

apex<sup>®</sup>

# Time for tiffin

**Around the world in 26 letters  
A creative development**

  
ASTON  
UNIVERSITY



# You must remember this...



## **'Freshers' Fayre 1991' welcomed the arrival of new students on campus.**

This popular feature has opened our eyes here in the Alumni Relations Office. Thanks to all of you who wrote to us in response to the picture in the last issue of Apex (including those who kindly pointed out we were looking at a Land Rover – Ed). Stuart Hogg and Joan Kelley (née Wood) both 1974 BSc Biological Sciences owned up to being faces on the inside cover. Stuart planned this trip to the Pyrenees to, in his own words, "...spend a memorable eight weeks (nominally) studying the ecology of the mountain streams in Andorra and having a great time," whilst Joan was one of the drivers of the Land Rover which although very useful in the mountains, drank petrol and lumbered along the motorways. "We got sponsorship from Lee and Perrins," explained Joan, "so had boxes and boxes of Worcester Sauce and instant curry paste." Do let us know if you're one of the 'freshers' in the photograph above.





4



10



13



14



30

# Contents

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

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

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## Features

<b>Around the world in... 26 letters</b>	4
<b>Graduate Apprenticeship – standing out from the crowd</b>	5
<b>Superama – straight to your door</b>	7
<b>Aston honours</b>	8
<b>A creative development</b>	10
<b>Journey to the art of Birmingham</b>	12
<b>Perkz of the Aston Alumni Community</b>	13
<b>Time for tiffin</b>	14
<b>Message home</b>	23

## Regulars

<b>You must remember this</b>	2
<b>Profile on...</b>	6
<b>Where are they now?</b>	24
<b>Reunions</b>	29
<b>AGA</b>	30
<b>In-Touch</b>	31
<b>Gifts</b>	32

## News

<b>Aston jumps up league tables</b>	6
<b>New Chancellor</b>	11
<b>New directions for Sir Adrian</b>	11
<b>Network news</b>	11
<b>School of Engineering &amp; Applied Science</b>	16
<b>Aston injects expertise to combat major diseases</b>	
<b>Atlantic crossing</b>	
<b>Aston Business School</b>	17
<b>Aston Multi-Media Interactive Research Suite (AMIRS)</b>	
<b>Boost your career to the next level</b>	
<b>School of Life &amp; Health Sciences</b>	18
<b>Do badgers dream of algae beads?</b>	
<b>School of Languages &amp; Social Sciences</b>	19
<b>School speaks a different language</b>	
<b>Gold: Culture and Commerce</b>	
<b>English Studies</b>	20
<b>Changes</b>	
<b>New team member</b>	
<b>Combined Honours</b>	21
<b>A unique combination</b>	

## Plus

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



A modern day Phileas Fogg, Duncan Mitchell (1979 BSc Ophthalmic Optics) is no armchair traveller. Armed with a world map and a sound knowledge of the alphabet, his mission is to journey around the world from A to Z. Tantalised by the prospect of sunnier climes, Apex caught up with him on his return from Jerez to hear the latest adventure in his travel log.

# Around the world in ...

## 26 letters



"The idea came about initially because of my rather sad tendency to revisit the same places over and over again – ask my kids about Cyprus," began Duncan. "My wife, Suzanne, and I had spent a couple of weekends in Paris with another couple, Pete and Elaine, and we decided that if we weren't careful we'd spend the rest of our lives going there. So, we reckoned that if we visited places on an A-Z basis we'd avoid this." The mission was accepted. The world was at their feet.

"Our rules are simple enough," explained Duncan. "We've both got families, so our destination has got to be relatively easy to get to and, since we don't take the kids, we can only go for a weekend or so. The places we visit have to be cities, or at a pinch large towns." Duncan and his fellow travellers have calculated it will take a further 16 years before they reach the end of the alphabet and the end of the road.

With such a choice of places to visit, has there been a favourite? "I can honestly say I've hugely enjoyed everywhere (even Birmingham in December), but I suppose if I had to choose somewhere it would be Istanbul – one of the great cities of the world. With many of the cities we've been to, you can do most of the major attractions in a weekend. With Istanbul I came away wishing I had another week to see everything I wanted to. The people there are incredibly friendly too – full of opinions and philosophies and generally good company."

The memories are rich and varied: "Ann Frank's house in Amsterdam – deeply moving. Stalin once said that one death is a tragedy; a million deaths is just a statistic, the story of Ann Frank really brings that home. Gogarty's Bar in Dublin – I defy anyone to find Irish music boring after

a visit there, it's impossible not to have a great time. The Fish Market in Hamburg is a huge Sunday morning outside market where you can buy absolutely anything, just when you think it's finished you come across a huge market hall, the size of a couple of football pitches, with live music and vendors selling enormous fry-ups and champagne."

One of the biggest challenges has been the weather. "I'm not just talking poor, I'm talking headline-making weather. It has been uniformly dreadful everywhere we've been. OK, you expect it in Birmingham in December, but Istanbul in April?" Not to be disheartened, Duncan has found solace in local cuisine which has generally meant some excellent food.

"We've never experienced any real problems at our destinations," reminisced Duncan. "But when we went to Ghent we had to fly to Brussels three days after 9/11, which was a bit sobering. Last year we visited Istanbul two days after England beat Turkey at football, the day after the British embassy in Istanbul was bombed, and at the height of the Gulf War. We've made a conscious decision not to be put off travelling by these sorts of things."

Next on the list is Kingston, Jamaica. Pete and Elaine's daughter lives out there. "I developed a liking for reggae when I was at Aston in the 70s, so it will be good to hear it first hand." So far so good, but what will happen when the more unusual letters roll around? Duncan isn't perturbed and firmly believes there is a destination for every letter of the alphabet: "Quebec, Quimper, numerous cities in China begin with X, or there's Xanthi in Greece or Xalapa in Mexico. If all else fails we could cheat and go to Exeter!"

### Travel itinerary

Amsterdam, Birmingham (yes, really), Cambridge, Dublin, Edinburgh, Frankfurt, Ghent, Hamburg, Istanbul, Jerez...



Graduate employers are looking for people who stand out from the crowd. Nowadays, in a highly competitive job market, where workplace competencies and sound vocational skills often tip the balance at interview, just having a degree is no longer enough to secure a top job. Robert Waldron, Manager of Aston's Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) Scheme, explains the importance of developing employability.

# Graduate Apprenticeship – **standing out** from the crowd

Aston University has led the way in supporting a scheme where academic and vocational qualifications are integrated. Through the GA Scheme, graduate employees shape their own personal development plan by negotiating with their employer those vocational qualifications which are appropriate for career development. Key objectives are then set and formally assessed. The skills gained are acknowledged through a national Sector Skills Council Graduate Professional Diploma. The Diploma is a major, tangible aspect of the GA Scheme. Robert explains: "The most rewarding aspect of the Scheme is to see that vocational skills are fully recognised alongside the potential which candidates can offer businesses."

There are three elements to success on the GA Scheme – a degree, workplace assessment of core competencies and vocational qualifications – which can be gained either as an undergraduate during the placement year or as a graduate employee in the workplace.

Aston University undergraduate Akshay Patel felt that his employability skills were not explicitly credited in his degree programme, so he chose to complete work experience through the GA Scheme. Akshay worked at Birmingham International Airport where his mentor devised an assessment plan which created opportunities for developing and assessing Akshay's vocational skills. On completion, Akshay felt more equipped and confident with skills he will be able to use in the

business world and which will help differentiate him from other graduates at interview.

Staff based in the regional office at Aston University are satisfied that they have demonstrated the success of the GA Scheme. "It really works," enthuses Robert. "We can now apply this model of delivery as a focus for the career development of graduate employees. Through the GA Scheme, our graduates can stand out from the crowd and tip the balance in their favour with their portfolio of workplace competencies and sound vocational skills."

The Scheme is available all over the West Midlands. For information on joining the Scheme or to arrange a visit to the regional office at Aston University, call Robert, Laura or Sandra on 0121 204 3669.



# Profile on...

## Sian Howarth

Sian has been at Aston since 1991 and depending on when you studied here, you'll no doubt remember her for different reasons.



Sian Howarth

Prior to 2001, Sian could be found in the Guild – not simply wiling away the hours, but as Entertainments Manager and responsible for arranging great nights out and most of the May Balls during the 1990s. During those early years at Aston, she worked with all the Ents volunteers and has fond memories of a lot of Teckies, Door Staff, DJs, Event Managers and Stage Managers.

But for the past three years, Sian has taken on a completely different role in the University. Now working as part of the Student Services team, she is Aston's Disability Co-ordinator. Her role is to give advice and guidance to students with disabilities and arrange any support they may need to pursue their studies successfully. She also gives advice and guidance to staff, raises awareness, challenges discrimination and helps the University form its disability policies. She believes that students should feel there is someone they can talk to confidentially, who is positive about disability and who can really help support them in practical ways, such as finding the best arrangements for their exams so they can perform to their best ability.

But a look behind the professional face of Sian reveals hidden talents. A Brummie who recently moved to the Black Country (following a short séjour in Sheffield after graduating from Sheffield University) whose family life is taken up with her partner and four-year-old son and who still finds time to sing with Church of Elvis. This four-strong band plays original, indie music and has been known to play at the City Tavern in Birmingham's city centre as well as just about every music venue in Birmingham and beyond.

Profile on... will be a regular column in Apex. Let us know if there's a member of staff you'd like to read about from your days at Aston.

# Aston jumps up league tables

For many prospective students, both at home and overseas, newspaper league tables have become an important research tool in the absence of any official means of ranking universities. Readership figures of the quality papers globally are massive, thanks to their availability in both traditional and electronic formats and to be considered as a quality university amongst the quality press is important. Good news then for Aston which, in the most recently published league tables back in May of this year, jumped to its highest ever level in the university rankings.

*The Times* ranked Aston 22nd out of 99 universities up from 33rd a year ago. This placed us above the likes of Lancaster, Southampton, Sheffield, Leicester, Reading, Keele, Strathclyde and Liverpool. And we are now only a whisker behind our friends and neighbours at Birmingham just down the road. (In terms of overall scores, ours was 780, theirs 782.)

Aston also continues to do particularly well in graduate employment (4th in the country), student completion rates (7th), facilities spending (16th) and on percentage of students getting a first or 2.1 degree (17th).

Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor Graham Hooley explains that the successes are shared across all four of our schools. In the subject rankings ABS continues to do well ranking third behind only Oxford and LSE. Subjects Allied to Medicine in Life & Health Sciences ranks 8th, Pharmacy 10th, Mechanical Engineering 12th, Chemical Engineering 15th, German 14th and French 21st. All in all an excellent set of results likely to impact positively on future student recruitment.

In *The Guardian's* ranking, which is based primarily on teaching quality, Aston did even better jumping to 13th place overall out of 129 universities and well ahead of Birmingham which came in at 22. *The Guardian* also mentioned Aston directly: "The relatively small University of Aston rises to an impressive 13th in the overall rankings, also scoring highly in the separate subject tables where it ranks second in both chemical engineering and biosciences after, respectively, Cambridge and Oxford."

Some highlights of *The Guardian's* league tables: Chemical Engineering (2nd) behind Cambridge but ahead of Imperial, UCL and Manchester; Biosciences (2nd) behind Oxford but ahead of Cambridge, Warwick, Imperial; Pharmacy (3rd) ahead of Manchester, King's and the School of Pharmacy; Electrical and Electronic Engineering (10th), Psychology (10th)





A few mouse clicks and the delivery van rolls up shortly afterwards – a perfect solution for those of us who have little time or interest in browsing the aisles of the local supermarket. Home shopping is reportedly on the increase and most certainly in Mexico where the Superama call centre takes over 2,500 orders a day in addition to those processed through its website. Superama is part of Wal-Mart International and the largest retail company in Mexico. Assistant Director Eduardo de Uriarte Occelli (1994 MSc Software Design and Applications) makes sure his customers get exactly what they want.

# Superama – straight to your door

Superama's home delivery service started nine years ago with just two people taking orders over the phone. The concept was well received and in less than a year the company was implementing a computer system and running a busy call centre. "I've been in charge here for the last three years," explained Eduardo. "We re-engineered the whole process for picking the goods in the store and bought specialised software for monitoring the call centre. Our sales doubled and they are now twice that of an average store. My degree helped me develop the systems for the new call centre, the home delivery system and the web page for home delivery. I have to be in touch with the ISD department at all times to set goals on what to work towards and we have to speak the same language on what can or can't be done."

So how does it work? The client calls the call centre where a specialised sales person takes the order, helping customers to specify brands, products, sizes or flavours. The order goes through the system to the nearest Superama store to the customer's delivery address

(home or office). Specialists pick the goods on the sales floor, advising the customer of any difficulties, extras or promotions, and the order arrives in less than two hours or less than 45 minutes with the express service.



"Mexico City is large and complex so people value their time and really appreciate our service," enthused Eduardo. "We're not just shopping but helping people who are sick, old or who can't get to our stores. Our main challenge is maintaining the quality of the service as it grows, delivering on time with no mistakes to maintain customer confidence and, of course, ensuring security of online payment."

Wal-Mart International is the largest retail company in Mexico and manages a number of business interests: Superama in high income areas, Supercenter in middle income areas and Bodega Aurrera in lower income areas as well as the department store Suburbia and a chain of restaurants called Vips and Porton. Consequently the role of Assistant Director is varied. Eduardo is also in charge of store openings, store modernisations and public and operational efficiency. Practically this means developing marketing campaigns for the cities where new stores are opening, ensuring new stores comply with operational protocol and minimising any potential inconvenience for shoppers whilst work is undertaken in their local store.

A complex portfolio, but a successful recipe of meeting customers' needs as sales figures and growth demonstrate. The Superama formula relies on providing a service to people who can't get to their stores for whatever reason and ensuring that their service is fast, secure and efficient. Superama can be found at [www.superama.com.mx](http://www.superama.com.mx).

A large, stylized logo for Superama. The word "Superama" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a stylized orange flower icon with five petals and a blue center. A blue swoosh underline is positioned beneath the word "Superama".



#### Anthony R. Sweeten

Tony Sweeten joined engineering specialists The 600 Group PLC in 1972 as Production Manager of TS Harrison. Since then he has successfully taken up a number of posts within the company until he was appointed Group Chief Executive in December 1996.

Tony is actively involved with a number of associations: Deputy President of the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF), member of the Economic Policy Committee and member of the Strategy Review Group. He is also past president of the Manufacturing Technologies Association (MTA), as well as Chairman of the MTA Manufacturers Committee. He continually and actively seeks to promote the engineering industry and its aims.



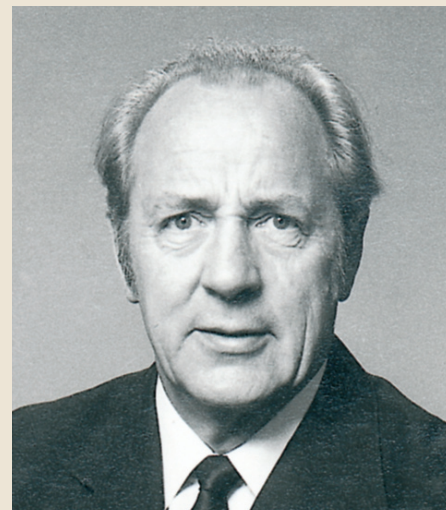
#### Professor Peter A. Hall

After completing a BA in economics and political science at the University of Toronto, an MPhil at Balliol College, Oxford, Professor Peter Hall took a PhD at Harvard in 1982. He is now Director of the Minda de Gunzburg Centre for European Studies, a Harvard College Professor, as well as a Krupp Foundation Professor of European Studies at Harvard.

He is the editor of several books, author of more than 60 articles on European politics and public policy-making and has won a number of awards for his writing and teaching including the Woodrow Wilson Award for the best book in political science (*Governing the Economy* published in 1986), the Luebbert Award for the best article in comparative politics published in 1998, the Feldman Award for contributions to the study of public policy, and the Ordre des Palmes Académiques from the government of France.

Professor Hall has been a Fellow for the Centre for Advanced Study in Behavioural Sciences at Stanford and of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin as well as a visiting scholar at the London School of Economics, the Centre de Sociologie des Organisations in Paris, the Institute Juan March in Madrid and the Wissenschaftszentrum, Berlin.

He has served as the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard and Chair of the ACLS-SSRC Committee on Western Europe. He is Co-Director of the Successful Societies' Program of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research and President of the Comparative Politics section of the American Political Science Association and a member of the advisory boards of European Research Institute in Birmingham and the Max-Planck Institute for the Study of Societies in Cologne.



#### Eric Clements

Designer and silversmith Eric Clements was born in Rugby in 1925 and is regarded as one of the most influential 20th century designers and teachers associated with Birmingham. He began his education at the Lawrence Sheriff School in Rugby and went on to train as a designer at Birmingham College of Art. Eric's studies were interrupted by military service from 1943-47 when he joined the Gordon Highlanders and then the Royal Army Education Corps; he then continued his training at the Royal College of Art, London.

Eric worked as a senior lecturer at the School of Silversmithing and Jewellery in Birmingham until 1954 when he became the Head of the School of Industrial Design at Birmingham College of Art and Design. From 1973 he became Dean of the Faculty of Art and Design then Assistant Director at Wolverhampton Polytechnic until 1985.

Eric received a scholarship from both the English Speaking Union and the Ford Foundation, USA for design education. He has been an external examiner, assessor and validator and was on the Council for National Academic Awards from 1964. He was also a Business and Technician Education Council Moderator. Design commissions since 1950 include work for HM the Queen, the Government and universities (including Aston).

# Aston





### Jenny Uglow

Jenny Uglow grew up in Cumbria and Dorset and studied English at Oxford. She is now Editorial Director of Chatto & Windus, part of Random House. She also reviews widely and acted as consultant on BBC classic serials, including *Wives and Daughters*, *Daniel Deronda*, *The Way We Live Now* and *He Knew He Was Right*.

Jenny is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, Vice-President of the Gaskell Society and an Honorary Visiting Professor in the Department of English at the University of Warwick. Her own books include *The Macmillan Dictionary of Women*, studies of George Eliot and Henry Fielding, and the biographies *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories* (1992) and *Hogarth: A Life and a World* (1997), both shortlisted for the Whitbread Prize. *The Lunar Men: The Friends who Made the Future* (2002), won the Hessel-Tiltman prize for history, and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for biography. Her latest book is *A Little History of British Gardening*.

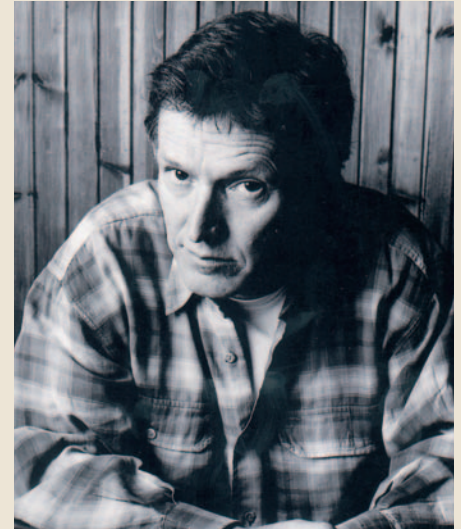


### Ray Dedicoat

Ray Dedicoat was born in Hollywood, Birmingham in 1950 where he went to Silverstreet School in Wythall, followed by Woodrush Secondary School. He now runs the Hollytrees Animal Rescue Trust with his wife Ann. He has worked in animal welfare for over 35 years.

After leaving school, Ray worked with the Birmingham Council (PARKS) Department while undertaking voluntary work for the Elliots who then owned Hollytrees and ran the Midland Rescue Kennels. He began managing Hollytrees in 1984 after the Elliots bequeathed him half of their estate on their deaths due to his commitment to the trust. He has now quadrupled the work that the Elliots began, with Hollytrees becoming one of the busiest rescue centres in the area. In 1997 the charity became independent from the Animal Welfare Trust so that all money raised is now spent on animal welfare in the Midlands. As well as the rescue centre Ray runs a successful boarding kennels and cattery at Hollytrees which he uses to fund the voluntary rescue work.

Ray has won Radio WM's Man of the Year award for five consecutive years between 1997 and 2001 beating many recognised figures.



### Steve Winwood

Rock 'n' roll legend Steve Winwood was born in Handsworth, Birmingham in 1948. Throughout his local upbringing, Steve showed a keen interest in music, spending his time studying classical guitar and piano at school and listening to Jazz, Rock, Blues and Ethnic music, in particular Ray Charles.

Steve's performing career began with his brother, Muff Winwood, and his father's band at weddings and other local events. In 1963, at the age of 15, he joined the Spencer Davis Group with his brother. The band enjoyed international success including two UK number ones – *Keep On Running* and *Somebody Help Me*.

In 1967 Steve left the Spencer Davis Group to form Traffic, one of the most influential groups of their era. Following the break-up of the band in 1969, he formed 'supergroup' Blind Faith with Eric Clapton, Ginger Baker and Rick Grech, but chose to reform Traffic again in 1970 and reached the US Top Ten with all four subsequent albums.

From 1977 to date Steve Winwood has enjoyed a successful solo career. He earned five Grammy nominations and two Grammy Awards, Best Male Vocal and Record of the Year for his album *Back in the High Life* in 1987. Since then, Steve has made numerous coveted performances including playing at the Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations at Buckingham Palace in 2002. The band, Traffic, was also inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in March this year.

# honours

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



Planning for retirement conjures up idyllic scenes of rest, relaxation and a blissfully stress-free life. But when Gill Lane (1985 MSc Public Sector Management) retires, she has other plans in mind. Having confessed to moving house 19 times, she sees retirement as the ideal opportunity to follow one of her passions and take her interior design hobby forward into her retirement career.

# A creative development

Maybe the concept of retirement has changed. “We no longer ‘stop’ at retirement,” believes Gill, “although I don’t think anyone ever did in reality – they just did different things. Many of our forebears said they didn’t know how they found time to go to work, so they were obviously filling their time pursuing a variety of interests. Maybe the difference is that in the past people retired from work then took up other activities such as looking after grandchildren, spending more time on hobbies, improving their golf handicap, travelling, etc. Now I find that my contemporaries are looking at second or third careers instead and possibly giving ‘working’ time to charitable causes. In addition, many who have had what they consider to be a stimulating career want that intellectual stimulus to continue – we read that use of the intellect keeps us alive longer!”

Gill is currently owner/director of Gill Lane Executive Development, a consultancy specialising in coaching, mentoring and training senior executives. She has plans to

gradually reduce her consultancy work leaving her with time to develop her interior design business: “I am at long last doing what I should have done as my main career all those years ago!” she enthuses.

Even though the plethora of TV programmes has raised awareness of what people can do to their homes, not everyone has the time or talent to prepare designs, source the components or undertake the work. TV programmes also raise expectations so people assume they can get a quick fix from designers for next to nothing without appreciating the real time and talent involved. “A bespoke design service is not about putting strong colour onto a couple of walls and using MDF to make a few shelves to make a room look different!” warns Gill. It is for this reason Gill will be developing a series of workshops to bring certain design skills and knowledge to a wider audience.

“I am in my nineteenth home,” admits Gill. “But all the moves gave me the joy of redesigning and redecorating houses to

suit my personal taste. When I was about 13, I went through my purple and orange phase. I also loved to change my room around, inventing new uses for items such as my toboggan that became my magazine rack. I would sketch out room plans and loved using different fabrics to create different looks.”

Today her main influences are Colefax and Fowler’s classic interiors, Jane Churchill’s fabrics, Kelly Hoppen’s use of neutrals, Mary Gilliat’s logical approach and Tricia Guild’s grasp of colour.

Her approach to design reflects her consultancy work – client meetings, detailed briefs and proposals. But the essential ingredient is getting to know the room, the atmosphere, the natural light and dimensions. “Then the fun part begins as I play around with various fabric samples, paint colours, furniture brochures and bits of carpet in my studio at home to create a mood and design board before we go ahead with the project.”

From complete barn conversions through kitchen designs, gutting modern houses and project managing work on a 16th century farmhouse, Gill’s design work is active, extensive and innovative. Relaxation in her retirement years seems a far cry from

Gill’s obvious enjoyment of managing her lifelong passion. Gill can be contacted on [gill.lane@gilllaneinteriors.co.uk](mailto:gill.lane@gilllaneinteriors.co.uk).





# New Chancellor

The University is delighted to announce that Sir Michael Bett has been appointed Chancellor of Aston University succeeding Sir Adrian Cadbury who has served the University in this capacity for 25 years.

Sir Michael graduated from Pembroke College, Cambridge University, and held senior positions at GEC, the BBC and, latterly, BT for 15 years where he was Deputy Chairman from 1991 to 1994. He was First Civil Service Commissioner from 1995 to 2000 and Aston University's Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Council from 1993 to 2003.

Sir Michael has chaired or been a member of numerous public review bodies. He became nationally known in the HE sector through his chairing of the Bett Committee. In addition to his business interests, Sir Michael is involved in a wide range of charitable organisations.

"First, I pay tribute to Sir Adrian Cadbury who has served Aston University with great distinction as Chancellor for a quarter of a century," commented Sir Michael. "I am looking forward immensely to meeting the challenges which will face Aston in particular, and universities in general, during the next few

years of significant change in higher education," he added.

The Alumni Relations Office welcomes Sir Michael Bett as Chancellor and looks forward to working closely with him in his new role.



## New directions for Sir Adrian

On behalf of the worldwide alumni community and members of the Convocation, the Alumni Relations Office thanks Sir Adrian Cadbury for his support of and dedication to our work and activities throughout his twenty-five years as Chancellor of the University. Each year at degree congregations, Sir Adrian has warmly welcomed many thousands of Aston graduates into membership of the Convocation. In his role as Chairman of the AGM of Convocation, Sir Adrian has maintained a positive and enthusiastic association with Aston alumni. As Sir Adrian steps down from this office, the good wishes of Convocation accompany him for the future.



## Network news

**Aston graduates now have the opportunity to network more effectively with fellow alumni by joining the new membership scheme called 'Network'. Laura Stansbie explains the benefits of subscribing.**

"Network is based around professional development and exchanging ideas. For example, members can share with fellow Aston graduates in specific industries or professions through email forums, events and seminars focused on career management, business issues or personal development, online newsletters and a mentoring programme – we hope our alumni will be encouraged to give something back in the form of advice or knowledge to other



**Laura Stansbie**  
Professional Network  
Administrator

alumni. Members will also receive extra benefits such as special rates and discounts both on campus and nationwide. Each membership subscription fee will go towards funding future events and services as well as the administration of the network." In its first year, Network is being piloted amongst graduates of business and management related degrees but everyone is welcome to join if they feel this focus would benefit them professionally. We hope to build up a thriving network that will benefit members in many ways. For more information on 'Network' please visit [www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/network](http://www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/network).

Continuing with our regular update on the City and its environs, Graham Stubbs (2001 BSc Environmental Science and Product Design) captures Birmingham as it has never been seen before. Join him and Babs Coombes (2003 BSc Applied & Human Biology) from Aston's PR Office as they journey through the art on campus and out into the City.

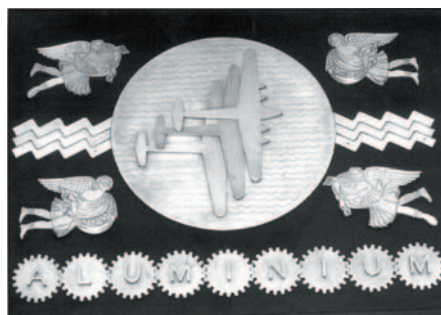
# Journey to the art of Birmingham

During her final year, Babs undertook work experience in the Public Relations Office at Aston to get a flavour of science journalism. After graduation, she went to work as a microbiologist at Cadbury Trebor Bassett, but continued to aspire to a career in journalism. "Many people think it's odd to graduate in a scientific subject and take up a career in PR and I often get asked why I undertook such a dramatic career change. The truth is I am combining the two subjects I enjoy the most – science and journalism – as well as promoting the University as a whole which is something I can do very passionately and honestly. One of the main things that struck me about the University when I joined was its friendly atmosphere, the green, attractive campus and there's always something to look at that's a bit out of the ordinary. So, I've decided to tell you something about three pieces of art on the Aston University campus which you may be familiar with."



## The Tipping Triangles

The Tipping Triangles sculpture stands 18ft high and dominates the water fountain at the front of the Nelson Building. Its design, by internationally renowned British sculptor Angela Connor, was the winning entry in a competition to produce a piece of public art for the University in 1987. The finished sculpture was unveiled to the public in 1994.



## The Aluminium Murals

The series of aluminium murals located outside La Serre Bistro inside the University's Main Building were presented to the University by the Aluminium Federation in February 1964. The one pictured here celebrates the use of aluminium in aeroplanes.



## The Aston Academy Sculpture

The sculpture positioned outside the new Aston Academy of Life Sciences is called Inside 'Tempus-Fugit' (Time Flies) and represents the theory that inside every ageing man's mind there lives a nine-year-old boy. If you walk up to the sculpture and peer inside the head you can see a small

metal figure of a child. This unique piece was created by emerging sculptor Ray Lonsdale, a self-employed steel fabricator, who produces commissions in his spare time.



## Birmingham Street

Graham is currently studying for a PhD at Aston but still finds time to pursue his passion for photography. His preferred subjects are local views and landscapes but Graham's gift for putting a different slant on his work envelops the City in a completely new atmosphere. Graham's instinct helps him appreciate how light falls on shapes and to then translate this phenomenon into a 3D image bursting out of a flat piece of paper. With such a refreshing interpretation of the City, Graham has a promising future ahead of him. In the short space of just under four years, he has created an impressive portfolio and has already held three public exhibitions. Take time to lose yourself in Graham's Birmingham. Graham can be contacted on [gpspictures@hotmail.com](mailto:gpspictures@hotmail.com).



## Victoria Square



Two Aston graduates, David Tedford (1989 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) and Paul Ireland (1989 BSc Computing), have successfully launched a new online employee discounts scheme called Perkz. Perkz features discounts of up to 35% from a range of online specialists and high street retailers such as Laura Ashley, John Lewis and the Early Learning Centre. The journey to create Perkz brought together no less than four Aston alumni.



David (right) and Paul introduce alumni benefits

## Perkz of the Aston Alumni Community

Prior to Perkz, David worked in marketing for top companies such as Unilever, Barclays and Egg. At Egg he developed and managed an Internet shopping portal where Egg customers had access to discounts at a number of retailers. David recognised an opportunity to offer a similar scheme as an employee benefit and so left Egg to develop Perkz. He was helped in refining the proposition by Jill Bottomley (née Grant, 1989 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) who is now a Senior HR Manager with Centrica.

Technical brains were needed to develop the site. Paul had been a software developer for a range of city organisations and was looking for a greater creative outlet. He had also recently started his own interactive media company called Abstract Worlds Ltd. Together David and Paul created the website.

At the same time a need arose to develop the brand and associated advertising material. In this, Paul and David were helped by fellow MAS graduate Martin Troughton who is Founder and

Managing Partner of Harrison Troughton Wunderman, a leading London advertising agency. Martin also agreed for his agency to be used to pilot Perkz.

Perkz was launched in September 2003 and clients now include Centrica, Egg, BNFL, United Utilities, Budget Insurance, Cable and Wireless, several police forces and a host of smaller organisations. David's advice for budding entrepreneurs: "As the saying goes, it's not what you know, it's who you know. So don't forget to keep in touch with your Aston colleagues – you never know when you might need them!"

**You can benefit from being part of the Aston community as well. Perkz is currently available free of charge to Aston alumni. Go to [www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/benefits](http://www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/benefits) where you can register and take advantage of the discounts. Paul and David would also like to hear from anyone interested in taking Perkz for their companies.**



## What's Convocation?

This is news for the Class of 2004 and a reminder to all our alumni. As a graduate of the University you are automatically a member of the Convocation. As written in the Charter of Incorporation, the Convocation has specific duties and responsibilities including appointing the Chancellor, receiving an annual report on the working of the University from the Vice Chancellor and other powers and duties as may be conferred upon it by the Statutes such as the right to discuss and express its opinion to Council or Senate on any matter concerning the working of the University. (If you would like further details please contact the Alumni Relations Office.) The Annual General Meeting of the Convocation along with elections to Standing Committee and Council will be held on 19 March, 2005 and alumni are encouraged to come along. Full details will be sent out in due course.





Tired of the customary sandwich in your lunchbox? The next time someone suggests you pick up lunch, you might find yourself with more on your plate than you bargained for. With a new concept in fast food retail, Jamal Hirani (1996 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) has taken lunchtime food to a deliciously new level. For connoisseurs of real Indian food, Tiffinbites offers a healthy, authentic alternative right on the high street.

**I passionately believe that communicating the healthy, fresh aspects of our range is the key to having Indian food accepted in the mainstream lunch and evening market.**



**Indian meal delivery**

The idea for Tiffinbites came from a combination of Jamal's frustration at the lack of choice in the lunchtime market together with his inherent knowledge that 'real' Indian food could provide a healthy, exciting alternative to the standard lunchtime fare. Wondering if this frustration was common to most of his colleagues, he e-mailed 1,000 people to ask if they would consider eating Indian food for lunch if it could be provided quickly, consistently and cleanly. The overwhelmingly positive response he received convinced Jamal that the market was clearly ready for an Indian lunch offering. The question of how to get the food to the hungry was inspired by an ingenious Indian meal delivery service.

Five million Tiffinboxes are delivered to office and factory workers in Mumbai every month by loyal Tiffin wallahs – delivery staff. Jamal's modern Tiffinbox is a three-tiered container with authentic dishes heated to order on the premises. Domestic microwave instructions are also printed on the packaging to enable customers to enjoy the food at home. Tiffinbites also sells a selection of wraps, chaat (Indian street foods) and fresh naan breads that are baked to order in the naan ovens in each store.

One of the strongest trading points for Tiffinbites has been promoting the healthy aspect of the food. All the Tiffinboxes contain less than 5% fat, they are all



halal and all made to authentic recipes exclusively for Tiffinbites. "I passionately believe that communicating the healthy, fresh aspects of our range is the key to having Indian food accepted in the mainstream lunch and evening market," comments Jamal. "The unique presentation of our products combined with the quality of food and service that we offer in our stores has meant that once people have tried our food, they generally come back again and again."



# Time for tiffin



Getting Tiffinbites to the high street involved three main challenges – finding a supplier, finding a site and raising financial backing. “Of these, the hardest was sourcing a supplier who could deliver the quality and consistency we insisted upon whilst showing a willingness to grow with us at the pace we wanted to grow,” says Jamal. “A lot of the larger suppliers weren’t interested in working with a start-up organisation. Now that we have several stores, it’s interesting to see some of those suppliers come back to us and offer their assistance!” he adds.

Having opened five stores in London within fourteen months, Jamal took the decision to expand outside of London when a site in the newly refurbished Bullring became available. “We knew that Birmingham was the next city for a Tiffinbites and the site in the Bullring was too good to pass up,” comments Jamal. Tiffinbites Birmingham Bullring is the largest store in the group to date, and marks the next stage in the brand’s evolution. The future for Tiffinbites sees further store growth as a top priority.

“There is easily scope for another three to four stores within Birmingham,” comments Jamal. “During my time at Aston I gained a sound knowledge of Birmingham as well as benefiting from my degree studies; Tiffinbites’ expansion through Birmingham will draw on that knowledge.” Full details of Tiffinbites’ menu, shops and philosophy can be found at [www.tiffinbites.com](http://www.tiffinbites.com).

Aston researchers have begun work on a groundbreaking project that will help combat major diseases including cancer and brain disorders.

## Aston injects expertise to combat major diseases



The University's Professors David Lowe and Ian Nabney have helped construct a team of 31 organisations from around Europe on the €6.4 million project. The four-year undertaking looks at the relatively new field of bio-pattern and bio-profile analysis. A bio-pattern is the basic information that provides clues about underlying clinical evidence for diagnosis and treatment of diseases. A bio-profile is a personal 'fingerprint' that fuses together a person's current and past medical history, bio-pattern and prognosis.

The 'bio-pattern network of excellence' project will help Europe become a world leader in e-healthcare by developing techniques for the analysis of an individual's bio-profile and making them remotely accessible to patients and clinicians. The project aims to identify how bio-profiles could be exploited for individualised healthcare such as disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

Aston's Professor David Lowe said: "Combining our local expertise in information analysis with clinical, computing and communications experts across Europe provides a rare opportunity

for developing future, truly personalised and active healthcare management systems."

Dr Elia Biganzoli, from the Unit of Medical Statistics and Biometry of the National Cancer Institute, Milan, who leads the team of experts in Milan, said: "We see the key benefits of this collaboration in the multidisciplinary approach for bio-profile analysis. The synergy from joint efforts of researchers from different fields is needed to offer the EU citizen a realistic perspective of the improvement of patient care through the exploitation of bio-patterns."

## Atlantic crossing

**Two Aston students will throw caution to the wind to row across the world's second biggest ocean.**

George Simpson and Paul Herbert will be joined by friends David Martin and Neil Wightwick in the transatlantic rowing challenge, the Ocean Rowing Society Regatta.

Having taken part in a regatta in Newquay in October, the Aston pair brought their newly acquired boat back to Birmingham where preparations have begun. They are currently land-training five days a week to attune themselves for the challenge ahead. The physical training needs to prepare them to be able to row for twelve hours a day for a month or more to get from the Canary Islands to Barbados when they finally set out in January 2006.

George would like to hear from anyone who is interested in this charity event. If you would like to help him help leukaemia sufferers, contact him directly via: [info@Atlantic4.co.uk](mailto:info@Atlantic4.co.uk).







As an Aston graduate you will already be aware of the University's growing reputation as a highly respected seat of learning. One of the reasons for this is the continuing development of Aston Business School as a centre for business education. In this edition of Apex Judy Scully introduces readers to AMIRS, a state-of-the-art research and executive IT training suite and Tim Anderson encourages alumni to consider studying for an Aston MBA.

## Aston Multi-Media Interactive Research Suite

Aston Multi-Media Interactive Research Suite (AMIRS) provides one of the most innovative state-of-the-art research and executive training IT suites in the UK and offers highly competitive rates for hiring. As part of the Aston University charitable status it is a not-for-profit commercial venture that links the wider community with University research and technology facilities. Situated in the heart of Aston Business School, AMIRS serves the academic, local business and public sector communities. Current research projects include the NHS National Staff Survey for the Healthcare Commission, local region small and medium business enterprise research for the Foundation of Management Education and the DTI, Reward and Recognition call centre research for the Institute of Customer Service – CIPD and CEP, simulator design research for e-learning clinical practice for the NHS. If you would like more information on

research projects please contact Judy Scully [j.w.scully@aston.ac.uk](mailto:j.w.scully@aston.ac.uk). For information on the research facilities available for hire please contact Glenys Foskett [g.m.foskett@aston.ac.uk](mailto:g.m.foskett@aston.ac.uk). For information on the technical specification please contact Andrew Wilson [a.r.wilson@aston.ac.uk](mailto:a.r.wilson@aston.ac.uk). If you would like to see the facilities please arrange to come and visit us and we will be happy to show you:

- executive style IT training suite and Board Room with 35 online computer terminals
- video conferencing facilities
- online survey research facilities and analysis
- eye-tracking research facilities
- teaching facilities for up to 40 people



## Boost your career to the next level

As an Aston graduate you will already be aware of the University's growing reputation as one of the UK and Europe's most highly respected seats of learning. One of the reasons for Aston's growing reputation is the continuing development of Aston Business School (ABS) as a centre for business education. Today ABS ranks among the largest of the leading business schools in Europe, with nearly 100 full-time academic staff and many visiting specialists.

In the latest official research assessment across all UK universities, ABS was awarded an excellent rating of 5 which indicates that its research is judged to be of international importance. Aston is also ranked amongst the best for teaching quality. The School achieved a maximum score of 24 out of 24 following a recent national review by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

ABS offers a highly rated MBA programme which can be studied either full or part-time,

by on-campus attendance or by Aston's unique DVD-based distance learning method (UK only) or through a tailored combination of learning modes to suit students' lifestyles. All modes of study are fully accredited by AMBA and the school also holds accreditations from EQUIS and the AACSB.

Whatever the subject of your Bachelor's degree, if you graduated three or more years ago and have reached a stage in your career where you feel you need a boost to take you to

the next level then the Aston MBA may be just what you need (and if you graduated from Aston less than five years ago you could be eligible for a 10% discount on the fees). To find out more about the Aston MBA which includes modules dealing with Leadership and Entrepreneurship as well as all the traditional business disciplines such as Marketing, Finance, Operations etc. visit [www.astonmba.com](http://www.astonmba.com) or to receive a brochure email [abspg@aston.ac.uk](mailto:abspg@aston.ac.uk) or call +44 (0)121 204 3100.

In the UK, badgers are often infected with bovine Tuberculosis (TB) and there is evidence that they may be linked with TB infection in cattle, which has resulted in randomised badger culling since 1998. Obviously this isn't the most humane way of dealing with the problem, so researchers from the Medicines Research Unit at Aston are trying to develop a new TB vaccine delivery method for use on uncle Brock.



## Do badgers dream of algae beads?



TB is an infectious disease affecting man and many animal species including cattle. Last year alone, over 20,000 cattle were slaughtered in the UK (at a cost of £31 million in farmer compensation) due to TB infection. However the persistence of infection recorded in cattle herds remains high and control of bovine TB has proved difficult in countries where there is a wildlife reservoir for the disease. Whilst the majority of TB transmission in herds results from cattle to cattle transmissions, a proportion of disease outbreaks may be associated with the presence of infected wildlife.

In an effort to remove this TB transmission route from badgers to cattle, Aston researchers Dr Yvonne Perrie and Dr Hannah Batchelor

are working in conjunction with the Veterinary Licensing Agency to develop appropriate vaccines.

They explain: "We have used alginate gel beads as a means to deliver the vaccine orally to badgers. A significant problem in the oral delivery of vaccines is that the acid within the stomach of the badger destroys the fragile vaccine, thus it does not reach the intestines where it is absorbed. If we can entrap the vaccine inside these gel beads we can protect it within the stomach so that it reaches the intestine where the beads dissolve to release the vaccine. Our preliminary experiments have shown that the beads remain intact within a solution of acid (simulated gastric fluid) for up

to two hours, after this time the beads are transferred to simulated intestinal fluid where they are seen to fully dissolve over a two-hour period."

Alginates are natural products derived from seaweed, they have no taste or smell and can be found in many food substances eaten on a daily basis (for example, ice cream), so they are perfectly safe for badgers to eat. Current research is investigating how to get these beads to badgers and how they should be incorporated into bait that will tempt them, so far it's known that badgers mainly eat earthworms but also enjoy chocolate! So watch this space for news of the world's nicest tasting vaccine.





The School of Languages & Social Sciences (LSS) is the new name adopted from June 2004 by the School of Languages & European Studies (LES). The change reflects a broadening of academic interests, which is also marked by the transfer of a group of sociologists from ABS to LSS. The intention is to develop social science activities at Aston, introducing a major programme in sociology in October 2005 and a single honours programme subsequently.

## School speaks a different language

Since the School will be offering programmes in politics, sociology and, from October 2005, international relations, the narrower focus suggested by reference to European Studies in the School name might have been seen to conflict with the international scope of the School as a whole. Spanish and English studies are being introduced at undergraduate level as these are important global languages.

The change is by no means intended to signal a reduction in the importance of European studies within the School's

research or teaching portfolio. European studies is offered both in the combined honours context and also in full degree programmes in the School, where it is combined with language study. Indeed the integrated study of language and the society in which a language is spoken, through focus on learning through the medium of the foreign language, is the hallmark of Aston's long-standing reputation in the field.

The new name has been widely welcomed across the School. Colleagues are keen to

extend our range of activities in languages and in social sciences. A number of new staff appointments are currently in the pipeline. It is particularly hoped that collaboration between members of the politics and modern history and sociology groups will lead to synergies and new initiatives at postgraduate level. Many challenges lie ahead, but the mood is positive and we are sure that exciting times are coming in the future.

## Gold: Culture and Commerce

**This interdisciplinary workshop, organised by the Centre for the Study of Literature and Society, was held in the heart of Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter and brought together experts from industry and Aston researchers interested in gold as a cultural symbol.**

Peter Taylor began with an overview of the activities of the Goldsmith's Company, one of the twelve great livery companies of London. The Company promotes the craft and industry of the goldsmith and offers support to young craftspeople. It funds extensive charity work and promotes links between the industry and academia. Michael Allchin of Birmingham's Assay Office (established in 1773 thanks to Matthew Boulton) told the story of hallmarking in Britain. Professor Norman Cherry of UCE's School of Jewellery showed how the School has created and reinforced links between teaching, research and industry in the field of jewellery design.

The focus then shifted from commerce to culture. Dylan Carrol (2004 BSc Modern Languages German) gave an overview of the positive and negative cultural values associated with gold: excellence, happiness, plenty, and adornment, but also greed,

selfishness and a threat to morality. He discussed the existence of a 'gold standard' against which new cultural production is measured. Dr Hélène Stafford illustrated the French poet Mallarmé's use of gold as generative of poetry, both linguistically and symbolically. Mallarmé saw the artist as an alchemist, turning base words into precious poetry. Professor Rüdiger Görner discussed the paradox of gold as a cultural motif and its ubiquity in the works of the German poet Mörike.

The conference aimed to inaugurate a dialogue between this vital aspect of Birmingham's commercial and industrial history and research being carried out in LSS in the field of cultural and literary studies. A series of lectures is proposed for the coming academic year on the theme of gold, organised by the Centre for the Study of Literature and Society.



Sue Garton updates alumni on the advances in the LSU programmes and introduces the new member on the team.



## Changes

The last twelve months or so have been a time of great change and I thought that you might be interested in more details. Many members of the old LSU team have decided to move on to new projects and challenges. Keith Richards and Sue Wharton have moved to Warwick University, Steve Mann has migrated across the city to Birmingham University, while Fiona Copland has joined the University of Central England. Jane Willis has retired (but seems to be busier than ever), but will still be representing Aston at conferences and so on, so look out for her. Julian Edge will be going much further afield as he will be taking up a post in Sydney, Australia, as Director of the National Centre for Research in English Language Teaching. We're sure you'll join us in wishing them all the very best in their new jobs.

We already have some new team members. Ramesh Krishnamurthy joined us in August and you can find out a bit more about him below. Nur Kurtoglu-Hooton and Muna Morris-Adams, who some of you may know if you did the Advanced Certificate before the MSc, will now also be joining the MSc team. There will also be two other new team members whose names will soon be announced.

Not only have there been changes to the team, but the course itself has undergone a facelift. There are two new programmes to choose from: Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) and Educational Management in TESOL (EMT). The credit weightings have also been changed so that the Foundation Module is now worth 40 credits and the Dissertation is worth 60 credits. Those of you who are quick

at maths, will have worked out that 4 modules will complete the course. There are no longer any single modules and the old modules have been rationalised and now also include elements from some of the single modules. So the choice is now between Analysis of Spoken Interaction, Analysis of Written Discourse, Course and Materials Design, Educational Management in TESOL, Grammar and Lexis, Methodology, Teaching Young Learners. We're certainly very excited about taking the MSc forward in its new form and we'll keep you up to date with developments in future issues of Apex.

## New team member

Ramesh Krishnamurthy is the latest member of the MSc team, so we thought you might like to know a bit about him. Ramesh has degrees in French and German from Cambridge and in Sanskrit from SOAS, London. He was a member of the Cobuild project team at Birmingham University from 1984 to 2003, working as a lexicographer and editor on many of its publications (dictionaries, grammars, etc.) and playing a major role in the development of Cobuild's corpora (especially the 500 million word Bank of English). He also contributed to postgraduate teaching at Birmingham and assisted students and visiting scholars in their research. He continues to enjoy Honorary Research Fellow status there. Ramesh has worked on several major EC-funded computer-based language research projects, including NERC, TELRI, and SENSEVAL. The SELECT project took him to Wolverhampton University, where he became an Honorary Research Fellow in the Computational Linguistics Group, contributed to further research projects, and also taught several undergraduate modules. He also has a substantial publications record, and extensive experience of giving talks, workshops and short courses in many countries. We're delighted to welcome him to the MSc team.

at order... in accordance with a technical... such as the entries in a dictionary where these are... depends on their first letter unless these are... same in which case it is the second... and so on.

**lexicog.** ABBREVIATION FOR: ① lexicographical.

**lexicography.**

**lexicography** (,leksɪ'kɒgrəfi) NOUN the process or profession of writing or compiling dictionaries

► **lexi'cographer** NOUN ► **lexicographic** (,leksɪkə'grəfɪk) ADJECTIVE

**lexicology** (,leksɪ'kɒlədʒi) NOUN the study of the overall structure and history of the vocabulary of a language.

► **lexicological** (,leksɪkə'lɒdʒɪkəl) ADJECTIVE

► **lexico'logically** ADVERB ► **lexi'cologist** NOUN

**lexicon** ('leksɪkən) NOUN ① a dictionary of the words of a particular language such as Greek



Aston is renowned for its academic excellence, graduate employment rates, and climbing league table positions. Laura-Kate Mapp looks at the unique mix of academic and administrative roles which combine to produce the success of Combined Honours.



## A unique combination

Combined Honours homes between 15-20% of Aston University's undergraduate student population. The Director, Dr Roy Smith, is in charge of the overall organisation, management and quality of the Combined Honours Degree Programme. He provides guidance to students on the programme and is responsible for student assessment and discipline. Roy oversees the development of the programme through the introduction and development of future Combined Honours. He also teaches modules in the School of Life & Health Sciences. The Assistant Director, Dr Jo Smedley, assists the Director to develop and improve the Combined Honours programme and works to support students. Jo heads a marketing and communications initiative within Combined Honours, developing strategies to raise the profile of the concept. She also teaches a computing module in the School of Engineering & Applied Science and a module in Aston Business School.



**Sue Perry**

Assessment and Student Records Officer

Sue is responsible for the organisation and administration of student records and assessment. She is the first point of contact for any student enquiries regarding assessment processes. She liaises with the Schools to make sure that student data is kept up to date and accurate, and prepares the overall assessment reports for Combined Honours students.



**Miranda Cleal**

Departmental Secretary and Admissions Officer

Miranda has the administrative responsibility for the smooth running of Combined Honours as an office, and organises many of the Combined Honours events such as Open Days and graduation hospitality. Miranda also has the role of Admissions Officer for all Combined Honours and Major Minor Honours programmes.



**Lindsay Batt**

Reception/Clerical Assistant

Lindsay assists the whole Combined Honours team in the administration of the department. She heads the reception and helps students with any general enquiries.

Student feedback has confirmed that the team contribute hugely to the academic careers of many Combined Honours students here at Aston University. The personal touch certainly makes working life far more rewarding for the staff in Combined Honours.



**Shak Imam**

Marketing Placement Student

I'm Shak Imam, the new Marketing Placement Student for this year, taking over from Laura-Kate Mapp. I'm studying Marketing at Aston and as part of my placement year my aim is to enhance and promote Combined Honours to potential students – part of this work involving the

organisation of Combined Honours Open Days. I am also responsible for promoting placements to first and second year students and for contributing to Apex magazine – keeping you all up to date with the latest developments in Combined Honours.



# Backstage at the May Ball 2004

This year's May Ball opened its doors to the theme of Moulin Rouge. Unbeknown to those of us who enjoy the May Ball rather than organise the event, planning began way back in October 2003 when a committee was convened with representation from a number of departments across the University including security, estates, VC's office, finance, catering, marketing and 'Sabbs' from the Guild. It's the Committee's job to plan the programme of events. This year's May Ball revellers enjoyed big bands, a casino, fireworks, a fairground on campus and a delicious three course meal. The May Ball commemorates the granting of the University Charter.

## Execs, drums and rock 'n' roll

On Saturday 19 June the usually quiet and calm area by the Chancellor's Lake at Aston University was a medley of noise and enjoyment as the students congregated to celebrate the end of their exams – and the start of a long holiday.

'Guild on the Grass' was a 12-hour summer festival organised by the Aston Students' Guild execs in recognition of the 3,000 Aston Students who are taking up one year placements, or moving on from university after graduation to work for some of the most recognised companies all over the world.

In the thick of the action was special guest Sir Adrian Cadbury, taking the chance to spend some time with students before stepping down from his position as Chancellor which he has held for twenty-five years.

The festival, which Sir Adrian attended with Lady Susan Cadbury, was largely funded by the Chancellor himself, as

well as contributions from Secretary-Registrar David Packham and all the Heads of Schools.

There was a whole host of entertainment and refreshments available throughout the day with two stages providing an assortment of live music, from Rock to Reggae, performed by Aston students from the Live Music Society and local bands. Other amusements included a host of DJs, bungee running, gladiator duels and a bouncy castle.



"Guild on the Grass was a great opportunity for leaving students to say goodbye to their friends, course mates, lecturers and professors," concluded Barri Coen, one of the event organisers.



# Message home...

From talking to our alumni, it seems that many of you are interested in what your peers are doing and the 'Where are they now?' pages prove to be ever popular. So, we've put together a special feature which includes more news of where your fellow alumni are. We've caught up with our alumni who are now living outside the UK and given them the chance to send a message home.



**Kevin Ellis** (1981 BSc Building Economics and Measurement) is now in Barcelona working as Director for

Currie and Brown International. After a few years in London in the early 80s, his first taste of life outside the UK was in 1984 when he moved to Norway to follow the money-making opportunities in the oil industry. He went to Barcelona to study for an MBA and returned to Norway on completion of the course. In 1994 he returned to Barcelona initially to manage M&S expansion projects in Spain – 10 years on he's still there. Likes the sunshine, little rain, beaches, good transport, lots of bars and restaurants, good wine, olives, 20 golf courses nearby but dislikes long working hours compared with Norway and the bureaucracy. "Working outside the UK is good for you. It allows you to gain different viewpoints on all aspects of life, maybe pick up a language and experience a new culture. It is also great for partners and kids – plenty of schools and in a couple of years the youngsters have a language for the future."



**James Fincham** (2000 BSc Computing Science) is currently in Sydney, Australia, managing all internal development and systems for ATR Australia,

producers and marketers of official Australian TV ratings. How did he get here? "I made a last minute decision to go travelling. After intending to go for three months, I spent a year travelling around Hong Kong, diving in Thailand

and Malaysia, glacial hiking in New Zealand, chilling in Fiji, walking on volcanoes in Hawaii, horse-riding in the southern USA, spending the majority of my time in Australia. Arriving in Oz, I quickly picked up work for the Olympic Committee assigning accreditation passes to both volunteers and athletes, catching many events whilst I was there. I then began working with ATR who offered to sponsor my return after I had finished travelling. I returned to Australia in October 2001 for the interesting job on offer at ATR, for the beach and bush – and the weather had something to do with it as well! I had completed my Advanced Open Water PADI Scuba certificate on my travels, and wanted to continue diving somewhere with temperate waters. Returning to Oz allowed me to complete my Dive Master certification and therefore lead dives and assist teaching in sites all around New South Wales. Likes the people and their outdoor culture and living in one of the most beautiful cities in the world, dive trips and underwater photography. Dislikes, "Aussies dishing out a fair amount of ribbing to us 'Poms' when it comes to cricket, the Olympics and even football!"



**Nathalie Kasper** (née Watkins, 1998 BSc IBML French) moved straight to France after graduation. Now works in international HR for Servier, a French pharmaceutical company. Likes Paris and the

fact she can see the Eiffel Tower from her living room window. Dislikes not being able to get decent tea: "My mum sends it over for us!"



**Punil Shah** (1983 BSc Combined Honours) and Nina Shah (1984 BSc Pharmacy). Punil is an investment analyst and Nina a pharmacy manager. "We moved to Australia for a better lifestyle, excellent weather, beautiful beaches, reserves and open lands, English speaking, friendly people and great fresh vegetables and fish!"

**Peter Roberts** (1968 BSc Mechanical Engineering) is now living in Ottawa, Canada, with his Canadian wife and enjoying an early retirement, pursuing a lifelong interest in photography.



"In the mid 1970s my UK employer sent me on an assignment to the USA which proved to be a very formative experience," explained Peter when quizzed on why he left the UK. "After returning home, I soon missed being in North America. In 1981, the Canadian Civil Aviation Authority (Transport Canada) made me an offer I couldn't refuse. I still remember the friendly welcome I received. With a cost of living less than half that of the UK, Canada offers a very comfortable lifestyle."

Wherever you are in the world remember you can communicate with fellow Aston alumni locally through the international e-groups.

Go to [www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/emailgroups.htm](http://www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/emailgroups.htm) and see who's nearby!

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

# Where are they now?

## 1960s

### Stan Arthurs

(1967 BSc Electrical Engineering)

From 1951 Stan Arthurs gave 40 years of dedicated service to Aston University and its predecessor institutions governed in turn by Sir Peter Venables, Lord Nelson and Sir Adrian Cadbury. Ex-chairman of both Aston Graduates Association and the Standing Committee of Convocation, Stan was elected to council, where for 12 years he served and chaired several of its sub-committees. A founder and life President of the University Football Club, he also enjoyed gliding, a continuation of WWII activities. In retirement Stan serves two charity organisations and also makes scale models of houses, birds and planes using match stalks and lollipop sticks.



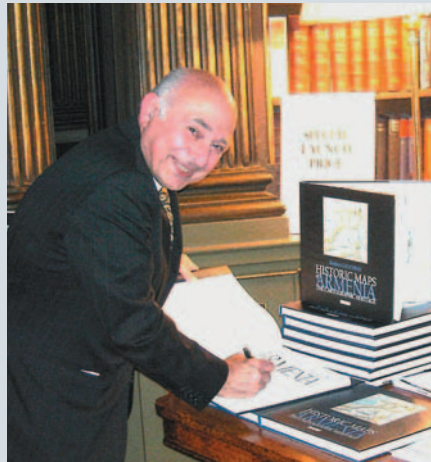
Stan Arthurs

### Rouben Galichian

(1964 BSc Electrical Engineering)

"After graduation I returned to my home country of Iran and worked in the NIOC for 10 years as an electrical engineer and later as instrument engineer and Head of Instrumentation and Electrical Departments of NIOC design office.

After 10 years there I established, together with a few friends, Bornaa Consulting Engineering in Tehran. After the Iranian Revolution I was invited by one of our Joint Venture partners to come to the UK to assist in one of their projects. I stayed on in the UK running my own company until 1999, when I joined again with my colleagues from Iran and the ex Bornaa company was renamed Nargan; it now has a staff of over 500. I am currently the Nargan representative in Technip France, located in Paris; I live in London but work in Paris three days a week. I recently published a large volume entitled 'Historic Maps of Armenia', published by I.B. Tauris of London and NY, a copy of which I have donated to the library at Aston."



Rouben Galichian

## 1970s

### Stewart Clegg

(1971 BSc Behavioural Science)

Since graduating from Aston, Stewart Clegg has held teaching and research positions in a number of countries worldwide, including Australia, Brazil, China, Japan, the UK and the USA. He is currently professor of management

and the director of ICAN Research (Innovative Collaboration, Alliances and Networks Research) at the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia. He is also a visiting professor for Aston Business School and will be giving his Inaugural Lecture (the 53rd invited presentation of his career) in October. Stewart Clegg has written and contributed to 99 journals and produced over 30 books. He has also written five professional publications, completed nearly 50 book reviews and contributed to over 100 conference papers.



Stewart Clegg

### Mark Warrick

(1976 BSc Town Planning)

"When I left Aston in 1976, jobs in Town Planning were in short supply and I went to work for a local architect in Spalding, South Lincolnshire, where my parents lived, and later for the same firm in Peterborough. I began to feel that my vocation lay elsewhere and after passing through the Church of England's selection process I went to Lincoln Theological College in 1980 to train for the Anglican priesthood. The same year I married Alison, a teacher. After assistant curacies in Grantham and Cirencester I returned to the fens to become Vicar of Over, near Cambridge, in 1991, by then with two sons and a daughter. We came to



Deeping St James (dsj.org.uk), between Spalding and Peterborough, in 1997, a large suburban village parish with plenty of work to do. Alison is teaching in Peterborough and the boys have left school; our daughter is just 15. My interest in local authority matters is now satisfied by being a member (and, this year, chairman) of our Parish Council, and I serve on its Planning and its Transport Committees and maintain its website."



Mark Warrick

## 1980s



Bill Nimmo-Scott

### Bill Nimmo-Scott

(1980 MSc Occupational Health and Safety)

Whilst studying for his MSc at Aston, Bill was a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy, at the time serving in nuclear submarines and, "with all his allowances one of the richest students in the Uni!" He went on to have a distinguished career

in the Royal Navy being promoted Commander and being awarded the OBE before he left. He ran a successful consultancy for nine years dealing in nuclear and radiation safety. Semi-retired now he still does consultancy work but has more time to enjoy his country pursuits. He is seen here with his dog Bosun at a clay pigeon shoot. He would love to hear from any of his contemporaries on the course.

### Liz Bailey-Connor

(1982 BSc Human Psychology)

After graduating Liz went on to do a Masters in Educational Psychology (University College, London) before practicing as an Educational Psychologist in Essex. In 1990, Liz emigrated to British Columbia, Canada and has recently become a Canadian citizen. Liz's husband, John, is a teacher and they have two girls, Allie and Kate (ages eight and seven). Liz works for a large auto insurance company where she reports to the operations executives. She has moved around a number of positions in the company and is currently leading a variety of business improvement/effectiveness initiatives and is involved in leading a major shift in the company's people (human resource) practices and policies. Liz enjoys running, volunteering and spending time with her family.



Lynne Proude

### Lynne Proude

(née Ridout, 1985 BSc Human Psychology)

After leaving Aston, Lynne worked in advertising before heading off on a 'year-long' working holiday to Australia. Seduced by the sun and relaxed lifestyle she didn't

return to live in the UK, choosing to settle in Sydney. After her first job in Australia as Events Manager for Sheraton Hotels, Lynne moved into Public Relations for the Financial Services Industry. She has been working for the past five years for St George, one of Australia's major banks. Initially Internal Communications Manager for St George, Lynne has recently moved into a new role as Corporate Affairs Manager. In 2002, Lynne returned to her home town of Bournemouth to marry Andrew and they are now settled back in Sydney with their children Aidan (two) and Sylvie (one).

### Jacqueline Morley

(1983 BSc Modern Languages French and German)

"After leaving Aston, I completed a one-year postgraduate diploma in translation and interpreting techniques at the University of Kent in Canterbury, after which I worked for a number of years as a translator and in customer services, mostly using my German. I 'discovered' complementary therapies, particularly Reiki, in the late 1980s and this proved to be a life-changing experience that has led me to make this my principal means of earning my living. I have just moved to Brittany, France, with my husband Neil, where we have

bought two cottages which we are renovating, with plans to offer a range of relaxing short holidays including healing therapies and Reiki courses. For more information [www.inspiredchoice.co.uk](http://www.inspiredchoice.co.uk).

### Nicholas Bently

(1987 BSc Transport Operation and Planning)

"On leaving Aston in 1987 I spent several years working for a national retailer in a variety of management positions. In 1994 I undertook a career change and joined the Metropolitan Police. I have worked within the CID environment since 1999 spending the last few years working on various pro-active squads in West London, currently working as a Field Intelligence Officer researching and conducting pro-active operations. In 2001 whilst office bound following an injury, I found myself sitting opposite Deborah Hawkes (1994 BSc Human Psychology) – Aston graduates really do get everywhere! Currently living in Surrey and still playing with motorcycles, I enjoy travelling and have spent a lot of time in the USA during the



Nicholas Bently

last few years. Still in occasional touch with Owain Needham (1987 Transport Operation and Planning), but would be interested to hear what old classmates or anyone else I knew at Aston are up to."

### Sonia Bostjancic

(née Bowers, 1988 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

After working as an optometrist in Plymouth until 1995, Sonia moved to Australia for a two year work contract and met her husband John. They married in Plymouth in 1996 and now live in Orange in central NSW. Sonia works for a small group of optometric practices in the region and is also a consultant for the Royal Blind Society, and has just obtained her Masters Degree in Optometry from the University of New South Wales. She has a 19 month old daughter, Tabitha-Rose, and is expecting another baby in September.

## SPOTLIGHT ON...

**Ali S Hasan**  
(1989 PhD Applied Linguistics ELT)

"After completing my PhD at Aston, I started teaching at the Faculty of



Education, Damascus University, Syria and in Jordan. I am currently Professor of ELT, responsible for EFL Teacher education and research. In addition to teaching, I have supervised and awarded a number of MA and PhD students. I have participated in 35 local and international conferences and published many articles in ELT. In 2003, I received the DAAD Scholarship of Linguistics to carry out a joint research project with Professor Dr Volker Raddatz at the Department of Linguistics and American Studies, Humboldt University, Berlin for three months. I would love to get a similar scholarship with another European colleague, hopefully in England. Please get in touch with the Alumni Office for my address, phone numbers and more details as I would like to hear from my friends and colleagues everywhere."

EU or World Bank experts. I keep in close contact with a group of Aston graduates, some of whom live in Paris, others are elsewhere abroad. The last Aston meeting I attended was in a Parisian pub and was a great opportunity to meet up with my fellow alumni living in France."



Christel Koehler (second from right)

### Philip Hewitt

(1992 BSc International Business & French)

"I spent five years in advertising in London, working for ad agencies and TV stations before leaving for Tbilisi, Georgia, to establish an agency network for Coca-Cola in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Married Gordana (a Croatian) and took a job in Istanbul, where my son Sam was born in 1999. Next to Zagreb, Croatia, for two years as agency regional director for the former Yugoslavia and then on to Miami, USA, as VP client services director for Latin America and the Caribbean. Now back in Croatia, loving a career break, developing a farmhouse near the sea, teaching English and doing freelance ad work. I'm also chasing my dream of being a writer, so literary agents – please get in touch!"



Philip and his son Sam

### Reenal Patel

(1994 BSc Pharmacy)

"I have worked in community pharmacy since qualification and am currently working part-time for the PCT. I live in Bristol with my husband Biral and our two year old son Amal."

### Andrew Bull

(1993 MSc Software Engineering and Applications)

Andrew and his wife Becky, celebrated the birth of their beautiful baby daughter Isabel Maunder, weighing 8lb 8oz, on 4 August 2004.



Andrew, Becky and Isabel

### Yirong Ma

(1995 MSc Teaching English for Specific Purposes)

"After graduating from Aston University, I returned to China and continued my teaching in Zhejiang University in Hangzhou China. Now I work as an associate professor in the School of International Studies of Zhejiang University. I mainly teach EFL to Chinese students. In my spare time, I also do some research on English language teaching and the English language itself. I really enjoy my work since I love my students as well as the campus life which makes me feel young all the time. As to my hobbies, I love travelling and have visited a lot of places in China."



Yirong Ma

## 1990s

### Christel Koehler

(1992 MBA)

"After graduating from Aston, I finished my studies in France and joined La Poste, the French postal operator, and worked in various positions in different regions of France and the French West Indies. For the last three years I worked as an international consultant to foreign posts and now work on European postal solutions for major customers. These jobs are very enriching and involve travel to many different countries, including Japan, Jordan and Kazakhstan; they also involve negotiation at a high level including top management, Ministries,



**Jyoti Saini**

(née Chawla, 1996 BSc Pharmacy)

On 19 October 2003 Jyoti married Vijay Kumar Saini in a traditional Hindu Punjabi ceremony. Some of Jyoti's fellow Aston graduates from 1996/1997 went along to join with her in the celebrations, including Tracey Rogers (1996 BSc Human Psychology), Nina Bentley (1996 BSc Chemistry), Kirsty Kettle (née Cowan, 1996 BSc Optometry) and Paul Kettle (1997 BSc Modern Languages French). The pre-wedding ceremonies and the wedding day itself were fantastic and a great time was had by all. Since graduating, Jyoti has worked as a pharmacist and manager for Boots the Chemist in her home town of Sheffield, she also completed her Postgraduate Diploma in Pharmacy and has worked as a Pharmacy lecturer. She now lives in Birmingham with her husband where she works as a prescribing advisor for the Primary Care Trust.



Jyoti and her husband Vijay

**Athena Tsitsilianou**

(1997 MSc Teaching English)

"I am currently teaching English to students from first to sixth grades at Athens College. I was a board member of TESOL Greece for a year and successfully completed an online Diploma course from Harvard University entitled 'Assessment for Understanding'. I live with my husband and two 'lovely' girls aged nine and 11 and I am presently learning to play the piano at the ripe old age of 40!"

## 2000s

**Peter Croxson**

(2000 BSc Business Computing and IT)

"Having worked for IBM on my placement year, I rejoined them on graduating in July 2000. Three jobs, two locations and surviving redundancy later, I am working in IBM Head Office for the UK in Portsmouth as a Business/Financial Analyst and Report Strategy Manager for IBM Global Account. Outside of work, I design, run and maintain a website dedicated to the band Feeder ([www.feederanorak.co.uk](http://www.feederanorak.co.uk)), which has twice been recognised in the top 250 of the Interactive Music Awards organised by BT Openworld, as well as featuring in Metal Hammer magazine and on XFM."

**Glykeria (Claire) Kasseta**

(2001 BSc Applied Chemistry)

"After graduating from Aston I studied at the University of Cyprus for two and half years for my Masters Degree in Chemistry and finished my studies there in March 2004. I now live in Athens where I am working temporarily for the Olympic Games 2004."



Glykeria (Claire) Kasseta

**Will Perrin**

(2001 BSc Information Technology for Business)

"In 2001 I started the graduate 'Technical Associate' scheme at Credit Suisse First Boston. Since then I have worked in various departments and in 2003 travelled to New York and Tokyo where I witnessed the New York blackout and the biggest earthquake in Tokyo for two years. I am now the global technical lead for secure virtual private networks, which allow users to connect into work from virtually anywhere and am currently working on a system to allow people's CSFB desktops to appear in a window on their home PC."



Will Perrin

## SPOTLIGHT ON...

**Amanda Green**

(2002 BSc Applied and Human Biology)

After completing a sandwich year working in marketing at Boots Head Office in Nottingham, Amanda left Aston with a position on Boots' graduate training scheme. Since October 2002 she has worked on developing new products for Boots, firstly in the healthcare arena and now in washing and bathing brands. However, the most exciting chapter of Amanda's career will begin in September when she embarks on a journey to the USA. Amanda has been awarded a prestigious Roosevelt Scholarship and been given the chance to represent Nottinghamshire and further her own career on a four-month study trip. The Nottingham Roosevelt Memorial Travelling Scholarship was established in 1947 and the first scholarship recipients went to the States in 1949. The scholarship, open to those who live or work in the county and are between the ages of 20 and 30, is unique to Nottinghamshire and more than 100 young people have visited America. The scholars follow no fixed programme and have to organise their own visits to look at their chosen trade or profession. They are encouraged to travel widely in America, and to act as ambassadors for the city and county. To this day, the scholars still maintain contact with the Roosevelt family and Amanda will be meeting Haven Roosevelt, grandson of President Franklin Roosevelt, during her four months in America. Boots have recently opened two stores in the US with plans to roll out across America. Amanda intends to gather insights into the vast regional differences that exist across the length and breadth of the States, which will influence the marketing mix of each individual store.

## SPOTLIGHT ON...

**Babs Coombes**  
(2003 Applied and Human Biology)

"During my undergraduate career at Aston I was lucky enough to gain some experience

in the public relations department at the University. This allowed me to gain some experience in scientific writing and helped me to decide that that was what I wanted to do in my future career. After graduating I worked at Cadbury Schweppes as a microbiologist, a job I really enjoyed, but when a position became available at Aston University for a PR Assistant I knew I had to apply and was lucky enough to be appointed. I've been in the position now for six months and have found it very rewarding. I have already edited my own magazine, written articles, worked with newspapers and television crews and organised photoshoots – including one with Murray Walker!"



**Miles Weaver**

(2004 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Miles has been awarded an Aston Business School bursary to study for a PhD in the area of supply chain management in the Operations and Information Management Group. He has spent his time since graduating carrying out research on behalf of Professor Edwards and Dr Shaw in the Knowledge Management Research Group.



Miles Weaver

**Samaa Taher Attia**

(2004 PhD Management)

"During my studies at Aston, I cherished the time I spent with my friends and fellow doctoral students in the UK. I have such unforgettable memories, not only of the serious business of studying for a PhD, but also of the time I spent socially with people of various nationalities. Now, after finishing my PhD and returning to Egypt, I am ready to join the Academia, where I will be actively involved in not only teaching but also in research and consultancy."

**Nooshin Daragheh**

(2004 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

"After a relaxing summer, I'm about to start my new job as a Commercial Executive with Northern Foods, working on sandwiches and salads! I'm missing student life already, and all of my friends who are pursuing different things around the world!"

**Kirsty Davies**

(2004 BSc Business Computing and IT)

"I really enjoyed my time at Aston, perhaps a little too much as I'm not quite ready for the world of work just yet! I'm off on my travels with my boyfriend on the 2nd November for 7 months, so I've been busy trying to get everything organised for the trip – immunisations, insurance, money etc. I've also been working for a careers guidance company, Connexions, where I've been dreaming about the day when I will finally jet off to the sun and leave everyone behind in the wind and rain – ha ha! My trip starts in South America where we will stay for three months. We're planning to do some jungle trekking in the Amazon and a four-day mountain trek in Peru along the famous Inca Trail to the ancient remains of the lost city of Machu Picchu (yes I've joined the gym since uni, still worried I might fall off the edge of a mountain from exhaustion!) We will also be visiting New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia and Thailand before making our way back to England! It is quite scary leaving home for so long and we will miss everyone here, but now I really can't wait to go!" If you would like some information on travelling, then Kirsty is more than happy to advise you. Simply contact the Alumni Relations Office for Kirsty's email address if you are interested.

## Want to be in Apex?

If you would like to be featured in 'Where are they now?' in the May edition of Apex, please send some information about yourself either by e-mail to [alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk](mailto: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 e-mail one at high resolution (250-300dpi). We are waiting to hear from you – don't be afraid! (Deadline for receipt of information March 2005.)

## Beijing Workshop

In June, Professor Nigel Reeves was invited by Peter Thong (1970 BSc Production Engineering) and Lydia Lim to lead a workshop entitled 'Re-inventing an Economy' at Traders Hotel, Beijing. The theme used Birmingham as a case study of a city 're-inventing' itself. A pioneering city in the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century and again in the automotive revolution of the early 20th century, Birmingham owed its prowess to its inventors and entrepreneurs, James Watt and Matthew Boulton and one hundred and fifty years later, Herbert Austin. Today, through endeavours such as Eastside, Europe's largest regeneration zone, Birmingham is re-inventing its economy for the age of the Knowledge Economy. The case study highlighted the role of Aston University, the Science Park and the City in this new revolution. The presentation was based on a PowerPoint collection of historical and contemporary slides of Birmingham and its past.

During and at the close of the presentation given by Professor Reeves and Peter Thong, participants discussed the relevance of the shift from manufacturing industry to service industries in advanced industrial countries and were asked to consider their competitive advantage as the most advanced industrial economies move out of large-scale, non knowledge-intensive manufacturing. Aston Science Park and Aston University together helped to sponsor the event and the organisers were glad to acknowledge this debt. Further such workshops are planned

## EECS '97



Adrian Britton (1997 BEng Electronic Engineering and Computer Science) sent us this photo of a select Aston alumni gathering earlier this year. "Had ourselves a little EECS '97 reunion in Sydney back in early May. Tom Crossey popped in from the US for a wedding. Pete Lee emigrated from the UK to start a shiny new life in the sun. Adrian Britton has been here for four years now. No matter how many years have gone by we still found out how much we remembered over a few beers and this is the 'morning after' photo in front of the city skyline."



## IBML 1999

On 22nd May graduates from the IBML class of '99 gathered for their inaugural reunion on the banks of the River Thames. Attendance was excellent, though the night was missing a couple of key figures including the erstwhile course guru, GJ. As befits the international flavour of IBML, individuals travelled from far and wide to attend; the French Alps, Holland and Manchester to name but a few. A good night was enjoyed by all with lots of drinking and reminiscing. It's refreshing to see the older we get, the funnier we were. We're planning a bigger and better do sometime soon so if you missed out last time or have lost touch, then either contact the alumni office ([alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk](mailto:alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk)), or [tdgriffin@hotmail.com](mailto:tdgriffin@hotmail.com).



## IBML 2003

Friday 27th August saw the first IBML Class of 2003 reunion in Covent Garden, London. "While not as many people could make it as anticipated, we still had alumni representing all rival factions: French, German, and Dual," said Simon Hall (2003 BSc IBML French). IBML graduates who showed up on the night can now be found working in various sectors, from marketing to investment banking, to sourcing and financial analysis – both in the public and private sector. A great night was had by all and hopes are now set on moving the next reunion further north – to Birmingham in the very near future. We'll keep you posted!



## Paris Reunion

On 24th April this year, 50 Aston graduates, all of whom live and work in France, met up for drinks at the Bombardier Pub in Paris. The reunion was designed to provide an opportunity for alumni to meet up and make new contacts. Everyone had a great time and will no doubt be meeting up again in the near future!



The evening gets under way in Paris

## House of Lords

On Monday 13th September 2004, graduates from the south east region enjoyed a drinks and canapés reception in the Cholmondeley Room at the House of Lords. The evening was hosted by Lord Jeff Rooker, who is an Aston graduate (1964 Production Engineering and 2001 Honorary Doctor of Science), and was attended by graduates from as far back as the 1950s to 2003.





# News from AGA-

## Jenny Martin reports

At the AGM in March, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Mike Wright, outlined exciting expansion plans for the next few years. These included the opening of the new Life & Health Sciences block and the completion of the original plans for the Nelson Building, which will result in a doubling of the numbers of students in the Business School. Our chairman, Lawrence Inniss, took this opportunity to thank Sir Adrian Cadbury for all his support over 25 years in his role as President of AGA and presented him with cufflinks inscribed with the University crest to mark his retirement from the University and to act as a reminder for all the happy times we have shared. The meeting was followed by the traditional wine and cheese party in Aston's bar so that members could renew old friendships.

Members of the Association took a guided tour of the Warwickshire County Cricket Ground at the end of April on the coldest, wettest day of the year. Cricket stalwarts were not defeated by the conditions and we enjoyed a visit to the museum, which houses a wide range of memorabilia. This was followed by a tour of the new cricket academy and practice facilities, where both professional and school age players are able to use the excellent facilities to improve both their playing skills and computer skills. Having visited the players' dining room, the groundsman's area, the conference facilities and the score boxes, we took lunch. In the best AGA tradition the sun came out and we were then able to enjoy a limited over match.

In June we joined The Birmingham Guild of Graduates for an illustrated lecture by the team of archaeologists responsible for the dig beneath The Bullring before the new development. At the Edgbaston Street site it was possible to trace the trades involved in turning the hides from cattle sold in the Bullring into tanned leather. There was also evidence of the dyeing used before making it into saddles, belts, clothes and furniture between the 12th and 18th centuries. At the Park Street site, evidence of iron working together with brass, gunmetal and pearl buttons were found. The talk was followed by a magnificent buffet supper to enable us time to meet old friends.



On the coldest night in July, AGA members and friends visited the croquet lawns at Knowle. After suitable instruction we were able to play a four match tournament. Due to the inclement weather we cut short our competition and spent the rest of the evening enjoying the bar facilities and the fish and chip supper.

Members and friends visited the Broadfield House Glass Museum, Stourbridge, in September to see the magnificent display of British glass, much of which was made locally. Pieces date back as far as the 18th Century and include vases, paperweights and drinking vessels. An exhibition of glass-blowing added to our understanding of the skills needed to achieve such fine work. Supper was taken at the Crooked House, Netherton, which provided an interesting end to the day.

## Dates for your diary

**October 15:** demonstration of the skills involved in the sport of fencing together with an outline history to explain the development of the sport. This event will take place at the Woodcock Street sports centre on campus.

**December 3:** visit to Aston Hall by candlelight. Another chance to see this beautiful building as it would have originally looked. This visit has been arranged in response to suggestions from members.

Your committee have worked hard this year to ensure that all members of AGA are receiving notification of social events if they wish to do so. If you are not yet receiving this information and wish to do so please contact the alumni office at Aston University. All events are posted on the website [www.astongraduates.com](http://www.astongraduates.com).



# 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...

**Sophia Abbasi**  
(1994 BSc Applied and Human Biology)

**Stephen Abbott**  
(1979 BSc Materials Engineering/Chemistry)

**Mahmood Akhtar**  
(1983 BSc Chemistry/Physics)

**Elizabeth Alexander**  
(1992 MSc Public Sector Management)

**Abdelmoneim Babiker**  
(1983 MSc Mechanical Design Analysis)

**Carlo Badia**  
(1985 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

**Julia Bagwell**  
(1995 BSc International Business and German)

**David Baker**  
(1978 BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

**Verley Chambers**  
(1987 MSc Public Sector Management)

**Yiu Chan**  
(1990 BEng Engineering)

**Christos Christodoulou**  
(1988 MSc Information Technology)

**John Collins**  
(1978 MSc Occupational Health and Safety)

**Scott Davies**  
(1994 BSc Transport Management)

**Satwant Deol**  
(1986 MSc Operational Research and Systems Analysis)

**Tara Dhillon**  
(1979 BSc Civil Engineering)

**Philippa Dunkley**  
(2001 BSc International Business and French/German)

**William Edgar**  
(1987 BSc Physics)

**Emilios Efthymiou**  
(1984 BSc Civil Engineering)

**Darryn Evans**  
(1992 PhD Civil Engineering)

**Matthew Exley**  
(1993 BSc Computing Science)

**Ping Fan**  
(1984 BSc Chemical Engineering and Management)

**Nicholas Farmer**  
(1993 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

**Rosemary Farrow**  
(1978 BSc Pharmacy)

**Mohammed Fouladi**  
(1989 MSc Computer Aided Design)

**Arcadio Gamboa-Medina**  
(1978 PhD Mathematics)

**Freddy Garcia Silva**  
(1981 BSc Metals and Materials Technology)

**Mohammed Ghouti**  
(1979 BSc Health and Safety)

**Neil Gibson**  
(1979 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

**Julie Hackney**  
(1981 BSc Biology Management and Environment)

**Anna Hajduk**  
(1995 BSc French/Psychology)

**Regina Hallam**  
(1993 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

**Jane Hammond**  
(1989 BSc Psychology/Business)

**Rachel Irving**  
(1997 BSc Psychology and Management)

**Ahmed Ismail**  
(1983 BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

**Eugene Iwaniv**  
(1978 BSc Geological Sciences)

**William Izzard**  
(1991 BEng Mechanical Engineering)

**Kate Jackson**  
(1992 BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

**Saleh Jaky**  
(1980 MSc Public Sector Management)

**Fereidoon Javadinejad**  
(1982 BSc Chemical Engineering)

**David Joyce**  
(1978 BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

**Johnson Kalu**  
(1992 MSc Teaching English for a Specific Purpose)

**Joanna Kapusta**  
(1983 BSc Biological Sciences)

**Lackbhir Kaur**  
(2000 BSc Business/German)

**Andrew Kyriakou**  
(1982 MSc Process Analysis and Development)

**Sandra Leech**  
(née Melton 1980 BSc Business Administration/Transport Planning)

**Evaristus Liwo Tialen**  
(1985 MSc Electronic Engineering Communications System)

**Stephanie Lucken**  
(1991 BEng Mechanical Engineering)

**Christopher Lynch**  
(1983 BSc Behavioural Science)

**Anthony Madeley**  
(1979 MSc Occupational Health and Safety)

**Ian Mearns**  
(1978 BSc Metals and Materials Technology)

**Samina Mirza**  
(1996 BSc Computing Science)

**Jane Mitchell**  
(1988 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

**Jennifer Newby**  
(1988 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

**Paul Newton**  
(1996 BEng Electromechanical Engineering)

**Anastasios Nonas**  
(1979 MSc Telecommunications Technology)

**Royan Norton**  
(1971 MSc Applied Psychology)

**Rita O'Sullivan**  
(2000 MSc Business Studies)

**Lindsay Oakes**  
(1980 BSc Health and Safety)

**June Odell**  
(1986 BSc Physics)

**Philip Ogden**  
(1992 BEng Civil Engineering)

**Stephen Palmer**  
(1988 PhD Chemistry)

**Jai-Inder Pannu**  
(1989 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

**Sheetal Patel**  
(1991 BSc Pharmacy)

**Vishvala Patel**  
(1978 BSc Pharmacy)

**Mohammed Qadir**  
(1980, PhD Modern Languages)

**Zhang Qing-Gang**  
(1991 MSc Teaching English for a Specific Purpose)

**Afzal Qureshi**  
(1992 PhD Chemical Engineering)

**Dina Radia**  
(1978 BSc Pharmacy)

**David Rafferty**  
(1982 MSc Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

**Surjit Rai**  
(1997 MSc Marketing Management)

**Judith Ranger**  
(1981 BSc Biological Sciences)

**Timna Sabri**  
(2003 BSc Applied and Human Biology)

**David Salerman**  
(1985 BSc Geological Sciences)

**Edmund San**  
(1986 MSc Public Sector Management)

**Helen Sheehy**  
(1995 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

**Helen Templeman**  
(1981 BSc Biology Management and Environment)

**David Thompson**  
(1979 BSc Architectural Studies/Transport)

**Robert Ticehurst**  
(1994 BSc Pharmacy)

**Yung Tran**  
(1987 BSc Mechanical Engineering)

**Neil Usher**  
(1992 MSc Information Technology)

**Gillian Utting**  
(1984 BSc Ergonomics/Urban Policy)

**Nmadi Uzoho**  
(1980 BSc Production Technology and Production Management)

**Eneas Valdivieso Cedeno**  
(1982 PhD Chemistry)

**Peter Van Den Hof**  
(1992 MSc Software Engineering and Applications)

**Brian Vincent**  
(1979 BSc Business/French)

**Steven Wainwright**  
(1986 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

**Samantha Wakefield**  
(1995 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

**Ajibola Williams**  
(1985 MBA)

**Suwardy Wongso**  
(1978 BSc Mechanical Engineering)

**Evangelia Xanthou**  
(1993 MSc Telecommunications Technology)

**Xin Xu**  
(1990 MBA)

**Harilaos Xydias**  
(1978 MSc Construction Management and Economics)

**Mokrine Yaker**  
(1979 MSc Telecommunications Technology)

**Ching Ye**  
(1993 MBA)

**Mark Yeldham**  
(1981 BSc Mechanical Engineering)

**Costakis Yiannakou**  
(1983 BSc, Civil Engineering)

**Zainol Zainuddin**  
(1978 BSc Civil Engineering)

**Batool Zakeri**  
(1978 MSc Systems Analysis)

**Chaaban Zeidan**  
(1978 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

**Donna Zurkowski**  
(1981 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

## 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!

**Mark Ashley**  
(1994 Teaching English for a Specific Purpose)

**Fatima Jamal**  
(1982 BSc Pharmacy)

**David Porter**  
(1976 BSc Electrical Engineering)

**Jernail Singh Lakha**  
(1981 BSc Metallurgy)

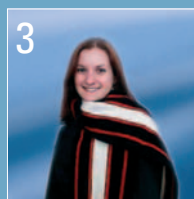
Ghaz Shahidi is trying to organise a reunion for the Management and Computer Science class who graduated in 1997. If you would like to get in touch with Ghaz, please contact the Alumni Relations Office and we will pass on his details to you.

**Makinder Suri**  
(1981 Pharmacy)

**Isabel Williams**  
(1985 BSc Pharmacy)

**Anna Wiseman**  
(1992 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

Are you looking for somebody from Aston? If they aren't listed on our e-mail directory on the website [www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/directory](http://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.



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