

STEPS



Alumni Magazine **Summer** 2007

Childhood obesity



Drought Dilemmas

Laddete Culture

Focus on Politics & International Relations

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Vice - Chancellor's foreword

Professor Paul W. Wellings



Welcome to this Summer 2007 edition of Steps magazine. I hope you enjoy reading about the University's most recent developments, research successes and college news.

We now send this magazine to over 55,000 alumni readers around the world, as well as 600 parents of current students who have signed up to our Family Programme. This represents by far the University's largest key audience and I am very aware of the importance of thorough communications with Lancaster's many graduates.

Over the last few months, the Alumni & Development Office has organised a considerable number of successful events with many graduates attending from different fields, age groups and countries.

In February, a networking evening was organised at the offices of the Moving Picture Company in London, for Lancaster graduates working in media, marketing and creative jobs. 80 came along on the night to reminisce and generate business contacts.

In March, we organised the first ever Lancaster Pub Night in London at the Cornerstore in Covent Garden. This was specifically aimed at alumni who had graduated in the last five years and was a knockout success. The pub overflowed with more than 250 Lancaster friends and its walls were adorned with old posters from the Sugarhouse and Film Society. It is intended that we will be holding the next Pub Night in Manchester later in the year.

Then in early April I travelled to Kuala Lumpur with Sir Chris Bonington, the Chancellor, and Chris Fancy, the Director of Alumni & Development. Here we hosted over 100 Malaysian Lancaster alumni for an evening dinner and presentations. Chris Fancy then flew on to meet alumni at events in Singapore and Bangkok.

It is really good that so many of you want to see old friends at events such as these and it gives us a chance to talk to many of you personally and to update you more thoroughly about how the University is changing. Thank you as always for all your support and I look forward to meeting many more of you during the course of the next year.

2007 Diary dates

WEDNESDAY 20 – WEDNESDAY 27 JUNE - STUDENT DEGREE SHOW

Peter Scott Gallery, an exhibition of exciting new artwork by final year Fine Art Degree students from the Art Section of the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts. The exhibition includes paintings, drawings, sculpture and installation. In conjunction with the show, the Art Section studios will also be open to the public. Please telephone 01524 593057 for further information. Alumni are welcome to attend the private view of this exhibition which will be held on 19 June, 6-8.30pm.

MONDAY 23 – THURSDAY 26 JULY - SCIENCE AND RELIGION - HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

The History Department is hosting an international and interdisciplinary conference to celebrate the work of Professor John Hedley Brooke who taught at Lancaster for over 30 years before taking up a chair at Oxford. Speakers from Oxford, Cambridge, Canada, USA, Australia, Malaysia, and elsewhere will discuss science and religion, and honour John Hedley Brooke. Subjects covered will range from historical studies of Copernicus, Newton, and Darwin to contemporary debates about Islam and science, and about genetic engineering and bioethics, and 'Intelligent Design'. More details can be obtained from t.dixon@lancaster.ac.uk

THURSDAY 18 OCTOBER - THE 2ND RICHARDSON INSTITUTE PEACE STUDIES LECTURE

6.30pm, George Fox 1 Lecture Theatre. This lecture will be given by Martin Bell, former BBC Foreign Correspondent and MP for Tatton. Admission is free. Please contact [Feargal Cochrane](mailto:f.cochrane@lancaster.ac.uk) at f.cochrane@lancaster.ac.uk for further information.

WEDNESDAY 31ST OCTOBER - ALUMNI CAREERS FAIR

This all day event is part of the Career Opportunities Fair. Alumni volunteers are sought to talk one-to-one with Lancaster students about their careers. Please contact Louise Johnson (l.johnson@lancaster.ac.uk) for more information or if you would like to attend.

AUTUMN - ALUMNI PUB NIGHT (MANCHESTER)

More details will be posted on our website nearer the time.

The articles printed here, to the best of our knowledge, were correct at the time of going to press. We cannot guarantee that all articles submitted have been printed and we reserve the right to edit material where necessary. Furthermore, then views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of Lancaster University or the Editor.

Steps is available to view on-line at www.alumni.lancs.ac.uk/steps as a pdf and a Word Document. If you require this magazine in another format please contact the office.

Front Cover: Persuading children to eat a healthy diet can be a problem. Picture courtesy of the IDEFICS project on childhood obesity.

News

Researchers launch **living archive of rural disaster**

How to study disasters? How can researchers find ways to 'capture' the complex and multiple consequences which disasters have for the communities affected?

When the 2001 Foot & Mouth Disease epidemic struck rural Britain, policymakers and researchers realised that there was no documented social history to show how people had lived through the previous large-scale outbreak of 1967. The 'Health & Social Consequences of the 2001 Foot and Mouth Disease Epidemic' was an in-depth longitudinal diary based study which has provided detailed documentation of the effect of the disaster on the daily lives of a wide range of those affected: Farmers, farm workers, rural health workers, teachers, clergy, hauliers, people in small rural business and all manner of related rural occupations. Many of the accounts provided by these respondents have now been archived for public access.

An introduction to what is a very large archive of rural life in the period following the disaster is provided in a new website: www.footandmouthstudy.org.uk

The original material, including sound and hand written diaries, has been archived at Lancaster University's Rare Book Archive and can be reviewed by arrangement with the archivist: <http://libweb.lancs.ac.uk/rba.htm>

The original study was undertaken by the Institute for Health Research, Lancaster University, which received funding from the Department of Health. Further funding for a public dissemination conference was provided by Alumni who gave to the Lancaster University Friends Programme. More information from Dr Maggie Mort, IHR, m.mort@lancaster.ac.uk

Getting to the **top of the league**

Love 'em or hate 'em, league tables are a fact of life for Universities these days. They influence recruitment and national reputation, so it is good to report that once again Lancaster has risen in two of the popular national press rankings of British universities. Earlier this year we were placed 21st in the Times Good University Guide, and more recently we were ranked 22nd nationally in the Guardian University Guide.

It was in some of the individual subject rankings, however, that we really took our place amongst the top universities in the country:

Mechanical Engineering	4th
American Studies	6th
Sociology	6th
Social Work	6th
Art and Design	7th
Computer Sciences and IT	7th
Business	8th
Economics	9th
Theatre Studies	10th
Mathematics	11th

Subject provision was assessed against criteria that included student-rated teaching provision, educational spend per student, Student/staff ratios and employment prospects of graduates.

Lancaster University's Pro Vice-Chancellor for Colleges and the Student Experience, Professor Amanda Chetwynd, said, "We are delighted with our improvement in the Guardian league tables and it is especially important that the student feedback has been very positive and has contributed to Lancaster's position."

Honorary Degrees



Philip French and Dr Mike Dexter who both received honorary degrees

The Observer film critic Philip French and the Chair of the Cockcroft Institute for Accelerator Science Dr Mike Dexter received honorary degrees from the University's Chancellor, Sir Christian Bonington, in degree ceremonies held in December.

Philip French has written widely on books, theatre and cinema for newspapers and magazines in Europe and America. He has been theatre critic and cultural columnist for The New Statesman, chief book reviewer of The Financial Times and deputy film critic of The Times.

Dr Mike Dexter is currently the Chair of the Cockcroft Institute for Accelerator Science, a joint venture by the universities of Lancaster, Liverpool and Manchester along with two research councils and the North West Regional Development Agency.

First Professor of Hospice Studies appointed



Professor Sheila Payne has been appointed as the UK's first professor of Hospice Studies, at Lancaster University.

Professor Payne's post, the first full time position of its kind in the UK, is supported over five years by the national charity Help the Hospices. It is based in the International Observatory on End of Life Care and will lead on important new research to help improve the lives of the many thousands of patients and families who depend on hospice care every year.

News

International art



Aryballos, Etrusco
- Corinthian, 620-600 BC.

Over the years, the Peter Scott Gallery at Lancaster University has built up a significant fine art collection. The gallery presents a varied annual programme of temporary exhibitions, bringing exciting new artworks to the region, as well as showcasing works from the collection.

The gallery's Irène Manton Collection contains a wealth of international artworks, including watercolours by Chinese artists, prints by Japanese artists, African wood-cut prints, and examples of Indian and Inuit art.

European artists represented in the collection include Eduardo Chillida, André Derain, Max Ernst, Joan Miró and Victor Vasarely.

Professor Irene Manton F.R.S. (1904-1988) was an eminent scientist and Honorary Research Fellow in Electron Microscopy at Lancaster University. She was an enthusiastic collector and had a particular interest in calligraphy and printmaking techniques. She also had an interest in antiquities and the history of writing, and the collection includes Greek, Roman and Egyptian artefacts.

A rich resource for the public as well as the academic community, the gallery is open during exhibitions Monday – Saturday 11am-4pm and late Thursdays 11am-9pm. Admission is free of charge. For further information about the collections and forthcoming exhibitions please call 01524 593057. To add your name to the gallery mailing list and receive invitations to private views, please send your contact details to galleryenquiries@lancaster.ac.uk or telephone the number listed above. The Peter Scott Gallery is part of the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts and is located in the Great Hall Complex on the University campus.



Woman Artist, Kunisada, 19th Century.



Painting of a Celebrated Poet, 17th Century, Watercolour and Gold Leaf.

Sir Liam Donaldson launches new Medical facility



The 'nation's doctor', Sir Liam Donaldson, has launched the new £1.6m Clinical Anatomy Learning Centre.

Sir Liam, the Government's principal medical adviser, also advises the Secretary of State for Health, the Prime Minister and other government ministers.

The facility is being used by 50 new students who are currently in the first year of their five year medicine degree at Lancaster. The degree is awarded by the University of Liverpool. Students follow the same curriculum but will complete all their studies at Lancaster and will take up clinical placements across Lancashire and Cumbria. The initiative is the result of collaboration between Lancaster University, the University of Liverpool, UCLAN, St Martin's College and the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Trust.

Sir Liam said: "This centre represents the state of the art in medical education. It will help to train a new generation of doctors equipped to provide 21st century healthcare to their patients."

For information about medical education at Lancaster University please see www.cme.lancs.ac.uk

Do you have a business idea to make our environment a better place?

The Lancaster Environment Centre has launched a competition to find four green business ideas and help turn them into reality. The competition is calling for creative, realistic, environmentally-focused business ideas which will then be incubated in a purpose-built 'business hatchery' in the Lancaster Environment Centre.

There is a whole range of prizes including 12 month's free incubation support and accommodation in The Gordon Manley Building – the new business extension to LEC, which is one of the largest environmental research centres in Europe.

The deadline for entry is July 31, 2007. For further information on LEC's 2007 Business Creation Competition please visit www.lec.lancs.ac.uk/ebp or contact Chris Holroyd via email c.p.holroyd@lancaster.ac.uk or telephone on 01524 510228, with your name and contact details to register your interest in the competition and to obtain a copy of the application form.

Students love Lancaster University

The first ever survey of Lancaster University's current second year students has revealed a high level of overall satisfaction with their university experience.

Over 80% of all students surveyed, rated their university experience as excellent or good. Students rated the college system, departments, accommodation and the campus setting as things that they particularly liked.

UK Space research goes online

An interactive website set up by Lancaster University has been launched. The site is the idea of Dr Jim Wild (Department of Communication Systems) and showcases the UK's record of world class space research.

The www.sunearthplan.net website is aimed at people interested in finding out more about research into the solar system. Anyone will be able to post questions on the website for scientists to answer.

Dr Wild said: "The UK has an enviable record in space research and a significant number of UK scientists work on programmes operated by NASA, the European Space Agency and the Chinese National Space Administration. Lancaster University has a strong record of being a part of this and I wanted to showcase what we do here in the UK."

The website project is funded by the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council. Other organisations contributing to the website include the British Antarctic Survey, Imperial College and University College, London, and the universities of Leicester, Bath, Southampton, Sheffield and Aberystwyth.

Summer holiday courses and activities

22 July - 4 August 2007



Lancaster University is pleased to offer the Summer Programme, run by the Department of Continuing Education. The Summer Programme offers over 65 courses for adults and a wide range of activities for children age 6 and over.

With high quality teaching by expert and enthusiastic tutors, and the University campus makes a great setting for a summer school. You can come along on a daily basis or stay on campus in student accommodation.

Courses include academic subjects, special interests, sports, arts and crafts and more besides.

For a full colour brochure and to find out how to book your place contact us on 01524 592623/4, email summer.programme@lancaster.ac.uk or visit our website at www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/conted/

Book success for Alumni

Kester Aspden (Politics and International Relations 1993, Pendle) has published a book 'Nationality: Wog'. The book revisits one of the most notorious racist crimes in British history. Further information is available from cjohnson-hill@randomhouse.co.uk

Maurice Carder (MA Linguistics 1979, County) has published a book 'Bilingualism in International Schools: A Model for Enriching Language Education'. This book is published by Multilingual Matters, www.multilingual-matters.co.uk

Introducing the Lancaster Postgraduate Statistics Centre



In the Spring of 2005 the University of Lancaster was successful in winning a £4.85 million bid to fund a Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL).

In common with other CETLs, the Lancaster CETL has the core aim of achieving excellence in teaching.

However, our specific focus on the development of postgraduate statistics taught both within the discipline of statistics and more broadly in other disciplines is more unique. The award is partially funding a £3.3 million building, the Postgraduate Statistics Centre (PSC), to expand the postgraduate activities of the department. It will provide state of the art new teaching spaces for teaching statistics courses. In addition to this, funding has provided the department with several new members of staff and will allow a range of new resources to be developed within the centre.

For more information please see www.maths.lancs.ac.uk/psc or contact Dr Bev Abram (b.abram@lancaster.ac.uk).

In memoriam

Professor John Bevington died 4 May aged 85. John was appointed Professor of Chemistry in 1964. He was the first Head of the Chemistry Department and Pro Vice Chancellor from 1969 – 1973. He was also the first Principal of Bowland College until 1967. He retired from the University in 1989 after 25 years service.

Katherine Bradley, Physics 2004, Lonsdale. Katherine sadly died in an accident while travelling in Australia.

Mary Close-Thomas (MPhil 1989) and Honorary research associate for the Sociology and Educational Research departments, died 4 February after a long illness.

David Foster died suddenly, aged 62, on 20 March. He joined the Department of European Languages and Cultures in 1995 as a mature postgraduate student.

Peter Knight, member of the Department of Educational Research until March 2002, died unexpectedly at his home on 28 April.

Hilda Salmon, died 29 January. Hilda was the first and only full-time college bursar for Lonsdale College

Professor Martin Aaron Trow, Educational Sociologist, Honorary Graduate D. Litt 1999 died 24 February 2007, aged 81.

Michael Walton, Marketing 1983, Lonsdale, died on 4 November 2006 aged 44.

Amy Wootton (married name Ormond), a former principal of County College (1971 - 76), died 26 March in Ludlow, after a short illness.

Dr Ed Chronicle, died in Hawaii. Ed was a senior lecturer in Psychology at Lancaster, and was with the department for 10 years, before joining the University of Hawaii in 2003.

In recognition of his contribution to teaching a postgraduate prize fund has been set up in his name. It is hoped that this can be expanded to allow access to bursaries for students who might not otherwise be able to afford postgraduate study. If you would like to contribute please contact Rachel Davis on tel: 01524 594897, email: r.davis@lancaster.ac.uk

Childhood

By Dr Dita Wickins-Drazilova and Dr Garrath Williams,
Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy

The Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy at Lancaster University has been through many changes recently, including the launch of a Centre for Bioethics and Medical Law and participation in several new research projects.

IDEFICS – identification and prevention of dietary and lifestyle-induced health effects in children and infants – is the largest of these projects. Coordinated by the University of Bremen, IDEFICS is an EU-wide project set up to identify ways to tackle the current rapid increase in obesity amongst European children. Running over five years, the study will follow cohorts of children in eight European countries at pre-school (age 2-4) and primary school (age 6-8) level.

Because of the rapid rise in rates of childhood obesity, this topic has attracted intense media and policy interest. Studies suggest that overweight children are much more likely to grow into obese adults with increased health risks during their life such as heart problems, diabetes and arthritis. All these can significantly shorten life expectancy. In Britain, the number of obese children has tripled in the last 20 years; if this rate of increase were to continue, half of British children would be obese by 2020. The situation is similar across the whole of Europe, with British children in the top five most obese in the EU.

The central causes are usually seen in terms of how much and what children eat, and how much they exercise. However, studies show that the issue is more complicated, since factors such as stress, pollution or lack of sleep influence the weight of both children and adults. In addition, children – and adults – from lower socio-economic groups suffer higher rates of obesity, as well as worse health than those who are better off. Nonetheless, no one disputes that changing diet and exercise patterns are of major importance, and the study will involve trial interventions to alter nursery and school settings, affecting about 8,000 children in all.

Much media coverage, and a good deal of political discussion, assumes that the parents of overweight children should shoulder most of the blame. However, there are many socio-economic, cultural and life-style factors that may determine the relative weight and health of a child. For example, while in previous generations most children used to walk or cycle to school, many are driven to school by car these days. This is obviously not just a matter of parents' choices: safety concerns, school closures, availability of public transport and other factors push parents towards driving their children to school every day. The project will also try to determine how many parents are motivated by safety considerations when letting their children spend long hours playing computer games or watching TV rather than playing outside.

Other factors affect food consumption. For previous generations a visit to a fast food restaurant was an unusual occasion, today it is an easy and regular solution for families with busy lifestyles. (One consistent result of previous studies is that the size of portions served is a crucial factor in affecting how much people eat.) Also, while in

the past sweets and high-sugar drinks were a special treat, these days ever-present vending machines and the amount of pocket money children get mean that they can snack on chocolate bars, crisps and sugary drinks all through the day. This is supported by a UK study that showed that the amount of pocket money children received has been rising by more than double the rate of inflation in last 15 years, with most of it being spent on sweets, crisps, chocolate and drinks.

One of the first goals of this project, launched in September 2006, is creating and analysing a questionnaire distributed to parents across Europe. Questions will be asked about how children travel to school, how often they eat vegetables, sweets, and processed foods, if they watch TV during meals, and how much parents believe they are influenced by advertising, product labeling or children's choices during food shopping. The questionnaire will also look at parents' opinions on controversial issues regarding state intervention, for instance in cases where the child is so obese that there is a serious health risk. This topic recently made headlines when social services threatened to take eight-year-old Connor McCreaddie, who weighs 14 stone (89 kilos), away from his mother.

Another controversial question is whether there should be restrictions on TV advertising of foods and drinks that are high in fat, salt and sugar. In recent reports, the Government and the House of Commons have supported Ofcom's position that there should be a ban of such advertising "in and around all programmes of particular appeal to children". However, the Food Ethics Council calls for stricter restrictions on advertising for foods high in fat, salt and sugar, which accounts for 80-90% of all food advertising on television.

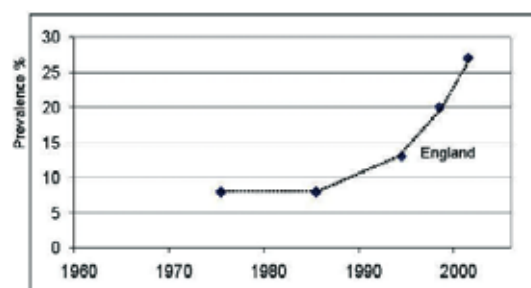
The various social factors form an important part of Lancaster's participation in the research. As the project develops, and the results of the interventions in schools become apparent, we will be examining the policy implications, and asking what governments and policy makers can do to tackle the increase in childhood obesity. As well as looking at the responsibilities of parents, we will be examining the role of schools, food companies, media and local and national governments in ensuring children's healthy lifestyles. Throughout the project, we will also be advising other partners on the ethical issues involved in doing research with children and in altering their school settings.

While the results of the study won't be available until it nears its end in 2011, in the meantime the IDEFICS website (www.ideficsstudy.eu) is already up and running. Even though broader social and policy factors need to be taken into account, the site will offer advice for parents on maintaining healthy diet of their children, and a cook book full of tasty and healthy recipes. The website also has a section for children, including ideas for playing games both inside and outside. And those interested in current scientific developments in the study of childhood obesity can visit the "experts" section, or a website of one of IDEFICS partners, the European Food Information Council www.eufic.org which contains extensive nutritional advice and summaries of research.

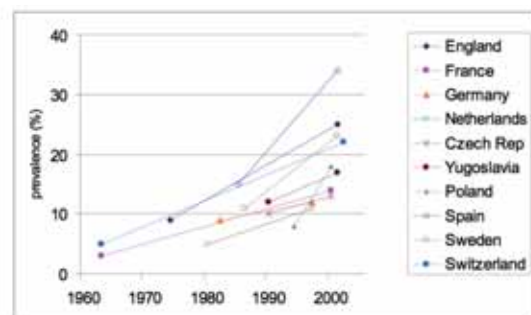
Obesity



Overweight children - Trends in the last three decades



School-children: accelerating overweight



For more information please contact
idefics@lancaster.ac.uk

Research

New Sensory Neuroscience unit for Psychology

A new research unit, the Sensory Neuroscience Unit (SNU), has recently been established in the Department of Psychology. Research in the SNU combines behavioural measures (asking participants to press buttons in response to sensory stimuli such as tones and noises) with electroencephalographic (EEG) recordings, in which the electrical responses of neurons in the brain are recorded by attaching electrodes to the scalp.

Professor Chris Plack, Head of the SNU, investigates how we hear – and how we don't hear. He has a particular interest in the underlying causes of sensorineural hearing loss (the most common type of deafness), which affects more than one in six people in the UK. Sensorineural hearing loss is caused by a dysfunction of the hair cells in the cochlea which convert acoustic vibrations into electrical impulses in the nervous system. Dysfunction of one group of hair cells, the outer hair cells, changes the way in which the cochlea responds to sounds. Chris is devising ways to measure these effects. He is hoping to find better ways to diagnose hearing loss, and to help audiologists program hearing aids to more closely compensate for the deficit experienced by each user.

In contrast to the low-level physiological mechanisms that underlie hearing impairment, Chris is also investigating how people perceive the noises around them in their everyday environments. Current legislation allows for a maximum overall noise level in a particular situation (for example, a work place, or a residential area), but this ignores the fact that some sounds are more pleasant to listen to than others. For example, a waterfall can be quite loud, but is much less annoying than a pneumatic drill. The Positive Soundscape Project is a multi-disciplinary endeavour, involving researchers from the Universities of Lancaster, Salford, Warwick, Manchester Metropolitan and the University of the Arts, London. The aim is to find new ways of measuring environmental noise which take into account the complex human response to sounds.

Members of the SNU will also be teaching and supervising students on the Department's new MSc in Language, Speech and Hearing, in conjunction with colleagues who work on language development and disorders.

Further details from Professor Chris Plack: c.plack@lancaster.ac.uk



First ever study of ketamine use in the UK

Criminologists at the University of Lancaster are conducting the first ever UK study of recreational ketamine use amongst young people involved in electronic dance music culture. Ketamine, has been part of recreational drug repertoires since the late 1960's, but first emerged in the UK rave and club scene in the early 1990s. Ketamine is a popular choice of drug amongst a significant minority of clubbers in the UK, although its use is seen by some as problematic due to its dissociative properties and potential impact upon short term memory. In 2006 Ketamine was classified as a Class C substance under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 which has important implications for users, and more broadly for drugs researchers and criminologists.

Dr Fiona Measham and Dr Karenza Moore, who between them have 25 years experience of researching clubbing and personal involvement in UK clubland, decided to investigate user experiences of ketamine after observing use of the drug in night-clubs and at parties throughout the North-West of England. Their research involves surveys in clubs to determine the prevalence of ketamine use and interviews with current users about their experiences of the drug.

Dr Karenza Moore says, "Ketamine appears to be increasingly popular amongst clubbers but there remains a paucity of research on the drug in night-time leisure settings. We are working with colleagues in the UK and the USA to redress this imbalance and specifically to build a harm reduction model for young people involved in electronic dance music culture. We are also exploring the possibility of a broader trend in the UK towards the increasing criminalisation of young people involved in specific dance music scenes". Further information from Dr.Karenza Moore - k.moore@lancaster.ac.uk

€2.8 million training network

The Accounting and Finance Department is co-ordinating a new European Commission-funded Marie Curie Research Training Network, attracting circa. €2.8 million to Lancaster and its partner universities across Europe.

Professor Peter Pope leads the INTACCT Project in developing research initiatives and doctoral training opportunities to explore issues relating to the introduction of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) across Europe.

The EU requires public listed European companies to prepare financial statements using IFRS. This development is a key element in the creation of an integrated market in financial services. Harmonisation of financial reporting around IFRS should increase the comparability of corporate financial performance and lead to considerably greater financial transparency and accountability. If these predictions are correct, then the efficiency of the European economy could improve significantly.

However, it is possible that the benefits from IFRS adoption might have been overestimated and potential costly consequences underestimated. Moreover, benefits from IFRS will only be realized if compliance can be assured. However, effective enforcement is by no means guaranteed and professional accounting bodies and accounting academics have already warned of potential compliance problems. These concerns create a strong rationale for establishing the Network to drive forward continental research into the establishment and operation of IFRS.

Interested readers may find out more about the Network at www.intacct-research.org.



Research network on Mediterranean mobilities

The Centre for Mobilities Research has launched a research network on the Mediterranean aimed at creating capacity to address the challenges facing the region in the 21st century.

Half of the world's water poor population, 30% of maritime trade traffic, 25% of hydrocarbon traffic, 30% of international tourists, the most militarised sea in the world - these are traces in the emerging landscapes of Mediterranean life. The challenges facing the Mediterranean in the 21st century are overwhelming and paradigmatic of trends in other regions. Key global socio-environmental processes of the 21st century will be reflected in and shaped by events in the Mediterranean. Particularly relevant will be how climate change affects the region. As a border zone between the greatest regional wealth differences on earth and one of the areas of the world where the effects of climate change will be greatest the Mediterranean sea is indeed pivotal in how what Timmons Roberts calls the 'climate of injustice' will be tackled.

The Medmobilities Network seeks to foster capacity to better understand the transnational complexities of Mediterranean life. Former Lancaster University students working in academia, business and policy worlds with an interest on these issues are encouraged to contact Javier Caletrio or Ramon Ribera-Fumaz at Centre for Mobilities Research, Department of Sociology, E-mail: j.caletrio@lancaster.ac.uk

More info: <http://www.medmobilities.net>

International Observatory on End of Life Care

Are you caring for somebody who is terminally ill or do you have a terminal illness?

Have you received a Preferred Place of Care document?

This is a document that records and notifies preferences and choices about how to die. It is a record that can be shown to any caring professional who can assist in achieving the preferred place of care.

If you would like a Preferred Place of Care document, please ask your District Nurse or GP.

The Observatory has completed a ground-breaking study to map the development of palliative care in every country in the world. In total, 115 of the world's 234 countries have established one or more hospice-palliative care service. Yet only 35 countries have developed palliative care to achieve integration with other mainstream service providers together with recognition in national policies.

The Observatory is a key partner within the UK's Cancer Experiences Collaborative (CECo) which links researchers at five universities as well as clinical organisations (including the four largest hospices in England and the national charity 'Help the Hospices'), along with user representatives. CECo aims to work together in building sustainable research capacity and improving the quality of research in supportive and palliative care.

The Observatory's work on policy and evaluation includes studies within the National Health Service. Preferred Place of Care (PPC) is one of three major programmes endorsed by the Government to improve palliative and end of life care for cancer patients in the UK.

For information on the above contact Lynne Hargreaves, Programme Coordinator, International Observatory on End of Life Care l.hargreaves@lancaster.ac.uk

Researchers discover new dialect

A new type of teenage language in London has been identified by researchers at Lancaster University in the first ever major study of language change in London.

They found that young people in the inner city have developed their own multi-ethnic accent which is spreading outwards from the capital.

The £280,000 project, which is run jointly with a team from Queen Mary, University of London, involved over 100 hours of recordings with 16 to 19 year olds which were analysed by Professor Paul Kerswill and Dr Eivind Torgersen of the Department of Linguistics and English Language.

They compared the speech patterns of teenagers in Hackney with elderly people and what they found surprised them.

Prof Kerswill said: "The older people sounded Cockney but the 16 to 19 year olds have a very different pronunciation. For example, instead of saying "face" like "fice" or "go" as "gow" as in Cockney, they say "feh's" and "goh", which is more like Jamaican English, although these vowels are also found among speakers with Asian and African backgrounds."

This vowel shift is most obvious in the speech of teenagers from the ethnic minorities, though it can be heard among people from all ethnic backgrounds in Hackney, one of the most ethnically diverse areas in England.

The teenagers also used words like "blud" (blood, meaning mate), "creps" (trainers), "yard" (house), and "endz" (area or estate). Prof Kerswill believes this new form of speech, which they refer to as Multicultural London English (MLE), arose as more recent immigrants learned English with few English-speaking role models.

"I think there has been a change in the last 30 years. The first generation of Afro-Caribbean children in London spoke something recognisably Cockney, but they would have kept their own Caribbean patois and switched between the two. Now their descendants are inventing a new form of English which is shared by all ethnicities."

"Dialects and accents in England are generally being watered down by a process known as dialect levelling. But what's happening in London is the opposite – immigration is creating a new dialect which could spread outwards as people move out of the inner city.

"My hunch is that these teenagers won't grow out of it when they're older because it's much harder to change your pronunciation as an adult. What happens in London usually influences the rest of the country and that's true of dialects too."

The three year project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

For information on the above from p.kerswill@lancaster.ac.uk



Dr Eivind Torgersen (left) listening to speech recordings with Prof Paul Kerswill

Research

The Grow Creative Project

Lancaster University's Innovation and Enterprise Unit has received a quarter of a million pounds to deliver a range of initiatives aimed at improving the commercial awareness of creatives in Lancashire and Cumbria.

The Grow Creative project, which runs until June 2008 will also focus on developing enterprise skills amongst creative graduates of the University and providing postgraduates in a range of disciplines across the North West with valuable opportunities to apply and hone existing skills and knowledge such as market research, funding, financial and organisational management. Project Managers, Charlotte Stuart and Becky Gordon are well placed to understand the needs of graduates wanting to enter the region's creative sector. Both being Lancaster graduates from relevant disciplines.

The Grow Creative project will offer support and advice via a range of initiatives including development opportunities for creative owner/managers in the form of business development workshops, peer networking and one-to-one mentoring.

The project also offers organisations the chance to engage postgraduate and undergraduate consultants to undertake focussed consultancy work.

In order to address employability issues amongst graduates from creative subjects, the end of the summer term will also see the launch of the undergraduate consultant scheme. This scheme will provide a limited number of students from the creative subjects at the University with bursaries to undergo project management training, undertake small consultancy projects and receive targeted advice and support on applying for work in the creative sector.

For further information on any aspect of the project, please visit the Grow Creative website www.grow-creative.co.uk or email r.gordon@lancaster.ac.uk

Research Shows married couples vote more



Married people are more likely to vote, according to research carried out by a Lancaster University Professor of Politics.

The research, which takes into account more than 30 years of evidence, shows that in Britain people who are married turn out to vote in greater proportions than those who are single, separated, divorced or live with a partner. The difference generally persists even when age differences are taken into account.

Professor Denver said: "Previously it was thought that married people were more likely to vote because they had more social contacts in the community and, at a very practical level, simply had someone else in the house to remind them to vote. It now appears, however, that the main driver is that married people (and also the widowed) have a greater sense of civic responsibility than those with. He is the author of a widely used text on electoral behaviour - Elections and Voters in Britain.

Arctic expedition to investigate chemical pollution



Lancaster University scientists are heading for the Arctic as part of an international investigation into how chemical pollutants are affecting a unique part of the planet.

Chemicals which are used every day in agriculture, industry and in the home – for example pesticides and flame retardants – are found in increasing quantities in the Polar Regions.

These pollutants then break down and work their way into the food chain causing damage to plant and animal life ranging from single-cell organisms to crustaceans, sea cod, seals and whales.

The extreme cold temperatures found in the Polar Regions mean that chemicals do not break down as quickly as they would in a temperate climate. Instead they accumulate in the snowpack, to be released suddenly during the short summer melt season, placing additional stress on the environment.

Dr Cris Halsall of Lancaster Environment Centre is set to take part in a three year study into these chemicals - many of which are known as Persistent Organic Pollutants (or POPs). The research is funded by a £324,556 grant from the Natural Environment Research Council.

Dr Halsall said: "The Arctic is a unique pristine environment - the Arctic sea ice is home to species which are not found anywhere else in the world. We know that mankind is having a damaging impact on that environment and these pollutants provide an additional stress on this environment.

Coming at a time when climate change is increasingly on the international political agenda, polar research has never been so important or relevant.

Climate Change - The Solar connection

Turn on the TV or radio, or open a newspaper or magazine and it seems impossible to avoid the mention of an impending crisis. The threats of 'climate change' and 'global warming' are regular news items and have become buzz words in the past few years.

A majority of experts appear to agree that greenhouse gases do play a role in global warming. Whilst the exact amount that greenhouse gases contribute to any change in the Earth's average temperature is widely debated, there is little mention of the role that the Sun plays in modulating the Earth's climate.

Climate change is not new - in fact, it is the norm. Our climate is constantly changing and has been for thousands of years. Climate change in the past can be inferred from tree-ring data and other methods. Such changes have also been directly linked to the Sun. Between 1645 and 1715, a period of unusually quiet solar activity occurred, known as the Maunder Minimum. This coincided with a period known as the Little Ice Age in Western Europe. Lower than average temperatures were recorded - and in London it was cold enough that the River Thames repeatedly froze.

In contrast, during part of the Middle Ages (~900-1350 AD), warmer than average temperatures led to ice-free seas and an opportunity for Viking settlers to colonize parts of Greenland.

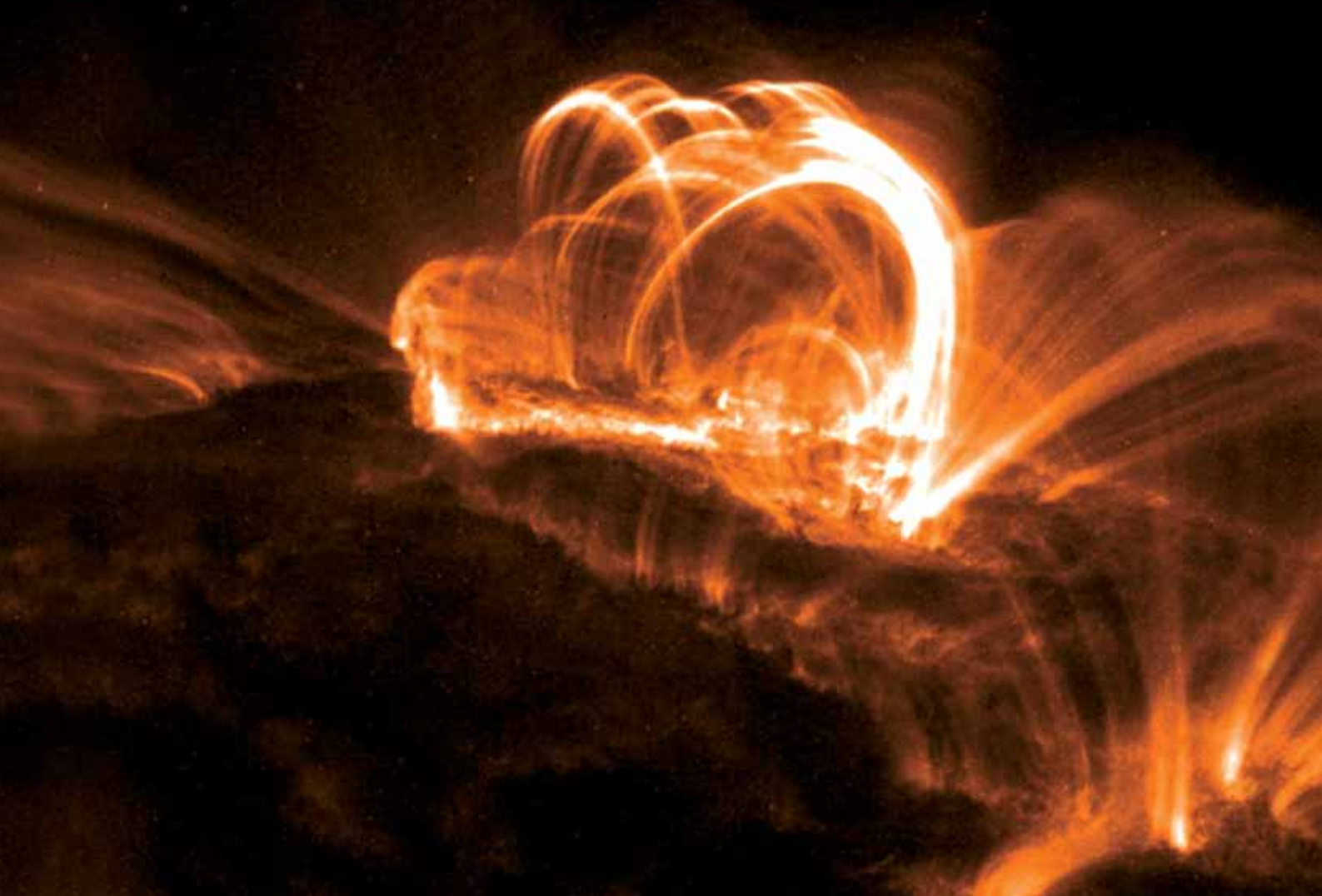
The Sun is constantly changing too. It observes an 11 year 'solar cycle' during which time the number of sunspots rises and falls. Close to the maximum of this cycle, solar storms can throw out vast quantities of energy and particles which may damage satellite systems and produce dangerous radiation for astronauts in orbit. Such storms can also directly affect radio communications and knock out power grids on the ground. At Lancaster we attempt to understand the Sun, the solar cycle, solar storms, and their effects on communication systems. Using data from numerous satellites in orbit, we have shown that different phases of the solar cycle have different effects on orbiting instruments. In fact, some of the most damaging consequences of solar radiation occur at the minimum of the solar cycle, when the sun appears relatively benign.

Such research produces unintended benefits - an understanding of solar effects on our climate and a realisation that greenhouse gases and carbon emissions aren't the whole story. Understanding variations in the solar heating of the Earth's atmosphere are as critical to predicting global climate change as understanding the effects of greenhouse gases.

For further information please see the following weblinks or contact me direct.

<http://www.dcs.lancs.ac.uk/research/spears/>
<http://www.sunearthplan.net/>
<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Study/ProtonOzone/>

Michael Denton, Lecturer, Department of Communication Systems
 Email: m.denton@lancaster.ac.uk



Update



Looking for a lost friend?

We may be able to help you find someone you have lost touch with. Log on to our alumni website - www.alumni.lancs.ac.uk

The Online Directory has facilities to search for friends, add class notes and photos and chat on forums. It is a great way to find old friends. Even if your friend is not listed, we have a section on the forums where you can post a note. Someone who knows them may see it. Alumni have found this a very good way to find friends in the past.

Looking for someone in particular?

Are you trying to trace a particular friend who you have lost touch with? If you can't find them on our Online Directory or through the forums, then let us have your details and we will pass them onto your friend if we have a contact address/email for them. They can then get in touch with you.

Media event

A media networking and socialising event at The Moving Picture Company (TMPC), Soho, London, took place on 1 February 2007. Attended by over 80 media graduates, the occasion provided an opportunity for alumni to be reunited with one another, or to meet for the first time, over some delicious canapés and drinks.

Speeches were made by alumnus Richard Allinson, (Presenter, BBC Radio 2), Ben Bailey, (Editor, Scan) and Professor Rachel Cooper (Director, LICA, Lancaster University), who presented a slide show on *Imagination@Lancaster*, one of the University's latest projects.

Special thanks go to Adrian Pickett (Politics and IR 1982, County) from TMPC who kindly allowed us to use his offices for this event and John Stockton (Sociology 1986, Cartmel) from the Moving Venue Caterers.



Kuala Lumpur 2007

Over 100 people attended the 'Kuala Lumpur Chancellor's Event' held on the 11 April 2007.

This was the first overseas trip that a Lancaster Chancellor has ever attended and Sir Chris Bonington and the other staff from the University received a warm welcome at the Alumni Event. Also attending from the University was Professor Paul Wellings, Vice-Chancellor, and Chris Fancy, Director of Alumni & Development. The evening consisted of a drinks reception, presentation from the Vice-Chancellor and buffet dinner. The alumni also heard from the Chancellor and Boyd McCleary, British High Commissioner to Malaysia. All the alumni had a great time and enjoyed meeting up with their contemporaries. They look forward to the next event.



Singapore and Bangkok 07

Over 70 graduates convened for the Singapore and Bangkok alumni events which were held on the 14th April and 17th April respectively.

Attending from the University were Chris Fancy, Director of Alumni & Development, and Nick Gilbert, Alumni Relations Officer. The events comprised of a drinks reception and buffet meal. The Bangkok alumni event became a double celebration with it falling on the same period as the Songkran festival (Thai New Year). Feedback was very positive and alumni enjoyed meeting old friends and getting reacquainted with all the news from Lancaster by listening to a lively presentation given by Chris Fancy. Many of the alumni expressed an interest in organising a similar event on a yearly basis.



Covent Garden attracts record number of alumni

Around 250 Lancaster graduates attended the first Lancaster 'AlumNite' (Lancaster in London – Pub Night) on 1 March 2007. The event, held at the Cornerstore in Covent Garden, was for alumni who graduated between 2000 - 2006.

This was the biggest social gathering of alumni that we have organised and within a couple of hours the whole pub was occupied by Lancaster graduates! The full range of pictures is accessed via our Online Directory, so if you want to see these you will need to log on). We will be running another similar event soon – please see the website .



Alumni Survey 2007

A big "thank you" to all those of you who have either returned our "Proud of your success" survey form or logged on to our website to update your employment details.

Lancaster now has more than 82,000 graduates and we are in touch with the majority of you. However, we are becoming ever more aware of the value of information about our graduates' success in getting jobs after leaving university and in developing their careers in subsequent years. Your university's standing in the popular and influential broadsheet league tables of higher education institutions can be critically influenced by the employment information supplied by each graduating cohort. Our outstanding profile in the prestigious Financial Times ranking of MBA programmes is heavily dependent on the information supplied to the reviewers by our alumni. Throughout the past year, many of you have helped your academic departments at Lancaster by writing testimonials for departmental websites, supporting open days and offering advice to potential Lancaster students. Through the Alumni Office's Careers website, support network and Careers Fair alumni volunteers have provided advice to graduating students on career opportunities and pathways in a wide range of business sectors. You have made a real contribution to Lancaster's standing in the HE sector and to the success of our graduates. Thank you!

...but we still need more...

If you have received one of our "Proud of your success" survey forms and not yet returned it, please do so in the pre-paid envelope, or better still, log on to our secure website and update your details. If you haven't received your survey form, it's probably because we already hold some career information for you. But perhaps you would log on to the Online Directory and check it. The details you give us will enable us to provide valuable information on the success of our graduates for your academic departments. We hope this is a win-win outcome. As the University's profile is raised, so is the employment value of your degree.

Alumni contacts: General enquires E: alumni@lancaster.ac.uk
Sally Nelhams T: 01524 592556 E: s.nelhams@lancaster.ac.uk
Nick Gilbert T: 01524 594119 E: n.gilbert@lancaster.ac.uk
Louise Johnson T: 01524 594109 E: l.e.johnson@lancaster.ac.uk

More photos of events can be view on the Online Directory
www.alumni.lancs.ac.uk

How you can help us

Career Networking Programme: Alumni are a good resource for providing students and other alumni with information about their career choices and their business sector. Communication is usually initially by email or telephone if appropriate. You or your company may be able to offer a student a work placement or work shadowing opportunity, or perhaps a vacation job. You could also add your profile to 'CareerTalk' an online careers networking system.

Talk to Current Students: Come back to the campus and give a talk/workshop to current students about your career field. Talks are arranged throughout the year and are usually well attended by students.

New Student Briefings: Students around the world find it useful to talk to graduates to find out what life at Lancaster University is really like. Talk one-to-one by email/phone to new students and provide them with informal advice and last - minute information.

Organise a regional event/reunion: Do you work somewhere interesting? Do you have access to a good venue for a regional event? Why not organise an alumni event in your local area? Past events have taken place on campus, in the House of Commons, the Lancaster City Museum, a Chinese restaurant in Newcastle, Old Trafford football ground, a boat on Windermere and various pubs throughout the country.

CareerTalk

CareerTalk – our online Career Networking System has now been launched to students and is proving to be very successful.



If you have not already added your profile and would like to do so please go to <http://careertalk.lancs.ac.uk> (you will need your alumni ID number to enter the system which is shown on the carrier sheet accompanying this edition of Steps).

For those of you who are unfamiliar with CareerTalk, the system comprises a database of Lancaster graduates containing a brief career profile and a secure discussion area for students to ask further questions.

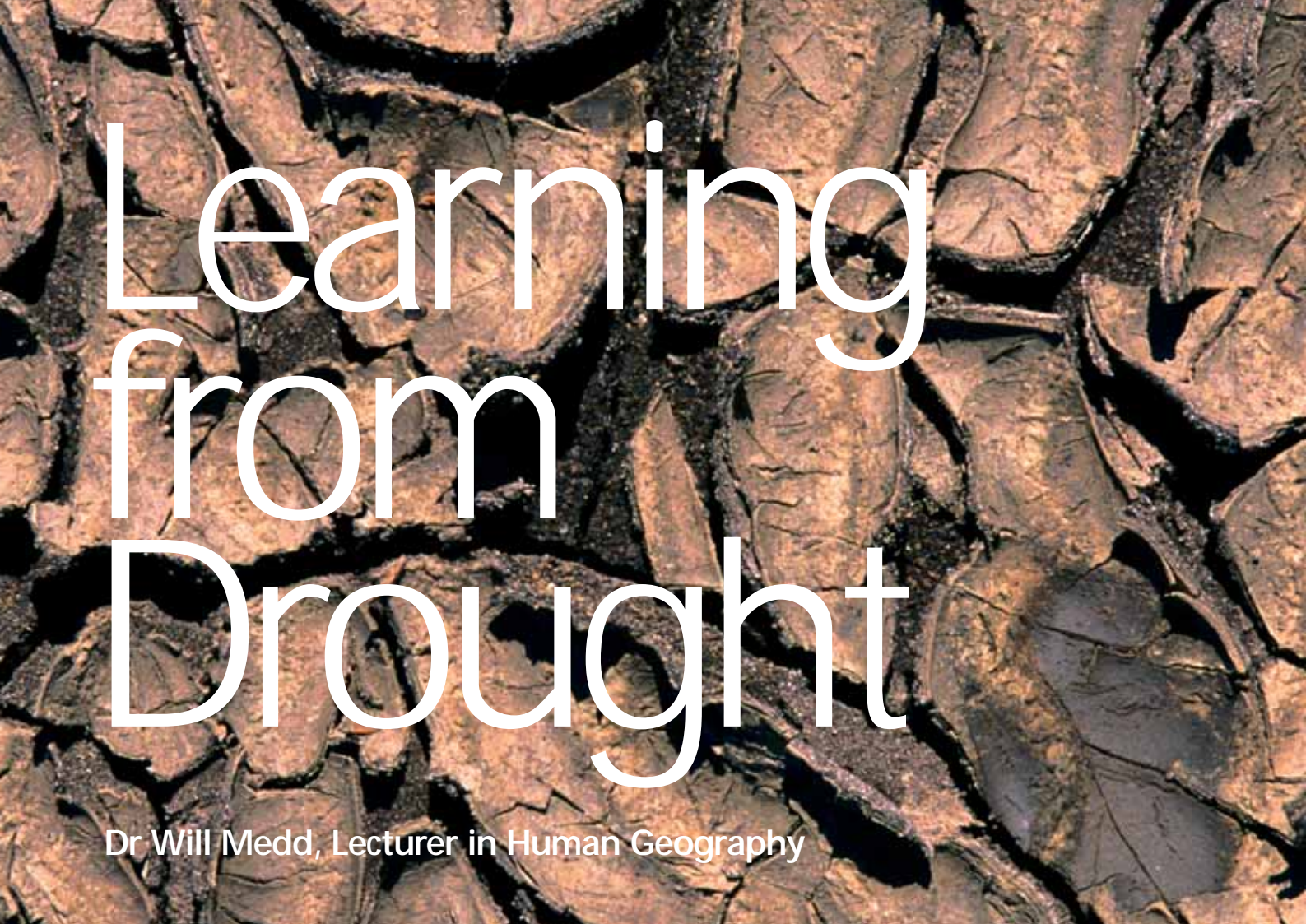
Commemorative Jewellery

- Cufflinks
- Seal rings
- Tie Pins
- Pendants
- Charms



We have recently extended our range of Lancaster University Commemorative Jewellery to include a simple Lancaster shield pendant and a really fun charm bracelet, with a University shield and a mortar board charm attached. For details go to www.commemorativejewellery.co.uk and click on the Lancaster University logo.

www.commemorativejewellery.co.uk



Learning from Drought

Dr Will Medd, Lecturer in Human Geography

Last summer's drought formed the focus for a project by researchers from the Department of Sociology and Centre for Sustainable Water Management.

In 2006 more than 13 million people in the south east of England were subject to hosepipe bans. The 2006 drought reopened many questions about the sustainability of current water management systems and underlying assumptions about demand. There are increased uncertainties in both supply - for example in the context of climate change - and demand - for example with increased use of water intensive technologies and house-building programmes.

So, what triggers the demand for water? People obviously need water to survive, to drink and cook. They wash to keep clean. Many wash clothes almost daily because detergent manufacturers have created a concept of how great it is to wear crisp, fresh, clean clothes. Such perceptions of water help us understand the puzzle of domestic water consumption, says Dr. Will Medd.

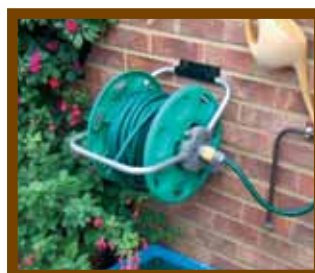
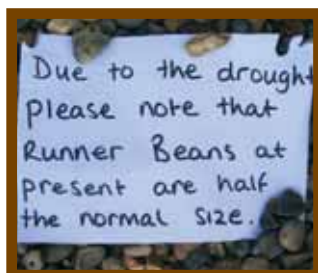
Responding to these challenges, his study addressed questions about the structure and dynamics of demand, the role of households and water managers in constructing concepts of scarcity and defining acceptable water use, and the implications for building resilient futures. The project developed a distinctly sociological approach to understanding demand by moving away from the conventional focus on resources and individual behaviour towards an appreciation of the everyday practices through which demand is created and normalised.

Previous research into domestic water consumption has often been heavily influenced by an 'engineering' mentality. For example, giving a household water efficiency technology and measuring the effect on consumption. However, this seemed to have limited impact and there were wide variations in usage despite each household using the same technology.

Dr Medd and his team therefore decided to change their approach in order to understand water demand:

"We changed the focus from water itself and looked at people's practices rather than behaviour, by studying people's everyday habits and routines through which they consume water."

"So, for example, people's activities in the mornings tend to focus on getting to work/school. They obviously use water in the process – to shower, clean teeth, use the toilet, perhaps putting some clothes on to wash, but do not consciously think about water."



"We also found a huge variance in practices. Some people water their grass more in preparation for garden parties and other social events. Households sometimes have guests staying, as one offs, or on a regular basis. Some people have two homes. Many more people now work from home, meaning they are at home during the day. Such findings mean that measures of 'average' per capita consumption are misleading - it's difficult to get a valid and reliable measure of domestic water consumption per person."

Medd's research uncovered some surprising practices. For example one woman habitually flushed the toilet throughout the day as her children never did. One girl used the toilet as a bin for cotton wool and dead spiders and one family shared baths to save water!

The study addressed specific questions:

- How water related practices evolved and become 'normal', and which were more or less amenable to change?
- How were options for demand management institutionally and technically structured and sustained?
- What will short-term responses to drought tell us about the role of water companies, regulators and consumers in shaping future demand?

Dr Medd and Dr. Heather Chappells conducted interviews with households in the south east, which generated important insights into the diverse ways people use water around the home and of the habits, routines and expectations that sustain these practices. Details of how householders have been able or willing to modify different practices over last summer and how they evaluated essential or non-essential water use were also assessed.

Modifying household practices is just one of the ways in which water supplies might be sustained. The study also investigated how current systems of water management and demand forecasting help to shape definitions of normal use or wastage and to structure responses to drought.

Undertaken at a time when companies were redefining drought management plans the research offered important insights into how assumptions about demand are informing long-term water management strategies in the UK.

With such variance in water consumption from person to person, day to day, it can be difficult to change or understand people's behaviour.

Dr Medd believes that people's behaviour can be changed. Advertising campaigns during water shortages, do affect what people do, but he thinks the focus on people changing behaviour is slightly misplaced if you want to get a fundamental shift in water demand.

Medd believes we need to change the systems of provision and move away from changing everyday behaviour to look at how demand is made through the array and sequence of activities, technologies and institutional arrangements that come together in the provision of water products and services through which water is consumed.

Much research looks at the role of the utility sector, the consumer and the regulator. Medd believes there are increasing routes through which on the one hand, there is increased pressure on water sources, for example, the promotion of hot tubs and power showers, and on the other hand, where opportunities for change might lie, through promoting drought resistant plants, green lifestyles and developing grey water recycling.

"To get a major shift in water demand, we need a significant systemic shift - changing fundamental aspects of people's lives. Water provokes deeply held assumptions about cleanliness, comfort and convenience. We need to look at what factors shape these cultural patterns rather than look at individual behaviour."

Medd believes that because of this, metering is unlikely to have a significant long term impact on consumption on its own, unless of course it has a major impact on household income. Gas and electricity are already metered and evidence suggests that people do not regularly look at how much they use.

He also believes that the effectiveness of water-saving technology will depend more on the person using it than how the product is designed. "Some assume a perfect water efficient toilet will be used in a perfectly normal way. They don't consider that different people use these different technologies in different ways. New ranges of dishwashers use less water, but how do people wash their dishes in the first place, and what new habits do dishwashers create"?

"I know of people who wash milk bottles and recycling in the dishwasher before putting them outside."

Dr Medd is now involved in further research looking at the relationship between water demand and ethnicity and religion:

"We're interested in opening up an understanding of the diversity of water consuming practices rather than researching than 'average' consumption."

Such a systemic shift in thinking needs an enormous amount of time and energy, for example, how to put resources into such a big campaign. It requires some very different thinking about the routes and timescale for promoting sustainable water consumption. It also means rethinking how we value water. Water companies alone cannot do it. It will need substantial engagement with organisations beyond the water sector from gardening centres to bathroom manufacturers to property developers.

However, Medd is encouraged that some influential people are already trying to make changes. Ken Livingstone revealed that for the past 15 months, no one in his household had flushed the toilet after urinating! He was hoping that other Londoners would follow suit. If it's yellow let it mellow

For further information: w.medd@lancaster.ac.uk

Drought and Demand Project:

http://www.lec.lancs.ac.uk/cswm/Drought_Demand.php

Traces of Water series:

<http://www.lec.lancs.ac.uk/cswm/Traces.php>

Parts of this article were kindly provided by Utility Week - www.utilityweek.co.uk



College NEWS

Bowland

Bowland College won the 2006 Carter Shield and the Founders Trophy. This year saw our biggest intake of first years (382 students) and our on-campus accommodation has grown to 579. The College has paid for refurbishment of some of its college social space (new carpets, repainting, new furniture) for which we'd like to thank our generous Alumni. Negotiations are underway to have our entire social space fully refurbished and remodelled in accordance with Bowland's requirements - continue to watch this space! Slaidburn House will return to Bowland College this year and the Tower remains standing and occupied - it's due to come back to Bowland in Oct 2008. Bowland remains at the heart of campus, next to Alexandra Square. A hugely successful, vibrant and people-focused College. Fellow Bowlanders, be proud. **Dr Louise Banton - Principal.**

Cartmel

December 2006 saw the sad departure of Prof. John Hughes as Principal of Cartmel. Although John has retired from the University, he will still be very involved in college activities and will be active in arranging our 40th Anniversary. Jayne Corless (ISS) has taken up the mantle of Principal of Cartmel College. Cartmel still continues to hold live music events with various International and local bands. The College would like to thank Alumni for their grant, which will enable the college to procure off campus lockers for the Farmhouse. We are now starting to plan our 40th Anniversary celebrations to be held in 2008, if anyone would like to be involved or receive a schedule of events, please send your contact details to Sue Gara. This year also sees the introduction of College branding, look out for the new Griffin, College colours and merchandising. **Jayne Corless - Principal.**

County

Neil Lent retired as College Dean at the end of the academic year 2005-06 to take up a post at the University of Leeds, and was succeeded by Steve Dempster. As a junior member, Assistant Dean, Senior Tutor and Dean - Neil played a full part in college life for 14 years, with only a short break. We thank Neil for his unstinting service.

The new residences were occupied from October. Building work continues, however, with the construction of new 'town house' residences on the former County Field. They, along with a new plaza-style entrance to the north spine of the campus, are scheduled to be completed by December 2007. County West is due to be demolished during the summer. The final phase of redevelopment will be the refurbishment of County Main. Since County Main is one of the more distinctive and distinguished of the campus buildings from the 1960s, we are delighted that its mooted demolition has been averted. **Professor David Smith - Principal.**

Furness

Furness has a new Principal, Reuben Edwards, and a new Senior Tutor, Aditya Vadali. However, some things don't change - the Bar is still by far the best. 'Trevor' has now been in the Good Beer Guide for the last three years and continues to sell a good pint of real ale to beer connoisseurs.

The TV room has been revitalised thanks to the donation of new leather sofas from the Friends Programme, the Common Room has benefitted from a lick of purple paint, and we are hoping to give the back bar a face lift over the Summer.

Last August saw the first of our annual reunions "Just An Excuse" with a number of alumni returning simply because we put a band on in the bar...we shall continue this 'tradition' on August Bank Holiday this year - with the bar open and a band playing - so if you just need an excuse to come back and visit: put August Bank Holiday into your diary.

Furness now has a vibrant presence on Facebook, and we shall soon be adding a number of Web 2.0 (a fancy way of saying community!) features to the college web site as well as creating a mobile presence via furnesscollege, So keep in touch! **Reuban Edwards - Principal.**

Fylde

Since the last report, there have been some exciting new developments in the College. The old residences have been knocked down and we have taken over our new accommodation - 475 ensuite study bedrooms located on the perimeter road at the head of Fylde Avenue. Work has just started on the new postgraduate Statistics teaching building which will fill the space previously occupied by the old residences. We are approaching the final design stage in the project to refurbish the College JCR and Bar. If you are visiting Lancaster in autumn this year, come and visit our new Bar and social space which will be opening for the Intro Week social programme. This will complete the programme of work on the College and complement our new JCR Office and Off-campus students' facilities which have been built into the space created when Radio Bailrigg moved location. If you are a Fylde College graduate, we would be delighted to hear from you. Tell us what you are doing now: send us some

photographs for the website; better still, if you are in Lancaster, visit the College and see what's changing and what's still the same old Fylde. **Frank Wareing - Principal.**

Graduate

Following the doubling in size of the College two years ago, the Principal and colleagues entered into negotiations with the Resources Division with a view to enhancing the social facilities - bearing in mind that they had remained virtually unaltered since the founding of the College in the early 1990s. The response was positive and by the time Steps reaches you Graduate College should be in possession of a remodelled and refurbished common room and a refurbished games room. In addition, the computer facilities are to be doubled in size. There is the possibility of further investment in the near future, focussing on the bar. **Maurice Kirby - Principal.**

Grizedale

The piles of rubble, once Grizedale, are unfortunately still with us, as the College will not be built for yet another year. Barbara, who you all will know if you have been in the college in the last 14 years, and Karen, our residence officer, together with the porters, have done a valiant job in keeping the College running, but it has not been the same without the student body around them. Surely that's a plus, you might say, but in fact they are missing the Grizedale students who are spread from the bottom of the south west area, in what is now Lonsdale, all the way up to Gz, and soon as far up as Bowland Tower. In fact there is barely a part of the University we do not cover.

The JCR and others have done their best to keep the Grizedale spirit going, but it will not be the same until we are all gathered once more around the hub of the college, inevitably the bar, where Julian still reigns.

However it has been a good year. New students have settled in, and many have chosen to stay on campus in their second and third years.

The future looks good too, the new buildings as 'Town Houses' of terraced-style, look good, and the bar and office area is to be redesigned. Julian has some interesting ideas for the bar, expanding the previous food business and so making the bar attractive to a greater variety of students.

We have however managed to keep the social side of the College going strong, as I noted the other day bumping into a group setting off for a 'Moulin Rouge' night, not one that Nicole Kidman would recognised though.

The Mini-Extrav is on and the Extrav will have to take place in front of the George Fox building, through lack of any other space.

In September 2008 the new buildings should be up, so we are watching our wasteland for signs of activity. Grizedale in exsilio. **Hugh Pollock - Principal.**

Lonsdale

Not too many changes to report this year. We have now settled into our new premises on Alexandra Park. Our large modern bar is well suited to big functions and the "Sorted" disco on a Friday night is now the main regular campus event. From being the second smallest College we are now the second largest - we will have over 700 students living on campus next year! Size may have changed but the spirit remains the same - the liveliest and friendliest College at Lancaster!

On a sad note we will be losing our long-serving College Administrator (College Secretary as was) Laraine Shaw. Laraine has served Lonsdale for more years than she likes to remember and we will all miss her greatly. She will be fondly remembered by of thousands of Lonsdale students and I hope that you will all join me in thanking her and wishing her well in the future. Best wishes to you all. **Keith Davidson - Principal.**

Pendle

2007 saw two members of College move on to new employment. Sue Hubbard our wonderful and committed Senior Tutor left in April. Sue has for a number of years been the strength of Pendle Tutorial System and will be missed by Junior and Senior Members of the College. Sue takes up her post as marketing and student recruitment manager for the School of Mechanical, Aerospace and Civil Engineering at Manchester University

We are delighted that Jen Whitfield, who has worked closely as Sue Assistant Senior Tutor for a number of years has agreed to take up the office of Senior Tutor.

Guy Downing our much loved Licensee left in February and now works in his family business, we wish him every success. As an interim measure Tom Sharman has stepped in to ensure Pendle Bar remains the focal point of the College social life and is fact becoming a Pendle Legend. The College hopes to appoint a new Licensee later in the year

This year's JCR Exec have so far produced five fantastic copies of "The Pendle Witch". The Witch Editors, Chris Hill and Jo McTavish hope to publish each fortnightly issue on the Pendle Web site as the paper copies of the publication disappear within hours of coming off the press! Special thanks for all that hard work!

Pendle continues to support collegiality at the University, next year Pendle Blocks 16 - 18 and George Fox Building will be on loan to Grizedale College until their new College is completed for the 08/09 academic year. **Peter Scullion - Principal.**

For more information on any of the colleges please visit www.lancs.ac.uk/colleges

Focus on Politics and IR



In a recent UK National Student Survey, the department of Politics and International Relations at Lancaster was ranked 1st in teaching and 4th overall for Politics Departments in the UK. The department prides itself on the varied international profile of its staff, who also range from established professors to young academics. All of us teach on the department's programmes to ensure that every student is able to benefit from our enthusiasm and knowledge.

The Department was established in 1964 as the Department of Politics and was one of the founding Departments of the University. Professor Philip Reynolds, who had come to Lancaster from Aberystwyth was the founding Head and remained as Head of Department until 1973 when he was succeeded by Peter Nailor. In 1988 under the headship of Christopher Clapham, the name of the Department was changed in order to make clear to potential applicants that we did also teach International Relations. Staff and student numbers expanded rapidly in the early days: there were 8 staff by October 1966, and staff numbers increased steadily thereafter. The Department remains a major player in social science at Lancaster, and we now have 18 full-time permanent staff teaching more than 600 undergraduates and over 60 postgraduates.

The Richardson Institute

Established in 1959 the Richardson Institute, which is hosted in the department was the first peace research centre in Britain and one of the first in the world. The Institute relocated to Lancaster in 1977, with Paul Smoker as Director who was followed by Morris Bradley, Hugh Miall and (currently) Feargal Cochrane. The Institute currently has three permanent academic staff who teach and research on issues connected with peace and conflict in the modern world. The Institute has an expanding teaching programme and in association with the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, endowed a 3-year Postgraduate Research Studentship in the field of Peace Studies/Conflict Resolution in 2006.

On Friday 13 October 2006, Mr Robert Fisk, Middle East Correspondent of the Independent gave the Inaugural Richardson Institute Peace Studies Lecture to a rapturous reception from around the 420 people. He spoke about his experiences of reporting on war for over 30 years, with a particular focus on the Middle East and US/UK policies in Iraq; his Lecture can be heard online at the Richardson Institute website. The second Annual Lecture will be given by former BBC Foreign Correspondent Mr Martin Bell OBE on 18 October 2007. If you would like to attend further details are on the events section of the Institute's website (<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/users/richinst/index.htm>.)

Our staff

Our staff are often engaged in work outside the university in addition to our teaching responsibilities and our academic research interests. For example: David Denver is an acknowledged expert on elections, who is frequently called on by the media at elections to offer commentary on election night trends, and has contributed to a number of studies by the Electoral Commission. One of our younger colleagues, Nina Caspersen was recently invited by the authorities of Nagorno Karabakh to observe their constitutional referendum, staying for three days and observing the vote at several polling stations. Nagorno Karabakh is an Armenian enclave which is formally part of Azerbaijan, but the de facto government is keen to demonstrate the entity's democratic credentials, and hence Nina joined a panel of international experts to observe the conduct of the referendum.

Christopher May has been working with the National Consumer Council on the intellectual property policy, helping to draft their evidence to the recent Gowers Review, and has also been working with Freedom to Innovate South Africa to support the establishment of open source software alternatives in sub-Saharan Africa. Amalendu Misra has briefed at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on Future British Strategy towards Central Asia, and recently gave expert advice on Rebuilding post-communal societies to the International Association for the Future of Humanity in India.

Recent and future developments

The department is always seeking ways of expanding our reach, in terms of what we research and who is taught. Currently we are looking at ways of establishing studentships to support post-graduate researchers who would like to join the department but whose financial circumstances impede their research careers. We are also part of a cross university team developing a new Masters in Public Administration and have recently initiated a more flexible student-friendly Politics Masters option that gives post-graduate students greater freedom to build a programme to suit their needs. Recently one of our post-graduate students, Luis Lobo-Guerrero launched the Biopolitics of Security network, and we now jointly host the Centre for Complexity Research, a unique interdisciplinary forum that promotes complexity sciences and applications in virtually every field of academic and policy endeavour. The network currently has over 750 members in 45 countries and in every major academic discipline, with over 25% non-academics.



Keeping in touch

We value our links with our past students, and have just started a series of workshops bringing our graduates back to the University to talk to our current students about how their degree in Politics contributed to their careers. If you would like to become part of this series please contact us, but even if you are unable to visit the department, we would value your comments for the Alumni profile section of the department's website. To keep up with what is happening in the Department please visit our website - <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/politics/>, and if you would like further information on the department, please contact the head of Department, Christopher May – c.may@lancaster.ac.uk – or the Alumni Office. We look forward to hearing from you.



LADS AND LADETTES IN SCHOOL

Since the mid 1990s there have been frequent and strong expressions of concern voiced in Britain by politicians, parents, teachers and the media about what has been referred to as 'boys' underachievement'. These concerns have been prompted largely by the existence of a 'gender gap' in examination results, and particularly by findings that more boys than girls fail to achieve A*-C benchmark grades in GCSE examinations taken at age 16 in England and Wales, and by similar patterns in Scottish examination results. Whether boys are 'underachieving' is a matter of considerable debate. Unfortunately, press reports usually fail to engage with the debate, and ignore important questions such as how is 'underachievement' defined – in relation to what or whom and why? Which boys are 'underachieving', and importantly, which girls are 'underachieving' too?

Numerous commentators have made links between 'underperformance' and 'laddishness'. For example, during his period as School Standards Minister in 2003, David Miliband argued that: 'We have to crack the lad culture that stops too many young boys doing well at school. . . . The culture tells boys that it is fine to play around and not work hard. But this harms their chances of doing well, getting their exams and fulfilling their potential.' Whilst I and many other educational researchers would take issue with simplistic claims that boys are 'underachieving', there is considerable evidence that 'laddish' 'it's-uncool-to-work' attitudes are impeding the progress of some boys in school.

Although recent anxieties about achievement have been focussed primarily on boys, there have also been concerns expressed about girls and 'laddishness'. For example, under a Daily Telegraph headline "'Ladette' culture blamed for rise in young girls being locked up" was a warning that: 'The number of delinquent girls being held in secure units is rising sharply, according to government figures that will prompt renewed concern about the impact of 'ladette' culture in Britain's schools . . . "Girls are now behaving as badly as boys...girls are hanging out more with boys and feeling they have to beat them at their own game"'.

My research explored 'laddish' attitudes and behaviours amongst 13-14 year old boys and girls. I undertook two related research projects funded by The Nuffield Foundation and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). During these two projects I generated a substantial data set: 203 pupil interviews (from 8 schools), 30 teacher interviews (from 6 schools) and questionnaire data from approximately 800 pupils (from 6 schools).

Why is this research important?

It is important to explore 'laddishness' amongst boys because although research suggests that 'laddish' cultures foster anti-learning attitudes, it is not clear why some boys so readily adopt 'laddish' behaviours. Without understanding boys' motives for adopting 'laddish' behaviours, it is not possible to challenge them successfully. Indeed, there is a real danger that current attempts by some schools to combat 'laddish' behaviour and tackle 'underachievement' actually serve to exacerbate the very behaviours that they are trying to discourage.

The inclusion of girls in the research was both novel and important. Girls have been largely sidelined in educational research, policy and practice agendas in recent years. Performance data that show that overall girls do better than boys at GCSE examinations has led many people to assume that in general, girls are fine. However, there is plenty of evidence to the contrary. For example, research suggests that: girls still feel alienated in traditionally 'male' subjects; career aspirations remain gendered; and many boys' dominant and 'laddish' behaviours can have negative effects on girls' learning.

Although some researchers have expressed concerns about the ways in which the 'laddish' behaviours of some boys might impact negatively upon the experiences and performances of girls, prior to my research there had been no exploration of whether girls themselves are adopting 'laddish' behaviours. This is despite anecdotal evidence from teachers and parents that they are, and reports in the media - such as that cited earlier - that highlight concerns about unruly schoolgirl 'ladettes'. So in my research I explored whether there is evidence that some schoolgirls are adopting 'laddish' attitudes and behaviours (becoming ladettes), and if they are, in what ways 'laddishness' amongst girls is similar to, and different from, 'laddishness' amongst boys. A crucial question as far as educational experiences and attainment is concerned is: if 'laddish' attitudes are evident amongst girls, do they incorporate the notion that 'it's not cool to work' in the same way that they do for many boys? In other words, does being a 'ladette' involve overtly rejecting hard work? Are 'ladette' femininities likely to impede some girls' progress in schools in the same way that 'laddish' masculinities are seen to do for boys?

Key Findings

The research has advanced understandings of 'laddishness' in a number of ways; two particularly significant ways are flagged here. First, both boys and girls display 'laddish' behaviours, and for girls as well as boys, working hard in school is generally considered to be 'uncool'. Second, motives for 'laddishness' are not single, but multiple, shifting, and operating at various levels of consciousness. Importantly, these motives are underpinned by both academic and social concerns.



Academic concerns

In many cases 'laddish' behaviours amongst boys and girls are motivated by fears of academic failure. Fears of academic failure are relatively common in contemporary secondary schooling; the high value attached to academic ability combined with the current, regular, high-stakes ability testing in schools is a potent recipe for fostering fears of academic failure. These fears may then prompt a range of defensive strategies that act to protect a student's self-worth by providing 'explanations' for academic 'failure' that deflect attention away from a lack of academic ability onto other, less damaging, reasons. For example, students can explain 'failure' in terms of lack of effort rather than lack of ability. These defensive behaviours include, amongst others, an overt rejection of academic work, messing around in class, and prioritising social over academic pursuits – the same set of behaviours that are labelled as 'laddish'. These strategies hold substantial appeal for students who fear looking 'stupid' as a result of (actual or potential) 'poor' test results. A pupil interviewee summed this up: 'If I'd tried my best and then I got a low mark, I'd be like I didn't try, I couldn't be bothered because everyone would think of my God, she got a low mark and she tried and everything. You'd get a bit of a reputation for being stupid.' Unfortunately, in the long-term, defensive strategies may lead to problems both for a student's academic attainment and experiences of schooling. Overall, there is a strong case for arguing that 'laddish' behaviours are motivated in part by fears of academic failure, but that is not the sole motivation.

Social concerns

Interviewer: If it was really cool to work hard in school and you got status from working hard, would you work hard?

Sandy: Yes I would, I would if it was [cool]. But because at the moment it's not, I just don't [work hard]. I don't try and I don't intend to.

'Laddish' behaviours can also be motivated by social goals because 'laddish' ways of performing masculinity or femininity are generally regarded as 'cool' and earn pupils 'popularity points' amongst peers. In other words, some students may behave 'laddishly' in an attempt to be popular, or to avoid being unpopular. Social relationships constitute a

crucial component of school life, and the consequences of social failure - frequently marginalisation and/or bullying - can be extremely distressing for students. Fears of social failure motivate many pupils to try to 'fit in' because they are afraid of the consequences of becoming unpopular.

On their own, neither academic nor social concerns can explain 'laddish' behaviours. However, by considering pupils' social and academic goals in combination, we are more able to understand the range of behaviours commonly labelled as 'laddish'.

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Carolyn's research has recently been published in a book: *Lads and Ladettes in School: Gender and a Fear of Failure*. The publishers – Open University Press - are offering Lancaster Alumni 10% off the usual price of £19.99 on all purchases of Carolyn's book until 31st August 2007. To order the book visit www.openup.co.uk or call +44 1628 502700 and quote the special offer code JACKSON for a discounted copy.

Carolyn is based in the Department of Educational Research and most of her teaching is on the Psychology in Education (PinE) undergraduate degree programme. The Lancaster PinE programme is unique. It was developed, and is taught, by psychologists who have worked in the field of education for many years and have a particular interest in using psychology to understand both how people learn and ways to improve learning. The programme is accredited by The British Psychological Society (BPS) as conferring eligibility for the Graduate Basis for Registration (GBR). For more details see: www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/edres/ or email: pine@lancaster.ac.uk

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