

1851 Royal Commission Alumni Association

E-mail Newsletter July 2004

Dear Royal Commission Alumnus,

This newsletter is being sent out using a new contacts list, which hopefully will obviate the earlier difficulties of some e-mails bouncing and also mean that your e-mail addresses are no longer spam-harvestable. This also means that the newsletter goes out in plain text, which although making the layout rather plain, should make it easier to access on all systems. For this, as well as helpful advice from a number of alumni, I have had the invaluable assistance of the IT section at Imperial College, for which I am very grateful.

I have also been looking at better ways of managing the Alumni web site and next year plan to update the site to link with an alumni database which will allow electronic joining of the association as well as easier updating of details. In the mean time we have refined the current site and expanding it to include a section where this and all previous newsletters are being posted for ease of referral.

I will also be writing in September or October to all those active 1851 award holders who have not yet joined the association, urging them to sign up. It will be easier this time round, since with the web site in place, people can join by simply e-mailing from the web site joining section.

2004 Award Winners

Meanwhile the 1851 Royal Commission has completed its 2004 round of fellowships and scholarships, selections having been made from as impressive a list of candidates as ever. We had another record year of applications for Science Research Fellowships, giving our Science Scholarships Committee a major task of assessment and selection. In the event we were able to give eight fellowships this year. At the same time five Industrial Fellowships and seven Industrial Design Studentships were also awarded. The full list of award winners is shown here and will shortly be published in The Times.

Science Research Fellowships

Dr. Amanda Clare	Computational Biology	Univ. of Wales, Aberystwyth
Mr. Alan Drew	Physics	St. Andrews University
Dr. Genevieve Langdon	Mechanical Engineering	Univ of Cape Town, S. Africa
Mr. William Mulholland	Biomedical Engineering	University of Melbourne, Australia
Dr. James Oliver	Applied Mathematics	Nottingham University
Dr. Shashank Virmani	Quantum Physics	Imperial College, London
Miss Haley Morgan	Astrophysics	Univ. of Wales, Cardiff
Dr. Rachel O'Reilly	Chemistry	Cambridge University

Industrial Fellowships

Mr. Hugh Datson	Geoffrey Walton Practice/Leeds University
	Field & laboratory testing of a new directional nuisance dust monitoring system.
Dr. Anna Gao	Micropathology Ltd/Birmingham University
	Development & application of molecular biological techniques for the rapid diagnosis of sight threatening bacterial eye infections.
Mr. William Payne	Cambridge Research Systems/Plymouth University
	Non-contact, high speed, high accuracy, eye-tracking with eye-movement contingent visual display.
Mr. Matthew Stirling	Avecia Process Technology/Huddersfield University
	Catalytically coupled processes.
Mr. Andrew Turner	Ricardo DTS/Sheffield University
	Investigation & development of alternative electromechanical actuation systems for improved efficiency in vehicle transmissions.

Industrial Design Studentships

Miss Corinne Bacon	Royal College of Art/Imperial College
Miss Jennifer Barnard	Royal College of Art/Imperial College
Miss Julia Bleasdale	Royal College of Art/Imperial College
Mr. Robin Chilton	Royal College of Art/Imperial College
Mr. Nicholas Everett	Royal College of Art/Imperial College
Miss Katie Goodwin	Royal College of Art/Imperial College
Mr. Simon Needle	Loughborough University

Alumni Association Events

The Royal Commission's Board of Management met on 14 July and fully endorsed the plan for alumni events to become regular features in the Commission's programme. After the success of last February's Science Evening, it is planned to hold another one at the same time next year, followed possibly by a similar format evening covering Industry and Design. Of course all alumni will be welcome at all events.

We are also looking at the possibility of a larger alumni event which may take the form of a reunion as well and hopefully be the sort of gathering which might attract our alumni from further afield – so watch this space!

The Royal Albert Hall Organ

As part of its recent major redevelopment, the Royal Albert Hall's organ, last heard in 2001, has now been fully restored. When it was inaugurated at the opening of the Hall in 1871, it was the largest in the world, with 111 stops and its blowers driven by steam engines in the bowels of the hall. The power was insufficient, however, and after a two stage rebuild by Harrison & Harrison, of Durham, it was unveiled in 1934 with electric blowing power and 146 stops, giving a total of 9,779 pipes. By then, no longer the largest in the world, it was still the biggest in Britain.

Despite further minor changes in the 1970s, the organ was worn out by the end of the century and after a tendering process, a contract for major refurbishment was awarded to Mander Organs of London. As well as a complete rebuild, a further stop of 220 extra pipes was added, bringing the total to 9,999 – to restore its position, briefly occupied by the Liverpool Cathedral organ, as the largest in the country.

The inaugural concert of the splendid new instrument took place on 29 June 2004 and it is also featuring in a number of this year's Promenade Concerts which began on 16 July.

Exhibition Road Development

I explained in the last newsletter that after an expensive and rather unrealistic proposal for the development of Exhibition Road about 6 years ago, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has now commissioned the architects Dixon Jones to produce a workable proposal to improve the access to the Royal Commission's unique South Kensington estate. Some 30 million visitors a year come to South Kensington, primarily to visit the three great museums, and the majority pass through South Kensington tube station. The present state of the main thoroughfare, Exhibition Road, is not geared to such numbers and is an unworthy portal to Albertopolis.

As plans develop, a Cultural Committee has been formed, with representation from the many institutions adjoining Exhibition Road, and this will seek to influence the project to enhance the profile of, as well as improve access to, the cultural estate which is the legacy of the Great Exhibition. The Royal Commission has a key role to play here, of course, and I will keep alumni members informed as the project moves forward.

Imperial College

Part of the development of Exhibition Road is the new face of Imperial College, represented by its magnificent new entrance through the Foster-designed Tanaka Business School, built with the generous assistance of a £26M donation from Mr Gary Tanaka, an Imperial alumnus. Opened by HM the Queen last month, it is the most significant manifestation of a major development of the college which includes a new faculty building as well as refurbished academic departments and sports complex.

Finally, if you know of any other 1851 alumni who have not yet joined the association, please urge them to do so. Equally, on the July 03 newsletter (now posted on the web site), I listed those award winners we have cost contact with altogether. We would be very grateful if you could look at that list again and let us know if you have any information which would help us get in touch. Equally, please do not hesitate to e-mail me if you have any comments or news – we would love to hear from you.

With very best regards,

Malcolm Shirley,
Secretary to the Commission