

RGU YOU

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GRADUATION *December 2000*

LOCAL AND EUROPEAN HEROES *honoured by* *The Robert Gordon University*



Stewart Milne, Honorary Degree of Doctor of Business Administration, pictured with his family



Zygmunt Tyszkiewicz CMG, Honorary Degree of Doctor of Business Administration, with Justin Greenwood, Jean Monnet Professor at RGU



Chris Robertson, Public Affairs, BA Corporate Communication



Natalya Cormack, Centre for Open and Distance Learning, MSc Electronic Information Management

The Robert Gordon University honoured two very different individuals at its winter graduation ceremony last year.

Stewart Milne, Chairman and Chief Executive of the Stewart Milne Group, and Count Zygmunt Tyszkiewicz, former Secretary General of the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE), were both conferred the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Business Administration.

Zygmunt Tyszkiewicz, born in Warsaw and naturalised British in 1955, served as an officer in the XII Royal Lancers before embarking on a highly successful and distinguished career with Shell.

He began by handling Shell's affairs in the French-speaking African region, and went on to become General Manager of Shell and BP Tanzania. From 1979, he was Managing Director of Shell companies in Greece, where he became involved in the politics of business, twice being elected President of the Greek Oil Industry. Then in 1985, he took up the post of Secretary General of UNICE, a post he occupied for 12 years.

While Secretary General, Mr Tyszkiewicz created cohesion among the great diversity of UNICE members and made the organisation heard, understood and often supported by European Union institutions.

Since retiring from UNICE in 1998, Mr Tyszkiewicz has been appointed as Executive President of the Lanckoronki Foundation, seeking the preservation and enhancement of Polish culture, and awarded the honours of Knight in the Order of Dannebrog, Denmark, Commander in the Order of Leopold, Belgium, and a Companion in the British Order of St. Michael and St. George (CMG). The Robert Gordon University chose to bestow an honorary degree on him in recognition of his services to the European business community and his contributions to European integration.

Stewart Milne is a businessman of national standing. The Stewart Milne Group is now one of the largest home building groups in the country with an annual turnover of over £130 million. Stewart has built up the company from somewhat humble beginnings in 1972 when he established himself converting kitchens and bathrooms in tenement flats in Aberdeen.

A founding Board Member of Scottish Enterprise Grampian, a former Grampian Industrialist of the Year and winner of the Scottish Business Achievement and the Chartered Institute of Building awards, Stewart is a lifelong supporter of Aberdeen Football Club and has been a Director of the Club since 1994 and Chairman since 1998.

As well as the honorary graduates, almost one thousand students graduated from the four faculties at The Robert Gordon University, a few of whose stories are detailed here.

Two former RGU students who are now members of RGU staff graduated from the School of Information and Media. Chris Robertson, who now works in the University's Public Affairs Department, and Natalya Cormack, from the Centre for Open Distance Learning, graduated with a BA in Corporate Communication and a postgraduate MSc in Electronic Information Management respectively.

As part of Chris' degree course, he had to undertake a six-week industrial placement, which he completed with the Public Affairs Department. Impressed with his undoubted talent for creative writing, the University employed him within the Department where he now manages the news site on the RGU webpages, contributes to the production of the internal newsletter, and is part of the University's new press team.

A delighted Chris said: "The Corporate Communication degree is a relatively new course at RGU - my year is one of the first to graduate from it - and the fact that I have found a job so quickly illustrates well the

Many thanks for all the contributions to *RGYou*.

Remember that any University news that you would like to see included in *RGYou*, on the website or in the press should be sent to us at Public Affairs, Schoolhill, or e-mail us at: c.damodaran@rgu.ac.uk, c.robertson@rgu.ac.uk or newsdesk@rgu.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can call us on extension 2206 or 2210. You only need one point of contact for all three media.



The deadline for the next edition of *RGYou*, due out in March, is Friday February 23 2001. While we do reserve the right to edit any material we receive, we do look forward to hearing from you.



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New knowledge source on SCOTTISH RESEARCH

The Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) is working with universities and other higher education institutions across Scotland to set up a new website providing authoritative information on Scottish research activities.

The new site will detail academic expertise in Scotland. Universities and research institutes are 'populating' the website, scottishresearch.com, with details about their researchers, research groups, projects and services. The site will offer one source and one set of mechanisms to search and display the information from all the participating bodies.

The site will also supply up-to-date news about Scottish research, applications of research advances, and the latest status reports on Scottish patents. In parallel, visitors will be able to find current information about formal tenders and requests for proposals and help from users, buyers and funders of research, and others looking for research partners.

For more information, please contact: Brian Cooper, Communications Officer, SHEFC, telephone 0131 313 6664

Career Innovation Group visits innovative career-minded university

Senior Executives from the Career Innovation (Ci) Group visited Aberdeen late last year for a global strategy meeting hosted by the University's Centre for Entrepreneurship.

The Ci Group is a collaborative, commercial group of 19 of the world's leading companies, including PricewaterhouseCoopers, Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS), Unilever and Reuters. These companies employ an estimated 1.5 million people between them and the Ci Group brings together global recruitment directors from the member companies to share ideas and conduct research on the career attitudes of high flyers.

In addition, the group commissions research to address the specific needs addressing industry and from the results of that research develops real life products, including software applications, publications, and consultancy and training services.

Colin Graham and Vicki Stewart from the Centre for Entrepreneurship have recently completed a nine-month study for the Group, researching young professionals' attitudes to entrepreneurship and dotcoms. The project surveyed over 1200 people from 69 countries and the key findings, which will be published early this year, were presented at a Ci Group meeting in Silicon Valley, California.

Colin said: 'This is one of the world's leading human resource professional groups - the ideas developed from the research carried out for the group are taken up by the 19 member companies and have a real impact on important issues such as recruiting and retaining talented people. We are obviously delighted that the Ci Group chose RGU to host this strategy session.'

University sets up new Centre for SPATIAL ANALYSIS

Dr Jonathan Ball, Research Fellow at the School of Construction, Property and Surveying, is the manager of RGU's newest centre for excellence, GISUtrac - the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Unit for Training, Research and Consultancy, launched last month.

GISUtrac aims to provide a focus for GIS activities at RGU within the field of spatial data handling, leading the way in what is an exciting, expanding and lucrative field. GIS are now recognised as one of the most important and powerful tools for the analysis and modelling of spatial data and are increasingly used throughout industry and academia: last year, GIS business was worth in excess of \$2 billion globally.

New developments in IT have made GIS affordable, and it is the fastest growing international market in its sector. Spatial analysis itself is particularly useful in areas such as planning, oil exploration, environmental analysis, surveying, retail, banking, tourism and health.

However, there is a recognised shortfall in training in GIS, and the opportunities for research in the field are significant. Dr Ball commented: 'GISUtrac will address this gap in the market both in terms of the provision of training courses and the sale of materials to existing programmes. RGU's new in-house GIS capability will allow the facilitation of multidisciplinary research in many areas, adding value to research and consultancy proposals, and thereby contributing to the likelihood of successful bids.'

The unit will support the work of the University's Centre for Open and Distance Learning (CODL) and its Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities, as well as providing support to research projects that use GIS, pursuing its own research projects, and collaborating with external organisations.

GISUtrac, which is being partially funded in the initial stages by a grant from the University's Education Development Trust (EDT), has already started work on a number of collaborative, multidisciplinary projects, and has several other ideas in the pipeline.

For further information, or if you have academic research or commercial project ideas that may benefit from GIS, please contact Dr Jonathan Ball on extension 3710 or email: j.ball@rgu.ac.uk

opportunities the course offers. One reason for this is almost certainly the very successful and ever popular industrial placement scheme."

Natalya started work with the University's Centre for Open Distance Learning as an Assistant Web Technologist in June 1999, after completing a diploma course in Electronic Information Management at RGU. She then studied for her MSc part-time while working at the University. She said: 'Being part of the team that runs RGU's innovative Virtual Campus has been a great experience, both academically and professionally. My MSc will put me in a great position to take advantage of future opportunities in the IT sector.'

The father of one of the University's students flew to Aberdeen all the way from China to see his son graduate. Jason Lu (Chinese name Lu Tianbao), 27, from Wuhan in central China, graduated with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Aberdeen Business School under the proud gaze of his father, Guoqiong Lu, 60.

Jason started studying full time for the MBA qualification at RGU fourteen months ago having applied to the University at one of its recruitment missions in China in 1999. He decided to study for the prestigious postgraduate qualification at RGU because the MBA is the best subject in the management field and The Robert Gordon University has one of the best reputations for teaching the MBA among the new universities in the UK.

The first students to graduate from a Diploma in Management Studies (DMS) that has been customised by the Business School especially for employees of the National Air Traffic Service Ltd (NATS) and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) also graduated in December.

The DMS programme for NATS and CAA employees started 18 months ago and was designed to reflect the skills requirements of NATS and the CAA and draw on that particular employer's specific needs, while still delivering the broad spectrum of management education required of the DMS programme.

Michael Flaherty, Andrew Green, Sandra Hardwick, Stuart Jackson and Rose Keane all studied for the qualification on an open distance learning basis while remaining in full time employment at NATS. Meanwhile, Aberdeen Business School has also been awarded the contract to provide the Certificate in Management Studies (CMS) programme for NATS, which underpins the DMS course. The first CMS course is due to get underway in the spring, and will be delivered on an open and distance learning basis as well.

Bill Sutherland, Course Leader for the NATS CMS and DMS programmes, said: 'The fact that these students are graduating from this University with a professional management qualification that has been tailored to meet the exact staff development needs of an individual organisation is testament to the innovative and flexible nature of teaching and learning at The Robert Gordon University, of which we are justifiably proud.'

Three nursing students also graduated after successfully completing their course on a distance learning basis. Yvonne Nicolson, a registered nurse working in Shetland, Norma Gunn, a tutor at Moray College Elgin and Linda Kirkness, an Emergency Room nurse in Los Angeles, USA, are the first graduates from the BA in Nursing Studies who studied this course while registered on the Virtual Campus. All three graduated with distinction, reflecting their commitment and dedication to their continuing professional development and all three travelled to Aberdeen especially to graduate.

Four students from Vietnam graduated with an MSc in Offshore Engineering at the School of Mechanical and Offshore Engineering. All four graduates are employed by a subsidiary of BP Amoco in Vietnam and were sent on the course by BP Amoco.

Bill Buchan also graduated with an MSc in Offshore Engineering. Bill, a Lecturer at Banff and Buchan College, completed his BSc with RGU as well, and this year won the Society of Petroleum Engineers Allan Cradock Book Prize at the School of Mechanical and Offshore Engineering.

Proud father and grandfather, George Wilson, janitor at the University's Kepplestone campus, watched his daughter Jayne Smith graduate with a nursing degree from RGU after five years of juggling commitments to her family, her work and her studies.

Administrative Officer at the University, Clare Park, graduated with a PhD from the School of Construction, Property and Surveying after almost ten years of study, mostly on a part-time basis. Clare said that working and studying at RGU had been a 'thoroughly fulfilling experience'.

The First December GRADUATION BALL

The culmination of the day's celebrations came with the first Graduation Ball for the December ceremonies. The evening was compered by the infamous Paul Cowie, who opened the evening's proceedings with a DJ set that included Relight My Fire and the Grease Medley.

After a break in the festivities for the newly graduated to tuck into some stovies, ceilidh band Shindig took to the stage, opening with a bombastic Scottish country-rock tune before leading the revellers in some Scottish country dancing. Various degrees of dancing were displayed as the bandleader attempted to lead the throng (many of whom had had the proverbial one too many) in traditional dances like the Dashing White Sergeant and the Gay Gordons.

DJ Paul Cowie then returned to close the evening with another DJ set, which included the likes of Robbie and Kylie's 'Kids'. By this time, the hoards were feeling a little worse for wear (this reporter included - I also graduated in December), and were ready to make the precarious journey home.

Graham MacDonald, President of the Student Association, commented: "The first December Graduation Ball ended up being a great success - it was sold out."



Armida Taylor (right), School of Nursing and Midwifery, pictured with three graduates from the BA in Nursing Studies course who studied on a Distance Learning basis



Tianbao Lu, MBA, Aberdeen Business School, and his father



Graduates from the DMS programme that was specifically designed for the National Air Traffic Service LTD, with course leader Bill Sutherland



BP Amoco subsidiary employees graduate from the MSc in Offshore Engineering, under the watchful eyes of Ted Mason and Cameron Stewart



Bill Buchan, Lecturer at Banff & Buchan College, graduates with an MSc in Offshore Engineering



Graduation Ball, December 2000



Nutrition and Dietetics graduate wins national award

Fidelma Moore, who graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Nutrition and Dietetics with State Registration in the December ceremonies, was the joint winner of the best presentation award at last year's Symposium for Recent Graduates, organised by the British Dietetic Association and held in London. At the Symposium, recent graduates from all over the UK presented work that they had completed as part of their undergraduate research projects. Fidelma's project was on 'Diets as experienced in autistic spectrum disorders'. Apart from the honour of winning, Fidelma, who is now working as a dietician in Aberdeen, also won £200.

Research Assessment Exercise update

Staff from all faculties are currently involved in preparing for the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), a nation-wide scheme administered by the UK funding councils. The RAE distributes research funds according to its assessment of institutions' quality of research in its selected disciplines and this year the University plans to make 12 submissions in subject areas as diverse as Computer Science, Business and Management, Art and Design and Nursing. The £5 billion fund of public money distributed as a result of the Exercise is allocated according to the ratings awarded to each submission, which start at 1 and rise to 5*. The deadline for submissions is April and staff are now primarily concerned with redrafting and checking the submissions. An Evaluation Event was organised by the Academic Affairs department and the RAE Task Group (convened by Ian Johnson, Head of the School of Information and Media), which considered the draft submissions and made suggestions for the redrafts. The University is hoping to continue the improvement in performance seen in its last RAE ratings in 1996.

Students raise £235 for local charities

Students staying in University flats at Woolmanhill raised £235 for charity after holding a fund raising event at the flats. Terry Knight, Site Manager at Woolmanhill, encouraged Carol Robb, Gayle Robertson, Anna Thorburn, Beth McDougall, Kimberly Sinclair and Carmen Donald to raise the money, which was donated to Northsound Radio's Cash for Kids fund and a homeless shelter in Aberdeen before Christmas. Terry commented: 'I would like to congratulate these students on their hard work and the great deal of effort that they put into raising this money for some very worthwhile causes. They are undoubtedly a credit to the University.'

RGU two both win gold

A student and a member of staff at RGU won the men and women's Gold Medals respectively at the Royal National Mod last year. Deirdre Mactaggart, a Lecturer in Tourism at the University's School of Hotel, Tourism and Retail Management, and Innes MacLeod, a final year nursing student at the School of Nursing and Midwifery, were each judged to have given the best performances in the most prestigious solo singing event at the Gaelic festival, and were both delighted with their achievements.

Jeans for Genes Day Total

Staff at The Robert Gordon University raised an amazing £290 last year for the annual fundraising event, Jeans for Genes Day. Jill Smith, Senior Secretary to the Principal, who organises the event within RGU every year, would like to thank everyone who made a contribution for the charity for the privilege of wearing their jeans to work for the day.

Open Air exhibition in open plan building

Paper suppliers G F Smith and the Typographic Circle moved North to RGU last year for the presentation of Open Air, sixteen photographic essays by leading UK and international designers and design groups. The presentation in the Faculty of Management building was attended by the top design studios in Aberdeen, including representatives from the University's own award winning Graphics and Printing team.

Refractions and time for reflection

Pupils and teachers from Kaimhill Primary School visited RGU late last year to see an exciting and colourful demonstration by the School of Applied Sciences and to take part in the University's second Christmas Carol Service. The lecture, given by Dr Hazel Wilkins, demonstrates fun new experiments and gives children the opportunity to gain hands-on experience of a science laboratory. After the lecture, the children sang a number of carols at the University Carol Service, which once again proved to be very popular.



Children from Kaimhill Primary School visit the School of Applied Sciences for a lecture by Dr Hazel Wilkins, Colourful Chemistry, before going on to sing at the RGU Carol Concert

"My United Nations" - an exhibition of international dolls at Georgina Scott Sutherland Library

A collection of over 100 dolls gathered from around the world was on display in the Georgina Scott Sutherland Library at Garthdee for a number of weeks last year. Marie-Louise Glenesk, a member of Library staff, has been collecting dolls for the last 50 years, and was delighted at the chance to exhibit the dolls in the library. She said: 'I was given my first doll when I was five years old, but it was really my first geography book that kicked off my interest in faraway places. By the age of 10 I was collecting seriously and I now think of the collection as 'My United Nations' as it contains representatives from all over the globe. It was a great pleasure watching staff and students stopping to admire the dolls over the last few weeks.' *The display space at the Georgina Scott Sutherland Library is available for any students or members of staff to display pieces of work, items from a collection, or any other material of interest to a wider audience. For further information, please contact Moira Geddes, email m.geddes@rgu.ac.uk*

Engineer's expertise in demand

Dr S K Salman, a Reader at the School of Electronic and Electrical Engineering, has been invited to serve on the steering committee of the annual Universities Power Engineering Conference (UPEC), usually hosted each year by a UK university. Delegates from countries all over the world including Japan, USA and many European and middle eastern countries attend the conferences. Dr Salman has also been invited to sit on an international advisory committee made up of experts from the academic research arena and industry for the organisation of a workshop on 'Distributed Generation', which will be held at the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden.



Dr S K Salman pictured with fellow delegates

OILING *the future*

Four of The Robert Gordon University's centres of excellence joined forces to hold a prestigious conference at the Faculty of Management last month. Entitled *Oiling the Future*, the conference brought together a broad range of delegates to discuss the economic future of the region.

Alasdair Morrison MSP, the Deputy Minister for Enterprise, Tourism, and Lifelong Learning provided the keynote address at the conference, which was chaired by Professor Thomas Lange, Grampian Chair in Public Policy at the University.

In his speech, Mr Morrison commented: "It is widely recognised that Aberdeen and the surrounding area have historically been one of the most economically vibrant in Scotland. However, as this impressive gathering of academics, business and industry leaders, economic specialists and politicians indicates, we face common problems. Only a concerted effort in partnership with each other will enable us to realise continuing economic success and prosperity for Aberdeen and the North East."

The conference also featured contributions from key professionals from both the public and private sectors including Ed Gillespie, Chief Executive, Scottish Enterprise Grampian, Moir Lockhead, Chief Executive, FirstGroup plc, Len Ironside, Leader of Aberdeen City Council, and Melfort Campbell, Managing Director of IMES Group.

Ross Martin, Director of the Scottish Forum for Modern Government, said: "This event is a local response to the economic development, diversification and globalisation challenges that face the country today. We addressed a number of key issues including which activities will require economic development support after the oil bubble has burst, whether Scotland's economic development network should be organised on a cluster basis, and whether tourism can play a leading role in a new economic development strategy."

Professor Thomas Lange said: 'Economic development for Aberdeen and the North East is at a crossroads. Now is the time to stop, reflect and think ahead. Against the background of an increasingly globalising economy, this conference provided a unique opportunity to tackle local and regional issues within a global context. Most of all, we need to discuss and consult on the scope for economic diversification if we are serious about turning the region's long-term economic prosperity from an ambition into a reality.'



L-R: Professor Thomas Lange, RGU, Alasdair Morrison MSP, Anne Begg MP and Ross Martin, RGU, at the *Oiling the Future* conference



L-R: Professor Stevely, Professor Diggle

OMNIANA - Professorial Lecture *deals with fragments of everything*

The 2000 Professorial Lecture at The Robert Gordon University was presented by Professor Jeremy Diggle, Head of Gray's School of Art, at the end of last year, and proved to be a very thought-provoking event indeed.

In his trademark casual approach, Professor Diggle considered new areas of practice that have developed from art but, potentially, can no longer be classified as art. He claimed that working with new media as he has been doing for a number of years has taken him 'beyond being just a visual artist', and that he has come to realise that 'new technology deserves a new academy of its own'.

He said: 'The possibilities raised by the new technology cannot be incorporated just into art and design, or computers, or maths, or anything else. We need somewhere else - as well as all the traditional subject areas - in order to explore the greater potential afforded by such new media.'

Using the multimedia technology in the Faculty of Management building to its full potential, running three presentations simultaneously, Professor Diggle described some of his own research work against a backdrop of a barrage of different images.

He explained that one aspect of his work is a story that he has been working on for around five years, and which can only exist within the context of digital media. 'I have always been interested in oral narratives and stories that have been passed on and retold but never actually written down,' he said, 'and so I decided to put ideas of characterisation out onto the Internet and develop and reform those ideas based on the feedback that those characters receive. These stories may or may not be true, and the virtual characters, or avatars, may or may not exist, blurring the traditional distinctions between what is fact and what is fiction, real and unreal.'

Professor Diggle introduced his captive audience to various characters that he has been working with in recent years, illustrating his belief that the way that people think and learn will be fundamentally altered by the new technology now available, thereby creating the need for a new area of academic discipline.

As Principal Professor Stevely commented, art has always intended to be subversive, and Professor Diggle's stimulating and challenging inaugural lecture demonstrated that this ideal is still very much to the fore at Gray's.



Board of GOVERNORS

The next part in a series of introductory profiles of the members of the University's Board of Governors.

Mr Keith G Fraser

Mr Fraser has spent a large part of the last two decades in and around the environs of The Robert Gordon University. Hailing originally from Buckie he led a peripatetic life in the banking industry for several years in the late seventies, ending up at the Clydesdale Bank's Chief Office in Aberdeen. In 1979 he left the bank's employ to undertake a Bachelor of Arts degree in Librarianship at the then RGIT, which he followed with a postgraduate diploma in Management Studies. After some five years in local government working for Lothian Regional Council, he joined the staff at the Library service of this institution in November 1990 as a Chartered Librarian. He is currently responsible for services to the Faculty of Science and Technology, as well as the day to day management of the Library at St Andrew's Street.



Mr Fraser is actively involved in the professional development side of Librarianship and is a member of the Scottish Library Association Council. He is also a co-opted member of the Library Association's registration board. He said: 'I am very interested in all aspects of education, particularly life long learning and I am very excited by the development of 'virtual learning spaces', and see RGU's own efforts in this area as being key to the long-term future of the institution.'

Mr Fraser is also interested in areas such as human resource management, especially equal opportunities, staff motivation, and other contemporary issues such as workplace bullying. He has found his time on the Staff and Student Affairs Committee to be particularly enlightening, and is a member of the Estates and Buildings Committee as well.

In his spare time Mr Fraser enjoys spending time with his family and friends. As an enthusiastic Europhile he enjoys travelling, particularly to France and Germany. Stemming from his interest in the Internet he is in the process of building a website to feature the history of his branch of the Fraser and Gordon clans. He also enjoys working in his 'challenging' garden throughout the year.

Dr Allan Bruce

Originally from Edinburgh, Dr Bruce came to Aberdeen in 1968, and graduated with an MB, ChB from Aberdeen University in 1974. Thereafter he remained in Aberdeen where he practiced surgery and pathology, before finally moving into general practice.

Dr Bruce then went on to become a partner (GP Principal) at Westhill (latterly Skene Medical Group) and lectured to trainee GPs and student nurses. He has also been actively involved in the medical advisory structure at Grampian Health Board and is currently Chairman of the GP-sub committee and a member of Grampian Area Medical Council. Dr Bruce, who has witnessed and implemented many radical changes within the NHS in Scotland over the years, also graduated from Glasgow

University in 1994 with an MPhil in Law and Ethics in Medicine.

As a Governor at The Robert Gordon University, Dr Bruce first served on the Staff and Students Committee, and currently serves on the Finance Committee, the Nominations Committee and is involved with the Governor Away Days.

Dr Bruce said: 'I hope my contribution as a Governor will result in some small way to establishing RGU as an institute of academic quality recognised by employers and students - both current and future. I envisage this University building on its existing solid foundations to contribute to the health agenda locally and nationally.'

Mr Robert Blyth

Mr Blyth was educated at Aberdeen University where he graduated with an LLB in 1964. He then served his apprenticeship as a solicitor with a firm in Aberdeen and, on qualifying immediately moved to Paisley in order to gain litigation experience. He was fortunate to become a partner in T F Reid and Donaldson, Solicitors, in 1968.

In 1972 Mr Blyth returned to Aberdeen and the following year became a partner in the established legal firm of Edmonds and Ledingham. That firm merged with C & P H Chalmers in 1991 to form Ledingham Chalmers and Mr Blyth remained as a partner in its Commercial Department until January 1995, when he left the practice to become Director/Group Solicitor with the Balmoral Group of Companies in Aberdeen, with which he has had a close relationship since the formation of the group. During Mr Blyth's years in legal practice he was very heavily involved in a number of industries but particularly oil and gas. That background knowledge proved advantageous in his current post with the Balmoral Group.

Mr Blyth has served on the University's Board of Governors for seven years. He was convenor of the Audit Committee for three years and also currently serves on the Estates and Building Committee, putting his legal background to good use in dealing with the numerous property related matters that have featured heavily at Governor's discussions over the past few years.

Mr Blyth is also a past President of Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce and currently serves on the Board of Scottish Enterprise Grampian and Aberdeen Harbour Board. He continues to be deeply involved with a number of organisations including the Church of Scotland.

Mr Blyth said: 'It has been a great privilege to serve the University in these exciting years, with huge progress having been made by the University in a relatively short period of time. I think it is important that the Governors should support our staff in their pursuit of excellence and I am particularly keen to see us make more of the commercialisation of the research facilities that are available to us. The University has much to contribute to industry, particularly in the North East of Scotland, thus supporting the economy of our area'.

RESEARCH at the School of *Information & Media*

The University's School of Information and Media is building a strong reputation for research and development with a number of projects, a few of which are detailed here.

Reader and Deputy Head at the School, Rita Marcella, recently looked at how the European Union makes its information available to the public, and is currently working on a project that will help the UK parliaments and local authorities determine how to make best use of Information Technology in making information available.

Reader Dr Dorothy Williams investigated how teachers make use of educational research to develop their work and helped the Scottish Executive draw up guidelines for teacher training about how to use IT in schools. She is currently in the final stages of work designed to assess what makes a good school library.

Lecturers at the School also consistently produce a number of quality studies. Lecturer Jo Royle and Research Assistant Rosemary Stockdale recently completed a major study on how consumer publishers' use of websites affects their relationships with retailers.

Jo explained: 'We knew that publishers' websites provide an invaluable information channel for consumers and retailers, but we also noticed that nobody - publishers, retailers or consumers - was making best use of it. Publishing has been quite slow to embrace e-commerce and take advantage of the opportunities it offers, and successful branding in consumer publishing had not often been effectively transferred onto the web.

'We wanted to identify exactly how consumer publishers' relationships with retailers had been affected by their web presence, and what services were offered to visitors to the website. We found that the facilities on publishers' websites were not directed at trade retailers, and that enhancing a global identity was going to be of increasing importance for publishers who are now dealing in an increasingly global market, thanks to the web. However, the booktrade itself seemed reluctant to point out what could be done to make publishers' websites more useful to them.

'It is therefore clear that communication between consumer publishers and retailers needs to be improved, that publishers need to develop web

strategies to improve their business to business dealings, and that booksellers need to invest more in web based technology.'

Lecturer Fiona Campbell's research for her PhD was important since there had been no previous research carried out in Scotland that considered how journalists gather and use information within the context of environmental journalism.

She said: 'I started my research some years ago, just before the Braer tanker incident off Shetland. A content analysis of several of the newspapers at the time highlighted that journalists deliberately over-dramatise issues, make value judgements and frame stories in terms of conflict in order to sell their newspapers. Journalists gather information and interpret and disseminate that information at the appropriate level for their readership.'

Sarah Pedersen, also a Lecturer at the School, is currently involved in research that is based more in the humanities than social science, since it is specifically concerned with women correspondents to Aberdeen newspapers between 1900 and 1918. Sarah is looking to determine if the profiles of women correspondents to newspapers were similar to those of men, whether their motivations for writing to the papers were the same, and if the letters reflected the changes that were occurring in women's lives at that time.

Sarah said: 'Previous research on correspondence to newspapers has illustrated that the letters to the editor represent the views of the readers in a unique way and can be used as a measure of the public's reaction in a way that the editorial opinion of a paper cannot. I am finding that politics and women's suffrage are increasingly the subject of women's correspondence to newspapers during the period that I am researching.

'However, one woman is proving to be something of an anomaly: Marian S Farquharson of Houghton is not your typical woman correspondent to a newspaper. I am keen to find out as much as I can about Marian's background, and would be delighted to hear from anyone at RGU who may have some information about her.'

If anyone has any information about Marian S Farquharson of Houghton, or knows of someone who might, please contact Sarah on extension 3913 or email: s.pedersen@rgu.ac.uk

RGU AWARDED 250,000 EUROS FOR INTERNATIONAL URBAN GREENSPACE PROJECT



The Scottish Centre for Environmental Design Research (SEARCH), based at the Faculty of Design at RGU, has been awarded 250,000 Euros from the European Commission for its involvement in a project concerning the strategic planning and design of greenspace in the urban environment.

The three-year project is to be co-ordinated by University College Dublin and involves organisations from six countries. It has been funded under the 5th Framework Project and is worth 1.4 million Euros (around £900,000) in total.

The international project team will undertake an analysis of the use and values attached to different greenspace types and analyse the use of public participation to explore greenspace needs.

It is intended that the results from the study will help to guide the future planning of greenspace provision, in the UK and abroad, and develop methods to assist planners, designers and public in the pursuit of greater levels of public participation.

Urban greenspace (parks, country parks, nature reserves, greenways and all landscaped public open space) makes an essential contribution to quality of life. It provides a recreational resource, a peaceful retreat from the city, an attractive backdrop to built development, safe and exciting play areas for children and a reserve for urban wildlife. Many municipal authorities do not receive any significant income from greenspace, but must budget for its maintenance along with other municipal responsibilities such as education or roads. Consequently, many greenspace areas are either neglected or are sustained in a form that risks becoming less relevant to modern lifestyles.

Dr Richard Laing, Research Fellow at SEARCH, and Professor Robin Webster, Head of the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture, lead researchers for the project at RGU, believe that it will significantly develop work already undertaken within the Faculty of Design. In particular, the project will facilitate the application and refinement of methods developed previously by RGU and the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute regarding streetscape design.

For further information, please contact Dr Richard Laing, tel: 01224 263542 or email r.laing@rgu.ac.uk



New postgraduate course in physiotherapy at the University validated by PROFESSIONAL BODIES



An innovative Masters course offered by The Robert Gordon University's School of Health Sciences was validated by the Joint Validation Committee of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP), the national professional body for physiotherapists, and the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine (CPSM) late last year.

The first students to embark on the new MSc in Physiotherapy (Pre-Registration) will enrol this semester.

The degree is designed for graduates of a relevant science subject to become professionally qualified physiotherapists within an accelerated timeframe. All graduates of the two-year degree will automatically be eligible for State Registration with the CPSM, which is a condition of employment within the NHS and other organisations.

The School of Health Sciences at RGU has extensive experience in the delivery of a fast-track physiotherapy degree, having successfully taught a BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy (Accelerated Mode) for several years.

Professor Valerie Maehle, Head of the School of Health Sciences and course leader for the new degree programme said: 'Professional approval for the course seals the hard work and efforts of the staff at the School involved in the design and creation of the new degree. The positive experience of the Accelerated Mode degree can only benefit the new students on the Masters programme, although the MSc in Physiotherapy (Pre-Registration) will be taught in a very different way.'

'There is a high element of self-directed study and a more student-led approach in course delivery, so students will use the skills that they gained in their first degrees to the full. As with all our courses, there is a strong clinical bias to the new Masters programme, and students will experience a total of 35 weeks of clinical placements, integrated at strategic times throughout the course. Interest in the course has been high, and we are looking forward to welcoming our first students.'

For further information about the new course, visit the School of Health Sciences website at <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/subj/healthsci/mscphysm/>



New renewable energy research opportunity at RGU

Late last year, David McGrath from Zetek Power Plc visited representatives at the University including the Head of the School of Mechanical Engineering, Professor Ian Bryden, Chair of Energy and Environmental Engineering, Professor Peter Robertson, and Doctor Stephanie Rigby, Wood Group Lecturer in Environmental Engineering.

Introduced by Dr Rigby, Mr McGrath, a former student of the University's School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, gave a short presentation explaining Zetek Power's background in finding renewable energy sources, particularly those on the cutting edge of fuel cell technology. Zetek Power produces alkaline fuel cells, a cheap sustainable form of energy that has already been used to drive prototype vehicles such as taxis, buses, airport carts, yachts and ferries, as well as some domestic applications. The technology was originally bought from the European Space Agency.

Mr McGrath invited RGU to submit a project proposal for the use of such a fuel cell, with the successful application being given use of a fuel cell as well as technical support, training, and commercialisation assistance if required. Zetek Power has already gifted cells to Napier University and the University of Bombay, who intend to adapt the technology for use in Indian environment.

Dr Rigby, who organised the presentation, commented: 'This is a great research opportunity for the University. RGU is leading the field in Environmental Engineering and to branch into this area of study would be beneficial for both the University and the community as a whole. I would encourage those with an interest in this field to contact me if they have any ideas for a project proposal.'

For further information contact Dr Stephanie Rigby, Wood Group Lecturer in Environmental Engineering, telephone extension 2310 or e-mail: s.rigby@rgu.ac.uk

RGU Builds Links in Korea

Dr Maureen Young and Dr Jonathan Ball, both Research Fellows at the University's School of Construction, Property and Surveying, have recently returned from South Korea, where they were invited speakers at a symposium entitled New Millennium International Forum on Conservation of Cultural Property.

Organised by the Institute of Conservation Science for Cultural Heritage at Kongju National University, the symposium was funded by the Cultural Properties Administration in South Korea.

In South Korea, cultural property includes national treasures, historic or scenic sites, national monuments and even people with particular skills or folklore knowledge. The symposium addressed the specific issues surrounding recent advances in conservation treatments for building materials. Stone is not a common building material in South Korea, but granites, very similar to those in Aberdeenshire, have been used for thousands of years in the construction of pagodas, statues and other monuments. There is increasing awareness in South Korea of the deterioration that can occur when ancient stones are exposed to modern levels of air pollution, and Drs Young and Ball, members of the Masonry Conservation Research Group at RGU, were invited to present the results of their research into the effects of conservation treatments on rates of stone decay and biological colonisation, and on methods for mapping the decay of stone.

Until recently, government funding in South Korea has focused on the repair and restoration of cultural properties. The newly established Institute of Conservation Science for Cultural Heritage and the first research budget for conservation mark the beginning of active conservation research in South Korea. Future international research collaboration is expected.

Information on the Masonry Conservation Research Group is available on the MCRG web site at <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/schools/mcrg/mcrghome.htm> or from Dr Maureen Young, email m.young@rgu.ac.uk. A copy of the conference proceedings is available from the library.





In recent months, staff have received several letters from the Principal, Professor Bill Stevely, and the Human Resource Director, David Briggs, focussing on the challenges facing the higher education sector in general and this University in particular in finding money to implement the key elements of the Bett report, which the Government has failed to fund.

The difficulties have come to a head with some trade unions taking industrial action in the form of 'action short of strike'. The immediate effect is that some students are not getting their assessment or exam results and this is to be regretted. So far, there has been limited impact locally but matters will deteriorate if a national solution cannot be found. The University is working very hard with our national colleagues to find a basis for that solution.

However, substantial progress has been made locally over the last two years, an overview of which is summarised here.

Fixed term contracts - two years ago, 40% of our academic staff were on short fixed term contracts. The figure now stands at around 13%. This has been achieved through a radical rethink about how the University values the people we employ and how to recognise that value, which is not always about money. At the same time we have been reducing our dependence on fixed term contracts in support areas.

Academic salaries - the Bett Report recommended that, to be competitive with the major vocational external recruitment markets, the minimum starting salary for new entrants to Lecturing posts should be set at around £21,500 per annum. National negotiations have failed to address this issue. While the rest of the sector stood still, the post-1992 university sector in Scotland reached an agreement with the unions on a new professional academic contract that did just that. Many existing staff benefited as a result with average increases at 1% above the annual pay round and some well above that. New staff have an improved starting salary as well as attractive holiday arrangements. The new professional academic contract also embraces many of Bett's other recommendations, including recognising the professional status of academic practice and, importantly, for the first time, recognising academic freedom within the employment relationship. Nearly 60% of RGU's academic staff are now employed under the new arrangement.

Equal Pay - Bett identified that there were significant equal pay issues in the sector that would have to be addressed. In reality, these can only be effectively dealt with by developing or adopting locally a single job evaluation scheme across all groups, academic and professional/support. Some trade unions have resisted this and that continues to present difficulties. Nevertheless, there have been a few things we could do to move the agenda forward. Firstly, we have looked at the pay treatment of males and females within each group. While there is some evidence of a 'pay gap' within one or two groups it is not of the order that Bett suggested. That is not the whole story however, and we will be doing more work in this area. Only when we have the full picture will we know if there is a real problem, the size of the problem and how best to address it. Whatever the result, it will require some investment to tackle it effectively and, at the moment, we are still waiting to see how the University will benefit from the new funding allocations for the next three years.

Secondly, we have been talking to the TGWU and hourly paid workers in to try to reach agreement on a package to enable us to extend opening hours on a regular basis to give students access to computing and library facilities and to meet our statutory obligations under the working time directive. Part of the package involves benchmarking new rates of pay for the new roles against the existing job evaluation scheme used for other support posts and harmonising the terms and conditions of employment with those for other support staff. At the time of writing discussions are nearing completion and we are optimistic of a successful conclusion. For the first time, this will put almost all our support staff on the same footing and create a sound foundation for any further developments. It will also reflect in reality the notion of 'one organisation, one staff' rather than the five different groups that have prevailed in the past, and move us closer to that vision.

Future bargaining arrangements - One of the aspects of dispute nationally has been the arrangements for forming the proposed new National Committee that would deal with annual national pay negotiations across the sector and it is not clear yet whether there will be a sustainable resolution to this dispute. It is clear to RGU that the future will involve a more substantial element of local bargaining than has been the case previously, which is why we set about, just over a year ago, seriously reviewing the local collective bargaining infrastructure. We found it to be under-developed and unstructured and in need of serious rethinking. We have been talking to the trade unions formally and informally and have presented to them proposals for the future which include entering in to a form of 'Partnership Agreement' which will also include appropriate trade recognition arrangements and related procedural agreements. At the time of writing we are expecting to complete agreements with the EIS and the TGWU very shortly.

Of course, there is still much to be done around some of the Bett issues and in other respects. The biggest issue is the need to revisit our reward practices, which will involve looking afresh at pay structures and levels to ensure that we are competitive and that we can recruit and retain the best staff possible. Clearly, this will only be possible if we are able to attract additional income, either from the Funding Council settlement or from other income streams - full cost courses, short courses, extra student numbers, improving overseas recruitment, consultancy etc.

On staff development, we continue to invest almost £1million a year. Last year the priority was to invest in staff development relating to communication and information technology skills. Bett recommended that all universities pursue Investor in People recognition or begin to work towards it. Of course, the University had already achieved that in 1995, and achieved re-accreditation at first attempt in 1998 and will seek re-accreditation again, based on the new national standard, towards the end of this year.

We will continue to work with our colleagues in both the 'old' and 'new' sectors, and with the trade unions, to achieve a national solution to the present dispute, which we will want to be part of.

School of Pharmacy raises £1000 for project in Tanzania

Staff and students at the University's School of Pharmacy have raised £1000 for a pharmaceutical project in Tanzania.

The money was primarily raised at the annual Pharmacy Pantomime, which takes place at Kepplestone every year just before Christmas, and which is organised by students at the School. The theme of this year's event was the television programme Big Brother with students playing members of staff in the 'Big Professor' house. For their part, the staff produced their own version of The Weakest Link.

Proceeds were donated to the Neema Fund for an International Pharmaceutical Student Federation (IPSF) project in a remote area of Tanzania. A number of RGU's pharmacy students are members of IPSF and the idea is that federation raises funds in pharmacy schools throughout the world specifically for the Neema Project.

The money is being used to set up a healthcare site to address the medical needs of people in that part of Tanzania. Local people have been involved in the building and some government funding was provided for the project but the IPSF has provided a large percentage of the funding for the healthcare unit, which is due to be completed in May this year.

In addition, the School of Pharmacy at RGU has set up a bilateral student exchange scheme with the School of Pharmacy in Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania, allowing pharmacy students from each school to spend four weeks at the other participating institution and encouraging cross-cultural links between the two schools.

The first year of the programme saw two third year students from RGU, Amy Chan and Susan Paterson, visit Tanzania in May last year. Later in the summer, two Tanzanian students, Ateqa Jaffar and Mitangu Fimbo, visited Aberdeen, visiting local community pharmacies on work experience and the pharmacy department at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, as well as spending a few days in the School's own Pharmaceutical Care Centre in the School of Pharmacy gaining valuable practical experience.

The University's close links with the IPSF are due to the fact that one of our pharmacy graduates, Lindsay McClure, is now president of the organisation, as well as being a practising pharmacist. Lindsay graduated from RGU in 1999 and worked closely with the School's Staff/Student Liaison Officer, Sandra Hutchinson, to set up an international exchange programme at the School, of which the Tanzanian exchange is part. RGU is the only School of Pharmacy in the UK to actively organise student exchange schemes, which provide a valuable and worthwhile experience for both the staff and the students involved.

Further information on IPSF can be found on the Internet at www.IPSF.org

VIRTUAL POSTGRADUATE COURSE attracts students from all over the world

The on-line distance learning mode of the Postgraduate Diploma/Master of Science course in Information and Library Studies, run by the School of Information and Media, welcomed its second intake of students at the start of this semester, as a direct result of the very significant demand for places on the course, which was only launched last year.

29 students enrolled for the course on the University's Virtual Campus last month, joining the 31 who matriculated as distance learning students in September last year.

The Postgraduate Diploma element of the Information and Library Studies course, which has been approved by the Joint Accreditation Board of the Library Association and the Institute of Information Scientists, consists of modules in subjects such as Information Studies; Information Management: Policy, Processes and Use; Reference and Enquiry Services; Technical Services, and Resource Management - the same as campus-based students are taught. The modules are studied over a minimum period of two years, with a further year required for completion of a dissertation for the award of Master of Science.

The course is taught via the University's Virtual Campus, which was established in 1999 and hosts a growing number of web-based open and distance learning courses, on topics such as e-business, nursing and publishing. At the end of last year, the Campus had over 2,200 registered users, including some from countries as diverse as Azerbaijan, Madagascar and Venezuela.

Course Leader Rita Marcella, Reader and Depute Head of the School of Information and Media, said: 'We are

absolutely delighted at the success of this course, which is clearly representative of one of the ways in which higher education is evolving to meet the needs of students everywhere.

'Most of the students chose to study the MSc in Information and Library Studies by distance learning in order to gain a professionally accredited qualification that would improve their career prospects, but without having to take a career break or move away from home. Many also feel that the course provides them with the theoretical underpinning for their work.'

Courses on the Virtual Campus have a Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) based superstructure, usually presenting the teaching materials in Portable Document Format (PDF) or PowerPoint format. These online 'lectures' are supplemented by both e-mail and telephone tutorials and students can also communicate both with academic staff and with each other through electronic discussion forums and community groups. Coursework is all submitted and marked electronically.

Rita commented: 'The Virtual Campus attempts to recreate the facilities found on a traditional campus and provides services such as bulletin boards, event calendars, a 'Campus Cafe' chat room, access to the University library catalogue and a range of online resources relevant to the content of the courses offered. We have found that our students feel that these features contribute greatly towards avoiding any feelings of loneliness or isolation that studying on a distance learning basis may lead to, which in turn has contributed to the undoubted success of this particular course.'



Pharmacy students taking part in the Panto

Univation Enters Chinese Market

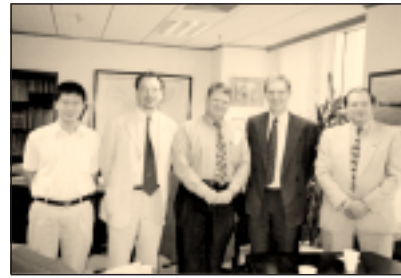
University Principal Professor Bill Stevely and Univation's Graeme Slaven recently visited Shekou in South China, forging links with many of the oil multinationals based in the city.

Professor Stevely and Mr Slaven visited the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), and operators Agip, Chevron and Texaco (who operate in South China under the collective name CACT) and Philips (China) Inc, for whom Univation has already delivered a number of contracts. The RGU delegation also hosted a traditional Chinese lunch for around 20 representatives from the various companies.

The Chinese market is notoriously difficult to break into, and it is a measure of the extremely high standard of service offered by Univation that the University owned company has successfully negotiated to provide tailored training for a sector of the Chinese oil and gas industry. Four senior managers from the CACT Operators Group from Nanghai (South China Sea) attended training at RGU in Aberdeen, provided by Univation and Aberdeen Business School, while additional training in Human Resource and Asset Management has been delivered in China and was very well received.

Professor Stevely also visited the Nanghai Co-operative Training Centre in Shekou, which was established to service the energy industry's training needs in the South China region, and in which Univation and RGU are key players. By obtaining a foothold in the Chinese training market, it is hoped that Univation, and therefore the University, will develop a strong market presence leading to greater success in other areas.

Univation continues to form alliances overseas with new contracts to supply tailored training programmes in Russia and Venezuela, as well as China - adding to those already established in Azerbaijan, Khazakstan, Nigeria, and the UK. *RGYou* will keep you updated on future developments.



Graeme Slaven (second from right) and Professor Stevely (fourth from right) in China

Appointments, Resignations and Retirements

Dr Ian Heywood, Director of the Centre for Open and Distance Learning, is leaving the University after just over two years to take up a new post with local company, BusinessLab. Ian will be sadly missed by his many friends and colleagues in the department.

Two new members of staff took up posts with the Customer Services Department at the end of last year. **Andrew Blight** is a Receptionist/Clerical Assistant based at the Information Centre at Schoolhill and **Tracey Chiverton** is a Clerical Assistant in the International Office at Blackfriars Street.

A number of new members of staff have also been appointed at the School of Mechanical and Offshore Engineering. **Paul Linklater**, a part-time Research Technician working with the Chair of Energy and Environmental Engineering, **John Little**, a Teaching Company Scheme (TCS) Researcher, Research Student **How Bing Sii**, and **Dr Jacqueline McElhiney**, Research Fellow, have all taken up posts at the School recently. Lecturer **Bob Taylor** retired after 18 years with the School in December, but will be staying on to teach on a part-time basis for the rest of the academic year. Dr **Cameron Stewart** also left the School in December to take up a new post at the Department of Trade and Industry. Finally, part-time Lecturer **Len DeVille** left the School.

Congratulations to **Professor Frank McIntosh**, Assistant Principal/Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology, on his marriage to Maureen last month.

Notice Board

The 2001 Granite City Challenge between The Robert Gordon University and the University of Aberdeen will take place on Wednesday March 14 2001. *RGYou* would like to take this opportunity to wish all the RGU teams the very best of luck in their events.

The Library has taken over responsibility for issuing International Standard Book Numbers (ISBN) for RGU publications. Staff about to publish should therefore send the Library a completed Information Form, which provides details of the work (title, edition, number of pages and illustrations for example), confirmation that the material does not infringe any existing copyright and the agreement of the appropriate Head of School that the title can be submitted as an RGU publication. Please contact Lorna Adam, Library Administration Assistant, on extension 3454, for a form as soon as you have a proposed publication date. Staff are also reminded that it is necessary to provide the Legal Deposit Libraries with copies of each publication. The RGU Library Service will organise this on your behalf, but copies of the books must be provided (free of charge) for forwarding within a month of the publication date.

Susan Gray from the Estates Department is a member of the Grampian Concert Orchestra, which will be holding a concert on Tuesday, 20th February 2001, at 7.30pm in St Andrew's Cathedral, King Street. The orchestra will be performing Dvorak, Synphony number 8; Dvorak, Carneval; and Mozart, Violin Concerto number 4. Tickets are £5 (£3 concession) and are available from Aberdeen Box Office. For further information please do not hesitate to contact Susan on extension 3313.

IT Services' Iain Moir ran the Great North Run last year, raising over £400 for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. He would like to thank everyone who sponsored him in the half marathon (which he completed in 1 hour and 51 minutes), in particular the staff at IT Services, Finance and Student Records.

The student newspaper, *Cogno*, was relaunched by the Student Association last month after a break of three years. Congratulations to all those involved, and good luck with future editions.

RGU hosts conference on the future of air transport

The University's Centre for Transport Policy organised a conference on the Future of Air Transport in London at the end of last year.

The conference brought together policy makers and those at the cutting edge of the UK air transportation industry to examine the major issues facing the industry over the next thirty years, including air transport competition, managing the growth of air transport and improving surface access to airports, such as high speed rail links.

In addition, the Rt. Hon. Lord Macdonald, Minister for Transport at the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, launched a government consultation document on the future of aviation during his keynote speech at the conference.

Lord Macdonald highlighted the success of the UK's air transport industry, noting that 25% of all international airline passengers fly from or to the UK. Lord Macdonald argued that in order to maintain this lead, several important issues must be faced, including the economic and environmental effects of any growth in air transport, air transport's role in an integrated transport policy, and consumer issues, such as the pricing of airline tickets and improved customer service.

Sir Richard Branson, Chairman of Virgin Atlantic Airways Ltd and Dr Andrew Sentance, Chief Economist at British Airways plc were also at the conference. Sir Richard said that for the UK air transport industry to continue to thrive, a new air transport agreement with the United States needs to be agreed. He claimed that the current agreement limits the ability of UK airlines, such as Virgin, to fly within the US - for example from New York to Los Angeles - thereby preventing the development of the UK airline industry in what is a huge market. He also said that the European Commission should have the ability to represent all the European Union's countries in air transport negotiations with the United States. Dr Sentance from British Airways agreed with this view, calling the present UK / US agreement 'arcane' and arguing that a European Union/United States 'Common Aviation Area' is the ultimate goal.

The Future of Air Transport Conference was chaired by Professor David Begg of The Centre for Transport Policy and was also addressed by Nicky Gavron, the Deputy Mayor of London, Sir Alastair Morton, Chairman of the Shadow Strategic Rail Authority, Geoff Muirhead, Chief Executive of Manchester Airport plc, Mike Hodgkinson, Chief Executive of BAA plc, John Stewart, Vice Chair of Transport 2000, Tony Grayling of the Institute of Public Policy Research, Doug Andrew of the Civil Aviation Authority, Roy Griffins of the Civil Aviation Authority and Sir Bob Reid, Chancellor of The Robert Gordon University.



Green Travel Scheme *update*

Work on the University's Green Travel Scheme continues apace with a number of improvements over the last few months, particularly for staff and students cycling around the various sites.

These improvements include investment in new facilities such as secure parking for bikes, shower changing facilities, and lockers. The old cycle stands at the Scott Sutherland building and Gray's School of Art have all been replaced with new stands, while at Schoolhill and St Andrew's Street, the old cycle stands have now been replaced with new, secure, covered bike cages. In addition, the shower facilities at Schoolhill have been upgraded and new lockers (that are large enough to hold cycle and motorcycle helmets) are now available.

Transport Management Co-ordinator Biljana Damjanovic said: 'Cycling is a healthy, environmentally friendly and cheap way of getting around.

If more people cycled more often, society would benefit in many ways; there would be less congestion, less pollution, and a fitter, healthier population. At RGU, we are very keen to encourage more staff and students to cycle to and from University, and these facilities clearly illustrate our commitment to this goal. We also welcome any comments and suggestions from staff and students that would help us with future improvements.'

There are still a number of lockers and plenty of spaces in the new secure cycle cages available to students and staff at St Andrew's Street and Schoolhill. To obtain locker and/or cycle cage keys, contact the Transport Management Co-ordinator on extension 3318. A returnable deposit of £10 is required.



STOP PRESS!!

Professor Ian Bryden, Head of the School of Mechanical and Offshore Engineering, has been appointed Specialist Advisor to the Science and Technology sub-committee of the House of Commons. This post will cover the marine energy enquiry, which was announced by the government last month. Professor Bryden expressed delight at being selected for this strategically important position and being invited to participate, at the highest level, in advising parliament and government on future energy policy for the United Kingdom.

'This appointment is very exciting, both professionally and personally', he said. 'It is national recognition at the highest level of the work the University has done in the field, and of its position as a first class authority in energy technology and policy. Potential advisors from around the world were interviewed for this post, illustrating once again that The Robert Gordon University is a world leader for research and expertise in marine energy.'

In addition, Dr Kostas Rados, Lecturer in Environmental Engineering at the School of Mechanical and Offshore Engineering, has been invited to undertake a 12 month study and research sabbatical at the internationally renowned United States Naval Postgraduate School. The American school organises these sabbaticals to individuals who have an international academic reputation as a means of fostering long term links between overseas institutions. Professor Bryden, Head of the School of Mechanical and Offshore Engineering, commented: 'Once again the international status of the staff of the School is being recognised. The Robert Gordon University is justifiably very proud of this latest success and Kostas is to be congratulated for receiving this accolade.'