University of Essex



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

MEET OUR NEW CHANCELLOR JOHN BERCOW

ESSEX EFFECT



ESSEX IN NUMBERS

Our historic parkland in Colchester

1 GREEN FLAG AWARD

PAINTED BY JOHN CONSTABLE IN **1816**

230 BEAUTIFUL ACRES

3 MAN-MADE LAKES, HOME TO WILDLIFE

2,800 NOTABLE TREES

We've got two of our most prominent alumni in this year's magazine – our new Chancellor, and Speaker of the House of Commons, John Bercow and economist Yanis Varoufakis. There's news of the library's 50th birthday, and your memories of paternoster lifts, late night study… and sometimes just late nights. As ever, this year's Essex Effect also rounds up news from the University – including our record high rankings and new sports centre – and the impact of our research around the world. Don't miss the story of Anushree on page 30, whose work may one day take Essex's influence all the way to Mars. You can also catch up with old friends in the directory. But what about you? Do you have a story to tell? Did Essex change your life in ways you hadn't expected? Has it taken a new turn since? What is special about Essex to you? Tell us your tale for your chance to be in the next issue of this award-winning magazine.

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14 Find out how our Click crowdfunding programme helps students and alumni



18 What's special about this coat of arms?



22 Our library celebrates 50 years



28 Find out more about the incredible Essex events going on near you...



DATA FOR DEVELOPMENT

Professor Maria Fasli has become the first UNESCO Chair in Analytics and Data Science. The role will highlight the critical role that data plays in promoting equality and sustainable development. "Data underpins almost every aspect of human life," she says, "and there is huge potential for unlocking its benefits for economic growth. However, in developing and transitioning countries there is an acute lack of skills in data science and analytics." The UNESCO Chair will help address this skills gap by developing and strengthening the knowledge base of developing countries. Maria says this will "help develop strong and self-reliant knowledge economies, support growth, enable the delivery of better services to citizens and enhance people's lives". She also aims to improve workers' data literacy, capacity and skills.

Professor Maria Fasli, UNESCO Chair in Analytics and Data Science

ESSEX NEWS



BETTER MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK



Employers need a more joined-up approach to spotting and dealing with mental health problems among their staff, according to research conducted by Dr Maria Hudson from Essex Business School. The research was commissioned by the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) and centred on 30 interviews across six organisations. It recommends several steps for employers, including offering additional support and training for line managers, empowering staff to have more control over their working lives, and placing the onus on the organisation to reduce workplace anxiety. In her report to ACAS, Maria noted that mental illness is the largest single cause of disability in the UK, with workplaces having a significant impact on our mental health.

Dr Maria Hudson, Essex Business School

THIRTY YEARS OF WOMEN'S LIVES



From 1960 to 1990, women's lives changed beyond recognition, with mass entry into the workforce, second-wave feminism, declining marriage and birth rates, rising divorce rates, and new contraceptive and reproductive advances. But we know little about their everyday health experiences. Dr Tracey Loughran, from our Department of History, is leading a Wellcome Trust-funded project to explore this. Her team will carry out 50 oral history interviews, consult little-used oral history archives and look at mass-market and feminist publications and archival material on feminist, gay and black activism. Tracey wants to know what these sweeping social and cultural shifts felt like, and how they changed women's wellbeing and relationships with their bodies. If you're a woman born between 1940-70, email Tracey at t.loughran@essex.ac.uk.

Dr Tracey Loughran, Department of History



WHY DID WE VOTE BREXIT?



Professor Paul Whiteley in our Department of Government has co-written the definitive guide to the landmark referendum the impact of which will be felt for years to come. *Brexit: Why Britain voted to leave the European Union* uses over ten years' worth of survey data, a panel survey undertaken before and after the referendum and a unique survey of UKIP members. All this allows the authors to explain the driving forces behind the historic vote and to examine its long-term consequences. Professor Whiteley said: "Brexit will be a constitutional change that will have implications for the world of politics and our society as a whole for a long time to come. As academics we have a role to play in scientifically analysing how and why this massive change came about."

Professor Paul Whiteley, Department of Government



BETTER DEMENTIA CARE





Essex is helping to evaluate a new project by award-winning charity Dementia Adventure which helps people living with dementia get outdoors and retain a sense of adventure in their lives. Dr Mike Rogerson, from our School of Sport, Rehabilitation and Exercise Sciences, explained: "The project will give more people living with dementia supported access to natural environments, and may soon come to represent a significant step in enhancing and progressing the care we offer people with dementia in the UK. Our research will shed light on what the outcomes really are for their health and wellbeing."

Dr Mike Rogerson, School of Sport, Rehabilitation and Exercise Sciences

OWNING OUR DECISIONS





Our researchers are contributing to a multi-million pound, five-year Wellcome Trust project looking at public policy challenges in mental health care. Professor Wayne Martin, from our Essex Autonomy Project and our School of Philosophy and Art History, is leading research into the role of 'insight', an important concept in treatment decisions. Health and legal professionals often have to ask how someone who lacks awareness that they're unwell can competently assess treatment options for an illness they don't recognise. Our team will look into this and legal guidelines on coercive treatments.

Professor Wayne Martin, School of Philosopy and Art History

IN BRIEF

It's been an amazing year for Essex…

WELCOME CHANCELLOR!

Essex graduate and Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt Hon John Bercow MP is our new Chancellor. John has been a champion of parliamentary democracy, of equality and diversity in the Commons, and for making the work of Parliament more accessible. See p18



NEW SCHOOL OF SPORT

We've brought together sports therapy, physiotherapy and sports and exercise science teams to create a new School of Sport, Rehabilitation and Exercise Sciences. To reflect NHS changes, our School of Health and Human Sciences is now the School of Health and Social Care, and our Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies has become the Department of Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies.



GLORIOUS GREEN CAMPUS

Our historic Colchester Campus has won a Green Flag Award, with judges describing it as one of the best sites they had seen for environmental practices. The international award sets the benchmark for good management of outdoor spaces and recognises a beautifully maintained site with excellent visitor facilities.



WOMEN OF THE FUTURE

Our first-ever Chancellor's Appeal beat its target and raised £600,000 for 30 Masters scholarships for women from around the world. They all began studying at Essex this academic year, and will use what they learn here to make change in their communities.



ECONOMIC IMPACT

The University contributes more than £500million to the UK economy, a rise of 11% on the previous year. Our latest Economic Impact Report shows that we've attracted record numbers of students, and boosted the economy through research, business collaboration and teaching more than 13,000 people.



ESSEX RATED AMONG THE WORLD'S BEST



Essex is one of the top 300 universities globally according to the latest *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings, our highest place for five years. We were in the top 20 for 'international outlook', reflecting our ability to attract students and research talent from around the world, and our commitment to working with leading institutions across the globe.

In the UK, we climbed eight places to 22nd in *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* Good University Guide 2018 – our highest ranking ever. We were also one of five universities shortlisted for the guide's coveted University of the Year title.

The Times' guide is the definitive ranking for UK universities and the most comprehensive overview of higher education in Britain. It showed Essex performing strongly in measures such as overall student experience, facilities spend per student and the number of alumni in professional jobs or graduate-level study.

Essex was also rated Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework 2017, and came in the top 15 in England for student satisfaction for the fifth year running in the National Student Survey.

Added to our top 20 in the Research Excellence Framework 2014, it all goes to show that Essex is one of a handful of 'dual intensive' universities which are equally committed to excellence in both education and research.

FOUNDING FATHERS

In January 2017, we sadly lost two of the University's most brilliant minds

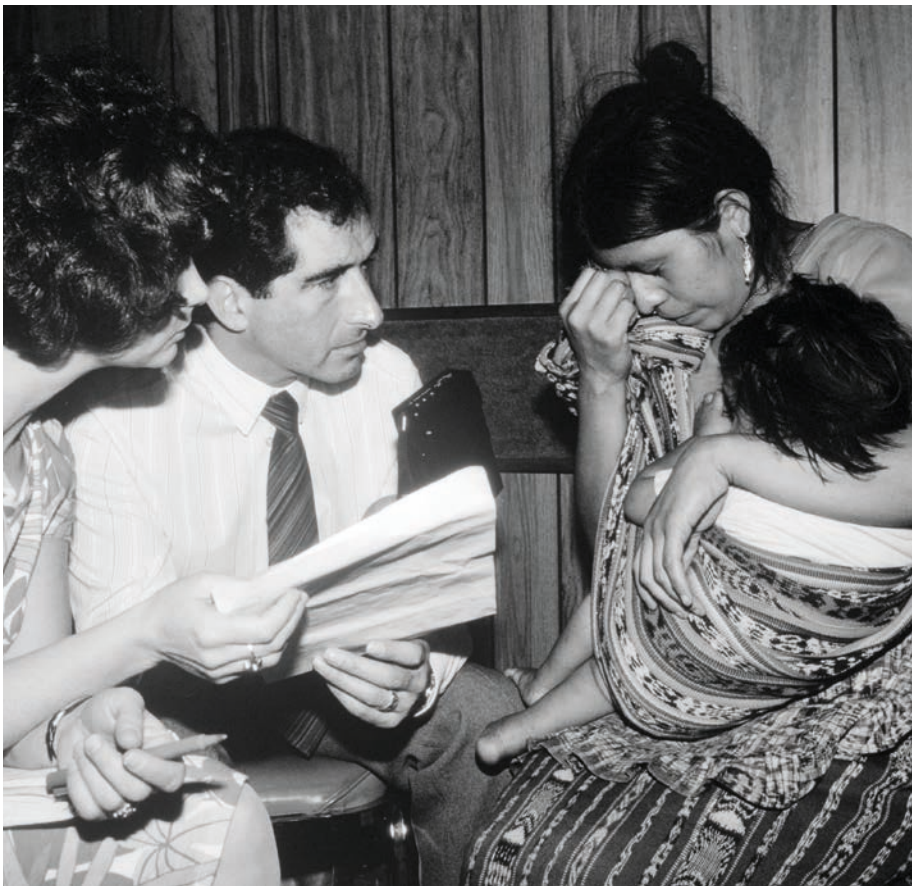
WORLD-LEADING

Professor Anthony King (right) helped to make ours the top-rated political science department in the UK. Former Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Ivor Crewe, said: "Tony and the Department of Government were synonymous. He was critical to putting it on the map as a world-leading centre. His brilliant lectures inspired generations of Essex students and he was unstinting in his encouragement of young academics, including myself. He made us all wiser. I mourn a friend, mentor and colleague." David Sanders, our Regius Professor of Political Science, called him "the clearest and most compelling lecturer I have ever observed. His facility for making complex arguments accessible was unparalleled. His personal kindness was immense. I will miss him more than I can say."

HUMAN RIGHTS INSPIRATION

Professor Sir Nigel Rodley came to Essex in 1990 after spending 17 years as Amnesty International's first legal officer, and alongside his work here also served as UN Special Rapporteur on Torture from 1993-2001, and on the UN Human Rights Committee from 2001. Our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Anthony Forster, said he was "central to establishing Essex as a world-leading centre for human rights. He was an inspiration." Professor Clara Sandoval, Acting Director of the Human Rights Centre, said he was "a brilliant and unpretentious colleague, an inspiring and generous human being and a wonderful mentor and friend. He will always be remembered for his brilliant legal mind, for his admirable professionalism, for talking truth to power, and for his integrity. His legacy will endure in the people he taught and worked with. He was a friend and mentor who taught me more than I can say. We will miss him dearly."





JEAN-MARIE SIMON/AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL





INCREDIBLE SPORT SPACE OPENING



Our brand new £11million Essex Sport Arena at Colchester Campus is nearly complete, and set to open in January 2018. The arena features an international-standard competition sports hall with room for eight badminton courts, three full-size basketball courts, three netball courts, five volleyball courts, and two futsal courts. With seating for 1,600 spectators, the venue will attract high profile sporting competitions, as well as accommodating our teams competing in the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) championships. Dave Parry, our Director of Sport, says: "Men's and women's basketball and volleyball teams will be playing in the BUCS Premier this year, so it's great timing to have such a nationally significant sports venue opening. We're really excited that this will also accommodate activities such as the new Max Whitlock Gymnastics School, and Netball Superleague fixtures."

Dr Dave Parry, Director of Sport

CALLING ALL THE HEROES

Our Essex Heroes initiative celebrates inspirational alumni, students and staff doing amazing things. Their posters appear on bridges and windows across our campuses, showcasing members of our community whose passion and commitment make a difference. Nursing lecturer and part-time lifeboat crew member Iain Keenan and Aiman Shameer, who volunteered at a homeless shelter during her studies, are just two of them. Visit one of our campuses to see more – we're proud of them all.

Do you know a member of the University community doing something inspirational? Let us know so we can share their story – email: alumni@essex.ac.uk



THE SUBVERSIVE INSIDER

Yanis Varoufakis, the economics professor who became a 'rock-star finance minister' looks back at what brought him to Essex – and where it led

AS A TEENAGER, I WAS APPREHENDED BY THE POLICE one night for distributing political leaflets, a year or so after the fall of Greece's military dictatorship in 1974. I was not allowed to contact my parents, and wasn't released until 6am. My parents and I had been discussing where I would go to university, and that day my dad said: "That's it! You will be studying in England. Anything from Anthropology to Zoology. All we know is you will not stay here, to re-live what I went though." He had been a political prisoner during Greece's Civil War (1946-49).

THERE'S STILL A FRUSTRATED PHYSICIST INSIDE ME. In 1977, Andreas Papandreou persuaded me to study mathematical economics instead of theoretical physics. He had taught economics at Berkeley, and was leader of Greece's opposition at the time – later three times Prime Minister. I met him almost by accident, and he had good things to say about mathematical economics at Essex then. I admire real science – but with the economist label one's political positions are taken more seriously.

I WAS EXCITED TO BE AT ESSEX while, I must admit, also appalled by the bleakness of the place, especially of Colchester – a truly depressing garrison town at the time. I lived in William Morris Tower in my first year, and later in Rayleigh and shared houses in Wivenhoe and off Military Road.

"I admire real science, but as an economist one's political positions are taken more seriously"

MRS THATCHER CALLED US THE RED UNIVERSITY. I do little teaching these days, but I recognise in some students the urge to subvert the dominant paradigm which characterised quite a few of us at Essex then.

MONTY PYTHON MADE THE MOST SERIOUS CRITIQUE of British society in the 1970s, not stuffy academics or self-important politicians. In ancient Athens, it was Aristophanes who exposed the problematic aspects of society in the most serious manner. An old Greek intellectual once said: "They can imprison us, they can defeat us, but they cannot make us forfeit our sense of humour".

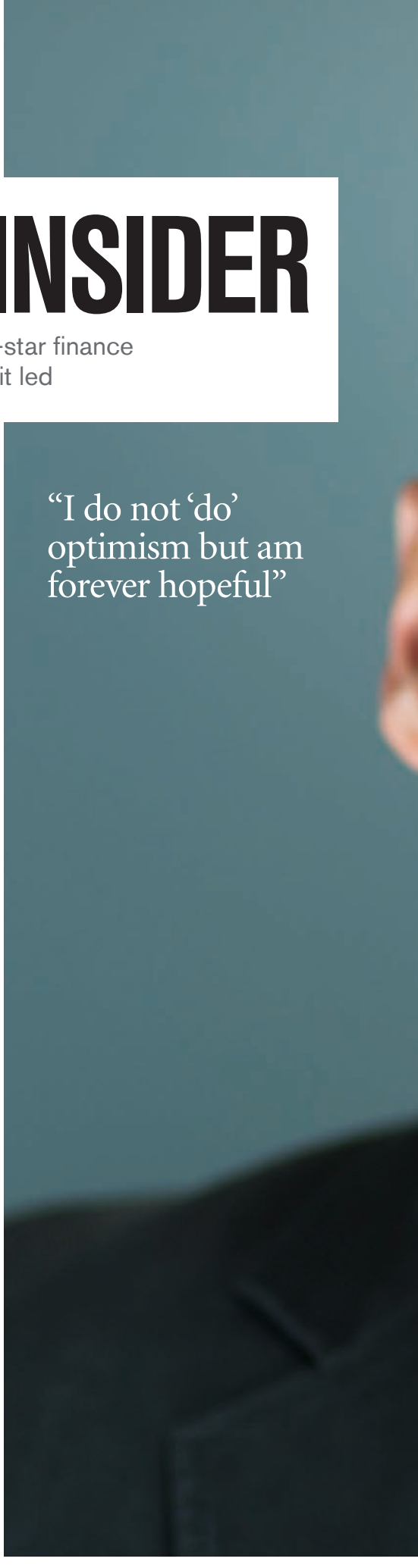
THE SITUATION IN GREECE NOW IS DESPERATE and getting more so daily. What can Europe do to help? Help itself by abandoning the combination of incompetence and authoritarianism that is tearing it apart.

I DO DIPLOMACY WHEN THERE IS A REASON TO. What I do not do is to bend over backwards to become co-opted by the powers that be against the interests of those whom I was elected to represent.

I AM APPALLED BY THE RISE OF POPULISM. It has nothing to do with the people and is different from popularity. Populists appeal to the worst fears of the downtrodden in order to marshal them into political movements which, soon after, turn against the people and against humanism.

THE FUTURE IS UP TO US TO FASHION. This thought is the eternal source of hope, however bleak the omens may be. As faith in the EU is waning, we see a rise of misanthropy, xenophobia and toxic nationalism – so, last year, I launched the Democracy in Europe Movement 2025 (DiEM25), a movement to reform the European Union. I do not 'do' optimism but am forever hopeful.

Yanis graduated with a BA Mathematical Economics in 1981 and PhD Economics in 1987



"I do not 'do' optimism but am forever hopeful"

YANIS' KEY DATES

1961	Born in Athens
1967	Military coup in Greece
1974	Military dictatorship ends while Yanis is at junior high school
1978	Yanis leaves Greece to study at Essex
1981	Graduates with *BA Mathematical Economics*
1987	Graduates from Essex again with *PhD Economics*
1982-2008	Teaching posts at University of Essex, University of East Anglia, University of Sydney, University of Athens
2004-2006	Economic adviser to George Papandreou, later Greek Prime Minister



2015	Minister of Finance in Greece's Syriza Government, January-August
2016	Founds *DiEM25*
2017	Publishes memoir: *Adults in the Room: My Battle With Europe's Deep Establishment*

DIFFERENT WORLDS

Dr Richard Bartle created one of the first virtual worlds at Essex in 1978, and now teaches students like Cristiana Andrade-Pacheco to create environments he could only have dreamed of

RICHARD'S STORY

"When I joined Essex there were about 200 people doing maths, and two of them were better than me. There was no one better than me doing computer science, so I switched.

"Roy Trubshaw (Computing Science 1980) and I created MUD [Multi-User Dungeon – the text-based role-playing virtual world] as a political act. 1970s Britain wasn't great. We didn't like the world, so we wanted to make a better one. MUD wasn't about being who you wanted to be, because you didn't know who you wanted to be. It was about being who you are. Through playing the game you got to find out who you wanted to be and become the person that you really were. A lot of us in Computer Science were from poor working class backgrounds. We wanted people to be free from the bonds society puts on them.

"We didn't like the world, so we wanted to make a better one"

"It was collaborative from the beginning. Roy and I are both good at designing worlds, but Roy was more interested in collating the physics and I was more interested in creating the content. We did it in our free time. It wasn't a project, it was just fun.

"In her final year, Cristiana created a version of Minecraft [a video game set in a 3D world made of cubes] from spheres, using Unity software. People who aren't programmers say, 'Oh, that's interesting'. If you're a Unity programmer, you think, 'Woah! How did she do that?' She's a stellar student.

"Computer Science is one of the largest departments now. I was the only one that got a first in my year for computing. This year, about 40% of our students got a first. But I think Cristiana would have got a first even in my day."

Richard graduated in 1981, and is Honorary Professor of Computer Game Design in the School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering



PHOTO: SIMON ROGERS



CRISTIANA'S STORY

"When I first arrived from Portugal, it was very exciting: new country, new people. Essex seemed very big – buildings everywhere, and a lot of places to get lost. Even after three years, I still do.

"I've always wanted to go into the games industry. Growing up, I started on the Game Boy Color, and spent hours playing Pokémon and Mario. Computer Science students are probably still seen as nerds a little bit – the people who don't sleep, and play computer games until the merry hours. But we mix more than in Richard's day – most of the people I know are from arts departments.

"I really wanted to make a game for my final year project, so I chose to do something I've never seen before: a version of Minecraft with spheres instead of cubes. With a cube, you've got three faces that you see. But you have to build a sphere out of five hundred triangles. I thought: that looks like an incredibly hard thing to do, but why not? Now I know why! I wish I'd had more time, and a supercomputer.

> "We are probably still seen as nerds a little bit"

"I'm always looking for the next, good, virtual world. I've tried all of them – even the ones that only have one or two thousand players. One or two games dominate online – like World of Warcraft – and they are a little bit superficial, but everyone goes back to them, so others try to copy them, so I don't think there will be big changes in virtual worlds in the near future. I would like to see something new and different, like it was with MUD.

"There is toxicity online because people can be anonymous, but I just ignore it. I don't think women suffer more than men do. I've found that when people find out you're a girl they actually try to be nicer to you.

"I'm interested in artificial intelligence in video games [making non-player characters behave in a more intelligent, human way]. I'm starting a PhD, because I want to research, and try to help others develop their own games."

Cristiana graduated in Computer Science in 2017

DOUBLE CLICK

Meet some of our enterprising students as they change the world, with a little help from their friends (and you)

We started our crowdfunding platform Click two years ago to help students and recent graduates fund projects in the arts, sports, societies, volunteering, internships and enterprise. Instead of simply applying for money, they learn to fundraise, mobilise networks, and make things happen themselves. It empowers them, and equips them with crowdfunding and digital marketing skills they can use in life – and it allows alumni, staff and students to support what's important to them. Matched funding from alumni like you has helped 150 projects raise £200,000 in just two years – and Click has won national and international awards.



INVENTIVE THEATRE

WALKING TALL

Most of us would find stilt-walking tricky. In May 2017, though, Piotr Pawarski and friends covered the 75 miles from Southend to London on stilts. Piotr, a *BA World Performance* graduate from East 15 Acting School, founded a theatre company, StiltsPro, "to reach audiences underexposed to the benefits of theatre and give them hope".

Click helped them raise funds to take live theatre to refugee camps in Greece in summer 2017. "We ran drama workshops, too," Piotr says, "so they could have the experience of creating theatre, and work on props and sets." They've also appeared on high streets and in care homes to reach new audiences – and aim to visit camps in Sierra Leone in 2018. Piotr says, "It's my mission to go to these places and share happiness."

Piotr studied World Performance at East 15 Acting School, graduating in 2017



SUPPORT APP

BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

When third-year Business Management student Juanita Agbola read news of six UK students taking their lives, she resolved to prevent something like it happening at Essex. "I've run mental health workshops in schools and with the public," she says. "One in four students suffer, but many don't ask for help or know where to get it, so I started fundraising to develop Unibuddy."

Juanita raised £1,400, and is developing the app now. "It will identify where the user wants to reduce anxiety or stress," she says, "help them to see how lifestyle is a factor, and give them ways to tackle the situation."

Juanita studied Business Management, graduating in 2017



BUSINESS BRILLIANCE

COCKTAILS ARE GO!

If you've just graduated, and you haven't run a business before, how do you find the money for a start-up? Through Click! Vicky Madzharska and her friends set up Zizzy Bar just ten days after they all graduated from Essex in 2015.

"Our market research showed us that Essex has the highest number of weddings and engagement parties in the country," Vicky says, "and everybody needs a drink at a special occasion, so we came up with the concept of a mobile bar. We saved up for fridges, bar tools and menus, and made our own wooden bars." Click helped them to invest in a van and equipment, and the business is thriving – so much so, they've successfully used Click to invest in a new beer dispenser. "We've chosen a job we love," says Vicky. "We really enjoy what we're doing."

Vicky studied Business Management and graduated in 2015

HELPING PEOPLE

BRAIN POWER

If you couldn't speak or move, how much would it help your quality of life if you could control a machine with your mind? Ana Matran-Fernandez wants to create a system which can do just that, to "improve the quality of life of people who are completely locked in". She and fellow students developed a system which allowed David Rose, who has no movement below his chest, to control an avatar in a computer game with his thoughts. They raised £3,000 with Click, so they could test it at a competition in Zurich. They came third, "which was brilliant", Ana says, "and now three of us are applying for a grant to work on the system with someone who has motor neurone disease."

That will allow them to keep exploring their system, which could change the lives of disabled people across the world.

Ana with her colleague on the project Davide Valeriani. Both got PhDs in Computing and Electronic Systems in 2017



WE ADD NEW PROJECTS TO THE SITE ALL THE TIME – SEE WHAT OUR BRILLIANT STUDENTS ARE UP TO: CLICK.HUBBUB.NET



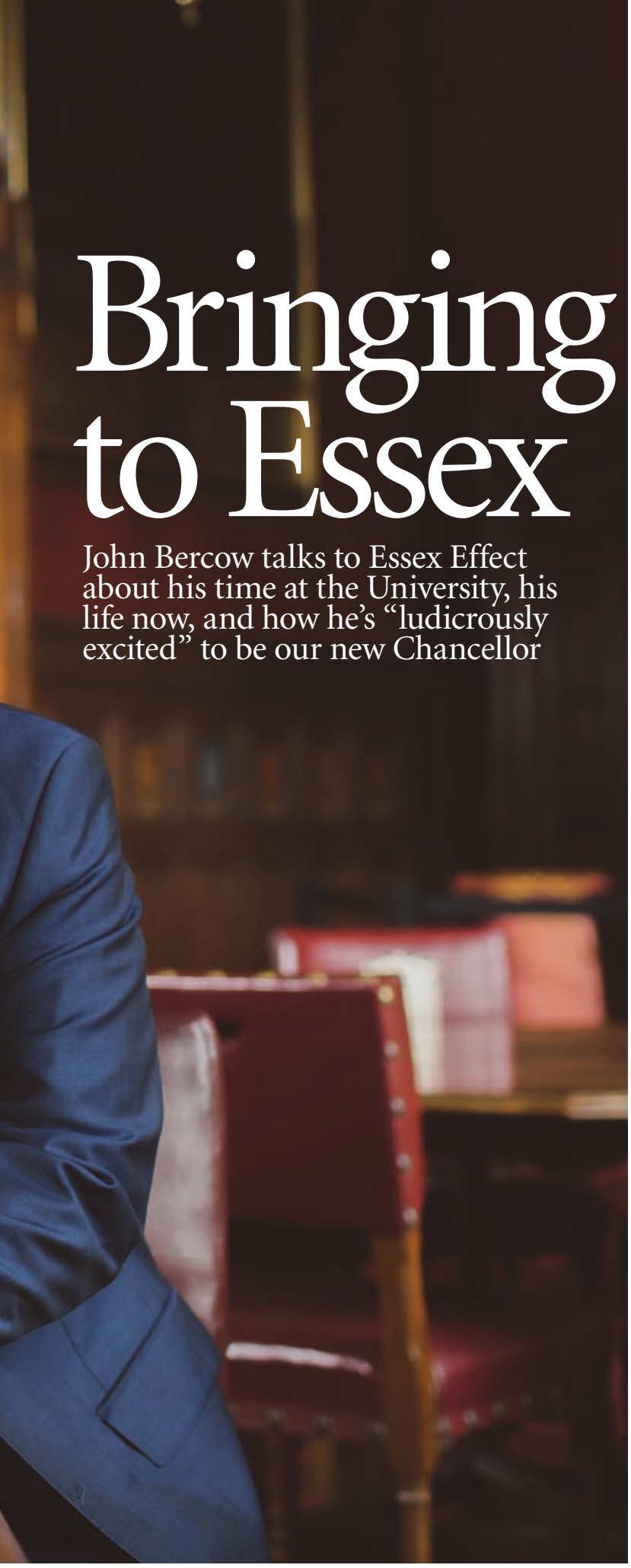
PHOTO: ESSEX STUDENTS' UNION



FESTIVAL OF COLOUR

Every year, our Students' Union's Asian Society organises a celebration of Holi, a traditional and playful Hindu festival to mark the beginning of spring, in which people throw coloured powder or water at each other. The red powder represents love and fertility, the blue the skin of Hindu deity Krishna, yellow is the colour of turmeric, and green symbolises spring and new beginnings. It's seen as a day to forgive and forget, to repair broken relationships and to meet others. At Essex, it brings people and cultures together in a declaration of our internationalism.





Bringing order to Essex

John Bercow talks to Essex Effect about his time at the University, his life now, and how he's "ludicrously excited" to be our new Chancellor

"I was really smitten with the place." The Rt Hon John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons, is now our sixth Chancellor, but back in the 1980s, he came to Essex for a day to visit a friend. "The layout, the atmosphere of enquiry and the sense that one could spend three very fulfilling years there struck me with great force." That day trip changed his life. "I went back at the end of the day, determined not just to go to university the following October, but to go to Essex."

When he arrived, he threw himself into the "rumbustious" student politics of the time. A lifelong Conservative on what was considered by some a left-wing campus, he "loved getting embroiled in arguments. I relished the cut and thrust, and the idea of being subject to criticism or abuse wasn't something that bothered me at all. It was a great experience to get up and put a point of view across in a hostile atmosphere." (Although he does recall someone dousing him in beer in the SU one night.) He cites the example of one of his earliest political acts at Essex: "I proposed a motion criticising CND [the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament]. We lost the vote, but it was one of the most highly attended Students' Union meetings in years. I think I can claim credit for inadvertently galvanising the SU by putting across different points of view. It wasn't just an exchange of opinions between one type of left-winger and another. There were proper arguments on policy and ideology between left and right."

STRONG VIEWS

At the same time, he was discussing and exchanging ideas in seminar rooms and lecture theatres, too. "Essex taught me to think quite deeply," John says. "I was taught to challenge myself and, in the words of the great Tony King [who taught in our Department of Government for 40 years]: 'study the evidence'. Tony said to me, 'You've got very strong views. You need to be able to justify them to yourself, if you're going to be able to justify them to anybody else'."

A year after graduation, he was a councillor in London, and 11 years later MP for Buckingham. In 2009, he became Speaker of the House of Commons – overseeing parliamentary debates and Prime Minister's Questions, the weekly opportunity for the Opposition to hold the PM and Government to account. "The atmosphere is often ›



"Controlling the House of Commons requires patience, assertiveness and humour"

PHOTOS: PAUL TAIT

A HOMAGE TO ESSEX – HIS COAT OF ARMS IN DETAIL



Opposite: John Bercow pictured in the Chancellor's robes at Speaker's House

very noisy and very high octane," he says, "and very difficult to control." Describing the spectacle as "a kind of legalised blood sport", he says controlling it requires "a combination of patience, assertiveness and humour."

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

His daughter's view is that "All you do all day is shout 'Order' at people", but while he is usually in the Speaker's Chair for three to six hours a day, John also spends time trying to change parliament as a whole. As a champion of equality and diversity, he encourages parties to select parliamentary candidates who will change the make-up of the House of Commons. "I think it's hugely important that parliament should look, and sound, and feel rather more like the country it aspires to represent," he says. He chairs the body which runs the parliamentary estate and oversees the buildings and staff, and was instrumental in getting a nursery opened in the Palace of Westminster. He has overseen the appointments of "the first female and BAME [black and minority ethnic] Speaker's Chaplain, the first female and BAME Speaker's Counsel, and the first BAME Serjeant at Arms in the history of the House of Commons. Traditionally, we've tended to have large numbers of white, male, middle and upper-middle class people in prominent positions, and I'm trying to shift the balance. We've still got a hell of a lot to do but I think it's starting to make a difference."

This interest in inclusivity is not only practical, but personal. The grandson of Romanian immigrants, John was the first in his family to go to university, and fondly remembers his parents watching him graduate. "I knew exactly where they were and I was very much focused on them as I went up to get my degree." It's a bittersweet memory, because his father died the following year, but "they were both very proud and pleased for me" – and one prominent member of staff in our Department of Government helped to make the day special for them all. "I remember introducing my parents to Ivor Crewe [then a major figure in our Department of Government, later Vice-Chancellor], and he will have had conversations with hundreds of students and parents. He could just have done it in a very perfunctory way, but he found some very nice words for my parents about my efforts, and gave them the impression that they were the only people in the world that mattered at the time. Thirty years later, he won't remember that, but I do."

That memory feeds directly into his ambitions as Chancellor. "I want everybody studying or working at Essex to feel that what they're doing is not just important to them and the community, but also important to me. Secondly, I feel there is something we could do together to improve diversity and inclusion, perhaps giving people who haven't seriously thought of being students an opportunity to do that." He also wants his fellow alumni to have a lifelong relationship with Essex. "I hope graduates regard the University as a friend and keep in touch," he says. Ask the University for career help, he says, "and ask: is there anything I can do to help the University to help other people?"

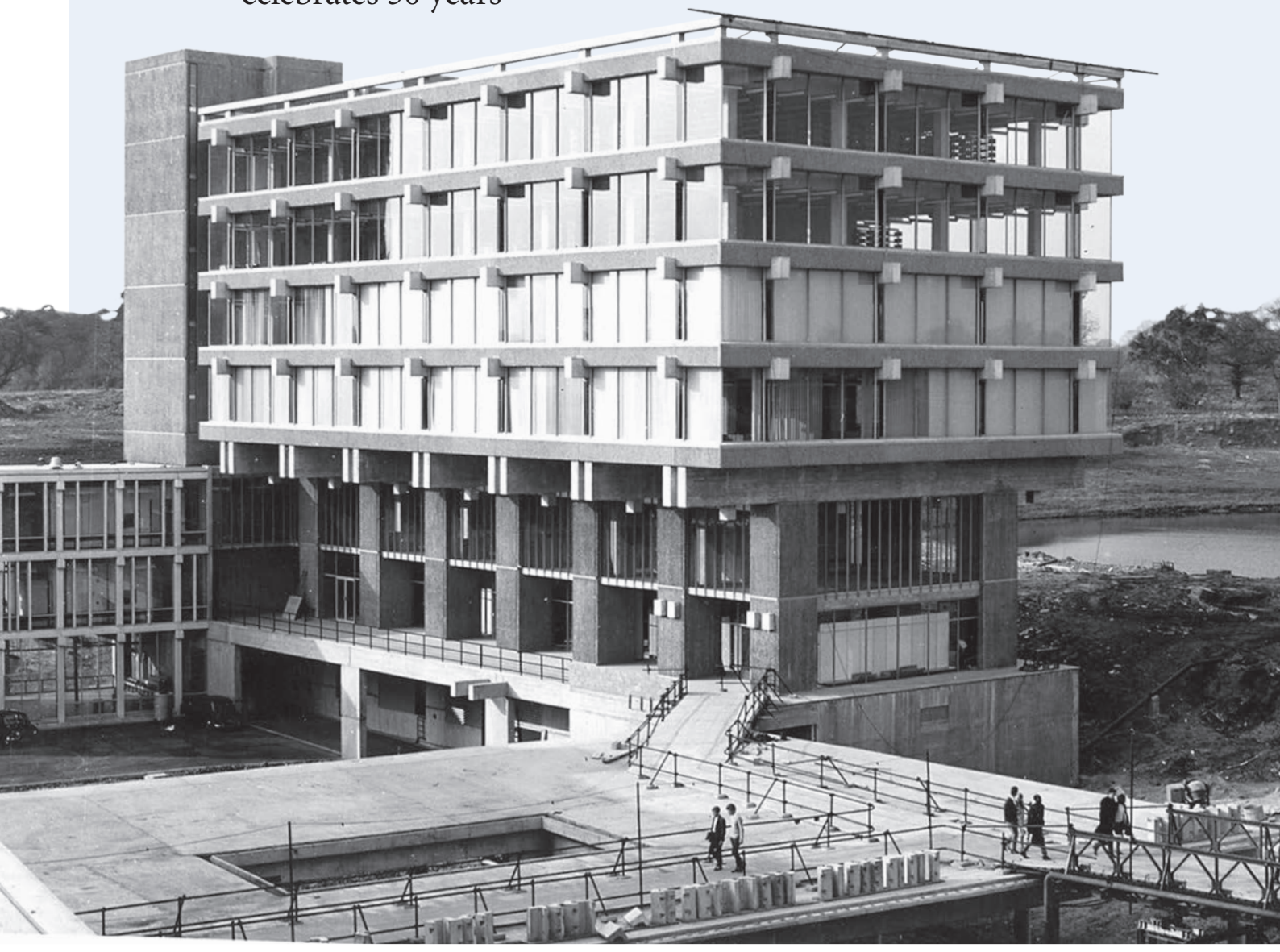
He is, it seems, still "smitten" with Essex: "I feel this terrific and rather emotional pride and attachment to the University because I feel so grateful for the experience I had there. I've always felt that Essex was bold and innovative and not just content to stick with the status quo but wanted to generate new ideas, to improve, and to make a difference. It's a great honour to be asked to be Chancellor. I'm ludicrously excited about it."

Join us for an Alumni Reception in Speaker's House on 20 March 2018. Invitations will be sent by email, you can register your interest in advance email: alumni@essex.ac.uk

Watch the video of the full interview at www.vimeo.com/uniofessex

Concrete temple

The paternoster, the view, the wealth of knowledge. Our library celebrates 50 years



Opposite: The lake and building being formed. Right: As it is today. Below: the famous paternoster lift





"Anytime prospective or new students were being shown around on the top floor, one of us would get in the paternoster, go over the top, do a handstand, and appear on the other side. The looks on their faces…" Dave Riches (*BSc Electronic Engineering 1982, MSc Telematics 1983*) speaks for many when asked what he remembers about the library on our Colchester Campus. The paternoster lift – one of just four left in the UK – is still perhaps the most memorable single thing about the building, but our library has many stories to tell.

Originally housed in ex-RAF huts when Essex opened its doors in 1964, the library was part of the first phase of building in 1966-67. This was when Square 4, the Hexagon (originally a restaurant), and the first two towers appeared – along with this now much-loved concrete book palace, or as Professor Jules Lubbock from our Department of Art History called it: "a temple of scholarship".

The architect, Kenneth Capon, said: "It symbolises what the University stands for – the conservation and discovery of knowledge, the importance of self-education, and the inter-relationship of subjects." Self-education, in particular, was designed into the place: the way the books were arranged allowed students to study their own subject and discover related topics shelved nearby.

It was renamed in 1987 to honour our founding Vice-Chancellor when he retired, and his widow Lady Sloman opened the north wing extension in 2015 – which finally brought the library to its originally intended size. It welcomed its new neighbour, the Silberrad Student Centre, at the same time.

There have been other changes – with e-books, and more computers than our first students could ever have dreamed of – but some things have remained resolutely the same. In the words of librarian Sarah Kafala: "The digital world can make miracles happen every minute, but it cannot reproduce the same tangible delights as a piece of paper and some ink…"

Read more about the history of the Albert Sloman Library and share your memories online at http://libwww.essex.ac.uk/ASL50.htm

YOU SAID...

We asked for your memories of the library. Here's some of the best...



"In my first year, we had an all-night sit-in to protest the replacement of grants with student loans. There were some earnest debates in a corner somewhere, but it was mostly one big party – drinking, smoking (I know! But it was still allowed back then), and a hard-fought Subbuteo tournament running all night on the fifth floor. Early in the morning, a film crew came, and a bunch of bleary-eyed wastrels grabbed books and did their best to pretend the whole thing had been one long study session."
Helen Taylor, English and European Literature, 1989



"Studying...then wandering outside and feeding the ducks for some down time!"
Charley Keith, Drama and Literature, 2010



"The library holds many of the most significant memories of studying at Essex: from the first sight of so many books and publications on my subject, more than I had ever imagined existed, to putting the finishing touches to my dissertation, it was within the library walls that I realised my dream achievement of a BA."
Camilla Jarvis, Social and Cultural History, 2014



"Coming from south east Europe at age 18, the scenery over the library was just breath-taking. And of course, that lift! Thank you for the memories."
Pavlos Progias, Cell & Molecular Biology, 2002



"The first time I saw the paternoster, I thought, 'What? I'll be turned over!' I decided to check it out. I put a Mars bar wrapper down in the front corner and watched the lift clunk away. The wrapper came back in the same spot. By then, there was a smiling student behind me, saying, "After you..."
Charles S Hubbard, Mathematics,1997

‘This isn’t acceptable’

From Iraq to Nigeria millions of people are displaced. Professor Geoff Gilbert tells us how at Essex, research means not just looking at the world, but doing something to change it





There are more than 65 million displaced people across the world – and behind that statistic, of course, millions of individual human stories of disrupted and threatened lives. While most of us wonder what can be done, Professor Geoff Gilbert, who has worked in our School of Law and Human Rights Centre for almost 30 years, looks for answers.

The first step is to define and acknowledge the scale of the problem. "Approximately 1% of the world's population are 'persons of concern' to the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR]", he says. "That means they're either refugees, stateless persons, or internally-displaced persons. Today, we're seeing third generation refugees born in camps, borders being closed, and refugees dying trying to make dangerous journeys to a better life. This isn't acceptable."

RULE OF LAW

The answer isn't simple, but Geoff and an Essex alumna, Anna Magdalena Rüsch, have carried out research on the ground to make it clearer: the rule of law. It's a concept which shapes much of the United Nations' work – making sure people, organisations and states are governed by fair laws that promote rights – and it's a significant part of Geoff's ongoing work.

He and Anna began by travelling to Colombia in 2015 to report on the refugee crisis for UNHCR, and saw the effects of one of the world's longest-running civil wars. "We visited an area called Altos de la Florida," Geoff says, "made up of mainly internally-displaced persons. Colombia has a population of just under 45 million. Six million of them are internally-displaced. Altos de la Florida has no running water, no electricity, and mud roads."

There is still violence in the country, despite a peace deal in 2016. Enforcing the rule of law in such circumstances is not easy, but Geoff explains: "The rule of law approach allows the UN and other bodies to work with states on capacity building, so they're able to take on their responsibilities for persons of concern. It means persons of concern become part of the state's planning process, they are recognised as being in need, and the state can fulfil its responsibilities to everybody on its territory."

Above: Geoff and Anna in Colombia
Main image: Yazidi refugees in Northern Iraq

Our research, then, informs and underpins a vital strand of the UN's work today to help refugees and other displaced people – and it can have dramatic effects. Geoff and Anna also visited Niger, where Boko Haram terrorism has led to an influx of refugees from Nigeria, and driven people from their homes inside the country, too.

As Geoff points out, this is not a country which seems ideally placed to cope. "Niger is 187th out of 187 countries in the United Nations' Development Programme's humanitarian index," he says, "and an area called Diffa, just across from the Nigerian border, with a population of about 500,000, has received about 100,000 people in the past two years." The rule of law approach, though, and the support of UN agencies, has been enormously effective. "With the help of the international community they're being provided with the resources to build their own homes, and to be fed, and it's a joint operation with persons of concern and with the local population."

Anna is now an associate refugee status determination officer for UNHCR in Bangkok – one of many Essex graduates to take their expertise into a career at the UN or elsewhere in the human rights field. As the refugee crisis has worsened, she and Geoff have continued to work together to improve the lives of displaced people. In June 2017, for example, they wrote a policy paper for Australia's Kaldor Centre – the world's only research centre dedicated to the study of international refugee law – pointing out that 'safe zones' for refugees are the "least worst alternative" to asylum. They called on the international community to "establish proper pathways to safety through humanitarian and migration channels". Geoff has written articles calling on Europe to do more for Syrian refugees, and condemned Donald Trump's 'travel ban' as "harsh and shocking".

Both of them know that there will be refugees as long as there is conflict and persecution in the world, and that their work cannot offer quick fixes, but it offers a way forward – and hope for the people who need it – so they persist. ■

Professor Geoff Gilbert, School of Law, and Anna Magdalena Rüsch, LLM International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, 2012

ESSEX DIRECTORY

1960/70s

GLYN SAUNDERS, RETIRED

Literature 1971

"I've recently retired and live in Chichester but previously worked as Head of English in schools in London and Portsmouth as well as at Chichester University. My favourite place on campus was my Towers bedroom – first time in my life I'd had my own bedroom and access to showers!"

DAVE SMITH, BREWING CONSULTANT

Chemistry 1976

"I joined Sam Smith's Brewery in Tadcaster in July 1976, and left in 1988 to start my own business. I've worked with over 170 breweries since, helping them to consistently produce the best beer possible. There's nothing more satisfying than to watch someone order a pint of beer you've helped to produce, and watch them go back later and ask for another."

JOHN RABSON, HOSPITALITY

Electrical Engineering 1975

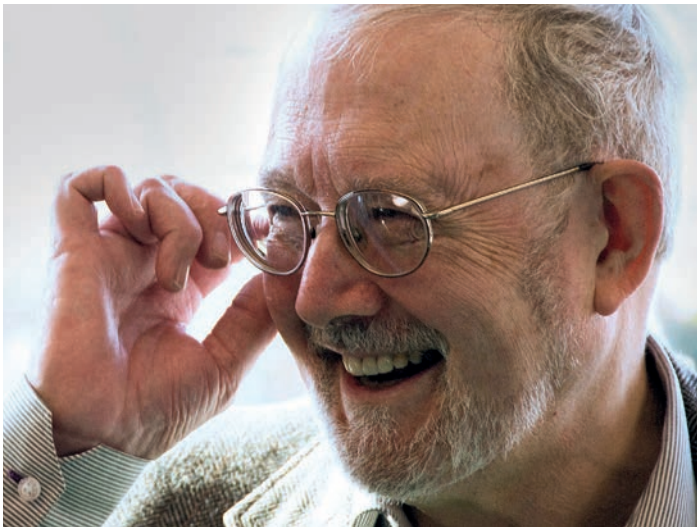
"My wife and I recently celebrated 11 years in Burgundy, and run a gîte for the benefit of those who return from combat with wounds that are not physical. I am continuing to conduct research into extra-long wave radio."

1980s

TREVOR LUNT, AUDITOR

Economics 1983

"I moved to Cape Town with my wife in 2006 – we met walking up Table Mountain. Going to Essex was a lifestyle change for me. My favourite place was Friday film society nights at the main lecture theatre and living in Brightlingsea in my second year – meeting the locals at the pub or playing football on Hurst Green."



SPOTLIGHT ON

DAVID BOUCHIER, ACADEMIC AND BROADCASTER

Sociology 1981

"After graduation I stayed on at Essex as a Sociology lecturer from 1972-86. After moving to the States I taught at the State University of New York for several years, and had a regular column in the New York Times. I went on to join a National Public Radio station as resident essayist and classical music host. I have published 11 books including a memoir called Lucky Man. My wife is a retired professor, and we live part of the year on Long Island and part in France. I am almost retired, but still producing radio essays and music programs as well as teaching a classical music workshop."

ERIC WIGNALL, EDUCATION

History 1986

"I've recently taken a new role as Vice President for Admissions and enrollment services at the University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois. As a Masters student from the US, I remember long days in the Library and walking from town to campus. The 1980s were a great time for comparative history and Essex had a fantastic program. I learned a great deal from wonderful people."

ELISA WEBB, WRITER

Sociology 1988

"I read for a sociology degree because it gave me the analytical tools to challenge inequality and change people's lives. I taught sociology and psychology for over 20 years in inner-city schools and I am currently on a career break to undertake a grown-up gap year. I am a part-time PhD student, novelist, bookseller, and parent of two daughters. My first novel was published in 2016 by a publishing house set up by fellow alumna Patricia Borlenghi. My dream is to continue writing and teaching to empower my students through thinking on the page."

1990s

DEJDOU ETRIN-EHOUSSOU, LECTURER

Applied Linguistics 1992

"My graduation day, with classmates from all over the world, bestowed upon me an everlasting sense of belonging. That led me to embark on further studies in Culture, Communication, Education and Human Development at NYU. I returned home to the Ivory Coast where I've been lecturing in English ever since."

Want to be in the next edition? Email us at alumni@essex.ac.uk with your story and photos

ANITA VEITL, TEACHER

European Studies and Languages, 1993, International Relations 1996

"Before studying at Essex I spent six years working at a bank in Germany. Going to university in England was such a wonderful experience. I decided to give it my all. After a year abroad in Spain, I returned to Essex and eagerly participated in all Latin American activities and met a lovely Mexican. After graduation I took the leap and I moved to Mexico! I married and I have been living and working in Mexico City for the past 21 years."

TANIA SEBASTIAN, ATTORNEY

Theory & Practice Human Rights 1996

"Even though I am British, I lived in South Courts (with international students), and look back on that year as one of the best experiences of my life. I now live in the US, in the DC metro area, and work in an area of law I love, and was made Of Counsel this year in my firm."

2000s

ANNABELLE SHAW, RIGHTS MANAGER

MA Modern Art & Theory 2000

"I am currently living in London and working in the copyright department at the British Film Institute. My favourite place on campus was the top floor of the library or the eucalyptus tree by the lake."

SERDAR ARSLAN, MANAGER

Law 2006

"I work at a multi-disciplinary surgery for homeless people. We treat those with physical, mental health, addiction, social and

housing issues. It is heart-breaking to hear their traumatic experiences and struggle on the street. I believe studying Law has helped me to advise and help vulnerable people with legal and psychological support and interventions."

ELENI PETSA, TEACHER

Teaching English as a Foreign Language 2009

"I loved everything about Essex... It's a unique experience! I liked the teaching quality and the practical aspect of my course. My favourite place was the library and the lake. I now live in Zakynthos, Greece teaching primary education."

2010s

VLAD BOGDAN BUZOIANU, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Business Management 2012

"I always remember picnics by the lake, away football matches and days in the library! Essex was a different world that turned me into a different young man. I live in my hometown in Romania where I have created a Business Forum; Career+, a youth development academy; co-founded Bye Bye Stud, a youth events company, now a regional market leader."



SPOTLIGHT ON

ROICHATUL ASWIDAH, HUMAN RIGHTS COMISSIONER

Theory and Practice of Human Rights 2005

"At Essex many of my lecturers were involved in human rights work in the field, as UN special rapporteurs or in other UN bodies. This gave me the opportunity not only to study the theoretical background, but also experience putting theory into practice which greatly enriched my study. I was appointed Commissioner to the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights in 2012 by the Indonesian Parliament. I work for better promotion, protection and fulfilment of human rights in Indonesia, especially for minority and vulnerable groups."



SPOTLIGHT ON

ADESEYE OGUNLEWE, ATHLETE

LLB Law and Politics 2016

"I joined the Essex sports scholarship programme as an amateur athlete, and the Human Performance Unit helped me to qualify for the 100m sprint at the Rio Olympics. I was honoured to represent my country – and to earn the title of 'Nigeria's fastest man'. Making it to the Olympics was overwhelming because I put in a lot of work over many years to get there. It was the same with getting a degree. It was one of my life goals, and I come from a very educated family so the pressure was on! Now I'm dedicated to my training and I've also been named a champion of the Speak Up Africa organisation, so I can use my profile to call for action on public health and education across the continent."

ORITSEGBUBEMI ATIMOMO, HR AND BUSINESS CONSULTANT

Entrepreneurship and Innovation 2014

"I am still in contact with friends I made at Southend even though we are all spread across the world. I would often go to the Forum to escape from all distractions – I even had my own spot in the study area. I work as a consultant in Lagos as well as on a number of enterprise development programmes. I am still very involved in entrepreneurship advocacy through the 'Spirit of Enterprise' initiative I started eight years ago."

LESLEY O'SHANNESSEY, TEACHER

Year Abroad 2014

"I really enjoyed my six months in England, having left the UK with my family in 1957 as a child to go to Australia. I never realised that my life would change so dramatically from being a dairy farmer's wife and a mother, to becoming a teacher and considering a PhD. I never thought I would be on this journey of learning and teaching at my age. It just goes to show you how one's life can twist and turn and you never know where you will end up."

NATASHA BRAME, FUNDRAISER

Psychology 2014

"I am now a Fundraiser at EACH (East Anglia's Children's Hospices). I have always wanted to be a fundraiser and due to my experience with the Charity Society at Essex, I am now lucky enough to have my dream job!"

Essex around the world

Just a few of the alumni events we've held in the last year



BIG IN JAPAN TONIGHT

In March 2017, over 100 alumni and guests came to our first ever alumni event in Japan. Our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Anthony Forster, hosted the event at Tokyo's Ritz Carlton, and gave everyone all the latest news from Essex. Alumni who graduated from 1980 to the present day caught up with old friends, and made new ones.



November 2016 saw us hold an alumni networking event in India at the Park Hotel, Delhi, where guests enjoyed drinks and canapés.



The Men's Volleyball team at Alumni Sports Weekend in April 2017 –120 alumni returned to take part in 16 different sports.



HONG KONG IS A BIG HIT!

Over 80 people gathered at the Hong Kong Maritime Museum in October 2017 to meet our Vice-Chancellor and enjoy the 180-degree panoramic view across Victoria Harbour. There was a chance for alumni living in Hong Kong to network, to meet current students on their years abroad, and to chat to prospective students thinking of coming to Essex.



BEST VIEW IN LONDON

Graduates from across the decades enjoyed a special evening on the London Eye in June 2017 with three private pods each hosted by an Essex academic. Dr Liam Jarvis (Literature, Film and Theatre Studies) spoke on fringe theatre in the capital, Prof Paul Whiteley (Government) on the fallout from the UK's general election, and Dr Thomas Freeman (History) on London's dark side.



Ricky Gunawan (MA Theory and Practice of Human Rights 2012) winning a British Council Alumni Award for Social Impact in Indonesia in March.



Alumni volunteers helped out at a networking event in Limassol, Cyprus, over the summer, bringing together alumni from different years, backgrounds and professions.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

From networking to theatre screenings to academic lectures, join us at one of our alumni upcoming events.



UK EVENTS

Career Conversations
23 November 2017, Colchester campus
Recent graduate event
29 November 2017, Roof East London
Albert Sloman Library 50th anniversary showcase event
7 December 2017, Colchester campus
National Theatre Live *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* screening and talk
22 February 2018, Lakeside theatre, Colchester campus
RSC *Macbeth* screening and talk
11 April 2018, Lakeside theatre, Colchester campus
Chancellor's Alumni Reception
20 March 2018, Speaker's State Rooms, Parliament, London

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Paris **26 January 2018**
Kuala Lumpur **January 2018**
New Delhi **February 2018**
Mexico City **February 2018**
New York **15 March 2018**
Washington DC **22 March 2018**
Athens **Spring 2018**
Nicosia **Spring 2018**
Events in other cities will be added throughout the year

ACADEMIC LECTURES

Hear the latest research from our recently appointed professors.
Simon Weidenholzer, Economics
4 December 2017
Peter Martin,
Health & Human Sciences
22 January 2018
Nancy Kula,
Language & Linguistics
12 February 2018
Natasha Ezrow, Government
26 February 2018
Clara Sandoval-Villalba, Law
30 April 2018
Enam Al-Wer,
Language & Linguistics
14 May 2018
Francisco Sepulveda, CSEE
29 May 2018
John Bartle, Government
11 June 2018

Want to hear about the latest events near you? Make sure we have your email address and current location. Find out more about our events at alumni.essex.ac.uk/eventscalendar or email alumni@essex.ac.uk

REUNIONS



Thinking about organising a reunion? We can help put you in touch with old friends, help you find accommodation and provide support for your event. Contact us to get a copy of our reunion organiser package.

MY MISSION TO MARS

Anushree Srivastava doesn't have an average, nine-to-five job



SO, TELL US ABOUT YOUR MISSION

I was Crew Biologist on The Mars Society's Mars 160 Twin Desert-Arctic Analog Mission. We were trying to simulate a real mission to understand what it would be like to live and carry out scientific research on Mars. It was a truly international group, representing seven countries. We spent 80 days in the Utah desert and 30 days on Devon Island in Canada, a polar desert inside the Arctic Circle.

WHAT DID YOU DO AS CREW BIOLOGIST?

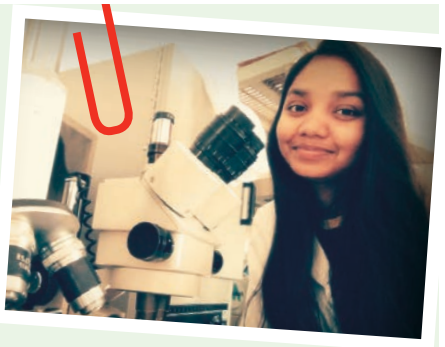
We lived in the research stations, completely isolated, and immersed in life with our crewmates. We performed extra-vehicular activities (EVAs) in heavy space suits and conducted scientific operations in the field, which was physically demanding. Inside the habitat we carried out 'human factors' research to study how people behave in simulated environments, and how that can influence the exploration and potential colonisation of Mars.

WHAT DRIVES YOUR PASSION FOR RESEARCH?

My research interests are principally in geomicrobiology [studying how micro-organisms and soils, rocks and other materials interact], but I have a real interdisciplinary interest in astrobiology and space exploration. I am interested in the big questions: Where have we come from? Is there life elsewhere in the universe? What's the future of terrestrial life? Astrobiology tries to answer those questions, encompassing life sciences, planetary exploration, earth sciences, history, and philosophy.

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO ESSEX?

When I was in school in India, I liked history and literature. I never thought I would be doing science one day, although I was fascinated by the natural world, and life beyond Earth. That inspired me to apply for the MSc at Essex.



ANUSHREE'S CV

2005	BA Ancient Indian History and Anthropology, Lucknow University
2007	MA Anthropology, Lucknow University
2016	MSc Biotechnology, University of Essex
2016	Crew Biologist, Mars 160 Mission

The Mars Society is a space-advocacy organisation established in 1998 to promote the human exploration and settlement of the planet Mars. Its steering committee includes former US astronaut Buzz Aldrin, the second person to walk on the moon.

"Find your passion. Follow your heart. Reach for the stars!"

AND ESSEX LED YOU TO 'MARS'?

Yes, my time at Essex gave me hands-on research experience in a geomicrobiology lab, looking for signs of past or present life trapped inside crystals, and that helped me to secure the position of Crew Biologist. I developed the skills I needed to investigate microbial life in the extreme, high-salt – halophilic – environments you find in the sites we visited on the Mars 160 mission, and it was important for understanding the possibility of finding microbial life in similar deposits on Mars.

HAS IT LED TO OTHER OPPORTUNITIES?

I was recently on the science team of the NASA Spaceward Bound India 2016 expedition team, collecting samples at TsoKar, an ancient lake considered (like the Utah and Canadian sites) to have similarities to the surface of Mars.

SO, WHAT'S NEXT?

I hope to become part of a doctoral program to carry forward my passion for astrobiology, and contribute to the future astrobiological exploration of Mars.

ANY ADVICE FOR RECENT GRADUATES?

Find your passion and do what you love no matter how difficult things appear at first. Never consider any work insignificant – you don't know where that little step will end up. Pour your heart into what you do as if you won't get another chance. Follow your heart – that's what I did. Reach for the stars!



STAY CONNECTED. GET INVOLVED AND VOLUNTEER

No matter where in the world you are, you can connect with Essex. Volunteering is a way to make a difference: giving your time to help today's students or using your expertise to support the University in the UK and around the world. Your time and guidance can be of real, practical use to a new generation – and being a volunteer can build your network, skills and career too. There are different opportunities ranging from talking to prospective students, to mentoring, supporting alumni events in your region, contributing to our media, or completing a graduate profile.

Get in touch to find out more: alumni@essex.ac.uk

University of Essex

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