

# UniLife

## Manchester to open embryonic stem-cell research centre



## Features



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Dr Daniel Brison and Professor Sue Kimber Co-Directors of the North West Embryonic Stem Cell Centre, based at St Mary's Hospital and The University of Manchester

Photo by Paul Cliff

## Letter from the President



The idea of a university has never been more important than it is at the beginning of the 21st century. An authentic university epitomises the fundamental human drive to understand the essential nature of things, to make sense of an infinitely complex universe and, little-by-little, to shape and re-shape the natural world to serve human ends. Yet we live in an age where *homo sapiens* – the knowing, thinking, reasoning creature – has, arguably, learned too much for its own good.

There has been a fundamental shift in the ecological relationship between humankind and the terrestrial environment. After long generations of hunting and gathering, pastoral and arable agriculture, mining and manufacturing, *homo sapiens*, for better or (just as likely) for worse, now commands forces able to manipulate the entire global environment in far-reaching ways. We have, as John F. Kennedy put it: "The power to destroy all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life." Our knowledge has made our species downright dangerous, not least to ourselves.

Yet there can be no retreat into ignorance. Short of some hideous global cataclysm, humankind will neither seek nor find a return to a less knowing, less technologically sophisticated world. Dreams of Arcadia are an ultimately futile denial of an indomitable human curiosity. So *homo sapiens* will either find the knowledge and the wisdom to chart a path forward through a perilous 21st century, or the so-called "knowledge age" will reach a melancholy dénouement.

In the midst of this post-modern crisis, universities in Western societies are in danger of becoming narrow and utilitarian. A nihilist divorce of higher learning from values and ethics has tended to make them mere degree factories, vocational mills unable to instigate or lead any great, urgent human conversation about how to build just, sustainable, civil societies in which all forms of human poverty may be eliminated.

Yet universities must lead. A great university has as much responsibility for instigating human discourse about the remediation of global poverty as it has for undertaking cutting-edge research into renewable energy or molecular biology; its graduates must be informed, ethical, responsible citizens, not just world class professionals.

Such thinking is at the heart of the 2015 *Agenda* and presents the greatest challenge of all for the scholars, teachers and students at the heart of the University community.

Professor Alan Gilbert  
President and Vice-Chancellor.



# Manchester to open embryonic stem-cell research centre

**Manchester is set to become a major contributor to stem-cell research with the opening of one of the most hi-tech facilities in the country.**

The North West Embryonic Stem Cell Centre, based at St Mary's Hospital and The University of Manchester, will develop new treatments for diseases such as cancer and diabetes. The £2 million centre, funded by the Northwest Development Agency and the Medical Research Council, will produce embryonic stem cells of high enough quality for human transplantation – one of only a handful of laboratories in the UK able to do this.

Dr Daniel Brison, a consultant embryologist at St Mary's and co-director of the Stem Cell Centre, said the new facility would place Manchester at the cutting edge of developments in embryonic stem-cell research. "This is the first major research grant from the NWDA into the NHS and supports the Government's interest in developing human stem cells for the benefit of patients.

"The centre's laboratories will be some of the best equipped in the country producing stem-cell lines to Good Manufacturing Practice standards so they can be used for transplantation at a future date."

The North West Embryonic Stem Cell Centre will ask patients on IVF programmes to donate eggs and embryos that would ordinarily be discarded and develop them in the lab under licence from the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority. Infertile couples will be among those to benefit from the new research centre as knowledge gained about embryonic development will assist the hospital's IVF programme.

The centre, which is due to open in June 2006, is a joint project between The University of Manchester, the Central Manchester and Manchester Children's University Hospital NHS Trust, the Paterson Institute for Cancer Research and The University of Liverpool.

Co-director Dr Sue Kimber, from the University's Faculty of Life Sciences, said: "We aim to build on the strong relationship between the Trust and the University to enable us to deliver state-of-the-art medicines for treatment of a wide range of diseases."

Scientists believe that stem cells – master cells that have the potential to turn into any kind of human tissue – could be used to replace diseased cells in patients suffering from currently incurable diseases like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes and cancer.

Professor Peter Stern, from the Paterson Institute, will be focusing on the use of embryonic stem cells in the fight against cancer. He said: "Cancer cells have properties that are similar to those seen in embryonic cells during development except, with cancer, the cells are maliciously activated.

"We will be investigating such shared properties between embryonic stem cells and cancer cells to identify targets where it is possible to develop cancer vaccines."

A further £1.45 million NWDA grant has been awarded to the University to establish a UK Centre for Tissue Regeneration, which will be based adjacent to the stem-cell labs in the new Core Technology Facility on Grafton Street.

Professor Cay Kielty, director of the centre, said: "The Northwest Science Fund award will support the establishment of a tissue-regeneration 'clean laboratory' to Good Manufacturing Practice standards.

"The lab will regenerate skin, nerves, cartilage and blood vessels using living cells, including stem cells, under quality-control, sterile conditions for future use in human tissue repair."

## Honours

### In brief

#### Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell honoured by Oxford University



Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell, BSc, PhD, DSc, FRS, FMedSci, FIBiol, FRSA, MRC Professor of Physiology at The University of Manchester, is to receive an honorary degree from the

University of Oxford in June 2006, subject to approval by Congregation. Professor Rothwell will be awarded her honorary degree at Encaenia, the University's annual honorary degree ceremony, on Wednesday 21 June. The degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa* is to be awarded.

Professor Rothwell is a leading figure in the field of neuroscience. Her research has contributed toward major advances in the understanding and treatment of conditions such as brain injury and stroke. She is also credited with discovering the importance of a small tissue called 'brown fat' in body-weight regulation.

#### Professor Louis Appleby honoured for services to medicine



Professor Louis Appleby has been awarded a CBE for services to medicine in the Queen's New Years Honours List.

Professor Appleby leads two research

units at the University: The Centre for Suicide Prevention and the Centre for Women's Mental Health Research. The largest research project is the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness, of which he has been Director since 1996. He has been an honorary consultant psychiatrist in Manchester since 1991. Professor Appleby was appointed as National Director for Mental Health in England in April 2000. In addition to this, he oversees national policy on mental health and is responsible for implementing the Government's NHS Plan.



L-R Professor Cay Kielty, Dr Daniel Brison and Dr Sue Kimber

## In brief

### Students Part Of Great Discovery In Egypt

Two students at The University of Manchester are team members of the University of Memphis archaeological mission working in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt. The mission has recently discovered a new tomb in the valley – the first to be discovered since Howard Carter chanced on the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922. American students Roxanne Wilson and Betty Schneider are members of the first ever complete online Egyptology Certificate course, directed by Professor Rosalie David. The students are working in the tomb unpacking a set of coffins.

### Six Nations selection for Kuadey

Student at The University of Manchester, Selorm Kuadey, has been selected to play for England in the forthcoming under-19s Six Nations Rugby Championships. Kuadey, from Preston, is in his first year of a Medicinal Chemistry degree at the University.

### Manchester to receive comet dust samples from NASA

Scientists at The University of Manchester are to be among the first in the world to receive samples of comet dust brought back to earth by NASA's Stardust space mission.

The Cosmochemistry Research Group, within the School of Earth, Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences, is hoping to unlock the secrets of what Space was like before the solar system was formed, when the samples arrive next month. The NASA capsule, which landed back on earth after a seven year space mission, contains the first grains of cometary dust samples ever returned to earth.

Dr Torsten Henkel, who will lead part of the project, said: "We hope that these samples will give us a snapshot of what the solar system was like when it started to form more than 4.5 billions years ago."

### FOODONCAMPUS

Wednesday 8 February 2006, saw the first Student Food and Wine Society cooking lesson organised in conjunction with FOODONCAMPUS. Focusing on pasta sauces, twenty society members gathered at the Barnes Wallis kitchen to learn skills ranging from chopping an onion without making your eyes water, to how to make the perfect cheese sauce.

The Food and Wine Society was established in 2005, to help give students an appreciation and understanding of good food. Other activities include visits to farmers' markets and cocktail lessons, with wine tasting and social shopping in the pipeline.

## Down Under for the Commonwealth Games

**International student, Chirag Shah, will be heading Down Under in March, to compete in the XVIII Commonwealth Games in Melbourne, Australia. Shah, a 3rd year International Management with American Business Studies (IMABS) student, will be competing for Kenya in the men's squash event which will start on Thursday, 16 March.**

Chirag said: "It has been difficult with both study and training commitments and it is a great pleasure when you receive an honour for all the hard work you put in". Chirag, who lives in Victoria Hall was brought up in Kenya before starting at The University of Manchester in 2003.

Chirag is on the University's Sport Scholarship Scheme (SSS) which supports talented athletes

and enables them to combine their sporting and academic careers. Sport Development Manager, Andrea Williams, manages the 15 athletes and six teams on the Scheme, along with the 40-plus TASS athletes based in Manchester. She said: "We are delighted that a student of ours is competing in the Commonwealth Games. It is easy to underestimate the commitment it takes to combine a degree with competing in sport at this level and I am pleased that his tutors and the University have supported him".

Alison Odell, Director of Sport at the University, said: "We are thrilled for Chirag. Many of us experienced the Commonwealth Games as a volunteer or spectator in 2002 but actually to have the opportunity to

compete in the games is an experience most of us can only dream of. It is fantastic for The University of Manchester to have a student competing."



## Student Satisfaction Surveys

**As part of our ongoing commitment to listening to students, the second annual student satisfaction surveys, supported by the Students' Union, are launched this week.**

There are three separate questionnaires designed specifically to enable undergraduates, taught postgraduates and research postgraduates to answer questions relevant to their own experience. They are anonymous and can be accessed at the link below.

Students have been involved in identifying the key issues to cover, and these include academic study, accommodation, student support services and the Student Services Centre. There are also questions about the Students' Union, the University environment, communications, the Careers Service and facilities such as the library, IT, sports and catering.

Over 1500 students from across the University took part last year. Research postgraduates were the most highly represented group; around 15 per cent of the total research student population had a say. This year the University would like the participation rate to be even higher.

Work has already started on addressing the issues and concerns which were highlighted by last year's findings, the results and associated action plans of which can be viewed at the web address below.

As an added incentive, participants will be able to enter a draw for prizes which include vouchers ranging in value from £10 - £100. In 2005, prizes were awarded to Sarah Croucher from the School of Arts, Histories and Cultures, who received a £500 travel voucher, and Sunil Chitrashekaraiah, from the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, who received a prize of £250 travel vouchers.



Sarah Croucher pictured above with Sarah Beer



Sunil Chitrashekaraiah with Sarah Beer



# Drama places Pinter centre stage

The life and work of British playwright, director, activist and Nobel Laureate, Harold Pinter will be celebrated with a special conference and theatre event at The University of Manchester in April.

Beyond Pinter, a one day conference on Tuesday, 25 April, at the Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama, will examine the work of Harold Pinter, who wrote *The Birthday Party*, *The Caretaker*, and *Betrayal*, it will pay particular attention to the artistic and political aspects of his work in theatre and film. The conference will be followed by an interdisciplinary site-specific theatre performance event: *Playing Pinter*.

Dr Aleksandar Dundjerovic from Drama, conference organiser and director of *Playing Pinter*, explains that the aim is to bring together theory and practice exploring the versatile artistic opus of Harold Pinter.

"Beyond Pinter and *Playing Pinter* provide an opportunity to bring together students and



Drama students Jonny Miller and Scott Wheeler (sitting) perform a scene from *Playing Pinter* during rehearsals at the John Thaw Studio Theatre

professional artists working in Manchester. This is a collaboration between a new generation of performers involving professional actors and undergraduate and postgraduate Drama students, connecting the artistic life of the John Thaw

Studio Theatre with the Manchester community."

*Playing Pinter* runs from 25 - 28 April at 7.30pm at the John Thaw Studio Theatre, Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama, just off Oxford Road.

[www.manchester.ac.uk/drama/events/pinter](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/drama/events/pinter)

## Manchester Business School comes up in the world

**Manchester Business School has been ranked 22 business school in the world in the Financial Times. The survey places the School third in the UK and seventh in Europe in its annual ranking of full time MBA programmes. It is a big step up for the School, which was placed 44 in the world last year.**

The school is particularly strong on the international experience of its programme, ranked sixth in the world and first in the UK. This criterion looks at the opportunity students have to gain international exposure through teaching, case studies and international projects. The International Business Project is the keystone course of the Manchester MBA programme.

Manchester Business School is fourth in Europe for percentage salary increase for its graduates and is first in the UK on this ranking. The School's doctoral programme was ranked ninth in the world. This factor considers the number of

students graduating with doctoral degrees, with extra weight given to those who go on to work in the top 50 business schools.

Professor John Arnold, Director of Manchester Business School, said: "We are very proud of this result. We have scored highly - world top 20 - in a number of career-based measures as well, which is good news as it is obviously a key reason why people undertake an MBA. We have been following a programme of continuous improvement for a number of years - seeking students with the right combination of outstanding academic ability and high quality work experience, and offering them in return a top class learning experience and a high level of support services, particularly with regard to career management services, where we have invested heavily in the last few years. I see this result as confirmation that our efforts are paying off."

## Honours

### In brief

## New Year's Honours for Manchester Professors

**Professor Angela Dale** has been awarded an OBE for services to social science.

Professor Dale joined The University of Manchester in 1993 as Professor of Quantitative Social Research. She was the founding director of the Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research (CCSR) in the School of Social Sciences. The Centre is internationally recognised for its work in developing and disseminating samples of microdata from the UK census of population. In 2002, Professor Dale was appointed director of the ESRC's £5 million Research Methods Programme.

**Professor Ashley Woodcock** has been awarded an OBE for services to the Montreal Protocol.

The Montreal Protocol was established to protect the ozone layer as part of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). For the past ten years, Professor Woodcock has been Co Chair of the Medical Technical Options Committee, and Senior Technical Adviser to the Protocol.

Professor Woodcock is a respiratory physician and became involved with the committee because inhaled therapy for asthma contained CFCs, which were banned under the Protocol rules in 1996. As a result of the committee's work, a temporary exemption was granted, so that asthma patients could continue to receive treatment with inhalers while the pharmaceutical industry made the transition to CFC-free inhalers.

Thanks to the Protocol, stratospheric ozone levels are predicted to return to normal levels by 2050 and asthma patients' health has been protected at the same time as the environment.

## AUA honours Bland Tomkinson

Bland Tomkinson, University Adviser on Pedagogic Development, has been awarded Fellowship of the Association of University Administrators (AUA). The AUA is the professional body for higher education administrators and managers in the UK and Ireland.

Its Fellowship scheme recognises members who have made a significant contribution to the development of the Association and to the management and administration of the higher education sector. Bland is also a Registered Practitioner of the Higher Education Academy and has twice been nominated for a National Teaching Fellowship.



In the Manchester 2015 agenda we set ourselves ambitious goals for research and graduate education. In the first year of the new institution we faced much disruption, significant uncertainty and some very hard work. Yet in research and graduate education, the results to date are encouraging. We slightly exceeded our targets for research grant income and came within 2 per cent of our targets for recruiting PhD students. The latter is remarkable, despite a serious failure of the electronic application procedure for graduate students and was achieved only because of the hard work of many staff.

The first ever University-wide external review of our research is ongoing and will allow us to examine our strengths and weaknesses and direct support appropriately. The Graduate Education Group has been busy in every area of graduate education, from admissions to best supervisor practice, generic skills training, to optimising completion rates and cross-disciplinary activities.

We have established significant central funds for matching costs for major equipment and a central research fund for bids to be brought forward by your Associate Dean for Research. Major priorities over the next year include enhancing research grant successes, recruitment of independent research fellows, positioning for EU Framework 7 and optimising support for research and graduate education.

It is impossible to ignore the pending RAE, with submission in late 2007 and assessments through 2008. Detailed planning and preparations are in place but should be focused on the few staff in positions of leadership in research. RAE 2007/8 is critically important to the University, but to the vast majority of our staff "achieving research excellence" should be the goal, independently of RAE. If our research is excellent, RAE will not be a problem. Open meetings will be held to answer questions about RAE as we move closer to the deadline.

Please direct any queries to Nancy Rothwell, Vice-President for Research.

## Jodrell Bank astronomers discover new planet

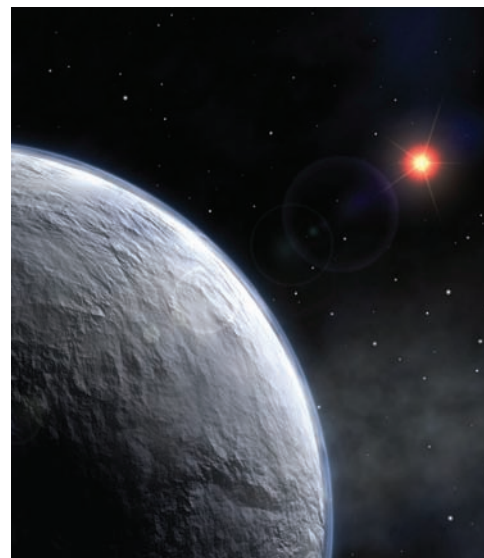
Jodrell Bank astronomers, from the University's School of Physics and Astronomy, have recently detected the lightest planet known to exist around a normal star. The planet is five and a half times the mass of the Earth and takes approximately ten years to orbit its parent star.

The planet was detected through a technique called gravitational microlensing, whereby light from a distant star is magnified by another star passing between it and observers on Earth. The gravity of the foreground star bends light in a similar manner to an optical lens – an effect predicted by Einstein's 1915 General Theory of Relativity. Any companions to the lensing star, such as planets, produce a detectable signal in the apparent magnification of the background star.

The use of this physical phenomenon as a means of detecting planets was first predicted by Dr Shude Mao, from the Jodrell Bank Observatory, and Professor Bohdan Paczynski, from Princeton University, in 1991. The technique was later refined by other astronomers.

The newly discovered planet is the third found via the microlensing technique and represents a major step forward in our understanding of extra-solar planetary systems. Microlensing is the only technique currently available that allows such light mass planets to be discovered around normal stars. The discovery hints that sub-Neptune mass planets around stars may be quite common.

The data from several microlensing collaborations were used to conclude the presence of the lightest



Artist's impression of new planet and red dwarf star. Image courtesy of the European Southern Observatory (ESO).

planet known. The findings were reported in the January 26, 2006 edition of *Nature*. Together with international partners, intense efforts are under way at Jodrell Bank to discover more planets through this method. An ambitious new international network of four telescopes has also been proposed to discover a dozen or so Earth-like planets in the next decade.

[www.jb.man.ac.uk/news/planet/](http://www.jb.man.ac.uk/news/planet/)

## High efficiency' vacuums no protecton against dust mites

**A team at the North West Lung Centre, run by the University and based at Wythenshawe Hospital, has discovered that vacuum cleaners with 'high-efficiency particulate air' or HEPA filters are no more effective than standard models at reducing exposure to dust-mites.**

The team compared nasal air samples taken before and during vacuum cleaning using both HEPA and non-HEPA vacuum cleaners. They found a small increase in exposure to dust-mite during vacuuming with either type of machine, which was increased when emptying the dust compartments of either.

Lead investigator Dr Robin Gore said: "These vacuum cleaners are marketed to allergy-sufferers on the basis that they reduce a person's exposure to air-borne particles raised from carpeted floors. For allergy sufferers, such particles can trigger asthma attacks. However, we have already found

that both HEPA and non-HEPA vacuum cleaners can actually increase an individual's exposure to particles containing cat allergens.

"These latest findings further suggest that there is no significant advantage to using a HEPA vacuum cleaner to reduce exposure to air-borne particles like dust-mites.

"In combination with our previous work, the study seems to confirm that high-efficiency vacuum cleaners confer no benefits and should not currently be specifically recommended to allergy sufferers as a means of reducing personal exposure to allergens, either by their manufacturers or health professionals."

Professors Ashley Woodcock and Adnan Custovic were co-investigators in the study, which was published in the *European Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*.



# Hens' teeth not so rare after all

Scientists have discovered that rarest of things:  
a chicken with teeth – crocodile teeth to be precise.

Contrary to the well-known phrase, 'As rare as hens' teeth,' the researchers say they have found a naturally occurring mutant chicken called Talpid that has a complete set of ivories.

The team, based at Manchester and Wisconsin, have also managed to induce teeth growth in normal chickens – activating genes that have lain dormant for 80 million years.

Professor Mark Ferguson, one of the scientific team at The University of Manchester, says the research – published in *Current Biology* – has major implications in understanding the processes of evolution. It could also have applications in tissue regeneration, including the replacement of lost teeth in humans.

"The mutant bird has severe limb defects and dies before it can hatch," explained Professor Ferguson, who is based in the University's Faculty of Life Sciences.

"It was discovered 50 years ago but no one has ever examined its mouth. What we discovered were teeth similar to those of crocodiles – not surprising as birds are the closest living relatives of the reptile."

The discovery led the team to wonder whether healthy chickens might still maintain the genetic pathways to re-grow teeth.

"We found we were able to induce teeth to grow in normal chickens by making changes to the expression of particular molecules," said Professor Ferguson.

"All the pathways to make teeth are preserved which helps us understand how evolutionary changes can be brought about by subtle alterations in developmental biology."

Professor Ferguson says a direct application of the research could be in the re-growing of teeth in people

who have lost them through accident or disease.

But the study has implications for tissue regeneration more widely.

"The principle of activating specific dormant pathways to stimulate regeneration instead of repair has made applications, to injury, surgery and human disease," he said.

Indeed, building on previous discoveries of scar-free healing in embryos, Professor Mark Ferguson and Dr Sharon O'Kane founded Renovo, a spin-out company from The University of Manchester, which is developing novel pharmaceuticals for the prevention and reduction of scarring.

Renovo now employs about 100 staff and is the world-leading company in researching and developing novel pharmaceuticals to prevent and improve scarring.

- Eye health has been the subject of two different features, one in *Easy Living* magazine and one in the health pages of the *Daily Mail*. Sarah Morgan from the Faculty of Life Sciences spoke about the necessity of wearing sunglasses to protect eyes from ultra-violet light, while Philip Morgan spoke about a condition called presbyopia, which is said to affect the vision of nearly all adults over the age of 45.
- A robot that can dig like a mole to locate survivors under rubble in the aftermath of an earthquake or terrorist attack is being developed by a team from the School of Computer Science. The aim is to produce a robot that runs on tracks and interacts with obstacles. This story appeared initially in *The Engineer*, and was also reported by *The Times*, *The Herald* and the *Daily Record*.
- Scientists at The University of Manchester have secured European funding to design a massive international radio telescope, which will be the size of 200 football pitches and be able to see back in time to the astronomical equivalent of the Dark Ages. Prof Philip Diamond, chairman of the telescope steering committee, spoke to *The Independent* about how the telescope will enhance our understanding of the universe. The story also featured in *The Times* and local press.
- Frequent use of a mobile phone will not lead to increased risk of brain tumours, according to a study which involved scientists from the universities of Manchester, Leeds and Nottingham. This story appeared as a full-page feature in *The Times*, and was also reported by the *Daily Mail*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*.
- A study of professional football players carried out by Prof Susan Cartwright from Manchester Business School has found that foreign players often suffer from culture shock, loneliness and isolation when they join British clubs. Prof Cartwright's findings appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, *BBC News Online* and local and regional press. Prof Geoff Beattie also appeared in the sport pages of the *Daily Telegraph*, analysing the touchline body language and behaviour of Premiership football managers.



## Grants and Contracts

### IHS wins purpose-built HQ

The Institute of Health Sciences, the networked organisation which promotes health sciences research and postgraduate education within the University and its partner NHS Trusts, has been awarded £1.5 million by the Wolfson Foundation to help create state-of-the-art headquarters.

The HQ will be within the new SCAN building complex - which has yet to be formally named - and which will also house the Student Services Centre and School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work. Designed by architects John McAslan and Partners, it is due to open in September 2007.

IHS Chair, Professor Bonnie Sibbald, said: "This new HQ will provide research facilities, seminar and meeting room space across four floors, to allow researchers from disciplines across the University and NHS to collaborate effectively. The Wolfson Foundation's decision to grant this funding reflects the strength and depth of health science research in Manchester, which has attracted £25 million in grant income in the last recorded year and is growing strongly."

[www.ihs.man.ac.uk](http://www.ihs.man.ac.uk)

### MSEC wins funding to help foster enterprise in E.U. Island economies

Manchester Science Enterprise Centre (MSEC) has been jointly awarded a grant of €68,000, with a number of European partners. The grant is to produce a set of training tools for fostering entrepreneurship in EU Island economies, with high-tech areas, such as science and engineering, being the prime targets due to the positive impact they are known to have on local economies.

### MRC award £291,000 to study antibiotic resistance

Finbarr Hayes and Daniela Barilla have been awarded £291,000 by the MRC for their project "Targeting antibiotic resistance: molecular dissection of a mitotic machine driving genome segregation in *Enterococcus*."

### Cancer Research UK grant

Dr Stefan Roberts, from the Faculty of Life Sciences, has been awarded £46,000 by Cancer Research UK to study "Functional analysis of a WT1 transcriptional cosuppressor".

### British Heart Foundation grant award

Dr David Middleton, from the Faculty of Life Sciences, has been awarded £47,093 by the British Heart Foundation.

## The Cotton Industry War Memorial Trust

The Cotton Industry War Memorial Trust has awarded bursaries to outstanding Textiles and Paper students in recognition of their academic performance. The Trust has also helped to establish a world class Digital Print and Design facility within the School of Materials. The Trust supports many educational and health related projects across the North West.

Laura Stubbs, who also received the Samuel Crompton Fellowship from the Trust, is now undertaking her PhD studies with Professor Isaac Porat and Dr Prasad Potluri, investigating the development of braided fibrous structures for muscle replacement.



Textiles and Paper students receive bursaries from Peter Lockett, Chairman of the Cotton Industry War Memorial Trust. From left to right: Professor Bob Young, Sarah Wroe, Laura Stubbs, Professor Chris Carr, Ruth Perkins, Rachel Thwaites and Dr Peter Lockett.

## Faster and more accurate smear test trialled

Researchers in the Division of Human Development and Reproduction are testing automated cervical screening systems that could improve accuracy and speed up waiting times as well as reducing costs.

The study, funded with £1.3 million from the Government's Health Technology Assessment Programme, is a collaboration with the Cancer Screening Evaluation Unit at The Institute of Cancer Research and the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. It will test automated systems which select the 10-20 areas containing the most abnormalities from each screening slide, rather than the usual approach of searching the whole of every slide.

It is hoped that restricting the scrutiny to the most essential areas will improve the quality of screening and speed up turnaround times, giving women an answer more quickly. Professor Henry Kitchener, who is leading the project, said: "The cervical screening programme is a great success nationally, producing ever-reducing rates of cervical cancer and death from the disease, but we are always looking to improve the system. This study could result in a major improvement, and - with lower than average attendance for screening in parts of Manchester - emphasise the value of cervical screening."

Prior to their routine smear test appointment, women in Greater Manchester will be sent an



Professor Henry Kitchener

information sheet on the study. If they choose to take part their test may be amongst those read twice, as half of the 100,000 tests compared will be read by the automated system as well as the usual manual approach. Anyone whose test is slightly abnormal will also be offered a test for Human Papillomavirus (HPV), and if this is positive offered a colposcopy.



# Positive parenting

## The ITV programme “Driving Mum and Dad Mad” is the latest weapon in the battle to help parents cope with children who have behavioural problems.

Alongside the series, the Home Office-funded “Great Parenting Experiment” has been following families to examine not only its impact, but the value of email support and a self-help workbook.

“The results are very positive,” says Dr Rachel Calam, Senior Lecturer in Clinical Psychology and a leading authority on parenting and childhood behaviour problems. “We have demonstrated that just watching the programmes can have a strong positive effect, as well as being highly cost-effective, because TV or internet-based programmes reach so many people.”

Dr Calam, a mother of four and soon to be a grandparent, has always centred her research activity in the area of parenting and adjustment. Her collaboration with Professor Matt Sanders of the University of Queensland has produced significant trials of implementation of interventions, including the TV series, of which a second series has been commissioned.

Locally, in Salford and Manchester, her research on a range of interventions for antisocial behaviour brought an invitation to present preliminary data to the 2004 International Congress of Psychology in Beijing.

The question at the heart of her research is: Can providing powerful parenting interventions reduce children’s psychological and physical health problems?

A major area of Dr Calam’s research is childhood asthma. What is the relationship between parenting, child behaviour and the development of asthma? Collaborative research with Professors Adnan Custovic and Ashley Woodcock at the North West Lung Research Centre at Wythenshawe Hospital, funded by Asthma UK and the Moulton Charitable Trust, is producing illuminating results.

The contribution of psychosocial factors to the development of asthma symptoms is being examined by following women in pregnancy through to birth and then following the children aged three, five and eight. This continuous assessment is providing evidence which challenges previously-held ideas.

“We have shown that children with behavioural difficulties appear at increased risk of developing

respiratory problems subsequently, which challenges views that psychological problems in children with asthma are a result of illness or medication,” she says. “The research is immensely enjoyable and fascinating – and benefits hugely from the excellent opportunities here for interdisciplinary collaboration.”

The work has appeared in highly regarded medical journals and received considerable publicity internationally.

A third area of her long-term research, funded by the Department of Health, is the development of computer-assisted interviews for children, under the title *In My Shoes*. “This helps vulnerable children talk about things they might otherwise find difficult,” she says. The method is now being implemented nationally, through the Departments of Education and Skills, and Health.

Dr Calam is also Director of the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, with 75 students in training.



## Jorum

The University of Manchester is one of the collaborative partners in a new national service for hosting learning and teaching materials. Jorum (from a biblical term meaning a collecting bowl) was launched in two phases. November 2005 marked the launch of Jorum Contributor - allowing learning and teaching resources to be deposited in the repository. Jorum User - which supports staff taking content out of the repository - was launched on 30 Jan 2006.

The service is funded by JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) and is a joint venture between the two JISC-designated national data centres; MIMAS at the University of Manchester and EDINA at the University of Edinburgh. The two data centres jointly run the NLN materials service which provided eLearning content to the FE sector. They are also involved in a range of other learning and teaching activities, as well as providing other key national data services for the academic community.

Jorum is an exciting new venture as it will provide a central facility for teachers and support staff in UK further and higher education to share materials. The resources can be repurposed and reused in ways permitted by the licensing conditions under which they have been deposited. Materials that have been centrally funded can be stored in Jorum, as well as those created within institutions. Jorum is working with the Centre for Excellence in Enquiry Based Learning (CEEBL), among others, at Manchester to assist in housing content that they create.

JORUM is a community resource. How it develops and grows will depend on the contributions made by staff around the country. Already more than 25 institutions have signed up to contribute resources. The University of Manchester is one of these so any staff wishing to deposit content in Jorum can do so. We are hopeful that the University will be an early subscriber to the service so that staff at the institution can take advantage of this new resource. It's early days but Jorum already has a high profile; we hope to see it go from strength to strength.

For more information about the Jorum service please visit the website at

[www.jorum.ac.uk](http://www.jorum.ac.uk)

For Jorum FAQs for contributors visit

[www.jorum.ac.uk/contributors/chelp/faq.html](http://www.jorum.ac.uk/contributors/chelp/faq.html)

For Jorum FAQs for users visit

[www.jorum.ac.uk/user/help/faq.html](http://www.jorum.ac.uk/user/help/faq.html)

## Employers Target Manchester

Recent league tables rank The University of Manchester first in the UK and number 12 globally, in terms of being targeted by employers. However, this is no reason for complacency and, in an increasingly competitive job market, the University needs to continually work at developing closer relationships with graduate recruiters.

Target Manchester, held recently at Chancellors, was a one-day event designed to foster such relationships. The event brought together over 80 delegates from a range of mainly blue-chip companies – such as AstraZeneca, JP Morgan, Rolls Royce, Accenture, BP and Atkins – with staff from the Careers and Employability Division and from a number of schools, including Computer Science, MBS and Electrical and Electronic Engineering.

The event was opened by the President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alan Gilbert, who talked about the importance of employers within the context of the 2015 Agenda. Professor John McCarthy, from the Faculty of Life Sciences, showcased the University's commitment to excellence in research and graduate training with a presentation on the Manchester Interdisciplinary Biocentre. Liz Williams, UK University Relations



President and Vice-Chancellor Alan Gilbert (3rd from left) with Kate Farley, European Marketing Consultant at BP; John McCarthy, Director of Manchester Interdisciplinary Biocentre; Jez Chance, Marketing Manager at AstraZeneca; Liz Williams, UK University Relations Program Manager at IBM UK Ltd, and Helen Lambert, Recruiter at PA Consulting (left to right)

Program Manager at IBM, spoke of the mutually beneficial partnership forged in the area of graduate recruitment and of the wider relationship that IBM are developing with the University.

Delegates were also given the opportunity to get an insight into 'What Manchester Students Think' with a lively session organised by the Student's Union.

The event was well-received by corporate delegates. John Morewood, Senior Manager of Graduate Recruitment and Talent at HSBC, said: "Target Manchester was a very useful event with three key elements: graduate recruiters, the University careers division and students. It would be useful if all other universities did the same."

## A golden opportunity for Manchester student

**Manchester student Rachael Gormley recently worked alongside some of the biggest names in Manchester music – from New Order to the Doves – by helping to organise the Manchester v Cancer fundraising concert, held at the MEN Arena. She was given this unique opportunity by Stephen Chapman, an ITV Granada journalist and Rachael's mentor on the Manchester Gold mentoring scheme, which is run by the Careers and Employability Division.**

Stephen Chapman co-organised the event, which raised funds for cancer research at Manchester's Christie Hospital. He is also a graduate of the University, gaining a degree in French and German in 1998. He said: "This is the second year I've been involved in Manchester Gold and it's been a really

great experience. Rachael was absolutely critical on the day. She's had a crash course in every side of journalism and concert management too, so it's a big learning curve – and definitely one for the CV."

Second-year Religions and Theology student, Rachael, worked as Stephen's PA and thoroughly enjoyed the challenge. Rachael said: "It was a great day, albeit a long one! In the build-up to the event, Stephen gave me so many opportunities. As a result, I now have an upcoming work placement at ITV Granada."

Caroline Carlin-Nuttall, Manchester Gold Manager, said: "Manchester Gold has created many exciting career development opportunities, both for student participants and alumni who want to 'give back' and mentor our students."



# A sporting chance for collaboration

The Eastlands area is known as the sporting hub for the city of Manchester; currently home to Manchester City Football Club, it was also the focal point for the Commonwealth Games in 2002.

However, Eastlands is now fast becoming a hive of hi-tech activity – and The University of Manchester is right at the forefront. Central Park is the UK's first ICT-based Business Park and has as its "anchor tenant" Fujitsu Services who have based their new headquarters in the Park, just a stone's throw from where Kelly Holmes and Darren Campbell stormed to glory in the Commonwealth Games. The project is Europe's first large-scale, mixed-use urban business park.

Within the development, One Central Park is the educational hub of the business park. The £18m building is designed to be a crucial driver in bringing new investment and new jobs into East Manchester.

The One Central Park building contains a series of distinct but inter-related activities, in partnership between the Greater Manchester Universities (through MSEC, Manchester Sciences Enterprise Centre), MANCAT (Manchester College of Arts and Technology) and the Manchester Science Park.

As part of its investment, The University of Manchester has set up a Research and Graduate Centre on the top floor of One Central Park (OCP).

Professor Rod Coombs, Vice-President for Innovation and Economic Development said: "This is a place where people and ideas can come together to create opportunities and wealth for surrounding businesses and the immediate community. It is right that The University of Manchester should be at the heart of Central Park."



The Research and Graduate Centre has three main aims:

- To exploit the knowledge base of the universities to benefit the region
- To create new revenue streams through our training infrastructure
- To increase research income through collaboration with industry

Professor Coombs said: "The Research and Graduate Centre provides a place where companies large and small can access the academic knowledge base to

initiate new products and services, allowing companies to tap into the academic resource pool."

Key University research groups are invited to become tenants of the OCP building, which boasts 18 rooms, as well as a seminar and breakout space. Staff from the School of Informatics have expressed an interest in occupying space in the building and discussions are underway with other University research groups.

Knowledge Transfer Manager Martin Conway said: "It is still early days in the development of One Central Park but the possibilities are endless and the future of the project looks very exciting."

## Chemical warfare agent detection technology used to treat lung disease



**A new technique based on the same technology used to detect chemical warfare agents and explosives is being employed by scientists at The University of Manchester to treat hospital patients with lung disease.**

Dr Paul Thomas and a team of researchers are using a sensor, commonly used to detect explosives at airports, to develop a new way of diagnosing lung disease.

The microDMx sensor, developed by Sionex Corporation, is being used to develop a new technique which is able to detect 'unhealthy' molecules present in the breath of a patient.

The technology is currently being tested at Wythenshawe Hospital's North West Lung Research Centre (NWLRC). The aim is to produce a device which will enable doctors to monitor patients with lung or respiratory conditions by simply asking them to breathe into it.

Dr Paul Thomas from the School of Chemical Engineering and Analytical Science, who is leading the research, said: "Our vision is that one day we will be able to detect a previously undetectable tumour metabolising inside a human lung simply

by asking a patient to breathe into a device like this. For now our aim is to use the microDMx sensor to develop better instruments which will improve patient care and treatment.

"The potential is such that we will not only be able to provide more accurate diagnosis, but we will also be able to tailor treatments to the individual. For instance, if a patient is taking steroids for asthma, we would be able to determine whether they were being given the right amount of steroids from the molecules in their breath which relate to the severity of the inflammation in their lungs."

NWLRC Consultant Dr Dave Singh, said: "This research could make dramatic improvements to the detection of lung diseases. We are really excited about the future possibilities for diagnosing diseases, and monitoring the response to treatment."

# Challis's Challenge

**A chance conversation with a professor as a student set John Challis, our new part-time Professor of Perinatal Physiology, on track for the field of research for which he is internationally renowned today. As a first year undergraduate at Nottingham University, he had applied for a summer job at the National Institute of Agricultural Botany, but didn't get it.**

Back at Nottingham, he happened to pass Eric Lamming, Professor of Animal Physiology, who, hearing of his disappointment and knowing he lived in Cambridge, suggested that he got in touch with Brian (now Sir) Heap, who at that time was just setting up his research lab at the ARC Institute of Animal Physiology at Babraham. Heap, who was to become Director of the Institute and later Master of St Edmund's College, Cambridge, responded positively, gave him a summer job, then another, and then took him on as a PhD student.

"He was an extraordinary mentor, a tremendous role model – and he became a good friend," John says. Research into hormone changes in sheep at the time of parturition resulted in 1971 in a paper published in *Nature*. "It was supposed to be a joint paper with Brian, but he insisted on taking his name off it, saying that it would be an important paper for me," John says. "It was incredibly generous – and the research got me started into reproductive biology."

Challis moved on from work on sheep to studies in humans, first as a postdoc in the US, at the University of California, San Diego, and then at Harvard, both with another inspirational figure, Professor Ken Ryan. "Ken moved from San Diego to Harvard and asked me to set up a new laboratory in Human Reproduction and Reproductive Biology," he says. "It was a terrific experience."

After a couple of years, he moved back to the UK, to Oxford, to work with one of the great pioneers in the field, Geoffrey Thorburn, at the Nuffield Institute for Medical Research and the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the John Radcliffe Hospital.

"At that time, Oxford was the place to be – a sort of Camelot for fetal study," he says. "Thorburn was a giant in the field, Geoffrey Dawes was there as Director of

the Nuffield Institute, and Alec Turnbull was head of Ob-Gyn. There were three big MRC programme grants in fetal and pregnancy research and a host of bright eager colleagues."

After a couple of years there, John moved to an Assistant Professorship at McGill – a life-changing move, because he has been in Canada ever since. He is now Vice-President for Research and Associate Provost of the University of Toronto, as well as Professor of Physiology, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Medicine. His research over 30 years has contributed in a fundamental manner to advances in fetal and placental endocrinology and to the hormonal mechanisms in pregnancy leading to clinical labour. His work has delineated feedback control mechanisms unique to fetal life and provided novel information applicable to ways of predicting pre-term labour – and treating this condition.

In 1978, he moved to the University of Western Ontario – and stayed for 17 years until he went to Toronto in 1995. At UWO, he worked in Obs and Gynae with Professor John Patrick, who had been at Oxford, initially studying circadian rhythms and hormone changes in pregnant women. He recalls how he and Patrick wrote up an abstract for one leading paper – at the last minute, they retired to a Dunkin' Donuts establishment and scribbled the abstract on a doughnut bag. It was chosen as the Number One paper for a major conference.

Now comes the challenge here, where John was AstraZeneca Distinguished Lecturer in 2001. Understanding how the placenta functions is key to major problems like premature birth, pre-eclampsia, growth restriction of some babies in the womb, and predisposition to particular diseases, such as heart problems and diabetes in later life. John is very excited about the work that he and his internationally renowned colleagues here at St Mary's, particularly

Professors Colin Sibley and Phil Baker, whom he rates extremely highly, can do.

"We have a lot in common and we now have an extraordinary opportunity collectively to try to unravel the problems and understand better how the placenta functions," he says. "With teams in Toronto and Manchester working together, we have a world-class research effort."

The University of Toronto, Canada's top research-intensive institution, is a powerhouse of medical research, supported by nine hospitals, each with its own VP for Research. The University is also a key partner in the development of a new facility for Medical and Related Sciences - appropriately called MaRS - that will help facilitate commercialisation of research findings.

The significance of the collaboration on fetal research is reflected in the fact that one in ten pregnant women experiences a pre-term birth – and babies born pre-term account for 85 per cent of infant death and handicap.

Professor Challis could not be more enthusiastic about the new project. He is a man of great good humour and energy, who likes to escape with his wife and family to their cottage by Lake Ontario, hiking, cycling and canoeing.

He has one small regret though – he doesn't have a medical degree. As a pupil at the Cambridgeshire High School for Boys, he had to choose between Physics and Biology. He chose the latter, only to learn later that by not doing Physics he couldn't read Medicine. Still, looking at his appointments, international honours (including FRSC and FRCOG) and vast list of publications, he seems to have done pretty well without it. And he takes pleasure in the fact that one of his sons is now reading Medicine at Cambridge. So, it looks as though they'll have a medic in the family after all.



## Profile

**Name**

Professor John Challis

**Position**

Professor of Perinatal Physiology

**Education**

1967: BSc (Hons), Nottingham University

1971: PhD, University of Cambridge

1974: M I Biol, Institute of Biology

1984: DSc, Nottingham University

**Career History**

1974–1976:

Research Scientist, Oxford Univ., Nuffield Inst. for Med. Res. and Dept. Ob/Gyn, John Radcliffe Hospital

1976–1977:

Assistant Prof., Dept. Ob/Gyn and Assoc. Member, Dep't. of Physiology, McGill University, Montreal

1977–1978:

Associate Prof., Dept. Ob/Gyn, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

1978–1981: Associate Prof., Depts. Ob/Gyn and Physiology, University of Western Ontario, London, Ont. Canada

1979–1989:

Member, MRC Group in Reproductive Biology, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario

1981–1995:

Professor, Depts. Ob/Gyn and Physiology, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario

1983–1995:

Scientific Director, Lawson Research Institute, St. Joseph's Health Centre, London, Ont.

1987–1995:

Vice-President, Research, St. Joseph's Health Centre, London, Ontario

1989–1995:

Director, MRC Group in Fetal and Neonatal Health and Development

1995–2000:

Professor and Chair, Dept. of Physiology, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

2001–2003:

Scientific Director, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health

2003:

Vice-President, Research and Associate Provost

1995:

Professor, Departments of Physiology and Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Toronto; Professor, Department of Medicine (cross-appointed); Member, Institute of Medical Sciences, U. of T.; Affiliate Scientist, Samuel Lunenfeld Inst., Mt. Sinai Hosp., Toronto; Member, MRC/CIHR Group in Fetal and Neonatal Health and Development (Director, 1989–1995); Member, MRC/CIHR Group in Development and Fetal Health



## School pupils enjoy hospital experience

The Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences invited Year 11 pupils from local inner city schools behind the scenes of one of its partner teaching hospitals in February, when it hosted a 'hospital experience weekend' at Hope Hospital.

Jointly funded by educational charity The Brightside Trust, from a £120,000 grant from AstraZeneca, the event was part of the Faculty's Mentoring Plus scheme run by the Widening Participation Office. This aims to raise pupils' awareness of the careers available within healthcare, and their aspirations to train for them.

The 30 pupils spent two days learning about the variety of healthcare professions in the hospital, and mixing with current medical students to find out more about how they are trained. They were given presentations by practising doctors and healthcare professionals and toured the wards with medical students, as well as undertaking group activities which offered a taste of life as a student in the Faculty.

The event was led by David Yates, Professor of Emergency Medicine and admissions tutor for the School of Medicine, who said: "Like all universities providing education and training in medicine and healthcare, we're acutely aware of the potential social and economic barriers to entry. Initiatives like this help us to reach the widest possible range of candidates, and empower them with the skills and information to make informed decisions about their future."

"Pupils interested in coming to university as a route into the health professions also need more than academic ability, they need experience of healthcare's stresses and rewards. This can be difficult if you don't know anyone in the field, so the event and wider scheme give them a chance to see what it's like 'on the other side'."

## Students win prize at Film Festival

Students from the School of Arts, Histories and Cultures have been awarded a prize at the Fifth Imperial War Museum Student Film Festival Awards Ceremony held recently in Manchester.

Thomas Baxter Lord and Chrys Ballas, students from History's MA in War, Culture and History course, were awarded the runners-up prize in the 'Best Documentary' category for their short film, "From Land and Sea: The Falklands Remembered". They were selected for the prize by an audience poll and a panel of industry and museum judges.

The film explored the Falklands conflict from the perspective of local participants, and featured interviews with veterans from the local community.

The film was produced as part of the Filming War, Filming History option of the MA in War, Culture and History Program at The University of Manchester. This special option course brings together cultural historians of war, theorists, media specialists and war museum curators and students, and aims to uncover local voices and northern experiences of war through the medium of digital film.



Left to right: Toby Haggith (IWM Film and Video Archive); Dr Ana Carden-Coyne (Centre for the Cultural History of War, The University of Manchester); Thomas Baxter Lord (student filmmaker of From Land and Sea: The Falklands Remembered); Nicola Cutts-Watson and Neil Waterman (student filmmakers of Refuge); at the awards ceremony for the Fifth IWM Student Film Festival. 2 February 2006

Course Director, Dr Ana Carden-Coyne of the Centre for the Cultural History of War, commented: "This was the pilot year for the MA in War, Culture and History. Competing against mostly full time media students, our two students were runners-up in the Best Documentary prize. This is great credit to their hard work and thoughtfulness in making a film about the

Falklands War from the viewpoint of participants in the local community.

"It also reflects the teaching diversity and outreach activity of the Centre for the Cultural History of War, as well as the benefits of collaboration with the extraordinary staff and facilities at The University of Manchester's state-of-the-art Media Centre."

## IBM Lecture

**One of IBM's global vice-presidents is to visit Manchester in March 2006, to share his thoughts on the latest IT revolution with business people in the region. Dr Irwing Wladawsky-Berger is vice-president for technical strategy and innovation at IBM and will be giving a public lecture at The University of Manchester on Tuesday 21 March 2006, at 5.15 pm. His lecture will look at Enabling a Business Process Revolution.**

The event is organised jointly by the School of Computer Science, the School of Informatics and Manchester Business School and is part of The University of Manchester's strategic partnership with IBM, launched in November 2005.

Under the partnership, key staff from both organisations will work together on research projects, mentoring programmes and specific projects such as the People with Disabilities Project, which will address issues facing disabled students on campus through the provision of IBM Assistive Technologies and staff training.

Dr Wladawsky-Berger is responsible for identifying emerging technologies and marketplace developments which are critical to the future of the IT industry, and for organising activities outside and inside IBM in order to capitalise on them. He is currently leading IBM's On Demand business initiative, helping customers transform themselves into demand-led businesses, with the use of internet technology.

Dr Wladawsky-Berger's lecture will look at the current digital revolution that society is experiencing. Advances in IT and the accessibility of the internet are combining to create opportunities for collaborative innovation across industries, changing the way individual enterprises, wider industries and possibly even entire economies function. What are the implications of this for business and IT, and what is the potential impact on society as a whole?

To reserve a free place at the lecture, please register at the website below.



# Researchers join battle for Romani culture

A delegation of Romani (Gypsy) families and dignitaries attended the launch of the latest phase of a project which aims to increase awareness of their unique culture and shed light on their ancestors' origins. The families visited a team at The University of Manchester which has launched a website as part of research into the Romani language.

The project is endorsed by President of the European Roma and Traveller Forum, Rudko Kawczynski, who said: "Antigypsyism has been present not only among extremists, but within the mainstream of every European society and this includes academics and teachers.

"We therefore welcome the efforts of The University of Manchester to study the origins and history of our language and will do what ever we can to support this research."

The project will help codify the language – which involves writing it down and agreeing on how words are spelt, making it easier to teach and

raising its profile. Visitors to the website will be able to locate different dialects on a map, and to listen to examples of sentences in different dialects.

Romani is the second most commonly spoken minority language in the European Union, behind Catalan.

Project coordinator, Professor Yaron Matras, heads the team of the Romani Linguistics Project at the University, which works with Romani communities and education projects in the UK and abroad.

The team has also been involved with drafting Romani language policy for the Council of Europe.

Professor Matras said: "Romani doesn't really have a literary tradition and is primarily an oral language."

He continued: "Our work will provide a much needed resource so that Romani can eventually be included in mainstream media and school curriculums.

"The work will be of interest to linguists, historians and ethnographers."

## IBM partners pair up



The IBM-Manchester Partners Programme got underway last month when the successful applicants from The University of Manchester and IBM met as a group for the first time.

The event, held in the Sackville Street Building Council Chamber, was chaired by IBM Vice President, Simon Pendlebury, and Professor John Perkins, Vice-President and Dean of The Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences.

The Programme, launched in November 2005, is unique to The University of Manchester and is a core element of the University's broader strategic relationship with IBM. Through the Programme, partners work in areas of overlapping strategic importance, in order to achieve organisational goals for both IBM and the University.

As part of the process to become partners, applicants have to identify a new activity to work on over the next three years. The activity forms part of their

Personal Development Plan within their own organisation and is reviewed by a joint IBM-Manchester steering group which meets quarterly to manage the strategic relationship.

Dr Kung-Kiu Lau (Computer Science), Dr Liping Zhao (Informatics), Professor Bob Wood (Informatics), Professor Linda Macaulay (Informatics), Dr Alex May (Medicine) and Dr Barbara Jones (Business School) will work with their IBM counterparts in areas which include bio-health informatics, the impact of ICT rich environments on the work-life balance and e-business.

Professor Perkins, who spoke of the benefits he hoped the scheme would bring to both organisations, said: "The coming together of the partners for the first time symbolises the start of a unique opportunity for both the University and IBM to forge collaborations which will benefit the research, teaching and recruitment activities of both organisations."

## Blind software pioneer delivers prestigious Turing Lecture

An IT entrepreneur, who overcame blindness to become a world champion water skier and went on to establish his own charity for the visually impaired, delivered the prestigious Turing Lecture to a packed audience last month.

Chris Mairs, Director of Data Connection Ltd and founder of the a-technic charity, which develops technology for the disabled, delivered the lecture, entitled: "Lifestyle access for the disabled - adding positive drift to the random walk with technology."

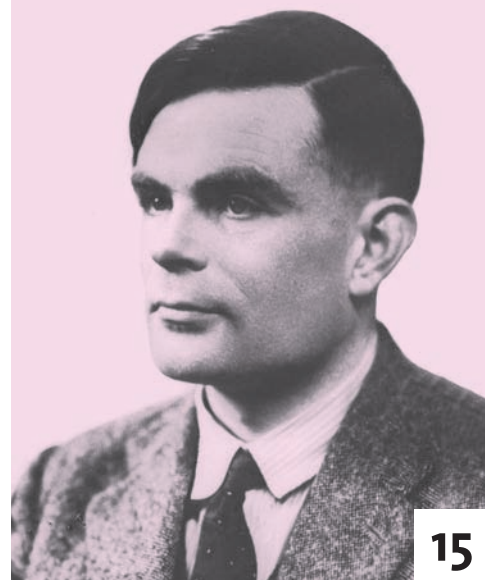
The lecture, hosted by the University's School of Computer Science, focused on the effect advancing technologies such as ipods, mobile phones and microwave cookers have had on people with disabilities.

The event was sponsored by the British Computer Society, Institution of Electrical Engineers and IBM.

Chris, who overcame a severe inherited eye disease to eventually lead the British disabled water ski team to victory at four World Championships, said: "On the one hand, technology can sometimes help visually disabled people, but on the other hand the 'technology heavy' nature of 21st century lifestyle often disenfranchises the disabled. I will be looking at what should and can be done to improve the outcome resulting from this technological dichotomy."

Chris directs Data Connection's product line strategy and is Chief Technical Officer of their MetaSwitch telephony subsidiary. His Bat Blaster device is used by blind water skiers throughout the world to compete in slalom events.

The Turing Lecture series is held in honour and recognition of Alan Turing's contribution to the field of computing. Chris Mairs' lecture was the eighth lecture in the series.



# What's On



## The Whitworth Art Gallery

### DISPLAYS/COLLECTIONS

**Now You See It – The Trevor Dannatt Collection**  
to 7 May

**Now, Voyager** to 21 May

### The Textile Gallery now open

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**.

**Whitworth Art Gallery,**  
Oxford Road, 0161 275 7450  
Gallery Café 0161 275 7497  
Gallery Shop 0161 275 7498

### Opening hours

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

[www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth)

## Chaplaincies

### St Peter's House Chaplaincy SUNDAY WORSHIP

10.00am Group Work  
11.15am Morning Worship  
6.30pm Evening Worship (term-time only)  
**FOYER** 10am - 4pm

An area where students and staff can relax and meet friends. A tea/coffee machine is available. Chaplains also available Monday to Friday Floor B, Room B25, Renold Building 0161 200 2522 Precinct Centre 0161 275 2894 email: [sph.reception@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:sph.reception@manchester.ac.uk)

### Avila House RC Chaplaincy

(next to the Holy Name Church)  
Mass Times  
Mon - Fri 1.05 pm (term-time only)  
Oxford Road  
0161 275 6999/273 1456

### The Jewish Student Centre and Synagogue

Hillel House, Greenheys Lane.  
0161 226 1139  
[rabbijy@hotmail.com](mailto:rabbijy@hotmail.com)  
[www.rabbijy.com](http://www.rabbijy.com)

**Ambrose Mosque:** Tuer Street

**Mosque:** Sackville Street Building

**Prayer Room:** Renold Building

## Tabley House

Small conference and meeting rooms available year-round. Licensed for weddings and baby-naming ceremonies.

**Tabley House,**  
Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 0HB 01565 750151  
[email.inquiries@tableyhouse.co.uk](mailto:email.inquiries@tableyhouse.co.uk)

[www.tableyhouse.co.uk](http://www.tableyhouse.co.uk)

## Contact Theatre

**Fri 10 March – Saturday 11 March**

### Afforeggae

Created in the wake of a brutal police massacre in the early 1990's. AfroReggae turn their socially conscious songs into blistering live performances. In the midst of the lawlessness, they use the languages of rap and hip-hop to expose the violence that threatens to crush their community.

**Thu 16 March – Sat 18 March**

### Visible

A thought-provoking drama focussing on commonplace comfort zones.

**Wed 22 March – Sat 25 March**

### Les Harengs Terrible

A comedy about a love triangle set in Paris

**Wed 29 March – Fri 31 March**

### Furcht und Elend Des Dritten Reiches (Palaver Festival)

Brecht play set under the Third Reich (All performances in German)

**Thu 30 March**

### Circo Rimbombanti (Palaver Festival)

A magical tale of love and courage set in a run down circus

**Contact, Oxford Road, Manchester**

Tickets/Info: 0161 274 0600

For information on other events please visit our website

A limited number of tickets are available from just £4 on the day from the Ticket Office between 11am - 4pm daily.

[www.contact-theatre.org](http://www.contact-theatre.org)

## Courses for the Public

The Centre of 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](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/continuingeducation)

## The Manchester Museum

### SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

**Due South** to 29 May

Stunning images from the last great wilderness by John Kelly, selected artist with the British Antarctic, not simply a visual record, but an account of the emotions and fleeting thoughts of life in the "freezer". John Kelly.

**Family Events (booking line: 0161 275 2648). Children must be accompanied by an adult).**

**Sat 11 March 10am-2pm**

Introduction to Forensic Science. Solve a crime in our practical workshop. £1

**Helping make sense of your brain! 11am-3pm.** Fool your brain and senses with hands-on activities. FREE

**Sat 18 March 1pm-4pm**

**Conservation Day.** Find out how the Museum's artefacts are looked for. FREE

**Sat 25 March 1.30, 2.30 & 3.30pm**

**Antarctic Adventure.** Drama workshop creating an expedition to the Antarctic. FREE

**Sat 1 April 1pm, 2pm and 3pm**

**Step into Spring!** Craft Workshop £1

**Saturday 8 and 22 April 1pm-4pm**

**The Drawing Den.** FREE

**Mon 10, Tue 11, Thur 13, Tue 18, Thur 20 and Fri 21 April. 1pm and 2.30pm**

**Pots of Fun.** Craft workshop. £1

**Wed 12 and 19 April**

**Smashing Pots!** Practical workshop. FREE 5+

**Adult Events (booking line 0161 275 2648)**

**Tues 7 March 2pm-3pm**

**Tour the Store** FREE

**Wed 8 March 1pm-4pm**

**Women in Touch** FREE

**Wed 8 March 5.30pm-7pm**

**Reading Women** FREE

**Sat 11 March, 10am-5pm**

**Fairtrade Market** FREE

**Mon 13 March 12pm-2pm Commonwealth Day 2006 – Health and Vitality** FREE

**Mon 13 March 2.30pm and 6.30pm**

**The Commonwealth in Focus – A Mother's Perspective** FREE

**Wed 15 March, 6.30pm-8pm**

**From here to there and back again.** FREE

**Thurs 16 March, 6.30pm-8pm**

**A Frog's Life!** FREE

**Sat 18 March, 2pm-3pm**

**Locusts: God's wrath or revelation?** FREE

**Wed 22 and 29 March, 10am-5pm**

**The World in Your Hands.** FREE

**Fri 31 March, 6pm-7pm**

**African Ceramics.** FREE

**Manchester Museum,**

Oxford Road, Manchester 0161 275 2634

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[www.museum.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk)





## Music and Drama at Manchester

Thursday 9 March, 1.10 pm  
Robin Ireland - Viola

Monday 13 March, 5.30pm  
Reading Series with Ian McGuire and Christopher Wilson

Thursday 16 March, 1.10 pm  
The Rivioli Quartet

Friday 17 March, 1.10 & 7.30 pm  
New Music Ensemble – American  
Experimentalism with afternoon workshops

Saturday 18 March, 7.30 pm  
The University of Manchester Wind Orchestra

Wednesday 22 March, 5pm  
Paul Heritage at Palaver

Wednesday 22 March, 7.30 pm  
Ad Solem Chamber Choir with the Bray Ensemble

Thursday 23 March, 1.10 pm  
Psappha with students from Music and Drama

Thursday 23 March, 7.30pm  
After Title

Friday 24 March, 5.30 pm  
Psappa (Contemporary Ensemble in Residence)

Saturday 25 March, 7.30 pm  
The University of Manchester Chorus and  
Symphony Orchestra  
After Title

Monday 27 March, 5.30pm  
Reading Series with Will Self

Thursday 30 March, 2.15 pm  
Quatuor Danel

Thursday 30 March, 7.30 pm  
University of Manchester Big Band

Fri 31 March, 7.30 pm  
Quatuor Danel

**The Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama**  
The University of Manchester, Bridgeford Street,  
Manchester M13 9PL  
0161 275 8951/8950  
email [boxoffice@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:boxoffice@manchester.ac.uk)

[www.manchester.ac.uk/martinharriscentre](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/martinharriscentre)



## John Rylands Library

The John Rylands Special Collections Library, Deansgate, will be closed until 2006 for essential refurbishment and the construction of a new visitor and interpretative centre. Access to all the special collections is available through the main University Library on campus. A Special Collections Reading Room is open on Floor Purple Four, Monday to Friday 10am - 5.15pm and Saturdays 10am-1pm. Readers may find it helpful to contact us in advance on 0161 275 3764. Further information can be found on our website [www.rylibweb.manchester.ac.uk/spcoll/](http://www.rylibweb.manchester.ac.uk/spcoll/)

## International Society

Saturday 11 March  
Lake District visiting Aira Force Waterfall,  
Ullswater and Ambleside

Saturday 18 March  
Robin Hood's Bay and Whitby North Yorkshire

Sunday 19 March  
Yorkshire Dales visiting Bolton Abbey  
and Skipton

Saturday 25 March  
North Wales visiting Penrhyn Castle  
and Bodnant Castle

Sunday 26 March  
Peak District visiting Hardwick Hall and Buxton

Friday 31 March to Monday 3 April  
OVERNIGHT TRIP  
Cornwall (with visit to the Eden Project)

Saturday 1 April  
Alton Towers

Sunday 2 April  
North Wales visiting Anglesey

**International Society**  
327 Oxford Road (next to Krobar)  
0161 275 4959  
Open: Mon-Fri 9.30am – 5pm  
[www.internationalsociety.org.uk](http://www.internationalsociety.org.uk)

## 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](http://www.jb.manchester.ac.uk)



## Gig Guide Manchester Academy

**MANCHESTER ACADEMY 1, 2 and 3**

Mon 6 March  
Monster Magnet

Wed 8 March  
The Wonderstuff

Sat 11 March  
The Other Smiths vs The Other Morrissey

Tue 14 March  
Crowbar + Will Haven

Wed 15 March  
Rogrigo Y Gabriella

Fri 17 March  
Mortiis

Fri 17 March  
Fightstar

Sat 18 March  
Buzzcocks

Sun 19 March  
The Bluetones

Wed 22 March  
Pitchifter

Fri 24 March  
Motorheadache

Mon 27 March  
Henry Rollins (seated show)

Thurs 30 March  
Disturbed

Weds 29 March  
Discharge

Sat 1 April  
The Durutti Column

Sun 2 April  
The Wholigans

Sun 2 April  
Less Than Jake

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Royal Court (Liverpool) 0151 709 4321 (c/c)  
Students' Union 0161 275 2930  
[www.manchesteracademy.net](http://www.manchesteracademy.net)

## Seminar Listings

Seminar listings are now available online at [www.manchester.ac.uk/seminars](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/seminars), and members of University staff will be receiving a weekly email bulletin which includes a link to this page. To publicise seminars please submit details to [seminars@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:seminars@manchester.ac.uk)

## 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](http://www.burlington.man.ac.uk)



# Jodrell Bank scoops Descartes Prize

Scientists at The University of Manchester's Jodrell Bank Observatory have been awarded the European Commission's prestigious 2005 Descartes Prize for their coordinating role in the Pulsar Science in Europe (PULSE) project.

The prize is awarded to teams of researchers who have achieved outstanding scientific or technological results through collaborative research.

The PULSE project has been awarded the prize for its discovery of the first known double pulsar and its continuing research into the phenomena. Pulsars are rapidly spinning neutron stars, often described as 'cosmic clocks', whose observation offers unparalleled opportunities to study some of the most extreme physical conditions in the universe.

Observations of the double pulsar, carried out in collaboration with astronomers at Australia's Parkes Observatory, have enabled them to make the most accurate confirmation yet of Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity – the theory of gravity which supplanted that of Isaac Newton.

"Rarely does a single class of object lend itself to high-precision experiments in so many domains of modern and fundamental physics," said Jodrell Bank's Dr Michael Kramer.

The discovery has been hailed as 'one of the greatest advances in astrophysics' and was ranked among the top ten 'most important scientific breakthroughs' of 2004 by the American journal 'Science'.

Professor Andrew Lyne, leader of the PULSE collaboration, said: "This discovery of the double pulsar was the culmination of many years of technical developments at both the Jodrell Bank and Parkes Observatories and it is very pleasing to see this work and its exciting results recognised internationally."

Professor Lyne added: "Our work increases mankind's knowledge of some of the fundamental physical laws that govern the universe. These results are not only of interest to today's scientific professionals. They also help to interest young people in astronomy, physics and basic research, forming an important foundation for a society increasingly based on science and technology."

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## Scuba diving – why not give it a try?



AMSAC offer a "Try diving course" with training in how to use diving equipment. The course is designed to give people the opportunity to experience the sensation of being underwater and to try out the scuba equipment. The price for the course is £30 for three pool sessions.

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# Looking Back - The Sackville Street Building



Based on the style of a German/Swiss Technische Hochschule, the Sackville Street building we all came to know and love as the UMIST Main Building was originally the Municipal College of Technology and opened its doors just over 100 years ago, in 1902. Work on it had started in 1895, funded by Manchester City Council.

As early as 1908, plans for an extension were being considered. But nearly half a century would pass before that extension was realised. Our picture dates from about 1960, shortly after the “new” extension, on the right, opened.

The extension was the subject of a competition in 1926, won by Bolton architects Bradshaw, Gass and Hope. It had to be in harmony with the original building, hence the use of brick with terracotta facings. Building began in 1938, but

was suspended during the war. It was opened on 22 November 1957, by the Duke of Edinburgh, by which time it had become by Royal Charter, in 1956, the Manchester College of Science and Technology, mutating to UMIST in 1966.

One can't help wondering if Prince Philip still has the set of handkerchiefs woven at the College and a copy of the student publication Technknowledge, with which he was presented to mark the opening.



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### News and story ideas

Internal Communications Office

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Deadline Noon 16 March

## Events Contact

### Events and listings information

Philippa Adshead

Telephone 0161 275 2922

email [unievents@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:unievents@manchester.ac.uk)

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