A new Imperial College School of Medicine

Imperial College is poised to become one of the largest and most important providers of medical education and research.

Just before Christmas, the governing bodies of the College, the Royal Postgraduate Medical School (RPGMS) and the Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School, on behalf of the University of London, agreed in principle to merge. Earlier in the year the National Heart and Lung Institute (NHLL) agreed in principle to merge with the College and has been affiliated with IC since last October, with the intention to merge from this coming August.

The new College, to be known as the Imperial College School of Medicine (ICoM), will be located on the South Kensington campus. It will house medical students for a total of about 3,000 over a period of 3-4 years. The existing pre-clinical departments at St Mary's and CXWSM will move into this building, which will be located between Chemistry and IC, and will be complete by 1997.

The College has recently received a full grant for a claim under its Employee Profit Sharing Plan. This claim arose from a very serious shortfall of cash and bank deposits which was discovered in August last year and resulted in the dismissal of the medical school's senior police officer.

Insurance claim met in full

The Higher Education Funding Council for England has been kept fully informed throughout and is fully supportive of the remedial actions taken by the College. A major independent firm of actuaries has been commissioned by the Audit Committee to examine the circumstances which led to the occurrence and to review the current procedures across the College.

IN BRIEF

170 Queen's Gate refurbished

Refurbishing the basement of 170 Queen's Gate has enabled the provision of additional accommodation for academic visitors. The flat has been given over to a visiting academic, who is currently on sabbatical leave, and will be ready to take up residence in the early spring.

Sherfield security

Sherfield security is currently undergoing a face-lift to provide space for new security and alarm equipment for the College's laboratories and offices. The new system is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

MRE renamed

Earth Resources Engineering is to be renamed MRE. Professor John Woods, Head of the Department, says that this, "reflects the broader range of interests covered by the Department's research and teaching." The name change comes into effect on 1 October this year.

Chairman yields

Chairman of the Governing Body, Sir Frank Cooper, is expected to stay in office for at least one more year. Sir Frank, Chairman since 1988, yielded to representations from his colleagues and allowed his name to be put forward by the Privy Council to extend his appointment.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS

Governers' lecturers join Imperial

Dr Brian Robertson takes up his new lecturership in the Department of Biochemistry.

Lord Bramall representing HM The Queen presented the 1994 Queen's Award for Export Achievement to the Rector on 2 February at 170 Queen's Gate. The Chairman, Sir Hon Sir Frank Cooper is also pictured. The College received the second Award for a 40 per cent increase in overseas earnings, derived from overseas student fees, research contracts and grants.

The College has recently received a full grant for a claim under its Employee Profit Sharing Plan. This claim arose from a very serious shortfall of cash and bank deposits which was discovered in August last year and resulted in the dismissal of the medical school's senior police officer.

EXCELLENT RATING BOOSTS MORALE

The quality of teaching in the Department of Geology has been declared excellent following a visit from the HEEFCE assessment team.

"I am most pleased because of the effect on the course, of the contribution it has made," said Michael Newbould, Head of Geology. "We are all aware that the College simply expects excellence, which is one of the reasons we work so hard. Relief is probably the dominant emotion."

The other College department to achieve this rating so far are Chemistry, Computing and Management.

In April HEEFCE are introducing a revised method of assessment, whereby all academic departments in each subject will be visited. Chemical Engineering will be the first IC department assessed using this new method.

Excellent rating boosts morale

Dr Brian Robertson

A specialist in patch-clamp techniques, he has acquired an international reputation for studies on the biophysical properties of neuronal calcium channels.

Dr Kerry Gallagher joins the Department of Geology.

He graduated with a Geology degree from the University of Nottingham in 1981 and went on to do an MSc in Geophysics at the University of Durham.

At the Australian National University, he gained his PhD on the subsurface history and thermal state of the Eromanga and Cooper basins in Australia. He worked as a Research Fellow with a Pintex Track Group at La Trobe University, Melbourne, The Open University and University College London until 1992.

Kerry joined IC from Kingston University where he was a Research Lecturer and Honorary Research Fellow in the School of Earth Sciences.

Dr Kerry Gallagher

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Medical school (continued)

Cystic fibrosis cure? St Mary's Hospital Medical School doctors have been involved in administering healthy gene tests to cystic fibrosis sufferers. This breakthrough in the search for a cure was reported in the Daily Mail on 31 December.

First place for IC Chemical Engineers

An article entitled 'Imperial is untouchable' appeared in The Times Higher Education Supplement (6 January), reporting on a US survey into the quality of chemical engineering departments in the UK. It stated that the Department of Chemical Engineering and Chemical Technology has maintained its top position for the past three decades.

Merger shock waves

The Independent (23 January) ran an article on the medical merger plans headed 'London medical schools in £60m hi-tech merger'. Professor Peter Kirkland, Dean of St Mary's Hospital Medical School, told the paper: "The traditional lobalities to individual medical schools will inevitably decline. There will be an institutional ethos cost and the merger will cause shock waves at Imperial College, but on balance there is enormous potential."

Hidden expedition broadcast

A half-hour radio programme recorded by IC students will be broadcast on BBC Radio 4. The programme documents the Imperial College Hidden Expedition which visited a little-explored area of the Indian Himalayas last summer. The expedition carried out an environmental impact assessment and made three new accommodations in the region. The programme will be broadcast on 28 February at 10.00 and 15 March at 17.00.

Prize for IC student

Physics student Karen Yass was a runner-up in the Daily Telegraph Young Scientist of the Year competition. Karen won £100 and a year's subscription to the magazines New Scientist and Nature for her PhD-wood essay 'Dark Matter of the Universe'.

Business stress

Professor Sue Bailey (Management School) spoke to BBC Radio GLR about her recent research into the stress caused by owning a business. The report was also covered by The Guardian and Daily Mail.

Jubilee tube safety

A team from Imperial College, including Professor John Buckley (Civil Engineering) are looking into tunnelling safety on the jubilee line extension. This story caught the attentions of the press on 16 January when it was reported on BBC News, Kibby and BBC Radio GLR.

If you have any interesting research you would like published please contact the Press Office on extension 46701.

Integrated teaching

Rodney Eastwood explained the concept behind integrated pre-clinical teaching at South Kensington. "Medical students will follow a new curriculum which will take advantage of the strength of science, engineering and management departments on the South Kensington campus. We can expect some medical options for scientists and engineers too. About the only thing that is certain for doctors practising in the next century is that the technology, techniques, procedures and resources they will use will be different from that used, or even known about, today. Their education must equip them to meet this challenge!"

Campus changes

The planning procedures for other buildings and departments at South Kensington. "The opportunity will be taken of moving the Department of Biology from its existing 3-F building to accommodate the new building," said Rodney Eastwood. The Department of Basic Medical Sciences, Biology, Chemistry and Biochemistry will cease "an intellectual complex of international stature".

Rodney Eastwood continued, "Best will be converted to student residences, a much better use for the building, and will provide enough additional student rooms to cope with the increased numbers. Central Libraries will be extended upwards with a medical floor and, with separate access, a lecture theatre. With Read and Pippard in Sheffield this will form a small group of central theatres."

Funding

The building project depends on sufficient funds being provided for the College to make a decision about whether to proceed with the overall scheme. Rodney Eastwood expects to know about the funding before Easter.

New Graduate School of the Environment

The Office of Imperial College's new Graduate School of the Environment (GSE) is now open. It is the focal point for information relating to environmental studies at Imperial; so aims to provide information for the department and centres within the College, outside organisations and visitors to the School. A new database will be set up to provide on-line information to network users.

Urmberella

As many of the College's departments and centres are involved in environmental related teaching and research, the School's role will be to act as an umbrella for these activities and to develop an overall strategy for environmental studies at Imperial.

Staff appointments

Janice Hankins, the GSE Administrator, or, explained, "The GSE will offer an exciting opportunity for a student to establish itself further as an international centre for excellence in environmental teaching and research."

Janice joins the College from The Chartered Institute of Management Accountancy, where she was Research Manager. The First Dean of the School is Professor John Wood, an ex-student of the College himself. Professor Woods is also Head of the Department of Mineral Resources Engineering.

The view from the tower by Don

"The Queen's Tower has one major distinguishing feature: from the top, one can get a nice superior perspective on Sheffield. Just in case anyone should think that IC Reporter is yet another organ which Sheffield has dreamt up to keep the average Don in check, this is the average Don's revenge!" While medics are merging, lenins are blustering and the Rover is rectifying, the daily chores of the average Don still need to be done. Lectures have to be perfect or the LEQs will give us sleepless nights. How can it be that six students found me inaudible when the other 36 thought I was shouting too much? Who is it that consistently marks every sheet as VPI? And then there is the Research Assessment Exercise. Everyone in the hierarchy is telling me to publish in the best journals and bring in lots of money in the few next weeks. Has the fact that you can only publish if you've done some sensible research slipped people's minds? Research needs time and money. The powers that be seem determined to deprive the average Don of both. So RAIE = Rush And (try not to) Expect. We are told to regroup as to achieve maximum strategic advantage. I'll do my best although having one or two good ideas may be more effective than regrouping in the long run. Will the old days of doing things because they were interesting ever come back? Answers on a postcard please! So am I excellent or am I excellent? I am excellent we are excellent but they are not. These are the grammatical rules of the day. Market forces they call it. Research into regrouping rules OK! But enough of the pessimistic air. There have been good things around. I thought that Ernest Gombrich's performance at the Colin Cherry Memorial Lecture was outstanding (see page three). Not much persuaded but the mental acrobatics on the subject of art and surprise were breathtaking.Cabaret: another good thing. You missed it? Be sure to support stage and music in the future - they are some of IC's larger signs of excellence, and means of relaxation. A Don's life would not be complete without a bit of gossip and irritation. The gossip: on page 12 of the annual accounts there are figures showing that some highly paid individuals operate in the College. Who are they? There will be a media hunt like that which found the £48 million lottery winner? It is rare, however, that the average Don is in the elite group so whatever the answer is, it's not very interesting. The irritation? Well, why not write on, or email, Don about them?"

You can reach Don via email is s.bennion@ic.ac.uk

The Office of Imperial College's new Graduate School of the Environment (GSE) is now open...
REVIEW

‘An Art Historian’s Debt to Colin Cherry’
Ernst Gombrich

Introduction by Professor Bob Spence and review by Carrie Galus

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olin Cherry, a man of wide scholarship and deep intellect, was Professor of Telecommunication in the Department of Electrical Engineering. He made profound contributions to fields as diverse as electrical circuit theory, psychology, and the social effects of communication. He was among the first to identify the emerging field of information theory and to point out that the human being is an integral part of a communication and should be studied for that reason. Following his untimely death in 1979 it was proposed that an annual memorial lecture should be presented to commemorate his life and work. Cherry interpreted ‘communication’ in a wide sense, and this is reflected in the choice of speakers.

The first ten speakers were technical directors of UK and US telecommunication companies. Later speakers included Richard Gregory, author of the classic Eye and Brain; Nicholas Negroponte, Director of MIT’s hugely successful experimental television media lab; and, presenting the latest ‘Cherry Lecture’, the eminent art historian Professor Sir Ernst Gombrich OM. The lectures are organised by Professor Spence of the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and take place approximately at yearly intervals.

As An Art Historian’s Debt to Colin Cherry - a review.

In the abstract, it is difficult to imagine how a professor of telecommunication could influence the work of an art historian. The first major question was: who was Cherry? The art historian is Sir Ernst Gombrich, one of Britain’s most distinguished post-war art historians. This explains a great deal. In their insistence on breaking down the boundary between the visual arts and other disciplines, both men were decades ahead of their time.

During a lecture on Tuesday 24 January, Gombrich described how Cherry’s theories of communication incorporated his own particular brand of hard-line socialism. Condemning modern society as being constricted by the propaganda machine of the media and not standing up for its rights, Benn suggested that activism was the key to social change.

In personal reservations on the European Union, however, Gombrich expressed “Symbol do not convey information in the way trucks carry coal” - a point cherry made in On Human Communication. Gombrich continued, the colour red itself has no universal meaning. The think of a child’s balloon, a traffic light, a bank statement. The person who is perceiving the colour must choose from a set of associations the one which is relevant to the situation. Gombrich also borrowed the concept of ‘redundancy’ from Cherry: the idea that in speech, very little is essential to convey the basic message. “Perhaps I understood this idea so well because for six long years of war I received foreign radio transmissions at the BBC,” said Gombrich. Just as speech depends on the context of language and conversation, so does art. Any gap in a work of art can be filled in by what we expect to be there - as an archaeologist might reconstruct a broken jug.

“Greed of art depend on this principle,” said Gombrich, “as greed of art depend on this principle.”

To the ancient Greeks, human forms drawn in flat profile probably looked natural; it only appears unarticulated because of our habit of interpreting our art in a way that is consistent with our view of the world. This is how we interpret the human figures in later Greek sculpture. Each generation of artists surpasses the expectations of the previous generation, by finding new artistic possibilities. Renaissance and Baroque are prime examples of painting that carried these expectations forward.

In conclusion, Gombrich brought up a slide of an abstract painting, which seemed to violate all his assertions. The point, he said, is that “a new arrangement of elements makes it possible to see what one has not previously thought possible.”

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Rector discourses secrecy

Members of the Board of Studies should be more open and willing to discuss departmental concerns with colleagues who happen to be present in the meetings. Robert and Alison Oxborough said last Wednesday, “people have to feel that they don’t know what goes on at the Board of Studies, and that is the problem,” the Rector told the group. It asked its members of the Board - which includes professors as well as elected departmental representatives - to spread the word about issues affecting their colleagues.

The Board of Studies’ papers are not confidential, the Rector continued, but are actually held in departmental libraries. The Rector stressed that he would like to encourage interested parties to consult the papers, and communicate their views to the departmental representatives.

In an informal poll of the College’s 30 staff members, 19 members said the Board of Studies’ papers were confidential.

Tony Benn
Alison Short reviews

The Rt Hon Tony Benn addressed the Labour Club on 1 February. In a witty and impassioned speech he outlined the lecture and sat casually on the front bench while delivering a speech which encapsulated his own particular brand of hard-line socialism. Condemning modern society as being constricted by the propaganda machine of the media and not standing up for its rights, Benn suggested that activism was the key to social change.

Personal reservations on the European Union, however, Gombrich expressed “Symbol do not convey information in the way trucks carry coal” - a point cherry made in On Human Communication. Gombrich continued, the colour red itself has no universal meaning. The think of a child’s balloon, a traffic light, a bank statement. The person who is perceiving the colour must choose from a set of associations the one which is relevant to the situation. Gombrich also borrowed the concept of ‘redundancy’ from Cherry: the idea that in speech, very little is essential to convey the basic message. “Perhaps I understood this idea so well because for six long years of war I received foreign radio transmissions at the BBC,” said Gombrich. Just as speech depends on the context of language and conversation, so does art. Any gap in a work of art can be filled in by what we expect to be there - as an archaeologist might reconstruct a broken jug.

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Rector’s comment

Sir Ronald Oxburgh outlines newspaper’s aims

I am delighted to have this opportunity of contributing to the Reuter Reports. Since arriving at the College eighteen months ago I have felt that there was gap in College life that I hope the Reuter will help to meet. It seems wrong to me that the first thing people ask themselves about the College may know of some major achievement or event in the life of the College is when they hear about it in a national newspaper. If there are important things happening in the College, I think that the College itself could reasonably expect to hear about them first.

Secondly, it is often hard to find out sufficiently far in advance about future events in the College. There is a great deal going on at the College that I hope the Reuter will help to meet. Many people are far less interested in events happening in the College. College life and work are far less interesting than in this year, and I hope that this year, and I hope that will have an impact. Many others have already written to me to say that they are interested in the College and want to know more about it. The College is full of people who are interested in the College, and I hope that this year, and I hope that will have an impact. Many others have already written to me to say that they are interested in the College and want to know more about it.

Hail and Farewell

Eric Stables

The last issue of Newsmag was distributed in May last year. Several newswriters had been too busy to ask when the next issue was coming out and to say that they would actually want to see it. The fact is that after seven enjoyable years, with the inevitable highs and lows, both editor and publication were starting to run out of steam. It had become more than apparent that the College needed a newspaper which could appear at frequent and regular intervals, which in turn meant having an editor who was able to devote more time to the job than he could.

As I did not take a proper leave of Newsmag, my successors in May, I am grateful for the chance to do so now, belatedly but with affectionate memories.

The Reuter is starting life at a time in Imperial College’s evolution when things are happening. I have no idea what the future will be, which will profoundly affect the life and work of many members of staff. A two-year flow of information and comment will be total. It is not the final metamorphosis to take place as we would all wish.

For a campus newspaper to be more than a sheet of bulletins emanating from the Administration, its editor has to have genuine freedom of control over content and style. I think Newsmag was quite rare among such publications in having an academic editor with full powers, and in being set up and distributed almost as far away from ‘Sheffield’ in house and spirit as it is possible to get.

Although the Reuter’s editor will work in Sheffield she will be able to do so in the knowledge and help of an editorial board, all of whose members are determined that it shall not become a bland official sheet, describing what one might call ‘the view from Level 5’ (though I’m sure it’s a more interesting view).

There is no point in controversy for controversy’s sake. But as well as knowing what’s going on around us, we need healthy debate and comment and for this the cooperation of readers and correspondents in departments is essential.

If I could be the editor of my Right Godsmother, I would confer on her the power to extract long-promised (and well-written) copy from the minds of would-be contributors without it having to run physically through their word processors. A sort of psychic email. Unfortunately we are not yet quite there, but this is one of those things we will have to have in mind as the years go by. I hope that this year, and I hope that will have an impact. Many others have already written to me to say that they are interested in the College and want to know more about it.
San Francisco to host alumni weekend

Plans are well advanced for a second alumni weekend programme, to take place in San Francisco, 8-10 September this year. Last September IC held its first weekend gathering for alumni in Washington DC. Over 80 senior alumni and their partners attended the programme which opened with a reception hosted by The British Ambassador and Lady厦turbick. A seminar 'New technologies and life in the 21st century' was introduced by the Rector.

More than 100 alumni are expected to attend the September programme. Distinguished alumni and academics will lecture on biomedical, environmental and management topics. One or more of the presentations will be topical - for instance, Imperial College has acknowledged expertise on earthquake engineering.

Any members of staff who anticipate joining us in San Francisco are urged to contact Clive Oakley on 61625.

Balloons, bubbles and boomerangs

March

College Events Friday 18 March St Mary's Gospel
Deadline for copy Please send your contributions to Patricia Dymond at the Medical School.
Friday 17 March The launch of National School of Hospital within the Health, Centre extension 49775.
17 - 18 March BAYSDAY
Further information from Melanie Thody Schools Liaison Office, extension 580423.

DEPARTMENTAL EVENTS

Wednesday 14 February Art exhibition 'Deafness and Dystrophin: Mouse Models for Human Disease'.
Sarah Brown, Professor of Genetics, To be held in the Cockburn Lecture Theatre at 17:00.

LECTURES

Wednesday 22 February Inaugural lecture: Alan Bat Noy 'Mystery, Mechanisms and Methods of General Anaesthesia'. Nick Frank, Professor of Biophysics. To be held in the Blackett Laboratory Theatre 1 at 17:30.
Thursday 23 February City & Guilds Centennial Lecture 'Aesthetics in Engineering'. Professor Anthony Ninhoc (Department of Mechanical Engineering), To be held in the Core Lecture Theatre at 18:00.

MEDICAL

Thursday 23 February Stop smoking group Held weekly for five weeks from 12:30 to 12:45. For further information contact the Health Centre. extension 47375.

MUSIC & HUMANITIES

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Lectures are free, all welcome. Further details from Dr Janet Smith, extension 48812.

DEPARTMENTAL EVENTS

Tuesday 14 February Management School Alumni Association AGM.
To be held in Room 202, Management School at 18.30. Further details from Helen Freeman, extension 49135.

Wednesday 22 March Welcome Research Centre Symposium - From Epistemology to Molecular Biology. Five Years of the Wellcome Research Centre for Parasitic Infections. The symposium will take place in the Clare Lecture Theatre from 10.30 to 17.45.

27-29 March International Engineering Structural Geology in Reservoir Characterisation and Field Development Further information available from Professor Coward, extension 46460.

29 - 31 March Biology 2000 - a special series of lectures, demonstrations and visits designed for first-year A level biology students. Organised by the Department of Biology with support from ZENICA PLC. Further information from Dr Ana Yeo, extension 45755.

LECTURES

Thursday 16 March Eighth Schrodinger Lecture 'Should Science Studies be X-rated? Revisiting the Pasture Case on the Centenary of his Death'. Professor Bruno Latour To be held in the Great Hall, Sherfield Building at 17:30.

Lectures are free, all welcome. Further details from Dr Janet Smith, extension 48812.

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Are you going to Japan?

South Kensington Kai, the informal College alumni association in Tokyo, is anxious to raise the profile of IC in Japan and promote research collaboration between the College and Japanese universities. The association has a number of members influential positions in Japanese industry and government.

IC Forum

The group is keen to organise a programme of talks at three- to four-month intervals in Tokyo. Extended IC Forum, the talks would be given by College members visiting Japan. The Rector said, "It should be possible to cover any additional costs incurred through staying on a day or so longer than otherwise".

Research funds

"This seems to me to be a very good and relatively painless way of promoting the College and possibly finding new sources of research funding," he continued.

As many of you know we have several alumni working for the British Council in Tokyo and Bust Cohn, the IC Forum Coordinator at the Embassy is also an alumni. They are very supportive of an initiative of this kind and will help to make it work.

If you do have a Japanese trip planned within the next six to nine months and would be willing to give a talk on your work, please drop a note or email to gwen wolfe or telephone her on 071-594 6133, extension 46133.

ANNUAL REVIEW


BOOK REVIEWS

Books written by staff members will be reviewed by IC Reporter. If you would like your book reviewed please contact Victoria Bonning on extension 46697.

IC Reporter

IC Reporter will be published fortnightly during term time. Contributors are asked that their draft should be received by Tuesday 21 February. These can be sent via email or internal post (Room 546a, Sheldon Building) Extension 46697. Fax 0 71-594 6700. Please note the editor reserves the right to cut or amend the articles as necessary.

Information correct at time of going to press.