

John Lloyd

MR CHANCELLOR,

Can you imagine a world without smartphones, credit cards, cars, planes and trains? The advances made in computing science impacts almost all modern everyday items. Today we are gathered to recognise and celebrate the achievements of John Lloyd, our former Head of Department then School of Computing Science here at Newcastle University.

We are especially proud to honour John and thank him for building the foundations for our world leading research school in computer systems. In the 2014, under his guidance for the Research Excellence Framework – how universities are assessed on the quality of their research – Newcastle’ computer science was ranked the best in the UK for impact. This work was undertaken after John retired in October 2008 demonstrating his dedication to his field of expertise and commitment to his colleagues beyond the call of duty. This level of selflessness is a true inspiration to us all. A former colleague described John as someone that cares about our University and was always ready to offer level-headed advice and great wisdom. He reflected saying that with John you always felt confident that the captain on the bridge was calm and knew where he was going. Furthermore, it was expressed that perhaps the mark of a great leader is the ability to take others forward while making us think we chose the direction ourselves. I would like to thank John on behalf of Newcastle University for also inspiring the next generation of leaders to take the helm as some of these words were spoken from the new Head of the School of Computing who respects John for his collegiality, far-sightedness and good humour to mention only a few of the great qualities this gentleman possesses.

Let me now turn back the clock to 50 years ago. On 2nd October 1967, John was one of nine young men who registered at Newcastle University to start postgraduate courses in computing science in what was then the Computing Laboratory. This fifth cohort of students were the first to be based in the Claremont Tower which opened in September 1967. John became a Research Officer in the Computing Laboratory in 1970. He obtained his PhD in 1972 and was promoted to a Lectureship in 1973 then to Senior Lecturer in 1994. He became Head of the Department of Computing Science in 1997, and was Head of the School of Computing Science from its establishment in 2002 until 2006. From 2006 to 2008 John acted as Head of the School of Natural Sciences, whilst continuing to teach in Computing Science. He has held visiting appointments at Northwestern University (1974) and at the University of Delaware (1985). He retired in October 2008 and now has Guest Member of Staff status. John is former secretary of the executive committee of the Council of Professors and Heads of Computing, the UK subject body for Computing. He is also a Fellow of the British Computer Society. John's research interests, originally in numerical analysis, subsequently extended to cover aspects of computer graphics and parallel computation. His breadth and depth of knowledge allowed him to teach on a wide range of courses, and he has acted as external examiner at a number of institutions in the UK and abroad.

Last month five of the nine class of 67 students returned to Newcastle for a reunion. John's most recent academic successor was able to show these alumni the School of Computing's new home in the Urban Sciences Building. Pride of place in the new School of Computing's reception are bound doctoral theses. In chronological order, ninth on the top shelf is that of JL Lloyd, in which he investigates the Rayleigh-Ritz method for approximate solution of two-point boundary value problems in ordinary differential equations. Immediately alongside John's thesis is that of Thomas Anderson, who went on to head the

School just before John, and that of David Appleton. What few realise as their eyes pass over these learned works is that Anderson, Lloyd and Appleton were the nearest thing the Computing Laboratory ever had to a "Boy Band". For their scientific works were (nearly) eclipsed by their song writing talent. I should explain ... The Computing Laboratory evidently held far more elaborate and theatrical celebrations than is the norm today. In fact, it seems that a full-blown cabaret was required. On the website celebrating the 40th anniversary of the School, you can find the Computing Laboratory Songbook where Lloyd, Appleton and Anderson were major contributors and regular performers. Some of the songs are of their time, but with titles like "Some talk of IBMs" (to the tune of The British Grenadiers), and "Oh, he sold the KDF9 to buy a Volvo" (to the tune of Galway Bay) no wonder their legendary appeal remains.

In reminiscing John smiled as he recalled his welcome speech to all new students when he was Head of Department. He used to say to students at induction week "choosing Newcastle can change your life", especially if your girlfriend then moves to study in Sunderland. John met his wife Val in 1966. They have two children, Elizabeth who holds a senior position in Scottish Government and Martin who works for Greenpeace in the Netherlands. Val recalled how John had said he would only be in Newcastle for less than a year but 50 years later he has still not managed to escape! Indeed nor do we hope he will. Val shared with me how before she retired as a teacher her colleagues thought how lucky she was to be married to a computer specialist. This was at a time when computing was starting to move into primary education. Val soon set her colleagues straight and informed them that when she got home and tried to repeat something she had been shown on a course and asked John, then Head of the Computing Science School, for help she would sometime get the reply "I have technicians who do that". Moving on from this little miscommunication issue then it is noteworthy that John also served as a school governor in

Newcastle for over 20 years, further showing his generosity in devoting time to help improve the local educational experience of our young people.

John retired on Thursday 30th October 2008 and on the Friday - officially his last day – he flew to Malaysia for a week to act as external examiner for a Malaysian University. Overnight on the Tuesday/Wednesday he was taken ill with a heart problem and admitted to a private hospital. On Thursday he had a stent installed, and only after he'd paid the bill – he assures me later recovered from insurance - he was discharged on Friday to fly home via Amsterdam at midnight that night. Thinking no more drama could possibly await him after his friends and colleagues thought he'd safely left when the plane taxied away, little did they know he stayed for another 3 hours on the runway due to an engine problem. He got to spend an extra night in Malaysia before returning home the following night. Not the ideal way to start one's retirement!

John has been of great service to the University post-retirement in many ways including his Chairmanship of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body. He first joined the Committee in 2009 and became Chair in 2013 and continues in this capacity. This has been a very challenging period for aspects of our animal research and John's oversight has been immensely valuable. The University is particularly grateful for his work on the ethical review process for animal research – probably the most sensitive work the University undertakes. Dr Lloyd has helped establish Newcastle as a 'hub' of expertise following a call for such centres to be established. This has helped to confirm our commitment to ethical principles which were challenged strongly by the Home Office during a very difficult period. Thank you John for serving on this and other University committees.

MR CHANCELLOR, in recognition of his dedicated service to Newcastle University, including his outstanding contribution to the world-leading School of Computing, I commend John Lloyd to you for the award of an Honorary Fellowship.

Professor Selina Stead

Public Orator

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