



University of Essex

**THIS  
IS ME**  
JAMIE RAINES  
TALKS CHANGE

**ESSEX  
EFFECT**







the forum  
southend-on-sea

**ESSEX IN NUMBERS**

The Forum in Southend-on-Sea

HAS BEEN OPEN FOR  
**3**  
YEARS

HAS BEEN VISITED BY MORE THAN  
**1.75**  
MILLION PEOPLE  


THE LIBRARY AND STUDY SPACE HAS LENT OUT MORE THAN  
**1**  
MILLION ITEMS  


OUR LEARNING HUB HAS SEEN MORE THAN  
**70,000**  
LOGINS  


  
WON A ROYAL INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED SURVEYORS AWARD



This year's Essex alumni magazine has a new look – we hope you like it. It's got something for everyone: from political protests to unfamiliar vegetables – via coral reefs, tattoos, and a genuine comedy legend. And if there's something you'd like to see in these pages, let us know. We want to hear your stories and see your photos, and give you a magazine you love.

If you were inspired by your time here to do something extraordinary, or if your life has taken an interesting or unexpected turn, we'd love to hear about it. This is your magazine, and it's more than just a way to find out what's happening here – it's a way to keep in touch, to find out about events around the world and to connect to your global alumni network – tens of thousands of people across the world, all with something in common.

You are part of Essex, and it doesn't finish when you leave. Essex is for life. If you contributed to this issue, thank you. The magazine – like the Essex community – is nothing without you.

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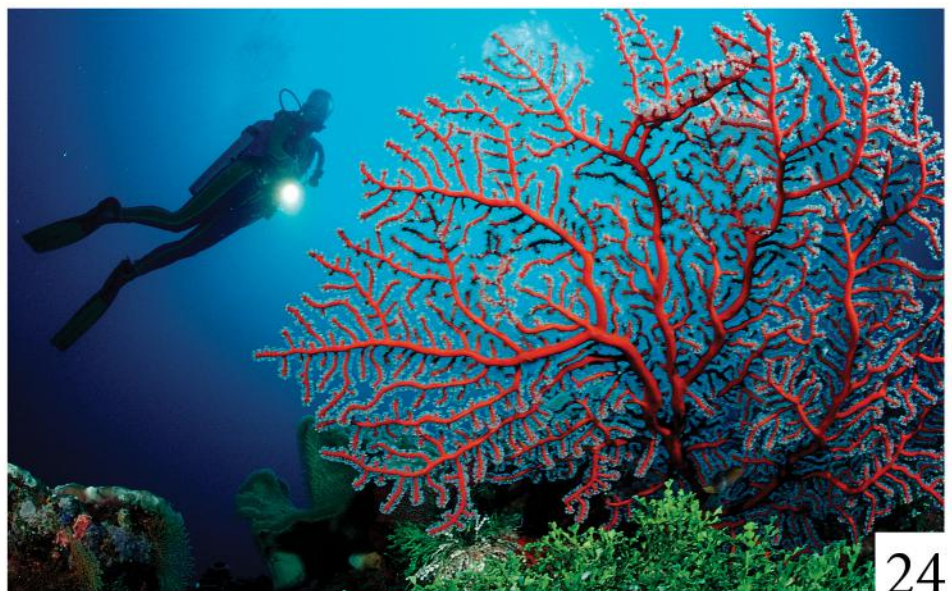
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10



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24



## WAITING FOR PEACE



Essex law and human rights expert Clara Sandoval has been working to help end one of the world's longest-running civil wars. She advised the Ministry of Justice in Colombia while the government negotiated to end five decades of political violence which had claimed more than 220,000 lives and driven more than 7 million people from their homes. The peace deal was narrowly rejected in a referendum in October, but a new agreement was reached as we went to press. Clara is now actively involved in legal debates around the country's next steps, and says this is "a great opportunity to build a better framework for transitional justice".

**Clara Sandoval, Senior Lecturer, Law**







## FEEDING THE WORLD

Building on our expertise in bioscience, a new Essex-led project is aiming to improve wheat yield and help feed the world's booming population. Globally, wheat is the most important staple crop, providing 20% of daily calories and protein. Population growth and changing diets are expected to increase world demand for wheat by 60% by 2050. Our three-year project will look at ways to improve photosynthesis – the process by which plants harvest energy from the sun and convert it to food. Led by Tracy Lawson in our School of Biological Sciences, the project also involves agri-tech company Bayer and the National Institute for Agriculture Botany in Cambridge. "The challenge of feeding our growing population is a real issue we want to help tackle," Tracy says. "Our research has links with industry, so we can have a real impact on producing the next generation of higher-yield wheat varieties."



**Tracy Lawson, Professor in Plant Physiology, Biological Sciences**

## UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY

Essex has secured £27.5 million extra funding from the Economic and Social Research Council for Understanding Society – our world-leading study of 21st century UK life and how it's changing. It captures information about social and economic circumstances, and the behaviours and health of people living in thousands of households. Established in 2009, Understanding Society helps policy makers, public sector support services, charities and academic researchers to analyse changes in society over time. The new funding covers three waves of data collection from over 100,000 people across more than 5,000 postcodes in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The funding also includes two studies where researchers will test new survey techniques.



**Michaela Benzeval, Director, Understanding Society**





## DOES CRIME REALLY PAY?

A mafioso who completes just one more year of education can increase his earnings by an average of 8%, according to a study by the University of Essex and the University of California Merced. For 'business criminals' – carrying out fraud, embezzlement, tax evasion and counterfeiting – the increase can be 16%. The study by Nadia Campaniello and Giovanni Mastrobuoni at Essex is one of the first to look at the effect of education on criminals' productivity and earnings, helping us to understand the economics of crime – and combat it. They analysed 400 mobsters in the 1940 United States Population Census and 1960s records from the Federal Bureau of Narcotics.

**Nadia Campaniello, Lecturer, Economics**  
**Giovanni Mastrobuoni, Professor, Economics**



## SECRETS OF SCHIZOPHRENIA



An international study involving Leonard Schalkwyk in Biological Sciences has advanced our understanding of genetic risk factors in schizophrenia. This inherited disorder is characterised by episodes of psychosis and altered brain function. Previous research has identified genetic variants associated with the condition, but scientists remain uncertain about which genes cause it. The study, published in *Genome Biology*, was the largest of its kind and helped to clarify which genes are affected. It provides a blueprint for researchers to undertake similar analyses for other complex diseases.

**Leonard Schalkwyk, Professor of Human Genetics**



## WRITING HISTORY



Elizabeth Kuti from our Department of Literature, Film, and Theatre Studies is currently writer-in-residence at Hampton Court Palace. She's written dramas and micro-plays which visitors to the Palace will find being performed as they go around – especially during the busy summer holiday period. Mainly focused on the Tudor period and the court of George II, she also created a scene about Shakespeare to mark the 400th anniversary of his death. It was performed in the Great Hall where he and his company, the King's Men, acted. It followed a major success in 2015 for her *TimePlays* in the Historic Royal Palaces.

**Elizabeth Kuti, Senior Lecturer, Literature Film and Theatre Studies**



PHOTO: HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES / VYES SALMON



## IN BRIEF

It's been an amazing year for Essex...

### LAST BASKET WINS CUP

Our female basketball team secured a national title after winning their nail-biting final in the closing seconds. Essex Blades were underdogs coming into the last game of the Basketball England National Cup, but came back from seven points down at half-time to win 53-52.



### MAKES YOU THINK

Our popular THINK seminar series won the Student Experience category in the Guardian University Awards 2016. The seminars give students a chance to debate and hear differing views on challenging subjects, such as drug legalisation, sex work and immigration. THINK was praised for bringing students together to discuss major moral and political matters.



### EAST 15 TO WEST END

East 15 Acting School graduate Joseph Ayre is playing the lead in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* in London. He joined the National Theatre's award-winning production straight from his BA Acting course, and says it "really is a dream come true".



### ROYAL VISIT TO SOUTHEND CAMPUS

In February, the Duke of Kent officially opened The Forum Southend-on-Sea, home to the University's state-of-the-art Learning Hub and Lecture Theatre. Developed through a unique three-way partnership, the Forum is a joint project between the University, the local council and South Essex College to create the country's first integrated public, university and college library.



### WINS ACROSS THE WORLD

Four Essex graduates won British Council Education UK Alumni Awards this year. Leticia Osorio from Brazil (pictured on the left here), Jianwei Zheng from China and Abdullah Al Fraidan from Saudi Arabia each won in their country's Social Impact category, while Ankit Mehrotra won for Entrepreneurship in India.



## ESSEX IN TOP RANK



Our outstanding student experience, strong graduate prospects and world-leading research have helped the University of Essex climb five places into the top 30 of *The Times* and *The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2017*. It's the definitive overview of the best UK universities and shows us performing strongly on student satisfaction and employability. This year has also seen us reach the QS World University Rankings global top 2%, and the *Times Higher Education World University Rankings*' top 20 for international outlook. Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), Aletta Norval, said: "We're delivering outstanding education and world-leading research."

## EQUAL PAY FOR ALL



Essex has closed the pay gap for female professors. It's an issue across higher education, and Essex decided to take the lead and give female professorial staff a one-off salary uplift to close the gap completely. Vice-Chancellor Anthony Forster said: "Treating our staff with equal respect and dignity is at the core of our values. This decision makes sure we reward people in a fair way, based on their contribution to our community." We are also introducing a gender equality champion on the University's senior management team.



# ON CAMPUS

## DESIGN INNOVATION

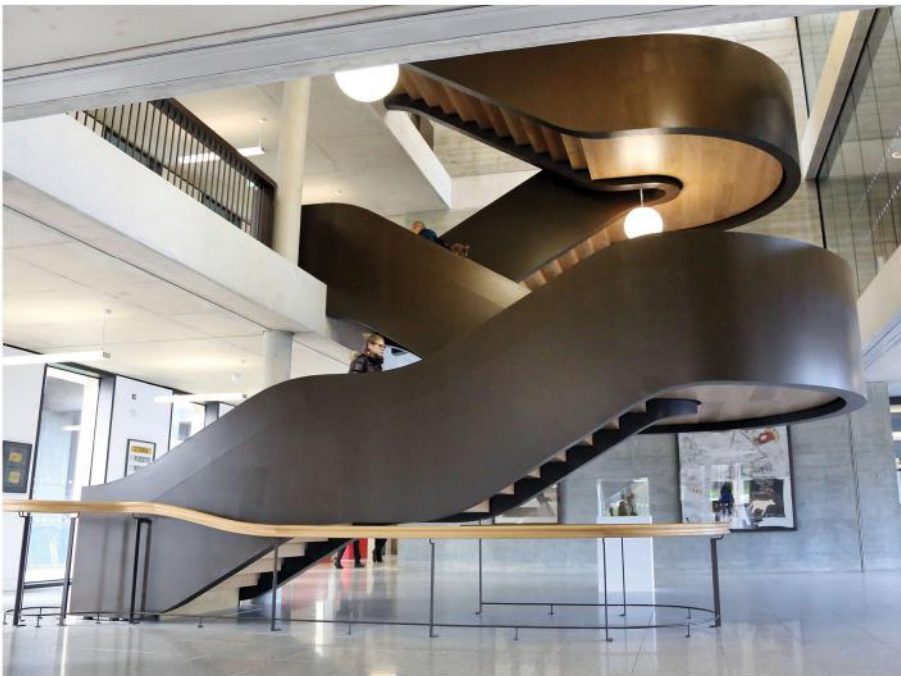
The new zero-carbon home for Essex Business School has won the Design through Innovation category at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Awards for the East of England.

The judges said: "The building is low-carbon as part of the School's ethos to lead the development of sustainable business strategies, and provides flexible group learning and media facilities with an emphasis on postgraduate learning and research."

The new building has a stunning winter garden with a domed roof, which creates its own microclimate, and its energy-efficient design and low-carbon technology save us more than a tonne of carbon every day. There's also a virtual Bloomberg trading floor and innovation booths for group working, plus dedicated working space for postgraduate and research students.







## STRIKING SILBERRAD SCOOPS AWARD

Our striking new £26 million Silberrad Student Centre and Albert Sloman Library extension won a Royal Institute of British Architects National Award and was RIBA East Building of the Year. The judges said both buildings were well used and obviously loved by staff and students.

The Silberrad Student Centre is now one of the biggest buildings on campus, and houses a new student media centre, 180-space reading room and excellent IT facilities. It also features works from the University's Essex Collection of Art from Latin America.

The Albert Sloman Library's new extension houses 1.4 million books and brings 21st century technology into a traditional environment for study.

### IN BRIEF

## What else is happening at Essex?

### DEVELOPING EAST 15

We're renovating the Corbett Theatre on our Loughton campus to create a versatile new space. There will be a new library and IT centre and a bigger café, too. By the end of the process, East 15 Director Leon Rubin says, "We'll have the best single campus facility for a conservatoire school in England."

### IMPROVING OUR LAKES

The area around the lakes on our Colchester campus is being improved with a new landscaped amphitheatre – which will be a performance space and a spot for meeting or enjoying the view. We're also adding new barbecues and seats, making a place to suit small groups and large gatherings.





# COMEDY LEGEND

From *Not the Nine O'Clock News* to concerts for the Queen, if you've watched British TV in the last 40 years, you've seen Geoff Posner's work. This is his story

**I WANTED TO BE A TV DIRECTOR** at the age of 12. I went to university to have some qualification to my name.

**IN 1966, ESSEX WAS A BUILDING SITE.**

I ended up in a B&B in Clacton, with a landlady in a purple, quilted housecoat. Leticia smoked constantly, and put the ash in her pocket. The sliced bread was always teetering on the edge of mouldiness. "I don't know what's happened to the bread these days," she'd say. "We've only had it two weeks."

**I WANTED TO CHANGE THE WORLD,**

not by standing on the barricades, but by expanding people's minds. I became Chair of the Ents committee and booked bands, including The Who, and ended up on the door. When the guys from the army came, all at least three feet taller than me, I welcomed them with open arms to avoid my face being altered.

**ESSEX TAUGHT ME TO FIGHT FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN,** and don't take

no for an answer. After Essex, I threw myself at the BBC, only to be thrown right back. I wrote over 40 application letters for any job from Stationery Supervisor to Director General. Most people would have taken the hint and given up.

**I DEMANDED TO SEE THE HEAD OF APPOINTMENTS AT THE BBC,** and he

agreed. "Well, maybe we could take you on as a..." I said yes before he'd had a chance to say "Floor Assistant". I did a bit of everything. I worked on *Doctor Who*, donning a glove with a plastic spider on the end which was going to be superimposed onto someone's face. This was before CGI – it just looked like a glove with a plastic spider on.

**I SET MYSELF THE GOAL OF**

**DIRECTING BY THE TIME I WAS 30.** With three days to go before I was 31, I sat in a directing chair for the first time and

thought: "What if I don't like directing?" That thought lasted no more than 15 seconds.

**YOU CAN'T MAKE SOMEONE FUNNY, BUT YOU CAN MAKE THEM FUNNIER.**

Sometimes, scripts come in and you don't want to change a word. The late Victoria Wood and I worked together for 15 years, and those shows have to be some of the most rewarding I ever did. And I love spotting talent. I found Harry Enfield at Edinburgh, and saw Vic Reeves at a very odd comedy venue in Deptford.

**LIVE TV IS NOT FOR THE FAINT-HEARTED. BUT IT'S ADDICTIVE.** I got my taste for it in the 1980s. Then, when the UK won Eurovision, and had to stage it the next year, the BBC phoned me up: "Geoff, I don't suppose you'd like to..." "Yes". "Do you want time to...?" "No." I've been involved with Live 8, Comic Relief, Children In Need, the Olympics Opening Ceremony and the Queen's Jubilee Concerts.

**YOU KNOW WHEN YOU SAY SOMETHING AND DON'T THINK ANYBODY'S LISTENING?** We were discussing where to put Brian May to open the Golden Jubilee concert, and I looked up at the roof of Buckingham Palace and said "What about up there?" When we started the concert, I thought, "We have Heads of State, the Royal Family, and billions of people watching. If this goes wrong, I shall be taken to the Tower of London and locked away. Take a deep breath, Geoff, and go for it."

**I'VE BEEN IN TV FOR OVER 40 YEARS,** and I've started lecturing on live events and television to nurture new talent. How different my life would have been if a course like this had been around in 1966. But life is a question of being in the right place at the right time, and Essex was the right place for me. ■

**Geoff graduated in Sociology in 1970**

"I love spotting talent. I found Harry Enfield at Edinburgh and Vic Reeves in Deptford"





## LIFE AFTER ESSEX

### GEOFF'S HIGHLIGHTS

- 1974 Floor assistant,  
*Doctor Who*
- 
- 1979 First directing job:  
*Not The Nine O'Clock News*
- 
- 1982 *The Young Ones*
- 
- 1985 *Victoria Wood As Seen On TV* (producer and director)
- 
- 1990s Production/direction  
2000s credits include *Harry Enfield's Television Programme*, *French & Saunders*, *Dinnerladies*, *Lenny Henry Show*, *Little Britain*, *Catherine Tate's Nan*, and *Eurovision Song Contest* (and more).
- 
- 2002 *Party at the Palace*  
(Queen's Golden Jubilee concert)
- 
- 2012 Diamond Jubilee Concert
- 
- 2016 Honorary degree, Essex.  
*BBC Children in Need Rocks for Terry*





# ESSEX GAVE US A POLITICAL AWAKENING

Pat Jones, at Essex in the 1970s, compares notes with Chantel le Carpentier, a student today

## PAT'S STORY

"In Rotherham in the Sixties, very few women went to university. Nobody in our family had gone. Probably because I'm one of two girls, my dad really wanted us to. My boyfriend drove me down. The Towers were shrouded in fog. It looked grim, but my mother was born in Colchester so I knew the area.

There was a culture shock. The Students' Union shop sold aubergines and I didn't know what they were. I remember standing on a hill above Essex and saying 'Aubergines? Who the heck knows about aubergines?'

My first political activity was a sit-in over an exam timetable clash. Then there was another over rent rises and canteen prices. I somehow got elected onto the first 24-hour occupation committee, and soon I was on the SU executive.

There wasn't a 'lad' culture at Essex, but there was sexism. When I was canvassing, the first time I stood for election, on campus radio they said, 'Pat Smith's going up and down the towers wiggling her bum'. There was a 'blue' film festival, too, billed as 'not suitable for children's and women's lib'. We ended up having the first real debate on sexism at the University – a meeting of 700 people. I'd arrived at Essex wearing short skirts and platform shoes and I left not quite in dungarees, but a left-wing feminist wearing jeans.

I left in 1977, and trained to be a journalist on the *Morning Star*. The news came in on tape, and the men in the tape room used to put Page Three 'girls' up on the walls, so we had a campaign on the *Morning Star* of all places to remove them.

From talking to Chantel about politics, I think if she wants a career in it, she has a good chance. But there'll be a lot of meetings."

**Pat graduated in Sociology in 1976**

"The Students' Union shop sold aubergines and I didn't know what they were"



Above: Pat and Chantel looking at some of Pat's mementoes of Essex, including student magazines and protest badges.





## CHANTEL'S STORY

"Like Pat, I wasn't a feminist at all when I came to university. I had that stereotypical view of what a feminist was. I would have said I wasn't one, but if you'd asked me if I believed in equality for the sexes I'd say, 'Of course!'"

I was supposed to be a scientist. I did chemistry, biology and maths at A-level, but I just had a lightning bolt moment and realised I've always cared about politics and people, so I dropped out, went to a different college and took history and sociology.

I got in touch with my old school teacher recently, and she said, when the [2003] Iraq war started, I lined up all the children in my class on the steps in the playground that we

**"Some people in politics would throw you under a bus if they had to"**

weren't allowed on, and got them all to sing 'War! What is it good for? Absolutely nothing!' That was my first political engagement!

When I came to Essex, I joined the Labour society and thought 'I found my people!' But there were only three women in the society.

The boys talked about politics in a way no-one cares about – 'Did you see that policy 5.6 sub-clause 11 going through the Lords this week?' We were excluded. Then there was a women's event at a Labour students conference, and someone started talking about how awful it is to be a woman in the Labour Party and I thought, 'Oh, it's not just me then?'

I've campaigned against Page Three, too. During the 'No More Page Three' campaign, I put a 'boobs aren't news' sticker over every Page Three in the campus shop so people would buy them, open it and there would be no boobs, just a sticker. We weren't the first university to do it, but we ended up in *Buzzfeed* and the *Independent*.

I don't know that I want to be a politician, because some of the people I've met in politics would throw you under a bus if they had to. But I want to contribute to something bigger, to change things, so we'll see where that takes me." ■

**Chantel is studying History**



PHOTOS: SIMON ROGERS



# SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE, GIVE YOUR TIME

You could help today's students get the most from their time at Essex

There are many ways to get involved including taking part in our employability and entrepreneurship programmes, mentoring students, supporting our international alumni networks, talking to prospective students, submitting a graduate careers profile, helping out at

“It was delightful to speak to enthusiastic students. I was able to give helpful advice”

*Kate Deyn, Mathematics, 1999*

campus events and providing internships for students and graduates.

It's rewarding and fulfilling – a way to give back to somewhere that played a big part in your life. You stay connected to Essex, and you can develop new skills yourself, as well as growing your own network.

Talk to students and recent graduates at our advice evenings. It starts with Arts on 24 November 2016; Science, Health and the Environment on 8 February; Business and Finance on 16 February; Society and the Law on 21 February; Supporting People and Society on 23 February; and Technology and Data on 2 March. To find out more please email [alumni@essex.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@essex.ac.uk) ■

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Check our alumni events calendar for all the latest dates: [alumni.essex.ac.uk/eventscalendar](http://alumni.essex.ac.uk/eventscalendar)

### ALUMNI EVENTS

Attend exclusive receptions and screenings of two National Theatre productions at the Lakeside Theatre on campus: **No Man's Land**, 12 January, Colchester **Hedda Gabler**, 9 March, Colchester

**London Eye experience with an Essex twist**  
22 June, London

**Alumni Sports Weekend**  
28 - 30 April, Colchester

### PROFESSORIAL INAUGURAL LECTURES

Celebrating excellent research by our recently appointed professors

**Silke Paulman, Psychology**  
6 February, Colchester

**Phil Cannell, Health and Human Science**  
2 March, Southend

**Tracy Lawson, Bio Sciences**  
6 March, Colchester

**Anthony Vickers, Computer Science and Electronic Engineering**  
20 March, Colchester

**Jackie Turton, Sociology**  
24 April, Colchester

**Udo Kruschwitz, Computer Science and Electronic Engineering**  
8 May, Colchester

**Alison Rowlands, History**  
22 May, Colchester

Find out more at [www.essex.ac.uk/events/pil/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/events/pil/)





# FINDING A VOICE

Scholarships change lives – just ask alumna and student Maria Patricia Miranda-Rivera



Clockwise from left: Maria on campus at Colchester, studying children's language, and Edith Borthwick School.

Our lives can change direction in the most unexpected ways. For Maria, it happened when she was babysitting. "I was studying in France," she says, "and I was asked to teach a four-year-old French girl to speak English."

The girl hadn't spoken any English before, but after six weeks, she was forming sentences. "It made me fascinated by how children learn to speak." It also made Maria determined to work with children and young adults with special educational needs "to help them speak and be able to express themselves".

Thanks to a scholarship from Santander, Maria now has an MSc from Essex in Language and the Brain, which has given her new insights into language processing and acquisition. While studying here, she also started

**"The appeal will support women like me who need opportunities they might otherwise not have"**

volunteering at the Edith Borthwick School in Braintree, shadowing and helping the speech and language therapists who work with children with special educational needs. "It was enriching," she says, "and it reinforced my

desire to work in speech and language therapy."

The opportunity to study for a further Master's at Essex this year will allow Maria to pursue a career at a higher level. "The MSc in Speech and Language Therapy, which I am working on now will allow me to

work with children and young adults with complex needs."

The chance to study here, then, won't just change Maria's life. "The children and young adults I will work with will be forever linked to my scholarship. And each of them will be able to communicate better, have a richer life and a bigger role

in their families and communities."

That's why Maria's been supporting our Women of the Future Scholarships Appeal, which has raised more than £500,000 to support 25 Master's scholarships for women from around the world to study at Essex. "The appeal will support the next generation of leaders, women like me who need opportunities they might otherwise not have. Then we can make change in our communities."

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, Maria – originally from Puerto Rico – can join a roll call of remarkable Essex women, such as Dr Shirin Chaudhury (PhD Law 2000), the first woman speaker of Bangladesh's parliament and herself an Essex scholarship student, Dr Aisha K Gill (BA, MA and PhD Sociology), an academic and activist working to end violence against women, and Carry Somers (MA Native American Studies 1992), a leading climate-change and Fairtrade pioneer. ■

You can find out more about the appeal at [essex.ac.uk/see/change](http://essex.ac.uk/see/change)









## TATTOO ART

"I was led to art history not through museums and galleries, or a teenage Warhol phase, but as a way to think about tattoos, which have fascinated me since childhood. Most academic work on tattoos looks at why people choose to mark their skins, not the artistic practice. I'm researching a comprehensive history from scratch, focusing on influential tattoo artists and their work, and how tattooing reflects and influences wider visual culture."



**Matt Lodder, Lecturer, Art History**



# In the thick of it

The 1980s were a time of political upheaval in Britain. We asked some Essex alumni to look back on their time at the centre of the action







**‘W**e had miners sleeping on the floor in our flats. We were told to get rid of them or we’d be chucked out.” Iain Bourne and his friends have vivid memories of the 1984-85 miners’ strike, which began when

Britain’s National Coal Board announced plans to close 20 ‘uneconomic’ mines. The dispute developed into a bitter, year-long conflict between Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government and the National Union of Mineworkers – and by chance, the University and the small town of Wivenhoe found themselves on the frontline.

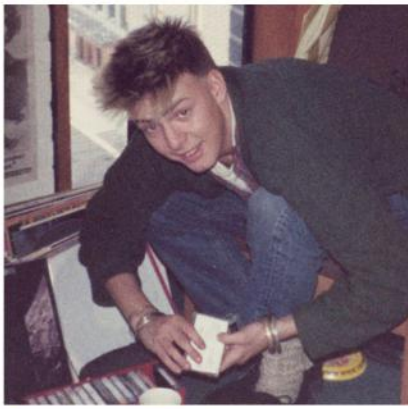
With the miners trying to put pressure on the government by restricting the country’s coal supply, the Coal Board organised imports from Germany and Poland via Wivenhoe. “It was one of the only private ports in the country,” explains William Fellows, “and we’d all be on the picket lines there. There were several hundred miners staying at the uni on and off.” Many people in Wivenhoe put miners up in their homes, too.

“We collected a lot of money to support the strikers and their families,” William adds. “It was extremely fraternal. The SU bar became the miners’ bar.” Another friend, Chris Connelley, says the students were “a human shield” for the miners, and William concedes that “the miners would push students to the front of the picket line, because the police would be less violent to us”. The port where all this happened is now a housing estate, and Wivenhoe is once again a quiet town, but many residents and former students still look back on these times as formative.

The miners’ strike was just one of many causes >

Left: A protestor being arrested near Wivenhoe station in 1984.





◀ 1980s students got involved in. William recalls a long list: “Troops Out of Northern Ireland, CND marches, pickets to Wapping [to protest about media magnate Rupert Murdoch’s approach to the print unions]. There were always coaches going all over the place.” They were involved in the anti-apartheid movement too, demonstrating in London, and trying to get students at Essex to boycott the Barclays on campus because of the bank’s links to South Africa.

### ACTIVISM AND HEDONISM

Apparently, they managed to get a bit of work done as well. “We went to loads of lectures,” Iain says. “On the whole, we were good students who took education very seriously.” Another member of the circle, Wayne Holloway, agrees. “Intellectually it was amazing. We’d read all the time,” although he adds that “there was the activism, too, and we’d be hedonistic.” This, it seems, is putting it mildly. “There were a lot of drugs around,” Iain says, “because Colchester’s near [the port of] Harwich.

Everyone was stoned all the time. We spent a lot of time talking about existentialism and phenomenology.”

Sometimes, those discussions were eye-opening. “The women’s movement really educated me about gender and welfare,” William says. He and Chris both cite Deborah Coles, mid-80s SU Women’s Officer, as an influence, and Iain remembers “the great Mary McIntosh [who taught Sociology at Essex for over 20 years] lecturing about gender. Some of the things she came out with were quite astounding to me as a 17-year-old.”

“Everyone thinks their time was the best, but it’s hard not to look back on it fondly. It was a rite of passage”

Chris calls it “an amazing three years. Everyone thinks their time was the best, but it’s hard not to look back on it fondly. It was a full-on rite of passage.” Deborah says, “It was a fascinating time, and enriching. It fuelled my passion for social justice.” She now runs the charity Inquest, while the others have forged careers in the public sector, technology research and the entertainment industry. Wayne is writing his third novel, set at Essex in

the 1980s. Whether it will include his fond memories of “a KGB agent who came and spoke to the Anglo-Soviet Friendship Society” he doesn’t say, but it might be interesting: “I got him pissed and made him do James Bond impressions.”

The years since may have mellowed them a little, but Chris thinks “you can always tell an Essex person. We’re distrustful of stuff we’re force-fed.” And perhaps it was just that sort of critical thinking that led Iain to one of the significant turning points in his life. “I believed there would be a revolution and we’d end capitalism,” he says, “until I was 22 and I realised it was bollocks.” ■

**Iain Boume, Philosophy and Government 1985. Deborah Coles, Sociology 1986. Chris Connelley, Sociology 1985. William ‘Wif’ Fellows, Government and Sociology 1985. Wayne Holloway, Literature and Sociology 1986, Ideology & Discourse Analysis 1991**





MAIN PHOTO ABOVE: © JOHN STURROCK / REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK  
 PREVIOUS PAGE PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ESSEX COUNTY STANDARD, COPYRIGHT RETAINED

Top left:  
 Clockwise  
 Wayne, Chris,  
 William and Iain.  
 Above:  
 Protestors  
 stopping a truck  
 in the middle of  
 Wivenhoe.  
 Left: Activists  
 meeting at the  
 Lecture Theatre  
 Building on  
 campus.



# Making change

Jamie Raines and  
Shaaba Lotun have  
a public profile, but  
it's what they plan to  
do with it that makes  
them remarkable





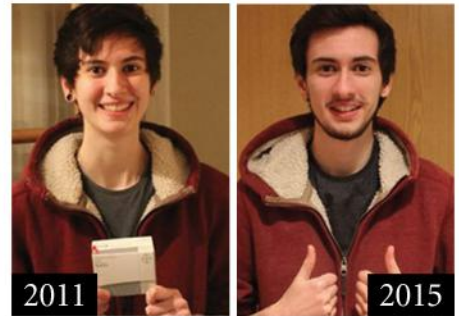
**J**amie came out as transgender to his friends and family when he was 17, and started documenting his female-to-male transition on his blog and YouTube channel. He took a selfie every day during the first three years of his hormone treatment, which a TV company turned into a time-lapse video that's been watched more than 8.5 million times. Now, Jamie and his girlfriend, Shaaba, are launching a new social enterprise This Is Me. to support other transgender people. We met them to find out more.

**Jamie:** I was under the radar as an undergraduate. I'd started hormones before I came to university, so there was no need to tell anybody. After the documentary, everybody was incredibly supportive, which shows how progressive Essex is – and it's trying to learn more. It's a lot easier now for trans people than it used to be. We've got access to treatment, for example, but there's still a long way to go. When I was growing up, being transgender was a lot more sensationalised in the media. Rather than stories about people's lives, it was about 'sex change' and surgery, and we're definitely moving away from that.

**Shaaba:** Jamie's had a YouTube channel since 2011, posting videos about his transition. We make light-hearted and educational videos and we're on Tumblr, providing support – Jamie answers people's questions almost every day.

**Jamie:** So we thought, can we make this more official? And that's how This Is Me. came about. We want to keep building awareness and understanding of the community, and to represent and support transgender people.

**Shaaba:** When you haven't started medically transitioning, or you've just started, people talk about 'passing' as the gender you identify as, rather than the one you were assigned at birth. To help with that, we had the idea of creating



Left: Jamie and Shaaba this year. Above: Jamie beginning hormone treatment and in 2015.

### CLICK: FOR STUDENTS

Jamie and Shaaba crowdfunded for This Is Me. using our new fundraising tool, Click. Students and recent graduates can raise the funds they need for events, equipment, special projects and more with donations from staff, students and alumni as well as their own networks of family and friends. In the first year 36 projects raised £46,000 making it one of the most successful university crowdfunding platforms in the world. Find out more at [www.essex.ac.uk/see/click](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/click)

wristbands with pronouns on, so people could wear the pronouns they want their friends or colleagues to use. So, for example, Jamie is happy with 'he', but some people prefer gender-neutral pronouns like 'they' or 'them'. Then we thought, perhaps the wristbands are slightly small. Some people might want to be a bit louder in how they express themselves, so maybe we'll do t-shirts – and it just grew.

**Jamie:** We decided if we're selling stuff, we should put some money back into the community. There's such a high rate of unacceptance for young trans people. It's more common to see people having a tough time with their family than having the support I did. Often, they're left with very little money to help with their transition, so we're going to put at least 20% of everything we make back into the community. Hopefully, the rest will cover our costs!

**Shaaba:** The first thing we want to develop is an androgynous clothing line – clothes that look good, that suit anybody regardless of how they identify, and that anyone can wear to show inclusiveness. Then more functional

clothing. Female-to-male transgender people often bind their chests, but it can be difficult to afford the right equipment and they end up using bandages that can cause rib damage. We want to provide what people need, affordably.

**Jamie:** We launched This Is Me. at an event the Vice-Chancellor hosted this summer, and we were nervous. It was the first time we'd spoken about the project publicly, and we were worried people might not know what we were talking about, or might not agree with it, but it was incredibly positive – and we raised just under £3,000 in five weeks.

**Shaaba:** We're going to keep making videos, too. We try to provide supportive messages, and some fun ones. We did a clothes-swap challenge where Jamie wore my dress and heels. It was funny, and it shows you can wear what you want and not worry what others think. If you're a guy and you want to wear a dress, that's fine. It's about breaking down barriers, and we want to keep doing it, every way we can. ■ Find out more at [www.thisismelgbt.com](http://www.thisismelgbt.com)

**Jamie graduated in Psychology in 2015 and Shaaba graduated in Law in 2015. They both finished Masters at Essex in 2016**



A full-page photograph of a coral reef. In the upper left, a diver in a dark wetsuit and mask swims towards the right, holding a bright flashlight that illuminates the water. The reef is dominated by large, branching red coral structures that resemble trees. Below these, there are dense patches of green sea fans and other smaller coral species. The water is a clear, deep blue.

# Rainforests of the seas

With a quarter of all marine species and half a billion people relying on coral reefs our work to protect them is needed now more than ever



**W**hy is research and teaching on coral important? The answer's pretty clear to David Smith, Director of our Coral Reef Research Unit: "If we don't do something, reefs as we know them could quite easily disappear. We need to actively manage the system, understand how we can mitigate the effects of climate change, and find alternative incomes and food security for the people who depend on them."

Because these are some of the most diverse ecosystems on Earth. They occupy less than 1% of the world's surface, but are home to more than 25% of all marine species – and about half a billion people around the world rely on them for their food and livelihoods, too. That number is expected to double in the next 50 years, during which time half the world's coral reefs could disappear. "These are not doomsday scenarios," David adds.

That's why he works in "field research sites that span the oceans. We have bases in Brazil in the Atlantic, in the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean, in the Caribbean, and a flagship site in the Wakatobi Marine National Park in the Pacific. That's in what's called the coral triangle, the most biodiverse area on the planet!"

#### UNDERWATER LECTURE

To fund the work, the unit formed a partnership with an expedition organisation to develop a programme which now sends 2,000 people, including 500 students, to the site every year. The students dive on the reefs and even have lectures while they're down there. "It's a world away from writing on slates underwater and using hand signals," David says. "The technology we have allows me to explain different aspects of the reef to students while they're in the water looking at it, rather than afterwards."

Our students also get to use our purpose-built tropical research aquarium facility – the only one in the UK – where they can create different environments, and see how reefs respond to climate change. The idea is to consider the whole picture, or, as David says: "It's top-

"If we don't do something, reefs as we know them could quite easily disappear"

down – helping governments to find realistic ways of tackling the problems – and bottom-up – examining coral samples at a molecular level, to understand how some coral species survive when others are damaged by climate change."

One thing the team has been investigating is bleaching, which, as the name suggests, turns coral white. Their colour comes from algae which live in their tissues, but when the sea is too warm, the corals expel the algae.

The reefs can survive this, but bleaching puts coral under stress, and at greater risk of dying. Earlier this year, David and his team saw bleaching in the Seychelles' Curieuse Marine National Park at "average levels of 80%, but up to 95% in some places. Many branching coral thickets have died, and even the most tolerant boulder corals are starting to pale drastically."

Bleaching is associated with El Niño, a climate cycle in the Pacific Ocean which sees warm water in the Pacific move east along the equator and has a global impact on weather patterns. However, the researchers – a joint team from Essex and the University of Technology Sydney – didn't expect to see it happening at the "worrying" levels they observed.

#### REEF PROTECTION

"Rather than sticking our heads in the sand," David says, "we're actively looking at ways we can manage reefs in the future." The research is not an end in itself, then – what's important is its impact. Our field course is renowned, training new generations of marine biologists who can contribute to coral reef protection – and there are encouraging signs. "We're seeing changes in policy," David says. "People are taking notice of our research." Essex's work was instrumental in getting the Wakatobi Marine National Park designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, for example – so there is hope yet for the 'rainforests of the seas'. ■



# ESSEX DIRECTORY

## 1960/70s

### SHERRY KEITH (GIRLING), PROFESSOR

Sociology of Literature 1969  
"I've lived in Jamaica and Brazil, and am now a professor of social science and history at San Francisco State University. I've written several books including *Brazil Lost and Found*."

### PENNY FROST, SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

Literature 1972  
"I have been working for many years in special needs teaching and supporting special needs teachers, and am a Lib Dem councillor for the London Borough of Richmond."

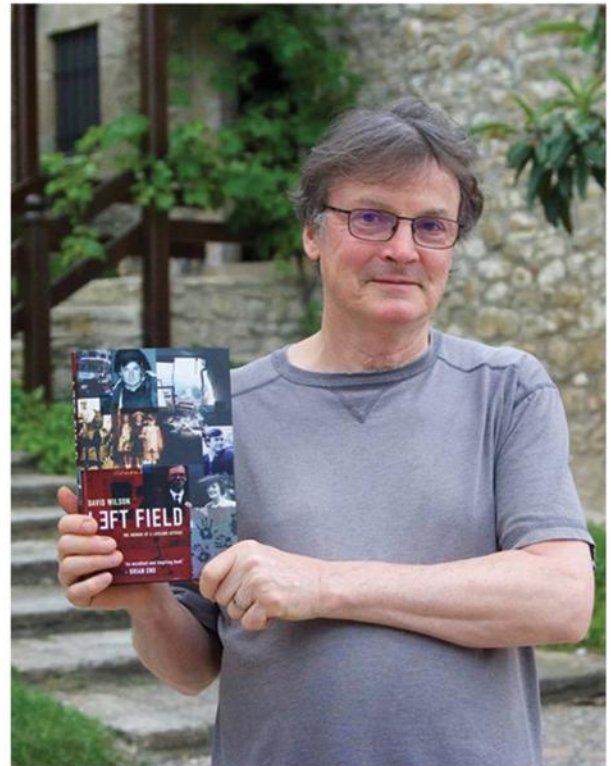
### ALANNAH HOPKIN, WRITER

Literature 1977  
"I moved to Ireland in 1982, published two novels and three non-fiction books, and next year my short stories will be published by Dalkey Archive Press."

### SPOTLIGHT ON

### DAVID WILSON, LIFELONG ACTIVIST

Sociology 1970  
"I have been a gaucho, teacher, art agent, filmmaker, war crime witness, aid worker and playwright. As co-founder of War Child, I helped set up a mobile bakery that fed the starving people of Mostar, and I was the first director of the Pavarotti Music Centre in Bosnia, helping those traumatised by war. More recently, I've worked with the Stop the War Coalition. Sir Tom Stoppard says I've "lived a life and a half", and Brian Eno calls my memoir, *Left Field*, which came out this year, "an excellent and inspiring book". I hope it finds readers among those who agitated with me in the 60s, and among today's hopeful young people organising for a better and fairer world."



### SPOTLIGHT ON

### DILLY MEYER, ESSEX STAFF

Language and Linguistics 1979  
"I manage the Talent Development Centre, which helps students identify their strengths and develop new skills. I'm also currently Anglia Regional President of the Soroptimists, an international women's organisation with a global voice (including special consultative status at the United Nations). I'm a member of the Colchester Soroptimists – who bought the first books for the library when the University opened in 1964, and were instrumental in setting up St Helena Hospice. In the past two years, we've supported a school in Kenya – giving them a water supply which has doubled pupil numbers – and the Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge. We helped them to set up a business enterprise so they can learn skills. Find out more about Soroptimists and join at sigbi.org."

## 1980s

### HELEN EATWELL, MOTHER

Literature 1980  
"After Essex, I was accepted on a post-graduate TEFL course, but discovered I was pregnant the same week I knew my results. Once I'd had my daughter, motherhood seemed the most wonderful career in the world, and I couldn't have been happier."

### NIGEL ROBERTS, ROYAL SOCIETY FELLOW

Computing Science 1980  
"I founded the internet's domain naming system in the Channel Islands, and this year was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. It's an honour to join an organisation whose members include Stephen Hawking and Tim Berners-Lee."

### SUE HANSHAW, ESSEX STAFF

Language Studies 1984  
"I've worked in health and social



## News of students and staff from decades past up to the present day

care, and policy development, and spent many happy summers doing field archaeology. I'm now back at Essex as the new Head of Research Development, but I miss the Hex Restaurant."

### **FAROOQ MOHAMED, CIVIL SERVANT**

Sociology of  
Development 1987

"I'm now Director of Public and International Relations at the Ministry of Labour in Bahrain, and I look forward to hearing from my classmates."

### **QUAZI HOQUE, JUDGE**

International Human Rights  
Law 1989

"I became a lawyer, and was elevated to the Bench in 2010 as a Judge of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh."

## 1990s

### **CATHERINE DAWSON, TEACHER**

French Language &  
Linguistics 1992

"I moved to Corfu to teach English, met my husband a year later, and I'm still here – with two children."

### **ROSINALDO BULHOES, COMPANY DIRECTOR**

Electronic Systems  
Engineering 1994

"I founded BitCom Tecnologia when I came back to Brazil. We work in telecommunications and electronic security."

### **ROLAND TAN, BROADCASTING**

Electronic Systems  
Engineering 1990 and 1994

"I still remember William Morris Tower swaying in the night in the 1987 'hurricane'. I'm now responsible for radio and TV broadcast operations at Mediacorp, a national TV and radio company in Singapore."



### **SPOTLIGHT ON**

### **OREOLUWA SOMOLU LESI, WOMEN'S PIONEER**

Economics 1998

"After Essex, I studied Information Systems and worked for the Education Development Center in Boston as a research assistant in their Gender, Diversity and Technology department. I started thinking about gender inequality in STEM fields across the world and about the barriers that prevent women from getting involved in tech in Nigeria. In 2008, I left a job in the Nigerian oil and gas industry to found the Women's Technology Empowerment Centre (W.TEC), which promotes science, technology and education to women traditionally excluded from those fields. It's made me one of the top ten most influential women in science and technology in Africa."

### **JAZI ISTIYANTO, NUCLEAR ENERGY**

Computer Studies 1988,  
Electronic Systems  
Engineering 1995

"I loved the Multifaith Chaplaincy, where people of different faiths get along in brotherhood. I taught Electronics and Computer Science, and am now Chairman of Nuclear Energy Regulatory in Indonesia."

### **CLAIR GOODWIN, ENTREPRENEUR**

English & European  
Literature 1996

"I was an English teacher, but I took a leap into the unknown and turned my hobby into a career. I now look after dogs (mostly British gun dogs) while their owners are away, and I'm truly happy. I would never have dared to do it without my degree."

## 2000s

### **BAHAR DENIZ, LECTURER**

European Community  
Law 2001

"I loved the lakes at Essex, and having friends from so many countries. I was an EU expert for Turkey's accession to Europe, and am a full-time law lecturer at Istanbul Gedik University."

### **TUIJA LAAKSONEN DE OLIVEIRA, TEACHER**

Latin American Studies 2001

"My best memories are leading a course for international students and ten pin bowling. I married a Brazilian I met on my year abroad in Bolivia, and have lived in the Brazilian Amazon since 2006. I currently teach English, Spanish and Art at a local school."

### **SARAH-LOUISE NEESAM, FURTHER EDUCATION**

Politics 2001

"I'm Student Welfare Manager at West Suffolk College, and just won a Suffolk County Council award. I loved how I grew at Essex. I'm a good manager today because of it."

### **SOOKANG OH, POET**

Sociology 2001

"I have published seven books of poetry in South Korea, including *Red Tea* in 2014 and *A Hope* last year."

### **AYGUN KAZIMOVA, RIGHTS ANALYST**

International Human Rights  
Law 2005

"I have worked for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and since 2011 for risk intelligence company Verisk Maplecroft." >

Want to be in the next edition? Email us at [alumni@essex.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@essex.ac.uk) with your story and photos





**SPOTLIGHT ON**

**MIKE REVELL,  
CHILDREN'S AUTHOR**

Creative Writing 2009

"I was a Reluctant Reader with two capital Rs, but Harry Potter changed my life. I live in North Wales now, and my second novel came out in May. My first, *Stonebird*, was based around the idea of gargoyles coming alive in the glow of the moon – and the importance of memories and the magic of stories. My second book, *Stormwalker*, is about a boy called Owen, and his grieving father, who's an author. Every time Owen's dad writes a story, Owen jumps into it and has to live out what's happening on the page. Along the way, he discovers that if he can finish the story, he might be able to help his dad."

**2010s**

**HAROON ASGHAR,  
BUSINESS**

International Marketing and Entrepreneurship 2012  
"Southend was small, but calm and beautiful. I joined my family business in Pakistan, but got a scholarship to pursue my dream, and started a PhD in September."

**SOL SIERRALTA,  
HIGHER EDUCATION**

Management and Organisational Dynamics 2012  
"The fifth floor of the library had such a beautiful view. It was really inspiring reading there. I'm in charge of developing new undergraduate and postgraduate academic programmes at Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas in Peru."

**< LISA RITCHIE,  
ENTREPRENEUR**

English Literature 2006

"I work with startups in London and on a book recommendations project called Machine Supply. As well as a book vending machine there is a weekly newsletter for book lovers."

**JIA WANG,  
LEGAL CONSULTANT**

International Trade Law 2006

"I loved cooking with my flatmates. I'm now a legal consultant in Shanghai."

**TOMOKO KURABAYASHI,  
NEWS ANCHOR**

Economics 2008

"I made friends from all over the world at Essex, and became a news and sports presenter on NHK World in Tokyo."

**MARIE DENNINGHAUS,  
DISABILITY LOBBYIST**

European Studies 2009

"I once sang at the Royal Albert Hall with the University choir. I don't know how I got there, but it was brilliant. I work for an NGO in Brussels advocating for people with disabilities."



**SPOTLIGHT ON**

**ABDULLAH AL FRAIDAN, ONLINE PIONEER**

Language Testing And Programme Evaluation 2005,  
Linguistics 2010

"I'm now Dean of E-learning and Distance Education and Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia. I manage nine different BA online courses for more than 144,000 students in Saudi Arabia. Eighty per cent of them did not have the chance to do a BA before and had found jobs instead. These programmes have re-opened the door for them to achieve something they never thought of before, and some have been promoted at work. The University has been able to connect with many different sections of Saudi society including people with special needs, on low incomes, or over 60 – and prisoners."

**CAMILLA JARVIS,  
ADULT EDUCATION**

Social and Cultural History 2014

"I have set up adult education classes at Finchingfield Guildhall, and was part of the platform party at graduation this year. It was magical to wear a gown again when I was not so emotional and could really appreciate it!"

**KIRSTEN ALEXANDER,  
PUBLISHING**

English Language and Linguistics, 2014

"I am currently working as an Assistant Production Manager for an international publishing company. I am in charge of the production of a wide range of publications, including writing and editing for many."

**FARIDE TANUS LEAL,  
ENTREPRENEUR**

Entrepreneurship and Innovation, 2014

"Life after graduation isn't easy, however being an entrepreneur is the most scary and amazing experience I have ever had! Starting your own business feels like the most challenging job in the world, but it is the most rewarding." ■



# Essex around the world


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

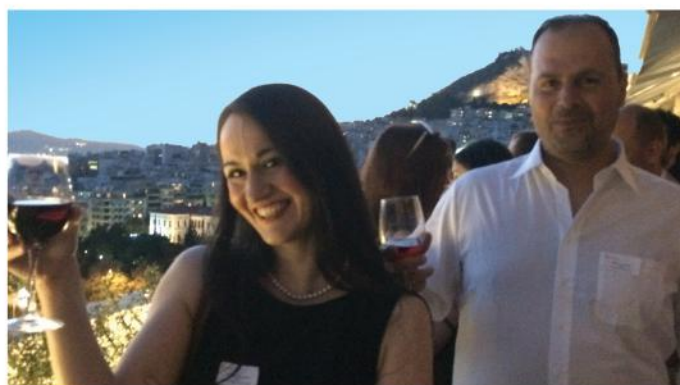



## ONE NIGHT IN BANGKOK

 A great time was had by all at our first-ever alumni event in Thailand. Guests (left) enjoyed drinks and canapés on the roof terrace at 409 Bar & Bistro in Bangkok. Richard Cornes, Senior Lecturer in the School of Law, hosted the event and said: "It was a wonderful evening and great to meet so many of our graduates from across Thailand."




 This year over 250 alumni in China attended dinners hosted by Vice-Chancellor Anthony Forster, in Beijing (pictured) and Shanghai.




 Alumni enjoying a drink at our Athens alumni and student networking event at the Galaxy bar with stunning views of the Acropolis.



 Final year students Samantha Nakirya, Sarah Bath and Nephath Shumba attended our special alumni evening at the House of Commons in London.



 The Grand Salon at the Hilton Opera hotel was the beautiful setting for our alumni get-together in Paris earlier this year.



# DINING OUT ON HIS SUCCESS

Entrepreneur Ankit Mehrotra is the co-founder of dineout, India's first and largest online restaurant reservation system. It's now helped over three million diners book a table

## SO, TELL US A BIT ABOUT DINEOUT

I launched it with three friends in 2012, and we now seat over 130,000 diners in 3,500 restaurants across eight cities in India every month. We've expanded to Singapore and Dubai. The company was acquired by Times Internet in 2014, and we acquired another company in Bangalore in 2015.

## HOW DID ESSEX HELP YOU GET WHERE YOU ARE?

School in India was all about reading books and cramming for exams. At Essex, studying Computers and Telecommunications, the onus was on me to do practicals and extra reading. I started learning to question stuff and find the answers myself. At school in India, there's huge competition to come number 1, so people just learn by heart. Because of the project work at Essex, the risk of failure went away. It was about the experience, the learning, the experimenting.

## WHAT DID YOU DO OUTSIDE YOUR STUDIES?

I lived in the South Towers for all three years, in Bertrand Russell, with different people from different countries every year. I worked in the Students' Union, I was a member of the cricket club, and the gliding club, so I did a lot of flying at weekends. That was something I could never have done in India. I learned so much, and travelled Europe with the friends I made.

## WHAT DID YOU DO FIRST AFTER GRADUATION?

I went into investment banking. I took some courses in finance, moved to London and got on the graduate programme with BNP Paribas in September 2006. There were 25 people



## ANKIT'S CV

- 2006 Joins BNP Paribas
- 2012 Founds dineout.co.in, named Young Entrepreneur of the Year
- 2014 dineout acquired by Times Internet
- 2015 dineout acquires inResto, Bangalore
- 2016 Winner, British Council Education UK Alumni Awards, India

“Do your research, stay focused, stick to your roots”

from across the country – graduates from LSE, Oxford, Edinburgh, some PhDs, some Master's in Finance – and a computer and telecom undergrad alongside them, so I had a great sense of achievement.

## WHAT MADE YOU RETURN TO INDIA?

I was six months away from UK citizenship, when I decided to give it all up and move back to India. Open Table,

the US restaurant reservation service, had just bought out Top Table, the UK service. I realised this was a great business model, and I wanted to do something for myself. I started researching and speaking to a friend and we decided to do it. I had just turned 26, and I thought if I don't do it now, I never will. We started Dineout in February 2012 and raised our first round of investment in August that year.

## DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR OTHER START-UPS?

Firstly, find the right area with a need in a large enough market. Nobody had run a service like this in India, but we had done our research, and eating out was booming. And then: stay focused. We learned a lot of things on the ground. Perseverance is very important. When a new start-up comes along to compete with you, people write you off. Just carrying on through thick and thin has probably been our number one lesson.

## WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF 'BUSINESS AS USUAL'?

As you grow, it's important to stick to your basics. Early on, I was the one speaking to my customers on the phone, and now I employ 35 people to do it. It's my job to make sure they care – that the entire team works with the same sort of culture and ethos as you built the business on. Customers will try you once or twice, but if they don't get good service they will never come back. So stick to your roots. Also, today we are 300 people across eight cities, so people management is important. As a founder, I spend about 30% of my time on hiring, because a good person hired is sometimes equivalent to 3-4 people.

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU?

We have an opportunity to be number one in our industry. We've expanded to Singapore and Dubai. As we grow, we'll look to take it to other parts of the world. We also want to give back. We have personally invested in three start-ups, and we mentor others in the education and healthcare sectors. So we've turned into evangelists as well. ■

*Ankit graduated in Computers and Telecommunications in 2005*



## THE IVOR CREWE LECTURE HALL



### **SUPPORTING WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD**

Thanks to our supporters, 25 amazing women from across the globe will be able to study at Essex. Alumni, staff, students, and others helped our Chancellor's Women of the Future Appeal reach its £500,000 target. But we're not stopping there. We want to do even more to support the most talented women, who are willing to challenge conventions and push boundaries across the world. We have a proud tradition of educating brilliant women, and with your help we can support even more to learn, have inspirational ideas and change their communities and beyond. This is our investment in the women of the future and we will match every donation pound for pound. Anything you can give makes a difference to students today – and each of them can change tomorrow.

For more information on the Appeal or to make a donation visit [www.essex.ac.uk/see/change](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/change) or contact Lynsey Dawson at +44(0)1206 872700 or email [ldawson@essex.ac.uk](mailto:ldawson@essex.ac.uk)



# YOUR GLOBAL FAMILY

There are more than 90,000 alumni in over 130 countries, so wherever you are, you're never far from another Essex graduate

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New York is just one of the cities where we will be holding an alumni event next year. Make sure we have your current city and email address so you don't miss out

Update us online or email [alumni@essex.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@essex.ac.uk)

