

the alumni newsletter

intouch

ISSUEthree

AUTUMN 2005

Bristol cleared of 'bias' allegations

Bristol is not biased against public school pupils, the Independent Schools' Council (ISC) concluded in its report published in August this year.

The report, which looked at 20,000 applications for ten popular courses at the top 20 universities, said that admissions tutors treated candidates fairly, despite allegations of discrimination by some parents and schools. Rejection rates of up to 81 per cent for privately educated pupils simply reflected 'a large rise in suitably qualified applicants', the report said.

Jonathan Shephard, general secretary of the ISC, said: 'All the evidence is that

universities are putting their academic reputations first and recruiting the best candidates, regardless of means and regardless of social background.'

Bristol found itself at the centre of the row over admissions in 2003, but argued strongly that it had no bias for or against applicants from independent or state schools.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Eric Thomas, said: 'I was delighted to read this report which confirmed what we knew all along. Bristol judges on ability, motivation and potential – nothing else.'

welcome to intouch



As the new academic year began, there was a buzz around campus. First-years at Freshers' Fair discovering all that Bristol has to offer, people rushing along Woodland Road to their lectures, the gym suddenly full with staff and students. It was great to see and really made me appreciate the creative, vibrant University community we have here at Bristol.

With the introduction of higher student fees, I want to make sure that we don't lose this strong sense of community by drifting towards a consumer culture.

NUCLEUS, which you can read more about on the back page of this newsletter, will be a 'hub' where, I believe, our community will grow and thrive. It will provide a shared space for staff and students right at the heart of the University; a space to be creative, to think, to meet and to learn.

We hope that NUCLEUS will be completed around 2009, when we celebrate our centenary. I can't think of a better way to mark 100 years of the pursuit of knowledge here at Bristol.

Professor Eric Thomas, Vice-Chancellor

inside

NUCLEUS: The Bristol student experience will be transformed by a £45 million complex to be built right at the heart of the University. Read more on the back page.



coasting along

everest record



chemistry first

sporting weekend



'The city is one of the most attractive in Britain, as well as possessing a vibrant youth culture'

The Times Good University Guide 2006

'Bristol was one of the five universities most highly rated by head teachers'

Survey conducted for *The Sunday Times*, published 2 October 2005

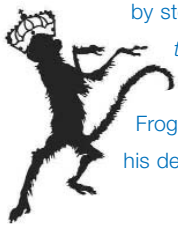
UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS

The University received more than 30,000 applications for the 3,100 home-funded undergraduate places this year. More than 95 per cent of the 3,100 intake put Bristol as their firm choice.

inbrief

BACK TO BEDLAM

Former Bristol student James Blunt (BSc 1996) has taken the music world by storm with his debut album *Back to Bedlam*. James, who studied sociology, knocked Crazy Frog off the number one spot with his debut single *You're Beautiful*.



James Blunt

DOUBLE VICTORY FOR ENGINEERS

Two engineering students have been awarded a prestigious Leadership Award Scholarship from the Royal Academy of Engineering, beating thousands of applicants from all over the UK. Daniel Dodd (2nd year, MEng in Aeronautical Engineering) and Daniel Meredith (3rd year, MEng in Engineering Design) were among only 26 undergraduates to receive the award.

NEW CHIEF EXEC FOR SAVE THE CHILDREN

Save the Children appointed Jasmine Whitbread (BA 1986) as its new Chief Executive in September this year. Jasmine was previously International Director and Deputy Director of Oxfam.

Students shine with gold and silver

A partially sighted student from Pakistan studying at Bristol has been crowned International Student of the Year 2005 by the British Council. Muzzamil Lakhani was selected from 12 finalists to receive the Gold Award and £2,000 in prize money. Another Bristol student, Dionna Tong, from Singapore, won the Silver Award and £1,000 in prize money.

Physics student Muzzamil's inspirational story of 'triumph over adversity' won the top award. His life has been transformed since he began undergraduate studies at Bristol University. His severe visual impairment meant he was unable to walk even short distances unescorted back home in Pakistan, and his life and academic choices were limited.

Comprehensive support networks at Bristol have helped him to lead an independent life, both on and off campus. Within a month of arriving in the UK, Muzzamil had started to train with a long cane, helping him to become more independent. He joined the Institute of



Above: International Student of the Year Muzzamil Lakhani with Lord Kinnock

Physics, became a member of a choir and took piano lessons. He has recently secured a work placement with Unilever. Muzzamil said: 'My life took a U-turn the day I came to Britain. The University has been phenomenal in helping me, and the city of Bristol has stolen my heart.'

The Rt Hon Lord Kinnock, Chair of the British Council, described Muzzamil and Dionna as 'truly exceptional'.



Student Community Action's production of *The Wind in the Willows*, held in the grounds of Goldney Hall this summer, raised nearly £5,000 for the Avon Wildlife Trust to preserve riverbanks in and around Bristol.

£14 MILLION BOOST TO SOUTH-WEST RESEARCH

Universities in the South West have formed a £14 million partnership to boost research in areas of vital economic importance to the region. Called Great Western Research, the project is led by, and will be run through, Exeter University on behalf of its lead partners, Bristol and Bath Universities, and ten other south-west higher education institutions.

Bristol climbers killed in Tajikistan

The tragic death of two young Bristol graduates in a mountaineering accident in Tajikistan, central Asia, has shaken the University community.

Simon Spencer-Jones (MSc 2000, MBChB 2005) and Ian Hatcher (MEng 2001) were taking part in a six-week expedition along with eight former members of the University's Mountaineering Club. The pair were climbing Revolution Peak when a blizzard hit at 22,800ft. When they failed to arrive at the pre-arranged rendezvous point, an extensive search was organised, but found no trace of the climbers.

Simon's mother, Dr Julia Thornely, said of her son: 'He was doing what he loved so much and living his life to the full. Simon made it clear that he gained enjoyment and satisfaction from everything he has done and all that he has achieved. He has touched many lives and they have touched his and, in his own words, that is all anyone could have asked for.'

One of Ian's friends described him as 'a kind and considerate friend who loved testing himself against the challenges

offered by mountains, whether climbing, running or cycling. He always looked to help those finding these challenges harder than he did, supporting the less experienced members of our expedition.'



From left to right: Ian Hatcher, Simon Spencer-Jones and Chris Gudgeon (MSc 2001) on the summit of Pelvoux

Edward Bailey, last year's Mountaineering Club president, described Simon and Ian as 'inspiring people, both as climbers and friends. They will be sorely missed by all who knew them.'

Simon's parents have created a memorial fund in his memory. Anyone who would like further information should contact them through Rachel Edwards, tel: +44 (0)117 928 7940.

Chemistry first

Two Teacher of the Year awards, given by The Royal Society of Chemistry, have been won by Bristol staff. This double award in one institution is unique, since three of the four awards went to school



teachers and only one to a lecturer in higher education. Dr Dudley Shallcross won the Higher Education Teaching Award and Tim Harrison won the Schools Education Award. Both awards can be claimed by the University because school teacher Tim Harrison has been appointed as Bristol ChemLabS Teacher Fellow for 2005/06.

inbrief

CLARA SNAPS UP THE BEST OF BRITISH TITLE

Clare Molden (BA 2004) beat off tough competition to be named BG Group Student Photographer of the Year at the 2005 Picture Editors Awards. Clare, who studied English at Bristol, is now studying photojournalism at Norton College.

PALLIATIVE CARE AWARD

The Department of Palliative Medicine has received the 2004 University Award of the International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care based in Houston, USA. The award is open to universities all over the world.

ARCHITECT OF THE YEAR

A Bristol graduate was named 2005 Architect of the Year at the Building Awards ceremony in recognition of his company's well-designed, affordable housing. Mark Bottomley (BA 1983) established bptw partnerships 17 years ago in his flat in Bethnal Green.



From left to right: Alan Wright (bptw partnership), Denise Chevin (*Building* magazine) and Mark Bottomley at the Building Awards ceremony



Not just coasting
along...

Bristol zoology graduate Miranda Krestovnikoff (BSc 1994) (pictured above) presented the BBC's landmark series *Coast*, which hit our screens in July. A 13-part series on BBC2, *Coast* celebrated the unique character of Great Britain's coastline, exploring both its human history and natural beauty.

Miranda, also presenter of Channel 4's *Wreck Detectives*, was part of a five-strong team of historical and geographical experts, each presenting

in their field of expertise. During the filming she dived around the UK covering the wildlife stories for the programme, including minke whale watching off the Isle of Eigg, catching and tagging porbeagle sharks in Padstow and looking for leatherback turtles in north Wales.

The team also included two Bristol University academics: Dr Alice Roberts from the Department of Anatomy and Dr Mark Horton from the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Bristol graduate killed in London bombings

Over 1,000 people attended the funeral to commemorate the life of Bristol graduate Jenny Nicholson (MA 2005), who was killed in the terrorist attacks on London in July. Jenny was working for a music publisher in London and it was on her daily commute from Reading that the bomb exploded at Edgware Road.

The funeral, held at Bristol Cathedral, celebrated Jenny's life through music, poetry and readings. Members of the Bristol University Choir performed an arrangement of the song *Hallelujah*.

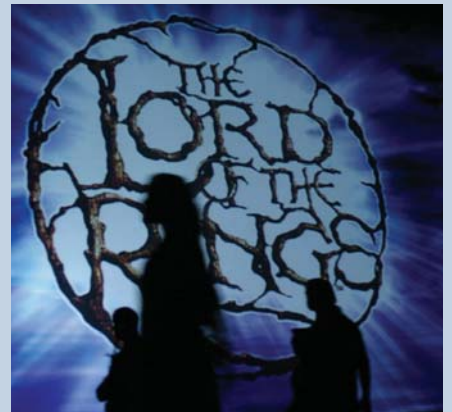
In the midst of this tragedy, Bristol had reason to be proud of its alumni. The policeman who headed up the hunt for the bombers – Deputy Assistant Commissioner Peter Clarke (LLB 1977) – is a Bristol graduate.

He used to be in charge of the Met's Royalty and Diplomatic Protection Department and took over the role of national co-ordinator of UK anti-terrorism operations, in addition to heading the Met's Anti-Terrorist Branch, in May 2002. He is highly rated by fellow officers and the Muslim community.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SOUTH WEST NEWS SERVICE

Students help Havana

A group of Bristol engineering students have forged a link with a university in Havana in a bid to improve the Cuban capital's water supplies. The Engineers Without Borders society at Bristol – which has more than 200 student members – is currently working on plans to upgrade the city's main aqueduct. It secured \$17,000 in funding by winning the prestigious Mondialogo Engineering Award.



Middle-earth may seem a long way from the cafés and bars of Clifton, but the eagerly-anticipated musical production of *Lord of the Rings* is a very Bristol affair. Directed by Mathew Warchus (BA 1988), choreographed by Peter Darling (BA 1985) and adapted by Mathew Warchus and Shaun McKenna (BA 1978), it is due to open in Toronto in spring 2006.

Don't expect dancing hobbits and a chorus of dwarfs. Mathew Warchus describes it as being 'plunged into the events as they happen. The environment surrounds us. We participate. We are in Middle-earth.'

ALUMNI APPOINTMENT

Lady Pitkeathly has been appointed Chair of the independent advisory board for Futurebuilders, the Home Office-backed investment fund. The fund is designed to help voluntary and community organisations build up capacity to provide public services.

By gum he's won it!

Britain's pavements could be transformed, thanks to a new non-stick chewing gum developed by Revolymer, winner of the University's £30,000 New Enterprise Competition.



Professor Terry Cosgrove (pictured left with Dr Roger Pettman) has developed a new polymer which would make chewing gum much easier to clean off the streets, thereby saving the taxpayer millions of

pounds in cleaning costs. Similar techniques in controlling adhesiveness will be applied to other materials in coating surfaces in hospitals, medical devices and anti-graffiti paints.

Second prize was won by *Null Hypothesis* – the journal of unlikely science, a new monthly publication that

offers a unique, fresh and humorous view of science. Despite only being in the shops for a few months, it has already won widespread acclaim and was called the 'Private Eye of science' by *The Daily Telegraph*.

Ashley Berlin won the Undergraduate Prize for his Cargo Measurement Systems. He had already built a prototype for them after developing the idea during a work experience placement.

And you could be a winner too...

If you have a great business idea, why not enter the 2006 New Enterprise Competition? It is open to those who have graduated in the past five years, as well as University staff and students.

For more information, please visit www.bristol.ac.uk/research/enterprise/competition

On top of the world

Record-breaking Bristol student Jake Meyer (pictured right) became the youngest person to complete the Seven Summits – the ascent of the highest mountain on each of the seven continents – when he reached the summit of Everest on June 4 this year.

He described reaching the top as 'an immense feeling of elation and relief. I had been battling for the last five years and it was done. I had achieved my life goal.'



inbrief

HIP, HIP, HURRAY

People requiring joint replacement surgery could soon have their own cartilage grown in a laboratory and then implanted instead of conventional prostheses, thanks to pioneering stem cell research in Bristol. This form of regenerative medicine may offer doctors the opportunity to help patients with conditions once thought untreatable, such as osteoarthritis.

FUNDS SECURED FOR FELLOWSHIP

Bob Fowler, Dean of Arts, and Katie McKeogh, Major Gifts Manager in the Campaigns and Alumni Relations Office, have secured funds for a new post-doctoral fellowship in the University's Institute of Greece, Rome and the Classical Tradition.

CELEBRATING BRUNEL

The University is currently in talks with the *SS Great Britain* with a view to establishing a permanent institute devoted to the study of maritime archaeology and the history of technology to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the birth of the great engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

The plan is to bring the University's Brunel archive, which is the largest in the world, and *SS Great Britain*, designed by Brunel, together in a new development close to the dock. There will be a library and facilities for postgraduate teaching and research and outreach activities.



inbrief

A CLIPPER ADVENTURE

Bristol graduate Laura Gosling (MBChB 2003) is taking part in a 35,000 mile sailing race around the world.

Described by Laura as 'an adventure of a lifetime', the Clipper Round the World Race will take about ten months to complete, and will pass

through ports in Brazil, South Africa, Australia, Canada and Japan.

You can follow Laura's progress at www.clipper-ventures.co.uk. Her boat is *Victoria*.

FIRST EXERCISE CLASS FOR CANCER PATIENTS

Cancer patients will be able to attend exercise classes designed exclusively for them, thanks to a new programme launched by the Centre for Sport, Exercise and Health – the first of its kind in the country. Supported by Cancer Research UK, it has been launched following a successful feasibility study last year involving patients from the Bristol Haematology and Oncology Centre.

PLAY ON THE HALLOWED TURF

Never thought you would play at Coombe Dingle again? Well here's your chance. St Brendan's rugby club is looking for good social players for the forthcoming season.

Contact Chris Groves on +44 (0)117 9248905 or 07817 436635.

Weekend of sport

It was 'old heads' versus 'young shoulders' at the alumni-student sporting weekend in May this year.

First off was water polo, where youth triumphed over experience – the Students trumped the Alumni Allstars 14-8. Meanwhile, over at Coobe Dingle, the men's hockey had a nail-biting finish, with the alumni team narrowly beaten.

But the 'old heads' got their own back in the rugby match. The close encounter ended Students 26, Alumni 28.

Bristol alumni are keenly plotting the downfall of the young pretenders on 6 and 7 May next year ... watch this space.

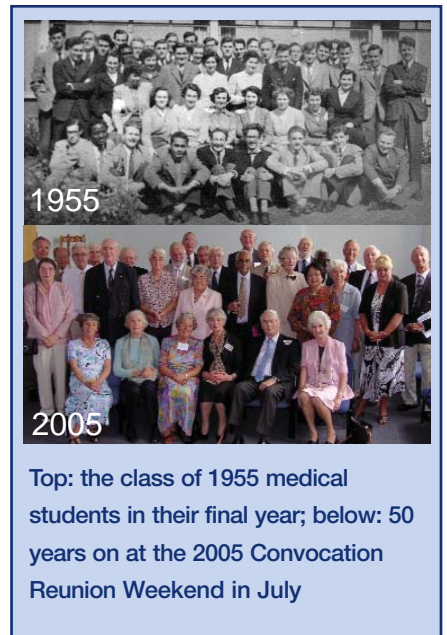
PHOTOS: LIZ GREEN

Rugby reunion

Mike Aylwin (BSc 1994), now *The Observer's* rugby editor, and Matt Singer (BSc 1995), a former professional at Saracens, were among the past members of the University's Rugby Football Club who came together for a reunion in June this year.

Seventy-five people attended in total, including the current and previous years' captains, as well as former players from the early 1970s to the very recent past.

A raffle raised £1,200 in support of rugby at Bristol.



Top: the class of 1955 medical students in their final year; below: 50 years on at the 2005 Convocation Reunion Weekend in July

25 years of engineering maths



MARTIN CHAINNEY

Computer dating and Lego robots were just a part of the celebrations marking the 25th anniversary of Engineering Mathematics at Bristol, attended by many of the department's alumni.

No other university in the UK teaches engineering mathematics as a single discipline. Yet it thrives at Bristol, both in teaching and research.

CALLING ALL SABBATICALS

Were you a sabbatical officer during your time at Bristol? If so, read on. The current Union President, Gaston Dolle, is organising a reunion of sabbaticals in the Students' Union on Saturday 4 February 2006. Please contact Gaston for information and tickets: president-ubu@bristol.ac.uk. Places are limited, so first come, first served.

V-C wins award for exceptional initiative



The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Eric Thomas, has received the Chief Executive Leadership in Europe award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) in recognition of his exceptional initiative in promoting and supporting education.

Professor Thomas has taken the lead in establishing a new UK framework for philanthropy in higher education. His

report for the Department for Education and Skills' Task Force on Voluntary Giving to Universities, published last year, had a galvanising effect on universities' relations with friends and alumni and on their commitment to a professional basis for development operations.

'Eric Thomas has helped to make educational philanthropy seen for what it is – necessary, honourable and possible,' commented Joanna Motion, CASE's Vice-President for International Operations.

inbrief

ANNUAL FUND SOARS

It wasn't just a good year for the Annual Fund, it was a great year. Over 3,300 graduates donated to their University, giving nearly £439,000. And that meant even more students benefited from alumni gifts. Rosie Dale, Head of Annual Giving, said: 'Thank you so much. Bristol scholars are truly indebted to the goodwill of our donors, who are giving them such a great start in life.'

The University of Bristol and IMA bring you the alumni travel programme 2006

Cruising in Burgundy

2 to 8 July 2006, £1,490

Led by Michael Liversidge

Join our exclusive hotel barge *Litote* along the Burgundy Canal – a sybaritic mixture of elegant wines and excellent food and a programme of escorted visits to the mediaeval sites of Burgundy. We visit the Hospice de Beaune, the 15th-century Chateau de Comarin, the village of Chateaufort en Auxois and the Abbey of La Bussière. This is punctuated by visits to the vineyards of Mersault, Beaune and Clos de Vougeot. The price is fully inclusive of travel, the hotel barge and sumptuous cuisine, with a selection of wines of the region with lunch and dinner.



IMA has pioneered alumni travel in the UK and alumni from Bristol have travelled with us all over the world. Our tours are designed for people with a general interest in the featured country, but all our itineraries have a strong educational element provided by our expert Bristol lecturers.



Byzantium, Ephesus and an Aegean Cruise

20 June to 1 July 2006, £1,290

Led by Dr Tamar Hodos

This is an excellent value 12-day tour of the famous Byzantine and Ottoman sites of Old Constantinople, followed by a visit to ancient Troy and Ephesus, including a one-week private Aegean cruise along the coast of Ionia and Caria. It's the perfect mix of mental stimulation and bodily relaxation.



Galapagos Islands Cruise and Ecuador

23 November to 4 December 2006 £2,890

Led by Dr Andy Bennet

We are delighted to offer this destination for the third time, a comfortable cruise to one of the great ecological experiences on earth. Accompanied by our Bristol ecologist, this combination of colonial cities, stunning scenery and 'The Enchanted Islands' makes for a super tour.

Total Solar Eclipse, Turkey 28 March to 7 April 2006, £1,050

Led by Professor Mark Birkinshaw
Experience a total solar eclipse with our tour to Classical Lycia at the time of the eclipse.



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Events diary

ANNUAL CONVOCATION RECEPTION AND AWARDS CEREMONY – 15 Dec 2005

SABBATICALS' REUNION – 4 Feb 2006

SPRING LECTURE – 15 Feb 2006

To be given by Dr Anne Weyman, Chief Executive of the Family Planning Association

SCIENCE ALIVE – 17 and 18 March 2006, The Galleries, Bristol

SPORTS WEEKEND – 6 and 7 May 2006

CONVOCATION REUNION WEEKEND – 21-23 July 2006

All alumni are invited. There will also be extra celebrations for those who graduated 25, 30, 40 and 50 years ago.

GEOLOGY/EARTH SCIENCES REUNION – 22 July 2006

For more information about these events visit www.bristol.ac.uk/alumni



NUCLEUS: transforming the heart of the University

The Bristol student experience is set to be transformed by a new £45 million complex called NUCLEUS, which will be built right at the heart of the University.

Although still an emerging concept, the complex will house the Library, enhanced IT resources, learning and teaching space and the Students' Union. Spaces for performances and exhibitions will feature as well. It is likely to be situated with its front on Tyndall Avenue, and will provide students and staff with a central point in which to meet, work and socialise.

Professor Eric Thomas said: 'If Bristol is to maintain and strengthen its position, it must strive for even higher standards. Improving the quality of the academic and social experience is one of our main



An early impression of what Tyndall Avenue and NUCLEUS may look like

aims and NUCLEUS is a major step towards this.'

NUCLEUS will be funded from a variety of sources, including the proceeds of recent land sales and government initiatives. It is also hoped that alumni will play a key role in planning and financing this ambitious venture.

Ballroom fever for BULABDS

Bristol's Latin American and Ballroom Dancing Society (BULABDS) took first place at the British Inter-Varsity University Nationals in March this year. The team was able to travel to Blackpool for the competition, thanks

to a grant from the Alumni Foundation. Arun Arumugam, BULABDS Vice-President, said: 'Our thanks to Bristol alumni for their support. Without it we wouldn't have been able to send the team to Blackpool.'

BULABDS is now one of the largest societies in the Union, with more than 500 members.



BUILDING SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

The first ever Societies Conference took place this year, providing in-depth training to Society Officers on running a successful Union society. Over 170 officers attended, and got expert guidance in areas such as 'Managing a society budget', 'Chairing a committee' and 'Event organisation'.

The event, which was partly funded with a grant of £500 from the Alumni Foundation, proved so successful that it will now form part of the Union's annual training programme.



www.bristol.ac.uk/alumni