

## Welcome

Welcome to the Martinmas 2009 edition of the *Link* Newsletter, keeping you up to date with news and developments at the University. A special welcome to those of you joining us for the first time – we look forward to interacting with you in the months and years ahead.

With best wishes from St Andrews.

Sandra Doherty  
Alumni Assistant

Elaine Cartwright  
Alumni Relations Officer

## St Andrews Named One of UK's Top Universities

St Andrews has been named top university in Scotland and fifth in the UK in *The Sunday Times University Guide 2010*, which describes St Andrews as "now firmly established as the leading multi-faculty alternative to Oxford and Cambridge."

The result caps the most successful run of league table results in the University's history, the highest ever achieved by a Scottish university with St Andrews placed first in the National Student Survey, third in *The Guardian University Guide*, fourth in *The Times Good University Guide*, fifth in *The Sunday Times University Guide* and seventh in *The Independent Complete University Guide*. This strong performance is attributable to high scores in entry standards, good Honours degrees, staff-student ratio, research quality and completion rates, along with student satisfaction, where, for the fourth year running, St Andrews has come out on top.

Principal and Vice-Chancellor Louise Richardson said, "We are delighted by these results, they are deeply gratifying. They reflect the dedication, engagement and commitment to excellence of everyone who works and studies at St Andrews. We are also very proud that as a relatively small Scottish university we have been able to sustain such a strong performance at the highest level of UK higher education."

*The Sunday Times University Guide* can be viewed online at: [www.timesonline.co.uk/](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/)



Credit: Peter Adamson

## Band Aid for Students

A folk-rock band of academics from the University has written a song about the credit crunch in aid of student scholarships. The band, Dry Island Buffalo Jump, which is made up of four historians, a French linguist, a Divinity scholar and a poet, are selling downloads of the song and donating all proceeds plus live performance fees to raise money for students in need.

The band, which started out playing cover versions, has written a number of original songs. The Credit Crunch Song, inspired by the financial crisis and based on Old Testament readings, was written by founder member and English lecturer, Dr Chris Jones, and recorded at his Boarhills cottage by Dundee musician John Curran. It features backing vocals by 'the Buffalettes', Chris's daughters Eve (9) and Anya (7), and guest appearances from Heraclitus, the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher, and Boethius, the sixth-century philosopher poet who wrote 'The Consolation of Philosophy'. With 18 degrees between them, the band has already been dubbed the brainiest band in Britain.

Dr Jones said, "In these straitened economic times, more and more students are going to find it hard to get the money together to go to University. Neither of my parents went to university - I was the first in my family - so widening access is something I feel quite strongly about. But that's also true of many of my colleagues here. If a few kids who wouldn't normally think about coming to study at St Andrews apply here because of our song, and get a bit of financial support to do so, that would be great."

The track can be downloaded via the University website, [www.st-andrews.ac.uk/dibj](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/dibj) with a minimum suggested donation of £1.



Credit: Gayle Cook

## New Medical Building Enhances Teaching and Research

The new £45 million School of Medicine and the Sciences is one of the first UK medical schools whose research facilities are fully integrated with the other sciences and key university disciplines, placing St Andrews in a position to produce world-leading research.

Director of Teaching, Professor Simon Guild, outlined how the School has been designed with twenty-first century teaching and research in mind. Formally-taught and self-directed learning modules have the principles of research built into all elements, with the aim of developing a habit of independent learning and enquiry in students that will last a lifetime. He explained how the building will be “student-focused, with flexible resources and IT facilities that could not be shoe-horned into the old Bute building.”

Students will learn in a variety of environments: lectures, practical clinical sessions, small group sessions with simulated patients, student-led learning groups, and laboratory practicals, with the practice of teaching whole body dissection being maintained. These different approaches have demanded varied and flexible teaching and laboratory space - needs that have been central to the planning of the new building.

Director of Research, Professor Simon Herrington, in his discussion on research, noted the multidisciplinary nature of modern medical discovery. “Medicine has moved far beyond the intuitive approach of Jenner or Fleming,” he observed. “Today, medical research teams can comprise biologists, physicists, chemists, neuroscientists - wide ranges of specialists systematically combining their work. Our relocation to the North Haugh, next to our scientific colleagues, is eagerly anticipated by both medics and scientists.”

Professor Herrington explained that the underlying thrust of the approach is to deliver translational research, transposing discoveries from molecules, through cells, to people and populations, as exemplified by the recent £1.2 million grant awarded to our Next Generation Biophotonics programme. This involves a grouping from the Schools of Medicine, Physics & Astronomy, Biology and Chemistry sharing knowledge in a truly multidisciplinary partnership.

The new building, which is scheduled to admit its first medical students in September 2010, has been awarded an ‘Excellent’ sustainability rating under the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method scheme (BREEAM), and will be among the most sustainable and environmentally friendly buildings in the UK.



Credit: Dawn White

L-R – Professor Simon Guild (Director of Teaching), Professor Simon Herrington (Director of Research), Professor Hugh MacDougall (Dean of Medicine), and Stuart Armstrong, (Director of Medical Fundraising)

## New Team of Student Representatives

A new team of sabbatical officers has been elected by the student body.

Andrew Keenan (22) from North Berwick was re-elected as President of the Students' Association. A graduate of Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies, Andrew was Editor-in-Chief of the award-winning student newspaper *The Saint*, and also Press Officer for the successful FS:08 Fashion Show, which raised over £28,000 for charity. He is looking forward to continuing the work of the last year, particularly in relation to the extensive redevelopment of the Students' Association building, involvement in the planning of the University's celebration of its 600th Anniversary, and a complete review of the Association's operations, including the streamlining of society funding and support.

Georgina Rannard (23), Director of Representation, is from Liverpool and a graduate of Modern History. She has served as President of the OneWorld Society, running Fairtrade and ethical investment campaigns, and most recently was the Rector's Assessor, organising Kevin Dunion's successful rectorial election campaign in October 2008. Georgina will be focusing on improving the academic advising system, the provision of affordable accommodation, and sustainability issues within the student body and the University.

Director of Events & Services, Phil Pass (22), a Geography and Management graduate from Manchester, served as Accommodation Officer for a year as well as being a member of the Cricket Club and the Management Society and leading the Entertainments Crew. Phil has also taken part in over 50 different student theatre productions. With a remit extending from the organisation of the Freshers' Week programme through to the Graduation Ball, he is responsible for publicising the bars, catering, shop and other commercial services of the Association, ensuring that they continue to provide what students need and want, whilst exploring sponsorship opportunities for the Association.

Classics graduate Matthew Guest (22) from Southport is the Director of Student Development & Activities. He has been involved in working with stage crews, the Hamilton Hall Committee and the Theatre Odyssey group. More recently, he served as the Community Relations Officer for the Students' Association. Matthew aims to enhance the student experience by promoting the many societies, through working closely with the Careers Centre and University departments and raising awareness of the important role played by the Students' Association.

Sam Roberts (22) from Edinburgh has taken a year out of his studies towards a degree in Art History to serve as President of the Athletic Union. His plans include building on the groundwork of his predecessor to launch the 'Saints Sport' brand, which will encompass all sporting activity at St Andrews, and leading a complete operational review within the Athletic Union.



Credit: Oli Walker

L-R Georgina, Andrew, Sam, Matthew and Phil

## Setting Sail with Greenpeace

A pioneering Greenpeace arctic expedition joined forces this summer with St Andrews geophysicist, Dr Richard Bates, to investigate the impact of climate change. Sailing further north than they had ever attempted before and led by polar explorer Eric Philips, Dr Bates joined glaciologists and Greenpeace to study the break up and analyse the deterioration of the Petermann, one of Greenland's largest glaciers.

In an effort to address the threat of damaging environmental change, the team has developed ground-breaking new techniques to gather data and measure ice that is melting at an extraordinary rate. Dr Bates explained how above normal temperatures in the Eastern Arctic during June had caused the break up along the western shore of Greenland to start earlier than usual. This has implications for rising sea levels across the globe as well as for the Greenland ice sheet as potential larger releases of frozen fresh water floods into the ocean. Dr Bates emphasised the urgency of the investigation. He explained how critical it is to observe and take measurements of the whirlpools and upwellings, as well as to gather information on the water movements in front of, within, and below these glaciers in order to understand how the systems work and thereby assess how much they are changing.

Now back in Scotland, Dr Bates hopes to be able to apply his experience to work on local climate change. "There's an important link to Scotland in what sea level rise and the increase of fresh water from the Greenland ice cap into the ocean circulation might do to our way of life. It's an issue for any country where people live and work near the coasts and much of the economy is associated with coastal industries."



Credit: Nick Cobbing

## 'Invisibility' Two Years Away

A St Andrews physicist hopes to make major advances in the field of invisibility, thanks to funding from a Royal Society Theo Murphy Blue Skies award for ground-breaking research. Professor Ulf Leonhardt began his involvement in turning invisibility from fiction into science in 2002, and over the next two years plans to develop ideas that may turn invisibility from frontier science into applicable technology.

Inspired by optical illusions, Arabia and the imagination of his children, along with JK Rowling's Harry Potter, Professor Leonhardt describes his work as "geometry, light and a wee bit of magic". Describing technology as "the modern form of magic", he goes on to say that "Fantastical, magical things are possible in principle. The question is whether you can turn them into practice, and that depends largely on ideas, which are even more essential than the development of new materials."

Using modern metamaterials, such as metal consisting of tiny structures with unusual electromagnetic properties, Professor Leonhardt is working on the design of invisibility devices using Fermat's principle, or the law of refraction. His research exploits the unorthodox connection between the bending of light in materials and the geometry of curved space. In bending light, transparent materials like glass or water appear to distort the geometry of space, which is the cause of many optical illusions, including invisibility. He explained, "Imagine a transparent material that guides light around an object without distorting the light; the object would disappear from view. One way of achieving this feat is to let the material act like a coordinate transformation of space: the cloaking device condenses space, enclosing the object into a single, invisible point."

Although Professor Leonhardt says it is difficult to predict possible applications, he suggests that invisibility research may actually be used to improve visibility, leading to the development of the perfect retroreflectors (cat's eyes), better microscopes and improved lenses. While the *New Scientist* recently predicted that invisibility cloaks could be a part of everyday life in 30 years, he remains open-minded about the possibilities of his research. "I will most certainly find easier ways of cloaking, but it remains to be seen how practical they are. The important thing is to understand the foundations and come up with something new or take an existing idea to extremes, using technology and ideas to make things happen - technology we cannot imagine would ever exist."

## University Lands Green Gown Award

The University has won one of the UK's most prestigious environmental education awards, the Green Gown Award, for its ground-breaking undergraduate programme in Sustainable Development.

The programme, which was launched in 2004, with the first students graduating in 2008, is considered Scotland's flagship higher education degree programme in sustainability and is now becoming a model for other courses across Europe. The course offers a unique, interdisciplinary curriculum, explores a new relationship between knowledge and society and seeks to nurture future leaders in Sustainable Development. It was recently showcased by the Scottish Government as an example of good practice within Scotland. According to the Green Gown judges, who praised University staff for their hard work and commitment, the St Andrews course demonstrated "innovation, excellence and educational impact." The Green Gown Awards, which recognise exceptional initiatives being undertaken by universities and colleges across the UK to become more sustainable, have become established as a prestigious recognition of the achievements within the further and higher education sector, as well as the environmental sector. Dr Rehema White, Sustainable Programme Coordinator at St Andrews, said of winning this award, "It sends a message that you can be innovative and try new approaches in higher education, that a change towards transformative education is possible."

Whilst the programme is hosted by the School of Geography & Geosciences, the teaching of core modules is undertaken by eleven Schools across the University. This study area is now one of the fastest growing academic areas in the University, and is part of the University's drive to promote sustainable development through scholarship as well as practice.

## Mirror Mirror

They say that opposites attract, but this is not the case according to research carried out in the University's School of Psychology. The research, which found that women liked men who were both masculine looking and looked like themselves, brings scientists closer to revealing the secrets of what women find attractive in men. The research team, led by Tamsin Saxton, a postdoctoral research fellow funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), used computer digital techniques to manipulate men's faces to make them look more or less masculine, and more or less like the women who rated them. Women then rated each face for attractiveness.

Tamsin commented, "Previous research has often found that women can be attracted to masculine men, but are also a bit suspicious of them. However, women tend to trust men more if they look like them." The findings might explain some of the attraction between celebrity couples such as Vanessa Paradis and Johnny Depp, David and Victoria Beckham and Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes.

The study, which is part of an ongoing research programme, was carried out in collaboration with the University of Liverpool. The findings are published online in the scientific journal *Behavioral Ecology*, Volume 20, Issue 5 September-October 2009.

## Your Story

To commemorate the University's 600th Anniversary we are collecting personal perspectives on what the University of St Andrews means to you and why it is so special. Whether it is an anecdote, memory, story, or poem, we would like you to share this and a suitable photo with us. Over the course of the Anniversary, we aim to collect 600 entries (up to 600 words) which will be used as a fascinating and valuable collection for future generations.

To contribute Your Story, please visit [www.st-andrews.ac.uk/600th/yourstory](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/600th/yourstory) or if you have any further questions please email us at: [yourstory@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:yourstory@st-andrews.ac.uk)

## 'Love from Home' Service

Our very popular online 'Love from Home' service, run in cooperation with local baker and confectioner Fisher & Donaldson, allows families to send their students cakes, chocolates and gift baskets on special occasions with a personalised message. Please visit [www.st-andrews.ac.uk/parents/FamilyProgramme/LovefromHome/](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/parents/FamilyProgramme/LovefromHome/) to see the full selection of goodies which can be ordered and paid for via our Online Order Facility.

Please note that deliveries are made to addresses in St Andrews during term-time, Monday to Saturday, between 8am and 1pm. It is important to allow at least five working days between placing your order and the delivery date to guarantee delivery on the requested date. In the interest of security, we are unable to take orders over the phone.



## Semester Dates 2009/2010 [www.st-andrews.ac.uk/semesterdates/](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/semesterdates/)

<b>Martinmas Semester:</b>	Monday 28 September 2009 – Friday 22 January 2010
Reading Week:	Week commencing Monday 9 November 2009
Graduation:	Monday 30 November 2009
Christmas Vacation:	Saturday 19 December 2009 – Monday 4 January 2010
Revision Period:	Commences Tuesday 5 January 2010
Examinations:	Monday 11 January 2010 – Thursday 21 January 2010
<b>Candlemas Semester:</b>	Monday 8 February 2010 – Friday 28 May 2010
Spring Vacation:	Saturday 27 March 2010 – Sunday 11 April 2010
Revision Period:	Commences Saturday 8 May 2010
Examinations:	Saturday 15 May 2010 – Thursday 27 May 2010
Graduation:	Tuesday 22 June 2010 – Friday 25 June 2010
Re-Assessment Diet:	<i>Medicine</i> Monday 30 August 2010 – Friday 3 September 2010 <i>Others</i> Monday 6 September 2010 – Thursday 09 September 2010

Further information for families of current students can be found at: [www.st-andrews.ac.uk/parents](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/parents)

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Latest news and other information about the University can be viewed at: [www.st-andrews.ac.uk](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk)

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