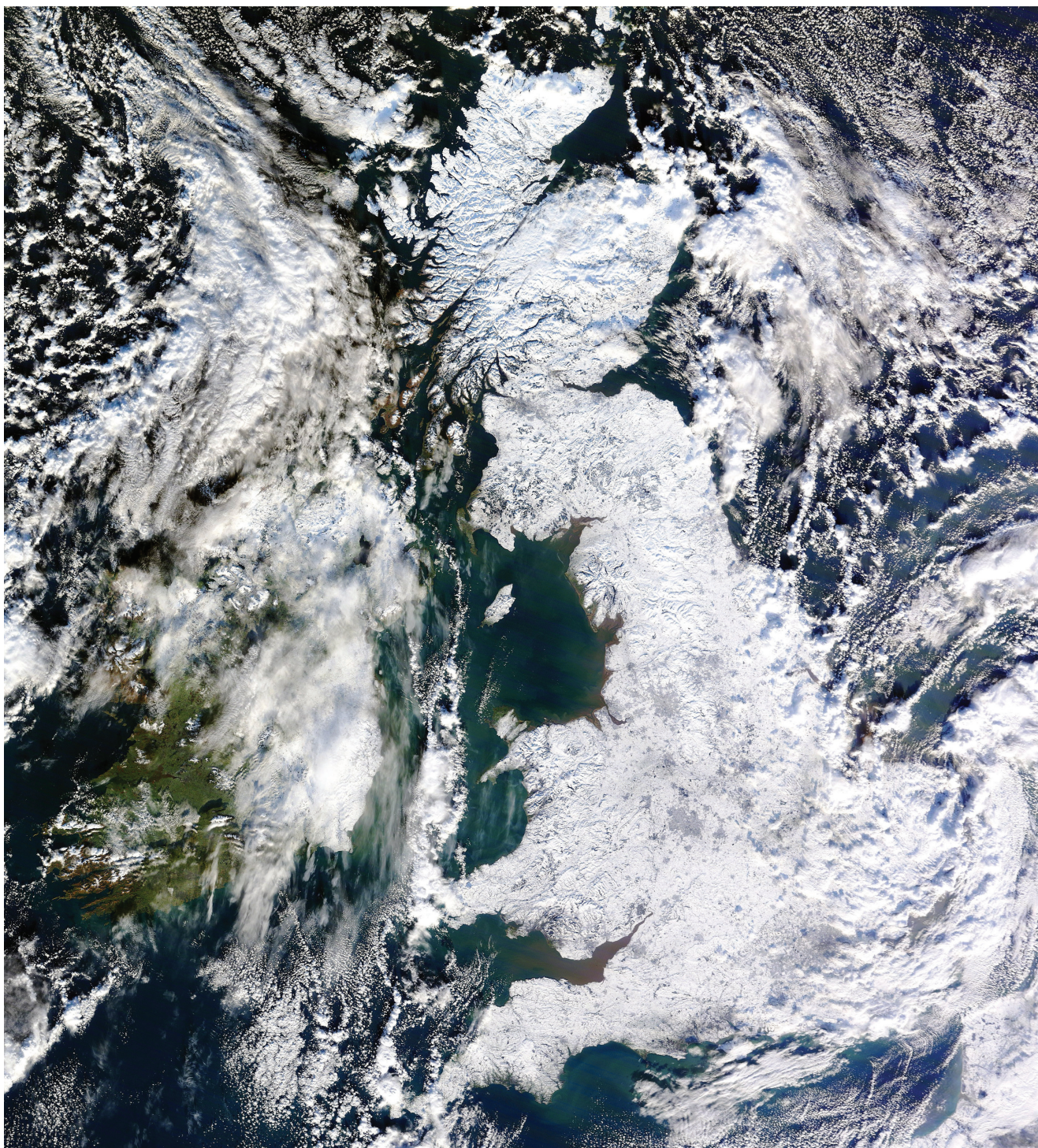


c n t a c t



The magazine of the University of Dundee • February 10



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h.mcnally@dundee.ac.uk
t 01382 388878 | f 01382 385515
Design | Tara Wainwright
Design • Print • Marketing
t.e.wainwright@dundee.ac.uk
Scottish charity no: SC015096



from the principal...

In my report before Christmas, I mentioned Lord Mandelson's announcement of the Higher Ambitions report, representing the Westminster Government's framework for sustaining strength in higher education. Its main thrust was the need for the sector to focus on excellence. Since then, Lord Mandelson has provided the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) with its annual grant letter and, in the *Guardian*, has set out his views on funding reductions to higher education. In total, universities south of the border face cuts and efficiency savings of £915m (amounting to some 12.5% of HEFCE funding) over the next three years. The funding landscape in Scotland appears to be less brutal at the moment as evidenced by the draft Scottish budget's intention to increase funding for higher education by 2.1% for 2010/11. However, this is not a time for complacency as that budget only covers the period to April 2011, and the Scottish Funding Council has not yet provided Universities with their funding allocations for 2010/11, which will run to the end of July 2011. The picture beyond spring 2011 is entirely unclear in Scotland.

With Westminster elections sometime before June 2010 and Holyrood elections in May 2011, it would be easy to categorise ministerial statements in Edinburgh or London as mere politicking, but given that all major parties recognise the need for public spending restraint, universities north of the border will need to ensure they are positioned to deal with reductions in funding in the near future.

At its meeting in December, the University Court considered a high level academic vision for the University. This expanded on the themes of impact, focus and excellence which I had proposed in my presentations to University staff in September and early October. These themes are crucial for our future development and will necessarily have implications for the ways we engage in research, give our students the best possible teaching and learning experiences, and provide professional support for these functions. In a belt-tightening environment, institutions will succeed only if they are able to take hard decisions about the quality of their learning, teaching and research outputs and of the support services they provide.

The current Strategic Review has involved the compilation and close analysis of data relating to research performance, teaching reputation, income profiles and other key indicators. It will undoubtedly highlight the University's strengths, which are many, but it will also identify those areas where we do not perform at a level consistent with our academic vision. In an ideal world, this would provide the University with the opportunity and time to develop such areas to the standards to which we aspire, but I believe that the external financial environment is unlikely to provide us with that luxury and will require us to take more urgent action.

The prime motivator for the Strategic Review, as I have said before, is an emphasis on achieving excellence in all that we do; and we already attain the highest standards in many areas of activity. Two recently published league tables underline this fact: firstly, Dundee was confirmed as 8th in the UK (and 1st in Scotland) in a major *Times Higher Education* survey of the student experience, scoring particularly highly for the quality of its teaching and learning and for its facilities; and secondly, a review of pharmacology research put Dundee at the top of the world rankings based on citation indices. By any standards these are remarkable achievements and we can all feel justly proud. In common with other universities, we face testing times, but such examples of excellence from around the campus serve to inspire us all to do better, and we will surely emerge stronger for it.

Professor Peter Downes • Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Dundee first for Cancer Research UK



The first Cancer Research UK Centre in Scotland was launched at the University on World Cancer Day earlier this month.

It creates the first link in a unique chain of Cancer Research UK Centres being launched across the UK. These new centres will draw together world class research and medical expertise to provide the best possible results for cancer patients nationwide.

As the first centre in Scotland, the Dundee Cancer Research UK Centre will help set the pace for national and international progress in bowel, breast and skin cancer.

It will build on Dundee's world class research in the areas of radiotherapy and surgery by focussing on new highly advanced image-guided surgical techniques.

The Centre will also lead to the development of an international hub for research into the most serious type of skin cancer (melanoma), making new discoveries in basic cell biology then helping to translate those into new treatments.

Collaboration is the key to the success of the Centre which will enable researchers who do not normally work together to exchange ideas and information more easily. It now brings together researchers and support from University of Dundee, Cancer Research UK and NHS Tayside.

Professor Irene Leigh, Head of the College of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing and chair of the board of the new centre, described it as a "very exciting development for cancer research in Scotland."

"The new centre will help us bring together a variety of researchers and clinicians to collaborate and work together to improve the lives of cancer patients across Scotland. By building closer links between scientists and doctors we want to increase the pace of research, leading to improved treatments for patients."

The Centre aims to be a world leader in developing treatments tailored to individual cancer patients based on understanding the biology of the disease and how that varies among patients.

Cancer Research UK already supports research in Dundee but is set to increase its contribution to over £7.5m a year to help develop the Centre.

Professor Peter Downes, Principal of the University said: "The award of Cancer Centre status is the combination of years of effort building world class basic research into the underlying mechanisms of cancer alongside the clinical research needed to translate new knowledge into improved treatment of disease. It exemplifies our strategy to ensure research has a positive impact on society."

Harpal Kumar, chief executive of Cancer Research UK, said: "Huge progress has been made in beating cancer since the charity was formed and we're determined to carry on. Funding these centres of excellence is one of the charity's priorities and will enable us to work towards the goals we have set to improve the treatment and survival of cancer patients. But we continue to welcome the generous donations we receive from the public to ensure we can continue to build on what we have started today."

Image courtesy of Fotopress

www.dundee.ac.uk/pressoffice

Top ratings for Dundee

Smart city in intelligence top seven

Dundee has been selected for the third year in four as the one of the seven most intelligent communities around the world by an influential US think tank.

The non-profit Intelligent Community Forum has pitted the city against two conurbations in the USA and one each from Canada, South Korea, Estonia and the Netherlands for the overall winner to be picked in May.

Convener of Dundee City Council's city development committee Will Dawson welcomed the honour, which highlights the city's on-going success in moving away from a manufacturing based economy to one which uses what people know to generate wealth.

He said: 'The work that we have done this year focuses on ensuring that we have the right people with the right education, training and qualifications to be able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the new economy.'

'Successful projects like Dare to be Digital, Dare Schools Challenge and a major investment in upgrading information technology in schools have helped the ICF come to their decision.'

ICF co-founder Louis Zacharilla who unveiled the shortlist said: 'The Top Seven of 2010 have demonstrated ingenuity through innovative broadband applications and dedication to education.'

'Each of the communities has been affected by recession, yet they pushed forward with their commitment to broadband, innovation and a knowledge-based economy through investments in research and development facilities, the creation and aggressive support of small business and 'clusters' of industries that continued to produce new jobs.'

Dundee did not enter the competition last year because many of the projects that helped the city become one of the world's seven most intelligent communities two years in a row needed time to develop and produce the expected positive results.

Last year Sweden's capital Stockholm was top of a list of role models for the world's cities to aspire to.

This year's winner will be announced by the ICF at a ceremony in New York in May.

Dundee in student top ten for student experience

The University has been ranked among the top ten in the UK for student experience, according to a major survey carried out by *Times Higher Education*.

Dundee ranked 8th in this year's survey, which brought together the views of more than 11,000 full-time undergraduates in the UK. They were asked to rate their institutions on 21 different attributes that are key to a positive student experience.

Dundee moves up to 8th from 12th last year. It is the only University to feature in the top ten of two categories singled out as especially important by *Times Higher* - teaching and learning, and facilities.

"This is fantastic news and is a great reflection of the student experience at Dundee and the hard work put in by people in all departments of the campus," said Andrew Smith, President of Dundee University Students' Association.

"We are a very modern campus with a diverse student body and a lot to be proud of. The learning and teaching facilities available are second to none and at DUSA we are always trying to work with and complement the good work of people all over campus.

"This is also a great boost for our students and will do a lot to continue to enhance our reputation both nationally and internationally. The time I have spent at the University of Dundee has been a privilege and a pleasure and I think these results show that huge numbers of our students feel the same way.

"University is a profoundly important experience in shaping the future of our graduates and our country and it is always excellent to see good work being encouraged."

Dundee rated top in the world for pharmacology

The University has been ranked top in the world for the impact of its research in pharmacology.

Times Higher Education, the leading magazine for the higher education sector, published a table of 'Top European Universities in Pharmacology', using data provided by Thomson Reuters from its Essential Science Indicators, 1st January 1999 to 31st October 2009.

Dundee is placed no. 1 in this list, at 33.11 citations per paper (190 papers, 6291 citations). While this table is for European universities, it also gives the world ranking for each university and Dundee is again top.

"Once again, the University has come out top in a major survey of the quality of our biomedical research," said Principal Professor Pete Downes.

"Citations are one of the most important measures of excellence in basic research because it indicates the extent to which other scientists recognise the quality of research.

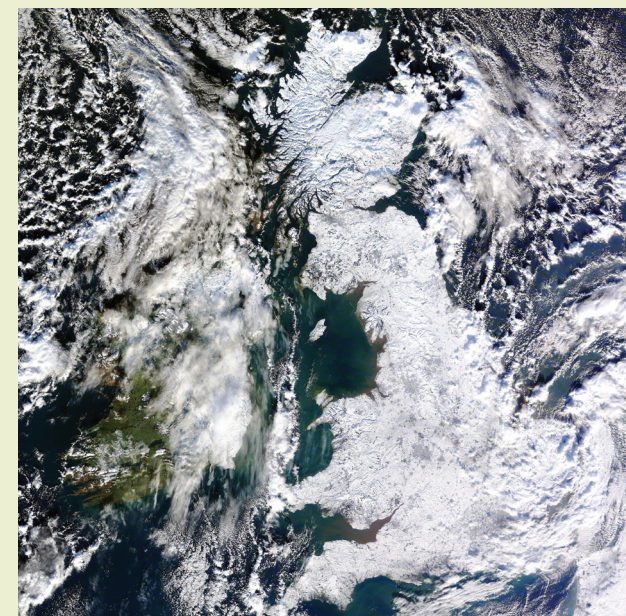
"Impact is at the core of our agenda, so to be ranked so highly in a table like this is particularly pleasing.

"By this analysis Dundee is the most influential pharmacology department in Europe and the world. The Scottish Government is right to identify life sciences as being vital to the country's future financial wellbeing, something that should continue to be recognised as we move forward and funding decisions are considered."

As well as conducting world-leading research in pharmacology, the College of Life Sciences at Dundee also offers an undergraduate programme in the subject.

For the full table see: www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=410026&c=1

Cover story: the picture of winter



The full extent of the big freeze which hit the United Kingdom in January is shown in our striking cover image for this issue of *Contact* – a picture which was captured by the University's Satellite Receiving Station.

The image was received from a NASA satellite named Terra just before noon on January 7th, when the country was blanketed with snow from John O'Groats to Lands End.

The image has proved to be an iconic image for a winter where snow and ice returned to the country with a vengeance. Within hours of being sent out to media, the picture was being used by all of the major news organisations including TV news broadcasts, dominated the front pages of the next day's papers and has since turned up on everything from Sky Sports to BBC 2's *Mock The Week*.

The University has also been inundated with requests from the public for a copy of the picture.

"The interest in this picture has been stunning, but then perhaps that is not surprising as it is very striking," said Neil Lonie at the Satellite Receiving Station, which is based in the Ewing Building.

"We receive and archive images all the time from various Earth Observation satellites and have been doing so each day for over thirty years. These are primarily used to support environmental researchers studying processes in the atmosphere, the marine environment and on land, but we also make images freely available through our website. We have captured striking images of major incidents before, such as the Buncefield oil depot fire. But it takes a large amount of good luck for all the elements to come together – in this instance we were very lucky that for a short time there was virtually no cloud cover as the satellite was over the UK and this allowed us to see the extent of the snow cover."

The Satellite Receiving Station is funded by the Natural Environment Research Council. For more information and access to archives of images visit the Station's website at www.sat.dundee.ac.uk/

New year OBE for Professor Wolf

Professor Roland Wolf, Director of the Biomedical Research Institute at the University of Dundee, has been rewarded for his services to science with an OBE in the New Year's Honours list.

Professor Wolf is internationally renowned for his work in the field of molecular pharmacology, drug development and drug resistance in cancer patients. He said he was delighted to be awarded such a prestigious honour.

'I feel very privileged to have received an OBE in the New Year Honours List,' he said. 'I would very much like to say that honours such as this reflect the combined contributions of many individuals who have worked with me over the years.'

After working in West Germany, the US and England, he headed the research labs in the Imperial Cancer Research Fund's Medical Oncology Unit at the Western General Hospital in Edinburgh.

In 1992, Professor Wolf relocated his Molecular Pharmacology Unit to Dundee to establish the Biomedical Research Centre, and in 1998 his discovery of the role played by a single gene in protection against cancer made international headlines.

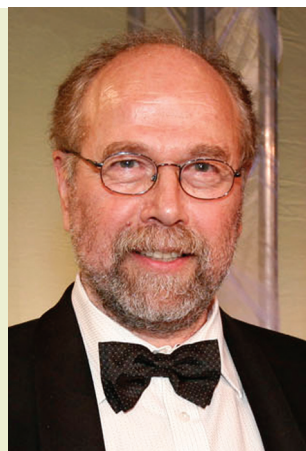
In 2001 he founded the specialist drug company CXR Biosciences, which now has 45 members of staff.

He has published 440 papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals and has been on the board of governors of cancer charities and a member of numerous national and international committees/advisory panels, including UK Government committees on medical science, translational medicine, toxicology and drug safety.

Professor Wolf is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the Academy of Medical Sciences, the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce and the British Toxicology Society.

He is a recipient of the Gerhard Zbinden Award for contributions to the area of drug and chemical safety, the European Scientific Achievement Award 2005 from the International Society for the Study of Xenobiotics (ISSX) and the Scottish Enterprise Award for Leading Individual Contribution to Life Sciences in Scotland in 2006.

He is also an Honorary Director of Cancer Research UK's Molecular Pharmacology Unit.



Sharing water law expertise

The Tajik Ambassador to the UK Dr Erkin Kasymov and Ismatullo Nasredinov, First Consul at the Embassy of Tajikistan paid a visit to the University this month to find out more about the work being done at the UNESCO Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science.

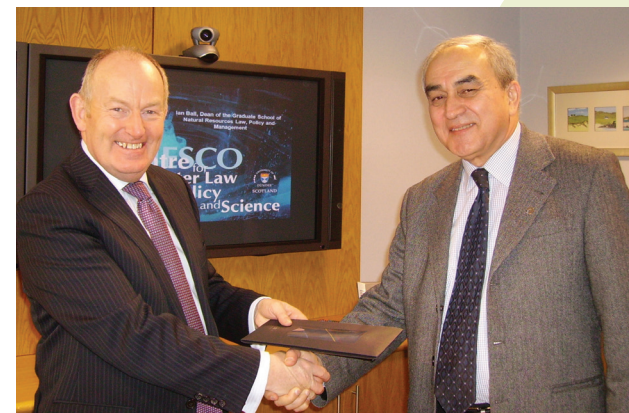
The landlocked former Soviet republic is heavily dependent on its water resources for power generation and the visit was aimed at enabling the Ambassador and Consul to discuss how the country could benefit from the UNESCO Centre's expertise.

They were welcomed to Dundee by Professor Pat Wouters, Director of the Centre.

"The Tajik visit builds upon the strong foundations established by the UNESCO Centre over a number of years working with governments and organisations in central Asia," she said.

"Previously, this included a visit from the Tajik Water Minister, who signed a memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation in postgraduate teaching and education.'

"The UNESCO Centre is looking to recruit students from the country for the Water Law Water Leaders (WLWL) summer professional education programme, including via a possible link up with a UNESCO water centre based in Tehran.'



Ian Ball, Dean of the Graduate School of Natural Resources Law, Policy and Management with the Tajik Ambassador.

"Longer-term, we are keen to see WLWL teaching delivered at basin level in central Asia, including Tajikistan; this region being one of the Centre's top four geographical target regions strategically."

The ambassadorial tour also included the Centre for Energy, Petroleum and Mineral Law Policy (CEPMLP), the student-entrepreneurship centre, the Enterprise Gym, and the renowned Drug Discovery Unit within the College of Life Sciences.

New students welcomed

Hundreds of new postgraduate and undergraduate students joined the University community last month to begin their studies.

The new intake, including dozens of students from overseas, will be studying courses as varied as Law, Accountancy and Nursing.

They were welcomed to the University by Principal Professor Pete Downes at the start of a week-long programme of events.

'We had British and international students joining us to begin their studies in January and with many students arriving to a Dundee snow-scene, this was particularly exciting for those who had come from far flung places and for whom this was their first experience of snow,' said Dr Kathleen McMillan, director of Personal Learning for University Success (PLUS@Dundee),

'Our plans for Freshers' Week were developed to include chances to explore the city and the campus as well as participate in activities that will prepare them for their studies, but the white backdrop certainly gave an added edge to their first experience of Scotland.'

All new undergraduates and postgraduates were also invited to a Welcome Reception in Bonar Hall where they had the chance to meet academic and other key staff.

Centre to lead \$1.5m internet project

The University's Centre for Energy, Petroleum and Mineral Law and Policy (CEPMLP) is leading a new US\$1.5 million project to produce an internet-based guide to best practice in the international petroleum and mining industries.

Funded by the World Bank over three years the project will be led by Professor Peter Cameron, recently appointed Director of CEPMLP, and honorary lecturer Dr Charles McPherson, who delivers the centre's annual course on Extractive Industries Revenue Management.

The project will involve collaboration with the Universities of Witwatersrand in South Africa and Queensland in Australia. It will involve an extensive stakeholder consultation process beginning in Canada in March.

Other universities are being invited into the network established for the project alongside non-governmental organisations, industry, the International Monetary Fund and the International Bar Association.

CEPMLP welcome first patron

Sir Robert Wilson, KCMG, Chairman of international energy company BG Group, has become the first Patron of the University's Centre for Energy, Petroleum and Mineral Law and Policy (CEPMLP).

Sir Robert has been a keen supporter of CEPMLP for almost a decade, since his time as Chief Executive of Rio Tinto plc. He received an Honorary Degree from the University in 2001. As patron, Sir Robert will assist CEPMLP expand and deepen its already extensive links with the international energy and mining industries.

'We are fortunate indeed to have attracted Sir Robert to become the first patron of our Centre for Energy, Petroleum and Mineral Law and Policy,' said University Principal Professor Pete Downes.

'With his help and support, the Centre's reputation as an internationally leading provider for interdisciplinary postgraduate teaching and research in the vitally important energy and mineral law sector will continue to grow'.

Sir Robert Wilson is currently Chairman of the BG Group, a position he has held since 2004. He was chairman of international mining company Rio Tinto plc from 1997 to 2003 and its chief executive between 1991 and 1997.

He is also senior independent non-executive director of GlaxoSmithKline plc. He has previously been Chairman of The Economist Group and non-executive director of Diageo plc, BP plc and The Boots Company PLC (now Alliance Boots).

'It gives me great pleasure to become the first Patron of CEPMLP,' he said, "and I very much look forward to providing advice and support in its very important work.'

Sir Robert will simultaneously take on the role as Patron of the Energy, Petroleum, Mineral and Natural Resources Law and Policy Education Trust. The Trust was created in 1976 to promote the development of education and training in the field of oil and gas law, and was a key party in the establishment of CEPMLP in 1977. Today, the prime focus of the Trust is to support CEPMLP.

Cardiovascular research wins award

A postgraduate student at the University’s Centre for Cardiovascular and Lung Biology has received a prestigious award for his work on cardiovascular research.

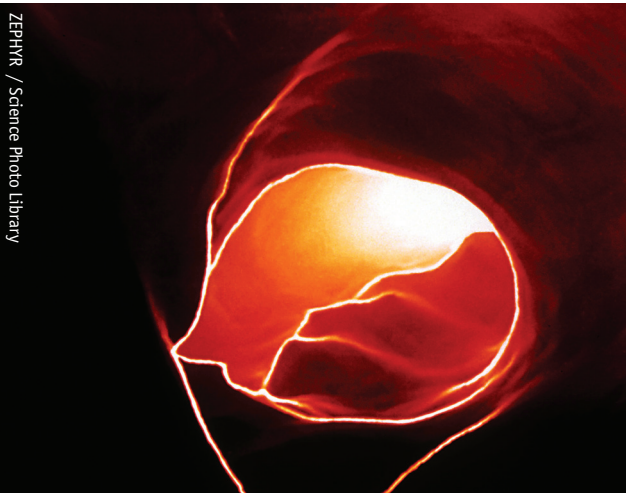
Dr Maheshwar Pauriah (35), originally from Mauritius, received the American Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics Presidential Trainee Award for a paper submitted for inclusion at the upcoming ASCPT Annual Meeting in Atlanta in March.

Dr Pauriah’s work on the development of biomarkers for atherosclerosis was identified as being the most outstanding abstract submitted for the meeting by a clinical pharmacologist in training.

Atherosclerosis is commonly referred to as a hardening or furring of the arteries. It is caused by the formation of multiple plaques within the arteries.

Dr Pauriah works under Professor Chim Lang, who explained that biomarkers, measurable biological characteristics, may allow identification of patients most at risk of plaque rupture, or enable the monitoring of disease progression, and so assist the screening of possible drug candidates and clinical trial design.

‘Improvements in biomarkers may then facilitate the advancement of clinical treatments of this disease which is the leading cause of premature death in the United Kingdom,’ he said.



‘The Centre has long been recognised as a centre of excellence in cardiovascular research. Each year, our research is presented in national and international meetings.’

This is the second year that the award has been granted to a trainee from the Dundee department. In 2007, the award went to Dr M AlZadjali, also working under the supervision of Professor Lang, for her work on insulin resistance and heart failure.

Image shows Atherosclerosis in carotid artery, CT

Dundee researchers forge US links

A delegation of cancer researchers from the University has been helping build relationships with key US institutions following an invitation to the country by the St Andrew’s Society of Washington DC.

The University party was led by Professor Irene Leigh, Vice Principal and Head of the College of Medicine and Dentistry and included Professor Inke Näthke, cancer cell biologist working in colorectal cancer; Professor Alistair Thompson, surgical oncologist working on breast cancer and Professor Robert Steele, who is responsible for national bowel screening programmes in Scotland.

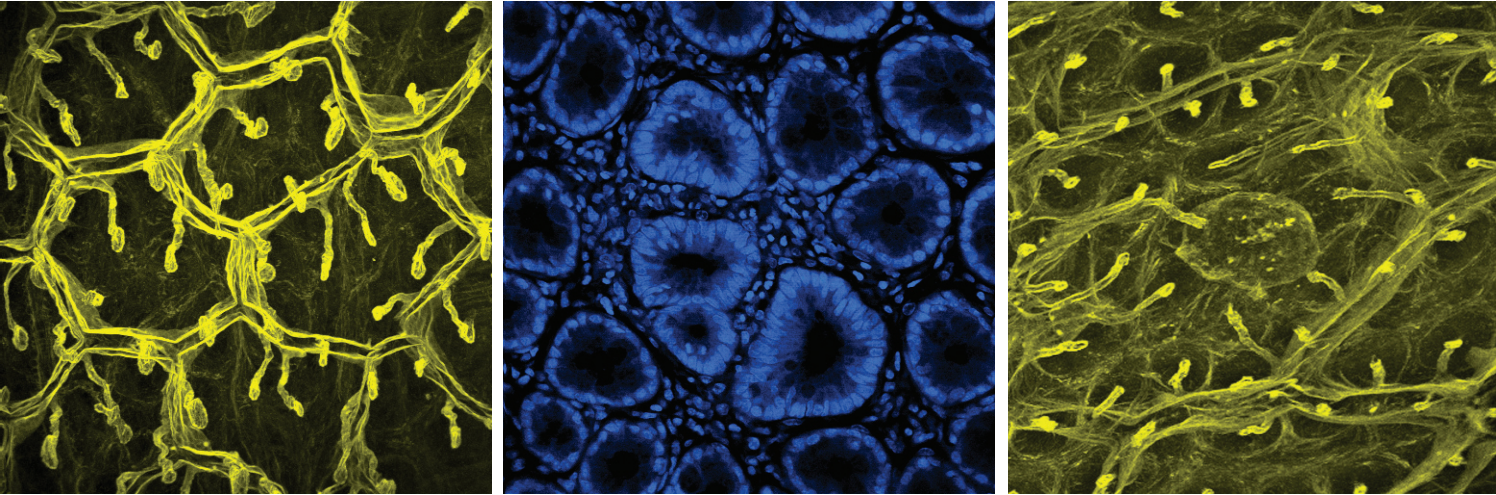
The visit included sessions at the National Institutes of Health, the National Cancer Institute and the Lombardi Cancer Comprehensive Cancer Center at Georgetown University.

‘This was an extremely productive visit to some of the most prestigious institutions in the USA for cancer research and could have positive future benefits for Dundee,’ said Professor Leigh.

Meanwhile staff and students from the School of Medicine and the School of Nursing and Midwifery have been sharing ideas with their counterparts from around the world at an international forum on quality improvement and patient safety.

Heather Marr, Deputy Dean of the School of Nursing and Midwifery and Professor Peter Davey from the School of Medicine travelled to Orlando in the USA with nursing student Liam Shields and medical student Tommy Johnston to take part in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement 21st National Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care. Since their return the two students have been asked to share their experiences at a number of events within the University and the NHS.

Protector gene link to bowel cancer



New research by Cancer Research UK scientists based at the University have shown that deleting a single gene can increase the average number of tumours in the bowel by 50-fold.

The scientists, led by Professor Roland Wolf, Director of the Biomedical Research Institute and a Cancer Research UK scientist, removed a gene called GSTP from mice already genetically predisposed to the development of tumours in the small intestine.

The absence of GSTP led to a 50-fold increase in the number of tumours called adenomas, in the same region of the bowel as the human cancer is found. Adenomas are benign, pre-cancerous tumours.

The profound change in tumour incidence appeared to be related to increased inflammation in the bowel.

It is already known that the GST family of genes protect the body against harmful chemicals. In previous studies by the same team an absence of GSTP in mice led to increased tumour development in the lung and skin following exposure to environmental chemicals such as those found in tobacco smoke. But this study shows that GSTP can also protect against cancer in other ways.

Professor Wolf, lead author of the study, said, ‘These data provide fascinating new insights into a gene which can affect the development of bowel cancer possibly by affecting inflammatory responses.’

Study co-author Dr Colin Henderson, another Dundee-based Cancer Research UK scientist commented, ‘We are very excited that this research will help us study how bowel cancer could be prevented and allow new treatments to be tested.’

Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in the UK - each year more than 37,500 people are diagnosed with the disease, more than 100 people every day.

Dr Lesley Walker, Cancer Research UK’s director of cancer information said, ‘Bowel cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in the UK after lung cancer.’

‘We already know that at least 10 per cent of bowel cancers in the UK are related to being overweight or obese. We know a diet with lots of red and processed meat will increase the chances of developing bowel cancer whereas a fibre-rich diet reduces the risk.’

‘Some studies suggest that GSTP levels could be boosted by chemicals found in vegetables like broccoli. If this can be confirmed in humans, it could suggest another way of reducing the risk of bowel cancer.’

Images from the mouse small intestine. 1) Normal tissue 2) Aberrant crypt foci - Abnormal tissue at the centre of the image, has the potential to develop into something more sinister. 3) Micro-adenoma - the spherical object in the centre is a micro-adenoma (an early tumour) only visible with a microscope (in this case a multi-photon microscope). Images courtesy of Dr Paul Appleton, Cell and Developmental Biology, University of Dundee

Prestigious honour for Chancellor

Lord Patel of Dunkeld, chancellor of the University, has been appointed a Knight of the Order of the Thistle in recognition of his contribution to Scotland.

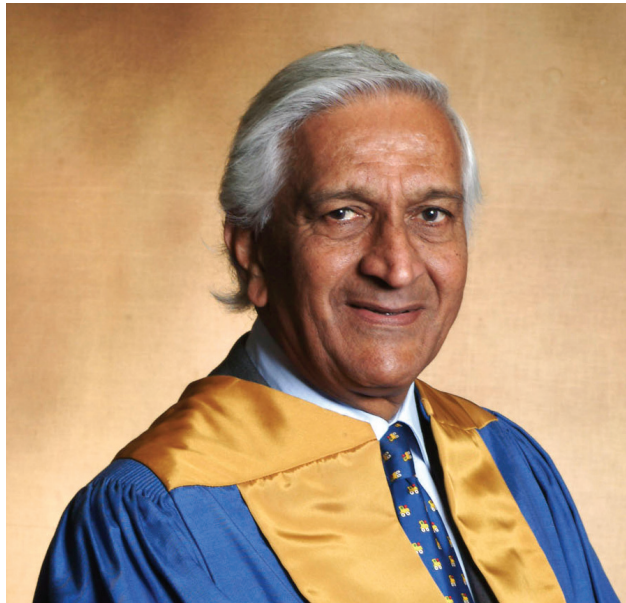
Lord Patel (71) will formally be installed in the order in the summer, and is the first Scottish Asian to have the honour bestowed upon them. The Order of the Thistle is the highest honour in Scotland and, in the UK, is second only to the Order of the Garter.

Lord Patel said he was delighted to receive the order, which honours Scottish men and women who have held public office or who have made a significant contribution to national life. He added, 'I am much humbled, and feel greatly honoured by her Majesty giving me this award.'

Lord Naren Patel was born in Tanzania in 1938 and studied medicine at the Queens College, St Andrews, now the University of Dundee. He graduated in 1964, and went on to work at Ninewells Hospital for over 30 years.

His academic and clinical interests were in the field of high-risk obstetrics, and he published papers on pre-term labour, foetal growth retardation and obstetric epidemiology. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences and the Royal Society of Edinburgh, honorary Fellow of several Royal Colleges in the UK, Ireland and overseas, and honorary doctorates in the UK and overseas.

During his career, Lord Patel served as the President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and led a number of other professional bodies.



He was knighted in 1997 and was made a peer two years later.

In the House of Lords, Lord Patel has been a member of the Science and Technology Committee, and is currently Chairman of the UK Stem Cell Oversight Committee, UK Stem Cell Network and Chairman of the National Patient Safety Agency of England and Wales.

Lord Patel is patron of a number of charities, a board member of several others, and is closely involved in developing centres for training and treatment in Africa for obstetric fistulas.

New study of swine flu vaccine

Thousands of people from across Scotland have been recruited by researchers at the University's Medicines Monitoring Unit (MEMO) as part of a questionnaire study to identify any rare side effects of the swine flu vaccine.

Although the vaccine for the H1N1 influenza virus has already been licensed and passed as safe, researchers at the unit will be monitoring the progress of people offered the vaccine over the course of a year.

Dr Isla Mackenzie, consultant physician at MEMO and lead doctor on the study, said it was routine practice for new vaccines to continue to be monitored.

"Working with very large numbers of people is the only way to pick up extremely rare but important side effects of drugs or vaccines," she said. "So far we have around 3,500 participants and we are continuing to recruit steadily. We are also extending the study to include children as certain younger age groups are now being offered vaccination."

The study, which is being run in collaboration with the Drug Safety Research Unit in Southampton, will follow participants for a year after their swine flu vaccination with monthly contact to collect data on any events such as hospital admissions or possible side effects requiring urgent medical treatment.

It also includes those who declined the offer of vaccination to allow comparisons to be drawn between the sections of the population who took the vaccine and those who didn't.

As well as monitoring the safety of the vaccine, the study also pilots new methods of collecting and managing data. To make it easier for participants, those involved in the trial will be able to opt to respond via email or text.

More information on the study is available at www.safetyswineflu.co.uk or 0800 917 3509 and it is still possible to register online if you have recently been offered swine flu vaccination.

Drug Discovery visit for Hollywood star



Dundee-born actor Brian Cox was given a first hand insight into the work being done in his home town to combat neglected diseases when he visited the University's Drug Discovery Unit.

The award-winning actor, who has this month been elected as the University's new Rector, was accompanied on his tour by Dr Stuart Smith, founder of Developing World Health, an organisation dedicated to developing treatments and potential cures for devastating tropical diseases.

The pair were welcomed to the College of Life Sciences by Dean of Research Professor Michael Ferguson.

"Brian Cox is a very good friend to the College of Life Sciences," he said "He helped Sir Philip Cohen and myself enormously with fund-raising to build the Sir James Black Centre, where we work on diseases like diabetes and cancer and also on neglected tropical diseases like African sleeping sickness, leishmaniasis and malaria."

'We are always happy to welcome him back and also to welcome Dr Stuart Smith, the founder of 'Developing World Health', a charity that aims to raise awareness of these neglected tropical diseases.'

The Drug Discovery Unit was established by Professor Ferguson and his colleague Professor Alan Fairlamb in 2005. Many disciplines working towards the discovery of new therapies for tropical diseases are combined there.

Brian Cox is a long-time supporter of the work being carried out at the University, and has assisted with, and contributed, to several campaigns raising funds for research facilities and projects.

DDU

Image courtesy of Fotopress

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Zooming in on Catia Montagna

Doom-laden newspaper headlines announcing the latest call centre to relocate to India, or the most recent company to shift manufacturing to Eastern Europe, have become commonplace over the past decade.

The 21st century appeared to usher in the era of outsourcing, as a diverse range of firms moved operations to low wage economies overseas. The UK, it appeared, could do nothing to stop this haemorrhaging of jobs and British workers braced themselves for lengthening dole queues and financial disaster. After all, how could we compete with the emerging economies where average salaries are only a fraction of the UK minimum wage?

Companies simply had to relocate in order to remain competitive and this relentless trend was a phenomenon of the times. Right?

Not according to Professor Catia Montagna, Head of Economic Studies at the University, who believes that outsourcing is not always a magic bullet for firms looking to gain a competitive advantage, does not necessarily lead to dire consequences for workers in the west, and is subject to a certain amount of misrepresentation by the media. Her Discovery Day lecture *Zooming in and Zooming Out on Outsourcing* aimed to redress the balance.

"Outsourcing occurs when a task that a company could perform in-house is subcontracted to an outside firm" explained Professor Montagna. "Outsourcing has always existed. Every country has extensive buyer-supplier networks. However, the volume of cross-border outsourcing has increased, and this is what is attracting attention. But we should not forget that the majority of outsourcing still occurs within the national boundaries – a lot of it is within a firm's immediate region – and that the bulk of international outsourcing takes place between industrial economies.

"There is a tendency to confuse the price paid for an outsourced good or service and the effects of outsourcing on the costs and profitability of the firm. What is often not understood is that outsourcing may entail a tension between quality and costs: an input acquired at a price that is lower than what it would cost to produce it in-house may not result in cost savings if its quality is lower than it would be when produced in-house.

"International outsourcing poses many challenges, such as communication and monitoring difficulties, dealing with different business and legal environments, etc, but there are also particularly acute incentive issues (that also affect, even though to a lesser degree, domestic outsourcing) that arise from the fact that the contracts that regulate the outsourcing relationship are not perfect and that the investment a supplier needs to make to customise a component to the needs of the outsourcing firm is not easily verifiable.

"The sector in which a firm operates and the nature of the outsourced activity is important in determining the success, or otherwise, of outsourcing. Outsourcing can be a source of cost savings and increased profitability in sectors where the inputs are very generic, but not necessarily so in industries where specialised, high-tech inputs are required. Technologically complex activities require a supplier to make investments that may be of little value to other firms outside the particular buyer-supplier relationship and this may generate an incentive to under-invest, result in lower quality, and fail to deliver the hoped-for cost savings."

If the practice of outsourcing is not always an economic panacea, does this mean the trend is likely to be slowed, or even reversed in coming years? Professor Montagna believes that outsourcing will continue to take place.

"The business press indicates that there have been instances when firms have taken back outsourced activities, often because of customer dissatisfaction" she said, "and there are very clear, sound, economic reasons why the tendency to outsource is not boundless.

"Not everything is bright and gold with outsourcing – there are hidden costs and, therefore, incentives for firms to keep some things in-house. However, outsourcing reflects a deepening of the international division of labour, so unless we go back to protectionism, then it's here to stay. In open economies, it is possible to exploit the differences that exist between countries. If some countries are relatively better at doing some things than we are, then inevitably it will be attractive to try to benefit from the advantages that these countries offer, and outsourcing is a means to achieve this".

What is the outlook for countries such as the UK? Can we then benefit from outsourcing, despite apocalyptic warnings to the contrary?

"The degree and pattern of outsourcing within a country depend, to some extent, on its industrial make-up", said Professor Montagna. "The UK is a net exporter of intermediate goods and services – that is, it receives more outsourcing by others than it outsources itself. I think the UK is in a fairly good position because it is increasingly specialising in relatively high-value, low-volume and technologically advanced types of markets and activities.

"In some of these knowledge intensive sectors, geographical proximity with suppliers is very important so outsourcing tends to be domestic. As a result, local agglomeration economies emerge, with clusters of specialised firms that may become a destination for other countries' high-tech outsourcing. And, we should not forget, universities play a big role in providing the required local knowledge depth in these sectors. I think outsourcing may offer big opportunities for the UK and, closer to home, for Dundee".

Despite this, factories in the UK laying off workers to the advantage of call centres in India are the first things that many people think of when they hear the word outsourcing. Does Professor Montagna's research imply that workers should not be filled with dread at the mention of outsourcing?

"The job issue is understandably the one which attracts the most concern" she said. "Work that colleagues at the Globalisation and Economic Policy Centre at Nottingham have done shows that in the UK the effect of outsourcing on overall employment has been very small. If there are impacts, they actually tend to be positive. This is found to be the case for other OECD countries as well. Clearly, this doesn't mean that within a fairly stable overall employment there aren't people who suffer – when countries specialise internationally, demand for some skills will increase while demand for other skills will fall.

"There is a tendency for the media to use statistics in a slightly sensationalist way. The use of clear-cut statements like "outsourcing is going to generate mass unemployment" is not helpful. A company outsourcing part of its operations and shedding 100 jobs in a region understandably attracts a lot of negative attention, but if as a result of outsourcing it becomes more productive a year down the road and saves, or creates, more jobs, then it doesn't receive so much publicity. Similarly, we do not tend to hear as much when local businesses benefit by being at the receiving end of the outsourcing activity of foreign firms.

"This is why my Discovery Day lecture zoomed in and out. It's always useful to step back a bit from the heat of a debate and look at the bigger picture. Then, we can see that things are not as black and white as often implied. That said, I'm very conscious of the fact that international specialisation generates adjustments that will involve welfare losses for certain sections of the population. A key fact to bear in mind is also that the speed at which specialisation changes is now much higher than before. I think this poses challenges for governments as there is a need for strong safety nets as well as quick responses in terms of training and education that cannot be met by the private sector. But it doesn't help anyone to portray things as being bleaker than they really are."

DDIO Discovery Day

Thirteen newly-appointed professors from a wide variety of disciplines shared their enthusiasm and knowledge of their subjects in a series of 15 minute lectures during Discovery Day 2010.

The annual event – showcasing cutting edge research being carried out at Dundee – has a reputation for providing an entertaining and accessible glimpse into a range of challenging and often complex subjects. The format has become a model for the sector and imitated by a number of other universities in the UK.

Professor Pete Downes, Principal of the University, officially opened this year's lectures by saying that he was delighted that the new professors would have such an excellent platform to highlight their work.

The 13 professors who presented at Discovery Day 2010 were:

- **Kevin Hiom** (Pat McPherson Chair of Cancer Biology)
- **David Muir Wood** (Chair of Geotechnical Engineering)
- **Chris Reed** (Personal Chair of Computer Science and Philosophy)
- **Roger Soames** (Cox Chair of Anatomy)
- **Chris Spray** (Chair of Water Science and Policy)
- **Yolande Muschamp** (Personal Chair of Primary Education)
- **Catia Montagna** (Personal Chair of Economics)
- **Mike Bonell** (Personal Chair of Catchment Science)
- **Andy Evans** (Chair of Breast Imaging)
- **David Coates** (Personal Chair of Life Sciences)
- **Brian Hudson** (Chair of Education)
- **Tim Hales** (Chair of Anaesthesia)
- **John Connell** (Personal Chair of Endocrinology).

Professor Montagna said taking part in the Discovery Day event was an interesting, emotional, and challenging experience.

She explained, "It is certainly easier to go and speak to a specialised audience. Translating what you do into plain English can be a bit of challenge, particularly when you have the time constraints.

"But I really enjoyed what was truly a day of Discovery that gave us a good opportunity to hear what others are doing in the University; I thought the other talks were all very interesting. It was an important day for the University and the atmosphere was charged with symbolism, so it was interesting to listen to the other guys and find out what they were doing. I found myself being more emotional than I had anticipated, as there was considerable symbolism attached to the occasion."

Spring into action with green travel

Members of staff are being urged to go green this springtime and make the most of a range of sustainable travel initiatives aimed at cutting the University's carbon footprint.

Trudy Cunningham, the University's environment and sustainability officer, is hoping new bike racks, a new secure bike shelter on campus and the latest round of the staff cycle scheme will all encourage more people to leave the car behind.

The cycle scheme, which allows staff to hire a bike and safety equipment for 12 months free of income tax and National Insurance contributions, launched in November with over 30 members of staff signing up.

Run in partnership with Cyclescheme Ltd, an initiative set up by the Government as part of its Green Transport Plan, the cycle scheme will open again to staff in March with another opportunity to join in July.

"Spring is the perfect time to think about cycling," said Trudy. "The days are getting longer, the weather is hopefully getting better and it is the ideal time to get out in the fresh air. It's great for getting fit, it's cheaper than driving and it is much better for the environment.

"We've been busy working to make it easier to cycle to work and in January a new secure bike area was built near the Frankland building and 10 new bike lockers installed on the main campus and another two at the Botanic Gardens and Kirkcaldy.

"In the last year we have added over 100 bike spaces and two shelters to the campus. We also have a bike pool of four bikes, which this month we are going to add an electric Wisper bike to, information on cycle routes on the University website and copies of the Dundee Cycle Map to give away. Staff cycling to work also have free use of showers at the swimming pool at DUSA and at ISE."

The staff cycle scheme works by deducting the cost of the bike and equipment, up to a maximum of £1000, from an employee's gross salary over the course of 12 months. It is open to any monthly-paid employee over 18 who has been in post for at least six months and has at least 12 months remaining on their contract.

To coincide with the reopening of the scheme the University is also running a cycle workshop on Friday 12 March. Run by Personal and Professional Development, the *Cycling to Work: Effective Bike Commuting* session will include a cycle check and tips on how to cycle in traffic.

There will also be a demonstration of electric bikes on the campus in March to help raise awareness of alternative means of travel.

Increasing the numbers of staff and students commuting by bike is a key target in the University's Green Travel Plan which has just been updated.

"We published our first plan back in 2004," said Trudy. "We're now on our second plan and that is looking to increase cycling and walking and encourage more sustainable car use.

"We carried out a travel survey in 2008 and found that 25% of staff and 37% of students walk or cycle to university and 33% of staff and 27% of students drive to University alone.

"We want to reduce the numbers driving alone by 10%. The University is already part of Dundee Liftshare where we have our own dedicated area. So far there are more than 300 members of the scheme and it is one of the most successful University schemes in the UK.

"We're also looking at introducing lift-share only spaces on campus for people who are registered with the scheme. We want to encourage people to think about how they travel to work and make it easier for them to opt for greener alternatives."

Trudy added that the University website also has a wealth of information on bus travel, ticket prices, cycle routes and walks in and around the campus.

To find out more visit: www.dundee.ac.uk/general/travel/ For information about the staff cycle scheme, bike pool and other travel related enquiries visit: www.dundee.ac.uk/estates/energy&environment/travel.htm or email travel@dundee.ac.uk

Green success for students

Ecologically aware students from the University's Renewable Energy and Environmental Modelling Masters programme have had their efforts rewarded at the prestigious Green Energy Awards.

Geoff Wood, who is now studying for a PhD, won the Best Student Project award while his classmates Karen Fox and Gavin Murphy were also shortlisted.

Hosted by the Scottish Renewables Forum, the awards attracted strong competition from universities across Scotland.

Course director Dr David Rodley, from the School of Engineering, Physics and Mathematics, said he was delighted for the students.

"We have had students make it to the finals for this award in each of the last three years," he said. "To have all of our nominees short-listed this time around is obviously a tremendous tribute to the talents of our students, to the hard work and dedication of all the staff involved and to the quality of the programme in general."

The award is open to all students at Scottish universities undertaking a course or project that contributes to the understanding and future of renewable energy in Scotland.

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Talking the talk about psychology



Professor Trevor Harley, Dean of the School of Psychology, admits he's a man with a mission, and it's not just about making it to the top of the bestseller list with his latest book *Talking the Talk: Language, Psychology and Science*.

Although he's hopeful the new publication will follow the successful path of his undergraduate textbook *The Psychology of Language*, now in its third edition and recognised as the leading textbook on language, his main aim is to improve the status of psychology.

"There is a mismatch between what people think psychology is all about and what it is actually about," he explained. "Psychology sometimes gets a bad press and there is a lot of pop psychology out there doing the subject harm. It means we do sometimes struggle to be taken seriously.

"I want this new book to go some way to persuading people that psychology is a real science, up there with physics, chemistry and biology. Just because the subject of the subject is ourselves doesn't make it any less scientific. In many ways if you want to see science working, the processes are clearest in psychology. There is great emphasis on formulating and testing precise questions, and the statistics involved are often very sophisticated.

"It can be difficult however and cognitive psychology can be particularly so. It involves thinking about the processes of the mind and how these relate to what is going on in the brain. There is also a precise terminology that has developed and there is often disagreement on quite fundamental issues. For every theory put forward there is likely to be another saying the opposite."

Professor Harley is hoping his new book will help to explain psychology as it really is.

"It is a balancing act," he said. "I want it be accessible to the lay reader but I don't want to oversimplify things. I hope I have made it informative and entertaining. I want people to read it like a novel and come away with an understanding of what psychology is.

"The book is about how humans do language. It is about how we speak and understand language, how we learn to read, how children acquire language and what happens when it goes wrong."

Written in an engaging and conversational style *Talking the Talk* successfully combines serious science and amusing anecdote as it attempts to answer many of the questions people often ask about language. It also looks at how scientific knowledge can be applied to practical problems.

Professor Harley's own research into the language problems associated with ageing and in particular pathological ageing has already been used as a basis for developing new therapies and treatments.

A recent study into information recall in people with Alzheimer's disease, for example, suggested that knowledge may not be destroyed by dementia as had previously been thought.

"We asked patients to define simple words," he said. "People with dementia are notoriously bad at this sort of task and at first sight it looks like they've lost most of the detailed knowledge of the meaning of the word. The assumption had been that Alzheimer's causes this knowledge to be destroyed.

"However we found that if you ask the patient in the right way with appropriate questions that support them to search their stored knowledge they can often generate more detailed information. The implication is that the information is not always lost after all.

"If the problem is the strategies being used to access that information then maybe we can teach people new strategies. That is what has happened. Therapists have taken my research and used it to develop new treatments. "

Professor Harley added that psycholinguistic research addresses important problems in society. For example, it has told us the best way to teach children how to learn to read, with an emphasis now on phonics and the sounds words and letters make.

"Phonics is now the preferred method of teaching reading in the UK," he said. "That came about because of research into language.

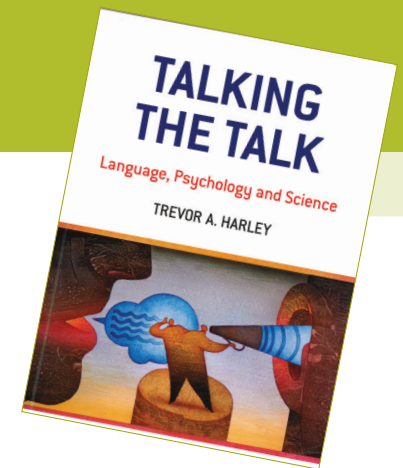
"Psychology should have applications and the way to develop new treatments is to do the basic research. We have to understand how things work first. It is not always obvious what is going to have an impact but it is difficult to develop therapies without first having a good theory to base them on."

Talking the Talk covers both the theory and practical aspects of psycholinguistics and Professor Harley is hoping it leads to greater understanding of a subject he believes is both fascinating and vital.

"Language is incredibly important," he said. "When there are difficulties or when language is impaired it can have a major impact on a person's quality of life. It is something we all use.

"We all think and learn. We all make mistakes, say the wrong thing and have difficulties remembering things. These are things we can all identify with. It's hard to imagine being human without language."

For more information on *Talking the Talk* or Professor Harley's research visit www.trevorharley.com



“...if you want to see science working, the processes are clearest in psychology.”

Sisters are doing IT for themselves



Morna Simpson and her colleagues in the Girl Geek Scotland project want to change the world. By making technology accessible to all people, regardless of their age, gender, religion or nationality they hope to spread the benefits widely.

The first step to doing this is by inspiring women to succeed in creative technology fields and by supporting them to do so. At its most basic level, Girl Geek Scotland is a community for women and girls interested in technology, creativity and computing, but the organisation has ambitions far beyond this.

Morna, a lecturer in Interactive Media Design at Duncan of Jordanstone, founded Girl Geek Scotland group alongside colleagues a year ago. Since then, a group has been established in each of the four major Scottish cities, and project collaborations extend to groups in Leeds and Newcastle

There are plans for further growth that will help women in Scotland to develop their inner “geekness” with support from a wide community of professionals and like-minded peers.

“The term ‘geek’ is mainly used pejoratively and to describe men, but we want women to embrace and be proud of their geekness,” explained Morna. “We need to get more women involved in technology-related subjects, something that is usually the domain of men.

“This seems to be something that is particularly specific to our culture – if you look at other countries like Vietnam, there is a higher percentage of women working in technology.”

So, why do a relatively small number end up working in science and technology? Why do fields like computing end up so male-dominated? Are men simply geekier than women?

“Perhaps there is something about male culture that makes them more obsessive about facts while women bring a more social nature and a creativity to bear on projects and workplaces, but there are women out there who are every bit as geeky as men!” laughs Morna.

“Because technology-based media is produced and made by men, it’s largely made for men as well. While women may be more interested in gaming than previously, the games are still, by and large, designed by men. Even when games are targeting women, they’re still designed largely by men according to what they think women want. We want to bring about the situation where women are designing these games as well as men.”

Morna believes that many women are intimidated by the prospect of trying to conquer predominantly-male environments, and are often dissuaded from trying merely because there are fewer examples of pioneering women in these industries.

“We need to get more women involved in technology-related subjects, something that is usually the domain of men.”

She adds that even successful women can be reluctant to speak about gender as they are concerned that they could be perceived to have been gained success through positive discrimination.

In addition, there remains the most specific obstacle that many ambitious women face – the thorny issue of childbirth around and the discrimination faced by women of a certain age.

“Whether or not to have children remains the most difficult decision a woman needs to make in terms of their career,” continued Morna. “It has a huge impact on their professional lives, whether they want to progress up the career ladder or set up their own business. Given the challenges they face, I completely understand why women opt out of top end careers and chose something which allows more flexibility.

“Fundamentally, there has to be more assistance for women. If we want to see women develop new businesses and get to the top of their careers, there needs to be more support with childcare.

“In recent years we’ve seen fewer women choosing careers in technology. Perhaps they are choosing to play it safe because of the financial climate, but many are bound to look at jobs that offer security and maternity pay. In this respect, the public sector is more flexible, and starting your own business isn’t even an option.”

Encouraging entrepreneurialism is a key objective of the Girl Geek project. Morna believes that one of the biggest challenges that she and her colleagues face is overturning preconceptions about what women can achieve, and in what fields.

She says that, from an early age, girls are still being conditioned with certain expectations and that going into business for themselves isn’t among them.

“Those women who become entrepreneurial tend to do so at a later age than their male counterparts, again largely because of the child issue. My mother started her own book shop in her 40’s, for that very reason.”

During 2010, Girl Geek Scotland will hold a series of events to help women succeed in business. February will see Shanna Tellerman, a rising star of Silicon Valley, speak about *Creativity Computing and Entrepreneurialism* at Girl Geek Dinner events in Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen and Glasgow.

A series of Residential Workshops have been designed to equip women with the skills to turn their business dreams into reality, and to develop a strategy to deal with particular challenges they face in the workplace.

Morna says that it is vital for women to have guidance to reach the top of their game, and that the speaker series will help women to harness their creativity and get the confidence to use it. She hopes that Girl Geek will grow internationally and help create a culture with the potential to make a real difference to people across the globe.

“Workshops, seminars and talks provide the opportunity for women to come together and network as they don’t have the same outlets for social interaction with colleagues that men do,” she said.

“We want them to see that you can be a successful entrepreneur or rise within an organisation without being a ball breaker. That image can put other females off because they think that’s the only way to get on. It is possible to succeed in a male-dominated environment by presenting your best female traits rather than mimicking the worst aspects of male behaviour.”

“The project is obviously aimed at women but we will not exclude men who appreciate what we’re trying to do and want to help. Whenever you start an organisation such as this, people think you’re being anti-men, but that’s not the case.

“If women do well, start their own businesses and employ men then everyone benefits from that. We’re trying to help women get to a stage where their talents can take them into the places they deserve to be, not to shut men out. I’ve worked in places where the workforce was almost entirely male-dominated, and other places where it was largely female-dominated. I now count myself lucky to be working at Dundee, where there is quite a mixed environment.

“Studies have shown that workplaces are more productive and more creative when there is a mixed workforce. There is no getting around the fact there are differences between men and women, and if we ever want true equality then we have to face up to this. However, being different doesn’t mean being inferior, and this is the message we have to get across.”

pictured left to right: Dr Sophia Lycouris, Mel Woods, Morna Simpson and Shanna Tellerman.

Magnificent seven lead the way



The achievements of some of the University’s most famous names are celebrated in a new booklet published by the Dundee & Angus Convention Bureau.

Put together in honour of the region’s pioneering spirit, the *Sense of Achievement* book features leading figures from the past and present.

Historical heroes include scientist Sir D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson, the University’s first Professor of Biology back in 1885 and Sir Robert Alexander Watson Watt, a graduate of the University who went on to develop RADAR systems.

However, it is in the modern section that the book is dominated by researchers and academics associated with the University. Of nine entries seven have a University of Dundee connection.

Professor Sir Alfred Cuschieri, who pioneered minimally invasive “keyhole” surgery, leads the present day stars. Sir Alfred was Professor of Surgery and Head of the Department of Surgery and Molecular Oncology at the University between 1976 and 1988 and 1988 and 2003. He is Director of the Institute for Medical Science and Technology at the Universities of Dundee and St Andrews.

He is followed in the *Sense of Achievement* book by internationally acclaimed biochemist Professor Sir Philip Cohen, who has been a Royal Society Research Professor at the University since 1984. He is also Director of the Medical Research Council Protein Phosphorylation Unit and Director of the Scottish Institute for Cell Signalling.

Also featured are University Principal Professor Peter Downes, Professor Dario Alessi, Director of the University’s Diabetes Research Centre, Professor Sue Black, Director of the Centre for Anatomy and Human Identification and her colleague Dr Caroline Wilkinson, who is pioneering facial reconstruction.

Professor Sir David Lane, internationally recognised for his discovery of the cancer gene p53 while based at the University, further boosts the Dundee profile.

Lorna Reid, Association Manager at Dundee & Angus Convention Bureau, explained that the publication of the booklet was aimed at celebrating the achievements of local pioneers past and present.

It was also, she said, designed to highlight the work of the successful Ambassador Programme where leading figures join forces with the bureau to bring conferences to the area, an initiative what has brought significant economic benefits.

“Over the past two years ambassador-led conferences have contributed £10.3 million to the local economy,” said Lorna. “This has supported a wide variety of businesses including those in the leisure, transport and retail sectors.

“Examples of conferences secured by the Ambassadors include the 13th Biennial Scientific Meeting of the International Association for Craniofacial Identification and the British Association for Human Identification 2009.

“Modern day Ambassadors Professor Sue Black and Dr Caroline Wilkinson from the Centre for Anatomy and Human Identification were instrumental in bringing both these events to Dundee and Angus.

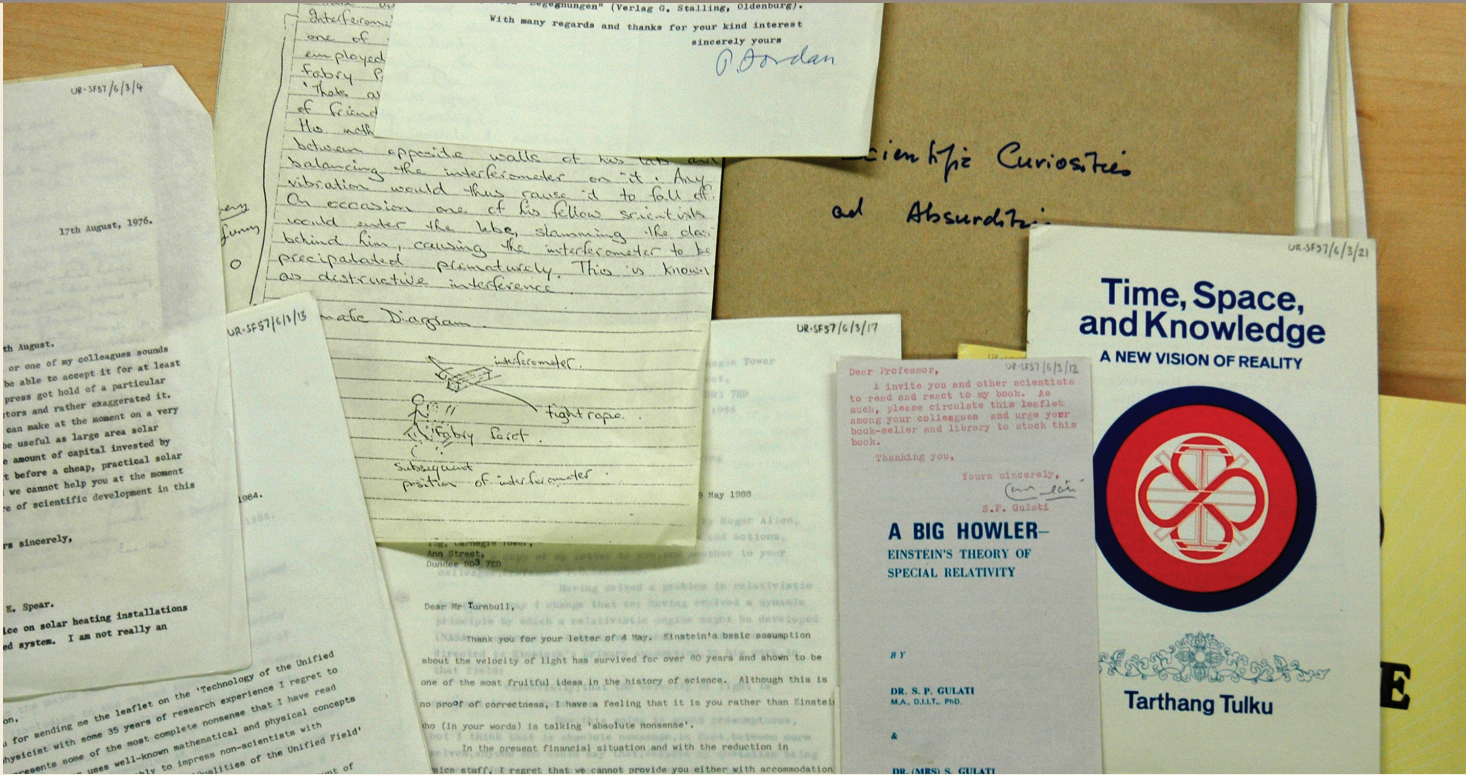
“It is this very drive, determination, spirit and passion which makes these people leaders in their respective fields. Ambassadors have an important role to play in bringing conferences and events to the area and it is vital that modern day pioneers continue to join the programme and not only contribute to their chosen field but play a part in generating economic benefit for Dundee & Angus.

“We are here to offer free conference support and ensure that help and advice is available every step of the way from the initial stages of securing a conference to putting the finishing touches to the final arrangements.”

Copies of the book are available from the Dundee & Angus Convention Bureau. For more information about the Ambassador programme contact Lorna Reid on 01382 434173 or visit www.conventiondundeeandangus.co.uk/ambassadors

From the Archives

Professor Walter Spear’s Scientific Curiosities and Absurdities



It is sometimes forgotten that the research carried out by University of Dundee professors Walter Spear and Peter Le Comber into amorphous silicon was largely responsible for the development of many modern items we take for granted such as flat screen TVs and solar panels.

During the 1970s and 1980s their work attracted international attention and as a result much correspondence was sent to Spear and Le Comber by people wishing to know more about their work. Some of the enquiries they received bordered on the bizarre. Spear kept many of these in a file he labelled ‘Scientific Curiosities and Absurdities’ which was later deposited with his papers at the University of Dundee Archive Services.

Among the gems in this file is a request for Spear or a colleague to install solar heating in a villa in Spain in exchange for a free holiday. Spear had to explain that such technology was not yet available.

Spear received several letters from individuals wishing to advance their own scientific theories, many of which were questionable at best. Spear frankly told one such individual that the leaflet they had sent him contained arguments that were ‘some of the most complete nonsense that I have read for a long time’.

Professor Spear suggested that another correspondent, who argued that Einstein’s theories were ‘absolute nonsense’, might more accurately apply their description of Einstein’s work to their own theories.

Spear also kept other items of interest in the file including a request for his autograph, as well as a letter from the German Physicist Pascual Jordan, which Spear kept for the signature.

Another item he retained was a copy of a second year physics exam script. A student, who had been asked to describe how the principle of the Michelson interferometer could be used to measure vibrations, obviously had no idea of the answer and so instead came up with a (one hopes intentionally) humorous explanation involving balancing the interferometer on a tight rope in a lab with vibrations causing it to fall.

For more information about this and other collections contact Archive Services at archives@dundee.ac.uk

ISE marks ten years of heart health

The Institute of Sport and Exercise (ise) has been celebrating ten years of helping to improve the health of local heart disease-sufferers.

Since it began, the Phase IV Cardiac Rehab class has been attended by more than 450 local people as part of their recovery from a range of conditions and treatments including heart attacks, bypass surgery, angina, heart transplants and valve replacements.

To mark the tenth anniversary, current and former class members were invited to a special birthday celebration with staff and health professionals including Professor Stuart Pringle, consultant cardiologist at Ninewells Hospital, who gave an overview of cardiac rehab and cardiac services in Tayside.

Hazel Ednie, Specialist Populations programme co-ordinator, said that before the class was established the nearest Phase IV rehab programme had been in Glasgow.

‘It’s been great to be involved with the programme here and to work with some really fantastic and determined people,’ she said. ‘Some have come to us as part of their cardiac recovery and have been quite inactive and immobile previously.

‘In time, we have seen their fitness improve and with it their quality of life. Not only does their cardiac health improve, but their risk of suffering another cardiac illness decreases.’

The phases of cardiac rehab refer to the different stages of care a patient receives following their illness. Phase I is hospitalisation. Phase II is when the patient is discharged from hospital but will be under the guidance of their GP and be given support from a cardiac nurse, while Phase III is when patients receive education and exercise under the supervision of a cardiac physiotherapist.

Phase IV of cardiac rehabilitation is community-based exercise to support and maintain a patient’s heart health following their care from the primary healthcare team.

ise’s specialised exercise programme includes weekly exercise classes, monthly education workshops and activity taster sessions. It is delivered by instructors with expertise in exercise for people with medical conditions.



New personal training programme from ISE

Staff at ise, the University’s Institute of Sport and Exercise, are offering a timely solution to the challenge of staying motivated with a new personal training programme.

The Personal Exercise Programme (PEP), offering one-to-one, motivational, bespoke training sessions, began on 15 February.

“It is well known that people start out with the best of intentions but often never reach their goals,” said Facility Operations Coordinator Kirsteen Cruickshanks. “Whether it is climbing a munro, running a marathon or achieving and maintaining a healthy weight PEPs can help give individuals the skills they need to get there.

“We all have the resources, determination and commitment to maximise our potential and our PEP instructors are dedicated to uncovering these life skills and helping people use them more effectively.”

Kirsteen added that February is an ideal time to offer some extra motivation.

“This time of year can be really difficult in terms of carrying on our new year’s resolutions,” she said. “People do tend to flag a bit. January is always busy but the first few weeks of regular exercise are the hardest and it takes a while to see results so motivation can drop.”

The new programme is provided by a team of ten personal trainers of different ages and offering a range of training techniques, motivational methods and areas of expertise.

“When people think of personal trainers they sometimes think of someone like a drill instructor shouting at them but it’s not like that unless you want it to be!” said Kirsteen.

“Whether it is climbing a munro, running a marathon or achieving and maintaining a healthy weight PEPs can help give individuals the skills they need to get there.”

“Our trainers will empower people to become their own instructors.”

“Anyone signing up for a programme will be asked what their favourite and least favourite form of exercise is and what training style they prefer, whether they are steady eddy or fast and furious or somewhere in between.

“We’ll look at all the information and try and find the best match from our team of trainers. They do work very much as a team so there could be input from more than one.”

The programme offers three packages beginning with Ignition, a one-off session lasting an hour and costing £30. Also on offer is the Accelerate package consisting of three hourly sessions for £60 and the Full Throttle option of ten sessions at £18 a session.

“Committing to PEPs is an investment in yourself, your health and your life,” said Kirsteen. “The trainers will monitor progress but individuals should be able to see and feel the benefits in all aspects of their lives.”

For more information visit the ise website at www.dundee.ac.uk/ise/fun/whatwedo/gym-pep.php

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time for results

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court news

At its December meeting, the Court approved the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2009 and took time to discuss the Principal's vision for the future development of the University.

Financial Statements

The Director of Finance introduced the annual accounts to 31 July 2009 (available online at: <http://www.somis.dundee.ac.uk/finance/>). The operating result for the year was a surplus of £1.6m with a bottom line surplus, after disposals and voluntary severance costs, of £0.6m. Income had increased by 9% during the year to £208m, including an increase in tuition fees of 17% and of research income of 9%.

Expenditure had also increased by 9%, with staff costs rising by 8% overall. The year saw a net cash inflow of £9.5m, buoyed in part by working capital movements and as yet unspent capital grants, both of which had, along with other factors, contributed to the University moving from a net debt position to a positive cash balance of £8.3m.

However, the University had capital commitments and net current liabilities of £28m, representing future expenditure obligations that would unwind over time. Court members complimented the layout, content and clarity of the statements presented, and the Principal noted that the external auditors had also made positive comments on the format and content of the accounts.

Audit Committee

The Court received the annual report of the Committee, which summarised the major internal audit work which it had overseen during 2008/9. In its private meeting with the auditors, the Committee was pleased to report that no issues of concern had been raised, and that therefore it the Committee had full confidence in the system of internal controls in operation at the University.

Strategic Review

The Principal presented his vision for the University as one which would build on its academic reputation and embed a commitment to impact in all its forms. The emphasis would be on excellence, in research, in teaching and in the support services, irrespective of the prevailing economic conditions.

The Principal also set out his assessment of the financial environment, taking into account in particular recent press statements and official reports pointing to public sector funding restraint, although for Scotland the picture was not entirely clear at this stage.

Court members generally welcomed what it viewed as a sober and thoughtful response to the economic situation. In terms of an update of the Strategic Review itself, the Principal reported on his recent discussions with Deans, the Students' Association and with representatives of the campus unions.

The next step was for a careful analysis of activity across the University, before this could feed into strategic planning and the budget setting process for 2010/11. A progress report on the review would be presented at the Court meeting in February, with more detailed proposals presented at the April meeting.

Statutes

The Court approved changes to Statute 9 (The Court). The changes cover: i) the Chancellor ceasing to be a full member of Court, ii) changes to the role of the Rector's Assessor, iii) creating a separate category of Court membership for the Chairperson, iv) creation of a second student member of the Court, v) clarification of rules on continuous membership, the delay required before staff and students can be appointed lay members.

The proposed changes can be viewed at: <http://www.somis.dundee.ac.uk/court/notice/>. The changes are now subject to Senate endorsement, ratification at a second meeting of the Court, and finally formal approval by the Privy Council. It is anticipated that, subject to these approvals, the changes will take effect from 1 August 2010.

Other News

The Court received an update on the V&A at Dundee project, which it was reported was entering a crucial phase as it moved towards the establishment of a charitable company to take the development and fundraising of the project forward.

The Court also considered reports from the Director Strategic Planning on the University's performance against the targets contained in the Strategic Framework to 2012.

The Rector

In view of the Rector's decision not to stand for re-election, the Court took the opportunity to thank Craig Murray for his commitment to the work of the Court. Craig had been a particularly conscientious Rector in this respect, outspoken in his views, but who thereby had added both rigour and vigour to the Court's debates. The Court also thanked the Rector's Assessor, Mike Arnott, for his contributions over the past three years.

appointments

Professor Charlotte Rees
Director, Centre for Medical Education
College of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing



Charlotte Rees comes to the University of Dundee from the Office of Postgraduate Medical Education, University of Sydney, Australia where she was Associate Professor and Director of Educational Research.

She moved to Sydney in February 2007, having spent five years at Peninsula Medical School, Universities of Exeter and Plymouth, where she was Senior Lecturer and Foundation Academic Lead in Human Sciences, Communication Skills and Personal and Professional Development for the new medical curriculum.

For almost ten years, Charlotte has developed a programme of research about patient-centred professionalism in medical education. Her current and future plans for research include exploring healthcare students' professional identity formation and professionalism and health and social care service user involvement in education.

V&A at Dundee a step closer

A 'stunning' location at the heart of Dundee's redeveloped waterfront has been chosen as the site for the "V&A at Dundee", the ambitious plan to create a new centre of 21st Century design in the city.

An international architectural competition to deliver a landmark building for the centre, which will sit to the south of Craig Harbour in the River Tay, has also been launched and has already attracted considerable interest.

The V&A at Dundee is being delivered by a ground-breaking partnership between the Victoria and Albert Museum – the world's greatest museum of art and design – and the University of Dundee, the University of Abertay Dundee, Dundee City Council and Scottish Enterprise.

"The announcement of the site and the launch of the design competition bring this exciting project two big steps towards reality," said University Principal Professor Pete Downes, who is also Chairman of the project steering group.

'Since the announcement of Scottish Government support for the project in August last year, each of the partners has been working to bring us to this stage. The next step will be the formation of a charitable company to carry the project forward and we will be making announcements on that very soon.'

"There is still much work to be done to deliver this project but I am confident we will get there- the drive and determination exists to create a major asset for Dundee and Scotland."

Sir Mark Jones, Director of the V&A, added, 'The creation of the V&A at Dundee fulfils the V&A's aim of sharing its collections, exhibitions, skills and resources, reaching new audiences and giving access to more people nationally and internationally.'



The site, described by Mike Galloway, Director of City Development for Dundee City Council, as "stunning" is being made available through the Dundee Central Waterfront Partnership, the joint venture between the city council and Scottish Enterprise which is revitalising the prime area of land linking the city centre with the River Tay.

It is planned that the V&A at Dundee will open in 2014. Funding for the £47 million project is anticipated to come from the Scottish Government, other public bodies and private donations.

Deputy Principal Professor Georgina Follett has been formally seconded to the V & A Dundee project for an initial six month period. Her role will be to develop the V&A project into a national project for Scotland and Dundee. This project is seen as critical to the future development of the University and its role in cultural development and will transform external perceptions of the region.

Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design will be lead and managed by Professor Tracy Mackenna in Acting Dean capacity with full responsibility and authority to take and implement decisions required of the Dean.

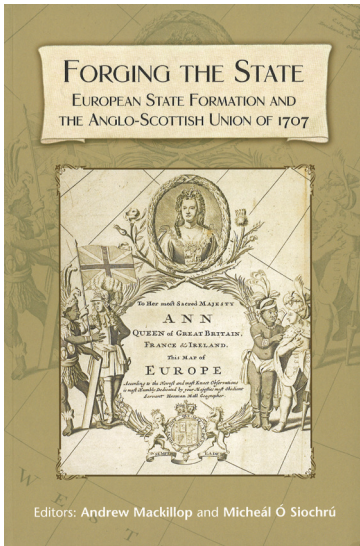
Forging the State:
European State Formation
and the Anglo-Scottish
Union of 1707
Ed Andrew Mackillop and
Micheal Siochru
DUP

The 1707 Union which united Scotland and England has been understood in a number of ways ranging from the Whig paradigm of inevitable progress, as an exercise in geopolitical security, a crisis in Scottish concepts of national sovereignty and as a mutually beneficial re-alignment of Anglo-Scottish relations for the purpose of imperial expansion.

This book seeks to complement these perspectives by situating the Union in the broad context of European state formation and by exploring comparable political, economic and cultural efforts at unification elsewhere on the Continent.

It concludes by suggesting that in many ways the British Union was a very European event which was built upon processes of amalgamation and international rivalry as well as intellectual and cultural developments common to the Continent as a whole.

Andrew Mackillop is a lecturer in history at the University of Aberdeen. Micheal O Siochru is a lecturer in history at Trinity College Dublin.



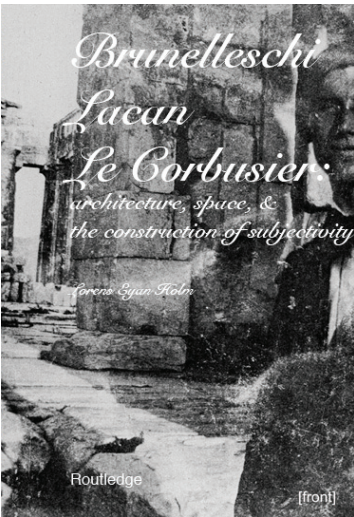
Brunelleschi Lacan
Le Corbusier:
Architecture space and
the construction of
subjectivity
Lorens Holm

A major new interpretive work on the structure of spatial experience, this book is for theorists of Architecture, Art, and Visual Studies. It interprets the fifteenth century demonstration of perspective for today by putting it in relation to contemporary theories of subjectivity.

It explores a link between Architecture and Psychoanalysis that has not hitherto been elaborated and opens the way for the Lacanian critique of architecture that is now a familiar feature of discourse in the other arts and social sciences.

The text argues that perspective is the paradigmatic form of spatial consciousness. This explains why perspective remains such a satisfying representational form - the form of space that we tend to call real - and why it remains the primary visual form of architectural space, despite recent experiments in representation that claim to challenge this canon. This link between the inner world of the psyche and the exterior world of architectural space is as fundamental as it is problematic, and is perhaps therefore inevitable.

Lorens Holm is Reader in Architecture and Director of the Geddes Institute for Urban Research at the University of Dundee.



Book celebrates talented artist and teacher

A book by a former lecturer at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design has been published nearly five years after his death.

Bill Cadenhead died in January 2005 before he had time to complete his book *A Philosophy of Drawing*. However the volume, which reflects his passion and talent for art, has now been published after Dr Sandra McNeil, a visual researcher and arts educator with a background in fine art, discovered the draft manuscript during her PhD research.

Dr McNeil was advised to consult Bill's draft as a key piece of evidence during her research into the learning experiences of fine art students.

This led to a published essay through contact with Bill's widow, Vi, who provided unlimited access to her husband's work, leading to her deciding to finish what he had begun.

In extracts from the book, Bill expressed his belief that 'an image, once written about or drawn, is never forgotten' and that 'a single line can express meaningful information if handled sensitively and expressively'.

Speaking about his hopes for the book, he said, 'The drawings here constitute a philosophy of art. The skills demonstrated in this book will be of great value to students, to artists and anyone interested in representing the natural world.'

Professor Stephen Partridge, Dean of Research at DJCAD, and Professor Ian Howard, former DJCAD Dean and current Principal of Edinburgh College of Art, launch the book at a ceremony in the Visual Research Centre at DCA.

'I saw a proof of the publication last year, and was very pleased to do so,' said Professor Partridge. "Bill was a deeply admired colleague and a fine practitioner. I personally respected him greatly, and am delighted to see the publication finally in print.

Bill was born in Aberdeen in 1934, and was part of the first intake of students to work in the new Art College building on Perth Road, from which he graduated in 1955. He was awarded a postgraduate scholarship which enabled him to travel in Europe before returning to the College as a part-time lecturer in 1961, teaching drawing and painting on a full-time basis from 1971 until his retiral in 2003.

As an artist he was best known for painting snowy Angus landscapes, responding well to the transient effects of light and weather. His teaching centred on life drawing, and he wrote a perceptive essay on the importance of this for the Museum Services exhibition Life Study in 2003.

Levehulme fellowship for Dundee professor

Professor Peter Kitson, from the University's English Department, has been awarded a prestigious fellowship to write a book examining Britain's relationship with China in the late-18th and early-19th centuries.

Professor Kitson has received a grant of £87,000 from the Leverhulme Trust for his project, 'Representation and Exchange: Britain, China and the Far East, 1770-1840'. The fellowship provides funding for the University to create a two-year lectureship in Romantic Literature to fill in for Professor Kitson while he researches and writes his book.

Professor Kitson explained that the project will see him explore the representation of China in British literature and culture in the period, as well as examining the nature of the relationship between the two great empires.

"Overall, I'll be looking at literary and other sources to see how the Qing Empire of China was represented in this period," he said. "A number of the sources I'll be looking at are writings from British missionaries to China in the early nineteenth century.

"This includes translations of the Bible into Chinese, and also translations of Chinese classical writings as the texts of Confucius and Chinese novels and dramas.

"The book will look at the impact of this exchange on British writing including popular drama, political satire, and travel writing. Science is another crucial area where important exchange took place between the west and the east.

"It is often perceived that the west was far more advanced in this respect, but, in fact, there was a definite of exchange of knowledge with British travellers keen to obtain and exploit Chinese know-how, especially with regards to agriculture and the applied sciences involving porcelain, silk and tea production and the Chinese keen to acquire western knowledge of astronomy and weapon manufacture.

"There are also extensive diplomatic documents to examine, as Britain sent two crucial Embassies to China in a failed attempt to establish modern diplomatic relations with the Qing Empire. The failure to set up clear trading and diplomatic protocols with China led to the dreadful expedient of flooding China with Opium grown in British-governed India as an attempt to redress the trading imbalance occasioned by the insatiable demand for tea."

This award further establishes the reputation and profile of Dundee's English Department for research excellence and impact in Romantic-period studies and the global contexts of literature in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Professor Kitson's project will begin in September 2010 and he will return to the English programme at Dundee in January 2013.

Adam Smith College agreement signed

The University has signed an agreement with Adam Smith College in Kirkcaldy to forge closer links between the two institutions.

It will drive the development of cooperation in several areas and provide increased opportunities for College students as well as the University's own Fife-based students, according to University Vice-Principal Professor Calderhead.

It is also intended to increase the number of students from Adam Smith College who go on to achieve a degree at Dundee.

'This agreement will improve the higher education opportunities for students in Fife,' he said. 'We are committed to supporting higher education in Fife, and the two institutions working more closely with each other will help to satisfy both student and employer needs.'

Shirley Scott, Vice Principal of Adam Smith College, also welcomed the partnership.

'The degree deficit in Fife continues to be more challenging than is the case in other parts of Scotland,' she said.

'We address this best when universities and colleges work together to increase access to degree level study. This new agreement with the University of Dundee will enhance and extend the opportunities available to Fife students through our University Centre.'

A number of similar agreements already exist between the University and local colleges, as well as others that have been signed with further educations institutions across Scotland.

Scene from a desk

Artist Pippa Koszerek has been encouraging Dundee office workers to send her the view from their desks as part of a major art project being run by the Exhibitions Department at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design.

Pippa is one of the artists working on the Nine Trades of Dundee project which aims to take art directly to the workplace and challenge preconceptions about who is an artist.

Each artist involved in the project is either working in a job that helps fund their art or who has done so in the past.

Pippa, who has worked as an artist for the past nine years and as a temporary secretary in a variety of offices for eight, is exploring minute-taking as a creative tool.

‘I really enjoy entering new office environments and meeting new people,’ she said. ‘For me, the strangeness I experience each time I enter a new office as a temp, makes me think of each new environment as a film set.’

‘By collaboratively creating an alternative public art tour based on workplaces I hope to expand on this sensation.’

The art tour is being developed with secretaries from around the city after they send in images of their usual workplace views.

Nine Trades is a project inspired by the ‘The Nine Incorporated Trades of Dundee’, an organisation that has been operating since the 1800’s. Originally concerned with commerce and standards of the city it now functions as a charity and is involved in the preservation of heritage.

Anyone who would like to contribute by sending a picture of the view from their desk can contact Pippa on P.Koszerek@dundee.ac.uk

More information is available by visiting www.ninetrades.com

Image: Daryl Smith



Happy Duckling wins BAFTA nomination



An enchanting short animation film written and directed by a former teacher at the University’s Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design has continued its run of success by being nominated for a BAFTA Film Award 2010.

‘The Happy Duckling’, a nine-minute film created using a unique and innovative ‘pop-up book’ style, has already scooped several prizes, including Best Animation at the BAFTA Scotland Awards.

The film by Israeli animator Gili Dolev, who studied and taught at DJCAD, has now been shortlisted in the Short Animation category for a national British Academy of Film and Television Arts accolade.

It tells the story of a young boy and a very unordinary duck, who learn that sometimes you have to be cruel to be kind.

Gili, who was assisted on the film by students from Dundee and Abertay Universities, has now returned to Israel with his wife and child, and works as a Content Development manager with Primus Design and Animation. He said everyone involved in the making of the film was thrilled with this latest recognition.

‘This is an absolutely tremendous honour and all of us on the team are truly happy ducklings today,’ he said. ‘There are only a few awards around the world of this magnitude, and I’m completely over the moon just to be nominated.’

‘I’d like to thank the fantastic and talented people who made this project a reality, DJCAD and Abertay University for their support, and everyone else who supported us along the way.’

The Happy Duckling has already been shown in almost 50 countries worldwide, and has won several awards at film festivals around the globe.

Production of the film took place at Duncan of Jordanstone’s media labs and Abertay’s White Space studios, and it premiered at Dundee Contemporary Arts during the 2008 Discovery Film Festival for children and young people. The film proved an instant hit with both children and adults.

The animated adventure follows the antics of a young boy who finds himself the reluctant travelling companion of a relentlessly happy duck. Despite his best efforts to shake the duck off, it trails him all the way through the delightful and surprising pop-up book world where anything can, and does, happen.

The film’s original score was provided by Dundee-born composer Mick Cooke of Belle and Sebastian.

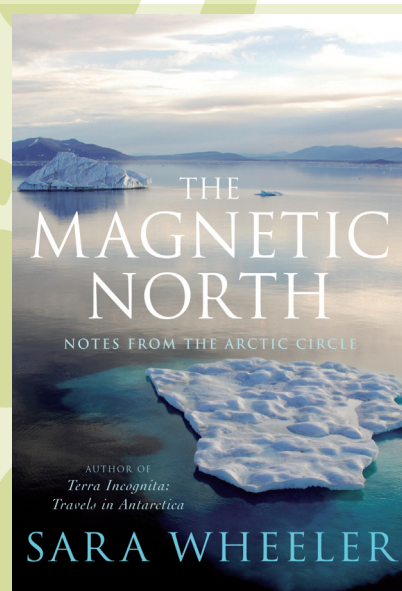
what's on...

25 February to 10 March

Monifieth Art Society Spring Exhibition
University of Dundee Botanic Garden. Free entry to the exhibition. 10am - 3.30pm.

27 and 28 February

Garden of Light – Walk the World
7pm to 10pm, Botanic Gardens
For two nights in February 2010, visitors will be able to walk through the University's Botanic Gardens and experience a spectacular display of light and sound. With all music being specially commissioned for the event and around 400 lights located throughout the grounds this event offers a spectacular experience.



6 March

SELS 2010 - Tips about icebergs: An Arctic journey

6pm, Dalhousie Building
Smashing through the Arctic Ocean with the crew of a Russian icebreaker, herding reindeer with Saami and shadowing the Trans-Alaskan pipeline with truckers, the writer Sara Wheeler made a sequence of east-west circumpolar journeys in the course of the research for her critically acclaimed book *The Magnetic North*. In this powerful and funny lecture, the latest in the Saturday Evening lecture series, Wheeler uncovers the beautiful, brutal reality of the Arctic and ponders on its past as well as its future.

10 March

Café Science Extra – Depression: Who decides what doctors prescribe
6pm, Dundee Science Centre, Greenmarket GP and researcher, Pauline Lockhart, will discuss her latest findings in to what affects trends in prescribing anti-depressant medications. Doors Open 5:30pm. Free entry. Not ticketed.

13 March

Ig Nobel Winners Event

6pm, Dalhousie Building, Old Hawkhill, University of Dundee
The aim of the IgNobel awards is to honour achievements that first make people laugh and then make them think. The show features Marc Abrahams, organiser of the Ig Nobel Prizes and Guardian columnist, together with a gaggle of Ig Nobel Prize winners and other improbable researchers. Marc will review the past year's improbable research and several Ig winners and colleagues will try to explain what they did and why they did it, and will field questions. This event is running as part of National Science and Engineering week in 2010. Confirmed speakers include Elena Bodnar, Dan Meyer, Steve Farrar and Charles Paxton. Some of the material presented may not be suitable for younger persons.

29 March

Café Science – Monkey business: what primates tell us about ourselves

7pm, Chambers Coffee House
Humans are a special type of primate, but so are the many different species that exist. This talk will look at some of these primate species and what they may (or may not) show us about ourselves. Doors open at 6:30pm. Talk begins at 7pm. Free entry. Not ticketed.

2010 SATURDAY EVENING LECTURE SERIES

BBC presenter kicks off new SELS series

Economist, journalist and television presenter **Evan Davis** launched the new season of the popular Saturday Evening Lecture Series in January by examining "The Truth About Dishonesty."



Evan spent several years as BBC economics editor, and currently presents Radio 4's Today programme and the hugely successful venture-capitalist series *Dragons' Den*.

His lecture looked at when it pays for those in journalism, politics and business to be candid and when it benefits them to be economical with the truth, arguing that – in the long run – the consequences of dishonesty are negative.

An exciting programme of varied and thought-provoking lectures has been lined up for the 86th season of the Series, which will take place over the coming months. All lectures take place in the Dalhousie Building, and are followed by a drinks reception. Free tickets are available through the University's online store or by contacting the Events office on 01382 385564.

Other lectures in the 2010 season are:

March 6th: **Sara Wheeler**

"Tips About Icebergs: An Arctic Journey"

April 24th: **Sir Christopher Frayling**

"From Brunel to Wallace and Gromit – the changing public image of the engineer"

May 1st: **Lewis Wolpert**

"The Development of Pattern and Form"

May 15th: **Professors Lynn Abrams and Callum Brown**

"Troubled transition to modernity: Scottish everyday life in the 20th century"

Café Science turns two!



Just two years after hosting its first meeting, Café Science Dundee is celebrating a bright future with growing audience numbers, a new venue and an exciting programme of speakers.

The initiative, which aims to promote public engagement with science and offers local researchers the opportunity to discuss their work, has also just re-launched a channel on YouTube, allowing viewers to log on and revisit highlights from the series.

So far this season speakers have included Dr Steve Parkes, Director of the Space Technology Centre, Dr Keith Skene, lecturer in the College of Life Sciences, Professor Vicki Hanson, Chair of Inclusive Technologies at the School of Computing and Professor Geoff Gadd, Professor of Microbiology in the College of Life Sciences.

Still to come are Dr Steve Reynolds from the School of Electronic Engineering and Physics with a look at solar power and Dr Calum Sutherland, from the University's Biomedical Research Institute, who will be asking why it is so difficult to reduce the nation's waistline.

Dr Peter Willatts, from the School of Psychology will be discussing whether Omega 3 fats make children smarter while Dr Scott Hardie from the University of Abertay will be looking at primates and what they tell us about ourselves.

Dr Jon Urch, the University's Public Outreach Coordinator, who helps run Café Science and Café Science Extra, the forum for up-and-coming researchers, said he was delighted with the public response to the talks.

"Both Café Science programmes have gone from strength to strength this season," he said. "Audience numbers are up considerably. We have seen our biggest ever audience for Keith Skene's discussion on evolution and we are making great strides forward in reaching out to our audience.

"We are over the moon that we have found such a fantastic new venue in Chambers Coffee House in South Tay Street for the Café Science events. We celebrated our 2nd anniversary there in January and the audience gave us rave reviews."

Café Science Extra has also seen a boost in audience numbers with a four-fold increase since it began in October 2008. Held in Sensation Science Centre in Dundee the programme has included talks on breast cancer, saving the planet, the psychology of people and places and the use of lasers in medicine.

The four sessions remaining in the current season include talks on trends in anti-depressant treatment, right and left handedness, the use of ultrasound and the search for a cure for tropical diseases.

Dr Maria Ana Cataluna, from the School of Electronic Engineering and Physics, who gave the talk on lasers said she found it an "inspiring experience."

"Participating in the Café Science Extra event was an exciting opportunity which I really enjoyed," she said. "Inevitably you take a fresher look at your research and how it fits in the "big picture", particularly when you explain complex phenomena in lay terms.

"The beauty of coming face-to-face with the general public is that not only it raises awareness of your research and its impact, but you also feel rewarded and accountable for what you do as a researcher – and I found that a very inspiring experience!"

Any researchers interested in taking part in the Café Science Dundee and Café Science Extra programmes can contact Dr Urch on 01382 386669 or via email at j.urch@dundee.ac.uk or revealingresearch@dundee.ac.uk. For more information about the programmes visit: www.CafeScienceDundee.co.uk and www.youtube.com/user/CafeScienceDundee

sense of achievement

Pioneer: Dr George Alexander Pirie 1863 - 1929

Dr George Alexander Pirie was an early pioneer in the use of X-rays in clinical medicine between 1896 and 1925 at the Dundee Royal Infirmary. He paid a high price for his research which ultimately led to the amputation of both hands.



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For further information contact **Lorna Reid** on **01382 434173**
or email lorna.reid@conventiondundeeandangus.co.uk

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