

Spring 2007

Graduates'

review

Education that Inspires
Research that Changes the World



University of
Leicester



Editor's Welcome

Welcome to the Spring 2007 issue of the *Leicester Graduates' Review*. This edition features news about the latest developments at the University and from your fellow graduates. Our current Personalia is available on the website at www.le.ac.uk/alumni and in hard copy on request. Please take a minute to complete the update form and let us know what you are doing.

Enjoy the magazine, remember to stay in touch and, whenever you can, come back to visit us. Our next Leicester event is the *Homecoming* on 30 June 2007. You can be assured of a warm welcome.

Kathryn Whitehurst

Kathryn J Whitehurst,
Alumni Relations Office

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The Alumni Relations Website

For the latest alumni news, entries for the 2007 Personalia and obituary notices please visit our website: www.le.ac.uk/alumni

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Cover shot:
Students exploring
the new Library.

'Leicester is taking off'

Introduction by Professor Robert Burgess, Vice-Chancellor



Professor Robert Burgess

Always seen as a strong university, Leicester's ascent in the last few years has been significant and impressive. Few, if any institutions can rival the achievement of the University in the last year. The view from *The Times* is that we are "taking off". The *Times Higher Education Supplement*, when shortlisting the University for the second successive year for the award of "University of the Year" said that Leicester is "by any measure one of the best".

There are many reasons for these plaudits. Our success in the National Student Survey, designed by the Government to "inform prospective students about what and where to study" is key. Amongst full-time students at mainstream English universities Leicester, for the second successive year, has the highest scores in the sector for the quality of our teaching and student satisfaction. This is a testament to the hard work of my colleagues and the commitment of Leicester students.

The University now enjoys its highest ever ranking in both *The Times* and *The Guardian* university league tables. We are ranked 18th (out of 110 universities by *The Times*). To add some context, this places us ahead of many other leading universities – including some you probably thought were ahead of us! I'm sure it will come as no surprise to you to learn we intend to climb higher.

Our research work is cutting edge and you can read about it in this magazine. Professor Mark Jobling and Turi King of the department of Genetics hit the headlines this year when they discovered that some Yorkshiremen have genetic roots that can be traced back to West Africa. Dr Loveman of the Department of English has uncovered a secret, lost life of diarist Samuel Pepys, which has implications for our understanding of this important historical figure. Professor James Chapman and his team in Film Studies are changing the way we think about film. And one of our own graduates, Nilesh Samani, now Professor of Cardiology and Head of the University's world leading Department of Cardiovascular Sciences, describes pioneering work in this important field.

Our £300m capital development programme gathers pace. In September we opened a new hall of residence on the site of the old Villiers Hall. In my view, and that of others who have visited, it is amongst the finest accommodation in any University. It's a great venue for meetings and conferences and if you are involved in arranging these kinds of events I would encourage you to consider holding them here at your University. My colleagues in Conference Services would be delighted to speak with you (Tel. 0116 221 2009, email: conferences@le.ac.uk). You can be sure of a warm Leicester welcome.

As you read this magazine the first phase of our new £27.9m University Library will be open. We expect to complete this state-of-the-art facility later this year. It is an excellent resource that will provide first rate support for research and teaching for the whole community. Creating a building of this scale and quality would not have been possible without the generous support of our alumni and other friends of the University. You can read more about this support on pages 28-30.

The funds provided by you, the alumni, have also allowed us to create a scholarship scheme for able applicants that is attracting the brightest and best to the University, regardless of their background. This, and our growing strength, is a key reason why Leicester has seen one of the largest increases in applications for undergraduate study in the country (up by 11.6% with some faculties, such as Science up by more than 30%).

The next academic year is a very important one for us. It is fifty years since the University of Leicester received its Royal Charter and became a university. We are planning a series of celebrations to mark this event. You can join us at our *Homecoming* celebrations on 30 June 2007 and find out more about our work. Next year, on 26 April 2008 there will be a special Open Day at the University for alumni and other friends so I hope this advance notice will help you to make it a firm fixture in your 2008 diary.

I am sure you will share with me pride in the achievements of your University. We are confident and determined that our next half century will be as successful as our first. I look forward to welcoming you at these University events. n

The Times Good University Guide 2007

=18	Leicester
=18	School of Oriental and African Studies
=18	St Andrews
21	Lancaster
22	Southampton
23	East Anglia
24	Sheffield
25	Newcastle
26	Manchester
27	Sussex
=28	Exeter
=28	Glasgow
30	Essex
31	Reading
32	Queen's, Belfast
33	Birmingham
=34	Kent
=34	Leeds
36	Aberdeen

What's *in a name?*

Research undertaken at the University on the genetic link between people with shared surnames, has discovered something rather surprising.

It was during the course of this research that they made the startling discovery of the rare African Y chromosome, previously only found in 25 people – all in West Africa.

Professor Jobling and Turi King (pictured right) researching the Y chromosome chain and genetic links within surnames



During the examination of DNA from volunteers the researchers Professor Mark Jobling from the University's Department of Genetics and PhD student Turi King happened across a very rare Y chromosome, previously found only in West Africa – in a Yorkshire man living in Leicester.

The original basis for the research was to try and identify a genetic link between people with shared surnames through the study of their Y chromosomes. Professor Mark Jobling, who led the research, explains:

“Y chromosomes are passed down from father to son in the same way as surnames are. Therefore by studying the Y chromosomes from a series of volunteers we hoped to identify the wide degree to which a shared surname also indicated shared ancestry, or ‘hidden relatedness’.”

In order to achieve this, the researchers focussed on 150 pairs of men with shared surnames but with no known

shared ancestry. The Y chromosomes of each pair were examined and compared to find any genetic links. Within this group the researchers found a 25% chance of a shared surname also resulting in a shared Y chromosome, and therefore a common ancestor.

Removal of high frequency names, such as Smith, increased the chance of sharing to 50% and when the test was applied in more detail to rare names, such as Attenborough, this increased to 80%.

African Link

It was during the course of this research that they made the startling discovery of the rare African Y chromosome, previously only found in 25 people – all in West Africa.

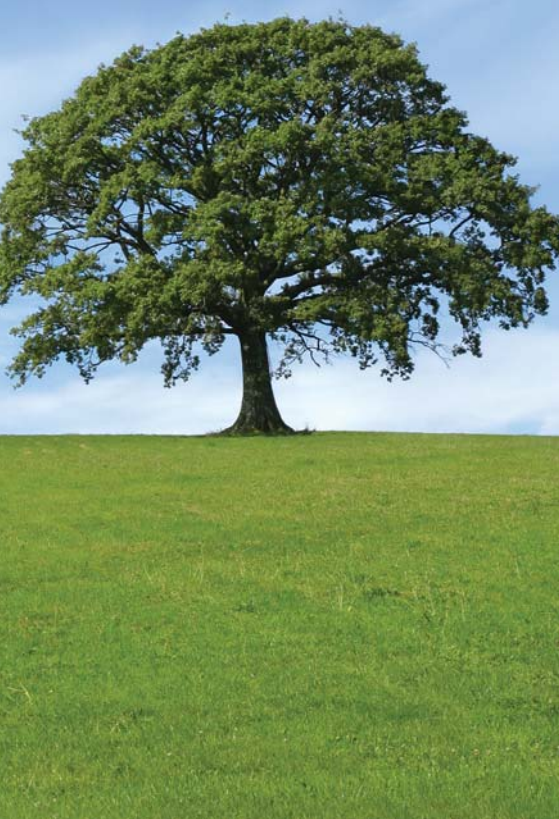
“It is extremely rare,” said co-author of the study Turi King, “there are only 25 other people known worldwide and they are all African.”

Following this discovery the researchers collected DNA from 18 men with the same surname and discovered that 7 of them also shared this rare Y chromosome link. The men are all white and were all unaware of their African ancestry until the study.

The original volunteer, John Revis, a Yorkshire man now living in Leicester was also unaware of his African connection. He told the *Mail on Sunday*:

“I started looking into my family history and traced my ancestors back to the mid-1700s....There was nothing to suggest I was African.”

Following the discovery the University employed a genealogist to undertake traditional ‘paper-trail’ research which linked the chromosome back to two family trees in Yorkshire. These trees can be traced back to around 1780 but no link between them has yet been found leading the researchers to believe that they probably joined up



somewhere in the early 18th century – some two centuries earlier than the significant immigration of the middle of the 20th century.

There are two trains of thought regarding how the Revis' ancestor entered the UK. It is known that the Romans brought a garrison of soldiers from North Africa with them in about 200 AD. The second, and researchers believe more likely, route is via the slave trade. In the late 18th century there were about 10,000 black people resident in the UK. However, until now, these immigrations did not seem to have left a trace; however, this research has highlighted the fact that a level of integration must have taken place.

"This study shows what it means to be British is complicated and always has

This could enable people to match up their family trees far quicker than has previously been possible by identifying people who share surnames and undertaking genetic research.

been." Professor Jobling says: "Human migration history is clearly very complex, particularly for an island nation such as ours, and this study further debunks the idea that there are simple and distinct populations or 'races'."

Implications

The results of the original research could also have massive implications for the matching of crime scene DNA to potential suspects, in cases where no immediate match to an individual on the National DNA Database can be found. Professor Jobling explains: "If the police had access to a large enough database of names and Y chromosome data they could run the DNA found at the crime scene against it to see if they could find a Y chromosome match. In 20% of cases this could lead to a surname match, which could potentially help the police to reduce the size of their suspect pool".

While police would still need to obtain a full DNA profile this approach could act as an effective investigative tool, dramatically reducing the amount of time police currently spend investigating suspects.

The research also has implications for traditional genealogy: "This research raises the possibility of tracing surnames back to single founders, and of linking together branches of family trees by the information written in DNA, rather than birth, marriage and death certificates," Professor Jobling said.

This could enable people to research their family trees more rapidly than has previously been possible by identifying people who share surnames and undertaking genetic research.

The research results are also of interest to social historians. Any illegitimacy in the chain at any stage would have impacted on the research results as the Y chromosome chain would have been broken. However the research has shown that this was extremely rare.

"If you asked most people, even most geneticists, what the illegitimacy rate was they would probably say around 10%. However, this research shows that the actual level is likely to be closer to 1%," Professor Jobling said.

This shows that social norms held today have remained strong throughout the last few centuries.

Future research

The researchers are already looking into ways to further develop this research and its applications,

"We are currently working with the Forensic Science Service with regards to testing the use of Y chromosome testing at crime scenes. We are also undertaking a further, larger surname study later in the year," Professor Jobling said.

Let's hope that the discoveries next time are just as fascinating. **n**

"I started looking into my family history and traced my ancestors back to the mid-1700s....There was nothing to suggest I was African."

Student sport has always been important at Leicester. February saw hectic preparations in the Sports Association (SA) for the annual Leicester – De Montfort Varsity Competition.

Get Sporty

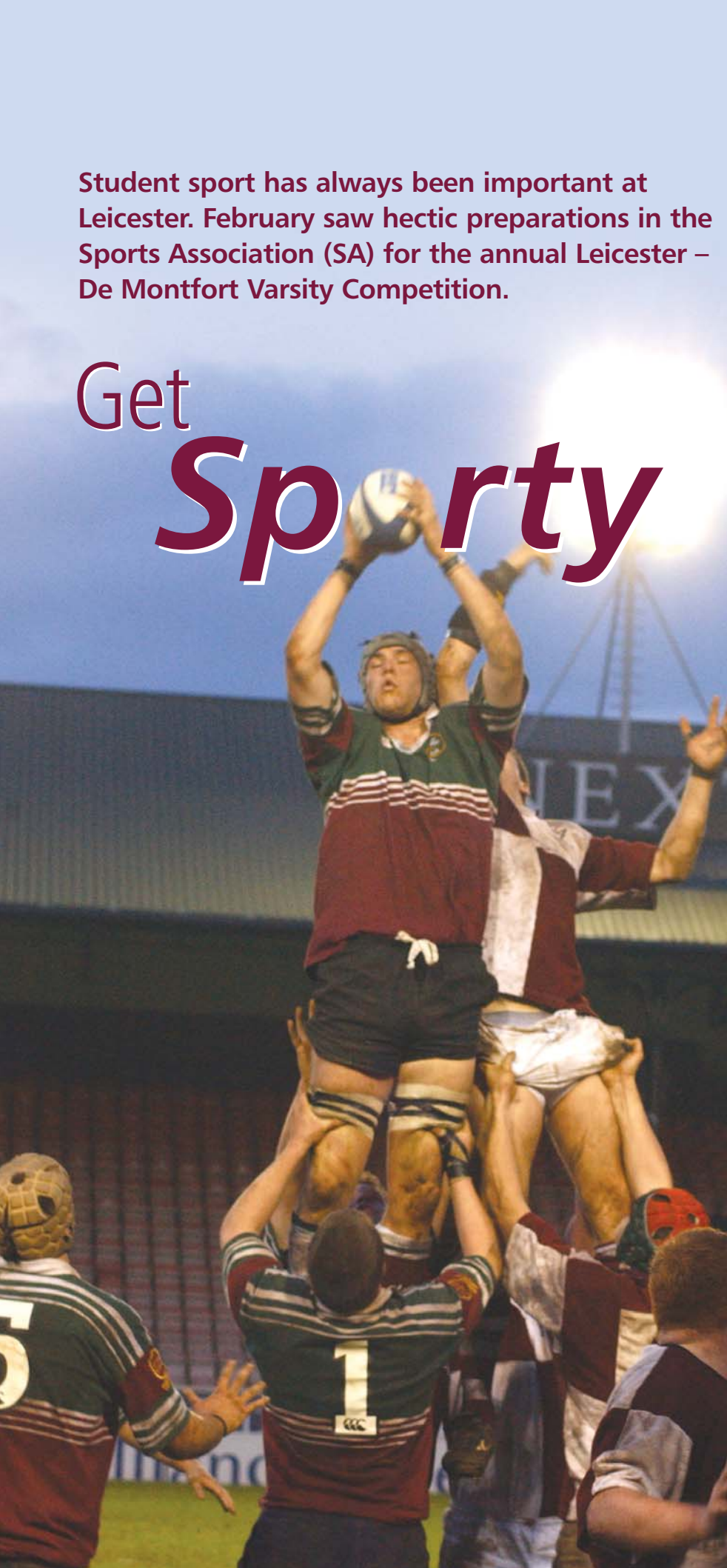
The annual sporting extravaganza, established in 2000, pitches up to 25 Leicester sports teams against their De Montfort University counterparts for the Varsity Shield and more importantly, local bragging rights. The glamour matches – football, rugby and cricket – all take place in Leicester's sporting arenas, the Walker's Stadium, Welford Road and Grace Road, and are vigorously supported by students from both institutions.

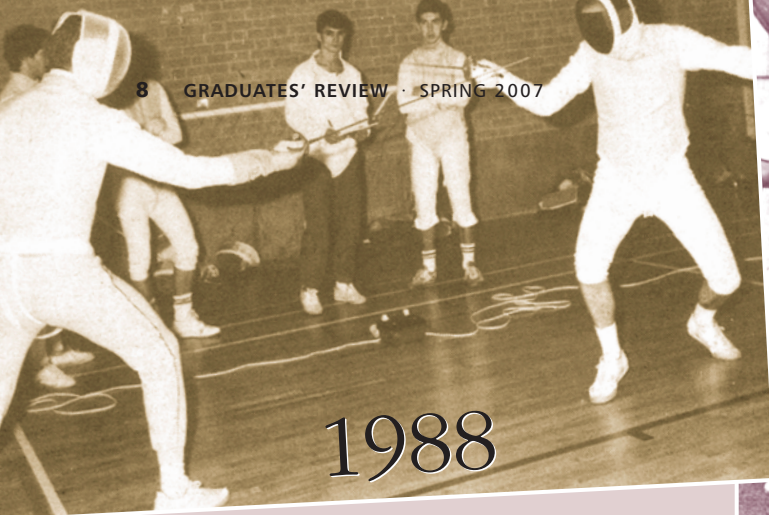
"We're very lucky that we have three great stadia for the three national sports," says Dan Rose, current Sports Officer and MSc Management student. "Playing there is a fantastic motivator and there's definitely more of a competitive edge to varsity games."

According to the archived sports pages of the *Ripple*, the role of the Sports Associator at Leicester has traditionally been "to provide supervision of all sports activities as well as co-ordination and correlation between sports societies." This has changed little. Dan's main responsibilities are as a student figurehead for sport at the University, to represent the clubs at Council meetings as well as liaising with the individual societies.

Leicester is also unusual in that it has a permanent Sports Secretary, Annie Morgan, who for the past 25 years has organised fixtures, kit, transport and insurance. With just two members of staff, the SA compares something like a cottage industry to institutions like Birmingham where there is a Director of Sport, a sabbatical sports officer and more administrators.

"Playing there is a fantastic motivator and there's definitely more of a competitive edge to varsity games."





"Prowess on the sports field does not make any impression on the end-of-session faculty meeting. The fact that you scored 33 tries in one season's rugby will not keep you in the University."

Annie Morgan, Sports Secretary says that sport at Leicester is driven and run by the students. The aim is to get people involved in sport. It is also a great way of gaining skills – financial, people management – that can help with future careers.

The importance of participation is a constant thread that can be seen in the *Ripple*. In the late fifties the sports column quoted a University of Aberdeen study which claimed to show a link between sporting participation and academic excellence.

"Nothing is more inductive to academic depression than the giving up a sport for no reason other than laziness".

Nevertheless the real reason for being at University was never overlooked,

"Prowess on the sports field does not make any impression on the end-of-session faculty meeting. The fact that you scored 33 tries in one season's rugby will not keep you in the University."

With the aim of getting students involved, new societies have been encouraged to develop and now cover a massive range. Whereas initially only traditional sports were offered, such as football, cricket, athletics and "rugger", the years have seen the emergence of mountaineering, sailing, surfing,

American Football and many more. A large proportion of these societies are purely recreational (such as the short-lived Honourable Sport of Wooing and Tiddleywink Societies) but others, such as Ultimate Frisbee have enjoyed a reasonable amount of competitive success. Today there are 32 sports societies giving students the opportunity to try something that they might otherwise have been denied.

The involvement of female students has also been an important theme. Women's athletics, rugby, football, basketball and hockey teams have long been established. The sentiment however has thankfully changed from earlier years. In 1961 Geoff Dyson, an ex-national sports coach, gave a lecture on sport. The *Ripple* stated that he believed that for women "a good workout twice a week can help in housework and the wearing of fashionable clothes later in life".

Reading old sports reports in the *Ripple* reveals tales that anyone who has participated in University sport must be familiar with forgotten kit, irate bus drivers, bemused locals, hungover participants and obscure matches. A report in a 1960 issue of *Ripple* documents a 40-5 victory for Leicester's netball team over the Domestic Science College "partly due to their opponents' ignorance of the

rules." Similarly the 1964 football team enjoyed a 7.5 hour trip to Swansea only to be defeated on a pitch ridden with "sandy inclines and potholes. The Welshmen, with ancient hillcraft embedded in them, leapt from hillock to hillock with the surefootedness of mountain goats."

Understandably there is a big social element to sport at Leicester. Intra-mural sport has been a staple part of campus life for years. An early edition of *Ripple* reports on the upcoming 5-aside final between Kent Kasuals and Melbourne Maulers for the coveted keg of beer. The sports societies have also participated in charity matches for RAG as well as entering teams for the traditional London to Leicester pram race. And of course the rugby team has always had an active social side, describing themselves as "ridden with characters – men of ambitions and firm beliefs and a liberal outlook on life".

The recreational outlook has not been without criticism however. In 1962 the sports editors of the *Ripple* chastised the sports societies for their apathetic, uncompetitive attitude. "Teams should be more conscious of the fact that they are representing Leicester University. The few who support our teams will have been amazed...to realise how deplorably unfit are many of our sportsmen."



1970



2007

The rugby team also apparently garnered an unenviable reputation during the mid-sixties. Indeed, the *Ripple* reported that Terry Price, a Welsh rugby international and Leicester student had apparently divulged the antics of the rugby club to the *People* newspaper so they became a matter for national discussion.

Dan is philosophical about the University's attitude to competition, saying it is really up to the individual students and societies to be competitive or otherwise. "Often students who are really excellent at sport come to Leicester. Unlike other universities we don't expect them to play at a high level for us. I think often they come to Leicester to experience student life rather than purely to do sport." The flip side of course is that frequently the Sports Association becomes aware of the talent of its students only after receiving formal notification of their inclusion in national or regional squads. Likewise *Leicester Tigers* have cherry picked some of the University's talented rugby players, most notably former England winger Tony Underwood. "Tony played for the University for his first term," remembers Sports Secretary Annie Morgan, "but then he went to *Tigers*. We still put his name on the team sheet though, just to scare the opposition!"

Despite this the University has achieved notable sporting successes, with athletics, football, rugby and hockey teams reaching national semi-finals and finals over the years. Recent students have also received national recognition for Rugby League, Ultimate Frisbee and Jiu Jitsu.

Most recently William Sharmon, a current BA Economics student achieved a silver medal in the 60m hurdles at the National Student Indoor Championships.

With the facilities being improved and new societies such as the Surf Club being established, the University's sporting future looks bright.

"The best move anyone can make at university is to join a sports club or any society," says Dan. "In one fell swoop you can get healthy and make great friends."

"The sense of belonging it gives is beyond price," adds Annie "and we do it for the love of it." n



1953

1988



"The facilities are also exclusively for the use and benefit of students" adds Annie. "They are purely for pleasure. The SA is a service provider. It is not run for profit."

From Boy to Man



Professor Nilesh Samani was the first graduate of the Leicester Medical School to become a professor.

A graduate of the Leicester Medical School, Professor Nilesh Samani now heads the University's Department of Cardiovascular Sciences, which has an international reputation for its work. He also heads an important research group, and runs a full clinical practice at Glenfield Hospital:

"I have been with the University for longer than most – as boy and man!"

Leicester connections

Professor Samani's long history with the city and the University started in 1972 when he moved to Leicester from Kenya, attending Charles Keene College

in the city. He joined the University in 1975 as one of the first intake into the Leicester Medical School, enabling him to follow his lifelong ambition:

"I wanted to study medicine from a very young age. My family were business people but both my parents and my grandparents had ambitions for my generation to be professionals."

After the award of his degree with distinction he was able to develop his interest in cardiovascular medicine, working alongside several eminent University Professors.

After three years in London Professor Samani returned to Leicester in 1985 as registrar to Professor John Swales who saw the potential of molecular biology to medicine and encouraged him to undertake research in this area. As fate would have it, Professor Bill Brammar's group in the Department of Biochemistry had cloned the renin gene, a key molecule regulating the cardiovascular system. Professor Samani joined this group on an MRC Clinical Training Fellowship to work on this and other related genes. Professor Samani explains:

"This was an exciting time for genetics and its application to medicine. Sir Alec Jeffreys had just discovered DNA genetic fingerprinting and I received an MRC Fellowship which opened up opportunities for me to research the application of genetics to cardiovascular diseases such as hypertension and coronary artery disease."

Despite opportunities elsewhere Professor Samani chose to remain at Leicester as a lecturer in cardiology:

"Professor David de Bono started at Leicester as British Heart Foundation Professor of Cardiology in 1989 just as I was finishing my fellowship, providing me with the opportunity to stay on at Leicester under his mentorship."

After his training he was appointed to his consultant post in cardiology in 1993. In 1997, Professor Samani was the first graduate of the Leicester Medical School to become a professor. He was awarded a British Heart Foundation Chair in Cardiology in 2003 and, in the same year, he was asked to head the newly formed Department of Cardiovascular Sciences in the Medical School.

Leading Research

Alongside his other duties, Professor Samani heads a leading cardiovascular research group, currently undertaking

research into the genetic basis of cardiovascular diseases. Professor Samani explains:

"By identifying 'culprit' genes which may be responsible for these diseases it is hoped that more effective prevention and treatment techniques can be developed."

The group's second main area of interest is in understanding 'individual risk' or why some people develop cardiovascular conditions whereas others don't.

"We are aware that, at a population level, several personal and lifestyle risk factors such as high blood pressure and smoking affect risk of heart attacks. However, even if these factors exist, some people will develop the disease early whereas some will get it late or not at all. We are currently trying to understand this variation in individual risk."

The Group's recent research into coronary heart disease and ageing has also highlighted some interesting results:

"We were already aware that the risk of developing coronary heart disease increases with age but we wanted to discover whether, where the disease was present in people early, this was because they were biologically older."

Using the length of telomeres (the strands of DNA that cap our chromosomes and wear away with cell division) as a marker for biological ageing the research discovered that those people with shorter telomeres and therefore an increased biological age had a greater chance of going on to have heart attacks.

The research also showed that statins, the commonly used drugs to lower cholesterol level, mainly benefited people who were at increased risk because of shorter telomeres.

"Our research aims to provide us with a better understanding of why common cardiovascular conditions, such as coronary artery disease, heart attacks and hypertension run in families."



Professor Niles Samani, British Heart Foundation Professor of Cardiology

These discoveries may help to provide insights into the causes and treatment of heart disease which kills more people in the UK than any other disease.

The Future

Professor Samani's research group and the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences looks set to go from strength to strength following the development plans for a state-of-the-art Cardiovascular Research Centre at Glenfield Hospital.

"This will bring all of the research staff together on a single site where the bulk of the clinical work is also done. This will be a very important development for Leicester and for the University."

In addition to funding provided by the University Hospitals Trust to build the centre, Professor Samani and the University have raised a further £5.5 million for this exciting project.

And what does Professor Samani put his significant successes down to?

"I have been very lucky to have had some excellent mentors and colleagues during my career and had an opportunity to work in a very supportive University and Hospital. I feel very privileged." n

A Peep at **Pepys**



Research by Leicester academic Dr Kate Loveman uncovers continuing relationship between Samuel Pepys and famous mistress Deb Willet.

In 2006 a research discovery by Leicester's internationally renowned English department gave new insight into our knowledge of Samuel Pepys.

Samuel Pepys was an English naval administrator – who later became the Chief Secretary to the Admiralty – and a Member of Parliament. But it was the private diary he kept between 1660-1669 that made him famous. The diary provides a fascinating combination of personal revelations, including his infidelities, and eyewitness accounts of events that took place at a crucial point in Britain's history, such as the Great Plague of London in 1665, the Second Dutch War and the Great Fire of London.

Fear of losing his eyesight prompted Pepys to stop writing his diary in 1669 and left readers and biographers with unanswered questions about one of the most famous episodes in his diary, namely the fate of his mistress Deb Willet. She was a companion to his wife, Elizabeth St Michel, but was banished from his home after Elizabeth discovered the affair. According to University of Leicester lecturer, Dr Kate Loveman: "She [Deb] seemed to disappear at once from Pepys's life and from the historical record."

< Samuel Pepys (left):
National Portrait Gallery, London

Although Pepys had no maritime experience, he rose by hard work and his talent for administration to be the Chief Secretary to the Admiralty under King James II. He was one of the first to apply methodical research and careful record keeping to the business of government and his influence was important in the early development of the British Civil Service.

The Diary

Pepys's record of his daily life over ten years is breathtakingly honest; in it he writes about the women he pursued, his friends, and his business dealings. His diary reveals his jealousies, insecurities, trivial concerns and his fractious relationship with his wife. Written in shorthand, so that it could not easily be read by a casual browser, the diary contains passages where Pepys resorts to a private code involving words based on Spanish, French and Italian.

However, Dr Loveman's research while at St Anne's College, Oxford and published in *The Historical Journal* has revealed that long after Deb left the household she remained in contact with Pepys. It also sheds new light on a key question about Pepys's private life – was he a light-hearted philanderer or a sexual predator?

Dr Loveman's study offers an insight into the social history of the 1660s and provides new information to interpret the diary: "Pepys describes in vivid terms his infatuation with seventeen-year-old Deb, his wife Elizabeth's discovery of the affair, and the strife which followed – including an episode when the jealous Elizabeth threatened him with hot tongs. After tracking Deb obsessively around London, Pepys eventually lost contact with her and, in his last diary entry in May 1669, regrets that 'my amours to Deb are past'."

Dr Loveman's research uncovered new evidence from London archives and from Pepys's papers in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, showing that their association did not end with the diary. Eight months after Pepys's last entry about Deb, she married a young clergyman, Jeremiah Wells. The couple lived at lodgings in Angel Alley, Whitechapel – a ten-minute walk from Pepys's home in Seething Lane – and had a daughter

"She [Deb] seemed to disappear at once from Pepys's life and from the historical record."

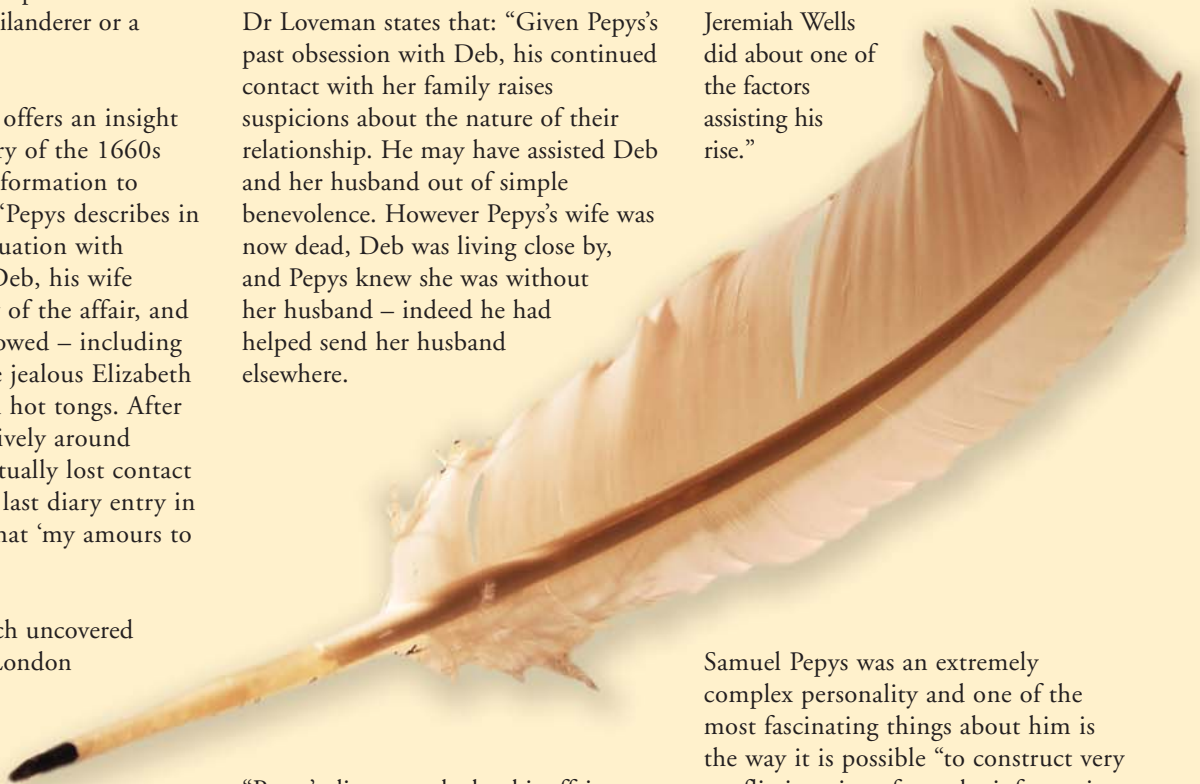
Deborah in December 1670. This prompted Wells to write to Pepys asking for assistance in getting additional employment. Dr Loveman said: "It therefore appears that Deb was prepared to further contact between Pepys and her husband."

Pepys's position as one of the most important civil servants of his age enabled him to help Wells by getting him a job as a navy chaplain. Letters between Pepys and Wells show that Pepys continued to act as Wells' patron throughout the 1670s, helping him to support his family through employment in the navy and in the church.

Dr Loveman states that: "Given Pepys's past obsession with Deb, his continued contact with her family raises suspicions about the nature of their relationship. He may have assisted Deb and her husband out of simple benevolence. However Pepys's wife was now dead, Deb was living close by, and Pepys knew she was without her husband – indeed he had helped send her husband elsewhere.

Deb's financial state partly reliant on Pepys's influence she may not have been in a position to refuse him if he sought to resume their affair.

She adds: "From an academic perspective, the main interest in my study lies in the way in which Pepys's amorous relationship with Deb Willet led to long-term sponsorship of her husband. Small case-studies like this allow us to build up a better picture of how individuals could rise in Restoration society through a combination of merit, diligence, and patronage. In this case, because we know of Pepys's past relationship with Deb, we probably know more than Jeremiah Wells did about one of the factors assisting his rise."



"Pepys's diary reveals that his affairs with women had more than once led to him helping their husbands to a position on board ship. In fact, Wells arrived on his first ship with a letter of recommendation from Pepys addressed to the purser Samuel Martin – who also happened to be the husband of Pepys's long-term mistress Betty Martin. With

Samuel Pepys was an extremely complex personality and one of the most fascinating things about him is the way it is possible "to construct very conflicting views from the information we have about him: as regards his private life, you could choose to paint him as either a cheerful philanderer or a sexual predator. Here we have to give Pepys some credit for generously supporting his former servant, while recognising that his benevolence may have hidden darker motives." n



Out of Africa

Neglected and underfunded – that has been the state of Higher Education in the Third World for the past fifteen years – that is until now.

New funding has resulted in a rapid expansion in the provision of higher education and the University of Leicester is one of the innovators and forerunners in guiding this fledgling system to fruition.

The University has played a major role in establishing higher education links with the University of Gondar in Ethiopia since 1997 through a medical

partnership programme called the Leicester-Gondar Link.

And now the British Government has sat up and realised that investing in Third World universities is of major importance in stabilising the world economy. The resulting rapid creation of new universities in Africa has stretched management skills to the limit and put a huge strain on teaching and support

resources there. To address the priority for staff development, help has been sought from outside the country.

Looking for ways to support development in this area the University of Leicester with its successful working relationship with Gondar made it an obvious choice to award funding to help nurture and grow the existing strong bond and be a model upon which other

UK-Third World partnerships can be based. The Leicester-Gondar Link has been awarded a grant of over £60,000 from the British Council to support several areas – staff development, links between the Departments of Economics in Leicester and Gondar and innovative work in development education.

Training in management skills will be provided through a series of workshops, in conjunction with Skillshare International, and a Staff Development Centre set up, with guidance from the University of Leicester.

A University Relationship

Early in 2006 a delegation from the newly established University of Gondar visited Leicester and spent time shadowing the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Robert Burgess and other members of the University's management team to gain insights into the management of a modern university.

The recent visits reinforce the link that was established between the medical schools of Leicester and Gondar and, until recently, was confined to staff in the medical schools and the hospitals.

History of the Link

The Leicester-Gondar Link arose from discussions in 1997 between Michael Silverman, Professor of Child Health in Leicester, and Professor Eldryd Parry of the Tropical Health and Education Trust – a London-based voluntary organisation that arranges links between medical schools and hospitals in the UK and Africa. The Link twinned the Faculty of Health at the University of Gondar with the huge University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust and Leicester's Faculty of Medicine.

Health professionals in Leicester responded to requests from their equivalents in Gondar and transferred skills via the internet and exchange

visits. Around 50-60 bilateral visits gave participants first-hand experience of the health services and the education of health professionals available in the two settings. It has been mutually beneficial: Leicester staff have learnt about tropical diseases and medicine, and have gained great satisfaction from giving practical help to their colleagues in Gondar, while the Ethiopians have gained professional support, teaching materials and advice.

Each visit has been set up as a project with clear short and long-term objectives, to ensure the enhancement of clinical services, teaching and research in Gondar and in Leicester. Many of the programmes are small but highly efficient in their use of resources, with few overheads and they are managed by groups of enthusiastic individuals. It soon became clear that the success of individual projects depended heavily on their integration with each other. For example, a British Council funded programme to develop a Masters Degree in Public Health (in conjunction with Health Sciences) was successful only with parallel attention to teaching and training methods, and information access.

Gondar – at one time the national capital – is a city with a population of 150,000. Situated in the highlands of Ethiopia near the Simian Mountains, it serves a mainly rural community in the huge area of North West Ethiopia with over three million people.

Until four years ago the University of Gondar did not exist, but by 2011 its full-time students will exceed the number at the University of Leicester.

In Gondar the medical college trains 50 doctors a year, 80 nurses as well as health assistants, sanitarians and technicians. But, many people live so far away that they receive no health care.

Facilities at the hospital are limited with no intensive care. Wards are crowded and understaffed. Infectious diseases are the most common problems, such as TB, HIV, pneumonia and hepatitis.



Achievements to Date

Early successes of the Medical Link include:

- The establishment of post-graduate surgical training at Masters level in Gondar
- The creation of a joint textbook of Paediatrics, including a section of international child health
- Several successful research projects leading to peer review publications
- The establishment of an undergraduate course in community-based physiotherapy and rehabilitation in Gondar
- Professional support for nursing staff, technical staff and library staff
- The Link has also become a focus for individuals who are visiting Gondar from other parts of Britain.

The success of each project has been evaluated: some show substantial progress; others are still at the development stage and many take years to reach fruition. This is hardly surprising given that Ethiopia is a country where poverty remains a major problem, where there are deficiencies in infrastructure and communication can be much more difficult than in the UK.

But the future is promising. There are already many rewarding relationships between health professionals and the teaching staff in Gondar and Leicester. There is a growing understanding of each other's culture and needs to which the Link might contribute and The National Health Service leadership has an increasing understanding of the value of international links. [n](#)

Behind the Scenes at the Newsroom

"One thing that used to, and still does, make my blood boil, was the comment that you're 'just the weather girl'."

Leicester's pioneering Geographical Information Systems (GIS) programme, part of the Department of Geography, is internationally acclaimed. Many Leicester GIS graduates occupy some of the highest profile posts in their field. Below, Sky news presenter Lukwesa Burak tells how her Leicester MSc in GIS, 1998 led to a career where she is recognised around the world and prepared her for the rigorous skills her job demands.

Leicester GIS graduate Lukwesa Burak was a popular weather and news presenter on BBC television and radio for nearly 5 years before moving to Sky Television in 2006.

At Sky she works on the world shift, broadcasting to Africa and Asia during the period when Britain is asleep, hunting out major news stories, arranging interviews and keeping up with breaking news around the world. Her 'day' starts at 7pm, when she leaves her Leicestershire home for London, and she is on air from midnight until 6am.

She got her first job at the BBC almost by chance. After graduating from Leicester in 1998 with an MSc in GIS (Geographical Information Systems) she had joined a Manchester-based GIS consultancy, working with London Transport in the capital city, before moving back to her home town and working at Area Traffic Control air quality projects at Leicester City Council.



Leicester GIS graduate Lukwesa Burak

She actually got her first taste for broadcasting, when someone from Leicester-based MATV (Midlands Asian TV) approached her whilst walking around Leicester on her lunch break, and asked her if she would like to do some presenting work for a couple of weeks. She took up the offer, and laughs when she thinks back to her time dashing out at lunchtime to put on her make-up, record the lunch and evening news bulletins, then rushing back to her desk at the Council. Lukwesa thought she'd got away with it, until it was announced on her last day at work, that the heavily applied make-up kind of gave the game away – that and the fact that half of Leicester, including her colleagues, had been watching her daily.

While at Leicester City Council, she was involved in hosting a European conference, when a chance query about British weather from a Spanish colleague sent her to the BBC weather website. There, she saw a job advertisement, forgot all else, applied and got the post.

"The job was as a broadcast assistant at the BBC Television Centre in the Weather Department," she said. "My degree had armed me with all the things I needed for the post and I thought, why not?"

Whether Lukwesa realised it at the time or not, her MSc in GIS had come from a Department with an enviable track record in teaching GIS. The Leicester Department of Geography is one of only a few in the country to have maintained a chair in Geographical Information Systems and has been at the cutting edge of the development and application of GIS technology for more than 20 years.

With its focus on innovative taught postgraduate teaching and its track record in learning and teaching developments it has trained more than 280 students since 1989, many of whom have since taken up leading positions in public and private GIS organisations. One indication of its reputation is that the Leicester GIS department is currently the lead institution in one of the government's highly prized Centres of

The Virtual Reality Laboratory in SPLINT, Department of Geography



Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), with funding of £3.9m.

Zambian-born Lukwesa, a member of the royal tribal family of the same name, completed her first degree in Geography and European Studies from the University of Sussex and spent a year in Switzerland (Neuchatel) on an ERASMUS exchange course. It was in Switzerland that she 'got the GIS bug' and started searching round for a good place to take a Masters degree.

Leicester won on two counts, as one of the best courses she came across and a chance to go back home. There was only one problem – she couldn't afford it, but, taking advice from the Head of Department at the time, she won an EU scholarship to pay for the course.

"My time at Leicester was great," she said. "In my career I've used absolutely everything we did on that course. It wasn't just theoretical, it was very relevant. It was a hard course. There was so much to fit in during one year – lots of theory and practical skills like writing code. People who weren't that way inclined struggled a bit, but we all pulled together and helped each other.

"One of the best things was the people I met from all over the world. I made some great friends. There were crazy nights when three or four of us would be working in the labs at 3am. Someone would be tearing their hair out because their code wasn't working and we'd all

come together and try to sort it out. The support was great. I felt quite privileged."

Although her role with Sky is in the Newsroom, she feels that working in the Weather Department has been an excellent training ground, right from her early days at the BBC. "The BBC trained you for broadcasting, not just to stay in the background. At every shift you were expected to go out there and shadow presenters. I shadowed Michael Fish and Isobel Lang, and all the main national presenters worked with us.

"We also got more weather training, learning how to put together the charts that go out on air. Once we reached a certain level we were called on to cover all BBC regions if they needed someone. That's how we got into presenting."

She laughs now about her nerves the time she was given an assignment with the extremely friendly and supportive BBC Wales, when she had some difficulty pronouncing a certain Welsh word. A couple of months later she came back to the East Midlands, taking up a place at Nottingham (BBC East Midlands Today), mainly with radio at first.

"I've always done the early shift," Lukwesa said. "At Nottingham, it was non-stop, we had 21 radio broadcasts in the morning. I had to be up at 4.30am to start at 6am. First I had to ring the Weather Centre, where the forecasters would give you the science and you had to work out the best

way to put the story across to the public. I worked on radio until lunchtime then had to get ready for television, first putting together the weather chart, then down to the make-up room, back to the studio and finish at 2pm. I did that for three years. I was very lucky to have the stability of staying in the East Midlands."

Returning to work after having her son Theodore, Lukwesa decided she needed a new challenge and began to move into the Newsroom, standing in as a presenter every weekend throughout the summer. "Working six, sometimes seven days a week, was hard with a new baby," she said, "but I knew there was an end to it and the experience was wonderful. But I have to add, and I'm sure I speak for a lot of working parents, that a lot of my career would never have happened if I didn't have the wonderful support of my Mum."

"The key is listening to what people say. A lot of people come into the business thinking they know it all, but you really are at the mercy of the team in the gallery. I worked with a really good team, who helped me along. I went on some great courses, too, for imagery, voice-training, writing, journalism, media law and reading links. It was intense but great fun."

After the summer, she kept up her skills by doing afternoon news bulletins, then took up a permanent post as the Lunchtime News Anchor for East Midlands Today.

She was there for seven months before moving to Sky. There, she found herself in a completely different world, working with 24-hour rolling news. "There are no rehearsals, no chances to try something out. News is constantly breaking over the wires and having to be checked on the Internet, and you are very much involved with all that, not just reading the auto cue. It's a very hands-on job and when you come off your shift you are tired."

For now, the night shift suits Lukwesa very well, giving her time with her young son, but she knows the world she works in is constantly changing and is already looking to her own future plans. "Now I'm still finding my feet at the national level, but in the not too distant future I'd maybe like to do something during daytime – prime time television. That will be the next step."

Lukwesa smiles, sometimes masking exasperation, when young people seem too glib about careers as television presenters. "There is so much involved. The training is intense. You have to learn how to keep talking when you've got the gallery completely falling apart around your ears. You can't let people at home know everything has gone horribly wrong. Your image is important, too – after all, you're in people's living rooms and you have to look your best. Presenting the weather was a great training ground, you have to ad lib the whole thing. Each stage of my career

has been a wonderful training ground. It's taken me five years to get where I am, and everyday I learn something new...great isn't it!"

"One thing that used to, and still does, make my blood boil, was the comment that you're 'just the weather girl'. That's a terrible insult to the very highly trained scientists who work in meteorology and the work they do supporting people out there whose lives depend on weather. It's a highly trained scientific job. People are working for 24 hours to get the information, then you can be told you've only got 30 seconds to get the message out. But you still have to do it. Just because weather presenters are on air for matter or minutes sometimes seconds, doesn't mean they're any less qualified, and it's about time people starting getting their facts right."

"The government is always trying to encourage children into science, so why rubbish something like weather reports that go into their homes every day? We need to get more kids involved with science, through the sciences – maths, physics, chemistry, geography, meteorology etc.... My own background was very scientific and although I've moved on to news now, I would never rubbish where I've come from because it was a marvellous training ground and believe me, you do have to have something between the ears to do it." **n**

Celebrating 50 years of Field Research

This year Dr David Harper from the Department of Biology has been researching in the Rift Valley lakes of East Africa for 25 years – half the University's life!

To commemorate both anniversaries, he plans to make a film focused on three undergraduates who will be working with him at Lake Bogoria this August-September.

To make this film representative of the University's 50 years, it will include a review of past field research by Leicester students from around the world. In the early years, the University had a strong Exploration Society but few records of its activities remain today.

Alumni who conducted field research – of any kind and anywhere in the world – are invited to write a short account of their research, accompanied by one or two photos, and send them to Dr David Harper at dmh@leicester.ac.uk or to the Department of Biology at the University of Leicester.



A Course Less Ordinary

It's bold, it's imaginative, it's new thinking – no, not the latest multiplex blockbuster, but the study of film at the University of Leicester which is reaching out to a whole new generation of people wishing to engage critically with cinema.

Study film at the University of Leicester and you will never watch a movie in the same way again.

For Leicester is in the vanguard of a new generation of film scholarship – as far removed from the early approaches to the discipline as the flea-pit is from the multiplex.

In the ever evolving world of cinema, Leicester offers courses that not only keep in step with change, they provide students with an understanding of the context of change – they learn to see movies in a different way altogether.

This perspective on cinema stems from the distinctive way film studies is taught at Leicester – as a multidisciplinary approach, or put it another way with a multistar cast of academics, whose subject areas are as diverse as the films they lecture on, but who are brought together by their common interest-movies.

Leicester's take on film studies places it among the avant-garde courses where films are seen as the fulfilment of more than a creative process.

Filmstar Isha Koppikar
filming Raakh
(meaning Ashes) in
the University's
Botanic Garden.

As James Chapman, Professor of Film Studies, explains: "What I try to persuade the film student to think about is what they see on screen in the end product. It is the residue, if you like, of a whole range of industrial, cultural, aesthetic, political, censorial and commercial decisions that have been made during the production process and have shaped the final text.

"We take a student's knowledge and interest in film and try to get them to analyse cinema on an academic level. So a lot of people might say – 'film, it's just entertainment, it's escapism pure and simple.' We say yes it is, but escapism is rarely pure and it's never simple.

"The culture of understanding what a piece of entertainment is revolves around ideas of pleasure – how do films generate pleasure – in what sort of way and for what type of assumed spectator are differences in gender, social class, age, and ethnicity. The way people respond to film engages with questions of the place of film in a wider role e.g. as an instrument of propaganda and persuasion or as an issue-led medium.

"In essence we move students away from looking at films as just a piece of flimsy entertainment fiction and to look at the wider context."

Film Studies at Leicester is taught mainly within the Department of the History of Art and Film – although its presence is across the University in two faculties – and the study of the subject provides a thorough grounding in the analysis of art and films, both historical and contemporary. Students are trained to interrogate, negotiate and make their living 'within' a world of images. They have the opportunity to study in depth a range of subjects from medieval art and architecture and Renaissance painting to Hollywood cinema and contemporary conceptual art.

Allied with this commitment to develop the critical faculties of the student is a determination among the Leicester academics to take Film Studies in new directions: establishing it as one of the foremost departments of its kinds in the country where new thinking from different disciplines informs the teaching and understanding of the subject.

Says Professor Chapman: "One of the things you learn as a film student of the new generation – as at Leicester – is that the subject has moved on from the first generation of film studies where there was a certain attempt to legitimate the discipline intellectually which involved the application of high theory – you get a whole generation of people in the 70s doing film theory who looked at cinema as institution and rarely mention individual films except in passing: you get a sense they don't actually enjoy the performance.

"I tell prospective students that our degree course balances 'traditional' film studies with new approaches and concerns. 'Old' film studies might be seen as a predominantly aesthetic approach, film as art, film history as the history of films, privileging a few 'classics' (*Citizen Kane*, *Battleship Potemkin*, *Bicycle Thieves* etc).

"We cover this too – predominantly in Year 1 as a grounding for students. But we also balance it out with new approaches and films that reflect intellectual interests in the discipline as it stands. At Leicester, there's a particular emphasis on film in context (historical, cultural, industrial etc) recognising that films are not autonomous texts but are part of wider institutional and cultural discourses.

"We also embrace the popular, we don't look down on it, and we see it as very important in terms of its social significance and it is still very ideological and needs to be analysed.

"If it is denigrated for being sexist, reactionary or racist we analyse the mechanisms and processes that make it so. We also ask why it continues to be popular and reach a wide audience.

"The new generation film academic at Leicester engages with films as someone who likes the medium along with looking at it intellectually as well as critically. There is no longer a sense of slumming it in studying films.

"It is true to say that many of the pejorative connotations associated with the study of film – or media studies – have been lost given the critical skills developed by students and their employability.

"20 years ago Film Studies were seen as soft subjects and not widely offered," said Professor Chapman. "We have seen them becoming more academically respectable.

"Importantly, and this is crucial, the subject is seen as providing students with a whole range of employable skills because it offers a balance of subject specific knowledge and a range of skills and competencies that you acquire from studying film. In a world where we are all told to multitask and be masters of various trades, an interdisciplinary subject like film offers a wide range of skills competencies: even for those who want to go and work in the medium of films itself."

"20 years ago Film Studies were seen as soft subjects and not widely offered," said Professor Chapman. "We have seen them becoming more academically respectable, more students taking them at A-level and more universities offering them at degree levels."



Bollywood production
filmed on the
University campus

Dr Anna Claydon, from the Department of Media and Communication, added: "Media Studies comes under criticism often from the media itself which is ironic because they do not understand the intellectually challenging nature of Film Studies and Media Studies. There is something preventing people from seeing it as a rigorous and intellectually challenging subject."

"In terms of our programme at Leicester we have such a high rate of employability six months after graduation – 86% plus a further 10% going into higher education study – so there is evidence that the discipline is leading people into good solid jobs. This is something that is having real impact on the image and prestige of studying film."

The spectrum of academic backgrounds and influences that are brought to bear upon the studying of film at Leicester is one of the key reasons, therefore, that it has been able to carve a distinctive niche.

Leicester is distinctive in that it addresses the euro-centrism or anglo-centrism associated with many Film Studies courses and offers a core module studying world cinema, embracing cinema from different countries, including Bollywood, Mexican and Middle Eastern films.

Dr Claydon says: "The act of learning about world cinemas is important for both Home/EU students and any international students present. We forget how Anglo-American-centric we seem to those from other cultures and part of being a student is about having our expectations challenged and our realities checked by new, more cosmopolitan views of the world and its socio-cultural artefacts: and film is the most dynamic available."

"Film itself is multidisciplinary – it is related to photography, to art history, literature, sociology, critical theory, cultural studies and more. The intellectual context in which the study of the discipline has occurred draws on literature, social history, media and communications."

Dr Claydon added: "Film Studies is one of the most interdisciplinary subjects that students can study. A Film Studies graduate needs to have learnt something about history, artistic composition, law, politics, gender, semiotics, ideology, cultural studies, technology (and how it was invented and is used), narrative analysis, globalisation and national identities and many other aspects."

So what of the future? As cinema evolves and transforms, can academia keep up?

Professor Chapman said: "Film and cinema have proved to be very durable – they have survived and incorporated changes including technological changes, world wars, decolonisation, the advent of talking cinema, TV, video, DVD, the internet and more. Yet in the last twenty years cinema attendance has increased. Cinema has incorporated new technologies – it has perhaps been modified by them – but it has not been killed off by them." n

University News

To find out more about the University or the stories listed here, log on to www.le.ac.uk

Official Launch of GENIE CETL

GENIE is a Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) in Genetics and has received £4.85million of funding from HEFCE. On 1 December 2006 GENIE officially opened its newly refurbished facilities in the Adrian Building and the Maurice Shock Medical Sciences Buildings. The Vice-Chancellor opened the centre by adding a DNA basepair to a semi-space filling model of the DNA double helix – a floor-to-ceiling DNA model that will be housed in the Adrian building.

In real life some 3 million basepairs of DNA would be only one millimetre long.



[Image: L-R Professor Peter Williams, Head of the Genetics Department, Dr. Annette Cashmore, Director of the GENIE CETL, Professor Sir Alec Jeffreys and Professor Robert Burgess, Vice-Chancellor.]

Seventy-seven Year Old Fresher



At age 77, Hank Reece has embarked on a degree at Leicester. He recalls that he was 'bombed out' of his first attempt to go to University, when Bristol – the city he was living in – was blitzed during the Second World War.

After a successful career running his own knitwear firm, Hank wanted to return to higher education and has enrolled with his daughter, Frances.

Hank has travelled widely and has always taken an interest in the archaeology of the countries he and his wife visited, so the BA Archaeology and Ancient History was a natural choice, while Frances is studying History. Hank looks forward to the challenges ahead though admits: "I haven't sat an exam for over six decades so I do wonder if I can keep up!"

Joe Orton Exhibition

A retrospective exhibition 'Ortonesque; Joe Orton 1933-1967' displays for the first time a collection of Joe's personal belongings, described as "a treasure trove for scholars". In 1997, the University of Leicester acquired Joe Orton's personal and literary papers, photographs and memorabilia.

This major exhibition at Leicester's New Walk Museum and Art Gallery will celebrate the life and times of Leicester playwright, diarist and author, Joe Orton, and mark the 40th anniversary of his death.

Joe Orton's short but prolific career lasted from 1964 until his murder in 1967. He amused audiences with scandalous black comedies such as "Entertaining Mr Sloane", "Loot" and "What the Butler Saw". His contempt for social institutions and his delight in shocking people made him one of the funniest satirists in the British Theatre.



Unique Sundial

A sundial believed to be unique in its three-dimensional design has been erected on the University's main campus. The analemmatic "noon mark" was donated by Mrs Jean Humphreys, wife of the late Professor Arthur Humphreys and commemorates her gratitude to successive Principals and Vice-Chancellors of the University.

The sculpture, entitled "Eye of Time" was designed by Dr Allan Mills, Department of Geology and carved from Portland stone. The sculpture is an early form of sundial that registers both the instant of noon and the time of year. Throughout history cultures have needed to keep track of both cycles of time, for agricultural purposes and in their daily lives. Noon marks were used as late as the 19th century to check unreliable clocks and watches.



City Schools Art Exhibition

In June 2006, the University hosted the City Schools Art Exhibition entitled "Roots: Laying Foundations for Creative Growth". Twenty seven schools took part in the event, which was co-ordinated by staff from Sir Jonathan North Community College and the University's Outreach team.

At the launch 400 visitors enjoyed dance and musical performances, including a display of Maypole dancing by pupils from Avenue Primary School.



Leicester joins The 1994 Group

In August 1996, The 1994 Group of internationally recognised, research-intensive universities admitted the University of Leicester to its membership.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Robert Burgess said: "This is a milestone for Leicester, the impact of which extends far beyond one of perception. It places Leicester in a group alongside our research intensive peers as we continue to raise our game nationally and internationally.

"Universities like Leicester are competing internationally for the best students, for top-ranking staff and for research grants. Being part of a select group of leading UK universities provides us with a competitive edge on a global stage."

Potential new painkiller Drug

Medical scientists at the University of Leicester and Ferrara in Italy have developed a potential new pain-killing drug.

Professor David Lambert, who has collaborated with Dr Girolamo Calo in Ferrara Italy on the development of the new drug – known as UFP-101 – believes that it avoids many of the side effects of morphine, currently the 'gold standard' in pain reduction.

An estimated 10 million people across the UK experience daily or frequent pain and many also experience unwanted side effects. Professor Lambert explains:

"Morphine produces its clinical effects by interaction with opioid receptors. In addition to acting as a pain killer this drug produces a number of unwanted side effects of importance from clinical (e.g., depression of breathing, constipation and tolerance) and social (addiction) viewpoints.

RAG Week

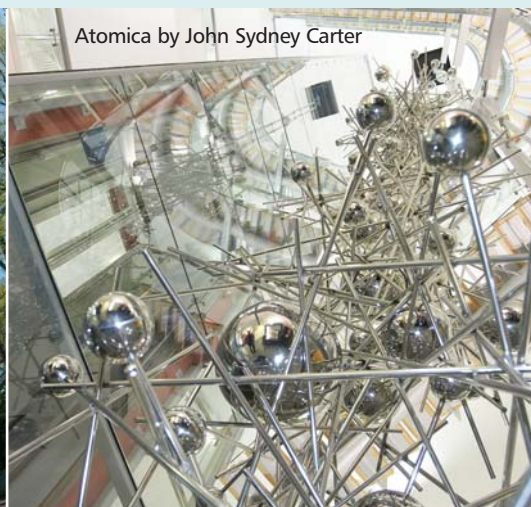
As part of RAG week, Students' Union president, Martin Cullen was locked in a cage and assailed by wet sponges. Money raised from the attack went to charity. Food and drink featured prominently in the week's highlights, including RAG's bar crawl in *Zanzibar*, the Students' Union approved nightclub, and an International Food Fair in the Union's bar, *Element*, where students were able to sample food from around the world.



University opens world-class Centre for Bio-Medicine



Henry Welcome Building



Atomica by John Sydney Carter

The University's new £22.5 million centre for world-class biomedical research was opened on 17 November 2006.

On this occasion, two sculptures by the national artist John Sydney Carter, FRBS, were unveiled.

Director of the Wellcome Trust Dr Mark Walport formally opened the building, which was funded jointly by the University and the Wellcome Trust.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Robert Burgess said: "The University has the largest number of taught postgraduate students in the UK and an international reputation for the excellence of its research in biological and biomedical science. This highly complex facility, part of a £300 million University Development Plan to transform the campus, will allow the University to further develop its activities in these important areas."



Attenboroughs honoured 'at home'

Richard and David Attenborough returned in July 2006 to the University they once called home to receive special honours. As children, the two famous brothers lived on campus at the University of Leicester where their father, Frederick, was Principal. More than 60 years later, they were invited back to be made distinguished Honorary Fellows.

When asked what their father would think of the awards, Lord Attenborough, 82, said: "He would have laughed." Lord Attenborough, who is an Oscar-winning film director, has already given his name to a centre for disability in the arts at the University.

Sir David, 80, the award-winning TV naturalist, has maintained links with the University, including giving lectures.

A Trio of Anniversaries

The Leicester Geologists' Alumni Society (LGAS) held an Open Day and alumni reunion on 28 October 2006 to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Department of Geology. Graduates were joined by some of the department's first staff members for tours of the refurbished facilities and on 29 October they joined first-year students on a fieldtrip to Bradgate Park.

The Department of Computer Science celebrated its 25th anniversary with a programme of special events on 13 March

2007. Professors Rick Thomas and Iain Stewart gave a presentation about the Department's beginnings and its development over the years which was followed by the annual Faculty of Science Lecture.

The University's Victorian Studies Centre – the longest established in the UK – marked its 40th anniversary on 31 March 2007. A conference, held to consider the pasts and futures of Victorian Studies, included workshops demonstrating some of the innovative digital technologies used to spread resources among the wider community.

Alumni News

To find out more about the University or the stories listed here, log on to www.le.ac.uk

Message from the Chairman

The Alumni Association has at its disposal two capital funds which yield an annual income for the support of student projects and academic work. Depending on the amount of income available – at present approximately £1,000 from each fund – members are able to distribute funds to deserving causes.

During my tenure as Chairman of the Alumni Association, I have found the allocation of these monies is one of the most rewarding aspects of the job. Applications for funds always exceed the available cash and, for this reason, I have tried to increase the funds available at our disposal.

Our first attempt at fundraising was to enter a team of 7 runners from the University in the 2006 Edinburgh Marathon. The team made up of students and staff raised a figure of £3,725. This was a magnificent achievement and has encouraged us to plan more fund-raising events for this cause.

There is no doubt that money is tight in the education sector, and our students need all the help we are able to give them. Therefore I urge you to watch out for our next events on the website at www.le.ac.uk/alumni/ so that you can assist us in our current plans to help our students on their way to a first-class education here at Leicester.



(l-r) Clare di Palma, Martin Pennington, Edris Kibalama, John Alcock, Keith Ruffles, Anita Linsell, Jason Wong.

Anita L Linsell
Chairman, Alumni Association



2006 Alumni Reception at the National Space Centre

During the evening of 28 June 2006, the National Space Centre was opened exclusively for the University's alumni and friends.

The event attracted more than 130 graduates, representing every decade from the 1940s to the most recent graduates. Surprisingly, for many local graduates this was their first visit to the award-winning Centre where they learned about what it takes to become an astronaut, and about the latest discoveries in space exploration.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Burgess welcomed alumni and spoke about the special relationship between the Space Centre and the University – one of its co-founders with Leicester City Council, following a successful bid to the Millennium Commission, and highlighted a string of Leicester's recent achievements.

There was plenty of opportunity to chat with fellow alumni while exploring the Hub, Rocket Tower and six themed galleries and many alumni promised to come back for another visit to one of the UK's prime visitor attractions.

Alumni Reception at the Bodleian Library, Oxford

Close to 100 graduates, guests and honorary graduates attended an informal reunion on 9 November 2006 at the Bodleian Library. They were welcomed by the University's Chancellor, Sir Peter Williams and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Robert Burgess. As one of oldest libraries in Europe, founded in 1602, the Bodleian Library is regarded as a masterpiece of Gothic architecture. In addition to exploring Divinity Hall and Convocation House, the evening included a guided tour of the Duke Humfrey's Library.



Upcoming Events

Date and Time: 6.30pm on Thursday 24 May 2007

Place: The Pitcher and Piano, Trafalgar Square

In May 2007 a special 'reunion' will be held for recent graduates, especially those from the last ten years – with **FREE** entrance.

Many graduates live and work in London, so where better to meet than at the Pitcher and Piano in Trafalgar Square? It is a great place to meet up with new friends and catch up on news, so pick up the phone and round up all your old classmates or send them a text to meet you at 6.30pm for a great night out. Why not invite friends who live outside the capital to join you for the weekend?

You will receive full details and a reminder by email, but if you have any questions, just call Helen Richardson at tel. **0116 252 2354** or email: hr15@le.ac.uk

For graduates living outside London, you have not been forgotten – keep an eye on the website at www.le.ac.uk/alumni/ and your emails for an event in a city near you!

Please note this is the only official Leicester reunion for recent graduates



Reception at the House of Lords

Date: Thursday 25 October 2007

Place: Palace of Westminster, Cholmondeley Room and Terrace

University of Leicester graduates will receive an invitation in late summer to a reception at the House of Lords on Thursday 25 October 2007. From the Cholmondeley Room and the Lords' Terrace, graduates will be able to enjoy the splendid evening views over the river Thames, in the company of old friends.

After invitations have been sent out, registration will be on a 'first come, first served' basis. To ensure that you receive full details, please let us know your latest email address at: alumni.relations@le.ac.uk and visit the website at: www.le.ac.uk/alumni/

University Open Day in 2008

Date: Saturday 26 April 2008

Place: University of Leicester

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the awarding of the University's Royal Charter in 1957, a series of special events will be held during the 2007-08 year. A University Open Day on 26 April 2008 will be one of the year's highlights, where graduates, friends of the University and members of the public will be free to explore all areas of the campus and see the very best the University has to offer. This will also be one of the first occasions for many to visit the new £27.9m state-of-the-art Library.



Affinity Credit Card

Many of our graduates currently hold a University of Leicester Beneficial Bank Card, which was established to benefit students requiring assistance through the University's Student Hardship Fund.

Our current partnership will come to an end in May 2007 and we are pleased to announce that an alternative affinity card provider will be announced in the near future. Full details of the new scheme, outlining the benefits to alumni and to the University, will be mailed to graduates and will appear on the Alumni Relations website at: www.le.ac.uk/alumni/

We look forward to providing our new card with additional benefits.

Top Historian gives 2007 Annual Lecture

Military historian, filmmaker and author Richard Holmes delivered the 2007 Alumni Association and Haldane Society Lecture to a packed audience on 9 March 2007.

The Lecture, entitled *Tommy: The British Soldier on the Western Front 1914-1918*, illustrated what life was like for soldiers on the front line. Richard Holmes interpreted personal testimonies of hand-to-hand fighting, trench love affairs, those who shot prisoners and those who risked their lives to escort a surrendering enemy to safety.



The Vice-Chancellor opens Leicester's latest Residential and Conference Facility



University of Leicester students who managed to secure an apartment in the University's 'New Hall' this year experienced state-of-the-art accommodation, believed to be amongst the best in the country.

The £25m New Hall, situated in the University's residential site in Oadby, accommodates 746 students. Of these 581 are housed in the new pavilions, comprising units of four-five flats, where students quickly feel at home.

All rooms are en suite, with telephone and Internet access and each unit has a fully-equipped kitchen/living room where students can socialise or prepare late night meals.

The University is a popular venue for conferences and facilities have been designed to suit conference delegates as well as students.

Recipes for Disaster



Leicester science graduates Gordon Wilkinson (PhD Chemistry 1972) and Brenda Wilkinson (PhD Microbiology 1973) never imagined becoming authors of a cookbook.

After selling a successful science publishing company in 2000, they devoted more time to their charity work, primarily for the Christian relief and development agency, *Tearfund*. The monotony of the local diets they ate during their travels prompted them to think about the staple foods of people in the world's poorest countries. The result was a collection of recipes from across the globe in a cookbook designed to raise funds for disaster relief.

To purchase a copy of *Recipes for Disaster – Relief and Development* (at £7) or to download individual recipes visit: www.recipesfordisaster.org or email the Wilkinsons on recipes@felbridge.com

"Leicester may not be the most famous University in the UK. But by any measure it is one of the best."

Times Higher Education Supplement 2006

Members of the Alumni Association

The University of Leicester is an established university with a proud past and an exciting future. Ranked top for teaching quality amongst mainstream English universities (NSS 2005, 2006) we made the Top 20 in *The Times Good University Guide* league tables 2007 and were shortlisted by the *Times Higher Education Supplement* as "University of the Year" for 2005 and 2006.

This year we are seeking keen and enthusiastic individuals to join the Association's Standing Committee of Convocation and help steer our developing relationship with our alumni. The role is open to all former students of the University. If you have a few hours to spare and would like to get involved in running the Association please contact:

alumni.relations@le.ac.uk before 1 June 2007.



**University of
Leicester**

Annual Fund



From the 2006-07 student callers

Equal Access to Education

While the high quality of Leicester's teaching and research has remained consistent, major changes have been made to the funding arrangements for all students from 2006 onwards. An increase in tuition fees – to £3,000 per year – has presented the University with a dilemma: how to maintain its position as a top 20 university, while continuing to admit the best students, regardless of background.

In keeping with its belief in fair access, the University – together with the generous support of friends and graduates – has put in place a comprehensive system of scholarships and bursaries, which guarantee financial support to bright students who might otherwise have been deterred by the high cost of study and the prospect of student debt. The University is committed to growing these funds for future generations of students.

Students, Books & Bricks

You might be surprised to learn that on three evenings per week during term time the University's Council Chamber is transformed into a Calling Room for current students.

The students from all Faculties are members of the Annual Fund team, chosen to contact their predecessors – Leicester's alumni – to talk about the University's current priorities.

At Leicester, the tradition of giving is as old as the University itself and dates back to the founding of the first College in 1921. Through their conversations with graduates, students learn much more about Leicester, such as what the University was like in a different era, how much has changed and the value of a Leicester degree to its alumni. In turn, graduates hear about the latest news and issues on campus.

The 2006 Telephone Campaign invited graduates to consider support for one of three areas – students, books or bricks

and mortar – or helping to build up a student opportunities fund, providing additional library resources or investing in the planned refurbishment of the Students' Union Building.

Staff and students welcome this opportunity to pass on our sincere thanks to all our current donors, listed overleaf.

All alumni – regardless of their area of support – will receive a special invitation to tour the new Library at the University's Open Day on 26 April 2008 (see page 26).

Library Construction enters the final Phase

The University's high rankings for teaching and student satisfaction demonstrate its commitment to provide students with a first-class education and support. For the second consecutive year, Leicester was ranked joint top in the *National Student Survey* among mainstream English universities.

Construction of the new Library, now in its final phase, is at the heart of the University's £300 million programme of investment which is changing the face of the University campus. During the refurbishment of the existing Library all library services have now moved to the new extension to ensure that services to students continue without interruption.

The new Library will be known as the *David Wilson Library*, after its principal benefactor, formerly Chairman of the construction group Wilson Bowden plc, who donated £2 million as flagship funding towards the project. David Wilson's generous support is indicative of how many individuals have – financially and otherwise – helped to enhance the University's reputation.



The opening of the new Library in 2007 – the University's Jubilee Year – will be a fitting tribute to Leicester's accomplishments as a university in its first half-century.

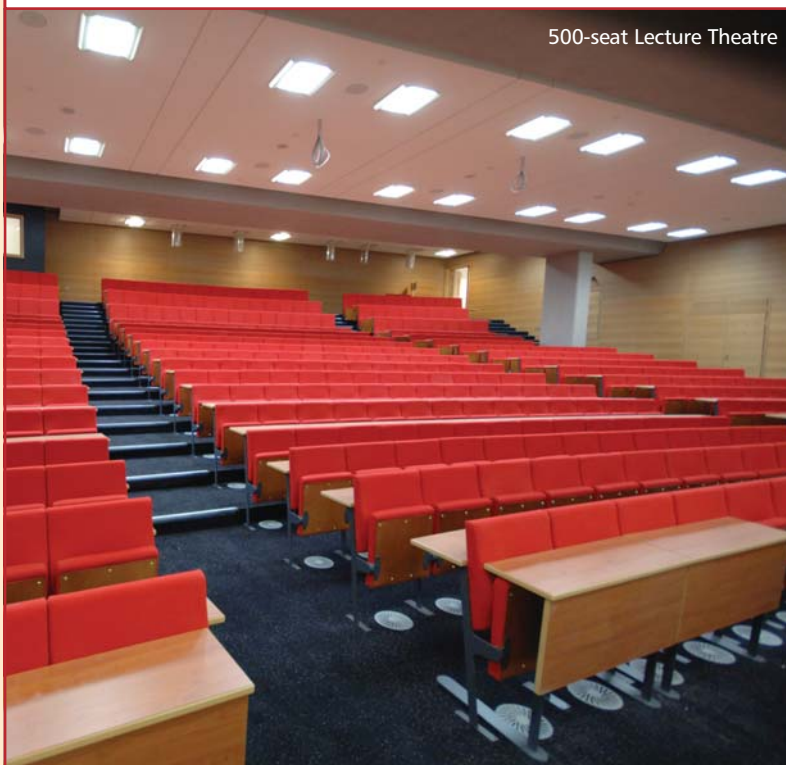
ROLL OF BENEFACTORS 2006-2007

Thank you for your generous support

Thank you to all those benefactors listed below, and to our 103 anonymous givers, who have made a contribution to our Annual Fund between 1 April 2006 – 1 April 2007.

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The remodelled Library will house:



500-seat Lecture Theatre

- study spaces for 1,500 students
- group study rooms
- increased IT facilities
- a 200-seat postgraduate area
- seminar rooms offering flexibility of space
- a 500-seat lecture theatre (above)
- a café
- a bookshop
- careers library

Access to a wealth of networked resources and the digital library will be delivered through wireless technology and well-equipped computer areas throughout the Library. The building will increase shelving capacity to 38km – enough to accommodate 20 years' growth in the printed collections. Radio-frequency identification technology will be brought into play to enable students to self-issue books, enhancing the building's ability to serve students effectively.

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How your generosity can help the students of today

Annual Giving

Creating Opportunities for Students



University of Leicester

1. Details of Supporter

Name

Address

2. Regular Gift - Banker's Order

Name and address of Bank/Building Society

Post Code

Acct No

Sort Code

Please transfer the sum of £ ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Annually

to the account of the University of Leicester (92642689) at HSBC Bank plc. 31 Granby Street Leicester LE1 6EP (sort code 40 28 06)

Beginning on 20 ☐ for years (we recommend 3)

☐ or until further notice

Signed Date

3. Single Gift

I wish to make a gift of:

☐ £50 ☐ £100 ☐ £250 ☐ £500 ☐ Other £

☐ I enclose a cheque or CAF voucher made payable to the 'University of Leicester'.

☐ I would like to make my gift by credit/debit card Visa/Mastercard/Delta/Maestro/Solo

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Start Date

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Issue No

Signed

4. Gift Aid declaration - UK taxpayers only

Name of Charity: University of Leicester (Inland Revenue Reference X 23305/3)

If you pay income tax or capital gains tax, the Charity can reclaim the standard rate tax you paid on your gift. You simply need to sign below.

☐ I would like the Charity to reclaim the tax I have paid on all donations made since 6 April 2000 and on all future donations until I notify you otherwise.

Signed Date

5. What your gift will achieve

I would like my gift to be directed towards:

☐ Student Opportunities ☐ Students' Union Facilities ☐ Library Resources

☐ Please indicate if you wish to be omitted from the published list of benefactors.

Thank you for your support

Ways to contribute

► If you would like to make a contribution, please fill in and return the form to the address below.

• **Regular Gifts** – By setting up a Banker's Order, you can make a regular gift to the University – on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis – over a fixed period of time (we recommend 3 years). Alternatively, you may prefer to set up a Banker's Order without an end-date and advise your bank to stop payments whenever you wish. Please complete section 1 and 2.

• **Single Gifts** – You may make a donation of any amount by cheque, credit, debit, or charge card. Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) vouchers or CAF card are also accepted. Please complete sections 1 and 3.

• **Gift Aid Declaration** – Since April 6 2000, if you are paying UK income or capital gains tax the University is able to reclaim the tax you have paid on any gift, boosting the value of your gift by 22% at no cost to you. To enable us to do this, please complete section 4 Gift Aid Declaration.

• **Higher Rate Taxpayers** – Higher rate taxpayers can claim the difference between the higher rate of 40% and the basic rate of 22%. This means a Banker's Order of £25 a month would only cost £19.23 a month and a £500 donation would cost you just £386.

• **Directing Your Gift** – Please indicate which area you prefer to support in section 5.

Please return your completed form to: Alumni Relations, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester LE1 7RH.





Did you Know?

10 Facts About Your University

1	Leicester has been ranked joint first for two consecutive years for student satisfaction and teaching quality by the <i>National Student Survey</i> amongst full-time students at mainstream English universities.
2	Leicester has been shortlisted for two consecutive years for the Award of "University of the Year" by the <i>Times Higher Education Supplement</i> .
3	Leicester is a member of the 1994 Group of internationally renowned universities engaged in leading-edge research and high quality teaching.
4	Leicester has burst into the <i>Times Good University Guide</i> top 20 in 18th position (out of 110 universities), its highest ever position.
5	Leicester is just one of 21 British universities to be ranked in the world's top 200 (in 151st place) according to the Shanghai Jiao Tong International Table of Universities.
6	Leicester is the UK's second largest provider of distance learning education. Why not study for a masters or other qualification in this way? Visit www.le.ac.uk/distancelearning .
7	In 2007 Leicester became one of just six UK universities to achieve the highly prestigious Partner status through the Chartered Financial Analysis Institute.
8	Leicester Professor Sir Alec Jeffreys, inventor of DNA fingerprinting was named "Great Briton of 2006" in the third <i>Morgan Stanley Great Briton Awards</i> .
9	Leicester's Students' Union was named "Student Union of the Year" in 2005 and was a runner up in the same competition in 2006.
10	The <i>Times Higher Education Supplement</i> describes the University of Leicester as "by any measure one of the best".