Welcome

Welcome to the Martinmas 2010 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,
Emma Bright, Alumni Relations Officer

League Tables

St Andrews has once again affirmed its reputation as a leading centre of advanced learning by performing extremely well in the recent round of independent league tables. The University was named top in Scotland by the Guardian University Guide 2011, the Times Good University Guide 2011 and the Complete University Guide 2011 and in these newspapers we were fourth, fourth and sixth respectively in the UK.

Furthermore, St Andrews has once again topped the National Student Survey (NSS), being named as one of the country’s leading multi-faculty universities. The Survey is an annual evaluation of how satisfied students are with the quality of their higher education experience. Students were asked to rate their satisfaction on elements such as teaching, assessment, academic support and personal development. St Andrews shares top spot this year with the University of Oxford.

The NSS also ranks individual departments and academic schools within universities. The School of Medicine, which has recently moved to a new £45 million purpose-built Medical and Biological Sciences Building on North Haugh, was named top UK medical school for student satisfaction. 97% of St Andrews medical students gave the School top marks. Geology and Divinity at St Andrews were also named top in the UK while Anthropology, Arabic, Computer Science, Physics & Astronomy, Maths, Classics, Chemistry, International Relations and French all feature in the UK top ten.

Freshers’ Week 2010

The lead-up to Freshers’ Week is always a busy time and this year was no exception. New students were invited to attend Bejant Receptions in St Andrews and Glasgow, hosted by two of our alumni clubs, and this provided them with the chance to meet fellow students before the start of term. The Students’ Association President attended the St Andrews Reception and all four sabbatical officers attended the Glasgow reception and offered valuable advice on academic, personal and social matters. At the beginning of Freshers’ Week, Parents’ Receptions were held once again in the Younger Hall and staff from Schools and Units across the University, as well as the Principal and the Deans, were present. The receptions were a great success with over 1,200 parents in attendance. An additional reception held in Lower College Hall for parents of American students was well received by over 100 parents.

This year also saw the introduction of the Freshers’ Gift: a travel mug which contained information on how Development’s work benefits students and a voucher for a free coffee from a local café. The environmentally-friendly mugs were available in four jewel colours (ruby, sapphire, amethyst and emerald) and were marked with the University crest and ‘Freshers 2010’, providing a reminder of Freshers’ Week in years to come. The sun shone down on our gazebo during mug distribution and we were delighted to have the opportunity to meet the Freshers in person and welcome them to St Andrews. The travel mugs proved hugely popular and, with the exception of around 100 mugs distributed at our two Bejant Receptions, all 1,200 travel mugs were collected from the Development Office on the first day of Freshers’ Week.

Medical Reunion

In late June, over 100 graduates, members of staff and other friends of the School of Medicine met for a reunion in St Andrews to mark the completion of the new Medical and Biological Sciences Building which the School now calls home. Guests enjoyed lunch followed by a tour of the new building’s impressive facilities led by the staff who will be using them. They also had the chance to see a display of Bute Medical Society class photographs, dating back almost 100 years, along with other memorabilia specially compiled for the reunion. In the evening, the group relocated to Lower College Hall for drinks and dinner, followed by a speech from Professor Gordon Lowe (MB ChB 1972).

The event proved to be a great success and the attendees were all most impressed by the state-of-the-art facilities that the new building has to offer. Many also chose to support the School of Medicine and mark the years they spent studying in St Andrews by ‘sponsoring’ a seat in the new building’s lecture theatre. Pictures from the event are available to view online at www.st-andrews.ac.uk/alumni/Events/m勃alreunion2010.
Introducing the Student Sabbaticals

At the Students’ Association, there are four elected sabbatical officers who have taken a year out to work for the student body and make the student experience in St Andrews the best it can be. The Association, or ‘the Union’ as it is known, has three main spheres of activity: campaigning and advocacy, student leadership, and events management.

Ally Holmes oversees a small empire of student enterprises, including a film production team, a hugely successful charity campaign, one of the country’s finest student theatre groups, the world’s oldest debating society, and a radio station. Phil Pass organises the social side of Freshers’ Week, the Graduation Ball, and everything in between, booking up-and-coming music acts, comedians and DJs, and hosting some of the biggest and best events in town.

Siena Parker leads the Students’ Representative Council and ensures that the student voice is heard within the University, covering all areas of policy – everything from accommodation, education and welfare to green issues and equal opportunities. If students have a campaign they want to launch, or an issue to raise, she can help.

Owen Wilton, as President, represents student views to the Principal, the Scottish Parliament and the outside world, and has responsibility for the coordination of media relations. He is also responsible for a multi-million pound redevelopment of the Association building itself, a once-in-a-generation project. Owen and Siena both sit on the University Court, the governing body of the University, and feed student opinion into the decision-making process.

“We’re always busy, so it helps that we get on so well,” said Owen. “I think our personalities have clicked this year, and it’s been a lot of fun so far.”

Ringing the Changes

St Salvator’s Chapel recently celebrated the 550th anniversary of its consecration. A rare and beautiful example of Late Gothic architecture, the Chapel was founded in 1450 as a part of Bishop James Kennedy’s College of the Holy Saviour.

The latest chapter in its rich and varied history was marked by the installation of four new bells, making St Salvator’s the only university chapel in Scotland suitable for change ringing. The new bells will be used to announce services and celebrate special occasions such as weddings and graduations.

The project has been made possible by generous donations from J Michael Buchanan, the After Many Days Club, the Keltek Trust and the St Salvator’s Chapel Bell Ringing Society – allowing the purchase and installation of three second-hand bells and one new bell.

The long history of the University was remarked upon by Pope Benedict XVI during his recent official state visit to Scotland. Addressing the crowds at an open-air Mass in Glasgow, he commented, “Here in Scotland, I think of the three medieval universities founded here by the popes, including that of St Andrews which is beginning to mark the 600th Anniversary of its foundation.”

A programme of international events is being developed to support the University’s anniversary celebrations from summer 2011 through to 2013. Further details will be available on the University website from next summer.
**St Andrews Prize for the Environment**

An innovative method of removing arsenic from groundwater without using chemicals has won this year’s St Andrews Prize for the Environment. A team from Queen’s University, Belfast, addressed the alarming levels of arsenic contamination of water in West Bengal and established operations in six rural areas that now supply clean and arsenic-free water to the local populations. This life-changing technology is easy to install and operate and can be set up locally with readily-available components.

At a ceremony in St Andrews, Bhaskar Sen Gupta was presented with the winning prize of $75,000. Bhaskar said, "I am delighted with this win. It will enable us to transfer our knowledge to other groups who will be able to set up 25 more operations with around 25,000 people benefiting from the provision of safe drinking water."

The St Andrews Prize is an environmental initiative by the University of St Andrews and ConocoPhillips, one of the world’s largest integrated energy companies, with operations in more than 30 countries.

Since its launch in 1998, the Prize has attracted entries on topics as diverse as sustainable development in the Amazon and Central American rainforests, urban regeneration, recycling, health and water issues, and renewable energy.

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**Class Gift 2010**

Established in 2009 and led by students, the Class Gift is one of the first of its kind in the United Kingdom and provides graduating students with the opportunity to celebrate their time at St Andrews by investing in the future of the University.

Many assume that St Andrews is a ‘rich’ university, but it is not. Our endowment is only the twentieth largest in the United Kingdom and less than 1% of Oxford’s, or 0.01% of Harvard’s. Although many students pay tuition fees, these fees contribute less than 30% of the University’s total budget and, in light of dwindling government support, it is only with additional support that we can continue to be a great university rather than just a good one.

For the Class Gift 2010, students were offered the opportunity to vote for their preferred project from a number of University priorities, including the provision of student scholarships, the redevelopment of St Salvator’s Quadrangle and a fund for acquisitions for MUSA (the Museum of the University of St Andrews). The overwhelming favourite was the redevelopment of the University Library. As such, the funds raised from the Class Gift 2010 will be used to provide study furniture.

Acting Director of Library Services Mr Jeremy Upton said, "I am delighted and feel honoured that the students of the class of 2010 have decided to offer the Library funds for the purchase of new informal and group study furniture in the Library. As the most heavily used student space on the campus, we know this furniture will be well used by the students this year and in the years to come."

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**Seal Surveys**

University experts have been drafted in to determine the cause of the mysterious deaths of 33 seals.

An investigation has been launched by the Scottish Government following the ‘unusual’ deaths of seals recently found washed up along the east coast of Scotland and England.

A team of scientists from the Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU) at St Andrews is currently investigating the potential cause of death of the animals who were found with a single, smooth-edged cut starting at the head and spiralling around the body. The experts, who describe the markings as strange ‘corkscrew’ injuries, now believe that these are caused by boat propellers rather than by predators such as sharks.

Meanwhile, St Andrews students are part of a research team currently investigating the decline in seal pup births on the small Hebridean island of North Rona. The team’s task is to study seal breeding success annually and over the long term and to find out what factors contribute to the variation in numbers. You can follow the team’s progress on their blog: http://bioblogs.st-andrews.ac.uk/sealsonrona/default.aspx

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**Economic Impact**

A new independent economic impact assessment has revealed that the University contributes over £300 million per year to the Scottish economy and supports over 9,000 full-time jobs.

The report found that for every £1 of public money invested in St Andrews, the University returns over £7.50 to the Scottish economy. University leaders say the study shows that universities are net generators of wealth, rather than consumers of public funds and have warned that if investment is withdrawn from the HE sector, the knock-on effect for the economy at large will be considerable.

Welcoming the findings, St Andrews Quaestor and Factor Derek Watson said, “In the current debate about the future funding of higher education in Scotland the impression is given that our universities are net consumers of public funds. This report shows that the opposite is true. Scotland’s universities are a major driver for economic success and a key plank of economic stability.”

The report can be viewed in full on the University website: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/economic-impact-report.pdf
Golf Graduation
To coincide with this year’s 139th Open Championship at St Andrews, three of the world’s greatest golfers were honoured by the University at a special Golf Graduation ceremony.

Arnold Palmer, Tom Watson and Padraig Harrington were awarded Honorary Degrees by the University at the Younger Hall in July. The trio have won eighteen major championships, including nine British Open titles, over the course of the last half century.

The University awarded each of them the degree of Doctor of Laws honoris causa in recognition of their achievements and outstanding contributions to the game of golf. The degrees were conferred by University Chancellor Sir Menzies Campbell.

Previous recipients of honorary degrees from St Andrews for their contribution to golf include Jack Nicklaus, Seve Ballesteros, Gary Player, Colin Montgomerie, Nick Faldo, Peter Thomson and Peter Alliss.

Booker Prize – Mister Pip comes to town
Lloyd Jones, shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2007 for his novel Mister Pip, recently visited the University to take part in a question-and-answer and book-signing session for students. The visit was the second in a recently-launched initiative designed to offer new students a common topic for discussion.

Launched in 2009, the St Andrews Booker Prize Project involves every new undergraduate student being sent a copy of a Booker Prize shortlisted book before the start of term. Initially conceived by University Principal Dr Louise Richardson and the chairman of the Booker Prize Foundation, it is hoped that the project will engage entrant students in intellectual debate.

This year’s event follows on from last year’s standing-room only visit by author of The Reluctant Fundamentalist, Mohsin Hamid.

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

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<td>Monday 27 September 2010 – Friday 21 January 2011</td>
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<td>Week commencing Monday 8 November 2010</td>
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<td>Tuesday 30 November 2010</td>
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<tr>
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Further 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: alumni@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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