

apex

from our own correspondent

Laura Jones

From MBA to MOBO p4

Merchandising Man Utd p6


ASTON
UNIVERSITY

you must remember this...



Centre for the Arts, 1970s

The Centre for the Arts was established in the early 1970s. It was housed in the Gosta Green building from where some of the very first television transmissions were broadcast in the 1940s. When the BBC moved to the regional broadcasting centre at Pebble Mill, the building was taken over by the University. In the 1970s, for an annual outlay of 25p, members could enjoy events, training courses, ticket reductions, a regular craft market, music, theatre and art classes. By the late 1980s, the Triangle Cinema was well known throughout the Midlands as a venue for arthouse and low budget British and European films. Subsequently the building became home to Dillon's and then Waterstone's bookshops.



Contents

Special thanks go to everyone who contributed to this issue 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.

Apex is also available via our website in html or pdf formats, but please contact us if you experience any difficulties accessing our publication.

How to contact the Alumni Relations Office:

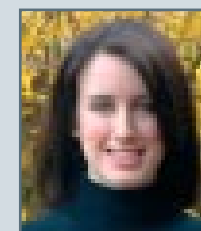
www.aston.ac.uk/alumni
alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk
 T +44 (0)121 359 3611
 F +44 (0)121 359 4664
 Alumni Relations Office,
 Aston University, Aston Triangle,
 Birmingham, B4 7ET, UK

Designed by Linney Design
Printed by Linney Print

Photo credits:
Graduation 2003 courtesy of Ed Moss
and Huw Meredith, Laura Jones in the studio
p3, p14-15 copyright bbc/ariel



Sarah Pymm
Alumni Relations Officer



Caroline Hidson
Alumni Relations Assistant

Features

From MBA to MOBO	4
Merchandising to the masses	6
Floyd on paint	10
From our own correspondent	14

Regulars

You must remember this	2
Profile on...	8
Where are they now?	24
Reunions	29
AGA	30
In-Touch	31
Gifts	32

News

Engineering & Applied Science	16
Many parts profit from polymer funding	
Aston Business School	17
ABS chance to showcase Birmingham Putnam presentation	
Life & Health Sciences	18
Clean space is out of this world	
Languages & European Studies	19
Building on links with schools	
New citizenship and culture joint degree	
Language Studies Unit	20
ProDD symposium	
New LSU alumni network	
Combined Honours	21
New research to support development	
An international dimension	

Plus

All the latest news from the Alumni Relations Office, the Students' Guild and the Societies and Sports Clubs

Ninder Johal (1986 MBA) started his career post-Aston with top companies such as GEC and Lucas, working latterly as a Management Consultant. But his passion for music was to lead him in another direction and in 1993 he started his own record company, Nachural Records. After ten years of hard work, picking up the 1997 Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Young Asian Business Person Award en route, Nachural Records had its first success in January 2003 when the first ever bhangra track to enter the UK charts – ‘Munde to Bache’ by Panjabi MC – went in at number five. The record’s subsequent success worldwide has secured the artist’s nomination for this year’s MOBO awards and Nachural Records will be there to celebrate.

From MBA to MOBO



“All I could think was ‘yes!’ Nachural Records has arrived!” explained Ninder on hearing about the success of the track. “I had waited ten years to see this happen and I had achieved my ambition of taking a non-English language track into the charts. To see it get to the top five in the UK, and for it go on to achieve success in the European market, taking the number one slot in no less than seven countries, has been incredible. The track has even beaten established acts such as Ronan Keating, Liberty X and Robbie Williams. It has also achieved cult status in the ‘unbreakable’ US. It’s been like a dream come true.”

But why did Ninder give up a successful career to start a record company when there were no guarantees of success? “I have always had a strong interest in music and it was during my time at Lucas that I set up my own bhangra band, Achanak, which plays Asian dance music similar to that of Panjabi MC. Whilst working at Lucas as a Management Consultant was fantastic, the band was doing so well that I couldn’t be in two places at once. I was also newly married and I wasn’t in a position to travel away for long periods of time, as required by my job. I had to decide what to do and, with the MBA having introduced me to the idea of entrepreneurship, I decided to take the plunge and Nachural Records was born. In fact, Panjabi MC was one of my first clients to be signed – he sought out the label looking for a contract.”

And were there any times in the last ten years that Ninder had felt like giving up? “Yes, there were. The mid-nineties were really hard with mounting losses. Cash flow became quite severe. Sometimes I wondered why I had given up the security of my job at Lucas, but my faith in music kept me going. My commitment

to operating in a niche market, with heavy emphasis on production and promotion paid off, and in classic MBA jargon, the label will continue to stick to its core competencies or ‘stick to the knitting’ of signing new Asian talent in Asian dance music. Projects are now under way to replicate the success of Panjabi MC.”

And to culminate a great year, Ninder has entered the top 20 of the world’s most successful A&R directors and has just been awarded two awards from the Black Country Chamber of Commerce for Personal Achievement and Business of the Year for Sandwell 2003. He also acts as a mentor for new businesses and has just been appointed Head of the Business School at Matthew Boulton College. “I believe in management education and I’d like to play a role in Matthew Boulton in spreading the word.” It seems Ninder’s words are well worth listening to.

Ninder has entered the top 20 of the world’s most successful A&R directors and has just been awarded two awards from the Black Country Chamber of Commerce for Personal Achievement and Business of the Year for Sandwell 2003.

Midlands has Graduate Advantage

A new initiative which aims to attract and retain graduates in the Midlands was launched at Aston in June. Jill Woodman, Project Manager, introduces the project to Apex readers.

Graduate Advantage is a new initiative in the West Midlands supported by the local regional development agency, Advantage West Midlands (AWM). The project aims to improve graduate retention in the area and boost the local economy.

“It will be a two-pronged attack,” commented Jill. “We will be trying to increase the numbers of graduate jobs in the area by working with local companies, whilst at the same time promoting the region to graduates as an attractive place to make a career after their degree has finished.”

Graduate Advantage is backed by a consortium of the careers services of the region’s universities and colleges, giving the project direct access to current students and finalists. The project team is based at Aston but will be working with employers and careers services across the region.

The idea for the project in its final form came from the combined ideas of the careers services in the region, which recognised the need for a collaborative approach to improving the employment prospects for graduates wanting to settle in the West Midlands. Hopefully it will answer the perennial question heard by careers advisers: “But how can I find a job in the West Midlands?” Now the answer is: “Visit the Graduate Advantage website.”

www.graduateadvantage.co.uk offers a wealth of information about the West Midlands and its labour market. There is an online vacancy service where recent graduates can register their details for potential employers to browse, or apply for specific advertised vacancies. For those looking for a little more support in their first job, the Graduate Placement Programme offers projects of six to nine months, mostly with smaller companies, combined with an individual training programme co-ordinated by the project team to aid professional development.

Graduates already in employment may find the project can help their current employer too, as companies can benefit from free advertising of vacancies online. In addition, employers using the Graduate Placement Programme receive help and advice to set up the project and an allowance towards training costs. There is also a Vacation Placement Programme which helps employers find a current student to undertake a summer project of up to 12 weeks, with help in preparing the project and a financial subsidy for smaller businesses.

The project is supported by AWM until the end of December 2007, which gives plenty of time for it to become established as a leader in graduate recruitment in the West Midlands. After that, the consortium will be seeking further funding to take the project forward, so that both companies and graduates can continue to benefit from its services.

The project website at www.graduateadvantage.co.uk holds more details of the services available, with sections on the site aimed at both employers and graduates. For further details, contact enquiries@graduateadvantage.co.uk



A collaborative approach to improving employment prospects for graduates in the West Midlands.



Nowhere can you see such loyalty to a sport than amongst supporters of Britain's premier league football clubs. Football is big business and in terms of followers, Manchester United is streets ahead with an estimated 53 million fans worldwide. With Old Trafford only capable of holding 68,000 people, you might question how the most famous football team in the world maintains the loyalty of fans that may never get the chance to watch their team play. Tom Howgate (1991 BSc French and Psychology), the Club's Head of Licensing, tells us how merchandising is one way of reaching out to the masses.



Merchandising to the masses

Manchester United used to be a self-sourcing business until 2000, when it decided to transform its merchandising operation into a licensing one. Tom is now responsible for licensing Manchester United's Intellectual Property (IP), primarily trademarks and copyrights, to manufacturers around the world eager to use the logo on everything from footballs to bedspreads – though they don't always get their own way! "It's my job to ensure that we only give out licences for products in-keeping with the brand values and standards of the Club. A committee meets each month to make decisions on offers we have had. And you wouldn't believe some of them. We've had companies wanting to put the logo on anything from cat-flaps and coffins to kettles and can openers!"

So, what is the aim of the licensing programme? "It's a way for us to communicate with the Club's fans. As only 5% of fans will get the chance to visit Old Trafford we have to bridge that gap and create touch points with, for example, television, the Internet, soccer schools and stores. We have to develop great products and services representative of the excellence of the Club." Tom is keen to emphasise that they are aware that the Club started well before sophisticated theories about merchandising and branding. They are therefore cautious when approaching new markets, one of which includes China. Tom explains: "Here we will go in slowly, quite possibly starting with a football partnership at grass roots level. I don't see us with 50 stores straight away. The same happened in the US where the team played three friendlies on a pre-season tour this July, hosting children's soccer camps and coaching seminars along the way."

The biggest market after Europe is Asia, where an estimated 20 million fans reside. Manchester United is currently looking for licensees in China and Hong Kong. At the moment Asia is served by three licensing partners, covering Japan, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia, but it is hoped that the combined names of Manchester United and Nike – who took over the club's worldwide clothing and football kit merchandising operation in August 2002 – will have the prestige to be able to tap into further previously untouched overseas markets.

"What we look for in a licensing partner is one who is capable of developing products of great quality with strong distribution, proven sales and marketing skills and all-round experience. We have a valuable IP to protect and we have suffered just like any other prestige mark from counterfeiting, particularly in Asia, though this is something we intend to address in the future."

And will the sale of David Beckham to Real Madrid affect future sales, especially in Asia where he is hailed an icon? "It would be naive to say it won't have any impact, but we have so much tradition behind the club that any losses will certainly not run into the millions. We are secure enough to continue our work. We are always careful not to exploit the players over the team and we apply a three player rule to our products so that a player will not appear on a licensed product without at least two of his team mates."

And finally, which football team does Tom support – surely it must be Manchester United? "Well, I hate to say it, but it's Sheffield Wednesday. The club is currently toiling two divisions below Manchester United though so I have no problem cheering them both on."

Do you know an Aston alumnus/alumna whose outstanding contribution to society or community should be recognised? Nominate someone for the new Alumni Recognition Award and join the University in celebrating the contribution our alumni make to society.

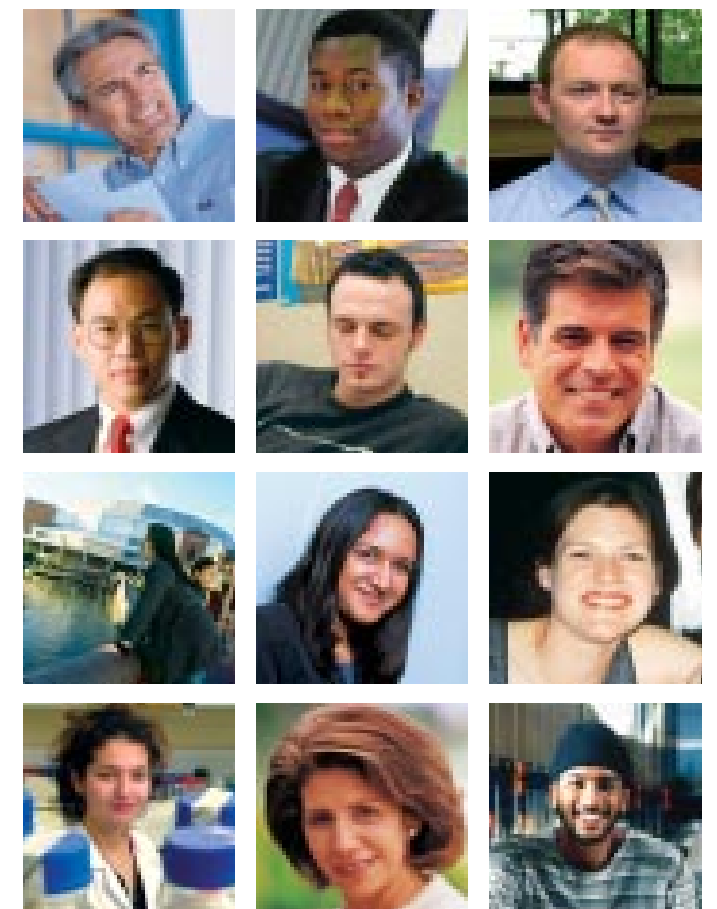
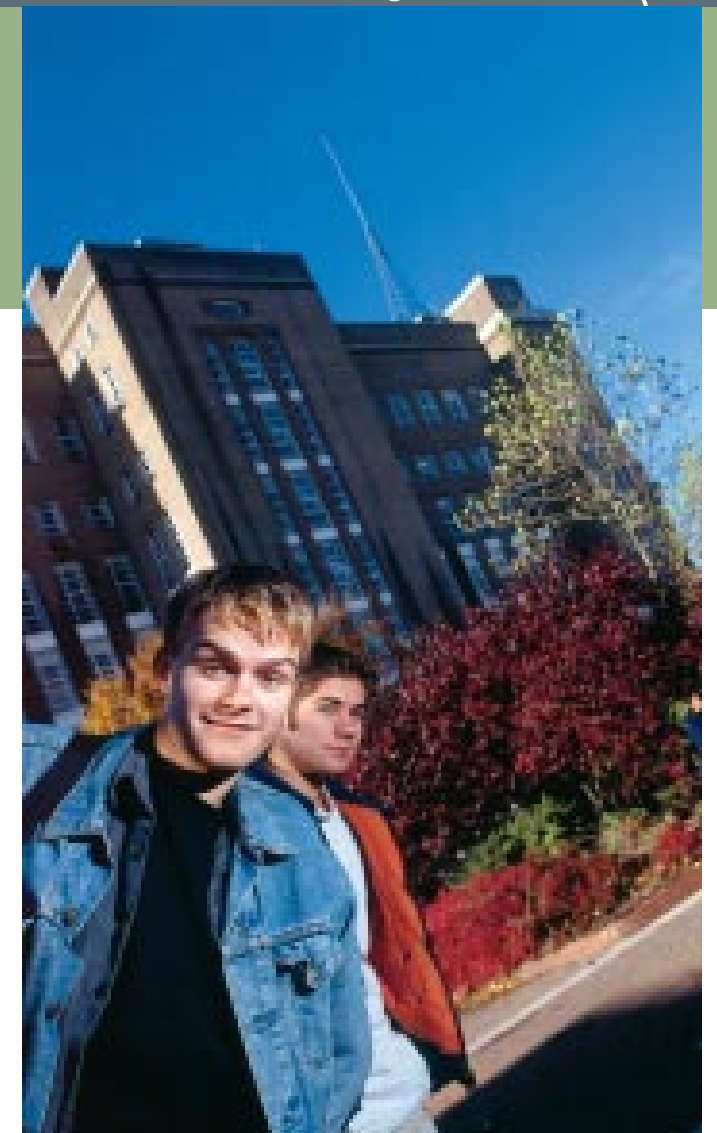
The Alumni Recognition Award

Aston alumni are high achievers with many going on to become very successful individuals in a number of diverse areas. Many voluntarily devote considerable time and effort to a passion close to their hearts and it is this commitment that we are proud to recognise in our alumni by way of the prestigious Alumni Recognition Award.

The Vice-Chancellor will present the Alumni Recognition Award at the University's Graduation Dinner to a former student of Aston University who has contributed something of significant value to society or community. A panel of judges will assess each entry and make an award based on the impact of the contribution to society or community, the level of involvement required and the level of commitment given to the outcomes.

Anyone can nominate a former student for this award (as long as permission has been granted). Nominations require a statement of the nominee's involvement and commitment, along with details of two people who can support the nomination. We have put together an information pack with further details on the award and how it will be judged. This information can be found on the website (www.aston.ac.uk/alumni) or you can contact the Alumni Relations Office directly if you would like us to send the information out to you.

We are always delighted and proud to hear about how our graduates are contributing to many projects and initiatives which transform the lives of others. We invite you to spread the word and join us in celebrating the achievements of Aston alumni.



Profile on...

Dr Christina Schäffner

Alumni of the School of Languages & European Studies will no doubt recognise Dr Christina Schäffner, senior lecturer in Translation Studies and German and Director of Postgraduate Programmes. Apex joined her over coffee to find out a little more about her and how she found herself working at Aston, which is recognised as one of the UK's leading centres for Translation Studies.

Christina admits to a passion for a research challenge and how this was a driving force behind her decision to embark straightaway on a PhD at Leipzig University after completing her undergraduate studies in English and Russian. As a PhD student, Christina became involved in teaching English, translation theory and practice and interpreting on Leipzig's translator training programme.

Schlotheim is her home – her parents still live there – but her professional career centred on Leipzig. After completing her PhD she became teaching assistant at the University and then went on to a research position at the Saxon Academy of Arts and Sciences.

When quizzed on her decision to come to the UK and work at Aston, she will admit to it being rather by coincidence. A research vacancy caught her eye and she believed she fitted the bill perfectly and applied. Her only previous visit to the UK was in 1980 – coming from East Germany meant she couldn't travel freely. It was a result of German unification that a career outside of Germany became a possibility and she opted for the UK given that she had a degree in English.

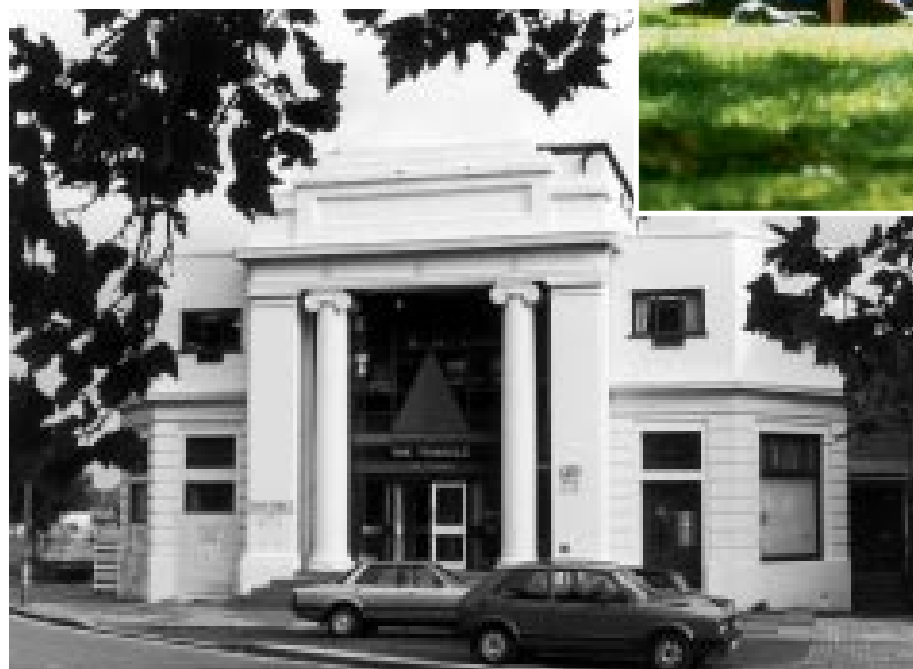
Her specialist research areas are translation studies (especially political texts in translation), political discourse analysis, translator training and metaphor research. Since 1998 she has been Secretary General of the European Society for Translation Studies (EST) and she has an impressive list of publications under her belt.

In what must be a rather busy academic life, we wondered if she had time for anything else: regular concerts at Birmingham Symphony Hall, theatre, cinema, reading, but not quite enough time to travel as much as she would like to.



Christina Schäffner

Profile on... will be a regular column in Apex. Let us know if you'd like to catch up with one of your former lecturers.



What's in your album?

'Capture Aston: the great digital picture campaign!'

"Those were the days my friend," goes the old ditty. And you thought they'd never end. Do they still live on in your photo album?

The Alumni Relations Office is embarking upon its most adventurous project yet – to create a digital picture library of life at Aston. Here's your chance to be involved in 'Capture Aston: the great digital picture campaign!'

Why?

Good question, but lots of reasons. We're always searching for photos to use as illustrations for reunions, in publications and on page two of Apex and, as a bit of fun, we're giving you an excuse to go hunting through all those boxes in the attic – you never know what you might find!

What are we looking for?

Pictures that capture your best moments and treasured memories of life at University. Pictures that sum up an event, the campus, a special occasion, a landmark in history, or simply your student life at Aston with all its fun and frolics, tears and dreams.

How to be involved in 'Capture Aston: the great digital picture campaign'.

Help us create a digital picture library by sending us either high resolution scans (250-300dpi) or original photos which we will scan and return to you. You can send us as many photos as you wish using our

freepost address (see below). Remember to clearly supply your own name and address or email with your photo(s) and an indication of what the image is, when it was taken and point out any people, places or landmarks.



Competition time

All pictures or images we receive will be entered into a competition. We've got a prize of £50 worth of gift vouchers from Jessops, Europe's leading specialist photographic retailer, to award to one photo which 'best captures the essence of life on campus at the time the picture was taken' (i.e. 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s). With a network of over 240 stores selling a comprehensive range of cameras, camcorders, digital cameras, binoculars and accessories, Jessops has something for everyone. So, if you'd like to be in with a chance of winning, send your photo(s) before noon on 31 December 2003 to:

Alumni Relations Office
Aston University
Freepost BM2599/13
Birmingham
B4 6BR

If posting from overseas, please use stamps.

Lights! Camera! Action!
Go hunt out your snaps.

Entries should be sent to the Alumni Relations Office or alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk by noon on 31 December 2003. The competition is open to graduates of Aston University and its predecessor institutions. Competition entry is not obligatory and if you do not wish to enter the competition, please indicate this when you send in your photos. By sending in your pictures you agree for us to catalogue and store them digitally in accordance with the Data Protection Act and use them in University publications and on the website. For more details and terms and conditions contact the Alumni Relations Office or visit www.aston.ac.uk/alumni and follow the links.

Living at the top of a tower with a stunning view out over the lauze rooftops and beyond, right into the deep heart of rural France, can only be a source of inspiration for any artist. But this is also home for painter Adrian Kenyon (1984 BSc Geological Sciences) whose friends, he explains, will affectionately remember him as 'Floyd'. Apex visits the Dordogne to find out more about Adrian's art and his life in France.



Floyd on paint



Rue des consuls, not far from the bronze geese, nestling amidst the hustle and bustle of market crowds and summer street entertainers is one of Sarlat's resident *artiste peintres*. Since 1997, Adrian, with his easel, has been a familiar sight to locals and tourists alike as crowds gather to watch the transformation of blank canvas into the vibrant colours of a fantasy landscape or the lifelike detail of wildlife paintings.

"I began painting during a period of unemployment in 1985," explains Adrian. "Initially it was an escape from reality (sometimes I think it still is). The first thing I drew was more like a sign than a painting which said 'life is just a fluke' in copper-plate lettering with a decorative border. In a way it was an attempt to hang on to an idea that I had kept all my life. Through studying geology I had become a devout Darwinist who would scoff at the idea of an alternative explanation to the appearance of life and its consequent evolution – famous last words as they say." Adrian hung the sign on his wall immediately thinking he could do better.

Adrian seized the challenge he had set himself and, to help him learn his technique, began by copying images he

liked. In at the deep end, he admits to sometimes biting off more than he could chew, but these early days were a time of learning and improvement. He soon realised he had an incredibly steady hand and very good close-up vision – good attributes for small-scale studies. "I'm left-handed and proud of it!" he retorts. It comes as no surprise, therefore, to learn that miniatures were a natural part of his early work.

"I laboured and became a competent copyist – from paintings to photographs – a quantum leap rather than a learning curve," he recalls. "I found that if I 'forgot' I was copying a bird, for example, and I just concentrated on the individual shapes and colours that make up the bird, then, at the end of the day, hey presto! A bird! This was a simple, but major, turning point in my life as an artist."

Adrian now seeks inspiration for his original work in many areas from the idea that God really exists, nature, loud and powerful music from Debussy to Techno, finding a meaningful existence and overcoming depression to simply wanting to improve as a painter and possibly achieving fame.

His work is characterised by strong colour and attention to detail, with thin glazes building up to the desired effect. His studies take on what he describes as 'a hyper-realistic technique' and his subjects vary across themes such as still-life and

landscapes, animals and buildings and trains and motorbikes. "Recently all my energy is going into one canvas," Adrian explains. "A criticism of 21st-century politico-economic policy of raping the earth in the name of profit."

When quizzed on artistic influences on his work, he stresses his own style has evolved over time. But he also acknowledges influential artists such as Roger Dean, Salvador Dali, Jérôme Bosch and Albrecht Dürer amongst others. Although largely self-taught, Adrian has also sought professional guidance and has studied under well-known German artist, Herdin Radtke, who specialises in painting in the style of the old masters. This introduced Adrian to the world of oil painting, currently his preferred medium of expression.

With an ever-growing clientèle who commission his paintings to take home to Europe, Australia, Japan and America and a collection of his own private exhibitions in Sarlat, Gourdon, La Rochelle, Angoulême and the UK, Adrian's future as a successful artist is assured. But his heart and home lie in Sarlat, the place he describes as a 'medieval jewel', the capital of the Périgord Noir where his local reputation is fuelled by his regular appearances in the market place, not far from the bronze geese.

Alumni Advantage

The Alumni Relations Office has negotiated a range of discounts and promotions both on and off the campus for alumni

Off-campus discounts

Choice Hotels are offering 10% off when you stay in one of their hotels across Europe or the USA. Call 0800 44 44 44 to request a brochure or quote 2677 to make a booking. Alternatively, visit the Choice Hotels website at www.choicehotels.com (Rates are based on room only. Rates quoted are not to be used in conjunction with any other agreed rates and are subject to availability at the time of booking.)

Choice Hotels are also offering a special rate of £25 per person for B&B at the Quality Hotel, Birmingham for all alumni, friends and relatives.

To book call 0121 454 6621 and quote 'University offer'.



The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra is offering a 10% discount on tickets for CBSO concert promotions at Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Alumni wishing to purchase tickets should call the Symphony Hall Box Office on 0121 780 3333 quoting 'CBGT Offer'. For details of CBSO concerts visit www.cbso.co.uk or call CBSO offices on 0121 616 6500 for a brochure.



On-campus discounts

Library Membership

As an Aston graduate you are able to register to use the University Library for just £24.50 a year. This entitles you to borrow one medium loan item and five long loan items subject to the library's normal loan rules. Access to Aston's web catalogue is also available. Contact the Alumni Relations Office for an application form and a list of terms and conditions on 0121 359 3611.

Further details on all of the above benefits can be viewed at www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/benefits.htm

The above information is correct at the time of going to press. Aston University accepts no liability for any losses incurred by alumni resulting from these offers or any reliance placed upon them.



Avis has teamed up with Aston University to offer alumni preferential car rental rates worldwide:

UK – Guaranteed Premier Partner rates or best available rate on the day

Europe – 10% off Avis Supervalu rentals ¹

USA and Canada – 5% off inclusive holiday rates ²

Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa – Up to 10% off standard rates

Avis Chauffeur Drive – 10% off in the UK

Avis Prestige Cars – 10% off in the UK

Call 0870 60 60 100 for quotes and bookings or visit www.avis.co.uk Please quote your Avis Worldwide Discount (AWD) number – K626925

Conditions: Prices and savings are shown as a guide only – these are correct at time of publishing but are subject to change and are therefore not guaranteed to apply at time of reservation. Driver must meet Avis age, driver and credit requirements. Subject to availability at participating Avis locations. UK discounts only available in mainland UK. Proof of membership of Aston Alumni may be required at time of rental. Subject to standard Avis rental terms and conditions.

¹ Supervalu rates must be booked from the UK at least 24 hours in advance for a minimum rental of 3 days.

² USA/Canada rates inclusive of Loss Damage Waiver (LDW), Additional Liability Insurance (ALI), airport and state taxes.

Green Flag, one of the UK's leading breakdown experts, is offering great discounts to Aston graduates. Choose from 3 levels of cover plus a range of additional services to suit your motoring needs. Roadside Assistance starts from as little as £33.00. To join, call free now on 0800 051 0627 quoting reference BN3-A02.



Management Development Centre

Aston alumni can enjoy preferential rates on overnight accommodation in the Management Development Centre, starting from just £58.75* for a single room, bed and breakfast, including VAT. For further details, or to make a reservation, contact Maureen Wood on m.p.wood@aston.ac.uk or telephone 0121 359 3011.

*This rate applies until 31 January 2004, after which a single room will cost £64.63 until 31 January 2005.

Sports Facilities

There are a variety of discounts available to alumni for use of the University's sports facilities. The Woodcock Sports Centre has recently been refurbished and has a new fitness facility equipped with the latest Cybex gym equipment. Contact the Alumni Relations Office for an application form and details of the discounts available.

Aston Honours



The Rt Hon Baroness Boothroyd PC

Baroness Boothroyd was Speaker of the House of Commons from April 1992 to October 2000, the first woman to be elected to the Speaker's chair in 700 years of the British Parliament. She was also the first to come from the Opposition benches since 1835, an achievement made possible by her supporters in every party in the House. Baroness Boothroyd first entered the Commons at a by-election in 1973 as a Labour MP for West Bromwich. She subsequently served as a Government whip, joined the first British delegation to the European Parliament and was elected to the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party. She was awarded a life peerage on her retirement and sits in the House of Lords as an independent cross-bencher.

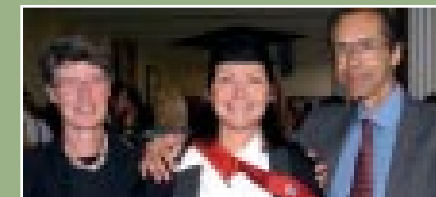
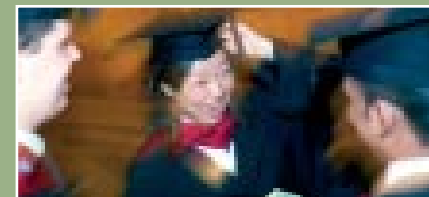
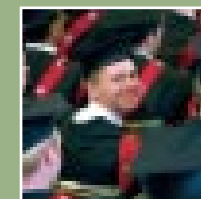
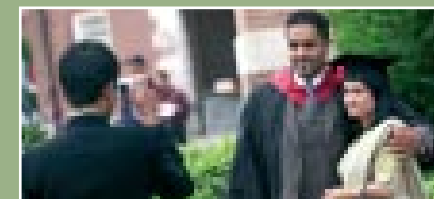
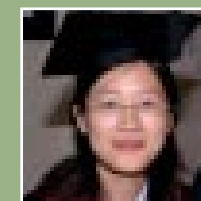
At this year's Degree Congregations in March and July, Aston welcomed five new honorary graduates as members of Convocation, acknowledging their achievement and contribution to their respective fields.



Professor Kenneth Dyson

Kenneth Dyson is currently Research Professor in the School of European Studies at Cardiff University. Awarded the German Federal Service Cross (first class) for services to Anglo-German relations, he was also a founder and former Chair of the Standing Conference of Heads of European Studies and a founder and former Chair of the Association for the study of German Politics. His most recent books have been concerned with the role of the Euro in European integration and its implications and with the changing relationship between Germany and Europe.

Welcome to the Class of 2003 – all our graduates who celebrated the culmination of their hard work in March and July this year



Remember your Degree Congregation? Would you like a high quality reminder of how you and all your fellow graduates enjoyed receiving your certificates? Aston Media Graduation Videos are still available for 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 degree ceremonies. Recordings feature close-up shots of everyone and general shots of the day itself including after-ceremony parties and views of campus and city life. Each video is provided with an insert personalised to the specific ceremony and includes the names of all those graduating on that day. To order please contact Leo Coelho on +44 (0)121 359 3611 ext 4955 or e-mail l.a.coelho@aston.ac.uk



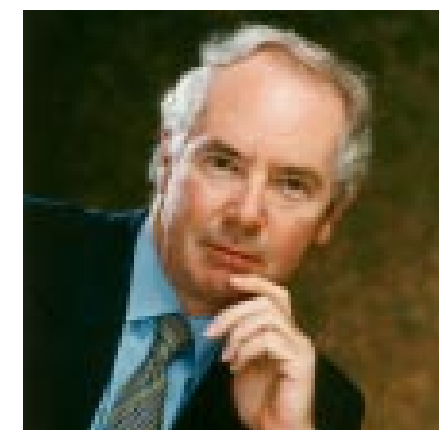
Christine Braddock

Christine Braddock trained at Northern Counties, a subsidiary of Newcastle University. She then worked in the Lancashire Education and Probation Services, linking offenders who had been released from prison to education and social agencies. An appointment at Blackpool and Fylde College in computer and work-based training, led to an appointment within HM Prison Service. On becoming Senior Education and Training Adviser to the Home Office, with responsibilities for work-based learning and Women's Education, Christine then moved to Dudley College progressing to Deputy Principal, which led to the appointment as Principal/Chief Executive at Matthew Boulton College.



Sir David O'Dowd

Sir David has over 40 years' experience in law enforcement and served with the Leicestershire, West Midlands, Metropolitan Police Service and the Northamptonshire Police Forces. He is a former Chief Constable of Northamptonshire and until December 2001 was Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Sir David has personally served with the present and the two previous Home Secretaries. Since Sir David's retirement in 2001 he now holds a number of voluntary appointments with Victim Support, at a local and national level; he is a founder Trustee of the AA Motoring Trust, a Board member of the British Transport and Ministry of Defence Police Committees and the Ombudsman for the Institute of Management Consultants.



Sir Peter Rigby

Sir Peter is a successful entrepreneur and leading international businessman who has built a lifetime career in the computer industry, spanning over 40 years. Sir Peter is a vocal ambassador for technology and the hi-tech industry and over the years has also been a proactive ambassador in promoting and developing the Business interests of the Midlands Region. He has been an active agent for change in inner city regeneration and development and has taken the lead to encourage the region to embrace a hi-tech future. With a passionate belief in bringing technology into the business community, Sir Peter was the driving force behind Millennium Point, a highly complex project to deliver a centre of excellence for lifelong learning.

From Our own correspondent

“

We tell it like it is,” explains Laura. “Young people will hear about things anyway. It’s far better for them to hear it from us and to understand it fully than for us to ignore stories and pretend they’re not happening.”

”

The world has changed over the last couple of years. For many, especially children, it is sometimes an uncertain, dangerous place, but sometimes an exciting place with new things to discover. In this climate, more than ever, children need someone to turn to for answers and hopefully reassurance. Laura Jones (1998 BSc Modern Languages) Reporter and Presenter on BBC’s Newsround regularly reports the world’s breaking news on our TV screens.

“I always wanted to be a journalist,” she enthuses, acknowledging that her passion for news grew out of her father’s insistence on listening to news bulletins during long car journeys. Now it’s her voice that millions of young people tune into on TV as she tries to help them understand the world they are growing up in.

“It’s vital that children grow up understanding the world around them,” she maintains. “And it’s important for them to realise that other children growing up elsewhere are sometimes having a really tough time. We don’t want to frighten or upset children, but they need to know what war, famine and suffering are – even if it’s just so they can appreciate their own lives more. Ultimately we hope that by watching our reports, children will become interested, or even passionate, about a certain issue and will want to go away and find out more or do something to help.”

Laura grew up watching John Craven’s Newsround. In its 30 years of broadcasting, the programme has never shied away from hard news. “We tell it like it is,” explains Laura. “Young people will hear about things anyway. It’s far better for them to hear it from us and to understand it fully than for us to ignore stories and pretend they’re not happening. We’re always careful not to use really violent pictures and we don’t include disturbing details if we don’t have to.” This realistic approach has given Laura the opportunity to bring stories to the ears of young viewers about the spread of AIDS and famine in Africa, the war in Iraq, the plight of street children in Russia and the growing trend in Jamaica of children taking guns to school.

“We get positive feedback from adults as well,” assures Laura as she points out that Newsround also has a large following amongst students. “When I reported on ETA and the bombings in Spain, we went right back to basics. We explained exactly what the organisation was and what it was fighting for, so that everyone aged from 8 to 18 could understand. Adults commented it was the first time they had really been able to understand the situation.”

When asked about poignant reporting in her time with Newsround, Laura recalls filming the documentary on the plight of street children in Russia. “We were in St Petersburg. It was minus 25 degrees. It was so cold the homeless children were forced to live in sewers. It was heartbreaking when they showed us around the corner of the sewer they had made their home. The children were about 10 and 11 years old. It was even more tragic to learn that most of them wouldn’t make it past their 15th birthday.” The drive behind this type of report is the hope that people might be encouraged to help or the government might be shamed into some sort of action.



On a different occasion, Laura filmed a piece about Maasai children who were about to start using the Internet. “We went and stayed with them in their Maasai village,” she explains. “It was an amazing experience. They had never met a white person before and many of them had never been outside their village. Their life revolves around herding their cattle and keeping them safe from the wild animals out on the plains. I’ll never forget sitting on the floor of a hut, listening to the Maasai children singing traditional songs in the evening whilst, in the background, lions and elephants could be heard trying to break into the village!”

Needless to say her family is proud (and surprised, she adds), even if a little worried when Laura is filming in dangerous places. “I’ve had to wear flack-jackets and helmets, go on a chemical weapons training course, wear full army kit and a gas mask, endure a two-week army training camp, survive a mock kidnap and learn how to cope in a riot.”

Laura’s life has turned out a little different from her days reporting on the *Birmingham Sun*. But her passion for journalism flourishes. The future? She admits she hasn’t thought too far ahead. “I’d love to stay at Newsround for a while longer – there are lots more interesting stories to tell.”

Dr Sahar Al-Malaika, leader of the Polymer Processing and Performance (PPP) unit, explains how a subsidy from Advantage West Midlands will benefit not only her own area of research, but society at large.

Many parts profit from polymer funding

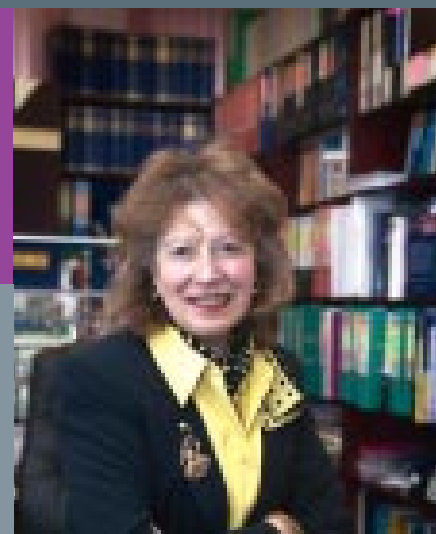
AWM's £250,000 grant is earmarked for setting up an advanced, state-of-the-art specialist polymer characterisation and testing facility to complement existing first class facilities. The specialist facility will offer significant benefits both to emerging enterprises and the region's more established polymer-related companies. It will also be a vital lifeline to innovative companies that require access to polymer expertise and advanced characterisation and testing facilities but have neither the expertise nor the capital outlay. It could stimulate new research directions, expand existing collaborations and forge new links between Aston's polymer group and the public and private sector enterprises. Most importantly it will support technology transfer schemes and commercialisation of the PPP unit's research.

The PPP research unit is one of the few academic centres within the UK that is able to offer the expertise and facilities for the interdisciplinary needs of basic and applied polymer research. The unit is world-renowned for research that provides generic solutions to complex industrial problems through the application of scientific and engineering principles. It has a reputation for frontier, basic

and applied research, involving real problem solving whilst advancing scientific knowledge. It has a proven track record of collaborating with industry and in technology transfer of its intellectual property.

There is a great demand for the PPP unit's expertise which is often sought to fulfil the needs of the different sectors of the specialty chemical, polymer and related industries. The grant will further promote academic-industry activities and help maximise the commercial outputs from Aston's facilities. It will also enable participating academics to move into the development of new products and processes that will benefit the region's industries.

The PPP research unit will study the fundamental and applied aspects of polymer processing, lifetime performance and specialty chemicals such as polymer additives, including stabilisers and antioxidants. The unit focuses its fundamental research activity on target areas of applied research which can have short and long term benefits to the polymer industry and its impact on environmental and societal issues.



On the application side, the PPP unit's remit is a broad one. Examples of the interest and expertise it generates include:

- the prevention of free radical oxidative damage;
- stabilisation and extension of polymers' lifetime;
- food packaging and other specialised packaging areas;
- medical-related applications;
- automotive, under-the-bonnet applications and coatings;
- aircraft tyres;
- defence applications;
- agricultural and environmental related areas involving biodegradable polymers and recycling of polymers.

In all applications the approach is to establish the nature of the specific interactions linking the polymer, its processing and end-use application to achieve optimum lifetime performance.

Bio Product Innovation Centre

Over £300,000 for the development of a new Bio Product Innovation Centre to provide a specialist assembly of analytical equipment for companies in the pharmaceutical, biomedical and medical devices sectors.

Supercomputing

The neural computing research group was awarded £80,000 to establish a cluster-computing network as a cost-effective means for entry into supercomputing.

The Aston University Aseptic Unit

£600,000 will help develop the Aston University Aseptic Unit, a new development comprising two clean rooms and an aseptic room. Climate and humidity controlled, the facility will offer a complete specialist production environment to support the commercialisation of Aston's pharmaceutical research.

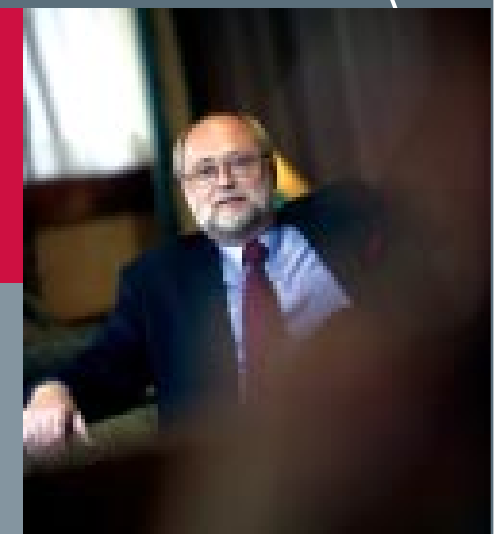
Photonic Process Development

£142,000 for a clean room and a further £437,000 for associated kit, Aston's photonic research can expand its interests in optical materials technologies, including devising cheaper components demanded by the telecommunications industries.

Sahar Al-Malaika's is just one of a number of projects that the University's Business Partnership Unit has recently helped secure for the School of Engineering & Applied Science. Other projects benefiting from AWM awards include:

Aston Business School welcomes the world. Over the past year, ABS has been involved in two major events with international appeal. Both were held at the Business School this year and serve to demonstrate the School's ambition and international standing.

ABS chance to showcase Birmingham



Aston Business School was selected to host this year's Academy of Marketing Annual Conference, July 8-11. The theme of the conference 'A History of the Next Decade' was chosen to reflect the crucial role that the conference plays in inspiring and facilitating new and exciting research and researchers within the marketing discipline. The theme also made clear the vital role that research should play in influencing the future of marketing practice and vice versa.

Plenary speakers at the conference included Sir Dominic Cadbury, Aston honorary graduate and Chair of the Wellcome Trust, giving the practitioner perspective; Professor David Montgomery from Stanford Business School in the USA with the academic perspective, and Peter Fisk, CEO of the Chartered Institute of Marketing, giving the professional body perspective.

The eclectic mix of titles of the submitted papers which ranged from *Blowing Bubbles Forever – The West Ham Syndrome Revisited*

to *Marketing to Classical Music*, provided something for virtually every taste.

Conference Chair, Professor Graham Hooley, said: "The Academy of Marketing Annual Conference is the biggest held in the UK with delegates attending from as far afield as the USA, Australia and New Zealand. It was a great honour for Aston to be chosen to host the 2003 event and we seized this opportunity to showcase ABS, Aston University and the City of Birmingham."



Putnam presentation

In April, over 200 people from all over the UK turned up at Aston to hear and discuss Professor Robert Putnam's presentation on *Social Capital: Some Challenges for Policy Makers and Practitioners*.

This was one of only a few public appearances the eminent Harvard professor will make during a year's sabbatical at the University of Cambridge. Putnam is best known for his pioneering work on the importance of social capital and social networks within society – the resources we develop for our communities and societies when we band together to do things for each other in groups, clubs and associations. The significance of his work has led to his being consulted by both the US and UK governments.

During the presentation Putnam provided a review of the importance of social capital to modern society and of the implications for politicians and policymakers of its apparent recent decline in the US – a trend he expects to be reproduced in other advanced, industrial countries. Putnam argued that social capital was positively correlated with greater equality within society and should be promoted as such. He also pointed out that it was negatively correlated with social diversity – social capital appears to be lower in more diverse social settings.

Given the growing diversity of 21st century society this creates for policymakers the particular challenge of how to promote new forms of social capital alongside diversity. Critical here is the distinction that Putnam made between *bonding* and *bridging* capital. Bonding capital is that found within social groups, helping to hold these together; bridging capital is that found between groups, helping to forge links across society. Both, he argued, are important; but it is bridging capital which is likely to have a critical role to play in promoting cohesion within diversity, and therein lies the policy challenge.

There are, of course, no easy solutions to this challenge; and this was perhaps the most significant conclusion that Professor Putnam drew from his work – there is no quick fix to the social capital conundrum. Nevertheless the breadth of ideas and empirical analysis explored in the presentation left the audience thinking hard about the implications of social capital for social policy. The presentation was jointly sponsored by the Social Policy Association and the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN), and organised by Aston Business School's Professor Margaret Harris.



If you visit the third floor of the Main Building at the moment you will no longer be greeted by traditional chemistry labs. They have been replaced with a scene reminiscent of Huxley's *Brave New World* as the University's new clean room takes shape. Dr John Marriott from the School of Life & Health Sciences gives Apex readers a sneak preview of the new medical clean unit.

Clean space is out of this world

The unit has been built thanks to a grant of over £660,000 from Advantage West Midlands. The entire unit will be sealed inside a vinyl envelope and its air and output strictly controlled. With its brilliant white walls and ultramodern equipment, this is clearly a facility for the future.

The unit has been built by a company called Thermal Transfer and will provide an ultra clean, sterile and controlled environment for pharmaceutical manufacture, research and teaching. It will offer academics a complete specialist pharmaceutical environment to support the development of new medicines such as gene therapies and novel therapeutic compounds. The unit will comprise of three clean rooms containing special, positive pressure isolators that allow operators to work in a completely clean, sterile environment. These rooms will be climate and humidity controlled to allow the aseptic production,

manipulation and reconstitution of a variety of medical products (including chemotherapy drugs usually used in the treatment of cancer) that cannot be sterilised commercially. There is a particular need in the region for aseptic facilities to support the preparation of pharmaceuticals with a short shelf life – particularly in the treatment of children.

Dr Marriott explained: "The medicines that will be prepared in this unit are not like the ones you can buy over the counter. Custom medicines administered to critically ill patients have to be sterile but they generally can't be sterilised by traditional methods because it will destroy them. This specialist clean room will provide a much-needed specialist support facility for the Midlands and will also provide a teaching facility for operators who currently work in existing clean room facilities in the country. When it's complete it will be available to the NHS, start-up companies and private hospitals, amongst others."

The unit will be the first university-based facility of its kind in the Midlands and will bolster Aston's commitment to innovation and the development of future business opportunities. It will offer medicine production on demand, an activity integral to the activities of university spin-outs in the region, the development of which will be supported by Aston's Business Partnership Unit (BPU). The BPU supported Aston's pharmacy staff in the bid for the clean unit and will continue to support them in the future as they research new pharmaceutical products and their possible commercial manufacture.

The unit will also promote regional training activities for healthcare professionals, particularly professional development opportunities for pharmacists through Aston Media's facilities, in particular the Education and Training Channel.

Dig this – Aston Academy takes shape

Building work has begun on the University's new £10 million Aston Academy of Life Sciences. John Edwards, Chief Executive of Advantage West Midlands, was guest of honour at a special ceremony to mark the cutting of the first sod.

The Aston Academy of Life Sciences will be a unique facility for biomedical research, which will build on Aston's grade 5 research rated Neurosciences Research Institute. The project is funded by HEFCE's Science Research Investment Fund, Advantage West Midlands, The Wellcome Trust and Aston University. Through Aston's Business Partnership Unit, the Academy will provide a platform for the

development of patents, licence opportunities and new spin-out companies, resulting in income – generating opportunities and enhanced employment potential within the West Midlands.

Dr Sarah Hosking from Aston University added: "Commencement of this state-of-the-art building, designed by local company, Associated Architects, represents both the



literal and metaphorical breaking of new ground for the region, particularly in relation to the commercialisation of research in health and biomedical technologies. I am personally delighted to be a part of the project and to see it enter this new phase." The Academy is due to be completed in April 2004.



Teachers from as far afield as Yorkshire, Norwich and Wales came to the School of Languages & European Studies in June to take part in a one-day conference for French teachers organised by Lecturer, Dr Angela Kershaw.

Building on links with schools

The aim of the day was to continue the dialogue between Aston and schools across the country, which had already been established through previous teachers' days and through the new tri-annual French Studies Newsletter.

The day started with a lively and fascinating keynote lecture by Professor John Gaffney on '*la séduction politique*', in which the audience was invited to analyse media images of François Mitterrand and Jean-Marie Le Pen. Following this, participants were offered a choice of parallel sessions on topics such as

the European Union, the French media, French intellectual life, translation studies and French politics. The programme was tailored to respond to teachers' expressed interests and needs. All the sessions demonstrated how university study builds on knowledge and skills acquired at AS and A2 levels, as well as introducing new challenges. Teachers found this particularly useful and interaction in these sessions was very lively. Delegates then enjoyed a screening of Erik Zonca's award-winning film, *La vie rêvée des anges*, winner of various awards.

The response to the day was very enthusiastic and the School of Languages & European Studies plans to run a similar event in the future. For some participants it was an introduction to Aston University, for others, a repeat visit. In all cases, new links were forged which will lead to new initiatives for open days and school visits.

If you would like further information on future LES events please contact Dr Angela Kershaw at the University.

New citizenship and culture joint degree

The School of Languages & European Studies has strengthened its portfolio of postgraduate courses with the addition of a new joint MA/MPhil with the University of Birmingham that will run from September 2004. The programme aims to provide a high-quality postgraduate degree focusing on the concepts of citizenship and culture in France. The programme is unique in its inter-institutional nature, in that it exploits to best advantage the combined expertise of Aston and Birmingham universities, each of which has a specific area of competence to offer.

Modules on offer include topics on key contemporary issues, citizenship and culture in the 19th century examined through fiction, film, culture and conflict in modern France.

For further information about the new course contact Dr Christina Schäffner at the University.



LSU alumni can now enjoy a new e-mail-based network to keep in touch with fellow language professionals all over the world. Sue Garton explains below how to sign up and start swapping ideas, support and discussion topics. Julian Edge updates LSU alumni on the ProDD Symposium and a forthcoming symposium.

ProDD symposium



Towards the end of the academic year 2000/2001, the Language Studies Unit formalised its research efforts by setting up a new research centre in the School, the *Centre for the Study of Professional Discourse and Development (ProDD)*. It is ProDD's goal to further:

- contextualised, data-based investigations carried out by participant-researchers;
- research that seeks not only to theorise the data of a situation, but also to contribute to the quality of experience available to participants in that situation;
- research that argues explicitly and by example for a fuller integration of research and practice in education and other professional domains;
- the development of appropriate paradigms and procedures for research in the human sciences.

A series of distinguished speakers and visitors have worked with ProDD including Professor Mark Clarke, from the University of Colorado (USA), Professor Anne Burns, from Macquarie University (Australia) and Professor Michael Legutke, from the University of Giessen (Germany). They have given talks on their areas of expertise, contributed to the Development Forum and met with individual staff members and research students to consult on individual projects.

Our main venture for 2003/2004 will be to host two symposia (15 and 16 December 2003 and again in July 2004) on the theme: *(Re-) Locating TESOL in an Age of Empire*. The symposium sets out to formulate a professional response to the perception that the invasion and occupation of Iraq may have signalled a historic shift in contemporary international

relations. In this context, it is impossible not to notice that the leading players in the invasion were also the major TESOL providers worldwide: the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia. If English is now to become the language of Empire, as well as the lingua franca of commerce and culture, what difference does this make to the profession of English language teaching, or to the lives of English language teachers? Keynote speakers in December will be Professors Christopher Brumfit (University of Southampton) and Sarah Benesch (City University of New York) who will explore the use of critical pedagogy and critical media awareness in English for academic purposes to respond to the new imperialism. More details will be available on the website: www.les.aston.ac.uk/lsu/research/proddsymcftp.htm



As a result of a suggestion made by some of you in the questionnaire, LSU has decided to set up an e-mail discussion group for LSU graduates to enable you keep in touch with each other and with the LSU. First and foremost this group is for you and in principle anything that is of professional interest would make a suitable topic for discussion. Some possibilities are:

- to keep in touch with fellow graduates;
- to discuss professional issues of general interest;
- to find out about job opportunities in different countries;
- to help with writing and publications:

All you need to do to sign up is to go to www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/professional.htm and follow the instructions there.

New LSU alumni network

Thanks go to all of you who returned your LSU questionnaire earlier this year. The results made very interesting and positive reading and your suggestions were very helpful to the LSU. If you didn't receive the questionnaire and would like to fill one in for us, e-mail your address to Sarah Pymm in the Alumni Relations Office.

Dr Jo Hamilton-Jones, Assistant Director of Combined Honours, reports on the success and development of two widening participation projects supporting the development of research while continuing close collaboration with Schools and the developing international profile of Combined Honours.

New research to support development



Combined Honours is a natural home for some types of pedagogic research within the University. Published research already exists in this area and continues to grow in refereed international journals. Staff have also attended and presented papers at conferences in the UK, Sweden and the USA.

Currently there is an exciting opportunity for new and extensive research on issues concerning widening participation, retention, progression and achievement in under-represented groups in particular subject areas and in groups with non-traditional entry backgrounds. We were successful in bidding for funding from the Widening Participation Fund to support projects to improve retention of students.

One of our new research projects, led by Roy Smith, Director of Combined Honours, will look at the specific resource needs of students studying from different types of residential location. The main aim of the project is to find out if students in Combined Honours who study from home are disadvantaged in any way compared with students living on campus.

More details of research projects in Combined Honours can be found on the website at – www.aston.ac.uk/combhons/research/index.html

A second project, led by Jo Hamilton-Jones, will create, implement and evaluate a post-acceptance/pre-enrolment blended learning course comprising on-line, CD, paper-based and other forms of distance learning. The outcome will be a diagnostic profile of students' academic abilities prior to starting their studies. This will identify the areas where more focused study support can be provided. This project has also provided an exciting doctoral research opportunity in conjunction with the Language Studies Unit to explore the area of pedagogical on-line discourse.

An international dimension

Combined Honours degrees have been studied at Aston in various forms for over 40 years. These highly successful courses are renowned for their innovation and flexibility, attracting students to a range of disciplines and career paths.

Recently the Combined Honours path to success has become increasingly attractive to international students – applications for 2003 more than doubled on the previous year. Nearly 20% of applicants to Combined Honours courses for 2003/4 were international students – a welcome development and one that we will continue to encourage and develop.

We spent some time delving into our archives to find out where our alumni came from over the years. We were surprised to discover that we've welcomed students from all of these countries: Belarus, Belgium, Botswana, Cameroon, Cyprus, Dubai, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, People's Republic of China, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Taiwan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.



Ever wondered how student life at Aston might differ today from when you were here? We interviewed Jeanette Crofts (née Fitzpatrick, 1984 BSc Maths and Computer Science) about her time at Aston in the 1980s, then ran along to that popular student haunt – the Guild – and grabbed Lorna Kemp, Guild Campaigns Officer, to tell us about student life today. Here are their replies on five different topics.

Student life: Past and Present

On accommodation...



Jeanette: "The best accommodation I stayed in was in my first year when I lived on the sixth floor of Lawrence Tower. Back then it had better facilities than the other towers. For security reasons, girls were only housed from the sixth floor upwards, but when the fire alarm went off on a Saturday night, as it frequently did, it was amazing the number of girls who came out of the fire exits on floors 1 to 5!"

Lorna: "I'm currently living in a shared house in Erdington – a really popular area with students – which makes it cheap and you also feel quite safe. I miss living in Stafford Tower though, where I was in my first year, as I had a fantastic network of friends."

On courses...



Jeanette: "I chose to study Computer Science and Maths, but can't think why. I'd never touched a computer before! In those days the Computer Science faculty was in a very new building which I believe is now the campus medical centre – something of a surprise when I returned to the campus a couple of years ago."

You had to book the computer terminals in advance in 20 minute slots, but my typing was so poor that by the time I had got my username and password right it was almost time to surrender the machine to the next student. My favourite lecturer was Les Hazlewood who managed to guide me through the mysteries of programming and put up with my frequent cigarette breaks and hangovers!"

Lorna: "I'm studying Managerial and Administrative Studies – a very popular choice amongst students – and I really enjoy it. It has provided me with a flexible approach to my studies where I've had the opportunity to explore a variety of different areas."

On going out...



Jeanette: "The Pot of Beer (aka The Pot) which became the Faculty and Firkin and is now The Gosta Green, was my favourite place to go out. It was a real 'sticky carpet' student haunt with a great jukebox. Some people went to the Sacks of Potatoes but it was always too small and cramped for me. Sundays were always spent playing pool in the upstairs bar of the Guild or sleeping off the previous night's hangover!"

Lorna: "Students these days still go to the Guild and the Sacks of Potatoes, but there are also a lot of alternative bars and clubs opening up around Birmingham, particularly along Broad Street, that are more attractive to students. I do have to say though that students now are incredibly career focused and money, or lack of it, is another pressing concern. It's probably fair to say that staying in is the new going out."

On music...

Jeanette: "I tend to remember *Tainted Love* by Soft Cell and *New York, New York*, as they were always the songs used to close an evening at the Guild. I also fondly remember The Boomtown Rats and Ian Drury. The latter played at my final May Ball in 1984."

Lorna: "*New York, New York* still rings out at the end of Guild nights now, which is funny. Students these days tend to be into R&B, but there's still a great following for the 'cheese' Aston's so famous for!"

On fashion...



Jeanette: "We mainly wore jeans whilst I was at Aston. In the early days the fashions were a bit hippy with jeans and floaty tops (for the girls anyway) but later it started to get a bit more New Romantic."

Lorna: "There's so many different styles of dress around the campus that I couldn't give details of any particular style. Students do seem to dress very smartly though, particularly on my course, and many look like professionals. I can only guess that perhaps the job market's emphasis on 'dress to impress' has something to do with this. There is still a fair amount of grunge and casual around though and I don't think the student passion for jeans will ever go away."

Who are the Qing Society? Its founder member explains...



"We wanted to start a society that would take the Guild by storm! We wanted Britain's favourite pastime to become a recognised society within the Guild. Some people may see it as a joke, but Qing (queuing) can be seen as being tedious and people often do it badly, frequently resulting in 'Qing rage'. So, we have taken it upon ourselves to educate and promote 'Qing etiquette' and make it a more enjoyable activity. It gives people an opportunity to join a society which involves something we all do all the time! In May we went on our first, and possibly last, pub crawl. We went to 6 pubs and it took us around 4½ hours – the slowest pub crawl ever – but that was due to all the Qing at the bars! We are looking into the possibility of a trip abroad to take the concept of Qing to the continent. Remember – we do it in a line!" Mad or what?!

The Singapore Society

The Singapore Society (AUSS) was founded in 1998 and has grown from a modest group of Singaporean students to one which can now boast over 100 members from all over the world, including China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Myanmar, Taiwan, India, England, Europe and of course, Singapore. We asked its co-founders, Florence Lau (née Loh, 2000 BSc Accounting for Management) and David Lau (2000 BSc Accounting for Management) to tell us about the group and the sort of activities they got up to.

"We set AUSS up not to be a support network as such, but to provide a group that seeks to make the transition from home to Birmingham a smoother and more welcoming process. For many international students, being away from home for the first time can translate into loneliness, uncertainty, inability to cope with studies and even financial difficulties. A group of us had been through it and we wanted to make it easier for others. All it takes is a thought and a spark of enthusiasm. We wanted to do it, we did it and we are still doing it!"

"When we were in the Society we used to take part in a variety of activities. Many of them are still carried on today but, as the group is bigger, the events require more sophisticated organisation! We joined in with

Can you spot what's missing?

Listed below are the societies and sports clubs available to students today. Can you see what's missing from when you were at Aston:

Societies:

African & Caribbean
AIESEC
Animal Rights
Asian
Aston Transport Society
Aston University Music Society
Aston University Racing Club
Chinese Overseas
Christian Union
Fusion
Hindu Students Forum
Islamic Society
Jewish

Krishna Consciousness
Kurdish Students' Society
Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual
Links
Live Musicians' society
Optics
Psychology Society
Qing
Raise and Give (RAG)
Rocksoc
Sikh
Singaporean
SIS

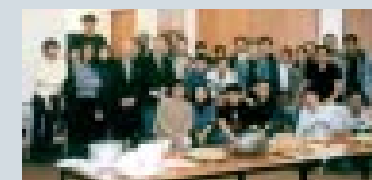
Sports clubs:

A.U.
Aikido
Archery
Canoe
Cricket
Dance
Dance Sport
Golf
GTUK Tae kwon do
Jitsu
Karate
Lacrosse
Men's Badminton
Men's Basketball
Men's Football
Men's Hockey
Men's Rugby
Men's Squash

Men's Table Tennis
Men's Tennis
Men's Water Polo
Mountaineering
Netball
Ski & Snowboard
Snooker
Sub Aqua
Swimming and Water Polo
Ten Pin Bowling
Thai Boxing
Women's Badminton
Women's Basketball
Women's Football
Women's Hockey
Women's Rugby
Women's Table Tennis
Women's Water Polo

weekly sports sessions like badminton or football and enjoyed local day trips and overseas excursions. We also frequently interacted with other Singapore Societies in the UK, taking part in the Nottingham and Midland Games, SingNite, and even arranged badminton and snooker competitions. Eating is a trademark for the Singaporean Society and we often gathered for events including welcome parties, farewell parties, Christmas dinners and festive celebrations like Chinese New Year."

Many former members of the Singapore Society try to keep in touch and arrange to meet up during the year. If you are a former member and would like further information on any forthcoming events or meetings, email David Tan (2000 BSc Operations Management) at davidtbl@hotmail.com



AUSS Farewell Party 1999/2000

Itching to find out what your friends from Aston are up to? Looking to see who's up to what and with whom? Well look no further because 'Where are they now?' is *the* place to find out the latest news from Aston's thriving alumni network. You never know, you might just spot someone you want to get in touch with. If you want your face noticed in May's edition, contact us at the usual address with your news – and go on, send a photograph!

Where are they now?

1960s

Ian Hamilton Fazey

(1964 BSc Chemical Engineering)

edited The Sun, Aston's campus newspaper, in 1962-63 and was president of the Guild of Students in his fourth year. He worked as a chemical engineer only for the year it took to get a reporting job on *The Birmingham Post*, where he became a national award-winning education and science correspondent. A series of increasingly senior posts on the *Liverpool Daily Post* and the *Liverpool Echo* saw him move into management and become CEO of two newspaper groups. After returning to journalism in 1980 as a freelance, he worked in radio, TV, magazines and, most notably, for the *Financial Times*. He was made an OBE for services to journalism in 1990 and his writings on fostering entrepreneurship, economic reconstruction and regeneration have since led to wide-ranging consultancy work for the OECD and the UN. He was founding chairman of j4b plc, publisher of the award-winning grants search website, and floated the company on Ofex in 2001. He stepped down in 2002 after two strokes and has since been regaining his reading skills with the help of Colin Fowler, head of optometry at Aston's School of Vision Sciences. He met his wife Cindy on the Aston campus – she was doing a London external at the adjacent College of Commerce. She is now Professor of International Drug Policy at Liverpool University. They have no children.



Ian Hamilton Fazey

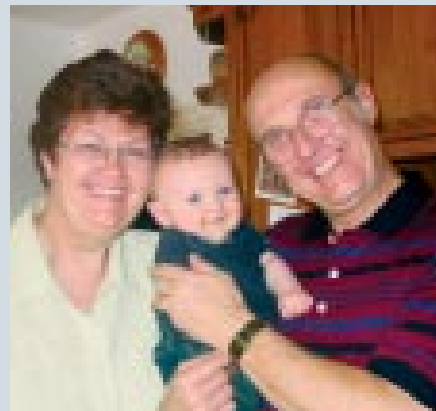
John Hiam

(1964 BSc Metallurgy and 1966 MSc Mechanical Engineering) spent his career in the US and Canadian steel industry, rising to General Manager of Quality Control in Canada and then Senior Director of Product Development and Product Technology in the US. He is now retired and doing part-time consulting and indulging in his hobbies of bird watching and hiking, and spending much of his time on safaris in South America. He has also found time to have three children and four grandchildren along the way.

Graham Jervis

(1967 BSc Chemistry and 1970 PhD Chemistry)

"After completing my PhD I got a job with Esso at their Research Centre in Oxfordshire and after a brief period developing lubricating oils for Concorde, I left chemistry to follow a career in management. I moved to London and held management jobs in Product Marketing, Human Resources and IT. I left Esso in 1986 and joined ICL where I was the manager responsible for the global development and marketing of a range of software products. Reorganisation led to redundancy in 1992 and I joined two others to set up a management consultancy company providing change management services to Property and Facilities Managers. It has been very successful and now 11 years on there are 25 of us who can number a great many blue chip companies as clients. I am married to **Virginia Jervis** (née Woodier, 1968 BSc Pharmacy) and we have two sons and are also now grandparents – scary! We still keep in touch with fellow Astonians and this year we had a get-together with my old PhD chums. Virginia also keeps in contact with her Aston friends through a circular letter that has been going for 25 years!"



The proud grandparents!

Lawrence Smalley

(1967 BSc Civil Engineering)

"My higher education was with the Birmingham College of Advanced Technology – a forerunner of the University – where I took a Higher National Certificate in Civil Engineering. I was later awarded a BSc when the University was formed. My professional life has been wholly spent in local government with the County Boroughs of Walsall, West Bromwich and Stockport, the Sandwell Metropolitan District, the West Midlands County Council and finally the Brighton Borough Council, from which I retired in 1991 as Director of Technical Services. I have lived in Steyning, West Sussex, with my wife and family since 1978. Now retired, I am able to concentrate on my golf and have managed to reduce my handicap to single figures once again. I am also a keen supporter of my local museum and am presently Chairman of the Management Committee."



Lawrence Smalley

1970s

Stephen Skinner

(1976 BSc Physics and Metals and Materials Science)

was a member of the University Air Squadron whilst at Aston and went on to join the RAF as a pilot. He has since flown many types of aircraft, primarily the Nimrod. His flying days are now over and he is currently manning a desk with the MOD. Steve met his wife at Aston, **Gillian Skinner** (née Nugent, 1977 BSc Behavioural Science). Gillian sadly passed away three years ago, but worked as a social worker and probation officer before her untimely death. Stephen has two teenage children who both attend boarding school in Edinburgh. With what little time he has he enjoys long distance running (three London Marathons to date) and the occasional game of golf.



Peter Ward

Peter Ward

(1977 BSc Communication Science and Linguistics)

"I now live in Lancashire where I work as a freelance Computer Analyst. My job has taken me to various places in the world including New Zealand, Scandinavia, and the USA. I've also lived in Germany for nine years and have worked part-time as a translator since then. Back in May 2003, my wife Sue and I went to Iceland bird and whale watching. I didn't see any whales unfortunately, but did glimpse one or two dolphins and saw plenty of waterfowl and seabirds, including Eider, Teal, Puffins and Arctic Terns. It was fascinating, and I would certainly recommend a trip out there for anybody else interested in the pursuit. If you like a few beers though, take plenty of money as it costs £5 a glass!"

Duncan Wilkinson

(1979 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

"I loved my time at Aston and I still get a tear in my eye when I drive over Spaghetti Junction! I seemed to spend most of my time playing football (we had a great 5-a-side team called 'Solid Gold' and we won a few trophies – even beating the 'Beverley Sisters!') and when I wasn't doing that I was socialising, in fact not much studying come to think of it! After graduating, I ended up lecturing for a year on marketing, but somehow got into sales and have since worked mostly in the telecoms sector with stints at Cable and Wireless, Siemens and Energis. I am currently Director of Channels at THUS plc. I have been married to Julie for 18 years and have two beautiful daughters, Sarah and Rachel, 5 horses, 4 cats and a dozen chickens. I still play league cricket in Hertfordshire, hack around local golf courses and run the London Marathon each year for a Leukaemia charity. Life's great, but I'll never forget those Aston years!"



Duncan Wilkinson

1980s

David Swanson

(1980 BSc Energy Technology)

"Now living in (sent to...) Coventry after more than four years living in the Philippines as Regional Business Development Manager for National Grid. During that time, I was looking for investment opportunities around the Asia Pacific region in the power and telecommunications sectors – an excellent way of seeing the world and a long way from my roots in power stations in the UK! I've recently taken on the role of Integration Manager for Transco's LNG Storage business following the merger between National Grid and Lattice – an excellent broadening experience, even if electricity and gas sounds

a pretty explosive mixture! I'm happily married to Sue (now teaching in Coventry) with two boys – Richard (16) and Henry (13). Richard has just taken his GCSEs – I had forgotten how nerve-wracking the old exam lark can be!"



Sue, David, Henry and Richard

Gordon Harker

(1983 BSc Building and 2000 MBA)

has worked around the West Midlands for various construction companies and is now running the GAJ Construction Group based in Coventry. "I married Mary in 1995 and we have a boy called Matthew (6), and a girl called Grace, soon to be aged 2. Most of my time is spent entertaining Matthew, playing cricket and football, and following 'the Boro'."

Gregory Wajiga

(1983 MSc Industrial Mathematics)

went on to acquire a PhD in Computer Science from the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, Nigeria. He is currently an Associate Professor at the Federal University of Technology, Yola, Nigeria, where at various times he has headed the Departments of Operations Research Statistics, Mathematics and Computer Science, and the University Computer Centre. He is a member of Nigeria Computer Society and the current Chairman of the Adamawa State Chapter of the Society. He is married with three children, and enjoys badminton and tennis in his spare time.



Gregory and his family

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Jonathan Haslam

(1981 BSc Human Psychology) joined J Sainsbury post Aston, where he stayed for 8 years, rising to Senior Buyer based in their Head Office in London. He then moved into sales, becoming Sales and Marketing Director within the seafood industry before joining his current employer Hoggett Bowers as a Recruitment Consultant. Over the last five years he has specialised in the Consumer Products sectors as a Principal Consultant. Jonathan married his wife **Miranda Haslam** (née Moore, 1982 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) in 1987. Miranda took the Law option within MAS and after graduation went to Bar school. She was called to the Bar in 1983 and has been practising in the field of crime in London ever since. In April 2003, the Lord Chancellor appointed Miranda as Queen's Counsel (Q.C.). Miranda will continue to specialise in crime, though her cases, by definition, are now more serious and complex than those she was handling as a 'junior'. Jonathan and Miranda have two children aged 14 and 11.

Jonathan, Miranda and children outside the House of Lords on the day of the Silk's ceremony.

**Kate Newman**

(aka Cathy, 1988 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) is Business Development Director at CDT Design, a graphics design consultancy based in London. The studio creates brand, corporate and environmental identities and famous marks include work with ENO, the South Bank Centre (SBC), the Design Museum, plus the design of *The Independent* newspaper launch. Kate took the CIM Diploma after graduating, which has stood her in good stead as she is responsible for the sales and marketing of the studio. Her career has spanned brand management, naming consultancy and graphic design and identity, with a year out in 2000 to travel

round the world. "I love the challenge of working within a creative industry and my role means that I am constantly meeting new people and learning all the time." Kate's hobbies still include dancing, food, extreme sports and culture.



Kate Newman

Nigel Harrison

(1989 MEng Mechanical Engineering) "Much of my career has been spent working abroad for Unilever, and I am currently living in South Africa as the Factory Manager of Unilever's second largest detergents plant. I joined Unilever as a graduate trainee specifically for the opportunities it provided for travel and I have certainly had some fantastic experiences. When I first started I was given £13 million to build a new factory for the company in Warrington – a huge task in itself – before landing my first overseas job in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where I was Technical Manager for over three years. I have also worked in France as Hair Category Logistics Manager for over three years before moving to South Africa. I am married to Fiona and we have a little boy called Aaron. My favourite pastimes are golf, 4x4ing in the veld, football, theatre, and I am a great supporter of the English rugby team (even better when the Boks are playing badly!) – oh and don't forget the odd glass of ale!"



Nigel, Fiona and Aaron

1990s

Adam Smith

(1994 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) has been living in San Francisco for the last three years and works as a Worldwide Consumer Communications Manager for Hewlett-Packard in their Silicon Valley marketing headquarters. He has grown to love the Californian lifestyle, enjoying hiking, camping and snowboarding in the Bay Area and the Sierras. He was back in England in September to attend the wedding of Aston graduates **Mark Blatchford** (1994 BSc Business Administration and Human Psychology) and **Angela Blatchford** (née Willoughby, 1998 BSc Social Studies and Business Administration).



Adam and girlfriend Meredith on a recent trip to Malaysia

Graham Tappenden

(1995 BSc Computer Science and German) married Michaela Gutjahr in the park in Bad Homburg, Germany, on 8 March earlier this year. Their daughter, Sarah, was born less than a week later on 14 March, weighing 8lbs 4 ounces. Graham is currently working for Sinus, the IT provider for the Deutsche Bank in Eschborn, Germany. Michaela is a qualified nurse who, until the birth, worked in Bad Homburg Hospital. They intend to bring Sarah up in a bi-lingual environment. Photos of the wedding and their first trip to England can be found at www.graham-tappenden.de



Michaela, Sarah and Graham

Helen Spreadbury

(1996 BSc German and Japanese) and husband **Marcel**

Hawtin (1995 BSc Computer Science) celebrated the birth of their first child George Louis and on 23 June, and just days after, best friends Marnie and James tied the knot. The couple, who married in June 2000, live in London where Marcel works in IT for a Japanese bank. Helen is currently on maternity leave from her job as a librarian at a city law firm.



Baby George

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Louise Batterbee

(1999 BSc Business Administration and French) "After graduation I went on a 3-week holiday to Hong Kong to visit relatives... and find myself still here 4 years later! There really is an attractive buzz of life that exists in this city. I am currently working as a program manager organising CEO-level business conferences around Asia. It's been a great way to meet a whole range of interesting business and thought leaders and political figures and has allowed me to travel to many of the main cities in south-east and north Asia. Unfortunately work travel doesn't leave much time for sightseeing! I never expected to find myself living out in Asia, but have no plans to return yet!"

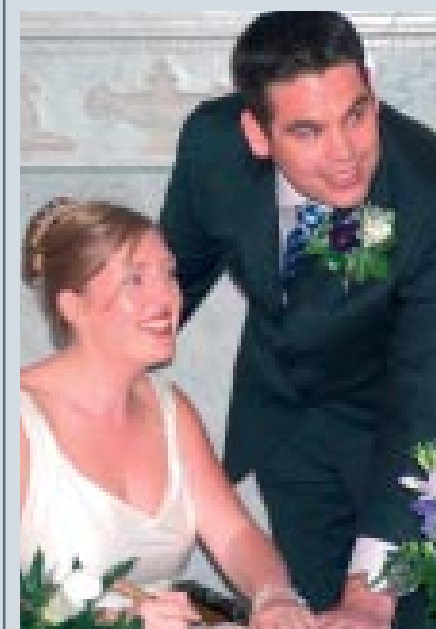


Louise Batterbee

Marnie Byles

(née Evans, 1996 MEng Chemical Engineering and Applied Chemistry) and **James Byles** (1995 BSc Pharmacy) were married this June in Wales. Marnie and James met at Handsworth Village whilst studying at Aston. **Mike Scott** (1996 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) was Best Man. The wedding was a lovely day and a superb time was had by all. The couple now live in London, where James works as a Consultant for Accenture, and Marnie is a Chartered

Accountant at a market research firm. They are expecting their first child in November, and have plans to move to Milton Keynes where James is currently based on a client site.



Marnie and James on their wedding day

Mehmet Kural

(1998 MSc Financial Management and Control) "I came back to Istanbul after graduating to work at Demirbank (acquired by HSBC later) as an equity salesman. I had a few great years but an economic crisis in Turkey in 2001 hurt the business, which is fortunately now picking up. At the moment I am the Vice-President of a multi-national start-up firm, HC Istanbul Securities, which provides research and brokerage services to international institutional clients. I have been married for 3 years. We don't have any children yet, but they are amongst our medium-term plans. In my spare time, I play the drums, various sports, and I also take part in motor sports – my new hobby!"

Rab Khan

(1999 PhD Chemical Engineering) "After graduating I was lucky enough to get offered a job as a graduate trainee with Cadbury in Bournville, Birmingham. The excitement of eating chocolate soon wore off and, having worked as a Process Engineer and Line Manager, I decided after 18 months to accept the position of Process Engineer working for DuPont in Cambridge. This included carrying out extrusion trials using genetically modified soya beans and process safety projects. After two years in Cambridge I was selected for the prestigious Fellowship in Manufacturing Management at Cranfield University, specialising in Lean Manufacturing.

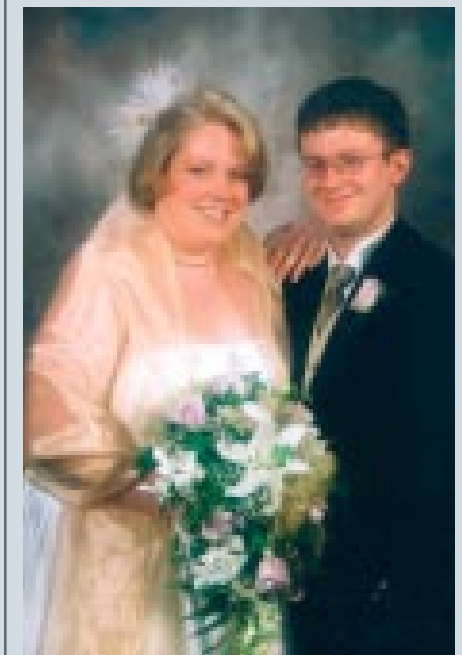
This provided the step change in my career and having successfully completed the course, I now find myself as an Improvement Manager working in a large bakery in Northern Foods."



Rab with his colleagues

Sarah Spink

(née Knight, 1999 BSc Transport Management) "On 28 May this year I married **Adrian Spink** (1997 BSc Maths and Computer Science) in the MGM Grand Hotel, Las Vegas. We had a fabulous time and were lucky enough to be able to take lots of family and friends with us. We followed the wedding up by a week's holiday in the swamps of Louisiana. We met whilst working in a theme park in Nashville, Tennessee, on the BUNAC scheme. Adrian is now a Senior Programmer working for Xansa at Birmingham Business Park, and I am a Transport Consultant for Jacobs Consultancy in Birmingham."



Sarah and Adrian on their wedding day

2000s

Ben Colley

(2000 BSc European Studies and German)

"I am currently on the Graduate Training Scheme with Thales Underwater Systems, where I work as Assistant Procurement Programme Manager. Part of my course has involved me abseiling and orienteering, and I have also been sent to Thales University near Paris for a purchasing course, which involved meeting other Thales employees from across Europe. I still visit Birmingham (mostly to watch the Blues). I've also just bought a flat and I am due to start taking on a second role within my job."

Charlotte Jago

(2001 BSc French and German)

"I moved out to Munich after graduation and spent the first nine months working as a Recruitment Consultant before being offered a

position by a client, which I accepted. Working for the world's largest chewing gum company sounded too good an opportunity to miss! I've been working in HR for Wrigley's on a global SAP project for the last 15 months. I am responsible for 90 expatriates from 15 countries and I absolutely love it! Last month I was promoted and in September I'll be starting a new chapter of my career, still working for Wrigley's, in Procurement and Demand Management in Supply Chain at the EMEA HQ, still here in Munich. In my free time, apart from regularly swimming, running and enjoying the Bavarian countryside, I've been making the most of having Europe within driving distance. This year I've already been to Lake Garda, Prague, Graz, Vienna, Slovenia, Croatia and on numerous weekend trips to Austria and France. Once the snowboarding season starts I'll be heading out to the Austrian Alps most weekends. It would be great to hear from fellow course mates. You can get my contact details from the Alumni Office."

Jonathan Phang

(2003 BSc Information Technology for Business) "Since graduating this year, I have been taking a well earned rest! However, I'm about to start work, along with a few other Aston ITB Graduates, with a firm called L&A Consultants, to help produce an IT benchmarking system for the National Association of Police Fleet Managers (NAPFM). I regularly keep in touch with many

of my friends from Aston and we've had a few reunions already! I'm returning to Birmingham to go clubbing at GodsKitchen mid-October and I can't wait! Anyone who wishes to get in touch, please contact the Alumni Office for my details."

SPOTLIGHT ON...

David Matthias

(2001 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

"After graduating, I decided to take a year out. I had been awarded a place on the graduate scheme with Accenture, but I had to put it on hold. Deciding I wanted to give something back to my community in Shrewsbury, I started working for a church-run community centre. I helped out with such things as schools work and the many events and lunches that happened there, from parent and toddler groups to senior citizens' lunches. At the end of my year out I was offered the post of Administrator and I decided to go for it, even though it meant having to forfeit my position with Accenture and taking a 60% pay cut. I don't regret my decision though because I know that my training from Aston is being used to develop something that really means something to me. I am now responsible for running the largest non-profit independent venue in Shrewsbury and I also manage all aspects of the church, which has a congregation of 300."



Alex Ridings

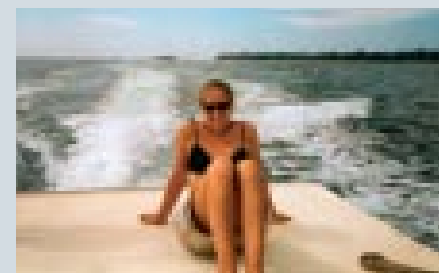
(2001 BSc Business Administration and Public Policy and Management) "Whilst studying at Aston, myself and **Asa Cox** (2001 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) built up a small but successful marketing company called Ideas and Concepts, where we produced and promoted a website called 'Had a Mad One'. The site highlighted big nights out to students and also promoted local

companies, restaurants etc. On leaving Aston I spent almost a year writing business plans to promote to banks and investors the site's wider potential. Having secured the necessary finance, Ideas and Concepts was launched last year on a national scale and 'Had a Mad One' was re-launched in January 2003. 'Had a Mad One' has become a big success with record labels and the 15-25s they are trying to reach. Its blend of magazine content and soon to be high-tech media functions are hoped to make it the next MTV, or Heat magazine at the very least. Recently I have launched a new company called Think Tank Publishing, which has in four months generated an extraordinary reputation as a web-design and consultancy business. Its strength is founded on bringing in new exciting and enthusiastic undergraduate designers. Together we now boast an international client base but where we take it next – who knows!"

Helen Spring

(2001 BSc Psychology and Social Studies)

"After graduating, I went travelling. I started off in Central America working on a conservation project in Belize – and I even learnt how to dive in Honduras. I then went to Australia and Asia before returning to England at Christmas. I now work as a Countryside Outreach Officer, which involves helping people to access the countryside. I have just moved to Bedford, and further to my experiences in Honduras, I have just joined the diving club here!"



Helen Spring

Want to be in Apex?

If you would like to be featured in 'Where are they now?' in the May edition of Apex, please send some information about yourself either by e-mail to c.l.hidson@aston.ac.uk or by letter addressed to: Caroline Hidson, Alumni Relations Office, Aston University, Aston Triangle, Birmingham, B4 7ET. Should you wish to send a photo to accompany your profile, please either post an original, which we will return, or e-mail one at high resolution (250-300 dpi). We are waiting to hear from you – don't be afraid! (Deadline for receipt of information March 2004.)

Our reunions

Strangers in the night

On 6 June we held a reunion dinner at the House of Commons for Aston graduates based in the south-east.

The event was an enormous success with 170 graduates turning out to dine in surroundings boasting over 150 years of parliamentary history. The evening started with a reception drink in the Strangers' Dining Room and was followed by a three-course meal in the Members' Dining Room. After dinner, speeches were given by our Vice-Chancellor Professor Michael Wright and Aston graduate Dr Ashok Kumar MP, to whom our thanks go for sponsoring us to use the venue.



Settling down for dinner

Your reunions

Peter Rue (1973 BSc Pharmacy and 1978 PhD Pharmacy) organised a reunion for 1973 Pharmacy graduates on 28 June to celebrate 30 years since graduation.

A large number of graduates and staff turned up for the event, which was held in the Nelson Building, Aston Business School. Due to its success, the organisers are currently working on the next one to be held in 2033!



1973 Pharmacy Reunion

Fondue Memories

Yes, Friday night was cheese night at the Students' Guild when it hosted the Fondue Memories Reunion on 18 July.

Over 500 graduates from between the years of 2000-2002 returned to Aston to meet up with old friends and relive their student days, many staying overnight in Lawrence Tower to make their evening seem even more authentic! Live band, 'So 80s' started the evening's entertainment and was followed by music from ex-Guild DJs Dixter and Flopsy. And, of course, what evening at the Guild would be complete without finishing with 'New York, New York'. Everyone really enjoyed themselves – though we suspect there are a few out there who don't remember a single thing about it!



Meeting up with old friends in the Blue Room

Forthcoming alumni events...

13 December 2003

Class of 2000-2003: Alumni Christmas Party at the Guild. Visit Santa's grotto in the Guild, boogie to some funky music or get vocal on the Christmas Karaoke! Tickets for entry to the Guild cost £5.00; optional pre-event buffet £8.00.

13 March 2004

AGM of Convocation and Alumni Reunion. All alumni are invited to this annual event, so come back and catch up with old friends.

May 2004

Paris Reunion for alumni living in France.

June/July 2004

House of Lords Reunion for Aston alumni living in the South East.

June 2004

West Midlands Reunion. For all graduates living in the West Midlands area.

18 September 2004

'Forty-five years of combined experience.' An invitation to all combined honours graduates to return and celebrate the School's 45th anniversary.

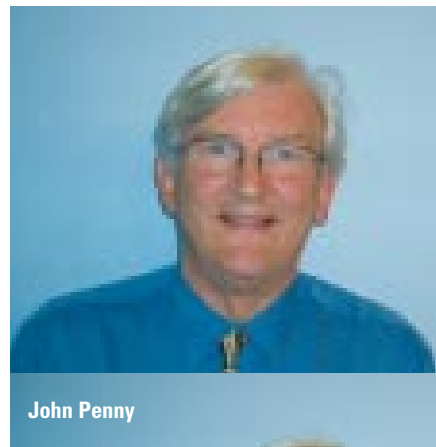
Please contact the Alumni Relations Office for further details about any of the above events. Call 0121 359 3611 or email c.l.hidson@aston.ac.uk Details are also available at www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/reunionsandevents.htm

News from AGA – Jenny Martin reports

At the AGM in March, officers gave reports which highlighted the progress being made in bringing a range of services to members. During the year, AGA members and friends have again supported a programme which included a variety of talks and visits. Mike Wright, the Vice-Chancellor, gave an encouraging report on the growth of the University during the previous year and outlined exciting plans for the development of the University in 2004. The evening concluded with the traditional wine and cheese party.

In April we played host to a ten strong contingent of Birmingham PALS. This is a recently formed living history group who highlight the part played by the 1st Birmingham battalion which saw service in the First World War. The evening began with an illustrated talk to show how the battalion was formed from friendship groups in 1914, how they trained and eventually fought in France. Several AGA members related anecdotes of family members who were involved with the PALS. The group then showed how the uniforms were modified over time and with the changes in circumstances and climate. The group also exhibited an extensive archive of memorabilia associated with World War I including rifles, grenades, cap badges and other items of kit issued to servicemen of the time.

This year AGA was host to the joint meeting with the Birmingham Guild of Graduates. Professor Penny, past president of the Birmingham Astronomy Society, talked of his



John Penny



fascination with astronomy and illustrated his lecture with some amazing slides of galaxies, constellations, stars and black holes. He also exhibited a range of telescopes, suitable for use by the amateur astronomer to view the heavens. The meeting was followed by a buffet supper, which provided an opportunity to renew old friendships with our opposite numbers from Birmingham University.

The annual pétanque match against the village team at Hints, near Tamworth, took place in July and AGA members were again successful in retaining the trophy. Our thanks to the Hints village team for a wonderful supper and thank you for the doughnuts, which have become a feature of this event.

AGA members visited Harvington Hall in September. The Hall has a history dating back to Elizabethan times and is particularly well known for having the largest number of priest hidey holes in the country. The gardens have recently been restored and replanted and were a special pleasure.

Coming up

In the next edition of Apex we will report on David Harrison's illustrated talk about his involvement with the Mountain Bothies Association. This group maintains lodgings for travellers in out-of-the-way places. We will also share the highlights of the visiting Turner exhibition and the permanent exhibition at Birmingham University's Barber Institute.

All Aston graduates are entitled to join AGA. The annual subscription is £5 and many events are free or subsidised. Due to administrative difficulties, some new graduates have not received application forms. If you wish to join, please contact the Alumni Relations Office. Visit www.astongraduates.com for forthcoming events.

In-Touch – We'd like to find

The Alumni Relations Office has lost touch with the following graduates. Do you know any of them? We need your help to track them down...

Kay Anderson
(1984 BSc Pharmacy)
Julie Aspin
(1994 BSc Human Psychology)
Helen Barnett
(née Tucker, 1994 BSc French)
Madan Bhandari
(1973 BSc Chemical Engineering)
Neil Burt
(1973 BSc Chemical Engineering)
Carolyn Bush
(née Watts, 1982 BSc Behavioural Science)
Barnaby Byfield
(1992 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)
Helen Daniels
(1993 BSc French)
Amanda Dinsdale
(1983 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)
Peter Elks
(1979 BSc Energy Technology)
Christopher Fish
(1994 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)
John Gallagher
(1969 BSc Chemical Engineering)
Jacqueline Gibson
(1993 BSc French and German)
Alison Godwin (née Jones, 1983 BSc Business and Linguistics)
Ben Hankinson (2000 BSc Logistics)
Katherine Hobbs
(2000 BSc International Business and French and German)
Emma James
(1988 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)
Sikander Kanji
(1982 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)
Christopher Kearney
(1986 BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering)
Albert Keeshan
(1984 BSc Chemistry)
Sarah Laraman
(1994 BSc International Business and French)
Monique Lawrence
(1991 BSc Applied Chemistry)
Neil Lindsay
(1986 BSc Metals and Materials Technology)

Ruth Lloyd
(1985 BSc Human Psychology)
Nicola McGrath
(1984 BSc Computer Science)
Vanessa Moon
(1983 BSc Human Communication and Philosophy)
Grant Munn
(1983 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)
Stephanie Myers
(1990 BSc Society and Government and Business)
Robin Nayak
(1989 BSc Society and Government and Business Administration)
Andrew Nicholl
(1984 MSc Electrical and Electronic Engineering)
Sarah Noades
(1987 BSc French and Society and Government)
Mallowry Osborne
(1993 BSc Psychology and Business Administration)
Stephanie Prescott
(1991 BSc Business Administration and Computer Science)
Mandhir Singh
(1994 BSc Human Psychology)
Joanne Smith
(1994 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)
Hasham Ullah
(2002 BSc International Business and German)
Sara Ward
(née Morgan, 1982 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)
Jonathan Wells
(1987 BSc Business Administration and French)
Hilary Wilburn
(1978 BSc Business and Maths)
Wolfram Witt
(1990 BSc Management and Computer Science)
Michael Woodhead
(1978 BSc Building Economics and Measurement)
Carol Young
(1987 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)
Richard Young
(1978 BSc Biology of Man and His Environment)

In-Touch – You'd like to find

A number of you take advantage of our In-Touch Service to track down long lost friends. Whilst many are happily reunited others remain far more difficult to locate. Do you know any of the following?

Mary Veronica Carroll
(1976 BSc Chemistry and Physics)
Matthew Chalk
(1992 BEng Mechanical Engineering)
Paul Christmas
(1986 BSc Applied and Human Biology)
Alan Clarke
(1977 BSc Metals and Materials Engineering and Geology)
Cathy Hayton
(1986 BSc Applied and Human Biology)
Michael Hogan
(1990 BSc International Business and French)
Sarah Luke
(1985 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)
Mike Pemberton
(1968 BSc Behavioural Science)
Chris Rooke
(1995 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)
Mike Snow
(1978 BSc Business and German)

Are you looking for somebody from Aston? If they aren't listed on our e-mail directory on the website www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/directory then contact the Alumni Relations Office and we will see if we are in touch with them. If we have a current address you will be invited to write a letter or leave your contact details. We will pass these on to the address we hold. As we rely on alumni telling us when they move on, we cannot guarantee the person you are looking for will still be at that address. We would like to hope, however, that you all keep in touch with us and let us know of any changes to your address. The In-Touch Service does not give out individual names and addresses to inquirers and all mail is treated in the strictest of confidence.

Class of 2000 graduates

We are out of touch with 92 graduates from 2000. Do you know where any of them are? A few are listed below:

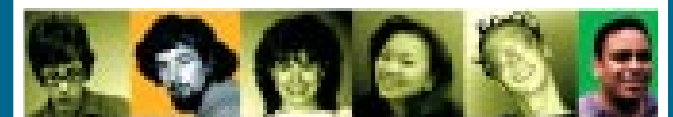
Paul Ashcroft
(2000 BSc International Business and German)
Daniel Bromage
(2000 BSc Logistics)
Reena Chauhan
(2000 BSc Accounting Management)
Katherine Hobbs
(2000 BSc International Business and French and German)
Amarjit Johal
(2000 BSc Applied and Human Biology)
David McColl
(2000 BSc Computer Science)
Catherine Prescott
(2000 BSc International Business and German)
Mohammed Shahid
(2000 BSc Optometry)
Matthew Smith
(2000 BSc Transport Management)

Matthew Springate
(2000 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)
Joanne Stevens
(2000 BSc Logistics and Business Administration)
Mark Stevens
(2000 BSc Psychology and Computer Science)
Andrew Stewart
(2000 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)
Kam Tang
(2000 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)
Stephen Ward
(2000 BSc Human Psychology)
Paul Wood
(2000 BSc Computer Science)
Kevin Woollard
(2000 BSc Applied and Human Biology)

1984 Managerial and Administrative Studies

We are out of touch with 93 MAS graduates from 1984. Here are the names of a few of them. Do you know where they are?

Margaret Allcock	Claire Foster	Adam Rhodes
Stuart Attwood	Jonathan Goldsmith	Fernando Rodriguez
Louise Austin	Kathryn Heppleston	Linda Ryan
Mary Besant	Colin Hobson	Roland Savage
Duncan Brindley	Michael Jackson	Lloyd Smail
Wai Chung	Zaynul Keshani	Clive Staines
Vanessa Drake	Martin Kiss	John Syms
Jacqueline Ellis	Stephen Messias	Ashton Thripland
Grant Ferguson	Julia Milton	Susan Tomlins
Ivan Filby	Sally Neville	Michael Wiltshire
Bryan Fisher	Ko Ng	Mayee Wong
Brendan Flanagan	Oluseye Odumosu	

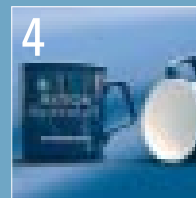


Are there any more like you?

To help in our search for lost alumni, please tell us who you are in touch with from Aston! We would welcome contact details of anyone you are in touch with if they are happy for you to pass on their address details. Send any information to:

Caroline Hidson
Alumni Relations Office
Aston University
Aston Triangle
Birmingham
B4 7ET

Alternatively, give me a call on 0121 359 3611 ext 4525.



To order your Aston University gifts, please complete the order form and return it to:
Alumni Relations Office, Aston University, Aston Triangle, Birmingham, B4 7ET, UK. All prices include postage and packaging.

Item	Description	Price	Size/Colour	Quantity	Total
1	Cufflinks	£15.00			
2	Tie	£12.00			
3	Scarf	£17.00			
4	Mug	£3.00			
5	Aston keyring	£5.00			
6	Parker rollerball	£3.50			
7	Umbrella	£18.00			
8	Lapel badge	£1.00			
9	Waterman pen set	£30.00			
10	Bookmark	£1.00			
11	Coaster set	£12.00			
12	Jumper keyring	£5.00			
13	(3) Aston branded Titleist PTS Solo golf balls	£5.00			
	(6) Aston branded Titleist PTS Solo golf balls	£10.00			
	(9) Aston branded Titleist PTS Solo golf balls	£15.00			
	(12) Aston branded Titleist PTS Solo golf balls	£20.00			
14	Shot glass engraved with University crest	£3.50			
15	Sweater blue or grey s/m/l/xl	£25.00			
16	Crest keyring	£2.00			
Total					

Payment can be made by credit card or cheque made payable to Aston University in sterling and drawn on a bank in the UK.
All orders must be accompanied by full payment. Refunds will only be given if the goods are faulty. Please allow 28 days from receipt of order.

Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Miss ☐ Ms ☐ Name:
Address:
 Postcode: Country:
Tel: E-mail:

Tick as appropriate: I enclose a cheque in pounds sterling drawn on a bank in the UK for £
I wish to pay by ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Switch ☐ Access ☐ Delta ☐ Solo

Please charge to my account:

Card number Cardholder's signature
Name on card

Expiry date Issue number

Would you like to see any new additions to this gift range? If so, write your suggestions here: