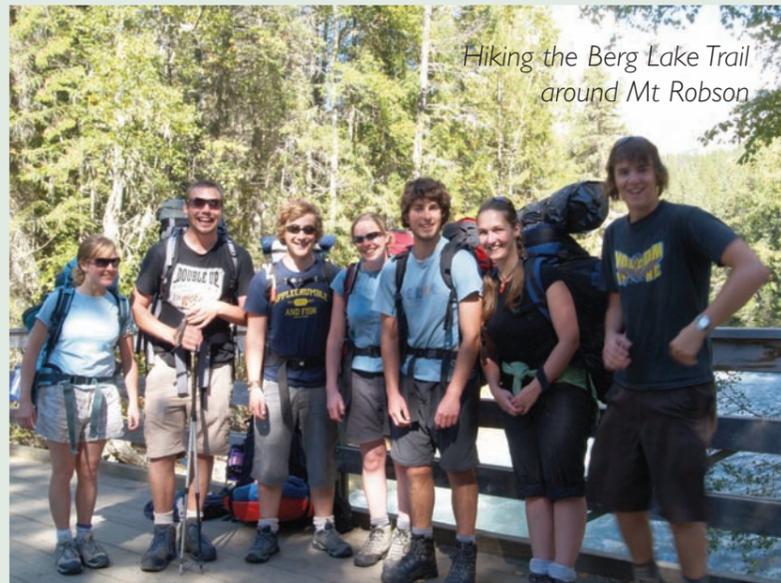


Canadian summer

Over the summer, eleven of our students participated in work placements in British Columbia, facilitated by Dr. Simon Boxall (SOES) and Dr. Terry Curran (IOS). Seven students worked with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada at the Institute of Ocean Sciences (IOS) on Vancouver Island, two others were based at West Van Labs, Vancouver, and two more at the Pacific Biological Station, Nanaimo, British Columbia.

The six-week IOS placements involved students working on projects spanning a wide range of hydrographic and oceanographic disciplines, including sediment classification, mapping and zooplankton taxonomy - a fantastic opportunity to work alongside distinguished Canadian scientists, some of them Nobel Peace Prize winners! The students were involved in field work ranging from research cruises aboard Canadian Coast Guard Ships to Arctic expeditions, and



Hiking the Berg Lake Trail around Mt Robson

following the placement they even had time to explore more of Canada - surfing on the Pacific coast and hiking in the Rockies...great fringe benefits!

Touring UNCW's Centre for Marine Science

Ocean and Earth Science

This newsletter is published by the School of Ocean and Earth Science at the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton (NOCS)

The School offers undergraduate and postgraduate training across the full range of Ocean and Earth sciences with an Excellent grading for teaching quality and a Grade 5A in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise.

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Autumn 2007

soes news

News from the School of Ocean and Earth Science at the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton



NOCS: the place to be seen!

Recently the prestige of the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton (NOCS) has been emphasised by a continuous stream of distinguished visitors. During the Results Day BBQ in June, our Final Year students were surprised not only by their degree results, but also by a visit from "blond ambition" himself (as the *Independent* would have it!), Conservative MP and then Shadow Education Minister, Boris Johnson. Whilst Boris happily quizzed students about their experiences during their degree courses, in answer to one of his more tongue-in-cheek questions, Professor Andrew Roberts pointed out that, "No, you couldn't solve the problem of rising sea levels by drilling a big hole at the bottom of the ocean!"

We've also been visited by members of the House of Commons Science & Technology Committee: the Chairman



Phil Willis MP, who was at NOCS in July on a fact-finding mission to learn more about the strength of marine science in the UK, and Dr. Des Turner MP, who visited at the end of August; the top brass from the Geological Survey of China visited in October; other distinguished visitors have included Professor Lord Robert May, formerly the Chief Scientific Advisor to the Government and a past president of the Royal Society, who was a guest speaker at our Friday seminar series, and last but certainly not least, the Duke of Kent, who visited to learn more about our research and facilities.



Students benefit from donors' generosity

An innovative transatlantic student and academic staff exchange programme has been made possible with the largest individual philanthropic gift ever received by the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton (NOCS), the UK's leading centre for marine science.

Through the generosity of Dr. Dennis and Joan Gillings, the Gillings Family Foundation will award £250,000 to fund the five-year exchange programme between the University of North Carolina Wilmington's (UNCW) Center for Marine Science (CMS) and University of Southampton's School of Ocean and Earth Science.

The first students from Southampton to participate in the exchange programme are Martyn Papworth and Kris Stevenson. They will travel to UNCW in early 2008 and spend the Spring studying at UNCW/CMS. Martyn and Kris are enrolled on the Master of Oceanography with study in North America programme at Southampton.

The new gift will expand an exchange programme (initiated by another gift from the Gillings Family Foundation in 2006) for a period of five years, and will involve both undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as a week of field-based training at the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences (BIOS).

Professor Andrew Roberts, Head of the School of Ocean and Earth Science, said: "We are thrilled with the Gillings Family Foundation's investment. Students are at the heart of what we do at the University and the Gillingses' generous support will give us the opportunity to internationalise our students' experience and to build a culture of philanthropy at the Oceanography Centre."



Student-centred facilities

The dawn of the 2007/8 academic year saw the completion of our new Student Centre, a complex of eco-friendly facilities which include a quiet study area furnished with an internet café in addition to myriad laptop connection points, a 'conference' room equipped

with a plasma screen to enable students to practice presentations or hold discussion meetings - and a Common Room boasting a 40inch plasma screen and a snooker table. This £250k suite of rooms is further evidence of our commitment to using funds from top-up fees to provide additional student-centred infrastructure for NOCS-based students.



On the IMarEST of a wave

The quality and standing of Oceanography and Marine Biology teaching at SOES was acknowledged in August when all of our degree programmes received accreditation by the national professional body responsible for benchmarking these

subject areas, the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST). This recognition

means that all SOES degrees are now fully accredited by their respective professional bodies, as our Geology and Geophysics degree programmes received renewed accreditation from The Geological Society of London in 2006.



Bolivia or bust

Last summer, Third Year Geology student James Bryce participated in an expedition to the NW Bolivian rainforest to locate and survey 'Itturalde', a suspected meteorite impact structure. The structure was first located by LANDSAT in the 1970s, but two previous NASA expeditions had failed to reach the crater or produce results due to the remoteness of the locality.

As an integral member of an Anglo-Bolivian military expedition and drawing on mapping by the UK Hydrographic Office and the help of Bolivian locals, James was able to access the crater on foot; he was involved in conducting a gravimetric survey, and obtained rock and soil samples both from the crater and the surrounding forest and savannah areas to bring back to SOES for analysis.

"Despite running out of water and food, needing to rebuild a bridge from scratch, and one of our guides sustaining a serious spider bite, we were able to extract safely after the eight-week expedition", stated James - as though these were everyday eventualities! Who knows, perhaps an equally adventurous opportunity might come your way if you decide to come to Southampton?



"I'm sure that impact crater was here somewhere!"

Easing the transition to university

Our second annual Induction Week was declared an enormous success by the new First Years, who found themselves involved in activities as varied as geological fieldwork at Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door, sea survival training in the university pool, navigation skills development on Southampton Common and team building events around NOCS.

During the sea survival sessions the students had lots of fun "throwing" themselves into the water (... look straight ahead and just step off!) and clambering into the raft. They also practiced righting the upturned raft and moving around as a group (doing the "crocodile") in the water.

With such tasks as 'The Marble Run', the team building sessions proved especially popular, being not only excellent fun and a chance to meet other new students, but in some cases student teams even beat the staff performances in the same tasks when they trained as facilitators!



The fun and mayhem of Induction Week activities!

