

### INSIDE ISSUE 9:

#### School updates

Research Co-ordinators give us the latest news

#### RAE 2008: the results

An institutional response to our results, and consideration of how the RAE can benefit us all

#### GuildHE Postgraduate Symposium

Timi Hyacinth reports

#### Public lectures

Reviews of some of this year's public lectures

#### Sport-in-Development

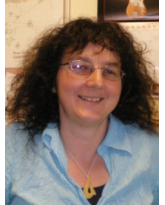
A report on Aaron Beacom's new book

The RAE 2008 is over: the results are published, the funding settlement established, and life goes on. Marjon may have come 'bottom of the league table' overall, but did so because our research strategy of the last few years explicitly set out to support research across the institution rather than by an elite few. The fruits of that approach were clearly evident in the 'research and scholarly activity' sections of the School annual reports this year, each of which included lists of publications and presentations running to 3 pages or more. Let no-one doubt that this is an active academic community! Further responses to the RAE can be found on pages 4 and 5.

There was further evidence at the first GuildHE Postgraduate Symposium (December 2008) that high quality research is not confined to the large, research-intensive universities. Post-graduates from a variety of disciplines – agricultural engineering to literature, sculpture to osteopathy – explained their research-in-progress to a friendly audience, challenging participants (speakers and audience alike) to think

beyond their disciplinary comfort zones (see report by Timi Hyacinth on page 2). For the staff who attended, the event served to emphasise the potential for the small, teaching-led institutions to support each other in our research endeavours by providing an extended 'research environment'. There is enthusiasm within the GuildHE to hold a similar event next year, perhaps running to two days, with one day for staff presentations and one for postgraduate students. The GuildHE Research Network is also exploring other ways of facilitating collaboration between institutions, principally via a bid to HEFCE's 'shared services' funding initiative. Further updates will be reported in Research Matters.

Finally, many congratulations to Professor Dave Harris on being appointed as Director of the new Centre for Educational Research, and to David Oddie on receiving an MBE for his work with the ARROW project. You can hear more from both in the Learning, Teaching & Research Conference on 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> April.



## Centre for Educational Research - Dave Harris, Director

The Centre for Educational Research was launched on 13<sup>th</sup> February. The Centre has three functions:

- A place to meet like-minded researchers and exchange ideas with them, find a mentor or a "critical friend" or a partner for collaboration
- A place to pursue some general collaborative projects: there are two suggested ones at the moment, one on the very valuable College archives, and one where all researchers store relevant material on an online research methods database
- A location for information of shared value – how to publish, get funded, present at a conference, work with the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres and so on.

The online version of the Centre is already up and running and is located on Learning Space. There are wiki pages for individual members of staff (a wiki is a webpage you can edit and use to tell your own stories – if you can type you can use one); folders on the projects mentioned above; a discussion board. We are hoping to arrange face to face meetings, presentations, visiting speakers and so on in due course – please alert students or colleagues.

Anyone who does educational research is welcome to join the 30 or so members from across the College that we have already. Contact Adam Read or myself and you will be given access as a "leader" – which means you can participate fully, and add material, and we hope you will. You are also welcome to "lurk" if you wish, until you find your feet.

## GuildHE Postgraduate Symposium - Timi Hyacinth, PhD student

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2008, Neil Trigger, Pauline Couper and I left Plymouth airport on a trip to York for the GuildHE Research Symposium. We flew for approximately an hour and a half, passing through Bristol airport on the journey to Leeds Bradford. From there we took a taxi for another hour to York St John University, the venue of the Symposium. We were among the first participants to arrive the Symposium. In attendance were researchers and research students from: Art Institute of Bournemouth; Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln; Bucks New University; Leeds Trinity and All Saints; Harper Adams University College; Newman University College; Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication; University for the Creative Arts; St Mary's University College, Twickenham; University of Cumbria; York St John University; Anglo-European College of Chiropractic; Glyndwr University; Leeds College of Art and Design; Plymouth College of Art and Design; The British School of Osteopathy; UCP Marjon and representatives from NUS, Vitae and GuildHE. The Symposium started about 11 am.

After opening remarks we had a session on Communication with Professor Frank Burnet of University of West England. Part of the presentation was to demonstrate the need for effective communication of research to end users and how little details could make a lot of difference. This was followed by a session of poster presentations by research students from several institutions. The peculiar thing about each one of us was that we had come from small research communities. The range of topics was quite diverse but being able to communicate to such a diverse experience meant you

could not take express communication for granted. I was assigned to group 1 for my poster presentation. Three halls were used for this session. The procedure was that other research students (in group 2) and academic researchers (tutors) who were in small groups of 4-6 people, were required to visit the different poster presentations and listen to us talk about our current research. About 5 or 6 groups visited my presentation. This means I spoke at least 5 different times and had the same number of opportunities to receive varying feedback and questions about my research. After each group left, I had a better opportunity to reframe my presentation, to make it more accessible to the new group and was able to highlight areas which I had overlooked. It was a non-threatening environment and participants showed a measure of interest, even in areas that were new to them. I was able to note questions and issues which I had not thought about in my research.



After lunch there were separate discussion forums for research students and tutors. All postgraduate students met together with representatives from NUS and Vitae. Group 2 had their poster presentations after this session and I had the opportunity to listen to presentations from fields I had no knowledge about. I realised how important it is to be able to communicate research to people with no specialised knowledge of that research area. I left York, happier that I had been part of a vibrant research community.

## Research Strategy Revision Update

On 15<sup>th</sup> January approximately two dozen colleagues gathered in the Lecture Theatre to begin our deliberations on the revision of the Research Strategy. The day began with a thought-provoking presentation from Professor Andy Cobb, Dean of Academic Affairs at Harper Adams University College, who reflected on the development of a research culture at his institution, which now has Research Degree Awarding Powers. The 'spectrum' of research activity at Harper Adams (ranging from scholarly activity to 'pure' research and encompassing consultancy along the way) clearly accords with our 'SandRA' diagram, and Andy highlighted the potential for student dissertations to trigger staff research projects.

Discussion in the afternoon focused on our own Research Strategy, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the 2004-9 strategy and sharing ideas about what we should be aiming to do next. Common amongst the 'strengths' were the College Awards (enabling people to 'buy' time for research), the Learning, Teaching & Research Conference, and the general encouragement to be engaged in research. There is further progress to be made in the development of research infrastructure (such as support for applying for external funding) and in defining research clusters. As for the 'wish list' of what we would like to see; that was the longest of the three lists!

Notes from the meeting will be sent to school management teams, from which Research Co-ordinators will feed back to Research Committee. There will be further opportunity to 'have your say' at the Learning, Teaching & Research Conference, and a draft revised Research Strategy will go to schools for discussion next term.

Many thanks to all who participated in the January event.

*Professor Andy Cobb, Dean of Academic Affairs at Harper Adams University College and Chair of the*



*GuildHE Research Network.  
(Photo from [www.harperadams.ac.uk](http://www.harperadams.ac.uk))*

### **Prof Dave Harris - SSPEL**

SSPEL has enjoyed a period of consolidation and progress – and one disappointment. We are pleased with the overall grading of the RAE Unit, and with the feedback we received. Obviously we would have liked to do better but this is a good result for a new entry. One SSPEL member contributed to the good results received by Education as well.

Activities included a successful School Research Day (abstracts are on the online Newsletter). Colleagues have also edited books, and published in international journals and international handbooks, online publications, and in the second edition of our own online journal. Increasingly, we are collaborating with colleagues from other institutions. Small (but welcome) funds have been attracted for projects, which often involve electronic teaching and learning. Several individuals have also completed or are about to complete research degrees.

A new development has led to a Coaching Research Forum, with the following terms of reference: The CRF will support the development of mentoring, coaching and coach education research at local, regional and national level; will have predominantly pedagogical research foci; will have three research foci: coach mentors, coaches (including coach education programmes), and athletes; will develop and enhance the reflective practice of coach mentors, coaches and athletes; will provide a forum for discussion, dissemination and collaboration with regards to the development of mentoring, coaching, and coach education at local and regional level.

The disappointment turned on the collaborative book project which finally succumbed to events (busy timetables, publisher's deadlines, coordination problems and the other familiar issues). However, something might still be rescued from the exercise, if only an increase in confidence and experience. Publishing projects now underway include participation in a collaborative book edited by colleagues in another institution, and other publications at the review stage. Applied research and consultation is ongoing as well.

### **Prof Will Large - SCCS**

Last year was not perhaps one of the most auspicious in the school's short history, and there is no doubt that the programme closures have affected staff morale. None the less, the school has achieved some notable successes in research. Although the influence of the RAE on the University College is less significant than it might be for other institutions, nonetheless we can be justifiably proud of our achievements that much of the material submitted to the different panels was rated of international standard. Moreover, the general strategic support of the University College for the development of a sustainable research environment was also noted by these panels.

Having written the section on research for last year's School Report (2007-8), I have been very impressed by both the

quality and quantity of the research that is being produced by all of my colleagues in the School and I would urge you all, if you have not done so, to have a look at this Report. Perhaps it will inspire you to do your own research next year! What is particularly exciting is that this research is springing forth from all areas of the school rather than being concentrated in one or two areas. We are all committed to the idea that research sustains and supports high class teaching, and it is important that the University College supports this into the future. I believe that the new Centre of Educational Research, led by Professor David Harris, will do so particularly in our hoped for new partnership with the Open University.

Finally, on a more personal note, I will be leaving Marjon at the end of this year to take up a position at the University of Gloucestershire. I cannot say that I am entirely happy about leaving and I do have second thoughts about it, but what I can say, is that whatever I have achieved in the years that I have been here I could not have done so without the support of the University College and my colleagues.

### **Dr Sean MacBlain - SEPD**

Much happened within the School of Education and Professional Development (SEPD) in the last year, with colleagues involved in four successful applications for external funding and producing a good list of publications. Recent authors include Annie Fisher, Robert Guyver, Sean MacBlain, Steve Pratchett, Paul Wilson and Tony Wright. Sean MacBlain and Robert Guyver set up an electronic journal within SEPD, entitled: *Critical and Reflective Practice in Education*. Volume 1, Issue 1 is due for publication this year and, already, there has been a healthy response.

Kathy Jarrett, Sharon James and Sean MacBlain set up a research group, now known as the RW Group (RWG), which meets on a monthly basis to share thoughts and experience regarding research activity and to explore ways of working collaboratively on research activities and possible academic papers. Current members of the group are: Annie Fisher, Caroline Colfer, Karen Russell, Natalie Canning, Katherine Hamley, Liz Fleet, and Robert Guyver. The group is encouraging others to join and we would welcome any colleagues who would wish to join us.

A number of staff attended regional and national conferences in order to develop their own knowledge and skills and to meet with colleagues from other institutions and backgrounds. There is a healthy foundation for the continuing development of research activity in SEPD. The School is working to develop its research capacity further and will be organizing a Research Day at the end of this current academic year when all staff will be invited to share their research interests and activities with one another. In addition staff kept themselves informed through engagement with their own research and scholarly interests and, in some cases, through completion of higher degrees. We are looking forward to an exciting year, particularly with the setting up of the new Centre for Educational Research.

**NOTE: this is an abridged version of a paper received by Academic Board on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2009.**

The results of the Research Assessment Exercise 2008 were published on 17 December 2008. On 5 January 2009, the University College received access to feedback on each of its submissions. Subject Overview Reports have also been produced for each Unit of Assessment (subject) and these have also been circulated to the staff submitted and considered by Research Committee. In the spring the RAE team will publish institutions' submissions (without personal, contractual and commercially confidential information) and the sub-profiles (except where less than 4 individuals were submitted to a Unit of Assessment) and overall quality profiles for each submission.

## Background

The University College and the Research Committee, in particular, has taken a fairly skeptical view of the RAE. However, the Research Committee was persuaded to submit to RAE 2008 by arguments that not to do so:

- might damage the careers of some academic staff
- might damage the reputation of the University College post-TDAP
- might be to give up on a potential source of research income
- might be to miss out on valuable feedback on research output.

In order to participate in the RAE 2008 and to mitigate any divisive effects, the University College therefore decided to make participation voluntary. No one was forced to take part and all those who wanted to submit were submitted. This decision was taken in full knowledge that it might affect the results and particularly the University College's place in any subsequently produced league table. In the event Marjon submitted work to five Units of Assessment in the RAE 2008, involving 16 staff.

## Analysis of Outcomes

Whatever criticisms might be leveled at the RAE, there is no doubt that it is a rigorous and potentially valuable form of peer review. The new profiles replacing a single rating tell us more than ever before. The University College, therefore, should take careful note of the results and feedback.

### 1. Research outputs

It is pleasing that, in each Unit of Assessment, there is some output considered to be of a 'quality that is recognized internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour' (2\*) and that in two there is output which is considered to be of 'quality that is internationally excellent' (3\*). This provides us with a good base on which to build particularly in those disciplines.

### 2. Research Environment

This is where the University College's submission in the main are judged weakest with only one unit being judged

2\*. The absence of research degree supervision in some Units of Assessment is clearly a critical factor here, with written feedback on three Units of Assessment commenting on this. It is important to target resources to developing this provision once a new accrediting body has been agreed.

Four Units of Assessment also comment on the lack of external research funding in their feedback on the research environment.

It is notable that three Units of Assessment identify strengths in the institutional strategy to develop research, including investments in research infrastructure and the provision of support and development opportunities for staff.

### 3. Esteem indicators

It is noticeable that the sub-profile of indicators of esteem largely reflects the assessment of the research outputs, though it is encouraging that there are higher ratings of esteem than output in some units. This bodes well for the future.

## Proposed Actions

It is important that this feedback should inform future planning. The following actions have therefore been proposed by Research Committee:

- That staff in each Unit of Assessment consider the Unit's feedback and the relevant Subject Overview report and submit a brief report to the School Management Team;
- That the School Management Team consider the report(s) from the Unit(s) of Assessment and feedback on key issues to the Research Committee via the RESCO and that this feedback be considered by the whole school as part of a school staff development event;
- That the Research Committee consider the response from schools and ensure that the key issues are addressed as part of the new Research Strategy
- That a central focus of the above discussions be on ways of developing a more vibrant research environment.

## Funding

On 28 January HEFCE issued a circular, *Funding for Universities and Colleges in 2009-10*. It indicated that activity assessed at 2\* or higher level will be taken into account in distributing mainstream QR funding. The University College will thus be in receipt of funding for research consequent on its RAE performance.<sup>1</sup>

Continued on next page...



<sup>1</sup>The March funding letter confirmed that the University College will be in receipt of £40,118 p.a.

# We can all learn from the RAE results - Pauline Couper

Marjon submitted work to five discipline-based Units of Assessment (subjects) in the RAE 2008, involving quite a small proportion of staff. However, the reports of the exercise could be of benefit to all of us in the institution, whichever discipline we locate ourselves in. The RAE 2008 was an enormous exercise, in which work across 67 discipline areas, by 52,400 researchers in 159 institutions, was read and assessed. It thus provides an overview of the state of research in the UK, and one which is potentially useful to us all.

## Subject overview reports

The output from the RAE is not just about numbers. Every Subject Panel has produced a summary report, providing an overview of research in their subject. These reports are all freely available online in pdf format. So if you want to know what the strengths, weaknesses, research gaps and big challenges are in your discipline, visit <http://www.rae.ac.uk/pubs/2009/ov/>. The list of subject areas encompasses the 'traditional academic' disciplines (such as Sociology, Philosophy and English Language & Literature) and the more professionally based subjects (e.g. Social Work & Social Policy Administration; Health Services Research). Some subject panels have also used their report to comment on trends in HE and proposals for future research evaluation more generally as well.

## Developing our research environment

The timing of these reports is perfect for Marjon, being published just as we begin to revise our Research Strategy. Most Subject Panels have provided some indication of the things they see as characteristic of high quality research environments. Reviewing several subject reports relevant to Marjon (not just from the Units of Assessment that we submitted research to, but also others that represent subjects within the institution) yields a list of 'ideal' attributes. Good research environments are likely to have:

- Graduate students & support for them, including funded studentships & Graduate Schools;
- External research funding;
- Investment in facilities & infrastructure;
- Provision for staff development and capacity building (such as support for early career researchers);
- Effective leadership;
- Coherent research groups;
- Internal peer review opportunities;
- Clear & measurable targets;
- Operational quality audits;
- A strategy for sustainability, including succession

planning;

- A critical mass of researchers;
- National & international collaborations;
- Well-established & organized knowledge transfer activities (particularly in 'professional' subjects).

Such a list may be useful as we consider our aspirations for the future.

## How to produce a high quality publication

Similarly, many Subject Panels have used their reports to explain the differences between what they have judged to be the best and the weakest published work. The most common approach to this has been to highlight the weaknesses of the lower graded work, so a review of several subject reports yields a 'miss list' – i.e. things to avoid – rather than a hit list. But such a list may be of use in helping individuals be self-critical about their work. The following, then, tend to be associated with publications that received low grades:

- Review papers that report material without developing a research agenda;
- Case studies that lack context, generality or theoretical exegesis;
- A formulaic structure (an interesting point, given that I know of at least one journal that specifies a structure for authors to follow!);
- 'Salami slicing' a research project into a number of very similar outputs;
- Work that was "unnecessarily inflected by 'fashionable' concepts which detracted from their other strengths";
- Routinely empirical quantitative work with no obvious conceptual or policy value;
- 'Thin' qualitative work with insufficient critical, contextual and reflexive rigour;
- Repetition;
- Failure to engage productively with wider conceptual and theoretical issues;
- Insufficient building upon other work / literature;
- Small scale work reflecting inward-referencing sub-communities with insufficient awareness of the generic mainstream or of relevant international developments;
- Work that is too closely tied to government and government agency priorities, with tight timescales, a focus on description rather than analysis, and limited theorization.

Clearly this is a generic list and, while it is potentially useful, you may find guidance more specific to your own work in the relevant Subject Overview Report.

## Final notes

I would like to stress again that the RAE 2008 does not, in my view, adequately reflect the range and scale of Research and Scholarly Activity in the University College, nor the recent progress made in developing the research environment. Nevertheless, it is vital that the University College continues to build on these. The revision of the Research Strategy, which was launched on 15 January, provides the perfect opportunity to ensure that this happens. Finally I would like to congratulate all the staff who submitted their work and to thank all those involved in preparing the RAE 2008 submission itself.

The second annual University College lecture series is now in full swing. In the autumn term, the two Richard Hooker lectures attracted good audiences. The lectures are jointly sponsored by the University College and the Diocese of Exeter. Whilst the series commemorate Richard Hooker, who was born in Heavitree, Exeter and wrote one of the most important books on Anglican Theology, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Policy*, this year's lectures were wide-ranging and inter-disciplinary. On 19 November Professor Grace Davie, Chair in the Sociology of Religion at the University of Exeter, compared religious attitudes in the USA and Europe under the title, *Religious America, Secular Europe: framing the debate*. She explored the apparent paradox of higher levels of religiosity in the USA compared to Europe and the absence of an established church in USA unlike much of Europe. Because of the separation of Church and State in the USA, Religious Education was not taught in US schools, unlike Europe. Interestingly, the absence of RE in the US school curriculum has led to creationism being taught in the Science curriculum! David Oddie provides an account of

the second Richard Hooker lecture are below.

In addition, the University College was privileged to stage two special events. On 26 November a preview of the film, *Heart of Jenin* (directed by Leon Geller and Marcus Vetter), was shown in the Desmond Tutu Centre. Lesley Alcock reviews the event on these pages. On 28 November the BBC's diplomatic correspondent and Marjon honorary graduate, Bridget Kendall provided a stimulating and at times humorous account of the vicissitudes of Russian politics. This lecture, entitled 'Russia and the West', was sponsored by the Caradon Trust which commemorates the late Lord Caradon. The University College is delighted to host this prestigious event every other year.

The next public lecture is on 19th March (see back page for details).

Geoff Stoakes

### **Richard Hooker Lecture by Rev Donald Reeves, Director of The Soul of Europe, 20th Nov 2008.**

The second Hooker lecture in the Autumn was given by the Rev Donald Reeves and Peter Pelz. The Revd Donald Reeves, an Anglican priest, was Rector of St James's Church, Piccadilly, London from 1980 until 1998. He was described by Margaret Thatcher as a 'dangerous man', which is the title of his shortly to be published biography. Together they run the 'Soul of Europe'.

In the early nineties the municipality of Prijedor in NW Bosnia in the Republica Srpska was a laboratory of ethnic cleansing. During that time most of the Bosniaks (Muslims), and Croats (Catholics) were removed from Prijedor. Between 3000 and 4000 people died in the course of 3 months. Many were sent to 3 concentration camps in the area. One of the camps was a steel mine near a village called Omarska. The Bosniak and Croat survivors wanted a memorial to those who were killed there - but the mine management did not want to antagonise the Serbs.

The Soul of Europe was asked to mediate in the dispute and the lecture was an account, which can be read in their book, *The White House: From Fear to a Handshake*, of their extraordinary journey of attempted reconciliation and mediation over nine intensive months. On the way they worked with deep, historically grounded mistrust and demonization of the 'other'. The moving lecture demonstrated their extraordinary perseverance and compassion and the profound courage of both Bosniaks and Serbs who were willing to engage with the process.

David Oddie

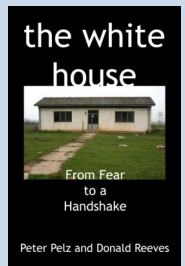


Photo from [www.o-books.com](http://www.o-books.com)

### **Film showing: *The Heart of Jenin* by Ismael Khatib and Fakhri Hamad, 26th Nov 2008**

Ismael Khatib and his colleague, Fakhri Hamad, came to UCP Marjon to launch their film 'The Heart of Jenin'. It was well attended, lasting about 180 minutes, with a question/answer session afterwards. The film told the emotional story of Palestinian boy Ahmed Khatib, 12 year old son of Ismael and Abba, shot dead by Israeli soldiers in Jenin in November 2005. Ismael and Abba donated their son's organs to both Israeli and Arab children as a

gesture of peace. The film documented Ismael's journey, from Ahmed's death to his meetings with some of the recipients, including a Jewish girl.

Having worked as ARROW Admin Support since summer 2004, I have been fortunate enough to be involved in many activities and met some interesting and inspiring people along the way. The opening of the Desmond Tutu Centre in 2006 was most memorable. The fact that this film took place here was quite poignant, really, as Ismael and Abba Khatib

...continued overleaf

were special guests at the opening event, unveiling a plaque in memory of Ahmed.

I was partly looking forward to watching this film and partly hesitant. I knew it would be rather upsetting and moving; I was not mistaken. Previously, I could only imagine how difficult such a situation must be. Not only coping with your child's death in such awful circumstances, but also the everyday atrocities and difficulties experienced by Palestinians, with the wall, checkpoints, etc. Two parts of the film immediately come to mind... The family wanted to visit Ahmed's grave to mark the first anniversary of his death; they were refused entry through the checkpoint. The other was Ismael's determination to meet the

Jewish girl, with Ismael's cousin as mediator. The atmosphere was clearly tense between Ismael and the girl's father, who had found it difficult to be thankful for the Khatibs' gesture, such is the gulf between their cultures and lives. Although the meeting was brief, there was a sense of mutual tolerance on Ismael's departure.

Although the Palestinian people have learned to live with the everyday horrors of conflict, there still has to be hope for peace.

Lesley Alcock

### **Film showing: *God is Green* by Mark Dowd, 14th Jan 2009.**

A relatively small, but clearly enthusiastic, audience gathered in the chapel to see Mark Dowd introduce his Channel 4 documentary, *God is Green*. Beginning with the premise that human-induced climate change *is* happening and that we should be doing something about it, the documentary considers why the world's religions have said so little to date on the issue, and their potential to 'spread the message' and ultimately to change behaviour. At times pointed, at times funny, the film includes some memorable moments: from a Vatican representative's claim that it produces no carbon emissions because its electricity is imported rather than generated within the Vatican, to the Bishop of London being cornered in the street and persuaded to sign a pledge not to fly for a year.



Photo from  
[www.churchtimes.co.uk](http://www.churchtimes.co.uk)

The real strength of the film, however, lay in Mark's sensitive appreciation of the subtle complexities of this enormous issue. Throughout both the documentary and the subsequent question-and-answer session he avoided the temptation of relying on an over-simplistic, 'save the planet' kind of rhetoric, highlighting instead that the 'environmental' issue is inseparable from issues of global inequalities, injustice, and cultural sensibilities. Mark is clearly not a film-maker frightened of asking difficult questions, of himself as much as of others, and he makes a compelling case for us all to do the same.

Mark Dowd is currently campaign strategist for Operation Noah (<http://www.operationnoah.org/>). The documentary can be viewed online from their website.

Pauline Couper

### **'Work and Leisure in Higher Education' - inaugural lecture of Professor Dave Harris, 13th Feb 2009**

#### **A Pleasurable Educational Excursion**

Listening to Professor Dave Harris's inaugural lecture – 'Work & Leisure in Higher Education' – evoked in me the memory of a passage from an abstruse text, *Zen in the Art of Archery*:

Is it 'I' who draw the bow, or is it the bow that draws me? Do 'I' hit the goal, or does the goal hit me? ... Bow, arrow, goal and ego, all melt into one another, so that I can no longer separate them. And even the need to separate has gone (Herrigel 1971:69-70).

My recollection, was stimulated, firstly, by an idiosyncratic association of the book's title with the McDonalds golden arches image, satirically transformed by Dave into the College's logo and used to illustrate Ritzer's McDonaldisation thesis; and secondly, Dave's appropriation of the Zen like concept of 'flow': a state in which one experiences a unity of mind and body, being and doing, whilst totally immersed within an activity. This

concept was used to argue that H.E. can fruitfully be considered, not as work, but as a form of 'serious leisure'.

The exposition of this argument was humorously made using an articulation of serious citations from Adorno, Marx, Bourdieu and Kay-Shuttleworth, and visual examples of flow in the high velocity leisure pursuits of rock climbing and motorcycling. This eclectic mix of sources supported the contention that reframing study as the active, pleasurable, character building, cognitive equivalent of an extreme sport could transcend the separation of the learner from what is learned. So, if H.E. were to become akin to a serious leisure pursuit, and flow achieved in learning and teaching, then new possibilities could emerge for personal fulfillment and for the recreation of the pedagogical relationship of lecturer and student.

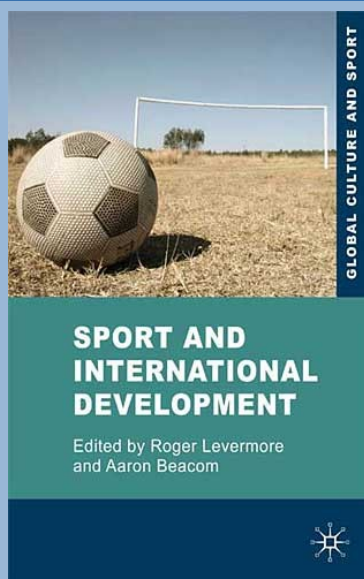
In sum, the levity and learning of this educational excursion were well received by an appreciative audience of 'cognitive tourists'.

Paul Sutton

## Launch of Sport-in-Development book a first - Aaron Beacom

Senior Lecturer Aaron Beacom (SSPEL) has, in conjunction with research colleague and co-editor Roger Levermore (University of Liverpool, Business School) just launched the first book addressing the emerging field of sport in international development (Palgrave, January 2009). The co-edited publication brings together an international field of authors from a range of disciplinary backgrounds including development studies and sociology. It provides a comprehensive and critical analysis of a new aspect of development which has evolved out of attempts by a range of governmental and non-governmental organisations (including the United Nations) to address the growing development deficit at a time when the Millennium Development Goals appear further away than ever.

The book grew out of two sessions on sport-in-development that Roger and Aaron organised at the 2007 International Studies Association Congress in Chicago, Illinois, USA. Lorna Read (Vice President Strategy and Planning for the international NGO Right to Play) notes in the Preface that 'anyone at that conference who was new to the field would quickly have learnt that, as



with other international development interventions, sport-in-development is conceived, explained, understood and practised in a variety of different ways. The objective of this book is to put sport-in-development on the map in the development literature, and to position it within the larger international development debates'. Aaron comments that the key challenge was to open up the subject to systematic analysis using mainstream development theory while benefiting from the deep understanding gained by practitioners who have been engaged in this emerging field for the

past seven years. It addresses key development concerns relating to the empowerment of indigenous communities and the challenge of effectively evaluating the impact of projects in the light of outcomes driven development policies. It includes analysis of the use of sport based projects to promote gender equality, sport and reconciliation and sport as a tool for rehabilitation in post-conflict situations.

Aaron notes that the book is proving to be a useful teaching aid for students studying international perspectives on sport. It also has cross-disciplinary application – particularly in relation to the contentious issue of evaluating development initiatives. Copies of the book are currently available in the University College bookshop. Since publication of the book Aaron has been co-authoring (with Lorna Read from Right to Play) a chapter on sport-in-development for inclusion in an international sport development handbook which is due for publication in 2010.

Levermore R. & Beacom A. (eds) (2009) *Sport and International Development*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

## Forthcoming Events

19th Mar 2009	Public Lecture: Dr Maurice Hindle - <i>Shakespeare on Film</i>	7.30 pm HDC101
26th Mar 2009	Pre-conference Keynote Lecture: Professor Bruce Macfarlane - <i>What Does it Mean to be a 'Good' Academic? Recognising the Virtues and Vices.</i>	11am – 1pm HDC101
1st - 2nd April	UCP Marjon Learning, Teaching & Research Conference - see electronic noticeboard for updates, registration details etc.	

The 2009/10 Public Lecture Series is currently being planned. If you would like to propose a speaker, please contact Geoff Stoakes.

If you would like to write something for Research Matters, or if there is an issue you would like to see covered, please contact Dr. Pauline Couper, University College Research Officer.  
Email: [pcouper@marjon.ac.uk](mailto:pcouper@marjon.ac.uk), Ext: 4321

**University College Plymouth St Mark & St John**  
Derriford Road, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 8BH

[www.ucpmarjon.ac.uk](http://www.ucpmarjon.ac.uk)