

Winter 2010/11

Nexus

Connecting the University community



**ROBERT GORDON
UNIVERSITY • ABERDEEN**

University confers Honorary Degree on Donald Trump

CORE wins prestigious national award

New Head of Gray's School of Art appointed

Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski



Sunday Times names University 'Scottish University of the Year'

The University has been awarded the accolade of Scottish University of the Year by The Sunday Times.

Published in September, the supplement commends the University's excellent academic provision, consistently strong graduate employability levels and bold, strategic masterplan.

Continued on page 11

Former Dublin City University President appointed as Principal

The University has appointed Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski as its new Principal and Vice-Chancellor. Professor von Prondzynski succeeds Professor Mike Pittilo MBE, who passed away in February.

In June 2010 Professor von Prondzynski completed a 10-year term as President of Dublin City University (DCU).

Professor von Prondzynski graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, with a BA and an LLB in 1978, and attained a PhD in Law at the University of Cambridge in 1983.

He began his academic career in 1980 as a Lecturer in the School of Business Studies at Trinity College, Dublin, becoming a Fellow in 1987. A move to the University of Hull in 1991 saw Professor von Prondzynski take up posts as Professor of Law, Dean of the Law School, the Jean Monnet Professor of European Social Law and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences. He left Hull in 2000 to take up the Presidency of DCU.

During his time at DCU, Professor von Prondzynski led a number of strategic developments including a significant growth in research income (from about £3 million in 2000 to nearly £40 million in 2009), major campus investment and development, and positioning DCU as a major contributor to Ireland's global knowledge economy and society. He initiated a number of major partnership projects with industry, and also the establishment of the DCU Ryan Academy for Entrepreneurship (funded by the late Ryanair founder, Dr Tony Ryan). As a result, DCU rose 21 places in the Times Higher Education World Rankings in two years (from 300 in 2007, to 279 in 2009).

He is an international authority on employment and commercial law, and is an active commentator on academic and social issues through the media, and his blog (universitydiary.wordpress.com) is now Ireland's most widely read blog.

Commenting on his appointment, Professor von Prondzynski said, "I am delighted to be taking up this exciting appointment. Robert Gordon University has been one of higher education's major success stories and is widely recognised for the excellence of its programmes and for its capacity to respond to the needs of students and of the wider society."

Professor von Prondzynski will take up his post in March 2011.

THIS ISSUE

Welcome to the winter issue of the University's magazine, Nexus. This issue includes details of the University's collaborations with both business and the community, as well as student and staff successes.

Please get in touch if you have any suggestions for stories or features for the magazine. Email your ideas to g.caie@rgu.ac.uk. You can also use this address to contact me if you would like copies of any photos included in Nexus.

The deadline for articles to be included in the Spring edition is 1 February.

Gail Caie
Senior Communications Officer

SPECIAL FEATURES

4-5

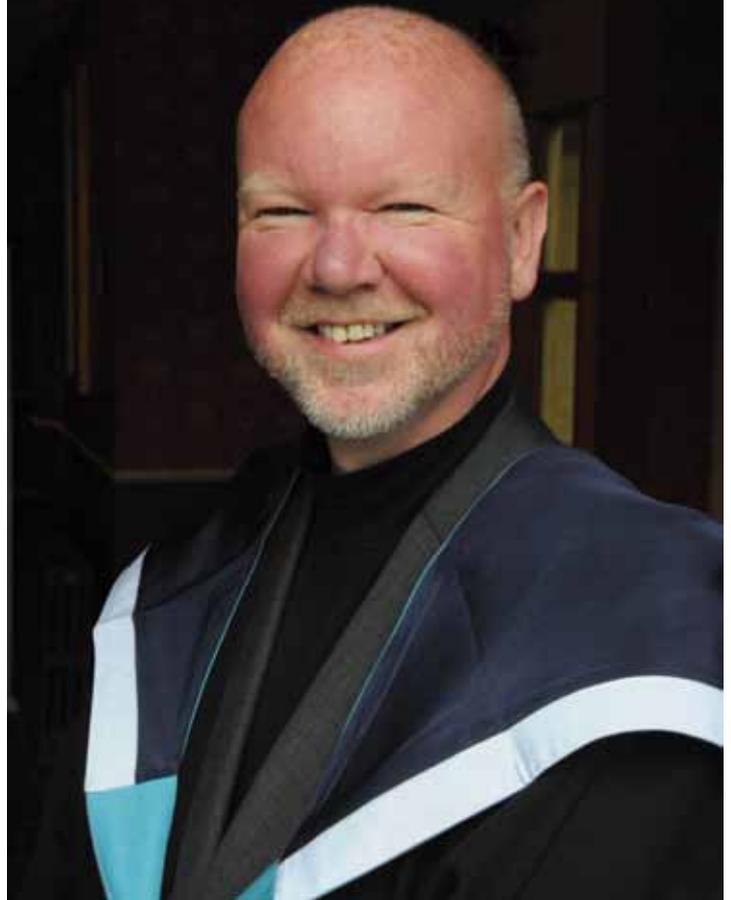
Working with business and the community

6-7

Staff achievements

8-9

Student successes



Award-winning arts luminary appointed Head of Gray's School of Art

Professor Paul Harris, a British Academy and Scottish BAFTA award-winning photographer and film-maker, has been appointed Head of Gray's School of Art.

Professor Harris joins Gray's from the University of Abertay, where he was Creative Director of the Institute of Arts, Media and Computer Games from 2002.

During his tenure, he attracted over £9 million in funding to support Scotland's creative industries and also established the National Centre for Excellence in Computer Games Education.

Following an illustrious career in television, working for Channel 4, Central Television and the BBC, Paul began teaching media production and was Head of Film and Television at Edinburgh College of Art from 1996 to 2002.

Indeed, Paul's industry background and passion for cultivating the next generation of artists has been recognised with numerous national and international awards as a director, script advisor and executive producer of student work including two Royal Television Society Awards, a Scottish BAFTA for Best New Documentary Talent and a British Academy Award for Best Short Film.

Paul has also served on and chaired a number of panels and boards including BBC Scotland's Music, Arts and Entertainment Independent Review Panel, the Scottish Screen Investment Panel, the Centre for Excellence in Media Practice, Scottish Enterprise's Digital Media Industry Advisory Group and Angus Digital Media Centre.

Commenting on his appointment, Paul said, "Gray's School of Art produces a steady stream of talented professionals who drive the region's creative and cultural economy. I hope to lead the School in its vision to become a leading art and design school for Northern Europe whilst continuing to develop new talent in not only modern communication forms such as graphic design and digital media, but in traditional crafts and fine arts including painting, printmaking and ceramics."

Passivhaus development officially opened by Housing and Communities Minister

Alex Neil MSP, Minister for Housing and Communities, officially opened Fyne Initiative's Tigh-Na-Cladach development in Dunoon in 4 October.



The event highlighted the achievements of this unique development of low energy homes, which were designed by Professor Gokay Deveci of the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment. The 15 terraced properties, located south of Dunoon and overlooking the Firth of Clyde, became the first homes in Scotland to be awarded Passivhaus status earlier this year – an international construction standard only awarded to buildings meeting rigorous energy efficiency criteria.

Professor Deveci was among the greeting party to welcome the Minister, which also included Fyne Homes CEO Colin Renfrew and New Business Director Peter McDonald.

Alex Neil, Housing and Communities Minister, said, "Tigh-Na-Cladach is a fine example of what is needed throughout Scotland - thoughtfully designed, low energy, affordable homes that encourage social inclusion."

The Passivhaus is much more than an energy performance standard; it is a quality assurance standard that closes the gap between the theoretical performance and reality.

The project was also shortlisted for the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) Andrew Doolan Best Building in Scotland Award, the UK's richest architectural prize.

Obesity management programme wins award



(L to R): David Secher, Chairman of Praxis Unico; Louise McCombie from Counterweight; Simon Fraser from CREDO; Hazel Ross from Counterweight and broadcaster Maggie Philbin.

An obesity management spin-out involving the Centre for Obesity Research and Epidemiology (CORE) and CREDO (Commercialisation, Research & European Development Office) has beaten off stiff competition to win a prestigious national award in recognition of commercial practice.

The Impact Awards, organised by PraxisUnico, recognise and celebrate best practice in commercialisation and the process of transferring knowledge for the wider benefit of society and the economy.

Team members behind commercialising the highly successful programme,

'Counterweight', were presented with the Public Policy and Service Impact Award at The Impact Awards ceremony, held at the PraxisUnico Conference Gala Dinner in Nottingham in June.

'Counterweight' provides a structured weight management programme

including education and mentoring for general practice staff to upscale their knowledge and skills in the management of obesity. Staff in the programme are supported for up to a year by weight management advisors specially trained in obesity management, and who form the Counterweight team in primary practice.

Counterweight is also being delivered in the workplace and in the community, as well as through primary care centres. The Counterweight team have been working closely with the Business Development team in CREDO to turn the programme into a company, and are currently progressing investment opportunities.

Professor Iain Broom, Director of CORE, said, "We are absolutely delighted that we have been recognised in these prestigious awards. Counterweight has proved profoundly successful, with 40% of patients followed up by the programme in Scottish health boards losing more than 5% of their body weight. This has major implications for health spending, as it reduces the risk of developing Type II diabetes alone by 50%."

Researchers who are interested in discussing the commercial potential of their research are encouraged to contact the Business Development team at CREDO.

WORKING WITH BUSINESS AND THE COMMUNITY



(L to R) Jeff Horner and Professor Julian Malins, c4di Project Director, tackle a hands-on innovation task to create the highest structure possible out of dried spaghetti, tape and marshmallows. C4di run this task regularly as part of the innovation workshops.

'Jam Boy' Fraser Doherty, the inventor of Resomation - an eco-friendly alternative to cremation - and inventor of the chip-and-pin, James Goodfellow.

The regional launch event took place at the University's Faculty of Health and Social Care building. Presentations were led by GO Group Innovation Support professional, Jeff Horner, c4di Project Director Professor, Julian Malins, and Beth Duff of The Red Horse Speaks, who shared her story about starting up Scotland's first equine assisted learning programme.

Initially, John Logie Baird Award entrants will compete at a regional level, with judges looking for originality, entrepreneurial ability, market potential and the ability to develop the idea. As a partner organisation, c4di have been invited to take one of the places on the north-east regional panel.

Regional workshops, providing support and information on patents, prototypes and product development, will be provided for the best commercially viable ideas. Regional winners will then be selected to go forward to the national competition.

The JLB Awards Programme is open to both individuals and companies, who will compete to win £10,000 worth of product and marketing support.

The Awards are free to enter by visiting www.johnlogiebairdawards.com.

Hunt is on for Aberdeen's top innovator

The search for Aberdeen's top inventors and innovators began in October with the launch of the national John Logie Baird (JLB) Awards. The event marked the third in a series of regional launches.

Held at the University and sponsored by the Centre for Design and Innovation (c4di), the awards were established to identify and nurture Scotland's top talent. Past winners include

Scottish Businessman and ex-Pepsi Director join forces in University initiative

Enterprise skills are critical in every 21st century career, and having business know-how boosts employability and is often the key to survival when self-employed.

new initiative at the University offering all students real-life experience and tuition in entrepreneurial skills.

Professor Skene, who began and funded the University's Centre for Entrepreneurship in 2002, is now funding the new initiative to bring these sought-after skills, previously reserved for business students, to every scholar at the University. Dr Park, who also ran graduate internship programmes at Fortune 500 multi-national corporation, Procter & Gamble, will take the helm.

As well as a series of lectures, workshops and master-classes, the programme is supported by key activities including creating a unique business incubator to help students transform embryonic ideas into fully fledged business opportunities. Students are also now able to develop and run their own businesses for a year as a fully-credited industrial placement.



Dr John Park at ABS.

To address this, Scottish businessman, entrepreneur and Honorary Professor of Aberdeen Business School (ABS) Mr Charles Skene OBE and ex-Research and Development Director for Pepsi Europe, Dr John Park, have joined forces to kick-start a

Inaugural international summer school hailed a success

Gray's School of Art, in collaboration with Peacock Visual Arts, delivered its first ever International Printmaking Summer School with a programme of three one-week workshops which began in July. Members of the public, artists and practitioners from Aberdeen and across the globe came together to learn and gain expertise in printmaking.

For a number of years, Professor Lennox Dunbar, Head of Printmaking at Gray's, has conducted workshops at 'Makingartsafely' in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and as a result of this association, decided to offer a similar range in Aberdeen.

Workshops were delivered by artists such as: Keith Howard, a world-leader in contemporary (Intaglio-type) printmaking techniques from Rochester Institute of Technology in New York State; Paul Furneaux, who has researched and taught printmaking in Tokyo, Connecticut and most recently Dublin, and Elspeth Lamb, an internationally-recognised expert in papermaking.



(l to r): OT students Shane O'Carroll, Jessica R. Caselton – on horse, Lisa Mulvey, Charis Seeds, and injured Royal Marine on horse - Jason Hare.

apply the theory, knowledge and skills of occupational therapy studied at university to the real-life recovery processes of injured armed forces personnel and war veterans.

Horseback UK, based on a 30-acre farm near Dinnet, Aboyne, was created to provide a safe environment to aid those serving in the armed forces who have suffered acute stress and physical injuries as a result of active service.

Horseback UK utilises a holistic approach - working with the horses combined with establishing essential familiar routines for individuals to enable their recovery and adaptation from injury. The University's OT Department and Horseback UK seek to embrace the abilities and skills potential of the war veteran rather than focus on their disabilities.

Stephanie Morrison, a lecturer in OT at the University who is leading the project, set the partnership in motion following the award of a Winston Churchill Travel Fellowship in 2009 to visit the USA and Canada.

Horseback UK is located at Ferrar, Dinnet, near Aboyne. For more information, please visit www.horseback.org.uk.

Saddle up: Students and veterans participate in the healing power of horses

A unique learning partnership has been formed between the University's School of Health Sciences Occupational Therapy, and local charity Horseback UK, where occupational therapy students will contribute to support and enable the recovery process of injured war veterans.

Third and fourth-year occupational therapy (OT) students are set to take part in research projects, elective placements,

enterprise projects and situated learning experiences at Horseback UK, based near Aboyne in Royal Deeside. Students will



Donald Trump Honoured by University

Donald J. Trump, Chairman and President of The Trump Organization, was presented with the honorary award of Doctor of Business Administration (Hon DBA) in October.

University Chancellor Sir Ian Wood CBE, conferred the award at the ceremony. Following receipt of his award, Mr Trump delivered an acceptance address in front of an audience of invited guests and students.

The University chose to confer this degree on Mr Trump in recognition of his business acumen, entrepreneurial vision and the long-term future his company is planning in the North-east of Scotland.

Professor John Harper, Acting Principal and Vice-Chancellor, said, "Given that business and entrepreneurship lie at the heart of much of the University's academic offering, it is only fitting to award Mr Trump with an honorary degree. He is recognised as one of the world's top businessmen, and our students, the entrepreneurs of tomorrow, can learn much from his business acumen, drive and focus."

The appliance of science - Dons' fitness under the microscope

For the past five years, RGU: SPORT has worked in collaboration with Aberdeen Football Club (AFC), applying specialist sports science expertise to help footballers improve their performance on the pitch.

Sports Programme Manager, Neil Brown, and Team Leader, Emma Fisher, travelled to Loughborough University with the squad, where they assisted their development on a daily basis.

Neil, a devoted Dons supporter since childhood, explains why he believes sports science and bespoke training programmes can help players achieve optimum levels of strength, fitness and agility:

"Every day players undertake fitness tests, which allow us to assess their speed, strength and flexibility. We then analyse the data and apply sports science knowledge to tailor a unique training programme for each player, which will target any weaknesses that have been identified."

RGU: SPORT initially supported the development of the AFC Youth Academy, through the delivery of strength and power-based exercises, with the application of sports science. This collaboration saw many of the youth players progress to the SPL and as a result, the programme is now being applied to senior team training.

RGU: SPORT's methods have been so successful that other athletes such as gold medal-winner Hannah Miley, and tennis star, Claire Birnie, have also adopted them.

STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS



International conference debut for lecturer in health improvement

A lecturer from the School of Health Sciences saw her work featured as part of the 20th World Health Promotion Conference, in Geneva, Switzerland, in July.

Course Leader Gil Barton has played a pivotal role in developing a new Masters course in Health Improvement and Promotion at the University. She co-authored the paper on *'Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development in Health Promotion'*, which was presented at the conference, alongside Angela Scriven, Reader in Health Promotion from Brunel University, Uxbridge. Their work delves into the distance learning options offered to students studying the course, underlining the unique opportunity this provides for those based both locally and internationally to learn through the use of innovative technologies.

Endorsed by the Royal Society for Public Health, the course aims to address serious challenges facing the health promotion sector in terms of building workforce capacity.

Gil explains, "The rise of lifestyle related diseases means that health improvement and promotion is becoming increasingly important to world governments. The current economic climate is compounding this issue and it is imperative that practitioners are aware and able to respond to the political influences which underpin the holistic elements of health. Our distance learning approach enables us to deliver multi-faceted elements of health improvement and promotion and provides a flexible vehicle for life long learning."

Nursing lecturer trains and presents in USA

Pamela Kirkpatrick, a Lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, recently completed the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) 'Train the Trainer' programme in Indiana, USA and is now an accredited trainer for the JBI Comprehensive Systematic Review Training Programme, joining Dr Sylvia Wilcock.

Pamela said, "Taking part in this training in an international context was a very steep learning curve that was made easier with shared learning as participants brought different strengths to the group work."

Whilst in the USA, Pamela also presented two conference papers on behalf of herself and Dr Peter Wimpenny at the 7th Biennial Joanna Briggs Colloquium in Chicago Illinois. The delegation consisted of 350 people representing 42 countries. Pamela presented the outcomes from a systematic review entitled *'Roles and systems for*

routine medication administration to prevent medication errors in hospital based acute care settings: a systematic review'.

In addition, Pamela explored the challenges involved in undertaking qualitative systematic reviews in the paper entitled *'Decisions, Decisions, Decisions!!! Negotiating the MAZE of a qualitative systematic review'* which was awarded the 'Best Paper' award.

Pamela plans to present the outcomes from her current systematic review which is examining the experiences of support in the community for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and other long term conditions.

Pamela concluded, "I'd like to thank my mentor Dr Pete Wimpenny who has been fantastic in helping me to learn the JBI systematic review processes. His guidance and input into my learning have been invaluable, and I'm extremely grateful."

Academics present research by Royal command

Two academics from the Institute of Health and Welfare Research recently showcased their research to Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, when she visited Aberdeen to open the Suttie Centre for Teaching and Learning in Healthcare at Foresterhill.

Dr Marie Goua and Dr Giovanna Bermano presented one of only six posters on the day, which related to their research into the links between diet and prostate cancer. This cell-based project is funded by medical research charity, Tenovus Scotland, of which The Princess is the Patron.

Dr Goua said, "It was an honour to be chosen by Tenovus to meet Princess Anne and present our research to her. She showed a great interest in the research, especially the nutrition aspect of it in relation to prevention as well as treatment of cancers in general."

The research project is in collaboration with Professors Wahle and Heys from the University of Aberdeen.

ABS staff celebrate 25 years of service



Several members of staff from Aberdeen Business School recently celebrated 25+ years of service to the University, and were presented with champagne and flowers at the 45th Anniversary lunch at the Marcliffe and a recent staff development event.

They are Professor Charlie Weir, Professor Dorothy Williams, Pete Jones, Sarah Harper, Brian Scroggie, Barbara Diack, Morag Hamilton and Jill Smith.

Lecturers recognised by their students

Academics from across the University have been recognised for their hard work by their students through the Students' Association's inaugural 'I Love My Lecturer' Awards.

The Awards aim to promote excellence in teaching and learning in the University and give students an opportunity to say thank you. The Students' Association promoted the campaign through 'Wired', their weekly email to all students, and suggested that any students who felt a lecturer had gone above and beyond the call of duty to help them nominate that lecturer for an award.

A total of 87 nominations were received for the Awards, which were whittled down to 13 finalist lecturers.

The lecturers were:

- Anne Stevenson, Alex Mackay and Fiona Duncan from ABS;
- Audrey Fryer and Robin Grant from the School of Computing;
- Dr Catherine Hunter, Dr Eoin Cowie and Ranjit Barry from the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences;
- Dr Jonathan Scott from The Scott Sutherland School;
- Lesley Leishman from the School of Health Sciences;
- Dr Winifred Eboh from the School of Nursing and Midwifery;
- Dr Gunti Gunarathne and Dr Jennifer McConnachie from the School of Engineering.

The Students' Association will be continuing and developing the Awards scheme. Nomination forms will be released through the Students' Association website towards the end of the second semester. For more information contact academic@rguunion.co.uk.



Couple retire after 52 years

Jack and Shirley Banks have chalked up 52 years of service between them at the University. They have witnessed a host of changes during their time in the janitorial and cleaning departments, not least of which was the former Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology being granted University status in 1992.

The couple married in 1966, after meeting when Jack served his time as a motor mechanic in a garage at Mounthooly, next to Shirley's home. "I was dared to ask her out by her twin sister, and the rest is history!" After their two children John and Linda went to school, Shirley joined her mother-in-law in working as a cleaning assistant at Willowbank House.

So began Shirley's career at the University, one which took her around a number of locations, including the School of Health on Merkland Road and the RGIT Survival Centre. With the opening of new buildings on the Garthdee campus, Shirley moved to Aberdeen Business School, Gray's School of Art, Scott Sutherland School and finally to the latest addition, the Central Services Building.

Husband Jack joined her at the University in 1992, following a career in the motor trade. At the outset of his career as a driver / janitor at the Schoolhill campus, Jack met a fellow new start, Peter Hall. They struck up a friendship which endures to this day. Both became involved with the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), representing the janitorial and cleaning staff at the University. Both rose to prominence in the Union, with Jack being appointed Branch Chairman and Peter becoming Secretary.

After three years at Schoolhill, Jack was transferred to Gray's School of Art for six very happy years, before being moved to St Andrews St in 2001. "Despite my nickname of 'Grumpy Jack'," he said, "I have enjoyed every minute of my time here!"

They concluded, "It will be strange not going out to work, and we will miss all the friends we have made at the University."



25 years of service for The Gatehouse's Alison

Alison Allan, Studio Supervisor at The Gatehouse, completed 25 years of service at the University in August. Here she is pictured with her colleagues at The Gatehouse.

STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

Anna Shirron with her work.



Mastering the mundane

The Gray's School of Art Masters Degree Show exhibition took place in September. The Show was an opportunity for the 21-strong cohort of Master of Fine Art and Master of Design students to publicly exhibit their stimulating new work. The exhibition showcased a diverse range of socially and critically engaged work using time-based media, painting, installation, performance and photography from tomorrow's talented conceptual thinkers, artists and designers.

One student exhibiting was Anna Shirron, the 2007 BP Fine Art Award winner, who has been mastering 'the ugly face of beauty' in her final-year project, questioning the pre-conceived ideas in art and society of 'what is beautiful'.

Looking specifically at areas of Aberdeen deemed less aesthetically pleasing, Anna's work discovers whether adding something ordinary but beautiful to a site can change people's perceptions of it.

Anna's exhibit consists of large-scale intricate pattern work cut from plain everyday white paper which is displayed on the walls and floor of her exhibition space, taking inspiration from the surrounding scenery of Gray's, and basing her patterns on the view from her studio windows.

Award success for talented computing students

The School of Computing held its annual prize-giving ceremony in July. In addition to the presentation of School prizes, local businesses sponsored and presented awards including: ConocoPhillips, TOTAL, Amor, Nexen Petroleum, Aventa Systems, XMA Ltd, SAIC, Divex, Codify, The Marcliffe Hotel and Spa and the British Computing Society.

Joint winners of the Divex Prize for Best Fourth-Year Computing for Graphics and Animation Student were Alistair Mitchell and Emma Clarke.

Rounding off what has been a very successful University career, Emma has already started working as a Software Developer for local business software solutions company, Codify.

Collecting the Divex Prize also has a special meaning to Emma as she was presented with the prize by her dad, Derek Clarke, Joint Managing Director of Divex.

Emma's proud dad also saw her pick up another accolade at the prize-giving, the Frances Morrison Prize for Best Honours Project involving software development.

A total of 47 awards were made at the School of Computing prize-giving.

Emma with her dad and Derek Clarke.



RGU: SPORT encourage active students

RGU: SPORT is encouraging students to be active and take out membership of the facility. As an incentive, all annual members were entered into a Prize Draw to win an i-Pod docking station. Paul Taylor from Aberdeen Business School won the Annual Peak docking station, and Ryan Waugh from the School of Health Sciences won the Off-Peak docking station.

Business success for enterprising student

Aberdeen Business School student and young entrepreneur Glenn Buchan is building his career while still at university and his company's success has already caught the eye of the local business world.

Glenn, a final year management student, set up marketing company Adspad Limited last year with his business partner Kilian Palop, a PhD engineering student at the University of Aberdeen.

Adspad Limited enables businesses to gain exposure to the student population by producing A3 paper placemats which appear on trays at both universities in Aberdeen. Glenn said, "The idea came to us when we were eating lunch in the canteens and we saw huge marketing potential in the empty trays.

"We had some successful meetings with both Universities who were very supportive of the idea and saw it as a fantastic opportunity to promote university information to students. We were then put in touch with Dr Simon Fraser, Business Development Officer at CREDO, and with his help we registered Adspad as a Limited

Company and started to get the business off the ground."

Since starting the business the duo have secured several nationally recognised clients such as Aberdeen City Council, Cineworld Cinemas, Scottish Opera, Aberdeen Performing Arts and Union Square.

Adspad Limited has already been recognised at this year's Shell LiveWire Awards where they were given the Grand Ideas Award and a £1000 cheque. The pair also reached the final of the Grampian Awards for Business Enterprise 2010, and won the Services Category of the Scottish Institute for Enterprise New Ventures competition and another £1000 cash prize.

Glenn concludes, "Running a business hasn't been plain sailing. Launching was very difficult as we hadn't built up a reputation and companies weren't interested in our product - for the first two months we didn't make any sales at all. Fortunately we believed in our product and went on to secure a number of large clients."

For more information go to www.adspad.co.uk

Swimming the dream



North-east sport star, Hannah Miley, won gold for her country at the Commonwealth Games in October.

The RGU: SPORT scholar smashed the Commonwealth record at the Delhi games in the Women's 400m Individual Medley, completing in 4 minutes 38.83 seconds. Hannah became the first Scottish woman to win gold in the Delhi pool at the 2010 Games.

The Commonwealth success builds on Hannah's recent triumph on the European stage, having secured gold and two bronze medals at the European Championships in Budapest.

New University President elected

Ryan Maclean, who is studying for a Postgraduate Masters degree in International IT Law at Aberdeen Business School, has been elected as the Student President of the University's Student Association, RGU: Union.

Ryan, who took up his post at the beginning of August, was elected by his peers who voted online and across the University campus during RGU: Union's election week from 24- 31 March.

Ryans aims to ensure students receive more effective feedback from University coursework and assessments; establish an International Students Forum to better engage the University's growing international student population, and also to campaign for more efficient transport links and extended library and IT facility access.

Nutrition and dietetics graduate success

Emma Burgess, a recent nutrition and dietetics graduate, submitted her Honours project '*The Potential Impact of Compulsory Continuing Professional Development on Dietetic Management*' as a poster at the recent British Dietetic Association Conference, and won one of four prizes for best poster.

Emma presented her poster at the annual conference at the Macdonald Highland Resort in Aviemore in July. She was presented with a copy of Mary Hickson's book '*Research Handbook for Health Care Professionals*' which was donated by Wiley Blackwell publishers.

Emma has also had an abstract published in the August 2010 edition of the Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetic.



Student Employee Awards

The Student Services Department recruit student ambassadors each year to assist in welcoming new students to the University.

In September 2009 all ambassadors excelled in their respective roles, which made the selection process for the National SEOTY (Student Employee of the Year) Award nominations extremely rigorous.

David Black (Airport Meet and Greet Ambassador) was awarded the Robert Gordon University on Campus Student Employee of the Year Award.

Chris Woods (InfoZone Ambassador) was awarded the Student Employee Leadership Award, and then went on to win the regional award in this category for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

STUDENT SUCCESS



Crathes provides inspiration for Gray's art winner

Iain Morrison, a full-time member of staff who is also studying part-time for a Masters in Design at Gray's School of Art, has taken the top prize of £1000 in a National Trust for Scotland art competition.

Iain, an Applications Supervisor for BDes Graphic Design, has worked at the University for over 14 years. He won the 'Emerging Artist' category for his visual graphic designs on Crathes Castle, near Banchory.

Inspired by the 16th century tower house and its environs, Iain created a stylised visual

timeline, entitled 'Construction', showing how the castle has developed over the centuries.

As part of his Masters project, Iain has spent considerable time exploring the Castle's estate, buildings and gardens, creating various timelines reflecting the history of the castle in unusual and visually aesthetic ways, using a range of computer graphics applications.

As well as creating an award-winning piece of art, Iain has also provided the National Trust for Scotland with a valuable record of the castle's development which the charity plans to use in its visitor information facilities at the Castle in the future.

Iain was awarded his prize from the National Trust for Scotland at a ceremony on 25 September at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre in Glasgow.

Robert Gordon's College Beyond School Conference 2010

Sixth year pupils from Robert Gordon's College spent the day at the University as part of the ninth S6 Beyond School Conference in August.

Led by Fraser Beaton, Head of Careers at the College, the purpose of the Conference was to give pupils a taste of university life, whilst helping them focus and prepare their UCAS forms for application to college and university.

Rachel Creegan, Senior Schools Liaison Officer from the University's Marketing Department, gave a presentation which focused on writing personal statements.

Rachel explains, "With University applications at an all-time high, UCAS forms need to be to a high standard. This early interaction with school pupils is essential and helps them in their future path to further and higher education."

Pupils were divided up into small groups relating to their future career choices, which were directed by volunteers – parents, school and University staff – who provided professional input in to their chosen area.

Pupils were also given the opportunity to practise interview techniques, not only for the university application process but for future job opportunities.

Fiona Warrender, lecturer in Occupational Therapy at the University, comments, "The Conference acts as a catalyst, enabling pupils to fully understand the application process through UCAS and also gives them a first-hand look at Robert Gordon University's facilities."



RCU pupils at the Conference.

Lecturer contributes to prestigious Journal

Chris Yuill, from the School of Applied Social Studies, has contributed to a special edition of *The International Journal of Management Concepts and Philosophy*.

The special edition focuses on the ideas and theories of Richard Wilkinson as outlined in *The Spirit Level*, where he, and co-author Kate Pickett, argue a compelling case for the causal relationship between social inequalities and a range of negative social outcomes, such as the substantial inequalities in health that exist in many high-income nations.

The contribution made by Chris was to extend and analyse one possible solution to reduce inequalities in society and in health suggested by Wilkinson and Pickett: the widening of economic democracy. Such a move would involve the radical reordering and restructuring of the workplace to allow employees to have a much greater say in both the operational practicalities and strategic running of the place in which they work.

Chris argues, "There is plenty of convincing evidence that business organisations that are less hierarchical, and offer their employees greater autonomy and control can be more profitable, in addition to realising a working environment that is much more healthy, lower in stress and higher in social support."

After synthesising a wide range of literature on the subject, Chris identified that more than just offering share-schemes, as is common in the USA was required. Robust and binding mechanisms to allow employees meaningful control within an organisation are required to be implemented by companies wishing to pursue the route of economic democracy, if the full benefits both economically and in terms of health are to be realised.

For further information, please contact Chris at c.yuill@rgu.ac.uk.

ABS marks anniversary by reinforcing business links



As part of Aberdeen Business School's 45th anniversary celebrations, the School reinforced its strong links with industry and highlighted its desire to use academic expertise to work with local companies.

Its long history of corporate interaction was celebrated at a lunch held in April at The Marcliffe Hotel, and was attended by some of the School's industry supporters including Sir Ian Wood, James Milne of Balmoral Group, Bryan Keith of Bon Accord Glass, Neil Bruce of AMEC, Charles Skene of Skene Group and John Halliday of Halliday Fraser Munro.

Dean of ABS, Rita Marcella, said, "The broad range of industry representatives at the lunch reflects the different sectors with which the School has close relationships."

As well as the potential benefits for students from strong industry connections, the School hopes to benefit businesses by offering training, research and expertise from the School's range of academic resources.

(l to r): Rita Marcella, Dean of Aberdeen Business School; Neil Bruce, Executive Director of AMEC; University Chancellor Sir Ian Wood and Professor John Harper, Acting Vice-Principal.

University graduates from Carbon Management Programme

The University was one of four Aberdeen based organisations to successfully graduate from the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management Programme in September, thanks to a commitment to reduce their carbon emissions.

The Carbon Management Programme is designed to help organisations develop a targeted framework to deliver carbon reduction practices by establishing their current baseline emissions, assessing the risks and opportunities posed by climate change, and developing a robust strategy to reduce carbon footprints over a five to ten year period.

Since the programme began in 2003, nearly 100 public sector organisations have developed, or are in the final stages of developing, a Carbon Management plan.

The organisations include Aberdeen City Council, the University of Aberdeen and the Scottish Agricultural College, which were among 43 organisations to receive a certificate from John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth, at the Apex Waterloo Place Hotel, Edinburgh, marking the end of the seventh phase of the programme.

By March 2009, the 50 organisations which had prepared a Carbon Management plan have so far collectively reduced their carbon dioxide emissions by over 350,000 tCO₂e, with associated energy bills savings in excess of £35 million.



(l to r): Professor Peter Robertson receiving the certificate from John Swinney.

Continued from page 1

Alastair McCall, Editor of The Sunday Times University Guide, said, "Robert Gordon University thoroughly deserves to be The Sunday Times Scottish University of the Year. It is the model modern university producing dynamic graduates capable of making an immediate contribution to life, work and wider society.

"The annual graduate employment data over many years has shown Robert Gordon standing shoulder to shoulder with - and often half a step in front of - Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial College London and the London School of Economics. This is no

accident. Students follow courses that have in many cases had a significant input from employers; the end product is both an academically and vocationally relevant education."

Mr McCall went on to praise the University's masterplan for the Garthdee campus and highlighted the University's "flourishing reputation for research" and "high student satisfaction rates". He concluded that it is the University's exceptional graduate employment record that sets it apart from its peers.



Andrew Martin

International Tourism and Hospitality Management, is particularly excited about the possibility of Richard Branson opening a Virgin Galactic airbase in Scotland.

Andrew, who is also Director of the Scottish Centre of Tourism (SCoT), said, "Managing multi-national hotels, resorts, national tourism development and tourism enterprises and attractions requires the sharpest of professional management skills, allied to a sound knowledge of how to direct operations. The thought of extending this practice to space travel is very exciting.

"As this international sector continues to exhibit growth, there will be worldwide demand for suitably qualified managers to take lead roles in both the private and public sectors.

"The new MSc Tourism Management course is, in part, in response to the future needs of the industry nationally, internationally and beyond. By combining the best of both academic and professional worlds, it aims to give you the best possible career boost."

This new course, which saw the first students joining in September, has been developed with guidance from the TMI/Tourism Society (Tourism Management Institute) and international industry stakeholders.

Andrew continues, "The Aberdeen Business School Masters course offers aspiring managers the opportunity to gain industry-specific expertise together with a highly relevant academic qualification. There will be an emphasis on preparing students for future senior management roles and, as such, they will develop their critical thinking and appraisal skills through the application of academic models and relevant theory."

Summing up, Andrew says, "The future for tourism and hospitality is exciting, challenging and diverse. New developments include space tourism, the growth of events, and developing countries throughout the world looking to tourism for economic re-generation. There is a real need for the best of management to strategically lead these developments."

Out of this world

While the intergalactic employment opportunities offered by the tourism and hospitality industry may not be immediately obvious at first glance, Dr Andrew Martin, course leader of the new Masters course in

School of Applied Social Studies work with Scottish Council and Canberra partners to boost Australian social work force

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), the regulatory body for social work education, endorsed the partnership initiative by the BA (Hons) in Social Work by distance learning in September. This course is run by the School of Applied Social Studies and the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services/ATC in Canberra Australia.

In 2008 the course team developed links with the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services/ATC, Care and Protection Services (DHCS/ATC) in Canberra, Australia. In the last two years the team have been exploring how the social work distance learning course could contribute to the drive of Canberra ATC to recruit a qualified social work workforce. The course is an employment based route to achieving a professional social work qualification over three academic stages that roughly correspond with normal academic years.

Initial pilots have taken a small number of staff into stage four of the course to work towards a 'top up' of their existing qualification to honours degree level. In the last year the team have been in negotiation with Canberra ACT and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) about extending the partnership and admitting staff from Canberra to stage four of the course.

The plan is to admit applicants to the BA(Hons) in Social Work by distance learning through existing Fast Track admissions process. This will require all candidates to provide the standard portfolio of evidence in support of their application to stage three of the course. To be eligible to apply for admission via this route all applicants will need to have a degree in social studies or a related subject area e.g. community education.

Robert Buckley, Senior Lecturer at the School of Applied Social Studies, said, "This initiative presents a stimulating and challenging opportunity to the course team, the School and the University. The partnership offers the chance to work collaboratively and creatively with professional colleagues in another country in the education of social work practitioners. It will also allow staff involved to enhance and develop their own understanding of comparative issues between the two systems of social welfare provision."

It is envisaged that the initiative will run as a three-year pilot with a full evaluation at the end of that period.

For further information, please contact Robert Buckley on r.buckley@rgu.ac.uk

School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences strengthens links with Bonn University

The School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences and the University of Applied Sciences, Bonn, have celebrated ten years of collaboration by signing a renewed 'Agreement to Collaborate', spearheaded by Professor Andrew Morrisson.

The origins of the collaboration can be traced to when Professor Morrisson met Dr Maria Weisshaar from Bonn at a conference on distance learning, and discussion on the similarities of the institutions inspired the academics to collaborate.

Professor Morrisson helped to set up a four-year Bachelor Biology course at the University, which is articulated with the course at Robert Gordon University. Students from Germany can carry out two years of the bachelor course at Bonn, then enrol onto their final year of the Bioscience with Biomedical Sciences course in Aberdeen.

Professor Morrisson is also continuing to work with colleagues in Bonn to develop a forensics course, which started two years ago, again designed to articulate with the course at Robert Gordon University. Both courses are taught in English.

In recognition of his work supporting the University of Applied Sciences's curriculum development, Professor Morrisson was appointed as an Honorary Professor at Bonn in 2008.

Over 10 years, 80 students from Bonn have graduated with 'accreditation of prior learning' and come to complete their studies at Robert Gordon University. Robert Gordon University students can also study in Bonn on a four-month placement to undertake the project component of their MSc Instrumental Analytical Sciences course.

Professor Bill Stevely originally signed the 10-year collaboration agreement with their then Principal. Professor John Harper, Acting-Principal, signed the new agreement with their current Principal, Professor Hartmut Ihne, in April 2010. The signing took place at a special "out-of-campus" day in Bonn organised by the students in celebration of the strong links with Scotland. The ceremony was attended by Professor Morrisson and included two Robert Gordon University students who are currently working on their MSc research projects in Bonn. The ceremony concluded with a special whisky tasting session.

There is also a staff exchange between the institutions with several Robert Gordon University lecturers teaching periodically at Bonn and staff from Bonn contributing to courses in Aberdeen.

Professor Morrisson has also recently contributed to a chapter of a book co-written with Professor Gerd Knupp from Bonn on Analytical Chemistry and is currently working on a statistics textbook.

Viscom challenges students to a taste of the real world — in 3D



(l to r): John Welsh, Applications Supervisor at Gray's School of Art, and Bruce Milne, Viscom General Manager.

Digital media students from Gray's School of Art were challenged by Aberdeen video and multimedia specialist, Viscom, to demonstrate their expertise and creativity by producing their own 3D animations to a commercial standard.

The students were given six weeks to fulfil a brief drawn up by Viscom General Manager Bruce Milne, and competed to demonstrate their abilities in three individual categories and also to be crowned overall winner.

The brief was to produce a 3D animated introduction for a theoretical DVD-based educational pack for Calderglen Country Park, a four-star tourist attraction just outside Glasgow which has a children's zoo, extensive nature trails, adventure and special needs play areas and a golf course.

The successful students were: most creative approach — Marta Noworyta; most technically accomplished piece of work — Jamie Chinnery; most thorough research and development process — Kevin Sang and overall winner — Petia Koleva.

Mr Milne said, "Overall we were impressed with the time and effort put into both the research and creation of the final pieces. No two students exhibited the same approach, which shows a healthy range of influences and reference points."



Stephanie Dowling, RGU: RAG President.

Charities society recognised in UK awards

The University's Charities Society, RGU: RAG (Raising and Giving), has been awarded the accolade of Best Small RAG 2010 at the annual UK RAG Conference.

The accolade, which is awarded to a charities society that raises less than £30,000 annually, was presented to RGU: RAG for its dedication and hard work throughout the year, increasing its society membership and successfully running a series of events to raise money for charity.

Held in Kent, the annual UK RAG Conference is a four day event where charities societies from across the UK unite to discuss and generate creative ideas. During the conference an award ceremony is held to celebrate the success of a selection of the UK's most successful RAGs.

RGU: RAG was also presented with the Best Event award for an underwear fashion show which raised £853.99 for Breakthrough Breast Cancer and Everyman Cancer Research.

Lecturer from School of Health Sciences attends Vienna conference to launch the latest European guidelines

Amy Wareing, a Lecturer in Diagnostic Radiography at the School of Health Sciences, travelled to the Austria Centre, Vienna, in October to attend the Annual Congress of the European Association of Nuclear Medicine for the launch of a comprehensive European text for PET/CT Imaging, which she contributed towards.

The book, *Principles and Practice of PET/CT. Part 1, A Technologist's guide* is a collaborative work involving imaging specialists and physicists from across Europe and is the first of a comprehensive

three-part series devoted to this highly specialised, 'cutting edge' imaging technology.

Suzanne Dennan, Chair of the European Association of Nuclear Medicine Technologist Committee added, "It is hoped that this PET-CT book will serve as an invaluable educational tool for all professionals working in PET-CT Departments."

Amy has donated several copies to the University Library, which will be available for general loan.

Staff member's 'Erasmust' experience is a winner!

Julia Kennedy, Erasmus Institutional Co-ordinator, who won first place in the British Council's annual Erasmus Essay and Photography Competition, was honoured at the Erasmus Prize Ceremony, held at the British Council headquarters in London on 12 November.

Entitled 'Erasmust! Why more staff should take part', Julia's winning entry illustrates why more staff should take part in the Erasmus programme, based on her personal experience of living, working and teaching abroad in Europe.

For the first time, the competition invited Erasmus staff from Universities across the UK to enter, providing them with an opportunity to receive recognition for their time abroad from their institution and the British Council. As the overall winner of her category, Julia's essay and photograph portfolio will be used in future British Council publicity material, the press and on the website.

ABS Professor appointed to HITRANS

HITRANS, the statutory Regional Transport Partnership for the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, has appointed Professor David Gray, Professor of Transport Policy at Aberdeen Business School, as a Non-Council member of their Board.

HITRANS Chair, Counsellor Duncan MacIntyre, said, "We face really challenging and interesting times as we look to make progress in delivering our strategic vision for transport in the Highlands and Islands, and I am delighted to have David join us on our journey. I am really pleased David has taken up our offer and am sure his knowledge and appreciation of the key role that quality access plays in all aspects of our lives in the region, be it in developing our businesses, accessing healthcare and education, or just getting to the shop, will add value to our discussions and our decision-making processes."

Professor Gray is also a Theme Leader in the Institute for Management, Governance and Society (IMaGeS).

Honorary Professor finishes as Chair of CIOB

Rob Leslie, Honorary Professor at the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment, has recently concluded his year-long appointment as Chair of the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB).

As Chair, Rob went to the Shanghai 2010 International Expo building conference in June. During the trip Rob visited Tongji University, the VIP suite at China Pavilion and viewed the British Pavilion.

To conclude Rob's appointment as Chair he handed out awards at their annual dinner at the Guildhall, London.

Rob is Business Development Director of Robertson Construction Eastern Limited.



(l to r) David Hibler, Erasmus Programme Manager, Julia Kennedy and Simon Williams, Head of EU Programmes with the British Council.



(l to r): The University's Dr Marie Goua and Dr Bermanno on tour.

The exhibit is being toured until March 2011 as a result of a £25,000 grant from the Scottish Government Science Engagement Fund to deliver a series of workshops to more than 10,000 teenagers in the North and North-east of Scotland.

Members of the public attending the exhibition have the opportunity to learn how weight distribution impacts on their life, as well as the role individual lifestyles play in maintaining health and fitness. Attendees get to grips with staining fat cells to see what they look like under a microscope, and find out whether they can differentiate between the myths and the facts about obesity.

The exhibiting team of academics is led by Dr Giovanna Bermanno, leader of the Cardiovascular and Metabolic Disease research theme within the University's Institute for Health and Welfare Research, and Course Leader for the MSc in Obesity Science and Management. The team comprises fellow members of the Institute and the Centre for Obesity Research and Epidemiology (CORE).

Early this summer, 'Fat Body Slim: Shape Matters!', was one of only 26 exhibitions from across the UK to be selected to appear in the 350th Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition in London's South Bank Centre.

'Fat Body Slim: Shape Matters!' exhibited at Moray Leisure Centre in Elgin in October, Inverness in November, and will visit Fraserburgh in December. Further venues hosting the exhibition through to March 2011 will be announced soon.

For further information on the tour and team's research visit the team's microsite on www.rgu.ac.uk/fatbodyslim.

Obesity on the move

A cutting-edge obesity research exhibition, led by a team of the University's academics, launched a six-month tour of northern Scotland in October.

The fun and interactive exhibition, which began its tour at Satrosphere Science Centre, investigates the science behind obesity, body shape and health.

Entitled 'Fat Body Slim: Shape Matters!' the exhibit has been designed to showcase the University's obesity research through a series of accessible and interactive displays.

Flagship University event brings together business leaders to discuss North-east values

Business leaders from across the North-east came together at the University's prestigious 2010 Entrepreneurship Dinner, sponsored by AMEC, in September, at The Marcliffe Hotel and Spa.

Entitled 'Exporting North-east Values - Energy and Hospitality', the event, which is now in its 15th year, included keynote speeches from Roy MacGregor, Chairman of Global Energy Group, and Robert Cook, Chief Executive, Malmaison and Hotel Du Vin. The dinner culminated with a panel discussion which included Neil Bruce, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer for AMEC plc, and was chaired by Kirstin Gove, PR and Media Training Manager at AVC Media Enterprises, and former STV anchorwoman.

The panel discussed a number of issues including: the qualities of successful entrepreneurship; the characteristics which are synonymous with the North East (both good and bad!) and how these translate to the rest of the world, and the similarities between the energy and hospitality industries.

Gray's lecturer awarded Scholarship

Heather Ross, Gray's graduate and Lecturer at the School, has been awarded the Royal Scottish Academy's Alastair Salvesen Art Scholarship of £12,000. Heather's award-winning proposal presented to the Salvesen committee dealt with Japanese-based themes: 'old and new', femininity and technology.

The Royal Scottish Academy administered four awards totaling £21,000 to artists in Scotland. These awards are given by the RSA on behalf of the individual benefactors and trusts in keeping with the primary aim of the RSA: to encourage and support artists. The awards form part of the RSA's annual awards programme and each award is presented annually.

University prioritises health as new scheme is made available to employees

As part of a suite of initiatives aimed at supporting the health and wellbeing of its staff, The University has introduced subsidised health cash plans which are available to all employees.

The HSF health plans start at £1 per week and reimburse subscribers on their everyday healthcare costs, including dental and optical care, alternative therapies (such as chiropody, chiropractic and acupuncture) and private specialist consultations and scans. HSF cash plan includes family members as standard and claims are processed extremely quickly and efficiently. The HSF cash plans also provide up to £40,000 personal accident cover and free access to 24/7 GP, stress and legal helplines.

Julie Skinner, Resourcing Specialist from the University's HR Department who facilitated the initiative, said, "HSF have been very helpful in explaining the scheme to the employees, particularly those who initially confused it with private health insurance. Once staff at the University understood that the scheme would allow them to claim back for things such as glasses, contact lenses, and dental bills, membership to the scheme rapidly grew.

"The claims forms are available online, and the funds are transferred directly into the bank account of staff members within a week."

Julie conducted a survey in order to ascertain how the plan was working. Here are a couple of the comments that came back:

"I am happy to confirm my satisfaction with the plan. We, as a small family, have personally made claims for the dentist and for glasses and it has worked fine. The HSF health plan offered at RGU is worth every penny you invest." Dr. Horacio González-Vélez

"I'm very happy with the plan. I wear contacts and my husband has been talking about getting glasses for several years! When I set up the Health Plan he finally got round to it so we claimed quite a lot back just before our holiday, which was very handy. I would also say that the staff I have spoken to on the phone have been extremely friendly and helpful and the process for claiming back seems quite straightforward. I wouldn't want to give up the plan now." Fiona Jardine.

For further information go to the Pay and Benefits page of the HR website and click on 'Health Cash Plan'. For advice contact David Elliott at HSF on 07976 638030.



Stunning venue available for reading parties

The Burn is a 180 acre estate with a mansion house at its core located just outside of Edzell on the border of Aberdeenshire and Angus. The Burn hosts reading parties for one, two, three or more nights. An annual membership fee is paid by the University to allow staff and students to take part.

The Burn has at its core a Georgian mansion that was built in 1791. Reading parties use an impressive Drawing Room as their main room for group activity, and the Library and Lounge as break-out rooms.

The Burn provides full catering for participants. The cost for a group of 25 would be £1220 (£48.80 per head) in 2010, rising to and £1250 (£50 per head) in 2011.

For more information visit www.theburn.co.uk, call 01356 648 281 or email burn@goodenough.ac.uk.

EVENTS DIARY 2010/11

For further information on all events, visit: www.rgu.ac.uk/news/event diary

DEC	
15	Carol Service
JAN	
27	Guest Lecture - Baroness Caroline Cox
FEB	
11	Professor Mike Pittilo's - Photographic Exhibition