

#07 Summer 2015

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# discover more



University of  
BRISTOL

YOUR GUIDE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL



## LIFE ON A FILM SET

Behind the scenes  
at Aardman, Bristol's  
hit animation studio



Also in this issue

**THE UK'S GREEN CAPITAL** BRISTOL'S ALL-NEW STUDENTS' UNION **SIMON PEGG INTERVIEW**  
THE SECRET LIVES OF STUDENTS **MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR OPEN DAY** LOTS, LOTS MORE



Image: Bitagesh, Sachania

**EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL 2015**

**Bristol shows its true colours**

Green goings-on aplenty as Bristol celebrates becoming the first UK city to be named European Green Capital. Several University landmarks were bathed in green light to mark the occasion, including the Wills Memorial Building.

**FIND OUT MORE INFO**  
bristolgreencapital.org

How are Bristol students involved? **Turn to page 17 to find out.**

welcome



hello!

Welcome to the new edition of *Discover More*, the University of Bristol's magazine for schools and sixth form colleges.

In this issue, we speak with the Bristol alumna who worked on the recent box-office smash *Shaun in the City*.

There's also a look inside the refurbished Students' Union, now fully geared up for Bristol's new generation of students. Then you can find out how to make the most of your open day here – we're all on hand to make your trip a memorable experience!

Finally, some of our students are leading 'double lives', turn to page 10 to find out more.

We are travelling all around the country to tell you more about the University of Bristol; visit [bristol.ac.uk/study/teachers/post-16/events](http://bristol.ac.uk/study/teachers/post-16/events) to see where we'll be.

We hope you enjoy the issue!

University of Bristol Student Recruitment Team

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Cover image: STUDIOCANAL

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*Discover More* is produced in association with Immediate Media Branded Content, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN  
Tel +44 (0)117 927 9009 Web [www.immediatecontent.co.uk](http://www.immediatecontent.co.uk) Editorial Manager Tom Burnett With thanks to Philippa Walker, Tammy Harris-Bennett, Charlotte Wilson, Jill Cartwright, Dean Purnell Account Manager Clair Atkins Editorial Director Dan Linstead Art Director Will Slater

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INNOVATION

# The world's greatest story

The University of Bristol team behind the award-winning *Palaeocast* has 3.5 billion years of life to tell you about

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Mass extinctions, the evolution of marsupials, how the 'tree of life' was developed – these are just some of the fascinating topics you can learn about on *Palaeocast*. This palaeontology podcast features Bristol academics discussing their theories and investigative stories, and has just been named one of the finalists in the 10th Annual Podcast Awards.

"We aim the conversations on the show to be comprehensible for A-level students, and we've got some seriously ambitious plans for providing educational resources for schools," says *Palaeocast*'s head honcho Dave Marshall from the University's School of Earth Sciences.

"We believe the evolution of life will prove to be the world's greatest story, but we've still got so much to discover. There's never been a better time to hear about palaeontological research, that's the message I'd like to send to the world."

**FOLLOW THESE LINKS FOR MORE**

[www.bristol.ac.uk/earthsciences/courses/undergraduate](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/earthsciences/courses/undergraduate)  
[www.palaeocast.com](http://www.palaeocast.com)

STUDENT DISCOVERIES

## Undergrad makes shell-crushing discovery

Palaeontology and evolution student Fiann Smithwick had his research featured in leading scientific journal *Palaeontology* in January, a rare achievement for an undergraduate.

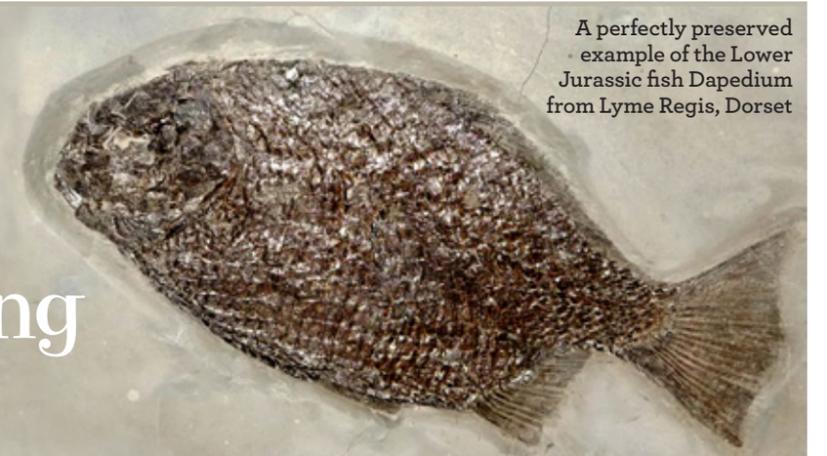
Fiann reconstructed the feeding behaviour of a fish that existed some

200 million years ago, and discovered it was well adapted to crushing shells scraped from the sea floor.

"We are delighted to see such an excellent piece of work carried out by an undergraduate," said Professor Mike Benton, Fiann's supervisor. "Funded by

the Palaeontological Association, he devised the project himself, learned the numerical techniques and wrote it up. It's rare for an undergraduate to be able to do all this and pass the scrutiny of one of the world's leading scientific journals."

A perfectly preserved example of the Lower Jurassic fish *Dapedium* from Lyme Regis, Dorset



RESEARCH IMPACT



The VENTURER BAE Wildcat, a modified military jeep, will be trialled in Bristol

## How's my driving?

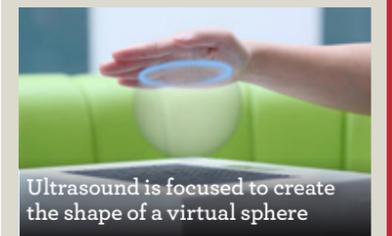
IMAGINE being overtaken by a car without a driver – well, that's something that we may all soon be getting used to, with help from the big brains at the University of Bristol.

"The University's Communication Systems & Networks Group is working on a range of advanced wireless technologies. In combination with other sensor technologies, we believe car-to-car communications will

play a key role in providing the safety and public trust levels necessary for autonomous vehicles to become a reality on British roads," says Dr Robert Piechocki, who is leading the project at the University.

The VENTURER consortium, of which Bristol is an important part, is now investigating the legal and insurance aspects of driverless cars, as well as exploring how the public react to such vehicles.

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Ultrasound is focused to create the shape of a virtual sphere

## Touchy feely

No, not John Travolta at the Oscars, but touch feedback technology that is already being used in entertainment, rehabilitation and even surgical training. The technology uses ultrasound to create a 3D shape that can be seen and felt.

Research by Dr Ben Long and colleagues from the University's Department of Computer Science has the potential to change the way 3D shapes are used.

"In the future, people could feel holograms of objects that would otherwise be untouchable, such as feeling the differences between CT scans or understanding the shapes of artefacts in a museum," says Dr Long.

**GET INVOLVED**

Take a look at [Youtube.com/BristolIG](http://Youtube.com/BristolIG) for more information

NEWS IN BRIEF



Out in the streets

While the lure of the Xbox and Wii might be hard to resist, researchers at the University of Bristol have found that time spent outdoors is hugely beneficial to the health of young people. “Children are three to five times more active outdoors than indoors,” says Dr Angie Page. “Increasing the amount of time they spend outdoors through active travel and street play is key in helping them maintain physical activity levels.” Take a look at page 22 for more on the study of childhood at Bristol.



Head in the clouds

The University's Wills Memorial Building is one of Bristol's most famous landmarks, and over the past decade more than 16,000 people have taken a tour. In the process, the University has raised an impressive £20,000 for Wallace and Gromit's Grand Appeal, the Bristol Children's Hospital Charity. The tour is ranked third on TripAdvisor for attractions in Bristol – well worth a visit!

Masters of flight

In a blink of a human eye, young praying mantises are able to rotate their body to ensure they land safely on their desired target. Bristol's Dr Gregory Sutton said: “We offered them a target to jump towards and found they would do this consistently and accurately. We now have a good understanding of the physics and the biomechanics of these precise aerial acrobatics, but because the movements are so quick, we need to understand the role the brain is playing in their control once the movements are under way.”



EWB Bristol members on a trip to the Centre of Alternative Technology in Wales. Conor is back right, and below



STUDENT LIFE



Student volunteer of the year

A FOURTH YEAR engineering student from Bristol has won this year's Student Volunteer of the Year award. Conor McGlacken, who is currently president of the student society Engineers Without Borders Bristol, was presented with the award at a ceremony at the Houses of Parliament in February.

Conor began volunteering with the society in 2011, when he helped with outreach workshops on engineering and development with local school children. Engineers Without Borders Bristol is a branch of Engineers Without Borders UK (EWB-UK), and during his second year Conor was chosen as part of the international charity's team at a UNESCO conference in Nigeria.

In just six days, the team trained 100 University of Nigeria students to run outreach workshops, which together they delivered to over 1,500 Nigerian school children.

“Joining Engineers Without Borders is one of the best decisions I ever made,” Conor told us. “It's a great moment when you're learning something in a lecture and you think: ‘Hey, I can change the world with this stuff! And I can start now!’”

“Engineering doesn't have to be about planes and engines and bridges – to me it's about people. I could literally save lives with the stuff I learn, by designing a clean water system, or a better piece of hospital

equipment, or a house that can withstand an earthquake. That's what EWB is all about.

“Getting involved with volunteering and societies at university is definitely something I'd recommend. Whether you're a medic or an English student or an artist or whatever, you don't have to wait to start using your skills.”

ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS BRISTOL

The student society is currently running six technical projects:

- **Wind turbine** – Design and build of a working 2.6m diameter wind turbine
- **Rainwater harvesting** – A system to catch rainwater for a school in Benin
- **Targeting water projects** – Mapping information in India
- **Solar phone charging** – Designing a stall for UK music festivals
- **Ecorestoration** – Investigating reforestation in India
- **Biogas** – Harnessing power from decomposing plant waste

FIND OUT WHAT ELSE THEY DO

EWB Bristol also organise trips, workshops, design competitions and outreach programmes. [www.ewb-bristol.org](http://www.ewb-bristol.org)

Bristol rides high

RESEARCH

The University's reputation for research was confirmed by the Research Excellence Framework 2014, which ranked Bristol among the top five institutions in the UK.

With 91% of the University's eligible staff included in the REF submission, highlights included being ranked first overall for geography and sport and exercise sciences, while Bristol was ranked second overall for sociology and earth systems and environmental sciences. The University

also ranked highly for physics, mathematical sciences and computer science.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Eric Thomas said: “This sits right at the heart of our values as a research-intensive university. It not only places us among the top universities, but also informs our teaching, and the REF results are testament to the excellence and dedication of our staff across the institution.”

Bristol's waterfront district, with several University buildings in the background



Red Devils show some heart

PARTNERSHIPS

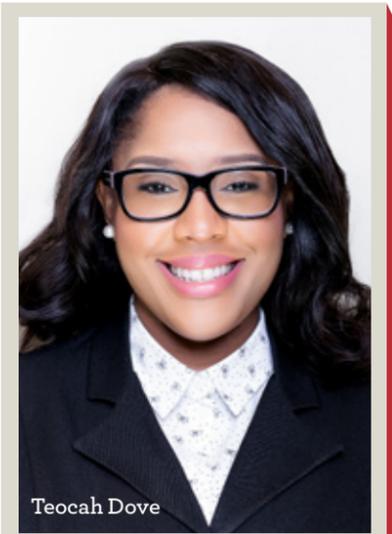
Manchester United's Academy players are part of a University of Bristol-led project to find out about the wider benefits of exercise among different sets of young people.

Those taking part in the project aim to more precisely identify the safe levels of exercise for children with congenital heart disease, as well as to identify the positive benefits that regular exercise has on 'normal' healthy children over time.

Dr Guido Pieles, NIHR-Clinical Lecturer in Paediatric Cardiology at the University of Bristol and Bristol Congenital Heart Centre, who is leading the research project, said: “This is a unique study, using the latest technology to image the heart while it's 'at work' during exercise.”



“THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY MEASURES THE HEART WHILE IT'S 'AT WORK'”



Teocah Dove

Leading from the front

Bristol Master's graduate Teocah Dove will receive The Queen's Young Leaders Award this June, in recognition of her voluntary work.

The 26-year-old, who successfully completed a Master's in Gender and International Relations from Bristol, began volunteering in Trinidad and Tobago at the age of 16, and has since worked on a number of projects in youth and community development.

“IT'S SO SURREAL, TO GET AN AWARD FROM THE QUEEN”

“I don't think it has sunk in yet,” says Teocah, “it's so surreal, to get an award from the Queen is a great honour. What I like is that it's more than an award, it's actually a holistic development package, including a one-week residential programme and a year of mentorship. It will really empower us to make a difference in the future.”

Teocah is one of 60 winners of The Queen's Young Leaders award from around the Commonwealth. Princes William and Harry launched the award in 2014, with the aim of recognising exceptional people aged 18 to 29 who are using their leadership qualities to change lives in their communities.

# Lights, camera, action!

Bristol alumna Sophie Smith played a huge part in ensuring *Shaun the Sheep The Movie* was finished on time



8

“People think that animation is a slow process,” says Sophie Smith, “but if Liam Neeson is your star you can only film one of him, whereas we can film dozens of stars at the same time!”

We catch up with Sophie at Aardman Animation studios in north Bristol, where modelling clay, movable hillsides, inventive genius and homegrown Bristol humour all come together to create the much-loved Aardman characters, and, now, the major feature film *Shaun the Sheep The Movie*.

Sophie has been Pre and Post Production Manager for the past two years, during which time she has overseen one of the studio's

most ambitious productions to date. So how did she get here?

“I was going to take a year out after doing my A-Levels, but then decided I'd apply for the Drama, Theatre, Film and Television degree course at Bristol. It was the best course in the country and was relatively close to home, so I applied and, on the back of the theatre work I'd done as a teenager, I got in.

“The first thing that struck me was how academic the course was, and what hard work! I didn't really know what to expect from university, but we were doing 40-hour weeks from the off, with lectures from 9am until 6pm every day. As well as the core modules on subjects like history of theatre and film,

you can take various options that interest you. I studied the history of Robin Hood in performance, screenwriting, documentary filmmaking and others.”

Which three things did studying at Bristol most help with?

“Firstly is definitely the discipline of hard work! Next I'd say a good grounding and knowledge in film, and thirdly getting to know people who will be in the same industry – invaluable in this business.”

Sophie took the tried and tested route into the industry, beginning as a 'runner' on various TV series in London, before getting her lucky break through a contact she'd met while studying at Bristol.



Sophie on set at Aardman

“I wanted to move back to Bristol, so I wrote to every TV and film company here. I was lucky Aardman were mid-feature, making *The Curse of the Wererabbit*, so I got on. Being in feature films is a really good way to move quickly within different departments so you can learn a lot quickly.”

However, the nature of film and television work means that people are often employed for one project at a time.

“The way feature films work at Aardman, there's a big gap between films. I was lucky that year to be employed for London 2012 where I was at Wembley for six months,

helping to organise the Olympic football events that took place there. Being part of London 2012 was an amazing experience. When that finished I got a call from a producer at Aardman asking me to come back to work on *Shaun the Sheep The Movie*, which was the start of two years' hard work!”

So what's next for Aardman films? “It's under wraps I'm afraid! We're finishing off the launch for *Shaun the Sheep The Movie*, which includes events all around the world, then the Shaun trails in London and Bristol, before starting on the next Aardman film, due in 2018... watch this space!”

## COURSE INFORMATION

Although Sophie's course is no longer available at Bristol, there are plenty of similar options available. Take a look at [www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/courses/undergraduate](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/courses/undergraduate)



'Lambmark Larry' at Paddington Station

## Shaun on tour

This year will see 120 unique artist-decorated Shauns take over Bristol and London. The 5ft high sculptures will spring up throughout the two cities, before being auctioned to raise money for sick children in hospitals across the UK.

The University of Bristol has sponsored three of these Shauns, one of which will be placed in Paddington Station in London (above) as part of the *Shaun in the City* London trail that began in March.

“Shaun is such a well-loved character. He will add colour to our streets and I'm sure many will flock to the city to be part of the fun,” said Shaun creator Nick Park.



Shaun creator Nick Park with friends

discover more/summer 2015



Farmer and flock in their youth

Charity no. 1043603. Shaun in the City & Aardman Animations Ltd 2015. Courtesy of STUDIOSOFA.

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# Bristol's got talent

University is the perfect time to try out new things. These students show what can be achieved with a bit of juggling...

## Jazmin Sawyers

Law, international sport and songwriting

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In common with other athletes with explosive power, Jazmin's abilities have led to summers on the track with long jump, and winters on ice in the bobsleigh.

"Lots of people ask how the two are linked, but they're very similar – with long jump you sprint 30 metres and jump in the sand, with bobsleigh you do the same but jump in the sled."

After winning silver in bobsleigh at the 2012 Winter Youth Olympics, and also in the long jump at last year's Commonwealth Games, the 20-year-old has her sights firmly set on a bright future in both disciplines.

"Doing both has given me the chance to travel, which is such a privilege for someone my age. I've been all around Europe with athletics and America and Austria with bobsleigh. I haven't yet had the opportunity to venture to the southern hemisphere with sport, but hopefully in the next two years! This year is Beijing for the World Championships and next year it's the Olympics in Rio."

However, Jazmin is also clear about the need to think beyond sport.

"A career in sport can be such a short-lived thing, I could break my leg tomorrow and never jump again which is terrifying. Law is a back up for me, and going to university also allows me to do the normal student life thing – perhaps not to the extent that others do, but

still a little on top of sport and travel.

"Studying and training is hard work. I'll go to my seminars and tutorials and then I'll listen to lectures when I commute to Bath where I train. It's great because they're all recorded and put online so I can stick a lecture on my phone and listen to one on the way there and one on the way back."

As if her list of achievements wasn't already impressive, having picked up a guitar on a whim from a charity shop in 2013, Jazmin has been performing her own songs for the past 18 months.

**FOLLOW JAZMIN ON TWITTER**  
[twitter.com/jazminjayne](https://twitter.com/jazminjayne)



Jazmin with teammate Mica McNeill after winning silver in bobsleigh at the 2012 Winter Youth Olympics

[bristol.ac.uk](http://bristol.ac.uk)

Jazmin won silver in the long jump at the 2014 Commonwealth Games

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# Rachel Hosie

Languages, award-winning blogger

Rachel's Pinterest page describes her as a 'French and German student, handbag lover, human magpie, tea addict and all round keen bean', which gives you more than a hint that you're dealing with one enthusiastic individual. This zest for life comes across in spades on social media, which even got her shortlisted for Cosmo Blog Awards 'Best Lifestyle Blog' in 2013 and 2014.

"I started blogging five years ago, mainly as a way to practise my writing," says Rachel. "I didn't care about whether anyone read it or not, but I knew I wanted to be a journalist and thought blogging looked like fun."

Keeping her many social media pages up to date is time consuming, but Rachel points to the positives. "I make sure to post regularly but doing so doesn't feel like work – I love doing it! Plus, it has opened so many doors for me and led me to wonderful things."

Rachel spent last year abroad – six months teaching English at two schools in Bavaria in Germany, followed by six months as a media assistant in the BBC News Brussels bureau, and calls it the best year of her life so far.

"I did so much travelling, met incredible

people, made new friends and improved my French and German while doing so. I also realised just how amazing British student life is – we are so lucky to have awesome societies, clubs and events to get involved in."

Any advice for budding social media queens out there?

"My advice would be to write for yourself, write about what you know, and write what you'd want to read. While other blogs are fabulous for inspiration, don't try and

copy them. There are so many blogs out there and the one unique factor you have is you. Also, don't expect thousands of page views overnight – it takes time to build up a following, but by consistently posting quality posts that people enjoy and share, it'll happen. Most importantly, enjoy it!"

**THAT AWARD-WINNING BLOG**  
handbagsandcupcakes.co.uk



# Lewis Rendell

Maths, University Challenger

For many, coming face to face with Jeremy Paxman might be the stuff of nightmares, but for Lewis Rendell, one of the four University of Bristol students who made up this year's *University Challenge* team, it was a great experience.

"Jeremy came to speak to each of us beforehand to calm us down," says Lewis. "But as soon as the cameras started to roll he put on his persona of being very strict. Then, when filming finished, he came to have a drink with us in the green room!"

Lewis was one of 250 students from Bristol to try out for a team place. Applicants had to answer 30 questions, and coming in the top five, Lewis was in.

"TTV came to Bristol to interview us to make sure we were television-friendly – 130 teams apply but only 28 make it onto the show so we were incredibly fortunate to be given the chance. We split

up common topics, such as prime ministers, the periodic table and so on, so we were 'experts' in different areas.

"The whole experience of travelling up to Media City in Salford, particularly the first time, was memorable because we didn't know what to expect at all."

In the end, the team did very well to reach the quarter-finals, the first Bristol team to do so under Paxman's watch. The hardest part has been keeping the result a secret, as filming happened a year ago!

"The day after the first match was aired I was walking along the Harbourside and someone shouted out '*University Challenge*!', it's very bizarre!"



# Harry Baker

Maths, author, World Poetry Slam champion

"I loved my year abroad, it was one of the best things I've ever done," says Harry, who has just spent a year in Hanover in Germany as part of his maths degree.

"Lots of my friends have graduated now but I'm living with two great friends and Bristol feels more like home than London where I grew up! Bristol's a good size, I know the city and can whizz around on my bike."

"I'm training for the London Marathon, and as I live in Clifton Village it takes me about 15 minutes to run across the Clifton Suspension Bridge and into Ashton Court or Leigh Woods. I find those areas exciting as I'll be running and suddenly there will be a quarry. Growing up in London there are no gorges, quarries or forests, so to live in a city 10 minutes away from that amount of fresh air and countryside is perfect."

Although a mathematician, Harry's love of words and rhyming led to slots at the Edinburgh Fringe and his first book, an anthology of his verse titled *The Sunshine Kid*.



But what exactly is poetry slammng?

"Each participant has three minutes to perform something they have written, and at the end of the night someone is deemed the winner, so that's it in its empirical form. In terms of the actual performance? At times I've said to people that I rap, or that it's like comedy because there are rhythmic and comedic elements, but I like 'slam poetry' as a term because it embodies the creative freedom and dynamism of it."

How do the worlds of maths and verse collide?

"For a couple of years I was adamant they were separate – and I like it that way. But I've realised more and more that there is definitely a link. With a maths formula you know there is an answer out there and you use what you know to get there. In the most abstract way, mathematics and poetry are both about searching for truth, they are about trying to find answers."

**WHAT'S HARRY THINKING?**  
harrybaker.co

**FIND OUT MORE**  
Studying maths at university can open up a world of opportunities, take a look for yourself at [www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/2016/maths](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/2016/maths)



Harry performing his 'slam poetry' on stage



# Student central

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Internationally-known bands, digital hubs, a swimming pool and free bananas... we give you the all-new Students' Union

Surrounded by Georgian Clifton as it is, the 1960s Richmond Building has come in for some criticism in the past. But one thing that has never been in doubt is how useful the place was – with a large gig venue, bars and a swimming pool, the University of Bristol's Student Union (Bristol SU) has never been underused.

Five years ago, however, the decision was made to revamp the place from top to bottom, and the results are now proudly on show. Over £30m has been spent modernising the building and its many spaces, with features such as a new café/bar and digital activity hub making the building very much ready for the next generation of students.

## THE 'NEW' UNION AT A GLANCE

**£30m**  
REFURBISHMENT  
OVER THE PAST  
FIVE YEARS

**200**  
NEW STUDY  
SPACES

**33.5m**  
SWIMMING POOL

TWO THEATRES, NEW DIGITAL  
ACTIVITY HUB, NEW CAFÉ BAR

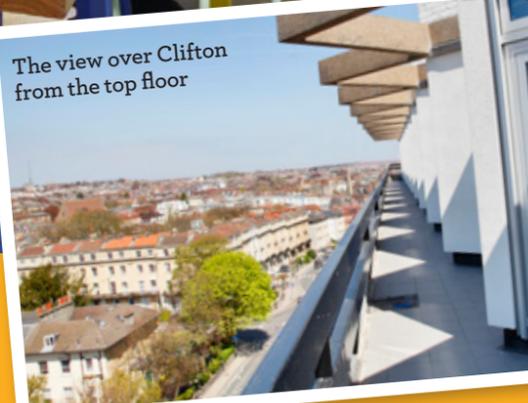


THE ANSON ROOMS  
ED SHEERAN THE SMITHS  
AND AMY WHITEHOUSE  
HAVE ALL PLAYED HERE



**FREE** TEAS & COFFEE  
and a banana  
during exams!

The view over Clifton from the top floor



Bristol SU's refurbished 33.5 metre pool



## WHAT'S THE STUDENT VIEW?



**KITTY FULLER**  
3rd year History of Art

"I've never lived that close to the Union before so haven't spent much time here. But for my third year I'm living very close by so I'm using it more. I've been using the pool, which is great, and the study areas upstairs are a really good idea. I'm pleased to be living close by!"



**DECLAN LAGAN**  
1st year Biology

"As a first year it's all pretty new to me, but the recent work has made a big difference. I really like The Balloon Bar, it's somewhere you actually want to go as it looks great and the prices are pretty good too. It's somewhere that lots of students seem to be using for socialising as well as finding a quiet corner to read or work."

**AUGUSTA NNAJIOFOR**  
International Foundation Programme

"I think those responsible for the refurbishment did an amazing job. The work seemed to happen really quickly and there wasn't too much disruption. The Balloon Bar has some good study areas, and upstairs you can really find peace to work in the new quiet reading spaces. I think it's fantastic."



"For Bristol SU, it feels like a moment of history," says Ben Pilling, chief operating officer at Bristol SU. "It has been a long project, but it feels like it has all come together at the right time. There are lots of events in the spring term to celebrate the relaunch.

"The building looks a lot more modern from the outside, but we've really looked at the inside of the building and I hope that's what students and visitors see. I hope that people

appreciate it for what it is – a really fantastic, usable building with lots of huge spaces for student activities. It's not a Georgian villa, but there you wouldn't get great big dance studios, the Anson Rooms, a swimming pool and all the other things we're lucky to have here."

Why not take the chance to see the changes for yourself at an Open Day? We're certain you'll be as impressed as Bristol's current crop of undergraduates!

**"IT'S A FANTASTIC BUILDING WITH LOTS OF SPACE FOR STUDENT ACTIVITIES"**



Simon Pegg meeting student fans



Opening The Pegg Studio Theatre

# BACK TO MY ROOTS

16

One of the UK's most recognised actors, Simon Pegg recently returned to his old student stomping ground to open The Pegg Studio Theatre



bristol.ac.uk

“I used to come here to see bands and drink beer out of plastic cups for 70p a pint! It's changed enormously – and it's so much nicer now.” Simon Pegg's reaction on returning to the Students' Union he used to frequent as an undergraduate tells you a lot about the how far the Richmond Building has come since the early 1990s.

One of several new facilities for students to use, The Pegg Studio Theatre is so named after students voted to honour one of the University's most famous alumni, who became a household name after appearing in blockbusters such as *Shaun of the Dead* and *Hot Fuzz*.

“It's an incredible honour to have a theatre named after me, I was very touched when I found out. I've found it hard to recognise much of the building, yet it feels familiar. It used to just smell of beer and students... but it has been so beautifully changed and modernised.”

Showing you really can mix study with lifelong passions, Pegg's dissertation looked

at how Marxist modes of critical theory could be applied to *Star Wars*, his favourite film.

“I feel like Bristol is the place that galvanised the decisions I've made and it's somewhere that will always be special to me. The whole higher education part of life is a very informative time – it's a privilege to be in that environment.

“It 100% shaped my career. This is the mould I came from. It was so important not just in terms of my academic life but my personal life. I wouldn't change a thing. It was an incredible thing to discover that education could be so enjoyable. It wasn't easy, and required an incredible amount of work, but it was all worth it.

“It's ace to be back in this part of the world – I've obviously got a huge affection for it. Bristol itself will always be of great sentimental value to me.”



# Get Green at Bristol

Bristol is European Green Capital 2015, and students from the University of Bristol are doing their bit to make a difference



17

‘A green-thinking city with a great quality of life’ – praise enough from the European Commission to gain Bristol this much-sought environmental accolade.

This year, the city will be alive with people showing the outside world just why Bristol is the first UK city to be chosen for this award.

The University is very much part of this, and plans include becoming a net carbon neutral campus by 2030, decreasing the University's transport footprint and ensuring that students have the chance to undertake education for sustainable development.

Student-initiated projects are also an important part of the mix, from halls of residence to end-of-year recycling.

## STUDENT SWITCH OFF

An inter-hall competition that ran across UK universities, Student Switch Off gave students the chance to win prizes for reducing their energy usage and increasing their recycling rate.

In the first year of the Students' Union Get Green programme, students managed to recycle 50% of their waste, a figure that rose to 65% the following year.

## THE CREATE FUND

Students with ideas that could contribute to social, environmental or economic sustainability on campus or within their community can apply for up to £500 to help make their idea a reality.

The Bristol Bicycle Project (right) – one such idea – is a student-led initiative that offers bike hire and “everything you need for a happy bike: lights, lock, helmet and maintenance support.”

## BRISTOL BIG GIVE

Held at the end of the student year in collaboration with the University of the West of England and Bristol City Council, the Bristol Big Give encourages students to recycle their unwanted goods for charity rather than sending them to landfill.

In 2014, 88 tonnes of donated items from students were collected (right), with a total value of £180,000. This raised vital funds for local and national charities, including the British Heart Foundation.

## FIND OUT MORE

[www.ubu.org.uk/activities/getgreen](http://www.ubu.org.uk/activities/getgreen)  
[www.bristolgreencapital.org](http://www.bristolgreencapital.org)



discover more/summer 2015

# It's decision time!

What and where you'll study are two of the most important decisions you'll ever make – that's where open days come in

**D**eciding where you're going to spend the next few years of your life may, at times, seem like an impossible task, but visiting different universities can really help. Although there's lots you can find out about online or through a prospectus, there's nothing quite like having time to snoop around a university and all that it offers.

"Open days are great opportunities to 'try out' universities," says Dr Shelley Hales, senior lecturer in Bristol's Department of Classics and Ancient History, who helps out at the open days. "Every aspect of university life is on show, from accommodation and societies to departments and libraries. Looking around the campus and chatting with us all will give you a real chance to imagine yourself living and studying here. You'll soon know if Bristol feels like the right place for you."

"The city of Bristol is unique and vibrant," adds event organiser Rosie Wildman, "it's just the right size, not too big or too small, and has a great student vibe. When visiting the city you can see how the University is at the heart of the city but also maintains a great campus feel."

"You'll have the chance to see our excellent

## TOP TIPS

- Speak to students and staff – make a list of questions before you go.
- Do you want to visit with family or on your own? Find out if there is anyone else going from your school or college.
- Will you stay overnight? If so, get as much as possible out of the experience – it'll help you decide whether you can picture yourself there in a year or so.
- Do your research. Look at universities' websites and prospectuses and read as much information as you can in advance.

student facilities, including the newly refurbished Students' Union and beautiful Goldney Hall of residence where *Sherlock* was filmed. With over 200 undergraduate courses, many offering exciting opportunities to study abroad or work in industry, there really is something for everyone."

Both agree that the best way to ensure you get the most from the day is to be prepared.

"Before you come, make a couple of lists," says Dr Hales. "The first should focus on your course; what do you want to study? Are there particular aspects of your subject that you want the course to cover? The second should think about the environment of and around the university. Are there activities in which you'd like to participate, or facilities you'd like the university to have? If you want to take up internships and build work experience, for instance, then a city-based university is probably better than a rural campus."

"Research, research, research," says Rosie. "The day will feel short and you will want to get the most out of it. Prepare by researching what you would like to visit, this way you'll be able to make the most of your day."

"Read the open day programme carefully and complete the day planner prior to the open day so you can make the most of your time here. Take a look at the maps and travel information to ensure you know how to get around on the day."

Dr Hales concludes: "Universities are big places and on an open day there are loads of things going on. If you've thought about the things that are most important to you, you can

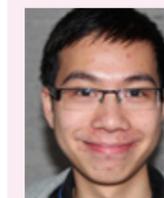
There's lots of information on the University website, where you'll find open day videos and the booking form you need to come and join us for a day  
www.bristol.ac.uk/ opendays-visit



prioritise those areas. Make sure you have a bit of time at the end of the day to experience the city, even if it's just a stroll down Park Street. And, of course, try and give yourself a chance to see something new that you wouldn't have thought of – that's what university is all about!

"Finally, think practically and be honest with yourself - don't base your wish list on the kind of ideal student you'd like to be as much as on the person you know you are."

## STUDENT'S VIEW



**Name:** Le Hoang Anh  
**From:** Vietnam  
**Studying:** Biochemistry

"I was part of the medical teaching lab steward team," says Anh. "We give young people the chance to go and look at the facilities in our teaching lab, where they can try experiments. There's also a mobile teaching lab outside where people can have a go at things."

"By coming to an open day you will be able to see everything in action, so you can feel the spirit of the university in the closest way. There are lots of things here that you can't find in a brochure or prospectus."

"For example, at the University of Bristol there is a space called the Cantock Steps that aren't normal steps. People call them the Steps of Indecision as the way they were designed makes it a struggle to see how you should walk 'up' these steps. Everyone I met at the open day noticed the steps and I'm sure they will remember the experience!"

"As stewards we're happy to answer any questions that visitors have, and tell them about our own experiences."



# Riding high

One of the most recognisable faces in British history, Winston Churchill was also the University of Bristol's longest-serving Chancellor

When he became Chancellor in 1929, Winston Churchill was carried through the streets of Bristol before taking part in a performance that involved his kidnap and imprisonment... can you imagine today's politicians being so game?

From 1929 – the year the world was plunged into depression after the Wall Street Crash – until 1965 – the year The Beatles released *Help!* and *Rubber Soul* at the height of Beatlemania – Churchill's influence helped to bring great change to the University of Bristol.

As well as marking the 50th anniversary since Churchill's death, 2015 is also the 75th anniversary of his 'Finest Hour' at the Battle of Britain, and the University is celebrating with a number of talks and lectures to mark the occasion. For one of these, Sophie Hatchwell, a teacher and PhD student in the Department of History of Art, has been looking into Churchill's 36 years as Chancellor.

"I was doing a bit of work in the Public and Ceremonial Events department when I heard about a project to investigate Churchill's relationship with Bristol," says Sophie.

"It sounded like a great opportunity to get involved in some original archival research, learning more

When Churchill was made Chancellor of the University in 1929, he was kidnapped and taken prisoner by raucous students as part of a student 'rag' performance!



about the University and a very interesting historical figure, so I asked to work on it.

"This year is important for a variety of reasons: it reminds us to pay respect to a very important man, whose actions had a direct effect on this country and the lifestyle we are now living. It also gives us the opportunity to look back on his work with a different perspective, and therefore look in a more balanced way at his achievements and his faults. It's an opportunity to learn more about, understand more, and re-appraise our recent history."

Although the position of Chancellor is largely ceremonial, Churchill's prestige certainly helped to win the University lots of friends in high places.

"His prominence in political and international circles meant that during his time as Chancellor the University was able to attract an amazing calibre of Honorary Graduates, including Neville

**"HE WAS ABLE TO ATTRACT AN AMAZING CALIBRE OF HONORARY GRADUATES TO BRISTOL"**

Chamberlain, Anthony Eden, Robert Menzies the Prime Minister of Australia, and a number of men and women in important positions in government and the war effort. This was important specifically after WW2: Churchill's importance raised the profile of the University during a time of great expansion, when it benefitted hugely from government grants and various building projects."



Right: Churchill leaving Bristol's Wills Memorial Building in 1946

# Through a child's eyes

The world must seem a very big place indeed for children who are starting to spend time outside their family unit. Aiming to discover more about how children adapt to situations within social groups, in making *The Secret Life of Four-Year-Olds* Dr Paul Howard-Jones, an educational neuroscientist from the University of Bristol, was able to observe this important step through the eyes of a group of children at nursery.

"I have never had the opportunity to listen to the conversations of a group of children of this age in such an intimate way," says Dr Howard-Jones. "It actually has been a fantastic revelation."

The film captured the behaviour and

emotions that children go through on a daily basis, as they work out how to respond to other children and the things that happen to them during a day at nursery.

"At four years old, children often begin relationships with their peers that can last a long time," Dr Howard-Jones told the Wellcome Trust. "These relationships provide an important arena for the development of their social skills. Children this age can be tender and nurturing, but also quite harsh, with their ability to regulate their emotions still very much 'work in progress'."

The Childhood Studies programmes at Bristol give undergraduates an in-depth understanding of the needs of children

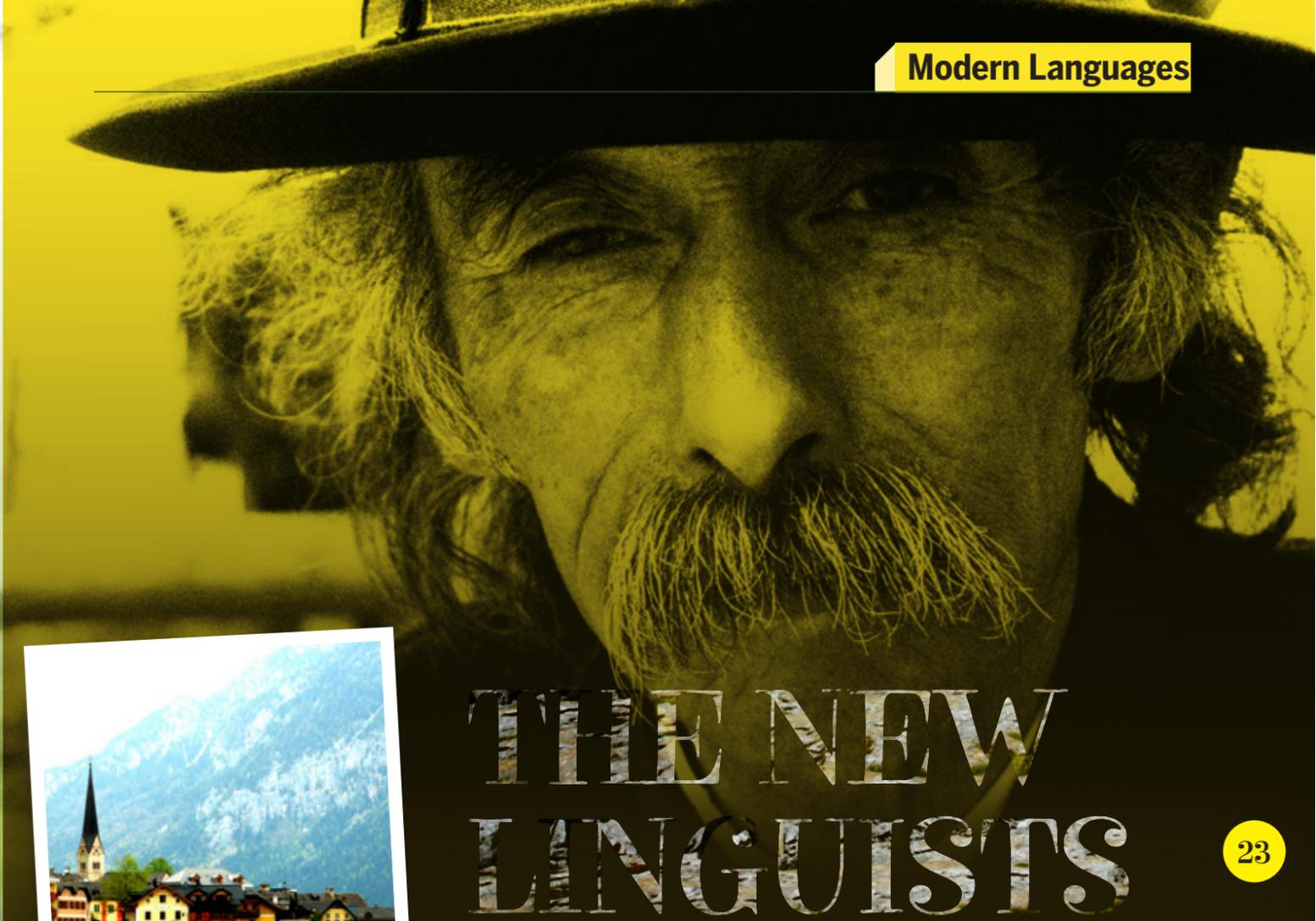
Channel 4's *The Secret Life of Four-Year-Olds* included topics that a degree in Childhood Studies can explore

and young people from birth to 19, taking account of the political, social and economic environments in which they grow.

Students can also learn about different aspects of childhood such as special educational needs and global child poverty, and become active researchers through projects and a dissertation. These are all important factors that equip graduates for a wide range of career choices, including education, early-years research and services, psychology and therapeutic work with children, social work and youth justice.

**FIND OUT MORE**

[www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/2016/childhood-studies](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/2016/childhood-studies)



# THE NEW LINGUISTS

Immerse yourself in the culture of another country with the help of Bristol's School of Modern Languages

Doing a language degree at university, you'd expect to achieve a high level of spoken and written proficiency in your chosen language or languages. However, the courses at Bristol are as much about investigating the cultures and societies where your languages are spoken, experiences that often lead to lifelong connections with countries and regions around the world.

"With over a thousand full-time language students, Bristol offers a fantastic environment for modern languages," says Dr Ian Foster, Director of Foreign Language Teaching. "We teach eight modern European courses in a relaxed and informal setting with highly-qualified native speaker tutors and small groups."

Alex Collins, who is in the final year of a French degree, says: "If you enjoy learning and speaking foreign languages, studying one or more at university is a bit of a no-brainer. As well as giving you a really useful skill that

will be relevant even after you leave, I have found that having a language on your CV, no matter which it may be, does still mark you out when looking for a job."

Spending a year abroad in your third year also gives you an incredible opportunity to explore a culture where your language is spoken.

"For the year abroad," continues Alex, "I think the best thing to do is to find somewhere where you will have little opportunity to speak English – you'll make a lot of progress, even in seven or eight months. Equally though, it's just a really good opportunity to go and do something a bit different from what most other students do, and I think it really changes your perspective on university for your final year, as well as encouraging you to get the most out of it when you get back."

"At Bristol, students have a great deal of flexibility in arranging what they do in their time abroad," says Dr Foster. "We have over

40 partner universities, in Europe, Russia and Latin America. Many students choose to spend time abroad on work placements, which can be an invaluable way of gaining real-world experience and building a portfolio of skills for your CV after graduation."

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

[www.bristol.ac.uk/sml](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/sml)

**YEAR ABROAD PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION**

Each student who spends the third year abroad is invited to enter this competition, with some stunning results. The main image on this page was taken by Vicky Symington in Argentina, where she worked for six months, and the photograph inset was taken by Amber Bartlett in Austria.

# UNDERGRADUATE OPEN DAYS

# 2015

**Friday 19 and Saturday 20 June 2015**

booking opens 6 May 2015

**Saturday 12 September 2015**

booking opens 22 July 2015

To find out more and to book your place, please visit  
[bristol.ac.uk/opendays](http://bristol.ac.uk/opendays)

