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THE UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER MAGAZINE

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THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE STUDY AND PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE OPENED BY LYNDA BELLINGHAM OBE





# LYNDA BELLINGHAM OBE OPENS NEW UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTRE

**In this image:**  
Lynda Bellingham OBE (right)  
with Ruth Jones OBE, Founding  
Director of the University's  
new National Centre for  
the Study and Prevention  
of Violence and Abuse





ACTRESS AND CAMPAIGNER LYNDA BELLINGHAM OBE TOLD OF HER HOPES FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER'S NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE STUDY AND PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE (NCSPVA) AS SHE OFFICIALLY OPENED THE NEW RESEARCH CENTRE LAST MONTH.

Ms Bellingham, who has spoken candidly about the abuse she suffered during a previous marriage, also received a University Fellowship at the ceremony, which took place at the University of Worcester Arena.

The NCSPVA will be a national centre of excellence for raising levels of research, understanding and awareness of violence and abuse – a continuation of the work done in this area at the University over the last decade.

Ms Bellingham, who received her OBE in recognition of her charity work last year, said: "I'm absolutely thrilled that this centre has been launched.

**I think that the University of Worcester has shown such enormous courage to do something like this.**

To now have a focus point where people can come together and really try to understand why these things happen is fantastic.

"We have a jumping off point now with the creation of this new centre. We have raised awareness over the last few years but we have a long,

long way to go – I would like to think that eventually, domestic abuse will just not be acceptable socially and that people will feel free and within their rights to report it, if they feel they have a problem."

The centre will be led by Ruth Jones OBE, who has played an instrumental role in championing education, research and support services both in the UK and internationally throughout her distinguished career.

She was awarded the title of Worcestershire Woman of the Year in 2011 and named as a Woman Inspiring Europe in 2012, before also being awarded an OBE in the 2014 New Year's Honours List.

Ms Bellingham continued: "Ruth Jones is a star. What she's doing here, the work that she does is amazing and I have such admiration for her. I just hope that I don't let her down and that I can continue to spread the word and remain involved with the NCSPVA, which would be marvellous."

**"We are delighted that Lynda could be with us for the opening of the NCSPVA and to receive her University Fellowship. We are very grateful for her unflinching support, and that of her husband, Michael."**

Ruth Jones OBE

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# SPORTING DREAMS

FROM THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES TO TOP-FLIGHT RUGBY OUR STUDENTS ARE PROVING THAT HARD WORK AND DEDICATION REALLY DO PAY OFF.

In this image:  
Fiona Clarke

Opposite page:  
Top: Robert Nitman

Bottom: Dan Geisler



## FIONA JUMPS FOR GOLD

### AIMING FOR COMMONWEALTH GLORY

Worcester student, Fiona Clarke, has been selected to represent England at the Commonwealth Games later this month.

Fiona, who is studying for a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Sport, Coaching and Physical Education, achieved the qualifying distance for the women's F38 category long jump competition, which will take place on the opening day of track and field competition, July 27, at Hampden Park.

Fiona's event is one of several para-sport disciplines that are integrated into the Commonwealth programme, meaning the 19-year-old Birchfield Harrier will be representing her country alongside the likes of double Olympic champion Mo Farah, World Indoor 60m champion Richard Kilty and London 2012 long jump champion Greg Rutherford, all of whom have also been selected in the 129-strong English track and field team.

Fiona says: "I can't really put into words how I'm feeling at the moment, I'm just completely over the moon. It's easily my biggest achievement to date and now I'm determined to go there and make the team proud.

"I achieved the qualifying standard within the designated time limit, so I was automatically selected. My ambition – and the condition on which I was selected – is to go there and finish within the top eight, which is the goal of every athlete selected for Team England.

"I don't have many competitions between now and the Games, so I can focus completely on my training."

Fiona, who has cerebral palsy, is part of the University of Worcester's Elite Athlete Mentor Scheme, which looks to support students juggling their studies with high-level competition.

The students are able to benefit not only from one-to-one support and advice from the University's experts, but also from the facilities at the University of Worcester Arena, which has established itself as a centre of excellence for disability sport in this country.

Fiona continues: "The backing I've received has been brilliant and everyone has supported me tremendously. Charlotte Beaman and Christian Edwards, the Elite Athlete Mentors, have helped me greatly and have given me some really useful advice which stood me in good stead ahead of the Games."

## A PREMIER INTERNSHIP

A former University of Worcester sports student has secured a dream internship with Harlequins Rugby Club.

Robert Nitman will spend a whole season working with the professional players to develop their strength and conditioning, fitness and overall training, as well as assisting with other duties at the Club.

"It's a dream come true to secure this internship with Harlequins," said the 24-year-old. "I started playing rugby when I was about seven years old and always wanted to work for a professional club. Harlequins had links with the club I played for as a kid so to get an internship with them is amazing."

Robert gained a Distinction and two Merits in his BTEC in Sport, Health and Lifestyle before joining the University of Worcester's Sports Coaching Science degree in 2008. He graduated in 2011 with a 2:1 classification and went

on to work as a rugby coach for Malvern College, while also carrying out voluntary work with the University's men's rugby squad. In April this year he gained the UK Strength and Conditioning Association's accreditation.

"I applied for the Harlequins internship two years ago but didn't get it," Robert said. "They told me to go and get some more experience, so that's what I did. I came back to the University and worked with the rugby club, and also with Strength and Conditioning Mentor Marc Scriven. Then I applied again and got in."

**"I couldn't have done it without the support of the University and my degree."**

Robert, from Worthing in West Sussex, will start his internship next month. "I can't wait to get going now," he said. "Hopefully this will put me in an even stronger



position in the future to secure a professional role with a rugby club. It gives me a whole year's worth of working at an elite level."

## DAN'S DELIGHT AT SEVENTH-PLACE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP FINISH

Having recovered from a bout of pneumonia earlier in the year, student Dan Geisler overcame an achilles injury to finish seventh in his age group at the Duathlon championships, which were held in Pontevedra, north west Spain, at the beginning of June.

"I finished seventh overall and was the third British athlete back, so I was very happy with the result," Dan says. "I had an absolutely amazing time – the crowd on the day was amazing and I made some great friends and received excellent advice, which was the topping on a fantastic experience."

"The result also means I pre-qualify for the 2015 World Championships, which will be held in Adelaide, Australia."

Despite his fitness worries, Dan went on to clock 35:45 in the first of the running sections, before making up time on his fellow competitors in the cycling and second running phases of the race.

He adds: "The sun was beating down and the race went off at an electric pace, but it's not my style to start fast, so I was able to pace my race and managed to pass quite a lot of athletes who had plenty taken out of their legs by the heat and the challenging course."

Dan is quick to acknowledge the support he has received from the University of Worcester Elite Athlete Mentor Scheme, which offers support and advice to those balancing their studies with high-level sporting competition.



"The Elite Athlete programme has really helped me," he says. "It's been good to have someone to turn to and talk to throughout the year, and they supported me well through my pneumonia."

# A LEADING PSYCHOLOGIST CALLS FOR MORE RESEARCH INTO INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION

UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER PSYCHOLOGIST, DR GABRIELA MISCA, IS TO JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION AND GLOBAL SURROGACY AT THE HAGUE.



Dr Gabriela Misca

In recent years there have been a number of high profile celebrity cases of intercountry adoptions, including Angelina Jolie and Madonna. But not enough is known about the effects on children adopted out of their native country, according to Dr Gabriela Misca.

Dr Misca, Senior Lecturer in Developmental Psychology, has been invited to contribute to the International Forum on Intercountry Adoption and Global Surrogacy at The Hague this summer. It follows her keynote address to the New Zealand Law Society Conference, 'International Adoption and Surrogacy - Family Formation in the 21st Century' in April.

"Over the past decades, international adoption has become a global phenomenon involving cross-border movement of vulnerable children, mainly from poor, undeveloped countries to wealthier countries," she said.

"Much of this increase has been linked to major social and political changes; for example, over the past decade, China has emerged as the major source of children worldwide resulting from its 'one child policy', and in the 1990s there was a peak in adoptions of children from Eastern European countries, following the fall of the communist regimes."

Dr Misca said that intercountry adoptions were often criticised because adopted children's identities were lost and replaced by a new name and new nationality.

"There is a distinct gap in research exploring the issues of openness in intercountry adoption, particularly in light of easier channels of communications afforded by social media and the internet," she added.

"The changing global landscape in which intercountry adoption currently operates may aid to remove some of its stigmatising connotations and further research on the outcomes for internationally adopted children is highly relevant for both policy and practice."

Dr Tim Jones, Head of Psychological Sciences at the University of Worcester, said:

**"Dr Misca's important research is central in focusing on the impact increased globalization has on families across the world, and in doing so addresses a key criticism of the ethnocentricity of psychological research."**

Dr Misca will be joining a group of worldwide experts on intercountry adoption and global surrogacy that will convene at The Hague, Netherlands, on 11-13 August 2014. The objective of the forum is to produce a body of knowledge that will inform the work of the Hague Conference as they move forward with implementation of the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption at the next Special Commission in 2015.

# GROUND-BREAKING DEGREE CELEBRATES FIRST GRADUATE

MARTIN GILL IS THE FIRST PERSON TO COMPLETE THE UK'S ONLY MASTERS (MSc) IN PSYCHODRAMA PSYCHOTHERAPY AND SAYS THE QUALIFICATION WILL ALLOW HIM TO CARRY OUT MUCH-NEEDED RESEARCH IN THE FIELD.

Psychodrama Psychotherapy is a method of therapy which uses dramatisation to help people investigate and gain insight into their lives. It has been used for more than 40 years within a range of health, social care, therapeutic and organisational settings, most notably with inmates at HM Prison Grendon.

"There has been very little research done into the effectiveness and use of Psychodrama Psychotherapy and other creative therapies," Martin said. "Because of this, it is often not a level playing field in relation to the behavioural sciences."

"This course has allowed me to look at research methods and given me a greater understanding of the science behind what I do."

"All practitioners have to be able to stand up for their own practice and to be able to evidence its importance and impact," he said.

University of Worcester link tutor Huw Richards said: "We launched this course in 2012 as a way of bridging a gap in this area and giving existing practitioners the chance to gain a valuable qualification."

"We are delighted that Martin is the first to complete the Masters and that he is finding it so integral to his everyday work."

The course is delivered in partnership with Oxford School of Psychodrama and Integrative Psychotherapy.

# MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF DEMENTIA COULD BE IMPACTING THOSE LIVING WITH THE ILLNESS

Representations of dementia in the media could be having a negative impact on those living with the illness, according to a leading Professor of Psychology

Phrases such as “worse than death” and “ticking time bomb”, used by newspapers when describing dementia, create fear and anxiety, says Professor Elizabeth Peel, of the University of Worcester.

In addition, the media’s use of “faddy avoidance tactics”, such as telling people to complete a crossword a day to stave off the onset of dementia, can create a feeling of self-blame.

Professor Peel studied hundreds of UK national newspapers, looking at their depiction of dementia and Alzheimer’s, over a 12 month period. She then interviewed a number of people who care for someone living with dementia to look at their perception of the media’s portrayal of the illness.

“A panic-blame framework was evident in much of the print media coverage,” she said. “Dementia was represented in catastrophic terms, such as a “tsunami” and “worse than death”, juxtaposed with coverage of individualistic behavioural change and lifestyle recommendations to “stave off” the condition.”

More than 800,000 people in the UK are estimated to have some form of dementia, and projections suggest that by 2021 more than 1 million people will be living with the illness.

The economic cost to the National Health Service, local authorities and families is estimated at £23 billion a year; more than cancer and heart disease combined. In 2009, the Government launched its National Dementia Strategy, which has brought the illness to the top of the news agenda.

“There is an emerging level of stigmatisation of people living with dementia,” Professor Peel said.

**“The way the media portrays dementia is very important, particularly for those living with the illness. Choice of words and tone can have a huge impact.”**

One of the carers interviewed by Professor Peel said: “...there’s an implication that it’s somehow your fault if you get dementia because you’re not being active enough or doing the crossword.”



Professor Elizabeth Peel

“While individualised health messages may have valence for the ‘worried well’, the impact on those already diagnosed with a dementia – especially vascular dementia – and their families may be detrimental.”

Professor Peel has been working with the University of Worcester’s Association for Dementia Studies, which uses research, education and scholarship to make a substantial contribution to building evidence-based practical ways of working with people living with dementia and their families, enabling them to live well.

**“There is an emerging level of stigmatisation of people living with dementia.”**

Professor Elizabeth Peel

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## PROFESSOR PEEL’S INAUGURAL PROFESSORIAL LECTURE

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On 9 July Professor Peel delivered her inaugural lecture at the University of Worcester. Entitled “Talkin’ bout a revolution, sounds like a whisper: Diversity, discourse and social change”, Professor Peel spoke of how social justice aims and values are currently more vital than ever. Throughout the lecture she drew on data from a range of research projects that grapple with trying to make the world a better place for a) non-heterosexual and non-normatively gendered folk; b) people newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes; and c) people living with (or no longer living with) a dementia, and their families.

# NEW COURSES, NEW SCHEMES

## MATHEMATICS DEGREES LAUNCHED

Nationally, the government has been driving to increase the numbers of students studying Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects, which it believes are critical to the success of the British economy.

There is a strong national demand for graduates with Mathematics, and starting salaries for those graduates are currently ranked 9th out of 59 subject areas.

The University of Worcester's Mathematics offering will be available to study from September 2015, when students can study a range of combinations, including Biology and Mathematics, Mathematics and Psychology, and Geography and Mathematics. Students may also choose to combine the subject with Education Studies, Computing or Physical Education.

Professor John Newbury, Head of the University's Institute of

Science and the Environment, who has led the development of Mathematics at Worcester, said: "Mathematics is a subject that links and underpins so many other disciplines. Maths graduates are essential for the success of the UK's economy and industrial base.

"By offering Joint Honours courses, we are giving students the opportunity to combine two subjects to maximise their knowledge and employability. The combinations we are providing will produce graduates with even stronger skills in problem solving and data analysis, which will serve them well in their future careers."



## NEW PILOT SCHEME TO UP-SKILL HOSPITAL PHARMACISTS

A new pilot taking place at the University of Worcester, launched and sponsored by Health Education West Midlands (HEWM), aims to up-skill pharmacists within hospitals, as part of an integrated response to the national urgent and emergency care crisis (House of Commons Health Committee 2013).

The idea is that pharmacists would be able to assess and diagnose minor injuries and illnesses, and then prescribe and dispense appropriate medication.

The University of Worcester is delivering specialist education to a group of pharmacists from across the West Midlands.

Tracy Lapworth, Course Leader for Advancing Practice, said: "There is a national struggle to recruit middle grade doctors and an urgent care crisis. The aim of this new initiative is to enable pharmacists to practice in an enhanced role, while also assisting in day-to-day clinical duties in urgent and acute care settings, as well as within Clinical Decision Teams, Mental Health, Paediatrics and Community Pharmacy."

"It was identified in phase two of the HEWM pilot that pharmacists need health assessment and diagnosis skills in order to prescribe, and that's the education and training which we are providing."



The University runs Advanced Health Assessment and Non-Medical Prescribing modules as part of its Masters degree in Advancing Practice, aimed at nurses. These modules are now being offered to pharmacists.

"The pharmacists will learn how to take a medical history and how to undertake a patient examination," said Ms Lapworth. "We feel that this will be hugely beneficial to the pharmacist, in order to allow them to prescribe."

Worcester is one of three universities involved in the pilot, but is the only one to offer Advanced Health Assessment modules. The pharmacists will be awarded an Advanced Health Assessment and Practice Postgraduate Certificate in Prescribing Practice upon completion of the course.

Krishna Shingadia, a pharmacist at Worcestershire Acute Hospital NHS Trust, is one of those on the course.

She said: "It's great for us on a professional level to gain new skills but will also, hopefully, have a big impact in our work places."

Asif Sarwar, a pharmacist at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, added: "This gives us an opportunity to do different things and to make even more of a difference."

**"I think this is going to be the future of pharmacy."**

Krishna Shingadia

**Image:**  
Pharmacists taking part in the pilot scheme

## PSYCHOLOGIST SECURES PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL TEACHING FELLOWSHIP



DR PENNEY UPTON, A PRINCIPAL LECTURER IN PSYCHOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER, HAS BEEN AWARDED A NATIONAL TEACHING FELLOWSHIP BY THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY.

Often described as the Higher Education teaching Oscars, this is the top award for those teaching at universities across the country – with just 55 awarded nationally this year.

Dr Upton joins seven other colleagues at Worcester who have previously received a National Teaching Fellowship (NTF).

"I am honoured to have been awarded the Fellowship," she said. "As I'm sure our students will agree, studying Psychology at Worcester provides some unique learning experiences. It is a pleasure to teach such inspiring people."

"I am very privileged to work with some outstanding colleagues in the Institute of Health and Society," Dr Upton added. "I feel particularly fortunate to have been Head of Psychology before becoming Associate Head of the University's Institute of Health and Society, where I was surrounded by a team of forward thinking academics."

Professor David Green, the University's Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive, said: "The award of a National Teaching Fellowship to Penney Upton is a much-deserved accolade for her outstanding teaching over many years. Penney is an inspirational member of staff and we are delighted that her work has been recognised by this national award."

Professor Green added: "We now have eight members of the University's staff to be selected for one of these prestigious awards of which only around 50 are made in the entire country in any one year. So many awards in a single university is rare and reflects our success in achieving our aim of being a truly outstanding university at which to study."

In 2012, Dr Upton was awarded a Senior University Teaching Fellowship in recognition of her significant contribution to innovations in learning and teaching. She has also authored three Developmental Psychology textbooks for undergraduate students and co-edited a series of 'test yourself' guides for Psychology students which cover the core British Psychological Society (BPS) areas.

An active researcher, Dr Upton has published widely on subjects including the impact of chronic illness on children's quality of life, approaches to changing risky health behaviours, such as smoking in adulthood, and the use of touchscreen technology to enhance the wellbeing of older adults with dementia.

## SOCIAL WORKERS COMMITTEE

A Senior Lecturer and Psychology graduate at the University of Worcester have both been elected as representatives for the British Association of Social Workers (BASW).

Peter Unwin has been elected as a Council Member for BASW's UK Committee, while Masters student, Jo Smith, has been elected Student Rep for the BASW England Committee. Both of these positions were gained via a competitive national ballot of BASW membership.

"We are both very pleased to have gained these positions from which to better promote social work at a time when it (undeservedly) has a poor reputation," Peter said. "Jo's position will be used to promote the benefits of joining a professional body among social work students nationwide and my role will be more concerned with governance and media."

"The University of Worcester has enjoyed a close working relationship with BASW since our Masters in Social Work course began seven years ago and we are looking forward to consolidating this relationship for the good of social work and reputation of the University as a leader in this field."

Jo, who gained a First Class Honours undergraduate degree in Psychology at the University of Worcester before joining the University's Masters in Social Work, said she was overwhelmed to have been elected.

"I was so surprised," said the 22-year-old. "But it's fantastic as it now gives me the opportunity to work with BASW to promote their work and help develop future plans and hopefully make a real impact."



**Above:**  
Peter Unwin and Jo Smith

**Top left:**  
Dr Penney Upton

# THE ODOUR LAB

## NEW ANALYTICAL ODOUR LABORATORY OPENS AT UNIVERSITY

The University of Worcester and leading odour control firm Air Spectrum Environmental Ltd have jointly opened their new analytical odour laboratory at the University's National Pollen and Aerobiology Research Unit (NPARU).

The formal opening of the Spectrum Odour Lab, a specialist odour threshold testing facility, marks a unique partnership between the University and Worcester-based Air Spectrum Environmental Ltd.

The company - which has twenty years of experience in the odour control industry - designs, manufactures and installs bespoke odour control and dust suppression systems across the world, working with high profile companies such as Tesco, Jaguar and Aston Martin.

The Spectrum Odour Lab will specialise in odour threshold analysis, offering a fast, accurate and efficient testing service to a range of companies across the UK. The lab is equipped with state-of-the-art analysis equipment which will handle up to 100 samples per day.

Steve Hunt, Managing Director of Air Spectrum Environmental Ltd, explains: "Odour is one of the biggest cause of nuisance complaints. This UK Accreditation Service (UKAS) approved European standard laboratory brings to the UK market a new, dynamic capability in olfactometry – odour sampling."

The lab adds to the world-leading research facilities in the University's Charles Darwin building. The facility is the home of NPARU, a leading institution in research and commercial activity in the area of aerobiology and the main provider of pollen forecasts, fungal spore forecasts and pollen data for the whole country. NPARU also contributes to the Met Office's Weather and Health Forecasting service.

Professor Roy Kennedy, Director of NPARU and Professor of Aerobiology and Microbial Science, says: "This new laboratory measuring odours fits the research profile of NPARU. Odour is an important component of the atmosphere, which is a vital part of NPARU's research activities."



**Top right:**  
Steve Hunt,  
Professor Roy Kennedy  
and Professor David  
Green

**Bottom right:**  
Inside the Odour Lab

For further information, visit  
[www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/spectrum-odour-lab](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/spectrum-odour-lab) or  
[www.odourlab.co.uk](http://www.odourlab.co.uk)

## BE SEEN, BEE SPOTTED

**A RARE BEE, FOUND MAINLY IN RURAL AREAS, HAS BEEN RECORDED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER DURING A STUDENT WORKSHOP.**

The bee, *Nomada lathburiana*, currently listed as a Red Data Book species, was found during a survey at the St John's Campus with Worcestershire Biological Records Centre (WBRC). A Red Data Book species is an organism that can be found on the list of rare and endangered species.

Senior Lecturer in Ecology and Environmental Management, Dr Duncan Westbury, said: "The presence of such an important and interesting species is certainly a bonus for those at the University promoting biodiversity, but it is also a testament to the grounds team and their sympathetic management."

*Nomada lathburiana* is a cleptoparasite of *Andrena cineraria* (ashy mining bee) – in other words it lives off the ashy mining bee.

Dr Westbury said: "We were already aware that the ashy mining bee was living on campus, but then to record a rare bee that is parasitic on this species was a wonderful outcome of the entire workshop."

"Regular recording and monitoring of species will continue throughout the year and hopefully we will find further hidden gems - our students are now more engaged than ever!"

Geoff Trevis, a bee expert and recorder for WBRC, said "While *Nomada lathburiana* looks like being downgraded from the Red Data Book after it was recorded in other locations within Worcestershire, this is the first record of the species from a decidedly urban situation, which suggests the species is continuing to extend its range."



# COMPUTING STUDENT LANDS DREAM JOB AS TECHNOLOGY FIRMS CALL FOR MORE IT GRADUATES

George Mathieson, who will graduate later this year with a First Class degree, will start work at Malvern-based Borwell next month, as a software engineer.

Computing and the digital industries are now one of the world's largest sectors of employment. However, UK technology firms have warned of a shortage of graduates as many parents discourage their children from studying such degrees.

Twenty-two-year-old George said: "It's crazy really as the computing and digital industries are huge now and the world needs more graduates in these areas.

"I was always interested in Computing and when I was looking to go to university, the course at Worcester really caught my attention as it covered such a wide range of topics.

"During my degree I have had the chance to work with some fantastic people who are very talented, and I have learned an enormous amount. I am so pleased that I have secured a dream job and I can now put it all into practice."

George, from Rowley Regis, studied A-levels at Stourbridge College before joining the University of Worcester three years ago. His final year project saw him design and prototype an affordable but sophisticated robot suitable for use in schools.

Since completing his degree, he has been working as a Research Assistant at the University, preparing the robot for commercial manufacture.

Dr Colin Price, Head of Computing at the University of Worcester, said: "We are delighted that George has secured employment with Borwell. He met Steve Borwell when Steve was giving a guest lecture on the 'Professionalism in Context' computing module, and soon after providing Steve with his CV, George was called in for an interview which has led to employment."



George Mathieson

He added: "Most computing devices are hidden: they run our cars, household devices and smart phones. The power of the computer is its ability to be programmed; software running on these devices brings them to life and establishes their place in our world.

"There is a clear need for graduates who understand the hardware inside these devices and how to programme them. Moreover, our graduates need to understand these devices on a more abstract level, which means algorithms and data structures. At Worcester we lead our graduates into a 'Computational Thinking' mode which captures this abstract level and relates it to real-world scenarios."

## MEETING THE WORLD LEADERS OF TOMORROW

A SERIES OF ALUMNI DINNERS HAVE BEEN HELD IN CHINA, CELEBRATING THE REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR CHINESE ALUMNI, AND PROVIDING A VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY FOR NETWORKING AND MEETING OLD FRIENDS.

Under the guidance of the University's Chief Representative in China, Mr Xie Yuan Hui (Hawk), a strong network of Chinese alumni has been developed over the last ten years.

Our Chinese graduates have secured jobs with some of the most globally renowned companies such as Marriott and Morgan Stanley, and several have started their own businesses.

Laurel Wang, a Business Psychology graduate now working for British-based recruitment company Michael Page in Shanghai, remembers her time at Worcester fondly. "I took part in many extra-curricular activities, and twice hosted Worcester Chinese Association's Chinese New Year celebration. I joined the International Committee, where I met my boyfriend, who comes from Finland. I had found a good job before I even left the UK."

Mr Xiang Gao, a 2007 graduate, has now set up his own IT company, and was pleased to meet Dr Joanne Kuzma (Principal Lecturer in Computing) at the Shanghai Alumni Dinner, to talk about his new business.

"I was very impressed to meet our alumni," said Dr Kuzma. "It's great to hear that they were all so positive about their time studying at Worcester."

Many of the alumni already have plans to visit Worcester again. Mr Jinglei Sun and Ms Xiaohan Wang, one of several married couples who first met in Worcester, plan to visit in October, to show their new son the city which will always be special to them.



# THE RISE OF THE 'MAMIL'

Dr Paul Castle, a Chartered Sport & Exercise Psychologist in the Institute of Sport and Exercise Science at the University of Worcester, explains the psychology behind the rise in popularity of the MAMIL (the 'middle aged men in lycra') and why cycling has become so popular.

The streets of Yorkshire and the shop fronts of Cambridge are beginning to return to normal now that the Tour de France has raced its way through.

With pre-race opinion surrounding team selection, fitness doubts and likely yellow jersey contenders, cycling is once again thrust into the headlines. It's been two years since Sir Bradley Wiggins took victory in the world's most famous road race which, on top of his Gold medal also won that year, catapulted cycling into the spot of third most popular sport in the UK.

Dubbed the 'Wiggins effect', his success, and that of Team GB at the London 2012 Games, has seen cycling go from a relatively niche sport or sedate past time, to now being one of the most fashionable ways to get fit. Not least among middle aged men, which has spawned another new term - MAMILS (Middle Aged Men in Lycra).

Many sports saw renewed interest following the 2012 Olympic Games, but none have enjoyed the sustained explosion of interest that cycling has. Reasons for this are varied. On one hand we have the high profile of cycling on television, then we have the introduction of 'Sky Ride' in several UK cities ([www.goskyride.com](http://www.goskyride.com)), in which city centre roads are closed to enable families to ride around the city in a safe, traffic-free environment for a day, which has meant that families have 'taken ownership' of the roads en masse.

But one of the biggest reasons is the accessibility of cycling. Not everyone can suddenly purchase a boat to go rowing, or have the commitment to be part of a team sport. But most people either have, or can purchase relatively inexpensively, a bicycle and a little spare time to go out and enjoy it. Cycling is a

non-load-bearing activity, requires minimal equipment and no specialist facilities or environment. In this sense, it is far easier to wheel the bicycle out of the garage and go. There are, therefore, fewer reasons not to get out for a ride.

Once the enjoyment factor of cycling takes a hold, the motivation to cycle tends to increase. People start to monitor ride times or distances; they start to 'conquer' challenging hills or different conditions; headwinds and tailwinds begin to play significant roles in rides and with these factors, people start to look at beating previous times or increasing distances. Psychologically, motivation and emotion become the driving factors and over a period of time, cycling becomes part of daily life.

The success of Sir Bradley Wiggins, Chris Boardman MBE and others has allowed the 'ordinary' cyclist to challenge themselves more.

We all like to identify with things that are successful, because we feel part of the success. Out of this was borne the MAMIL concept. The psychology underpinning the MAMIL is an internal monologue within the individual, which goes something like this:

**"If I buy a Team Sky cycling jersey, shorts and a cycle upwards of £3,000, I AM as good as Sir Brad, in fact I am better; I have a day job and I'm middle-aged!"**

As the MAMIL, or equivalent female cyclist, cycles more, they improve in physical and cardiovascular fitness, endurance and the sense of well-being further fuels the motivation to continue. Some people will go on to enter races, join a club or embark on a sponsored cycling

event as a way of measuring their 'performance' against likeminded others. This may lead on to entering more competitive events, at which point the psychology of cycling changes into something far more performance-orientated. Carbon equipment, adequate nutrition and hydration, sleep, rest and recovery interspersed with interval and endurance training, all start to play a part. The recreational cyclist has evolved into an amateur 'athlete', where the motivation to succeed comes to the forefront.

Of course, other cyclists are content to remain as recreational cyclists or commuters; or they see cycling as a family activity and would not wish to ever enter a competition. These examples show the diverse array of motivations for cycling; they highlight how cycling evolves within each of us in different ways and they hint at the positive effects of cycling on well-being.

As a practitioner, having worked with many clients wishing to change their lifestyles through cycling, I like to use the analogy that we are all on the same journey - some of us, such as Sir Brad, are much further down the road but we all enjoy being on the same stretch of road, although a cycle route would be preferred by many. By thinking about our experiences of cycling in this way, the benefits to our sense of well-being can be monitored and measured.

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**A CHANGE IN LIFESTYLE IS PERHAPS A SINGLE PEDAL REVOLUTION AWAY!**

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Dr Paul Castle

**Opposite page:** Paul takes to the road in the obligatory lycra

**Not everyone can suddenly purchase a boat to go rowing.**

**But most people either have, or can purchase relatively inexpensively, a bicycle and a little spare time to go out and enjoy it.**

# ON A BICYCLE MADE FOR TWO

**Right:**  
Will Norman and Julie Fisher take to the streets of Worcester

**Below:**  
Andy Stevenson

Back in April, colleagues Julie Fisher and Will Norman from Communications & Participation shared a conversation that went something along the lines of:

Julie: I'm thinking of doing a bike ride for the British Heart Foundation.

Will: Let's get a tandem. We could do it together.

A month or so later and Will had successfully managed to borrow a tandem, a couple of helmets and a dayglo jacket from a charity that lends tandems to visually impaired people.

Will, a double paralympian athlete and Julie, the University's Theatre in Education specialist, took part in the 30 mile event on 29 June.

During the race Julie and Will made impressive progress, moving through the pack of fellow



competitors. All was going well until mile 29 when one of the tandem wheels had a major blow out.

**A puncture repair kit and a mechanic to the rescue, they crossed the line and took the honour of first tandem home.**

A massive congratulations to the dynamic duo. To donate to Julie and Will's chosen charity, please visit:

[www.justgiving.com/Julieandwillandabikecalledbeatrice/](http://www.justgiving.com/Julieandwillandabikecalledbeatrice/)

## BOOK ILLUSTRATED BY WORCESTER EXPERT RECEIVES ACCLAIM FROM BRITAIN'S GREATEST EXPLORER

**A book in which a University of Worcester design lecturer has helped to bring to life a top-secret World War II Antarctic expedition has received wide acclaim.**

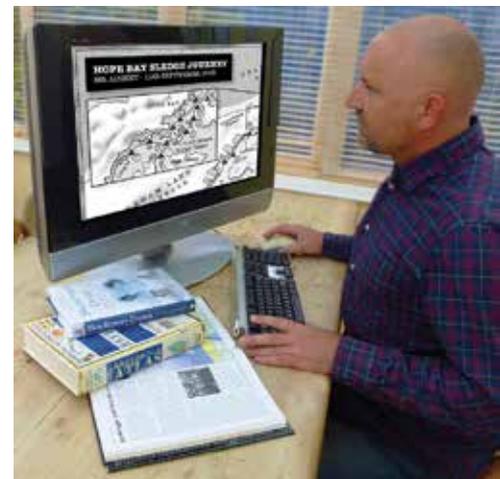
Britain's greatest living explorer, Sir Ranulph Fiennes, has described it as 'a truly remarkable story', while the Scott Polar Research Institute has called it 'a valuable addition to our understanding of Britain's involvement in the Antarctic.'

Andy Stevenson, Senior Lecturer in Graphic Design and Multimedia, researched, planned and created a series of historical maps to illustrate *Operation Tabarin: Britain's Secret Wartime Expedition to Antarctica, 1944-46* by acclaimed polar historian Stephen Haddelsey.

Earlier this month, the two men attended a House of Commons reception to mark the 70th anniversary of the expedition, which strengthened British territorial claims in the Antarctic.

Mr Haddelsey says: "I was absolutely delighted that the event at the House of Commons and the book launch were so well attended. I've no doubt that Andy's excellent maps will help a wider audience to understand the operation and I hope to work with him again on future projects."

Andy is now looking into the possibility of bringing in some of his new-found polar links for a potential future student children's book design reference book project.



Many of the polar organisations are keen to help raise awareness with younger generations of British Scientific achievements in the Antarctic. Such a project could include both references to the historical perspective as well as our key roles in the monitoring of climate change.

# TRAINING IN CARE HOMES REDUCES PRESCRIPTION OF HARMFUL ANTI-PSYCHOTICS TO PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA BY A THIRD



An innovative training programme for care home staff has cut the use of inappropriate anti-psychotic drugs, which double the risk of death in people with dementia, by a third according to research commissioned by Alzheimer's Society.

Over 100 care homes were recruited to receive the 'Focused Intervention Training and Support' (FITS) programme – which equips staff to understand complex behaviours in people with dementia and to deliver person-centred care as an alternative to harmful antipsychotics. When medication was reviewed, residents were more alert, communicative and active, with improvements in mobility, eating, sleeping and in achieving personal goals.

90 per cent of people with dementia will experience behavioural and psychological symptoms at some point. Often, people in care homes experiencing these symptoms are prescribed antipsychotic drugs as a first resort. For someone with dementia, antipsychotic drugs can worsen dementia symptoms, double the risk of death, treble the risk of stroke and can leave people unable to walk and talk.

Proven effective in a clinical trial in 2006, the FITS programme has now been scaled up and completed by staff in 67 care homes across the UK, in what is one of the largest formal evaluations of a training programme ever conducted.

**The intensive nine-month training and supervision programme was delivered by specialist coaches and evaluated by the Association for Dementia Studies at the University of Worcester. Training courses focused on person-centred care approaches and alternative ways of managing the behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia, which can include aggression.**

Launched at the Alzheimer's Society's research conference on 3 July, the study reports that prescriptions of antipsychotic drugs were reduced by 30 per cent in care homes who were part of the programme. As well as showing benefits for people with dementia, the study, led by Professor Dawn Brooker at the University of Worcester found that FITS also brought positive benefits to care home staff, residents' families and to the care environment.

Almost 40 per cent of the 106 care homes who began the study were not able to complete the training programme. The research identifies major barriers that exist to delivering dementia-specific training in care homes, but offers practical solutions to overcome them. Any future dementia work to implement training for care home workers should be guided by the findings of this comprehensive study.

Professor Dawn Brooker, the lead researcher on the study, said: "We've shown that FITS training is feasible to deliver on a large scale, reduces the prescription of inappropriate antipsychotics and empowers teams to work in a person-centred way. Provided that the right facilitators are in place, it is an effective way to improve quality of life for people with dementia in care homes."

Dr Doug Brown, Director of Research and Development at Alzheimer's Society, said: "Antipsychotic drugs can be hugely dangerous for people with dementia. In many cases, they're inappropriately prescribed and can lead to reduced quality of life whilst doubling the risk of death. Too often they're used as a first resort but this research shows that person-centred care is an effective alternative and has positive benefits for care home residents and staff.

"We hear over and over from people affected by dementia that as well as the vital research to develop new treatments, they want to see research that helps them live well with dementia. Putting research findings into practice can be a challenge but this report is a key example of doing just that - it shows how care research can deliver real change to the lives of those living with the condition today."

Focused Intervention Training and Support brought positive benefits to care home staff, residents' families and to the care environment.

**- study led by Professor Dawn Brooker**

# UNIVERSITY NEWS

If you have suggestions or stories for the next edition of the University of Worcester News, please get in touch with us on [communications@worc.ac.uk](mailto:communications@worc.ac.uk)

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