

Knowledge Strengthens the Core

In the last few issues of RISE we've brought you research news on the activities of Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga and Dr Richard Haigh from the Centre for Disaster Resilience one of the University's research centres from the School of the Built Environment.

The Centre for Disaster Resilience research work had achieved the honour of being identified as one of the five academic partners of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) Campaign. Dilanthi and Richard have recently been further honoured by being appointed as Advisory Panel members of the UNISDR. Individuals are appointed as Members based on their expertise and recommendations from partnering organisations in the Campaign, Dilanthi and Richard are the only panel members representing the academic community. The overall goal of the campaign is to achieve resilient, sustainable urban communities, with a growing number of local governments that are taking actions to reduce the risks to disasters, to invest smarter in risk reducing measures, to better prepare for, better respond to and recover from disasters. In line with the UNISDR Resilient Cities Campaign, The Centre held an International Workshop on Disaster Risk reduction and Resilient Cities in Batticaloa, Eastern Sri Lanka in June 2010. The workshop held discussions around establishing continued academic support and deliverance of national and international collaborative research support to encourage future research proposals in support of the UNISDR campaign.

Whilst in Sri Lanka Dilanthi, Richard and part of the Salford Centre team (Dr Chaminda Pathirage and Dr. Kaushal Keraminiyage), were invited by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to facilitate an International Training Workshop on Disaster Risk Assessment and Management for the Coastal Zone of Sri Lanka: Developing a knowledge base on Hazards, Vulnerabilities and Capacities for Disaster Risk Reduction. Several sessions were led by Salford team members such as: knowledge management and best practice sharing in disaster risk management; concept of empowerment; use of virtual networks and other mechanisms in capacity building and risk reduction. A further two training workshops were also led by the Salford team encompassing the concept of stake holders in disaster risk reduction and management and capacity building for disaster preparedness and reconstruction.

Chaminda and Kaushal were in Sri Lanka to not only take part in the provision of workshops but as part of their Vice Chancellor's early career Scholarship data collection activities and they both emphasized the importance of the opportunity they received from UNDP to be facilitators of this international event. The Salford Disaster Centre will continue its research work in Sri Lanka, indeed is working towards a further major initiative lead by Chamber of Construction for Sri Lanka, on the use of construction craftsmen programmes for Conflict Transformation commencing in November 2010.

If you would like to know more about the research in the Centre contact Richard at: r.p.haigh@salford.ac.uk



USA conference and potential new partners

Dr. Bingu Ingirige of the School of the Built Environment, here at the University, was recently awarded an international travel grant from the Royal Academy of Engineering to participate at the International Conference on Innovation in Architecture, Engineering and Construction (AEC) 2010 held at The Penn State University, USA.

Bingu co-chaired a special session on innovations in construction e-Business at the conference and met with leading academics and industrialists, discussing potential collaborative research initiatives with key conference delegates, including Professor Chimay Anumba, the Conference chair. Bingu's current research interests are around IT collaborative environments and knowledge transfer.

He has published and secured research funding in areas of project and organisational collaboration leading up to industry level collaboration. At an industry level, Bingu has secured EPSRC funding to improve small business collaboration in facing up to extreme weather events – a major stakeholder engagement initiative.

If you would like more information on Bingu's research contact him at: M.J.B.Ingirige@salford.ac.uk

Crescent Network

The Crescent Network, a network for early career researchers continues to develop and expand. Now with over 60 members, it is attracting members from all the HEIs in the Greater Manchester region.

Set up in Jan 2010 to offer early (and not so early) career researchers a resource where they can begin to create a public engagement profile, it also contains information on public engagement grants and training opportunities. More recently, the Network has begun to offer its own training events delivered by members of the network. Always pleased to welcome new members, and given that August is generally a quiet month at the University, now is the ideal time to join if you are an early career researcher who may or may not be thinking of pursuing a career in academia. Just visit <http://crescent-network.ning.com/> and sign up – it is easy to do and you will be contacted by a network representative within 48 hours to see how they can support you.

The network aims to encourage its member to support each other so if you feel you have a skill that is related to public engagement and would be happy to share it with others, or if you need any more information on the Network contact Caroline Whalley at:

C.Whalley@salford.ac.uk

Crescent
Network

From Dartmouth to the Oxford Union

Professor Eric Grove, School of English, Sociology and Contemporary History at the University was recently asked to substitute at the Oxford Union debate for his old friend and radio colleague, Christopher Lee, author of 'Sceptred Isle', the popular and very well received history of Britain. Eric Spoke for the proposition 'This House believes that the British Empire was a good thing.'

Eric's side arguing for the point was led by Lawrence James, a well known Imperial Historian, and Conservative politician Kwasi Kwarteng. The opposition was led by Churchill biographer and former Keeper of the Churchill Archive Centre at Cambridge, Piers Brendon and Piers was supported by the television historian Professor Michael Wood and His Excellency Wajid Shamsul Hasan, High Commissioner of Pakistan. Sadly, Eric's side lost!

Eric's major research interest is the Royal Navy linking into his former role as member academic staff at the Royal Naval College Dartmouth. He first met Christopher when, as Defence Correspondent for the BBC, the latter was researching a programme on Nelson. This contact also led Eric to be a regular contributor to Sitrep, a defence current affairs 'round table' produced by Chris for the British Forces Broadcasting Service. Eric not only researches into naval history and contemporary security matters, but is also the Director of an enterprise centre, the Centre for International Security and War Studies, whose activities include visits by the Chiefs of Staff and lectures by distinguished speakers at Imperial War Museum North.

Appointed as one of the historians on the ITN Factual/Channel 4 'Hunt for the Hood and the Bismarck' Eric had to spend a month at sea finding and examining the wreck. On this expedition much new knowledge was gained especially about the catastrophic loss of HMS Hood. This resulted from a journal article and a chance meeting on a train! Since then, Eric has become a confirmed 'teledon' on naval matters and last year was involved in helping make a number of programmes. The most notable was with National Geographic Television who came to England with their American and Japanese experts to utilise Eric's expert knowledge for a major programme on Japanese submarines.

Eric says of his old time friend and media colleague Christopher, 'my high profile - and my performance in Oxford in February can be traced to that meeting long ago with Chris at Dartmouth and his kind patronage since'.

If you would like to know more about Eric's research contact him at: e.grove@salford.ac.uk