CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF EPIGRAM
Many happy returns to Epigram – Bristol’s student newspaper – which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

I hope you enjoy reading about Bristol University and journalism, and then take up your own pen or keyboard. Denis Burn (BSc 1975), Bristol’s Chair of Council, is seeking alumni, staff, student and Court members’ views about the University’s future.

Alumni responses now will inform the search for the University’s next Vice-Chancellor, who will take over from Professor Sir Eric Thomas (Hon LLD 2004) in autumn 2015. Please visit bristol.ac.uk/alumni/future by Saturday 31 May.

You can also support Bristol today by standing for a range of volunteer posts in the Alumni Association (Convocation) and I hope to see you soon at one of our forthcoming alumni events in Bristol, London or further afield (p29).

Bill Ray
Chairman of the Alumni Association (Convocation)

Keep in touch

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The red nonesuch, the Flower of Bristol, gave its colour to the University’s academic hoods and its name to the University’s first student magazine, The Bristol Nonesuch, in 1911. Nonesuch, in its current magazine form, was first published in 1991 for all those who share a common interest in the University of Bristol.

Bill Ray
(BSc 1975)
Chairman of the Alumni Association (Convocation)
Latest from Bristol
bristol.ac.uk/news

**Brick by brick**

This year, some of Bristol’s buildings will receive a much-needed facelift, while others open their doors for the very first time.

In April, the School of Biological Sciences will move into the new, five-storey Life Sciences Building on Tyndall Avenue (pictured above). Not only will the building provide state-of-the-art laboratories for teaching and research, but it will also boast some impressive eco-credentials, including solar panels to heat water, ‘living’ walls, and bat roosts.

Gary Foster, Professor of Molecular Plant Pathology, said: ‘The new building will enhance and develop our teaching and research. It will also give our students a great space to work in, and provide us with some impressive new facilities.’

Meanwhile, a £30 million refurbishment of the Richmond Building, home to the Students’ Union, the Anson Rooms, and the University swimming pool, is due to finish in October. The renovations, co-designed by students, will completely transform the 1960s concrete building to prepare it for the future. New facilities include social spaces, seminar rooms and quiet areas for private study.

Slightly further afield, Brunel’s original train station, the Engine Shed, opened its doors last December as the city’s new enterprise hub. Thanks to a partnership between Bristol City Council, the University and the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership, the Grade I listed building, built in 1841, will be managed by Bristol SETSquared – the University’s award-winning business incubator – which will use a third of the space for early-stage technology businesses.

In numbers

**30**

Bristol’s position in the 2013 QS World Universities rankings.

**20,000**

The number of applicants Lindsey Russell (BA 2013) beat to become the 36th Blue Peter presenter, as voted for by CBBC viewers. Russell credits her success to UBTV, the student-run TV station, which helped put together her show reel and entry.

**£84,500,000**

What the NHS could save annually by using an anti-cancer drug that is cheaper than the current treatment, but equally effective in treating slight loss, according to a nationwide study involving the Bristol Clinical Trials Evaluation Unit.

**A royal seal of approval**

Neonatal research

Bristol has been awarded the Queen’s Anniversary Prize in recognition of its leading research in obstetric and neonatal practice that has saved babies’ lives all over the world.

Three strands of research carried out at the University have made giving birth, and the early stages of life, safer for mothers and their babies. Since the late 1980s, Professor Peter Fleeting and Dr Pete Bar’s ‘back to sleep’ advice has reduced the occurrence of cot death and saved the lives of more than 15,000 babies in the UK alone; Professor Marianne Thoresen’s more recent pioneering cooling treatment for babies who suffer oxygen shortage at birth saves more than 1,500 babies from death and disability each year; and an obstetric emergency training programme known as PROMPT, led by Tim Draycott, has reduced hypoxic injuries (where the brain is starved of oxygen) by 50 per cent and bracial plexus injury (a result of nerve damage) by 70 per cent.

Research like this has been made possible thanks to generous donations from alumni and friends of the University. The Centenary Campaign aims to raise £100 million by the end of 2014, ensuring that Bristol’s second century is even more impressive than its first.

Wanted: Bristol’s future leader

Vice-Chancellor

Professor Sir Eric Thomas (Hon LLD 2004) is to retire as the University’s Vice-Chancellor in August 2015.

After 14 years in the role, Professor Thomas said: ‘I believe it will be the right time for a new leader to take Bristol on to the next stage. My time at the University has been the most enjoyable, challenging and fulfilling of my professional career and I am fiercely proud of our students and graduates. There is still much to do in the next 18 months, including finding my successor.’

To help the University in its search for a new leader, we want to know what you think makes Bristol so unique, and what qualities you think are important in our future Vice-Chancellor. Please share your thoughts via our online survey at bristol.ac.uk/alumni/future before Saturday 31 May.

**A bird’s eye view**

Alumni

Presenter Miranda Krestovnikoff (BSc 1994) has been elected as the new president of Europe’s largest nature conservation charity, the RSPB. Krestovnikoff, a wildlife expert on BBC One’s The One Show and Coast, will lead the charity’s governing body for the next five years with the aim of securing a healthy environment for birds and other wildlife. After graduating from Bristol with a Zoology degree, she volunteered with various wildlife organisations and trained as a diver before becoming the popular presenter we know today.

**Size doesn’t matter**

Health

Treatment for high blood pressure could be as simple as removing one of the tiniest organs in the body, and may be more effective than existing therapies.

A small nodule (no bigger than a grain of rice) found on the side of each carotid artery is a major culprit in the development and regulation of high blood pressure. The discovery, led by Professor Julian Paton from Bristol’s School of Physiology and Pharmacology, could revolutionise the treatment of hypertension, the world’s biggest silent killer, and the results of a human clinical trial are expected next year.

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1 Key to the universe // Physics
Professor Peter Higgs (Hon DSc 1997) and Professor François Englert were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for predicting the existence of the Higgs boson particle, discovered at the CERN Large Hadron Collider almost 50 years later.

2 Flower power // Biological Sciences
Bright colours and enticing fragrances aren’t the only features flowers use to attract pollinators. Bristol researchers, led by Professor Daniel Robert, created a buzz when they revealed that flowers also produce electrical signals to attract bumblebees to their pollen. Moreover, when a flower is running low on nectar, it changes the voltage of the signal to alert approaching insects.

3 Pitch Perfect // Alumni
Fans of author Rachel Joyce (BA 1983) can now enjoy her latest novel, Perfect. In 2012, Joyce wrote the international bestseller, The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry, which was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize.

4 Conquering cancer // Health
In the future, cancer could be prevented from spreading by manipulating the levels of a particular protein, known as PRH, in individual cells. The role of PRH is to interact with DNA and ‘switch’ particular genes on or off. Research from the School of Biochemistry suggests that changing PRH levels could stop cancer cells moving from their original location.

5 Raising the flag // Alumni
Matthew Baugh (BA 1994, MSc 1997), former HM Ambassador to Somalia, received an OBE in the Diplomatic Services and Overseas List of the 2013 Birthday Honours for promoting peace and security in Somalia. You can hear Baugh speak about his experiences of working in countries affected by conflict at the Best of Bristol Alumni Weekend on Saturday 5 July (bristol.ac.uk/alumni/events).

6 Quantum computer // Engineering
Scientists and engineers led by Dr Mark Thompson have, for the first time, generated and manipulated single particles of light (photons) on a silicon chip—a major step forward in the race to build a quantum computer. In the future, quantum computers will use light (photons) to carry information, rather than electricity, but harnessing the photons has remained a challenge until now.

In brief
Alumni
Will Dean (BSc 2003), founder and CEO of the popular military-style obstacle event series, Tough Mudder, has been named the National EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2013 Emerging Award winner.

Nishtha Chugh (MSc 2011), featured in the autumn edition of Nonesuch, won The Guardian International Development Journalism Competition 2013 for her reports on attempts to change attitudes towards gender in Rwanda.

Paul Stebbings (BA 1977), Artistic Director of ADG Europe and TNT Theatre Britain, has received an MBE for his services to theatre.

Sri Nazir Razak (BSc 1988), Group Chief Executive of CIMB Group, was named CEO of the Year by the Minority Shareholder Watchdog Group at Malaysia ASEAN Corporate Governance Index Awards 2013.
Rowing into the record books

Students

Final-year student, Jamie Sparks (2011-), and best friend Luke Birch, have become the youngest pair to row across the Atlantic.

Fewer people have rowed the Atlantic than have travelled into space or climbed Mount Everest. But after 55 days at sea, Sparks and Birch, also known as ‘Two boys in a boat’, crossed the finish line of the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge in fifth place.

During the ‘world’s toughest endurance race’, the pair encountered 30-knot winds and battled powerful waves, often surviving on just 80 minutes of sleep at a stretch. Rowing 3,000 nautical miles non-stop, they each lost more than a stone-and-a-half of weight, suffered blistering salt sores, and even had to contend with flying fish. But their endurance paid off when they not only broke the world record to become the youngest pair to complete the race, but also became the biggest ever individual fundraisers for their chosen charity, Breast Cancer Care.

Preparing for the Pacific

Students

On 7 June, Elsa Hammond (PhD 2012-) will begin her attempt to row 2,400 miles in the first ever Great Pacific Race. Hammond, the only woman from the UK registered in the race, will aim to break the solo women’s record while raising money for the Plastic Oceans Foundation. The race is the first to cross the world’s largest ocean from California to Hawaii.

Leading the way

Science

Two scientists from the University and an alumnus have been named in the Science Council’s list of the top 100 practising scientists.

Professors Max Headley and Judy Harris (pictured above), both from the School of Physiology and Pharmacology, and Professor Cecil McMurray CBE (PhD 1970), Managing Director of SciTec Consulting, were recognised by a range of organisations, including the European Commission, the NHS and the government, for their contributions to UK society and the economy.

On the fast track

Alumni

Richard Branson has praised two businesses, founded by Bristol alumni, that feature on The Sunday Times Fast Track 100 league table for 2013.

Branson applauded the number of businesses founded by young entrepreneurs on the 2013 list, including online food retailer, graze.com (Edd Read, MEng 2007, above left), and translation services provider, Language Connect (Ben Taylor, BSc 2001, above right).

The tools used to produce Bristol’s student paper may have changed, but the mission remains the same: to engage, inform and entertain. In Epigram’s 25th year, James Landale, the paper’s first editor (pictured), reflects on the op-ed that launched his career in journalism, and current editor Josephine Franks considers how the publication continues to make its mark.
Students offering and discovers some home truths.

From the horse's mouth

James Landale (BSc 1990, MSc 1992, Hon LLD 2013) wrote his first op-ed for Epigram (reproduced below) in 1989. Now Deputy Political Editor for BBC News, he looks back at his student offering and discovers some home truths.

**Epigram does not want to bridge the divide between a self-important Union and an aesthetic student body. It merely wishes to engender amongst the student body a knowledge of what it is to be a student. It is not just doing a certain course. It is not just the next stage after A-levels. University is a specific way of life, a communal existence that joins together some very different people, like it or not, by their very student status. Many have lost sight of this. Epigram aims to chage [sic] this, because it believes that students will profit from knowing more about what is going on in the University.

A further aim is to act as a watchdog on the Union and University hierarchy. This doesn't mean endless critical editorials. It means that you, the student, have a letters page in which to voice your opinions, to praise as well as to deflate a few egos. Some student politicians may be on power trips, but that doesn't mean they cannot further student interest. The Union has a wide range of services (on the whole, very well run) that help and bring together students in an invaluable way.

Epigram has its sights high. It will be a challenge, not only for those who organise it and contribute to it, but also for you, the student. It's your paper. Read it, write for it and eat your fish and chips out of it. Remember, the editor is on a power trip too. Whether he can also produce a good newspaper depends on you.
Tessa Mayes (BSc 1989) is a journalist, film director and producer.

As the River Mole breaks its banks, flooding villages near my parents’ home, climate change is front-page news. So, too, are the confusing messages surrounding it.

In the first Prime Minister’s Questions of the new year, David Cameron said he ‘suspected’ that the ‘abnormal weather’ was linked to climate change, while critics called his comments ‘casual’. Lord Stern, author of the Stern Review on climate change, commented at the Davos World Economic Forum that he had ‘underestimated the risks’. And yet the UK Met Office has forecast that temperatures are unlikely to rise significantly until at least 2017.

You’d think by now that a subject with a long record of scientific scrutiny would be clear. But its politicisation – and the speculative nature of some scientific studies – makes it difficult for journalists to cover climate change accurately.

The way climate change is discussed is as controversial as the subject itself. Prince Charles, for example, is one of many to describe those who dispute climate change science as ‘deniers’. But rather than clarifying the debate, this label precludes discussion, leading to studies with less alarmist interpretations of the data being dismissed.

So how should journalists cover climate change? Like any news reporters, they should stick to the facts. I would also argue that they should have more expertise. Unless you know how UN climate reports are received by scientists and debated by politicians, how can you put them into context? Not all studies are equally valid, but how can journalists assess what’s important if they know little about the science? News articles can all too easily lead to scaremongering rather than enlightenment.

The media should air opposing views on climate change, but journalists should be expert enough to assess the scientific and political importance of those views without being accused of bias. Otherwise audiences will believe that all views are equally important when they aren’t. That’s propaganda, not news.

When it comes to an issue as emotive as climate change, can we rely on journalists for accurate information? Here, two academics from the Cabot Institute, and four alumni working in journalism, campaigning and industry, discuss some of the factors influencing the portrayal of climate change in the media.
Climate change is one of the most profound challenges facing humankind. However, it is one associated with uncertain and complex consequences, with the most pernicious concerns not necessarily being climate change itself but how it exacerbates other issues, such as extreme weather events, food security, access to resources, and the spread of disease and conflict. It cannot sit in isolation from the rest of the news, but demands nuanced exploration that facilitates the responsible formation of opinion and policy. Experts, the public and the media form a triangle around policy-makers, influencing political decisions. Most government decision-makers want to enact beneficial policies, but they must do so in a storm of opinion and policy.

*Dr Tony Juniper (BSc 1983, Hon DSc 2013), former Director of Friends of the Earth, is a writer, campaigner and environmental adviser.*

During many years of environmental campaigning, I came to believe in keeping emotion on the right side of science. Straying across the line could invite negative consequences, including loss of credibility and momentum toward campaign aims. So it is that much of the campaigning on climate change has been about science, but times are changing.

Despite rising scientific evidence and political acceptance of the need to cut emissions, there has been a shift in emphasis. Political support for shale gas has risen, while support for renewable energy sources and policies for low-carbon living have diminished, in part propelled by media coverage of opinions expressed by climate change sceptics.

There are several reasons for this change, including the hostile editorial positions of several media organisations, the effect of recession and a change of government. Despite the reputation to raise the volume of emotional messages as scientific ones flounder, most campaign groups have remained faithful to the facts. But is this the best use of their time and resources? After all, many others now speak up for the science.

Indeed, it is notable how some of the most alarming messages on climate change now come from mainstream organisations. For example, in 2012 the World Bank published a report that pointed out how a failure to cut emissions would lead to unprecedented heat waves, severe drought and major floods, with serious impacts on the economy.

Another 2012 report from global management consultants PWC – hardly a voice for radical environmentalists – told of the dangers that would come with the six degree of warming that could occur during the 21st century. And even Christine Lagarde of the International Monetary Fund said in 2013 that ‘without concerted action, the very future of our planet is in peril.’

Having raised the alarm to the point where the mainstream and science consensus is on their side, what should campaign groups do next? As damage from extreme weather becomes more pronounced, the science will become less important as societies struggle with how to stage an effective response. In turn, this will require an increase in public demand for low-carbon energy, food and transport solutions, and that is where more work is needed.

The challenge for campaign groups now is not only about winning technical arguments but also about building cultural acceptance of the changes we need to make. It is not for lack of science that we are failing to change, but because that change is widely seen as being all about sacrifice.

Environmentalists are used to being led by science, but increasingly the work that must be done is linked more with communications and psychology than atmospheric chemistry. This is a hard nut to crack, not least because it is all about emotion, and thus outside many campaign groups’ comfort zones. So it is time to rebalance the effort, to see the need for more emotion and less science? I think it might be.

*Angela Knight CBE (BSc 1972) is Chief Executive of Energy UK*
Climate change affects the food we eat, the energy we use, the homes we live in, the work we do and how we travel. It can even affect our health. The Cabot Institute brings together scientists from across the University to tackle these interrelated issues. Research areas range from flood-hazard modelling to mapping the whole genome to deliver new high-yield, drought-resistant crops.

**Cabot Institute: leader of the pack**

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**PREFERENTIAL MEDIA SELECTION LEADS TO POLARISATION**

Personal worldviews can therefore enter into a positive feedback loop, in which predispositions are reinforced by selective exposure to misleading media sources. Of course, the same feedback cycle can emerge among people with opposing worldviews, who also preferentially select their media sources, but these sources happen to be more likely to report accurately on climate change. The result: increasing polarisation on an issue of fundamental importance to us all. The problem is compounded by the journalistic ethos to strive for ‘balance’. A commendable goal in political coverage, it can lead to bias in coverage of science. USA Today recently fell into this trap when its editorial endorsement of the scientific consensus on climate change was accompanied by an opposing piece by lobbyists infamous for comparing people who accept climate science with the Unabomber. The same outfit attempted to sow doubts on the adverse health effects of smoking on behalf of the tobacco industry.

This so-called ‘balance’ in the debate on climate change has had identifiable consequences. It has mishandled the public about the strength of the scientific consensus: people tend to think that only around two-thirds of scientists agree on climate change, when the true proportion is more than 95 per cent. The US National Academy of Sciences calls it a ‘fact’ that the globe is warming and that humans are responsible. These facts are accepted by around 97 per cent of scientific articles on this topic, and they require a mature discussion of how best to meet the challenges posed by climate change.

The media matter. And because it continues to get it wrong at times, it must approach its coverage with scepticism.

**CELEBRITIES WIN THE BATTLE FOR COLUMN INCHES**

The Daily Mail often reported on the peak of Arctic sea ice in August 2007 and made a big deal of the fact that it had ‘shattered the global warming myth’, while most of the world was reeling from the Hurricane Katrina disaster in the U.S. And it almost worked. The Daily Mail headline: ‘End of the world? Sea ice meltdown means Northern Hemisphere will freeze! 35 per cent chance of it ever returning!’

Yet another tackling climate change faces an enormous challenge, because it is an abstract issue that can overwhelm and terrify us. We are all implicated in the problem and the solutions are not clear-cut. Not surprisingly, many of us find it easier to close our minds and simply hope for the best.

We Can, the environmental lobbying group I co-founded in 2008, wrestled with this dilemma. Environmental campaigners are often seen as young and radical, so We Can attempted to plug the demographic gap by championing new high-yield, drought-resistant crops.

**What do any of us in the media or arts have to offer but stories – in fact or fiction – told as imaginatively and compellingly as possible?** The media has a duty to communicate climate change to ensure we have an electorate capable of making informed decisions, while those in the arts can help audiences imagine the unimaginable, through the magical realism of films such as Beasts of the Southern Wild, the biblical grandeur of novels like Cormac McCarthy’s The Road, or the polemical passion of documentaries such as The Age of Stupid.

**PREFERS unimagined REALITY**

The problem is that the media is selective, and people are only ever told a partial story. Household bills are discussed in isolation from power-generation changes and yet they are linked; the wholesale costs of energy are primarily set in the international marketplace and are not controlled by governments or companies; policy-makers have driven carbon-reduction targets originally aimed at industry but borne mainly by energy companies. Current energy policy was never intended as a long-term strategy, but it will require the costs to be passed on. Consumers are getting it wrong again when they report on climate change. The result: increasing polarisation on an issue of fundamental importance to us all.

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The media matter. And because it continues to get it wrong at times, it must approach its coverage with scepticism.
The University of Bristol Students’ Union has a fantastic range of clothing, accessories and gifts online. With 15% off international purchases, you can wear your Bristol colours with pride whenever you want to! View the collection and get the alumni discount at ubushop.co.uk.

1. Fairtrade zip hoody (£30), available in burgundy and grey, sizes (female only) XS, S, M, L, XL
2. Bristol University Avon satchel (£130), 100% British leather, available in a range of colours
3. Bristol University Chelsea satchel (£110), 100% British leather, available in a range of colours
4. Bristol faculty scarf (£25.99), wool and fleece, available in all faculty colours
5. Crested leather wallet (£25), available in black and brown
6. Bristol faculty tie (£25.99), silk, available in all faculty colours
7. Vintage hoody (£34), available in coral, heather blue and heather green, sizes (male and female) XS, S, M, L, XL
8. Crested tie slide (£14.99)
9. Crested cufflinks (£19.99)
10. Bristol logo ballpoint pen (£2.50)
11. Bristol Buster bear (£14.99)

Information is everywhere. But who are the journalists and editors deciding which stories make the headlines? And what do digital advances mean for the traditional press? Nonesuch asked four Bristol alumni for their take on British journalism today, and their predictions for the future.

Lines of duty

Shop online at ubushop.co.uk

15% ALUMNI DISCOUNT
at checkout with code ALUMNI15 until 25 July 2014

The University of Bristol Students’ Union has a fantastic range of clothing, accessories and gifts online. With 15% off international purchases, you can wear your Bristol colours with pride whenever you want to! View the collection and get the alumni discount at ubushop.co.uk.
Behind the headlines

Feature

Will Hutton
(BSc 1972, Hon LLD 2003)
‘the pundit’

I have been lucky to have witnessed some very important events: the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, when I crossed from East to West Berlin with the first East German citizen to come across Checkpoint Charlie; the explosion of the Chernobyl reactor in 1986; the tragic wars of the Balkans in the 1990s; 9/11 in New York City; the exciting expansion eastwards of the European Union that culminated in the Euro crisis; and the effects of the 2008 financial global banking collapse. If I achieved something in explaining those events to many readers or viewers, I would consider that to be a justification for choosing journalism.

Journalism finds stories. These usually depend on human beings behaving in ways that are unusual, wrong, funny, hugely influential, or politically, economically, socially or culturally significant.

Every day, you look for the story you might tell your friend or family member, and you look for how to do that in a way that informs but also entertains, or a way that makes people laugh, cry and think. Your responsibility to your audience is to find such stories and, above all, to tell the truth — as far as the latter can be determined. Sometimes it’s just as important to make sure the reader understands what you don’t know, as to show what you consider you do.

Journalists have always looked for new means to spread their stories. In the digital world, that spells constant change, because technology is developing so fast. Today, we can involve and engage millions more people in constructing and appreciating those stories.

Fantastic work goes on at universities, and academics are starting to make their research more user-friendly. But newspapers don’t have the money to support journalists like they used to — they have fewer staff, with less time to read research. Public debate is circumscribed thereby. I believe academia should be hard-wired into the media, and that people, like me, should do our best to help that process.

Digital is the future. It’s going to be all about apps, mobiles and tablets. I’m not sorry about that, but I do worry that information will become more skewed. If you go online and only see information that confirms your existing prejudices, you’ll rarely be challenged. That’s problematic. One of the great things about newspapers is coming across the unexpected.

When I started as a journalist, the internet wasn’t invented, and the mobile phone didn’t exist. You can be certain that in the next 30 years, we’ll see more platforms for amazing journalism emerge. Human beings want it. Democracies need it. We’ll find a way.

Krisi Murison
(BA 2003)
‘the editor’

I’ve heard journalism described as ‘writing the first draft of history’. I’d certainly apply that to some of my colleagues who are doing extraordinarily important work, from exposing Britain’s modern-day slave rings to reporting from the frontline of civil wars torn countries.

As their commissioning editor, I like to bask in that grandeur too! Deciding what stories to cover is usually as simple as asking the questions: does it spark my interest? If I read or overhear something that makes me want to find out more, the chances are I’m not alone. Others will be curious too.

A journalist’s responsibilities to the reader are to inform, to entertain, to grip, to surprise and to make damn sure you’re accurate.

When I started on magazines, digital publishing was a complete afterthought. The online team (for ‘team’ read ‘individual’ in most cases) was usually relegated to the furthest end of the office, and systematically ignored. Once it was clear there might be a future in the internet, most magazines ran around like headless chickens for a few years, trying to make their pages look more like websites. They were simultaneously throwing all their content away for free online, then wondering why physical sales were going down.

Now the dust is settling and we’re beginning to see how to make it work. The ‘Sunday Times’ online-subscription model was controversial when it was first introduced, but it’s definitely working: our paid-for circulation — print combined with digital — is now stable. It won’t be long before it’s rising again.

People are coming to accept that great content has to be paid for. For me, subscription models are clearly the future. Anyone looking for trusted, in-depth journalism will sign up to their preferred media outlet, in the same way I already do with Spotify for my music and Netflix for my box sets.

There’ll always be an audience for quality journalism, regardless of the medium (paper, iPad, website, phone app or something that hasn’t been invented yet). The basics — world-class words, photos, opinions and information — will never change, only the way people access them.
Behind the headlines

‘SOCIAL MEDIA HAS TRANSFORMED THE ENTIRE LANDSCAPE’

Alastair Stewart OBE (Hon LLD 2008)
‘the broadcaster’

Alastair Stewart was offered a job after a chance appearance on Southern ITV while Deputy President of the National Union of Students. He joined ITN as Industrial Correspondent in 1980, and is the longest-serving newsreader on British television.

At its heart, ‘journalism’ is what the French root of the word (de jour) implies: what happened today? In TV and radio, the role of journalism is to provide facts. You then invite the viewers or listeners to make their own minds up.

Impartiality is a challenge. But it’s a limitation I cherish and one I think is at the heart of our liberal, pluralist democracy. Bad societies have bad, biased media. Good societies elevate honesty and balance in journalism.

Factoring out emotion matters. At the Beslan siege and bombing, off camera, I was weeping. On camera, I was stoic. It’s not for me to lead you in an emotional response – it’s for me to give you the facts.

Social media has transformed the entire landscape. From gossip to vital tips-off, it’s changed the way we engage with the facts, our contacts, our competitors, our colleagues and, of course, the public. It’s a ‘heads-up’ – the ‘jungle drums’ of a medium one cannot afford to ignore.

Choosing which stories to cover is a huge and difficult responsibility. It’s a collective process – from the editor down. The stories we choose are those that surprise, shock and provoke. By definition, ‘news’ is the novel, the unexpected – it’s ‘new’. There is service information too, but the beating heart of news is the story that prompts a response between ‘I didn’t know that’ and ‘OMG’ (as they say on social media).

There is a risk of a period in the doldrums for newspapers as they work out what they must do to stay alive. We need to think about how megaliths like the BBC influence local media, their websites and social media.

Newspapers are second cousins these days to TV and radio, especially ‘rolling news’. I think ‘appointment-to-view bulletins’, like ITV’s 6.30 pm offer, have good prospects. People still like honest, balanced reporting that has been well considered before transmission.

It’s a precarious time for all of us when everything you need is on the internet. Like the classic Eric Morecambe sketch featuring Grieg’s piano concerto – we’re ‘playing all the right notes – but not necessarily in the right order’.

‘Studying at university is a chance to learn from distinguished academics, explore ideas, ask questions, and search for answers. By making a gift today, you’ll help build a new lecture theatre on Priory Road – a modern, comfortable space to help Bristol students enjoy the best experience our University can offer.’

Walls Rushforth (Law 2010-) (pictured)

Build a lecture theatre. Build a future.

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‘THE PRIOY ROAD LECTURE THEATRE’

The Priory Road lecture theatre will open its doors to social sciences and law students this autumn. The theatre will provide a long-awaited, practical teaching space for hundreds of students.

Inside the theatre, we’re delighted to honour our Pioneers – alumni, like you, who give more than £1,000 over the course of the academic year – by name on individual seat plaques. The plaques will act as an ongoing acknowledgement of your generous support, and will remind generations of future Bristol students just how supportive and inspirational our alumni community is.

Others in the field

Sue Lawley OBE (BA 1967, Hon LLD 1989) // Former TV and radio broadcaster
David Jordan (BSc 1975) // Head of Editorial Standards and Policy, BBC
Paul Appleby (BSc 1977) // Chair of Bristol Media; Director, VID Communications
Misha Glenny (BA 1980) // Freelance journalist
Martin Clarke (BA 1985) // Publisher, Mal Chane
Alexandra Frean (BA 1985) // Washington Bureau Chief, The Times
Dr Wendy Darke (BSc 1986) // Director, BBC Natural History Unit
Sarah Montague (BSc 1987) // Presenter of the Today programme, BBC Radio 4
Susanna Reid (BSc 1992) // Presenter of Good Morning Britain, ITV
Isabel Oakeshott (BA 1996) // Political commentator
Darren McCaffrey (BSc 2007) // Reporter, Sky News

These pieces are extracts from longer interviews. To read more, and find out about other alumni working in journalism, please visit bristol.ac.uk/alumni/nonesuch
Editors’ reflections

Feature

Changing faces

No celebration of Epigram would be complete without mention of its editors – the students with the vision and courage to break new ground, challenge authority and court controversy in pursuit of a story. And what memorable stories some of them were...

1992/93

Michael Gomulka (BSc 1995)

Criminal defence and media crime barrister, SRB

I came across a story that a cabinet minister was secretly funding a Eurocrystall campaign using the address of a launderette around the corner from his constituency office. They were distributing leaflets that campaigned against government policy. I verified it, I would cost the politician a career.

I called the Daily Mirror and spoke to Mr Alastair Campbell, who politely told me exactly how the story was worth, depending on whether it made page one, two or three. The problem? My source, I would have to tell the Mirror that it was my friend’s father who was printing the leaflets. I couldn’t. Mr Campbell spoke to a Mr Alastair Campbell, who was quickly dispelled by the tabloids.

The Union told me I couldn’t editorial on how an independent newspaper should be free to ask any questions, and publish anything it wants.

I still see a face from The Economist’s break-in. She needed a double-lock. I gave me the best copy I could have given.

I arrived in Bristol as a raw 19-year-old with ambitions to change the world, and started writing for Epigram immediately.

Interviewing Goldie was nuts. We both grew up on council estates in Birmingham, yet here he was, a mega-star dating Bjork. I asked him for his political opinions and he gave me the best copy I could have hoped for.

I’d tightened up a touch by the time I became editor, but I still wanted to shake things up. On the whole, I was supportive of the Students’ Union. I believe you needed to use it or lose it. But I wrote an editorial on how an independent student newspaper should be free to ask any questions, and publish anything it wants.

The Union told me I couldn’t publish. I called the Epigram team and they piled into the office. We refused to leave until the Union guaranteed we could go to press unchanged. The deal was that I would resign. I wrote the final editorial outlining my reasons – uncensored, of course – and left.

Andy Dangerfield (BSc 1998)

Development Manager, British Heart Foundation

I came across a story that a student who ‘overdosed’ on pesto – a tale quickly picked up by the tabloids. Or our story about a student who ‘overdosed’ on pesto – a tale quickly picked up by the tabloids. We certainly attempted serious journalism. Our reporting on the Clifton Suspension Bridge suicides played a part (if only a small one) in the campaign to add the Clifton Suspension Bridge suicides played a part (if only a small one) in the campaign to add the

Compared with some of the issues we tackled, the story might seem trivial, but not least in light of the shifts in attitude towards homosexuality in Britain today. But in January 2003, Section 29 (which banned educational establishments from promoting homosexuality – a law not dissimilar from that recently passed in Russia) had not yet been repealed. The story itself changed little. But social tolerance is built incrementally, and it’s thanks to this story and thousands like it in the grassroots press that, ten years on, the opposition to gay marriage legislation in England and Wales was so marginal.
Editors’ reflections

2003/04
Craig Woodhouse (BSc 2004)
Political Correspondent, The Sun on Sunday

Bristol was thrown into the eye of an international media storm when an 18-year-old science student, Rosie Reid (BSc 2008), decided to sell her virginity on the internet to cover her debts.

I’d chosen to take Epigram in a tabloid direction (a sign of things to come, as it turns out), so this was the perfect story.

Public interest was piqued further because Rosie was a lesbian. We met Rosie and her partner, who told us they’d dreamed up the story to sell, rather than it being a serious ploy for Rosie to sell her body. We splashed the story as an exposé, though Rosie did later claim that she had sold her virginity to a 44-year-old man for £8,400. Whether that was just another story to sell to the papers, I guess we’ll never know.

2007/08
Josh Burrows (BA 2008)
Sports Writer and Editor, The Times

The idea that the University was planning to take over the Students’ Union was unpalatable, and unprecedented. When we covered the story, I worried that the University would exact terrible revenge. That never happened, but we did receive, and print, a stern letter from the Vice-Chancellor. Just when the story looked like it would run and run, the Union AGM barely reached quorum and nobody seemed to care.

With hindsight, discovering cocaine in just about every toilet we tested is perhaps not surprising. But it was an example of what student papers tend to do badly: investigative journalism. I had badgered our news team to generate front-page stories. Here, they came up with the goods.

Harry Byford (BA 2008), now at The Week, won The Guardian’s Student Columnist of the Year Award for his ‘insights’ into student societies. ‘What did I get for my efforts?’, he wrote. ‘Hundreds of offensive comments, calls for my “sacking”, and countless awkward conversations with people who I’d been mildly rude about. And, like a first sexual experience, it was worth every second.’

2010/11
Ellen Lister (BA 2011)
Lawyer, Linklaters LLP

I’m particularly proud of our coverage of the fee increases proposed by the coalition government. Two thousand students marched from Senate House down Park Street, and our Comment Editor, Luke Denne (BSc 2011), was interviewed on Sky TV at national protests in London. Epigram covered it all.

We also covered the violent riots in Stokes Croft – the worst riots Bristol had seen since 1980. Not entirely a ‘student’ issue, but we did become more engaged with the local community as a result.

We ran some great interviews (Fearne Cotton, Julian Fellowes and Major General Chris Wilson) and expanded the music section hugely – Bristol being, as every fresher knows, ‘the home of drum ‘n’ bass’.

• These pieces are extracts from longer interviews. To read more, and hear from other Epigram editors, please visit bristol.ac.uk/alumni/nonesuch

Mixed media

Epigram isn’t the only media to be documenting student life in Bristol.

Burst Radio

Bristol students first hit the airwaves in 1995, and have been broadcasting as Burst Radio since 1997. Former Burst DJs include Heart FM presenters Paris Troy (LLB 1999) and Nicola Bonn (BA 2003), comedian Marcus Brigstocke (Drama 1995-1997) and magician Chris Cox (BA 2003). burstradio.org.uk

Inter:mission

Committed to capturing Bristol’s cultural scene, Inter:mission is an online arts and listings magazine, featuring interviews, reviews, blogs and features written by students. intermissionbristol.co.uk

UBTV

UBTV is the latest student-run venture to be ‘Broadcasting Bristol’. As well as covering campus news, the team produces regular features showcasing Bristol’s drama, comedy and music talent. ub-tv.co.uk

The continuing story

Modern ideas of journalism and the Fourth Estate have both a prehistory and an uncertain future. Among the academics at Bristol who study the media in various contexts are three who, taken together, cover the modernpress from its medieval antecedents to its current crises.
By Nick Riddle

Ruling the waves
Dr Simon Potter in the Department of Historical Studies of an Imperial Press System, 1876-1922, is based on eight years of archival research and draws on collections in Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA. Before that, he examined the preceding era in New Zealand and South Africa.

The BBC's Empire Service – the forerunner of the Broadcasting Empire: The BBC and the British World, 1922-1970, is based on eight years of archival research and draws on collections in Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA.

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The Continuing Story
The University extends its sincere condolences to the friends and families of those listed below for whom we have received notification of death.

Raymond Hill (BSc 1954) died December 2013, aged 101
dr geoffrey kelloway (BA 1916, MB 1919, PhD 1927) died September 2013, aged 99
elizabeth price (BA 1938, diploma 1938) died April 2013, aged 96
Phyllis Simms (nee howes) (BA 1938, diploma 1938) died September 2013, aged 96
donald manchester (BSc 1914) died October 2013, aged 93
Raymond wallis (BSc 1910) died June 2013, aged 88
Sir Walter Cooke (BA 1946) died November 2013, aged 89
brigadier dennis biggold (BA 1947) died August 2013, aged 92
dorothy clark (nee New) (BA 1946) died January 2014, aged 90
the Rev Mr Francis Denny (BA 1944) died August 2013, aged 90
the Rev Mr Arthur hall (BA 1944) died January 2014, aged 90
michael gorman’s journalistic leadership helped to shape the modern chinese media. he was editor and publisher of the bangkok post from 1971-1983, steering the paper successfully through a turbulent period in thai history. he also set up the china daily, the country’s first english language newspaper. Michael was a trustee of the Thomson Foundation, having worked with the Thomson Organisation Ltd for a decade after graduating from Bristol.

Michael’s career in journalism was seeded at Bristol where he edited nonesuch news, the then-student paper which preceded brc and epigram and which lent its name to this magazine. at Bristol, Michael also met his wife Christine gorman (BA 1958), née Wilson, who survives Michael together with their three children. Michael was a dedicated Bristol university volunteer and supporter, and was a member of court. he was featured in nonesuch (autumn 2008), which is available to read online at bristol.ac.uk/alumni/nonesuch.

Dr emsworth professor richard peace died December 2013

please email any notifications of death to alumni@bristol.ac.uk.
Ernest Brook (BA 1952) left a legacy to help fund an oxygen chamber, a vital piece of equipment that will be used to examine how oxygen levels in the placenta affect unborn babies. Dr Patrick Case, from Bristol’s School of Clinical Sciences, hopes his pioneering research in this area will help reduce brain damage in unborn babies, and incidences of autism, attention deficit disorder and schizophrenia in later life.

Everyone can leave a legacy

Contact:
Ella Searle, Planned Giving Manager, University of Bristol,
Senate House, Tyndall Avenue, Bristol, BS8 1TH
T: +44 (0)117 394 1045  E: ella.searle@bristol.ac.uk

bristol.ac.uk/centenarycampaign/how/legacies
Exempt charity number: X1121