Enough, for all, forever:
in pursuit of sustainability
Tuition fees: the facts
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Foreword
Professor Paul Younger
(BSc Geology 1984, PhD Civil Engineering 1990)
Director, Newcastle Institute for Research on Sustainability (NIReS)

There are many definitions of sustainability, but most fail to identify that the economy, society and nature are not largely separate domains that intersect only in the space we label ‘sustainability’; rather these domains are concentric, so we need to devise economic measures that respect societal needs and environmental limits. ‘Enough, for all, forever’ is Newcastle University’s pithy crack at the proverbial nut.

‘Enough’ fulfils needs without creating waste. ‘For all’ encompasses all the Earth’s beings. And ‘forever’ means exactly that. We need to become good ancestors as well as good neighbours.

Newcastle upon Tyne has been named the UK’s most sustainable large city for the second year running, which is a huge achievement considering our industrial roots – don’t forget it was our Tyneside forefathers who gave the world ‘carboniferous capitalism’. Now the challenge is to change one of the world’s oldest industrial cities into one of its most sustainable, and to make it a global exemplar of best practice.

This issue of Arches looks at the work of the University and our alumni in the pursuit of sustainability. The article on page 8 looks at the solutions-led research on campus, from modelling the effects of rainfall on crop yields, to green forms of transport, and the drilling of a borehole two kilometres beneath the centre of Newcastle in search of geothermal energy.

Elsewhere, celebrated author Matt Ridley warns of the unintended negative outcomes of well-intentioned desires to ‘go back to nature’ (page 11); Geography graduate Ed Stafford walks the entire length of the Amazon, and witnesses the effects of deforestation (page 24); and Arches looks at the work of an independent cinema in London which supports an ecovillage in South Africa (page 26).

If you live in the UK, you can’t have missed the media frenzy around the 2012 student fees proposals. Arches provides a full report on page 20. And in the field of health, little presents such a challenge to healthy old age as the onset of dementia. You can read about the University’s pioneering research on page 18.

Finally, on behalf of the University, I’d like to thank Mark Scrimshaw, who stands down as chair of the Alumni Association after 10 years this summer. Mark talks about his experiences on page 32.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Arches.

Paul Younger

Two minutes with Ella Ritchie
Arches has a brew with the University’s Deputy Vice-Chancellor

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The Big Market
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Bookmark
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University’s pithy crack at the proverbial nut.

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Professor Paul Younger
Mothers’ obesity increases risk of foetal and infant death

Women who are obese during early pregnancy have a significantly increased risk of their baby dying before, during or up to one year after birth, according to Newcastle University researchers.

Publishing in Human Reproduction, a journal of reproductive medicine, the researchers studied 40,932 single-baby pregnancies at five maternity units in the North of England between 2003 and 2005. They found the risk of foetal death (in which the baby dies in the womb) or infant death (up to one year after birth) to be double in women who were obese in early pregnancy than those of recommended weight.

Obese women were categorised as having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 kg/m² or more; recommended weight is a BMI of between 18.5–24.5 kg/m². The total (absolute) risk among obese women was 16 in every 1,000 births (1.6%) compared to nearly nine per 1,000 births (0.9%) in women of recommended weight.

Dr Ruth Bell, clinical senior lecturer in the Institute of Health and Society at Newcastle University and associate director at the Regional Maternity Survey Office (RMSO), said: "It’s important to remember that most women will deliver a healthy live baby, regardless of their weight at the start of pregnancy. What’s key is that women should be helped to achieve a healthy weight before they become pregnant or after the baby is born. Our research shows that this will give the baby the best possible start in life. Women should not try to lose weight during pregnancy, but should ensure they eat a balanced healthy diet."

Recycling efforts are not wasted

Newcastle University has increased its recycling rate to almost 93 per cent in just three years – and is no longer sending any general waste to landfill.

Daniel O’Connor, waste manager, said this remarkable achievement was down to dedicated staff and students, good communications, easy-to-use recycling facilities and new waste treatment technologies.

In 2008, the University’s recycling rate was around 20 per cent. Now most items can be recycled – including more unusual ones such as keys, bubble wrap and DVDs.

A ‘Let’s recycle more’ campaign was introduced in early 2010, which included £30,000 worth of recycling containers so no one would be more than 20 seconds away from a recycling bin. And one of the most colourful and effective methods of encouraging recycling has been the introduction of a ‘recyleometer’ of foam balls, which reflects each University building’s recycling rates.

Increased recycling has cut the University’s spending on waste by £90,000 in the last financial year alone.

Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Planning and Resources, said: 'If someone had told me three years ago that we could hit an almost 93 per cent recycling target, I would not have believed it. However, we have shown that with good communications, great infrastructure and a ‘can do’ attitude, any organisation can divert hundreds of tonnes of waste from landfill, save carbon, get more value out of waste, and even save money at the same time.’
A Newcastle archaeologist has helped to ensure a new Roman biopic, set in North East England and Scotland, is true to history.

Lindsay Allason-Jones (BA General 1974, MLitt 1988) served as an academic adviser to the production team behind The Eagle, which stars Billy Elliot star Jamie Bell and Channing Tatum. The film was released in the UK in March, and is out on DVD from 21 June.

Inspired by Rosemary Sutcliff’s novel The Eagle of the Ninth, the film follows a young Roman centurion as he ventures beyond Hadrian’s Wall to discover the fate of the lost Ninth Legion and restore his family’s honour.

An expert in Roman archaeology, Lindsay became involved after the film crew visited the former Museum of Antiquities, now housed in the Great North Museum: Hancock, in 2008. ‘With television, they tend to get everything I know at the beginning and then I rarely hear anything until it’s finished, but with this I had input throughout,’ she said. ‘As academics we’re always told to do things which have impact. It’s such a good film that it cannot fail to engage people with this period in history.’

More pedantic historians may take issue with a few aspects of the film, but overall Lindsay was impressed with how the production crew took her advice, particularly when it came to making a milecastle on Hadrian’s Wall and its inhabitants more authentically ‘scruffy’.

‘There are a few details – such as the Roman soldiers wearing leather armour and using stirrups because the actors would fall off otherwise – that couldn’t be changed, but I can live with that,’ Lindsay said. But thankfully, she was able to correct the Roman word for sword from ‘gladiolus’ to ‘gladius’ before publicity materials went to print. ‘I still have a lovely image of them running into battle waving their flowers every time I think about it,’ she laughs.
New boat for Marine School

A 100-year-old University tradition will be maintained when the School of Marine Science and Technology launches its new research vessel later this year.

The boat, still to be named, will replace the 35 year old RV Bernicia which is fondly remembered by generations of marine science alumni.

The new vessel is essential to the University’s profile as a major player in the marine field.

No other vessel with similar capability for environmental monitoring and research activities exists between Edinburgh and East Anglia.

One of the many research programmes supported by the vessel is the Dove Time Series, a North Sea monitoring programme of international importance to climate change studies. This programme involves monthly ‘at-sea’ sampling of plankton, initiated in 1969 and continuing to the present day, which provides invaluable data about the health of the marine environment.

Through its marine research activities, the University also has the opportunity to contribute to the economic development of the region by informing regional policy and practice in the areas of fisheries and offshore wind turbines.

The School of Marine Science and Technology already has one of the most extensive public engagement programmes in the University, and plans are already in development for extending these activities on a new improved and safer vessel.

The design of the new boat developed from a concept that came out of a PhD thesis by Antonis Mantouvalos (BEng Marine Technology 2002, PhD 2008).

It is an innovative catamaran concept with a pedigree from the traditional Northumberland ‘coble’ fishing boat – technologically advanced and very environmentally friendly.

The new vessel is under construction by local company Alnmaritec, based in Northumberland.

Students’ Union refurbishment well under way

An £8 million refurbishment of the Students’ Union, which began in November 2010, is promising to transform the interior of one of the University’s most iconic buildings and significantly improve services for students.

Built in 1924 by local architect Robert Burns Dick – whose company also designed the Laing Art Gallery, the Spanish City in Whitley Bay and the towers of the Tyne Bridge – the building is the social and administrative centre of Students’ Union activities.

Its President, Tom Delamere (BA Archaeology 2010), said: ‘The Students’ Union needs to be a building that reflects the diversity of our student members and the range of activities we offer.’

The development will see all six floors of the building given a full refurbishment and new facilities added, including a large space for gigs and events, a brand new bar, 24-hour-access computer clusters and coffee bar as well as the Student Advice Centre.

Over the last six months, the building has been stripped back to its original features. The process of fitting the new shop, offices, bars and computer clusters is now well under way and everything is running to schedule for the new Union to open in time for Fresher’s Week 2011.

An artist’s impression of level two of the Students’ Union, as it will look on completion in September.
New technique offers hope of preventing mitochondrial disease

As the Health Secretary, Andrew Lansley, considers new legislation which could allow a medical technique, pioneered by Newcastle University scientists, to be used on patients, Sam Wood looks at the potential of the research.

Last year Professors Doug Turnbull and Mary Herbert and their team announced a breakthrough in the fight against an inherited disease. Scientists had, for the first time, managed to successfully transfer DNA between two human fertilised eggs.

The technique (pictured) has the potential to help prevent the transmission of serious inherited disorders known as mitochondrial diseases.

Every cell in our body needs energy to function. This energy is provided by mitochondria, often referred to as the cell’s ‘batteries’. Mitochondria are found in every cell, along with the cell nucleus, which contains the genes that determine our individual characteristics. The information required to create these ‘batteries’ – the mitochondrial DNA – is passed down the maternal line, from mother to child.

Like all DNA, the DNA in mitochondria can mutate and mothers can pass these mutations onto their children. Around one in 200 children are born each year with mutations which in most cases cause only mild or asymptomatic forms of mitochondrial disease. However, around one in 6,500 children are born with severe mitochondrial diseases, which include muscular weakness, blindness, fatal heart failure, liver failure, learning disability and diabetes that can lead to death in early infancy.

There are no treatments available to cure these conditions and mothers face the agonising choice of whether to risk having a child who may be affected by such a disease or not to have children at all.

Ruth Safak’s 20-year-old son, Deniz, is confined to a wheelchair, has regular seizures and suffers severe migraines. Ruth, 54, from Sunderland, is his sole carer.

‘Mitochondrial disease has ruined our lives,’ says Ruth. ‘My son is much worse than me, he vomits, he has seizures and migraines, he can’t walk, he’s only 21.

‘I didn’t know until Deniz was eight that he was affected by it and I was a carrier. He can’t do anything for himself, he needs round-the-clock care and suffers terribly. If I could have avoided this, what a marvellous life we would have had.

‘I think the research into this technique is fantastic and nothing should stand in its way.’

Earlier this year an independent scientific report by The Human Fertility and Embryology Authority (HFEA) described the technique being developed at Newcastle University as ‘potentially useful’.

Although it found no evidence that the techniques would be unsafe, the report recommended a number of new experiments to address any potential safety concerns.

The report has now gone to the Health Secretary, Andrew Lansley, who will decide later this year if the technique will be allowed to progress to full human trials and eventual treatment.

Professor Doug Turnbull, who is co-leading the research, said: ‘We are pleased to have received this endorsement from the HFEA. We are already beginning to address some of the experiments they have asked us to conduct, but this will take time.’

In the wake of the HFEA announcement, leading medical research charities signed a joint open letter to Mr Lansley, urging him to introduce regulations to enable the technique to be used in clinical treatment.

Under amendments to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990, the government is able to pass regulations which will allow the techniques to be used in assisted conception (IVF). However, these regulations will only be considered once it is clear that the scientific procedures involved are effective and safe. It remains to be seen which way the government will go.
This year, Newcastle University launches the second of its societal challenge themes: sustainability. *Arches* looks at some of the solutions-led research on campus and beyond; the transformation of Newcastle and Gateshead into a 'living lab'; and the role you can play in creating a sustainable world for future generations.

**ENOUGH, FOR ALL, FOREVER**

Newcastle upon Tyne is the UK’s most sustainable large city – according to influential think tank, Forum for the Future, which bestowed the accolade in 2009 and 2010. Not bad for one of the world’s oldest industrial cities, and the global birthplace of ‘carboniferous capitalism’ – the industrial economy based on use of fossil fuels.

Newcastle City Council and neighbouring Gateshead Council have committed to a joint economic and spatial strategy based on the attainment of sustainable urbanism; and are now working with Newcastle University to establish the NewcastleGateshead conurbation as a ‘living lab’ – which will serve as a montage of best practice for achieving sustainability in old industrial centres across the world.

At the heart of this strategy, known as the ‘1Plan’, is the twenty-acre Science Central redevelopment site in the centre of Newcastle, where work is well underway to develop state-of-the-art research facilities shared by the University and its industrial partners, alongside sustainable, affordable homes.

Leading the University’s contribution to this is the Newcastle Institute for Research on Sustainability (NIReS) – based in the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering – which is drawing together work from many Schools across the University to spearhead our second societal challenge theme, sustainability (see panel piece on page 11).

The challenge is formidable, and the University recognises that only where there is consensus and active participation will positive changes result. The University has adopted a four-word slogan to capture the essence of the sustainability challenge: Enough, For All, Forever. ‘Enough’ implies a material sufficiency (though not wasteful excess); ‘for all’ evokes both social equity and consideration for the non-human inhabitants of shared ecosystems; and ‘forever’ signals respect for natural resource limitations as well as ensuring we preserve our planet for future generations.

The vision of ‘Enough, For All, Forever’ is the raison d’être of NIReS, which is fostering interdisciplinary research throughout and beyond the University community to deliver world-class solutions in the development of clean fossil fuels, renewable energy, water management in the face of climate change and the development of more sustainable modes of transport, to name but a few.

‘The University-wide focus on sustainability provides a boost to our existing efforts to deliver lasting solutions rather than merely analyse problems,’ explains Professor Paul Younger (BSc Geology 1984, PhD Civil Engineering 1990), Director of NIReS. ‘The pursuit of a `knowledge economy’ is much talked about in academia and government. We want to go a step further, pursuing a `wisdom economy’ in which knowledge is tempered by a principled commitment to ensuring that all beings – human and non-human – have access to sufficient resources in perpetuity.’

‘While the University’s programme of events lies at the heart of this launch year for the theme, the sustainability challenge will remain a focus for years to come, as an issue around which the University will marshal its people and assets, putting the full force of the institution behind finding solutions to some very real challenges in feeding, watering and sheltering the world without destroying nature in the process.’
A high-profile campaign, set to be launched at the House of Lords in summer 2011, aims to deliver a number of measurable outputs. These include encouraging policymakers to reform the regulatory framework so that the real costs of carbon, water and other limited resources are priced into goods and services to ensure that the power of the market starts driving sustainable solutions. The campaign will also promote a change in attitudes, encouraging us all to reassess the impact of how we use and manage resources for the future.

Newcastle’s expertise in the field of sustainability falls into 10 thematic areas (see the wheel above). These 10 themes do not cover every aspect of sustainability, but accurately represent areas in which the University already has independently attested, world-leading critical mass in research. Over arching challenges of our age – most notably climate change – are addressed across all of NiReS’ themes, rather than as separate issues.

The launch year focuses on four themes in particular: energy, water, marine and transport. Here are some examples of the University’s groundbreaking work in these areas.

**Energy**

**Geothermal energy**

Engineers and geologists at the University are drilling a 2,000-metre borehole under Science Central, in the centre of Newcastle, to harness geothermal energy from one of the UK’s largest geological fault zones – the so-called Ninety Fathom Stublick Fault Zone – which shows signs of hosting hot groundwater. This could provide much of the fully renewable energy supply for the development itself, as well as a portion for the neighbouring Eldon Square, the UK’s largest city-centre indoor shopping mall. Professor Younger is keeping a blog on the borehole’s progress, which you can access through the University’s website at: www.ncl.ac.uk/sustainability

**Bio energy**

A state-of-the-art anaerobic digestion plant that converts manure from livestock, along with energy crops and vegetable residues, into green energy is now in operation at the University’s Cockle Park Farm near Morpeth.

Anaerobic digestion is a microbial process which breaks down organic matter into simpler chemical components in the absence of oxygen, resulting in the production of biogas – generally 60 per cent methane and 40 per cent carbon dioxide – together with digestate, which will be used for fertiliser. This process will contribute to the UK’s renewable energy targets and help reduce the carbon footprint of agriculture.

The facility has been installed to promote the uptake of anaerobic digestion, and is set to provide farmers and rural businesses with a valuable source of information and expertise. The School of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development is running an engagement programme through to September 2012, which includes a number of workshops and a free feasibility assessment service.

The plant will generate more than 250,000 cubic metres of biogas per annum, currently being burned in a gas boiler, and 7,000 tonnes of biofertiliser per year. The mix of farm, University and residential properties on site will provide an opportunity to use the renewable heat and electricity produced to create a sustainable energy community. Keep an eye on AlunNews for more information as it unveils, or contact Paul Bilsborrow, project manager, at: p.e.bilsborrow@ncl.ac.uk
**Water**

**Catchment hydrology and sustainable management**

The complex interactions between climate, land, water and human activity have become a major focus for integrated social and academic research, and the development of tools to support decision making.

Researchers in the University’s School of Civil Engineering and Geosciences (CEGS) have modelled the potential water yield (the volume of rainfall minus evaporation to show the amount of water available to crops and catchments) for various climate change scenarios across the UK. In the drier locations, they found a trend towards a negative yield in the next 50 years.

‘This represents a huge issue which means we need to start taking our water use and catchment management much more seriously, to avoid grave water supply implications,’ says Jennifer Harrison (BSc Geography 2006), a research associate in CEGS. ‘This means integrated land and water resource management, which leads to suitable crop selection.

‘We’re increasingly linking with academically excellent institutions in Arizona, Melbourne, South Africa, India and others to learn from their work on dryland crops and management whilst supplying our superior expertise in areas such as modelling. There is great potential to benefit from the existing advances these organisations have made, combined with our own hydrological expertise, and gain an improved understanding of how we can move towards more sustainable energy and water use.’

**Marine**

**Algal biofuels**

Scientists and engineers at Newcastle are engaged in pioneering research to develop algae into a commercially viable bioenergy source. The researchers have developed methods of converting algae into methane for heating and electricity generation, and also for extracting algae oil to be converted into biodiesel.

Newcastle University is internationally recognised for its expertise in algal bioenergy. A key focus of the research is to make the process of energy generation from algae more cost efficient and able to operate at a large scale.

‘One of the major barriers to the commercial production of algae fuel is the cost of harvesting and dewatering,’ says Dr Gary Caldwell (MPhil 2001). ‘We have developed innovative, low-cost, low-energy harvesting technologies that promise to substantially reduce the costs associated with algae farming’

Newcastle is also the world leader in the field of algae chemical ecology. Algae communicate with each other by releasing specific chemicals into the water. As part of an £8 million investment by The Carbon Trust, the researchers are pioneering techniques based in chemical communication to trick the algae into growing faster and producing more oil – work that has recently been showcased on BBC Countryfile in the UK.

‘Newcastle and the North East of England have historically been at the centre of power generation in the UK,’ adds Dr Caldwell. ‘As fossil fuels decline, research at Newcastle University will ensure that the region will once again be at the heart of the growing UK bioenergy industry.’

**Transport**

**Electric and hybrid cars**

Greener transport research at Newcastle University focuses on developing technologies to lower the environmental cost and drain on resources of transport operation and production.

Researchers from the University are working on specialist equipment for electric vehicles, some of which have already been fitted in electric cars that are undergoing trials on roads across the North East. These include: new materials for lighter structures; new energy storage systems and fuel cells; advanced biofuels; low carbon vehicles; innovative tractor drives and recommendations for improving the behaviour of drivers.

The University’s director of human resources, Veryan Johnston, took part in such a trial in April of a Cu-V electric car, made by Northumberland-based Avid. ‘It was a bit strange when I first started to drive it,’ she says. ‘It’s silent and there are no vibrations, which was a little weird, but once you get used to it it’s great.’

**Exhaust emission sensors**

Remote road-side sensors are under development at Newcastle, with the aim of measuring carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and nitric oxide emissions from passing cars – with up to 300 wireless sensors in the street-side infrastructure of Gateshead to measure pollutants and detect vehicle flows.

The real-time monitoring of environmental pollution will be used to explore how traffic control and demand management measures could be implemented to mitigate pollution. This could help track whether or not carbon emissions are decreasing in line with the UK government’s guidelines.
Rising to Global Challenges: Rio +20 and Tipping Point

NIReS is providing much of the scientific support for the development of a relatively new international charity, the Planet Earth Institute, which is committed to encouraging collaborative, science-based initiatives between developing countries in the global South to address the world’s most pressing sustainability issues.

The Planet Earth Institute (PEI) has developed from a UNESCO initiative in the late ‘noughties’, and retains a prominent link to the heart of many United Nations sustainability programmes. Over the next year, PEI is charged with organising many of the global round-tables in preparation for the ‘Rio+20’ Earth Summit, at which world leaders will gather in the summer of 2012. Through NIReS’ involvement with PEI, a round-table event will be held at NIReS in late 2011, involving staff and students from throughout the University and beyond. Furthermore, in March 2012, NIReS will hold the latest of the high-profile, international ‘Tipping Point’ events, in which scientists and artists of all kinds come together to explore novel ways of communicating and understanding the great sustainability challenges of our age, and possible solutions to them.

If you are interested in participating in either event, please email: sustainability@ncl.ac.uk

Sustainability: a societal challenge

Given its vision of a world-class civic university, and as part of its commitment to excellence with impact, Newcastle University groups and nurtures a significant part of its research under institutional themes that address key societal issues. These themes, called Societal Challenge Themes, address the demand-side of research by responding to some of the most pressing needs within society.

Last year saw the successful launch of the first of these themes: ageing and health. And 2011 sees the launch of the second: sustainability. This theme is being led on behalf of the whole University community by the Newcastle Institute for Research on Sustainability (NIReS).

“We see the development of these societal challenge themes as representing the entire University community – students, staff and alumni – as well as responding creatively to the needs expressed by our many partners in civil society,’ says the University’s Vice-Chancellor, Professor Chris Brink. ‘We hope that as many of you as possible will join in the activities of the societal challenge themes. This year we are launching the Sustainability theme with a wide variety of events, from the scientific to the cultural, and from the regional to the international.’

For more information, visit the NIReS website at: www.ncl.ac.uk/sustainability or e-mail: sustainability@ncl.ac.uk

‘We see the development of these societal challenge themes as representing the entire University community – students, staff and alumni – as well as responding creatively to the needs expressed by our many partners in civil society.’

Professor Chris Brink, Vice-Chancellor.

Get involved

Keep an eye on AlumNews, our alumni e-newsletter, over the coming months for a more in-depth look at these research areas. If you’ve not yet registered, contact: alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk with your name, graduation details and e-mail address.

‘Enough, For All, Forever’ hopes to engage with all alumni as well as a wide range of local and regional organisations and individuals who share a passion for making Newcastle as sustainable as it can be.

Please get in touch and tell us how you are approaching the challenge of sustainability, either from the perspective of your own carbon footprint or as a company that delivers solutions to sustainability challenges. This information will be used to map the city and region in terms of sustainability assets, technology, services and solutions. And take part in the launch year’s diverse programme of events, which you can read about online at: www.ncl.ac.uk/sustainability

For more information on how to get involved, visit the website, contact the team on: 0191 246 4960 or e-mail: sustainability@newcastle.ac.uk
THE SUSTAINABILITY PARADOX...

Or why going back to nature would be a disaster for nature –
Matt Ridley (Hon DCL 2007) shares an alternative view of sustainability.

Bizarrely, most of the policies urged by the environmental movement would increase the acreage each person needs to sustain their lifestyle. According to think tank Global Footprint Network, we are already consuming the Earth’s food, fuel and fibre 1.4 times as fast as it can be replenished.

But this number is misleading. More than half of it consists of the land that would be needed by each person to plant trees with which to absorb his or her own carbon emissions. If you take the view that we can cut emissions, or find better ways to sequestrate them, or even cope with at least some increase in them, then the footprint shrinks and we are living well within our ecological means. Even if the footprint number is right, is it really increasing? I would argue the opposite. Our ecological footprint is probably shrinking at an accelerating rate and we are getting more sustainable, not less, in the way we use the planet. The most sustainable thing we can do for the planet is to accelerate technological change and economic growth.

Going back to nature would be a disaster for nature. I hardly live as an ecological ascetic, with my synthetic fleece, leather shoes and imported fruit juice. Acres of oil wells, cattle fields and mango orchards divert their output to me. But if I lived as a hunter-gatherer, I would need roughly 1,000 hectares of land to survive. And if the remaining 6.8 billion of us did the same, we would need 18 planets – 54 if we couldn’t exploit the ocean.

When farming was invented 10,000 years ago, its footprint was instantly smaller. The first farmers needed about ten hectares each to support their lifestyles – a hundredth of the hunter-gatherers. Likewise, the introduction of fossil fuels 200 years ago further shrank the footprint and so halted deforestation. In the 1700s, Britain’s iron industry was dying for lack of wood fuel on a largely deforested island. A century later, Britain was burning coal equivalent to the output of a forest the size of Scotland and trees were spreading again.

Nowadays, every item we use takes less land to produce than it did in times past. My clothes and breakfast each take roughly half as many acres to produce as they did before synthetic fertilisers. Yields of fibres such as cotton, silk and linen have roughly doubled. Every improvement in fuel efficiency is a reduction in fuel acreage. In the past 50 years, thanks to innovations in genetics, pesticides, and fertilisers, the tonnage of cereals grown in the world has almost trebled even though the acreage of cereals grown has stayed roughly the same at a little under 700m hectares. This is largely thanks to the Haber process, which extracts nitrogen from the air to produce ammonia for fertilisers.

Likewise fuel. A log fire requires up to ten acres of intensively harvested woodland just to supply the manure. Whereas a typical shale gas well in Pennsylvania occupies half an acre and produces 50,000 cubic feet a day, enough to heat 150 houses – making gas 3,000 times more efficient than wood in terms of fuel acreage.
So my point is simply this: human land needs – as measured in acres to produce food, fibre, fuel, shelter or lighting – are all getting smaller and smaller and have been doing so for a very long time. How then is it possible to argue that we are increasingly and unsustainably overdrawn at the planetary ecological bank?

To this question you will hear three common answers. First: population. The eightfold explosion in the numbers of people in 200 years has overwhelmed the reduction in the land hunger per person. Second: finite resources. It is only possible to produce so much per acre by burning lots of oil, coal and gas, which will soon run out. Third: pollution. The increase in the yield per acre has come at the expense of air pollution, water pollution and climate change.

As for population, it is quite true that any reduction in the land used per person in the twentieth century was overwhelmed by the quadrupling of the number of people. Suppose that the Haber process had never been invented. The twentieth century would have surely seen terrible famines (and much less population growth). Suppose fossil fuels had not been tapped in the nineteenth century. Britain’s industrial revolution would have ground to a halt as soon as all the streams of the Pennines had been exploited for water mills. It was because of the reduction in acreage needed per person achieved by both these innovations, and many others, that population was able to grow so much. Yet, bizarrely, thanks to a worldwide phenomenon called the demographic transition, the richer and healthier and more urbanised we become now, the fewer babies we have. The United Nations estimates that world population will probably cease growing altogether when it hits 9.3 billion some time after 2060.

As the population growth rate slows, the footprint of humanity itself will start to shrink. By 2070, every reduction in land use per person will be a gain to the whole species.

Yes, but since resources are finite, surely we will run out of oil, gas, phosphorus, copper, nickel or some other such non-renewable resource? Well, first observe the surprising fact that it is the renewable resources that keep running out: mammoths, blue whales, white pine forests, guano. By striking contrast, there is not a single non-renewable resource that has run out yet: not coal, oil, gas, copper, iron, uranium, silicon, or stone.

As the best sources of copper, phosphorus or oil run out, and as new extraction technologies are invented, the poorer reserves become economically viable. In the past few years, horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing to extract shale gas have doubled America’s reserves of accessible and cheap natural gas; the same technology is now being tried in Europe, Asia and Australia and promises a global gas glut that will last decades. Even if conventional oil runs low, tar sands, oil shale and coal-bed methane will ensure plentiful fossil fuels for at least a century, perhaps much longer. They will be priced out of the market by cheap nuclear or solar power long before they physically run out.

But what about the earth’s capacity to absorb our waste? Vast amounts of land are needed to suck man-made carbon dioxide from the air, yet even here there are all sorts of improving trends. The Hudson and Thames rivers have less sewage and more fish. Pasadena has less smog. Swedish birds’ eggs have 75 per cent fewer pollutants in them than in the 1960s. American carbon monoxide emissions from transport are down 75 per cent in 25 years.

Decarbonisation, too, is already happening. The Italian engineer Cesare Marchetti once drew a graph of human energy use over the past 150 years as it migrated from wood to coal to oil to gas. In each case, the ratio of carbon atoms to hydrogen atoms fell, from 10 in wood to 1 in coal to 1/2 in oil to 1/4 in methane. Thanks to cheap shale gas, methane may soon begin to price coal – the most carbon-rich fuel – out of the market for electricity. The energy expert Jesse Ausubel predicts that ‘if the energy system is left to its own devices, most of the carbon will be out of it by 2060 or 2070’. Of course, these shifts may not prove fast enough to avert climate change. But the key is that things are going in the right direction. The footprint is shrinking.

So it is with incredulity that I watch the governments of the world, urged on by greens, assiduously trying to increase the human ecological footprint in the name of saving the planet. They praise organic farming, which means a massive increase in land taken for agriculture. And almost every measure espoused for fighting climate change – wind, waves, solar, tide, hydro and above all biofuels – would increase the acreage required to support a human lifestyle.

Biofuels are perhaps the greatest white elephant. A ‘crime against humanity’ in the words of Jean Ziegler, the United Nations special rapporteur on the right to food. Between 2004 and 2007, the world maize harvest increased by 51 million tonnes, but 50 million tonnes went into ethanol, leaving nothing to meet the increase of demand: hence the spike in food prices in 2008, which caused riots and hunger.

Their environmental benefits are negative too. Every acre of maize or sugar cane requires fertilisers, pesticides, and fuel for trucks, tractors and distillation – all of which are made with fossil fuel. So the question is: how much fuel does it take to grow fuel? Answer: about the same amount. Depending on which study you cite, each unit of energy put into growing maize ethanol produces 71–134 per cent as much in energy output. Drilling for and refining oil, by contrast, gets you a 600 per cent energy return or more on your energy used.

Be in no doubt: the biofuel industry vastly increases the human footprint.

The same is true of other renewables. To supply just the current 300 million inhabitants of the United States with their current power demand of roughly 10,000 watts each (2,400 calories per second) would require solar panels the size of Spain, wind farms the size of Kazakhstan, or woodland the size of India and Pakistan.

And this is far from a benign, cuddly, green use of the land. One wind farm in California kills 24 golden eagles a year and at least 2,000 other raptors; each turbine in the Appalachians needs four acres of forest cleared. Solar panels require huge amounts of steel and concrete. Tidal barrages change the ecology of estuaries. All renewables need to be linked with long lines of marching pylons. To generate the power that keeps civilization going with renewable energy would mean going back to the medieval habit of industrialising the entire landscape, only with ten times the population.

The ecological footprint of humankind is too large. It is our duty to shrink it. But going back to organic farming, self-sufficiency, renewable energy or even hunter-gathering will only increase it at the expense of other species. By far the best way to cut the human footprint down to size in the twenty-first century is to use more technology to raise productivity, more fertiliser to raise yields, more natural gas – the least carbon-rich, least land-hungry and possibly most abundant of the fossil fuels – to amplify human work and more prosperity to lower birth rates.

Then our great-grandchildren can live lives of great wealth, health and wisdom while surrounded by vast wildernesses. More cities and more tigers. That’s my dream.

Matt Ridley is a zoologist, conservationist, journalist and award-winning author whose books have sold over 800,000 copies in 27 languages. His latest book, The Rational Optimist, is available on Amazon and at all good bookshops.

You can read Matt’s full manifesto on the ChangeThis website at: http://bit.ly/lJZtlk
This challenge is being addressed by a new volunteer programme at Newcastle called LiveWell, which is encouraging older people to improve their health through regular exercise and the adoption of a Mediterranean-style diet. Populations in countries that avoid modern western dietary habits – such as Greece, Italy and Spain – generally have lower mortality rates and greater longevity.

Launched at the Great North Museum: Hancock in November 2010, the LiveWell programme is focused on ways to encourage healthy eating and exercise, and how to overcome the barriers to change in dietary behaviour.

Newcastle University invited premier North East chef and restaurateur, Terry Laybourne, to show how easy it is to embrace the ‘Mama Mia’ diet. ‘Mediterranean-style food is just so versatile and these recipes are incredibly simple, healthy and provide tasty food,’ says Laybourne. ‘There is nothing complicated in any of it; anyone at home can follow these recipes and really improve what they eat.’

The old adage that ‘an apple a day keeps the doctor away’ really is not an old wives’ tale at all. People who eat more fresh fruit and vegetables, cereals and fish, and balance this with modest amounts of dairy products and less red meat and saturated fats can drastically reduce the risk of disease. Research by the BNF shows that the risk of cancer is reduced by 24 per cent; Parkinson’s disease or Alzheimer’s disease by up to 52 per cent; and death by heart attack or stroke by 36 per cent. As Professor Paula Moynihan, a nutrition expert at Newcastle University, explains: ‘People these days are living longer but not necessarily in a state of good health. Just a few easy changes could dramatically improve quality of life into old age. It is never too late to start eating healthily.’

‘Mediterranean-style food is just so versatile and these recipes are incredibly simple, healthy and provide tasty food.’

Terry Laybourne, chef and restaurateur
BRANDADE of MACKEREL

Ingredients
- 120ml olive oil
- 2 rosemary sprigs
- 6 thyme sprigs
- 4 sage leaves
- 20 garlic cloves (peeled and each cut into three pieces)
- 700ml double cream
- 900g mackerel, whole, heads removed
- 1,500g potatoes (peeled and cut into two-inch chunks)
- 1 baguette (for olive oil croutons)

Method (serves four)
Remove heads, tails and gut from the mackerel • Bake for 15 minutes, then remove the skin and flake the flesh • Warm the olive oil and infuse with the herbs – strain • Heat the cream with the garlic and simmer until garlic is soft – liquidise • Cook the potatoes gently in water • Drain when tender and transfer, together with the fish, to a mixer with paddle attachment fitted or mix by hand • Beat for 30 seconds then drizzle in warm, herb oil followed by two thirds of the garlic cream

NIÇOISE SALAD with GRILLED TUNA

Ingredients
- 12 new potatoes (cooked and peeled)
- 225g extra fine French beans (prepared, cooked and refreshed)
- 1 Little Gem lettuce
- 4 large plum tomatoes (core removed and cut into quarters)
- 4 hardboiled eggs (cut into wedges)
- 55g anchovy fillets in oil
- 20 stoned black olives
- 12 basil leaves (torn)
- 20 flat parsley leaves
- 4 tbsps extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp best-quality red wine vinegar
- Sea salt
- Milled black pepper
- 4 x 120g tuna steaks (sushi quality)

Method (serves four)
Place the tuna in an oiled pan and sear on both sides • Tear the lettuce and arrange as a base • Build up layers of French beans, tomatoes, eggs, olives, basil and parsley • Place the tuna steak on the top

COOK WITH TERRY LAYBOURNE
For the 150,000 people estimated to be trafficked into forced labour and prostitution in South Asia each year, leaving such situations is only the first step towards regaining their lives. Returning home brings about new challenges, especially for women trafficked from Nepal, where discriminatory citizenship laws may make them aliens in their own country. Now researchers at Newcastle University and a Nepali NGO run by survivors of trafficking are lobbying to change the country’s constitution.

Life after trafficking: FIGHTING FOR IDENTITY IN NEPAL

Although the prevention of trafficking is a priority issue for many governments, little attention is paid to the plight of returnee women, who arrive home seeking a sense of social acceptance. In Nepal, one of the source countries for trafficking in South Asia and the Middle East, reintegration into society is all but impossible due to stigmatization and rules on citizenship that are biased against women.

‘Citizenship is the only way returnee trafficked women can construct their identities, regain the support of their families, explore desirable livelihoods and bring their traffickers to justice,’ says Dr Meena Poudel (PhD 2009) of Newcastle University’s ‘Post Trafficking in Nepal’ research project, herself from Nepal.

The two-and-a-half-year project, which began in 2009 with funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), is in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mission in Nepal, and Shakti Samuha, a Nepali NGO set up and managed by women who have experienced trafficking.

The Newcastle research team is led by Professor Diane Richardson, Professor Nina Laurie (BA Geography 1986) and Dr Janet Townsend.

At present, the children of returnee women who are born through sex trafficking are unable to gain citizenship of Nepal.
Shakti is Nepali for ‘power’ – wishful thinking, perhaps, for the many trafficked women it represents. The organisation provides a political voice for trafficked women; runs anti-trafficking campaigns in areas with the highest incidence, such as slums and around factories and dance bars; offers new skills to help formerly trafficked women find work; provides hostel accommodation; and lobbies for citizenship on a case-by-case basis.

Such is the stigma of trafficking in Nepal, that most returnees are labelled as prostitutes and ‘HIV carriers’, whether or not they have been trafficked for sexual purposes, into the circus, or into other forms of forced labour. Many other migrants who return from working in traditional destinations for trafficking, such as cities like Mumbai in India, are also stigmatised as ‘prostitutes’. But the steady increase of Nepali migrant workers into South Asia and the Middle East, along with labour agreements set up between the Nepali government and various countries, mean these stereotypes may soon be blurred.

For those who have experienced trafficking, the Newcastle research team has found that NGOs such as Shakti play an important role in their reintegration – offering training in traditional jobs such as sewing, cooking and carpet making. Shakti also provides business start-up funding for women to enter male-dominated trades such as driving ‘tempos’ (motorised rickshaws), security and plumbing. But many work spaces still bring a risk of identification and prejudice; and many jobs are unavailable unless a woman can provide a citizenship card.

The citizenship issue sits in contrast with positive developments elsewhere in Nepal. Since civil war and pro-democracy movements led its transition to a federal republic in 2008, Nepal’s politics have become increasingly progressive. It was the first country in South Asia to approve same-sex marriage, and one of the few to abolish the death penalty. But progress is hampered by gender inequality, entrenched, in part, by practices rooted in traditional Hindu values.

This inequality is evident in the national disparity in illiteracy, with two thirds of adult females being illiterate compared to a third of males (according to the United Nations Development Programme); and even more damningly by the bias against women in terms of national identity.

At present, Nepalis are required to apply for a citizenship certificate when they reach 16 years of age. The right to citizenship is only passed through the paternal line, and women are unable to apply without support from a male relative, such as her father, or husband.

This has huge implications for the thousands of women who are trafficked from Nepal every year, as many are rejected by their families on their return. ‘A trafficked woman is perceived as a ‘shame’ to her family,’ says Dr Poudel. ‘They think she would make their god unhappy, and stain the honour of their family.’

‘If the family is aware that a woman is returning from a trafficked situation, they will even send a message warning her not to return to their village. It is then very unlikely that male relatives would endorse her application for citizenship.’

This, says Dr Poudel, can drive women into violent marriages, in a bid to secure a man’s signature on their papers.

For women who return to Nepal with children born as a result of trafficking, the situation is even more complicated, as a non-citizen mother is unable to confer citizenship on her offspring.

The existing Interim Constitution of Nepal, which was put in place in 2007 as a precursor to the new 2011 draft bill, states that a mother can endorse citizenship applications for her children if the father’s identity is unknown. But Dr Poudel says this is toothless without political and social power – which, alone, survivors of trafficking don’t have. But with the backing of NGOs like Shakti, the story can be very different.

As Arches went to press, Nepal’s Constituent Assembly, an inter-party governmental body, was preparing the first draft of the new constitution – set to replace the Interim Constitution which expired at midnight on 28 May 2011.

But Dr Poudel is concerned that the new constitution will not contain adequate provision for returnee trafficked women – especially if the more radical changes proposed by the Constituent Assembly’s Fundamental Rights Committee, and championed by Shakti, are ignored. These changes include awarding citizenship to all people born in Nepal, without the need for parental recommendation; and approving citizenship applications for children born into trafficking based on the mother’s nationality, removing the need to search for an absent father. Research by the team shows that in the majority of citizenship debates, the voices of women who have experienced trafficking are marginalised.

‘We’re hoping for a compromise that will equip both men and women with equal rights to apply for citizenship,’ she says. ‘These must be universal, and not just granted subject to pressure from NGOs.’

Without such a change, returnee trafficked women will remain excluded from desirable livelihoods and other fundamental rights. A self-fulfilling prophecy which must not be allowed to continue.

The Post Trafficking Nepal research team is heading to Kathmandu in autumn 2011 to present to Nepali policymakers, and will publish their findings in the coming months. You can find out more about the project, and sign up to quarterly bulletins, on its website at: www.posttraffickingnepal.co.uk

Above: Meena Poudel, of the University’s ‘Post Trafficking Nepal’ research team.

Below: Members of Shakti Samuha, an anti-trafficking NGO in Nepal.
More than $600bn – that’s the financial burden of this condition, according to the charity Alzheimer’s Disease International. And yet, while it affects more people than cancer or heart disease, dementia continues to attract considerably less research money. For every UK scientist working on dementia, there are six working on cancer, according to another piece of research by Thomson Reuters Evidence.

‘It’s a national emergency,’ says Rebecca Wood, chief executive of Alzheimer’s Research UK, a dementia research charity. ‘Over 820,000 people in the UK are living with dementia, costing the UK economy a staggering £23bn a year. And with those numbers set to grow, the need for research has never been more urgent.’

Since the 1960s, Newcastle University has been at the forefront of dementia research. But John O’Brien, Professor of Old Age Psychiatry at the University’s Institute for Ageing and Health, says funding would need to rise 15 or even 30-fold to match the research commitment to heart disease and cancer. ‘It’s always been hard to attract interest and funding for older people, if we’re honest,’ he admits. ‘But where once it was thought that dementia was an inevitable consequence of getting old, so there was nothing we could do, we now know it’s a distinct disease with a number of different pathologies.’

Of course, many conditions are age-related but Professor O’Brien says dementia is exponentially associated with age – affecting one per cent of the population over the age of 60, but rising to 20 per cent among the over-80s. ‘That’s a much more dramatic increase than other diseases,’ he says.

Awareness of the condition has increased in recent years. In 2007, best-selling author Sir Terry Pratchett revealed he was suffering from dementia – or ‘an embuggerance’ as he chose to put it. The previous government published a five-year national dementia strategy in 2009, and raising the quality of care for people with dementia and their carers is a major priority under the current coalition government. Dementia is also one of the ‘high priority areas’ within the latest funding round for National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Biomedical Research Centres and Units – a £750m pot for university/NHS partnerships, available from April 2012.

The two main charities in the UK, Alzheimer’s Society and Alzheimer’s Research UK, have also committed to substantially increase their funding for dementia research. The latter funded projects at Newcastle University to a tune of £100,000 last year alone.

‘We’re still struggling to recognise and diagnose the condition at an early stage, so there’s an increased need for earlier and more
accurate diagnosis,’ says Professor O’Brien.
There are currently four licensed treatments
for dementia – all for Alzheimer’s disease, but none
as yet for vascular dementia or dementia with
Lewy bodies (DLB).

Current treatments are based on replacing
lost neurochemicals after brain cells have been
destroyed. ‘We’re coming to a better
understanding of biochemical mechanisms that
lead to nerve cell death, so the hope is that
future treatments will be based on protecting
nerve cells before they die,’ explains Professor
O’Brien. ‘The ultimate aim would be to try and
prevent dementia, but while there might be
some treatment improvements in the next five
years, we’re talking about 10 or 15 years to
make a real difference.’

Many of the major current concepts in
dementia were conceived and born in Newcastle.
Although it was 1907 when Alzheimer first
described the disease which carries his name, it
was another 50 years before Bernard Tomlinson
and Martin Roth, working at Newcastle University,
explained the neuropathological changes in the
brains of older people. It was at the same time in
Newcastle that Gary Blessed developed the first
psychometric test for the diagnosis of dementia
– a test still used today.

Later, the discoveries of Elaine and Robert
Perry at Newcastle, working with Ian McKeith
and others, contributed to the current
pharmacological therapies for Alzheimer’s. The
Perrys’ continued investigations in Newcastle,
together with those of others, indicated that
DLB was contributing to a significant proportion
of late-life dementia.

Newcastle University scientists remain
global leaders in dementia research, and have
since developed diagnostic criteria for DLB and
discovered that treatments for Alzheimer’s may
also be useful for DLB. The Institute for Ageing
and Health is now extending that work into
Parkinson’s disease dementia. More than 500
scientific papers have been published based
on the University’s bank of brain tissue. And
through the Dementias and Neurodegenerative
Diseases Research Network the University
also collaborates with scientists at University
College London.

But what of those currently living with
dementia? Louise Robinson, Professor of Primary
Care and Ageing at the Institute, says research
funding must also be channelled into improving
the care and well-being of people with dementia.
‘Yes, there are consequences around memory
loss, but people with dementia can have good
quality of life for a considerable amount of time,’
she maintains. ‘We are trying to introduce
treatments such as memory training and
psychological support, as well as drug treatments,
that can help people to adapt, in the same way
that we help people who have had a stroke to
rehabilitate and adapt to living with that condition.

‘We need to be researching how people
live with dementia – what are the most helpful
ways of delivering care to these people and their
families, to help them live in the community and
have a good quality of life?’

The Institute has been researching the
diagnosis of dementia and the causes for delay –
it can often take 18 months to two years for
someone with dementia to receive a diagnosis.
‘We’ve found that this can sometimes be down
to GPs who do not have sufficient knowledge,
but it can also be due to families who are not
ready to hear such a diagnosis,’ says Professor
Robinson. ‘A great deal of stigma still surrounds
dementia so we’ve been looking at ways to
facilitate diagnosis and support.’ The Institute
has also been investigating methods by which
people with dementia can themselves influence
the care they receive while they still have the
memory and communication skills to make
those decisions.

Professor Robinson is optimistic that
awareness of dementia is increasing. ‘I’m also
a GP and have seen an increase in the number
of people coming into my surgery, wanting to
have memory assessments done because they
feel they may have memory problems,’ she says.
‘There is evidence of a more proactive approach
among people in their 50s and 60s – so inroads
are being made.’

If you would like to help the University with
its research on ageing, you can do so through
VOICENorth. To find out more, please e-mail
Dr Lynne Corner, Engagement Manager,
Institute for Ageing and Health, at:
l.s.corner@ncl.ac.uk or visit the Institute’s
website at: www.ncl.ac.uk/iah

Images A, B and C: Images showing
the different patterns of brain
shrinkage in dementia. A colour
overlay is used to demonstrate areas
of brain shrinkage (shown in green
and blue) over time and associated
expansion of the fluid-filled spaces in
the brain (shown in yellow and red).

Image A is from a healthy volunteer
and shows very little change in brain
structure over time.

Image B is from an individual with
Alzheimer’s disease, demonstrating
widespread loss of tissue throughout
the brain.

Image C is from an individual with
fronto-temporal dementia. This
subject also exhibits loss of brain
tissue over time, although the
pattern is different from that seen
in image B. Tissue loss is much more
severe on the left-hand side of the
brain. This technique can be used to
highlight patterns of change in brain
structure, potentially aiding diagnosis
of different types of dementia.
TUITION FEES: everything you need to know
From autumn 2012, the way higher education in the UK is funded will undergo fundamental changes, which will see undergraduate students bearing a higher cost of tuition. Many misconceptions about the payment of fees have been perpetuated through intense media coverage, and this report aims to provide the facts, along with details of the support available at Newcastle University.

Government spending cuts
In October 2010, a report on university funding by Lord Browne changed the future of higher education in the UK.

Browne argued that the way UK universities have been funded in the past is unsustainable, and could not lead to continued growth in higher education. According to figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), over half a million more students are now studying for an undergraduate degree (a BA or BSc for example) in the UK than when student grants were abolished in 1997 – vastly increasing university overheads and the cost to the taxpayer.

Even when top-up fees were introduced from 2006, capped at £3,000 per year, the cost of tuition was still heavily subsidised by the public purse. But with the onset of a record budget deficit, this funding was cut as part of the coalition government’s Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010, and subsequently approved by both Houses of Parliament, meaning universities will take an 80 per cent cut to their teaching budgets from next year.

Without an alternative source of income, most of the costs of tuition will be transferred to new students from autumn 2012. The coalition government cites this as a ‘fair’ contribution, due to the oft-quoted statistic that graduates can expect to earn £100,000 more after tax than non-graduates during their careers – recently backed up in a report by accounting firm, PwC.

The fee
As a guide for choosing what level of fee to charge, Parliament has set an upper and lower limit. The ‘basic’ and ‘higher’ tuition fee amounts are £6,000 and £9,000 per year respectively.

Universities proposing to charge more than £6,000 must have an ‘Access Agreement’ approved by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) which sets out their commitments to widening participation and fair access, and includes proposals for financial support such as bursaries and fee discounts.

In April, Newcastle University announced its intention to charge the full fee of £9,000 to UK and EU home fee students – subject to approval by OFFA. As Arches went to press, two thirds of UK universities which have announced their plans are following suit, including nearly every member of the Russell Group thus far – which represents the 20 leading research-intensive universities in the UK, including Newcastle. The proposed fee will ensure the University can continue to invest, to benefit further the quality of the programmes we deliver and the broader experience of our students.

Undergraduate tuition fees at a glance

- Students will not have to pay any fees either before or during their studies.

- Repayments will only begin after graduation, and when a graduate is earning over £21,000 (at a rate of nine per cent of any income above £21,000). Graduates earning below this threshold will not pay anything back. Repayments will be based on what graduates earn, not what they owe.

- All outstanding payments will be written off after 30 years.

- Loans to cover study and living costs will be available to all students, regardless of family income.

- Grants will be available to students from households with incomes up to £42,600, which don’t have to be repaid.

- Only students beginning their course in or after September 2012 will be subject to the new fees. Existing students, and students who start their studies in 2011, will continue under the previous system.

- New tuition fees will only affect UK and EU home fee students.

- No decision has yet been made on changes to postgraduate fees (including MA, MSc and PhD courses). Keep an eye on the University website for details.
Raising aspirations
A proportion of the extra income from tuition fees will enable Newcastle University to build on its already extensive programme of raising aspirations and widening participation. We expect up to a third of undergraduate students will benefit from financial support of £2,000 per year from 2012, with £29m allocated to fee waivers and bursaries over the first five years.

North East England remains the region with the lowest level of national participation in higher education, and Newcastle University has spent the last 18 years working with local schools and colleges to raise aspirations and promote progression to Newcastle University. In a typical year, approximately 35,000 students are involved in the University’s widening participation activities. School pupils take part in a variety of activities on campus and in schools which range from master-classes, student shadowing, mentoring in schools, and residential summer schools. The University’s nationally recognised PARTNERS scheme has enabled over 1,800 students to enter Newcastle University through an accredited supported entry route.

‘Newcastle University has a solid foundation on which to build future success and we want to continue to attract the brightest and best students from all backgrounds to study here,’ says Professor Chris Brink, Vice-Chancellor of the University. ‘We are planning to build on our existing wide range of activities to promote fair access, which will include a generous package of support to ensure that students will not be put off applying to us for financial reasons.’

Package of support
A range of grants, bursaries and scholarships – funded by the University, its donors and the government, and which students won’t need to repay – will be available to assist students with living and study expenses.

Students with a household income below £25,000 will be able to secure a government maintenance grant of £3,250 per year; with partial grants available to students from households with incomes up to £42,600. And the government’s National Scholarship Programme, which is set to be worth £150 million per year by 2014–15, will provide further support for students from low-income backgrounds.

Newcastle already provides a range of scholarships, many of which are supported by alumni, which are non means tested. For full details of current financial support available, visit: www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/finance

Loans for living costs such as food, accommodation and travel will continue to be available to students from all backgrounds, up to a maximum of £5,500 per year for students living away from home (outside of London), and up to £4,375 for those living with parents. These will be repaid, in the same way as tuition fee loans, when graduates reach a salary over £21,000.

Education for life
The prospect of loan debt after graduating may seem daunting for those considering 2012 entry – although it is important to note that graduates will repay loans on the basis of what they earn and not what they owe. In the future, students are likely to be even more interested in what their options are after graduation – and this is where Newcastle University is strongly placed.

Our commitment to ‘education for life’ underpins the Newcastle University experience. The University’s award-winning Careers Service, through collaboration with industry, provides outstanding opportunities for students to add value to their studies by gaining additional skills and experience which will prepare them for rewarding careers. The ncl+ initiative helps students gain skills in communication, teamwork, law and ethical awareness; as well as brokering paid work experience on campus, and offering grants for community projects through the alumni-sponsored ncl+ Foundation, a beneficiary of the Annual Fund. And strengths in vocationally relevant programmes and enterprise education – such as the optional Business Enterprise module and the University’s Enterprise Challenge Awards, which reward good business ideas – are reflected in an exceptional record of graduate employment. In 2010, 94 per cent of UK and EU graduates progressed to employment or further study within six months of graduating from Newcastle University; and more than three-quarters of those entering work achieved a ‘graduate-level’ position. In addition to this, the University is placed in the top 15 for graduate employment prospects in The Sunday Times University Guide, The Complete University Guide, and The Guardian University Guide. And the University’s invaluable Alumni Association, which comprises 140,966 graduates across the world in every industry, provides a vital network for students to tap into, both socially and professionally.

With all this in mind, it’s important for students to view the new fees from 2012 as a worthwhile investment in their futures, rather than a burden.

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How you can help students gain vital skills

Our community of Newcastle graduates plays an important role in helping the University achieve its commitment of ‘education for life’. We continue to provide a solid degree-based education that enables students to develop and enhance their knowledge and skills. But, as we’re sure you agree, coming to university is much more than simply receiving an academic degree – it’s a rite of passage for individuals on both personal and professional levels, and an opportunity to forge life and career-changing friendships. Over the past decade we have been working with alumni groups across the world, and now more than ever we look to you for support. It’s integral to the future success of Newcastle University.

In March we held an open debate to discuss how funding and fees would change the higher education landscape and what this means for Newcastle. We posed the question: how can graduates help? A wide range of interesting discussion points were put forward such as how alumni in the education sector can support widening participation initiatives and also how attracting students to Newcastle from disadvantaged backgrounds would provide the greatest challenge. Here Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching, is keen to develop an innovative placement scheme for prospective students with alumni contacts that will help provide greater opportunity for those without personal networks to gain experience of the professions, including dentistry, law and engineering.

Whilst we formulate new plans over the coming year, many opportunities already exist for alumni to support skills development and career opportunity. Here are some of the current ways in which you can support our students:

Arrange student placements
Offering work placements enables students to gain additional skills in a variety of sectors, and is critical to developing their CV. It also provides cost-effective young talent for the business you are associated with.

Support entrepreneurship
25–30 new businesses are set up each year by students at Newcastle. Our Careers Service needs alumni with startup expertise, in both the private and public sectors, who can advise budding entrepreneurs on the intricacies of business and available funding.

Talk to students
We seek articulate individuals from a variety of professional sectors to speak at our career events, or act as interviewees and advisers to students who are taking an accredited career development module as part of their degree.

Recruit young talent
Your business could benefit from access to Newcastle University jobs fairs and recruitment rounds on campus.

Support the ncl+ Foundation
You can support projects that enhance life and professional skills by making a donation from £10 per month to the ncl+ Foundation – a Newcastle University initiative which funds innovative student-led projects that enhance student skills and benefit the local community.

Feedback from our students and graduates proves that Newcastle is a tremendous place to live and study. Please help us build on this by supporting our programmes. For further information, and to register your interest, visit: www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/support

Register a profile with Graduate Connections
An online networking system through which alumni can offer advice to current students on their chosen profession.
On 9 August 2010, Ed Stafford (BSc Geography 1997) became the first man to walk the length of the Amazon River, in an 860-day, 4,000-mile trek from the river’s source at Nevado Mismi, Peru, to its mouth at Maruda Beach, Brazil. He spoke to Frankie Clarke about his record-breaking adventure.

Dismissed by fellow explorers and warned by Brazilian fixers that death was inevitable, Ed’s determination to navigate the entire Amazon River on foot was audacious, if not ludicrous. ‘Nobody had ever done it before, so it seemed ideal,’ he grins defiantly.

Evading anacondas and gun-toting guerrillas became a daily occurrence for the ex-army officer turned expedition leader, whose 860-day journey took over a year longer than initially planned – more than doubling his chances of not returning home.

But by his own admission, Ed’s Amazonian adventure was never a lifelong ambition. Having left the army in 2002, he had his sights on a career as a stockbroker, but quickly realised he wasn’t cut out for the job. ‘I’d try to read an article in the Financial Times but would totally forget what it was saying before I made it to the end,’ he laughs.

It was a job ad for expedition leaders in Belize that lured him back into the wilderness. ‘A conservation charity wanted ex military officers to lead expeditions, and I thought I’d do it for a couple of months before getting a job in the City,’ he says. ‘As it turned out, I really loved it. It was refreshing to take all my skills from the army but use them for conservation aims like scientific research projects and community development projects’. This was a turning point for Ed. ‘My life changed direction after that. I carried on running expeditions until 2008 when I decided that I had enough experience to do something amazing.’
Ed arrived in Peru with his original walking partner, Luke Collyer, in early April 2008. Luke left the expedition after three months, and Ed walked with local guides for a time before meeting 31-year-old Gadiel ‘Cho’ Sanchez, originally from Satipo in South Peru.

‘To start with I found him irritating and we didn’t see eye to eye,’ Ed admits. ‘But we ended up getting on incredibly well. He was always supportive and patient. I’m amazed that I managed to live with anybody day-in-day-out for two years’. Cho has recently moved to the UK and is now staying in Leicester with Ed’s mum.

Ed raised over £37,000 for charities including Rainforest Concern and Cancer Research UK during his journey, whilst also drawing attention of the plight of the Amazon. ‘There are some very populated areas on the route I walked, with six international airports, and three million people live in Manaus. But in between there are some of the most remote tribes on the planet and it’s possible not to encounter anyone for weeks at a time.

‘I always envisaged that the journey would be through nature rather than through communities of people who didn’t want us there. The indigenous Peruvians had suffered terribly at the hands of the Shining Path, a communist terrorist group, so I was seen as a threat and it was quite a challenge having to convince them that I wasn’t.’

In his 47kg backpack, Ed carried a MacBook laptop and satellite equipment in order to publish a regular blog on the issues facing the Amazon – of which the major threat is deforestation. Ed found this to be more severe in Brazil than Peru. ‘In Peru there was lots of logging but once the big trees were removed the area would be left to recover, so we would always be walking through forest even if it was secondary forest,’ says Ed.

In contrast, the activity in Brazil was more aggressive. ‘There was far more clear-felling, lots more land-use change and far more cattle ranches,’ he recalls. ‘After Manaus, which is about half way between the Brazilian border and the sea, we walked for weeks without seeing any jungle. Everyone talks about the front line of deforestation so you imagine a military operation advancing forward but it isn’t like that at all.

‘Logging roads are used to extract the hardwood and then offshoots start to develop. First hunters move in and then cattle ranches start to appear. Eventually little communities start to pop up and that’s how it all spreads out.’

Sadly this is a common occurrence and Ed believes that governments could do more to discourage clear-felling.

IBAMA is the organisation responsible for the monitoring, preservation, enforcement and control of the sustainable use of natural resources in Brazil. But in Ed’s opinion, it isn’t doing enough. ‘Theoretically IBAMA’s regulations are really good but it doesn’t happen on the ground. In two-and-a-half years we never saw a single authority controlling logging. We never saw anyone from IBAMA in that time, which is just incredible’.

Ed believes that things will only change through education. ‘I’m not an activist and I don’t follow the whole campaigning ethos of telling people what to do. I think education is the better way forward,’ he says. ‘Young Brazilians are becoming more educated and conscientious about their rainforest and, over time, will get elected into government’.

Despite enduring hostile tribes, long periods of dark lows and bouts of the flesh-eating parasitic disease leishmaniasis – caused by sandfly bites – Ed feels the whole journey was worth the elation he and Cho felt upon setting foot in the Atlantic. ‘The last day was by far the best when we reached the ocean and dived into it,’ he smiles. ‘It was an emotional experience’.

Since returning to the UK, Ed has spoken at the Royal Geographical Society, completed a TV documentary, and written a book. He was named European Adventurer of The Year in March and one of National Geographic’s Adventurers of the Year for 2010, and has joined Sir Ranulph Fiennes’ charity, Transglobe, as a trustee. Now he’s keen to focus on future adventures. ‘I have a few ideas and I’m planning a big expedition’. Although he’s staying tight-lipped on the details, we can be sure to expect something equally audacious...

Ed’s book, Walking the Amazon, is available at all good bookshops from June 2011. A documentary of the same name, produced by Discovery, airs on 23 June on Channel Five.

You can find Ed’s blog archive, along with videos and photos, at: www.walkingtheamazon.com and read more about him on his website: www.edstafford.org
Teresa Graham gets disruptive when she’s not busy. ‘I’m like a helicopter,’ she says, swinging her arms like the steel blades of a chopper. Perhaps fortunately, free time is an alien concept for Teresa. She mentors small businesses, advises the UK government on deregulation, and spearheads Newcastle University’s Women’s Circle, which raises money for widening participation – tireless work which earned her a CBE in 2007.

So how she finds the time to run a community cinema in North West London’s quirky Kensal Rise is anyone’s guess, especially one whose entire profits go to a village 6,000 miles away in South Africa.

The Lexi is the UK’s first social enterprise boutique cinema. It has one screen, a bar, seats 80 people, and is manned by a team of 50 volunteers and a small crew of paid managers. Teresa is part-time Managing Director and ‘Head of Parties and Fun’.

Housed in a former Edwardian theatre, the cinema opened its doors in October 2008 after being dreamed into life by founder and Chief Executive, Sally Wilton – using proceeds from the sale of her previous business, conference company Etc Venues, of which Teresa was Chairman.

’Sally always wanted to run a cinema, and she’s passionate about helping the community, so The Lexi brings the two together,’ says Teresa. ‘It’s never been about personal gain, and when we heard about Lynedoch village in South Africa, we knew we’d found something that matched our principles and a place where we could really make a difference.’

Sitting 25 miles inland from Cape Town, Lynedoch EcoVillage is the first intentionally mixed-race and mixed-income village in South Africa. It was founded in 2000 by the Sustainability Institute, a non-profit trust, which runs the village as a fully autonomous space for sustainable living and learning – pioneering green technologies and self-governance, recycling waste and water, and using renewable energy to power the 45 homes, primary school, offices, classrooms and village hall that are currently on-site.

The Lexi sent £10,000 to Lynedoch in 2010, and forecasts a further £30,000 in 2011. So far it has funded projects including a crèche for 45 toddlers; the primary school where 475 local kids begin their education; a film-making club and cinema; and a community vegetable garden for research into sustainable farming methods.

‘We fund things that generate income,’ says Teresa. ‘The crèche means that parents can go out and earn a wage, and it gives the children a head start in their education. It costs £120 per child per year, including two meals per day and a tracksuit, so it’s a good investment.’

‘Lynedoch puts children and the environment at the heart of everything it does.’

Teresa Graham
A programme allowing the people of Lynedoch to own their homes is helping to influence the South African government’s national housing policy. And a number of youth projects, including the film-making club, are providing a viable alternative to the lure of gangs and drugs.

One of the biggest problems facing the area is alcohol, which has plagued the Western Cape since the days when vineyards paid their workers in substandard wine – a practice known as the ‘dop’ system (from the Afrikaans for an alcoholic drink). Although it was outlawed in the 1990s, the dop system’s destructive legacy remains today. Systematic alcoholism still rages through the Western Cape, and 45 out of every 1,000 children are born with foetal alcohol syndrome – the highest rate in the world.

‘A group of children from the film club made a documentary about the devastating effects of alcohol on local people,’ explains Teresa. ‘It’s a powerful film, and so satisfying to see the children identifying and challenging the problems around them.’

‘Lynedoch puts children and the environment at the heart of everything it does,’ she beams. ‘It encourages children to dream big dreams; not little ones in the expectation that big dreams can never happen.’

Patrons of The Lexi are kept abreast of issues and developments at Lynedoch through a series of short films by documentary maker, Mike Day, which are screened before each movie.

In addition to a string of new, mainly independent releases (generally no blockbusters as they’re so cost ineffective for small cinemas), The Lexi also hosts corporate events and film clubs, and screens live opera from the Metropolitan in New York and performances by the National Theatre by satellite, making use of its state-of-the-art sound system – ‘one of the top five in the country’ Teresa adds proudly. It also has a licence for weddings.

The monthly ‘Flicker Club’, which gives a fresh take on old movies with a celebrity reading of the original text, sells out in minutes. Past events have seen Joan Collins introduce All About Eve; Miranda Richardson read from The Birds as a prelude to the Hitchcock adaptation; and Nic Roeg set the scene for his 1973 occult horror classic, Don’t Look Now. ‘It’s like The Simpsons,’ says Teresa, ‘celebrities just need to be on there!’

Now The Lexi is stripping away the confines of traditional movie theatres and taking its cinematic magic to locations around South East England, with a new ‘pop-up cinema’ venture called The Nomad. A partnership with mobile cinema specialists The Screen on the Green, The Nomad is taking avian horror The Birds to London’s Bushy Park; David Fincher’s Fight Club to the home of British boxing, York Hall, in Bethnal Green; and Stanley Kubrick’s sci-fi epic 2001: A Space Odyssey to the cosmic surroundings of Greenwich Park, site of the Royal Observatory.

A further 150 events are also planned for later this year as part of a national tour. As The Lexi owns half of The Nomad, 50 per cent of its profits will go directly to Lynedoch.

‘We’re looking to grow the business really quickly,’ explains Teresa. ‘This is likely to be through part ownership and developing a franchise model.’

‘We’ve got pockets of audience all over the place, and after two years, we now know what they want,’ she says. But what does Teresa want? ‘The chance to make a real difference to people’s lives.’ If only all parties and fun could breed such benevolence.

You can read more about The Lexi on its website at: www.thelexicinema.co.uk – where you can also view Mike Day’s Lynedoch films – and The Nomad: www.whereisthenomad.com
COVERING CAIRO
The University was, perhaps understandably, anxious when I rushed away from my MA to photograph a revolution, particularly one where journalists were targeted by the crumbling regime. But Cairo is a city I know well from previous work. When the protests began, it was an automatic reaction for me to go there to photograph history in the making.

‘Covering Egypt’s revolution from within Cairo was to tell the tale of two cities. At its worst it was a war zone that even journalists who had worked in Baghdad found unwelcoming and unpredictable. At its best it resembled Rio, exuberant crowds singing and dancing in the streets, united in celebration of their unprecedented achievement.

‘This photograph (left) is one that I took in Tahrir Square during the celebrations that erupted after the announcement that Mubarak had, finally, stepped down. The city celebrated for two days without pause.

The media underestimated the Egyptians. There were moments when we were sure that they would give up, that the citizens’ takeover of Tahrir would fade away and Mubarak would manage to cling to power. When we expected a descent into violence, they showed incredible restraint. The way that normal citizens overcame their fear and organised themselves was extraordinary. I was happy and humbled to have my preconceptions proved wrong.’

Lindsay Mackenzie, 27, is an MA student in International Multimedia Journalism. A freelance photojournalist and trip leader, she has worked in more than 50 countries. Lindsay’s work has been published in The Globe and Mail, The National, The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, La Vanguardia, The Vancouver Sun and on the BBC and CNN, and she has led photography trips for National Geographic Student Expeditions. Originally from Vancouver, Lindsay is based in Tunisia when not in Newcastle.

Lindsay’s work can be viewed at: www.lindsaymackenzie.com
Editorial

The last year has been a dramatic one for a lot of students here at Newcastle and this is reflected and magnified in The Courier’s coverage. None of us were surprised at the decision to charge £9,000 a year for a degree at Newcastle but that has not stopped us scrutinising both the government and University since the Browne Review was published last October.

Now into its sixty-third year of production, The Courier has continued to grow, with two new sections of Fashion and Listings added into the mix. Through the long winter snows our reporters donned their wellies and travelled the length and breadth of the country reporting on student protests, sit-ins and riots in a way that was unparalleled in the mainstream press, while our sports coverage was challenged to be more investigative by a lack of outdoor fixtures.

We re-launched our website shortly after Freshers’ Week with the exciting result that The Courier is now available in its entirety at: www.thecourieronline.co.uk

The peak of our success with the new website came with the Stan Calvert Cup in March, when we were able to provide a live update feature to give students the latest scores at all the games across the city. The results speak for themselves: we had more than 2,000 hits on that day alone. We are pleased to report that we now regularly receive over 3,000 hits a week from all over the world and hope that a recent drive for exclusive web content will continue to improve this.

The summer term has been a time to celebrate for all the team with our second annual Student Media Awards, which were held at the BALTIC on Gateshead Quays and attended by local media personalities and more than 180 students. Honouring the achievements, passion and commitment of all our volunteers, we were joined by some alumni who have gone on to successful careers in the media industry and who were kind enough to share their pearls of wisdom with us.

Our final edition of the year was published in May, but The Courier will be back in the new academic year under the capable control of our current News Editor, Simon Murphy. Until then keep your eyes on the website for new interviews, updates and much more.

Fran Infante (BA Combined Studies 2010)
Editor of The Courier

Newcastle basks in Stan Calvert success

As the sun rose over Newcastle on Wednesday 30 March there was only one thing on the minds of the students of Newcastle: The Stan Calvert Memorial Cup. Postponed due to bad weather before Christmas, the longer-than-expected wait had only served to add to the eager anticipation of the day’s action. With Newcastle starting with a 22-6 lead, confidence was high in the Royals’ camp.

An early defeat in the cricket at South North, Gosforth, was countered immediately by two Newcastle wins, and as news filtered in from Longbenton and Coach Lane of hockey success, Newcastle’s lead grew before attention turned to Gateshead International Stadium.

With more sports than ever on show this year, those arriving early enough were able to witness a very even contest in the indoor athletics, while outside a stunning comeback from Newcastle Rugby League Seconds secured two more points.

Thanks to The Courier Online’s innovative live feed, Newcastle fans were able to hear of thumping wins in rugby and lacrosse and not even a shock defeat for Newcastle Ladies Hockey Firsts could dampen the optimistic mood of the crowds.

By the time the showpiece Rugby Union event arrived, the main stand at Gateshead was filling up fast. A fantastic spectacle ensued with huge tackles, brawling mascots and several streakers; and the Newcastle Angels gave a mind-blowing cheerleading performance at half time. On the pitch, Newcastle were ultimately too good for Northumbria, securing a convincing 24-13 win.

That was just the start of the celebrations, as moments later an announcement over the tannoy revealed that Team Newcastle had stormed to a 93.5 – 61.5 overall victory to earn an unprecedented, but wholly deserved, fourth consecutive Stan Calvert Cup win.

By Colin Henry.
Occasionally contentious but always provocative, here’s a gallery of The Courier front pages over the last academic year. You can read the latest news from campus, and browse digital editions of the newspaper, online at: www.thecourieronline.co.uk

NSR commands the airwaves

The University’s student radio station, NSR, has had an exceptionally strong year. Under the calm leadership of station manager Louise Morris (BA English Literature), the station has continued to expand its listenership and now has 109 weekly presenters working to entertain and inform the students of Newcastle.

After participating successfully in BBC Radio 3’s Free Thinking Festival in November, the station went from strength to strength. Earlier this year, the station set itself the ambitious task of securing a short-term license that would allow it to broadcast on FM frequency for the final two weeks of the Easter term. After an enormous amount of hard work the licence was granted, the transmitter was booked, and for 14 days only NSR took over 87.7 FM.

The result was a phenomenal surge in listenership and interest, and it is hoped that having proved the value of a student-led radio station this will become a much more frequent occurrence in the future.
What is the ACG?

Three times a year, a group of graduates meet with senior management as representatives of the whole alumni body to discuss the key issues facing the University. Together with University management and Students’ Union representatives, they make up the Alumni Consultative Group (ACG). The Chair of the group, and the Alumni Association as a whole, is elected from members of the ACG. This year, Mark Scrimshaw (BA History 1976), currently a full-time union official at the BBC but a documentary film producer and director by profession, steps down after a decade as chair. Arches chats to Mark about the role of the ACG and his own proudest moments.

What does the ACG mean to the University? I don’t think you can underestimate the importance of having a body that feeds the views and opinions of alumni back to the University. The Alumni Association represents a massive group with an enormous amount of experience in all sorts of fields, and to have a body that is elected by graduates and represents their views, I think is hugely important. Senior members of the University do value us even though we don’t blindly agree with them; we do pose questions and challenge their actions but we are at worst critical friends.

What are your personal highlights from the past 10 years? It would probably be working with former Chair of Convocation Jack Jeffery (BSc Chemistry and Bacteriology 1953, MSc Applied Science 1960) to make the ACG an elected body rather than a self-appointed body. Prior to this people could just turn up but it meant that we didn’t have any real clout. Now that we are elected through a public vote there is a real mandate to the body which I think is really significant. It was a slow and frustrating process that took the best part of two years to complete but the first election was six years ago and I think it’s worked well.

Should our graduates get involved? Yes! I’ve loved it, I really enjoy contributing to the University and I think it’s a healthy thing for people to get involved in. You do need to enjoy sitting on a committee though, which is not for everyone of course. But if you do want to give something back and you value your university then it’s a fun thing to do. We have good discussions and debates with the University, so if you’re interested in getting involved with them, then the ACG is great. When I first started, 10 years ago, there was no-one under my age on the committee but now we have five or six recent graduates, and ages range from 25 to 80. It works, as despite our age differences, we’re all talking from the same sheet.

You’re a busy man but you’ve managed to stay involved with the University. How do you find the time? Ah well, now here’s a story. When I tentatively dipped my toe into the pool of management for the BBC I was sent on a time management course. I was deeply sceptical about it but it changed my life. I couldn’t have done all the things that I do without it and would have carried on in the haphazard way that I had been. I would highly recommend that everyone go on one of those courses.

Can you sum up your time as Chair in three words? Interesting, innovative and hopeful. It’s been interesting for me; I hope that some of the things I did were innovative and helped the ACG move forward; and I’m hopeful about the future.
What is it? The Alumni Consultative Group (ACG) aims to represent the interests of all graduates of Newcastle University. As alumni ambassadors, members aim to act in an alumni-liaison capacity and provide valuable input to the senior management of the University on issues of strategic importance.

The members also support the Development and Alumni Relations Office in ensuring key messages are communicated outwards.

What is Convocation? Convocation is the annual meeting of the Alumni Association, which occurs each year during Convocation Weekend, which this year falls on 18 June. It’s a chance for graduates to have a say in how the University is managed and hear news first hand from the Vice-Chancellor. See the last issue of Arches (Spring 2010) for a full write-up.

Membership of the ACG Members are elected from the Alumni Association, comprising everyone who has ever studied at Newcastle University, and sit alongside the Chair of Convocation and representatives from senior University management and the Students’ Union. As of 2005, the 10 alumni members are now elected every three years. Two of the 10 elected members are then voted Chair and Vice-Chair of the ACG at the annual meeting of Convocation. The other members are appointed by virtue of their professional role within the University.

Membership up until June 2011 comprises: John Connolly (BA International Management 2005); Ian Forster (BA Geography 1955, DipEd 1956), Vice-Chair; Dr Donald Gascoigne (MB BS 1951); Jack Jeffery (BSc Chemistry and Bacteriology 1953, MSc Applied Science 1960); Antony Jones (BA Politics 1980), Chair of Convocation; Alastair Mitchell (MEng Naval Architecture 2008); John Pearcy (BSc Mining Engineering 1962); Judith Penny (BA Geography 1967); Mark Scrimshaw (BA History 1976), Chair; and Louise Thurston (BA Sociology and Social Policy 2002).

Thank you for all your support!

Find us online

You can now catch up with us and your fellow alumni on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Find old friends, tell us about your news and memories, make business contacts, view and upload photos, and hear about upcoming events wherever you are in the world.
I wish my students realised that... politics is all around them and that studying political science is brilliant for all sorts of careers.

If I wasn’t an academic... I might have become a psychologist, which was a childhood ambition of mine; now it would be working in the European Commission.

I absolutely love my job... I always have done right from when I was lecturing in the mid-1970s to now working in the senior management team. In my new role as Deputy Vice-Chancellor I have responsibility for engagement and internationalisation and running the University. The job is very varied and rewarding. A lot of my time is spent working with external partners, although a key challenge is to get all staff to feel positive about the University and to understand and promote its values.

Although I don’t like... the frustration of trying to get the risk register to reflect real issues!

Not many people know I have a passion for... collecting costume jewellery from 1950–70, Egyptian belly dancing and Lylah and Ruby, my two little Canadian granddaughters.

My idea of absolute vulgarity is... people who think they are better than everyone else.

A vice I’m willing to admit... Wolford tights. And I love crisp sandwiches.

My favourite view in the North East... is the bay at Embleton.

My personal philosophy is... I don’t really have a guiding philosophy in a life-force way. I believe that little things matter and that it’s important to stay cheerful. In my job timing is as important as ideas and the aphorism that ‘perfection is the enemy of the good’ is usually relevant. Oh, and a new pair of shoes can improve most work-related problems.

At 11 am on a Sunday, you will generally find me... at Sainsbury’s! Or trying to help my youngest daughter, who is going to art school, with projects. Or if I’m lucky I might make it to an antique or collectors’ fair.

Professor Ella Ritchie was appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Newcastle University in February 2011. She first arrived on campus as a temporary lecturer in politics in 1974, having studied politics and French at Lancaster University before gaining her PhD at LSE, and has remained at Newcastle ever since. Her past roles include Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning; the Jean Monnet Chair in Politics of European Integration; and Postgraduate Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences; as well as Professor of Politics.

Ella is a political scientist and has a research interest in the Europeanisation of higher education. She has played a key role in the development of the doctoral cycle of the Bologna Process, and is active in many national and international academic committees.

CORRECTION: In our interview with Professor Paul Younger in Arches Spring 2010, we mistakenly said that Las Vegas is one of Paul’s vices when, in fact, it’s his idea of absolute vulgarity. He is however a biblioholic and ‘can’t resist a good book’.
Rebecca and Ryan’s world cycling tour

In September 2010 Rebecca Holliday (BSc Mathematics 2005) and partner Ryan Davies embarked on an adventure – cycling 15,000 miles from England to New Zealand.

As well as testing themselves emotionally and physically they aim to raise £1 for every mile to help their chosen charities, Guide Dogs and Amos Trust.

To date they have cycled over 6,000 miles through Europe and Western Asia, and at the time of going to press, aren’t far from the Chinese border. The route has seen them negotiate frozen bikes, injured knees and gruelling mountain ranges but also brought them breathtaking scenery and very welcoming locals.

You can follow Rebecca and Ryan’s progress, view videos and pictures from their journey, and sponsor them via their blog at: http://worldcyclingtour.wordpress.com

MEMORIES OF NEWCASTLE

What’s your most enduring memory of your days at Newcastle? Whether it’s parading through the city, chasing cows on the Town Moor, or nodding off in the Quad on a sunny afternoon (however unlikely) – we all have a story to tell. Send your tales and photos to alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk and we’ll do our best to print them.

Brains not necessary

For the MB BS Class of 1953, success at University was about more than gaining a good degree. However, friendships made in those hazy days have lasted for over 60 years – thanks, in no small part, to the work of a few social lynchpins.

With this in mind, members of the Class of 1953 set up an award for the most gregarious and supportive member of each year’s graduating class, chosen by fellow students. The Year of 53 Prize was thus born, as Dr Geoffrey Marsh MBE (MB BS 1953, MD 1974) explains: ‘The year that went through the Medical School between 1948 and 1953 was a great group: a combination of ex-servicemen, schoolboys and a smattering of girls – about 15 per cent – who became firm friends.

‘To mark this wonderful camaraderie (which was whipped up by a few leading lights in the year) we decided to award £500 to a current MB BS final-year student who best contributed to the year group through social activities, promoting camaraderie and providing support to others.’

Now in its sixth year, the Year of ’53 prize is still going strong. This year’s winner, Chris Moss, was nominated by his peers for his unwavering commitment to bringing different groups of students together throughout his five years of study.
Share your wisdom

If you had the chance, right now, to talk to yourself as an eager, fresh-faced undergraduate – what careers-related wisdom would you pass on?

Okay, so you might not be able to turn the clock back to your university days, but there is something you can do to help our current students and new graduates – you can share your experiences through our recently revamped Graduate Connections database.

Graduate Connections is an online networking tool which features short profiles from our alumni, summarising their career paths to date and providing information about their current roles.

These profiles enable students to gain real insight into life within a particular profession or organisation. It also helps them find out about the skills and experience required to break into their chosen field from the people who know it best – you!

Usually, our users get all the information they need from an online profile but from time to time, inquisitive students may e-mail alumni for more tailored advice.

Recent graduate Gautami Patel (MSc Structural Engineering 2009) used the service during her job search, as she explains: ‘I contacted a graduate who was working for Subsea7 and gathered information which not only helped with my application and assessment, but also boosted my confidence. I now work for Subsea7 and I’m appreciative of the networking opportunities offered through the Graduate Connections service.’

We’re always on the lookout for new profiles and in particular we’d like to hear from international alumni.

If you would like to join Graduate Connections, please visit: www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/employers/profile/graduateConnections.php or call 0044 (0)191 222 7748.

Rise Up and join the entrepreneurial revolution

Working for someone else isn’t for everyone. Add to this today’s increasingly uncertain and competitive job market and it’s easy to see why starting up a business can be such an alluring option.

The Careers Service’s dedicated Rise Up team helps those with an entrepreneurial flair to get their business ideas off the ground. Roland Glancy (MSc Renewable Energy, Enterprise and Management 2010) is one such example. He stepped into The Elevator, an entrepreneurial business hub located within the Careers Service, for one-to-one advice from a team of specialist business advisers.

‘The Elevator has been a fantastic resource while I’ve been exploring my idea,’ explains Roland. ‘The desk space has been particularly useful and being surrounded by other business professionals and start-up companies is inspiring and comforting!’

From VAT and IP advice through to compiling a business plan and creating a brand identity, Roland has received support in all of these areas and more. ‘What I have found particularly useful throughout my business development is the knowledge that I can talk to someone confidentially about my business and get advice on what to do next,’ he adds.

As well as workspace facilities housed within The Elevator, graduates also have access to funding opportunities and the expertise of the University’s Entrepreneurs in Residence.

If you’re thinking about starting up your own business – irrespective of when you graduated or where you are now located – you can get in touch with our Rise Up team for advice.

For more information and links to useful resources, visit: www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/riseup

Roland Glancy, a beneficiary of the Careers Service’s business start-up resources.
Be part of Newcastle Science City

Science and innovation are alive in the history of Newcastle and the legacy continues today with Newcastle University at the forefront of research excellence: in ageing and health at Newcastle University’s Institute for Ageing and Health; in stem cell and regenerative medicine at the International Centre for Life; and in sustainability, which will be the scientific focus of Science Central – the largest city centre development for over a decade – being developed on the site of the former Scottish and Newcastle Brewery.

The Newcastle Science City partnership brings together all of this strength into one place providing:

- **Expert business advice through the UK-leading Innovation Machine**
- **Networking opportunities including the incredibly popular First Friday North East events**
- **Opportunities to collaborate with leading academics**
- **Investment opportunities in the city's key science sites including the flagship Science Central**

Our role is to maximise the potential of the city’s science base by supporting the creation of new businesses, attracting investment and strengthening science networks. To find out more about being part of Science City visit www.newcastlesciencecity.com
The BIG Market

The Newcastle alumni business community stretches across the world, offering everything from spinning classes and prize turkeys to lithographic prints, home-made piccalilli and gap years abroad.

Step into our virtual market and take advantage of the services on offer. Visit www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/bigmarket for details of special offers, exclusively for Newcastle alumni.

if you’d like to feature your business in these pages, e-mail the editor at: alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk

Newcastle University cannot take responsibility for any of the services or products purveyed by the businesses featured here.

Chilli Promotional Products
Marketing merchandise
Jody Fletcher (BSc Food Marketing 2000)
South East England
Chilli Promotional Products provides a customer-focused approach to clients looking to source corporate gifts, promotional merchandise, and personalised clothing throughout the UK. Products include pens, mugs, USB flashdrives, t-shirts, jackets, banners, bags, diaries and much more – all with the opportunity to personalise with your company details.
www.chillipromotions.co.uk
jody@chillipromotions.co.uk

Fit as a Fiddle
Pay-as-you-train gym
Lucy Glendinning (BA Combined Studies 2010)
Newcastle
Fit as a Fiddle is a unique fitness studio offering the best-quality classes on a pay-as-you-train basis, without the need to sign a contract. Located in the vibrant heart of Newcastle, minutes from Central Station, customers can drop by at their leisure. Classes currently offered include: spinning; circuit training; core stability; personal training; and women-only. Group training classes are priced at £4 per person (£3 for students).
www.fitasafiddleltd.co.uk

Forefront Digital
Web development
Iain Potter (BSc Computer Science 1998)
North East England
Forefront Digital is a web development agency based in Newcastle, offering website and web application development, along with PHP web development services. Because of its extensive experience in both web and software development, Forefront Digital delivers website perfection, inside and out. To find out more, visit: www.fore-front.co.uk
talk@fore-front.co.uk

Kelly Turkeys
Food
Derek Kelly (BSc Agriculture 1950)
South East England
Kelly Turkeys is dedicated to the breeding and rearing of farm fresh turkeys for superior eating quality – resulting in the highly acclaimed Kelly Bronze Turkey, winner of numerous awards and plaudits from chefs and food writers. Kelly Turkeys also produces beef for those special occasions.
www.kellyturkeys.com
philip@kellyturkeys.com

Wild Things Safaris
Hannah Wood (BSc Geography 1997)
Tanzania
Wild Things Safaris operates across Tanzania, and is proud of providing excellent safari options together with great personal service. Wild Things caters for each client individually, tailoring the safari to meet individual needs. It visits all of the internationally famous locations – the Serengeti, Mount Kilimanjaro, and Ngorongoro Crater – as well as other equally amazing less-visited gems of wildlife, landscape and nature, including the Selous Game Reserve, the volcano Mount Lengai, the Udzungwa Mountains National Park, Mahale and Gombe National Parks (where Jane Goodall conducted her research into chimpanzees) and many more.
www.wildthingsafaris.com

Goodfellow Communications
PR and communications
Steven Harding (LLB 1995)
South East England
Established in 2009, Goodfellow Communications is a communications consultancy, offering services to clients across the public, private and third sectors. Goodfellow has a particular specialism in the built environment and creative sectors, as well as expertise in the higher education sector, and provides a broad range of communications services including PR, stakeholder management, public consultation, event management and public affairs. The company prides itself on a highly personalised approach to clients’ needs, and combines its specialist knowledge and experience with a friendly and flexible approach.
www.goodfellowcommunications.com
FENCI Consulting
Management consultancy
Kevin-James Fenech
(BA Politics 1995)
Southern Europe
A Malta-based management consultancy
positioned to serve family businesses and/or
international business clients wanting to use
Malta’s more favourable corporate taxation
system. FENCI’s core competence is in blue
ocean strategy, customer loyalty, business model
innovation and competitive advantage/disruption.
The company provides a first-rate, time-abundant
service to clients and probably refuses more
new work than it accepts! www.fenci.eu

The Fork & Spoon Caterers
Catering
Jonathan Brook (BA History 2006)
Yorkshire
Based in Leeds, The Fork & Spoon Caterers
provides business lunches to corporate clients,
and caters for private functions throughout
the Leeds area. Jonathan also cooks at outdoor
events and farmers’ markets, providing members
of the public with locally sourced, handmade farm
shop sausages, made to his exact specification.
He makes and sells his own pickles and preserves,
and his piccalilli is proving exceedingly popular!
www.theforkandspooncaterers.co.uk
grill@theforkandspooncaterers.co.uk

Zander Photography
Photographer
Alexander Wilson (BA Town Planning 2010)
North East England
Zander Photography delivers stylish and
contemporary images by an experienced
Newcastle-based photographer. Zander has
experience in photography for weddings, events,
editorial and sports, and specialises in capturing
those discreet but memorable moments.
www.zndr.co.uk
hello@zndr.co.uk

Presence Communications
PR and marketing
Kelly Raiton (MA Creative Writing 2010)
North East England
Presence Communications is a PR,
communications and marketing consultancy
based in Gosforth, Newcastle, which specialises
in working with business start-ups and charities.
If your organisation needs to get its message
out there, needs to give it more impact, or just
say it in the right way, Presence can help.
www.presencecommunications.co.uk
kelly.raiton@presencecommunications.co.uk

Floxx
Social networking
Stu Bradley (BA English
Literature 2009, MA 2010)
Worldwide
Floxx is a location-based microblogging social
network accessible online and via its mobile app.
The platform allows posting and browsing of
descriptions of aesthetically pleasing individuals
in certain areas, with the potential to comment
on posts and contact the original poster.
Why wait? Get Floxxy!
www.floxx.com
stu@floxx.com

Slotzz
Bespoke iPad cases
Leonie Cunnington
(BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering
2008, PhD in progress)
North East England
Started by Leonie in 2010 with the aim of bringing
the world the most unique iPad, iPhone and
MacBook cases, Slotzz has now morphed into the
premium supplier of unique, stand-out branded
cases for professionals and companies looking
for a unique marketing edge. Each case is lovingly
handmade by Leonie, meaning she can make
a unique case for each brand and requirement.
www.slotzz.co.uk / @SlotzzCases on Twitter

Rackham Woffenden Brown
Accountancy
Mike Brown (BSc Agricultural
and Food Marketing 1986)
Yorkshire and Lincolnshire
Are you paying too much tax? Rackham
Woffenden Brown can reduce it. RWB is an
accountancy practice that operates throughout
North and East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.
It specialises in providing business advisory
and tax compliance services to owner-managed
businesses and limited companies – offering
audit, accountancy, payroll, personal tax,
bookkeeping and VAT services, together with
proactive tax planning advice.
www.rwbandaccountants.com
mike@rwbandaccountants.com

Madventurer
International volunteer projects
and adventure travel
John Lawler (BEng 1999)
North East England
Elected as a tribal chief for the work he did in
Ghana during his own gap year, John Lawler set
up Madventurer in 1998 during his final year.
Thirteen years on, the company sends over 500
volunteers a year overseas. It offers volunteers
the opportunity to teach, build, coach sports
and undertake work experience in Africa, Asia,
the South Pacific and South America.
www.madventurer.com tel: 0845 121 1996
The Art of Street Jewellery
Christopher Baglee (BA Architectural Studies 1969, BArch 1972) and Andrew Morley (BA Fine Art 1969)

Genre: Non-fiction
Published: 2006 (New Cavendish Books)
ISBN: 9781872727646

When I was first approached to review this book I mistakenly believed that it referred to some type of costume jewellery newly arrived on the streets to adorn our bright young things.

How surprised I was to realise that this particular range of street jewellery looked back to a former age of enamel signs manufactured across the world to create demand for products when marketing was neither instant nor constant.

The signs remain as works of art in their own right, evocative of their time, providing both a historical and social record of life; these iconic images bring a resonance and beauty all of their own.

What a delight this book is on so many levels with its glorious illustrations, social history and supporting text, with recognisable brands that still endure captured within its pages in images guaranteed to bring a smile to every reader.

Reviewed by Jane Clubley.

The British Constitution
Joyce Quin (BA French 1967)

Genre: Non-fiction
Published: 2010 (Northern Writers)
ISBN: 9780955386985

At a time of intense political mudslinging, it is a rare relief to step back and appreciate the art and science of British politics. And few people are better qualified to offer such an authoritative insight than Joyce Quin, member of the House of Lords and erstwhile minister, Privy Counsellor, MP and academic.

In The British Constitution, Lady Quin lays bare the elements of British political life, and examines their interplay, from the press and the monarchy, to reform in the House of Lords and the pitfalls of imposing local government from the centre. She presents a digestible guide both to how things are, and what shape they may take in the future.

A compelling and comprehensive read for students, practitioners and onlookers alike.

Reviewed by John Pearcy (BSc Mining Engineering 1962).

Basil’s Boys
Chris Foote-Wood

Genre: Non-fiction. Published: 2010 (Northern Writers)
ISBN: 9780956497307

Rowan Atkinson and Bryan Ferry are two of the 80 or so former Durham and Newcastle University students who have penned their recollections for this book on Henderson Hall and Basil Quartermaine Smith, its remarkable and influential warden from 1957 to 1981.

Author and alumnus, Chris Foote-Wood, has compiled a comprehensive history, covering more than 60 years of student life in 116 Chapters and over 400 photographs.

Living at Henderson Hall was very much akin to halls at Oxbridge and Durham. Particularly under Smith’s regime, social and artistic life flourished with reviews, plays, debates, concerts and dances. This book is about the many people who made Henderson Hall what it was and brings it so much to life; people are more important than the fabric or bricks and mortar of a building which itself may or may not have a character of its own.

This book is overflowing with nostalgia and worth every penny of your purchase.

Reviewed by John Pearcy (BSc Mining Engineering 1962).
The Natural Navigator
Tristan Gooley (BA Politics and History 1996)
Genre: Non-fiction
Published: 2010 (Virgin Books)
ISBN: 9781905264940

In these days when GPS systems and phone apps have almost made maps obsolete, is it perverse to think of turning the clock back and learning to find your way using the sun, stars and weather? Not according to Tristan Gooley, whose book The Natural Navigator is a fascinating blend of myth, folklore, history and geography combined with instructional techniques to follow for those prepared to have a go.

Gooley knows what he is talking about. He has led expeditions in five continents, climbed mountains in Europe, Africa and Asia, and is the only living person to have both flown and sailed solo across the Atlantic. Beautifully produced, this book is both easy and a delight to read. Whether one is simply charmed by the knowledge that English footpaths are more prone to puddles on the south side, or wishes seriously to discover how to plot a course across the ocean at night using the moon and stars, The Natural Navigator has plenty to teach us about re-connecting with the natural world around us for practical reasons and for pure pleasure.

And it’s not only about finding direction in wilderness areas or even just the English countryside: navigating in towns can be made easier by observing that TV satellite dishes normally point south-south-east, and tennis courts are frequently laid out north-south.

Understanding the moon and its relation to the movement of tides often seems to require inscrutable mathematical calculations, but try this: ‘On holiday on a tidal beach, if you see a half moon in the sky, the tide will not reach anywhere near its high water mark, which means there will be great swathes of beach that nobody is daring to lie on below this mark. These broad strips of prime sand are ripe for colonisation by wily natural navigators and should be seized upon as a prize for not having found your way to the beach by computer’. Now how useful is that?

Reviewed by Anne Burton.

INSIDEOUT, the Bigg Market
Pierfrancesco Celada (PhD Mechanical and Systems Engineering 2010) Genre: Photography. Published: 2011 (Fotografante)
ISBN: N/A

Classic Bigg Market escapades are captured in this dark, hilarious and even moving photo essay on Newcastle’s most infamous nocturnal destination. Pierfrancesco Celada spent three years photographing revellers on the Bigg Market, whilst studying for his PhD. In INSIDEOUT, he presents a more intimate thesis on the frailty of the human condition, its need for belonging, and the less-than-savoury effects of alcohol.

If you’ve ever been acquainted with the Bigg Market – which I defy any Novocastrian, native or adopted, to deny – this book is an unmissable memento. You can view some of its content online at: http://bit.ly/hiWgDl

Being Human
Edited by Neil Astley
(BA English Literature 1978, Hon DLitt 1996)
Genre: Poetry
Published: 2011 (Bloodaxe)
ISBN: 9781855248093

Being Human is both a wonderful standalone anthology of poems, and a fitting climax to the trilogy it completes. Building on the success of the book’s predecessors, Staying Alive (2002) and Being Alive (2004), Neil Astley lures readers into the world of contemporary poetry – picking 500 beautifully crafted poems from writers of many backgrounds and cultures, and weaving them into a hypnotic narrative.

Serving both to introduce new readers to contemporary poetry, and new poets to existing readers, Being Human is far more than just a ‘bridge’ collection. It’s an inspirational, intelligent and life-affirming volume that no bookshelf should be without.

An Encyclopaedia of Britain’s Bridges
David McFetrich (BSc Civil Engineering 1959)
Genre: Non-fiction. Published: 2010 (Priory Ash)
ISBN: 9780956638700

Bridges are a sign of man’s mastery over nature, from picturesque packhorse bridges to great spans stretching across broad estuaries. And the onward march of technology that allows ever more audacious constructions is seemingly never-ending. Of the million or more bridges throughout the UK, David McFetrich’s selection is significant in terms of design, construction and location, its connections with people events from history. His definitive book contains over 1,650 structures, 150 types of bridge, and more than 700 illustrations and diagrams.

The result is a fascinating and readily accessible compendium.
Snapshots

A history gene that runs in the family

The Spencer family proudly boasts three generations of Newcastle history graduates within its ranks. Grandmother Marie (née Giliker) graduated from the then King’s College in 1943, and recalls the ‘bun room hops’ on a Friday night when she wasn’t sheltering from air raids. Marie married John, an officer in the Royal Air Force, and travelled the world, whilst also pursuing a career in teaching. They had eight children, including Fran (BA Modern and Medieval History 1973), and nine grandchildren – at the last count – including Chris (BA History 2009).

A career in human resources saw Fran work with the University’s Chancellor, Sir Liam Donaldson, whilst at the Department of Health, and she now runs her own HR consultancy from home. She remembers happy days at Newcastle ‘when a pint of Fed ordinary was 10 1/2p, and American History with Tony Badger, who was still teaching at the University when her nephew Chris arrived in 2006.

Chris’s first year at Henderson Hall was a low-key affair compared to his latter years in Jesmond – a ‘dream world’ where his friends lived within a few minutes’ walk and there was no shortage of people to hit Osborne Road with. And with happy-hour prices, compared to those of his home in central London, Chris ‘felt like he had landed in heaven’.

The Alumni Association raises a glass to the Spencer historians, and to Fran’s brother-in-law for his impressive PhotoShop skills.

Chalet Girl – a film built on Newcastle friendships

Brit-flick Chalet Girl, a ‘snowmantic comedy’ released in UK cinemas in March, is the work of two Newcastle graduates: screenwriter Tom Williams (BA Combined Studies 1996) and director Phil Traill (BA Combined Studies 1995). Tom met Phil at the University’s theatre society, NUTS, and they’ve remained friends ever since, although this is the first time they’ve worked together professionally. Phil’s knack for assembling star-studded casts sees Felicity Jones in the title role of Chalet Girl, alongside Bill Nighy, Bill Bailey, Ed Westwick and Tamsin Egerton. His past films include All About Steve with Sandra Bullock.

We interviewed Phil (pictured centre with Jones and Egerton) in the March 2011 issue of AlumNews, which you can read online at: http://bit.ly/heGd7c
Small Tissue founder wins top business award

Ex-campus Big Issue seller, Richard Cartwright (pictured above second from right) was named ‘Britain’s most inspirational businessman’ for his bookselling business, Newcastle Books, at the Barclay’s Trading Places Awards in November 2010.

Best known to graduates of the early to mid-2000s as the creator of The Small Tissue, a handmade supplement that gained cult status among students, Richard received his prize and a cheque for £10,000 from Dragon’s Den star Theo Paphitis and model Caprice Bourret at a ceremony at London’s Savoy Hotel.

The 43-year-old former games shop owner arrived in Newcastle in 2000 after a robbery at his shop in Birmingham left him unable to pay his rent and forced him onto the streets for a decade. Undefeated, Richard used the money he earned from selling the Big Issue to buy rare books he found in second-hand bookshops, and sold them online. From humble beginnings living with 14,000 books in a thirteenth-floor flat, he now has 140,000 books in his warehouse in Byker and sells 60 to 70 books a day with the help of four full-time staff.

‘It’s been nice to get e-mails from people saying I’ve inspired them to get off their backsides and do something with their lives, especially as not so long ago I was asking people to buy a magazine so I could get my life together,’ says Richard. ‘The Big Issue is there to get people on their feet, and it certainly did it for me. I hope this story can change views of homeless people, and say don’t write them off, because everyone has a potential businessman in them.’

You can read a full interview with Richard on the Alumni website at: http://bit.ly/g6r3So

London-based Mudchute Uncles seek rugby league players

Founded in 2010 by five graduates, Mudchute Uncles is the first NURL old boys’ side outside Newcastle, and is based near Canary Wharf on London’s Isle of Dogs.

The team is looking for players, sponsors and community contacts as it enters its inaugural season in the London Amateur Summer league. Prior rugby league experience is not essential. Membership of the Uncles is free and training will be on a casual basis with games and socials taking place once a fortnight between May and August.

If you’d like to get involved, contact mudchuteunclesrl@gmail.com or follow the team on Twitter: @UnclesRL
1960s

Ian JARRATT (BSc Agriculture Economics and Food Marketing 1967, Ed 1968) received the inaugural Australian Consumer Action Award from CHOICE, a national consumer organisation, for his key role as 'a voluntary consumer advocate in the successful consumer campaign for the compulsory provision of unit prices (price per unit of measure) for groceries sold by large supermarkets’. Well done Ian!

Tony MORRIS (LLB 1960) has jilted the judiciary in favour of the creative arts, and is enjoying his career as an actor, musician and performance poet – having also coined the word ‘amerynd’ (relating to Native American flutes). See him perform online at: www.youtube.com/tonymorrispoet

Geoffrey REED (BSc Mathematics 1966, MSc 1967) was awarded an OBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours list. He received the OBE for services to statistics – a profession in which Geoffrey has spent most of his working life – in the private sector and in the public sector as a member of the Government Statistical Service.

Alan THWAITE (BSc Pure Science 1960) organised a 50-year reunion in Newcastle last May with his classmates and their wives. Read Alan’s review online at: http://bit.ly/iEkjAj

1970s

Adrian BECKINSALE (MB BS 1977) was elected President of the Ophthalmology Section of the Royal Society of Medicine in October 2010, and takes up the post for a two-year tenure.

Tim HICKS (LLB 1978) recently completed an MA in British Second World War History which, as a happy coincidence, brought him back to Newcastle for his dissertation research, which looked at the contribution made by three North East shipbuilders – Swan Hunter and Vickers Armstrong on Tyneside and JL Thompson in Sunderland – to the war effort. Tim met his wife Jackie HICKS (BSc Agriculture 1979) whilst studying, and both remember Newcastle and the University as wonderful places.

Dr Brian HUGHES (BSc Chemistry 1972) took early retirement from British Nuclear Fuels Ltd in 1994, and became director and company secretary for a property management company. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace in Cumbria in 1999 and was awarded a long-overdue Honorary PhD in Chemistry in 2004. Since 2000, Brian and his wife have lived in Germany and are ‘enjoying every minute of it’.

Professor Hassan ISAH (MSc Clinical Biochemistry 1978) was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria, after 33 years at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Kogi State is in central Nigeria where the rivers Niger and Benue meet.

Professor Anne JOHNSON (MB BS 1978, MD 1992) is currently Co-Director of the Institute for Global Health at University College London, where she was formerly Director of the Division of Population Health. After training in medicine at the University of Cambridge and Newcastle University, she specialised in epidemiology and public health, and her clinical research career has since spanned over 20 years. In recognition of this, she was appointed to the Wellcome Trust Board of Governors.

Godfrey PEARLSON (MB BS 1974) currently directs a 60-person research centre with two research-dedicated 3T MRI scanners. He’s always on the lookout for bright graduates, particularly those with Matlab programming experience or skills in quantitative image analysis or independent component analysis (ICA) approaches. If you’re interested, visit his website: www.ncr-iol.org

Alun REES (BDS 1978) sold his successful dental practices in 2005 and retrained as a coach before setting up as The Professional Coach™ in 2007. He now enjoys working as a consultant, coach, trainer, analyst and mentor, and hasn’t looked back since.

Dr John RUSHBY (BSc Computing Science 1971, PhD 1977) was awarded the (US) Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineering Harlan Mills Award for 2011 – becoming the second Newcastle computing alumnus to win the award since it was established in 1999, following Professor John KNIGHT (PhD Computing Science 1974) of the University of Virginia, who received the award in 2006.

Naresh SETHI (BSc Chemistry 1975, MSc 1979) completed an MBA at Cranfield University in 1984, and now works as a part-time associate professor and runs his own accountancy practice.

1980s

Rob BRAMLEY (BSc Soil Science 1985) was captain of the squash team while at University and has since played competitively in Oxford, New Zealand and Australia.

Andrew DUNN (BSc Mining Engineering 1981) and Marcus MILTON (BA General 1974, PhD 1981) are enjoying life in sunny Crete. In 2004 Marcus and his wife, Kirsty, decided to expand their UK holiday homes business into Crete and invited Andrew and his wife Tina along for the ride. They soon discovered that the olive trees on their land were producing an abundance of top-quality olive oil and now quite by chance have found themselves running a very successful olive grove. (We’re not jealous at all… Ed.)
Jane EASLEY née WHATLEY (BA Ancient History 1983) is now based in Chicago, and would love to hear from other alumni in the area. You can make contact on LinkedIn or through the Alumni Office at alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk

Rick GALUSHA (Economics 1981) has, for the past 22 years, hosted a roots and blues radio programme, which last year received the highest honour in international blues music radio: the ‘Keeping the Blues Alive’ award. You can listen to his show and archived podcasts at: www.KIWRblues.podomatic.com

Graham LAWES (BSc Metallurgy 1981) has spent 24 years working in South Africa. Earlier this year he returned for a visit to Newcastle and ‘thoroughly enjoyed walking round the city and especially the University’.

John LEE, a former employee of the University’s Geology department, celebrated his 100th birthday on Valentine’s Day 2011. John is currently enjoying the magnificent Perthshire countryside where he and his wife Dora now live, care of his son David. His time at Newcastle University provided John with ‘many happy memories’.

Kathleen MANSFIELD (BA Combined Studies 1980) launched her own drama company, Odd Productions, in 2009. Based in the Scottish Borders, Odd Productions tours locally and is enjoying widespread success. Kath also teaches English at Musselburgh Grammar School in Edinburgh and has two teenage children.

Steve PRICE-THOMAS (BA Geography 1989) was awarded an OBE for services to development in Vietnam in the 2011 New Year Honours list.


1990s

Ashley MILLS (BSc Computing Science 1990) reinvented himself as an iPhone developer after working as a programmer for 18 years, and is now one of the most experienced iOS developers in the country.

Tariq MIRZA (MA Landscape Design 1993) has lived in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Canada since graduating, and has recently moved back to Saudi Arabia: where he is working on a project to develop a new city, that is 120km from Jeddah in Rabigh.

Bernadette O’TOOLE (MFA 1998) has been nominated for the Liverpool Art Prize. She is one of four shortlisted artists from over 60 nominees.

Dr Leda PANAYOTOPOULOU (MA Human Resource Management 1995) has completed her PhD in Strategic HRM, for which she was awarded the second PhD Prize by the European Association of Personnel Management.

John WADHAM (BEng Mechanical Engineering 1990) married his beautiful wife, Kei, at the Raffles Hotel in Singapore. Congratulations!

Dr Tony WOOD (PhD Organic Chemistry 1990) received the 2010 Discoverers Award which is the highest honour given to scientists by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA). The award is in recognition of his groundbreaking development in HIV treatment, SELZENTRY® (maraviroc), a new class of drug which unlike most HIV therapies rather than attacking the virus blocks its entry into human cells. Tony is Vice-President and Head of Worldwide Medicinal Chemistry at Pfizer Global Research and Development.

2000s

Duncan GRIGG (BEng Marine Technology and Naval Architecture 2005) married the gorgeous Sarah Aldred at Jesmond Parish Church on 21 May 2011, with John CONNOLLY (BA International Management 2005) as his best man. Here’s to a long and happy life together!

Oliver HARRISON (MSc Environmental Engineering 2003) and fellow classmates Dan SPEIGHT, Alice SMITH, Rory PADFIELD and Effie PAPACHRISTOFOROU have all found themselves living and working in Kuala Lumpur. Olly credits their MSc as providing the opportunities that have led to careers in Malaysia.

Piers HOPKINS (BA Philosophy 2009) is currently working in Beijing and studying Chinese. He would love to hear from other alumni based in and around China. You can contact Piers through the Alumni Office at alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk or on LinkedIn.

Heather-Jane STEELEY (MA Creative Writing 2006) has worked as a freelance writer since graduation and now runs Alice Media, a social network and blogging consultancy which publishes the excellent quarterly indie arts title, Alice Magazine. www.alicemedia.co.uk

Deciding what to do when an elephant walks through your home and smashes the plumbing pipes, or stopping baboons from pinching food from your kitchen aren’t problems that many people have to encounter, ever, never mind on a daily basis. But for Hannah Wood (BSc Geography 1997) this is all part of life for her in Tanzania, where she runs an ecolodge with her husband Woody and friends, Roy and Zoe. Here she tells us about her experiences.

‘Let’s build an ecolodge.’ ‘OK then.’ And with that it began. Three years ago, sitting on the balcony of our house in Dar es Salaam, my husband Woody and our two friends and business partners, Roy and Zoe, thought we’d start up another business, in addition to our safari company, Wild Things Safaris, in Tanzania. We were all passionately committed to Tanzania, all believed in eco principles, and all wanted to bring more people here to show them the wonders of the African bush.

Roy and Zoe had spent several years getting to know the Udzungwa Mountains National Park. A unique park brimming with endemic primates and birds; rivers, streams and waterfalls; huge drooping strangler fig trees; and clumps of African violets. This we decided would be where we set up our camp.

It was to prove an interesting task. First off, the buying of the land, which is never an easy task in any country, but in Tanzania – with its complex laws on government land ownership, village councils and foreigners’ status – things were even more of a maze. Woody enlisted the help of a local man called Sospeter and together they embarked upon a series of lengthy meetings with the village elders. Eventually the village council gave their approval and piece by piece we were able to buy the land we needed.

We named our camp Udzungwa Forest Tented Camp, the locals call the place ‘Hondo Hondo’ which translates as ‘hornbill’ in Swahili – the camp is a favoured nesting spot! Due to the high biodiversity and fascinating ecological features of the park, we proved popular, and soon we were full of students from Germany, the UK, Uganda and Tanzania, just to name a few.

However, we wanted to be a real ecolodge, not simply a campsite, so over time we began to develop the site. After consulting the local villagers on appropriate building materials, we built five thatched huts on a small rise at the back of the plot. From the windows of the huts the view is straight out into the rainforest, with troops of colobus monkeys swinging through the trees and baboons roaming the ground. We then built luxury tented rooms along the forest edge, where guests can watch birds of prey and swooping hornbills all adding to a fantastic sunset.

Being ‘eco’ is harder than you may think, especially in Africa where equipment can be hard to get hold of. We interpret ecotourism as referring to responsible and sustainable tourism, both in terms of the natural world and the local community. And as a contributing member, we follow the International Ecotourism Society’s code of conduct. We have installed low-energy bulbs throughout the lodge and have solar-powered reading lights in all the rooms. Our hot water is provided using a solar heating system of simple black pipes and we have taken advantage of the abundance of water by installing a micro hydro-power generator. This will ensure our total self-sufficiency and dependence on renewable energy sources.

The other oft-neglected side of ecotourism is the ‘co’, or community aspect. We support the local primary school financially and with resources. We are a participating member of the ‘Pack for a Purpose’ scheme, which allows travellers with a conscience to fill the space in their bags with desperately needed items requested by the local school. We are currently setting up workshops with the schoolchildren and we support the local Ifakara Women’s Weavers group, using their linens and other products in our lodge and selling their products in our shop.

We are still only a couple of years old, which in Africa means we have a lot more to learn, and every day we encounter new and unexpected challenges. But we wouldn’t have it any other way.

For more information on Hannah and Udzungwa Forest Tented Camp, visit: www.udzungwaforestcamp.com

A colobus monkey, which are found throughout Udzungwa.
The Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) organises a number of alumni events and reunions each year, and all graduates are encouraged to attend where possible.

For our full events programme, and reviews and photos from previous events, please visit our website at www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/events

Please keep us informed of any change to your postal or e-mail addresses, using the contact details at the bottom of the page, so we can ensure that your event invitations arrive with you in plenty of time.

INSIGHTS Public Lectures

Newcastle University’s INSIGHTS Public Lectures are a series of free lectures open to everyone that aims to inform, entertain and stimulate debate. Lectures run throughout term time, and feature speakers who are leaders in their field. Visit the website to hear recordings and see details of upcoming speakers: www.ncl.ac.uk/events/public-lectures

Here are some highlights from the past year:

Professor David Nutt, neuropsychopharmacologist
Former chair of the UK government’s Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, Professor Nutt was sacked for daring to challenge policy on drug regulation. He presented new findings comparing the harm of drugs and alcohol at the University in February, and challenged current misconceptions about drugs. Listen online: http://bit.ly/id231c

Dr Matt Ridley, author and broadcaster
The best way to shrink the ‘human footprint’ on the planet’s resources is to maximise the use of synthetic fertiliser, synthetic materials and non-renewable energy – or so argues Matt Ridley (Hon DCL 2007). See his article on page 11, or listen to his lecture online: http://bit.ly/m3HnEC

Lord Roy Hattersley, writer and former politician
Lord Hattersley was a Labour MP for 33 years, latterly as deputy leader, and a cabinet minister under Jim Callaghan. Based on this wealth of experience, Lord Hattersley discussed the politics of the coalition government and looked at the case for electoral change. Listen online: http://bit.ly/ITIEIF

Events Diary 2011

17–19 June
Convocation Weekend 2011
The highlight of our alumni calendar, with 33 events from our 18 schools, and a lecture on sustainable architecture by Jeremy Blake (BA Architectural Studies 1974, BArch 1977). We’re also teaming up with EAT! and Vamos festivals for fantastic food and live music. Open to all graduates, on campus. More info: www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/events/cw11

18 July–6 August
Newcastle University International Summer School
Your choice of 16 programmes to help advance your career or simply spark your interest. More info: www.ncl.ac.uk/nuiss

31 July
Walton Salver 2011
Newcastle alumni golf tournament and sports day at Close House, Newcastle. Contact Denis Murphy for more details: denis.murphy@ncl.ac.uk or 0191 222 5329.

9–11 September
MB BS Class of 1961 celebrate 50 years
Private reunion organised by Claire Shenfine (MB BS 1961). Claire is trying to track down Colin Brown, Maria Byrnes (née Sztatrowska), Valerie Clader (née Arthur) and Edmond Simpson – if you know their whereabouts, please e-mail her at: claire.shenfine@virgin.net

14 September
Retired staff party, on campus
By invitation only. Contact Karen Hendrix for more information: karen.hendrix@ncl.ac.uk or 0191 222 8745.

21 September
Donor reception in London
For donors to the University, by invitation only. Contact Karen for more details (see retired staff party).

18 October
Wynne-Jones Chemistry Lecture 2011
On campus. This year’s speaker is Professor Richard Zare from Stanford University, California. More details: http://bit.ly/keqREK

22 October
Architecture Class of 1971 reunion
Private reunion organised by Jeremy Blake, in Newcastle. Contact Jeremy through the Alumni Office at: alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk for more info.

2012 – A special year for you?
If you have any suggestions for future events, wish to organise a private reunion or have any special anniversaries in 2012, we want to hear from you. Please contact our Events Officer, Maria Szpitun, by e-mail at: maria.szpitun@ncl.ac.uk or by phone on: 0044 (0)191 222 3638.

Contact us

If you need any further information on any of our events, have any suggestions for future events, or would like to recommend a venue, please contact our Events Officer, Maria Szpitun, by e-mail at: m.szpitun@ncl.ac.uk or by phone on: 0044 (0)191 222 3638.
You can also visit our website at: www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/events
Welcome back to Postgraduate study at Newcastle

Find out more about our 10% Alumni Tuition Fee discounts

www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate