

Virtual reality

Are you ready for a technological revolution?

Heroism and hard choices

How a Leeds lass saved the lives of great thinkers

Dancing king

Wayne McGregor's life in performance

Issue No. 19

2018

LEEDS

The magazine for alumni
of the University of Leeds



CITY LIVING

Alison Lowe:
Councillor, CEO, Leeds champion



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

From the Editor



When was the last time you were on the Leeds campus?

You might have been graduating in the sunshine (or rain) earlier this summer. Or it might be years since you last set foot here. It's only a couple of months since the start of term but campus has now taken on that evocative wintry feel, and the LUU building and Edward Boyle Library – both just refurbished and reopened – feel like old friends again.

Do you remember your usual Leeds meeting places? We asked some alumni for their favourites, and have published them in these pages. Let us know whether you agree.

Within the walls of our campus buildings, learning and life-changing research goes on. And beyond Leeds, our amazing global alumni network continues to grow across the world. We've tried to capture a slice of all those aspects of the Leeds community – past, present and future – in these pages.

In the Alumni and Development Team it's our job to help you maintain links with your University, and to create new connections within the alumni community. We do that through this magazine, our digital communications, events and opportunities to connect, and by providing you with ways to get involved and support the University and our students. We'll keep you connected, however recently (or long ago) you last walked across campus on a wintry Leeds morning.

Phil Steel (English Language and Literature 1997)
Head of Alumni Engagement

Cover: Leeds graduate Alison Lowe
Photo: Adrian Ray

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From the Vice-Chancellor



The University of Leeds is committed to putting the interests of students front and centre, undertaking research of the very highest quality and making a difference in the world.

Leeds was the Times and Sunday Times University of the Year in 2017 and their 2018 Good University Guide placed us at number ten in the UK, our highest ever position, reflecting a Gold rating in the new Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Leeds students and staff work in partnership to ensure that all students have a well-rounded experience and get the most out of their time here. Meanwhile, the implementation of our plans to improve research quality, income and impact continues apace, with recent investments in people and technology both paying dividends.

This is a pivotal moment for higher education in the UK – a time when the opportunities for education and research are so great, and the political, policy and funding uncertainties are so profound. Yet, the underlying academic and financial strength of the University provides great confidence for the future. None of this would be possible without the inspiration and hard work of staff and students from every part of the University. I should also like to acknowledge the generosity and goodwill of our community of alumni and friends who organise and support alumni activity, mentor our students, open their international networks to the University and donate generously every year to support student scholarships, leading-edge research and campus developments. Your contributions to the life and work of the University are much admired and greatly appreciated by us all.

Alan Langlands
Vice-Chancellor

Contributors

Adam Lowe (English 2007, MA Performance and Cultural Industries 2008) is a writer, publisher and educator. He was a tutor on the University's MA Writing for Performance and Publication in 2017, returning to teach on the same course he studied in 2007-8. adam-lowe.com

Marcus Lyon (Political Science 1987) is a British artist. He exhibits globally and his works are held in The Smithsonian Institution, MAM Rio, UK Arts Council Collection and the Art Institute of Chicago. Marcus currently serves on the boards of Leaders' Quest and Somerset House.

Suze Olbrich is a freelance arts and lifestyle journalist for the likes of The Guardian, AnOther and The Telegraph. She is also the editor of the biannual literary magazine, *Somesuch Stories*.

Phil Sutcliffe has earned his living as a freelance journalist, mainly in music (Mojo, Q, LA Times), for 38 years, but is currently dedicated to editing and publishing his father Lance Corporal Sam Sutcliffe's World War One Memoir, *Nobody Of Any Importance*. He is a member of Honour of the National Union of Journalists.

Ceri Thomas (English 1990) is a freelance writer and editor with magazines and newspapers including Total Film, the Evening Standard and the Mail On Sunday on his CV. He mostly writes about movies and TV programmes, and is a reluctant expert on John Wayne films.

James Urquhart (History & Philosophy of Science with Biology 2003) is a freelance science journalist who discovered at Leeds that he preferred writing about science than doing it. He is also a filmmaker and is currently editing his debut feature documentary, *Beyond the Mountains* about a seven-month journey walking in the wilds of Scotland.

Kipper Williams (Fine Art 1974) draws for a number of publications alongside Leeds, including The Sunday Times, The Guardian and The Spectator.

Get in touch
We'd love your feedback.

Email us at alumni@leeds.ac.uk, look for [@leedsalumni](https://twitter.com/leedsalumni) online, or write to us at: Alumni and Development Team, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT

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Memory lane: where were your favourite places when you were a student?





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magazine.alumni.leeds.ac.uk



Photographer and artist Marcus Lyon (Political Science 1987) created this image of Botany House, University Road, when he returned to the University this autumn. "My memories of Leeds were all locked in the bubble of the past: visions of post-industrial decline, the miners' strike, endless hours in the darkroom and MJ. But the moment I arrived on campus after 30 years absence it was the human energy that captivated me."



Photo: Pål Hansen

WHO IS WAYNE MCGREGOR?

*There aren't many choreographers who'd base a work on their personal genome, but Wayne McGregor isn't just any choreographer. With his new work *Autobiography in performance*, Suze Olbrich looks at his life in dance.*

Alumni profile

It's reductive to distil any human life into a singular narrative – opening, mid-section, grand finale – reality is never quite that tidy. Wisely, with his latest work *Autobiography*, choreographer Wayne McGregor CBE (Performance and Cultural Industries 1991, Hon DLitt 2016), resists such interpretations with a system that also averts repetition.

Wayne's *Autobiography* represents the fluidity of his life with a series of choreographed scenes, or 'volumes', which are informed by pieces of art, dance and literature, as well as treasured photographs. A different selection of volumes is chosen by an algorithm for each performance – re-interpreting his past, present and future anew every time.

But this being renowned polymath Wayne, it goes deeper, for at the bold heart of *Autobiography* is his very own genetic code. Company Wayne McGregor worked with the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute to forge the algorithm, which chooses from the 23 volumes that share aspects of the life of Wayne.

That's 23, as in pairs of chromosomes. It's Wayne's biology, his flesh made data by technology, which dictates the structure of the performance – as our codes shape our lives – with the emotions, the humanity, generated from the 10 performing dancers' embodied interpretations.

Seen live, *Autobiography*, which premiered at Sadler's Wells in the autumn, is profoundly impactful – those background machinations never once detracting from its emotional resonance.

But such artistry is hard to translate to the page, and so lacking an algorithm, a beginning for this story must be person-picked: Bretton Hall, 1988.

WAYNE TURNED TO SOCIAL AND COGNITIVE SCIENTISTS IN HIS DRIVE FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF HIS ART FORM AND THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE BODY.

Then 18, Stockport native Wayne had been dancing for 11 years, inspired to take classes by John Travolta's liquid moves in Saturday Night Fever and Grease. He'd already been teaching dance, including his own choreography, for six years. Alongside his inherent love for physical expression and a lifelong urge to move his body, whether in sport or to music, he was drawn to technology, spending hours coding as a teen.

Insatiably curious, Wayne was primed for inspiration, whatever the medium, as he embarked on a degree in Choreography and Semiotics at Bretton Hall College. Bretton Hall, affiliated with the University of Leeds, imbued creativity with a liberal education ethos.

A life-long impression was made by Bretton Hall's beautifully-wrought, capacious Georgian architecture and breathtaking landscape. At Bretton, students rambled round the vast natural setting where artwork emerged from the ground (part of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park) and boaters paddled on a man-made lake. Bretton Hall was a glorious, isolated, place. But from its mansion, perched on top of a hill, one could see for miles.

"We did as much of our work on site locations in the grounds as we did in a room," Wayne recalls. "It's really important not to always be surrounded by four walls... Many of our performances were around the sculpture exhibitions in the park. That whole relationship between space, body, earth and buildings was really different. It changed the way I think about bodies and spaces."

Bretton Hall's progressive approach to learning translated into a choreographic degree unlike any other. Taught by professional choreographers, the course focused on contemporary dance techniques (rather than classical ones such as ballet), resulting in innovative training in working with the body.

Wayne thrived with the freedom to craft his own pieces. Bretton Hall students were taught how to use dance in social contexts, which led to them working with youth groups, in hospitals and in prisons.

Duly invigorated, Wayne followed his time at Bretton Hall with a stint at New York's Avant garde Dance Foundation where he was enthralled by dance's postmodern revolution. Avant garde choreographer and interdisciplinary iconoclast, Merce Cunningham, would perform live – accompanied by equally intrepid composer, John Cage – at the Lincoln Centre.

TIMELINE

Wayne McGregor
(Performance and Cultural Industries 1991, Hon DLitt 2016)

1991

Founds his own company (originally named Random Dance Company, now Company Wayne McGregor)

2001

Random Dance becomes Sadler's Wells first Resident Company

2003

Research Fellow, Department of Experimental Psychology, Cambridge University

2005

Movement Director, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

2006

Chroma wins Olivier Award for Best New Dance Production. Appointed Resident Choreographer, The Royal Ballet

2008–2010

UK Government's Youth dance champion

2011

CBE for Services to Dance

2012

Choreographs Big Dance 2012 with 1000 participants for 2012 Festival for London Olympic and Paralympic Games

2016

GCSE dance syllabus includes his piece Infra

2017

Opens Studio Wayne McGregor at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

Bodies, movement, film, sound and light were atomised into miniature shards of intense sensation in *Atomos*, by Company Wayne McGregor, 2013.
Photo: Ravi Deepres

Autobiography unfolds uniquely for each performance. Life, writing itself anew in each performance.
Photo: Andrej Uspenski

Inspired by migrants' experiences, *ToGather* was performed at the Manchester International Festival 2017.
Photo: David Oates



Wayne McGregor
Photo: Nick Mead



Access more footage at magazine.alumni.leeds.ac.uk



Wayne returned to the UK committed to forging a unique creative path. His first job: Community dance animateur for the London Borough of Redbridge, where he assisted groups through movement-based learning. He remains a fervent believer in the power of dance to bolster lives, bond communities and foster regeneration. More than 90,000 people have participated in the Learning and Engagement programmes on offer by his Company in its new state of the art East London home, Studio Wayne McGregor.

Originally called Random Dance in a bid to stymie assumptions about its intentions, Company Wayne McGregor was formed in 1992. Wayne's talent saw him hired as Choreographer in residence at forward-thinking London dance institute, The Place, soon after. Over the next decade, Random Dance's repertoire and reputation grew steadily, culminating in it becoming Sadler's Wells' first Company in Residence in 2001.

About that time, Wayne turned to social and cognitive scientists in his drive for greater understanding of his art form and the intelligence of the body. These pursuits have led to academic positions including a professorship of choreography at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance.

This one-time teenage coder has developed artificially intelligent choreographic software and created choreographic tools alongside scientists at the Wellcome Trust. The latter project not only fed into Company members' training and its educational resources, but was also exhibited at the Wellcome Trust as *Thinking with the Body: Mind and Movement in the Work of Wayne McGregor* (2013).

Wayne is the only person without a classical background to hold the position of Resident choreographer at The Royal Ballet, where he has consistently upended expectations about what ballet can be.

Wayne's multi-award-winning creations include the groundbreaking *Chroma* (2006), which featured music by Joby Talbot and The White Stripes and set design by acclaimed architect John Pawson. More recently, Wayne's first full-length work for the revered company, an interpretation of a triptych of writings by Virginia Woolf to music by electronic impresario Max Richter, *Woolf Works* (2015), floored critics and fans alike.

With Company Wayne McGregor, he has continued to produce astounding creations – more than 30 so far. *Tree of Codes* (2015) was inspired by Jonathan Safran Foer's literary artwork and featured dancers from the Paris Opera Ballet, as well as lighting by fellow Renaissance man, Olafur Eliasson, all set to music by Jamie XX.

Human +/-, performed at London's Roundhouse, saw drones dancing with the human cast, as well as members of the public. The involvement of electronic musicians, established artists, robotics and regular folk is telling of Wayne's boundless ambition and adoration of culture in any guise.

So although it's impossible to predict where Wayne's artistic, scientific and technological endeavours will lead, rest assured countless more wonder-making works lie in store as this evolving autobiography continues to be retold.

Leeds' Special Collections contains one of the world's outstanding collections of cookery books. An exhibition 'Cooks and their Books: Collecting Cookery Books in Leeds' is on show in the Treasures of the Brotherton Gallery until 31st January. Here are six of our favourites.

GLORIOUS FOOD



Leeds' Galleries Assistant Manager Laura Beare picks some of her favourite people, objects and stories from the collection. Plus, find out more about Special Collections and forthcoming exhibitions at magazine.alumni.leeds.ac.uk

1

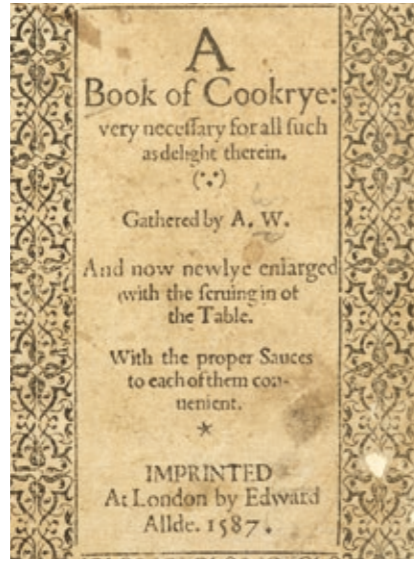
Bartolomeo Scappi
Opera dell'arte del cucinare
Venice, 1570



Bartolomeo Scappi served as chef to several cardinals, and subsequently for Popes Pius IV and V in the Vatican in Rome. His monumental treatise on the art of cookery was intended to inform his apprentice, Giovanni, and was the first to present cooking instructions and techniques in print and with illustrations. It reflects medieval tastes and cooking habits but incorporates ingredients, like sugar (which even features as a pizza topping with pine nuts and rosewater), newly-arrived from the New World. While Scappi was busy cooking in the Vatican kitchen, Michelangelo Buonarroti would have been working on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel nearby.

2

A.W.
A Book of Cookrye
London, 1587



The development of printing and growing literacy saw a proliferation in printed cookery books in the sixteenth century. The recipes in this book by an unknown author are short, with little detail on cooking times, temperatures or amounts. The only surviving copy of the 1584 first edition – containing the first recorded use of the term 'fines herbes' – is also in Leeds' Special Collections. The second edition pictured above added sweet dishes, and contains the handwritten inscription "Picked up in Sandwich and rebound by Father for Emily." Who Emily was, and whether she used the book for practical purposes, is unknown.

3

Charles Carter
The Compleat Practical Cook
London, 1730



The son of a cook, Charles Carter cooked for leading soldiers and diplomats serving Queen Anne in Berlin, Hanover, The Hague, Flanders, Spain and Portugal. He claimed to be able "in no mean way ... to surpass a French Cook." His book is arranged in chapters following the order in which dishes were usually consumed at dinner, which makes its comprehensive index extremely useful. It also includes a glossary of the continental cookery terms used throughout the book. The outstanding feature of this volume, however, is its series of 59 engraved table settings, of which he was particularly proud.

Blanche Legat Leigh, Lady Mayoress of Leeds in 1936, presented her collection of more than 1,500 historic cookery books to the University Library in 1939. Her gift inspired John F. Preston to donate his own collection of 600 books on food and cookery in the 1960s.

With further bequests and acquisitions, the Cookery Collection has grown in scope and content and is now one of the most significant held in Special Collections at the University of Leeds. In 2005 it was recognised as being of national importance and awarded Designation status by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

Cooks, compilers and collectors have all contributed to this outstanding bibliographic resource for food enthusiasts. However, the Victorian culinary entrepreneur Mrs A.B. Marshall was of the opinion that, "cookery being a practical art, no perfect cook was ever yet made from mere book study."

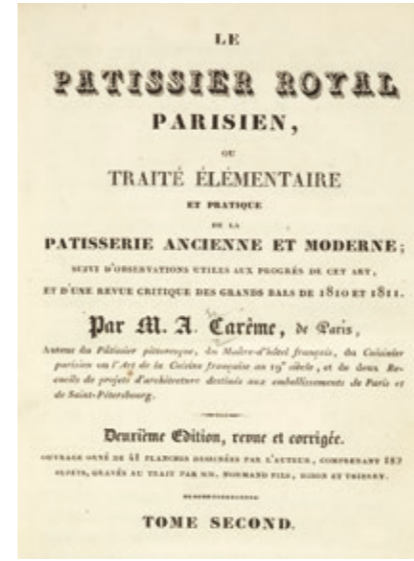
A Taste of Leeds
Lecture and lunch
Tuesday 23 January 2018

Food historian Peter Brears reveals the contrasting diets of Leeds' social and occupational groups in the Victorian and Edwardian periods, from the starvation diets of the poor to the great banquets of the wealthy. Peter has advised organisations such as English Heritage and the National Trust about historic food and kitchens and has published widely on the subject of food history. Following the talk you will have the opportunity to view the exhibition, 'Cooks and their Books: Collecting Cookery Books in Leeds' before a two-course Yorkshire-themed lunch at University House.

Tickets cost £20 per person. To book your place visit alumni.leeds.ac.uk/tasteofleeds or call 0113 343 6723

4

Antonin Carême
Le Pâtissier Royal Parisien
Paris, 1828



Carême's monumental table centrepieces, or pièces montées, the showstoppers of their day, marked the blossoming of the craft of the confectioner into fine art in the nineteenth century. Turned out of his home as a child, Carême began an apprenticeship in a modest cookshop at the age of 10, was subsequently employed by M. Bailly, one of the leading Parisian pâtissiers, and would go on to prepare technical masterpieces for Napoleon's table, as well as the Prince Regent, Tsar Alexander and Baron de Rothschild. His detailed recipes in *Le Pâtissier* remained highly influential over the following century.

5

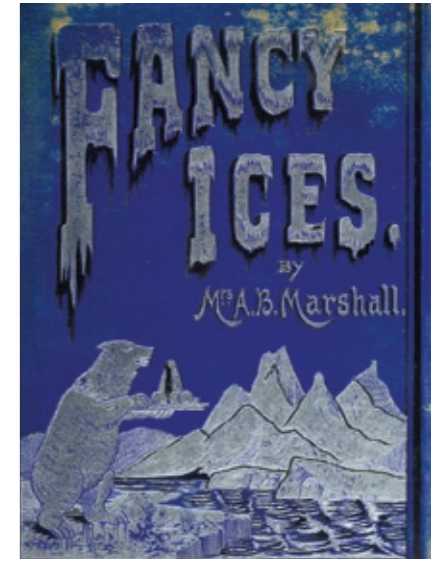
Isabella Beeton
The Book of Household Management
London, 1861



Despite her great reputation as a cook and housekeeper, Mrs Beeton was essentially a compiler and editor working for her publisher husband Sam. Her great achievement was the compilation of some 1,700 recipes into an accessible form we would recognise today, alongside paragraphs on the history, natural history and facts regarding the raw foodstuffs or individual dishes and numerous illustrations. This book was a comprehensive manual, also containing information for the mistress of a middle-class house on managing servants, raising children, caring for the sick, and dealing with legal matters.

6

A.B. Marshall
Fancy Ices
London, 1894



Mrs Marshall was THE celebrity chef of the 1890s. Her books, cookery school, demonstrations and weekly paper, *The Table*, instructed the booming middle classes in fine cookery. Mrs Marshall earned the nickname the "Queen of Ices" for her writing on ice cream and other frozen desserts. She was granted a patent for a machine that could freeze a pint of ice-cream in five minutes and proposed the use of liquid nitrogen in the process. The success of her books resulted in an increased demand in Victorian London for imported Norwegian ice.

James Urquhart meets researchers at Leeds to find out how virtual reality could transform our lives – and how we think.

VIRTUAL REVOLUTION

Peering at his laptop screen during a Skype video call, Professor Mark Mon-Williams declares “It’s going to change the way we live, work, and play. And a lot of that is for the better.” Mon-Williams, a cognitive psychologist at Leeds, is talking about virtual reality – the next ‘disruptive’ technology that many tech industry experts say is poised to shake the foundations of how we do things, from communicating to learning to healthcare.

“Twenty-five years ago, the idea that I could sit here now with a wireless device to talk to somebody and see their face sounded fantastical,” says Mark. But now that idea is a reality, he thinks that a more natural experience could be delivered by virtual reality. “Every day the vast majority of us are interacting with computers but in a suboptimal manner – already I’m getting sore shoulders sitting here looking at my laptop – it’s a really unnatural way of interacting.” Virtual reality, or VR, is not new of course. In the early 1990s it was much hyped, and it was around this time that Mark started to use it as a human psychology research tool. However, VR never became mainstream – it was prohibitively expensive and simply lacked the computing power. And then there were the consequences of being immersed in VR. People reported experiencing headaches, sore eyes and motion sickness when using VR systems for even just short periods of time.

Some experts believed that more powerful computing in the future could iron out the potential health problems, but Mark made a crucial discovery. His experiments revealed that the way VR presents information is at odds with how humans process visual information in the real world. The focussing and alignment mechanisms of our eyes are hardwired to work together to help us interact with what’s

around us. But in VR, our eyes must focus on a 2D screen while they align towards 3D objects out in the presented virtual world. This separates, or decouples, the two mechanisms, placing stress on the brain. This is what Mark found caused adverse effects among users – something no amount of processing power would fix.

Today, the computing and technology landscape is transformed. Smartphones and the internet are ubiquitous, technology is more affordable and, with backing from the likes of Facebook, Apple and Google, VR is making a big comeback. “Now it has the foundations, it has the tech support,” says Mark. “But some of those issues we raised 25 years ago still haven’t been resolved. A big part of the work we are doing at Leeds is to engineer those problems out.”

Mark is helping to do that by taking advantage of VR itself to better understand how humans use sensory information to control their actions. “The great thing about VR is we can have complete control, so we know exactly what is happening at a millisecond basis within that virtual world,” he says. Simultaneously, the individual who is interacting with that virtual environment can be precisely tracked to obtain useful data on their behaviour. By knowing what sensory information we need, VR systems can be designed to allow our brains to enjoy more natural interactions with computers. Mark’s research has already led to software development as well as potential hardware solutions, engineering suitable optics in head-mounted displays that don’t place unnatural demands on our visual system. “The theoretical foundations are strong,” he says. “We just need to do the science to check that our ideas do remove the difficulties, in order that VR can reach its full potential.”



The way VR presents information can be at odds with how humans process visual information.

“IN A DECADE THERE IS NO WAY THAT THESE SYSTEMS AREN’T GOING TO BE FULLY EXPLOITED TO BETTER EDUCATE SCHOOLCHILDREN.”

Brain training

Some VR applications, however, don’t suffer from the visual mismatch posed by large immersive environments. Virtual worlds that are confined to really small 3D spaces can avoid those problems, and Leeds is exploring their potential. “VR is a complete game-changer from a learning perspective,” says Dr Faisal Mushtaq, a psychologist and colleague of Mon-Williams. Faisal investigates how humans learn skills and how such knowledge can aid VR systems to accelerate that learning.

He recently conducted experiments on how VR could help surgeons prepare for a procedure. Before undertaking an operation in a surgical simulator, one group prepared by interacting with a 3D VR model of a tumour. Meanwhile a different group had a traditional 2D scan of a tumour to help visualise the surgical steps required. The group using VR to prepare for the task was found to complete it more quickly and safely. With promising results, Faisal thinks that VR could provide a cost-effective solution for training surgeons, especially since the European Working Time Directive limits how much real-world practice surgeons can now get.

VR training is already benefiting Leeds dental students. A £1.2 million state-of-the-art suite of 30 VR dental simulators – the largest of its type in the UK and the second largest in the world – lets students practise on virtual cases with realistic haptic feedback provided through a hand piece.

What’s more, a pilot project, dubbed ‘patient-specific surgical rehearsal’, allows fourth and fifth year dental students to upload 3D scans of their patients into the VR system and practice complex techniques prior to performing the actual procedure. “When trainees first start interacting with patients there’s a high risk of error given they don’t yet have the experience,” says Faisal. “Using VR accelerates the training process and provides a safe environment for trainees to practise.”

Medicine and Dentistry are not the only areas benefiting. Leeds is embracing VR. Data scientists are visualising datasets that could improve hospital efficiencies, biologists are understanding protein interactions, and transport researchers are developing systems to increase road safety.

Into the unknown

Meanwhile, Mark and Faisal are demonstrating VR in schools by enabling children to explore virtual environments, including the solar system, the inner workings of the human body and dinosaurs roaming the Earth. “It was just wonderful seeing children getting so excited. You just think that in a decade there is no way that these systems aren’t going to be fully exploited to better educate schoolchildren,” says Mark. The researchers also allow children to practise writing in VR using a robotic device, which could assist those who struggle with writing due to motor difficulties. “This could be a powerful tool to remove some of the inequalities that exist within our society.”

To avoid the risks associated with larger VR environments, the team restricts how long children can use them. The visual mismatching issue becomes a problem when VR might be used for longer periods, which could be highly disruptive to our normal physiological and psychological workings, and more so for children. “We don’t yet know what the implications are for prolonged use of VR over time for children where the visual system is still developing,” says Faisal.

The problems are especially important to rectify now because while Mark is eager to tap into VR’s educational potential for children, technology companies want to exploit VR in the gaming and movie markets. “We don’t want headsets going out into households where a child could use it for 12 hours,” Mark says. “It seems a sensible way forward to engineer the problems out of the systems from the outset.”

Computers have already changed the way we live, work and play, but VR promises to take it to another level. “Skype already allows us to see each other and talk but through VR we’ll be able to share a common space and interact in naturalistic ways with computer-generated information,” says Mark. “It’s almost impossible to believe it is not going to transform our lives for the better, and Leeds wants to be at the vanguard.”

Virtual Leeds

In addition to having the UK’s largest haptic dental training facility, Leeds is using VR widely:

1 The Institute for Transport Studies (ITS) is developing warning systems to help truck drivers be more aware of cyclists. ITS has also created a VR model of Leeds city centre as part of an initiative called VirtuocITY, helping to design cities in a future where humans will interact with automated vehicles and robots.

2 Earth and Environment students can explore the topography of virtual landscapes, going on field trips from their desk.

3 Born in Bradford is a major project researching the reasons for poor health outcomes in the city. As part of the project, Mark Mon-Williams uses elements of virtual reality as a tool to help understand children’s development.

4 Engineers, scientists and clinicians have designed and built robots for uses from helping patients to recover after a stroke, to exploring chambers in Egypt’s Great Pyramid.

5 The University’s Cultural Institute is facilitating collaborations with the creative industry including research into virtual and augmented reality, working with bodies such as Creative England and UKIE.



Professor
Mark Mon-Williams



Explore how Leeds is putting VR into action at magazine.alumni.leeds.ac.uk

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The new Edward Boyle Library and an uncovered treasure in the Union Building.

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Department news

The latest on research and activity from some of our academic schools and faculties.

Alumni news

A FLAIR FOR FLOWERS

A mermaid-inspired headdress is just one of the recent creations by Twisted Elm, otherwise known as Jen Baker (Music 2006).

Jen has progressed from producing mainstream wedding work at her florist business to incorporating her love of the dark and dramatic in more unusual designs for an alternative market. “I studied music at Leeds and gravitated towards theatrical works. I was particularly drawn by the visual aspects and stories behind them,” explains Jen.

“This later inspired sets and costumes I created for conceptual photographic shoots – most recently using the Slavic myth of Rusalka (a theme I came across whilst studying Russian opera at Leeds). In turn I tend to produce my designs based on these projects.”



Jen enjoys the dark and dramatic at the Whitby Goth Festival
Photo: Murdo Macleod

LEADING WOMAN

Leading woman Molly Blincow (Economics and Mathematics 2011) is listed in the Hedge Fund Journal’s 50 Leading Women 2017. Molly joined international investment firm Murano straight after Leeds, initially as Head of Research. Within four years, Molly had risen to Director before she turned 30. Molly also sits on the steering committee of the Diversity Project, an initiative to tackle the lack of diversity in the Asset Management industry. “Our biggest challenge is trying to create an inclusive and diverse team to serve our equally diverse client base,” explains Molly. “It is an industry-wide problem that we are trying to confront head on.”



Rising to the top, Molly Blincow

PUT TO THE PROOF

A trip to Tasmania proved an unlikely source of inspiration for Dr Abbie Neilson, founder of England’s smallest distillery. Abbie (PhD Medicine 2013) was so impressed by how local whisky producers had learned the trade from scratch that she decided to try it herself back in Yorkshire. Cooper King distillery was born. She now distils whisky and gin in the Yorkshire hills with locally sourced barley and casks. “It might seem brave, but there is a market for English whisky,” says Abbie, who ages the whisky in small 100 litre casks “for a richer spirit.” Proof indeed that the best things come in wee packages.



Cheers! Abbie Neilson with husband Chris

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

American politics have been keeping two Leeds alumni very busy. Tim Gallagher (Broadcasting 1997) was Washington DC Correspondent for Sky News until recently, whilst David Smith (English and Sociology 1996) is the Washington Bureau Chief for The Guardian. Their investigative journalism skills were honed at Leeds, as both had a stint as Editor of Leeds Student in 1994 and 1997 respectively.

“When I was political sketch writer of Leeds Student newspaper, I never dreamed that one day I would be standing in a New York hotel watching Donald Trump become the 45th President of the United States,” says David. “At the White House for a Trump speech or briefing by the press secretary, I know I’ve got a front row seat for events that will still be talked about decades from now. For a journalist, it is exhilarating to be covering the biggest story in the world.”

Tim concurs. “It’s been a remarkable time to be a journalist in the USA. The election of Donald Trump confounded pundits and pollsters and will no doubt enthral students of history for generations to come. We were lucky enough to witness it first hand.”



Washington Bureau Chief for The Guardian, David Smith



Former Washington DC Correspondent for Sky News, Tim Gallagher

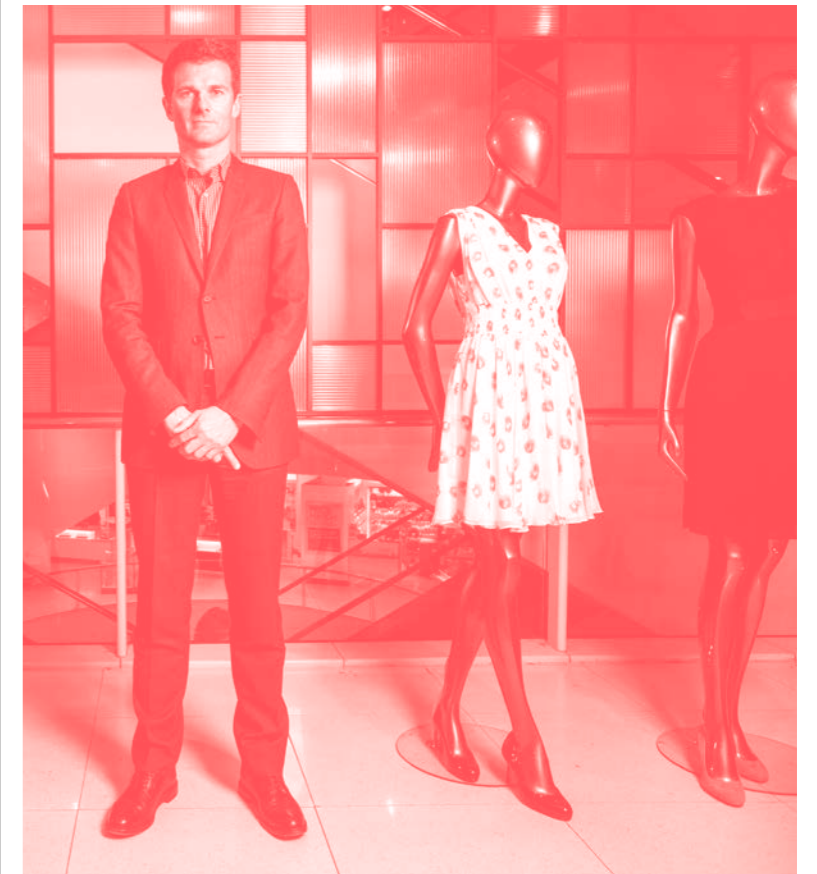
SETTING THE WORLD TO RIGHTS

Apparently Jeeja Ghosh (MA Disability Studies 2006) is ‘incompetent to fly alone,’ which was news to her when she was removed from a flight in 2012.

Jeeja, who has cerebral palsy, successfully sued the airline in a case which brought about significant recognition of equal rights for travellers with disabilities in India. As Head of advocacy and disability studies at the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy, Jeeja challenges perceptions. “My MA at Leeds really inspired me to get involved and make a difference to disabled people’s rights,” she says. Jeeja’s life was featured in an award-winning documentary, I’m Jeeja. For Jeeja, the shooting was an enjoyable experience. “The film will go a long way in establishing the rights of people with disabilities,” she says.

A KEY PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

The fashion career of Jigsaw Chief Executive, Peter Ruis (Politics 1989) began at 21, when he wrote to Marks & Spencer asking to become a buyer. From that first position, Peter has risen through the high street ranks and led John Lewis through the recession of 2008. Now Peter is spearheading the revival of high-street brand Jigsaw. The past four years with Peter at the helm have seen annual sales breaking £100 million for the first time and the opening of a flagship store in St James’s Emporium, London.



Rolling up his sleeves, Peter Ruis
Photo: David Levene

WRITER OF MERIT

“There is a bird in my heart, craving for a perch on the absent tree,” writes poet Niyi Osundare (MA English 1974) about the political situation of his native Nigeria. His censorious poems and essays tackle subjects such as socio-economic problems, leadership, and the struggles faced by the poor. “I interrogate Nigeria and Africa,” he explains, “their politics, culture and life.” Seventy-year-old Niyi has had an illustrious literary career. Author of 18 books of poetry, four plays, and numerous essays, he is also Distinguished Professor of English at the University of New Orleans. Niyi received the Nigerian National Order of Merit in 2014.



Politics, culture and life, Niyi Osundare

MOVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE

“It’s all down to my great-great-grandfather,” explains historian Lucille Campey (MPhil History 1987) about why she became a leading expert on emigration to Canada. “He left Scotland for Nova Scotia in the early 1800s. I wanted to discover his story and this led me into Canadian immigration history.”

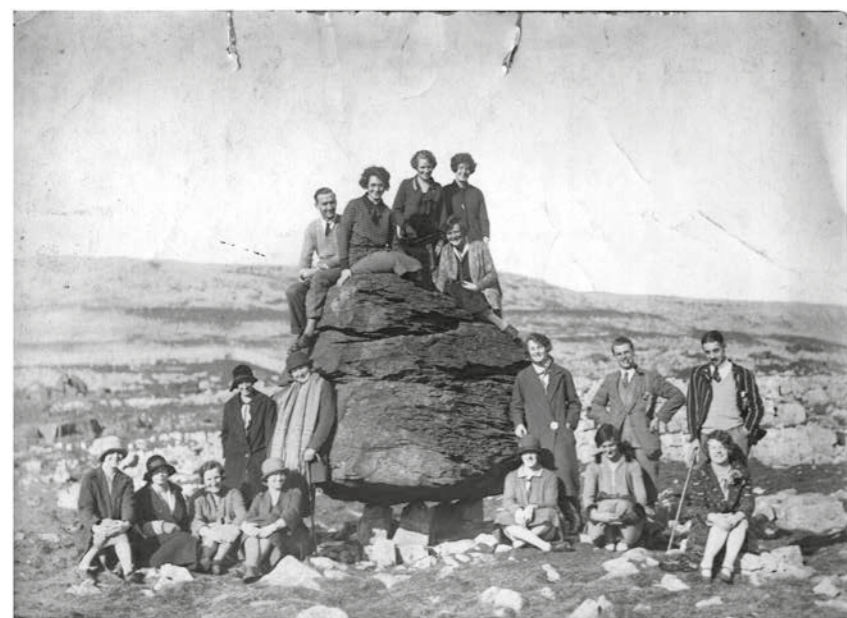
Twelve books written by Lucille have now been published in Canada about the Scottish, Irish and English who left their homes behind to settle lands across the Atlantic and the thirteenth will be published next year. Lucille, herself, crossed the Atlantic in the reverse direction in 1967 when she left her native Canada to marry her English husband. Her MPhil dealt with the

medieval settlement patterns of villages in the north of England. “Acquiring the techniques needed for my dissertation provided a grounding for my later immigration research,” said Lucille. In 2016, she was awarded the prestigious Prix du Quebec in recognition of her ongoing contribution to Canadian immigration studies.



Historian Lucille Campey

LUOSA take to the hills in 1948



KEEPING RECORDS

A bulging box containing records and photographs from more than 80 years of the Leeds University Old Students’ Association (LUOSA) now sits for posterity in the University’s archive.

The items were donated by Doreen Bayley MBE (English Language 1949, Hon MA 1988), who was involved with the Association for several decades. Membership cards of some of the University’s earliest students include Elsie Ward (Geology 1919), who was the first woman Fellow of the University. “LUOSA members have always been enthusiastic,” reports archivist Jen Zwierink. “Photographs in the collection recall ice skating trips, hikes and theatre nights, amongst many other social events.” LUOSA continues to this day and welcomes former Leeds students to regular meetings and events. alumni.leeds.ac.uk/luosa

IN BRIEF

Nathan Minsberg’s (Cinema and Photography 2013) documentary *Ginette* was selected to appear at the Berlin Brandenburg Jewish Film and the Stockholm Independent Film Festivals.

Alex Lozowski (Economics 2014) plays for Premiership rugby union team Saracens and made his England debut earlier this year against Argentina.

Obiageli Ibennah (MBA 2006) is the Managing partner of Bridgeway Microfinance Bank Ltd in Nigeria.

Mark Tucker (Textile Management 1980) is the new Group chairman of HSBC.

Actor **Jack Fox** (Theology 2008) is following in his famous family’s footsteps, being the latest member to appear on both the big and small screens.

Feast It, run by **Curran Dye** (Linguistics and Phonetics 2014) and **Digby Vollrath** (Politics 2013) serves up UK street food for events.

Dr Samantha Pugh (PhD Colour Chemistry 2001), Lecturer in STEM education and teaching enhancement at Leeds, has won a National Teaching Fellowship.

Threads, an online personal shopping service founded by **Sophie Hill** (Sociology 2006), was listed in the Sunday Times’ Tech Track 100.

Toma Paro, Sam Patchitt (both MSc International Business 2015) and **Richard Torpey** (Geography 2012) are tackling food waste with their app Yellow Label, which highlights end of day reductions on supermarket goods.

Suzanne Levy (English 1984) is helping Brits to sell themselves across the pond with her CV-writing service www.maximumimpactresumes.com

MBA graduate **Amanda Blanc** (1999) is the Group CEO at AXA UK.

Journalist **Liz Kershaw** (Textiles 1978) celebrated 30 years at the BBC this year.



Read more alumni news at alumni.leeds.ac.uk

Alumni families

The Mitchells *Five degrees from Leeds*

Veva Porter (Chemistry 1924) was one of a small number of women to graduate from Leeds in her time. She came from Hartlepool, the daughter of a seafarer.

Years later, Veva’s daughter Jane (Medicine 1954) met Phil Mitchell (Medicine 1954) in their first year labs. She married the Yorkshireman in 1956. Their son Robert (Medicine 1982) was amongst the first to study in the Worsley Building.

In July 2017, Robert’s son Samuel followed in the footsteps of three generations before him when he received his Leeds degree – in Medicine, of course.



The Swintons / Palmers *The generation game*

“Grandad was one of the first people I told,” says Jack Palmer (History 2016) of his election as Union Affairs Officer in LUU. “He has very happy memories of Leeds.” Jack’s grandfather, Ralph Swinton (English Literature and Geography 1951), recalls a rather different campus. “I love hearing his stories,” says Jack. Ralph remembers with fondness his days in the Yorkshire Jazz Club which met at the Adelphi pub, while Jack preferred to relax in Old Bar.



The Freestons / Zupniks *A marriage of true minds*

Leeds is so ingrained in the lives of Claire Freeston (History 2009) and new husband Anthony Zupnik (MPhys 2011) that they held their marriage blessing in the Great Hall. “It was great to celebrate our big day somewhere that’s so important to us,” says Claire, who also works at the University. “We both have many happy memories of Leeds.” The couple met during Freshers’ Week over a drink in Old Bar.



The Dransfields *It started with a dance*

“I am done, kid,” said Peter Meal (Geology 1951) to his cousin Pauline (Sociology 1952). The year was 1949, and they were enjoying their first taste of freedom at a Friday night bop. “Some other poor fella will come and dance with you.”

That “poor fella” and future husband was Philip Dransfield (PhD Chemistry 1951). The couple enjoyed 49 years of marriage and two of their sons, Graham (PhD Materials 1988) and Patrick (English & History of Art 1985), also studied at Leeds. “It’s not a coincidence we chose Leeds,” says Patrick.

The Sobels *Leeds born and bred*

Alex Sobel (Information Systems 1997) was born on campus to student parents. It was 1975, and Alex’s mother Ruth (PhD Russian Literature 1977) and father Leopold (PhD Viking History 1978) lived in married accommodation on Springfield Mount.

“I had a great time studying a stone’s throw from where I was born,” says Alex. “I was particularly interested in student politics.” Alex is now the MP for Leeds North West.



The Byfords *The law of attraction*

“There’s clearly some hidden magnet in the Refectory (or Old Bar!) that attracts us to Leeds,” says Mark Byford (Law 1979, LLD 2008). First Lawry Byford (Law 1956, Hon LLD 1987) studied at Leeds whilst serving as a police officer, then went on to become Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary.

Sir Lawrence’s son, Mark says “I met my wife Hilary (English 1980) at a Valentine’s disco. She remarked she’d never seen such ridiculous dancing.” Mark became Deputy Director General at the BBC. Most recently, the Byford alumni attended the graduation of Mark and Hilary’s children, Harry (Philosophy and Linguistics 2017) and Lily (Psychology 2017).



The Intekhabs / Khans *A badge of honour*

When Adnan Intekhab (MSc Global Supply Chain Management 2016) graduated, he proudly wore a University of Leeds pin that belonged to his great-grandfather, Motaber Khan (Commerce 1932).

“I have been able to retrace my great-grandfather’s footsteps,” says Adnan. “He lived on Regent Park Terrace, Hyde Park, and I lived nearby on St Mark’s Street. It is strange to think of him being there all those years ago.”

Campus news

1. New atrium brings light to LUU



01 Donors honoured in new Union

When students arrived at Leeds University Union in September, they found open spaces, bright colours, natural light and plenty of places to take a break. A year-long upgrade has modernised the building and created open communal areas, new shops and cafés, and purpose-built rehearsal studios. The derelict Raven Theatre, an underground in-the-round space once used for a host of performances, has been rejuvenated as the Pyramid Theatre and is used for productions by societies and visiting theatre groups. A glass roof between the Union and the Refectory enables light to flood in to a bright new atrium. Here, a donor wall shows the names of more than 400 alumni and other Footsteps Fund supporters who amongst them contributed more than £100,000 towards the cost of the upgrade.

2. The uncovered mural in LUU
Photo: Tony Glossop

3. The new Triathlon centre opened by brothers Alistair and Jonny



02 Union refurbishment uncovers lost mural

Contractors refurbishing the Union were amazed to uncover part of a mural painted in the 1970s by political refugees of Chile's repressive Pinochet regime. For 40 years, this powerful piece of history hid behind a kitchen in LUU. Once discovered, building plans were changed to preserve the wall on which the mural appears. It now looks down on a modern meeting room and plans are under way to restore the rest of the artwork.

Refugees from Chile came to Leeds in the mid-seventies through support from students and local trade unions. Do you remember the mural? Help us piece together its story at alumni.leeds.ac.uk/Chilean-mural.

03 Centre honours triathlon brothers

A new £5 million sports facility is named after two of our most successful sporting alumni. The Brownlee Centre honours brothers Alistair (Sports Science & Physiology 2009, Hon LLD 2013) and Jonny (History 2012, Hon LLD 2013), and sits alongside a new one-mile cycle circuit – one of the longest in the country – at the Bodington Playing Fields in north Leeds. As well as proving popular with athletes at all levels, including cycle clubs, families and riders with disabilities, the Brownlee Centre is a new National Elite Training Centre for Triathlon, the UK's first purpose-built triathlon training base.

4. Edward Boyle Library
Photo: Marcus Lyon

04 Edward Boyle Library reborn for today

When former Prime Minister Harold Macmillan opened the Undergraduate Library in 1975 it was an innovative, state-of-the-art, learning space. What became known as the Edward Boyle Library was at the heart of the university experience for generations of students. Now, after a £25 million investment, the 'Eddy B' is as popular as ever and is equipped for the way that students learn today. Although the structure of the building hasn't changed and rows of bookshelves still chart its six floors, the Library's technology-rich environment makes it markedly different.

Students can meet round communal tables, pull up portable desks to high-backed armchairs that block out peripheral views, or sit at traditional desks designed to capture maximum natural light. There's a café, computer clusters, a postgraduate area – and dedicated resources for the study of the physical sciences, engineering and social sciences.

5. On the Iron Throne: Axel Muller at the IMC



05 Swords and scholarship

Sword-bearing knights, paradigm-shifting debate and the Iron Throne all featured as part of this year's International Medieval Congress in July. Founded in 1994, the world-renowned annual conference attracts over 2,300 medievalists from all over the world.

The next conference, to be held in July 2018, will be particularly significant as it marks the 50th anniversary of Medieval Studies at Leeds and the 25th Congress. "We often think of the Middle Ages as a period without much diversity," says Axel Muller (MA History 1996), the Congress's Director. "In fact, it was full of complex and fast-changing societies with huge amounts of social interaction." Since 1967, Leeds has been home to an internationally renowned community of medievalists. Professor John Le Patourel led a group of pioneers to form a Centre for Medieval Studies and so the IMS (Institute for Medieval Studies) was born. Concurrently, Professor Peter Sawyer established the International Medieval Bibliography, the leading compilation of medieval scholarship, available in print and digital formats. Today the IMS is home to over 70 staff, postgraduate students and associates.

06 Leeds joins forces with Gemma

St Gemma's Hospice in Moortown, Leeds, is to become the UK's first formally recognised university teaching hospice and will provide increased capacity for Leeds students to study palliative care in practice. The strengthened relationship will raise the profile of palliative care research nationally and internationally, and ensure the sector has a continued flow of expert medical and managerial personnel. The pioneering agreement with Yorkshire's largest hospice also provides a strong platform for research and has been supported by NHS Health Education England.



07 Nexus is new gateway for businesses

From September 2018, a new innovation and enterprise initiative (known as Nexus) comprising a £40 million campus-based centre will transform the University's relationships with industry and help it bring its research to market. Nexus will provide businesses with a single gateway to Leeds' broad world-class research and innovation expertise showcasing strengths in data, health, environment and engineering. At its core will be a vibrant and dynamic community of innovators spanning academia and industry. Nexus will provide access to office and lab space, shared areas for networking and collaboration, and Leeds' state-of-the-art facilities, alongside an end-to-end professional support service.

Its new Director, Dr Martin Stow, a PhD biochemist, has more than 25 years' research and development experience both in large multinational companies at the Vice-President level as well as leading start-ups. He stresses its focus on addressing real world market needs and driving business growth.

Roger Marsh OBE (Metallurgy 1976), Chairman of the Leeds Enterprise Partnership, which promotes the Leeds City Region's interests nationally and internationally says: "Local businesses and entrepreneurs will have a place where they can engage and benefit from the knowledge and capabilities of the University, enabling the development of next generation technologies and products."



09 On the rails

The University is investing £10 million to develop the UK's first dedicated centre for high speed rail technologies and system integration. The Institute will provide a centre for planning, design and construction. "We have a genuine opportunity to forge ahead and become leaders in a high speed rail market that is expanding rapidly," says Professor Lisa Roberts, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation.

10 Top up your skills or explore a new subject online

If you haven't heard yet, the University offers short online courses – or MOOCs – which offer you an interactive way to explore subjects you're passionate about. Our courses cover a wide range of topics varying from business and science to arts and fashion. The courses are free, have no entry requirements and are designed to be flexible so you can complete them at a pace that suits you. Keep your skills up to date with courses designed for professionals offering CPD accreditation or explore a new area of interest and earn academic credit from the University of Leeds.

11 High marks for Leeds

Latest accolades for Leeds

- Leeds was The Times and The Sunday Times' University of the Year 2017
- One of the top five universities in the UK in the 2017 Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey voted by students
- Rated Gold in the 2017 Teaching Excellence Framework. An independent panel judged that the University delivers "consistently outstanding teaching, learning and outcomes for its students, of the highest quality found in the UK."

Supporter news

You help Leeds in all sorts of ways. Alumni give talks, mentor students, organise alumni activity, and many of you give financially to help develop our research, and support new generations of students. Here is a flavour of some of the ways you are shaping your University.

STUDENTS' TRANSATLANTIC EXPERIENCE

Alumni support enabled 15 undergraduates to take part in a seven-day Leeds to New York Student Leadership Programme. The students participated in a series of intensive workshops, visits and events through which they explored the challenges facing business, community and cultural leaders in the two cities. The programme is designed to meet the demand of employers worldwide who are looking for the kind of talent to work fluidly across different geographies, sectors and generations.

The programme was funded by alumni donations to the Footsteps Fund, while Leeds alumni on both sides of the Atlantic gave practical support by becoming involved in the sessions, hosting visits to business premises and passing on their own skills, knowledge and experience. Marc Steatham (History 1983), Principal of Allen Street Marketing in New York was one of the alumni involved. "It was great to see so many undergraduates investigate issues, formulate answers and present their findings with such professionalism and passion," he said. "I feel the future is safe!"



Student Leadership Programme participants

OUR NEXT GENERATION OF SCHOLARS



IntoUniversity students learn about the environment

IntoUniversity students took part in a special study session on flooding and environmental planning run by consultants Mott MacDonald, whose Managing Director is alumnus Mike Haigh (Civil Engineering 1981). IntoUniversity centres, supported by donations from alumni, work with children from disadvantaged backgrounds in inner-city Leeds, inspiring them to succeed in education.

ALEX IS STUDENTS' TV GUIDE

Broadcast Journalism students benefit from the expertise of Alex Gardiner (Politics and Parliamentary Studies 1989) who comes back to campus every year to talk about working in television. Alex, who until recently was Managing director of factual programme maker Shiver, provides insight and careers advice to students, offering reassurance about their future careers: "Leeds gave a lot to me, so it's good to give something back. And in doing that I get a lot back myself so it becomes a virtuous circle."

DOWN ON THE FARM

The University of Leeds farm has a long and proud history of agricultural research, with expertise in areas such as pig nutrition, soil and crop management and environmental change. Now the support of Nigel Bertram (Agriculture 1971) will create a new visitor centre for sharing research findings with farmers, industry leaders and students as well as with the general public.



The University farm will see a new visitor centre



Florence Henry joined the Leeds Network

FLORENCE OFFERS FIRST-HAND ADVICE

The Leeds Network is an online platform which enables students to read examples of what Leeds graduates have gone on to do, as well as to ask the alumni questions. Florence Henry (International Relations and Political Communications 2016) joined soon after graduating: "The graduate job market is hard, and as a student it's hard to know all the career opportunities out there. Speaking to alumni is a great way to help students learn more about the graduate employment world and work out how best to market their experience." Students can view profiles of more than 1,000 Leeds alumni.



Brain cancer researchers: Professor Susan Short, Dr Anke Bruning-Richardson, EXSEL Scholar Emily Salt

GIFTS BRING BRAIN CANCER HOPE

With the support of generous donations to our Footsteps Fund, Leeds researchers are pushing forward their search for a new treatment for brain cancer. Professor Susan Short's research group, based at Leeds Cancer Centre, is investigating the use of an oncolytic virus which can be injected into patients to target and kill brain cancer cells. If successful, the virus will attack tumours while leaving healthy cells unharmed and 'switch on' the natural defences of the patient's immune system to recognise cancer cells and destroy them.

Following our appeal in autumn 2016, gifts flooded in to support this research. More than 1,000 donors contributed a total of £137,000 to support this pioneering research – enabling Leeds to recruit a full-time Lead Research Radiographer. This valuable new member of the team will work closely with patients taking part in clinical trials of the new treatment and monitor possible side effects. More patients will be able to participate and receive the pastoral and medical support they need. "This support is so valuable," says Susan. "I truly hope we can repay your faith in our work by delivering a new therapy which could be genuinely life-changing for patients facing this terrible disease."

SANDERS IS OUR MAN IN TAIPEI

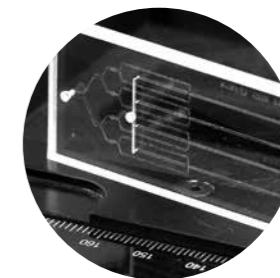
One of our many overseas volunteers, Sanders Chen (MA Business Administration 2012), ensures that the University of Leeds Taiwan Alumni Association continues to thrive. The Association hosts an annual reunion which sees large numbers of Taiwanese alumni come together to network, dine and share memories of life as Leeds students. For this year's Big Get Together, Sanders organised a barbecue in Taipei – and the Association even has its own dragon boat racing team!



Sanders Chen stays linked to Leeds

USING MICROBUBBLES TO REVOLUTIONISE TREATMENT

Leeds scientists are developing a potential way to load tiny 'microbubbles' with drugs, send them around the body and then remotely release anti-cancer drugs at exactly the right place. Currently, a patient receiving chemotherapy is given drugs to attack and kill cancer cells. But these drugs also spread around the patient's entire body, causing damage to healthy cells and side-effects such as fatigue, hair loss and nausea. Researchers believe their approach could lead to big changes in cancer treatment, reducing the amount of drug a patient would have to be given – and avoiding the worst of the side-effects. Donations from alumni over the coming months will help Leeds to accelerate this research. **To support this work, visit campaign.leeds.ac.uk**



The tiny microchip where different substances can be assembled around microbubbles ready for treatment

AWARD FOR FRONTLINE MEDICS

A legacy from Dennis Parker (Medicine 1953) will fund an annual Innovation Prize, awarded to the student whose idea is judged to have the greatest potential impact on education, leadership, teamwork, clinical practice or the community. Dr Parker served as a medical officer in the RAF and was awarded the MBE in 1967 for services with the British Joint Services Training Team in Ghana. The inaugural prize went to student James Nicholson who developed the Leeds Medical Student Community First Responder Scheme. The scheme has given students the chance to support the care of acutely ill patients outside the hospital, building on a range of skills integral to the University's medical curriculum. Thirty medical students have been trained so far in basic life support, providing oxygen therapy and using a defibrillator.



Dennis Parker (Medicine 1953)

Find out how you can volunteer at alumni.leeds.ac.uk/volunteering

Read more about how alumni financial support is Making a World of Difference at campaign.leeds.ac.uk

To find more about giving a legacy to Leeds visit campaign.leeds.ac.uk/your-legacy-our-future

Our online Donor Roll of Honour donors.leeds.ac.uk recognises the generosity of the many thousands of people who have supported the University since the campaign began in 2011.

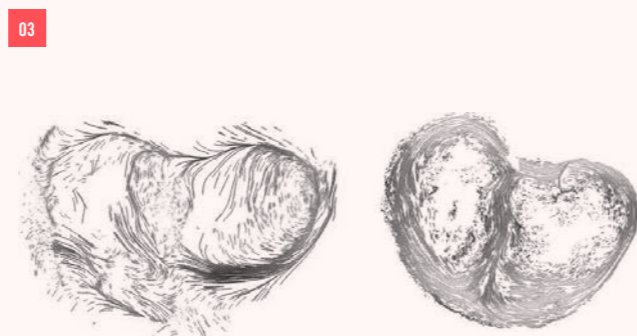
Department news



Cartoon by Kipper

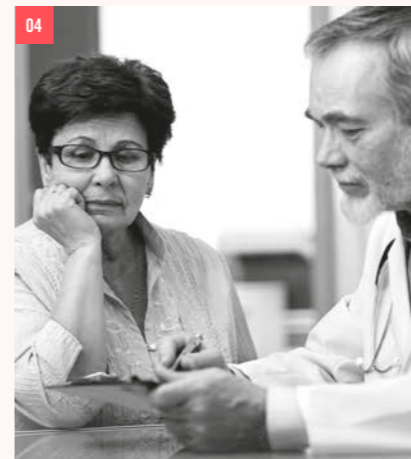


Concrete on campus
Photo: Marcus Lyon



Cross section of foetal heart
124 days into development

Cross section of foetal heart
128 days into development



Behavioural activation, helping older people with mild depression



Professor Jennifer Tomlinson, who led research into the diversity of those entering the legal profession



Joanne on the decks as part of Algotababz
Photo: Paul Higham getintothisco.uk

01 Design

“I don’t get oily when walking,” a team of Textiles researchers were told whilst investigating the use of fluorocarbons in raingear. The comment came from a study which asked outdoor enthusiasts how they use their clothing. Harmful fluorocarbons are used in waterproof jackets to repel rain and oil. Their use in clothing manufacturing has raised concern from legislation bodies and environmentalists alike, with some manufacturers switching to alternative coatings.

Leeds research found that fluorocarbons outperformed newer fabrics only in their oil repellency. Water resistance, which 82% of participants considered the most important factor, was unaffected. Sustainability is a growing concern within the clothing industry and “can be achieved through better chemistry,” says Dr Richard Blackburn.

02 Chemical and Process Engineering

Leeds scientists are using the principles of light to measure the strength of concrete, giving industry an understanding of when it could fracture.

In a new approach, a thin layer of ‘birefringent’ coating is applied to concrete beams. When the beam is loaded, its birefringent properties split light waves in different directions according to the stress in each area. The waves reflect back to a photonic camera which takes a picture showing where stress levels are most extreme. While the coating is not new, this is the first time it’s been used to assess the toughness of concrete against fractures. “This methodology could help assess the strength of a wide range of new composite materials in future,” says research lead Dr Joseph Antony.

03 Biomedical Sciences

Major structures in foetal hearts are formed in just four days, according to a Leeds study that used the latest imaging techniques. With this knowledge, doctors could eventually be able to monitor babies during this critical development phase and intervene if problems occur. It’s thought that one in 10 miscarriages is caused by the failure of the heart to form.

The most remarkable changes in foetal hearts occur 124 days into pregnancy. Within this time, the muscle tissue rapidly organises and cardiac fibres are laid down to form the helix shape of the heart. The research team, led by Dr Eleftheria Pervolaraki, also identified two proteins critical to the heart’s development. Levels of connexin 40 and 43 increase during its growth period, helping cells to communicate.

04 Medicine

Behavioural activation can help prevent older people with mild depression from developing a more severe clinical form, Leeds research finds. A treatment was delivered over 10 weeks through face-to-face and telephone contact, and encouraged patients to re-engage with social activities that bring pleasure and improve mood. “During treatment, people are encouraged to think about alternative ways to remain mentally and physically active,” explains trial coordinator Dr Gemma Traviss-Turner.

A study compared two groups of patients aged 65 and older who had mild depression. Half the participants were given access to behavioural activation, whilst the other half visited their GP. Four months later, behavioural activation had reduced more serious symptoms of depression. Plans are now under way to train NHS therapists in this low-cost intervention.

05 Media and Communication

“Can you feel the music?” asked Digital media specialist Dr Joanne Armitage at the British Science Festival this year. Joanne was the recipient of the British Science Association’s Daphne Oram Award for Digital Innovation. During her prize lecture, she demonstrated how she uses vibrating (haptic) devices like bespoke belts and cushions to enhance musical experiences.

“It was exciting to be a part of the British Science Festival and to discuss my work with a new audience. I was particularly honoured to have received the award lecture in the name of sonic innovator Daphne Oram.”

Joanne is also one half of the ‘Algotababz’, a musical duo producing rave music made from algorithms. The pair use programming language SuperCollider to generate live music in clubs and concert halls.

06 Leeds University Business School

New research into the legal profession shows that progress is being made in creating a more diverse sector but that women and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) solicitors still face career progression barriers. The research was commissioned and published by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) and is the most extensive of its type.

Led by Professor Jennifer Tomlinson, the research analysed data of more than 194,000 solicitors between 1970 and 2016. It showed that the proportion of women and BAME people entering the profession has risen significantly. However, career advancement remains an issue as partnerships remain male dominated with just one third of partners female. The best opportunities for females of all ethnicities to become a partner were in small firms, as is the case for BAME males.

English

Twenty years ago, he taught creative writing at Leeds. Now, world-renowned West Yorkshire poet Simon Armitage has returned as the University's first Professor of poetry. Dr Fiona Becket, Head of the School of English, said: "Current and future students for many years to come will be extremely excited to have the opportunity to hear and talk to Simon, and to be taught by him."



Simon Armitage received a Leeds honorary degree

Music

The School of Music is making room for a whopping 27 new Steinway pianos. Along with a combination of uprights, baby grands and a concert grand shipped from the Steinway & Sons factory the School has been given an All-Steinway School status. Over 400 students will benefit from the £742,000 investment which will make Leeds the first Russell Group university to exclusively use the instruments.



Playing a Steinway



Lucie the robot

Robotics

A conference on robot use in infrastructure brought experts from across the UK to Leeds in June. A team of Leeds and Birmingham scientists presented 'Lucie', a mobile long-lived robot that learns and adapts within her environment to then monitor real-world infrastructure. Other Leeds projects demonstrated a pipe inspection robot that is powered wirelessly and drones to scan and repair potholes using 3D printing.

East Asian Studies

Professor of Chinese Don Rimmington was a pioneering member of the School of East Asian Studies for several decades. Now he has a constant presence on the fourth floor of the Michael Sadler building, which has been named 'The Don Rimmington Foyer' in his honour. Alumni attended a special ceremony that saw Don unveil the foyer's new plaque.



Don Rimmington and his wife Liz

French

In September a conference marked the 55th anniversary of Algerian independence and almost two decades since the 'memory boom' publication of various confessional documents written by participants on both sides of the Algerian War. 'Rupture, Repression, Repetition? The Algerian War of Independence in the Present' examined the legacies of the Algerian War in philosophical and historical figurations of the present.

Education

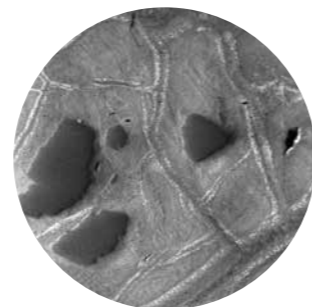
More than 300 applied linguistics professionals and researchers came to Leeds for the 50th anniversary conference of the British Association for Applied Linguistics. Hosted by the School of Education and the Centre for Language Education Research, its theme, Diversity in Applied Linguistics, gave focus to sign language and deaf studies, the future of applied linguistics as the field diversifies, and language teaching in turbulent times.

Sociology

A June colloquium explored the public's understanding of rising inequality. Presenting national and comparative research, speakers raised questions about how these perceptions shape support for certain political and policy responses to poverty, welfare and redistribution. The colloquium was organised in collaboration with the Leeds Inequalities Research Network which comprises 20 research centres and is complementing the establishment of a new MSc Inequalities and Social Science.

Earth and Environment

Organic matter found in deep mantle rocks from the Pacific has tripled the estimated depth limit for life. Chemical analysis of the matter, which was transported from up to 12km below the surface, resembles molecular signatures of microbial life. "This suggests the water-rich, low-temperature zones in the mantle may represent one of Earth's largest hidden microbial ecosystems," says Dr Ivan Savov.



Elements in hydrated mantle rocks

Mathematics

Listeners to Radio 4's Today programme are regularly foxed by Mathematics puzzles from Leeds. The questions originate in the the UKMT Mathematical Challenge, organised by The UK Mathematics Trust which is based at Leeds. The Trust aims to advance the education of young people in mathematics, organising events to stimulate mathematical thinking and develop problem-solving. More than 650,000 secondary school pupils participate in Mathematical Challenge events each year.



Discover more online at magazine.alumni.leeds.ac.uk

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS ALUMNI RECEPTION AT THE HOUSE OF LORDS

Hosted by Lord Bragg of Wigton



Friday 15th June 2018

Booking opens Wednesday 7th March 2018

For more information visit alumni.leeds.ac.uk/HofL2018



Kristallnacht. It sounds festive. But the Kristall was broken glass carpeting German and Austrian streets on the night of 9 November 1938, when Nazis smashed the windows of every Jewish shop and office they could find, burned down a thousand synagogues, and despatched 30,000 Jews to concentration camps.

So, in Berlin, a Jewish professor of mathematics, Stanislaus Jolles, aged 81, wrote a letter to his Austrian friend of 30 years, Ludwig Wittgenstein, firebrand philosopher long established as a lecturer at Trinity College, Cambridge. Jolles asked Wittgenstein to help get him and his wife Adele out of Germany so that they might live their last years in England.

Wittgenstein had one friend he could turn to. He approached Esther Simpson, a University of Leeds graduate serving as secretary of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL). Over six years, she had played the leading role in extracting 1,500 Jewish and/or dissenting academics from Nazi clutches.

Her cool reply surely shook the philosopher. “Professor Einstein has already written to us about Professor Jolles,” she wrote – and she repeated the refusal she’d given to the author of the theory of relativity: “Our assistance is limited to scholars and scientists who are still able to work.” Therefore, the SPSL couldn’t consider “scholars who, however pre-eminent in their day, are now of an age when they should be enjoying their pensions.”

Little enjoyment remained for Professor Jolles. He died ‘of unknown causes’ three years later. Soon after, his wife died in Theresienstadt concentration camp. Esther Simpson had grown used to making Sophie’s Choice many times a day.



Leeds graduate Esther Simpson served as secretary of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning (SPSL). Over 45 years, she played the leading role in bringing safety to thousands of at-risk academics around the world. Photo courtesy of the Lotte Meitner-Graf Archive

GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

Leeds alumna Esther Simpson befriended leading twentieth-century intellectuals – and saved many of their lives. Phil Sutcliffe unfolds her story.



Discover more online at magazine.alumni.leeds.ac.uk

Her extraordinary job began with the creation in 1933 of the SPSL, under its original name, the Academic Assistance Council (AAC). Not coincidentally, this followed Hitler becoming Chancellor of Germany on 30 January. Then, on 7 April, Jews and other opponents were barred from government employment. This left more than 1,000 university teachers out of work.

The AAC’s eminent founders included welfare state originator William Beveridge, radical economist John Maynard Keynes and ‘father of nuclear physics’ Sir Ernest Rutherford. To protect academics threatened by fascism, they launched a fundraising campaign topped off by the proceeds from an Einstein lecture in the Royal Albert Hall.

Then they appointed Esther Simpson as ‘assistant secretary’ – a modest job title she soon rendered absurd – on £2 10s a week. She came with no “money behind her” and set about dealing with the 30-a-day applicants attracted by the AAC’s star-studded connections.

Working until ten o’clock every night, she didn’t take a holiday until 1951, never stopped at all except to play her violin... or luxuriate in a box of Belgian chocolates, her one extravagant taste.

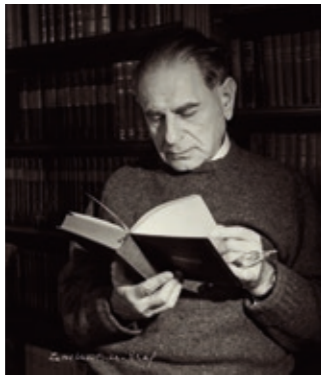
She organised transport from Germany, accommodation in Britain, and bank accounts, then regular payments – enough to ‘tick over’, she put it – for up to two years while the immigrants settled in, learned English if necessary, and looked for academic or commercial work.

The flow increased after the 1935 Nuremberg Laws stripped Jews of citizenship and again following the 1938 German Anschluss invasion of Austria. Accordingly, Esther explored the AAC/SPSL’s contacts in America. She reckoned lecture tours could shop-window her talented team. Almost all did line up a job – especially those who followed her pride-swallowing instruction to forget Ivy League fantasies: “You have to concentrate on the middle west, the smaller universities, just as any American has to do.”

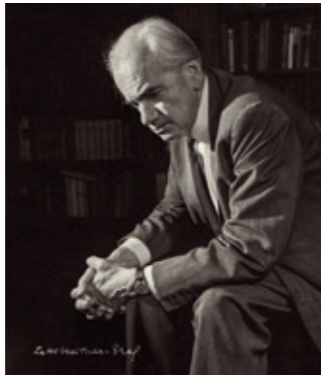
The college recognises in Esther Simpson someone who in the darkest times of this troubled century has kept alight the pure flame of human decency.

Esther Simpson OBE
Refugee co-ordinator
1903 – 1996

Text from citation upon her election as honorary member of the Royal College of Physicians in 1991



Some of the academics helped by Esther:
Clockwise from top left:
Ernst Gombrich, Karl Popper, Otto Frisch,
and Rudolf Peierls.
Photos courtesy of the
Lotte Meitner Graf Archive



On 3 September 1939, when Britain declared war on Germany and the borders closed, Esther's role seemed redundant. But that didn't last long...

Why Esther Simpson? Who was she? While she never gave a 'revealing' personality interview, her story speaks directly about 'what made her'. Leeds had a lot to do with it.

'Simpson' was an alias. Her Lithuanian Jewish parents had fled a Russian pogrom and settled in Leeds, her father a 'worker in the garment industry' in the city. She was born Esther Sinovitch, 31 July 1903, the youngest of four, attended Leeds Girls' Modern School in Willow Terrace Road and took music lessons for one shilling a term.

When she entered the University of Leeds in 1921, she really began to explore her potential, discover what she cared about and consider what she might do about it. Amongst the 2,000 students enrolled at Leeds, she was one of 20 there on a City Senior Scholarship. She studied hard towards a first, played violin in two orchestras (one conducted by alternating identical twins) and became secretary of the Imperial War Relief Fund's University branch, raising money for students and academic staff in Central Europe suffering the aftermath of the First World War.

But in terms of her moral certainties and capacity for almost infinite dedication, her brother Israel (Modern Languages 1921, MA French 1922) probably inspired her. Five years older than Esther, he'd recently served two years in jail as a First World War 'absolutist' conscientious objector. Brother and sister would have known the popular French lecturer Jean-Philippe Inebnit a Quaker, who was possibly the route to the pacifist faith that they both embraced.

Israel also played a part in the 'career' side when he introduced her to Leeds French lecturer Roger Soltau who, in 1928, offered her a job in the London office of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), another endeavour to counteract the War's lingering horrors. A year later, she moved to IFOR's HQ in Vienna, where she befriended the intellectual set. She'd just left IFOR when she received a telegram from the AAC that revealed her life's mission.

Come 1940, Esther's work took an unexpected turn. Suddenly she found herself campaigning to free academics interned by the British. Five hundred of them fell victim to a tabloid uproar about the enemy within. But she wasn't having it. She wrote thousands of letters, goading the government into examining every case and, within a few months, nearly all were re-liberated – including molecular biologist Max Perutz, art historian Ernst Gombrich, and spinal injury specialist Sir Ludwig Guttmann (who originated the Paralympics).

TIMELINE

Esther Simpson

(French 1924, Education 1925
Hon LLD 1989)

1903

Born in Leeds

1924

BA French with German,
University of Leeds

1925

Education Diploma,
University of Leeds

1927–1928

Secretary, International
Fellowship of Reconciliation,
London

1928–1933

Secretary, International
Fellowship of Reconciliation,
Vienna

1933

Secretary, World Alliance of
YMCAs, Geneva

1933–1944

Assistant Secretary, then
Secretary, Society for the
Protection of Science and
Learning (AKA Academic
Assistance Council), London

1944–1966

Assistant Secretary, the Society
for Visiting Scientists

1949

Ordre des Palmes académiques:
Officier d'Académie, France

1956

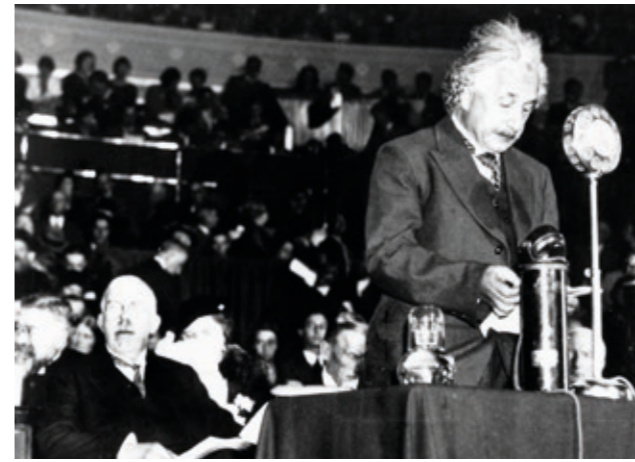
Order of the British Empire

1959–1978

Secretary, Society for the
Protection of Science and
Learning (volunteer 1951–1966
and after retirement)

1991

Honorary Member of the Royal
College of Physicians



Albert Einstein speaks at the
Albert Hall, 4th October, 1933:

"Without such freedom there would have been no Shakespeare, no Goethe, no Newton, no Faraday, no Pasteur and no Lister. There would be no comfortable houses for the mass of people, no railway, no wireless, no protection against epidemics, no cheap books, no culture and no enjoyment of art at all."

But the Second World War didn't end oppression. So, for 22 years from 1944 she continued her mission through a different organisation, the Society for Visiting Scientists. In 1966 she returned as a volunteer for the AAC's direct descendant organisation now called the Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA). Over these years she brought academics out of Czechoslovakia, Greece, South Africa, Nigeria, Bangladesh and more.

Esther admitted to the elitism of her niche and pointed out with pride that among her refuge-seekers she could count 74 Fellows of The Royal Society, 34 Fellows of The British Academy and 16 Nobel Prize winners.

Other ambivalences she preferred not to discuss in public. For instance, back in 1933 the AAC decided not to appoint any Jews to their board because their presence might put off supporters. And when Esther joined their staff she promptly changed her name from Sinovitch to Simpson by deed poll (one source says her father had adopted the name back in the 1900s). Looking back it would be easy to condemn these moves as hypocritical. Or perhaps Esther deployed the catalyst of pragmatism to convert ideals into action.

She wrote thousands of letters, goading the government into examining every case and, within a few months, nearly all were re-liberated – including molecular biologist Max Perutz, art historian Ernst Gombrich, and spinal injury specialist Sir Ludwig Guttmann (who originated the Paralympics).

Another ethical conundrum for Esther was the lines of research some of 'her' scientists pursued, in England or America. Otto Robert Frisch and Francis Simon contributed to the invention of the atomic bomb. And one of her AAC founder friends, Hungarian nuclear physicist Leo Szilard, wrote the 1939 letter to President Franklin D Roosevelt which proved a major factor in his approving the Manhattan Project. Recalling a conversation with Szilard when he tried to explain what he was up to, she said: "It sounded to me like a bigger and better bomb. I said that was something I did not like at all."

Never paid much, often paid nothing at all, always unsung outside her circle of intellectual giants, Esther did become rich in honours at least leading up to her death in 1996. But her favourite took her back to Leeds, the University's 1989 award of an honorary doctorate. "My four years there were the source not only of happiness but of pride, undiminished by the years," she wrote.

Paying tribute to Esther, the South African freedom-fighter/law lecturer Albie Sachs, whom she helped through crises in 1966 and 1988, brought out something of the caring character which lay behind her nun-like devotion to her work: "I regard her as an exemplary person of loveliness and kindness and efficient support. I don't think we need heroes in the world. We need courage and solidarity."

The University has a long history of welcoming students and scholars fleeing persecution. It still works in partnership with the Council for At-Risk Academics and the City of Leeds, which is a designated city of sanctuary.

Sources:
Esther Simpson's personal papers, held in the University's Special Collections, 'Refugee Scholars: Conversations with Tess Simpson' R.M. Cooper, editor, and Miss Simpson's Children, BBC Radio 4.

When you're communicating, who is to blame when there's a misunderstanding? Ceri Thomas finds out how research at Leeds led to a very uncomfortable night of theatre.

LOST IN TRANSLATION



“Think about a time when you didn't understand what was going on around you.” That was the blurb for the play. “We set out to unsettle audiences – to let them think they know what's going on. Only to realise that they really don't...”

When the University's Creative Labs offered Dr Lou Harvey the chance to collaborate with a theatre company, she didn't hesitate. Paired with the Cap-a-Pie theatre group from Newcastle, the Lecturer in language education began telling them about her research into the ways that even small communication breakdowns can have a huge effect on the lives of migrants, even those who speak excellent English.

“Take the story of my participant Dmitry,” she explains. “He was from Russia and joined a choir when he came to Manchester. When he went to the pub with them, someone asked him, ‘Oh, what kind of music did you sing in

Russia?’ And he answered in great depth. But he realised that people were starting to look away and lose interest and chat with other people. It made him think, ‘Oh God. What have I done? Why don't people want to listen to me?’ It took him a while to grasp that when people ask you questions in the pub, they want chit-chat, not an in-depth history of your life. Or as Dmitry put it, ‘I did big talk when I was supposed to do small talk.’

“It was psychologically quite debilitating and Dmitry lost a lot of confidence.”

As Lou discussed stories like these with Cap-a-Pie, they together began to come up with a shape for what they could do. First of all, they wouldn't simply recount real-life stories from Lou's research – instead they would try to create “something symbolic and fictional.”



TALKING POINTS

What are your attitudes to language and communication?

Do you get annoyed or impatient when someone doesn't understand you?

Do you think new arrivals to a country should be able to speak the main language of that country beforehand?

When communication breaks down, who do you think is responsible?

Do you think people should be able to speak any language they like in public?

“A lot of the feedback that we got were things like, ‘This makes me think about how I am with people. It makes me think about how I'm listening. Am I being patient enough? Am I being tolerant enough?’”

The second realisation was that they needed to make the audience not just see or hear the kind of confusion and discomfort being communicated, but feel it too. “We said ‘Right, what do people expect when they go to the theatre?’ Then we played around with those expectations.”

The result was a seven-minute piece called Up and Up and Up Towards, performed by a single actor. “We spliced together two fictional stories, the story of Icarus and that of an Austrian immigrant called Liesl and her boyfriend Andy, who bullies her when she tries to use local slang. And then we wove in these confusing features. Andy would begin the story of Icarus, and then he'd suddenly stop and he'd go, ‘I haven't said that right.’ And then he'd start again. Or he'd be speaking English and then go into gibberish, and then back into English. And then the story would switch without warning. The audience were going, ‘What? What just happened?’”

With audiences responding to both the message and method of the drama, Cap-a-Pie set about assembling funding for something bigger, and in June 2017 they put on The Translator in Leeds. It consisted of 90 minutes of material split over two evenings. Some moments were playful – one segment saw the actors playing charades with the audience but gradually changing the accepted symbols for ‘book’ and ‘film’ and so on until the audience had no hope of guessing the answers. Others were much darker, though. One saw audience members being encouraged by the actors to join in with the barracking of a character struggling with language in different public situations. It built up over various scenes from sighs and tutting, to a point where the audience found themselves actually chanting abuse at the characters.

TAKE RISKS – SPARK CHANGE

Creative Labs, run out of the University's Cultural Institute aims to spark collaborations between artists and researchers, to bring a new perspective to research.

Some other Creative Labs projects:

Science and art

A new £15,000 annual prize for artists was launched when biological scientist Professor John Ladbury was matched with Opera North's Projects director Dominic Gray, after they mused on how artists and scientists could be challenged to work creatively together.

Local communities and storytelling

An online storytelling tool used by schoolchildren, museums and libraries to collect stories about their communities was developed when Simon Pople, Lecturer at the School of Media and Communications was paired with a digital innovation company Carbon Imagineering.

Teaching and theatre

Social work Lecturer Stephanie Steels has seen her students become more confident and engaged in their learning after she picked up creative teaching approaches from her Creative Labs partners tutti frutti, a children's theatre company.

“You could hear how, at first, for some of the audience, it was kind of a joke. But as it went on and on and on, people were going, ‘This is awful. How have we got to this?’”

“A lot of the feedback that we got were things like, ‘This makes me think about how I am with people. It makes me think about how I'm listening. Am I being patient enough? Am I being tolerant enough?’ Communication is a two-way thing and it's not just the responsibility of the person speaking to be understood, it's the responsibility of the person listening to try and understand as well.”

Lou sees The Translator as very much a work in progress, and is looking to gain funding for a ‘polished piece’ that could be put on and possibly toured. As an academic, she's been fascinated by the avenues that the collaboration has opened up, particularly the ways that performance can be used in learning. “I'm really interested in exploring how people were actually learning in that experience – it's something that I wouldn't have been thinking about without this work,” she says.

Equally, though, Lou is delighted with just how effective an evening of theatre they created. “A friend of mine who's doing a PhD in applied theatre said, ‘Theatre that is based on research, and especially based on social issues, is often very important, very worthy. But it's often very dull.’ She said that what we did, though, was make interesting theatre. You got the sense of what it was about socially and why it was important, but it was also an interesting and innovative event in itself.”



START MAKING SENSE

Top tips for good communication

1. COMMUNICATION IS TWO-WAY

If you don't understand, it may not only be the other person's fault – sometimes you need to make an effort to listen.

2. BE PATIENT

If you're communicating with someone who is struggling with the language, being patient will really help them with their confidence to speak.

3. BE UNDERSTANDING

Respect that many people are multilingual and speak different languages with different people at different times and places. Languages are part of people's identities, just like ethnicity, gender and religion.

GET INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

A University research project is looking at the role of language learning and intercultural understanding, and we want to hear from employers to better understand their perceptions and expectations. The project aims to evaluate Broadening, which enables students to widen their learning horizons.

If you would like to be interviewed as part of the project, please contact [Caroline Campbell](mailto:Caroline.Campbell@leeds.ac.uk) or [Karen Llewellyn](mailto:Karen.Llewellyn@leeds.ac.uk)



See clips from Up and Up and Up Towards, hear Lou Harvey talking about the collaboration, and find out more about the Creative Labs at magazine.alumni.leeds.ac.uk



Discover more online at
magazine.alumni.leeds.ac.uk

As well as running a mental health charity across West Yorkshire, Alison Lowe is a Leeds City Councillor for Labour and Chair of the Police Crime Commissioning Panel. Here, Alison (History 1990, MA Medieval Studies 1992) speaks with her son, Adam Lowe about her life in Leeds.

Alumni profile: Alison Lowe

Why did you choose to study at the University of Leeds?

I love Leeds. I was born and bred here – growing up in Seacroft. Also, happily, I had no choice! With two children, I needed family support. My husband at the time always spoke highly of his course in Earth Sciences at Leeds, so it was the natural place to go.

What were you doing at the time when you decided to study?

None of my family had ever been to university and I was determined to be the first. However, life got in the way. I found myself unhappily married with a young child by the age of 21.

When my son was one, I visited my old History teacher at Parklands Girls' High School to show off my baby. She was so disappointed that I'd forgotten my own hopes and dreams, that I went home and researched my options that same night. Not long after, I applied as a mature student.

A week before my interview, I discovered I was pregnant with my second child and very nearly didn't go. Ultimately, the thought of telling my own children to follow their dreams when I had failed to follow mine was just too awful to contemplate – so I started on 29 September 1987 with a three-week old baby in tow.

My sister Jane helped me look after the kids. She also applied to study History at Leeds during my final year. A few years later, my older brother got his degree from Leeds Polytechnic (now Leeds Beckett).

What were your favourite parts of the course?

I particularly liked the three Edwards: Edward I, Edward II and Edward III. My BA thesis was focused on Edward II and his friendships with Piers Gaveston and Hugh Despenser. It was entitled 'Homosexuality in the Middle Ages' – much to my professor's shock!

What do you do now?

I'm CEO of a mental health charity called Touchstone that operates across West Yorkshire and also in Barnsley. Touchstone is a £4.5 million charity with more than 160 staff. We were named Most Inclusive Employer in the UK 2016 and came eighth out of 857 entrants in the Sunday Times Best Company to Work for 2017 (fourth for leadership).

In 1990, I became the first ever black woman on Leeds City Council. During the 28 years I have served, I have chaired various committees and I am now Chair of the Police and Crime Panel for West Yorkshire, covering about 2.2 million people.

I chair the Leeds Labour Group and lead on personnel matters for the Council, including chairing the Yorkshire and Humber Employers Committee.

I won the Stonewall Senior Champion of the Year award in 2015. I am regularly asked to share my diversity and inclusion expertise for private sector companies like PWC, Nestle, Lloyds Banking Group and many more.

How has your degree helped you?

I'm brilliant at knowing the stems of words from the Latin I did as part of my MA in Medieval Studies, but now I use my understanding of language to help with writing reports and applications. The efficiency and thoroughness I learned at University means my time management skills are still fab. I can take on, and complete, multiple projects at any one time.

I often have to analyse lots of data and interrogate evidence, and having two History degrees is a huge help. It's also useful to employ the discipline of study and research across my different roles, and it gives me credibility when speaking to stakeholders and partners if they know I can hold my own in a debate. That's served me well in local politics and board meetings alike.

What do you think about Leeds as a city today?

Leeds has great culture, nightlife and more than 70,000 students. Leeds is also a compassionate city that supports its citizens from some of the more harmful effects of austerity. Leeds has one of the most diverse economies in the UK. In 2016, Leeds saw the fastest rate of private sector jobs growth of any UK city and has the highest ratio of public to private sector jobs of all the UK's core cities. I'm proud to call it home.

“WE WERE NAMED MOST INCLUSIVE EMPLOYER IN THE UK 2016.”

Earlier this year we asked alumni to nominate some of their favourite places around campus and some of their best memories. Here are the results – what were yours?

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE IN LEEDS?



The Original Oak on Otley Road
“I met my wife in the Original Oak and we are still married 36 years later,” wrote one of you.



Best Pub

1. The Original Oak
2. The Skyrack
3. The Eldon



The Eldon

Three stalwarts of the Otley Run dominated votes in this category: close Headingley neighbours the Original Oak and Skyrack, and the Eldon, directly opposite the Mechanical Engineering building on Woodhouse Lane. All three remain popular with today’s students, as do others which received several votes – the Woodman (now Woodies Alehouse) in Weetwood; the Chemic Tavern in Woodhouse; the Faversham, close to the south-west corner of campus, and atmospheric Whitelocks in the city centre. Sadly, the lovely old Bricklayers Arms in Woodhouse, which once served a ploughman’s lunch voted the very best in all of England, has now been converted into flats.



Best Venue

1. The Refectory
2. Riley Smith Hall
3. Brudenell Social Club

The Refectory was a clear winner, with many respondents recalling the great bands which they had seen there – Leonard Cohen to Led Zeppelin cropped up amongst the replies. Others remembered performances in the Union’s own Riley Smith Hall, the Brudenell Social Club in Hyde Park and Irish Centre on York Road. Classical music lovers recalled piano concerts in the Great Hall and orchestral performances in the Town Hall. Recent alumni mentioned Fruity nights at Stylus, while older alumni recalled Ritzy’s night club in the Merrion Centre and the Star and Garter pub on Kirkstall Road. And one particularly studious alumnus felt that the “peace and quiet” of the Brotherton Library was the very best of all.



Another favourite, The Brudenell Social Club



Cream perform at the Refectory
Leeds Number 1 music venue in the 1970s and 1980s. One of you said “I remember watching Cream playing there in 1968. They were so musically driven and unstoppable it was as though they were playing to stay alive.” Photo: Nigel Abbot

Best Meeting Place



1. Old Bar
2. Parkinson Steps
3. MJ Coffee lounge (LUU)

Predictably, Leeds University Union was a hands-down winner in this category, with alumni recalling the time they spent in Old Bar and the TV room, and catching up with friends for coffee or lunch. The iconic Parkinson Steps were named by several as the place to meet, particularly in the sunshine, while others referenced the Maths and Physics coffee lounges and various halls of residence. But for alumni of a certain age the Mouat Jones coffee lounge holds special memories: “We thought we were so cool,” wrote one.



Old Bar, LUU
Start of a million nights out. “I met my husband in Old Bar when he borrowed 50p from me,” recalled one alumna. “He was on the Ernts Committee so I got into lots of gigs because he was on the door.”



The Parkinson Steps
One of the University’s most popular meeting places for generations of students
Photo: Marcus Lyon



The Refectory
Part-time venue for meeting and eating, part-time iconic music venue

Best Memory

The diversity of responses in this section shows how studying in Leeds created life-changing moments and life-long memories for so many of our students. While some recall the hops and balls, playing for sports teams or watching Leeds United, others reflect the vast range of experiences that studying in the city can offer:

“Singing Handel’s Messiah in the Great Hall.”

“Being woken by tigers roaring when the circus arrived at Hyde Park.”

“Spending an evening with Wole Soyinka on the LUU Waterways Society Barge on the Leeds-Liverpool canal.”

“Pushing a piano from the Leeds Union to the Manchester Union – presenting said piano to Manchester Uni in return for a painting that they had stolen.”

“I had three happy years when the world was my oyster and I was able to look forward to a wonderful life.”



Flick through our photo scrapbook of Leeds life through the years, see what campus looks like in 2018 at alumni.leeds.ac.uk/scrapbook



Discover more online at magazine.alumni.leeds.ac.uk

We asked for your nominations as part of our Scholarships appeal in Spring 2017. Thank you to everyone who donated – raising more than £120,000 for student scholarships.

A moment of quiet study,
Roger Stevens Building.



Photo: Marcus Lyon

BGT

For the last three years, our Big Get Together has celebrated the Leeds connection amongst our worldwide alumni community. Leeds alumni have organised 184 events, large and small, in 100 cities in 49 countries. More than 1,500 of you have attended an event across the world. Thanks to everyone who attended, and a huge thank you to all our amazing Big Get Together organisers!



To see more photos from our Big Get Togethers, visit magazine.alumni.leeds.ac.uk



Abuja 2017



Hong Kong 2017



Paris 2017



Istanbul 2017



San Francisco 2016



Toronto 2015



Chengdu 2017



Jakarta 2017



Port Harcourt 2017



Dhaka 2017



Taipei 2017



Ripon 2017

.....

YOUR LEGACY COULD SUPPORT STUDENTS FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

.....



Every legacy can make an impact, no matter the size. To find out how your legacy could make a difference, please contact:

LEGACIES HAVE HELPED TO SHAPE THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS FOR GENERATIONS.

These generous gifts are used for a wide variety of purposes. They have funded scholarships to support the best students regardless of their background, advanced pioneering medical and scientific research in areas such as cancer, arthritis and Alzheimer's disease, enhanced the collections of our libraries and galleries – and provided our students and academics with outstanding equipment and facilities.

By including a gift to the University of Leeds in your Will, you could help to nurture the people, generate the ideas and create the technologies that will change our world for the better. Everyone who pledges a legacy to the University is invited to join the Brotherton Circle which recognises those who are supporting us in this special way.

**Caroline Bartholomew,
Alumni and Development Team,
University of Leeds,
Leeds,
LS2 9JT**

T: 0113 343 2347

E: c.bartholomew@adm.leeds.ac.uk

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Alternatively, please tick the appropriate box in the Remembering Leeds section of the update form that came with your magazine and return it in the envelope provided.
www.alumni.leeds.ac.uk/legacies

.....

A new video blends old and new footage of the campus to show the impact which legacies have had on successive generations at the University: youtu.be/DqY8N5ekgZk