15 years of Leadership at the University of Leicester
CAPTAIN BOB
Leicester has been transformed significantly in the last 15 years under the inspired leadership of Professor Sir Robert Burgess

BOB THE BUILDER
Bob’s vision and imagination have transformed the University’s campus and landscape with new developments and facilities

THE QUALITY OF LEICESTER
Bob is dedicated to finding new ways of doing old things and bringing new perspectives to established ideas

STUDENTS
Bob’s devotion to high quality teaching and providing a great student experience are at the heart of everything we do at Leicester

RESEARCH
Bob has raised Leicester’s aspiration and reputation for world-changing research with impressive results

ART IN THE GARDENS
The visual imagination of Leicester’s Vice-Chancellor and passion for art and sculptures has enhanced Leicester’s environment

CAMPUS, CITY, COUNTY AND NATION
Bob has forged excellent links and partnerships locally; and has made a huge contribution to higher education on a national level

THE LEGACY
Bob has achieved so much in the last 15 years and given the University a renewed self-confidence which will be felt by generations to come
Bob Burgess is the University’s longest serving Vice-Chancellor, during which time Leicester has grown in status and stature to rank alongside the foremost British universities, featuring in the top 20 in national league tables and among the top 2% of universities worldwide.

Universities have much to celebrate and the University of Leicester is no exception. Its range of activities and discoveries in which members of the University have been involved, are a testament to Bob’s drive and enthusiasm. This is clearly demonstrated in ‘The Legacy of Leicester’ that highlights seven great achievements for which the University is renowned: one for each of the decades since University College Leicester received the Royal Charter to become a University in its own right.

Bob has not only shaped the University academically but he has also changed it physically. His keenness to enhance facilities for staff and students through major projects such as the David Wilson Library, the Cardiovascular Research Centre and College Court have helped ensure the University remains competitive with its peers.

Leicester has been at the heart of Bob’s life since arriving in 1999 and all those who know or have met him can be in no doubt as to his commitment to, and pride in, the University. As Vice-Chancellor, Bob has taken Leicester forward and will leave the University well placed to continue to build on its legacy of high quality teaching, learning and research.

There will be many opportunities to thank Bob for his contribution to Leicester over the coming months but it was felt important to document some of his achievements, not just as a thank you, but to highlight the journey that he has taken Leicester on, giving it the confidence to flourish.

Finally, I would like to give my thanks to Professor Gordon Campbell and Jo Wood who have worked tirelessly on this publication and without whose research and persistence it would not have been produced.

Dr Bridget Towle CBE DL
Chair of Council
Captain Bob

LEICESTER HAS TRANSFORMED SIGNIFICANTLY UNDER THE INSPIRED LEADERSHIP OF PROFESSOR SIR ROBERT BURGESS
The University of Leicester has been fortunate in its Principals and Vice-Chancellors, of which Sir Robert Burgess is the seventh. The first Principal, Robert Rattray, was a Scot who had taken a PhD at Harvard long before doctorates became fashionable, and at the time of his appointment was Minister of the Unitarian Great Meeting in Leicester; his local connections and his scholarly standing were important elements in his success in establishing University College Leicester. In 1932 he was succeeded by Frederick Attenborough, whose background as a Cambridge don gave the fledgling University College an important link with an ancient university. The third Principal, Charles (later Sir Charles) Wilson, was a Scot who had held academic posts at the LSE and Oxford. It was Wilson who used his negotiating skills to lead the University to full University status in 1957, becoming its first Vice-Chancellor; these same skills subsequently led to his contributions to the establishment of the Universities of Essex, Sussex and Strathclyde. In 1962 Wilson was succeeded by another Scot, Fraser (later Sir Fraser) Noble, whose expertise as an economist and as a senior administrator in the Indian Civil Service were important skills at a time of university expansion; his understanding of public-sector finance and of the fiscal implications of growth was widely recognised, and he presided at a national level over the process of expansion. He also had an important personal quality that he shared with Robert Burgess: he seemed never to forget a name or a face. The fifth head (and third Vice-Chancellor) of the University was Maurice (later Sir Maurice) Shock, an Oxford don
whose background in government and politics meant that he was supremely well-connected in Whitehall; at a time when Government seemed unaware of us, this proved to be very useful indeed to the University. It was Maurice Shock who carried the University through its most difficult period, which was heralded by the UGC letter of 1 July 1981, in which funding for the sector was cut by 15% and a policy of growth was scrapped in favour of contraction.

The first two Principals had backgrounds in the humanities, and the three Vice-Chancellors who succeeded them were all social scientists. The next Vice-Chancellor, Ken Edwards, was a scientist, a Cambridge geneticist who understood the work of our scientists (including medical scientists). He had also held a senior managerial position at Cambridge. This combination of science and management was timely, as our provision in science stood in need of support, and the management structures of the University stood in need of critical scrutiny. Ken Edwards was the man of the hour, and in the course of the 1990s he led this University with distinction, and also led what was then called the Committee for Vice-Chancellors and Principals.

In 1999 Ken Edwards retired, and the post of Vice-Chancellor was offered to Professor Robert Burgess, of the University of Warwick. Members of the Leicester staff scrambled to find out what they could about the new Vice-Chancellor. Colleagues in Sociology all knew him, as did the profession, because he was a prolific publisher and had served as President of the British Sociological Association. His specialist patch was sociology of education, so colleagues in the School of Education were another source of opinion and anecdote. We learnt that he had grown up in Somerset, attended local schools, qualified as a teacher, studied for a BA at University of Durham and then become a teacher at the Bennett Memorial School, a church school in Tunbridge Wells, where he taught sociology. In the course of his year in the classroom a good fairy in the form of Professor John Rex intervened. Rex had taught Bob at Durham, and had moved to Warwick to establish a Department of Sociology there. Rex exercised the powers of patronage that professors then enjoyed to offer a three-year PhD studentship to his very promising former student. In 1974, before the PhD was finished, Bob was offered a lectureship at Warwick. In the same year he married a fellow educationalist, Hilary Joyce (now our colleague Lady Burgess), whose father wondered aloud whether Bob would ever get a proper job.

Bob Burgess flourished at Warwick, rising through the ranks from Lecturer in Sociology to Head of Department, Professor of Sociology, Chair of the Faculty of Social Studies, Founding Chair of the Graduate School, Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Director of CEDAR (Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research). Beyond the University, he became Founding Chair of the UK Council for Graduate Education, a member of the Economic and Social Research Council and chair of its Training Board. This trajectory clearly reflected managerial abilities and a vision that was national rather than parochial, but academics must first prove themselves as scholars, and this Bob Burgess had done in abundance. In the mid-1980s, for example, he had published Experiencing Comprehensive Education in 1983, In the Field in 1984, Education, Schools and Schooling in 1985, and Sociology, Education and Schools in 1986. In all, he edited some two dozen books on qualitative methods and education, and more than a hundred book chapters and articles in learned journals. This chap...
The University of Leicester is the only university to win 7 THE awards

Burgess, colleagues concluded, was an academic with scholarly standing, managerial ability, and extraordinary resources of energy and commitment. And what sort of person was he? He was said to have a common touch, and to be able to establish cordial relations with everyone from porters and gardeners to professors and grandees; he was also said to have an extraordinary memory for faces and names. We also heard that he had said to the appointing committee that he intended to steer the ship of University of Leicester from the bridge. This is the origin of the widespread practice of referring to the V-C in conversation as ‘Captain Bob’.

When Bob Burgess arrived on the campus these qualities turned out to be real and substantial. The common touch was everywhere in evidence. The V-C wished to be known as Bob, and as one of the University drivers was Bob, they became known as Bob and Bob. Academic gowns worn at the top table of Senate disappeared, and at the first meeting of Senate over which he presided, the V-C sat on the table at the front of the room to outline his vision for Leicester. He seemed to know everyone, partly because he had read what he could about individual academics at Leicester, but also because his capacious memory stored what he had read. Vice-Chancellors often feel quite remote to members of staff, but Bob Burgess quickly overcame that difficulty by instituting an annual session at De Montfort Hall to which all members of staff were invited. He spoke for a period about his current thinking, and then opened the floor to questions. On the first occasion on which this happened, he responded to every raised hand with the first name of the questioner. This was a tribute to eyesight as well as memory, and it had an extraordinary effect on the audience. Those who attended realised that we were being led not by someone who thought of us as pieces in a jigsaw but by someone who knew who we were; we all become absorbed into the vision of Bob Burgess.

There was one aspect of Bob Burgess for which we were wholly unprepared, and that was his visual imagination. This was a Vice-Chancellor with an informed interest in sculpture and painting and architecture, and the initial manifestation of this interest was his conviction that the campus needed to be cleaned up. The public concourses were smeared with chewing-gum stains, and the V-C ordered that high-pressure hoses be used to clean up the campus. Captain Bob clearly wanted his ship to be spick and span, and his action raised spirits and began to induce a sense of pride in a campus that was destined to be constantly improved during his tenure of office.

It was not only the campus that was destined to be improved. Bob Burgess took the view that the quality of the University was not adequately reflected in its reputation, and made the enhancing of that reputation one of his first priorities. He thought, for example, that the University was too low in the league tables, and his study of the performance indicators and his sense of where improvement was needed has meant that the University’s place in the league tables has risen steadily during the Burgess years. He also had a vision of what this University should be: inclusive, accessible, ambitious, empowering, uncompromising in standards, a beacon of excellence. These aspirations were eventually articulated in a phrase used by the judges in the University of the Year competition: the University of Leicester was ‘elite without being elitist’.

The University of Leicester is the only university to win 7 THE awards
Bob the Builder

BOB’S VISION AND IMAGINATION HAVE TRANSFORMED THE UNIVERSITY’S CAMPUS AND LANDSCAPE WITH NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND FACILITIES

Top: Professor Sir Bob Burgess and the Librarian, Christine Fyfe, performed the ground breaking ceremony for the £32 million new development for the Library in 2005

Above: David and Laura Wilson with Professor Sir Bob Burgess looking at plans for the re-development of the University Library
Bob Burgess’ keenness to expand the campus, enhance facilities for staff and students and make the University competitive with its peers has meant that throughout his time at Leicester, some part of the campus has been a construction site, and the V-C has became known as Bob the Builder. As a result, he was regularly photographed in a hard hat and high visibility jacket sitting on a mechanical digger or with a spade in his hand cutting the first sod of a new building project. There are many projects in which Bob Burgess has been involved, but many would say that the main achievement has been the development of the main University Library in 2007. The enhanced Library was not envisaged as a facility for storing a burgeoning collection of books: that could be done off-campus. The project was a product of the visual imagination of the Vice-Chancellor, who realised that the campus lacked coherence, and that it needed a centre to which staff and students would be drawn. In his mind the Library had to be a magnet towards which members of the University would be drawn for a variety of purposes, some social (he insisted that the library have a café), some pedagogical (he wanted teaching spaces throughout the library), and some dedicated to resources, especially electronic resources.

In 2007 the new £32 million David Wilson Library was finally opened, housing a 500-seat lecture theatre, study spaces for 1,500 students, group study rooms, a dedicated postgraduate space, the bookshop, careers centre and the long awaited café. A hugely successful fundraising campaign, run by retired local businessman Nicholas Corah, Pro-Chancellor, enabled the University to provide a new space ‘for students to think, for students to meet academically and socially, allowing them to develop intellectually and personally’. It was seen as ‘a building that has a sense of place and purpose at the heart of the University’. The estates team were also delighted that the building was able to achieve a BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Energy Assessment Method) Excellent rating for its environmentally friendly construction and energy efficiency. A further highlight in the Library’s early life was the official opening by Her Majesty The Queen in 2008. This was a momentous occasion for staff, students and the local community, many of whom came onto campus to get a glimpse of the Royal party. The University was also fortunate to have the opportunity to hold a lunch for Her Majesty at the Oadby campus, as the development of that campus is another important legacy of the Bob Burgess years.

The Library has been a huge success. In the last year of the old Library some 600,000 staff and students passed through the turnstiles. In the first year that the new Library opened, the figure rose to more than 1.5 million visitors, despite the fact that increased electronic provision meant that the resources of the Library could be accessed from halls of residence,
homes, offices, and other access points on the campus. One feature of the design is that the coffee shop and bookshop can be accessed without going through the turnstiles, so the coffee shop rapidly became a meeting hub.

The redevelopment of the Students’ Union building in 2010 has also resulted in a similar effect, with the siting of a Starbucks and the 1923 café and bar in the heart of the campus – coffee and cake or chips being the mainstay of much social interaction for students and staff. Not only do developments such as the Library and the Students’ Union give staff and students somewhere to revive themselves when they are flagging, they also provide social spaces that allow people to get together for discussions, meetings, and even the annual Carol Service. Bob Burgess is a firm advocate of this kind of informal learning: in his view learning must extend well beyond formal interactions between staff and students. These buildings, and several others, have also enabled the University to display more of its artwork and sculptures; a collection that Bob has built up over the years and highlighted in Art in the Gardens.

For Bob Burgess, the student experience has been paramount and he has been keen to ensure that students were at the heart of everything the University did. On his arrival in 1999 Bob oversaw the purchase of The Coppice in Oadby for use as student accommodation. At the same time, the refurbishment of Gilbert Murray Hall began in order to increase en-suite accommodation, which was becoming an increasingly insistent requirement of students, and would enable the University to increase its conference facilities. In 2003, to continue the development of student and conference accommodation, the University increased its commitment to investing in the Oadby campus by carrying out a £22.3 million improvement and updating of the residential facilities. In academic year 2006/07 the University celebrated its 50th Anniversary of becoming a University and this year it was able to celebrate its dedication to students by officially opening the new Hall of Residence, named after former Chair of Council, John Foster. This new Hall provided highly sought after facilities including en-suite rooms, self-catering accommodation and a facilities building with bar, large dining hall and seminar rooms that could also be used for conference activities. John Foster shared with Bob Burgess a conviction that second-best was not good enough, and the unprecedentedly high quality of John Foster Hall is testament to these shared values, and to a working relationship that proved to be immensely productive.

The University has celebrated many anniversaries during Bob’s time, most notably in the academic year 2001/02, which was the University’s 80th Anniversary year and was marked by a series of lectures, concerts, civic events and the groundbreaking of the Henry Wellcome Building. At the same time the University also launched its Development Plan which focused on a 30-year plan for development of the campus. The £300 million ‘Vision for the Future’ Development Plan proposed developments such as the Library extension, a new central square and developing North and South Campuses for teaching use.

As a result of plans to redevelop the campus and enhance the student experience, students were
very pleased when in 2008 a £15 million improvement to the Percy Gee Students’ Union Building project was launched, a project that was set to provide students with 21st Century facilities, including a brand new atrium, an activities resource centre, food outlets and meeting rooms. The building had always been complex and difficult to navigate, having over 30 different levels which created a real issue for access and those with disabilities. It was also a challenge for the architects. Nevertheless, a splendid building was developed that exceeded expectations and was opened in 2011 by the President of the NUS, Aaron Porter, who had also been a previous President of Leicester’s Students’ Union Executive.

Students have also benefited from improved sports facilities during Bob Burgess’ time. In 1999, a new floodlit five-a-side pitch was opened at Oadby and, although not a sportsman, Bob was delighted that that the University now had a pitch featuring the most up-to-date surface. Further developments were made to sports facilities but in 2012 when, after over 50 years of being a University without a swimming pool, the University opened two in quick succession. The University took the opportunity to purchase the Nuffield Sports Centre adjacent to the main campus, with its pool and gym, as well as building its own new Sports Centre at the Oadby Campus, again with a vast array of gym equipment and a 25 metre swimming pool. This £10 million investment in sports facilities clearly demonstrated to students the importance the University placed on the whole student experience and has been very well received. The University was delighted to name the campus sports centre after a prominent alumnus, paralympian archer Danielle Brown, and the Oadby sports centre after the former Chair of Council, Roger Bettles. The principal enthusiasms of Roger Bettles had long been health and sport, and the new facility in Oadby was an admirable reflection of these passions, and of the productive working relationship that he enjoyed with Bob Burgess.

Naming buildings has also been a key activity that is associated with Bob Burgess. When he first arrived at Leicester he was very keen to ensure that buildings were named after significant individuals and began a programme of re-naming, starting in 1999 with the naming of student residences after Sir Edwin Nixon, former Chairman of Council, and the newest building on campus, housing the School of Management, named after Dr Ken Edwards, our former Vice-Chancellor. In 2000 the George Porter Building was named after the former Chancellor, fittingly to house the Department of Chemistry, as Lord Porter had been a Nobel laureate in chemistry. In 2007, the new University Library was named after David Wilson, who donated £2 million of funding towards the project and has continued to be a supporter of the University, making a further generous donation to the Cardiovascular Research Centre appeal in 2013. In 2011 the Rt Hon David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Science, officially opened the Space Research Centre extension and there have also been a number of royal visits with the most prestigious being HRH The Queen opening the David Wilson Library in 2008.
The tradition of royal visits was inaugurated early in Bob Burgess’ time at Leicester, with 2002 seeing three royal visits: Her Majesty the Queen and HRH Prince Philip visited the City and the National Space Centre, which was co-founded by the University; their Royal Highnesses The Earl and Countess of Wessex visited the Richard Attenborough Centre to meet staff and students; and His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent visited the Scarman Centre to talk about its work in business crime as well as visiting the Departments of Engineering and Genetics to officially open the Electrical and Electronic Power Engineering Research Laboratories.

Many people would associate Leicester with high quality science, particularly in genetics and space research. On his arrival in Leicester, Bob Burgess continued his association with the newly created Leicester-Warwick Medical School that he had begun in his previous role at the University of Warwick. The Medical School was investing heavily in developing lecture theatre facilities as well as works to Clinical Sciences areas and in 2000, £10 million funding was secured from the Wellcome Trust to enable the development of a new Biomedical Sciences Building next to the Maurice Shock Building that was opened in 2004, named after the pharmaceutical entrepreneur and medical philanthropist Sir Henry Wellcome. This also included the sculpture Atomica by John Sydney Carter, who has been a regular curator of the Annual International Sculpture Show as outlined in Art in the Gardens and the Frank and Katherine May Lecture Theatre, named after Dr Frank May MBE, a local businessman and long-term supporter of the University. At the same time designs were also commissioned for the extension of the Space Research Centre to allow the University to expand its rapidly expanding space research programme alongside the inter-disciplinary Mathematical Modelling activity that had begun. This provided a new home for academics from Mathematics, Engineering, Chemistry and Physics to work together using state-of-the-art equipment and develop a truly inter-disciplinary research group. 2003 also saw the refurbishment of the Chemistry laboratories, which allowed the Department to provide facilities for staff and students with disabilities as well as new laboratories and the following year a new home was opened for the School of Archaeology and Ancient History which ranked highly in the league tables and had become an increasingly popular subject. In 2014 the University continues its investment into the medical field by commencing work on a new Centre for Medicine that will house much of the teaching for medical students as well as providing much needed space for inter-disciplinary research within the health sciences.

Space is at a premium on an urban campus such as Leicester’s, so Bob Burgess has always encouraged Departments to bid for money to refurbish their accommodation and ensure that high quality staff and students continue to be attracted to Leicester. And this has not just been in the field of science. In 2009 Museum Studies moved to new premises on University Road.

Continued from previous page

Top left: HRH the Earl of Wessex, Prince Edward, and HRH The Countess of Wessex, visited the Richard Attenborough Centre

Bottom left: HRH Prince Michael of Kent visited the Scarman Centre as well as visiting the Departments of Engineering and Genetics
to new premises on University Road: this stunning space highlighted just what is possible using refurbishment where new build was not feasible. Their new accommodation houses lecture and seminar spaces, a library and a materials room and with large storage facilities. It also has the very popular and somewhat interesting inverted canopy signage that provides a distinctive entrance to the building. In 2013, Bob Burgess was able to open the University’s first Management Training Centre, College Court, something that he had been keen to develop since arriving at the University but it had proved difficult to identify suitable premises. When the sale of College Hall in Knighton fell through it was decided that this would make an ideal venue and plans began to be developed. College Court is now fully operational and adds another high quality facility to the University’s portfolio.

Work also takes place beyond the main campus, principally because the University is firmly embedded in the three University Hospitals of Leicester. In 2005 the Breast Cancer Unit was launched at the Robert Kilpatrick Clinical Sciences Building at the Leicester Royal Infirmary, in 2012 the Cardiovascular Research Centre at the Glenfield Hospital and in 2013 the Diabetes Research Centre was opened at the Leicester General Hospital as another good example of effective collaboration between the University and the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust. The Cardiovascular Research Centre was said to be a ‘visionary project’ by the Director, Professor Nilesh Samani, and attracted a £3m donation from the British Heart Foundation. The project was completed with a £500,000 gift from the David Wilson Foundation and the University’s largest donation of £7 million from the John and Lucille van Geest Foundation that has provided a Biomarker Facility and the endowment of a Heart and Cardiovascular Diseases Research Fund.

Excellence in all areas is a key aspiration of the University and in 2005 this was recognised by HEFCE who funded two Centres of Excellence in Learning and Teaching within the University in Genetics and Geography. The University also hosted a third centre in Physics and Astronomy with the Open University and the University of Reading. In 2010 the University held a competition to develop Research Centres, another of Bob Burgess’ passions. These centres of multi-disciplinary activity of an extremely high quality were launched in three areas initially: Medical Humanities; Landscape Interaction; and Change and Bioengineering. These were augmented in 2012 by further Centres in the Future of Work and Genetics. However, developing new activities and building accommodation is not without its cost and linked to capital development is the issue of fundraising. During Bob’s time at Leicester the University has experienced a more than 15-fold increase in its philanthropic income which has included tremendous support from alumni, parents and some of the most respected charitable trusts including The Wolfson Foundation and The Garfield Weston Foundation. It has received some of its biggest donations from local supporters including David Wilson, Sir David Samworth, the Edith Murphy Foundation and members of the community who particularly raised significant sums for the Cardiovascular Research Centre appeal in 2013. Early fundraising activity was undertaken with the assistance of the redoubtable Nicholas Corah whose expertise enabled the development of the new David Wilson Library, and on Nicholas’ retirement Bob set up the University’s first Fundraising Committee which has taken fundraising to another level and built a culture of giving through the annual appeal to alumni and major capital appeals for projects such as the Students’ Union, the Cardiovascular Research Centre and now the new Centre for Medicine. In this, their final year, Bob and Hilary Burgess have lent their names to a Research and Teaching Fund which has as its first priority a target of £2m for the Centre for Medicine. The fund will also provide postgraduate studentships, which is another area strongly supported by Bob and Hilary.
The Quality of Leicester

RAISING THE UNIVERSITY’S GAME: BOB IS DEDICATED TO FINDING NEW WAYS OF DOING OLD THINGS AND BRINGING NEW PERSPECTIVES TO ESTABLISHED IDEAS

The architectural texture of Leicester is documented in a book published by the City entitled *The Quality of Leicester*. Within the University, the initiatives of Bob Burgess have greatly enhanced the built environment, but he has also been insistent on raising the quality of staff and students, sometimes in opposition to those who see such ambition as futile or presumptuous. One arena in which the distinctiveness of Bob’s aspiration becomes apparent is the professorial appointments panel. There are often panel members who hope to hire someone who will be an agreeable member of the university family, and will settle in Leicester forever. The Burgess approach is wholly different, and members of appointment panels have often been startled by his ambition. When well-known names have been proposed, panellists have often said that we are insufficiently glamorous to attract such people, and that even if we did attract them, they would regard Leicester as a staging post rather than the fulfilment of an ambition. Bob has always answered the first objection with the insistence that we will never know the answer unless we ask, and has responded to the second by saying that he would rather have the services of a first-rate person for a few years than a mediocre person for life. If none of the candidates seems outstanding, Bob Burgess has always insisted that we not appoint, so resisting the impulse of academics who think that filling the vacancy is the most important priority. The result of this policy has been a distinct enhancement in the quality of the University’s professorial appointments. Indeed, our retention rate is also high, as the University of Leicester remains a good employer, and is a satisfying place to work.

The quality of students has also risen steadily during the years of Bob Burgess’ tenure of office. He insists, in the face of academic resistance, that we raise our A-level requirements so that we are seen to be in competition with the best of our peers. In August, when the A-level results are published, Bob masterminds the University’s response, always insisting that admissions tutors do their utmost to attract students of the highest quality.

When a new university is created, it naturally sits at the bottom of the hierarchy. When the University of Leicester was created in 1957, the last of the UK’s civic universities, it became the UK’s 22nd university. In the 1960s, in the wake of the Robbins Report, a new generation of plate-glass universities was created, and some of these – notably Sussex, York and Warwick – became immensely fashionable. Students did not ‘come up’ to Leicester, but rather ended up here, at the university across from the cemetery. It was a decent, hardworking place that embodied many civic virtues, and taught very conscientiously indeed, but it was not everyone’s first choice. The notion of modest, unsung virtue, remained with the University in the ensuing decades. Leicester was part of a university system of which Britain was rightly proud. In the years of Mrs Thatcher’s reign, however, this comfortable state of affairs collapsed, and universities found themselves competing for resources. Leicester’s quiet decency was no match for the aggression of some of the newer universities, and when universities began to
publish league tables, Leicester was routinely placed near the bottom of the 45 pre-1992 universities.

Bob Burgess decided that this was not satisfactory, and made league tables one of his priorities. There was predictable resistance from academics who thought that league tables were the frivolous creations of journalists who ranked universities as if they were restaurants, but Bob realised that the public perception of quality is influenced by newspaper league tables, and that they affected the attractiveness of the university to potential staff and students. He therefore lavished attention on the metrics of league tables, realising that higher ratings could benefit the University. This was not merely a cosmetic exercise, because the tables identified potential areas for improvement within the University. The National Student Survey, for example, is a reliable indicator of how our teaching feels from the receiving end, so Bob insisted that we take it seriously, and when it emerged that our students were amongst the happiest in the UK, Bob trumpeted this success at every opportunity. During Bob's tenure of office, the University has gradually risen in the league tables, and it is now routinely placed in the top 15 of the UK's c. 150 universities. Measures of the quality of the University's research include citations in learned journals, and by that criterion Leicester is 8th in the UK. On the global stage, the University is now routinely included in the top 1% of the world's universities. That standing is a tribute to the work of Bob Burgess.

One reflection of this widespread perception of enhanced quality is prizes, and Bob Burgess rejoices in the accolades awarded to the University. In 2008 Leicester was named University of the Year by the *Times Higher Education*, and Bob commissioned celebratory banners to hang on University Road. Since then there has been a torrent of prizes, culminating in 2013 in the Queen's Anniversary Prize, which recognised the ‘Inter-connected research and expertise in history, heritage and archaeology, highlighted by the discovery of Richard III.’

### University guide 2014: University league table

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The Leicestershire and Rutland University College was founded in 1921, and six years later it became University College Leicester. The College was conceived as a living memorial to those who fell in the Great War, and the motto, taken from the Latin translation of the Bible (John 10:10), was ut vitam habent: ‘that they may have life’. The presence of lively young students on the campus was deemed to be testament to the sacrifice of those who had fallen, and students lay at the heart of the College, which was from the outset deemed to be an educational institution centred on the preparation of undergraduates for University of London degrees.

This year marks the centenary of the outbreak of World War I, and Leicester remains the only UK university to have been conceived as a war memorial. Bob Burgess has always insisted that students remain at the heart of our endeavours, and that the education of students is a primary obligation. Indeed, at a time when some Vice-Chancellors style themselves as CEOs running businesses, it is widely recognised that Bob Burgess has always remembered that he is leading a university. That conviction has created a student profile that is unique amongst the UK’s finest universities: Leicester is the only top-twenty university to have met government targets for the proportion of students from poorer socio-economic backgrounds. The University of Leicester is proud to be an educational institution that attracts students from every sphere of life.

In the UK there is differential funding for research, but not for teaching. That has led some universities to concentrate on research at the expense of teaching. Bob Burgess has stood firm against this trend, insisting that teaching must remain a priority, insisting that the purposes of research include the enhancement of teaching, and insisting that the University find ways of honouring good teaching. The promotion prospects of academic staff have traditionally been heavily weighted towards their record in research, but Bob Burgess has created promotion routes that honour innovative and creative teaching. Graduation ceremonies now regularly feature the honouring of a colleague who has become distinguished for teaching, and the cheers of the graduads in the audience bear tumultuous witness to the value that they place on good teaching.

Under the leadership of Bob Burgess, the student population of the University has become remarkably diverse by any number of measures – ethnic mix, gender balance, intakes from state and private schools, international students from more than 100 countries – and Bob rejoices in that rainbow quality. The huge number of distance-learning students scattered around the world has meant that in some years Leicester has more postgraduates than undergraduates, and again Bob Burgess is adamant that those overseas students receive an education of uncompromised quality.

One of Bob’s particular passions is lifelong learning and adult education, especially for those
who have not been able to access higher education previously. As a result, he developed the Institute of Lifelong Learning in 2000 which aimed to include programmes from all areas of the University that could be offered on a part-time basis and ranged from professional development courses, certificate and diploma level qualifications through to a full degree. His commitment to part-time provision led him last year to relocate Vaughan College on the campus, so that adult learners can be more fully integrated into the life of the University.

One of Bob Burgess’ preoccupations has been the enhancement of the student experience. He has, for example, forged a relationship with the Philharmonia Orchestra which enables students to audition for a music scholarship which pays for instrumental music lessons with members of the Philharmonia. There are also a range of other instrumental and vocal scholarships funded through generous donations from alumni to the Student Opportunities Fund. All students are given a discount on Philharmonia concert tickets and players also run masterclasses in areas such as conducting. This has been a hugely successful scheme since it began in 2010.

In 2010, Raqib Huq spoke on behalf of the Orchestral Society indicating students’ delight at the development: ‘This year has been a great start to the partnership. Our orchestra has had sectional rehearsals with some of the Philharmonia’s best musicians. This was a huge help in pulling off an ambitious programme for our Christmas concert’.

Assistance to students has always been central to Bob’s sense of the role of a Vice-Chancellor. He has been an active supporter of the student fundraising group RAG, of community liaison committees and of the work of Contact, the University’s volunteering society. In 1999 Contact won Millennium funding to enable it to offer a wider range of activities within the community, including helping in schools with literacy, visiting the elderly, and participating in conservation projects. The University also takes part in the Right to Read scheme which allows staff to visit local schools to hear pupils reading.

A student’s time at Leicester culminates in graduation, and Bob Burgess regards degree congregations as the most important public events of the year. He invests an immense amount of energy into enhancing the ceremonies, including securing eminent honorary graduates whose presence will add lustre to the ceremonies and make important friends for the universities. Those honoured during Bob’s time as Vice-Chancellor include Bill Bryson, Engelbert Humperdinck, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Sir Terry Wogan. Thanks to the passion that Bob Burgess invests in these ceremonies, students feel that their years of study have been properly and joyously honoured.

**Middle right:** Sir Terry Wogan enjoys an ice cream during his Honorary Graduation July 2010

**Above:** Sadiyo Siad, winning volunteer at the year 2012 for her efforts locally as well as internationally
University College Leicester was a teaching institution, and teaching remains central to the life of the University. On becoming a University, however, the College was transformed into an institution expected to conduct research as well as teach, and to achieve that end professors were appointed to the staff, which had previously consisted entirely of lecturers. By the time Bob Burgess arrived, Leicester was well-established as a research-led university, and discoveries such as genetic fingerprinting and the prevalence of black holes were part of Leicester’s history. Bob decided that we were too modest about our research, and set about raising both aspirations and reputation. He wanted research income to be raised, research assessment scores to be improved, scientific citations work to grow, and publicity to be given to successes. These goals have all been achieved. Bob knows that reservoirs of knowledge must be renewed, and so in 2005 introduced a scheme of ‘New Blood Lecturers’ at the University in which the very best available young academics are appointed with some protected time in their early years of their appointments, so that they can focus on developing their research career but with a clear destination of integrating their research into teaching programmes after the first year or two. The scheme has been immensely successful, and the presence of these young researchers, together with a new generation of professors whom Bob has appointed, has ensured that the triumphs of the past will be repeated in the future.

As research is largely invisible to the general public, Bob Burgess decided to highlight the work of its academics in the local community. Medicine was an obvious area in which to foster such awareness.
There are many staff and students working in the City’s hospitals. Clinicians such as Professor Nilesh Samani and Professor Will Steward, who work at Leicester’s Glenfield and Royal Infirmary Hospitals on cardiovascular and cancer studies respectively, are regularly seen in clinics with patients as well as in the University laboratories developing new techniques for fighting such diseases. Professor Bryan Williams’ invention of a new way of measuring blood pressure using a wrist watch mechanism was being trialled at Glenfield Hospital in 2010 and won the 2011 Award for Outstanding Contribution to Innovation and Technology in the Times Higher Awards. Another invention, by members of the Space Research Centre (in particular Professors Mark Sims and Paul Monks), was the Diagnostics Development Unit (known as the space-ship style sick bay) that is being trialled in the Leicester Royal Infirmary. In 2004 the University inaugurated a Breast Cancer Research Unit at the Leicester Royal Infirmary, opened by the then local MP, the Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt and John Reid, the Secretary of State for Health. The Unit was relocated from Glenfield Hospital in order to provide a closer link to the Cancer Studies and Molecular Medicine Departments. Similarly, the local community generously supported the University’s fundraising appeal for the Cardiovascular Research Centre, where £5m was raised. The project was a considerable success and Leicester shoppers generously supported bucket collections by students, the Heartbeat Ball gala dinner raised a record £100,000, the Edith Murphy Foundation donated £375,000, local businesses raised £40,000 at a business dinner for leading members of the Asian community and further support was forthcoming from the many faith based groups and charitable associations including the Lions, Rotary, Heartsearch and Masonic charities. Applied medical research was thereby extended well beyond the confines of the University and Hospitals into the heart of the wider community.

Beyond medicine, the University also educates the next generation of lawyers, social workers and teachers, and many Leicester graduates are to be found serving in our courts and schools. In 2006, Bob Burgess took advantage of the University’s long-standing interest in crime, spread across many departments, and encouraged colleagues to create a Forensic Research Centre. In this Centre academics from Criminology, Psychology and Chemistry worked with the Home Office and Northamptonshire Police Scientific Support Unit to develop fingerprint analysis from metal surfaces. The Centre also worked with Probation Services to research re-offending and the Law Faculty looked at issues around drugs thresholds.
The greatest discovery during Bob Burgess’ time at Leicester was the recovery and identification of the skeleton of Richard III in a city centre car park. The discovery was made by Richard Buckley and his colleagues in the Archaeological Services Unit embedded in the University’s School of Archaeology and Ancient History. Bob ensured that the scientific and historical research that arose out of the discovery would be centred at the University, and successfully encouraged colleagues to form a research network across disciplines and departments. The question of the final resting place of the bones quickly arose, and Bob ensured that everyone who mattered was involved, including Sir Peter Soulsby (representing the City, which owns the car park), Bishop Tim Stevens (representing the Cathedral, where King Richard will be buried) and Lady Gretton, the Lord Lieutenant (representing the Crown).

The discovery of the remains of Richard III garnered the University unimaginable levels of publicity and acclaim but the danger, which Bob spotted, was that this might overshadow our other achievements. In truth, this was just the latest in a long line of impressive breakthroughs; hence ‘The Legacy of Leicester’, highlighting seven milestones in the University’s history.

Whittling down the list of possible candidates, Bob selected some well-known names but also some unsung achievements which revolutionised their own specialist fields in ways that subsequently affected millions of lives.

Thus we find Professor Sir Alec Jeffreys and his invention of genetic fingerprinting, recognised as one of the greatest scientific breakthroughs of the 20th century, alongside Professor John Swales’ definitive medical textbook on hypertension. Few non-cardiologists know Swales’ name, but the influence of his work on global medicine is incalculable.

WG Hoskins’ much-reprinted The Making of the English Landscape, which introduced the concept of ‘English local history’, remains an essential volume for historians while sociologists revere the name of Norbert Elias and his seminal two-volume work, The Civilising Process. The academic study of mass communication began at Leicester, and our unparalleled 50-year history of x-ray astronomy research links us to the discovery of arguably the first known black hole.

Of course the real legacy of Leicester is our graduates and the discoveries they have yet to make…
Art in the Gardens

THE VISUAL IMAGINATION OF LEICESTER’S VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PASSION FOR ART AND SCULPTURES HAS ENHANCED LEICESTER’S ENVIRONMENT
By the time Bob Burgess arrived on campus, staff thought that they knew what they were getting: a sociologist with a specialism in education, a respected academic manager with a reputation for getting things done, and a man whose personal qualities included a capacious memory and an ability to forge relationships with people of every station in life. The quality that took colleagues by surprise was Bob’s well-stocked visual imagination: we suddenly had in our midst a connoisseur with an informed taste in paintings and sculpture. Shortly after his arrival Bob discovered a trust fund that had been endowed for the purpose of enhancing the University, and in the years that followed his office has purchased scores of paintings for the University, insisting that the pieces chosen must be suitable for viewers with a wide range of tastes and, if possible, fit in some way with University themes or the location for which they are being selected; he also enjoys negotiating a good discount! Works chosen include those of international artists such as Marc Chagall and Joan Miró, national British artists such as Terry Frost and Alan Davie, and contemporary local artists, including Sarah Kirby, Kathy Layfield and Mikki Longley. Some of the choices have been bold and radical rather than homely and comfortable, and in that sense they reflect a core value of the Bob Burgess years.

Bob has also been instrumental in developing relationships with local artists through, amongst others, the Leicester Society of Artists. Every few years Bob has attended the exhibitions and decided whose work would fit well in the University. Local artists have then been written to, asking them to donate a piece of work, or offer it on loan if donating was really not possible. This has been a hugely successful initiative, and over the past five years the University has been generously given over sixty pieces from artists such as Tim Fisher, Brian Porteus, Ann Saxton and Douglas Smith. In addition, this has generated interest from others who are keen to have their work on display, not least members of staff. The Attenborough Tower is now home to Three Sentinels by Dave Pidgeon, a local artist who also works as a University Porter.

Left: Joan Miró: Ubu Roi

Middle: John Fulleylove: Richard III outside the Old Blue Boar Inn, Leicester. Donated and unveiled by Dr Frank May MBE on 21 January 2014

Right: Dave Pidgeon: Three Sentinels
Within his own office, Bob has regularly made use of the Leicestershire County Council’s art loan scheme which has enabled artwork to be displayed within the Vice-Chancellor’s suite on an annual basis. He has also ensured that works of art purchased, donated or loaned by artists are displayed across the campus and not just in the Fielding Johnson Building or Vice-Chancellor’s Office. In total, over a period of five years Bob has acquired over 60 paintings for the University from donations, which is a significant investment for the future and in the present enhances the environment for staff, students and visitors to the campus.

Bob Burgess’ view that paintings can substantially enhance the built environment is apparent all over the main campus. The most important expression of his visual imagination, however, is the annual Sculpture in the Garden exhibition in the University’s Botanic Garden in Oadby. These outdoor exhibitions began in 2002 with an exhibition of 34 pieces, displayed in recognition of the University’s 80th Anniversary with a view to giving something back to the community that had supported the University for many years. The exhibition has become a nationally recognised annual event that attracts visitors from all across the country, many of whom come back year after year. It also hosts sculpture for a wide range of artists, many of whom are distinguished members of the Royal British Society of Sculptors.

The 2002 exhibition was a tribute to the work of local and national artists, with much of which Bob Burgess was already familiar. It included work from future curators Helaine Blumenfeld and John Sydney Carter as well as the initial curator Professor Bill Forster (who showed five of his own pieces) and well known artists such as Derek Howarth, Deirdre Hubbard and Gudrun Nielsen. The show focused mainly on large-scale works and was highly successful in bringing in new visitors to the Botanic Garden.
The first Show was a huge success, so Bob decided that it should become an annual event. In 2003 Bill Forster was joined in curating the exhibition by Helaine Blumenfeld, for whose work Bob has a particular enthusiasm. When our Henry Moore sculpture was returned to Italy, Helaine Blumenfeld generously donated Souls to the University for the front lawn outside the Fielding Johnson Building. Her co-curatorship provided an opportunity for her and 20 international artists working at the prestigious Pietrasanta studio to exhibit their work alongside 17 UK-based sculptors. After only two years, the sculpture exhibition had become an institution. In 2005, the Show took on a new dimension as it celebrated the Royal British Society of Sculptors’ Centenary. In the catalogue, the President of the RBS expressed his gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Burgess, for his enthusiasm and support; such tributes testify to the Vice-Chancellor's hands-on support for these exhibitions. In the years that followed the annual exhibition has continued to evolve. 2006 was the first Show to have a formal title: With an Object in Mind. 2007 was the first year that Almuth Tebbenhoff exhibited in the Show, inaugurating another long association with Leicester and a subsequent curatorship. In 2008 a new Visual Arts Manager, Helen Forster, was appointed to the Richard Attenborough Centre and, as a permanent member of staff, she took over the curatorship of the exhibition. This brought a fresh approach to the show and challenged some traditional thinking about sculpture through the title A Sense of Place which aimed to show sculpture's relationship to the Garden and how it could blend into its surroundings. In 2009 Helen Forster was succeeded at the RAC by Stella Couloutbanis, who has been involved in the administration of the Show up to the present. In her first year Bob collaborated with local designer, painter and sculptor John Sydney Carter in mounting A Celebration of British Sculpture. John Sydney Carter had been involved with the show from its inception and had also developed a relationship with the University through his donation of Atomica to the University for the interior of the Henry Wellcome Building, and his subsequent gift of Vortex, which sits just outside the building.

John Sydney Carter: Vortex
In 2010 the Sculpture Show reflected another long-term interest of Bob Burgess: medical research. The Show celebrated the launch of the appeal to build the University’s Cardiovascular Research Centre at Glenfield Hospital, and John Sydney Carter, once again curating, entitled the exhibition Heart, Head and Hands. The work of Diane Maclean was particularly poignant and her Stranded Heart became the focus for the appeal, spending some time in the Leicester Highcross Shopping Centre and now proudly sits on the roof of the entrance to the new building. Bob’s University was once again reaching into the City. In 2012 and 2013 the exhibitions were curated by Almuth Tebbenhoff, and again Bob Burgess remained close to the project, contributing an introduction to the catalogues.

Bob Burgess has been the unseen presence in all of these exhibitions, and this summer his support will be acknowledged in a celebration of “the Bob Burgess Years”: 13 years of Sculpture in the Garden with work from many sculptors who have become friends of the exhibition, the University, and of Bob Burgess. Once again, Bob’s involvement in the Sculpture Show will highlight his insistence on high quality in everything that the University does. He has insisted that the work be produced by significant artists working to a very high standard. Curators have worked hard to make these annual exhibitions meet the standards that Bob Burgess sets, and their quality is testament to his leadership.

One of the key benefits of holding an annual sculpture show is that it attracts additional visitors to the University’s Botanic Gardens. Bob has frequently received comments from sculptors and guests that they did not know that the University had a Botanic Garden. Indeed, many local residents admit to never having stepped foot in it despite living no more than a few miles away. Bob has been heard to say that it is the University’s best-kept secret. Happily, that is no longer the case, and thousands of visitors come to the Garden each year to see the show. In 2013 the number going through the gates during the show was around 30,000 which is a magnificent achievement and a great legacy.

In the 2007 catalogue, Helaine Blumenfeld commented ‘We have seen children absolutely captivated, their imaginations stimulated by the tangible works they have been able to see and touch and even on occasion talk to (one little boy asked a large abstract sculpture: ‘What do you eat?’) but this would not have been possible without the participation of the University of Leicester and particularly the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Robert Burgess and his colleagues, who have supported this exhibition and been strong advocates for a renewal of society’s belief in the human spirit, and the transforming power of beauty.’ The same could be said of much that has happened at the University, but the sculpture show is the clearest manifestation of the support that Bob Burgess has given to the visual arts in the University.
Some Vice-Chancellors arrive at their new campuses, install themselves in vast and sumptuous vice-chancellorial suites, and throughout their reigns remain remote from the subjects whom they rule and the towns and cities in which they live, from time to time abating their consumption of the good life to issue edicts from airport lounges and London clubs. No Vice-Chancellor is further removed from this stereotype than Bob Burgess, who established his base in a very modest office and promptly set about getting to know the campus, the City and the County. Throughout his time at Leicester he has systematically visited academic and corporate service departments. With any other Vice-Chancellor one might have expected that this practice would be short-lived, but in Bob’s case the opposite is dramatically true: at the outset he visited two departments every term, and by his final year the pace had increased for protracted periods to two departments every week. The wisdom of this practice is made clear in the story about the president of a Japanese car manufacturing company, who, on being asked why he spent so little time in his fine office, replied that no cars were manufactured in his office. Bob Burgess is a Vice-Chancellor who realises that what matters in a university happens in classrooms, laboratories, hospitals and libraries. He has, as colleagues are sometimes heard to remark, never forgotten what a university is for, but he also knows...
what it does. Captain Bob steers from the bridge, as promised, but he also regularly inspects the engine room, and knows every corner of his ship.

Captain Bob also knows the seas in which his ship sails. The inshore waters are the City and County of Leicester. Bob has developed many links within the City and County, having served as a member of the Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and the Regional Development Agency and chaired the East Midlands Universities Association. He has built excellent relationships with the Bishop of Leicester and the City Mayor which benefit the University through partnership working between staff and students. He connects with the people of Leicester with a regular ‘First Person’ column in the Leicester Mercury. He has also forged links with the County’s other two Universities: De Montfort and Loughborough. Bob has developed excellent working relationships with these institutions and has encouraged staff to work in collaboration on activities such as The Square Mile Project. As a result of his local work and public profile, Bob was invited to become a Deputy Lieutenant in 2010, and since then has assisted the Lord Lieutenant in carrying out her duties as the Queen’s representative in the City and County. Each year Bob also invites representatives of local Councils to visit the University to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the work the University does and the benefit it brings to the City and the County in order that they can also become champions for the University in their local areas. He has hosted events such as Beating the Retreat and the Soldiers’ Charity Annual Curry Luncheon at the Botanic Gardens, and encouraged the University to take part in local annual festivals, including the Caribbean Carnival, the Leicester Pride Parade mounted by the LGBT community, and the Mela events of Leicester’s South Asian communities. All of this has helped to highlight the diversity of the City and the University and how the two are linked together and work together in partnership and harmony. In the sphere of education, in 2001 Bob established the Colleges University of Leicester Network (CULN), which brought together University academics, school teachers and sixth form college lecturers to work together on developing new programmes and initiatives through collaboration as well as providing wider access to the University for CULN students. This was an important step in working with local providers, some of whom send students on to the University.

In 2001, the University celebrated its 80th Anniversary as an educational establishment with an Anniversary Day that highlighted a year of activity and celebration including community activities such as civic receptions, lectures, dinners, concerts and exhibitions. In 2007
the University celebrated 50 years of becoming a University in its own right which gave rise to another series of celebrations, in particular Celebrate Leicester Day, when the University threw open its doors to the public, enabling it to showcase its achievements, facilities and activities to the whole community. A similar event is being planned for this summer, as part of the University’s Great War commemorations, and to mark Bob’s retirement, where once again the University will welcome the whole community to its Homecoming event to see the high quality and diverse range of work that is being done and how Leicester continues to develop as a leading UK University.

One strand of Bob’s work at a national level concerns the nurturing of educational institutions on the path to university status. New universities in the UK have often begun life, as Leicester did, as colleges of established universities. In the year that Bob Burgess arrived in Leicester, Nene College became the University College Northampton; it awarded its own taught degrees, but research degrees were awarded by University of Leicester until 2007, when UCN became the University of Northampton. Bob was happy for the University to assume responsibility for two other fledgling colleges, Bishop Grosseteste (in Lincoln) and Newman (in Birmingham), and was delighted to support them until they became independent universities. Indeed, he has even been responsible for providing induction training for new Vice-Chancellors through Universities UK.

Every year the University throws open its doors to the public, showcasing its achievements, facilities and activities to the whole community.

The work of Bob Burgess at a national level was well established before he came to Leicester: while at Warwick he had been a member of various national committees including being a member of the ESRC Postgraduate Training Board, the Founding Chair of the UK Council for Graduate Education and President of the British Sociological Association. As it was not long before Leicester began to increase its public profile and rise up the league tables it was a relatively short time before Bob began to be asked to join national committees in his capacity as Vice-Chancellor of Leicester. These included chairing a number of committees including the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, the Research Information Network, the Higher Education Academy, the Universities UK/GuildHE Teacher Education Advisory Group and latterly NatCen Social Research. He is currently President of the Society for Research into Higher Education and has also been President of the Association for the Teaching of Social Sciences as well as being a member of the Board of the British Library and the Economic and Social Research Council.

Bob Burgess is particularly well known for his work on measuring and recording student achievement and implementing a new method of recording student achievement that shows a wider range of activity, including volunteering, and enables the student to demonstrate ‘value added’. The development of the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) has been part of Bob’s life since 2004 and he frequently recalls that when he was asked to take on the chair of a Universities UK/GuildHE group looking into the issue of degree classification, he was assured it would only take one or two meetings! This group and its successors have become known as the ‘Burgess Groups’ and the HEAR is now being implemented by 27 institutions with more coming on board at a good pace under the leadership of the Higher Education Academy. Due to his involvement in degree classification work, Bob has also been asked to assume responsibility for chairing the Higher Education Academy’s group looking at implementing the introduction of a Grade Point Average across the sector. This would provide a new way of recording student achievement and should remove the cliff edges of a first, 2:1, 2:2 and spread out students’ marks, which will make it easier for employers to distinguish between quality applicants. This work is well underway and is due to report back in the autumn with the potential to extend the trial into 2015.
Bob’s commitment in time and energy to the University is prodigious. It is not, however, immeasurable: indeed, his office has counted his obligations (many self-imposed).

**Here is the tally for his penultimate year in office:**

![Diagram of events and meetings]

Total Events for the Year: **1254**
- Individual Meetings: 625
- University Meetings: 283
- Regional External Meetings: 13
- National External Meetings: 30
- Talks/ Presentations: 37
- Chair of University Meetings: 137
- Chair of Regional External Meetings: 2
- Dinners as Host: 42
- Lunches as Host: 34
- Dinners as Host: 42
- Dinners: 28
- Chair of National External Meetings: 23

These figures may well make Bob the nation’s busiest Vice-Chancellor. He regularly hosts dinners at his home, attends County Services, is guest of honour at school prize givings, gives speeches and presentations at weekends as well as during the week and rarely has a week go by where there are not at least two or three evenings taken up by University events. Alongside him at many of these events is his wife, Hilary, who has been a steadfast supporter of Bob, and the University owes a great debt to her. Hilary has had a successful professional life of her own, and in recent years has been colleague at the University, but in addition to the heavy workload of a professional academic, she lavishes many hours on the role of Vice-Chancellor’s Consort, and does so with good humour and unfailing grace.

*Right:* Lady Hilary Burgess and Professor Sir Robert Burgess at the formal launch of the partnership between the University of Leicester and the Philharmonia Orchestra.
Under the leadership of Bob Burgess the University has increased student numbers from 17,322 to 23,000 and increased research income from £27.2m to over £55m. It has raised its position in the League Tables from the mid-30s to the mid-teens with especially high achievements in the quality of teaching and the perception of students of their university experience. Bob has worked with remarkable energy and commitment to improve every area of the University within his influence. Throughout his years in Leicester he has sought to instil in the University four key values: an inclusive and accessible culture; a personal, supportive experience; a commitment to high quality innovation and rigorous academic standards; and a belief that teaching and research are synergistic. The greatest measure of his success is that the University is now characterised by these values.

He is highly regarded within UK university circles as is evidenced by the national roles that he has been asked to fulfil. In the media he has ensured that the University of Leicester is frequently the subject of positive comment, notably in the Times Higher Education awards and commentaries. The Burgess Report published in the autumn of 2007 received positive reports in most of the serious national press and in other media.

Mainly, it is the energy and ability that Bob brings to the leadership of the University of Leicester that is developing and improving its place within UK universities and the global community with remarkable pace and vigour. Bob has a capability to manage a daunting workload, applying a high level of academic knowledge and insight to every sphere of his endeavours on our behalf. His prodigious labours on behalf of the University and the nation were recognised in 2010 with the award of a knighthood in the New Year’s Honours.

The legacy of Bob Burgess is for the most part invisible, because it

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**The Legacy**

Bob has achieved so much in the last 15 years and given the University a renewed self-confidence which will be felt by generations to come.

**Student numbers increased from 17,322 to 23,000**

**Research income increased from £27.2m to £55m**

**Position in the League Tables moved from the mid-30s to the mid-teens**
consists in significant part of the greatly enhanced reputation of the University. As Bob has been remarkable for (among other reasons) his visual imagination, there is another sort of legacy, one that can be seen. The best place to look is in front of the David Wilson Library. On the concourse in front of the façade there is now a sculpture called *Flight*, by the distinguished sculptor (and friend of the University) Helaine Blumenfeld. This fine bronze was conceived as a symbol of aspiration, of reaching upwards. It serves, as the sculptor explained, ‘not only a beacon welcoming one into the library, but more importantly, a symbol of the spirit that has energized the University of Leicester in the years that Professor Sir Robert Burgess has been Vice-Chancellor’. Standing as it does in front of the Library that is the greatest architectural achievement of Bob Burgess’ time at Leicester, it symbolises his legacy. As was said of Sir Christopher Wren, so it can be said of Sir Robert Burgess: si monumentum requiris, circumspice. ‘If you seek his monument, look around’. 

*Right:* ‘Flight’ is a major bronze work by sculptor Helaine Blumenfeld OBE, one of Britain’s leading contemporary sculptors. It was unveiled at the entrance to the University’s David Wilson Library on 7 February 2014.