

# Achievers

Spring/Summer 2008

Read about alumni (past students) who have used the College of North West London in the London Borough of Brent as a springboard to success. To find out more about these students, access our College website: [www.cnwl.ac.uk](http://www.cnwl.ac.uk). click on Life at CNWL, then click on Alumni.

## Doctor Oyere aims for the heart



A CNWL scholar once described by a science tutor in 1998 as “the brightest student I have ever taught” is on course to become a top heart specialist in her home country of Nigeria after first qualifying as a biomedical engineer.

Oyere Onuma, who came to Britain in her teens, arrived with nine straight As at GCSE Level, and completed four A-Levels in biology, maths, chemistry and physics with top grades.

The 19-year-old was offered places at Oxford, Bristol, Harvard and Yale, and chose the USA, enrolling at Harvard University where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biomedical Engineering in 2002. She then went on to medical school at the Yale University School of Medicine qualifying as a doctor in May 2007.

Of CNWL she says: “I continue to remember my stay fondly. I do hope that other students have the kind of wonderfully supportive environment that I had.”

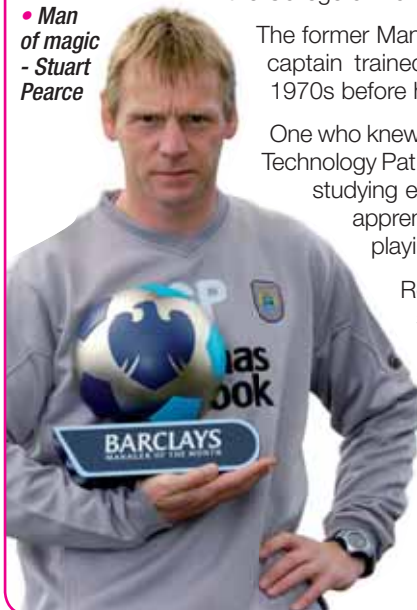
• Oyere Onuma

## Soccer boss is a real live wire

WHEN painting and decorating ex-student Albert Adomah was signed by Premier League club Barnet in January 2008, he was not the first fledgling footballer to learn a trade at CNWL.

England Under-21 manager Stuart Pearce, now a key assistant to England manager Fabio Capello, is a former student of Willesden Technical College, the forerunner of the College of North West London in Willesden.

• Man of magic - Stuart Pearce



The former Manchester City manager and one-time England captain trained to be an electrician for four years in the 1970s before hitting the soccer big time.

One who knew Stuart well was current Head of the Faculty of Technology Pat Leavey, because both of them were local boys studying electrical installation on a four-year day release apprenticeship programme. At that time, Stuart was playing as an amateur with Wealdstone FC.

Recalled Pat: “We were electricians at the same place, the London Borough of Brent’s housing maintenance section, and we worked on the same jobs. He was a very nice guy, and we had some good fun.

“He resisted all attempts by the professional football establishment to get him to go straight into a soccer career. He wanted to have vocational qualifications in case things did not work out for him in professional football.”

## Top website bank job

A FORMER CNWL Art & Design student has started an important job with the HSBC bank as its Graphics and New Media Manager for Central & Eastern Europe based in Prague in the Czech Republic.



• Michal Lukowski at CNWL with some of his art work

Michal Lukowski was one of the stars of his Access course in 2005-6. He designed the College’s website for art students, Headset 2006, single-handed in just two weeks, using animation, graphics, photography, video and music and working non-stop.

The 21-year-old from Willesden came to the UK from Poland eight years earlier and attended Queen’s Park Community School.

Before leaving College he landed a “fantastic” graphic design job in a publishing house, so he deferred his university place.

## Dream came true for Life FM boss

BRENT’S online radio station Life FM beat over 40 other applicants to win a five-year contract to run a community radio service on air from April 2007.

And the Chief Executive Officer masterminding Harlesden’s first community radio station plus SKFM in



• Jennifer Ogole

Kilburn, is a former College of North West London student who once dropped out of study, but later worked for the College and

turned her life round.

Stonebridge-raised Jennifer Ogole started on the road to success in the early 90s when after a brief venture into computing, she studied Access to Social Science at the College’s Kilburn site, then went on to Thames Valley University to take a degree in Sociology and Economics, followed by a Master’s degree in Urban Regeneration.

# Why Maxine leads the way

A HEALTH and social care co-ordinator from Hertfordshire who came to Britain from Jamaica aged 23 has her own dedication and the help of the College of North West London to thank for her career success, which included gaining a first class honours degree.

Mature student Maxine Allison, who is married with two grown-up children, studied intermediate social care followed by an Access to Social Work course at the College from 1995-7, while living in Wembley. She received offers from four universities but chose Kingston, where she graduated with top grades in social work and care management in the year 2000.

While working for Haringey Advisory Group on Alcohol (HAGA) for three years following a placement with them, Maxine gained a teaching qualification plus a group work qualification from London's Birkbeck College and now works for Watford & Three Rivers Primary Care Trust, where she deals with health and adult care services in the community.

But she also does assessment work for social care degree students in the London area, and she recently started a part-time Master's degree in Professional Education & Training in Human Services, also at Kingston.

"When I first came to CNWL, the other

students were much younger than I, and I had a few problems because of having a family. It was not easy, but I was given an action plan and the tutors were very helpful and encouraging, and also approachable.

"If you have planning and discipline, you can get through it. Now I have a job where you have to manage your time well because it involves dealing with crises and emergencies."

Maxine's teachers at CNWL included Pam Brown and Jan Etienne. Jan said: "I taught Maxine on the Access course. I think she is a real success story and a real-life role model for our mature women students."



Sarah Choudhrey



Sadegh Darvaehnoi



Bushra Khawaja



Phillip Bishop



Sara Addis



Arefeh Seyedarabi



Eranda Bandera

## They're all top of the class!

EX-PUPILS from the Islamic College for Advanced Studies (ICAS) in Willesden High Road are tipped to gain even more 1st class honours degrees in their final BA and BSc exams at university in summer 2008.

ICAS, whose teaching staff are employed by the College of North West London, has scored some outstanding internal exam results ever since it was founded eight years ago, but that success does not stop at A-Levels. Ex-pupils who left three or four years ago are also getting top degree results.

Among several 2007 high achievers was former ICAS sixth-former Sarah Choudhrey,

22, who gained a 1st for her BSc in Multimedia Technology and Design at Brunel University. She then worked as a web designer for the online travel company Opodo.

Another ICAS winner was Sadegh Shahrabaf Darvaehnoi who followed a four-year undergraduate Master's course at Imperial College, London University, and completed his MEng Computing with 1st class honours.

Head of Education Dr Mohammed Mesbahi said that since ICAS started, 460 students had gone to university and 80 per cent of them gained 1st class honours in their BA or BSc finals or distinctions in their Master's degrees.

Students of CNWL or ICAS achieving first class honours degrees and Master's/PhD degrees include:

### SUMMER 2007

**Sarah Choudhrey**, see above.

**Sadegh Darvaehnoi**, see above.

**Bushra Khawaja**, 24, Distinction, MBBS degree in medicine, University College, London. Former pupil at CNWL-linked Islamia School, Kilburn.

### SUMMER 2006

**Phillip Bishop**. First, BSc in Building Surveying, Westminster University.

### SUMMER 2005

**Sara Addis**. First, BSc in Building Surveying, Westminster University. The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) also awarded the mother of two a Certificate of Excellence for gaining the best degree from Westminster. While at CNWL, Sara scored the highest BTEC mark in the country for her HND in Surveying.

### SUMMER 2003

**Arefeh Seyedarabi**, 22. First, BSc in Genetics & Microbiology, Queen Mary College (London University). Went on to take a PhD in Structural Biology. Former pupil at ICAS.

### SUMMER 2003

**Eranda Bandera**, 24, from Sri Lanka, was a CNWL International student who took a six-month course

in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at Kilburn Centre to boost his chances of a top university place. Eranda already had a first class honours degree in aeronautical engineering from the University of Ufa in Russia. but wanted to pursue an MSc in aircraft construction and rocketry in the UK. Thanks to the English course, he was offered a place at Manchester.

### SUMMER 2000

**Maxine Allison**, Jamaican-born mature student and mother of two. First, BA in Social Work and Care Management, Kingston University. See story above.

### SUMMER 1999

**Loveth Inaba & Jill Barraclough**. Firsts, Business & Accounting, Middlesex University Business School. Both were former BTEC Advanced Business students at CNWL who overcame health difficulties and family commitments to achieve top marks. Loveth praised the quality of the teaching and course at CNWL. She said: "It helped me to gain the confidence I needed to succeed with the demanding work at University. We learned so much in College that I was able to understand and take an active part in my course from the first moment I entered university."

# The man who saved his soul

**MANY performing arts students from CNWL go on to professional studies and thriving careers, and all develop confidence and skills they never dreamed of.**

Among the most successful is former Bosnian asylum seeker Goran Kostic, who since leaving CNWL has worked non-stop in theatre, radio, TV or film as an actor and freelance technical director.

For the law student, enrolling for a BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts at CNWL in 1993-4 was a form of salvation – a way of coping with the civil war going on back home in Sarajevo. Not only did the course prove cathartic, but it brought professional success.

After taking a degree at Goldsmith's, Goran found himself in demand to play East Europeans and hard men. He played small roles at the National Theatre, worked with top actor/

director Steven Berkoff and continues to land TV and film roles, from *The Bill* and *Eastenders* to the movie thriller *Hannibal Rising* and the romcom *The Truth About Love*.

Earlier, in 2003, he had a prominent role as Ezekiel in the satellite TV comedy series about car mechanics, *Grease Monkeys*. He guested as a bodyguard in *Spooks* and appeared in the sci-fi thriller *Children of Men* (2006), playing a Bexhill Market hustler.

In 2008 Goran can be seen in three upcoming feature films - *The Hunting Party* (formerly titled *Spring Break in Bosnia*), starring Richard Gere, the human rights film *Extraordinary Rendition* starring Andy Serkis (Gollum from *Lord of the Rings*) and the French-made Liam Neeson film *Taken*. He also appears in a soon-to-be-released gangster film *Outlaws*.

When he could, Goran often returned to



• Goran Kostic with his baby son in 2004

CNWL to help out with lighting Performing Arts productions, including the 1999 musical drama *Nightshriek* and *Kafka's Metamorphosis* in 2003 – despite living in Bristol with his wife Vanja. They are currently based in Toulouse.

He said: "They asked me why I wanted to do drama. I said – to save my soul. It was therapy – it released an unbelievable amount of stress. My wife found her peace of mind in Buddhism. Mine was through drama."

## Nonso breaks into films



• Nonso in *Othello*

### Roots Co-ordinator

VOTED Student of the Year on finishing her Access to Performing Arts course at CNWL in 1998, mother of three Paulette Harris-German went on to take a drama degree at Middlesex University. She then tackled a wide range of theatre and media work in the UK and abroad. In April 2006 she was appointed London Roots Co-ordinator in charge of ethnic cultural programming for the BBC in the capital.

The role, one of 11 nationwide, combined journalism, events management, new programme ideas, research and public speaking. Initially Paulette worked on funding and casting, and helped produce news items. She also had a spot on BBC Radio London.



• Paulette Harris-German

Says Paulette, whose son Marlon also studied at the College: "The Access course I did at the College was absolutely brilliant, because it was my gateway back into education."

**IN recent months, you may have seen him playing a soldier in the acclaimed Oscar-winning Ian McEwan film *Atonement*, or spotted him in the action thriller *The Last Legion* about the Romans and King Arthur – released on DVD in February 2008.**

At 23, he was the youngest person ever to play King Lear in a Royal Shakespeare Company production. Two years later, he played the title role in *Othello* to critical acclaim during a world tour and won the Magnolia Stage Performance Award in China for best actor – the first non-Chinese to be honoured with the prize.

A year later in 2005, he won the Sunday Times/National Theatre Ian Charleson Award for Best Young Actor under 30 in a classical role, and had his portrait in charcoal hung in the National Portrait Gallery in London.

He has played many stage roles, including a prisoner opposite Kenneth Branagh's Edmond at the National Theatre, and is now carving out a film career that could make him a household name.

Yet Nonso Anozie, the Wembley-raised 6 feet 6 inch son of Nigerian parents, is still only 29. He credits his excellent drama training at the College of North West London in the late 90s with helping to launch his career.

He had previously spent an uninspiring year studying drama elsewhere, but it was when he enrolled for the BTEC National Diploma at CNWL that his talent began to emerge. At the end of his course, he beat off massive competition to win a coveted degree place at the Central School of Speech and Drama in 1999.

His film roles last year included the voice of Iorek Byrnison in *The Golden Compass* – based on Northern Lights, the first book in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy. Later his voice was replaced by that of Ian McKellen, but can still be heard in the video game. Director Chris Weitz described Nonso as "one of the most promising and soulful young actors I have encountered in England".

In summer 2007 he voiced the narrator Prospero in the classical concert *The Water Diviner* staged at the Royal Albert Hall to highlight environmental issues.

Now in 2008 Nonso's screen appearances could rocket him into the big time. He has a leading role in the new Mike Leigh film *Happy-Go-Lucky*, which won an award in Berlin and is due for cinema release in April 2008. Look out too for Nonso playing the lead in *Cass* – the life story of West Ham football hooligan turned author Cass Pennant, which began filming in autumn 2007.



• Nonso meets CNWL students in 2004

**CNWL - your passport to achievement**

# Style fame for the three Ms

IT seems that hairdressing students from CNWL's Wembley Park salon are always winning prizes, both in College and after they leave. But three in particular have made their mark – Marva Gordon, Michael Roberts and Marcia Johnson.

All have won numerous national prizes in recent years, including at the Afro Hair & Beauty Awards at Alexandra Palace, North London. Mother of one Marva started the trend in 2001 when she became national Afro-Caribbean freestyle champion at the AHT awards in Blackpool, and later the Level 3 student won the Softsheen Carson national title and further awards through her Kilburn salon, Xcellence.

Michael Roberts opened his own salon Michael's Styles in Willesden High Road in the year 1999 while still a Level 2 student and went on to win awards and run his own competitions.

Mother of two Marcia Johnson has won eight national hair awards since 2002, including five in 2007 a year after opening her own salon



• Michael Roberts



• Marva Gordon



• Marcia Johnson

Rougz in Finchley Road, Hampstead. She and Marva have both been guest speakers at the College's annual awards ceremonies. The former Level 3 student told her audience: "The College has helped me turn my dreams into reality."

## Shaun could be next MP



• Shaun Bailey

FORMER College of North West London student Shaun Bailey, a youth worker from Ladbroke Grove, was adopted as the Conservative Parliamentary candidate for Hammersmith and Fulham in 2007.

Shaun overcame three rival candidates to win the chance to overturn a projected Labour majority of nearly 6,000.

A well-known face on radio and TV, he became the darling of the media after he wrote No-Man's Land, a 63-page pamphlet analysing the social crisis afflicting our inner-cities, while a research fellow at the Centre for Policy Studies.

Willesden Centre in Dudden Hill Lane is where Shaun Bailey studied A Levels in sociology and economics in the 1990s, before taking a degree in computer aided technology. He worked as a security guard at Wembley and the Trocadero to put himself through university.

An award-winning gymnast with the Childs Hill Gymnastic Club for over twenty years, Shaun co-founded My Generation, a registered charity set up to address social problems of the young.



• Alex Piludu

## Working for Jamie Oliver

RUBBING shoulders with Brad Pitt, George Michael, Jamie Cullum and Cat Deeley in your workplace is all in a day's work for Italian Alessandro Piludu, a former student of catering at the College of North West London in Wembley Park.

Soon after leaving CNWL, Alex landed a job with Jamie Oliver in his famous London restaurant Fifteen in Shoreditch, supervising batches of 15 unemployed youngsters who want to become chefs.

Among over 20 regular chefs, Alex was the only Italian chef, with sole responsibility for preparing pasta dishes using fresh pasta which he kneads and cuts by hand. Many superstars visit the main fine dining restaurant or its informal ground floor trattoria.

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# WHERE you can study WHAT at CNWL

NOTE: Some subjects can be studied at more than one centre

### WEMBLEY PARK

Hairdressing, catering, business & accounting and more



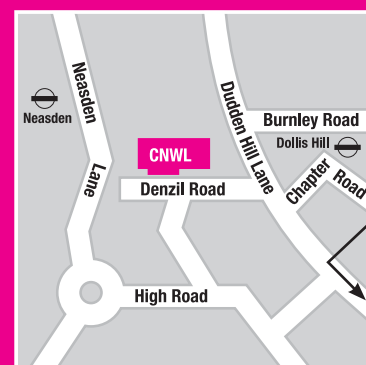
### KILBURN

ESOL, English, Maths, interpreting, computing and more



### WILLESDEN

Science, electrical installation, health & social care, art & design, building surveying, performing arts and more



ICAS A-Levels