Many readers will have followed with interest the debate in Parliament on proposals to introduce variable tuition fees of up to £3,000 per year for home and European Union (EU) undergraduate students studying in the UK.

Full-time home and EU undergraduate students currently pay £1,125 per year in tuition fees. The government plans to transfer the fees from an upfront contribution to a scheme of repayments that starts when a graduate is earning over £15,000 per year. Low income families will benefit from a government contribution towards the fees and a £1,500 maintenance grant. The fees contribution of £1,200 may be converted to an additional maintenance grant. In addition the University will provide a bursary of £300 if the full fee is charged.

Clearly, tuition fees are a very difficult issue, but the reality for universities is that the government has made it clear that extra income from variable fees represents the most significant element of any additional funding coming into the higher education system in the foreseeable future. We are all aware that the unit of funding per student has been halved over 20 years, and this trend has worrying implications for the standard of student learning provision that universities can afford to provide. Tuition fees offer universities a financial lifeline which will help them to reverse this trend and invest in areas that will guarantee our students an improved learning experience during their studies, and hopefully, a brighter future after they graduate.

At Newcastle, the University has agreed in principle to charge full-time home and EU undergraduate students the maximum £3,000 per year tuition fees once the legislation on variable fees comes into effect in 2006. Council, the governing body of the University, has noted the concerns of students and agreed that the University will plan for very significant bursary support. Higher fees will also be acknowledged in our hardship support schemes.

The government has linked its variable tuition fees proposals to widening participation targets. Although the new tuition fees regime will not come into effect until 2006, the University has had a longstanding commitment to widening participation reflected in initiatives such as our much-praised PARTNERS programme. In fact, our PARTNERS bursaries continue to provide a very popular area of support for alumni donors to the Alumni Fund. I would therefore like to extend my personal thanks to the growing number of supporters of the Alumni Fund whose generous gifts, which totalled more than £250,000 in our autumn 2003 campaign, are having, and will continue to have, a real and positive impact on campus.

I do hope you enjoy reading this latest issue of Arches magazine.

With very best wishes

Professor Christopher Edwards
Vice-Chancellor
UFO almost scuppers transatlantic victory

Leading yachtsman Ross Hobson, a senior lecturer in the University’s School of Dental Science, and sailing partner Andi Newman, claimed an outstanding victory in the 50ft trimaran class of the 4,340-mile Transat Jacques-Vabre race, despite facing several setbacks en route from Le Havre, in France, to Salvador de Bahia, in Brazil.

A collision with a UFO (that’s unidentified floating object) saw them limp into Plymouth for repairs, but they were able to repair their 45ft vessel, Mollymawk, and restart the race.

More problems occurred when the Mollymawk lost its satellite communication system en route to the Bay of Biscay. Then, the mast column was fractured below deck, causing a further delay for repairs. But the pair overcame all the obstacles to become the first and only multihull crew in their class to finish the marathon, which took them 28 days. Ross now wants to move up to the elite, worldwide circuit. ‘My next challenge is to try to raise the money to move up to a 60ft trimaran and compete in the 2,400-mile solo transatlantic race from Plymouth to Boston, which is restricted to vessels of 50ft and above. We have now done everything and won everything we can with the current boat and it is time to move up to a bigger and faster vessel’, he said.

To fulfil his aim, Ross needs to attract sponsorship from a major company or a number of smaller companies to acquire a new boat, at a cost of around £750,000. ‘It is an extremely tight timescale to get a new boat and a team running by June, and I already have a good team behind me, but time is running out for this year and we may have to look towards 2005’, Ross added.

The Mollymawk in full sail.

COURSE SWAP WITH DURHAM

The University is preparing to exchange two subject areas with the University of Durham in August. Newcastle is to move its Religious Studies group to join Durham’s Department of Theology. At the same time, Durham will transfer its Linguistics Department to Newcastle.

The moves will include arrangements for existing students in both subjects to complete their degrees in their current university. Measures have also been put in place to ensure they receive an adequate level of support from their tutors.

Between them the two universities are already attracting a significant proportion of the available undergraduate applicants for these subjects, so they have decided that it makes sense to consolidate their respective strengths. Both subject areas achieved the leading grade of five in the last research assessment exercise, and while Newcastle has the larger Linguistics group, Durham’s Theology is the bigger of the two. The transfer will put the North East among the top five in the country for these courses.

Professor Christopher Edwards, Vice-Chancellor, said: ‘This exchange of subjects will strengthen significantly religious studies at Durham and linguistics at Newcastle and hence strengthen the competitive position of both these subjects nationally’.

ONE OF BRITAIN’S MOST SUCCESSFUL UNIVERSITIES

Newcastle has been labelled ‘one of Britain’s most successful universities’, by a leading university guide book.

The Guardian University Guide 2004 says the University has a strong track-record for teaching and research.

‘It would be hard to spend an unenjoyable three years in Newcastle’, says the Guide, describing the campus as ‘a very friendly place’ with good sporting, leisure and IT facilities. ‘The city itself is great. Not too big to feel dwarfed in... it boasts many attractions larger cities would envy.’

The Guide, aimed mainly at prospective undergraduate students, says that another good reason to apply to Newcastle is its low cost of living.

Another best-selling guide, published by The Sunday Times, praises Newcastle University for its teaching excellence across all disciplines.

The Sunday Times University Guide says Newcastle ‘packs a formidable punch’ and has enjoyed one of the biggest increases in applications from students among UK universities.
Medical scientists from Newcastle and Durham Universities have joined forces to form a national centre of excellence for research on age-related eye disorders and visual problems in older people.

The Centre for Age-Related Eye Research in the North East of England (NorthEast CARE) will bring together a critical mass of clinical scientists and internationally recognized researchers in vision science, NHS staff in the field of ophthalmology from across the region, and older people with visual problems and those who support them. It is the only centre in the UK dedicated to research on problems of the ageing eye.

Mike Clarke, Co-Director of NorthEast CARE and Reader in Ophthalmology at the University said: ‘Very large numbers of older people are affected by visual disorders. Almost a third of people aged over 75 years suffer from a disease of the retina called macular degeneration, and 10 per cent of those affected will become blind. Over 250,000 cataract removals are performed in the UK each year. Despite the huge impact of these and other visual disorders on the quality of life of older people, there are few centres devoted to the ageing eye. NorthEast CARE is addressing this deficiency.’

The new Centre has been brought together by the University’s Institute for Ageing and Health. Its Director, Professor Jim Edwardson, said: ‘The strong research link we have developed with Durham University will add greatly to our ability to tackle age-related visual problems.’

---

VIZ ARTIST HELPS TACKLE CRIME AGAINST STUDENTS

Steve Donald, the artist behind the cult North-East magazine, Viz, has been using his talent as a cartoonist to work on an innovative crime prevention campaign for students.

Steve has been working with Newcastle Community Safety Partnership and Newcastle and Northumbria students’ unions to create eye-catching characters for the campaign, based on an imaginary city suburb known as ToLetsville. In terms of crime, particularly burglary, students are some of the most vulnerable people in society. The ToLetsville campaign aims to educate students about how to protect themselves, their homes and property.

To help get the message across, Steve Donald has created three hapless student characters – upwardly-mobile fashion student, Binki, ‘from London, well, nearer Reading’; Stu, the rugby-loving agriculture student from Norwich; and local boy Joe, studying geography but dreaming of being a DJ.

Through a series of monthly cartoons, the intrepid trio will experience everything a typical student might face, from the threat of burglary to parties that look like getting out of control. The campaign website offers advice on dealing with these and other issues, and encourages students to take responsibility for themselves. Some 30,000 information packs have also been distributed to students to reinforce the message.

Newcastle University’s Union Society Welfare Officer, Cate Watson, said: ‘Working in partnership means that we can draw on each other’s expertise and get a campaign that we hope students will really respond to. Beat the Burglar is just the start; the next web-game aims to encourage students to be good neighbours. We are also looking at more practical measures to promote better community relations.’

Visit the ToLetsville website at www.toletsville.co.uk

Centre has an eye on the future

Steve Donald, the artist behind the cult North-East magazine, Viz, has been using his talent as a cartoonist to work on an innovative crime prevention campaign for students.

Steve has been working with Newcastle Community Safety Partnership and Newcastle and Northumbria students’ unions to create eye-catching characters for the campaign, based on an imaginary city suburb known as ToLetsville. In terms of crime, particularly burglary, students are some of the most vulnerable people in society. The ToLetsville campaign aims to educate students about how to protect themselves, their homes and property.

To help get the message across, Steve Donald has created three hapless student characters – upwardly-mobile fashion student, Binki, ‘from London, well, nearer Reading’; Stu, the rugby-loving agriculture student from Norwich; and local boy Joe, studying geography but dreaming of being a DJ.

Through a series of monthly cartoons, the intrepid trio will experience everything a typical student might face, from the threat of burglary to parties that look like getting out of control. The campaign website offers advice on dealing with these and other issues, and encourages students to take responsibility for themselves. Some 30,000 information packs have also been distributed to students to reinforce the message.

Newcastle University’s Union Society Welfare Officer, Cate Watson, said: ‘Working in partnership means that we can draw on each other’s expertise and get a campaign that we hope students will really respond to. Beat the Burglar is just the start; the next web-game aims to encourage students to be good neighbours. We are also looking at more practical measures to promote better community relations.’

Visit the ToLetsville website at www.toletsville.co.uk

Centre has an eye on the future

Medical scientists from Newcastle and Durham Universities have joined forces to form a national centre of excellence for research on age-related eye disorders and visual problems in older people.

The Centre for Age-Related Eye Research in the North East of England (NorthEast CARE) will bring together a critical mass of clinical scientists and internationally recognized researchers in vision science, NHS staff in the field of ophthalmology from across the region, and older people with visual problems and those who support them. It is the only centre in the UK dedicated to research on problems of the ageing eye.

Mike Clarke, Co-Director of NorthEast CARE and Reader in Ophthalmology at the University said: ‘Very large numbers of older people are affected by visual disorders. Almost a third of people aged over 75 years suffer from a disease of the retina called macular degeneration, and 10 per cent of those affected will become blind. Over 250,000 cataract removals are performed in the UK each year. Despite the huge impact of these and other visual disorders on the quality of life of older people, there are few centres devoted to the ageing eye. NorthEast CARE is addressing this deficiency.’

The new Centre has been brought together by the University’s Institute for Ageing and Health. Its Director, Professor Jim Edwardson, said: ‘The strong research link we have developed with Durham University will add greatly to our ability to tackle age-related visual problems.’
SLUG ‘EM WITH GARLIC

It was worshipped by the ancient Egyptians, was said to keep vampires at bay, and is good for keeping you healthy.

University scientists have now found the pungent herb garlic could win the costly worldwide war against slugs and snails as an environmentally friendly pesticide. Laboratory tests on nine substances revealed a garlic product was one of the most effective killers.

Slugs and snails cause millions of pounds worth of damage as they munch their way through food crops and other plants, particularly those in cool, temperate climates like those of the UK, Northern Europe and North West America.

Garlic has been used to kill pests for hundreds of years. Monks used to site the herb next to their vegetable crops to keep unwanted visitors away. It is difficult to say why it is so potent for slugs and snails, but experts suspect it may have an adverse affect on the creatures’ nervous systems.

Lead researcher Dr Gordon Port, of the School of Biology, who carried out the tests at the request of the crop-growing industry, said: ‘We need to find new environmentally and cost-effective ways of controlling snails and slugs. These results suggest garlic could be our answer.’

STEPHENSON’S LEGACY LIVES ON

Father and son team Jarek and Martin Rosinski have designed a cutting-edge device which could prevent train crashes – just miles from the Newcastle factory where another father and son started the railway revolution.

Microlog, a miniature data logger, has been created almost 200 years after George and Robert Stephenson’s pioneering invention, Rocket, impressed onlookers at the famous Rainhill locomotive trials.

The Stephenson legacy lives on in a new £600,000 business outreach venture at the University. The Stephenson Centre, which brings together six internationally respected outreach units and consultancies under one roof, has been inspired by Robert, who was also a successful entrepreneur and politician.

Dr Jarek Rosinski, who is based at the Centre, showcased Microlog at the Centre’s official opening, which was performed by Science and Innovation Minister, Lord Sainsbury. Nineteen year-old Martin Rosinski studies electrical engineering at the University.

Microlog weighs less than 10 grammes and boasts a four megabyte memory, a powerful 16 byte microprocessor, and satellite and mobile phone technology packed into one third of the size of a matchbox. It works by being installed on the train’s wheel axles, which bend and twist under stress as the train runs along the rail lines at high speeds. Being highly sensitive, Microlog is able to detect any abnormal stresses which could be caused by problems on the track, such as buckling due to excessive heat. It then logs the relevant data, uses satellite technology to detect the exact location of the problem and then relies on mobile phone technology to send a warning message to a computer many miles away.

Dr Rosinski said: ‘We have been working over several years to perfect the design and we are confident it has huge potential in a variety of applications, rail safety being just one of them.’
It’s the Geordie Atlantis

University archaeologists found themselves in the deep end – literally – when they donned scuba diving gear, plunged into cold seawater and faced a flurry of questions about their latest find from watching journalists.

They were hosting a press conference close to the site of their discovery – dubbed the Geordie Atlantis – which amounted to the first ever evidence of Stone Age settlements under the British North Sea.

Penny Spikins and colleagues from the School of Historical Studies were in training for a research trip to look for underwater sites in Scotland when they came across a pile of Stone Age tools just off the North-East coast at Tynemouth. Their attentions focused on two main sites, where flint artefacts such as arrowheads and scrapers were found. They are thought to date back to the Mesolithic period, otherwise known as the Middle Stone Age, and are up to 10,000 years old.

Dr Spikins said: ‘To the average person they would seem like ordinary stones you would find on the beach, but to a specialist they were something very exciting indeed. We suspect these sites have remained a secret for so long because they were underwater, and people did not realize what they were.’

Both of the sites would have once been on dry land but sea levels at Tynemouth have risen by about eight metres since the last Ice Age. This is only the second such find in the UK and, because so little evidence of submerged sites exists, it will contribute greatly to our understanding of the way our ancestors lived.

Dr Spikins said: ‘We think Tynemouth could have been an important place for the early settlers because as well as having the luxury of coastal resources they had the River Tyne nearby. We will be fully investigating the sites and will also look for others which may exist nearby.’

FORGET TO TAKE ECSTASY, STUDY SUGGESTS

Clubbers worldwide see it as a guaranteed high – but users of the drug ecstasy risk a massive comedown in later life, according to a study led by University researchers.

The study, which surveyed both users and non-drug users, found that those who regularly took ecstasy were 23 per cent more likely to report memory problems than those who did not. Those who used cannabis reported up to 20 per cent more memory problems than non-users.

Whereas ecstasy mainly affected long-term memory, cannabis mainly caused short-term memory afflictions. Researchers concluded that people who use both risk suffering a ‘double-whammy’ of cognitive problems. Despite the findings, use of ecstasy is on the increase, with up to two million tablets being consumed every weekend in the UK.

Researchers carried out the survey via a website, asking volunteers about the probability of scenarios such as finding a television story difficult to follow and forgetting to pass a message onto somebody.

Lead researcher, Dr Jacqui Rodgers, of the School of Neurology, Neurobiology and Psychiatry said: ‘Users may think ecstasy is fun and that it feels fairly harmless at the time. The results indicate users are creating a time bomb of potential cognitive difficulties in later life.’

Dr Penny Spikins and colleagues with one of the Stone Age finds.
The entrepreneurial spirit of students and staff has produced many success stories...and a few surprises.

The success of some of the many companies that have emerged from the University over the past year or so are a testimony to the ability of our students and academic staff to combine good ideas with business acumen.

Research ‘spin-out’ companies include Biotransformations, a business based on new technology that activates antibodies with light, which was named ‘most valuable proposition in the field of life sciences’ in the Science2Market 2003 competition, identifying European research with the greatest commercial potential.

Professor Colin Self, a biochemist who founded the company, aims to develop new treatments for a range of diseases. For example, he is looking at the possibility of treating cancer by injecting antibodies into a patient and illuminating the tumour to destroy it, while healthy tissue is unaffected.

Meanwhile, Orla Protein Technologies, a new spin-out company that designs and manufactures proteins for the medical and diagnostic industries, was one of only eight in the UK to receive a 2003 Small Business Research Award. This helped bioscientist, Professor Jeremy Lakey, raise £400,000 in venture capital.

However students are not being left behind by entrepreneurial academics. One student, Tarek Nseir, won a major prize in a competition, the Young Achiever Awards, for setting up his own company, Revelation Design, which now employs four full-time graduates and has a turnover of £180,000.

Companies set up by students are supported by the University’s Enterprise Centre and can benefit from enterprise activities provided by the Centre. The University also staged its own showcase event, the Enterprise Challenge Awards 2003, which attracted entries from 35 teams of students to compete for prize money of £3,000 for the best business plans.

Those that took part included Heritage Media, a company run by archaeology students who can produce digital images of historic monuments and have recently been commissioned by the University to produce a 3D virtual tour of its campus!

Other successful student companies include Whatever Productions, a film company set up by medical students that went on to make a documentary on medical ethics in Canada.

The University really is going from strength to strength with its entrepreneurial agenda. In the Autumn 2003 edition of Arches, we reported how Seabait Ltd, a spin-out company that breeds ragworms for anglers and fish farms, had won two Queen’s Awards for Enterprise 2003 and was opening an American subsidiary. In the same edition, we reported that two companies set up by students, Magnetics and Ignite, had won an unprecedented four awards in the national final of the Graduate Enterprise Programme.

This March also sees the University stage a joint Alumni Enterprise Forum with the University of Durham, aimed at introducing budding alumni entrepreneurs with ideas for technology-based business start-ups to key information for taking their business idea forwards. The event marks the first step towards establishing a wider alumni enterprise programme at the University.

www.ncl.ac.uk/ris/busdev/spin.phtml

Whatever Productions’ team on location in Newcastle (Vibha Jaiswal, Jonathan Brett and Kavina Sivakumaran).
Newcastle alumnus, Derek Pullan (MSc Geophysics and Planetary Physics 1983), has become a key figure in one of Britain’s most exciting space ventures. Derek has been working as Head of Science Operations Planning on the Beagle 2 project, where he is part of a team responsible for deciding which science will be undertaken on Mars.

Derek became fascinated with space after receiving his first telescope as a young boy, but believes that it was a combination of his extensive geology training and his passion for the beauty of natural wildernesses that led him to his current position. Naturally artistic, he was encouraged to pursue a career as an artist as opposed to a scientist by his tutors, although his adventurous spirit actually saw him take to the high seas as a member of the Merchant Navy. Though Derek admits this was an odd career choice, it enabled him to witness some of the wildest places on earth and inspired in him a passion for geology that has remained ever since.

Half a million miles later (equivalent to a return trip to the moon!) he gave up seafaring and decided to step back into the classroom to obtain his geology degree. This fascination with the geological landscape has dominated his career choices ever since. Even now, working as a top scientist on a space mission, he sees the skills he gained at university as vital to his role. He explained: ‘Having the training and expertise from my degrees gave me more strings to my bow. I was able to move into this role comfortably, as the work we hope to do on Mars is, in essence, much the same as a geologist would do on earth.’

Though nothing has been heard from Beagle 2 since its projected Mars landing on Christmas Day, Derek remains positive about his involvement with the project: ‘Whatever happens with Beagle 2, I feel privileged to have been placed in such a prominent role on such a leading-edge mission.’
ALUMNUS HONOURED IN HALL OF FAME

Nicholas Koh (BEng Marine Engineering 1992) was recently honoured through election to the British Council’s Alumni Hall of Fame in Singapore.

Born into a Singaporean lampshade-making family, Nicholas took a Diploma in Marine Engineering at Singapore Polytechnic prior to spending six months in shipyard training, and an adventurous year as a cadet engineer on a ship transiting the North Atlantic between Europe and North America. These youthful experiences informed Nicholas’ well-received recent autobiography of his early life entitled: My Bowl of Rice: A Singaporean Growing up in Difficult Times (ISBN 981-04-9535-8).

On returning to Singapore, Nicholas served for a number of years in the Republic of Singapore Navy, and it was through a naval connection that he came to Newcastle, aged 30, on obtaining a Defence Technology Training Award in 1990. Here he took a first-class honours degree in Marine Engineering and was awarded the Weighton Medal and Institute of Marine Engineers’ Book Prize for being the top student with the best overall marks in his year in Marine Technology.

Since graduating, Nicholas has retired from the navy with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and joined Singapore Technologies Engineering Ltd as a Vice President. He then established his own business, Victory Knights Management and Consultancy Services Pte Ltd, with a focus on maritime educational services. In this capacity he has played a key role in the establishment of the University’s new MSc in Marine Technology (International) course, which was launched in Singapore in November 2003.

Looking back on his own time at Newcastle, Nicholas said: ‘Many of us who graduated from this fine university always yearn to visit Newcastle again and again. It is special in many ways. I am sure there will continue to be many in Singapore who will choose the Newcastle option given its outstanding education system and its dedicated and first-rate teaching staff.’

www.victoryknights.com.sg
www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/subjects/martech/courses/389

ARCHITECTURE IS FUN!

Distinguished architect, Peter Exley (BA Architecture 1985), has received two prestigious honours from the American Institute of Architects for his unique and innovative approach to education and design. Mr Exley’s firm, ArchitectsIsFun was presented with the Distinguished Building Award for transforming an unsightly dilapidated warehouse in Naperville, Illinois, into the engaging hands-on experience that is the DuPage Children’s Museum.

One of the most distinctive aspects of the design is the giant, oversized red door that greets every visitor. Executive Director, Susan Broad, explains: ‘The Big Red Door’ is not simply an exciting visual stimulus, it is an emblem of what we stand for, which is opening doors for children’. Peter and his team of architects conducted face-to-face interviews with local children and their families and asked them to draw the museum as they saw it in their imaginations. Some of the details from the children’s drawings were then included in the final design.

This belief in the centrality of the child can be seen to characterize all Exley’s work. Together with his wife Sharon, Peter specializes at ArchitectsIsFun in designing learning environments for children, to which he applies a unique design philosophy based on integrating pragmatic, developmental and inspirational needs with the critical and distinct phases of childhood.

Peter’s approach has resulted in a series of awards for the architect, including the 2003 Excellence in Education Award from the Institute of American Architects Illinois. Yet, despite his professional success, he retains a playful sense of enthusiasm for his craft. He explains: ‘It’s fun to dream, draw, imagine, and invent; we find these things irresistible. As architects, designers, and teachers we love creating exciting places for children and their families.’

www.architecturesisfun.com
After graduation, Ian Phillips-Kerr (BA Music 1998) embarked on a unique business enterprise that has transformed many a musician’s muddled scribblings into some of the world’s most beautiful scores. His company, Music Works, offers a music engraving service which involves using notation software to turn a hand-written piece of music into a professionally printed score that can be used for performance, recording or by a publisher.

Entrants were required to debate the merits of a proposal to scrap the existing Institution of Civil Engineers and replace it with a new, single, multidisciplinary institution representing all engineers. Karen said: ‘I argued in favour of the ‘Super Institution’, as I believe the current situation of separate institutions representing different engineering disciplines presents too much of a fragmented approach within the industry.’

The NCE Graduate Awards single-out promising graduates who in their first year of employment already show potential to be civil engineering leaders of tomorrow. The awards identify the ‘all round’ best graduates, taking account of academic achievements but also broader criteria such as voluntary work, leadership potential, initiative and enthusiasm for the industry.

These achievements capped an excellent year for civil engineering at Newcastle, which also saw two graduating students, Caterina Walsh (MEng Civil Engineering 2003) and Peter Wilkie (MEng Civil and Environmental Engineering 2003), shortlisted for the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) Student of the Year Awards 2003.

The actual interview process during the final round of the competition was very tough and included an interview by a panel of 15 judges. The award is a real asset to have on my CV and I hope to use it to my advantage as I pursue a career in civil engineering. Together with my Newcastle Master’s degree, it puts me in a strong position to pursue my ambition to become a Chartered Civil Engineer.’

Nowadays, Karen is enjoying working in the Aviation Group of TPS Consult, where she is directly involved in design work on Heathrow, Gatwick and Dublin airports. She said: ‘The work I do is fairly unusual and the site work can often involve me working ‘airside’, which can be quite exhilarating at times. Over the last year I have worked within 20 metres of Heathrow Airport runway on more than one occasion.’

Did you or your alumni friends graduate in civil engineering last year?

If so, there is £2,000-worth of prizes up for grabs in NCE Magazine’s 2004 Graduate Awards. When NCE launch the Awards in June they will be looking for the best all-round 2003 graduates both at university and during their first post-graduation job. To register for an entry form contact Awards Secretary, David Hayward, on: +44 (0) 1325 461149 or e-mail: david.jhayward@virgin.net
A BUILDING IN TUNE WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

A NEW HOME FOR THE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY OPENS ON CAMPUS IN APRIL 2004.
The new Devonshire Building, located on the site of the former Devonshire car park behind the Hancock Museum, is a shining example of a building in tune with the environmental principles espoused by the research community for whom it will provide a home. It houses laboratories and office spaces for the University’s new multidisciplinary Institute for Research on Environment and Sustainability (IRES), recently established to foster and promote the University’s internationally recognized expertise in environmental and sustainability research. It also provides accommodation for the Regional e-Science Centre (NEReSc), which was established in July 2001 to provide expertise in e-science to university researchers and industry, and to instigate and run a set of industrially focused projects and for the University’s Informatics Institute.

The Devonshire Building was conceived as a flagship environmental building adopting the highest standards of sustainable design. Project Manager, Nick Purdie, explained: ‘From the outset, it was decided that the building should demonstrate and achieve the highest possible environmental and sustainable design targets. The result is a high internal quality, low energy building, exceeding current UK best practice targets by around 30 per cent.

The environmental credentials of the Devonshire’s design were recognized when, in October 2003, it became the first university laboratory building in the UK to receive an ‘Excellent’ rating under the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM). This rating is regarded by the UK construction sector as the gold standard for environmental design and management.

The £19.1 million building is designed to capitalize on the local climate and is predominately day lit and naturally ventilated. Within the building, there are a number of different spaces, ranging from closely controlled laboratories to a more open central atrium that mirrors outside climatic conditions. The atrium acts as an environmental buffer, benefiting from passive solar heating while also serving to reduce heat loss and heat gain in adjacent spaces.

Climatic responsive façade systems optimize the levels of daylight and solar penetration, according to time of day and season. Efficient active solutions such as displacement ventilation are employed where possible so that, for example, the design utilizes geothermal cooling to meet the cooling loads associated with some of the building’s laboratories. Additionally, the traditional use of copper or steel pipework has been set aside in favour of using aquatherm pipework, which is made from 100 per cent recycled material.

A particular feature of the building is its use of photovoltaic (solar) panels to generate around 30kW of electricity. The installation of the first panels was witnessed by Stephen Timms MP, the government’s Energy Minister. Mr Timms congratulated the University on its BREEAM award, and said that he was particularly pleased to have the opportunity to do so as the Devonshire was the first major building benefiting from photovoltaic panels to be completed during his term as Energy Minister, and because the building embodied many of the government’s environmental policies.

One of the most exciting aspects of the project is the provision of a single shared physical space for the new IRES, allowing academics from different disciplines to work collaboratively alongside one another.

Professor Tony O’Donnell, Director of the Institute for Research on Environment and Sustainability explained: ‘The primary role of IRES is to provide sustainable solutions to environmental problems through interdisciplinary studies of urban, rural and marine environments. The facilities in the new building will enable scientists, engineers and social scientists to deliver holistic, cutting-edge research, developing understanding and helping to quantify the impacts of human habitation of the planet. Our engineers will develop and deliver the technologies needed to ameliorate these impacts whilst our social scientists will help shape the research agenda and provide the insights and framework whereby environmental science and technology are best delivered to society.’

Opportunities for new interdisciplinary research have been identified in the area of sustainability and global environment change, where there is a real need to understand the social and political pressures responsible for change, to understand and quantify the extent, rate and impact of that change, and to explore solutions using both political and technological instruments. Research within the Institute integrates the social, political and technological sciences through the incorporation of environmental objectives into areas such as farm and coastal management, urbanization, forestry, landfill, waterways, flood control, recreation and genetic conservation.

www.ncl.ac.uk/environment
www.ncl.ac.uk/about/future/devonshire.shtml

- Over 1 billion people lack safe drinking water and almost 2.5 billion lack sanitation.
- More than 2 billion people lack access to modern energy services.
- The 1990s saw the loss of around 16 million hectares of forest annually!
- Many fish stocks are at crisis point.
- We’ve lost around 30 per cent of our coral reefs and will lose another 30 per cent in the next 30 years if urgent action is not taken.
Twenty-four current students who contacted Newcastle graduates through the Alumni Fund Phonathon have raised a record-breaking £250,552 over an eight-week period at the end of 2003.

The generosity of alumni to the Fund has been outstanding once again, and in one remarkable evening session the dedication of our student callers enabled them to raise an amazing £21,000 in just three and a half hours!

The student callers were overwhelmed by the warm feeling alumni still have for the University and indeed the city itself. Although they have been kept up-to-date through Alumni Association correspondence and, in particular, regular copies of Arches magazine, nothing can quite match the insights of a current student when catching up on university news. Through the Phonathon we try where possible to match each student caller to graduates from their own course or discipline, so that they can provide appropriate information on things happening within their school and faculty.

One of the student callers, Kathryn McNeill, said: ‘Working on this year’s Phonathon team was an enlightening experience. It was great to hear about the things Newcastle alumni get up to after graduation and also to know that we are raising money for such a worthwhile cause. I truly enjoyed every minute!’

The money raised through the Alumni Fund is used to provide a growing number of undergraduate bursaries to students entering all three faculties through the PARTNERS programme.

Last year we were able to provide 60 bursaries, and after this year’s outstanding success we hope to provide around 75 bursaries for entry in September 2004. Each of these bursaries is worth £2,000 to the student and is going some way towards easing the growing financial worries undergraduates face.

Victoria Smith, a geography student and Alumni Bursary holder, said: ‘The Alumni Bursary alleviated concerns I had about financing myself during my course. It made a real difference knowing that former students, who knew what it was like to finance a degree, were helping me.’

The Fund is also able to help the University to provide emergency financial support for students who are already studying here. Last year £10,000 was allocated in this way, with an increase expected during the 2004-05 academic year. Alumni have also helped to provide over 50 postgraduate bursaries to a variety of PhD and Masters’ students across the University.

Constanze Zurn, a PhD student in Marine Sciences and Alumni Bursary holder, said: ‘The Alumni Bursary is one of the most amazing things that has ever happened to me! Without it I would not be able to study for this PhD and develop my passion for the sea. It has made my dream come true.’

Thank you to all our supporters!

Joanna Stewart
Alumni Fund Manager

For information on how to become an Alumni Fund donor, or to find out more about how donations are spent, please visit

www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/fund/

Alternatively, you can contact Joanna Stewart direct by telephone on +44 (0) 191 222 8470 or by e-mail at j.d.stewart@ncl.ac.uk

Katie Hart and Victoria Smith celebrate receiving their Alumni PARTNERS Bursaries.
NEW CLINICAL RESEARCH FACILITY

Work has begun on a new Clinical Research Facility (CRF) within the Faculty of Medical Sciences. The new development will facilitate the translation of ground-breaking research from the laboratory to the ward via controlled multidisciplinary trials involving a wide range of public and private research sponsors.

Over half of the funding for the new £3 million, 1,400m² facility, which will be located above the Leazes Wing of the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI), has been received from private donations. The Wolfson Foundation and the Garfield Weston Foundation have both made generous grants, and the majority of a £700,000 bequest to the Medical School from Dr Irene Foster (née Blankley), a medical graduate of King’s College, has been approved for the project by the executors of her will. The RVI Special Trustees also made a sizeable grant to make the Facility possible.

Professor Peter Baylis, Provost of the Faculty, commented: ‘This new Facility will embody everything that is important about the Faculty and its relationship with the regional NHS Trust; it will consolidate our position as an international leader in medical research while at the same time delivering far-reaching benefits for the people of the region. We are deeply grateful to all those who have contributed. In particular, it means a tremendous amount to us that Dr Foster thought to include us in her plans in this way as one of our former students.’

Dr Foster’s bequest, which will be used according to her wishes to commemorate the life of her late husband Geoffrey Foster DFC, will also support work in the fields of rheumatology and cancer research within the Faculty.

For information on leaving a legacy to the University, please visit www.ncl.ac.uk/daro/legacies.html
Alternatively, you can contact Chris Cox, Director of Development by telephone on +44 (0) 191 222 7250 or by e-mail at c.cox@ncl.ac.uk

SUPPORT FOR MARINE TRANSPORT

The University, with the support of a grant from the Sir James Knott Trust, has recently upgraded a previous Readership to a new Chair in Marine Transport and Management. Professor Kevin Cullinane has joined the University from Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Professor Cullinane is taking forward a new MSc in Marine Transport with Management, to meet the needs of the international shipping industry. The course is already attracting students from around the world.

Newcastle has been a leader in the teaching of marine transport since 1972, but the new Master’s course is the first of its kind in the UK in linking the technical and logistical aspects of marine transport with international financial and business issues.

The course has already benefited from a set of Scholarship Awards funded by World-Wide Shipping, to support students taking the course from Hong Kong and mainland China.

Helmut Sohmen, Chairman of World-Wide Shipping commented: ‘We are pleased to be forging such a direct link with this important new course at Newcastle University, which enjoys an international reputation for the quality of its marine-related teaching and research’.

The first World-Wide Shipping Scholar has recently been confirmed as Weihua Zhang, a graduate of the Department of Ocean and Naval Engineering at Tianjin University in China.
The University welcomes alumni, staff and guests to join us for our annual Convocation and Alumni Reunion Weekend. Highlights of the programme include:

**FRIDAY 18 JUNE**

**Welcome Meeting with Northumbrian Beer and Cheese**
6.00 pm – 7.30 pm
A perfect way to get the weekend off with a swing! This is a chance to get together with old friends in a relaxed and informal atmosphere, whilst sampling the best the region has to offer. You will also be able to meet members of the Alumni Consultative Group, the people who influence how the Alumni Association operates. As a welcome gesture, the first drink at this event will be free to all alumni and guests. Please book for tickets.

**SATURDAY 19 JUNE**

**Reunion Weekend Lecture**
9.30 am – 10.30 am
Professor Tony O’Donnell and Professor Paul Younger – ‘Towards an Environmentally Sustainable Future’
Environmental sustainability is a major area of research activity at the University, bringing together researchers from a wide range of academic disciplines within the new Institute for Research on Environment and Sustainability. Professor Tony O’Donnell and Professor Paul Younger will offer an insight into some of the cutting-edge work taking place within the Institute and provide an introduction to the Institute’s new award-winning home, the Devonshire Building.

**Convocation**
11.00 am – 12.45 pm
The meeting of Convocation, which will be chaired by Jack Jeffery 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 an opportunity to hear at first hand about the challenges being faced by the University, and ways in which those challenges are being tackled. The meeting of Convocation will be asked to agree proposals aimed at restructuring the Alumni Association and the Alumni Consultative Group (formerly named the Alumni Development Group). It will also be the occasion for the election of a Chair and Deputy Chair of Convocation, a Vice-Chair of the Alumni Association, and two or more ordinary members of Alumni Consultative Group. Please refer to the insert box for further details on these elections. All alumni are warmly invited to attend, but should book in advance to ensure an invitation to the Convocation lunch.

**ELECTIONS**
Candidates are invited for elections to be held within the meeting of Convocation to the following positions:
- Chair of Convocation (five years)
- Deputy Chair of Convocation (five years)
- Vice-Chair of the Alumni Association (one year in this instance)
- Two ordinary members of the Alumni Consultative Group (one year in this instance)

All alumni are eligible to stand for any of the positions. Please contact Joel Burden, Alumni Development Officer, no later than Friday 28 May, for further information on any of these positions and procedures for standing as a candidate. It is expected that office holders should be in a position to attend occasional meetings held in Newcastle.

**Contact:** Joel Burden, Alumni Development Officer, Development and Alumni Relations Office, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 6 Kensington Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU, UK.
Telephone: +44 (0) 191 222 7250
Fax: +44 (0) 191 222 5905
E-mail: joel.burden@ncl.ac.uk

**Annual Convocation and Donor Lunch**
1.00 pm – 2.30 pm
This lunch is for alumni donors and those who have attended the meeting of Convocation. The lunch will be hosted by the Vice-Chancellor and the Chair of the Alumni Association, and provides an opportunity for the University to thank its alumni supporters. There is no charge to attend the lunch, which is by invitation.

**Champagne, Strawberries and Jazz Reception**
2.30 pm – 5.45 pm
The main event of the afternoon will be a relaxed, informal affair with live music and entertainment for both adults and children alike, taking place in and around an open-air marquee. This is a great opportunity to mingle with former classmates and meet up with University staff, and it will provide a perfect starting point from which to explore the rest of the campus. Various ‘opt-in’ scheduled events will be taking place throughout the afternoon for those of you with an enquiring spirit, including campus tours and organized visits to the major campus museums. Alternatively, you can simply sit back and enjoy the atmosphere with your friends. Tickets cost £7 for champagne and strawberries (or £30 for a combined ticket also covering the evening dinner and disco). A cash bar will also be available.

**Convocation Lecture**
5.30 pm – 6.45 pm
Curtis Auditorium, Herschel Building
The Rt Hon Baroness Mary Warnock DBE – ‘The Good and the Natural’.
The Convocation lecture this year will be given by the renowned moral philosopher and member of the House of Lords, the Rt Hon Baroness Mary Warnock DBE. Baroness Warnock will address in her lecture the key biotethical question of whether something ought to be rejected because it is contrary to nature. She is perhaps best known for the highly influential committee she chaired on embryos and fertilization, whose report has stood the test of 20 years’ time and considerable advances in science to remain the benchmark of all public policy on embryology. It was Baroness Warnock’s long and distinguished career as an academic and headmistress that equipped her to address so effectively the ethical dilemmas in embryology that needed to be understood and debated in the writing of the Warnock Report.

Convocation lecture is free to attend for all alumni, staff and members of the public, but tickets must be booked in advance via the Development and Alumni Relations Office. Contact DARO on +44 (0) 191 222 7250 or e-mail: alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk

Contact DARO on +44 (0) 191 222 7250 or e-mail: alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk
Hatton Gallery Drinks Reception
7.00 pm – 7.45 pm
To get the evening off to a good start, pre-dinner drinks will be served in the Hatton Gallery from 7.00 pm. As well as being a perfect opportunity for mingling with friends and staff, you will also be able to view the BA Fine Art Degree Show, which will be on display at the Gallery. Entry for the drinks reception is included in the ticket price for the reunion dinner.

Annual Reunion Dinner
7.45 pm – 11.00 pm
This year the reunion dinner will be held in the University Ballroom. The three-course menu has a traditional Northumbrian twist, and includes a complementary glass of wine and coffee. Reunion groups can book tables to sit together. The all-inclusive dinner ticket enables alumni and guests to return to the Union Society to relive their student days with a night of drinking and dancing, but they also have the option to remain in the Ballroom for conversation and less energetic entertainment. Tickets cost £25 (covering drinks reception, dinner and disco entry), or £30 to also include the afternoon champagne, strawberries and jazz reception. Places are limited so please book early.

1970s/1980s Disco Nostalgia at the Union Society
8.30 pm – 1.00 am
Alumni and their guests are invited to return to the Union Society to relive their student days with a night of drinking and dancing in our nostalgic ’70s and ’80s disco. You can come on to the disco after the reunion dinner, in which case entry is included in the dinner ticket price. Alternatively, you can skip the dinner altogether and head straight for the dancefloor by booking a disco-only ticket for £5.

SUNDAY 20 JUNE
Trip to Blagdon Hall Gardens
10.00 am – 3.00 pm
The perfect way to spend a leisurely Sunday. The North of England Branch of the Alumni Association are organizing a trip to Blagdon Hall, the home of alumnus and former Chancellor of the University, the Viscount Ridley. This is a very special opportunity to visit the renowned gardens of this privately owned estate not normally open to visitors. Tickets cost £14 to cover the cost of coach transport, coffee on arrival and a delicious buffet lunch. Please book early as places are limited.

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 (DARO) holds a database of 59,000 contactable alumni 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 or e-mail: alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk.

Accommodation
Special rates have been negotiated at several hotels in and around Newcastle for alumni requiring accommodation for the nights of Friday 18 and Saturday 19 June. Accommodation is also available in University Halls of Residence for those interested in the full trip down memory lane experience. Check out our website for full details of all accommodation options at www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/events/reunion. Alternatively, to request a full list to be sent to you please contact DARO on +44 (0) 191 222 7250 or e-mail: alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk.

University Memorabilia Shop
Alumni returning for Reunion Weekend 2004 can benefit from a special 15 per cent discount on all merchandise purchased at the Memorabilia Shop. The shop will be open between 10.00 am and 5.00 pm on Saturday 19 June.

Convocation and Alumni Reunion Weekend is open to and supported by alumni of all era and we welcome you back to campus whether you graduated last year or 60 years ago. However, we particularly wish to encourage good attendance from alumni who graduated in the following years who celebrate class anniversaries in 2004: classes of 1974, 1979, 1984, 1989 and 1994. We already have a number of alumni from these classes planning to attend, so if it’s your class year too, why not make 2004 the year to pay us a return visit on your own or with family and friends?
ARCHES Events/Listings

FORTHCOMING ALUMNI EVENTS

Please contact the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) by telephone +44 (0) 191 222 7250, fax + 44 (0) 191 222 5905, or e-mail: alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk for further details on any of the events below.

1 May 2004

SCAN 30th Anniversary Reunion This reunion will run over the bank holiday weekend in May and is for any former SCAN volunteers or members of staff. For full details please contact Ruth Mulgrew at scan@ncl.ac.uk or ruth.mulgrew@ncl.ac.uk

18 – 20 June 2004

Convocation and Alumni Reunion Weekend See pages 16-17 for full details of the programme. Reunion groups and individuals interested in joining us should contact DARO. Reunion groups currently attending can be seen below.

Mechanical Engineers 1944 Reunion Please contact Bill Dobie via DARO for further information.

MB BS 1947 Reunion Please contact Lorna Rozner via DARO for further information.

MB BS 1954 Reunion Please contact Professor Walker via DARO for further information.

Physics 1974 Reunion Please contact Tony Weiner via DARO for further information.

Naval Architects 1979 Reunion – please contact Gill Maughan via DARO for more information.

MB BS 1979 25th Grand Reunion This event will take place over the Alumni Reunion Weekend and will include a formal dinner at the Cophthorne Hotel on the Saturday evening. More information can be obtained from Ian Jenkins at ian.jenkins@mac.com or Malcolm Price at malcolmprice1@blueyonder.co.uk

3 July 2004

MB BS 1984 Reunion Please contact Dr Peter Mattinson via DARO for further information.

9 July 2004

Chemical Engineering 50th Anniversary Reunion A celebration of 50 years of Chemical Engineering at Newcastle to be held in the Civic Centre, Newcastle. All alumni of the past 50 years are invited to join the celebration. For more information on this event please contact Professor Julian Morris via his PA on +44 (0) 191 222 7234 or e-mail: janice.trewick@ncl.ac.uk

16 July 2004

Alumni Golf Tournament – the Alumni Golf Tournament for the Walton Trophy will take place at Close House. Please contact DARO.

1 – 2 October 2004

MB BS 1994 Reunion The reunion will take place at the Cophthorne Hotel on the Quayside and will be a black tie dinner dance and disco. For full details please contact Parvin Bansal at parvin.bansal@talk21.com

8 – 9 October 2004

MB BS 1969 Reunion Please contact Professor Alan Craft via DARO for further information.

23 October

Catholic Chaplaincy 50th Anniversary Reunion The Catholic Chaplaincy of Newcastle and Northumbria Universities is celebrating its 50th birthday with a dinner and dance at St James’ Park in Newcastle. There will also be a celebration mass on Sunday 24 October at the Chaplaincy followed by a buffet lunch. Please contact Joanna Crofton at j.c.wenham@ncl.ac.uk

POSSIBLE EVENTS

MB BS 1956 Reunion Please contact Peter Robson via DARO for further information.

BDS 1977 Reunion Contact Mr Gus Ghani for further details at gus@theclinic.demon.co.uk

Agricultural and Environmental Engineering 1994 Reunion Please contact Mr Tim Roddy at timroddy@hotmail.com for full details.

CALLING CLASSMATES

Please contact the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) by telephone +44 (0) 191 222 7250, fax + 44 (0) 191 222 5905, or e-mail: alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk with contact details unless otherwise stated.

Catherine McDonnell née Morgan (BA Religious Studies 1974) would like to contact classmate Marion Johnson (BA Religious Studies 1974) via DARO. She would also like to contact Vivien Joan Sharp (BA French 1975) with whom she lodged in Whitley Bay in the early seventies.

Tony Weiner would like to hear from any other 1974 Physics graduates with a view to organizing a reunion. The following Alumni are not contactable via DARO, so any information on their whereabouts would be gratefully received: John Boddy, Neville Bowman, Michael Fenwick, Robert Giles, Mervyn Grant, Lynn Hall, Sandra Harper, Peter Konitzer, Phillip Nicholson, David Parry, John Sanderson, David Smith, Stuart Williams, and David Wilson. Please contact Tony via DARO.

Gus Ghani and Mr CT Russe-Hosein would like to hear from any BDS 1977 graduates with a view to organizing a reunion later in the year. Please contact Gus at gus@theclinic.demon.co.uk or Mr Russell-Hosein at russ@russelhosein.com

MB BS 1983 Reunion

On 12 – 13 September 2003, the MB BS 1983 graduates gathered in Newcastle to celebrate the 20 years that had passed since graduation. Organizer, Rachel Crabbe, explained: ‘We were fortunate to have wonderful warm, sunny weather for the whole weekend. Twenty to 30 turned out for drinks at The Pitcher and Piano on the Quayside on Friday 12 September, and we all marvelled at the changes to the area and agreed it was all very impressive.’

‘On Saturday 13 September, 86 people convened at the Gosforth Park Hotel for a dinner dance and it was a lively fun-filled evening, with good food and wine, dancing, and plenty of talking and catching up. There was a display of old photographs from University days which fuelled much reminiscing and laughter! We had a photographer taking shots of couples and small groups. I said a few words of welcome and thanks after the meal, and then we just partied on into the small hours!’, added Rachel.

The reunion website we set up was a big success, with about 60 year-book entries and e-mail addresses. After the event, lots of photos of the occasion were put out so everyone could see them, and subsequently, when the site closed, CDs were made and sent out to those who wanted them. The evening was such a success that the group plan to do it all again in another five years to celebrate their silver reunion.
MB BS 1973 Reunion

The 30th anniversary MB BS 1973 reunion took place in July last year, and proved to be a great success. Old friendships were renewed and a great time was had by all. Photographic souvenirs of the event can be obtained from organizer Irving Cobden, who is also planning to compile a yearbook to commemorate the event. For more information please contact Irving at irving@icobden.freeserve.co.uk

Can you Help?

Premia is a HEFCE-funded project based at the University and aims to improve provision nationally for disabled research students and to support their transition to employment. An e-mail mentoring programme is being set up as part of the project with the aim of improving disabled students’ access to employment. If you graduated in the last five years with a research degree and would like to volunteer as a short-term e-mentor to a current disabled student who is considering entering your field of work then please contact Penny Warin in the Careers Service on +44 (0) 191 222 8050, or at penny.warin@ncl.ac.uk. An outline of the whole project is available at www.ncl.ac.uk/disability.services/postgradresearch

Naming the Gilbert Telescope

Following the tragic death in a car crash of Dr Cecil Gilbert, a former senior lecturer in Mathematics who retired in 1976, and his wife Ruth, in January 2003, the University asked the immediate family for permission to name one of the telescopes at Close House Mansion ‘the Gilbert Telescope’.

Cecil was a leading figure in astronomy both at the University and within the Newcastle Astronomical Society. Both he and Ruth remained highly involved in University life throughout their long and active retirements.

Civil Engineering 1965 Reunion

In September 1963, Civil Engineering students Roger Elphick, Bryan Fletcher, Bob Fay and David Dingwall, toured the Saronic Islands and the Peloponese region of Greece for a month, travelling to Athens through the NUS Travel Service at King’s College just prior to it becoming Newcastle University. Forty years later, in September of 2003, the group travelled back to the area, to the island of Hydra to celebrate their 40th anniversary. They found that little has changed, on Hydra and also in their relationship with each other. David Dingwall remarked with some surprise: ‘Despite the obvious ageing process, we did recognize each other at Luton Airport before setting off!’

They are now thinking of a 50th anniversary reunion in the same place. David commented: ‘If septuagenarian knights of the realm Bobby Robson and Sean Connery can continue to be ‘Action Men’ why shouldn’t we?’

Honorary Graduates

The Chancellor of the University, the Right Honourable Christopher Patten CH, will confer the following Honorary Degrees at a ceremony on Friday 7 May 2004.

Stan Beckensall, former headteacher of Belford and Rothbury Middle Schools, who donated his extensive Northumberland rock art archive to the University in 2003, will receive an honorary Doctor of Letters (DLitt).

Antony Gormley OBE, the artist responsible for one of the region’s most famous landmarks, the Angel of the North, will receive an honorary Doctor of Letters (DLitt).

Dr Miriam Stoppard (MB BS 1961, MD 1966), writer and broadcaster, will receive an honorary Doctor of Civil Law (DCL).

Sir John Sulston, Nobel Laureate and former Director of the Wellcome Trust Sanger Centre for Genome Research, who was a leading figure in the development of DNA analysis and played a pivotal role in the Human Genome Project, will receive an honorary Doctor of Science (DSc).

Graham Wylie (BSc Computing Science & Statistics 1980), the founder and former Managing Director of software giant Sage, will receive an honorary Doctor of Civil Law (DCL).

Dr John Hogan, Registrar of Newcastle University, said: ‘The University is immensely proud of its links with so many of the North East’s most notable figures, so we are especially pleased to be able to honour their achievements in this way’.
Retired Staff

Professor John MURRAY retired as Dean of Dentistry in September 2002.

1930s

Frank Webster BOON (MB BS 1935) was posted to the Highland Light Infantry in Cairo at the beginning of World War II. He was then posted to join the Canadian Forces for the invasion of Italy, where he lectured on the prevention of malaria. On his return to the UK he was put in charge of a cottage hospital in Wantage, where he met a nurse who later became his wife. Now retired and living in Dorset, he enjoys walking, and is active in a number of different charities. He celebrated his 90th birthday in November, and despite his current address still considers himself an honorary Geordie.

1940s

Pam GOODE (BSc Agriculture 1947; MSc Plant Pathology 1948) worked in the Plant Pathology department at East Malling Research Station after leaving King’s College. She then went on to do an MSc at Birmingham University, after which she went to Uganda with a mission organization. Whilst in Uganda she worked for the Uganda Department of Agriculture, and taught at various agricultural colleges including the University of East Africa and the Ministry of Overseas Development. On her return to the UK she took up a post as lecturer at Salford University, also taught at Manchester University, and submitted her work in Africa for a PhD. She then worked as a consultant to the Nutrition and Horticultural divisions of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. She is currently retired and living in Lancashire.

1950s

Ken HOME (BSc Applied Science 1956) is Chairman and Chief Executive of Thornaby-based K Home Engineering, and received an OBE in the New Year Honours list for his services to business in the Tees Valley.

David ROCK (BArch 1952) has been elected as the ‘President of the Architects’. Benevolent Society, which annually assists over 550 beneficiaries. Prior to this appointment David was President of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

1960s

Charles ARKINSTELL (BSc Applied Science 1965) has been appointed Senior Vice President of Maritime Affairs for Carnival Corporation & plc, the largest cruise vacation group in the world. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Naval Architects in London, a member of the general committee of Lloyds Register, and the British Advisory Committee of the Registro Italiano Navale, an Italian ship classification society.

Bill GOVER (BA Politics and Economics 1966) and GIL HEYES (BA Geography and Anthropology 1969) married in 1972. Bill spent most of his career in the oil business, retiring at the end of 2003 after 31 years with ConocoPhillips in various US and UK locations. Gill pursued a teaching career while in the UK, culminating in a spell at West Heath in Kent. They now live in Louisiana, close to their two married children.

Erranglita RAO (PhD 1964) has worked as Professor of Pharmacy at Andhra University, and as an Advisor to Natco Pharma Ltd, Hyderabad. He is now retired and was recently awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award 2003 by the Association of Pharmaceutical Teachers of India.

John Rowlung (BSc Mathematics 1962) was honoured with a knighthood in the Queen’s Birthday Honours 2003 for services to education. He is headmaster at Nunthorpe School in Guisborough, near Middlesbrough and has recently written Heading for Excellence: A Toolkit For School Management (ISBN 185856 257 0)

John A Walkler (BA Fine Art 1961) retired in 1999 after almost 40 years working as an artist, art historian, and lecturer. He has written a number of books, the most recent of which, Learning to Paint: A British Art Student and Art School 1956-6 is, a personal account of his time as a student in the art department at King’s College. He is currently Director of the Institute of Artology in London and continues to research subjects relating to art and mass media that arouse his curiosity.

1970s

Omolobane Babatunde Adeyemo (MB BS 1974) is working as a consultant paediatrician at the Teju Specialist Hospital in Nigeria.

Alan Cook (BSc Geology 1971) has been awarded the Fellowship of the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining in recognition of his achievements in the fields of engineering, geology, mining and materials engineering. He is now working as a Geotechnical Adviser, with expertise in highways and UK light and heavy rail. He is married to Jo-Anne with three sons.

Marian Dixon née Tompkins (BA General Arts 1974) is married to Peter and working as a solicitor in London.

Christie Gittins (BA General Arts 1975) is the author of two recent books: a children’s collection of poetry Now You See Me, Now You… (ISBN 0954328809) which was shortlisted for the 2003 CLPE Poetry Award, and her first collection of adult poems, Armature (ISBN 190072770X). Her radio play Starved for Love starred Patricia Routledge and she has three more plays in development. She is currently Poet-In-Residence with Croydon Libraries.

Phillipa HALE (BSc Psychology 1973) is married with two almost grown-up children, a son who is independent and a daughter just about to start university. She is working as an advisory teacher, providing advice, support and training for foundation stage practitioners. She enjoys being a member of the National Women’s Register, as well as staying fit but not slim by swimming and by dancing in a ladies Morris dancing side called Barley Break.

David Rainé (BSc Agriculture 1976) was one of four outstanding candidates for the British Meat and Livestock Industry Awards in October 2003. He is partner in an extensive farming business covering pedigree and commercial livestock and was chairman of the Meat and Livestock Commission Sheep Strategy Council for several years. He is also currently the acting chairman of the English Beef and Lamb Executive Board.

Barbara Stabler (BA Politics and History 1977) runs Jaunts, a Jesmond-based tour company that runs specials-interest short breaks across the UK and Europe.

1980s

Jerry Beach (MB BS 1983) moved to Canada last year and is currently the Residency Programme Director in Occupational Medicine at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. He is married to Terry with two daughters and one son.

Nicola Bignell (BA Geography and Forensic Science 1988) is currently living in London and is working as a Music Copyright Executive for the BBC. She is married to two boys, Ethan and Leo.

David Cousins is the General Manager of JSR Farms, and has recently been awarded a prestigious Yorkshire Agricultural Society Nuffield Farming Scholarship.

Roger Drew (MB BS 1983) spent 10 years working in Zimbabwe after graduation, first as the only doctor in a mission hospital, and then as Projects Director of an AIDS Non-Government Organisation. He returned to England to take up a post as Executive Director of the London-based charity, Healthlink Worldwide, which seeks to improve communications about health in developing countries. He is currently working as a self-employed health and development consultant and is working with the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, compiling a list of resources on work with orphans and vulnerable children.

Lissa Evans (MB BS 1983) recently published her first novel Spencer’s List and is currently in the final stages of her second book which is set around a provincial hospital. After graduating Lissa worked for BBC radio, on the popular series Room 101. She then went on to produce the television series, a second and third series of Father Ted, and directed a number of television programmes including the first three series of The Kumars at Number 42.

Sally Ferguson (MB BS 1983) is living and working in Hong Kong as a private Obstetrician and Gynaecologist. She is married with two children.

John Rowling (BSc Mathematics 1962) is a personal account of his time at King’s College. He has been working in Zimbabwe after graduation, as a consultant to the Nutrition and Development consultant and is working with the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, compiling a list of resources on work with orphans and vulnerable children.

Graham Lawes (BSc Metallurgy 1981) is married with two children. He is currently living in South Africa and working as Vice President of a Canadian company with responsibility for Southern Africa, Australia and South-East Asia, supplying process equipment to the minerals and pulp paper industries.

Michael Yew Leong Lim (BDS 1981; MB BS 1983) works as a dentist in Singapore but is also a food and travel writer for The Singapore Sunday Times, and is known to his readers as The Travelling Gourmet. His motto in life is ‘Das Leben es ist unbestimmnt. Ist erst den Nachtisch - ‘Life is uncertain. Eat dessert first!’

Tony Morris (LLB 1988) spent a number of years in various judicial capacities before retiring early to pursue a second career in the arts as a full-time performance poet, musician and painter. His latest album Changing Tracks is now available, as is his book Farewell To Friends, a collection of verse designed specifically for funerals and memorial services. More information on Tony’s work can be found at www.tonymorrispoet.com.
Alex CLARK (BSc Biology of Plants and Animals 1996) is currently working as an artist and owns the Lime Tree Gallery in Stanhope, Co Durham. She specializes in wildlife drawings and watercolours, and has recently produced a range of greetings cards which have been sold all over the world.

Ann COMBER (BA English Language and Literature 1998) and Will WRIGHT (BA Geography 1998) were married in April 2003 in Edinburgh. Ann currently works as the Web Content Manager for English Heritage, and Will works as a surveyor in London having passed an MA in Property Valuation and Law at City University a year ago.

Hannah COWIN (BSc Geography 1997) is currently in Hanoi, Vietnam, teaching English with the British Council. She has been teaching for four years now and hopes to head out to East Africa in the summer with her long-term partner Scott.

Diane GATES (BA English Language and Literature 1998; MLitt English Literature 1999) is the Creative Director of bmarketing, a brand and communications company based in Newcastle upon Tyne. The company has recently been awarded the Investor in People Standard, and has been shortlisted in the category of Best New Business in the Tyne and Wear Investors in People Outstanding Practice Awards.

Will HECKS (BSc Agriculture with Farm Business Management 1998) recently announced his engagement to Sally ARMSTRONG (BSc Food Marketing 1998).

Chris LANIGAN (BA Politics 1992; PhD Politics 1999) was recently appointed Policy and Research Manager for North Tyneside Council. He married Hazel Plater in September 2003 at Berwick-upon-Tweed registry office.

Iain MCDONALD (BSc Marine Biology 1998) is presently studying for a PhD in Coral Reef Ecology and Geology. He is based in Manchester, and enjoys frequent field trips to Jamaica.

Barbara O’TOOLE (PhD Urban Policy 1994) is a North East MEP and is currently the Labour spokesperson on Culture, Education, Youth, Media and Sport in the European Parliament. She is also a visiting Professor at the Jean Monnet Centre at the University and has frequently had her work published.

Richard ORMEROOD (BSc Geography and Computing 1992) is working for British Airways as an IT Manager, and recently married Michelle HENRY (BSc Agriculture and Environmental Sciences 1995) who is currently working as a primary school teacher.

Laura WADE (BA Social Studies 1998) has been living in Gateshead for the past 12 years after returning from Canada. She qualified as a social worker in 2000 and now works for a local charity that works with young people who are homeless. She has a little girl, called Emily-Jane.

Louisa YORKE (BA Combined Studies 1995) emigrated to Canada in 1997 and became a Canadian Citizen in October 2003.

2000s

Rachael ALLUM (BA Combined Studies 2002) is a trainee researcher for GMTV and is thoroughly enjoying London life!

Alissa BARLOW (BA English Literature 2002; MA in The Americas 2003) completed an MA in Latin American History and Politics in December 2003. As a result she never wants to set foot in a library again but clearly can’t get enough of the University as she is now the Assistant Alumni Development Officer in the Development and Alumni Relations Office.

Kara BYERS (BA Combined Studies 2002) worked as a freelance journalist in London, Leeds and Newcastle before landing her current job on a glossy ladies magazine in Dubai.

Penny DAVIES (BA English Language and Literature 2002) has just returned to the UK after six months travelling and community project work across Africa.

Andrew GARRAD (MA Human Resource Management 2003) has recently been appointed as assistant to North East MEP Dr Barbara O’Toole.

Harriet GLADWELL (BA English Literature 2002) is currently the Marketing Co-ordinator for a large architectural firm in Newcastle and hopes to relocate to London in the summer.

Emily HARBOTTLE (BA Classical Studies 2002) is currently working for a large London-based publishing house and married University sweetheart Ben


Chris HUMPHREYS (BSc Computing Science 2003) is currently working as the Database and Information Assistant in the Development and Alumni Relations Office. He has recently announced his engagement to girlfriend Jade, and is currently celebrating a lucky lottery win.

Jenny JENNINGS (MA Fine Art 2002) was appointed curator of the art gallery at Red Box Design in Newcastle after taking part in a business placement funded by the Arts Council.

Emma KING (BA Combined Studies 2003) is living in Newcastle, and has started a musical theatre company called ‘Burns On Seats Productions’ whose first show will premier on 23 April 2004 in Newcastle City Hall. She is currently earning a living singing as one half of a jazz duo at various venues across the North East.

Sotaro KOBAYASHI (MSc Computing Science 2001) is currently working in Belgium as a Technical Support Consultant for Blue Fountain Systems Ltd. though he loves Brussels and London, Mr Kobayashi believes Newcastle is still the best place to study.

Greg PHILLIPS (BA Business Management 2000) is a director of North East catering company Dundees Ltd, which was recently included in the prestigious Inner City 100 index. Dundees were also presented with a special award for Economic Inclusion which recognized their achievement for work in the local community, and their support of the local economy.

Sarah RANDLES (BSc Speech and Language Sciences 2000) is living in Macclesfield and working as a children’s speech therapist.

Sarah Louise SMITH née HOMWOOD (Master of Town Planning 2000) married David Smith in September 2003 and is currently working as a Planning Officer for Sheffield City Council.

Joanna STEWART (BSc Genetics 2002) has been appointed to the post of Alumni Fund Manager at Newcastle University. Last year she co-ordinated the annual telephone campaign and raised over £250,000 towards student bursaries. Her success was picked up by several local and national news agencies and she is currently enjoying her new role as a media starlet.

Chris WRAITH (BSc Computing Science 2003) has won one of the UK IT industry’s ‘Oscars’ for a project he completed during his studies at Newcastle.
ARCHES In the News

EMBRYO RESEARCH

EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH IS ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING AND CONTROVERSIAL AREAS OF BIOMEDICINE, OFFERING THE POTENTIAL OF THERAPIES FOR DISEASES SUCH AS DIABETES, PARKINSON’S, LIVER DISEASE, HEART DISEASE AND DEMENTIA.

In each case, the hope is that new human tissue will be created in order to replace the failing cells and cure the disease. These ‘tailor-made tissues’ would be grown from stem cells, derived from the inner cell mass of the early human embryo.

Stem cell therapy is not new. It is over 50 years since two Newcastle doctors reported injection of donated bone marrow to treat people with marrow failure, probably the first use of the procedure in this country. Bone marrow contains stem cells, and this form of stem cell treatment is now routine. Over the last five years Newcastle has pioneered the use of cord blood transplants and has one of only two working cord blood banks in the UK — another form of stem cells.

Embryonic stem cells are potentially more powerful than cells derived from bone marrow or cord blood, because in theory they can be coaxed into becoming any of the many different types of tissue in the human body. All the trillions of cells in our bodies are derived from the one fertilized egg which is implanted in our mother’s womb after conception. That is why the early embryo is called ‘pluripotent’ — it can be differentiated into many different cell types.

The theory seems straightforward, but the practical difficulties are considerable. Moreover, many people have moral and theological concerns about using human embryos in this way. Under the 1990 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, embryo research is permitted up to 14 days after conception. However, some critics are concerned that an important moral line has been crossed, once embryos are exploited to benefit third parties. Yet advocates of the research point out that there are many embryos which are surplus to requirement: they were created to help infertile couples have a child, and they are no longer needed. Rather than discarding or destroying these embryos, they could be used potentially to save lives. The majority of infertile couples who are asked to donate surplus embryos for research agree to contribute to the research.

In 2003, the University announced that the team, comprising Professor Tom Strachan, Professor Alison Murdoch, Dr Majlinda Lako, Dr Miodrag Stovjvovic and Dr Mary Herbert, had successfully created an embryonic stem cell line. They were one of the first two groups in the UK to achieve this, and they were the first to validate fully their cell line. This research was funded by the Special Trustees Fund of the Newcastle Hospitals NHS Trust, and the team have received further support from the Wellcome Trust, Medical Research Council and the regional development agency, ONE NorthEast.

There is a long way to go. The priorities are to identify more reliable techniques for generating cell lines. To overcome problems of compatibility between transplant and patient, eventually around 4,000 different cell lines will be required. At present, the stem cell line is being grown on mouse feeder cells: any tissue intended for transplant into humans would have to be grown on human or artificial media. Above all, there is a long way to go before the process of differentiation into all the different types of human cell is fully understood and controlled.

In America and Europe, there is opposition to embryonic stem cell research from religious conservatives and those with moral and social anxieties about biotechnology. Effective regulation, ethical debate, and public engagement initiatives in the UK seem to have created a favourable climate for the research. In Newcastle, the collaboration of basic science, clinical services, and the ethics and public education work of the Policy, Ethics and Life Sciences Research Institute (www.peals.ncl.ac.uk) have enabled the University to take a lead in this important field. It is premature to talk about therapeutic outcomes: it may take a minimum of five to 10 years before there are practical applications of these pioneering advances. But it is hoped that the benefits will then begin to flow for patients, as well as for the biotechnology sector in the region. 

www.ncl.ac.uk/ihg/
‘Sell your bed’ was the advice the predecessor’s wife gave to mine when I was appointed as the President of the Rugby Football Union, ‘you’ll never see it!’

Though we have managed to hold on to our bedroom furniture, we have spent a great deal of the last year on the move since I took up the position. In the last few months alone we have travelled to the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan. I thoroughly enjoy the jet setting life that I currently appear to be leading, but it’s also really, really hard work. The President is effectively the association’s ambassador, and whilst this ensures invites to numerous international sporting events and government functions, it also means taking full responsibility for the organization of events taking place at Twickenham, the official home of English rugby. This is actually a much larger and more complicated job than you might first imagine; a typical 6 Nations match requires not one, but three formal feasts. That’s an awful lot of invites to send out, and a lot of hungry mouths to feed! The President chairs the council of the RFU, and spends a considerable amount of time visiting member clubs. England’s phenomenal success has created a sense of national excitement and enthusiasm for rugby, which I seem to be smack bang in the middle of, and I feel privileged to have been involved in this way at such a crucial and exciting time for the sport.

I remember my time at Newcastle with great affection and return to the region whenever I can, whether it be for an official function, or for a night out on the boat! I especially remember the intense rivalry that used to exist between King’s College rugby team, and my team, the Medicals, who were based out at Heaton Park. We considered ourselves to be entirely separate and somewhat superior to King’s College because we felt we had more of a history and a sense of tradition behind us; in contrast King’s College were too modern and fancy to us, so sparks often flew when we played together with the Durham College players as the Durham University team in the UAU Championships on Wednesday afternoons. I was also Chairman of the Union Disciplinary Committee for some time which meant making some tough decisions. I remember once having to ban an Agric student for two months after he assaulted a member of staff; as a result the entire Agric student body, and most of the rugby players protested and staged a mass walk out. The takings in the Men’s Bar plummeted, and stayed that way until we readmitted the student. That was a really unpopular decision with everybody!

I also remember lodging out at Whitley Bay as many students did in those days. That long bus ride up the coast road used to send me to sleep almost every day. I swam in the sea every day for two years whilst I lived there. A few friends and I used to pretend that we really enjoyed it, even in the winter months; this was blatantly untrue as it was often freezing, but none of us would ever admit to the fact, or want to be the one who chickened out so we carried on!

I come back whenever I can, I have so many memories and so many ties with Newcastle, it’s great to keep them alive in any way that I can. It was a ‘never to be forgotten’ period of my life.