



UCLNEWS

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Dr Ilse Vickers

FP6 success for UCL

UCL is a major beneficiary of the sixth EU Framework Programme

The €17 billion EU Framework Programme Six for the period 2003–2006, launched in December 2002, has generated several major awards for UCL in a range of programmes such as Integrated Projects, Networks of Excellence, Scientific Targeted Research Projects (STREP) and the Marie Curie mobility actions.

Dr Ilse Vickers, Director of Research Europe and architect of UCL's success in previous programmes, has been instrumental in positioning UCL for FP6. Using her vast experience of European funding and extensive network of contacts in Brussels, Dr Vickers developed a highly focused and planned effort to advise and prepare senior management on the strategic and financial implications of FP6.

Dr Vickers explains: "Planning the early stages of FP6 has required working on many different levels – strategic, technical, administrative – and involving UCL, Universities UK and the DTI OST as well as the European Commission and European Parliament. However, what is important and pleasing is that these efforts have met with success." Of the 290 proposals submitted by UCL in the first year, the Commission has already selected more than 90 projects for funding with many other proposals still waiting to be evaluated.

One of the major benefactors from the many successful proposals is Euro-limpacs, an Integrated Project to be coordinated by

UCL's Environmental Change Research Centre (ECRC), based in the Department of Geography. One of the first large Integrated Projects funded under FP6, the project has a budget of €12.5 million and includes 37 partners from 17 European countries, plus Canada and Russia, and is concerned with how climate change might alter the structure and functioning of freshwater ecosystems in the future.

Professor Rick Battarbee, the ECRC's director, explains: "Climate change associated with greenhouse gas pollution is probably already upon us, and the kind of climate change expected over the next few decades may take us far beyond the range of climate variability we have experienced naturally in the past. In this context nothing is safe, the goal posts for our environment are well and truly moving. Lake, stream and wetland ecosystems are particularly at risk."

A major attribute of the project will be its focus on both the impact of climate directly and on indirect impacts, especially those resulting from interactions between climate change, pollution and land-use. Key ECRC Euro-limpacs staff include Dr Simon Patrick who will act as project coordinator, Dr Martin Kernan who will coordinate the science programme and Dr Heather Binney who will oversee the complementary training programme.

Utilising specially allocated FP6 funds UCL has appointed a project manager and finance manager dedicated to the Euro-limpacs project. By managing Euro-limpacs from UCL's European Office, the project will benefit from the team's considerable experience and knowledge. It is also hoped that the lessons learnt from this project can be applied to future integrated projects coordinated at UCL.

A series of FP6 workshops preparing UCL for the third and final calls for proposals will be announced shortly. The European Commission is already starting to discuss FP7 and it is rumoured that it will be even bigger and more ambitious than its predecessors. Dr Vickers comments: "We are involved in these discussions from the start and every effort is being made to protect the interests of the universities in the UK."

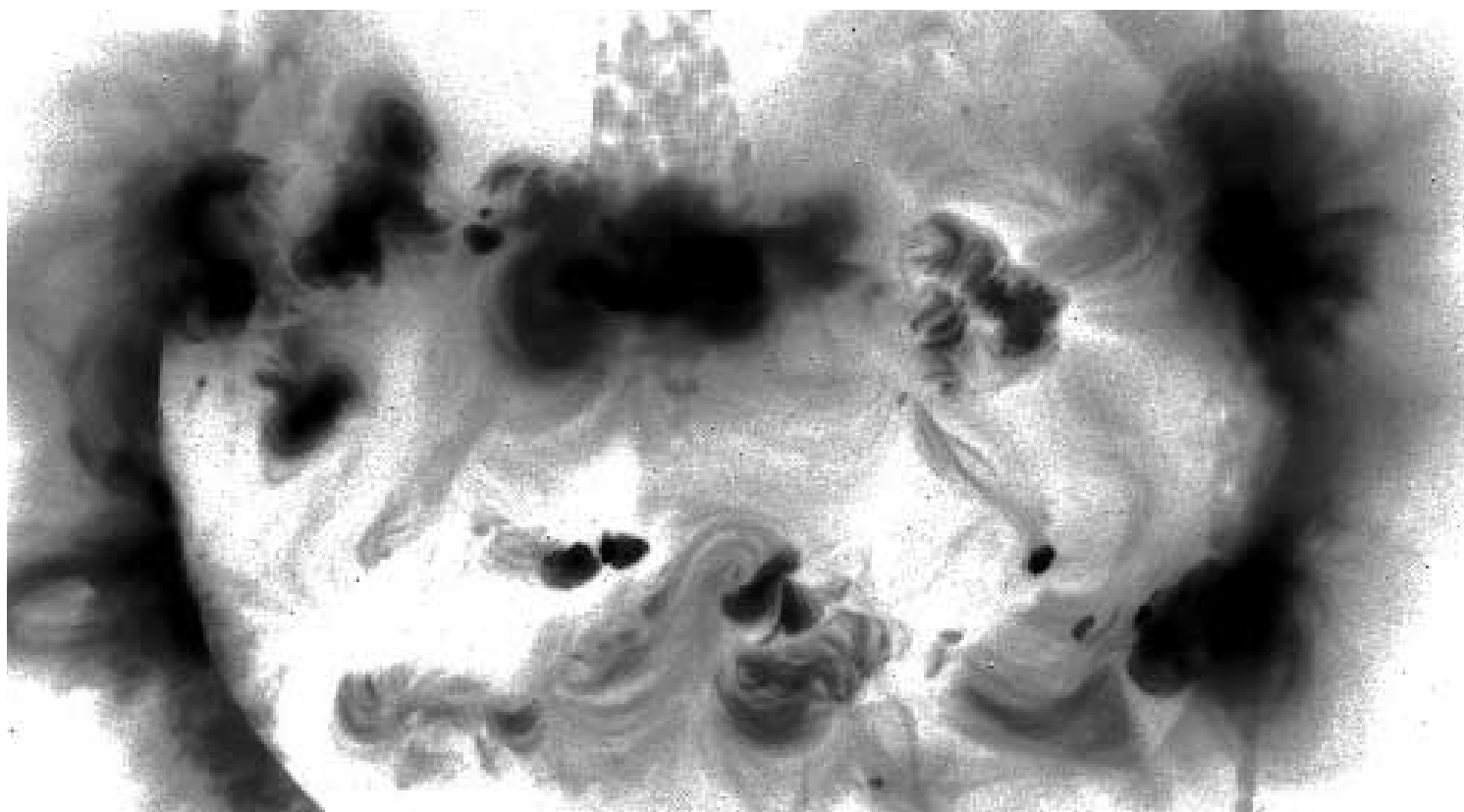
For a link to more information on Euro-limpacs or FP6, see the UCL Newslink site at www.ucl.ac.uk/news

UCL students bring Christmas cheer to Camden's elderly

UCL student volunteers took time out of their studies this Christmas to organise a party for a group of senior citizens in Camden. Coordinated by UCL's Voluntary Services Unit (VSU), the party was attended by four local community groups, who were treated to a festive feast, presents, and a performance by UCL Union's Musical Society.

The team of 19 student volunteers managed to fit planning, organising and fundraising for the event around their busy end-of-term schedules. The event brought together two generations that seldom meet and helped alleviate the isolation felt by many elderly people over the festive period. "This is a highly rewarding experience particularly due to the sense of achievement involved in helping others," said event co-leader Ms Reema Rehman (Economics 3).

Mr John Braime, Voluntary Services Coordinator at UCL Union, added: "The team should be very proud of what they've achieved. They did all of the planning, organising and fundraising in their limited spare time, and have made a real difference to the local community."



The Sun as seen in x-rays, observed by the Yohkoh spacecraft. The darkest regions are the source of solar flares. Large loops can join these regions, which have now shown indications of flaring as well



Dr Craig Ritchie

UCL physicist wins Leverhulme Prize

Dr Louise Harra, of UCL's Mullard Space Science Laboratory (MSSL), has been awarded one of the Philip Leverhulme Prizes 2003. The awards recognise young scholars of substantial distinction and promise.

One of five young scientists to receive an award in the Astronomy & Astrophysics category, Dr Harra's research focuses on solar physics and has used observations from space satellites to shed new light on the Sun's outer atmosphere, or corona.

Dr Harra and the other prize-winners in the category presented their research to the Royal Astronomical Society on 9 January 2004. Her presentation 'Solar Flares and Coronal Mass Ejections' discussed the impact that future instrumentation will have on our understanding of the dramatic explosions on the Sun, from confined, smaller scale flares, to more global phenomena such as coronal waves.

"Flaring normally occurs on the Sun related to bright active regions. Active regions are regions on the Sun with a very strong magnetic field that is able to confine high temperature gas. When these magnetic flux tubes are moved around, they can bash against

each other, causing an explosion – a solar flare," says Dr Harra. "These flares produce as much energy as 10 million volcanoes, and can throw gas towards the Earth. Large flares were produced from active regions late last year, creating beautiful aurora seen as far south as London. My research examines flares seen outside active regions on the Sun that could be larger in spatial size."

In November 2003, *The Astrophysical Journal* published a report by Dr Harra, Dr Sarah Matthews and Dr Lidia Van Driel-Gesztelyi (MSSL) that presented – for the first time – observations of flaring behaviour in a 'transequatorial loop' on the Sun. These loops are huge with a factor at least five times longer than normal flaring loops on the Sun. "These observations have huge implications in the way we comprehend the solar cycle and the global reconstruction of the Sun's magnetic field after such an event," explains Dr Harra. "We observed soft x-rays of the loop connecting the Southern and Northern hemispheres over a two-day period, and proved this phenomena's importance in terms of their energy content."

Slade fundraiser raises £10,000

A fundraising event in memory of UCL alumni and staff member Miss Margaret Muller raised £10,000 for a hardship bursary on 15 December 2003. Miss Muller, from Virginia, USA, completed an MFA programme in June 2001. She also worked as a studio assistant for the UCL Slade School of Fine Art's Summer School and at Saturday classes during the 2002–2003 academic year. In February 2003, she was attacked while jogging in Victoria Park, Hackney Wick, and sadly died from her injuries.

Margaret had a strong sense of loyalty to the Slade – she worked closely with a number of tutors and made a positive contribution to the life of the school. The event successfully raised enough funds to establish a bursary in her

memory. The £500 award will be donated annually to a Slade student who is suffering financial hardship. The American Embassy has pledged to fund the bursary for the first two years and it is likely that the bursary will be awarded to an international student, as was Miss Muller.

Funds were raised from the sale of donated works of art from Slade staff and colleagues of Margaret, and more than 200 people attended the event. "We were really impressed with the turn-out and delighted that people bought so many works of art to help fund this very appropriate and worthwhile cause," said Professor John Aiken, Director of the Slade.

From Athlete's Foot to Alzheimer's

A UCL scientist, in collaboration with colleagues at Harvard and Melbourne universities, has made promising advances in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease through the application of a drug normally used to treat Athlete's Foot. Dr Craig Ritchie, from UCL's Department of Psychiatry & Behavioural Sciences, led the study, which was supported by Prana Biotechnology Ltd. The findings have been published in the current edition of the journal *Archives of Neurology*.

The study examined the effectiveness of the drug Clotrimazole in slowing the progression of cognitive decline in a group of 36 participants with moderate to severe Alzheimer's. Eighteen participants were administered Prana's PBT-1 (Clotrimazole), while the others were prescribed placebos. PBT-1 has antibacterial and antifungal properties, but also binds metals. In Alzheimer's, amyloid plaques (protein deposits), disable and kill nerves in the brain. These deposits need zinc in order to clump together. When taken as a pill, PBT-1 can enter the brain, removing any zinc that is bound to amyloids, and absorbs any dangerous, excess free zinc.

Alzheimer's disease is assessed on a scale of 0 to 70, with lower scores indicating a healthy adult. Untreated patients with mild to moderate symptoms could expect a rise in score of between 6 and 12 points over a year. During the study, those prescribed PBT-1 showed an average rise in score of 1.5 points over a 24-week period. Those assigned to placebo saw an average increase of score of 8.9 points over the same period, a difference of 7.4 points. A panel from the Food & Drug Administration in the US deemed a difference of 4 points to be clinically significant.

"The results of this trial have been very encouraging to a clinician. Our findings have led to the development by Prana of new, possibly more effective drugs that hit the same target as Clotrimazole," says Dr Ritchie. "UCL plans to be involved in further testing of the principal using Clotrimazole in a larger, UK multi-centre study which is now seeking public funding."

Campus Questionnaire



Professor Rick Battarbee (Geography 1968) is Director of UCL's Environmental Change Research Centre (ECRC)

What is your greatest extravagance? My grand piano

With which historical figure do you most identify? Very hard – it's not quite the same, but I have an admiration for Nero who reportedly fell out of his chariot during a race at Olympia, but nevertheless got up and declared himself the winner. Lessons there!

What was your most memorable experience at UCL? In 1991 being at the receiving end of Derek Roberts' legendary decision-making speed as the resources to set up the ECRC were agreed in approximately five minutes

What is your claim to fame? Playing rugby against Willie-John McBride, a friendly fortunately!

Where would you most like to live? In our Bloomsbury flat, but with an escape route to the Dales

What is the biggest threat facing humanity? Racial and religious intolerance

What could you not live without? My piano

Why did you choose to study at UCL? Advice from my older brother who was at Birmingham at the time...

What is the last book you read? Peter Carey's *The True History of the Kelly Gang*

What is your greatest fear? Rheumatic fingers

What characteristic do you find most attractive in other people? Selflessness, integrity and good humour

What was your favourite part of UCL? As a student, the Union bar and the graffiti wall in the Foster Court locker room, sadly not preserved

What is the most important lesson life has taught you? Patience

How would your friends describe you in three words? Too laid back

What is your idea of perfect happiness? A relaxing pint and a pickled egg in a Wharfedale pub after a gentle amble over the moors with my wife

What single thing would most improve your life? A new back

What do you consider to be your greatest achievement? Helping to convince Mrs Thatcher's government of the need to take acid rain seriously

Whom at UCL most influenced you? Probably back in 1965 my first-year undergraduate tutor Eric Brown for writing kind words on my first ever tutorial essay – I'm still trying to live up to them!

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself? Avoidance of boring jobs

What is your favourite pastime? Trying to persuade my piano to make half-decent sounds

What was your most embarrassing moment at UCL? Being presented with a record of 'Freddy, the oldest swinger in town' by a group of first year undergraduates when I still thought I was one of them – the penalty of being bald in your 20s

What was the last CD you listened to? Simon and Garfunkel's greatest hits (but that's not a true reflection of my musical tastes)

What other career would you like to have had? Organist and director of music at an English cathedral

What would you most like to be doing ten years from now? Less

Provost visits Beijing to launch new centre



UCL's Provost & President, Professor Malcolm Grant with the Executive Vice-President of Peking University, Professor Min Weifang

Professor Malcolm Grant, UCL's Provost & President, led a UCL delegation to Peking University, Beijing, in December 2003 to officially launch the new International Centre for Chinese Heritage & Archaeology, which will have offices and activities in both institutions. As the first such venture between the UK and China, the centre is the latest development in a long and fruitful relationship between UCL and Chinese universities.

"The centre will create a genuine and meaningful partnership between two of the most important archaeological institutes in the world. Outside organisations will be welcomed to help the centre develop specialist knowledge about China's past and to safeguard China's cultural heritage," said Professor Peter Ucko, Director of UCL's Institute of Archaeology.

The new centre aims to develop and promote new ideas and technologies relating to Chinese archaeology and heritage, with particular focus on the most appropriate methods of excavation, conservation and management of archaeological sites. It will raise public awareness of China's rich heritage, and make this material

more accessible. The centre's training and research will concentrate on areas that are underdeveloped in China, particularly conservation, public archaeology, archaeobotany and archaeometallurgy. In addition, a new Senior Lectureship in Chinese Archaeology has been established at UCL.

A delegation of the presidents of seven of China's top universities and Chinese Ministry of Education Officials recently visited UCL, and were joined by British Council advisors and journalists from all over China.

Professor David Norse, UCL's Pro-Provost for China, explained: "The visit by the Chinese university presidents was a high-level exchange that forms part of a programme of collaboration in higher education with China, which is supported by the Chinese Ministry of Education, the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the British Council. The purpose of this year's visit was to strengthen the numerous relationships UCL has already established with Chinese institutions, and to provide opportunities for building new ones."

Voice your opinions

With a view to promoting UCL as positively and accurately as possible to the outside world, Purba Choudhury, Deputy Director of Corporate Relations, is seeking staff and students' views about UCL. She says: "It is vital for me to hear your opinions to make sure that UCL's external communications strategy reflects the real UCL and is not based on 'spin' or wishful thinking."

UCL students and staff are encouraged to complete, anonymously, a short questionnaire online, answering questions such as 'what do you think is unique about UCL?' and 'which five universities are UCL's main competitors?'

In addition to the online questionnaire, student and staff views will be sought through a series of meetings. These are taking place in the Old Refectory: **10:30am-12 on 26 February, 15, 17 March and 3:30-5pm on 23 February and 19 March.** Everyone is welcome and there is need to book – just turn up and voice your opinions!

The questionnaire is located at www.ucl.ac.uk/uclviews, the password is **mysay**.

Your news

Story suggestions for future issues of UCL News are welcome; the deadline for the next issue – to be published on 19 April 2004 – is 19 March 2004. Contact details and a link to guidelines on suggesting story ideas are provided on the back page

Sharing innovation and excellent practice in teaching and learning will be the focus of the next in a series of internal conferences at UCL

Promoting teaching and learning

The university's fourth internal conference 'Teaching & Learning at UCL: The Way Forward 2004' will take place on 31 March and 1 April 2004. Nicknamed TILT – Technology and Innovation in Teaching and Learning – it will be held in the Wilkins Building, the heart of UCL.

The event is perhaps the largest of its kind in the UK university sector. More than 50 staff will contribute papers and lead discussions as well as presenting demonstrations and posters.

Professor Michael Worton, Vice-Provost for Teaching & Learning, said: "UCL rightly prides itself on the quality of student learning in its research-led environment. Countless academics are developing inventive and creative ways of enhancing the student learning experience. Yet the size of UCL and the diversity of its disciplines mean that staff may be unaware of their colleagues' innovations in teaching and learning. The conference is a significant forum for sharing such experience."

Feedback since the first conference in 1998 confirms that participants find them worthwhile. Professor Roland Rosner, Director of UCL's Education & Information Support Division (EISD), which is organising the event, said: "These events are influential. For example, the 2002 conference stimulated considerable interest in WebCT, an online learning and resource tool. In response, EISD organised a major seminar on this topic and a case was then made to purchase a UCL-wide site licence for the product. Some 2,000 students are now using WebCT as part of their studies."

The event's wide-ranging programme includes, but is not confined to, approaches that exploit communications and information technologies. Topics addressed will range from computer-aided assessment to the role of peer-tutoring in enabling and widening access and from online student appraisal of teaching to the challenges of introducing a BSc programme in Medical Humanities.

Conference exhibits will include 'Digging Your Own Grave: Generic Skills from an Archaeological Simulation' and 'Sculpture Through a Keyboard'.

Some of the presentations by academics will highlight teaching practices resulting from collaborative projects developed through secondments to EISD's Education & Professional Development department.

Participation in the conference is free but staff will be required to register.

For a link to the full programme and online registration, see the UCL Newslink site at www.ucl.ac.uk/news

From left: Professor Trish Greenhalgh, Department of Primary Care & Population Science; Dr Muki Haklay, Department of Geomatic Engineering; Ms Gerdi Quist and Ms Katheryn Ronnau-Bradbeer, Department of Dutch; Mrs Vanda Broughton, School of Library, Archive & Information Studies and Dr Vincent Matthews, Department of Library Services, Education & Information Support Division; Dr Nick Merriman, UCL Museums and Collections

Continence technology lab now complete



Dr Alan Cottenden

A £109,000 grant from the Dunhill Medical Trust has enabled the Incontinence Technology Group, led by Dr Alan Cottenden (Medical Physics & Bioengineering), to fully equip their Continence Technology Laboratory, following an earlier grant for £75,000 from the Clothworkers' Foundation.

Some of the equipment will be installed in a specially designed room which enables experiments to be done under controlled temperature, humidity and air flow conditions. The room was upgraded in 2001 using money raised through the UCL Friends Programme and this latest award completes the project.

The majority of the group's work focuses on incontinence pads and appliances. Dr Cottenden explains: "We produce evaluation reports to help purchasers make informed choices, and identify the failings of existing products. We also study the materials used

in products; a major current effort is to build mathematical models to describe how urine, skin and absorbent materials interact. A better understanding should yield more effective products."

The Incontinence Technology Group already hold around 20 patents and have successfully designed their own products. Their most successful, Kylie Pants – washable absorbent underwear for lightly incontinent men, women and children – has been marketed in 15 countries. The new equipment will help further research and development into a problem which is shared by around 6% of the adult population and more than half of nursing home residents.

Anglo-American rhetoric

Professor Kathleen Burk (History) continues her series of Gresham College lectures this month with 'What, then, is the American, this new man?'. The lecture explores nineteenth century Britain's fascination with the United States through the travel writings of such distinguished authors as Dickens and Trollope.

The lecture takes place on Wednesday 12 February and is followed on 2 March by 'Anglo-American marital relations 1870–1945' – a look at the growth in transatlantic marriages in the latter part of the nineteenth century and during the Second World War. 'Britain, America and the Two World Wars' takes place on 24 March and discusses the shift of power from Britain to America between 1914 and 1945.

Gresham College was established in the City of London in 1597 to provide free public lectures which both challenge and stimulate debate. Professor Burk was appointed Gresham Professor of Rhetoric in September 2003 and will hold the post until 2006. All lectures are held at Barnard's Inn Hall, High Holborn at 6pm.

For a link to more information on Gresham College, see the UCL Newslink at www.ucl.ac.uk/news

New biofilm journal launched

A new international journal – *Biofilms* – has been launched by academics from UCL's Eastman Dental Institute and Montana State University (MSU), Bozeman, USA. Edited by the institute's Professor Michael Wilson and Professor William Costerton (MSU), the journal's mission is to act as a forum for the publication of papers relevant to biofilms.

Biofilms are responsible for the most prevalent infections of man – dental caries and periodontal diseases – as well as for infections of the prosthetic and medical devices that are increasingly being used in medical and surgical procedures. They are also blamed for a range of problems of great economic importance such as the blockage of oil and water pipelines, the corrosion of boats and marine structures and interference with heat exchange processes.

The areas of human activity in which biofilms play an important role are many and varied and include medicine, engineering, bioremediation, the pharmaceutical industry, water distribution and treatment, marine biology, dentistry and the food industry. "With such diversity, it is difficult for biofilm researchers to keep up to date with advances in the field," explains Professor Wilson. "The aim of the journal is to provide a much needed single forum for the publication of articles relevant to biofilms."



Widening Participation

A team from the department of Primary Care & Population Science led by Professor Trish Greenhalgh together with Mr Kieran Seyan and Dr Petra Boynton, will present a focus study of perceptions of university in school pupils from non-traditional backgrounds.

Results showed that pupils from working class backgrounds were preoccupied by material concerns whereas middle class pupils were internally motivated and talked more in terms of having fun, developing their potential and gaining a rewarding job.

An interpretation of these findings will be presented that draws on the Marxist theoretical perspective developed by Paul Willis in *Learning to Labour*, and which suggests implications for UCL's Widening Participation programme.

Implementing Moodle

Using SCILTA funds, the Department of Geomatic Engineering implemented a departmental level Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to assist in the running of courses. The system, which was implemented in just two months and is now being successfully used across the whole department, is based on an Open Source application called Moodle. The presentation, by Dr Muki Haklay (Department of Geomatic Engineering) will discuss the pros and cons of Moodle implementation.

Virtual Dutch

Ms Kathryn Ronnau-Bradbeer and Ms Gerdi Quist from the Department of Dutch will demonstrate the 'Virtual Department of Dutch'. Developed over the past three years in conjunction with the universities of Cambridge, Hull and Sheffield the virtual department has encouraged collaborative teaching projects using video conferencing and WebCT, developed several electronic courses and published a number of electronic self-study packs on the internet. The electronic self-study packs and electronic course, 'Critical Language Awareness' will be showcased at the conference together with a paper.

Information skills and WebCT

Dr Vincent Matthews (Department of Library Services, Education & Information Support Division) and Mrs Vanda Broughton (School of Library, Archive & Information Studies) will describe work done during 2003 thanks to a grant from ESCILTA to a UCL multi-departmental project team. This has produced a WebCT module designed to enhance information skills, which is potentially available for use by all who study at UCL. The presentation will include a guided tour of the module and its main features along with an account of its current and anticipated usage in the School of Library, Archive & Information Studies course 'Information Sources and How to Use Them'.

Museums and collections as teaching tools

Dr Nick Merriman (UCL Museums and Collections) will discuss using UCL's museums and collections as a teaching resource. The presentation will highlight the opportunities available to use UCL's four museums and eleven collections totalling c750,000 objects and specimens for interdisciplinary teaching and learning. Attention will be drawn to existing programmes which use the collections, including direct hands-on access to objects, use of prepared loan boxes, development of exhibitions and the increasing provision of digital information. It is suggested that those at UCL involved with teaching and learning will be able to use these collections in highly creative ways in future.

UCL Annual Report

A comprehensive overview of UCL's work, the **Annual Report for 2002/2003** has been published online, and can be viewed at www.ucl.ac.uk

People



Professor John Collinge

New Year's Honours were awarded to four members of staff: **Professor John Collinge** (Neurology), CBE for services to medical research; **Professor Robert Souhami** (Oncology), CBE for services to medicine; **Dr Margaret Flora Spittle** (Oncology), OBE for services to medicine; and **Dr Beatrix Wonke** (Haematology), OBE for services to medicine



Professor Robert Souhami

Professor Peter Cook (Bartlett School) and **Professor David Morley** (Institute of Child Health) – shortlisted in the poll of Britain's 50 wisest people, compiled by *Saga Magazine*



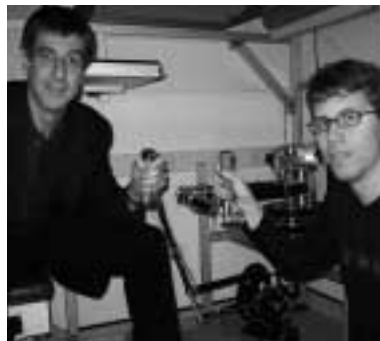
Mr Michael Bamforth

Mr Michael Bamforth (Archaeology 1), 'Top A-level student' for the best result in the UK in the GCE Advanced Archaeology examination 2003. The Society of Antiquaries of London awarded Mr Bamforth a cheque for £500

Mr Sami Abouzahr (History 3) – 'Joint First Prize', Royal Historical Society/History Today Undergraduate Dissertation of the Year competition

UCL regrets to announce the death of: **Professor Robin Winter**, Pre-Clinical Studies (1970); Intercalated BSc (Hons) (1971); MBBS (1974), Department of Medicine; Reader in Clinical Genetics & Fetal Medicine (1992–1994), Institute of Child Health; Professor of Clinical Genetics & Dysmorphology (1994–2004), Institute of Child Health

In the News



Dr Konrad Körding and Dr Daniel Wolpert



Dr Andrew Coates



Professor Mike Horton



Professor Benjamin Heydecker

UCL makes headlines all year round. Here are a few recent highlights; for much more see 'UCL in the News' at www.ucl.ac.uk/news

Corrections and clarifications

"In a column headed 'Quit while you're ahead', (Comment), December 5, we incorrectly asserted that University College London had only '2% ethnic minorities'. In fact, 33% of the student population comes from ethnic minority groups, making the UCL student body one of the more diverse in terms of ethnicity."

The Guardian, 10 December 2003

It's a numbers game

"Anyone for Bayesian integration in sensorimotor learning? That's tennis, in case you're not an advanced mathematician. If you are an advanced mathematician, you would be able to explain how tennis players unconsciously follow the 1763 theorem of the Reverend Thomas Bayes, whose rules of probability predict that the likelihood of an event occurring depends on what happens before it. Or at least that's how Dr Konrad Körding and Dr Daniel Wolpert (Neurology) tell it in the latest issue of *Nature*. But we still don't think they've quite solved the riddle of Tim Henman."

The Independent, 15 January 2004

The \$billion question

"The prospect of a manned mission to Mars is one of the most enticing in space exploration. While robots such as NASA's Spirit Rover will transform understanding of the planet over the coming decade, and could reveal whether it has ever harboured life, most experts agree that scientific experiments conducted by astronauts would be even more valuable. It is highly unlikely, however, that President Bush's speech will bring a human landing on Mars very much closer. The worry is that the emphasis President Bush has placed on manned missions will divert critical funds from robotic probes. 'That would be a tragedy, as we have only scratched the surface of exploring the Solar System with robots,' said Dr Andrew Coates (Space & Climate Physics)."

The Times, 10 January 2004

A small matter of health

"Regulations are needed to ensure that the products of industrial nanotechnology do not pose unexpected risks to human health, British scientists say. Professor Mike Horton (Rayne Institute) Co-director of the London Centre for Nanotechnology, said that the problem did not lie with nano-particles designed for medical use, as these have to undergo the same toxicology test as any new drug. Companies that are using nano-particles for products as diverse as sunscreens, tennis rackets and strengthened steel cables, however, do not have to conduct any special toxicity assessments. 'If we're manufacturing thousands of nanotubes a year, whatever you do there is going to be significant loss,' Professor Horton said. 'There could be issues there.'"

The Times, 9 January 2004

Caught out on camera

"The Association of British Drivers and other groups profess to be interested in road safety, and cite a levelling-off of the year-on-year reduction in fatalities as evidence that speed cameras do not work. According to the Department of Transport, however, they do; its figures for 2002-2003 show a 35% reduction in death or injuries where cameras have been introduced. The anti-camera lobby counters that this is coincidence and that accidents are happening elsewhere, an argument refuted by Professor Benjamin Heydecker (Centre for Transport Studies). 'Our studies show that cameras work to reduce death and serious injuries. The anti-camera groups select statistics that fit their arguments.'"

The Guardian, 14 January 2004

Links between health and wealth in old age revealed

The initial findings of a pioneering study led by researchers from UCL's International Centre for Health and Society (ICHS), were revealed in December 2003. The project is the first-ever comprehensive study into the effects of social, economic, psychological and health factors on the ageing process amongst Europeans.

The English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) – a collaborative study by researchers from UCL, the Institute of Fiscal Studies, the National Centre for Social Research and the University of Cambridge – has monitored the health of 12,000 participants aged 50 and over for a period of 20 years. The study will now continue with interviews at two-year intervals, in order to track participants as they grow older.

The findings reveal that the levels of illnesses, such as heart disease, experienced by manual workers in their fifties, are equivalent to those experienced by managers and professionals in their seventies. Director of the ICHS Professor Sir Michael Marmot, who leads the study, said: "The study is tackling one of the

most important questions currently facing society: how do we provide for an ageing population? By investigating the relationships between health, economic position and social participation as people age, we will be able to answer that question in a complete way, taking into account how older people live today, what inequalities exist in old age and what is necessary for a good lifestyle."



Professor Sir Michael Marmot

Lord Chancellor invokes spirit of Bentham

In December 2003 Lord Falconer, the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, gave a speech, organised by UCL's Constitution Unit, on the government's continuing programme of constitutional reform.

The Lord Chancellor began his speech by praising the university's spiritual founder, Jeremy Bentham: "Today Bentham is little read and little understood beyond a caricature of the cold, unfeeling utilitarian. We often fail to remember that his doctrine of utilitarianism was, in fact, a radical and progressive philosophy which emerged from the impatient optimism of the European Enlightenment."

Lord Falconer acknowledged Bentham's commitment to education for all and his desire for constitutional reform: "It was his belief that Britain's archaic constitutional and legal arrangements were an affront to rational government and a cloak for injustice which led him to become such an intellectual pioneer of reform." He stated that his new government department, the Department of Constitutional Affairs, "is committed to similar values of openness, rationalism, and indeed radicalism".

UCL's Constitution Unit focuses on the design, implementation and consequences of constitutional reform in the UK. Noting that a government priority since coming to power in 1997 had been devolution, Lord Falconer praised the unit's contribution of "forthright and powerful research" which has "transformed the nature of public debate about the constitution".

The speech, which is the first in a series, gave an overview of the government's plans for constitutional reform based around the three values of 'credibility and effectiveness', 'democracy and public engagement' and 'trust and accountability'. Speeches later in the year will deal with issues of freedom of information, human rights and voting.

For a link to more information on the Constitution Unit, see the UCL Newslink site at www.ucl.ac.uk/news

Pioneering students honoured



Members of the Satsuma clan with Pro-Provost Philip Treleaven at UCL's Japan monument

To commemorate the arrival of 14 Japanese students of the Satsuma clan in 1865, a group of the same clan followed their ancestors' footsteps by paying a visit to UCL in December 2003.

The students were noblemen who had to endure a treacherous voyage to the UK. When they arrived, UCL was the only university in England in which both teaching and research were open to all races and religions, and to people of all social classes, regardless of their political leanings. The students registered for

Professor Alexander Williamson's classes in analytical chemistry, and the academic also took them into his home. The students were keen to advance the technological capabilities of their nation, and returned to play key roles in the development of modern Japan. UCL's first students from Japan had arrived two years earlier, and the visit also marked the 140th anniversary of their enrolment.

Professor Izumi Haraguchi from the University of Kagoshima is a Satsuma clan member and was amongst the visitors to UCL.

He said: "Satsuma people wanted to come to Great Britain and learn everything about western civilisation and some managed to, and on their return the Satsuma clan played a part in the civilisation and modernisation of Japan. We learnt law and engineering mostly from Great Britain. This is a very memorable visit – the 140th anniversary of course – but with the present day's international problems, this is a great chance to think about world peace. We are very proud of our ancestors who studied at UCL, so many of our clan want to visit this very place."

Environment Institute established to further research



Dana Pridie-Sale

A new institute designed to promote and facilitate research into the environment is being established at UCL. The Environment Institute recognises the increasing importance of environmentally related research by the UCL community and will capitalise on the university's considerable expertise in the area.

Under the direction of Professor Richard Munton (Geography), the institute will encourage and support networks of staff and doctoral students wishing to develop agendas that cut across disciplinary interests. Alongside these initiatives it will support efforts to attract additional funding for research. A further and

equally important function of the institute is to raise the profile of UCL research and expertise beyond the university to policy makers and those in both private and voluntary sectors.

There are no plans at present to develop a formal teaching capacity although when refurbished space becomes available in the Pearson Building in January 2006, it is planned to house visiting scholars and to have a dedicated space for seminars, meetings and workshops.

The institute will develop a database of UCL environmental expertise from the natural and engineering sciences, the social and built

environment, medical sciences and the humanities. The website, which is under construction, will keep interested parties up to date on news of lectures, meetings and workshops, the first of which will be held on 24 March 2004. The seminar, chaired by Professor Julian Hunt, will be a forum for the exchange of information about research and possible new initiatives in the study of the urban environment.

For further information on the institute or to register for the database contact Dana Pridie-Sale (x25534; ucfadpr@ucl.ac.uk)

Alumni Matter: Georgina Butler

Laws 1968

One of a handful of women to achieve a high rank in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Georgina was appointed HM Ambassador at San Jose, Costa Rica, in 2002

In a small post, with a small budget, Georgina has to find unusual ways to make her presence felt: "Normally, you celebrate your national day – you send out the invitations to ministers and so on, we have the usual drinks and snacks – no Ferrero Roche, though, they would melt in Costa Rica. But it's terribly boring and to my mind it's a complete waste of time. So, early on I asked the British community if they wanted something to make grand of. Last year it was the Jubilee. We put on a big event and raised \$10,000 for charity, when we were actually just doing it for people to enjoy themselves and have a great time. It was wonderful; that's the sort of thing you've got to involve the British community with so you've actually got more resources to pull on."

Her ingenuity, however, didn't stop with Jubilee celebrations: "In the south, there is a wonderful place called Bahia Drake, 'Drake's Bay', because Sir Francis Drake put in there on his round-the-world voyage in 1579. Because of this connection with Britain, I wanted to do something special. I managed to persuade a Royal Fleet Auxiliary Black Rover that was in the Pacific to visit there for a weekend. We got the Ombudsman of Costa Rica and the Minister for

Science & Technology to come down. We had a big party with the community on the beach. We had such a wild time; the guys on the boat agreed to re-enact Drake's landing and so we borrowed some great costumes from the national theatre. We organised a treasure hunt on the beach, and had a chest filled with gold bars, beads and swords for the children, and arranged boats out to the ship and back. Things like that are terrific to do and I told them all they needed to know about the great British hero Sir Francis Drake and that he wasn't a pirate, as the Spanish had told them."

Georgina uses every opportunity available, however unorthodox, to raise the embassy's profile: "I go out horse-riding at something called a tope, in San Jose. About 3,000 horses parade through the centre of town, so you know that there will be a television camera every hundred yards. I dress up in a great big red Stetson and put on my Union Jack t-shirt, jeans and my red cowboy boots. You're sure to get coverage dressed like that. I can make all the fancy speeches I like, on the economy, or on Iraq, but the thing that people remember is your part in one of their prize events of the year.

In November I went to open an artificial reef they've built off the Nicoya Peninsula. The idea is to attract tropical fish back to this particular cove and make it a tourist destination. We decided to open the reef by me diving down and placing a marble plaque on it, rather than a hat-and-glove job. It's hard to find innovative ways of attracting attention without spending too much money."

Georgina's new husband walks into the room, to usher the ambassador on to their next appointment. "Anyway, this is the best thing I found in Costa Rica," she says with a glint in her eye. "Now you can't believe anything she's told you," he retorts.



This article first appeared in the Autumn 2003 issue of the alumni magazine **UCL People**. If you know of a former UCL student involved in interesting, exciting or unusual activities, please let us know. Contact details are on the back page

Private View

A series featuring artefacts in UCL's varied museums and collections



What Is It?

A jar of the uranium mineral cleveite, which is a variety of uraninite (UO₂) containing up to 10% Rare Earth Elements (REEs). It is the sample that was used in the experiment conducted by Sir William Ramsay in the 19th century when he discovered helium

How old is it?

The specimen was purchased by Sir William Ramsay in 1895 after he had heard that the American, William F. Hillebrand, had noticed an emission of gas thought to be nitrogen when uraninite was treated with acid

Where is it?

Department of Earth Sciences

How did it get there?

It was donated by Professor John Norman Collie, head of the Department of Chemistry from 1913–1928

What else is in the collection?

The Geology Collections contain a wealth of rocks, minerals and fossils, as well as important texts, prints and two original copies of one of the first geological maps of Great Britain to be produced

What makes it special?

This is the sample that Sir William Ramsay used to isolate helium. Following on from the experiment of Hillebrand, Ramsay treated the cleveite with acid, and obtained spectra for argon, nitrogen and another unidentified gas

Who uses it?

The collection as a whole is primarily a teaching and research resource for both staff and students of UCL, as well as the wider academic community. Local schools are also encouraged to make use of the resource through a loans box and the popular 'Mars in the classroom' pack

What's new?

A copy of Greenough's 1819 geological map of the British Isles was donated in November and will be available for viewing after conservation. The Johnston-Lavis collection database, together with digital images, will become available on the web in the next few months

How can I view it?

A small display on the cleveite specimen can be found in the corridor of the 1st floor of the South Wing, whilst the specimen itself can be viewed by appointment. The Rock Room is open to the general public on Wednesdays 12–2pm or by appointment. The Planetary Suite is open on the first and third Wednesday of each month, 12–1 pm. Contact Mr Danny Howard (x32403; geolcoll@ucl.ac.uk)

Shows and Exhibitions at UCL



Ethnographic Collection

Institute of Archaeology

Stories from the Stores

Exploring the Institute of Archaeology's artefacts through the themes of collecting, preserving, discovering and learning
– 31–34 Gordon Square;
9am–5pm, Monday to Friday

Bartlett School of Architecture Gallery

Work from visiting designers, artists and writers, as well as from the Bartlett School's own staff and students
– Wates House, 22 Gordon Street

Department of Earth Sciences

Infinite Possibilities: The Past, the Present and the Future of Earth Sciences at UCL
Drawing on UCL's Geological Sciences Collection
– Rock Room, South Wing; 1–2pm, Wednesdays; or by appointment

Department of Electronic & Electrical Engineering

Sir John Ambrose Fleming
On the centenary of the invention of the thermionic valve, which made radio and modern electronics possible, a tribute to UCL's first Professor of Electrical Engineering
– 7th Floor, Engineering Building

Ethnographic Collection

Fabric of Life: Materials & Culture

Examining the attitudes behind collecting artefacts at the turn of the 20th century, and how those attitudes have changed
– Department of Anthropology, Foster Court;
by appointment

The Galton Collection

Featuring Sir Francis Galton's pioneering work on fingerprint investigation, his studies of biometry and developing the field of eugenics
– Department of Biology, Darwin Building;
by appointment

Grant Museum of Zoology & Comparative Anatomy

A diverse natural history collection covering the whole of the animal kingdom, including cases packed full of skeletons, mounted animals and specimens preserved in fluid
– Department of Biology, Darwin Building;
1–5pm, Wednesdays and Fridays;
or by appointment

Only Connect: Opening UCL's Collections to the World

Highlighting outreach work by UCL's museums and collections, and the university's widening participation activities
– North Cloisters; until May 2004

UCL People

Photographs of UCL staff, students and alumni taken by Andy O'Connell for the university's publications
– Torrington Space, outside 1–19 Torrington Place

Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology

Housing an estimated 80,000 objects, making it one of the greatest collections of Egyptian and Sudanese archaeology in the world
– DMS Watson Building; 1–5pm, Tuesday to Friday, and 10am–1pm, Saturday;
or by appointment

Strang Print Room

Paper Cities: Topography & Imagination in Urban Europe c1490–1780

Featuring printed media depicting urban views across Europe from the Renaissance to the late 18th century
– South Cloisters; 1–5pm, Wednesday to Friday; until 26 March 2004

UCL is closed 8 April 2004–15 April 2004 inclusive. For further events information and contact details see Events at UCL Online: www.ucl.ac.uk



The Grant Museum



Strang Print Room

UCL NEWS Story suggestions for future issues of **UCL News** are welcome; the deadline for the next issue – to be published on 19 April 2004 – is 19 March 2004. For guidelines on suggesting story ideas for **UCL News** or the 'News' or 'Events' sections of UCL Online see 'Your News' at www.ucl.ac.uk/news

Distribution enquiries should be made to Marianne Miles, Communications Administrator (x09721; uclnews@ucl.ac.uk)

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