

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS // AUTUMN 2016

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## **A fond farewell**

Baroness Hale reflects on her time as Chancellor

## **Hole in the heart**

A revolution in medicine

## **The road ahead**

Your University launches a new strategy



# We thank our Chancellor for 13 years at the helm of the University



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## Features

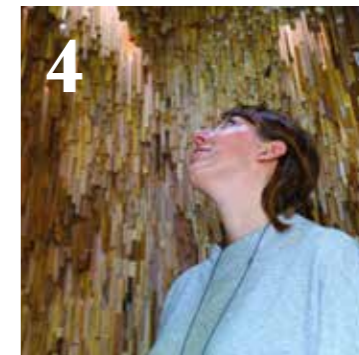
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Graduation 2016 © Bhagesh Sachania/Photography



News



University

## Nobel Prize winner announced as University's next Chancellor

Sir Paul Nurse, a Nobel Prize-winning scientist and former President of the Royal Society, has been named as the next Chancellor of the University of Bristol.

A leading geneticist and cell biologist, Sir Paul's work on the control of cell division underpins current research into treatments for cancer and other serious diseases.

His contributions to science were recognised with a knighthood in 1999. In addition, Sir Paul's endeavours relating to the discovery of molecules that regulate the cell cycle saw him jointly awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 2001.

Sir Paul said: 'I am delighted to have been appointed to be the University of Bristol's next Chancellor. Bristol is a university I have long admired: high quality research, great students and excellent

academics on its staff. It is an exciting time for the University with a new Vice-Chancellor at the helm.'

**'Universities have a huge role to play in providing knowledge and thought leadership as we develop a future Britain'**

Over the last 30 years, Sir Paul has held many senior research leadership roles, including Director General of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, and since 2011, Director and Chief Executive of the Francis Crick Institute.



Awards

### Writing residency award

Playwright Ian McHugh has been named as the first ever recipient of the annual Kevin Elyot Award by the University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

The award, created in the memory of the renowned playwright, screenwriter and Bristol drama alumnus, will support Ian to create a new dramatic work inspired by Kevin's archive, which was donated to the collection by his sister following his death in 2014.

The archive comprises hundreds of scripts, correspondence, manuscripts and publicity material detailing Kevin's work from initial idea to finished product from across his entire career.



Alumni

### Bristol alumni in Rio

It was two golds and a silver for Bristol alumni after 25-year-old hockey player Georgie Twigg (LLB 2012) helped her team to defeat defending champions the Netherlands in a tense final.

Hannah Mills (Diploma 2013), along with partner Saskia Clark, also netted top honours in the women's 470 sailing. The two golds, added to the silver won by Tom Mitchell (BA 2011) in the men's rugby 7s, means that if the University of Bristol were a country, it would lie 39th in the final medal table.



University

## Institute receives Classics funding

The A. G. Leventis Foundation has awarded a grant of £147,819 to the University of Bristol's Institute of Greece, Rome and the Classical Tradition.

The award will be used to fund a postdoctoral fellowship programme based within the Institute, continuing the support already received from the Foundation.

'We are delighted that the A. G. Leventis Foundation has once more agreed to fund a postdoctoral fellowship programme,' says Dr Nicoletta Momigliano, Reader in Aegean Prehistory and Director of the Institute.

'The current holder of the A. G. Leventis Fellowship in Greek Studies is Dr Adam Lecznar, whose research, teaching and outreach activities in local Bristol schools have been outstanding. We are very happy that another young scholar will be able to follow in his footsteps.'

The A. G. Leventis Foundation promotes Greek and Cypriot cultural heritage and supports numerous public benefit programmes, pioneering environmental projects and medical research.

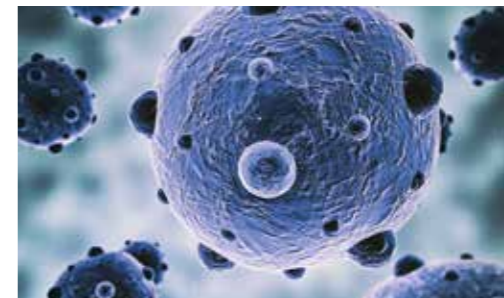


Awards

### Queen's Anniversary Prize

Professor Hugh Brady, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bristol, has been presented with the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher Education on behalf of the University.

The prize, also presented to Denis Burn (BSc 1975), Chair of the Board of Trustees, and Professor Katharine Cashman, leader of Bristol's Volcanology Group, is the highest accolade for any academic institution. HRH Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall gave the award in recognition of Bristol's world-leading research in volcanology.



Medicine

### Drug-resistant infections

A consortium of nine academics from the University of Bristol has been awarded £1.5 million to carry out research on antibiotic resistance (AMR) in animals and the risks it poses to humans.

The award, from the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the Medical Research Council (MRC) is part of the 'AMR in the Real World' call. A major aim of the University of Bristol project is to test whether AMR bacteria from cattle cause drug resistant infections in humans.

### In brief

Former Bristol academic and Nobel Prize winner **Professor Sir Angus Deaton** was awarded the University's highest honour earlier this year, an Honorary Fellowship, for his distinction in the field of economics. His research has had a significant and lasting impact at Bristol and around the world.

Aircraft engineer and Bristol graduate **Emma England (MEng 2013)** is flying the flag for women in engineering after being named the Best of British Engineering at the Semta Skills Awards.

**Katharine Cashman**, Professor of Volcanology in the School of Earth Sciences, and **Professor David Lodge**, Visiting Fellow in the School of Physiology and Pharmacology, have achieved the rare distinction of being elected fellows of the world's most eminent and oldest scientific academy in continuous existence: the Royal Society.

Bristol's **Dr Matthew Ridd** has been awarded the 2017 John Fry Award by the Royal College of General Practitioners and Society of Academic Primary Care. Dr Ridd is a practising GP and Senior Lecturer at the University of Bristol.

News

University

**1 Modernist grotto unveiled in Bristol**

Hollow, a piece of public artwork made from 10,000 tree samples from across the world, was unveiled by the University earlier this year.

City

**2 Royal Fort Garden awarded top accolade**

Bristol's Royal Fort Garden has been named one of the best green spaces in the country with a prestigious Green Flag Award.

Medicine

**3 A new bio-ink for 3D printing with stem cells**

Bristol scientists have developed a bio-ink containing stem cells, allowing 3D printing of living tissue for surgical implants.

University

**4 New student 'habitat' opens in landmark building**

The former Habitat store on Clifton Triangle has been transformed into a student centre, public reception and café.

Achievements

**5 Honorary degree awarded to FGM activist**

Activist Fahma Mohamed received a Doctor of Laws accolade from Bristol for her work on campaigns to end female genital mutilation.

University

**6 Bristol's courses are among the best in the world**

Data from the QS World University Rankings by Subject has listed 28 subjects taught by the University of Bristol in the world's top 100.

Students

**7 Bristol a cappella group claims national title**

The Bristol Suspensions beat off stiff competition to be named University A Cappella Champions at the Voice Festival UK.



# The road ahead



University

**A new focus on internationalisation, enhanced physical and digital infrastructure, stronger research partnerships and a first-class student experience... [Richard Elliott](#) gets the inside story on the University's new Vision and Strategy.**



The University is in the process of launching a new Strategy, outlining our ambitions and priorities and marking the beginning of a journey that will take us well beyond 2023. It's a masterplan that captures the collective ambition of staff, students and the wider Bristol family including our alumni, supporters, partners and benefactors, setting out our aspirations in six key areas: education and the student experience; research, innovation and partnerships; our staff and ways of working; internationalisation and global relations; physical and digital infrastructure; and sustainability, with ambitious targets.

Here are just a few of the highlights. You can expect to see and hear more about these strategic themes and associated projects as they progress over the coming years.

#### Education and the student experience

A renewed focus on teaching, learning and the student experience is one of the key touchstones of the new Strategy.

Through a new 'Bristol Futures' curriculum, the University will support students to complement the academic depth of their studies with the opportunity to take one of three personal development pathways, in innovation and enterprise, sustainability or global citizenship. This will ensure that Bristol's students develop the knowledge, skills, adaptability and resilience they need to thrive in a changing world.

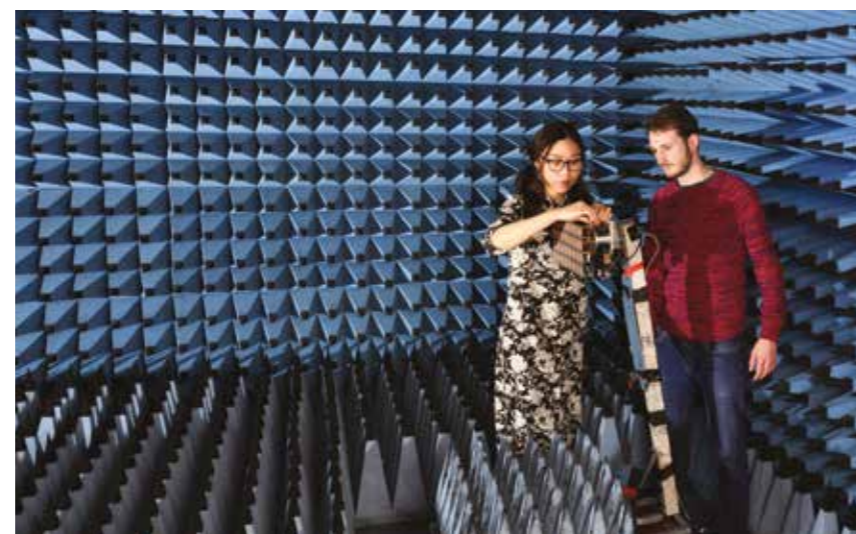
'Bristol Futures will offer enhanced opportunities for students to engage with

### 'The University is exploring options for an additional campus within the city'

the local community and other external stakeholders,' says Professor David Smith, one of the academic leads on the project. 'This will help them gain experience and develop graduate attributes to make sure they are career-ready, whatever their next steps might be.'

The environment in which our students work, live and play is as important as the education we provide. Offering an outstanding student experience, supporting

**Above** Undergraduates in the Department of Film and Television  
**Below** The anechoic chamber in the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering  
**Right** Researchers at the University of Bristol



student wellbeing and enabling students to develop their personal resilience and self-reliance are vital in ensuring that our students get the best from university life.

#### Research, innovation and partnerships

The University of Bristol is ranked among the world's leading research-intensive universities. Our reputation is built upon our core disciplinary strength and breadth, in which we will continue to invest and build.

Through our new Strategy, we will build on our current position; the establishment of a limited number of Specialist Research Institutes will give greater external visibility to areas of research where Bristol is particularly strong, and the creation of 100 Vice-Chancellor's fellowships to boost research and leadership capacity and by substantially increasing our PhD numbers.

Research is a collaborative and global endeavour, and the Strategy includes a number of projects and initiatives that will embed entrepreneurial thinking in our graduates, and establish our position as a sector leader in terms of our ability to establish and maintain productive partnerships.

#### Internationalisation and global relations

A truly international university, Bristol is proud to welcome staff and students from over 120 countries across the world. Our new Strategy includes plans to further internationalise the student experience and deepen our alliances with carefully selected organisations worldwide, to ensure that our institution remains attractive to the world's brightest minds.



#### Physical and digital infrastructure

The University will continue its rolling investment across campus in high-quality academic infrastructure.

Our new Strategy proposes a transformation of key physical features of the main campus to create a welcoming, highly-visible and student-centred heart for the University. This will involve the provision of new facilities including a new University Library and a 'Global Lounge'. Existing buildings will be remodelled and enhancements made to the University's external public realm.

Looking further ahead, the University is exploring a range of options for the creation of an additional campus within the city.

#### Thank you

Developing such a comprehensive plan involved a massive team effort. The University is hugely grateful to everyone, including our *Nonesuch* readers, who gave up their time to provide input on the draft plan in an inspiring show of support. Your involvement and feedback helped us to formulate bold new initiatives in the Plan that will now shape this great institution for years to come – thank you.

Our alumni, friends and supporters are some of our most passionate and committed advocates and ambassadors. We look forward to sharing the new Plan with you at the launch reception and events in the year ahead. ●

To view the full Strategy and find out more about our vision and aspirations, please visit [bristol.ac.uk/strategy](http://bristol.ac.uk/strategy).

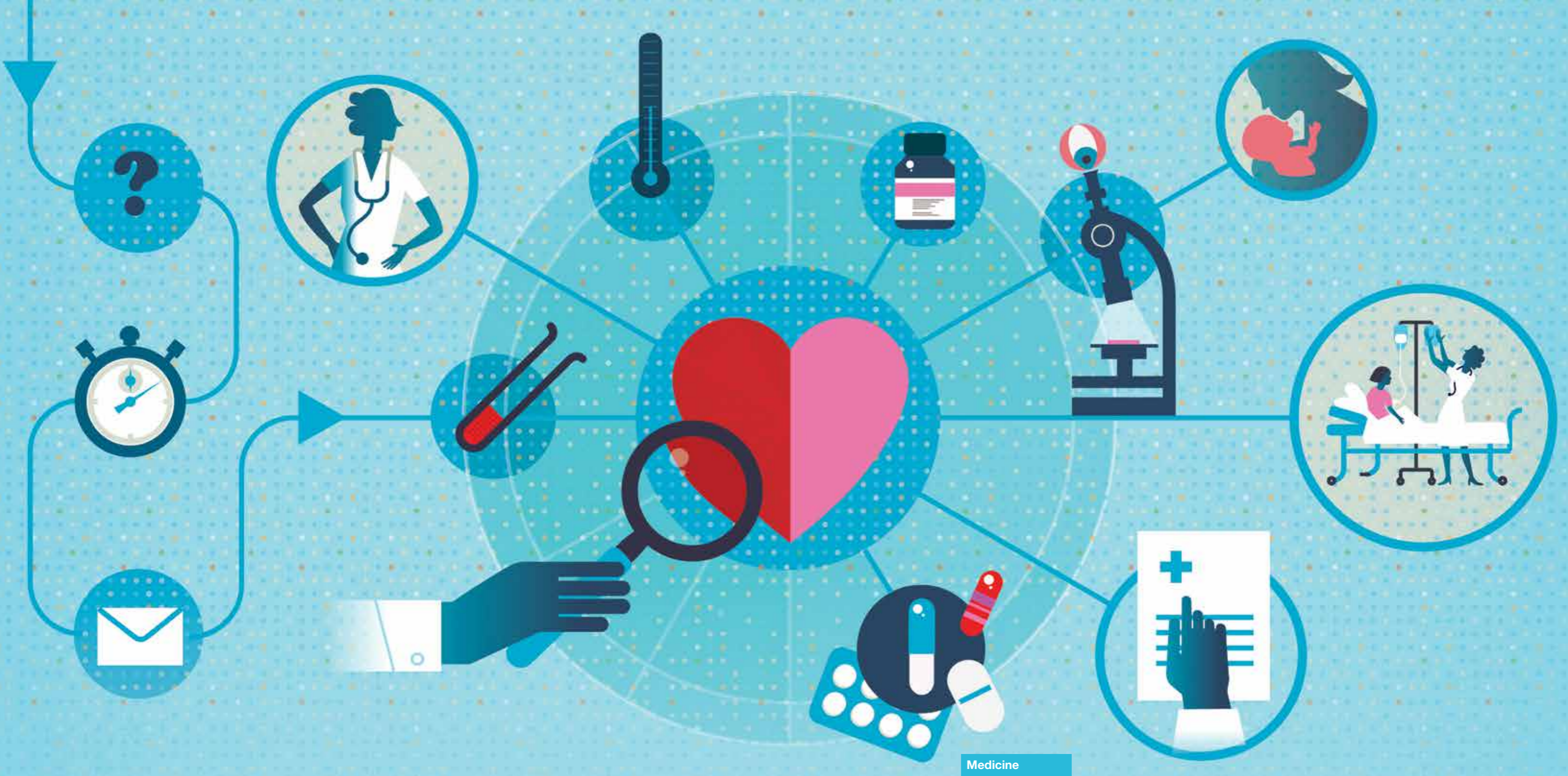


#### In numbers

**1,000**  
alumni from 50 countries shared their thoughts via online surveys and forums

**2,000**  
staff, students and external stakeholders expressed their views face-to-face

**10,000**  
written comments were submitted to the University



Medicine

# Hole in the heart

**Congenital heart disease is the most common type of birth defect, with between six and 13 diagnoses for every 1,000 live births. Advances in treatment and care could mean that babies born with a 'hole in the heart' have just one operation which will last their whole life. *Nonesuch* explores how researchers at the University of Bristol are revolutionising heart surgery for young children.**

Imagine going in for a prenatal check-up, expecting all to be well, but it's not. Your baby has congenital heart disease (CHD). This means there is a small puncture between chambers in your baby's heart, dangerously altering the flow of blood through their body. With a hole in the heart, oxygen-rich blood mixes with oxygen-poor blood that has already delivered oxygen and nutrients around the body.

Artificial grafts can be created using prosthetic materials, a treatment that has saved lives, but not without significant problems. These new valves, conduits and patches are applied through surgery soon after birth but they can't match the growth of a baby's heart. Parents have no choice but to put their child through an endless cycle of risky and distressing operations to

replace the failed grafts and correct recurrent dysfunction – only to be back in hospital a few years later.

Cardiac imaging techniques have shown that this method of reconstruction is also associated with abnormalities, which can lead to thickening and scarring of connective tissue, and calcification. For most, the long-term outcomes remain poor, significantly affecting quality of life.

But there is good news.

Researchers at the University of Bristol have found a solution to these problems. The team has conducted cutting-edge research into regenerative medicine, involving the use of stem cells to regenerate defective human heart and blood vessel tissues. Their research means that one operation could be enough to heal a congenital heart defect for life.

## Thank you

Generous support from a range of individual donors and charitable trusts has been instrumental in making this project a success, including the British Heart Foundation, Medical Research Council, The Mahoro Charitable Trust, Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust, Enid Linder Foundation, and the Garfield Weston Trust. If you are interested in supporting this ground-breaking research please visit [bristol.ac.uk/alumni/give-back](http://bristol.ac.uk/alumni/give-back).

### Pioneered at Bristol

Congenital heart disease research at Bristol has expanded substantially in recent years and it now brings together experts from many different departments across associated hospitals. The Bristol Heart Institute is recognised internationally as a centre of excellence for carrying out interdisciplinary cardiovascular research that can bridge the void between clinical and basic science.

Stem cell therapy and tissue engineering promises nothing short of a revolution in medicine. Led by Professor Massimo Caputo and Professor Paolo Madeddu, the approach that Bristol's research team is investigating has the potential to completely transform treatment of CHD. Indeed, it could produce the ideal graft, as explained by Caputo: 'Umbilical stem cells are multipotent, so they can be used to generate most components of cardiac tissue, making them ideal for use in the new treatments Bristol researchers have developed. By using the patient's own stem cells, there is no danger of rejection or infection. We'll create a structure that is durable, biocompatible, won't provoke an adverse immune response and won't cause blood clots.'

### Bristol leads the way

The work done by Caputo's team has provided the first ever evidence that cells can be seeded onto a matrix that is of clinical grade and ready to be implanted. They hope to build new heart valves using cells from the patient's own body, with two procedures left to complete before they can embark on a first-in-human trial.

The regenerative technique brings a crucial advantage: once implanted in the defective heart, the biological structures can grow and remodel with the heart and body. This removes the need for multiple surgeries.

'Grafts currently used to repair complex problems within the structure of a child's heart need to be replaced over time as the child grows,' says Caputo. 'One operation could last a lifetime if we engineer the heart valves to match the growth of a child's heart, reducing the number of surgeries that a child born with congenital heart disease must go through.'

### Exploring all avenues

In 60 per cent of all cases of CHD, the heart defect is not discovered until after birth, when access to the umbilical cord and its multipotent stem cells (so-called 'master cells' that have the potential to produce

many of the cells or tissue the body needs to repair itself) are no longer available. Bristol's research team has identified this secondary and equally urgent need and is prepared to undertake parallel studies to investigate the possibility of alternative sources of stem cells. To date, cells from the thymus (an organ of the immune system that is located in front of the heart and behind the sternum) have been identified as possible alternatives to umbilical stem cells.

### From bench to bedside

What makes the Bristol team stand out is that it is one of the few research-active units focusing on congenital and paediatric heart surgery research. There are simply not many cardiovascular research centres that include as many clinicians – and particularly surgeons – as Bristol does. This also helps to make it an attractive place for researchers.

With experts in translational cardiovascular medicine, stem cells, tissue engineering and cardiac surgery, Bristol also has one of the few teams with experience of conducting several randomised controlled paediatric CHD surgery trials.

Cellular and molecular biologist Dr Mohamed Ghorbel, a member of the University's CHD research team explains: 'Translational medicine is a rapidly growing discipline in biomedical research and aims to speed up the discovery of new diagnostic tools and treatments by using a multi-disciplinary, highly collaborative, bench-to-bedside approach. It's one of our focal points here at Bristol.'

Ghorbel attributes this approach to the team's success, explaining how the challenge of translational research is that it necessitates multidisciplinary team work.

'In the case of biomedical sciences, translating research from bench to bedside requires collaboration between basic scientists and clinicians,' adds Ghorbel. 'The strength of this approach at Bristol lies in strong research-minded clinicians keen to work very closely with strong basic scientists in research, for the ultimate benefit of the patient.'

### In numbers

# 6,306

babies are born with congenital heart disease in England and Wales every year – equivalent to one in every 111 births

# 100k

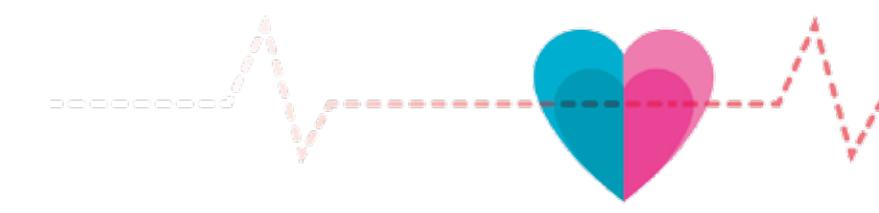
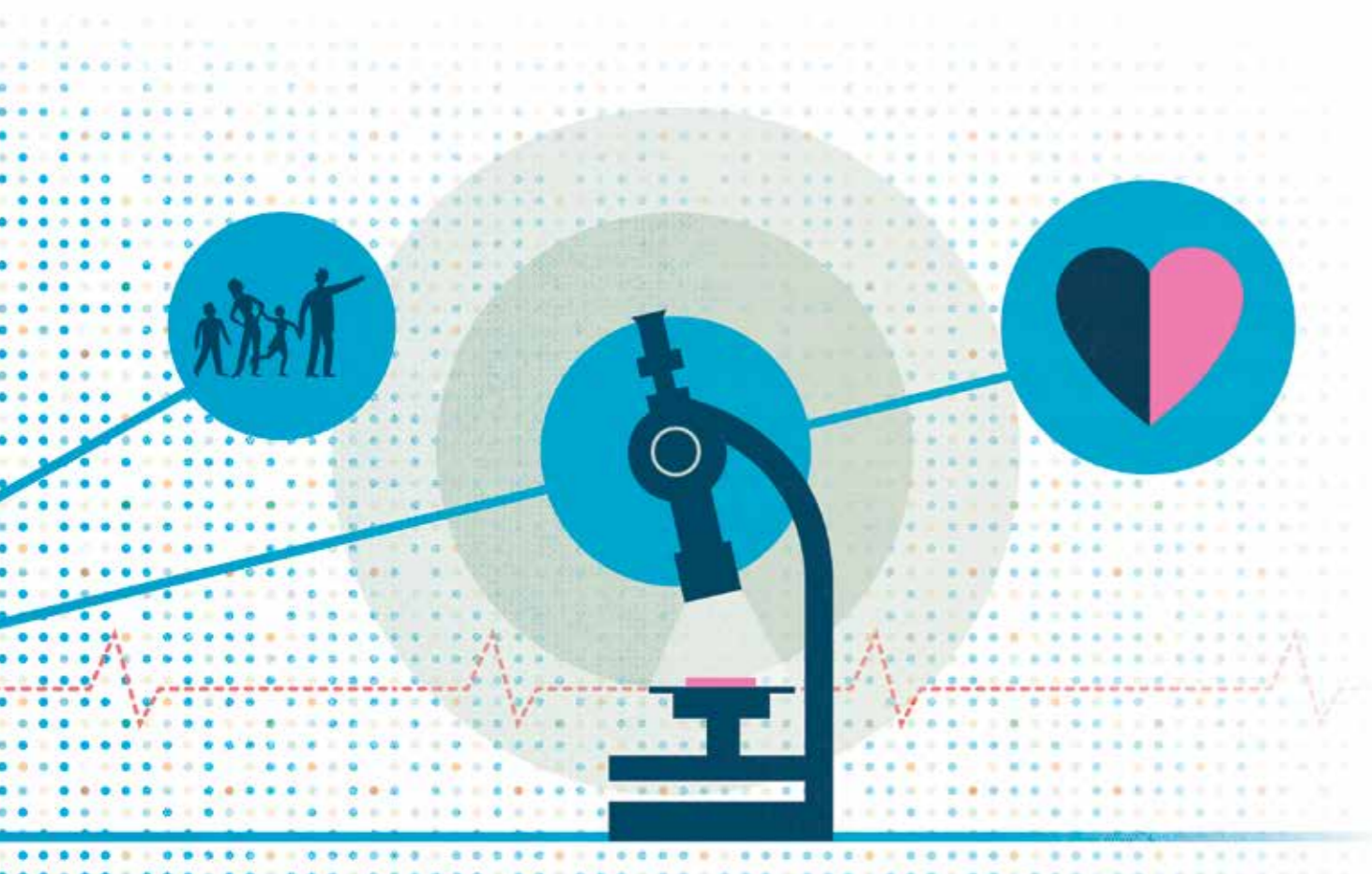
the number of times per day that the heart beats, pumping between 7,200 and 10,080 litres of blood around the body, delivering oxygen and nutrients

# £175m

estimated cost of treatments for congenital heart disease to UK hospitals in 2013/14

**'By using the patient's own stem cells, there is no danger of rejection'**

Professor Massimo Caputo, Professor of Congenital Heart Surgery at the University of Bristol



Illustrations © Andrew Baker

To make a donation towards this exciting research, please visit [bristol.ac.uk/alumni/give-back/how-you-can-help/cardiovascular-research](http://bristol.ac.uk/alumni/give-back/how-you-can-help/cardiovascular-research).





# A fond farewell

Cover feature

Shaking the hand of the last student to graduate on 22 July 2016 signalled the end of an era for **Brenda Hale, Baroness Hale of Richmond**. Bristol alumnus **Darren McCaffrey (BSc 2007)**, Sky News Politics Correspondent, explores how one of the University's greatest Chancellors touched the lives and work of thousands.

**B**renda Hale, The Right Honourable the Baroness Hale of Richmond, will be stepping down as Chancellor of the University of Bristol at the end of 2016 after 13 years at the helm. During her time at Bristol, she has presided over no fewer than 67 degree ceremonies, and has spoken personally with more than 16,500 graduating students.

On 22 July 2016, staff, students and alumni raised the roof at the final ceremony over which Baroness Hale presided, marking the departure of a colossal figure who has dedicated herself so fully to the growth and development of the University. Her legacy is one of inspiration, commitment and warmth – qualities which have greatly endeared her to Bristol’s growing community of students, staff and alumni.

In this interview for *Nonesuch* magazine, Britain’s most senior female judge reflects on a decade in the University’s history and Darren McCaffrey explores her significant role in leading and guiding the University community.

**Darren McCaffrey (DM)** You presided over my graduation back in 2007, a very memorable day. Alumni have many stories about how you have always gone out of your way to make sure that it’s a day we enjoy. Is it right that you once restarted a ceremony for the benefit of a student and their parents who arrived late? And that you won’t let go of a student’s hand until you’ve seen them smile?

**Baroness Hale (BH)** That’s absolutely right, I think things have progressed because when I started in 2004 the ceremonies were on the whole too formal. I tried to lighten the mood a bit, but I had to do it gradually. Of course, by the time I finished my last ceremony only a week or two ago it was quite riotous, so that was rather good. Lots of smiles on happy faces, just as it should be when celebrating such marvellous academic achievements. And as I recall that dear student was so upset about arriving late (and he had a very good reason) that I felt I could not disappoint him. Upon reflection I think I have achieved something in the development of the degree ceremonies over my time, with the many degrees that I have conferred. I hope that alumni remember with fondness their very special experience of graduation.

**DM** Your contribution has been hugely significant – to the University and also the wider Bristol family and the higher education sector. What would you say are your highlights from your 13 years as Chancellor?

**BH** That would probably be my installation as Chancellor back in 2004, because Bristol does ceremonial events very well and they had a newly composed trumpet fanfare which was quite exciting. I also had the opportunity to visit Beijing with the University in 2015 to take part in a celebration ceremony for 350 Chinese graduates who hadn’t been able to graduate in Bristol or whose families could not travel to Bristol to see them graduate. That was very special because of the marvellous atmosphere and the number of families present, and it really highlighted to me the strength of Bristol’s international standing in China.

**DM** What was it like for you going to university in an era that was very different to today?

**BH** It was much more male-dominated and there was an exclusivity about it. I think only about six per cent of the population went to university when I did, of course fewer women than men. At the University of Cambridge, there were three women’s colleges and I think 21 men’s colleges, so the undergraduate gender ratio was something like 9:1. This was grossly unfair as it meant that a lot of the University’s practices were based on young men and their lives rather than young women and their lives. It’s taken the ancient universities a long time to become genuinely equal in their treatment of different people and different lifestyles, and this is an area in which I would like to see swifter progress and change.

**DM** When you became Chancellor of Bristol, you were already breaking down barriers and records in terms of your legal career, having recently joined the House of Lords as a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, becoming the only woman to have ever held this position.



**Opposite** Baroness Hale aged 21 (middle top row) with friends at the Sidney Sussex May Ball, Cambridge, 1965  
**Left** Bristol graduates in Beijing for a special celebration ceremony

**What others say...**

‘Chancellors will always say how much they value students, but Baroness Hale is the real deal when it comes to getting stuck in. Her approachability is one of her truly great qualities. Admired by so many students, this affection is certainly reciprocated. She will always keep an inquisitive eye on what Bristol students are up to, of that I am quite certain.’

**Max Austin, former Undergraduate Education Officer, Bristol SU**



**BH** Yes, I was already a very senior woman judge, and I shortly afterwards became even more senior because no sooner had I accepted the idea of being Chancellor of Bristol than I was appointed a Law Lord. My closest connection with Bristol prior to that was actually in 1966 when I turned down the offer of an assistant lectureship at the law faculty at Bristol. I went to Manchester instead. I often wonder what would have happened if I’d not done that – whether I would have stayed in Bristol because it’s such a lovely place. Would I have felt the same desire to move out, and on, and up? I don’t know.

**DM** Your predecessors include Sir Winston Churchill and Nobel Prize-winning scientist Dorothy Hodgkin. What did it feel like to be asked to be the University of Bristol’s seventh Chancellor?

**BH** It’s a privilege and an honour to be asked to be Chancellor of any university but when it’s a university of the stature of the University of Bristol... well then it’s an even greater

**‘I hope that alumni remember with fondness their very special experience of graduation’**

privilege and honour. The research standing and prestigious reputation of Bristol is well-known, but I also really felt that Bristol cared about its students. And of course, I knew that would be a key part of being a Chancellor: connecting with students, witnessing their growth and change, and sharing in the celebration of their success.

**DM** How would you describe the role of a Chancellor?

**BH** I suppose as Chancellor you’re a bit of a focal point for the staff, students and alumni. It’s primarily ceremonial though – it’s the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Hugh Brady, who carries out the day-to-day management of the University and serves as Chief Executive and President. I often say being



**‘Bristol’s alumni are among the most enthusiastic and generous of any in the country’**



**Above** Baroness Hale has presided over no fewer than 67 degree ceremonies in her 13 years as Chancellor  
**Left** The University of Bristol Law School ranks within the top 10 in both the 2016 QS World University Rankings and the 2017 Complete University Guide

Chancellor is rather like being Queen – you get to wear the robe and the hat, smile a lot, give out the prizes and say thank you to people, but you don’t have to run the place. Still, I wanted to do the job properly which I hope has meant making degree ceremonies more joyous occasions, real celebrations of the graduating students’ achievements. I also hope I have helped to make the Alumni Association [of which the Chancellor is President] feel like a valued part of the University.

**DM** What is it about the changes you’ve seen at Bristol in the last 12–13 years that makes you proud to be Chancellor of the University of Bristol?

**BH** Well it’s a combination of academic excellence in the staff and the research that they do which always rates very highly; the students, whose energy and ability never cease to amaze me; and the leadership and administration, whose vision and resourcefulness have brought the University so far. Bristol’s alumni are among the most enthusiastic and generous of any in the country and they’re proud of their University, too. And proud of the city itself, of the beautiful historic buildings which add so much to the attractions the University has to offer. Students have a vibrant, slightly edgy city on their doorstep, and there they are in the middle of it all.

**DM** Certainly, one of the things that attracted me to Bristol was the city. It’s a big thing – a lot of graduates continue to live in Bristol after they’ve finished their degree.

**BH** Yes, that’s right. And that attraction increases the longer you’re there. There’s always lots going on. It is an extraordinary city, really, isn’t it? Because it’s so old, every time you go around a little corner there’s another building that you don’t remember having seen before.

**DM** Now that it’s time to say farewell, do you think that you will miss being Chancellor?

**BH** I will definitely miss it and what I will miss the most are the people. It’s hard not to develop a very personal regard for students and alumni as Chancellor. The wonderful thing about students is that they’re an ever-changing, ever-evolving body; they renew themselves at the very latest every three years and it makes me proud to think of all the outstanding leaders and citizens who have gone on to make major contributions after graduating. Bristol has a lot of people who’ve had a close association with the University for a long time, people who have helped in the funding and the running of the University over the years who care very deeply about the institution and its future. I shall miss them all but hopefully people will understand that the time is ripe for me to take on a new challenge. And of course, as it’s my discipline, I’ve probably seen more of the law school than anywhere else – while trying very hard not to show favouritism I do have a fondness for the subject and they’ve achieved extraordinary things. It’s a very different law school today from the law school where I declined a job in 1966. ●

**What others say...**

‘Baroness Hale has been a fantastic figure head for our University and represents all the qualities we should aim to hold as an institution. I am personally quite disappointed not to finish my degree in 2017 by shaking her hand. She will be missed.’

**Sophie Hunter** (History 2014-), Deputy Online Editor, *Epigram*



Baroness Hale will miss the University but says that the time is ripe for her to take on a new challenge

Earlier this year we asked you to tell us about your favourite lecturer, past or present. Many of you nominated Nobel Prize-winner and Bristol physicist **Professor Cecil Powell (1903-1969)**, and here's why.

### Dear Professor Powell,

Several people inspired me at Bristol, but none as truly as you did. The clarity and simplicity with which you delivered your lectures, usually without reference to notes, could have been models for the Education Department.

I remember the first time I met you as if it was yesterday. In early October 1962, at the end of Welcome Week on a Saturday morning in the Department of Physics at Royal Fort, it was my first university lecture, and I arrived well before time, which was not a habit I would upkeep! The lecture theatre was already quite full and a few members of staff were making some preparations at the front. After a while, one of them began speaking – I took him to be a lab assistant – but as he continued, I realised that it was you, the professor.

You were so unassuming, you see, but spoke in such a clear, simple, yet authoritative way. This was atomic and nuclear physics, stage one (I suppose they call them modules now). You took us on an overview, as you saw it, of the ultimate structure of matter. I think it must have been enthralling because I went away and turned my notes into an essay.

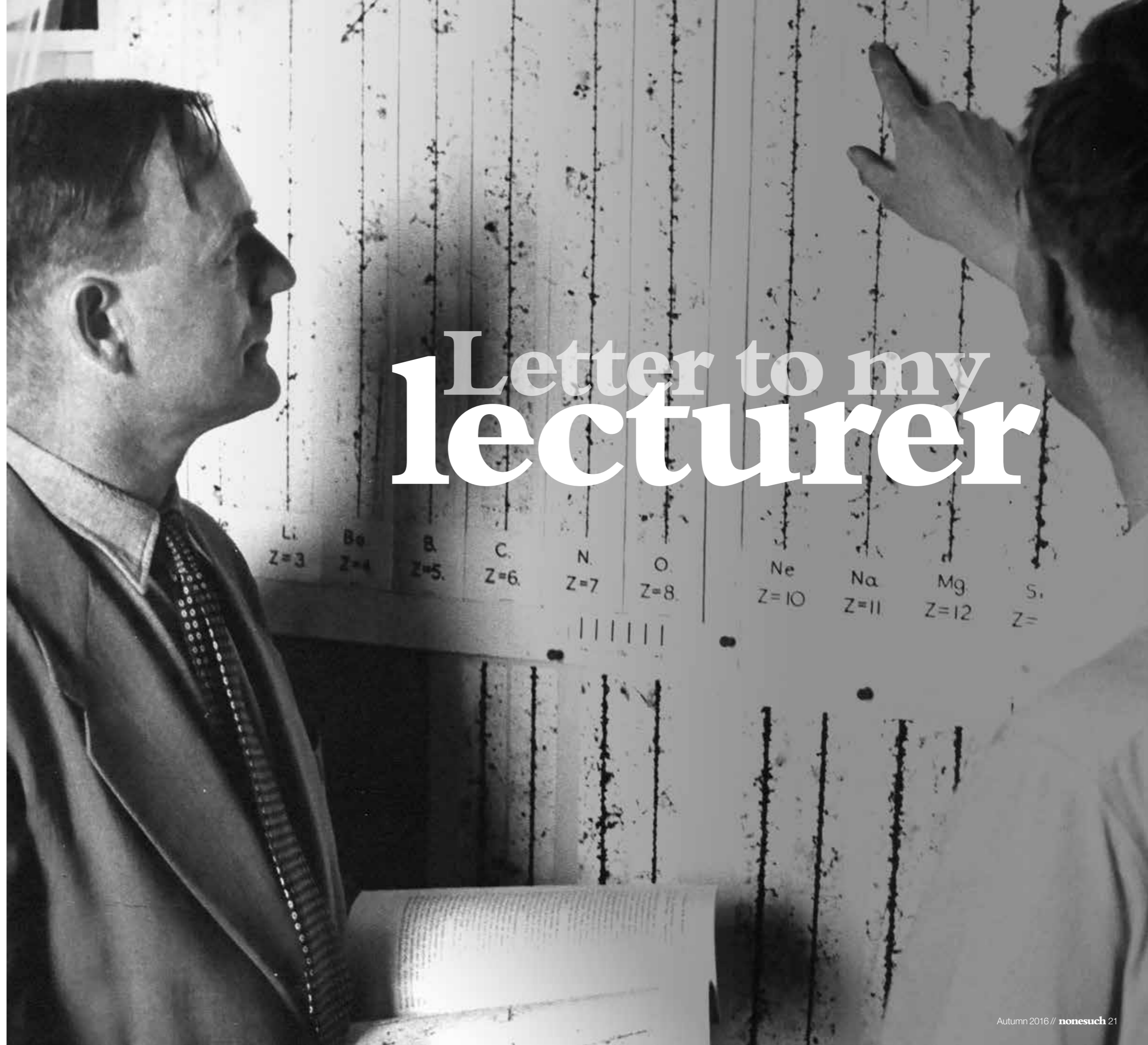
One morning, you arrived to a lecture and announced a change in some constant on a list you had typed up for us – the result of some research from your lab on the top floor of the building perhaps. Somebody told me that you had a Nobel Prize from your work on mesons and pioneering photographic plate method in 1947; I wondered how such a celebrated scientist could be so humble and caring to his rather green students. I discovered that you invited third year students to your house, but I never reached that stage as I was a general honours undergrad, and spent my final year reading mathematics only.

In the mid-60s, I wrote to you from Makerere College in Uganda to congratulate you on some honour conferred by the then Soviet Union. You replied promptly in your lovely handwriting to say that receiving letters like mine were the nicest things that happened when receiving such international recognition. I wish I had kept that letter.

To say thank you is grossly inadequate. But nonetheless... thank you.

Michael Beere (BSc 1965)

To share your memories of a favourite lecturer, or for more memories of Professor Cecil Powell, please visit [bristol.ac.uk/nonesuch](http://bristol.ac.uk/nonesuch).





# Finding my feet

Alumni

**Author and screenwriter David Nicholls (BA 1988, Hon DLitt 2016) returned to the University earlier this year to receive an honorary Doctorate. Speaking to Catherine Prior (BA 2016) after the ceremony, Nicholls reflected on his student years.**

#### Something I'd never expected

When I was young I didn't really understand what university was, how you got in or what you did there. I used to watch *University Challenge* every week and that was my only real clue – and I thought it looked great.

Living with fellow drama students, there were a lot of acoustic guitars flying around, a lot of debates, a lot of late nights and high emotions. And a lot of candles setting fire to curtains. At that time I'd never expected that I would work in fiction or be a novelist. I think for a lot of the English tutors it was slightly frustrating that we were always running off and doing plays when we should have been reading *Middlemarch*.

I dipped my toe into directing, but I wasn't very good at it. I preferred stand-up. I was in a double-act with my friend Matthew Warchus (BA 1988, Hon DLitt 2010), which I really loved doing. When I left university I would have stuck at it, but Matthew was committed to the idea of directing and I wasn't very funny without him. I wasn't particularly funny with him, retrospectively. And so I gave it up.

The one thing I didn't do at all was writing. The emphasis of my course was devised work and physical theatre. I think it would've been considered a bit eccentric to come in one day with my own script, so I didn't actually write anything that you could call a play in all the time that I was at Bristol. I wish I had, though. It's quite rare to have people around you who are prepared to try new things; it would have been a great laboratory for writing. But you need a special kind of confidence to impose your words on people at that stage of life.

I found the years after graduating really tough. Some people come out of university like a rocket and they just know what they're doing. They're very ambitious, clear-headed and principled – but I wasn't at all. I'd have taken anything I was offered and I wasted a lot of time.

**'It's quite rare to have people around you who are prepared to try new things'**

My way into writing was through letters. Studying acting in New York, gradually realising that it wasn't my thing, I would write to friends with tales of awful dance classes and terrible singing sessions. Watching me in plays, my friends would say: 'Well done... but maybe you should write.'

#### Back to Bristol

I found it surprisingly affecting, coming back to a graduation ceremony. There's something really hopeful and fretful about this time of life. I always resist giving advice except what I would say to recent graduates is: don't panic. It's rare for people to fall into something they're good at straight away – and by straight away, I mean within three, four or five years. You've got loads of time to think and try new things, perhaps work in areas you wouldn't necessarily have chosen. You'll find your feet eventually. ●

You can watch the full interview on which this article is based at [youtube.com/user/UniversityOfBristol](https://www.youtube.com/user/UniversityOfBristol).

David Nicholls © Hal Shinnie  
David Nicholls, one of the UK's most successful screenwriters and an internationally bestselling and critically acclaimed author

With a changing climate and growing pressure on resources, global food security is a complex balancing act. *Nonesuch* finds out how the University is addressing this key challenge.

By Kate Ashley

# Balancing act

**H**ow can we produce enough nutritious food that everyone can access, and do so sustainably? Addressing global food security at the University of Bristol's Cabot Institute, Professor Michael Lee cautions against relying on a single metric for evaluation as Dr Patricia Lucas looks at the social science of sustainable, healthy food systems.

## The danger of a single metric

Feeding an increasing global population raises complex questions about using animals in future farming. Efforts to improve sustainability have up to now focused solely on the environmental impact of livestock, overlooking economic factors and the social viability of food production systems. Professor Michael Lee, an expert in ruminant nutrition and grassland systems, explains how relying on a single metric of evaluation for sustainability can lead to inconsistent strategies which are ultimately unsustainable.

'Assessing systems using only a single metric can push farmers towards a production system that doesn't deliver the other necessary areas of sustainability,' says Lee. 'For example, minimising methane emissions at all costs can shift farming towards more intensive systems, where animals are kept in housed conditions with tailored – often imported – feed for more efficient production. This cuts methane carbon, but exports the pollution issues to other countries that export protein-rich feed. It also causes a nutrition imbalance for return of nutrients via livestock faeces and urine.'

The actions and decisions of local farmers have a critical impact on food security globally, and on the feasibility of future livestock production. Lee emphasises the importance of treating farms as businesses which need to make a profit as a vital part of economic sustainability.

'Any decision that we make or science we develop ultimately has to be economically viable,' he adds. 'It's one of the three pillars of sustainability, along with social and environmental factors. We cannot develop a system that lowers greenhouse gases but yields significantly less milk and leads to farmers unable to adopt the system economically. These issues are not going to go away – and the people who will resolve them are the farmers. The science communities' role is to take risks the farming community cannot afford to take, to find the correct balance of social, environmental and economic need.'

Understanding the impact of individual purchasing decisions on the food production system will be key to finding that all-important balance.

## Consequences for health

The social aspect of sustainability covers everything from consumer food choices to the impact of food poverty on health. Dr Patricia Lucas, Reader in Child Health Research in the School of Policy Studies, sees it as a complex and interwoven set of factors.

'The global food chain means that changes to purchasing patterns here in the UK can affect what food is available in producing countries, too,' says Lucas. 'While producers worry that consumer decisions are driving



# Calendar November 2016 to July 2017

Make sure you're invited to relevant events in your area by updating your details at [bristol.ac.uk/alumni/mydetails](http://bristol.ac.uk/alumni/mydetails).



## NOVEMBER

Thursday 10 November  
**Bristol Talks: Professor Marianne Thoresen** // London

Saturday 12 November  
**Officer Training Corps sixth annual dinner** // Bristol

## DECEMBER

Thursday 1 December  
**Alumni Association Student Awards** // Bristol

Monday 12 December  
**London Branch Alumni Carol Service** // London

## APRIL

Friday 7 April  
**Alumni Reception** // Beijing

Monday 10 April  
**Alumni Reception** // Shanghai

Thursday 27 April  
**Alumni Association Lecture** // Bristol

## MAY

Monday 8 May  
**Alumni Reception** // New York

Wednesday 24 May  
**Charter Day (invitation only)** // Bristol

## JULY

Friday 14 to Sunday 16 July 2017  
**Alumni Weekend 2017** // Bristol  
All alumni welcome with invitations extended to those celebrating special graduation year anniversaries. If you are interested in gathering a group of your contemporaries to attend the weekend please contact [alumni-events@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:alumni-events@bristol.ac.uk) and we can help by forwarding your invitation to friends you may have lost contact with.

## Get involved

Are you passionate about Bristol's future? Do you have ideas about how to support your alumni community and help fellow graduates get involved with the University? We're looking for enthusiastic and committed volunteers to participate in a variety of ways from mentoring to event support or by joining the University's statutory bodies on the Convocation and Alumni Association Committee and Court.

To find out about these roles, and apply online, please visit [bristol.ac.uk/alumni/elections](http://bristol.ac.uk/alumni/elections). Applications close on Thursday 12 May 2017. Voting will open in June 2017 and close on Saturday 15 July 2017. If you would like a postal ballot, please contact +44 (0)117 394 1051 or [alumni@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@bristol.ac.uk).

### Highlights from my first year as Chair

**Julie Goldstein (BSc 1978), Chair of Convocation and the Alumni Association**

Among the highlights of my first year as Chair was July's Alumni Weekend, which saw alumni returning to Bristol in droves to attend the various events and receptions. Like many of you, I thoroughly enjoyed being part of this special weekend, making new friends and catching up with like-minded colleagues. The month ended on a high with the excitement of the graduation ceremonies and the opportunity for us to welcome a further 4,000 members to the Alumni Association. We hope all of our new graduates will stay engaged with the University and help us build an even stronger and more vibrant alumni community.



# More online

Visit [bristol.ac.uk/alumni](http://bristol.ac.uk/alumni) to keep up to date with news and stories from your fellow graduates. From Olympic medal winners to palaeontologists, you'll find advice and anecdotes from alumni working in a wide range of professions, all around the world.

Sign up to our monthly enews to get the latest alumni and University stories, events and highlights delivered straight to your inbox. [bristol.ac.uk/alumni/mydetails](http://bristol.ac.uk/alumni/mydetails)



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



## nonesuch

Autumn 2016

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