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Welcome to apex

the new magazine for Aston graduates.
Whether you're a graduate of some years or
have only recently joined our alumni network,
this magazine is for you.



Sarah Pymm
Alumni Relations Officer

It will carry news of the latest developments at Aston including research, industrial links and give you the opportunity to discover what has become of some of your contemporaries.

This first edition is full of reminiscences. With a little help from my friends I've selected some great moments from the past four decades and there's an exciting glimpse of where the future could take us.

Apex will also have a regular feature on past students. Catch up on all those half-remembered names and faces and see some of the innovative things Aston graduates are doing. Don't forget to tell us how you're getting on yourself, of course! You'll find details of how to contact us on the opposite page.

If you still live in the Birmingham area or are eager to see the campus again, why not join us at some of the events listed in Agenda? Apex will keep you up to date with what's going on and if you would like any more details, don't hesitate to contact me at the Alumni Relations Office.

I'd particularly like to point out the annual meeting of Convocation on 16 May. As a graduate you are a member of Convocation and this is an opportunity to meet a good number of fellow graduates and catch up with what's happening. If you haven't yet replied it's still not too late! Give me a ring to reserve your free tickets. There is also an alternative programme for family and friends who may wish to join you.

A big thank you to all those who have contributed to this first edition of Apex. Let me know if there's something you'd like us to cover in future editions - you might want to write a piece yourself. I'm looking forward to a heavy postbag!

Happy reading!

May

- 15 Aston Graduates' Association Annual General Meeting 7.30 pm. Open to all current AGA members.
- 16 Annual General Meeting of Convocation 10.30 am. An open invitation to all Aston graduates and a special programme for partners and friends not attending the meeting. An afternoon tour of Vision Sciences has been arranged featuring demonstrations of current research. Free tickets for these two events can be obtained from the Alumni Relations Office.
- 19 "Is it worth it? Balancing profit and risk when transferring manufacturing technology." Inaugural Lecture by Professor David Bennett, Aston Business School, 5.30 pm. Details from Sarah Johnson, Public Relations Office.

June

- 11 Meeting of the Standing Committee of Convocation in the Council Room from 6.00 pm.
- 15 "John Saunders on branding. The name of the rose." Inaugural Lecture by Professor John Saunders, new Head of the Business School, 5.30 pm. Details from Sarah Johnson, Public Relations Office.
- 18 Aston Graduates' Association Joint Meeting with Birmingham Alumni Association. AGA Members can obtain details from the Secretary.

Agenda

Why not join us at some or
all of the events listed.

More details from the Alumni Relations Office

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70s



60s

You must
remember
this?

80s



90s



Make contact

How to contact the Alumni Relations Office
Tel +44 (0)121 359 3611 ext 4315
Fax +44 (0)121 359 4664
email s.e.pymm@aston.ac.uk
visit web site <http://www.aston.ac.uk/>

In touch with alumni, students, teachers,
research, careers, industry...

More and more people want to keep in touch with Aston University for furthering research and teaching projects, advising potential students of under- and postgraduate courses, helping with career choices or simply maintaining links with the University they chose over all the others as a place to study. Keep in touch via our web site where we have a discussion forum, alumni event postings and ways you can continue to support Aston University.

Editor Sarah Pymm

Special thanks goes to all alumni who contributed to this first edition of Apex. Apex is published twice a year for alumni of Aston University. Letters, photographs and news are very welcome but we reserve the right to edit any contributions. Please address all correspondence to the Alumni Relations Officer. The opinions expressed in Apex are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Alumni Relations Office or Aston University.

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Photography.

Professor Mike Wright
Vice-Chancellor

From the Vice-Chancellor

"I am delighted to have this opportunity to write to you all in our new magazine for Aston alumni. As you may know, I am a fellow graduate of the University and therefore have a special interest in maintaining links with all of our former students."

"The outside world certainly views us as a
very high quality institution.

Our reputation is first class with prospective employers and among other universities because of our high entrance standards, high teaching standards and high percentage of sandwich programmes."

It has been nearly 30 years since my own graduation and during that time the university sector has changed dramatically. The one thing which has remained constant, however, is the very high quality of teaching and research for which Aston is known.

"Over the last five years we have considerably enhanced our research standing."

In the time since my appointment as Vice-Chancellor, I have met a number of our alumni. Their careers are diverse, many holding key positions in industry, commerce and public life. The one thing they share is a genuine satisfaction with the start they received at Aston.

I hope that you, too, will renew your acquaintance with us. Our new Alumni Relations Office has been inundated with calls from former students and we are quickly establishing a database which will help our alumni to re-kindle the friendships that began here at Aston. Wherever you are now based, please contact us and tell us how your career has developed since your time at Aston. We will be delighted to hear from you.

Aston's research standing was confirmed in the 1996 Research Assessment Exercise. Eight out of nine departments achieved Grade 4 ratings. This indicates national and international excellence in virtually all the research activities of these departments.

This has been achieved in spite of less than favourable funding arrangements for Higher Education. There is pressure on all universities to deliver more with less resources and it is a reflection on the quality and dedication of staff and students - past and present - that we have been able to deliver so much.

Today we are still a relatively small university, but with ambitious plans for growth by the year 2000. We are introducing a new range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes geared to the demands of modern industry, commerce and public services. There will also be more opportunities for postgraduate part-time study in our drive to support the needs of the Learning Society.

In a time of change, however, it is useful to renew links with the past and at Aston there is a tradition of excellence of which we can be very proud. I hope that every graduate of the University will share that sense of pride in having studied here and will want to keep in touch with us. There are many opportunities to do so on both the social and academic level.

CV Highlights:

- 1969** Graduated from Aston with first class honours in Electrical Engineering.
- 1972** Received PhD from Aston for research in electromagnetic machines.
- 1985** Became Managing Director of Molins aged 35.
- 1988** Elected Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering.
- 1990** Joined Aston as Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Head of Department.
- 1996** Appointed as Vice-Chancellor of Aston University



You must remember this ..1960s

A University Charter was drawn up by the Academic Advisory Committee which was submitted to the Privy Council in April 1965. The Charter received royal assent in March 1966 to form 'The University of Aston in Birmingham'.

Aston's origins can be traced back even further to 1895 when an independent institution known as 'The Birmingham Municipal Technical School' split from the School of Metallurgy in the Birmingham and Midland Institute. Under the leadership of Dr W E Sumpner, studies were offered in Chemistry, Physics, Metallurgy and Electrical Engineering. Commercial Studies were later incorporated into the syllabus. In 1956 the then 'College of Technology in Birmingham' was recognised as Britain's first 'College of Advanced Technology'. As a result of the proposals of the Robbins Committee on Higher Education, plans were laid to transform the institution into a technical university.



College of Technology, Suffolk Street



Academic procession from the service of dedication in the cathedral church of St Philip's

The first phase of a major redevelopment project began in 1967 which was to provide new teaching, administrative and housing accommodation for staff and students at the University.

"My earliest recollection of what was to become Aston University was viewing a massive hole in the ground from the top of a No. 14 bus. There seemed to be a remarkable lack of progress over a protracted period."

Ray Hornsby (1966 ACT Electrical Engineering)



Work begins on campus

The late 1960s was an era characterised by protests over national issues such as education and welfare and global issues of war and apartheid. The NUS took an active role in campaigning for student rights.

"By the 1960s students were increasing in numbers and becoming conscious of forming a recognised, articulate section of society, with a distinctive culture and potential political power."

Professor George Parker, former Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Acting Vice-Chancellor.

"I remember clearly in my first year of Computer Science that we had to submit computer programmes on punched cards - one card for each line of the programme."

Victoria van den Bogaerde (née Simpson-White: 1979 BSc Computer Science & French)

..1970s

During the 1960s there had been an emphasis on engineering courses. With the onset of the 1970s, there was a growing interest in computing science. Plans were made for a new state-of-the-art computer centre.

The high rise accommodation blocks form Aston's familiar skyline. Lawrence Tower was the first to be built and was opened to students in 1971. Other residences included Old Cross, Bishop Ryder House, Gem House, Vauxhall Court, Stafford Tower. The residences were named after streets or buildings which were formerly on the sites. To cater for the increase in numbers of students, Handsworth Theological College was converted to Handsworth Hall in 1973. Overnight discipline and security was maintained by senior students on the 'Postgraduate Rota'.



Running programmes in the computer centre



The first tower block is built on campus

1972 Vauxhall Dining Centre completed

1974 Gem Sports Hall opened by Rt Hon Denis Howell, Minister of State (Sport)

Music groups, drama and visual arts flourished in the 1970s. The popular Folk Dance Group led by Mr and Mrs Guilford still meets today!

There was a strong association with Midlands based professional group 'Orchestra da Camera'. An arts and craft workshop was established in Duke Street and plays were performed at Kyrle Hall. In 1971 the Centre for the Arts was set up in the former BBC TV studios at Gosta Green.



Building the new Management Centre 1978



May Day 1973 Dancing 'The Arkansas Traveller'



Centre for the Arts

..1980s

In 1982 major construction work was undertaken to divert Aston Street and create a pedestrianised city centre campus. The College of Commerce vacated the South Wing of the Main Building which was immediately acquired by the University. This entrance became the main reception area. As part of the extensive development programme, block paving was laid over the old tram lines in front of what is now known as South Wing.



Building work in the 1980s

The concept of the Aston Triangle was born. The symbolism of the University, Science Park and community was reflected in the architecture and shape of the campus. The Post Office recognised 'Aston Triangle' as an official postal address.



Chancellor's Lake

Internal renovations were undertaken to meet the needs of both staff and students. The accommodation towers were refurbished and facilities improved.

1984 saw investment in the library facilities. State-of-the-art software was installed to facilitate on-line searching. The computer suite was fully equipped and the Department of Computer Science and Applied Mathematics was established.



Fountains and water sculptures were designed and installed and the famous red and blue sky lifts made their first appearance.

..1990s

Aston is reorganising its structure into Schools of Studies. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mike Wright, maintains that the reorganisation is not change for change's sake.

The new structure will provide a realisable and workable framework to accommodate the shift towards modular programmes of study and the need for innovative teaching programmes and research across disciplines.

"Aston must be slick and responsive and we need the correct organisational structure to do that."

Professor Mike Wright, Vice-Chancellor.

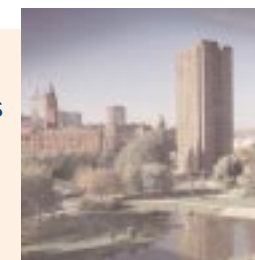


Artist's impression of new Lakeside Residences

For some, living away from home is one of the many attractions of university life. Aston has housed students in accommodation on campus and off-site at Handsworth and Aston Brook Green. For many Handsworth inhabitants, finding out they were living off campus was not immediately appealing. However, these worries were soon dispelled. Very soon friendships were forged and Handsworth's unique atmosphere was created. Many of you agreed that your days at Handsworth turned out "just great". But time moves on and with the ever-increasing demands of quality and quantity, the University plans to build a brand new residences block on the site of the current visitors' car park. The new accommodation block, scheduled for completion in late summer 1999, will be known as 'Lakeside Residences'. Handsworth has been sold to our neighbours, the University of Central England.

The origin and development of Aston University can be read in Professor Parker's book of the same title. Copies can be ordered through the Alumni Relations Office by completing the form on the back of this edition of Apex.

If this feature has brought your memories flooding back, why not join us on campus on 16 May for the AGM of Convocation?



This event is open to all University graduates and their families. It is your chance to catch up on the events of the past year, meet the academic staff and learn of the current research in Vision Sciences. Call the Alumni Relations Office for more details.

Degree of success



Paula Betteridge, Director of Marketing & Communications (left) and Sarah Pymm, Alumni Relations Officer, draw the winning questionnaires.

In June 1997 the Alumni Relations Office was faced with the monumental task of tracing the whereabouts of Aston graduates. At that time we thought we knew where just over 7,000 of you were. Some four months later we mailed out the first batch of graduate update forms. 30% of you returned your forms. And they are still coming in! Please help us to keep our records up to date as this information will be valuable as we develop our alumni work. Thanks.

Most of you wrote to tell us you had moved. Sorry if your edition of Apex went to an old address but we are still going through the post-bag. If you have not yet returned a form or would like to record changes on your graduate record, complete your details on the separate form enclosed. Future editions of Apex and details of reunions and events will be sent to your correct address.

And the winners are:

David Whipp (1983 BSc Energy Technology) wins a UK weekend break for two, courtesy of Stakis Hotels.

Melanie Harris (née Ladbrooke: 1982 BSc Business Administration/German) wins two concert tickets for a City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra concert.

Profiles

Profile of a President

Engineering has traditionally been perceived as a male dominated industry. Therefore it was hardly surprising that Pam Liversidge found herself to be the only 1971 female graduate of Mechanical Engineering. Today she is again centre of attention as the first woman President of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE).

Raised in Shropshire, Pam successfully completed her studies at Aston and began her career as a Graduate Trainee at GKN. Three years into her work she had already become Assistant Technical Manager. In 1989 she joined East Midlands Electricity plc as Strategic Planning Manager before going into business in her own right. Pam is currently Managing Director of Quest Investments Ltd, based in Sheffield, which owns two heavy engineering companies and has interests in two medical engineering companies.



Jane Spoors, second year undergraduate in Mechanical Engineering, demonstrates current research to Pam Liversidge (right).

"taking engineering forward by helping to give engineers a more user-friendly and respected image with the general public."

Her association with IMechE is a long and successful one: from student member to corporate member in 1980, followed by election to Fellow status by 1988. Her warm approachable personality makes Pam a valuable role model for women seeking to enter this respected profession.

Pam states her mission as, "taking engineering forward by helping to give engineers a more user-friendly and respected image with the general public." She aims to do exactly that during her Presidential year by pursuing the theme of 'the contribution of engineers of many disciplines to the quality of life'.

It was with great pleasure that Aston welcomed Pam back to the University in November 1997 to give a public lecture entitled "Creating a better lifestyle - 150 years of engineering" in which she presented a concise history of the impact advances in technology have made since the Victorian era. She compared the wretched lifestyle of the 1840s with the one enjoyed by the majority of people today. Focusing on contributions from great names such as George Stephenson, Isambard Kingdom Brunel,

Edwin Chadwick and others, Pam highlighted inventions in the fields of transportation, communication and sanitation. She concluded with an insight into the demands placed on engineers and scientists by modern surgery, a particular interest of Pam's. Her work and public lectures do indeed reflect her mission.

She promotes her industry with enthusiasm and aims to carry her mission well beyond her term of office as President of IMechE.

**Today she is again
centre of attention**
as the first woman President
of the Institution of
Mechanical Engineers

Calling all former Astonauts...

Refreshers

Saturday 18th July 1998
9pm - 2am
£5 advance, more on the door

Calling all former Astonauts...

We would like to welcome you all back to Aston to refresh your memories of weekends at the Guild. You'll have the opportunity, once again, to jig away to chart tunes, get a bit nostalgic and even fall around to 'New York, New York' at the end. What better opportunity to catch up with friends and find out what they've been doing since graduation. It'll be a refreshing change. We'll see you in July!


James Dolan, President



For accommodation details and booking forms please complete and return to:
REFRESHERS, Aston Students' Guild, FREEPOST BM8179, The Triangle, Birmingham, B4 7BR.
E-mail p.d.wallis@aston.ac.uk or telephone 0121 359 6531 ext 4060.

Name:

Address:

.....

Profiles

Burning ambition

After graduating in 1986, Anna returned to work with her placement company, L'Oréal and began a successful twelve year marketing career. During this time she worked for some of the world's best known cosmetic and haircare companies before joining her parents' marketing consultancy business in Grayshott, Hampshire.

She openly admits that a growing dissatisfaction with big company politics and ever increasing job insecurity prompted her to consider working for herself: "As well as changing my job, I also took stock of my life and thought seriously about what I really wanted to do to enhance my own sense of fulfilment." Anna found this sense of fulfilment in becoming the first woman to qualify as a retained Fire-fighter with the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service in the rural village of Grayshott.

Anna explains, "Being retained as opposed to 'wholetime' means I am able to carry out my normal daily work, springing into action when summoned by a 999 call to my personal alerter." That call could come at any time during the working day. Retained Fire-fighters have to be able to perform their role as professionally as their full-time counterparts and this requires rigorous and demanding training at Eastleigh Services HQ.

Anna remains unfazed by the hazardous life she leads and stresses the importance of the ongoing training she receives. She is currently on a two

The glamorous world of the cosmetics and haircare industries is a far cry from the dangerous and physically demanding work required of the 999 Emergency Services personnel. But a day in the life of Aston graduate Anna Harrison can dramatically change from Marketing Consultant to Fire-fighter.



year probationary period assisting more senior members of the crew and is not placed in what she calls "tricky situations." Before she tackles real fires, she will undergo further training especially in the use of breathing apparatus.

So, what is the attraction?

"The day when someone dials 999 for the Fire Brigade is often one of the worst days of their life. If I can help ease whatever desperate circumstances people find themselves in, whether a fire, a road accident or other emergency, then the effort this job demands is worthwhile."

Details of the Retained Fire-fighter schemes in operation around the country can be obtained from your local Fire Station.

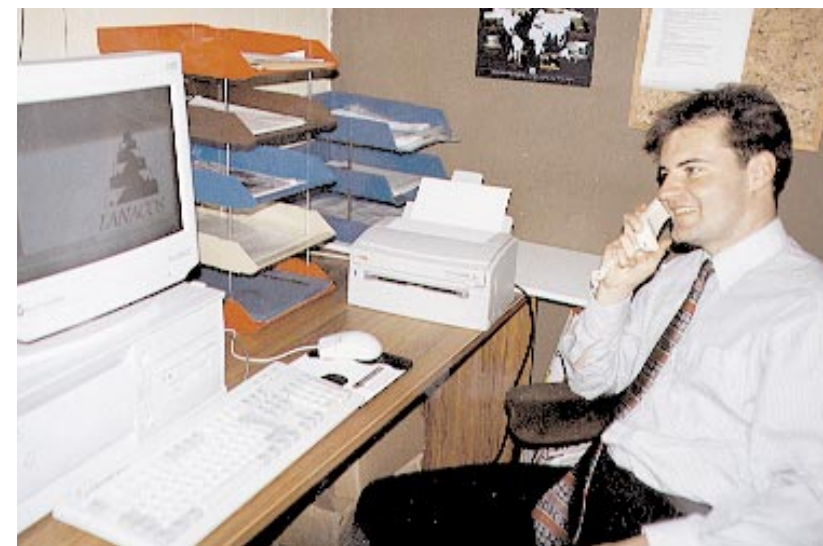


"I only weigh nine stone, but I suddenly found myself carrying a man out of a third floor window and down a ladder."



Profiles

Paragliding Paraguay



Combining tailored learning with holidays is a new approach to language training

Learning a language takes on a whole new dimension when Martin Pickett (1993 BSc French/Society & Government) gets involved. Stereotyped images of classroom-based teaching are quickly replaced by the excitement of linking clients' interests with a living language.

What could be better than a tango in South America or refining your wine tasting skills under the supervision of a respected French cellar master? For the more adventurous, how about learning how to paraglide whilst brushing up on a foreign language?

These opportunities are now more than dreams thanks to 'LANACOS', Martin's own company. "Nowadays language courses can cater for all ages, levels and interests throughout the year," explains Martin. "The choice has increased. I have created a unique database of opportunities which I can easily use to link clients' interests and destinations directly. Its very exciting and innovative!"

Martin has a network of professional language centres in 20 different countries and whenever possible visits them to examine first hand the quality of the provision. He is proud to admit, "Unlike many other language agents who charge extra, I do not collect money from my clients. Clients pay the brochure price and I get commission from the language centre."

"The only place to really learn a language is abroad in the home country."

Where are they now?

A regular feature to bring you up to date on the activities of your contemporaries. Here you will discover who's doing what and where they have gone. If you would like to share your news with readers, please drop a line to the Alumni Relations Office at the usual address. Why not include a photograph?

1950s

Joseph Newhall (1952 BSc Engineering)

Joseph lectured at Gosta Green before becoming Head of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Science at the new South Birmingham Technical College. He retired in 1980.

When he is not busy with his professional consultancy work, Business Finance Strategist **Peter Charles (1959 BSc Engineering)** retreats to his farm which he now maintains in the south of England. Whilst at Aston, Peter was President of the Students' Guild and also Editor of the Birmingham Sun.

Joseph Newhall and the staff of
Electronic Engineering 1952

1960s

John Brindley (1960 ACT Engineering)

This former Secretary of Aston Badminton Club now has his own engineering consultancy.

Cliff Elliott (1963 BSc Electrical Engineering)

is currently working as a Specialist Engineer in Wind Tunnels with British Aerospace based in Warton, Lancashire

Adrian Alderton (1965 BSc Engineering) is the Managing Director of his own building contracting firm. He would be interested in hearing from other Aston graduates of the 1960s.

Charles Steiner (1965 BSc Metallurgy) has spent a profitable career researching funding opportunities for contract research. Born in France, he came to Aston for his undergraduate studies and then went to America to undertake postgraduate research. On returning to the UK he married a Yorkshire girl, took British citizenship and has settled in this country with his wife and son.

1970s

Kim Fisher (MSc Telecommunications Technology)

is now Radio Adviser for the Marine Safety Agency. Kim would be interested in hearing from other Aston graduates of the 1970s.

Thomas Greeves (1970 BSc Biological Sciences) is a Dental Surgeon with the North Devon Healthcare Trust.

Pam Liversidge (née Edwards: 1971 BSc Mechanical Engineering)

Pam started her graduate career with GKN. She is now Managing Director of Sheffield based Quest Investments and currently holds the prestigious title of President of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

Terry Platt (1971 BSc Architecture) now runs his own company, managing various projects in the south-east. He would be interested in hearing from other Aston graduates of the 1970s.

Costas Polichronakis (1972 MSc Chemical Engineering) is living in Greece and working as Information Systems Section Head for EKO.

Ralph Oram (1974 BSc Business Administration) runs his own shoe retailing company in Llanelli.

John Tunwell (1974 BSc Chemistry) sells cars, parts and accessories for 'Startin Rover' automotive company.

Tim Willson (1974 BSc Mathematics)

Four years after graduating Tim left West Bromwich for the rocky shores of Canada where he met his wife. He now works as a Consultant in the field of Computer System Development and has recently moved to Philadelphia with his family. Tim would like to hear from 1974 graduates, especially Martin Abrahams, Graham Dixon, Terry Jones, Jane Lawrence, Steve Lawrence, Steve Moss, Phil Cossell, Marcus Moore, Nigel Tuck, Chandra Singh, Kieron Mellon, Adrian Bone and others.

Peter Creamer (1975 BSc Mechanical Engineering)

is based at Temasek Polytechnic in Singapore where he is Manager of Temasek Plus International.

David Amos (1976 BSc Building) now works as Project Manager for Bovis Construction Ltd.

Town crier **Kevin Ward (1976 BSc Physics)** currently works as Charge Nurse at Selly Oak Hospital. Readers may remember him as a member of Aston's choir.

Alan James (1977 BSc Mechanical Engineering) currently teaches mathematics in the Channel Islands. In his undergraduate years, Alan was a member of Aston Scout and Guide Club.

Guy Marshall (1978 BSc Ophthalmic Optics) is a practising Optometrist and Partner in a company.

Theresa Patrick (née Day: 1978 BSc Behavioural Science) works as part of a social services team as Senior Practitioner - Occupational Therapy.

1980s

Liz Amos (née Herbert: 1981 BSc Maths/Physics)

Liz works in Management Information Systems at Aston University and is currently developing the Smart Card - a multifunction chip card incorporating the Mondex Electronic Purse. She has many innovative ideas for the future and is developing applications alongside electronic cash.

Amanda Broad (née Rennie: 1981 BSc Biology/French) is a freelance translator also studying for a PGCE to teach French and Science.

Phil Cadman (BSc 1981 Electrical and Electronic Engineering) is a freelance writer of technical articles for hobby and engineering magazines.

'Ello 'Ello to **Martin Mitchell (1981 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)** who is now a Police Officer in London. How many of our readers joined him in 'The Sacks of Potatoes' in the 80s?

Raman Patel (1981 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) works for Berkley Associates as a Tax Adviser.

Carole Harvey (née Edwards: 1983 BSc Business Administration/French)

Head of Marketing Development and Planning at Boots the Chemist and holds an MBA.

Stephen Humble (1983 BSc Mathematics) was Chairman of the Mathematics Society at Aston and is now a Mathematics Teacher in Sussex.

Philip Evans (1984 BSc Physics) has since undertaken postgraduate research and now lectures at the Institute of Cancer Research in London.

Joanna Morley (née: Woodfield 1984 BSc French/German) is a Pre-School Playgroup Assistant and would be interested in contacting fellow Aston graduates in the Gloucester area.

Where have the other members of the Canoe Club paddled to? **Graham Reeves (1985 BSc Electrical and Electronic Engineering)** wants to hear from you. He now works for Smiths Industries as a Project Engineer.

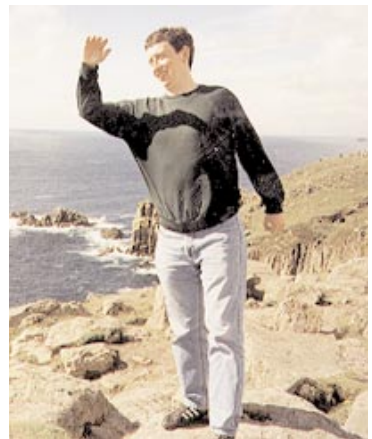
Derek Butler (1986 MBA) is employed by GKN as Assistant Group Treasurer.

Visiting Lecturer **Richard Knight (1986 MSc Public Sector Management)** teaches in Birmingham colleges.

Andy Baxter (1987 BEng Mechanical Engineering) surprisingly (for him) started a career in marketing. In 1992 he set up an export department, moved into the specific discipline of market research and now works for Boots the Chemist.

Sailesh Dodia (1987 BSc Pharmaceutical Sciences) works in retail pharmacy in Essex.

Hardial Sago (1988 PhD research) completed his postgraduate research at Aston and currently works for the consultancy firm W S Atkins as Principal Acoustics Consultant.



Philip Evans

Where are they now?

Looking for someone from Aston?

Contact the Alumni Relations Office.

If we have a current address, you will be given a reference number and asked to write a letter to the person you are looking for. Put your letter in an unsealed stamped envelope and note both the reference number and the name of the person you are looking for clearly on the front.

Put your letter in an envelope addressed to the Alumni Relations Office. Please include a covering letter explaining who you are and asking us to forward your enclosed letter.

We will pass on your envelope to the address we hold. As we rely on graduates telling us when they move on, we cannot guarantee the person is still at the address we hold. We would like to hope, however, that you all keep in touch with us and tell us of any changes to your address. The post box service does not give out individual names and addresses to enquirers and all mail is treated in strict confidence.



Gavin Critchley and friends

1980s

Amanda Collins (née Boylan: 1989 BSc Modern Languages French) is Marketing Manager with 'Inlingua', Cheltenham where she promotes the school's language courses.

Karen Barden (1989 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) had an energetic time at Aston playing in the ladies 5-a-side football and netball teams. She now works in the higher education sector as a Careers Counsellor.

Andrew Booth (1989 BSc Transport Management) worked on the Birmingham Sun team whilst at Aston. He now works for OT Africa shipping line.

Lisa Morgan (née Measures: 1989 BSc Ophthalmic Optics) practises in Oxford.

Former hockey club member **Helen Northey (1989 BSc International Business/French)** is Head of Retail Marketing at Virgin Vie Ltd, a toiletries and cosmetics business.

1990s

Helping us all get around that little bit easier is Connex South Eastern Traincrew Manager **Philip Uzzell (1991 BSc Transport Management)**

Gavin Critchley (1990 BSc Transport Management) is currently working for consultancy group Arthur Andersen. He would like to hear from fellow graduate Graham Baty.

BLADS star **Sally Campbell (1992 BSc French/German)** is Export Sales Consultant with Sunrise Medical Ltd, a company specialising in equipment for the elderly.

The slightly more exotic shores of the Ivory Coast and the job of Assistant Project Manager for Reuters Ltd attracted **Clare Black (1993 BSc International Business and French)**. Friends will remember her at Aston between 1988/92.

David Horne (1993 BSc Transport Management) is now Business Development Manager with Wales and West Passenger Trains.

Drama enthusiast **Geraldine Pettit (1993 BSc Psychology/French)** was Publicity Officer for ENTS. She is now a Teacher in Warwickshire and would be interested in contacting graduates in her local area.

Dorothy Steel (1993 BSc International Business and German) is currently a Sales Agent with British Airways.

Andréa Williams (1993 Business Administration/French) worked at Aston as Schools Liaison Officer before moving to Southampton University. She has now returned to Aston as International Officer.

David Hugo (1994 BSc Transport Management) is Sales Consultant with the Thomas Cook Group.

Simon Birkbeck (1995 BEng Chemical Engineering) is employed as Development Engineer for Esso Petroleum.

Anne Carter (née Corner: 1995 BSc Modern Languages German) is moving to America with her husband Tim Carter (1992 BSc Computer Science). Enthusiastically she writes, "Tim has found a new job with a computer consultancy firm. It really seemed time for a change and we're looking forward to this opportunity to live abroad! Please keep in touch."

A former member of the Music Society, **Guillaume Goussault (1996 MBA)** is an equity trader based in New York. He would like to be put in contact with any graduates in the area.

Jason Power (1995 BSc Applied Physics with Electronics)

Currently working for AMS Neve plc demonstrating, training and advising clients on digital mixing consoles and editors. His international consultancy work has taken him to places as diverse as Bombay and Moscow. He has recently completed work for a forthcoming Channel 4 programme soundtrack.

Nicki Heathcote (1996 BSc Human Psychology) has started her career in the busy world of Public Relations. As a member of Aston's Marketing & Communications team, she works on a number of initiatives aimed at raising the profile of the University.

Sanjeev Aggarwal (1997 MSc Telecommunications Technology) is currently NSD Engineer with Nortel plc. A former member of the Asian and Diving Societies, Sanjeev would like to get in touch with former friends and graduates in his local area.

PLJ Training based in London specialises in training and education. **Shamilah Ahmad (1997 MSc Marketing Management)** is currently working as a Computer Trainer.

Chris Arnold (1997 BSc Logistics) is probably known to readers as the Technical Co-ordinator for ENTS. He is currently working for National Express.

Caron Smith (1997 BSc Modern Languages German/Japanese) is a Purchasing Assistant with Lidl UK GmbH.



Jason Power (centre)

We regret to announce the deaths of the following alumni and staff:

Frank Edwards, Lecturer in the Pharmacy Department.

Dr Maurice Everdell, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Chemistry who retired in 1982.

Professor Peter Jeavons Honorary Visiting Professor in the Department of Ophthalmic Optics until his retirement in 1994.

Richard A Lewis (1968 BSc Sociology) moved to Princeton after graduation where he received an MPhil. He spent several years at Stanford before joining one of Columbia's faculties. His family have asked that Richard's name be entered here as, although he lived in America for the last 20 years or so, he had many friends from his Aston days.

Professor Peter Morris, Chair of French Politics in the School of Languages and European Studies.
Professor George Parker, Head of the Chemistry Department of the College of Advanced Technology and first Dean of the Faculty of Science of Aston University. He was Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor and acting Vice-Chancellor before retiring from the University in 1980.

Calling all...

1962 Electrical Engineering graduates -

Raymond Roberts is eager to contact classmates of the then Birmingham College of Advanced Technology.

Mechanical Engineering research students -

Professor Sansome would like to contact a number of former George Alexander Laboratory students. Especially Mr David Biddell, Dr Hock Thye Chia, Dr Graham Dawson, Mr Eames, Dr Paul Greening, Dr Leigh Gubb, Dr Nayrouz Ibrahim Ibrahim, Dr Vidya Prasadika Kariyawasam, Mr Peter Leavesley, Dr David Keith Robertson, Dr David Rothman, Mrs Tan, Professor Peter J Thompson, Dr William J Waterhouse and others.

1974 Systems Analysis graduates -

especially: Ian Beatty, Peter Bissell, Robert Corbett, Peter Cumberlidge, Maxim Dobres, Ian Fordham, Janet Pugh, Gordon Rodman, Brian Sansom, Peter Sarjeant, Gregory Serna, Geoffrey Smith. Fellow graduates would like to get in touch with you all.

Where are they now?



Philip & Alison Crompton



Neil & Carol Harvey



Steven & Grace Bond

Weddings

Alison Talbot (BEng 1989) and Philip Crompton (BEng 1989) both studied Electrical and Electronic Engineering at Aston. They were married in September 1993.

Neil and Carol Harvey (née: Edwards) married in June 1986. Carole is a 1983 graduate of Business Administration/French; Neil completed his Managerial and Administrative Studies in the same year.

Steven Bond (BSc and PhD Chemistry 1988 and 1992) and Grace (née Evans: 1988 BSc Modern Languages). Grace is a buyer at GEC Alsthom and Steve a Principal Scientist at T&N Technology.

Celia (née Hay: 1985 BSc Modern Languages/Linguistics) and Adrian Rowe (1985 BSc Civil Engineering) are celebrating their tenth wedding anniversary this year. Adrian is currently reconstructing the railway bridge across the Manchester Ship Canal. Celia explains she taught French and German at Urmston Grammar School before working full time bringing up the children. "My present career is much more challenging," she admits.



Adrian & Celia Rowe, with Toby, Elliot & Thomas

A number of graduates have contacted the Alumni Relations Office trying to get back in touch with former friends, flatmates and research partners.

Many have been successfully reunited but others are proving a little more difficult to track down! Do you know of the whereabouts of any of the following?

- Christopher Andrews**
B J Angle
Laura Brookes
A P Cotterell
J A C Hughes
Chris Lau
Peter Le Bosquet
Samantha Barnes
(1994 BSc Society & Government)
Graham Baty
(1990 BSc Transport Planning and Management)
Mahesh M Bava
(1983 MSc Mechanical Design Analysis)
Jon Beresford
(1980 BSc Biological Sciences)
Ken Bowdell
(1962 BSc Electrical Engineering)
Sue Bratt
(1989 BSc and 1994 PhD Chemistry)
Keith J Butler
(1987 PhD Mechanical Engineering)
Julia Covell
(1988 BSc Business Administration and French)
Michael Crossley
(1980 BSc Civil Engineering)
Julian Foster
(1980 BSc Biology of Man & Environment)
R Hamer
(1974 BSc Pharmacy)
Paul Hand
(1980 BSc Applied Physics with Electronics)
Simon Johnson
(1983 BSc Building Economics & Measurement)
Frederique Gouarderes
(1996 PhD Chemistry)
Michael Hempstock
(1993 BSc Electrical Engineering and Applied Physics followed by postgraduate study)
Michelle Jordan
(1988 BSc Pharmacy)
Richard Lavelle
(1980 BSc Civil Engineering)
Ian Margetts
(1989 MSc Personnel Management)
Adrian Raybould
(1980 BSc Civil Engineering)

'Talkback'

AGA organises a variety of events for its members. Jenny Martin shares some of the highlights of the group's most recent visits.

Leather and lights

The Walsall Leather Museum, which has recently won several awards for its outstanding displays, was our first port of call. Here we were introduced to two skills of the leather industry - processing and production.

Leather manufacturing has been a part of Walsall's history since the 18th century. Hides from a variety of animals including snake, crocodile and pig have been processed here. Hides from one animal can be made to look like that of another simply by altering the surface patterns using rollers or by changing the colours. Patent leather and other special surfaces are also produced.

The museum has a display of items such as wallets, jewellery boxes and even a selection of the Queen's handbags! Leather has traditionally been used to make saddles. Saddle making is done by hand by a process involving building up layers of hide using an iron frame as a support. The museum's collection shows examples of saddles made for adults, children, workhorses, jockeys and even royalty. During our visit we tested our leather craftsmanship when we had the opportunity to make a bookmark to take home as a souvenir. After our tour we enjoyed a black country supper of faggots and peas and visited the shop. Members then visited the Arboretum to see the illuminations.

The museum has a display of items such as wallets, jewellery boxes and even a selection of the Queen's handbags!

Dear AGA Members

Members of AGA cannot help but notice the new format of our newsletter! As most of you are aware, the University has appointed Sarah Pymm as Alumni Relations Officer. She will be producing a magazine twice a year in which AGA's news and reports will be featured. We may be in a different format, but you will all continue to get the most up to date information on the activities of AGA. In this edition read about our recent social events and AGA's donation towards the University clock.

At the moment AGA is at a cross-roads. There will be changes, but, as your Chairman, I urge you to support the recommendation originally proposed by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mike Wright, that AGA continues as a social group. Working together with the Alumni Relations Office this will enable members to keep in contact with both the University and local graduates. I urge you all to attend our AGM on 15 May or express your support of AGA in writing to the Chairman via the Alumni Office.

I look forward to your continued support.

Lawrence Inniss

AGA Chairman

Gone surfin'

AGA Secretary John Evans can be contacted via the Internet on jge@jgeevans.demon.co.uk

Lunar heritage

Lights, camera, action!

It was Guy Fawkes night with a difference for AGA members and friends when we visited the BBC studios at Pebble Mill in November 1997. The evening began with a buffet supper and a glass of wine whilst our guide explained recent developments at the Pebble Mill site: that very week the BBC had introduced the new twenty-four hour news service from these studios.

During the tour we were introduced to the intricacies of studio lighting and sound effect techniques. The studios have to be adaptable to cater for the different types of BBC broadcasts. We were shown how the ‘Can’t Cook, Won’t Cook’ studios are set out on a floor grid, each piece of the set having its own spot. If the studio is then used for another broadcast, a show, concert or play, the set can be broken down and restored exactly as before for the next edition of the cookery programme.

The studio used for daytime shows such as **‘The Really Useful Show’** is surprisingly small but clever use of space and a variety of different sets enables the presenters to be shown against many different backgrounds.

The highlight of the evening was the visit to Ambridge, or rather the set of the long-running radio soap ‘The Archers’. The area used for recording is surprisingly tiny, but a whole variety of different sound effects are available. One part of the studio is used for recording indoor events whilst another gives the impression of recording outdoors. The art of sound effects is not as simple as you may think.

There are different sets of bolts and locks for each character’s front door, different underfoot surfaces from farmyard to front room carpet and a wide variety of stairs to climb. You have to get it right!

To begin the New Year Aston graduates and friends visited the home of Matthew Boulton which has recently been restored and opened to the public. An introductory, illustrated talk set the work of Boulton in context. Together with James Watt and others, these early manufacturers used Birmingham as a base to develop their scientific and technological ideas. They met on the night of the full moon so that they had maximum light to see their way home and consequently became known as ‘The Lunar Society’.

As Boulton’s house in Hockley was in a central position it was often the meeting place of the Lunar Society. A room in Soho House is set aside as a memorial. The house, originally set in 17 acres of parkland, has since been used as a hotel, a student residence for early sandwich course students and more recently as police accommodation. When the city council decided to restore the building, many internal walls which had been built to increase the number of bedrooms available had to be removed and the interior design re-established. When the fabric of the building was stripped back, fragments of the original wallpaper and mouldings were discovered. These originals were used to ensure the replacements were authentic.

Boulton was well ahead of his time in his technological expertise. The house is centrally heated using under floor hot air ducts and there is an enormous bath in which all the family and the servants were able to wash. Boulton had a wide range of interests. He had an extensive geological collection, was intrigued by the problems involved with minting and made a multitude of metal objects in a variety of finishes, including silver plate and ormolu. He also kept extensive weather records for the area.

Several gardens near to Soho House were excavated, in an attempt to uncover the plan of the original site and any artefacts which had remained buried. You can see the results of their work and gain an interesting insight into this period by visiting Soho House.

They met on the night of the full moon so that they had maximum light to see their way home and consequently became known as ‘The Lunar Society’.



‘Talkback’ A century of success

Aston wanted to commemorate its centenary celebrations of 1995/96 with a lasting and permanent tribute. Last year a stainless steel clock was erected on the face of the South Wing underneath the new Aston University signage. The clock has a 4.9 metre dial making it only slightly smaller than Big Ben. “Such a prominent feature was a fitting reminder of Aston’s success,” explains AGA Chairman Lawrence Inniss. AGA has made a substantial donation of £4000.

“Such a prominent feature was a fitting reminder of Aston’s success.”

AGA Treasurer Alan Hughes (left) and AGA Chairman Lawrence Inniss meet Vice-Chancellor Professor Mike Wright (right) beneath Aston’s clock



Picture quiz

Take the AGA challenge and see how much you know about the campus. Answers in the next edition of Apex.

1. Why is this tree important to AGA members? What type of tree is it and is it still on the site?



2. In what year was the 'Vauxhall Dining Centre' photo taken?



3. How long has 'The Sacks of Potatoes' been at Gosta Green?



4. What is this building and where is it now?



5. What used to be housed in this building and where has it gone to now?

An everlasting memory of your success

A specially designed laser engraved plaque with your name and qualification is a unique reminder of your achievement at Aston University.

To order your laser engraved certificate plaque, please complete the order form and send it with a copy of your degree certificate if possible to: The Alumni Relations Office, Aston University, Aston Triangle, Birmingham, B4 7ET England.



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