

VISIT OF HRH THE DUKE OF YORK

On October 31 2013, the Department of Materials Science and Metallurgy was privileged to receive a visit from His Royal Highness The Duke of York, who was accompanied by the Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, Mrs Jane Lewin Smith and members of his office. The Duke of York was welcomed in the Armourers and Brasiers Meeting Room by the Head of Department, Professor Mark Blamire, with an introduction to the Department's distinctive research programme. As His Royal Highness has a special interest in the translation of science, three case studies were then presented to illustrate the commercial exploitation of innovative Materials Science. Professor Bill Bonfield discussed the key factors empowering the development of a synthetic bone graft and the successful acquisition of the associated start-up company, ApaTech Ltd. Work in a different field, but with a similar progression, was reported by Professor Sir Colin Humphreys for CamGan Ltd, an exciting venture with the potential to make Light Emitting Diodes cost competitive. In contrast to the start-up route, Professor Harry Bhadeshia demonstrated how his novel super bainite, high strength steel had created new applications for a major corporation, Tata Steel. All the speakers emphasized the need for distinctive, world class science to underpin commercial success. Chaired by Professor Tony Cheetham, these talks evoked a lively discussion with The Duke of York as to the optimum capital and funding mechanisms required to enhance scale up and manufacture.

Following this session, His Royal Highness was taken on a tour of four laboratories to illustrate some highlights of the current research programme and The Duke of York actively discussed progress with senior staff, post doctoral assistants and PhD students. In the Cambridge Centre for Medical Materials, Professors Serena Best and Ruth Cameron outlined an interdisciplinary approach to developing biomaterials for tissue regeneration which has already delivered a cartilage scaffold for clinical application. A pioneer of carbon nano tubes, Professor Alan Windle, and Royal Society University Research Fellow, Dr Krzysztof Koziol, demonstrated a pilot scale, continuous spinning process for fibre production and the special advantage of high conductivity. The Device Materials Laboratory was introduced by Professor Judith Driscoll, who presented the sophisticated deposition methodologies for the next generation of thin films for electronic applications.

Appropriately the tour concluded at the state-of-the-art Wolfson Electron Microscopy Suite, where Professor Paul Midgley demonstrated the nano scale resolution of structure which enables an understanding of properties for all classes of materials.

On departure His Royal Highness expressed his thanks for a very informative and interesting insight into the opportunities for translation of Materials Science and his desire to keep in touch with developments.

Summarizing the positive impression made by the Royal visit for the Cambridge Evening News, Professor Blamire commented: “We were delighted to be able to showcase our new building to The Duke of York, given that we have just moved from our previous buildings on the New Museums site to this purpose built site in West Cambridge. Materials Science underpins most of the priority opportunities for growing industries in the UK and we demonstrated the vital role our basic research plays in developing technology in areas ranging from medical materials to LEDs to carbon nano tubes.”

HRH The Duke of York in conversation with PhD student Claire Armstrong and Professor Judith Driscoll



Photograph taken by Phillip Mynott