

June 2011

Newcastle Graduate Blossoms at Chelsea

As the world's most famous flower show throws open its doors for 2011, a sustainable "rain garden" is proving one of the main attractions.

Designed to capture every drop of water that falls onto it, the Royal Bank of Canada New Wild Garden is the creation of award-winning designer Dr Nigel Dunnett and colleagues from The Landscape Agency, including Newcastle University graduate Ed Payne.

"We've designed the garden in such a way as to capture and use every single drop of rain that falls onto it," explains the former biology student.

"From the living roof on the building, through to the collecting pools below and the soakaway planting area, the garden brings water to life, making the garden water-cycle visible, and retaining water that would otherwise be lost."

Drawing on the ideals of Victorian horticulturist William Robinson – a pioneer of modern gardening and an advocate of the principles of sustainable gardening – Ed said one of the key aims of the design was to highlight the importance of not wasting our most precious resource.

Placing sustainability at the heart of the project, the garden also includes a recycled shipping container to create a novel office space and a deck constructed from timber reclaimed from sea defences on Southend sea front.

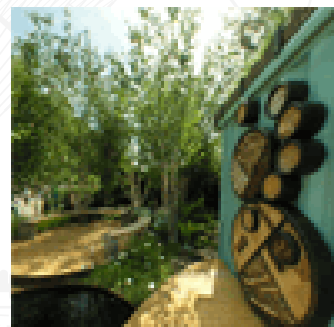
Incorporating reflective pools which capture rainwater and sculptural dry stone walls, the concept is based on the new Rain Garden the team developed last year for the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) London Wetland Centre.

"Everything in the garden is recycled, reclaimed or re-used to create a system that is totally sustainable," says Ed. "It's an ethos which we place at the heart of all our projects – looking at how new technologies and materials can be used to restore and revive areas in a way that enhances and benefits the environment."

Lynn Patterson, Director of Corporate Responsibility at RBC, added: "The team has conceived a design that is hugely innovative and immensely relevant to 21st-century city living.

"The sustainability message, which is at the heart of the RBC New Wild Garden's design, aligns perfectly with our ongoing commitment to water preservation."

Further information available at: <http://www.rhs.org.uk/Shows-Events/RHS-Chelsea-Flower-Show/2011/Gardens/A-to-Z/RBC-New-Wild-Garden>





Innovation at Newcastle University rewarded

Green technology which could cut heating bills and increasing young people's access to the arts are just two of the innovative business ideas which won prizes at Newcastle University's Enterprise Challenge Awards.

The Enterprise Challenge, now in its ninth year, is a business planning competition which rewards the best business plans put forward by Newcastle University students or recent graduates.

Winner in the Science and Technology category was The Radfan, a new product which could help reduce heating bills. It is attached to household radiators and helps spread the heat around the room, meaning the thermostat can be turned down.

The inventor is Roland Glancy, 29, who completed a Masters in Renewable Energy Enterprise and Management at Newcastle University. He said: "I've been developing this on and off for about a year. With current designs, the air around the radiator gets warm, but that doesn't spread around too well, especially in larger rooms.

"The opposite side of the room often stays cold, so you have to turn up the heating to get the full benefit and ensure whole room is warmed.

"But the device I have developed will ensure the warmer air circulates around the room, meaning you don't have to have the heating up so high. It could save the average household about £70 a year, which could be vital for those who live in fuel poverty."

The Radfan is currently in the process of being patented.

Nick Keeley, Director of the Careers Service, congratulated the winners: "This just shows the level of talent and innovation we have here at Newcastle University," he said. "We strive to support all our students through the Careers Service, to ensure their business ideas have the best chance of succeeding, which is especially important in these uncertain economic times."

The Enterprise Challenge Awards took place on May 12 at the Hilton Hotel, Gateshead, where the twelve winners received their share of the £9,000 prize money.



You've Bin Framed: Boosting recycling behaviour

Researchers from the School of Computing Science and Culture Lab at Newcastle University have come up with a novel way of encouraging students to reduce and recycle using a camera phone and Facebook. Signing up five households to take part in the study, the aim is to monitor what they throw away and introduce an element of competition to try to improve recycling rates and minimise waste.

Placing a small sensor attached to a camera phone in a kitchen bin, "BinCam" takes a photograph every time the lid slams shut. The image is then fed directly to the BinCam Facebook page where not only house members but also other BinCam users in the study can see what they've thrown away. Graphs chart how well each household is doing in the recycling league and there's the opportunity to leave comments or share recycling tips.

More information about BinCam can be found at <http://di.ncl.ac.uk/bincam/>



Newcastle University ranked in top 12 for research power

Newcastle University has been invited to join a leading group of institutions following its recent success in science and engineering at pulling in research funding.

The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) has ranked Newcastle among its top 12 most strongly funded universities after it scooped £57.2m in the last three years.

Research grant successes include the £12m Digital Economy Hub led by Professor Paul Watson, the Sustainable Urban Environment Award led by Professor Margaret Bell and Dr Russell Davenport's Challenging Engineering award.

Professor Tony Roskilly, Dean of Research for the University's Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering, said it was a fantastic achievement.

"This not only gives us the opportunity to work with EPSRC to help shape their research agenda for the future, but also gives us confidence they have recognised Newcastle as one of the most successful universities for winning and delivering projects," he said.

EPSRC funds research and postgraduate training in engineering and the physical sciences at universities and other organisations throughout the UK.

Set up to recognise the benefits of greater engagement with its biggest hitters, EPSRC identified the 12 organisations that between them hold 50 per cent of the research funding allocated by the council.

Under the framework agreement, the aim is to strengthen links between the research council and the universities to help identify activities where they can work together.

Professor Oliver Hinton, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of SAgE added: "This recognises the quality of research and innovation of projects that our world-leading teams are working on here at Newcastle University. It is a tremendous achievement."

Marie Curie international outgoing fellowship for career development awarded to Romy Matthies

Romy has recently been awarded a three-year fellowship from the European Union's FP7 programme that will take her for two years to Waterloo University, Canada, before returning to the School of Civil Engineering & Geosciences, Newcastle for year three of the fellowship. Her research will focus on the partitioning of transition metal isotopes particularly copper and zinc, in environmental and mine settings to increase understanding of the biogeochemical processes during the generation, transport and mitigation of mine drainage. Romy will be supported by her main advisers from Newcastle and Waterloo Dr Adam Jarvis and Prof David Blowes.



Student Trips

Students recently attended another of the SAgE Faculty Student Trips on Saturday 21 May to Alnwick Castle. Whilst there students were able to journey back to the earlier days at Alnwick Castle by watching Raphael Flaconry carry out an unusual and creative flying display with hawks, owls, and falcons. The falconers, wearing traditional dress from Tudor times, provided flying displays whilst also relaying talks on folklore and natural history.

Students were also able to visit the Alnwick Garden, created by the Duchess of Northumberland, with the spectacular Grand Cascade waterfall and then wander through the rose and ornamental gardens and see other water features designed by William Pye.

This year's trips are now coming to a close and preparations are underway for 2011-12 trips. Next year we intend to hold more trips in Semester 1 and will still hold the popular trips of York, Edinburgh and St James Park. The new schedule will be available from early September. Look out for the new one on your personalised web page.



Matthias and Sophie Beat the Bulge



The 2011 DFDS Beat the Bulge Challenge has been won by Matthias Kunz & Sophie Clift.

Colin Fawcus from DFDS, presented the duo with their prize, a DFDS 2 night city break to Amsterdam.

Matthias Kunz, is currently doing a PhD in Geomatic Engineering at the School of Civil Engineering & Geosciences. His work is focused on glacier volume change estimation from historical and modern satellite imagery of Antarctica.

Matthias first came to Newcastle in 2006 as an ERASMUS student and after finishing his degree in Germany came back in 2008 to do his PhD.

Matthias says "I'm very excited about Amsterdam and would like to go on a canal cruise and visit the zoo or a museum afterwards and maybe a bit of shopping and clubbing as well".

Sophie Clift is doing a PhD within the Molecular Photonics Department of the School of Chemistry. Her research involves the synthesis and characterisation of photoactive boron dipyrromethene dyads.

She came to Newcastle in 2004 to undertake a Masters degree and enjoyed it so much she stayed on to do her PhD here!

Sophie can't wait to go to Amsterdam "to enjoy the shopping, culture and nightlife and possibly hire bikes to cycle alongside the canals and explore the city further".

Boca Seniors Claim 7's Title

Boca Seniors won their first Intra Mural 7-a-side football tournament after beating former champions Queens of Everything 2-0 in the final on Wednesday 18 May.

On a sunny afternoon at the Longbenton 3G pitch, 7 of the finest teams in Newcastle University fought it out for the title of 7-a-side champions. Following the initial group stages the four semi-finalists were previous champions Queens, 11-a-side regulars Boca Seniors, S.S. Ladzio and surprise package Borderline Unacceptables.

Following a 1-0 loss in the group stages to S.S. Ladzio, Boca Seniors upset their confident opponents thanks to a Michael Bridges goal who evaded the static marking of Michael Johnson to fire home after a superb cross by Andy Bisby to seal a 1-0 win and a place in the final. In the other semi-final Queens fought past the battling Unacceptables who had not had the luxury of a break after the group stage to guarantee another final appearance and a chance to win their third 7-a-side title.

Queens, having two titles to their name, were the experienced favourites in the final but found themselves unable to breach the Boca defence thanks to some resolute defending on the part of Gerdas Gustas. A stunning solo goal by Sam Turnock put Boca 1-0 up, however it was only through spectacular goalkeeping by Ed Brindley that Boca preserved their lead. Boca grew into the game and continuing to look dangerous, it was not long before Dan Parkinson finally attempted his first shot of the competition to put Boca 2-0 up, there was just time for Max O'Collins to strike the inside of the post but it didn't matter as Boca claimed their first title, much to the delight of roaming right back and manager Stephen McNeill.





iVAMOS! Festival

iVAMOS! – the North East's celebration of Spanish and Portuguese-speaking cultures – got underway on Saturday 4 June.

A series of events showcasing world-class art exhibitions, concerts, dance, carnival processions, sport, club nights, collaborations, talks, films, food and family-friendly workshops take place over a five-week period.

Embracing the festival, the University will host a special season of recent Spanish cinema and the Robinson Library will offer a tour and talk about its exciting collection of resources from Latin American literature, culture, film, music and language (details on website below).

Courtesy of the British Museum, the Hatton Gallery will host an exhibition depicting the imagery used to educate the people of Mexico about their history and emerging culture following the 1910 revolution. This was the world's first social revolution and the victorious left-wing government utilised art as the voice of the uprising to connect with people.

A pioneering programme to cover the walls of public buildings with vast murals ensued and led to the setting up of print workshops to produce works for mass distribution and education. The exhibition runs from 23 June to 14 August with a special event on Saturday 25 June.



Transport Students Fieldtrip to Germany

Thirty-two postgraduate Transport students have just completed an 8 day field trip to Germany. The party were hosted by Newcastle University transport alumnus Paulo Humanes, now working for PTV (Planung Transport Verkehr) in Karlsruhe, and included study trips to Karlsruhe University, the Merkur Railway in Baden Baden, the sustainable city of Freiburg, the Technical University of Darmstadt and Deutsche Bahn Fernverkehr in Frankfurt (courtesy of another Newcastle transport alumnus Rudi von Grot). During the tour, students received a number of lectures on car sharing, the real-life application of transport models including an e-learning session on the network modelling package VISSIM, and the implementation of sustainable development concepts in urban environments. The lectures and tour of Freiburg were kindly sponsored by the North Eastern branch of the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation with students reporting back on their findings as part of a local seminar on sustainable transport to be arranged in Newcastle later in the year. Cultural elements of the trip included a brewery trip in Karlsruhe, a Nightwatchman tour of the old town of Durlach, wine-tasting in the Black Forest and an impromptu game of football somewhere under the English Channel on the journey home.

Funding Opportunities in the School of Civil Engineering & Geosciences

The School of Civil Engineering and Geosciences has a number of bursaries available to support UK/EU students commencing study on one of our MSc courses in September 2011. Applications should be made by email. Outline your ambition, the role the bursary would play in your ability to study at Newcastle. Further details will be sent to current applicants shortly and the closing date is 29 July 2011. Further enquiries should be made to the admissions tutors using the following emails addresses:

MSc Environmental Engineering - ceg.environmentalengineering@ncl.ac.uk

MSc Engineering Geology, MSc Geotechnical Engineering, MSc Structural Engineering - ceg.geotechnic@ncl.ac.uk

MSc Transport Engineering and Operations, MSc Transportation Planning and Policy, MSc Transport and Business Management, MSc Transport and the Environment - ceg.transport@ncl.ac.uk

MSc Applied Hydrogeology, MSc Hydroinformatics, MSc Hydrology and Climate Change - ceg.water@ncl.ac.uk

MSc Petroleum Geochemistry, MSc Environmental Biogeochemistry, MSc Environmental Biogeochemistry with Consultancy Skills - ceg.geochemistry@ncl.ac.uk