Delivering a Strategy for Success
Our 40th Birthday
Down on the Farm in Romania
Many of you will be aware that in January 2003 the UK government published the long-awaited White Paper on The Future of Higher Education. As you might imagine this will have a profound effect on our life at the University so I wanted to share my first reactions with you.

All universities will be pleased that at long last we have a government that has recognized the financial problems that higher educational institutions face. However having made a diagnosis, not everyone is happy with the proposed therapy. On the research side the aim is to have greater selectivity with the creation of a very small group of elite universities. The golden triangle of Oxford, Cambridge and London (University College/London Imperial College) is likely to get the majority of the additional money. The new tier of 6* research funding will be based on the very best of the current 5* (ie international quality research in more than 50 per cent of the submitted activity) but with the added proviso that there is a critical mass of researchers. This is big and beautiful approach militates against all but the largest research-led universities. Even though Newcastle obtained a median 5 score in the last Research Assessment Exercise, if the Higher Education Funding Council only funded grade 5 and above we would lose £4.8 million per annum.

There is considerable emphasis in the White Paper on the need to form consortia for research. This is going to place increased importance on developing links with other strong groups within the region. The further investment in research infrastructure is very welcome. This is principally for science. We have been awarded £21.45 million based on our very successful recent increase in research grant awards. However we need similar investment in improved teaching and student facilities.

On the teaching side the government plans to expand higher education through increasing two-year Foundation degrees, which currently do not form part of our strategy. Fortunately our bid for additional conventional student numbers has been very highly rated and is likely to be funded. The additional income from this would be about £1 million per annum.

We welcome the government’s recommendations on building stronger partnerships between universities and the regional development agencies. This is already an important issue for us in the North East, as is made clear in our main Arches feature on the University’s active support for the regional Strategy for Success. However we are concerned at the government’s belief that knowledge and technology transfer is the province of the non-research intensive universities and that funding for this should be preferentially given to them.

Much of the above has been obscured by the debate about ‘top up fees’. The proposal is that universities will be able to increase these from their current level of £1,100 per annum to a maximum of £3,000 per annum. However we would not be allowed to do this unless we were meeting an agreed target for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The University has had particular success with its PARTNERS widening access programme, greatly assisted by donors to our alumni fund. We therefore do have concerns about the appointment of an access regulator to oversee this area, especially if it increases the bureaucracy of admissions.

With very best wishes

Professor Christopher Edwards  
Vice-Chancellor

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Welcome to Issue 2 of Arches, the magazine of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne
Newcastle Gateshead Joins the Capital of Culture Shortlist

Shortly after the first edition of Arches was published in October 2002, the University was able to join in the celebrations which followed the announcement that Newcastle Gateshead has won a place on the government’s shortlist to be named European Capital of Culture 2008.

As exhibitions go, ‘Are you sitting comfortably’ – a collection of some 40 WCs, sinks and assorted sculptural pieces made from sanitaryware – which had its first UK showing in the Hatton Gallery at the end of 2002, certainly could not be described as ‘bog standard’.

As well as drawing the crowds the exhibition, which was produced during the ‘WC Workshop’ – an artists’ residency project held at the premises of AB Gustavsberg Sanitaryware factory in the Värmdo district of Stockholm, Sweden, in 2000 – sent pun-seeking journalists into overdrive.

Beehive Project Takes Off

The University has been awarded £3.8 million of government money towards the estimated £19 million cost of implementing its five-year Business Plan, which aims to boost student numbers, teaching, research and entrepreneurship.

Of the £3.8 million from the Higher Education Funding Council for England, £2.2 million will be spent on the creation of a ‘Research Beehive’ and Postgraduate Centre - a central suite of meeting rooms, library and social facilities where staff and postgraduate students can exchange ideas and develop new research concepts.

The rest of the money will be spent on a variety of projects including the new Stephenson Engineering Outreach Centre, upgrading teaching facilities in the Business School, relocation of faculty offices and improvements to the campus grounds and buildings.

Separately to the funding announcement, the University is creating nine powerful research institutes, operating in interdisciplinary fields to complement the work of the academic schools. Three of the new institutes, Environment and Health, will be housed in new buildings costing over £30 million which are now under construction.

Other institutes to be based in existing buildings, are Informatics; Public Policy and Practice; Nanoscience and Technology- Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Neuroscience. The ninth institute, Human Genetics, has already been established at the International Centre for Life in Newcastle but will be developed further, especially in stem-cell biology research.

The University has plans to create more institutes once the first nine are established.

Sanitary Sculptures Grab the Headlines

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‘It’s the Loo-vre’, screamed the headline in Newcastle’s ‘Echo’ – but still the news. He said: ‘Winning the bid would be an important attraction to the best students from all over Britain, encouraging them to come to the region and then remain here after graduation, which in turn would boost the economy by providing local employers with a larger pool of top-quality skilled graduates’.

With the final decision due to be announced in June, the Newcastle Gateshead Initiative is enjoying up its campaign to get everyone in the North East region to ‘Back the Buzz’. Find out about the latest developments at www.visitsnewcastlegateshead.com

ROWERS TRIUMPH IN RACE AGAINST NORTH SEA PASSENGER FERRY

Twenty intrepid rowers from the University’s Boat Club are celebrating a unique victory after challenging the DFDS Seaways ship, the ms Prince of Scandinavia, to a race across the North Sea from Newcastle to Ijmuiden, Amsterdam.

The rowers, working in two teams of 10, completed the 492 km voyage 18 minutes and 57 seconds ahead of the ship after a marathon 16-hour row through the night, using twin ergo machines aboard the passenger cruise ferry.

Boat Club Sponsorship Officer, Gill Harris, who organized the event nicknamed ‘Operation Amsterdam’ by the rowers, said: ‘At one stage we were only 1,500 metres ahead of the ship, and it looked like touch and go as to whether we were going to be able to do it. We didn’t realize how hard it would be to keep going right through the night, and when we were nearing the finish it was quite tense, but really exciting at the same time’.

The exhausted but ecstatic rowers arrived in Amsterdam at 10 am after having rowed non-stop from 5.30 pm the previous evening, when the ship left Newcastle. Throughout the challenge, they kept their energy levels up by eating pasta and drinking energy drinks.

The principal aim of the challenge was to raise the profile of the Boat Club to help obtain the sponsorship needed to engage the services of a full-time coach to enable them to build on their strengths and compete at the highest level nationally.

* This year’s Northumbrian Water University Boat Race between Newcastle and Durham takes place on the River Tyne on Sunday 18 May. www.societies.ncl.ac.uk/nubc/
A derelict farm in the small, Romanian town of Siret may seem an unlikely place to find students and staff from Newcastle University. Yet they are the driving force of a remarkable project that will yield not only vegetables and eggs but happier lives for local orphans.

Through their sweat and toil in Siret – and back on Tyneside, where they have been raising funds through gruelling charity events – the University volunteers aim to make the farm a self-sufficient business that can teach the orphans useful skills and integrate them back into society.

The project is carrying on the good work started by TV’s ‘Challenge Anneka’ programme 12 years ago, when Anneka Rice sent a team of volunteers to refurbish Romania’s biggest orphanage at Siret, near the border with Ukraine.

The orphanage is now closed but many of its former residents, now young men and women, are so institutionalized that they live alone and have not been able to find jobs or become integrated into society.

The farm had fallen into disuse after the collapse of communism and was acquired two years ago by the Birmingham-based charity Romanian Challenge Appeal, which launched an appeal for a partner in the project. The University’s School of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development stepped forward and now manages the farm on the charity’s behalf.

When fully operational, Siret Farm will produce crops such as cabbages and potatoes for sale under the expert guidance of a University-appointed farm manager and students who are encouraged to visit the farm as part of their studies.

For the farm to become self-sufficient, it will need a variety of enterprises including the production and marketing of free-range eggs. Students have worked with orphans to refurbish some of the farm buildings and build new hen houses.

Back on Tyneside, students and staff took part in the BUPA Great North Run half-marathon from Newcastle to South Shields last October to begin raising the £3,000 needed to buy 1,000 chickens and a year’s worth of feed.

The event was followed in February by a nine-mile tractor-pull from Tynemouth to The Monument in Newcastle city centre, when money was collected from bemused pedestrians, motorists and even traffic wardens along the route.

Students involved in the project recently gave a presentation to other students in the Faculty. Lisa Thomas told how she spent part of her 2002 summer holidays making nest boxes and training the orphans to prepare for the arrival of the chickens. ‘I worked in the chicken shed, with some of the orphans, communicating by notes and diagrams because we could not speak each other’s language’, she said.

‘One 19-year-old had cerebral palsy. I used hard-boiled eggs to train him to collect eggs without cracking them. He got the hang of it eventually and seemed really pleased with himself’, said Lisa, a third-year student who took part in the BUPA Great North Run.

Head of the School, Dr Alan Younger, added: ‘Some of these orphans have such poor communication skills that they sit in the corner of a room and rock from side to side for much of the day. We want to de-institutionalize these people so they can take their place in society.’

Animal science lecturer Dr Jonathan Guy said that once the orphans had learned to look after chickens, they would be taught how to market the eggs to local shops.

‘The aim is to provide them with the opportunity to learn some basic animal husbandry skills as well as numeracy and communicating with people, which should act as a good springboard for their future’, said Dr Guy.

‘We are also very keen that the students benefit from this experience. We hope that many of our future students will become involved in the Siret Farm project during their degrees and give something back to people less fortunate than themselves’, he added.

Donations and sponsorship money can be sent to Dr Jonathan Guy or Dr Alan Younger School of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development King George VI Building University of Newcastle upon Tyne Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU

Phone 0191 222 6867
or e-mail j.h.guy@ncl.ac.uk

Cheques should be made payable to ‘Romanian Challenge Appeal’.

A Harvest of Happier Lives

Agriculture students and staff at Newcastle are the driving force in a unique project to sustain a remarkable farm in Eastern Europe.
**POTATO BOB**

King’s College graduate Bob Meredith (BSc Agriculture 1955) has received the British Potato Industry Award for 2002. Bob read Agriculture at King’s before going on to receive a Colonial Office Probationership for postgraduate studies at Cambridge and the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad. Thereafter, he worked as an agronomist in Northern Nigeria, undertaking research on groundnut, sugarcane and cotton crops. On his return to the UK, he joined the animal feeding-stuffs industry of Unilever before moving to the former Potato Marketing Board (PMB) in 1971 as deputy head of research and development (R & D). Later he took overall responsibility for communications and R & D.

Among his many achievements in the potato industry Bob oversaw innovative and high-profile publicity campaigns and events leading to a steady increase in potato consumption and better targeting of the emerging catering sector. He also managed the introduction of an early assurance scheme that identified high-quality potatoes and produced premiums for the supply chain by assuring consumers they were purchasing top quality British produce.

**POTATO Review**’s popularity quickly grew among British growers and today it boasts many overseas subscribers. He recently stood down as sole proprietor and publisher but still makes regular contributions to the magazine that is now entering its thirteenth year.

Bob said: ‘The King’s course and fieldwork continues to provide me with sound basic husbandry principles on which to assess technological advances over a whole range of disciplines that make up modern agricultural practice. That, combined with the studies at Cambridge, led me into biometrics and my career work at the “development” end of R & D. I shall always appreciate that King’s training had a significant impact on that career.’

Bob’s main satisfaction is that POTATO Review continues to be the journal for the “potato professional” and has subscribers in 52 countries worldwide.

Bob is always happy to hear from those interested in his work at his memorable e-mail address potato.bcb@1ial.pipex.com

**RECOGNITION FOR YOUNG WRITER**

Talented young writer Ben Rice (BA English 1995), who appeared in the Classnotes section of the first issue of Arches, has recently been included in the prestigious Granta list of the 20 Best Young Writers in Britain under the age of 40. Ben is one of the youngest fiction writers to appear on the list which is published just once a decade. It is a remarkable achievement on the back of a single publication Pobby and Dingan, which won the 2001 Somerset Maugham Award for best debut novel.

The quirky story centres on the disappearance of Pobby and Dingan, the imaginary friends of eight-year old Kellyanne Williamson, and the unforeseen consequences of their disappearance. It is set in Lightning Ridge, New South Wales, the opal mining capital of Australia.

Ben has now published a second novella entitled Specks in the Sky, which won the 2001 Somerset Maugham Award for best debut novel and was born and under his direction the publication soon became renowned for delivering practical technology-transfer-led articles.

**DESIGNER DNA**

Louise Allcroft (MSc Medical Genetics 1995) has found a novel way to turn DNA into a unique designer gift.

The enterprising Newcastle University graduate is co-founder of the Sunderland-based biotechnology firm Complement Genomics. In its latest venture under the name DesigNAgifts, Louise and her team are producing a range of luxury gifts incorporating the DNA profiles of individual customers. As DNA is unique to each individual, the simple idea is that an object such as a piece of jewellery, designed with a customer’s DNA pattern, might be the ultimate in exclusive designer gifts.

A DNA sample is obtained from the customer through a simple, painless swab inside the mouth. The company analyses the DNA using state-of-the-art machinery and sophisticated computer programmes, which enable them to produce a series of coloured peaks which identify each individual from millions of other people. Then, using a series of bespoke techniques, this information is transformed into a coloured barcode which is used to produce a totally unique ‘DesigNAgift’. The idea has been a hit with the range of unique DNA gifts available from the company continuing to grow.

Louise said: ‘The course at Newcastle University fuelled my interest in human genetics. Through these studies, I gained both the theoretical and practical working knowledge of this exciting and rapidly expanding field. My co-founder (Dr Neil Sullivan) and I are delighted with the reception our new product has received from the press and public alike. It seems the concept of DesigNAgifts™ has really captured the imaginations of people all over the world.’

www.complementgenomics.co.uk

**AN ASIAN JEWEL**

British Asian graduate Judge Abbas Mithani (LLB 1979) has been honoured as an ‘Asian Jewel’ at the Asian Jewel Awards at Birmingham’s International Conference Centre, an event attended by some 1,400 Midlands movers and shakers. It was an evening celebrating a half-century of ongoing achievement in the UK’s Asian communities and recognizing 12 individual ‘Asian Jewels’ in particular amongst the many worthy nominees from Midlands businesses and organizations.

District Judge and Recorder Abbas Mithani received the Legal Excellence Award. Having arrived in the UK aged 13 and going on to become the youngest law undergraduate in his year at Newcastle University aged just 17, Judge Mithani became the first Asian articled clerk at his West Midlands firm before setting up his own practice specializing in insolvency, corporate and commercial litigation. In 1999 at the age of 41 he became a District Judge, one of the youngest appointments at the time to that position, going on to become a Recorder of the Crown Court in 2001. He is also an Honorary Professor of Law at Birmingham University and is an author of, and contributor to, many legal works and publications.

Looking back at his time at Newcastle University Judge Mithani commented: ‘I can say with all honesty that I found my time at Newcastle to be very enjoyable and rewarding. I... my first exposure to the legal world. My experience there was invaluable to me in my later life as a commercial lawyer.’

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**Ethiopian Award Winner**

Newcastle University alumnus Melesse Temezen (MSc Agricultural Engineering 1987) has been honoured with a National Award for Outstanding Achievement in Science and Technology by the President of Ethiopia at a ceremony in Addis Ababa.

Melesse was one of three innovators to receive an award from the National Science and Technology Council for the breakthrough he made in the improvement of a mould board plough, which is light and simple with good performance. The plough has been in use by farmers in different parts of the country and commercialized by the Akaki spare-part and hand-tools industry.

During 15 years of research Melesse was able to develop 10 prototype designs that were accepted by farmers, five of which have been commercialized.

Speaking at the award ceremony, President Girma Woldegiorgis said the innovations of the awardees were exemplary in motivating other researchers and inventors in various fields.
A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR

A heartfelt thank you to all those alumni who have helped us to raise an amazing £230,000 this year for the Alumni Fund, the largest amount raised through the annual phonathon since the programme began in 1998.

Over 200 current students applied to be part of this year’s phonathon team, hoping to play their part in raising money for the University and their student peers.

Many of the students eager to work for the programme had benefited themselves from Alumni Fund support through hardship grants, bursaries and access to equipment in the Disability Support Service.

Over an intensive eight-week period prior to Christmas, more than 2,500 alumni were contacted by the phonathon team, generating gifts totalling just over £230,000. Particularly heartwarming was the generous response of donors who had given to the Fund in previous years and were happy to renew their support for the second, third, fourth, or even fifth time.

Of course, the phonathon is about much more than raising funds and putting them to good use. Our student callers thoroughly enjoyed the chance to talk to alumni about their experiences of university life and the opportunities it has led to since graduation. It also provided the team with an opportunity to answer queries about the fund or the University more generally, and to inform alumni about the benefits and services available to them.

Alumni Fund Manager Wendy Taylor commented: ‘The generosity of alumni donors, and the affection so many of them hold for the University, never ceases to impress me. Our current students face many difficult challenges, not least financially. They, and the University as a whole, are fortunate to have the support of so many of those who have gone before them’.

‘Although it is only 10 years since I graduated, it seems that the world of higher education is now quite a different and financially much harder place for students, and it’s good that the Fund offers people like me an opportunity to put something back in’.

Peter Briggs – Alumni donor

BSc Theoretical Physics 1993

‘The phonathon was definitely the most satisfying and enjoyable job I have ever had. To be helping fellow students was good enough, but to have the opportunity to speak to alumni in this, my final year, was really educational and useful’.

Dean Morley – Student caller

Third-year Social Studies student

‘I am a scholarship student myself and had I not received a bursary from the University I would never have come to Newcastle. I fully understand the importance of the Alumni Fund and how it can assist someone to live his or her dream’.

Shamini Ragavan – Student caller

Third-year Master of Laws student

If you are interested in finding out more about the Alumni Fund or would like to make a donation, please contact Wendy Taylor on 0191 222 8470 or e-mail wendy.taylor@ncl.ac.uk.

Further information can also be found via the website at www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/fund

Shamini Ragavan, student caller.

SCIENCE BREAKTHROUGH

A team of scientists at the University, along with collaborators at Oxford, Harvard and Michigan State universities, has examined the molecular structure of two bison bones aged more than 55,000 years old — a major breakthrough which could bring about changes in evolutionary theory.

The research, funded by The Wellcome Trust and the National Science Foundation, has the potential to be applied to much older fossils to gain the most accurate information ever about the genetic make-up of ancient species and may eventually be able to find the answers to long-standing evolutionary puzzles, even perhaps the connection between dinosaurs and birds.

Dr Christina Nielsen-March, a member of the research team, said: ‘Although 55,000 years sounds a long time, it is not going back far enough to tell whether a species has really evolved. We hope to go back further in time and analyse older fossils to see how species have evolved over millions of years’.

Modern students who don’t possess a mobile phone risk being cut off from university life, new research reveals.

Newcastle University anthropologist Natasha Standen, who carried out the study for her PhD thesis, surveyed, interviewed and observed more than 1,000 Newcastle University undergraduates aged 18 to 24.

She found that 66 per cent owned mobile phones and that each week a student would make an average of 15 calls, costing an average of £19.16 per month in total. The use was highest among first years, and lowest among those in the third and subsequent years.

Natasha said: ‘The percentage of students using mobile phones is similar to the proportion of the general UK population. Students just use them in a different way. The way university student life is structured means that having a mobile phone is perfectly suited to it. Students are constantly mobile, frequently travelling across campus to lectures and seminars, or to study periods in the Library, and their halls of residence or houses are spread across the city. The mobile phone provides them with a link to their course mates and their friends, regardless of time or place’.

‘Until the mobile phone came along, Newcastle University students, especially first years in halls of residences, often had problems trying to communicate by telephone. Sharing landlines and payphones was viewed as impractical, causing annoyance and frustration. Having their own phone gives them the privacy which communal landlines do not usually offer’.

The research found that although students used their phones frequently, most budgeted carefully and made many calls during the most inopportune times of the day.

It’s Good to Talk

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The aerospace industry has used the technique for many years for treating highly stressed parts to prolong their operating life, and peening is also increasingly being used in both the motor sport and performance production car industries.

‘We also hope our work will improve the UK’s international competitiveness. Countries like China may be able to produce gear boxes cheaper but if we can make them better it will help retain industry in this country’, added Dr Shaw.

‘The generosity of alumni donors, and the affection so many of them hold for the University, never ceases to impress me. Our current students face many difficult challenges, not least financially. They, and the University as a whole, are fortunate to have the support of so many of those who have gone before them’.

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A Strategy for Success

‘In terms of volume and national and international standing of research, the University is by far the largest component of the region’s research base. We are therefore well placed to provide the backbone of research to support each of the Centres of Excellence that are to be established under the Strategy for Success.’

Professor Christopher Edwards
Vice- Chancellor

Newcastle University is playing a key role in the establishment of five regional Centres of Excellence in the North East. The Centres are supported by all five of the region’s universities as partners in the North East’s Strategy for Success, a new and innovative initiative which identifies a leading role for the universities to play in building a ‘knowledge-based economy’ within the UK in line with government policy objectives.

Strategy for Success has been developed and is co-ordinated by One NorthEast, the regional development agency for the North East of England. It aims to exploit the region’s research base to generate innovation, competitiveness and growth in the North East, thereby laying the foundation for the region’s future economic prosperity. In particular, it identifies an approach to cluster development based on establishing five new Centres of Excellence that are supported by a research exploitation company (NorthSTAR) and guided by the Regional Science and Industry Council.

The key component of Strategy for Success in terms of University involvement is the establishment of the five Centres of Excellence in Life Sciences, Nanotechnology, Photonics and Microsystems; New and Renewable Energy; Process Industries; and Digital Technology and Media. Although each Centre has a primary physical location within the region it is not intended, or likely to be the case, that all research activity will take place at a single location. Instead, emphasis is being placed on fostering good integration and enhancing the relationship of the parts to the whole with a view to delivering economic benefit right across the region.

The principal function of the Centres will be to ‘condition’ technologies arising from the regional research base into a form that enables them to be utilized for commercial purposes. Each Centre is being constituted as a Company Limited by Guarantee with aims and objectives that are informed by the overall Strategy for Success. Our existing research strengths at Newcastle University mean that we are well-placed to contribute to all five Centres.

In the case of Life Sciences, the University already has a long track record of research activity with a commercialization focus – reflected in a number of businesses having been ‘spin-out’ by bio-entrepreneurs at the University. Meanwhile our extensive network of industrial collaborations underlines the direct relevance of the University’s research activities in life sciences to the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. Among a network of University connections the Centre enjoys particularly close links with the International Centre for Life, home to the Northern Genetics Knowledge Park and the University’s own Institute of Human Genetics. Major investment and the expansion of research facilities are enabling giant steps to be taken in a number of life science fields including research in human genetics, human vision and brain disorders, biogerontology and oncology.

Elsewhere, the University is breaking ground in entirely new areas of research such as nanotechnology. Here, our impressive new facilities and a large body of research staff drawn from across a range of disciplines have made Newcastle the hub of the Nanotechnology Centre of Excellence. In establishing these facilities the University has been the major beneficiary of the Department of Trade and Industry’s prestigious ARCHES award. In recognition of this award the University Innovation Centre in Nanotechnology was launched in May 2003. Nanotechnology is an exciting new field of research akin to microtechnology, but dealing with objects 1,000 times smaller in scale. It is expected to trigger a technology revolution that will change our lives in many different ways. At Newcastle, for example, scientists are developing devices ranging from a tiny biosensor that can warn of an impending heart attack, to quantum dots and wires which could one day be used to build computers the size of pinheads.

New and renewable energies are an increasingly important area of business with the desire to move away from fossil fuels. The University’s researchers are playing a lead role in the UK’s first large-scale New and Renewable Energy Centre (NareC) at Byth in Northumberland. Devices for harnessing energy from the sea and wind will be put through their paces at NareC, which will provide a world-class test capability unequalled in Europe. Our involvement reflects the University’s widely recognized research strengths in marine technology and a wide range of the environmental sciences.

The focus of much of the University’s research activity in relation to process industries also has an environmental theme. Research in chemical and process engineering aims at reducing the environmental impact of factories of the future, while cutting production costs and improving safety at the same time. Process industries are already the biggest single generator of wealth in the North-East region and constitute one of the major employers. The need to strengthen the role of the region’s universities in enhancing the commercial effectiveness of the sector is therefore paramount. Newcastle’s new Responsive Processing Laboratories will play a role in achieving this aim, facilitating research that combines technical know-how with expertise in control and monitoring techniques and mathematical modelling of processes.

The Digital Centre of Excellence is establishing bases in all five universities. Newcastle University has a strong academic research and teaching base in computing and informatics and a world-class test capability unequalled in Europe which can benefit from large amounts of extra computational power. In conjunction with the establishment of the five Centres of Excellence, One NorthEast is working with regional partners including the University to establish a new exploitation company named NorthSTAR (North Science and Technology Application Resourc) charged with transferring knowledge and technology from the research base. NorthSTAR will seek to maximize the commercial value generated from the region’s technological assets by interfacing with the Centres of Excellence and providing services such as commercial expertise and access to finance and to potential customers.

Strategy for Success is an exciting opportunity for the University to work alongside its regional partners with the aim of developing the economic vitality of the North East and transforming its future potential.

Alumni interested in developing links with any of the activities embraced by Strategy for Success are warmly encouraged to contact the Regional Development Office at the University by e-mail: s.d.o’donnell@ncl.ac.uk Alternatively contact Gillian Durkin, Strategy for Success Project Executive, One NorthEast, Bioscience Centre, International Centre for Life, Times Square, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4EP. Telephone 0191 211 2560 www.strategyforsuccess.info

The University of Newcastle upon Tyne Magazine | Issue 2 Spring 2003 | www.ncl.ac.uk
On 1 August 2003 the University of Newcastle upon Tyne celebrates its fortieth birthday. However, unlike other ‘new universities’ born in the 1960s, Newcastle was already one of the oldest higher education institutions in the UK at the time it became a university. In the words of Mr Charles Bosanquet, who became the first Vice-Chancellor after serving 11 years as the Rector of King’s College, ‘we claim that we will be 100 years old the day we are born!’ This was no exaggeration as the University could trace its origins back to the foundation of the College of Medicine in 1844 in the Mansion area of the city. During most of the intervening period King’s College, as it was named after 1937, had formed much the larger part of the University of Durham.

The peculiar fact that the new University of Newcastle upon Tyne was engineered through a division of the old University of Durham meant that a whole generation of students enjoyed the unique experience of studying at two different universities over the duration of a single degree course.

Nevertheless, as David Rawlinson (LLB 1965) recalls, institutional change seemed less momentous at the time than it did in retrospect. ‘I studied Law from 1962. Probably like a number of my contemporaries I came to Newcastle in a sense by mistake, applying originally to Durham but, in the absence of a law faculty there, having my application referred on to the Newcastle faculty then situated on the top floor of the Percy Building. From then on Durham really had no relevance to me. The LLB course from 1962 was under new regulations which anticipated the transition the following year to the new University. There was no contact I can recall with Durham, whether academically or socially, and I think I visited there only once in my three years at Newcastle. In 1965 I was given the option of either a Newcastle or Durham degree and chose a Newcastle one on the basis that it was where I went to University. Interestingly, out of my Law year of 39, only nine chose this Newcastle option – the view of some of the others being that the tradition of Durham might give their degree more “weight”.’

Peter Gore (BDM 1964) remembers that 56 out of 58 dental graduates in his year also chose the Durham degree ‘... probably sticking with what they knew best’. Yet David Dingwall (BSc Civil Engineering, 1965) reports that his entire class took the Newcastle option following the urging of their course tutor, Professor Cassie.

Given the sensitivities associated with the change it was perhaps unsurprising that the celebrations to mark the establishment of the University were fairly low key and public pronouncements tended to emphasize continuity rather than change. Writing in The Journal on 31 July 1963, the new Vice-Chancellor focused on the Parliamentary Act which brought the University into existence on the following day. ‘What the Act does not alter is the direction and momentum of the University based on 131 years of achievement. A University is a society bound together by a communion of memories and hopes, expressing its aims in regulations which are the written form of policy.’

Despite the feature in The Journal, David Dingwall recalls that media coverage was fairly limited in August 1963. ‘There was little reference in the newspapers which at the time were reporting stories such as the Christine Keeler Affair, the Great Train Robbery and Beatlemania’. In many respects the creation of Newcastle University was as much an historic moment for the city of Newcastle as it was for the University. The report in The Journal on 31 July captured this quiet sense of pride in its opening sentence. ‘Tomorrow, August 1, Newcastle will become a university city, even though the man in the street will see few indications of this momentous transition. “It was a point expressed in the only recorded ceremonial that took place on 1 August when the Lord Mayor of Newcastle paid a formal visit during the first meeting of Senate to congratulate the University on its new status and present the Vice-Chancellor with an inscribed Lindisfarne silver salver to mark the event.”’

The inauguration of the first Chancellor in King’s Hall.

Mr Charles Bosanquet
Vice-Chancellor of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne (1963 – 68) (Rector of King’s College 1952 – 63)

Mr Tony Higgins (BA German 1967) is Chief Executive of UCAS and therefore spends his working time channeling students into his alma mater amongst other UK universities. In 1963 he was a keen rugby player in the first year of intake at the University.

“I was one of the first students to be enrolled by the University in 1963 to study German and Swedish. I didn’t go to the Freshers’ Fair and arrived in Newcastle on the Saturday before term started. I discovered when I went to my hall, Eustace Percy Hall, that the Rugby Club were holding trials that afternoon. I caught the number 19 bus to get to Crotch Park, only to find that I was going the wrong way around on a circular journey. I had to get off, cross the road and catch the bus going the other way around. On arrival at Crotch Park I discovered that because I had not been at Freshers’ Week I was not registered to play in the trial and so I only came on late in the second half as a substitute. I seemed to do quite well however, and was picked to play for the first 15 on the following Saturday against Percy Park. I played at centre and scored the University’s first and second try in its history and was written up in The Sunday Times the following day.”

FACTS AND FIGURES

1963

4,402 students
1,000 staff

2002

15,270 students (including 2,281 international students)
4,308 staff
The University welcomes alumni, staff, and guests to join us for any of a range of events taking place across campus and beyond during Convocation and Alumni Reunion Weekend 2003.

FRIDAY

Alumni Association AGM
Council Chamber, Armstrong Building
5.00 pm – 7.00 pm
The AGM is open to all alumni whether actively involved in running branches or interest groups within the Alumni Association, or simply interested in hearing more. The meeting will be chaired by Dominic Pinto (BA Politics 1976), Chairman of the Alumni Association.

Alumni Ceilidh
King’s Hall
7.30 pm – 12.00 am
Join us for a special Reunion ceilidh in the King’s Hall. Our ceilidh band will provide the music with a special caller for those who don’t know the steps. A light buffet is included in the ticket price and a cash bar will be provided. Tickets cost £8 per person. Places are limited, so please book early.

SATURDAY

Reunion Weekend Lecture
Lucy Bird, Director of Marketing and Development, The Sage Gateshead
Herschel Building
9.30 am – 10.30 am
We are privileged to be joined by Lucy Bird from The Sage Gateshead who will speak on the exciting project taking shape on the Gateshead Quayside. The Sage Gateshead will be at once a magnificent Norman Foster building, an outstanding facility for all kinds of live music and for the work of its resident musicians and a pioneering centre for music education and discovery. The University’s involvement with the project through its unique degree course in folk and traditional music will be explained in the context of the European Capital of Culture 2008 bid; this will be a wonderful opportunity for alumni to take a behind-the-scenes look at a key component in the evolving cultural and artistic profile of the region.

Buffet Lunch
Hatton Gallery
1.00 pm – 2.30 pm
A buffet lunch is available in the Hatton Gallery between 1.00 pm and 2.30 pm. Why not take the time to enjoy the final-year show of the BA in Fine Art graduates while eating your lunch. Reservations for the lunch must be made in advance with tickets priced at £10 per head including a glass of wine. Access to the Hatton Gallery itself is free of charge.

Alumni Fund Donor Lunch
Bedson Building
1.00 pm – 2.30 pm
To be hosted by the Vice-Chancellor and the Chairman of the Alumni Association.

Tour of the Music Facilities
2.30 pm – 4.30 pm
A second opportunity to tour Newcastle’s music facilities as described in more detail above.

Convocation (with a presentation by Professor Christopher Edwards, Vice-Chancellor)
Herschel Building
4.00 pm – 5.30 pm
The meeting of Convocation, which will be chaired by Jack Jeffrey CBE (BSc 1953; MSc 1960), is the annual meeting at which alumni receive a report from the Vice-Chancellor on the state of the University. Convocation is an important forum that provides you with the opportunity to hear at first hand about the challenges being faced by the University and in the ways in which those challenges are being tackled. Convocation allows you to have a voice on issues of policy at the University. Tea will follow in the Herschel Foyer for those attending Convocation. Once again, Convocation will be broadcast live online to a virtual audience around the world. Please book early for a live link-up slot, as these slots are limited.

Convocation Lecture
Sir Thomas Allen CBE
The Performer Creator or Recreator?
Curtis Auditorium, Herschel Building
6.00 pm – 7.15 pm
Convocation Lecture will be given this year by the world-renowned and local-born baritone Sir Thomas Allen CBE (Hon MA 1984). He will be speaking on the subject ‘The Performer, Creator or Recreator?’

Drinks Reception and Reunion Dinner
Hatton Gallery and King’s Hall
7.30 pm
The Reunion Dinner returns to the King’s Hall, preceded by a drinks reception in the Hatton Gallery. Our caterers have devised a special four-course menu for the Dinner. Wine can be pre-ordered for the table at the Drink’s Reception or purchased at the table. You can either book individually or with friends (groups of seats can be reserved on request). Why not contact a few of your contemporaries to return to campus together (see ‘Additional Information’). Tickets cost £28 per person (including VAT). Places are limited, so please book early.

University Lecture
Herschel Building
2.45 pm – 3.45 pm
Professor Philip van der Eijk on the History of Medicine

Drinks in the Hatton Gallery

A buffet lunch is available in the Hatton Gallery preceded by a drinks reception in the Hatton Gallery. Our caterers have devised a special four-course menu for the Dinner. Wine can be pre-ordered for the table at the Drink’s Reception or purchased at the table. You can either book individually or with friends (groups of seats can be reserved on request). Why not contact a few of your contemporaries to return to campus together (see ‘Additional Information’). Tickets cost £28 per person (including VAT). Places are limited, so please book early.

MENU
Drinks in the Hatton Gallery
Chicken, Calvados & Cream Cheese Terrines served on a Bed of Rocket with Caramelized Onion Chutney
or
Sweet Potato, Carrot & Courgette served on a Bed of Rocket with Caramelized Onion Chutney
or
Aubergine Dauphines
Individual White Chocolate Truffle Tart with Strawberry Sauce and Forest Fruits
Northumberland Cheeseboard
Tea, Coffee & Mints

BOOKING
A booking form is enclosed for alumni readers of Arches. To request additional booking forms please telephone +44 (0) 191 222 7250 or visit our website at www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/events/reunion where you can book online. Final details, including venues, campus maps and parking information will be sent in mid-May to those booking in advance.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Contact Your Friends Online
If you want to contact friends from your time at Newcastle to see if they are attending, why not sign up for and search our online directory, NUGrad? Over 5,000 alumni are already signed up for the directory at www.ncl.ac.uk/nugrad Alternatively, the Development and Alumni Relations Office holds a further 55,000 address details and will be happy to forward messages on your behalf.

Disabled Access
Disabled access provision is not uniform across campus. Please contact DARO for advice on disabled access issues on +44 (0) 191 222 7250.

Accommodation
Special rates have been negotiated at several hotels in and around Newcastle for alumni wishing to spend the night of Friday 6 and/or Saturday 7 June. Check out our website for full details at www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/events/reunion Alternatively, to request a full list by e-mail, fax or mail please call the office on +44 (0) 191 222 7250 or e-mail alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk

University Memorabilia Shop
Alumni returning for Reunion 2003 can benefit from a special Reunion Weekend discount of 15 per cent on all goods. The shop will be open between 10.00 am and 5.00 pm on Saturday 7 June.
An Evening at The Royal Institution

Over 100 alumni and guests attended a special reception held on 19 November at The Royal Institution (RI) in London. Home to the oldest independent research body in the world, alumnis were able to view the RI’s museum of exhibits relating to the major scientific discoveries of leading RI members during the past two centuries, including the discovery of sodium and potassium by Humphry Davy, electro-magnetic induction by Michael Faraday and the liquefaction of hydrogen by James Dewar.

The highlight of the evening was a chance for alumnis to receive a special illustrated talk within the famous Faraday Lecture Theatre from our special guest speaker, the award-winning architect and alumnus Sir Terry Farrell (BSc 1961). As well as touching on his fascinating architectural perspective for redeveloping the University’s own central campus in Newcastle, Sir Terry also treated alumnis to a retrospective on his career as an architect, which has included high-profile projects such as Seoul Airport in South Korea and Charing Cross Station and the MNE Headquarters buildings in London.

The talk was complemented by a special temporary exhibition mounted at the RI by Tony Farrell and Partners and it provided many interested questions and comments throughout the evening.

The reception was attended by the Vice-Chancellor, the Chairman of Convocation and the Chairman of the Alumni Association, who each spoke briefly during the evening.

Alumni Event in Taiwan

Around 60 alumni and guests attended a reception for alumnis at the Westin Hotel in Taipei on 2 December. The event coincided with a visit to Taiwan by Professor Madeline Alvin. Pro-Vice-Chancellor, who attended the reception and spoke to alumnis about exciting recent developments at the University and opportunities for alumnis to support the work of their alma mater.

Our thanks are extended to Hoin-Yuan Lai (MPhil Law 1999) and his colleagues at the British Council in Taiwan who provided invaluable assistance with the organisation of the evening. Geoff Evans, Director of the British Council in Taiwan, was also able to attend and said a few words about the new alumni network which the British Council has established in Taiwan and forthcoming activities taking place.

A special webpage for alumni in Taiwan is at www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/contact/branches/international/taiwan.html

Alumni Networking in New York

In conjunction with the Founders and Benefactors Weekend. Contact Geoff Braunton for further details at gbraunton@hotmail.com

The reunion commenced informally on Friday evening at Gosforth Park Hotel. It was noticeable that there was more talking than drinking. Perhaps the skill to do both simultaneously has been lost over years of responsible practise! The next morning a tour of the Medica School was amazing, and included the Anatomy Teaching Centre, the Information Technology (IT) Room and the Clinical Skills Laboratory. The learning process has been revolutionized by the use of IT technology, where each student can access the web and university teaching material to work at their own pace and save what they need. The system allows access from any computer so that students can continue with their academic work whilst completing a student internship in any hospital in the region. Their contacts with the system are monitored to provide feedback to tutors.

The Clinical Skills Laboratory was equally impressive and many of the onlookers wished that this type of facility had been available during their training. After the tours Professor Jordan provided an outline of the current curriculum for MB BS training and future developments. It was satisfying to learn that the recent assessment of the Medical School’s teaching and research had been so positive.

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Half-price Hotels Deal for Alumni

Alumni can now take advantage of a fantastic half-price hotels deal with Hotel Express International. By becoming a Hotel Express University of Newcastle upon Tyne member, alumni can take advantage of 50 per cent discounts at thousands of luxury hotels throughout the world.

Annual membership of Hotels Express costs £34.99, of which 20 per cent goes directly to the University’s Alumni Fund, supporting student-orientated activities at the University. Whether you need a hotel for a visit to Newcastle or a trip to Australia you will be helping the University and saving money for yourself through Hotel Express membership. Members receive a membership card and hotel directory detailing the thousands of hotels participating in the offer.

Further details of the offer can be found on the inset enclosed in this issue of Archives and on the Alumni Association website at www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/services

If you wish to take immediate advantage of this exclusive offer, then simply call 0870 120 8686 with your credit card details quoting reference NUA or alternatively please send cheques and postal orders made payable to ‘Hotels Express Ltd’ to PO Box 187, Ilkley LS29 0WT.

Honorary Graduates

The Chancellor of the University, the Right Honourable Christopher Patten CH, will confer the following Honorary Degrees at a ceremony on Friday 9 May 2003.

Dr Herbert Laebø OBE (BSc Electrical Engineering 1949, PhD History 1985), who is the retired founder of Joyce-Laebø Electronics and Scientific Instrument Group, is to become Doctor of Science (DSc).

Fiona Reynolds CBE, Director-General of The National Trust, is to become Doctor of Letters (DLitt).

Mr Robert Kirkwood OBE (BSc Electrical Engineering 1949, PhD History 1985), who is the retired founder of Joyce-Loebl Electronics and Scientific Instrument Group, is to become Doctor of Science (DSc).

Professor Fred Schneider of Cornell University, who is an international expert in computer security, is to become Doctor of Science (DSc).

Sir Bobby Robson CBE, Manager of Newcastle United FC and former Manager of England, is to become Doctor of Civil Law (DCL).

Mr Andrew Swales (BSc Electrical Engineering 1949, PhD History 1985), who is an international expert in computer security, is to become Doctor of Science (DSc).

Professor Fred Schneider of Cornell University, who is an international expert in computer security, is to become Doctor of Science (DSc).

Sir Bobby Robson commented on his award, ‘I am delighted to accept this honour from Newcastle University, who are not only Newcastle United’s closest neighbour in the city, but also another of this region’s “premier league” organisations’.
**2000s**

John EDWARDS (BA Music 1958) has reached retirement age and returned to work at her own practice on a part-time basis.

Rosemary AHMED (MB BS 1964) retired as Planning Director for Steel/Corus, but is now retired and works as a part-time consultant engineer.

Kevin PARFITT (MEng Civil Engineering 1991) has been appointed as the first Dean on some private consultancy.

Richard MONTGOMERY (MB BS 1978) launched his own business offering technical support services to the food manufacturing industry in 2001.

Joan NEALE (MEd 1982) was married in 1990 and has three children. She graduated with an MA in Social Work in 1996 and is now a teacher.

Susan ADAMS (BSc Mathematics & Statistics 1988; PhD Statistics 1995) moved to Victoria, Australia to take up a position at the University of Melbourne and they had a baby boy in August 2001.

Kate ASKEW (BSc Biological Sciences 1991) spent one year travelling. She did a FCFS at Ripon and York College and is now a teacher.

Andrew BARR (MSc Computing Science 1994) is living in Bedfordshire and works as Head of Equine, Animal Care and Dog Grooming at a small college.

Adam BROWN (BSc Biological Sciences 1996) published the Popular Publications Association Excellence in Advertising Award for 2001 for the best interactive campaign. He was also a finalist at the New York festival for the print advertising category.

Russell CHARNOCK (BEng Civil Engineering 1993) has retired after 45 years of teaching since he retired in Sheffield.

James GEDDES (BSc Civil Engineering 1949; PhD Civil Engineering 1953) is currently publishing a series of books on the old colours of British regiments.

Jack MESSING (BDS 1946) retired from a visiting professorship at Palma University a few years ago but still does private clinical interests involving meetings at the Royal Society of Medicine.

John WILSON (MB BS 1970) has retired from his post as Chair of the University Dental School.

William HOLMES (BSc Agricultural Studies 1967) is employed by Northumberland councils in the planning department.

David NOBLE (Chemical Engineering 1989) completed postgraduate teaching as a psychosocial therapist last year and is married with two children.

Mary FARRELL née ANDERSON (BSc Microbiology & Language 1973) is married with three children and qualified in psychoanalytic psychotherapy last year.

Ann WHEELER (MEd 1982) was married in 1990 and has two children. She is now working as a research assistant at the John Lewis Partnership.

Richard BASTIE (BSc Biochemistry 1999) has founded his own company and is starting up his own marketing company called Star Promotion.

Donald LEE (BSc Zoology 1956) is the Chair of the Northern Branch of the Institute of Biology, a council member of the Yorkshire Agricultural Society and Editor of the Biology of Hemenstoke, published in 2002 by Taylor & Francis.


Laura KERRIDGE (BA Speech 1980) works part time as a speech and language therapist and has two children.

Sarah VALE née CANT (BA Classics 1983) got married in July 2002 and has been an acting head of department at a museum and art gallery in Birmingham.

William WALKER (PhD Theoretical Physics 1989) is on the Board of the CSCC as an IT Consultant and is living in St Alkhan with three children.

Alvin MENEY (BSc Mathematics & Statistics 1988; PhD Statistics 1995) moved to Victoria, Australia to take up a position at the University of Melbourne and they had a baby boy in August 2001.

Christopher LANIGAN (BA Politics 1992) studied for an MSc in PR and 1993) is emigrating to New Zealand to practice, demonstrate and teach permaculture design on a larger scale.

Clare ORMEROD (BA Fine Art 2001) did temping work before joining Mencap in their events department. She is enjoying the London lifestyle.

Rory MCMULLEN (BSc Economics 2000) has graduated as a Chartered Accountant for Price Waterhouse Cooper, before joining the Royal Bank of Scotland as a Corporate Relationship Manager and is currently involved in an internet venture.

Craul STEELE (PhD Chemistry 1997) has been appointed Senior Operations and Technical Support Advisor at British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. 

Claire DALEY (BSc Statistics 2001) has completed a PCCE in Mathematics at Cambridge University and is working as a teacher in Liverpool.

Nicholas EVANS (BSc Plant Science 2000) works for a charity in Malawi on tropical agriculture. He is also studying for an MSc in Natural Resource Management.

Sarah HENSON (BA Fine Art 1990) has returned in September 2002 and is pursuing a vocational training course in brewing.

Richard SMART (Business Management 1997) completed a BSc in Management qualification as a Chartered Accountant for Price Waterhouse Cooper, before joining the Royal Bank of Scotland as a Corporate Relationship Manager and is currently involved in an internet venture.

Francis ELLARD (BA Fine Art 1998) has worked for the MOD for four years and in September 2002 started an MSc in Defence Systems Engineering.

Lynn GREENWELL née GAIR (BSc Medical Ethics at Imperial College, London. 

William RICHARDS (BSc Plant Biology 1995) started research at Leeds University into the attitude of disengaged youths towards hard drugs.

Kirsten REMER née REYNOLDS (BSc Countryside Management) was awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship in 2002. Exhibiting annually at the Manchester Academy and working on a sculpting project for a private estate.

Lynn HARMONY née MARSH (BA Linguistics 1995) gained a certificate in TESOL and went to teach in Shanghai where she met her husband. They are now living in Los Angeles.

Karen NELAC (BA Architectural Studies 1989) works for a music teacher for four years and now works in a music store in Harrogate. He is married to Claire.

Carol STEWART (BEng Marine Engineering 1992) has recently been appointed Senior Operations and Technical Support Advisor at British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. 

Krushna PURI (PhD Fossil Fuels & Environmental Geochemistry 1999) has worked for the South Africa Heritage Resources Agency and is responsible for establishing a national inventory of heritage resources in South Africa. 

Shandy HO (MA Museum Studies 1995) attended a Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award in 2002 and also won an environmental fellowship through IUCN to study turtle populations in Brazil.

Dean CORNISH (BA French with Spanish 1997) left university and spent some time teaching English to foreign students in Spain and at private schools in the UK and is currently working for legal publishers.

Stella WHYTE née REES (BSc Agricultural & Environmental Sciences 1990) is currently teaching in Mwanza, Tanzania in August 2002 and has previously taught in Melbourne, Australia.

Emma HESLEWOOD (BA History 1997) worked for the Campaign for Tides and went to teach in Shanghai where she met her husband. They are now living in Los Angeles.

Christopher MEAYERS-NORKETT (BSc Process Engineering 2000) is a music teacher for four years and now works in a music store in Harrogate. He is married to Claire.
Arches
Editorial Board
Development and Alumni Relations Office
University of Newcastle upon Tyne
6 Kensington Terrace
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 7RU

Telephone: 0191 222 7250
Fax: 0191 222 5905
E-mail: alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk
www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni

Editorial Board members are: Joel Burden (Development & Alumni Relations Office), Chris Cox (Development & Alumni Relations Office), Dr Eric Cross (Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences), John Dentley (Regional Development Office), Melissa Finlay (Publications & Website Development Office), Richard Kay (Alumni, Agricultural Business Management & Marketing 2001), Jake Lee (Union Society & BA Economics 2002), Dinah Michie (Publications & Website Development Office), Ros Normandale (Alumna, BA Combined Studies 1993), Melanie Reed (Press & Communications Office), Mark Scrimshaw (Alumna, BA History 1978), Professor Clarke Slater (Faculty of Medical Sciences), Wendy Taylor (Development & Alumni Relations Office), Mick Warwicker (Press & Communications Office), Professor Paul Younger (Faculty of Science, Agriculture & Engineering, & Alumnus, BSc. Geology 1984).