Welcome

Welcome to the Candlemas edition of Link, through which we aim to bring you up to date with University news, and share with you some exciting developments. For those families whose students will be graduating in the summer, we hope that you have enjoyed participating in the Family Programme and that your links with the University and town will be long-lasting.

With best wishes for a lovely summer.

Sandra Doherty    Elaine Cartwright
Alumni Assistant    Alumni Relations Officer

Plans for a New School for Medicine and the Sciences

The University is planning a new £45m School of Medicine and the Sciences, which will lead collaborative research in areas such as cancer, health psychology and infectious disease. It will be one of the first UK Medical Schools whose research facilities are fully integrated with the other sciences and key university disciplines including physics, chemistry, biology and psychology, offering an important new dimension to medical research and the training of new doctors.

The University also expects to expand its leading-edge medical research capacity fourfold over five years, focusing on key areas of collaboration which capitalise on the internationally-recognised research excellence of its Science faculty.

The development at the heart of the University’s science campus on the North Haugh is being made possible in part by a donation of £8 million from The Sekhar Foundation, the charitable arm of the Malaysian-based Petra Group, and is one of the largest single donations ever given to a Scottish university.

The School will be named after the late Dr B C Sekhar, an iconic figure in Malaysia’s history and the father of the country’s rubber and palm oil industries.

In a related move that will strengthen links between St Andrews and Malaysia, the Sekhar Foundation, founded by Datuk Vinod Sekhar, the son of Dr B C Sekhar and Chief Executive of the Petra Group, has specified that some of the £8 million be used to create a scholarship fund which will allow some of Asia’s brightest students to study the arts and sciences at St Andrews for up to four years.

Subject to consultation, planning permission and other appropriate consents, construction will start later this year.

Early Cervical Cancer Detection

A new technology that could enhance early detection of cancer and potentially save lives has been developed by Professors Simon Herrington and Andrew Riches of the Bute Medical School and Professor Kishan Dholakia of the School of Physics & Astronomy. The researchers have demonstrated that cancerous cervical cells can be detected at an early stage by using a technique called Raman spectroscopy to detect pre-cancerous cells. This technique could eliminate much of the labour-intensive work required for a conventional smear test and should be fully compatible with current cervical screening programmes, only requiring procedural changes in the laboratory. Furthermore, Professor Herrington believes that this very promising approach to the identification of cancer cells in cervical cancer is also applicable to cancers in other sites, such as the lung and the bladder.

Professor Dholakia explains, "A light beam is shone on the cells or tissue and the light will scatter differently from the cancerous cells. The difference is very subtle and relates to the molecular bonds within the cells; importantly, it is a non-invasive method using lasers, which means there is no damage. This should detect cancer at an earlier stage and will act as a complementary technique to standard pathology. The scattered light technique is an efficient means of providing confirmation."

The Schools plan to develop this technique together so that it can eventually be used for tissue. “We are aiming to get this in to hospitals in the next 5 to 10 years which would be a major development for the University of St Andrews,” commented Professor Dholakia.

The research is published in the 15 December 2007 issue of the International Journal of Cancer and is online at www.interscience.wiley.com
**Bringing Africa to St Andrews**

Medical students in one of the poorest countries in Africa will soon be in touch with their counterparts in Scotland, thanks to a new initiative launched jointly by the University of St Andrews and the University of Malawi.

The University has set up a ‘buddy-friendship’ system between students in both countries - utilising a blog and email contacts between students at the College of Medicine in Blantyre – Malawi’s only medical school - and the Bute Medical School in St Andrews.

The scheme was launched in February, during a visit to St Andrews by a delegation of senior staff from Malawi. The visitors were particularly interested in the way that the Bute Medical School has developed its curriculum in recent years, especially its use of IT in delivering material to students, Professor Simon Guild, Director of Teaching at the Bute, said, “The purpose of this current visit is to let them see how we teach and how we use IT as a means to deliver the curriculum and communicate with students. We can give them advice on the software and hardware that they will need to replicate the virtual learning environment we have built here and how to establish their own intranet.”

It is hoped the initiative will benefit both sets of students facing very different medical realities, eventually leading to more permanent links in teaching and research. As Professor Guild points out, “We have many students keen to go over to Malawi to learn more about diseases such as HIV, malaria and TB, while we can teach Malawian students more about cancer, diabetes and even stress.”

Malawi is facing one of the greatest healthcare challenges in Africa, with a population of around 15 million and a current capacity to train only 60 doctors per year. As part of the country’s Emergency Human Resource Programme, Malawi wishes to greatly increase its professional healthcare training, including medical student numbers.

**University Artefacts of ‘National Significance’**

Art works, historical artefacts, scientific instruments and specimens belonging to the University of St Andrews have been recognised as ‘nationally significant’ by the Scottish Museums Council. The three collections that have received Recognition status are the Chemistry Collection, the Heritage Collections and the Historic Scientific Instruments Collection, and bring the number of Recognised Collections of National Significance across Scotland to 27.

Professor Ian Carradice, Head of Museum Collections at the University, said, “This is great news, and very timely, since many of the highlights from these collections will be accessible to the general public when our new Museum of the University of St Andrews (MUSA) opens this summer. The Heritage Collections of the University of St Andrews symbolise the development of higher education in Scotland, from its mediaeval origins to the present day, and the two Recognised Science Collections illustrate some of the great contributions made by Scotland to the advancement of learning.”

Founded in 1413, St Andrews is Scotland’s oldest university and its history, personalities and teaching practices can be traced through the collections of documents, art works, photographs, laboratory equipment and specimens that have been accumulated over the centuries. The University’s Museum Collections altogether contain approximately 112,300 objects covering a wide range of subject areas from art to zoology.

Highlights from the collections now ‘Recognised’ include the University’s three mediaeval maces and College silver, its unique collection of seventeenth and eighteenth-century archery medals, the Great Astrolabe (1575) and Universal Instrument (1582) by Humfrey Cole and rare pieces of eighteenth-century chemical glassware.

The Recognition Scheme, launched in October 2006, is managed by the Scottish Museums Council on behalf of the Scottish Government and is designed to identify, and subsequently support, collections of national significance held in Scotland’s non-national museums and galleries.

Top left: St Salvator’s College Mace
(Credit: Special Collections)

Bottom left: The Universal Instrument by Humfrey Cole, 1582
(Credit: Special Collections)
In addition to capitalising on St Andrews' strong roots in Mediaeval History (encompassing political, religious, social, cultural and legal history), the new Institute will benefit from related areas of expertise across the University, including Art History, Theology, and languages and literatures (Arabic, French, Old and Middle English, German, Greek, Italian, Latin, Old Norse and Welsh).

Institute Director Dr Frances Andrews said, “Our new Institute builds on the work undertaken over the years but presents new opportunities for cross-disciplinary research. The teaching will include an extraordinary chronological range and, by combining Byzantine and Middle East Studies with study of the mediaeval west, make us unique in the UK. The development will not only bring world-class researchers to St Andrews but will encourage creative collaboration between colleagues in different schools across the University.”

For further information, visit www.st-andrews.ac.uk/saims

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**University Recognised for ‘Green Agenda’**

An innovative travel plan established by the University has been recognised in a new report outlining universities’ contributions to the climate change debate. St Andrews was one of only two Scottish universities singled out in a Universities UK report in January this year, with special mention made of the St Andrews Green Travel Plan.

Implemented in 2005, the initiative involves staff, students and residents of St Andrews joining forces to tackle travel and parking around the University. From establishing a bicycle user group to working with local bus companies on improving bus routes and timetables, the University is looking at ways to enable staff to travel in a sustainable manner around St Andrews. Many staff and students already actively contribute to the University’s green agenda by car sharing, walking, cycling or using public transport.

The University has demonstrated its commitment by building almost 500 new and refurbished bicycle spaces and providing bicycle maintenance classes. A bicycle pool scheme has also been set up to enable staff to travel sustainably around town between meetings, and all future building developments will include bicycle and shower facilities.

The travel plan was devised with the help of the local Transport Forum, which involves representatives from both town and gown. The University’s Environment and Energy Manager Roddy Yarr said, “We are constantly talking and listening to our stakeholders and putting into practice their good ideas, which is really helping to embed more sustainable practices into our working lives.”

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**The St Andrews Charity Fashion Show, FS:08**

Over 900 students packed the University’s Younger Hall in March this year for the St Andrews Charity Fashion Show, FS:08, raising £28,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

The annual show, now in its seventeenth year, was one of the most environmentally friendly student fashion shows in the country. Organisers supported the University’s commitment to sustainability by making environmental issues key to the event, from using eco-friendly products and lighting to carbon offsetting. FS:08 Director Olly Markeson said, “Cancer research and sustainability are two very important issues for St Andrews students. It’s wonderful to be able to put on a show which benefits both.”

In recent years, the University has taken steps to become a leader in sustainable development by integrating policies and activities across its operational and educational policy. In addition to capitalising on St Andrews’ strong roots in Mediaeval History (encompassing political, religious, social, cultural and legal history), the new Institute will benefit from related areas of expertise across the University, including Art History, Theology, and languages and literatures (Arabic, French, Old and Middle English, German, Greek, Italian, Latin, Old Norse and Welsh).

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**Major New Mediaeval Institute Opens**

One of the largest centres for the study of Mediaeval Studies opened at the University in February.

The Institute of Mediaeval Studies, which brings together over 30 staff from across the University, is a multidisciplinary centre which combines a wide range of approaches to the study of the mediaeval period. Staff and students from the fields of History, History of Art, Modern Languages, Philosophy, Divinity and Classics, have come together to engage in research and teaching spanning the Mediaeval world from the Middle East and the Mediterranean, to the British Isles and Scandinavia, and from late antiquity to the fifteenth century.

The Institute incorporates the well-established Department of Mediaeval History, the largest of its kind in the world, and home to a series of extensive and long-term research projects on material ranging from Baghdad to Scotland and from St Bonaventure to the Italian cities of the late middle ages. One of the most recent projects includes a discussion of relations between professional religious and the urban communities in which they resided.

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Blake for Brits

In June 2007 Jules Knight (known as Julian Kaye during his student days at St Andrews) formed the classical-pop quartet called ‘Blake’ via facebook with Stephen Bowman, Dom Tighe and Ollie Baines.

Since forming and releasing their self-titled debut album, they have quickly hit the big time, going straight to number 1 in the UK Classical Album chart, the top twenty UK Pop Album chart and achieving gold status within three weeks. The band’s version of ‘Swing Low, Sweet Chariot’ was also chosen as the official Rugby World Cup anthem. A nomination for Album Of The Year at this year’s Classical Brits is the latest recognition for the band.

Sussex-born Jules speaks fondly of his time at St Andrews, which he views as a ‘second home’. “I feel very privileged to have been to St Andrews and it is true to say those were the best years of my life. I made many friends for life in that beautiful town and it seems like yesterday that I was at St Andrews, organising the May Ball, walking through the streets as Field Marshal Haig in the procession and running on the West Sands. I would love to win this incredible award as a thank you to the University and the town for putting up with me for four years and for giving me such a great start in life”.

The awards will be announced on 8 May and we wish Blake the best of luck! For further details, please see www.classicalbrits.co.uk

Love From Home Service Now Online

This very popular service with which many of you will be familiar, is now online. Run in cooperation with local baker and confectioner Fisher & Donaldson, our online ‘Love from Home’ service allows families to send their loved ones cakes, chocolates and gift baskets on special occasions with a personalised message. This is a great way to deliver an encouraging word, a good luck message, a birthday greeting or simply to show you care.

Deliveries are made to addresses in St Andrews during term-time, Monday to Saturday, between 8.00am and 1.00pm. At least 5 working days between placing your order and the delivery date must be allowed. Please note that, in the interest of security, we are now unable to take credit card details over the phone.

Please see our full selection of goodies via our Online Order Facility at www.st-andrews.ac.uk/parents/Familyprogramme/Lovefromhome/

Thank You

Thank you to all parents and families for your continued support during our telephone campaigns, where money was raised for the Family Book Fund, Student Scholarships and the Museum of the University of St Andrews (MUSA).

Back in November last year, 14 students called parents and alumni in the US and Canada throughout the night, in a three-week campaign during which over US$66,000 was pledged.

The recent UK Spring Campaign was run over a five-week period. Forty-five students spoke to over 3000 parents and alumni, and almost £232,000 was pledged.

On behalf of the University and the many students who have benefited from your generosity, please accept our sincere thanks.

Session Dates

2007/2008

Graduation: Tue 24 June 2008 – Fri 27 June 2008
Re-Assessment Diet:
Medicine Mon 1 September 2008 – Fri 5 September 2008
Others Mon 8 September 2008 – Thu 11 September 2008

2008/2009

Pre-Sessional Week: Week commencing Mon 22 September 2008
Martinmas Semester: Mon 29 September 2008 – Fri 23 January 2009
Reading Week: Week commencing Mon 10 November 2008
Raisin Monday: Mon 24 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: Mon 12 January 2009 – Tue 20 January 2009

Information for families of current students can be found at: 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

The University of St Andrews is a charity registered in Scotland, No: SCO13532