

Bébé éléphant a une maman.  
C'est maman éléphant.



## FOREVER FRIENDS

The UK's friendliest universities

## THE LANGUAGE BUSINESS

Why we should teach our toddlers  
the art of communication



# you must remember this...



Early technology arrives in Aston's Languages Department! A far cry from today's language learning spaces where multi-media facilities and satellite links put students in touch with the world.

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### Meet the team...



**Sarah Pymm**  
Alumni Relations Officer



**Caroline Hidson**  
Alumni Relations Assistant



**Susan Anson**  
Alumni Relations Assistant

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 the website in html or pdf formats, but please contact us if you experience any difficulties accessing the publication.

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





# FOREVER FRIENDS

Aston University and the University of Birmingham were named in the top 10 of a league table of the UK's friendliest universities conducted by the reunion website Friends Reunited. Aston took sixth place, narrowly ahead of Birmingham in seventh, making Birmingham one of the most friendly student regions in the UK.

Friends Reunited has more than 12 million members and was the first to compile a complete league table of Britain's friendliest universities. The University Friendship League Table was created by analysing the millions of e-mails sent via the Friends Reunited website between the ex-students of all Britain's universities

and colleges to see who keeps in touch the most. Hull headed up the top 100. Aston came in at number six.

Professor Mike Wright, Vice Chancellor of Aston University, said: "I am delighted with this result. As a University that has strong ties with its alumni we know that people who come to Aston make lasting friendships. The close-knit campus community and lively social activities ensure everyone gets to know one another really well as soon as they join us."

Richard Ketley, third year Aston University Pharmacy student, added: "Aston stuck out as the only university I visited which was interested in me and how to develop my learning – it was much friendlier. You can walk to the nightlife and back again, shopping is just across the road and you can go almost anywhere in

the country as New Street Station is just a short walk away. Facilities are quite big for the amount of students that we have. The city is fantastic and there is so much more than I expected. Birmingham has jumped into the 21st Century with a bang. It's lively and a great place to live."

**Lost touch with a friend from your student days?** Contact Susan Anson in the Alumni Relations Office and ask for our 'In-touch Service'. If e-mail isn't enough and you want to get the old crowd back together again, don't forget we can also help you organise your own reunion. If you need a helping hand to get your plans off the ground, pick up the phone or send us an e-mail.

## widening participation



**Widening Participation is about widening opportunities for a broader range of students, making higher education a possibility for those who are not well represented in the sector. Research\* shows that young people in the most advantaged 20% of areas are five to six times more likely to enter higher education than those living in the least advantaged 20%. Aston's approach to Widening Participation is integrated and students are supported throughout the 'student life-cycle' from raising aspiration in schools, to student support, graduation and employment.**

The Outreach Office in Schools and Colleges Liaison provides a comprehensive range of outreach activities in schools. In 2004/05 over 100 Aston volunteers were placed in local schools as student tutors, supporting primary, secondary or post-16 pupils in the classroom. Forty-two students were recruited to the Aimhigher Mentoring Scheme, which matches student mentors with mentees from Year 7 to Year 13. Mentors meet one-to-one with their mentees on a weekly basis throughout the academic year providing help and encouragement as well as academic support. The scheme provides mentees with an insight into higher education and student life with mentors gaining in terms of personal development and employability.

School pupils are also given the opportunity to experience life at Aston through a programme of taster days, masterclasses, and an annual summer school. This year's summer school, which took place in July, involved 54 Year 11 pupils from West Midlands schools, nine student ambassadors and academic staff from across the University. Activities included designing web pages, building robots, a careers event and a range of Social Sciences, Business and Science and Engineering activities. The summer school is in its fifth year and once again proved to be a very successful and worthwhile experience for all involved.

The University also reaches out to disadvantaged communities through voluntary and community activities focusing on arts, drama, music and sport. In 2004/05, over 50 Aston students took part in the Active Community Engagement (ACE) volunteering scheme, working with schools, community groups and other organisations and supporting one-off events.

In July, Aston was pleased to host a graduation ceremony for Aston Tower Community Primary School. Among the pupils celebrating at the event were children graduating from nursery class to the first year of primary school and Year Six leavers and pupils who received prizes for their achievement. The school was supported by nine Aston student volunteers during 2004/05 who were involved in a variety of sports activities and classroom support.

Preparations are already under way for 2005/06 activities and we look forward to another successful year.

\*'Young Participation in Higher Education', Higher Education Funding Council for England 2005.

## profile on...



**GILL CLARK**

**Gill Clark (née Crane 1981 BSc Modern Languages) first arrived at Aston in 1977, having travelled from Wales, to study for a degree in French and German. It wasn't until 20 years later that she returned once again, this time to start working for the Students' Guild as the Student Development Administrator. She had previously worked for Birmingham University's Guild of Students, about which she jokingly says: "Obviously I saw the light and realised the error of my ways!"**

Situated on the first floor of the Guild, Gill is responsible for supporting all the activities of clubs, societies and volunteers, so if you were ever involved in any sporting clubs or societies during your time at Aston then you're bound to know her! Gill says she loves every aspect of her job, especially as it brings her into contact with so many students from a range of backgrounds and cultures, all of whom are interested in a variety of different things. Gill is keen to promote the importance of getting involved in extra-curricular activities whilst at University, seeing it as a great way to make new friends and to gain valuable new skills that many employers now look for in conjunction with a good degree. She is very keen to keep in contact with students after graduation and really enjoys learning about where they are and what they're doing.

Other aspects of Gill's job include organising award ceremonies such as the Athletic Union Colours and Guild Colours, where students are recognised for their achievements and commitment. She also organises the annual Graduation Ball at The Birmingham Botanical Gardens, which is always extremely popular.

Outside work, Gill is kept very busy with three teenage children and two dogs. She openly admits to being a shopaholic and spends most weekends with friends happily roaming around the shops. Unfortunately, with that hobby, it'll be many years before Gill will be able to retire!





## new faces

SUSAN ANSON

The Alumni Relations Office welcomes Susan Anson to the team. Susan studied at Aston Business School and graduated with first class honours in Marketing this summer. Susan will be on the end of the telephone when you call us and she'll be picking up your e-mails with your contact details changes and your requests to trace lost friends or replace lost degree certificates. Susan will also be organising events for you all and putting her marketing skills to good use raising our profile amongst current students and alumni.

## STOP PRESS

information for languages graduates

Do you use, or have you used, languages in your career? Would you be willing to share your experiences of working with languages? If you've answered yes to these questions, the Regional Language Network (RLN) West Midlands needs your help.

The RLN promotes language and cultural skills to businesses and individuals in the region advising businesses on international communications, supporting education providers in their teaching of Modern Foreign Languages and signposting individuals towards language jobs and courses.

The RLN is looking for graduates with language skills to become individual case studies on their website [www.rln-westmidlands.com](http://www.rln-westmidlands.com). By detailing the experiences of those working with languages and showing the variety of career options available, young people and adult learners will be encouraged towards language learning. It doesn't matter whether you graduated in languages or have gained these skills since leaving university. Anyone who has spent time studying languages and now uses them in the workplace is invited to take part. For more information contact Frances Pallett on [frances.pallett@rln-westmidlands.com](mailto:frances.pallett@rln-westmidlands.com)

## an inspired read



Loyal readers are bound to sense something a little bit different about this issue of Apex. It doesn't look the same, it doesn't feel the same – what's happened? Aston has gone through a dazzling transformation to encapsulate more of what you want to read.

This new design includes old favourites such as 'Where are they now?', profiles on fellow graduates all over the world and news from your former School or department and the Guild.

In response to the many letters we receive, from now on we will have dedicated pages to developments in the City and a wider view of the changing face of the Aston campus.

We are delighted to continue our working relationship with the Linney Group and it's thanks to their design team for bringing this fresh new approach to Apex. The production of the alumni magazine is led by Janine Raine who has more than a professional interest in Apex, being a 1994 graduate of MAS.

"It's great to be involved with Aston again! My role as Account Manager is to liaise with the creative team here and the alumni relations team at Aston to develop a design that you'll want to pick up and read. The aim was to give Apex a fresh new look with inspiration for the new design coming from various sources including Sunday supplements and glossy mags. We'd love to know what you think."

As ever, back issues will appear on the alumni website [www.aston.ac.uk/alumni](http://www.aston.ac.uk/alumni). We'd love to hear your views on the new design and ideas for future issues. Go on, challenge us to produce a feature on that question that's been bugging you for years!

## HARPERCOLLINS SPONSOR PRIZES FOR THE ASTON DISTANCE LEARNING MSc IN TESOL

Ramesh Krishnamurthy is a Lecturer in English Studies and teaches on the Distance Learning MSc in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). Previously, he worked for nearly 20 years with Collins Dictionaries on the COBUILD project at the University of Birmingham. Recently, Ramesh has been discussing with HarperCollins the possibilities for future collaboration with Aston and these prizes are the first outcome.

The Collins Cobuild TESOL Prize will be awarded twice each year for the best overall performance on each occasion and also the best dissertation, so that each year there will be four winners – each entitled to £50 worth of HarperCollins books as well as a copy of the Collins English Dictionary. The first two prizes were awarded in July 2005. Our benefactor at HarperCollins adds: "On a more general note, all your students might be interested in our Word Exchange site, which has discussions on language and many resources, such as usage guidance and grammar glossary, at [www.collins.co.uk/wordexchange](http://www.collins.co.uk/wordexchange)"



# A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

In recent years there has been a spate of unsympathetic window replacements in period properties using modern materials and mass produced windows in metal, UPVC and wood, often removing and destroying important stained glass windows or leaded lights which add character and history to a property. Times, though, have changed and people are striving to replace and restore leaded windows back to their home to return it to its former glory and add selling value in an increasingly competitive housing market.

Babs Coombes (2003 BSc Applied and Human Biology) and her partner Paul Cook have recently started their own business, Stained Glass Creations, in which they design, make and restore stained glass windows and leaded lights throughout the UK using traditional methods. Here they tell us about the history and craft of producing stained glass.

### The history

The history of stained glass is somewhat vague but, from evidence found in remains at Pompeii and Heraculum, it is apparent that wealthy Romans first used stained glass in the windows of their villas in the first century AD.

It was not, however, until the tenth-century AD that stained glass began to emerge in churches when depictions of Christ and other biblical scenes were found in windows in England, France and Germany. From then on, particularly in gothic architecture with its tall walls and large window openings, stained glass was used in abundance in churches and cathedrals across Europe to illustrate scenes from biblical stories until the mid sixteenth-century.

It was during the Late Gothic and Renaissance periods that stained glass began to be more appreciated as an art form and panels were produced for private houses as well as religious buildings.

Due to political and religious unrest in the mid sixteenth-century, a significant number of stained glass windows and glass factories were destroyed in Reformation attacks and stained glass was not widely produced again until its revival in the nineteenth-century.

### The craft

"At the beginning of the twelfth-century AD, a German monk called Theophilus wrote a description of the techniques used to make a stained glass window, methods which have barely changed in 900 years," explains Babs. "We still use techniques synonymous with those described by Theophilus in his reports to make our products and complete restorations."

"The first stage in the production of a leaded light is to produce a full size 'cartoon' of the customer's window," continues Paul. "The lines represent where the lead came will go and are the thickness of the heart of the lead. This must be taken into account when producing the window otherwise the final dimensions will be incorrect."

Once the cartoon has been produced, the glass is cut using an oil-fed glass cutter on top of the drawing as a template. Grozing pliers are used to separate the pieces.

The next step is to lead the window together using lead came. Thinner lead came is used for more intricate parts of a window, while thicker lead is used around the edges and in parts of the window which need more support, for example lines which span the length or width of a panel. "We stretch and straighten the lead using a lead vice and cut it to size using a lead knife. The glass is then slid into the lead channel," explains Babs. Once the glass and lead are in place horseshoe nails are used to ensure it does not move while the next piece of lead is cut. This time-consuming process continues until the whole window has been leaded together.

The next stage in the production of a leaded light is to solder the panel together. Paul and Babs use a specially made traditional gas soldering iron with a copper tip to solder the windows. Before solder can be applied all the joints between the lead must be cleaned using a wire brush. Tallow is applied to the joints to help the solder to run smoothly and cover the joints properly.

It is then time to cement the window in order to make it weatherproof and strong. Leaded light cement is mixed with putty to create a thick paste. A natural brush is then used to apply the cement to the panel and push the cement into the small gaps between the lead and the glass to ensure the panel is watertight when the cement has dried. The final stage of producing a stained glass panel is to clean off the cement and polish the panel.

Anyone interested in Babs and Paul's work can contact them on 07731 754 489 or e-mail: [stainedglasscreations@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:stainedglasscreations@hotmail.co.uk). You can also check out their website: [www.stainedglasscreations.org](http://www.stainedglasscreations.org)



# OUR 5 TH ASIAN

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

**SIR IAN CHARLES  
REYNER BYATT**



**Sir Ian Charles Reyner Byatt** is an Economist and expert on the economics of public expenditure and the regulation of public utilities. Currently he is the Chairman of the Water Industry for Scotland, a Senior Associate at Frontier Economics and a member of the Productivity Panel at HM Treasury. He is also a member of the Panel of Experts on the Reform of the Water Service in Northern Ireland. Born in 1932, Sir Ian graduated from Nuffield College, Oxford University, with a DPhil in Economics. He also studied at Harvard University as a Commonwealth Fund Fellow. Sir Ian has lectured in Economics at both Durham University and the London School of Economics. He joined the Civil Service in 1967, undertaking a number of roles, before joining the Treasury as Under Secretary (1972-1978); Deputy Chief Economic Adviser (1978-1989) and Chairman of the Economic Policy Committee of the European Communities (1982-1985). Following this, Sir Ian was Director General of Water Services (1989-2000) before taking up his post at Frontier Economics. Sir Ian holds Honorary Doctorates from Brunel University and the University of Central England and is an Honorary Professor at Birmingham University. He was awarded a Knighthood in 2000.

**SIR ADRIAN CADBURY**



**Sir Adrian Cadbury** was born in 1929. He studied Economics at Cambridge, joined the Cadbury business in 1952, became Chairman of Cadbury Limited in 1965 and retired as Chairman of Cadbury Schweppes in 1989. He was Director of the Bank of England from 1970-1994 and of IBM (UK) from 1975-1994. Sir Adrian became Chancellor of Aston University in 1979 and held office until 2004. He was Chairman of the UK Committee on the Financial Aspects of Corporate Governance which published its Report and Code of Best Practice in December 1992 and was also a member of the OECD Business Sector Advisory Group on Corporate Governance. He was awarded the Royal Society of Arts Albert Medal in 1995, the International Corporate Governance Network Award in 2001 and the International Academy of Management's Distinguished Award in 2003. He received the Laureate Medal for Corporate Governance in 2005. Publications include: *Ethical Managers Make Their Own Rules*, awarded HBR's 1986 Ethics in Business Prize, *The Company Chairman* (1990, revised edition 1995) and *Corporate Governance and Chairmanship – A Personal View*, published by Oxford University Press in October 2002, which has been translated into Japanese and Chinese.

**COLIN JOHN CLINTON**



**Colin John Clinton**, a Midlands man, graduated from Aston University in 1980 with an Honours degree in Civil Engineering. Since leaving school his career has taken him to roles in local government and later in the private sector with Ove Arup and Partners International, where he is now a Director. In November 2004 Colin became the youngest ever President of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) at the age of 48. He pioneered a number of initiatives in communications and media and in 1999 he secured a major deal with Heart FM radio for the promotion of Civil Engineers and Civil Engineering across the West Midlands. Throughout his career Colin has been responsible for many major transport and civil engineering projects both in the UK and across continental Europe. He is a Fellow of the ICE, a Fellow of the Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT) and was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors (ICES) in 2000. Colin is also a Director of the British Consultants and Construction Bureau (BCCB) Worldwide, Director of the BCCB Board of Directors, and Chairman of their European Board. During his term as ICE's President, he is leading the revitalisation of the Institution making it relevant for the next century and a voice to governments and industry.

**ISABELLA  
KRYSTYNA MOORE**



**Isabella Krystyna Moore** is a member of the Institute of Linguists and the Institute of Translations and Interpreting. She studied at St Andrews University and at Warsaw University, gaining a Master's degree in History of Art before working for several multinational companies in Eastern Europe and the United Kingdom. She founded COMTEC 18 years ago, offering technical translation and interpreting services to companies involved in exporting, securing ISO 9002 and Investors in People accreditation for COMTEC. Her other abiding focus and interest has been the interface between business activity and public policy, in particular the promotion of language skills, female entrepreneurship and trade development with the new accession countries. From September 2002 until June 2004, Isabella was first woman President of the British Chamber of Commerce and Vice-President of Eurochambres, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce. In September 2004 she took up a new role as Director of CILT, the National Centre for Languages. The Centre was formed in 2003 from the merger of the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research and the Languages National Training Organisation (LNTO). She is delighted to be leading an organisation which plays a vital role in developing our nation's language competence and in implementing the government's National Languages Strategy.

**RABBI LEONARD TANN**



**Rabbi Leonard Tann** has held the position of Chief Minister at the Singers Hill Synagogue, Birmingham for almost 19 years. During this time the Rabbi has been involved with many church groups and faith leaders within the city and he attaches great importance to inter-faith work. The day after the terrorist attacks in the US on September 11, Rabbi Tann visited the Birmingham Central Mosque and its leaders as a pledge of solidarity in response to the verbal attacks and daubing it had received. Other faith leaders joined him, thus forming the Faith Leaders Group, which now holds regular meetings. As well as his work with other denominations, Rabbi Tann enjoys representing his congregation through his involvement with various charities around Birmingham and has studied part-time since 1997 to gain his MA in Biblical Studies and soon aims to complete his MPhil. Rabbi Tann is married to Irene and they have one son, Roger, who is 28.

**DR SARINDAR  
SINGH SAHOTA**



**Dr Sarindar Singh Sahota** graduated from Birmingham University with a BSc in Electronic and Electrical Engineering in 1971. He then returned to his home country of Kenya where he joined his father's business, Nairobi Terrazzo Contractors Limited (specialists in flooring contracts). The business grew from a small firm to one of the largest flooring contractors in the country, employing over 400 people. In 1989, Sarindar returned to Birmingham to join his younger brother in his business, Nanak Electricals, and he went on to become a partner. He is also Director of Sahota Properties. Other roles include: Chair of Dudley Road Traders Association, Chair of the Single Regeneration Budget Round Six North West Birmingham, Deputy Chair of West Midlands Business Council, Non-Executive Director of Birmingham and Solihull Chamber of Commerce and Industry, member on both the Birmingham and Solihull Business Link Supervisory Board and the Aston Business School Advisory Board. Sarindar has contributed greatly towards enhancing the profile and performance of the regional business sector, particularly within the Asian community and was awarded the 2004 Above and Beyond the Call of Duty Award by the Heart of Birmingham Primary Care Trust, an honorary degree from Birmingham University and an OBE in the Queen's 2005 New Year's Honours.

# news

## Getting in touch with friends

### E-mail Directory

Our online alumni e-mail directory now has over 1,000 registered members from all years and subjects of study and is a great way for you to look up 'lost' friends and to keep in touch with one another. Many of you will have noticed that it was missing from our website for a few months but it can now be found up and running once again at [www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/contactsdb/](http://www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/contactsdb/). If you requested previously to be listed on the directory we would be grateful if you could log on to check and see if your contact details are still the same. Any changes should be e-mailed to [alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk](mailto:alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk). Likewise, should you wish to be added to the directory, please also send an e-mail to [alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk](mailto:alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk) and include the following information:

Name  
Name at Aston (if different)  
Year of graduation  
Subject of study  
Contact e-mail address  
*(Please note that the e-mail directory is NOT password protected at this time.)*

### 'In touch' service

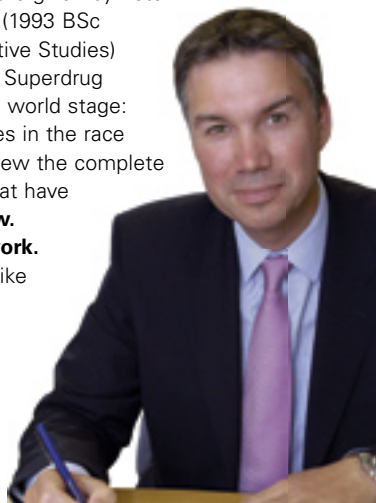
Our 'In touch' service runs alongside the online e-mail directory and is a useful resource should you not be able to find your friend(s) listed on the e-mail directory. To use the 'In touch' service you can either fill in the form at [www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/looking/intouch.jsp](http://www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/looking/intouch.jsp) with the name(s) of alumni you are trying to find or you can contact us directly with your request either by e-mail to [alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk](mailto:alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk) or by telephone: +44 (0)121 204 4543. Once we have received your request we will then look to see if we are in contact with your friend(s) on our database. If we are, we will contact them on your behalf to say that you want to get in touch. (Please note that no contact details are given out without consent from all parties involved.) Sadly, in some cases we won't be in touch with the friend(s) you are looking for but we will always try to suggest, where possible, alternative routes that you could try to find them.

## New e-group

Our list of available international e-groups has just grown to 16 with the introduction of the new Swiss-Alumni Group. If you are living in Switzerland and would like to be in touch with other Aston graduates in your country, then why not join? As a member of an e-group you will be able to post messages to everybody within that group and will also receive e-mail newsletters from the Alumni Relations Office. A list of available e-groups along with instructions on how to join can be found at [www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/emailgroups/index.jsp](http://www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/emailgroups/index.jsp)

## The Network Lecture Series

The Alumni Relations Office has enjoyed another year of successful Network Lectures for the 2004/2005 academic year. The Network Lecture Series has been run by the Alumni Relations Office since 1997 and aims to bring together Aston students and graduates into an exciting discussion forum. Aston graduates are invited back to their alma mater to address an invited audience of professionals and undergraduates interested in their particular area of expertise. Current students are able to gain a valuable insight into the real world of their chosen careers. They can also make that all-important business contact or discuss issues related to their studies at Aston. Held once a term, Network Lectures have become well known amongst both students and staff for playing a vital role in helping to put something of value back into the life of the University. This year's Network Lecture Series culminated in a lecture given by Aston graduate, Euan Sutherland (1993 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) Chief Operating Officer for Superdrug Ltd, entitled 'Retailing on a world stage: challenges and opportunities in the race for global domination'. To view the complete list of Network Lectures that have been held so far, visit [www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/network.jsp](http://www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/network.jsp). If you think you might like to return to Aston to give a Network Lecture, why not contact us to discuss the opportunity in more detail? You can call us on +44 (0)121 204 4543 or e-mail [alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk](mailto:alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk)



## MBA Online Community

If you graduated in 2005, you may not yet have had the opportunity to register as a member of the MBA online community.

In summer 2004, MBA alumni all over the world took part in e-mail discussions and focus groups to explore ways of making networking between them easier once they had graduated. The most important consideration was the vehicle through which this happened and, almost without exception, an electronic communication system seemed to be most desirable. So the MBA Online Community has been launched at [www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/mba](http://www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/mba)

It is open to all MBA alumni of Aston University and we have already had a successful start to the programme. Members have listened to Sir Adrian Cadbury, Sir Digby Jones and Professor Rob Rhodes on topics as wide as corporate governance, Q+A business, politics and day-to-day life in the Westminster village.

There are currently around 300 members from all over the world representing many different graduation years who receive electronic newsletters, invitations to seminars and the chance to network by posting e-mails to message boards. Why not take a few moments to go to [www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/mba](http://www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/mba) and see who's there.

The availability of new digital and cable platforms has seen many of us ditch traditional terrestrial TV in favour of the variety now offered by literally hundreds of different TV channels.

One of the largest multi-channel broadcasters in the UK is UKtv, beaming ten different UKtv channels into our homes every day. Adam Chard (2001 BSc International Business and German) and Kerry Yates (née Bebe, 1991 BSc Managerial

and Administrative Studies) work together in UKtv's Brand Marketing Department, producing promotional advertisements (promos) for three of its channels. Here they tell us more about the fast-paced life of television.



## What are your roles within UKtv?

**Kerry:** "Both of us work in the Brand Marketing Department of UKtv and work specifically on UKtv's three factual channels – UKtv Documentary, UKtv History and UKtv People. I am Head of Brand, meaning I am in charge of the development of all marketing strategy and promotional activity (on and off air) for all three channels."

**Adam:** "I am Brand Marketing Assistant, so I basically assist Kerry in this task and co-ordinate some of the processes we work through."

## How do you go about producing a promo – does it take a long time and who gets involved?

**Adam:** "In the new world of digital television, where 350 channels are all trying to grab viewers' attention, developing effective and hard hitting promotional trails is really important. In order to produce a promo we start by liaising with the channel editors at our monthly marketing meetings where we discuss content, newsworthy issues and consumer insights – understanding your viewer, their interests and motivations is vital if you want to make a connection. We also have to be aware of the content of the programme we are looking to promote. We then brief our agency, BBC Broadcast, which has a team of creatives who work on the individual promos. We receive scripts for the trails and following our feedback we will work with them on the final edit."

**Kerry:** "In general we will be working on around 20 promos per month. In FMCG marketing you might work on two to three promos a year, we work on over 250 per year! A promo typically takes eleven weeks from being briefed to going on-air. Having said that, the work we do is very fast-paced and schedules and events can change at the drop of a hat, so we have to be on the ball when it comes to reacting to events in the news or to any current trends. It's certainly very challenging at times."

## What's the favourite promo you've produced for UKtv?

**Kerry:** "My favourite has to be 'Explore your World' on UKtv Documentary. This summer we ran a Natural History season and put together a campaign encouraging viewers to get closer to nature. We based promotions for various programmes around the four basic elements of Earth, Wind, Fire, and Water and produced a stunning series of trails as a result. For 'Wild Down Under' we included the raging fires of the Australian outback; we used stunning views of earth from the Himalayas to promote Michael Palin's series, 'Himalaya'; swirling schools of fish underwater for 'Massive Nature'; and the windswept plains of pre-historic Britain to promote 'The British Isles –

A Natural History'. The music was great, the visuals stunning and the overall impact was huge. Before UKtv I worked for Budweiser, so another of my favourites includes the frogs and lizards and 'Wassup!'"

**Adam:** "We have a brand new origination called 'Inside the Nazi State' on UKtv History. The programme gives a unique insight into the ordinary people who lived with, and fought for, the Nazis. The promo involved building a factually accurate mock-up of a Jewish bakery that would have been seen in Germany in 1938. We had to get everything just so, right down to even the clock on the shelf. A brick was catapulted through a glass pane in the shop front to recreate the events of the infamous 'Krystallnacht' (Night of the broken glass). This was done ten times and each time the glass was painstakingly replaced and graffiti had to be painted on in exactly the same position. The way this was shot makes it look stunning but at the same time portrays visually the more sinister side of the programme's content."

## What are the best and worst things about the work you do?

**Adam:** "Just working for a television network is a lot of fun and there is always an element of glamour associated with working in the media. The industry has a young and vibrant feel to it and there are always opportunities to work with creative and enthusiastic people. One of the worst things about the job is the amazing amount of TV I have to watch. I go home to relax in front of the telly and it's like being at work again!"

**Kerry:** "Just knowing that thousands of viewers are able to watch our work within the comfort of their own living rooms makes the job very rewarding from my point of view. An entertaining and interesting promo can go a long way to increasing UKtv's viewing figures and it's great to know that we can help to achieve that. The only downside is keeping on top of our product (schedules) and competitors. Our programmes are ever-changing and we have to move quickly to keep ahead of the competition. It can do your head in!"

## Finally, do you see your careers staying within the media?

**Kerry:** "Since leaving Aston I have gained so much experience having worked in a variety of different industries, including advertising agencies, FMCG and the drinks industry.

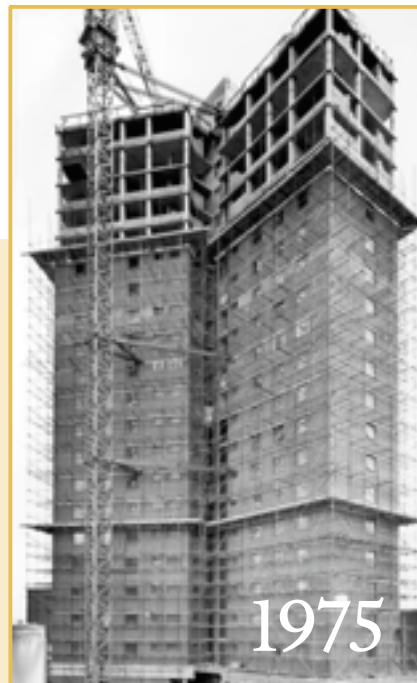
Advertising has always been my favourite marketing discipline though, so my entry into the television industry was a natural step. As UKtv is part-owned by the BBC we have a great creative environment to work in and a broad range of channels to work across. I would recommend anyone to consider a marketing career within the media."

**Adam:** "Marketing was always my favoured discipline throughout my course at Aston, although I only started working in brand marketing just over two years ago. I thoroughly enjoy working in the media and hope to further my career in this industry. I have recently completed the CIM (Chartered Institute of Marketing) Professional Diploma."



# CAMPUS REVISITED

Do you remember any of this during your time at Aston? Was Lakeside under construction? Are you the person in the lift? We're collecting thoughts and memories of yesterday – drop us a line with your memories.



1975



2000

**April 1975 Dalton Tower.** Dalton Tower's twenty floors grew in 1975. It is home to 406 students.

**20 June 1986,** the official opening of a new futuristic glass and tubular steel main entrance and twin wall climber lifts by The Rt. Hon. Lord Young of Graffham, Secretary of State for Employment, marked a significant milestone in the progress of Aston University and the redevelopment of the site on which it is located. The lifts offered panoramic views of the campus and Birmingham. The corner of the Nelson Building, the chequerboard wall of the Vision Sciences Building and the Library can be seen left to right across the top of the picture.

**2000 saw the building of 'Lakeside'** – well appointed en suite accommodation situated on the edge of the campus overlooking The Chancellor's Lake. This picture clearly shows the two 'arms' snaking down towards the Chemical Engineering Building. Beyond the trees on the left is the Sumpner Building, now the site of the new Matthew Boulton College.

**F**ounded in 1895 and a university since 1966, Aston is an old university with a proven history of academic excellence, world class teaching quality and research and a graduate employment record that is consistently one of the best in the UK. Many of you will recall walking across the green and compact campus right in the heart of Birmingham to lecture theatres, the Guild or even out into the City for a spot of shopping or entertainment. If you visit Aston today you'll still be able to retrace your steps around this familiar territory. The campus has always looked impressive with its well-kept gardens and lawns – even major building projects have never detracted from their beauty as the Aston campus has been shaped over the years into a modern student community. Here we capture moments in time down the years and across the campus.



1986



2005

**Matthew Boulton College**  
**Opened its doors to students in September.** The new College has shared facilities with the University and represents a UK first. It also provides a gateway to all the other institutions and facilities available in the Eastside Learning Quarter. The relocation of Matthew Boulton

College to the Aston campus recreates a link that extends back to the two institutions' common origin in the Birmingham Technical Institute founded in 1895. Aston University is already working closely with Matthew Boulton College through the institutions' strategic partnership which is providing opportunities for learners to progress into higher education programmes and courses. The strategic partnership will also have a huge impact in terms of significantly increasing student numbers into the University's foundation degrees and providing a seamless progression into higher education.



## ShoppingforBritain

**M**oving abroad this year? Planning on packing a box of your favourite tea bags in amongst your socks? Well, you wouldn't be the only one! The world may appear to be getting a much smaller place, yet it's still incredibly difficult to find everyday British food and household items abroad that we've all come to know and love. Tim Heseltine (1988 BSc Business Administration and Computer Science) thinks his new online venture, ShoppingfromBritain.com may provide a solution for those of you living abroad and pining for a bag of Walkers or a shortbread finger. We met up with him to find out more.

ShoppingfromBritain.com is effectively an online supermarket which aims to supply British products – food and otherwise – to people living all over the world. In fact ShoppingfromBritain.com delivers to over 200 countries worldwide, having negotiated contracts with UK-based carriers to ship packages abroad. Shipping to European countries takes as little as two to three days from ordering and up to one week for the rest of the world. Current products that are available to buy fall into one of five categories: Food and Drink, Health and Beauty, Baby Care, Household, and Pet, though visitors are invited to e-mail with special requests should they not be able to find exactly what they are looking for.

One of our first questions to Tim is to ask why he decided to start ShoppingfromBritain.com and we gather from his answer that he may not have started it at all had it not been for the words of a visiting lecturer back in the 1980s:

"During my time at Aston we had a visiting lecturer from Wolverhampton Polytechnic, though I'm afraid I forget his name. He told us that if we didn't start our own businesses almost immediately after graduating then we never would as we'd become too comfortable elsewhere. I remember disagreeing with him at the time, saying I thought the best time would be after gaining experience working for other successful businesses. After recently completing an MBA, this conversation returned to my mind once again. I'd been considering a career change for a while and during a holiday to California last year I noticed a number of British shops doing good business. Looking more closely though, I thought they had a very average offering with an expensive and restricted range of items. I did some research into this market, saw the potential and came up with what I hope was a strong business plan – for an online supermarket selling British food and household items to people anywhere in the world. On 31 December 2004 I left permanent employment, set up the company and at the end of April went online with shoppingfromBritain.com"

**Shipping to European countries takes as little as two to three days from ordering**

With upwards of 15 million Britons living abroad and a further 500 joining them every day, Tim certainly has a large audience to potentially sell to. He tells me that whilst most of the interest in his website is from ex-pats and overseas workers, there is also a lot of interest from foreign nationals. He says: "Often they are buying things that they discovered on a visit to the UK and still want to buy. I have customers whose children visited the UK on exchanges and who still want to buy UK crisps and snacks. There is also a strong interest abroad for premium English tea brands, such as Twinings." And whilst the leading country in terms of orders is from the USA, closely

followed by Australia and nearby Europe, Tim tells us that surprisingly he also gets a fair amount of orders from people living in the UK who are looking for favourites that their local supermarkets no longer stock. The only two things that Tim is unable to sell at the moment are chilled and perishable foods, though this is something he plans to look into. He explains: "Any packaging has to be able to withstand the product sitting in a delivery van somewhere in the middle of summer. If I had an order for every time someone has enquired about bacon or pork pies, I would be doing very well!"

Finally, what are ShoppingfromBritain.com's most popular items? What's next for this innovative new online venture? "My best selling products have to be Walkers crisps, tea, biscuits and Branston Pickle. As far as future plans are concerned I'm looking into diversifying the product range a little, possibly into chilled foods, clothing and magazines. I am even being approached by manufacturers asking me to stock their lines, so things are looking good." For more information, or to order your favourite British items, please visit [www.ShoppingfromBritain.com](http://www.ShoppingfromBritain.com)







# THE LANGUAGE BUSINESS

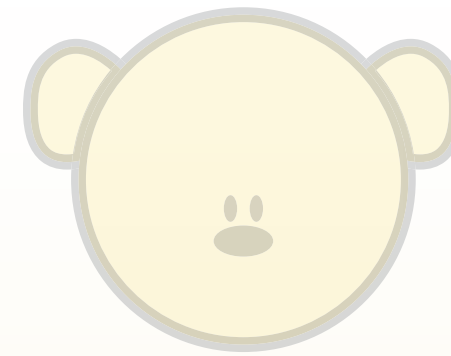
Learning a foreign language isn't limited to simply stumbling through a few stock phrases to order your cappuccino on holiday. Whilst there's nothing wrong with applying your linguistic skills in a social setting, it's worth sparing a few moments to think about the wider benefits linguistic competence can offer.

The accomplished linguist has honed and refined communication skills, is able to listen and manipulate information in a way to make it accessible to other people, can negotiate and explain intricate streams of thought and is able to quickly grasp what's going on in an increasingly global community. The world of foreign languages can be a springboard for the entrepreneur who, literally, wants to go places.

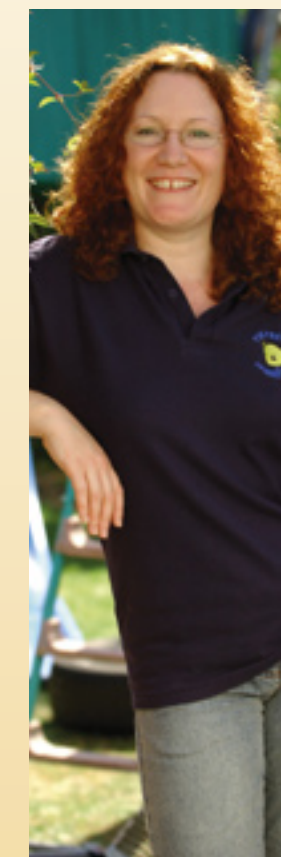
Amanda Collins (1989 BSc Modern Languages French) is such an entrepreneur. She has taken her passion for all things French and transformed it into the lifeblood of her own business, positioning 'Language Solutions' in the gap which she identified for language tuition aimed at very young children. Marketing under the brands of 'Fun French' and 'Fun Spanish', Amanda's company is establishing itself to respond to the Government's language initiative which will require all state primary schools to offer language tuition to children at key stage two from September 2009. "We already go into schools locally and deliver language programmes within the framework of the existing curriculum," explains Amanda.

We? Over the past six years Amanda has built up a team of between eight and ten tutors who deliver her French and Spanish courses to around 600 children. "But we have a wider portfolio of programmes," continues Amanda. "We have parent and toddler groups, family tuition, adult groups and one-to-one classes. Some of my learners are in their sixties but the majority are between two and eleven." Even the toddler classes raise the roof with bilingual nursery rhymes and respond to instructions in French.

Amanda openly admits to being on a mission to educate people about exposing children to language early on. "It's not just about learning labels for things we see and do," she enthuses. "It's all about learning how to make patterns with words – whether those words are your mother tongue or a foreign language. Research has shown that in the early years the human brain can recognise and reproduce any sound. As we get older our brain works out what we need to survive in the situation we're in and it blocks out the sounds or words we don't need. So, if we're functioning in a bilingual environment or hearing foreign sounds from an early age, our brain will instinctively consider those sounds useful, learn how to make distinguishable patterns from the sounds, retain them rather than block them out and we'll learn quickly. That's why it seems more difficult to learn foreign languages as we get older – our brains have shut out the foreign sounds because it



“I’m currently developing activity packs for children which can be used at home to reinforce classroom learning.”



thinks we don't need them to survive. So, exposing very young children to languages other than their mother tongue can be extremely beneficial."

Amanda has seen children overcome speech impediments and master confidence in communication. She stimulates an environment of fun and she encourages her learners to relax and feel comfortable with what they're doing. "We've always got the coffee brewing for the adult classes," she laughs. A major challenge for her is to eliminate any bad memories her learners might have of language learning at school.

Amanda uses her own patented materials and has been commissioned by a national publisher to co-write new teaching materials. Amanda has developed a flair for creativity and uses interactive media to engage the modern learner with contemporary images and support via a virtual classroom. "I'm currently developing activity packs for children which can be used at home to reinforce classroom learning."

Amanda works right across the spectrum of language provision. As an Export Communications Consultant for the Chamber of Commerce, she will work with SMEs who are forging links overseas and conduct an audit of their international communications, producing a plan of action for them to achieve their objectives within a specified budget. "This kind of work brings home how useful it is to have a linguist on your team," explains Amanda. "The linguist is a well-rounded valuable member of staff who is culturally aware and able to analyse a situation, listen to what's going on, relay information accurately to a variety of people and react appropriately."

Hard work has got Amanda where she is today. After graduation, she stayed at Aston to support international students. With a TEFL certificate in her hand, she sped over to Lille where she taught corporate clients of a language school. Following this she worked as Director of Studies and then as Regional Manager for language schools in Reims and Epernay, only returning home some five years later to brush up on her English! With the offer of an international sales and marketing job, Amanda began to spend less time in the classroom. Her responsibilities widened and she began travelling to Eastern Europe, Russia and Asia – using French or German as a lingua franca where both parties had no other common language. Her entrepreneurial spirit has afforded her an interesting career and it's not difficult to see how she draws on all of her working experience to transform her passion into her successful business. Read more about Amanda's work at [www.fun-languages.com](http://www.fun-languages.com)

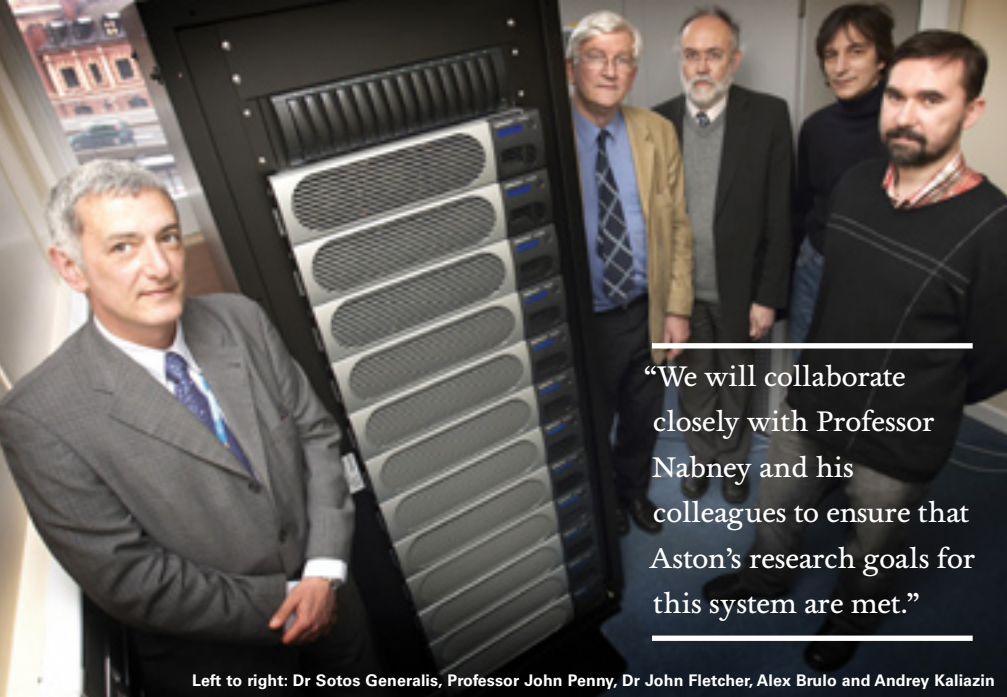


Academics in the School of Engineering & Applied Science have become the first in the UK to have the new Cray XD1 supercomputer to advance their scientific and engineering research across a broad spectrum of disciplines.

The supercomputer will be available to researchers in all departments of the School of Engineering for advanced work in Chemical Engineering, Applied Chemistry, Computer Science, Electronic Engineering, Engineering Systems and Management and Information Engineering. Aston will also exploit the Cray XD1 system's field programmable gate array (FPGA) capabilities for acceleration of key applications. There are plans to use the supercomputer for optimisation of optical communication systems, finite element analysis and analysis of very large data sets in domains such as genomics and environmental modelling.

"We compared this supercomputer with two 'conventional' clusters from other manufacturers," said Professor Ian Nabney of the Neural Computing Research Group. On comparative benchmarks, the Cray scaled much better to larger problems.

# SUPERCOMPUTER A FIRST IN UK FOR ASTON ENGINEERS



"We will collaborate closely with Professor Nabney and his colleagues to ensure that Aston's research goals for this system are met."

Left to right: Dr Sotos Generalis, Professor John Penny, Dr John Fletcher, Alex Brulo and Andrey Kaliazin

Faster computation on problems with high inter-processor communication requirements is the most important feature for our research projects. We also expect to use the system's FPGAs for random

number generation for large Monte Carlo simulations."

Cray is very pleased that Aston University researchers will rely on the XD1 supercomputer to support their advanced

scientific and engineering work. "We will collaborate closely with Professor Nabney and his colleagues to ensure that Aston's research goals for this system are met," said Ulla Thiel, Vice-President for Cray Europe.

## leading research for a greener Europe

Renewable energy is at the top of Europe's political agenda thanks to the EC's unwavering commitment to the Kyoto Protocol. Aston's Bio-Energy Research Group (BERG) has been developing renewable energy, particularly bioenergy, for over 25 years.

BERG's proven expertise in the field has been recognised with major national, European and international research contracts on renewable energy projects, including management of SUPERGEN Bioenergy and core membership of the EC's Bioenergy Network of Excellence.

BERG's latest project is ThermalNet – an integrated European network that looks

at how to optimise thermal biomass conversion to produce power, heat and transport fuels. Biomass covers all renewable organic matter including trees, crops, agricultural feed and wastes and municipal wastes. Launched in January 2005, the network is co-ordinated by Professor Tony Bridgwater of BERG. The 2.8 million, three year contract is funded through Altener in the Intelligent Energy for Europe Programme.

The network brings together 13 partner organisations from across Europe. This team of experts will champion the most effective methods for thermally converting biomass into energy. ThermalNet is a cluster of three networks – combustion, gasification

and pyrolysis. Each one represents a different thermal conversion process for biomass. BERG's leadership in ThermalNet and its participation in other key energy projects in the UK and Europe mean its research is applied directly to European renewable energy strategies and policies.

Through the Kyoto Protocol the EU promised to cut its combined greenhouse gas emissions by eight per cent from their 1990 levels by 2010, mainly by substituting fossil fuels with renewable energy sources (RES). With bioenergy expected to make up the largest share of RES in Europe, BERG's R&D has never been more important.

# IMPROVING CALL CENTRES

ABS research looks at the staff issues behind customer service

Love them or hate them, call centres are becoming a part of everyday life and the Business School has been taking a closer look at what makes staff tick. Neeru Malhotra, a member of the School's Marketing Group, has conducted research into the relationship between perceptions of rewards, attitudes and service quality amongst frontline employees in banking call centres.

"There is a need for the call centre managers to find out what they can do to manage the staff efficiently, as well as the service quality delivered to customers," explains Neeru in the research. "The current research evidence demonstrates that neither staff nor customers seem to be happy with the way these call centres are being managed."

Banking call centres are booming. Previous research has shown that while the number of branches has reduced (The British Bankers' Association reported a reduction of 15% between 1996 and 2001), call centres have been on the increase since the 1990s. Estimates show approximately 595,000 people employed in call centres in autumn 2002 (Key Note).

Neeru's research has been conducted from an internal marketing perspective. She explains: "Marketing is all about understanding wants and needs and satisfying them. Internal marketing aims to satisfy the needs and wants of internal customers – employees – so that they can display the right attitude and effort, which is crucial for delivering good quality service and satisfying customers. This study addresses the problem of understanding the significance of rewards as



part of internal marketing in relation to improving employee attitudes and service quality."

Research was carried out amongst 342 frontline employees working in the 'in-house' call centres of a major high street bank. "The results highlight the importance of rewards," explains Neeru, "Intrinsic rewards (like role clarity, training and skill variety) emerged as the most significant of all as they were found to impact on service quality. Enhancing role quality calls for conscientious endeavour on the part of management; the more employees are clear as to what is expected of them in their jobs, the higher would be the quality of service."

Other factors such as participation in decision making, constructive feedback, training and increased internal communication have a positive effect. The introduction of greater skill variety, making the roles more challenging and freeing staff from monotony, is another positive although complete autonomy is often unfeasible in these roles.

According to the study, promotional opportunities, pay and benefits need to be managed more carefully as they have only an indirect relationship with service quality.

"Besides theoretical and methodological contributions, the research also provides strong managerial implications and directions for future research in applying internal marketing for improving service quality of frontline employees in call centres." That's not just good news for Aston Business School but for the thousands of call centre employees and millions of customers.

“

Current research demonstrates that neither staff nor customers seem to be happy with the way these call centres are being managed.

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## talking business

Business School Head responds to call for language skills

If language degrees answer the needs of both industry and students they will prosper, the Head of Aston Business School has said.

Following a call from the CBI for high calibre employees skilled in languages, the Business School has announced that applications for its International Business and Modern Language BSc programme has jumped by 111%. In general, applications for degree places at Aston Business School have risen by 36% this year – more than four times the national average.

"There's a desperate need from industry for both language skills and a real understanding of a different culture," explains Professor John Saunders, Head of Aston Business School. "But universities are closing their language schools down. By developing a product that is carefully targeted, we've bucked the trend. Do it properly and the demand is there."

The four-year International Business and Modern Language programmes include a placement year working overseas. Students can choose one or two modern languages with lectures conducted in the chosen language(s).

Almost 6,000 applications from around the world have been made to Aston Business School for 620 places on Aston's 17 single, joint and combined honours business degrees. The latest figures from UCAS, the organisation responsible for managing applications to higher education courses in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, show an average rise in higher education applicants of 8.2%.

This year Aston Business School has received 4,153 applications from the UK and EU and 1,744 from non-EU countries – a rise of 36% on last year's total of 4,332. Applications from UK and EU students for its International Business and Modern Language programmes have risen by 111%.



Neuroscientists from Aston who were involved with the international Methods of Mind conference. Left to right: Peyman Adjamian, Gina Rippon, Carl Senior, Gaynor Evans and Jade Thai.



“This prestigious five-day event attracted neuroscientists from across the world and was the premier education event in cognitive neurosciences.

”

The conference was chaired by Dr Carl Senior and Dr Gina Rippon from Aston and attracted high profile speakers from across the world including Professor Steven Rose from the UK as well as Professors Matthew Lieberman and Marcus Raichle from the USA. Other speakers included Professors Susan Hurley and Andrew Young and presentations from Professor Stefano Seri and Drs Gareth Barnes, Arjan Hillebrand and Krish Singh from Aston.

Alongside the main conference there were a number of masterclasses which enabled delegates to learn how to use various brain imaging techniques. These training classes were organised by post doctoral Aston students, as the emphasis of these conferences is very much on the exchange of ideas between students and working scientists.

**Neuroscientists in the School of Life & Health Sciences held the *Methods in Mind* Conference at Aston between 12 and 16 September. This prestigious five-day event attracted neuroscientists from across the world and was the premier education event in cognitive neurosciences. It gave Aston postgraduate students and staff an unrivalled opportunity to present their work to an international audience.**

The conference is an annual educational meeting that first took place in 1998. At the time brain imaging was a relatively new technology and these initial conferences gave working scientists and students the chance to come together to discuss their existing work and explore future possibilities in neuroscience research. The concept was a great success and previous conferences have taken place in locations including London, Washington and Sao Paolo.

Aston was the ideal location for this year's conference as the University has both MEG (Magnetoencephalography) and MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scanners, as well as a multi-channelled EEG system in the Aston Academy of Life Sciences and the Neuroscience Research Institute.

## PIONEERING STUDY INTO CHILDREN'S EYESIGHT

**O**ptometrists in the School of Life & Health Sciences are embarking on a new study of the prevalence of refractive error in UK school children – surprisingly something that has not been assessed in detail for four decades! The team will travel to schools in the West Midlands area to perform part of a basic eye test to determine whether children need to wear glasses.

Research shows that the prevalence of short sight in school age children is rising worldwide – particularly in East Asia – and indicators suggest a similar trend is occurring in the UK and mainland Europe. The demographics of the UK have seen significant changes with children choosing to spend more time indoors reading, watching TV or playing computer games as well as an increased diversity in ethnicity, educational demand and levels of urbanisation. Therefore it is important that visual data for the child population in the UK is collected.

The research also benefits the children and parents involved in the study. Research in 2001 stated that one in five school age children may have problems with their sight which have not been identified. This could have an impact on school work such as problems with reading, language and concentration. Should any visual problems be detected, parents will be informed and advised to take their child to a registered optometrist of their choice.

The study will involve a series of measurements performed by fully trained UK registered optometrists. Children will be assessed to check whether or not they need to wear glasses and the size and shape of the eye will be measured.

Dr Nicola Logan, Lecturer in Optometry at Aston explains: “We are hoping to build up a database of child visual function which we will then analyse to ascertain any relationships between the size and shape of a child's eye and whether this could affect his/her need to wear spectacles later on in life.”

The study is funded by the Central Local Optical Committee Fund, UK and by the College of Optometrists, UK.



**P**rofessor Malcolm Coulthard is the first academic in the world to be given the title of Professor of Forensic Linguistics. This dynamic and evolving research area is concerned with the analysis and measurement of language in the context of crime, judicial procedure and legal disputes.

One aspect of the forensic linguist's work is the examination of language as evidence – s/he can be called upon to analyse spoken language or written texts involved in a criminal or civil dispute, for example suspect suicide notes, statements under caution when a defendant claims their words have been altered by police officers or cases of plagiarism. The forensic linguist is also concerned with the language of the law, the nature of courtroom interaction, the effect of interpreters, how to deal with vulnerable witnesses and even linguistic problems in statutes and jury instructions.

In his career so far, Professor Coulthard has been commissioned to write reports in over 180 cases, several of them high profile, including the appeals of the Birmingham Six, the Bridgewater Four, Derek Bentley and most recently that of Paul Blackburn, who had his conviction overturned in late May after he had served 25 years whilst protesting his innocence.

“I was asked to look at a confession statement attributed to Paul which the police said he wrote unaided,” Professor Coulthard explained. “He claimed that this had been mainly dictated to him by the police officers. My conclusion was that there were certain vocabulary choices and grammatical constructions which were unlikely to be those of a 15-year-old approved school boy with low educational achievement.”

Professor Coulthard has published widely in the field of linguistics, including the seminal text *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, still in print after 28 years with some 35,000 copies sold. He is the founding editor of *Forensic Linguistics: the International Journal of Languages and the Law* and was the Founding President of the International Association of Forensic Linguistics (IAFL). The IAFL has just established the Malcolm Coulthard Bursary to cover all the travel and conference expenses of the doctoral student who submits the best abstract for the biennial international conference, to be held this year at Cardiff University, where Professor Coulthard is an Honorary Professor.

Professor Coulthard studied at the universities of Sheffield and London, and worked at the University of Birmingham

## language as evidence – the world of forensic linguistics

“In his career so far, Professor Coulthard has been commissioned to write reports in over 180 cases, several of them high profile, including the appeals of the Birmingham Six.

”

linking English with Politics or Sociology within the School and with subjects ranging from Psychology to Business Studies across the University through the Combined Honours programme.”

As early publicity for the undergraduate degree, Professor Coulthard organised an English Language study day in March for 6th form students. Schools Liaison at Aston had to close registrations when they reached 240 and eventually had a waiting list of 100.

Professor Coulthard would also like to increase the numbers of doctoral students in the School of Languages & Social Sciences. He believes that the introduction of English Language will facilitate this as it is a very attractive area of research for PhD students. He would also like to explore the possibility of introducing a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics which would complement the existing Master's degrees in TESOL and Translation Studies.

continuously for 37 years. Since arriving at Aston in October he has been working with staff from the University's very successful distance Master's programmes. He is also keen to develop the study of English Language and Linguistics at undergraduate level.

“Aston's English undergraduate programme is different and exciting because it incorporates a one-year sandwich placement. This should appeal to a different kind of student, one who wants to both learn about the English language and apply it in practical situations, which is very important in today's competitive graduate job market. About six years ago English Language overtook English Literature as an A-Level subject, partly because people are more focused on careers and it is still growing in popularity. English Language will link very nicely with the School's well-established modern languages programmes, so a student will now be able to study English with French, German or Spanish. They will also have the option of





# BRAINS RUN IN THE FAMILY

Three sets of identical twins graduated this year, proving that brains really do run in the family!

**H**annah Hill, who studied Combined Honours Business Administration and Public Policy and Management, and her twin sister Rebecca, who studied Pharmacy, both received first class Honours Degrees. Hannah also won two additional prizes for excellence – the Mobil North Sea Ltd prize and the Public Policy and Management prize.

Andrew and David Hiller both graduated with upper second class Honours Degrees in Combined Honours Business Administration and Psychology.

Mandeep Nagra received an upper second class Honours Degree in Combined Honours Business Administration and

“I’m delighted to see all our students graduate, but it is particularly nice when siblings graduate together.”

Sociology, while Sukhdeep Nagra received a lower second class Honours Degree in Combined Honours Business Administration and Health and Safety Management.

Dr Roy Smith, Director of Combined Honours said: “I’m

delighted to see all our students graduate, but it is particularly nice when siblings graduate together. It is very unusual to

see so many twins going through at the same time. The twins would have to apply to the

same university at the same time, both meet their A-level requirements and pass all their course assessments at the same time so that they could all graduate on the same day this year. These coincidences do happen, but are a rarity, especially at a University as

small as Aston where only approximately 1,500 students graduate per year. What accentuates this coincidence further is that two sets of twins also achieved the same classification of degree.” This coincidence at Aston was so rare it was reported on radio and in the local and national press.

Hannah said: “Rebecca and I have always been to the same schools since we were four. I think it’s helped having an identical twin every step of the way because we’ve been able to encourage each other.”

## building on foundations

**Continuing the theme of work-based learning, Combined Honours is involved in the development of two Foundation Degrees in conjunction with Matthew Boulton College which is now located on the Aston campus.**

Foundation Degrees are a UK Government initiative which enable people who are currently employed to accredit their existing learning and to acquire higher education level qualifications. They are frequently offered on a part-time basis.

A Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care has been developed involving the School of Life and Health Sciences, the School of Languages and Social Sciences and Combined Honours. This offers access to a Foundation Degree at Matthew Boulton College with onward progression to an Honours Degree in Combined Honours at Aston to a number of different groups of Assistant Practitioners in Health and Social Care.

Similarly, a Foundation Degree in Business Administration has been developed involving Aston Business School and Combined Honours. This is designed to appeal to a wide range of employees and employers looking for a vocationally oriented qualification through a Foundation Degree at Matthew Boulton College and progression to business-related study with Combined Honours at Aston.

There are several key components of the interdisciplinary Honours progression programme, including a work based research project. The project is designed to be of direct benefit to employers and students alike and reinforces the vocational nature of the Foundation Degree experience together with the adoption of resource-based learning approaches in some Aston modules.

These two developments provide exciting opportunities for Combined Honours to continue their mission to provide earning and learning opportunities for students to access the Aston curriculum.

## exciting new changes in Aston Students’ Guild

**On 1 July 2005 the new Guild Executive took up office. Gareth Booth takes up the role of President whilst on placement from his Managerial and Administrative Studies degree. He has already donated a large amount of time to the Guild since being at Aston – he was Publicity Officer of the charity raising society RAG (Raise and Give) last year and has played an active role in various other committees including the Guild’s Marketing and Communications Strategy Group, Guild Council and the Guild’s Steering Committee.**

Along with Gareth, logistics student Nathan Shane will be Vice President, Finance and Advancement. He will manage the finances of all areas within the Guild and is responsible for commercial services in the building. Stephen Abbots (2005 BSc Maths and



Computer Science) is Vice President, Education and Welfare; Peter Johnson (2005 BEng Communications Engineering) Vice President, Marketing and Entertainments and Jenni Stedman (2005 BSc European Studies and French) Vice President, Student Involvement.

Commenting on their new roles at the Guild, Gareth says: “There is a challenging year ahead. We have looked at the way the Guild is run internally, its structures, operations and core competencies. We need to maximise the Guild’s importance and give credibility to the role it plays in complementing academic activity to provide a broader student experience. We hope to continue and fulfil the Guild’s current five year strategy and look at what Aston Students’ Guild is and what services it should provide in a way that students want and at a time they want.”

## ASTON VICTORIOUS IN THE SAUERKRAUT CUP!

**In anticipation of the 2006 football World Cup to be held in Germany next June, three German lecturers at Aston and Birmingham University decided to organise their own football tournament this April called the Sauerkraut Cup in the hope of promoting German as a foreign language in the UK.**

The event, which was hosted by the former German Aston Villa player Thomas Hitzlsperger and was sponsored by the German Academic Exchange Service and the Anglo-German foundation, was a huge success and saw Aston University celebrating a 3-0 win over their Birmingham ‘rivals’.

The German Studies students and lecturers donned their football strips to battle it out on the pitch at Solihull Borough Football Club on 27 April. Thomas Hitzlsperger was present not only to give professional opinion on the match and to hand the cup to the winning team, but also to meet German language pupils from local schools who were invited to the match. The event attracted a large crowd which included university and school students, cheerleaders, press and many others, who all witnessed the School of Languages & Social Sciences German football players win.

Event co-organiser Yvonne Henze, DAAD-Lektorin for Business German in the School of Languages & Social Sciences said: “Football is one of Germany’s best known ‘export goods’ and one of England’s favourite sports, so the decision to link a German language event for schools with the beautiful and popular game almost suggested itself, especially in consideration of the fact that Germany will be hosting the World Cup in 2006.”







## Annual Giving Student Telefundraising Campaign ends on a £124,000 high note

**The first-ever Alumni Annual Giving Campaign has been very successfully completed!**

A remarkable team of student callers raised over £124,000 to date from about 2,000 alumni for student-focused projects such as student bursaries and placement grants, a bus for the Students' Guild, and the ABS Undergraduate Lounge. Calling alumni from all over the world, the student team has collected on average about £1,100 per hour per evening/afternoon of calling.

Aston staff and friends who visited the call centre were very positive about the professionalism and enthusiasm demonstrated by the students. Aston University's Secretary-Registrar, David Packham said: "It was good to see the student callers again last night and to congratulate them on their achievement in raising such a healthy sum through their efforts. I am really pleased for the University but also for the student callers, given that this was a trial run. They have done tremendously well."

Judging by the letters sent to callers and comments made to Development and Alumni Relations staff at reunions and other events, Aston alumni seem to have enjoyed the opportunity to speak with current students about their own experiences of Aston and life at the University today. It also demonstrates both the positive feelings held by alumni for the University and the strong belief in giving back to their University. As one donor wrote: "May I finalise by reiterating that the Annual Giving Fund is

an excellent and worthwhile cause which deserves the maximum support from graduates of Aston University."

**For more information about this campaign, please call Shona Nicholson (ext 3338) or Brian Porter (ext 3026) in the Office of Advancement.**

### SUPPORTING ASTON STUDENTS – THE ADRIAN AND SUSAN CADBURY FUND

**Aston students have always been a favourite of Sir Adrian Cadbury and his wife, Susan. So it should come as no surprise that this generous couple have decided to lend their names to a fund which will help improve the educational experience and the lives of Aston University students.**

The Adrian and Susan Cadbury Fund has been created from a significant initial donation by the Cadburys so that Aston Students' Guild might begin to redesign, reallocate and refurbish space in the Guild thereby enhancing student services and helping to make the Guild more commercially successful. Funds towards this refurbishment have also been added through the successful Annual Giving Campaign.

All funds or gifts-in-kind for student-designated projects will be gratefully appreciated and may be contributed by donors at any time as single gifts or as a pledge over several years. Declaring Gift Aid for donations can also increase significantly the impact of each gift.

A variety of small and larger-scale student projects requiring urgent funding are available to donors. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Brian Porter, Director of the Office of Advancement (b.w.porter@aston.ac.uk or 0121 204 3026) for information on The Adrian and Susan Cadbury Fund projects and other ways to give to support Aston Students.

## planned legacy giving

Many people have found that the achievements of a lifetime can gain added purpose and recognition through a contribution towards the future of other people, especially to those younger than you and in higher education – at Aston University.

The additional financial benefits associated with many types of planned legacy gifts, as encouraged by the UK Government, make it possible for you to support the work of Aston University and its students to a greater extent than you thought possible. A planned legacy gift is one which helps you to ensure that your personal and financial objectives are met, realise tax

benefits in your current financial planning and achieve your philanthropic goal of ensuring excellence at Aston University and for its students and staff.

Your commitment to the future of Aston University, its students and staff may come in different forms of planned legacy gifts, all of which may have significant financial benefits to you.

We welcome the opportunity to work with you and your financial advisors to determine which planned legacy option would be most appropriate for you.

**If you are interested in discussing this further, please contact Brian Porter, Director of Advancement at +44 (0)121 204 3026 or e-mail b.w.porter@aston.ac.uk**



**BIRMINGHAM**



**W**e've received many requests from our alumni to feature developments in and around Birmingham. As a city famed for reinventing itself, Birmingham's appetite for change and improvement shows no signs of diminishing. Whether leisure, business or lifestyle, the City proudly boasts a passion for improvement, with an estimated £8 billion due to be invested over the next 10 years. Here's a flavour of what's on the horizon.

Eagerly awaited is the reopening in 2007 of Birmingham's classically-styled Town Hall. A total of £31 million will fund major repairs and improvements such as a new roof and pavement café. Admirers of the landmark building will be pleased to hear that its stunning, original 1834 balcony layouts will also be reinstated.

Located near Broad Street, Arena Central is a £450 million development of high quality office, residential and retail space. It is anticipated that the impressive development will become a major landmark on Birmingham's skyline.

Set to revitalise the concept of modern inner city living, Attwood Green, located near Five Ways, will not only provide an enhanced environment with amenities and new commercial and housing opportunities, but will also create the largest park within the outer ring road. The regeneration scheme is due for completion in 2010.

An important landmark building on Centenary Square, Baskerville House is being refurbished and extended into modern Grade A contemporary office space, including a state-of-the-art health club in the basement topped off with a glazed roof.

One of Birmingham's most famous landmarks will enjoy a facelift as the iconic Rotunda undergoes major refurbishment and conversion to luxury apartments.

Creating an impressive 130-metre glass tower, 10 Holloway Circus will be a stunning new addition to Birmingham's skyline.

The apartments and penthouses above the Radisson SAS Hotel and Health Club will command an amazing view of the city. Worth £70 million, the development will be completed in 2005.

Utilising a former hospital campus, Birmingham Great Park is a £400 million development that will create an attractive 'village' environment of open spaces, housing, offices, health and leisure facilities in the Longbridge area of the City.

The plans for the east side of the city are the most ambitious and far-reaching over the coming years with this massive development breathing new life into swathes of currently run-down industrial areas. Eastside will comprise attractive new technology, learning and media quarters including new homes for the Birmingham Conservatoire and the Royal College of Organists as well as a new National Academy of Writing, a Media Village and beautifully landscaped city park. After its impressive beginnings with the landmark Millennium Point, the work on Eastside continues apace with the commencement of the Masshouse development in January 2005, a seven-year project that will bring a lively mix of commercial, residential and leisure opportunities linking Eastside to the city centre.

Birmingham is a city constantly on the move so it's no wonder that major improvements to its transport infrastructure are planned over the next few years. The flagship National Express coach station on Great Charles Street will be the hub of the UK's coach network and a welcome replacement for the existing Digbeth Coach Station, which is now unable to cope with the increased demand for travel to and from the city. Plans are also underway for the refurbishment and upgrading of New Street Station, with the regional development agency, Advantage West Midlands, pledging substantial financial backing.

Birmingham is a city that's always looking forward; the regeneration of recent years has been impressive but the future looks even more exciting. With so much development in the pipeline it seems Birmingham's renaissance is by no means over.



# where are they now?

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

## 1970s



**ALAN WALTON**  
**1971 BSc**  
**Electrical Engineering**

"After graduating I worked for three years at a private steel rolling works in the Black Country. Following the winter of discontent in 1973-74, the three day working week and the Arab oil embargo, I thought oil is the business to get into. Shell offered me a job with Shell Exploration and Production in the London headquarters working on North Sea oil developments. During this time I worked for six months commissioning the Auk platform, Shell's first in the North Sea. After seven years I moved to rivals Esso where I worked mainly in the European refining area. During this time I had the opportunity to work for three years in New Jersey at Exxon

Research and Development and one year at Rotterdam Refinery. In 1992 I established a consultancy that opened up many new horizons, allowing me the opportunity to make short business trips to unusual countries such as Turkmenistan, Iran, Thailand, Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Russia. I recently worked for two years in Venezuela on an oil field development project, providing a fantastic opportunity to experience South American life and to learn Spanish. The work included designing and managing the construction of a 70km, 115kV overhead power line about 400km south east of Caracas. At one stage during the construction the aluminium conductor was being stolen faster than it could be erected! I am presently working in the south of England on the conceptual design of electric power supplies for a new oil field development in Siberia that incorporates the challenge of constructing a 700km pipeline north to the Arctic Ocean."

**PHIL RODEN**  
**1972 BSc**  
**Administrative Science**

"I returned to the Birmingham accountancy firm of Agar Bates Ledsam after graduation, with

whom I had worked during my sandwich year. I qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1974 and twelve months later joined my father's small accountancy practice, where I stayed until 1983 doing accountancy, audit and tax work. I then joined Trident Housing Association as Director of Finance, and have been there ever since. Trident provides housing, care and support services to over 3,000 households in the West and East Midlands and is based in Birmingham, so I still live in my home city and am proud to be a Brummie through and through. I am also proud of my two associations with Aston and the Villa. Trident celebrated its 40th anniversary last week and we have just embarked on a year of celebrations, which will include the launch in a few months' time of a book charting our history and achievements. On a personal note, my wife is a library graduate from one of those other Birmingham educational camps (UCE). Our daughter, Laura has just graduated from Manchester with a 2:1 in Geography. Our older son, David, has recently received his A-level results and will be going to Leeds next month to read Mathematics and our younger son is awaiting his GCSE results."



**MIKE PALMER**  
**1977 BSc**  
**Systems Analysis**

"After finally leaving Aston (after a 4-year course and a sabbatical year) reality hit home when I joined Lucas Electrical in Birmingham as Employee Relations Officer at the height of industrial unrest! Despite that, I have continued my career in HR (or Personnel as it was called then) through Lucas, GEC and HSBC. I am now living in Harpenden and working in London for HSBC Insurance Brokers. I've been happily married for almost 26 years to Ann (who I met at Aston) with two boys aged 11 and 13. I've enjoyed a couple of Aston reunions over the years and am still in contact with a few old mates from the Guild – I was Deputy President of the Students' Union between 1975-6. My hobbies these days include travel, socialising and Luton Town FC (for my sins!!)"



**Mike Hayes**  
**1979 BSc Business**  
**Administration**  
**and German**

"I joined the Littlewoods organisation soon after graduation as a management trainee and worked for them for 20 years, much of that time spent as the HR Manager for their Index catalogue shop business. I now work at Celtic Football Club as Head of HR, a job that has been by far the most rewarding and enjoyable I've had to date. On the domestic front I have three children from my previous marriage, Daniel, Laura and Christopher, who live in Lancashire. My fourth child, Louise was born in March 2004 here in Glasgow where I live with my wife Mairi. Outside work I'm a big music fan and I authored the biography of American rock band Cheap Trick, published in 1998."

## 1980s



**SUKHJINDER MARWAH**  
**1982 BSc Biochemistry**  
**and Pharmacology**

"I started my career in the NHS as a Research Scientist before going on to successfully complete an MSc, Fellowship(Haem) and PhD in field of Haematology. Currently, I am registered as a Clinical Scientist in Haematology at City Hospital, Birmingham, where I manage the Haemoglobinopathy Department and the City and Guilds Phlebotomy course. In addition, I continue research in the development of iron overload in patients with Sickle Cell Disease and Beta Thalassaemia and write publications and present posters at national and international scientific meetings. I am also a visiting lecturer (BSc

and MSc) and assessor in Haemoglobinopathies at Wolverhampton University and the University of Central England. I am a registered DNA sampler for paternity testing and immigration matters."

**SUZANNE KIRBY**  
**née Smyth, 1983**  
**MSc Public Sector**  
**Management**

"When I graduated from Aston I was already a Chartered Librarian working in Birmingham and I expected to progress in my chosen career for the rest of my professional life – it didn't quite work out like that! I grew restless and went on to work for Dudley Social Services running the Research and Information Department and planning future services with the health authority and the private sector. Next, I restructured some local government services for compulsory competitive tendering and moved on to advise chief executives and council leaders on strategic and policy planning. I gave up work in 1998 to care for my husband and after his death decided to travel for a couple of years. My travels led to me becoming a Clinical Hypnotherapist. I now work part-time from home as a Stress Management Consultant, a Past Life Regression Therapist and an Emotional Transference

of Energy (Emotrance) Practitioner. I have helped people quit smoking, lose weight, relieve their depression and overcome fears and phobias.



**KEITH STEWART**  
**1985 MBA**

"1985 was a momentous year – my father sadly died, my son was born, I graduated, changed jobs and then we moved from Sutton Coldfield to Bedfordshire! My career fortunately flourished in the retail and hospitality sectors thanks to my Aston MBA and I worked for mainly large corporations latterly as MD of various subsidiary companies when I decided to fulfil my biggest ambition and do a management buy-in of a Yorkshire event caterer in 2003. We now live in York where I indulge my classic car 'habit' in my spare time – I've owned well over 100 of them in the past 40 years."



**MARK PROTHEROE**  
**1986 BSc Maths and Physics**

"I took a sabbatical position in the Guild as VP Education after graduating and shortly afterwards completed a Masters in Artificial Intelligence and Business at South Bank Polytechnic. I then went on to do several scientific jobs ranging from research on the UK component of the Strategic Defence Initiative (Star Wars) to becoming the Senior European Radar Scientist on a joint Canadian/European space-based radar processing project. This was the start of a 10-year period travelling the world, initially building a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) processing system that could be used for environmental monitoring of the Earth from polar orbiting satellites and then onto the development of large ground-based processing stations for environmental research. Environmental projects were high on the agenda after

the Rio Conference and my work took me to countries as diverse as Canada, Argentina, Japan, Taiwan and across the European Union. I maintained my links with academia and helped found two research institutes at Dundee and Kings College, being a visiting lecturer at both. As with all research jobs I ended up moving into management, taking up directorship positions for companies working for the European Union and British Government. Currently I am Managing Director of a company called The Bid Team Limited, which provides consultancy and outsourced bidding solutions for SMEs wishing to bid for European and Government contracts. An eclectic career so far and a thoroughly enjoyable one and it all started at Aston. When I left I thought that I would never use my degree and yet I've spent the last 20 years doing exactly that – using it."



# 1990s



**RACHEL CAIRNS**  
née Morris,  
1994 BSc International  
Business and French

After graduation I joined ICL's graduate training scheme and went on to complete a postgraduate diploma in Human Resource Management at Manchester Metropolitan University. In 1996 I left ICL to join the Human Resources department of JCB based at their global headquarters in Staffordshire. It was here that I met Alan and we married in 1999. The following year our son was born and I took the decision to leave industry in a bid to achieve a better work/life balance. I joined Keele University as Human Resources Manager in 2001 and I thoroughly enjoy working in the Higher Education sector. I am fortunate to be able to carry out my role on a part-time basis allowing me to spend valuable time with my young family. We have four children, Harry, Sophie and twins Laura and Emma. Life is hectic but fun!"

Did you  
graduate in  
the 90s?

We'd love to find out  
what you're up to!



**STUART HUTTON**  
1999 BEng Electronic Engineering  
and Computer Science

"I'm now a freelance Automotive Design Engineer, specialising in the development of high performance cars. I've worked at Jaguar and MG and I'm currently developing new models for Bentley. My job involves taking cars from a design concept and engineering them into production realities, using 3D CAD to perfect designs, setting up prototypes, and then the best part – testing them. This requires pushing the prototypes to their limits at special test tracks in the UK and Europe and at secret facilities from the Arctic Circle to Arizona. Testing heavily disguised Jaguar prototypes around Manhattan and driving Bentleys around high speed bowls were particularly enjoyable assignments. As a 'refreshing break' from all of this I recently completed the 1,300 mile round trip to Le Mans for the 24 hour race in a little MG, which was great fun but incredibly hot. I always remember my Aston days with a great deal of affection and although I now live in Cheshire, I can often be found in the Academy or Snobs Birmingham 'indie pits' reliving my memories of 'Shine' at the Guild on a Friday night."



**JAGDEEP GOGNA**  
1999 BSc Public  
Policy and Business  
Administration

Jagdeep went on to receive a postgraduate degree in Business Continuity Management from Coventry University. He currently works as a Business Continuity Management Consultant at Hewlett Packard and was recently awarded the title of Business Continuity Student of the Year at the International Business Continuity Awards, held in London's Park Lane on 12 May. The panel of distinguished judges, including the Head of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat, Cabinet Office declared Jagdeep a clear winner, adding: "...he made some very careful observations, demonstrating a variety of angles and opinions and offered some justified views on the future of business continuity." Jagdeep is an active member of his local golf club and a keen pianist. In his spare time he also enjoys Michelin-starred cuisine, working out at the gym, as well as reading to keep abreast of movements in the commercial property market. An existentialist fine-artist, Jagdeep has also deployed these skills into jewellery-making. Central to his most extravagant hobby, singing, Jagdeep has performed numerous live shows with Asian bhangra bands.

# 2000s



**XIAODONG JIANG**  
aka Tony,  
2000 MBA

"I met my wife, Amanda, at a media reception in April 2004. She works for a multinational advertising agency and sat opposite me – it really was love at first sight! We started dating and were engaged on 11.11.2004 – the date consists of four '1's, which means 'lifelong love' in Chinese. We married on 20 March and the weather was excellent, having poured down the day before and after the wedding! We have enjoyed nearly 10 tourist trips in less than a year, including those to vacation paradises like Koh Samui of Thai, Sanya Beach and Huangguoshu Waterfall of China. At the end of May, I completed a three-year contract as EMBA Marketing Manager with China Europe International Business School, the leading business school in China and Asia. In July, I joined Shanghai Advertising Limited, one of the top 10 advertising agencies in China, which is jointly invested by Shanghai World Expo (Group) Co. Ltd, Hakuodo and WPP group plc, one of the world's leading communications services groups. Shanghai Advertising Limited is also the investor of Shanghai Ogilvy and Shanghai Hakuodo. I was invited to fill the newly created position of Marketing Director, which is also new to the whole advertising industry."

**LACKHBIR KAUR**  
2000 BSc International  
Business and German

Currently works for PepsiCo UK in Theale, Reading. She was nominated by PepsiCo to represent the company in a scholarship award. The scholarship is run annually by the ACS (Association of Convenience Stores) and open to all FMCG companies in the UK. The aim of the ACS is to encourage managers within FMCG to develop their knowledge of the impulse market and identify new strategies, which will help retailers to increase market

share and grow profits in, what is, an increasingly competitive market. The competition entailed writing a dissertation set by the ACS. Four finalists were identified and were invited to give a presentation to a panel of judges. This year's finalists included Proctor and Gamble, Gallagher, Scottish Courage and PepsiCo. Lackhbir won the UK ACS scholarship for 2005 and as a result is off to New Orleans later in the year to compete in the Global Scholarship Awards. Here she will be competing against other candidates from America, Europe, South Africa and Australia. Good luck Lackhbir!



**NICK MARATOS**  
2000 BSc Managerial and  
Administrative Studies and  
**LOUISE MARATOS** née Gough,  
2001 BEng Chemical Engineering

Nick and Louise met at the Students' Guild in 1997 and recently married on 9 April in their now home town of Crawley, West Sussex. They had a fantastic day and were joined by many of their friends from Aston. Louise now works for Three Valleys Water as a Process Engineer and Nick as a Category Development Manager for Kimberley-Clark.

Did you  
graduate in  
the 2000s?

We'd love to find out  
what you're up to!

Email:  
alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk

or write to:  
Alumni Relations Office  
Aston University  
Aston Triangle  
Birmingham  
B4 7ET

Deadline:  
February 2006



**PAUL HEBRON**  
2003 BSc Management  
and Psychology

"After graduating I worked as an HR Assistant for AWG Facilities Services until June 2004. I then joined the Institute of Career Guidance, the largest professional organisation for career guidance practitioners in the UK, where I presently hold the position of Membership Manager. During my placement year I was lucky enough to attend an introduction to web design course. Having worked on freelance projects over the past few years a friend and I decided to launch our own business – SP Web Design Ltd. You can find out more about the projects we've worked on by visiting our website [www.spwebdesign.co.uk](http://www.spwebdesign.co.uk)"



**Esther Squire**  
**2004 BSc Managerial**  
**and Administrative**  
**Studies**

"A few days after my graduation ceremony in July 2004 I flew out to India alone having secured a placement through AIESEC with a small charity in Chandigarh, north India. During my six months there I was privileged to spend a lot of time in the deprived areas of the city working in slum schools and undertaking a project for handicapped children to improve the conditions they lived in. During my placement I regularly travelled across the beautiful and exciting country of India and I lived with students from all over the world, allowing me to gain a mixed cultural experience. My experiences have changed me enormously, especially in terms of my career direction, and I am now working with people with learning disabilities, which I love. I still harbour a strong desire to travel and work abroad, especially in the area of international development."



**Philbert Suresh**  
**2004 MSc Logistics**

Works for Translogique Canada (TLC), a leading training provider and event management company in the area of logistics and supply chain management. Philbert spearheads TLC programs using knowledge he has acquired from 22 years experience in the industry worldwide and 12 years teaching in Canada, the UK and UAE. He piloted a new curriculum for Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) under the Ministry of Higher Education, UAE in a business specialisation supporting national development through Logistics and Supply Chain Management between 1996 and 2002. He is also a



spotlight on...

**LAURA-KATE MAPP**  
**2005 BSc Marketing**

"After my exams finished in May I began working at Rolls-Royce in order to earn some money to fund a round-the-world trip. However, it wasn't long before I was back at Aston University – but this time as a member of staff! I took on the role of Marketing Assistant in the Business School in June where I have been involved in a number of marketing campaigns and research projects. I hope to remain here until I leave for a nine month trip around the world with my sister, where we plan to visit countries in Asia, Australasia, South and North America. And after that? Well, I suppose it will be time to get a serious job!"

founder member of Supply Chain Logistics Group in Dubai. Philbert has a son, Lambert, who has just graduated in Computer Engineering from a community college in Canada,

and a daughter who works in financial services at TD Bank, Canada. His wife has a PhD in Comparative Literature and manages a publishing business in Chennai, India.

## want to be in apex?

If you would like to be featured in 'Where are they now?'

in the spring edition of Apex, please send some information about yourself either by e-mail to:

**alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk**

or by letter addressed to:

**Alumni Relations Office, Aston University,**  
**Aston Triangle, Birmingham, B4 7ET.**

Should you wish to send a photo to accompany your profile, please either post an original, which we will return, or e-mail one at high resolution (250-300 dpi).

We are waiting to hear from you – don't be afraid!  
 (Deadline for receipt of information is February 2006.)

**Gill Acomb**  
**2005 BSc Marketing**

During the summer I spent two weeks in Malta with my boyfriend and his family. It was great to relax after all the stresses of exams, the only nerve-racking part was waiting for my results to arrive by text while I was away! For the last month I've been working for Corgi in Leicester and absolutely love it! My role as Project Co-ordinator involves me overseeing the marketing for Corgi's 50th Anniversary next year. Although it is initially a one year contract, I am keen to try and impress my employers in the hope that they will keep me on at the end!



**Rebecca Louise Hunter**  
**2005 BSc Business**  
**Administration**  
**and French**

During the summer I worked as a Télé-opérateur at AA European Operations in Lyon, France. This year was my second season in the role, which involves taking emergency breakdown calls from British AA customers who have broken down in Europe and European AA customers who have broken down in the UK. I am now studying MA Applied Translation Studies at Leeds. Core modules include Methods and Approaches, Specialised Translation (for me it's from French to English) and Computer Assisted Translation and I have also taken up Spanish from scratch! So far I am really enjoying the course and living in Leeds. Next year I would like to do a placement year in Spain. My real aim is to be trilingual. Having studied languages, I have met so many intelligent motivated people – some who spoke anything up to six languages fluently!

# re:UNIONS



## 1995 and 2000 Reunion

On 2 July the classes of 1995 and 2000 were invited back to Aston to celebrate their 10 and five year anniversary reunions. Over 150 alumni attended the reunion held at the Students' Guild, with 51 of the guests choosing to attend a celebratory three course meal beforehand at Aston's highly-rated Lakeside Conference Centre. Judging by the speeches at the

end of the meal, we gathered that everyone was having an excellent time and we have since heard that many even made it to the famous Manzils for a curry after the event at around 4.00am! Our thanks go to Dan Devonald (2000 MEng Electronic Systems Engineering) and Rob Brittain (2000 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) for their help in rounding up their friends and classmates for this event.



## Reunions around the world

### CYPRUS

Despite it being a holiday weekend, Aston alumni weren't deterred from enjoying a reunion at the Hilton Nicosia along with Postgraduate Marketing Coordinator for Aston Business School, Tim Anderson, on March 11 this year.

### ATHENS

Back in the spring Aston hosted an MBA alumni reunion dinner in Athens. After drinks at the Athens Hilton the group took a short walk to a local restaurant recommended by one alumnus, where a very convivial dinner was enjoyed by all!

In the autumn Dr Gareth Griffiths, MBA Director (External), will be visiting Athens and is looking forward to hosting another similar event. We will be in touch with all our Greece based MBA alumni shortly with more details.

**Pictured left to right:** Joseph Kassapis (1979 BSc Mathematics), Tim Anderson (Postgraduate Marketing Coordinator in Aston Business School), Antonios Kassapis (1978 Housing and Computer Science), Nicos Ambizas (1954 BSc Maths and Physics) and Vrahimis Petri (1965 BSc Physics).

## calendar '06

Forthcoming reunions and events for 2006

### 11 MARCH: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CONVOCATION

Next year marks forty years since Aston received its Charter and we'll be celebrating this as part of our AGM programme. The AGM will take place on Saturday 11 March 2006 and a full programme will be issued in January 2006. You will have the opportunity to come back to campus to meet the Vice-Chancellor and officers of the University, find out about the recent successes Aston has enjoyed and revisit your student haunts. For those of you who want to be more involved with the life of the University there will be an opportunity to forward nominations for positions on the Standing Committee and University Council. Put the date in your diary now. Call round friends and make sure they have the date too! We're looking forward to seeing you on Saturday 11 March 2006.

### MAY: 1980s PHARMACY REUNION

Back by popular demand! If you studied Pharmacy in the 1980s, make sure you book for the 1980s Pharmacy Reunion.

### 6 OCTOBER: HOUSE OF COMMONS REUNION DINNER

All alumni based in the south east are invited to this event. More details will be out in the New Year.

### FONDUE MEMORIES

We intend to repeat Fondue Memories again this year and all graduates from 2001-2005 will be invited back to campus, so please keep your eyes peeled for more information on our website [www.aston.ac.uk/reunionsandevents](http://www.aston.ac.uk/reunionsandevents)

### 50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY REUNION

Dr Gordon Appelbe qualified as a Pharmacist at the School of Pharmacy in 1956 and would like to hold a 50-year anniversary reunion in 2006 for his fellow classmates. Anyone is welcome to attend, but he is particularly keen to trace the following people: Basil Simmonds, Shirley Ealden, Sheila Randle, Jill Tinley, Ann Timms and Pat Turner. If you are one of those listed, or you would just like to find out more about the proposed event, please contact the Alumni Relations Office on +44 (0)121 204 4543 for Gordon's contact details.

Please contact the  
**Alumni Relations Office for further details about any of these events.**  
 Call 0121 204 4543 or e-mail [alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk](mailto:alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk)  
 Details are also available at  
[www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/reunions](http://www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/reunions)



# News from Aston Graduates' Association

**A**GA members have taken part in a variety of events this year. We broke new ground in May by visiting Nutlands to see the lambs born to the Jacobs Sheep belonging to Jackie Emberton, an AGA member. We were also able to see the wool being spun and the fleeces and shawls etc. that she makes from it. As it was bluebell time members were able to wander over this pretty farmland until it was time to adjourn to a nearby country pub for supper and a pint of real ale.

This year it was Aston's turn to host the joint meeting with Birmingham Guild of Graduates and we were pleased to welcome Sally Hoban from

the Public Relations Office to talk to us about Antiques at Aston. She concentrated particularly on the history and development of the Arts and Craft Movement in Birmingham. She also discussed the importance of the James Watt plan chest and the Byng Kenrick casket which have both been preserved by the university. A buffet supper afterwards provided an opportunity for AGA and Birmingham graduates to renew old friendships.

In July AGA members visited the National Trust's newly refurbished back-to-back properties in Hurst Street. Many of us found it easy to relate to the basic living conditions and many of the

exhibits matched items still in use by AGA members. The four houses represent the households of four families who lived here from the early eighteenth century until fifty years ago. As our visit coincided with the V.E. celebrations in the city, the houses were bedecked with flags and posters and the guides had donned Second World War costumes varying from those of the Land army to wrens. Members found the morning most informative and interesting.

A visit to the Birmingham Council House in September provided another opportunity to

increase our understanding of the way the city is governed and gave us insight into the history of this magnificent building.

Due to popular demand another pétanque competition was staged at the Hints village Hall in September and this was followed by a buffet supper.



## lost artwork returns to Aston



**The original model for an important piece of artwork at Aston has recently been presented to the University Library by the wife of the man who originally commissioned it.**

Mrs Edna Constable was married to Eric Constable, Chairman of AGA in the 1960s. The sculpture model (known as a maquette) had been kept in the family's loft in its case until Edna discovered it recently and approached the University to see if we wanted to put it on display.

The piece was the working model for the full-size Morphic Nebule sculpture, commissioned by AGA in the 1970s. This visually striking, modernist artwork adorned the staircase wall in the University Library until relatively recently. It is currently in storage awaiting restoration. The original piece took approximately three months to complete once the final design had been chosen from a series of drawings.

The Morphic Nebule was sculpted by the artist John Bridgeman FRBS, ARCA. He was born in Suffolk and studied at Colchester College of Art and The Royal College of Art in London. He also produced sculpture for Coventry Cathedral and the City Hospital in Birmingham (formerly Dudley Road Hospital). Bridgeman died in December 2004 and in his obituary *The Independent* newspaper described him as a "fiercely unconventional sculptor."

He was one of the first sculptors in Britain to embrace new materials in the art form including fibreglass, plastics, concrete and cement fondué. He was also Head of Sculpture at Birmingham College of Art between 1956 and 1981.

The maquette for the Morphic Nebule was presented to the University at a special ceremony held in August which was attended by library staff and members of AGA. The piece is now on display in a prominent position in the library.

Lawrence Innis, Chairman of AGA said: "On behalf of AGA I'd like to thank Edna for this valuable piece of artwork which is part of the life of Aston Graduates' Association."

Edna said: "My husband Eric would have loved the University to have this piece of sculpture, I feel that it's really home now. I'm certain that the library will look after this piece and I can't think of anywhere else that it should be."

### Coming up...

**Nov '05** Visit to The Pen Museum, Birmingham.

**Jan '06** Dinner at The College of Food.

## art

**COMPETITION** Calling all budding artists! AGA will be awarding three prizes for the best 2D pieces of art entered in their competition which is open to alumni, members of Aston staff and current students. For full details and entry rules, contact Sarah Pymm in the Alumni Relations Office. Deadline for stage one entry is 20 December 2005.

# intouch

## 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!

**DAVID BETTINSON**  
(1974 BSc Electrical Engineering)

**LEN HOBBS**  
(1976 BSc Behavioural Science)

**JONATHAN SHORT**  
(1989 BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

**ELTON WHITING**  
(1994 BEng Manufacturing Engineering)

**ELISA ZEN**  
(1997 MSc Personnel Management and Business Administration)

**KAREN NEAVES**  
(1998 BSc French and Business Administration)

## 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...

**DAVID ACOTT**  
(1983 BSc Energy Technology)

**MESSAoud ADOUI**  
(1973 MSc Welding Technology and Management)

**DANIEL AGER**  
(2003 BSc Accounting for Management)

**NASREEN AKHTAR**  
(1982 BSc Biological Sciences)

**SAIQA ASLAM**  
(2002 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

**STEPHANE BAILLS**  
(1994 MSc Telecommunications Technology)

**KIRPAL BAINS**  
(1995 BSc Chemistry)

**AYSE BAS**  
(1992 MSc Teaching English)

**CHARLES BEARD**  
(1977 BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

**IAN BRENNAN**  
(1998 MBA)

**ADRIAN BRIDAL**  
(1969 BSc Chemical Engineering)

**MICHAEL CASSIDY**  
(1989 BSc Society and Government)

**DILPREET CHAHAL**  
(1991 BSc Management and Computer Science)

**TANYA CHAPPELL**  
(2002 BSc European Studies and French)

**NORMAN COLE**  
(1974 BSc Behavioural Science)

**PETER COURT**  
(1982 BSc Geological Sciences)

**NEIL COWIE**  
(1982 MSc Pharmaceutical Sciences)

**DONNA COWLEY**  
(1985 BSc Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

**BABARA DAVEY**  
(née Groom, 1973 BSc Combined Honours)

**SALLY DORRINGTON**  
(1998 BSc Optometry)

**PHILIPPA DUNKLEY**  
(2001 BSc International Business and French and German)

**JOANNE ELLIS**  
(1997 BSc Business Administration and French)

**BRUCE EVANS**  
(1992 PhD Ophthalmic Optics)

**ALISON EYRE**  
(1999 BSc Psychology and Management)

**SARAH FLETCHER**  
(née Hall, 1974 BSc Physics and Chemistry)

**RICHARD FULCHER**  
(1998 BSc Computer Science)

**FREDDY GARCIA SILVA**  
(1981 BSc Metals and Materials Technology)

**STUART GOODE**  
(1997 BEng Manufacturing Engineering)

**MICHAEL GRACE**  
(1981 MSc In Environmental Planning and Design)

**JUDITH GRICE**  
(2001 MSc Community Clinical Pharmacy)

**SYLKE HEINRICH**  
(1997 MSc In Business Studies)

**GEOFFREY HENDY**  
(1989 MSc Public Sector Management)

**SARA HERBERT**  
(1979 BSc Pharmacy)

**MICHAEL HYDE**  
(1978 BSc Biology of Man and His Environment)

**ANDREW IOANNOU**  
(1991 BEng Production Technology and Production Management)

**MARK JERVIS**  
(1978 BSc Civil Engineering)

**TIMOTHY JESSON**  
(1988 BEng Electromechanical Engineering and 1999 MBA)

**SASHUANG JIANG**  
(2002 MBA)

**DAVID JOYCE**  
(1967 BSc Production Engineering)

**AYLA KARAMALLI**  
(1982 MSc Chemistry and Technology of Polymers)

**SHINGO KASAHARA**  
(1997 MSc Business Administration)

**MANDHESE KAUR**  
(1997 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

**ANGELA KELLY**  
(1974 BSc Behavioural Science)

**NAOMI KIRKMAN**  
(2000 BSc European Studies and French)

**ANN LATHAM**  
(1978 MSc Computer Science Applications)

**HARISH LATHIA**  
(1978 BSc Mathematics and Physics)

**KWOK LAU**  
(1978 BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

**RAYMOND LAW**  
(1978 BSc Mathematics)

**ANTHONY LAWRENCE**  
(1978 BSc Geological Sciences)

**JAMES LAWRENCE**  
(1998 BSc French)

**RAYMOND LAWRENSON**  
(1978 BSc Energy Technology)

**KIAN LAYEGHI**  
(1978 BSc Civil Engineering)

**JOHN LEE**  
(1981 BSc Energy Technology)

**RHONDA MCELHINNEY**  
(1996 BSc International Business and French)

**TERESA MCGOWAN**  
(1996 BSc Transport Management)

**MICHELLE MCLOUGHLIN**  
(1996 BSc International Business and German)

**GAVIN MEIKLE**  
(1996 BSc Applied and Human Biology)

**JOSEPH MENSAN-TANDOH**  
(1996 MSc Management)

**CHRISTOPHER MOTTTRAM**  
(1983 BSc Mathematics)

**MUHAMMAD MUBARAK**  
(1983 MBA)

**KHURSHID NAQVI**  
(1985 PhD Production Engineering)

**DEIRDRE NASH**  
(1985 BSc Ergonomics and Society and Government)

**NIGEL NELMS**  
(1985 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

**DAVID NGONYANI**  
(1981 BSc Chemical Engineering)

**GRAHAM OTTER**  
(1975 BSc Systems Analysis)

**SARAH PEALING**  
(1997 BSc Optometry)

**GARY PETERS**  
(1981 BSc Human Psychology)

**CLAIRE QUINN**  
(2004 BSc Human Psychology)

**LISE RAJAGUKGUK**  
(2001 MSc International Business)

**STEPHEN RAWLINGS**  
(1993 BEng Civil Engineering)

**SAMANTHA REED**  
(1996 BSc French)

**KATIE RICE**  
(1995 BSc Pharmacy)

**PHYLLIS RILEY**  
(1983 MSc Public Sector Management)

**PAUL ROBERTS**  
(1971 BSc Administrative Science)

**THERESA ROCHE**  
(1981 BSc French and German)

**WENDY SANDY**  
(1987 BSc Applied and Human Biology)

**STEPHEN SILVERWOOD**  
(1979 BSc Civil Engineering)

**EMMA SMITH**  
(1995 BSc Pharmacy)

**KAREN SMITH**  
(2003 MBA)

**KEITH VINNING**  
(1981 BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

**ALEXANDER WESTBROOK**  
(2003 BSc Law with Legal Practice Management)

**DON WILLIAMS**  
(2004 BSc Optometry)

**WEI YOU**  
(2004 BSc Business Computing and IT)

**ZHENHUA YU**  
(2004 MSc Financial Management and Control)

## Looking for somebody from Aston?

If they aren't listed on our e-mail directory on the website [www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/contactsdb](http://www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/contactsdb) then contact the Alumni Relations Office and we will see if we are in touch with them. If we have a current address you will be invited to write a letter or leave your contact details. We will pass these on to the address we hold. As we rely on alumni telling

us when they move on, we cannot guarantee the person you are looking for will still be at that address. We would like to hope, however, that you all keep in touch with us and let us know of any changes to your address. The in touch service does not give out individual names and addresses to inquirers and all mail is treated in the strictest of confidence.





### TO ORDER YOUR ASTON UNIVERSITY GIFTS, PLEASE COMPLETE THE ORDER FORM AND RETURN IT TO:

Alumni Relations Office, Aston University, Aston Triangle, Birmingham, B4 7ET, UK. All prices include postage and packaging.



Item	Item Description	Price	Quantity	Total
1	Cufflinks	£15.00		
2	Tie	£12.00		
3	Scarf	£20.00		
4	Mug	£4.00		
5	Parker Rollerball	£6.00		
6	Aston Piggybank	£5.00		
7	Lapel Badge	£1.00		
8	Triangle Clock	£15.00		
9	(3) Aston branded Titleist PTS Solo Golf Balls	£3.00		
	(6) Aston branded Titleist PTS Solo Golf Balls	£6.00		
	(9) Aston branded Titleist PTS Solo Golf Balls	£9.00		
	(12) Aston branded Titleist PTS Solo Golf Balls	£12.00		
10	Shot Glass engraved with University crest	£4.00		
11	Pyramid Paperweight	£15.00		
12	Crest Keyring	£2.00		
			<b>Total</b>	

#### Payment can be made by credit card or cheque made payable to Aston University, in sterling and drawn on a bank in the UK.

All orders must be accompanied by full payment. Refunds will only be given if the goods are faulty. Please allow 28 days from receipt of order.

Dr ☐ Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Miss ☐ Ms ☐ Name:

Address:

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Tel:  Email:

Tick as appropriate: ☐ I enclose a cheque in pounds sterling drawn on a bank in the UK for £

I wish to pay by ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Switch/Maestro ☐ Access ☐ Delta ☐ Solo

Please charge to my account:

Card number

Name on card

Security no.

Expiry date  Issue number

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 Postcode:  Country: