

November Issue

Nexus

Connecting the University community



**ROBERT GORDON
UNIVERSITY • ABERDEEN**

- New Director of Library Services appointed
- Continued success in Universities league table
- New student accommodation unveiled



University invites public to view plans for Garthdee campus



Staff, students and local residents had the opportunity to view detailed plans for the proposed new building planned for the University's Garthdee campus at two public consultation events which were held on 13th October.

The University's detailed planning application for a 34,000m² development will be submitted to Aberdeen City Council in November with a decision expected early in 2010.

The development will be connected to the existing Faculty of Health and Social Care, which neighbours RGU: SPORT and Aberdeen Business School. The new development will see all of the University's academic activities located at the Garthdee Campus within state-of-the-art teaching and learning facilities including a new library as well as formal and informal learning and social spaces for students. It will also allow staff and students from different

disciplines to benefit from co-located inter-disciplinary working in a manner that has previously not been possible with two separate locations.

Mike Berry, Director of Estates at the University, said, "Our new Masterplan gives the University an appropriately significant central point of arrival, makes the most of our wonderful riverside setting and enhances our existing high quality campus at Garthdee."

The new facilities, which will cost £170 million, will complement the University's existing buildings at the east end of the campus in terms of their innovative design and style, while

providing an outstanding educational and working experience for its staff and students. The campus will retain its park-like ambience and further develop the recreational environment for the benefit of staff, students and the local community.

Mike Berry concluded, "As part of the public consultation process we are keen to encourage as many local residents as possible to view the development proposals for themselves and give their views."

Further information is available from the RGU website: www.rgu.ac.uk/campusdev/masterplan

THIS ISSUE

Welcome to the November issue of the University's magazine, Nexus. This issue sees two pages dedicated to both our continued interaction with business, and student success stories. This student focus continues with a feature about Freshers' Week activities and the new accommodation.

Please get in touch if you have any suggestions for stories or features. 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 December issue is Wednesday 4 November.

Gail Caie
Senior Communications Officer



Michelle Anderson

University welcomes new Directory of Library Services

Michelle Anderson has joined the University as Directory of Library Services. Previously, Michelle had worked at the University of Lincoln since 1999, initially as Customer Services Manager, and then as Head of Library and Learning Resources for eight years.

Michelle is a professionally qualified librarian, gaining an MA from Leeds Metropolitan University and a Postgraduate Diploma from the University of York, before working in both HE and FE libraries, and as an information professional in commercial research and development.

Reflecting on her time at Lincoln she said, "My time there was marked by the opening of the new University Library in the Great Central Warehouse, a renovated goods and grains warehouse. During this period there were great improvements in student satisfaction through learning resources, a shift in strategy towards electronic provision, the development of the institutional repository for research, and enhanced links with the learning landscape.

"I am delighted to have joined the University at such an exciting time. Our priorities include engagement with the master planning process to deliver a university library able to support the institution's aspiration to be one of the country's leading universities."

SPECIAL FEATURES

4-5

Interacting with business

6-7

Celebrating student success

8

Community engagement



Gray's graduates Kelly Sim and Simon Smith at the launch of the exhibition.

Gatehouse takes charge of state-of-the-art Horizon machine

The Design and Print Consultancy at the Gatehouse have taken charge of a new state-of-the-art Horizon glue binding machine. The previous Sulby machine, which was purchased by the University some eighteen years ago, was becoming problematic. Due to the age of the machine, spare parts were becoming scarce but the main factor for replacement was that the machine was not completely guarded.

Bill Walker, Print Manager at the Gatehouse, said, "The Health and Safety of our staff is paramount and although we had a safe system of working practice in place, it was always our intention to invest in the new piece of equipment. The glue binder is used to produce a more professional finish to all University and local commercial printers work e.g. student theses, dissertations, manuals, paperback books, reports and other thick documents needing to be bound in book form. The commercial side of our service allows us the opportunity to generate additional income which of course goes towards paying for the purchase of the machine."



'Broadening Minds' with Homecoming exhibition

The University joined in the Homecoming Scotland celebrations with a special exhibition opened by Principal Professor Mike Pittilo at Georgina Scott Sutherland Library, at the start of October.

The University's Arts and Heritage Collections team co-ordinated the exhibition, entitled 'Broadening Minds', which showcases the work of nine graduates of Gray's School of Art. Each has spent time abroad and their exhibits show how contrasting life in Scotland with their experiences abroad has influenced their work.

Graduate Simon William Smith was selected to contribute. He completed a degree in Design for Industry at Gray's in 2002, and has since worked in various companies as a designer. He cites the two years he spent based in Miami, Florida, as a great source of inspiration for his future career and is currently employed as a design engineer with Piezo Composite Transducers (PCT) Limited.

Also exhibiting is Kelly Sim who graduated from Gray's with a degree in Printmaking in 2001. She worked locally before travelling to the USA in 2004 to complete a Masters at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Now working for a publishing company, Kelly is also striving to further her practice in fine art.

Jane Kidd, Collections Curator, said, "It is great to see how our graduates have fitted in abroad. They've made the link between Scotland and some of the world's greatest landscapes – from Paris to Warsaw and Utah – and this exhibition promises to be an eye-opener for all visitors."

The exhibition runs until 15 January 2010.

University ranks among the best for graduate earnings

Adding to its consistently strong record for graduate employability, the University can now count high graduate earnings among recent accolades.

Published in September, *The Sunday Times University Guide 2010* includes the first full league table recording the earning power of university degrees, and shows the University as the highest performing new university in Scotland in this regard.

Once again best in Scotland for graduate-level jobs and third in the UK, the University has also been ranked top new university in Scotland and second best of the post-1992 institutions in the UK. In Scotland, the University boasts the fewest number of graduates unemployed after six months.

'From courses to facilities, the focus is firmly on employability,' Sunday Times University Guide 2010.

With an average graduate salary of £20,858 after six months, the University is among some of the former polytechnics that are bucking the trend that shows graduates from new universities earn lower salaries.

Professor Mike Pittilo, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University, said, "It is a tremendous achievement for the University to be among the top UK institutions for graduate earnings. I am delighted to hear that our alumni are doing so well.

"We are proud to consider ourselves the 'Professional University' and this underlines our commitment to producing work-ready graduates. Our courses are developed with industry in mind and work placements are an integral part of many of the programmes delivered by the University. I am sure that we will continue to build on this success."

INTERACTING WITH BUSINESS



Professor Paul Spicker

Event series addresses skills development in construction industry

As the economic crisis continues, gaining a competitive edge in the construction industry is ever more important to UK firms. To address this, the first in a series of quarterly events relating to skills development in the field took place at Aberdeen Business School on 15 September.

Set up by Aberdeen City's Construction Industry Development Forum, this new series of events is being supported by the University's Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment, in conjunction with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and Aberdeen City Council.

Two Scott Sutherland staff members gave their input at the first session, entitled 'Management competence and Higher Education'. Dr David Moore, course leader of the University's MSc Construction Project Management programme, reviewed what makes a good project manager, while Dr Mohamed Abdel-Wahab, lecturer in construction management, discussed whether Higher Education meets the needs of the construction industry.

Dr Abdel-Wahab explained, "This series of events aims to create an environment for knowledge exchange. It will provide an opportunity for networking between local construction companies and academics, and promises to be a very worthwhile mutual learning exercise for those working in the field."

Welfare reform investigated

A lecture to celebrate the extensive research that Professor Paul Spicker has completed on reforming welfare took place at the University on 6 October.

The Professorial Lecture, entitled 'Reforming Welfare: What is happening to social security?' explored what the social security system was supposed to do, how it has changed, and where the programme of welfare reform is taking it.

Professor Spicker explained, "Historically, the British social security system was a cornerstone of the welfare state. It was supposed to leave behind the old idea that welfare was only for the poor, and this worked, but recent policy has come to focus increasingly on poverty and unemployment, and this 'catch all' approach is leaving gaps."

Professor Spicker holds the Grampian Chair of Public Policy at the University and has written widely in the field of social policy. He has published thirteen books, several shorter works and over 70 academic papers.

He has undertaken a wide range of applied research projects, including studies of poverty in Scotland, homelessness, police complaints, and work on public consultations. His research has also included study related to the care of the elderly, benefit delivery systems, psychiatric patients, housing management and local anti-poverty strategy.

In 2007, Professor Spicker was appointed a Special Adviser to the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee for their report on the simplification of social security benefits.

Univation secures two further PetroChina contracts

Univation has secured two more contracts from The Foreign Co-operation Administration Department (CCAD) of PetroChina to provide technical training in Aberdeen, combined with industrial and cultural visits.

In September twenty delegates, from a number of operating companies within PetroChina, arrived to undertake engineering and production training. Their programme included visits to KCA Deutag, DrilQuip and Petrofac. The second delegation is due later this month.

Greg Sloan, Univation's Regional Development Manager for China, said, "PetroChina is looking to substantially increase the amount of offshore work it does, having in the past concentrated on onshore development. They appreciate the rich source of energy industry experience and expertise on our doorstep.

"We are building a long term relationship to provide offshore training to PetroChina through CCAD. Here in Aberdeen we have the knowledge and contacts that they need. We are ensuring that an integral part of the training programmes we put together for them involves engagement, particularly with the local oil and gas service industry. This knowledge transfer

is going to be one of Aberdeen's most important exports in the coming years."

As well as the teaching programme and industrial visits, the delegates enjoyed some traditional UK culture. This included visits to Glenfiddich Distillery, Crathes Castle, Edinburgh and London. The delegation was even treated to a haggis, neeps and tatties evening, cooked by Univation staff, for which they generously reciprocated with a night of traditional Chinese food at the Skene Apartments.

Greg concluded, "These cultural events are very important in building trust and relationships with our Chinese delegates, and are one of the key factors in ensuring the success of our programmes and ongoing future work."



The delegation and Univation staff see the sights in London.



Offshore Europe 2009: bigger and better

The overall verdict on Offshore Europe (OE) this year was that it was bigger and better than ever before and the increased size of the University's stand mirrored an increase in visitor numbers and exhibitors.

Duncan Stephen, Manager of the Energy Centre, agreed, "It was fantastic to see such a strong presence from the oil and gas community. We had interest from both employers and employees, eager to either do a full MSc Engineering course, or simply to take modules on a CPD basis to tackle the skills gap in their career. The oil show has always been, and will continue to be, an important event to showcase the School's portfolio of both undergraduate and diverse postgraduate courses."

Sales Manager, Stuart Rennie, said, "This year's show brought a lot of new contacts and engagement with existing customers. We also made a number of important connections that will help progress our business goals in the Middle East, China and other key target markets."

The stand was manned by staff from ABS, the School of Engineering/Energy Centre, Communications, Marketing and Univation.

University staff manning the stand

Industry - academia collaboration short-listed for energy institute award

An innovative degree programme run jointly by Shell International Exploration and Production and the University has been short-listed for an award at the prestigious Energy Institute Awards 2009.

The Advanced Degree Programme for Shell Wells Technical Professionals has been short-listed in the International Platinum Award category, the winners of which will be announced at the awards ceremony on 19 November at the Sheraton Park Lane Hotel, London.

The Programme enables Shell personnel to gain an MSc academic degree as part of their learning and development programme. Fifty staff have joined up since the pilot stage, studying for either MSc Well Design and Engineering, or MSc Completion and Intervention Engineering, with the first cohort graduating in July of this year.

Shell provides in-house modules as essential parts of the training and competence development of staff in the relevant disciplines. The programme incorporates these, offering work-based learning experience, self-study, coaching and mentoring, with continuous assessments and examinations. On a day-to-day basis, the courses are delivered and administered by a team comprising academic staff from the University's School of Engineering and Shell personnel. The full programme links with learning administered via the Shell Open University and managed by the Wells Faculty at the Shell Global Learning Centre.

Angela Smith, Shell Learning and Development Wells Course Director, stated, "I am very pleased with the results from this successful staff development programme. It is win/win for both the company and the student. The benefits to Shell include a detailed implementation plan for the application of the project. The students continue their personal development through attainment of an MSc in Well Engineering or Completion and Intervention Engineering."

University alumnus takes charge of Scottish Renewables

University graduate Niall Stuart has been appointed Chief Executive of Scottish Renewables, the representative voice of the renewable energy industry in Scotland.

Niall will join the organisation from his current role as Press and Government Affairs Manager at the Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI).

Having graduated with an MSc in Information Analysis with Distinction, in 2001, Niall secured a job working with Anne Begg MP following a placement opportunity. He worked as a researcher in both Aberdeen and London before going on to work as Press and Government Affairs Officer at the Federation of Small Businesses in Scotland, and then took over

the running of the office in 2005. He joined SCDI in October 2007.

Niall explained, "I'm delighted to be taking up this new role, and renewables is such a dynamic and fast-growing sector. It will be at the very heart of efforts to grow the economy and tackle climate change over coming years and Scottish Renewables has a critical role leading the debate on how we deliver the sector's potential for investment, new jobs and carbon savings for Scotland."



CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS



Kayleigh modelling one of her designs.

Bringing home the tartan: Scottish student is London Fashion Week finalist and international success

Kayleigh Archibald, a Gray's School of Art student, is well on her way to becoming tomorrow's Vivien Westwood. An accomplished fashion student, Kayleigh represented herself as a finalist at London Fashion Week, ventured to Japan for three months as the recipient of a major award, and was involved in 'Bringing Home the Tartan' to her native Scotland.

Kayleigh has achieved tremendous success since she began a degree in Fashion at the University. She was encouraged by Programme Leader Kim Eason to submit work to the Fashion Diversity 2009 competition, for the chance to see her work on the Fashion Week catwalks, and has been selected as a finalist for her innovative take on late 18th century clothing.

As part of the project brief, Kayleigh incorporated the theme of pleasure gardens, a term used for public recreational space in the 18th century, into her submission.

She explained, "Important aspects of my design include corsetry and petals. This inspired my use of ribbon and pastel, petal shapes as well as deeper, rich colours. What remains true is the social importance of outdoor spaces and I think my collection would really stand out from the crowd."

Kayleigh saw her capsule collection of six outfits modelled by professionals at Fashion

Week, in a catwalk show at The Museum of London on 19 September.

She is also one of ten finalists in the 'Bringing Home the Tartan' competition, launched by the Scotsman newspaper earlier this year. She was challenged to create a stylish garment using tartan from the official register, and so far she is certainly bringing home success.

Kayleigh said, "I designed and hand-made a jacket inspired by Scottish heritage. The garment's large fake fur sleeves are testament to Scottish winters and its pleated underskirt is a new take on the kilt. I made the piece using Japanese 'Sakura' tartan after a University project working with Sakura Scotland and I'm delighted with it."

And the excitement doesn't stop there for Kayleigh. She applied for the Toyo-Orc Award through her local newspaper in Orkney and will travel to the Toyo Institute of Art and Design as the award-winner for a three month placement, in March next year.

Student projects hit the big screen

Students from the Department of Communication, Marketing and Media at Aberdeen Business School saw their community efforts hit the big screen at The Belmont Cinema on 21 September.

'ABS on Film 2009' provided a student-led account of the projects the group worked on last semester, using their cutting-edge talent to feed into local community initiatives.

The ABS Fashion Show, which took place in May, saw students raise a staggering £10,000 for cancer support charity CLAN, while the Aberdeen Identity project involved another group producing a short film to portray Aberdeen in a youthful way to prospective travellers and workers, with sponsorship from BAA Aberdeen and BP.

Richard Baron, who is embarking on his final year of a degree in Media Studies, took part in the Fashion Show and led the student team in charge of filming the projects stage by stage. He undertook a work placement with AVC Media, a company which also provided support for the Fashion Show, and was later offered employment as a direct result of the skills he demonstrated.

He said, "Working with different types of people all with varying opinions and ideas has helped me to excel. My placement and the Fashion Show project were great fun and provided me with a chance to make a name for myself. Experience like this is 'A' grade CV material and really helps your work prospects for the future."

Tim Smith, BP's Director of External Affairs, said, "I am very impressed by the vision and originality shown by the students. The Aberdeen Identity film is of outstanding quality and really showcases Aberdeen in a professional manner. It is extremely heartening to see the wealth of talent coming through from the University and encouraging that these young people are keen to use their skills in actively promoting our great city."



From left to right: Professor Rita Marcella, Dean of Aberdeen Business School; Tim Smith, BP's Director of External Affairs; Duncan Charles, Fundraising Coordinator for CLAN, and student Richard Baron, get set for the screening.



Management student carries out placement at Bayer, Germany

Management student **Lukasz Wozniak** spent this summer working in Germany for global pharmaceutical company **Bayer** and was funded by the **Saltire Foundation**. **Lukasz** was based in HR in Bayer's HQ in **Leverkusen**, and worked closely within the department which set up the organisation's global HR strategy.

Lukasz said, "As a management student focused on HR issues it was a great opportunity to gain first-hand experience in my chosen field and a superb chance to network."

"As I am approaching my final year at the University, I have to make a decision about my future career-path and this internship gave me great insight into the real business world."

The Saltire Foundation aims to promote and develop Scotland's up-and-coming business talent across the globe. Its undergraduate programme, which Lukasz took part in, gives talented and ambitious students the chance to experience the working environment of some of the world's most successful multinational companies.



Lukasz Wozniak

New design for Auld Reekie's Castle wins award for Aberdeenshire graduate

A graduate of the **Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment** has won first prize in the **Association for Project Safety Scottish Student Design Award 2009**.

Claire Bonner scooped the prestigious accolade in recognition of her design for a permanent grandstand facility for **Edinburgh Castle Esplanade**. Called 'Dun Eiden' it would hold the **Military Tattoo**, as well as other events throughout the year.

The award centred around the issues of project health and safety, and how through careful design, risks can be minimised at early design stages. Claire explains, "As my site is so prominent and accessed by thousands of tourists, my submission focussed on site access and construction whilst still enabling the public to access the site at all times. The stands were actually made up of prefabricated elements which could be put together on site in a relatively short space of time, thus minimising disruption."

"Given the location, and the volume of tourists visiting this site, access was always of paramount importance, both at early design feasibility stages, and also at construction phases. The Construction Design and Management Regulations enable constructions to be carried out efficiently and safely through early elimination of any potential risks at the design phase, as well as control any residual risks which may occur on site."

Students' work to 'Sustain Our Nation'

Product Design students at Gray's School of Art have been working in groups preparing their entries for 'Sustain Our Nation', a major national competition inviting young designers to create sustainable, design-led social enterprises.

As a first step in pulling their ideas together, the students took part in a **Community Day**, hearing from local initiatives, council members, other organisations and members of the public, as a means to exposing themselves to a range of community issues and existing social enterprises. Representatives attended from organisations such as **The Foyer**, **Transition Extreme** and the **Creative Waste Exchange**, providing a really helpful insight for the students.

Sue Fairburn, a lecturer who is leading the project at Gray's has already marked the School as one to watch, as she was part of the

winning team at the competition's **Masterclass challenge**, for tutors to learn more about the project, in London earlier this year.

She said, "Key themes facing all communities in Britain are crime, alternative financing, environment, health and ageing. 'Sustain Our Nation' is challenging students to develop a product or service which must not only offer a viable business solution, but also a major social benefit, focusing on one or more of the five key issues. I am confident that the students at Gray's will come up with some fantastic ideas."

Maximum prize money for each regional winning group will be up to **£10,000** with a further **£10,000** awarded at the National final, courtesy of the **Audi Design Foundation**.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



One of the participants at the Summer School

Urban Design Summer School

An Urban Design Summer School entitled 'Centre to Edge' took place at the end of August, delivered in conjunction with The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment and the University, in association with Aberdeen City Council.

The Summer School was attended by students, architects, landscape architects, planners and urban designers from the public and private sectors, planning and property consultants and private developers and housebuilders.

The event was held over three days at the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment. It gave delegates the tools needed for a leadership role in meeting some of the key urban challenges of the coming decade.

The enduringly successful principles of traditional town-building were considered in relation to current issues of climate change, traffic and transport, integrated land uses and new building typologies. In addition to a strong academic component, the Summer School employed a model of 'teaching through practice' to address two different contexts within the City of Aberdeen boundary, using a condensed version of The Prince's Foundation's widely recognised Enquiry by Design process.

The delegates were welcomed by Professor John Watson, Dean of the Faculty of Design and Technology. Additional speakers included Dr William Brogden, an architectural historian, author and an authority on the history of Aberdeen. The Summer School finished with an evening Civic Reception at the Town House, Aberdeen.

Balancing act: Physiotherapy taster class for the over-50s

The School of Health Sciences is running a physiotherapy exercise session as part of Aberdeen's 50+ Festival.

The event took place at RGU: SPORT on 25 September and acted as a taster session for those interested in joining the regular class, which is run as a service to the over-60's community by students of physiotherapy.

Jennifer Duthie, Associate Head of the School of Health Sciences, who co-ordinates the student-led exercise programme, ran the University's contribution to the Festival. She explained, "Physiotherapy exercises can help with stiffness, balance and general fitness. The physiotherapy classes we provide give our students the opportunity to understand how the body can change with age, and what they can do as physiotherapy professionals to help counteract this.

"The University has a real interest in the health and wellbeing of the community, and offering this service is both very rewarding and mutually beneficial. Participants enjoy the class but they also take on the role of educators, which is really worthwhile for our students."



Stretching themselves: participants enjoy physiotherapy taster class run by the School of Health Sciences.



Professor Barclay during one of his demonstrations

Getting away with murder

Around 300 members of the public attended a sold out 'Murder, Mystery and Microscopes' event which took place as part of TechFest at the University on 26 September. The occasion was hosted by Damien McLeod of Original 106 FM and gave adults who have an interest in forensics the chance to hear from some of the most high-profile and knowledgeable experts in the field.

A collaborative initiative between the Macaulay Institute and Aberdeen's two universities, the event formed a basis for the discussion of the forensic implications of a number of extracts from the fictional works of Scottish crime writer, Stuart MacBride. Professor Dave Barclay, world-renowned forensics expert and Senior Lecturer in Forensic Science at the University, provided his specialist insight into this very interesting debate.

During the event Professor Barclay demonstrated how not everything we see in our favourite murder mystery programmes is quite how it works in the real world. Equipped with a can of petrol, one eye-opening part of his presentation involved throwing a lit cigarette into the flammable liquid!

He explained, "We aimed to explode a few myths of how Hollywood doesn't always get the science right. The event also allowed me to demonstrate a bit of real science and give an insight into the exciting nature of studying forensics at the University."



Sarah 'wins' a Graduate Certificate in Management

In conjunction with Original 106fm, the University recently ran a 'Win a Graduate Certificate' competition. Over four weeks listeners had the opportunity to play a daily competition to win £106 of book vouchers. The winners were then whittled down by Original FM, to meet the criteria of a Graduate Certificate student. The University's Marketing Department then contacted the finalists to gauge their suitability and interest, and invited them to the University's Open Evening.

At the Open Evening, the finalists competed in a general knowledge quiz live on air, with the winner receiving their fees paid on any of the four Aberdeen Business School Graduate Certificate courses; Management, Project Management, Marketing and Information Studies.

The winner was Sarah McLeod, a mum of two from Summerhill. Sarah, who left school at 16, joined the army in the catering core but left when she became a mum as she wanted to work more flexible hours. She currently works in accounts.

Alan Hunt, course leader of the Graduate Certificate in Management, said, 'I am delighted that Sarah has decided to study the Graduate Certificate in Management, and with her work experience it will be a great stepping stone for her and her career. The course facilitates entry to a range of Masters level courses at Aberdeen Business School and also provides a qualification in its own right. Graduate Certificates are ideal for those who would like to fit study in with their other commitments.'

Medieval artifacts unearthed at Schoolhill

Medieval artifacts have been unearthed at the quadrangle of the University's Schoolhill premises. The Council's Archaeological Unit worked on the Schoolhill site while workmen re-landscaped the quadrangle as part of extensive building works which took place over the summer.

While it is rare for this type of soft-landscaping work to reveal archaeological remains, because the area is known to be the site of the Dominican (Blackfriars) friary, an archaeological condition was placed on the planning application to ensure an archaeologist was present during the works.

Soon after the JCB started to strip grass and topsoil, medieval objects including pottery, floor tiles and mammal and fish bones were discovered. After three days work at least two walls, a hearth and possible drains were uncovered and recorded.

The roof and floor tiles, and the construction methods of the wall, suggested that these were the remains of the Blackfriars friary. The friary has not been investigated by archaeologists before, but there are records of remains being found during building works in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Aberdeen City Council's assistant archaeologist, Alison Cameron said, "This is a very exciting and significant find. Now we can start to work out where the buildings were and what they looked like."

Distinguished visitors come to Aberdeen Centre for Trauma Research

In August, the Aberdeen Centre for Trauma Research (ACTR) was pleased to welcome a return visit of Major Wajid Malik. The visit was supported by the British Council Higher Education Link and had previously supported reciprocal visits by the staff of the ACTR and the Department of Psychiatry, Rawalpindi, Pakistan. The ACTR was equally pleased to have the first visit of Captain Khalid Shah who had been successful in obtaining a "Talented Researcher Award", also provided by the British Council, following an application by the ACTR and the Rawalpindi Department of Psychiatry on his behalf.

During their visit, both Major Malik and Captain Shah received intensive research training from Dr Susan Klein, Reader in Trauma Research, and clinical experience from Professor David Alexander, Director of ACTR. In addition, attachments were arranged for Captain Khalid with the Adult Psychiatric Service at the Royal

Cornhill Hospital and the local ambulance service. Each of the visitors was also able to draft out papers representing collaborative research efforts under the aegis of the Pakistan-Aberdeen Collaborative Trauma Team (PACTT). This was established by Dr Klein and Professor Alexander in conjunction with Professor/ Brigadier Rana, who is the Head of the Department of Psychiatry in Rawalpindi and is now one of our Honorary Professors.

Both the visitors had distinguished themselves during and after the catastrophic 2005 earthquake in the Pakistan controlled area of Kashmir. Their visit further cemented the academic link between the University and Pakistan and further advanced our institutions international standing.

Typically, the University made these two gentlemen most welcome. The ACTR extends its own appreciation for this and echoes that expressed by Major Malik and Captain Shah.



Left: President of RGU RAG (Raising & Giving) Charities Society Nóra Ní Fhlannagáin (before the head shave) and Vice-President of the Union Rachel Watson at RGU in the Park.

University fun day is 'joust' the ticket

Hundreds of freshers kicked off student life at the University with a host of fun and informative activities in September.

'RGU in the Park', which took place on the 23rd in the city centre's Union Terrace Gardens, saw students fire up rivalries in a giant gladiator joust, as well as a range of other games.

Students unleashed their competitive streaks by racing each other on the bouncy bungee run or by seeing who could 'rodeo' the longest on the moving inflatable bull. Those up for a serious challenge tackled the British Army's assault wall or joined in a 5-a-side football game.



Nóra getting her head shaved for charity.

Another staple of the Freshers' Week calendar is the University Freshers Fair, which took place the following day, with over 2000 attending around 150 exhibits.

The event gave the new arrivals a chance to make the most of an abundance of freebies, as well as sign up for a variety of societies and sports clubs.

Aberdeen Business School student Nóra Ní Fhlannagáin also raised a record £1959.38 during Freshers' Week by having her eleven-inch locks shaved off for the Children's Hospice Association of Scotland (CHAS).

RGU: RAG, with help from the RGU: Union Freshers' Team, also tirelessly bucket collected for the event. Nóra, the Society President, said, "We were amazed at the response and have set a new RGU: RAG record, smashing our target of £1500."

The event can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Apq035EmNOg>.

Drawing a BLNK: Gray's graduates further their success

A group of graduates who featured in this year's Gray's School of Art Degree Show 2009 came together for a group exhibition which was open to the public at Aberdeen Arts Centre.

Entitled '2&3', a reference toward the dimensions of the work displayed, the exhibition is part of a programme of events at a new contemporary gallery space at the Arts Centre. Gray's graduates were involved in leading '4 BLNK WOLS', their newly adopted gallery space, and the event provided their fellow alumni with an opportunity to exhibit some of their best efforts.

Louise Emslie, Tina Hay, Jenny Hood, Callum Kellie, Kieran McCrudden and Mhairi McGhee, graduates of the Photographic and Electronic Media and Sculpture departments at Gray's, exhibited an eclectic mix of work that continued to explore their challenging artistic ideas and research, developed as part of their studies.

Louise Emslie explained, "It was a fantastic opportunity for us to step out into the art world, post art school. Being given the opportunity to exhibit in the city centre encouraged us all to continue with our practice and, more importantly, to bring the us together in a professional setting. Such an opportunity is hard to come by, even for established artists."

New student accommodation unveiled

The University opened new student accommodation at 8/10 Craigievar Crescent, Garthdee, this September. Most of the residents have already moved into the flats, which were designed by local architect Sholto Humphries, and developed by Carnoustie Developments Ltd. The innovative custom design incorporates eight self contained student apartments for couples, individuals and people with disabilities.

The accommodation was designed to be as eco-friendly as possible, and benefits include:

- Less transport requirement and carbon footprint impact due to its close location to the University;
- Secured cycle racks;
- Concrete floor slabs and separating walls for improved energy performance, greater soundproofing and fireproofing;
- Very high standard of insulation resulting in costs of approximately £4 per property per week for heating and lighting;
- Low voltage lighting throughout;
- Ground floor apartment with custom designed wet room and kitchen for wheelchair access;
- An enhanced neighbourhood, as per Government Planning Policy, built on a former disused brownfield site.

Heavyweight concrete masonry homes, such as the new accommodation, have inherent benefits as their thermal mass absorbs heat during the summer thereby reducing the need for air-conditioning and similarly reduces the need for heating during the winter.

Concrete and masonry homes also provide free built-in fire resistance, sound insulation and flood resilience, without the need for additional finishes and coverings. This cuts down on carbon emissions during manufacture, and also reduces the cost of their supply and insulation.

Bill Somerville, Deputy Director of Estates and Property Services, said, "On 7th September the developers invited Pat Briggs, Vice-Principal and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Planning and Resources) and the Accommodation team to inspect the building.



"Following this the developers invited the local community for a tour and they were delighted with the finished result, saying the building has vastly improved their neighbourhood."

The development is a departure from the traditional student residence and fills a specific gap in the marketplace.



Pat Briggs with George Knox and Derek Clark, Directors of Carnoustie Developments Ltd, and Terry Knight, University Accommodation Services Manager.

Gray's talent on international platform

Gray's School of Art has been very well represented at this year's BP Portrait Award exhibition in London. The most prestigious portrait competition in the world, this year's contest received a record 1,900 entries from artists all over the globe. Gray's alumni Donald Macdonald and Jennifer MacRae were among the top selected to exhibit.

The work of Donald Macdonald has also been seen in group exhibitions across

Edinburgh, Glasgow and London, and he was commissioned to paint a work for presentation to the First Minister in 2004.

It was the fifth time that fellow graduate Jennifer MacRae has earned her place in the exhibition, having also been recognised for her work on a number of occasions by the Royal Academy and the Hunting Art Prizes.

David Henderson, Programme Leader for Painting and Printmaking at Gray's, commented, "This achievement underlines

the strength of Gray's painting graduates, making their mark within an internationally recognised competition. This success is testament to the quality of the course, learning and teaching delivered by staff who are all practising artists. It is also significant that the course includes a taught drawing programme which involves drawing from the figure. It is wonderful to see so many talented individuals progressing through our doors at Gray's Degree Show every year and brilliant to hear of their achievements in their ongoing careers."

Jobs Fair for students looking for part-time work

The University's Careers Centre held the second annual Part-time Jobs Fair for all students on 25 September. The event took place during Freshers' Week at University Street, RGU: SPORT, to help students find opportunities for part-time work during their studies.

Attendees found out about jobs in the retail, hospitality, entertainment and public sector. Employers included Jobs for U - Union Square, The Marcliffe, Argos, Asda, Cornerstone Community Care, Aberdeen Football Club Shop, Aberdeenshire Council and Royal Mail.



University Professor Emeritus appointed Patron of Largs Viking Festival

Magnus Fladmark, Professor Emeritus at the Scott Sutherland School and Built Environment, has succeeded the late Magnus Magnusson KBE as Patron of the Largs Viking Festival. The Festival, which takes place annually during the first week of September, has taken place for 29 years. Dressed in his Norwegian national costume, the new patron is seen here in the company of the Largs Viking Bob Low.

The then Consul General of Norway, Mr Hovdkinn, who opened the Festival in 2007, said, "The historical links across the North Sea represent a rich legacy shared by our two countries. Having seen how this legacy is celebrated at Largs, I am delighted that Magnus is willing to become Festival Patron and as a guru on these cross-cultural links, he is the perfect choice".

The Principal and Vice Chancellor, Professor Mike Pittilo, said, "Magnus was made an Honorary Fellow by the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland for his key role in many Scottish heritage initiatives before coming to the University. After joining our staff, he has contributed significantly to the marketing of the university with six major international heritage conventions and associated books. He is now continuing to fly the University flag when dealing with festival affairs."

Expressing admiration for the contribution made by local volunteers, Professor Fladmark said, "Our challenge now is to make the Festival a highlight in the cultural calendar of Scotland. The Minister of Culture in the Scottish Government, Michael Russell MSP, delivered the formal opening this year, and I am delighted that Sally, the daughter of Magnus Magnusson, has agreed to do the same in 2010 when we celebrate the festival's 30th anniversary".

National accolade for University-supported community project

Two local nurses have been nominated for a prestigious national award for their work in helping obese patients manage their weight.

Practice nurse Christine Goldie, from the Banff and Gamrie Practice, and obesity specialist nurse Jenny Brown, from Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, have been short-listed for the award by the National Obesity Forum (NOF).

They have been short-listed in recognition of the support they give patients in reducing risk factors such as heart disease and encouraging self-care.

The nurse-led service, based at Banff, is funded through the University as part of a project run by the institution's Centre for Obesity Research and Epidemiology (CORE).

Professor Iain Broom is Director of CORE. He said, "I am delighted that the work of the service in Banff is receiving such prestigious recognition and would like to congratulate both Christine and Jenny on this success. This represents a great deal of hard work by both members of staff in progressing the programme, and also by the patients who are involved.

"Research carried out by CORE has proven that many of the distressing conditions associated with obesity can be avoided if obese people lose weight and sustain their weight loss, and this recent success underlines the importance of taking research forward into practice. It is vitally important that projects such as these continue to support the community."

The nurses attended the ceremony at the annual conference of the NOF in London on October 5th and 6th as guests of the organisation.

Are you interested in being mentored?

The University joined the North East of Scotland Joint Public Sector (NESJPS) Mentoring Scheme last year. The scheme has brought together some of the biggest public sector organisations in Aberdeen City & Shire including Aberdeen City Council, Grampian Police, Grampian Fire and Rescue Service and NHS Grampian, with more partner organisations aiming to join soon. It allows people from these different organisations to link up and share professional experience and expertise as both mentees and mentors.

The University currently has eight mentees and six trained mentors. Applicants for both mentors and mentee roles first complete a short form setting out their learning and development goals. This is followed by a "matching" session where mentees are matched up with prospective mentors with whom they are invited to get in touch to commit to a learning relationship which focuses on the achievement of development goals.

One mentee said, "I would recommend this to anybody, at whatever length of service or position, as an opportunity to improve their performance, develop their self-awareness and learn from others."

Another added, "It has been life-changing – it has opened my mind."

A CPD Event for all the mentors and mentees involved in the Scheme is being organised in the Beach Ballroom on 3rd December.

Anyone interested should contact Pat Swinborn in the HR Department at p.swinborn@rgu.ac.uk

EVENTS DIARY 2009

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

NOVEMBER

7	Open Day
9 - 13	ABS International Week 2009
12	Leadership Lecture - Lord David Trimble
12	Chartered Institute of Arbitrators Seminar - "Mediation as a valuable complement to the work of the courts"

DECEMBER

3-4	Winter Graduation Ceremonies at the Music Hall
11- 13	Affordable Arts Show
16	Christmas Carol Service

