

August 2011

Converting manure to megawatts

A state-of-the-art Anaerobic Digestion plant capable of producing just under 100kW of electricity a day from organic farm waste has been officially launched at Newcastle University.

The £1.2m anaerobic digestion facility is the first in the region to be installed on a working farm and is part of a major drive by the University to explore new ways in which agriculture can become more sustainable.

Launched by Recycling Minister Lord Henley, the system is already producing heat from the animal dung produced on Cockle Park Farm. The next step will be to use this heat to keep the pigs warm and to generate electricity to power the milking parlour.

Project lead Dr Paul Bilsborrow, based in the School of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, said the aim was to work with North East farmers, land managers and other related businesses to find new ways of producing renewable energy from waste.

"Anaerobic digestion offers huge potential in terms of utilizing the methane from animal waste and converting it into renewable energy which can be used to heat and power on-farm buildings," he explained.

"The plant at Cockle Park provides us with a unique opportunity to demonstrate best practice for integrating this technology within a working mixed farm. It is also an important step towards the creation of a 'Sustainable Farm', focused on the production and use of renewable energy.

"By working together with the agricultural industry we hope to develop new ways of making anaerobic digestion a viable process for uptake by farms across the UK."

The Anaerobic Digestion plant is a key part of the University's new Living Lab concept which places research into sustainability at the heart of the region, encouraging forward-thinking and innovative approaches to sustainable challenges and providing real solutions both now and in the future.

Opening the new facility, Lord Henley said, "Creating and using clean and green energy from waste on working farms saves money for farmers and is good for the environment. Developing these types of innovative and practical solutions is key to moving us along the path to a zero-waste economy."

The project was jointly funded by the University and One North East through its Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).





Launch of iTunes U channel

Newcastle University has launched its own channel on iTunes U – Apple's free educational digital store of audio and video content from universities and cultural organisations.

The University's iTunes U channel will highlight the extensive archive of INSIGHTS Public Lectures, taking them to a global audience.

Public lectures have been recorded since 2008 and the new channel includes over 120 recordings, adding to the 350,000 files already available to download for free.

The talks are given by leading figures, internationally renowned researchers and distinguished authors and are grouped in seven broad-themed categories: Art and Literature, Business and Current Affairs, Health and Medicine, History, Law and Society, Religion and Philosophy and Science and Technology.

The iTunes U project was developed jointly by the Marketing and Communications Directorate and Information Systems and Services. Anne Coxhead, Head of Marketing and Publicity said: "iTunes U presents the University with an opportunity to take the INSIGHTS programme to a global platform, showcasing the high quality cultural events on offer at Newcastle, whilst strengthening the University's online profile and presence."

The INSIGHTS Programme and recordings of Public Lectures will be uploaded to the University's iTunes U channel from the beginning of next semester.

iTunes U is popular with universities and colleges in the United States, with over three million downloads in three years, and is growing in popularity in the UK.

The University joins other UK universities already established on iTunes U including Oxford, Cambridge, Warwick and UCL.



Student Trips

Following on from last years successful social programme, the Faculty of Science , Agriculture and Engineering (SAGe) has now arranged a new series of trips for students arriving in September.

Again we have retained the favourites as well as introducing some new trips. York, Edinburgh and the St James' Park Stadium tour are included again.

New trips this year include a visit to Whitby, Eden Camp and Leeds Armouries.

Schools will be issued with the trips programme booklet shortly and students will receive these during their induction programmes. The booklet will also appear on student personalised webpages and the SAGe Faculty website shortly at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sage/postgrad/newsletters.htm>

We appreciate that a number of students also bring families with them whilst undertaking their studies and it is often difficult to find activities that keep young children amused in a city that you are unfamiliar with. To help you we have put together a booklet "Family Fun" and this can be found at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sage/postgrad/Newsletters/Family-Fun.pdf>.

Pictured here are students on a trip to Rothbury.

Included below are some websites which you may find usual for further local and regional information:
www.visitnewcastlegatehead.com
www.visitnorthumberland.com
www.visitnortheastengland.com
www.newcastle.gov.uk/cityeye/





Students' cycle hire scheme rolls out across Newcastle



A fleet of 150 bikes are now available to pick up and drop off in a Paris-style rental programme that was launched across the city last week.

Business district improvement agency NE1 has teamed up with ScratchBikes, a business launched by Newcastle University Civil Engineering graduates Rob Grisdale and Jack Payne.

People can use the bikes by registering online for one of three different memberships in a scheme designed to reduce the city's carbon footprint.

Bikes can be collected or returned to any one of 15 hire stations at key points including Central Station, Monument and the Haymarket, the RVI and university and college campuses.

Another seven hire points will reach residents in outlying suburbs in a bid to encourage workers, students and members of the public to cycle into the city. If needed, the bike can be re-hired when the two hours expire.

Rob explained: "Newcastle is a compact city, so cycling is a brilliant way of getting around and an excellent way to get fit and healthy.

"Cycling from the Quayside up Dean Street to the Monument is a great workout even for the most ardent cyclist – rest assured, elsewhere the city is pretty flat so not such a testing journey."

Higham Group Awarded EPSRC KTA

The research group of Dr Lee J. Higham has attracted further funding in the form of an EPSRC Knowledge Transfer Award (KTA), in collaboration with High Force Research Ltd, a company which specialises in chemical synthesis and R&D for the pharmaceutical, biotech and fine chemicals industries. This form of competitive financing is designed to assist in the commercialisation of existing EPSRC-funded research (generated from an EPSRC Career Acceleration Fellowship), and in this instance will take the form of a novel one year MPhil Studentship. Congratulations are also due to Jenny Wallis (pictured), who will rejoin the LJH team after both a successful Johnson Matthey-sponsored Summer Studentship and a highly-productive MChem project on the synthesis of bidentate primary phosphines.

Jenny will spend nine months in the LJH group working on novel phosphorus-containing compounds with potential medicinal applications, before spending the final three months at the laboratories of HFR itself, a dynamic company based in the region, who will generously co-sponsor the award.



Induction Information

For those postgraduate students commencing their studies in September in the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering (SAGE), schools will shortly be sending out information about the induction week.

For International students arriving don't forget that Newcastle University International Office organises an "Airport Meet and Greet Service" and details can be found at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/prearrival/welcome/september/arrival.htm>.

Further information on Newcastle can also be found from our "Destination Newcastle" at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/assets/documents/Destination_Newcastle_PDF_2011.pdf.

Have a safe journey and we are looking forward to meeting you all in September!



Sport @ Newcastle

Record-breaking season for NUBC

Newcastle University Boat Club have gone from strength to strength this year with success on all fronts.

Following their most successful domestic BUCS season and some great performances at Henley Royal Regatta, the Boat Club continued to impress at the British Rowing Championships.

Held in Nottingham on 17 and 18 July, the club brought back two gold, one silver and two bronze medals.

Gold medal winners were current Boat Club president Murray Wilkojc (MA British History) and incoming president Ed Ford (Business Management) in the Open Under 23 men's double.

Nick Buckle (English Language and Lit), Ed Stephenson (Civil Engineering), Matt Smith (Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies) and Ben Gourley (Financial Maths with Management) took the Open men lightweight four title. Other medals were the silver in the lightweight pair and bronze in the men's coxed four and women's four.

At the World Under 23 Championships in Amsterdam last weekend (23 and 24 July) George Rossiter (1st year Combined Honours) represented Great Britain in the men's eight. He won a bronze medal on Lake Boosnan, stroking in the men's eight for GB. This is a great achievement which holds out well for George's future in the GB Team.

This year, 20 University athletes have been selected to represent Great Britain at the European Universities Championships held in Moscow between 30 August and 2 September.

In other sporting news, Susie Rodgers, a graduate of the School of Modern Languages now working for the British Council, has been selected to compete for Team GB at the European Championships in Berlin this month - qualifying for the 50m fly, 50, 100 and 400m freestyle and 100m backstroke.

As well as British team selection, recent record-breaking results have led to Susie winning funding from the GLL Sport Foundation. "Support from the Foundation will help with buying elite race swimsuits and enable me to compete across the country, helping me towards my ultimate goal: to compete at the 2012 Paralympic Games," she said.



John Fenn - Director of Rugby Retires



The Centre for Physical Recreation and Sport paid tribute to John Fenn, the first Director of Rugby at Newcastle University at a celebration buffet lunch.

John was joined by members of his family and a host of work colleagues to celebrate his contribution to Newcastle University Rugby Union over the last seven years. John has made an outstanding contribution to the development of rugby at all levels within the University - having helped establish six university representative teams, two fresher's teams, the Rugby Union Referees Society and a Rugby Board at Newcastle.

He leaves a considerable legacy at Newcastle and some big shoes that his successor, Tom Wilkinson, will be hoping to fill and further develop.

Don't forget to check out pre-arrival information and the welcome service. Have a safe journey and see you in September.

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/prearrival/>