

Bulletin

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This Issue • Celebrating Lifelong Learning • New appointments and awards

'A TRULY WONDERFUL YEAR'

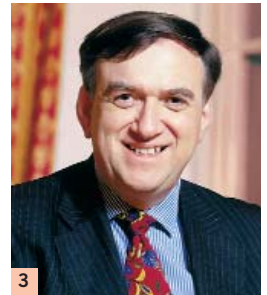
Reflections on an extraordinary year of achievement at the University of Leicester



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From left:

1. The Chancellor, Sir Peter Williams, presided over his first meeting of the University's Court.
2. The Students' Union is celebrating a number of successes this year.
3. Vice-Chancellor Professor Robert Burgess
4. Success in the National Student Survey.

▶ A truly wonderful year – that's how Chancellor Sir Peter Williams introduced the Vice-Chancellor's annual report at the 49th annual meeting of Court on 16 February.

Addressing his first meeting, Sir Peter said it was a tremendous honour and pleasure to serve as Chancellor and he looked forward to a long and happy association with the University.

Reflecting on the academic year 05/06, the Vice-Chancellor Professor Robert Burgess highlighted records from that year that had brought great distinction upon the University. Amongst them were:

- Being placed joint first for institutions teaching full time students in the inaugural National Student Survey
 - Nomination as one of four universities for the title Institution of the Year by the Times Higher Education Supplement
 - The Students' Union winning the title Students' Union of the Year
- Commenting on the Students' Union's achievement, Professor Burgess said



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this was a tremendous achievement in the face of stiff competition from 700 unions across the UK.

In addition, the Union had won the Leicester Mercury's The Week's award for the best venue in the region and the Union had also achieved Investor in People status.

"It has been an absolutely tremendous year from the Students' Union point of view and we are very pleased that students have rated their

experience here at Leicester so highly," said Professor Burgess.

Professor Burgess said Leicester currently has 19,000 students, 3000 staff and a turnover of £167m. The University strategy is to maximize the potential for growth:

"Our objective is to increase student numbers as well as financial surpluses in order for the University to flourish and develop in a dynamic way.

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STUDENTS TAKE A WEIGHT OFF THEIR MINDS

▶ A team of scientists from the University of Leicester experienced zero-gravity on a parabolic flight. Daniel Brandt, Jim Aldcroft, Keith Sprake and Richard Branch - fresh from sitting their physics finals - joined 28 other teams from around Europe on the Airbus A300 over the Mediterranean Sea. More pictures back page.



Photo: ESA/Anneke Le Floch.



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"The proportion of postgraduates (almost 50%) to undergraduates at Leicester is a unique feature of the University and articulates well with the research base of the University. Many universities have 25% postgraduates – Leicester has considerable strength in this respect and we are developing incentive schemes that will support departments in their recruitment of postgraduates."

Turning to research, Professor Burgess praised in particular the proportion of 'blue chip' awards to Leicester. These were peer-reviewed awards from the research councils and represented 50% of awards to Leicester. The University, with a grant income of £35m per year, is ranked in the top 20 institutions in the UK for research income per full-time member of staff.

Commercial application of the University's research represented another significant advance for Leicester- eight spin-outs had been established since 2001 and there were 10 licences operational and a further 15 under investigation. Professor Burgess said the University needed to continue developing this base and added that spin-outs had extended beyond the biological and physical sciences, citing the work of Professor Martin Gill and research on crime prevention as a key example of success.

Professor Burgess also addressed Court on student issues and, in response to previous requests from Court, provided illustrations of student activities that were having a positive effect on the University and the community.

Turning to Estate developments, Professor Burgess said to date £134m had been invested in the University's £300m Development Plan. He cited the development of the Library and the new hall of residence in Oadby as major milestones in the University's progress – adding that he would hope the next meeting of Court would take place in the new Oadby hall.

"We need to sustain and develop our infrastructure in order to flourish and support our world class research and teaching," said Professor Burgess.

• You can read the full summary of the VC's address to Court on eBulletin: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/ebulletin>

CELEBRATING SUCCESS IN LIFELONG LEARNING

► Two students of the University of Leicester's Institute of Lifelong Learning are going on to greater things after their success in courses at the Institute.

Harry Cross and Nicola Howell both studied for Certificates of Higher Education and received their certificates, along with approximately 100 other students, at the Annual Certificate Presentation Evening on 1 February.

Harry Cross, 76, began the course in Modern Social History purely out of interest, never intending to do the written assignments or put himself through the examinations. But during the first term he got hooked on History and, having completed this course successfully is now enrolled on a BA (Hons) Humanities course with the Institute of Lifelong Learning.

Nicola Howell, who for 14 years was a shop assistant at the Black Cat Bookshop in Leicester, began the Practical Ecology and Wildlife Conservation course after taking on voluntary work for the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV).

As her interest in the topic grew, she enrolled on the Leicester Institute of Lifelong Learning course, embarking on two years of weekly lessons, weekend field trips and a week in Wales studying coastal ecology.

As the course was drawing to an end, she saw a job advertised for a "Rivers Operative" within the Environment Agency and the winning combination of her experience from the course and her voluntary work got her the job. Unstoppable now, she is also going on to do a degree in Environmental Science with the Open University.

Nicola commented: "I now work outdoors 90% of the week and I love it. The work involves keeping the flood-banks, floodgates and riverbanks maintained, and removing any blockages. I have been trained to drive land-rovers off-road, use chainsaws, go into confined spaces and am now waiting for a boat-handling course.

"The opportunities for development within the Environment Agency are many and varied. There is lots of in-house training so I can build on

the certificate I obtained from the Institute of Lifelong Learning at the University of Leicester.

"The course has helped me turn my life around and change career completely. It not only educated me on ecology and conservation, but also informed me about all the different agencies within this field and how everyone has to work together from the government to environmentalists and farmers.

"I would heartily recommend it to anyone with an interest in ecology or wildlife, as it can be studied on many levels, either just for fun or to obtain a Certificate in Higher Education."

The Institute of Lifelong Learning offers a wide range of part-time degree, diploma, certificate and short courses. Some students follow these out of interest, whilst others are looking to improve skills and knowledge for professional development. Traditional qualifications are not usually required for entry. For further information please call 0116 252 5911 or see www.le.ac.uk/lifelonglearning



LEARNING FOR LIFE: Successful students at the Lifelong Learning Certificate Presentation evening.



CELEBRATION: The official opening of the Northampton Centre marked a new chapter in Lifelong Learning in the region

New Era of Educational Opportunities in Northamptonshire

► February 15 saw the inauguration of the new centre for students at the University of Leicester's Institute of Lifelong Learning base in Northampton. The University of Leicester has had a visible presence in Northampton since the early 1960s and is proud of this new chapter in the history of lifelong learning.

The new centre is available to all part-time students studying at the University's Northampton annexe and affords access to general teaching classrooms, a Learning Resource

Centre encompassing library and IT facilities, as well as a cafeteria and crèche.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Robert Burgess, officiated at the ceremony and opened the centre in the company of Northampton College Principal, Mr Len Closs, the Director of Lifelong Learning, Professor John Benyon, and Head of Institute, Ms Jackie Dunne. The Mayor of Northampton, Councillor Sally Beardsworth, were also be in attendance.

The centre, which offers a wide selection of part-time adult education courses, places increasing emphasis on its newer courses, which include Foundation Degrees in Managing Voluntary and Community Organisations and Drug and Alcohol Counselling.

Len Closs, Principal of Northampton College, said:

"We have been developing a strong relationship with the University of Leicester over a number of years. We are very

pleased that the University has shared our aspirations to improve the range of opportunities for learning in the town and has joined us in our new building at Lower Mounts."

Director of Studies, Gerald Porter, commented:

"Students are attracted to a vibrant and thriving centre and we are extremely pleased, as a result of our new partnership with Northampton College, to be able to share in these state of the art facilities".

Leicester Launch of Institute of Community Cohesion

► The Lord Mayor of Leicester, Cllr Mary Draycott, hosted the launch of the new Institute of Community Cohesion on March 27th.

The institute has been set up by Ted Cante, Associate Director of the Improvement and Development Agency (IdeA), who gave a keynote lecture at the launch. Also participating was Surinder Sharma, Director for Equality and Human Rights at the Department of Health.

The launch was followed by a reception at the University of Leicester, which is an academic partner in the new Institute.

The institute is intended to become a key international authority on cohesion work, based on a unique partnership of

academic, statutory and non-governmental bodies, as well as public, private and voluntary sector agencies.

It will draw together the expertise of the city councils and universities in Leicester and Coventry. It will focus on professional evaluation of best practice, disseminating cohesion ideas that have been shown to have an impact on communities.

National partners include IDEa, the Commission for Racial Equality, the National Health Service, the Housing Corporation, and several government departments.

Discussions with the vice chancellors of both of Leicester's



The Lord Mayor of Leicester, Councillor Mary Draycott, pictured with the Vice-Chancellor during a separate visit to the University. She visited the departments of Criminology and the Department of History of Art and Film.

universities, and those of Coventry and Warwick, resulted in a decision that different aspects of the institute's work will be hosted by each university. Overall, eight different departments will be involved across the four universities.

Professor Robert Burgess, Vice-

Chancellor of the University of Leicester, said:

"The University of Leicester will influence the future direction of this visionary institute through rigorous research and new thinking, ensuring it has an international impact."



▶ A remote-controlled aeroplane packed with scientific know-how has recently had a test flight in the UK - heralding a new generation of aircraft

The revolutionary model plane has been developed as part of a £6.2m programme, involving engineers from the University of Leicester, funded jointly by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council and BAE Systems.

The five-year programme is called FLAVIIR - flapless air vehicle integrated industrial research - and involves teams from Leicester, Liverpool, Nottingham, Southampton, Swansea, Warwick, York and London. Manchester University's Goldstein Aeronautical Research Laboratory developed the model aircraft and the programme is managed by Cranfield University.

"The overall programme is aimed at developing new technologies for future generation uninhabited air vehicles, so called UAVs," said Professor Ian Postlethwaite, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Engineering at Leicester.

"The team involves experts from around the UK in Aerodynamics, Control Systems, Electromagnetics, Manufacturing, Materials and

WE'RE FLYING WITHOUT WING FLAPS AND WITHOUT A PILOT

Structures, and Numerical Simulation. The results from the different groups will be brought together in a single flying demonstrator in about 2009. The concept of a flapless vehicle, using fluidic thrust vectoring (where direction is changed with a secondary air flow) and air jets, is one important area of investigation. Another is the replacement of the pilot by sophisticated software that can autonomously fly the vehicle without collisions in what might be dangerous or remote environments." This is the contribution of the Leicester researchers.

Professor Postlethwaite and Dr Da-Wei Gu, working with Research Assistants Sarah Blaney, Kannan Natesan and Yoonsoo Kim and

Research Students Ihab Abu Rayan, Jianchi Chen and Samir Hassoun from the Control group at Leicester, are involved in increasing the levels of autonomy and performance in UAVs through research on co-ordinated control, integrated control and condition monitoring.

Over the past year, the Leicester team has developed a software package for the flight path planning task. The package incorporates several planning methods and is able to run in real-time and deal with uncertain situations.

Algorithms for co-ordinated mission task planning involving several UAVs are currently under development. Some initial robust control systems have been designed for the demonstrator model and control schemes, which explore FTV

(fluidic thrust vectoring) and CC (circulation control - which replaces conventional flaps by blowing air from the trailing edge of the wing) actuators will be a major development. A health management/condition monitoring system is also planned.

In addition, the Leicester team will explore the potential of multiple sensors (sensor arrays) distributed across an airframe to provide virtual air data for use in the health monitoring and improved control of future UAVs.

Another key project will be developing fault detection mechanisms for use in a fault tolerant flight control system, which can automatically adapt for failures sustained during a mission thereby maintaining adequate flight performance and stability. Ⓞ

Urban kids in diabetes timebomb

▶ Survey results show that children living in inner city areas are at a hugely increased risk of becoming obese and developing Type 2 diabetes. The study, conducted by researchers at the University of Leicester, shows that only 37 per cent of children in an urban area walked to school, compared to 67 per cent of suburban children in a previous study.

Inactive lifestyles can increase the likelihood of obesity and contribute to the development of Type 2 diabetes. The study, presented at the Diabetes UK Annual Professional Conference, also showed that 47 per cent of pupils who responded to the survey admitted to spending more

than four hours per day watching television or videos or playing computer games.

86 per cent of the children surveyed were from South Asian backgrounds. People from South Asian communities are up to six times more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes and have an increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease. The lack of physical activity is an important factor in contributing further risk.

Lead researcher Dr Kamlesh Khunti, from the University of Leicester said,

"With this study we wanted to look at the characteristics of children who live a sedentary

lifestyle and the impact of demographics on their health. It is quite clear that children living in urban areas are not doing enough exercise. These dire levels of physical activity in urban youngsters need to be addressed, particularly with South Asian children who we know are already more genetically prone to obesity, cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes."

The research was presented today at the Diabetes UK Annual Professional Conference in Birmingham. The survey was conducted in five inner-city schools in a deprived area of Leicester with 3150 pupils aged 11-15 years. Ⓞ



Dr Kamlesh Khunti: Warning over rise in incidence of type 2 diabetes.



Multi-million pound UK Biobank underway

► UK Biobank, a visionary medical project aimed at improving the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer, heart disease, diabetes and many other serious conditions was launched after several years of meticulous planning.

The project – a UK world first – will gather, store and protect a vast bank of medical data and material that will allow researchers to study in depth, in decades to come, how the complex interplay of genes, lifestyle and environment affect our

risk of disease. Because it will involve thousands of people who eventually go on to contract each particular disease UK Biobank will provide a uniquely rich resource that allows researchers to identify more reliably than ever before why some people develop a specific disease and others do not.

Leicester is the lead institution in the Fosse Way Consortium involving six institutions. Professor Paul Burton is Leader of the Fosse Way Consortium, coordinated from the University of Leicester, and a

member of Biobank's Scientific Steering Committee.

Paul Burton is professor of genetic epidemiology and head of the genetic epidemiology unit at the University of Leicester. He qualified in medicine from the University of Leicester in 1983, taking an intercalated BSc in genetics in 1981. He gained his MD from Leicester in 1992.

He took up the Chair in genetic epidemiology at the University of Leicester in September 1999. 🗨

MEN WHO SHARE SURNAMES ARE GENETICALLY LINKED

► Research led by Leicester geneticists, comparing the DNA of 150 pairs of men who share British surnames, has shown that about a quarter of pairs are linked genetically. Their findings were published in the journal *Current Biology* on 21 February.

The key is in the Y chromosome – the part of our genetic material that confers maleness, and is passed, like many surnames, from father to son. A simple link between name and Y chromosome could in principle connect all men sharing a surname into one large family tree.

However, in reality the link may not be so clear cut. Each name may have had several founders, and adoptions, name-changes and non-paternities would confuse any simple genetic link.

Previous research had suggested a link for some particular names.

The new study, from Turi King, Stéphane Ballereau and Mark Jobling from the University of Leicester, and Kevin Schürer from the University of Essex, examines the issue more generally by analysing many names, and recruiting pairs randomly from the population.

Pairs sharing surnames are on average much more likely to share Y chromosomes than pairs with different names, and the link becomes stronger as names become rarer. For example, there is no link for Smith, Jones and Taylor, but a clear link for Attenborough, Widdowson and Grewcock.

Linked men share a common ancestor less than 20 generations ago (about 1300 AD), when surnames were founded. The research has important implications for genealogists wishing to connect branches of their family trees.

It also has a potential use in forensic science, since it suggests that, given large databases of names and Y chromosome profiles, surname prediction from DNA alone may be feasible. 🗨

Ministerial Visit to University Centre



A delegation from Trinidad and Tobago visited the Centre for Educational Leadership and Management. Amongst those pictured are Professor Ian Postlethwaite from University of Leicester - Pro Vice Chancellor, Professor Clive Dimmock - Director of CELM, Dr Ann Briggs - Deputy Director CELM, Hazel Manning - Minister of Education, Sharon Mangroo Director Curriculum Development, Colin Connolly - The High Commission, Trinidad and Tobago, London.

► The Centre for Educational Leadership and Management (CELM, part of the School of Education, enjoyed a visit from a party from Trinidad and Tobago, led by the Minister for Education (and wife of the Prime Minister) Hazel Manning. The visit was partly arranged through the new agent for

CELM programmes in the West Indies. Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Ian Postlethwaite joined the Director of CELM, Professor Clive Dimmock, and the deputy director Dr Ann Briggs, in welcoming the visitors.

The purpose of the visit was to discuss ways in which CELM might

assist in meeting Trinidad and Tobago's needs to professionally develop its teachers, principals and administrators. The Islands have just received a significant grant from the IDB to devolve the administration of its schools and colleges and to revamp its school curriculum. 🗨



PROMOTING VOLUNTARY GIVING

► A three-year scheme to promote voluntary giving to Higher Education providers from private donors has been launched to help generate additional income for the sector.

Under the pilot project, announced by the Department for Education and Skills (DFES) and Universities UK (UUK), DfES will provide up to £7.5 million to 27 higher education providers to match fund investment to increase income from private donations. Leicester received over £100,000 as part of this project.

Universities and other higher education providers were invited to submit proposals for inclusion in the pilot. 78 proposals were submitted, with the successful 27 selected by a Panel chaired by Professor Eric Thomas. 📍

NEW PARTNERSHIP

► The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has announced more than £5m backing for two major initiatives by the learned societies responsible for promoting physics and chemistry. The Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) will be awarded £3.6m and the Institute of Physics (IOP) £1.8m. The announcement follows an agreement last year that HEFCE would work with a group of organisations to support strategically important and vulnerable subjects.

Steve Egan, Acting Chief Executive of HEFCE, said:

"We are delighted to support both these programmes. Chemistry and physics are both of fundamental importance to the development of our science base and the economic well-being of the country."

"We believe that the long-term health of these subjects can best be secured by ensuring that there is an increasing demand from people wishing to study them who are well informed about future career prospects. We are pleased to work with partners - including the learned societies, universities, schools, colleges and employers - to stimulate interest and excitement in these subjects and to bring them to the attention of pupils from a wide range of backgrounds."

The financial administration of the two projects will be undertaken through the University of Leicester, working in partnership with the RSC and the IOP. 📍

► There's more to a mountain than meets the eye – or so a Leicester geologist has found.

He's discovered a new type of mountain range never identified before – and what is more, they are forming today.

Dr Dickson Cunningham, of the Department of Geology at the University of Leicester, has been researching mountain building processes in Central Asia for 12 years.

Now the senior lecturer in Tectonics has published a paper in the journal *Earth and Planetary Science Letters* in which he documents a new class of mountain range previously unrecognised by geologists.

Dr Cunningham said: "Most of Earth's actively forming mountain ranges are found along tectonic plate boundaries and contain systems of faults and other crustal structures that accommodate the stresses at the plate boundary and generate uplift.

"My research has identified a new class of mountain range -

RESEARCH REACHES NEW HEIGHTS



Dr Dickson Cunningham, Department of Geology, at the 1957 Magnitude 8 Earthquake Rupture in Gobi Altai Mountains, Mongolia.

specifically, the Altai, Gobi Altai and easternmost Tien Shan mountain ranges in Mongolia and China are forming today in an intraplate and intracontinental setting due to a combination of contractional faulting

and horizontal translation."

Dr Cunningham's research on mountain building processes in Central Asia has been funded by NERC, the Royal Society and the National Geographic Society. 📍

Further Reductions in Crime on Campus

► The latest statistics from the University Security Office show a further reduction in reported crime on campus. The headline figure of 135 incidents for 2005 is a 7.5% reduction on 2004 and continues the downward trend since 2002.

Although incidents at residences have not followed any consistent trend, the number of incidents on the academic campus fell for the fifth year in succession, with most improvement in the reduction in theft.

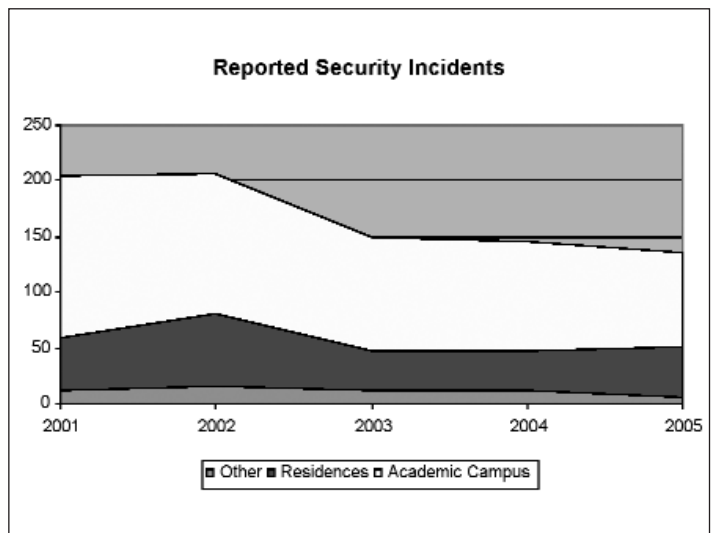
Unfortunately there has been a slight increase in the number of incidents of assault or robbery from the person. After a continuous downward trend over previous years the number of reported incident increased from 7 in 2004 to 20 in 2005.

Although crime in the University is extremely low and the downward trend indicates that security measures are proving

effective there are clearly areas where further improvements can be made. Advice must be to make sure windows in residences are not left open, belongings are secured and people should not

walk alone in less frequented areas, particularly after dark.

The full statistics can be found on the Estates Office web pages at www.le.ac.uk/estates. 📍





SOLAR ENERGY SHINES IN EAST MIDLANDS

► The University of Leicester is to share £1.8 million of funding from the DTI's Major Photovoltaic Demonstration Programme to fit solar energy installations onto buildings. Leicester will incorporate solar panelling as part of its new Library development.

Each of the projects across the region will be adding solar panels that will make valuable savings in energy costs, reduce carbon emissions and, through high visibility, promote awareness of the benefits of the technology in the local community.

Dr Hans Bleijs of the Department of Engineering was the instigator of

this latest addition to the University's quest for incorporating green electricity generation in its buildings, and was closely involved in the design of this scheme, which will act as a demonstration system for different PV technologies and a research tool for the Department of Engineering.

The University's Project Manager, Peter Bale, said he was proud that the University had the foresight and commitment to incorporate this technology into this flagship development and felt it had inspired the Design and Construction team working with their suppliers and University Academics to produce a

scheme that could be supported by the DTI ensuring the aspiration becomes a reality for future generations.

As part of its Energy Management Policy, the University is committed to achieving the best practice benchmark standards in energy efficiency. The building is expected to receive a BREEAM 'excellent' rating in part by incorporating a bespoke glass/glass thin film photovoltaic array that provides huge energy savings as well as aesthetic appeal.

The University also acknowledges the pivotal support given to the scheme from the outset by the John Hobley trust. ☺

University of Leicester Announces World First Forensic Technique

► A team led by a University of Leicester forensic pathologist is believed to be the first in the world to use a new radiological approach for mass fatality investigation.

Traditionally 2 types of radiology are used in mass fatality and temporary mortuary investigations - that of fluoroscopy and plain x-ray.

These techniques however are time consuming, yield limited information and are a health and safety hazard to those working in the environment due to the use of radiological equipment outside their normal working area. They are also not undertaken at the scene of the incident.

As far as we know, for the first time in the world a new radiological system was used recently at a mass fatality investigation. A team of researchers led by Professor Guy Ruty of the University of Leicester Forensic Pathology Unit used a mobile MSCT scanner at the mortuary for the examination of the victims of a vehicle mass fatality incident.

This instrument provided superior information in 2 dimensional plain film (AP and lateral) and 3 dimensional multi-slice examination with on-site soft tissue and bony reconstruction. The system proved faster than traditional temporary mortuary radiology yielding greater information related to identification, health and safety, autopsy planning and cause of death.

Professor Ruty said:

"The demonstration of the ability to utilise mobile MSCT technology under these circumstances may result in a complete rethinking of the type of radiology to be used in temporary mortuaries or mass fatalities scenes. The work presently being undertaken by my research team within the Forensic Pathology Unit at the University of Leicester in this area is hoped to develop new approaches to mass fatality radiological investigation which may be adopted throughout the world." ☺

Welcome to the Virtual World at Leicester

► Elearning is becoming an integral part of student life with nearly all of the UK's Higher Education Institutions supporting learning and teaching using some form of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The University of Leicester introduced a Blackboard VLE service in 2002 with an initial offering of 112 course modules. This service has seen a year on year growth and now supports over 1000 course sites with over 16,000 students having participated on at least 1 online course. The service regularly supports nearly 10,000 of students on a weekly basis and nearly 80,000 pages of content are being viewed daily.

The success of the Leicester elearning programme can be attributed to many reasons not least the introduction of a broadband Internet service into every student room within the University's accommodation system. The cheaper availability of computers, in particular laptop

computers, gives students the ability to carry on with their learning from their study bedrooms giving access to online resources previously available only from the University campus.

The Blackboard VLE offers an integrated approach to student teaching and support, allowing email and discussion communications, and with the use of other plug-in technologies the quality of the elearning experience has been enhanced. The use of Macromedia Breeze to produce lectures from PowerPoint slides and narration allows presentations to be viewed and listen to time and time again so that salient facts can be understood by the student. (Macromedia Breeze also offers a low-cost video conferencing facility which we are only just beginning to exploited.) Also the electronic submissions of student assignments through the Blackboard VLE are also electronically checked for plagiarism.

A recent addition to the Blackboard service allows student to build up and control their own personal development plan (PDP) which can be electronically shared with personal tutors or other support agencies, such as the Careers Service. Such "eportfolios" can then be shared with prospective employers and other agencies outside of the University.

The Blackboard VLE has within a few short years become a mission critical service within the University supporting not only student teaching but departmental administration, various institutional committees etc. and with the introduction of a Blackboard Learning Portal later this year we would have completed the VLE enhancements to improve and advance the students' learning experience.

• Dr Richard Mobbs, Head of Learning Technology ☺



Women Redefining Role In Workplace

► Women are redefining their role in the workplace and are more likely to seek personal fulfilment than top flight career success, research from the University of Leicester suggests.

The stereotypical view of women at the pinnacle of their profession in business and commerce - as illustrated by movies *Disclosure* and *Working Girl* - is outdated says Dr Jo Brewis, Reader in Management at the University of Leicester Management Centre.

Dr Brewis, whose research interests focus on the intersections between identity, gender, sexuality, the body and processes of organising, detects a sense of growing cynicism and disillusionment among women, who are questioning the need to succeed in a masculine business environment.

"Women are questioning whether they really want to reach the top," Dr. Brewis says, "and whether business is the kind of environment they want to excel in. Masculine qualities may be required in the business world, but is that really what women aspire to? Some of the more senior women in commerce and elsewhere are also quite formidable, because they have had to strive so hard to get where they are that they don't come over as sympathetic characters."

Dr Brewis also questions whether women want to be defined by their jobs as men have traditionally been. ☺



Dr Melanie Davies has been appointed as Chair in Diabetes Medicine in the University's Cardiovascular Sciences Department.

Inaugural Chair in Diabetes Medicine

► Dr Melanie Davies was appointed as Chair of Diabetes Medicine at the University in September and took up her post on 6th February 2006. Having trained and qualified at Sheffield University, she developed an early interest in diabetes and did her training in Sheffield, Ipswich and Cambridge before moving to Leicester

in 1993. She had previously been a consultant physician with an interest in diabetes at University Hospitals of Leicester since 1996, and served as Head of Service for Metabolic Medicine from March 2001. Her main research interests are screening and early detection of type 2 diabetes, prevention of type 2 diabetes,

pathogenesis of type 2 diabetes, and evaluating complex interventions including education initiatives in diabetes.

Since 1996 she has developed a research team in the NHS and has successfully obtained over £3.5 million in peer reviewed grant funding. Her research experience spans clinical research in both specialist and primary care, and she has a wealth of experience in successfully running clinical trials.

She has been an expert member of the panel for the MRC and Department of Health regarding diabetes research in the UK, and is an active member of key committees for Diabetes UK. She is Chair of the first NHS R&D programme for diabetes within the Trust, which was established in 2002 and for the past 2 years has received the highest possible rating from the Department of Health.

Professor Davies was recently successful, along with Dr Kamlesh Khunti in the Department of Health Sciences, in obtaining the South East Midlands Research Network for Diabetes which will generate £2 million of funding over the next 5 years.

Professor Davies is married with 3 children. Her hobbies include skiing and horse riding, and she has a smallholding with a wide variety of animals. ☺

New Director of Student Support and Development

► Paul Jackson has been appointed as the new Director of the Student Support and Development Service (formerly EDSC) at the University.

Previously (to Sept 2005) as Assistant Director, he led the Faculty Services team of the Careers Centre University of Leeds, responsible for oversight of a range of "employability" initiatives delivered through the academic curriculum including personal development planning, work placements and career planning/development modules.

He has taught on 'employability/

PDP' modules in Earth Sciences, German, Medieval Studies, the Business School, Environment School and Bioinformatics ranging from level 1 to Masters. He served on the Standing Group on Progress Files, reporting to Learning and Teaching Board, the Work Placement Group addressing the QAA Code of Practice and the City and Guilds Advisory Board.

He is a Trustee of the Centre for Recording Achievement, consultant to National Council for Work Experience, contributor to ESECT and "AgCAS Network Think Tank for



Paul Jackson has been appointed as the new Director of the Student Support and Development Service (formerly EDSC).

Employability", and served on the National Record of Achievement Review Higher Education Working Group. He established the Yorkshire Strategic Forum for PDP Steering Group. ☺



NEW PROFESSOR OF MECHANICS OF MATERIALS

► Jingzhe Pan joined the University of Leicester on 2 April to take up a Chair in Mechanics of Materials. He was previously a Reader in Solid Mechanics at the University of Surrey. Jingzhe was born and educated in China. He obtained his PhD in Solid Mechanics from Shanghai Jiao-Tong University in 1988. In 1990 he was invited to England by Liverpool University as a visiting research fellow. From 1991 to 1994, he worked in the Engineering Department of Cambridge University as a research associate. From 1994 to 2006, he worked at the University of Surrey as a Lecturer, Senior lecturer and then Reader.

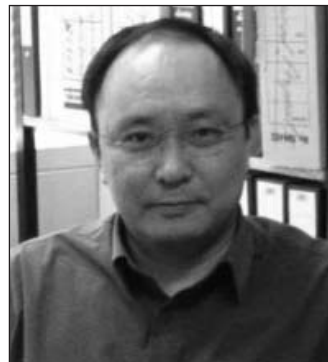
Engineers are confidently using virtual tests on computers to design buildings, bridges, airplanes and etc. Jingzhe has been working to copy the same success to the microscopic level so that people can virtually test new materials. Over the last ten years, Jingzhe and his team have developed various computer modelling techniques

for virtual test of materials and applied them to a range of material problems. Two representative examples are sintering and creep failure.

Most of ceramic products and a large number of metal, polymer and glass products are made by sintering - a process during which extremely fine powders are fired and consolidated. Jingzhe has been leading the international effort to develop computer modelling techniques for sintering. With the help of these techniques the ancient sintering technology is entering a new phase of producing high added value materials. Creep failure of steel components is a major cause of aging for power generating plants. Many power plants in the UK are reaching the later phase of their designed life. The decision to replace a critical component is an expensive one. Jingzhe and his team pioneered a computer modelling technique to predict the residual life of these

components so that the potential of an existing plant can be fully exploited.

Jingzhe's other interests include studying international politics and Buddhism. At Surrey, he had been lecturing leadership theories as well as solid mechanics. He is married to Xiaoxia Yu, an air-traffic control software engineer, and has two children. ☺



Professor Jingzhe Pan is new Professor of Mechanics of Materials in the Department of Engineering.

New Professor of Mental Health and Disability Appointed

► A new Professor of Mental Health and Disability has been appointed to the University.

Professor Howard Meltzer joins Leicester from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) where he is Deputy Divisional Director, Health & Care Division. He has been a Visiting Professor in Leicester's Department of Psychiatry (Section of Social and Epidemiological Psychiatry) since 2001. He took up his Chair at Leicester in April.

Professor Meltzer brings to the post a wealth of experience having spent over 25 years at a national level on the collection, analysis, interpretation and report-writing of epidemiological data on health statistics, predominantly relating to disability and mental health of adults and children.

In his last role, Professor Meltzer managed three branches within the

Health and Care Division of the Office for National Statistics - Medical Research, Morbidity and Health Care and International (dealing with UN, WHO, OECD and EC - Eurostat and DG Sanco).

He represented the UK on several international committees, including the UN Washington Group on Disability Statistics and the European Community's task force on major and chronic diseases.

He is currently involved in the consultation process on the European Commission Green Paper on Mental Health. Within the UK he represents ONS in the Cross Government Network on Mental Health and Social Inclusion.

He attended North Manchester Grammar School before reading Psychology at London University. He gained a Master's in Social Psychology from the London School



Professor Howard Meltzer, Professor of Mental Health and Disability.

of Economics and his doctorate in Health/Occupational Psychology from the University of Hull. ☺

CHANCELLOR WINS PRIZE FOR SERVICES TO ENGINEERING EDUCATION

► The EPC announced the award of the President's prize for 2006 to Sir Peter Williams, Chancellor of the University of Leicester.

Sir Peter Williams has combined distinguished academic and industrial careers and used this powerful combination to influence both the education and the enhancement of professional standards of engineers. He has done this through his positions with the Engineering and Technology Board, the National Physical Laboratory, the Association for Science Education, the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education, Women into Science and Engineering and many more important areas.

Sir Peter has made an outstanding contribution to the education of scientists and engineers over many years and the Engineering Professors' Council is delighted to recognise this enormous contribution by awarding him the 2006 President's Prize. ☺

Awards for Leading Researcher

► One of the UK's leading academic analysts and commentators on American foreign policy, Professor John Dumbrell, has received international recognition for his research.

The Professor of Politics has celebrated success with books he has authored on America's international relations. The award-winning author claimed the Richard E Neustadt Book Prize in 2005 for 'President Lyndon Johnson and Soviet Communism' - a prize endowed by the US Embassy, London, and awarded to the best book published in any given year on American politics by a UK-based author.

Professor Dumbrell, of the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Leicester, is a previous co-winner of the University of Cambridge Donner Book Prize for 'A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations in the Cold War and After', awarded by the University of Cambridge Centre for International Studies. ☺



INTERNATIONAL HONOUR BESTOWED ON UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ENGLISH STUDENT

▶ A University of Leicester doctoral student has scooped a rare and prestigious international prize- one of only two to be awarded outside of the USA.

Erika Corradini, a PhD student in the Department of English, won the David R. Tashjian International Travel prize for her paper on Anglo-Saxon Studies. The prize will allow her to participate to the 41st International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo in May.

Erika's tutor, Professor Elaine Treharne, said:

"Erika thoroughly deserves this award for her genuine intellectual ability. She is a great asset to the university and her win is incredible considering that only two prizes of this kind are awarded outside of the USA."

Leicester Archaeologists Dig up Another Award

▶ A University of Leicester archaeology team is celebrating after being recognised for its dedication and investment in its staff.

The University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS), part of the School of Archaeology and Ancient History, has yet again been commended for its continuous commitment to staff training, development and progression, by retaining its 'Investor in People' status, originally awarded in 2003.

This second success is crucially important as it demonstrates how the department continues to maintain its high standards of business practice and investment in people, despite its phenomenal growth over the last three years, which has seen the department double in size.

The department has once again passed stringent assessments to qualify for this award.

'AWARD IS ENCOURAGING'

▶ Sarah Stuckey of the University of Leicester Students' Union has described the 2005 Leicester Mercury 'The Week' award as very encouraging.

Sarah, who is the bars and entertainment manager of the students' union, is pleased that the University of Leicester Students' Union got the Best Venue category in the annual awards that seek to recognise and celebrate achievements made by the arts and entertainment sectors in Leicester, Leicestershire and beyond.

Over the last year, the University of Leicester Students' Union spent £261,000 on a large-scale redevelopment of the Venue, the students' union club located in its

Percy Gee building. The refurbishing project was necessitated by the need to make the facility more accessible and attractive to promoters and bands. A new false ceiling was built in the club to improve acoustics, making it better for bands.

"Our aim was to make the Venue a major live music venue in the East Midlands," says Sarah. "There was an untapped demand for live music in Leicester, especially among students. We have since increased the number and variety of acts that we host."

"The venue has been a great asset to our organization and the students that it is run for. Our events

consistently have high levels of attendance. The Week Award is an indication that our efforts have not been in vain," Sarah concludes.

Martin Cullen, University of Leicester Students' Union president, also expressed delight at the award. "This is good news for our student led organization. The awards prove that our union is a clear leader in the bars and entertainments sector. This honour encourages us to provide even better facilities for our members and the communities they live in."

The 2005 Leicester Mercury 'The Week Award' was held at the De Montfort Hall, Leicester on Wednesday 8 February 2006.



(from left) Thomas Newbold, Harry Caswell, Samee Mohammad, Bola Fagbure and Richard Keeble.

'PHENOMENAL SUCCESS' OF MANAGEMENT STUDENTS

▶ Management students from the University of Leicester are toasting their success in a prestigious national business competition

Undergraduates on the BA Management Studies course were second runners-up in the Grand Final of the IBM University Business Challenge.

The team of third year students, Samee Mohammad, Thomas Newbold, Richard Keeble, Harry Caswell and Bola Fagbure,

celebrated their success at the IBM UK headquarters in London.

Head of the Management Centre Professor Gibson Burrell said:

"This is a phenomenal achievement given that 140 teams, made up of 700 students from 58 universities, participated in the competition, which involved teams working as business consultants in simulated companies and making key decisions in areas including marketing, finance and production.

Well done to the team they've done the Management Centre and Leicester proud!"

The IBM Universities Business Challenge, now in its eighth year, is a national competition open to all faculties of UK universities. The Challenge offers undergraduates the opportunity to improve their knowledge of the business world - win cash prizes, enhance their CV and have a lot of fun!



The University played host to Bernard Greaves from the Leicester Partnership on 1st March. He was met by Vice-Chancellor Professor Robert Burgess, the Head of the Department of Genetics - Dr Annette Casmore, the Director of the Space Research Centre - Professor George Fraser and Professor Bill Brammar - Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor. During his visit he was shown around the Department of Genetics by Dr Cashmore and the Space Research Centre by Professor Fraser.



Marathon Man

► A team of staff and students connected with Leicester is taking part in the fundraiser to raise funds for the University of Leicester Alumni Association. All monies raised will be used for student projects and student research activities.

Among them is Head of Careers at the University, Mr Martin Pennington.

He said: "The Edinburgh Marathon takes place on Sunday 11th June and a small team from the University is taking part in order to raise money for the Alumni Association. This will help to provide bursaries and similar support to students who face difficulties in continuing their studies because of the increased costs of higher education.

"I have a strong belief that no-one should be prevented from benefitting from first class higher education because of their inability to meet the ever growing costs and this is my small gesture in that direction. I aim to raise £1000 personally and am already nearly half of the way to that target - any further support from the staff and students at Leicester will be gratefully received.

If you would like to sponsor Martin, please visit his website at <http://www.justgiving.com/martinp> or contact him on ext 2716; mjp26@le.ac.uk

• **More People news in Bulletin Supplement.**



Jill Hammersley swam 2500m (100 lengths of a 25m pool) on 23 March - from 8pm to 10.55pm- for the NCH Children's Charity and made approximately £200.

She said: "It was very hard and I suffered badly from cramp but they wouldn't let me give in and I am so pleased I managed to complete it. "Although I didn't get as many sponsors as I would have liked - the opportunity is still there if anyone would like to make a contribution."

*** To contribute, contact Jill in Engineering on ext 2559**

WHAT'S THE MORAL: The Rt Revd Tim Stevens, Bishop of Leicester, gave an inspiring talk to a packed lecture theatre at the University. The lecture, 'Religion: the root of all evil or moral guide?' was this year's Alumni Association & Haldane Society Annual Lecture on 8 March 2006



Captions for Photostop

1. Ever wondered how astronauts feel when they are weightless?

(3 images) A team of Scientists from the University of Leicester experienced zero-gravity last year. Daniel Brandt, Jim Aldcroft, Keith Sprake and Richard Branch - fresh from sitting their physics finals - joined 28 other teams from around Europe on the Airbus A300 over the Mediterranean.

2. Paradise Lost - Leicester Biologist Sounds Alarm Bell over Disappearance of Site of International Importance

Dr David Harper, of the University of Leicester Department of Biology, addressed the Fourth World Water Forum in Mexico City. His session was coordinated by the U.N. Environmental Program and UNESCO-International Hydrology Program (IHP). Dr Harper highlighted how Lake Naivasha,

Kenya's second largest lake, has shrunk to half its original size and its water level has dropped three metres. Vital wetlands, he said, are degraded beyond recognition.

3. A View from the Edge of the Universe

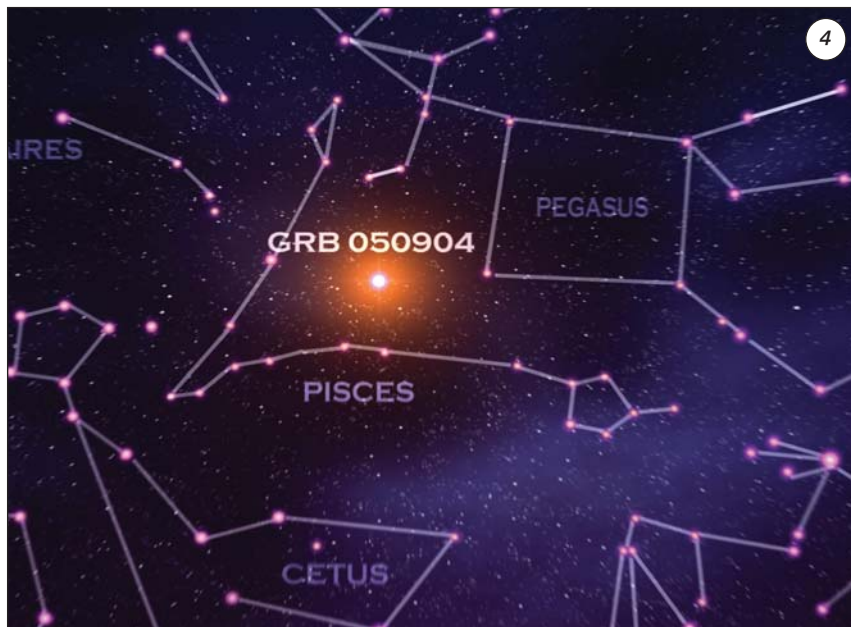
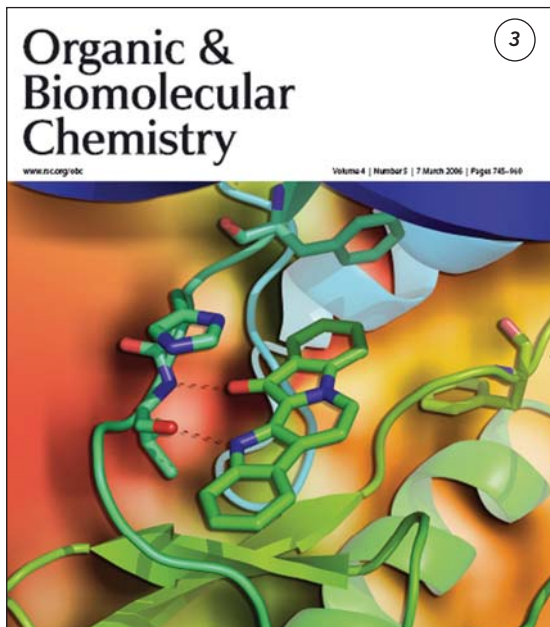
Scientists from the University of Leicester were part of a team that recorded the most distant star ever seen. GRB050904 was discovered by the Swift satellite on 2005 September 4.

4. University scientist published in international chemistry journal

This picture is taken from the front cover of the journal, *Organic and Biomolecular Chemistry* and shows an inhibitor molecule in the active site of the enzyme CDK4. The current issue of this journal contains a paper by Dr Paul Jenkins of the Chemistry Department and his collaborators in which results on the discovery of new, non-toxic inhibitors of CDK4 are reported.



Parabolic flight images: ESA/Anneke Le Floch.



Captions for photostop on page 11

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Design: AVS Graphics

Photos: AVS Photography
Print: AVS Print
Small advertisements for members of the University are carried if space permits. Please send advertisements to Press and Publications Office.

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Address: University of Leicester,
University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH
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