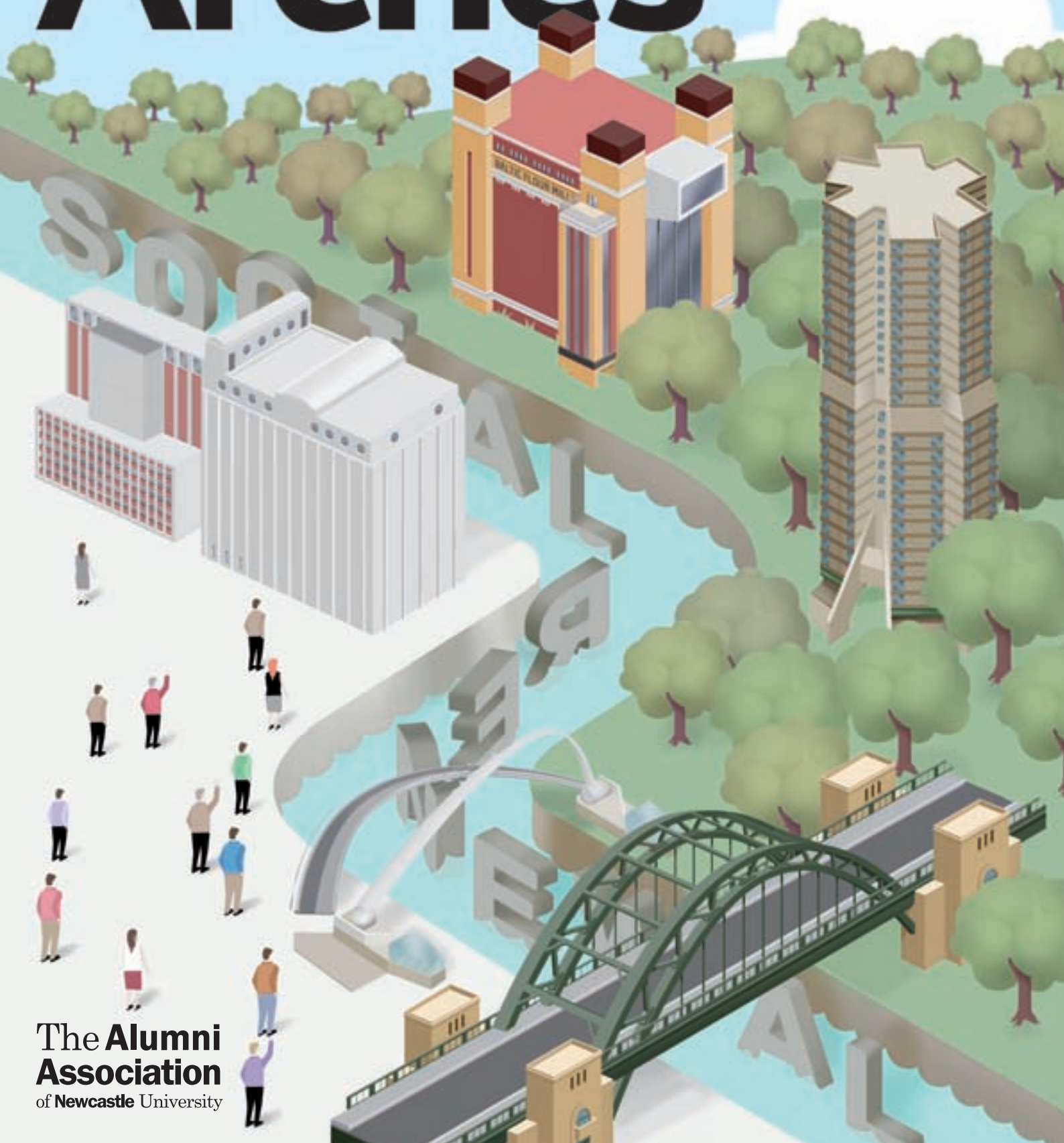


Arches



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Acknowledgements: Many thanks to Joanna Brookman, Lynne Corner, Nina Laurie, Robert Hoy, Emily Marsden, Clare Rogers, Lucy Powell, Lucy Wallace at the British Council, Philippa Walker and Jami West at the University of Bristol, the *Times Educational Supplement (TES)*, and *The Courier*.

Very special thanks to Marion Wilson, Ben Freeth, Chris Pilkington and the team at Infinite Design, Tom Groves and the team at Potts, Newcastle University Press Office, and all the staff in DARO, who have helped to make this magazine possible.

Picture credits with thanks: Zander Wilson, The Cloud Commission, Kerry Hyndman, Mike Urwin, Ian Forrester, the Hatton Gallery, Nick Smith, Dave Coombs, Michael Baister, Rachel Evans, the University of Bristol, *JesmondLocal*, Momentum Pictures, *The Courier*.



Cover illustration: Newcastle University's quest for social renewal, by The Cloud Commission.



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Foreword

Professor Mark Shucksmith

(MSc Agricultural Economics 1977, PhD 1987)

Director, Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal



Newcastle University is renowned all over the world for the excellence of its research. We're very proud of this and rightly so. But we want to go further and focus the work we are doing on issues which are important to people locally, nationally and internationally.

This is why we have created the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal, because we want to answer the big questions facing the world today and use our expertise to look at the challenges which affect people's everyday lives. How can people, communities and societies thrive in a world of rapid change?

Problems such as unemployment – particularly for young people – inequalities in education and health and the way changes in the world around us affect communities are just some of the areas we will be examining. This edition of *Arches* just begins to scratch the surface.

We launched the Institute with the innovative Great North Build exhibition, which used Lego to help members of the public – both young and old – to understand how those who plan our towns and cities make their decisions. Visitors had to think about problems such as how they would rebuild a city after a serious flood and where they would put new healthcare facilities. This was a great success in bringing the wider public in to share our work – you can read more about it on p4.

Elsewhere in the magazine, we chat to three social entrepreneurs who are helping their communities through their businesses (p13); and hear about the health of the UK as a major financial centre from the Chairman of the London Stock Exchange (p10). We also talk to ex-Dr Feelgood guitarist Wilko Johnson, an icon of British musical heritage (p24).

Finally, be sure to take a look at our all-new alumni benefits initiative, the BIG Market (p42), which provides exclusive offers from fellow graduates with an interesting product or service to share – from wedding photography to exotic flavours of tea.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Arches*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Shucksmith'.

Professor Mark Shucksmith

News

For more information about any of these features, and to keep up to date with the very latest news from Newcastle University, visit: www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni



Great North Build: the small town with the big purpose

An exhibition at the Great North Museum: Hancock in spring 2012 brought town planning to life for people of all ages – using Lego for a fun take on urban issues.

The Great North Build took 110,000 Lego bricks, around 10,000 visitors and five weeks to create.

Visitors created a city which constantly evolved with buildings including a Stonehenge, a prison, football grounds and even a Quidditch arena and Lego Angel of the North.

Each day visitors were asked to react to new circumstances and decide how developments in commercial, residential and retail space could be accommodated, according to a set of planning guidelines.

One day the city was hit by a natural disaster when the River Brick broke its banks. A level-four crisis was declared by the Lego city mayor and visitors then had to consider how they would rebuild the city after the flood, and where vital services such as hospitals should be situated.

The Great North Build marked the launch of the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal. Its director, Professor Mark Shucksmith, said: 'The Great North Build was a great success and many people really enjoyed it. Visitors understood straightaway what it was all about. It was very satisfying to see how our research was being brought to life so even very young children could understand it.'

'That's at the heart of what we do here at Newcastle as a world-leading civic university. We want what we do to be relevant to everyone.'

Diet or DNA: are we fated to be fat?

Marks on the genetic 'code' that babies have at birth is different for children who go on to become obese or overweight compared to those who do not, new research has found.

Using blood from the umbilical cords of 178 babies, researchers analysed genes that are known to be linked to body weight and found that nine of the 24 relevant genes looked at in this study were linked to the child's weight at age nine.

Dr Caroline Relton, senior lecturer in Epigenetic Epidemiology at Newcastle University, who led the work said: 'We were looking at the epigenetic patterns, the regulatory marks on genes. In this research we found a link between those found at birth and differences in body composition in children when they were nine.'

'This suggests that our DNA could be marked before birth and these marks could predict our later body composition.'

Epigenetics is a rapidly emerging and exciting area of scientific research which may help us to explain how the environment and genome work in concert to influence our risk of many diseases. Evidence is growing that factors like parental diet, exercise, smoking and hormones can alter the regulation of our genome – when genes are switched on and when they are switched off – even before birth.



Raising aspirations alone may not be key to academic success

New research carried out by Newcastle University challenges the idea that raising aspirations is the key to improving the education of children from low-income families.

Liz Todd, Professor of Educational Inclusion at Newcastle University, led a multidisciplinary team that reviewed projects designed to raise aspirations and change attitudes as part of a Joseph Rowntree Foundation-funded study.

The project looked at whether the issue of low educational attainment by children from poorer backgrounds can be solved by schemes that aim to change aspirations and attitudes.

The review found that while some interventions showed some change in attitudes and had an impact on educational attainment, there was no evidence that one led to the other.

Importantly, the review found that low-income families already have aspirations for their children to go on to higher education but often other barriers can get in the way of them realising these ambitions. Professor Todd also found that teachers, policy makers and other

education professionals underestimate the ambitions of young people and the aspirations that families have for their children.

Professor Todd said: 'For more than 10 years national and local policy has focused attention on raising aspirations. But there is no evidence that if you want to impact on the attainment of lower-income pupils that changing attitudes and aspirations is the way to go. There is an urgent need to change direction.

'It's not that aspirations aren't important. It's not about turning them on but keeping them on track. It's highly unlikely that any child starts school wanting to be unemployed.'

The research found that the most effective way of helping children from low-income households to achieve their ambitions is engaging parents in their children's learning and providing a range of support for children such as mentoring and extracurricular activities.

It also stated that we need to develop approaches that don't blame families and children for the effects of poverty on their education.



NEWS IN BRIEF

■ **Minimum alcohol pricing not set high enough.** Following the Prime Minister David Cameron's vow to tackle binge drinking, new research from Newcastle University has highlighted the need for a strong approach to alcohol pricing. The study found that the ban on below-cost pricing is unlikely to have a noticeable effect on the cost of alcohol. Dr Jean Adams found that less than two percent of promotions led to alcohol being sold at below-cost price and the measure is likely to have a limited impact.

■ **Increased fertility rate for IVF patients achieved by new equipment design.** A novel system for processing embryos during IVF treatment has been shown to significantly improve the chances of pregnancy – by more than a quarter. Pioneered by a Newcastle team of fertility experts within the University and NHS, the innovative design of interlinked incubators provides a totally enclosed and controlled environment within which every step of the IVF process can be performed. Research revealed that the introduction of the new system resulted in a 27 per cent increase in pregnancy rates compared with conventional equipment used in IVF treatment labs.

■ **Leading the way in carbon capture and storage.** Newcastle University has been named one of the key players in a £13 million UK Centre for Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) research. Funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), the project will bring together over 100 of the UK's world-class CCS academics. Newcastle University's role in the project will be to find solutions to the problem of transporting the CO₂ from source to the depleted offshore oil and gas wells where it will be stored.

The hidden cost of cannabis



Around £200 million-worth of electricity is being stolen every year to run illegal cannabis farms across the UK.

Research being carried out in the University's Centre for Cybercrime and Computer Security (CCCS) has revealed this would be enough electricity to provide free energy for every household in Newcastle for a whole year.

Now the team is joining forces with key organisations to investigate ways in which cyber technology could be used to crackdown on the commercial cultivation of this Class B drug.

'The cultivation of cannabis is happening on an industrial scale but at the moment the police are still very much reliant on intelligence and tip-offs,' explains Phil Butler, a Co-Director of the Centre and a former detective inspector with Northumbria Police.

'What we are trying to do is develop technologies that will enable us to take a more proactive approach in the fight against cannabis cultivation.'

Among the technologies being investigated is a smart meter which feeds back information in real time to the main electricity grid. Remotely monitoring input and output, Mr Butler said it could detect 'spikes' on the grid where unexpectedly high levels of electricity were being withdrawn.

The new initiative was launched in May with a two-day conference which brought together individuals and organisations who have a key role in combating the problem of cannabis cultivation, including the Home Office, ACPO, regional fire and police services and energy companies.

New potential target for rheumatoid arthritis

Scientists have discovered a new way of potentially treating rheumatoid arthritis which works by preventing damaging white blood cells from entering the joints.

Using a unique drug, they are able to stop destructive white blood cells migrating from the bloodstream into inflamed tissue and so preventing them causing further injury.

In rheumatoid arthritis the body's own immune system attacks the joints. Typical approaches for treatment involve blocking the signals in the body which activate the immune system to attack the joint. In contrast, this new strategy will prevent damaging white blood cells from entering the joints in the first place.

Lead author Dr Graeme O'Boyle described the agent's action: 'Imagine that the damaged joint is covered in flags which are signalling to the white blood cells. Traditional treatments have involved pulling down the flags one by one but what we have done is use an agent which in effect 'blindfolds' the white blood cells. Therefore, they don't know which way to travel and so won't add to the damage.'

'This research is very exciting, as although it is in its early stages, if it can be transferred to humans it could shut down the inflammation that causes rheumatoid arthritis.'



Apps the way to do it

Newcastle University has challenged its students to devise a mobile phone app to improve life on campus, with a £10,000 prize for the overall winner.



Organised by students from the University's Entrepreneurial Society, the two-stage 'Appathon' asked students to submit ideas for an app that would enhance their University experience, before going on to build it.

The first stage of the competition, which closed in February, saw a wealth of ideas submitted from across the University – with a prize fund of £1,750 for the three considered best by the judges.

An app to help University societies and clubs keep in touch with their members – called NCL Space – won first prize in this first 'ideas' round. Its designer, Olle Muronde, a first-year computer scientist, said: 'When you first get to university it's hard to keep track of everything. I missed several events because I just didn't know they were happening.'

'With my idea for an app it will be much easier for freshers and other students to keep up to date with what their societies and clubs are

up to. It will also allow you to find out which societies your friends have joined so you can too.'

Other ideas included one to make textbooks more easily available, an app to help new students find their way around campus, and one which turns your phone into a University smartcard, giving access to buildings even if you have forgotten your card.

Another of the first stage winners was Joshua Simmons, with his CampusBuzz app idea.

Josh said: 'In a sense, CampusBuzz is a messaging system not dissimilar to Twitter, but for campus only. Tags can be attached to posts for easy identification and filtering. The design is intentionally simple to give a high level of freedom for anybody posting.'

'It's a communication tool that connects students, societies, and anybody else within the University system. It can be used to announce society events, free give-it-a-go sessions, Union events, University news, and anything else that

students should know about. Students could use CampusBuzz for selling books, recruiting for a sports team, or anything they might need help for. It's basically a 'one-stop shop for student life.'

Daniel Thompson, President of the Entrepreneur Society, said: 'We have had a great response to the competition. Many of them were very innovative, which is exactly what we were looking for.'

'A lot of students have smartphones these days and with apps becoming more and more popular it seemed the right time to run a competition like this.'

'Many of the ideas show great promise and hopefully they will prove to be popular when we see the finished apps. Any of the ideas submitted could now be made into real apps.'

The next stage of the competition will be to develop the apps for use on campus in time for the new intake in September, with a grand prize of £10,000 for the overall winner. If they prove popular, they could be rolled out on campuses across the country.

Professor Chris Brink, Vice-Chancellor of Newcastle University, said: 'Improving our students' experience of living and studying on campus was at the heart of the app competition and that is why I was delighted to support it.'

'Thanks to the commitment, knowledge and enthusiasm of our Entrepreneur Society and assistance from the Students' Union and Careers Service, the competition has been a resounding success; attracting over 250 entries and capturing the imagination of students in a range of subjects to devise ways of harnessing the latest mobile technology to make life easier for all those studying at Newcastle.'

SOCIAL RENEWAL: what does it mean to you?

In April, Newcastle University launched the third of its Societal Challenge Themes: Social Renewal. This builds on its previous two themes, Ageing and Sustainability, to address some of society's most pressing needs.

Based in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal asks how societies and communities – whether local, regional, national or international – can thrive when faced with rapid, transformational change.

Researchers are addressing global challenges such as stimulating enterprise, regenerating places and tackling health and education inequalities, and are channelling their work into seven main themes: Leadership, Citizenship and Governance; Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation; Heritage and Culture; Identity, Diversity and Inclusion; People, Place and Community; Digital Innovation; and Wellbeing and Resilience.

Arches asked a group of students, graduates and members of staff: 'What does social renewal mean to you?' Here's what they came back with. See the video interviews in our online edition for more details on their work and ideas: www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/arches/SRvideo



Dr Alistair Clark is a lecturer in Politics, with a research interest in local elections.

'Low voter turnout is not just about apathy. The reasons are complex and include declining trust in representatives to deliver what they promise; social exclusion and inclusion; and the decreasing ability and willingness of political parties to run active campaigns to help get the vote out.'



Dan Ellis (MA Business and Creativity 2011) runs a community cinema in North Tyneside.

'We need to empower people to become involved with the improvement of their communities and to achieve this it is essential to improve the infrastructure, the support and resources reaching people and the organisations that are active on a local level.'



David Moffatt (BSc Agriculture 1966, PhD 1971) is an international development consultant.

'For me social renewal must be founded on the devolution of responsibility, authority and, critically, control of the purse strings to communities – and should build on their existing assets.'



James Johnston is Chair of Newcastle University's Diversity Consultative Group.

'Society can overcome difference by celebrating all kinds of diversity and we can do worse than encourage positive role models who can inspire and renew our confidence in each other.'



Katie Griffiths (BA Economics and Business Management 2012) is the outgoing President of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE).

'Social renewal needs to be driven from the bottom up, and I think students can be a key part of that. At SIFE we get students to use what they've learned in their degree, and the resources to which they have access, to give something back to society – often teaching business skills and getting individuals in the community to become more entrepreneurial and improve their own standards of living.'



Professor Mark Shucksmith (MSc Agricultural Economics 1977, PhD 1987) is Director of the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal, and an expert on rural development.

'The challenge of social renewal faces us all – wherever we live – in these times of rapid, transformational change.'



Natavan Aliyeva (BA Politics 2012) is an international student ambassador from Azerbaijan.

'Every year thousands of bright and intelligent international students in the UK face unnecessary obstacles in finding reasonable jobs, as the immigration laws are getting stricter and stricter. I understand that loosening the immigration laws by the government might lead to unnecessary migration problems, but I believe that those students who are eager to stay in UK and have all prerequisites for finding good jobs, should be given at least some chances to prove themselves and benefit the UK economy in the future.'



Professor Nina Laurie's (BA Geography 1986) research in international development sees her working with **Shakti Samuha, an organisation in Nepal comprising women who have been trafficked.**

'Social renewal is making something new through collective action, with the solidarity and the support of others. For things to change you have to go beyond just a material intervention, and treat people with respect, honour and esteem.'



Dr Suzanne Moffatt (PhD Speech 1990) is a senior lecturer in the University's Institute of Health and Society.

'Poor health and the persistence of health inequalities have a fundamental impact on quality of life. Improvements in health result, first and foremost, from tackling root causes such as poverty, poor housing, educational and employment opportunities and environmental degradation. A challenging and long-term outcome of any social renewal initiative would be improved health and the reduction of health inequalities.'



Oonagh McGee works on the Social Inclusion in the Digital Economy (SiDE) project.

'Social renewal is about transferring the knowledge and expertise we have at the University into the community, using education as a vehicle towards regeneration.'

But what does it mean to you? Share your thoughts on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/nualum – and keep an eye on the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal's website for details of events and activities over the coming year at www.ncl.ac.uk/socialrenewal

'WE SHOULD BE IN PROTEST'

The Occupy movement had a point, says the chairman of the London Stock Exchange, even if it was misdirected. With unprecedented levels of debt, and a system in which it is only encouraged, it's Whitehall that must answer.

Dan Howarth talks to Chris Gibson-Smith (PhD Geology 1970).



'Western democracy is at the beginning of a period of crisis. None of the wealth benefits of globalisation are reaching the bottom half of our society. It's a timebomb, and the single biggest real political issue in this country.'

Chris Gibson-Smith



From the seventh floor of the London Stock Exchange on Paternoster Square, its Chairman, Chris Gibson-Smith, surveys a panorama of London that stretches from Smithfield in the north to St Paul's Cathedral, a few streets south. Tucked behind the white dome of St Paul's sits a plot of concrete which was home to the Occupy London movement between October 2011 and February 2012 – for whom the Exchange was a symbol of corporate greed and everything that's wrong with modern society.

'I have a certain sympathy,' says Gibson-Smith. 'A protest says there's something wrong and I think they're right about that.'

'Western democracy is at the beginning of a period of crisis. None of the wealth benefits of globalisation are reaching the bottom half of our society. It's a timebomb, and the single biggest real political issue in this country.'

But the Exchange was a misplaced symbol, says Gibson-Smith. It's politics that is the real problem.

He points to out-of-control spending, 'disgraceful' government balance sheets, and the rapid turnover of ministers which only eschews accountability.

'We should be looking at a structure of superb administration which is 85 per cent leadership running society within the framework of laws we have agreed consensually, and maybe 15 per cent politics. That would be a sensible balance,' he argues. 'What we have is the other way round.'

A geologist by trade with nearly 30 years' experience of running FTSE 100 companies, Gibson-Smith is well-versed in the tectonics of business and economics.

After rising through the ranks at BP to become a managing director in 1997, he was appointed Chairman of the London Stock Exchange in 2003, and Chairman of British Land – one of the UK's largest property development companies – in 2007. Along the way, he's held directorships at Lloyds TSB and Powergen (now E.ON), and was Chair of National Air Traffic Services from 2001–2005.

His experience of oil, banking and aviation helped when the markets faced three of the biggest crises in recent years: the global financial crisis, the volcanic ash clouds, and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

'I was and remain appalled that it happened,' says Gibson-Smith of the 2010 disaster which saw up to 4.9 million barrels-worth of oil spill into the Gulf of Mexico. 'You have to maintain an intense focus to make sure such catastrophes never happen, and it can only be that someone lost the intensity of that responsibility.'

Gibson-Smith speaks slowly and sincerely, with every word carefully considered. He's as down to earth as any Geordie, despite his lack of the native twang and a childhood spent in the oil fields of South America.

His father and grandfather worked in the oil business, and he lived with his parents – who also studied at Newcastle when it was King's College – in a clearing in the jungle in Borneo until he was eight years old, when he returned to his grandmother's house in Jesmond to go to school. 'I think of myself as a world citizen as well as a North East lad,' he says.

He studied for a BSc in Geology at Durham University, where he met his wife Marjorie. 'I graduated in the year ahead, and I realised I was deeply in love,' he says. 'There was no work in England for geologists, so I came up with this wheeze of doing a doctorate. Newcastle had a place because someone dropped out, so it turned out perfectly.'

Marjorie supported him by teaching at a school on Newcastle's Scotswood Road, and they married during his PhD.

After joining BP, Gibson-Smith became its youngest-ever chief geologist at the age of 36. His 'dream job' lasted for six months, when he was identified by senior executives as a potential future board member. 'They asked if I'd ever considered becoming a businessman, and I genuinely thought it was because I was doing such a bad job that they wanted me out,' he laughs.

He won a place on Stanford University's fiercely competitive Sloan Master's programme, and moved out to California, before heading up BP's North American operation on graduation. 'The standards on the Master's were extraordinary and it changed my life,' says Gibson-Smith. 'It completely changed my relationship with quality.'

'With the PhD you were lost in a world of your own, it was more about your own intellectual development. But at Stanford it was like standing in front of a fire hose,' he chuckles. 'The privilege was having had both systems, and I needed both of them to become what I now am.'

He puts much of his success down to a branch of management theory called organisational behaviour (OB). 'I'd never heard of it before the Master's, but it turned out to be my natural gift – working with other people to produce results. Everything else I have to work at, OB I do. And that's still how I work, I get other people to do it for me,' he smiles.

Gibson-Smith and his team have kept the Exchange in good fettle despite a turbulent period, both driving and resisting a raft of takeover bids, and rescuing the Exchange's own shares from a mini-crash at the end of 2011.

With almost 3,000 companies from 70 countries listed on the Exchange, and a total market capitalisation of £3.5–4 trillion, the market is healthy. But long-term sustainability will depend on how the UK's economy is managed – and Gibson-Smith doesn't believe politicians are up to the job.

For starters, they don't stay in office long enough to be held to account. 'There have been six Secretaries of State for Transport in the last six years,' he points out. 'It takes you three years to understand the job, but you're gone in a year! Politicians are just taking the mickey here. There's nobody in there with a real sense of authority and responsibility.'

He finds the concept of austerity cuts bizarre too. 'In 1997, government spending was £270 billion, and this year – within talks of austerity – it will be £690 billion. I don't

understand it, and nor should the man in the street because it doesn't make any sense at all.

'What is the government doing with the money it takes off us?' he asks. 'We're taxed to the max as a society and we're having to borrow in the hope we'll grow through the problems, so the debt is still growing. The fact we permit this level of grotesque inefficiency is a crying shame. We should be in protest,' he says.

A credit rating downgrade would increase the cost of raising capital and make the UK economy even less efficient, warns Gibson-Smith. The markets have given this government a grace period to deal with the deficit, but time is running out. 'It's not next week's threat but it's certainly next year's threat'.

So what's the answer? 'We the people have to create voice and discussion. We are the solution,' says Gibson-Smith. 'We have to figure out how to reform politicians if they won't do it for themselves'.

He'd like to see the experts and technocrats have more influence over policy to begin with, and a greater emphasis on long-term rather than short-term thinking.

He and the Exchange are currently lobbying the government over its tax policy which favours companies that finance themselves through debt, in the form of bank loans, rather than equity, in which investors buy a stake in the business.

Whereas interest on bank loans is tax-deductible, the purchase of shares is taxed four

times – through corporation tax, dividend tax, share-trading tax and capital gains tax.

'The whole system is, by design, systemically skewed to debt, at a time when we're trying to reduce it,' he contends. 'It's a virtual guarantee that successful entrepreneurial wealth creation in this country will be minimised through a lack of equity risk capital.'

A healthy, wealth-generating society needs a bubbling pool of young people creating new businesses, he points out. But it also needs far greater awareness, and confidence to act on that awareness from the public, on both the economy and the quality of politics. 'That means far more attention to the details, and a better understanding of economics,' he adds.

One example he gives is the £200 billion of new capital that shareholders injected into British industry when the financial crisis hit. 'It happened quietly and efficiently within 14 months, and no one's ever heard of it, but it's the same amount as the £200 billion in quantitative easing which the Bank of England put out to keep the banks afloat. And everyone's heard of that'.

Remarkably, the frustration doesn't seem to get to him. And ever the scientist, he uses a series of five-year tests to keep him focused on the job. 'Am I still enjoying it and do I make a difference?' he asks himself. 'So far, in my 67th year, the answer is yes and yes.'

'It's fascinating,' he says. 'I had no idea it would turn out this fun.'



AGENTS OF CHANGE

An army of social entrepreneurs are finding business opportunities in social good, and reinvesting profits into their communities – despite the odds being stacked against them. Chris Stokel-Walker (BA English Literature 2010) meets three Newcastle graduates who are doing their bit for the 'big society'.



Financial necessity has seen major cuts to the charitable and voluntary sectors, whilst the UK government aims to give them more responsibility. Once a fuzzy campaign slogan, David Cameron's 'big society' is now a cry for help, asking ordinary people with ingenuity to create something bigger and better from a smaller pot of cash.

Electing to help the local community is a bold move, but as Jill Baker of the Tyne Gateway Trust – a social enterprise which combats child poverty in the North East – suggested at a recent event at Northumbria University: 'If we don't try, we'll never change the world, will we?' At heart 'we're all risk takers,' she added. 'Just some of us are more daring than others.'

But it seems the markets aren't geared up to accommodate social value. 'We lack a measure for social impact in the same way that we can measure economic impact,' points out Dimo Dimov, Professor of Entrepreneurship at Newcastle University Business School. 'It's therefore hard for such enterprises to justify and obtain resources using existing market-based principles.'

Until the community impact of such schemes can be quantified economically, social entrepreneurs will have more difficulty than most in finding funding.

A new corporate structure, at least, is helping. The Community Interest Companies (CIC) were introduced by the government in 2005, as an alternative to the complexity of charitable status. Designed with social enterprises in mind, the CIC provides the security and flexibility of a company, whilst ensuring profits and assets are used for public benefit.

Though the government officially estimates there are 68,000 social enterprises in the UK, Lucy Findlay of the Social Enterprise Mark Company believes that the real number is at best half that. In early April the government tried to help matters by launching Big Society Capital (BSC), combining capital from dormant bank accounts and funds from high-street banks to form what will eventually be a £600 million fund to spread out to social enterprises via intermediaries. In a sector that only had £165 million to go around in 2010–11, that is a large cash injection. But there are queries as to whether the capital will go to the right places, or whether banks will be willing to invest in social schemes that seem unlikely to promise high returns.

'Social enterprises are no different to any other business, and it's unbelievably tough out there at the minute,' explains Gareth Trainer (BSc Physiological Sciences 2000, EMBA 2007), Assistant Director for Entrepreneurial Development at Newcastle University's Careers Service. If businesses are struggling in the current climate, social enterprises are too.

Relying on small cash injections until an idea is big enough to self-fund is therefore the end goal. Social enterprises 'need an economic engine in order to be self-sustainable', says Professor Dimov.

Arches talks to three of our own social entrepreneurs who are hoping to get to the point of self-sufficiency, whilst helping their local communities.



Food Nation

Jamie Sadler
(BSc Food & Human Nutrition 2004)

Jamie Sadler runs Food Nation, a recently rebranded CIC that aims to tackle health inequalities in the North East through promoting good food and nutrition. Formerly known as East End Health, the Byker-based organisation reconstituted as a CIC in September 2011 after a number of years as a charity.

'In the current climate you need to be lean and ready to do business, and I felt that a charity wasn't the best model for us,' says Jamie, pointing to the infrequency of trustee meetings which meant important business decisions had to be delayed. 'We also found that our paid staff had a much better understanding of the business, and deserved an opportunity to be more involved in its direction and governance.'

Now Food Nation employs 14 people, and has just been awarded a 'Community Food Initiative' contract through which it will coordinate food and nutrition activities in communities throughout Newcastle.

Another project, Smooth Enterprises, works with secondary schoolchildren to set up their own businesses selling Innocent smoothies in local primary schools. 'The idea is that they make a profit like any other business, but by teaching them about social enterprise they reinvest that profit into their school community to tackle food and nutrition issues,' Jamie explains. 'It was important that we sourced the drinks at the right price for kids in more disadvantaged communities, so we get them for 57 pence from a North East supplier and encourage the kids to sell them for a little bit more, but nowhere near the £1.80 they might cost in a café.'

Food Nation still relies on public funding, and Jamie admits that he spends most of his time on funding applications. 'It takes a lot of time and energy because it's all so short term, often six months to a year. The longest funding agreement I've ever had for a project is three years. It would be lovely to secure sustainable long-term funding so you can focus on what you want to achieve. It can be frustrating but it's so worthwhile and just part and parcel of the job.'

'Going forward, the outlook of the voluntary sector needs to change. We can't rely on handouts – we must act more like businesses if we're going to survive and grow,' says Jamie. An outside catering service is one of the business ideas on his list.

'We need new ways to generate income and make profit. That's not something you associate with our sector, but it's what you do with the profit that's important. Being a CIC is about investing that money back into the business for social good, which is ultimately what we're passionate about.'



Top to bottom: Jamie Sadler, Dan Ellis, Lucy Fairley, Chantelle Howes-Warden

Jam Jar Cinema

Dan Ellis

(MA Business & Creativity 2011)

After finishing drama school, Dan Ellis returned home to Whitley Bay in North Tyneside and decided to do something about the lack of provision for the arts in the area. He set his sights on a community arts venue, modelled on an old Meadow Well cinema, which offered free entry on Saturday afternoons to patrons who donated an old jam jar.

Taking his idea to the Blueprint social enterprise competition in 2011, Dan's idea – by now christened Jam Jar Cinema – won the £5,000 prize. This gave him the impetus and financial freedom to find a 2,600 square foot building in Whitley Bay that had been derelict for a decade.

Blueprints have been drawn up and contracts exchanged, and by the end of 2012 Dan hopes his new educational and cultural hub will bring the local community together in front of the silver screen.

Setting up as a CIC, Dan appointed three directors to his board and wrote a 'community statement', capturing the social value his business will bring to the area. He found the registration process to be smooth, with a £35 fee payable to Companies House, where a team weighs up the community benefits before granting CIC status.

'As a CIC you're trading your social purpose, so the regulation is a good thing,' says Dan. 'If I wanted to set up as a normal business, there are a lot more barriers in place.'

Dan says he has the same aims of profit and scalability as a commercial entrepreneur, but other motivations. 'I won't be saying in 10 years I want 50 branches across the country, that's high-growth entrepreneurialism. In my case, in 10 years' time I'd like to have got 1,000 people into employment or made a difference in communities. The criteria for success are different.'

He's looking at generating revenue streams to ensure Jam Jar Cinema isn't reliant on grant funding. 'I'm at my wit's end with filling out grant forms,' Dan admits. 'It's an inefficient use of time, and often a shot in the dark. You have to think about the impact you could have elsewhere if your efforts were redirected.'

'For all the talk of launching funds for investment and creating jobs, they're difficult to access for a small start-up company. You might pay an employee £20,000 a year to fill out grant bids for you, and many cultural organisations have development teams who are responsible for that. But if you look at how much is spent on their salaries alone compared to successful bids, it doesn't quite make sense to me. I don't want it to be part of our business model.'

Until the cinema gets off the ground, Dan is working as an usher and doing freelance theatre work to ensure a steady income. Eventually he aims to generate funds through private events, and operate at a surplus so he can open another venue in a couple of years and set up a dedicated education fund.

Dan is determined that Jam Jar Cinema will be a long-lasting pillar of the community when it opens its doors to North Tyneside cinephiles later this year.

Crossings

Lucy Fairley

(BMus Folk and Traditional Music 2010)

Lucy Fairley established the Crossings community music group with the help of Newcastle University's Careers Service. 'They gave us a tremendous amount of advice,' she explains. Acting as a way for new immigrants to the region to make social connections, Crossings' regular weekly meetings have spawned a choir, a band, educational workshops in local schools and even a basketball team.

'Virtually everything we do is run by volunteers,' says Lucy, who set up Crossings as a charity in late 2009 following an initial feasibility study. 'Many asylum seekers are isolated, terrified of enforced return to their home country and suffer from poor mental health. It's important for them to know that there is someone there to support them.'

The group proves that music is a great communicator – to date it has helped people from 26 different nations to come together with others to aid the difficult transition into a new home.

The group has been supported by a variety of grants, though Lucy admits it's hard to secure finance. Crossings missed out on National Lottery funding in late 2011, having devoted many hours to producing a bid document, but has received guaranteed three-year funding from Newcastle City Council and support from other trusts, foundations and donors. Eventually, Crossings hopes that money made from performing will help fund its good work, making the enterprise sustainable.

Chantelle Howes-Warden, a student on Newcastle's BA in Accounting and Finance and one of the original founders of the group, is astounded at how far charitable community spirit has brought Crossings. 'It started off as just an idea and now look at it! I didn't think we'd last this long.'

Providing a vital service, Crossings ensures a warm welcome to the region for those who need it most.

India, South Africa, Cambodia, Gateshead... Wherever Sugata Mitra works, he provides pupils with a computer and leaves them to it. And they learn. Helen Ward meets the Newcastle academic whose work could transform teaching.



Schoolchildren in Hyderabad, India, use Skype to contact one of Professor Mitra's 'grannies' in the UK.

THE WILL TO LEARN

In Oxford, a bunch of suited professionals have gathered to listen to some of the most inspiring and innovative thinkers in the world at the TEDGlobal conference.

Sugata Mitra, Professor of Educational Technology at Newcastle University, is holding his audience rapt. He flicks on a film of two children peering at a computer screen. These are not the goggle-eyed zombies of middle-class Western parental anxieties. They are in India and they are poor. Desperately poor.

The computer monitor is a metre off the ground, embedded in an external wall, with a mouse embedded beside it. The boy, who is about eight, is working the mouse, and his 'student', a six-year-old girl in a yellow dress, is straining to see. The camera pans down and we see she is on tiptoes and barefoot.

Professor Mitra's 'Hole in the Wall' experiments are now well known – his work inspired the book *Q&A*, which was made into the Oscar-winning film *Slumdog Millionaire*. And he is not short of an admirer or two. 'He is clearly

highly gifted – probably a genius – and has tremendously exciting ideas about how education could be better for the poor,' says James Tooley, Professor of Education Policy, who has worked with Professor Mitra in India and Newcastle.

Like the Indian children with the computer, the man himself is driven by curiosity: to discover if there is anything children cannot teach themselves when they are given access to the Internet.

He gave the Oxford talk in 2010 and it was immediately posted on the TED website. It has since been viewed more than 500,000 times. In May 2012, he gave an updated version of the talk at the Thinking Digital conference in Gateshead*.

In the talk, Professor Mitra describes his teaching 'method'. He leaves a computer with a bunch of kids, tells them there's some 'stuff on it that I don't really know about... and then I leave'. It gets a laugh.

He explains that he has done this in many of the remotest places of the world: all over India, from South Africa to Cambodia and Chile –

even Gateshead! And what is really funny is that it works. Children, aged eight to 13, can learn by themselves without teachers present, if they work in groups and if they have access to the Internet.

Professor Mitra, 60, is an avuncular figure with a grey moustache and curly, dark hair. He speaks in educated tones and laughs along with his audience, gesturing constantly, and opening his arms when asking questions: 'What else can children do? Can Tamil-speaking 12-year-old children in a South Indian village teach themselves biotechnology?'

In answer to that question, he explains that he gave a computer and the task to 26 children in Kallikuppam and then left. When he came back after two months, they told him they understood nothing – 'apart from the fact that improper replication of the DNA molecule causes genetic disease'. Another laugh.

The next stage, though, was to increase the children's learning through the 'granny method'. A 22-year-old who worked for an NGO (non-governmental organisation) was invited to help teach the children. She did not know the subject, but was simply to ask the children to explain it to her and praise them when they did so. Through this method, the children's scores rose to the equivalent of school-taught children. This is where the laughter stops.

He had discovered what seemed to be an educational impossibility, but one he has since expanded into 'the granny cloud' – in which 200 real grandmothers from England use the Internet to be supportive to Indian children as they effectively teach themselves.

Professor Mitra himself is the product of an avowedly traditional education. He went to Jesuit schools in Ahmedabad, the largest city in Gujarat, India, and then in Delhi. 'It was very, very strict. Rote learning, that sort of thing – hard work and discipline,' he says.

His family life was similarly academic. His father was an educational psychologist and one of the first Indian psychoanalysts, which meant that Professor Mitra 'grew up in a house full of psychoanalysts and their patients'.

His career began with a PhD in solid state physics and he went on to research energy storage systems, first in Delhi and then in Vienna. His interest in computer networking led him to join a newspaper group and set up the first local area network publishing system in India in the early 1980s.

'[Prime Minister] Indira Gandhi came to inaugurate the system, so I have a favourite photograph of me explaining computers to her.

She listened to this whole thing. I'm sure she didn't understand a word, and at the end she said: 'That's lovely. Shouldn't you have a hair cut?'

From here, he moved on to direct the publishing systems of India's largest telephone directory publishing company before joining the National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT) in Delhi in 1990, where he was head of research and development. It was while he was there that the 'Hole in the Wall' experiments started.

When his son Shounak – now 31 and working in Colorado, USA, as a software writer – was five or six, Professor Mitra realised he was learning about computers by observing his father. 'He used to stand behind me and watch and after a while say, 'Why don't you do this?' I figured he was learning by watching, which goes against the grain of the teacher, which is that children learn by doing,' he explains. 'It was, in a way, the seed of the whole thing.'

The other starting point was remoteness, the fact that in every country there are areas where teachers cannot or will not want to be. The Internet solved this, connecting children in these places to knowledge. They need access and encouragement but the rest, it seems, comes naturally.

The work, repeated and built on, has led to his thesis that education is a 'self-organising system' – an idea that spans many disciplines but emerges from physics. The concept is that the structure of a system arises from the actions of its parts, not from external forces.

In 2006, Professor Mitra left NIIT after being appointed to a chair at Newcastle University and 'buying a heavy overcoat'. Since then, he has not looked back. 'He's charismatic and his ideas are very exciting,' says Professor Tooley. 'He is willing to think the unthinkable about education and educational delivery.

'In many ways, some of the best people in education are those who come from outside and haven't got sucked into ways of thinking from an early stage.'



Currently on a one-year visiting professorship at MIT Media Lab in Massachusetts, USA – where he is working on children's reading comprehension and the future of learning – Professor Mitra continues to work with local schools in the North East of England.* His research at St Aidan's CofE Primary School, an outstanding school in a deprived part of Gateshead, has included many experiments. For example, in a 40-minute session once a week a teacher sets her Year 4 class a question. The children then arrange themselves into groups of four to research the answer. And it works.

'I use it to teach curriculum material,' says the teacher, Emma Crawley. 'While they are working, I am observing the dynamic of the class, thinking about what they have found out and how to bring that together at the end.'

It will not come as a surprise to hear that Mrs Crawley has become one of Professor Mitra's many global fans. But there is little doubt that his conclusions also raise some uncomfortable questions. And he knows it. In his talks, he often alludes to a comment made to him by the science-fiction author Arthur C Clarke: 'If a teacher can be replaced by a computer, then they should be.'

So, could his work, which began by looking at how to provide education to areas where there are no teachers, end up by replacing them with computers in much wealthier places in order to cut costs?

'It is a big danger,' he admits. 'One of the things my work suggests is that we need one computer for every four children, which is a straightforward cut of 75 per cent, and one I'm quite happy about because there is enough evidence it will work.

'But the other way of misrepresenting the work is to say 'therefore a teacher is not required', which is absolutely untrue. We have curricula, we have examinations, and children desperately need their teachers to handle the system. Until the system itself changes, there is no question about the teacher's role.'

So it would require wholesale systemic reform? What would happen then? 'Imagine,' he replies, 'if government says, "OK, now GCSEs are abolished." Then I would say, yes, the teacher's role changes very dramatically.'

Of course, it may seem a pipe dream, even impossible, but to Professor Mitra the impossible is where he feels most at home.

This article is adapted from a feature which originally appeared in the Times Educational Supplement (TES). * denotes newly-added text.

OCTOGENIAL

More people are reaching their 80s and 90s than ever before, yet researchers still know remarkably little about their everyday health experiences. Here at Newcastle, a groundbreaking study of the 85-plus generation – part of the Newcastle Initiative on Changing Age (NICA) – is yielding some surprising results.



The ever-increasing lifespan of our population is often portrayed negatively by politicians and the media, when it ought to be celebrated as one of humanity's greatest achievements. This is the thinking behind Newcastle University's Charter for Changing Age, which aims to highlight the opportunities brought by society's older people, and challenge misconceptions.

And it's not just hot air: the inferences relating to the oldest and fastest-growing demographic in our population – those aged 85 and over – are based on a longitudinal study of their health and social needs, which began in 2006.

The Newcastle 85+ study was the first of its kind to look specifically at this age group. Researchers from the University's Institute for Ageing and Health interviewed 841 people living in Newcastle and Tyneside, who were born in 1921 and registered with a local GP. They questioned the participants about their ability to perform everyday tasks such as cooking, washing and going to the shops, to gauge their level of self-sufficiency.

The researchers then rated them on a scale according to how frequently they needed to call on another person for help.

More than one in three of those involved in the study were entirely capable of looking after themselves, with another 39 per cent needing help less than every day. This means 80 per cent of the population aged 85 needs little in the way of care.

For the 20 per cent who do need either daily help or critical 24-hour care, there were some vital implications for the future. With the number of people aged over 80 in the UK expected to

nearly double to 4.8 million by 2030, the study predicts an extra 630,000 care home places will be needed – an increase of 82 per cent.

Although centred on the North East, the findings are applicable to the national population, says Carol Jagger, AXA Professor of Epidemiology and Ageing at the Institute for Ageing and Health. 'More people than we imagined can look after themselves to a large extent, which is encouraging,' says Professor Jagger. 'But the government needs to invest both in elderly care and research which tells us how to improve healthy ageing. It should be about helping people maintain their health in old age as well as looking after them.'

Work is already well underway at Newcastle. Initiatives include the LiveWell programme, which looks at how to encourage healthy eating and exercise in the older population, and overcome the barriers to change in dietary behaviour; and the Ambient Kitchen, a spoke of the Social Inclusion through the Digital Economy (SiDE) project, which integrates technology into the kitchen – such as floor sensors, accelerometers in utensils, and computer projections on walls with video links with carers and relatives – to aid people with dementia.

The North East Charter for Changing Age also continues to gather pace. It is now backed by all 12 local authorities in the North East of England who – working with the University, national charity AGE UK and others – will make the region a world leader in enshrining and protecting the rights of older people.

Other supporters of the charter include Dame Joan Bakewell (Hon DCL 2010) and Dr Miriam Stoppard (MB BS 1961, MD 1966, Hon DCL 2004) and UK politicians Stephen Dorrell, Chair of the Health Select Committee, and Ed Miliband, leader of the Labour Party.

'The sort of negativity often witnessed today can only feed ageism and deepen individual pessimism about our own future and those of our loved ones,' says Professor Tom Kirkwood, Associate Dean for Ageing at the University. 'People make a massive contribution to society over a lifetime, be it work, caring for family and friends or volunteering and this doesn't stop just because you have reached a certain age – it's just a number!

'We need to wake up to a new 29-hour day – research shows that for every 24 hours we live, on average we accrue an additional five hours each day. In other words, UK life expectancy is currently increasing by two more years every decade. The key issue is how best we make the most of our lengthening lives by improving health and wellbeing.'

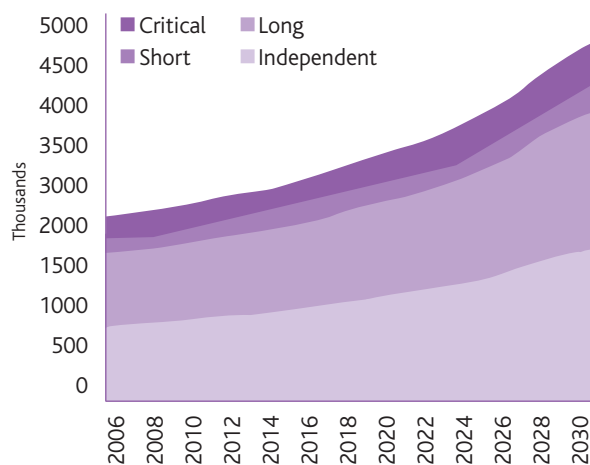
You can find out more about the Charter and the University's age-related work on the NICA website: www.ncl.ac.uk/changingage

The 85+ Study

Of the 841 participants in the 85+ Study, 62 per cent were women, 77 per cent lived in standard housing, and 13 per cent in sheltered housing. The study identified 17 activities of daily living (ADLs) by which to assess their 'interval need' – the amount and frequency of care they required to perform a task. The individual categories of interval-need dependency, as defined by Isaacs and Neville (1976), are defined below.

Here is some selected data from the study; the rest you can find in BioMed Central's open access journal, *BMC Geriatrics*, at: www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2318/11/21

Projected numbers (in thousands) of people in England and Wales aged 80+, with different categories of interval-need dependency.



Key

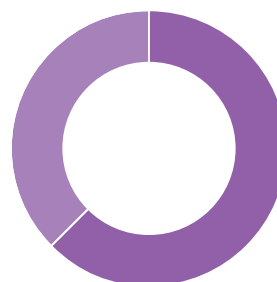
Long interval need – able to prepare a light meal, but struggled to go to the shops. Need relatively unskilled help for one to two hours each day.

Short interval need – able to use toilet unassisted, but unable to prepare a hot meal. Need help at intervals of three to six hours daily.

Critical interval need – unable to rise from bed or chair without supervision. Need constant nursing attention.

No difficulty shopping for groceries

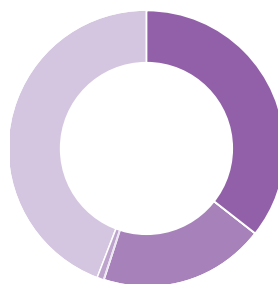
%



Men	61.8%
Women	36.8%

Ability to cut own toenails alone (men and women)

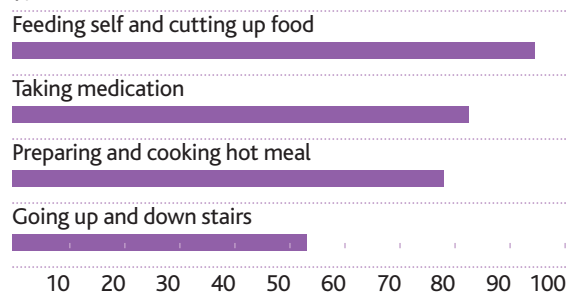
%



No difficulty	35.9%
Some difficulty (long interval need)	19.6%
Only with an aid (short interval need)	0.2%
Unable to do alone, need help (critical interval need)	44.3%

No difficulty performing ADLs (men and women)

%



High-speed rail is set to become a reality in the UK. But it won't put us on the right track unless it's part of a wider transport strategy, writes Ian Wylie.



THE FAST AND THE SPURIOUS

A high-speed train in Germany

After years of dithering, the government has finally backed plans for a high-speed rail network linking London, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds, to the tune of £33 billion. But taxpayers will only get value for their money if the 250mph HS2 line – from London to Birmingham initially, with separate spurs to Manchester and Leeds later – is part of a joined-up transport strategy.

That's the warning from Roberto Palacin, Senior Research Associate leading the Railway Systems Research Group at Newcastle University's NewRail centre.

'If we don't strengthen local rail, metro or tram networks, we won't maximise the benefits of high-speed rail and it will just become a haven for business travellers,' he says.

Palacin wrote NewRail's response to the Department for Transport's public consultation on high-speed rail, welcoming the proposed network but raising concerns about strategic policy and planning. And he is about to author another paper on the subject for the Smith

'Let's not just think high-speed rail, let's think which airports we need to develop; how they will be linked to rail networks; will motorways be tolled and how will they join up?'

Sir Neville Simms

Institute – one of the most trenchant critics of HS2 – in collaboration with John Tomaney, the Henry Daysh Professor of Regional Development Studies at Newcastle University.

High-speed rail's most passionate supporters claim that it offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to end the north-south divide. HS2 Limited, the company tasked with delivering the project, has estimated that a national high-speed rail network would generate benefits of up to £59 billion.

But when giving evidence last year to a House of Commons Transport Select Committee inquiry, Professor Tomaney explained that he believed the economic benefits for regions outside London and the South East were 'ambiguous at best and negative at worst'. The experiences of France, Spain and Japan, where high-speed rail lines are more commonplace, suggest that it is the capital cities which benefit most. In fact, one study found that a high-speed link had actually led to companies quitting Lyon for Paris.

Britain's first high-speed rail link (HS1) is between London and the Channel Tunnel. Phase one of HS2 will connect London and Birmingham by 2026, with 400 metre-long trains whisking 1,100 passengers along the 140-mile route in just 45 minutes. This would be followed by a second phase of the Y-shaped route reaching Manchester and Leeds by 2033. Connections to existing lines could then cut journey times between London and Newcastle to two hours and 37 minutes.

Palacin argues that Leeds and Manchester should not be end-of-the-line termini but through-nodes, allowing the provision of direct services beyond these cities to the conurbations of the North East and Scotland using the existing East Coast and West Coast Main Line routes, upgraded where necessary.

'We believe high-speed rail is a good idea, but our concern is that there are aspects not being tackled,' says Palacin. 'The focus so far has been on reducing transport time between conurbations, rather than taking a cohesive overview of mobility and connectivity in the UK. We are asking what kind of transport links are there going to be, to ensure that people living in areas that are not well-connected benefit from high-speed rail? How are people in Northumberland going to be able to access the benefits of high-speed rail? If more thought is not given to integrated transport links, we will not maximise the benefits.'

NewRail has become one of the largest and most successful research units in Europe in its field. Based in the School of Mechanical and Systems Engineering, NewRail has developed expertise in rail logistics, infrastructure, systems and vehicles, and some of Palacin's recent projects have included Modtrain, sponsored by the European Commission, which developed modular vehicle concepts for high-speed rail, and a study on high-speed rail connectivity in North West Europe.

'Capacity in the South of England is approaching its limit. If we want a better balance of transport modes by shifting more people off roads and onto rail, then the current network is going to run out of capacity,' says Palacin. 'What we are arguing is that there is no true mobility masterplan to cater for this balancing of the different modes, that would allow people to use all transport modes in a more efficient way.'

Sir Neville Simms (BSc Civil Engineering 1966), the recently appointed Chairman of Bombardier, a train manufacturing and servicing company, agrees. 'The real issue in the UK is



Roberto Palacin, Senior Research Associate at NewRail

capacity. There are 80 per cent more passengers using trains now than before privatisation, and we need to meet that growth. But why would we put in capacity that's not high speed? Whilst some new capacity can be squeezed out of the system with extra carriages and better signalling, there's a limit. And we need to think bigger than tinkering with what we've got.'

Transport is one of the research themes within the Newcastle Institute for Research on Sustainability, and current projects at NewRail – which works in collaboration with many of the major companies including Siemens, Bombardier, Alstom, Areva, SNCF and Deutsche Bahn – include innovations in the energy consumption of rail vehicles and systems.

'We are able to advise and support manufacturers on advanced vehicle design that is more efficient, optimises energy use and carries less weight by using new materials,' says Palacin, who is currently leading a European Commission-funded project on energy consumption in urban rail systems. 'This is particularly important with high-speed rail because as speed increases, energy use rises exponentially. By reducing energy consumption, you can reduce the impact on the environment,

and maximise capacity on the trains.'

What's needed in the UK, says Sir Neville Simms, is a national transport strategy. 'We've never had anything close to that,' he says. 'We know the productivity of the nation relies on good infrastructure. But looking forward to 2025, let's not just think high-speed rail, let's think which airports we need to develop; how they will be linked to rail networks; will motorways be tolled and how will they join up? At the moment, it doesn't seem like it's going to happen, and that's disappointing.'

According to Palacin, other European countries such as Germany and Spain have a better record of strategic investment in transport. 'Other countries often have an infrastructure strategy plan for their main cities and you can see how rail, aviation, freight, road and people fit into that plan. Yet here in the UK in recent months we've witnessed a debate about creating another airport for London, on the Thames Estuary. That's a random idea, and not part of a cohesive national strategy for transport.'

'What we're suggesting does not require large sums of investment. Sometimes all that is required is the will.'

SWITCHING ON TO EMPLOYABILITY

Having launched household names like Richard and Judy, Trisha Goddard and Jeremy Kyle, Dianne Nelmes (BA Politics and Economics 1973, Hon DCL 2011), is now helping students break into television. Dan Howarth meets the oft-dubbed Queen of Daytime TV.

'I've just about pulled in every favour I'm owed now,' laughs Dianne Nelmes, a TV executive and former investigative journalist who's squeezed her professional contacts to secure work placements in the TV industry for dozens of Newcastle students.

Nelmes launched many of the UK's best known talk shows, latterly as Controller of Daytime Television for ITV, before taking charge of production company Liberty Bell in 2008. That same year, she was appointed Visiting Professor in Journalism at the University – a three-year role in which she gave regular lectures and workshops.

'We had a lot of fun,' she recalls fondly. 'At the beginning of each year I'd give the students

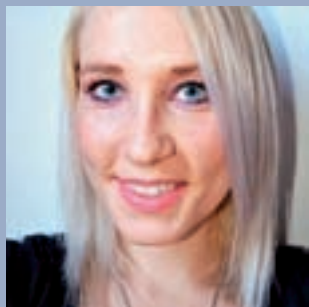
a lecture about getting jobs, and I'd tell them I'm a working journalist and a TV executive – not an academic – so use me as a networker.'

Perhaps thankfully, not everyone took her up on her offer. 'I gave my email address to 150 students each year, but only 20 or so would get in touch. Of those, 10 would really pursue me, and they're the ones who are going to make it.'

The TV industry – Nelmes points out – is not glamorous, and requires persistence, determination and hard work to get a foothold. 'It's hideously competitive,' she says. 'It was difficult when I was young, but it's much harder now. It takes a combination of luck, talent and sheer grit to be successful.'

'It's all about hard work and making good contacts. My grandfather taught me to keep on keeping on, no matter how tough it is, and that's my mantra.'

Dianne Nelmes



Michelle Alister
(BSc Psychology 2008, MA Media and Journalism 2011)

'I first met Dianne at a lecture she gave at Newcastle University as Visiting Professor in Media and Journalism. It immediately struck me how humble she was, refusing to take credit for any of her exploits. Dianne played some taster footage from a show currently in development. Little did I know in a mere few months I would be in Keswick, immersed in eight weeks of filming on location for the production of that show, *The Lakes on a Plate*.

'At the wrap party Dianne told me she had recognised a spark of determination in me, and

the fact that I had my Gold Duke of Edinburgh award listed on my CV secured me the job. As the completion of the award is not enforced, Dianne believed it took a certain type of person to choose to see it through. It certainly put me in good stead for scaling the mountains of Cumbria when we filmed with Sir Chris Bonington, and the creators of Kendal Mint Cake.

'It was the day she received her honorary doctorate that she asked me to work at Liberty Bell when I graduated, which led to my current role as Researcher at Flame TV. Dianne is a fabulous mentor, and I have her to thank for my blossoming career in media so far.'



Dianne Nelmes (left) with Jeremy Kyle, who she interviewed on stage in King's Hall in 2010

London is still the epicentre of the British TV industry, but Nelmes is adamant that other parts of the UK still have plenty to offer. 'The BBC move to Salford is the biggest opportunity there could ever be for young people coming up in this business,' she says. 'It's a wonderful area and the cost of living is much cheaper than London. I've been telling my students to see what's going on and apply for jobs there.'

Originally from Berkshire, Nelmes' first foray into journalism was as a reporter for *The Courier*, where she wrote about homelessness and poverty in Newcastle – an issue that remains close to her heart. After serving as President of the Students' Union, she became

a graduate trainee journalist, writing for *The Journal* in Newcastle before making a move into broadcast with BBC Look North, and then moving to Granada to work on its award-winning investigative current affairs programme, *World In Action*.

Spurred by the broadcasting industry's apparent apathy over the importance of women as a target audience, Nelmes took a huge gamble in 1988, launching *This Morning* with a then unknown Richard Madeley and Judy Finnigan. Broadcast from the Albert Dock in Liverpool, the show was an overnight success. 'We filmed from Liverpool for eight years, but the bosses insisted on taking it to the central

ITV studios in London. I think the show lost something when we did that, and it broke my heart,' she laments.

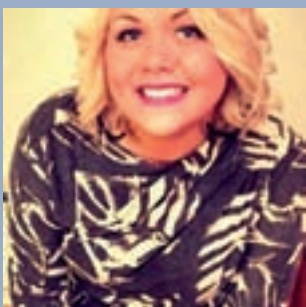
But from there, Nelmes went on to launch talk shows for Vanessa Feltz, Jerry Springer and Jeremy Kyle, and she created *Loose Women* in 1999. Having built a career from letting others steal the limelight, she's now brokering opportunities for the next generation of TV executives.

'I get a lot of joy out of helping young people, not only at university but in my company too. I just love their vibrancy, enthusiasm and talent, and it's so exciting to watch them grow,' says Nelmes. 'If other graduates spot an opportunity to help students progress into work, I'd say do it. We all had people who helped us along the way, and it's so important to give that back.'

'I hope this will inspire women in particular, as I think men are much better at networking than we are. My big joke is that men play golf and women go shopping. I actually got the money to do *Loose Women* in the fitting room of Harvey Nichols, after I heard a female boss of mine was going shopping and I asked if I could go along.'

'It's all about hard work and making good contacts. My grandfather taught me to keep on keeping on, no matter how tough it is, and that's my mantra.'

If you'd like to find out more about offering work placements to students, please contact Lesley Wilson in the Careers Service at Lesley.wilson3@ncl.ac.uk



**Chelsea Simpson
(BA Media, Communication
and Cultural Studies 2012)**

'Dianne is the Queen of Daytime Television and the person I have to thank for helping me into the career of a lifetime. One of the first times I actually met Dianne was when she interviewed Jeremy Kyle in front of an audience at the University. I never thought that 12 months later I would actually be working on the show myself!

'My first experience in TV was at ITV London. I found myself surrounded by celebrities and gossip for a week of work experience at *Loose Women*. Next, with the help and advice of Dianne, I was lucky enough to be given the opportunity to work

on Jeremy Kyle. I initially started as a Production Runner on the show and soon after I was promoted to a Junior Researcher. It's been a challenging and exciting experience.

'"Give it your all and love it" was the best advice given to me by Dianne. The past six months have proven that hard work and dedication are all you need to achieve a career that you love. Thanks to the skills I learnt at Newcastle University and the invaluable help and advice of Dianne, I am now at the beginning of what I hope will be a successful broadcasting career.'



THE BARD IN BLACK

30 years after he was kicked out by punk progenitors Dr Feelgood, Wilko Johnson (BA English Language and Literature 1970) recounts his experiences with 'the greatest local band in the world' for a new book. It proves his rock and roll indulgences haven't completely wrecked his brain cells. Dan Howarth chats to one of rock history's greatest and most innovative guitarists.



'Reeking of surly insolence' was how one invigilator described Wilko Johnson – then John Wilkinson – in 1970, reeling from being told to 'get stuffed' in a final-year English exam. 'That's the kind of pratt I was,' admits Wilko, who remembers the gibe being a tad more profane. 'I didn't care.'

But beneath the rakish exterior was the makings of a literary scholar, who would become one of the UK's few speakers of Old Icelandic – which he learned so he could read the original manuscripts of the Icelandic Sagas.

Nor was he an enemy to all academics. Wilko had a long-standing friendship with the late Robert Woof (Hon DLitt 2001), who lectured in English literature at Newcastle before becoming the founding director of the Wordsworth Trust – a position he held until his death in 2005.

'He was one of the nicest guys and was constantly interested in what was going on around him,' says Wilko. When some of Wordsworth's letters came on to the market at the end of the 1970s, Woof and another pal of Wilko's, the late Pete Laver (PhD 1978), asked him to do a benefit gig – which he threw at the Roundhouse in London with Motörhead.

In his youth, Wilko had designs on being a poet himself, but didn't feel his efforts were up to scratch. 'My poetry was rubbish,' he laments, 'but I found an outlet for it in later years by writing songs – stringing rhymes together and exploring the meaning of the universe'.

Dressed in black with a vintage Telecaster guitar over his shoulder and a maniacal stare, Wilko is best known for his six years with British R&B pioneers, Dr Feelgood – despite a stint with Ian Dury and the Blockheads, and over three decades on a never-ending tour with his own band, featuring Blockheads bassist Norman Watt-Roy, and Dylan Howe on drums.

He's also making a foray into acting, with the role of mute executioner Ilyn Payne in HBO's *Game of Thrones*. 'If you get an acting job and your character ain't got a tongue, you don't have any lines to learn,' he jokes.

With an autobiography on the presses and the release of a Dr Feelgood boxset, featuring unreleased tracks and a DVD of rare live footage, Wilko is finally revelling in Feelgood nostalgia after 30 years of hardly thinking about the band.

He's also in talks with Fender over the release of a Wilko-signature Telecaster – which takes him back to his first hankerings for the guitar. 'When I was 16 I got a job in a wretched quantity surveyor's office in London, and at lunchtime I would run across town to gawp at the guitar shops on Shaftesbury Avenue. Looking at Telecasters seemed to restore my brain,' he smiles.

His first Telecaster lived in the stockroom of a guitar shop in Southend, and he'd play it for half an hour every Saturday while he saved up the £90 to buy it outright. 'I'd pay a few shillings every week, and tell myself that as soon as I was 18, I'd get a job as a bus conductor, where you could earn £25 a week. So that's what I did but man it was terrible. I had to walk all the way to work first thing in the morning because there were no bleedin' buses.

'I persuaded my girlfriend it would be a good idea to empty her savings account, which contained just enough so I could pay for this Telecaster. We had to keep it secret from her mum and dad,' he laughs mischievously. 'We did get married in the end and we were together for a long, long time. But I never did pay her back.'

Wilko was born on Canvey Island, a run-down seaside resort in Essex mired by violence, alcohol and noxious fumes from the nearby oil and gas refineries – which saw the town dubbed ‘Oil City’.

When Dr Feelgood formed in the early 70s, Canvey became a hotbed for the proto-punk ‘pub rock’ movement – a term Wilko despises, as he was strictly teetotal at the time. Feelgood’s fierce performances were rooted in Wilko’s choppy guitar style and his chemistry with the band’s growling frontman, Lee Brilleaux.

The two had met some years previously when a violin-playing Wilko, busking with his brother in a jug band, caught the ear of 14-year-old Brilleaux. ‘This guy had such an intense personality,’ Wilko recalls. ‘A really sharp bite’.

Wilko made his way to Newcastle for university – ‘before they kicked it about and built that bloody great road through it’ – and Brilleaux formed a jug band of his own, which grew into an R&B group with a solid local following.

By 1971, Wilko was back from his travels in India and Nepal, and teaching English at a local school. He hadn’t played a note since leaving for Newcastle, but a chance meeting with Brilleaux led to him filling the band’s vacancy for a guitarist. ‘We were a local band for about two years, playing purely for the love, before we evolved into what Dr Feelgood would become, musically and visually,’ he says.

Over the next few years, Dr Feelgood took the UK by storm, producing two studio albums before reaching number one in the UK charts with *Stupidity* – a live album which captured the energy of the band’s electrifying stage performances. But the release of the fourth Feelgood album, *Sneakin’ Suspicion*, in 1977 heralded the end for Wilko, as a spat with Brilleaux saw him thrown out of the band.

‘We couldn’t stand the sight of each other,’ says Wilko, recounting the growing animosity between him and Brilleaux in their 1976 US tour. ‘But exactly what it was I do not know.’

The bust-up remains a cause of regret. ‘I’ve never found anything like the partnership I had with Lee,’ he says. ‘He was the driving force of the band, and although it was like a double act between me and him, Lee was the instigator. Everything was instinctive.’

‘I will always look back on him as one of the most impressive people I’ve ever known. A great friend and someone who changed my life.’

Dr Feelgood was the subject of a 2009 film by Julien Temple called *Oil City Confidential* – the third film in Temple’s punk trilogy, which also featured Joe Strummer and the Sex Pistols. Wilko dug out old photos and memories for the first time in years. ‘For a long time I never really thought about the band. It was confusing,’ he says.

The film’s effect was strong enough to bring him to tears. ‘In one of the live sequences, Lee was doing his stuff and I suddenly flashed on that feeling of what it was like – a feeling I’d forgotten. The whole kind of essence burst on me,’ he admits.

‘It’s peculiar to look back on all this stupid antagonism, but it’s what you do,’ says Wilko. ‘I’m slightly wiser now, and I realise I was to blame in not reconciling things. But you can’t go through life saying you won’t get emotional, because you always do.’

Dr Feelgood never achieved the same level of success after Wilko’s departure, although the band continues to this day with a different line-up. Brilleaux died of cancer in 1994, and a memorial gig is held in his name each year on Canvey Island. Wilko plays there when he can.



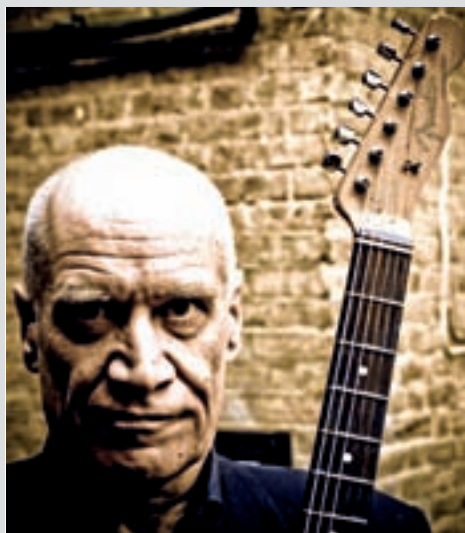
In contrast to his relationship with Brilleaux, Wilko has forged a 30-year partnership with Blockheads bassist, Norman Watt-Roy. ‘Apart from the fact he’s a brilliant musician and a nice guy, he’s got absolutely no ego problems,’ he smiles.

The Wilko Johnson Band is particularly big in Japan, where they refused to cancel a tour last year unlike the many acts who succumbed to fears of radiation fallout from the Tōhoku earthquake. ‘People were coming up to us afterwards, thanking us for not cancelling the gigs,’ says Wilko. ‘The Japanese are so independent, but right now they’re wounded and need help. It was very touching. Japan is roughly a yearly event for me and I wouldn’t miss it for anything’.

He has a similar affection for the North East. ‘Newcastle is still a beautiful place, and any time I play there I’ll just wander around the streets because I get this special feeling.’

‘I love Newcastle so much. I remember thinking, when I got a place at the University, blimey what will these coal miners be like? But they were three of the happiest years of my life.’

Looking Back At Me by Wilko Johnson and Zoë Howe, and All Through The City, the Dr Feelgood boxset, are available now.





Wonder wall

Rob Airey, Keeper of Art at the Hatton Gallery, explains why the Merz Barn Wall is such an important part of its collection.

Kurt Schwitters' Merz Barn Wall – on permanent display in the Hatton Gallery – is an international art treasure, described by critic Andrew Graham-Dixon as 'one of the most moving and singular works of art created in Britain in the twentieth century'.

Schwitters developed a form of collage called Merz and a series of large-scale sculptural environments, or Merzbau, of which the Hatton's Merz Barn Wall is the only surviving example. Created in a Lake District barn in late 1947, it was Schwitters' last significant work. He had settled in Britain after fleeing the Nazis, first from his home in Germany and then from exile in Norway. For a time he was interned as an enemy alien on the Isle of Man.

Already ill, Schwitters died in January 1948, leaving the Merz Barn unfinished. The Wall in the Hatton is a moving testament to the work of this major artist.

From June 2012, Newcastle University will be working with Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, who manage the Hatton Gallery, on an exciting capital campaign, which aims to improve the gallery space in order to provide access to art for everyone.

The Hatton occupies a distinctive position in the North East as a university gallery, and there is a huge amount of potential for further collaboration and interaction between historical pieces and contemporary work by Fine Art staff, students and graduates. The Gallery already has a successful learning programme, and the planned work will make it possible to develop this programme so that children can be inspired by the art on display and work together in a dedicated learning space.

For more information on the Hatton, see its website at: www.twmuseums.org.uk/hatton

A campus for the future

Newcastle University has invested over £200 million in its estate over the last few years to bring about an exciting transformation of its buildings, infrastructure and public spaces, creating a campus for the twenty-first century.

Not only are great things happening on campus, we've branched out further into Newcastle and the rest of the world too. This abstract map by Kerry Hyndman (BA Fine Art 2008) gives a taste of what you can expect.

1 The Campus for Ageing and Vitality

The site of the former Newcastle General Hospital is now home to the University's pioneering Institute for Ageing and Health. World-class research on growing old and staying healthy takes place alongside treatment and care for patients, and there is space for businesses who want to engage with research.

2 Science Central

Set to be built over the next 15 to 20 years, Science Central will transform the western part of Newcastle city centre into a new urban quarter, with businesses, shops and homes alongside scientific teaching and research facilities – particularly in energy, marine and transport. A geothermal borehole on the site recently hit the headlines after discovering hot groundwater nearly 2km beneath the surface.

3 Newcastle University International Singapore (NUIS)

Since 2008, we've delivered courses in marine engineering, chemical engineering, and food and human nutrition to over 360 undergraduate and postgraduate students at various sites in Singapore. In 2014, we'll be moving into two new multimillion-pound campuses, in partnership with the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT).



4

Student Forum

An outdoor space for students at the heart of the University which is home to one of many new pieces of art on campus – ‘Generation’ by Joseph Hillier (BA Fine Art 1997). Demolition of the Museum of Antiquities has revealed the full extent of the Armstrong Building’s stunning architecture for the first time in decades.

5

The Princess Royal

Newcastle’s new research vessel was designed in-house by staff and students in the School of Marine Science and Technology. The design, incorporating elements of a catamaran with a deep-vee hull, makes it the ideal vessel for the School’s ground-breaking research.

6

INTO Newcastle University

International students preparing to study in the UK will soon be able to enjoy brand new teaching facilities and accommodation at INTO’s purpose-built home opposite the Haymarket.

7

The Students’ Union

Last year’s £8 million refurbishment created a large space for gigs and events, new bars and cafés, a bigger and better Union Shop, and new offices for *The Courier* and Newcastle Student Radio.

8

Newcastle University Business School

Right in the heart of Newcastle’s centre of business and commercial development, Newcastle University Business School’s new facilities unite its world-class research, teaching and enterprise and innovation activities under one roof, whilst providing its students with spacious lecture theatres, top-class IT clusters, social spaces and a café.

9

Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia (NUMed)

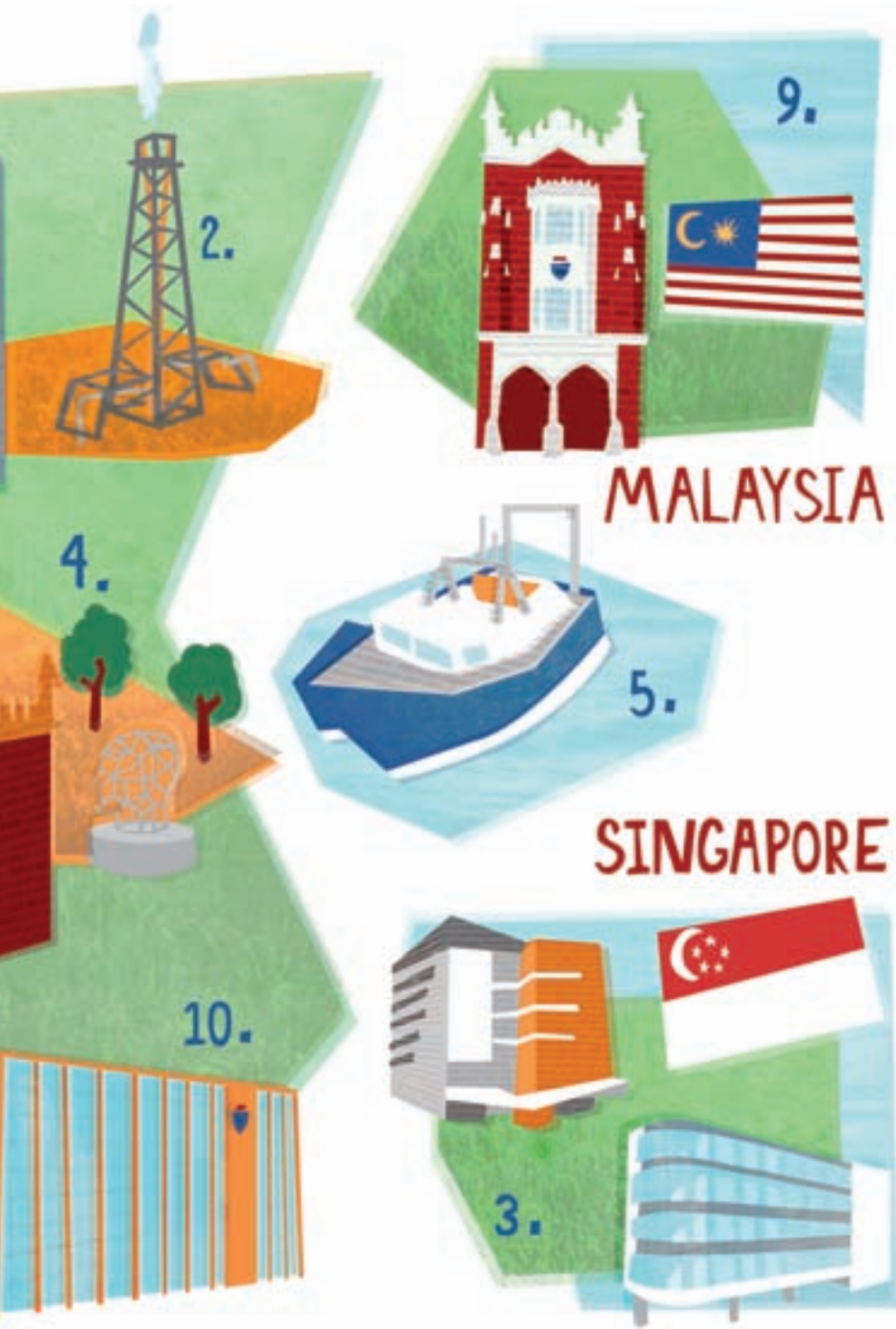
Eighty MB BS students enrolled at NUMed when it opened in November 2011, making Newcastle the first UK university to offer full UK medical degrees abroad. A BSc in Biomedical Sciences and postgraduate courses are planned from 2013, and 900 medical students are forecast to be studying at NUMed by 2017.

10

King’s Gate

A £35 million building which brings student services together under one roof, including the Careers Service, Accommodation, Student Wellbeing, Finance and Planning, and Alumni Relations. Opened in autumn 2009.

Illustration: Kerry Hyndman (BA Fine Art 2008)



For the love of science

The British Science Festival is returning to Newcastle for the seventh time, in September 2013, writes Rose Wu.



Organised by the British Science Association in partnership with a different host city each year, Europe's largest science event brings together over 350 of the UK's top scientists, engineers and commentators to discuss the latest developments in science and technology with the public.

From presentations of cutting-edge research to thought-provoking discussions and debate, a schools' programme for 8–19 year olds, hands-on activity for families, and a city-wide programme of comedy, drama and exhibitions – the Festival will have something for everyone.

Professor Ella Ritchie, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Newcastle University, says: 'It is a real coup for Newcastle to have been chosen by the British Science Association to host such a prestigious science festival. The opportunity for Newcastle to showcase some of the latest advances in science, technology and engineering will enhance further our reputation as a city of science and attract hundreds of businesses and visitors to the area throughout the six-day event.'

A regional launch of the Festival will take place in July when the British Science Association opens its call for activity proposals to go in the Festival programme. And with the British Science Association planning to return to Newcastle every four years, Newcastle University is working with regional partners and communities to think

creatively, not only about the Festival, but also its build up and legacy.

To help staff and students get their ideas for projects off the ground, the University will be launching the Ignite Small Grants Scheme, supporting activities across the University that showcase expertise and enthusiasm for science.

An engagement and outreach training programme is also being developed for staff and students looking for different ways to communicate their work. Activities will range from speaking to the media and learning how to develop activities for different audiences, to science busking.

Other projects being developed include a series of themed school packs to send out to local schools over the next academic year; a student-led science magazine which will launch in autumn 2012; and a 'street-science' team of volunteer student science buskers, who will help build enthusiasm and showcase the arrival of the Festival across the region.

Dr Bryn Jones, Dean of Postgraduate Studies for the University's Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering, who was at the 1995 festival says: 'It's great to see the Science Festival returning to Newcastle again and fun to think that the children who came to the events that we organised in 1995 are among today's undergraduate and postgraduate students!'

With all the exciting research taking place in Newcastle and the region today, we're sure the return of the Festival in 2013 will be bigger and better than ever.

If you would like to get involved, find out more about any of the above projects, or involvement opportunities for companies, or if you have any ideas you'd like to discuss, please contact Rose Wu, Science Festival and Engagement Coordinator, at rose.wu@ncl.ac.uk

If you have any photos or stories from the last two times the British Science Festivals came to Newcastle in 1995 and 1949, we'd love to hear from you.





MRes student Ella Neil (right) with fellow medics

A healthy exchange

A student-led venture is supporting medical students in developing countries and forging international friendships, writes Ella Neil (MRes Medical Genetics).

Kathmandu vista: Newcastle medics spent a month in Nepal's capital, where they experienced its overstretched healthcare system



Each year, Stage 4 medical students undertake an eight week elective module aimed at developing personal and professional skills away from the comfort of the Medical School. Many choose to go abroad, and the majority to developing countries. We visited Nepal – exciting and welcoming despite being one of the world's poorest nations – and spent a month in a government hospital in Pokhara, the second city of Nepal, and a month in Kathmandu.

Learning in the basic, busy hospitals, our medical skills and knowledge developed noticeably. And by living and working in Nepal for a substantial period, we learnt a lot about its culture and history.

Fifty five per cent of Nepal's population live in extreme poverty and 82 per cent rurally. Considering the Himalayan landscape you begin to appreciate the obstacles to providing adequate healthcare.

Understanding a healthcare system very different from our own was interesting, challenging and valuable. A common refrain of returning students is that they have a 'much greater appreciation of the NHS!'

Local Nepali students were amazed that our visit constituted part of our medical degree; their own three-week elective periods afforded them neither the time nor the money to visit the UK.

The host medical teams invested a lot of time in us and in this sort of overstretched medical system we felt that it was important for us to give something back. We decided to set up 'Elective Exchange' with other medical students and friends, aiming to bring students from the medical school in Pokhara to the UK to study here in Newcastle's world-class hospitals.

The students will spend time in the Medical School, local hospitals and primary care centres, meet clinicians and medical students and explore the culture and history of Newcastle.

We hope that the project's impact will be far-reaching. The project team are honing transferable skills in teamwork, organisation and budgeting and the four students will return and share their experiences with their peers.

In order to cover all the costs including flights, visas and accommodation, we are raising over £6,000. So far, we are thankful for the support of the Vice-Chancellor, the Students' Union and the wider Newcastle community through multiple fundraising events. We have also created friendships with local Nepali people.

If you would like to know more about the project's previous and upcoming events, please visit our website: www.elective-exchange.co.uk

You are warmly invited to our welcome event when the students arrive in September – an opportunity to meet Newcastle students and our visitors, learn more about the project's achievements and share elective stories and memories.

Please e-mail elective.exchange@gmail.com if you would like to come along and we will send you details.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

James Johnston reports on why class gifts are making all the difference.

Reunions are a great way of celebrating those halcyon student days and alumni are increasingly using the opportunity to give something back to current students.

Professor Eric Thomas (MB BS 1976, MD 1987) recently returned to celebrate 35 years as a Newcastle graduate with his 1976 classmates. 'It is a great chance to ask friends and colleagues to celebrate what the University has done for them in their careers and personal lives,' he says.

'Some of us felt strongly that we wanted everybody to have a chance to go to medical school. We are at that stage in our lives when we can afford to give back and felt we could use our year reunion as an opportunity to create a fund which could support a student in financial difficulty.'

Another group of regular reunion-goers are the medics of 1953, who have been supporting an annual award of £500 for one final-year medic who is deemed by his or her peers to have contributed most to the camaraderie of the year group.

It was a 'flash of inspiration' from Dr Geoffrey Marsh MBE, one day in 2004, that brought the Year of 53 Prize to life. 'In our year there were two or three people who were the main drivers of our various activities, be they social events, year shows or political machinations. These were people for whom most of the year had an enormous respect and would turn to for help in any troubled times. And yet such people often received no tangible reward.'

After a round of voting, the year group decided to support Dr Marsh's idea. Much loved by students, the Year of 53 Prize event is now a regular feature in the University calendar.

This year's recipient, greeted with a unanimous round of cheers and applause, was Thomas Leyland. 'My experience of being a medical student at Newcastle University has been about so much more than science. Though I'll try and remember the Krebs cycle and the blood supply to the little toe, I won't ever forget the friendships that have been formed,' says Thomas. 'The Year of '53 award brilliantly

celebrates how medical students have supported each other to make great things possible.'

Giving together has never been easier and is a brilliant chance to ensure the next generation of students have the very best experiences and the greatest opportunities to succeed. Raising donations through class gifts is one of the easiest ways for you to have the greatest impact.

'We are not trying to strong-arm people into donating. Giving is very personal and individuals do it in different ways,' adds Professor Thomas. 'What we hoped to do was provide such a persuasive case that our friends would want to invest in a future student.' Since their reunion, the Year of '76 MB BS group are near their target of raising £20,000.

To find out more about class giving and support for reunions, please see:
www.ncl.ac.uk/giving/classgifts



Professor Eric Thomas of the MB BS class of 1976

Thomas Leyland (centre) receives the Year of '53 Prize from members of the MB BS class of 1953. From left: Gordon Pledger, Beatrice Noble, Mary Danskin, Thomas Leyland, Geoffrey Marsh, Doris Story and Michael Fisher

The Year of '53: a poem

Newcastle's answer to William Carlos Williams, Geoffrey Marsh MBE (MB BS 1953) pens an endoscopic ode to his classmates from the year of 1953.

You can listen to Geoffrey performing the poem in the online edition of Arches – available through the alumni website at www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/arches



I'll read you a poem 'bout a medical class,
It's not very long and the rhyming is crass,
With Colville and Pledger and Lund and the rest,
We assembled on Tyneside, intent on our best.

The boys all came from diverse walks of life,
Swashbuckling pilots to grammar school louts,
With Foster and Heaton, the Walkers and Fisher,
No-one would have thought we'd ever bond together.

Now the girls were all lovely but there weren't many of 'em,
There were Marys and Thelma and Doris and Blossem,
They were all prim and proper – at least when they started,
'Though some were more experienced by the time we all parted.

Anatomy first – it was quite a slog,
We dissected those bodies from caput to clog,
Alan Buchan's dad wheeled all the torsos about,
And kept us in order, did occasionally shout.

Steel tables agleam, our heads bent right over,
As we delved into mysteries of vagina or shoulder,
The sign-ups were frequent, we passed and we failed,
Borthwick, Oldfield and Nicholson had us very afraid.

The Clinicians were great, many Geordies among 'em,
There was Nattrass, Henry Gorgeous, the Off and Gordon Irwin,
And Ungley and Walton and Dewar getting ratty,
Harvey Evers, Frank Stabler and dear old Natty.

They taught us so well and they taught us great lots,
And humbled us often and made us feel clots,
They all knew their stuff and tried on their rounds,
To instil us with knowledge so we'd earn future pounds.

In surgery in theatre we spent many hours,
Hauling retractors with keen student powers,
Blood spurted as we dabbed and tried to control,
The arterial leakage of some poor old soul.

When at Princess Mary's, we lived in a shed,
Got up for deliveries, then went back to bed,
Midwives summoned us to Scotswood and Blaydon,
By the time that we got there, the mothers had laid 'em.

But it wasn't all work, 'Ace High' you remember,
Every line of Mike's script was an absolute bender,
The girls danced their legs off, the boys made grand speeches,
'Twas a show that tied up the audience in 'steeches'.

In sport our year members were really a-boil,
There was Madgwick in football and Beatrice with foil,
With Hay in the line-out in jumping position,
And Crumpton to lift him, they crushed opposition.

Electives these days are to Seychelles or Vietnam,
We just went to Ashington, Sunderland, Hexham,
Kevin Henderson and I took a tram right to Bensham,
And came across Ashby, a physician worth mention:

He knew about bellies and all things gastric,
He really was clever and very eclectic,
He droned loud and long as he prodded the patients,
But their groans were as nothing to his own eructations.

There was Ridley and Milligan, Madgwick and Joe,
And Little and Cashman and Bewick and lo!
All chaps now gone on to reunions ahead,
Perhaps in blue skies – or am I misled?

So here's to the Year of dear '53,
We're only the remnants but as you can see,
We're all hale and hearty as we swallow our pills,
As we wend t'wards the place where there ain't no more ills.

The MB BS class of 1953 presents an annual award of £500 to the student who contributes most to year-group camaraderie, as voted by their classmates. You can find out more about the Year of '53 Prize at: www.ncl.ac.uk/giving/y53

The Courier

Latest news from the independent voice of Newcastle students.

Editorial



There's no such thing as an average year for *The Courier*, and 11/12 has certainly not been any different.

Although they say a good workman never blames his tools, this year we didn't have the option – with a brand new, fully equipped office and the biggest editorial team to date there was little excuse for not stepping up our game – especially when production now spreads across seven days a week.

This year the paper has been more student, or rather Newcastle University student, focused than ever. From documenting tragic deaths to court cases, housing issues and revealing plans to knock down the iconic Ricky Road, we've ensured the student body has been kept up to date with everything that has been going on around campus.

It's also gone through a redesign and the introduction of new sections, such as Science and Technology, while giving makeovers to others.

However, the biggest success has been the rebuild, relaunch and redesign of *The Courier Online*, led by Deputy Editor Elliot Bentley. The paper now goes live before the printed pages have even hit campus, seeing a huge expansion in both the size of our audience and its geographical reach. We're currently reaching just shy of 100,000 unique hits for the year, averaging around 8,000 a week. Biggest lesson learnt? Never underestimate the power of Facebook and Twitter.

Unfortunately all good things must come to an end and having just produced our final issue of the year it's nearly time for me to pass the baton on to Music Editor Ben Travis, who I know will continue to take *The Courier* onwards and upwards for its sixty-fifth year.

Kat Bannon (BA English Literature 2011)
Editor of *The Courier*

Record victory makes it five in a row

Team Newcastle retains Stan Calvert Cup after monumental defeat of Northumbria.

On 4 March, Athletic Union officer Alice Holloway hoisted aloft the most prestigious student sporting trophy in the North East as Newcastle claimed the Stan Calvert Cup for an unprecedented fifth consecutive time.

An array of outstanding performances saw a huge margin of victory for the winning side as they stormed to a 100.5–52.5 win – a record points tally and the second biggest margin in the competition's history.

One of the most striking aspects of the victory was the number of teams that upset the odds to beat a Northumbria side with a far more impressive BUCS record. The Friday performance by the Women's Football Firsts was a prime example of such giant-killing, as the BUCS Northern Division Three B side won a close encounter with Northern Premier League leaders Northumbria Firsts – one of the stand-out results of the year, according to Performance Sport Manager Fraser Kennedy.

Whilst Newcastle went in to the final Sunday having already established an impressive lead, it was the day itself that held most of the excitement. A shock defeat for the Ladies' Hockey Seconds and a narrow defeat for the Men's Football Firsts were the only negative results to filter in from Coach Lane, as victories in rugby, fencing and lacrosse amongst others kept the Newcastle spirits high.

Although the showpiece Rugby Union event finished in a disappointing defeat, it was the overall score that mattered most and AU officer Alice Holloway could not contain her joy as she lifted the coveted trophy in front of the Uni supporters.

Rory Brigstock-Barron



NSR turns 15

Newcastle Student Radio turned 15 in style with its most successful year to date. Now playing 24 hours a day, seven days a week, it has amassed 100 presenters working on over 50 shows, airing online around the Students' Union and on the 'Tune In' smartphone app.

The station's listenership has increased dramatically in the last year, and its web pages have become the most visited on the NUSU website. New features include a media player, webcams and an instant message feed, sating the station's enthusiasm to increase its online presence.

This year the station has participated in a number of successful events including BBC Radio 3's Free Thinking Festival; it has been broadcast nationwide on the SRA (Student Radio

Association) Chart Show; and two of its executive committee members, Nick Searing and Phil Whittington, hosted a 24-hour radio show, raising £429 for several charities.

The station has certainly come on leaps and bounds, providing hundreds of students with the opportunity to showcase their talents. The station's efforts and improvements have been justly recognised within the Student Radio Community with NSR picking up the gong for Outstanding Contribution to Student Radio at this year's I Love Student Radio awards in March.

You can listen to NSR online at:
www.nusu.co.uk/nsr

Nick Searing



NUSU
NEWCASTLE STUDENT RADIO



By George! Where's Colin gone?

Staff left speechless after disappearance of life-size cardboard cutout of Colin Firth

They say every girl dreams of finding their own Mr Darcy, but, judging by recent events, someone may have taken matters into their own hands. A life-size cardboard cutout of Colin Firth was recently stolen from the foyer of the King George VI Building – and there's a reward for anyone who can return it.

The cutout, dressed as King George VI from the award-winning film *The King's Speech*, was originally part of a display promoting a campaign to raise awareness for speech and language disabilities.

However, on 13 December, the cutout was taken in broad daylight. No CCTV footage was captured of the thief, who may have been aided by the cutout's conveniently transportable folding ability.

'I'm surprised it lasted so long,' said Dr Helen Stringer, lecturer and director of Newcastle University Children's Speech and Language Therapy Clinic. 'We felt it was really appropriate, considering he was King George VI.'

The cutout was donated by South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust and had been on display since the University's Visit Day on 29 September. In its place is now a poster asking: 'Where is Colin?'

There have been several rumours of sightings of Colin since his disappearance, although a widely-circulated photo taken of the cutout on the Metro is likely to have been a forgery.

As a message to the person(s) responsible, Dr Stringer says: 'We'd like him back, and there will be no recriminations – I did hope someone would slip him back into one of the rooms.'

'We hope he had a nice Christmas wherever he was, and that he wasn't left on his own somewhere. There were a lot of women interested in keeping him company over the winter.'

For anyone who can provide information leading to Colin's return, *The Courier* is offering a breakfast for four in Frankie and Benny's John Dobson Street Branch. No questions will be asked!

NB: *The Courier* does not condone theft in any form or under any circumstances.

Elliot Bentley

Introducing the AASI Fund

Students gain vital skills whilst improving life and opportunities in the community – it's a win-win situation that exists thanks to you.



Charlotte Ball (BA Politics 2010)

With the support of our generous graduates, a new arm of the Annual Fund is breathing life into unique, extra curricular projects which help students gain vital skills whilst doing their bit for the community. Lauren Girling chats to former bursary recipient, student caller and now Annual Fund Manager, Charlotte Ball (BA Politics 2010), about the Alumni Association Student Initiative (AASI) Fund.

What is the Alumni Association Student Initiative Fund?

The AASI Fund as we call it supports Newcastle students who want to take the lead on an extra curricular project. The Fund exists thanks to the generosity of our graduates who have donated to the programme through our Annual Fund. More students are realising the importance of adding to their degree and are keen to get involved with different activities offered by the University.

The AASI Fund supports students not just financially but with in-kind support from the Careers Service. We want to ensure that projects are sustainable, developed and have an impact not only on the student's skills development but the wider community.

How important is the AASI Fund to students?

Many students have bright ideas for projects but don't know where to go with them next. The AASI Fund allows students to firstly talk openly about an idea to the Careers Service and a chance to gain invaluable advice about putting together a

funding proposal, setting a budget and developing a project plan, before coming to pitch their idea to our committee, which advises them every step of the way. The Fund only reimburses up to half the costs of a project (up to a maximum of £500), prompting students to use their initiative and seek additional sources of income, which is invaluable to personal skills development.

What sort of projects have benefited?

You would be surprised at the range of different projects that have received funding and the types of students that come with their ideas. For example, this year we have supported 'Project Turnaround', a group of MA Media and Journalism students wanting to produce a magazine in 48 hours which captured reactions to the Turner Prize. Last year we supported 'Brush Up' a group of Dental students wanting to increase awareness of dental hygiene to schoolchildren in the local area. And one of our most recent success stories is 'Phylum Feast', an event in honour of Charles Darwin aimed at local schoolchildren, in partnership with the Great North Museum.

What impact do these projects have on people and communities outside the University?

One common theme for these unique projects is that the student organisers took something that

they were passionate about and developed an idea into a successful project that embraced the local community. Many of our successfully funded projects aim to reach out to a younger generation to inspire them to get involved in a new activity or to engage them in a new topic. Through developing strong links with local schools, we hope that youngsters will aspire to continue on to further education – hopefully here at Newcastle University.

What would you like to say to existing donors and potential new ones?

This is our smallest fund area in terms of the amount of support we receive from donors, so to those that have dug deep to support this unique fund, I want to thank you for putting your faith and support in our students. Some of the results have been amazing, and the bright ideas these young people have and the experiences they gain through being able to make their project a reality will no doubt be invaluable to them when they leave the University.

You can support the AASI Fund by making a donation online at:

<https://payments.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/> or you can contact Charlotte for more information at: annualfund@ncl.ac.uk



Here are two projects that have benefited from the AASI Fund and its kind donors:

Project Turnaround

Fourteen current Newcastle students led by MA journalist Sophie Bauckham and seven alumni descended on Gateshead's BALTIC gallery last November to make a magazine in 48 hours about the Turner Prize.

They were joined by another 21 members of the public – from schoolchildren to creative professionals – and supported by 36 local businesses, who took ads in the magazine and provided raffle prizes for the launch party.

The AASI Fund provided £500 start-up funding, and the team went on to raise £3,000 in total – covering their costs and donating £1,000 to local charities – including the AASI Fund. You can find out more about the project on the alumni website at: <http://bit.ly/LCPVOH> and request one of the few copies still available by e-mailing: alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk



Phylum Feast

On 12 February, people around the world celebrate the birth of Charles Darwin with a 'Phylum Feast' – a meal with foods from as many species of plants and animals as they can manage. For Biology student Sam Steventon, this was a perfect opportunity to show local schoolchildren how fascinating and fun science can be.

With the help of the AASI Fund, Sam booked the Great North Museum: Hancock as a venue, and organised a range of workshops and activities – such as identifying skulls and stuffed animals – to accompany the event. On 10 February, he welcomed 180 local children to the Museum, where they sampled 125 phyla. Feedback from the teachers was glowing, with one saying: 'The children loved every minute', and another: 'The feast was

brilliant – lots of children tried worms and grasshoppers; they said the mealworms were sweet and the squid was 'fishy but lush'.

Demand from local schools was high, and Sam was only able to accommodate a quarter of the classes who wanted to go. There's huge potential for future events, and Sam has clearly found an innovative way to enthuse kids about biological science.





Five minutes with... Eric Cross

I wish my students realised... the importance of listening to as wide a range of music as possible, and being curious enough to explore styles that are completely new to them. I can also never understand it when students read up on and write about pieces that they have clearly never listened to!

If I wasn't an academic I would be... a conductor, particularly of opera, though my abysmal piano playing has always made that a very unlikely career path.

The thing I love most about my job... is the opportunity to put on concerts, especially with students and amateurs who are getting to know great music for the first time, and the wide range of marvellous events and fascinating creative people I get to see and meet in my role as Dean of Cultural Affairs.

Although I don't like... e-mails, they can be wonderful if you need to contact someone urgently on the other side of the world. But they are utterly relentless and can become all-consuming if you're not careful. I always feel about a month behind with them!

Not many people know I have a passion for... steam engines: a passion I inherited from my father, though my knowledge is far less comprehensive than his was.

My idea of absolute vulgarity is... eating a Big Mac while walking around St Mark's Square in Venice.

A vice I'm willing to admit... chocolate. I'm a bit of a chocoholic, as is obvious whenever cakes appear in the Faculty Office.

My favourite view in the North East... Dunstanburgh Castle, seen as you approach it on the marvellous coastal walk from Craster. It was the first of the wonderful Northumberland castles we visited when we arrived in the North East and I've never grown tired of it. It's such an atmospheric place, whether you're visiting in the summer sunshine or thick snow in winter.

My personal philosophy is... to be nice to people. I have always tried to manage by consensus wherever possible, and I suppose if I had to identify a personal philosophy, it would be that. Even when you disagree strongly with what someone is saying or doing, I see no reason why you need to be unpleasant to them.

At 11am on a Sunday, you will generally find me... sitting – probably in a chilly draught – in St James's United Reformed Church on Northumberland Road next to the City Hall. It's an imposing Victorian church whose upkeep is a challenge to the small congregation, and is an excellent venue for concerts.

Professor Eric Cross is Dean of Cultural Affairs at Newcastle University, a role which involves fostering links between the University and the region in all areas of cultural activity, as well as co-ordinating academic activity internally, especially relating to the University's cultural assets such as the Great North Museum.

He has worked at the University for 34 years; firstly as a lecturer in music, before rising through the ranks to become head of department and then Dean of the Faculty of Arts. He is also Professor of Music and Culture.

Eric was born in Norwich and studied at Birmingham University, where he completed a PhD on the operas of Antonio Vivaldi. Outside of the University, he is conductor of the Newcastle Bach Choir.

Take your career to the next level with a Newcastle MBA

Newcastle graduates benefit from an exclusive 20 per cent discount on many postgraduate programmes, including the Business School's internationally accredited MBA.

With an emphasis on nurturing strategic thinking and entrepreneurial actions, the MBA at Newcastle University Business School is designed to accelerate careers by developing high-level skills and knowledge. You will gain fresh perspectives on evidence-based management as you join an elite group of leaders who set a standard for change.

The Association of MBAs (AMBA) has accredited the Business School's MBA programme. Fewer than 200 business schools worldwide have achieved this demanding level of accreditation. The full-time MBA is the fastest way to gain a qualification that can develop your earning potential. In 12 intensive months, participants develop academic and personal skills and build excellent contacts, ready for the next move in their career.

'The MBA is more than just three letters after my name, it's given me the confidence to knock on doors and break down barriers in my career,' says MBA student Alv Rasmussen.

Unlike many other MBA programmes, class sizes are small and personalised, with students of all origins and business interests working together and learning from each other, as well as their teachers. The Business School deliberately keeps classes to a size that enhances close interaction with teaching staff and personalised learning. Outside the classroom, students build valuable links with ambitious fellow MBA students and get the opportunity to apply their learning to real business challenges – through live case studies and action learning projects.

Become an MBA mentor

All Business School graduates benefit from being part of a global alumni network that offers a wide pool of opportunities. With over 10,000 fellow graduates worldwide, the Business School provides unique and exclusive opportunities for connecting, learning and developing, both personally and professionally.

With the launch of an MBA mentoring programme last year, current students are now realising their potential with the help of graduate mentors. Could you now be in a position to impart some of your own wisdom, experience and advice to a current MBA student either in an academic, personal or professional context?

For more information on the MBA programme, as either a prospective student or a mentor, please contact Dr Tyrone Pitsis at: tyrone.pitsis@ncl.ac.uk

MEMORIES OF NEWCASTLE



Here are the girls of the Rag Revue Chorus of 1947, the first Rag Week to take place after World War II. Can you name any of the smiling faces in the picture, or are you amongst them? Get in touch with the us by e-mail at alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk or phone on 0191 222 5892 and claim a mystery prize.

As usual, we'd love to hear from you. Please send your tales and photos to the above e-mail address. We'll post them on our Facebook page and do our best to print them in the next edition of Arches.

Jean Nicholson (BA Fine Art 1948)

The Rag Revue producer that year was a fifth-year medic called Maurice Brand. He was a dynamo. He asked me to design the costumes, and I also danced and sang in the chorus, which involved a lot of tap dancing and high kicking. The producer of the Rag Revue traditionally failed his finals – I know that Maurice did. He had to do another year, which he passed well. The music and words were composed by another medic, Peter Whittingham. I think he passed first go. The music was lovely.

Adapted from the book *Newcastle University: Past, Present and Future* published by Third Millennium.

THE ENTERPRISE MANIFESTO

If you're thinking about launching your own business, a recession can provide the most fertile conditions to get it off the ground, argues Gareth Trainer (BSc Physiological Sciences 2000, EMBA 2007) of the University's Careers Service. And all the resources you need are right here on campus.

The UK economy surprised even the most pessimistic of experts in July this year, when output fell by 0.7 per cent, sinking the country deeper into a double-dip recession. But gloom for the Treasury needn't be anathema for business – in fact, it can be quite the opposite.

'Recessions are a fantastic time to start a business because costs and interest rates are generally low, and only get higher as you come out of recession,' says Gareth Trainer, Assistant Director (Entrepreneurial Development) at Newcastle University Careers Service. 'Just ask any successful entrepreneur or investor.'

The reasons are numerous. Assets are cheaper and easier to come by, people are looking to change suppliers, and you can gain good PR by appearing to buck the trend.

Trainer identifies two main reasons to become an entrepreneur: opportunity and necessity. 'The first is where you spot and seize an opportunity; and the latter is where you have no other options, say you've been forced to consider starting your own business due to redundancy and lack of available jobs. In recessions, there can be more necessity entrepreneurship, and these conditions can lead to creative solutions,' says Trainer. 'Enterprising people find a way.'

Whether you're starting a business out of opportunity or necessity, the University's Careers Service provides a suite of valuable resources through its 'Rise Up' initiative – all of which are free to students and graduates.



Rise Up operates from 'The Elevator' – an open-plan workspace on the ground floor of King's Gate with hotdesks, PCs, internet access, telephones and printers – where its team provides one-to-one business advice and access to resources such as COBRA, a leading market research tool. There's also a team of experienced entrepreneurs and business support professionals, who Trainer describes as 'the folks with war stories and trophies, who want to share the secrets of their success with the business stars of the future'.

One such entrepreneur is Jane Nolan MBE (BA English Language and Literature 1973, MA 1974), who founded survival gear manufacturer, Shark Group, in 1974, before selling it and leaving to set up her own consultancy business in 2009. She's now studying for a PhD on what enterprise means to English graduates.

For those looking to become part of an active community, the Rise Up Entrepreneurship Programme (RUEP) is a series of intensive, interactive workshops designed to deliver insights and devise realistic strategies for successful start-up businesses. RUEP launches this October and will run for five weeks, on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Places are worth over £500 each, but available free of charge to Newcastle students and graduates. See the Rise Up website in October for information on how to apply.

The Rise Up Pitch puts fledgling entrepreneurs with growth aspirations in front of a panel of investors, where they can get expert advice and make useful connections with influential members of the North East business community, as well as unlock potential funding of up to £200,000 if the idea is really investable.

'It doesn't matter if you've ever spoken to an investor before, what Rise Up does is allow people to access advice, mentoring and resources in a safe environment,' says Trainer. 'Many of our resources are about introducing you to useful people. Success is all about building networks and partnerships, your 'social capital' as we like to call it, and the friendliness of the North East makes it a great place to do that.'

Of course, success also relies on adequate cash flow, and the Rise Up team provides small start-up grants of £250 to help students and graduates develop an idea. Advice on unlocking higher-value funding, from enterprise competitions to venture capital, is available too.

'In the last 12 months, we have had more student and graduate start-ups that have successfully found funding than ever in the 10 years I've been here,' says Trainer. 'If I look back at the people we worked with in the early years, their aspirations were tamer and less risky.

But I think there's been a change in the circumstances students and graduates now find themselves in, and they're prepared to take bigger risks to achieve what they want in life.

'Start-ups that came out of the University in the early 2000s are now providing mentoring and business opportunities for fledgling ventures too, so there's a clear ecosystem forming at Newcastle.'

So what's in it for the University? 'We want graduates to have destinations they're proud of, and we want them to feel like they have our support,' says Trainer. 'And hopefully as businesses grow, they'll be interested in recruiting other Newcastle graduates, and maybe research collaborations and scholarships.'

But Trainer is adamant that the Rise Up objective is not purely to create new businesses, but to create the capability and mindset of an entrepreneur. 'It's fantastic when a new business can grow and provide jobs for people, but our main thrust is kindling a sense of personal impact,' he says. 'That ability to acquire personal connections and skills, and spot qualities that really enhance graduate employability.'

The Rise Up team is also busy embedding a culture of enterprise into the Newcastle curriculum, and a new undergraduate module explores enterprise, entrepreneurship and employability within the context of the University's societal challenge themes. 'It looks at where ideas come from, legal and ethical issues like intellectual property, finance and sales and marketing techniques, alongside pitching and presenting skills,' says Trainer.

'One of the problems in dealing with entrepreneurship in universities is that many students don't recognise the word as something they're trying to become. Some positively dislike the word. So we're encouraging them to forget about the words for a minute and understand the underlying processes.'

ScratchBikes is one Rise Up graduate of which Trainer is particularly proud. Launched by Jack Payne and Rob Grisdale (both MEng Civil Engineering 2009) after conceiving the idea on an enterprise module, this originally campus-based cycle hire scheme has now gone city-wide, with a smartphone app to help users locate their nearest bike. The award-winning duo have won investment from venture capitalists, and are now taking their expertise global with Grand Scheme, a bike share consultancy.

As for Trainer, he's tight-lipped about his own business ideas. 'My attitude to risk is perhaps not as embracing as some of the clients I work with, especially not at the moment with a new

family and a whopping mortgage, but it will happen,' he admits. 'I'd probably put money on me starting my own business later in life.'

The former Union sabbatical officer (education) first dabbled in entrepreneurial endeavour in 2001 when his Newcastle Student Radio (NSR) show, *The Crack*, spawned a casual comic collective which recently came together under the leadership of Beccy Owen (BA Combined Studies 1999) and put on a musical theatre production explaining biodiversity to kids at The Sage Gateshead. 'It didn't make masses of money of course, but we had a structure and some good times putting on the show,' says Trainer. 'Some people might hear that and think it's not a business, but it's enterprising and uses resources, ideas and contacts, and could have led to a school tour which is where it might have become profitable.'

'Your idea might not always make a profit or form a business from the word go, but it needs to get out there. And we think our students and graduates are the most mobile folk to try and do that.'

'Start-ups that came out of the University in the early 2000s are now providing mentoring and business opportunities for fledgling ventures too, so there's a clear ecosystem forming at Newcastle.'

Gareth Trainer

If you're thinking about starting your own business, or would like to become an alumni mentor, the Rise Up team wants to hear from you. Visit the website at: www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/riseup for more information, where you can also subscribe to the Rise Up newsletter.

Meanwhile you can follow the Rise Up team on Twitter at @NURiseUP and access the Rise Up student and graduate community at: www.facebook.com/NURiseUP

The BIG Market

Exclusive deals and offers for Newcastle graduates, from Newcastle graduates.

Welcome to our new benefits and services package for Newcastle alumni. Gone are the ubiquitous hotel and car rental discounts, replaced by unique offers from fellow Newcastle graduates with a useful product or service to share.

Find out more on the BIG Market website at nualumni.tumblr.com, and contact alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk if you'd like to be part of the project.

Newcastle University cannot take responsibility for any of the services or products purveyed by the businesses featured here.

Professional services

Every1Speaks' digital teaching resources

Offer: £100 off a year's license for your school.

Courtesy of: Peter Hirst (Applied Communication 2004).

What is it? Every1Speaks is a web platform that saves teachers time, helping children develop teamwork, creativity and literacy skills through enquiry based learning.

How to redeem: Mention you're a Newcastle graduate once you have registered.

www.every1speaks.com

Sell yourself better with JT Copywriting

Offer: 20 per cent off James' hourly rate and 50 per cent off his start-up package.

Courtesy of: James Tennant (Ancient History 2009).

What is it? A freelance copywriter who's improved the marketing materials of companies such as eBay and Universal Studios, James knows exactly what it takes to create an effective message for your business.

How to redeem: Quote NUCOPY12 when you get in touch.

www.jtcopy.com

Art and photography

Wedding and event photography from Zander

Offer: 15 per cent off wedding and event photography packages.

Courtesy of: Alexander Wilson (BA Town Planning 2010, Diploma 2012).

What is it? Stylish and contemporary images by an experienced Newcastle-based photographer. Zander specialises in capturing those discreet but memorable moments in beautiful collections, which you can share with your loved ones for years to come.

How to redeem: Enter code NUALumni12 at the checkout, or quote Big Market when contacting Zander.

www.zndr.co.uk

Prints by illustrator Kerry Hyndman

Offer: 20 per cent off prints.

Courtesy of: Kerry Hyndman (BA Fine Art 2008).

What is it? Kerry is a London-based illustrator and designer who has produced work for *The Times*, *Wired* and *Arches*. She also runs an online shop selling her limited edition prints and products.

How to redeem: Enter TOONDISCOUNT when buying from the online shop.

www.kerryhyndman.bigcartel.com

Clothes and gifts

Personalised gifts from Giftinatin.com

Offer: 15 per cent off every GiftTin.

Courtesy of: Anne Livesey (MBA 2002).

What is it? A range of carefully selected gifts for him and her, from bath bombs and candles to knitting and golf kits. Many are handmade and 90 per cent are produced in the UK. All presented in unique tins with a handwritten personal message and delivery included.

How to redeem: Enter code ALUMNI at checkout.

www.giftinatin.com

Stylish and durable hats from Zaini

Offer: 10 per cent off Zaini hats.

Courtesy of: Miranda Harper (BA Media, Communication and Cultural Studies 2009).

What is it? Borne from Miranda's dissatisfaction with typically boring headwear on the ski scene, Zaini hats are made from super-soft acrylic in a range of bright colours. Designed with the slopes in mind, they're practical and durable as well as stylish.

How to redeem: Enter code NEWCASTLE at checkout.

www.zaini.com

Owleyes handmade jewellery

Offer: 10 per cent off handmade jewellery.

Courtesy of: Chloe Booth (BA Fine Art 2009).

What is it? Owleyes specializes in unique handmade jewellery, vintage accessories and homeware. Chloe works from her studio in Newcastle, handcrafting one-of-a-kind pieces from reclaimed and vintage objects. She also sources vintage gems from around the world.

How to redeem: Enter coupon code NUALUMNI at checkout.

www.owleyesmarket.com



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1. Wedding and event photography from Zander.
2. Burlesque shows and workshops with Constance Peach.
3. Exotic tea blends from Charbrew.
4. Prints by illustrator Kerry Hyndman.
5. Stylish and durable hats from Zaini.

Leisure and entertainment

Burlesque shows and workshops with Constance Peach

Offer: A third off tickets for Casa Bellini Burlesque and workshop places.

Courtesy of: Alice Foster (BSc Animal Science 2004).

What is it? Dispose of your inhibitions as the dancers dispose of their overgarments for an uproarious evening of comedy and choreography. If you're brave enough to give it a try, Constance offers a third off her burlesque workshops too.

How to redeem: Quote NEWGRAD when ordering online or over the phone. www.casabelliniburlesque.co.uk

Food and drink

Own a vineyard without the hard work with 3D Wines

Offer: 25 per cent off a 'row of vines'.

Courtesy of: David Dickinson (BSc General Science 1973).

What is it? A unique wine club with a choice of 34 vineyards, from which you can rent a row of vines and buy your own exclusive wine. 3D's partners also benefit from invitations to wine tastings, vineyard banquets and champagne blendings.

How to redeem: Use code NU2012 when ordering online or by phone. www.3dwines.com

Exotic tea blends from Charbrew

Offer: 20 per cent off Charbrew teas.

Courtesy of: Adam Soliman (BA Accounting and Finance 2009).

What is it? A specialist tea brand which uses whole leaves, herbs and spices and real fruit pieces in each of its blends, sourced from around the world. Blends, including Strawberry and Cream and Tropical Rooibos, are elegantly wrapped in biodegradable mesh tea pyramids to deliver a superior cuppa without the mess.

How to redeem: Enter code NUALUMNI at checkout.

www.charbrew.com

Bookmark

**Books from the Newcastle University alumni community.
Guest reviews by Eric Doughney, Sue Bevan, Dr Alan Younger
and Lauren Girling.**



Crossing the Lines: New Writing by International Students

Edited by Kachi A Ozumba (PhD Creative Writing 2011) and Jackie Kay
Genre: Short stories
Published: 2011 (Flambard Press)
ISBN: 9781906601263

The work of 14 writers from five continents combines in *Crossing the Lines*, a bouquet of writing styles and interpretations tied together by the shared experience of studying in the UK.

This anthology of short stories is the fruit of a competition by the Newcastle Centre for the Literary Arts (NCLA) which invited international students to write about their time at universities around the UK. The result is a fresh and diverse publication which explores a variety of social and cultural challenges and personal dilemmas with passion and humour.

From overcoming the isolation imposed by cultural barriers, to getting lost in the wintry whitewash of the Northumberland countryside, *Crossing the Lines* offers an insight into international student life that isn't immediately apparent to those of us who call the UK home. And observations, such as the indecipherable drawl of a taxi driver or the British proclivity to frame a criticism with 'that's good, but...', offer a rare opportunity to smile at our idiosyncrasies.

This is a fine anthology which undoubtedly showcases some big names of the future.



Christian Atheist: Belonging without Believing

Brian Mountford (BA Theology 1966)
Genre: Non-fiction
Published: 2011 (O-Books)
ISBN: 9781846944390

Devout religiousness and atheism are hardly complementary positions, but are they mutually exclusive? Certainly not, argues Canon Brian Mountford, in this erudite and equitable book, which explores the place of doubt and compromise within the Christian church.

'Christian Atheism' was first coined by writer Philip Pullman to denote his appreciation of the cultural heritage of the church – its language, morality and sense of community – without belief in God. It would seem an untenable position for religious conservatives, but Mountford identifies members of his own congregation with similar views, and explores the phenomenon through conversations with 12 people – including a parishioner, a student, a philosopher, and Pullman himself.

Vicar of the University Church at Oxford, and a Fellow of St Hilda's College, Mountford has the vantage of a preacher, a scholar and an ambassador for the Church, and he tempers his own beliefs with a non-judgemental quest for tolerance and understanding.

As science and modernity cast doubt over the dogma and metaphysical claims of traditional Christianity, the unquantifiables of love, morality and metaphor are still as important as ever. Prizing personal interpretations and the collective good of the church-going community, *Christian Atheist* offers an olive branch to believers and non-believers alike.



Chopin in Manchester

Peter Willis (BArch 1956)
Genre: Non-fiction
Published: 2011 (Elysium Press Publishers)
ISBN: 9780904712056

The value of this lavishly illustrated and impeccably researched book (a revision of an article by Peter Willis entitled *Chopin's Recital in the Gentlemen's Concert Hall, Monday 28th August, 1848*, published in volume 8 of *Manchester Sounds, 2009–10*), is that it focuses upon an event of considerable cultural significance which, although acknowledged in many extant Chopin studies, has hitherto remained under explored.

Prompted to leave Paris by the political events unfolding in the revolutionary Europe of 1848, Chopin resolved to remove to Britain and, as part of a visit which incorporated London and Scotland and 'preceded by high musical reputation' but in poor health, paid his one and only visit to Manchester in August 1848. Here, reviews of his concert, though mixed, were unanimous as regards his musicality.

Peter Willis' documentary provides a fascinating insight into mid-nineteenth-century Northern English cultural life, and a moving account of the time spent in Britain by a composer of whose artistry Robert Schumann once asserted: 'Hats off gentlemen, a genius'.

This volume will be of interest to, and enjoyed by, musicians, music lovers and historians alike.

It is understood that two further volumes covering Chopin's time in London and Scotland are in preparation. They are eagerly awaited.

Reviewed by Eric Doughney (PhD Music).



Big Frog

Rob Badcock (BA Scandinavian Studies 1973)
Genre: Science fiction
Published: 2011 (The Book Guild Limited)
ISBN: 9781846245763

This is the first novel by former Principal of Milton Keynes College, Rob Badcock. The Big Frog in question has a cameo role presiding, as it does in real life, over the wacky clock in a shopping centre in Milton Keynes.

The story is set on Earth in 2042 when environmental catastrophe has prompted much of the human race to move to another planet. Those remaining live in domed cities that tower over the remains of the old. Beyond these 'citidomes' is tropical rainforest occupied by wild animals and shady characters. *Big Frog* tells the story of 14 year-old Rib Meskitoe who runs away from his home in Milton Keynes Citidome and unintentionally arrives in Wigan where he finds work on a lottery till. Impulsively he steals a winning ticket and finds himself on the run through the inhospitable rainforest with a price on his head. For the most part the book chronicles Rib's journey back home although there are chapters that deviate from the narrative to provide the reader with insights into Rib and the world he inhabits.

The author says that *Big Frog* is for the young at heart with a sense of fun. Whilst it is aimed at those in their teens and early twenties, I think it will appeal to adults with an appreciation of the weird and absurd. I was particularly amused by Rib's trip on the M1 motorway which had become little more than a rough track encroached by rainforest, with lakes to navigate and occasional mating elephants on the carriageway. The more mature reader who enjoyed cult offerings like *The Prisoner* and *Logan's Run* will find many references to remind them of their youth. I am pleased to report that *Big Frog* held the interest of this mature reader throughout.

In the final chapter it becomes clear that Rib Meskitoe is destined for further adventures; *Big Frog* is the first part of a trilogy. Further insight into the book and its author can be found at www.bigfrogbook.com

Reviewed by Sue Bevan (BSc Zoology 1979).



Understood Backwards

John Craven (BSc Agriculture 1959, PhD 1962)
Genre: Autobiography
Published: 2012 (Memoir Club)
ISBN: 9781841045245

In *Understood Backwards*, John Craven publishes his memoirs. Born, raised and educated in the North East of England, John demonstrated considerable sporting prowess throughout his youth, particularly as a rower and at rugby – which certainly didn't harm his application to study agriculture at Newcastle, as the professor at the time was the very well known Mac Cooper, himself a keen rugby enthusiast. Subsequently, their relationship was destined to continue because John married Mac Cooper's daughter, Barbara, in 1962 and together they have lived, worked and successfully raised a family.

On graduating, John took up a post in the Milk Marketing Board (MMB), an organisation with which he was to be associated for the next 33 years. Starting as a farm management consultant in Cheshire, John rose through the ranks, eventually to become Chief Executive of Genus plc, the privatised company that was to succeed the MMB after its abolition in 1994. At an early stage, John and Barbara purchased a small farm, Spy Hill in Cheshire, and that has been the family home ever since.

Throughout his career, John was known as an outspoken individual with strongly held beliefs and principles. His work brought him into contact with a wide range of business and political figures. In the book, his relationships with these individuals are described in typically candid fashion.

Since his retirement, John has been busier than ever, both with the farm, and with projects within the NHS and the Home Office. His love of sport seems never to have abated, and there are many reminiscences of golfing activities.

Throughout, the book provides a fascinating personal view of John's life and work in agriculture, set in the social and political context of the era. It is direct, engaging and entertaining.

Reviewed by Dr Alan Younger.



The Three Levels of Leadership: How to Develop Your Leadership Presence, Knowhow and Skill

James Scouller (BA Economics and Social Administration 1976)
Genre: Non-fiction
Published: 2011 (Management Books 2000)
ISBN: 9781852526818

Our need for good leadership has never been more pressing – whether in pulling Europe out of economic quagmire, or keeping a business steady amidst the worst conditions in decades. This timely contribution by executive coach James Scouller may prove to be a lifeline.

Dispelling jargon and complex terminology – and pledging in the preface to be free of 'padding' – Scouller writes clearly and methodically, presenting a leadership model that's infused with an understanding of psychology, personal fears and motivations.

His three levels of leadership – 'public', 'private' and 'personal' – refer to how good leaders react as part of a group, relate to others, and leverage their own moral and technical development respectively. Personal leadership is the main thrust of the model, which Scouller argues is key to developing 'presence' – that elusive characteristic which many great leaders seem to display.

Having spent over a decade in CEO-level roles with international firms, before becoming a coach in 2004, Scouller shares a wealth of knowledge that would benefit any type of aspiring leader. Although he states that the book is written for executives, it contains many transferable insights.

With practical tools, online exercises and useful summaries at the end of each chapter, this is an unmissable book for anyone who wishes to push him or herself all the way to the top.

Reviewed by Lauren Girling (BA Politics and Sociology 2012).

Snapshots

News in pictures from campus and across the alumni community.



Funny money: an evening with Mrs Moneypenny

After breaking her arm at the World Economic Forum in Davos this year, Mrs Moneypenny had to rearrange her exclusive stand-up comedy show for Newcastle alumni and friends at Barclays HQ in London's Canary Wharf. The date is now fixed for 25 October 2012.

An entrepreneur, newspaper columnist, bestselling author, TV presenter, wife, mother and now a stand-up comic – there seems to be nothing the pseudonymous graduate can't throw her immaculately manicured hand to.

On 25 October, Mrs Moneypenny will be presenting extracts from her sell-out show from the 2010 Edinburgh Fringe, offering hysterical tales of banking, business and cost centres one, two and three (her three boys, that is).

All proceeds go to Newcastle University Women's Circle Fund, helping dis-advantaged young people to access higher education. Tickets are £40 for Newcastle graduates (limited supply) and £60 for non-graduates, and you can book online at: www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/moneypenny

You can read a full interview with Mrs Moneypenny on the alumni website at: <http://bit.ly/Kr5Scb>

Tales of a Teesside childhood

Home on the Range: Growing Up on Teesside in the 50s and 60s is the first book by Susan Lewis CBE (BSc Botany 1969) and a poignant tale of her childhood in Billingham.

An evocative and nostalgic look at the post-war transformation of Billingham, Susan writes with warmth and candour about the impact of industry on the town, and her childhood.

Leaving Billingham to study botany here at Newcastle, Susan went on to teach in secondary schools throughout Yorkshire, before moving to Wales where she became a school inspector. In 1997, she became the first woman to be appointed HM Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales. Susan retired in 2008, shortly after receiving her CBE for services to education.

After selling out of printed volumes, Susan's book is now available in epub format from: www.amazon.co.uk





The Atlantic is no match for Tommy Tippetts

More people have been into space than have rowed across the Atlantic, so it's no wonder the Talisker Whiskey Atlantic Challenge is considered to be the world's toughest rowing race.

Competitors can spend up to seven months on a boat that measures just seven metres long and just less than two metres wide, with only a small cabin for protection against raging storms. Most competitors are a crew of two, with each member taking turns to row the boat, but, as the youngest ever solo entrant in the competition, Tommy Tippetts (BA Politics and Economics 2010) had to deal with the challenges alone.

And what challenges they were. Problems with his boat meant that he was almost immediately out of the running for winning the race, but he persevered for 82 days, completing the race on 12 April 2012 and becoming the youngest ever solo male to row the Atlantic.

Tommy received £500 of funding from the Alumni Association Student Initiative fund (formerly the ncl+ foundation), which you can read more about on page 36.



Lord Walton's 90th birthday

This coming autumn Lord John Walton of Detchant (MB BS 1945, MD 1952, DSc 1972, Hon DCL 1988), former Dean of Medicine and member of University Court, reaches his 90th birthday. To celebrate, the University will be hosting a number of events on Monday 10 September 2012, including an afternoon of talks in the Medical School looking at new neurology work in Newcastle and the Walton Legacy, followed by a closing reception and a birthday dinner at Jesmond Dene House Hotel.

To register your interest for the event, please e-mail James at james.johnston@ncl.ac.uk or call 0191 222 6072.



Classnotes

If you would like your news to be printed in the next issue of *Arches*, please contact the editor by e-mail at alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk or visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/nualum or our LinkedIn group at www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/linkedin where you can find old friends and tell us about your news.

1960s

Philip SHARPE (BA 1968) appeared in a photo in the *Undergraduate Prospectus*, circa 1968, alongside Wilko JOHNSON (BA English Language and Literature 1970), and would like to get hold of a copy. We can't find any on campus, but might any of our readers have a copy in their attic? Please contact alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk if so. Thanks!

1970s

Kyriacos ALEXANDROU (BSc Chemical Engineering 1979) is your link to a beautiful property on Cyprus, as he and his wife own 'Cyprus Dream Homes': a property development and real estate agency based in Larnaca. Kyriacos hopes to return to Newcastle soon, as his daughter is applying to study here.

Richard JONES (Agricultural Engineering 1978) now runs his own management consultancy, Windrush Solutions, which specialises in lean manufacturing. Richard lives in Chester, but says that he misses Newcastle terribly – which is why he hopes his daughter will choose to come to Newcastle University next year!

Professor Heitor QUINTELLA (MSc Computing Science 1978) – pictured third from right with his former roommates at a reunion – now lives in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He recently visited his alma mater and reencountered many old friends, professors and colleagues. In 2011, he received the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* in Fine Arts from the Fluminense Association of Fine Arts, in recognition of his 40 years in the applied field of digital art. His work has dealt mainly with the history, myths and iconology of Amerindian tribes and AfroBrazilian culture. He has worked

with the Presidency of The Republic of Brazil, the IBM-Rio Scientific Centre, and latterly Fluminense Federal University from which he retired. Heitor has won various literary and scientific awards and medals in his career, supervised more than 150 postgrad students, and published some 30 books and 250 papers in various fields of human knowledge. He now runs his own consulting firm and digital art atelier. He is married with two sons and a grandson.



1980s

Alastair HARRIS (BA Economic Studies 1984) describes his movements since graduating as: 'A bit of training, a bit of travelling, another degree, and a lot less drinking! Most importantly (to me) marriage and five children (including two sets of identical twins), which keeps me feeling young whilst looking old.'

Dr David TERRELL (PhD 1982) joined the Faculty of Warner Pacific College in Portland, Oregon to teach physical sciences, after doing research at the Mexican Petroleum Institute and being a member of the Engineering Faculty at the National University in Mexico for more than 14 years. David says: 'The good thing about Portland is the micro-breweries as well as the fact that I can easily get my Newcastle Brown Ale!'

David KEW (LLB 1987) moved to Perth, Australia after having practised in a Manchester law firm. David is happy to help any Newcastle alumni who happen to find themselves in that fantastic part of the world. You can contact David through us at alumni-office@ncl.ac.uk

Ian JONES (BEng Chemical Engineering 1988) beat the odds by making a remarkable recovery from a serious head injury sustained in a car crash to go on to a successful career in accountancy, working for a time in Abu Dhabi.

Graham LAWES (BSc Metallurgy 1981) left the UK after graduating to work in the platinum mining industry in South Africa, where he experienced 10 years of apartheid, four years of transformation and 10 years of democracy. He has enjoyed a career in international business management and travelled to almost 50 countries giving him a broad perspective of the world and a multicultural outlook. Graham achieved his first managing director's position in 1991 and has been leading and managing businesses ever since.

1990s

Claire PARRISH (BSc Physiological Sciences 1990) found a new career in the beautiful Turks and Caicos Islands, following a few years in the UK medical sales industry. The Islands and their people have now been home and extended family for nearly 12 years. 'Like the Geordies, we know how to socialise, but on beaches at a pretty laid back pace,' says Claire. 'No Bigg Market here!'

Tom WILLCOX (BA Ancient History 1994) has set up as an independent communications consultant, serving a mix of agencies and private clients. With experience in SME development, he offers a flexible pay-as-you-go service aimed primarily at smaller companies without the budget to cater for regular, retained PR agency support. Projects on which he's recently worked include a public engagement programme in the energy industry and the promotion of the novel *Making Shore*, winner of the 2011 People's Book Prize for fiction. See www.tomwillcoxpr.co.uk for more info.

James SEBRIGHT (BA Business Management 1995, MRes 1996) spent 15 interesting years working in IT in Newcastle, including 10 years doing web design and development at British Airways. James is now setting up as a freelance photographer and web/usability designer. Take a look at www.jamessebright.com if you have any projects that need an experienced creative professional.

Catherine ARCHER (BA Classics 1996) has had an enviable career path to date. Starting off at Reckitt & Colman as a graduate trainee, she then moved to Cadbury, where aside from working with chocolate on a daily basis, she travelled extensively, working in Australia and Singapore. Catherine then moved from one vice to another, taking up her current role of Director of Marketing with Bacardi UK!

Njinye WONODI (MSc Applied Process Control 1997) spent his first 10 years after graduation working in different countries, from the jungles in Gabon to the swamps of Nigeria and the desert of Algeria. He then moved to Louisiana, USA, where he enjoyed the local crawfish. Njinye is now working for EnQuest in Aberdeen, and has kissed goodbye to his days of warm weather.

Dr Claire WINSTANLEY (MB BS 1993) is now a GP in Bristol and has recently written a book for parents with babies up to a year old, entitled *Babies All Wrapped Up*, which is available on Amazon. Claire shares her own medical knowledge and experience as a mother – she has three children – alongside advice from midwives, nurses and paediatricians.

Emma BENSON (BEng Chemical and Process Engineering 1993) embarked on a successful career in the publishing and music industries in London after graduating. She left work to stay at home with her two children, moving back up North at the same time. Emma's experience of being pregnant on holiday and not being able to sunbathe on her front gave her the brainwave of a lilo with a hole. After much thought, Emma got around to patenting, trademarking and finally producing the 'Holo', which launched just over

two years ago. She now sells these from her website at www.holo-lilo.com and gets a lot of great feedback from physios, midwives, yoga teachers and – most of all – mums-to-be.

Lee TURNER (Master of Fine Art 1998) is the owner of Hole Editions, an independent printer and publisher of original fine art lithographs, based at 36 Lime Street studios in Newcastle's quirky Ouseburn Valley. You can see his work at www.holeeditions.co.uk

2000–10s

Lauren WINDLE (MA European History 2009) was the only student on her course when she graduated in her MA's inaugural year. She returned to the US to validate her teaching degree and taught for two years before the economy really tanked and education funds were cut. Lauren moved to Shanghai in 2010 and currently teaches history at an international school, but she's planning a move to Baku, Azerbaijan, this summer.

Sarah BENNETT (BA Combined Honours 2011) is putting her studies in English, linguistics and German to good use by teaching English as a foreign language in China. Her original plan was to stay for six months, but she has enjoyed it so much that she is staying until 2013. Sarah hopes to travel further after her stint of teaching, but intends to eventually return to Newcastle to look for work as it has 'definitely become home'.

Ben LOGAN (BSc Computing Science 2003) works full time at an investment bank in London, and in his spare time is developing a 'job site with a difference'. YourJobList.com enables users to manage their career and track job applications, and do novel things like rate their favourite recruitment agent. Best of all: it's free!

Lola MCEVOY (MA International Multimedia Journalism 2010) worked in Parliament as a press officer and researcher after graduating. She now has a job with Editorial Intelligence and produces and presents her own radio show on the side.

Theodora CLARKE (BA Combined Studies 2007) helped to set up Lifestep, a new company focused on helping young people become employable. After university she worked in financial recruitment in New York City. She is currently completing her PhD in History of Art at Bristol University. Theodora is also Director of Communications for the Conservative Women's Organisation and in 2011 was the London Youth Organiser for the 'No to AV' referendum campaign. You can find her on Twitter as @theodoraclarke

Dr Nawal AL-HOSANY (PhD Architecture 2002) (pictured below) moved back to the United Arab Emirates after graduation, where she became the first ever female Deputy Director of the Abu Dhabi Police, before being appointed Director of Sustainability at future energy company Masdar in 2008. In 2011, she was appointed Sherpa to the UN Secretary General High Level Group for the 'Sustainable Energy for All' initiative, and continues her mission of educating stakeholders and pushing the sustainability agenda in the UAE through her role at Masdar. Nawal frequently sits on panels at regional and global conferences, and joined former US President Bill Clinton and actor Brad Pitt on the closing panel of the Clinton Global Initiative Conference. A prolific traveller, having visited more than 185 cities in 38 countries, Nawal and a friend became the first two female Emiratis to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in 2010.



Hit the road Jack

After blowing the roof off the Henderson Hall ball in May 1992, the guitarist of student prog-rockers *Apple Tragedy* is now back with a more peaceful acoustic. Quiet, it seems, is the new loud. Let *Arches* introduce you to the soulful strumming of Jack Arthurs (BA English Language and Literature 1992).



Ray Charles? Roy Orbison? The Blues Brothers? None of the above, says Jack Arthurs, referring to his inspiration for the trademark dark glasses he wears on stage. They're stenopeic spectacles, he explains, with opaque plastic lenses containing tiny pinholes which allow narrow beams of light to enter the eye, reducing the circle of confusion on the retina and enabling him to see better.

Arthurs always needed glasses to play the guitar, since he was diagnosed as short-sighted as a child. But since discovering the Bates Method – an alternative therapy for improving eyesight, which Aldous Huxley credits for his unprecedented recovery from keratitis at the age of 16, in his 1942 book *The Art of Seeing* – he intends to stop wearing them completely.

'Huxley's argument is that you see with your brain, not your eyes, and so your brain can be trained to interpret visual signals, even if your eyesight is poor,' says Arthurs. 'My prescription

has been reduced by 25 per cent, and I try not to wear them whenever I can. Glasses distort your perception, and losing them allows you to trust your instincts more.'

According to Arthurs, his sense of hearing is heightened by not wearing glasses, as well as his sense of touch and general posture. 'I've found that I'm able to pick out more depth in my music, which has taken composing and playing to a new level.'

Arthurs launched his debut solo album, *Only Dreams Are True*, in March 2012 at the Cumberland Arms in Newcastle's Ouseburn Valley. So far, the response has been as uplifting as its tracklisting, with airplay on BBC Radio 3 and an inclusion on *Stormwatch*, the CD that accompanied issue 25 of *PROG* magazine.

'The album is a collection of acoustic songs celebrating personal transformation,' says Arthurs, whose own personal journey took an unexpected turn when he was made redundant

in early 2009. After the best part of two decades working in publishing, higher education and public policy, he saw this as an opportunity to focus on his music.

'So many people are losing their jobs at the moment, so I think a lot of people can identify with my story,' he says. 'I wanted to do something positive with my situation, and I think people need music in times like this, to cheer them up.'

Arthurs formed a new band, Greyhound, in 2005 with ex-Apple Tragedy bassist Andy O'Shaughnessy (MB BS 1995; MSc Health Sciences 2002), on returning to the North East after some years working in poetry publishing in London. Although the band is still together, Arthurs is currently taking time out to focus on his solo work.

'I'm delighted how listeners are embracing *Only Dreams Are True*. Lyrically and musically, it's a purer form of self-expression for me, compared with songs written within the band,' says Arthurs. 'I'm enjoying being self-sufficient creatively and writing material combining my voice and acoustic guitar.'

'It's a completely different sound from Greyhound. There's an immediacy and soulfulness to acoustic music which can be very moving emotionally. I'm enjoying writing material which feels bright, emotionally open and optimistic in mood. More music is on the way!'

You find out more about Jack Arthurs on his website at www.jackarthurs.co.uk and buy *Only Dreams Are True* through iTunes and Amazon.

COMPETITION: For the chance to win a signed copy of the album, answer this question: Which track on *Only Dreams Are True* features a bird's name in its title? E-mail dan.howarth@ncl.ac.uk with your answer before 30 September 2012. Those answering correctly will be put into a hat and the winner will be drawn in early October.

Events

The Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) organises a number of alumni events and reunions each year, and all graduates are encouraged to attend where possible.

For our full events programme, and reviews and photos from previous events, please visit our website at www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/events Please keep us informed of any change to your

postal or e-mail addresses, using the contact details at the bottom of the page, so we can ensure that your event invitations arrive with you in plenty of time.



CW12 guest David Norris (BA French 1972) with his wife Helen.

Biggest ever Convocation Weekend

Over 400 graduates and guests descended on campus on 15–16 June for our annual alumni reunion, Convocation Weekend.

Celebrating decennial anniversaries for the Classes of 1962, '72, '82 and '92, this was our biggest and best Convocation Weekend yet, with appearances from the Olympic Torch; the Kingsmen sword dancers; and Tony Wadsworth (BA Economic Studies 1977), the former CEO of EMI Music, who judged the Business School's inaugural battle of the bands.

Delivering our annual Convocation Lecture was James Timpson – Goldman Visiting Professor at the University and Chief Executive of Timpson Ltd – who spoke of his company's policy of employing and helping to rehabilitate ex-prisoners.

Visit our website at: ncl.ac.uk/alumni/events/cw for photos, videos and a full review of the weekend's events.

Events Diary 2012–2013

5 August 2012

Walton Salver 2012

Newcastle University's annual alumni golf tournament, the Walton Salver, is set to be contested again this year in the plush grounds of Close House. Places are limited, so please contact Denis Murphy for more details and to book: denis.murphy@ncl.ac.uk

Autumn 2012

Madrid alumni event

Calling all graduates in Spain! We're planning an alumni event in Madrid, and we'd love to see you there. If you'd like to register your interest in this event, please contact Maria Szpitun at maria.szpitun@ncl.ac.uk

6 September 2012

History alumni event in London

Open to all graduates from BA History and BA Politics and History, this evening of networking and catching up with old friends starts at 6pm at the Royal Institution, 21 Albemarle Street, London W1S 4BS. To book your place, please contact Maria Szpitun (address above).

20 September 2012

Retired staff party

By invitation only. Please contact Karen Hendrix for more information: karen.hendrix@ncl.ac.uk

4 October 2012

London donor reception

To be held at the Royal Society of Medicine's Chandos House. By invitation only, please contact Karen for more details (see retired staff party).

12 October 2012

Wynne-Jones Memorial Lecture: 'Molecules that Changed the World'

This year's speaker is K C Nicolaou, Professor of Chemistry at the University of California in San Diego. His lecture will map the development of civilisation through the discovery of key chemical structures.

25 October 2012

An evening with Mrs Moneypenny

Author, FT columnist and TV presenter, Mrs Moneypenny, presents extracts from her Fringe comedy debut at Barclays HQ in Canary Wharf, London. See p46 for full details.

14–15 June 2013

Convocation Weekend

This is our annual alumni reunion back on campus. We'd especially like to invite graduates from years ending in '3' to reunite, reminisce and revisit the University for a weekend filled with anniversary celebrations. Contact Maria Szpitun using the details below to register your interest.

Contact us

If you need any further information on any of our events, have any suggestions for future events, or would like to recommend a venue, please contact our Events Officer, Maria Szpitun, by e-mail at maria.szpitun@ncl.ac.uk or by phone on: 0044 (0)191 222 3638.

You can also visit our website at: www.ncl.ac.uk/alumni/events

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