

MSc Aquaculture



MSc Aquaculture 2003-04
(photo by Garnet Hooper).

The MSc Aquaculture course this year has a total of 20 willing and able students from all over the globe, with very different backgrounds, from places such as Colombia, Nigeria, USA, Greece, Spain, Rwanda, France, Hong Kong, Philippines, Scotland and England, I don't think I have forgotten anyone!

As with usual courses the first few days were spent "getting to know one another" however most students would usually only talk to the person they were sat next to.

This all changed on a field trip to Machrihanish, in the second week of the course, way back in October. During the day we were all very studious and no one, not even Trevor could fault the fact that we worked our little socks off – hmmm! In the evening though, the MAFIA (Greek card game) and alcohol ruled.

It was on this trip that a VERY important bet was made. We will go by nicknames to at least allow the loser some grace. Some of you may or may not be aware



A frenchman in defeat
(photo by Wendy Rooney).

that the Rugby World Cup has just been played in Australia. The bet in question was between an Englishman, Shrek, and a Frenchman, Pepe Le Pew. If England proceeded in the world cup further than France then Pepe would have to wear whatever Shrek chose and vice versa. Well, Pepe lost, and to his credit carried it off with true French panache and looked quite stunning as a blonde, much to the enjoyment of the rest of the class.

All in all everyone on the course has gelled very well, and as a mark of this Norm has designed a logo to put on a t-shirt for the years to come, when no doubt some of us will be in the back of beyond (or even Howietoun), trying to make an aquaculture system out of a muddy puddle, so keep an eye out for us!



ASA Party piece

Following a brief absence from Aquaculture News, possibly explained by the list of activities below, the Aquaculture Students Association gives you the chance to catch up with goings-on over the last 18 months. Between study and student representation has it really been one long party? One would have to say that the whole thing was started by John Taylor. This Terror-of-the-Pike-World had the temerity to suggest that ASA might hold a summer party; presumably the idea was to convince himself that it was summer last July (2002).

ASA, fully in sympathy with his predicament, wisely decided to hold the summer party in September which, being almost winter in Scotland, is more likely to be sunny and dry. Also, the influx of innocents for the Masters' courses would provide extra bodies and ASA could pass off the booze-up as an "official welcoming party". In an obvious juxtaposition, it was decided to organise the Christmas Ceilidh at the same time and ASA President,

Alison, zipped around inspecting venues and arranging caterers.

Then began The Hard Sell. For Pathfoot veterans, any party will do but, short of threatening to deduct marks from exam results, it seemed it would be hard to convince the MScs to come along. In the end, the tum-out for the Summer Party at Stirling Rugby Club was well in excess of forecasts, with members of the Sub-Aqua Club lending support and a threatened invasion by octogenarians from The Caravan Club. We don't know who set off the fire alarm – "the toilets on this aircraft are fitted with smoke detectors" – but, despite this interruption and some doubts about the music selection, by the end of the evening there were plenty of exuberant, alcohol-induced dance routines being attempted by the less-inhibited students.

We had barely recovered from the hangovers when the Christmas Ceilidh was upon us. Ticket sales were encouraged by establishing a post outside the Aquaculture Office and waylaying passers-by. The "follow-up" process involved a two-to-one visit from the heavies and, by dint of encouragements, threats and other forms of coercion, the stiff sales targets were met.

Smith's Restaurant proved to be an ideal venue – once maps and GPS co-ordinates had been provided – and the buffet was a resounding success. By the way, who stole my second sausage roll?!? Richard Collins solely and bravely represented The Staff – where were the rest of you, eh? As is usual with The Scottish Ceilidh, the women were twirled and whirled, stood on and thrown about and the resulting bruises were spectacular (I think the dances were really invented as battle training for the men). In the heel of the reel, the 2-man "3-piece-ceilidh-band" extracted every last ounce of energy from us and sent us away home, exhausted, and with only 21 shopping days till Christmas.



As a result of Charlie's dedication to the photocopying account and the two successful parties, ASA finances were in a very healthy state entering the New Year (2003). Such affluence required another celebration and "The Booze Cruise" idea was born (woe betide ASA if the students ever become teetotal). Part subsidy by ASA meant that the ticket prices were very reasonable and the minimum of 50 places was filled. No secrets can be revealed about what went on; it is sufficient to say that it didn't rain and we didn't lose anyone overboard into Loch Lomond. There was a short video recording of Martin (one of the MScs) dancing (??) but that has now been forwarded to "You've Been Framed".

ASA finances are still healthy and this year's Christmas Ceilidh was just as much of a success ... even with the French interpretations. We hope that you will continue your support and we look forward to another year of memorable events. Any ideas, contributions, donations and all your encouragement should be addressed to Sandra Laffon - Ms. Fiesta. Viva ASA!!!!

Nail biting finish to Institute match

Ben North

Once again, after a bit of encouragement from keener and more impressive members, the staff were able to field a side of 11 against an eager and talented student team. Three mainstays on the staff team came over from the Institute's Howietoun Fish Farm. Despite benefiting from abundant Latino talent, the students could not keep Howietoun's Chris from scoring the first goal for the staff twenty minutes into the game after a defensive mix-up in the student ranks. Strong defence and an efficient off-side trap (all those hours on the training field paying off!) in the second half kept the staff ahead until the last minute when Javier pushed through a goal for the student team. In ten minutes of extra time no 'golden goal' was scored, but the students shone through, winning the penalties 1-0. Refereeing, as ever, Charlie kept control of the game, and was grateful not to have to take anyone to hospital this year. The cheering crowd enjoyed the match and a few beers with the teams afterwards. Will the winning team benefit from such MSc-student talent next year? Come and join in.



Bryony Dixon nee Banks
PhD 2001

I completed my PhD in 2001 at the IoA. I am currently working as a post-doc at Bribie Island Aquaculture Research Centre, Department of Primary Industries, Queensland Government. I'm involved in 3 different projects, the first is a microsatellite project looking at the population genetics of the saucer scallop (*Amusium balloti*) in Australia and New Caledonia, the second is a microarray project looking at disease resistant genes in barramundi and the third project is investigating genes involved in regulating moulting in sand crabs (*Portunus pelagicus*) and mud crabs (*Scylla serrata*). Bribie Island is just north of Brisbane, and BIARC is conveniently located about 300m from the beach. See you all out here for some collaboration!

Hannah Chubb
MSc Aquatic Pathobiology
2002-2003

After the masters course in Aquatic Pathobiology I moved to St Andrews to start work as a research assistant in the fish muscle research group at The Gatty Marine Laboratories. I am currently involved in a Norwegian funded project looking into the growth of the striated portion of the King Scallop adductor muscle. I am enjoying both work and living in beautiful St Andrews.

Tom Dixon
PhD 2003

2003 was a very productive year for myself and Bryony. All started well with the completion of my PhD at the Institute, and continued in that direction in April when we headed off for a new life down under. After taking a small side-step, I am currently employed as a post-doc by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Livestock Industries in Brisbane, Queensland, working on disease resistance in sheep. The position utilises many of the techniques I gained whilst in the IoA, including gene expression studies, DNA

marker work and science communication, and is further expanding my skills in the fields of immunology and mammalian biology. The lifestyle down here is treating us well with several trips through NSW and Victoria with work, and a bit of personal travel to Magnetic Island, Sydney and Fraser Island in between times. Combine all of the above with our new found hobby of barbecuing, and we now feel quite at home down here!



Nicola Hastings
PhD 2003

In June 2003 I submitted the final copy of my thesis for examination and was successfully awarded the Ph.D. on the 15th of July. During this time I began a post-doc position at the Roslin Institute (Edinburgh), the position focuses on mastitis resistance in cattle and involves QTL analysis. However, I have also been involved in a number of other projects at the Roslin Institute including typing the MHC polymorphisms in the RoBoGen herd, a specific herd owned by the Roslin Institute and bred for scientific purposes, and recently I have received a grant to study the genetic basis for the decline of fertility in dairy cattle. The latter project will not only help to employ me but it will employ a new member of staff to help with the technical side of the project. I have also moved house to Roslin village where I'm enjoying both country and city life, although I do still miss everyone at the Institute of Aquaculture and living in Stirling.

Marine Herlin
MSc Aquaculture 2002-2003

Thanks for your e-mail asking what I am doing: I have started, since the 1st of October, a PhD under the supervision of both David Penman and Brendan Mc Andrew. The title is "sex determination of Atlantic cod and Atlantic halibut". I am at the moment reading in my new office D16.