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Learning new moves

Juicy developments p6
Branching out p10

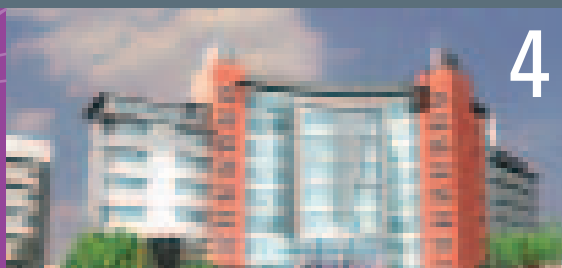
 **ASTON**
UNIVERSITY

You must remember this...

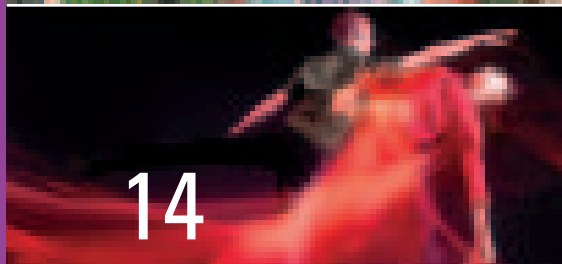


This picture was taken as the Biological Sciences team were about to set off on an expedition.

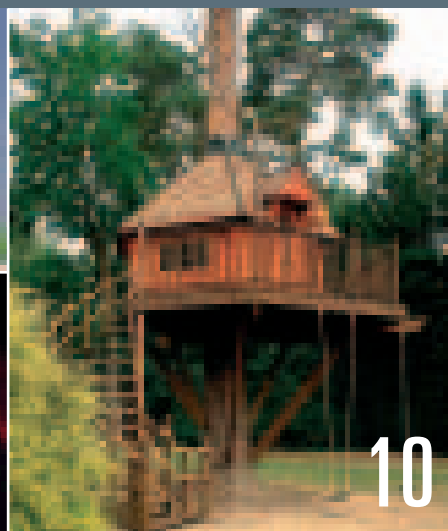
Is this you? Did you drive the jeep? We want to hear from anyone who went on the expedition and from anyone who remembers the transport! Note the former name of the University before it was changed to Aston University.



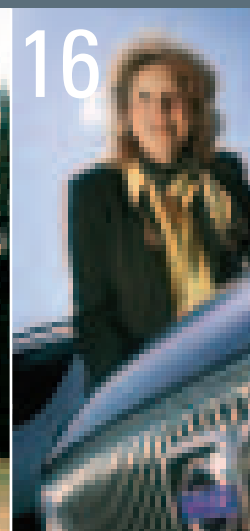
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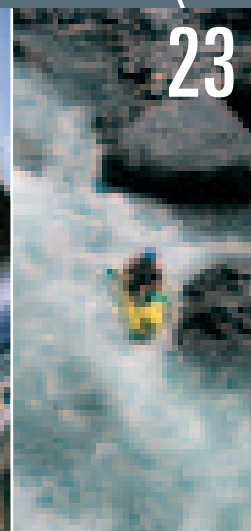
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Special thanks go to everyone who contributed to this issue of Apex. Apex is published twice a year for alumni of Aston University. Letters, photographs and news are very welcome but we reserve the right to edit any contributions. Please address all 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.

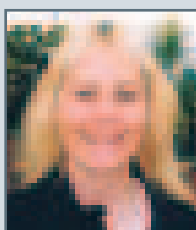
Apex is also available via our website in html or pdf formats, but please contact us if you experience any difficulties accessing our publication.

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Plus

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

For those of you who haven't had the opportunity to come back to Aston University for some time, we hope this taster of the exciting new developments will give you some idea of how your University is moving forward. Regular Apex readers will already know about the new Academy of Life Sciences. In addition to this, building works on campus include an extension to the Nelson Building and new accommodation for Matthew Boulton College.

All change on campus



Extension to the Nelson Building

In 2003 Aston University commissioned Architects Design Partnership to develop a scheme for the refurbishment and extension of the existing Aston Business School. The project forms an integral component of the master plan for the revitalisation of the Aston Triangle Precinct.

The scheme is designed over five storeys and is divided into two interconnected blocks. The new South elevation expands the services currently provided by the Management Development Centre. Facilities provided will include a large welcoming reception area, a new lounge-bar, administrative offices and 80 stylish new hotel-style bedrooms, adding to the 83 bedrooms already available. The ground floor of the existing building is to be

extended and completely refurbished and will include up-to-date kitchen and dining facilities as well as flexible meeting rooms and syndicate spaces.

The new West Block provides teaching, meeting and syndicate areas for the University's MBA programme as well as office space. The design for this block also features separate 150 and 120-seat state-of-the-art lecture theatres. The building is scheduled to open in 2005.



Matthew Boulton College

Construction of Matthew Boulton College's state-of-the-art £37.9 million premises just off Jennens Road has now started and is due for completion in September 2005.

The new College, which will have shared facilities with the University, represents a UK first. It will also provide a gateway to all the other institutions and facilities available in the Eastside Learning Quarter.

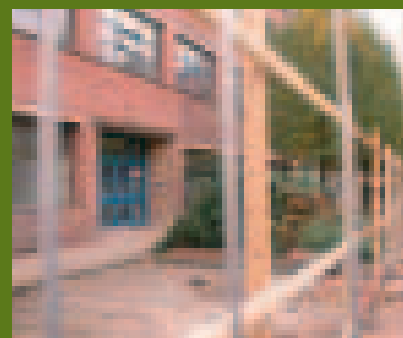
The cost of the new College is being funded by the multi-million pound sale of Matthew Boulton's present site to Advantage West Midlands, plus a grant from the Learning and Skills Council. Birmingham City Council has also been instrumental in facilitating and significantly contributing to the move.

Alongside Millennium Point and the proposed Central Library, the new College will form a key component of the planned Learning Quarter in Eastside which, with the Bullring development, will completely transform the city centre into a place in which to live and learn.

The relocation of Matthew Boulton College to the Aston campus recreates a link that extends back to the two institutions' common origin in the Birmingham Technical Institute founded in 1895.

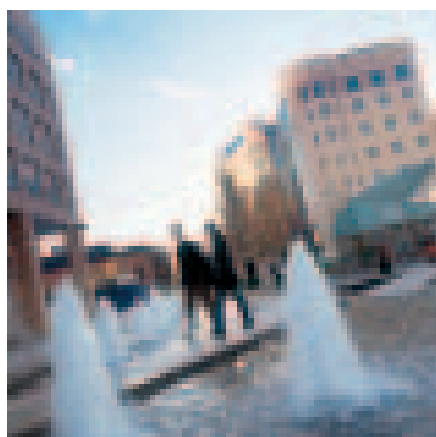
Aston University is already working closely with Matthew Boulton College through the institutions' strategic partnership which is providing opportunities for learners to progress into higher education programmes and courses. The strategic partnership will also have a huge impact in terms of significantly increasing student numbers into the University's foundation degrees and providing a seamless progression into higher education.

Other changes on campus include the demolition of the Sumpner Building, the withdrawal of buses from Aston Street to the perimeter of the campus, the medical centre has moved to the Main Building with Student Services, refurbishment of lecture theatres and laboratory facilities and an above-ground crossing to link the campus with Corporation Street following the filling in of the Ryder Street subway.



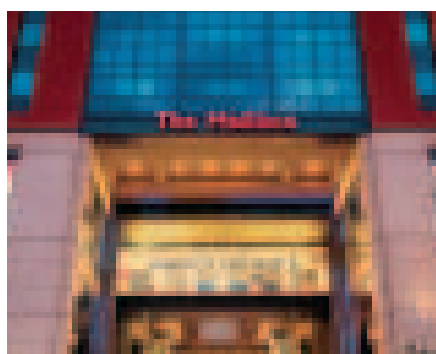
Birmingham is the UK's second most popular destination for overseas visitors who enjoy rich heritage, world class venues, modern shopping and facilities and a fusion of cultures. Undoubtedly Birmingham has a past to be proud of but massive investment has transformed it into one of Europe's most exciting and energetic cities. We've had several requests from alumni to feature developments in the city. So, if you're an armchair traveller, or simply interested in the renaissance of the city in which you lived and studied, relax and let Apex take you on a guided tour of some of the most prestigious developments in Birmingham. It might even whet your appetite to revisit and experience more of what Britain's second city has to offer!

City life



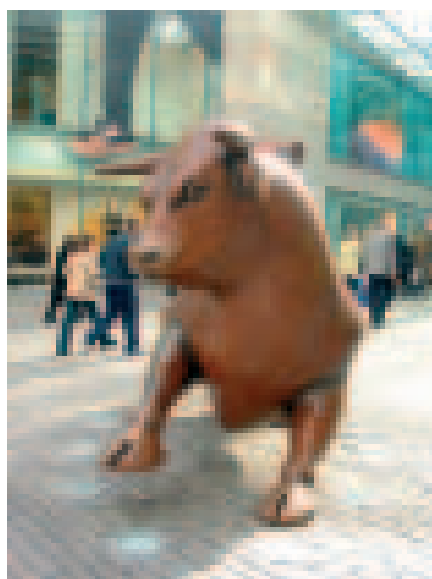
From Waterside to Brindleyplace

The regeneration of Birmingham's western canal quarter began back in the late 1980s and has gone from strength to strength winning the first UK International Excellence on the Waterfront Award in 1995 and the B.A. Tourism for Tomorrow Award for sustainable visitor attractions in 1997. Ranked alongside the waterfronts of New York, Sydney, Amsterdam and Boston, Birmingham's waterside backs up to Brindleyplace's 17 acres of stylish bars and restaurants surrounded by spacious and modern architecture.



The Mailbox

A few minutes' walk from New Street Station or a short trip on a waterbus from Brindleyplace and the avid shopper will arrive at The Mailbox – a landmark development of lifestyle and fashion shops, luxury apartments, two hotels, cafés and restaurants.

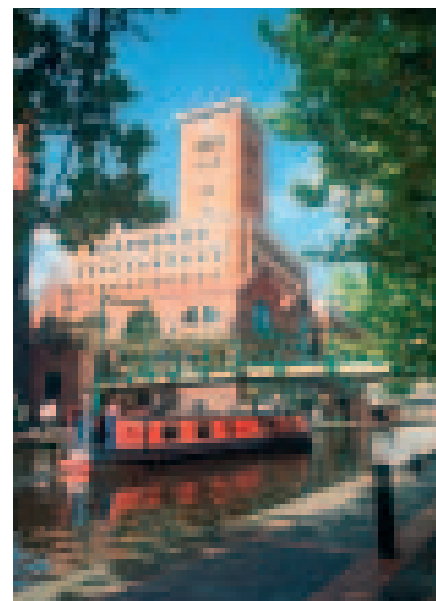


The Bulling

From its early beginnings as a market place in the 1800s, the Bulling developed into an innovative shopping attraction in the 1960s and in 2003 underwent a transformation which has turned it into the largest city centre retail regeneration scheme in Europe. The entrance to the complex is guarded by a 4.5m long bronze animal sculpture which at twice life-size weighs in at 6.5 tonnes. "The Bull" was created by sculptor Laurence Broderick and is sited at the junction of New Street and High Street. One of the largest animal sculptures in the country, The Bull is a focal point and symbol of the area representing courage, strength, potency, dynamism, movement, determination, nobility, pride and the market place.

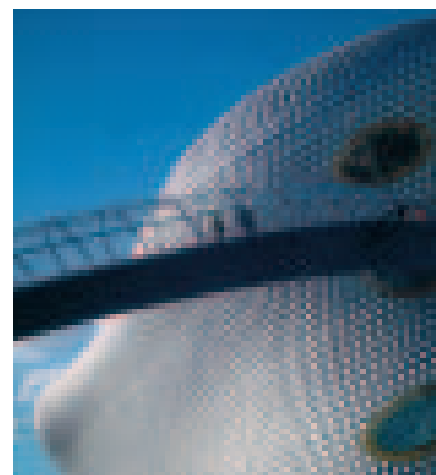
Selfridges

The original vision of 'creating excitement in customers, delighting them with an unrivalled shopping experience' holds true in Selfridges' latest addition to its portfolio of stores. In an attempt to encapsulate the spirit of modern society, architects Future Systems have created a store at the forefront of shopping entertainment completely covered in a 'skin' of 15,000 spun aluminium discs.



Eastside

Currently under construction, the Eastside master plan extends the city eastwards. At over seven million square feet, this development is estimated to be five times bigger than the Brindleyplace and Gas Street sites. The city's industrial past will meet the future with the creation of a new 'media village' centred on the point where the Grand Union Canal meets the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal's Digbeth Branch. Aston's campus backs to the Eastside development area where the Central Library is planning to relocate and where Matthew Boulton College will build its new home.



Experience all this and more in Birmingham. If you plan to visit, don't forget to pop into the Alumni Relations Office and say hi!

If asked to describe fast food, the word 'healthy' probably wouldn't be at the top of your list in terms of suitable adjectives. Fast food outlets have served their purpose thousands of times over for many of us looking for a quick snack. But where can you go if you want something slightly healthier than a cheeseburger and large fries? Bhupendra Bagla (2002 MSc International Business) thinks he may have found the answer – in the juice and smoothie industry. His company, Cogent Group, was recently appointed master franchisee in India and the Middle East for Juice Zone Inc., a healthy fast food chain popular in Canada. Having just opened his first outlet in New Delhi, India, we asked Bhupendra to tell us more about the brand and his plans to develop it in the future.

Juicy developments

Firstly, how did Bhupendra come across Juice Zone? "I discovered Juice Zone during my travels to Canada, just one of the countries I travelled to soon after my graduation in search of new business ideas. My father's company, Cogent Group, was very much focused on structural and commercial developments and whilst the businesses of the Group were all being managed well by experts in their respective fields, I felt that it would be an idea to expand into more retail-based businesses. The fast food industry is a growth market in India and I wanted a slice of the action. Noticing that there was a gap in the market for an outlet offering quick, healthy and tasty snacks, I decided to search for a company that I could bring back to India that would offer a fast food alternative to the rising upper-middle classes of India – something innovative and fun."

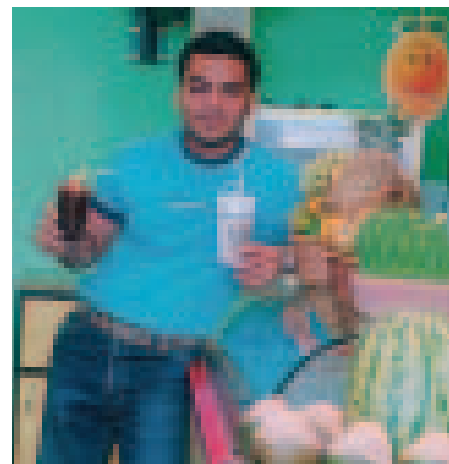
Bhupendra quickly identified Juice Zone as a brand encapsulating all of his ideals: it was young, bold and exciting and the founders of the brand were equally as ambitious and keen to develop it. He also knew that Juice Zone's offerings of a juice or a smoothie (a mixture of fruit, juice, ice and a thickener such as yoghurt) accompanied by a light low-fat snack would be a safe and successful business option for the Indian market. "There was definitely a demand in India for somebody to offer hygienic and fresh juices," says Bhupendra, "but nobody had appeared to want to take on such a venture before." Quite ironic when you consider that India ranks first in



New Delhi Juice Zone

the world in terms of fruit production with an annual output of 32 million MT, major Indian fruits consisting of mango, banana, citrus fruits, apple, guava, papaya, pineapple and grapes.

So how did Bhupendra adapt the brand to suit the Indian market – surely the product range differs from its Canadian counterpart? "It took me a year's hard work to give the brand's components an Indian flavour and one of my tasks was to adapt the entire menu to suit the Indian palate. In Canada you would be offered a range of snacks with your choice of juice or smoothie including paninis, wraps, soups, and freshly baked goods, whereas in India

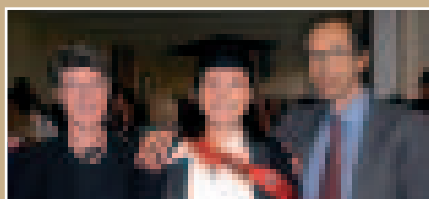
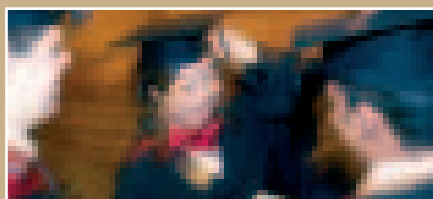
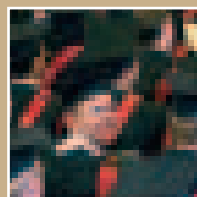
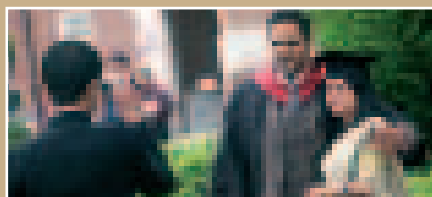
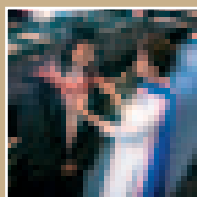
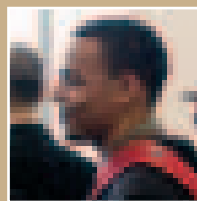
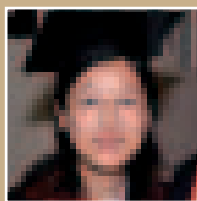
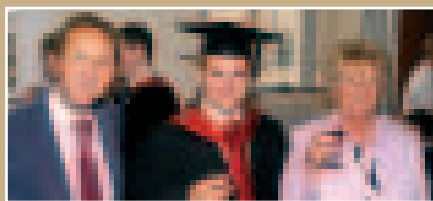


we have such things as baked samosas, potato masala pitta and chicken falafel pitta. With regards to the smoothies and juices, the processes and standards of the ingredients are the same as in Canada, but sugarcane, watermelon and pineapple lassis are some of our most popular items and are products that we have developed just for the Indian market. As in Canada, all our drinks can be mixed with fortifier blends, such as 'energy blend' or 'protein blend' and wheat grass is a very popular drink amongst our customers, world renowned for its amazing healing properties!"

Initial press reports about Bhupendra's first Juice Zone Bar indicate that the idea of offering 'healthy, tastier and faster foods' has well and truly been adopted by Indians of all ages and income levels. Juice Zone India is enjoying tremendous success. So what does the future hold for the brand? "Juice Zone's mission internationally is to be the largest and most recognised juice and smoothie bar brand. Our aim in India is to have a further 24 Juice Zones open by the end of 2004 – we call it 'Mission 24' – and I am currently looking to appoint sub-franchisees across India to achieve this goal." And does Bhupendra enjoy Juice Zone's products? "Of course! I like wheat grass and fresh orange juice, and my preferred smoothies include 'Body Builder' and 'Smoothie Supreme' with a scoop of energy blend."

If you would like further information about Juice Zone, visit www.juicezone.com

Welcome to the class of 2004



Welcome to all our new alumni! That's a welcome to all of you who graduated this year either in March or July and now belong to the Class of 2004 and also to those of you who we've recently caught up with and are reading Apex for the first time.

If you're new to Apex, you might not yet know the extent of the work of the Alumni Relations Office. You will have seen us around campus and you might have been to one of the Network Lectures which we organise. You might even have come to us to be put in touch with a graduate for an insight into a particular profession. Now you have graduated, there's so much more open to you.

As an Aston graduate you are automatically a member of a global network of Aston alumni which is becoming increasingly more active. Membership of this network is free and new members are joining at a remarkable rate – we're always finding 'lost' alumni with whom we've lost touch, maybe you know someone who also graduated from Aston. Please ask them to get in touch with us.

Now you're part of an ever-growing alumni network, what else is in it for you?

- social networking events for like-minded alumni – get your year group back together again
- reunions back on campus (or nearer home) to celebrate landmark anniversaries of your graduation from Aston
- an In-Touch Service and on-line directory to help you find faces from the past – whatever happened to what's-his-name?
- membership of international alumni groups – wherever in the world you find yourself, there's bound to be more like you nearby
- opportunities to put something back into the life of Aston today by supporting your former School, the Careers Service or current students
- a range of discounts and promotions for Aston graduates

For more information visit
www.aston.ac.uk/alumni

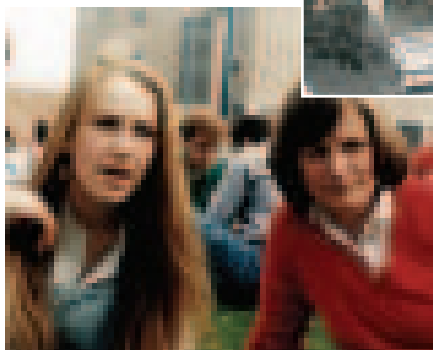
Capture Aston – the great digital picture campaign

In the last edition of Apex we ran a campaign inviting you to send in your photographic memories of your time at Aston.

"Capture Aston: the great digital picture campaign" aimed to get you all rummaging around in the loft and leafing through your albums to find pictures that captured your best moments and treasured memories of life at University. Pictures which summed 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.

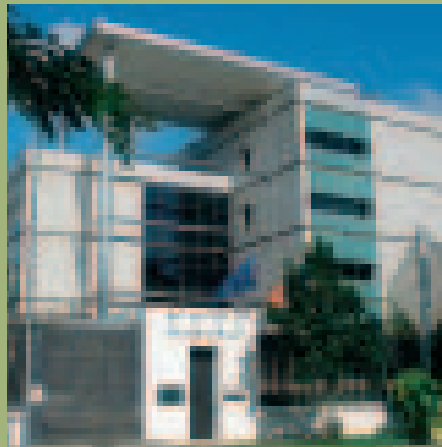
We had a good response – thank you to everyone who took part. We had photos from all decades which captured a range of events on campus. Jessop's, Europe's leading specialist photographic retailer, gave £50 in gift vouchers which the lucky winner put towards a new digital camera.

Here we've printed just a taster of the photos you sent in.



Very few of us have the privilege of welcoming visitors to our city, showing them the sights and explaining how we were personally involved in the realisation of the buildings before their eyes. Meet Goh Chong Chia (1972 BSc Architecture), Partner with TSP, one of Singapore's most prestigious architects and planners, whose portfolio encompasses some of the city's most internationally recognisable buildings which shape the heart and character of Singapore.

Welcome to my city



Architecture was in his blood from an early age. As a student, Goh was interested in painting and sketching; shapes, volumes and spaces fascinated him. The decision to study architecture should have come as no surprise. So the search was on to find study opportunities in a major English City. "I felt that it would be more contextually relevant to the urban situation of Singapore," explained Goh. "I thought that Birmingham, being the second city with the beautiful surrounding Midlands, would be an exciting place to be but also a place which, with its social and environmental problems of the era, would serve as an eye opener to me."

Three successful years later, Goh returned to his native Singapore. Then in 1974 he joined TSP Architects and Planners, a long-established regional practice with successful building, urban design and planning projects in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Thailand and Hong Kong. In 1979 he was elevated to Partner and has been involved in the design and supervision of a range of residential, commercial and recreational projects.

At that time the country was still trying to find its footing as an independent nation although it was enjoying a period of increasing affluence. This created demand for new types of 'upmarket' housing. "Slums had to be cleared and housing had to be built," explains Goh. "We were looking for high density, high-rise solutions to house an increasing population. We had great difficulty trying to convince developers to move in that direction. They were concerned that the lifts may break down and the building would turn into slums like we saw happening overseas."

TSP became one of the pioneers of high-rise residential condominiums – 'bungalows in the air' with one apartment on each floor and highly sculpted exteriors. Out of this successful start sprang a variety of commercial work, laying the foundations for a broad portfolio to flourish: high-rise, medium and low density housing, buildings accommodating high technology and educational, consular and institutional buildings.

"We treat each project as a unique combination of opportunities," explains Goh when asked how TSP approaches a new build. Apparently it's not all simply material construction. "A successful design must fulfil the social, historical and environmental context of the place it is to be located," enthuses Goh. The client's values, aspirations and policies are springboards for architectural ideas."

Goh believes that Singapore's architecture has been influenced by the way architects have been trained. The modern movement has influenced the design language of architects. Smaller buildings tend to follow the vernacular style as these buildings are usually naturally ventilated. Corporate buildings tend to take on the international design style as their function and requirements are universal. Singapore's architecture is slowly evolving from the climate and social needs.

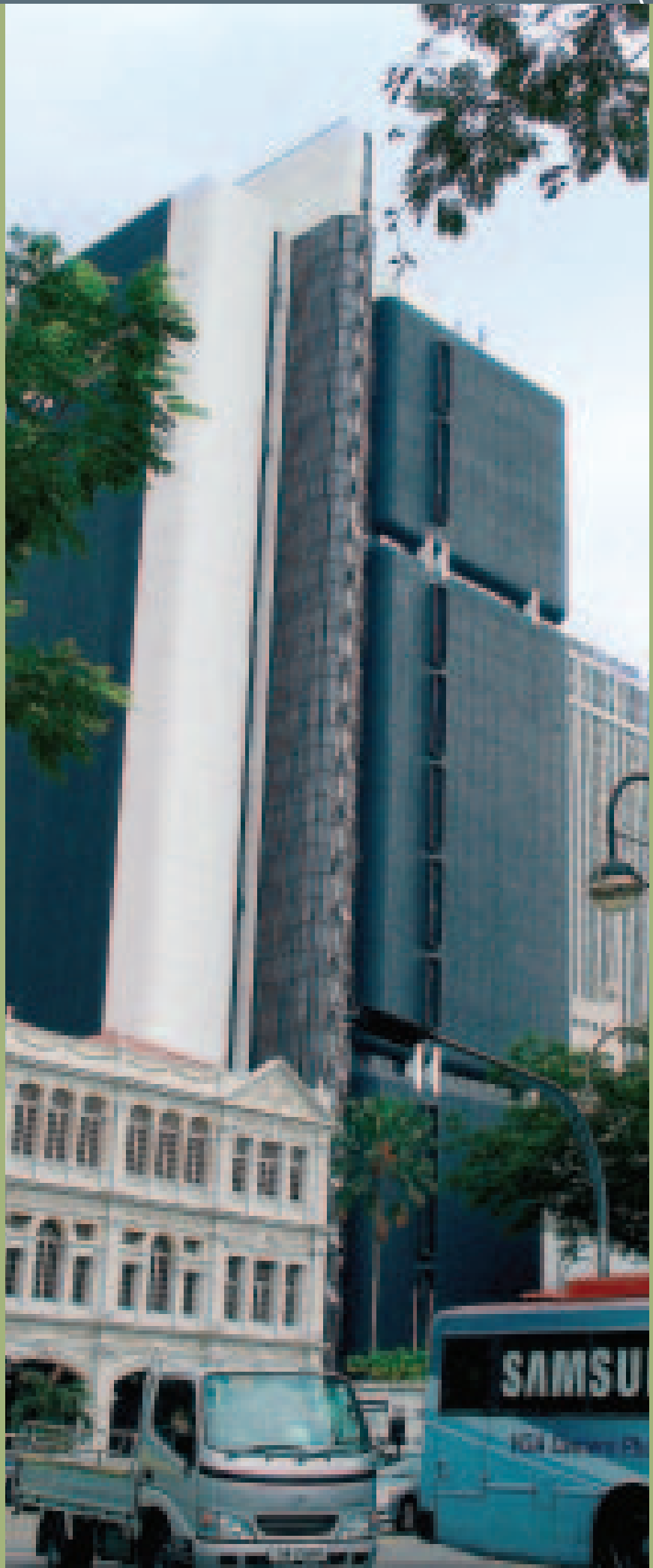
On such a limited land mass, Singapore has no choice but to build skywards. "We are already trying out housing of 50 storeys," points out Goh. "As these




buildings become larger and taller, they will become communities instead of single use structures. We will have to test out whether we can achieve a living environment that recognises our social, cultural and historical needs whilst offering privacy and security within pleasant surroundings and lush tropical landscaping.”

Designs and lifestyles change over time. Goh and his colleagues keep abreast of new ideas through their work in architectural education. “We don’t work in ideological straitjackets,” stresses Goh. One of TSP’s priorities is to understand that every problem is unique and every client is different. Their values have a profound effect on what is built.

With such a personal involvement from both Goh and his clients, Singapore’s skyline is more than a collection of buildings. Rather it is a personal signature to over forty years of professional, industrial and economic development – a strong base from which to launch the future face of Singapore.



Branching out



“Tree houses have come a long way since the supermarket pallet in the cedar tree”

We've got the water feature in the garden, converted the loft and reinvented the barn from outhouse to cosy bolt hole. In the world of lifestyle makeovers, is the tree house the 'must have' accessory for today? Jonathan Dolding (1997 BSc International Business and German) of BlueForest Ltd invites us into his world of luxury tree houses.

Part of Jonathan's work in BlueForest's sales and marketing team is to raise people's awareness of the traditional tree house as an alternative to a conservatory or orangerie. The sky really is the limit with the company's flexible approach to tailor-made tree houses which turn clients' dreams into reality. BlueForest, a small company with a core management of three people, undertakes a complete bespoke service from design and site survey through planning, construction and ongoing maintenance.

"The idea that tree houses are just play dens for children or simply supermarket pallets crudely nailed together is a myth," Jonathan claims. "They have a whole host of uses: an outdoor area for the family to share, a 'commuter-free' home office, a sophisticated area to entertain guests, a quiet relaxation space, an eco-lodge – we encourage our clients to dream." And with a range of accessories from swings, slides and commando nets to spiral staircases, solar power and stove burners, those dreams are easily made reality. But is the tree house a viable option in the British climate? "Wood is a fantastic insulator and the house remains cosy and snug all year round," reassures Jonathan.

The company is devoted to ecologically and ethically sound practices in the construction of its tree houses. "It's very easy for any company to jump on the environmental bandwagon but we practise what we preach and we're keen to set up fair-trade links with projects that operate in Africa and South America."

Fully opposed to the destruction of old-growth forests, the company aims to use timber from sustainable sources only – properly managed forests where active replanting takes place. Wherever possible home-grown timber is used to support the local industry, otherwise wood is imported under FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) regulations.

Great care is also taken to protect the tree. Smaller tree houses are often supported on braces fixed around a collar near to the base of the tree so that no fixing into

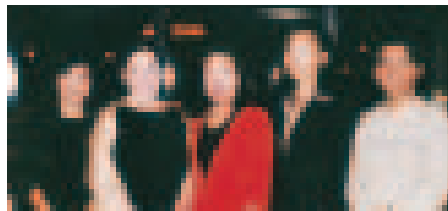


the tree is necessary. Larger tree houses are supported on stilts which take the majority of the weight so the tree is not under any unnecessary stress. Jonathan convinces his clients that the health of the tree is also important. "Trees are extremely versatile and adapt to all types of weather conditions and changes such as pruning and trimming. With our construction techniques, the effects of building a tree house are negligible. When we build, sufficient room is always left for the tree to grow and move naturally. We then run a maintenance programme whereby we visit our tree houses every 18 months to two years to ensure the tree still has sufficient room and we make adjustments as necessary."

So is this type of construction taking off? BlueForest have recently received a torrent of quality enquiries from homeowners looking to build an alternative space which will also add value to their homes and opportunity lies in the commercial market with hotels and community education projects.

Tree houses have come a long way since the supermarket pallet in the cedar tree. Friction burns from abseiling down a rope to the ground below and thick jumpers to keep out the cold have given way to under floor heating, electricity, plumbing and all the mod cons we'd expect in our homes. An alternative to the conservatory, a fun Swiss Family Robinson play area, a sophisticated dining room, home office or even a honeymoon suite in the air. Tree houses are in and branching out.

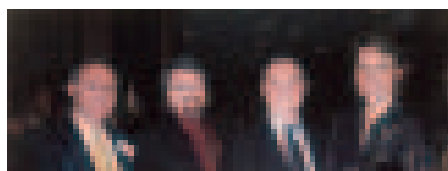
If we were to list our FAQs, the highest one on the list would be, "Where do Aston alumni live?" The answer is easy. "All over the world!" We try to meet as many of you as we can over the year, and here you are – a dedication to those alumni who were brave enough to appear in print.



Our alumni in Taipei were delighted to be able to meet up and welcome Sally Mansell from Aston's International Office. It gave them the chance to hear about Aston which to them now seemed like "a thousand miles away". If you're in Taiwan and want to meet up with other Aston-ites, get in touch with Kevin who gave us this website address: <http://groups.msn.com/AstonTaiwaneseWebsite/astontaiwanesewebsite.msnw>



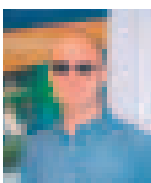
Fourteen alumni and guests met in Delhi. This group is officially number one for the widest spread of graduation years. Alumni spanned 49 years of Aston with alumni from the Class of 1954 and the Class of 2003! Alumni in the area are considering setting up a local chapter. Anyone interested should contact the Alumni Relations Office.



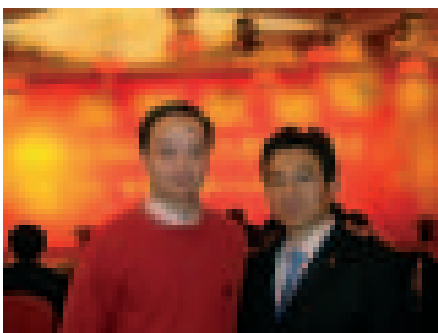
The Hilton Hotel, Istanbul, saw one of the largest gatherings of our alumni overseas. We were the guests of the British Council who welcomed Jo Hamilton-Jones, Assistant Director of Combined Honours, and Rosey Thomas of the International Office. The story is reliably told that Jo took centre stage to announce that Aston was there and was greeted with an overwhelmingly loud response from the majority of alumni present in the room who were Aston graduates. Thank you Istanbul!



Aston staff often find themselves overseas on business and really enjoy it when local alumni can meet them and make their trip more enjoyable. Wendy Yip of the International Office recently visited Chiang Mai where she met staff from Chiang Mai University who were all at Aston some 20 or 30 years ago to complete their PhDs. An alumni event is being planned in Chiang Mai at the request of the alumni there.



Anyone interested should contact the Alumni Relations Office. Adam Head (1993 BSc French) dropped in at the exhibition in Thailand. A great way to help your University or keep in touch.



During the eve of Chinese Dumpling Festival 2004, the Returnees Service Center in Shanghai Pudong District held the annual party for returnees who work in the area. Aston Shanghai alumni Tony Jiang (Xiaodong) and Alex Wu (Dongjiong) MBA 2001 attended the party. Tony (right) is the marketing manager of Executive MBA in China Europe International Business School, the leading business school in China. Alex is a Senior Consultant of Golden Brains Consulting Co. Ltd.



13 November, Ankara Hilton and Meral of Sabanci University captures our alumni on film.

International networks

If you are living or working abroad, it doesn't mean that you can't keep in touch with Aston and each other. Join an international e-group or network where you will find a link to fellow alumni in your country.

International e-groups

We have fifteen international e-groups for Aston alumni living abroad to join: Australia, Canada, China, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Spain, Turkey and the USA. Once you are a member of one of these groups you will receive an email each month from the Alumni Relations Office. Most importantly, as a member, you can post messages yourself to be read by everybody in the group. Go on, ask them what you've always wanted to know. For more information and for instructions on how to join, visit www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/emailgroups.htm

International networks

We currently have six thriving international networks whose members meet up for events and dinners. The networks established so far are: Hong Kong, Cyprus, Kuala Lumpur and Southern Peninsula, Penang and Northern Peninsula, Shanghai and Beijing. If you would like to become a member of one of these groups, please contact the Alumni Relations Office for a members' directory of names and addresses.

New Pro-Chancellor

The University is delighted to announce that Geoffrey John CBE has been appointed as Aston's next Pro-Chancellor, succeeding Sir Michael Bett who has served the University in this capacity for ten years and who became nationally known in the HE sector through his chairing of the Bett Committee.

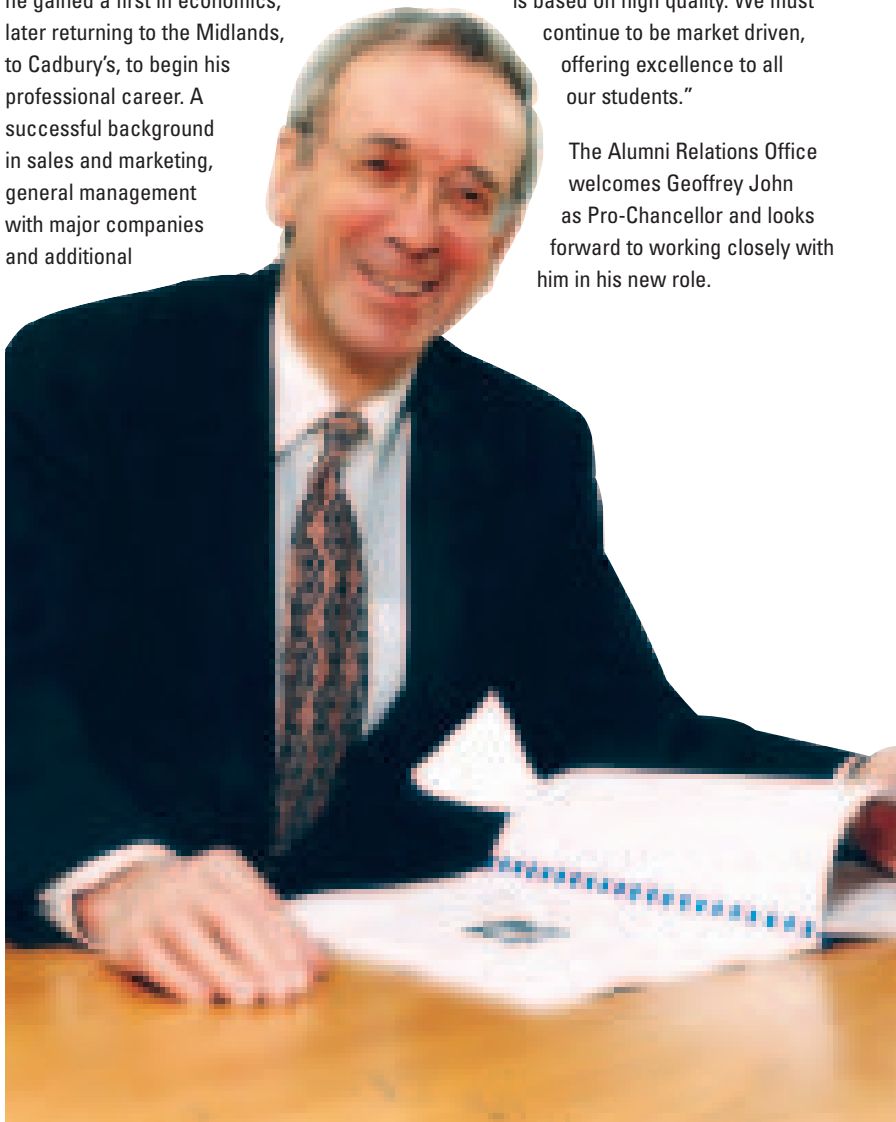
The role is a key senior appointment in the University. At a day-to-day level, a major responsibility of the Pro-Chancellor involves chairing Council meetings and strategy committees which will steer the University through the challenges and opportunities in the HE sector. In addition he fulfils an ambassadorial role, projecting the University whenever and wherever possible.

His links with the region are strong. His early education was at Bromsgrove School before moving to Cardiff University, where he gained a first in economics, later returning to the Midlands, to Cadbury's, to begin his professional career. A successful background in sales and marketing, general management with major companies and additional

experience of the public sector is the perfect preparation for his new role as Pro-Chancellor.

An engaging speaker and a good listener, he is able to distil the key issues from a discussion and focus on the major considerations which impact on the development of the University. Geoffrey John's vision reflects Aston's success in producing graduates of the highest quality. "Our market is our students," he acknowledges. "Our success is based on high quality. We must continue to be market driven, offering excellence to all our students."

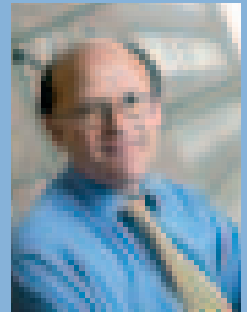
The Alumni Relations Office welcomes Geoffrey John as Pro-Chancellor and looks forward to working closely with him in his new role.



Profile on...

Dr Roy Smith

He began his life in academia at Cambridge University, where he read Zoology. After receiving his undergraduate degree, Roy moved to Newcastle University to research for his PhD in cellular



Roy Smith

signalling systems. Roy later crossed the border to Edinburgh University where he worked as a post-doc at the William Dick School of Veterinary Studies – affectionately known as the "Dick Vet". (This work had to do with cockroaches, of all things, not sheep or dogs!).

Roy moved South and his academic focus onto teaching in 1980 when he got his first permanent job teaching Human Physiology to Health Care students at Birmingham Polytechnic, now the University of Central England. When UCE modularised, Roy took on the role of Life and Health Sciences Faculty Degrees Scheme Director, where he ran a modular scheme for 5000 part-time and full-time students. It was this experience that made him the obvious choice to take on the role of Assistant Director with Combined Honours at Aston University when they too became modular in 1999. Within two years Roy became Director of Combined Honours.

In addition to his managerial role, Roy teaches in the School of Life & Health Sciences, which he says keeps him in touch with the reality of student life, keeps his academic subject interest alive and makes a welcome break from administration. He also continues to carry out research into teaching and learning, funded by Widening Participation.

Outside Aston University, Roy enjoys a close-knit family life with his wife and two children. He is a keen chess player, competing for Lichfield with his son, Richard. For physical and mental therapy Roy spends time on his allotment and seeks solitude in bird watching. A long-term interest in astronomy has been on hold for some time, with a half-made telescope languishing in the garage.

With continuing course developments, research projects, and innovative marketing ideas, Roy's future with Combined Honours is set to be a busy one! The telescope will have to wait.

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.

Learning new moves



What happens to a dancer when it's time to stop dancing? Life has to go on, bills still have to be paid, the dancer has to retrain. But ending a dancing career can be devastating for the person involved. They've been immersed in the world of dance from an early age. Working days have been long. The commitment to succeed has been intense. Richard Whistler (2001 MSc Business Studies) knows only too well the stresses involved in changing career, but reveals that there really isn't anything too scary about learning new moves.

Currently Marketing Officer at the prestigious Northern School of Contemporary Dance in Leeds, Richard Whistler has been an active member of the British dance scene all his life. Following completion of full-time professional dance training at the Royal Ballet Lower and Upper Schools in London between the ages of 11-19, he then went on to dance professionally with the Scottish Ballet and the Birmingham Royal Ballet. A decade of performing, touring, and latterly choreographing, enabled him to see the world and work closely with Jiri Kylian, Robert Cohan, Galina Samsova, Sir Peter Wright and David Bintley, amongst others.

"I started dancing at the age of eight at a local dancing school in Essex. I began with tap and modern styles but was encouraged to try ballet by my teacher who felt that I had a natural physical aptitude for it. I had 'good feet' which could point hard and my natural hip rotation allowed me to achieve the turned-out positions required in ballet. So, I concentrated on gaining my classical ballet grades under the tutelage of Pat Prime who further encouraged me to audition for The Royal Ballet School when I was ten years old.

"From memory, I didn't have any great ambitions to become a ballet dancer, but I passed the audition and at age eleven went to board at White Lodge at the Royal Ballet Lower School in Richmond Park, Surrey. I moved to the Upper School at sixteen where it quickly became apparent how serious the training had become. That transition from Lower to Upper School made me realise that I could really make a career out of this. Dancing rapidly became my way of life and as long as I could perform, tour, and be part of a big company, I was content."

So, at what point did Richard realise his career was drawing to a close, and what support was out there to help him make that change? "There were a number of

factors that prompted my change of career. I had been dancing professionally for nearly a decade; my thirtieth birthday was rapidly approaching (everyone in my changing room was looking younger than me); and I had become a little disillusioned about the company I was dancing for at the time. Feeling ready for a new challenge, I decided to quit while I was ahead, though the outlook did seem quite daunting. I realised that this was going to be a longer road for me to travel than simply switching

good reputation surrounding its business course and also because he wanted to take a straight business course rather than one that had an arts dimension to it. "I had a feeling marketing would appeal to me as I felt it had a more creative aspect to it, but I chose the MSc in Business Studies simply to keep my options open. It quickly became apparent though that it was on the marketing modules that I was having greater success, generally because I found it more interesting and it allowed me to think creatively."

Richard has now been at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance for three years. He is in charge of the marketing and press responsibilities associated with the college's courses. He also programmes and publicises the Riley Theatre, its 280-seater venue which has hosted performances from established contemporary dance companies such as Random Dance Company, Jasmin Vardimon and Henri Oguike Dance Company and has welcomed new talent such as Protein Dance and Maresa von Stockert. "It is very satisfying to work on the various aspects of the business that make courses and programmes of performances run successfully – I do not think I was fully aware of the amount of effort that

goes into these things when I was dancing! I find it particularly rewarding to be in a position where I can watch individual artists and dance companies develop and it is fun being part of the vibrant dance culture in Leeds. I realise I am lucky to still work in a dance-orientated environment."

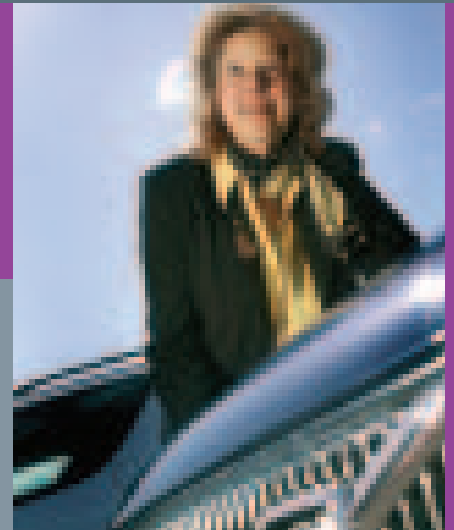
So, are there any regrets? Does Richard ever miss his dancing career? "I have no regrets. I moved on at the right time when I was young and capable. As for dancing, I only tend to dance at wedding receptions or parties, so I guess you could say I've well and truly moved on."



companies or becoming a dance teacher. Luckily a number of other dancers were also preparing to depart, so there was a comforting sense of 'safety in numbers'."

It was to the Dancers' Career Development that Richard turned for support. Most professional dance companies subscribe to them and they assist by offering career guidance, financial assistance and support services to dancers looking to retrain. With their encouragement, Richard re-entered the education market and within a year he had applied to Aston to study a one-year intensive Master's course in Business Studies. He chose Aston because of the

In the last edition of Apex, the Polymer Processing Performance Unit was featured. Here we report how an award of €300,000 will further research into a water-based paint that aims to replace the solvent-based paints currently used in cars.



Painting cars green

Dr Sahar Al-Malaika has teamed up with luxury car makers Daimler-Benz and Volvo in a bid to evaluate an environmentally-friendly paint that could eventually be used by all car makers.

One of the 'unfriendly' aspects currently dogging the green drive is the level of harmful gases which can be emitted in manufacturing processes, and it is here where the current research is focused. The advantage of the new paint over those currently used is that it will not produce any of these harmful gases.

"Its uses will be universal," said Aston's polymer expert, Dr Al-Malaika. "Once developed and mass-produced it will surely see the end of environmentally-unfriendly paints, not just for cars but for everything for which we're now using solvents."

To help with her research, a weatherometer has been installed in Dr Al-Malaika's lab. The weatherometer simulates real weather conditions in a controlled environment and monitors the performance of paint in a fraction of the time it takes under normal, real-time conditions. This complements rather than replaces real weather testing but the two approaches (simulated and actual)

are being run in tandem to gain a fuller understanding of how materials react in different weather conditions. "Whilst the weatherometer produces simulated data we can work with today, it's crucial to study the effects of real weather on material performance over 20 or 25 years," explains Dr Al-Malaika.

With concern growing generally over the potentially detrimental impact our cars and car-related issues may have on the environment, the future is beginning to look green.

Aston University and MoD partnership

Aston University has been chosen as one of only five UK universities to enter into a partnership with the Ministry of Defence as part of the Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme.



Through bursaries, the scheme aims to attract potential engineers into the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and Ministry of Defence Civil Service. Having chosen their preferred service, students will become members of a mentoring and pastoral support unit and, under the supervision of full-time military personnel, gain an understanding of their chosen service whilst benefiting from a number of opportunities for personal development.

The support unit will be commanded by a serving senior officer from the Army who will be a Visiting Lecturer in the School of Engineering & Applied Science. This unique interface between the University and the support unit will enable the two organisations to work together to actively monitor student performance and achievement. The hands-on practical training, together with the academic learning and teaching excellence that Aston provides, will enable students to develop and use their skills whilst encouraging a commitment to a long term career in the services.

Focusing on people and developing training needs in line with career aspirations is an important factor for success in today's business climate. Marketing Manager, Christine Chateur, updates alumni on the ABS Management Development Programme.



Tailored programmes prove a perfect fit

In the ever-changing world of business it has become increasingly important for companies to focus on their most valuable asset – people. One way of doing this is to look at the training provided for key staff in middle and senior management positions. After all, these are the people to which an organisation looks to lead their workforce and take them forward as a team.

Training can take on various guises. For example, open courses, available on an individual basis, allow key people to brush up on their finance, people and marketing skills etc.

The most effective training for an organisation is that which is customised to their specific needs and to which they have an input. In order to retain key staff, they must be given the opportunity to develop their training needs in line with their career aspirations. Tailor-made training is also an invaluable networking opportunity for managers within an organisation to meet and exchange ideas and working practices.

Aston Business School has taken a flexible approach to providing training for large organisations to satisfy these needs. Within our Management Development Programme

we have a highly skilled team of staff, who can advise on the best way forward for an organisation to achieve both its long and short term objectives.

Research indicates that employers and employees alike are keen to have an award for training carried out within their organisation and to this end we have developed the customised Certificate in Management and the Accredited Diploma in Management.

The customised Certificate in Management comprises 15 days' contact teaching time with a work-based project of 5,000-8,000 words and as the name suggests is tailor-made to your organisation's requirements. The Certificate in Management develops key management disciplines including finance, marketing, people and strategy. The work-based project has proven to be invaluable to existing clients in terms of identifying areas within the organisation where improvements can be made i.e. cost savings, enhanced profits, etc.

The Accredited Diploma in Management consists of four MBA modules studied over a sixteen-day period with assessments for each module. This gives an employer the opportunity to select employees with, for instance, leadership potential, to take their training a

step higher with the added opportunity of going on to complete the full MBA. The Aston MBA is available full-time, part-time and distance learning (by video or DVD). The Economist's influential Which MBA? ranking puts the Aston MBA among the Top 10 in Europe and identifies it as the No. 1 MBA offered by a full-range business school in England and Wales.

Retention is high on the agenda for the majority of employers, and the Certificate and Diploma in Management are an excellent method of developing key personnel and at the same time retaining their skills within the organisation.

In addition to this we are able to offer a wide range of customised training from individual modules through to leadership programmes, all delivered by a team of experienced lecturers and consultants. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss your organisation's development needs and at the same time show you our excellent conference facilities on the Aston campus in the centre of Birmingham.

To discuss any of the aforementioned in more detail, contact Christine Chateur, Marketing Manager on T: 0121 359 3011
M: 07867907527 or E: C.E.Chateur@aston.ac.uk



A research team at Aston University has been awarded EU funding of almost half a million euros to investigate one of the most pressing problems in medicine today – the need to develop new vaccinations against Tuberculosis (TB). The funding will allow Aston researchers to identify, design and test possible new vaccines for the illness working alongside teams from throughout Europe.

New TB vaccine to be developed

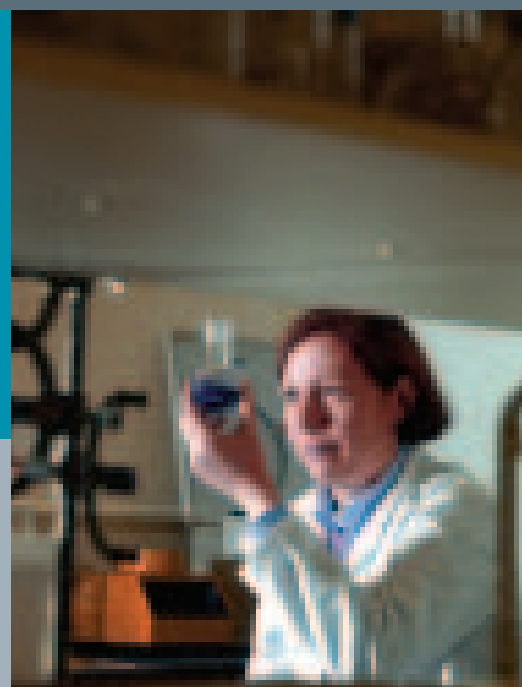
TB is one of the biggest killers in the world, particularly in developing countries or poor areas, and antibiotic resistance to the disease is increasing. With a global incidence increasing at 2% and two million deaths each year, TB demands the highest priority among communicable diseases linked to poverty. In developing countries, the vast majority of TB cases affect the young adult population, increasing its economic impact. Though the bulk of deaths occur in developing countries, TB is an increasing global public health menace. No country is free from the disease, with incidences varying from 7 in 100,000 in Scandinavia to 300 in 100,000 in parts of Africa. In Eastern Europe the incidence has risen above 100 in 100,000 with a high incidence of multi-drug resistant strains. While chemotherapy has dramatically lowered the incidence of TB in countries with robust public health systems, other countries have witnessed no decrease in incidence, but instead, an increase of antibiotic resistance.

For these countries, vaccination remains the most cost-effective intervention.

Dr Yvonne Perrie, who leads the Aston team, explained: "My work is primarily about discovering and developing new delivery methods for drugs and adjuvants (a substance added to a vaccine to improve the immune response in the body so less vaccine is needed). In this research the vaccine might still be delivered via an injection but we plan to develop a synthetic carrier system for the vaccine to improve its efficiency. We will work with our project partners in Copenhagen to produce new and improved vaccines active against TB, by combining the best delivery system/adjuvant available with the best antigen or antigens known. The best new vaccines will enter Phase I trials, a stage we hope to reach within 18 months. We can then produce optimised vaccine candidates for Phase I clinical trials amongst the public in European and TB-endemic countries."

The funding has been received under the EU Sixth Framework Programme, which has as its priority, life sciences, genomics and biotechnology for health. The TB vaccination consortium involves European and major national or regional centres of research with expertise in immunology, molecular biology, genetics, biochemistry, vaccinology, and drug delivery. Thirty institutions, including two vaccine producers, will participate at the start of the project, which will run for five years. Further institutions and companies will join during the clinical trials.

Aston University's main partner is the Statens Serum Institut, Copenhagen. Other teams involved in the project include Oxford University, University of Birmingham, Manchester University Medical School and The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.



Lone dieters have slim chance of success

Aston University psychology researchers Dr Mike Green and Nicola Elliman have discovered that the most effective way to lose weight is in an organised weight loss group.

Their research measured stress levels and mental performance of control subjects, women dieting in groups and those dieting alone. The results of the study revealed that subjects who were following unsupported diets had significantly increased stress levels linked strongly to severely impaired mental function. The control participants and the women attending organised weight loss groups gave identical results, displaying lowering stress levels, and better performance at the mental task.

"The kinds of deficits found in mental function from some diets are similar to clinical depression and anxiety disorders. Therefore it is inevitable that these weight loss plans are more likely to fail. Organised dieting groups are less stressful due to the group support, regulation and nutritional information that they provide, and thus are more effective," explains Dr Green.



Having led the School of Languages & European Studies with considerable energy and commitment for the last five years, Professor Anne Stevens is now moving on to concentrate on teaching and research. Dr Pam Moores became Head of School on 1 August 2003. Here she explains how she will continue to lead the School in its success.

Meet the new Head of School

Pam took her undergraduate degree in French and German (Modern and Mediaeval Languages) at Cambridge and then gained a PhD in French. She began her teaching career at Coventry College of Education as a lecturer in French, followed by a stint at Warwick University when the two institutions merged. She also worked over the same period for the Open University. Pam moved from Warwick to Aston to take up an appointment in what was then the Department of Modern Languages, led by Professor Dennis Ager.

So, what does she hope to achieve in her new role? "Firstly, we want to build upon the fact that we are a languages school with a strong national reputation, and we want to maintain that reputation at a time when modern foreign language learning in the UK is under threat. We're in a very good position to do so, thanks to the contemporary relevance of our programmes and our strong RAE and TQA scores. In Britain, the perception is that languages are difficult, so we need to do what we can to balance the drive for high standards with a sense of fun and an awareness of the cultural enrichment and good employment prospects that language study can bring. The challenge for me is to bring the School through what may well be a few difficult years whilst retaining and consolidating our reputation for excellence.

"One way we can do this is to capitalise on the importance of global English through the work of the Language Studies Unit, recently renamed the English Subject Group in order to make our expertise in English more visible. Our activity on the humanities and social sciences side is being developed too through programmes in Politics and International Relations. We already have a good range of language programmes, including Translation Studies and International Business and Modern Languages (IBML), which we hope will continue to attract top-quality students. We are introducing Spanish this year, so we are now offering the three most popular foreign languages in HE in the UK today. Our widening participation work is expanding successfully with highly regarded initiatives to attract and support non-traditional applicants to language courses. We want to convey the message that learning languages can be enjoyable. For example, when teachers and pupils come into LES on school visits, we engage pupils in text messaging in French and German, or exercises based on programmes such as *Loft Story*, the French version of *Big Brother*. All of this helps young people to relate to what it can mean to master a foreign language.



"We have ambitions for the research side of our activity too. This is important, and academic colleagues are working hard to further enhance our research profile."

Pam demonstrates passion and commitment to language learning: "Studying languages is very enjoyable, opening up new areas of interest. Students can travel, work or study abroad and there are a lot of challenging and rewarding job opportunities for language graduates. Learning a language at Aston is all about using your skills because we teach our classes in the target language rather than teaching French literature in English. Also, the year abroad is a great opportunity for students to grow personally as well as linguistically."

LES is keen to welcome students from abroad. Last year it had its first intake of students from Shanxi University, China, and this year a group from Tianjin as well. The School is looking forward to playing an increasingly important role in enhancing the University's international reputation.

From party invitations to quality reviews, this report from Jane Willis in the LSU will fill you with pride and have you calling to mind the memories of your student days.



A quality review

The LSU was recently the subject of the University's Quality and Standards Committee and we'd like to share the outcome of a recent Review Report with all our alumni.

Programme reviews take place every five years and, although hard work for all concerned, are extremely important as they highlight our areas of excellence and acknowledge our efforts in moving forward, as well as recommending ways of developing further. The reviews involve the preparation of a huge Self-Assessment Document supported by detailed statistics and a bank of documents detailing procedures, processes, quality mechanisms, etc. All this is passed to a panel made up of representatives from across the University and two external assessors, who then subject the team to a full day of questioning and probing.

The tone of the report was overwhelmingly positive and the reviewers highlighted the following features of the MSc:

- an overall learning experience tailored to the individual needs of students and their work environment;

- the philosophy of the programme offers a unique approach;
- a carefully designed curriculum with each module informed by scholarship, professional activity and research;
- quality support from the academic staff;
- the commitment of staff who present a strong cohesive team with good practice shared across the group;
- the Professional Environment Profile;
- the responsiveness of the group to external guidance such as QAA guidelines on distance-learning programmes.

There were, of course, a number of recommendations designed to help us further improve our provision and, not wanting to rest on our laurels, we are currently implementing a new marketing plan, developing a new suite of programmes and restructuring our administrative support. We've also changed our name from 'Language Studies Unit' to 'English Studies' to better reflect a widening of our interests. Watch this space for more news.

News and plea from Jane Willis

Jane is retiring this September (having reached 60) and is settling down in the Lake District in the North West of England with her husband Dave.

On fine days they plan to go mountain walking, cycling, sailing etc and on rainy days they will write books. The next book is on designing task-based language teaching materials and courses.

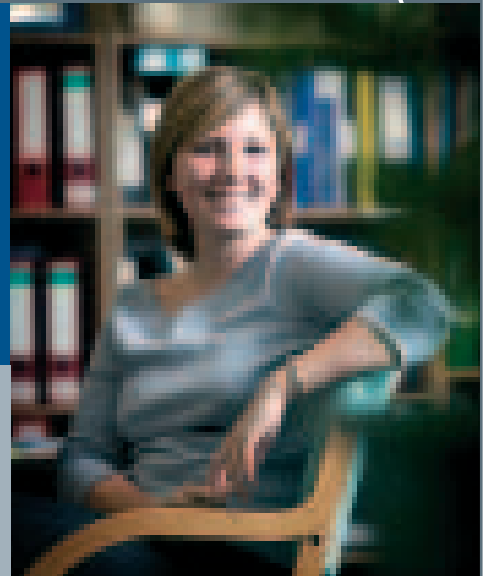
Jane has a plea. If you have ever designed a successful task-based course or course strand, and would be willing to contribute a brief overview of it to a chapter on task-based course and syllabus design, please get in touch with her as soon as you can on janewillis@daveandjane.demon.co.uk Likewise, if you have ever set up the same task in two different ways, and recorded and transcribed the subsequent interaction, she would like to consider your data for publication. You would of course be acknowledged by name.

Summer party

If you're in the UK or better still if you're in Birmingham, why not drop by and see us? The fifth LSU summer school will take place 12-16 July and we'd really like to catch up with any of our alumni who can find time to pay us a visit during this week. Do let us know beforehand if you're planning to be in the area and, if there's enough of you, we'll organise a dinner or event so we can all meet up again. Don't forget the LSU online network at www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/professional.htm Join the message board here, post a note to your fellow LSU graduates and see who else can make it.



Laura-Kate Mapp, Marketing Assistant for Combined Honours, reports on the success of an academic paper which looks at the problems and solutions of marketing combinational study and follows the developments of implementing a Personal Development Profile here at Aston University.



Marketing a combination

In September 2003, Combined Honours appointed Laura-Kate Mapp, an Aston Business School student studying BSc Marketing, as a placement student to help to raise the profile of interdisciplinary study at Aston University. As part of their placement programme, students are required to complete a placement essay, critically analysing a problem from the organisation in which they are placed. An academic paper, *Marketing a Combination* has been successfully submitted in a national annual conference in Edinburgh jointly organised by the Learning and Teaching Support Network and the Business Education Support Team. The paper will be presented by Laura and Dr Jo Hamilton-Jones, Assistant Director of Combined Honours.

The paper looks at the problems faced by Combined Honours in the promotion of their courses and how they are being solved, highlighting the relation of theory to practice. The activities now being undertaken by Combined Honours are intended to educate internally and externally the

concept of multi-subject degrees, after it became apparent that many prospective students found this method of study confusing or simply did not know it existed. This more aggressive approach to marketing has included the introduction of a new Combined Honours prospectus and course brochures, the improvement of Open Day events, the development of a virtual Open Day and holding presentations in schools for prospective students.

Combined Honours is also focusing on building relationships with graduates. The continuing development of alumni case studies is being used to promote the career opportunities open to Combined Honours students. The case studies are displayed in the department and used in marketing presentations and Open Days. A graduate reunion will be held in September to celebrate the 45th anniversary of Combined Honours.

Development of the Aston e-PDP

The development and implementation of PDPs (Personal Development Profiles) is expected to be operational across the whole HE system by 2005. A successful bid was made to the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund in order to support the development of the Aston PDP, a cross-University project which will be based in Combined Honours.

The PDP scheme involves universities and students keeping a record of learning, achievements and developments throughout their academic career. It includes the provision of a transcript as well as a recording of individual students' learning and achievement, at each stage of the degree programme. These records will be used to produce personal statements and to set and evaluate goals for the student. The funding will support the development of this scheme and will allow the introduction of a pilot scheme for online PDP.

David Thompson was successful in his application for the post of Progress File Development Officer and will be responsible for the implementation and development of this project at Aston. David will pilot the scheme with the help of a sample of Aston University students. Initially the scheme will target three sets of students: all Aston University students who are on their placement year, Combined Honours students in their first year of study and postgraduate research students from across Aston's four Schools. The placement group will monitor the work-related skills that they gain while on placement, reflecting on their personal progress. The first year Combined Honours students will monitor their transition into Higher Education. Postgraduate student learning has long been an area that has required further support and the inclusion of this group is seen as an opportunity to enhance awareness here.





In memory of 'Shaggy'

Tom Coniffe (1995 BSc Society and Government and Urban Planning) pays tribute to Paul Wallis (aka 'Shaggy', 1996 BSc International Business and French) who tragically died in an accident on holiday on 17 October 2003.

"Paul was known to so many as 'Shaggy' during his time at Aston. His tragic death in October was a terrible shock to everyone who knew him.

"Since 2001, Paul had lived and worked in Nakhom Pathon, Thailand, teaching English to primary school children. He came to love his job and Thailand, and there are many from his student days who have benefited from his skills as a Thai tourist guide. He was a superb host and he excelled in showing off his new home.

"In his days at Aston, Shaggy seemed to know everyone, whether through IBML, OddSoc, as VP Communications or from just down the pub. His was one of the first faces people came to recognise around the place – a man with an instant opinion, enthusiasm for life and driven to have a good time.

"As the funeral took place in Bangkok, a memorial service was held for him in Birmingham on 15 November 2003. This was the day after his 30th birthday. About 130 people attended, many of whom stayed afterwards for a meal and party in his honour. He'd have been delighted at bringing together so many old friends again.

"Shaggy was a man who in his time at Aston helped to define the student experience for lots of people, and it is in keeping with the man that, once he found his métier in life, he continued to shine for so many."

Arriving at the Guild

We asked several international students to take some snapshots of their first experiences of the Guild. Here's what went on...



Leaving the Guild

"Hi, I'm Andrew Busby, President of the Students' Guild this year. As any past Presidents reading this will know, my main duty is to co-ordinate the Executive Committee and act as the main point of contact for the outside world. As President, I am the face of the Guild and represent students' views to everyone you can think of. Since I became President I have never looked back. I have enjoyed every minute of my Presidency taking the highs with the lows.

"We have had a very hard year, financially and operationally. We have worked tirelessly this year to raise the profile of the Guild and to set it on a path to a more secure future.

"We have just had our elections which has brought home to me that I only have a few months left before I hand over to my successor, Anthony Tuite. I am proud that I have had an amazing opportunity to run such a large prestigious organisation at the age of 22!

"When I finish my term of office in July, I will miss having the opportunity to make decisions which will have a real impact on the University and student life. It will be sad to move on after five years at Aston as it really feels like home!"

Canoe Society

The Aston Canoe Society has been running for over 20 years and is as successful now as it was then. We got in touch with former society chairman, Andrew Smith (1986 BSc Mechanical Engineering) to tell us about the Society in the 1980s, and also current chairman of the society, Martyn Read, to find out about the group's activities today.

Andrew Smith on his days with the Canoe Society:

"I was a member of the Canoe Society from 1982 to 1986 and was chairman from 1985 to 1986. This was during a time when we were lucky enough to have some 50 or more members, though I'm not sure whether the popularity of the club was down to the standard of canoeing or the great social life and infamous weekends we spent canoe surfing in Devon!

"To be honest, I don't recall any of us being that good at canoeing. I remember paddling/swimming down the river Tryweryn in North Wales. On one occasion, our 'A' team even managed to capsize just getting to the start of the University White Water Racing Championships on the river Dee at Llangollen.

"I suppose we never seemed to take ourselves too seriously. I remember going to a university polo championship at Loughborough University and we couldn't believe it when we saw the Loughborough team drinking orange juice in the bar – they were just too committed to their sport as far as we were concerned! But perhaps our somewhat laid-back attitude was why the only compliment I remember us receiving in the club had nothing to do with canoeing at all when someone accused us of being a 'clique'. I'd never been in a 'clique' before and was both amazed and proud that someone had described our group in that way.

"I have some great memories from my time with the club, one lasting one being of an un-named member of the club who managed to collect the town sign for Woolacombe as a souvenir during one of our weekends away. He was last seen walking along the Hagley Road with it under his arm! We should have visited Bude as the sign would have been shorter and a lot less obvious! Other memories include chilling out on a hot day in Bala (doing a division 3 slalom competition) during the Live Aid concert, and also the amount of time we seemed to spend in minibuses, often having to repair or bump start them as we could only afford the cheapest and the worst!

"You may be interested in my latest adventure. It's similar to canoeing in that it involves being wet and tired! I've signed up to take part in a round the world yacht race starting on 3 October this year. Look out for me on the TV.

"You can also follow the race through a link in the following website www.challengebusiness.com"



Martyn Read and the Canoe Society today:

"As much as I love Birmingham, getting out of the city is one of the best things about the Canoe Society. So far this year we've been on weekend trips to Devon, the Northeast and Wales, as well as on numerous day trips to places such as the National Water Sports Centre, the Nene White Water Centre and also Ross-on-Wye and Llangollen.

"The club meets weekly on a Tuesday for a pool session at the Woodcock Sports Centre between 8-10pm, followed of course by a pint or two in Einsteins! We have a wide range of abilities in the club so we try to include something for everyone on our trips and have kayaked a range of difficulties catering for both beginners and the more experienced of the group. Term one provided our beginners with their first taste of white water and they loved it! The river gods weren't kind to us last term with the water levels being quite low, so we're hoping for a bit more rain in the coming months.

"In contrast to the cold wet paddling in the UK, the club are planning a two week kayaking extravaganza to the French Alps later in the year – the land of cheap booze and warm(ish) summers! This has been organised for the last two years with incredible success and is set to be as popular again this year.

"We still have a number of graduates who help us out on trips, so if you're interested in reliving some of your student days then visit www.weloveitmoist.co.uk to find out more."

Aston Afro-Caribbean Society

Ever wondered what the Afro-Caribbean Society does? We asked one of its members to tell us about what they are up to.

"The Aston Caribbean Society is an organisation that endeavours to bring people of African and Caribbean backgrounds together. Our motto summarises what the society stands for, which is 'Movement of Ideas, Celebrating Cultures'.

"Within the society we organise a number of social events, last year's outings including trips to the cinema, bowling, and to various restaurants. Larger events included the 'Divas and Playaz' and the very popular Food Bash. We held our most recent Food Bash on 15 November 2003 and it was a great success, with Aston ACS members meeting up with students from other universities including Birmingham, UCE, Southampton and Bristol.

"Obviously enjoying ourselves and holding social gatherings is a large part of the society's appeal, but we also have meetings where we will talk about current issues. Last year we had the nurses from the Health Centre come and talk to us about sex and contraception. We've also had a representative from the Windsor Fellowship come and talk to us about the organisation, whose aim is to help students from ethnic minorities find employment and to train them in the skills necessary to today's working environment.

"By now I hope that you will see how diverse the society is, not only in terms of culture, but also in the things we do as a society. We like to think of ourselves as a society that cares about the opinions of all our members. We hope that ACS will expand and be known as an established society within the Aston Students' Guild, Birmingham and beyond!"

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 November's edition, contact us at the usual address with your news – and go on, send a photograph!

Where are they now?

1960s

Ahmad Majdpour

(1966 BSc Electrical Engineering)

"I studied Electrical Engineering from 1959 to 1963 at the Birmingham College of Technology, the forerunner of Aston University. I obtained my degree in 1966 when the University of Aston in Birmingham gained its charter. We were the first group of students to learn about the transistor and I was amongst the first to get a room in the newly built Gracie Hall residences. After graduation, I went back to Iran and started working for the National Iranian Oil Company. They had originally given me my scholarship to study in Birmingham and my work was mostly in the field of oil pipelines and stations. I left Iran after the revolution and headed for Germany where I have lived since 1984. I settled in Dortmund but unfortunately couldn't find a job relevant to my study or experience, so I learned the German language, opened a small business and settled quite happily. I have now acquired German citizenship. I have been married for 39 years and we have three children – two daughters aged 36 and 25, and a son aged 34."

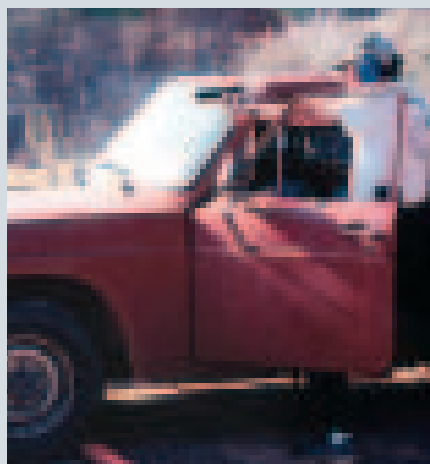


Ahmad Majdpour

Philip Terry

(1968 BSc Metallurgy and 1972 PhD Metallurgy)

"I started working for British Steel in Scotland after completing my PhD, continuing to work on fracture mechanics which had been the topic of my PhD research. I moved from British Steel to the UKAEA at Risley after six years to work on the Fast Reactor and PWR programs. After seven years with UKAEA I joined the US company Cameron Iron Works in Leeds and worked for them for twelve years on welding and metallurgy issues involved with oil field equipment. In 1996 I moved to Texas to work for Lufkin Industries as Chief Metallurgist. Here I have been able to indulge my (probably psychologically questionable) passion for handgun shooting. I married Sue Terry (née Vowles) in 1968, having both met at Aston where Sue was studying library science at the College of Commerce. We have two sons, one working in the computer industry in Dallas and whose wife's expecting our first grandchild in May this year, and the other who just recently graduated from 'Ole Miss' (the University of Mississippi) with a degree in Political Science in December 2003."



Philip at the 2002 United States Practical Shooting Association National Championship

1970s

Khalil Hussain

(aka Kelly, 1972 MSc Mechanical Engineering and 1975 PhD Mechanical Engineering)

has spent most of his life post-Aston in industry. He worked for GEC Gas Turbines in Leicester for a number of years, rising to the position of Chief Systems Engineer. He also held the position of Technical Manager with Altair Filters International in Surrey. For the last 15 years, Kelly has been living and working in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada. He currently owns and operates a small consulting engineering company that supplies engineering services to the petrochemical industry.



Left to right: Kelly Hussain, Glenys Hussain and Cris Mota Soares

Cristovao Mota Soares (aka Cris, 1972 MSc Mechanical Engineering and 1977 PhD Mechanical Engineering)

Cris' career post-Aston has been mostly spent in the academic field. He is currently an Associate Professor at IST – Technical University of Lisbon, Portugal. In addition to classroom lectures to undergraduate and postgraduate students, Cris also supervises a number of PhD students.

Cris attends international technical conferences regularly where he presents papers and chairs sessions on the subject of 'Optimisation of Composite and Adaptive Structures'. Cris and Kelly Hussain were friends throughout the Aston years and remained so in later years. In December 2003, Kelly and his wife Glenys travelled to Portugal and enjoyed a reunion with Cris and Marilu Mota Soares in the Algarve and Cascais, near Lisbon.



Left to right: Kelly, Glenys, Marilu and Cris in front of a 1,300 year old Mesopotamian olive tree in the Algarve

for Colchester Borough Council. We have two super children who are both currently studying hard at colleges in Cambridge – an expensive business but Kate needs an excuse to work so hard! I am a member of Rotary and a keen, but far too occasional, golfer. The scenery down here is beautiful and, although we enjoy occasional trips back to Birmingham, the traffic does seem slightly worse than we remember!”

Serdar Ceylan

(1979 MSc Chemistry and Technology of Polymers)

“After graduating from Aston I really wanted to prove myself in the commercial world and applied for jobs with several companies, despite not being a citizen of a commonwealth country. After several attempts, I got a job as Project Engineer with a company called Clifford Covering Co Ltd (now Shellar Globe Clifford Co Ltd). I worked there for three years on a number of exciting projects, but unfortunately in 1982 I lost my father in a tragic accident and had to resign from my job and return to Turkey to take care of my family. I am now President of my own company, Flora Aromatic, which exports herbs and spices all over the world. Aside from work I enjoy playing tennis, the violin, and painting. I also have two daughters.”

graduate medical school in St Georges, Tooting. I'm currently working at Treloar College in Alton, Hants, which specialises in education for disabled students, where I am working with communication aids for students with little or no speech, similar to the Dynavox used by the son in Jasper Carrot's sitcom *All About Me* on BBC1. Nick is now a freelance furniture designer and has produced some interesting commissions – see www.unicornwooddesigns.co.uk”

Annette Kratz

(1983 BSc French and German and 1991 PhD Modern Languages)

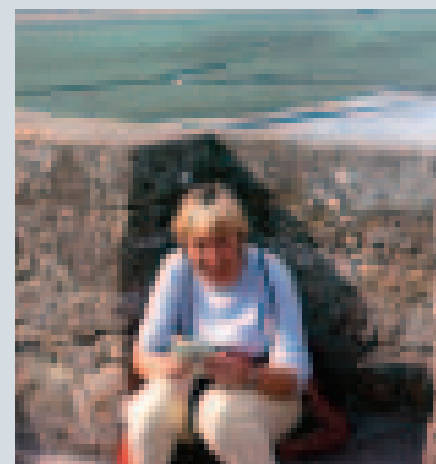
lives in Stafford and works at Keele University. She is Head of the Centre for International Exchange & Languages, where she encourages students of all disciplines to spend a period of their degree abroad and persuades the others that being able to communicate in another language is a key skill in today's world! She is still a keen squash and tennis player and would love to hear from all those who went on the tennis tour to Germany in 1984. She is a loyal supporter of the Birmingham Bullets basketball team and the rest of her spare time is spent travelling, and she and Colin (yes, still the same one) have just come back from Singapore and Western Australia.



Colin and his wife, Kate



Serdar Ceylan



Annette Kratz

Colin Daines

(1975 BSc Environmental Health)

“I worked for Kettering Borough Council during my time at Aston and went back there for two years after graduating. I then returned to work in Solihull where I married Kate, who I met whilst she trained as a teacher in Walsall. I remember playing badminton in one of the first new buildings built at Aston when terraced houses and scruffy factory units were still scattered around the campus. I am now living on the Essex/Suffolk border where I work as Environmental Protection Service Manager

1980s

Sue Tupper (née Wareing,
1981 BSc Biological Sciences)

“I'm married to Nick Tupper (1980 BSc Architecture and Computer Studies). Having lived in Norway for 15 months, we have since settled back in the UK and had a family of three sons, now aged 16, 14 and 11. I am currently studying for my GAMSAT exam to get into

Simon Harrop

(1987 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

“I am now Managing Director of a small but growing marketing consultancy which specialises in promoting products through sense of smell. We export through 17 distributors to over 25 countries worldwide. We are the only company in the world doing what we do and have received awards for innovation and doubled our turnover in the last 3 years. I have fond memories of Aston

because it mixed an academic approach with a real-world approach to business with a melting pot of backgrounds."



Simon with his wife, Sarah

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Sandy Scott

(1986 BSc Business Administration and German)



"I moved to Paris straight after my degree and fell in love with France. I was lucky enough to stumble upon a position at an international record company and spent the next 9 years marketing American labels (A&M, Geffen) in Europe and France, working with artists like Sonic Youth, Nirvana, Beck and Barry White. In 1996 I travelled around the world before moving to Amsterdam for 3½ years, where I worked as a freelance graphics/web designer, with a little interior decoration and sailing thrown in. Homesick for France I moved back in time for the new millennium and passed my boating licence for the Seine. I got a call to work at Canal Plus TV as a music programmer/journalist on long running live talk show Nulle Part Ailleurs. Preferring to work from home, I edged myself into translating, lyric adaptation, and some music journalism, while doing up a garret flat from A to Z – I am now a top electrician and all-round handywoman! Later in the year I am moving to Nagoya, Japan, for three years to join my man who works as an engineer out there. I will teach English initially, as my Japanese is still rudimentary. After Japan we hope to build an off-grid house somewhere on the planet."

Nick Winter

(1987 BSc Chemical Engineering)

"After leaving Aston I followed a fairly traditional route doing projects and operations management within fine chemicals, petrochemicals, flavours and fragrances, before starting consultancy for pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical companies. During this time I met and married Nicky who is pictured celebrating 2004 with our children Holly and Rowan. Just over two years ago we started our own consultancy www.2020MS.com. We do team facilitation, project management, strategic planning and project disaster recovery. There's never a dull moment. Chemical engineering at Aston gave me a great start!"



Nicky, Holly, Rowan and Nick

Charles Harry

(1988 BSc French and German)

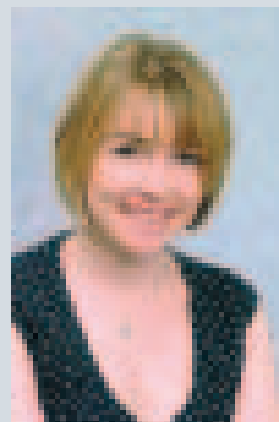
is the Assistant Principal at Mander Portman Woodward College, Birmingham, where he teaches English, French and German. He is also a member of a local amateur theatre company called MDCC. Last year, Charles directed a production of *The Taming of the Shrew* which toured around Midlands' venues and to Wales. The company has a long-standing cultural exchange with a group in Frankfurt, Germany, and has the longest running link of its kind between the two cities.

Deborah Layton

(1989 BSc Pharmacy and 1998 MPhil Pharmacy)

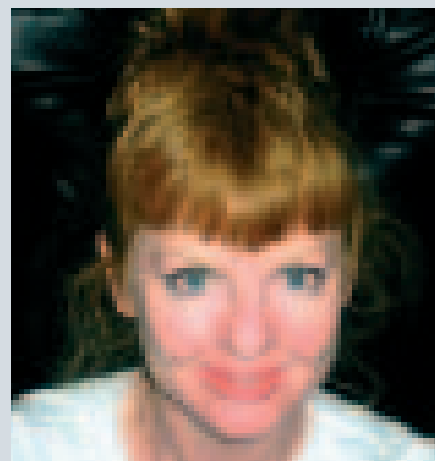
registered with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain in 1990. She worked for four years as a retail manager for an independent chemist chain in the Midlands, whilst undertaking a postgraduate programme of research into pharmacokinetics of platinum analogues based at Aston University and City Hospital, Birmingham. Deborah moved to Southampton in 1994, working in both retail and hospital pharmacy sectors, and was awarded her MPhil in 1998. Deborah joined the Drug Safety Research Unit, a registered independent charity operating in association with the University of Portsmouth, as a Research Pharmacist in February 1999. She is actively involved in post-marketing surveillance

studies of selected newly licensed drugs (www.dsru.org), designing and undertaking pharmacoepidemiological studies including examining the pharmacogenetics of adverse drug reactions. She is currently enrolled at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands for her PhD in Pharmacoepidemiology. Deborah has nearly 20 publications in peer review journals and has presented at a number of national and international scientific conferences.



Deborah Layton

1990s



Teresa Collins

Teresa Collins

(1990 BSc Business Administration and French)

"My degree set me well on my way for an exciting career in France. I spent my year out in 1998 teaching English in a village in France, which is where I met my partner. I returned to France after my finals and took the first job to come my way as a bilingual receptionist. I later became a Marketing Assistant for the same international company and then a Translator

for a small Parisian firm. I then moved on to become the Executive Assistant to the Senior Paris Partner of Price Waterhouse Tax and Legal and in 1995, joined Hertz Lease France as Assistant to the General Manager. At that time there were only 60 people on the payroll and one of my key roles was to develop the Human Resources Department. I then became HR Manager of the company which merged with ALD Automotive, a branch of the French banking group, Société Générale. After the merge, which took place in October 2003, I was appointed Vice HR Director of the French company which today has 650 members of staff on the payroll. Unfortunately I do not use my English very much today at work but, after all, I did choose to settle in France!"



Miltiades Michaelas

Miltiades Michaelas

(1990 BSc Management and Computer Science)

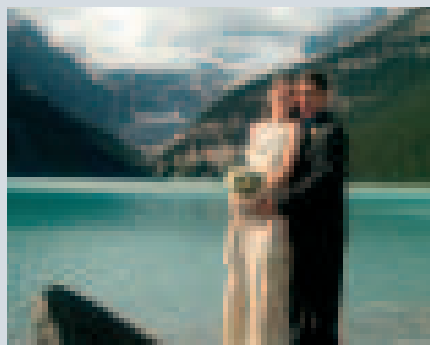
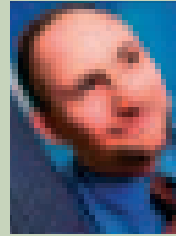
"After graduating, I studied for an MBA at Nottingham University in Financial Studies, during which time I got engaged to my wife, Despo. I returned to Cyprus in 1992 and joined Cyprus Popular Bank, an associate of HSBC. Very early on I became involved in launching the first factoring company in Cyprus for the Laiki Group, and following a successful three years I moved internally to the Corporate Lending Department of the Bank, climbing quickly to the position of Manager, Nicosia Unit. I also became involved in investment banking projects and lectured in finance and management. In 1999 I moved to the largest local petroleum company in Cyprus with a mission to float the company on the Cyprus Stock Exchange, which was achieved in late 2000. I returned to the Laiki Bank Group in 2001 and took over the role of General Manager for its Australian retail bank subsidiary and moved to Australia with my wife and two lovely daughters, Eleni (7) and Ioanna (11). We love Australia, but miss Cyprus too and hope to move back in 2005. I'd like to get in touch with my flat mates from my first two years at Aston. Email the Alumni Relations Office at alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk if you would like my contact details."

SPOTLIGHT ON...

James Robertson

(1991 BSc Transport Management and 1993 MSc Information Technology)

"I have just launched my own company, Arkwright Consulting, delivering online and offline marketing solutions. We've just completed the West Midlands Graduate Fair website where we helped Birmingham Forward try to keep West Midlands graduates in the West Midlands region – being an Aston graduate who has stayed in the West Midlands obviously helped to secure one of our most prestigious contracts to date! Business is booming and we seem to be one of the few web agencies guaranteeing that the sites we produce for customers will bring in more in the way of revenue than the site cost to create. My wife Vanessa and I are expecting our first baby in August and we recently moved house to a gorgeous three-floored, five-bedroom Victorian terrace in Edgbaston. It has a huge garden which seems custom designed for kids to roam around in! Life's going great. If you'd like further information on my company, visit www.arkwrightconsulting.co.uk"



Joanna and Paul on their wedding day

Joanna Franks

(née Cartwright, 1994 BSc Human Psychology)

"I am currently putting to very good use the more professional skills I learned working on the Birmingham Sun. As a publications editor for RNIB I write and edit several magazines for blind and partially sighted readers. It's fantastic to be in a job that is satisfying on so many levels – even if I can't work with a slowly emptying pint glass next to my keyboard any more! In my spare time I'm still a voracious

reader, but I also enjoy gardening, cycling with my husband Paul (we married in Canada, in September 2001) and being Sam Fisher (if you have to ask, you haven't got an X-box in the house)."

Karen Antoinette Pierre

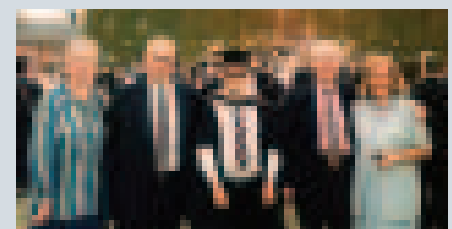
(1995 MBA)

was recruited soon after graduating as the first CEO of the Tobago Regional Health Authority, one of the newly developed RHAs in the reform of the Trinidad and Tobago Health Sector. During this period she had her only child, a boy, called Lloyd. At the end of 1998, she relocated to Trinidad where she worked for a short period reviewing the operations of the only tertiary level health facility in the public sector (the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex), to facilitate the optimisation of the facility within severe budgetary constraints. After a one year career break and part-time lecturing (in nutrition, dietetics and management) at the University of the West Indies, she has assumed full-time responsibility for the coordination of the Dietetics Internship Programme and a Teaching Load. Her present responsibilities utilise her clinical and management training and experience in new and challenging ways.

Dexter Lee

(1997 BSc French and German)

graduated with an MA in Playwriting from Goldsmiths College, University of London, on 3 September 2003. Everything came and went without a hitch. Among the guests at the ceremony were two alumni and their wives from St Andrews University, Dexter's other Alma Mater.



Dexter Lee with fellow St Andrews alumni and their wives

Hugh Edgley

(1996 BSc Transport Management)

"On 1 November 2003, I married Rachael Lapping who I'd met at the end of my placement year with Blakes Chilled Distribution – the advantages of Aston's speciality sandwich courses can clearly be seen! Leaving my graduate job with Wincanton, I had five years more logistics business development experience with P&O Trans European Ltd in Ipswich, until Wincanton acquired P&O Trans European. After an enforced job change, I am enjoying myself as Logistics Planning

Manager for Arla Foods (the people behind Lurpak, Anchor Butter and lots of milk) improving the running of their warehouses and pushing my career up a few gears. Arla has recently merged in the UK with Express Dairies, which adds to the challenge. The Aston Speological Society (ASS), or caving club, had one of its last heydays during my time at University and the group provides a valuable link back to my Aston days. The group, some of whom are in the photo, is in regular contact and active, walking, skiing, socialising, if not so very often caving! Rachael and I recovered from our hectic year during our December honeymoon in Singapore and New Zealand, which included a stay with Steve Jay (1996 PhD Electrical Engineering)."



Left to right: Miles Doughty (2001 MEng Chemical Engineering), Martin Pyne (1996 BSc Transport Management), Tristan Tapper (2000 PhD Chemistry), Andrew Lillington (1998 MEng Civil Engineering), Daniel Fisher (1995 BSc Transport Management), Rachael, Andrew Knight (1996 BSc Transport Management), Hugh, Lesley Haig (1996 BSc Human Psychology), David Wrigglesworth (1996 BSc Applied and Human Biology), Jo Barber (1999 BSc International Business and French and German).



Jake

Jake Van Den Dries

(1999 MSc Risk Management and Safety Technology)

"Life changed significantly after graduation. My offshore oil industry career took me from the North Sea to the USA, then to Singapore and now Rio de Janeiro. Initially involved in the

HSE aspects of the design and preparations for operations of an FPSO (Floating Production Storage and Offloading facility) project, I now enjoy life and work as HSE Manager Brazil for Shell Exploration & Production Americas."

Dan Parfitt

(1999 BEng Mechanical Engineering)

"After graduating I went to BAe Systems Flight Training in Prestwick, just outside Glasgow. I was there for 5 months before moving with the training centre to Jerez, near Seville in southern Spain. I spent 10 months there, leaving with a commercial pilot's licence. From Spain I went to work flying the Jetstream 41 (a 29-seat turboprop aircraft) for BACitiexpress in Cardiff for 2 years and Newcastle for 6 months. I now work for MyTravel Airways in Manchester flying the Airbus A320 and A321 (180 and 220 seats respectively). I married Louise in April and we live in Wilmslow."

2000s

Sarah Biasco

(2000 BSc Psychology and Business Administration)

"Since graduating I've moved to London, lived in six flats and worked in four jobs! I had a brief spell in market research before moving into office management for an engineering firm. I then worked at the Science Museum where I got to see all the big exhibitions for free! Last year, I took some time out to stay in Valencia to learn Spanish, which was lots of fun. I'm now back in London working for the charity Christian Aid in the Human Resources department. I am hoping to study for a CIPD qualification in Training and Development. I'm also feeling more ready to settle down after such a hectic three years!"

David Norman

(2002 MEng Electronic Systems Engineering)

"I started at Aston in 1997 on the STEPs foundation course. I carried on to the Electrical and Electronic BEng programme, and after receiving good first year results was asked to continue on the MEng Electronics System Engineering Programme. Having graduated in 2002, I am still at Aston and currently in year two of my PhD with the Photonics Research Group."

Simon Hall

(2003 BSc International Business and French)

"After graduating, I joined the European Management Development Programme with GE Capital. My first seven months were based in Shannon, the west of Ireland, as a team leader. The role involved both managing a team of around ten people, as well as delivering

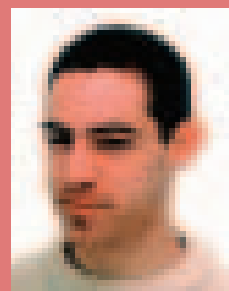
quality improvement processes within the Irish services of the GE Capital business. It was a challenge, but as a native of Ireland I enjoyed getting back into the swing of life over there! In April 2004, I moved to Leeds for my second rotation as a sourcing manager. My goals for this new position include assisting with the delivery of a purchase base target of £142.8m for 2004; developing supplier cost baselines; modelling supplier cost structures; developing process/tools for supplier spend management and sourcing metrics development and enabling digitisation of process."

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Tim Bayton

(2002 BSc French and German with Translation Studies)

"During my final year at Aston, I began working as a freelance translator for a machinery manufacturer in



Germany, where I had worked in the summer following my placement. After finishing University, I began to look for opportunities to expand this and find more clients. At the same time, being unsure if I wanted to be self-employed, I applied for several in-house positions and was shortlisted for a job as a German-English translator at the German Foreign Office in Berlin. However, given that my own business was starting to look viable, and I had already returned to England, I opted for the freedom of self-employment. I continue to work from home as an independent interpreter and translator and can be found on the Internet at www.TimBayton.co.uk

Want to be in Apex?

If you would like to be featured in 'Where are they now?' in the November edition of Apex, please send some information about yourself either by email to alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk or by letter addressed to: 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 email one at high resolution (250-300 dpi). We are waiting to hear from you – don't be afraid! (Deadline for receipt of information September 2004.)

Our Reunions

Alumni Christmas Party 2003

It may seem like a long time ago now, but on 13 December the Alumni Relations Office held its first ever Christmas Party at the Students' Guild. Aimed at graduates from the last four years, over 400 people returned for the event and much fun was had dancing away to cheesy tunes, singing Christmas karaoke and meeting up with old friends.



Christmas Party 2003 (photo courtesy of Simon Clifford)

AGM of Convocation



Lunchtime at the AGM

The Annual General Meeting of Convocation was held on 13 March with over 100 alumni and their guests returning for the event. Aston alumni were invited to attend the morning AGM, where they heard from the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Wright, about the University's vision and forward strategy and its achievements over the past twelve months. Guests were taken on an alternative visit to a glass blowing workshop, after which everyone met up for a relaxed and

informal lunch. In the afternoon, Drs Anthony Hilton and Peter Lambert showed alumni around their laboratories where they are developing research into MRSA – the 'Hospital Superbug'.

Forthcoming alumni events...

17 July 2004

Reunion for all alumni living in the West Midlands at the Heritage Motor Museum, Warwickshire.

Tickets are priced at £36 per person, which includes free entrance to the museum followed by a three-course dinner in the Kestrel Rooftop Restaurant. Transport to the venue costs an additional £8 per person.

13 September 2004

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

Tickets are priced at £35 per person for a drinks reception and canapés.

18 September 2004

'Forty-Five Years of Combined Experience.'

An invitation to all Combined Honours graduates to return to Aston and celebrate the School's 45-year anniversary. Tickets are priced at £32 per head for a cocktail reception and a sit-down meal.

19 March 2005

AGM of Convocation.

18 June 2005

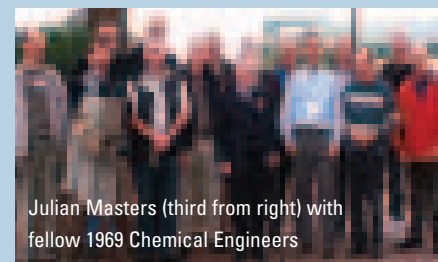
Reunion dinner and dance at the Lakeside Conference Centre to celebrate 20, 25 and 30 years since graduation. So, if you graduated in 1975, 1980 or 1985, keep your eyes peeled for further information!

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

Your Reunions

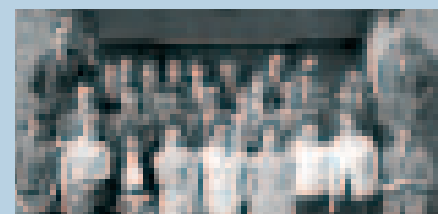
Julian Masters (1969 BSc Chemical Engineering) organised a reunion for 1969 Chemical Engineering graduates in October called the 'Sixty Niners' Reunion'. Julian tells us more about the day:

"This was the first reunion we'd had in 34 years and what an unforgettable time we had! Held at Aston Business School, 36 former students, staff and their wives attended the weekend event which brought together 69ers now living in Canada, USA, Germany, Belgium and the UK. Nostalgia boards reminded us how we were in the 1960s and carried messages and photographs from those unable to attend. Highlights of the weekend included a tour of our department and an after dinner 'Oscars' awards ceremony with everyone winning their category. Guest appearances were made by Jeff Jeffreys, Aston's first Chemical Engineering Professor Eric Smith, Tony Bridgwater and other members of staff. For more details and pictures visit our site www.sitemaster-internet.co.uk/69ers/

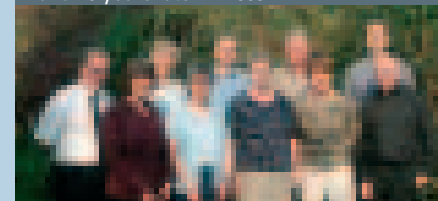


Julian Masters (third from right) with fellow 1969 Chemical Engineers

Janet Roughton (née Bentley 1963 BSc Pharmacy) held a reunion at her house in September to celebrate 40 years since graduating. Janet tirelessly searched Friends Reunited and made numerous telephone calls to the Pharmaceutical Society in order to track down her classmates. She eventually made contact with fifteen people, ten of whom turned up for the reunion and one person even travelled all the way from Bermuda! Fond memories were exchanged by all and nobody could believe that 40 years had passed.



Pharmacy Class 1963... and 40 years later in 2003



News from AGA

David Harrison, our treasurer, gave an illustrated talk about his involvement in The Mountain Bothies Association at our October meeting. The bothies are generally situated in quiet country areas and provide accommodation for walkers, climbers and others who are looking for a peaceful weekend. David himself is a volunteer helper in the restoration and maintenance of a bothie in the Pennines.

Over 60 members and friends enjoyed a guided tour of the Barber Institute at Birmingham University in November. The Institute has acquired a collection of works of art of international significance including work by Bellini, Rubens, van Dyck, Gainsborough, Reynolds and Rossetti. On the occasion of our visit the Institute was holding an exhibition of Turner's early seascapes together with other paintings thought to have influenced him. These were loaned from the National Gallery, Tate Britain, The National Maritime Museum and The Yale Center for British Art USA. Our guides were able to give us an insight into the life and times of both Turner and the other artists who acted as his contemporaries.



In February AGA took a guided tour of the Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Greenhouses.

The greenhouses contain examples of plants from tropical, sub-tropical, Mediterranean and arid regions. The gardens were opened in 1832 and the original layout is still retained. A recent objective is the conservation of species threatened by exploitation. The gardens act as the home of The National Bonsai Collection and there are also exotic birds, an orangery and a gallery where local artists exhibit their work. Cream teas were available for those in need of sustenance.

AGA works with the Alumni Relations Office at Aston to ensure the views of graduates are taken into account and to provide an interesting and varied social programme. We also make awards to two undergraduates who have made the most valuable contribution to the life of the university during the previous year and from time to time we sponsor other events at Aston. This year we are making a donation to the student hardship fund.

Unfortunately the traditional visit to the College of Food had to be cancelled this year due to the refurbishment of the restaurant during January. The AGM of the Association will be reported in the next issue of Apex.

Jenny Martin

Coming up

Some years ago AGA members were asked whether they wished to receive mailings about social events. If you are not currently receiving this information and would like to do so, please contact the AGA secretary via the Alumni Relations Office. Forthcoming events are advertised at www.astongraduates.com

April 30 – Guided tour of The Warwickshire County Cricket Ground, museum, players' facilities, scoreboard, hospitality boxes, etc. AGA members will then be entitled to watch the County Championship match against Glamorgan from the Tom Dollery Bar for the rest of the day, if they wish.

June 11 – Joint meeting with Birmingham University at Edgbaston. Lecture on the archaeological findings made during the construction of the Bullring. Buffet supper to follow.

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...

Graham Baker
(1983 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Neal Beamish
(1999 MBA)

Jadwiga Butcher (née Cendrowska,
1974 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

Hugh Campbell
(1985 MSc Personnel Management)

Antonia Castle
(1995 BSc International Business and German)

Ryan Dallas
(1991 BEng Mechanical Engineering)

David Durant
(1995 BSc Computer Science)

Dirk Ebeling
(2002 MBA)

Carrie Flatley (née O'Rourke,
1984 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Alexander Gaines
(1992 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

Yan Gao
(2002 MPhil)

Richard Hampton
(1994 BSc International Business and French)

Nicholas Harris
(1976 BSc Chemistry)

Clare Jenkins (née Snowden,
1993 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Chun Jing
(2002 BSc Business Administration and Engineering Management)

Helen Knox
(1988 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

Sara Ludlam
(1991 BSc French and Psychology)

Rhonda McElhinney
(1993 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

Paul McKinley
(1984 BSc Ergonomics and French)

John McOwan
(1988 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

Steven Naldrett
(1983 BSc Biological Sciences)

Zoe O'Brien
(1999 BSc Business Administration and French)

Alan Officer
(1993 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

Matthew Peddle
(1999 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Robin Piper
(1981 BSc Geological Sciences)

Kenneth Price
(1978 BSc Building Economics and Measurement)

Lynn Rawcliffe
(née Stockley, 1984 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Paul Rowson
(1982 BSc Pharmacy)

Harpreet Sanghera
(1999 Phd Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

Olga Smirnova
(1998 BSc Pharmacy)

Neil Spencer
(1995 MSc Information Technology)

Julie Stubbington
(1987 BSc Human Psychology)

David Thompson
(1996 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Kevin Tomsett
(1986 BSc Chemical Engineering)

Cindy Tromans
(1985 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

Geeta Varma
(1997 BSc Optometry)

Mark Vroobel
(1979 BSc Pharmacy)

Frances Webster
(1992 BSc Applied and Human Biology)

Meishan Wen
(2001 MSc Marketing Management)

Nicola Whitehead
(1990 BSc Human Psychology)

1990 BSc International Business and French

We are out of touch with 16 International Business and French graduates from 1990. Do you know any of those listed below?

Anna Apostolov

Susan Carter

Graeme Crosbie

Carolyn Davies

Charlotte Dominy

Jonathan Edwards

Georgina Georgiou

Rosemary Grundy

Graham Hives

Michael Hogan

Ruth Humphrey (née Baylis)

Sarah Lord

Sally Parnham

Sarah Parry

Barbara Szpytma

Johanna Walsh

1979 BSc Pharmacy

We are out of touch with 41 Pharmacy graduates from 1979. Here are their names. Do you know where they are?

Julian Ashley

Jayne Barre

Carol Bray

Sean Campbell

Norman Cotterill

Anne Cox

Elizabeth Dean

Margaret Dixon

Romka Duskocz

Ceri Evans

Chee Feng

Christine Fisher

Janet Heaton

Sara Herbert

Mark Horsley

Paul Jenner

Celia Kellett

Andrew Kirkham

Ann Mathews (née Shryane)

Rita McGuire

Elaine Noble

Steven Olley

Ewe Oo

Robin Palmer

Utamkumar Patel

Smuti Patel

Kaushik Patel

Poornima Patel

Aruna Patel

Elizabeth Read

Joan Richardson

Donald Roberts

Paul Robinson

Pankaj Shah

Martin Stokes

Lindsay Tovell

Kay Townsend

Mark Vroobel

Colin Walker

David Watton

Alison Whyler

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? If so, let us know!

Mike Baird
(1984 BSc Physics)

Dina Dattani
(1981 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Paul Gillespie
(1982 BSc Geological Sciences)

Andrew Griffiths
(1989 BSc Human Psychology)

Michael Hogan
(1990 BSc International Business and French)

David Jones
(1989 MSc Public Sector Management)

Mark Kelly
(1990 BSc Maths and Computer Science)

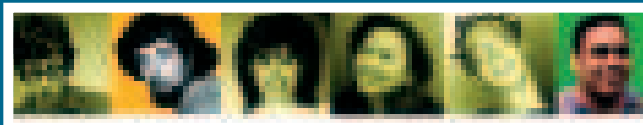
Simon Latham
(1991 BSc Human Psychology)

Are there any more like you?

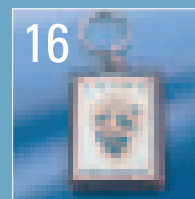
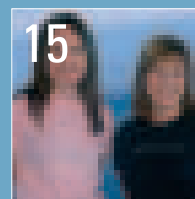
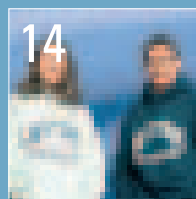
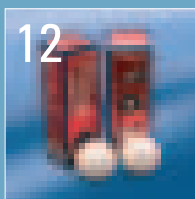
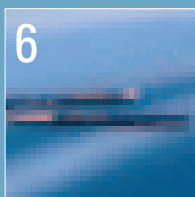
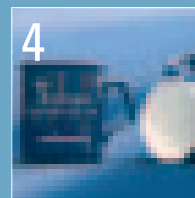
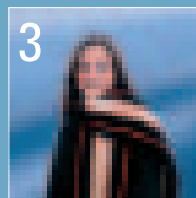
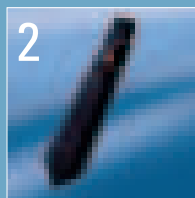
To help in our search for lost alumni, please tell us who you are in touch with from Aston! We would welcome contact details of anyone you are in touch with if they are happy for you to pass their address details on to us. Send any information to:

Alumni Relations Office
Aston University
Aston Triangle
Birmingham B4 7ET

Alternatively, email alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk
or call 0121 359 3611



Are you looking for somebody from Aston? If they aren't listed on our email 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.



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.

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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	Bookmark	£1.00			
10	Coaster set	£12.00			
11	Jumper keyring	£5.00			
12	(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			
13	Shot glass engraved with University crest	£3.50			
14	Sweater blue or grey s/m/l/xl	£25.00			
15	'Aston Babe' diamante t-shirt Navy, Pink, Khaki s/m/l	£12.00			
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.

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