

apex

Issue two

Autumn 1998



**New
Directions**

 ASTON
UNIVERSITY

Welcome to apex

Our first edition certainly had you reaching for your pens, word-processors and e-mails! Thank you to everyone who contacted the Alumni Relations Office having read Apex – I'm looking forward to hearing from even more of you this time.



Sarah Pymm
Alumni Relations Officer

You'll find our regular 'Where are they now?' feature on pages 15-19. We've had more than a degree of success in tracing a significant number of Aston graduates. Groups of long-standing friends, flatmates and fellow course-members have arranged reunions both in Birmingham and elsewhere around the UK. If you'd like to be part of a reunion, or even organise one, contact me at the Alumni Relations Office.

A number of events have already been planned for the first part of the new academic year 1998-99. 'Agenda' lists all the events for graduates and I'll be glad to send you further details. Look out particularly for next March 20-21 since this year the popular AGM will be part of a Reunion Weekend. Make a note in your diaries, the full programme will be available soon.

In the meantime, keep writing to us! We can't guarantee to publish everything we're sent but we'll certainly do everything in our power to help Aston graduates communicate with each other. Apex – only the tip of the Aston triangle!

Happy reading!

This edition features some of the ground-breaking research currently taking place in Vision Sciences. Future editions will focus on research in other Schools within Aston University. It might be just the thing to whet your appetite for postgraduate research with us!

Alternatively, you might want to share with a wider audience something about how your career has developed or exotic places you've travelled to. Our regular feature on past students looks at a number of you whose lives have moved on in very different ways since graduation.

Agenda

Please contact the Alumni Relations Office for more details of these forthcoming events.

November

- 18 "French intellectuals on the Eve of the 21st Century: French perceptions of world affairs." School of Languages & European Studies Public Lecture Series with the support of the French Embassy in London, Dominique Moïsi, 6pm.

December

- 8 Spin Doctoring. Inaugural Lecture of Professor John Homer, School of Engineering & Applied Science, 5.30pm.

January

- 29 "French intellectuals on the Eve of the 21st Century: Diversity in the one and indivisible Republic." School of Languages & European Studies Public Lecture Series with the support of the French Embassy in London, Catherine Wihltol de Wenden, 6pm.

February

- 12 "French intellectuals on the Eve of the 21st Century: The self as a cultural construction in contemporary French literature." School of Languages & European Studies Public Lecture Series with the support of the French Embassy in London, Azouz Begag, 6pm.

March

- 20-21 Reunion Weekend. An opportunity for all graduates to return to Aston University. An exciting programme of events is planned, including demonstrations of current research, a reunion dinner and the AGM of Convocation. Don't miss this opportunity to meet up with fellow graduates and enjoy the atmosphere of the University campus.

Contents

P4-5

Clear vision
Vision statement

P6

Schools of Study
Student numbers up

P7

Honorary graduates

P8-9

The last degree

P10-11

Fifty 50 challenge

P12-13

Getting to the art of Aston

P14

A Guide to Buckingham Palace

P15-19

Where are they now?

P20-21

Talkback

P22-23

Reunions

Getting to the art of Aston



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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 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.
Designed and Produced by Boxer Creative Ltd.
Photograph of Professor Brian Pentecost supplied by the British Heart Foundation.

Aston news

Clear vision

Road accidents are more likely to be influenced by age and avoiding bad driving conditions than by vision. This surprising finding comes from the largest ever UK study of drivers' vision.

In 1996, PhD research student Sarah Slade and Dr Mark Dunne of Aston's Vision Sciences coordinated this major national survey of drivers' vision with sponsorship from Vauxhall Motors. Trained teams set up test centres at 24 Granada Service areas. Volunteer drivers were asked to complete a vision test and fill in a confidential questionnaire about their eyesight and accident record. The main test examined drivers' ability to distinguish contrasts – an important factor in low-light conditions or in fog. Almost 8,000 drivers took part in this survey.

"Our initial findings showed that drivers who believed their vision to be poor were being generally more careful, driving more slowly and avoiding potentially hazardous conditions," commented Dr Dunne.

Although situation avoidance could potentially go some way to reducing the number of accidents on the road, many drivers do not necessarily realise that their vision is not up to the same standard as when they took their test. The survey revealed that as many as 1 in 16 drivers failed to



Clinical eye testing

read a number plate at 67 feet – the legal eyesight standard required for driving. This has obvious implications for the safety of other road users.

This research forms part of a wider initiative backed by a consortium of road safety officers, Health Authorities, police forces and the Guild of Experienced Motorists. The DVLA (Driver Vehicle and Licensing Agency) has also been informed of the valuable research taking place at Aston. Vision Sciences is currently developing a dynamic visual attention test which may eventually be used to assess the effects of tiredness, medication and visual or mental disability on driving and general mobility.

"39% of drivers over the age of 65 fall below the legal eyesight requirement."

Aston news

Vision statement

"The first ever on-line scientific research programme."

They may not be the latest high street fashion accessory, but yellow reflective armbands may go some way to reducing accidents on the road.

With the onset of darker winter mornings and evenings, the busy road can become an even bigger hazard for pedestrians. As roads get busier and volumes of traffic increase, what measures can be taken to raise the visibility of pedestrians? Dr Mark Dunne of Aston's Vision Sciences may have found the answer in 'Day-glo'.

In the first ever survey of its kind, Aston University has teamed up with Vauxhall Motors to study the role reflective clothing may play in preventing accidents. "We are currently analysing results obtained from an on-line programme known as The Driver Reaction Time Simulator," explains Dr Dunne. This programme measures how quickly a driver is able to react when someone steps off the kerb into the road. Initial

findings suggest that wearing reflective armbands significantly increases the visibility of pedestrians making drivers' reaction times faster. This could potentially reduce serious accidents.

The 'pedestrians', in this case on-screen computer graphics, randomly step off the kerb into the middle of a virtual road. Some of the pedestrians sport reflective armbands. This enables the programme to measure any differences in the speed of drivers' reaction times. Everyday distractions are also incorporated into the programme to make it as realistic as possible and there is also the facility to simulate day and night driving conditions.

"Something as simple as wearing a reflective armband could mean the difference between being seen or being involved in a road accident," points out Dr Dunne. The programme is available via the Internet at <http://vauxhall-drts.com>

Sarah Slade of Vision Sciences



Aston

news

Schools of Study

The beginning of the new academic year sees the beginning of Aston's new organisational structure. Schools of Study are now firmly established, replacing academic Departments and Faculties throughout the University.

This major re-organisation has not, however, been undertaken lightly as Secretary-Registrar David Packham points out, "A large number of people have put in a huge effort over the past two years to bring us to this point. There have been exhaustive discussions within Faculties and Departments as well as mighty efforts made by the task force which was originally set up to look into the establishment of our Schools of Study."

The driving forces behind the change were the desire to encourage more collaborative ventures within and between the Schools and to accommodate the shift towards modular programmes. Each School of Study has been structured along similar lines, ensuring the most efficient use of resources to promote the success of the academic activities taking place within them.

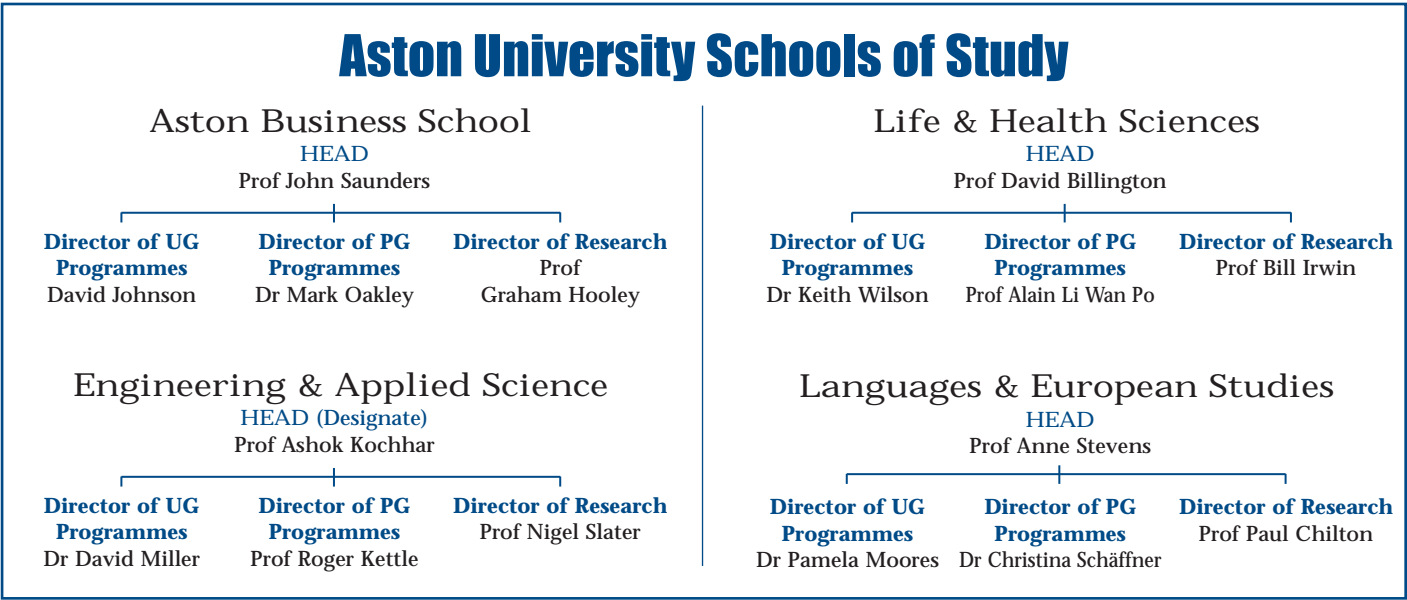
"The establishment of Schools of Study marks a watershed in Aston's history."

David Packham, Secretary-Registrar

Student numbers up

The recent media interest in the introduction of tuition fees has led to speculation that universities would struggle to fill places on their undergraduate courses. Aston, however, has seen a marked increase in its new undergraduate intake.

Entry standards have improved, with the average A-Level entry score rising to 21.3 points. In line with strategic objectives to widen access, numbers of international students have risen and there has been a marked increase in the number of high calibre students coming to Aston with non-traditional qualifications.



Aston

news

Honorary graduates 1998

This year's degree ceremonies were held on July 15th and 16th. Five honorary degrees were awarded in recognition of contributions made to the West Midlands and Aston University.

15 July

Lord Simpson of Dunkeld FCCA FIMI FCIT ACIS



Educated in Scotland where he qualified as an accountant, Lord Simpson was recently introduced into the House of Lords as a Life Peer. Over the last 30 years he has held senior management positions with top companies and is currently Managing Director of GEC.

Pam Liversidge BSc CEng FIMechE FCGI FRSA



Pam Liversidge graduated from Aston University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. She began her career with GKN before joining East Midlands Electricity plc. Now living in Sheffield, she is Managing Director of Quest Investments Ltd. In 1997 she was elected President of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

Dame Rachel Waterhouse DBE PhD



Dame Waterhouse has enjoyed a long association with Birmingham. She has traced a series of fascinating studies into the rise of the city as an innovative engineering centre and has recorded the development of some of the city's schools. Dame Waterhouse's career has been closely associated with consumer affairs and she was a Council member of the Consumer's Association for 30 years, eight as Chairman.

16 July

Rt Hon Baroness Jill Knight of Collingtree DBE



Baroness Knight was educated at King Edward Grammar School in Birmingham. She was awarded the MBE in 1964 and two years later elected Conservative MP for Birmingham Edgbaston, a seat she was to keep for 31 years until she entered the House of Lords in 1997.

Professor Brian Pentecost MD FRCP



Professor Brian Pentecost trained at St Mary's Hospital Medical School in London. His career took him to the United Birmingham Hospitals where he was appointed Consultant Physician and Cardiologist. Since 1993 he has been Medical Director of the British Heart Foundation and has published widely in medical journals.

Profiles

The last degree

A polar expedition to the highest latitudes of 89°N - 90°N.

Feeling on top of the world was a very real emotion for Aston graduate Ronald Heath as he stood at the North Pole. Meeting up with the polar expedition was a great risk for him and his son. The prospect of supporting the charity 'Whizz-Kidz' made it all seem worthwhile.

Ronald Heath (1967 BSc Mechanical Engineering) could hardly believe the message waiting for him when he returned home from work in December 1996. A team of former soldiers was embarking on a high profile fund-raising expedition to the North Pole to promote 'Whizz-Kidz', a charity which provides mobility aids for disabled children to help improve their quality of life. Ronald's son, James, has cerebral palsy and had already benefited from 'Whizz-Kidz'. They were both to be given the opportunity to profile the work of the charity by flying out to the North Pole to meet up with the expedition team.

The expedition was scheduled for Spring 1997. "The ice is at its thickest in winter," explained Ronald, "but there is no sunshine



Ronald with son James (centre) and wife Elizabeth

"At the North Pole there are no appointments, no routine and no rat-race. The region is strange, primitive and merciless. It's not a world where you take chances."

at that time of year; you can't walk around in darkness. Going in Spring means that you at least have daylight, but there are watery holes in the ice and it is difficult to land a plane."

"You can go out in temperatures of -35°C as long as it is not windy – it's the wind that kills you."

It was clearly a hard decision to make. It would be a dangerous mission for anyone. Despite his apprehension, Ronald agreed and flew out to Ottawa, Canada in April 1997.

The journey to the North Pole was to take Ronald and James through the Northwest Territories, on to Resolute Bay with a stop at Eureka before

flying the final 700 miles to the North Pole. At Resolute Bay, however, the weather began to close in fast and temperatures plummeted. What had begun as a straightforward journey had suddenly turned into a slow and gradual move northwards through territories populated by only a few thousand Inuit.

Ronald and James were stranded at Resolute Bay in a 'white-out', with the wind blowing up ice crystals from the ground making it impossible to see. They could go nowhere.

It was three days before Ronald and James were able to make further progress northwards. Finally they reached Eureka. The weather was not expected to hold out, so a decision was made to make a final dash for the North Pole. Hours later Ronald and James were standing on top of the world. The expedition had been an overwhelming success.

Over a year later Ronald vividly remembers his arctic journey. "It was difficult to readjust to real life," he admits. "At the North Pole there are no appointments, no routine and no rat-race. The region is strange, primitive and merciless. It's not a world where you take chances."



On top of the world

Profiles

Fifty 50 challenge

August 1st 1998: Land Rover site, Solihull, West Midlands – the end and the beginning. As the day dawned on a small group of Rover employees gathered outside the Solihull factory, the tension and excitement heightened as the reality of the next 50 days began to unfold. For the 30-strong group, this day marked the end of 18 months of gruelling training and rigorous planning. The most ambitious motor expedition ever was under way.

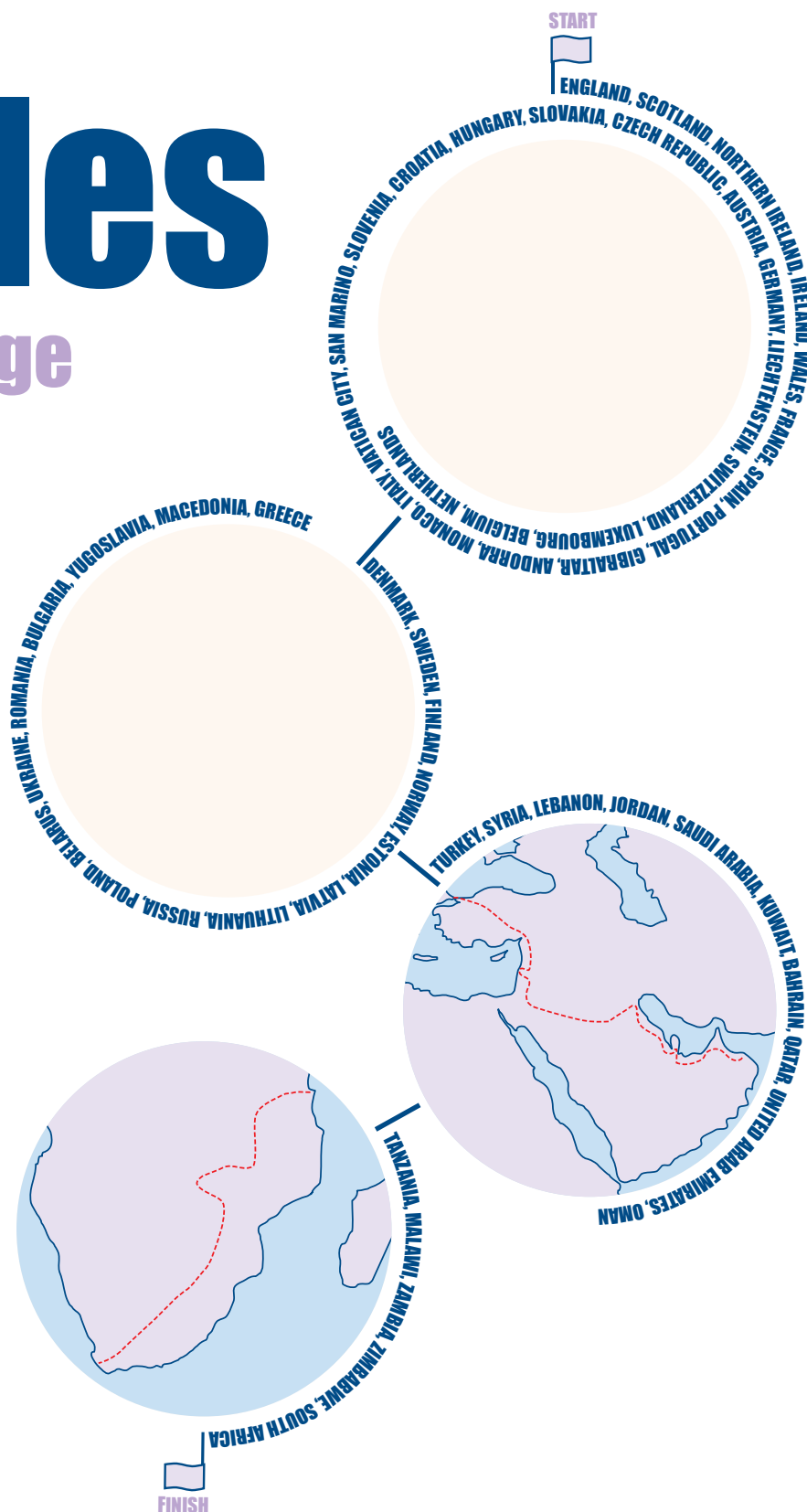
To celebrate 50 years of Land Rover, a team of volunteers had originally planned to drive the 1,000 miles from Lands End to John O'Groats. But Land Rover was not the only organisation celebrating its golden anniversary. It was also the 50th year since the UN declaration of Human Rights. In recognition of this, UNICEF was helping children in war-torn countries who were suffering cruelty and neglect in the aftermath of conflict.

A relationship was struck up between Land Rover and UNICEF. Suddenly the UK drive became merely the project's starting point. The team began to lay plans for an expedition which would take them from Solihull to South Africa via Norway and Eastern Europe. Plans were soon afoot to drive through 50 countries in 50 days raising funds and publicising the work of UNICEF: the 'Fifty 50 Challenge' was born.

Aston graduate Jamie Trigg (1997 BSc Logistics) joined the 'Fifty 50 Challenge' team in October 1997, working chiefly on route-planning and logistics. The journey was split into four legs covering Europe, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Six months later with the route more or less finalised, Jamie's attention switched to coordinating human resources. He was faced with the challenge of fostering a team spirit and ensuring as far as possible that all team members were dedicated and fully contributing to the aims and objectives of the project. "Employees from all departments were welcome to sign up for the expedition, but this was on top of normal work commitments," Jamie explained, "so we lost many of our weekends and free evenings to the rigours of an intensive training programme."

The need for total commitment to the project and the willingness to give up precious free-time acted as a natural selection mechanism. Only those able to withstand the discipline and



"The team settled down to a daily routine of a 6am wake up call to be on the road before 7, but only after the routine vehicle checks."



En route

exhaustion of an expedition across hugely diverse terrains, cultures and political tendencies were chosen.

Jamie and his fellow team members, including Aston graduate James Marsden (1995 MEng Mechanical Engineering), had to prepare themselves for everything that could possibly go

"5,300 miles in eleven days, 21 countries visited and 30 rolls of film shot."

wrong and, more importantly, ensure that a strategy was in place which would allow them to continue the journey if things did not go according to plan. "Of course we had to know what to do

if someone needed first-aid but, on an even more serious level, we had to consider what we would do if we were not allowed entry into a country or if one or all of the team was kidnapped, seriously injured or killed. I have huge files of information on everyone from CVs to allergies and next of kin."

The 'Fifty 50 Challenge' team monitored each stage of the expedition. The drivers were required to report back at pre-planned points. "You never know what might happen or what you might witness en route," warned Jamie who was part of the team driving from Dar-es-Salaam to Cape Town. "It's a long way from the beauty of Norway's fjords, across the blazing deserts of the Middle East and down to the Cape."

Aston University Travel Scholarship

Jamie was able to undertake research for this challenge in South Africa thanks to an Aston University Travel Scholarship. The University considers grant applications from undergraduates and recent first degree graduates who wish to pursue some particular activity which will enhance the lives of themselves and others. Further information about the Travel Scholarship can be obtained from the University.

Jamie Trigg (left) with James Marsden



Profiles

Getting to the art of Aston

The next time you buy a greetings card have a look at the name of the artist – you may be closer to Aston University than you think. The work of 1988 BSc Modern Languages graduate Alison Fennell is now widely available in the high street.

“I was absolutely dumbstruck when I caught sight of a framed print of my sunflowers picture in the window of a branch of a national greetings card chain,” she admits. A wonderful feeling no doubt, but evidence of a tremendous amount of hard work and a sound business sense to realise a childhood ambition.

Born in Merthyr Tydfil, Alison has always shown a keen interest in all things creative. As a child she spent hours surrounded by glue, paper, card and paint and holds up her class prize for a drawing of Pinocchio as one of her earliest achievements. Alison’s talent was encouraged by her grandfather, himself an oil painter, who

Poppies



Sunflowers

would give tips on how to look at a subject carefully in order to draw more realistically.

Despite this strong encouragement, art took a back seat during Alison’s years at secondary school. She became interested in languages and went on to qualify as a teacher. It was not until 1993 at a local art exhibition that she resurrected her childhood passion for art. Here she met teacher Arnold Lowrey who was to become her mentor. It was his encouragement that inspired her to pursue her creative talent.

She describes her style as representational although some of her floral work has a

“In the early 70s I used to love watching Tony Hart and Rolf Harris doing their art programmes and creating amazing pictures with seemingly effortless ease.”

distinctively impressionistic feel: “I am a bit of a chameleon and usually find myself tackling different subjects in different styles. I would hate to have a portfolio of identically rendered paintings varying only in subject matter. That to me is boring. I like to be free to experiment with the medium and express myself however I want.”

This love of open expression brings a dimension of freshness to her work – probably one of the main attractions for international greeting card publishers Beechwood Publications Ltd©. Alison explains that it was no easy task to prepare her portfolio for publication: “It took me a solid month creating new ideas and struggling to work to an unfamiliar paper size. The hard slog was worth it, however, when two of those portfolio designs went into print a few months later.”

Alison Fennell painting with pictures of completed works



“The inspiration behind my paintings is almost always an overwhelming sense of urgency to put down on paper my emotions and thoughts about a subject.”

This is the first step towards Alison’s ambitious career goal to one day own her own gallery. Alison is now concentrating on developing her commission work, and hopes to expand her contacts in the public galleries of Bath, Bristol and London as well as producing more designs for the greetings card market. This autumn she will have had the double satisfaction of a second month long gallery show at “The Makers” in Cardiff as well as seeing her work on the cover of a book distributed by Welsh publishers “Honno”. Alison can be contacted via the Alumni Relations Office.

“I practised on an ironing board left permanently up in the hallway of my flat. This was the only spare working space I had where I could leave everything and come back to it when I felt like it.”

Profiles

A guide to Buckingham Palace

Going to London to see the Queen was no fairy tale for Samantha Jenks (1997 BSc Human Psychology). In June she received her Queen's Guide Award and was invited to the prestigious Young Achievers' Reception at Buckingham Palace.

Samantha's interest in The Guide Association began at the age of seven when she joined her local Brownie pack. Sixteen years and a string of awards later, she is now a Guider in St Paul's Brownies in Hampstead, Birmingham.



With a little help from friends, Samantha carried out an access survey in London.

As a Guide she gained the Baden-Powell Trefoil, the highest award for her age group. This motivated her to accept the challenge of completing the highest achievement possible: The Queen's Guide Award.

Samantha embarked on a programme which was to run for three years, "almost exactly the same time as my undergraduate studies," she points out. Her work involved completing numerous projects in the home, community and overseas. "Some Guides help out with projects abroad," explains

Samantha, "but because I am in a wheelchair that would have been difficult. I decided to collect tools for the

"I've met the Queen, Viscount Linley, actress Julia Sawalha and Mandy Dingle from Emmerdale."

international charity, 'Tools for Self-Reliance', which reconditions old tools and dispatches them overseas. I also embroidered greetings cards, which I sold and raised £300."

Despite the huge amount of dedication needed to complete the Award, Samantha still found time to serve on local committees, including the Birmingham branch of PHAB Camps (Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied), an organisation which provides holiday opportunities for children of all abilities. Since January 1998 she has been working as a Speech Therapy Assistant with the Paediatrics Team of the NBC NHS Trust and is considering returning to education to gain professional qualifications.

In recognition of her commitment to The Guide Association and her work within the local community, Samantha's Division Commissioner nominated her for the Young Achievers' Reception in London. Samantha was one of only five other young people from the Midlands who had the honour of meeting members of the Royal Family.

"Sometimes the workload felt like I was studying for two degrees."

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

Thomas Yates (1955 BSc Mechanical Engineering) is now enjoying retirement after a successful career as Chief Engineer for Lucas Aerospace Engine Systems.

After graduation, **Peter Wells (1958 BSc Engineering)** undertook further research at Bristol University. He is currently working as Chief Physicist for the United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust.

1960s

Janet Roughton (née Bentley: 1964 BSc Pharmacy) is a self employed locum pharmacist in the West Midlands. Janet is also a member of Aston Graduates' Association.



Janet Roughton (bottom row, second from left) and Pharmacy students visit a pharmaceutical manufacturer, 1960

Where are they now?

1960s



Vrahimis Petri

Now married, **Vrahimis Petri (1965 BSc Physics and Mathematics)** has returned to his former school in Cyprus as Senior Mathematics Master. Vrahimis would like to hear from Peter Rock, Colin House, and David Perkins.

Tony Stanley (1966 BSc Chemistry and Zoology) worked as Environmental Manager for the National Rivers Authority until his retirement in 1996. Tony is a JP and a member of his local amateur dramatics association. He is currently working on a production of "An Evening with Gary Lineker".

Alan Barker-Benfield (1967 MSc Production Engineering) now lives and works in Vienna, Austria. He is IT Architect for IBM and his last assignment took him to Switzerland where he assisted a tobacco company in preparing their IT systems for the Year 2000.

James Leach (1967 BSc Engineering) worked for the National Grid Company for 27 years as Public Relations Officer. He is currently a self employed PR Consultant.

Stephen Salt (1968 BSc Production Technology and Management) lives in Kentucky, USA. Stephen has worked for Alcan Sheet Products for 30 years as Engineering and Maintenance Manager. Steve and his wife, Pat, raise Irish setters and compete successfully with them in field trials and hunting tests.



Kelly Hussain, Ibtissam Robertson, Glenys Hussain, Cris Mota Soares, Sandy Robertson (left to right)

1970s

Robert Fradley (1972 BSc Social Sciences) was the first undergraduate to be sponsored by Birmingham Police Force. Now retired, he runs a bed and breakfast in Bath with his wife, Jill.

Malcolm Hawksford (1968 BSc and 1972 PhD Electrical Engineering) is now a Professor at Essex University where he specialises in audio engineering and electronics. He has lectured both at under- and postgraduate levels as well as supervising numerous research students.

Graham Hanson (1974 BSc Combined Honours) currently works for an education foundation in Malaysia.

Having recently left Hope Hospital where she was Director of Pharmacy, **Christine Clark (1975 BSc Pharmacy)** is now a Research Associate at Manchester University.

International student '**Kelly' Hussain (1975 PhD Mechanical Engineering)** is the President and General Manager for Alstar Engineering Ltd, Canada.

Alexander Robertson (1976 PhD Mechanical Engineering) is Director of Mechanical Engineering for Sierra Technologies Inc. Alexander met his wife, Ibtissam Al-Daimerlani, at Aston. They now live in New York with their daughter, Nadia.

Nick Harris (1976 BSc Chemistry) is a Management Consultant for Pera. He would like to say, "Hello," to all Chemistry graduates of 1976.

Wallace Wilson (1976 BSc Behavioural Science) works for the Legal Aid Board as Group Duty Solicitor and Franchise Manager. Wallace is also a dedicated supporter of Newcastle United!

Cris Mota Soares (1977 PhD Mechanical Engineering) is Associate Professor of the Mechanical Engineering Department at the Technical University of Lisbon, Portugal.

John Claxton (1978 BSc Civil Engineering) studied for a postgraduate diploma in Health and Safety at Aston in 1979. He is now a Health and Safety Executive inspecting the public utilities, engineering and construction sites.

Tina Morris (1979 BSc French and German) is Head of Events for Motivforce Group Plc.

now?

Christina Wheeler (née Parkhouse: 1979 BSc Computer Science and French) worked in the IT industry for many years after graduation. A full time mother until recently; she is now training to be a GNVQ and A level Computer Science teacher.

1980s

Stephen Powell (1980 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) is currently Distribution Planning Manager for Argos.

Stephen Humphries (1981 BSc Political Studies and Business Administration) moved to Sydney, Australia in 1987. After 3 years in Papua New Guinea, Stephen moved to New South Wales, Australia where he is a partner with Price Waterhouse Coopers.

Christopher Jackson (1981 BSc Transport and Business Administration) is Deputy Editor for Railway Gazette International.

Nigel Woodcock (1982 MSc Public Sector Management) is Finance Director at Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust.

Kwong Ching Lee (1985 BSc Mechanical Engineering) is working as a professional Mechanical Engineer at the Baptist University in Hong Kong. He would like to hear from his good friend Jonathan Virgil Cox of the same year.

Annette Judges (née Penman: 1985 MSc Personnel Management) is Head of Human Resources for the Northern Birmingham Mental Health NHS trust.

Peter Munro (1985 MSc Public Sector Management) works for the Department of Health as a Social Services Inspector.

Mark Wright (1985 BSc Physics) is a partner with the tour operator, Majestic Tours.

Rosemary Arrowsmith-Oliver (1987 MSc Personnel Management) is a Local Government Manager in the Borough of Enfield, London.

Mark Pearson (1987 BSc Business Administration and German) is an Associate Partner of Andersen Consulting.

Elizabeth Dickinson (née Hornabrook: 1988 BSc Society and Government and Business Administration) worked for academic publishing companies as Marketing Manager after graduation. Elizabeth is now part time proof-reader and full time mother to fourteen month old Jake.

Joanne Fairhurst (née Mayor: 1988 BSc Human Psychology) is IT Training Manager with Price Waterhouse Coopers in Hong Kong.

Guy Williams (1988 BSc Business Administration and French) is Group Finance Director for the Welsh Rugby Union. During his Aston days, Guy was also a member of the Guild Rugby Club.

Dawn Anderson (née Purselove: 1989 Psychology and Business Administration) is Business Manager for Nottingham City Hospital NHS Trust. Dawn is responsible for coordinating national and international training courses.

Steve Richardson (1989 PhD Geological Science) joined British Nuclear Fuels Plc at Sellafield. As a Senior Research Associate and Chartered Chemist, Steve's work has been related to operating the plant. He would like to get in touch with other geology postgraduates.



Kwong Ching Lee with daughters Jane (right) and Judith

The following people are no longer in touch with the Alumni Relations Office. If you know of their whereabouts, please contact us.

Tessa Avery
(1997 MSc Personnel Management and Business Administration)

Andrew Brumley
(1992 BEng Mechanical Engineering)

Christopher Chileshe
(1996 PhD Mechanical Engineering)

Matthew Crummack
(1993 BSc International Business and French)

Brent Ellis
(1988 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

David Hatch
(1993 BSc Pharmacy)

Stuart Henderson
(1986 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

Keith Heppenstall
(1986 BSc Energy Technology)

Andrew Hicks
(1988 BEng Mechanical Engineering)

Vanessa Holden
(1985 BSc Mathematics)

Matthew Lintern
(1996 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Christopher Lowe
(1997 BSc Computing Science)

Richard Nutt
(1997 MEng Chemical Engineering)

Amanda Roxburgh (née Sawyer)
(1993 BSc International Business and German)

Anne Sanchez
(1996 MSc Personnel Management and Business Administration)

Where are they now?

1990s



Robert Lee Aston

Susan Mowse (1990 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) has recently been promoted to Marketing Manager for TMS International Ltd.

Marc Garrett (1991 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) is Branch Manager of car sales company MJ Autogroup Plc.

Stephen Hills (1991 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) is Second Officer and Deck Navigator aboard ships belonging to the Coflexip Stena Offshore Group. "Apart from travelling all over the world, the best thing about my way of life is the six months leave!" admits Steve.

Claire Butler (née Benton: 1992 BSc International Business and German) works for Bass Brewers as Marketing Communications Manager.

Paul Jackson (1992 BSc Business Administration and Mathematics) is Branch Manager for Newey and Eyre.

Tina Kochhar (1992 BSc International Business and German) is Fleet Business Manager with the Ford Motor Company.

Sara Reeve (1992 BSc Ergonomics and Computer Science) works for University Hospital, Lewisham as Clinical Audit Manager. Sara would like to say, "Hello," to all who know her from her Aston days.

Aston graduates **Kerry Glover** (1994 Managerial and Administrative Studies) and **Nick Elton** (1993 BSc Computer Science) are getting married next year. Kerry is Resourcing Manager for Railtrack Great Western and Nick is a Police Officer with Surrey police.

Faith Carter (1994 PhD Mechanical Engineering) is back in England working as a Network Forecasting Analyst for Orange.

Mike Freeman (1994 PhD Management) is a lecturer and also writes for the professional press.

Kate Lovegrove (née Hatherill: 1994 BSc Business Administration and German) is Marketing Communications Specialist for Creative Labs (UK) Ltd.

Carol Toomer (1993 PhD Pharmacy) works for the Imperial College Medical School as Research Assistant in the Dermatology department.



Sanrupt Misra and Mike Freeman

Rachel Cowburn (1995 BSc French and German) worked in Brussels for Glenys Kinnock MEP after graduation. She completed a traineeship in the European Commission, and now works as Parliamentary Research Assistant for Chris Pond MP.

Pan European Utilities Analyst **Colin Stone** (BSc 1995 Mathematics and Computer Science), is currently working for BT Alex Brown International, London.

Robert Lee Aston (1996 PhD Civil Engineering) lives in Georgia, USA. He is a practising attorney at law, specialising in mining and environmental law.

Nomaan Bin Bashir (1997 MSc Marketing Management) is Corporate Accounts Manager for Cable and Wireless, Pakistan.

Julie Richardson (1997 BSc Applied Chemistry) is a nuclear plant chemist and has recently moved to Anglesea.

John 'Ted' Worth (1997 MSc Teaching English) is Director of an English school in Greece. He was recently elected Treasurer of TESOL, Greece.

Looking for someone from Aston?

Contact the Alumni Relations Office.

If we have a current address, you will be invited to write a letter. We will pass on your letter 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.



Claire and Piers McLeish



Michelle and Martyn Styles

Weddings



Gareth and Sharon O'Leary

Gareth and Sharon (née Sulley) O'Leary married in August 1996. They are both 1993 Pharmacy graduates.

1993 BSc International Business and Modern Languages graduates **Claire Buchanan and Piers McLeish**, married in September 1994. Claire is currently Marketing Analyst at Jungheinrich (GB) Ltd, and Piers is Systems Development Manager for MBNA International Bank in Chester.

Michelle (née McConville) (1988 BSc Pharmacy) and **Martyn Styles** (1987 BSc Society and Government and Public Policy) married in June 1992. Michelle is Head of Information Services at the National Pharmaceutical Association and has appeared on the BBC several times representing the NPA. Martyn is Computer Networks Manager of a corporate services company. They are expecting their first child in March next year.

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 the whereabouts of any of the following?

Michael Archer (1986 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Michael Coles (1992 MSc Telecommunications Technology)

Michael Crossley (1980 BSc Civil Engineering)

Louise Davis (née Diggle) (1979 BSc Modern Languages)

George English (1976 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Graham Fosh (1981 BSc Mathematics and Computer Science)

Ian Fryer (1987 BEng Civil Engineering)

Anthony Gavin (1973 BSc Combined Honours)

Sarah Hall (1974 BSc Chemistry and Physics)

Steve Hill (1974 BSc Biology and Chemistry)

Michelle Jordan (1988 BSc Pharmacy)

Simon Kerrich (1986 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Richard Lavelle (1980 BSc Civil Engineering)

Doug Learmonth (1976 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Nicolette Obertelli (1974 BSc Combined Honours)

Richard Potter (1989 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Dewi Powell (1995 BSc Chemical Engineering with European Studies)

Adrian Raybould (1980 BSc Civil Engineering)

Stephen Welch (1991 MSc Telecommunications Technology)

Justin Williams (1995 BEng Chemical Engineering)

'Talkback'

AGA

Prize-winner

Each year AGA awards a prize to a graduate who has made a significant contribution to the life of the University. The 1998 prize was awarded to Anthony Ellison (1997 BSc International Business and German).

Anthony contributed enormously to the activities of the Students' Guild. He was RAG Officer in his second year and was responsible for coordinating events which raised £20,000 for charity. He was also a Guild Counsellor and IBML Course Representative. Anthony's love of skiing led him to become Captain of Aston's Ski Club and, under his leadership, Aston won a place in the National University Finals for the first time. Prior to studying at Aston, Anthony was himself a member of the British Ski Team.

Sir Adrian Cadbury (left) presents the AGA Prize to Anthony Ellison

Dear AGA Members

As a newcomer to AGA, I have become aware of a need for the Association to become more dynamic and adopt a pro-active approach to serving its membership. I hope to see AGA working closely with the Alumni Relations Office with the aim of improving services and benefits for both graduates and students of Aston University. This, I am certain, will attract more members and help the Alumni Relations Office and the Committee to further enhance the activities of AGA.

An additional point is that the University wishes for AGA to assist the Alumni Relations Office in establishing regional branches throughout the world. These branches will help develop professional networking opportunities amongst Aston graduates as well as offering a social function. The Alumni Relations Office has received specific requests from graduates in Canada, France, Hong Kong, Pakistan and Singapore to set up groups. I would encourage any graduate living in these areas to contact the Alumni Relations Office if they are interested in supporting this venture.

I look forward to your continued support.

Philip Taylor

Philip Taylor (1996 MBA)
Vice-Chairman of AGA



Noticeboard

Past AGA Chairman, Lawrence Innis (1989 MSc Public Sector Management) was appointed by the Secretary of State for Health as a Non-Executive Director of Solihull National Health Care Trust.

John Evans is no longer email contact for AGA members. Correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary or can be sent via the Alumni Relations Office for forwarding.

The Social Secretary is currently finalising details of another visit to the BBC at Pebble Mill for those unable to join the group last time.

The last issue of Apex acknowledged AGA's generous donation to the commemorative clock on the face of the South Wing. Jenny Martin comments, "Sitting at the Tilton Road End watching Birmingham City Football Club beat Manchester United in a pre-season friendly match a few weeks ago, I found myself admiring the city skyline silhouetted by the setting sun. One of the most impressive buildings on the skyline is without doubt Aston University Main Building with the South Wing clock."

Report of the year

March

The success of the partnership between the University, the city of Birmingham and Lloyds Bank was evident on a recent visit to the Science Park. There has been extensive development work in the area which has changed it into a thriving business centre for small hi-tech companies

May

The AGM was held on 15 May 1998. The discussion addressed the ongoing issues of how AGA is to move forward into the next millennium. The AGM was followed by the ever-tasteful cheese and wine party! As usual there was an excellent selection of fine wines and cheeses and thanks must be given to all those who helped with the organisation of the event.

June

Birmingham can lay claim to being the birthplace of many influential people. Amongst these are Matthew Boulton and James Watt who, with others, contributed much to manufacturing and scientific investigation in the area. As a follow-up to the recent visit to Soho House, AGA members joined up with the University of Birmingham's Guild of Graduates to hear Dr Brian Giles' lecture on the recording of local weather phenomenon over the last 100 years. Next year's lecture will be organised by AGA – all suggestions gratefully received.

July

Petanque Challenge

There was a time when AGA could boast a close liaison with the British Petanque Association having amongst its membership stars of the international circuit. The courts at Kings Heath, once the site for many gruelling matches played out to the bitter end are now overgrown with weeds. With such a reputation to maintain, AGA felt obliged to accept a recent challenge from the Hints Petanque Club to a match on their village court. Hints Petanque club are to be congratulated for supplying the rule book, boules, cochonin and refreshments in a vain attempt to improve their chances. Nonetheless, AGA team members rose to the occasion in magnificent fashion and won the contest with ease.

Reunions

Reunions are a great time to catch up with friends and enjoy being together with your year group again. The Alumni Relations Office can help you organise a reunion or publicise your event in Apex. Here is a taste of what has been happening over the past few months.

IBML 93 Reunion Dinner

To celebrate five years since their graduation, 40 International Business and Modern Languages graduates and guests returned to Aston on September 5th. The evening was the initiative of Nick Baldwin (1993 BSc IBML German) who contacted the Alumni Relations Office back in June to discuss the possibility of organising a reunion for his year group. "The initial thought of organising a five year reunion filled me with dread. How many people would I be able to track down? Would they want to come? And how big would my phone bill be? However, a single call to the Alumni Relations Office solved all my problems. They were totally geared up to organise our reunion and they were raring to go!"



IBML93 Reunion Dinner

"The initial thought of organising a five year reunion filled me with dread."

1978 Environmental Health

1978 graduates of Environmental Health celebrated their 20 years in style. "We had a great meal, lots to drink and a 'bop' to the old songs of the 70s! We intend to have a 25 year reunion in 2003," said Les Poultney (1978 BSc Environmental Health).

Front seated left to right: Sue Schofield (née Hockey) Robin Barnes and children, Daphne Arnold (née Roger). Rear standing left to right: Les Poultney, Steve Dudley, Judy Carter, Sue Hibbert (née Merrington), Graham Roberts, Bob Hatfield, Sue Paull (née Best), John Gee, John Zarins, Richard Farr, Dave Dainty, Derek Piekarczyk and Steve Sumner.



1978 Environmental Health

IHD/TT/Alvey Scheme

Drs Alastair Cochran and Derek Hickson (tutors) were joined by Drs David Newey, Alastair Purves, Faith Carter, Clive Hickman, Paul Crane, Rosanne Wrench, Andrew Carruthers, Alan Pilkington, Cedric Rodrigues and Michael Wood with their

families. The reunion was held in the Senior Common Room and gave everyone the opportunity to catch up on news. The next reunion is planned for March 2000 and details can be obtained from Dr Mike Wood.



IHD/TT/Alvey Scheme
Biannual Reunion

Answers to the picture quiz in issue one

1. The tree was donated to the University by AGA in the 1970s.
2. The Vauxhall Dining Centre photograph dates from 1978.
3. The Sacks of Potatoes, originally a potato factory, has been at Gosta Green for 105 years.
4. The 19th Century water trough is now located near the Students' Guild.
5. This building was the former Department of Geology.

Aston University gifts



To order your Aston University gifts, please complete the order form below and send it to: The Alumni Relations Office, Aston University, Aston Triangle, Birmingham B4 7ET, England. All prices include VAT @17.5%. Postage and packing extra. Please add per item: £2.00 UK and Europe; £3.00 Outside Europe.



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Leather wallet and credit card holder	12.00		
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Mug (navy)	3.00		
The Origin and Development of Aston University 1895-1996. Written by Professor George Parker (hardback)	19.99		
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Name at Aston if different _____

Degree and subject studied _____

_____ **Year of award** _____

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