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ISSUE 4: 2019

# Welcome

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the fourth edition of our University of London Worldwide alumni magazine, *WC1E*.

In this issue, Professor Philip Murphy considers Britain's place in the world as it faces the prospect of leaving the EU, while Dr Emma Bridges examines the depictions of soldiers' wives from Greek myth – Penelope, Andromache and Clytemnestra – to open up a conversation about the experiences of contemporary military spouses.

As well as a wide-ranging interview with the Founder and Director General of the African Prisons Project, Alexander McLean, we also talk to the author, entrepreneur, philanthropist and current student, Christine Amour-Levar, about setting up Women On A Mission and HER Planet Earth.

Lindsay Alexander writes about how our art deco administrative home, Senate House, has served not only as inspiration for literary works but also provided a prime film location for TV and Hollywood blockbusters alike; Dr Rolph Payet stresses the urgent need for new types of policymakers, managers and scientists who can steer the planet towards less emissions and less waste; our '5 minutes with...' slot features the University of London's new Vice-Chancellor, Professor Wendy Thomson CBE; and *WC1E*'s Art Director, Antonia Bailey, looks back on 10 years of our *imagenation* photo competition.

Maureen McTaggart gives her considered opinion of the Google Home Mini smart assistant, while our cover story provides further insights into how Al is changing our day-to-day lives, both at home and at work.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the magazine – do please get in touch and let us know your thoughts. We look forward to meeting some of you personally at one of our alumni events.

### Professor Mary Stiasny OBE

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Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) and Chief Executive, University of London Worldwide

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### EDITORIAL



Wrote his PhD on the contemporary Estonian composer, Arvo Pärt. He has written for BBC Music Magazine, the TLS and The Arts Desk, among others.



### LISA PIERRE EDITOR

Former Head of Alumni Liaison and Engagement, Lisa has worked in the field of alumni relations for over 10 years.



### ANTONIA BAILEY

ART DIRECTOR Head of Design and Production at the University, Antonia has worked in the design and education sector for over 15 vears.

### **GEMMA JESTICO**



**GRAPHIC DESIGNER** Having previously worked within design studios in Australia, Gemma is now one half of the University's design team.

### CONTRIBUTORS



### LINDSAY ALEXANDER Content Manager at the University of London, Lindsay studied an MA in Media

and Communications at Goldsmiths and previously worked in the film sector.



### DR EMMA BRIDGES Public Engagement Fellow in Classics at the Institute of Classical Studies, Emma's new book is due for publication by OUP in 2020



### TIM HALL Focussing on technology, Tim works

on improving all aspects of the student journey, from first enquiry to graduation and future employability.



#### **BENEDICT J. JONES** An author of crime and horror fiction, the hidden history of London has always fascinated Benedict and played an important part in his work.



### Study and volunteer mentor, Maureen inspires women from disadvantaged communities to overcome obstacles. PROFESSOR PHILIP MURPHY

Works in Student Experience as a

MAURFEN MCTAGGART

Campaigns Manager to enhance the

Director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Philip is author of The Empire's New Clothes: The Myth of the Commonwealth (Hurst, 2018)

### DR ROLPH PAYET

An international policy expert, researcher and speaker on the environment and climate issues, Rolph was the first President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Seychelles.

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University of London's global student PR Officer at the School of Advanced

# NEWS

# CASE AWARD FOR WC1E

WE'RE delighted that the collection of portraits used in the cover story from the 2018 edition of *WC1E* – which profiled 10 remarkable women working at the University of London – won a prestigious CASE Award in the 'Photography' category.

The judges said: "Our panel fell for these formal portraits from the University of London. The women are shot using formal principles in traditional environments of power. Refreshing to see women photographed with a sense of their substance and wisdom."

In a congratulatory message, Sue Cunningham, President and CEO of CASE, said: "More than 2,800 entries were submitted from throughout the world for this year's Circle of



Excellence Awards, so your recognition is especially noteworthy. In addition to celebrating the best work in educational advancement, the Circle of Excellence helps inspire others by showcasing creative and innovative work. Your awardwinning work contributes, therefore, to the betterment of the educational advancement profession worldwide."



# UOL SIGNS UP TO SOCIAL MOBILITY PLEDGE

**THE** University of London has signed up to the Social Mobility Pledge, as one of the first acts of the new Vice-Chancellor, Professor Wendy Thomson CBE.

Professor Thomson said: "All universities, including the University of London, have a key role to play in supporting and promoting social mobility. We must do our utmost to remove barriers and support talented individuals to realise their full potential. Together with other universities and employers, we have signed up to play our part in promoting social mobility. The actions we take to support the Pledge will open doors for people who may otherwise have found them closed."

The aims of the Social Mobility Pledge are in keeping with the University of London's deeply held values and longstanding commitment to improving access to higher education.



## NEW VICE-CHANCELLOR APPOINTED

THE University of London is pleased to announce the appointment of Professor Wendy Thomson CBE as its next Vice-Chancellor with effect from July 2019. Wendy holds a tenured Professorship in Social Policy at McGill University and sits on the Boards of the University of the Arts, the University of East Anglia, as well as Diabetes UK. Wendy's previous roles include the UK Prime Minister's Chief Advisor on Public Service Reform, the Director of Best Value Inspections for England and Wales at the Audit Commission and, most recently, Managing Director of Norfolk County Council.

Wendy's career started in the charity and local authority sectors where she held leadership positions in the London Boroughs of Islington and Newham. Her research is in public service reform, health policy and child welfare, and she has led governmental panels and reviews on these issues for government in Canada, and internationally for Department for International Development and United Nations Development Programme.

You can read more about Wendy in our Q&A with her on page 7.



### WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS



# UCL, LSE AND KING'S IN WORLD TOP 40

LONDON has no less than four universities rated in the world's top 40 institutions according to the *Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2020* which were published in September. Three of the four are member institutions of the University of London: UCL (15th), LSE (joint 27th) and King's College London (joint 36th). The fourth London-based university in the world's top 40 is Imperial College London (10th). The largest and most diverse university rankings to date, including almost 1,400 universities from 92 countries, they confirm London's position as one of the world's premier cities for higher education.

The Times Higher Education rankings represent the only global university performance table to judge world-class universities across all of their core missions – teaching (the learning environment); research (volume, income and reputation); citations (research influence); international outlook (staff, students and research); and industry income (knowledge transfer).

# GOLD FOR WORLDWIDE CONVERSATION

THE University of London has won the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) Golden World Award for Excellence in PR in the International Campaign category for its 'Worldwide Conversation', which was held over a three-month period across the world during 2018.

The 'Worldwide Conversation' on women's higher education and equality in the workplace was launched in London with a keynote lecture from Shauna Olney, Chief, Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch, International Labour Organisation of the United Nations. Following her lecture, a panel discussion chaired by the Hon. Mrs Justice Cheema-Grubb DBE paved the way for a further 20 conversations on this subject to be held across three continents. A compendium of these conversations is being published later this year. Find out more: **bit.ly/uol-ipra** 



 The Uni 2018 wa the work three co rldwide conversation higher education ultiple countries



### LEADING WOMEN WINS GUARDIAN AWARD

THE University of London's Leading Women campaign scooped top prize in the Marketing and Communications Campaign category of *The Guardian* University Awards 2019. The campaign celebrated the global contribution of female leaders and education pioneers associated with the University of London, as well as reinforcing and promoting the role of women in higher education generally.

The campaign included blog posts by academics, students and inspiring women, a podcast that followed in the footsteps of Virginia Woolf, panel discussions and mentoring sessions at the Women of the World Festival, a recreation of the 1860s examination, plus an audio installation during the Bloomsbury Festival in Senate House.

An art installation in Bloomsbury's Torrington Square commemorating the first nine women students and a timeline in Senate House celebrating women's contributions to education and world history remain as permanent reminders of the campaign's message.

YOUR VOICE

### Highlights of what our students and alumni are saying about us on social media:

Graduation is good but the best part is being able to meet all of you during this journey. #graduation #uolgrad2019 #friends #singapore #happygraduation

Ling @soulikhone

Oops, I #graduated again...GDip in Social Sciences! #UOLWorldClass #emfss Kyle @mondkoncepto

We were one family of different colours united by education...One family that won our battles. One thing I realised when I walked out from there [graduation] was that no matter where you're from, what you are, or how old you were...Just know that you can do it!

Masha @mash.mie

It was great! Thank you for organising such a wonderful event. It was a day to remember. Jevgenij Charcenko @jevgenijc B

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It is always a pleasure to be in the company of UoL Staff and Alumni. We are proud to be associated with UoL, one of the most prestigious educational institutions in the world.

TMUC, Islamabad Teaching Centre @tmuc.islamabad

I am wholeheartedly thankful to @uoLondon for its role in bringing mankind forward: affordable, high-quality and highly accessible education is the only cure against inequality and injustice.

Benny @mypheyes

Share your memories and moments with us on social media. Use **#UOLWorldClass** at:

- f facebook.com/londonualumni
- twitter.com/londonu
- instagram.com/\_londonu

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# 5 MINUTES WITH: PROFESSOR WENDY THOMSON

**Professor Wendy Thomson CBE** joined the University of London as Vice-Chancellor in July of this year. She brings a range of experience in senior roles in higher education and public service. Until coming to the University, Wendy held a professorship in social policy at McGill University in Montreal and served on the Council of the University of East Anglia and the Norwich University of the Arts. Previous roles include CEO in local government and Chief Advisor on Public Service Reform for a former UK Prime Minister.

With research interests that also include health policy and child welfare, Wendy has led governmental panels and reviews on these subjects, both for the Canadian government and internationally.

### What was the last country you visited?

I visited Russia for the graduation ceremony of our students studying finance and economics at ICEF Moscow. It was the first time I had been in Moscow since the early 80s. There were many changes to be seen, changes in which the University of London has played a progressive role.

### What is the best and worst thing about travel?

The best thing about travel is experiencing new people and cultures and climates. The worst thing: airport queues.

### Describe yourself in 10 words.

Mother, professor and public servant who loves tennis and yoga.

### What is your favourite city and why?

My favourite city is London because it is a diverse cosmopolitan meeting place with exciting people and diverse talents; and my adopted home.

## What three things would you take with you on a desert island?

My daughter, my laptop and a sustainable supply of fine food and wine.

## Name three guests, past or present, you would like to have dinner with and why.

Michelle Obama, because of the life she is living and the inspiration she provides. Leonard Cohen, because of the poetry in his words and voice, and our shared birthplace, Montreal. Vikram Vij, so he could make sure our dinner was tasty and came with his expert critique.

# Name one thing you want to do in the next year.

Help the University of London shape its next big vision and strategy; its 'why'?

What is your favourite book of all time? E. P. Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class*.

15 .....

Name something or someone that always make you smile? My daughter.

What is your favourite restaurant? The Red Fort.

**Tell us one thing you love about London.** The squares of Bloomsbury.

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# BRITAIN, BURDERARDE AND COMMONWEATER

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There's a widespread assumption that if the UK leaves the European Union (EU), the Commonwealth – an association of 53 states, most of them former parts of the British Empire – will take on a renewed importance.

'm extremely sceptical about this. At least at the level of international organisations, there is a simple distinction for Britain between the EU and the Commonwealth: one matters and the other doesn't. It's a lesson we're in danger of having to learn the hard way.

Frankly, if the UK decided to leave the Commonwealth tomorrow, it would be a remarkably easy process. Formally, it would require little more than a short note along the lines of 'We're off. Love, Boris'. And, beyond having to rename the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, with the attendant costs of new signage and stationery, and devise some new protocols for Buckingham Palace garden parties, nothing very much would change.

If, on the other hand, the UK leaves the EU without a deal on 31 October, almost everyone acknowledges that it will drop off the edge of an economic cliff. The only questions are how far and how hard the fall will be.

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### **Negotiation and compromise**

This may sound like a rather bleak analysis from the Director of the University of London's Institute of Commonwealth Studies. But now, of all times, it's important to be honest with ourselves about Britain's place in the world and its relationship with its European neighbours and its former colonial territories.

The EU, and its crowning achievement, the 'single market', are the products of decades of hard negotiation and painful compromise in which the member states have been prepared to pool important elements of national power and sovereignty in order to create something greater than the sum of their parts.

The hostility it arouses in many quarters owes much to the fact that its influence permeates almost every element of daily life in its member states and helps to shape the nature of the global economy.

The Commonwealth, by contrast, is the product of centrifugal forces: the fracturing of the world's largest modern empire and the achievement of ever-greater autonomy by its component parts.

Within 30 years of the end of the Second World War, the tangible elements which bound Commonwealth members together – common allegiance to the Crown, preferential trading agreements, the 'sterling area' and common rights of citizenship – had withered away.

### A post-colonial Humpty Dumpty

British trade with the Commonwealth, which peaked in the middle of the 20th century in the wake of the devastating impact of the Second World War, was already in steep decline long before Britain finally joined the 'common market'. And it is simply contrary to the whole character of Commonwealth members' relationship to Britain and to each other to imagine that they would be prepared to compromise their hard-won national sovereignty in order to put some post-colonial Humpty Dumpty back together again. 6699-

Having genuinely to fend for ourselves is a novel and frightening concept, particularly in a world in which figures like Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping are vying for power and influence.

The British Government may have been slow to come to terms with these changes, but it wasn't that slow. It made its first application for membership of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1961, and the fact that it only finally joined 12 years later owed more to two separate uses of the French veto than to a lack of realism in Whitehall.

So why has the Commonwealth become a talking point again in the context of Brexit? It certainly isn't due to any renaissance of the organisation itself. The Commonwealth Secretariat is widely viewed as an ineffective body and, as a consequence, has increasingly been starved of funds.

### 'Imperial nostalgia'

During the 2016 referendum campaign, it was notable that few of those who argued that the Commonwealth might provide Britain with some sort of substitute for Europe had any real experience of the current state of the organisation. It tended to be cited as part of the soothing mood music intended to reassure British voters that the country would not be isolated after Brexit.

Yet there were few hints about how Commonwealth trade might be boosted, or why leaving the EU would facilitate that process. Nor had Commonwealth leaders been vocal in calling on the UK to break away from the EU and renew old trading links (what sceptical British civil servants had dubbed 'Empire 2.0'). Indeed, in a virtually unprecedented outbreak of unanimity, they had been almost as one in urging Britain to stay put.

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To outside observers, many of whom have been disturbed by the sight of what appeared to be a national mental breakdown, there has been an understandable tendency to apply some amateur psychiatry to the British. A frequent diagnosis is that they are especially prone to 'imperial nostalgia'.

On one hand, the term nostalgia is arguably both too broad-brush and too loaded to be a particularly useful tool in diagnosing the causes of Brexit. And it does little to explain why the 2016 referendum result should have been so different from that of 1975, when British voters overwhelmingly endorsed Britain's continued membership of the EEC.

### The ghost in the machine

Political historians of the future will probably opt for more concrete explanations, not least the power of the Brexiteers' slogan 'Take back control', a stroke of rhetorical genius, which seems to have tapped deeply into a widespread sense of helplessness as the forces of globalisation have shifted power away from national governments.

Yet, if we read nostalgia specifically in terms of a sense of loss, we might find clues as to why the idea of the Commonwealth, as opposed to its flimsy reality, has proved so comforting to the UK in the current climate. British national identity developed in the 18th and 19th centuries within the broader context of a global Empire. This complicated the process of codifying British citizenship and when the government finally did so in 1948, it created a single category of 'Citizens of the UK and Colonies' and another of 'Commonwealth Citizens', to which it accorded identical rights.

Although successive acts of parliament from 1962 onwards gradually removed the rights of entry and residence from the Commonwealth citizens, it was not until 1981 that legislation created a distinct 'British citizenship' and quietly phased out the concept of British subjecthood (which had hitherto formally extended to about a quarter of the world's population).

In many ways, the Commonwealth is the ghost in the machine of the British national psyche. We're simply not used to being alone. And, hitherto, we haven't been. As the ship of Empire finally sank beneath the waves in the 1960s and 70s, the British scrambled aboard another international vessel: the EEC.

Having genuinely to fend for ourselves is a novel and frightening concept, particularly in a world in which figures like Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping are vying for power and influence. No wonder we sometimes reach for the old, tattered, comfort blanket of the Commonwealth.

Professor Philip Murphy is Director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies and author of The Empire's New Clothes: The Myth of the Commonwealth (Hurst, 2018).

# EMPOWERING THE POWERLESS

### **INTERVIEW BY LISA PIERRE**

I first met Alexander McLean on his graduation day a decade ago. I was introduced to him by his father, who was keen for Alexander to find out about the alumni network. We chatted and he told me he was working in Uganda with a charity he had set up after a chance visit to a maximum security prison. That charity was the African Prisons Project (APP).

Since then, the charity has become well-known within the University of London, as has Alexander. His work has attracted global interest from the media and politicians, and I hear a popular TV show is keen to do an interview. So, after my first interview 10 years ago, I was interested to know what has changed in Alexander's life and how the APP has grown from what he launched as a student society back in 2007. You set up the APP after seeing the conditions of prisoners and the way they were treated. Was there a particular instance that prompted you to want to help? What improvements do you think that APP has made in the last 10 years? I'm excited to see that in many ways the culture has shifted in Uganda and Kenya Prisons Services over the last 15 years, away from harsh punishment towards rehabilitation and redemption. I've been excited to see greater investment in prison officers – in their education, training and conditions, and I am encouraged by the opportunities to take responsibility, which are given to prisoners in East Africa in abundance. I think taking responsibility for oneself in prison is a good preparation to look after one's self, one's family and one's community upon release.

APP had three objectives when we first talked: education, justice and healthcare. Out of the three, you felt justice underpinned them all and you hoped for improvement in this area first. Do you think this has happened? What has changed in regards to the two other objectives? We established a model for training prison officers as library assistants and adult literacy teachers, which has been taken on by Uganda's Kyambogo University. About 70 prisoners and prison officers have completed gualifications in these areas. We established a model to train prisoners and prison officers to provide basic health education, diagnosis and treatment in prisons without medical facilities or health workers (about 75 per cent of Ugandan prisons). This model, called the Prison Village Health Team Model, has been taken up by the Ugandan government and expanded into all 240+ prisons in the country.

In the 2017 Impact Report, we talked about transition and said: 'In the 10 years that APP has been a charity, our work has been evolving. While we continue to support every effort to provide health, education and life skills, we've seen that whatever we do to improve people's welfare in prison, if they don't have justice, they won't have peace.'

## You wanted to expand APP into other countries in Africa. Has that happened?

We are now working in 40 prisons across Uganda and Kenya. We have been invited by the Chief Justice of the Gambia to begin work there. We are looking forward to starting work around judicial training and access to justice in prisons there later this year. We have been asked by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to begin working with them to improve the lives of women and children in prisons in Sudan, though the current political climate has made that difficult.

Next week, I head to Botswana to visit prisons and meet members of the judiciary, as well as to be a judge in an All Africa moot court competition, which some of our University of London students are participating in online. Botswana has been rated the least corrupt country in Africa, and has a strong commitment to the rule of law, but still uses corporal and capital punishment. I'd love to work there.

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Whilst we continue to support every effort to provide health, education and life skills, we've seen that whatever we do to improve people's welfare in prison, if they don't have justice, they won't have peace.

We've been bringing African prison officers to the UK for many years, to see what works and what doesn't in the justice system here. We are now starting to take steps to have conversations around what equality before the law looks like in this country and to see whether it might be possible to share lessons about the law with British prisoners, prison officers and groups of people at risk of going to prison.

### You must have seen many sad, often harrowing and painful scenes over the years. How do you cope with that?

Oscar Wilde said of prison: 'the problem with prisons isn't that they break our hearts, our hearts are made to be broken, rather that they turn our hearts to stone.' I've seen many heartbreaking things and lead a community of people, which every day is stepping into other people's pain.

For most of my twenties, I switched off my emotions – I didn't cry, or experience great joy. I realised that to do this work without love and kindness in me is pretty difficult. Since then, I've been working to balance action and contemplation in myself and our community. It looks like us having meals together in prison, as lawyers, judges, academics, prisoners and prison warders. We have assemblies where we celebrate our successes and commiserate our losses. We spend time on retreat together, in prison and out of prison. As a community of people from various faiths and of no faith, we tap into monastic traditions around silence, meditation and contemplation to help us grow in awareness of ourselves and life beyond ourselves.

# How has the University of London been involved with the educational objective behind APP?

Tremendously: offering fee reductions, teaching support, incredible study materials. It's been great to have academics and students from University of London institutions spend time with us in East Africa, helping teach our students in prisons.

# How valuable was your Master of Laws degree and is it still relevant to what you do today?

I learnt that it was possible to study and work at the same time – something that our students do each day. They divide their time between the classroom and the legal aid clinic. My modules were around human rights, criminal justice and refugee justice. **Opposite:** Alexander McLean speaking with an inmate at Luzira Prison, Uganda.

Archive Photography – African Prisons Project My Masters gave me a glimpse of how the law affects the most vulnerable and how lawyers can serve them. That's the bedrock of my life.

## What do you feel have been some of your and APP's greatest achievements?

The conversation I had with the head of the Power of Mercy Committee in Kenya – having spent a lot of time with the men and women who APP has trained, especially our students who are studying for a law degree (LLB) with the University of London. When visiting our students at Kamiti Prison recently, it was described as the *Kamiti Prison Law School*. He said: "Your students are transformed people. They talk differently, they hold themselves differently, they present themselves differently. When making recommendations for mercy, we place a very high value on being part of APP. How do you do it?"

Susan Kigula's attendance at the 7th World Congress against the Death Penalty (Brussels, March 2019) – from death row prisoner to law student and legal advocate changing the law – to attendance at a global forum, sat alongside senior officials from the European Parliament.

The international Penal Reform Report on the Rehabilitation of Women Prisoners in which APP were highlighted as a 'promising practice' in prison education.



I am deeply inspired by our students. I was with a University of London graduate in prison recently, he'd been on death row for many years before being exonerated last year.

# Social media now has the power to get behind people and causes. Do you see this power as a positive?

Yes. Social media provides us with an opportunity to share our work more widely and engage with people who otherwise wouldn't know about our work at all. The challenge for us is that African prisons are not an easy or obvious point of connection for most people! However, so many people are engaging with global issues of injustice and are hungry for personal stories of change. So, although we sometimes face great challenges with communicating why we do what we do, each person we work with has a story which can inspire us to engage with the issues of injustice that need changing around us too.

What challenges do you think APP still faces? We've seen that raising funds for this kind of work isn't easy because few people prioritise prison issues. It's exciting to see that prison reform in the US is gaining momentum. We think there's much that America could learn about what it looks like for prisoners and prison officers to share life and to work together and to study together and to find collaborative solutions to their problems, or the way that education can be totally transformative, and how giving trust to prisoners can be transformative. But those interested in penal reform in the US have tended not to have thought about what was going on beyond America. And so we saw that this work was a hard sell. People say: "Why do you want to bother with these people?"

# Legally, what changes would you like to see in your lifetime?

Abolition of the death penalty. Stats from this years World Congress Against the Death Penalty: 54 countries still use the death penalty, which represents approximately 60 per cent of the world population living under the yoke of a justice system which kills; of the more than 20,000 prisoners sentenced to death, they await execution in conditions of detention, which are often well below what is required by international standards.

You have been inspired by people such as Mandela, Gandhi and Martin Luther King, who spent time in detention. Who have you met personally that has inspired you? I am inspired by my children, wife and parents. My grandmother shaped me deeply. Dr Anne Merriman, who founded Hospice Africa Uganda and introduced morphine to Uganda and many other countries, has shaped me deeply. I am who I am because of who she is.

I am deeply inspired by our students. I was with a University of London graduate in prison recently; he'd been on death row for many years before being exonerated last year. We went into a room to do a student assembly and he said to me: "This is the death room." He spoke about how he'd been beaten in that room by prison warders until he passed out, and showed me the spot where he'd lain unconscious. But he had no bitterness and, in fact, he is one of the warmest, kindest, most compassionate people I know, with the highest integrity.

### Ten years ago, you wanted to qualify as an advocate and visit Svalbard. Have you achieved either of these goals?

I was delighted to receive Lincoln's Inn's top scholarship, the Lord Mansfield Scholarship. I was offered a pupillage at Doughty Street Chambers, which has a good reputation for human rights and public interest work. I turned it down because I

#### Far right, from top to bottom: A Legal Awareness Session at Thika Main Prison, Kenya.

Two sisters trained as APP Paralegals in Lang'ata Women's Prison, Kenya.

An APP Paralegal recruitment drive at Kiambu Prison led by a Legal Officer from the Kenya Prisons Service.

APP law students consulting each other during a moot court with Strathmore University. believed I couldn't do pupillage and run APP, and if I stepped back at that time, APP would fail. I don't regret that decision. I enjoy sitting as a magistrate and the proximity it gives me to justice issues in this country. It's also exciting to be building a community of advocates. Did I really say I'd like to visit Svalbard?

### In the last 10 years, you got married and became a father. Has this changed your outlook on the world in any way?

Marriage and fatherhood are teaching me a little about slowing down. I can't move at the pace that I did when I was single. But my marriage and my children strengthen me. I am reminded I am running a marathon rather than a sprint. My children have spent a lot of time in African prisons. My wife is a doctor, we fell in love looking after dying prisoners in Uganda.

I am reminded that the sense of being known, being loved, being seen and belonging, which family offers, is a great gift. Many people do not have this and I have been challenged to think how APP may offer that sense of being seen, known and cared about to our paralegals, staff and the clients we serve.

### How do you balance the many roles you have, from the man who is having breakfast with Barack Obama one day to the man visiting someone on death row the next?

I believe that I have opportunities to build some bridges with my life. I am regularly able to meet fascinating, remarkable people, whose lives on the surface look very different. However, I've seen that whether you're a president or living in a palace, or a cell in a prison or a cell in a monastery – that need to belong, to have meaning, to serve, is fundamental. I am excited to be in a position to help build meaningful community, as there are people all around us who are passionate about living in more just societies.

# What would you like to have achieved in the next 10 years?

As the APP, we are aiming to have one million people experience fair hearings in court by 2020.

### What do you do to switch off?

I love to dance. I love to give and receive hospitality. I play badminton and squash. I am part of a fantastic church. I love to spend time with multiple generations of my family at once.

### If you were to encourage people to be active and play a part in making the world better for all, what would you tell them? You have your own gift that only you can offer the world. It may seem small, but if we each

the world. It may seem small, but if we each offer our gift, the world will be transformed.







# FROM STOVE PIPE HATS TO SOMBRE SUITS BY BENEDICT J. JONES



As March 2020 fast approaches, our thoughts turn to what is always a momentous day enjoyed by the graduands, and also by the staff of the distance learning programmes. The annual University of London graduation ceremony is the culmination of the student life cycle.

Things are very different at the graduation ceremony of today as opposed to the first ceremony, which was held at Somerset House, on the banks of the Thames close to Waterloo Bridge, in 1849. Somerset House is perhaps most famous for housing the registry of births, deaths and marriages for the United Kingdom from 1859 until 1998. The graduation venue of more recent times is the Barbican Centre, where thousands of students gather to receive their degrees and celebrate their achievements. At that first ceremony, there were around 250 students, and while their sense of elation at their success would have been the same, we can imagine that these early Victorians would have celebrated in a more sedate manner, perhaps a hearty shake of the hand.

Graduates had previously received their degrees without a final ceremony and this continued until a group of graduates petitioned the University of London Senate. The dress of the attendees would have caught the eye of onlookers; before changing into academic robes with rich velvet facings, graduands would be dressed in stove pipe hats, long coats and cravats.

6699.

We can imagine that these early Victorians would have celebrated in a more sedate manner, perhaps a hearty shake of the hand.

Today, we see students in sombre suits, smart dresses and a wide range of traditional dress – a cacophony of styles and colours. Likewise, in 1849, the casual observer from our times would have been struck by two things that are very different today – in 1849 all of the graduands were male and all of them were white. Today, the University has students in more than 180 countries and many of these come to attend the ceremony in London after they complete their degree.

The world has changed and the University of London has changed with it. The graduation ceremony is a fantastic place to show off and celebrate the diverse range of students of all races, colours and creeds. But most of all, we should appreciate the similarities between our recent ceremonies and those of more than a century and a half ago – they are a celebration of the hard work and success of students. It would be nice to go and stand on the terraces of Somerset House and stare out across the rolling waters of the Thames and imagine those first graduates after they had received their awards looking out over the same waters.



# imagenation PHOTO COMPETITION



MISSED OPPORTUNITIES: BY ABIGAIL ABA SEKYI-AIDOO





RAIN AND SUN, THEM AND US): BY REBECCA MARTA LAGO

CAUGHT IN BETWEEN (PRESENT AND FUTURE,



CHERRY BLOSSOMS ATTHE JEFFERSON MEMORIAL: BY BRYN DAVIES

THIRSTY BIRD: BY ANIMESH SINHA



JOY OF 100 YEARS LIVING: BY MERINA LABONI



FEATURE



### CALLING ALL ASPIRING PHOTOGRAPHERS... BY ANTONIA BAILEY

The University of London's biennial photo competition *imagenation* made its debut back in 2008. Since then, over 1,000 entrants have submitted more than 4,000 photos. The competition was established to bring together the collective creative talents of our alumni, students and staff.

ver the years, we've put out the call to 'all aspiring photographers...', asking amateur and professional alike to join the 'World Class' and show us their talents. The very first *imagenation* competition was open to University of London staff only. The uptake was reasonable, but we felt the whole thing had the potential to be bigger. So, on its second outing in 2010, we focussed on access and opened up entry to University of London alumni – this marked a significant change for the years to come. We also upped the ante in terms of prizes and expanded the theme to allow a wider variety of shots.

This was also the year that we launched a new prize – the People's Choice Award – giving everyone a chance to play judge. The official judges shortlist was opened up for the public to vote on and choose a winner, and was an instant hit. The quality and standard of shots we received that year amazed us, and we realised we were on to something big.

With each competition came the chance to expand – categories, prizes and, more importantly, eligibility. By 2012, we decided to open up the competition further to include current students. We expanded our web

presence and created our own microsite to promote the competition – *imagenation* had definitely arrived.

We felt it was important to go bigger and better with each competition and managed to do this through the differing entry themes. In 2008, we started off simple, the initial competition simply asked entrants to show us 'My London'. By 2018, we had expanded the entrance categories to four – People and Culture, The Natural World, Street Life and Travel – not only giving participants even more chances to win, but also an opportunity to be more creative.

Over the years, we've invited participants to submit photos of people, places or things – shots that celebrate the beauty and diversity of our planet. With each competition, there have been prizes, but also published recognition through the official University of London calendar. Every winning and highly commended photo ever chosen has become part of the official University calendar for the following year.

The judging panels have also had a hard part to play over the years. With such a wide array of photos from so many different countries, it has always been difficult to choose just a selection of winning shots. The photos featured here are simply a handful of the amazing entries that we've received over the years. The pure passion and talent out there among our students and alumni is breathtaking, and goes to prove that you are all truly world-class.

To see the winning and commended photos from the latest *imagenation* competition, visit: **london.ac.uk/imagenation** 





DHOW RIDE IN LAMU: BY CHRISTA AWOUR ODINGA-SVANTESON









A SEA OF REINDEER: BY CHRISTINE AMOUR-LEVAR





### FEATURE











# The Rise of the Machines

### **BY LIAM KELLY AND TIM HALL**

A sentient machine that is smarter, faster and more efficient than any human being turns on its creators and destroys them. Sound familiar? This basic narrative forms the premise for many of the popular culture references to Artificial Intelligence that many of us grew up with. In film, such as 2001: A Space Odyssey and The Matrix, as well as countless science-fiction novels, this is a trope that modern storytellers have been fascinated with.



itself is not a recent concept in fiction. Samuel Butler predicted sentient machines in his 1872 novel *Erewhon*. The advances we have made since then in computing, robotics and AI are staggering, but so too is our reliance on technology. Should we be worried about AI or could the 'rise of the machines' be the next big opportunity?

The technical term closest to what has often been depicted in science fiction is Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). These are generalpurpose thinking machines so powerful that they are comparable to the human mind. Machines that could work and adapt themselves across a variety of domains and achieve goals in complex and changing environments.

There are a number of definitions of AGI, but in keeping with the theme of higher education, Ben Goertzel's is 'when a robot can enrol in a human university and take classes in the same way as humans, and get its degree, then I'll [say] we've created [an] Artificial General Intelligence'. Experts predict that AGI may become reality in the next two decades.

### Al as disruptor

A potential consequence of AGI is the creation of a machine that has the ability to enhance itself, outside of our control, in what has come to be described as 'The Singularity'. Once this happens, it could start doing so at exponential speeds. Up until this point, capability can only improve as quickly as research progresses, but this will evolve to an ever-more rapid feedback loop – one that may result in an intelligence vastly superior to the combined intellect of every human on the planet.

There has been much recent discussion about disruptive technologies, but none seem anywhere near as potentially disruptive as AI. Two years ago at the University of London Centre for Distance Education's annual Research and Innovation in Distance Education conference, a packed room of academics, learning technologists, and subject matter experts were asked which technologies would have the biggest impact on higher education. When the results were revealed, AI was the clear winner.

Outside of education, what impact will advancements in AI have on the workplace? Experts have suggested that there will be a substantial shrinkage in the workforce, with some predicting up to 40 per cent of existing jobs being lost to automation, robotics and machine learning. This prediction is not for the distant future, but for the next 10 years.

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If your business is education, but you have not explored how AI will transform education, be prepared to be disrupted. That's because AI is not coming; it's already here. **Alex Chan** 

We can already see machines replacing staff in the retail sector, with the widespread introduction of self-service checkouts in supermarkets. As technology changes the skills that employers require in their staff, education providers will have to adapt to new priorities and demands.

### **Opportunities and threats**

The recent news that Alan Turing will be honoured on the new £50 bank note is worth celebrating by anyone interested in computing, mathematics and Al. Turing wrote *Intelligent Machinery*, his first paper about simulating the brain on a computer, in 1948 and his work led to many advances that make this technology possible today. The world we live in is very different to the one in which the father of Al first considered the possibility of a thinking machine.

As with all technological disruptions, major changes brought about by AI will bring both opportunities and threats. Machines and algorithms in the workplace are expected to create 133 million new roles but cause 75 million jobs to be displaced by 2022, according to a new report from the World Economic Forum called *The Future of Jobs 2018*. That's a net gain of 58 million jobs – jobs that will require the human touch. With the launch of new BSc in Computer Science and MSc in Data Science programmes, the University of London is preparing those looking to develop their careers in these growing industries with the skills and knowledge required for success.

Once the technical barriers are surmounted, any possible consequence of Artificial Intelligence, along with other technological advances such as solar power and 3D bio printing, might bring about an almost 'post-work' age in which we're free to pursue our passions; when humans are required to spend less time working because machines will be able to do so much on our behalf.

There is not yet consensus on whether the impact of Al on work, education or lifestyle will be positive or negative. Where agreement can be found is that Al has become deeply embedded in our modern lives, whether we are aware of it or not, and will increasingly underpin technologies in everything from medicine to engineering. You could say that the machines have already risen, and they are here to stay. **In focus:** Liam Kelly interviews alumnus Alex Chan and academic Dr Matthew Yee-King about Artificial Intelligence and its effects on our personal and professional lives, including education.



Alex Chan is a University of London alumnus and successful entrepreneur. He recently caught the world's attention by launching one of the most advanced AI Video Search Engines – Babbobox. A pioneer in the field of Video Big Data, Alex has over 20 years'

experience in the technology sector, with his past work winning international awards. The University of London held an AI and Digital Disruption on the Workplace event in Singapore earlier this year, at which Alex led a fascinating discussion.

The rise of the machines is absolutely inevitable. The reason why we cannot stop it is because we humans want it. The question we should be asking is how high should we allow the machine to rise? Should we set a bar to what the machines can or cannot do?

The machines and AI that we have today are great at doing single, repetitive tasks, things that are perhaps transactional and have a definitive outcome. For example, AI is already better than doctors at diagnosing some diseases. That's a good thing. However, should we allow AI to prescribe treatment as well? Perhaps not. But that would also mean that doctors would have more time to treat more patients and it may cost patients less for the treatment because hospitals and doctors could do more with less. That is a good thing.

Allowing machines to do these repetitive and mundane tasks might free us up to do things that are more 'human'. Things that involve critical thinking, creativity, strategy, physical skills, imagination etc. Things that machines cannot do (yet). Will that lead to mankind living better lives? Allowing each of us to fulfil our own potential? Perhaps, it remains to be seen.

It is important for us to think about how machines are going to disrupt our lives at personal and professional levels, and make necessary adjustments to accommodate the changes that will come. We call it digital disruption, but disruption has been with us since mankind discovered fire. If you were a horse and carriage coachman 100 years ago, and then you see people start driving cars, what would you do? Picket and protest against the cars or reskill yourself to adapt to these changes? It is the same with this current rise of the machines.

We certainly cannot and should not stop this digital disruption, but whether it is a positive or negative change, I believe it is in our hands to decide. I would like to think that we still have the power to determine our own destiny in this machine age.

Like any other tools, AI can be used and abused. The part that excites me is also the part that worries me most – scale. In the wrong hands, AI can be incredibly destructive because scale is now available to an individual. That is why there is a need for ethics and accountability in the design and implementation of AI and machine learning systems. Who defines and enforces these ethics is a topic for another day.

Programmes that help us auto-correct words and grammar are great, but many of us rely on them to a point that we cannot spell simple words. I am guilty of that myself and that worries me. Simple everyday programmes like these make us rely so much on machines that we become lazy and complacent.

While we should be excited about how AI and machine learning can improve our lives, we should also be mindful about the harm that it can potentially do, both at a micro and macro level. Should we embrace AI and machine learning? Absolutely, but with a watchful eye.

In terms of the single most exciting application of AI I've seen in recent years, I would say Google DeepMind's AlphaGo win against 18-time world champion Lee Sedol in 2016. It wasn't just about AlphaGo beating arguably the greatest *Go* player of all time in a game of strategy and intuition, where many believed it could never happen; it was about what the win symbolises – that the machines have really arrived. The event captured the world's attention on what AI can really do, beyond driving autonomous cars and making cities smart, something of a higher order, mimicking human intelligence. That single event literally changed my perception what AI is really capable of.



### Dr Matthew Yee-King (DPhil,

MSc, BSc) is the Programme Director for the University of London's BSc Computer Science and an academic in the Department of Computing at Goldsmiths, University of London. In 2013, he delivered the first English language MOOC on the Coursera platform, attracting an enrolment of 97,000. As the project manager for the €3m PRAISE research project, he managed the development and trialling of innovative education technology, including media annotation systems. Matthew's research interests include education technology, creative musical Als and genetic algorithms.

I think that the big thing we will see from educational AI systems soon will be personalised, adaptive education across a range of subjects. The big problem, particularly in state-funded schools at the moment, is the one-size-fits-all approach, where it is challenging for teachers to cater for the range of capabilities and prior experience in the large classes they teach. In state-funded education, one-size-fits-all is the only economically viable approach, as the human resources required to develop individual learning plans that adapt to the capabilities and prior experience of the learner are simply not available. This is why those who can afford it pay for personal tutors.

Many schools are using intelligent tutoring systems for mathematics education, and they work. They do not require very sophisticated AI, but creating the knowledge base and associated questions are very labour intensive.

Advances in AI will make it possible to extend intelligent tutoring systems beyond mathematics into other subjects, where the answers the student provides are natural language-based. With these systems, students will be able to work through curricula at their own speed. Teachers will be able to use learning analytics to visualise the progress of classes and individuals, and to identify areas of weakness that they can focus on in their limited class time.

Deep generative technology is another emerging trend in the last few years, where AI systems can generate content such as audio, video and text. This technology has great potential for education, for example, generating comprehension questions about pieces of writing, generating explanations of concepts that take account of the student's present understanding, generating practice exercises for coders and so on. Deep generative technology can also generate feedback for students about their work, as well as generating study items. It can do this instantaneously upon submission of the work, unlike a human teacher.

Broadly speaking, anyone who uses internetconnected technology is a part of a giant, cybernetic machine. Al systems are also part of that machine, and how they operate, the motivations of their creators and the nature of the data they collect are not generally available for public scrutiny. What could possibly go wrong?

Should we be excited or worried about automation and machine learning? Personally, I feel both. It really depends on what we choose to automate and who benefits from that. I think that the more people have access to, and understanding of, this technology, the more democratised its use will be. The BSc Computer Science online degree, for which I am the Programme Director, aims to increase access to, and understanding of, this technology.

Sticking with the education theme, I am really interested in the work people are doing to make machine learning/AI more accessible. For example, I am part of the AHRC-funded *MIMIC project* (mimicproject.com), which aims to provide machine learning-based tools.

# CASE STUDY: BY MAUREEN MCTAGGART Living with Google Home Mini

Although universities are flirting with Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as the Beacon chatbot, which is being trialled at Staffordshire University, this technology is some way from becoming commonplace on campus. Yet, for millions of us, digital helpers like Apple's Siri, Amazon's Alexa and Microsoft's Cortana are familiar and even helpful both at home and in the office.

n Al home assistant had not been on my wish list – my gadgetry is restricted to an iPod, a lastgeneration mobile phone, washing machine and hairdryer. Perhaps I have a congenital aversion to wires. So curiosity was behind my acceptance of *WC1E*'s assignment to spend a week with a Google Home Mini device. Maybe it would be mildly entertaining; they would be taking it back anyway.

For your £49, you get a device the size of a small, thick hamburger with a wire attached (there is no battery) – a WiFi-connected smart speaker. The loan one was chalk, but it also comes in charcoal, coral or aqua with a colour-matched plastic base and rubber foot to prevent movement. The first step is to connect it to your wireless network via the Google Home app on a mobile phone or tablet.

### And so it begins...

If you are tardy setting it up, you get random verbal reminders, which can be alarming if you are snoozing in front of the TV or holding a hot drink. Be sure to connect to the optimum Google account as a change requires a factory reset, the first problem as the reset button could not be seen unaided and this required a call from Google support (very good).

But even getting the app had been a lengthy cycle of frustration. Passwords. What was that password for iTunes to download the Home app? OK, reset it. 'The password will be sent to your nominated email account.' However, I forgot the password for that too. It was time to recruit someone with trousers (i.e. male although we do have some good women techies now, just not around me) – and that comes with its own frustrations!

Eventually it was sorted. Of course, some people will find it easier but there was a lesson here – avoid using old technology. Two iPods went by the wayside, wasted time and caused raised blood pressure. Moreover, Chromecast attached to the TV saw, heard and spoke no evil – or good either. Useless. Trying to use a laptop for streaming ended up with foreign-language dialogue coming out of the Mini rather than video from the TV via Channel 4's 'Walter Presents'.

### Ask and you will receive

The marketing portrays these assistants as the beating hearts of home entertainment systems – simply ask and you will receive, but that is the theory. In practice, it depends on what you can connect to, such as subscription services like Spotify or other clever technology like smart TVs, wireless speakers, lighting and maybe your central heating. What if you haven't got any of these?



What do you get out of the box when you connect to your wireless network? Not a lot really. Sound quality might be OK for a room with no other speaker but it is no better than a transistor radio. And the choice of music is limited unless you can link to a subscription service.

However, you can have some fun asking Google a wide range of questions. From maybe the date, weather, how long it will take you to get to work or how much an adult koala eats (200-500 grams of leaves each day, mainly eucalyptus), to information about specific people who may be in your contacts or on Wikipedia.

> You can even ring up and talk to friends and family, and if corny jokes are your thing, it can make you laugh: 'What did the surgeon do to the rabbit? Gave him an hopperation.' On the positive side, many of these rather simple tasks can be a lot more pleasant than doing them on a keyboard and/or screen. But you must remember to open every request with an "Ok Google", or "Hey Google".

"Ok, Google," I say. "Connect to All 4". The response was very concise directions to a medical centre in Oldham. Then I tried "Ok Google open All 4". This time it was a 'Sorry I can't help with that yet, but I am trying to learn.' Simultaneously the android phone that was also used to download the app opened iPlayer.

It never did open All 4 because it couldn't connect to the TV or its attached Chromecast device. It wasn't fond of the BBC either. Instead of finding 'Hometown: A Killing' on iPlayer, it played 'Losing my Hometown' by Canadian country music star Kelly Prescott on Spotify. The kind of questioning required to get the Mini talking is normally reserved for certain types of people, particularly dodgy ones. So it's best to speak slowly and clearly, and drill down carefully with the questions – like a QC.

### A hands-free approach

If your ego is easily massaged Google can be the boss. "Ok, Google, who is Maureen McTaggart?" With its hotline to Wikipedia, it proudly relayed the information, that Dr MacTaggert is a fictional Marvel Comics character who 'works as a geneticist and is an expert in mutant affairs'.

It was at this point that the thought occurred that this device might continue to listen and record our conversations. The Mini admitted that recordings are sent to Google, but only what comes after the words, "Ok Google".

Most of the basic information you can glean via the Mini is readily available using smartphones, tablets or PCs. However, the Google Home does make it easier by cutting out these tech middle men so you can go truly hands-free. Yes, there are complications, but it does feel good to use your voice and liberate your hands for more worthwhile tasks – like pouring yourself a glass of wine or making a cup of tea.

Will the Google Mini Home assistant worm its way into my life? I don't think so – not yet anyway – although it was (sometimes) fun, and nice to masquerade as a genetics expert for a few seconds. Yes, there were 'touch' alternatives to voice commands like 'volume up' but these weren't much use for a spherical device that is not always in the same position. To be honest, in a more high-tech home, it would probably be a different and more positive story.

"Hey Google, can you help me write this article?" 'I am totally stumped,' it responded.

Maureen McTaggart is Media and Public Relations Officer at the School of Advanced Study, University of London.

### **BY LINDSAY ALEXANDER**

With its grand, sweeping staircase and exquisite art deco-style interiors, it's no wonder that Senate House has served as inspiration for literary works and has been considered a prime filming location for decades, featured as a backdrop in Hollywood blockbusters, music videos and a number of television programmes.

BEHIND THE SCENE:

SENATE HOUSE AS AN IDEAL FILM SET

oday's Senate House remains an iconic landmark on central London's skyline. The Grade II listed, 19-storey building with a robust, towering exterior has often been interpreted through film and literature as a symbol of majesty and authority.

The beauty of the building is its ability to transport audiences through history, by transforming across eras, from bureaucratic war offices to decadent modern-day ballrooms. The film and television industry have been successful in embedding the architectural significance and elegance of the building into mainstream media.

### A compelling history

Based on the vision of Sir William Beveridge, Charles Holden, who gained recognition for designing London Underground stations, was commissioned to design a new home for the University of London. Senate House was intended to be a "great architectural feature" of central London which harmonised a number of surrounding buildings in Bloomsbury, including the British Museum, University College London and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

The original design consisted of a single structure spanning across Bloomsbury, topped with two towers: Senate House and a smaller tower to the north; combining traditional design elements with 1930s modernity. However, due to a lack of funds and the onset of the Second World War, the original plan was scaled down and only Senate House and the library were completed in 1937.

Sir William Beveridge had described Senate House as: "...something that could not have been built by any earlier generation than this, and can only be at home in London ... an academic island in swirling tides of traffic, a world of learning in a world of affairs."

Shortly after the war broke out, Senate House was taken over by the Ministry of Information, which oversaw government publicity campaigns, including the notable 'Keep Calm and Carry On'. During this time. Senate House was amidst the devastation caused by the Blitz, having been struck several times by bombs. The impressive Portland Stone cladded tower remained intact, although there was significant damage to some parts of the building.

In 1944, the University of London returned to Senate House and the library was reopened to the public in 1945.



Senate House was the stage for a plot-twisting scene in BBC's hit television programme, Bodyguard

### Architecture as a muse

With such a significant historical presence, it's easy to see how Senate House has motivated writers and filmmakers to create stories and settings that are reflections of the building itself.

One of the most recognisable depictions of Senate House is found in George Orwell's 1984. Largely based on the Ministry of Information's wartime occupation at Senate House, where Orwell's wife worked, the Ministry of Truth is a symbol of authority in the dystopian novel. The building appears in the film, Nineteen Eighty-Four, embodying the ominous characteristics of Orwell's literary interpretation.

Fans of the novel are still intrigued by the building that provided Orwell with inspiration for his story. Visitors to Senate House have even been able to visit the infamous Room 101. which was a dark fictional embellishment by the author, during guided tours of the building.

### Stealing the scene

Senate House is often chosen as a filming location for scenes that emanate a sense of grandeur. The marble interiors and wrought iron railings provide an elegant backdrop that can be transformed into stately homes, regal halls or ornate spaces, which have been

Above and opposite: Bodyquard BBC television series, Senate House. By Thomas Duke, @steppingthroughfilm



Below: *The Dark Knight Rises* film, Senate House. By Thomas Duke, @steppingthroughfilm showcased in films such as *Richard III*, starring Sir lan McKellen and also *The Dark Knight* Trilogy.

While the interior of Senate House provides a grand setting for filming, the exterior of the building often makes an appearance as the home of official organisations, such as the Interpol headquarters in *Fast & Furious 6* and *Muppets Most Wanted*, or the CIA headquarters in *Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit*. Senate House was converted into war offices in *Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang*. The building was also prominently featured in Depeche Mode's video for *Strangelove '88*, and became The New Globe Theatre in the video for Garbage's Bond theme song, *The World is Not Enough*. The clean lines of the structure and impenetrable silvery stone façade deliver a commanding presence on the screen.

Last year, Senate House was the stage of a plottwisting scene in BBC's hit television programme, *Bodyguard*. Senate House was transformed, once again, in 2018 for the first episode of the widely popular dramatic thriller, *Killing Eve*. The entire series is punctuated by extravagant settings and stunning architecture. It is only fitting that Senate House appears in the opening episode, matching the tone and aesthetic style of the programme.

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Senate House's Crush Hall is a popular filming location, often scouted for the magnificent staircase that leads to an elegantly crafted corridor.

### A lasting legacy

Since its construction in 1937, Senate House has held prestige as a significant London structure. Although it underwent a multimillion-pound refurbishment in 2006, the building retained the integrity of its original design. The refurbishment provided enhanced event spaces and updated facilities and equipment, bringing a new vitality to the building and creating a more inviting space for creative industries to utilise.

Whether it be as the backdrop to a rock video or a stately office, the essence of Holden's initial concept of the building continues to be prominently showcased in mainstream media, celebrating its architectural splendour and immortalising a structural legacy.



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The University's motto 'studied anywhere, valued everywhere' really rings true because I was actually studying at the bottom of the earth. If you want to work and travel, and also have a life outside of university, then the flexibility is amazing.

Killian Russell spent the last year working at Scott Base, Antarctica New Zealand's research station, all while completing his BSc in Business via distance learning.

Killian Russell BSc Business, Ireland, Class of 2018 **Christine Amour-Levar** is a French-Swiss-Filipina philanthropist, adventurer, entrepreneur and author. Having grown up between Manila, Paris and Tokyo, she is currently based in Singapore where she lives with her husband and four children. Despite her hectic life, she is finding the time to study for a Graduate Diploma in International Relations with the University of London. Interview by **Lisa Pierre**.

Sophia University in Tokyo with a BA in International Business and Economics and a minor in Japanese language, Christine joined the firm of McCann-Erickson as an Advertising Account Executive. Her passion for sports led her to move to the USA, travelling the world working for Nike in communications and marketing. She went on to complete another degree at the New York School of Interior Design, after which she worked for the designer Philippe Starck in Paris.

In 2007, now living in Singapore, she founded and launched *Beijaflor*, the first Brazilian multi-brand fashion retail concept in South East Asia, with a flagship store on Orchard Road. In 2011, she wrote the motivational guide, *The Smart Girl's Handbook to Being Mummylicious*. Christine is currently Chief Marketing Officer of iRace Media.

Growing up with cosmopolitan parents, living in Asia and Europe, and being the product of an international education, has helped Christine navigate the vagaries of a global career and a life across many borders. Coming from a mixed cultural background has helped her to find her own cultural place in the world.

# Woman of the World



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She also speaks no less than six languages: French, English, Filipino, Spanish, Japanese and Portuguese. 'Speaking many languages has helped me connect and relate to people from various cultures more easily. I've only found it to be an advantage thus far,' she shares.

### **Women On A Mission**

In 2012, after a chance encounter with a passionate Everest summiteer, Valerie Boffy, the two plus another friend, Karine Moge, put together an all-female team to trek to Everest Base Camp in support of women survivors of war. Filled with a sense of personal accomplishment, and immensely grateful to all those who helped them achieve their fundraising target, the core team bonded together and *Women On A Mission* was born.

With a full-time job and raising four children, why did she decide to set up *Women On A Mission?* 'Life is a succession of circumstances, coincidences and opportunities. These choices define our destiny. They can manifest themselves in many different ways: through situations, places, people who inspire us. *Women On A Mission (WOAM)* was born from a combination of passion, coincidence, drive and dedication'.

### **HER Planet Earth**

Christine's passions are numerous. Feeling strongly that gender often remains the untold story behind climate change – and that in many countries women are among the most vulnerable to climate change and environmental degradation, partly because they make up the Women On A Mission was born from a combination of passion, coincidence, drive and dedication.

larger share of the agricultural workforce and tend to have access to fewer income-earning jobs – Christine decided to set up *HER Planet Earth*.

*WOAM* and *HER Planet Earth* have become organisations that combine challenging expeditions to global majestic locations around the world with inspirational events and workshops in Singapore and abroad. *WOAM* raises awareness and funds for women who have been subjected to violence and abuse, while *HER Planet Earth* supports underprivileged women affected by climate change.'

I'm curious to find out about the women she calls her 'tribe'. What type of women go on these expeditions? She tells me that these women are a very diverse group of dedicated and driven individuals of all nationalities, ages and backgrounds. They are extremely accomplished and well-established in their own careers and fields, but equally passionate about empowering underprivileged women and protecting our beautiful planet. 'Together, we are ignited by the desire to work harder to create a world where human rights and environmental integrity can blossom and prosper.'

### A Sea of Reindeer

Living with awareness and purpose, and choosing to make a difference in the lives of others, has helped her define her own personal mission and

### Above, left to right:

Christine at a women's centre run by one of *WOAM*'s charity partners, 'Women for Women International', in Rwana, November 2017.

Christine in the Altai Mountains of Mongolia walking side by side with an Eagle Hunter.

The WOAM team in Wadi Rum, Jordan, November 2013.



### Above, left to right:

Christine summitting a new peak in Antarctica, January 2018 with *HER Planet Earth*.

The *WOAM* team in the Danakil Desert of Ethiopia, November 2017.

Christine horseback riding in Kashmir, October 2005.

brand of leadership. As well as a lot of pleasure and fulfilment from rallying groups of women and communities to support worthy initiatives, her expeditions have taken her from the Arctic, Antarctica and deserts in the Middle East and Africa, to the Himalayas, riding across the Altai Mountains of Mongolia with the mighty Kazakh Eagle Hunters, and standing on the rim of a bubbling volcano with the Afar people of the Danakil Desert in Ethiopia.

All this talk of travel reminds me how I first made contact with Christine. A photo she took on one of her many expeditions won first place in the University of London's *imagenation6* photo competition last year.

'I was so happy and surprised to learn that my photo *A Sea of Reindeer* had won,' she says. 'I've never won a photo competition before, so having my photo selected was just such an unexpected bonus! The shot was taken on my iPhone in minus 36°C temperature, in December 2015, while I was travelling in Siberia. At that time, my WOAM teammates and I were following the migration of the Nenets reindeer herders of the Yamal Peninsula'. [See page 20 for Christine's winning shot].

### **Deepening her understanding**

I am so enthralled with all the adventure that I almost forget that Christine is a current student! I'm left wondering: why take on more study and where does she find the time? Looking to deepen her knowledge of international affairs, the Graduate Diploma in International Relations, with academic direction from LSE, was the perfect course and fitted in well with her lifestyle and schedule. So how has it been so far? I've enjoyed the experience tremendously and found it quite easy to study remotely using the virtual learning environment, study materials and online resources. I feel that I have broadened my knowledge of politics in the field of international relations. The programme has provided me with a better understanding of world affairs and politics, covering topics such as foreign policy analysis, security in international relations, and environmental problems and politics, which are very relevant to my work with *HER Planet Earth* especially.'

### **Standing in solidarity**

Is there anything else that Christine Amour-Levar would like to do? The answer is yes. She would like to write another book about her life experiences and learnings from running WOAM and HER Planet Earth. She would also like to do more for her country of birth, the Philippines, via an entrepreneurial new business idea, philanthropic projects, or even some sort of diplomatic role.

For someone who cares so much about the planet, is there one thing she wishes for the world that her children will grow up in? 'I hope to lead by example and to show my children, my daughters in particular, that it is important to stand in solidarity with other women – especially those in dire need of help – and to be brave and to have the courage to take up personal, sometimes even physical, challenges for causes we believe in'.

Finally, I ask what she hopes to be doing in five years' time. '[I hope] to still work on projects that make my eyes shine with excitement and my heart skip a beat'. And that, I feel, is one of the best answers to that question I've ever been given.

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I never thought I'd be able to do any of this on my own. But the way they planned everything out, it made it so easy; right from the tutor groups to the examination centres, everything was very well organised. It's easy to access for any student, even if you live half a globe away.

Sharmeen Shoaib studied our BA English in Lahore. She was diagnosed with brain cancer and the only thing that kept her going was that she could continue to study on her own, at her own pace and look forward to her graduation ceremony in the near future.

Sharmeen Shoaib BA English, Pakistan, Class of 2018

# WARRIORS' WIVES

**BY DR EMMA BRIDGES** 

# 6699 -----

Bursting into tears, she ran straight towards him, and flung her arms around Odysseus' neck, and kissed his face and spoke to him.

Homer, Odyssey 23.207-8

In describing the emotional reunion of Penelope with her soldier husband Odysseus, who has returned home after almost 20 years away – first fighting a war at Troy, and then undertaking a long and meandering journey home – the Greek epic poet Homer captures the sense of joy and relief that this couple feel when they are finally back together.

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The tearful embrace which the mythical husband and wife share – part of a homecoming story told in mesmerising detail in a poem which was originally composed over two and a half thousand years ago – has much in common with the heart-warming images of military reunions, which today's media are fond of broadcasting. Yet the embrace of a couple reunited after a long separation is only one element of the complex emotional process which takes place when a soldier returns to their family after serving on the front line.

Both partners may need to undergo an often challenging readjustment process, as each seeks to get to know the other once more after time spent apart under difficult circumstances. Reunion can also be especially complicated and problematic when the combatant has suffered physical or emotional trauma, and may be unrecognisable as the person who left home.

The poet of the *Odyssey*, it seems, knew this too; Odysseus returns home quite literally in disguise, and his reunion with Penelope is far from straightforward. This painstaking account of the process of the mythical couple's reunion acknowledges that it can take time and patience for such a relationship to return to normal.

### **Mythical soldiers' wives**

Penelope is just one of several mythical soldiers' wives whom we find in the epic poetry and tragic drama of the ancient Greek world. Homer's portrayal of her – as the resourceful and isolated waiting wife, who for much of the *Odyssey* has no idea whether her husband is alive or dead, yet who remains faithful despite the presence of 108 suitors vying for her hand in marriage – cemented Penelope's reputation in the ancient world as a paradigm of marital fidelity and wifely virtue. In many ways, she prefigures idealised images – derived from often problematic ideas about traditional gender roles – of modern 'military wives' who 'keep the home fires burning' while their husbands do their duty.

Elsewhere in the ancient mythical tradition, we meet other warriors' wives, among them the Trojan Andromache – who in the other Homeric epic poem, *The Iliad*, becomes a war widow after the death of her husband Hector – and Clytemnestra, who is presented as Penelope's opposite, and perhaps represents the deep-seated fears of troops on active service about what might happen at home in their absence. Rather than remaining faithful to her husband Agamemnon while he is away fighting the war at Troy, Clytemnestra takes a lover; then, on Agamemnon's return – as imagined in particularly gruesome detail by the fifth-century BCE Athenian playwright Aeschylus – she murders her husband.

These mythical women, and others like them, are shown in the ancient texts in a range of situations which might well be familiar to present-day 'military spouses': saying goodbye to their partners as they leave for battle; dealing with separation and wartime suffering; waiting anxiously for news when a loved one is in the line of fire; readjusting when warriors return home; and negotiating bereavement and trauma.

### **Finding comparisons**

In the 1990s and early 2000s, American clinical psychiatrist Jonathan Shay published two influential works – *Achilles in Vietnam* and *Odysseus in America* – which compared the traumas undergone by Vietnam veterans with descriptions of the heroes' experiences of war and homecoming in *The Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Since then, a significant strand of recent scholarship in the field of classics has sought to compare ancient representations of armed conflict with the experiences of modern combatants.

Meanwhile, several initiatives in the US involving theatrical performances and readings have used ancient poetry and drama as a way of opening up public dialogue with and about veterans. This work uses the narratives of myth as a starting point for talking about complex and painful real-world experiences.

It's an approach which, to some extent, mirrors the way in which the ancient Greeks used mythical stories in order to think about difficult topics related to their civic and domestic life. Until now, however, the spouses of warriors – those in the ancient narratives, as well as those in the modern world – have not been given the same level of scholarly or public attention.

I am currently working on a project which aims to start redressing the balance, by focusing on the stories of soldiers' wives in ancient myth and thinking about what these women might reveal to us about some of the psychological, emotional and social consequences of being married to a soldier. Below: illustration of the meeting of Odysseus and Penelope.



Below: illustration of the meeting of Hector and Andromache.

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By examining more closely the depictions of these soldiers' wives, and the relationships with their husbands, I aim to open up a conversation about the experiences of contemporary military spouses. Of course, it's not always possible to draw straightforward comparisons between the ancient stories and those of modern military families. For women in the ancient Greek world, where war was an ever-present part of life, marriage to a soldier was not the exception for a woman, but the norm. By contrast, in contemporary western society, where the military is a career choice and the majority of the population has no direct experience of combat, marriage to someone who has spent time in a war zone sets apart the military spouse from other women in society.

### **Contemporary military spouses**

In addition, in modern society, the situation can differ from the marriages depicted in the ancient sources, as women and those in same-sex partnerships are eligible for military service, and in some cases both partners in a relationship may be service personnel. Nonetheless, as shown by recent statistics for both the UK and the US military, front line troops are still predominantly male, and the majority of military spouses are women.

Often, when the emphasis of media reporting and scholarly study is on the combatants themselves – just as in the *Odyssey*, where the majority of the narrative focuses on the experiences of Odysseus rather than those of the waiting Penelope – the voices of their partners can be silenced or forgotten. As a result, spouses' experiences can be misunderstood or overlooked altogether, or they become reduced to gendered stereotypes of passivity based on archaic ideas of wifely decorum.

By examining more closely the depictions of Penelope, Andromache and Clytemnestra, and the relationships of these characters with their soldier husbands, I aim to open up a conversation about the experiences of contemporary military spouses; in turn, looking at the first-hand testimonies of the partners of soldiers, from the world wars of the 20th century to recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, will help to shed fresh light on the women we find represented in the ancient texts.

It is, I think, time to look beyond the outdated stereotypes and to listen more carefully to the voices – ancient and modern, mythical and real – which haven't always been heard.

Dr. Emma Bridges is Public Engagement Fellow in Classics at the Institute of Classical Studies. Her book, provisionally titled *Warriors' Wives: Ancient Greek Myth and Modern Experience*, is under contract to Oxford University Press and is due for publication in 2020. Meanwhile, you can find her on Twitter @emmabridges.

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# OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PLANET BY DR ROLPH PAYET

Growing up in the Seychelles, one would not miss the fact that while we are physically isolated and surrounded by immense natural beauty, hundreds of tons of plastic has been washing up our shores since the early eighties. This is what we see and can observe. And what about the invisible chemicals being irresponsibly dumped in many corners of our planet, ending up in its oceans and atmosphere?

Climate change, ozone depletion in our atmosphere and persistent organic pollutants in many fish species are all evidence that our planetary footprint far exceeds our doorstep. Let's take the waste we generate at home – we place it in the bin, park it by the roadside, someone picks it up and we forget about it. Did you know that only nine per cent of all the plastics we generate at home is recycled? It is estimated that by 2030, emissions into our atmosphere as a result of plastic use will be equivalent to 295 new 500 megawatt coal-fired plants.

While our planet absorbs about 25 per cent of our carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions, deforestation, marine pollution and growing fossil fuel energy are further increasing CO2 in our atmosphere. In 1982, our atmosphere had 320 ppm (parts per million) of CO2, and in 2017 we measured 405 ppm. The last time our planet had 400 ppm CO2 was several million years ago, with no megacities or millions of people living on the coast. Irrespective of your views on climate change, the bottom line is that all of our human activities are closely linked and impacting the planet, with even remote islands like the Seychelles not spared.

### **Empowering people through education**

The root cause is clearly grounded in human and industry behaviour linked to relentless production, irresponsible consumption and unsound disposal, whether it be energy, products or services. Are there business or economic cases for sustainable development? Indeed, there are, and our schools and universities should embrace those, not only as separate subjects but rather as part of all subjects or fields of study. At a recent EU conference on future chemicals policy, it was clear that sustainable chemistry or green chemistry is not on the curriculum of aspiring chemists. We will not be able to solve the present if we do not empower the future generation. In designing the environmental science degree courses at the University of Seychelles, I was keen to introduce key concepts of sustainable development, natural science economics and global planetary cycles in year one of the undergraduate degree.

This is a reflection of my academic journey and the understanding of the policy-science interface, especially how we can reconcile human needs with the needs for existence and planetary stability. While we need something as basic as wood, we also need forests for cleaner air and water, among other needs. It is not rocket science, but we need to empower people through better awareness and education, so they can make sound consumer decisions.

### **Cleaning the planet**

Sadly, there are also many who are either marginalised and displaced by poor governance, war or failed states, leading to abject poverty with catastrophic consequences to the environment and our planet. A recent study estimated that 16 per cent of all deaths worldwide are caused by pollution, with 90 per cent of those deaths occurring in lowand middle-income countries. Arguing for better healthcare without addressing the cost of pollution to health is like paying twice for the water we drink.

Decoupling economic growth from natural resources and sustainable development is vital to arrive at a solution for climate change and pollution. While we explore asteroids for more resources, we also need to focus on cleaning our planet. By cleaning, I mean, cleaner air for our cities, cleaner water and healthier foods. Poor municipal waste management is one of the main causes of plastic clogging our rivers and oceans.

How we can build robust tracking systems for our waste was a matter for discussion at the recent conference of the parties to the Basel Convention. While we have touted for recycling and the circular economy as a sustainable approach to managing our wastes, there is evidence of wastes destined for recycling being dumped in many corners or the world, in particular in Africa and South East Asia. What many consumers pay for in terms of waste management is actually being dumped irresponsibly at huge planetary cost.

### **Transforming consumer behaviour**

Addressing the challenges of waste calls for the transformation of our production and consumer behaviours, it is as daunting as addressing climate change. Addressing both those challenges requires not only annual negotiations by countries but concrete actions on the ground. Reductions of emissions and waste generated can be achieved through individual actions, as well as measurable actions by governments and industry.

A UK company recently estimated that about 570 million tons of CO2 emissions were reduced in 2017 as a result of increased adoption of LED bulbs. High-speed trains is another example which can reduce

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Arguing for better healthcare without addressing the cost of pollution to health is like paying twice for the water we drink.

emissions from the transport sector. Of the 42,000 km of high-speed rails built so far, it is estimated that the emissions savings per passenger can be up to 90 per cent when compared to aviation emissions. Indeed, the same applies to the waste sector, where one study showed that the cost of diverting a ton of waste from a landfill has approximately twice the economic benefit in terms of job creation and new goods and services, with a concomitant reduction in CO2 and methane emissions from landfills.

### A new breed of policymakers

While many of the figures I have quoted here are merely estimates, they do show that our planet and our health are under serious threat. But there are significant opportunities that can be explored today to clean up our planet. While there is clearly a need for better technologies and practices, there are many that have been tried and tested.

Furthermore, political expediency based upon renewed access to fossil fuel deposits and other minerals leading to destruction of key planetary habitats is not only irresponsible but robbing the people of the planet of their right to a clean and safe environment against the promise of more jobs and poverty reduction.

People of this planet need a new breed of policymakers, managers and scientists that can steer this planet towards less emissions and less waste, while, at the same time, creating new jobs and reducing poverty. I am betting on our esteemed educational institutions to bring about this transformation!

An alumnus and honorary graduate of the University of London, Dr Payet will be giving a lecture, 'Pushing Back on Plastics', at the University on Thursday 7 November 2019. To register for the event, please visit: pushingbackonplastics.eventbrite.co.uk

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# Graduation

## **CLASS OF 2018**

The University of London's Chancellor, HRH The Princess Royal, and then Vice-Chancellor, Professor Peter Kopelman, presided over our 2019 London Graduation Ceremony, which was attended by graduates from more than 100 countries.

Dr John Cribbin, Deputy Director (Academic Services) HKU SPACE, received an Honorary Fellowship for his commitment to the University of London's distance and flexible learning delivery.





# EVENTS

**#UOLWorldClass** pictures from around the world



## **MALAYSIA 10.18**

Last October, we welcomed alumni to the residence of the British High Commissioner of Malaysia for a fascinating discussion on 'More Seats at the Table: Achieving Leadership Equality in a Gendered World', followed by a drinks reception and networking

## SRI LANKA 02.19

In February, we held our first alumni event of 2019 in Sri Lanka at Ask For Fern. Thank you to all those who attended to network and socialise with fellow alumni.



## **UNITED KINGDOM 03.19**

This March, we saw over 1,200 students graduate at the Barbican Centre in London. Fun memories were made with family and friends at the Alumni Stand Photo Booth. We hope to see you again at an event in the future and hope you stay an active part of the alumni community. Congratulations and welcome to the World Class!

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## **SINGAPORE 04.19**

Alumnus and CEO of Babbobox Alex Chan gave a lively and interactive talk to Singaporean alumni on 'AI and Digital Disruption in the Workplace' at our Careers Insight event.

## **SINGAPORE 04.19**

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In the same week, alumni gathered at Eden Hall to discuss 'Borderless Issues in a Bordered World', exploring what lessons Singapore can offer the UK in the face of political change.

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Me & Lily in Greece May 2019

To keep up with Bloomsbury's adventures and more, follow @\_londonu on Instagram

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