

University Notes

Stirling is continuing its climb up the Guardian's UK university rankings. The paper's league tables, published earlier this month, show it in 38th place overall (out of 113 institutions) - up from 43rd last year and 53rd the previous year. Stirling also fares well in the subject rankings: Education is ranked 3rd in the UK and 1st in Scotland; Media Studies, Communications and Librarianship is ranked 1st in Scotland; and Politics is ranked 3rd in Scotland.

This year the University turns a venerable 40. The anniversary will be celebrated in various ways over the coming months, but first off was a joint initiative with Dundee. Since both universities were established in 1967, the curators of their respective art collections - Jane Cameron (Stirling) and Matthew Jarron (Dundee) - arranged an imaginative swap of art works. The resulting exhibitions, held in Stirling's Pathfoot building and Dundee's Tower Foyer Gallery, were open to and enjoyed by the public during April.

Also in April, the University's Dementia Services Development Centre (DSDC) held the UK's first international conference on dementia. Entitled 'Citizenship: Responding to the Challenge of Dementia', the conference was designed for a range of practitioners from day care managers and clinical psychologists to physiotherapists and speech therapists. The fact that it was sold out indicates the high level of interest in the field.

DSDC Director Professor June Andrews said: 'A person should have rights to make choices, opportunities to express individuality and to participate in everyday life experiences. The challenge is, how can this be achieved given the progressive nature of dementia?' The DSDC also organised a recent art exhibition, which included a number of works by people with dementia, in its Frank Hitchman Gallery.

Meanwhile Dr Gordon Bell, a biochemist in the Institute of Aquaculture, has teamed up with Dr Tom Gilhooly, a GP from Glasgow, to offer patients an innovative new service testing the Omega-3 levels in their blood. The Essential Health Clinic is the only facility in Scotland to offer conclusive tests to examine the nutritional status of patients' blood and then recommend appropriate measures to treat conditions as varied as Multiple Sclerosis (MS) to depression, drug addiction to Crohn's Disease.

Until recently, the Omega-3 tests had to be sent away to a lab in the United States for analysis. However, Dr Bell offered the University's services and as a result an exciting connection has been made.

Dr Gilhooly said: 'The clinic only launched in February 2007 and we have already begun testing on over 100 samples. This means enormous potential income for the Nutrition Analytical Service Laboratories in Stirling. Because the scientists there use innovative red blood cell fatty acid analysis, this means that we have removed the need for patient fasting prior to testing from the process, which some people can find difficult.'

Dr Bell has been involved with cutting edge research into essential fatty acid deficiencies in patients with autism and those with dyslexia, Asperger's syndrome and bipolar disorder. The new business link created between the University of Stirling and Scotland's first nutritional health clinic could see up to £50,000 poured into the Scottish economy.

And more good news from the Institute of Aquaculture: funding worth £30,000 has been awarded to an all-female research

project between the Institute and the University of Karachi's Centre of Excellence in Marine Biology. The three-year project aims to strengthen teaching and research in shellfish aquaculture. As part of the programme, academics from Pakistan will spend a month on campus developing their teaching and research skills. Stirling researcher Dr Janet Brown, who will also visit their facilities in Pakistan, said, 'It makes sense for female academics to be involved in developing shellfish aquaculture, since employment prospects in the shellfish industry in Pakistan are often uniquely attractive to women.' The award was made as part of the British Council and the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan's Higher Education links programme.

The Department of Nursing & Midwifery starred in a two-part documentary screened on BBC Two Scotland in April. Nursing A Dream charted a year-in-the-life of students studying at the University's Western Isles campus on the Isle of Lewis as they endured hard work, long hours and high emotions in their journey to become qualified nurses.

As reported here before, several species of bumblebee are on the verge of extinction. Because of this, the Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT) at the University has launched a national survey, BeeWatch 2007. Ben Darvill, Director of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, said: 'The general public can do a lot to help, by planting cottage garden flowers, and by recording the bumblebees they see. Producing accurate distribution maps is a crucial step in conserving our precious bumblebees. Those wishing to take part in the survey might find the identification guide on the BBCT website useful. Bumblebees can be difficult to identify, though, so feel free to take digital photos and email them in - BBCT will identify your bees and let you know what you have.'

BBCT is also running a national trial of different bumblebee homes. They are keen to learn whether the commercial boxes are ever used, and want to test a number of much cheaper alternatives. Anyone can take part, even in the smallest gardens. More information, nest box designs and suggestions for how to get the best out of commercial boxes can be found on the BBCT website (www.bumblebeeconservationtrust.co.uk).

And finally, the 34th Dumyat Hill Race took place on Wednesday 9 May. This year's winners were [ADD NAMES AND TIMES]. The annual race was created when a Stirling academic bet £1 that 'no member of the University could, without mechanical assistance, do the return trip from the Gannochy to Dumyat in less than an hour'. The race, which starts and finishes on the University campus, is five miles long and includes 1250 feet of ascent. Phew!

PRIZE SUDOKU

Prize this time is a £25 book token—and once again there are two easy puzzles to start you off, followed by the competition puzzle, which is a bit more difficult. Closing date is June 15th, and the winner will be notified by March 20th. Entries must be on the form shown below, and members of the Bridge of Allan Times committee or their immediate family are excluded.

An easy one to get you going...

9							3	
	2	6						
7		8	2					
	8	7			1		9	
2	6		9	1		5	7	
1				7	2	4		8
		3	7		4	8		
	9			6				
	7	1		5		6	4	2

a bit more difficult...

	3	7					5	
				8				1
		8					3	4
				4				
			7					6
7	1	6		2	5			
					3		6	8
3	4		8			1		2
				5	2			

...and this is for the prize (£25 book token). Remember to complete the form on the right.

				9				
9			2	7			3	8
		4			8			7
	1							2
					5	4		
						6	7	
	3							1
		2	3	4			6	
8			9				5	

Complete the information below, then cut round the dotted lines. Post your entry to The Editor, Bridge of Allan Times, 10 Abercromby Drive, Bridge of Allan FK9 4EB. The winning entrant will be notified by June 30th 2006.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

The March Sudoku competition was won by Mr J Gilchrist, Pullar Avenue

A Century Ago in Bridge of Allan

Town Council: Proposed Speed Limit for the Burgh (June 8)

At the meeting of the Works Committee held on 25th May the question of having a motor speed limit for Bridge of Allan came up for consideration. The Clerk pointed out that while it was the duty of the Local Authority to put up caution signals where they thought necessary, any limitations of speed must be sanctioned by the Secretary for Scotland, to whom application must be made, his first step being to order an inquiry that he might be satisfied that such a limitation was necessary. The meeting did not think it proper to recommend such an application, but instructed the Surveyor to have motors passing over a measured distance in the village timed by the local sergeant of police.

Mr Blackadder, replying to Councillor Anderson, stated that owing to the unfavourable weather they had been unable to take the speeds of the motors passing through the village.

[The Provost] then read the following letter from Councillor Pullar:--

Dear Provost MacDonald, -- I much regret that I shall be unable to be present at next meeting of the Council on the 4th prox., and so shall not hear the minute of the Works Committee read with reference to a speed limit for motor cars in Bridge of Allan. I shall doubly regret my absence if the recommendation of the Committee is in favour of delay. Why wait, in this important matter, till some one has been killed or the rate-payers are aroused to present a petition which cannot be ignored?

It should always be remembered that the lives of the lieges are at the mercy, not of the majority of sensible people, but of the reckless scorchers, with their new toys, who at present have full liberty to career at the rate of twenty miles an hour down our beautiful main road, which, being intersected by so many cross roads and by-paths from the braes, is a peculiarly dangerous one. Apart from danger, the impact and suction caused by anything over 10 miles an hour are so ruinous to the road itself, and so productive of microbe-bearing dust, which rises in clouds all over the village, that these considerations alone should settle the matter.

As to red-tape technicalities, it is all nonsense to suppose the Secretary of State would allow of the 10 mile limit being applied to Tilllicoultry, Dollar, Alva, Dublane [sic], Blackford and almost every village in Perth, and deny it to Bridge of Allan.

Should the recommendation of the Works Committee not be favourable, I beg by this present to give notice that at the following meeting on 2nd July next, I shall formally move: -- That the Burgh Clerk be requested to at once take the steps necessary to enable us to pass a by-law imposing a speed limit of 10 miles an hour on all motor traffic throughout the Burgh.

The Clerk was instructed to take notice of the motion.

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