More online

Make sure you visit bristol.ac.uk/alumni to keep up to date with news and stories from your fellow graduates. From children’s book authors to climate change commentators, you’ll find advice and anecdotes from alumni working in a wide range of professions, all around the world.

Here are a few of our top picks:

Susan Startin (BSc 1971), Jonathan Ward (MSc 2004) and others share their memories of their favourite lecturers, including Nobel Prize winners and eccentric English teachers.

bristol.ac.uk/alumni/favourite-lecturers

Psychology graduate Michelle Elman (BSc 2014) explains how her life coaching company, Mindset for Life, and its cancer-focused campaign are helping to build women’s confidence worldwide.

bristol.ac.uk/alumni/michelle-elman

Eleven o’clock curfews, ‘coffee bar’ culture, and national service: Quentin MacGarvie (BSc 1956) and Ian Lloyd Davies (BA 1955) remember student life in the mid-1950s.

bristol.ac.uk/alumni/student-life-fifties

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The nonesuch

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.”

How Bristol’s volcanologists are making a global impact

Celebrating the world’s greatest playwright

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If you need part or all of this publication in an alternative format, please telephone +44 (0)117 394 1046.
A new vision for Bristol University

Professor Hugh Brady, Vice-Chancellor and President, would like to thank all alumni who shared their ideas and hopes for the future of the University.

Developing a new vision and strategy for Bristol has been a key priority for Professor Brady since he joined the University last September. Staff, students and alumni have all been involved in the consultation process. Thank you to all who shared their thoughts. The vision and strategy will be published online later this year at bristol.ac.uk/governance.

Breaking down taboos Alumni

No More Taboo, a not-for-profit social enterprise set up by Chloe Tingle (MEng 2014), was named Female Start-up of the Year at the 2015 Festival of Female Entrepreneurs.

No More Taboo sells reusable sanitary products to support projects that help tackle the taboos surrounding menstruation and sanitation in the developing world. Tingle was inspired to set up the enterprise after a volunteering trip to Bolivia. ‘The girls I met lacked basic health education, but were genuinely concerned about their impact on the environment’, she explains. ‘It made me wonder why we’re not doing more to reduce the amount of disposables we use here in the UK.’

Over the next five years, Tingle hopes No More Taboo will prevent 743 tonnes of waste going to landfill, save women £16 million, and educate more than 9,000 UK schoolchildren.

Royal praise for alumni and staff

Honours

Alumni and staff were recognised in the New Year Honours list 2016, including Professor Malcolm David Evans (above) from the University’s Law School.

Professor Evans was awarded a knighthood for his services to torture prevention and religious freedom, while Professor Julie Selwyn (PhD 2008), director of the Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies, received a CBE for services to adoption and looked-after children.

Professor Paul Curran (PhD 1979, DSc 1991), Vice-Chancellor of City University London, received a knighthood for services to higher education and Professor Viv Bennett (MSc 1995, Hon LLD 2015), Chief Nurse for Public Health England, was awarded a CBE for her work as the government’s principal advisor on public health, nursing and midwifery. For the full list, please visit bristol.ac.uk/nonesuch.

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News

1 Putting geology on the map // Geology
Researchers in the School of Earth Sciences restored and displayed a copy of the very first geological map of England and Wales, 200 years after it was created by local canal engineer and surveyor, William Smith, in 1815.

2 Chancellor to step down // University
The Right Honourable the Baroness Hale of Richmond DBE will step down from her role as Chancellor at the end of 2016 after 13 years as ceremonial head of the University. Lady Hale’s successor will be announced later in the year. Thank you to everyone who submitted nominations.

3 It’s an honour // Alumni
Singer-songwriter and former British officer, James Blunt (BSc 1996, Hon DMus 2016), came back to Bristol in February to receive an honorary degree, along with founder of subsea technology manufacturer, Sonardyne, John Partridge (BEng 1962, Hon DEng 2016). Read a full list of honorary graduates and find out how you can nominate someone for an honorary degree at bristol.ac.uk/alumni/honorary-degrees.

4 Sight to behold // Alumni
Jack Greasley (BSc 1998) won a Scientific and Engineering Award at the 2016 Oscars for his contribution to visual effects. Greasley and his team developed the MARI 3D texture painting system for the 2009 film Avatar, and the software has now been broadly adopted across the industry. You can read an interview with Greasley at bristol.ac.uk/nonesuch.

5 New lease of life // Medicine
An international team, led by Professor Julian Gough at Bristol, has developed a computer system, Mogrify, that can predict how to create any human cell type from another cell type directly, without the need for experimental trial and error. This image shows a cellular ‘landscape’ programmed from real data, and the team’s breakthrough paves the way for life-changing medical advances within just a few years.

6 The campaign trail // Students
Bristol Students’ Union won Students’ Union of the Year at the National Centre for Diversity’s Grand Awards. The team’s equality and diversity work includes campaigns like Reclaim the Night, tackling sexual violence and gender equality, and the work of its Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and Black and Minority Ethnic student groups.

In brief

Alumni
Captain Anne McClain (MSc 2005) was among NASA’s 2015 class of graduating astronauts, which was also the first to be evenly split along gender lines. McClain hopes to be part of NASA’s first mission to Mars in the not-so-distant future.

Award-winning visual effects engineer Ben Morris (MEng 1992, Hon DEng 2011) has added the highest-grossing film of all time, Star Wars: The Force Awakens, to his already impressive filmography. Morris won both an Oscar and a BAFTA in 2008 for his work on The Golden Compass, and is now working on Star Wars: Episode VIII, due for release in December 2017.

Dr Emma Mitchell (PhD 2013) made history as part of the first all-female team, and the first team of four, to row the Pacific. Mitchell and the Coxless Crew covered the 8,446 miles between San Francisco and Cairns in 257 days, raising more than £35,000 for Walking With The Wounded and Breast Cancer Care.

Co-founder of Guerilla Science Mark Rosin (MSc 2006) received the 2015 Early Career Award for Public Engagement with Science from the American Association for the Advancement of Science. A practising scientist himself, Rosin designs experiences and events to help people connect with science in creative new ways.
Meeting of minds

Medicine

Thanks to significant philanthropic donations from charities, alumni and friends, a new medical facility, the Bristol Brain Centre, opened at Southmead Hospital in November. The Bristol Brain Centre is the first of its kind in the country to bring together clinicians and academics researching multiple sclerosis, dementia and movement disorders. Working together this way will not only help researchers deliver new treatments faster, but will also mean thousands of patients benefit from cutting-edge care from experts specialising in a range of different conditions.

Flying high

Alumni

Flight Lieutenant Matt Masters (MEng 1998) will be soaring across our skies this summer as part of the famous Red Arrows as he embarks on a three-year tour with the iconic display team. Flt Lt Masters joined the Royal Air Force soon after graduating and was selected for the elite Red Arrows last October after a tough and lengthy selection process. ‘It is a childhood dream that has become reality,’ he says, ‘The Red Arrows are known for their legacy of precision flying and their popularity among the British public, and I am extremely proud to be part of a team that has influenced so many people around the world.’

Tour de force

Engineering

A team of researchers from the Universities of Bristol and Sussex, in collaboration with spin-out company Ultrahaptics, has built the world’s first sonic ‘tractor beam’ that can lift and move objects – a concept previously only seen on programmes like Star Trek.

The beam uses high-amplitude sound waves, created by dozens of miniature loudspeakers, to generate an acoustic hologram that acts like a force field, holding and object in place. By carefully controlling the output of the loudspeakers, the object can be moved or rotated.

PhD student Asier Marzo (PhD 2013) demonstrated the beam to Hollywood actors Ben Stiller, Owen Wilson and Will Ferrell during Spanish TV programme El Hormiguero. The show combines comedy, science and guest interviews, and Stiller used the beam to levitate an object in his infamous Zoolander ‘Blue Steel’ pose. The technique could be developed for a variety of applications, including gripping and transporting drug capsules or microsurgical instruments through living tissue.

Breaking news

Alumni

Political journalist Kenneth Ng King Tsun (MSc 2010) made headlines of his own after winning a Professional Achievement Award in the 2016 Education UK Alumni Awards. Organised by the British Council, the awards honour the achievements of professionals across the globe whose experience of UK higher education has contributed to their success. Ng studied an MSc in International Development thanks to an alumni-funded scholarship from the Bristol University Alumni Association, Hong Kong Branch. Ng says: ‘My professors and classmates enhanced my critical thinking and broadened my vision – crucial for my career as a journalist.’ Ng hosts weekly talk shows, On the Record, one of Hong Kong’s most popular news programmes.
Four years on from London 2012, Andrew Honeyman (BA 1985) and James Cracknell OBE talk about their role in the London 2012 Olympic Legacy and the impact of the Games on the UK.

Andrew Honeyman, Head of Physical Activity and Cultural Quarter at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, outlines how the Games continue to have an impact in the UK.

The most obvious legacy of London 2012 is the change in and around Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in east London. When I compare the area now to how it was when I first visited in 2009, the change is amazing. Anyone can go and swim in the same pool as Michael Phelps and Ellie Simmonds for under a fiver, and thousands of people now live in affordable housing in the former athletes’ village. Work has started on Olympiopolis too – an education and cultural quarter that will include arts venues, museums and university campuses. A community is growing up around the park, so what’s really exciting is that it will be decades before the true legacy story in east London fully emerges.

Companies across the UK won contracts for London 2012: many were small- and medium-sized enterprises that have since gone on to work on other major events abroad, like the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics or Rio 2016. Get Set, our education programme, continues to provide learning resources to schools around the country, and the legacy charity, Spirit of 2012, funds community-led sports and arts projects.

My colleague Heather Sinclair (BSc 2002) and I are the last two members of the legacy team, and we are involved with the government’s preparations for Rio 2016. It’s hard to say what the legacy for Brazil will be, but I’m sure it will be a great Games and there’ll be something that will really surprise everyone!

Hannah Mills (Diploma 2012)

Olympics debutant Hannah Mills won Team GB’s first medal in the women’s 470 dinghy in London 2012. But deciding whether to compete again in Rio wasn’t all plain sailing.

“At first, I was absolutely gutted to win silver in London. We were guaranteed a medal: our final race was a battle for gold, and the disappointment passed. Then, the high was undoubtedly the best feeling I’ve ever experienced.

Sailing is a big sport in Brazil, and includes some of their best medal hopes, so media coverage will be high. The venue is right in Copacabana Beach, with the statue of Christ the Redeemer just behind. I’m looking forward to the regatta being the centrepiece of the Games. Usually our venue is far outside the host city. Be sure to watch all of our boats – we’ve qualified for 12 events (of 14) for the Olympics and all four in the Paralympics, the best of any nation.

Rowing is Great Britain’s most continuously successful Olympic sport. And Sir David Tanner CBE, British Rowing’s Performance Director, has been at the helm since 1996.

During my first year at Bristol, I used to row from the old boathouse at Salford, cycling to and from Wilks Hall five or six times a week. In my second year, I offered my coaching services to Clifton College and took the under 16 squad to regattas on the Thames that I raced at in school. When they began to win some ‘post, I discovered I had some talent for coaching, and went on to coach the men’s four at the 1990 Moscow Olympics.

I knew Sir Steve [Redgrave CBE] and James [Cracknell OBE] well before I became British Rowing’s Performance Director (PD). I saw Team Leader for Rowing for the 1992 and 1996 Olympics, as well as the World Championships in between, while being head of a big London comprehensive school. Since 1996, lottery funding has been a game-changer for the sport: we are now the envy of the world, thanks to the British public. Katherine [Grainger CBE]’s first year in international rowing was 1997, and my first as PD, so we’ve developed our careers alongside each other. Sir Steve, Janes and Katherine are all ‘standout’ people with a massive will to win. That doesn’t always make them easy to work with: they’re strong-minded, ambitious, and uncompromising in their aims. But they’re also great to work with: they want the best, and have an innate competitive spirit.

I’m probably most proud of launching our talent recruitment programme, Start, in 2002. Start employs coaches across the UK to find future rowers, most of whom have never thought of rowing. At London 2012, five of our two Olympic champions learnt to row through Start. We still need to find more coaches though and, particularly in the university sector, unlock the potential of our massive pool of students.

After London 2012, our biggest challenge will be defending our position at the world’s leading rowing nations. All the competition is after us and ‘winning after winning’ is always our aim. We are always ambitious with our targets, but we try not to be too tied to numbers. For London, our Olympic target was six, and we won nine (from 14 events), our Paralympic target was one or two and we won one (four times). It takes a lot of rowers to win the medals we won in London, and it’s hard to be too precise. It is simply beautiful and we’ll be racing in a natural lake bound by Ipanema and Copacabana Beaches, with the statue of Christ the Redeemer just behind. I’m looking forward to the regatta being the centrepiece of the Games. Usually our venue is far outside the host city. Be sure to watch all of our boats – we’ve qualified for 12 events (of 14) for the Olympics and all four in the Paralympics, the best of any nation.
Dr Matthew Brown

Hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games is a chance for Brazil to assert itself on the global stage. Dr Matthew Brown, Reader in Latin American Studies, looks more closely at the attention the country is receiving in the global media.

In the closing ceremony of London 2012, Brazil presented itself to the world as fun, at one with its history and peoples, and ready to welcome hundreds of thousands of sports fans: a young, upbeat country at the cutting edge of global economic development. There was something of reality in that picture, but it was also a conscious construction, a ‘myth of nation’ at the cutting edge of global economic development. Brazil has lost a lot of the international status it dreamed of when it first bid to host the World Cup and the Olympic Games.

Many people living in Brazil won’t see the Games as important as a football World Cup: football is their main sport after all. But we often forget that Brazil has just as long a tradition in sports like rowing and sailing as we do here in the UK. Other Olympic sports, like athletics or golf, don’t have such big trajectories, and the construction of a golf course in an area of natural beauty has justifiably been the subject of much political and environmental debate. History shows that the authorities can get away with almost anything for football, but do it for golf, and people take notice.

Sport has been part of Brazil’s national identity since it became independent from colonial rule in 1822, and the Games are an ideal opportunity for the world to learn more about the country’s history, culture and society. More than 50 of our Modern Languages students will be in Rio in August, working, studying or visiting, and will gain fantastic experience and knowledge of the Brazil – beyond the PR spectacle.

Misha Glenny (BA 1980)

Journalist Misha Glenny spent three months living in Rocinha, the largest slum in Latin America, to research his latest book, Narcos: One Man and the Battle for Rio. He explains how the situation in Brazil is growing increasingly tense ahead of the Games.

Rio’s slums are hazardous: it was a struggle to suffer for just three months the indignities that its residents cope with their whole lives. I rented a room the size of a prison cell with only one luxury: its own toilet. But the heat and the humidity made every day tough. The downpours were biblical and when the floods came, humancrement spilled out of the open sewers. The smell was vile and the noise incessant: dogs barking, couples arguing, gargantuan rats – a rat-tat-tatting of gasps exchanged fire with the police.

Although not too closely examined in the media, Brazil has been in the midst of a monumental political, economic and constitutional crisis for several months. This has led to near complete gridlock in government as President Dilma Rousseff’s very own political allies in Congress seek to have her impeached on grounds of fiddling the budget statistics to improve her image. The man who inaugurated the proceedings is himself under suspicion of fraud and money-laundering. All this is taking place as the Federal Police and the Public Prosecutor are investigating what may turn out to be the largest corruption scandal in history. The complex case involves the payment by construction companies for contracts handed out by the state–controlled oil company, Petrobras, who then hand over the funds onto political parties, most importantly President Rousseff’s Workers’ Party.

This perfect storm has been crowned by the Zika virus, first sweeping across the country six months before Rio was due to host the Games. It is a uniquely terrifying blight, proliferating at lightning speed and affecting the human race at perhaps our most vulnerable point: species reproduction.

Having spent many months in Brazil, I have grown used to how the country manages its many mega sporting, leisure and religious events by cobbling everything together, as well as supporting a culture of suspicion of fraud and money-laundering. This is our term lifestyle.

To hear from other alumni looking ahead to the Games, including hockey player Jo Leigh (BA 2015) and England rugby sevens captain Tom Mitchell (BA 2013), please visit bristol.ac.uk/nonesuch

The road to Rio
Crisis point

Last year, film producer Samantha Chitty (BA 2008) travelled to the refugee camps in Calais to deliver and distribute much-needed supplies. She shares her experience with Dr Jon Fox, joint Head of the University’s Migration Research Group.

Samantha Chitty (SC) For weeks, I had been reading harrowing stories of refugees escaping war-torn countries and making perilous journeys across Europe, only to find themselves living in appalling conditions, without any guarantee of asylum. I felt compelled to help.

Dr Jon Fox (JF) The current refugee crisis has certainly grown in complexity and intensity since last summer. With no end in sight, the situation has become increasingly desperate, both for those remaining in conflict zones and for those leaving. And as more and more refugees flee, the conditions in camps like those in Calais will only become even more straitened.

SC My experience was as shocking as I could have imagined. Almost post-apocalyptic. I was with a volunteer who had basic first aid skills, and we were approached every few minutes for help. A teenage boy who had tried to commit suicide even asked if we could redress the wounds on his wrists. They’re hopeless and fearful: some of them could have imagined, almost post-apocalyptic.

JF That’s true, and clearly the media and politicians play a huge role in what most people know about the situation. This was brought home by the images of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi in the press last August. Those images drew the world’s attention to the crisis, and not only influenced ordinary people’s reactions, but also the actions of governments. It was difficult for most people to be unmoved, though that doesn’t mean they feel ready to allow large numbers of refugees into their countries.

SC Especially when the media run stories about economic migrants ‘window shopping’ countries with the best social services. But I can’t believe anyone would leave the place and people they love to live on an inhospitable piece of land, where they’re only guaranteed one meal a day and have no access to medical care—not unless their alternative is much much worse.

JF Many people are either uninformed or simply uninformed. As academics, we certainly have a role to play in helping to paint a more balanced picture. We can supply the public and the media with unbiased factual evidence so they better understand the dynamics, causes and consequences of refugee flows, and help policymakers and NGOs make informed decisions on how to deal with them.

SC I do understand people’s concerns. Here in the UK, we’re not a big country and our social services are already stretched. But I don’t believe we can stand by while people freeze and starve to death. In my mind, as a democratic country, it’s our duty to protect people seeking asylum on our doorstep.

JF Of course, but receiving societies will always face important challenges in accommodating refugees. That’s partly because of policies that restrict employment and residency possibilities for asylum seekers: they place a burden on the state (and sometimes, local charities) to provide refugees with basic services, often at considerable cost and for a lengthy waiting period. But most refugees do have skills that can contribute to the local economy. One reason Germany has been more receptive than other European countries is that it sees refugees as one possible long-term fix to their demographic problem: an ageing population that puts a strain on the welfare state. Refugees come from all backgrounds, but it’s often those with skills, knowledge and experience who are more likely to migrate. Those who are most socio-economically disadvantaged simply aren’t able to migrate, even when circumstances are dire. Integrating refugees is not without its challenges, but time and again countries have risen to those challenges.

SC Sometimes I think the press is more interested in printing stories than the truth. I read an article recently that said refugees in Europe were living the life of Riley. You only need to see photos to know that’s not true, and many of the people I met were suffering post-traumatic stress disorder after what they’ve experienced in their home countries.

JF That’s certainly been a shift in public mood since last summer, due to changing media coverage, political indifference, and events that threaten to turn the tide of opinion against the refugees, like the assaults in Cologne. But the basic problem will remain until there’s a place for refugees to go. What we need is a global, co-ordinated response with more equitable distribution of refugees not only throughout Europe but across the world.

SC Absolutely. The people helping in Calais are locals or unpaid volunteers: they just don’t have the experience or training to deal with a humanitarian crisis on this scale. But without their help, those refugees simply won’t survive.

JF My colleagues and I in the Migration Research Group have been working with Bristol City Council, the Students’ Union and Bristol STAR (Student Action for Refugees), to resettle refugees and their families here. The main challenge is providing sufficient support: not just access to housing and employment, but also legal assistance, language courses, education and psychological counselling. We’re also helping the University establish a refugee scholarship scheme to meet the higher education needs and aspirations of those we welcome to Bristol, and expect to have this in place by September.

SC I certainly hope to volunteer again: even for a day or two, you can make a real difference and it’s an incredibly rewarding experience.

To read more about Samantha’s volunteering with Help Refugees, or find out more about the work of the Migration Research Group, please visit bristol.ac.uk/nonesuch.
Saturday 23 April 2016 marked the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare’s death. *Nonesuch* unearths a wealth of memorabilia in the University’s Theatre Collection, and former and current students explain how the world’s greatest playwright has touched their lives and work.

**Jo Elsworth**
Director, University of Bristol Theatre Collection

With Shakespeare being such a key part of our theatrical heritage, and featuring in many of the Theatre Collection’s holdings (particularly the London Old Vic, Bristol Old Vic and Shakespeare at the Tobacco Factory archive), it was difficult to decide how best to mark his 400th anniversary.

Our current exhibition of memorabilia, *Shakespearabilia*, shows how Shakespeare’s image has endured. Most of the likenesses we are familiar with today are drawn from just two portraits: the ‘Chandos’ portrait, painted between 1600 and 1610 and named after its owner, the Duke of Chandos (attributed to John Taylor) and an engraving by Martin Droeshout that features as the frontispiece to the collected works of Shakespeare (the First Folio), published in 1623. Memorials at Holy Trinity Church (see image overleaf), Stratford-upon-Avon, and in Poets’ Corner, Westminster Abbey, have also endured as recognisable images of Shakespeare.

No one is certain how accurate these depictions are, but the images have remained relatively unchanged and even influenced popular culture, appearing on everyday items from shoehorns to beer bottles and tea bags.

Most of the objects in the exhibition come from the Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson Collection, acquired in 2011. The collection is a lifetime’s work of two actors, who first met in a production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in the late 1930s, and formed a personal and professional partnership that lasted until Mander’s death in 1983. Many of the exhibition items are on public display for the first time.

Running alongside *Shakespearabilia* is a display by MA History of Art students focusing on unexpected productions of *Hamlet*. As an accredited museum and one of the world’s largest collections dedicated to British theatre history, we hope our activity will pique visitors’ interest and show that there are many different ways to think about Shakespeare.

*Shakespearabilia* will run until Saturday 10 September. For more information, please visit bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection.
Dr Anna Farthing (BA 1987)
Visitor in Residence in the School of Arts, and a creative producer in performance and heritage

I was extremely fortunate to access the Theatre Collection during my undergraduate degree. From studying stuff I understood how creativity is stored in material things. My work in performance and heritage is informed by that early experience, as is my approach to Shakespeare.

I have directed productions of A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Pride and Prejudice and I was a board member of the Bristol Shakespeare Festival, which programmes performances in various parks each July. But my habit of rummaging in archives has also led to a fascination with how Shakespeare’s life and work can resonate across time and space.

As a trainee director at the National Theatre in the 1990s, I worked with Emily Watson (right) on The Two Lady Aunts at the Queen’s Theatre by Chikamatsu (1635-1725), translated in blank verse by Peter Oswald. Familiarity with Shakespeare helped both actors and audiences to access the story, recognising Jacobean themes within the Japanese setting.

Later I wrote an imaginary meeting between Shakespeare and actor-manager Isabella Adriennis (1562-1604), who led the Company of the Comici Gelosi. Adriennis improvised in several languages in the tradition of commedia dell’arte and toured Europe at a time when women were still banned from the English stage.

Most recently I created Hamlet at the National Theatre of Germany in 2002, and at The Donmar Warehouse in London in 2002, and at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. I remember vividly the heartache of in poetry. However many times I heard it, it was still a sucker punch. I hope I’ll play Shakespeare again one day.

Emily Watson OBE (BA 1988, MA 2003)
Actor

Shakespeare was a big part of my life growing up: my grandmother and mother had a quote for everything. When I was seven, my parents took me to see a Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) production of As You Like It. I was enthralled. Shortly after that, I saw Judi Dench in Much Ado About Nothing and nearly stopped the show laughing at my head off.

Studying English at Bristol, I played Beatrice in Much Ado to Matthew Waters’ BA (1988, Hon DLitt 2000) Benedick. He’s a director now [at London’s Old Vic], but he’s also a fine actor and very funny.

At drama school, I really began to engage with the language of Shakespeare. I learned how the rhythm and structure of his blank verse gives you all the clues you need to play any of his characters.

I joined the RSC on a ‘play as a cast contract, where you play whatever’s thrown at you – for two years, it was mainly speak-carrying and wenching. But I got to understand some great actors and learned a tremendous amount.

Most importantly, I met my husband John Waters. Although he’s no longer an actor, we’ve always shared a love of theatre. Our daughter is called Isidora.

Since those early days, I’ve had a long career in film and TV, but I also got to play Viola in Sam Mendes’ production of Twelfth Night at the Donmar Warehouse in London in 2002, and at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. I remember vividly the heartache of in poetry. However many times I heard it, it was still a sucker punch. I hope I’ll play Shakespeare again one day.

On stage and screen

More alumni bringing Shakespeare to life

Classical stage and TV actor Tim Pigott-Smith (BA 1967, Hon DLitt 2008) has appeared in 18 Shakespeare plays.

Adrian Noble (BA 1972, Hon DLitt 1996), former Artistic Director at the RSC, won the Globe Award for Best Director for The Winter’s Tale in 1993.

Greg Doran (BA 1980, Hon DLitt 2011) took up the reins as Artistic Director of the RSC in January 2013.


John Heffernan (BA 2003) recently played the title role in a diane version of Macbeth at London’s Young Vic.

Kieron Mieres (BA 2013)
Third-year English student

I read Hamlet at school, and didn’t really understand it; it was like a foreign language. But I came to appreciate that it all boils down to Shakespeare’s understanding of human nature.

It’s amazing, the way he achieves such empathy for such a wide range of people. I feel as if I have to live a thousand lifetimes to get under the skin of someone like the 9-year-old Ophelia in Hamlet, who turns between her father’s betrothed, her brother and her lover, and learns at first experience of love ends in heartbreak and insanity.

Shakespeare takes people as they come. He doesn’t judge; his characters aren’t solely defined by their religion, or politics, or philosophy—they’re complicated, conflicted and real. Then he sets them aside and leaves them in their own. The more you study Shakespeare, the more open you become to other points of view.

You get different things from reading and watching the plays. Reading’s much more contemplative; a performance, you get washed into the world of the play. Love’s Labour’s Lost at Shakespeare’s Globe last year, and people actually farted. It wasn’t the violence so much as the raw emotion of the characters was so visceral. It’s astonishing that a 400-year-old play can have that effect on a modern audience.

I’ve had some great tutors, particularly Dr Laurence Publicover, who has encouraged me to question the Aristotelian definition of the tragic hero as victim. Take Macbeth, for example. Yes, he’s unlucky— he’s a gun for a mediocre world; his wife is plotting against him. He lives in a society where murder is a normal method of advancement. But he’s also ambitious, and a villain.

Studying Shakespeare has enabled me to take a step back and think about what makes other people tick. That’s never going to leave me.

Robin Belfield (BA 2001)
Director and RSC Young People’s Performance Developer

I work with schools and theatres to develop teachers as directors. I help them explore Shakespeare’s plays from a performance perspective, engaging young people as actors rather than scholars of the texts.

This work feeds into a unique co-production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream: A Play for the Nation (also known as dream2016) between the RSC and amateur companies across the UK to celebrate Shakespeare’s anniversary. At 14 venues, the professional cast will be joined by amateur actors playing the parts of the mechanicals (the six characters who perform the play within the play), and schoolchildren in Titania’s fairy train. As part of dream2016, I worked with 42 schools and theatre companies on a shortened version of the play, The Dream. Students from six different regions rehersed a section of the play, and came together to perform at their local theatres in March. Some of those students from each region will then perform at the RSC’s Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon in July.

Many of the youngsters I work with are new to Shakespeare and have no preconceptions. But I also meet those who think the plays are difficult or boring, and it’s a challenge to get them to open their minds. The easiest way to do this is to get them to speak the words out loud.

There are lots of ideas for the performer in the text: the trick is to find them.

I love rediscovering Shakespeare through performance—a task I think I know well becomes fresh in the mouth of a different actor. But the real reward is to help a young person connect with the language and watch them speak it with confidence and feeling.

Belfield worked with young students in West Yorkshire on A Midsummer Night’s Dream

Above Drawing for a model of the Globe Playhouse by William Powell, first analysed by Martin White, Emeritus Professor in the Department of Drama. Professor White has published extensively on Shakespeare and theatre practice, and worked as an adviser to the Globe reconstruction.
Major Tim Peake has captured the public’s imagination with his adventures aboard the International Space Station. But for one Bristol graduate, following Peake’s preparations felt like déjà vu. Air Commodore Nigel Wood CBE (BSc 1971) explains how, 30 years ago, he very nearly became Britain’s first astronaut.

In 1981, my young family and I watched the first Space Shuttle land on Earth. As we watched history being made, the shuttle gliding gracefully out of the sky in front of us, I had no idea that two years later I’d get a call asking me to join the first group of British astronauts. I thought it was a spoof.

I was a Royal Air Force (RAF) pilot at the time. I’d followed in my father’s footsteps and had a pilot’s licence before I could even drive a car. I never dreamt of being an astronaut. The Apollo 11 mission (Neil Armstrong’s moon landing) happened while I was at Bristol and I was just as in awe as everyone else. It was the pinnacle of aerospace engineering – and adventure – at the time, but too far removed from life as a student for me to imagine myself there.

I never saw myself as academic. But when I left school in 1967, I was accepted onto the RAF graduate scheme, on the condition I went to university. I got an open scholarship on Bristol’s Aeronautical Engineering course. It was the era of student protest, sit-ins, student marches and heated debates: a baptism of social and political engagement that was as much a part of my education as my lectures in the Queen’s Building. I was lucky to have Dr David Birdsall as my tutor. He encouraged us to look beyond the confines of the syllabus, and the limitations of our work. Unbeknown to me at the time, that work would lead me into test flying and research – and, in 1986, to within an inch of going into space.

After being posted to Germany, and then the Edwards Air Force Base in California, Houston was an exciting place to work. In 1984, the Space Shuttle was still new. I’ve never seen such focused engineering talent: these guys could literally fly you to the moon. My daughters were saying: ‘Daddy is going to be an astronaut.’ Television crews were setting up in our back garden.

There were four of us on the team: myself, Commander Peter Longhurst RN, Major Richard Farrimond R Signals and Chris Holmes. The Ministry of Defence had ordered a new generation of communication satellites, Skynet 4, and we were to launch the first two on separate Space Shuttle missions.

I was selected for the first Skynet mission, and had 12 months to train and prepare. It only took about 17 weeks to learn how to live and work on the shuttle – the best fun was our zero gravity training, experiencing how to work in weightlessness. I spent the rest of my time preparing secondary experiments from UK research establishments. They covered everything from human physiology and the use of adhesives in space to the effects of cosmic rays on equipment.

The launch was scheduled for 24 June 1986, but fate had other ideas. On 28 January, five months before I was due to blast into space, Space Shuttle Challenger exploded a minute after take-off. We lost friends and colleagues. We carried on preparing, but our mission was put on hold and eventually cancelled. The satellite was later launched on a Titan rocket. With the shuttle programme grounded, I went back to my day job of test flying, and later became the RAF’s Chief Test Pilot. I retired from flying in 2003 and now work as a freelance photographer.

Space flight is still in its infancy: it’s uncertain and hazardous. People will look back and say: ‘Wow, they flew in those old things!’ We were carrying the flag for Britain in space in 1986 but were sadly halted by the Challenger disaster.

The story picked up again five years later, when Helen Sharman joined the Russian Mir Space Station to become the first Briton in space in 1991, but that was without UK government backing. Now Major Tim Peake has finally got there – but it’s taken 30 years. I couldn’t be more thrilled for him. Good luck to him and his successors! •
In 1995, after lying dormant for more than 300 years, the Soufrière Hills Volcano on the small Caribbean island of Montserrat, a British Overseas Territory, erupted. For the next five years, it sent fast-moving gas and rock flows across the island, and, in 1997, buried the capital city, Plymouth, under metres of debris. More than 8,000 people – two-thirds of the island’s population – were forced to leave their homes.

The disaster prompted the British government to call on Professor Steve Sparks, from the School of Earth Sciences at the University of Bristol, for help. Sparks’ knowledge of how volcanoes behave – and, just as importantly, how they might behave – proved crucial for co-ordinating the effective evacuation of the island’s residents.

Today, the Soufrière Hills Volcano has become one of the most important and best-studied eruptions of its type, and more than 20 years later, the research Sparks and his colleagues embarked on in Montserrat still underpins the longest-running and most sophisticated volcanic risk assessment of its kind.

Sparks and his colleagues in Bristol’s Volcanology Research Group, headed by Professor Katharine Cashman, AXA Chair in Volcanology, now represent one of the largest and most successful volcanology groups in the world. Last year, Sparks won the Vetlesen Prize (the Nobel Prize of the Earth sciences) for his contribution to the field, and in November, the group received the prestigious Queen’s Anniversary Prize for Higher Education in recognition of their outstanding research.

The group works closely with researchers from a range of other disciplines, including engineering, mathematics, history and social sciences, within the University’s Cabot Institute. Co-founded by Sparks in 2010, the Cabot Institute brings together world-class expertise to tackle some of the most pressing environmental challenges affecting how we live with, depend on and adapt to our planet.

‘Our work falls broadly into two categories: hazard and risk,’ explains Professor Cashman. ‘For us, the terms have quite different meanings. “Hazard” describes fundamental volcanic processes – the probability of an eruption, the direction of lava flow or the volume of gas emissions. “Risk” occurs when those hazards intersect with people – with local, regional and global populations.’

The two categories are, of course, intrinsically linked: only by carrying out fundamental, curiosity-driven research can the team begin to understand the impact natural hazards have on life above the surface.

Other than meteors, volcanic eruptions are the only natural hazards to have potentially global consequences. But how much do we really know about what triggers an eruption, or what those consequences might be? Two world-leading volcanologists in the University’s Cabot Institute explain.

By Catherine Treble

Left The Soufrière Hills Volcano on Montserrat, venting an ash and steam plume on 17 October 2009

The UK does have a volcano problem: it’s called Iceland

Professor Katharine Cashman

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So, what makes a volcano erupt? 'That’s the question children always ask when they learn about volcanoes,’ says Cashman, ‘and it’s very difficult to answer. One of the biggest challenges is that what triggers an eruption happens where we can’t see it.

However, volcanology is undergoing a scientific revolution, and the techniques we apply to our research are rapidly changing. We used to think that volcanoes such as the Yellowstone Calderas in the US produced large eruptions from a “vat” of melt below the surface. Recently this view has changed. We now view magmatic systems as vertically extensive and transiently connected regions of melt and (mostly) crystals, or solid particles. In fact, the magmas chambers that feed volcanoes may be as much as two miles deep and ice and snow similar in density. Importantly, ‘mush’ is likely to produce different geophysical signals than melt, and thus we are rethinking our interpretations of volcano monitoring data.

Working collaboratively to decipher how all aspects of the volcanic system interact—and respond to changes in the external environment—the group uses a combination of laboratory studies, geophysical and geological observations and satellite data. Additionally, studies that might once have been the preserve of volcanologists, petrologists or geophysicists now more often include experts from other disciplines too.

‘Collaborating across disciplines helps us learn about these systems as a whole and see how different pieces fit together,’ Cashman explains. ‘For example, we are working with statisticians on the probability of eruptions, and with applied mathematicians on the behaviour of lava flows, mudflows and volcanic plumes. We’re also working with atmospheric scientists on the climatic impacts of eruptions, with social scientists on risk assessment and communication, and with historians on past eruptions.’

Can we predict when an eruption will occur? Typically, before a volcano erupts, the ground may swell, and migrating magma may trigger tiny earthquakes and release gases. Scientists have used ground-based monitoring for a number of years to detect these subtle changes, but researchers at Bristol now measure these small deformations in the Earth’s surface using satellite-based techniques.

For example, Dr Juliet Biggs was studying the East African Rift, a 6,400km trail running through Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania, where she discovered that some of the rift’s 100 volcanoes weren’t as dormant as previously thought. These observations led to a significant grant from the Natural Environment Research Council for further study of the Main Ethiopian Rift—these volcanoes could seriously disrupt the densely populated cities of Addis Ababa and Nairobi, yet until recently, have gone largely unstudied.

In fact, more than 1,000 active volcanoes on and around Iceland erupted in 2010, affecting more than ten million people.*

What happens after an eruption? Satellites aren’t just providing new ways of forecasting natural hazards; they’re also helping to monitor activity after eruptions too.

‘Contrary to what most people believe, the UK does have a volcano problem,’ says Cashman. ‘It’s called Iceland.’ In 2010, Iceland’s largest volcano, Eyjafjallajökull, sent a giant ash cloud across northern Europe, forcing the unprecedented closure of airspace, and costing the aviation and tourism industries hundreds of millions of pounds.

Since then, thanks to a seven-figure grant, Bristol’s Volcanology Research Group has been working closely with the Met Office to increase the UK’s resilience to the hazards posed by Iceland’s volcanoes.

‘We’re helping them better interpret satellite images, improve existing models of volcanic ash plumes, and track how ash is transported before setting off,’ Cashman explains. ‘A volcano can erupt in a number of different ways and produce ash particles that vary in size, density and shape, affecting how ash cloud will be dispersed.’

The potential impact of Icelandic eruptions on the UK extends beyond ash alone. In 1783, for example, a large lava flow eruption generated an acid fog that caused crop failure and increased mortality in many parts of Europe.

‘We’re not just studying volcanic eruptions in Iceland,’ Cashman says, ‘we’re the world, working hard to minimise their impact.’

Global perspective

Bristol has been the driving force for the Global Volcano Model, a free, online resource for researchers, community leaders, politicians and industry, co-founded by Professor Sparks in 2011.

‘The aim is to co-ordinate international activity and create an authoritative source of information,’ he explains. ‘Our aim is to understand how volcanic eruptions affect the world. That data can be useful both for scientists, and for local and regional communities.’

Over the past few years, Bristol has been involved in international discussions encouraging more governments to invest in risk reduction—preventative measures that are sustainable in the long-term—rather than simply ring-fencing money for emergency relief.

‘Governments and policymakers tend not to look beyond the next election cycle,’ says Sparks. ‘But environmental strategies have to be long-term. Natural disasters will happen, and large eruptions can have global consequences years into the future.’

History certainly offers some forbidding examples. In 1815, Indonesia’s Mount Tambora erupted, launching more than 12 cubic miles of dust and rock into the atmosphere, blocking the sun and chilling much of the northern hemisphere. A year later, clothes froze to washing lines in northern America, the highest summer temperature recorded in Spain was 15°C. Crops failed around the globe, and an estimated 70,000 people died from starvation or disease.

‘An eruption on the scale of Tambora in today’s world would be devastating,’ admits Sparks, ‘and there have been even larger eruptions in the past. Yellowstone Caldera gets a lot of headlines. If it were to erupt today, it would cover most of North America and Canada with ash, with huge consequences for the global climate.’

Local impact

Yet even with comprehensive hazard and risk assessments, communicating the risks of an eruption can pose significant and surprising challenges, as social scientists from the Cabot Institute, led by Dr Ryerson Christie, have discovered.

In 2013, Christie and his team conducted hundreds of interviews with people living near Cotopaxi in Ecuador. Their research revealed that most inhabitants had actively relocated to the volcano, believing the area offered them better safety than nearby cities. Existing evacuation procedures also required residents to cross areas depicted as dangerous in folklore, leaving many confused and frustrated about how to respond in an emergency.

Studies like these highlight the importance of taking local knowledge and beliefs into account when devising natural disaster educational tools, and the Volcanology Research Group is currently involved in a pilot project funded by the World Bank to develop jargon-free public information films to help some of the world’s most vulnerable communities.

‘How our work supports emergency management is hugely important,’ says Sparks. ‘It’s about resilience: strengthening the capacity of communities to deal with eruptions when they happen. Yes, at its most fundamental, volcanology is about understanding how our planet works, but it’s also about saving lives and protecting people.

‘Certainly for me, Earth sciences is the most important branch of science in the 21st century. Volcanoes are responsible for our atmosphere, our oceans, and our landformations—and the impact they have on our environment profoundly affects how nine billion of us are able to live on, and adapt to, our changing planet.’

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Last year, Sparks delivered a synopsis of global volcanic risk to the United Nations, forming the basis of their Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. He has also been involved in international discussions encouraging more governments to invest in risk reduction—preventative measures that are sustainable in the long-term—rather than simply ring-fencing money for emergency relief.

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You can find out more about the work of Bristol’s Volcanology Research Group at bristol.ac.uk/volcanology. Professor Sparks and other members of the Cabot Institute will also talk at a panel discussion event, ‘Living with volcanoes in the 21st century’, on Thursday 27 October in the Wills Memorial Building. For more information, please visit bristol.ac.uk/robot/event/16.
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‘Nature is inexhaustible and the process of discovery endless’
Professor Cecil Powell after receiving the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1950
**Feature**

**The Intangibles**

By Nick Riddle

Fighting talk

This is an exciting election to cover, with so many twists and turns,’ says Laura Trevelyan (BSc 1990), an anchor on BBC World News America whose career as a journalist has included covering several UK general elections and, since anchor on BBC World News America whose current affairs. ’After years as a political correspondent covering the vastness of the United States in quite different,’ she says. ‘Here, you have to grasp the differences between the Cuban, Puerto Rican and Dominican vote in the pivotal swing state of Florida, and try to assess what impact President Obama’s reappointment with Cuba may have in November’s election. Quite a change from my days on Spain’s Costa Del Sol interviewing the British expat vote.

But it’s the spectre of the American Dream’s collapse, the urgency that haunts the current electoral landscape and can be heard rattling its chains beneath the media coverage. Americans have always been a practical, problem-solving, optimistic people, but the fact that wages now are stagnant, opportunities seem more limited and costs are rising – that’s definitely a threat to the dream, and there’s a lot of campaign talk about how to reinvigorate it.’ For Trevelyan, both the challenge and the excitement of covering this year’s election is the complete absence of certainty. ‘You simply don’t know what the day will bring – it’s a rollercoaster,’ she says. ‘That race has conventional wisdom turning cartwheels!’ •

**The American Dream is one of the intangibles about the US elections.**

The Guardian

**THE AMERICAN DREAM IS ONE OF THE INTANGIBLES ABOUT AMERICA**

THE AMERICAN DREAM is one of the intangibles about America, certainly,’ suggests Trevelyan. ‘Gun culture is another one that’s pretty hard to explain to an outsider. And I’d say the role of religious faith is much stronger here than in Europe.

Wages now are stagnant, opportunities seem more limited and costs are rising – that’s definitely a threat to the dream, and there’s a lot of campaign talk about how to reinvigorate it.’ For Trevelyan, both the challenge and the excitement of covering this year’s election is the complete absence of certainty. ‘You simply don’t know what the day will bring – it’s a rollercoaster,’ she says. ‘That race has conventional wisdom turning cartwheels!’ •

**Let’s get qualitative**

‘The purpose of our work,’ Cristianini points out, ‘is not to predict but to understand.’ A veritable industry, however, has been built around the desire for accurate predictions about voting behaviour. Needless to say, it works to a tighter deadline.

Political polls now reach a peak of sophistication in the US thanks to statistician Nate Silver, whose carefully weighted methods, partly derived from his nuanced analysis of baseball statistics, proved outstandingly successful in predicting the state-by-state outcomes of the 2008 and 2012 US elections. Not so in the UK, where polls during the 2015 election were so wide of the mark that the British Polling Council launched an inquiry into current practice. ‘We can learn a lot about polling from the US,’ says Deborah Mattinson (LLB 1978), who worked as a pollster for former British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, before co-founding the research consultancy Batts Mattinson. ‘We only do elections every five years, and they do them all the time and spend much more money.’ But, Mattinson argues, the US can also learn from the UK.

Subject-verb-object triplets (such as ‘Romney criticised Obama’ or ‘Obama praised the Senate’), and assigning a weighting for each verb according to the degree of support or opposition it represented.

‘Our analysis could automatically identify the two key parties in this huge network, which confirms that the method works,’ Cristianini says. ‘Everything showed that media reporting in 2012 featured more frequent positive statements about the Democrats than the Republicans, and Republicans had more divisive opinions on issues compared to the Democrats.

In 2012, Nello Cristianini, Professor of Artificial Intelligence, and colleagues in Bristol’s Intelligent Systems Laboratory seized the opportunity to put some advanced algorithms to work. ‘We can use computers to detect sentiment and opinion,’ explains Cristianini. ‘They can analyse text, images, and extract macroscopic patterns and trends that help us better understand the workings of the media.’

The team collected more than 130,000 newspaper articles from American online news outlets, using computers to analyse these articles sentence by sentence, identify

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Cristianini has found this method less successful in the UK. ‘Some of the reasons are easy to deduce: the US is a much larger country, its state-by-state outcomes of the 2008 and 2012 elections. Not so in the UK, where polls during the 2015 election were so wide of the mark that the British Polling Council launched an inquiry into current practice. ‘We can learn a lot about polling from the US,’ says Deborah Mattinson (LLB 1978), who worked as a pollster for former British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, before co-founding the research consultancy Batts Mattinson. ‘We only do elections every five years, and they do them all the time and spend much more money.’ But, Mattinson argues, the US can also learn from the UK.

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‘We use much more sophisticated, qualitative, ethnographic techniques that allow us to get a better understanding of the deeper views and perceptions that influence people’s behaviour at the ballot box,’ she explains. ‘We’re much more interested in “small data”, and more deliberative data.’

In a 2015 collaboration with The Guardian, Battleground Britain, Mattinson and her colleagues set up a 50-strong panel of swing voters in five marginal constituencies to get a deeper understanding of how this key group of voters thought and felt about the UK election. Among the methods they employed was the relatively new approach of mobile ethnography, in which participants use their mobile phones to collect data and share their opinions and feelings ‘in the moment’.

Hundreds of hours of focus groups, workshops and mobile usage later, the findings suggested that the Conservatives won over the swing voters because they were perceived as having the most attractive personality and sincerity – qualities that Labour too often lacked – in addition to a clear message.

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Sir Jeremy Morse KCMG (Hon LLD 1989), former University Chancellor, died February 2016, aged 88

Sir Jeremy Morse KCMG, Chancellor of the University of Bristol between 1989 and 2003, was widely regarded as the most successful senior banker of his generation and was the inspiration for Colin Dexter’s fictional detective. In 1975, he was made KCMG for his contribution to international discussions aimed at creating a more stable banking environment. Sir Jeremy was also a chess expert, and a lover of poetry and brain teasers.

You can read an extended and moving tribute to Sir Jeremy, written by Sir John Kingman FRS, former Vice-Chancellor, at bristol.ac.uk/alumni/inmemoriam.
Everyone can leave a legacy

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