



The Global
Academic
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S1

The Newsletter for all
SchARR graduates
Issue 4 November 2008

EUphoria lifts our new Erasmus graduates

See inside for full story and more pictures



Welcome to this issue of S1

Dear alumni

Once again autumn is here at Regent Court, which means the start of a fresh academic year with new SchARR students, and some new programmes.

But it also means a successful conclusion for over 100 new graduates from SchARR courses. Over the past few weeks, the examination boards have been meeting, sifting the results and awarding degrees. As ever I was impressed by the outstanding work of our students, both in course work and dissertations.

So if you are a new graduate, welcome to S1 and the SchARR alumni organisation. For those of you who have been part of the SchARR alumni family for while, I hope that life is treating you well and that you remember us in Regent Court from time to time.

This issue of S1 celebrates some of the stories from the lives of our graduates and our staff. I hope you enjoy it.

Nick Fox, Director of Teaching

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We visit Rennes to celebrate our first Europubhealth graduates

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Five Ways to Keep in touch

1. Make sure we have an up-to-date e-mail address, so if you change your e-mail address, let us know!
2. Use 'Sheffield Reunited' to create a profile of yourself, so your fellow graduates can keep in touch.
3. Send us some news about what you are doing. We'll consider any news for publication in S1.
4. Become an alumni contact for your year. You will be our link with other students from your cohort. To become a contact, simply let us 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.

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Graduates re-EUnited in Rennes

Over the summer, the first cohort of EuropubHealth (EPH) graduates were honoured at a ceremony in the French city of Rennes, writes Petra Meier.

It was an emotional as well as a multi-lingual ceremony, as graduates received their EPH certificates in front of academics from the six consortium partners, as well as the family and friends who had come to celebrate with them.

Unique

And for Sheffield EPH students it was a chance to catch up with colleagues who had spent their second year studying in France, Denmark or Poland.

Graduating from the two-year programme was the climax of a unique MPH degree that

allows students from around the world to experience two different approaches to public health. The first year spent in Sheffield or Granada is complemented by a second year in a different European city. This makes EuropubHealth unique, providing a richness of personal experience and cultural diversity.

S1 offers its warmest congratulations to our latest graduates, as they begin a career that will benefit from the links they gained with other students and professionals during their two years in Europe.

Delighted

But some have clearly decided they like the English weather so much that they can't bear to leave! We're delighted to welcome some EPH graduates back to SchARR, where they've started work for a PhD or as researchers.



Developing an interest



ScHARR's students hark from all four corners of the globe, so making our courses internationally relevant is a priority. S1's Richard Cooper met Graham Jones, the man behind the popular Inter-national Health Policy and Systems unit, and the School's latest endeavour, the MPH in International Development.

Pictured: Graham Jones (right) with Gambian literacy facilitators

Could be that internationalism is in Graham Jones' blood. His father was a sea pilot, and Graham found his sea legs in the merchant navy, managing a touring theatre company in the 1970s. 'I took the opportunity to travel whenever I could', he recalls, and his trips included China, at a time when foreign visitors were first permitted entry, and many countries in Latin America.

Pace

A change of pace took Graham into the National Health Service (NHS), and he turned his hand to a variety of policy-related managerial positions for almost a quarter of a century, ending up as director of a health authority. After seeing considerable change in this time, he decided to leave: 'I wanted to spread my wings. I'd always been fascinated by having more time to think about what you do. The problem with being an NHS manager or policy maker is it's such a relentless pace'.

A part-time Masters in Public Administration at Warwick gave Graham the space he needed, and more opportunities for travel. He was in Washington when Hillary Clinton was trying to reform US health care, and

South Africa during the Johannesburg Earth Summit. But it was the Gambia that was to be the setting for his dissertation, about organisational and social learning in rural African communities.

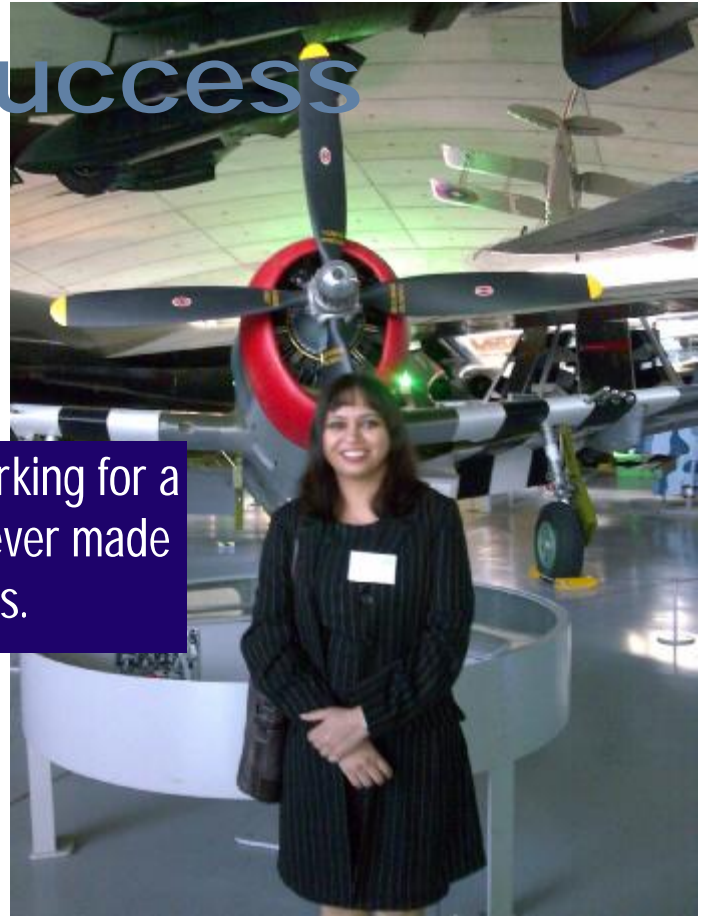
During this time that Graham began to reflect on the differences between his experiences of healthcare in the UK and those of other countries and developing countries in particular. 'When you're in the NHS, all the problems and trying to do something to solve them seem overwhelming. But if you look from the perspective of somewhere like South Africa or sub-Saharan Africa, actually the problems are very trivial. I wanted to move beyond the parochialism of NHS issues'.

Perspective

Following his studies, Graham gravitated toward academia, with various consultancies and a job teaching public policy at Derby University, before joining ScHARR in 2004 to teach on the Health and Human Sciences degree. He feels that

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Propelled to Success



Harpreet Brar (MPH, 2007) is now working for a Primary Care Trust. But she almost never made it to SchARR in time to start her studies.

When Harpreet got her offer to study at Sheffield she was over the moon, as she'd applied very late and thought she'd have to wait a year to begin. 'Sheffield was my only choice in the UK to study public health,. SchARR offered the best research-based learning experience.'

Harpreet is now working for Peterborough Primary Care Trust, as a health improvement practitioner, and she believes the MPH gave her the skills to put the principles of public health into practice .

Tools

Looking back she says she enjoyed the entire course. 'I found health promotion, health protection and health needs assessment particularly helpful for my work. The health promotion module provided me with an introduction to contemporary health behaviour models, and taught me how these relate to key public health issues.

'A major part of my work now is to influence people with long term health conditions to change their behaviour, adopt healthy life styles and take control of their lives.'

Harpreet says the health needs assessment module helps her identify unmet healthcare needs within the

population. 'I find I'm applying lessons I learned in the classroom in practice every day'.

Even those aspects of the course that she did not appreciate at the time (and Harpreet singles out formative assignments!) are proving useful. 'Now I feel I have learned important skills like team-work and presentation'.

Memories

Harpreet says she has fond memories of her time at SchARR. 'Everyone was very helpful and supportive, whatever my questions.. 'During my first few weeks in Sheffield, Charlotte (Hollins) was my life-line. She helped me a lot in settling into a new environment, and was my first point of contact for any information'.

Nick Fox

Graham Jones: continued from page 4

he brought 'practical real world experience to the academic process'.

Now also teaching on the MPH, an interest in Paulo Freire's work made the connection to health literacy, and how individuals and communities can improve their own health. 'It's about people's own knowledge and cultural traditions and about Western medicine. How these two interact or don't interact, and the kinds of synergies that are possible.'

Graham links his academic interests to much more practical contributions to international development. He is a trustee of an NGO that has promoted literacy in Ghana, Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Cameroon, and is co-founder of the interdisciplinary IDEAS project, which explores information literacy in development contexts.

These activities have informed his popular MPH course on international health policy and systems, which he teaches with Sarah Barnes. This has been based on work in the Gambia, Zambia and Kerala, and the role of the World Bank and Global Fund..

Now Graham is leading on SchARR's latest venture, a new MPH in International Development, which will address the public health issues in development. A feature will be placements in development organisations, and Graham is keen to hear from alumni who might host or benefit from these.

SchARR will launch the MPH (International Development) in 2009, in collaboration with the Geography department. Enquiries about the programme to scharrtu@shef.ac.uk



A step into the real world

Tom Sunderland (Health Economics and Management, 2007) has been working at the large pharmaceutical company Boehringer Ingelheim in Bracknell since March 2008.

Tom studied on the BA Economics course, but it was quite late in the day when he first encountered health economics, when he took Aki Tsuchiya's third-year unit.

'I wasn't too sure what path to follow within economics, and had quite a few options. Then I saw the MSc in Health Economics and Management, so I looked into potential careers and realised that health economics would be an interesting and diverse field to work within'.

During a placement at another pharmaceutical, Schering-Plough, Tom built an economic model that was used in a subsequent Health Technology Assessment report.

When he finished his MSc, he considered studying for a PhD, but then decided to take his current job, to join the 'real world'. Tom told S1 that he's loving the work.

Engaging Moves

Carol Robson (Health and Human Sciences, 2004) now runs her own consultancy *ENGAGE WITH*, providing equality and diversity training to business. She was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce in 2006.

Recently Carol also conducted a small research project on gender identity disorder (GID) in children and adolescents, looking at how schools, health professionals and friends reacted to people with a diagnosis of GID.



Kaushik stays on

Kaushik Chattopadhyay (EPH, 2008) has just finished the two-year EuroPubHealth degree, which he thoroughly enjoyed. Said Kaushik: 'this most exclusive of courses has made me competent in various fields, from public health to international culture.'

But Kaushik (pictured above) is not taking a breather from his studies, as he is about to start doctoral research in SchARR, having been awarded a University of Sheffield studentship and fee scholarship.

His research will be on an Ayurvedic (traditional Indian) medicine, and he'll be supervised by Stephen Walters. He says that he's looking forward to returning to the school as a research student.

Re-birth for a Sheffield landmark



Latest addition to the University estate is the former Jessop maternity hospital, a Victorian building that was the birthplace for generations of Sheffield citizens. Re-furbished and shorn of its ugly later extensions, it will eventually house the Music department when completed later this year. The Jessop is just across the road from SchARR, so for staff born in the one-time hatchery, maybe its true that all roads in life lead back to where you started out!

Picture: Richard Cooper

Unspeakable contract

And the award for the least memorable name for a research contract goes to ... the Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Research and Health Care. Or CLARHC as we have learn to know and love it.

What's behind this unlovely name, however, is a prestigious £20m new NHS research and development project, in which SchARR is a key player.

The CLARHC is one of seven similar groupings funded by the National Institute for Health Research.

It will develop new areas of research between the NHS and the Universities involved around topics including diabetes, obesity, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, tele-health and health inequalities.

If the shoe fits ...



Speaking of which ...

Warm congratulations are in order for SchARR alumni co-ordinator Sarah Barnes, who gave birth to Gabriel on 20 October. Sarah will be back in the New Year. Until then, Richard Cooper has stepped in to cover the role of alumni co-ordinator.

Its official: we're still getting better!

Ok, so we know it's embarrassing always blowing our own trumpet. But once again, things are going great for SchARR's programmes.

First of all, its been an exceptional year for our MPH degrees, with more students than ever before, and numbers 20 per cent above our target. Especially pleasing is the success of the new Management and Leadership MPH, with 17 students for its first intake.

Second, the work we did to improve the student experience is paying off, with satisfaction ratings at an all-time high. Quality as well as quantity ...

A Personal Look Back by Dr Liz Croot (MMedSci 1998; PhD 2005)

One of my first memories of the University was going to CICS to get a programme to teach yourself to type. And it turns out you can teach yourself!

What I most remember about the MMedSci in Primary and Community Care was how well organised it was. I recall how safe and protected it was too. It was a small class and we were well looked after.

One thing that stood out were the two lecturers on the education module, the way they role-played what they were trying to teach. I remember twigging what they were doing and thinking 'Oh, that's clever'. It was a very soul-searching, touchy-feely approach.

Also, a session with a film about Julian Tudor-Hart doing research on this patients and we were all saying what a great idea it was, and then at the end the lecturer said 'Oh, I'm really disappointed in you all, he was a paternalistic autocrat!' and that made me think 'oh yes I suppose he was!'

I didn't have any thoughts of doing a PhD when I finished, except that I'd enjoyed it. I went to Bangladesh for two years, and it was then that I decide to study for a PhD. It was seeing the institutional racism in the UK health service that made me want to do the research.

It was a fairly obvious topic for me, because I wanted to look at how physiotherapists worked with ethnic groups in the UK, and how Pakistanis are treated. Is there a real difference in belief systems about disability, or is it a mix of poverty and racism that causes the chasm between some health professionals and some Pakistanis?

In fact I found that poverty and personality were the major factors, though there is institutional racism. For example, you don't book patients for a therapy session on Christmas Eve or Boxing Day, but it's seen as a nuisance if Pakistanis get booked in at *Eed* and then want to cancel.



Being back in the University was exciting and challenging, and it was good to work with interesting and interested people. It was different with longer gaps between supervision, so I needed to be self-disciplined. I had more time to study than on the MMedSci too, as I didn't have to work alongside my studies, thanks to a fellowship.

The high point of my PhD was talking to the families in my research, definitely.

One of the low points was going to print out the final draft and make copies up at the Northern General. It was a Saturday and when I got to the building, the alarm was going off. I arrived as the same time as the security staff, we went in and there had been a flood on the top floor. The ceiling had come down and there was water dripping through, and I can remember begging this fire safety officer to let me photocopy.

She said 'you're doing it at your own risk' and 'its electrical' and so on. She did let me do it, but all the time I was thinking 'This can't be happening!'

**Tell us about your time at SchARR.
Send 500 words and a digital photograph to scharralumni@shef.ac.uk**