

Rising to the challenge
A league of our own
Profile of a profiler
The art of research
On the right track

Graduates' Review

Spring 2004



University of
Leicester



February 2003 – Genetics Department receives the Queen's Anniversary Prize for pioneering research.



March – LUT uses Shakespearean "insults" to raise money for Comic Relief.



April – Archaeologist, Dr Patrick Clay, examines artefacts from Iron Age treasures in Leicestershire.



May – *The Guardian* rates Leicester's Medical School as the best school in the UK.



June – University joins in the celebrations at Britain's biggest Asian festival, the Mela.



July – Students celebrate their achievements at summer degree congregations at De Montfort Hall.



August – Students participate at one of the University's many Summer Schools.



September – Official opening of new residence, Opal Court.



October – Engineering receives three-year funding for research into vital air safety systems.



November – Leicester celebrates England's World Cup victory with seven Leicester Tigers in the squad.



December – Leicester scientists at the National Space Centre wait expectantly for news of Beagle 2.



January 2004 – A cold snap and flurry of snow provided students with some light relief after exams.

Front cover: the University of Leicester is at the forefront of research. The cover illustrates some of the latest works by Leicester academics. All of these publications are available at the University of Leicester Bookshop, telephone: (0116) 252 0000.

Editor's Welcome

► Welcome to the 2004 issue of the *Leicester Graduates' Review*.

Twelve months can be a long time in Higher Education and it is hard to convey something of the amazing progress that has taken place at Leicester, both to the physical shape of the campus and intellectually during this time. September 2003 saw the completion of the £3.7m Space Research and Multi-disciplinary Modelling Centre, and within the next few weeks the new £20m Medical Sciences Building will be up and running (see page 4).

Research. If that word conjures up the ivory tower, lonely scientist in a lab image, you had better think again. Traditionally a strong research institution, 2003 saw the University advance its reputation in both science and the arts. In this issue we look at Leicester's involvement in the Beagle 2 project and the burgeoning media interest in arts studies – both exemplify our position at the forefront of academic research. We also trace two leading experts in their respective fields. In our *In Person* feature Dr Julian Boon discusses his role as one of few criminal profilers in the UK. In our *Graduate Profile* Richard Bowker reflects on the challenges he faces as Head of the Strategic Rail Authority.

As the University is physically transformed, it is reassuring to know that certain things remain the same. In this issue we report how the *Financial Times* placed the University at the head of the league table for provision of taught postgraduate courses for the third consecutive year. We also bring you details of this year's *Homecoming* on 26 June when many of you will have the opportunity to tour the mix of traditional and new facilities for yourself, and catch up with old friends.

There's no doubt that Leicester is on a roll. We hope you will come and see for yourself how much we've changed. *Homecoming 2004* promises to be another of this year's successes.

Kathryn Whitehurst

Kathryn J Whitehurst
(BA Combined Studies 1970)

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www.le.ac.uk/alumni

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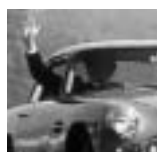
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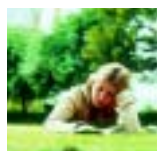
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Progress *in times of change*

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► The publication of the Higher Education Bill, currently making its way through Parliament, indicates that once again the higher education sector and Leicester face a time of challenge and change. The most controversial element of the Bill is the proposal to introduce variable tuition fees from 2006, but other elements of the Bill relating to research, teaching and the student experience all introduce challenges for the sector.

The University of Leicester is a leading research and teaching university. On this we are clear. For the third successive year we have been rated by the *Financial Times* in their top 20 UK universities.

Between 1989 and 2002 funding per student in higher education fell in real terms by 40%. Higher education has worked hard to maintain the quality of what we provide when faced with such a decline in funding. If Parliament passes the Bill, leading universities like Leicester face a difficult challenge. The resources that higher tuition fees will provide are vital if we are to remain an internationally competitive university. With 14 consecutive independent "excellent" ratings for our teaching, two Queen's Anniversary Prizes in a decade and pioneering research that impacts internationally, we believe strongly that we cannot and should not reduce the quality of what we offer our students, businesses and members of the community. Yet, whilst maintaining quality, the University must continue to attract the brightest and best students regardless of their social and financial background and naturally we are concerned how higher fees might impact on this. Indeed this problem is particularly acute at Leicester with 23% of our undergraduate students coming from social classes



three (manual) four and five – indeed a very diverse group for a leading university but a group we wish to retain. In September 2003 the *Sunday Times University Guide* wrote that of only five universities with a lower drop-out rate than Leicester in 2001 "none... approach the diversity of Leicester's intake".

At Leicester we are determined to maintain our standards and reputation for quality for which we are well known. But we are also determined to maintain the diversity of our intake and attract the best students. To this end we have established the University of Leicester Student Opportunities Fund. Already with support from our graduates and other friends we are building a fund to provide scholarships so that no able student is deterred from study at Leicester because of cost. We hope that you and other graduates will consider supporting the Fund. The details of the Student Opportunities Fund are printed on page 24.

At a time of considerable social and economic change the University continues to make strong progress. You will recall that in the last issue of the *Graduates' Review* we described the University's ambitious £300 million development plan. Our progress has been rapid and our first development, the £3.7m Space Research and Multi-disciplinary Modelling Centre, was available for use in September 2003 and will be officially opened later this year. The Departments of Chemistry and Archaeology & Ancient History now occupy newly refurbished buildings on campus. These developments will be followed later this year by the completion of our £20m Biomedical Sciences Research Building (pictured below). Work is due to begin in the next few months on a major extension and refurbishment of the University Library. As part of this project the University has been successful in securing the largest single philanthropic donation in its history – a gift of £1m from the John Hobley Trust. Under our newly appointed Pro-Chancellor, and Chairman of Fundraising, Nicholas Corah, we have an ambitious plan to raise even more resources to support our vital activities.

Universities are not ivory towers divorced from the communities in which they are located. Universities have a critical role in creating new knowledge, educating the workforce and contributing to their communities in a wide range of different ways. Let me give you three very different examples from Leicester that illustrate this theme.

On pages 8-9 you can read about the University's role in the Beagle 2 Mars Probe. Beagle 2, the UK's first mission to another planet, had its Operation





(Main) Students on campus; (below left) work in progress: the Biomedical Sciences Building.

Control Centre at Leicester. Although ultimately not successful in its primary objective of landing on Mars and beginning the search for life, the spin-off benefits of Beagle are enormous. For example, the X-ray spectrometer on Beagle (developed at Leicester, which determines the geochemical composition of material) needed to be able to operate on such a low level of power that it has very clear and significant applications in environments where ready access to high levels of power are restricted or space is limited (such as in deep mining or Third World environments). At just under 30kg, Beagle opens the way for frequent and cheaper exploration of Mars in the future by the European Space Agency. Beagle is therefore a major contribution to scientific advance and points the way to future developments.

Research at Leicester is strong. In the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise 84% of staff entered were found to be conducting national or international calibre research. Our research strengths stretch across the sciences, the arts and social sciences. In October for example, Professor Alan Felstead and Professor Lorna Unwin of the Centre for Labour Market Studies won a grant of over £1m from the Economic and Social Research Council to study workplace education. Meanwhile Professor Gerry Hanlon from the Management Centre won a grant of £150,000 to analyse corporate social responsibility. In total over £80m in research grants and contracts have been won in the last two years. It is these research activities that inform teaching. Our students are taught by academics who are leaders in their fields. They

These are exciting times for the University of Leicester. We have a proud past but our future can be even more exciting.

bring the subject alive and get students to develop a range of skills that can be used in their future careers.

If the UK is to remain competitive with other industrial nations then a highly educated workforce is crucial. Leicester is an institution genuinely committed to delivering lifelong learning. We have developed a range of new Foundation Degrees with employers that deliver the skills they need. We offer over 100 postgraduate programmes to individuals and partner organisations in the private and public sectors. In these ways Leicester is providing academic and professional postgraduate education that is essential not only for the advancement of knowledge but also for continuing professional development. In 2001, 2002 and 2003 the *Financial Times* placed Leicester at the top of its league table for its volume of taught postgraduate education. On pages 6-7 you can read why Leicester leads UK universities in this work.

The presence of a leading research university is undoubtedly of benefit to Leicester, Leicestershire and the East Midlands. We are an energetic partner in the region. We recently signed a partnership agreement with Bishop Grosseteste College (in Lincoln) and Newman College (in Birmingham). Attracted to the University by our strong record for

research and teaching we can see ways in which we can work together. Already we have been successful in winning a new centre in Science Education for the East Midlands with Bishop Grosseteste and the University of Nottingham and developing work for the Teacher Training Agency with Newman College. Our Colleges-University of Leicester Network brings 21 Higher and Further Education Colleges into a strong partnership with the University.

We provide a comprehensive programme of summer schools, masterclasses, taster courses and visits for local school children and sixth formers. At Leicester we believe we have an important role to play in raising aspiration, nurturing talent and supporting attainment in local schools and colleges. Our programmes and activities are very popular. Last year over 2,000 young people visited the University to take part in an activity. We also work with the parents of young people with talent in order to de-mystify the world of the university.

These are exciting times for the University of Leicester. We have a proud past but our future can be even more exciting. You, our graduates are our strongest advocates. I hope in this year's *Graduates' Review* you will learn more about our work and feel, as we who work here do, proud of your university. ■

Postgraduate courses

– a league of our own

► In May 2003 the *Financial Times* placed the University of Leicester at the head of 'a league of their own' for the level of taught postgraduate provision. As the largest provider of such courses in the UK, Leicester has consistently topped the *Financial Times* league tables in this respect since 2001.

The importance of this is self-evident, living as we do in an era of lifelong learning and 'portfolio' careers, an era when each individual with any wish to progress in a career will continue to study beyond the end of school or university.

Between 1996 and 2001 postgraduate student registrations in the UK jumped by 30% and numbers continue to rise as graduates and businesses increasingly turn to postgraduate education, keen for the advantages of respected specialised qualifications and the edge that a well-trained work force can provide.

So what has enabled Leicester to become the UK's leading provider of taught postgraduate education? In the view of Professor Kevin Lee, Dean of the Graduate School, and Louise Masterman, Head of the Graduate Office, Leicester has a winning combination, based on its high standards of teaching, its international research record and the accumulated expertise and range of programmes that can be offered by the country's largest Graduate School.

Quality of teaching

"The quality of both our postgraduate and undergraduate teaching has been judged by the government's Quality Assurance Agency to be among the best in the country," Professor Lee pointed out. "We have 18 subject areas graded as 'excellent'. In fact all departments assessed by the QAA in the last four years have been rated as excellent, a record which few other universities have been able to match."

Leicester's innovative Learning and Teaching Strategy is acknowledged to be a leader in its field. As a result, last year the University received further funding from the Higher Education Funding Council (England) to establish a second strategy, including in its remit postgraduate and distance learning issues, specifically: research techniques and methods, working relationships, data analysis

and presentation and communication skills.

Leicester's objective is to encourage students to develop both subject-specific and generic skills. Skill development is embedded in course programmes through creative ways of teaching. Among a number of initiatives the University has taken is the establishment of the Royal Literary Fund Writing Fellowship, enabling postgraduate students to receive guidance from a published writer – currently the poet Andrew Sant – in presenting their written assignments, and the creation of the Teaching Fellowship Scheme, offering two awards a year each of £2,000, to encourage stimulating and challenging teaching.

The influence of the Graduate School, Professor Lee feels, helps to ensure that best practice is maintained throughout the faculties and departments, supporting and monitoring this with tight and thorough quality reviews. This unifying influence is helpful in a University whose postgraduate programmes cover every discipline, as reflected in more than 100 masters programmes.

Importance of research

As a major research institution, last year the University attracted £46m in research grants, and this knowledge, expertise and sense of innovation and discovery permeates all teaching at Leicester, but more particularly that involved with postgraduate programmes.

One off-shoot of this is that postgraduate degree programmes across the campus are consistently more relevant and closely in touch with the 'real world' of industry, business and academia. "People like our degree programmes," Professor Lee said, "because they are useful."

Expertise in programme delivery

The size of the University's Graduate School means that there is enormous accumulated experience in designing programmes that are relevant to student needs and in delivering these programmes in ways that students appreciate. While the core activity remains campus-based, there are many opportunities for people to register for degrees part-time and through distance learning – another form of postgraduate education at which Leicester has proved highly successful, being the largest UK

provider of distance learning courses outside the Open University.

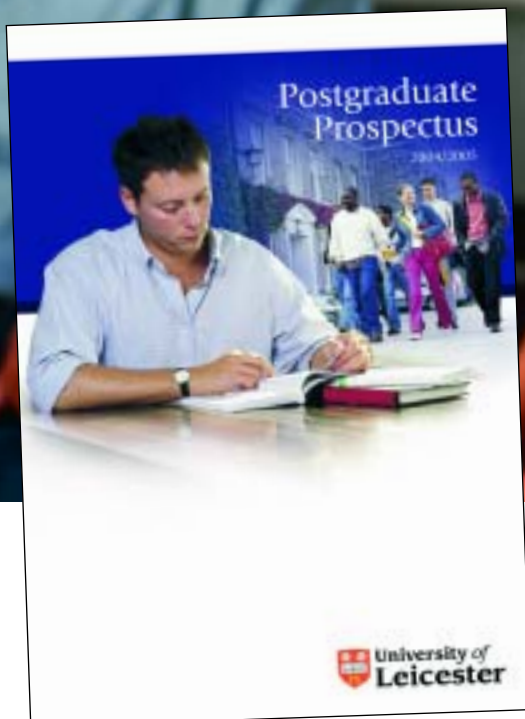
The advantages of taking a degree part-time or by distance learning are many for busy professional people who feel reluctant to interrupt their career, but nevertheless want to take a postgraduate qualification that will expand their horizons or unlock new career opportunities.

An MSc in Molecular Pathology and Toxicology enabled mature student Jackie Appleby to make a welcome break from a career as a chartered accountant to that of a research scientist in the biomedical sciences. She commented: "The course being part-time and flexible allowed me to fit it round the school holidays so that I needed very little help with child-care. Apart from being interesting in its own right, the MSc gave me invaluable experience in the lab, without which I would have really struggled in the PhD which I am doing now. I feel very fortunate in having been given a second chance to pursue my interest in science and medicine – and an unexpected bonus has been the chance to travel (and sometimes present my work) all over the world, as far away as the USA and Japan."

Flexibility is particularly valued in distance learning, allowing students to study in their own time and at their own pace. Portability is another key attraction, enabling them to take coursework with them wherever they travel, with no ill effects – as MBA graduate Lt Commander Daniel Yarker found, even when on duty: "At times when I have needed to get material while I have been at sea the Leicester Management Centre has been great, posting books and other resources to me. As a result I don't feel I've suffered in any way through taking a distance learning programme."

Part-time – and distance learning – programmes can sometimes be tailored to the needs of a student's employment. A South African head teacher taking a Leicester MBA in Educational Management reported dramatic results from his degree projects: "The school image has changed positively... It has expanded from three classrooms to thirteen. Pupils no longer leave in big numbers."

For obvious reasons distance learning has proved popular among international students, but Leicester also has a large population of students



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from overseas who choose to study on campus, full-time. Although this is a big investment to make, a one-year masters course is seen as good value for money, offering an excellent qualification in a comparatively short time. International students choose Leicester because it is a pleasant, relatively safe environment – a city but not too big, where the cost of living is cheaper than other parts of the UK, particularly London. Situated in the heart of the country Leicester also provides a good base for exploration further afield during weekends and holidays.

Changing demand for PhD degrees

Looking beyond taught masters courses, the profile of the people who return to university to take a PhD is changing, as Louise Masterman explained: "We are seeing more people come back between the ages of 30 and 55, looking for professional development and career enhancement further along their career path, rather than moving straight from an undergraduate degree to a masters and PhD project. More of them are taking the PhD part-time and many are attached to research and industrial and training projects."

Here, the University's high research standing is even more relevant. Medical student Raman Verma is the University's first MBPhD student, taking time off from his medical degree to take first an intercalated BSc and then a PhD before going on to complete his medical studies. He has been working with Professor Bryan Williams in the Cardiovascular Research Institute and has found it challenging but also highly rewarding. Professor Williams' verdict is equally favourable: "Raman has done extremely well. His research will be published in high impact journals. It will form the basis of further work in the lab and we will take this forward. It has been a success."

Someone who was part of the growing trend of those taking a part-time PhD later on is Martin Davies, who graduated from Leicester with a BA in 1973 and a PhD 30 years later. He said: "For all the outward changes since my undergraduate days, the University proved to be just as human and humane an institution as it was in the early seventies... The whole experience proved as rewarding as it was testing. It was wonderful to be intellectually stretched – challenged to plan on a large scale and to think and write self-critically. My unexpected new

title of Dr – and what led up to it – has created a great deal of interest in my school, and has, I believe, been something of an inspiration to ambitious sixth formers as they work towards university places."

Whatever the nature of postgraduate degrees they represent a major investment by the student of time and money, which benefits both student and society. Figures for taught postgraduate leavers in 2001 and 2002 indicated that 91% were in employment (83%) or further study or training (9%), with 4% seeking and 4% unavailable for employment or further study. Postgraduate leavers in those years include people working in senior positions in the South African parliament, the Ugandan government, the Central Bank of Nicaragua and the Bank of Guyana.

Obtaining a masters degree very markedly improves students' chances of getting a job – even more so than a first degree. A high proportion of people with masters degrees move into "graduate-level" employment, indicating that they offer a fast track into good, interesting jobs, often in medicine, education and other professions which contribute enormously to the local, social infrastructure. ■

Beagle 2 MARS

– making history

Every now and then we find ourselves poised on the brink of a landmark of history – a moment when something is achieved or revealed for the first time, pushing out the boundaries of human knowledge and experience just that little bit further.

► Such a moment came at Christmas 2003 when Beagle 2, a mere 30kg of equipment, was due to parachute down to the surface of Mars and just 9 kg of instruments and tools were to begin a search for signs of life, past or present, among the rocks and soil of the *Isidis Planitia*, close to the Martian equator.

For everyone with a connection to the University of Leicester that moment had special significance. Scientists in the University's internationally acclaimed Space Research Centre had played a major role, providing systems management, electrical and mechanical engineering expertise and operational support in the development of Beagle 2, the first European Mars lander.

In the words of Dr Mark Sims, Beagle 2 Mission Manager: "This is the most complicated and scientifically advanced lander for Mars that has ever been designed."

At the time of going to press, however, Beagle 2 has maintained an obstinate silence, having been dispatched on its trajectory to the landing site on Mars from its parent Mars Express spacecraft on December 19 2003.

The trajectory was precise, indicating that Beagle 2 should have landed within an area of about 2000 square kilometres within the target zone. The joint University of Leicester-Industry team worked long hours over Christmas and the New Year trying to establish communication links. However, to date no communications have been received from the Beagle 2 probe. Further investigations are continuing.

Named after *HMS Beagle*, the ship in which Charles Darwin, author of *The Origin of Species*, sailed – another defining moment in human history

– the Mars lander is part of the European Space Agency's Mars Express Mission, launched from Baikonur in Kazakhstan in June. The year, 2003, brought Mars the closest to Earth it has been for 60,000 years, offering a unique opportunity to take advantage of this in a new initiative to learn more about the planet.

In addition to Beagle 2, Mars Express, part of the ESA's Horizons 2000 programme, carries a payload of seven scientific instruments to orbit Mars, assessing the planet's atmosphere, surface and interior from a number of different measurements. UK universities have contributed significantly to three of these seven instruments.

Beagle 2 has drawn together years of planning by a partnership of Europe's foremost space research scientists. Led by the Open University, with the University of Leicester and EADS-Astrium (Stevenage) as principal partners it has involved more than 110 companies and organisations who have, in one way or another, made contributions to the project.

Scientists and engineers from more than 15 universities and research institutes across the UK, Europe and as far afield as Hong Kong have taken part. The British National Space Centre via the DTI and the European Space Agency are among its funding partners.

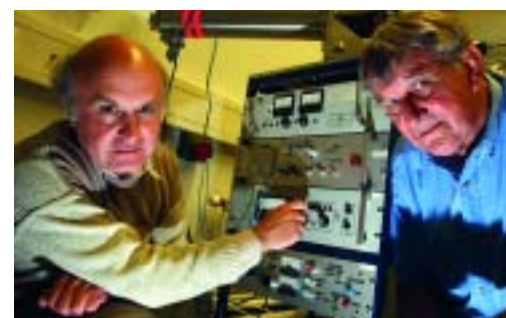
In a resounding tribute to the Beagle 2 project at the Royal Society, Science Minister Lord Sainsbury said: "The project involves a consortium of more than 100 academic institutions and industrial subcontractors. The lander was built in an extremely short time, and to stringent specifications. The designers and engineers involved in the project



Main: Beagle 2 and technicians (image: All Rights Reserved Beagle 2.com).

Below left: Mark Sims and Alan Wells (image: Leicester Mercury).

Below right: The PAW prior to installation.



have met those challenges head-on and come up with a series of innovative solutions.

"This is a testament to the UK's strengths in engineering and world-class scientific expertise. With the experience gained and skills acquired through working on Beagle 2, UK firms have reinforced their reputation as sought-after partners in international projects."

Later, as Beagle 2's silence began to cause concern, he commented: "Long term we need to be working with ESA to ensure that in some form there is a Beagle 3 which takes forward this technology. I very much hope that the Aurora programme, which is now being developed by ESA, will take forward this kind of robotic exploration."

The University of Leicester has long been a major player in space research; every year since 1967 there has been some Leicester-built equipment operating in space. As one of Europe's largest space science and astronomy groups, its Space Research Centre has played a key part in the Beagle 2 payload and mission management, as well as constructing the PAW (Position Adjustable Workbench) and X-ray



spectrometer instruments. In effect, Leicester has developed the eyes and hands of Beagle.

The PAW (aptly named in view of its distinctive shape) contains a suite of five instruments at the end of a robotic arm: a Gamma-Ray Mossbauer Spectrometer; a rock-coring tool; an optical microscope; an underground digging tool (PLUTO); and the University of Leicester X-Ray Spectrometer (XRS).

It also consists of a stereo camera pair; the control electronics circuitboard; a highly integrated wiring harness; and the supporting structure constructed of lightweight cast aluminium.

Technology developed for Mars can have life-saving applications here on Earth. The Leicester-built X-Ray Spectrometer is now to be adapted to detect industrial spillages and pollution in the developing world.

Professor George Fraser, Director of the Space Research Centre, has received funding of 75,000 Euros from the European Space Agency to develop a terrestrial version of Beagle's X-Ray Spectrometer (XRS).

Designed to determine the elemental make-up and carry out radiometric dating of Martian rocks, development of the terrestrial version of XRS will take into consideration safety factors, such as the eradication of radioactivity, which would not be a

problem operating remotely on Mars. It will also need to be repackaged to form a hand-held tool.

That Leicester should have been chosen as the venue for the Lander Operations Control Centre is yet another acknowledgement of the University's expertise in space science research – recognition for both the University and the £52 million National Space Centre which it co-founded.

Professor Alan Wells, until recently Director of the University's Space Research Centre, conveyed the feelings of the Leicester team at the time when he said: "Our involvement in the mission to Mars is the latest achievement in over 30 years' space exploration by University of Leicester scientists, who have positioned the University as one of Europe's leading academic centres for space research.

"The international standing of the Physics and Astronomy Department was reflected when it won the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education nearly a decade ago for world-class research. The University played a leading role in establishing the National Space Centre. The role was further strengthened when additional funding was obtained from the Millennium Commission to locate the Beagle 2 Lander Operations Control Centre in the University's research facilities at the National Space Centre.

"This decision came as a real coup for the



partnership between the University and the National Space Centre. It consists of a satellite control centre, whose activities can be shown to members of the public and school groups who visit the National Space Centre. The University of Leicester Lander Operations Control Centre complements the Lander Operations Planning Centre, based at the Open University, where science operations planning analysis takes place."

Conflicting theories abound as to whether there is – or ever was – some form of life on Mars. Who knows what the answer will be and whether this year will resolve the matter finally or simply place another piece in the jigsaw of information we are gathering about our nearest planetary neighbour in the continual human endeavour to expand our horizons. Whichever way, one can be sure that the University of Leicester will continue to have a key role in space research and exploration and play a major part in NASA's Swift – a Gamma Ray Burst Explorer, a three-telescope space observatory for studying the position, brightness, and physical properties of gamma ray bursts. ■

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The *art* of research

With mainstream television programmes currently popularising subjects such as archaeology and history, the interest in arts research has never been greater. Steve Todd looks at how the arts are adapting to the current Higher Education climate.

► Given the prestige and media coverage so often afforded to high profile scientific research, leading arts academics could easily be forgiven the odd jealous glance after countless hours of lone study. Despite such disparity, Professor Robert Colls of the School of Historical Studies, believes that, "Arts are such a vital part of a university's provision. A university is not a university without the arts – they are vital to our thinking about the human condition."

A leading figure in English History, Professor Colls is one of a number of highly respected, active arts research academics at the University of Leicester. Last year his book *Identity of England* was selected as Melvyn Bragg's 'Book of the Year' in *The Observer* and this year it repeated this award when it was novelist Gordon Burn's choice. Following on from this success Dr Colls is currently working on another book called *Sport and The English Hero* in which he examines the relationship between sporting achievement and popular heroism from the 18th century up to the present day. "The first heroes were probably prize fighters", he said. "Now it's footballers, but that is relatively recent". The subject is an area that Colls believes historians have not taken seriously enough. "Sports history is about far more than sport and takes us deeper than history usually allows, probing into the lives of the very poor and the very rich, often at the same venue. It takes us deep into the English imagination and uncovers both official and unofficial versions of national identity."

A member of the University's academic staff since 1979, Professor Colls is concerned for the future of such studies as higher education becomes increasingly restricted financially. His views are particularly salient given the prominent coverage of non-arts based research in the media recently and Colls admits that important 'lone scholar' arts research can sometimes be overlooked in favour of more high profile studies.

"In many ways science is much easier to quantify than arts," said Professor Colls. "All you have to do is take someone down to a laboratory and you have tangible results to show them or, at least, people in



white coats looking busy. Their research results are usually measurable but that isn't always the case with the arts. If you catch me doing research you'll find me with my feet up reading a book, preferably at home, but that is not to say that the final outcome is any the less valuable or necessary. Indeed, the arts and humanities are so valuable, they are not just what people live by they are, very often, what we live for."

The interest that surrounds non-arts based research, in particular scientific discoveries, is clearly evident but although arts research itself may not gain as much exposure, the expertise of leading academics is increasingly sought after by the media. "At least once a week I will receive a phone call from television or radio journalists," said Colls. "The arts side of the university is hugely exploited by the media. Basically we are teachers and while this might not always give you the opportunity to discuss your exact chosen topic, we do believe in what we are doing as a force for good and welcome the chance to speak. Television in particular undoubtedly promotes arts subjects, particularly history, but the actual educational content is very small and is no substitute for a proper higher education at a great university like Leicester."

Television is becoming a progressively more employed medium amongst Leicester's academics,

eager to expound their knowledge and expertise. One such academic is Dr Joanna Story, a lecturer in Early Medieval History, who appeared on Channel 4's *Time Team* with Tony Robinson in an Anglo-Saxon crypt at Repton, Derbyshire, in an episode televised in November last year. Dr Story also presented a six-part series for Carlton TV called *The History Detectives*, screened in the summer of 2003. On the programme Dr Story, who is currently studying Charlemagne's *Epitaph for Pope Adrian I* located in St Peter's, Rome, since 795, and her team investigated historical queries sent in by viewers in the region, offering answers about their local past.

"We showed people history on their street and how they could find out about it," said Dr Story. "The public raised questions about their local history and then we showed them how to solve these which demonstrated how history can be relevant and accessible to everyone. One of the objectives of the series was to show that history is for everyone, not just something to be studied in the ivory towers of universities. Often the public see it as in their interest to know about the country and the society in which they live and I think people are better citizens if they have knowledge of their history. It is fundamental to the society we live in that we know how it has been shaped."

"History benefits from being very popular among the general population right now. TV producers realise there is a huge appetite for history amongst the general public and this is a primary mechanism that we can project the relevance and importance of what we do outside of the University's four walls. Television work can help not only the subject in general but can also promote the University which is also extremely important in attracting new students. The recent explosion in the popularity of history programmes has revolutionised what universities can do, making it relevant and accessible to a larger audience."

Whereas history is a subject currently profiting from widespread exposure, other areas of the arts endeavour to communicate their own relevance outside the domain of academia. Dr Julie Coleman, a



Main: The increasing public interest in history has seen many Leicester experts advising and even appearing on television.

Inset: image from the book 'Identity of England' by Professor Robert Colls (Oxford University Press 2002). Photo by Shirley Baker.

History benefits from being very popular... television producers realise there is a huge appetite for history amongst the public and this is a primary mechanism that we can project the relevance and importance of what we do outside of the University's four walls.

lecturer in English Historical Linguistics and Medieval Literature, embodies this struggle. Coleman's recently published *A History of the Cant and Slang Dictionaries* (Volume 1: 1567-178) reveals the secret language allegedly used by thieves and beggars during this period to conceal their illicit conspiracies. While her research interest lies principally in the history of the English Language, particularly the history of the lexis and the slang and cant dictionary tradition, Dr Coleman's expertise has been employed by the press for an array of purposes, including commenting on terms of endearment used on Valentine's Day and in a recent newspaper article looking at text message English.

"With the arts sometimes you have to talk about things that aren't always your primary interest to gain valuable exposure for your research and for the University as an institution," said Dr Coleman. "It is vital that people know what is happening at the University of Leicester and also hear our name. I want potential undergraduates and postgraduates to see my name and want to work with me.

"I think though it is often easier for the science subjects to gain coverage for their research as they are sometimes seen as more relevant to what is happening in society now. People look at Beagle 2 for example and can't fail to be interested by it, whereas something like Shakespeare is much harder to promote as it is perhaps seen as not having as much relevance."

Dr Coleman, however, argues that this is an unfortunate misconception and that arts can carry more of a personal significance for an individual. She cites her study of the English Language as an example of this, since its evolution is democratic because "anyone can develop a slang word". An equally pertinent case can be found in the work of Professor Richard Bonney, Director of Centre for the History of Religious Pluralism. In his book *Jihad: The Idea of Just War from the Qur'an to Bin Laden*, Professor Bonney proposes that studying and understanding the varied views of Jihad is central to mending the rift between Muslims and the West.

"The aim of the book is to lead to a better understanding between communities," said Professor Bonney. "Jihad is often seen as extreme and not a holy war, but through research we can draw broad conclusions that are historically accurate and relevant to the contemporary debate. There is a danger of seeing terrorism by Muslims and thinking that Islam leads to terror. A lack of distinction exists between the application of faith and terrorism in general." Professor Bonney's research, due to be published later this year, has featured strongly in the current debate surrounding the Muslim world and the US with his views used by *The Times*, amongst others. "Because we are applying a historical study to a contemporary issue our work is deemed both relevant and important." ■

In Person:

Profile of a profiler

University of Leicester psychologist Dr Julian Boon was featured in a Channel 4 documentary series, "The Real Cracker". One of a small handful of criminal profilers in the UK, he was shown working closely with the police solving some of the most violent crimes at the time. He talked to Jane Pearson about his work and about the making of the television series.

► "I am a rare bird in psychology, in that I am interested in personality, which – bizarre as it may seem – most psychologists are not. It seems to me that personality is the central preserve of psychology, and that is the reason why I study it.

What interests me is what makes some people actively do good things, for instance Mother Theresa, and others do negative things, such as Myra Hindley. I am every bit as interested in the positive as the negative. I find it fascinating to provide a scientific articulation of the roots and routes by which different people take on these hugely divergent attributes.

Fifteen years ago there was a case that generated a national fascination verging on hysteria. The police were mystified as to what sort of person would want to perpetuate such horrible crimes. I wrote to them pointing out that although profiling was not an exact science I might be able to tell them something about what motivated the offender and ergo infer some related characteristics about him.

There was a long gap, then a telephone call asking for my take on this. I didn't know until later that they had received letters from hundreds of people ranging from academics to psychics, offering advice on solving the crime. The reason they eventually contacted me was apparently because I had written in a measured way. It turned out that the information I gave came from a quite different angle from the one borne out of police experience.

Then, as these things happen, while I was helping on this first case, they sought my views on many different crimes – to say the least it was a very steep learning curve.

It is good to help the police, and from my point of view it provides a unique source of research data related to the negative personality type. You can talk to offenders and get their version of reality – a reality that all too often is self-serving and wholly misleading. However, if you have chance to see at first hand all the details of a crime scene that is far more accurate, because it is objective and to the tutored eye of the forensic psychological profiler very revealing.



Image: © Henrietta Butler

I can think for example of one case where an offender left a stiletto shoe at the murder scene. The profile was very clear that this man had a shoe fetish, but when they arrested him although he confessed to the crime he refused to admit having any fetish. Gratifyingly when the police approached his wife she made it clear that far from having a sexual interest in shoes he couldn't cut the mustard in the bed chamber without the place being festooned with them.

While they may be concerned with not leaving forensic evidence at a crime scene, offenders cannot mask every clue as to why they commit a crime. They cannot take away all the key elements of the psychological evidence. It is not uncommon for there to be attempts at staging a crime scene, but we have got better at detecting this – to the point where paradoxically, staging the crime has come to help identify perpetrator motivation rather than hinder it.

The demand for criminal profiling and my expertise in personality theory proved to be a merge of interests helping the police on one hand and my research interests on the other. It provides a unique source of understanding negativity in human personality – how it starts with little

antisocial acts and develops into cruelty, sadism and necrophilia. It is not that profiling is better than the normal police procedures. It is rather like looking for lost children on the moors. Two searchers' experiences may coincide and then you know you're on the right track, or they may diverge, in which case you have to rethink.

The kinds of questions profilers tend to be asked frequently are: Has an offender done anything like this before? Is he local? Will he do it again? Does he know the victim? Oh and by the way, Dr, can you give us his post code? The first rule is always if you do not know what's gone on, say so. You should not lead the police in the wrong direction because some officers have got as many as ten murders to investigate at any one time and they are desperate for any means of deploying resources as efficiently as possible. If the profiler does not know and says so, nothing is lost.

In one of the most sadistic and prolonged cases of rape, the police asked me if the rapist had done this before and I said yes. It turned out he had committed a vicious rape on a 14 year-old girl and had been in jail for, in my view, an all too short a time for this. While there, he demonstrated how he had "reformed" by marrying one of the warders. Had I been on the parole board, far from having my fears allayed I would have been concerned about that marriage. Sadism's psychological main-engine is control and the idea of a highly sadistic offender bonding with the prison jailer is, to my eye, not a hallmark of respectability but an indulgence of his nasty proclivities. True enough, as soon as he got out of prison he started re-offending.

I am very suspicious of offenders who express remorse for their crimes. When Myra Hindley wrote to *The Guardian* to say she had paid her debt for her crimes I felt that no one who thinks like that can be feeling remorse, because you cannot "pay a debt" for the kind of crimes she committed. One gratifying moment was when her partner Ian Brady came out of the woodwork to say she had not changed. On that point at any rate I'm not disagreeing with him. However, I'm suspicious that



Image: © Henrietta Butler

his motive was not to inform society but because sadists love control and the knowledge that she could not have her freedom gave him happiness.

Cases involving children and older people are the ones that affect me most. It makes me doubly determined to put my best effort into helping to find the offenders.

The people I profile are not forgiving, and I have had some harsh things to say about those who are in jail. So I am concerned, not so much on my own account as for the protection of my family, and I do not show myself around too much. When I appeared on television there was no reference to my family or where I lived.

It took about four years to make the series. Everything had to be cleared with the police. You have to get used to the film crew being with you, and on a show like that you are heavily exposed because everyone can see what you are saying. Fortunately it showed that the lion's share of what we offered to the police was useful.

For about five years I was a racing driver and the film crew took pictures of me racing round Goodwood in an Aston Martin but they ended up on the cutting room floor.

Most of my work is taken up with university teaching and admissions. Applicants who want to come to the University show a lot of interest in criminal profiling as a result of all the television thrillers and novels, as well as *The Real Cracker*. Would-be profilers are passed on to a very senior police officer who has researched profiling. He is fond of saying 'To become a profiler you first of all need to be asked to do it and then you need to get it right!'

Alternatively students can take up a research specialism in a specific area. I have one Masters student researching nightclub rape, and all the misconceptions surrounding these cases. He is an expert in that field and so the National Crime Faculty will call on him for a view on that particular type of assault when the need arises.

Another route students can take, which is also

very interesting, is to become crime analysts. That involves gathering information such as new sexual offences and seeing where crimes can be linked. It is much more realistic to follow a career in this than to try to become a criminal profiler. To have a knowledge of personality theory and research and to apply it at the cognitive and affective level in crime investigation is a very skilled business – you can't put together a case profile on the back of a fag packet in ten minutes!

I think it is true to say that my experiences bring personality theory alive to our forensic students. For instance a case that illustrates Freud's anal personality type was that of a highly respected auditor. All day he was respectable, but at night he was out seriously assaulting prostitutes. When the police went to his home it was an absolute tip, with nothing put away for years. This was typical of an anal character who exercised control over others while creating lack of order for himself.

Students who take a particular interest in personality theory are going to be the most promising for a career in criminal profiling, and some – you can tell – do have a real interest and feel for the subject. But it is a long road to make a career of it." ■

The demand for criminal profiling and my expertise in personality theory proved to be a merge of interests.

Graduate Profile:

On the *right track*

In 2001 when Richard Bowker (BSc Economics and Economic History 1988) – Commercial Director of Virgin Group and Co-Chairman of Virgin Trains – was asked to head the Strategic Rail Authority he hesitated, but only momentarily.

► “It was a high profile job that 50 million other people probably thought they could do better, and the rail industry was in a pretty serious mess. I thought: ‘Do I really want to do this?’

“Yet it seemed that everything I had done in my life had led up to this point, including the strong social angle of my degree course at Leicester. I felt I could make a difference, I knew what I thought needed doing, and that it required a mixture of gentle persuasion and the hobnailed boot approach. I do believe we can make our railways great again.”

Born in Oldham and brought up in Leyland, Richard was the eldest of four children born to a father who held a high-level post in the bus industry and a mother who was a doctor. He attended school in Blackburn, which is where he feels his roots are – and his favourite football club.

Like much of his subsequent career, his place at the University of Leicester seems to have been remarkably unplanned, and he is no bad role model for anyone downcast at having to rely on the clearing system:

“At school I was interested in engineering. I had a passion for railways and had applied to join the British Rail Graduate Signalling Scheme, though ultimately it was cancelled that year. So I decided to change tack and take economics. Since all my application forms were engineering-based I went through clearing, and Leicester offered me a place in Economics and Economic and Social History.

“It was the best thing that could have happened to me. I came in 1985 and had three wonderful years, staying in Digby Hall. I keep in touch with one or two of the twelve members of my course.

“During the second and third years we had lectures from Dr Derek Aldcroft. I still keep a copy of one of his books at home. It was he who interested me in the mix of railway economy and social history – which is what it’s all about.

“I loved the place and the people, and the part I enjoyed most was the bit of the degree course that I fell into accidentally: Economic History. I graduated in 1988 with a 2.1.”

Richard had always planned a short-term career



in music, and his first job was as a session pianist for a production company based in Leeds. After a year, however, he realised a musician’s career could be lonely, with unsociable hours and in-built disadvantages in arranging insurance and mortgages.

So, with little idea of what he wanted to do, he talked it through with his father and joined the London Underground Graduate Finance Scheme, where he qualified as a Chartered Management Accountant in 1992.

It was there his first real break came. With government funding cuts, an opportunity opened up to move into asset finance, and Richard joined a small team charged with finding innovative funding. He spent the next four years in train procurement. “That was one of the most exciting jobs in the world,” he said. “People said it couldn’t be done, but we pulled it off and secured new trains for the Northern Line.”

In 1996 he was head-hunted by Babcock and Brown, and six months later was seconded to Virgin Trains, who were in need of experience in project management and train procurement. At a cost of £1 billion per train, it was no minor task, and again people said it could not be done. But, Richard said quite simply: “Those trains are now carrying passengers.”

His first real board position came in 1999 with Virgin Trains, as a Non Executive Director. The same year, with two friends from Babcock, he set up a small consultancy, Quasar, who were quickly



appointed by Abbey National to advise them on the purchase of a train leasing company. At the same time, Richard led Virgin’s bid for the East Coast route and spent a lot of time negotiating with the Strategic Rail Authority. Though this was unsuccessful, it was his first insight into what the SRA was all about.

Quasar had only been operating for one year when Richard Branson asked him to join the Virgin team. It was a difficult decision. He liked the quality of life Quasar gave him, enjoyed working with his two colleagues, and the business was doing well, but he did not want to miss the experience of being Commercial Director of the Virgin Group as well as chairing Virgin Trains.

“It was,” he said, “a fabulous year. You can’t buy experiences like that. I learned a huge amount.” Which was just as well, since just one year later he found himself at the head of one of the most troubled industries in the country.

“Running the Strategic Rail Authority is a challenge,” he admitted, “but also enormous fun. We have changed the team at the top, and in the fifteen years since I left Leicester this is the best all round top team I have had the privilege of working with. We are going to change the world.”

Meeting that challenge is not helped by constant negative reporting in the press. “Take the August Bank Holiday,” he says. “Out of 10,000 miles of track we closed 77 miles. Around 30,000 trains ran and 25,000 people worked through the holiday to



I felt I could make a difference... it required a mixture of gentle persuasion and the hobnailed boot approach. I do believe we can make our railways great again.

carry out necessary maintenance. Yet the press just homed in on the theme of chaos and distress. I don't care on my own behalf, but I do care about the thousands of staff who worked that weekend. It doesn't help their motivation."

Richard believes in the importance of detail in getting the customer experience right, and he was gratified to see the enthusiasm of the First Great Western staff when they became the first batch of staff to receive their Certificate in On-Board Service from City & Guilds. He has now set up the Centre for Rail Skills, a "virtual college" providing training at NVQ level as well as other levels to make such training and development more widely available across the rail industry. He is also pleased to see that graduate recruitment is rising again, having been a casualty of privatisation.

"A group of graduates working for South West Trains visited here and Network Rail, getting to see all parts of the industry, which is very important. A lot of our problems arose from a confrontational approach immediately post privatisation, which many mistakenly believed was all in the name of commercial competition. I have real confidence that the whole skills agenda, from the service operatives to the highest graduate post, will take off with increasing momentum."

Having steered the rail industry into a period of stability, following the post-privatisation explosion in demand and rising costs, he now sees the SRA's strategy as falling into three initiatives:

"We must set out clearly a long-term development strategy. We have started to do this and over the next year that will become clearer. Whilst ensuring the day job of running the network is done properly we must also plan for the future and so we are shortly to consult on plans to build a brand new high-speed line network in the UK. Secondly we have put in place a robust, long-term franchising programme. Thirdly, in January we will be making the rail's submission in the next year's spending review. We may ask for more cash, but the request will be supported by proper analysis and understanding of the effective cost of delivery, to give the industry a sustainable financial base."

With all the drive and enthusiasm which he invests in his job, he says he and his wife of one year, Madeline, have to work hard to find space for themselves. They share a similar passion for music and the countryside, and escape from their hectic professional lives with weekends in Herefordshire.

Has Richard Bowker changed substantially from the graduate who left Leicester in 1988? He does not think so. "I've been round the block a bit, of course, but fundamentally I still feel the same person. I've worked really hard not to become cynical. I remember Leicester with a huge amount of fondness. It was a fabulous time and a great preparation for all the things that followed." ■

Closing the gap on Harvard

Competing at Henley was beyond the wildest dreams of the small group of rowing enthusiasts who founded the University of Leicester Boat Club in 1948. Members pooled their resources to purchase a second-hand boat to compete at local regattas in Newark, Nottingham and Stratford-upon-Avon. Today the rowers are making a splash internationally, as Tim Grossey (BSc Geophysics 1999, MSc Geographic Information Systems 2001) explains.

► Over the last few years the University Boat Club has undergone some dramatic changes, which have transformed it into one of the top 15 university rowing clubs in the country. Former members may remember the limited facilities available to the Club in the past – a fleet of aging wooden coxed fours, a boathouse that was little more than a corrugated shed and a river that becomes unrowable for most of the winter due to flooding and in the summer due to weeds.

Unfortunately the river Soar has not changed much in the last 10 years, except maybe to see an increase in barges and unmentionable debris – and hence a decrease in wildlife – but the facilities available to the members of ULBC have certainly been improved.

In 1995 a new boathouse was built on Bede Island, opposite the old Leicester Football Club ground. The City Rowing Club aided by Lottery Funding and with additional contributions from both the University of Leicester and De Montfort University, built the boathouse. This new facility was really the start of the rowing transformation that took place at the University Club. Inside, this modern building has racking space for four eights, 20 fours, five pairs and about a dozen single sculls. There is a fully furnished gym and a large number of indoor rowing machines for members' use. Upstairs there is a large, spacious social room and bar – an improvement on the old breeze block 'bar' that was overcrowded when 10 people were in residence. Like the old shed, the building is shared by the three rowing clubs based in Leicester but, in contrast, there is plenty of room for each club's set of equipment.

Equipment plays a vital part in the competitiveness of any sports club, and rowing is no exception. As technology advances so do boat designs and materials. As an example, *Lola*, one of the big names in motor racing, has recently started to apply its racing car technology to the design of racing boats. In rowing it is important that you are able to compete on an even basis with your opponents, rather than giving them an advantage by using old, and more significantly, slow boats. The Sports Association and Sports and Recreation Department have been very supportive over the past decade to ensure that this is the case with the Boat Club.

In 1993 the Club bought its first plastic shell coxed four, and named it *Annie Morgan* after the encouraging and enthusiastic resident Sports Association secretary. For the next three years this remained the only quality competitive boat in the fleet that comprised a total of three boats (the other two being old, heavy wooden coxed fours).

In 1996-97 Norman Byrd, ex-sports president, became Captain of the Club and realised its potential given the right equipment and coaching. From fund-raising and support from the Sports and Recreation Committee a new coxed four, the *Magic Sponge* was purchased in 1996. In the same academic year the first men's crew since the 1970s attempted to qualify at Henley Royal Regatta. They were unsuccessful, but the seed had been sown, showing how ULBC had the potential to race at the most prestigious rowing event in the country.

In 1998 the Sports Association made funding available for a part-time rowing coach. Henley winner and Commonwealth medallist, Ric



Colborne, was appointed. Coinciding with his arrival in Leicester was the purchase of the Club's first eight, paid for through fundraising activities. Ric took the club apart, rebuilt it, and over the last five years has been moulding it into his idea of how a serious sports club should be run. The equipment pool has expanded beyond recognition, thanks again to the vision and belief of the Sports Association. The Club now has three eights, three coxed fours, two coxless four and two pairs – all high-quality, competitive boats.

This academic year has been the most successful season yet for ULBC. The Club has come away from every event between January and June 2003 with a win in at least one event. This in itself is a statement about the dedication and enthusiasm of the squad that is now building itself a permanent place on the university rowing circuit top 15.

Abilities and experience vary at the beginning of the rowing season, which starts in the autumn term in September, and continues right through to July. New recruits are taught how to row by the Club's



(Main) Members of the men's squad in action; (far left) Tim Grossey; (bottom) the women's squad.

existing 'senior' members, while Ric spends time coaching the seniors who row at Leicester and at the National Water Sports Centre in Nottingham.

New students are generally expected to train up to five or six times a week, whereas the senior members commit themselves to about 12 training sessions a week – split between water sessions, weight training and other land training sessions (including indoor rowing, circuits, running). This can obviously be very demanding given the heavy academic commitments that most students have. It has been said that rowers have time management skills second to none!

This year that commitment and time-juggling has paid off. The women's squad, fairly inexperienced at the beginning of the season, exceeded all expectations by winning a total of three British

Universities Sports Association (BUSA) medals; one at the BUSA head race (long distance time trial) and two at the BUSA regatta (side by side racing). In addition they notched up some impressive wins at several local regattas and finished the season by progressing through two rounds at Henley Women's Regatta in the student eights event.

The men's squad had an equally successful year. Winning many head races through the winter season, mainly in coxed fours, they were unable to medal at the BUSA events, but taking the very tough competition into account the results were impressive. The men's season finished on the ultimate high by pre-qualifying for Henley Royal Regatta. But the draw was unkind. The eight had to race Harvard, the defending champions of the university eights event, and the ULBC/LRC composite

coxless pair drew the Croatian national pair, who had beat the GBR pair earlier in the season. Both crews lost their races, despite putting in outstanding performances – 'coming of age' as Ric put it.

The members' commitment to the Boat Club is staggering. Rowing is the sort of sport where people almost sell their souls to compete and become completely engrossed. There are many members who have left the University over the last few years who have gone on to compete at very high levels with different clubs around the country. It is in part due to their lasting dedication to the sport that an alumni club called *Belvoir ARC* has been set up. This club enables past members to keep in touch and continue to compete with each other at a few events each year, usually during the summer. Through its own fundraising activities, *Belvoir* is able to support the university rowing scene with the ultimate aim of purchasing a new boat for the University Club.

All in all rowing in Leicester has changed for the better over the last 10 years. With the continued support of the University, the Club has the potential and ability to progress further up the university rowing ladder and establish the University of Leicester as a recognised rowing university. ■

• *Belvoir ARC was established in 2000 and the majority of its members graduated in the last five years. Former members of ULBC who would like to find out more about Belvoir, or get information about what the Club is doing, please get in touch via e-mail: su-rowing@le.ac.uk*

Rowing is the sort of sport where people almost sell their souls to compete and become completely engrossed.



On stage at the University of Leicester's degree ceremony at De Montfort Hall on Thursday, July 10, Vice-Chancellor Professor Robert Burgess leads an ovation for Sandeep Pahal (centre). Sandeep is accompanied by Clare Taylor from the University's Welfare Service.

Rising to the challenge

► To be offered a place at the University of Leicester Faculty of Law is, in itself, no mean achievement. The Faculty is one of the most innovative and successful law schools in the United Kingdom, which has been consistently ranked nationally as a 'top ten' law school in both teaching and research activities.

To graduate from Leicester with a first class Law degree is therefore certainly a mark of distinction, and for Sandeep Pahal, who graduated in July 2003, it is also a tribute to her hard work and tenacity in the face of adversity.

Sandeep chose to study Law partly because she felt she had something to prove and, having attained a first-class degree, she has certainly more than risen to the challenge she set herself.

What is unusual in Sandeep's case is that at the age of 16, she woke up one morning, while on holiday with her family in France, unable to see. She was flown home straight away and received treatment which restored only minimal vision, which she later lost again. Inflammation of the optic nerve was found to be the reason for her sight loss.

Quoted in the *Leicester Mercury* following her graduation, Sandeep said: "I was devastated when I first discovered I had lost my sight. I was so scared and I felt that my life and all my hopes were over."

Giving up was not an option for Sandeep Pahal, (LLB 2003), when she suddenly lost her sight at age 16. She chose a new career and with support, sheer determination and hard work, her achievements were first class.

After the initial shock wore off she reassessed her life. Acknowledging that science was no longer a realistic career path because of the experiments involved, she abandoned plans to take A-levels in biology, chemistry and psychology in order to become a policewoman or scientist and instead enrolled at the RNIB Vocational College in Loughborough.

On a four-month course she learned Braille, to use a Braille and speech machine and mobility for people with visual impairment. Having mastered the art of studying using non-visual methods, Sandeep passed three Social Science A-levels at Loughborough College, and was accepted to study Law at the University of Leicester.

Sandeep commented: "I had to work a little bit harder than the others, constantly having to plan ahead. It finally paid off and I have enjoyed every

minute of my degree course."

Dr Paula Dobrowolski, Head of the AccessAbility Centre at the University of Leicester said: "Sandeep has worked extremely hard to gain her first-class degree in Law and is to be congratulated on her tremendous achievement. She has always been well-organised, thorough and very hard-working. She has been fully committed to her course as well as making time for friends and family. It has been a great pleasure to work with her.

"Clearly, she has been supported by many members of staff in the AccessAbility Centre, particularly her volunteer readers, especially Mr John Mason, a retired law man himself, who has read material on to tape for her, probably for hundreds of hours together over the three years."

Sandeep has now embarked on a career in the Law, and is working for a firm of solicitors in Nottingham. ■



Reunions

University of Leicester *Homecoming 2003*

► "A very enjoyable day. All three of the lectures I attended were very good – keep this feature for the future". This comment was typical of the enthusiasm expressed by graduates who came flocking back to Leicester for the *2003 Homecoming* on 21 June. Spanning every decade from the 1940s to the year 2002, hundreds of former students used the occasion to meet up with old friends. Many were attracted by the chance to catch up on recent discoveries and discuss with experts some of the issues facing the world in the 21st century, while others were plainly nostalgic and wanted to see how their alma mater had changed over the years.

Like many days last summer, the *Homecoming* was blessed with exceptionally fine weather. Graduates who arrived early had a chance to relax over a light breakfast in the Café Piazza or sit outside in the early morning sunshine, before making the final decision on which of the many arranged activities to attend. Lectures proved to be a favourite as graduates could enjoy being back in the classroom without the pressure of exams.

As they willingly set off for the first series of Saturday morning lectures, they were faced with

some difficult choices: from finding out how music influences shopping decisions and learning about nanotechnology to – hot on the heels of the war in Iraq – questioning why modern American Presidents are doomed to failure. There was an added incentive for graduates with teenage children thinking about going to university to hear about the changes to tuition fees proposed by the government from 2006 or to upgrade their internet searching techniques.

With only minutes to spare before the next sessions, graduates chose between a Law lecture that gave them fresh insights into what constitutes murder (less clear cut than most thought), learning about aviation safety or listening to one of the country's top Genetics researchers talk about the disastrous consequences that occur when the human biological clock goes wrong. For computer aficionados there was an opportunity to find out when computers are not the best problem-solvers

and book lovers had a chance to take part in a quiz or browse a display of the Library's greatest treasures, after an introduction to the Library's Special Collections.

In addition to the latest academic findings, many graduates were also keen to hear about Leicester's present standing as an international research-based university and its plans for the future. A review of the University given by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Robert Burgess outlined an ambitious £300 million development plan that would transform the shape of the University over the next 30 years.

After lunch, graduates pitted their wits against mathematical puzzles, listened to the debate about whether changes in language equate with language deterioration or heard about new excavation and survey techniques currently being developed by the School of Archaeology & Ancient History.

Later in the day the pace slowed down with a choice of films, demonstrations and visits. ►

Spanning every decade from the 1940s to the year 2002, hundreds of former students used the occasion to meet up with old friends.



Demonstrations in Engineering on a Flight Simulator and with Levitating Motors proved to be popular with all age groups, as did visits to the University's Planetarium and the Botanic Gardens. The day's entertainment ended on a musical note when players from *Aquila Winds* performed a Haydn trio.

At the Annual Meeting of the Leicester Graduates' Association, Ms Anita Linsell (BA History of Art 1997) was elected Chairman for a three-year term beginning on 30 September 2003.

In the evening Vice-Chancellor Professor Robert Burgess and Dr Hilary Burgess welcomed graduates and guests to a dinner at Beaumont Hall. But there was no let up after dinner as graduates signed up for a pub quiz, organised by Standing Committee member, Stuart Proud (BA Geography 1978). When we left at midnight graduates – in true Leicester tradition – were still partying into the night.

Homecoming: 26 June 2004

► Graduates, friends and families are welcome to the summer *Homecoming* and Annual General Meeting on 26 June 2004. Full details of the day's programme are listed on the enclosed booking form. ■



The 2004 Leicester Graduates' Association Lecture

Lord Puttnam (centre) pictured with Ms Anita Linsell and Vice-Chancellor Professor Burgess.

► Internationally acclaimed film producer turned educationalist, Lord (David) Puttnam (Honorary Doctor of Letters 1986) delivered the annual Graduates' Association Lecture to a full house on Thursday 12 February.

In his talk, entitled *Education, the Media and Social Responsibility: the Challenges of the Digital Age*, Lord Puttnam considered his experiences in the worlds of film-making and education, and the social responsibilities of film-makers. He also examined the opportunities and challenges arising from the impact of new technologies on education.

For over thirty years Lord Puttnam was an

independent film producer and is best known for his award-winning films, including *The Mission*, *The Killing Fields*, *Local Hero*, *Chariots of Fire*, *Midnight Express*, *Bugsy Malone* and *Memphis Belle*. He retired from film production in 1998 to concentrate on his work in education, where he served as the first Chairman of the General Teaching Council, was founding Chair of the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, and for ten years chaired the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television. He is also Chair of Trustees at BAFTA. In July 2002 he was appointed President of UNICEF UK.



2004 London reunion

► A special evening reception and buffet is planned on the Terrace Pavilion at the House of Commons on 21 October 2004. All graduates are welcome to the event and invitations will be sent out to those in the London area. Full details will also be published on the web-site at: www.le.ac.uk/alumni/events.html

Personalia and obituaries

► Entries for the 2003 Personalia and obituary notices are available on the Graduate Relations web-site at: www.le.ac.uk/alumni/. Obituaries are also available in hard copy from the Graduate Relations Office, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH or e-mail: kw42@le.ac.uk.

► Do you, your colleagues, friends or relatives organise events or conferences?

Continuous investment ensures a quality venue for a range of events. As a graduate of the University your referral of business will help to generate income to further improve the facilities for our future students.

Please telephone on (0116) 271 9933 or e-mail: conferences@le.ac.uk for more details.

The Union – past and present

► The travel club from Ongar in Essex couldn't quite get over it – sharing their lakeside hotel in Annecy, France were these three couples, friends of long standing. The word got around that they had all met at university – the women as well as the men. Not only had they all met at Leicester but they had found their life partners there – partners still after nearly 50 years. For Neville Shorrick, Stan Miller and Don Granger it was going to be a difficult 2003 – each was to reach 70 this year – but they decided to mark the occasion by a joint holiday together with the former Diana Born, Eileen Mansell and Jill Puleston, now Mesdames Shorrick, Miller and Granger. The toasts were to "us" and to the University of Leicester where in 1956-57 the Students' Union Treasurer, President and Secretary respectively were preparing themselves for future careers and adventures – but that's another story.

Pictured (l-r) Neville Shorrick, Don Granger, Jill (Puleston) Granger, Diana (Born) Shorrick, Eileen (Mansell) Miller, Stan Miller.



Mountaineering Club

► During the weekend of 17-19 October 2003, the Mountaineering Club held its third reunion at the Shap Wells Hotel, Cumbria. Members were from the years roughly 1968 through to 1974. More 'old members' had been traced since the last occasion, so once again some people were meeting for the first time in almost 30 years.

People came from far and near. One person flew in from Hong Kong, several came down from Inverness, others came up from London and one person only had to stroll down the road from home nearby. The large hotel was able to comfortably cater for the group of 60 members who gathered and the highlight was an excellent dinner on the Saturday night.

After dinner, everyone retired to the bar and looked at old slides from mountaineering trips during their university years at Leicester. During the day, people went off on various walks. Some drove into the ever popular Lake District which is nearby, while others walked from the hotel to explore the less well-known hills around Shap.



The weekend was a great success. At the end, people were asking when the next one will be. No plans have been made as yet, but there will certainly be another in the next few years. If you would like to become registered with the group please contact John Penniford at tel: (01895) 442 116 or e-mail: john.penniford@cgey.com

Annual Meeting of the Graduates' Association

► In addition to the programme of events planned for the *Homecoming*, the Annual General Meeting of the Graduates' Association will be held at 4.00pm on 26 June 2004.

Would you like to help run the Graduates' Association and take part in University business? The Standing Committee of the Graduates' Association is the channel of communication between the University and its graduate members. It also offers advice and support on the graduate relations programme. Members take an active part in helping to arrange and host events. The Committee meets four or five times per year. All its members are also members of the University's Court and the Chairman has the right to serve on the University Council.

Three memberships will become available in September. The elections will take place at the AGM on 26 June 2004. All Leicester graduates, and other members of Convocation as defined in the Statutes, are eligible to stand. Membership is for 3 years (from 1 October) in the first instance. Travel expenses are available for attendance at committee meetings.

If you are interested in serving on the Committee, your nomination must be received at the Graduate Relations Office by Friday 21 May 2004. Please contact the Office at tel: (0116) 252 2195 if you would like more information, or visit the web-site: www.le.ac.uk/alumni



Friends from College Hall reunited

► It has become something of a tradition for a group of Leicester graduates who first met at College Hall in the 1950s to meet up again once per year. Travelling from all parts of the UK – from Norwich and Dudley to Watford and Sheffield – the group converged on Leicester's Belmont Hotel on 26 July 2003 for a day relaxing with one another and catching up on news. Although they all studied different subjects, their shared experiences at Leicester formed close bonds that have

lasted over fifty years.

Any College Hall graduates who would like to join future reunions of the group are asked to contact the Graduate Relations Office at tel (0116) 252 2195.

Pictured are: (back row l to r) Annette (Wynne) Cheeseman, Rachel (Pursehouse) Hampton, Joy (Stockdale) Mottershead, Peter Hampton, Joan (Mason) Hodges; (front row l to r) Mary (Brennand) Forsyth, Pat Corrigan, Rubina Curtis, Kathleen (Davies) Griffin.

Around the University

Top prize for MBA achiever



► A University of Leicester graduate has gained a top national prize for work he did while he was a student at the Management Centre. At a prestigious prize-giving event at the Law Society in London, Tim Wright was presented with a cheque for £3,000.

The competition, organized by Ashridge Management College and *The Guardian* newspaper, was open to all AMBA accredited MBA programmes. In addition to the £3,000 prize he won for his entry on "Corporate Social Responsibility" Tim's essay was published in *The Guardian*.

Director of the Management Centre, Professor Gibson Burrell, said: "It is a rare distinction indeed to win this accolade. One assessor said the panel of judges saw his work as refreshingly different and as a clear first prize." The Management Centre has matched the prize and presented Tim with a cheque for £3,000.

Medical School top in UK

► The University of Leicester Medical School has been rated as Britain's best school to study Medicine. It came top in *The Guardian* subject league tables published last month – and the University of Leicester also leads the country in terms of the level of its taught postgraduate provision according to the *Financial Times*.

Some of the strongest teaching assessments in the country, significant investment in facilities and a student completion rate few beyond Oxbridge can exceed has seen the University once again rated in the *Financial Times* and *Sunday Times* group of 20 leading UK Universities.

The University of Leicester Medical School, founded in 1974, is now among the biggest Medical Schools in the UK, following its partnership in 1999 with the University of Warwick. Dean of the Leicester Warwick Medical Schools Professor Ian Lauder said: "The Medical School is delighted to receive this accolade which is a reflection of the enormous amount of hard work put in by everyone in the School."

Magic of chemistry

► In a series of demonstrations for local school students the University of Leicester Chemistry Department showed them just how magic Chemistry can be! As part of the programme of activities between 24-27 June Dr Paul Jenkins and Dr Jonathan Woodward ran two demonstration lectures daily with a 'Harry Potter' theme for more than 800 Leicestershire school students. All schools in the area were invited to send their year six pupils to this exciting display of 'Amazing Energy,' sponsored by AstraZeneca and the Royal Society of Chemistry. They took part in a series of demonstration experiments designed to show how energy is transformed from one form to another.

The demonstrations were held in the newly refurbished George Porter Chemistry Building, which now houses all the facilities for the Department's research and teaching in one building.



This state-of-the-art facility was formally opened on Friday, 27 June by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester, Professor Robert Burgess.

Drug use in football

► The University's Centre for Research into Sport and Society has recently completed the first ever survey of drug use in English football, with the cooperation of the Professional Footballers Association (PFA). Questionnaires were sent to nearly 3,000 football players. Of the 700 players who responded, 46% indicated they knew a fellow professional who took 'recreational drugs', such as cocaine or cannabis.

Dr Ivan Waddington who led the study concluded that although the use of performance-enhancing drugs was not widespread, it showed clearly that such drugs were being used in professional football. He said: "Given what appears to be an increase in the use of performance-enhancing drugs in Italy and some other countries and given the increase in the

pace and intensity of the game and the physical demands made upon players, the pressures on players in the English leagues to use performance-enhancing drugs are likely to increase." The survey also indicated that the use of recreational drugs was much more widespread than the results of the UK Sport/FA drug testing programme suggested.

The survey also showed that 36% of players had not been tested for drugs at anytime in the past two years, and 60% felt they were not likely to be tested in the next 12 months. This compared unfavourably with the level of testing in track and field; a Sports Council survey in 1975 found that 75% of elite athletes are tested every year and only 16% felt they were unlikely to be tested in the next twelve months.



University Monopoly

► The University of Leicester is streets ahead in the new Leicester Monopoly board which was launched recently at the National Space Centre, securing one of the green card places, along with Loughborough University. The county's third university, De Montfort, is represented by one of the red cards. Also on the board are the two radio stations, the Space Centre, Bradgate Park, Bosworth Battlefield and Beacon Hill.

Marketing Director Richard Taylor (pictured above with Madeleine Hurst) said: "It's a bit of fun but it is good to see we are the closest to Mayfair of the county's universities!"



World class sculpture exhibition

► International sculptors working in Pietrasanta, Tuscany, took part in a unique sculpture exhibition at the University's Harold Martin Botanic Garden displaying their works alongside UK artists. The exhibition featured 49 pieces by 22 artists, including honorary graduate Helaine Blumenfeld and Emeritus Professor Bill Forster OBE. The 2003 exhibition was free and open to the public every day between 5 July and 20 September.

Home Office recognition for Forensic Pathology

► Following a Home Office review into forensic pathology services, the University of Leicester has been designated as one of four training sites throughout the country, taking two out of seven Home Office trainees. Professor Guy Rutty, Head of the Division of Forensic Pathology, commented: "I think this is a great thing for Forensic Pathology at the University of Leicester. It shows us to be one of the principal centres in the UK. We will also be training some consultant staff here, initially from the RAF, Japan and Holland. All the posts, salaries and supporting costs will be met by the Home Office and other funding will be made available where necessary. This initiative is part of the implementation of a training recruitment drive by the government." Other forensic pathology training centres to be designated by the Home Office are at the Universities of Sheffield, Newcastle and Liverpool. The University of Leicester Division of Forensic Pathology is one of the principal advisors for The INFORCE Foundation, a charitable organisation which investigates crimes



against humanity, war crimes and genocides, locating and identifying victims so that bereaved families can bury their dead.

Head of the Division, Professor Guy Rutty has worked with eleven English police forces and is registered with the United Nations. He has assisted the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) with war crime investigations in Bosnia, and is currently working with the International Commission on Missing Persons in the Former Yugoslavia (ICMP). He also provides a forensic pathology service to the Falkland Islands.

Clouds reveal Europe's ozone future



► Forget blue skies research, it is clouds that have focused minds at the University of Leicester where scientists are tackling the causes of ozone depletion. Atmospheric scientists in the Department of Physics and Astronomy are spearheading the MAPSCORE project, a European Commission Environment project which investigates a major cause of ozone depletion – high altitude polar clouds which activate the chlorine originally from CFCs and lead eventually to severe ozone destruction.

Leicester researchers have discovered it is possible to map the global distribution of polar clouds from space, and to determine their composition. For the first time, scientists can see maps of clouds around the globe, via the internet, as soon as the ESA ENVISAT satellite detects them. This knowledge has already been put to good use in examining clouds and ozone loss near Europe during the last winter. Now the Leicester scientists are observing the evolution of the Antarctic ozone hole which last year behaved in an unprecedented fashion and showed that there are still surprises in the ozone story.

University of Leicester scientist Dr John Remedios, who is coordinating the MAPSCORE project, said: "ENVISAT makes it possible for us to map Polar Stratospheric Clouds in 'near real-time' for the first time. We have unprecedented detail and can even define the types of cloud that are driving ozone loss. This information guides our atmospheric modelling of how these polar stratospheric clouds form and their influence. This is important because we need to be able to predict how much ozone will be depleted in future years and polar stratospheric clouds are a key part of the problem".

LUT presents 'Shakespeare with attitude'

► Students from the University of Leicester Theatre (LUT) recently staged the third in the 'Leicestershire trilogy' with drama that has a local focus.

After the success of their opening production, *What the Butler Saw*, by late Leicester playwright Joe Orton, LUT staged a play that was entirely created locally – the *24-Hour Play*.

The final production in the trilogy was an innovative version of William Shakespeare's *King Richard III*, co-directed by Stuart Tym and Dr Roger Scoppie. The infamous king spent his fateful last night in Leicester before meeting his bloody

fate at the Battle of Bosworth in Leicestershire.

For the first time in the Queen's Hall LUT threw away the stage and performed *Richard III* 'in-the-round' on the floor of the hall with the audience all round it, actors in the middle. Stuart said: "This is the first time LUT has really exploited the flexible space of their new home. This (made) for a much closer, intimate style of theatre, the cast interacting much more with the audience than they could with a proscenium arch in the way." In its fresh approach to an old masterpiece, the production demonstrated an exciting display of political spin in action.





THE UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER Annual Fund

► Over the last decade generous support from friends and graduates of the University has made it possible to improve facilities for students in ways that would not otherwise be possible. It has allowed us to begin the vital work of transforming our library facilities and creating student scholarships. This support has been of enormous importance to the University, yet more work is needed if we are to continue to transform our facilities ready for the University's next half-century.

In his address on page 4 the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Burgess, talks about the many successes the University has enjoyed in the last year. These successes are all the more significant when we consider the financial problems all British universities face. Between 1989 and 2002 government funding per student fell by 40% in real terms. In this financial climate the University's ability to invest in capital projects is severely limited.

At the same time the average debt a student finds

themselves in upon graduation has risen sharply to around £15,000.

The University of Leicester has a proud record of providing high-quality education in good facilities to students. We attract and admit the brightest and best students regardless of their background or financial circumstances. Our students have one of the highest completion rates in the UK. In September 2003 Leicester won praise from *The Sunday Times* because out of just five universities with a lower drop-out rate, "none... approach the diversity of Leicester's intake". As Leicester approaches the 50th Anniversary of the award of its Royal Charter we are determined that our next half-century will be as successful as our first and that we hold to this record and values.

And with the generous support of our friends and graduates this will indeed be the case. With your support we have established two new funds, details of which follow over the following pages.

Today students do not receive grants. Many also have to contribute to the costs of their tuition. Most students are eligible for some form of student loan but the loan has not kept pace with the rising costs of university life. Similarly, the capital grants to universities that made providing first-rate facilities such as libraries relatively straight forward in the past no longer exist. Increasingly universities must turn to their friends and supporters for help and assistance.

Every individual who supports the Funds will be thanked personally for their gift. We will explain just how much difference your support has made. Through the pages of the *Graduates' Review* you will be able to read exactly how those funds have been used to enhance the experiences of today's students.

The Student Opportunities Fund

► The University of Leicester has a long history of attracting the best students. Yet with the financial pressures on students increasing we need to ensure this record of success continues. **The Leicester Student Opportunities Fund** is creating bursaries so that students facing hardship can join and complete their studies at Leicester.

Student Hardship – Real Life Stories

► **John** is 29 and has returned to study after recovering from health problems. He began his studies ten years ago, completing year one of a course in Engineering. He had previously taken a gap year when he had travelled to Zambia and worked on an ecology project there. He became ill

during his second year of study and was forced to withdraw from his course. He spent some time in hospital and very slowly recovered. During the interim period he has changed jobs several times, most of his work has been either in a factory or a warehouse. He has decided that he is wasting his life at low-paid work and has decided that he is well enough to cope with university life. He has applied for a Student Loan to fund his living costs but because of his previous year of study he also has to pay his own tuition fees. Without financial help from the University John will not be able to return to education.

► **Hema** is 21 and is a third year student studying for a degree in Medicine. She is an able student and

is enjoying her studies at Leicester, but her mother has been diagnosed as terminally ill. Hema returns home to London each weekend to care for her father and her younger brother and to spend some quality time with her mother. Because of this commitment and pressures of her studies, she finds it impossible to participate in the paid work during the week that so many students need to make ends meet. She needs help to pay for travel costs home; these amount to £23 per week over 30 weeks of term-time – £690 – that her family cannot afford. Hema is a determined student but she is concerned that the financial pressures she is facing will be detrimental to her studies.

• *The names of the students have been changed.*

► "The prospect of phoning former students to ask for gifts for the Annual Fund was to begin with rather daunting. However once I began to explain the reasons behind making the calls I was genuinely surprised at how many graduates really cared about the University and about the worsening financial situation of students today, and who responded positively to our approaches. As part of the Annual Fund team it was really interesting to exchange experiences of studying at Leicester with recent graduates but also with those who spent their time here across different decades, many of whom have gone on to enjoy successful careers, thanks in part to the qualifications and experience they gained here. The amount of gifts that we received I believe not only reflects the generosity of these graduates but also how much of an impact the University has had on their lives. Funding is a major issue for today's students and it appears as though it will become increasingly prominent in the coming years. Hopefully, with the benefit of my own personal experience at Leicester, when I graduate I will be in a position to show similar support to the students of the future and afford them the same opportunities as I, and many former students before me, have been fortunate enough to receive."

Alison Burgess (MBChB 2007)





The Library Development Fund

► The University Library is at the heart of Leicester's intellectual life. Thousands of individuals have used its resources to advance their learning and research. Our aim is to ensure that students and researchers will continue to have access to the very best resources available as the University enters its second half-century.

With almost a million visits per year, the Library provides a physical space for reading, thinking and writing – and gives users access to services, collections and technology.

Our growing collections comprise over one million volumes and subscriptions to 7,500 scholarly journals in print and electronic format.

Highlights of our Special Collections include:

- the Robjohns bequest of incunabula, early printed Bibles and Books of Hours

- the topographical Library of Thomas Hatton
- the political memorabilia collected by Archibald Gorrie
- the papers of writers Joe Orton and Laura Riding.

Our vision for the next generation Library seeks to preserve the rich heritage of the past as well as providing access to the electronic information of this century – and create a high-quality space where learning and research are fostered.

The new University Library will transform our service and benefit students and the community for years to come by providing:

- an improved study environment for students
 - redesigned reading rooms
 - varied and comfortable study spaces
 - rooms for collaborative study
 - opportunities to use books and new media

together

- updated lighting and ventilation systems
- better organisation of collections
- flexibility in response to a fast-changing learning environment
- access to better enquiry and help facilities and to library and computing staff for assistance with information discovery
- a dedicated area for postgraduates and researchers
 - study carrels
 - meeting rooms
 - informal seating
- state of the art IT training rooms to teach students information skills which will stand them in good stead for life
 - wireless network connections throughout the building so that laptops can be plugged in almost anywhere
- modern facilities for storing, displaying, conserving and consulting our Special Collections.

Our Library will become the learning and research facility that befits a University with a world-renowned reputation for the excellence of its teaching and research. The development of the project will cost £18m. The University has already secured more than half of the required funding for the project from a range of sources, including generous support from graduates of the University and friends from the City and County.

But additional resources are needed if we are to build a truly excellent facility. Through our **Library Development Fund** we seek to raise the remaining resource needed to build this very special facility. We hope very much that you will help us to realise this vision with your support. ■





How your generosity can help the students of today

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

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- **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. To enable us to do this, please complete Section 3, Gift Aid Declaration.
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I would like my gift to be directed towards

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this league in 2001, 2002 and 2003?

2001

2002

2003

postgraduate (taught)	postgraduate (taught)	postgraduate (taught)
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