



Aston University
Birmingham

apex

Alumni Magazine

Issue 21
Spring 2008



ASTON 2012

An inspirational place

GREEN CLEAN

How toxic is your house?

**WHERE
ARE THEY
NOW?**

you must remember this...



Aston alumni at the House of Commons, October 2006.

Whether it's a low-key, seasonal get-together, or a more formal occasion, there are opportunities throughout the year for Aston alumni to catch up with lost friends, meet new faces and find out how their University is moving forward. Back in 2006, the House of Commons opened the doors of its Strangers' Dining Room to welcome alumni from the southeast. Throwing open the windows on the banks of The Thames, we enjoyed views up and down the river, walked in the footsteps of government through the galleries and enjoyed a gourmet meal to round off the evening. The Vice-Chancellor reported on Aston's successes and many a useful contact amongst graduate friends was (re)established.

We are always interested in your ideas for venues – so do email us on alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk with suggestions of where we can arrange an alumni event.

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Meet the team...



Sarah Pymm
Head of Alumni Relations



Caroline Broome
Alumni Relations Assistant

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

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Katy Barry updates Aston Business School MBA and MSc alumni on recent news and events



Kathryn Priest, MSc Programme Director, celebrates the Financial Times rankings success.

MBA alumni tackle the credit crunch

In November, a successful MBA event was held at Aston Business School. Alan Gilmour (2001 MBA) and Marketing Director of Heritable Bank, gave a presentation entitled:

Credit Crunch – Views from the Sharp End! Current MBA students and MBA alumni attended Alan's lecture, which defined the term 'credit crunch', detailed the causes of it and addressed the implications for the UK and the global economy. The presentation was informative, well-delivered and, judging from the lively debate that followed, certainly thought-provoking!

Get involved in future MBA events

Further MBA alumni events are being planned for the future and it is hoped that the next one will be held in London, which is where many of our MBA alumni live and work. We aim to offer a series of lectures or debates on topical themes – if you have any ideas for a suitable subject, or would like to give a presentation yourself, we would be very pleased to hear from you. Please contact Katy on k.l.barry@aston.ac.uk

Success in the Financial Times rankings!

ABS was very successful in the Financial Times 2007 rankings. ABS was ranked 2nd in the UK and 13th in Europe in the Masters in Management ranking, and 7th in the UK, 16th in Europe and 50th in the world in the Executive MBA ranking. We are extremely proud of these results in such prestigious rankings because it confirms the high international reputation of ABS; it is also in the best interest of alumni because it helps with career progression. Thank you to everyone who completed the online alumni survey, which forms an important part of the ranking process. The Financial Times asks alumni who graduated three years ago to complete an online survey about the programme they studied. This year, alumni who graduated in 2005 from the MSc in International Business and the full-time MBA will be surveyed. In order to participate in ranking exercises this year and in future years, it is vital that we have up-to-date contact details, especially email addresses, so please make sure you give us this information and keep us informed of any changes. You can do this by completing the Graduate Update Form, which can be accessed online at www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/update.jsp or by e-mailing k.l.barry@aston.ac.uk

Beta Gamma Sigma Update

Once again the Aston University Chapter of Beta Gamma Sigma has welcomed new members. With 69 new members joining us this academic year, our membership has grown to over 500.

Some of you will have been contacted by Farzana Sayani to help us shape a useful society and networking group for all our members. We are currently building this and Apex will keep you informed about future developments. Make sure your contact details are up to date with the alumni relations team so that you don't miss out on the launch of the Beta Gamma Sigma network. If you are currently working outside the UK, you are eligible to join any Beta Gamma Sigma network close to you. Visit www.betagammasigma.org for locations.

Business Achievement Award

This year Sir Adrian Cadbury will be awarded the Beta Gamma Sigma 2007-08 Business Achievement Award. He was nominated by the former President of the Aston University Beta Gamma Sigma Chapter, Professor John Saunders. As the name of this award suggests, it recognises the business success and accomplishments of recipients. Sir Adrian's career and wider contribution to society and knowledge embody the values of honour and integrity, pursuit of wisdom, and earnestness that are the founding principles of Beta Gamma Sigma: honour and integrity in his championship of business ethics and social justice in his own business and across the world; pursuit of wisdom through his continued commitment to developing and communicating business knowledge through lecturing, academic articles and books; earnestness through his stewardship of Cadbury Schweppes, the Bank of England and the energy and commitment he gives to Aston University, Aston Business School and its students.

NETWORK LECTURE SERIES

Aimed at current Aston students, Network Lectures might not be something graduates are familiar with – unless of course you're one of the few who've been invited back to give one of the lectures! Organised termly, Network Lectures have been running for over 11 years now, their aim being to bring Aston students together with an Aston graduate into a networking forum where ideas and experiences from the graduate's profession can be discussed and explored. They are now a well known and popular feature on the University's events calendar and students value them highly, many attending all of them throughout the year, regardless of whether there is any link between the content and their subject of study.

The last year has certainly seen no reduction in the calibre of graduates that we have invited back. Simon Harrop (1987 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies) wowed the audience in March last year with his lecture 'Marketing and the senses: is advertising dead?' Simon is the CEO of Brand Sense Agency and he challenged the traditional visual route that marketing often takes by suggesting that it should incorporate more, or all, of our other sensory perceptions such as smell, for instance. Needless to say, a few sensory tests were involved in the lecture that night and the audience had a lot of fun. On a more serious note, May last year saw 1988 Human Psychology graduate, Joanna Clarke, return to talk to us about her work as a Consultant Forensic

Psychologist at the Headquarters of Her Majesty's Prison Service. Working with some of the country's most dangerous, damaged, disruptive and difficult prisoners in the system, Joanna spoke about her work looking at ways to ensure that staff can work happily in such an environment, and at the same time thrive in it. Joanna is featured on page nine of Apex, so do take time to read more about her work. And finally, in November Philip Swallow (1981 BSc Business Administration and Computer Science) returned to Aston to give a lecture entitled 'Metrics or Management: Improving outcomes on IT contracts'. Philip is the Global Managing Director of Quality and Client Satisfaction at Accenture and impressed everyone, not least the Computer Science students, with his advice about successful IT project management.

We are always looking for graduates to give Network Lectures, so if you think you would make a good candidate and are willing to give some of your time back to the University, then please contact Caroline Broome on c.l.broome@aston.ac.uk or call +44 (0)121 204 4543. If you would like to see a complete list of the Network Lectures Series, visit www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/gettinginvolved/network.jsp



HUGH FIELDEN

Many of you must remember Hugh, not least because he's been a regular face at many of the University's bars over the last 19 years – serving behind them, that is! He started at Aston in 1989 as Bar Supervisor at the Vauxhall Dining Centre (popularly known as the VD Centre) and later became licensee. It was a busy student bar where he got to know a large number of students, and they him. Prior to this he'd held a number of hospitality related jobs around the country and even worked as a restaurant manager in Pretoria, South Africa for two and a half years during the apartheid system. When the Vauxhall Dining Centre closed he was moved to Bar Lago in the Sumpner Building on the opposite side of the Lake. Bar Lago closed in 2003 when the Sumpner Building was demolished and Hugh currently works in Aston's Café Bar on the sixth floor of the Main Building. This is a staff only bar, but Hugh enjoys the opportunity to get to know other members of staff from around the University.

Hugh is also responsible for hospitality deliveries throughout the University, but admits that one of his dislikes is waiting for the lifts. It can, on occasion, make getting hospitality to a certain area on time almost impossible. Hugh believes a staff only lift would solve all his problems and those of staff needing to get to meetings on time!

In his spare time, Hugh enjoys walking, foreign travel, bird watching (the feathered sort too!) tenpin bowling and gardening. He also enjoys meeting people and would like to add to his language base of Spanish (basic), French and Chinese (very basic!). Hugh also enjoys chess, fishing and watching football.

Aston 2012

Strategic Objectives

Our six strategic objectives cover the delivery of the three elements of our mission, enabled by the development of our culture and values and by sustainable financial and physical growth.

Delivering Aston's mission

- To become a Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching
- To be recognised internationally for Excellence in Research in key areas relevant to business and society
- To support Birmingham and the West Midlands through best practice in Community Engagement

Enabling Aston's mission

- To strengthen our community through developing our Culture and Values
- To deliver Sustainable Growth in key areas to provide financial flexibility and critical mass, whilst retaining our character as a small, specialist university
- To provide a high quality Physical, Information and Communications Infrastructure to support our Mission



Over the next five years, universities will need to respond to some significant challenges, influencing both strategic direction and shorter term actions. Some of the major issues will include:

- raised student expectations, higher levels of student debt, increasing concern by individuals on the return on investment;
- the continuing drive to increase the contribution of universities to the local and national economies;
- changing demographics combined with the Leitch skills agenda, leading to growing numbers of non-traditional students and a stronger focus on employer engagement;
- the globalisation of HE, with increasing international competition for students, staff and research funding;
- increased national and international collaboration between universities, especially with regard to high cost research.

Aston is well placed not only to respond to, but to take a leading role in, these developments. We have real strength in our high quality staff and students. Our programmes are well aligned to the needs of the 21st Century and our research strengths address priority areas for business and society locally, nationally and internationally. Our track record in widening participation is one

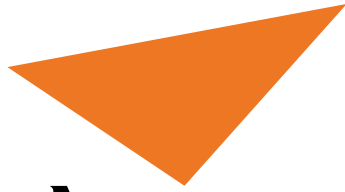
of which we are hugely proud and which we continue to develop with the establishment of our Foundation Degree Centre, new initiatives in learning support and our links to local Academies.

Whilst Aston must grow to secure greater financial flexibility, and to re-invest in our infrastructure, we will remain a small university. The friendly atmosphere and the ability to communicate and collaborate easily, that come from being on a single, compact campus, are core features of Aston's character.

An increasingly successful future for Aston demands a clear view of where we aim to be in five years time, and of what differentiates us from the competition: why choose Aston? A strong and motivated team across the University, aligned behind a compelling strategy, supported by a high level of commercial and financial understanding and with the ability to be fast and flexible in meeting new challenges, will all be critical to delivering our vision for Aston in 2012. With our new student residences scheme about to be launched and the purchase of the remaining four acres of our campus in process, the next five years will be an exciting time of growth and renewal at Aston. We will be working together to establish ourselves as a top 10 UK university whilst retaining Aston's core value: delivering accessible excellence.

Professor Julia King CBE FREng
Vice-Chancellor

an inspirational place



Aston University

Birmingham

Aston's new logo

Chris Harrison, Head of University Communications, has led Aston's recent re-branding project. Apex asked him to explain the motivation behind the new look.

Branding is critical in the present HE environment, but why have we taken the decision to refresh our logo? And why now? There are at least five very good reasons:

The new University strategy provides a clear set of objectives, challenges and targets for Aston up to 2012. Many of these rely to some extent on the University having a strong reputation, and therefore it is critical that from the very outset of the strategy's lifespan, we have a brand that is working extremely hard to raise our profile.

In recent years, universities have initiated a major diversification in markets in all sorts of ways, from the surge in international recruitment to increased collaboration with commerce and industry. It is therefore vital for Aston to have a brand which is flexible and can be adapted to a variety of audiences, and retain some semblance of consistency and coherence.

There is of course a need for the University to respond to changes in the sector. In a climate of increased student demands brought on by the onset of deferred variable tuition fees, it is important that Aston is seen as an institution that provides outstanding customer service and sets high academic standards – the brand helps to establish that reputation. Similarly, with the Government's emphasis on university-business collaborations and the need for employer-led programmes, the brand is integral in positioning Aston as a major player in this area.

We must also anticipate future changes and position Aston so that we can continue to succeed even if the sector changes further. For example, we expect the cap on tuition fees to either be raised or removed completely in the next few years. In such an environment it is important that we can justify charging what our programmes are worth. If we position ourselves correctly now and raise our profile now, this will help us maximise the opportunity the raising/removal of the cap will present.

Finally, we must have a brand that reflects the personality, values and aspirations of Aston, from the logo to our key messages – it is only right that we took the opportunity to update our 'look'.

The first thing to say about the new logo and associated visual identity is that it is not just an orange triangle. Complex organisations such as the University have to cater for the varying tastes of both their target markets, and their employees. With that in mind, the logo can be used in any of the twelve colours in our colour palette, so we can be bright and vibrant when we want to be, or more conservative and heavyweight if that is more appropriate. The triangle concept follows through from the logo to the design of our printed and electronic materials.

I realise that many people have a fondness for the previous logo and that it will take some time to adjust to the new one. We believe that we have a visual identity that now supports Aston's brand values of excellence, accessibility, friendliness and professionalism.

The Aston Difference

We are fortunate at Aston to have a strong identity defined by the following characteristics:

EXCELLENCE WITH RELEVANCE:

High quality programmes with an emphasis on employability; centres of world-class research, with a strong focus on relevance to the needs of business, organisations and people.

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE:

95% of our UK undergraduates come from state schools and colleges and we are highly successful in attracting students from low participation neighbourhoods and socio-economic groups. Combined with our high undergraduate retention rates and an outstanding record on graduate employment Aston can really claim to enable social mobility.

MULTICULTURAL AND INTERNATIONAL:

We are an international and multicultural learning and research environment, enjoying the creativity that comes from diversity, preparing graduates for the world of international business, and collaborating with international partners in our research.

WARMTH AND RESPECT:

Key features of our community are the informality and friendliness of staff and students, and our celebration of individual, religious and cultural diversity.

Aston's ethos is one of accessible excellence.

More details: www.aston.ac.uk/about/strategy

Funding for New Street gets green light



You may remember that in issue 18 of Apex, we wrote about Aston graduate, Martin Chambers (1981 BSc Building Economics and Management) and his involvement with overseeing the proposed redevelopment of Birmingham New Street Station. As an update to that article, we were delighted to hear that the final stages of public sector funding for the redevelopment of New Street Station was announced in February, including the largest ever regional development authority grant of £100m from Advantage West Midlands. The scheme is even bigger and better than first envisaged – totalling £600m with private sector contributions – and will transform one of the country's busiest stations. As well as securing a massive improvement to the travelling experience for the millions of passengers who use the station every year, the project will create thousands of permanent new jobs and act as a catalyst for almost £2 billion of wider benefits for Birmingham and the West Midlands.

"We've hit the ground running since the funding announcement," Martin explains. "Already, we have appointed a lead consultant who will join the core team at Network Rail to help us deliver this important project. We were also able to launch an international design competition for the station within days of funding approval. The competition will take in the combined expertise of the funding partners, along with the Royal Institute of British Architecture, meaning that we can be confident of the very best approach to the external design for the station."

"As a result of the continued hard work of the team, we are therefore confident we will be on site as planned in 2009. The first passenger benefits of the redevelopment will be delivered before the Olympics in 2012 and the station works will be completed this side of 2014."

"It's going to be great to be at the helm of such an important project for this region and my team and I will be doing everything we can to give Birmingham and the region a gateway of which it can be proud."



Doing life and thriving working happily in high security prisons

Knowing that many of the country's most dangerous and disruptive criminals are locked behind bars probably allows many of us to sleep a little easier at night. But how many of us actually give much thought to the people who have to work alongside them? Research has shown that the impact such a high risk working environment can have on staff well-being is tremendous. Working for HM Prison Service Directorate of High Security as a Consultant Forensic Psychologist, Aston graduate Joanna Clarke (1988 BSc Human Psychology) is undertaking pioneering work that aims to minimise the stresses experienced by staff in such high risk jobs. We went to speak to Joanna to find out more about her work.

“I'm not sure the general public fully appreciates the demands on prison staff and in my view they really do represent the fourth – and mostly invisible – emergency service”



Jo has spent much of her career working for the Prison Service, but has been in her current role for the last two and a half years. “The HM Prison Service Directorate of High Security is responsible for eight high security prisons in England and Wales. It is my role to advise governors, senior managers and front line staff how to enhance the well-being and resilience of those working in Discrete Units, which are small units that house the most difficult, dangerous, disruptive and often damaged prisoners in the system. It's pioneering work in that there isn't really another job like it in the Service. Essentially, it's about developing and implementing a strategy that aims primarily to minimise the risk of stress developing amongst staff as a result of the situations that they face. For example, ensuring that the right people are in the right jobs, that they are properly trained and feel competent to undertake their role, and making sure that the on-the-job support and supervision is appropriate to needs and demands. It's a complicated strategy in that it needs to be flexible enough to respond as far as possible to individual needs, but not so flexible that it becomes

impossible to implement! The joy for me is that every element is based on research evidence about what is effective in enhancing well-being and at least some of what's included has been derived from research I undertook at the University of York, looking at the impact of sex offender treatment providers of working in a high risk job.”

When we asked Joanna to describe to us some of the ways that staff are affected, she tells us to imagine ourselves in their position, that every day you go to work you will encounter people who have proved themselves capable of killing. Not only that, they may also be motivated to do you harm because you represent everything they hate, i.e. authority, rules, power, etc. Add into the mix a plethora of mental health problems (some estimates put the prevalence of mental health problems of the prisoner population as high as 90%) and you have potential for very stressful situations. “I'm not sure the general public fully appreciates the demands on prison staff and in my view they really do represent the fourth – and mostly invisible – emergency service,” explains Jo. “The impact this can

have on staff is tremendous and often exacerbated by a culture that partly depends on denial of emotion for its survival. For example, having to manage anxiety over long periods, adjusting to periods of relative calm and then periods of frenetic and risky activity, managing personal threats and so on, can all take their toll. Staff on Discrete Units often say they hadn't realised the pressure they were under until they left. Part of my job is to relieve that pressure at the time by getting the right things in place so that the impact can be dealt with there and then rather than allowing it to build up.”

Jo's earlier career was based at HMP Albany, a then maximum security prison which was a key site for the introduction of the then new Sex Offender Treatment Programme (SOTP). She later moved to HM Prison Brixton where she established a unit, along with two other colleagues, for the assessment and treatment of sexual murderers. We ask her how she has dealt with hearing about some of the crimes these people have committed. “It's very hard to describe how you cope with hearing graphic details of how one human

being perpetrates abuse against another, but you need to hear it if you're to 'make sense' of why someone behaves the way they do. There is absolutely no doubt it changes you. One way I've dealt with the work is to treat it very much as an intellectual exercise, fitting bits of a puzzle together so you get a whole picture, which means you can then see more clearly what needs to be done to prevent further offending. It's a very useful way of detaching from the harsh reality of what you hear.”

As we come to a close, Jo assures us that there are many positive aspects to her work. “I've met some of the most talented, committed and professional people of my career, many of whom have remained great friends. I've seen some of the most dangerous offenders gradually begin to accept their behaviour and work towards change, and I've learned some incredibly useful skills along the way. If I hadn't worked with sex offenders and learned so much about how people adjust to cope in the face of potential trauma, I wouldn't be doing what I do today.”

60th Anniversary Celebrations

Aston Business School began its life as the Department of Industrial Administration at the then Birmingham College of Technology, based in Suffolk Street, in 1947 and is now celebrating its 60th Anniversary. A number of special events have been organised to celebrate the occasion.

Selena Teeling is currently revisiting the history of Aston Business School and will be compiling a document based on the memories and stories of staff and students past and present.

On 14 April guests have been invited to attend an afternoon of celebrations. These will include

the unveiling of a specially commissioned piece of artwork by Eryka Isaak, a presentation to Sir Adrian Cadbury of the Beta Gamma Sigma Business Achievement Award and the naming of Susan Cadbury and Adrian Cadbury Lecture Theatres.

On 17 June 2008, the Business School will open its doors to

staff and students past and present. The Open Day will celebrate the history of Aston Business School, Then and Now, publicise the School's achievements, explain ABS' future vision, make connections with friends and community representatives and reconnect with staff and students.

On Friday 4 July 2008, the celebrations culminate in a 'Summer of '47' themed party to thank staff for their contribution. Attendees will be asked to dress to suit the era and will enjoy an evening of entertainment with a live 'swing' band.

Happy Birthday ABS!

MAS celebrates 30 years!

Are you a Managerial and Administrative Studies (MAS) graduate? If so, block out 1 November in your diary as that's when we're inviting all MAS graduates back to campus to celebrate 30 years of MAS. We're working hard in conjunction with Dr Helen Higson in Aston Business School to make it a day to remember.

Planning is in the early stages, but we're aiming for a daytime event full of activities including campus tours, lectures, tea and cakes with your year group – and of course, a big celebratory lunch with friends and former lecturers! By having the event during the day we hope many more of you will be able to attend, especially those of you with families who may find it difficult to get babysitters for an overnight stay.

If you are in touch with graduates from MAS who don't hear from us, we'd be grateful if you could pass on details about this event and encourage them to get in contact with us. Likewise, maybe we can help you to get in touch with one of your friends from MAS. For details on our In Touch Service, please go to www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/keepingintouch/intouchservice.jsp

Further details about this event will be sent out to all MAS graduates soon. To make sure you are on the mailing list, email c.l.broome@aston.ac.uk with your up-to-date contact details, and/or return the completed Graduate Update Form to us at the usual address.

We look forward to seeing you on 1 November!

School of Engineering & Applied Science CPD courses

In today's rapidly changing environment, we are all encouraged to embrace change and foster innovation. There can be few professionals who have been unaffected by the rapid pace of change which has influenced the professions over the past decade. To adapt to these changes we need new skills – we need professional training. No longer can keeping up to date be optional; it is becoming increasingly central to professional and organisational success. The response of many professions to this challenge has been to embrace the concept of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Continuing Professional Development is the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and the development of personal qualities necessary for the education of professional and technical duties throughout the practitioner's working life. It is the process by which a professional person maintains the quality and relevance of professional services throughout his/her working life.

The School of Engineering & Applied Science offers a programme of seminars and conferences, intended to contribute towards professional training and the CPD requirements of the relevant professional institutes. Some of the courses available in June are listed below, many of which are repeated annually:

3 June The New 'Manual for Street': A guide for Practitioners

4 June Quality Street and Public Places – Practical Planning & Design Guidance

10 June Speed Management Conference

11 June Going, Going... Greener! Environmental Benefits from Existing Roads

12 June Domestic Subsidence & Trees

17 June Transport Network Efficiency and Management – Emerging Techniques

18 June Managing Structures Better Than Before – Identifying Problems and Managing Assets

For technical enquiries:

Dr M Sadeghzadeh on 0121 204 3606

For course/conference availability:

Helen Mallinson on 0121 204 3593 or Claire Wallis on 0121 204 3624

Fax: 0121 204 3684

Email: cpd-seas@aston.ac.uk

Website and mailing subscription:

www.seas.aston.ac.uk/cpd

Experience Works

(especially for Aston graduates!)

With nearly three-quarters of Aston undergraduates participating in work experience based degree programmes every year, it is no surprise the University is ranked first in its class for graduates gaining employment.

The number entering the job market increases every summer, enabling employers to draw on the range of capabilities this unique group offers. With businesses competing nationally, how can you ensure that you access and retain this valuable talent pool? Aston University based project Graduate Advantage is here to help.

A graduate's skills are wide ranging, from technical knowledge, IT skills to research capabilities. Once they enter your business they can ultimately increase your bottom line. However, many organisations are unsure of how to access this resource. Graduate Advantage, supported by regional universities, offers free services to connect West Midlands based businesses with local students and graduates. The not-for-profit programme covers two areas – placements and training.



HOW TO BRIDGE YOUR RESOURCE GAP

1) PLACEMENT PROGRAMME

An ideal avenue for recruitment needs or short-term projects, the service covers vacancy creation and promotion, telephone screening and shortlisting of applications. Benefits include:

- a low cost solution from four weeks to 12 months;
- flexible working; full and part-time throughout the year;
- a subsidy to help pay the student or graduate. (For first time users in small to medium business subject to criteria.)

Staffordshire based PR Agency MMS Ltd took on a PR placement through the scheme. After a rigorous interview procedure they chose Aston graduate Emma Langford. She exceeded expectations and has recently been taken on permanently! They are delighted with Emma's capabilities:

“ Her skills go beyond her academic knowledge. Her team-working, presentation and report writing ability is fantastic. However, her attitude is what sets her apart; she is flexible, has an open mind, a fresh approach and contributes with creative thinking. ”

Danielle Mitton, Director MMS Ltd

2) TRAINING

Recognising that the leading motivator for staff retention is personal development, two free courses are offered that add value to your existing graduate staff and increase their motivation!

• GRADSKILLS

Created with new graduates in mind, this course develops core skills resulting in effective employees by bridging the gap between university and the workplace.

• MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

For staff looking to take the next step in the career ladder, this course is specifically for new and aspiring first-line managers.

TO ENSURE YOU REMAIN CREAM OF THE CROP!

Graduate Advantage has plenty to offer recent graduates. Placements offer paid work experience that will not only boost your employability but may lead to your dream job.

"This was a great opportunity. Within a small company you get a better insight into the processes and you get commercial experience very quickly. You are a big fish in a small pond and your contribution is valued." Emma Langford (2007 BSc European Studies and German).

To give yourself the best chance of securing that all important graduate job or placement, you can take advantage of our free personal development courses simply by picking up the phone and reserving a place. In an increasingly competitive job market graduates are finding they have to really raise their game by updating themselves on key job skills, especially if they want to find a role that matches their aspirations.

This multi-faceted project can help you immediately, either as an expanding business or a motivated graduate. To discuss your requirements further, contact Clara Wilcox on +44 (0)121 204 4767 or email c.j.wilcox@graduateadvantage.co.uk

Funded by Advantage West Midlands and supported by a consortium of West Midlands universities and university college

Green Clean

Cleaning the house from top to bottom is a chore that most of us endure. But 'squeaky clean' might not necessarily be 'green clean'. Just north of Nottingham City Centre Aston graduate Carole Harvey (1983 BSc Business and French) and colleagues have been busy formulating the first range of organic homecare products approved by the Soil Association and Vegan Society. Apex asked her how toxic are our homes?

"The shocking fact is," revealed Carole, "that many of the products we use to clean our homes are made from highly toxic chemicals. The recent Channel 4 series *How Toxic Are You?* described how the chemicals we use can get into our system and how they can also irritate our eyes, lungs and skin. At Natural House Products we have developed a range of cleaning products with simple organic formulations – natural organic alternatives to existing homeware products which people can trust."

Natural House sells eight products in its current range: three spray cleaning products (Surface Spa, Bathroom Spa and Window Spa), two types of soap (a household bar soap and a liquid hand soap) Dish Spa, Organic Soap Flakes and Salad Spa, a food grade fruit and vegetable wash. With an organic room aroma about to be launched, Natural House covers most of our cleaning needs. So, what makes these products different?

"They are the world's first certified organic homeware products," explains Carole. "All of the products are certified organic by the Soil Association and are approved by the Vegan Society. In achieving organic certification it means that we have sustainable production, the products don't harm the environment in their manufacture or their use and

the products are free from GM, parabens, and petro-chemicals. Vegan approval means that our products are cruelty free, we have not tested on animals and the products don't contain any animal derived ingredients. There are plenty of 'natural' cleaning products out there but, without any certification or inspection, how can you be sure what you are buying?"

Carole is a member of a founding team of four along with three other specialists: Rachel, an environmental scientist who looks after production and liaison with the Soil Association; Glyn, a formulations guru who prepared the original formulations and Keith, a management consultant and special professor at Nottingham University who looks after product development. Carole's role is operations, finance and sales/marketing. They are supported by a part-time office manager who looks after web sales and all the associated administration.

Natural House sells mainly through a website (www.natural-house.co.uk) and selected stockists including health food stores, Waitrose and John Lewis. "Our market is mostly in the UK," explains Carole. "We have had some enquiries from abroad which we are following up but our strategy is to build the business in the UK first, especially as we don't want a huge carbon footprint transporting our products

around the world. As we get to that stage in our development we would prefer to work with people to manufacture abroad under licence rather than transporting the finished goods."

Natural House products are endorsed by Janey Lee Grace (Radio 2's Steve Wright's co-presenter and environment Guru). "Our products feature in her book *Imperfectly Natural Woman*," smiles Carole, "and bizarrely we supply our soap flakes to Cornwall Fire Service as they need natural soaps to wash their ropes! Denise Van Outen is very complimentary about our products too."

And Carole's motivation? "This is the first time I've done a job that's really 'me.' I've been an accountant and worked in marketing and operations in different businesses such as wines and spirits wholesaling, car products retailing at Halfords and wellbeing services at Boots. Whilst I've always worked hard I never felt this is what I'm on the planet to do. For the first time at Natural House Products I feel as though I'm using all my skills and experience to create some fantastic products that I care about and that are genuinely unique." When not in Natural House, Carole is Finance Director for Staffline Recruitment Group plc and a wife and mother.

PRODUCT LINE

SPRAY CLEANING PRODUCTS:

SURFACE SPA, A MULTI-SURFACE ORGANIC CLEANER FOR AROUND THE HOME

BATHROOM SPA, AN ORGANIC CLEANER FOR TILES AND CERAMIC SURFACES IN THE BATHROOM

WINDOW SPA, AN ORGANIC CLEANER FOR MIRRORS, WINDOWS AND SHOWER ENCLOSURES

SOAPS:

AN ORGANIC HOUSEHOLD BAR SOAP WITH ORGANIC APRICOT KERNEL TO EXFOLIATE

AN ORGANIC LIQUID HAND SOAP WITH LIME, PINE AND SPEARMINT

DISH SPA, A GENTLE, ORGANIC WASHING UP LIQUID

ORGANIC SOAP FLAKES FOR HAND-WASHING

SALAD SPA, A FOOD GRADE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE WASH



IS THIS THE END FOR SPEED CAMERAS?

A potential new speed monitoring invention that is the brainchild of a star PhD student from Aston University has won him a national computing award for the second year running.



Dimitrios Georgoulas, who is 27, has won this year's Student Project of the Year category in *The Computing Awards for Excellence 2007* after taking the same prize for a different project last year.

The Awards recognise student achievement in the field of Information Technology (IT) and receive entries from across the UK. Dimitrios was thrilled to be a winner again and received this year's accolade from host Sanjeev Baskar, star of BBC's *The Kumars at No. 42*, at an awards ceremony in London.

Dimitrios' project, entitled 'Intelligence-Based System for Wireless Sensor Networks', involved creating an advanced computer software system which connects to wireless sensor devices and monitors the speed of a moving vehicle or object. The name of the software is In-Motes EYE, and it was designed to monitor acceleration, light and temperature variation. It works without the need for human intervention.

In theory, this could be a revolutionary discovery for speed control and have a direct effect on government laws and the whole of the motor industry. The sensors and software provide an accurate answer to speed monitoring without the flaws of speed cameras. Sensors could be

fitted or built into cars, with the readings being relayed to a control centre (which contains the software), with no need for cameras. One flaw of the speed camera which does not occur with the wireless system is that cameras are unable to capture speeding vehicles if they are changing lanes.

The concept for the project was developed as a major component of Dimitrios' PhD research in the School of Engineering & Applied Science. It had to stand up to scrutiny from the discerning readership of *Computing* magazine and a distinguished panel of experts from the IT industry. Dimitrios was also tested on the project's potential to advance, improve or develop IT.

The Computing Awards are a highly regarded accreditation in the IT industry and these two consecutive wins for Dimitrios will almost certainly set him apart from the crowd.

"It is a really great honour to win this national award for a second year running. The awards ceremony presented a great opportunity to meet leading industry thinkers, which should secure the project real recognition," he said.

For further information on the awards, go to www.computingawards.co.uk

Thai collaboration

Professor Brian Tighe of the Biomaterials Research Unit, School of Engineering & Applied Science, visited Chiang Mai University, Thailand, in January. His visit was as a PhD examiner for a joint doctoral thesis which has grown out of the very active continuing research collaboration in

the field of biomaterials between Aston and the Chiang Mai Polymer Research Group led by Dr Robert Molloy.

The link between Aston and Chiang Mai has now been in existence for over 30 years and remains as strong today

as ever. Professor Tighe's visit also provided an opportunity to discuss the forthcoming international conference on smart materials to be held in Chiang Mai in April for which he is a member of the International Advisory Committee.



What do you want to be when you grow up?

The career path of a child as young as the age of six can be predicted by measuring their personality. The research has just been published at the British Psychological Society's Annual Conference of the Division of Occupational Psychology in Stratford.

Dr Stephen Woods from Aston Business School and Sarah Hampson from the Oregon Research Institute in the USA, analysed data from a study which began in the 1950s and 1960s. At the beginning of the study, the participants were children aged six to 12 years of age. Each child had their personality assessed by their school teacher. At the end of the study, the participants, who were by then mostly in their late 40s, completed a survey about

their current and past jobs. The findings from this study indicate that both gender and childhood personality traits predicted people's occupations in later life.

Young girls viewed by their teachers as less imaginative and curious were more likely to be working with data, filing records and doing other rule-regulated work in middle age. In contrast, young boys viewed by their teachers as less imaginative and curious were more likely to be working in physical

jobs in middle age, such as construction or manufacturing. Conversely boys and girls rated by their teachers as more imaginative and curious, were more likely to be working in the arts, or in research and sciences.

The key childhood personality trait which was found to predict occupations was 'Openness to Experience'. This trait describes a child's curiosity, imagination, and interest in ideas.

Centre for Project Management Practice

A grant of £100,000 has been awarded by the ESRC, which was in turn matched by Aston Business School and School of Engineering & Applied Science collaborators, to create the Centre for Project Management Practice (CPMP). The CPMP promotes knowledge sharing by exposing project management practitioners and researchers to each other's experiences, concerns and expertise. This in turn will pave the way to bridging the 'knowing-doing' gap in skills and knowledge between project managers and project management researchers, as well as identifying where and how new project management knowledge should be created.

The centre is headed up by academics who have all been project managers across a range of business sectors. Centre Co-Director, Dr Naomi Brookes, who previously worked in the aerospace industry, said that the centre would create some excellent links between project management knowledge and its practice in industry. "Project management is a very crucial skill which is required to effectively undertake any form of business innovation," she said. "Businesses finally understand the importance of project management and at Aston we have a wide range of project management research and expertise available."

The region's first centre of excellence for Project Management Practice was unveiled at Aston Business School on 28 January 2008. The Centre is supported by the Midlands Aerospace Alliance, the Engineering Employers Federation, Advantage West Midlands and The Association of Project Management. Companies such as GKN Driveline, West Bromwich Building Society, Land Rover, Tempus, Brintons, Mtech Group, Middlemarch Environmental, The Logistics Business, Qinetiq and Siemens enjoyed the launch party and welcomed the opportunity to share best practice and bridge the knowledge gap.

Participants of the centre benefit from gaining access to the world's best practice in project management thinking for innovation, developing further crucial project management skills in their regional workforce, shaping the project management research agenda in regional universities to give outputs that are directly usable and identifying specific research-consultancy projects for areas leading to improvement in current project management activities.

The centre offers a novel opportunity for project managers to swap with project managers in other organisations and with project management researchers in academia. Academics will have the opportunity to work on projects in a business setting and business individuals can experience work in an academic unit for a short period. Free seminar programmes widen the scope of research available to participants and researchers are guided in tailoring their research to suit practitioners' needs.

If you would like more information on the CPMP scheme, please visit www.aston.ac.uk/cpmp or alternatively email cpmp@aston.ac.uk

£200k research grant for Aston researchers

A research team from Aston has received a substantial grant from the Parkinson's Disease Society (PDS), which could pave the way for new treatments into the condition.

The Aston team will be directed by Dr Ian Stanford to carry out a 36-month study that aims to better understand and improve electrol stimulation therapies that are used as a treatment for Parkinson's disease.

Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) surgery involves the insertion of a metal electrode into the brain, which is then connected to an external battery-powered stimulator placed in the chest wall.

Until now, Deep Brain Stimulation surgical treatments have focused on the sub-thalamic nucleus (STN) area

of the brain because the electrical activity of the nerve cells is upset in Parkinson's. About 70-80% of patients who undergo surgery will experience some benefit from the procedure. However, more recent research has suggested that electrical stimulation of another area of the brain, the motor cortex, may also provide symptomatic relief for some people with Parkinson's.

The research group at Aston will assess the changes in communication between the motor cortex and the STN regions of the brain that occur in Parkinson's. This will help to

improve our understanding of why DBS provides relief from the symptoms of Parkinson's and to extend our knowledge of how the motor cortex may control the activity of the STN region of the brain. The research will open up the possibility of alternative and perhaps non-invasive treatments for Parkinson's.

Dr Ian Stanford from Aston said: "We are delighted that funding from the PDS has given us the opportunity to investigate new avenues in the treatment of Parkinson's."

Dr Kieran Breen, Director of Research and Development at the PDS said: "Deep Brain Stimulation has already proven to be a very effective treatment in Parkinson's disease so we hope that this work will extend further the benefits that it already offers and give rise to the development of new treatment methods. We only fund research of the highest quality and it is the generosity of our supporters that enable us to fund projects such as this. All of our work is funded by voluntary donations and in 2007 we were able to spend £4.6 million on Parkinson's research."

Youngsters get a taste of the Orient

On Friday 8 February, 100 youngsters from local schools with little or no prior knowledge of Chinese Mandarin took part in a 'Celebrating China' day at Aston University's Lakeside Conference Centre.

The event was part of the West Midlands Routes into Languages Consortium activities.

The Year 8 pupils took part in a series of 'hands-on' workshops looking at Chinese language, culture, traditions, arts, and the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

They also experienced a practical Tai Chi session led by professional instructor Mark Peters, who is Head of the West Midlands based Kai Ming Association.

The event is funded by the Routes into Languages West Midlands Consortium and is the first in a series of themed cultural events led by Aston University this year.

The Routes into Languages programme is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Department for Children, Schools and Families. The West Midlands Regional Consortium is led by Aston in collaboration with the universities of Birmingham, Coventry, Keele, Warwick and Wolverhampton. They will deliver a three-year programme of activities aimed at encouraging young people to study languages and increasing the take-up of languages from school to university.



A decade of translation



Current final year BA students, current MA students, research students, graduates and staff reunite to celebrate ten years of Translation Studies at Aston.

The School of Languages & Social Sciences at Aston celebrated ten years of Translation Studies programmes in November with a special reunion event. Graduates, current students and staff and visiting scholars from across Europe visited the University for the celebration.

Dr Christina Schaeffner, who is Head of Translation Studies at Aston said: "In 1997, in addition to a new Masters qualification, Aston became the first university in England to offer a dedicated Translation Studies programme at undergraduate level. Our courses have gone from strength to strength and attract students from all over the world. Aston's translation programmes are now in their eleventh year and we felt it was time to celebrate their success."

International student network

Moving to university is often a life changing experience for many students irrespective of the distance they have travelled to take up their studies. It takes time to settle into university life and get used to new homes, new routines and new people. But for international students, who may have travelled literally from the other side of the world, the transition to university life can be very difficult. Not only are they in a different country with different cultures and customs, but they are away from their friends and family and the people they are most likely to turn to. Combined Honours graduates will know that the team at Aston has always tried to make every one of their students feel at ease during their time on campus – and international students have been no exception. But a radical new approach from the team is set to make this aspect of student life even better.

A new face has recently joined the Combined Honours team by the name of Magdalena Wisniewska whose brief is to ensure that international students can easily integrate into Aston life and benefit as fully as they want to. Magdalena herself is an international student who, through organising and arranging events for international students, aims to bring them closer together and provide a support network for them to make friends and settle easily and quickly into university life. As part of the student community herself, Magdalena is perfectly positioned to motivate and encourage her fellow students. Apex interviewed her to find out more about her role.

Q WHAT DOES YOUR NEW ROLE INVOLVE?

"I'm an events organiser for international students – including European students – who study Combined Honours at Aston. I want to provide students with the opportunity to take part in informal gatherings where we can all mix together and talk to each other."

Q WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

"It's important to gather together students from all around the world; getting to know people from different cultures and customs is a great experience. It gives students the opportunity to express any concerns they might have about living in a foreign country, hear how others have adapted to student life and, of course, to make new friends."

Q WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO MOST ABOUT THE ROLE?

"Meeting new people, making new friends and having a wonderful experience."

Q WHAT DO YOU BRING TO THE ROLE?

"Well, I'm from Poland, but last year I travelled quite a lot. I found getting to know different cultures and people really exciting. I spent free time with my international friends and I made sure I enjoyed every day I spent abroad. It's character building! I think I can use this experience to help others who are trying to adapt to different cultures."

Q WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITIES WILL YOU BE ORGANISING?

"I'll try to organise a variety of activities. I'm very flexible, so my main objective is to meet all the students' needs and expectations and try to fulfil them so that they feel at home."

Q DO YOU HAVE A MESSAGE FOR THE STUDENTS YOU'LL BE WORKING WITH?

"I really hope people will understand the purpose of setting up this society – it's very important to make the best out of the time we spend away from home."

Dr Sukhvinder Phull has recently joined the Combined Honours team as Assistant Director after 18 years at Coventry University. He has spent the majority of his life in Birmingham before moving briefly to Manchester University to read BSc in Combined Honours (Biology and Chemistry). He returned to Warwick University to complete his PhD in the field of Bio-Analytical Chemistry. With a strong background in chemistry and biology, Sukhvinder is still very active in research and has published several papers and books in various fields of chemistry. He is also presently supervising two PhD research students and five MSc students in the fields of Analytical, Pharmaceutical and Forensic analysis.



New faces in the Development & Alumni Relations Office

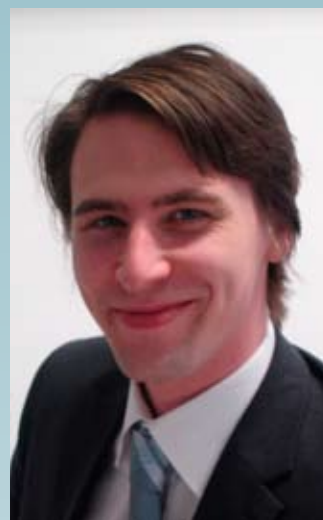
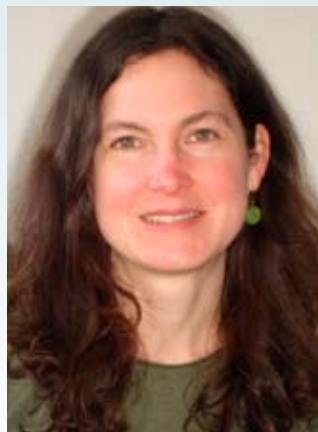
SHEILA O'NEAL – DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

Sheila is from San Diego, California and has relocated to the UK to work for Aston. She has a broad background in fundraising, including stints at San Diego State University, The Burnham Institute, and the Scripps Foundation for Medicine and Science. She is excited by the challenge of the job and the opportunity to raise awareness among alumni of the need for private support for the University. Sheila says: "In the US we talk about 'the margin of excellence' that philanthropy can provide. In other words, over and above general operational expenses, funds from the private sector should be used to leverage the University's strengths to get to that next level of achievement. A good example of this is when chairs and professorships are endowed by a donor. The income from the endowment allows the University to raise its sights when recruiting for the positions. These are prestigious posts that attract the best candidates, raise the University's academic standing, and attract top students as well." On the personal side, Sheila is a confirmed Anglophile and is enjoying all aspects of living in England, especially the weather – we'll check back in six months to see if that still holds!



KATY BARRY – ALUMNI RELATIONS MANAGER (ABS MBA AND MSc ALUMNI)

Katy has been employed by the University for over ten years and has worked in a number of different departments. She initially worked as Course Co-ordinator in the Postgraduate Programme of the Business School, then as Assistant Registrar in Registry before taking up a post as School Administrator in the School of Engineering & Applied Science. She is pleased to be back in the Business School and is looking forward to working on a number of initiatives with postgraduate alumni. These include organising events (lectures, seminars, social events), producing newsletters and developing the alumni network. She hopes that many alumni will choose to maintain contact with the School and University after completing their studies.



LUKE TAYLOR – MANAGER OF THE ANNUAL FUND

Luke has arrived from the University of Essex where he worked in a variety of fundraising roles, from student caller on a fundraising campaign to managing the overall annual giving programme. He is enthusiastic about the future at Aston and is encouraged by the community spirit evident amongst both students and alumni.

"The Annual Fund can play an important part in enhancing both academic and extra-curricular activities, providing better facilities, opportunities and student support. Alumni play an important part in the life of a university long after they graduate, and their goodwill can help students at Aston for many years to come. The Annual Fund has already funded a number of worthwhile initiatives, from e-learning and audio-visual equipment to minibuses for the Students' Guild. In the coming years it is our aim to grow the Annual Fund further, and provide Aston students with an unrivalled experience of university."

Development at Aston



Alumni are a valued part of Aston's rich history and their support is helping to shape our future. Luke Taylor, Annual Fund Manager, explains the importance of the Aston Annual Fund.

Universities in the UK are now under greater pressure to meet growing expectations, and provide facilities and technologies that can compete with educational institutions right across the globe. They play an important role in supporting and enriching local economies, and are considered key catalysts for development and regeneration in their regions. Aston must therefore not only deliver a first class education for its students; it must also deliver projects and initiatives that benefit the regional, national and international community, both academically and economically.

Today's students make a much greater personal investment in their education and have become more discerning in what they expect from a university. In order to continue to recruit the brightest and most talented students, Aston needs to continue to offer a unique and memorable academic experience with opportunities and initiatives that enrich and inspire future generations.

Aston is well placed to take a leading role in these challenges. The quality of our teaching and research, coupled with our outstanding record in graduate employment, means that we attract students of the highest calibre. But small, community spirited universities, like Aston, rely on the help, support and goodwill of those who know it best; our alumni and friends.

The Annual Fund was established three years ago as a means of harnessing this support and goodwill. It is primarily supported by two fundraising appeals each academic year, and funds a wide range of projects across campus, ranging from scholarships and bursaries to the latest advances in teaching technologies. We are fortunate that so many of our alumni hold Aston in such high esteem; indeed over 1,500 people have made a gift to the Annual Fund in the last few years. By continuing to work together in this way we can enrich the lives of our students in an even more ambitious way, enhancing Aston's reputation as a centre of excellence. Support from alumni also demonstrates to external bodies, such as trusts and foundations, the value placed on an Aston education by its alumni.

Our donors give at a number of different levels, and we only ever wish for people to give what they can afford. A gift of just £10 per month, over a four-year period, could provide a modest scholarship, or be used to improve technologies and facilities. In addition, if you are a UK tax payer, the University can claim an additional 28% through the Gift Aid scheme at no extra expense or inconvenience to yourself.

All donations to the Annual Fund are gratefully received, and all of our donors have the opportunity to support an area of the University to which they feel particularly attached or proud. Together we can ensure that future generations benefit from everything Aston has to offer, for many years to come.

“ The quality of our teaching and research, coupled with our outstanding record in graduate employment, means that we attract students of the highest calibre. But small, community spirited universities, like Aston, rely on the help, support and goodwill of those who know it best: our alumni and friends ”

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR UNIVERSITY

Making a gift to Aston's Annual Fund couldn't be easier. You can:

Make a donation over the telephone using your credit or debit card, by calling us on 0121 204 3021.

Make a donation by posting a donation form (available from the Development & Alumni Relations Office or on our website) to Development & Alumni Relations Office, Aston University, Aston Triangle, Birmingham, B4 7ET.

Email us at development@aston.ac.uk to request a donation form.

AUTUMN 2007 FUNDRAISING APPEAL

The recent autumn fundraising campaign has been hugely successful. A significant number of alumni decided to offer their support to the University's Annual Fund, with numerous projects already receiving funding. Over 5,000 people were contacted by our team of enthusiastic student callers, all of whom were delighted by the response to the appeal.



As a result of the generosity of our alumni we will now be able to provide the Students' Guild with a second minibus for academic conferences and sporting fixtures and install a state of the art E-Learning Laboratory in the School of Languages & Social Sciences.

The Annual Fund Manager, Luke Taylor, was delighted to learn of the enthusiasm amongst Aston graduates. "It is clear that Aston's alumni hold the University in very high regard. The Annual Fund has been a great success, and receives wonderful support from its donors. I hope we can continue to make a difference for many years to come."

To all our donors we express our deepest gratitude. The Development & Alumni Relations Office is pleased to report that a wide variety of projects have received funding as a result of the generous support of our alumni.

ASTON STUDENTS' GUILD

The Students' Guild is to receive funding for an extension to its IT suite, thanks to donations made by Aston's alumni. It is the latest in a number of projects that have been made possible thanks to supporters of the Annual Fund.

The new IT suite will provide an alternative study area for students, complete with the latest computing technology and Internet access. This will be particularly useful during the exam period, when demand for such facilities is high. It will also benefit sports clubs and societies and will provide additional space for work on group projects.

Dilly Rehal, the current Guild President, is delighted that Aston alumni are working together to support and improve the University. "Donations to the Annual Fund are really making a difference. The IT suite will be extremely beneficial to students giving them an important additional resource to aid their academic study. We are all grateful for the support we receive and believe the Annual Fund to be a great way to improve the Guild further for future generations."

In addition to the IT suite, the Guild has also received a grant to augment its emergency loan system. The Guild Emergency Loan (GEL) is administered by the Students' Advice Centre and supports students by providing small loans to those in immediate financial need. The award from the Annual Fund will help preserve this vital service and allow the Guild to increase the maximum loan available when needed.

“The Annual Fund has been a great success, and receives wonderful support from its donors. I hope we can continue to make a difference for many years to come.”

ACADEMIC SCHOOLS

The School of Languages & Social Sciences is to receive funding to facilitate a state of the art digital E-Learning laboratory.

This technology allows for more interactive study, by projecting audiovisual materials to individual computer screens. Tutors can assess coursework digitally, and in class, giving language students greater and more frequent feedback on the progress of their studies.

Students at Aston are also to benefit from a number of bursaries and scholarships that have been made possible by Aston alumni. Over £50,000 has been awarded, helping students from across the campus community. From international bursaries to aid those in greatest financial need, to scholarships for talented postgraduate students, these vital grants allow students to excel without added financial pressures.

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!

Did you
graduate
in the 60s?

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

Email:
alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk

or write to:
The Development & Alumni
Relations Office
Aston University
Freeport BM2599/13
Birmingham
B4 6BR

Deadline: August 2008

1960s

NORMAN ROGERS (1967 BSc MECHANICAL ENGINEERING)

"I left school during wartime and took a design apprenticeship with Serck Radiators in Greet, working on mods. to Spitfire and Hurricane systems as well as design work on heat exchangers for Mosquito, Typhoon, Tempest and Whirlwind installations. Whilst there on day release, plus the odd evenings and Saturday mornings, I studied Mechanical Engineering at the College of Technology in Suffolk Street and in 1952 was awarded my ACT(Birm) which led in due course to the award of BSc ad eundem gradum in 1967 from Aston University. Needing wider aircraft experience, I had earlier moved to Armstrong Siddeley near Coventry working on the design of the 'Screamer', a liquid rocket engine for the Avro 720 fighter, but the contract was cancelled before the aircraft flew. I then moved to Bristol Aircraft at Weston-super-Mare where a new company was formed, Bristol Aerojet Ltd. (half Bristol, half Aerojet General of the USA) which became known as BAJ and I worked there for over 30 years. Here I became involved with the 5" Skua for the Met. Office and the 7.5" Petrel for the Science Research Council. As Trials Manager, I attended trials in Sweden, Norway, India, Pakistan, Spain and Australia, as well as at UK ranges including the one in the Hebrides. In 1975 I was appointed Project Manager Chevaline responsible for the solid and liquid rocket hardware on the Polaris IFE and in 1982 Chief Engineer, a position I held until I retired in 1986. I would welcome hearing from anyone who I worked with on these projects. Please get in touch with the Development & Alumni Relations Office for my contact details."



1970s

CARLO VAN LAMSWEERDE (1971 BSc BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES)



"Aston gave me excellent preparation for the international career which my wife and I had in mind. We did get our international mobility with 14 moves during a great career of over 20 years with Shell. I have worked in Lowestoft, the Congo, Oman, the Netherlands (three times), Nigeria, Aberdeen and London (twice). Working in developing countries was often tough, but it was always very rewarding. It also helped me to better understand completely different cultures at an early stage – before 'diversity' became an issue. In the 1970s I participated in setting up schooling and training schemes for Omani nationals who had no access to formal education, and in the 1980s I was instrumental in organising cross-postings for young professionals between Shell companies in Africa, Europe and the Middle and Far East. At the end of 1994 I left Shell and spent five years on the Executive Committee of the Dutch shipping, transport and distribution company, Royal Nedlloyd, which we managed to turn around and make profitable without any forced exits or redundancies. Since 2000 I have worked as an independent

consultant in HR, transformation programmes and executive remuneration. I'm still very much a European, working from Wassenaar in the Netherlands and Lautrec in France (where we have renovated a farmhouse), with three grown-up, Scottish educated children working and living in London, Aberdeen and Leeds. In 2007 I decided to cut down the consultancy work after I had concluded that the hidden talents of the French Tarn region (NE of Toulouse) could be exported to customers in Holland, and I started a web-based shop selling delicacies, such as the delicious pink garlic from Lautrec, Gaillac wines and a range of handy cooking utensils such as the unique garlic cutter. For my services to the pink garlic producers I was 'knighted' a Chevalier of the Order of Pink Garlic of Lautrec."



CHRIS JOHNSON (1975 BSc ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING)

"Since graduating I have spent most of my career in the industrial electronics field. I have worked at all levels from Engineer to Managing Director and have been involved in a wide range of interesting projects in the control systems and physical testing industries. Applying digital control technology for the first time to servo hydraulic systems in the early days of microcomputers and microprocessors was a real challenge. Over a period of

Did you graduate in the 70s?

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

Email:
alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk

or write to:
The Development & Alumni Relations Office
Aston University
Freepost BM2599/13
Birmingham
B4 6BR

Deadline: August 2008

25 years I worked on projects controlling mechanical and hydraulic systems capable of applying potentially destructive forces to many everyday items from ice cream to commercial aircraft. Now as the Technical Manager for a world leading Pneumatics Company, I manage all our electrical products in Europe, which involves significant European travel and regular trips to the Headquarters in Japan."

MICHAEL PARKES (1977 BSc ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH; 1986 MSc OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY; AND 1993 MSc PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT)

"I have been fortunate in a long relationship with both Aston University and Sandwell MBC who supported me through all three of my degrees. I was appointed as an Environmental Health Officer in Sandwell following graduation in 1976, an interesting and demanding place to work and gain experience. Over the years I was afforded the opportunity to return to Aston twice more, acquiring the knowledge and competences that have supported my personal and career development. I studied for my MSc in Occupational Health and Safety

whilst working as Health and Safety Manager and had significant local and national roles in this area of work. I then moved into a management post and following graduation from the MSc in Public Sector Management moved to more senior management roles, ultimately becoming Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards for Sandwell MBC in 2000. This was a joint appointment with the Health Authority and my role progressively became much more strategic and involved significant partnership working. In this role I again became involved in regional and national work with local government agencies, government bodies and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, which I now serve as one of the West Midlands Trustees. My studies and career so far have proved to be interesting, challenging and enriching. After 34 years with Sandwell MBC I took the opportunity to retire from Local Government in mid-2007 and now work as an Environmental Health Management Consultant. This has given me the opportunity to beneficially change my work/life balance and to give more time and thought to issues at the Environmental Health/Public Health interface and to take on work in this area. I hope that the next 34 years will be as rewarding!"



1980s



Peter Hood

PETER HOOD (1983 BSc BUILDING ECONOMICS AND MEASUREMENT)

"I can't say that I've got many stories about travel to far off places! I live in Dudley and work in Erdington. On graduating, I did experience the exotica of Brighton, working for George Wimpey Construction, who sponsored me through my degree. However, having met my future wife, Julia, in my final year (she was at the Poly and worked at Hawkins wine bar) I relocated back to the Midlands in 1984 and haven't left since. We got married in 1985 and have two boys, one who has turned to the dark side (he's at Birmingham University). After a number of employment changes, including a period working with a fellow graduate, Tony Cook (1983 BSc Building Economics and Measurement) running our own building firm, I joined G F Tomlinson Birmingham Ltd in 2004 as Director and General Manager, overseeing a £50m p.a. construction business, with 180 employees. By a twist of fate, we won the contract to refurbish the entrance/reception to the Aston University main building last year. I had not stepped into the main building since graduation – she is wearing well and the revamped entrance adds a contemporary feel to a familiar Birmingham face. We hope to work at Aston again (hint, hint) and who knows, maybe I'll get to Brighton again soon!"



Sarah and her dog, Ollie

1990s



Andrew Willetts

ANDREW WILLETTS (1992 BSc ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE)

"After working as a System Administrator in Halesowen (a job which continued from my year in industry) I moved to the USA in 1993, where I took a similar role for a copier distributorship. There I utilised many of the programming skills I learnt at Aston and developed additional skills in networking and Windows systems. I moved into the security software industry in 1997 and worked in a Systems Engineer capacity for a decade, representing several leading security software vendors. I made the move into product management in 2007. I've been married for 11 years with a nine-year-old daughter and I live in Atlanta, GA."

SARAH BIRCH (NÉE PRICE, 1993 BSc APPLIED AND HUMAN BIOLOGY AND 1998 PhD PHARMACY)

"I enjoyed my time at Aston so much first time around that I came back and worked with Mike Tisdale's group for four years completing a PhD in Cancer Biochemistry. Following this, I worked as a Post Doc in Oxford at the Nuffield Department of Obstetrics and

Gynaecology for four years researching the mechanisms underlying pre-term labour, before deciding that life in the lab wasn't really for me. I left Oxford in 2001 and married surveyor turned historian, Simon, who's currently working on his second book. We're now based in the Welsh borders, where we can indulge our love of walking, and I work in Manchester managing the editorial team in a medical communications agency. Working as a Medical Writer gives me the chance to continue to learn about the human body and the diseases that affect it, without the frustrations that can be inherent in lab work!"

MELANIE COESHOTT (NÉE REAY, 1997 BSc BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND FRENCH)



Melanie and Simon on their wedding day

After graduating I went on to complete a three-year Chartered Accountant training contract with BDO Stoyward, Nottingham. I then stayed in Nottingham for a further five years working for Capital One Bank in various finance roles in UK and France. I also completed an MBA at Nottingham University in my 'spare time'. I then moved to Belgium to take up the role of Assistant Controller for MasterCard Europe. I have been here two and a half years now – time really flies when you are having fun! Last October I got married to my long-term, long-distance partner Simon – that is maybe an understatement, we eloped to New Zealand! We are now expecting our first baby and are looking forward to the changes and challenges that will bring."



SEAN McMANUS (1995 BSc INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND GERMAN)

Sean has published his third book and debut novel called 'University of Death'. The book satirises the music industry and is named after the band at the centre of the action. It includes fictionalised cameos from some well-known pop stars, but focuses on those who are at the bottom of the industry and trying to claw their way up.

The story takes a slice through the music business: from the boardroom to the stage; from the studio to the record fair. It explores how fans relate to their favourite bands, how businesses use technology to manipulate consumers, and what would happen if the music industry disappeared overnight. Sean has had several books published before including 'Small Business Websites That Work', published by Prentice Hall, and the co-authored 'Customer Service Pocketbook', published by Management Pocketbooks. Sean has self-published this novel. He said: "Artists like Prince and Radiohead have shown that self-publishing is a credible way to reach an audience, and the Internet enables most authors to reach readers much more quickly than they can through conventional publishers. Each book ordered through www.universityofdeath.co.uk is printed on demand, so the project is environmentally friendly too: only those copies which the market demands will ever be printed."

SYLVIA MULENGA JOHN (1997 MBA)

"My first baby was due at the same time as my graduation ceremony, but luckily I made it through and Chanda was born three days later. Nearly two years later Musonda was born and I was set in my new role as a mother of two. I embraced my new identity as a mother and incorporated part-time work. I was happy with home life but unfulfilled with the part-time jobs/careers available for mums trying to get back into the workforce. Uninspired and frustrated, in 2005 my idea was born with the encouragement of my dad. Two years since its inception, Africabound Adventures now offers bespoke safari holidays to Zambia and the southern region ranging from adventure, walking, cultural, corporate and eco-safaris to suit all budgets, right through to the ultimate tailor-made wedding/special occasion package. I work from home, which provides flexible hours allowing me to achieve a work-life balance. I am passionate about what I do since I love Zambia – the land, the people, wildlife and the sun! It is an exciting venture, promoting fantastic safaris in an unspoilt wilderness with its vast game, residing in some of the best lodges and bush camps on the continent. It makes me want to go just talking about it! I plan to visit again on safari and stay in touch with my suppliers next year. In the time I have left to spare, I enjoy Karate with my two girls now aged eight and ten and I'm working towards my brown belt. For more information on tailor-made safaris to Zambia visit www.africaboundadventures.com"



Sylvia and daughters,
Chanda and Musonda

2000s



Reza Hooda

REZA HOODA (2002 BSc INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND FRENCH)

"I started work after graduating as a graduate trainee for PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in Birmingham. After three rigorous years of studying for exams and working at the same time, I qualified as a chartered accountant in 2005. Being a glutton for punishment, I decided to put myself forward for another set of exams – this time for the Chartered Institute of Taxation – and I qualified as a chartered tax adviser in 2006. I have now worked for just over five years with PwC in their tax department advising entrepreneurs, private companies and high net worth individuals on structuring their affairs so as to pay as little tax as possible! Although I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at PwC, my dream has always been to run my own business. An opportunity has recently come my way and I am now just about to embark on pastures new by buying into an accountancy practice as a partner. The company is called Walji & Co and is based near to Southampton. Despite the relative risks involved with the venture, I'm very much looking forward to the challenge of expanding the practice and being my own boss. So, having arrived in Birmingham 10 years ago to start my studies, it's now time to move on! As if this much change wasn't enough, I'm also looking forward to being a dad for the first time this April!"



Sarah Smith and Tim Davy

spotlight on...

SARAH SMITH (NÉE HOOPER, 1999 BSc INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND FRENCH) AND TIM DAVY (1997 BSc MANAGERIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STUDIES)

When Tim Davy became Web Marketing Officer at Redcliffe College, a centre that trains people for global Christian service, he joined a marketing team led by fellow Aston alumnus Sarah Smith. After Aston, Sarah worked in marketing at the Bible Society for six years. She now works part-time as Marketing and Communications Manager at Redcliffe College and the rest of the time works freelance, specialising in charity marketing and web development. Her work includes iThemba AIDS Foundation (an HIV/AIDS charity working in Africa) and Habitat for Humanity (an international housing charity). Tim spent four years working for a Christian charity (two years in Birmingham; two years in Siberia!) and in 2005 he completed a Master's degree in Biblical Studies and is now working on a part-time PhD in Old Testament. The rest of the week is spent at Redcliffe College where he is responsible for web and new media activity. Both say that their Aston degrees gave them the kind of training they needed to think clearly and strategically about the challenges of this niche, but exciting sphere of marketing.

YASIRALI PIRMOHAMED (2003 MPharm PHARMACY)

"I lived for most of my life in Dubai before heading to England to study a foundation degree at Matthew Boulton College. I passed my Foundation Year with high marks and went on to study Pharmacy at Aston. Coming to the UK and living here as a student was difficult. It required a lot of hard work and self discipline. After graduation I did my pre-registration at Good Hope Hospital. This was the best year of my life as I was able to see the different roles that pharmacists work in. I then worked for a small multiple as a second pharmacist and in 2006 was offered a managerial job for the Co-op. I have now been working there for two years and have gained valuable experience. I am also involved in pre-registration training and the past three pre-regs

have been Aston graduates! My experiences at Aston are still with me and will remain with me for a long time!"

CLAIRE FRETWELL (2005 BSc MARKETING) AND NEIL RUDGE (2005 BSc INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS)

Claire and Neil married in September 2007. They met during their second year at Aston and now live in Alvechurch.



Clare and Neil on their wedding day

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:
The Development & Alumni Relations Office
Aston University
Freepost BM2599/13
Birmingham
B4 6BR

Deadline:
August 2008



Maria Martin

MARIA MARTIN (2005 BSc HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT)

"After graduating I joined the NHS Management Training Scheme for two years. During this period I undertook three placements – managing a community nursing team, working on a project to set up a medical equipment library for a local hospital and finally project work exploring and improving care pathways for the elderly in Melbourne, Australia. As part of the scheme I also studied for an MSc in Health Care Leadership and Management from which I am due to graduate this year. After completing the Management Training Scheme I decided to swap human health care for animal health care and I now work for a charity called

the PDSA. The PDSA is the UK's leading veterinary charity, caring for more than 300,000 pet patients belonging to people in need. I work as a PetAid Hospital Manager and currently run two PetAid hospitals in Kent. As a Hospital Manager I have a wide ranging number of responsibilities, from the usual things such as health and safety, finance and human resources to contribution encouragement, patient and client flow in the hospitals, efficient working, organisation of PR events and fundraising. It is definitely a job out of the ordinary with a large scope of responsibilities and one that keeps me very busy. You certainly need a love of animals to be in this role – and I am lucky to have the opportunity to combine my passion with my job. Out of work, I am still living in Kent but I like to travel as much as I can. I still swim regularly but unfortunately as yet I haven't written any books, completed any marathons or learnt to cook!"

KAMRAN SALEEM (2005 BSc MANAGERIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STUDIES)

"I settled in Birmingham after graduating and began working as a trainee accountant at my family-owned accountancy firm. This was all nice and cosy, but felt a little restrictive! In May 2006, I found a way of utilising my firm's history and reputation (est. 1974) and established a business entity within, where we fund asset/vehicles for clients across the UK. Called MHC Finance Ltd, we fund medium to top end vehicles for private and company purchases. In our first year, we completed over £4m worth of funding. We're now in our second year and have developed a partnership with Fortis Bank and are looking to double our funding turnover. I feel my course at Aston, as well as the experience I gained from my industrial placement, have put me in an optimum position to make the most of new opportunities as they present themselves. Please visit www.mhcfinance.co.uk for more information about my company."

SARAH WILLIAMS (2005 BSc COMPUTER SCIENCE AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION)



Sarah Williams

"I didn't want to go into industry straight after graduation, so I completed various temping jobs in the Midlands and in September 2005 I started working for SureStart as a receptionist. In September 2006 I gained a place on a Primary PGCE course, since being a primary school teacher is something that I've always wanted to do. After a year of study at Newman College and teaching placements with various Birmingham Schools, I gained Qualified Teacher Status in July 2007. I am currently completing my first year of teaching at a school in Handsworth, Birmingham. I teach year one (age five to six). My job is so varied and it's great! This year has really been busy as I've bought a house with my partner and we've got engaged to be married next

August. In my spare time I run a Brownie Unit in Harborne, which involves organising weekly meetings, trips and camps. I enjoy all variety of crafts including glass painting, card making, cross stitch and jewellery making. I also enjoy rock climbing and walking."

SAJID MAHMOOD (2007 BEng ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE)

"I am currently looking for a job in IT. I really enjoyed my time at Aston and received great support as a mature student. Aston is definitely the best place to learn! I would like to help mature students in the future and also serve the community in some way."



Sajid and family

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:

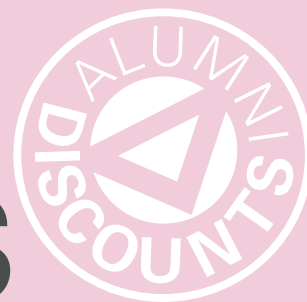
alumniinfo@aston.ac.uk

or by letter addressed to:

**The Development & Alumni Relations Office,
Aston University, Freepost BM2599/13
Birmingham, B4 6BR**

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 August 2008.)

ALUMNI DISCOUNTS



On-campus benefits

CONFERENCE FACILITIES: Conference Aston is offering alumni 10% off conferences booked* with them at either of their venues, Aston Business School Conference Centre or Lakeside 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 (double occupancy) | £100.00 |
| Superior Room (single occupancy) | £91.00 |
| Superior Double | £106.00 |

To take advantage of the above offers, please call Conference Aston 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.conferenceaston.co.uk

*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 The Development & 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 on campus. 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 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 is 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.



BEST WESTERN is 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.



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'.

NATIONAL CAR RENTAL is offering Aston University alumni preferential rates on car and van hire in the UK and on international car hire in over 80 countries worldwide – including all the major destinations. For a National car or van quotation, or to make a booking, please call 0870 191 6950. To benefit from these preferential rates please quote:

| | |
|----------|----------------------------|
| A001639 | for UK car hire |
| A001640 | for UK van hire |
| 8580898 | for International car hire |
| A001639G | for Guy Salmon hire |

AMAZON ASSOCIATES: The Development & 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 Development & Alumni Relations Office.

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re:UNIONS

A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Aston graduates are literally on every continent in the world and we are always delighted to report your meetings and activities in Apex. The past few months have been very busy. Our international chapters have been meeting up regularly with each other to network professionally and socially. There have also been a number of occasions when Aston staff have visited overseas and were excellently looked after by our alumni. A big thank you to all our 'meeters and greeters' in the four corners of the world. Here's a taster of our international activities.

Vietnam

Nguyen Thu Ha and Tran Thuy Anh (2005 MSc International Business) join Angela Edkins from Aston's Careers Service at an education fair in Vietnam, November 2007. They volunteered to talk to prospective students about their time at Aston and assisted in translating Angela's advice for local students. Alumni in Vietnam enjoyed dinner in a local restaurant the evening before.



Korea

Alumni meet David Bennett (Aston Business School), Beverly Adab (School of Languages & Social Sciences) and Gina Rippon (School of Life & Health Sciences) in Seoul, October 2007.



Athens

Navdeep Uppal from Aston Business School gathered together MBA and MSc alumni for dinner on a recent trip to Athens. These gatherings are a time to network with fellow professionals as well as to find out the latest news from Aston University.



India

A chance to meet informally after work was offered to Aston alumni in Delhi when Liza Rodger of Aston's International Office came to town. Drinks and nibbles awaited our alumni as they talked about the possibility of starting their own chapter.



Thailand

Thank you to alumni who helped at the Bangkok education fair. Angela Edkins from Aston's Careers Service met alumni at an education fair in Thailand in November 2007.

1977 Behavioural Science Reunion

On 6 October last year, a group of 1977 Behavioural Science graduates returned back to campus to celebrate 30 years since graduating. Fellow graduate and Teaching Fellow/Admissions Tutor for Psychology, Pete Reddy, was the brains behind the event and treated the group to a trip around campus and then to the new Psychology labs where guests were invited to take part in a variety of different experiments. The event was rounded off with an evening meal in French restaurant, Michelle's, on Corporation Street.



London Christmas Pub Reunion

We held our annual London Christmas Pub Reunion again on 4 December at the Pitcher and Piano, Trafalgar Square. Once again, the turnout was excellent with over 100 people attending, many using the event as an excuse to either meet up with old friends or to make contact with fellow professionals. An enjoyable evening was had by all and we look forward to seeing more of you there this year!



calendar '08-'09

11-13 JULY: 40-YEAR PHARMACY REUNION

If you graduated in Pharmacy in 1968, then why not come along to the 40-year reunion organised by fellow graduate, Virginia Jervis (née Woodier). Contact Virginia on virginia.jervis@ntlworld.com for further details about this event.

26 JULY: FONDUE MEMORIES

If you graduated between the years of 2004-2007 then you are invited back to this year's Fondue Memories Reunion at the Students' Guild. Tickets are priced at £6 per person and accommodation in Lakeside is available at £30 per person, single occupancy only. A booking form can be found at www.aston.ac.uk/alumni/reunions

TICKETS WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE ON THE DOOR THIS YEAR, SO BOOK EARLY TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT!

1 NOVEMBER: 30 YEARS OF MANAGERIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STUDIES (MAS)

If you are a graduate of MAS from any year, then make sure you return for the 30-year MAS reunion. Further details will be out soon.

DECEMBER: LONDON CHRISTMAS PUB REUNION

Date tbc.

14 MARCH 2009: 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 Development & 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

News from Aston Graduates' Association

Jenny Martin updates readers on the recent activities of AGA

University Challenged

In a new departure for Aston Graduates' Association, we challenged the staff of the Development & Alumni Relations Office to a quiz in November. As it happened, they were grossly outnumbered by AGA members and friends. After a very hard fought battle, involving some fiendishly difficult questions, David Osborn, AGA Chairman and his team were allowed to claim first prize, but all praise to the alumni team for taking part against such numerical odds. The evening, which included a buffet supper, was voted a success and may well be repeated in the future if we can find another team to challenge. Thanks particularly to David and Val Harrison for acting as question masters and scorers.

SEASON'S FESTIVITIES

For our December event we returned to the Council House in Birmingham for Christmas lunch. After mulled wine and carols in the antechamber we were shown into the beautifully decorated banqueting suite to join other local societies for Christmas lunch with all the trimmings. The Christmas pudding was followed by clementines, mince pies and petit fours to ensure no one left feeling hungry. The venue was superb and the staff ensured that this was a very merry way to begin the festive season. For those in need of a little light exercise after the feast, the German market in Centenary Square provided an excuse to shop.

Visit to Birmingham Town Hall

Birmingham Town Hall was built in 1834 as the best music hall outside London. It has recently undergone a £34 million pound refurbishment over a number of years. AGA members and friends were shown around the improvements that have taken place in the auditorium, to the pipe organ and to the non-public areas. The Hall now looks stunning and is already hosting some famous concerts. We hope to return to listen to music here in the near future.



Forward thinking: welcome to 2009

It has become a tradition for AGA to start the New Year with a visit to the College of Food in Birmingham for a Gourmet Dinner. The event provides an opportunity for the students to prepare and serve a formal dinner before they travel abroad to complete their training. It provides us with an opportunity to meet together in a very convivial atmosphere and to enjoy some very good food and wine. This year was no exception. And we'll be doing it again next year! Tickets are limited, but early application would ensure that you start the New Year 2009 in style.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AGA

In 1949 the principal of the College of Technology in Suffolk Street asked some of the students in their final year if they would be prepared to form a committee to support students approaching final exams, to keep records of those who gained the Associateship of the College and to provide a sounding board for ideas for the development of the college. This committee became the Guild of Associates. This group helped in the transition of the College of Technology at Suffolk Street to the College of Advanced Technology at Gosta Green and then into the University of Aston. AGA, as we are now known, will be celebrating its 60th birthday in 2009. Any ideas for a suitable way of celebrating would be gratefully received. Furthermore, if you would like to reminisce about your time at Aston, contact the secretary via the Development & Alumni Relations Office.

Diary dates

AGA AGM 14 March

The Vice-Chancellor gave a report on the activities of the last year. The formal meeting was followed by a buffet supper as usual.

All future events are listed on our website
www.astongraduates.org.uk

Please note change of website address.

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

Several subscriptions have been returned as they have been paid to the wrong account. Please check that your sub is paid to Aston Graduates Association, A/C No. 00774235, Lloyds Bank, 2 The Priory, Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6BP (Code 30-96-28).

AGA badges are available from the secretary
(tel +44 (0)121 427 2047) price £5 to include packing and postage.



intouch

You'd like to find

A number of you take advantage of our in touch service to track down long lost friends. Whilst many are happily reunited, others remain far more difficult to locate. Do you know any of the following? If so, let us know!

CAROLINE NEAVE (1995 BSc International Business and French)

RUTH WOOD (1980 BSc German and Russian)

JANICE SMITH (1980 BSc French and German)

ANDREW GRIFFITHS (1989 BSc Human Psychology)

SIMON LATHAM (1991 BSc Human Psychology)

DAVID EDWARDS (1995 BSc MBA)

We'd like to find

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

PEYMAN ADJAMIAN (2003 PhD Applied Psychology)

EVANS AGBAMU (2007 MSc Engineering Management)

PHILLIP ALLEN (1979 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

KATE ASTON (2004 BSc Sociology and Psychology in Business)

CLAIRE BAGLEY (1992 BSc French and German)

SUSAN BAINES (1988 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

MUKESH BAJANIA (2001 BSc Information Technology for Business)

DAVID BAKER (1990 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

NOSHIN BANO (2005 BSc Marketing)

JUDITH BARTELS (2005 MBA)

ROBERT BRAY (1996 BEng Chemical Engineering)

THOMAS BROTHWELL (2003 BSc International Business and French)

DUNCAN BUCHANAN (1996 BEng Electromechanical Engineering)

DECLAN BURNS (1988 BSc Production Technology and Management)

HENRY BYEKWASO (2001 BSc Transport Management)

ADRIANA CERUSO (2005 MSc Engineering Management)

ALEXANDROS CHACHOU (2002 BEng Mechanical Engineering)

SUKHVINDER CHAHAL (1999 BSc Chemistry)

JENNIFER CHU (2001 BEng Civil Engineering)

JONATHAN CLEMENTS (1994 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

RYAN COLLIER (1997 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

CRAIG COOK (2003 BSc Sociology and Psychology in Business)

STUART COSTIGAN (2002 BSc European Studies and Business Administration)

KIERSTEN COWAN (1996 BSc Optometry)

CHARLOTTE DURNALL (2000 BSc European Studies and German)

SERGE FENOUIL-GANGI (2001 BSc International Business and French/German)

ROGER FIELDEN (1984 BSc Chemical Engineering)

CAROLINE FORMBY (1997 BSc Human Psychology)

KAREN FOX (1996 MSc Information Technology)

ROBERTA FRY (1992 BSc Human Psychology)

CAROLINE GARDNER (née Bradley, 1985 BSc Business Administration and Computer Science)

GEMMA GLAVES (2004 MPharm Pharmacy)

CATHERINE GRAY (2001 BSc Business Computing and IT)

OLIVER GREEN (2001 BSc Public Policy and European Studies)

STUART GRIMWADE (1980 BSc Building Economics and Measurement)

JOHANNES GSCHOSSMANN (2003 MSc International Business)

ABDUL HAFIZ (2003 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

MIKE HALL (2003 MSc Work Psychology and Business)

DAWN HANDS (1988 MBA)

SARAH HUMPHRIES (2005 BSc Optometry)

JENNY HUNT (1999 MSc Information Technology)

WILLIAM JORDAN (1976 BSc Production Technology and Management)

CHRISTOPHER JORIO (1998 BSc International Business and French)

SUSAN JOYCE (2003 MA Translation in a European Context)

NILAN KARADIA (1992 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

FAYE KENNING (2007 MSc Human Resource Management and Business)

SAID KHAN (1993 BSc French and Society and Government)

PAMINDER KOASHA (2005 BSc Logistics)

AGNES LARIGUET (2006 MSc Marketing Management)

ROBERT LEE (2006 MSc International Business)

DAVID LEWIS (2001 MBA)

PENG LIU (2005 BSc Maths and Business Administration)

MARIA LORITE (1998 PhD Pharmacy)

BEVERLEY MARTIN (1998 BSc Applied and Human Biology)

THOMAS MARTIN (2006 BSc Computer Science)

EUAN MCKAY (1997 BSc Optometry)

NINA MILLER (2000 BSc Public Policy and Social Studies)

ANTHONY NOLAN (2001 MSc Information Technology)

JENNIFER NOONAN (2005 BSc Human Psychology)

STEWART ORRELL (1997 MSc Information Technology)

ELIZABETH OXBOROUGH (née Alden, 1991 BEng Production Technology and Production Management)

KETAN PATEL (1994 BSc Ophthalmic Optics)

SARAH PAYNE (2004 BSc International Business and French)

ANDREW PEARCE (1991 BSc Transport Management)

TIMOTHY PEARCEY (1993 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

DUVVURI PRAKASH (2007 MSc Engineering Management)

GEMMA RUSHEN (1999 BSc Optometry)

PAUL RUSSELL (1998 PhD Chemical Engineering)

HARJOGA SAMRA (2003 MPharm Pharmacy)

LAURA SEDDON (1997 BSc French and German)

IVOR SZKOLAR (1980 BSc Physics)

LUCY TAYLOR (née Rundle, 1995 BSc Maths and Society and Government)

MARK TAYLOR (1981 BSc Electrical and Electronic Engineering)

SARAH TAYLOR (2000 BSc Psychology and French)

MARK TRACEY (2001 BSc Information Technology for Business)

EDWARD WEEKES (2004 BSc Logistics)

REBECCA WELLS (née Eastham, 1997 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

MCDONALD WILLCOX (1999 BSc Public Policy and Social Studies)

JENNIFER WILSON (née Hanson, 1991 BSc Managerial and Administrative Studies)

KIT WONG (née Leung, 1990 MBA)

BING XU (2006 MSc Business Studies)

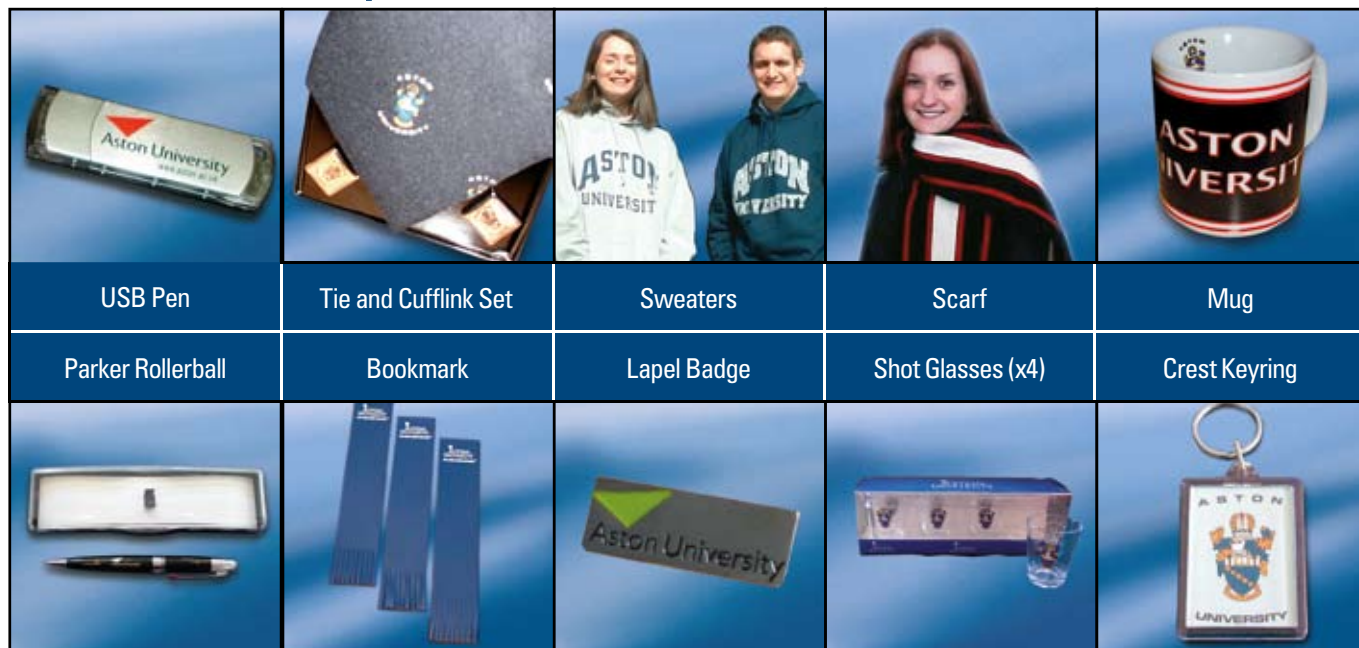
YANI ZHENG (2006 BSc Public Policy and Management/Business Administration)

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 Twhe Development and Alumni Relations Office and we will see if we are in touch with them. If we have a current address you will be invited to write a letter or leave your contact details. We will pass these on to the address we hold. As we rely on alumni telling us when

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

Gift Shop



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

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

| | Item Description | Price | Quantity | Total | | Item Description | Price | Quantity | Total |
|---|------------------------------|----------|----------|-------|-------|-------------------------------|-------|----------|-------|
| 1 | Chrome Branded 512mb USB Pen | £7.00 | | | 5 | Mug | £4.00 | | |
| 2 | Tie and Cufflink Set | £15.00 | | | 6 | Gift Boxed Branded Rollerball | £7.00 | | |
| 3 | Pink Sweater | S/M/L/XL | £25.00 | | 7 | Bookmark | £2.00 | | |
| | Grey Sweater | S/M/L/XL | £25.00 | | 8 | NEW Branded Aston Lapel Badge | £1.00 | | |
| | Light Blue Sweater | S/M/L/XL | £25.00 | | 9 | Shot Glasses (x4) | £8.00 | | |
| | Navy Sweater | S/M/L/XL | £25.00 | | 10 | Crest Keyring | £2.00 | | |
| 4 | Scarf | £20.00 | | | Total | | | | |

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

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

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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 Name: Address:

(if different) Postcode: Country: