The building plans are almost at the end of the tendering process and the predictions are that we will get a good price for the building work - ie significantly less than the estimated price at the RIBA Stage E design stage. We are hoping that the builders will be on site in June 2009.

The Duke of Devonshire hosted a dinner for the Patrons of the Sheffield Institute Foundation and the Vice Chancellor Professor Keith Burnett at Chatsworth on 23rd March.

We will have a visit from Doug Oppenheim and some of his colleagues from Hutton Collins scheduled for Tuesday 2nd June. Doug was one of the intrepid members of the South Pole Expedition which has raised almost £750,000 for the SITraN project.

Diaphragmatic pacing for neuromuscular respiratory failure We have in Sheffield inserted the first diaphragmatic pacing devices to help MND patients with respiratory muscle weakness. These patients are the first in the UK to have access to this intervention (which was used to help Christopher Reeves after his spinal injury). Chris McDermott, Pam Shaw, Theresa Walsh and Alison Proctor have developed this project. Funding was provided by our local Neurocare Charity and we received skilled help and support from Consultant Surgeon Roger Ackroyd, Consultant Anaesthetist Linda Englert and visiting surgeon from the Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland USA, Ray Onders. Funding for a multi-centre trial led by Sheffield has been applied for from the NIHR HTA scheme.

Charitable Run.....

Richard Mead ran the Sheffield Half Marathon with a team of people from the Motor Neurone Disease Association. His target was 2 hours and he completed in 1 hour and 52 minutes 37 seconds coming 1967th out of 5500 participants.

Richard said 'It was my first stab at something like this and a hot day, so very pleased with my time, the last two miles were tough but it was a fantastic experience. I want to say thanks again to everyone who sponsored me and helped raise nearly £500 for the MNDA. Also a special thanks to Dan Blackburn for the encouraging support on the way. Assuming my knees hold out, I will be going again next year and if anyone wants to join me you are more than welcome.'
A warm and slightly belated welcome to Dr Scott Allen and Ms Lynn Duffy who will be working with Andy Grierson and Pam Shaw on the EU Framework 7 Mitotarget project.

Myrthe Hartgers is a visiting medical student on a research elective from the University of Amsterdam.

Conal Devlin, Clinical Lecturer in Psychiatry, will be replacing Daniel Tsoi who left for senior lecturer/consultant post earlier in the year; he will be organising the undergraduate teaching in psychiatry and pursuing research in religious delusion formation.

PhD studentship awarded to Miss Jadwiga Nazimek, who will start in July 2009, supervised by Professor Woodruff and Dr Hunter.

Glyn Hallam, Research Associate on the ESRC funded 'EROS' grant. This is part of a multi-disciplinary grant across UK academic departments that intends to identify the neural basis of emotional understanding of other people’s mental states.

Psychiatry were awarded an Academic Clinical Fellow in 2009 and look forward to Laurence Lewis-Hanna starting with us in August. He will be researching auditory hallucinations.

Congratulations to:


Congratulations to Sian Barber who has been awarded a Yorkshire Enterprise Fellowship from Yorkshire Forward from 1st April for 1 year. The Fellowship includes £10,000 to support research into anti-oxidant therapies for MND, a personal business mentor with commercial expertise, and training in business finance, accounting, and management of intellectual property.

PhD Awards

Warm congratulations to:

PhD awarded to Yiota Christou "Generation of motor neurons from embryonic stem cells" - supervised by Peter Monk and Pam Shaw

PhD awarded to Alice Brockington “Investigation of the role of dysregulation of vascular endothelial growth factor in the motor neuron degeneration of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis” – supervised by Pam Shaw.

Grants Awarded:

Oliver Bandmann, PI and Heather Mortiboys have received Dr Hadwen Trust for Humane Research award for £49,895: Fibroblasts as a new disease model for Huntington’s disease

Pam Shaw and Laura Ferraiuolo jointly with Catarina Bendotti Mario Negri Institute Milan, received a MND Association award £170,750 to study the gene expression profiles in two mouse G93A SOD1 mouse models showing strain specific differences in motor neuron disease phenotype.

Steve Wharton was awarded a grant for £5000 from the British Neuropathological Society. Title: “The role of oxidative damage to nucleic acids in the pathogenesis of motor neurone disease”.

Other Achievements:

Janine Bijsterbosch, an MRC funded PhD student with us, was awarded top marks in the 2009 Medical School First Year Research Presentations.

One of the recent BMed Sci students in Psychiatry Molly Douglas, won first prize for an oral presentation of her work at the Annual Academic Faculty of the Royal College of Psychiatrists Conference. She was the only medical student in competition with all UK psychiatry research trainees. She also now Chairs the student-led initiative, the Psychiatry Society, within the Sheffield Medical School.

Dr Tom Farrow from Psychiatry and Dr Andy Grierson from Neurology have been promoted from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer for 2009.

Professor Woodruff was appointed to the Academy of Finland, 2009. He continues to serve on the Clinical Interview Committee of the Wellcome Trust; and was appointed as Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee of the Academic Faculty of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. With the formation of this faculty, Psychiatry has, for the first time, had formal academic representation in
the UK. This role is important for developing strategy for enhancing academic careers in the specialty.

With thanks to Beverley Nesbitt and Martin Brook who, with support from secretarial and technical staff, have taken forward our refurbishment programme of the Lecture Theatre and SCANLab within Academic Clinical Psychiatry.

Dr Birkett and Mandy Shepherd who organise the MRCPsych Course are pleased to announce that the pass rate for the last exam was 70%, well above the national average.

**Neuroscience Summer Ball:**

Just to remind you that the Neuroscience Summer Ball is Saturday 6th June, at the Hilton Hotel, Sheffield, ticket prices £33 each for 3 course meal etc. If you haven’t got your tickets yet, see Adrian Higginbottom or Lorraine Henery.

If you have any news items for the June Neuroscience News can you please let Lorraine Henery have them by Friday 5th June: L.Henery@sheffield.ac.uk.