

MANCHESTER
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The University of Manchester

magazine

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

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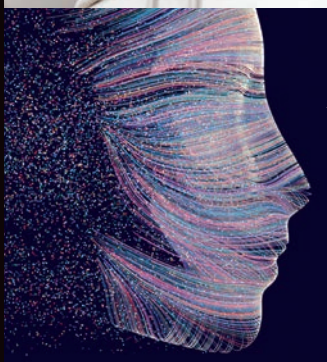
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Cover: alumnus Gareth Owen OBE – turn to page 2



Together, we make an impact

A

s we reflect on what has been an unprecedented two years, I want to take this opportunity to thank all our staff, students, alumni and supporters, and to highlight the strides we have made to bring *Our future*, the University's vision and strategic plan, to life. In this year's magazine, we celebrate impact – the impact of our people, research, teaching and learning, innovation, and the benefits we bring to society and the environment, locally and globally.

With the world forever evolving and being dealt new challenges, from devastating wars to a cost-of-living crisis, healthcare inequalities and calls for urgent climate change action, it is the duty of institutions like ours to be a leading light in responsible and sustainable change, to create a better future for all.

Together, we're making an impact – from our distinguished alumni, like Gareth Owen OBE, Humanitarian Director of Save the Children UK, to staff such as Dr Olga Onuch, responsible for engaging students and researchers in conversation with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Meanwhile, our students continue to make an impact, leading initiatives like The Black Excellence Network, founded by medical student George Obolo.

The last 12 months has seen the University demonstrate our research impact on a local, national and global scale. Our submission to the Research Excellence Framework

(REF) 2021 – the UK-wide assessment of university research performance – was one of the largest and broadest in the sector, spanning 2,400 staff, 5,200 outputs and 160 case studies across 31 subject areas. We were delighted with the results in which, overall, 93% of the University's research activity was assessed as 'world-leading' (4*) or 'internationally excellent' (3*). These fantastic results reflect the incredible dedication and creativity of our colleagues who work every day to solve significant world problems and make a difference.

A selection of 22 case studies – highlighting some of the best and brightest of our research efforts – are illustrated in our online research impact showcase, housed on the University website. This launched in May 2022 to coincide with the REF 2021 announcement, reaffirming our position as a global powerhouse of research. The strength of our research enhances the quality of our teaching, helping students

realise their potential to contribute to society's greatest challenges and giving them access to lifelong learning opportunities.

At The University of Manchester, we're always pushing forward, bringing together brilliant minds to do great things. Great things like making life-saving treatments available across the world or developing more ethical and socially responsible artificial intelligence (AI). We continue to respond to the challenges faced in these post-COVID times with the same passion, drive and commitment as ever before.

We also use this issue to celebrate and thank our Chancellor, Lemn Sissay OBE, for the past seven years. Lemn has had an impact on many aspects of University life, notably as part of our Stellify programme, for which his poem *It's Time to Stellify* encapsulated the determination of students to make a difference in the world, as part of our commitment to social responsibility. His energy and creativity have been invaluable assets to the University and will continue in his role as an Honorary Chair of Creative Writing.

While great challenges and many uncertainties remain, the horizon at Manchester is bright with opportunities. Our people, research, learning and innovation continue to make a positive impact. So, we can confidently say that whatever we may face in the future, we at The University of Manchester will find a way to deliver on our ambitions.

Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell
President and Vice-Chancellor





“
Any big system
can fall into status
quo mode. You need
people whose job it is
to agitate things.
”

**A
MAN
ON A**

MISSION

**Gareth Owen OBE:
from Madchester to
humanitarian hero**

//
**You'll always find
humans who refuse to
despair, whatever their
circumstances.**
//



Gareth in Somalia, 1993

As he walks past University buildings, adorned with blue plaques that celebrate some of history's most remarkable people, Gareth Owen OBE is filled with hope and excitement for the next generation of leaders learning at Manchester today.

Gareth, Humanitarian Director at Save the Children UK, believes that our people possess the compassion, leadership skills and courage to create waves of future political change. They will work to make the world a fairer place and it's their names we'll see on buildings in 100 years' time.

Surprising beginnings

Gareth arrived at the University in 1987 and called Owen's Park in Fallowfield home. A career in the aid sector wasn't always on the cards – influenced by his father, he embarked on a Civil Engineering degree.

It was a wonderful time to be in the city, the "height of Madchester" with "the most incredible music scene." Despite a positive experience overall, graduating in 1990 and landing his first job in London, Gareth didn't feel any passion for his chosen career.

So, he said, "I made one of the bravest decisions I've ever made – to go back to university."

He studied for a master's in irrigation at Southampton before travelling to Somalia with aid agency Concern Worldwide in 1993. He was 24 years old.

Working as a base logistician, Gareth helped the agency feed a population starved by famine and civil war. Although engineering hadn't been his passion, his degree proved invaluable.

"Engineering gives you useful practical skills. You're numerate, literate and able to communicate.

You have to think logically and problem-solve.

"The mindset of completing a task is ingrained in engineers. You don't build half a bridge! Manchester was a really good grounding for that."

Now a leading figure in the aid sector, Gareth worked with Concern Worldwide, Voluntary Service Overseas, Action contre la Faim and Oxfam, before joining Save the Children UK in 2002. Since then he has led responses to some of recent history's most devastating crises, from the Iraq conflict and Indian Ocean tsunami, to the Haiti earthquake and civil wars in Somalia and Angola. His work earned him an OBE in 2013 and the University's Outstanding Alumni Award in 2017.

Becoming a disruptor

Gareth is, in his own words, a "disruptor". Since taking his current post, he has lived by the motto 'ask for forgiveness, not permission', shaking up the international humanitarian system and helping it "change with the times."

As he puts it: "Any big system can fall into status quo mode. You need people whose job it is to agitate things."

It's this disruptive nature that saved the lives of 10,000 refugees in the Mediterranean in 2016.

Conflict, persecution and extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East forced unaccompanied children to risk everything on life-threatening journeys across the sea to Italy in overcrowded, unseaworthy boats. A risk they had no choice but to take.

"We put a 60-metre search and rescue ship in the Mediterranean" says Gareth.



Somalia, 1993

But first, they needed to find someone to pay for the large anchor handling tugboat, a piece of kit that sits low in the water so refugees can board easily. A boat set to cost \$1 million per month. His first point of call was Greek shipping magnates, who, according to maritime law, were legally obliged to respond to distress signals from refugee boats in the Med, costing them \$1 million per day. It was in their interest to help Gareth and Save the Children UK.

Gareth's actions made an immediate impact. After the ship was positioned 12 miles (19km) off the coast of Libya, 400 people were rescued in complete darkness from a boat in distress. One in four people rescued were children, the majority of whom were travelling alone. The ship saved 10,000 lives.

Sadly, these perilous routes still claim the lives of thousands more every year and Gareth continues to push for change, calling

on world leaders to stop the Mediterranean becoming a mass unmarked grave for children.

"I'm about creating political action. People say to me 'What's the point of doing that?'"

"Well it's like when you protest and wave a placard. The only difference is 10,000 people's lives were saved by doing that. It's about being on the right side of history."

Finding humanity in the darkest places

Gareth's career has seen him encounter the brutality of conflict, famine and natural disasters across the world. It's the humanity found in the most desperate of situations, however, that keeps him going.

"You always find inspiration – even in the worst of times. It's the most uplifting thing you can experience. You'll always find humans who refuse to despair, whatever their circumstances."

Only once has he come home early. After eight months establishing a feeding programme for starving children in Angola – a country torn apart by civil war – he came home at the behest of his family who were deeply concerned for his safety.

"My dad doesn't do much in the way of emotion. He's only hugged me twice. He grabbed me at the airport, held onto me and said 'I thought we'd lost you'. It was a big moment.

"And it's meant that for the rest of my career as a humanitarian, I've been very empathetic."

In Angola he had encountered lawlessness and extreme violence. His experiences left permanent mental scars. Or, as he later realised, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

"What happens with PTSD is your system thinks it's in danger. Your brain knows you're going to be fine, but your body goes into high alert."

Even today, Gareth still suffers with its effects: "The most dangerous time as an aid worker is when you're moving. So when I'm on a train to Manchester, my system equates moving with danger and you can't switch it off."

Learning from experience

Gareth's experiences have given him an appreciation for and awareness of wellbeing – one of the University's key priorities. He believes it's this ability to express mental health concerns that will give the next generation the inner strength to make a real difference in the world.

"Humanitarianism is about human connection and hope. And you need a thin skin. Thin skins get a bad reputation! Being sensitive is the road to empathy, human connection and loyalty.

"We need that in the 21st century, or we won't solve planetary-level crises like climate change."

Inspiring the next generation

Today, Gareth is back in Manchester speaking to the humanitarians of the future at a careers day hosted by the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI).

His return is thanks to Save the Children UK's partnership with the HCRI. The charity use the Institute's research capacity and expertise, and HCRI is able to conduct field research that directly informs policy.

"It is stacked full of brilliant humanitarians. It's a real powerhouse centre of learning. And I love that it's here in Manchester."

As part of the annual careers day, Gareth is sharing his experience with the students who will change the way the world thinks about helping others, something that can't happen without critical reflection: "The big criticism of aid is that practitioner agencies have been weak at promoting reflection from within. We haven't created enough space to think as the world evolves."

Looking ahead, it's the students of today who will think more, agitate more and disrupt the political landscape to make a positive impact.

"That's what academic institutions like The University of Manchester are all about. They're places of disruption and thought."

Because now is the time to reimagine how we help the world, and as global citizens, create stronger, healthier futures for all.

Gareth's latest book, When the Music's Over: Intervention, Aid and Somalia, is available now.

Words by Tom Fern

Images by Russell Hart



HCRI is stacked full of brilliant humanitarians. It's a real powerhouse centre of learning. And I love that it's here in Manchester.

Manchester announces Nazir Afzal OBE as new Chancellor

As Lemn Sissay OBE prepares to end his tenure as Chancellor, former Chief Crown Prosecutor for north-west England, Nazir Afzal OBE, is preparing to step into the post.

During his 24-year-long career, Afzal prosecuted some of the highest-profile cases in the UK and led nationally on issues such as violence against women. His inauguration will take place in October 2022.

Afzal said: “This son of immigrants, born in an impoverished inner-city terraced house, could never have imagined my journey would take me here, and I intend to remind people that this institution represents the best this country has to offer.”



Marcus Rashford MBE receives honorary degree

Manchester United and England international footballer, Marcus Rashford, received an honorary degree from the University for his ongoing charity work and well-publicised campaign against child poverty.

The talented 24-year-old is the youngest recipient of the degree in our history.

On presenting him with his honorary degree, Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell said: “Marcus is an exceptional young man who continues to demonstrate a sense of community and generosity that goes well beyond his years...our University also has social responsibility at its core, and we are proud to share these values with him.”

REF 2021 confirms Manchester's position as a research powerhouse

We have retained fifth place for research power in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021, a UK-wide evaluation of higher education research output.

Manchester made one of the largest and broadest submissions, spanning 2,400 staff, 5,200 outputs and 160 case studies across 31 subject areas. 93% of the University's research activity was assessed as 'world-leading' (4*) or 'internationally excellent' (3*).

In a statement, Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell said: “These comprehensive and independent results confirm Manchester's place as a global powerhouse of research.”



Grace Harvey



Student wins silver at the Paralympic Games

Manchester student, Grace Harvey, won a silver medal in the women's SB5 100m breaststroke event at the 2021 Tokyo Paralympics.

Grace, who is studying Immunology, has cerebral palsy and began swimming age four as part of physiotherapy treatment to help control leg spasms.

Dr Thomas Nuhse, Grace's academic advisor, described her “enthusiasm for science and the hard work she has put in alongside her training” as an “inspiration.”

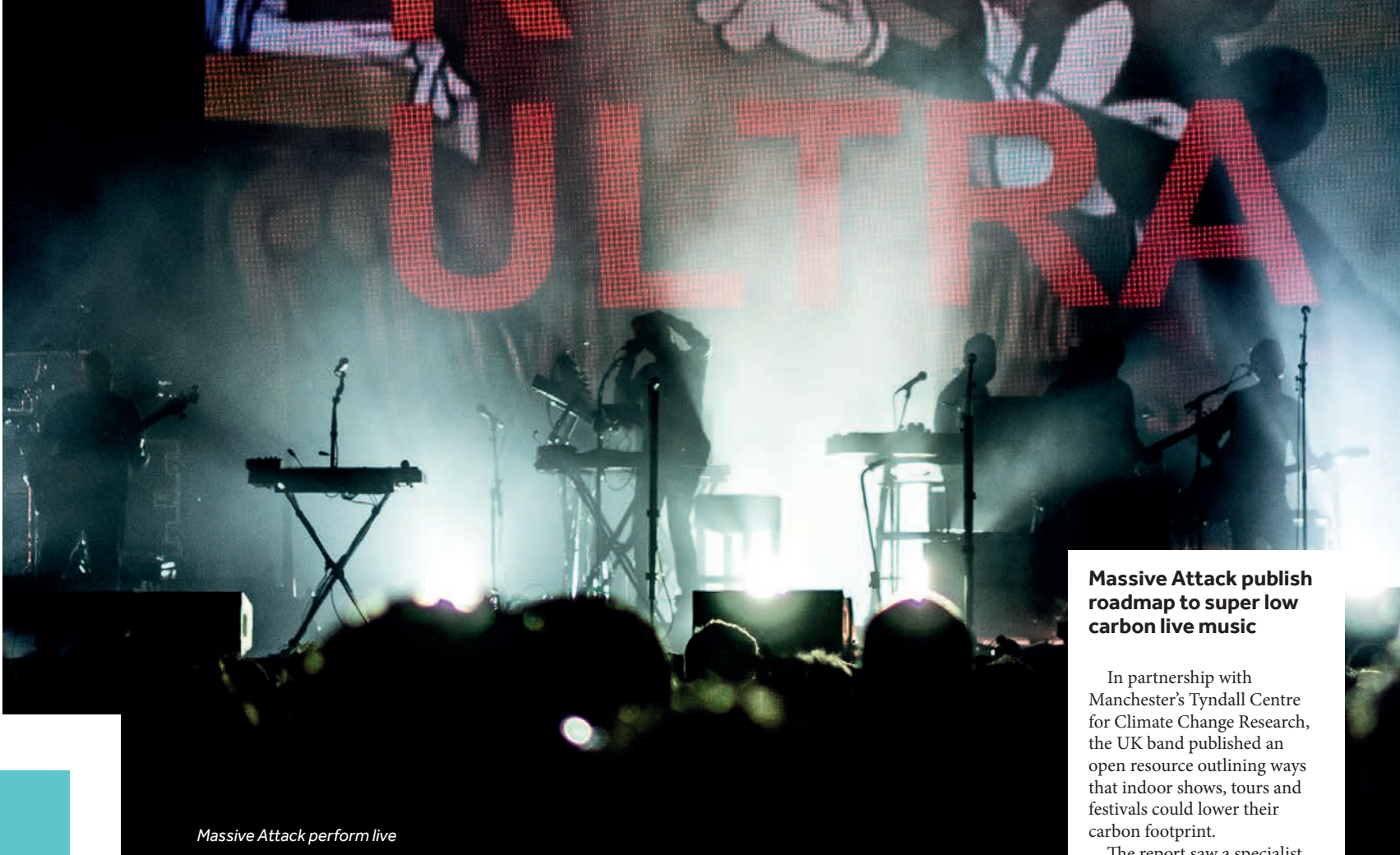
ID Manchester preferred partner announced

In June 2021, we announced our joint venture with Bruntwood SciTech to establish Innovation District (ID) Manchester. The new £1.5 billion innovation district will transform our north campus and play a vital role in the future of the UK science and technology sector.

When complete, the space will help to create 10,000 jobs over the next 10 to 15 years.



ID Manchester artist's impression



Massive Attack publish roadmap to super low carbon live music

In partnership with Manchester's Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, the UK band published an open resource outlining ways that indoor shows, tours and festivals could lower their carbon footprint.

The report saw a specialist body of scientists, engineers and economists come together to accelerate society's transition to a sustainable, low carbon future and avert climate catastrophe.

Massive Attack perform live

First-ever civic university agreement for Greater Manchester signed

The landmark agreement was signed by the Vice-Chancellors of the city's universities, the Mayor and ten local authority leaders.

The coalition will work together to drive social and economic change in the city region – focusing on six priority areas: education and skills; reducing inequalities; jobs and growth; the digital, creative and cultural economies and net zero.

The leaders of the five higher education institutions in Greater Manchester released a joint statement saying: “We’re proud of the civic role our universities play in Greater Manchester and the agreement sets out how we can enhance this through collective action...delivering real and lasting impact for our city region.”

University lecturer crowned Young Woman Engineer of the Year

Dr Ciara McGrath, Lecturer in Aerospace Systems, has been named Young Woman of the Year by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET).

McGrath was awarded the honour for her work in astrodynamics and space mission design, collaborating with industry and policymakers to design space systems – multiple spacecrafts and satellites that work together – to help support life on earth. She looks to make complex science accessible through podcasts, radio and written articles.

On winning, Ciara said: “I always say it was my dad who showed me the stars, but it was my mum who taught me to reach for them.”



Dr Ciara McGrath

**Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings 2022**

Our University has retained its position as one of the world's leading institutions for action towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

Since the *Times Higher Education* Impact Rankings began, we remain the only institution in Europe to be consistently named in the top ten globally.

Through our research we're helping to create a healthier, fairer, and greener world. We have contributed more than 21,000 research publications across 17 SDGs over the past five years – representing 4% of the UK's total contribution towards the goals.

**University tops UK
Research and Innovation
funding table**

Manchester is top of the table for the funding received from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), totalling £98 million across 199 research grants – more than the 'golden triangle' universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London.

Despite a difficult time for higher education, our applications, both in number and value, were up on previous years. One of our key successes was a £32 million award for the Productivity Institute.



**Manchester graduates
most targeted by UK's
top employers**

University of Manchester graduates are the most sought after by the UK's top 100 employers, according to an independent annual review of vacancies and starting salaries.

This is the seventeenth year High Flyers Research has conducted *The Graduate Market* assessment. In that time, no other institution has been number one more frequently than our University or ranked as consistently in the top three in the UK.

Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, speaks to our students

**Ukrainian President speaks to
Manchester students during conflict**

On 10 June 2022, the University's Ukrainian Society, the MOBILISE research team – led by Dr Olga Onuch – and the Manchester Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence hosted a virtual Q&A with Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Mariia Horb, President of the University's Ukrainian Society, expressed the importance of speaking to Zelenskyy "at such a difficult time and uniting our voices with the struggle of the people of Ukraine."

Our University continues to support Ukrainian staff and students with initiatives including a new scholarship programme for those fleeing conflict or persecution, and emergency funding to support those displaced by the war.



A bold future for cancer research

The Paterson Building is set to become the new home of life-changing cancer discoveries. Once complete, the facility will house Europe's largest concentration of scientists, doctors and nurses, working collaboratively to innovate ground-breaking research and pioneering treatments.

Construction of the £150 million research facility, supported by gifts from the University's international community of alumni and friends, is taking place on the site of the original building, which was tragically damaged in a fire in 2017.

Re-imagining the ecosystem

The space will bring together scientists and experts working across fields, including data, AI, physics and biological sciences, in open-plan workspaces to foster ideas generation and collaboration. This, along with labs and clinics in close proximity to one another; the Oglesby Cancer Research Building (the home of researchers working

under the Manchester Cancer Research Centre) across the road; and The Christie Hospital (Europe's largest single-site cancer centre) next door, will make translating discoveries into clinical practice easier and more efficient.

At the forefront of innovation

The University of Manchester has a proud track record of pioneering cancer innovations, including the first clinical use of tamoxifen for breast cancer and helping to establish the UK's first proton beam therapy centre.

One such innovator working at the forefront of future-defining research is Professor Stephen Taylor, who is leading the team responsible for developing a

biobank of ovarian cancer cells to support the creation of new therapies for advanced ovarian cancer.

This rapidly developing disease offers limited treatment options, meaning survival rates haven't substantially improved for 20 years. The pandemic exacerbated the problem, delaying early detection. Effective, targeted treatment for ovarian cancer is needed now more than ever.

A biobank allows scientists to understand the biology and genetics of a group of cells and how they change or respond to drugs. They are widely used in cancer research, but Taylor's is a little different. This biobank is alive.

"The problem with most tissue biobanks is that in order to create them, the samples are preserved by either being dropped in formaldehyde or frozen. Both these methods fix and kill the samples, so the tumour that we are studying is technically dead," Taylor explains.

Creating a living, moving biobank that tracks the cancer cell's journey is giving the team real-time insights into tumour changes and revealing that while they may look similar genetically, no two cells are the same.

By replicating each tumour's environment in the lab, the cells mirror those of the patient and act as a perfect model to understand treatment reactions

“What we're doing in the laboratory, it's cell culture – which in principle anybody can do. The difference is we're doing it very well.”





GIVE ANOTHER STUDENT THEIR MANCHESTER OPPORTUNITY

"To the donors – you have my utmost gratitude for giving me a platform to chase my dreams. I will be forever grateful."

Dr Ahsan Chaudrhy
MBChB Medicine and Surgery, 2020
MRes Tissue Engineering for Regenerative
Medicine, 2019

One in four
of our students
grew up in a
low-income
household



Ahsan as a first-year student in 2014

and what will work for the patient. The most exciting aspect of this new approach? The potential to understand why a particular sample might be resistant to a drug, Taylor says, "That could be a game changer."

Transforming cancer futures

The Paterson's position next to Europe's largest cancer treatment hospital will give researchers like Taylor access to hundreds more clinical samples from patients. It's this access to multiple samples from the same patient during their treatment journey that allows the team "to track the evolution of their disease in response to the treatments they have received. This is key because if the tumours start to develop drug resistance, we can see where

and when it starts, understand why and do something about it," explains Taylor.

The Manchester research community's boundary-pushing outlook isn't limited to addressing national cancer issues. In partnership with the Kenyan government, researchers are also looking to identify the genomic differences in prostate cancers of African and European men – drawing on the ethnic diversity within the Greater Manchester population to understand how diagnosis and treatment can be improved.

Making change happen

The Paterson, The Christie Hospital and the Oglesby Cancer Research Building are set to form

a powerhouse 'cancer campus' in the coming years. But for Taylor, the real secret to Manchester's success is its people and their commitment to making a positive impact.

"What we're doing in the laboratory, it is cell culture – which in principle anybody can do. The difference is we're doing it very well. It takes a lot of effort and dedication to be the best. Anybody can kick a ball into the back of a net, but Cristiano Ronaldo is Cristiano Ronaldo."

Words by Kate Tidman and
Professor Stephen Taylor
Image by Kirsty Smith

Find out how you can play
your part in this project at
manchester.ac.uk/cancerappeal

**Manchester's
success is its
people and their
commitment to
making a positive
impact.**

A University of Manchester education sets students up for a lifetime of success – across the globe, Manchester alumni are making a positive difference to some of the biggest challenges facing society.

But with living costs soaring and household budgets squeezed, more and more students need support to study at Manchester and make their mark on the world.

Dr Ahsan Chaudrhy graduated in 2020 and received a scholarship to support him throughout his time at Manchester. His degree in Medicine and Surgery catapulted him to the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, Ahsan

continues to use his skills to help others as an NHS foundation doctor.

"My years at medical school were the best of my life. The scholarship made a huge difference and helped me achieve my goals in both the short and long term."

Thanks to generous donations from our community, Ahsan has fulfilled his dream of becoming the first doctor in his family. But many more talented people still need support.

Give another student their Manchester opportunity by making a gift today. You can make a donation to help a student in need, or support talented people for years to come with a monthly, quarterly, or annual gift.

**Use the donation
form included or visit
[manchester.ac.uk/
opportunity](https://manchester.ac.uk/opportunity)
to make your
gift online**



Greater Manchester graduates

Making a difference in our city region



“The University has such an enormous impact, not just here in Manchester, but globally, and I knew I wanted to be part of that from the moment I attended the induction day.”

Adam Mellor

”

The University of Manchester’s graduates are the most sought after by top UK employers (*The Graduate Market, 2022*). This is down to a combination of academic achievement and embodiment of the University’s values, which help them enter the job market as responsible leaders, ready to make a valuable contribution to the community.

Transforming care for local patients

Adam Mellor is a nurse working on a surgical assessment ward at Stepping Hill Hospital in Stockport. He is one of more than 2,600 healthcare-related graduates currently working across Greater Manchester’s hospitals and NHS trusts. Adam always wanted to dedicate his career to caring for others, but credits the University with giving him the knowledge and practical skills necessary for what, especially in recent years, has been a challenging vocation.

Having grown up in Manchester, Adam wants to use his position to ensure the people of his beloved home city have access to the very

best healthcare services. For him, making an impact is in the small details, the patient care that goes above and beyond, and getting people settled back home as quickly and safely as possible: “Seeing a patient ready for discharge, with pure excitement on their face, is such a fulfilling feeling.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals and institutions like The University of Manchester came together to fill the shortfall of key healthcare professionals, take the pressure off frontline teams and give patients the best care possible. Adam reflects on how his degree helped him prepare, with the “fantastic range of workshops and courses” provided

“
The Manchester spirit is
to push yourself, embrace
challenges and jump out
of your comfort zone.
If you can do that, you
really will succeed.

Julia Morton

”



“
The University has helped
me to gain contacts from an
industry that I never thought
I'd be interested in and have
truly provided a platform on
which I can succeed.

Matt Petinaud

”



throughout his studies arming him “with so much practical experience that you can apply to real-life scenarios.”

For Adam, and others like him working across our region's hospitals, making an impact means much more than turning up for work every day. It's making a positive difference in a patient's life and helping them achieve their goals for a healthier future.

It's not only through our graduates that the University is making an impact. Locally, partnerships with NHS trusts in Health Innovation Manchester and the Manchester Academic Health Science Centre are

boosting positive outcomes in the region. Globally, our research creates healthier populations by establishing new treatments for global diseases.

Nurturing the leaders of tomorrow

Julia Morton, a PGCE secondary teaching graduate, is dedicating her career to inspiring the minds of the future through innovative and inclusive learning. She believes teaching is a great way to affect meaningful change in society, and alongside the University, is working hard to combat the increase in social inequalities amplified by the pandemic. Julia says: “There's a real passion and discussion within society about social

mobility, and where opportunities start for young people.”

As a history teacher, Julia believes it is important to ensure the education she provides is socially and culturally inclusive – imparting knowledge, skills and language that are accessible to everyone. She likes to open up conversations for students around why we teach certain subjects in school. One such example is the British Empire, for which she made sure students from different backgrounds, including those of Indian heritage, felt included in the discussion and could openly share their views on the impact of the British Raj in India.

She also dedicates time to working with the University's Ahmed Iqbal Ullah RACE Centre – a specialist library focusing on the study of race, migration and ethnic diversity – to look at ways to decolonise the history curriculum and help fellow teachers broaden their understanding of how to deal with race relations in schools.

Julia credits the University with her determination to make a difference: “Being part of the trainee teacher programme at Manchester has shaped who I am and who I will become in the future.”

Supporting a greener future

Matt Petinaud's interest in the natural world started in

childhood. Since then, with help from the University, he has turned this passion into a fulfilling career. His studies in Environmental Science gave him the knowledge and skills to help tackle climate change in his everyday work.

During his studies, Matt won a summer internship at BP through the University's connections with key industry partners. His time in their Environmental Department gave him practical experience in drawing up risk assessment and environmental best-practice tools for the future of energy generation.

Now a Carbon and Energy Consultant, Matt is excited

about the positive impact he and those working in his field, are making on things we often take for granted, such as air quality. Currently, he works with manufacturers to quantify energy usage and the associated carbon footprint – helping to reduce emissions in the short and long term. He says: “Climate change is a major problem and it requires international collaboration, so for me to be able to contribute to that in any way is incredibly rewarding.”

Manchester's research and teaching impact

The University is committed to creating fairer, healthier and more sustainable futures and was

again confirmed to be a global powerhouse of research, with 93% of its activity assessed as ‘world-leading’ (4*) or ‘internationally excellent’ (3*) in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021.

Our research power enhances the quality of our innovative teaching, giving students the chance to learn from real experts. We go beyond academia, offering opportunities to develop key skills outside of core courses, including initiatives like Stellify and our Manchester Leadership Programme – giving graduates the tools to contribute to society's greatest challenges as global citizens.

Words by Anna Pintus


Images of Matt and Adam
by Jill Jennings

Image of Julia by Pete Carr



Solving the world's most urgent problems

Research with impact. It's in our DNA.



The University has a strong tradition of delivering innovation and positive change, creating benefits for our local community and internationally.

For the fourth year in a row, Manchester is among the top ten universities for impact towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, and one of the UK top five for research power in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 results. Overall, 96% of our research impact was assessed as 'world-leading' (4*) or 'internationally excellent' (3*).

Throughout history our University has used its expertise, knowledge and strong commitment to social responsibility to respond to global challenges. In 1918, the guidance of Dr James Niven, a lecturer in public health, was used to inform Manchester's response to the Spanish flu pandemic and significantly reduced mortality rates across the region.

More recently, University mathematicians used their expertise in statistical modelling to advise the government on how best to protect the UK population during the COVID-19 pandemic. The group, led by Drs Ian Hall, Thomas House and Lorenzo Pellis, advised the UK's Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M) to take decisive action earlier than planned and provided guidance on the most effective public advice to issue in order to control the spread of the virus.

Showcasing our impact

Research is at the heart of our vision for the future. We bring the world's best minds together to tackle global challenges and deliver

economic, environmental, social, cultural, health and wellbeing benefits. Our research impact showcase highlights a selection of case studies that celebrate the impact we've made in our home city and the wider world.

Supporting health and wellbeing

The University's research into risk factors associated with stillbirths has influenced UK and international health policy, helping to educate parents and save lives. This has led to the Saving Babies' Lives care bundle – a set of evidence-based interventions designed to improve patient outcomes – being used across NHS England and the development of the Australian Safer Baby Bundle, which launched in 2019. Initial evaluation showed that the bundle was associated with a 27% reduction in stillbirth in 21 of the state of Victoria's maternity services.

Work led by Professor Karen Kirkby has been vital in enabling more patients to access therapy for some of the most difficult-to-treat cancers. Her team helped to bring the UK's first NHS high-energy proton beam therapy centre to The Christie Hospital in Manchester in 2018. This has improved outcomes for patients, including many children and those too ill to travel. The state-of-the-art treatment reduces side effects compared to conventional radiotherapy and saves the NHS £60,000 per patient.

Celebrating culture and creativity

Professor Caroline Bithell is teaching the world to sing. Her research and book are a key reference for more than 700 natural-voice practitioners, who lead choirs and community singing networks worldwide in an open and inclusive environment. Her work is also used for online courses led by Village Harmony, a US-based association working in partnership with local teachers across the globe.

Locally, our researchers uncovered new insights into the lives of residents during the Industrial Revolution, shaping a £9.4 million reinterpretation project at Quarry Bank, a National Trust site in Cheshire. This led to a 53% increase in visitor numbers between 2015 and 2020.

Boosting economic development and highlighting inequalities

Our researchers are helping agencies like the World Bank and the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, to better understand how political contexts shape development. This work supported more effective, long-term and transformative aid programmes that deliver inclusive economic growth, reduce poverty, create thousands of jobs and improve health and education systems. In Karamoja, Uganda, the University’s research shaped the design of a new poverty-reduction initiative which has improved health governance and significantly reduced malnutrition rates in young children.

In Manchester, research led by Professor Francesca Gains highlighted the lack of diversity in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the need for more women in decision-making positions to improve policy action. Her research resulted in a Women and Girls’ Equality Panel and more

permanent governance arrangements in the GMCA.

Driving innovation and commercialisation

The University’s research into personalised forms of immunotherapy – where a patient’s own immune cells fight cancer – has undergone rapid commercialisation to deliver life-saving results for patients worldwide. Researchers discovered how to manipulate the immune system in order to achieve the best anti-cancer response, known as adoptive cell therapy (ACT). The team also set up the infrastructure to deliver the therapy, improving the access, efficiency and safe delivery of ACT to patients across the globe.

Manchester researchers have also used pioneering technology – Conformetrix – to reduce the cost and time of drug development. The University spin-out C4X Discovery Ltd, is now a multimillion-pound business used by global pharmaceutical companies. Its lead candidate drug, C4X3256, is designed to help manage substance use disorders, and has been developed with fewer side effects and in a fraction of the time normally required.

Promoting sustainability and meeting climate change goals

Climate change demands global and local action. Research conducted at the University’s Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research has been used to drive policy changes in the shipping and aviation sectors, informing the establishment of global CO₂ targets set by the International Maritime Organisation.

The research also supported new aviation emissions objectives included in the Manchester Climate Change Framework – endorsed by Manchester City Council in March 2020, formally establishing it as the city’s climate change strategy.

What’s next for research at Manchester?

From tackling cancer and poverty to finding the energy solutions of the future, our research is making a real difference to the quality of people’s lives locally and worldwide. Today’s global challenges are greater than ever – but so is our commitment to solve them.

Words by Vicky Taylor-Plane
Illustrations by Jane Naylor
Visit our research impact showcase
manchester.ac.uk/impactshowcase



Inspiring the Black leaders of tomorrow

George Obolo, medical student and co-founder of The Black Excellence Network, placed fifth in the 100 Most Outstanding Black University Students in the UK 2021. We spoke to him about Manchester, mentoring and his mission to open up higher education for more Black students.

There are even opportunities directly for Black students, but we're just not told about them; they're not really spread and so The Black Excellence Network exists to solve that and share opportunities.

George Obolo cares about people; that's immediately apparent. He's interested, curious, he asks questions – about the camera we're using and the football teams we support. It's a curiosity that immediately puts you at ease. It doesn't take long to understand why he's a good mentor.

It was during spring 2020, and in the middle of the UK's first COVID-19 lockdown, when George took advantage of the extra time to set up a mentoring scheme with three fellow students.

The Black Excellence Network offers mentorship to Black sixth form students applying for a place at Russell Group universities. There's also a professional consultancy service for students preparing to graduate and enter the jobs market.

Making the top five

The network is a passion project for George. He started it while also working with a tech start-up and a charity, in addition to training to become a doctor. It's no wonder he's been named one of the 100 Most Outstanding Black University Students in the UK.

Powerlist Magazine's list of outstanding university students of Afro-Caribbean heritage, supported by Latham & Watkins, Standard Chartered and the University of

Oxford, highlights role models for younger students. Finding himself named one of Powerlist's top five future leaders was "inspiring" George says.

Overcoming the barriers to education

George and his fellow founders were motivated to start The Black Excellence Network after first-hand experience of the hurdles that stood between young Black people and a university education. "Going through sixth form and seeing all the barriers to higher education or studying a degree like Medicine, we wanted to make sure that wasn't the case for people younger than us or people behind us," he says.

While there are plenty of opportunities out there for young Black people, often "we just don't know about them," George explains. "There are even opportunities directly for Black students, but we're just not told about them; they're not really spread and so The Black Excellence Network exists to solve that and share opportunities."

In addition to identifying and sharing opportunities, the network also pairs Black sixth form students with undergraduates who are studying the course to which they hope to apply. The team takes care to match mentors

and mentees based not just on subject, but personality too.

"Other communities have more parents who have gone to university, so they understand that life already. But for a lot of the Black community who have come to the UK, their parents haven't gone to university, meaning this is a whole new game they're playing," adds George.

It's nice up north

After moving to Manchester, George was struck by its inclusivity, friendliness and the can-do attitude adopted by many of its residents: "I just think it's nice...like, people are nice! I could stop someone on the road here and have a conversation.

"When you're back home, sometimes in your friendship groups it can be an echo chamber, where you're just hearing the same thoughts and perspectives. But being in a student-packed centre, I got to see so many perspectives on life and that helped my leadership. Because it meant that I see the benefit in diversity."

Words by Hayley Cox

Image by Russell Hart

Discover more about The Black Excellence Network <https://blackexcellencenetwork.net>



The First Light Pavilion has landed

Jodrell Bank Observatory, part of the University, is celebrating the opening of a new attraction, the First Light Pavilion.

This feat of architectural engineering reveals the fascinating history behind one of the world's leading radio astronomy observatories and the UK's newest UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is at the heart of a £21.5 million project, supported by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the National Lottery Heritage Fund and generous gifts from the University's alumni and supporters.

Designed by award-winning architects HASSELL Studio, the grass-topped 76 metre-diameter dome mirrors the shape of the Lovell Telescope with its perfectly curved edges. Inside the unique building, visitors can enjoy a new exhibition, bringing to life the Jodrell Bank story from its beginnings in 1945, to its exploration of the universe using radio waves instead of visible light. The Pavilion also contains a custom-built auditorium where visitors can enjoy planetarium-style shows on a curved projection screen.

Discover more about Jodrell Bank and the First Light Pavilion at jodrellbank.net
Image by Andrew Brooks

//
I think that everything
we do, and everything
we personally stand for
as members of staff,
comes from the work we
do with the students.
//



The work of the Manchester Innocence Project (MIP) is paving the way to freedom for victims of a miscarriage of justice. We meet the inspirational teaching team putting University of Manchester students at the heart of the cause.

A new innocence project is born

When Professor of Law, Claire McGourlay, came to Manchester in 2017, setting up an Innocence Project quickly became a priority. Her remit was to examine the School of Law's clinical legal education offering and on review, she found no criminal appeal pro-bono initiative existed. She herself had been involved in miscarriages of justice work since her involvement in the 'Cardiff Newsagent Three' case as a student – which saw a 20-year-old trainee painter and decorator wrongly imprisoned for murder for 11 years.

Fintan Walker, a Lecturer in Clinical Legal Education, joined the project soon after, bringing with him a wealth of criminal practitioner expertise, along with PhD student Suzanne Gower – a criminal lawyer of 15 years who teaches about miscarriages of justice.

The project found its name when it became part of the Innocence Project family, an initiative established in the US in 1992. Today, the MIP is one of more than 60 Innocence Projects, with only a dozen found outside the US.

A passion for righting wrongs

Many former legal practitioners find themselves returning to innocence work, says McGourlay, and it's this passion the students find for the work when they get involved.

"The work has a massive impact on the way that students behave, think, and progress in their careers."

One such practitioner is Nicola Campbell, one of McGourlay's past students, who came

to Manchester to study for her PhD after working for the Crown Prosecution Service. The pull to work on wrongful convictions was strong and now she makes up one of the teaching team leading the project.

Making a difference through teaching and learning

MIP sits within the Justice Hub, a collection of law projects making a real impact within the Manchester community. Teaching and learning is its bedrock as students lead the work on these cases, including sifting through piles of paperwork and contacting experts to review evidence (and getting them to do it for free). Or as McGourlay puts it, "finding the needle in a haystack."

Despite being in its infancy, the project is already being recognised for embodying the University's core goals, from its commitment to social responsibility to driving research and discovery. In its first year, it received a Making a Difference Award for best project and McGourlay credits the win to the work of the students: "I think that everything we do, and everything we personally stand for as members of staff, comes from the work we do with the students."

Taking MIP to the next level

There will never be a shortage of innocence work to take on and the COVID-19 pandemic has created even more of a challenge. Criminal practitioners, says McGourlay, are predicting the post-pandemic period will see an increase in wrongful convictions, so innocence work will be needed more than ever – a challenging prospect for the team.

"The big difference between the US and us is they get millions of dollars in donations," McGourlay reveals, specifically referring to a Californian project with its eight full-time, non-teaching lawyers dedicated to the work.

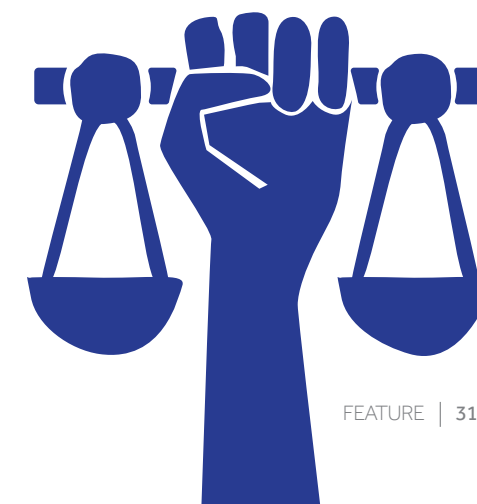
The Manchester Innocence Project is, however, raising its profile, thanks to accompanying podcast, *The Innocence Podcast*, presented by ITV Newsreader Kylie Pentelow. As well as amplifying miscarriages of justice work in general, McGourlay hopes the podcast will attract more students to the cause, allowing MIP to take on more cases, which for many people is their last chance of freedom from imprisonment.

Series one of *The Innocence Podcast* is available on Apple Play and Spotify.

Words by Rose Brooke

Illustration by Jane Naylor

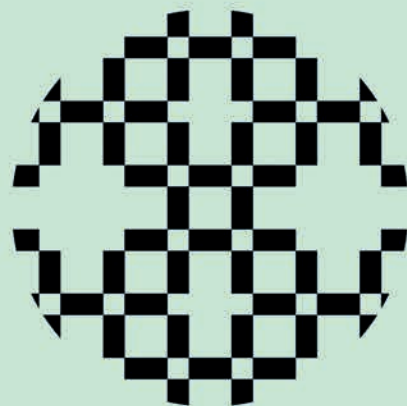
Image by iStock/CSA-Printstock



The British Pop
Archive launches
in Manchester



BRITISH P P
ARCHIVE



A REAL POP- PORTUNITY

A first-of-its-kind pop archive has launched in Manchester, bringing with it extraordinary objects from the popular culture canon and boundless opportunities for research and teaching.



BRITISH P P
ARCHIVE

Celebrating UK Pop
Culture, Youth Culture and
Counter - Culture



BRITISH P P
ARCHIVE



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May 19th —
January 15th
2023

BRITISH P P
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BRITISH P P
ARCHIVE



1952

Professor Hannah Barker, Mat Bancroft and Professor Jon Savage



The iconic music, television and events that put Manchester on the global cultural map in post-war Britain are being immortalised in a unique and historic archive. The British Pop Archive (BPA) launched in May 2022 at its home, the renowned John Rylands Research Institute and Library, with a temporary exhibition at the cultural attraction on Deansgate.

Professor Hannah Barker, Director of the Institute, curated the archive along with independent curator Mat Bancroft and music journalist and broadcaster Jon Savage, the University's first Professor of Pop Culture.

Shining a light on iconic pop culture

Comprised of ten archives relating to iconic pop culture moments, both for Manchester and the wider world, the BPA holds artefacts relating to the heydays of New Order, Joy Division, The Smiths, Factory Records and the iconic Haçienda. The complete archives of Joy Division lyricist Ian Curtis and electronic

composer Delia Derbyshire are contained within the collection, along with the Granada TV Archive. With it comes some of Britain's best-loved and most ground-breaking moments in broadcasting history, including the archives of *Coronation Street* and *World in Action*.

Other highlights include records and recordings, promotional materials for gigs, posters, merchandise, hand-written lyrics, personal and business correspondence, recorded interviews and many more fragments of popular culture.

Born from collaboration

Professors Barker and Savage bonded over their shared interest in popular culture archives and how they impact the lives of ordinary people. Together with Bancroft, Savage's long-term collaborator, the project began to grow and evolve.

"Despite being quite different individuals, we gelled instantly," Barker recalls. "As a social

and business historian, I'm fascinated by archival materials relating to the cultural and creative industries, and to outputs such as music, television and film that impact so powerfully on people's lives.

"What made me pursue this joint endeavour was the understanding that this archival collection would fit neatly with the work of colleagues at the University working on the cultural and creative worlds, centred around Creative Manchester. There was a real opportunity to build a new archive which would link and support not just current research, but also future research trajectories."

A hub of creativity

Creative Manchester, one of the University's platforms for collaborative research, will amplify the work emerging from the archive.

"Manchester has been a hub for creative industries for decades. A place where artists forged new sounds and were supported by inventive businesses and listeners," says

Professor John McAuliffe, Creative Manchester Director. "Creative Manchester co-ordinates research, allowing us to see this work in new ways. The archive, and the stories it tells, offers a backstory to music we know well, and is an inspiration for new work too."

As a modern archive, the BPA, along with the Humanitarians Archive led by the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI), serves to future-proof the University Library's special collections. Professor Chris Pressler, University Librarian, champions both projects for helping to keep the library in tune with research and teaching needs: "While we continue to work on materials from 5,000 years of human history, it is critical that we also engage with our own time."

Creating a national culture resource

As a research-led institute, the BPA is an important addition for the University. Its influence, however, extends much further, Savage reflects.

"Britain's pop and youth culture has been transmitted worldwide for nearly 60 years now. As the most fertile and expressive product of post-war democratic consumerism, it has an inspiring history that's in danger of being under-represented in museums and libraries. We are launching with Manchester-centric collections, but the intention is for the BPA to be a national resource. It is, after all, the *British Pop Archive*."

Making an impact

The buzz surrounding the BPA launch has been hard to ignore, with coverage across national and local media including *The Guardian*, *The Manchester Evening News* and *The Times*, as well as bulletins on BBC News, ITV News and BBC Radio Manchester.

"The press coverage we've had has been amazing and the launch event at the Rylands went brilliantly," says Barker. "It's been really exciting to see the launch archive take shape and to plan future acquisitions and possible directions."

There's an exciting future within teaching and learning too, with the Professor of Pop Culture forging new paths. A new MA in Creative and Cultural Industries is to be launched within the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures. There are also existing courses exploring popular and electronic music and composition, and those dedicated to screenwriting that will be able to take advantage of the archive.

The BPA exhibition is open to the public and will run until 15 January 2023. Barker and the team welcome all enquiries from individuals or organisations that wish to support the BPA and help preserve and research more of the UK's unique cultural and creative history.

Words by Rose Brooke

Images by Jill Furmanovsky

Find out more uom.link/british-pop-archive

PUTTING THE HUMAN BACK INTO THE ALGORITHM

**Is AI our only hope for the future of humankind?
Professor Sami Kaski explores how this powerful tool could
help meet the challenges facing our world. But how do we
ensure that the human is present in the machine?**



AI here, there, and everywhere

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is all around us every day. From the smart watches we wear that collect our personal biodata to its use by medical professionals to prescribe treatments to patients, this technology has the potential to greatly advance global health services, to name just one area, in the future.

The University of Manchester is playing an important part in these advancements, as a world-leader in developing autonomous systems that combine AI technologies with robotics. An example is our work to improve the capabilities of robots used in the hazardous work to decommission legacy nuclear power reactors and helping to better protect surrounding communities.

Through machine learning, these robots obey their algorithms – the embedded digital instructions defining an AI task – and adapt performance using devolved decision-making capabilities, so they can be agile and respond to changing or complex environments.

It's impressive technology, but automated operation is largely limited by the need for human intervention, to set objectives and rewards within the algorithm that tell the system the desired outcomes. Why is this a challenge? Because as humans we often don't have a fully defined goal at the beginning of a research project. Without a set goal, these intelligent machines can't reach their full potential.

Pushing the frontier of AI design

Now it's time for a bold vision. We need to take machines beyond simply responding to our literal inputs and develop systems that use intelligence to infer what's really being asked of them by their imperfect human users.

"We've given algorithms a free pass for far too long," says AI expert Professor Stuart Russell (from a broadcast by Radio Davos). We must push for full automation in our AI systems and put the human back into the algorithm.

But what about social responsibility, one of our University's core goals? If future AI is to act in a responsible way, they need to 'think': 'what does this human user need from the task – they are not quite sure what they want, so how can I help?'

Formulating an intuitive model

At Manchester, we're developing an intuitive AI that predicts the behaviour and expectations of its user, in line with the theory of mind. According to the theory of mind, humans make assumptions about what others want, think and believe. We infer these states of mind, even though they're not directly observable.

These inferences are the foundational elements for successful human social interaction; our AI will incorporate a similar approach to enable successful human-AI interactions.

Making an impact

This pioneering AI model is set to make a big impact across a number of industries. Human-inclusive machine learning will help us improve outcomes step by step and achieve trustworthy solutions to challenges. Say we wanted to design a personalised treatment for lung cancer, we would need to maximise the efficacy of radiotherapy while also minimising its side effects. To achieve this, doctors could use AI to combine their expertise with data learnings collected from earlier patient experiences.

Manchester has a long history of innovation in AI, stemming from Alan Turing's time here in the 1940s. Today our researchers continue in the same spirit – both in research and the use of AI to solve problems across other fields. It's even comparable to the start-up culture you might associate with new tech enterprises. With national and local government plans to level up innovation and R&D investment across the UK, we could be witnessing the birth of a Silicon Valley in the north.

Inclusive by design

The Manchester AI team are not just putting the human back into the algorithm but, in fact, a diverse range of humans. Our researchers engage with a broad spectrum of end-users at the start of the design process – bringing greater representation and democracy to the development of human-inclusive AI systems. This is an exciting period for research as we explore new frontiers of artificial intelligence and start to better balance its relationship with humans.

**Artificial Intelligence
could be more
important to
humankind than
electricity or fire.**

Sundar Pichai, CEO, Google

Words by Sami Kaski, Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Research Director of the Christabel Pankhurst Institute for health technology research and innovation.

Image by iStock/Floriana

Find out more at the Manchester Centre for AI Fundamentals idsai.manchester.ac.uk/research/centre-for-ai-fundamentals

THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME

This edition of *The University of Manchester Magazine* showcases some of the wonderful things happening at your University right now.

But did you know that much of what makes Manchester special can only happen thanks to generous gifts in wills? Gifts of this kind have an incredible impact – furthering life-saving research and supporting students from all backgrounds to study here.

By including a gift in your will, you could play your part in shaping the future at Manchester. Whether you're passionate about tackling worldwide inequalities, or want to protect our planet for generations to come – with a gift in your will, you'll help pave the way to a better tomorrow.

To find out more about how you could make your own mark on the future, visit manchester.ac.uk/willgift or get in touch at supporters@manchester.ac.uk.

Barbara's passion for education

Barbara Smethurst (CertEd Education 1966, MEd Environment, Education and Development 1989) chose to leave a gift in her will to make sure her passion for education would live on. She said:

"Given how much I benefited from studying at the University and the way it influenced and informed me, I decided that I wanted to leave a legacy that would pass on the same opportunities that I received, to others."

Barbara's vision for the future will now help a new generation of students to study here at Manchester. What mark would you like to leave on the world?

Learn more about including a gift in your will and check out our free will writing service at manchester.ac.uk/willgift

OPINION



Promoting fair and equitable access to medicines

BY PROFESSOR ANTHONY GREEN

Professor Anthony Green of the Manchester Institute of Biotechnology (MIB) explores an open-source model of drug production, making life-saving treatments more sustainable, practical and affordable to produce.

Most of us in the UK don't worry about medical care; we know that it's there for us, including all the drugs and therapies that accompany treatment. The NHS – free at the point of care – is a service we're fortunate to have, but this luxury isn't afforded to many in the world.

Imagine, then, what it is like in developing countries where medicines are expensive, certain treatment options are not available, and hospitals and medical centres are few and far between. It is a problem faced by many countries and we have a responsibility to help change this. We need to support fair access to medicine – this starts with making drugs more practical to produce, administer and more affordable for the end user. This is what our recent work on the COVID-19 antiviral therapy, molnupiravir, aimed to do.

Sustainable and low-cost solutions for life-saving drugs

Molnupiravir was used to treat influenza, but studies now show that it offers approximately

a 30% reduction in both hospitalisations and deaths from COVID-19 (for mild to moderate disease) in unvaccinated patients with at least one comorbidity. If you can reduce the amount of people with mild disease requiring medical care, you can ensure resources are available for those who are most in need. In countries where healthcare systems are stretched, this could be a lifeline they didn't have before.

Knowing that molnupiravir could help turn the tide on COVID-19 in developing countries, my colleagues Professor Nicholas Turner, Dr Sarah Lovelock, Dr Ashleigh Burke, and I worked in conjunction with a philanthropic organisation, Prozomix Ltd. and Sterling Pharma Solutions to develop an efficient biocatalytic process to manufacture molnupiravir. This new method is scalable, low-cost, environmentally sustainable and is freely available for companies to use.

This last point, that it is freely available, is crucial to ensuring fairer access to the drug and was a key stipulation for our work. Now that it is available in the public domain, anyone can make use of it.

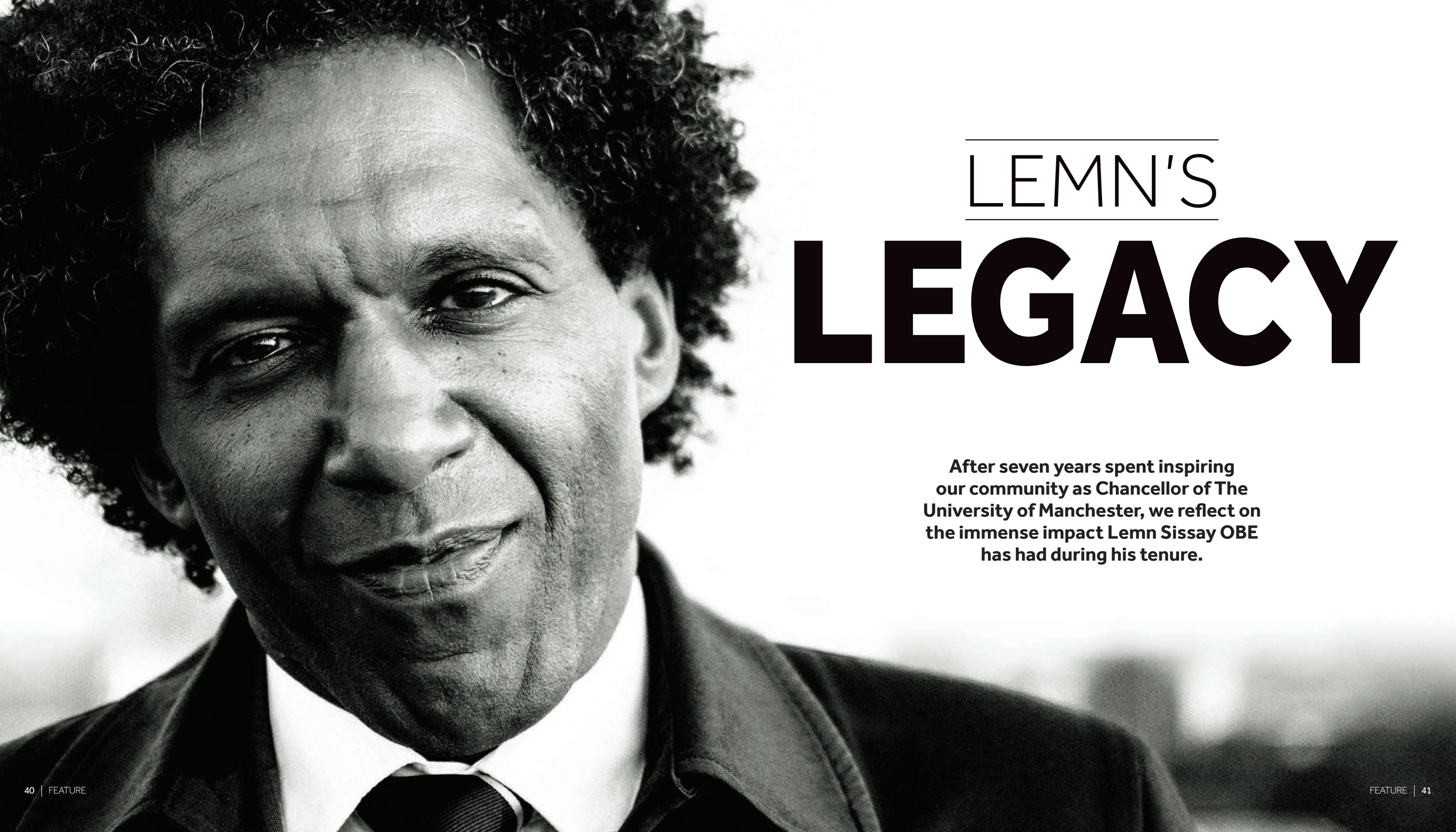
Our process has been carried out on a kilo-scale by industrial partners to demonstrate scalability and the key engineered enzyme, developed in our labs, has also been commercialised by Prozomix Ltd. Free

samples are available to pharmaceutical manufacturing companies interested in adopting our process. This open source approach allows them to test out and apply the process, which should, in turn, reduce production costs by introducing competition.

Collaborative research opening doors to healthier futures

When faced with a health threat like COVID-19, it is key to have potentially life-saving drugs available to treat the global population. Increasing the efficiency, scalability and sustainability of manufacturing is one important piece of the jigsaw in ensuring fair and equitable access to medicines.

The open and collaborative approach to research we adopted – drawing on skills and expertise from academia, industry, charities and philanthropic organisations – provides a valuable model for new low-cost routes to essential medicines. Pfizer recently launched Accord for a Healthier World, an initiative where patented drugs are released to a group of countries on a not-for-profit basis. This recognition of the need for health equity from a global pharmaceutical giant is an important step forward. We hope that our work and this model of drug production will pave the way for many more to approach other global health challenges in a similar way.



LEMN'S LEGACY

After seven years spent inspiring our community as Chancellor of The University of Manchester, we reflect on the immense impact Lemn Sissay OBE has had during his tenure.

“
My primary
aim is to
inspire and
be inspired.
”



Finding his voice

From his challenging early years, losing his family and growing up in care, Lemn Sissay OBE overcame adversity to excel as one of the country’s most adored creative poets, while also becoming well-known for his caring, thoughtful nature, and a determination to support those who need it most in the Greater Manchester region and across the wider world.

Lemn became separated from his mother shortly after she travelled to the UK from Ethiopia in 1966 and only met her again after turning 21. During a tumultuous childhood, he lived in four different children’s homes and would only discover his name was ‘Lemn Sissay’ when he left the care system aged 17. He went on to use the little money he had to kick-start what would be a long and revered career in poetry, inspiring the minds of many with his distinctive style and thought-provoking, emotive pieces.

To inspire and be inspired

After seven remarkable years, Lemn’s tenure as Chancellor at the University is coming to an end. At his election in 2015 he said: “my primary aim is to inspire and be inspired.” His work with students and arts institutions in the Manchester region and beyond has done just that. Lemn has excelled in public-facing roles including Trustee of the Manchester International Festival, Fellow and Trustee of the Foundling Museum and his position as official poet of the London 2012 Olympics, to name but a few.

His work as Chancellor has equally left a mark. Channelling the University’s core goal of social responsibility, Lemn worked to expand our donor-funded Equity and Merit Scholarship Programme to give Ethiopian students the opportunity to study a master’s at the University. He brought together the brightest minds from around the world, helped them to overcome financial difficulty and gave them a platform from which to become global citizens and make a positive impact on the future of the planet.

“My work with students has been some of the most rewarding during my time as Chancellor. Students are at the heart of everything the University stands for and I have been inspired by their passion, drive and determination to make a positive difference in the world,” Lemn says.

One of these graduates is Aida Erkihun Bayissa. After meeting Lemn while volunteering in Ethiopia and becoming aware of the scholarship, she went on to study an MSc in International Development at the University’s Global Development Institute. Without the scholarship, Aida said, her time in Manchester wouldn’t have been possible.

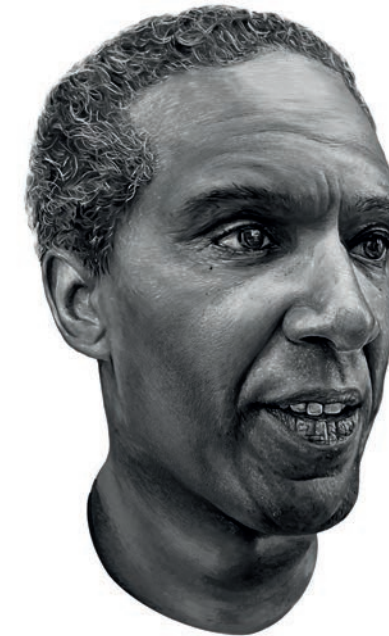
After graduating and working at the International Finance Corporation on investment policy and promotion in Ethiopia, Aida has since started her own consultancy firm, ACE Advisors. The firm works across the public and private sector in Ethiopia to provide a bespoke service on policy and strategy.

Lemn’s work to create opportunities for students from across the globe, regardless of background or financial status, is just one example of the University’s values of knowledge, wisdom and humanity brought to life in the everyday world.

Leading with care

The Chancellor also plays a key role in promoting the University to the wider public, from presiding over meetings of the General Assembly to the conferment of degrees. Along with official business, Lemn is also known for organising the annual care leavers Christmas dinner through his foundation. First held by the Lemn Sissay Foundation in 2012, the programme is now celebrating its tenth year.

“What started in Manchester has spread across the country and this year, 25 towns and cities will hold Christmas Day events for care-experienced adults, offering presents, great food and a wonderful day,” Lemn explains.



Lemn Sissay portrait
by Bex Mamo

Bex Mamo on Lemn Sissay

Bex Mamo is a realist portrait artist based in Manchester. Her work celebrates inspiring public figures from across the globe. Thrilled to work with Lemn, Mamo’s incredible piece of art shows how far his influence runs beyond the University to inspire local creators.

I first met Lemn through a mutual friend but had, of course, already heard of his work. What struck me about him was his authenticity and genuine enthusiasm for learning about other people and their life experiences.

During our conversations, he told me that he truly loves people; if you spend just an hour with him in public, you quickly see that the love is reciprocated by the people of Manchester. How would I describe Lemn? An electric soul who ignites every other soul in his presence.

I started my career busking with my paintings in Manchester and now work as a realist portrait artist from my studio in Ancoats. I pour my heart and soul into everything I do, something Lemn can relate to. We both started our careers from a place of necessity. It’s who we are as people – we absolutely have to create. Even if you’re living in chaos, your artwork can always be the remedy.

My portrait of Lemn is oil on canvas and took around 50 hours to complete. I used a pair of watchmaker’s glasses to get the detail in the skin and eyes. He’s floating on the canvas like a calm, collected and majestic figure. When I’m painting, I immerse myself in the subject’s work, so each tiny pore was painted while learning about Lemn’s life story and listening to his poetry. Some critics may think realism is a craft rather than art, but I think knowing the back story of the piece makes it a true piece of art.

People here love Lemn; he validates our expressive personalities, is a symbol of resilience and, like many of us, Manchester is his beacon of light – a route to his new life and the rest of the world.

Thank you for the art, Lemn.

Words by Bex Mamo

Discover more of Bex’s work on
Instagram @bexmamo

Since 2015, the Manchester dinner has been hosted by the University, and our staff and students volunteer their support in the run-up to and organisation of the day.

With a smile for everyone he meets, Lemn will be remembered not only for his incredible work as an ambassador for the University and everything we stand for, but also as an inspirational artist, bringing words to life in his memorable poems. His poem *Inspire and be Inspired* continues to welcome students to the University and kick-start their journey to becoming the future leaders of our world.

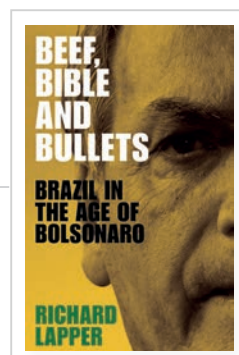
Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell said: “Lemn has been an amazing supporter of our University, bringing life to the role – a ceremonial office with significant ambassadorial responsibilities – thanks to his star quality and wholehearted enthusiasm. It has been a pleasure working with him.”

Words by Harry Newton

Images by David Gennard

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by Angela Stienne

Mummified explores the curious, unsettling and controversial cases of mummies held in French and British museums. From powdered mummies eaten as medicine to mummies unrolled in public, dissected for racial studies and tested in modern labs, there is a lot more to these ancient remains than first meets the eye.



Queer Beyond London

by Matt Cook and Alison Oram

Queer Beyond London explores and compares the queer dimensions of four English cities – Manchester, Leeds, Plymouth, and Brighton – using pioneering community histories from each place, and includes the voices of queer people who have made their lives there.

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Gift of Time

To mark the end of his tenure as our Chancellor, Lemn Sissay OBE has released a new poem, *Gift of Time*.

In it, Lemn celebrates the joy he's found during his time at Manchester and praises our students, staff and alumni for their dedication, passion and making his journey so rewarding.

The University's relationship with Lemn is set to continue as he becomes an alumnus and takes up a position as Honorary Chair in Creative Writing.

You can watch Lemn's performance of the *Gift of Time* on our website.

manchester.ac.uk/giftoftime

Words by Anna Pintus
Illustration by Jane Naylor

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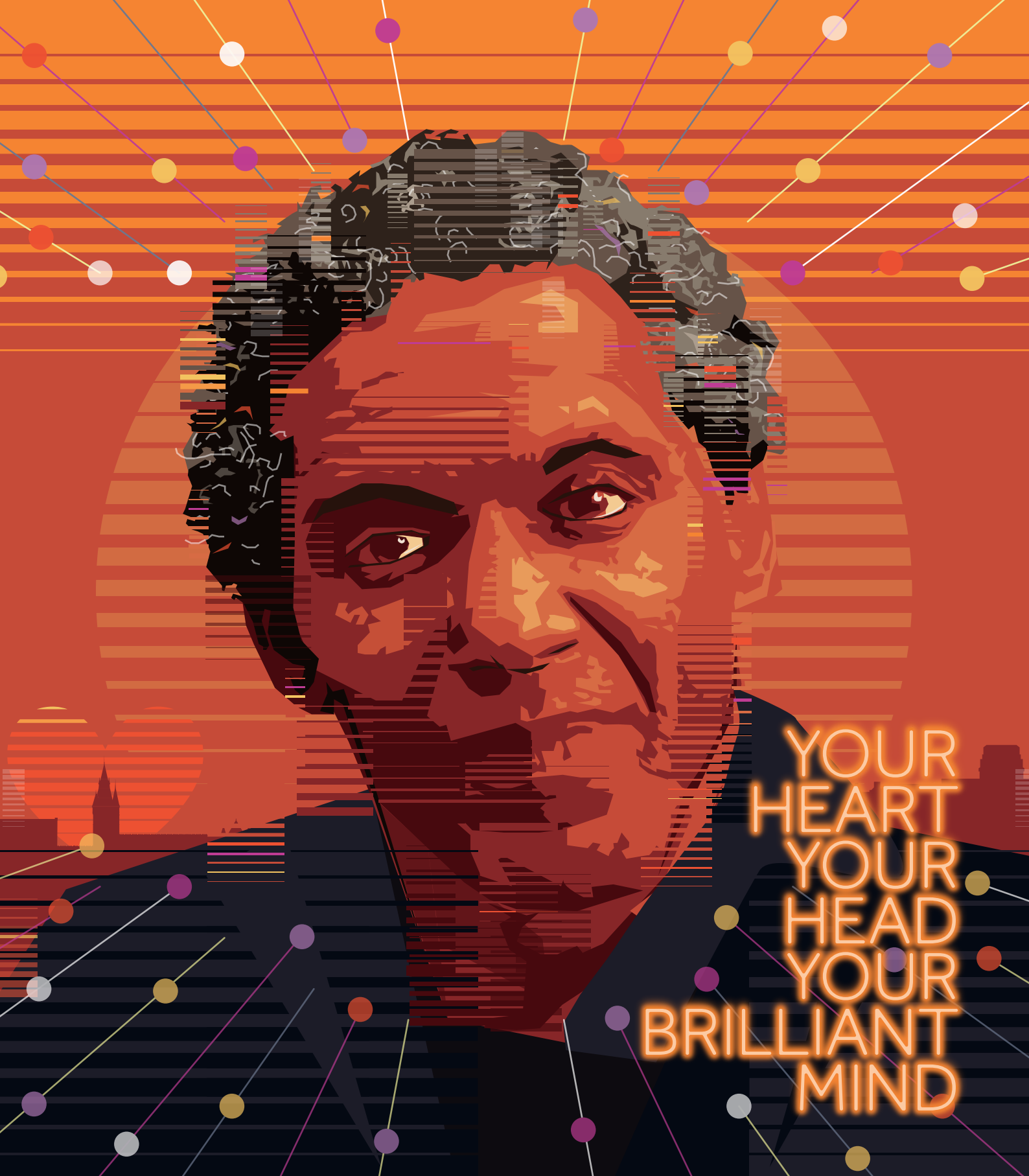
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