

MANCHESTER  
1824

The University  
of Manchester

# *your manchester*

The University of Manchester Alumni Magazine  
May 2006

## Meet **Meera Syal**

*Re-live your student days*

*Good news on cancer*

*Making a difference  
The Brooks World Poverty Institute*

*Physics gets funky*

# welcome to your manchester

Welcome to this second edition of "Your Manchester", the magazine for the 200,000 graduates of The University of Manchester.

It has been another exciting year for the University and I am pleased that I can report real progress towards meeting the goals identified in the Manchester 2015 Agenda, our ambitious strategic plan for repositioning The University of Manchester over the next decade as one of the world's leading institutions of higher learning.

In the past year, there has been reassuring recognition of the strength of the new University in international ranking of universities and in November 2005 we were named as the UK's "Higher Education Institution of the Year" at the inaugural Times Higher Awards. Research amongst our key external stakeholders, student application

rates, media commentary and feedback from within the wider higher education sector also indicate that the University is widely perceived to be pulling away from the competition.

While it is important not to become carried away with such impressionistic judgements, they do confirm that the new University has a unique opportunity to achieve the kind of "step change" improvement that inspired the merger between UMIST and the Victoria University of Manchester. The major task over the past 18 months has been to begin to invest real substance in the vision of a world class university in Manchester and confirm that the ambitious goals and aspiration of the Manchester 2015 Agenda are indeed realistic.

Evidence of progress towards those goals is perhaps best illustrated in the research field. We have recruited many wonderful

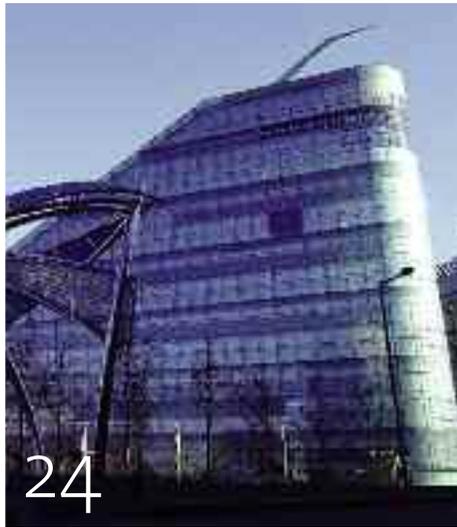
new researchers, attracted record levels of external funding and launched our first Research Institutes in health sciences, neuroscience, photon science, nuclear science and molecular imaging. In November 2005, we assumed responsibility for the activities of the Paterson Cancer Research Institute and established the Manchester Cancer Research Centre (MCRC). The MCRC will work in close partnership with the Christie Hospital and Cancer Research UK to consolidate the largest cancer research centre in Europe and an international leader in the care of cancer patients.

In November 2005, we appointed Nobel Laureate Professor Joseph Stiglitz to lead the Brooks World Poverty Institute (BWPI), a multidisciplinary centre of global excellence researching poverty, poverty reduction, inequality and growth. Graduate Rory Brooks - and his wife Elizabeth - generously agreed to support the BWPI with a gift of £1.3 million over three years. Rory has been a long-term supporter of the University and his donation represents one of the largest known gifts to support poverty research in Europe.

In the field of teaching and learning, evidence from our own surveys show that the merger did not adversely affect the student experience and exciting proposals for new courses and for improving existing programmes are emerging from all four faculties. In February, we signed a pioneering partnership agreement with the Open University that will enable students at Manchester to benefit from the latest technologies developed by the OU to enhance student learning. The partnership promises to provide an unparalleled platform for launching new joint e-learning courses around the world.

The University has demonstrated a pioneering approach in other areas. In the field of knowledge and technology





transfer, our new arrangements for commercialisation and application of intellectual property have produced some notable success stories in the fields of computing and biotechnology. Our ambitious £620 million Capital Development Programme is being delivered “on time” and “on budget” with a host of new and refurbished buildings and laboratories set to transform the Manchester campus over the next few years.

I have been particularly impressed since my arrival in Manchester in February 2004 by the commitment, enthusiasm and support for the University demonstrated by our alumni community. Wherever I have travelled in my first eighteen months as President and Vice-Chancellor, I have been struck by the affection and support that Manchester

graduates have for their university, and the very practical ways in which they are prepared to demonstrate their support by participating in events, organising local alumni groups and supporting our student recruitment, fundraising and research partnerships around the world.

I hope that the highlights that we have selected for the pages of this magazine will give you a flavour of the range of the University’s success over the past year and the achievements of our graduate community. The main satisfaction that we – and I hope you – will derive from the last year’s achievements is the strong foundation they provide for the major successes in the next phase of the Manchester 2015 Agenda.

Professor Alan Gilbert  
President and Vice-Chancellor

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# the news

## Manchester is crowned Higher Education Institution of the Year



The title, announced at the inaugural Times Higher Awards, was in recognition of the efforts made to 'advance substantially the University's reputation in the course of the academic year'. Prime Minister Tony Blair commented:

"Manchester has impressed the whole Higher Education sector by its successful merger last year with UMIST. But what particularly impressed the judges was how, under the leadership of its President and Vice-Chancellor Professor Alan Gilbert, Manchester's vision for the future and determination to reinvigorate itself to become one of the top research universities in the world has enthused both staff and students."

In a message to staff, Professor Gilbert said: "This award is a tribute to the efforts of all of our staff and students following what has been an exciting year. I am deeply grateful to all of you for the skill, determination and vision you have shown in getting the University up and running following the merger".

He said there was still much more work to be done to achieve the aims and ambitions of Manchester 2015, but the award was a true recognition of everyone's efforts – "it is thoroughly deserved and I am immensely proud and grateful to you all."

## And we won University Challenge!

The celebrations continued this spring after the Manchester team won this year's University Challenge contest on BBC TV.

The University beat Trinity Hall, Cambridge in one of the most nail-biting finals ever seen, eventually triumphing by 160-150.

Team member Joseph Meagher said: "The final was extremely tight - it was great television, and we were delighted to come out on top."

Manchester were semi-finalists last year but went one better this time around, under some tough questioning from host Jeremy Paxman.

This year's winning team is made up of Joseph Meagher (Politics), Gareth Aubrey (Astrophysics), Chris Holmes (Material Science) and Adrian Anslow



(Mathematics). They were selected and coached by Stephen Pearson from the John Rylands Library. Mr Pearson has even turned down an approach by the

programme makers to set questions for University Challenge in the future, because he wants to stay on to coach future teams at the University.



Jonathan Trigell

## Literary prize for Manchester graduate



Jonathan Trigell, has won the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize with his thought provoking debut novel *Boy A*.

*Boy A* tells the tale of a teenager called Jack who has had to shed his old name in order to rid himself of his former life.

The prize, which recognises fine young writers early in their careers, is one of Britain's oldest and most prestigious literary awards.

Mr Trigell was both an undergraduate and postgraduate at the University completing a BA Hons in English Language and Literature in 1996, followed by an MA in Novel Writing in 2002. He now organises events and races throughout the Alps for Natives.co.uk and is writing his second novel *CHAM*.

Sarah Waters, Chair of the Judges, commented: "*Boy A* impressed us on many levels: as a compelling narrative, a beautifully structured piece of writing, and as a thought provoking novel of ideas. It's a wonderful debut."

## New widening participation programme

A new flagship widening participation outreach scheme: Manchester Access Programme (MAP) has been developed by the University to help talented young people across Greater Manchester. The scheme will target students from under-represented and disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to excel educationally within a world class research-intensive institution.

## Genome discovery to help combat disease

An international consortium of researchers led by The University of Manchester has cracked the gene code behind a key family of fungi.

*Aspergillus* is a very common air-borne fungus which is carried all over the world as spores. Although usually harmless, the species *Aspergillus fumigatus* is now the leading infectious cause of death in vulnerable leukaemia and bone marrow transplant patients.

Project co-ordinator Professor David Denning said that fungi including *Aspergillus* played a critical role in the earth's ecosystem, being responsible for almost all degradation of plant material as well as recycling nitrogen.

"*Aspergillus fumigatus* is a major constituent of compost, and mould fungi have been important sources of drugs including penicillin," he said. "However, they are something of a *Jekyll and Hyde* and also produce toxins such as aflatoxin which can cause liver cancer. *Aspergillus* also causes a life-threatening infection for transplant and leukaemic patients, as well as being a major allergen for asthmatics."

Identifying these genome sequences will transform scientific understanding of why this group of fungi is so lethal and allergenic. "The importance of the project in helping develop new drugs and diagnostic tests, and understand and prevent allergies and diseases like pneumonia and sinusitis, cannot be overestimated," Professor Denning added. "The information revealed will also develop our understanding of the biology of composting and mycotoxin production, and provide benefits for many other areas of science and medicine."

## New commitment to environmental sustainability

The University has joined more than 300 higher education institutions in 40 countries by signing the international Talloires Declaration, the official commitment to environmental sustainability in higher education.

Composed in 1990 in Talloires, France, the declaration forms an action plan for environmental sustainability in teaching, research and outreach activities. The declaration pledges to:

- Increase awareness of environmentally sustainable development
- Create an institutional culture of sustainability
- Educate for environmentally responsible citizenship
- Foster environmental literacy for all
- Practice institutional ecology
- Involve all stakeholders
- Collaborate for interdisciplinary approaches
- Enhance capacity of primary and secondary school
- Broaden service and outreach nationally and internationally
- Maintain the movement

President and Vice-Chancellor Professor Alan Gilbert signed the declaration on behalf of the University, saying: "Signing the Talloires Declaration is symbolically important, as it commits The University of Manchester, both as a corporate citizen and as an educational institution, to responsible practice in relation to sustainability."



## World Sport Academy will boost Olympic legacy

The University has announced the creation of The World Academy of Sport Executive Centre to provide intensive, tailored education to managers and administrators working in the sport and major events sector.

With the UK now hosting the 2012 Olympic Summer Games, Leader of Manchester City Council Richard Leese, said: "Manchester has a proud history of hosting major international sporting events. It gives me great pleasure to see one of our universities teaming up with the international sporting community to deliver education solutions to the administrators of sport and major events. From a local and regional perspective this initiative will mean that we are further developing our considerable expertise and knowledge in this sector and I have no doubt that this will help to ensure that the North West is able to share the regional legacy of the 2012 Games."

## Comet dust samples to unlock secrets of the Universe

Manchester scientists are to be among the first in the world to receive samples of comet dust brought back to earth by NASA's Stardust space mission.

The cometary dust will be analysed by the Cosmochemistry research group which is hoping to unlock the secrets of what space was like before the solar system was formed.

The grains are one tenth the diameter of a human hair and the most advanced technology will be needed to break down their structure in detail. Manchester was chosen by NASA because of its highly sophisticated equipment and expertise.





*President and Vice-Chancellor Professor Alan Gilbert and Professor Brenda Gowley, Vice-Chancellor of the Open University*

# Open University partnership sends multimedia message

The University of Manchester and the Open University have agreed a new partnership to develop combined degree programmes, initially for overseas student markets.

The partnership will allow the UK's two largest universities to access each other's curriculum and draw on their complementary strengths in serving both part-time and full-time students.

Professor Alan Gilbert said: "The OU is undoubtedly the world leader in modern distance and open learning, in the development of multimedia-based

learning materials and in the excellence of its student support systems. These competitive advantages, coupled with the OU's growing strength and sophistication in on-line delivery, make it an ideal partner for The University of Manchester as we seek to enrich the learning experience of our campus-based students and embark on our ambitious international plans."

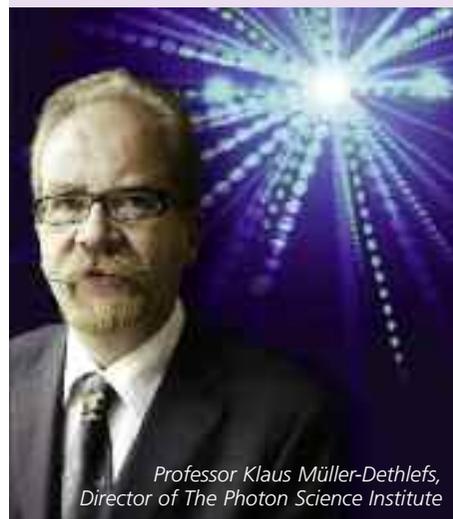
Programmes will be targeted in key markets in China, India and other parts of Asia, as well as smaller but just as important markets in Africa and Latin America.

## One of the world's leading centres of excellence

The University's £40 million Photon Science Institute, which will pioneer cutting-edge light and laser technologies, has been officially launched.

The Institute will be the largest research and teaching centre of its kind in the UK, with a projected annual research income of £5 million and more than 30 full-time academic staff led by internationally renowned scientist Professor Klaus Müller-Dethlefs .

Research will focus on the development and application of laser technologies for medicine, pharmaceuticals, life sciences and physical sciences. Projects will include new optical materials such as solar cells, and the development of new non-invasive medical technologies enabling diabetics, for example, to measure blood-sugar levels without taking a blood sample.



*Professor Klaus Müller-Dethlefs, Director of The Photon Science Institute*



Nobel prize winner Joseph Stiglitz is heading up a new interdisciplinary research centre focusing on the world's poorest nations

# Investing against Poverty

Well over a billion people - about a fifth of the world's population - live in absolute poverty and the United Nations plans to halve this figure by 2015. That is the same target year that The University of Manchester has set for becoming one of the world's top 25 universities. And the two goals are not mutually exclusive.

Former World Bank Chief Economist Professor Joseph Stiglitz's appointment as Chairman of the new Brooks World Poverty Institute at The University of Manchester is a timely opportunity. He has already played a significant role in the debate over tackling poverty, famously arguing last year for example that the

World Trade Organisation's agenda on free trade should be scrapped.

Poverty reduction, he said, requires not just market liberalization but also massive investment in aid. In other words, poor countries need to have stronger economic foundations before their markets can be thrown open to international competition.

Professor Stiglitz has an illustrious pedigree: he was an advisor to President Clinton and won the Nobel Prize for economics in 2001. He also recently hit the headlines when he published a study arguing the Iraq war could cost America \$2 trillion, far above the White House's pre-conflict estimates.

Professor Stiglitz said that as an Economist he was attracted to Manchester as the city that gave birth to the idea of free trade, and to the University's efforts to be a catalyst for development in the North of England.

It was in the mid-19th century that a group of English political economists including John Bright and Richard Cobden formed the "Manchester School". Their core belief was that the state should interfere as little as possible on economic matters, and they advocated free trade.

At the Institute's launch in February Professor Stiglitz said: "The Hong Kong trade talks for securing a fair trading

system for the poorest nations of the world were vitally important. But the deal, however, is of little more than symbolic value to the developing countries, who are coming to realise that, despite the promises they have been given, this trade round will once again deliver them little of real value."

He said that one of the first projects he had undertaken with the Institute was to hold a conference at The University of Manchester to assess the value of these trade talks. "It is the start of what I am sure will be an exciting and productive relationship with the Brooks World Poverty Institute and The University of Manchester," he said.

Through the creation of the Institute, the University aims to become a major international research centre on poverty and well-being.

It is a multidisciplinary centre seeking to devise new approaches to poverty research and the development of strategies to combat it. Staff from the School of Environment and Development will have substantial involvement.

The Institute will be staffed by over 40 researchers bringing together an international group of policy makers and representatives from the academic, business, and voluntary sectors. It will also publish a new international journal on world poverty.

The University has already gained international recognition for its work on poverty reduction through its Government-funded Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC) whose work has been drawn on by the Africa Commission, aid agencies and governments.

Chancellor Gordon Brown launched the CPRC's Chronic Poverty report at the House of Commons in 2004 calling it "a landmark report." The CPRC, a partnership involving researchers from the UK, Bangladesh, India, South Africa, Uganda and West Africa, is run out of Manchester's Institute for Development Policy and Management. Established in 1958, the IDPM is the UK's largest university-based International Development Studies department.



Rory Brooks and Professor Stiglitz

# Rory Brooks funds world class research

The World Poverty Institute came into being after Manchester graduate and international businessman, Rory Brooks, donated £1.3 million over three years to the project.

Rory graduated with a bachelor's degree in Management Sciences from The University of Manchester in 1975. He has maintained a strong relationship with the University, having been the *Alumnus of the Year* in 1999, funding a Chair in Enterprise in 2000, the first of its kind at a British University, and chairing the UMIST Alumni Association. Rory Brooks received an Hon LittD from UMIST in 2003.

This gift, being made through the Rory and Elizabeth Brooks Foundation, is one of the largest personal life-time gifts in the University's history, and among the largest known gifts to fund poverty research in Europe.

The co-founder of investment firm Mezzanine Management, an investment firm focusing on providing private equity funding to growth business, Rory Brooks, said: "I am proud to be involved with the

establishment of the Brooks World Poverty Institute at the University of Manchester, my alma mater, under the leadership of Professor Joseph Stiglitz.

"That the Institute has been able to attract an academic of his calibre is testament to the ambitious vision for the University, set out by President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alan Gilbert."

Professor Alan Gilbert said: "We already have a reputation for research and policy engagement in the fields of development economics, development studies, social anthropology, sociology and politics. The role of the BWPI will be to build on this through world-leading research on poverty in all its manifestations."

He added: "On behalf of the University I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Rory and Elizabeth for the far-sighted generosity that has played a catalytic role in launching this landmark project. This is exactly the kind of imaginative partnership based on shared values that will be critical to the success of the Manchester 2015 agenda."

# The good news about cancer...



Around half of all cancers could be prevented through changes in lifestyle – 135,000 cases a year in the UK alone

Furthermore, death rates have dropped by 11 per cent for most of the common types of cancer over the last decade. And most of this is thanks to cancer researchers and their unprecedented advances in understanding the molecular and cellular basis of cancer.

The University of Manchester has a distinguished history in the field and is about to become a world leader in the exploration and treatment of cancer, offering real hope of even more advances in diagnoses and treatments in the future.

Links between fundamental scientific discovery, clinical research and improved patient outcomes are now vital to enable further progress, and the University has recently established the Manchester Cancer Research Centre (MCRC). The centre brings together scientists and researchers from The University of Manchester, the Paterson Institute of

Cancer Research which was acquired by the University this year, the Christie Hospital and Cancer Research UK.

The Centre aims to double cancer research activity and increase funding from £30 million to £60 million per year. This will not only build on the partners' internationally renowned strengths, it will also allow strategic development of their work to have an even greater impact on cancer research.

The focus will be multi-disciplinary with academics based across the research spectrum, from basic science to clinical work. They will seek a better understanding of the events that cause, develop and maintain cancer while identifying new targets for possible intervention.

Extensive early phase trials of new agents enhanced by technology such as molecular imaging will also be carried out at the centre. Research programmes

will include existing work on breast cancer; paediatric cancer; cell proliferations, death and genome stability; experimental cancer therapeutics; and tumour microenvironment. In each of the areas the MCRC aims to be a world leader.

Fulfilling these ambitions will require considerable investment over the next five years in scientific researchers (to include ten world class researchers), new laboratories, clinical research facilities and supporting technology.

Director Nic Jones said the establishment of the centre had come at the most opportune time. "By coordinating our research activities and emphasising the need to bridge the gap between research and patient treatment, we can become a major international centre of cancer research," he said. "This research will lead to safer and better treatments for the future."

Professor Nic Jones, Director MCRC



Professor Tim Eden



Complementing the launch of the MCRC is the appointment of Tim Eden as the UK's first Professor of Teenage and Young Adult Cancer. The disease affects over 2,200 teenagers every year and is increasing. Improvements in survival rates have been much poorer than in children and many older adults in the last 20 years, and the number of patients entered into clinical trials is also much lower. This lack of research means very little is known about why teenagers get cancer.

The charity Teenage Cancer Trust has invested £2.5 million over ten years to fund Professor Eden and his team, based across The University of Manchester, the Christie Hospital and Central Manchester and Manchester Children's University Hospitals NHS Trust.

Another recent development is the award of a major EU grant to Professor Robert Hawkins for his work to develop cancer fighting cells from within the body's own immune system. The pre-clinical research project, which has been awarded nearly

12 million euros, has the potential to fight a broad range of cancers.

T-cells are part of the body's immune defence machinery which naturally protects against infections and some cancers and can be used to treat some malignant disease. But many cancers avoid destruction by the immune system. The project team, involving an international consortium of 16 partners, hopes that state of the art technologies can be used to modify the T-cells, to hunt down and destroy cancer tumours.

Professor Hawkins, Cancer Research UK Professor of Medical Oncology at the University, said: "Unlike radiotherapy and chemotherapy, which destroy both cancerous and healthy cells, Engineered T-cell Therapy has the potential to selectively destroy cancers within a patient's body using its own infection-fighting mechanisms. This project focuses on optimising that system in the laboratory."

Other work is being carried out at the Faculty of Life Sciences where scientists

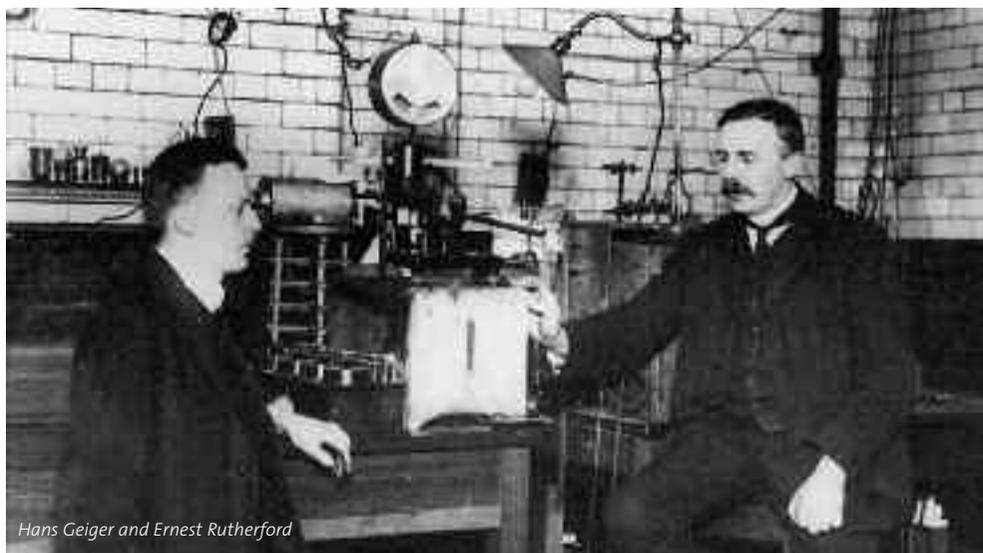
are trying to understand the basic biological mechanisms underlying cancer development. One group of researchers, for instance, is trying to understand how cells interact with their local environment and how this then regulates their decisions to live, die, stay put or migrate. These studies are particularly important in the understanding of how breast cancers evolve and spread.

Several other groups are deciphering the mechanisms which determine if and when cells should grow and divide. A third group is studying the mechanisms which maintain genome stability in normal cells and how these mechanisms go wrong during tumour evolution. Since the vast majority of human cancers have highly abnormal genomes, this area has implications for understanding many different tumours.

 [www.medicine.manchester.ac.uk/cancerstudies](http://www.medicine.manchester.ac.uk/cancerstudies)

 [www.mhs.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.mhs.manchester.ac.uk)

Nearly a century after Ernest Rutherford paved the way for nuclear physics, Manchester is once again at the forefront of the search for clean energy



Hans Geiger and Ernest Rutherford

# Warming to the Nuclear Option

Tucked away in a small room in the Schuster Building, just off the Oxford Road, is an old bureau. At first glance it looks like a desk which never quite made it to the tip – stained, chipped and ragged - but enquire as to why it has been left behind and you will be promptly given a short history of physics, life and nearly everything.

Incredibly it belonged to Ernest Rutherford and is believed to have been used while carrying out his research on properties of the alpha radiation emitted by radium at the University in 1910. It is radioactive - as the Geiger counter (an invention of Rutherford's student) proves in a sweep over its surface. Fitting then, that nearly a century later, the University has launched a new institute which aims to build on Manchester's rich heritage for pioneering atomic and nuclear research. This started with John Dalton's atomic theory (presented to the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society in 1803) and

received world acclaim with the award of the Nobel Prize to Rutherford.

The Dalton Nuclear Institute was launched in July 2005 with the aim of becoming one of the world's elite centres for nuclear teaching and research. It has plans to be the largest Institute of its kind in the UK encompassing postgraduate training and research. It boasts one of the country's leading experts on nuclear power, Professor Richard Clegg, former Director of Science at British Nuclear Fuels plc, as its Director.

Since its launch the Institute has been in the headlines for all the right reasons. Both the media and academia have welcomed its arrival – which may have been very different ten years ago at a time when nuclear power was perceived as a much 'dirtier' form of energy. But as supplies of key fuels like gas and oil show signs of decline, it appears Britain could be slowly warming to the idea of nuclear power.

In a recent MORI poll (17 January, 2006) 54 per cent of people said they would be willing to accept the building of new nuclear power stations if it would help tackle climate change, and 48 per cent agreed that the nation needs nuclear power because renewables alone are not able to meet its electricity needs.

The government's position on the future of nuclear power is yet to be defined. The current UK energy policy is to Keep the Nuclear Option Open (KNOO). However, currently no new nuclear power stations are planned in the UK and many are coming to the end of their life. In fact, by 2020 the current 22 per cent of electricity generated via nuclear will be reduced to just seven per cent if they are not replaced.

Richard Clegg's standpoint is very clear. He is adamant that new power stations are essential if the UK is to meet rising energy demands and meet its CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction target. He is also

Professor Richard Clegg, Director,  
The Dalton Nuclear Institute



clear about the role the Dalton Nuclear Institute will play in this process.

"While the UK is going to need a basket of energy generation technologies including clean-coal, oil and renewables to meet its long-term energy requirements, nuclear also remains one of the best options that we currently have for a sustainable and reliable source of energy. It can be used to provide a base-load supply of electricity and has the added benefit of being virtually carbon-free," he says.

"If a positive decision is taken on new reactor build then a whole new investment will be needed to ensure the UK has the indigenous capacity to be able to select, licence and operate a new reactor fleet, as well as attract bright new graduates into the field. The Dalton Nuclear Institute will underpin that future, supplying trained graduates and delivering five-star research in support of the industry."

Over the last thirty years the UK's nuclear research and development skills base has fragmented due to successive privatizations and reorganisations. It has shrunk significantly since the 1980's. But while the industry waits for a decision from the government on its energy policy, there is still a great deal of work to be done.

The Dalton Nuclear Institute is tackling this skills shortfall head on. Last year it helped to launch NTEC - a consortium of UK Higher Education Institutions offering a portfolio of postgraduate education in nuclear science and

technology - and in October the Consortium launched a new MSc course in Nuclear Science and Technology.

Alastair Walsh Atkins, NTEC Coordination Centre Manager, said: "NTEC, through this MSc course, aims to address this shortfall by providing an industry-recognised programme which will equip individuals with the educational background required to help manage the UK's nuclear decommissioning programme safely and economically as well as supporting any forthcoming new reactor build programmes."

The International Energy Agency predicts a rise in global energy demand of 50-60 per cent by 2030. If all else remained equal, that rising demand would be accommodated principally by fossil fuels, which have generally been the cheapest and most convenient available. But oil supplies show signs of running down and natural gas stocks also show signs of depletion. Coal remains relatively abundant, but of all fuels it produces the most greenhouse gas emissions for the energy it gives.

Sitting behind his desk, strewn with formulas and parchment, it is hard to imagine what Ernest Rutherford would have made of this 'climate' versus 'cost' conundrum. Tossing another spade of coal onto his fire to keep his Victorian lab warm, it is doubtful the thought ever crossed his mind.

 [www.eps.manchester.ac.uk/dalton](http://www.eps.manchester.ac.uk/dalton)

Michael Parker, Chief Executive BNFL



## Cockcroft Rutherford Lecture 'History of the Future'

The annual lecture series, organised by the Division of Development and Alumni Relations, is held in memory of alumnus Sir John Cockcroft and of Lord Ernest Rutherford, whose work in the early 1900's laid the foundations of all future nuclear research.

The 2005 lecture was delivered by Group Chief Executive of British Nuclear Fuels, Michael Parker, entitled: 'Nuclear Power: Consigned to History or a future source of Sustainable Energy?'. Michael is also a Manchester alumnus, receiving a Bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering in 1968 and an MBA in 1972.

The lecture focused on the changing landscape of the nuclear industry and on whether nuclear power would become consigned to history or would become a future source of sustainable energy. He said: "The future for the nuclear sciences looks much rosier now than a decade ago. We are beginning to see green shoots of a re-emergent industry, which is global in its outlook. Nuclear technologies have a strong future in the world; the UK, BNFL and Manchester intend to make a full contribution to these developments."



The list of gigs from the 1960s and 70s reads like a Who's Who of pop aristocracy and outstanding music is still a magnet for Manchester today

# The Hot Ticket is still here

Trawl through Student Union archives and you'll soon discover just why any music-crazy student might want to make The University of Manchester their place of study. Indeed Anna Ford (BA EconHons Economics 1966), now Co-Chancellor of the University, admitted that it was meeting the Beatles at Granada when she came for her interview which persuaded her that this was the place to be.

Radio 2 DJ Mark Radcliffe was another former student (BA Hons Combined Studies 1979) who got a thrill out of seeing bands at the Union's MDH, now Academy 2.

"I saw Queen on there, ACDC and Talking Heads – their support was Dire Straits. The ticket price was £1.20," he recalls.

"I was in a band with my best mate to this day, Phil Walmesley, and we were supposed to be supporting Cheap Trick – remember them? So we were really excited because we were going to be on that stage. Then Cheap Trick cancelled, but the base player who was also the Social Secretary said 'well there's nobody else playing, so we

might as well do it anyway.' I think everybody got their money back. There were about 35 people there and although there was a sound system, there were no lights, so they just switched on all the lights in the hall."

With his former colleague on the Radio 1 Breakfast show 'Lard', Mark did go on to play sell-out gigs at the Academy as the Shirehorses.

"It was still a thrill to play at the MDH. We could have played at the Academy, but playing at the smaller venue made people feel that they'd got a really hot ticket. Of course, as soon as they saw us they actually knew they hadn't."

Even now, Mark turns up every now and again for a gig with his new band, The Family Mahone, the last time supporting Shane McGowan.

"I still feel nostalgic when I go there, especially when I am going up those stairs. It is just like it was when I was 18, which is nearly 30 years ago, but it's a nice feeling," he reflects.

"I've always been in a band since I was 14 and I'm now 47 and I think I always

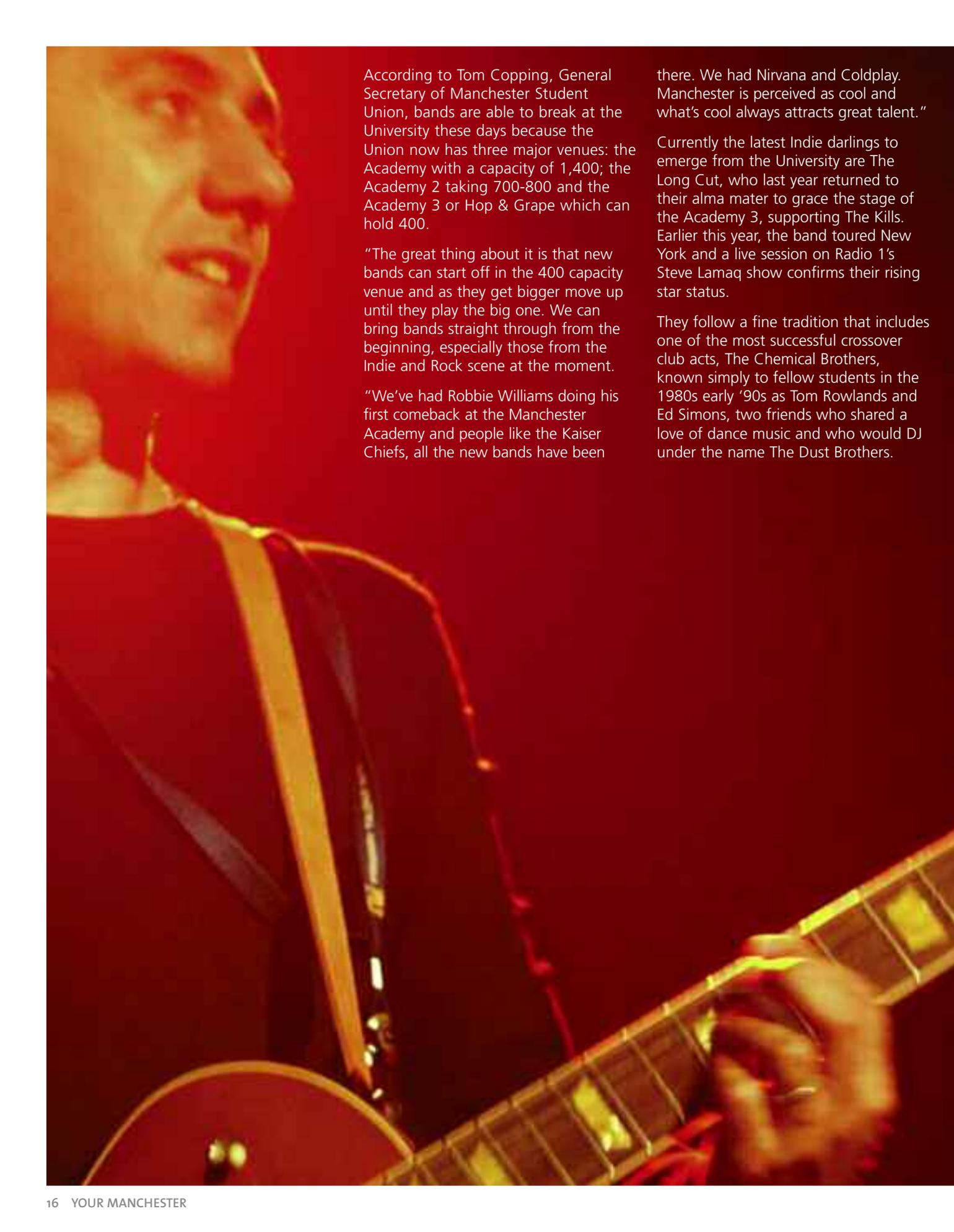
will be in a band now. It's something I'd rather be doing than playing golf."

Admittedly, the early 1960s didn't presage great things for student gigs. The annals of history reveal dad-like acts such as Kenny Ball, Acker Bilk and Lonnie Donegan first played the Union, but at least they paved the way for the future megastars.

A list of gigs from the 1960s and 1970s reads like a Who's Who of pop aristocracy. The Yardbirds, The Who, Them featuring Van Morrison, Jimmi Hendrix Experience, Captain Beefhart, Cream, Pink Floyd, T Rex, Hawkwind, Velvet Underground, TheWailers, Magazine, XTC, The Stranglers and The Cure are amongst the many who found an appreciative audience amongst the city's student population.

Mark Radcliffe reveals he saw the Stranglers when they played the Squat, which used to be close to the Contact Theatre.

"It was 30 pence and they were awful," he says. "It's not often you see something for 30 pence and felt you were robbed."



According to Tom Copping, General Secretary of Manchester Student Union, bands are able to break at the University these days because the Union now has three major venues: the Academy with a capacity of 1,400; the Academy 2 taking 700-800 and the Academy 3 or Hop & Grape which can hold 400.

“The great thing about it is that new bands can start off in the 400 capacity venue and as they get bigger move up until they play the big one. We can bring bands straight through from the beginning, especially those from the Indie and Rock scene at the moment.

“We’ve had Robbie Williams doing his first comeback at the Manchester Academy and people like the Kaiser Chiefs, all the new bands have been

there. We had Nirvana and Coldplay. Manchester is perceived as cool and what’s cool always attracts great talent.”

Currently the latest Indie darlings to emerge from the University are The Long Cut, who last year returned to their alma mater to grace the stage of the Academy 3, supporting The Kills. Earlier this year, the band toured New York and a live session on Radio 1’s Steve Lamacz show confirms their rising star status.

They follow a fine tradition that includes one of the most successful crossover club acts, The Chemical Brothers, known simply to fellow students in the 1980s early ‘90s as Tom Rowlands and Ed Simons, two friends who shared a love of dance music and who would DJ under the name The Dust Brothers.

The two graduated with BA (Hons) in History in 1992, changed their name to the Chemical Brothers and by 1995 they'd signed to Virgin, transforming them from champions of the club scene to superstar DJs with the first arena sized sound in the electronica movement. Their debut album *Exit Planet Dust* was critically acclaimed and a year after supporting Oasis at the then-named Nynex Arena in Manchester, they had their first number one with *Setting Sun*. Most recently *Push the Button*, released in 2005, has secured their position as one of the most exhilarating sounds around.

Honours Drama graduate, Tim Booth, formed James during the 'Madchester' era of the late 1980s and 1990s, when practically every funky young student wanted to come to the city. The group

signed to the city's ultra-cool Factory label and later Phonogram and had a string of hits, most famously *Sit Down* in 1989.

Another band that had its origins in the University was Sleeper. Britpop 'It Girl' Louise Wener fronted a number of Indie student bands before meeting guitarist Jon Stewart. When Louise graduated with a BA in Combined Studies in 1988 and Jon a BA in Politics and Modern History in the same year, they moved to London and formed a four-piece band called *Surrender Dorothy*. In 1993 they changed their name to Sleeper and had a chart-topping Indie hit with their debut single.

However it wasn't until 1995 they had their first mainstream top 20 hit with *Inbetweeners*. They notched up a

couple of hit albums, *Smart* and *The It Girl* and contributed to the track of *Trainspotting*. In the end, fame and fortune came too much for Louise, who has admitted a lot of what you hear about the pop industry is actually true.

As Britpop began to wane and the hits dried up, Sleeper became casualties of in-house friction at their record company: "It's quite a scummy industry," Louise once confessed in an interview on Radio London.

"It's very drug-addled and all the clichés you've heard are part of it." Bravely putting pop fame behind her, Louise has swapped life as a pop star for writing novels - or as she puts it - "a job fit for a grown-up".



Mark Radcliffe

James

The Chemical Brothers

Sleeper



Scientist Brian Cox is leading an international team researching big questions in particle physics. But he used to be on Top of The Pops and now spends his spare time appearing on daytime TV



# Putting some fizz into physics

If you want to get on TV then get a physics degree. That is Brian Cox's advice and he should know. A particle physicist who has laboratories in Geneva and The University of Manchester where he is researching the origins of the universe, he can often be found on a TV screen or radio station near you.

Dr Cox is a well known face thanks to his appearances on Channel Four's Richard and Judy as well as more weighty shows including Horizon and a regular slot on ITV's This Morning. It seems that programme bosses cannot get enough of his particular brand of popular science with just enough authoritativeness to lend credibility - without sending his viewers to sleep. His appeal is that while clearly knowing his stuff (first class honours from The University of Manchester; PhD at the DESY laboratory in Hamburg; numerous awards and currently a coveted Royal Society research fellowship) he makes sense to ordinary people.

Dr Cox's media career actually began much earlier when, as a keyboard player with rock bands DARE and D:REAM, he appeared on Top of the Pops. He went on to have many top-ten hits including the New Labour election anthem Things Can Only Get Better. He is, he admits, a born performer even though the heady days of live rock concerts have now been replaced by occasional appearances in front of a lectern.

Does he worry though that his media savvy reputation might lead to accusations that he is trivialising his subject?

Following a TV appearance this week in which he found himself explaining the science of good dancing, Dr Cox said: "We have to accept that there has been a failure on the part of the media and the school system to engage people with science. It is incredibly difficult to get science on TV and if I have to sometimes do silly stories - then slip in some particle physics or whatever - then so be it."

Actually, he says, when it is presented appropriately physics is almost universally interesting to people from all walks of life. "The trick is not to go off on worthy rants or to treat your subject as sacred," he says. Another turn-off is scientists pretending they know everything. "Admit that there are questions we don't yet understand and be authoritative without being preachy. Then you find that people - whether they are school children or day-time TV viewers - have hundreds of interesting questions."

If they asked him what his day job was, Dr Cox would no doubt blow their minds with his latest experiment to simulate the environment of the early universe by accelerating particles to ultra-high energies, colliding them together inside precision detectors and observing what happens.

The experiment is made possible by the latest in a long line of these machines called the Large Hadron Collider at the CERN laboratory in Geneva. It is a 27km tunnel which can achieve collision energies an order of magnitude larger than anything previously achieved in the laboratory. "For an experimental physicist it is tremendously exciting," he says.

As is his latest movie project. Over recent months Dr Cox has been busy advising the producers of a forthcoming science fiction film called Sunshine. Although the details are still top secret as the film isn't out until 2007, the story is written by Alex Garland (also a former Manchester graduate BA (Hons) History of Arts 1992 and author of The Beach) and happens to be about a 30 year old physicist. Scarily, the sun is beginning to die out taking mankind with it. All hopes are pinned on the crew of a spaceship carrying a device to breathe new life in to the sun.

As well as advising on the credibility or otherwise of the science, Dr Cox made sure that the character of the scientist was right, a task he was well qualified for. "I even wrote down bits of physics which were pinned up inside the spaceship," he said. "Lets hope it helps to save the world."



# Sweetening the Pill

Diabetes is predicted to become one of the greatest threats to human health over the next twenty years. The disease is still incurable, but Manchester scientists are making progress with stem cell research

As global obesity levels rise, so too does the incidence of diabetes with the World Health Organisation predicting a doubling of the estimated 150 million sufferers by 2025.

And while the problem looks set to remain acute here in the West, predictions for developing countries look even gloomier.

Diabetes is an incurable condition causing loss of insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. Sufferers manage the disease with medical intervention and through careful regulation of sugar intake in the diet, but they often face an uncertain future with the threat of heart disease, damage to the body's nervous system and other serious health complications.

Professor Mark Dunne is a leading expert in diabetes research and co-founder of the University of Manchester's Diabetes and Obesity Research Network. His research, much of which is carried out in collaboration with MRC research fellow Dr Karen Cosgrove, is investigating the potential of insulin-secreting cell biology and human embryonic stem cells – master cells that scientists believe can turn into any kind of human tissue, including potentially healthy cells for the cure of diabetes.

“It is now widely recognised that embryonic stem-cell technology has the future potential to alleviate the problem of human tissue supply for transplantation-based therapy of diabetes,” Professor Dunne said.

“We hope in the future to derive human insulin-secreting cells from embryonic stem cells - according to guidelines of the Department of Health and with full ethical and legal permission.”

Research elsewhere in our Faculty of Life Sciences, in collaboration with Oxford University, has for the first time laid bare the structure of a key house-keeping protein implicated in diabetes and other diseases of insulin-secreting cells.

The research, recently published in the European Molecular Biology Organization Journal, will not only give a greater understanding of causes of the disease but may lead to better treatments.



Professor Dunne added: "For more than 20 years we have known that these channels are important. They are the target for the many anti-diabetic drugs that are taken by many millions of patients. Defects in the genes encoding the channel give rise to a rare form of infantile diabetes. They also predispose some people to the disease, and cause a lethal disease of uncontrollable insulin secretion in newborns – Hyperinsulinism in Infancy."

While studies to find better treatments for diabetes continue, another group of researchers may hold the key to tackling the problem of obesity – a major cause of diabetes in adults.

Manchester biologists, working with colleagues at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore, have made a major advance in understanding what makes a substance taste sweet.

The research could help pave the way for the development of low-calorie sweeteners that mimic natural sugar and leave no bitter aftertaste.

"Our study has for the first time measured how sugar and one synthetic sweetener interact with the two types of taste receptors on the tongue," said Dr Graeme Conn, who heads the team in Manchester.

"Some synthetic sweeteners only interact with one receptor but we found that sugar interacts with both. Similarly, sucralose, the sweetener used in Splenda®, also interacted with both receptors but with a greater affinity to sugar. Knowing what molecular mechanisms are at play has given us a greater understanding of what makes sugar taste sweet and will no doubt help us design better sweeteners."

The research findings, published in the scientific journal *Current Biology*, have implications for diabetic patients who need to regulate their sugar intake.

One of the serious medical conditions suffered by diabetic patients is damage to the body's nervous system, which in severe cases can result in loss of toes and feet. But experts in Manchester's

Faculty of Life Sciences believe their research into a new treatment for nerve damage caused by the disease could bring relief to millions of patients.

The team, working with colleagues at American biotech firm Sangamo BioSciences Inc, has discovered a way of stimulating genes that prevent nerve damage caused by the disease.

Professor David Tomlinson, who is leading the research in Manchester, says the study has massive potential for the management of diabetic neuropathies or nerve disorders. "Diabetic neuropathy is a major problem in insulin-dependent diabetes, particularly in patients who have had the disease for a period of time," he said. "This approach to gene therapy is quite different to previous attempts at treatment as, rather than injecting a gene that produces a 'foreign' copy of a therapeutic protein we turn on the patient's own gene to produce a natural version of this beneficial protein. The most significant advantage of this is that the protein is made as if the patient's body had made it naturally."

"Our study has shown that a single treatment with a DNA-binding protein, protected against nerve damage that in humans can lead to limb loss."

Meanwhile, other researchers in Life Sciences are working on the control of appetite and obesity (Dr Simon Luckman, Denis Burdakov, and Professors Alexei Verkhratsky and Anne White) and on the signalling events caused by insulin (Dr Alan Whitmarsh).

In our Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences researchers are investigating diverse clinical aspects of diabetes, including early methods of diagnosis, links with cardio-vascular disease and obesity and high blood pressure. Other medical research in the Faculty is focussing on wound-healing and the use of larval therapy to treat infections, as well as looking at depression and anxiety in diabetic patients.

 [www.ls.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.ls.manchester.ac.uk)

"We have managed to produce the first three-dimensional picture of this protein," said Professor Robert Ford, the structural biologist leading the research in Manchester. "It's a very complicated beast: it actually comprises eight different proteins cooperating together in a large, complex structure. Until now, scientists have had to work largely in the dark; our research at last shines a light on the functionally significant parts of the structure."

The protein, a receptor for sulphonylureas, is part of an ion channel complex which act as 'tunnels' in the membranes of cells and, in the insulin-secreting cell, serve as 'electric sensors' of sugar levels in the blood.

# Women's Work

Many people dream of ditching the boss and starting their own business venture but it seems men are much more likely to take the plunge. Just what is holding back female entrepreneurs?

Bill Gates, Richard Branson, Alan Sugar...most of us could come up with a handful of household names who have turned small businesses into global successes, but why are so few of them women? Do men have all the good business ideas? Or are other barriers preventing women from getting started with their own business enterprises?

Having interviewed more than sixty women business owners from across the North West of England, senior lecturer, Sandra Fielden, has established that women entrepreneurs have no shortage of great business ideas. They do, however, face a number of debilitating hurdles. Dr Fielden, of Manchester Business School, argues that only when the various support agencies start to take account of these problems will they really be able to help women succeed in small business.

Figures show that the number of people starting new businesses in the UK is increasing, and the entrepreneurial rate is now higher than that of Germany, France, Italy and Japan. At the start of 2002 there were an estimated 3.8 million business enterprises and it is widely acknowledged that small and micro businesses have a crucial role to play in the regeneration of the UK. They also contribute significantly to the creation of new jobs.

But while the number of self-employed workers has doubled over the past two decades, women account for less than one-quarter of all self-employed business owners.

Long business hours and the lack of good quality childcare repeatedly cropped up as difficulties for female entrepreneurs in the study. The male-oriented business culture was also a recurring complaint. But some women simply lacked confidence in their business skills and needed help in establishing a network of other women entrepreneurs for mutual support.

Throughout the study, women pointed out that their needs were not identical to those of men, and that they required specific categories of help and advice which were often simply not available, Dr Fielden said.

Her research revealed that women often have different motivations, challenges and pressures than their male counterparts. One respondent said women often started a business for lifestyle reasons: "This is not a choice that many men are faced with," she said.

While formal business support organisations were useful sources of practical guidance on, say, cash-flow or



book-keeping, women often really needed to be put in touch with other female entrepreneurs to share experiences.

"Feeling isolated can be a huge barrier for women to overcome, particularly if they do not have any means of access to other women and networks," Dr Fielden said. "Making the transition from working in a large organisation to setting up a business is understandably difficult for some women and this tends to be related to feelings of loneliness."

One 32-year-old female entrepreneur echoed the need for companionship: "Knowing someone is there is important...it provides security and peace of mind," she said.



Many women in the study referred to the need for this kind of intangible support over and above practical training. "They felt that women often just needed someone to talk to," Dr Fielden said. "Talking through problems would help to clarify issues and would enable women business owners to gain a different viewpoint and perspective. This type of support could also bring to light problems or issues which women had not previously considered."

There was a consensus according that coaching by women for women could provide the necessary support and personal service that is not currently available. It could just as easily be on-line as face-to-face.

As one respondent put it: "It would be good to have someone to talk to so that you knew what important questions to ask - because I don't know what I don't know."

Another agreed: "Coaching would be a great deal more helpful to me than perhaps something like the Chamber of Commerce. They don't tend to get to the nitty gritty things. For example, you might have a problem which you don't have a solution to and it's only when you break down that problem into bits you might see that it's actually a marketing problem rather than something else which you first thought of."

Dr Fielden's study clearly highlights the many barriers faced by women starting out in business, and that one of the

main stumbling blocks stems from the lack of appropriate and accessible business support.

"Whilst they are not only working hard to set up their business, women are also trying to perform a 'balancing act' between their work and domestic roles," she said. "Only by raising awareness of this, and ensuring that business support goes someway to reconciling these opposing forces, can there be a true levelling of the playing field for women and men in business."

Support needs to fit more appropriately with women's lifestyles and daily responsibilities, she added. "Normal business hours can be a real problem for women with children. It's often as simple as that."



# London eat your heart out

## Manchester has a burgeoning media industry bringing new jobs and prosperity to the region

The BBC is planning to invest at least £400 million in a move north which will create more than 1500 new jobs. The decision will cement Manchester's position as a key media player and should have a number of knock-on effects as other creative industries realise the city's potential.

Under proposals which are expected to be formally endorsed by BBC governors, Radio 5 Live, BBC Sport, Children's BBC, New Media and Formal Learning are all to re-locate from London to what the BBC has described as "a world-changing broadcast centre" on a new site replacing the existing HQ on Oxford Road.

BBC Director of Nations and Regions Pat Loughrey says: "We are convinced that Manchester can steal a march on the whole of the rest of the industry in the UK with a very new kind of broadcasting centre with a very different kind of BBC. It's about audiences and services of the future. It is the entire research and development core of the BBC."

In a separate development, the BBC has also been engaged in preliminary talks about re-locating its Surrey-based research centre to a new site on The University of Manchester campus.

Manchester City Council is doing its best to encourage new technology companies to set-up shop and there are

hopes that global IT giants like Microsoft might be persuaded to do business here.

This spring, Channel M, Manchester's own TV station, will be moving to Sky satellite transmission, and new studios in the Urbis museum of the modern city, where visitors will be able to see live programmes being made.

The new upsurge in activity may be a dramatic one - but the city has long been a place where the media's movers and shakers are happy to do business. In the early 19th century, it was also a hotbed of radical, campaigning journalism, and of course the birthplace of the legendary Manchester Guardian.

The first four-page edition of this August publication appeared on Saturday, 5 May 1821. Its avowed aim was to "zealously enforce the principles of civil and religious liberty, warmly advocate the cause of reform; and endeavour to assist in the diffusion of just principles of political economy."

In its first couple of years the weekly circulation of the Manchester Guardian hovered at around a thousand copies but actual readership was much higher than this. When the Manchester Guardian was first published, the city had six other weekly newspapers. The Manchester Mercury, Chronicle, Exchange Herald,

British Volunteer, Manchester Gazette and Manchester Observer. But by the 1830s the Manchester Guardian was Britain's third most successful provincial newspaper, and many of its rivals had ceased publication.

By the end of the 19th century, all the national newspapers had offices in Manchester and full quotas of reporting staff. They were to stay until the 1980's - when the large regional operations of the Daily Mail, Express and Telegraph were closed and hundreds of journalists made redundant. Even The Guardian (now based in London) massively scaled down its Manchester operation.

The Withy Grove premises of the Daily Mirror and Sunday Mirror (in what is now The Printworks) closed at around the same time and downsized to a small office near Oldham. The Manchester Evening News, the Guardian's sister paper, survives but its circulation is now significantly lower than in its heyday just before and after the Second World War. Even City Life, required reading for generations of The University of Manchester students, ceased publication just before Christmas 2005.

But the good news for Manchester is that broadcast and film media are more successful than would ever have seemed possible back in 1954, when



Independent Television was launched following the Television Act.

On 3, May 1956, Granada TV began its bid to supply the north-west of England with first-rate programming - and quickly gained a reputation for groundbreaking TV like *World In Action* and *Seven Up*, Michael Apted's famous documentary charting the lives of children from very different backgrounds. There were also landmark moments like the first TV appearance of The Beatles and, of course, the start of *Coronation Street* in 1960. At the weekends, ABC TV supplied programmes from its Didsbury studios.

All that changed in 1968, when Granada TV was awarded the full week franchise for the north-west and a new company called Yorkshire Television, which Granada later bought along with LWT and Tyne Tees, set up over the Pennines.

In 2000 Granada bought Meridian, Anglia and HTV, and 12 months later Border TV. Granada and Carlton then owned all the franchises in England and Wales. In February 2004, Granada Media and Carlton Communications were eventually allowed to merge to form one single company: ITV plc, which now owns four additional television channels (three using the ITV brand), broadcasting on cable, satellite and digital terrestrial. The company also has interests in cinema advertising businesses. To some, this monopoly may seem an unhealthy one - but many independent production companies with a new take on TV drama and news are also flourishing in Manchester.

A classic case is Red Production Company, which was set up by Nicola Shindler in January 1998 to work with writers on modern, innovative and entertaining dramas. Red first went into

production in spring 1998 on Russell T Davies' groundbreaking drama *Queer as Folk*, which turned the city's gay village into a tourist Mecca. Other highly successful productions included *Clocking Off*, *Bob and Rose*, and *The Second Coming*, in which Salford actor Christopher Eccleston played the Messiah. *Shameless*, Paul Abbott's comedy set on a Manchester estate, is another success for Channel 4.

North West Vision, the regional arm of the UK Film Council, has a Manchester office which provides a comprehensive film liaison service covering all aspects of filming and production - sourcing locations, organising filming access and putting companies in touch with a network of film industry professionals. The Manchester film office also helps facilitate introductions to 'film friendly' local authorities and agencies. Last year it had 761 filming days across the whole



of Greater Manchester - generating over £30 million for the local economy and making it the busiest filming year ever.

Manchester's lead as one of the UK's most popular filming destinations is increasing so much that the city is even becoming a regular "double" for London. On several occasions, Manchester Town Hall has served as the House of Commons. The city's Northern Quarter even doubled up as "New York" for the recent re-make of Alfie, with Jude Law in the role made famous by Michael Caine.

If all goes to plan, it's been estimated that the expansion of Manchester's media industries could help generate another £1.1 billion for the local economy over the next ten years - with over 4000 more jobs. Good news spreads fast.

Writer and actor Meera Syal, who is being awarded an honorary degree this year, believes her undergraduate days prepared her uniquely for the demands of the creative world in which she has since achieved so much. She took time out from nursing her new baby to speak about her student experience in the early 1980s in Manchester



# Meera's Manchester

The oft-heard criticism that arts students have too few lectures worked in favour of Meera Syal. A student of English and Drama who, after achieving a double first has gone on to become a prolific and multi-talented writer and performer, Ms Syal says her tutors encouraged her to be creative by giving her the time to develop her own style.

Reflecting on her work as a writer and performer in numerous film, television and theatre productions, Ms Syal acknowledges that her sense of personal discipline was developed while studying and has been the foundation of her hugely successful career: "I remember my time at the University with great affection" she says. "The drama

department was thriving and I had chosen a really quite unique course."

Academically she recalls the course was very hard work, particularly during the first two years when she was effectively studying for two degrees. "But I loved what I was doing and I was very active," she says. "We were doing shows all the time, as well as experimentation and improvisation. Its where I cut my teeth and it was a very good grounding for what I later went on to do. Looking back it was as good as drama school."

Most importantly though, the degree course encouraged Ms Syal to become creatively self-sufficient. "I have always generated my own work and, as the

tutors gave us our own space, they instilled in me the discipline of writing. That was the course's great strength."

Whilst an undergraduate Ms Syal wrote and acted in *One of Us*, a play about a young Asian girl who runs away from home because she wants to be an actress. The character rejects her parents and becomes intoxicated with her white friend, Carol.

She took the play to the Edinburgh Festival, and that same year it won the National Student Drama Award. A London theatre director saw her in the play and offered her the chance of an Equity card. It was time to abandon her plans of going on to study for an MA and start to act for a living.



Picture courtesy of BBC television

# ester Memories

For seven years after leaving university Ms Syal acted in London at the Royal Court Theatre, before receiving a call from the BBC who were looking for an Asian woman to co-write a script.

Despite having no experience of television she went on to write *My Sister Wife*, a three-part BBC television series on marriage, before completing such enormously well received shows as *The Kumars* and *Goodness Gracious Me*.

As if that wasn't enough Ms Syal is also a highly acclaimed novelist - her first book *Anita and Me* draws on her childhood experiences growing up in a small mining community near Wolverhampton and was shortlisted for

the Guardian Fiction Prize and won a Betty Trask Award.

Her second novel, *Life Isn't All Ha Ha Hee Hee*, charts the adventures of three young Asian women growing up in Britain and was turned into a compelling BBC series.

Ms Syal also wrote the film *Bhaji on the Beach* for Channel 4 and has appeared and written for many different television and radio comedy shows as well as making guest appearances on shows like *Ruby*, *Absolutely Fabulous*, and *Drop The Dead Donkey*. She also starred in the BBC sitcom *Keeping Mum*.

Little wonder then that Ms Syal was awarded an MBE in 1997 and won the

'Media Personality of the Year' award at the Commission for Racial Equality's annual 'Race in the Media' awards three years later, as well as the EMMA (BT Ethnic and Multicultural Media Award) for Media Personality of the Year in 2001.

So what next? "I have thought about going back to studying, in fact I had a place at Leeds to do an MA in Drama and Psychology, so maybe sometime in the future...But at the moment I am trying to juggle the demands of a 13 year old daughter and a four week old baby - teenage strops and sleepless nights is an interesting combination! And I am missing work. I love my children very much but I'm not made to stay at home and bake biscuits."

# “One of the most brilliant pupils Owens College ever had”

The University of Manchester's early days as an intellectual haven for bright lads born in modest circumstances are reflected in the works of one of its most famous, if most unfortunate, alumni.

Born in 1857, the son of a pharmaceutical chemist in Wakefield, Gissing became a student at Owens College at the age of 16, and immediately showed enormous promise. Sadly, however, he left the College in scandalous circumstances and never fulfilled his hopes of a degree. But the University has not forgotten the work of the man whose spectacular fall from grace is one of the most intriguing stories in English literature.

Now a £97,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant has recently helped fund the acquisition of an important collection of new Gissing material by the John Rylands University Library. It includes several leaves of a draft of his novel *Verandila* (published posthumously in 1904), as well as some unpublished family letters. Personal items relating to Gissing's time at the University include the three volumes of *Virgil*, which Gissing was awarded in 1874 as a prize for Latin when he was a brilliant young student.

The John Rylands University Library already holds a substantial collection of material relating to Gissing, including examples of his magazine writing, as well as a number of first editions along with key biographical and critical material.

Head of Special Collections Dr Stella Butler says: "Gissing was important as a 19th century social commentator, and

of course as one of our earlier students. We already have a very fine collection of first editions of most of Gissing's works. But the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us lots more significant archival material."

Gissing's most well-known novel is *New Grub Street*, first published in 1891. It describes the life and career of a novelist who is forced to compromise his art by the demands of the literary market-place. This was a subject on which Gissing felt passionately. As well as his many novels he wrote an important study of Dickens, together with many articles and literary essays.

Critics concur that one of his best books is *Born In Exile* (1892), which begins at an awards ceremony at "Whitelaw College" (recognisable as Owens College) which he describes as "an institute which had conferred humane distinction on the money-making Midland town."

His fictional hero, Godwin Peak, like Gissing in real life is a social outsider lacking money and status who is frustrated in his attempt to find a career outlet for his intellectual ambitions. And just like his protagonist, Gissing's life was to end prematurely, far from home and without the admiration of his peers.

While a student at Manchester Gissing moved into lodgings in Grafton Street and befriended a prostitute, Nell, for whom he had naïve ideas of reform. Unfortunately for his good intentions, she was already an alcoholic. Determined to keep her from the streets, Gissing stole from his fellow students. But he was caught in the act

and sent for one month's hard labour to Belle Vue jail on

Hyde Road, Manchester. In the event, he was bailed out by J Greenwood, the Principal of Owens's College. But his hopes of a glittering academic career were over.

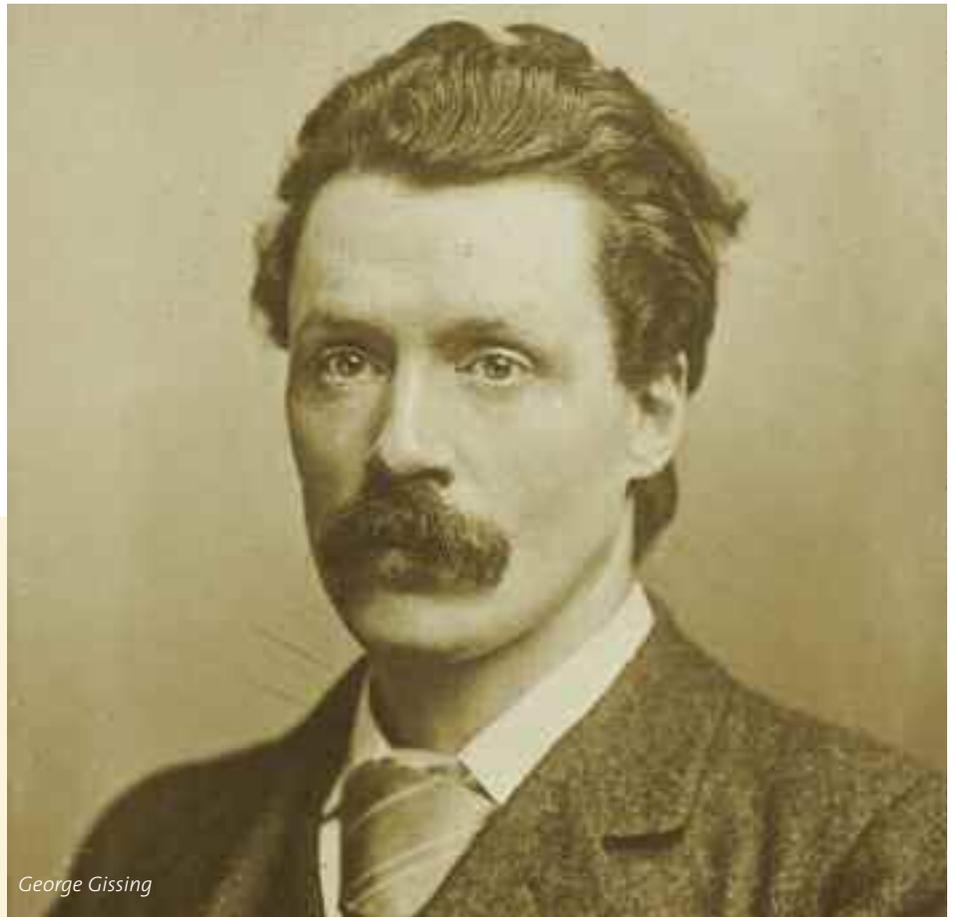
Alan Shelston, John Rylands Research Fellow, says: "Gissing was one of the most brilliant pupils Owens College ever had. He loved the classics, took first place in Latin and English and won academic prizes. His future was full of promise but he suddenly had to leave. It must have been devastating and I suspect he never really came to terms with it."

He was sent to America and scraped a living by teaching and writing short articles for local papers. Gissing returned to England after a year but tracked Nell down in Manchester and, much to his family's horror, he married her. He moved to London to escape to



Gabrielle  
Fleury

Unfortunately he was brought down by scandal but George Gissing is widely respected as one of the most gifted writers of his time and a new archive brings an important collection of his work to Manchester



George Gissing

anonymity, did a little tutoring and began writing the social realist novels for which he became renowned.

Eventually, the couple separated. But Gissing continued to support his wife financially until her early death from alcohol in 1880. He later married a girl who turned out to have a serious mental health problem, and then compounded this catalogue of romantic disaster by fleeing to France to live with a French woman named Gabrielle Fleury. Gissing and Gabrielle did not lead a very happy life together. Indeed, Madame Fleury allegedly fed Gissing a very frugal diet about which he complained bitterly to many of his friends back in England. He was lonely, missed England and soon his health began to suffer.

In December 1903, George Gissing died in South West France. He was only 46. His great friend H G Wells was at his deathbed. Unlike Wells, Gissing was never lionised by the London literati nor did he make a lot of money from his novels. Today, however, his work is highly regarded and his novels are being brought back into print.

Works like *The Odd Women*, *Born In Exile*, and *The Nether World* explore the issues of the day such as women's emancipation, the constraints of the English class system, the terrible hardships endured by the poor and those - like Gissing himself - who had fallen on hard times.

He was also a major influence on later writers like George Orwell, who similarly wrote about life as lived by the dispossessed. Gissing's determinist view of life, and bleak view of the universe, has earned comparisons with Thomas

which deals with a class of young men distinctive of our time - well-educated, fairly bred, but without money."

After Gissing's death a group of admirers provided the money for a university prize to be established for English Literature, and there is a tablet to his memory in the main building. The University which had excluded George Gissing recognised him after all.

Alan Shelston concludes: "Gissing is not always easy to read because his view of the world was such a pessimistic one. Though he had sympathy for working people he had also suffered personally a great deal and had little faith in the society

which had rejected him.

"But he's certainly an interesting, important writer and in works like *Born In Exile* he gives us a fascinating glimpse of student life as it would have been in Manchester at that time."



Hardy, whose *Jude The Obscure* also explored the territory which Gissing claimed as his own

"What I desire to insist upon is this, that the most characteristic, the most important, part of my work is that

# Manchester Means Business

Want to meet others in the professional service sector who share your interests in the North West? The University of Manchester Alumni Association has teamed up with Pro-Manchester - which promotes professional skills and networking in the region - to launch a Common Interest Group to bring people together



Left to right - John Barnacle, Daniel Hall, Professor Rod Coombs, Sir Howard Bernstein, Peter Saville, Colin Sinclair

The aim is to encourage and extend networking opportunities for alumni in the North West as well as to demonstrate the benefits of doing business in Manchester. The group is led by Ian Rankin (BSc Hons Management Science 1983, Director, Scott Lang and Company) and was launched in November, at the University's newly opened Incubator Building, a state of the art biotechnology research and development centre.

Plans are also underway to create a London branch of the group and a breakfast briefing was held in June, in the appropriately named Manchester Square, organised by MIDAS (Manchester's investment agency) and Pro-Manchester in conjunction with The University of Manchester Alumni Association.

Guests heard Sir Howard Bernstein, Chief Executive, Manchester City Council, Professor Rod Coombs, Vice-President for Innovation and Economic

Development, The University of Manchester, Daniel Hall, Head of Corporate, Eversheds and Peter Saville, Creative Director, Manchester City Council deliver a series of short presentations on the regeneration of Manchester and its competitive advantage in the financial and professional services sector. Guests were also given plenty of time to network and meet fellow alumni.

Head of Alumni Relations Annette Babchuk, said, "Our partnership with Pro-Manchester and MIDAS has given us this opportunity to engage with our alumni employed in the financial and professional services sector in London at this event, which we hope will be the first of many of this type."

Neil Fountain, MIDAS Chief Executive added: "The continued success and further expansion of the Financial and Professional Services sector in Manchester is fundamental to the

growth and prosperity of the entire city-region and MIDAS recognises the valuable role that alumni can play in the inward investment process. Manchester can now rightly call itself the Economic Capital of the North and compete for business on a world stage."

To celebrate the success of the city's thriving corporate finance community, MIDAS held a further event in November, to which alumni were again invited, in London's prestigious Capital Club. Among the speakers was alumnus Richard Bailey (BA Hons American Studies 1974, Managing Director, Northern Practice, NM Rothschild), who discussed Manchester's dynamic position as 'deal Capital of the North'.

If you, or any colleagues are interested in advancing your business by joining either the Manchester or London business networking group, please contact Alex McAlinden, [a.mcalinden@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:a.mcalinden@manchester.ac.uk)



# Re-live your student (party) experience!

The University of Manchester Alumni Association is offering the chance to be reunited with the best bits of your student days...that is, the people you partied with!

## Fusion

These Manchester University Lounge Nights, held on Thursday nights in London or Manchester, are especially for those who graduated from 2000 onwards.

Thanks to all those who came along to our first 'Fusion' event in London. We very much hope you enjoyed yourselves, caught up with some old friends and maybe even made a few new ones along the way.

We were very interested to read all your comments on the doodle board – certain themes seemed to feature quite strongly – kebabs, alcohol (vodball in particular), partying and not forgetting Kro Bar munchies!

'Fusion' is coming back on Thursday, September 14 in Manchester and on Thursday, October 26 in London, so please put the dates in your diaries. For more information please go to: [www.manchester.ac.uk/alumni/groups/youngalumni](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/alumni/groups/youngalumni). A special warm welcome to our new 2006 recruits – we look forward to seeing you there!

## Going back a bit...

The University of Manchester Alumni Association invites you to take a trip down memory lane to revisit your time here and join us at our big, Alumni Celebration in June.

The weekend in question will be Friday, 9 June until Sunday, 11 June and will take place on campus and in the city.

Among the highlights will be a welcome reception of drinks and canapés in the grand surrounding of the Banqueting Hall at Manchester Town Hall, followed by an optional trip to Rusholme – the world famous 'curry mile' for dinner.

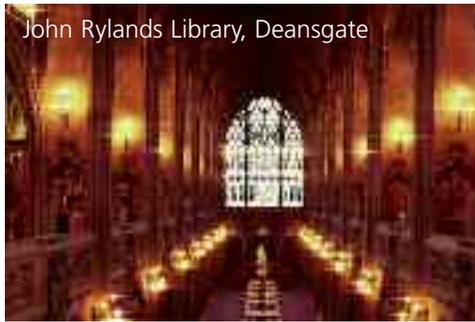
On the Saturday there will be a series of high-profile lectures offering the chance to hear from:

- Professor John Perkins, Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Science, who will give a personal and highly selective view of the history of science and engineering at The University of Manchester and its precursors, concluding with a personal vision of the future.

- Dr Hong Liu, Senior Lecturer in Marketing, Manchester Business School also Director of the Chinese Business Centre, who will discuss building and maintaining business relationships in China.
- Dr Stephen Taylor, Cancer Research UK Senior Fellow, who will talk about cell division from basic cell biology to anti-cancer drugs.
- Professor Geoffrey Beattie, Head of School and Dean of Psychological Science, regarded as one of the leading international figures on non-verbal communication and resident psychologist to the UK reality TV programme, Big Brother, who will outline new research into bodily communication.

There will be a special dinner on the Saturday night in the elegant Whitworth Hall, hosted by the President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alan Gilbert, followed by entertainment for those brave enough to carry on partying!

For more information please go to: [www.manchester.ac.uk/alumni/events](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/alumni/events) or email Alumni Officer, Alex McAlinden: [a.mcalinden@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:a.mcalinden@manchester.ac.uk)



John Rylands Library, Deansgate



Cottages 4 You



Conference Office

# Benefits for Alumni

Your Alumni Association membership card entitles you to discounts and special offers from many organisations. For the latest deals visit: [www.manchester.ac.uk/alumni/benefits](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/alumni/benefits)

## UNIVERSITY SERVICES

### Careers Service

The Careers Service provides a wide range of information, advice and guidance to recent graduates and more experienced alumni. Whatever stage of your career development or job hunting, visit the graduates section of the careers website to find out more about how the Careers Service can help: [www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/graduates](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/graduates) or telephone + 44 (0)161 275 2828.

### Civil Weddings

Members of the Alumni Association are entitled to a ten per cent discount on the cost of a Civil Wedding held in either the Whitworth Hall or the Council Chamber. For more details please contact + 44 (0)161 306 4100 or email [meeting@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:meeting@manchester.ac.uk)

### Library

You are entitled to free membership of the John Rylands Library and the Joule Library – just remember to show your membership card as proof of identity.

## University Sports Facilities

The University of Manchester Directorate of Sport is pleased to offer members of the Alumni Association use of the University's sports facilities, including sports classes, at the rates available to University staff. Please note that alumni will have to show a University Sports Card to qualify for this offer. To obtain a card, please call + 44 (0)161 275 4961 or email [uniman.sport@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:uniman.sport@manchester.ac.uk) [www.sport.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.sport.manchester.ac.uk)

## RESTAURANTS

### Market Restaurant

Northern Quarter, Manchester

The Market restaurant is offering Manchester alumni a 15 per cent discount off the total FOOD bill excluding Saturday nights and special dates. Please make all bookings in advance, quoting 'the Manchester graduate discount' telephone + 44 (0)161 834 3743.

## ACCOMMODATION

### The University of Manchester Conference Office

Discounted rates are available to all Manchester graduates in many city centre hotels if they are booked through The University of Manchester Conference Office. Please telephone them directly quoting 'alumni' on + 44 (0)161 306 4068 or email [mcc.reg@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:mcc.reg@manchester.ac.uk).

### Cottages 4 You

A ten per cent discount is available to members of the Alumni Association on over 15,000 fabulous properties from castles to cosy cottages in the UK, Ireland and France. For more information telephone 0870 336 2833 and quote MAN10 or visit [www.cottages-4-you.co.uk/ManUni](http://www.cottages-4-you.co.uk/ManUni).

### InterContinental Hotels Groups

Visit the Alumni web pages (address above) to see the latest bargains.

MANCHESTER  
1824

[www.manchester.ac.uk/giftshop](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/giftshop)

The University  
of Manchester

GiftShop  
@Manchester

The official online store for university-branded clothing, and a wide range of gifts

[www.manchester.ac.uk/giftshop](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/giftshop)





The Lowry



**LEISURE**

**City Sightseeing**

City Sightseeing is the world's largest operator of open-top double-decker hop on and off town and city tours, and operates over 80 tours throughout the world – from Athens to York, and of course Manchester!

Members of the Alumni Association are entitled to a special introductory voucher which gives a ten per cent discount on the first tour. Keep hold of this ticket as it is worth ten per cent off the next tour.

You can request a voucher from the Alumni Relations Office. For more information about City Sightseeing, please visit: [www.city-sightseeing.com](http://www.city-sightseeing.com)

**Interflora**

Interflora is pleased to offer members of the Alumni Association a ten per cent discount on flowers and finishing touches when ordering online at [www.interflora.co.uk](http://www.interflora.co.uk) using voucher code busact0310. This offer excludes funeral items, overseas orders, Simply Interflora products and all courier delivered products as well as Interflora delivery. Please refer to their website ([www.interflora.co.uk](http://www.interflora.co.uk)) for full Terms and Conditions. For more information please call 0870 9045459.

**The London Pass**

The London Pass is London's only inclusive sightseeing card, offering free entrance to over 50 of London's top attractions, including the Tower of London, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Tour and Exhibition, St Paul's Cathedral, Kensington Palace and the London Aquarium.

The London Pass also offers added benefits and offers in shops and restaurants, including Harrods and the Hard Rock Café. With fast track entry at many popular locations, you save time as well as money.

The London Pass offers over £500 worth of value and you can see London from just £12 per day (based on a 6 day pass). Choose from a 1, 2, 3 or 6 day pass and enjoy the best of what London has to offer!

To take advantage of a ten per cent discount, please visit [www.londonpass.com](http://www.londonpass.com) and quote the code Aluman04 or call 0870 242 9988 and quote 'The University of Manchester'.

**The Magazine Group**

Members of the Alumni Association can save up to 75 per cent on over 400 magazines and trade journals, from current affairs to cars, science to fashion and finance to health. For each subscription made, The Magazine Group will make a generous donation to The University of Manchester Alumni Association.

For more information, please visit [www.manchester.ac.uk/umaa](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/umaa) or telephone 0870 787 9885 (UK) or + 44 (0)1795 414 787 (overseas)

**Open Fairways**

The Open Fairways green fee & hotel privilege cards will entitle you and your friends to 50 per cent off your play or stay at over 1000 of the finest golf courses and hotels in the UK and Ireland. The University of Manchester alumni can join for an exclusive rate of £89 (RRP£120).

Apply now for your Open Fairways membership via the secure server at [www.openfairways.com](http://www.openfairways.com) (please quote Ref UMAN06 in the special offers box) or telephone 028 9076 9111.

**THEATRES**

**Royal Exchange, Manchester**

Members can take advantage of a £3 discount off any performance in the Main Theatre. This excludes Saturdays and is subject to availability. For further information please call + 44 (0)161 833 9833 or visit [www.royalexchange.co.uk](http://www.royalexchange.co.uk).

**The Lowry, Salford Quays**

The Lowry, in Salford Quays, will offer certain concessionary prices to Manchester graduates. For more details please telephone: 0870 111 2000.

**Contact Theatre**

Members can take advantage of concessionary priced tickets on production of their Alumni Association membership card. For more information please contact the Box Office on + 44 (0)161 274 0600 or visit [www.contact-theatre.org](http://www.contact-theatre.org)

**TRAVEL/TRANSPORT**

**BSM**

Members can take advantage of some great savings and benefits, including a free one hour driving lesson. For more information please call 08457 276 276 and quote ESO500. Calls may be monitored and recorded.

**Flypark**

A five per cent discount is available to members on car parking options at 15 UK airports, including Heathrow and Manchester. Please visit [www.flypark.co.uk/discount](http://www.flypark.co.uk/discount) or telephone 0870 733 0545.

**RAC**

Members of the Alumni Association can save up to 18 per cent on RAC membership. To join, please call 0800 581 077 and quote GE0301. Existing RAC members can take advantage of the discounts at renewal, by phoning 08705 722 722 and quoting GE0301. Terms and Conditions apply. Calls may be monitored and recorded. For more information, please visit [www.rac.co.uk](http://www.rac.co.uk).

**SeaFrance**

Members are able to take advantage of a ten per cent discount on all fares.

Please telephone 08705 711 711 and quote 113016UNI.

**Financial Services**

**The Co-operative Bank**

The Co-operative Bank is unique amongst the high street banks in working to a strict Ethical Policy, developed after extensive consultation with their customers.

The Co-operative Bank is developing a range of financial products for The University of Manchester Alumni Association. See the Alumni webpages for further details. Terms and conditions apply.

**Disclaimer:**

*The benefits and services listed do not imply endorsement of the listed companies, nor their products or services nor is this list exhaustive. While as much care as possible has been taken in compiling this information these descriptions may not truly represent the full capabilities or function of the respective company, which may be determined more fully by contacting the company in question.*

Despite Manchester's colder climate, it is a magnet for Greek students and has one of the largest populations of Greek students of any UK city



# Greeks gravitate to Man

During the daytime, when not in lectures they can normally be found congregating at Le Café Mykonos, at The University of Manchester Precinct Centre, getting their daily dose of traditional Greek coffee, or frappé (instant coffee with iced water, milk and sugar) and catching up on the Greek football scene. Indeed, the Manchester experience does not seem to have diminished any loyalty to Greece as far as football is concerned with Panathanihos, Olympiakos and AEK Athens football supporter's clubs all formed in the city.

The presence of Greek students in Manchester is by no means new however and is no doubt a reflection of the strong Greek community that developed in the city. This has its official birthday as 26 April 1843 when Greek merchants, who had been here for some years, gathered together at the York Hotel. The community steadily grew and by 1860 they had established their own Church in Bury New Road, called the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation. This still exists today.

According to the University's records it seems that the first Greek student to enrol at The University of Manchester was Michael Megalides of Volo, Greece in 1908. Following this, more and more Greek students registered over the years and they were later joined by Greek Cypriots. Among them was alumnus Sophocles Christodoulou Andreades who studied Law in 1953 and later taught Modern Greek and Exegesis at the extra mural department of the University. In his book, 'A personal history of the Greek community of Manchester and its Church', he writes:

"Manchester is a very cosmopolitan city and its people are renowned for their warmth and hospitality. I like it very much and by now I am almost a native. My life has been here. Here it was that I met a Manchester girl, with whom I fell in love. We married, produced a family and although my two daughters live in London, we have remained in our Old Trafford home these past 51 years. This was once an area popular with the Greek Cypriots and I well remember the time when in my street alone, four or

five of the houses were owned by my fellow countrymen. Those days are long since gone. Other ethnic groups now inhabit those homes. Times have changed and I look back on the rich tapestry which has formed my life in this city with great affection."

There are currently more than 350 Greek and Greek Cypriot students registered at The University of Manchester. Over recent years Greek students have shown an interest in a wide range of courses especially those leading to professions in accounting, finance, economics, law, engineering, computer science, natural sciences, development studies, and dentistry.

There is a strong bond amongst the Greek students whilst studying here and the Greater Manchester Cyprus Society (GMCS) and the Hellenic Society of Manchester are both active. Elsa Markoulidou (BSc Computer Science 2005) is on the GMCS committee, responsible for public relations. She says:

"Our aim is to enhance the Manchester experience for students



# chester

coming from Cyprus. Leaving the small country we call home and coming to a big city like Manchester is a huge step for Cypriots. We are here to offer help on the same difficulties we faced when we first arrived – to give practical advice such as how to open a bank account and we also organise social and cultural gatherings and parties. The University of Manchester is in the heart of a lively, buzzing city with events, cinemas, clubs and bars. It is an ideal place to study and offers overseas students a great opportunity to spread their wings.”

This sense of community does not stop once the students leave the University and it is hardly surprising, with such a sizeable Greek student population, that there are a huge number of Greek alumni who despite having left the city, are still keen to keep The University of Manchester spirit alive! In November 2005 The University of Manchester Alumni Association in Greece was formed. We talk to the new President:

## George Tsakogiannis, President of The University of Manchester Alumni Association in Greece

### **What does your role as President entail?**

In this first year we shall be concentrating on increasing the number of our members and on organizing events to bring people together. We need to raise awareness among the 4,000 Manchester graduates in Greece. Of course in that way we shall also be making people here aware of the enormous changes that have recently taken place in Manchester and the ambitious aims of the new University. We intend to do this through our website, which already has a healthy number of visitors, through the local mass media and by word of mouth. As President one of my own tasks will also be to contact key players in Greece with whom we shall be able to collaborate in the future.

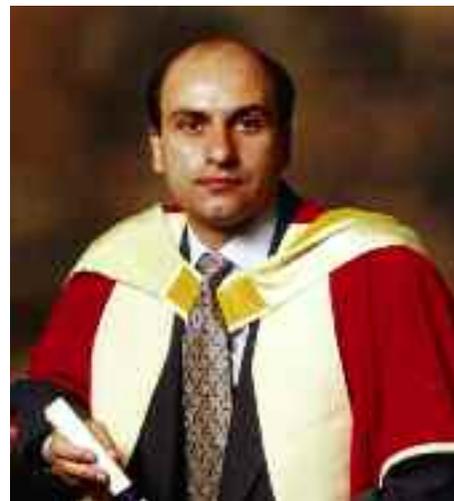
Already we have started planning for a social event in the Spring, aimed more at the younger members. In January next year, we'll organize the traditional Greek event of cutting the New Year cake, or "Vassilopitta", which will bring all ages together.

### **What are the benefits to Manchester alumni in Greece?**

Already our memberships includes people with a wide range of interests and ages. For those starting or in the middle of their professional careers, contacts with members through e-mail and the website and through the events we organize will provide continuous channels for networking.

Social and cultural events will reunite old friends and provide opportunities not only for members but also for their families to socialize, and for new friendships to be created.

We hope to develop even closer links with The University of Manchester, including the possible joint organization of scientific events. Through these events and the development of close links to the Greek academic and business community, we hope to raise awareness of the strength



of the Manchester teaching and research programmes, and to enhance the status of the University and its graduates.

### **How was your time at Manchester – do you have any lasting memories?**

Before first going to Manchester in September 1986, my final year project supervisor at the National Technical University of Athens told me that I had chosen the "most rainy and dark city in the world" for my postgraduate studies. By the time I left Manchester in February 1992, I knew that living among good friends and colleagues in a lively city while working on an interesting research project can largely compensate for the lack of sunshine!

As a research student, I was glad and lucky to become a member of the team working on the Flagship Parallel Machine – yet another innovative computer to be designed and built at the University's Computer Science Department. Getting a PhD meant hard work, long hours and many years! It also meant testing my limits, for there were several occasions of complete disappointment and loss of self-confidence. It was during these times of difficulty that strong and lasting friendships were developed.

Today, Manchester remains present in my professional life, as I meet UMIST and Owens graduates all over the Greek computing and telecommunications industries.

My hope for the near future is to make UMAAG a success story and to visit Manchester again – this time with my wife and our two sons.

A new partnership between the University and IBM seeks to bring experts together in a unique way to find solutions to problems - both local and global



# Partners sign Pact

The partnership underpins a key aspect of the University's mission to work more closely with world class industry, and will inspire collaborative projects ranging from improving the health of mankind to helping students with disabilities.

A partners programme has been devised to link IBM staff with academics from the University so that research - and teaching - can be informed by a real life business context. Joint projects will be developed across the engineering disciplines and also in the life sciences and the humanities. For example researchers in the Business School will be working with IBM partners this year investigating aspects of work life balance in the modern workplace.

In addition, the People with Disabilities project is seeking ways to help disabled students on campus using IBM Assistive Technologies and staff training.

A mentoring programme is also up and running, to provide IBM mentors to University staff and students.

And the Manchester Museum has teamed up with IBM to host a purpose-built kiosk giving visitors unprecedented access to collections from museums and ancient sites all over Egypt. Visitors can get virtual access to hundreds of exhibits and to



expert information covering seven millennia of Egyptian culture using [www.eternalegypt.org](http://www.eternalegypt.org). As well as three - dimensional images of artifacts, the site also allows visitors to explore the Pyramids, the Sphinx at Giza and the tomb of Tutankhamen.

Looking towards the future, the University is considering becoming a partner of World Community Grid, joining IBM and more than 110 leading companies and academic institutions which are encouraging people to assist humanitarian research simply by making use of idle PC time.

The idea is to link some of the world's estimated 650 million PCs to focus on humanity's most pressing problems, creating a large system with massive computational power that far exceeds the power of a few supercomputers.

The World Community Grid is providing researchers with a readily available pool of computational power that can be used to solve problems like the spread of HIV/AIDs and other infectious diseases, hunger and natural catastrophe. Alumni are encouraged to join in this project by contributing their unused computer time. To find out more visit [www.worldcommunitygrid.org](http://www.worldcommunitygrid.org)

According to the Alumni Association records, The University of Manchester is in contact with just over 200



graduates currently working for IBM, among them is Jo Strain.

Jo was an undergraduate at Manchester from 1982-5 when she studied for a degree in Botany.

She began her career at IBM as a trainee programmer and is now designing business systems for insurance and utilities industry customers. She also gives talks to schools about women in the IT business and is a keen historic rally car enthusiast: "Looking back to my time as a student I realise I picked up excellent key skills which I have been able to transfer to my work at IBM. Most importantly I learnt the rudiments of project management as we were required to conduct our own work, even then. We were also encouraged to be open to new ideas which I think allowed us to be more rounded people. And we learned how to structure our thinking which is a key business skill of course. About 90 per cent of what I do is people management. So, although technology expertise is important in my work, dealing with people in a commercial setting while managing change is vital. When I was a botany undergraduate I would never have imagined myself doing this. Now I can't imagine anything else which would give me the same satisfaction as helping people to achieve their personal goals. It is hugely rewarding."

# The International Society - 40th Anniversary Celebrations

From September 2006 the International Society will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary. One of the major celebrations will be a Gala Concert held at the Royal Northern College of Music on Tuesday, 31 October 2006. Anna Ford, Co-Chancellor of The University of Manchester and BBC News Presenter will be present. Anna was instrumental in the formation of the Society in the mid 1960's and in securing the Society's first permanent base on Plymouth Grove.

The Society has expanded steadily and last year had over 3,300 members from over 150 countries. It currently offers an extensive visits programme all around the UK, over 50 language classes a week, dozens of social events each year and support groups for partners and children of students. The Society has its own international café and continues to promote international friendship and to celebrate cultural diversity.

If you were one of the many students who benefited from the Society and has fond memories of time spent taking part in the Society's trips, social activities and classes, the organisers would love to hear from you and about what you are doing now. They would be happy to keep you informed about the various celebrations, the Society's work and hopefully even meet some of you over the coming year.

Please email [int.soc@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:int.soc@manchester.ac.uk), the Director Sue Fernley at [susan.fernley@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:susan.fernley@manchester.ac.uk) or visit the website [www.internationalsociety.org.uk](http://www.internationalsociety.org.uk)



## First Alumni Patron in Singapore

Rear-Admiral Teo Chee Hean has become the first Patron of The University of Manchester Alumni Association in Singapore.

Teo Chee Hean studied Electrical Engineering and Management Science at UMIST (First Class Honours) degree in 1976. He continued with his studies at Imperial College in London, obtaining a Masters of Science degree (with distinction) in Computing Science in 1977.

Teo Chee Hean, 51, has held various command and staff appointments in the Republic of Singapore Navy and the Joint Staff. He was promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral in 1991. Four years later, he was named Acting Minister for the Environment and Senior Minister of State for Defence.

Since then he has held a number of senior government posts including Minister for the Environment, Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence. On 1 August 2003, he was appointed as Minister for Defence.

Teo Chee Hean is married to Chew Poh Yim. They have a son and a daughter.

Chair of The University of Manchester Alumni Association, Andrew Spinoza, said: "We are honoured that Rear-Admiral Teo has agreed to become our first Patron in Singapore. The University of Manchester currently has 2000 former students based in Singapore and we are keen that they all remain involved in the life of the University and maintain links with one another."

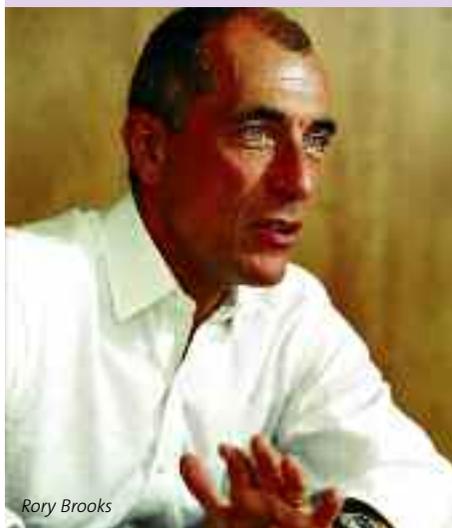


Commander, Royal Brunei Land Forces, COL Rosli Chuchu, calls on Minister for Defence, Teo Chee Hean.

## Disease and poverty to be tackled by major benefactions

The University has received two landmark private donations over the last twelve months, both of which will promote new approaches to deep-seated problems.

The support of Rory and Elizabeth Brooks for the launch of the Brooks World Poverty Institute in February (see page 9), represents one of the largest lifetime gifts in the University's history, supporting top quality researchers to identify and address blockages to progress in tackling chronic poverty - and developing networks to influence those developing national and international poverty alleviation policies.



Rory Brooks

## Boosting the Fight against Parkinson's



Photo courtesy of the Manchester Evening News

Sheila and Bill Edmonds

Only a few months earlier, researchers leading the fight against Parkinson's disease heard that they were to receive £2 million through the estate of a businessman whose wife died from the condition.

Winston (Bill) Edmonds, the former Managing Director of the Manchester Ship Canal Company, had cared for his wife, Sheila, and had witnessed how cruel Parkinson's could be. After his wife finally succumbed to

the disease, Mr Edmonds met Professor Alan Crossman, a world-renowned Parkinson's expert based in the University's Faculty of Life Sciences. Mr Edmonds was so inspired by Professor Crossman's research that he bequeathed a significant proportion of his estate to the research team's work, funds which are now being put to active use with the involvement of members of Mr Edmonds' family, following his death in July 2005.

Professor Crossman said Parkinson's disease was a devastating disorder which affects about one in 1,000 of the general population worldwide. There is currently no cure.

"On a personal level, I am deeply grateful to Bill for this generous and public-spirited gesture which will stimulate further research for the benefit of the many sufferers of Parkinson's disease," he said.

Mr Edmonds' son John, who lives in Devon, said: "Dad nursed my mother for many years through what was a long and difficult illness. He was absolutely shattered when she died."

Chris Cox, Director of Development, commented: "The scale of these two major commitments says a great deal about the quality of the work undertaken by the University's leading researchers, but still more about Rory and Elizabeth Brooks and Mr Edmonds as visionary supporters; we are highly fortunate to have such far-sighted and generous friends. All concerned at the University are deeply grateful."

## Legacy Information

The Edmonds bequest builds on a long tradition of support from alumni and friends who have remembered Manchester in their wills. Each has different reasons for supporting the University. Some are commemorating their own or a loved one's time on campus while others may be celebrating the University's part in launching

their career or ensuring a Manchester degree remains accessible to the brightest students irrespective of financial circumstances. Some individuals invest in an area of research which is close to their own priorities and interests.

If you would like to receive a copy of our new legacy information booklet – "Your

University – Your Values", or to speak to someone in confidence about remembering the University as part of your plans, please contact Louise Hancock, Legacy Officer, on + 44 (0)161 275 7230, email [louise.hancock@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:louise.hancock@manchester.ac.uk)

## Re-launch of UK Alumni Fund

The University's UK Alumni Fund has been reorganised and re-launched with the creation of a new Steering Group being chaired by Andrew Spinoza, Chairman of the Alumni Association, with representatives from the University's four faculties, the Students' Union, alumni donors, and staff across the University who specialise in providing student support where it is most needed. The new Fund, which builds on the success of the equivalent programmes at VUM and UMIST, will support five student-focused areas across campus:

- Alumni Welcome Scholarships
- Developing Country Scholarships
- Emergency Student Hardship
- Student Resources
- Research for Society

The Steering Group met in February to allocate over £500,000 across these priorities, including hundreds of undergraduate scholarships, and support for PhD students across the Fund's four priority research themes: World Poverty, Cancer, Science 2015, and Regenerative Medicine.

The University's team of student callers are in the process of contacting previous and current donors to UMIST and VUM, with a major programme of calling for new donors planned for Autumn 2006, providing an opportunity for alumni to support those aspects of the programme that most resonate with them.

For further information and to see how you can help, visit

 [www.manchester.ac.uk/alumni/alumnifund/](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/alumni/alumnifund/)

## North American Foundation Update

*Leah Smith, one of the student calling team*

The calling team's first programme of the year was to contact alumni in the US on behalf of NAFUM - the North American Foundation for The University of Manchester.

The calls gave alumni the chance to engage with what has been happening at Manchester since the bringing together of VUM and UMIST, to receive updates on their own subject areas at Manchester, and to share their current interests with the University. Many showed their appreciation by pledging donations which totalled more than \$30,000 for the principal purpose of supporting outstanding students from the US undertaking postgraduate research at Manchester. Overall, 174 donors gave a total of over \$150,000 to NAFUM during 2005, representing a 40 per cent increase on the previous highest annual figure.

Leah Smith, one of the student calling team who is reading English and Linguists, said: "I really enjoyed speaking to so many diverse and interesting alumni in the

States, all so enthusiastic about the UK and their time spent at Manchester. It was also quite a novelty to be calling at such unusual times with the international time differences. It was great fun!"

The President of NAFUM Robin Mills (BA Economics 1967), joined Professor Gilbert and Rory Brooks with Professor Joseph Stiglitz at the announcement of the Brooks World Poverty Institute in London in November. The appointment of Professor Stiglitz had been assisted via NAFUM's 'Laureates Fund'. Robin spent two further days in Manchester meeting key academics and university leaders taking forward a number of initiatives, and commented: "I am most impressed by the universal commitment and dedication to 'Manchester 2015'. This team is really switched on and there is excitement in the air. All in all it was a great experience and I came away very excited about Manchester. It will happen and our support as alumni can make a real difference".

## Partners in progress

University President Professor Alan Gilbert commented: "Ever since my arrival in Manchester in 2004 I have been struck by the extraordinary level of interest and support among alumni for what we are seeking to achieve in the new University. My first and most important message to alumni is therefore a simple 'thank you'. But I also want to stress that we need your support more than ever

going forward, and that we are fully committed to engaging you in what we believe to be a profoundly important agenda. There are few things more satisfying than enabling outstanding people to address issues of fundamental human importance. Working in partnership with alumni and friends in these great endeavours is one of the most rewarding and important aspects of our work."

For more information on the University's philanthropic priorities and programme of donor relations, please contact Chris Cox, Director of Development, Division of Development and Alumni Relations, on +44 (0)161 275 2620 or email [chris.cox@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:chris.cox@manchester.ac.uk).

# “A busy University for busy people”



Manchester was a crucible of radicalising ideas in the nineteenth century and the progressive tradition continues today according to a new portrait of the University

In a recent Guardian article about Manchester's radical roots in the 19th century, the author quoted historian Asa Briggs: 'The fact that Manchester was taken to be the symbol of the age in the 1840s was of central importance in modern world history.'

This was the Manchester of the Anti-Corn Law League, of Cobden and Bright and the Chartists, where Friedrich Engels wrote *The Condition of the English Working Classes* and corresponded vigorously with Karl Marx. The Manchester of that time was a city not simply at the forefront of the Victorian Industrial Revolution but was

also a crucible of radicalising ideas generated by industrial dynamism. Nineteenth-century Manchester looked not to the South, but outwards to America and Germany.

The civic pride of what was effectively Britain's industrial capital city lay at the heart of the establishment of higher education in Manchester. The journey from medical colleges in the early nineteenth century and the Mechanics Institution in 1824, to the establishment of Owens College in Quay Street for local boys, then to the foundation of a federal University of northern England in 1880, and finally to the 1903

achievement of university status for the Victoria University of Manchester – all this was made possible by the efforts and bequests of Manchester philanthropists, manufacturers and the municipality itself.

The years 1903-1939 are often referred to as a Golden Age for Manchester's Victoria University, a period in which giants such as Rutherford and Bragg laid the foundations of modern science, while the University, in the days of Tout and Unwin and Samuel Alexander, and later of Lewis Namier, was equally distinguished in Arts. After the War the University invented the world's first



stored-programme computer and developed radio astronomy at Jodrell Bank. Between the wars the University had fewer than 3,000 students. Today, when 'Owens' and the 'Tech' have united, it has nearly 35,000 and a determination to revive in the twenty-first century the traditions of its Golden Age as a world-class research university and leader of the knowledge economy of the North West.

A Portrait of The University of Manchester is the first publication to tackle the step-changes in scale that have taken place over the last 60-70 years in a non-academic fashion. When we asked for personal accounts from Manchester alumni we didn't expect – although perhaps we should have – contributions from every living generation from 1928 to the present day. Indeed at least one family, the Ryans, can count generations attending

Manchester in the 1900s, the 1930s, the 1960s, the 1980s, the 1990s with the most recent alumnus, Philip Ryan, graduating in the year 2000!

Through these personal accounts we can catch a hint of the genteel Thirties, of fiercely segregated halls of residence, with students wearing gowns at meals, and being addressed by tutors by surnames with or without benefit of Mr or Miss. The strangeness of the wartime years is expressed in a number of contributions, including this atmospheric evocation of a pivotal moment between two worlds:

It was in the second week of May that my school-friend Kenneth and I took the train from Grimsby to Manchester in order to sit for the Whitworth scholarship. The city was calm and the cobbled streets reverberated with the sound of the iron-shod wheels of drays full of cotton goods and the sharp clash of horseshoes. All vehicles had their headlamps fitted with metal shields with shaded louvres and most shops had strips of sticky tape stuck across the plate-glass windows, diamond fashion ... Before dusk we were taking a walk along Mosley Road to The Firs when suddenly we realised that the sky was filling up with barrage balloons. The Maginot Line had been outflanked by the German invasion of the Low Countries and the War had taken a new and dangerous turn for Britain.

The post-war 1940s, a time of rationing, fuel shortages, cold winters and freezing fogs, was marked by the presence of older students, male for the most part, who had served in the armed forces or, later, had completed their National Service.

The first great expansion of the University following the Robbins Report of 1963 laid the foundations of a new sort of student life with large numbers of students living in newly built halls of residence forming a significant proportion of Manchester's population. Conflicts emerged between a baby-boomer generation and a more staid university administration – at first cultural, along the now-standard lines of youth-culture informality, eccentricities of dress, a burgeoning music scene – then, later, political.

In the Sixties and Seventies, students responded not simply to the great

global issues of the time such as the Vietnam War, but also reacted against perceived authoritarianism in the disciplinary structures of the University itself. Demonstrations, sit-ins and occupations took their place beside the Rag Days of an older tradition, generating a turmoil from which, interestingly, a number of today's cultural and political leaders were to emerge.

What had now become a distinctive self-sustaining student culture in Manchester received another boost in the hedonistic Eighties, with an exploding club scene centred round locations such as the legendary Hacienda. Yet despite the excesses, and the occasionally frightening frictions generated between what might once have been called Town and Gown, the cross-cultural buzz of Manchester has continued to the point at which a thriving and dynamic urban scene is now actively recognised by the University as a positive attraction to new generations of students from all over the world.

Putting together an illustrated panorama of this story in words and pictures has been a challenge, but a fascinating one. It is hoped that every reader of every generation will find something of interest over and above the flashes of memory which such an account inevitably evokes. Despite the huge changes that have taken place, there seems to me to be a spirit and tradition about university life in Manchester that has always had a radical and progressive tinge, a sense of practical engagement with the world, and that Manchester has been an experience from which people go on to do things with their lives – and that it continues to be what an early commentator described as 'a busy university for busy people'.

There is sadly no time left to send you memories of university life in Manchester for inclusion in the book. However, as long as you subscribe to this book by Monday, 17 July 2006, you will not only receive it by post at a discounted price, but will also get your name listed as a subscriber. Check the colour page at the back of this magazine to find out how to order by post, or subscribe securely online at [www.tmltd.com](http://www.tmltd.com) and click on 'Books Gallery' and then 'Forthcoming Titles'.

# A Portrait of The University of Manchester

Advisory Editor Professor Brian Pullan

Book publication November 2006

## From the Managing Editor, Jane Havell:

Working on this fascinating illustrated book covering the past, present and future of higher education in Manchester, culminating in the newly unified University of Manchester, I have been struck by the testimony of living alumni from many decades. All seem to have found a particular degree of personal involvement and fulfilment both in the quality of the education offered and in the rich context of the city itself. These first-hand accounts of individual experiences, a small selection of which are offered here, add a unique human dimension to the story of progress and vision which has characterised the University enterprise in Manchester.

## Manchester alumni write:



*I loved my years as a student at Manchester and I have always been grateful for the scientific basis of my education. My subject was Chemistry... Our own favourite Professor Robert Robinson (Organic Chemistry)... became President of the Royal Society, a Nobel prizewinner, and was knighted.*  
- Evelyn D, BSc Hons (Chemistry), 1928

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*When we returned to Ashburne in October 1939, we all had to wear identity bracelets with name, identity, the Ashburne address and telephone number. We also had to take warm clothing to wear in the makeshift air raid shelters - and for firewatching...*

- Hilda M, Honours General Science, Chemistry and Physics with Mathematics, Owens

*I chose Manchester partly to please my headmaster, a Manchester graduate, but also because the staff list at Manchester was impressive with four FRS's among the forty staff... Regarded as rather aloof and unapproachable was Max Newman, the head of the department... I recall holding a corridor open for him to pass through. He did not acknowledge me nor did he blink an eye. No doubt he was lost in the realms of higher mathematics...*

- RMK, Honours Mathematics, 1959-62

*Academic life was (as one would have expected) 'academic'. But outside of the academic there was a lot happening in Manchester. After all this was the North West - the home of music... the Apollo Bar and the Hacienda...*

- Maz M, 1980-3

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