Spectacular fireworks finale to a golden year

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A special programme of events and initiatives were organised during 2012 to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Charter of Incorporation to the University of Keele.

One of the first events of the celebration year was the Installation of Jonathon Porritt as the new Chancellor of the University. The eminent writer, broadcaster and commentator on sustainable development officially took up the office of Chancellor of Keele University at a special ceremony in the University Chapel.

The new Chancellor told a packed audience: “This is quite a privilege for me – quite a daunting experience to be honest. This is a very heavy responsibility placed on my shoulders and a very interesting time to take up this role as the University embarks on the 50th Anniversary of its incorporation.”

Professor Nick Foskett, Vice-Chancellor of Keele University, said: “We believe that Jonathon's appointment as Chancellor recognises and underlines our core values and ambitions. His profile as critical thinker, as clear advocate for the values that we share, as a believer in the importance of evidence-based and science-based policy and decision-making, and, of course, his leading commitment to the sustainability of current and future society matches closely what we uphold at Keele. We look forward to his support, to his wise counsel and to his engagement in developing and delivering our vision for Keele and its students over the coming years, as we seek to further enhance the achievements, profile, reputation and influence of Keele University.”

Keele ranked among global elite

As Keele celebrated its 50th Anniversary year the University was placed, for the second consecutive year, among the top 2 per cent of all the universities in the world.

The University is positioned in the band 350-400 in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nick Foskett, said: “Our position among the world’s elite underlines our commitment to teaching excellence and outstanding research, as well as our contribution to the social, environmental and economic agendas. Once again this is an excellent result for Keele which shows that our achievements are being recognised not only locally and nationally, but internationally.”

Phil Baty, editor of the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, said: “The top 400 of the world’s universities represents just 2 per cent of the world’s higher education institutions, so for Keele to remain a part of this global elite group is a worthy achievement, especially as competition for the top places is intensifying each year.”

Keele was also named as one of the top universities in the country by the Sunday Times newspaper. The University moved up three places to 29th in the prestigious Sunday Times University League Table 2013 - the most authoritative and widely respected guide to universities in the UK.

BBC News

Dr Bill Dixon, Criminology/Head of Sociology and Criminology, was interviewed by Matthew Amrliwala live on the BBC News Channel as part of a day of inserts on the News Channel in the run-up to the elections for Police and Crime Commissioners.

Keele academic on BBC Breakfast

Dr Jon Herbert, SPIRE, was a guest on BBC Breakfast discussing the US elections. With a viewing audience of about 1.8 million, Dr Herbert gave his assessment of the unfolding elections from the red settee in the BBC studios.
FIREWORKS AND LASERS FINALE

Fireworks and lasers lit up the Students’ Union Building as alumni, students, staff, local residents and civic dignitaries gathered to see the first lighting of the Forest of Light.

The unveiling of the sculpture by Pro Chancellor Malcolm Peckham marked the completion of a major project to transform the heart of the campus, the £2.7 million overhaul of the Students’ Union building into a superb social hub and the grand finale of Keele’s 50th Anniversary year. The walk-through installation – designed by Diane Maclean to commemorate Keele’s 50th Anniversary – reflects the open nature of the University, its many disciplines and the different backgrounds and countries around the world from which students are drawn. Cluster lights set in the ground shine through and reflect on the many angled surfaces of the columns.

The Pro Chancellor revealed that an anonymous alumnus had donated £25,000 towards the cost of the sculpture and the rest had come from the Keele Key Fund. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nick Foskett described the installation as “absolutely fantastic”. He said: “We are delighted with the remodelling of Union Square, the installation of the Forest of Light and the renovation of the Students’ Union.”

Earlier, former SU and AU President Neil Smith, with current SU President Joe Turner pictured below, performed the opening ceremony for the remodelled ground floor of the Students’ Union Building.

Neil said: “It is terrific to see so many people here and it gives me great pleasure to declare this newly refurbished Students’ Union open – it is a fantastic centre that will enhance the student experience at Keele.”

50th Anniversary staff garden party

A constant downpour saw the 50th Anniversary staff garden party move indoors at Keele Hall but it failed to put a dampener on the spirits of those who attended. Hundreds of staff gathered in the hall for lunch, strawberries and cream and drinks and the chance to meet and chat with colleagues. The Vice-Chancellor and senior members of the University team mingled with guests and a jazz band entertained those in the Ballroom.
A s part of the Charter Celebrations, the Vice-Chancellor and other senior colleagues visited alumni around the World. Keele alumni live in over 130 different countries and many are keen to promote the University’s global reputation. “Keele in the World” was launched in 2012 to describe alumni networks around the world. The first are forming in Canada, USA, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Brunei and Sri Lanka but more will follow where alumni and Keele’s strategic mission coincide.

The first Charter Year visit was to Canada and the USA. Meetings and events were held with alumni in Victoria and Vancouver in British Columbia, and in Portland, Oregon and San Diego, California. New alumni ambassadors were identified for the Keele in America and Keele in Canada networks and a new vision unveiled by the North American Foundation for Keele University (NAFKU), an autonomous philanthropic body set up by and for North American alumni. Alumni reaffirmed their commitment to funding postgraduate NAFKU scholarships at Keele for American and Canadian students. They also saw new opportunities to support recruitment, study abroad, business networking and social connections.

During the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding between Keele and USM Malaysia was signed. USM offers courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels to approximately 20,000 students. USM has also become a well-known university locally and internationally.

The Vice-Chancellor, and colleagues led a ‘Keele in Kenya’ event at the British Institute for Eastern Africa (BIEA) in Nairobi, hosted by Dr Ambreena Manji, Reader in Keele’s School of Law, who is presently on sabbatical as Director of the BIEA.

The two-day event aimed to build on existing links and establish new partnerships, providing opportunity for the University to extend its relationships with HE institutions and businesses in East Africa and to extend opportunities for Kenyan students to study at Keele.

Headlining the event was a presentation by the Vice-Chancellor entitled ‘Internationalisation and Higher Education – Perspectives and Challenges’. And he also announced Keele's programme of scholarships for Kenyan students from September 2013.

Pictured left – Delegates attend the Vice-Chancellor’s keynote address. Front Row: L-R, John McCarthy, Director of Marketing and Communications, Dr Matthew Brannan, Senior Lecturer and Co-ordinator of International Programmes for the School of Management, visited Malaysia for the award of Keele degrees at the Convocations of KDU University College (near Kuala Lumpur) and KDU College (Penang). The KDU programme in a range of management degrees has grown in scale and attainment each year and the 2012-2013 intake is at a record level of 120 students.

Many Keele alumni who had progressed significantly in their careers got together and a new “Keele in Malaysia” alumni network was launched as part of a growing family of new “Keele in the World” alumni networks. The network aims to support recruitment, employability and business networking and it will enhance further the strong reputation and presence of Keele University in Malaysia.

There was also a high turn-out of enthusiastic local alumni at events held in Hong Kong and Brunei. The Vice-Chancellor reflected on Keele’s unique educational heritage in its “50th Birthday” year and the distinctive features of the Keele experience. He also indicated the growing importance of alumni to support the recruitment of future students, extending educational and other opportunities for current students and the potential for career and business networking for graduates and alumni. The Vice-Chancellor also announced the launch of “Keele in Hong Kong” and “Keele in Brunei”, as the newest members of a select group of Keele in the World alumni networks.

The Vice-Chancellor said: “These visits have given us a significant opportunity to raise our profile and to understand better how we can provide students from Hong Kong and Brunei with the best possible learning experience. We can also enhance the opportunities for UK students to study overseas in stimulating locations. As we build relationships with alumni around the world, we aim to add value to a lifelong Keele connection for students, alumni and the University.”

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World affairs group celebrates Keele’s 50th Anniversary

Three key World Affairs Group lectures were organised to celebrate 50 years of the University Charter, enabling Keele to recognise the enormous contribution that the Group has made to the University since it was launched in 1981.

The first 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.

The other 50th Anniversary lectures were given by Sir Michael Aaronson, Professorial Research Fellow, University of Surrey, Rethinking International Intervention, and Professor Stephen White, James Bryce Professor of Politics, University of Glasgow, Is Russia a Democracy?

A special celebratory reception to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Keele Charter, hosted by Keele Honorary graduate Lord Puttnam, took place at the House of Lords.

More than 80 guests representing Keele Alumni, VIPs, MPs, Keele Council and staff, listened to speeches by the Chancellor, Jonathon Porritt, and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nick Foskett, pictured with former Chancellor Lord Moser, celebrating Keele’s Golden Jubilee.

The Vice-Chancellor updated guests on recent developments at Keele and adaptations to the curriculum to meet the needs of 21stC employers and how the present day expansion of the campus was required to meet the expectations of over 9,000 students and international students from 120 countries.

He also announced plans for Keele’s 50th Anniversary £50 million development appeal, which will be used to provide funds to advance the University’s vision of providing students with a world-class, value-centred university experience. This will include an Endowment fund for Chairs and Professorships, a Keele Scholarship Programme and the provision of “best in class” teaching, learning and social facilities.

Reception at the House of Lords
Naming the David Weatherall Building

Keele’s former Chancellor, Professor Sir David Weatherall, returned to the University for a special ceremony to name the Medical School building after him.

Unveiling a plaque to mark the naming of the David Weatherall Building, he said: “It gives me enormous pleasure to have this building named after me. It has been one of my greatest pleasures to see the development of a medical school at Keele.”

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nick Foskett, said Sir David’s contribution to medical science was unequalled and he had also been a “true friend to Keele”, while the Dean of Health, Professor Andy Garner, described him as “one of the true giants of academic medicine”. Following the unveiling, a special lecture in honour of the former Chancellor was delivered by Professor Sir Alex Markham. In the lecture, “Making Medicine Molecular: learning from Sir David Weatherall”, Sir Alex, Professor of Medicine at the University of Leeds, said: “The awesome scale of Sir David’s output makes it difficult to do him full justice in a single address. His influence has extended across the spectrum from clinical practice at the highest levels to laboratory science sustained at the absolute forefront of international research efforts, for over 50 years. His leadership contributions in academic medicine have been immense and extend worldwide.”

Vince Cable opens Nova Centre

Business Secretary, Vince Cable officially opened Keele’s dedicated business growth programme – The Nova Centre – and highlighted the important role that universities can play in helping to support business.

Based at the Science and Business Park, the Nova Centre is specially refurbished office space for eight fledgling businesses on a dedicated two-year enterprise programme.

The Business Secretary talked about the need for support and mentoring for small enterprises and praised the collaborative approach between Keele and local businesses. He said: “The Government wants to make the UK the best place in Europe to start, finance and grow a business and to encourage investment and exports as a route to a more balanced economy. Ventures such as the Nova Centre can help us achieve that goal through offering specialist support for businesses in their early stages of trading to help them grow and create jobs.”

Children’s commissioner opens Keele’s new £2.7 million nursery

Dr Maggie Atkinson, Children’s Commissioner for England, officially opened the new £2.7 million purpose-designed Keele University Day Nursery.

She was greeted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Rama Thirunamachandran and Rachel Adams, Deputy Director of Human Resources, and joined guests on a tour of the new facility.

The new nursery can accommodate up to 128 children from three months to school age. It has been designed in keeping with the University’s environmental sustainability objectives and offers an innovative layout, providing a secure and fun environment and optimising access to the outdoors, including an all-weather “outdoor classroom”.

Following a ceremony to mark the official opening, Dr Atkinson met academics in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, then visited the Sustainability Hub, where she was given an insight into the University’s work with schools in the area of environment and sustainability.

Later, Dr Atkinson, a doctoral alumna of the University, gave a lecture, ‘Children’s Rights in the Twenty-first Century’, in the Westminster Theatre.
Community open day at Keele

Keele held its first Community Day during the summer as part of the Charter Anniversary celebrations. It was a day of free fun and interactive activities for all ages and interests.

More than 40 sessions/workshops took place across campus, as well as other activities for families, such as a bouncy castle, cub karts, live music, and a penalty shoot-out with Stoke City’s mascot Pottermus. There were about 1,000 visitors to the campus.

Campus Library 50th Anniversary exhibition

As the University celebrates the 50th anniversary of the award of Keele’s Charter, the campus Library is also celebrating 50 years since the official opening of the Library building on 8 October 1962.

To mark the occasion, there is a small exhibition charting the birth and development of the Library. Take a look at the display in the Library foyer, available until the end of 2012.

Observatory’s 50th Anniversary

Keele University Observatory celebrated its 50th Anniversary with a special programme of talks in the Westminster Theatre, featuring Professor Allan Chapman, as well as representation by the European Southern Observatory, which also celebrated its 50th anniversary during the year.

Ron Maddison’s booklet on the history of Keele Observatory was launched at the event and there was also a “Sun and Star Party” at the observatory.
What’s on

Inaugural Lectures 2012 / 2013
Monday 11 February 2013 – Professor Susan Read, “Living in the shadow of grief: lessons from people with a learning disability”.

Monday 18 February 2013 – Professor Tomoya Obokata, “International Law on Human Trafficking”.

Tuesday 19 March 2013 – Professor Chris Exley, “You can call me Al”.

Tuesday 16 April 2013 – Professor Harry Scarbrough, “Transfer' or 'Translation?: How Knowledge Is Shared Through Social Networks”.

Tuesday 14 May 2013 – Professor Pat Black, “From Pupil to Professor – Reflections on a Journey in Pharmacy Education and Professional Development”.

Tuesday 28 May 2013 – Professor Christina Goulding, “The Tribal Consumer”.

Monday 10 June 2013 – Professor Julius Kaplunov, “Mathematics of Waves: from Earthquakes to Metamaterials”.

Winter Graduation
24 Jan 2013

Community Day
2 June 2013

Keele Concerts
16 Jan – Absolution Saxophone Quartet.
23 Jan – Kosmos.
30 Jan – Mugenkyo Taiko Drummers.
6 Feb – Warren Mailley-Smith.
13 Feb – Red Priest.
20 Feb – Doric String Quartet.
27 Feb – Schubert Ensemble.

50th Anniversary Poetry, Music and Art at Keele

A series of special poetry readings were organised at Keele to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the charter. Poets Laureate of England and Wales, Carol Ann Duffy and Gillian Clarke, and South London band LiTTLe MACHiNe: Walter Wray, Steve Halliwell and Chris Hardy came together for a fabulous collaboration of live poetry and music in the Westminster Theatre.

As part of the School of Humanities’ contributions to the Anniversary celebrations, the acclaimed poet and writer, Simon Armitage pictured, delivered a reading from his bestselling memoir Walking Home (2012), to a packed-out Westminster Theatre.

He described travelling the Pennine Way as a modern troubadour, without a penny in his pocket, after asking, via his website, for board and lodging in return for giving poetry readings en route. The Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, contributed too, donating a bottle of Poet Laureate sherry for raffle on the night.

The Art Gallery commemorated the anniversary with an exhibition ‘Celebrating the Past – 50 years of Collecting’, which provided a rare opportunity to showcase some of the fine works of art that are in the care of the University for posterity.