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## CyberTeaRoom

### Welcome to the cyberTeaRoom!

This is where you can pick up the gossip, spread the word, and share a virtual beverage. If you have any news or gossip for the CyberTeaRoom, pass it on to [The Editor](#) and look forward to seeing your words in print!

### News from the bottom of the world

Departmental alumnus Dr Kim Bernard is currently based at Palmer Station, Antarctica as part of her post-doctoral research. Kim is maintaining a blog to keep all those interested up-to-date with the daily happenings of life in the freezer. Read more by clicking [here](#).

### Congratulations



Congratulations to Professor William Froneman (HoD of Zoo and Ento) for being elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa. Well done William!

### Football challenge 2011



The annual football clash between the Zoology and Entomology Department and the Department of Biochemistry, Biotechnology and Microbiology (a.k.a. those guys from upstairs) took place recently. Although the Zoo and Ento gang went down 0-3, the team (pictured above) thoroughly enjoyed their day out.

### Take a Learner to Work Day

As a prelude to the National Science Week, Friday 29th June was 'Take a Learner to Work Day'. Three learners came to discover what biologists do at work. Their morning started by sitting in on an undergraduate Zoology lecture about plagiarism and intellectual property, which they kindly said was very good. They then received a guided tour of the Department of Zoology & Entomology with John Midgley, and found out about culturing

insects. After tea, Lyndall Pereira showed off the molecular laboratory and Crystal Clitheroe impressed them with the departmental natural history collections.

Milton Ngeju gave the learners a brief introduction to the technical side of their laboratories. However, the highlight of the day was meeting their first guinea pigs, Badger and Pippa, and discovering that not all rodents bite!



Photo: John Midgley, Koos Sinxolo, Badger, Lyndall Pereira, Chumisa Makabe, Crystal Clithero, Pippa and Khululekani Kupiso.

### Making the front cover

This image of two *Echinolittorina malaccana* snails, taken by Gray Williams, recently graced the cover of Biology Letters. In the issue Christopher McQuaid and his colleagues published some of their recent work on these beasties. Biology Letters "publishes short, highly-innovative, cutting-edge research articles" and has an impact factor of 3.521.



### Unravelling the ecology of Kasouga

The third year ecology fieldtrip was held recently (29 April - 2 May 2011). This annual fieldcourse is run collaboratively between the departments of Zoology and Entomology, Botany and Ichthyology at Kasouga. The course not only allows the students to get to know their lecturers in a more informal setting but also gets them working together in groups and learning some important ecological techniques.



### Christopher bags the Gilchrist Award

Source: Rhodes University website (18/4/2011)

Rhodes University's Prof Christopher McQuaid has been awarded the prestigious "outstanding contribution to the enhancement of marine and coastal science in the Southern Ocean".

The South African Network for Coastal and Oceanic Research (SANCOR) presents "outstanding marine scientist" every three years.

Prof McQuaid, who holds the Chair of Zoology and the SARCHI Research Chair in Marine Science at Rhodes, said it was a "great honour" to be a recipient of the award.

It was presented to him at a banquet of the 14th Southern African Marine Science Conference in Grahamstown in April.

According to SANCOR, the medal serves to recognise his contributions to marine science, excellence in South African marine science, and to focus attention on South Africa's marine and coastal environments.

But Prof McQuaid insists that it is also an acknowledgment of Rhodes University's stature in the field of marine biology.

Rhodes University Professor of Zoology William Froneman said in his citation of Prof McQuaid that he was a most worthy recipient of the 2011 Gilchrist award. He had played a "significant role" in the development of marine science in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa through his outstanding research publication record; his supervision of postgraduate students - many from previously disadvantaged backgrounds - and the establishment of strong collaborative links with tertiary institutions within the region.

"Christopher McQuaid can be regarded as one of the eminent marine biological researchers in South Africa. His contribution to the development of a vibrant marine research community in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa cannot be overemphasized. The mentorship role that he has played for a number of younger researchers within the region has ensured that the future of marine biological research in the province is assured," said Prof Froneman.

Prof McQuaid has been the recipient of numerous other awards including Rhodes University's Vice-Chancellor's Junior as well as Senior Distinguished Research Awards.

He has been awarded a number of fellowships including two Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust Fund Travelling Fellowships and the Sir Kirby Laing Fellowship from the University of Bangor. He has been elected Fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa - a prestigious recognition of his standing as scientist.

Prof McQuaid acknowledges that mentorship is central to his work. "Partly, this is because it is my job to train postgraduate students, but mostly it is because I enjoy working with young and inspired minds. They make me see things from different perspectives and help me to get new insights."

Speaking on the many collaborative links he has forged with other tertiary institutions, Prof McQuaid says he enjoys working with people from other countries with different cultural backgrounds. He collaborates with scientists in South Africa as well as from many countries in Europe, South America and Asia. "Not only do people from other countries have different perspectives on science, but I love the cultural diversity this introduces."

While South Africa was "biologically a very exciting place" for marine scientists, Prof McQuaid and his students also do research in places like South America and East Africa.

"Last year I had students working in Zanzibar, Italy, Kenya and Tristan da Cunha. Tell me that's not exciting."

He praised South African universities for bringing the emphasis back to fundamental research "It is only the universities that have the mandate to do pure or fundamental research and I believe they should emphasise that aspect of their research."

However, he warns against the tendency to "isolate ourselves".

"I understand the reasoning behind an attempt to appoint South Africans either in jobs or as students, but in the longer term we should be doing everything in our power to attract and retain talent from other countries as well."

Prof McQuaid was particularly delighted that one of his students, Given Matumba, won the prize for the best poster at the conference. He said the "beautiful poster" had been based on research Mr Matumba had done on the reaction of marine snails to temperature increases.



## Graduation 2011

The department celebrated the achievements of its graduating students at an afternoon tea held yesterday (7 April 2011), just prior to the science faculty graduation ceremony. The hard work of both first-time graduands and postgraduates was recognised by Professor Alan Hodgson in his short address.

The department is particularly proud of its postgraduate and top third year and honours students.

Congratulations are extended to Louise Allan (PhD), Helen James (PhD), Nicky Lunt (PhD), Dani Marlin (PhD), Iain Paterson (PhD), Shan Ambrose (MSc), Terrence Bellingan (MSc), Luzuko Dali (MSc), Brad Fike (MSc), Linda Johnson (MSc), Shirley King (MSc), Adam Ludford (MSc), Bruce Mostert (MSc), Mark van Niekerk (MSc), Ryan Daniels (Beth Cumming Memorial Prize), Laura Weston (Matthew Jones Memorial Shield), Candice Owen (JC van Hille Award), Bronwen May (Duerden Scholarship), Sarah Taylor (ESSA award) and Tammy Sawers (Ewer Prize). The award winners are pictured here.

## News from Dave Gray



## ZOOLOGY AND ENTOMOLOGY GRADUATION FUNCTION 2011



**HISTORIC DAY FOR THE NAFC MARINE CENTRE UHI AS UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS BECOMES SCOTLAND'S NEWEST UNIVERSITY**

Today (2 February) is a historic day for The NAFC Marine Centre UHI as UHI Millennium Institute becomes the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI).

The University of the Highlands and Islands is the only university based in the region. As well as providing local people with the choice of university study close to home, this innovative and energetic institution will be a magnet for attracting students, researchers and staff into the area; helping to stimulate economic, social and cultural development.

Director of The NAFC Marine Centre UHI, Professor David Gray, added: "The NAFC Marine Centre UHI has been, and continues to be, a proud academic partner in the UHI family. We are delighted that university title has been awarded to UHI; a deserving recognition of the high standard of education being delivered throughout the Highlands and Islands."

UHI comprises thirteen colleges, specialist institutions and research centres spread across the Highlands and Islands of Scotland; an area twice the size of Wales. It uses information technologies to link together students and staff to bring access to higher education to dispersed communities. The achievement of university title by UHI is the realisation of a long-time ambition for the region to have its own university to support economic development and to help sustain rural and island communities.

The NAFC Marine Centre UHI offers high quality accredited and bespoke training, as well as research, development and knowledge exchange provision to clients including the nautical, fisheries, engineering, aquaculture and scientific sectors and other emerging industries that may contribute to sustainable development.

### **Archives**

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