Life Through a Lens

The inimitable work of award-winning photographer Chris Steele-Perkins
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Dear Graduate,

I am delighted to welcome you to the latest edition of Arches, the magazine of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

In these testing times for higher education in the UK, I am confident that we as a University are setting new standards for innovation, as well as nurturing our traditional academic values. Our reputation as a leading research-intensive institution has been officially recognized by the designation of Newcastle as a Science City.

The Great North Museum and establishment of our Cultural Quarter will also further assist the City in its transformation into a centre of cultural interest. Furthermore, high standards of teaching in all areas have enabled the University to rise eleven places in this year’s Times Higher World University Rankings.

This period of change has also been mirrored in the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO), where we have a new Director of Development, Stephen Teal (see page 25), and a new Alumni Relations Officer, Lauren Huntington; both of whom are keen to get to know as many of you as possible. In addition to the appointment of a number of new staff, the DARO Team has also updated the look and feel of Arches, and would be pleased to hear your feedback.

Highlights in this issue include the results of this year’s Alumni Fund Phonathon; a review of last summer’s Reunion Weekend; and a feature on acclaimed photographer and Newcastle alumnus, Chris Steele-Perkins, including some spectacular photography.

I very much hope you will enjoy reading the new-look Arches, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and involvement, and wish you every success for 2006.

With the very best of wishes,

Professor Christopher Edwards
Vice-Chancellor
Fighting the Superbugs

Scientist appointed to fight ‘superbugs’

Professor Jeff Errington, one of the country’s leading microbiologists, has recently been appointed to the Chair of Molecular Bioscience at the University. He will also be Director of the Institute of Cell and Molecular Biosciences, where he hopes to place the University, and North East, at the forefront of the race to develop antibiotics capable of combating the new breed of ‘superbugs’ like MRSA and C-difficile.

‘Antibiotic resistance is reaching crisis proportions. As the so-called “superbugs” become more and more resistant to the treatments that are currently available, so the need to develop medicines capable of treating these infections becomes more urgent,’ says Professor Errington.

From February 2006, Professor Errington will be joined by a team of 15 scientists. Initially, the team will be based in the Medical School, but Professor Errington hopes that, eventually, the team will move to a new location close to the recently-opened Paul O’Gorman Building (which houses the Northern Institute for Cancer Research), and expand to more than 100 scientists.

He said: ‘My aim is to develop a centre to study the fundamental actions of bacteria. There are few, if any, places in the world that focus on this vital aspect of the infectious disease problem. We have an opportunity to set up a world-first centre here in the North East of England’.

Professor Errington began his scientific career at Newcastle University, where he graduated with a BSc in Genetics in 1976. He has spent the last 24 years at Oxford University, most recently as Professor of Microbiology. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Locusts Feel the Force

A husband and wife team from the University’s School of Biology and Psychology have won a major international prize for making locusts watch Star Wars.

Doctors Peter Simmons and Claire Rind were honoured with the Ig Nobel Peace Prize for the study which revealed locusts are terrified of Darth Vader, in Harvard University’s annual spoof of the real Nobel prizes. Now in their 15th year, the awards are given for science that ‘first makes people laugh, and then makes them think’.

The project was designed to help scientists understand the brain mechanisms that locusts use to escape predators and mid-air collisions in the hope that they may be useful in designing car safety systems. Also on the podium were Dr Meyer-Rochow of the International University, Bremen for his paper ‘Pressure produced when penguins pooh: Calculations on avian defecation’, and Roy Glauber, a Harvard University physicist who organized a paper plane-throwing contest at the awards and who last week won the real Nobel Prize for Physics.

Dr Simmons, speaking to the Newcastle Journal newspaper, said: ‘The Ig Nobel Award is an honour. It is recognition of our work. I don’t know why the award was the peace prize. Perhaps it is for marital harmony and something to do with us being married and still collaborating on research.’
Organic veg sales go from strength to strength

All Go for Organic

Nafferton Farm, a University farm near Stocksfield, has begun its third season of selling organic vegetables directly to the public.

Organic conversion began on the farm in 2001, and it now has around 350 acres of certified organic land producing grain, potatoes and vegetables. University staff and alumni can buy vegetables from the farm through its ‘box scheme’, which organizes delivery of boxes to drop-off points on campus every Friday. However, boxes are also sold directly to the public and to other retail outlets and the farm is now expanding its box scheme so that customers can order a selection of vegetables online, to be delivered either to their home or to a drop-off point. Nafferton supplies vegetables to other box schemes in the region such as Dilston College and North East Organic Growers, as well as to organic and delicatessen shops in the Tyne valley and Newcastle. The selection of vegetables available has also expanded and boxes now normally include a selection of around 10 different types of vegetables. This year Nafferton began to run a stall at the monthly farmers’ market in Hexham.

A new website is being developed with grant assistance from the ERRP Rural Enterprise Scheme. As well as allowing customers to order their vegetables directly through the site from the beginning of November, the site will also tell people about the farm and the organic system.

For more information visit: www.naffertonorganicveg.co.uk

Students Give Newcastle University Thumbs Up

A nationwide survey has revealed that students are overwhelmingly satisfied with their lecturers and degree courses at Newcastle.

About 170,000 final-year students at universities and higher education colleges across the UK took part in the government-backed National Student Satisfaction Survey, held for the first time this year. Students were sent a questionnaire asking them to give a score from 1 (definitely disagree) to 5 (definitely agree) to a series of positive statements, such as ‘staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching’.

Newcastle students predominantly gave a score of 4 (mostly agree) to statements about teaching quality and learning resources, as well as to the statement: ‘overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course’.

Professor Ella Ritchie, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, said: ‘This confirms what we already knew – the vast majority of students who come to Newcastle think they have made a good choice and are satisfied with their course.

‘However, we are not complacent and will be examining the survey findings in great detail over the next few months to see if there are improvements we can make to address any areas of concern among students.’

David Bulme, a third-year Combined Studies student at Newcastle University at the time of the survey, who is now Education Officer with the University’s Union Society, said: ‘Overall I am very happy with my degree and my time at Newcastle and I see filling in the National Student Survey questionnaire as a way of ensuring that future students enjoy an even better time at university’.

The University’s new Royal Literary Fund Fellow is Dr Denis MacEoin. Dr MacEoin is a former lecturer at Newcastle, and the University of Fez. He writes fiction under two names: Daniel Easterman (international thrillers) and Jonathan Aycliffe (classic ghost stories in novel form), and his 23 books have been translated into 11 languages. He describes himself as Irish and plump, and hopes to create a friendly, relaxed atmosphere in which students can unburden themselves about the anxieties and pressures that written work creates for them.

The first recipients of the University’s newest accolade, an Honorary Fellowship, received their awards from the Chancellor in October. They are: the University’s former Registrar, Derek Nicholson, who retired in 2002 after 31 years of service; Emeritus Professor Brian Shefton, an international expert in Greek art and archaeology and founder of the University’s Shefton Museum; Jack Jeffery, Chair of Convocation; Florence Kirkby, former Headmistress of Rutherford School in Newcastle upon Tyne; Reay Atkinson, former Director of the Northern Development Company; and David Wilson, chartered accountant and, until 2004, Honorary Treasurer of the University.

Newcastle College’s Performance Academy has joined forces with the University to expand its range of higher education music courses. From September the Academy will be introducing a Foundation Degree in Popular Music and a Foundation Degree in Music Production, which will be validated by the University. The courses have been devised with some of the UK’s major music producers and record companies including local record company Demolition Records and independent producer John Ravenhall.
Staff from across the University have paid tribute to former Northern Ireland Secretary, Marjorie 'Mo' Mowlam, who died aged 55 in August 2005. Mo Mowlam lectured in Politics at the University from 1979 to 1983, and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Civil Law by the University in 1998.

Tim Gray, Emeritus Professor of Political Thought, worked with Mo Mowlam during her time at the University and described her as an 'extraordinary' person.

'She took Newcastle University’s Politics department by storm in many respects. Even at her interview, we were overwhelmed by this very warm, genuine and enthusiastic woman with the most magnetic, vibrant personality. She gave a remarkable performance.

'She was only here for a relatively short time but she made her presence felt – she was a breath of fresh air. She was a brilliant teacher and communicator, and absolutely mesmerizing with the students.

'Staff also built a wonderful rapport with her – she was one of those people who you felt was genuinely interested in you. She made you feel two inches taller than you actually were.

'We weren’t surprised when she made it to the top. She carried this wonderful personality with her into her political career, which distinguished her from a lot of politicians of her day. She was a very emotional politician, with an instinctive ability to relate to ordinary people. We knew her expressions of sincerity were genuine, because that was the way Mo was.

'We’re extremely saddened by the loss of our remarkable and irreplaceable friend and politician.'
Scientists Granted Licence for Pioneering Research

Scientists in Newcastle have been granted a licence to carry out research aimed at preventing the transmission of mitochondrial DNA disease, a serious and distressing hereditary disorder that is passed from mothers to their children.

In some patients this leads to a variety of diseases, which affect the brain, muscles, heart and other organs. The licence will allow the research group, at Newcastle University Medical School and the Newcastle Fertility Centre at the Centre for Life in Newcastle, to conduct a research project aimed at developing a technique for replacing defective mitochondria with normal mitochondria in the 1-cell zygote.

The researchers stress that this research is only the very first step in a very difficult process, which they hope will lead to techniques that might prevent the transmission of mitochondrial DNA disease. While the proposed technique has been found to be safe in animal embryos, it will be very important to determine whether it can be safely used in human eggs. Abnormally fertilized eggs from consenting couples undergoing IVF treatment will be used in the research project. These eggs are not used for treatment because they contain the wrong number of chromosomes.

The Newcastle team is very grateful to the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign, which has provided funding for this research, and to the members of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) Appeals Committee for their very thoughtful consideration of the research licence application. Dr David Harrison, Director of Research at the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign, said: ‘We are delighted that the HFEA has given approval for this research project. The innovative approach being tested at Newcastle may lead to a treatment for mitochondrial myopathies, a group of conditions that dramatically affect quality and length of life.’

Alumni Fee Discount Available

From September 2006 Newcastle University will be offering a 10 per cent reduction in postgraduate tuition fees for all its alumni who are self-funding and who meet the eligibility criteria.

Newcastle graduates are in demand, and we are one of the top 20 universities targeted by international, national and local employers who are looking for high-quality postgraduates. Perhaps you are looking for a change in your career direction, or to become better qualified in your current profession? Alternatively you may want to specialize in a subject that you studied at University or possibly try something completely different!

You can find out more about all our postgraduate courses and research degrees by looking at the information on our website (www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate) or by contacting our Enquiries Service (Telephone: 0191 222 5594; e-mail enquiries@ncl.ac.uk).

A Newcastle University team has developed the world’s first web-based resource aimed at supporting disabled research students through their courses. The resource was developed after research by the University found that many disabled postgraduate research students faced barriers, which hindered progress and dampened confidence. It also showed that supervisors and other University staff could readily help remove or lessen the barriers, by putting more thought into tailoring the research environment and their working practices to meet the requirements of these students.

A new company is to be formed at Newcastle to design a sunscreen which will protect the skin’s genetic material, or DNA. The company will be set up at Newcastle University and follows research by skin cancer expert Dr Mark Birch-Machin.

If you are worried about funding your studies you can check out our searchable online database at www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding. For specific details on our alumni discount, please visit www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding/alumni+tuition+fee+discount.

A Newcastle University scientist’s outstanding contribution to anti-cancer drug development has won a major award recognizing his achievement. Professor Hilary Calvert, who is funded by Cancer Research UK, received the 2005 Pfizer Award for Innovative Science on 20 October. The prize is awarded annually to an academic scientist whose innovative research has made a significant impact on the discovery and development of new medicines.

A new company is to be formed at Newcastle to design a sunscreen which will protect the skin’s genetic material, or DNA. The company will be set up at Newcastle University and follows research by skin cancer expert Dr Mark Birch-Machin, Dr Birch-Machin, from the School of Clinical and Laboratory Sciences, said: ‘This sunburnt DNA is like a skin cancer time bomb – and too much sun exposure also leads to skin ageing, meaning your skin starts to look like an old leather sofa. Our company will turn a unique idea that was born in the laboratory into a reality.’
Giving a Helping Hand

A Newcastle alumnus is making the most of the out-of-date IT equipment the University discards, by donating it to deprived schools in the Ukraine — and he needs your help too!

Dr Alan Bell’s (MBA 1994; PhD 2002) wife, Hazel, is half Ukrainian. Until 1988 the couple were unable to visit any of her family because of the cold war — and when they eventually were able to visit, they found a country still living in the nineteenth century. There seemed to be little hope for them and their countryfolk when the iron curtain fell and they were left in near bankruptcy by the break-up of the Soviet Union. Travelling regularly to the Ukraine, Alan found that the children often suffered the most, especially as schools often had little, if any, equipment. He got to know a local school teacher in the small town of Burshtyn in the Ivano Frankovsk region, who asked him if he could help the local school children. Since then, he has taken small gifts such as exercise books but had always hoped one day to be able to take computers and IT equipment to the school as this is what they so desperately need.

Then, whilst visiting the University recently, Dr Bell spotted a man carrying old computers out of a building — he asked if they were rubbish and found out they were in perfect working order.

Alan is now working with the University in the hope that he will be able to get the computers to the children of Burshtyn.

If you or the organization you work for have any second-hand equipment that you no longer use, or if you could offer any assistance transporting the equipment to the Ukraine, or if you could lend Alan a van and sponsor a journey with petrol and ferry fees, we’d love to hear from you. You could make a real difference to the lives of these children.

If you think you can help, or if you’d like to find out more, please contact Alan directly at: alanbell.ltd@criticalstrategy.com

Scholarships to Help Indonesian Academics

Newcastle is one of 13 leading UK universities that have united to help rebuild the academic strengths of two Indonesian universities devastated by the tsunami on 26 December 2004.

The British Universities’ Scholarship Scheme for Higher Education Institutions in Aceh, Indonesia, will help the Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry (IAIN) and Universitas Syiah Kuala (UNSYIAH) in Banda Aceh to strengthen the research and teaching skills of their junior academic staff to help fill the gaps left by colleagues killed in the tsunami. The universities lost almost one in 10 of their staff and students, and suffered major damage to their infrastructures. As part of the agreement, each institution in the consortium will waive fees and cover living costs for one full Master’s scholarship per year for the next four academic years, creating approximately 52 scholarships over the lifetime of the scheme. IAIN and UNSYIAH will nominate candidates for the scholarships, who will then be selected by the UK institutions based on their normal admissions criteria.

The British Council in Indonesia is also supporting the scheme by providing free English language tuition for candidates to bring them up to the IELTS standards required by UK institutions. British Council Director in Indonesia, Professor Mike Hardy, said: ‘This is a wonderful achievement — and so appropriate for the needs of the two higher education institutions. We hope very much that the contacts established through these scholarships will become sustaining relationships. I am pleased that the British Council can assist’.
Phonathon 2005

This year’s Phonathon has been yet another record-breaker, with our student callers raising over £170,000 for the Alumni Fund.

Hundreds of Newcastle graduates were contacted during the eight-week campaign, which achieved a higher pledge rate than ever before with a record number of 899 donors, leaving the students overwhelmed by the generosity of our alumni, and the warm feeling still held for the University.

Running in its eighth consecutive year, the scheme has raised a total of over £1.1 million for the fund, which provides financial support to less-privileged students, and allows the University to make provisions for those with disabilities.

John Connolly, Alumni Fund Manager, said: ‘The Alumni Fund helps to provide talented young people from less advantaged backgrounds with the opportunity of a first-class education at a top class University.’

The primary purpose of the Alumni Fund is to provide Access Scholarships for new students with a limited family income. The amount of scholarships available has been doubled every year since 1998 to try and meet demand, with this year’s fund offering a record of 600 bursaries to the value of £500 each.

‘The Alumni Fund helps to provide talented young people from less advantaged backgrounds with the opportunity of a first-class education at a top class University.’

If you would like to make a donation to the Alumni Fund please complete the relevant sections of this form, cut out and return it to:

Development and Alumni Relations Office, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, FREEPOST NEA4761, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1BR

(Remember, by using our Freepost code, there’s no need to use a stamp, although by doing so it will reduce our costs)

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Leila Platt, one of the student callers and herself a bursary holder, said: 'I applied to work on the Phonathon campaign because I received an Alumni Access Scholarship when I started university and I wanted to give something back by helping to raise funds to support future students'.

Team supervisor and third year History student, Nyomi Winter (pictured left), added: 'This year’s Phonathon was great fun and very rewarding. We had a fantastic team who were motivated, professional and who really embraced what the Alumni Fund is all about.

'We had a lot of first-time donors this year and we hope that this is an indication that in future campaigns the Alumni Fund will go from strength to strength and continue to play such a vital role for the students within the university.'

Once again, a great big thank you to all of our supporters!

‘We had a fantastic team who were motivated, professional and who really embraced what the Alumni Fund is all about.’

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Tackling Terrorism

Following the London bombings last July, the question of how the UK can effectively respond to terrorism has become a crucial issue that affects us all, and is now at the heart of pioneering research currently being conducted at Newcastle Law School.

By its very nature, the study of terrorism infiltrates a range of academic subjects in the field of humanities, and the Law School has therefore been taking its research forward at an interdisciplinary level. With many establishments concentrating on the politics, psychology and social implications of terrorism, the counter-terrorism specialism of Newcastle Law School is an innovative deviation. Newcastle is one of the only universities in the country to offer a postgraduate course in this area, which considers the legal issues surrounding counter-terrorism, and is one of the very few that actually researches the subject from a legal perspective.

Spearheading this new venture is Dr Rhiannon Talbot, an expert in UK and international counter-terrorism law. The research is concerned with whether the government’s counter-terrorism policies are being undermined by some of the counter-terrorism laws they have introduced or wish to become law, she explains. ‘Highly controversial provisions, such as detention without charge for three months, may make the UK more secure in the short term but these powers could become issues that motivate alienated people into taking up terrorism. With this in mind, our research will consider how the law can be used more imaginatively to develop an effective strategy which will lead to both short and long term security.’

By its very nature, the study of terrorism infiltrates a range of academic subjects in the field of humanities, and the Law School has therefore been taking its research forward at an interdisciplinary level. Not only has Dr Talbot been taking her findings beyond a purely academic audience, by making regular appearances in the regional and national press, but she has also forged links with a variety of academic institutions. She has recently launched an e-mail network through JISC, the academic mail base operator, which aims to stimulate debate on a wide range of issues surrounding terrorism, and be a source of information and news. The Academic Research Network on Terrorism and Counter-terrorism is multidisciplinary, drawing together academics concerned with terrorism from a range of perspectives, including law, political science, intelligence and security studies and peace studies. ‘As the network is administered and run from within the School, we hope to initiate a process in which Newcastle Law School becomes a hub of academic research on terrorism and counter-terrorism,’ Dr Talbot added.

As part of the project, Dr Talbot recently organized a conference in conjunction with the Home Office, Jean Monnet Centre, and the University’s School of Geography, Politics and Sociology. Themed on exploring current and future developments in counter-terrorism policy across the EU, the event coincided with an official EU conference, which attracted a delegation of influential attendees, including academics and practitioners from a wide variety of disciplines, and government representatives from various European states. The keynote speakers were Sir Ronnie Flanagan, former Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and current Chief Inspector of the Constabulary; and Angela Hegarty of the University of Ulster, a leading academic in the field.

For further information, please visit the Law School’s website at www.ncl.ac.uk/nuls, or e-mail Rhiannon Talbot at r.m.talbot@ncl.ac.uk
In the small seaside town where we lived there was no ethnic community into which I could retreat," Steele-Perkins would later write. "I was seen as a Chink. So, in the heartland of Anglo-Saxon England I forged the peculiar bonds that bind me to this country."

Within a year of graduating from Newcastle in 1970 he had moved to London and had taken up photography full-time. In 1975 he began working with the documentary group Exit on their inner-city projects. He also co-curated and exhibited in the 'Young British Photographers' exhibition at London's Photographers' Gallery. In 1976 he started to move away from the various British subcultures that had informed his work thus far and became an associate of the young French photographic agency, VIVA.

However, his first book saw him return to documentary photography: The Teds (text by Richard Smith, Travelling Light, 1979) was published in 1979, and taking the form of a travelling exhibition, this set of pictures detailed the last great wave of England's Teddy Boys. By 1981 Steele-Perkins had become a central figure within the rejuvenated British photography scene, and had produced his second book, About Seventy Photographs (Arts Council of Great Britain, 1980).

More and more, however, he was photographing abroad, especially in the developing nations. "Previously my work had been focused on particulars of Britain: poverty, subculture," he noted. "I did not have any parallel reality against which to properly assess my position." And so he used his travels to give himself "a kaleidoscope of experiences" with which to gain a new perspective and context. Journeying through Africa, the Middle East, the Soviet Union, and Central America, he photographed wars and famine: "I had witnessed, photographed, and wept for the victims of the world. The starving, the dispossessed, the oppressed; those with no hope but their indomitable spirit."

For him, the experience of going to war was a harrowing but necessary one. "I wanted to know what it meant in the world to be at war" he notes, "and what I learnt was that war is a terrible thing and that I couldn't change anything, but it changed my mind -- I started to photograph in a more fluid way. Now the pictures that mean the most to me are the ones that operate gently rather than directly, pictures that are more about how people react to, cope with a given situation."

There is one photograph which particularly seems to capture that quality. In 1980 the international community was beginning to become aware of the growing problems of war and famine in Somalia -- Steele-Perkins visited the country, making photographs that recorded not only the scale and horror of the tragedy, but also some of the fruits of international aid. There is one image of two children performing handstands on the parched desert sand -- the photograph captures a sense of joy and life in...
the children, which proved that the Somalis were not just placid victims as they were so often portrayed in the media.

In the 1980s, he exhibited his work from Beirut and Africa, and became a full member of the Magnum photographic agency in 1982. He won the Oscar Barnack Prize and the Tom Hopkinson award for British Photojournalism in 1988, and the Robert Capa Gold Medal in 1989 – the same year that his first book of colour photographs, The Pleasure Principle, was published. He continued working abroad throughout the ‘90s and made a series of trips to Afghanistan, chronicling not just the civil war and its aftermath, but the citizens’ way of daily life. He was there for the 1998 earthquake and remembers the experience vividly:

‘I walked around photographing and talking to some people,’ he wrote. ‘The evening sun raking across the utter destruction of the village bathed the scene of loss and despair in a liquid beauty.’


His work in Afghanistan culminated in a book, Afghanistan (Marval, France; 2001), and then a travelling exhibition. He followed this up by setting out on an extensive project in Japan, which aimed to take in every aspect of Japanese life – from the lush landscapes of the Kumano Trail, to the contemporary streetlife of the city, to the heights of Mount Fuji.

His latest project – Echoes (Trolley 2004) however, is something quite different. The photographs are not his normal milieu, the stunning images of Africa and further abroad for which he is renowned, but rather selected fragments of a working photographer’s life and the archive of a single year, 2001. They are images that unashamedly evoke memories of that year, sentimental, odd, striking and intensely personal.

‘My photography has evolved and improved. I have gained experience but I am completely uninterested in going to war now,’ he explains. ‘I feel like I have done that, that I have nothing more to contribute. I still feel I’m a documentary photographer, and I am still interested in the world, recording life and making a statement about it – including my own. I still use the camera to photograph and understand the way things are, to learn about the things I do not really know.’
Banking on a Wind of Change

One of the country’s top environmental experts has warned of the scale of the threat to the environment if we do not cut our carbon dioxide emissions – starting now.

Delivering the first in a series of three HSBC-funded annual lectures, Lord Ron Oxburgh, the former UK Chairman of Shell Transport and Trading and Professor of Mineralogy and Petrology at Cambridge University, said: ‘We are in a really sticky situation, and we are running out of time’.

‘We are as certain as we can be that by burning fossil fuels we are turning a benign natural phenomenon – the greenhouse effect that makes the earth warm enough for us to inhabit – in to a seriously dangerous one by trapping so much heat that sea level rises and the world climate becomes wild and unpredictable.’

The consequences, said Lord Oxburgh, will be considerable economic loss to all, with the greatest impact being felt by the poorest nations that are least able to deal with catastrophes.

Lord Oxburgh called for greater government investment in finding alternative sources of energy, such as biomass, wind, hydro and solar energy and other low-carbon dioxide sources such as nuclear energy, and clean-coal technologies, where plants and trees can be gasified.

‘We have to change and, if the change is to be affordable, we have to start now,’ he said.

Lord Oxburgh’s lecture rounded off the first HSBC Partnership in Environmental Innovation Day, attended by representatives from HSBC and the University of East Anglia as well as a number of high-profile business partners and alumni.

The next HSBC lecture will be later this year. Look out for details in Arches and on the University website.

‘We have to change and, if the change is to be affordable, we have to start now.’

Visit: www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni

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Universities, including research into geothermal energy, how to make East Anglia a carbon-neutral university, and the production of low-cost water filters in Bangladesh.

The event was closely linked to the University’s new ‘Transforming the Environment’ development initiative, chaired by Newcastle graduate and Chair of Convocation, Jack Jeffery, which aims to raise funds for the key projects linked to sustainability.

All the presentations delivered as part of the first Partnership in Environmental Innovation event can be found at www.ncl.ac.uk/environment and www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/news.

For more details on the University’s Transforming the Environment projects contact Jaine Fleetwood:

jaine.fleetwood@ncl.ac.uk

Lord Oxburgh and the Vice-Chancellor joined a group of delegates for the first of three annual HSBC lectures. From left: Mark Vines of HSBC; Francis Sullivan of HSBC; Vice-Chancellor Professor Christopher Edwards; Professor Keith Tovey of UEA; Lord Oxburgh; Professor Paul Younger; Professor Trevor Davies of UEA.
Established in 1992 by Professor Paul Younger of the University’s School of Civil Engineering and Geosciences, the Mine Water Pollution Research and Outreach Programme has grown in scope, influence and reputation to the extent that the academic research which underpins the project now lies at the heart of the national and international effort to combat the grave environmental threat posed by polluted mine waters. The University is now widely considered to be one of the world’s leading centres of expertise in the field of mine water pollution.

The programme began as a community-based project involving an experimental wetland creation scheme in the former mining village of Quaking Houses, in County Durham, where residents had become concerned about the levels of pollution in their local stream caused by run-off from a nearby colliery spoil heap. Professor Younger, who holds the HSBC Chair in Environmental Technologies and Geothermal Energy, and his colleagues pioneered a unique natural regeneration technique using compost and limestone to treat the polluted water. The scientific basis of the technique, known as bacterial sulphate reduction, proved so successful that it has been adopted in countries as far afield as Bolivia and South Africa.

A pioneering research programme, which grew from a community-based project to clean up contaminated water flowing from an abandoned mine, has been awarded a Queen’s Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education.

‘There isn’t a bigger thing to win in Higher Education, but this literally started with me giving a bit of advice to Easington District Council in 1992’.

Newcastle University is one of 21 winners of the sixth round of The Queen’s Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education. The award will be presented by the Queen at Buckingham Palace in February.

Responding to the news, a delighted Professor Younger, said: ‘There isn’t a bigger thing to win in Higher Education, but this literally started with me giving a bit of advice to Easington District Council in 1992’.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Christopher Edwards, said: ‘The University of Newcastle upon Tyne is delighted that we have won a Queen’s Anniversary Prize. This is the highest award that can be made to a UK university. The award recognizes the outstanding contribution that Professor Paul Younger and his colleagues have made to solving the problem of mine water contamination which has had such devastating effects on many mining communities.’

The Queen’s Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education are the equivalent of the Queen’s Awards for Industry in the nation’s honours system. They are awarded biennially to institutions of higher and further education for work of exceptional quality and of broad benefit either nationally or internationally. The Prizes were first awarded in 1994 and originated as a result of the commemorations for the Fortieth Anniversary of the Queen’s accession to the throne.

Professor Paul Younger at a site near Stanley, County Durham, where work is underway to create bio-filter ponds using horse manure which will clean dirty mine water.
Politics Reunion 2005

During the Annual Reunion weekend, over 100 alumni representing five decades of former students returned to the University to help celebrate a landmark in the history of Politics as an academic discipline at Newcastle.

They came to help staff, both past and present, celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the Politics Department. Prior to 1955, two members of the History Department, John Brown and Ted Hughes, had taught Politics; but in 1955 they were taken from History to form a new, independent department. Over the course of the next half century this would grow to its present complement of 18 full-time academic staff, nearly 400 joint and single honours undergraduates and 100 taught and research postgraduates.

On the Friday evening, Politics alumni had an opportunity to witness the economic, social and cultural transformation of the city from an unusual vantage point, enjoying a cruise on the River Tyne, which also afforded the opportunity to see some early arrivals for the Tall Ships Race.

On the Saturday, despite a forbiddingly early 9.15 start, Politics alumni gathered in force to enjoy a series of events that revived memories of their days as undergraduates and postgraduates.

It could not have been more appropriate that the activities were opened by the man under whose aegis Politics grew in strength and numbers from 1965 onwards, and whom many former students regard as the personification of Politics at Newcastle – Emeritus Professor Hugh Berrington. Alumni, many of who had taken Hugh’s course on the Psychology of Politics, were accordingly treated to Hugh’s tour de force take on personality and politics as they apply to Prime Ministers Chamberlain, Churchill, Thatcher and Blair. An audio file of Professor Berrington’s lecture is available at www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/events, while photographs of this and the reunion events are available at www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/events/photos/reunion05.html.

After Convocation, alumni returned to the current Politics building at 40-42 Great North Road for lunch, and further reminiscences were triggered by contributions from two other long-serving and warmly regarded Professors in the Politics department – Tim Gray and Peter Jones.

In the afternoon, alumni were invited to participate in a series of discussions on key sub-areas of the discipline. Peter Jones and Thom Brooks led a session on developments in political theory over the last half century, Phil Daniels led a discussion on European integration, while Nick Randall led a seminar on developments in the last 50 years of British politics.

This session on British politics was enlivened by the participation of Alan Beith, MP for Berwick upon Tweed, who prior to his election to the House of Commons in 1973 was a Lecturer in the School. Indeed, Alan represents one of a number of former staff and students associated with Politics at Newcastle who went on to find success in political careers, including Mo Mowlam in the UK and Jin Park in South Korea.

The weekend was rounded off by a politically themed Convocation lecture from the Rt Hon Lord Judd who spoke on the highly topical subject of ‘Security and the Battle for Hearts and Minds’ before staff and former Politics students alike joined with other alumni to enjoy the Reunion Dinner at St James’ Park.

In the light of the success of the Reunion, the parting sentiment of both staff and alumni alike that another 50 years must not be allowed to pass before a similar event is held will surely be heeded.

On the Friday evening, Politics alumni had an opportunity to witness the economic, social and cultural transformation of the city from an unusual vantage point.
For the staff of the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO), the 2005 Annual Reunion had been a testing time with both Chris Cox (former Director of Development) and Joel Burden (former Alumni Relations Officer) leaving during the run-up to the weekend. Luckily they were able to rise to the occasion and a very successful Reunion weekend was the outcome, with over 300 alumni enjoying a series of events on Friday 22 and Saturday 23 July.

Professor Hugh Berrington gave a splendid lecture based on the personalities of politics, citing examples of Chamberlain, Churchill, Thatcher and Blair. The lecture proved to be both humorous and thought provoking and the very many alumni who attended were delighted to have such an eminent lecturer to start the weekend.

Convocation, which in the past has preceded the Convocation Lecture later in the day, was moved this year to a morning slot which seemed to appeal to the majority of alumni and is something which will be considered for next year. The Vice-Chancellor gave a detailed account of the state of the University and the plans for the future. As usual, he willingly answered a variety of questions from the floor. The minutes, to be circulated later, give details of the outcome of elections to the Alumni Consultative Group and Branch Representatives.

A well attended Convocation Lunch was followed by an extremely successful lecture by David Shaw on the Great North Museum. This is an ambitious extension and refurbishment of the Hancock Museum, which will amalgamate the existing natural history collection with the classical collections of the Shetland Museum and the archaeological treasures of the Museum of Antiquities. Many alumni took the opportunity to visit all three sites, which opened their doors free of charge following the lecture.

A century of teaching Naval Architecture in Newcastle was celebrated this year and as part of the celebrations the School of Marine Science and Technology, which was formed three years ago with the merging of Marine Technology and Marine Science, organized tours and visits of the expanded School. This proved to be a very popular event as many previous students met to remember old times and look forward to the future.

The Rt Hon Lord Judd of Portsea gave the Convocation Lecture this year, which was well attended by alumni, staff and the general public. The title ‘Security and the Battle for Hearts and Minds’ included a discussion of defence and security within the UK as well as the war in Iraq and its aftermath. A very lively question and answer session followed with many questioners making clear their stand on all the issues.

A much more relaxed event ended the weekend. The Annual Drinks Reception and Dinner moved to St James’ Park and was the first time the Annual Dinner had been held off campus.

Following the day’s formalities, graduates and staff congregated at St James’ Park for dinner and drinks, accompanied by a live jazz band.
To achieve the Millennium Development Goal 1, the UN is proposing the ‘Quick Win’ of eliminating all fees in state primary schools by 2006. But is the UN backing the wrong horse? Professor James Tooley examines the evidence...

Free Primary Education
The United Nations argues that progress in improving primary schooling in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia is simply too slow, with an estimated 115 million children still out of school. To move forward, the UN is proposing to eliminate all fees in state primary schools by 2006, through increased international aid so that all can benefit from free state education.

Missing altogether will be discussion of how private education can help. Some might wonder why this is an issue — after all, isn’t private education only about the elites and middle classes? Actually no. In the urban slums and villages in developing countries, increasing numbers of poor parents are sending their children to private schools — with fees of $2 per month or less, run by educational entrepreneurs who want to serve their communities, as well as make some money.

We have found such schools in battle-scarred buildings in Somaliland, in the shanty towns built on stilts above the Lagos lagoons in Nigeria, scattered amongst the tin and cardboard huts of Africa’s largest slum, Kibera, Kenya, in the crowded slums and villages across India and even in remote Himalayan regions of China. These schools are not some minority pursuit — in the Indian city of Hyderabad, for instance, official figures show 61 per cent of all children attending private unaided schools, and in the slum areas I’ve found the figure to be even higher — with 80 per cent of the poorest families going private. Everyone in development circles knows about this now, although curiously, there is a blinkered refusal to think through its implications.

Secretary of State Hilary Benn recently showcased free primary education (FPE) in Kenya as the shining example of aid to Africa not being wasted — in fact, research shows that the reported increase in enrolment is, at best, children moving from private slum schools — forced to close — to overcrowded state schools. That’s not a success story, it’s a disaster.

So why would parents choose to pay fees when state schools are free? Because state schools are simply failing their pupils. An Indian government-approved Probe Report paints a disturbing picture of the ‘malfunctioning’ system; when researchers called unannounced on their random sample, only in 53 per cent of the schools was there any ‘teaching activity’ going on and in 33 per cent, the headteacher was absent. Significantly, the low level of teaching activity occurred even in those schools with relatively good infrastructure, teaching aids and pupil-teacher ratio. Indeed, says the report, ‘it has become a way of life in the profession’.

Significantly, the Probe Report concedes that such problems were not apparent in the private schools serving the poor. In the great majority — again visited unannounced and at random — there was ‘feverish classroom activity’. So why is there such a startling difference? According to the report it is accountability. The private schools are successful because they are more accountable: ‘the teachers are accountable to the manager (who can fire them), and, through him or her, to the parents (who can withdraw their children)’. Such accountability was not present in the government schools, and this contrast is perceived with crystal clarity by the vast majority of parents.

Sir Bob Geldof and Bono rave about how an extra one-million-plus children are now enrolled in primary school in Kenya. All these children, the accepted wisdom goes, have been saved by the benevolence of the international community, but that ignores the remarkable reality that the poor in Africa have not been waiting, helplessly, for the munificence of pop stars and Western chancellors to ensure their children get a decent education. Poor parents are en masse voting with their feet, taking their children out of the state system into private education, so why is the only message from the development experts that they should be dragged back, kicking and screaming, into the government schools?

It is time the implications of this were thought through, not swept under the carpet. Why instead isn’t there an exploration of ways in which private schools for the poor can be helped, through loan schemes and low-cost school improvement packages? Why aren’t development experts poring over ways to make the private schools even more accessible, through public and private vouchers? These are the questions that need to be put to the UN. Poor parents have made their preferences clear. They want schools that are accountable to them, where teachers turn up and teach. They want private schools. It is time the politicians caught up with them.

'Isn't private education only about the elites and middle classes? Actually no.'
Canadian Alumni Association Reunion

Graduates from all over Canada congregated last November for the first ever meeting of the Canadian Branch of the Alumni Association.

Held on November 17 at the Renaissance Inn Hotel in Toronto, the meeting was stewarded by Ruth Allen, Chair of the Canadian Branch, and James Johnston, Development Manager at Newcastle, who had flown over from the UK for the occasion.

Based in Ontario, Ruth hopes to form a network of regional chapters over the coming months, following a very positive response to a mailshot sent out prior to the meeting. The main form of communication is likely to be via e-newsletter, keeping members abreast of events to be held in Canada, as well as news from the University.

Keen to get in contact with as many alumni as possible, Ruth said: ‘If you don’t think your details are up to date in the Newcastle database, please update them online, and also consider joining NUgrad – our online alumni directory’.

To update contact details, please visit www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/intouch/update
To join NUgrad, please visit www.ncl.ac.uk/NUgrad with your student reference number.

(1-r) James Johnston, Development Manager; Youbin Zheng; Steve Burany (alumni guest); Sue Weiduo Si; Bryan Avison; Ruth Allen, Mehdi Arfaie, Jim Temple, Michael Hamilton, Lesley Hamilton (alumni guest).

Degrees of Success Run in the Family

Professor Bernard Weiss collected his Doctor of Engineering (DEng) degree from the University during the December congregation ceremonies, marking the latest chapter in his family’s long-standing relationship with the city and the University.

Professor Weiss (pictured above), who is Pro-Vice-Chancellor at the University of Surrey, already holds a BSc (awarded in 1971) and PhD (1975) in Electrical Engineering from the University.

In the audience to see her son receive his degree was his mother, Frances (also pictured), who at 90 years old is one of the University’s oldest graduates. Dr Frances Weiss (née Lawson) graduated in 1940 with a Bachelor’s degree in Medicine.

But the family’s connection with the University goes back even further, to 1937, when Bernard’s late father, Joseph, joined the newly formed King’s College as a demonstrator in the Department of Chemistry. He remained with the University for the next 34 years – from 1956 as Professor of Chemistry – until his retirement in 1971.

‘It was probably my father’s influence that persuaded me to do research and ultimately embark upon an academic career,’ says Professor Weiss.

Professor Weiss also gained an early experience of working in industry, thanks to summer holiday jobs in companies including Reyrolle, Joyce Loebl and IRD, organized by his father, who had links with a number of notable local industrialists, among them Herbert Loebl (Hon DSc).

Professor Weiss added: ‘I am very attached to Newcastle, and visit whenever I have the opportunity. I am delighted to see the University thriving, with initiatives like the Centre for Life and Science City, and the extensive innovation in medical science, stem cell research and nanotechnology.’
Graduate Connections

Newcastle University wishes its graduates to be able to compete successfully in an increasingly competitive graduate marketplace, and is undertaking a range of methods to drive forward its employability agenda. The University’s award-winning Careers Service is a major contributor to this agenda and is looking to alumni to support one of their current initiatives, the Graduate Connections database.

Graduate Connections is an online database of alumni who provide their professional profiles as a source of realistic first-hand information and advice about a career, sector or organization. As Graduate Connections is well used and valued by current students, the Careers Service is currently wishing to increase the range of alumni contacts and is particularly targeting alumni who have graduated within the past 10 years or so, and also international alumni.

To submit a profile, you simply need to complete an online form, which requests brief details about your career. This information is stored on the database for students to read. Most students obtain all that they need from reading the profile, however a small number may wish to make contact with you, via the Careers Service, for further information or advice. Alumni hopefully find this both a rewarding experience and a means of maintaining ongoing links with the University.

If you would like to provide your details for Graduate Connections, please log on to the following: http://crilly.ncl.ac.uk/cems/careers/graduateconnections/registrationform.asp

For further information, please e-mail alison.richardson@ncl.ac.uk

The Careers Service, and Newcastle University students, will be most grateful for your support!

Quench Your Academic Thirst

The University of Newcastle upon Tyne is launching a number of International Summer School programmes for the summer of 2006.

Running from 31 July to the 20 August, these programmes are part of the University’s global education provision and form part of its commitment to internationalization. We look forward to welcoming students from around the world. The courses on offer include: Culture and Heritage; International Politics and Contemporary Global Change; Creative Writing; History, Archaeology and Classics; and European Business. These intensive three-week study opportunities are open to anyone with an interest in an educational holiday who meets the basic entry requirement.

Professor Colin Riordan, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences explains: “The goal of our Summer School is simple: to inspire students from other countries through programmes of intensive learning and teaching excellence, while creating an exciting yet supportive environment in which to experience British culture and society.”

All alumni students will be eligible for a £200 discount if they select to attend the University of Newcastle upon Tyne Business School Summer School on ‘Doing Business in Europe’. We can also offer anyone who is recommended our programmes by an alumnus, a £100 discount. So spread the word to friends, colleagues and relatives!

Students will be taught by a combination of classroom learning, field trips and self-directed study. Programme content is being set by some of our finest academics and teaching will be as practical and context-based as possible. Students opting for a three-week programme in Creative Writing will enjoy excursions to key literary sites such as the Wordsworth Trust at Grasmere and the Seven Stories Centre for the Children’s Book recently launched in Newcastle. History, Archaeology and Classics students can expect to be involved in an archaeological dig, experiencing first hand the thrill of unearthing historical artefacts and uncovering a piece of history. Business School students will benefit from considering Europe’s position in the global economy and identifying cultural differences between doing business not only within Europe but across continents, in comparison to the US or Asia.

So whether you fancy yourself as the next J K Rowling or Richard Branson, or if you would just like to take some time out to develop your knowledge of art, history, culture and music, consider spending three weeks with us this summer.

For more information visit www.ncl.ac.uk/nuiss or telephone Kate Morris on +44 (0)191 222 5823.
In 2004 a report was published by the UN which ranked Brazil as the fourth most unequal country in the world, with the richest 20 per cent of the population holding over 64 per cent of the country’s wealth, whilst the poorest held only 2.2 per cent. Celia Alldridge (BSc Combined Studies in Science 1999) is part of a movement working to change this reality.

For the last two years I have worked as a volunteer for the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST) or the Rural Landless Workers’ Movement in Brazil. Considered the most important social movement in Brazilian history, the movement fights for land, agrarian reform and social justice in a country where, since colonial times, the dominant class has monopolized the land to an extent uniquely unequal in the world.

Since its foundation in 1984, the most effective means the MST has had of initiating change has been to draw public attention to the plight of the landless workers and force the opening up of negotiations with the government ministry responsible for agrarian reform by setting up camps on carefully chosen, unproductive land. Our ultimate aim is the transfer of the land titles to the workers.

Although the MST uses other forms of struggle too – marches, occupation of public buildings, public meetings, camps in city spaces – the rural occupation is still its main weapon of resistance and negotiation. Today there are around 5,000 occupations in 23 states across the country, and around 350,000 families have successfully negotiated their ownership of the land. Furthermore, there are over 150,000 families in temporary camps on land which the MST is negotiating for the ownership of, or by road sides waiting for land allocation. There are therefore currently around two million MST members fighting for a more equal society and better distribution of land.

Ever since my first trip to South East Asia in my gap year, I knew I wanted to work in the Majority World (a term I consider more correct than ‘the South’ or ‘the Developing World’) in some way or another. After studying for an MA in Gender and Development Studies at IDS (University of Sussex), I was introduced to E-CHANGER, a Swiss NGO who now support my work in Brazil. For E-CHANGER the aim of sending volunteers is broader than the simple North–South transfer of technical skills and knowledge that some other Development Agencies advocate. Although the technical and professional aspects are essential, they believe that desire for social change and intercultural exchange are equally important; that

Uniquely
the Minority World has as much to learn from the Majority World as vice-versa, and that the transfer of knowledge is not as important as dialogue and exchange between civil societies and the creation of bridges and networks of solidarity. It was through them that I ended up with the MST.

I work in Salvador in the North East state of Bahia in the MST state head office, where I co-ordinate the activities of the ‘Gender Sector’, which is one of 12 sectors we work in. The movement is unique in its emphasis on fighting against gender discrimination, and our objective is to encourage women to take up more active roles of responsibility in camp production, and to highlight the current inequality between the sexes that prevails across large parts of the country. My day-to-day work includes organizing and giving gender training; event organizing; working to strengthen the relationships we have with other organizations, universities and feminist groups; producing pedagogical material; accompanying regional women’s gatherings and organizing state-level meetings. As part of my contract I’m also committed to spreading the word as much as possible about the work we do, and the reality of life in Brazil, so I write a regular newsletter to keep my supporters well informed (available on the website).

It’s hard work, but very rewarding. One of the major events I work on is our International Women’s Day (8 March) Celebration, which is our biggest state-level event of the year. Although the MST is committed to tackling gender inequality, it remains a movement predominantly run by men, and the culture of the rural camps tends to follow that of wider Brazilian society – a very macho one. Therefore the International Women’s Day celebrations are particularly important; it is a moment for the women of the MST to take the spotlight, become politically aware, negotiate their own space, and show their faces to the people of Salvador. In 2005, for the fifth year running, 1,500 rural female workers set up a temporary camp in Salvador for four days and participated in a programme of events, talks, and workshops which covered topics from sexual and reproductive rights, to the benefits of physical exercise! We also organized a night of live music and dancing, and a free service offering passport photos and documentation for those women who had never had access to them. Running such an event was exhausting for all of the co-ordinators of the ‘Gender Sector’ and took an incredible amount of organization, but when we joined several thousand other Bahian women to march through the streets of Salvador we all felt it had been well worth it.

In comparison to the world of handouts, which is more about educated, middle class people helping those less fortunate than themselves, my colleagues were themselves the ‘have nots’ of Brazilian society – many of them with little formal education – who have learnt and grown within the movement itself. I feel very privileged to work alongside these men and women who are struggling to improve their own lives and the lives of the majority.

If you are interested in finding out more about the MST or supporting Celia’s work please visit www.emmovimento.net or e-mail her on celia_alldridge@yahoo.com
If you would like your news to be printed in the next issue of Arches, please contact DARO on 0191 222 7250 or e-mail alum-office@ncl.ac.uk

1950s
Joseph BATTY (BCom 1953; MCom 1958) gained associate membership of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and a Chartered membership of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, but his real passion lies in poultry. Joseph is the Founder and Chairman of the educational charity World Bantam and Poultry Society with his wife Mavis.

Robert FISCHL (MB BS 1951) moved to the States soon after graduation, and before retirement Robert had made Senior Plastic Surgeon at Danbury Hospital, Connecticut. On a personal note he has made a great recovery from a liver transplant and now spends half the year living in Hawaii enjoying his second career as an artist.

1960s
Dr Christopher BADDILEY (BSc Physics 1965) spent two years at the Royal Observatory Edinburgh completing a Doctorate in Infrared Astronomy from the University of London. Christopher then moved to Manchester University where he took up a position in the Astronomy Department, after which he became Consultant Physicist at QinetiQ.

Dr Elizabeth Tessa HEDLEY-WHYTE (MB BS 1960; MD 1976) migrated to the United States soon after graduating, where she began her training in pathology; a few years later she became an American citizen. Tessa is now Director of Neuropathology at the Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School and a ‘Scholar in the Academy’ at Harvard Medical School. She was recently awarded the ‘Meritorious Service Award’ from the American Association of Neuropathologists for contributions to neuropathology and has been recognized as one of the most accomplished academic neuropathologists in the United States.

Trevor JONES (BSc Pure Science 1968) has taught mathematics in a number of renowned institutions over the years and is now in semi retirement. Trevor likes to spend his spare time trying to confuse his great-nephews with the concept of infinity.

Fred KOLBE (MSc Sanitary Engineering 1964) returned to Cape Town soon after graduating and has since secured a number of awards for Engineering Excellence in the field of the Water Cycle. Fred, who still plays competitive badminton, will be turning 70 this year and remains in excellent health.

Michael LOOMES (Dip Ed 1969) has recently retired from Preston Social Services. In August 2000, he and his brother opened the country’s first purpose-built Scout Museum in Lancashire.

1970s
Ruth EVANS (BA Politics & History 1976) went on to do an MPhil in politics at Oxford University, followed by a temporary lecturership in politics at Edinburgh University. She then joined the BBC where she worked as a producer for the World Service for a number of years. She now runs her own production company, which produces radio programmes for Radio 4 and the World Service; she also writes articles and reports for various publications and UN agencies. Ruth lives happily in Oxfordshire with her husband, 13 year-old daughter Ellen and 15 year-old son Matthew.

Graham GYNN (BSc Agriculture 1975) settled in Cornwall and is working on a new theory of Evolution & Consciousness. Graham also has a book waiting to be published.

Darrell Jackson (BSc Zoology 1973) started his career as a teacher. After 13 years he escaped the classroom to work in the Northumberland Outdoor Education Service. He has since retrained, and now works for the North East Ambulance Service; he is looking forward to an active retirement.

Jennifer Mary NICHOLSON-MORTON née HAMPSON (BA Spanish & Latin American Studies 1970) emigrated to Costa Blanca with her family in December 2003 and is about to have her first novel published.

Diane PACKHAM (MSc Education Psychology 1977) has remained in Newcastle and has been appointed Sheriff of Newcastle (Deputy Lord Mayor) for the municipal year 2005/6.

1980s
Alun CARR (BSc Metallurgy 1982; PhD Metallurgy 1986) is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, University College Dublin, Ireland.

Sheila GEORGES-SKELLY née SKELLY (BED 1981) presently lives on Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean, where she works as a part-time teacher, as well as a translator and a local TV news reader. She is married with four children.

Raouf KATTAN (MSc Marine Technology 1985; PhD Engineering 1989) and Roger VAUGHAN (BSc Naval Architecture 1966; PhD Naval Architecture and Shipbuilding 1971) chair Safinah Ltd, the world leading specialist consulting company in the field of marine coatings.

Mary SKELCHER (LLB LAW 1987) passed the Bar exams in 1988 and became a Crown Prosecutor in London; she then went on to qualify as a Chartered Tax Adviser. In 2003 Mary felt she needed a change of direction and is now a professional crossword compiler.

Geoff TAYLOR (MSc Occupational Hygiene 1986) recently published Enhancing Occupational Safety and Health and hopes it will soon be available in Spanish and Mandarin as well.

1990s
Sam TOWNDROW (BEng Chemical & Process Engineering 1999) and Ben TOWNDROW (BDS 2002) recently completed the WaterRelief: Race for Africa, which involved travelling the 3,000 miles from London to Africa in 30 days. The brothers raised £12,000 for ‘Excellent Development’, a charity which deals with dam building in Kenya.

2000s
Charles BAYBUTT (BA Business & Economics 2004) and Alex MARTIN (BA Combined Studies 2004) started up the promotional company called ‘Curious Generation’. On the 31 May 2005 they launched ‘One Night At…The Marquee’ in Leicester Square, an event which has helped promote, nurture, develop and discover some of the most exciting unsigned musical talent in the UK.

Tom MITCHELL (BA English Literature 2000) and Simon RICHARDSON (BA English Literature 2001) have a passion for comedy writing which has taken them to the BBC New Talent Sitcom 2002, ‘So You Think You’re Funny’ stand up competition semi final 2002, and the BBC Northern Exposure competition. Tom and Simon are at present developing material for BBC Radio 1’s sketch show, ‘The Milk Run’.

Bryony MORGAN (BSc Biology 2004) gained a first-class degree from Newcastle and has recently secured a job with the World Bank HQ in Washington DC in the Biodiversity Sector.
Marine Biology Silver Jubilee

Marine Biology graduates will be delighted to know that the degree is celebrating its Silver Jubilee in July 2006. Having evolved from Zoology, the MSc in Marine Biology was first offered in 1982, and now recruits more than 50 students annually. In 2001, as a result of University restructuring, the marine biologists joined the marine technologists to form the School of Marine Science and Technology; which has recently achieved chartered status for the Marine Biology degree, and now also offers a new course in Marine Environmental Engineering.

The School would like to invite all Marine Biology graduates, and of course any Zoologists from pre-Marine Biology days, to help celebrate this special occasion by attending a Silver Jubilee Ball at Newcastle Civic Centre on Saturday 8 July 2006.

Newcastle’s Marine Biologists are proud of their socialising traditions, and it is hoped that this event may even surpass the famous Dove Centenary celebrations that took place in 1997. Everyone in the School is looking forward to meeting graduates and their families, so please pop the date in your diaries, and get in touch with old classmates to make up a table. The price of each ticket is £40, and this will include a meal, wine on each table, and an excellent live band and disco.

Tickets are on sale immediately, so please contact Barbara Ingman, the School’s new secretary, at b.a.ingman@ncl.ac.uk. Please include your contact details, and a reminder of your graduation year, and Barbara will do her best to seat you with fellow graduates – unless you ask otherwise!

Norwegian Reunion

In May a group of Norwegian alumni returned to campus after a break of almost 50 years. The group, which was led by Mr Kjeld Naesheim (BSc Naval Architecture 1955), enjoyed a tour of the new Devonshire Building and the School of Marine Science and Technology, before attending a cocktail reception hosted by Dr Herbert Loebl (BSc Electrical Engineering 1949). The group thoroughly enjoyed their visit, and are hoping to make a return again for the next reunion.

Election Results

This year’s Alumni Consultative Group elections were the most popular to date, with over 700 of you voting. We are now pleased to announce that Dr Ian Corbett (Dental Graduates Society) and Dr Jean Robson (Medical Graduates Society) were elected as branch representatives, with Mr Mark Scrimshaw and Mrs Wendy Dawley being elected as Chair and Vice Chair respectively. We would also like to congratulate Mr Ian Forster, Mr Donald Gascoigne, Mr John Pearcy, Miss Louise Needham, Mrs Judith Penny and Mr Gareth Trainer, on being elected as Ordinary members of the group.

Football players wanted

Do you live in London? Do you play football? If so, we want to hear from you! A team of Newcastle graduates play in the Southern Amateur Football League every Saturday, and are looking for new blood. If you fancy getting involved or would like further information, please contact Robert Lusher on rlusher@cclaw.co.uk or visit the www.southernamateurleague.co.uk website.

September saw Mr Stephen Teal take up his position as Director of Development at the University. Stephen comes to Newcastle with a wealth of experience of fundraising and the education sector, having worked at the prestigious Westminster School in London, and Lincoln College Oxford amongst others.

Reunion Weekend

Last year’s Reunion weekend was bigger and better than ever, with over 300 graduates returning to campus. Highlights included a Tyne River Cruise and a chance to visit the hallowed home of Newcastle United. Photographs of the weekend are now online and are available to purchase. Please visit www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni or telephone 0191 222 7250 for further details.

Stephen Teal
Since beginning work on this project, I have met Newcastle alumni spanning a good range of generations. Except, of course, I must remember that many of them bear degrees from the University of Durham; such are the complexities of the history of higher education in the great city of Newcastle, but such, too, are the joys of researching so rewarding a subject.

In that time, I have learned much that I never expected to know about archaeology and Newcastle’s very own Romano-Celtic god; the renowned Medical School; the former worldwide reputation of Newcastle mining engineers; the continued reputation of Agrics; a vibrant fine arts tradition; the Bun Room; the Union; the Courier; the generosity of Catherine Cookson and other wonderful benefactors, and much, much else besides. But overwhelmingly, whether in the historical account or from living testimony, there has emerged a particular sense of loyalty from those who spent their student years in Newcastle, along with a notable determination of those in charge at every stage to make Newcastle a centre of academic excellence, a determination that created the autonomous University of Newcastle upon Tyne itself.

Today, with the exciting plans for the new Great North Museum and the Cultural Quarter, as well as the idea of building a Science City, that story continues, putting the University at the heart of the dynamic regeneration of Newcastle–Gateshead and the North East. Academically as well as architecturally, the University is reshaping itself to meet the challenge of the future.

With such a rich story to tell, it is surprising that so few books have been published about the University and its history. A refrain that I have heard over and over again is regret that there has in the past been no opportunity for a central archive. I very much hope that this book will do something to remedy that. It’s not a straightforward history as such, rather a richly illustrated overview intended to entertain and inform in equal measure. I hope alumni of every living generation will find something to remind them of their days in Newcastle, that newcomers to the University will be able to discover how the present came to be, and that everyone with any connection to university life in Newcastle will be inspired by the University’s vision for the future.

But this is still a work in progress, and Arches readers still have an opportunity to contribute to it. I will be delighted to receive your memories, anecdotes and first-hand personal accounts of your experiences at Newcastle, along with memorabilia, photographs, ephemera – indeed anything that you think may be of interest to readers.

We would be particularly interested in alumni contributions from the 70s, 80s and 90s. You can send them to me at the address below: if you want them returned, please tell me. If not they will be contributed to the University’s growing archive.

On the back cover of this magazine you can find more information about the book and how you can subscribe to it, with the added attraction of having your name, as a subscriber, listed in it.

I very much look forward to being able to give further news in these pages of the book’s progress ahead of its publication in good time for Christmas 2006. In the meantime, we await your contributions with anticipation.

Contact Janet at Third Millennium Ltd, 2–5 Benjamin Street, London EC1M 5QL or e-mail janetsax39@aol.com
NEWS UPDATE!

Now well underway, this first-ever illustrated colour portrait of the University, to be published in November 2006, tells the fascinating story of the evolution of the Newcastle colleges from the heyday of Victorian industrial might to today's vibrant and dynamic institution fully engaged with the cultural and economic regeneration of the North East. Much more than a history, the story is vividly told through many voices - from students and teachers of every generation to the present. The unique quality and continuity of the student experience in Newcastle is richly evoked in archive images, many previously unpublished, and in anecdotes, memoirs and memorabilia contributed by Newcastle alumni.

Still time to contribute your memories!

Do you have a special memory, image or souvenir of your time at Newcastle? We’d love to hear from you. Please send images, memorabilia, written contributions, computer disks, etc direct to:

Janet Sacks, Managing Editor, Third Millennium Publishing, 2–5 Benjamin Street, London, EC1M 5QL
Or e-mail newcastle@tmiltd.com

Material can be donated to the University’s archives or returned to you, as specified. Closing date specially extended to 11 March, 2006.

Our original appeal for alumni contributions to this project has already unlocked a remarkable treasure-trove. We have received a marvellous selection of first-hand accounts and previously unseen images and documents stretching from before the war all the way to the twenty-first century. With this book, the University has made a major step towards creating a true archive.

Emeritus Professor Norman McCord, Advisory Editor

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Does any of this strike a chord?

From alumni contributions already received:

How good those years at the Art School were. We had such a wonderful time. We girls, vying with each other with clothes we designed, made, and I even wove the tweed for one … there were Saturday Hops, Dances, glamorous Balls, Rag Revue, ‘Union Sauce’ (college newspaper and gossip). In the Union … the Bar was for Men Only. Super toasted egg and tomato sandwiches upstairs were only 4d. Happy, happy days.

Mrs Betty Welford (née Hjersing) 1936-9

I guess that every student believes their University was the best place to be, but I know that Newcastle was the best place to be in 1963–6 … The Animals were a ‘fill-in’ band at University dances in 1963, and the Rolling Stones would play at the Club-A-Gogo on Percy Street … I’m so proud of being one of the brand-new Newcastle University’s first graduates.

R M Whitelaw Economics 1963-6

Attending the University from 83–86 my outstanding memories are of the filming of the TV series ‘Redbrick’ and being the Captain of Newcastle in University Challenge 84/85 … We should have known the fates were against us when we were asked for the English version of the Greek adage ‘Owls to Athens’: the one non-North Easterner on our team, a Midlands lad, instantly buzzed in with ‘carrying coals to … COVENTRY’! Our humiliation was complete.

Peter C Harvey Geography, Archaeology and Soil Sciences 1983–6

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