



Falmer

The University of Sussex magazine

N° 57

04 / NEWS Events, developments and milestones at Sussex.

14 / PEOPLE Product designer Lucy Hughes, community change-maker Réjane Woodroffe, social entrepreneur Mamunur Rahman, actor Bertie Carvel.

26 / FEATURES A closer look at cancer care, new uses for an ancient enzyme and transitioning to the new normal. **40 / FORWARD AND BACK**

Collaborative projects and mentoring with students and alumni, arts centre memories, recent books and podcasts.

Falmer Magazine

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The Editor is keen to hear readers' views of the magazine and welcomes articles, news and photographs, although publication cannot be guaranteed.

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Welcome

In the past year the changes and challenges have come thick and fast and, along with the rest of the world, our Sussex community has been adapting to working in different ways.

Overleaf, Vice-Chancellor Professor Adam Tickell sends you a heartfelt message of thanks and emphasises the significance of the University's civic responsibilities in contributing to local and global efforts against the pandemic.

Our research features focus on improved care and quality-of-life for cancer patients, opportunities for a sustainable new normal, and 'blue skies' biochemistry that is now translating into potential treatments for a number of deadly diseases.

Sussex students share their views on taking part in a pioneering placement programme in Malaysia and, in the UK, our Role Models are engaging secondary school pupils in conversations around difficult topics.

Before and during lockdown, we talked to award-winning alumni about their work and their passions: Réjane Woodroffe discusses setting up – and scaling up – the Bulungula Incubator in rural South Africa, and Bertie Carvel reveals all about his acting career, including the small part played by Sussex. Read how Lucy Hughes has developed a sustainable alternative to plastic packaging, and find out how Mamunur Rahman flexed his garment factory alliance to produce face masks in Bangladesh.

Today, the world of work is rapidly changing and we're lucky to have thousands of Sussex alumni volunteering to help our newest graduates. We talk to two such volunteers who give their time to help others.

I hope you enjoy the latest edition. As always, it's a truly collaborative effort from many Sussex people.

Let us know what you think!

Sally





04 / UNIVERSITY NEWS Keeping you up-to-date with the latest events and initiatives.
08 / SUSSEX FIRSTS Seven highlights demonstrate the University's history of taking bold new steps.
10 / TIME WELL SPENT How a pioneering placement scheme in Malaysia is giving students an immersive, international work experience.

26 / CANCER CARE How psycho-oncology helps cancer patients and health professionals to work together on key decisions around treatments and quality-of-life. **30 / RESEARCH NEWS** Rewilding and climate change, Parkinson's breakthrough, a nuclear waste solution and more.
34 / PLAYING THE LONG GAME How decades of blue-skies research on the alternative oxidase is now being applied to potential therapies for deadly diseases. **37 / THE NEW NORMAL** Why the Covid-19 pandemic could present an opportunity to build a more ecologically minded and fairer world.



14 / LUCY HUGHES Creating sustainable packaging from fish waste. **16 / RÉJANE WOODROFFE** Making a difference in rural South Africa.
19 / MAMUNUR RAHMAN Social entrepreneur responding to Covid-19. **22 / BERTIE CARVEL** Award-winning actor and activist.
24 / ALUMNI NEWS Career milestones, community heroes, new ventures and awards.

40 / A LITTLE MORE CONVERSATION An alumna and student share their experience of being Role Model volunteers and helping young people in schools. **42 / ARTS CENTRE MEMORIES** Highlights and memories to celebrate 50 years of the Gardner Arts Centre and Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts. **44 / MENTORING MATTERS** Sussex Connect members share their mentoring stories and motivations for getting involved in volunteering.
47 / ALUMNI LIBRARY A selection of alumni-authored books and broadcasts from the past year.
48 / HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU Nearly 12,000 of you responded to our 2019 alumni survey. Find out more about your alumni community.



From the Vice-Chancellor

The world has endured so much in the past few months. Our lives have been profoundly changed in ways that seemed unimaginable not long ago. My thoughts go out to those members of the extended Sussex family who have been directly affected by Covid-19.

The pandemic has brought into sharp focus the fragility of our daily lives and the paramount importance of community. Amid the constant stream of devastating headlines, we have also seen extraordinary acts of kindness and care that have given us reasons for hope. Many of these examples have come from our very own Sussex community – our staff, students, alumni and supporters – who have responded with characteristic compassion.

I was particularly heartened by the generous response from alumni around the world to the Emergency Sussex Fund Hardship Appeal, which we launched in response to a sharp rise in the number of students facing genuine hardship. I am grateful to everyone who has already donated. You have helped us increase the level of financial support we are able to provide to students, just when their need is greatest.

As vital sources of new intellectual knowledge and creative solutions, universities have been at the forefront of global efforts to develop new treatments and vaccines, and are the source of the evidence-based research that informs policymakers and the public.

At Sussex, our civic responsibility has never had greater significance. Testament to our long tradition of experimentation and innovation – and underpinned by our deep commitment to social justice – Sussex is contributing to local, national and global efforts against the pandemic. For instance, our Business School is advising on food security and the impacts on supply chains, and our Life Sciences academics are contributing to Covid-19 international drug development research. In turn, colleagues in Mathematics have been modelling options for controlling the spread of coronavirus and researchers in Psychology are advising the government to ensure any interventions take into account latest advances in social and crowd psychology.

While we are yet to understand the full impact of the pandemic in the Higher Education sector, and we still have difficult decisions and challenges ahead, the Sussex ethos, values and commitment to making the world a better place will be our guiding principles and continue to inform everything we do.

We look forward to welcoming you back to our beautiful campus and to resuming our in-person alumni engagement activities around the world as soon as is feasible. In the meantime, the safety and wellbeing of our Sussex community – our staff, students, alumni and supporters – will remain our utmost priority.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in Sussex.

PROFESSOR ADAM TICKELL

News in brief

Alumna returns as visiting Professor

Sussex is delighted to welcome **AWARD-WINNING BROADCASTER AND AUTHOR**, Claudia Hammond (Psychology 1990), to the new role of Visiting Professor for the Public Understanding of Psychology. This appointment builds on Claudia's reputation for championing the public understanding of psychology and neuroscience.

Alumni discount for online Masters courses

We're happy to announce that we're now offering our alumni **20% OFF OUR ONLINE MASTERS COURSES**. Start at a time that suits you. Learn at your own pace. This is your chance to embrace new ways of learning and broaden your career options. Find out more at www.sussex.ac.uk/alumni/community

Law clinic success

Under the supervision of qualified solicitor Rustom Tata (Law 1984), law students Deirdre Tinney and Monique Wagner, from Sussex's free Employment Law Clinic, **HELPED A LOCAL MOTHER WHO WAS UNLAWFULLY SACKED** whilst on maternity leave. The mother won her case at tribunal and was awarded £30,000 in compensation.

We are international

Furthering our **COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONALISATION**, Sussex, in partnership with Zhejiang Gongshang University, is establishing the first joint institution in China and delivering AI degrees. The Sussex Artificial Intelligence Institute, Zhejiang Gongshang University will deliver collaborative teaching programmes for both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

Coming together for 60 years

September 2021 marks the launch of **UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX'S 60TH-ANNIVERSARY REUNION**. We're inviting all alumni to get involved in this weekend of events, celebrations and reminiscences. Further details will be shared in due course, so make sure your details are up-to-date on alumni.sussex.ac.uk



HONORARY AWARD

Celebrating our Chancellor: a surprise for Sanjeev

During the 2019 summer graduation ceremonies, we celebrated the tenth year of actor and comedian Sanjeev Bhaskar OBE serving as our Chancellor. To Sanjeev's surprise, after shaking the hands of thousands of 2019 graduates, on the final day of ceremonies he also received an honorary doctorate.

After a decade of congratulating, hugging and dancing with new Sussex graduates, it was Sanjeev's turn. As a part of the celebrations, we asked alumni who had crossed the stage with Sanjeev over the past decade to send in their memories and photos, which can now be found on the alumni web pages.

Receiving his honorary doctorate, Sanjeev said: "This experience of being Chancellor, and particularly at Sussex, is the gift that keeps giving because it's one of the greatest privileges of my life."



EMERGENCY SUPPORT

Our values in practice: the kindness of the Sussex community

At the height of the Covid-19 lockdown, Sussex alumni and friends came forward with characteristic kindness and compassion to offer help to those students most affected by the pandemic.

The Emergency Sussex Fund Hardship Appeal received donations from more than 400 people in the Sussex community within the first month, offering a lifeline to more than 100 students facing financial crisis.

Moreover, Santander Universities UK has allowed us to redirect

unspent funds from their earlier gift to support student mental health and wellbeing. They have also made an additional donation to create paid summer internships in local businesses for students.

The full impact of the pandemic on our students will not be known for some time but the kindness shown to them by the wider Sussex community has already made a difference to hundreds of students in their hour of need.

To lend your support, visit www.sussex.ac.uk/alumni/covidresponsefund



The kindness shown by the wider Sussex community has already made a difference to hundreds of students.



SOCIAL JUSTICE

I am a person because you are a person: learning from a South African freedom fighter

Justice Albie Sachs (Sociology 1967) returned to campus for our **11th annual Draper Lecture** and got involved in numerous activities, including a moot with law students, a student podcast, attending the launch of the Society for Southern & East African Students, and hosting a benefit dinner for Sussex's Mandela Scholarship Fund.

Albie Sachs first came to Sussex after being exiled from South Africa due to his involvement in the freedom movement. He continued to champion human rights and social justice globally and, following the end of apartheid, returned to South Africa in 1990.

In his Draper Lecture, which was introduced with a moving speech from South African MA student Mpinane Puleng Senkhane, Albie traced his remarkable journey and explained how his experience at Sussex shaped his thinking on social justice. He also spoke about the South African concept of Ubuntu: "I am a person because you are a person. I consecrate my humanity from acknowledging your humanity, embracing human interdependence."

NEW STUDENT CENTRE

Learn to transform: the future of the student experience

East Slope contractors Balfour Beatty have been working on the shell of a landmark new Student Centre for Sussex, which was handed over to the University in March 2020.

The Student Centre forms part of our initiatives to transform the Sussex student experience. Opening in spring 2021, the Student Centre will be the go-to place for students to access face-to-face services, information, advice and guidance.

Now that the shell has been handed over, we are hard at work on the internal fit-out, the design of which is taking student input into account as the project team continues canvassing student feedback on the use of the building. So far, facilities in the new Student Centre will include multi-purpose learning spaces for individual and group study, a double-height performance and events space, rooms for confidential meetings and access to an outdoor courtyard.



ENDOWMENT

Becoming global citizens: a tribute to Andrew

Andrew Pickup was a Global Studies PhD student who sadly passed away whilst undertaking fieldwork in South Africa. A popular member of the Global Studies community and a highly regarded researcher, Andrew's passing has had a profound effect on the School.

As a tribute to their son's memory, Andrew's parents have endowed in perpetuity the Andrew Francis Pickup Global Citizens Award. This award ensures that Andrew's memory will live on in

future generations of Global Studies students and will have a transformative impact, funding several bursaries of up to £500 for Global Studies postgraduate students every year who are undertaking a dissertation with placement.

Andrew's parents explained that this award aims to enable more students to embrace international opportunities, helping them to become truly global citizens, regardless of their financial circumstances.

NEW STRUCTURE

A new interdisciplinary School



In August, we launched a new combined School of Music, Film and Media, English, History, Art History and Philosophy, and the Sussex Centre for Language Studies. The new combined School is called the School of Media, Arts and Humanities and is led by Professor Kate O'Riordan as its first Dean.

Previously the Head of the School of Media, Film and Music, Kate O'Riordan and other Heads of School led an extensive consultation and engagement process with students and staff to explore the concept of a combined School and its possible structure.

Kate says: "I am particularly excited about the potential our new School will unlock and the opportunities to bring together academics from across many fields. This will help make our commitment to interdisciplinarity even stronger, one of the core values that Sussex was founded upon."

FALMER MOAT

Returning to our 1960s heritage

When Falmer House opened in 1962 – just a year after the first 50 students enrolled at the new University of Sussex – the moat was filled with water, designed to reflect the sharp contrasts of light and dark in the vaults above it.

Over the years, students have used the Falmer House moat in some unusual ways but by 2015 the moat was dry and in need of substantial work.

Last year, thanks to a huge effort by our Estates team, water was pumped into the moat, enlivening the quad and returning it to its former glory.



INCLUSIVITY

A refuge for sanctuary seekers

In recognition of its efforts to welcome and support forced migrants, Sussex has been awarded the title of University of Sanctuary.

This award, conferred by charitable organisation City of Sanctuary UK, recognises and celebrates the good practice of UK universities receiving sanctuary seekers into their communities and fostering a culture of welcome and inclusion for all.

Assessors commended Sussex's scholarships for asylum seekers; our world-leading research on sanctuary-related matters; our sector-leading Migration Law Clinic; and our close links with student, community and charity groups.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Adam Tickell welcomed the award: "It reflects the Sussex tradition of being a place of both physical and intellectual refuge and an institution that strives to make the world a better place for those who flee persecution. In turn, we are greatly enriched by the students and scholars from migrant communities who make Sussex their home."

We are greatly enriched by the students and scholars from migrant communities who make Sussex their home.

From opening the first campus-based arts centre to publishing the first blueprint for a quantum computer, the University of Sussex has a proud history of taking bold new steps.

Seven Sussex firsts

BRITAIN'S FIRST CAMPUS-BASED UNIVERSITY ARTS CENTRE

In 1969, the Gardner Arts Centre opened its doors. From the outset, the Basil Spence-designed series of circular studios was intended to give cultural nourishment to audiences from campus and beyond.

Five decades on, with a new name (Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts) and following an £8 million refit and renovation, the Centre continues to be a space for innovation and creativity.

With a programme that includes contemporary dance, edgy and political dramas, experimental music, international and arthouse film and other events that defy boundaries, it is fulfilling its early promise of being 'the yeast in life's solid dough.'

FIRST TRANSATLANTIC EMAIL

The first transatlantic email was received in the Richmond Building on campus in 1973, during a conference on computer communication.

It was sent from scientists in the United States to Richard Grimsdale, a Professor of Electrical Engineering whose research focused on computer networking.

Professor Grimsdale, who joined the University in 1967 and continued running labs and supervising students beyond his retirement, is also credited with building the world's first fully transistorised computer. His years at Sussex involved developing computer graphics technology, now widely used in video and filmmaking.

FIRST DISCOVERY OF AN UNKNOWN FORM OF CARBON

In 1985, Sussex chemist Professor Sir Harry Kroto discovered a previously unknown form of carbon that would lead to groundbreaking research in nanotechnology.

The football-shaped molecule, named the C60 Buckminsterfullerene or 'buckyball', has inspired a new generation of scientists to explore its potential for a multitude of applications, from super-strong yet ultra-light materials to miniaturised drug delivery devices.

The discovery led to Sir Harry Kroto (along with his US collaborators, Robert Curl and Richard Smalley) being awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1996, and a knighthood in the same year.

FIRST ENGLISH UNIVERSITY TO HOST AN EVENT FOR HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

In 2001, Sussex hosted a special day of remembrance to mark the UK's first Holocaust Memorial Day. The free event, open to all, was organised by The Sussex Weidenfeld Institute-Centre of German Jewish Studies and included shows and discussions on the theme of Holocaust Education Through Film.

The University has continued with the annual event, to remind current generations that the tragic mistakes of the past should never be repeated or forgotten. The event continues to focus on testaments from many Holocaust survivors and their families, alongside films, workshops and discussions.

FIRST CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF CORRUPTION

The Centre for the Study of Corruption (CSC) was set up in 2012 to tackle one of today's biggest global challenges. From ways in which new technologies create opportunities for corruption to whether corruption negatively affects women's access to human rights, researchers in CSC are looking at the impacts on society and coming up with solutions to help governments and organisations.

The Centre also teaches undergraduates and postgraduates (with three Masters programmes) and trains PhD students on a wide array of corruption-related areas.

FIRST QUANTUM COMPUTER BLUEPRINT

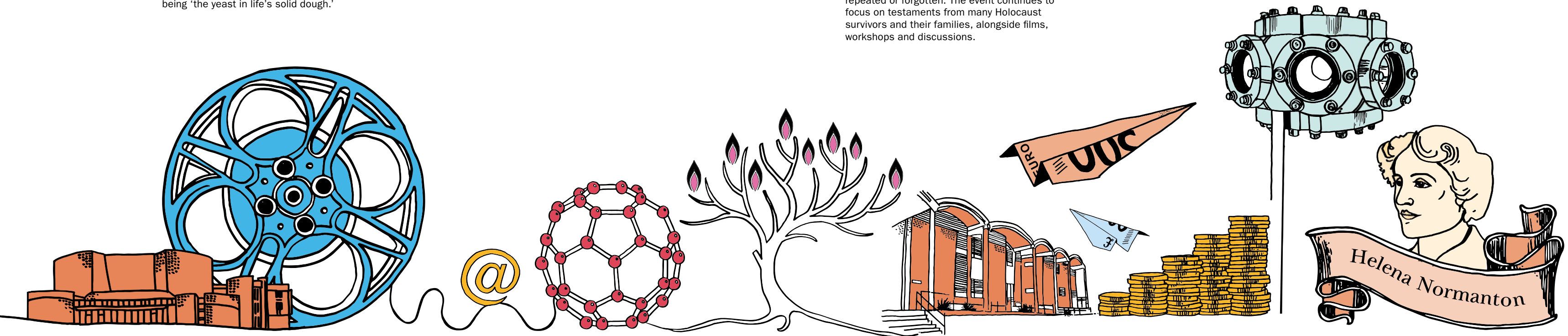
In 2017, an international team led by Winfried Hensinger, Professor of Quantum Technologies at the University of Sussex, published the first practical blueprint to build an ultra-powerful quantum computer that could solve problems beyond the capability of machines based on conventional electronics.

The team currently plans to build a prototype quantum computer at a cost of £1-2 million based on this design.

FIRST SUSSEX LEGACY DONOR

In 2017, Sussex launched the first Helena Normanton International Postdoctoral Fellowships, named after the first woman to practise as a barrister in England in 1922. Helena was also the first woman to lead the prosecution in a murder trial and, significantly for Sussex, she was also the first person to leave a legacy in her will (in 1957) to the University.

Born in London in 1882, Helena grew up in Brighton and won a scholarship to York Place School (now Varndean High School). She eventually went on to train and work as a teacher. A champion of women's suffrage, she pursued a legal career when a law was brought in to allow women to train as barristers. She continued throughout her life to campaign for women's equality, helping to bring about change in matrimonial law. ■



Hosted by **Afzal Abdul Rahim** (ENGG 1994), a pioneering placement scheme in Malaysia is shaping careers and leading the way in immersive, international work experience for business and engineering and informatics students from Sussex.

WORDS BY **RUBY MOORE**

Time well spent

THE VISION

The idea for an innovative student placement scheme in Malaysia was hatched over a lunch conversation between the CEO of telecoms firm TIME dotCom, Afzal Abdul Rahim (ENGG 1994), Professor Steven McGuire, Dean of the University of Sussex Business School, and Cliff Tapp from the University's Development and Alumni Relations team. They were discussing what could be done to better equip graduates with an understanding of the jobs – and the industry – that they were applying for.

Afzal was passionate about giving Sussex students a chance to experience every aspect of how an organisation works and they all agreed that working “in the thick of the action” in every division would best demonstrate the end-to-end value chain. This would also allow students to discover their passions and skills, enabling them to begin their career journey with a clear sense of direction.

Having worked at a power station when he was a student, Afzal wanted to ensure that students would gain real-world context for their theoretical studies. As well as nurturing a collaborative approach to working with colleagues in different areas of the company – “it leads to better teamwork and a more cohesive culture” – Afzal was sure that, in Malaysia, Sussex students would get the Southeast Asian experience while finding it relatively easy to get around as English is spoken in much of the country.

Afzal's ambitious vision for the month-long placement scheme became a reality in 2018, when twelve second-year students secured a place through a competitive process and headed off to Kuala Lumpur. Academics from the Business School and the School of Engineering and Informatics also visited TIME to assess the new programme and work with TIME's management team, including Head of Human Resources Sharif-Sharmizi Shahimi (known as Mizi), the man tasked with turning Afzal's vision into a reality.

AN IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

Having agreed with Afzal that it was important for TIME to create an “intense holistic journey, rather than pigeonholing [the students] into one division,” Mizi worked with colleagues across the organisation to ensure the students spent a significant amount of time in each rotation and really learnt about the functions of the different departments.

From researching new areas for broadband provision and speaking to prospective customers, to working on marketing campaigns, creating presentations and going out in hard hats to help lay cables, students were fully immersed in the work of the broadband provider for the duration of their stay.

Will Fennelly (Mechanical Engineering 2016) and Amie Slattery (Business and Management Studies 2016) were two of the students who took part in the scheme. They both acknowledged the time spent planning the detailed schedule. “[TIME dotCom] made sure that every day was a real and unique learning experience. Some of us have been on internships in England where we've been stuck in a room doing menial tasks on Excel all day. But in Malaysia there wasn't a single moment where we were bored, they were always pushing us.”

Outside work, Mizi also arranged for the students to explore Malaysia, including the nearby elephant sanctuary, and during the working week, students quickly picked up on the culture and love of food, acquiring recommendations for the best places to eat and joining TIME colleagues for lunch.

Once the students had settled into the programme, Mizi observed that it wasn't just the students who benefited, but that there was “a real knowledge exchange between the students and employees.”

The Business School's Director of International Affairs, Dr Ödül Bozkurt, sees the placement scheme as a “life-changing, perspective-changing opportunity” that gives the students the security of being in a group and receiving structured training alongside their hands-on experience: “They bring out their top guns: top marketing person, top engineer etc, and they deliver really well-put-together presentations.” »





GLOBAL CITIZENS

Helping students to develop as global citizens – connected, civically and politically engaged, entrepreneurial and creative – is a key part of Sussex’s strategy to create a better university for a better world. Dr Ralitsa Hiteva, the Engagement Lead for the Business School’s Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU), visited TIME with the students. She highlights the importance of being exposed to global ideas, concepts and trends whilst studying. “There isn’t a better way to do that than to experience it for yourself,” she says, adding that the value of the programme also lies in teaching the students “about the work ethic and the culture of a completely different environment.”

In blogs about their placement experience, students explain how they learned things that will benefit them every day. These include the transferable skills they acquired which have improved their problem-solving, communications and team working abilities.

Umar Akram (Business and Management Studies 2015) also found the experience hugely beneficial for job hunting. “Having spent a month abroad, with a company where we had done numerous rotations, was definitely a key differentiator going into interviews.”

Lecturer in Informatics Dr George Parisi was impressed with the students’ approach to the placement. “They all appeared very excited to meet and work with employees at TIME. They formed bonds with each other, worked very hard and collaboratively.” Both he and Senior Lecturer in Engineering Dr Niko Munzenrieder also found mutual benefits in liaising with colleagues at TIME, from insights into the needs of international industry to the possibility of future research partnerships.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Whilst our students gained immense value from the programme, Afzal says that TIME also benefited. “This definitely isn’t selfless. We get quite a lot out of it. We’ve found [the scheme] injects a sense of passion for teaching and some of the training built for the placement has been re-used for new hires. We’ve also had a couple of good eureka moments with the students!”

It wasn’t all smooth sailing though. Before the programme began, Mizi had to overcome bureaucratic hurdles, such as getting the students visas to be able to work in Malaysia.

Afzal’s top tip for companies thinking of offering similar programmes is to, “think big; think long term. Plan for it well, make sure that there is buy-in [across the company] and get personally involved.”

Meanwhile, Mizi also warns not to get too distracted by the planning. “Sometimes the best thing to do is to just do it, [because] you learn from your mistakes.”

Umar wants to reassure future placement students, revealing that he’d initially worried about getting along with others or being good enough at the work but, having completed the scheme, he advises them to “go for it.” “It sounds clichéd, but it’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!”

Amie and Will agree that the experience has encouraged them to be more open to opportunities and advise others to “say yes to more things in general because you may find that the next new experience you try might be one of the best things you ever did.”

“
This definitely isn’t selfless.
Training built for the placement scheme has been re-used for new hires and we’ve had some good eureka moments with the students!
”

WHAT NEXT?

This programme requires a huge investment, both from the University and from TIME. Both parties, however, believe that this is a valuable opportunity for everyone involved. Afzal is keen to develop the placement by integrating it with the schemes they offer local students, in order to make TIME “a magnet for local graduates to interface with international graduates.” He is also keen to expand the programme geographically to include their other sites in Thailand and Vietnam.

Due to Covid-19, last year’s placement plans were postponed. Sussex is keen to offer students valuable overseas work experience opportunities and will recommence planning as soon as it’s feasible and safe to do so. ■

GET INVOLVED

If your organisation already has placements to offer, they can be advertised to our students via our Careers and Employability Centre at www.sussex.ac.uk/careers

If you are interested in developing an innovative overseas placement programme within your organisation, please contact Cliff Tapp for an initial conversation at C.Tapp@sussex.ac.uk

EXPANDING HORIZONS

Afzal Abdul Rahim’s ambitions started young – wanting to enter the workforce as quickly as possible, he secured a place at Sussex aged just 16, having completed a foundation course in Malaysia.

At university, the diversity of personalities and nationalities were memorable and he’s still in touch with around 40-50 friends from the Class of 1997 who keep in touch via WhatsApp. Academically, he appreciated the lack of pressure early on. “We had some phenomenal lecturers who, on day one, told us, ‘I’m not going to get you a first-class degree. I’m here to make sure you have a first-class love for engineering.’ That makes all the difference.”

After achieving his degree in Mechanical Engineering with Electronics, Afzal worked for car manufacturer Lotus in Norfolk before returning to Malaysia where, in the wake of the dot-com bubble bursting, he took a leap of faith and plunged into the communications industry. Together with a core management team, he steered the AIMS Asia Group to its position as the region’s leading network-neutral data centre operator, before establishing the international bandwidth firm Global Transit.

At the age of 31, Afzal was appointed Commander-in-Chief at TIME dotCom, tasked with turning the company around and taking it back into profit. He attributes the courage to take on this massive task to being fortunate in finding his passion and calling in life very early on.

“In my 20s, I matched what I really loved to do with my work. When things align, then I don’t think you think about fear. You just see the opportunity,” he says. “As entrepreneurs, we look for the opportunity in things. While I saw that it would be a gargantuan task, I was fortunate to have a phenomenal team to pull it off. And I saw the prospect of owning an infrastructure company.”

The team made the company profitable within a year with Afzal embedding his values into the culture and structure of the company. “We have three corporate values: fun, bold and quick.”

Afzal is also passionate about investing in the future of Malaysia. He provides training programmes for Malaysian graduates, is the Chairman of the start-up accelerator Endeavour (supporting young founders in Malaysia), and he founded the non-profit Malaysia Internet Exchange.



ABOVE: Students receiving training at the TIME dotCom headquarters.

BELOW: Students visiting the elephant sanctuary.



Sussex graduate **Lucy Hughes** (Product Design 2015) has won international recognition for her packaging material made from fish waste. Now she is working on bringing it to market.

WORDS BY JACQUI BEALING

From sea to store



Our oceans are filling up with plastic; more than 150 million tonnes of it is reportedly floating around the world. By 2050, weight for weight, it's predicted that our seas will contain more plastic than fish.

It was this alarming forecast that inspired Lucy Hughes to create a biodegradable alternative to plastic as part of her University of Sussex product design degree course. The most apt feature of her product – a clear film that can be used for packaging, among other uses – is that it's actually made from fish waste.

In 2019 Lucy's invention, which she has named **MarinaTex**, landed her the prestigious 2019 James Dyson Award, beating more than 1,000 other entries from young engineers worldwide.

Awarding her the £30,000 prize, Sir James Dyson said, "Ultimately, we decided to pick the idea the world could least do without. MarinaTex elegantly solves two problems: the ubiquity of single-use plastic and fish waste."

Lucy, who graduated in 2019, also won the University's **StartUp Sussex** Social Impact Prize which is generously sponsored by Simon Segars (Electronics Engineering 1987) and worth £10,000.

In the past year, the 24-year-old from Twickenham has been working with government-funded laboratories to explore the full properties and potential of MarinaTex, as well as having conversations with supermarkets and businesses interested in following its development.

She is thrilled that, even though sustainability may have been moved down the agenda during the Covid-19 pandemic, there is still commercial interest in her product. But her motivation has never been about making money.

"I wanted to find the place where the material could make the most amount of difference," she says. "I was an avid viewer of the BBC's Blue Planet, which showed the amount of pollution caused by non-biodegradable plastic in the oceans. It makes no sense to me that we are using plastic, an incredibly durable material, for products that often have a lifecycle of less than a day."

Lucy chose to study product design at Sussex because of the course's strong reputation for being environmentally conscious. "Sussex teaches how we can move from a linear model – in which we take from the earth, make something from it and then dispose of it – to a circular model that is restorative and regenerative by design," she explains. "It's about closing the loop, making us rethink how we consume and use products, and what we waste."

With this in mind, she set about exploring the possibility of making a biodegradable material from fish waste. In the early stage of her research, she came across algae bioplastics, which are made from red algae. But her attempts to produce it resulted in material that was too crinkled to be of practical use.

After visiting MCB Seafoods Ltd, a Newhaven-based sustainable fish processing plant and wholesaler, and being shown their waste stream of fish offcuts and skin, as well as shells and crustacean skeletons, she began experimenting – mostly in her student kitchen – with adding this waste to the basic algae formula. Initially she tried grinding shells and skeletons with a Nutribullet food blender and a pestle and mortar to add to her formula. When this proved unsuccessful, she moved on to working with fish skin and scales.

"There were a lot of times at the beginning when things were going mouldy and I was wondering what the hell I was doing," she says. "My friends and family thought I was crazy. I went between the kitchens in my student home and my family home in London and everyone had to put up with the smell of fish. Even when you store fish in the freezer, you can smell it because fish are cold-blooded and their enzymes are still active."

Finally, because fish skin contains protein structures that are strong and flexible, she was able to produce a translucent yet durable film that could replace plastic film to wrap food with. It would also biodegrade within six weeks, which is faster than many other bioplastics.

In addition, MarinaTex is economical – one Atlantic cod could generate the organic waste required to make 1,400 bags of MarinaTex. Production of the bioplastic is also relatively low-tech, requiring temperatures below 100 degrees Celsius.

Now, with industrial production on the horizon, Lucy is excited about what the future holds for her product. "I didn't know much about the business side, so the support and funding from Dyson and from the University has been really useful," she says. "I've been analysing the market, researching potential people that I can work with, and trying to understand consumer behaviour – all the preliminary work that has to be done before putting a product on the market."

"What has surprised me is that, even during the pandemic, people still want to talk to me about the product," she adds. "As we have seen, particularly with the need for disposable PPE [personal protective equipment], plastic still outshines all other materials in the medical sphere. But it doesn't have to be used for everything." ■

“
It's about closing the loop, making us rethink how we consume and use products, and what we waste.
”



LEFT: Lucy Hughes at Newhaven Harbour holding a sheet of MarinaTex.

RIGHT: Lucy holds materials used in her experiments – fish scales and seaweed.

Réjane Woodroffe (Development Economics 2004) left a career in high finance to help South Africa's poorest rural community get on its feet. After receiving a British Council award for social impact, she describes why she finds her role today so richly rewarding.

WORDS BY **JACQUI BEALING**

A change for good



The Wild Coast in South Africa is a stretch of stunning natural beauty in the country's Eastern Cape province. It is also an incredibly poor region, where decades of underinvestment have left the largely illiterate farming communities struggling to survive.

For Réjane Woodroffe, a South African who experienced some of the worst inequities of the apartheid regime, it was the perfect environment to put to good use her background as an economist and her MSc in Development Economics from the University of Sussex.

Moreover, after a decade of working in the lucrative but for her ultimately unfulfilling world of high finance, she realised that here she could return to her activist roots and make a change for good.

Her plan is working. In April 2019, Réjane received the British Council's Study UK Alumni Award for Social Impact in recognition of the work she and her husband Dave Martin have done to create sustainable systems to support the education, employment and welfare needs of a community of 6,000 people.

Their project, the Bulungula Incubator, which they set up in 2007, is having notable success. For example, an e-learning programme developed to teach good-quality English and maths to primary school children (through using energy-efficient computer tablets and training classroom facilitators) is now being piloted in other deprived parts of the country.

Réjane calculates that their projects have more than 10,000 direct beneficiaries, while their broader programmes impact thousands more through sharing and collaborative partnerships with other organisations and government.

"A lot of things we have tried haven't worked," admits Réjane, "but because we are embedded in the community, we can adapt to its needs. We are focused on the ground and, in that way, we are starting to have a national impact."

Réjane left behind a luxury lifestyle, with a flat in Cape Town and a high-salaried role in asset management, to do "something more fulfilling" with her life.

"At the beginning, I really enjoyed my job," she says. "I'd gone from studying business at Cape Town University straight to becoming an assistant economist at Merrill Lynch. I was totally sucked into the finance sector and my career carried on developing." »



Children in one of the Bulungula Incubator Early Childcare Development programmes.

But after eight years, she was becoming increasingly miserable. "I started to think back to when I was happy, and I realised that it was during the 1980s, when I had been part of the community organisation in the struggle against apartheid," she says.

Réjane was born during apartheid in the 1970s. With her family, she experienced the terror of being forcibly removed from her Cape Town home when the area became designated 'white'. They were relocated to the impoverished townships in the Cape Flats.

Although Nelson Mandela's presidency, which began in 1994, gave hope to many that the fight was over, the emotional pull of her past was too strong for Réjane. "I knew I wanted to do something – I just didn't know what," she says.

She took time out to think and, in 2003, successfully applied for a Ford Foundation Scholarship. "It gave me the opportunity to study at any university in the world," says Réjane. "I chose Sussex because it had a reputation for being strong on economics and also the development side. It just seemed like a really good combo for me."

At around the same time, she met Dave Martin, a fellow Cape Town University graduate and "a back-packer at heart," who had set up Bulungula Lodge, a community-owned eco-hostel for travellers in Nqileni village. Through donations from visitors and seed funding from organisations, he had already begun to help develop the local economy.

Réjane could see that they were both on the same journey. Her time at Sussex helped build her confidence to frame that ambition and take the next steps.

"I was not a development professional and at first I felt quite insecure," she recalls. "I didn't know what to do. But at Sussex I was able to meet those who were professionals, to get their advice, to tap into resources and to feel confident about what I needed to do."

Réjane and Dave were married in 2005. For the next three years, Réjane split her time between working in Cape Town and travelling to the coast. "I had tried to resign from my job, but they offered me the opportunity to work half the week from home. It meant that we had some money and could start to do bits and pieces."



Bulungula Incubator projects have more than 10,000 direct beneficiaries, while their broader programmes impact thousands more through sharing and collaborative partnerships with other organisations and government.



One of the first projects was to raise money for water tanks, in order to supply 400 households with running water. This led to education around water and then to education more generally, from setting up pre-school groups to holding regular health clinics and arranging practical skills training, such as carpentry.

"I can't say we started off with a vision," says Réjane. "We began with one thing, and then something else became urgent and we did the next thing. It's only in the last three or four years that it has started to look like a holistic continuum."

For every step, she and Dave have worked with the community to ensure that whatever structures and systems they have introduced are sustainable. This has meant helping to train individuals in the community to run their own schools and businesses, even when their levels of literacy and numeracy have been very low.

They're also mindful that any new initiatives need to be complementary to the local culture and farming traditions. "Decisions are made by consensus," says Réjane. "Every project has a community committee from the start, so we are under the will of the community. You often have to demonstrate why it's good."

They're seeing now how their integrated approach is benefiting the community. The birth rate has dropped, due to better health education around contraception, but also because children are more likely to survive.

"As a way of life, it's incredibly challenging," admits Réjane. "It's stretching me in a way that the financial industry could never have done. But when we have success, it is so rewarding." ■

For more information, visit www.bulungula.org

The fabric of our lives

When the coronavirus pandemic began its lethal spread across the world, Mamunur Rahman (Gender and Development 2006) took action, mobilising his contacts and resources to help people in Bangladesh.

WORDS BY JACQUI BEALING

BELOW: Réjane speaking to students and staff at Sussex during her 2019 Study UK Global Winners visit to the UK.





“
Mamunur’s Ella Pad initiative has so far improved the health, hygiene and employment opportunities for 100,000 Bangladeshi women.
 ”

Mamunur’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic is the second example of how he has combined compassion and industry to benefit the health of his nation. This time, he had to convince the highest levels of policymakers to bring both the public and private sectors together to help solve the national crisis. And he credits Sussex’s rich seam of research in sustainability, as well as the network of Sussex communities he is in touch with, for giving him the strength to take this action.

Born into a poor community in Bangladesh, Mamunur was the only one from his family to graduate from high school. He went on to study for a Masters in Gender and Development at Sussex in 2006.

When he applied for a Chevening Scholarship to study for the Masters, taught jointly by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the University of Sussex, he was working in the development sector in Bangladesh. He believed further education would lead to a career in development in the UK. Instead, through a raised awareness of how he could do something to help the health and social inequalities in his own country, he returned to Bangladesh after leaving Sussex.

“We always used to think that, to solve our problems, we needed resources from Western countries,” he says. “We thought that, if we didn’t have the resources, we couldn’t do it. But being at Sussex showed me that we have resources that we are not using. So it built my confidence to do something about it. The Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) programme at Sussex has helped us to solve our own problems.”

After graduating from Sussex, he joined the Ministry of Industries in Bangladesh, which serves eight million small- and medium-sized enterprises. His role was to lead the research and policy advocacy teams promoting women entrepreneurs. In 2012, he carried out a survey of factory workers and found that women had very little access to toilets, which meant they were taking up to three days off work every month because of menstruation. This equated to 200 million workdays lost every year across the industry.

“This is the first generation of women who are working in factories and they are very shy,” says Mamunur. “Menstruation is such a taboo subject that they cannot talk to management about it.”

He recognised the same issues among schoolgirls, who were dropping out of education because of the prohibitive cost of menstrual hygiene products. “My own sister didn’t finish her education,” he says.

Realising the potential to make washable and eco-friendly sanitary napkins from some of the billion bales of waste textiles produced by the garment industry, he set about raising awareness and funds for his [Ella Pad initiative](#), eventually receiving a grant from the US State Department.

Through working with factory owners, the Ella Alliance has enabled women involved with napkin manufacturing to become entrepreneurs. Mamunur’s initiative has so far improved the health, hygiene and employment opportunities for 100,000 Bangladeshi women. The ambition is to reach the four million women working in the garment industry and the 10 million girls in education.

“We also want to scale-up the project in other developing countries where female factory workers face similar challenges,” he says. “At the same time, we want to encourage a shift in global culture, away from plastic-based disposable sanitary napkins towards an eco-friendly sustainable solution of washable sanitary napkins.”

With the napkins – and now also the masks – meeting an urgent need, Mamunur’s greatest satisfaction is seeing how he has been able to make a difference to people’s health and welfare in his country.

“Coming from a poor, rural background, where I was the only one from my family who has been able to do a Masters in the UK, I know I have been super lucky,” he says. “I think my responsibility is to give something back to society.” ■

“
We had to respond, to save the people and save the planet as well.
 ”

Early on in the Covid-19 crisis, social entrepreneur Mamunur Rahman quickly realised he had access to the resources to manufacture up to 160 million general-use free face masks for his country’s poorest communities.

The masks were initially produced by workers in nine factories that form part of the Ella Alliance, a garment factory partnership previously set up by Mamunur, for which [he was awarded the British Council’s Entrepreneurial Award in 2019](#). The factories also make washable, low-cost and eco-friendly sanitary napkins from surplus textile materials.

“Once the virus spread, people rushed to buy plastic-based masks at high prices. Many couldn’t afford them,” says Mamunur. “Moreover, we also observed that people were indiscriminately throwing away the non-degradable masks in the street, causing not only the quick spread of the disease but also polluting the environment.”

“The situation compelled us to come up with a solution. Our partner factories responded quickly and many more joined with us to make the washable masks using their available scraps of material. To distribute these nationwide, we involved the government.”

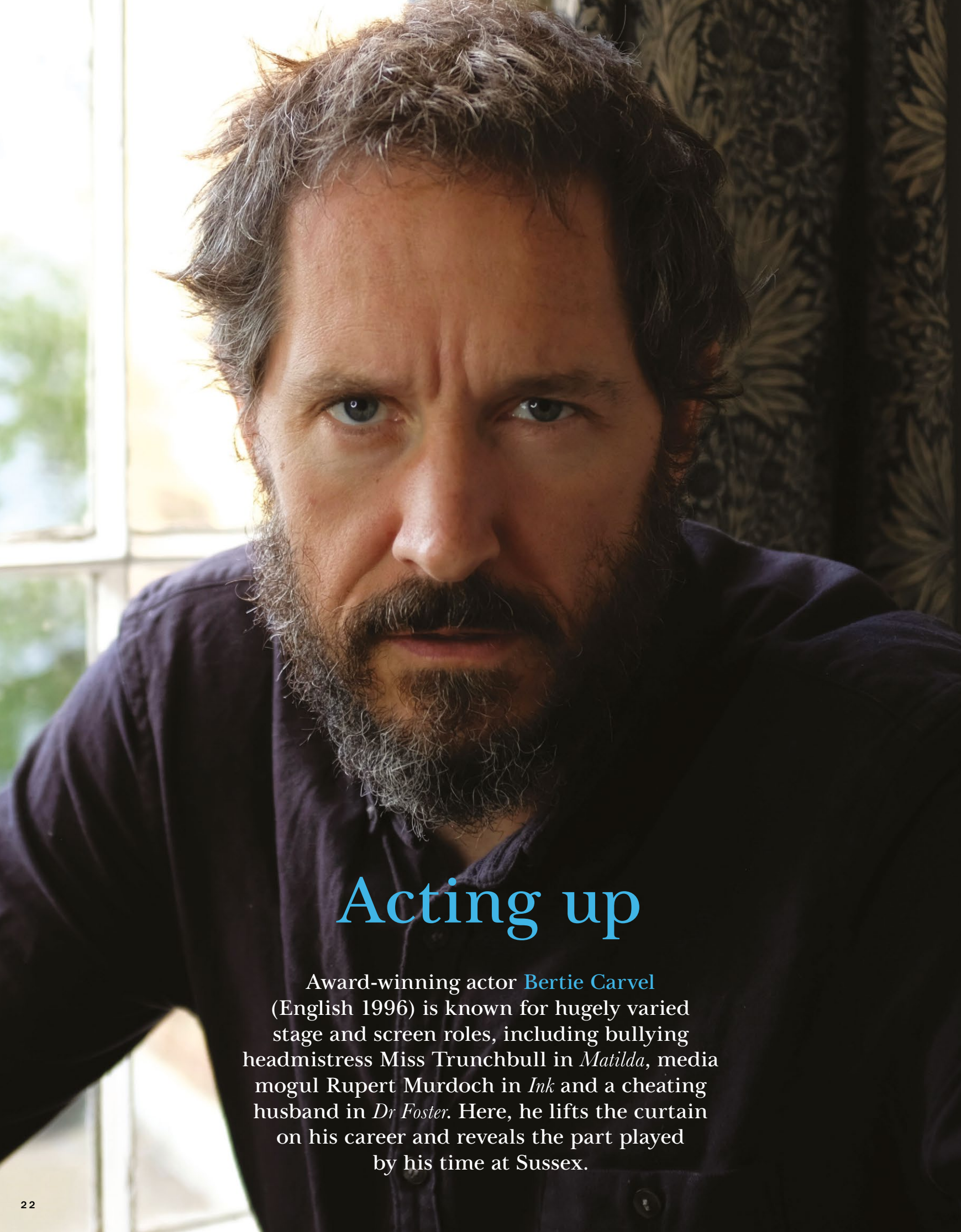
The Alliance researched sources, including the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to understand how the masks should be tailored to cover the essential parts of the face. The design was then shared across the factories.

“We had to respond, to save the people and save the planet as well,” explains the entrepreneur. “By replacing plastic-based masks, we were going to save billions of litres of water and millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide.”

COULD YOU BE ONE OF NEXT YEAR’S GLOBAL ALUMNI AWARDS WINNERS?
 The Study UK Alumni Awards are launched each autumn. For more information, visit study-uk.britishcouncil.org/alumni-awards

RIGHT: Mamunur with Ella Alliance face masks at one of the free distribution points in Bangladesh.





Acting up

Award-winning actor **Bertie Carvel** (English 1996) is known for hugely varied stage and screen roles, including bullying headmistress Miss Trunchbull in *Matilda*, media mogul Rupert Murdoch in *Ink* and a cheating husband in *Dr Foster*. Here, he lifts the curtain on his career and reveals the part played by his time at Sussex.



The simple truth is that the baddies are the best parts. What excites me about [a new] character is complexity, depth and richness, but also variety. In any part, you have to ask yourself, “What would it feel like to be going through this?”

I don't have a favourite part – I'm proud of them all. I get very consumed by whatever I'm doing at any given time. Afterwards, once it's done, because of the intensity of that involvement and the obsessive attention to detail, you have to kind of let things go.

For me, the enjoyment of acting really is to get to try on different sets of clothes, role-play different situations and emotions, some of which feel very close, some of which might feel further away, but all of which are connected by our common humanity and experience. I like getting in the dressing-up box and I like finding out who I am in a different set of trousers.

When playing real people, there's a greater sense of duty to do your research properly. But you can be pinioned, bound and restricted by that research, and you have to liberate your imagination and think, “Well, why are we making a play of this and not simply watching a documentary?” Drama and fiction and imaginative endeavour can reveal something that journalism can't – and vice versa.

My dad is a good journalist and believes in reporting on the truth. And in a way, I suppose I approach acting a bit like journalism – you start with the facts, present the character without judgement and then allow your audience to make up their own minds. [It] doesn't mean that you don't have a view but that you are there to empower your audience.

In *Parade* I played a man convicted of murder. So, there's also this real duty to the person, because you are dealing with a question of innocence or guilt. He certainly had a very unfair trial, but may have been a murderer – we'll never know. The key to me was to investigate the elements of his character that made him seem guilty or innocent, likeable or unlikeable, without judging him either way.

All through my teenage years, my hobby was live role-playing. Every weekend I would go to Chislehurst Caves with my mates. We all agreed 'rules': “In this space we are going to be who we say we are for a weekend. You can call yourself Jonas the Warrior, and we'll believe that you are a brilliant swordsman.”

I was young for my year when I started at Sussex and it was challenging. It took me right up to the end of my degree to kind of crack it. I just remember that sensation of finally getting it, and thinking, “Oh, I can do this.” You know, “I have to work hard, and I have to know what I'm trying to say, but I also just need to allow myself to have flair.” Before, I was trying to write good essays, but it was so obvious I didn't know what I was talking about. I'd arrived at a place where people were professionally writing about this stuff. I think I felt kind of crushed by that early on.

I think what I really learned at Sussex was independent thought and to think particularly critically. It was a profound experience to take those instincts that I already had but were really sharpened at Sussex, to do it independently and to challenge yourself, to not accept the orthodoxy lying down.

In the spring term of my second year, my mother had a stroke and it really knocked me sideways. I'm forever grateful for the pastoral care at Sussex and for being allowed to take time out. I was in a real spin and they gave me a chance to come back and complete the following year.

I discovered acting while I was at Sussex. When I came back from intermitting, I had this confidence – I'd cut my long hair for the first time in 10 years and was doing lots of Kung Fu. I thought, “I'm going to go and take up some new interests,” and signed up for an audition for *Murder in the Cathedral*.

Doing that play, I realised I'd found a vocation. It was like falling off a horse. I knew how to do it because I'd been doing it all these years [with role-playing] without thinking that that was what I was doing. By the end of my time at Sussex, I was in SUDS (Sussex University Drama Society) and doing all the plays, but I still had an awful lot to learn and I'm really pleased I had the opportunity to go on to RADA for three years.

I haven't been an overnight success, but I've been very fortunate. I've had a really consistent career and done lots of good work that I'm really proud of. Awards are very flattering but it's the work that counts.

I have some fairly way-out ideas: that feeling of invention and inspiration, and slightly slapdash outsider art, really thrills. In *Rope* there was a wonderful page-long characterisation for my character, Rupert Cadell, which described him as lame in one leg and holding his head and body perfectly still as if articulation causes him some definite physical pain that he is trying to circumvent. So, I decided he had a wooden leg, his real one shot off in the war, and I built this kind of leg contraption.

The director looked at me as if to say, “What the f*** are you putting to me? You want a wooden leg?” Then says, “Okay. Let's try it.” Then you do it, and he nods – it's good, and nobody knew it was good before you tried it. I love those moments. Good acting very often comes out of taking risks.

Activism and contributing towards a fairer society are important to me. Serving on Equity's council and subcommittees, I do my best to ask uncomfortable questions of those in power. Theatre is facing an existential crisis post-Covid and we need radical strategic intervention from government if our cultural powerhouse is to remain standing.

I am really excited about being a dad. I feel my life pivoting around this moment, from losing my mother last year and then becoming a parent myself. It has put a lot of things into perspective. My mother always told me that I could do anything I set my mind to. I don't know if that's true, but to be told that consistently is the most incredible gift. I couldn't want for more loving, more supportive parents. I'll try and be that. ■

ABOVE: Bertie Carvel in his award-winning portrayal of Rupert Murdoch in *Ink*.

Sussex alumni around the world have been active in starting new projects, making an impact at local and national level, achieving new career milestones and gaining recognition. Here is a brief selection of their news.

Community heroes



DR ANDREA BROCK (INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS 2013) and **DANIEL THERKELSEN (ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY 2016)** set up the first Covid-19 mutual aid group in Brighton, enabling the 17,000+ members to connect and support each other through the struggles that the pandemic has presented.

SUE EPPS (EDUCATION 1975) has created Table Talk, a project that has recruited 40 cafés across Brighton to allocate tables as a place to sit to talk to other customers in order to combat loneliness.

JAMES BOYLE (DEVELOPMENT STUDIES 2004) is working to turn old, disused urban areas into hubs for local, independent businesses through his work as a community investment manager at Make Shift in London.



SARA CHITAMBO (MEDIA STUDIES 2008) works as a project manager at Johns Hopkins Health and Education in South Africa, promoting sexual and reproductive health in the community through her award-winning TV shows.

YOKO INAGAKI (GLOBALISATION, BUSINESS AND DEVELOPMENT 2019), currently completing an MA in Globalisation, Business and Development, intends to provide the first reliable laundry facility in Madagascar. She received an £8,000 prize for her social enterprise, Manasa Mora, in the StartUp Sussex 2020 awards.

MARÍA FERNANDA SIERRA PEREA (IDS 2012) manages VIVE, a Trust for the Americas project that empowers women with the tools they need to become financially independent, recognise and prevent gender-based violence and transform their lives.

Milestones



ALEX BRUCE (BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE 2010) has sold two million drinking straws made from wheat straw in over 35 countries, making a significant contribution to global efforts to cut down on non-biodegradable waste.



BETH PEARCE (CONTEMPORARY HISTORY AND POLITICS 2006) has become one of only 396 global Masters of Wine. As a buyer for Majestic Wine, she passed the notoriously difficult testing to achieve the highest qualification in the wine trade.

EMMANUEL ALHASSAN (EDUCATION 1995) was recently honoured by the Ghanaian Colleges of Education for being one of the longest-serving tutors in the northern sector.

KATIE SILCOX (ENGLISH LANGUAGE 2004) has begun working for GQ Middle East magazine, alongside her volunteering work with refugees in Greece and setting up her online travel magazine, Contemporary Class, which aims to reflect underrepresented global issues.



JOANNA HILL (MEDIA STUDIES 1993), the former CEO of the government's Start Up Loans, which supported 50,000 start-ups during her time there, has been appointed to a new role at Askif, helping businesses to access Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans.

MORAKOT SRISWASDI (ECONOMICS 1990) is the new Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations (Vienna). This follows an extensive history of working in international diplomatic roles on the behalf of Thailand.

RODRIGO FRÍAS RIVAS (TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATIVE MANAGEMENT 2014) is Deputy Director of the Entrepreneurship Division at the Chilean Economic Development Agency (CORFO), helping start-ups to access public funding and generating over 1,000 new jobs with combined annual sales of £40 million.

New ventures Awards

In 2019, **MATILDA LAWRENCE-JUBB (ENGLISH LITERATURE 2017)** co-founded Split Banana, a social enterprise delivering inclusive relationship advice and sex education both inside and outside of schools. Read more about Matilda on pages 40-41.



MAGGIE GROUT (BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT 2019) has started the non-profit Thinking Huts, with the vision of building the first 3D-printed school. Thinking Huts is partnering with SEED, a non-profit in Madagascar, which hopes to launch the project next year.

LOUISE BEVERIDGE (POLITICS/ INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS 1981) founded JUSTE – Maison de talents in 2020 to match the needs of business for experienced communication and corporate social responsibility professionals working on short assignments.



PORTIA CRONJE (FINANCE AND BUSINESS 2014) founded Beauty By Me, a hair and beauty booking platform that bridges the gap between self-employed beauticians and their clients and provides them with a community to support one another.

CRISTOBAL MATTE (STRATEGIC INNOVATION MANAGEMENT 2019), currently completing his Strategic Innovation Management MSc, is co-founder and general director of Airkeep, an online platform that connects travellers with hosts who will store their belongings.

SOSAN AZIZ (IDS 2008) has won a prestigious British Council Alumni Award in Pakistan's Social Impact Category for her work tackling gender inequality as a member of the National Commission on the Status of Women in Pakistan.

H LANGANISO MATANGAIDZE (ECONOMICS AND FINANCE 2016) has been named as one of 2019's Top 10 Rare Rising Stars for founding RED, which aims to build low-cost, vertical wind turbines and distribute them across rural Zimbabwe and Malawi.

LUCY HUGHES (PRODUCT DESIGN 2015), founder of MarinaTex, has won both the James Dyson Award and the StartUp Sussex Social Impact Prize for her sustainable packaging fabricated from fish waste. Read more about Lucy on pages 14-15.

DR ANDREW MORGAN (BIOLS 1973) received DuPont's Lavoisier Medal for Lifetime Technical Achievement in 2019. The award is given to scientists and engineers who have made outstanding contributions to DuPont and their scientific fields throughout their careers.

PROFESSORS GAIL CARDEW (BIOLS 1986) and **KENT BERRIDGE (BIOLS 1977)** were both recognised for their contributions to science with honorary doctorates awarded at the Sussex winter graduation ceremonies in January 2020.

HELEN CAMMOCK (SOCIOLOGY 1989) made history with fellow Turner Prize-winning nominees by requesting to be judged as a collective, in order to make a statement "in the name of commonality, multiplicity and solidarity – in art as in society."



JAMES BOWYER (EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY 2019) has won the 2020 StartUp Sussex competition. Responding to Covid-19, his business Reviso.ai brings students' dearly-missed library study sessions online, through gamification and Artificial Intelligence.

UK honours



MARCUS HAYES (LAW 1984) has been awarded an MBE for services to education and the law. He is the Managing Director of the commercial law firm Mason Hayes and an Alumni Fellow of the University of Sussex.

SARA WAJID (ENGLISH 1991) has been awarded an MBE for services to culture and diversity. Sara is Head of Engagement at the Museum of London.

JOANNA BAKER (FRENCH 1979) has been awarded a CBE for services to the arts. Joanna is the former Managing Director of the Edinburgh International Festival and Chair of the National Youth Choir of Scotland.

SHOBANA JEYASINGH (ENGLISH 1970) has been awarded a CBE for services to dance. She is a choreographer and the founder of Shobana Jeyasingh Dance.

DR HILARY COTTAM (DEVELOPMENT STUDIES 1991) has been awarded an OBE for services to the British Welfare State. She is a social entrepreneur and designer, and the author of Radical Help.

JANE GOLDINGHAM (PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT 1996) has been awarded an MBE for services to the social work profession. Jane is a former Head of Operational Development and Principal Social Worker at East Sussex County Council.

SUE SAMSON (EDUCATION 1985) has been awarded an MBE for services to education. She is the Chief Executive Officer at the University of Chichester Multi-Academy Trust.

See more Alumni News at www.sussex.ac.uk/falmer and send your latest news to alumni@sussex.ac.uk

Traditionally, diagnosis and treatment of cancer has been shaped by scientists and clinicians, but at what cost to patients and their families? Professor of Psycho-oncology **Dame Lesley Fallowfield** is putting patients at the heart of decision-making, helping health professionals work with them to make informed choices about treatments and their quality of life.

WORDS BY **RACHAEL MILLER**

Cancer care – making it better

“ Ensuring that people aren't fatigued, depressed or feeling sick shouldn't be a luxurious add-on – it should be part of good cancer care. ”

PSYCHO-ONCOLOGY: PSYCHO-WHAT?

When Professor Lesley Fallowfield was awarded a DBE by the Queen in 2016, she became a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire for services to psycho-oncology. As she gave Lesley Fallowfield the award, Her Majesty mused, “What you do sounds a bit sinister. What exactly is the ‘psycho’ part of oncology?” It’s a question Lesley hears often, and one that she and her colleagues at SHORE-C (Sussex Health Outcomes Research and Education in Cancer) are dedicated to exploring in order to improve cancer care.

Psycho-oncology is research that combines the behavioural, psychological, social and emotional with the physical aspects of cancer and explores how together these impact patients, their families and the health professionals who diagnose, treat and support them. It covers all stages of the disease, from prevention right through to end of life considerations.

“For too long,” Dame Lesley says, “the way benefits or effectiveness of cancer treatments were measured was slanted towards clinicians’ and scientists’ views of how different drugs or surgery might affect the cancer, forgetting that all cancers inhabit people. I wanted to put patients at the centre of the way treatment decisions are made.”

THE START OF A NEW APPROACH TO CANCER CARE

Having completed a BSc in Experimental Psychology at Sussex in 1981, Dame Lesley embarked on a DPhil, looking into visual disturbances in neurological disorders. But the traumatic experience of a close friend with cancer became the catalyst that set her on a very different path.

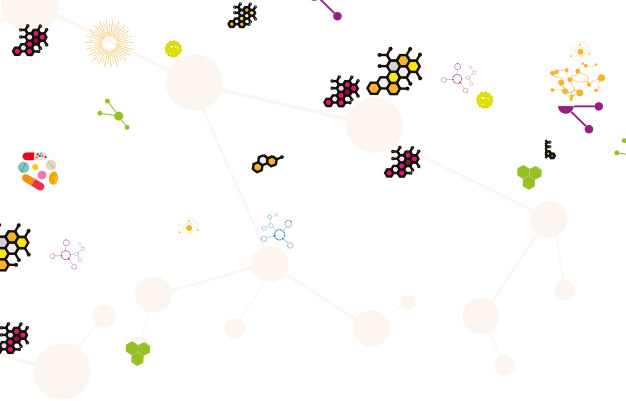
Her friend had acute myeloid leukaemia, a type of blood cancer. “She was given one of the early bone marrow transplants,” remembers Dame Lesley, “but experienced horrible side effects and died very miserably. When she was dying, she asked me, ‘Why does the medical profession do this kind of thing to you without really telling you what the consequences might be?’ I promised her then that I would start to make things better for patients with cancer. I didn’t want anyone to have to witness their loved ones dying in the way my friend did.”

Changes in approaches to cancer had begun to emerge in the 1970s, with some studies looking at the types of anxiety and depression experienced by cancer patients, but it wasn’t until the 1980s that psycho-oncology really began to gain traction as a subspecialty of oncology.

The work of breast cancer surgeon Professor Michael Baum particularly stood out for Dame Lesley. He thought the psychological aspects of breast cancer were poorly understood and was interested in psychosocial aspects of care, specifically measuring quality of life and improving communication skills.

In fact, Michael Baum’s ideas had such a profound influence on Dame Lesley that she went to work with him at King’s College London, determined to improve the experience of cancer patients after her promise to her friend.

In 2001, Dame Lesley came back to Sussex as the Director of SHORE-C. The research centre’s work is multi-layered. It measures the impact that a cancer diagnosis, its treatment and side effects have on patients’ lives; development of psychosocial interventions to help patients cope with these; and improving the ways in which health professionals communicate, to ensure that patients have better information to enable more educated decision-making about treatment options. »



9.6
MILLION

ESTIMATED NUMBER
OF DEATHS GLOBALLY
FROM CANCER IN 2018

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

1 IN 2

PEOPLE IN THE UK
WILL GET CANCER
IN THEIR LIFETIME

CANCER RESEARCH UK

“
My team has developed ways to assess what many thought was immeasurable, so that doctors can present more even-handed information about treatment, and patients can weigh up what’s right for them.”
”

QUALITY OF LIFE – MEASURING THE IMMEASURABLE

One research challenge is that the many side effects of cancer therapies are under-recognised and therefore under-treated. Dame Lesley’s team has developed patient-reported outcome measures to determine symptoms and side effects via quality-of-life questionnaires.

“We’re not just looking at the psychological consequences associated with different treatments but the treatment-related harms that affect people profoundly,” she explains. “If the extra weeks of life gained from a new treatment are spent in hospital or confined to your house or bed because of overwhelming problems like fatigue, vomiting or chronic diarrhoea, what have you actually gained?”

“It’s important to remember that, although quality-of-life broadly covers physical, emotional, psychological and social wellbeing, in practice that will mean very different things for different patients,” she adds. “For a young person who has had an entirely curable cancer, it might mean, ‘Can I still do my job after treatment, go travelling, go on to have children?’ For an older person, maybe in the last phase of their life, it might be a question of, ‘Will I be able to see my grandchildren or enjoy a meal with friends and family?’ You can’t just measure a few standard things. You have to tailor your questions so that they’re appropriate for the patient’s age, stage and lifestyle.”

“My team has developed ways to assess what many thought was immeasurable, so that doctors can present more even-handed information about treatment, and patients can weigh up what’s right for them,” explains Dame Lesley. “I think we’ve increased recognition of the importance of involving patients in evaluating the harms and benefits of treatment enormously.”



GETTING HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ON BOARD

If a patient is going to make wise decisions about the treatment options available to them, or follow the recommendations they’re given about diet or how to take medication, health professionals need to understand the importance of getting communication with them right. The challenge for those who work in this highly complex field, with its own specialist terminology, is to consider the very different levels of knowledge that patients may have. Coupled with an often-extreme degree of fear and worry about their diagnosis, this can have a huge impact on what someone actually takes away from a consultation with their doctor, as opposed to what the doctor thinks they’ve communicated.

Dame Lesley is particularly focused on improving the postgraduate communication skills training of senior doctors and nurses in the UK and abroad. “There’s no point in just targeting young medical students if they then enter a culture that fails its patients further along the line. If we’re really going to change things, we need top-down education, not just bottom-up.”

“We’ve had to be quite canny,” she reflects, “explaining to senior health professionals how acquiring better communication skills will enhance their own job satisfaction and wellbeing, as well as benefiting the patient.”

The team has also tackled potential resistance from more senior individuals by running courses to help them teach junior colleagues. That way, they are learning together and issues of professional pride are reduced.

From training courses and workshops to commissions to produce DVDs and web-based materials around certain topics, such as how to talk to patients who have advanced cancer, SHORE-C’s work is in huge demand.

“Our evidence-based communication skills training is being rolled out on a global scale,” says Dame Lesley. “It’s encouraging to know that our work is reaching so far and helping to improve life for people with cancer around the world.”

The team has also produced user-friendly information to give to patients contemplating entry into a clinical trial (where a new therapy is being tested). “We’ve produced DVDs for patients to take home to discuss with family and friends. We want them to be able to play the DVDs over and over again so that they are really sure about what’s involved and know which questions to ask when they next see their doctor.”

And the work doesn’t stop there. Recently, responding to the particular challenges and disruption that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought for cancer patients, Dame Lesley has been presenting a variety of podcasts to help patients manage their stress and anxiety. SHORE-C’s web pages also offer yoga videos and exercise apps. It’s all part of keeping patients at the centre of what they do.

“In time,” concludes Dame Lesley, “I’d like to see every cancer centre providing upfront, tailored, supportive care alongside treatment. Ensuring that people aren’t fatigued, depressed or feeling sick shouldn’t be a luxurious add-on – it should be part of good cancer care.” ■



SHORE-C – a three-pronged approach

Current research is focused on bladder, prostate and breast cancer, but the Centre’s aim is to improve patients’ experiences of all types of cancer, via three different routes:

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CLINICAL CANCER TREATMENT TRIALS: including development of reliable, validated patient-reported outcome measures and the coordination of the psychosocial/quality-of-life sub-studies within the trials.

SUPPORTIVE INTERVENTIONS: development and evaluation of interventions to improve side effects and the impact of a cancer diagnosis and its treatment on patients and their families.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS TRAINING: via a well-established, evidence-based suite of programmes and materials that are used worldwide and have been shown to enhance the professional effectiveness and personal satisfaction of healthcare professionals. This in turn improves interactions with patients and healthcare professional colleagues, patients’ understanding of their diagnoses, management plans and clinical trial recruitment.

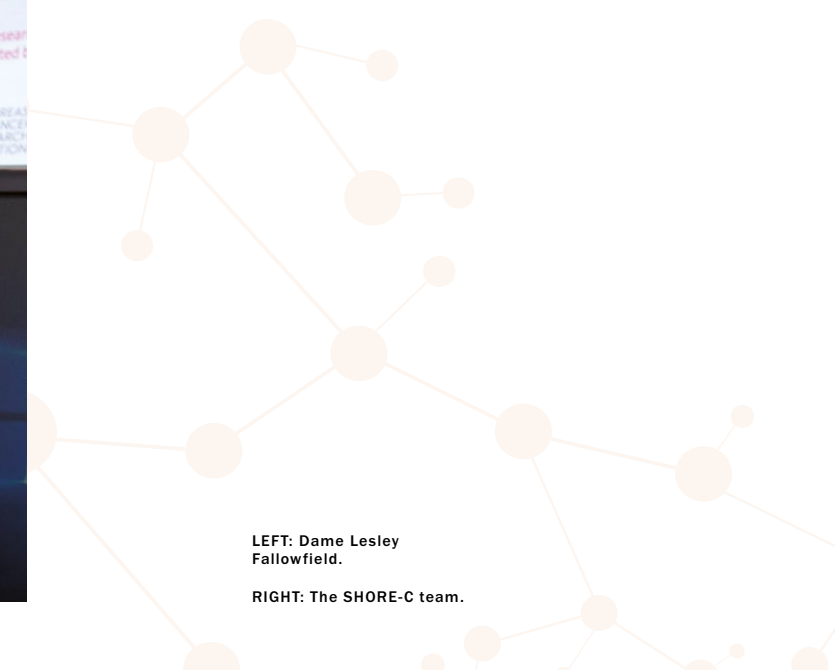
SHORE-C’s work is made possible by research grant income and charitable donations. If you are interested in supporting transformational cancer research at Sussex, please contact Robert.Yates@sussex.ac.uk

CANCER RESEARCH AT SUSSEX Research at Sussex is tackling cancer on many fronts, from the epidemiology and genetic basis of cancers to the diagnosis and imaging of disease, new cancer chemotherapeutic agents, and public health aspects, such as improving cancer awareness.

For more information, visit www.sussex.ac.uk/falmer

LEFT: Dame Lesley Fallowfield.

RIGHT: The SHORE-C team.



Research news

Research with impact is at the heart of Sussex's strategic framework. Our interdisciplinary and collaborative approach brings creative and innovative solutions to local, national and global issues. Here, we profile some of the latest developments and findings to come out of Sussex.



Research news in brief

Leading the development of Covid-19 forecasting reports

Dr Pierre Nouvellet, from the School of Life Sciences, has been **LEADING THE DEVELOPMENT OF COVID-19 FORECASTING REPORTS** used by public health organisations to guide public policy and better understand how the disease affects countries around the world. Dr Nouvellet's group has been producing weekly reports that forecast the reported number of Covid-19-related deaths in the week ahead.

Fifth state of matter created from home

Whilst working from home, Dr Amruta Gadge, a physicist from the Quantum Systems and Devices Laboratory, **SUCCESSFULLY CREATED THE FIFTH STATE OF MATTER USING QUANTUM TECHNOLOGY**. It's believed that this is the first time a Bose-Einstein condensate (BEC) has been created remotely in a lab that did not have one before, and it could provide a blueprint for operating quantum technology in inaccessible environments such as space.

Promoting the use of the arts to rise against fanaticism

Professor Raminder Kaur's play *Terror*, **BASED ON THE BRAVE STAND OF FARRAZ AYAAZ HOSSAIN** against violent insurgents in a Dhaka cafe in July 2016, was performed in London in November 2019. Professor Kaur says, "I wanted to explore what it takes for someone to stand up against extremism. Lecturing to change someone's views does not have as much impact as does the subliminal and visceral potential of recreated immersive worlds as happens in theatre."

Sussex and Rowse Honey celebrate 11-year research partnership

Since 2009, Rowse Honey has been generously funding the Laboratory of Apiculture and Social Insects' research on projects under the Sussex Plan for Honey Bee Health and Wellbeing. It facilitates **WORK ON DISEASE CONTROL AND FORAGING**, which is valuable for beekeepers and those trying to help bees both in the UK and worldwide.

DIGITAL

£8 million Digital Futures at Work Research Centre launches

Thanks to a flagship investment totalling £8 million from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Digital Futures at Work Research Centre (Digit) has launched, aiming to advance the understanding of how digital technologies are reshaping the future of work.

The Centre is run jointly by Professor Jacqueline O'Reilly from the University of Sussex Business School and Leeds University Business School's Professor Mark Stuart, along with partners from Aberdeen, Cambridge and Manchester Universities and a wide range of business and not-for-profit organisations.



Over the next five years, the Centre seeks to answer questions about the impact of new digital technologies on people and countries, in a bid to understand what needs to be done to make digital transformation more inclusive.

HEALTH

Possible Parkinson's treatment successfully targets two major nerve systems

According to the Parkinson's Foundation, more than 10 million people worldwide are living with Parkinson's disease.

While the disease can currently be managed by drugs, these tend to become ineffective after five years and present a number of side effects. An alternative is an invasive surgical procedure called deep brain stimulation (DBS) which uses electrodes to send pulses into the brain. However, this treatment produces mixed results and researchers believe this is because it stimulates every cell type, rather than just the specific cells affected by Parkinson's disease.

In 2015, scientists demonstrated that a form of gene therapy could target and stimulate a group of nerve cells affected by the disease, called cholinergic neurons. These cells degenerate as the disease progresses.

Now, thanks to brain imaging technology, they have discovered that their method, which targets cells that produce specific brain chemicals, can also successfully stimulate another type of neuron through cell-to-cell interactions.

Findings from a recent study by Dr Ilse Pienaar, Lecturer in Pharmacology at the University of

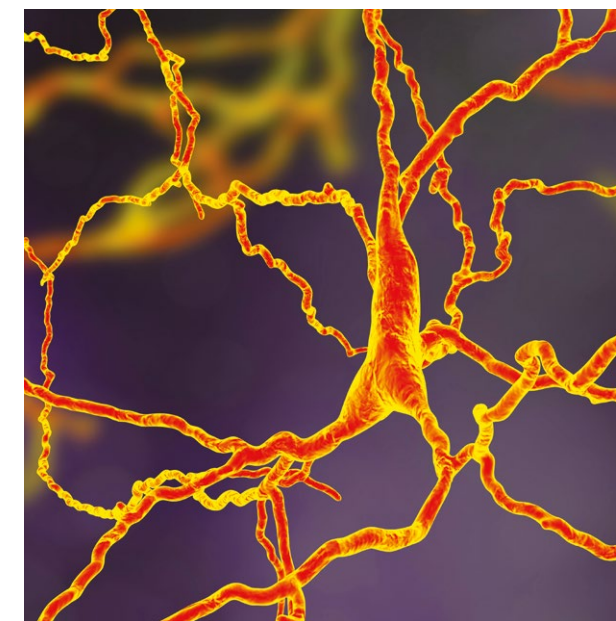
Sussex, along with colleagues at Imperial College London and Invicro, a precision medicine company, reveal a clear communication pathway between cholinergic neurons and dopaminergic neurons.

Dopaminergic neurons produce dopamine, but in Parkinson's disease these levels are reduced as neurons deactivate and eventually die.

Dr Pienaar says, "When we used brain imaging, we found that, as we activated cholinergic neurons, they then interacted directly with dopaminergic neurons. This seems to be a knock-on effect, so by targeting this one set of neurons, we now know that we are also able to stimulate dopaminergic neurons, effectively restarting the production of dopamine and reducing symptoms."

"This is really important as it reveals more about how nerve systems in the brain interact, but also that we can successfully target two major systems that are affected by Parkinson's disease in a more precise manner."

The technique could, in the future, provide a less invasive and more effective way to treat Parkinson's patients.



“ We now know that we are also able to stimulate dopaminergic neurons, effectively restarting the production of dopamine and reducing symptoms. ”

ENVIRONMENT

Rewilding can help to mitigate climate change

Research led by Dr Chris Sandom, founder of the Sandom Lab which studies palaeo, community and behavioural ecology, has provided a global assessment of the potential for trophic rewilding – reintroducing lost species that are known to have cascading effects on the food web – to help mitigate change and deliver a diverse range of benefits to the environment with varied regional impacts.

This typically means reintroducing large herbivores and top predators, or species known to engineer more diverse and complex habitats and benefit biodiversity.

Dr Sandom says, “The key thing to remember here is that nature is complex and it needs to be complex. Trophic rewilding aims to restore nature, including its complexity, and then to allow it to take its own path. This path will be different depending on time, place and chance. The good news is this will also bring with it a diversity of outcomes. Diversity is good because the needs of people and nature are diverse too.”

In the study, Dr Sandom and colleagues from Australia, America, Denmark and Sweden assessed scenarios in various regions across the globe to ascertain where restoring species which still exist today could help to mitigate climate change.

In some parts of the world, such as Europe and North America, most of the large predators (lions) and herbivores (elephants) have become extinct. However, by returning healthy wolf populations, the number of any remaining large herbivores, such as deer, could be reduced, allowing a greater opportunity for vegetation to grow and provide mitigating effects on climate change.



PSYCHOLOGY

The damaging effects of eating junk food regularly

New research by psychologists in Australia, the USA and the University of Sussex shows that regularly eating junk food can impair memory and appetite control.

The research team tested the effect of a ‘Western-style’ diet rich in sugar and fat on tests of memory and appetite sensitivity that involve the hippocampus – a small area of the brain which is key for normal memory function.

The researchers asked lean and fit volunteers who normally ate a balanced diet to eat one meal that was high in sugar and saturated fat every day for a week and compared them with other volunteers who continued to eat a healthy, balanced diet all week.

All the volunteers performed simple hippocampal-dependent tests to assess their memory, learning and appetite control. The scientists observed a rapid decline in the fast-food group’s learning and memory abilities, together with a loss of appetite control.

Professor Martin Yeomans, who researches appetite and nutrition at the Sussex Ingestive Behaviour Group and helped structure the study, says, “Our new study adds weight to growing evidence that habitual consumption of an unhealthy diet has a knock-on effect on the brain. This change leads to a vicious cycle which might explain why people find it progressively harder to switch to a healthy diet even when they are aware that their diet is leading to weight gain and consequent health problems.”



CHEMISTRY

New use for stockpiles of nuclear waste

Depleted uranium (DU) is a radioactive by-product from the process used to create nuclear energy. With many fearing the health risks from DU, it is either stored in expensive facilities or used to manufacture controversial armour-piercing missiles.

By using a catalyst that contains depleted uranium, a team of researchers at Sussex have managed to convert ethylene (an alkene used to make plastic) into ethane (an alkane used to produce a number of other compounds including ethanol).

Working in collaboration with researchers at the University of Toulouse and Humboldt University of Berlin, the Sussex chemists discovered that an organometallic molecule based on depleted uranium could catalyse the addition of a molecule of hydrogen to the carbon-carbon double bond in ethylene – the simplest member of the alkene family – to create ethane.

Professor Richard Layfield says, “The ability to convert alkenes into alkanes is an important chemical reaction that means we may be able to take simple molecules and upgrade them into valuable commodity chemicals, like hydrogenated oils and petrochemicals that can be used as an energy source.” Professor Geoff Cloke adds, “Nobody has thought to use DU in this way before. While converting ethylene into ethane is nothing new, the use of uranium is a significant milestone.”

Their work is a breakthrough that could help reduce the heavy burden of large-scale storage of DU, and lead to the transformation of more complicated alkenes.



Nobody has thought to use depleted uranium in this way before.



SOCIAL JUSTICE

Injustices faced by LGBTIQ+ asylum claimants

New research from the School of Law, Politics and Sociology’s SOGICA team (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Claims of Asylum) is reporting on the often harrowing experiences of people who claim asylum in the UK, Germany and Italy for reasons of sexual orientation or gender identity. To help illustrate the team’s research, [the University of Sussex is producing films with asylum claimants, all tied together with the theme of #IAmWhoISaylam](#), reflecting individuals’ struggles to prove their identity.





Playing the long game

From treating crop blights to potential therapies for neurological diseases, Professor of Biochemistry Tony Moore explains why decades of research on the alternative oxidase, a mitochondrial enzyme, is now flourishing.

WORDS BY JACQUI BEALING

Illustration of *Trypanosoma brucei*, the parasite that causes African sleeping sickness.

“ We had a couple of breakthroughs in the 1970s. It was still blue-skies research, but I began to see the potential for [AOX’s] application in increasing crop production. ”

In 1969, while on a student placement, Professor Tony Moore came across an enzyme in plant cells that was to determine the course of his scientific career.

At the time, very little was known about the alternative oxidase (AOX) except that it was found in the cells of heat-generating plants such as titan arum, whose magnificent blooms unfortunately smell like rotting meat.

Following decades of remarkable research, so much is now understood about the AOX’s crucial role in plant cell respiration that Tony Moore is currently working with scientists across the globe, testing compounds to combat crop and human fungal diseases. He’s also looking at the therapeutic implications for AOX in treating human infections and illnesses, including sepsis, Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s.

It’s testament to how blue-skies research can lead to real-world practical applications, and to Tony’s endless enthusiasm for his science.

“I always felt like research should have a degree of applicability,” he says. “I spend a lot of time at the Eden Project in Cornwall when they have new titan arum in flower, giving talks

about how we have come up with AOX inhibitors that will lead to new treatments for disease. People think they’re not going to understand a word I say, but they do, and they seem to like that I can put it into context.”

Tony was an undergraduate in biology at Hatfield Polytechnic when he took a year’s placement at Shell’s former agrochemical research lab in Sittingbourne, Kent.

“They were interested in herbicides and got me involved in trying to isolate mitochondria [the part of the cell that produces energy] from plant tissue to characterise the respiratory chain,” he says. “We know that mitochondria in animal cells are sensitive to cyanide: it stops their respiratory chain. But plant mitochondria aren’t so sensitive to cyanide. We wanted to know what that was all about. That’s when I first came across this enzyme.”

During the next few years, as he progressed through a PhD, research placements and fellowships in the UK and the US, Tony was among a band of scientists pursuing the answers to fundamental questions about AOX. »

Working with other biochemists enabled Tony to devise ever more accurate techniques to isolate and study the enzyme, and to work out that its role involved providing an alternative respiratory pathway (hence its name) when a plant is under stress.

"We had a couple of breakthroughs in the 1970s when we found that AOX was present in all plant mitochondria," he recalls. "It was still blue-skies research, but I began to see the potential for its application in increasing crop production. Then we also found AOX in fungi and some parasites."

By the time he arrived at Sussex in 1979 as a lecturer in biochemistry, Tony was receiving Research Council grants and funding from major players in industry, including Unilever, Dow AgroScience and Syngenta, to help support his research and PhD students.

"It opened up a whole new side when we began looking at how we could control plant fungal pathogens, potentially through making new compounds that were targeted to stop the function of AOX," he says. "We now think that the enzyme is more than two billion years old. It dates from when there was no oxygen in the atmosphere and bacteria were anaerobic. When oxygen came into the atmosphere, organisms needed a mechanism to get rid of it, because oxygen itself is incredibly harmful, so the enzyme was formed."

In 2007, after eight years in the University's senior leadership team, Tony returned "to the coalface" and began working with scientists at the Universities of Tokyo and Nagasaki who were looking at *Trypanosoma brucei*, the parasite that causes African sleeping sickness, that also has an AOX.

"We thought we could share our expertise, and that has continued," he says. "Together, we were able to crystallise the structure for the first time, which allowed us to design specific inhibitors."

Now, Tony's collaborations with universities and industry has led to a string of compounds patented by the University of Sussex, with a spin-out company to develop these compounds into agrochemical and pharmaceutical treatments.

He is currently working with: the University of Kent to evaluate new inhibitors for the highly drug-resistant human fungal infection *Candida auris*; the University of Campinas in Brazil to test compounds to treat blights that are devastating crops of bananas and cocoa; and Finnish researchers to see if AOX could help protect against septic shock.

AOX also has potential for gene therapy for neurological diseases, such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, and Tony is working on this with medical researchers in Newcastle, Finland and Germany.

With so many exciting and promising applications, investors have tried to lure Tony away from his labs in the University of Sussex. But he is staying put for very good reason.

"I have a lot of loyalty to Sussex," he says. "It has been very good to me. It has offered me management and supported my work and opened up new avenues to me. If this company is going to become successful, then Sussex should reap the benefit."

As for his career, he shows no sign of slowing down. "My wife keeps asking me when I'm going to retire, but I'm as enthusiastic as ever, and I'm surrounded by young, motivated and highly intelligent students and postdocs who want to carry on with the work."

To see more of Professor Tony Moore's work, visit our [Collaborate case studies](#) web page. ■



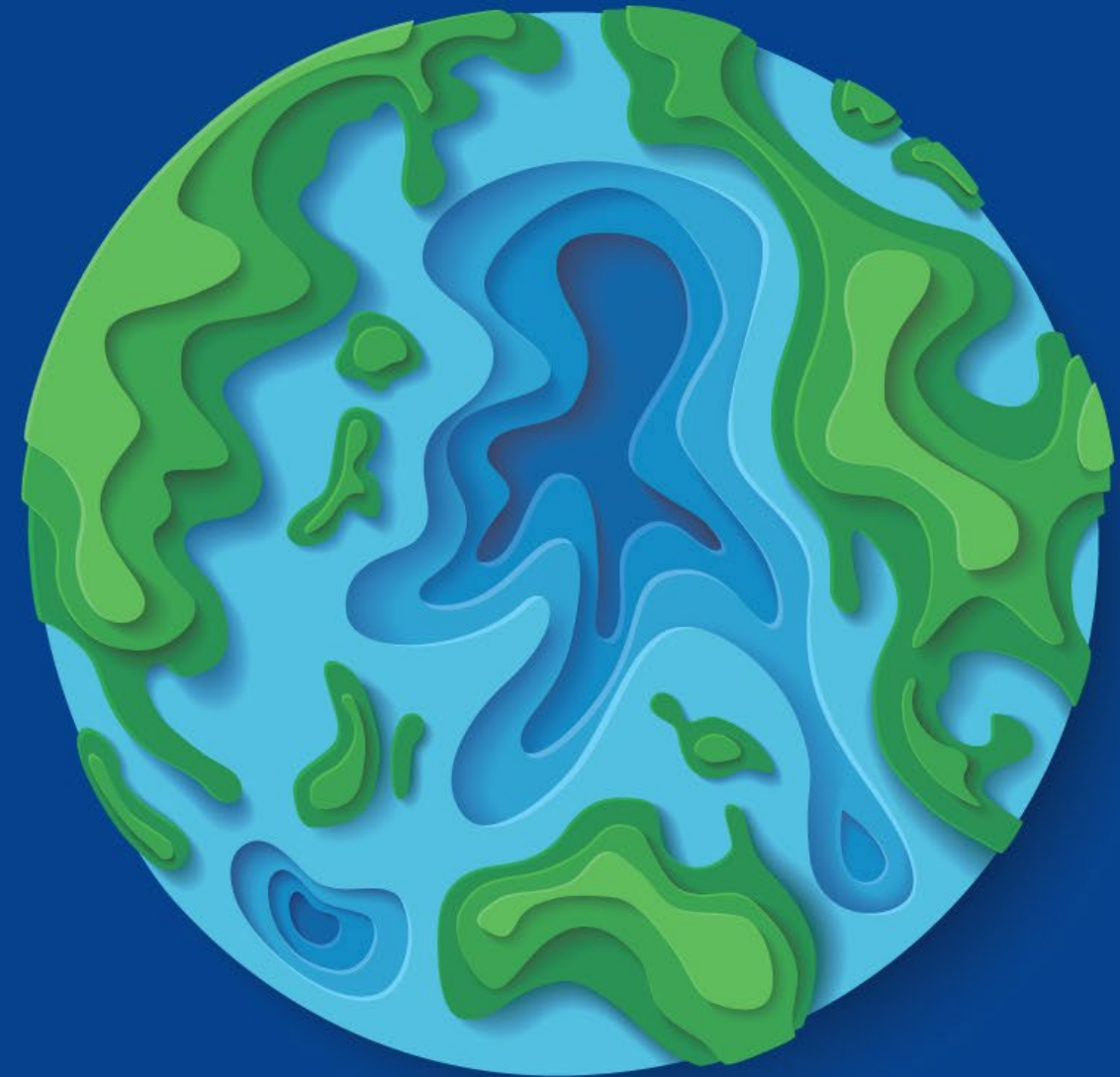
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AOX also has potential for gene therapy for neurological diseases, such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

”

Amid the despair and uncertainty induced by the Covid-19 pandemic, is there an opportunity to build a more ecologically minded world? **Professor Peter Newell**, Co-founder and Research Director at the Rapid Transition Alliance, believes there could be, and he is generating 'evidence-based hope' for a rapid and socially just transition to sustainability.

WORDS BY **PETER NEWELL**



Making sustainability the 'new normal'

“
We need bold leadership. There is a key role for governments in setting targets, building ownership, convening key actors and using all levers of state power to support positive change.
”

The University of Sussex is home to the [Rapid Transition Alliance](#), whose Co-founder and Research Director is Professor Peter Newell from the University's department of International Relations. With over 90 civil society organisations as members, the Rapid Transition Alliance seeks to show that, when societies and governments put their minds to it, dramatic and positive change is possible. Crucially, many of the lessons learned from historical examples of rapid change, apply to the current Covid-19-induced crisis.

The pandemic has exposed the frailties of our food systems. Just-in-time production and complex global supply chains don't respond well to shocks, whatever the cause, and are reliant on the widespread use of fossil fuels. In the vacuum left by recently disrupted supply chains, many regions are experimenting with sourcing more goods from local producers. It is both a way of boosting local economies and improving the sustainability of food systems.

In the Belgian city of Liège, for example, local groups have developed a food-earth belt named the Ceinture Aliment-Terre Liégeoise (CATL) to source local food from across the Southern region of Wallonia. Once put in place, it could create 44,000 jobs and generate €3.9 billion by feeding 3.5 million people with food grown on one-third of the area's agricultural land.

We have also learned that working from home, online meetings and webinars mean we can successfully reduce unnecessary travel. This forced experiment in remote working could help us chart ways to reduce our emissions in the battle against climate change, as some cities are doing by implementing cycle lanes and car-free zones.

The oil economy has been shaken to its foundations, if only temporarily. But the necessity to reduce our use of fossil fuels – if we are to hit the Paris Climate Agreement targets and keep the world below 1.5 degrees Celcius warming – makes the argument for capitalising on the plummeting prices of renewable energy stack up even more. This could boost our energy security and the sustainability of our energy systems, as well as underpin measures to help tackle energy poverty through better insulation and retrofits of houses.

But sustainability is not just about the environment. It also has social and economic dimensions. We know that one of the reasons the coronavirus was able to spread so rapidly is because people on insecure contracts with no job security felt the need to keep working, even when unwell and without proper protection. We know poorer and more marginalised black and ethnic minority groups have been harder hit with ill-health and deaths. They need to be the first beneficiaries of any concerted efforts to build back better and greener.

As supporters of the Green New Deal (a proposed package of US legislation that aims to address climate change and economic inequality) argue, programmes for re-training workers for jobs in the green economy and targeted support for local businesses paid for through taxes on pollution, could transform the economy for the better. It would also redirect the \$10 billion that gets spent every minute on fossil fuel subsidies.

“
If we are to build back better and greener, we need to do things differently and to challenge business-as-usual. Bold ideas often emerge in crisis settings.
”

Precedents exist for a Green New Deal. It has been estimated that, between January 1933 and December 1940, \$21.1 billion was spent on public relief and federal works programmes under President Roosevelt's New Deal (a series of public works projects, financial reforms and regulations enacted during the recovery from the Great Depression). This amounted to around 3.5% of US GDP at that time and would have been the equivalent of £50 billion a year in the UK in the 2008 post-financial crisis period.

Although it might feel as though we are in uncharted territory, we actually know quite a lot about when change happens and how to accelerate it. Firstly, we need bold leadership. There is a key role for governments in setting targets, building ownership, convening key actors and using all levers of state power to support positive change.

At the time of writing, Spain is proposing an impressive draft climate law which includes a proposed timetable for the administration 'to divest from any holdings in companies or organisations whose activities include the extraction, refining or processing of energy products of fossil origin.' This comes on the back of other countries agreeing to leave fossil fuels in the ground, from New Zealand and France to Costa Rica and Belize.

Secondly, we need different entry points. It's not all about climate change. Job security, health, wellbeing and community resilience offer ways to highlight and deliver on the co-benefits of action for sustainability. Climate change wasn't the main driver for India's solar mission; neither was it for retrofitting homes, which was about bringing down energy bills and creating jobs, or going for car-free city centres which is mainly about reducing chronic levels of air pollution.

Thirdly, perceptions of a fair share are key. These were crucial to the success of war-time rationing. Transitions need to be just if they are to be socially acceptable. In the current context, think of frequent flying and the need to target the 15% of the UK population who are collectively responsible for 80% of aviation emissions.

So, if we are to build back better and greener, we need to do things differently and to challenge business-as-usual. Bold ideas often emerge in crisis settings. The Green New Deal first emerged after the financial crisis of 2007-8 and the original New Deal was a post-war economic solution. Can the current climate emergency become a mobilising moment to build a more sustainable future? In a way, it has to – for all our sakes. ■





A little more conversation

Through the Role Models project, Sussex students are opening up discussions about difficult topics with young people in local schools. Alumna **Matilda Lawrence-Jubb** (English Literature 2017) and current student **Niranjanraj Ramasundaram** (Development Studies MA 2019) share their experiences as Role Models volunteers.

WORDS BY MOLLY WHYTE

“
We asked, ‘What would you do if a girl came into school with bruises?’
The interpretations of that situation were so different amongst a group of young people.
”



What do you wish you'd known when you were younger? That's the question at the heart of the Role Models project. Set up at the Students' Union in 2015, the initiative brings University of Sussex students and secondary school pupils together to discuss and reflect on topics such as healthy relationships, media literacy and mental health. With the support of project coordinator Emily Davies (Sociology 2015) and assistant AI Casey (Psychology 2012), the trained student volunteers plan and facilitate in-school sessions, working in both small groups and one-to-one. The project also runs elective modules with the School of Education and Social Work.

For Matilda Lawrence-Jubb, who grew up in London, the social pressures of being a teenager made for a tricky time. “Being a teenager is tough! You're coming face-to-face with so many experiences for the first time and you feel totally inadequate,” she says.

After university, Matilda spent time working in a sixth-form college as part of the action-oriented postgraduate programme Year Here. Although returning to a school setting felt like a big deal to start with, she embraced the opportunity, thinking at the time, “This is my responsibility, to go back in to share what I know now and to help give young people the tools and skills they need to get through difficult situations.”

Niranjanraj Ramasundaram, known as Niranjan, is a Masters student from Mumbai. He initially worried that he wouldn't have enough in common with fellow Role Models volunteers or pupils. He soon realised that shared experiences across India and the UK were plentiful. “There's this crucial period from ages 14 to 18 where there's a sense that this is your make or break period – there's a lot of pressure.”

Both especially see the value in talking more about sex and relationships, including gender expression and sexuality. “It's like you're taught how to use a condom, but you're not taught

about the awkwardness of asking to put one on – the conversations and the feelings that surround the situation, not just the biological side,” explains Matilda.

Learning how to express thoughts and feelings on challenging subjects can have a wider impact on resilience from adolescence into adulthood. Niranjan sees how “these skills that you pick up – healthy dialogue and relationships – are critical to how you cope with setbacks.”

Niranjan is excited to be working collaboratively with the project on his dissertation research. “We'll be looking to unpack the journey of the volunteers on this programme, from understanding what motivated them to what this experience means for their personal development and how they see this within the broader context of their role as agents of social change,” he says.

Both Niranjan and Matilda recognise how the university years can bring their own challenges, such as adjusting to the academic workload and making friends in a new place. Though “learning lots” while taking modules in areas like postcolonial literature and experimental writing, Matilda found being a Role Models volunteer “a breath of fresh air.” She says, “It made me feel more like a member of the Brighton community than I did before.”

Niranjan, who completed his undergraduate studies in India, experienced a transition from the start-up space he worked in as a recent graduate to the development sector. He's bringing this thinking to the project, by first “understanding the context of people's lived experiences, recognising them as the experts of their life, and then looking to co-create knowledge and/or interventions with them.”

For him as well, Role Models is a meaningful way to engage with young people – through a tried and tested participatory approach – and to forge connections with other volunteers. Putting this into practice takes courage. “You've studied something but now it's about going out there and executing it,” Niranjan says.

Matilda saw bravery in the pupils too. “When you break into small groups, they let their guard down a little bit and show real courage in front of their peers, saying things they might normally feel are taboo.”

In 2019, the practical skills Matilda gained influenced her to co-found Split Banana with Anna Alexander, a 2018 Fellow on the Year Here programme. The social enterprise delivers inclusive and relevant relationship and sex education to young people, as well as teacher training and co-creation workshops with adults.

Thinking back to her most memorable conversation during the project, Matilda recalls a discussion with four year-nine boys, in which they used emoji cards to identify their feelings in response to given situations. “We asked, ‘What would you do if a girl came into school with bruises?’ The interpretations of that situation were so different amongst a group of young people who were growing up in very different contexts. That was really powerful because, if you're not having these conversations, then who is?” ■

In 2019/20, the Role Models volunteer programme was funded by the Office for Students through the Sussex Learning Network as part of the Uni Connect programme, the Blgrave Trust and the University of Sussex.

After years of fundraising and construction, the Gardner Arts Centre opened with a concert by the London Mozart Players on 12 November, 1969. Here, we share some 50th anniversary highlights and a selection of alumni memories.

Flights of historic fancy

MARKING 50 YEARS

Curated by Laura McDermott, Creative Director at Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, the autumn 2019 season included *To the Moon*, a virtual reality piece created by Laurie Anderson and Hsin-Chien Huang that responded to the 50th anniversary of the moon landing in 1969; a concert and film screening on World Kindness Day by New Note Orchestra (a local addiction recovery orchestra) organised by Professor Robin Banerjee; and a 48-hour film challenge for University of Sussex students, organised by Dr Joanna Callaghan in collaboration with the CINECITY film festival. Return visits by seminal performance companies who have performed in the building over the years included Forced Entertainment and Stan's Café, who brought a special 1969-2019 version of their legendary performance installation *Of All The People In All The World*.

THE SOUNDS OF SUSSEX

In October 2019, a new music recording studio opened at Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts for use by students, researchers, visiting artists and eventually the local community. It was named the Jonathan Harvey Electronic Music Studio after Jonathan Harvey (pictured, working in his office), who was Professor of Music at University of Sussex from 1977 to 1993. Jonathan Harvey was a pioneer in the field of electronic music, and it is a fitting testament to his legacy that the room he used as a studio during his tenure has been refurbished and named in his honour.

The launch event was organised by Dr Evelyn Ficarra (ENGAM 1982) and included sound installations, compositions, DJ sets and a concert featuring Cristian Vogel (CCS 1992) and the punk band Squid.

Squid band member Arthur Leadbetter (Music 2013) said, "I'm so happy this building is in its best action ever, and that the music department here is flourishing. Long live Sussex."

ORCHESTRAL FINALE

The 50th anniversary season concluded with a special performance by the University of Sussex Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Professor Ed Hughes and featuring Shin Suzuma (Music Informatics 2008) playing the piano. The orchestra recreated the repertoire of a concert given by the University of Sussex orchestra in 1969: Brahms' Academic Festival Overture, Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 3 and Stravinsky's Symphony in C. The programme notes for the original concert were written by the author Ian McEwan CBE (English 1967), when he was an undergraduate student. Ian joined us for the evening and read some of his work aloud – also sharing anecdotes from his memory of the concert 50 years previously where, dramatically, a timpani drum unbalanced and bounced across the stage.

ALUMNI MEMORIES

A wonderful place. Apart from attending various productions over the years, it was here that I had my first photographic exhibition. As a young undergraduate, the support I received from the team there was invaluable in kick-starting my passion.

DAVID BIDDLECOMBE (ENGG 1978)

The first entirely student production was *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* by John Arden. Michael Attenborough and Jim Carter were amongst the leading lights. Jim was the model for the poster I produced which, sort of flatteringly, disappeared from quite a lot of sites before the performances even started.

FRITZ CURZON (EURO 1966)

[I remember] a *Macbeth* in 1977/78. All the characters wore identical tracksuits with a little embroidered crown logo depending who was king. It was my first *Macbeth* and I was so confused!

JESSICA NORRIE (EURO 1977)

I performed here as a visiting third year student in 1971/72. A wonderful production written by Amit Sen called *Coral/West...* Very avant-garde to say the least! Does anyone remember *Ubu Roi* performed in the courtyard, where we sailed off in a boat in the moat? The most fun!

ROBIN KRIEGER (ENGAM 1971)

OUR BRIGHTON FESTIVAL PARTNERSHIP

Looking to the future, we will continue our partnership with Brighton Festival – University of Sussex is a major sponsor of the festival – alongside many other festivals and organisations in the city. Artists featured in past editions of Brighton Festival include Doris Lessing who appeared in the literature programme in 2004 and Jaamil Olawale Kosoko, who performed in *Séancers* in 2019. Presented in association with The Marlborough Pub & Theatre as part of a project called Black Joy, *Séancers* was conceived, convened by and centred Black artists in a series of performances, workshops, residencies and a three-day gathering held at Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts. ■



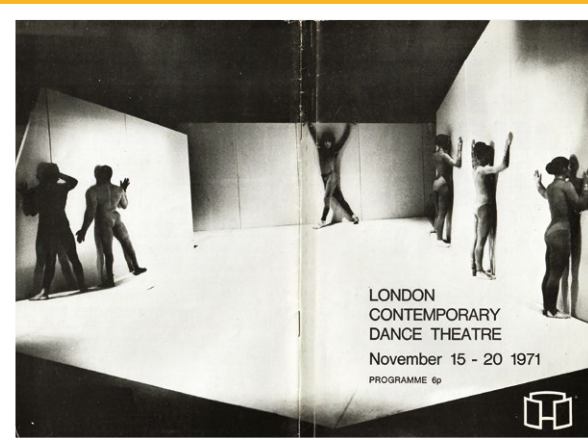
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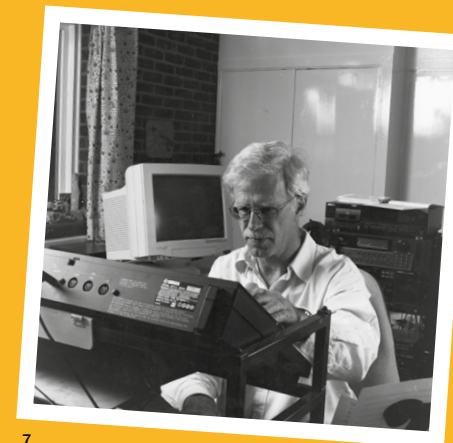
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7

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX THEATRE CLUB PRESENT: GARDNER CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

Sarah Willis James Carter

With

Nicolas Woodson Micheal Attenborough

Sgt Musgrave's Dance

by director designer

JOHN ARDEN JOHN MCKAY LAURENCE SOUTHOON

TUESDAY 3 MARCH to SATURDAY 7 MARCH at 7.30 p.m. MATINEES at 2.30 p.m. on Wed. & Sat.

TICKETS 8/- Arts Centre Box Office University of Sussex OBR3-680861 or 66755

1. Photo of local theatre group, from David Biddlecombe's exhibition in the Gardner Arts Centre.

2. The building under construction.

3. Doris Lessing, during Brighton Festival 2004, standing near the windows in the Gardner Arts Centre.

4. A flyer for *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*, March 1970.

5. Programme from London Contemporary Dance Theatre, November 1971.

6. Jaamil Olawale Kosoko performing in *Séancers*, Brighton Festival 2019.

7. Jonathan Harvey.

View the online 'archival advert calendar' of 50 snapshots online by searching #ACCAGARDNER50 and add your memories at www.sussex.ac.uk/falmer

Mentoring matters

We are enormously grateful to the hundreds of dedicated and inspirational alumni who volunteer their time for Sussex, sharing their wealth of expertise and skills with our students and alumni community. Here, we focus on mentoring and introduce you to some of our committed volunteers.

WORDS BY RACHEL DYSON



Alumni volunteers contribute a huge amount to Sussex. Overseas, our alumni consuls act as ambassadors for the University, wherever they live, and are a contact point for alumni, students and prospective students. Closer to home, many alumni return to campus to give talks and help students as they approach the start of their careers. Online, on Sussex Connect, thousands of alumni have indicated that they are willing to help students and other alumni by acting as mentors, opening doors at their place of work or providing industry-specific advice.

One such volunteer is Aydan Richards. Aydan left Sussex in 2018, with a BA in Languages and Linguistics and an MA in International Marketing, to take up his place as an SAP Applications Consultant at Capgemini.

In February 2020, Aydan returned to Sussex to appear on a panel at our Make It Happen talk for students interested in a career in business, marketing and finance, where he shared his experience of being on a graduate scheme and some tips for those thinking of applying. Aydan has also undertaken training for the Business School's alumni-student mentoring scheme and is looking forward to working with a student mentee once they have been matched. In addition, through Sussex Connect, Aydan has volunteered to answer questions specific to his industry and make introductions to people in his network.

While studying at Sussex, Aydan was not part of an official mentoring programme. However, he is grateful to two of his tutors in particular – one from his BA and another from his MA – with whom he organically developed a mentor/mentee-like relationship. He has also seen the immediate benefit of these sorts of relationships through the 'buddy' programme at Capgemini, in which new members of the graduate scheme are linked with someone ahead of them on a similar path. Having been matched from day one with a buddy who also graduated from Sussex, Aydan has now in turn become a buddy to a new graduate, and sees the value of these partnerships from both sides.

When asked what motivates him to volunteer for Sussex, he says that he wants to maintain his connection to the University. Aydan formed solid friendships here and has enjoyed having opportunities to come back to campus regularly.

To anyone considering becoming a Sussex alumni volunteer, he says "Do it! One hundred per cent. It is a great way to give something back and benefit too." »

“
It is a great way to give something back and benefit too.
”

ABOVE: (L-R) Alumni speakers Polly Gilbert, Yiheng Yu, Molly Masters, Aydan Richards and Nikhila Gopal at Make It Happen, February 2020.

LEFT: Aydan and students in the networking session of Make It Happen, February 2020.

A MATCH MADE ON SUSSEX CONNECT

Prateek Sureka (Technology and Innovation Policy 2008) and Sandi Gendi (Law 2017) became mentor and mentee through using Sussex Connect, our exclusive online professional development platform for Sussex students and alumni.

Having been a Law Student Mentor in her final year, Sandi knew how valuable the experience can be for both parties and what she was looking for in a mentor. Sandi searched the directory to find suitable alumni who were “willing to help” and approached a few people before finding the right match in Prateek. They both feel that they have benefited greatly from their partnership.

“The experience as a mentor has been extremely rewarding, and I cannot think of a better way to pay it forward,” says Prateek. “Becoming a mentor has helped me to expand my horizon. I have been inspired by the capacity that the mentees have for taking risks. The relationships have prompted me to remember that every person’s story has many hidden layers around perseverance, success and failure. The idea that we get to be part of someone else’s life and help them to succeed early on should be considered a privilege.

“My biggest take away from my mentoring experience is that everyone has their own stories of trials and triumphs of the job-hunting process. Like peeling the layers off an onion, there are some tears along the way. The mentoring relationship is not just about the job search, but about understanding the isolation that comes from starting anew and how it

affects the mentee. One can form a life-long relationship through the mentoring process. To anyone considering volunteering as a Sussex Connect mentor, I say, do it.”

For Sandi, “often, students want someone already in the field of work to help them transition from student life to their professional life. Since meeting Prateek and working with him as his mentee, I have landed interviews in policy-focused, development-driven positions and I’m now an Intern with Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, a global NGO associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications, ECOSOC and UNESCO. I would not have been able to land this position without his help and guidance.

“Mentors really can help students change their lives, as I have found with my current mentor. More than that, mentors can become dear friends as they continue to help you.”

Sandi graduated from University of Sussex in 2019 with a Bachelor of Law with Business and Management.

Prateek is the Political-Economic Specialist at the US Consulate General in Toronto. He holds an MSc in Technology and Innovation Policy from the University of Sussex and a joint associate degree from the London School of Economics and the University of Oxford in Foreign Policy and Diplomacy. ■

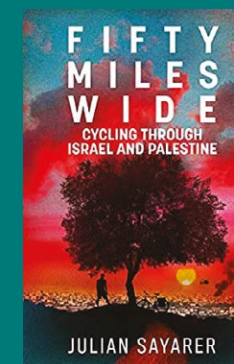
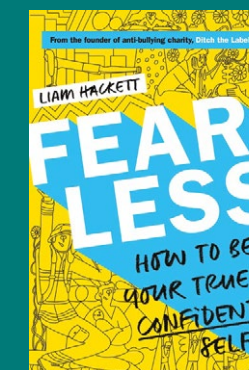
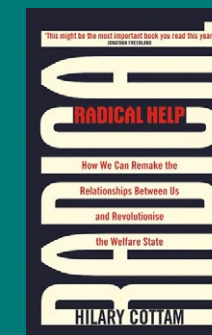
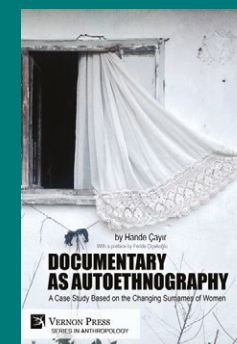
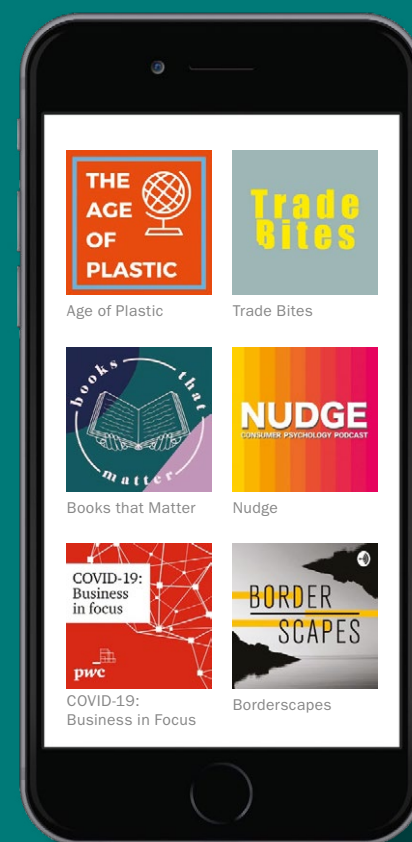
Expand your network, seek a mentor or offer to help others by joining Sussex Connect at www.sussexconnect.org



ABOVE: Sandi Gendi

LEFT: Prateek Sureka

“Mentors really can help students change their lives, as I have found with my current mentor.”



Alumni library

PODCASTS

ANDREA FOX (ENGLISH AND MEDIA STUDIES 2003), *Age of Plastic*. This podcast is for people who care about the planet. Each episode tackles a specific issue on how we can live more sustainably.

MOLLY MASTERS (ENGLISH 2015), *Books That Matter*. An offshoot of Molly’s award-winning feminist box subscription service, the *Books That Matter* podcast discusses women and literature, featuring interviews with diverse authors and feminist icons.

PHILLIP AGNEW (MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT 2002), *Nudge*. Phillip’s psychology podcast explores what a 1960s murder can teach us about marketing today, and why marketers pay more to show you ads when you’re happy.

ROWENA MORRIS (PRODUCT DESIGN 2007), *COVID-19: Business in Focus*. Rowena hosts PwC UK’s podcast series, inviting industry experts to look at the steps businesses can take to stay resilient as the world responds and adapts to the virus.

Trade Bites. A podcast series from the UK Trade Policy Observatory at the University of Sussex about global trade policy, including Brexit and the world trading system.

Borderscapes. Produced by students on the Sussex’s MA podcasting module, *Borderscapes* looks at issues of crossing lines, starting with stories from three women in self-isolation.

BOOKS

HANDE ÇAYIR (JOURNALISM AND DOCUMENTARY PRACTICE 2018), *Documentary as Autoethnography: A Case Study Based on the Changing Surnames of Women*, Vernon Press. Women in Turkey are legally required to change their surnames when they marry. If they divorce, and wish to continue using their ex-husband’s surname, they must seek permission from both him and the state. Hande explores how such policies affect women and their rights.

HILARY COTTAM (DEVELOPMENT STUDIES 1991), *Radical Help: How We Can Remake the Relationships Between Us and Revolutionise the Welfare State*, Virago Books. Bringing welfare reform into the modern era, *Radical Help* argues that our 20th century system is beyond reform and suggests that we need to think differently about how we support the young, the old, the unwell and those seeking work.

GILL HASSON (SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY 1997), *Put Your Worries Away (Kids Can Cope series)*, Free Spirit Publishing. All children worry sometimes and they often need help learning how to deal with anxiety. In this picture book, young readers learn ways to help themselves when they feel anxious, nervous or fearful.

DEAN ATTA (PHILOSOPHY AND ENGLISH 2003), *The Black Flamingo*, Hachette UK. Partly written whilst in residence on campus in 2019, Dean’s second book uses verse to tell the story of a boy who comes to terms with his identity as a mixed-race gay teen and then finds his wings as a drag artist.

LIAM HACKETT (BUSINESS MARKETING 2009), *Fearless! How to be Your True, Confident Self*, Scholastic. Founder of anti-bullying charity Ditch the Label, Liam Hackett draws on interviews with inspirational people who have gone against the grain. *Fearless!* explores how the stereotypes we hold influence everything, from how we feel about our bodies to our career aspirations.

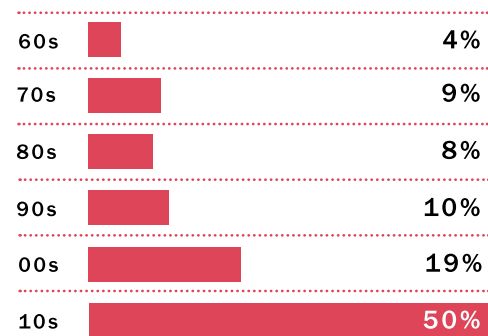
JULIAN SAYARER (INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS 2004), *Fifty Miles Wide: Cycling Through Israel and Palestine*, Arcadia Books. Ten years after breaking a world record for cycling around the world, award-winning travel writer Julian Sayarer returns to two wheels and takes to the roads of Israel and occupied Palestine.

See more podcasts and publications authored by alumni in the past year at www.sussex.ac.uk/falmer

In 2019, nearly 12,000 of you responded to our Alumni Survey, telling us how you'd like to stay connected with us – and with each other. Your views will continue to inform our engagement planning into the future. Thank you to everyone who took part. Here are some highlights...

Here's looking at you

WHEN DID YOU GRADUATE?



KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

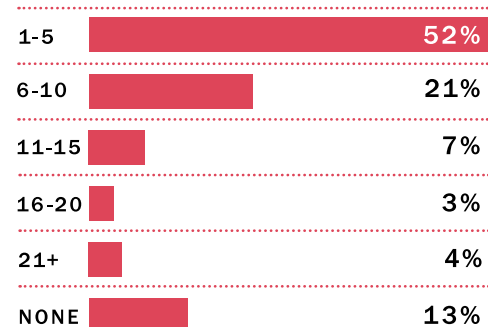


16%

16% OF YOU HAD OR HAVE FAMILY MEMBERS AT SUSSEX

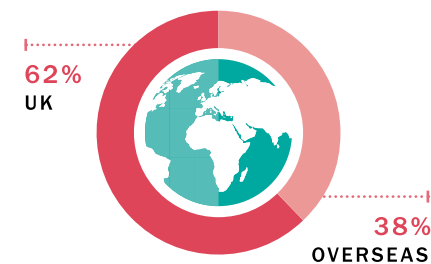
YOUR SUSSEX FRIENDS NETWORK

HOW MANY SUSSEX ALUMNI ARE YOU IN TOUCH WITH?



YOUR GLOBAL ALUMNI COMMUNITY

WE ASKED WHERE YOU CURRENTLY LIVE – AND HAD RESPONSES FROM MORE THAN 150 COUNTRIES!



YOUR SUSSEX EXPERIENCE

87%

SAID YOU WERE PROUD TO HAVE STUDIED AT SUSSEX

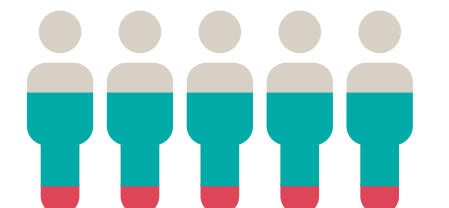
91%

SAID YOU HAD A GOOD TIME AT SUSSEX

51%

SAID YOU STILL FEEL CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THE UNIVERSITY

YOUR GENEROSITY



14%

HAVE MADE A DONATION TO THE UNIVERSITY

47%

HAVE VOLUNTEERED YOUR TIME OR WOULD LIKE TO DO SO

KEEPING IN TOUCH

77%

ARE HAPPY WITH THE LEVEL OF COMMUNICATIONS YOU RECEIVE FROM SUSSEX

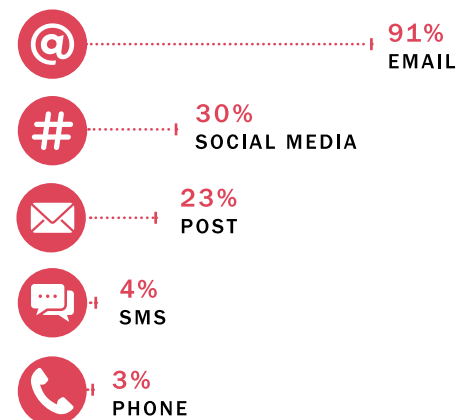
9%

WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE MORE

6%

WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE LESS

HOW YOU WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM US



You can update your details at any time in the alumni portal at alumni.sussex.ac.uk and send your views to alumni@sussex.ac.uk

Figures indicate the proportion of respondents to postal and email survey, October 2019.





Sussex teaches how we can move from a linear model – in which we take from the earth, make something from it and then dispose of it – to a circular model that is restorative and regenerative by design.



LUCY HUGHES
FROM 'SEA TO STORE'
PAGES 14-15

US

UNIVERSITY
OF SUSSEX