More and more universities are having to diversify their sources of funding in order to expand, develop and, in some cases, maintain standards against a background of falling government support for higher education in most countries. The University of Bristol is no different from any other British university in its desire to remain a top class academic institution renowned for the quality of both its teaching and research. Since 1990, when the University launched its fundraising campaign, the Campaign for Resource, it has attracted over £75 million of extra funding from companies, charitable trusts and individuals – both alumni and friends. It is important to note that this figure of £75 million does not include research money – it is extra, ‘new’ money which has enabled the University to attract top quality professors, to develop new academic projects, to provide new buildings and to fund additional fellowships, scholarships and bursaries. Without this £75 million, the University of Bristol would have had to face some very difficult situations.

In mainland Europe, universities are becoming increasingly concerned about how they will be funded in the future. They are very aware that central government may no longer be able to fund them adequately and that they must look to other sources. Funding will have to be sought from the private sector and from their alumni. Universities in Europe are already seeking advice from the US and the UK to see if there are any fundraising models which might be appropriate for their own particular national circumstances. The reputation of the Development & Alumni Relations Office at Bristol is such that it has been contacted or visited by numerous European universities on alumni relations and/or fundraising fact-finding missions. These include ESCP-EAP, Paris; Gdansk; Hanover; Heidelberg; Helsinki; Krakow; Malta; and representatives from Hungary and Slovenia.

The purpose of this lecture is to share an account of the reasons
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why one British university had to diversify its funding and, hopefully, to encourage other universities to realise that they too, can do the same. The main rule of fundraising is this, 'If you don’t ask, you don’t get!' but this very simple point is often put to one side as being too difficult or inappropriate, or even demeaning, for a university to try it. Can you imagine it? Actually going out and asking for money: it’s like begging! All we can say from Bristol’s experiences is that you may be very pleasantly surprised if you actually do go out of your office and ask people for their support. Besides, what have you got to lose?

Before analysing what happened at Bristol, it is important to place the funding of British universities in context. In 1963, the Prime Minister proposed the appointment of the Robbins Committee to review higher education in Britain and advise on its development. One of the recommendations in the Robbins Report was for an expansion in both the number and size of universities in the UK and increased funding from central government for higher education. In effect, the government of the day decided to take on the responsibility of funding universities. Gone were the days when universities had to rely on private benefaction and a hand-to-mouth existence. Instead, universities received increasing funding and for many it was a Golden Age of support for higher education. But it only lasted twenty years and in that period, a dramatic – perhaps even fundamental – change occurred in how people viewed the funding of universities. It became the norm to think that the funding of higher education was the responsibility – the sole responsibility – of central government. Why should people donate to a university? They paid their taxes to central government and it was therefore for government to finance higher education adequately. Universities began to neglect their alumni networks and failed to maintain and develop their links with local companies and the local communities. Why should they bother? Central government would always provide.

In 1979, a radical Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher was elected. One of its aims was to reduce public expenditure and to reduce taxation. The universities provided a soft target and one which, perhaps, could be regarded as having become a little too ‘fat’ and complacent. In March 1981, the British Government decided to
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cut the income which came to universities from the University Grants Committee (the UGC) and student fees. In 1983–84, the UGC issued detailed plans cutting Bristol’s income by 15%. Drastic adjustments were required to save £10 million immediately and £4.7 million a year thereafter.

Suddenly the University of Bristol found itself in a new situation. It was without friends in government. It had neglected its own network of supporters, especially its alumni. It was no longer receiving the financial support it had become accustomed to. In fact, it was on its own and it found itself very much alone. It was a classic case of short-termism gone wrong. Whilst the money came in, there were no difficulties, but once the funding source was drastically reduced, major problems arose. An unhappy case of ‘putting all its eggs in one basket’.

Most British universities suffered the same sort of cut although the University of Salford had to absorb a cut of 29%. Imagine what you would do in these circumstances. In Bristol’s case staff had to take early retirement, research grants were cut and departments had to close. It was a very difficult time.

Committees were established to work out how to save money and how to generate new sources of income. One of the results of the Income Generation Committee was to set up a University of Bristol Alumni Foundation in 1982 to raise support from the alumni – the former students of the University – and from staff and other friends. This Foundation was the first permanent fundraising unit in the University’s history and was the part-time responsibility of one member of staff. It was in time absorbed by the Development & Alumni Relations Office, which was created in 1990 to enhance further the fundraising potential of the University.

The words ‘development’ and ‘fundraising’ are interchangeable in higher education parlance. In the United States, the word ‘advancement’ is also used to describe this sort of work. People often assume that ‘development’ activities in the UK are something new – a knee-jerk response to decreasing government support in the 1980s and subsequently. But as I have already indicated, fundraising from private individuals existed before the 1963 Robbins Report. Indeed, the University of Bristol only came into existence because of the generosity of
both private citizens and the local council. With regard to fundraising, universities are having to return to their roots and once again learn the importance of establishing and maintaining links with a whole variety of groups who can help them: their alumni, wealthy benefactors, companies, trusts, charities, the parents of students, even their own staff!

This year, the University of Bristol celebrates its 125th anniversary. In 1876, University College, Bristol was founded. In its early years it struggled to stay afloat financially. What it needed was more money in the form of an endowment which would protect the College from the vagaries of stop-start funding. In 1908, Henry Overton Wills, a local businessman who had made a fortune in the tobacco business, pledged £100,000 towards the endowment of a University for Bristol and the West of England. This lead gift led to further pledges which resulted in a Royal Charter being granted. In 1909, the University of Bristol was established and all the bells in the city were rung to celebrate this achievement. Today, the University has 12,000 students, an annual turnover of £180 million and is one of the top universities in the UK. Other British universities can tell similar stories of their foundation: at Durham, in 1832 Bishop Van Mildert provided the funding to found the University from the Church’s wealth before it was appropriated by the government of the day; at Nottingham, the high street chemist family Boots played an important part. Many of the great civic ‘redbrick’ universities of England received the philanthropic support of local citizens who wished to found their own local university to serve the needs and aspirations of the immediate community.

At Bristol, the local Council levied an extra penny on the local rates (taxes) to help fund the University and this continued, although reduced to a nominal amount, until the 1970s. Nevertheless, the University of Bristol wished to expand. Appeals were launched to raise financial support from staff, alumni, the parents of students, friends of the University and local citizens on a regular basis. Major appeals took place in 1909, 1927, 1946, 1962 and then again in 1982. The 1927 Appeal made an ‘urgent call for patriotic citizens to raise £1,000,000’ with a full page advert in The Times which stated, ‘For youth – for the Nation – universities must expand.’ In 1962, Sir Winston Churchill, the Chancellor of the University since 1929, led an appeal with a statement, ‘During
more than thirty years, while I have had the honour to be Chancellor of the University of Bristol, I have closely observed its growth to its present stature and reputation. Much more remains to be done. The University must serve the educational progress of our country in an ever-increasing scale, and for this purpose further financial support is urgently necessary. What is interesting about these appeals is their frequency: they were occurring on a regular twenty year cycle. The difference with modern fundraising is that these appeals had short-term objectives and, by their very nature, were occasional. Appeals were only launched as a last resort. Fundraising today is a permanent operation – a fixed feature of university life and one which is increasingly being asked to find larger sums.

It is a truism but ‘Real education costs what it costs’. This is why universities need development offices to co-ordinate fundraising, to move a rolling portfolio of projects forward and to help ‘develop’ the institution with short-term, medium-term and long-term plans. One of the strengths of a university is that it is one of the few organisations which can actually plan for the very long-term and I will return to this point at the end of this lecture.

The reason for the setting up of the University of Bristol Development Office in 1990 can be neatly summarised by a recent editorial in The Times (8th July 2000). ‘Universities now compete in a global market place. Yet, increasingly, Britain’s institutions lack the funds to do this. A decade in expansion in student numbers has transformed a higher education sector that was once the preserve of an elite into one of mass participation. This stepchange in access and aspiration, however, has not been matched with resources. Funding per student stands at half its 1980 level, and no comparable Western Country spends a smaller proportion of national income on higher education. With salaries worth half as much as those in the US, universities struggle to attract the best academics. Higher education is underfunded as never before: this cannot continue if Britain is to keep pace with the global knowledge economy. Simply to restore funding to 1990 levels, given government expansion targets, would add 3 pence to the standard rate of income tax.’

In Bristol’s case, a projection was made in 1990 that £100 million
of additional funds would be required over the next decade to finance the University’s plans. If these funds were not raised, Bristol would become a very different university – ordinary rather than exceptional. When Dr. Alisdaire Lockhart, the University’s Development Director, was appointed in 1990, this massive figure was presented to him as his target. At that time, only a few British universities had set up development offices, notably Oxford and Cambridge. Alisdaire Lockhart, who came from the Cranfield Institute of Technology, now Cranfield University, set about building a fundraising team. From an initial team of two, it has now become a large office with 16 staff comprising three inter-related sections: project fundraising; fundraising from individuals; and support services (database, finance and research). The University has had to find the resources to fund this office, and its expansion in recent years, and this has cost £6 million in total over the last ten years.

It is this equation that is the key to understanding fundraising – £6 million in, £75 million out. Can any university afford to ignore this arithmetic?

By comparison with American universities, the size of Bristol’s Development & Alumni Relations Office, and the sums it has raised, are modest. By UK standards, however, it is a large office and one of the most successful offices in the country only exceeded by the campaigns of Oxford, Cambridge and the combined colleges of London University. It is quite common to hear of vice-chancellors sending staff on fundraising fact-finding missions to the United States. I myself have visited the States and I can guarantee that any visit will leave you with two clear impressions, both uplifting and depressing at the same time: their fundraising operations are huge and the sums of money raised enormous. There is clearly a long way to go before any British universities have offices the size of their American counterparts, but it must be recognised that American universities have been organising fundraising and alumni relations programmes for at least 50 years, and in many cases even longer.

Without wishing to cause too much despondency, one must recognise that ‘globalisation’ affects not only the economic but the intellectual life of countries. Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford and Chicago
are overtaking the distinguished universities of Europe. The American
universities have developed means of persuading their alumni to do-
nate sums to their endowments that no democratic government can
equal through tax transfers. When the military historian John Keegan
was a fellow at Princeton in 1983, he discovered that annual class reuni-
ons commonly raised $1 million each year, with the result that Princeto-
ton then enjoyed the income of an endowment of $7 billion. Today it
would be much more. As a consequence, Princeton and other Ivy Le-
ague universities can hire any teacher they want and provide facilities
such teachers need. Hence the rise in their academic predominance.
The wealth of these American universities also gives them the freedom
to admit any deserving applicant, irrespective of his or her family’s
ability to pay. It is a freedom they exercise liberally.

Michael Belloff, President of Trinity College, Oxford wrote to The
Times (1st May 1999) ‘Why can American admissions policies simul-
taneously give weight to family connection so as to foster goodwill
among alumni while applying affirmative action so as to ensure repres-
tations from minority ethnic groups in the student body? Why do
American students dare to risk incurring substantial debt to obtain de-
grees and then, when alumni, see themselves as having a further debt
of honour to secure the prosperity of their alma mater?’

The secret of university fundraising is that, over a period of de-
cades, the Americans have developed a moral sense amongst many of
their alumni, and other friends in commerce, that they should support
universities financially with personal contributions. It was this chal-
lenge, to change how people perceive the funding of universities, which
Alisdaire Lockhart faced in 1990. The successes that he and his team
have achieved are primarily due to a steady process of cultivation using
the keywords: inform, involve, invest.

When I visited the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1995 its
Chancellor explained an important aspect of fundraising and alumni
relations in the US: students attending universities, especially the fa-
mous private universities, often have to pay huge sums in tuition fees.
It is an expensive business costing tens of thousands of dollars. ‘Why
then,’ I asked, ‘do these alumni feel any compulsion to make addi-
tional voluntary donations once they have graduated? Surely, they have
paid enough already.' The response I received was that without the endowments, funded by alumni, that these universities have, the tuition fees would be even higher. It might cost you $20,000 a year to study but without the support of generations of alumni you would have been paying $40,000 a year. That was why you would be encouraged to make voluntary donations throughout your life and in the form of a bequest when you died. The process of cultivation started whilst you were still a student. University is not regarded as a three or four year interlude between school and a career – but rather the start of a life-long relationship with an institution you cherish.

It is the case in America that there is a belief in the dynamism of the private sector and a mistrust of the public sector, especially central government. If you want to get something done, you do not wait for government to do it – you do it yourself! This explains the vast range of fundraising initiatives for universities, arts organisations, cultural bodies, environmental charities and pressure groups. Coupled with this is the wealth of the United States, a tax system which encourages charitable giving, and a belief in putting something back into society. Research by the London School of Economics shows that the number of people participating in charitable giving in the US and the UK is roughly the same, approximately 75%. The difference is in the amount given: on average, Americans give 1.7% of household income to charity, whereas the figure in the UK is 0.63%. Animal charities and international aid are very popular in the UK, whereas in the States, religion and education are priorities.

There is also a very acute sense of ‘wanting to belong’ and, at the higher levels, to be recognised publicly for major benefactions. One only has to think of the American steel and railway magnates of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century who bequeathed their great art collections to museums named after themselves!

This desire for public recognition is a key factor in successful fundraising. Whether we like it or not, we are mortal and we cannot take our worldly possessions with us. Some people, often rich people, do worry about how they will be remembered and this concern is common to people of every nation. People like to have buildings named after them. This factor is one of the keystones of fundraising.
Coming back to the fundraising efforts at Bristol, the first stages of the Bristol Development Office were as follows:

- Ensure that the senior management of the University were fully supportive of the fundraising campaign.
- Identify a series of investment projects that could form the first group in what would become a rolling portfolio of projects.
- Identify organisations and individuals who could help the campaign with advice, introductions and support.
- Start educating different constituencies in fundraising, especially staff and alumni.

Any successful university fundraising campaign has to have the whole-hearted backing, support and time of the Vice-Chancellor or President, together with their senior colleagues. If the person at the top does not include it as a priority, it will fail. Equally, any division or lack of agreement among the senior members of the University will hamper fundraising efforts. It is essential that universities use their marketing and public relations offices to promote fundraising to five constituencies: the staff, the alumni, the students, the parents of students, and to friends of the university both locally and nationally. Fundraising is about changing how people perceive and value universities.

The following requirements for successful development operations are essential: strong leadership, clear direction, efficient ‘policing’ of who is permitted to approach external organisations for funds, and a willingness to provide the correct level of initial funding to enable a development office to establish itself. Too often, academics want quick results. Having neglected to nurture friends and supporters, they expect fundraisers to produce the equivalent of a white rabbit out of the magician’s hat, just like that!

The other common mistake is to starve the development office of the resources it needs to run itself successfully. Much of development work with potential donors is done over a meal. Academics love to point the finger at what they regard as lavish hospitality but this is actually an essential aspect of fundraising. You would not expect a guest to bring his own sandwiches when coming to stay at your home. Nor should you expect a donor who may be giving you £10,000 to pick
up a restaurant bill. It is often said that fundraising is all about friend-
raising. It may take months to get to know someone well enough to
ask for a major donation. It is human nature to choose the best time
to ask – after all, people do not often accept a proposal of marriage
on their first date!

In the early 1990s, there were still many academics who had de-
veloped their careers during the period when central government was
providing generous funding for universities. These individuals viewed
fundraising as anathema. Rather than being positive agents of self-
help, fundraisers were perceived as being the agents of a wicked gover-
nment policy bent on reducing central funding. The more success the
fundraisers achieved, the easier it would be for government to reduce
funding even further. With each election, many academics hoped for a
change of government and a reversal of policy. But their strategy was
based on hope, and hope is not a strategy. Over a period of four electi-
ons, a Conservative government was re-elected and remained in power
from 1979 to 1997. However, even when a Labour government was elec-
ted, it did not change the broad policy with regard to higher education.
Indeed, to the surprise of many academics, it promptly abolished stu-
dent grants and introduced tuition fees and student loans. To be blunt,
universities are rather expensive to run and there are not many votes
to be had in higher education. It is now clear to all but the most naive
that there is not going to be a return to a major financing of universi-
ties from central government. The Development & Alumni Relations
Office has always regarded ‘self help’ as a virtue. If the academics who
were so against fundraising, as a matter of principle, had been listened
to in 1990, the University of Bristol would have had a very different,
difficult future.

Bristol was fortunate in having the full backing of its Vice-
 Chancellor, Sir John Kingman, together with a Development Com-
mittee which comprised the most senior individuals in the University.
A decision was taken very early on that any fundraising approach
to external groups had to be co-ordinated through the Development
Office. At the very least, the Development Director had to be kept
informed. Co-ordination was the keyword. This procedure was neces-
sary to avoid the embarrassment of a charitable trust or a business
receiving three different proposals from University staff on the same day. On one occasion, the University of Oxford had been cultivating a Japanese company for a major gift, only to discover that their application was rejected because an Oxford College had succeeded in getting a modest project funded. The Japanese company strictly adhered to a rule: only one gift per university. As you can imagine, the Oxford University Development Office was not pleased!

It was necessary for the faculties to come up with an initial list of projects for which they were seeking funding — in effect, a shopping list. The Dean of each Faculty then had to approve which projects were actually central to the needs of both the Faculty and the University. For example, there was no point in raising funds to establish a special research centre if this was the brainchild of an academic who would shortly be leaving to go to another university. It was important to control the development of the University so that it could expand in a rational manner and not in an erratic way. A plan with vision was required. People also like to invest in success. Donors like to support exciting and imaginative projects or to help young people fulfil their potential. They will not give to an organisation which is failing or which cannot manage its finances properly.

The next stage was for the Development Director to review the list of projects and to give an informed opinion about the likelihood of raising funds. It might be the case that the Dean of Medicine wanted to raise funds for a Professor of Cancer Studies but that 38 other British universities already had a similar post. Potential funders might be interested in funding the first professor of a new and exciting discipline but not — no matter how worthy the subject — the UK’s 39th Professor of Cancer Studies! Much of the fundraising process is about matching up projects with suitable funding sources. Sometimes projects could be matched in a period of months — others might take years to achieve success.

Within the University of Bristol, it was essential for the Campaign for Resource to have some early success. Funds were quickly secured to benefit the Faculty of Medicine which had provided an excellent ‘shopping list’ of projects. This success enabled the Development Director to demonstrate the benefit of the fundraising campaign to the insti-
tution and to secure the interest and support of the Deans of the five other faculties. The success for Medicine also silenced some of the critics who had expressed doubts that a fundraising office could achieve anything at all. However, it was equally important to learn from our mistakes. There was no point spending years trying to raise funds for a project that was a non-starter. Development offices have to work out what they are good at and which projects are fundable. We have found that it can be very difficult to raise funds for buildings, but that it is easier to raise money for the provision of equipment in new buildings. Alumni like to support students suffering financial hardship, but are less interested in funding postdoctoral fellowships.

A question that many of you may be wanting to ask is ‘So who did Bristol approach to ask for support?’ In the UK, there has been a tradition going back hundreds of years for individuals or families to set up charities to support specific areas of life. The earliest foundations in the Middle Ages had a religious or medical purpose, but after the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century, education was increasingly chosen as an area for support with schools and colleges receiving endowments. In the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century, increasing wealth in the UK meant that more charities were set up especially to support different geographical locations, professions, social welfare, or special interest groups, for example animal welfare and the arts. Literally tens of thousands of charities now exist ranging from the very small to the very large. Some have endowments, whilst others raise funds through national appeals. Many of the medical charities raise funds for research – and where does the research often take place … in universities.

It is important to note that universities have charitable status in the UK. Any gift left to a university in a will is not taxed by the government. If a donor wants to leave the sum of £1 million to the University of Bristol as a legacy, that is the amount that the University will receive upon the person’s death. Whilst preparing this lecture, I met with a local man who wishes to leave the University £250,000 to support the provision of scholarships for students from poor backgrounds. In part he is making this gift because when he dies his estate will be large enough to incur death duties (taxation). He would prefer that a pro-
portion of his wealth goes to Bristol, rather than to the government, in order to reduce the level of taxation he is paying on the rest of his estate, which he is leaving to family members.

Charitable status also enables the University to increase the value of donations made to it from individuals who are paying income tax. The current basic rate of tax in the UK is 22% with a higher tax rate at 40%. The University can reclaim the basic rate of tax back from the government, thereby increasing the value of gifts at no extra cost to donors. The same applies to donors paying higher rate tax but, in this instance, the 18% difference in the tax rates can actually be reclaimed by the donors themselves. So, if you are earn more and pay more tax, it actually pays to give to charity! A similar system exists for companies wishing to give. These tax breaks play a very important part in encouraging people to think about giving. European universities will need to lobby their governments to introduce similar measures to encourage charitable giving. Governments are usually keen to reduce public expenditure and may be willing to assist universities with legislation to encourage support from businesses and individuals. The Committee of vice-chancellors in the UK, together with other leading charities, have successfully persuaded the current government to support increased tax efficient giving.

The sums awarded by the largest charities are enormous. The Wellcome Trust, which was endowed by the Wellcome pharmaceutical company, has a diversified portfolio of investment assets worth £10 billion in October 1997. It supports biomedical research, the history of medicine and the public understanding of science, and in 1996/97 made grants worth £227 million. In the same year, the Sainsbury Family Trust – who made their money in supermarkets – made grants worth £58 million; the Leverhulme Trust, which supports research and education, awarded over £15 million; and the Wolfson Foundation, which assists university medical departments, awarded over £18 million. Many local charities exist in Britain, some of which are very small but which can, if approached in the correct way, provide modest, regular support.

One significant recent development in the UK is the emergence of a twice weekly National Lottery. In the past, the only major form of
national gambling was the football pools, when individuals attempted to forecast the results of league football games which take place every Saturday. The profits from the football pools were huge, and a special charity, the Foundation for Sport and the Arts, was set up to put some of these profits back into the community. The Foundation still exists and in 1997 awarded grants of nearly £40 million. The popularity of the National Lottery has rather eclipsed the football pools. In 1997, the National Lottery Charities Board made awards of £285 million. It is interesting to note that lotteries were used in the past to raise funds for national projects. The British Museum was built with the proceeds from a lottery!

In addition to funds available from charities, from tax payers, and from the proceeds of betting, companies and businesses have also played a part in using a proportion of their pre-tax profits to support worthy causes. In 1999/2000, over 35 companies made charitable donations exceeding £1 million with the bank Lloyds TSB, through its Lloyds TSB Foundation, heading the list with donations of £26.5 million.

As I have shown, there are many non-governmental sources for British universities to approach for funding. However, it is important to note that it is not the organisation or charity which makes a donation, but rather an individual, or group of individuals, within the organisation or charity who make the decision. This is where the importance of patrons and an alumni network can make all the difference. Key people can, and do, influence decisions.

One of the reasons the Campaign for Resource has been successful was the development of a list of Patrons of the Campaign. Approximately 50 distinguished individuals were recruited over a number of years to lend their support to the campaign. They are all leading members of their particular field — whether in education, politics, business or the arts. Many of them are graduates of the University or have a family connection — often through their children. Others have strong links to the city of Bristol or to the south west region in general. What they share is a desire to see the University succeed and they are willing to advise or engineer introductions for the Development Director. The Patrons have provided countless examples of help to secure major do-
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nations. Their contributions ‘behind the scenes’, have played a vital role in raising funds, and the Patrons are one of the main pillars of support for the continued success of the Campaign.

I have left the University’s alumni, its former students, to last. Alumni Relations? What exactly is that all about? I often get asked this when meeting people. In essence, the purpose of Alumni Relations is to promote the University’s work to the thousands of alumni spread throughout the world, and to mobilise their goodwill, support and interest in order to help the University develop and flourish. Henry Ford, the American car manufacturer, once described the alumni of a university as being like the shareholders of a company. They have a direct vested interest in seeing the company do well as the ‘value’ of their degree rises and falls with the success of the enterprise! Many alumni care very deeply about the University of Bristol’s future and generously support fundraising initiatives to help current students and University projects.

Every day the Development & Alumni Relations Office receives letters, emails, faxes and telephone enquiries from alumni asking for help. It might be that they want to contact a contemporary with whom they have lost touch, organise a reunion, or find out about reasonably priced hotel accommodation in Bristol. It could be that they want to help the University by giving careers advice to current students, by making a modest gift to provide support for a student with financial difficulties, or to discuss ways in which they can leave a legacy to Bristol in their will. These enquiries are very varied in their nature because we are in touch with over 65,000 graduates worldwide, ranging in age from 21 to over 100, who have studied a multitude of subjects. The one thing these alumni have in common is that they know Bristol well and the majority have fond memories of both the city and the University.

In 1991, the University introduced Nonesuch, a special twice yearly magazine for its alumni. With every mailing of this magazine, an alumni record form is included which graduates are encouraged to complete and return. Over a decade, a very sophisticated database has been built up which now contains information on 65,000 alumni. In 1982, when the University started to collect information on former students, they only had addresses for 2,000. A huge amount of work
was required to discover where the alumni were now living and what careers they had followed. This information is used to help alumni keep in touch, to organise reunions and to provide careers advice to current students.

Since 1994, the University of Bristol has organised regular fundraising campaigns by both post and via the telephone. Areas of student life are highlighted – the Library, the provision of computing facilities, the halls of residence, scholarships for gifted students and bursaries to alleviate financial hardship. Specialist campaigns have been launched for specific departments such as chemistry and veterinary science. In these appeals, veterinary science students call veterinary science alumni about the Veterinary School. Not surprisingly, they find they have a lot in common and the participation rate rises. Over £1.5 million has been raised by contacting alumni and inviting them to contribute. Of course, not everyone gives but many alumni make small regular gifts and there are occasionally major donations. On the first night of calling in 1994, one graduate pledged £100,000, payable in instalments over 10 years. He had met his wife at Bristol, had thoroughly enjoyed his time at the University and had had a successful career. He now felt that it was time to help the next generation.

One of the most important aspects of alumni fundraising is thanking people. If someone makes a gift, the very least they expect in a nice thank you letter. We were once visited by a graduate who was rather angry. He came to the Development & Alumni Relations Office to say that he had made a gift but that he had yet to receive any form of thanks. We were embarrassed but after a short conversation, it transpired that he had made the gift in 1946! He had been waiting for the thank you letter for 50 years and it was still something that upset him.

In addition to thank you letters, donors now receive an annual newsletter which explains exactly how their donations have been used. Every Christmas, donors receive the University’s Annual Report together with a special Campaign for Resource calendar that includes photographs of projects supported through their generosity. On the back of the Calendar are listed the names of all the donors. Donors who receive regular updates often make further gifts both in terms of size and frequency.
People who give larger sums receive invitations to the University Charter Day, which celebrates the foundation of the University. A select group of supporters are invited each year to have lunch with the Vice-Chancellor and to hear lectures on Campaign for Resource successes. Staff from the Development & Alumni Relations Office take donors on tours of University departments to involve them further in the work of the University. The day ends with a special tea where donors can meet the recipients of scholarships and bursaries. The students who attend are some of our best advocates! Major benefactions to the University — gifts of over £250,000 — are recognised by a formal ceremony during graduation week when donors are invited to sign ‘The Roll of Benefactors’ in the University’s Great Hall. Smaller gifts are recognised by admission to ‘The Chancellor’s List’ (£50,000) or ‘The Vice-Chancellor’s List’ (£10,000).

In addition to individual donations, many alumni wish to remember the University in their wills, particularly those alumni who have no immediate family and who are in the position of having to decide which organisation should benefit from their estate when they die. Many remember their time at University with great affection and leave substantial amounts to benefit different faculties, departments or facilities. Bristol has received major gifts to benefit the medical sciences, the departments of French, Physics, Historical Studies and the School of Biological Sciences. These gifts are used to provide publicity and to promote the concept of giving both to the students who benefit, and who will in time become alumni themselves, and to all our graduates through the pages of our alumni magazine.

Now, perhaps more than ever before, the University is becoming more reliant upon the support and interest of our alumni. There is increasing competition between universities for the best students. Maintenance grants have been abolished and loans and tuition fees introduced. This means that there is an even greater need to provide scholarships and bursaries so that able students, whatever their financial circumstances, can study at Bristol. We are tremendously grateful to alumni who provide the means to finance these scholarships.

Dr. Henry Drucker led the Campaign for Oxford. In 1994, he delivered a keynote speech on ‘Why people give’ to the Royal Society for
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the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. He noted the strengths of universities:

- They have a respected place in society.
- They have a broad base of subjects – unlike a performing arts organisation.
- They can generate wealth – through inventions and patents.
- They have thousands of alumni, the majority of whom had a positive university experience.
- They have a history and a future.

Giving is all about inspiring people. If they believe in the cause, and the people presenting the cause, they will donate. Fundraising is about finding people with the imagination and foresight to invest in education. These people do exist. Since the foundation of the oldest university in the world, the University of Bologna in 1088, the university system has spread throughout the world. Universities have a long and distinguished tradition. Apart from universities and the Church, there are very few institutions that can trace their history back to the Middle Ages. Universities exist today which have lasted longer than royal dynasties. Universities may merge but you very rarely hear of universities closing down. This longevity gives universities the luxury of long-term planning, a luxury that few companies and corporations can indulge in.

The Chancellor of our own University, Sir Jeremy Morse, supports fundraising. He has said that endowments give universities security. More importantly they give universities independence. This independence from external control is what fundraising can provide, and it is a very attractive goal for universities. In 1728, Daniel Defoe said ‘Knowledge will never hurt us, and whoever lives to see a University here, will find it gives quite another turn to the Genius and Spirit of our Youth in general.’

We owe it to future generations of students and scholars to provide them with universities that will enable them to fulfil their potential for the benefit of humanity.