

Welcome

We would like to welcome all parents and guardians to the Martinmas 2008 edition of the *Link* newsletter and, in particular, warm wishes to all those new members of the Family Programme who are joining us for the first time, some of whom we had the pleasure of meeting at the Parents' Receptions in September. We were delighted to see so many people take the opportunity to meet fellow parents and University staff.

We trust that you will enjoy reading the latest news from in and around the University and hope your students have a very successful and enjoyable year ahead.

With best wishes from St Andrews

Sandra Doherty
Alumni Assistant

Elaine Cartwright (MA 1985)
Alumni Relations Officer

Scottish University of the Year

The University of St Andrews has been ranked in fifth position in *The Sunday Times University Guide*, naming it Scottish University of the Year.

It is the highest-ever ranking for a Scottish institution, and the first time a Scottish university has made the national top five in the guide's 11-year history.

It is also the second time in three years that the University has been named Scottish University of the Year, and the third time it has been singled out by the Guide. St Andrews last won the accolade in 2006 and was also the UK University of the Year in 2002.

The University has also been named joint third university in the UK (alongside Cambridge) in the National Student Survey 2008 published in September.

Dr Brian Lang, Principal and Vice-Chancellor said "I am very pleased that another year's excellent performance has been recognised. We look Oxford and Cambridge in the eye."

The full details of *The Sunday Times University Guide* are published online at: www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education/

THE SUNDAY TIMES UNIVERSITY GUIDE
SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR
2008/2009



Students Celebrate Vettriano Sale

A range of local, national and international charities supported by students at the University of St Andrews will benefit from the sale of a rare sketch by Fife artist Jack Vettriano.

The retrospective sketch of 'The Singing Butler' - Vettriano's most iconic painting - was sold to a private UK buyer for £32,000 at the Sotheby's sale at Gleneagles in August.

The sketch, completed by Vettriano during a short master class he gave to St Andrews students in 2003, had previously been valued at £20,000. The artist and the University Principal Dr Brian Lang agreed the work should be gifted to the student charity effort which last year raised a record £160,000.

A University spokesman said, "It's a fantastic boost for a Student Charities Campaign which has already proved to be one of the most active in Scotland. We are very grateful to Jack for the support he has given students and student charities in St Andrews over many years."

Charities which will benefit from the sale include UNICEF, Breast Cancer Campaign, Refuge, Joy to the World, The Chest, Heart & Stroke Association and Alzheimer's Scotland.



New Team of Student Representatives

Following their successful election, this year's sabbatical officers have now taken up their full-time positions.

Heading the team is President of the Students' Association Andrew Keenan (21) from North Berwick, who graduated with an MA in Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies in June. Andrew has been involved in numerous student activities - he was Editor of the award-winning student newspaper *The Saint*, and was Press Officer for the successful FS:08 Fashion Show, which raised over £28,000 for charity.

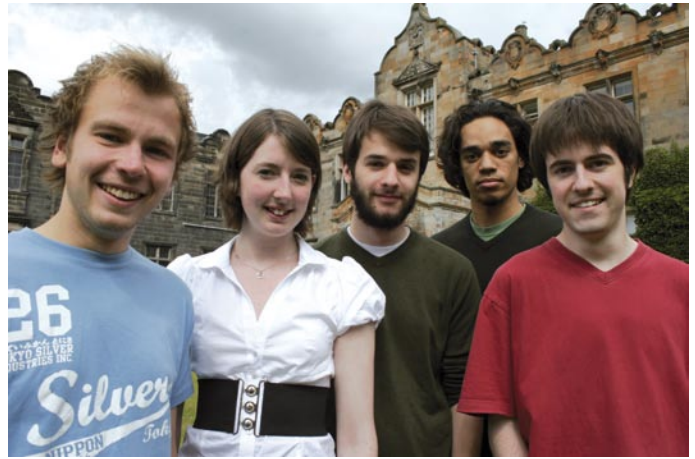
Andrew's goals include working on the Students' Union redevelopment, improving town-gown relations, and increasing representation on a national level to both Westminster and Holyrood. He also hopes to create a more visible media presence for the Association.

James Shield (20), from Lundin Links, is a 3rd year student in International Relations and has taken a year out to serve as Director of Representation. His goals include improving implementation of the class representative system, awareness of the Association's advocacy services and effective campaigning on national issues. His recent work with MSPs secured a debate on tenancy deposit protection schemes at the Scottish Parliament in June - an issue he hopes will become one of the Government's top priorities in terms of housing policy.

Philippa Dunn (22), Director of Student Development and Activities, graduated with an MA in English in June. Originally from Derbyshire, Philippa has been heavily involved in student activities, societies and subcommittees. Her interests lie in student radio and theatre, and she is excited about supporting and facilitating all the projects, events and ideas of more than 120 societies, as well as furthering the development of the new Barron Theatre as an exemplary arts venue.

Stacy Lee (22), from London, is Director of Events and Services and graduated this year with a BSc in Mathematics. Stacy has been involved in numerous activities, ranging from the University Taekwondo Club to the student radio station, STAR. He hopes to put on an exciting range of new and different events that students will enjoy and from which they will benefit. Stacy's remit also extends to publicising the wealth of services offered by the Association.

Alex Cooper (23), is the new Athletic Union President. Alex is from Cologne, and graduated in German and Spanish this year. During his undergraduate years, he was involved in STAR radio and was President of the Boat Club. He plans to build on the very solid groundwork of his predecessor, whilst employing a fresh emphasis on sponsorship and promotion of sport at St Andrews.



Pictured from L-R – Alex, Philippa, Andrew, Stacy and James
Credit: Oli Walker

US Ambassador Opens Arts Building

The new £8million Arts Building, which houses experts in international security, terrorism and peace studies, was officially opened in August by the US Ambassador to the UK, The Honourable Robert Tuttle.

Ambassador Tuttle unveiled a plaque during his visit, officially opening the building which is occupied by the School of International Relations (IR) and five prestigious research centres (The Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence, The Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, The Institute for Middle Eastern, Central Asian and Caucasus Studies, The Institute for Iranian Studies, and The Centre for Syrian Studies.)

St Andrews was the first university in Scotland to establish a School of IR and its academics remain at the forefront of explaining conflict and cooperation in the modern world. The School is also home to one of the world's oldest centres for the study of terrorism, which advises governments, the armed forces and the international business community.

During his opening speech, Ambassador Tuttle said, "It is an honour to have been invited to open and dedicate this building. It is fascinating to note, for example, that the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence will co-exist with the Centre of Peace and Conflict Studies, providing hope for us all.

"The University of St Andrews is renowned for its international outlook and this is demonstrated by the number of students it attracts from outwith the UK.

"As well as having a significant number of students from the US, it boasts connections with Americans such as Benjamin Franklin and Bobby Jones. This is a link to be celebrated and I would like to thank the University for inviting me to open such an important building."

The new structure is the first University building to be constructed in St Andrews' town centre for 30 years. Its cost was partly met by donations totalling £1.5million, a substantial amount of which came from US donors.

University Principal and Vice-Chancellor Dr Brian Lang commented, "St Andrews is a leader in the study of those subjects housed within this impressive new building. It is fitting that the staff and students involved should have an appropriate home, but the building being opened also helps to demonstrate the international role that is played by the University of St Andrews. We are pleased to be an institution that projects Scotland on to the world stage."

For details on naming opportunities associated with The Arts Building, please contact the Development Office on +44 (0)1334 462101 or develop@st-andrews.ac.uk



Pictured from L-R Principal Dr Brian Lang, The Honourable Robert Tuttle, Chancellor The Rt Hon Sir Menzies Campbell
Credit: Alan Richardson

The Opening of MUSA

MUSA, the new Museum of the University of St Andrews, opened its doors to the public for the first time this autumn.

Located on The Scores, MUSA houses four exhibition galleries, an education centre, viewing terrace and sculpture garden, along with a new fully accessible Learning Loft with a varied programme of educational activities which will enhance learning for all.

This is the first time that artefacts and artworks from a collection that has been six centuries in the making will be on public display in one location. The collections illustrate the history, personalities, teaching and research practices of the University and serve as unique touchstones for the history of St Andrews.

The Museum uses the very latest display techniques, including audio-visual and interactive presentations, to tell the story of Scotland's oldest university, taking us from mediaeval times right up until the present day.

Throughout the year, at locations throughout St Andrews, MUSA hosts a programme of temporary exhibitions and events which present an exciting mix of art, culture and history. For more information on these events, please contact MUSA directly.

Although MUSA is now open, we continue to raise funds to secure its long-term viability. If you would like to make a contribution, or would like the opportunity to sponsor one or more of the precious artefacts that are exhibited in MUSA, please contact us or visit www.st-andrews.ac.uk/musasponsor

Entry to MUSA is free of charge. Opening hours are:

Winter (1 October – 31 March) 12 – 4pm Thursday – Sunday,

Summer (1 April – 30 September) 10am – 5pm Monday – Saturday and 12 – 4pm on Sundays.

Please note that all University museum venues are closed during the Christmas and New Year period.

For further information please contact MUSA at : MUSA, 7a The Scores, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9AR

Tel: + 44 (0)1334 461 660 Email: museum-enquiries@st-andrews.ac.uk Website: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/musa



Summer Research for Undergraduates

An exciting new programme was launched this year to enable St Andrews undergraduates to carry out research projects over the summer vacation. The University funded 20 undergraduates on 8-week research projects that they each planned and completed with the guidance and supervision of a member of academic staff.

The idea behind the programme was to introduce undergraduates to the skills needed to carry out independent research, both as an introduction to a future research career and also as a way of showing them the day-to-day academic research that takes place 'behind the scenes' in the laboratories, libraries and offices of the University.

The Vice-Principal for Learning and Teaching (Professor Philip Winn) together with the Dean of Arts (Professor Lorna Milne) and Dean of Science (Professor Alyson Tobin) selected the 20 winners of the 'URIP' (Undergraduate Research Internship Programme) awards out of 100 high quality applications from undergraduates in Arts, Science, Divinity and Medicine. The students were selected on their academic record and also on the quality of their research project, which they designed in consultation with their academic mentor. Research topics ranged across all disciplines and included investigations into autism, the Scottish Court of Chivalry, gender and academia, the transaction sector of the US economy, laser technology and strategies for discovering new planets.

The URIP awards formed part of a University-wide programme of undergraduate research this summer. A further 17 undergraduates received awards from UK sponsors of research, including The Wellcome Trust, the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, the Nuffield Foundation and Carnegie Trust.

All of the summer 'internees' were invited to present the results of their project at an event in Lower College Hall that was attended by the academic supervisors, the Deans and Pro Deans, members of the Principal's Office, University Court, Heads of School and members of the press. The students presented posters and were on hand to answer questions and to explain their work to the visitors.

A prize of £250 was awarded to the winning poster 'The effect of diet and skin colour on the perceived health of infant faces', produced by Tamlyn Watermeyer who carried out her research in the School of Psychology under the supervision of Professor David Perrett. The two runners up were Kirstin Donaldson, who worked in the School of Art History on 'the identification and conservation of the Penrose photographic collection (Dean Gallery, Edinburgh)', supervised by Dr Natalie Adamson, and Louise O'Hare whose project 'Differential use of binocular cues for motion depth perception' was supervised by Professor Julie Harris in the School of Psychology.

Professor Winn commented, "We were gratified by the number of students who showed an interest in summer research internships, and delighted to see the level of support they were receiving from their Schools and supervisors. We were extremely impressed by the high standard of all the applications and with the enthusiasm with which the students undertook their research. The quality of the posters on show reflected the exceptionally high standard of work that was achieved and we thank the supervisors for the guidance and support they gave to these students over the summer."



The winners are pictured here with (L-R) Professor Tobin, Professor Winn and Professor Milne
Credit: Bruce Pert

Seals Help Unlock Secrets of the Ocean

Sensors developed by the instrumentation group of the University of St Andrews' Sea Mammal Research Unit have been employed by Antarctic researchers to collect otherwise inaccessible information about the climate.

Scientists usually collect data to characterise the ocean using satellite sensing, buoyant floats, and ship expeditions, but winter sea ice renders the Southern Ocean virtually impermeable to all three.

The group has created small data logging transmitters that can be used to measure temperature, pressure and salinity of the ocean through which the elephant seals swim, and transmit data as well as seal positions to satellites when the seals surface. The species can dive as deep as 2km and, from this, researchers are able to amass data for a vast range of hitherto inaccessible ocean, including areas deep within the sea-ice in winter, while also learning about the animals themselves. This new data has enabled them to follow the yearly rise-and-fall cycle of sea ice production and should help scientists refine computer models of the Southern Ocean circulation.



Credit: Lars Boehme

Professor Mike Fedak from the University's Sea Mammal Research Unit said, "The Southern Ocean is a hotspot for climate research because its circulation is critical to understanding the earth's climate and its huge ice sheet is sensitive to climate change."

Led by Dr Jean-Benoit Charrassin, a marine biologist at the Natural History Museum in Paris, researchers in France, the UK, Australia and the US have attached electronic dataloggers to 70 seals at the four most important breeding colonies of southern elephant seals.

The new approach has also been extended to seals roaming the seas around both Poles as part of the International Polar Year (IPY), and the on-going MEOP project (Marine Mammals Exploring the Oceans Pole to Pole) has equipped 100 seals of three polar species with sensors.

The MEOP animals have contributed over 35,000 observations from the polar seas in the past year, with the data being automatically distributed all over the world via the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Global Telecommunication System (GTS) to operational forecasting centres where they can be assimilated into models that are run to provide ocean forecasts and long-range seasonal and climate predictions.

Professor Fedak remarked "The idea that these animals have become our partners in providing real time data about the state of our climate, while simultaneously helping us understand their ecological requirements, has captured the imagination of biologists, oceanographers and the public."

Online 'Love From Home' Service

This very popular service allows families to send their loved ones cakes, chocolates and gift baskets on special occasions with a personalised message. Run by the Alumni Relations Office in cooperation with local baker and confectioner Fisher & Donaldson, our online 'Love from Home' service provides a great way to deliver an encouraging word, a good luck message or a birthday greeting to your absent student.

Deliveries are made to addresses in St Andrews during term-time, Monday to Saturday, between 8am and 1pm. Please place your order early as we require at least five working days between placing your order and delivery, to guarantee delivery on a particular date. Please note that, in the interest of security, we are unable to take orders over the phone or by post.

To see the full selection of goodies available and to place your order, please visit www.st-andrews.ac.uk/alumni/Familyprogramme/



Session Dates 2008/2009

Martinmas Semester: Mon 29 September 2008 – Fri 23 January 2009

Reading Week: Week commencing Mon 10 November 2008

Graduation: Thu 27 November 2008

Christmas Vacation: Sat 20 December 2008 – Sun 4 January 2009

Revision Period: Commences Mon 5 January 2009

Examinations: Sat 10 January 2009 – Tue 20 January 2009

Candlemas Semester: Mon 9 February 2009 – Fri 29 May 2009

Spring Vacation: Sat 28 March 2009 – Sun 12 April 2009

Revision Period: Commences Sat 9 May 2009

Examinations: Sat 16 May 2009 – Wed 27 May 2009

Graduation: Tue 23 June 2009 – Fri 26 June 2009

Re-Assessment Diet:

Medicine Mon 31 August 2009 – Fri 4 September 2009

Others Mon 7 September 2009 – Thu 10 September 2009

Information for families of current students can be found at: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/parents

Link is published by the Alumni Relations Office, Development, University of St Andrews, Crawford Building, 91 North Street, St Andrews, Fife KY16 9AJ. Tel: +44 (0)1334 467194 Fax: +44 (0)1334 462590 Email: alumnus@st-andrews.ac.uk

Latest news and other information about the University can be viewed at: www.st-andrews.ac.uk

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