

apex

Alumni Magazine

Issue 19
Spring 2007


ASTON
UNIVERSITY
IN THE HEART OF
BIRMINGHAM

GLOBAL CHALLENGE

The power of multi-cultural
communications

ASTON ENTREPRENEURS

Three brave graduates take the plunge
and start their own retail business

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

you must remember this...



The 1999 Annual General Meeting of the Convocation was held on 20 March. Part of the programme was a visit to Lakeside, the student accommodation block, which was still under construction at the time. Delegates donned hard hats and enjoyed a guided tour of what was to become award-winning accommodation. Lakeside is situated on the edge of campus overlooking the Chancellor's Lake and incorporates the latest innovative building technology. Are you in this photo?

Did you live in Lakeside during your studies? Write in with stories of your life at Aston.

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Meet the team...



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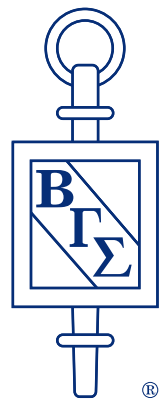
All the latest news from the Alumni Relations Office, benefits for Aston alumni and the Guild.

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 Office. 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 pdf format, but please contact us if you experience any difficulties accessing the publication.

Designed by Linney Design. Printed by Linney Print.

Photo credits: Page 15: Martin Neeves
Page 17: e-Learning lab Huw Meredith



BETA
GAMMA
SIGMA

AN HONOURABLE SOCIETY

The Aston University Chapter of Beta Gamma Sigma is going from strength to strength with more top Aston Business School students and graduates joining the ranks each year. We now have over 350 members worldwide. If you are not familiar with Beta Gamma Sigma, read on to discover how this award is important not only for recipients, but also for anyone involved in recruitment.

It's all Greek to me – many people misunderstand the importance of honour societies because of their Greek names. Honour societies are not social clubs or political organisations, but groups of people with similar interests who have been honoured for high academic achievement. Beta Gamma Sigma is an honour society for students of business schools accredited by The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International and is the highest recognition a business student, faculty member or professional anywhere in the world can receive. Beta Gamma Sigma was established in 1913 and now spans four continents.

ABS gained its AACSB accreditation in 2003 and is one of only a handful of UK business schools to win this international recognition. AACSB International assures quality and promotes excellence and continuous improvement in undergraduate and graduate education in business administration and accounting. ABS is the first UK institution to establish a Beta Gamma Sigma Chapter.

Beta Gamma Sigma encourages and honours academic achievement and fosters personal and professional excellence amongst its members. Membership conveys academic excellence and a commitment to high principles and superior achievement throughout a lifetime in business. Membership is awarded to the top students from ABS programmes.

Beta is the initial letter of the Greek word BEBAEOS (Beb-i-os), which signifies honour. Honour is personal integrity and excellence of character – a prerequisite for those who lead others.

Gamma is the initial letter of the Greek word GNOSIS (no-sis), which signifies wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge tested by experience and tempered by discerning judgment. It avoids prejudice and insists on freedom of thought and expression. Those who are wise seek a better comprehension and a more fruitful application of what is known and engage in a quest for understanding.

Sigma is the initial letter of the Greek word SPOUDE (spoo-day), which signifies earnestness. Earnestness is enthusiasm measured by achievement, reason and sincerity – a dynamic quality essential for all great achievements.



BUSINESS STUDENT REWARDED WITH BETA GAMMA SIGMA SCHOLARSHIP

Christopher Axford is the first student of Aston Business School to win a \$1,000 BGS scholarship. Aston Business School achieved exemplary chapter status making it eligible for participation in the Scholarship Programme. Christopher submitted a winning essay entitled *Honour, wisdom and earnestness: discuss the importance of these values as they relate to a successful business career in the 21st century.*

STUDENT LEADERSHIP FORUM

ABS undergraduate Daniel Crick has recently returned from a Leadership Forum where he met top international business leaders and business students. Through team-based, hands-on leadership experiences and interactive, dynamic team assignments, Daniel exchanged ideas and enhanced his expertise and academic knowledge.

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

Deloitte and PriceWaterhouseCoopers have been sponsoring Beta Gamma Sigma activities on campus for two years. Skills sessions on interview success, teamwork and employability skills have been organised for Beta Gamma Sigma members. In return, the companies have contact with top students who might be considering a career with professional services companies. If you would like more information about corporate involvement with Beta Gamma Sigma, contact the Alumni Relations Office.

LIFELONG MEMBERSHIP

Beta Gamma Membership is awarded only once in a lifetime – either during final year studies or at graduation. At the point of membership, recipients are in the top cohort of their class. But membership is for life! The Beta Gamma Sigma website (www.betagammasigma.org) has various member benefits as well as maps where other chapters are located all over the world. Aston University is planning to engage its members in activities in the near future and the Alumni Relations Office would be interested to hear members' opinions on the types of events which would be of interest. Contact Sarah Pymm on s.e.pymm@aston.ac.uk

Aston
Business
School
Conference Centre
is one year old!

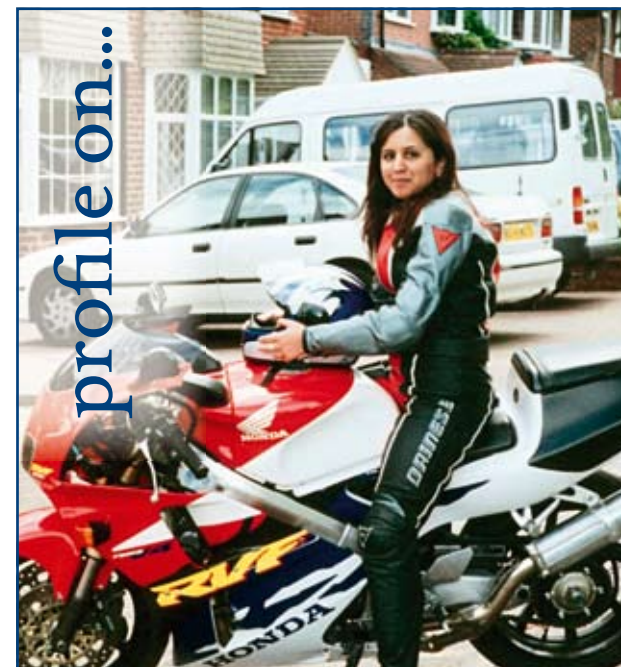


The next generation of stylish, urban chic city centre venues was unveiled on 9 March 2006 when Aston Business School Conference Centre officially reopened following an extensive £20 million expansion and refurbishment to provide a state-of-the-art conference and meetings venue in the heart of Birmingham.

The Conference Centre celebrated a highly successful first year on 9 March 2007, inviting internal and external clients, past, present and future to a special birthday lunch in the Centre's fabulous contemporary restaurant. The champagne was accompanied by a selection of culinary delights from the award winning chefs and the 'Aston through the ages' presentation enabled guests to take a look at how the Conference Centre has developed since the construction of the original building in 1977. The Conference Centre is ideally located in Birmingham City centre and offers an extensive range of conference, meeting and training facilities from single meeting room hire to all-inclusive, world-class residential facilities. A discount of 10% is offered to alumni booking here or at Lakeside Conference Centre, provided that bookings are for over 30 delegates. For further information regarding the conference and meeting facilities offered by Conference Aston, please contact Louise Goncalves on 0121 204 3011 or alternatively by email at conferenceaston@aston.ac.uk



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:
WWW.CONFERENCEASTON.CO.UK



SARNJIT SAHOTA

Many of our former international students will remember International Student Adviser Sarnjit Sahota who is based in Student Services. Sarnjit joined the University in July 2002. Her role is to provide advice and assistance to international and EU students studying at Aston and an ongoing pastoral care service for the duration of their studies. Even before students arrive they get to know Sarnjit through either the website or the pre-arrival handbook which helps students prepare for Aston.

"The Orientation Programme would have to be the main event for me," explains Sarnjit. "I get to meet so many students throughout the welcome week and join them in a range of activities. The welcome party hosted by the Sheldon and Yardley Rotary Club is also a memorable event. Every year, as part of the Club's international strategy, the Rotarians invite our international students to join them for a social evening.

When she's not at Aston, Sarnjit can be found in Wales and the Derbyshire Dales – two of her favourite locations where she spends time riding motor bikes. "Up until last year I had my own bike, but now I ride with friends when the weather is good."



ASTON entrepreneurs

Bear2Bed.com

EVER THOUGHT ABOUT STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

It's probably something many of us have dreamed about but deemed too risky to take any further. After all, do you really want to give up the security of your current career for something that could fail two or three years down the line, as so many new businesses do. For those brave enough to take the plunge though, the rewards of owning a business can be incredibly satisfying. We spoke to three graduates who have recently started their own retail businesses – Irfan Badakshi (2005 BSc Marketing) and Matt Roberts (2005 BSc Marketing) owners of Bean2Bed Ltd, and Emma Woodward (née Gilbert, 1999 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) co-owner of two Aspire Style lifestyle boutiques – to find out about their experience of starting a new business and what advice they'd give to other budding entrepreneurs.

What inspired you to start your own business?

Emma: My best friend, Samantha Yair, and I had often talked about opening our own shop. We'd seen these gorgeous lifestyle boutiques in London, but they were selling products at astronomical prices. We decided it was time a more affordable version was brought to the Midlands. We had no previous experience of running a business, just a passion to do something different. Starting our own business was a huge step for us as we both had good jobs and salaries; I was a marketing manager for Fox's Confectionery and Sam was a design engineer for Motorola, but we both felt frustrated in office jobs and the thought of buying beautiful gifts for a living and meeting new people every day was much more enticing.

Irfan and Matt: From an early age we were both very entrepreneurial and have made money from anything and everything – from mobile phones to KitKats! What inspired us to go into this business was the feedback we received on a very simple yet untapped concept – a beanbag that had a bed inside. Once we knew that we had something people would pay good money for, it was then a simple case of designing, patenting, manufacturing and marketing. Matt hadn't even graduated during the start-up phase which meant that his room in Gem House became our first ever stock room!

What research did you undertake beforehand?

Emma: We did a lot of research on location, competition and what other suppliers were out there.

Irfan and Matt: Our research was at a furniture exhibition at the NEC before we'd even set up the business. We made up a prototype, booked a stand at the show and



unveiled the product. We asked the attendees – all industry experts – to guess how much it might be worth, to write the answer on the back of their business card and the closest answer would win. It gave us an idea of how much it might be worth and we ended up with about 400 contacts from the industry. Above all, the feedback we received was what kick-started our business. We knew it had to be taken seriously.

How did you decide on what you wanted to sell?

Emma: Our stock has changed dramatically over the two-and-a-half years we have been trading. We started selling interior accessories – glassware, ceramics, fine art, furniture and soft furnishings – but because we wanted it in a lifestyle setting we took a bit of jewellery as well to drape over the furniture. The jewellery sold better than anything else so gradually we took more until it made sense to start looking at other fashion accessories. Now we stock 30% jewellery, 30% clothing, 30% giftware and just the occasional bit of interior accessories. We were lucky that the way we had set the shop up enables us to be really flexible.

Irfan and Matt: After 44 prototypes we had established our initial range of products: Double Bean2Bed (with a double mattress inside), King Bean2Bed (containing a king mattress) and a Sofa (with 2 king mattresses

inside). The range has slowly expanded as we have spotted gaps in the market or received customer feedback. We now boast a Junior Bean2Bed, a Twin Bean2Bed (containing two single mattresses), a Footstool (with two pillows inside), Additional Covers, and are about to launch our Pet2Bed (for cats and dogs) and our Parisian Range (exclusively for French City Apartments).

What problems did you encounter in setting up your business?

Emma: It was tough finding commercial property landlords that were willing to take a risk with a new business. It was one of the reasons that our first shop is in more of a quiet side street than a central location. It was much easier second time round and we managed to secure a property in a prime location in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Irfan and Matt: We didn't really encounter any problems as such. I'm sure there were some hurdles that every new business faces, but we took everything as a challenge and just got on with it. We are both very determined individuals so whatever problems there were they were resolved quickly and usually in our favour.

How did you decide on the name of your business?

Emma: We started as Aspire Interiors but changed it last year to Aspire Style to reflect the fashion focus in the shop now.

Irfan and Matt: Unfortunately we cannot take any credit for the Bean2Bed name and branding. We paid a marketing consultancy £3,000 to invent the neutral, descriptive Bean2Bed name. It is still amusing at exhibitions and in stores when customers only realise the pun after five minutes of conversation and trying out the products. We both love the name and are often congratulated on it by customers.

How did you feel on your first day of opening?

Emma: It was amazing. We had a big party for friends and family who finally got to see what it was all about! It was such a relief to be open as we'd done all the work ourselves to save money and had been working flat out and well into the night for two weeks before the opening day!

ENTREPRENEUR /noun a person who engages in business enterprises, usually with some personal financial risk

Irfan and Matt: When we launched the Bean2Bed product range at London Interiors in Earls Court it was all very exciting. We had a Channel 4 camera crew with us and they followed us around documenting the set-up process and at the same time attracted attention towards our stand. It was touching and inspiring to receive positive feedback from both industry experts and members of the public.

How do you position yourselves within your particular market?

Emma: Our shop sits across two main retail sectors – fashion and giftware. We wanted a shop that women would love to spend time in. Similar lifestyle shops to ours tend to be really expensive but we stock unusual products at really affordable prices – much of our jewellery is about £10 and our clothes around £50. Our customers love the thought that they are getting something unique that you can't buy on the high street, but at high street prices. We also pride ourselves on the way we display our products in a really inspirational way – our jewellery isn't tucked away in boxes, but draped over beautiful vintage furniture.

Irfan and Matt: Our USP is a bed inside a beanbag, so it's quite unique within the furniture/soft furnishings industry. Bean2Beds are aimed at the higher end of the market and the price points make the products quite aspirational. This is also reflected in our distribution channels and the retailers we supply, such as John Lewis, Bentalls and Darlings of Chelsea.

What's the best and worst thing about owning your own business?

Emma: The nicest thing is that we love coming to work every day and have so much passion for what we do. We have complete control over the business and it has been amazing watching it grow from scratch. The worst thing is that you never switch off. We work much longer hours than ever before, but I guess it's a hobby as much as job.

Irfan and Matt: The best elements of owning your own business are control and customer feedback. It is a wonderful thing to be able to set your own agenda each week and make



something happen every day. Just as rewarding is the recognition you receive through business awards and in the media. We've been lucky enough to be the subject of a Channel 4 Documentary, and have been featured in *The Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The Mirror*, *The Mail on Sunday*, *Good Housekeeping* and most recently *The Sun*, to name a few. But by far the most rewarding aspect is when customers tell us how much they love our products – it makes what we do that much more meaningful. The worst thing is that the office never seems to shut so it can be hard to switch off.

What advice would you give to someone else wanting to start up their own retail business?

Emma: You need to have a real passion for whatever it is you're going to sell. Sam and I only buy things for the shop that we really love ourselves. Also, don't spend a fortune on shop fittings. Proper shop fittings are uninspiring and expensive so try being more creative in the way products are displayed. Finally, be nice to suppliers. We have built a great relationship with our best suppliers and they now go out of their way to make sure we get to hear about things first which helps keep us ahead of the competition.

Irfan and Matt: Go for it. More often than not you should just go with your gut instinct. In the early days people can be very negative and scathing of new ideas (often because they wished they had thought of it first) but you have to block out all the negativity and dare to dream. If you can point to it, you can reach it; if you can dream it, you can achieve

it. That is the positive, entrepreneurial spirit that we try to put across every time we're invited to speak at colleges and universities.

What's the most successful thing that's happened to you since opening your business?

Emma: We won the Godiva Award for best shop in Coventry and Warwickshire. We were up against some incredibly tough competition and were thrilled to win. We had lots of our regular customers stopping by to congratulate us, which was fantastic.

Irfan and Matt: We've had many successes that we're very proud of. Getting our first big order for 250 units within just three weeks of trading, our numerous features in the press, winning the Shell LiveWIRE Young Entrepreneur of the Year for Central England, being listed in *Business Week's* Top 25 Young Entrepreneurs of Europe, about to turn over our first £million etc etc. But what takes pride of place on our wall above anything else is a letter from a customer for whom we went the extra mile (extra 420 miles to be exact!).

Would you do anything differently if you had to do it again?

Emma: We would have got a bit more clued up on accounting! We managed to get by when we just had one shop, now the business has grown so much it is a nightmare trying to keep track of everything!

Irfan and Matt: Probably not. Even the bad calls have been learning experiences. It's only a mistake if you don't learn from it.

SPREADING THE WORD



Jenny Smith (2006 BSc International Business and Modern Languages) was unsure as to what career path to take. Having received job offers from large organisations, she decided to take the position of KTP Associate for a marketing project with Aston University and The Christian Education Movement, despite having been previously unaware of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs).

As a result, Jenny now enjoys the combination of commercial experience, training and the opportunity to study for a higher degree. The project is also giving her the unique experience of having the ability to influence company direction by immediately stepping into a high profile position and really making a difference.

"Working in an SME as a Marketing Manager I get direct contact with top management and hands-on industry experience every day, says Jenny. "Alongside this, I am able to carry out my own research with the Marketing Group of Aston University thanks to the support and flexibility of the programme."

The Christian Education Movement supplies educational resources based on the national framework for Religious Education to schools

across the UK. Jenny is currently undertaking a review of the operations of the organisation so that she can develop a customer relationship management system. This will help the company to identify opportunities for new products and delivery methods and help implement an integrated marketing strategy for expansion.

Reporting to the CEO of the organisation, Jenny is accountable for the smooth running of the project but has the support of Professor Veronica Wong of Aston Business School and her extensive academic knowledge and expertise.

Mr Peter Fishpool, CEO of The Christian Education Movement, commented: "The sector in which we operate is becoming increasingly competitive. The KTP Project has given us access to marketing expertise at Aston Business School

and through the KTP Associate the capability to implement and embed these innovative ideas into our operations."

Organisations of all sizes are eligible to take part in KTPs which can cover a diverse range of subjects such as business process, technical innovation, product design and manufacturing. The one common thread is that the developments are strategic to the future of the business. KTPs provide resources and expertise to thriving organisations that wish to innovate, expand or improve their performance. KTPs are a true partnership creating benefits and opportunities for all the participants. Companies are able to improve their competitive advantage by transferring knowledge and expertise

and embedding an innovation culture in the business. Universities are able to apply the latest research to important business issues and use the outcomes as challenging teaching

materials. Able graduates are employed on these programmes to deliver set objectives and gain valuable commercial experience.

Business performance outputs vary from case to case, but according to DTI figures the most widely reported benefit for a company was an increase in sales of 46% and an increase in profitability of 42%. In addition, KTP generated growth thereby creating new jobs, generated investment in the business and gave the company access to highly qualified graduates to spearhead new projects.

If you are interested in finding out how a tailor-made Knowledge Transfer Partnership could benefit your business or would like to know more about being a KTP Associate, please contact ktp@aston.ac.uk or go to www.ktponline.org.uk

Birmingham

AHEAD OF THE GAME IN 2007

Award-winning restaurants and hotels, the arrival of exclusive fashion retailers, major sporting and arts events have all transformed the City of Birmingham into one of Europe's leading city centres. Birmingham's renaissance as a hub of world culture, events and commerce now confirms the City's prominence as a global destination for both business and leisure visitors.

BIRMINGHAM - WE LOVE OUR SPORT

A world-class sporting city, Birmingham has hosted more world and European championships than anywhere else in the UK. Chosen by the BBC to host *BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2006* in March 2007, Birmingham welcomed one of Europe's leading sporting events, the *European Athletics Indoor Championships*, to Birmingham's National Indoor Arena (NIA). More than 600 athletes from around 50 countries took part in the event, the most significant international athletics championships to be staged in Great Britain before the London 2012 Olympics.

TASTE THE WORLD IN ONE CITY

Whether you have a taste for the Orient, a passion for the Italian life, or are looking to spice up your life in the Balti Triangle, lovers of international cuisine can taste the whole world in Birmingham with a diverse range of award-winning restaurants, markets, food halls and cookery courses.

Leading fine-dining Indian restaurant *Itihaas* scooped two prestigious awards at this year's 2007 Cobra Good Curry Awards for the most coveted Best UK Restaurant and for Best in Midlands.

Legendry singer Asha Bhosle (immortalised in the Cornershop hit *Brimful of Asha*) has taken Birmingham by storm with a highly acclaimed *Asha Restaurant* in trendy Newhall Street. This is the third Asha Restaurant in the world, following the success of Dubai and Kuwait.

As well as The Mailbox being home to the City's glamorous shops from Harvey Nichols to Armani, it is also one of the City's leading venues for eating out including *Malmaison's Brasserie*, *Bar Epernay*, *Lazeez Signature*, *Red Peppers* and *Don Salvo*. In 2006, new concept *The Oriental* opened its doors, incorporating authentic Malaysian, Thai and Chinese cuisine. *Strada* also opened in The Mailbox in 2006, along with the new *Kinnaree Thai Restaurant* serving authentic Thai cuisine alongside a striking 12-foot golden dragonboat.

Peppers, Birmingham's first pan-Asian restaurant and Bollywood Champagne bar opened in March 2006, the first of its kind outside London. *Peppers* combines pan-Asian cuisine served in a non-smoking art gallery themed restaurant upstairs with the vibrancy of Bollywood in the downstairs bar.



Asha Restaurant

Taste of Birmingham 2007 has now been confirmed as the grand finale event for the Taste celebrations taking place in the city on 5-8 July 2007.

IF YOU'VE GOT IT, FLAUNT IT

Shopping in Birmingham has been revolutionised with the magnificent Bullring where visitors can tempt themselves in the biggest city centre shopping destination Britain has to offer. *Selfridges*, *Massimo Dutti*, *Karen Millen*, *Reiss*, *Yo! Sushi* and the *Veuve Clicquot Champagne Bar* are just a few of the many excellent shops and restaurants that make up this brilliant cosmopolitan area of the city centre. The super chic Mailbox has flagship stores *Harvey Nichols* and *Armani*; *Louis Vuitton* and *House of Fraser* also add touches of glamour through the city.

In addition to the many independent shops – including those housed within the eclectic *Custard Factory*, Birmingham also possesses a genuinely unique *Jewellery Quarter*, where beautiful hand-crafted jewellery can be purchased or special designs can be commissioned. The historic village-like Quarter is home to well over 500 jewellery businesses operating in surroundings which date back over 250 years.

BIRMINGHAM IN TUNE WITH '2007 - The Year of Elgar'

Birmingham will be joining in the nationwide celebrations to mark '2007 - The Year of Elgar' and will once again have the opportunity to show the world that, in *Symphony Hall*, it boasts the finest concert hall in Britain. A complete listing of CBSO and Symphony Hall concerts planned to mark the 150th anniversary, between March and June 2007 is available at www.symphonycity.co.uk

SLEEP EASY IN THE CITY

Staying over in Birmingham has never been easier. The City is accustomed to welcoming visitors from all corners of the globe tailored to every taste and budget. From *Malmaison* and *Hotel du Vin*, to the recently opened *Radisson SAS Birmingham* and new concept *nitenite city rooms*, there are more than 47,000 bed spaces ready for visitors to sleep easy in the City centre and surrounding area.

Calling all artists and photographers!

Would you like the opportunity to be the designer of one of the three Aston University corporate Christmas cards which will be sent out by staff for Christmas 2007?

We're looking for an original design – square or rectangular – which may be a photograph, painting, drawing, or print, but must not be larger than A4 or smaller than A5.

The design theme is 'Impressions of Aston'.

If you would like to enter, please email Susan Urwin at s.j.urwin@aston.ac.uk for details on how to enter and the rules of entry.

Deadline for receipt of entries is 31 July 2007.



PAR EXCELLENCE

The MBA Golf Club (MBAGC) is an exciting new business venture spearheaded by Aston graduate Gavin Bottrell (2003 MBA). The Club brings together MBA graduates at all professional levels from students to CEOs. Complete beginners, once-a-year players and experienced golfers are welcomed onto some of the world's finest fairways.

Membership of the MBA Golf Club is open to individuals who are either studying for, or who have gained, an MBA. "Our long term vision," explains Gavin, "is for a large organisation that will bring MBAs with an interest in golf together. Golf and the MBA qualification both already have international appeal so it's a natural progression." For the 'occasional golfer', Gavin reassures that you don't have to be an expert to join. "There are many MBAs who would like to take up golf or who play only occasionally because of other commitments. The MBA Golf Club is perfect for them as they can attend our scheduled events, get a handicap if they want to and greatly expand their contact network."

But competitions and golfing events aren't the only attraction. All members of the MBAGC are eligible for valuable benefits on a wide range of top quality services and products provided by sponsors and associates. Members are also given the opportunity to promote their own business activities free to the rest of the club and as the club grows and relationships are made, this will naturally lead to the generation of business opportunities both at home and abroad.

It's Gavin's love of golf and the importance he places in networking that has led him to set up MBAGC. "When I started my MBA course in January 2000, I was immediately struck by the high calibre of my fellow students," he explains.

“With hindsight, I didn't make the most of the networking opportunity presented to me. Since then I've realised that having good contacts and building relationships with like-minded people really does open up lots of great opportunities!”

"For several years now I've organised small golf events for friends and colleagues with MBAs – we make new friends, swap business ideas and have a great time."

For further details about the summer tournament and joining the MBA Golf Club, visit the club's website www.mbagolfclub.com

A community of ABS postgraduates

The Alumni Relations Office extends and maintains contact with Aston graduates throughout the world. Membership of this global network is free. It gives you the chance to network professionally and socially with Aston graduates in your area. There is a programme of reunions and events, a magazine which brings you news from Aston and your peers, a service to put you back in touch with lost friends and many more ways you can stay involved with your University. Visit www.aston.ac.uk/alumni

There are some exciting developments for MBA and MSc graduates of Aston Business School. A dedicated service and online community lets you network with other postgraduate alumni and develop your professional and social circles to your advantage.

SPOTLIGHT MBA GRADUATES

- Three MBA events over the year in various locations where you can debate hot topics and refresh your knowledge of contemporary business thinking
- VIP dinner invitations to meet Aston staff travelling overseas
- e-Newsletters over the year with news from your School
- An online community where you can meet your peers



SPOTLIGHT MSc GRADUATES

- VIP dinner invitations to meet Aston staff travelling overseas
- Three e-Newsletters over the year with news from your School
- An online community where you can meet your peers



In the know

We will be alerting you to news and events through email so it is becoming increasingly important for you to keep your details up to date. There are two ways you can do this:

- complete the Graduate Update Form on the reverse of the address sheet in this edition of Apex and return it to us by mail or fax on +44 (0)121 204 4783.
- visit www/alumni/update.jsp where there is an online version of the Graduate Update Form and submit your new details.

Want to know the latest research from your School or read the latest press releases? Visit www.abs.aston.ac.uk/newweb/news/

HEARING FROM YOU

We often receive requests from departments across the University who want to broadcast a message to all alumni or who want to make readers aware of new developments. In this issue, Siân Howarth, Disability Co-ordinator in the Disability and Additional Needs Unit (DANU) of Student Services, has a request for all readers.

"As part of Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme, we would like to hear from our graduates with disabilities, including specific learning difficulties, mental health difficulties and medical conditions.

This is for two main reasons:

- your feedback may help us to support our potential and current students better;
- we need role models to inspire our new students (whether you studied here experiencing disability and/or your experiences of disability are associated with your career.)"

So, if you'd like to help, please contact Siân Howarth, Disability Co-ordinator, Aston University on +44 (0)121 204 4711 or email s.l.howarth@aston.ac.uk

All correspondence will be treated confidentially.

A global challenge:

the power of multi-cultural



communications



Communications is the most powerful tool a company has. Speaking to the right people at the right time in the right way can dramatically improve product sales, company image and reputation amongst a target audience. In a market place where there are diverse cultures, races, faiths and nationalities, do companies implement this basic message to its full potential? Weber Shandwick, one of the world's leading global public relations firms, is tackling the traditional question of targeted communications in the light of an increasingly diverse customer base.

Head of Multi-Cultural Communications, Rakhee Vithlani (2000 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies and 2003 MSc Business Management) is at the forefront of a new and exciting area. "As the UK becomes increasingly diverse, companies are steadily realising the opportunities of communicating to the multi-cultural market, but it is apparent that many still do not fully understand how to effectively tune in," she explains.

Whether raising the profile of a brand or product, working within communities on a grassroots level or managing an issue which relates to ethnic groups, it is important to engage potential customers by moulding communications to a specific target group. "It's important on a number of levels," elaborates Rakhee. "Firstly, the economic benefits cannot be ignored. Studies suggest that the spending power of ethnic minorities in the UK will reach £300bn by 2010 – an incredible amount of money for any brand to ignore. Additionally, a deeper understanding of cultural sensitivities and how people are represented is important for public and private sector companies as well as the media."

Rakhee advises clients on how to reach ethnic groups through media and public relations strategies. "My work is extremely varied. One day we could be advising a FTSE 100 company, the next working with government on sensitive issues. Approaches to multi-cultural communications depend on the audience in terms of origin and age and on the client's brief but no matter who I work with, the relationships I have with media and key opinion formers is crucial to the success of any campaign. The trick is to understand that no one size fits all. In order to reach different audiences, a different tone and approach is required."

Since leaving Aston, Rakhee has built up an impressive career profile and has gained unique and relevant experience working with ethnic groups all over the world. This places her in an advantageous position not only to be able to speak authoritatively on her profession but also to drive a new and exciting area.

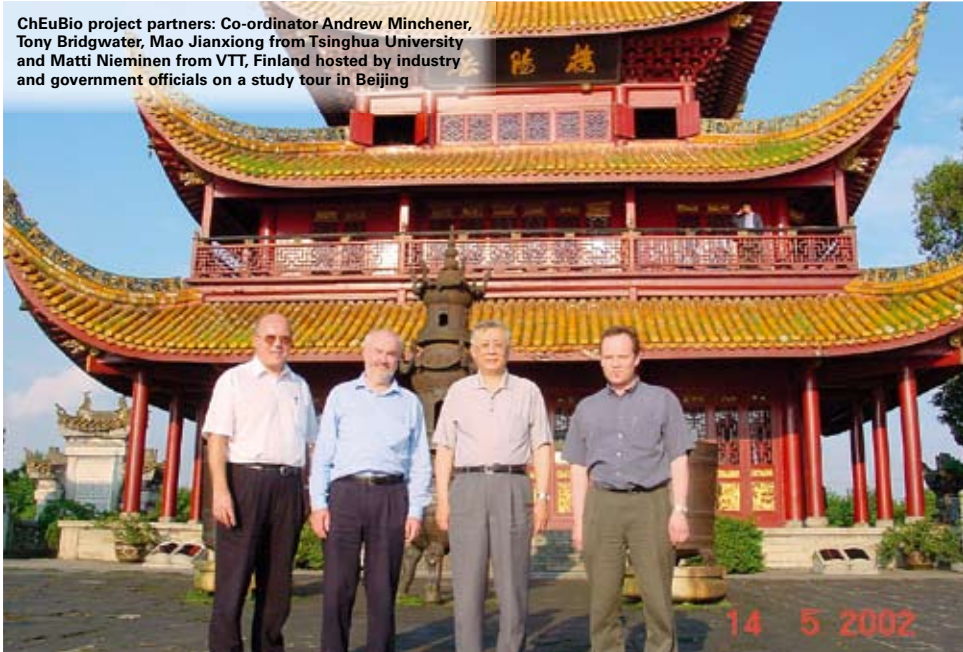
"I joined Weber Shandwick's Consumer Division through their graduate scheme and worked on international PR projects for major brands. This taught me an incredible amount about how campaigns work on a global level. In 2005 I was working for an account which took me to Hong Kong through which I was granted a secondment in China. Having already spent time working in India that year, I was exposed to the exciting but challenging opportunities presented by emerging economies. It really struck me that our industry (and country) is set for immense change in the immediate future and this has implications for my profession and the broader communications industry as a whole. On my return I had discussions with senior management about formalising a practice which would ensure we stay in the lead of these changes, specifically in the UK and we agreed to set up MCC, Multi-Cultural Communications, which I lead." Her work has taken her all over the world. "I also recently spent one month in the US including LA, New York, Chicago and Dallas implementing socio-political and urban campaigns to reach the African-American and Hispanic people," she explained.

Given the international market place companies now work in, the sensitivities and needs of distinct groups and their potential spending power cannot be ignored. Her work to support and advise companies engage potential new customers puts Rakhee Vithlani at the forefront of a new wave of communications.





Tony Bridgwater handles harvested reed – a popular bioenergy crop in China – on a ChEuBio study tour outside Beijing



ChEuBio project partners: Co-ordinator Andrew Minchener, Tony Bridgwater, Mao Jianxiong from Tsinghua University and Matti Nieminen from VTT, Finland hosted by industry and government officials on a study tour in Beijing

ASTON UNIVERSITY TO INTRODUCE BIOMASS TO CHINA'S COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS

ASTON UNIVERSITY'S BIOENERGY RESEARCH GROUP IS PART OF A EUROPEAN-CHINESE TEAM THAT WILL LOOK AT MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR EU COMPANIES TO INTRODUCE CO-FIRING OF BIOMASS IN CHINA'S COAL-FIRED POWER STATIONS IN A NEW PROJECT LAUNCHED IN NOVEMBER 2006.

The 590,000€ ChEuBio (China EU Bioenergy) Project, funded by the European Commission, is a two-year initiative that will assess the commercial possibilities of co-firing biomass in China's coal-fired power stations to help cut the country's dependence on fossil fuel and reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

Andrew Minchener, the Project Co-ordinator, said: "The potential impact of substituting coal with a CO₂ neutral fuel is large. If half of the biomass wastes currently produced in China could be utilised in the existing power plants it could displace over 200 million tonnes of coal."

Coal has fuelled China's emergence as an economic powerhouse and today the country is the world's largest coal producer and consumer. With over 70 per cent of all energy consumed in China coming from coal, it's a promising opportunity for

European companies keen to introduce their co-firing technology to new markets. Coal will remain supreme in generating power for China in the near future. In 2004 China had 400,000 megawatts of installed power generating capacity, this is expected to more than double by 2020 to one million MW.

But after decades of focusing solely on economic growth, the Government is beginning to face up to the heavy air pollution in its cities and is expressing growing concerns over climate change. In January last year the national Renewable Energy Law came into force which commits to generating 15 per cent of China's energy from renewable sources and backs its promise with £92 billion in investment.

Co-firing, which is not currently practised in China, involves burning coal and biomass together – mainly straw, rice husks, and wastes from crops and wood. Co-firing cuts down on greenhouse gas emissions and can help to reduce global warming because biomass is a carbon neutral fuel releasing the same amount of carbon when it is burned as it absorbs while growing.

China is a complex economy with distributed farms, making the logistics of biomass collection and transport challenging. ChEuBio will gather data

on the biomass sources and availability, undertake case studies of various plants to assess possibilities for co-firing in China's coal power plants, and determine the commercial potential for co-firing in China.

Aston University's Bioenergy Research Group will use geographic modelling to evaluate the potential of using various biomass feedstocks in different regions of China and will help to communicate the findings to the Chinese power industry and policy makers in the country.

Professor Tony Bridgwater, Head of the Bioenergy Research Group (BERG), said: "The fast growing economy in China offers enormous possibilities for bioenergy to make a major contribution to improving the global environment."

This project follows on from a wider, four-year project that BERG was involved in called "EU-CHINA Biomass" that investigated methods of encouraging biomass uptake in China and technology transfer between the two countries.

ChEuBio will share the results with the European co-firing industry and help companies to establish technology partnerships with Chinese power stations.

Want to start a business? IT'S EASIER FOR WHITE WOMEN...

FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS FIND IT EASIER THAN MEN TO RAISE CAPITAL FOR NEW BUSINESS IDEAS, NEW RESEARCH HAS DISCOVERED. GRADUATES ALSO HAVE AN EASIER TIME BUT ETHNIC MINORITIES, PARTICULARLY BLACK ENTREPRENEURS, FIND IT HARDER TO SECURE BANK LOANS.

The results are part of research which canvassed 400 SMEs across the UK. The research was carried out by academic Jonathan Scott from Aston Business School and Northumberland consultant David Irwin of Irwin Grayson Associates, using data originally commissioned by Barclays Bank Small Business Research Team.

"The accepted wisdom has been that banks offer plenty of finance and there is little or no difficulty in accessing it," explains Jonathan Scott. "We wanted to explore the extent to which entrepreneurs' personal characteristics impact upon their ability to access this resource."

When asked if they had experienced difficulties in raising finance for their businesses 50% of black entrepreneurs said they had, compared with 22% of Asian and only 13% of white respondents. Black manager/owners were found to be twice as likely (than the average) to re-mortgage their homes.

"Ethnicity makes a real difference in sources of finance with black entrepreneurs more likely to re-mortgage their homes, use personal bank loans or personal credit cards – this willingness to accept high risk could be borne out of a complete frustration coupled with determination to start-up," continues Jonathan.

Men were more likely to report difficulties (18%) than females (12%) in securing bank loans and only 8% of graduates said they had experienced problems.

“ By highlighting the issues faced by UK entrepreneurs we hope to help banks assess and address their customer needs. ”

Richard Roberts from Barclays Bank Small Business Research Team says: "We welcome any review of the SME market place that provides detailed analysis of the interaction between banks and customers. A main cause of business failure at start up is under-capitalisation and raising start up finance is often difficult."



THE ASTON DBA

The Aston DBA is a highly desirable qualification designed to appeal to 'high flying' directors and senior managers who already hold an MBA and who want to develop further skills of research and consultancy.

It offers the opportunity to apply the latest business and management theories to the working environment and to develop key analytical skills. The DBA involves world-class research methods training over two years part-time (or one year full-time) followed by a supervised independent research project into a real business and management issue.

The Association of MBAs has recently begun accreditation of DBA programmes. We are proud to say that our DBA holds this accreditation.



For further information please visit our website www.abs.aston.ac.uk/newweb/programmes/RDP/dba/ or email a.i.mccann@aston.ac.uk

COMMEMORATIVE TREE

Sir Adrian and Lady Susan Cadbury plant a tree on campus in celebration of the Beta Gamma Sigma Founders' Day and to commemorate cutting the sod and topping off the new ABS building. They were joined by members of the honour society Beta Gamma Sigma.



GRIME SCENE INVESTIGATIONS

ASTON'S DR ANTHONY HILTON HAS BECOME A HOUSEHOLD NAME DUE TO HIS NEW FOUND FAME AS A TV SCIENTIST ON THE BBC'S GRIME SCENE INVESTIGATIONS.

Anthony was the resident scientist (or 'the brain') on the programme and the *Grime Scene* team was extremely pleased with the success of the first series. As Senior Microbiology Lecturer and Director of Biology Programmes at Aston, Dr Hilton has exceptional experience in researching the bugs and beasts which aren't visible to the naked eye. He is also the Honorary General Secretary of the Society for Applied Microbiology.



Together with presenter Rufus Hound, Anthony and the 'Anthoniettes' have thoroughly enjoyed embarking on numerous missions to boldly go to grime scenes across the country in search of uncovering the multitude of bugs that lie in wait in our homes. The Anthoniettes, who are all Aston University PhD research students, play an integral role in sourcing the grime samples and analysing their findings.

Jess Rollason, Laura Wheeldon and Tarja Karpanen are all experts in Microbiology and share Anthony's enthusiasm for the exploration of germs. No stone was left unturned when the *Grime Scene* investigators were around. Houses were evacuated and the inhabitants interrogated in the search to find answers about their domestic hygiene. Homes were swabbed and sampled

from top to toe and not even the inhabitants escaped the process! Anthony and the team even had a mobile laboratory on the *Grime Scene* site where viruses, bacteria and general dirt underwent very close inspection. "Working on the programme was great," said Anthony. "It gave us a rare opportunity to undertake detailed surveys of people's homes and look for correlations with their lifestyle.

I was surprised just how many bacteria and fungi were lurking in even the cleanest domestic environments. It was also great to share my enthusiasm for microbiology with the viewing public in an informative and entertaining way." **For more information about the programme visit www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/tv/grime_scene/**



Monkey talk

Human Psychology placement student, Rowena Yeats, set off for an amazing experience in April to work with eminent language evolution scientist Marc Hauser at Harvard University in the USA.

Hauser's team carries out research into how rhesus monkeys communicate on Cayo Santiago, a small island off the coast of Puerto Rico. Rowena was involved in a set of experiments aimed at understanding the evolution of two domains of human knowledge – language and morality. The experiments focused on non-human primates and songbirds and the extent to which evolutionary building blocks of these uniquely human capacities are evident in other animals.

Dr Carl Senior, Rowena's tutor, was delighted about her placement as Marc Hauser is a close collaborator with Noam Chomsky. Hauser and Chomsky are two of the world's leading experts in the evolution of language in terms of human and non-human primates.

For further information about Marc Hauser's research lab visit <http://wjh-www.harvard.edu/~mnkylab/>

Ab initio German

Would you like to speak and study German at degree level but have little or no knowledge of the language? Aston University is about to introduce a new style of degree course which enables students without any qualifications in German to study the language up to degree level.



The German 'ab initio' programme (for absolute beginners) will open its doors to students in October 2007. Students who have not previously had the opportunity to learn the language will be able to study German and gain an in-depth understanding of the language, as well as of German history, society, politics and culture, through the four-year, full-time programme.

The programme features a specially designed intensive German course in the first year, as well as a compulsory integrated full year abroad in a German-speaking country in the third year. The German ab initio course will be combined with either another language (English, French or Spanish), or with European Studies, leading to a joint honours degree.

The introduction of an ab initio option opens up a new entry route for A-level applicants who did not benefit from the chance

to learn German at school, as well as to mature applicants who decide to register for a German degree at a later stage in their life. This new programme for Beginners' German is not open to students with German A-Level or GCSE, as these students already have a well-established entry route to university studies, but for students with no or little prior knowledge of German.

The new programme is the result of a nationwide consortium project, funded by HEFCE, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, and initiated by the Open University, in order to explore ways of collaboration with Higher Education Institutions over the creation and delivery of courses in strategic languages which are in decline.

For further information about the course please visit www.aston.ac.uk/lss/academicgroups/german/NewGermanabinitiocourseinfo.jsp

Not lost in translation

The School of Languages & Social Sciences recently welcomed members from the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI) to an exclusive workshop on the practical aspects of translation.

The event initially set out to provide further insight into translation issues but also functioned as an excellent

opportunity to create links between practitioners, theoreticians, professional translators and Aston translation students.

Throughout the day a range of interesting topics were discussed, including translating EU documents, working for direct clients and Aston's approach to the teaching of translation. The workshop was

organised by Aston's Institute for the Study of Language and Society (ISLS), in co-operation with the ITI West Midlands Group and ITI German Network. Over 40 professional translators and Aston translation studies students were in attendance.

"The feedback from ITI members has been very positive. Participants felt they had learnt things that would

be of use to them in their work as translators and interpreters and had a chance to do some useful networking," said Ros Mendy from ITI. In addition to this event, the University also welcomed a number of managers from national translation companies in early November. They were joined by Aston students for a presentation by Liz Robertson, Chair of the Association of Translation Companies, on the new European standard for translation services.

NEW E-LEARNING LANGUAGE CENTRE

A new e-Learning Centre has opened on the tenth floor of the North Wing. Sanako, the supplier of the e-Languages lab software, has cited LSS as an exemplar institution both on their web pages and in their worldwide newsletters.

Aston is the first HE institution to install the latest software called Study 1200 and has also appointed a highly experienced e-Learning Centre Manager.



e-LEARNING COLLABORATION

Dr Jo Smedley is about to embark on a high profile secondment with the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC). The project has been created to respond to the needs of the HE sector for coherent information, advice and guidance on e-Learning. Apex caught up with her before she left to find out more about her role and her involvement with the project.

What are the objectives of the role?

JISC is an organisation focused on technology for learning to support UK Universities and Colleges. The JISC/Higher Education Academy (HEA) Collaboration team will inform, advise and guide the HE sector on e-Learning. Each organisation in the team has its own remit and particular areas of expertise; both organise much of their work through the activities of separate internal providers such as JISC services, the Academy's subject centres and a large number of other dispersed teams and units based in different universities across the UK.

What will the role involve?

There will be two people in post. As JISC Team Leader in the collaboration, I'll be based at JISC at the University of Bristol. The role will require a large amount of travelling across the UK, visiting different parts of JISC and the HEA as well as universities and colleges. For me, it provides a great opportunity to develop partnerships while also linking with new innovations in learning and technology, two areas in which I have a special interest.

Is this new role a different direction for you?

No. My role at Aston involves networking across the University, looking

for opportunities to link with departments and staff to develop new subjects. It has also involved some external networking for opportunities to further develop multidisciplinary study. The new role involves networking across JISC and the HEA – so it's networking on a bigger scale! Perhaps most important of all, the outcome of this project should enhance the visibility of e-Learning resources available to the HE community and thereby enhance the student learning experience. That has certainly formed a large part of my role in Combined Honours and is an aspect of my work I am passionate about.

How did you get involved with this organisation?

Around 15 months ago, I was invited to become a member of the JISC Learning and Teaching Committee. JISC has six sub-committees which involve practitioners drawn from across FE and HE in England, Scotland and Wales. The sub-committees focus on organisational and individual aspects of technology to enhance learning across the sectors and this is just one of the ways that JISC seeks to actively link with the community. Being involved in this committee has been enormously interesting. I've met a lot of people involved in teaching and learning innovation using technologies, learned more about national strategies and gained a much clearer idea of priorities.

What challenges face you?

Bringing together a considerable number of resources and linking them with those from another organisation which is structured in a different way will certainly be a challenge – but it's definitely about team work. I'm aware that this project is going to be much bigger than any I have worked on before and I enjoy new challenges and opportunities.

When will you return to Aston?

The secondment officially ends in February 2009, but I'll be popping into Aston from time to time. I've been really grateful for the encouragement and support that I've received regarding this secondment opportunity. It will be a wrench leaving Combined Honours as the staff there work very closely together – but I'm sure they will keep me up to speed with the gossip from time to time!

What will you miss about Aston?

Definitely the people – the staff and students. Being a very small university, there is the opportunity to get to know people really easily. I'm surprised how many people I know – it's a nice place to be. Being involved in inter-disciplinary aspects at Aston and also linking with projects at Matthew Boulton College has provided a fascinating insight into learning, teaching and curriculum approaches and differences from subject to subject.



Double Scholarship Support for Aston

The Office of Advancement, in partnership with Gareth Griffiths, MBA Director (External), has recently secured a second £30,000 donation for Aston Business School from the Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust. The first £30,000 donation last year launched the Ferguson MBA Africa Scholarship Fund for MBA tuition fees, intended to reach out to African students who have been under-represented on the MBA programme due to comparably high UK tuition and living costs.

Ferguson support in 2006-07 has enabled ABS to welcome six outstanding African scholarship winners onto its MBA programme and raise the African representation from just three in 2005-06 to nine students this year. The Scholarship also resulted in a greater number of applications from African students overall, with applications received from Nigeria, Zambia, Ghana, South Africa, Morocco, Kenya and Sierra Leone, and an increased overall level of students actually enrolling on the Aston MBA. Preparations are under way for Ferguson Scholarship recruitment in 2007-08, and ABS is delighted to be able to continue with this programme for another year.

Nigerian scholarship winner Oyinkansola Coker says:

“ It's been thrilling so far – the workload, my course mates and the city as a whole. Everything so far has been integrated... visiting Cadbury and Land Rover was really fantastic in terms of what I was able to learn. I would not have missed this opportunity for anything! ”

Building on the success of the MBA Scholarship, the Ferguson Trust, the Office of Advancement and the School of Languages & Social Sciences have teamed up to launch the Ferguson International Friendship Scholarship with Ferguson funding of £21,720 in 2007-08.

The LSS Scholarship will provide financial help to students from Africa and South America enrolling on MAs in TESOL Studies, Translation Studies, TESOL and Translation Studies, and Applied Linguistics.

Each scholarship programme is expected to run for a minimum of three years and will provide life-changing opportunities for international students who otherwise would not be able to fund postgraduate studies at Aston and greatly enhance the diverse and international flavour of our student body.



Oyinkansola Coker

Ferguson MBA Africa Scholarship Winners 2006-07:

- Abdessamad Alami Drideb**
Morocco
- Oyinkansola Coker**
Nigeria
- Farrel Elliott**
Sierra Leone
- Emiko Memeh**
Nigeria
- Vivian Nwachukwu**
Nigeria
- Pauline Osasona**
Nigeria

Thank you. We are grateful to everyone who made a donation to the 2006 Aston Annual Fund. Through your generosity, you help Aston University challenge thinking and create opportunities for students.

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Mr Terence G Jenkins
Dr Jill K Jesson
Dr Jacqueline Jaynes
Mr Stephane Johann
Miss Caroline J Johnson
Ms Helen M Johnson
Mr Martin G Johnson
Mr Philip M Johnson
Mrs Alison Jones
Mr Graham Jones
Mr P Jones
Mr Frederic T Joulin
Mr Peter Juggins
Mr Richard A Kaines
Mr George K Kalloughlian
Mr Barry A Kamsler
Miss Argyro Kantara
Miss Firuza N Karbhari
Mr Richard G Karn
Mr Ramanujam Kasthuri
Ms Jatinderpal Kaur
Mr Robert Kay
Mr Michael R Kearney
Mr Pat D Keegan
Mr Nicholas D Keen
Mrs Claire L Keith
Ms Dawn A Kelly
Mr Philip T Kelly
Mr Stephen Kelsey
Miss Lucy V Kent
Mr Nadeem M Khan
Mr Sarwar A Khan
Prof Julia King
Mrs Sarah C Kinneir
Miss Louise Kirby
Mr Richard A Kirk
Mr David R Kirkley
Mrs Karen Kneiler
Mr Mark A Knight
Mr Wai C Ko
Mr George Kotzias
Mr John B Kyd
Mr Philip W Pardoe
Mr Kevin J Lambert

Ms Lisa A Lambert
Mr Alex R Langley
Mr Malcolm J Lashley
Dr Eileen J Loughton
Mrs Helen J Hill
Dr Kevin W Lawson
Mr Stuart M Le Tissier
Mr Trevor M Leake
Mr John N Leath
Mr Dexter Lee
Mr Kieran N Hodgson
Mr Andrew R Hogg
Mr Florian W Hoefling
Miss Lindsay J Hogg
Mr Barrie K Holder
Miss Carrie L Hollowday
Mr Stuart J Holmes
Mr Reza Hussein Hooda
Miss Kerry L Hooper
Mr Ross Hopkins
Mr Kim P Horby
Mr Nicholas S Horne
Mr Richard J Horton
Mrs Eileen C Houghton
Mr Ian R Houghton
Mr Mark A Hourigan
Mr Richard A Howard
Miss Margaret A Howat
Mr Anthony P Howell
Mr Ian Howells
Mr Richard I Howie
Mr Benjamin Howl
Mr John L Hudson
Mr Neil G Hudson
Miss Melanie D Hufton
Mr Brian P Hughes
Miss Clare L Hughes
Mr Craig K Hughes
Mr Francis H Hughes
Mr Paul T Hughes
Mr Robert E Hughes
Mr Howard A Hunt
Mr Robin Hunt
Mr Brian R Hunter
Mrs Monvanna T Hussey
Mrs Deborah J Hutt
Mr John T Hutton
Mr Richard E Hyam
Dr Diana C Ingham
Mr Richard T Ingham
Mrs Miranda M Ingram
Mr Christopher J Irish
Mr Shahidul Islam
Mr Peter L Jackson
Mr Thomas G Jackson
Mr Mark C Jacobs
Mr Gurdip S Jagpal
Mr Ankush K Jain
Dr Sara L James
Ms Sarah E James
Mrs Sangeeta Jammadas
Mr Bimal K Jangra
Mr James A Jardine
Ms Jennifer Jaynes
Mrs Rosemary Jenkin
Mr David W Jenkins
Dr Katie S Jenkins
Mr Terence G Jenkins
Dr Jill K Jesson
Dr Jacqueline Jaynes
Mr Stephane Johann
Miss Caroline J Johnson
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Mrs Alison Jones
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Mr Frederic T Joulin
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Mr Richard A Kaines
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Miss Argyro Kantara
Miss Firuza N Karbhari
Mr Richard G Karn
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Mr Robert Kay
Mr Michael R Kearney
Mr Pat D Keegan
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Mr David R Kirkley
Mrs Karen Kneiler
Mr Mark A Knight
Mr Wai C Ko
Mr George Kotzias
Mr John B Kyd
Mr Philip W Pardoe
Mr Kevin J Lambert

Mr John A Parish
Mrs Helen M Parker
Mrs Louise A Parker
Mr Simon A Parker
Mr Brian R Parkinson
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Mr Rajesh D Patel
Mr Christopher G Ling
Miss Jessica A Lippiatt
Mr Terry E Little
Mr Paul A Little
Mr Julian F Lorimer
Mr A K Lovell
Miss Christopher G Lowe
Mr J G Lowe
Dr John B Lowe
Mr Robert E Lowes
Mr Anthony B Loynes
Mrs Samantha Mackie
Miss Rachel L Main
Ms Lynda L Malin
Mr Colin R Mallen
Mr William J Maloney
Mr Nigel R Mann
Mr Peter L Manser
Mrs Carole Manship
Mr Matthew T Maple
Mr A G Marriner
Mrs Bridget A Marsden
Dr Margaret E Martin
Mr Wilfred H Martin-Buades
Miss Aurora R Martorell
Mr Robert A Mason
Mr Giovanni R Mastrantonio
Ms Sarah L May
Miss Jennifer M Mayes
Mr Christopher P Mayo
Mr Emmanuel C Mbakwe
Mrs Jayne C McBride
Miss Katherine E McCann
Dr Eric J Mccoy
Mrs Moyra E McCrear
Dr Hugh A McCredie
Mr H P McDowell
Mr Michael McElroy
Mr James A McGrah
Mr Connell McHugh
Mr Terence J McHugh
Mr Clive P McLeod
Mr Sean McManus
Mr Jason R McNeill
Mr Stephen L Merrick
Mr Alan J Metcalfe
Mr Simon J Metheringham
Mrs Anne E Middleton
Miss Maria Militsi
Ms Clare E Miller
Mr Michael J Millican
Dr David S Millican
Mr Philip D Mills
Mr Daniel A Minkin
Mr James C Mitchell
Ms Naira Mnatsakanova
Dr Olvind Moen
Dr Nipapan Molloy
Mrs Elaine M Montegriffo
Mr Andrew Montgomery
Mr Stanley G Moore
Mr George H Morris
Miss Katherine S Morris
Miss Katherine J Mossop
Mr Maurice Mottershead
Dr Mandeep S Mudhar
Mr Jeremy J Mullen
Mr Peter I Munro
Mr Peter J Muriuki
Miss Corinne L Murphy
Mr Ramanan W Mylvaganarn
Mr Kesavarman Nadarajah
Mr Amit Naik
Ms Sachiko Nakamura
Mr Steven D Naldrett
Mrs Helen Nayee
Ms Helen M Neal
Ms Shona Nicholson
Mrs Jane B Nicolas
Mr Cyril D Nivelle
Mr Graham Nixon
Mr David T Nock
Mr Gavin P Nottage
Miss Kenneth C O'craft
Mrs Carolyn O'Kane
Mr Lee J Olley
Mr Owen J O'Neill
Miss Carol A O'reilly
Miss Kathryn E Orme
Miss Helen J Orton
Mr Angus A Osborne
Mr Stephen O'Shea
Mr Richard H Owen
Mrs Melinda M Paine
Mrs Margaret E Palmer
Dr Petros Panagiotidis
Mr Philip W Pardoe
Mr Wai Y Lam
Mr Daniel C Parfitt

Mr Raymond S Steggles
Dr Chloe Sterling
Mrs Helen M Sterling
Mrs Hazel A Stevenson
Mr John A Stewart
Mr Peter K Stewart
Mrs Jayne E Stokes
Miss Susannah M Streeter
Mr Michael H Strong
Mr Martyn C Styles
Mr Desmond R Suckling
Mrs Susan J Sugarmann
Mr Robin G Swaffield
Mr Anthony J Swainsbury
Mrs Alison A Swindell
Mr Chris J Swinn
Mr Howard A Tame
Mrs Lynne E Taylor
Mr Richard Taylor
Mr Mark G Taylor
Mr Stuart M Taylor
Mrs Susan M Taylor
Mr Cameron E Teague
Mrs Rosalyn Terry
Mrs Julia S Thackeray
Dr Brychan C Thomas
Mr Neil Thompson
Dr William C Thompson
Mr David A Thornton
Mr Simon J Tolaini
Mrs Seana A Tomlinson
Mr Benjamin Towe
Ms Sally Trafford
Mr Hong C Tse
Mr Peter Ttofis
Mrs Marion J Tunwell
Miss Katrina E Turnbull
Mrs Alice M Turner
Mr Anthony J Turner
Mr Mark D Twemlow
Mr Michael S Tye
Mr Oliver Unlamai
Miss Navdeep K Uppal
Miss Natalie M Vaila
Mr Carolus P van Lamsweerde
Mr John Varnish
Mr Alan G Vickers
Mr Christopher J Vickers
Mr Javier Vidal garcia
Miss Tamsin E Virgo
Mr Spiliot Vlahoulis
Mr Barry J Waddell
Mr Alan T Waine
Mr David L Walker
Mr Errol C Walker
Mr Graham F Walker
Miss Louise J Waller
Mrs Moira A Wallis
Mrs Linda J Walters
Miss Rebecca L Walters
Miss Vienne A Warn
Mr Nigel P Warren
Mrs Helen E Warren-Piper
Mr David J Watkins
Mr Gareth D Wattlely
Mr Jason Watton
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Mrs Gill M West
Mr D C Wheel
Dr David L Wheeler
Mr David J Whitman
Mr David R Whittles
Dr Adrian J Wiggett
Mrs Lisa Wilcocks
Mrs Carla M Williams
Mr Gareth C Williams
Mr Peter S Williams
Mr Ronald E Williams
Dr Sue C Williams
Mr David A Willis
Mr Keith J Wilson
Mrs Marie H Wilson
Mr Andrew R Wischhusen
Mr Christopher D Wixson
Prof Veronica Wong
Mr James G Woods
Dr Andrew J Woodward
Mr Rafe Woolf
Mr Mark Woolley
Mr Timo M Worrall
Miss Philippa L Worsfold
Dr Christine E Wright
Mr Michael D Wright
Mr Peter Wright
Miss Gail S Wrigley
Mr Paul G Wynn
Mr Graham P Yearley
Mr Derek M Young
Miss Emma J Young
Mr Martin P Young
Mr Ho C Yu
Mr Imran Zar
Mr Aboubakar Zoumba
+31 anonymous donors

NEW FACILITIES IN THE STUDENTS' GUILD

AFTER RECEIVING GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE FUNDING FROM SIR ADRIAN AND LADY SUSAN CADBURY, THE STUDENTS' GUILD HAS REFURBISHED THE LOFT – THE OLD AND DATED 60s BAR ON THE SECOND FLOOR – AND TURNED IT INTO A NON-ALCOHOLIC SOCIAL STUDY AREA WITH INTEGRATED LEARNING FACILITIES.

The area also boasts the first free-to-use dedicated Student Presentation Suite, funded by Aston alumni through the Annual Fund.



The opening of The Loft

Challenging thinking – Creating opportunities

Giving to the Aston Annual Fund

Whether for bursaries, innovative teaching and research resources or for the enhancement of the student experience outside of the classroom, the Annual Fund helps to ensure that Aston continues to be an international centre of excellence in subjects of professional and vocational relevance in the sciences, engineering, business and humanities.

Since 2005, hundreds of alumni have generously responded to Annual Fund requests for funding in areas of key importance in and around the University. The Annual Fund does not contribute to the general running of the University, nor does it use any funds to cover its running costs.

Student bursaries

Aston is committed to ensuring that financial constraints are not a barrier to academically gifted students with the drive and potential to succeed. Funding bursaries mean students, who might not otherwise be able to consider Aston University, can live and study in one of the world's most vibrant cities, regardless of their financial circumstances. Placement grants are also important for those 70% of students who choose – or need – to complete a sandwich year for their degree.

Aston Students' Guild

For many alumni, attending Guild events or being part of a Guild sports club or society can be the defining memory of their University years. The Guild is far more than a social venue and improvements are necessary to reflect the increasingly diverse student body. The Office of Advancement has recently completed a technology suite on the second floor of the Guild where students can practise their presentation skills.

“The Aston University community is very friendly and diverse, which enhances students’ cultural learning. To enhance academic learning, it’s essential to have up-to-date facilities and areas where I can practise skills that are so important for my schoolwork today and potential employers tomorrow. Thanks!” Jamie Tan (far right in above picture), current undergraduate student.

For more information on the Annual Fund, please contact Emmy Pong, Development Assistant, on e.pong@aston.ac.uk



Academic-related facilities

Information and the way it is used has changed beyond all recognition in the past decade, particularly in the areas of science, technology, management and humanities. To address these changes it is Aston's intention to create more spaces and tools which will provide a vibrant hub for orientation, information access, study and the exchange of ideas. One of the Annual Fund projects is e-Workstations which will allow 24-hour computer access for students.

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

1970s



NORMAN RICHARDS
1972 PhD Metallurgy

"I worked on steel research prior to coming to Canada in 1980. Initially I worked as an engineering manager for Rolls-Royce, Canada, and presently I'm an engineering professor at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. The move in retrospect was good for my family in terms of standard of living and seeing the world."



ANDREW REARDON
1978 BSc Chemistry

"I've been married to fellow Aston graduate Sylvia Reardon (née Stones, 1978 BSc Chemistry) for over 27 years. I spent three fantastic years at Aston (specialist subject, table football in the huts next to Lawrence Tower!). I somehow ended up with a 2:1 and a job at Dunlop. Over the following 15 years I worked for a number of companies in the UK, including Courtaulds and Laporte, before we settled in North Staffordshire. I have found myself as a UK technical expert on ISO committees and am currently President of the European big bag association EFIBCA. I am the UK director of a pharmaceutical packaging company which supplies all the majors around the world from our state-of-the-art facility in Newcastle under Lyme. The 'can do' philosophy of Aston

has stood me in good stead and we are now proving that manufacturing can still be done well in the UK. Having travelled extensively setting up operations in the lower cost countries of the world (China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Turkey and Morocco, amongst others) I am more convinced than ever that Britain must remain a manufacturing country. Next year a cycle of sorts will be completed when our daughters Holly and April will both be studying at Birmingham Conservatoire on bassoon and cello respectively."

JOHN VOULIOURIS
1975 MSc Electrical Engineering

"I am a retired telecommunications engineer of the Hellenic Telecommunications Organisation, where I worked from 1975 to 2005. I have been married for 27 years and have a daughter aged 24."

TERRY RICHARDS
1977 BSc Production Engineering

"My graduation was an auspicious occasion as it was the last day I ever worked as a production engineer! I began my career as an Austin apprentice and joined their IT department. I worked here

Did you graduate in the 70s?

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

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alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk

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

Deadline:
August 2007

for a couple of years before moving into consulting, firstly with consulting companies and eventually under my own steam. My IT career peaked when I was the IT Director for the television company that televised the World Cup in Japan and Korea. I also started and ran my own concert sound and lighting company and toured with some people you have probably heard of. I have lived and worked in 13 countries but now live in Brittany, France, where I run my own technical translating company. I have no children, but by some miscarriage of justice I am about to become a grandfather."



RICHARD CLARK
1978 BSc French and German and 1981 MPhil Modern Languages

"Having always wanted to be a translator, I finally became a journalist specialising in stainless steel and the raw materials for stainless production (nickel, chrome and stainless steel scrap).

The practical nature of the language course at Aston was a key factor in securing my first position at Metal Bulletin in London and also helped ensure that I was soon poached by a German company to launch and then edit a German language publication. These early positions opened up an era of many years of business travel – Russia, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Korea, Japan, etc – where the language skills I had acquired proved to be very useful. This was brought home to me in Yokohama, when I managed to successfully communicate with my Japanese counterparts in German (admittedly they had, as luck would have it, spent many years working in Düsseldorf). Where am I today? I am currently managing director of Stainless Steel Focus Ltd, an international publishing company, and have just returned from ten days in the sun in Mumbai and Ahmedabad, to snow at Heathrow. For those that have not been to Ahmedabad (where incidentally I did manage to get by in English). I would like to point out that Gujarat is a 'dry state' – those that still have vague memories of me will be well aware of the predicament that I suddenly found myself in."

1980s

MUBEEN CUTCHI 1982
BSc Civil Engineering

"After graduating I worked for more than three years in the UK. Catapulted by the 4-year 'sandwich' course, I have not been out of a job for more than a week in the 25 years since graduation. I moved back to my native Pakistan in 1985 for a couple more years but the travel bug had bitten, and I soon found myself in Qatar. Neighbouring UAE was next, and I stayed 13 years there, moonlighting as a Canadian Immigration Consultant for an attorney out of Toronto, Canada. Eventually, I moved to Canada, but due to lack of job appeal, I am now in Chicago, USA, living the dream – I have a few houses, a few cars, and a few girlfriends!"

LINDSAY POWELL 1983
BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies



Lindsay went straight to work for 3M Company, with whom he had spent his placement year. The association has been long and prosperous. Sales and marketing assignments in different market segments and of increasing seniority have taken Lindsay across Europe, Asia, Japan and the Americas. In 1997 he transferred to the company's electronics business centre in cosmopolitan Austin, Texas, which he has since made his home.



Karen receiving her OBE at Buckingham Palace for services to the oil and gas industry

KAREN LEADBITTER 1981
BSc Geological Sciences

"My first job after graduation was in Chester at a company called Poroperm, a sedimentological consultancy. I then moved into the oil industry – first with British Gas, then Enterprise Oil and since 2002 I've been with Shell. I was UK Exploration Manager when Shell took over Enterprise Oil and I now work as the Central and Northern North Sea Exploration Manager for Europe. I have two children Nat (14) and Rosie (11) and a long term partner, Michael. We live in Aberdeenshire and love life here. We climb hills, ski, dance and this year I took up Shiatsu. I turned 47 this year and life couldn't be better."

He is currently responsible for planning and executing strategies for developing 3M's business in the distribution channel for electronic components. Although living in the USA, Lindsay has maintained a close relationship with the UK, having made several property investments. In 2000, Lindsay was recognised as a Chartered Marketer by the Cookham-based Chartered Institute of Marketing. Lindsay counts among several hobbies collecting ancient British Celtic and Roman coins.

A veteran member of the Ermine Street Guard, a registered charity which reconstructs Roman military equipment, he is currently writing his first novel set in the first century AD. To find out more go to www.lindsay-powell.com and subscribe to the blog at blog.lindsay-powell.com

spotlight on...

Did you graduate in the 80s?

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:
August 2007

JON HUGHES 1985 BSc Computer Science and Physics and 1992 MBA

"I spent several years in project management and sales and marketing roles prior to taking my MBA. Following this I moved from the IT industry into consulting and held positions with KPMG, Ernst and Young, OASIS and Syntegra before being recruited as UK MD to set up the UK division of an e-business consulting firm called Zefer, backed by a US VC firm with around \$100M of funding. Following the dot com crash and the failure of Zefer to float on the US stock exchange (we were due to float on Black Friday) I joined PA Consulting in London as a partner in one of the IT practices. In 2004 I was asked to head up the North American Business Transformation Group comprising three sub-practices – Program Management, People and Organisational Change and Business Operations Performance Improvement. I am now based out of Washington DC and spend my time helping organisations achieve their strategic ambitions and delivering out of the ordinary performance improvement. I have been married to Frances (née Clark, 1988 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) for 16 years and we have two children, James (9) and Anna (7). I am still playing golf and training and teaching Karate – hobbies I represented at Aston all those years ago."

spotlight on...



DAVID HARTLEY 1985 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies

"Since graduating, my career has been varied including time in market research, direct marketing, CRM software and I am currently a director of a large software company. However, I am probably best known for the amazing story of my four sons which has been extensively featured in the national media. Just over three years ago we found out that all of my four sons have a rare genetic condition called XLP. It was a race to find suitable bone marrow donors and three of the boys have successfully gone through transplant with the fourth scheduled for early this year. You can find more about the boys at www.teamhartley.co.uk We also run a charity – the XLP Research Trust. This is a UK registered charity which is now starting to fund pioneering medical research into this rare but deadly condition. The charity also acts as a worldwide hub for families affected by this condition. Please visit www.xlpresearchtrust.org for more information."

1990s

JOANNE JOHNSON née Sanderson, 1997 BSc International Business and German

"Following Aston I started work for Saint-Gobain as an Assistant Buyer. I moved around the country quite a bit but decided to settle in Stoke-on-Trent when I got an opportunity to work for automotive company, Sumitomo. Having enjoyed a very fast moving six years, I decided to increase my responsibility further and move to a train manufacturer, Bombardier. I've only got planes to go now! I enjoy a lot of travel and have picked the perfect

hobby to complement it – scuba diving. I am currently working towards my Dive Master with Instructor the next step away. I have dived all over the UK, Egypt and Jamaica, with Kenya coming up in October. My dream destination is Bonaire in the Dutch Caribbean and my ambition is to see seahorses in the wild.



TURGUT TURUNC 1998 MSc Teaching English

Turgut is currently the Education Co-ordinator of a private school in Istanbul, called 'Selim Pars Egitim Kurumlari'. He taught English at a state school during his MSc and afterwards became a teacher trainer for teachers of English for the Turkish Ministry of Education. He then worked as an Educational Consultant for Oxford University Press, Turkey, for four years and at the same time as an instructor for the BA programme in Teaching English. He is married with two children, a son and a daughter, both of whom are university students. His son is studying Electronics and Communication Engineering and his daughter is studying Physics. He and his wife – 'the young retired lady' – like nature very much and travel to their cottage on the Black Sea coast whenever they get the opportunity.

2000s



MATTHEW EDEN 2000 BSc Business Administration and French

"After graduating I followed my girlfriend, Céline, to Paris where I soon found work as a product manager for the French bakery specialists, DéliFrance. My language and business background was ideal for a position in international marketing and I spent six years working for them in both B2C and B2B marketing in the UK and on the continent. Last year I decided I wanted to try something different and, inspired by my experience of cross-cultural marketing, I set up my own translation firm (C&M Language Services Ltd.) at the end of 2006. Specialists in the translation of marketing and commercial documents from French to English, we also handle legal and technical translation and work in many other language combinations. So far, the varied nature of the work and the liberty of being my own boss have been very rewarding. On a personal level, Céline and I got married last September and are now looking to move back to France."

MARIA MOORE 2000 BSc Psychology and Management

"I am currently working in Ghana with my fiancé. We are here on a career break, working voluntarily with the aim of helping to make a difference to the lives of those



Maria and David

less fortunate. We are building an IT centre in a small village, managing the entire project in terms of its funding, building and the initial set-up. The experience is amazing and a far cry from my previous job as a Graduate Recruitment Manager for Deutsche Bank, London. In fact, we have enjoyed our experience so much that we have doubled our time here so will be in Ghana for a year. We are keeping busy in our village, re-roofing the village school which currently has a gaping hole in it! We are also looking for people to help us start a village library via book donations. More information about our projects and life here can be found on our blog – www.floudy-maria.blogspot.com

LYDIA ELLIS née Alden, 2002 BSc Marketing and PAUL ELLIS 2002 BSc Accounting for Management

They were married in October 2006 in a civil ceremony at Stone Manor, Worcestershire. Best Man was another Aston graduate, Matt Goodwin (2002 BSc Accounting for Management). The couple live in Worcestershire and both



Lydia and Paul

work in Birmingham. Lydia works as a Campaign Manager for Marketing Birmingham – Birmingham's destination marketing agency – and Paul works as a Management Accountant at Cadbury.

spotlight on...



GURINDER HUNDAL 2005
BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies

SARAH DIGGENS 2002
BSc International Business and French

ANDREW PAWLOWICZ 1968
BSc Organic Chemistry and Mathematics

They first got to know each other as colleagues in the same team at PA Consulting Group – a leading management, systems and technology consulting firm. On joining, they soon found something else in common – that they had all graduated from Aston University! Andrew, who has spent 32 years in consulting, is soon retiring from PA after 11 successful years as a senior member of PA's management group. In contrast, Gurinder is just starting out after graduating in 2005.

The third of the trio, Sarah, came into consulting after three years in the energy sector and is now close to describing herself an 'old hand'! Despite reading different degrees at Aston, each has managed to find a rewarding career at PA. Based in the business operations consulting team in PA, they advise on improving the working practises of their clients, who represent most major industrial sectors and are located throughout the world.

They enjoy the demanding and diverse work of management consulting. With no two assignments, clients or organisations the same, variety is definitely the flavour of the day. PA offers a variety of roles and career paths for graduates of all degree disciplines.

For more information and to keep the Aston alumni flag flying at PA please visit their website at www.paconsulting.com/joinpa



PAULINE MARTIN 2003
BSc Human Psychology

"After graduating, I spent the next three years out of study, gathering some essential life experience and saving up some money – I worked in Selfridges and did some occasional promotional work for the Arcadian Centre in Birmingham. By the beginning of 2006 I felt ready to go on and pursue a Master's in Health Psychology. I am now studying in London and it's fantastic, although I have to admit that I have forgotten a lot of the statistics that I

learnt at Aston! I hope to work towards a career in clinical or health psychology. Hello to all the Psychology crew and I hope everyone is doing well."



SERENA DOREY 2004
BSc French and German

"I went to work in Germany for two years after graduating, first as a translator for Volkswagen AG in Wolfsburg (they offered me the position following my placement there during my year abroad) and then for a translation company in Berlin. It was a fantastic experience and I got to travel around Europe and meet people from all over the world – I now have friends from Germany, Spain, Austria, France, Sweden, Poland, the Netherlands, Singapore and Australia! I recently returned to the UK and set up my own business as a freelance translator, working for a range of national and international clients, mostly major German automotive manufacturers, advertising agencies and marketing companies. My first challenge was organising the translation of my website, www.serenadorey.com into French and German. My own translations now end up on websites and in various publications across the world."

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:
August 2007

want to be in Apex?

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

in the autumn edition of Apex, please send some
information about yourself either by email to:

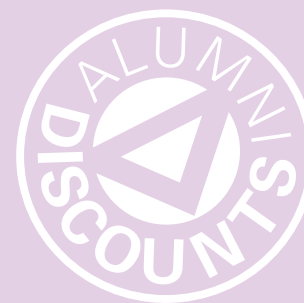
alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk or by letter addressed to:

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

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

We are waiting to hear from you – don't be afraid!
(Deadline for receipt of information is August 2007.)

ALUMNI DISCOUNT



On-campus benefits

CONFERENCE FACILITIES: Aston Business School Conference Centre is offering alumni 10% off conferences booked* with them or at Lakeside Conference Centre. They are also offering a discount on accommodation. The following rates are for bed and breakfast and are inclusive of VAT:

Classic Room (single occupancy)	£60.00
Standard Room (single occupancy)	£85.00
Standard Double	£100.00
Superior Room (single occupancy)	£91.00
Superior Double	£106.00

To take advantage of the above offers, please call Aston Business School Conference Centre on +44 (0)121 204 3011 and quote 'Aston Alumni Offer'. Should you wish to see more details about their conference facilities, please visit www.abs.aston.ac.uk/newweb/ConferenceAston/mdc/default.asp

*Must be booked for 30+ delegates



LIBRARY: As an Aston graduate you are able to register to use the University Library for just £24.50 a year. This entitles you to borrow one medium loan item and five long loan items subject to the Library's normal loan rules. Access to Aston's web catalogue is available. Printed material can be used in the Library and use of the Library's photocopy services subject to the usual rules of copyright. There is limited access to electronic resources for users who are not current staff or students. To join the Library as an external borrower, send an email to library@aston.ac.uk and you will be sent an application form in the post. Alternatively contact the Alumni Relations Office for an application form. More information about membership can be viewed at www.aston.ac.uk/lis/visitorinfo/alumni.jsp

SPORTS FACILITIES: All Aston graduates can now use the sports facilities at Aston. Once you have joined and become a member you can take advantage of vast reductions on many activities such as swimming, aerobics and badminton. With membership costing £35.00 for Aston alumni, there's nothing to stop you leading a healthier lifestyle! To join, contact the Woodcock Sports Centre on +44 (0)121 204 4623 or email sportsenquiries@aston.ac.uk for an information pack.

Off-campus benefits

cottages4you **COTTAGES4YOU** are offering a 10% discount on your next cottage holiday. Cottages4you offer a range of over 13,000 holiday properties across the UK, France, Ireland, Spain, Portugal and Italy. To search online, check availability and book visit www.cottages-4-you.co.uk/aston or call the holiday helpline on 0870 192 1751. To receive your 10% discount simply quote code 'AST10' when booking.

JURYS INN, BIRMINGHAM, is located on Broad Street at the heart of Birmingham City Centre. It is currently offering Aston alumni a discounted rate of £68.00 for a single occupancy room with breakfast included. The offer is available Friday through to Sunday, subject to availability. To book, please call 0121 606 9000 and quote 'Aston alumni'.



BEST WESTERN are offering up to 20% discount for Aston alumni at all of their hotels – over 290 in the UK and 4,000 worldwide. To book, simply call central reservations on 08457 73 73 73 and quote the Connect Business Plus Number 01357700. Cancellations must be made prior to 4pm on the expected date of arrival in order to avoid a charge.

THE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION is offering Aston alumni a 20% discount on membership. Single membership £19.20 a year (normally £24.00) and joint membership (two adults at the same address) is £25.60 a year (normally £32.00). To claim your 20% discount, visit www.ramblers.org.uk/offer and use code AST or call 020 7339 8500.

Please note that this offer is not open to existing Ramblers' members and expires on 31 July 2007.



APH LTD (AIRPORT PARKING AND HOTELS LTD) is offering Aston alumni a 10% discount on participating airport car parks, airport hotels and airport lounges.

To check availability, or to book, please visit www.aph.com/alumni or contact the call centre on 0870 737 7671 quoting 'ALUM'.

AMAZON ASSOCIATES: The Alumni Relations Office is an 'Associate' of Amazon.co.uk If you order through the link from our web page www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/amazonassociate/ 5% of any purchases made will come back to the University to support projects in the Alumni Relations Office.

All offers are subject to terms and conditions. The University provides no guarantees or warranties in relation to the quality or suitability of any services offered by third parties, nor in relation to the accuracy or reliability of advertisements placed by them and accepts no responsibility or liability whatsoever in relation to such services.

International alumni re:UNIONS AND events



India

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Julia King, met alumni during her recent visit to India in February. The group organised an evening buffet at Habitat Centre. An enjoyable evening was had by all as Aston alumni caught up with friends and heard Professor King's plans for the future of their University.



Thailand

Alumni in Bangkok were invited to join Director of Marketing, Stewart Comfort, for the Thai-UK Alumni Grand Reunion 2007 which was this year held in The Residence Grand Hyatt.

Master Class in Thailand

In conjunction with the British Council, Duncan Shaw of Aston Business School held a Master Class in Bangkok entitled Designing Strategic Action Plans by Involving Stakeholders. Dr Shaw is a Senior Lecturer in ABS and his research interests include structuring complex problems, facilitating groups and individuals in decision making, strategy implementation as well as simulation modelling and MCDA. He has recently worked with the UK's Health and Safety Executive and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

China – Beijing

Alumni in Beijing continue to meet regularly and welcome new members to the group. Visit www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/beijing/ for more information.

calendar '07-'08

Forthcoming reunions
and events for 2007-2008

23 JUNE: MBA GOLF TOURNAMENT

This event is open to MBA students, MBA graduates and staff from all business schools across the UK and will be held at The Warwickshire Golf and Country Club. An ideal opportunity for you to get to know your fellow participants. Cost is £75 and you can book your place online at www.mbasport.com

28 JULY: FONDUE MEMORIES

This year we're inviting all 2003-2006 graduates back to the Guild for the yearly Fondue Memories reunion. Enjoy a barbecue at Aston Business School Conference Centre before making your way to the Students' Guild to relive those student days! BBQ and Guild entry, £10 per ticket. Guild entry only, £6 per ticket. Email c.l.broome@aston.ac.uk for more details.

4 AUGUST: KENSINGTON ROOFTOP GARDENS, LONDON

All alumni in the Southeast are invited to attend this exclusive event at the Kensington Rooftop Gardens. Usually only open to members, we have secured use of the Tudor Gardens for a delicious three-course BBQ, after which you can dance away 'til the early hours in the nightclub. Tickets £35 per person.

6 OCTOBER: 30 YEAR REUNION

All 1977 alumni are invited back to celebrate their 30 year reunion. Details out soon.

6 DECEMBER: CHRISTMAS PUB REUNION – LONDON

Venue TBC
5.30pm onwards, entrance free.

13 DECEMBER: CHRISTMAS PUB REUNION – BIRMINGHAM

Venue TBC
5.30pm onwards, entrance free.

15 MARCH 2008: AGM OF CONVOCATION

All alumni of the University are invited to this annual event. Details will be out in the New Year.

Please contact the
Alumni Relations Office for further
details about any of these events.
Call 0121 204 4543 or email alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk
Details are also available at
www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/reunions

re:UNIONS



London prize winner, Martyn Styles with St John Potter (1987 BSc Public Policy and Computer Science) and Phil Franklin (1987 BSc Society and Government and Business Administration)



Birmingham prize winner, Angela Morris

London and Birmingham Pub Reunions

In December, the Alumni Relations Office held the first of its new pub reunions in Birmingham and London. The Pitcher and Piano in Trafalgar Square provided a relaxed and informal setting for what turned out to be an extremely successful event, attracting over 120 Aston graduates based in the Southeast, whilst All Bar One in Brindley Place, Birmingham played host to over 50 graduates from in and around the West Midlands. A champagne prize draw was held at both events, with Martyn Styles (1987 BSc Society and Government and Public Policy) winning at the London event, and Angela Morris (2005 BSc Translation Studies and French and German) at the Birmingham event. We look forward to repeating these events later in the year and hope to see many more of you there!

COBRAS Reunion

The 1957-1962 COBRAS (Colleges of Birmingham Rugby Association) celebrated their 50th year in style this February with a reunion at the Shakespeare Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon. David Taplin (1961 BSc Technology Policy Unit) instigated their first reunion back in 2002 and they've been meeting every year since. This year the responsibility of the time, place and programme was given to John Butler and old COBRAS from all over the country attended the weekend. Lunch was held at The Vintner before their return to the hotel to watch the Six Nations rugby for 6½ hours.

Maybe it was England's defeat to Ireland that led them on to The Dirty Duck for their late night activities where, by tradition, the winners of the sweeps put their money behind the bar and they managed to get through £135.00 of winnings! It was certainly an event to remember with much reminiscing over old times and the Metchley Lane matches and social events put on by the Students' Guild. The COBRAS' next event is planned for the France v England week in 2008, likely to be held again at the Shakespeare Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon.

For more details, please contact David Taplin at coliemore@hotmail.com



The COBRAS outside the Shakespeare Hotel (from left): Ollie McLaren, John Butler, John Gill, Bruce Dargie, David Taplin, Graham Jones, David Chapman and John Martin

House of Commons Reunion

On 6 October we held our second reunion at the House of Commons for Aston graduates based in the Southeast. Over 100 graduates turned out for a drinks reception and three course meal in the sumptuous surroundings of the Strangers' and Members' Dining Rooms. Representatives from the University included Professor Graham Hooley, Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor, and Professor John Saunders and Professor Michael West from Aston Business School. Our sincere thanks go to Ashok Kumar MP (1978 BSc Chemical Engineering, 1980 MSc Process Analysis and Development and 1983 PhD Fluid Mechanics) for enabling this special event to take place.



House of Commons Reunion

1985 Languages Reunion

A group of 1985 Language graduates returned to the campus in October last year to have a look around and see what's changed. An excellent time was had by all.



From left to right: Ian Jones BSc French and German, Stephen Wragg BSc Business Administration and German, Liz Harris née James, BSc French and German, Fiona Steen BSc French and German, Steven Wharton BSc French and German and 1995 PhD Modern Languages, Alison Hulstine née Powell, BSc Business Administration and German, Jo Laney BSc Business Administration and German (all 1985)

Golf Tournament

Gavin Bottrell (2003 MBA) invites golfers of all standards to take part in this summer's MBA Golf Day. So whether you're a regular golfer or a once-a-year player, come along, have fun and make some new friends and contacts!

The event is open to MBA students, MBA graduates and staff from all business schools across the UK and will be held at The Warwickshire Golf and Country Club on Saturday 23 June. A light lunch will be followed by the first tee around noon. After 18 holes of golf on the championship course, afternoon teas and coffees will be served providing the ideal opportunity for you to get to know your fellow participants. Cost is £75.00 and you can book your place online now at www.mbasport.com

MBasport.com is a community website bringing MBAs together through the medium of sport wherever they are in the world. It is free for all MBA students and MBA alumni to join, enter their profiles, and post messages.

News from Aston Graduates' Association

Jenny Martin updates readers on the recent activities of AGA

AGA does Christmas



AGA members visited the Birmingham Council House on 11 December for Christmas lunch in the Banqueting Suite. This was a very impressive occasion. We started with mulled wine in the antechamber and were then called into the Banqueting Suite, which was beautifully decorated. Our party was arranged on two tables so that conversation was easy. A string quartet played carols and Christmas music during the meal. The food itself was beautifully presented and tasted delicious. Due to the number of people who applied we also had a small party visiting on Tuesday 12 December and on this occasion the Lord Mayor was also present. From the feedback received it seems that members would like this visit to be repeated next year if possible. Look out in July or August for the application form if you would like to be included as tickets are limited.

VICE CHANCELLOR RECOGNITION

In November, at a supper to mark his retirement, your committee presented Professor Mike Wright with a pair of engraved silver cufflinks to thank him for his tremendous support during his term as Vice Chancellor. In January, your committee was introduced to Professor Julia King, the new Vice Chancellor, who kindly accepted our invitation to be Vice-President of Aston Graduates' Association.

College of Food visit

The January visit to the College of Food attracted a large number of applications and those who gained places had an exceptionally good evening. The food and service is quite outstanding. If you missed out this year I do beg you to reply early next year.

AGA badges are available from the secretary (tel +44 (0)121 427 2047) price £5.00 to include packing and postage.



Aston Graduates' Association committee meet at Aston about eight times a year. If you would like to help in any way at all please contact the chairman via the Alumni Relations Office at Aston. The treasurer in particular is looking for help.

Fund-raising for the Guild

You may have received a call from the telefundlers at Aston during November last year. Students from all sections of Aston rang graduates in an effort to raise much needed funds to improve facilities at the Guild. The students invited me to talk to them about the history of Aston and the changes that have taken place. We discussed the early days at Suffolk Street, the problems of being one of the first women students at Aston and the ways in which students and graduates have been able to influence the decisions made over the years.

Brandon Marsh Nature Reserve



A small but enthusiastic party of AGA members visited Brandon Marsh Nature Reserve on Thursday 19 October. It rained heavily in the early morning and several members rang to say they felt unable to join us. However, on arrival, the rain stopped and the sun shone on this magical place. Even in mid-October it was clear to see the tremendous range of wildfowl whose habitats are the numerous lakes and pools on the reservation. Our guide explained how the water level between the lakes and the River Avon was managed to provide the best nesting grounds for the birds by alternately flooding and drying the islands in the pools. The reed beds, recently planted by the volunteers, provide rich nesting grounds for the birds and are resulting in more breeding pairs being recorded each year. The reserve has been made from the ruins of the quarry and the gravel extraction areas and is now a site of scientific interest. If you missed the visit with AGA make a note to visit on your own sometime in the future.

Dates for your diary

8 June: Joint meeting with Birmingham University Guild of Graduates.

This meeting will be held in the Warwick Room at Aston. The deputy director of Twycross Zoo will talk about the development of the zoo and its work with endangered species. The meeting will be followed by a buffet supper.

All events are on the AGA website – check out www.astongraduates.com for more details

intouch

You'd like to find

A number of you take advantage of our intouch 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!

We'd like to find

The last edition of Apex was returned to us from the addresses of the following graduates. Do you know any of them? We need your help to track them down...

- ALAN ALCOCK**
(1992 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

YASMIN AL-JEBOURY
(1990 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

ALEXANDROS ANDROULAKIS
(2006 MSc Accounting and Business)

STEPHEN ARCHER
(1993 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

SUKHJINDER AUJLA
(2004 MSc Human Resource Management and Business)

GURPREET BAINS
(2003 BSc Optometry)

LAURENT BOINOT
(2005 MSc Financial Management and Control)

DENNIS BOYCE
(1971 BSc Behavioural Science)

MARK BRUMBY
(1980 BSc Mechanical Engineering)

CHRISTOPHER BULLOCK
(1999 BEng Chemical Engineering)

BERNADETTE BYRNE
(2003 PhD Computer Science)

CLAIRE CAMPBELL
(née Riley, 1996 BSc Pharmacy)

CLAIRE CAPPER
(2004 BSc Marketing)

CHRISTOPHER CARTLAND
(2003 BSc International Business and French)

DINESH CHAWLA
(2006 MSc Business Studies)
- WAI CHEUK**
(2006 BSc Marketing with Information Systems)

SAMANTHA CLARK
(1996 BSc International Business and French)

ZAIGUL DOSSALIYEVA
(1999 MBA)

DOUGLAS DOYLE
(1996 MSc Teaching English for Specific Purposes)

JAMES DYER
(1997 BSc Computer Science)

MARION EDENS
(née Ewen, 1980 PhD Biological Sciences)

GARRETT EDWARDS
(1998 MSc Personnel Management and Business Administration)

GAIL EDWARDS
(1995 BSc Society and Government/Urban Planning)

PASCALE EDWARDS-LABELLE
(2004 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

MARK ELLIOTT
(2000 MEng Electronic Systems Engineering)

EVANGELOS EVANGELOU
(2000 MBA)

ROSS FARRELL
(2000 BSc Logistics)

STEVEN FISHER
(1992 MBA)

JOHN FLANAGAN
(1980 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

ALEXANDER FORBES
(1989 BSc Geological Sciences)

- PHIL LANGSLOW**
(1980 BSc Chemistry)

JOSEPHINE ANNE PARTRIDGE
(1978 BSc Business and French)
- JAYANTI PATEL**
(1979 BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

GHIM HOCK TEH
(1978 BSc Production Technology and Management)
- JONATHAN TELFORD**
(1980 BSc Water Resources and Society and Government)

D. C. WHEAL
(1975 BSc Electrical and Electronic Engineering)
- CATHERINE GEARY**
(2003 BEng Mechanical Engineering)

DUNCAN GRAVES
(1997 BSc Pharmacy)

ANDREW GREGORY
(1988 BSc French and German)

AMY GUICE
(2002 BSc Human Psychology)

SARAH HALL
(née Carpenter, 1999 BSc Optometry)

LAURA HALL
(née Wilkinson, 1994 BSc Transport Management)

MICHAEL HALL
(1980 BSc Building Economics and Measurement)

PATRICK HARDING
(1981 BSc Pharmacy)

SIMON HARE
(1989 MEng Chemical Process Engineering)

LUCY HARPER
(2003 PhD Pharmacy)

SANTISH HAYER
(1998 BSc Human Psychology)

MARYAM HEDAYATI IBANEZ
(2001 MSc International Business)

SHAKEEL HUSSAIN
(2001 BSc Computer Science)

HELENA JACKSON
(1996 BSc French)

KATIE JAMES
(2003 BSc Public Policy and Management and Business Administration)

DAVID JONES
(2006 MBA)

DEBBIE KAVANAGH
(1998 BSc Applied Chemistry)

ALEXANDER KREIS
(2005 MBA)

DHARSHINI KRISHNAMURTHI
(2006 BSc Sociology and Business Administration)
- TREVOR LATHAM**
(1982 BSc Urban Planning and Transport)

MICHAEL LEONHARD
(1985 BSc Applied and Human Biology)

ZHILIANG LI
(2003 MSc Internet Technology)

JUN JIE LIU
(2006 MSc Marketing Management)

DIMITRIOS MAKRIDIS
(2003 BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

HANNAH MALTBY
(2004 BSc Psychology and Business Administration)

JOANNE MALTBY
(2000 BSc Psychology and Social Studies)

NATASHA MALTHOUSE
(2002 BSc Optometry)

PAUL MCKEOWN
(1990 BSc Chemistry)

PETER MCMANUS
(2001 BSc French and German)

ANDREW NAPTHINE
(1999 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

MARK NICHOLLS
(2006 BSc Marketing)

HIKMET ONUR
(1978 BSc Metals and Materials Technology)

KATIE ORAM
(2000 BSc Human Psychology)

ANDREW POTTINGER
(1996 BEng Civil Engineering)

CATHERINE PRICE
(2005 MSc Public Services Management)

JUN QI
(2001 MBA)

HUSSEIN RASIT
(2003 BSc Computer Science)

JOSEPH REEVES
(1997 BSc Public Policy and Business Administration)
- CLAIR REEVES**
(1993 BSc International Business and French)

DAWN RICHARDSON
(2003 PhD Pharmacy)

CLAIRE RIDGEON
(2002 BSc Maths and Business Administration)

PAMELA RYAN
(1998 MSc Public Sector Management)

HANI SABBAGH
(1993 BSc International Business and French)

RUSSELL SADD
(1995 BSc Chemistry and Business Administration)

ZEJUMADEH SHOTTE
(2002 BEng Electronic Engineering and Computer Science)

JOHN SINGLETON
(1993 BSc Computer Science)

MARTIN STOKES
(1993 MSc Public Sector Management)

GUO TAN
(2006 MSc Marketing Management)

PAUL TAYLOR
(2000 BSc Information Technology for Business)

ANTONY WEST
(1990 PhD Chemistry)

TERENCE WESTON
(1982 BSc Production Technology and Management)

AMY YAPP
(2003 MA Translation in a European Context)

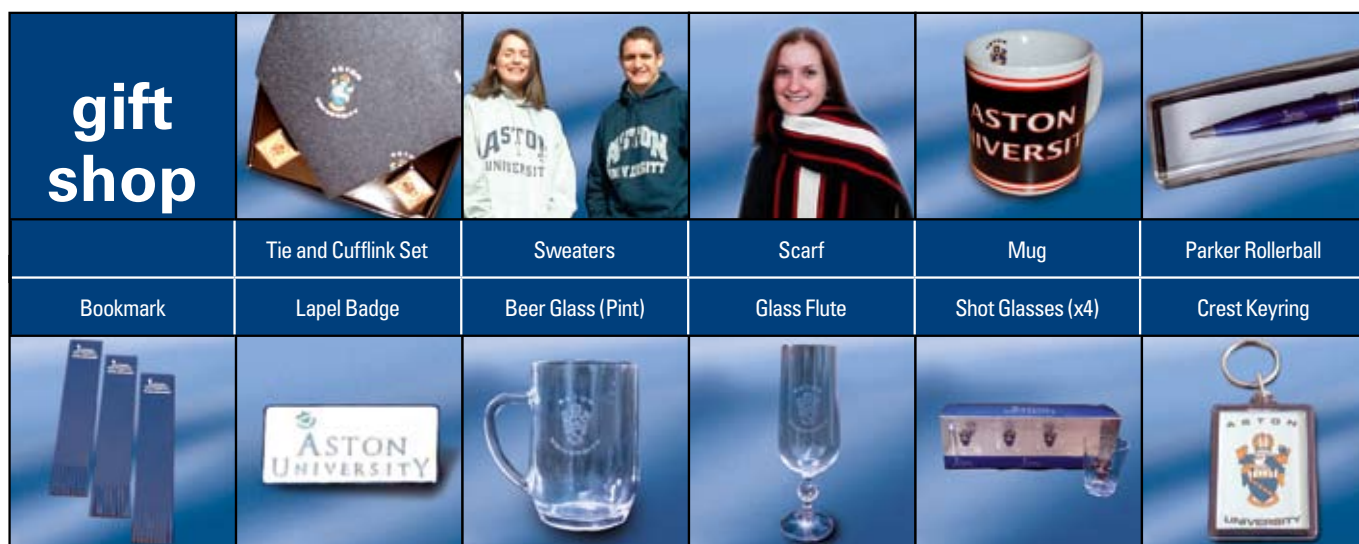
AZLINDA ZABHA
(2002 MPharm Pharmacy)

JING ZHOU
(2003 MSc Internet Technology)

Looking for somebody from Aston?

If they aren't listed on our email directory on the website 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 enquirers 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 Description	Price	Quantity	Total
1	Tie and Cufflink Set	£15.00		
2	Pink Sweater S M L XL	£25.00		
	Grey Sweater S M L XL	£25.00		
	Light Blue Sweater S M L XL	£25.00		
	Navy Sweater S M L XL	£25.00		
3	Scarf	£20.00		
4	Mug	£4.00		
5	Rollerball	£6.00		

	Item Description	Price	Quantity	Total
6	Bookmark	£2.00		
7	Lapel Badge	£1.00		
8	Beer Glass (Pint)	£5.00		
9	Glass Flute	£6.00		
10	Shot Glasses (x4)	£8.00		
11	Crest Keyring	£2.00		
Total				

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

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

Dr ☐ Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Miss ☐ Ms ☐ Name:

Address:

Postcode: Country:

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

Cardholder's signature

Delivery details
(if different)

Name: Address:

Postcode: Country: