

## Vice-Chancellor tours US and Canada for centenary



San Francisco, California

This year celebrates the University of Bristol's centenary. To mark this occasion, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Eric Thomas (Hon LLD 2004), is embarking on an international tour, which includes several stops in the US and Canada.

This series of events represents a unique opportunity for alumni based in North America to hear first hand about Bristol today and its plans for the future, and to get together with other Bristol alumni. The events will include talks by Professor Thomas and there will be plenty of time for informal socialising.

All alumni are welcome to attend, whether they live locally or are just passing through.

We will send invitation letters with full details to those alumni we know to

be local to each event. To book your place, please go to [www.bristol.ac.uk/alumni/events](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/alumni/events).

### North America tour dates:

**22 September – San Francisco, USA**  
City Club, 155 Sansome St, 10th Floor

**24 September – Vancouver, Canada**  
Simon Fraser University

**26 September – Toronto, Canada**  
University of Guelph  
Co-hosted by Dr Alastair Summerlee (BSc 1974, Hon LLD 2004), President, University of Guelph

**1 October – New York City, USA**  
The Water Club, 500 East 30th St

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

## Welcome

This year marks the University's centenary and a number of you will have attended events in Bristol to mark the occasion, providing the opportunity to meet up with old friends. We'll also be holding centenary celebrations in Canada and the east and west coasts of the US, hosted by the Vice-Chancellor. What better opportunity to get together with fellow alumni and make new acquaintances?



Bristol's strong connections around the world are part of what makes it such a great institution. Its academic ties with North American universities are many and varied; these institutions are favourite locations for Bristol students undertaking study abroad; many current Bristol University students are US or Canadian citizens and, of course, North America hosts the largest community of alumni outside the UK. This issue of *Bristol in the Americas* profiles scholars, students and alumni who typify these connections. I hope you enjoy reading about them.

I wish you all a great summer and look forward to seeing you at our centenary celebrations in the autumn.

### Jim Rucker (BSc 1978)

Director, University of Bristol Foundation Inc  
([jimruc1@aim.com](mailto:jimruc1@aim.com))

### Directors, University of Bristol Foundation Inc:

Jane Camblin (BA 1973) ([jacamblin@aol.com](mailto:jacamblin@aol.com));  
Louise Pitt (BA 1996) ([louise.pitt@gs.com](mailto:louise.pitt@gs.com));  
Geoffrey Rowley (BA 1953)  
([ghrowley@comcast.net](mailto:ghrowley@comcast.net));  
Wendy Vandame (BSc 1974)  
([wp\\_vandame@yahoo.com](mailto:wp_vandame@yahoo.com)).

### Local Convenors:

John Binsted (BA 1954)  
([jbinsted99@comcast.net](mailto:jbinsted99@comcast.net));  
John Bull (BSc 1958) ([johnbull@xplornet.com](mailto:johnbull@xplornet.com));  
Tony East (BSc 1959) ([tonyeast@verizon.net](mailto:tonyeast@verizon.net));  
Dr John Weaver (BSc 1953) ([jtweaver@shaw.ca](mailto:jtweaver@shaw.ca)).

## Reunion round-up

### ONTARIO

A Lake Ontario getaway from 12-14 September 2008 began with a Friday paddle-boat cruise, followed by a Saturday evening reception and banquet, with a Harvey's Bristol Cream sherry toast. Chairman of Convocation, Dr Stuart Goldsmith (BA 1966, Hon LLD 2007), and his wife, Elinor, were guests of honour.

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

On 20 September 2008, alumni based in Western Canada chatted and reminisced over bangers and mash, fish and chips, Newcastle Brown Ale and Boddington's. An evening reception and dinner – again, attended by Dr Goldsmith and his wife – attracted nearly 60 alumni and guests.

### CALIFORNIA

Alumni gathered on 17 January 2009 at Santa Monica's King's Head to mingle and meet guests Dr John Weaver (BSc 1953), Convenor for British Columbia, and Professor Nick Lieven, Dean of Engineering and Professor of Aerospace Dynamics. Professor Lieven highlighted the University's medical breakthroughs in stem cell research, developments in computer science and the student enterprise project 'Engineers Without Borders' (inspired by Médecins Sans Frontières).

### NEW YORK

On 14 May 2009, more than 20 alumni attended a lecture by Dr Mike Benton on 'The greatest mass extinction of all time', organised by Jim Rucker (BSc 1978) and hosted by Stephen Lloyd (BA 1972).

New York drinks are scheduled for the last Thursday of every month, from 6pm at O'Casey's, 22 East 41st St. Contact Jim Rucker or Wendy Vandame (BSc 1974) for details.

## Study Abroad

### Tory Ribar, Study Abroad Officer, reports.

Bristol welcomed 135 Study Abroad students from 13 countries in 2008-09, including 85 from Canadian and American universities. Our spring semester programme continues to be popular, with over 50 students arriving in January.

Once again we tried to bring a taste of home to Bristol during our annual Thanksgiving dinner. Over 60 students from North America and further afield sat down to dinner in The Hawthorns,

tucking into turkey, stuffing, veggies and the all-important pumpkin pie. Those who had never experienced a Thanksgiving learned what it's all about from those who were away from home for the first time.

Close to 50 Bristol students will spend a semester or year abroad in Canada or the US in 2009-10 as part of their degree, following in the footsteps of the 35 students abroad in 2008-09.

## From Philly to Bristol

Kristen first came to Bristol from Philadelphia in 2004 as a Study Abroad student, having left her home university to spend a semester studying English literature in England.

Almost immediately, she fell in love with the city of Bristol, its docks, hills and music. Finding her way around wasn't easy at first; she remembers getting lost for three hours the first time she

tried to navigate from Hiatt Baker Hall, across the Downs, to the Students' Union.

Now, five years later, Kristen calls Bristol home and works in the International Office in the Students' Union building, helping outgoing students to organise their years abroad and incoming students to feel welcome as well as how to find their way around Bristol.



## Journalism and the Big Apple

BBC broadcaster Caroline Hepker (BA 2000) on breaking into TV, the mad dash for a story and why her profession is like a sofa ...

At university, I was fascinated by politics and business but I also loved to talk. My Spanish language professor gave me the solution. Today, I cover Wall Street news for the BBC based in Manhattan.

Most days I write and record TV news reports with an Australian cameraman in New York City. My work is increasingly tri-media – television, radio and online. It takes me all over the US, giving me opportunities to meet people from all walks of life, from Wisconsin cheese-makers to Microsoft's Chief Executive. I feel very lucky to have had a ring-side seat, commenting on the worst economic crisis in 60 years and witnessing the historic election of Barack Obama to the White House.

But as one friend put it, this job is also about being a sofa – functional, a support to others and occasionally overstuffed. I cram news, memorising figures to regurgitate at will. No-one tells you either about the gnawing angst that we eager news-hounds live with – the fear of not knowing enough in the face

of much smarter, more intrepid interviewees (notable catalysts include Nobel Prize-winning economists). Sometimes it works in your favour; occasionally you feel as if you've fallen flat on to a concrete pavement.

The job is physically demanding too. Work could have been a grey office and a perpetual round of meetings. My life is more unpredictable and more sociable; when a big story breaks everyone runs and I love the mad dash.

Like all reporters, I find myself obsessed with the weather. Radio and print journos rarely need to look good hunting down a story. Standing drenched in a rain-soaked field in Detroit a week ago, clinging to an overhead tarpaulin, I did wonder what on earth I was doing. Then I was on air live outside Chrysler's HQ as the company filed for bankruptcy – job done. On screen you could barely see it was raining.

For anyone studying or graduating soon, I would say two words: embrace technology. The crowd of hopeful young journalism grads

– looking for a foreign posting or a name in print or documentary film-funding – multiplies like twitter messages, and yet the jobs in the industry are disappearing. Newspapers and magazines are moving wholly online or simply folding. TV and web are meshing. But technology is your friend: the more you know about it, the better off you'll be.

Finally, a word of advice on applying for jobs; even in a recession, opportunities are out there. Don't be discouraged if you get turned down at first. I remember trying to break into television towards the end of my studies. The BBC came to Bristol University's Careers Fair and I applied for one of their three prestigious Graduate Traineeships. I did not get an interview but neither did most of the other 8,000 applicants that year (yes, 8,000). But I ended up getting a job at the Beeb eventually. Some walls are there to clamber over. And as an adoptive New Yorker, I like to embrace America's cherished enthusiasm – if you really want it, you can make it happen.

#### QUANTUM PARTNERSHIP

Bristol's new Centre for Nanoscience and Quantum Information (NSQI) is poised to sign a partnership agreement with the California NanoSystems Institute (CNSI), following a conference at the University of California, Los Angeles in January. It is the first agreement of its type that the CNSI has made with a European university.

Linked by common academic interests and a commitment to interdisciplinary scientific research, the agreement will provide tangible benefits to NSQI and CNSI through joint research collaborations and academic exchanges in nanoscience and nanotechnology.

#### FULBRIGHT WINNER

PhD student Mike Shaw (2005- ) has gained a prestigious Fulbright Commission Distinguished Scholarship Award to carry out research at the Scripps Research Institute in California. See *Nonesuch* Summer 2009 for the full story.

#### THANKS TO JOHN BINSTED

After 11 years, John Binsted (BA 1954) announced his retirement as a director of the University of Bristol Foundation Inc at the AGM on 3 July 2009. John has been assiduous in his participation at board meetings and, even on personal trips to the UK, has made time to visit Bristol and share his views on alumni relations and fundraising in the US. John has been unstinting in his commitment to keeping the Bristol spirit alive, and the annual West Coast events he has organised have been a welcome addition to the calendar. Happily, John will remain Convenor for Convocation (for which he was awarded the Convocation medal in 2002) but his eagle eye for detail will be missed by the Foundation.

Geoffrey Rowley (BA 1958),  
Chairman, University of Bristol  
Foundation Inc

## Featured volunteer

John Bull (BSc 1958) has pioneered a reunion with a difference in Eastern Canada. He shares his tips and wisdom.

In 2001, we were invited to a reunion in the US, which we combined with a visit to my daughter in Charleston. At that event it was suggested that I might like to become more involved with Bristol alumni. So, with the help of the Alumni Relations team in Bristol, I emailed alumni in Eastern Canada to gauge interest and in 2002 I organised a reunion in my home town, Guelph: lunch, a round of golf or tour of the arboretum, then dinner. The consensus was that 'We should do this again', so a tradition was born.

To encourage people to travel to an event, I think they should have some 'meat and potatoes', so I lay on several activities with an overnight stay. Every year I do something different. We get



between 20 and 40 attendees with spouses at each reunion. In 2007 I extended the event over a whole weekend in the Kawartha Lakes region. It worked so well that we did it again last year at Wolfe Island in Lake Ontario.

I have a group of people whom I bounce ideas off. My wife complains that I spend a long time at the computer, but it's this interaction which makes things happen. Everyone who comes along always seems to enjoy it, which makes it worthwhile.

## American scholars

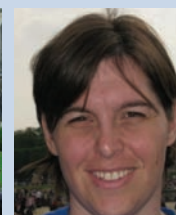
There were three winners of American scholarships this year, which are funded by alumni donations.

Louisa Pittman, from South Carolina, is completing an MA in Maritime Archaeology. Louisa spent eight years in the US Merchant Marine, serving as both crew and officer on historic tall ships, which inspired her interest in studying original ships and wrecks. She's starting a PhD in Bristol in September.

Colin Elliot, from Oregon, is studying for a Classics MPhil. 'Studying in the UK was the right choice because much of the the research, publications and scholars of the ancient economy are working in this country,' he says.

At the College of New Jersey, Ashley Reichelmann completed

a BA in Women's and Gender Studies and English Teaching. She says: 'I chose Bristol because it's the only university in the world with a MSc specialising in identity and the role contemporary society plays on its formation.'



Top: Ashley Reichelmann  
Above left: Colin Elliot  
Above right: Louisa Pittman