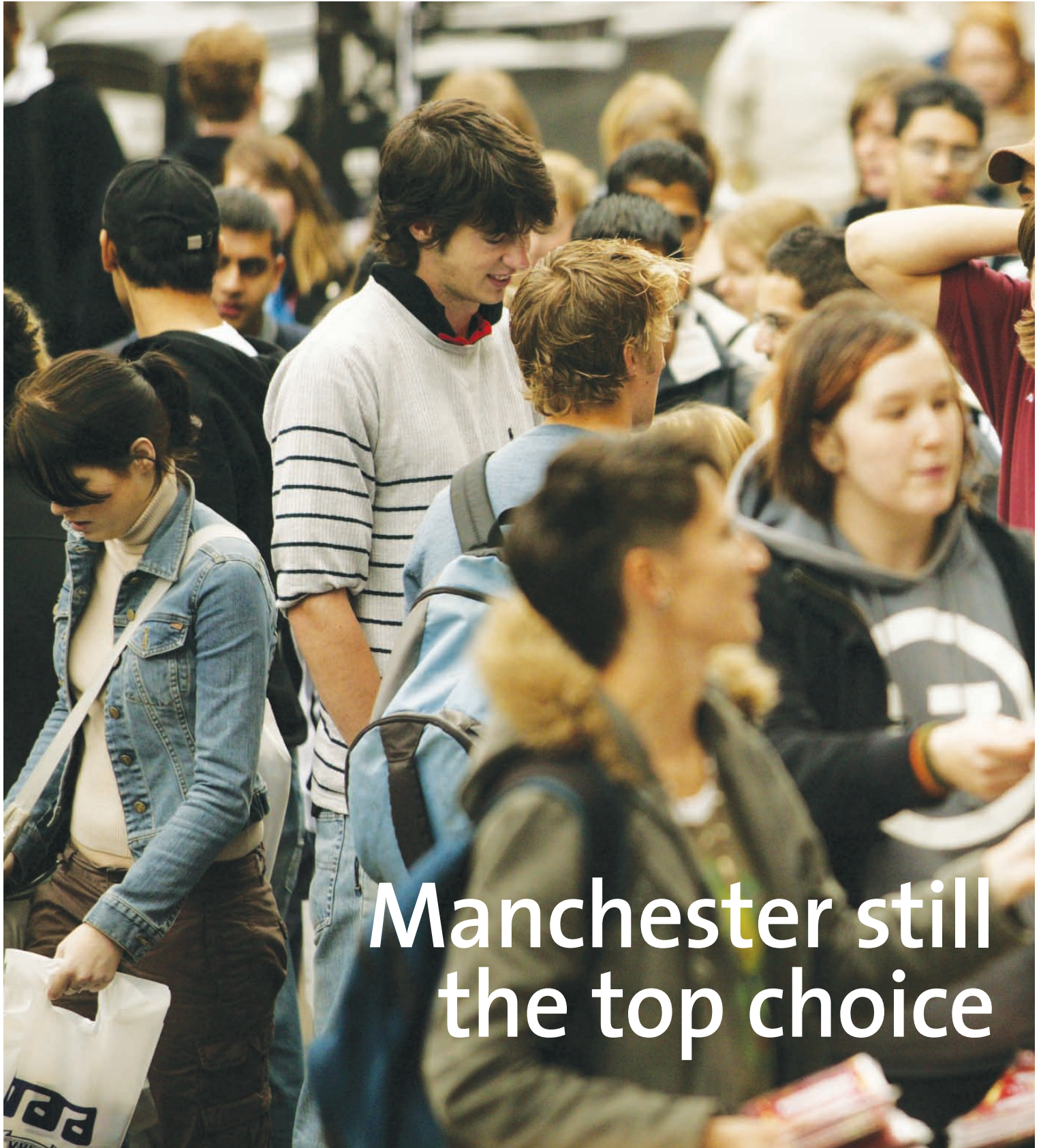


UniLife

Issue 6 Volume 4



Manchester still
the top choice

Features



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Letter from the President



Is the devil in the detail? My own experience suggests a qualified, "yes." The devil does detail well. He – and I accept, reluctantly, the case for the masculine pronoun here – is certainly an accomplished all-rounder! But detail is his speciality.

That is why "execution, execution, execution" is so important a mantra for good managers. In our particular case, with high ambitions, bold plans and aspirational goals driving a daunting *Manchester 2015 Agenda*, persistent, painstaking hard work that leads step-by-step in the right direction is all that stands between us and diabolical failure.

Each February we complete a "stock take" of performance against plan, concentrating especially on the previous year. At all levels of the University we use this detailed review of the previous 12 months to refine our strategies and/or redefine operational targets for the year ahead.

But under-pinning all such planning and re-planning, the persistent, painstaking hard work has to go on, whether by researchers being as meticulous in conducting experiments as they are ingenious in designing them; or by academics taking the time to enrich the undergraduate curricula with new scholarly thinking, and to keep abreast of pedagogic opportunities presented by new learning technologies; or by administrators leaving nothing to chance in facilitating academic priorities, supporting student recruitment, maintaining IT services or ensuring that the University responds positively to student needs.

The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) will loom large in 2007. Judicious appointments may still be crucial, but from now on Manchester's RAE performance is likely to depend mostly on getting the detailed operational dimension of the exercise right. The final deadline may still seem a long way off but there is a huge amount of work to be done and all the intermediate deadlines are therefore critical. Care will have to be taken to ensure that all those who are returned make the very best case, submitting the right publications and (for those

eligible for more than one panel) being returned to the right panel. In determining how many researchers to return, detailed decisions will have to be made to balance the prospective financial benefits of high return rates against the potentially negative reputational consequences of a high-return strategy. Manchester's research eminence is likely in the long term to rest on legitimate claims to *research power* rather than *per capita* comparisons of research outcomes. Everywhere, at all levels, expert decisions will have to be made, lest we do irrevocable damage to the *2015 Agenda*.

Resource management and revenue generation will also loom large in 2007. Otherwise we will find it increasingly difficult in future to build the kind of internationally competitive resource base needed to fund the *Agenda*. Having worked hard to improve the processes and procedures governing international student recruitment, for example, we must now ensure that changes in curriculum, marketing, recruiting and admissions processes are translated by dint of further painstaking effort into improved outcomes. Having run up planned deficits to fund our pre-RAE expansion, we must now balance the University budget.

Otherwise we will fail. The diabolical temptation, as always, will be to leave stones unturned here and there along the way, whether in preparing for the RAE, managing costs or generating revenue to invest in scholarly excellence. Execution, execution, execution – that is the only way to keep the devil out of the detail.

Alan Gilbert

Professor Alan Gilbert
President and Vice-Chancellor

News

Manchester still the top choice

The University of Manchester has retained its position as the UK's most popular university, according to figures released last month.

The University received 62,657 applications to its undergraduate courses for entry in 2006, the Universities Central Admissions Service (UCAS) statistics reveal. It confirms Manchester as the country's premier destination for would-be students.

Tim Westlake, Manchester's Director of Student Recruitment said: "We are very pleased that our figures are holding up, contrary to the national trend, and we believe our generous package of scholarships and bursaries is helping to maintain our status.

"Students are aware of the University's great reputation and want to come here to take part in the Manchester experience. 2006 saw the introduction of tuition fees, but this appears to have had no impact on the number of applications from people wishing to study at Manchester."

The 2006 figure is virtually unchanged from the previous year when there were 62,806 applications, a fall of less than a quarter of one per cent. The three most popular courses at Manchester are Medicine (MBChB), Law (LLB) and Pharmacy (MPharm).

Nationally, the final figures from UCAS for students starting courses in 2006 show that the number of applicants for full-time undergraduate courses fell by 3.0%. In 2006, there were 506,304 people applying to universities and colleges in the UK, 390,890 of which were accepted.

Anthony McClaran, Chief Executive of UCAS, commented: "The fall in the number of applicants for entry in September 2006 was considerably less than many predicted. The key question now is whether these figures represent a temporary blip or the start of a longer-term trend. Our figures for the 15 January advisory deadline for 2007 entry, which will be published next month, will begin to answer that question".



Thanks a million!

The University of Manchester has received a share of £1m of funding as part of a new Goldman Sachs Foundation and Sutton Trust initiative to help up to 900 gifted students in areas of deprivation access leading Universities over the next three years.

The University of Manchester Academic Enrichment Programme is working to attract high potential students from non-professional backgrounds or from families with little tradition of higher education from state schools. The overall programme, which will cost about £1m, will begin in July 2007 and attract 100 students a year to initiatives being led at Manchester, Nottingham and Birmingham Universities.

The University of Manchester was chosen, alongside Birmingham and Nottingham, because of the region's low progression rate to higher education (around 25% compared to a national participation rate of 43%).

"In the most deprived areas of all three cities, within a short distance of University libraries, lecture halls and student residences, only one

young person in ten actually ends up as an undergraduate," said Stephanie Bell-Rose, President of The Goldman Sachs Foundation. "The Goldman Sachs Foundation is delighted to be working in collaboration with the Sutton Trust and The University of Manchester to help talented students realize their potential and acquire critical skills that they will need to succeed in a global society."

Dr Tim Westlake, Acting Director of the Student Recruitment, Admissions and Widening Participation Division, said: "This programme will significantly extend the opportunities that the University is able to offer to talented students from non-privileged backgrounds across our local region."

Sir Peter Lampl, Chairman of the Sutton Trust, the educational charity which he set up in 1997 to help non-privileged children, said: "Over the life of the project we will be active in persuading the Government and other institutions to adopt the Academic Enrichment Programme model more widely across the education system."



The Academic Enrichment programme will select students at the end of their lower sixth year to go to on a one-week Summer School, which has input from each of Manchester's faculties. They will have two follow-up sessions during the next year. They will receive mentoring from current undergraduates and are given leadership training and personal development programmes.

Further information is available from julian.skyrme@manchester.ac.uk or saskia.metcalfe@manchester.ac.uk

In brief

Nobel Laureate visit

Nobel Laureate of Medicine Professor Arvid Carlsson visited the Neuroscience and Psychiatry Unit to meet staff and give an informal talk recently.

He also presented to a conference of the Royal College of Psychiatrists’ Special Interest Group in Psychopharmacology hosted by the Unit, outlining the status of and prospects for neurotransmitter targets in the treatment of schizophrenia.

Professor Carlsson was made Nobel Laureate in 2000 for his discovery of the neurotransmitter dopamine in the late Fifties - now accepted as key to the experience of pleasure and reward and important in causing addictions, depression and psychosis - and subsequent research into its behavioural functions. In the Sixties he established that drugs for the treatment of psychotic illnesses work by blocking dopamine receptors.

He is currently working on a new approach to drugs for schizophrenia and hopes to collaborate with the neuroscience group in Manchester.

Turing Lecture

A visionary computer scientist explored the beauty and elegance of computer software at the third Manchester Turing Lecture at the University last month.

Grady Booch, IBM Fellow and Chief Scientist at IBM Rational Software, delivered a talk on 'The promise, the limits, and the beauty of software' at the University’s School of Computer Science. The annual lecture was organised in association with the British Computer Society and the Institution of Engineering and Technology.

Booch is recognised internationally for his innovative work on software architecture, software engineering and modelling. A renowned industry visionary, he has devoted his life’s work to improving the effectiveness of software developers worldwide.

Booch served as Chief Scientist of Rational Software Corporation from its foundation in 1981 and continues to serve in that capacity within IBM. He is one of the original authors of a programming language known as Unified Modeling Language (UML), which is now used by global giants like Microsoft, IBM and Oracle in their products.

Booch offered some conclusions on the last 60 years of software development and some expectations and cautions for the next generation and also explored the idea not everything software developers want to build should be built, for moral, economic, social, and political reasons.

Creating a region of excellence



Professor Alistair Ulph (Left) and Sir Richard Leese (right)

The Centre for Local Governance has been launched at The University of Manchester as part of a wider plan to transform the North West into a region of excellence.

In partnership with the North West Improvement Network (NWIN), the Centre aims to create, generate and transfer knowledge which will contribute directly to improvements in local authorities (LAs) and their role in community leadership. It will also build the capacity of LAs to manage their own knowledge and learning.

The Centre for Local Governance, which is unique to the North West, will act as a focal point and knowledge hub and will focus on assessing, sharing and building on good practice in local government.

Three centres from the University – the Institute for Political and Economic Governance (IPEG), the

Centre for Educational Leadership (CEL) and the Centre for Public Policy and Management (CPPM) at Manchester Business School (MBS) - are involved in the partnership, along with SOLACE Enterprises Ltd and NWIN.

Sir Richard Leese, Leader of Manchester City Council and Chair of NWIN, said: "All local authorities in the North West face major challenges. The new North West Improvement Network (NWIN) has a key role to play in unearthing and spreading good practice across these authorities.

"I believe that an academic partner is vital to the process of improvement. In particular, I welcome the extra challenge, rigour and support that can be provided to North West local authorities by the new Centre for Local Governance at The University of Manchester."

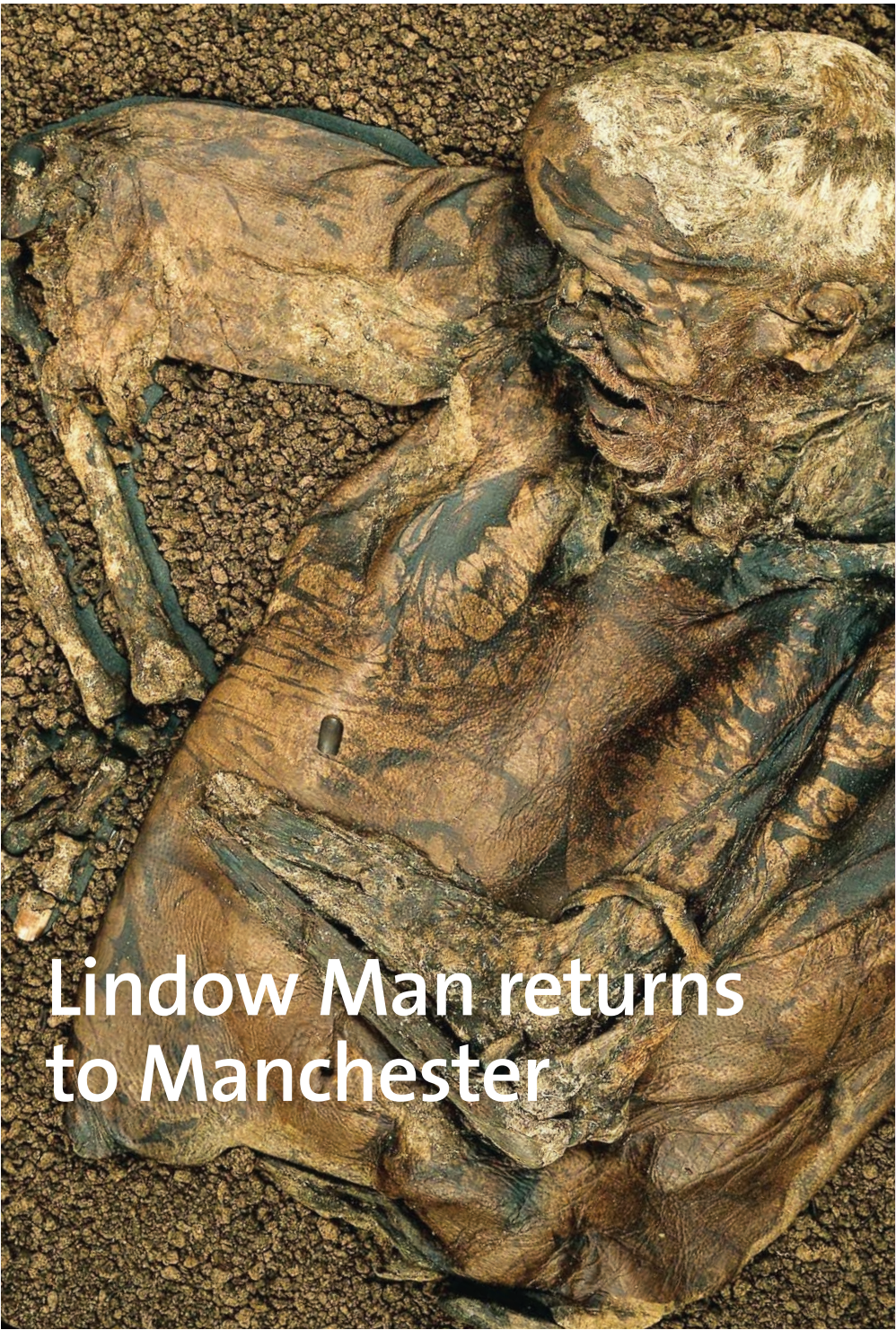
Partners Come Together

Representatives from The University of Manchester and IBM put their heads together last month to further bolster a strong on-going relationship.

Simon Pendlebury, IBM's VP Business Partners and Professor John Perkins, Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, hosted an event, which saw John Ibbotson of IBM's Hursley Laboratory talk about company activity ripe for potential collaboration.

The Partners Think Tank session also looked at how to build on excellent foundations and mutual trust.

The relationship between the University and IBM is continuing to develop and evolve following the signing of an official Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2005 which marked the creation of the IBM-Manchester Partners Programme, an initiative designed to identify key staff to partner with IBM for future opportunities for collaborative research.



Lindow Man returns to Manchester

The world famous Lindow man is to return to The Manchester Museum for a temporary exhibition next year which the public is being invited to contribute to.

The Museum is keen to reflect a range of different points of view in their interpretation of the body including those of archaeologists, museum curators, the city, special interest groups and members of the public.

The Museum will not be telling one story but looking at Lindow Man from many different perspectives. They are very interested, for example, in gathering evidence of how Lindow Man is important to the local community.

Lindow Man is the name given to the naturally-preserved body of an Iron Age man, discovered in a peat bog at Lindow Moss, Mobberley, near Wilmslow, Cheshire in 1984 by commercial peat cutters. The body has been freeze dried and is now on display in the British Museum.

The Manchester Museum will borrow Lindow Man from April 2008 to March 2009. He has been on display at the Museum twice before in 1987 and 1991 and is fondly remembered in Manchester.

The Museum is keen to hear from members of the public who have particular memories about Lindow Man, either because they live near the site where he was found or because they remember coming to see him on display at The Manchester Museum.

The Museum is in the early stages of developing proposals for the redisplay of Lindow Man but the following storylines are among several which may well be considered: Lindow Man's discovery and excavation and how and why did he end up in London?; his significance as an example of an ancient sacrifice, as an aspect of ancient religious belief and his importance to modern pagans; how museums treat human remains – Lindow Man and other human remains such as Mary Rose, Egyptian mummies, WWI dead, cenotaphs etc; At the British Museum, in the North West or reburied?; and the value of such a body for archaeological science.

To take part in the project, please send any thoughts, comments or memories that you may have about Lindow Man to the Museum: museum@manchester.ac.uk before 10 February 2007.

New Year’s honours

Professor John Perkins, Vice President and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences has been awarded a CBE in the New Year's Honours for services to Science and Engineering.

His academic career spans periods at Cambridge University and at the University of Sydney as well as Imperial College. He has industrial experience with Shell and with ICI, in the UK and in Australia. His research interests cover a number of facets of process systems.

Ruth Durrell, in the Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research (CCSRC) in the School of Social Sciences was awarded an MBE for services to Social Science. Ruth is Administrator of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Research Methods Programme (RMP). The RMP forms part of the ESRC's strategy to improve the standards of research methods across the UK social science community.



Professor John Perkins CBE



Ruth Durrell MBE

In brief

Medical Milestones

Doctors have voted anaesthesia the greatest medical breakthrough of the last 150 years – but their choice was at odds with that of the public, a British Medical Journal (BMJ) poll has found.

The online vote by medical professionals supported the view of Dr Stephanie Snow, a historian of medicine at The University of Manchester, who championed anaesthesia.

Readers of the journal had been invited to nominate what they considered to be the greatest 'Medical Milestone' of recent times. From an initial list of 70 nominations, judges whittled down the number to just 15, each with its own expert campaigner.

By the time voting ended, five clear finalists were left – anaesthesia, antibiotics, the discovery of DNA, sanitation and, finally, vaccines, which was championed by the head of Manchester's Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine and Wellcome Unit, Professor Michael Worboys.

At the final, held in London, each champion was given a final chance to make their case in front of an audience of medical professionals before the results of the online poll were announced.

Professor Worboys made the case for Louis Pasteur's development of the rabies vaccine in 1885, while Dr Snow championed the cause of a distant relative, John Snow, whose work with chloroform allowed for the safe and effective suspension of consciousness of patients undergoing surgery.

But it was another Jon Snow – the Channel 4 newsman – and BMJ editor Fiona Godlee who would announce the winner of the Medical Milestones poll, designed to mark the medical magazine's relaunch.

A show of hands amongst those listening to the finalists' presentations had put Professor Worboys and vaccines in the driving seat but the online votes told a different story.

The medical profession had gone with Dr Snow's 'symbol of humanitarianism' and voted for anaesthesia, while the public had opted for antibiotics as their medicine of choice.

But due to the proportional representation voting system, neither anaesthesia nor antibiotics took the glory, sufficient numbers in both camps voted for sanitation.



The Chinese Consul General, Mr Gong (left) opens the fair with Professor Rod Coombs, The University's Vice-President for Innovation and Economic Development (right) and Jean Krasocki, The Director of NCUK (centre).

Chinese recruiters impressed with Manchester's students

The University's first-ever Chinese Graduate Recruitment Fair, held recently at the Renold Building, was deemed a massive success by students and graduate employers.

The Fair attracted widespread media interest, with Chinese media representatives including the Shanghai and Shandong Education TV stations, the Cheng Du Business Newspaper and Chongqing Morning Newspaper flying in to attend. The BBC World Service also attended.

Organised jointly by the University's MLP, Careers & Employability Division and the Northern Consortium (NCUK), the Fair hosted over 30 exhibitors from China and the UK, seeking Chinese talent for internships and permanent positions.

The Division's Director, Jane Ratchford, said: "Employability is a key factor influencing overseas students' choice of institution, and surveys indicate that most are dissatisfied by their experience.

"This Fair is part of a package of new initiatives – including placements, mentoring and webcasts – being piloted this year, which aim to place this University at the cutting edge of careers provision for international students. We hope to create a world-class offer that schools and faculties can use to support their ambitions for international student recruitment."

Almost 2,000 students attended the Fair, mostly from Manchester; although some travelled from Bristol and Kent.

Manchester graduate Wei Song, who gained an MSc in Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations last year, said: "I'll never regret attending the Chinese Graduate Fair. I am now employed by Watsons China, a famous multinational chain store.

"The Fair provided me with the opportunity to hear the company's presentation [and] chat face-to-face with the company's human resources executive. I feel very fortunate to have secured a good job in such a short time."

Employers praised the enthusiasm and drive of attending students. Several held job interviews during their visit, and have already made offers to students.

Horace Ho, Senior Vice-President of Human Resources at Johnson Electric, said: "As a global company, we seek graduates who have the leadership potential and ambition to be the best that they can be. Our visit to the Manchester Chinese Graduate Fair was a success and we are pleased to have already made a number of graduate job offers to students."

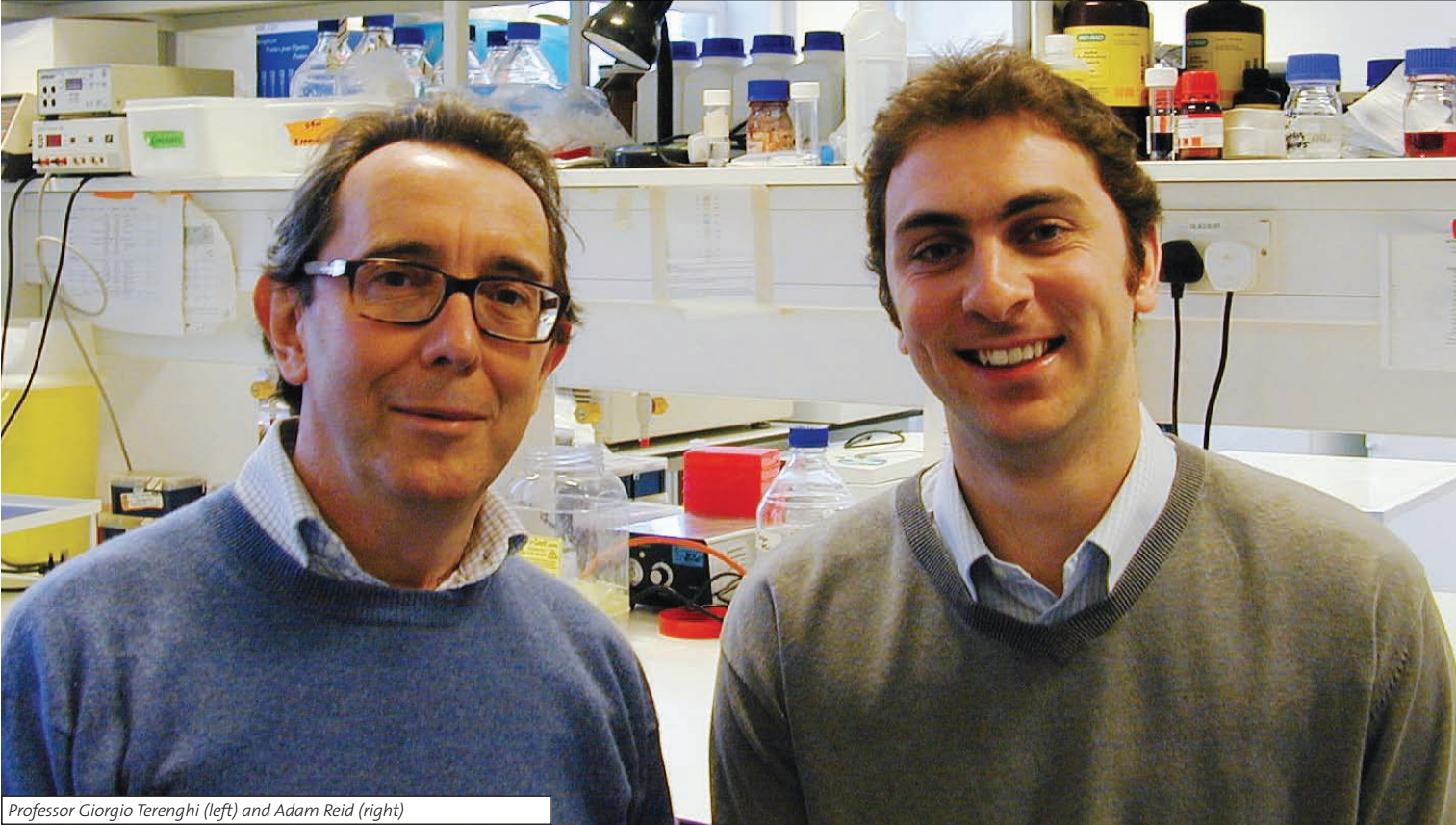
Maria Forrest, Human Resources Manager at KPMG Hong Kong, said: "It was great to be part of the Chinese Graduate Fair at Manchester and meet such enthusiastic students. I would definitely take part in another event like this one."

An afternoon conference followed the Fair, at which representatives from Chinese recruiters, UK universities and the media discussed how international students could increase their employability whilst studying in the UK.

Chinese students from The University of Manchester also participated in an informal discussion with media and employers regarding their experiences of UK study.

A closing dinner for the Chinese delegation was hosted by The MLP, Careers & Employability Division, with guest speakers Mr Gong, Chinese Consul-General, and Professor Bob Munn, the University's Vice-President for Teaching and Learning.

Study gives hope to accident victims



Professor Giorgio Terenghi (left) and Adam Reid (right)

Researchers at The University of Manchester hope to put an end to the nerve cell death that affects around 50,000 people each year who suffer peripheral nerve injury following workplace, road and domestic accidents.

Professor Giorgio Terenghi and his team at the Blond McIndoe Laboratories have shown that following nerve injury, a large proportion of involved nerve cells undergo programmed death resulting in poor recovery of sensation. Now, the team has established differences between two distinct types of sensory nerve cells. Sensory nerve cells supplying

the skin die in large numbers in response to injury, but following treatment with a clinically safe drug, N-acetyl cysteine (NAC), this cell death is virtually eliminated. Sensory nerve cells from the muscle however, die in considerably smaller numbers and do not appear to respond to NAC.

Professor Terenghi said: "Despite considerable advances in microsurgical nerve repair, the outcome for these predominantly young and working patients is often very poor. This is an exciting development because the differing response of these two types of nerve cells after a similar nerve injury provides a model to study the mechanism of nerve cell death and the action of NAC."

With the assistance of a research grant from the East Grinstead Medical Research Trust, Adam Reid, a Surgical Research Fellow, is aiming to measure the expression of key molecules that influence the survival and death of these two groups of sensory nerve cells, and their response to NAC. Using a new technique, the cells are stained with fluorescent tracer which can then be identified under a microscope and isolated using a laser microdissection technique available at the University which allows individual cells of interest to be cut out and captured in a contact-free manner.

Temporary work bad for men's health

A study of the health of workers found that men in temporary jobs are more likely to suffer health problems than men in secure employment.

Dr Vanessa Gash from The University of Manchester's School of Social Sciences spent two years examining health statistics of Spanish and German workers.

The results, she says, are relevant to any country where there are temporary workers - including the UK.

She said: "Getting a job is good for your health, but according to our research it's less good for your health if you have a fixed-term contract - especially if you're a man.

"Fixed-term contract workers can lose their jobs more frequently as their contracts run out within short periods. This job loss often results in unemployment which usually causes a deterioration of general health indicators and health status.

"They are also disproportionately affected by job insecurity which is also thought to affect health status. There may also be stresses linked to the comparatively poor job quality of some fixed-term jobs which tend to be relatively low paid."



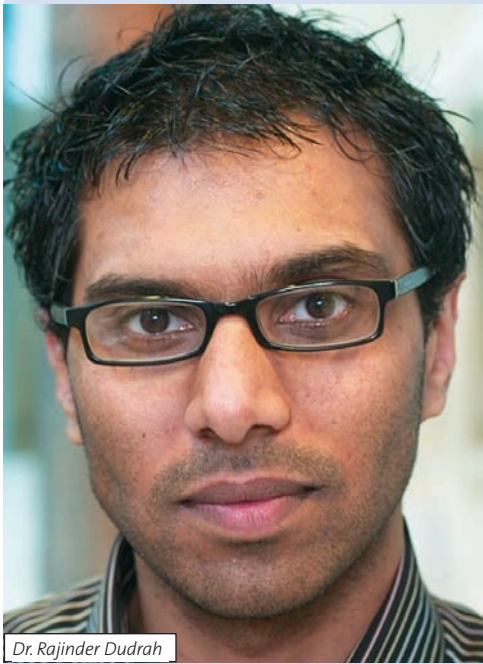
In the news

Bollywood expert keeps an eye on Big Brother

Dr. Rajinder Dudrah, Senior Lecturer in Film and Media Studies from the University of Manchester and author of *Bollywood: Sociology Goes to the Movies*, was inundated with requests for media interviews when the row erupted surrounding allegations of racism towards the Bollywood star Shilpa Shetty on Channel 4's 'Celebrity Big Brother' last month.

Dr. Dudrah, featured regularly on BBC Radio and made a live appearance on BBC's Asia Today television show that was broadcast to over 200 countries worldwide.

For Dr. Dudrah the debate has allowed him to put much of his research into practice.



"I was asked about the format of the programme, how it works, and why reality shows rely on conflict among the contestants and why moral judgements are being made by the viewers in order to vote people off. "The question of whether the contestants were playing up to the camera or revealing aspects of their real selves was also another one, and through the lens of Drama and Screen Studies I have been suggesting ways in which we need to be mindful of the performance of the participants and also of the ways in which the programme is cashing in on the controversy, thereby rescuing its dwindling audience figures."



The Wolfson Molecular Imaging Centre (WMIC) has been awarded a license to produce its own radioactive tracers, enabling it to proceed with unique research into cancer, neurological and psychiatric treatments.

The license - one of only a handful issued in the UK - allows the Centre to manufacture PET (Positron Emission Tomography) tracers in its high-tech sterile facilities and administer them to human participants in clinical trials.

PET scanning produces high-resolution images of internal organs and biological processes by injecting trace amounts of a radioactive compound, or 'radiotracer', into the part of the body to be scanned. Emissions from this tracer are then recorded by detectors within the scanner, and the resulting data processed by sophisticated software to create the images.

The trace levels of radioactivity are closely monitored for the safety of the patient, and diminish after a short time.

The license means the Centre can now develop, manufacture and use more complex radiotracers, which will allow researchers to measure a wide range of complex molecular events such as cancer tumour growth, cell death, psychoses and chronic pain, as well as the effect of drugs designed to treat these conditions.

Director Professor Karl Herholz said: "The award of this license is a key strategic milestone for the Centre, as we can now progress with the molecular imaging projects it is uniquely equipped for. This approach is relatively under-explored, and we are very excited about its potential to inspire breakthroughs and improve patient treatments."

See a Profile of Professor Herholz on pages 12-13

Cartilage discovery offers arthritis hope

Scientists have revealed the intricate structure of cartilage in what they hope will provide clues to how the crippling joint disease osteoarthritis might one day be treated.

The disease, which affects more than five million people in the UK, is caused by the wear and tear of the smooth, hard cartilage tissue that covers the ends of bones allowing them to glide over one another at the joint.

Scientists have long known that cartilage gets its strength from interlocking millimetre-long

collagen but their precise structure has remained a mystery for more than 40 years, so hindering any progress towards the development of potential therapies.

Now, the team has used sophisticated electron microscope techniques to uncover the molecular structure of the thinner of the two types of these collagen fibres or 'fibrils'.

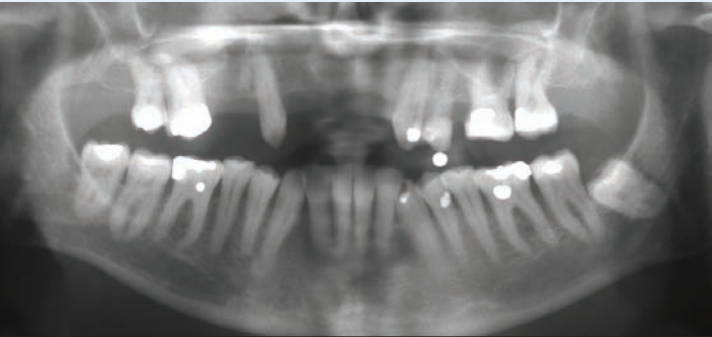
Professor Karl Kadler of the Faculty of Life Sciences, who led the research, said: "Osteoarthritis occurs when these fibrils are disrupted or lost. Eventually, the cartilage breaks down altogether and sufferers experience severe

pain as the two ends of the bones rub against each other."

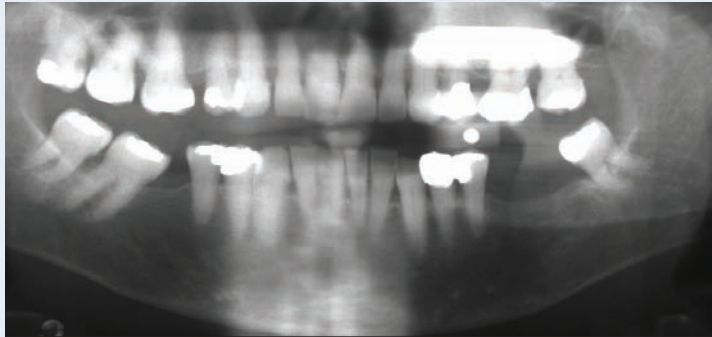
The team's findings - published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* - also explain why mutations in cartilage collagen genes cause osteoarthritis.

"This research, while just a beginning, at least establishes some basic scientific facts that could prove useful in future studies on osteoarthritis and related conditions."

Dentists could detect osteoporosis, automatically



A normal jaw cortex



A thinned jaw cortex, suggesting osteoporosis

Researchers in the University's School of Dentistry have created a unique way of identifying osteoporosis sufferers from ordinary dental x-rays.

Professor Keith Horner and Dr Hugh Devlin co-ordinated a three year, EU-funded collaboration to develop the largely automated approach to detecting the disease, which affects almost 22% in their sixties and 38.5% in their seventies.

Despite pressure from the EU to improve the identification of people at risk, wide-scale screening for the disease is not currently viable. The team has therefore developed a software-based approach to detecting osteoporosis during routine dental x-rays, by automatically measuring the thickness of part of the patient's lower jaw.

X-rays are used widely in the NHS, so the team has drawn on 'active shape modeling' technology developed by the Division of Imaging Sciences to automatically detect jaw cortex widths of less than 3mm - a key indicator of osteoporosis - during the process and alert the dentist.

Keith explained: "We tested 652 women for osteoporosis using the current 'gold standard' and highly expensive DXA test, which identified 140 sufferers. Our automated X-ray test immediately flagged-up over half of these, who may not otherwise have been tested. In a real-life situation they would immediately be referred for conclusive DXA testing.

"This cheap, simple and largely-automated approach could be carried out by every dentist

taking routine x-rays, yet the success rate is as good as having a specialist consultant on hand."

The team hopes an x-ray equipment company will now step in and integrate the software with its products. As colleague Hugh continued: "As well as being virtually no extra work for the dentist, the diagnosis does not depend on patients being aware that they are at risk of the disease - yet around two in five sufferers undertaking routine dental x-rays could be identified if the approach were adopted within the NHS."

Discovering the pharmacy of the pharaohs

Scientists at The University of Manchester have teamed up with colleagues in Egypt in a bid to discover what medicines were used by the ancient Egyptians.

The KNH Centre for Biomedical Egyptology in the Faculty of Life Sciences and the Egyptian Medicinal Plant Conservation Project in St Katherine's, Sinai (pictured), have formed a partnership to research Egyptian pharmacy in the times of the pharaohs.

The 'Pharmacy in Ancient Egypt' collaboration, which is funded by a grant from the Leverhulme Trust, will compare modern plant species common to the Sinai region with the remains of ancient plants found in tombs.

Researcher Ryan Metcalf said: "We know that the ancient Egyptians had extensive trade routes and it is entirely possible that both medicinal plants and the knowledge to use them effectively were traded between regions and countries.

"By comparing the prescriptions in the medical papyri to the medicinal plant use of the indigenous Bedouin people we hope to determine the origins of Pharaonic medicine."

The Medicinal Plant Conservation Project, headed by Professor Mohamed Al-Demerdash, is helping to preserve the biodiversity of the region through close cooperation with the local Bedouin.

Fellow researcher Dr Jenefer Cockitt added: "Many of the plants are endemic to the Sinai and extremely valuable to the Bedouin, whether as fodder, cash crops, building materials or as pharmaceuticals.

"St Katherine's will be able to supply us with seeds and information that covers the entire Sinai peninsula, which will be an invaluable resource for our work."





Education reform: a stark lesson

One of the UK's most comprehensive investigations into fairness in education has uncovered disturbing failures in the way the system treats children from poorer backgrounds.

The team from The University of Manchester's Centre for Equity in Education, led by Professors Mel Ainscow and Alan Dyson, examined how national strategies for education reform impact on children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Among the findings of their report are:

- Inequalities of funding can cause poor white children struggling with literacy to receive poorer support than children with English as a second language.
- It is increasingly difficult for poorer families to secure places in high achieving schools.

- The policy of choice forces the least popular schools to fill their spare capacity with excluded children and sometimes asylum seekers, placing these schools under extra pressures.

Professor Ainscow said: "In 1997, New Labour had the confidence to set about a programme of radical reform and centrally-driven initiatives to deliver high standards and equity. Our contention is that, as far as equity is concerned, the programme has failed to deliver. Our study differs from most research in that it drills down into specific localities and exposes what is really happening on the ground."

The report recommends a series of reforms based on good practice discovered in the areas studied by the team. These broadly promote: the reorientation of targets in line with the values of equity; collaboration and networking; area governance and area-based reform.

Problem drug use declining

Research led by the University's National Drug Evidence Centre in the School of Medicine has found that drug misuse seems to have passed its peak in some previous problem areas.

Tim Millar investigated the reality of the situation in perceived drug trouble-spots by estimating trends in the number of people starting to use heroin. These indicated geographical differences and suggested that problem drug use (PDU) is declining in some areas considered hot spots in the 1980s.

The study looked at almost 15,000 local heroin users using a new approach which takes account of the time-lag between people starting to use heroin and seeking help. It focused on the City of Manchester, Stockport and Wigan, which showed the clearest patterns in the 'prevalence' estimates (the number of cases in a population at a given time) produced using the traditional approach.

Prevalence estimates for Wigan progressively declined with age, indicating a younger PDU population than the other areas and that young people must have recently been recruited at a faster rate than previously.

By contrast, prevalence estimates for the City of Manchester indicated an older PDU population, prompting the team to think incidence might be in decline. In Stockport, the prevalence estimates showed less difference between age-groups, suggesting incidence had remained stable.

Tim said: "Our theory that the areas would exhibit different patterns of recent incidence trends - with some places having 'passed their peak' whilst rates of use continue to rise in others - was borne out using this new approach, which has proven capable of providing valuable indications which may help us to forecast future developments. Of course, Manchester and other 1980s hot spots continue to experience high levels of problem drug use, but it appears that the situation could have stopped getting worse and may be starting to get better."



Tim Millar



Dragons' Den comes to Manchester!

Student interns from the Centre for Excellence in Enquiry-Based Learning (CEEBL) recently designed and led a Dragon's Den-style workshop at a national conference in Manchester.

The conference was organized by the Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA) a national network organisation and a registered educational charity which aims to promote the awareness of recording achievement and action planning processes as an important element in improving learning and progression.

Invited to deliver a student-led session at the event, the CEEBL intern team chose to organise a 'Dragons' Den of Personal Development Planning'. Greg Tinker,

Student Sabbatical Officer at the Centre, led the session along with student interns Jamie Wood, Louise Goldring, Mary Sattenstall and Kate Maull (pictured). He said: "We wanted to do something really different that would first grab their attention, and secondly illustrate the real-world problems that both students and lecturers face with PDP."

"Rather than making the session purely student-focussed, the interns asked all of the delegates to work in several teams, some taking on the role of the student and others working from the perspective of the lecturer. They then, without warning, asked the teams to link-up in order to arrive at a compromise."

Each task related to some challenging aspect of PDP, such as how to motivate students. Each team came

up with a unique solution to their assigned problem, taking into account both perspectives, and then presented their solution to the 'Dragons' Den' (CEEBL student interns) however they preferred. Marks were awarded for the most creative solutions!

The final score was a tie between two teams who both came up with some very interesting solutions, such as a student PDP 'buddy' system.

Greg added: "As a result of this session, we have been approached by other organisations that are keen to involve us in their future events. This is excellent news for the Centre and the University, and provides us with further opportunities to disseminate our 'partners in learning' approach to a much wider audience."

Postgrad presentations

Professor Bob Munn, Vice President for Teaching and Learning, made awards of the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education to around 20 members of staff at the University, as well as to staff from a number of other institutions.

The awards were made during a reception in the University's Christie Bistro with Professor Munn commending the award recipients for their commitment to learning and teaching. Participants on the programme in previous years were also invited to the reception, with those involved including three recipients of a National Teaching Fellowship.



May Azzawi receives her certificate from Professor Bob Munn



Herholz’s horizons

When he was a young hospital doctor, Karl Herholz had the good fortune to hear a lecture that changed his life – and inspired him to start out on what was to be a distinguished career in neuroscience. Now, 25 years later, his enthusiasm is undimmed. “The brain is the most interesting object in the entire universe,” he says.

As Professor of Neuroscience and Director of the Wolfson Molecular Imaging Centre (WMIC), he oversees a clinical, science-led, experimental facility on the Christie Hospital site. The Centre is destined to become a world leader in the use of Positron Emission Tomography (PET)-based molecular imaging to advance the treatment of human cancers and brain disorders.

The understanding, prevention and treatment of dementias and stroke are his specialist area, aligned with his technological skills, being a physicist as well as a medic. His two most recent books clearly reflect that. *The Dementias: Early Diagnosis and Evaluation*,

co-edited with Daniela Perani from Milan and Chris Morris from Newcastle, was published earlier this year, and *NeuroPET: PET in Neuroscience and Clinical Neurology* appeared in 2004. The latter, which brings together the collected experience of more than 20 years in Cologne prior to his move here, was co-authored with Wolf-Dieter Heiss, his chief in Cologne, and Peter Herscovitch from Washington.

But had it not been for that lecture at a conference in Berne in 1981, he might never have had the courage to start. The lecturer was Michael Phelps from UCLA, one of the people who started PET, around the same time as our own Professor Terry Jones, who with Professor Pat Price played major roles in the conception, design and establishment of the WMIC, and are now his colleagues here.

“Phelps showed us images of brain function we had never seen before – and it was truly inspiring,” says Karl, who already had the interest waiting to be ignited. The subject of his doctoral thesis, which he was working on whilst doing his hospital house job in general medicine, was nuclear medicine.

Even as a schoolboy in Nurnberg he was keen on trying to understand how things work. “I had an

impetus to understand nature, what’s going on,” he says. “I probably read too many books, particularly by the physicist-philosopher Carl-Friedrich von Weizsacker.” He went to the nearby University of Erlangen to study Physics.

Gradually, however, he realised that “the most important and relevant area was human function.” “It took me some time to get into the field - it seemed too complicated,” he says. So, after a couple of years, he started Medicine, graduating six years later, in 1980, aged 28, and then routinely going on to his hospital job.

After the Phelps experience, he went back to the hospital, but in 1982 came his big break. He got an appointment as a Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Neurological Research in Cologne, under the direction of Wolf-Dieter Heiss. That really opened things up for him – and he stayed until 2005 and the move to Manchester.

“The Institute had one of the few PET scanners in Germany and I received proper neurological training – the job was a perfect match for me,” he says. It brought together his research, hospital work, clinical and technological interests. He started to focus on

mapping the brain and wrote a lot of software for image analysis. He was very involved in developing the techniques and particularly interested in cerebrovascular disease – how blood flow in the brain is being controlled.

He got his Professorship in Neurology and eventually became Head of the Clinical Science Group at the Institute’s PET service.

Stroke was the main topic of the Cologne Institute. In tackling the incidence of stroke, a service to patients was built up until 15% of those affected with stroke were treated in hospital within three hours after symptom onset – and the first three hours after a stroke are crucial for saving brain function. The usual figure without such special efforts is about 2%.

Karl’s clear motivation throughout, alongside all the research and increasingly sophisticated technology, is a desire to improve what can be done to help patients. “That has to be the driving force,” he says. His interest in dementia, especially Alzheimer’s, and brain tumours leads him to seek ways of identifying people in the early stages, so as to protect and preserve cognitive function.

The timing of his move to Manchester could not have been better – as the WMIC was opening up, Dieter-Heiss retired from the Cologne Institute and Max Planck Society withdrew the funding for clinical research. “The opportunity to come here was both exciting and attractive,” he says.

He still holds a Visiting Professorship in Cologne, where his wife, Ingrid, whom he met when a student, has her private psychoanalysis practice. “She brought me into medicine in the first place,” he says. “It was looking over her shoulder that convinced me.” They have three daughters, who seem to be following in their footsteps: Sibylle, 23, is a Psychology graduate now doing research, Susanne, 21, is studying medicine, and 16-year-old Regina is about to continue her education at St Bede’s here.

Karl Herholz is a caring, kindly and courteous man, focused on his family, his work and his patients. His position as chief of the WMIC as it develops, with his background and international recognition, could not be more fitting- another “perfect match”.

Name
Professor Karl Herholz

Education
1989
Habilitation and Venia legendi in Neurology, University of Cologne, Germany

1988
Specialist board examination in Neurology, Medical council, Dusseldorf, Germany

1981
Doctor of Medicine (Dr. med.), University of Erlangen

1980
Medical Exam and License, University of Erlangen, Germany

Present Appointment
From April 2006
Director of the Wolfson Molecular Imaging Centre, The University of Manchester

From April 2005
Professor of Clinical Neuroscience, Honorary Consultant in Neurology, Hope Hospital, Salford

Brief Career History
1994- 2005
Professor of Neurology, University of Cologne, Germany

1990 – 2005
Oberartz in Neurology, University Hospital, Cologne

1986 – 1994
Clinical Fellow, University of Cologne

1985 – 1986
Scientific Fellow, National Institute of Health, U.S.A.

1982 – 2005
Scientific Fellow, Max Planck Institute, Cologne

1980 – 1985
House Officer, Municipal Hospitals, Furth and Cologne, Germany

Game on!

The School of Computer Science recently hosted an event to raise young people's awareness of Computer Science and motivate them to take an interest in the subject.

More than 200 Year 11 and 12 secondary school students attended a fascinating lecture by the Chief Technical Officer of EA Games NW Development Studio on "The Science Behind Computer Games", followed by a games ladder competition using a large array of games consoles supplied by EA. The lucky winners received free EA games of their choice.

All the schools involved were impressed by the professional way in which the event was run and, more importantly, enjoyed the way it combined a serious message with a lot of fun.



Marvellous maths

The University is holding a series of special mathematics days for school pupils, aimed at firing up their enthusiasm for the subject and helping them achieve the best possible grades.

Around 180 pupils from 12 schools across Greater Manchester are attending a series of one-day sessions, in which they get the chance to take part in fun-filled maths activities.

During the sessions, pupils are split up from their usual peers and challenged to solve a varied array of puzzles. A special maths trail involves an element of physical activity.

The Maths Squad sessions have been developed by Barbara Grundy and her colleagues, working with Dr Farzana Aslam as the project co-ordinator, from the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences Widening Participation team.

Barbara said: "There has been great demand for places and the sessions have been a big success."

"As well as introducing the pupils to The University of Manchester, we are seeking to motivate them and create enthusiasm about studying mathematics. The sessions also help them develop teamwork skills."

"It is widely acknowledged that the UK is experiencing a shortage of maths graduates."



We want to help pupils achieve the best possible grades in their SATS and GCSE examinations, and perhaps even encourage them to study the subject at A-Level and beyond.

"Our student undergraduate and postgraduate ambassadors also find this work stimulating and rewarding, and they all recognise the wide range of really important skills they are able to develop."

The latest Maths Squad session took place in December, with further ones planned for 2007.

The project is being funded by Aimhigher Greater Manchester, with Manchester Metropolitan University also providing support.

Increasing access to free dental care



L-R: Anthony Blinkhorn, Barry Cockcroft (Chief Dental Officer for England), Dr Andrea Elkind (Administrative Director of Dental Education in Primary Care) and Dr Cheryl Rivkin (Clinical Lead, Manchester PCT Dental Service) with one of the dental students (seated).

Students from the School of Dentistry at The University of Manchester are helping transform the provision of dental care in less well-off areas of South Manchester.

A collaborative project between the University and Manchester Primary Care Trust is providing state-of-the-art surgeries, so that dental students can offer care to people living in Woodhouse Park in Wythenshawe.

The students will work alongside qualified dentists to provide a comprehensive range of treatments free of charge to residents who are not under the care of an NHS dentist, on an appointment basis.

The outreach scheme will also help educate the budding dentists, who will work alongside qualified

practitioners to gain experience of paediatric dentistry, orthodontics and restorative dental treatment.

Housed within the £4.6 million multi-functional Forum Health centre in Wythenshawe, the centre will offer seven dental surgeries, an X-ray room and its own reception and waiting area.

Its service will cater specifically for vulnerable patients, particularly those with challenging medical conditions, learning difficulties, mental and physical disabilities, special dental conditions, social and behavioural problems and dental phobias.

Outreach schemes were first developed by the University in the 1970s, and continue to make a valuable contribution to community dental

provision by providing additional care to complement existing services.

Professor Anthony Blinkhorn OBE, Outreach Director and one of the original team which developed the scheme, said: "Outreach teaching schemes play an important role in providing convenient and accessible NHS dental services to the community. They also give students valuable experience of working within the local area, which often encourages them to choose to practice locally once they have qualified."

"Like many places, there is a huge demand for dental provision in South Manchester. We are delighted that our students can help widen access by providing much-needed care and treatment to the local community."

Voting for genetics for health

Nowgen, the Centre for Genetics in Healthcare on Grafton Street, has made great strides in achieving its mission of engaging the public and patients in developing the genetics agenda through three high profile events

School students from Parrs Wood Sixth Form and Xaverian College Manchester joined University staff and members of the public in two debates: 'Designer Medicine' and 'Barcoded at Birth'. Both evenings saw lively discussion

around questions such as 'Will drug companies only produce drugs for the 'good responders' in the future?' and 'Should a patient be refused a drug on the basis of a pharmacogenetic test?' The audience were then asked to register their opinions using an electronic voting system, and were able to see how their own opinion compared to the other votes cast.

Nowgen have also hosted the very first meeting for families who have a child with Ohdo syndrome. Families came from as far as North America and no-one there had ever met another child with this rare

disorder which leads to learning disability and a range of other physical effects. Researchers at The University of Manchester (Dr Jill Clayton-Smith and Dr May Tassabehji) are working with colleagues from Liverpool, as well as members of the Ohdo Syndrome Family Network to try and pinpoint the cause of this puzzling condition.

Anyone in the University wanting to join in or propose ideas for future events is welcome to contact the team or Dr Helen Middleton-Price and Prof Dian Donnai the Director and Executive Director of the Nowgen project.



The public vote

What's On



The Whitworth Art Gallery

DISPLAYS/COLLECTIONS

Indigo: A Blue to Dye For
from 20 Jan to 15 April 2007

The Object of Encounter: Resonance and Wonder *to March 2007*

Featuring Walls: celebrating three centuries of wallpaper decoration *to 30 Sept 2007*

The Textile Gallery
The new displays are arranged thematically around subjects such as Rites of Passage, Inspiration for Design and Recycling, with each highlighting the wide geographical and historical range of the collection.

TOURS AND EVENTS
Every Saturday at 2pm there is either an Exhibition Tour or an Eye-Opener Tour.

Opening hours
Mon to Sat 10am - 5pm, Sun 2pm - 5 pm
FREE Admission

Collection Exhibitions Archive Now Online
The Whitworth's online 'Collections Catalogue' now allows you to browse and search selected exhibitions held at the Gallery over the past 10 years. Follow the link from homepage at: www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk

Oxford Road, 0161 275 7450
whitworth@manchester.ac.uk

Chaplaincies

St Peter's House Chaplaincy SUNDAY WORSHIP
11am Holy Communion
12.15am Bible Study
12.45 Lunch (1st Sunday)
6.30pm Evening Worship (term-time only)

FOYER 10am - 5pm
An area where students and staff can relax and meet friends. A tea/coffee machine is available.

Precinct Centre 0161 275 2894
[email sph.reception@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:sph.reception@manchester.ac.uk)

RC Chaplaincy, Avila House
Mass Times (term-time only)
SUNDAY: 7pm (in the Holy Name Church) next door to Chaplaincy
Mon, Wed, Fri: 6pm in the Chaplaincy Chapel
Tues, Thurs: 12.15 pm in the Chaplaincy Chapel

Oxford Road (opposite the Students' Union)
0161 273 1456
www.rc-chaplaincy-um.org.uk

The Jewish Student Centre and Synagogue
Hillel House, Greenheys Lane.
0161 226 1139
rabbiiy@hotmail.com
www.rabbiiy.com

International Society

Sat 10 Feb
Oxford with Guided Tour

Sun 11 Feb
Yorkshire Dales visiting White Scar Cave and Skipton Castle

Sat 17 Feb
York and the Jorvik Viking Festival'

Sun 18 Feb
Fountain's Abbey and Harrogate

Sat 24 Feb
Stratford-upon-Avon

Sat 3 March
Lake District Visiting Windermere

Sun 4 March
Tatton Park

Courses for the Public

The Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) runs a large and varied programme of courses designed for adults studying part-time whether for pleasure or personal/professional development. Most are open to beginners and no prior knowledge is assumed unless stated. Concessions are available to staff and graduates of The University of Manchester. Brochures/application forms available.

CCE, 1st Floor, Humanities Devas Street 0161 275 3275
www.manchester.ac.uk/continuingeducation

327 Oxford Road (next to Krobar)
0161 275 4959
int.soc@anchester.ac.uk
www.internationalsociety.org.uk

Contact Theatre

Tues 6 – Sat 10 Feb
Pilot Theatre partnership with York Theatre Royal presents:
Sing Yer Heart Out for the Lads
By Roy Williams. Directed by Marcus Romer. The play tells of friendship, bullying, belonging and isolation – all through the events of one Saturday afternoon in the pub.

Fri 16 and Sat 17 Feb
Reminiscence of the Ghetto & Other Things That Raized Me
Written and performed by Angela Kariotis. Directed by Paul Bonin-Rodriguez.

For information on other events please visit our website.

Oxford Road, Manchester
Tickets/Info: 0161 274 0600
www.contact-theatre.org

Jodrell Bank

The facilities at Jodrell Bank are going through a period of redevelopment. The Visitors Centre currently has a café, an exhibition space and a 3D theatre open, and visitors can still explore the various trails and the natural habitats of the Arboretum's 35 acres with its 2000 species of trees and shrubs and National Collections.

Jodrell Bank Observatory
Macclesfield, Cheshire 01477 571339
www.jb.manchester.ac.uk

John Rylands University Library (Deansgate)

The John Rylands Library, Deansgate is coming to the end of a three year, £16.5 million transformation. The Library is due to re-open to the public in spring 2007. The temporary Special Collections Reading Room which has been operating from the Main Library is now closed to readers. Special Collections reader services will re-open on Tuesday 10 April 2007 in the John Rylands Library, Deansgate. During the closure period we shall do our best to meet the needs of readers who require urgent access to specific items and would appreciate advance notice of such requests whenever possible. If you have any queries about Special Collections reader services, please telephone 0161 275 3764 or visit our website at www.manchester.ac.uk/library

Music and Drama at Manchester

Thurs 8 Feb, 1.10pm
The Coupland Consort

Thurs 15 Feb, 1.10pm
Quatuor Danel

Thurs 15 Feb, 1.10pm
Quatuor Danel with David Fanning

Thurs 15 Feb, 2.15pm
Quatuor Danel Seminar

Fri 16 Feb, 7.30pm
Quatuor Danel with Peter Dixon

Thurs 22 Feb, 1.10pm
Eleanor Meynell

Fri 23 Feb, 12pm & 3pm
KAIROS: Sound of Art/Art of Sound

Fri 23 Feb, 7.30pm
The University of Manchester Baroque Orchestra with Ad Solem

Sat 24 Feb, 12pm & 3pm
KAIROS: Sound of Art/Art of Sound

Sat 24 Feb, 7.30pm
The University of Manchester Symphony Orchestra

Thurs 1 March, 2.15pm
Quatuor Danel

Thurs 1 March, 1.10pm
Danny Driver

Fri 2 March, 7.30pm
Quatuor Danel

Fri 2 March, 7.30pm
Quatuor Danel

For further information contact:
The Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama
Bridgeford Street
Manchester M13 9PL
0161-275 8951/8950
boxoffice@manchester.ac.uk
www.manchester.ac.uk/martinharriscentre

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www.tableyhouse.co.uk

The Manchester Museum

SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

Wild Britain *extended until 27 Aug 2007*
Wildlife photography exhibition by Ben Hall.

Alchemy Artists *from 24 Feb to 29 April*
Exhibition of past work by the artists selected for Alchemy Fellowships.

Hop, Stock & Bent *to 18 Feb*
A photo-biography of five plants

EVENTS
Some of the highlights for January include:

Mon 12 to Fri 16 Feb – 11am-4pm
Wild about Wildlife FREE All ages

Mon 12 Feb 1.30pm-3pm
Wildlife Adventure (Book) FREE 5+

Tue 13 & Thurs 15 Feb 1pm-3pm
The Gallery Bench (Book) FREE 5+

Wed 14 Feb 1pm-4pm
Happy Hedgehog Day! FREE All ages

Fri 16 Feb 1.30-3.30pm
Brilliant Bird Boxes! (Book) FREE 8+
Get up close and draw Museum objects. FREE All ages

Sat 17 & Sun 18 Feb
Victorian Gentleman FREE
Collect an "I've spied Mr Pye" sticker from Graeme Pye Esquire, somewhere in the Museum today.

Fri 23 Feb 11am-12noon
The Magic Carpet
Dino-themed session for the under 5's £1

Sat 17 Feb 11am-4pm
Big Saturday
Dinosaur Day

Prebooked Family Events (0161 275 2648)

Drop-in Family Events (£1 per child, unless otherwise stated. For group bookings please call 0161 275 2648. Children must be accompanied by an adult).

Opening hours
Open: Tues-Sat 10 - 5pm
Sun-Mon (and Bank Holidays) 11- 4 pm
FREE Admission

Oxford Road, Manchester 0161 275 2634
www.manchester.ac.uk/museum

Burlington Society

The Society of Mature Students and Postgraduates in the Universities of Greater Manchester.

Burlington Rooms, Schunck Building, Burlington Street (next to JRUL)
0161 275 2392
www.burlington.man.ac.uk

Gig Guide Manchester Academy

MANCHESTER ACADEMY 1, 2 & 3

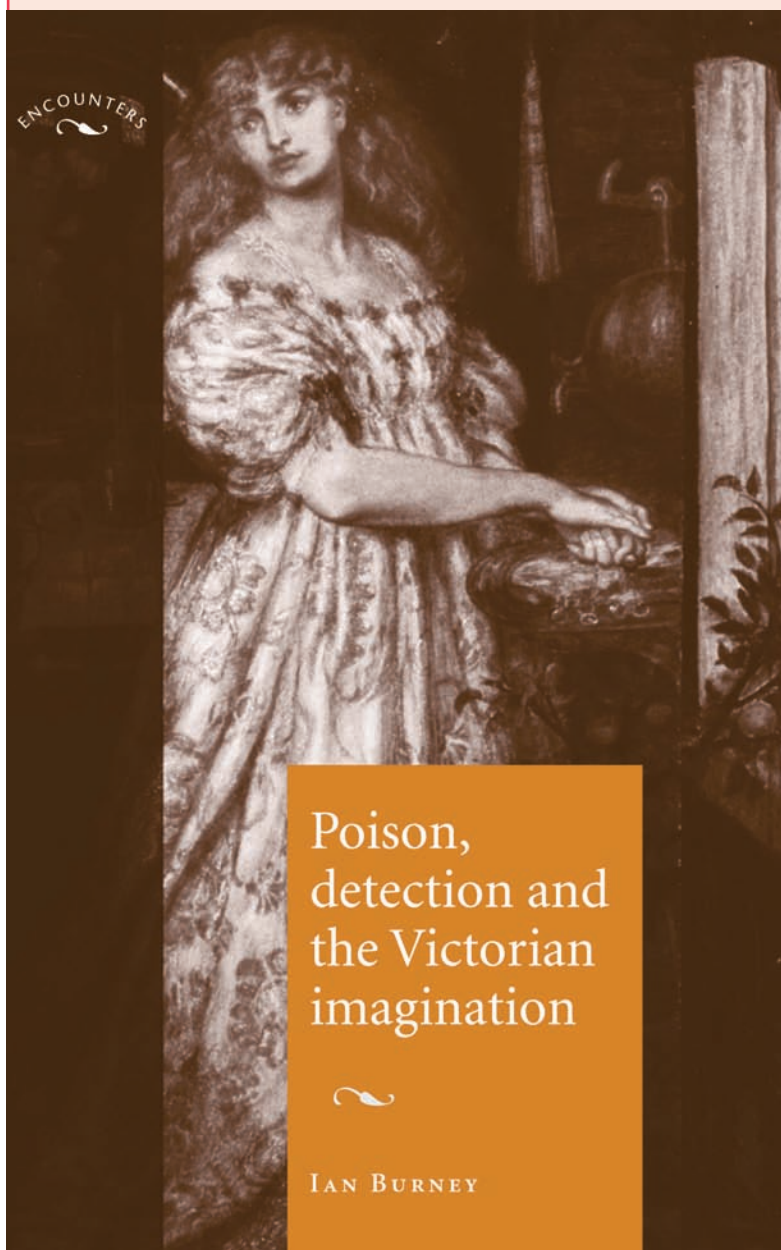
Mon 5 Feb
The Decemberists + Lavender Diamond
Academy Unsigned 144
Bye Bye Johnny + The Vagabonds + The Sound on the Station + Fat Comfort
Tues 6 Feb
Academy Unsigned 145
The Pynk Labels + The Geoff's
Wed 7 Feb
Plan B + Example
Senses Fail + The Sleeping
Thurs 8 Feb
Karima Rancis +44
Fri 9 Feb
Gym Heroes
Vman Events Unsigned: Cardinal Saviour + Carjack Mallone + Red Brick
Guillemots
Sat 10 Feb
The Haunted Clinic
The Get Happy Tour
Bowling for Soup + Son of Dork + Wheatus + Army of Freshman
Sun 11 Feb
Lior
Mon 12 Feb
The Bouncing Souls + The Draft
Tues 13 Feb
Capdown
Wed 14 Feb
Academy Unsigned 146
The difference + the Moneyshot + Fronrunner +Stephen Evans
Thu 15 Feb
And you will Know us
By The Trail of Dead
Half Man Half Biscuit + The Calvin Party
Regina Spektor
Matt Berry aka Dixon
Bainbridge from The Mighty Boosh, Garth
Mereghi's Darkplace & Snuff Box with band Jonas 3

Fri 16 Feb
Forward Russia! + Kubichek + Men Women & Children
Hell is for Heroes
Vman Unsigned
Sat 17 Feb
The Holloways
Matt Willis
Sun 18 Feb
The Long Blonds
Patrick Wolf
Mon 19 Feb
Just Jack
The Suicide Pact Tour 07
With Sonic Boom Six + King Blues + Failsafe + Mouthwash
Tues 20 Feb
Richmond Fontaine
Wed 21 Feb
Indigo Girls
Thu 22
Seth Lakeman
Reuben
Fri 23 Feb
Little Man Tate
The Black Keys
Sat 24 Feb
Bleeding Through
Cherry Ghost & Polytechnic
Sun 25 Feb
The Gossip
Amy Whitehouse
Tue 27 Feb
Mika + Kitty + Lewis
The Deadbeats
Wed 28 Feb
Brakes
Thu 1 March
Alexisonfire
Richard Muller
Fri 2 March
Whiskeycats
The Rapture
Sat 3 March
The Answer + Airborne
Eagles of Death Metal
Sun 4 March
Saxon

Tickets from:
Students' Union, Oxford Road
Piccadilly Box Office @ easy Internet Cafe (c/c)
0871 2200260
Royal Court (Liverpool) 0151 709 4321 (c/c)

Students' Union
Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL
0161 275 2930
www.manchesteracademy.net

Pinning it on the poison



Poison, detection and the Victorian imagination

IAN BURNEY

The murderous antics of one of the 19th century's most infamous killers are the subject of a new book entitled *'Poison, detection, and the Victorian imagination'* by Dr Ian Burney of the Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine at The University of Manchester.

Dr William Palmer's arrest, trial, conviction and subsequent execution, attracted massive media attention, not least because of Victorian England's growing fear of a new form of homicide – criminal poisoning 'by science'.

To counter this threat, Victorian society looked to the emergent field of toxicology yet poison detection in practice was no easy matter and its findings were subjected to searching questions by an often sceptical, public. At no time did these new scientific methods come under closer scrutiny than during the trial of William Palmer.

Palmer was a doctor who first came to notoriety while working at Stafford infirmary when he was accused of poisoning an acquaintance – although nothing was ever proven.

Palmer married in 1847 and he and his wife had a child the following year. But all four of their subsequent children would die in infancy. Several other people connected to Palmer also died in his presence, including his step-mother and at least two other associates, both of whom he owed money.

In 1854, after Palmer had taken out a life insurance policy on her, Ann also died, reportedly of cholera. Nine months later, Palmer had a

sixth child to his housemaid, but this too died just months after being born.

Still heavily in debt, Palmer next insured his brother, Walter, but when he too was found dead not long afterwards the insurance company refused to pay out.

However, it was not until the death of one of his horse-racing friends, John Cook, that the net finally closed in on Palmer. Knowing that Cook had won a large amount of money, Palmer invited him for dinner to celebrate. It would be the last meal he would ever eat.

Palmer was found guilty of Cook's murder but the conviction was based entirely on circumstantial evidence, primarily the similarity between Cook's death and that of known strychnine victims, even though no trace of the poison had been found in Cook's body.

Palmer was hanged at Stafford prison in 1856, and took his plea of innocence to the grave, leaving doubts over poison detection for others to ponder long after he had gone.

'Poison, detection and the Victorian imagination' is available from Manchester University Press, priced £35.

www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk

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Ewer Lovely!

Archaeologists at The Manchester Museum have identified an unusual pot, which has been in the possession of a local Manchester family for about a century, as belonging to a class of Medieval copper alloy vessels known as tripod ewers, probably dating from the 13th or 14th centuries. Typically these ewers, which were used for pouring liquids and although a number of such vessels have come to light, having been cast into bogs or accidentally lost in rural locations during the Middle Ages, in urban locations often it is only small fragments that survive, the vessels having long since been dismembered for scrap.

Mike Smith of Sale brought the vessel to The Manchester Museum to be identified, thinking it was Roman because it was found near Hadrian's Wall. Unfortunately much evidence of the casting and finishing off process has been lost but Bryan Sitch, Head of Humanities and Curator of Archaeology at the Museum is philosophical. "We have to remember that the ewer has survived because it was loved by the family and if it hadn't decorated the family hearth for all those years perhaps it wouldn't have survived at all. We're very lucky to be able to handle such a complete example".

There has been some discussion about the origins of such vessels, a matter which can only be resolved by metallurgical analysis. Bryan would like to hear from anyone in the University who might be able to assist the museum in analyzing the composition of the alloy used to make the ewer. Email bryan.sitch@manchester.gov.uk.



88 Carmoor Road
(off Hathersage Road/Upper
Brook Street), Chorlton-on-
Medlock, Manchester M13 0FB

For information, please
telephone Sharon on
0161 248 5340
or visit our web site
www.ciarastots.com

Small family run nursery

Mature qualified, experienced and knowledgeable staff
Caring and friendly atmosphere - Secure, nurturing environment
Open from 7am to 6pm, Monday to Friday - 3 months to pre-school
Happy children - Outdoor play area

Extra curricular activities on offer such as :

Baby Yoga and massage - Baby signing - Physical Outdoor Development

Burbidge Joinery and Construction

Quality UPVC Windows and Doors

All Windows and Conservatories are individually made to each customer's specified requirements.

A family business with over 24 years' experience.

Laminate and solid timber floors supplied and fitted.

For free advice or information contact: Paul Burbidge
(City and Guilds qualified Joiner) 0161-494 5228

Next issue is 5 March 2007

News Contact

News and story ideas

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