Welcome

Welcome to the Candlemas Edition of Link, the newsletter for families of undergraduate students. We are delighted to have this opportunity to share with you news from around the University.

Introducing the University’s new Director of Development

Momentum is gathering ahead of celebration of the University’s 600th Anniversary with the appointment of former banking Managing Director Patrick Degg to lead an international fundraising campaign.

Patrick (39) took up post as Director of Development in January 2010. A senior bank officer with over 15 years’ experience in international finance, Patrick was educated at Cambridge and began his career in finance with HSBC. Explaining his decision to move from the world of banking into the voluntary giving and higher education sector, Patrick said, “I’d been an investment banker for nearly 18 years and was coming to a time in my career, and my life, when I was considering doing something else. I started thinking, on a personal level, about how I succeeded in my career. If I look all the way back, it simply started with my being given opportunities at school and at university.”

As Director of Development Patrick is responsible for the Development Office and all those activities that are related to managing the University’s relationships with its alumni – we have about 60,000 alumni on our database. This also links into the fundraising aspects of development including, for example, our annual Telephone Campaign which encourages alumni and other friends of the University to give money on a regular basis, corporate relationships, applications to trusts and foundations, and individual giving.

New Medical Building

The new School of Medicine building has been completed, delivering 10,900 square metres of world-class medical and science facilities over four floors. Stuart Armstrong, Director of Medical Fundraising, is delighted to report that the School of Medicine will open on time for the new academic year in 2010, and within budget. Stuart stressed, “This is a real achievement in a volatile construction environment.”

The £45 million building project includes a lecture theatre for 300 people, teaching rooms, laboratories, research units, offices and support areas and is linked to the University’s School of Physics & Astronomy via a first-floor bridge. However, the bridge is not the only link that the new building creates. The new School of Medicine will encourage interdisciplinary collaboration within the entire science faculty, acknowledging the international consensus that the most significant advances in medical and biomedical research result from unrestricted collaboration between medicine and the sciences.

The St Andrews development will be one of the first UK medical schools where research facilities are fully integrated across the sciences. Already the investment in the multidisciplinary research structure is delivering results. Major research grants from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, the Medical Research Council, The Alzheimer’s Trust and, most recently, a European grant to study the genetics of obesity, have been awarded to cross-disciplinary teams of scientists and demonstrate the increasing profile of medical research at St Andrews.

On the Rocks Scottish Student Arts Festival

The University of St Andrews Students’ Association supports over a hundred different student committees and societies. Amongst the most active of these is Mermaids, the Student Theatre Fund, and Rogue Productions, a student film-making society. In the past these groups have staged their own annual festivals showcasing their work, but last year they decided to join forces and ‘On The Rocks’ was born.

The first ‘On The Rocks’ festival was such a success that it is now an annual event in the Scottish arts calendar. The festival aims to showcase the very best in new Scottish and student talent across the widest variety of art forms with drama, music, dance, comedy, art, performance and film in venues across St Andrews. With a focus on art that is new, experimental, diverse and innovative, the festival attracts performers, exhibitors and participants from across the UK and beyond.

On The Rocks 2010 took place this year from 18-25 April. For further information see www.ontherocksfestival.com
**The Immortal Spirit of Adventure**

The first Alex Richardson Award was this year presented to second-year student Charles Arnot (pictured here). The Award was set up in memory of Alex Richardson, who was in his Junior Honours year at the University when he tragically died last year. His family and friends have funded the award as a living memorial of his spirit of adventure and his passion for Spanish-speaking cultures.

The Alex Richardson Award is open to all students in their second year intending to continue Spanish at Honours level, and provides £1,500 to allow travel to a Spanish-speaking country to gain a deeper understanding of the culture.

Charles Arnot, the first recipient of this generous endowment, intends to use the funding to undertake charity work in Costa Rica this summer before going on to explore Central America further. Alex himself spent part of his gap year living with a native family in Costa Rica and teaching in a local school. His ambition had been to open a hotel there.

Alex’s father, Chris Richardson, said, “The introduction of the annual Alex Richardson Award is something that we feel Alex would have approved of, especially as he himself had won a similar award, and it is something that we as a family are very proud of. For many years to come, we hope that students studying Spanish will benefit from their travels, as a result of this award, just as Alex did.”

The presentation was made at a memorial ceremony in the gardens of the University museum, MUSA, at which a memorial bench was unveiled in memory of Alex.

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**University and Fife Council to Join in School Partnership**

A unique £50 million initiative establishing a direct link between the University of St Andrews and a local secondary school has been announced. The University has entered into an historic partnership with Fife Council which could see a new Madras College built on University land, near the sports centre. In exchange, the University will take ownership of the school’s existing historic building in the centre of town.

Currently, Madras is the only state secondary school in Scotland where pupils are split across two sites. The original building, which dates from 1833, has space to accommodate the senior pupils, while younger students are located a mile and a half away. Under the new scheme, pupils would be brought together for the first time.

The project includes plans to provide state-of-the-art sports facilities which will be shared by the University and the school. These would include 12 court games halls, tennis courts and both real and synthetic rugby and football pitches.

Dr Louise Richardson, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, said, “By taking a school to the heart of the University science campus we are signalling, with Fife Council, our ambition to nurture new generations of science-literate students to act as a catalyst for a closer bond between our secondary and higher education sectors. I am hugely excited by the possibilities this ambitious project presents for students, staff, the community of St Andrews and Scotland.”

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**Education Secretary Meets Student Ambassadors**

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning Michael Russell has hailed the team of student ambassadors at the University as champions of the key values of access and excellence, which underpin Scottish education.

The Education Secretary, together with the Principal Louise Richardson, joined the students in March as they announced that they would each be donating one day’s wages to fund a scholarship to support a student from a background of hardship to study in St Andrews and join the team of ambassadors. This is believed to be the first initiative of its kind in Scotland.

The team of over 70 ambassadors helps with a variety of outreach projects, including shadowing and mentoring school pupils, tutoring in local Fife schools, and supporting the University’s Space School – a series of interactive classes and workshops for Primary 6 pupils who are interested in space, science and maths.

Michael Russell said, “The student ambassador scheme at the University of St Andrews is an excellent example of how our universities are making the connection with local schools and communities to promote the benefits and importance of higher education. I applaud the generosity shown by the students I have met today which demonstrates a dedication to this principle that goes above and beyond the call of duty.”
Student Golf Success

A team of top student golfers from St Andrews has lifted the inaugural Smurfit Cup, beating the University of Ulster in a closely contested final at the K Club in Kildare. The St Andrews team of Will Wrisedale, Gordon Stephenson, Cammy Gray, Cole Sedgwick, Mike Gray and Mikael de Picciotto are all golf bursars supported by the R&A.

Playing a Ryder Cup format, the St Andrews team overcame the University of Ulster 7 and 5 after rounds on the Palmer and Smurfit courses at the K Club, host to the 2006 Ryder Cup. The University of Ulster team is also sponsored by the R&A and the new competition - generously sponsored by Dr Michael Smurfit, owner of the K Club - is designed to broaden competition amongst Britain and Ireland's very best student golfers.

Stephen Stewart, the University’s Director of Sport and Exercise, said, “This was a tremendous opportunity for our golfers to play against some of Ireland’s top student golfers in a world-class setting. The competition was good, but so too was the camaraderie that developed between both sides as they were treated to many extras, including insights into the preparation and organisation that went into hosting the Ryder Cup.”

£200,000 Alzheimer’s Research Boost

The University has been awarded over £200,000 by the Alzheimer’s Research Trust, for major new research into Alzheimer's disease, the most common cause of dementia, which affects around 417,000 people in the UK.

A talented team of researchers, led by Dr Frank Gunn-Moore (School of Biology) and Dr James Ainge (School of Psychology), will seek to determine why Alzheimer’s disease causes nerve cells in the brain to stop communicating with one another.

Student Enterprise

Enterprising third-year student, Tom Sauer, has hit upon a recipe for success with the launch of a new crêpe business. Tom was confident that he had identified a gap in the market when he realised that the only options available to hungry students at night were fried foods or kebabs. Having saved the money to buy a trailer, Tom opened his take-away crêpe enterprise in February this year – selling stuffed crêpes to students outside the Students’ Union on Tuesday and Friday nights. Tom’s crêpe ingredients and his selection of sweet and savory fillings are all locally sourced and 90 per cent of the produce is organic. Buoyed by increasing demand, Tom now employs a pool of five students to work shifts in pairs.

Currently pursuing a joint honours degree in Modern History and Management, Tom says the accounting skills he has learnt as part of his studies have been invaluable, “I don’t think I would have known how to keep the books in order if I hadn’t been studying Management.” As for the future, Tom is keen to continue serving up success, “I’m hoping to go into the restaurant business or catering after university, so I think this is a good first step.”

Shedding New Light on Cancer

Researchers at the University have developed a powerful technique that could allow earlier cancer detection. In a joint venture between the School of Physics & Astronomy and the Bute Medical School, the St Andrews researchers have advanced new technology that relies on a technique called Raman spectroscopy. The technique involves the use of monochromatic light which, when directed at a cell, interacts with every biological molecule within it. By analysing the light's frequency and polarisation, researchers are able to identify the cell's components and detect disease.

According to Professor Simon Herrington of the Bute Medical School, “This novel technology eliminates many of the problems that prevent Raman spectroscopy being used in a clinical setting, such as the fluorescence generated by the environment in which cells are embedded. This approach holds great promise for the more accurate identification of cancer cells.”

This new tool will hopefully pave the way to early detection of cancer and provide a further diagnostic method for pathologists.

Top Rated

The University of St Andrews has been named top in Scotland and fifth in the UK in The Sunday Times University Guide 2010 (published in September 2009). The result caps the most successful run of league table results in the University’s history.

In the tables published in 2009, St Andrews was 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. The results are the highest ever achieved by St Andrews and the highest ever by a Scottish university. The Sunday Times has described St Andrews as “now firmly established as the leading multi-faculty alternative to Oxford and Cambridge”. The strong performance is attributable to high scores in student satisfaction, entry standards, good honours, staff-student ratio, research quality and completion rates.
A Ringing Success

The University's annual Telephone Campaign, which aims to engage alumni and families across the UK, took place during February and early March. Our team of 45 enthusiastic student callers contacted over 5,000 parents and alumni over the course of four and a half weeks, during their evenings and weekends.

As one of the more personal ways of contacting friends of the University, the Telephone Campaign is an important way of maintaining dialogue, keeping our records up to date and thanking our donors. For alumni and families a call provides the opportunity to ask any questions, find out what is happening in St Andrews, and to make a lasting contribution to the life of the University by pledging financial support.

In total over £250K was pledged during this year's campaign, which will help support a variety of projects including the Wardlaw Scholarship Programme, the new School on Medicine and the Family Book Fund. All funds raised will help the University to enhance the student experience.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to speak with one of our students and to those who generously made a donation.

Honorary Degrees to be awarded in June 2010

At this year's June graduation ceremonies, the University will honour distinguished individuals from the worlds of sport, science, music, law, public affairs and the media.

Baroness Eliza Manningham-Buller, the former head of MI5, Dame Mary Peters, gold medal-winning Olympic pentathlete and Kate Adie, respected former BBC war reporter will be awarded honorary degrees by the University in June (Tuesday 22 - Friday 25 June 2010) this summer, along with bipolar disorder expert Professor Kay Redfield Jamison, composer Arvo Pärt and MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) inventor Professor John Mallard.

Online 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. To see the full selection of goodies which can be ordered and paid for online please visit www.st-andrews.ac.uk/parents/FamilyProgramme/LovefromHome/

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 5 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 2010/2011 www.st-andrews.ac.uk/semesterdates/

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Pre-Sessional Week: Week commencing Monday 20 September 2010
Martinmas Semester: Monday 27 September 2010 – Friday 21 January 2011
Reading Week: Week commencing Monday 8 November 2010
Raisin Monday: Monday 22 November 2010
Graduation: Tuesday 30 November 2010
Christmas Vacation: Saturday 18 December 2010 – Tuesday 4 January 2011
Revision Period: Commences Wednesday 5 January 2011
Examinations: Wednesday 12 January 2011 – Friday 21 January 2011

Further 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

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