“When Do I Get the Prescription Pad?
Good evening to all gathered here
I speak from lofty perch...”

poem by comedian Phill Jupitus (see page 9)
Alumnus Kazuo Ishiguro wins Nobel Prize for Literature

Acclaimed novelist, who studied BA English and Philosophy at Kent, has been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature 2017.

In awarding the prize the judges praised his novels for their "great emotional force" and the way in which his work has "uncovered the abyss beneath our illusory sense of connection with the world".

He has won several high-profile awards for his novels, including the Booker Prize in 1989 for Remains of the Day. In 2005, Time magazine named Never Let Me Go on its list of the 100 greatest English language novels. His seventh novel, The Buried Giant, was published in 2015.

Kazuo Ishiguro came to Kent in 1974 and studied English and Philosophy. He was a member of Darwin College and graduated in 1978. In July 1990 the University made Kazuo Ishiguro an honorary Doctor of Letters.
Interview with Karen Cox

Professor Karen Cox was appointed Vice-Chancellor and President on 1 August 2017. As our first-year students arrived for freshers’ week, we had the opportunity to spend time hearing about her vision for the University, as its sixth Vice-Chancellor and President since 1965.

We were second in line only to InQuire journalists (formerly InCant) and it’s clear that Professor Cox sees tremendous value in the life-long relationship the University has with its alumni.

“Alumni are an incredibly important part of the University family. They are important for supporting the University, talking about the University, promoting the University and helping shape its future. This collective voice can be really helpful in terms of our long-term future.

As you look back, your university experience becomes more and more important. It is a part of your life that is very formative and shapes the way you think. It is a platform from which you go on to the rest of your life.”
Ours is a truly global, welcoming, incredibly powerful community – transcending international boundaries.”

Professor Cox was previously Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Nottingham, and it was visiting Kent’s Canterbury and Medway campuses which confirmed that she wanted the role.

“I thoroughly enjoyed my leadership role at the University of Nottingham, but when I was approached about the role at Kent, the more I learnt about the institution, the more I thought it looks and feels like a great university.

I did a bit of mystery shopping. I thought the locations of both UK campuses are fantastic and the range of programmes is really interesting. I really liked the international, outward-looking and inclusive culture. The more I read and the more people I spoke to, I found the shared values and ways of working resonated strongly. When I came for the interviews, I thought ‘I would really like to work here’.

There is a sense of pride in the place, a sense of being part of an organisation with a mission. For the new students arriving, I get a real sense of excitement from them about being here.”

Professor Cox’s first year will focus on clarity of vision and engagement across the University. As she plans this work, the words of one particular alumna have resonated with her.

“I really like the way people talk about the University. There is a University of Kent film narrated by alumna Charlotte Green where she describes Kent as inclusive, international and inspiring.

They are three words that I genuinely think sum up this university. I want to bring that to life through the education we offer, the research that we do, the way we look after our campuses, the way we develop our people and the way we manage ourselves. It’s articulating something very clearly that refers to the University’s heritage – wanting to be different, doing something – then making a difference.”

Professor Cox is keen for alumni to highlight the values that run through the institution – in effect capturing what Kent’s about – and help articulate a compelling vision for the University.

“At the moment I’m working with the senior team to take a step back from the current University plan. Not rip it up, but rearticulate it – clearly, simply and in a way that we can prioritise what we need to be doing.

I want to have conversations about the kind of university we should be: to look at the education we offer our students, the experience we are creating for them, and the research we are doing. So much has changed since the plan was written in 2015, and universities are being challenged in different ways. We have an even greater responsibility placed on us to be clear about our role. I think people also recognise that we have to be constantly looking at what we are doing and how we are doing it.

The collegiate community seems strong, but I need to understand and explore that more. Given its origins in the 60s, what does the 21st century version of the collegiate community look like? Is it a connection that can last a lifetime, so how can we strengthen it to bring greater benefits?

I want to nurture our relationships and networks and provide a platform for them to grow. In time I will ask you where within the alumni community you have an affinity, and where you would want to make a contribution. Can you support students in those environments through mentoring, networking, work experience or fundraising; supporting them with the offer of expertise, advice or time? Kent alumni are spread around the world, many are part of groups and networks, global communities that can provide safe landing places for students coming to study or work in those parts of the world and help them settle.”

For Professor Cox, growth at the University doesn’t just mean an increase in student numbers. Growth can mean growing in quality, growing in stature, and in reputation.

“We can’t sit on top of this hill in Canterbury and think that the world will continue to come to us. We have to think about how we celebrate and share what we do. Whether that’s locally, regionally, nationally or internationally – let’s be really clear about the contribution that the University makes and how we can do that better.

Thinking about all the brilliant reasons why the University was established in 1965 and the values it stood for – how do we bring them forward now we are much bigger, more complex and have a greater role to play in shaping the future of the UK and contributing to an educated community and society?

We are the University of Kent. It’s a big county. We need to engage right across the county and not just in particular pockets. Wherever University staff and students are going out into the world, I want a clear signal to those places that we have arrived.

How do we engage best with an alumni community whose experiences will be from different decades and bring them all into one shared community? Should we think about a much greater use of technology to encourage more online interaction and engagement?

Education transforms lives; it’s also what creates a civilised society, but we must balance fairly the challenges of having lots of people in one place, the way we engage with the local community, and how we acknowledge and welcome the diversity of experience and views.

Of course we need to look at areas that are really flying, in terms of the programmes we offer and the research we are doing; we will nurture and develop those. In some areas we will have to take a longer and harder look – does it need to change, look different or be different?

That’s the challenge. We all want the University to be successful – to be able to say, I went there, I work there, I am studying there. There will be things happening that some of us don’t like, but we have to be positive as ultimately we are trying to be long-term, sustainable and, successful – the best version of the University of Kent that we can be.”
What do you intend to do as the leader of the University and in collaboration with other universities to mitigate the damage to students’ learning opportunities and academic collaboration across Europe as a result of Brexit?

“Universities have made their position very clear: supporting free movement of people, wanting clarity on the rights of EU citizens and highlighting the importance of accessing talent and research funds. We absolutely support Universities UK’s lobbying to get the best deal for the sector and Kent will continue contributing to that debate and keep our staff, students and alumni informed as best we can.

My view is that we are an open, welcoming, international university and will continue to be so. We will recruit staff and students from around the world, finding new ways to do so if required, and support people for as long as they want to be here. It is distressing to hear from people whose lives have been turned upside down by the uncertainty.

We have received some assurances on research funding, but research doesn’t stop at the European border and neither does collaboration. I expect colleagues, and the sector as a whole in the UK, to maintain and establish new partnerships.

We don’t yet know the outcome, which is why universities have to show leadership and be clear about their value to the world. We are not leaving Europe, and at Kent you realise just how close you are to the continent. I really like that the University is a gateway to the rest of the world. This is something we absolutely want to hold onto and build upon.”

In the light of her professional background, what are Professor Cox’s preliminary views about the desirability and feasibility of establishing an undergraduate medical school at the University of Kent?

“The prospect of a medical school has been raised with me many times in my first weeks here. But before joining as VC, I had identified that this is a large region with little in terms of the education of healthcare workforce – both current and future.

Yes, I believe absolutely it is desirable. I think it’s the right approach to address the challenges that the NHS here faces: delivery of services, recruitment and retention of a highly-qualified, highly-skilled workforce, and meeting the needs of the population. These are all signals that we need to be looking at how we recruit, retain and develop that workforce.

We are making progress with our partners – Christchurch University, the NHS and other stakeholders – and I am very excited to have the opportunity to think about a new initiative for a medical school and broader health portfolio.

But we need backing and support as the universities cannot do it alone. We are well placed to have a significant impact, sharing resources and expertise, but it has to be a response from all agencies involved. It would also be unfair to place a burden on the rest of the University, just for the pursuit of a medical school. Feasibility will be the biggest challenge. There is a lot of support, it will come down to finding the resources for us, together, to be able to do it, and do it well.”

Karen’s biography

As our new Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Cox is responsible for the leadership and management of the University, including students and staff across our seven locations: Canterbury, Medway, Tonbridge, Brussels, Paris, Athens and Rome.

A Professor of Cancer and Palliative Care and a registered nurse, Professor Cox is a Board member of the Nursing & Midwifery Council. She is a former Head of the School of Nursing and former Pro-Vice-Chancellor at the University of Nottingham. Her academic and research interests include patients and families’ experiences of cancer clinical trial involvement, cancer trial management and more recently, choice and decision-making in palliative and end-of-life care. Her work has been funded by Cancer Research UK, Macmillan Cancer Support, the Economic and Social Research Council and the NHS.

She studied at King’s College London, Oxford Brookes University and the University of Nottingham. Professor Cox has also been a Visiting Professor at Trinity College Dublin and Yale University.
Where no one has gone before...

Celebrating the pioneers at the frontier of research and academia

The University of Kent’s Innovation in Academia Awards recognise academics and researchers whose professional accomplishments have made a lasting impact in the field of higher education in North America or Europe.

In 2017, Professor Dimitris Christopoulos of Panteion University, Greece, received the top award in Europe. An academic, author and human rights advocate, his work on refugees has been crucial in raising awareness among the public and policymakers.

The top award in the US went to Dr Philip Kotler of Northwestern University, USA. He is an author, consultant and professor on marketing; he helped create the field of social marketing which focuses on helping individuals and groups modify their behaviours toward healthier and safer living styles.

Other winners include: Dr David Warburton, Professor Andreas Pinkwart (both pictured), Dr Iain Hodder, considered to be ‘one of the top archaeologists alive’, and Professor Helen Drake, an internationally acclaimed professor of contemporary French politics and EU affairs.

Nominate

Have you spent time studying in continental Europe or North America and been taught by an inspiring individual? Or maybe you know someone, professionally or personally, who is a leader in higher education in either region. If so, we’d love for you to nominate them for an Innovation in Academia Award (or encourage them to self-nominate!) by writing a short summary explaining why they should be recognised at our 2018 awards ceremonies in Brussels and Los Angeles.

Please visit www.kent.ac.uk/events/ia18.html to nominate by Sunday 10 December 2017.
Gold award for Kent in Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

The University has been awarded a gold rating, the highest, in the UK Government’s Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

The TEF panel judged that Kent delivers consistently outstanding teaching, learning and outcomes for its students. It is of the highest quality found in the UK.

A total of 295 higher education providers took part in the TEF. In the assessment, 59 providers were rated gold.

The TEF Panel reported that Kent’s students from all backgrounds achieve consistently outstanding outcomes. Very high proportions of students from all backgrounds continue with their studies and then progress to employment, notably exceeding the provider benchmarks. The metrics indicate very high levels of student satisfaction with teaching, academic support, assessment and feedback.

New Dean for Europe

Professor Jeremy Carrette has now taken up the post of Dean for Europe, following the recent retirement of Professor Roger Vickerman.

As Dean, Professor Carrette will be responsible for developing the University’s European engagement strategy, including strategic oversight of its four European postgraduate centres in Brussels, Paris, Athens and Rome.

Jeremy Carrette is Professor of Philosophy, Religion and Culture. He was previously Interim Head of the School of European Culture and Languages, and also Head of Religious Studies. His academic interests include philosophy of religion, globalisation and international institutions, with particular focus on the United Nations.

He has worked for the University for nearly 13 years.

Congratulations to our new graduates!

More than 4,000 students graduated at degree congregation ceremonies in Canterbury and Rochester between 10 and 18 July. They join you in our global alumni community and we look forward to welcoming them at alumni events and reunions. Recipients of honorary degrees include former boxing champion Barry McGuigan MBE, comedian Mark Steel, and Kent alumnus Lisa Madigan, the senior-most female Attorney General in the US.

Baroness Hale becomes president of UK Supreme Court

The Right Hon the Baroness Hale of Richmond DBE has been sworn in as the first female president of the UK’s Supreme Court.

Baroness Hale has ruled on many high-profile cases, including the government’s Brexit appeal and the appeal from the parents of Charlie Gard. Earlier this year she was on the panel of justices who, in a landmark case, ruled in favour of a man who was fighting to give his husband the same pension rights as a wife would receive. She has also had significant roles in numerous important legislative reforms, including the Children Act 1989, a crucial piece of legislation protecting children, the Family Law Act 1996 and the Mental Health Act 2005.

Hale succeeds Lord Neuberger as president of the UK’s Supreme Court, and spoke of her appointment as ‘a great honour and a challenge’. She is champion of diversity in the judiciary and is openly critical of the court on the matter, previously stating that the appointment of judges is ‘not only mainly male, overwhelmingly white, but also largely the product of a limited range of educational institutions and social backgrounds’.

In 2011, Baroness Hale was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Kent for her contribution to the law profession. She officially opened the Wigoder Law Building with The Hon Charles Wigoder and Mrs Elizabeth Wigoder in October 2016. Baroness Hale also gave a lecture titled ‘Human Rights and Social Justice’ to 470 students, alumni, staff and visitors in Wooff College.
News

‘When Do I Get the Prescription Pad?’

Comedian Phill Jupitus received an honorary degree from the University this July, and for his speech to the congregation, read a poem he wrote especially for the occasion...

When Do I Get the Prescription Pad?
Good evening to all gathered here
I speak from lofty perch
A weird place for me to appear
The atheist in church.
My task herein is to inspire
You all, and that is that
I’m not sure this is doable
While dressed up in this hat.

But academic garb aside
Consider why we’re here
The class of twenty seventeen
A most inspiring year.
I see a sea of mortarboards
Of frocks, of suits, of gowns
Of smiles relaxed and jaws clenched tight
Some faces yawn, some frown.
As I stand here in front of you
I can’t believe it’s real
The clown in doctor’s clothing
A fraud is what I feel.

Do you wonder at my presence?
Like you I am curious
Amongst such lofty intellects
My own credentials spurious.
Just now when I was called up here by
Doctor Olly Double
The more and more that he went on
I felt I was in trouble
Cartoonist
Poet
Stand-up comic
Actor
Improviser
How that CV has got me here
I’m really none the wiser.

Considering a life in art
I have to count my blessings
A normal job was not my thing
Instead, got paid for messing
I had no blueprint, scheme, nor map
Out there flying blind
Staying open-minded
And seeing what I’d find.
The thing I slowly realised
And some day soon you’ll see
While I was looking for a life
My life was seeking me.

And after more than thirty years
That life I still pursue
The point is not looking
For the things you want to do.
Of course it’s disingenuous
If I don’t mention luck
A word I should not mention
With it I have no truck.
(Breathe easy everybody, breathe easy)

For those of you assembled here
With family or friends
Your lives have built up to this point
But it’s not journey’s end.
Today you all can now reflect
On what you have achieved
Those moments which have led you here
And that you now receive.

The way you have applied yourself
The efforts you have made
Those times when you slacked off instead
In Whistable you played
The hours you’ve given to this place
The blood, the toil, the sweat
The days you will remember
The nights you can’t forget
The lectures, talks and seminars
The parties, clubs and bars
Deposits that you can’t get back
That time you crashed mum’s car
The friendships and acquaintances
The dances and the fights
The useful Monday mornings
After epic Sunday nights.

Your triumphs, your disasters
Your screw-ups and your wins
Your tears and celebrations
Your anger and your grins
The misery you oft endured
The debt you have incurred
The love you made
The love you lost
The kind and hurtful words.

Your lives they are not set in stone
And neither are events
You’ll navigate these ups and downs
With guile or common sense.
New challenges are everywhere
In every situation
Which need your creativity
Fresh thought and inspiration.
But don’t see walls and obstacles
Obstructions in your way
See a bridge you’re here to build
Through what you’ve done today.

Create and make and build and write
And draw and paint and sing
And help and hear and share and hope
That way you’ll find your thing.
But if you don’t it doesn’t matter
Listen to this rhyme
A thing you have, I haven’t got
Is lots and lots of time
So use it wisely, fill your days
With wonders wild and massive.
Don’t squander time with worry
Don’t waste it being passive.
Your art, your words, your heart, your work
The time that you will take
The lives you touch, the minds you change
The difference you will make
That world out there awaits YOUR time.
The gifts you have to give
The changes you will make in it
Through the life that you’re going to live
So well done students, sorry... graduates
You’ve all done brill.
To one and all, thanks and good night
I’ll sign off...
Doctor Phill.
Putting the ‘lab’ in ‘collaboration’

Ever since our foundation in 1965, collaboration has been at the very heart of Kent. The original vision of the first Vice-Chancellor, Geoffrey Templeman, was to create a ‘community of scholars’. The resulting collegiate system did just that: academics and students from different disciplines were in regular contact with one another, working side-by-side with offices spread around colleges and socialising together. It wasn’t until the early 70s, in fact, that departments began to form.

The Global Challenge Research Fund (GCRF)

This is a five-year £1.5 billion fund which was established in the government’s 2015 spending review. This fund has been created to ensure that UK research takes a leading role in addressing the problems faced by developing countries. Encouraging interdisciplinary working in order to solve major challenges for developing nations is at the heart of the fund, which aims to strengthen the capacity for research and innovation in the UK and developing countries, and to improve our ability to respond to emergencies and opportunities.

Groundbreaking research

Experts in Biosciences and Politics at Kent are leading projects in the GCRF (see left), one of the most ambitious global research programmes ever created. The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) is supporting projects in developing countries over the next four years.

37 awards were given in the first round of the programme, and Kent was one of only two institutions across the UK that received funding for two awards.

Professor Colin Robinson, Head of the School of Biosciences and Elena Korostelova, Professor of International Politics in the School of Politics and International Relations, are among the researchers joining forces with researchers in developing countries across the world to tackle some of the world’s most serious challenges.

Professor Robinson, working with colleague Professor Mark Smales, will lead a £4.8 million research grant into the establishment of biopharmaceutical and animal vaccine production in Thailand and neighbouring South East Asian countries. At the moment, new generation protein medicines — especially anti-cancer drugs — are typically available to only 1-5% of SE Asian patients, purely because of the high cost of imports. His project aims to apply world-leading UK expertise to enable these countries to produce their own animal vaccines and biopharmaceutical (protein) drugs.

Horizon 2020

Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU research and innovation programme ever, with almost €80 billion of funding available in the seven years from 2014 to 2020. The aim of the fund is to enable smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The programme contains three main pillars: excellent science, industrial leadership and societal challenges. Collaboration is a key aspect of the programme and Kent has already seen some success in securing funding through this.

A new funding model

This interdisciplinary approach is now being recognised for the incredible opportunities that it presents. Kent’s open and engaged outlook means that it is in a very good position to benefit from this change of focus, whether it be the new Global Challenges funding (see left), the closer relationship of the research councils as part of one organisation (UK Research & Innovation), or in the challenge-led European research programme. Collaboration cannot be forced, and the approach that Kent has nurtured for the past 50 years means that it is already capitalising on this. As well as promoting collaboration between subject areas, funders today are encouraging institutions to work together across national borders, bringing together a range of expertise to deliver innovative solutions to help solve global problems.
Science meets the world...

When it comes to collaboration in action, we can look to the School of Biosciences to see some incredible examples of what this means in reality. Academics are working with colleagues across the University, from the Law School to the Music Department – and making a huge impact with their innovative research.

The Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies of Reproduction (CISORe)

The Centre comprises several like-minded academics dedicated to the study of reproduction in all its forms. Drawing on a range of academic disciplines, CISORe’s core philosophy is that the study of this fascinating field will advance more productively through a multidisciplinary approach. Impactful, excellent research forms the basis of CISORe’s activities including scientific advance, new products and processes, contribution to public policy, and public engagement.

The study of the reproduction of humans and other animals has many facets, attracting interest from disciplines such as law, medicine (clinical and veterinary), genetics, cell biology, biochemistry, physiology, psychology, imaging, conservation, agriculture, public policy, sociology, anthropology, history, literature, art and ethics.

CISORe brings together these disciplines, creating a space where academics and external stakeholders can share knowledge, understanding and experience. As a result a wide range of projects has resulted, including the following:

From IVF clinic to animal farm

Work in Professor Darren Griffin’s lab is attempting to use the same technologies developed diagnosing genetic disease in human IVF embryos to improve livestock breeding programmes. By adapting these techniques to in vitro produced (IVP) pig and cattle embryos, genetically healthier animals may be selected before implantation. This ultimately ensures that only those offspring in possession of specifically desirable traits are reared, thereby enabling an economically and environmentally sustainable means of food production in order to meet growing market demands.

While these research programmes serve a key role in the food production industry they also act as model systems for human IVF and for basic scientific studies about the nature of early mammal development. The project is a collaboration with Canterbury Christ Church University and companies including JSR Genetics, Paragon Vets and Boviteq. The identification of genes that affect the gender balance in mammals is of key interest to the farming industry, where in many cases one sex of offspring is much more desirable than the other. Dr Peter Ellis has developed links with relevant industry partners to pursue avenues potentially leading to novel sex selection methods in agriculturally relevant species.

Assessing Child Welfare under the Human Fertilization and Embryology Act: the new law

Infertility is estimated to affect around one in seven UK couples (approximately 3.5 million people) and some 35,000 patients make use of IVF each year. Since 1990, infertility services have been subject to a highly complex system of statutory regulation; the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (1990) and accompanying Code of Practice issued by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA).

Controversially, in 2008, the legal requirement in place since 1990 was replaced with a new mandate. While previously clinicians providing treatment had to take account of ‘the welfare of any child who may be born as a result of the treatment’ including ‘the need of [a] child for a father’, they now had to consider the child’s need for ‘supportive parenting’.

On the basis of original empirical research this project assessed the impact of the amendment of this provision. Researchers explored the extent to which there is any continuing potential for exclusion of patients seeking infertility treatment services, assessed ongoing tensions or problems in the application of the reworded section, and traced the fit between what Parliament had intended it to achieve and its operation in practice.

This exploration relied on a detailed analysis of the published documentation that accompanied this reform process, and a series of semi-structured interviews which explored the views of clinicians, clinic counsellors and nursing staff.
Cellular Dynamics

Cellular Dynamics is a unique event that blurs the boundaries between science and the arts. Research from the School of Biosciences was explored alongside live musical performance in Cellular Dynamics. Initially performed as part of the Lunchtime Concert series in the Colyer-Fergusson Concert Hall, the performance returned as part of this year’s Canterbury Festival.

The event revealed a hidden beauty within experimental data, live cell imaging video and laboratory spaces. Developed as a collaborative project between Dr Dan Lloyd (School of Biosciences) and Dan Harding (Music Department), Cellular Dynamics is a unique visual and musical exploration of biology, capturing fascinating yet rarely-seen elements of laboratory research culture. Live performance of the music of Philip Glass, Tarik O’Regan and Gavin Bryars provided a suitably meditative atmosphere in which to explore fundamental processes within living cells.

Dr Dan Lloyd, Deputy Head of the School of Biosciences, and Curator of Cellular Dynamics, shares his personal view on the work:

‘We initially conceived Cellular Dynamics as an event combining images and video, generated through research in the School of Biosciences, with live piano music. Dan (Harding) and I set about finding piano repertoire that would provide a meditative environment in which to experience this imagery. Some of the sounds and themes inherent within the selected music allowed us to explore specific research themes within the scientific images, so that we do tell a scientific story. So rather than being just a musical accompaniment of scientific images, we have been able to find very interesting parallels between the music and the science to illustrate some fundamental biological research; investigating cell division, brain development, and ageing, among other things.

I’m an oboist as well as a scientist, and in Cellular Dynamics my experience as a musician is as important as my scientific background.

As well as generating the scientific story – through image and video – to match the repertoire, I am also part of the performance. I follow the piano score, so that the pianists are able to follow their musical interpretation just as they would in any performance, while I control the accompanying imagery. Musically, as well as scientifically, it is fascinating – it feels as if we’ve genuinely found something interesting at the intersection of the science and the music that adds value to both. That’s certainly the feedback we’ve received from the performances so far.’

Dan Harding, Deputy Director of Music, added: ‘The opportunity to combine live music with images from the School of Biosciences opens up interesting creative avenues; you hear the music in a new way because of what you are seeing, and you view the images differently because of the music which you are hearing at the same time. Cellular Dynamics shows that it’s possible to bring the arts and the sciences together in a manner which explores and enhances the creative aspects of both disciplines – it’s a collaboration in which science and music merge, blend and blossom into something new.’
Listen up
Experts in a post-truth world

As a University Professor and Vice Chair of the Political Studies Association (PSA) in the UK, I can reasonably claim to have expertise in my subject area. However, experts like me have failed to predict the majority of the biggest political, economic and cultural shifts of recent years, most notably the outcome of the 2015 and 2017 UK General Elections, the result of the 2016 referendum on UK membership of the European Union, the global financial crash in 2007, and more recently, the US Presidential election victory of Donald Trump. This begs the question: why listen to experts?

Added to this, we increasingly exist in a 'post truth', 'alternative-facts', 'fake news' world. In this dystopian reality, it is opinion that is most valued – evidence is secondary, or even unwanted. What really matters to apply meaning to situations – is how we feel about things – not what we think we know about them. The post-truth space that we now live in sees attitudes constructed via selective information and the application of suitable filters to confirm our prejudices; where we see and hear what we want to, with the rest airbrushed from our consciousness, or at least our web browser.

One consequence of news programmes asking us to participate by phoning/texting our opinions on a seemingly never ending stream of 'breaking news stories', is that distinguishing between what is important and what is not is becoming more difficult. Expert testimony and analysis sits on a level playing field with conjecture and speculation, or narratives linked to specific political interests.

This is why universities are such a critical component of healthy democratic life. They are full of experts (both staff and students), who are trained to examine the available evidence, critically engage with received wisdom, assess comparative examples, develop robust methodologies and devise new theoretical understandings for the contemporary political issues that surround us.

A university education is a precious thing and develops expertise in two respects. One is the subject specific knowledge and deep immersion in a subject area for 3-4 years, or more if a student goes on to postgraduate study. The second comes with the generic skills that are built during our educational journeys – examining evidence, assessing an argument, learning that assertion and opinion are not the same as evidence-based analysis. This is expertise, and it is desperately needed in today’s political climate. Its absence (from whatever quarter) consigns us
to a debased politics, where ignorance and prejudice can have equal billing in the policy process with knowledge and evidence.

A challenge has been laid down against those purporting to have ‘expertise’ or ‘facts’ at their disposal, in some of the emotionally charged issues that have made the news at home and abroad over the last 18 months. Some of those on the winning side of the Brexit referendum in 2016 have viewed ‘expertise’ as being less than helpful at times, or motivated by ‘Remoaners’ suffering from a persistent case of political sour-grapes. Of course the facts were a little more complex than the popular refrain that ‘the UK had made its democratic decision’, as two of the UK’s constituent regions, Scotland and Northern Ireland, voted decisively to remain in the EU.

When the former Justice Secretary Michael Gove MP commented in an interview just before the 2016 referendum, that ‘people have had enough of experts’, he was tapping into a popular motif of the campaign. This seemed to place more emphasis on how people felt, than what they actually knew, based on evidence surrounding the key economic and political arguments. To be fair to Gove, he was aiming his fire at economic experts whose predictions were consistently wrong – rather than at expertise per se.

But if you live by the catch-phrase, as many politicians now do (e.g. ‘Brexit means Brexit’) – you can die by it too. However, decisions taken on a hunch, may be regretted later by those who make them.

The EU referendum campaign exemplified this antediluvian approach. Don’t confuse people with facts or relevant experience – indeed those who did were seen as ideological fussbudgets, who missed the bigger picture. This has recently been referred to as ‘populism’ and linked to President Trump’s attempts to intimidate his opponents, by creating an impression that experts were out of touch with the popular mood. At a more sinister level, the ‘fake news’ peddlers from CNN and CNBC have been cast as being a dangerous impediment to ‘Making America Great Again’. In a campaign speech in Wisconsin in April 2016, candidate Trump declared: ‘the experts are terrible. …look at the mess we’re in with all these experts that we have.’

However, such public pronouncements by Trump and Gove speak to a much longer term and corrosive dynamic within public discourse. The anti-intellectualism inherent within such positions, is not just short-term political opportunism – it represents a sustained attempt to degrade the capacity of society to make informed decisions on the basis of the evidence available.

This has been aided and abetted by the popular media, which has lazily adopted a superficial approach to the coverage of political issues in the US and increasingly in the UK too. This is heavily personality-based – and policy issues are framed without much careful analysis of the evidence base to sustain them. Put bluntly, if Fox News becomes your most popular source of news content, President Trump is what you get at the end of it. Opinion is everything – the more trenchantly expressed the better. Evidence for the assertions made is of secondary value.

But experts can and should be centre-stage. This is slowly starting to emerge in the context of the Brexit debate, as those likely to be affected by the decision think through its implications. Experts across the arts, science and industry should not feel they need to whisper about their experience and knowledge behind their hands – it is vital that their expertise filters into public discourse and helps to shape the choices we are all confronted with today, and in the years ahead.

So to all experts out there, come forward and make your voices heard.

Professor Feargal Cochrane
Professor of International Conflict Analysis

Why Kent’s experts remain sought after by the media

The University has a good working relationship with journalists from across the globe, based on the fact that we have world-class academics who can be relied on to provide them with independent, impartial analysis, as well as evidence-based insights on a wide range of issues and topics.

Journalists know that the press releases and pitches they receive from the University’s press office are based on accuracy and transparency, and that we expect our research findings to be scrutinised by journalists and their editors alike. They appreciate that our experts are accessible, and ready to debate or address any challenges they may receive.

They are also aware that the work of our academics not only inspires students but has a real impact whether it’s through informing changes to government policy or developing world-changing technologies and ideas.

It’s not surprising, therefore, that Kent academics feature regularly in the media. Last year, almost 300 Kent academics contributed their expertise to print publications worldwide ranging from The New York Times to The Times of India. We also have a good profile in the UK press, and our experts are frequently on national TV and radio, including BBC Radio 4’s Today programme. Similarly, they are regularly featured in our regional media and can be heard on BBC Radio Kent almost every day of the week.

We are proud to be a sponsor of The Conversation, which describes itself as ‘an independent source of news and views, sourced from the academic and research community and delivered direct to the public’. More than 100 Kent experts regularly write for this highly regarded online publication which has a truly global reach with editions in Africa, Australia, Indonesia and the US.

There is no doubt that, as long as trusted experts are called on to redress the balance of ‘fake news’, journalists will continue to regard Kent’s academics as being among the best in the sector.

Gary Hughes
Head of Press Relations
Are you sitting down?

The term ‘Anthropocene’ is gaining in popularity. For those unfamiliar with it, it is the name that will soon be given to the geological epoch in which we are living. For 11,700 years we have inhabited the Holocene, a relatively warm and clement period in the earth’s history, but this will soon change because the worldwide impact that humans have had on the environment is so substantial.

Evidence for this new geological era is everywhere, from climate change to the omnipresence of plastics, chicken bones, concrete particles and radioactive isotopes from nuclear tests: these are all making a global impact. The evidence continues to mount and can be seen by only a quick glance out of your nearest window. But there is perhaps another place that scientists might want to look for evidence: the human body.

As we have been busy changing the world, things have been happening to our bodies. For thousands of years we have treated the world as something to project our ideas onto, but we have also been its canvas. Our environment has changed our bodies, from the tips of our toes to the tops of our heads, there is evidence of environmental change all over our bodies. In my last book, Footnotes: How Running Makes us Human, I discovered that to be able to run, what we really need is a good Palaeolithic body — one not troubled by so many of the symptoms of modern life. While some of these symptoms are connected to ways we rest, they are mostly connected to how modes of work have changed — bringing us indoors, to sit in static poses, often for hours at a time.

Even a cursory glance at some Victorian fiction tells us that they were amongst the first people to notice such changes. Particularly in Industrial novels, we find characters misshapen by new kinds of factory work that drew people in from the country at alarming rates. And our predicament with working practices is not so different. We overindulge in the wrong diets; we are overstimulated by technology; our lifestyles have become ever more sedentary; and all of it is changing our bodies. The way we live now is altering us to such an extent that most people in the West are no longer able to stand up correctly.

Our spines are curling, our pelvises tilting, our feet flattening, our knees are buckling, our bums are wilting, our eyesight is shortening, and our skin and our lungs show increasing sensitivity to the outdoors. We think of our DNA as static, like computer code. But it is as dynamic and reactive as the skin of a chameleon, responding vigorously to its environments. Modern life is expressing all kinds of hidden ciphers tucked away in our DNA, and as these ciphers get ‘switched on’, so the size, shape, appearance, and structure of our bodies are changing.

FOOTNOTES

How running makes us human

VYBARR CREGAN-REID

We are not able to step back in time and reclaim our ‘Paleo’ bodies (would we even want them?), but there are many small changes that we can make to our lives that will help us to live longer, live better, and more freely that I am currently exploring.

Prairie Change: how modern life is reshaping us, and what we can do about it will be published next year by Hachette.

Dr Vybarr Cregan-Reid
Reader in English and Environmental Humanities
Community

Campus news

Darwin

The Darwin College Conference Suite has undergone a nearly £1 million renovation and redecoration this summer. The former College dining hall is the most important flat floor space on campus, hosting a wide variety of events from high table meals through to large conference events. The renovated space will have state of the art audio visual facilities, and a living moss wall.

Two Darwin College students, Sharad Kiswani and Graham Robertson, featured as runners-up in two categories of the Kent Student Awards 2017 which took place on Friday 5 May. Sharad’s award was in the category of the Chancellor’s Award for Employability, and was given for his leadership role within Enactus Kent, a student group that organises projects that empower communities and improve livelihoods. Graham’s award was in the category of Outstanding Contribution to Arts and Culture, and was given for his role in organising ‘Breakin Convention’, a major hip-hop festival that took place in May of this year.

The Darwin Rose Garden has once again been looking beautiful this summer with the roses in full bloom. The gardens have also hosted several events including Eid celebrations and afternoon tea receptions. Although the plants are winding down for the winter, the gardens remain a lovely, tranquil space away from the hustle and bustle of central campus for students, staff and alumni to enjoy.

Woolf

The postgraduate community at the University of Kent is going from strength to strength with a great community ethos within the Woolf students.

This community spirit has been spearheaded by the Kent Graduate Student Association (KGSAs), with student Rowena Bicknell at its helm supported by Tom Ritchie. The KGSAs have made excellent use of a Graduate School space in the new Cornwallis West building, a terrace upon which several successful events have taken place including a pre-Summer Ball drinks reception and 4 July celebrations.

As a result of Rowena and Tom’s excellent work with the KGSAs this year, they featured significantly at the Kent Student Awards 2017. Together they came runner-up and highly commended in the two categories of Chancellor’s Employability Points Awards and Outstanding International/ Multicultural Initiative of the Year respectively. They also won the Outstanding Contribution to College Life category and the evening culminated in them together winning the award for Student of the Year. Two other Woolf students featured at the Awards with Serena Fox being awarded joint third place in the Outstanding Contribution to Sport Development for her excellent work as the President of UKC Netball and Giacomo Palmieri being awarded third place in the Outstanding Contribution to Media and Communications category for his involvement in varying projects with radio station CSRfm. Overall a brilliant year for Woolf students and a great success for the College!

Turing

After three academic years in existence, Turing College has just sent off its first cohort of residents and now recent graduates at this year’s summer graduation ceremonies. Starting off with approximately 250 students in residence in 2014-15, the college expanded to its full capacity in the following academic year with 2016-17 being the second academic year in which students resided in all nine accommodation blocks.

During this time the College’s student community has actively shaped the use of space within the College for the benefit of Turing residents. In 2015-16 the Turing Student Committee President was successful in initiating the refurbishment of the Common Room which was equipped with new and more suitable furniture resulting in a more sociable space for students to use and spend time in. Recently, the pathway between A and B Blocks was newly resurfaced making it safer to walk on following the 2016-17 student committee’s effective campaign.

On 21 October 2016 we were pleased to hold the Antony Copley Book Launch: A Story of a Rich Life Lived and Experience of Homosexuality over the Last 70 ‘Years’ in the Turing Common Room to honour the late Professor Antony Copley, who had sadly passed away prior to the event. The book launch was dedicated to his memoir Historian and Homosexual: Search for a Postwar Identity which explores the difficult world of the 1950s (and beyond) for homosexuals, the world that Alan Turing lived and died in.
Family members, friends and colleagues from across the University paid tribute to Professor Copley during a reception and a series of talks.

Together with the Student Committee the Master’s Office organised an end of year barbecue for all Turing students outside Hut8 on 10 June 2017. Students were able to enjoy a burger whilst chatting to their fellow students on a bright and sunny day, most of whom were close to finishing their exams and moving on from their familiar surroundings in Turing.

At the time of writing we are looking forward to welcoming all new Turing students at the College’s Welcome Talks in Hut8 on 18 September 2017 and for the second time, these will be held on the premises of the College. Several speakers/departments will contribute to the talks during which students will be able to familiarise themselves with faces and departments they are mostly likely to come across during their time at the University. 2017-18 will also mark the second year of having a dedicated Residents’ Support Officer for the College enabling student-to-student assistance and student mediation in flat/house disputes.

Kent Sport

Sport is a crucial part of the University experience for students and staff who learn new skills, enhance fitness and create life-long friendships. Kent Sport provides opportunities for participation and development at all levels, from elite sports people such as honorary Kent graduate Millie Knight (Paralympic skier), to our many sports scholars like Jasmine Pomeroy (karate) and James Mapley (cycling), to competitive intra-mural and inter-college student sport, through to staff sport including the Vice-Chancellor’s Cup, as well as recreational sport and fitness enjoyed by many. For those new to sport, we offer the Let’s Play programme to encourage participation and to ensure that staying active remains fun.

Kent Sport is progressing an ongoing programme of facility development to ensure that the University of Kent continues to offer the best facilities in the region. We are currently working with stakeholders to create a state-of-the-art multi-functional building that will offer additional sport and fitness opportunities including enhanced year-round tennis and netball as well as new fitness equipment and also space for other activities.

Membership at Kent Sport provides access to all facilities from indoor and outdoor tennis to squash, an excellent gym to a modern fitness and dance class studio as well as outdoor pitches, cycle hire and golfing opportunities. Membership is available to alumni and public as well as students and staff, who with special offers available during the Easter and summer vacations. Email memberships@kent.ac.uk or visit www.kent.ac.uk/sports for details. Kent Sport facilities also provide an excellent venue for functions, exhibitions and events; to find out more email kentsport@kent.ac.uk
Sanjay Gubbi

Elliot, 2005 – Conservation Biology

Sanjay received a Master’s Degree in Conservation Biology from Kent and was awarded the Maurice Swingland Award for the best postgraduate student of the year in 2006 while studying within the Darrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE). He is the recipient of the World Wildlife Conservation Award for 2011 and was also named as one of 25 ‘Leaders of Tomorrow’ by the Times of India in 2012 in recognition of his work.

This year, Sanjay was awarded the Whiteley Award donated by WWF-UK at The Royal Geographical Society in London on 18 May. He was honoured for his work on reducing deforestation in Karnataka’s tiger corridors, which are home to around 20% of the India’s tiger population. His work with the Indian government has helped legally secure 2,358 sq km of tiger habitat in the region, a 37% increase.

What made you decide to come to Kent?
Kent’s reputation as a university with world-class facilities, and DICE’s status as an institute that provides holistic teaching about wildlife conservation.

What is your favourite memory of Kent?
Spending time with my wonderful classmates who came from different countries and cultures.

What have you been up to since graduating?
I have continued with my interest in real-world conservation, but also due to my exposure at DICE, I have forayed more into wildlife research as well.

What would be your perfect day?
Sitting alone in the forests by a waterhole, and watching a lot of animals.

What was your earliest ambition?
I had no ambitions, but sometime during my high school and pre-university days I started to think that I wanted to be a wildlife conservationist.

What was your first job?
Studying painted storks and spot-billed pelicans in a village heronry in South India in 1992-93.

What is your favourite item of clothing, either now or in the past?
Casual clothing, especially polo shirts. I also love wearing traditional south Indian silk dhoti.

Which word or phrase do you use most?
I think it’s ‘wildlife conservation’.

What (if anything) would you like to change about yourself?
1. Learn not to be impatient.
2. Eat less.

Which country would you most like to visit?
Namibia. An amazing country with such wonderful landscapes, and plenty of wildlife.

What is your greatest achievement since graduating?
Perhaps working with the government that resulted in adding nearly 700,000 acres of forestland to the protected area network in our state. This has resulted in creating a network of 21 inter-connected protected areas for tigers, elephants and other wildlife species.

What’s the best piece of advice you’ve ever been given?
Time and tide wait for none. My father told this several times when I was young.

Who or what inspires you?
Professionally, it’s wildlife that inspires us to do what we do. If I see a tiger that has returned to an area where it had not existed earlier, it inspires us to do more.

Personally, we can always look around us, and we will find many people who will inspire us in our daily lives. But at times popular quotes help us to reorient ourselves. My family, close friends, and my team have been my biggest supporters of my work, both during good and bad times.

Where do you see yourself in ten years’ time?
Spending more time in the forests. If possible, supporting more youngsters to take up the cause of wildlife conservation.

If I ever retire (in my profession and in life), I would like to go with a clear consciousness that I tried doing something for the species I loved.
Together again

Rutherford reunion

On Saturday 29 July, over 150 alumni and friends gathered for a gala dinner in Rutherford College Great Hall to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Rutherford College’s first academic year. Hosted by Peter Kappa, Master of Rutherford, the dinner included former masters of Rutherford and other colleges, as well as founding Rutherford students and guests.

The dinner was the centrepiece of a wider weekend which included reminiscences from Professor John Todd about his experiences as Rutherford Master, a panel discussion featuring current and former staff as well as alumna and University Council member Dr. Stevie Spring, and a chance to tour the campus and visit some of the newer additions to the University estate in recent years!

It is hoped that this reunion will be the first in a series of annual events which will welcome alumni back to campus each summer for a weekend of celebration and nostalgia. Next year, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Keynes College, and we have big plans for Saturday 21 July 2018 – see below and please mark your diaries!

A golden jubilee celebration

To celebrate 50 years of friendship since meeting in 1966 at what was then known as The University of Kent at Canterbury, seven former members of Eliot College, Malcolm Bone, Stephen Cox, Piers Mackenzie, John Owen, Paddy Rogers, Peter Sherred and Sir Nicholas Thompson met up in London in October 2016 for a Reunion Dinner, at the Carlton Club.

Making up the dinner party were long-standing friends of the original seven when at UKC. both alumni and acquaintances from 50 years ago. These included John Clarke (Eliot 67), Margot Chaundler (Rutherford 67), Andrew Colvin (Eliot 67), Gillian Davidson (Eliot 68), Billie Taylor (Rutherford 68) and Lisy Buchan (Rutherford 67). The alumni group members were also delighted to meet up again with Wilf Kollon-Krayenhui, widower of Anne Krayenhui (Eliot 68 who died in 2016), and Mary May, a childhood friend of Anne and well-known to those attending.

‘It was a wonderful evening bringing together so many friends with a common link – Kent University – who have maintained their contacts and friendships over 50 years. So it was fitting and appropriate we should all come together to celebrate that achievement and in grand style’,

said Sir Nicholas Thompson through whose good office the venue was arranged. Stephen Cox added: ‘It was remarkable that, with only one sad exception, we had all managed to steer through 50 years maintaining contact with each other and treasuring the friendships forged while at UKC. It was especially pleasing that Wilf was able to be with us representing Anne who, I am sure, must have been with us in spirit’.

Since the event took place, we have sadly learned that Paddy Rogers has passed away. Our condolences go to his family and friends.

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SUMMER GALA BALL

Please save the date for the University of Kent’s Summer Gala Ball

SATURDAY 21 JULY 2018

We will be releasing further details and booking information soon
Confessions of a Former Master

On 29 October 2017, as part of the Rutherford 50th Anniversary Reunion celebrations, Former Master of Rutherford, John Todd gave a fascinating talk entitled Rutherford Reminiscences, and Other Musings (or Confessions of a Former Master!). We are delighted that he has chosen to share some of his thoughts here...

“In our initial year of operation (1965-66), apart from Physics and Chemistry being housed in what is now the Marlowe Building, all the non-science subjects and associated teaching activities took place in our first College, Eliot. This arrangement was fairly straightforward and quite an efficient way of working for the fledgling institution, however with the opening of Rutherford in October 1966 roughly half of the existing students and staff, regardless of subject affiliations, jumped ship and transferred their loyalties in an easier/faster direction to create a new collegiate community. At the same time the new 1966 intakes of students and staff were divided equally between the two Colleges. Thus the distribution of the academic subjects across all the Colleges and the broad-based ‘Part I’ teaching programmes in each of the three Faculties were seen as being unique hallmarks whereby Kent successfully emphasised and encouraged interdisciplinarity. Somewhat sadly, in the early years this sailing against the traditional academic wind may have come at a cost in terms of Kent’s research and teaching performance in national university league tables, resulting in an inevitable move towards subject concentration in the Colleges, thereby converting to a more traditional academic management model.

“When I inherited the Mastership of Rutherford in August 1975 there were already rumblings about ‘subject concentration’, but most of my recollections of my decade in office relate, on the one hand, to coping with financial and accommodation crises, and on the other to dealing with the consequences of student activities.”

Where else would you arrive for work on a Monday morning and find that your first task was to discipline a student for biting the Vice-Chancellor’s leg while the latter was giving a public ‘Open Lecture’ on the previous Friday evening, or discover that the entrance to your office is blocked by a heap of moist rotting manure bearing the inscription ‘You sh’t on us, we sh’t on you’, written on blue toilet paper? If it wasn’t the antics of the Junior Members who kept me entertained, then hosting groups of Saga holidaymakers during the vacation was not without its incidents. Thus I recall coping with an irate elderly gentleman who was accusing everyone, especially the cleaners, of stealing his valuable gold watch, only to discover that he had been wearing it all day on his upper arm (having moved it there in order to wash in the morning) or sorting out the aftermath of an elderly lady wearing a Saga badge being inadvertently ‘kidnapped’ by a representative when she was seeing off a friend at Birmingham New Street station and finding herself back in Rutherford where she had stayed the week before!

As I noted above much has changed at Kent over the past 50 years, but we still have Colleges (indeed we recently established two new ones, Wooff and Turing), and Masters whose primary functions are the pastoral care, welfare and non-academic discipline of students. Hopefully most of those now running the Colleges will share my experience that being a Master is a fantastic job, and that through their endeavours the current Masters continue to make Kent very much a ‘people place!’
In memoriam

Since the last issue of KENT Alumni went to press, the University has learned of the deaths of the following alumni, honorary graduates and former staff.

If you would like to be put in touch with the families or friends of anyone listed here please let us know – we may be able to help.

Pam Brierley (Former Staff)
Harold Brown (Eliot 1965)
Countess Mountbatten of Burma
(Honorary Graduate)
Joan Charlesworth (Former Staff)
Professor Robert Freedman (Former Staff)
Professor Vic George (Former Staff)
Audrey Green (Keynes 1981)
Michael Lockwood (Keynes 1967)
Patrick Rogers (Keynes 1969)
Nick Ryan (Former Staff)
Caroline Simmonds (Darwin 2005)
Deborah Steinberg (Keynes 1984)
Charles Truman (Eliot 1967)

Particularly interested in healthcare, children’s and bereavement charities, she was, among many voluntary roles, vice-president of the British Red Cross and of the NSPCC. She was appointed CBE in 1991.

Professor Vic George

Colleagues, friends and former students will be saddened to learn that Professor Vic George died suddenly in September. Vic will be remembered as a kindly, self-effacing and scholarly man who did much to shape the careers of his colleagues and contributed greatly to the discipline through his teaching and his many books.

These include the seminal Ideology and Social Welfare and Globalization and Human Welfare and British Society and Social Welfare (with Paul Widing), European Welfare Futures, Major Thinkers in Welfare, Modern Thinkers on Welfare (with Robert Page) and many others. Vic studied and carried out research on social security at LSE and then moved to Nottingham and Kent, where he was the founding professor of social policy. He will be missed by many in the discipline.

Obituary

Countess Mountbatten of Burma

Patricia Edwina Victoria Mountbatten was the elder daughter of Lord Louis Mountbatten, who in 1947 was created Earl Mountbatten of Burma, and his wife, Edwina (nee Ashley). Through her father, who was born Prince Louis of Battenberg, Lady Mountbatten was a great-great-granddaughter of Queen Victoria; she was a cousin of the Duke of Edinburgh and related to many of the royal families of Europe.

She was involved in many charitable causes and organisations, some, such as the Burma Star Association, as a tribute to her father. In August 1995 she and Prince Philip marched with the Burma campaign veterans in the Mall, to mark the 50th anniversary of VJ Day. She was also colonel-in-chief Princess of Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry (1974-2007) and vice lord-lieutenant of Kent (1984-2000). She was made an honorary graduate of Kent in 2000.

In 1995 he was introduced to the Queen at the Cathedral and was then awarded the Cathedral Centenary gold medal and then the Diocesan medal. He was also given an honorary fellowship by St Mary’s College, part of Surrey University.

Paddy, despite his declining health, was able to attend a UKC reunion in London last October. He was noted for his impish sense of humour and loyalty to his family and friends who will all miss him greatly.

Professor Robert Freedman

Robert first came to Kent in 1971 when he joined what was then the Biological Laboratory and went on to become its Director in 1989 until he was appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor in 1996. He subsequently became Deputy Vice-Chancellor before he left in 2002. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Kent in July 2010.

During his time at Kent, Robert was an active supporter of the arts and was chair of the theatre planning and policy committee and a member of the co-ordinating committee for the arts.
Thank you!

Last year, gifts to the Kent Opportunity Fund made a huge difference to the lives of Kent students. Whether they received a scholarship, were supported through financial difficulties with a hardship bursary, or given a chance to participate in an innovative project to enhance their skills, gifts from alumni and friends of the University have changed lives.

As we welcome our new students, many of whom will be touched by your generosity, we’d like to take this opportunity to thank you. Whether you’ve sponsored a brick in the Footsteps path, made a gift during our telephone campaign or joined us for one of the *In Conversation* events, your donations have made a difference.

“Thank you for your contribution to the Kent Opportunity Fund. You have made it possible for me, and many other students, to continue our work, to feed our passion and to push the limits of our chosen fields. Thank you for your faith in the students of Kent.”

Konstantinos Gravanis
2017 Alumni Postgraduate Scholar