Dr Zoe Robinson has been appointed as Director of Education for Sustainability, to provide the lead for integrating sustainability into the Keele curriculum and student experience. Professor Marilyn Andrews (PVC for Education and the Student Experience) said: “This role has been created to help Keele achieve its goal of becoming an ‘environmentally aware and sustainable outward-facing campus community’ and to help embed sustainability into the student experience through the Distinctive Keele Curriculum.”

Despite being the most prevalent and commonly recognised problem experienced in relation to alcohol, alcohol hangover has been a neglected part of the alcohol research scene until recently. The funding, worth £148,975, will allow important research to be carried out, improving the understanding of the alcohol hangover. Dr Owen will take up her post in August 2012.

CUSAC MEETING AT KEELE

The seventh CUSAC (Commonwealth Universities Study Abroad Consortium) members meeting brought together some of the 46 members’ institutions at Keele to hear presentations on Evaluating Student Mobility. Staff from Queen’s, Canada; Keele and Kingston, UK; Cape Coast, Ghana and Ilorin, Nigeria, presented on a range of topics including ‘Nurturing Diverse Needs among Study Abroad Alumni’ and ‘The Study Abroad Alumni and their Influence on Teaching and Research in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana’.

CUSAC awards bursaries to undergraduate students spending a semester or year at another CUSAC member where a bilateral agreement is in place. Keele students have benefited from the bursaries when studying in Canada and Australia and South African and Australian students have benefited from the scheme when studying at Keele. CUSAC is now moving into new directions offering members the opportunity to organise short-term summer programmes for undergraduates from CUSAC members and expanding the bursaries to postgraduates.

EU funding for alcohol hangover research

Dr Richard Stephens, and Dr Jim Grange, of Keele’s School of Psychology / Centre for Psychological Research, have secured an EU Marie Curie Research Fellowship to allow Dr Lauren Owen from Swinburne University of Technology, Australia, to come to Keele for two years to carry out research assessing the cognitive consequences of the alcohol hangover. Despite being the most prevalent and commonly recognised problem experienced in relation to alcohol, alcohol hangover has been a neglected part of the alcohol research scene until recently. The funding, worth £148,975, will allow important research to be carried out, improving the understanding of the alcohol hangover. Dr Owen will take up her post in August 2012.

JAPAN SOCIETY FOR PROMOTION OF SCIENCE VISIT TO KEELE

The Director, Professor Kozo Hiramatsu, and International Programme Coordinator, Polly Watson, and Yuta Matsuo and Ryoko Kaga, from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) visited Keele to hold a funding programme information event. JSPS is the largest funding organisation in Japan to support basic scientific research, supporting researchers at all stages of their career, larger research projects and international seminars and conferences, in all fields of ‘science’, including the humanities and social sciences.

The event, hosted by Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise, Professor Mark Ormerod, pictured, covered current funding programmes and opportunities for research collaboration with Japan, and was aimed at colleagues interested in developing or enhancing research links with Japan and obtaining funding to develop existing collaborations and establish new ones. It was very well attended by academic staff and research managers from all five Research Institutes.

The event was one of a series of initiatives aimed at raising internal awareness of research funding opportunities and Keele’s external profile with research funding bodies and external organisations.
Top research appointment for primary care director

Professor Elaine Hay, Director of the Arthritis Research UK Primary Care Centre at Keele, has been appointed as an NIHR (National Institute for Health Research) Senior Investigator.

Senior Investigators are the NIHR’s pre-eminent researchers and represent the country’s most outstanding leaders of clinical and applied health and social care research. Senior Investigators are fundamental to the formation of the NIHR Faculty.

She was one of 25 new appointees announced after the latest annual competition. A total of 54 Senior Investigators were appointed, including 29 reappointments, bringing the number up to 208. The competition received 177 applications, including many from current Senior Investigators wishing to continue in the role for a second and final term.

An independent expert panel advise on the appointments, which are made according to criteria of quality and volume of internationally excellent research; its relevance to patients and the public; impact on improvements in healthcare and public health; impact of their individual research leadership; engagement of patients and the public, and engagement of healthcare policy makers and planners with their research.

Keele University 50th Anniversary Sculpture Commission

A design by Diane Maclean, which has the working title, ‘Forest of Light’, has been chosen as Keele’s 50th Anniversary sculpture that will be at the centre of the redeveloped square at the heart of the campus.

A forest of slim gleaming stainless steel columns of varying dimensions, interspersed with circular stainless steel insets in the ground, 50 items in total, commemorate the 50th anniversary of the University. The walk-through installation, composed of multiple pieces, reflects the open nature of the University, its many disciplines and the different backgrounds and countries around the world from which students are drawn.

The columns of varying dimensions are spaced out in a circular arrangement, with the tallest in the centre. Circular stainless steel insets, 200mm in diameter, form an outer circle or are interspersed among the columns. Cluster LED lights set in the ground shine through and reflect on the many angled surfaces of the columns.

The columns are square section, with a combination of polished and brushed reflective surfaces.
National Collection status for Keele flowering cherry trees

The University has achieved the prestigious award of National Collection status for the flowering cherry trees on the campus.

The award, bestowed by Plant Heritage, is for our collection of 240 varieties of cherry trees planted across the campus. Only seven other universities hold National Collections and most of those are in the Russell group.

While many of the trees are still young, the collection builds upon the long history of cherries on the campus, using the expertise of Chris Sanders, a noted plantsman, and members of the University Arboretum Committee. It has been partly funded by Plant Heritage but primarily by generous donations of alumni in memory of John Ivinson, and by Philip Davies and his family.

As well as making the campus visually stunning in the spring, the collection is primarily of scientific use, acting as a reserve for unusual and little-known varieties. Material has been supplied to national nurseries, The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and the Natural History Museum, London. The website, run by Dave Emley, School of Physical and Geographical Sciences, attracts attention from around the world.

The curator for the collection is Dr Peter Thomas, School of Life Sciences. Further information can be found at: www.keele.ac.uk/arboretum/trees/cherries/

Keele in strategic international alliance in regenerative medicine

Biodesign, a major collaboration initiative funded by the 7th framework programme of the European Commission, has held its ‘kick-off’ meeting in Stockholm with the aim of developing methodologies using functional materials potentially with stem cells, and growth factors, to encourage the body to heal itself.

Biodesign (www.biodesign.eu.com) is an international alliance of 21 leaders in the field of regenerative medicine. Co-ordinated by Professor Jons Hilborn, from Uppsala University, the international partnership brings together groups from leading European, Israeli and Malaysian academic centres, small companies and large medical device companies, of which Keele University and Professor Alicia J. El Haj, pictured, is a partner.

Biodesign aims to stimulate technological innovation, translation of research, transfer of knowledge and technologies within Europe.

Specifically, the research aims of the project are to (i) develop new strategies for a more rational design of ECM mimetic materials serving both as gels and load-carrying scaffolds, (ii) link novel designs to adequate and more predictive in-vitro methods allowing significant reduction in development time and use of animals and (iii) evaluate these concepts for musculoskeletal and cardiac regeneration.

Keelelink and Keele Student Ambassador Awards Ceremonies 2012

Keele University’s Schools and Colleges outreach programme, Keelelink, hosted their 4th Annual Awards Ceremony. This year’s ceremony saw the addition of a celebratory lunch and presentation to reward the excellence delivered by the team of 252 Keele Student Ambassadors.

The Student Ambassador Awards were followed by an evening of entertainment and dinner in Keele Hall, to celebrate the ongoing excellent work of Keele academics for their work on Keelelink activity, and to champion Keelelink’s strong relationships with its 201 partner schools and colleges.

As well as the three course meal and awards such as ‘Academic of the Year’ and ‘Keelelink School of the Year’, the attendees, including local dignitaries and young people from regional schools, were entertained by the nationally recognised Break Dancers of St. Margaret Ward Catholic School & Arts College and Blythe Bridge High School’s Junior Orchestral Choir.

Keynote speeches for both ceremonies were delivered by Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost, Rama Thirunamachandran and Pro Vice-Chancellor for Community and Partnerships, Kevin Mattinson.
Keele backs Diamond Jubilee Pageant

Keele is an associate sponsor of a unique steam narrow boat that will represent Staffordshire in the Diamond Jubilee Pageant this summer.

‘President’, the world’s only surviving steam-powered narrow boat, part-built in Staffordshire, will represent the county in the 1,000-boat flotilla on the Thames on 3 June. The historic vessel will join The Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant as part of a seven-mile long procession of Dunkirk little ships, historic vessels, steam boats and tugs. At its centre will be a royal barge, decorated in red and gold, carrying the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

Her Majesty’s Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire, Ian Dudson, who is also Pro-Chancellor of Keele University, said: “The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Pageant will be a day long remembered in the country’s history. Staffordshire has chosen to use the occasion to highlight the importance of canals to our industrial development and the products for which the county is famous. There are more miles of canal in this county than in any other and so it will be very fitting that Staffordshire will be represented by a boat that symbolises this.”

The picture shows Pro Vice-Chancellor, Kevin Mattinson, at a send-off for President from the Etruria Industrial Museum in Stoke-on-Trent.

BUDDING ENTREPRENEURS OFFERED CHANCE TO GROW AT KUSBP

Three ambitious start-up companies have been selected to join a two-year business growth programme at Keele University Science and Business Park (KUSBP) giving them access to new office space and tailored advice on sales, marketing, HR, performance and strategy. The successful budding entrepreneurs will move into the new Nova Centre, located near to the University entrance.

They were chosen following interviews and reviews of their business plans, carried out by a steering group, comprising Professor Mark Ormerod, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise, Lucy Delaney, Business Development Manager at KUSBP, and David Webster, CEO of the Hanley Economic Building Society.

The companies are Inspiring Imagery, which provides affordable printing services; CIF Management Consultants, and Digital Delight, which provides affordable and high-quality digital services to local businesses. The Nova Centre will be the companies’ base for two years, during which time they will be given access to mentors, financial support, sales and marketing advice, business networking opportunities and membership to the North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce.

Companies interested in gaining a place on the business growth programme must be able to demonstrate a desire to expand and create jobs. For further information, contact Lucy Delaney at KUSBP on 01782 734603.
Keele hosted a visit from the Director of The Leverhulme Trust, Professor Gordon Marshall, and his colleague Andreas Heiner. It included a very well attended presentation from Professor Marshall about The Leverhulme Trust, its funding schemes and priorities, followed by a question and answer session, meetings with key staff and a variety of short presentations showcasing a wide range of research across the Natural and Social Sciences and the Humanities. Research areas highlighted included Astrophysics, Applied Mathematics, Forensic Geoscience and Applied Entomology and Parasitology from the Natural Sciences, the Ages and Stages project, and projects in environmental politics and democracy from the Humanities and Social Sciences.

Professor Marshall was impressed at the breadth of excellent research being undertaken at Keele, and commented that ‘the interdisciplinary nature of much of the research was a particular strength’.

The visit, hosted by Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise, Professor Mark Ormerod, pictured with Professor Gordon Marshall, was one of a series of initiatives aimed at raising the profile of research internally and awareness of research funding opportunities.

Final year PhD students, Kiren Yacqub-Usman and Cuong Duong, were delighted to learn that their submission: The pituitary tumour epigenome: aberrations and prospects for targeted therapy, has been accepted for publication in the journal, Nature Reviews Endocrinology. The journal is in the top 3% in the field of Endocrinology.

Kiren and Cuong are PhD students in the Epigenomics group within the Research Institute for Science and Technology in Medicine (ISTM). Their supervisor, Professor Bill Farrell (corresponding author on the publication), said the publication (an invited review) was a reflection of their ground-breaking studies at postgraduate level and also of published collaborative studies with Dr Alan Richardson (a co-author on the publication) in the School of Pharmacy. See: http://www.nature.com/nrendo/journal/vaop/ncurrent/index.html

International Women’s Day was celebrated at the Sustainability Hub with a series of events including workshops on entrepreneurship, empowerment and employability. Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor Marilyn Andrews, led a morning session where colleagues in academia and administration talked about their career paths under the banner ‘Inspiring Women’. They heard how each of the speakers had taken advantage of opportunities that had arisen during the course of their careers, and a common theme was their passion for their academic subject and the inspirational role models who had a significant influence on the choices they had made. Alongside this, sixth formers from local colleges attended a WP organised session on female role models in science.

Sara Parkin, Founder Director of Forum for the Future, gave a stimulating talk in the main lecture theatre over the lunchtime period to staff, students and external attendees, focusing on sustainable leadership, and raised the challenge of how to ensure that women were enabled to take up senior roles in industry and the public sector.

Visitors were able to browse displays of Women in Science and the Athena SWAN Charter.
Keele software expertise goes global

A research team based in Keele’s School of Computing and Mathematics is currently conducting a two-year EU-funded project, aimed at producing evidence-based risk management guidelines for global software developers.

Large-scale global development has led to significantly increased complexity with project managers required to co-ordinate multiple sites, multiple time zones and control multiple groups of developers with different cultural backgrounds.

The Keele-based project will produce guidelines to assist managers in dealing with the risks of globally distributed software development. Professors Pearl Brereton, June Verner and Barbara Kitchenham are currently collaborating on this work. June, a New Zealander, is at Keele as an EU-funded Marie Curie International Fellow and brings her expertise in global software development to Keele’s established international reputation in evidence-based software engineering (EBSE).

Professors Kitchenham and Brereton, together with Professor David Budgen, from Durham, have made significant contributions to the increasing international prominence of EBSE and its associated technologies.

Sir Roy Griffiths Public Lecture

The University and the Keele Health Alumni Association hosted the annual Sir Roy Griffiths Public Lecture, given by Lord Philip Hunt of Kings Heath, with the title “NHS at 64 – Do you Still Love Me?”

After introductions by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost, Rama Thirunamachandran, and the Alumni Association’s President, Professor Dame Carol Black, a large audience heard Lord Hunt outline the financial and social challenges faced by the NHS since its inception in 1948 and then address some of the key issues in 2012.

These included the likely impact on the service of the Francis Report into the Mid-Staffordshire Trust and the implications around the passage into law of the controversial Health and Social Care Bill, with its emphasis on commissioning by GPs and greater competition within the NHS. However, Lord Hunt, pictured centre left, ended his excellent presentation on an optimistic note, reminding his audience of the challenges which the NHS had faced, and overcome, throughout its history; at 64, it was still loved by the public, “to whose voice we should all listen.”

Retiring Chair of the Alumni Association, Jenny Cowpe, delivered the formal vote of thanks and gave Lord Hunt a gift to mark the occasion.

Legal outreach network launched

The School of Law has launched the Keele Legal Outreach Network, which formalises existing partnerships with a number of local community organisations, including Aspire, Brighter Futures, Savana, Voices of Experience with Arch, Stoke CAB, Embrace, Madeley High School, and affirmed new partnerships with Law at Newcastle-under-Lyme College, the Chief Inspector of Newcastle-under-Lyme Police, the office of Tristram Hunt MP, and a number of leading regional law firms.

The event was launched by Pro Vice-Chancellor, Marilyn Andrews, and is designed to enable Keele Law students to provide vital help and support to disadvantaged communities through legal research, policy work and community legal education, while further strengthening key employability skills.

The School of Law is committed to the delivery of high-quality, outward looking and distinctive legal education, which equips our graduates with key attributes, designed to enhance their future employability.

For more information about the Keele Legal Outreach Network, please contact Dr Jane Krishnadas [mail to: j.h.krishnadas@keele.ac.uk].
The first of three key World Affairs Group lectures to celebrate 50 years of the University Charter took place in the Westminster Theatre, enabling Keele to recognise the enormous contribution that the Group has made to the University since it was launched in 1981.

The keynote lecture, ‘Surviving the Century’, was given by Lord Rees of Ludlow, former President of the Royal Society. His lecture was based on his newly published book, ‘From Here to Infinity: Scientific Horizons’.

Lord Rees is Master of Trinity College and Professor of Cosmology and Astrophysics at the University of Cambridge. He is also Visiting Professor at Leicester University and Imperial College London. He was appointed Astronomer Royal in 1995 and was nominated to the House of Lords in 2005 as a cross-bench peer. He was appointed as a member of the Order of Merit in 2007.

The book explores all the material in his famous BBC Reith Lecture Series 2010, when he was President of the Royal Society.

The evening was chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nick Foskett.