

Bristol in the Americas

newsletter for Bristol alumni in North America 2010



As has become tradition, Canadian alumni from Victoria joined US alumni in Seattle for an afternoon organised by Professor Alan Morgan (MB ChB 1957) and John Binsted (BA 1954) on 13 June. Thirty-three alumni and friends attended from both sides of the border, with two physics graduates from 1965 reunited for the first time since their Bristol days.

Linking online

Whether there's any truth in the adage 'it's not what you know, but who you know', Bristol alumni in New York are getting plenty of opportunities to make business connections through the professional networking site, LinkedIn.

They have joined an initiative started by the UK Trade and Investment division of the British Consulate-General that manages a group for UK alumni based in New York and Tri-State from different universities. Each university has a sub-group.

Members are also invited to networking events and business seminars hosted by the British Consulate-General. The highlight of the 2010 calendar was the second annual alumni reception on 18 May. Bristol was represented by several alumni

who had the opportunity to meet the guest of honour, HRH The Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, KG KCVO.

To join, go to www.linkedin.com. Once you've registered search under groups for '**University of Bristol Alumni in New York**' (sub-group of 'British Consulate-General New York Tri-State Alumni').

Alumni in New York have also set up a Facebook page. Go to www.facebook.com and search for the 'University of Bristol Alumni in NYC' fan page.

Bristol's LinkedIn presence is not confined to Tri-State. The **University of Bristol Alumni** LinkedIn group has over 3,000 members.



Find us on
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Welcome

A warm welcome to my fellow Bristol alumni in the Americas. Although new to the Foundation this year, I have been in the US since 1988. However, it is only in the past few years that I've re-connected with Bristol through the increasingly active Tri-State (CT, NJ, NY) alumni group.

We now have well-established monthly gatherings in Manhattan as well as special events. I encourage you all to join us at one of these get-togethers, or indeed at others throughout North America. We'd also love to hear your ideas for events. Please see page 3 for more details about the Foundation and Bristol's North American alumni groups.

The University's centenary last year helped me revive memories of my time at Bristol, by joining some old friends for the Centenary Alumni Weekend in July. It had been quite a few years since I'd last visited and it was interesting to see both the old and the new in Bristol.

Stephen Lloyd (BSc 1978)
Director, University of Bristol
Foundation Inc

Events round-up

www.bristol.ac.uk/alumni/events

NEW YORK

Alumni in New York have been meeting for drinks on the last Thursday of the month in 'O'Caseys bar, 22 East 41st Street between 5th and Madison. Jim Rucker (BSc 1978) says: 'It's a great way to meet other Bristol alumni. We have a good mix of people: from the recently to the not-so-recently graduated; from US citizens who studied in Bristol to Brits who moved to the US.'

CALIFORNIA

Jane Camblin (BA 1973) plans to host an event in San Francisco on Sunday 19 September 2010.

Foundation Inc.

There have been some changes to the University of Bristol Foundation Inc., which raises the University's profile and facilitates fundraising for University projects in North America. In May, Geoffrey Rowley (BA 1958) stepped down as Chair after active membership since 1991, and Wendy Vandame (BSc 1974) completed her term as Director. The University expressed gratitude for their support, including Geoffrey's encouragement of US donors with his gift matches, and Wendy's promotion of alumni activity in the Tri-State area.

Jane Camblin (BA 1973) (jacamblin@aol.com) succeeded Geoffrey as Chair. Other Directors are Louise Pitt (BA 1996) (louise.pitt@gs.com), Jim Rucker (BSc 1978) (jimruc1@aim.com) and Stephen Lloyd (BSc 1978) (Stephen.lloyd@me.com).

Local alumni contacts are:
Western Canada - Dr John Weaver (BSc 1953) (jtweaver@shaw.ca); West Coast USA - Jane Camblin; Tri-State (CT, NJ, NY) USA - Jim Rucker and Stephen Lloyd.



Our man in New York

Ian Wei (above centre), Senior Lecturer of Medieval European History, is on sabbatical at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. Carrie Maeir (MSc 2005) reports on his lecture.

Ian Wei led a discussion with Bristol alumni and friends on 25 March in New York City on the evolution of the 'idea of the university', or the perceived role of the university through changing times across various cultures. The audience debated such

questions as: What is an ideal model for a world-class university today? If there is an ideal, how is that model defined, and who defines it? It was acknowledged that, while the idea of the university evolves over time and place, there is debate over the ways in which various influences take shape within the university.

The group gathered at a local pub to continue the discussion, and to discover how Ian was enjoying his stay in the US.

V-C visits US and Canada

Alumni in Canada and the US celebrated the University's centenary with the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Eric Thomas (Hon LLD 2004). In 2009, Eric embarked on an international tour that included stops in San Francisco and New York, Guelph and Vancouver.



Henry Daniel (PhD 2005) and Dr Mandy Bath (BA 1981, PhD 1884) at the V-C's event in Vancouver on 24 September 2009.



The nightshift

Laura Blake (BA 2009) on calling the US

It's two o'clock in the morning, and I'm in the chemistry teaching lab with 12 students, eating pizza and drinking cups of tea. No, this is not some kind of cult meeting or twilight student sit-in, though we are all here for a common purpose.

These students are my team of callers, and my job is to keep them motivated (and awake!) for the four hours between midnight and 4am. Our purpose is to talk to alumni in the US and Canada about their time at Bristol and the University's £100m Centenary Campaign.

My deadliest weapons in the fight against fatigue come in the form of sweets, cups of tea or coffee, shouts of encouragement and praise, and prizes throughout the evening. Not forgetting, of course, the 2am pizza delivery.

Fortunately, as the conversations start flowing, the callers don't need much encouragement to be perky. Bristol alumni are a fascinating bunch, and the students relish the opportunity to chat to a range of characters,

from former Bristol bell-ringers and emeritus professors, to hotshot bankers and dentists. Before they know it, they're getting careers advice, offers of a tour guide should they ever be in the neighbourhood and lots of generous donations.

It's 3.30am and the call room is buzzing with comparisons of student life at Bristol then and now, and laughter over anecdotes from days gone by. One student squeals when she discovers she lived in the same room in halls as the alumnus on the other end of the phone, and another hangs up feeling hugely encouraged after receiving some fantastic advice from an alumna doing his ideal future job.

As a fellow alumna, what's really wonderful to see is the common bond that makes alumni and students light up; it's a sense that despite a 3,000-mile divide, the person on the other end of the phone is somehow already a friend of ours.

Whether it's delight at having the opportunity to reminisce about

time spent in the Wills Library and hazy summer days on Durdham Downs, or discovering that their old department is still nurturing bright young minds, something about talking to alumni about Bristol brings out a feeling of pride that's really infectious.

It's the same feeling that gives the team a real sense of pride in being able to 'give something back', and means that as they head home for a well-earned sleep at 4 am, they're still smiling. Well, that and the promise of an extra pizza tomorrow night.

'For students who like staying up until the early hours of the morning drinking coffee and eating pizza, the US telethon is a great campaign to be part of. It's always interesting to catch up with Bristol alumni and to find out what they did after university and it's even more interesting to hear from those who have taken their experiences and skills from here to the other side of the world.'

Christian Miles (Maths 2009-), student caller



REMEMBERING JOHN BULL

John Bull (BSc 1958), Convenor of the Eastern Canada Alumni Group, passed away on 24 April 2010. John was model volunteer and a wonderful ambassador for the University. He organised countless events for alumni over the years, most notably the hugely successful annual reunion weekend for alumni in Eastern Canada. In 2009, Convocation recognised John's contributions when it presented him with a gold medal. The following are extracts from the tribute to John read by Heather Proctor (BSc 1964) at his memorial service on behalf of the group.

'John brought together Bristol graduates, initially unknown to one another, who, through his personal influence, developed a real sense of collegiality, friendship and esprit de corps.'

'At the Buckhorn reunion, eager Bristolians followed their fearless leader on a ramble through the bush. The bush became bushier and the way somewhat obscure. We had a lovely time finding our way out and what better way to make new friends!'

US GIVING

As we went to press, US alumni and friends had already donated nearly \$155,000 in 2009/10. In 2008/09 US alumni gave over \$118,000.

American scholars

The 2009/10 America scholars were Anna Bonewitz (MA History of Art 2009-), Emily Woodruff (MSc Palaeobiology 2009-) and Seiko Benner (MSc Molecular Neuroscience 2009-).

Anna (picture below) was impressed by the range of courses offered in History of Art. She was also involved in a curatorial project at Montacute House in conjunction with the National Portrait Gallery as part of a course on Tudor and Jacobean portraits. She says: 'The scholarship has made an invaluable contribution to my research of the subject.' This coming autumn she will begin a PhD at the University of Virginia.



Emily (pictured above) chose Bristol because of the University's excellent reputation for research and the world-renowned academics in the Earth Sciences Department. She says: 'I have received unparalleled preparation at Bristol for a career in scientific research. The highlight has been the opportunity to work with my supervisors Professor Mike Benton and Dr Marcello Ruta. Their experience and knowledge of palaeontology is extensive and it is a privilege to be one of their students.' This September she will begin a PhD in the Department of Biology at the University of Florida.

Study Abroad

In 2009/10, 125 students came to Bristol as part of Study Abroad exchange scheme. Ninety-two of these students were from the US and Canada. In 2009/10, 33 Bristol students will spend a year abroad in the US or Canada and 32 will do so in 2010/11.

Amanda Krest, a student from the University of California, San Diego, was a study abroad student in Bristol this year. She says: 'The quality of Bristol's academics and the breadth of offerings within the Philosophy Department left nothing to be desired. Bristol's location is just more icing on the cake.'

The city is always bustling with wonderful people and things to do. The curriculum was new and challenging but so incredibly interesting that working on it became intuitive.'

Annabel Hodge (Environmental Geoscience 2007-) is currently a Study Abroad student at the University of Chicago. She said: 'The University is situated in Hyde Park, a 40-minute bus ride to downtown Chicago, which is quite possibly one of the most beautiful cities running adjacent to Lake Michigan. Settling in has been relatively easy as the other students are incredibly friendly.'