

S1

The Newsletter for all
SchARR graduates
Issue 2 November 2007



School expands to fill the space available

SchARR is set to finally achieve a long-held ambition: a single building for all its staff and students.

From early 2008, the School will get the extra space it needs in Regent Court to enable everyone to work together for the first time. Currently, we have to use offices in three other buildings.

The move follows the departure of Her Majesty's civil servants from space on the first and second floors. SchARR takes over these offices, which will mostly house staff in open-plan rooms. In addition, there will be two new large teaching spaces for classes of up to 100. In future, most SchARR courses will be taught on the Regent Court site

Beneficiaries

Postgraduate research students will get a new suite on the ground floor, to replace the rooms they have at New Spring House. The main staff beneficiaries will be Public Health and Mental Health, who currently occupy use Portobello and the Innovations Centre.

When SchARR was founded in 1994, it was housed in the new Regent Court, a high-quality building in the emerging West St campus. When staff moved in there were no internal walls, and the Dean and deputy Dean had desks in the corner of one vast room!

New VC considers devolution plans

Vice Chancellor Professor Keith Burnett has made a mark in his first month in the University with proposals to strengthen the University Faculty structure. Faculties will get executive control over budgets and will be able to respond more quickly to opportunities.

The VC has set up a group to work on the plans, which will report to the Senate by the end of 2007. SchARR is represented on the group through Professor Allen Hutchinson, who is the current Dean of Medicine.

Professor Burnett was head of Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences at the University of Oxford before becoming the Sheffield VC on 1 October. An eminent physicist who worked in the US and Imperial College before Oxford, he was awarded a CBE in 2004 and elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 2001.

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Out into the wide, wide world

Another year begins and for our graduates, a new stage in their lives is also starting. We extend our congratulations to all, writes *Sarah Barnes*.

The academic year for our postgraduate students came to an end on 30 September, and with exam boards held last month, there will be a new cohort of alumni when graduation ceremonies are

held in January. But for one group, there was a twist. Our first cohort of EuroPubHealth students left the University of Sheffield for their second year destinations – to Jagellonian University, in Poland, the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, or the University of Rennes or National School of Public Health, France.

They celebrated the completion of their year with an international themed party in Krakow (see page 3), where the students prepared food from their own countries and some performed traditional dancing.

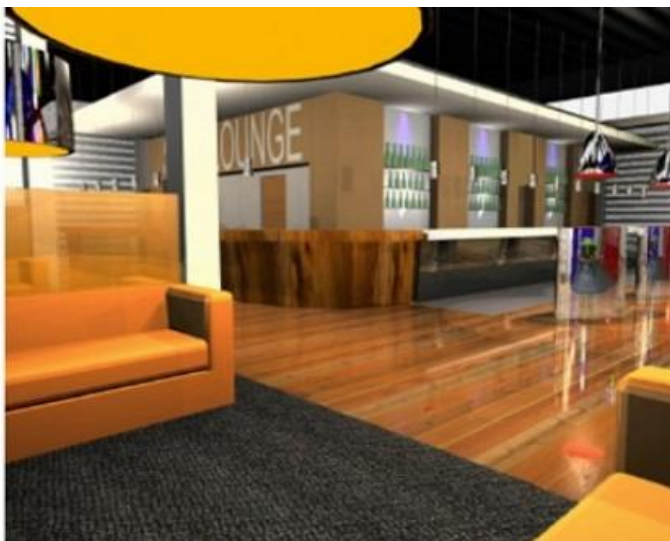
We are confident they will be successful, high achievers and, of course, excellent ambassadors for the University of Sheffield. Whether you are continuing your studies, or starting a new job, we wish you all the best for your careers.



Ying Wu (left) and Hong Chen serve their speciality

Student village opens its doors

A four year project to provide state-of-the-art housing for Sheffield students is nearing completion. The Endcliffe student village opened its doors last month, with stunning new accommodation that updates the halls of residence. The village provides en suite rooms within student flats, a social centre ('The Edge'), and free wireless internet access for residents.



Experience is everything

There's more to a good course than a sound curriculum. S1 met SchARR postgraduate tutor Carolyn Czoski-Murray to find out why SchARR takes the 'student experience' so seriously



A jar of instant coffee almost led Carolyn Czoski-Murray to turn her back on Sheffield for good. 'It was 1990, and Sheffield seemed a very depressed city. My husband was offered a job here as an anaesthetist. He phoned me from the *Red Deer* and I was gutted. I was living in Edinburgh, which was a cosmopolitan, buzzing city.

'I can remember my horror at going into a café here for a coffee and seeing a jar of *Mellow Birds* instant next to a kettle!' She used to read reviews of Edinburgh life written by a friend, bemoaning the evils of Starbucks coffee. 'I'd think: Starbucks! Yes! Please!'

Her path from then to now reads like a study in serendipity. Carolyn did a BA in Scottish History at Edinburgh, working as a nursing auxiliary during the vacations. When a lack of jobs put paid to a career in teaching, nursing seemed a good option. So in 1990, with the move imminent she took a job at the Northern General hospital pre-operative assessment clinic. 'It was very innovative and I had a lot of ideas and felt very frustrated about how to make it work better.'

Secondment

She was doing an MSc at Sheffield Hallam University by then and became interested in doing research. Then a secondment came up at SchARR on a project about the reduction in junior hospital doctors' working hours. 'One of the areas was pre-operative assessment, so I knew something about it'.

She got the job. 'I felt I was thrown in at the deep end, and had a few sleepless

nights, and very much learnt as I went along.' A long-shot bid to the Health Technologies Assessment programme was successful, and that created a job for her at SchARR. She withdrew from Sheffield Hallam and took our MSc in Health Services Research instead.

Complicated

Currently she works on projects with a focus on health and employment. 'I don't do a lot of complicated modelling, I do patient elicitation work and direct health economics work with patients measuring and valuing health outcomes'.

Carolyn's infectious good humour, Scots brogue and appetite for caffeinated beverages ensures she's a familiar figure in SchARR's corridors. But it was the launch of the MPH that led to her appointment as postgraduate co-ordinator. 'Until then, we'd had mostly home students who could relate to us easily. Overseas students can feel like fish out of water, and it's more difficult for teaching staff to be aware of their needs.'

She sees her role as familiarising SchARR students with British academic culture, and providing a more informal way to meet each other and their teachers. 'People from a different educational tradition from ours sometimes find it harder to be friendly and sociable with their teachers, and I'd like to encourage people to feel we are collaborative and work as a team. We can also learn a lot from our students' knowledge and experience of other health care settings.'

Overseas students can be surprised by the informality in SchARR, says Carolyn.

'You get invited to call your tutor by their first name! And we don't use didactic lectures and exams, and that's challenging for some.'

But she says most students quickly adapt, although our academic traditions do pose some challenges. 'Some people may think it very respectful to quote hugely from a respected author, rather than turning it into their own words. We would consider that plagiarism.' We can help students learn that we value their opinions too, and that these form an essential element of a discursive piece of work like a dissertation.

Bonfire

Carolyn also runs a busy social programme for SchARR postgraduates and was busy planning a Bonfire Night fireworks party. 'I've been scouting around for a venue, as the quad here is probably out, maybe St George's. And then pile back here to Regent Court for parkin and hot chocolate.'

She's also trying to sort out a visit to one of those very traditional British things, a pantomime at Christmas. 'And the students want an evening where they all bring along something to eat from their own countries. We hope to do that in December.'

What had been the impact of the MPH on SchARR? 'I think it's been a real catalyst. For a long time we have been saying we need to internationalise our curriculum. The penny has now finally dropped and people are making big changes to their teaching, to make it relevant and cut out the cultural references to *EastEnders*. Now I'd like to start getting our former students to come back and describe their experiences working in their own countries, some of which are very challenging.'

Carolyn is inspired by her task, and upbeat too. 'I think the key is never be complacent, to listen, to get feedback and continue to address the issues'.

What's more, with Sheffield café culture booming, getting a decent cup of coffee is no longer a problem.

Nick Fox

Picture: Sarah McEvoy

Dr Sarah Barnes: our alumni co-ordinator

Dr Sarah Barnes is now SchARR's alumni co-ordinator. Sarah's a Sheffield alumna herself, with a BA in Psychology (1998) and a PhD from the School of Architecture and Sheffield Institute for Studies on Ageing (SISA) in 2003. She joined SchARR last January as a lecturer on the MPH. 'SchARR Alumni is a great way for former students to keep in touch with the School and each other', Sarah told S1. You can contact Sarah by e-mail at scharralumni@sheffield.ac.uk



Regent Court Circular

Thumbs up for new courses

SchHARR's new courses have boosted our postgraduate numbers once again, with both the MPH (Health Services Research) and the MSc in Psychotherapy Studies offered for the first time.

The MPH (HSR) is aimed at health care professionals or budding researchers who want to gain expertise relevant to both public health and traditional health services research. Most of the students have experience working in health-related research, the healthcare industry or medicine:

The MSc in Psychotherapy Studies appeals to those working in mental health. Options now include units from the MA in Psychoanalytic Studies.

New route to a doctorate

Also on the up is the new route MPH. This is a four-year integrated doctoral programme, in which students follow the one year MPH with a PhD. This year, four students have enrolled for the programme.

A strength of the new route PhD is that it develops the breadth as well as the depth of students' expertise in their chosen subject area. During the doctoral phase, transferable skills are enhanced through an integrated programme of generic and research training units. These include communication skills and the commercialisation of research.

SchHARR applies psychology

A new interdisciplinary collaboration between SchHARR, the Department of Psychology and Clinical Psychology Unit opens its doors in November.

The Centre for Psychological Services Research (CPSR) is led by Professor Michael Barkham and members include SchHARR professors John Brazier and Glenys Parry.

Psychological services research combines the techniques and disciplines of Health Services Research and psychological research, with the aim of improving decision-making, quality and outcomes of services treating psychological problems.

Mark of distinction

Professor Mark Hawley joined SchHARR over the summer. His area of research is the use of technology to deliver health and social care interventions in the community, including assistive technology, telecare and e-health. Previously Mark was director of research at Barnsley Hospital, but has been a visiting professor at SchHARR for some years.

Get more SchHARR news from our web site: www.shef.ac.uk/scharr

Alumni News

Clare Bale (MPH 2007)



Clare completed the MPH this year and has been awarded one of the two SchHARR Economic and Social Research Council studentships to study for a PhD.

'My first degree is in Communication Studies, quite far removed from public health. However I hope to be able to draw upon both areas during my period of study. I am really interested in the impact of popular culture upon adolescent sexual health, said Clare. 'Much of the sexual health policy documentation 'alludes' to media impact, but there is little research in this area, particularly on the new brand of material emerging in magazines such as *Nuts* and *Loaded*, and music videos.

'My PhD will focus on the rise of this 'normalised' and

increasingly socially acceptable material and its impact on adolescent sexuality and sexual behaviour.'

There's some continuity for Clare as her supervisors will be Paul Bissell and Barry Gibson, who taught her on the MPH!

Isobel Duckworth (MPH 2006)

Isobel is studying for the Faculty of Public Health membership exams in Yorkshire and Humberside NHS.

'I choose the MPH at SchHARR as the content was relevant to support the Faculty examination. I studied with other public health trainees and we were the first ones to take the part-time course in 2004'

Isobel expects to gain her membership in 2009.

Clara Mmata (MPH 2006)

Clara is now working in Leeds, at the headquarters of the NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care. The Information Centre adopted some of the information-related functions of the former NHS Information Authority

and the statistics and information management functions of the Department of Health, including social care.

'I lead a hardworking team of information analysts, who are responsible for producing vital public health statistics on topics like workforce, contraception, immunisation, and cancer screening', said Clara.

'I worked in the NHS for five years, initially as a health care assistant, looking after patients and pro-



moting their health. I met many poorly patients with communicable and non-communicable diseases, and got increasingly concerned about the threats to the overall health of populations. This led me to aspire to train in public health and epidemiology. I firmly believe many diseases can be prevented and eliminated if only we work harder and continue developing this important profession.'

EuroPubHealth students party in Krakow

The first EuroPubHealth students moved on in August from SchHARR to the locations of the second year of their programmes. They celebrated with a party in Krakow, and course director Paul Bissell and Petra Meier flew out to help celebrate.

Pictured (left to right): Anil Vaidya, Anees Abdul Pari, Tarang Sharma, Pavel Ptyushkin (Granada), Ying Wu and Clara Ebegbare.



My SchARR ...

A Personal Look Back by Dr
Sheetal Parekh (MPH, 2006)

The offer letter from the University of Sheffield was the fulfilment of my dream of studying at a UK university. Sheffield had always been my first and only choice. Studying at one of the most prestigious universities made my studies special, but moreover the style of course delivery, staff with expertise in a relevant field and the whole MPH package made it a unique learning experience.

The earlier days as I remember were very exciting as well as challenging. As an international student it was more difficult in these first days to adapt to the new environment and teaching methods. Allen Hutchinson was particularly concerned and helpful about this and always encouraged us. Also, if it hadn't been for Charlotte Hollins life would have been much more difficult, as she was the first point of contact for all sorts of queries.

Alluring

As Ijaz Choudhary has mentioned (S1, spring 2007) the whole experience of studying at SchARR was memorable and I could not agree more with this. In addition, I enjoyed the "Principles of Health" module the most, as I was totally allured by the teaching style and presentation of Kevin Smith. I must mention here that each module was well structured and designed to meet our needs.

The most critical part of any course is the dissertation, but thanks to Allen Hutchinson and Paul Ward, we started to prepare well in advance. This helped us build a well organised timetable and made the task much easier. My dissertation supervisors Andrew Booth and Chris Carroll were extremely supportive and helpful.

The abstract for my dissertation on 'Effects of dietary/nutritional interventions in the development of risk of multiple sclerosis: a systematic review' has been recently selected at the 1st World Congress on Controversies in Neurology (CONy).

Informative

The SchARR library is a great resource, not only in terms of books and journals but also the staff. My personal sessions with Claire Beecroft and Angie Rees were highly informative and they were always very helpful. I can begin my career as a researcher with complete assurance, as I am very confident about literature searching as a result. The research methods module in the first semester has also been an asset.

I have started my research career at the University of East Anglia, as a research associate with Dr Robert Fleetcroft and Dr Nicholas Steel. I worked on a project commissioned by the Department of Health entitled 'Potential population health gain of the Quality and Outcomes Framework'.



The report has been recently submitted, and we are also planning an abstract for the Madingley conference in Cambridge. I am currently working with Fujian Song and colleagues on a systematic review of publication bias.

In conclusion, I would say to anyone who is thinking of a career in research that I definitely recommend SchARR's MPH. It's exactly what you need to build your skills as a researcher.

Tell us about your time at SchARR! Send 500 words and a recent picture to S1, at scharralumni@shef.ac.uk

Keep in touch!

If you're reading this, then hopefully you are still in touch with SchARR, and the University of Sheffield.

We are keen to make sure we don't lose contact with our graduates. So here are some of the things you can do to make sure we stay in touch .

1. Make sure we have an up-to-date e-mail address. You can send your e-mail address to scharralumni@shef.ac.uk If you change your e-mail address, make sure you let us know!
2. Use 'Sheffield Reunited' to create a profile of yourself, so your old colleagues can keep in touch.
3. Send us some news about what you are doing. We will consider any news for publication in S1.
4. Become an **alumni contact** for your year . You will be our link with other students in your year. To become a contact, simply let Sarah Barnes know at the address below.
5. Let us know details of any of your former friends and colleagues from SchARR student days who are doing interesting things or making a mark, whether its in their professional or personal lives.

E-mail: scharralumni@shef.ac.uk

Alumni Organiser: Dr Sarah Barnes

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