



**Bournemouth
University**

ALAN PERRY OBE ONL

Pro-Chancellor,

Alan Perry is a businessman with a passion for the heritage of Poole and its historic links with Newfoundland, where he has rebuilt an eighteenth-century Dorset merchant's house as a museum and learning centre. He was a founding member and Chairman of the Wessex-Newfoundland Society, and is a leading supporter of BU's partnership with Memorial University.

Alan Perry came from London to Dorset in pursuit of his business interests, beginning with market gardening but later extending to wine importing and property development. His entrepreneurial successes include most recently the development of the Piddlehinton Industrial Estate.

Alan's deep and lifelong love of history soon led him into a number of heritage projects including the restoration of the water wheel at Corfe Mullen mill. But his most significant project took him across the Atlantic, because he had become immersed in the history of Poole and particularly the role of its cod fishermen in establishing an English presence in Trinity Newfoundland during the seventeenth century. Here, on the east coast of the island, in the 1760s Benjamin Lester, a Poole merchant, built a large house, the first brick building in Newfoundland. By the 1960s the house was in ruins, and much of it had been demolished. When Alan visited Trinity in 1985 he saw the remains of this historic building and discovered its links with Poole.

Then his commitment and determination, and his skill as a fund-raiser, came to the fore. After exploratory discussions on both sides of the Atlantic, in 1992 he set up the Trinity Trust, with Lord Digby as patron, and raised over £600,000 to rebuild Lester-Garland house as a museum and learning centre which interprets and illustrates the historic links between Poole and Newfoundland. In the house are items of original furniture and Dorset artefacts of the period which Alan has traced and presented. Some of this material is also displayed in other Newfoundland museums.

Alan Perry has also done much more to build relationships and understandings between Dorset and Newfoundland. He has published historical articles and given lectures, promoted the making of a film about Newfoundland wildlife, and jointly founded the Wessex-Newfoundland Society, which promotes personal contacts and cultural links, and was its Chairman for many years.

During the 1990s Alan promoted and fostered a link between Bournemouth University and Memorial University in Newfoundland. This has developed into a fruitful academic partnership, creating opportunities for student exchanges and research programmes. 2010 is the 400th anniversary of the first English settlement in Canada, and BU has been actively involved in celebrations, which included Professor Sean Street's

BBC/CBC radio programme on Cupid's Cove in January, and an international archaeology conference at Memorial University in June.

Alan Perry has worked tirelessly to strengthen this academic and educational link, serving on the student travel grant committees of both institutions. He has also presented to both Universities specially designed graduation furniture symbolising their partnership. I am delighted to say that this furniture includes the 'crest and crossed cods' lectern which we have used at Awards Ceremonies for several years and which you see on the platform today.

Alan Perry's international work and achievements have been highly honoured in the UK and in Canada. He was appointed an Officer of the British Empire in 1997, and in 2009 was given the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is the Province's highest award and Alan was the first Englishman to receive it. Memorial University in Newfoundland awarded him an Honorary Doctorate of Laws in 1997. Today we also are proud to celebrate Alan's contributions to the life and shared heritage of Dorset and Newfoundland, and to the internationalisation of Bournemouth University. And it is very fitting that we do so now, as Newfoundland celebrates the 400th anniversary of the first English settlement at Cupid's Cove.

Pro-Chancellor, I have the honour to present Alan Perry, and I ask you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Arts, honoris causa.