Presentation of Martin Green

Mr Vice-Chancellor,

If cricketers were once divided between Gentlemen and Players, archaeologists are sometimes described as professionals or amateurs. That is correct as long as it describes how they earn their livings, but it is all too easy for those terms to take on other connotations. Good work is described as professional, poorer work as amateurish. And here the distinction breaks down. In this country we are fortunate in having a long tradition of researchers who pursue archaeology in their spare time. That has been the case since the seventeenth century and it is still true today. The most professional of all amateur archaeologists is Martin Green, a Dorset farmer who has probably devised more projects, discovered more monuments and conducted more excavations than most people working in universities.

Not just that, he is actively engaged in sharing his results. His centre of operations at Down Farm is on the itinerary of any university field trip, from Glasgow to Reading, from Kalmar to Leiden. Several generations of students have learned how to recognise artefacts by looking at his collections or how to excavate by working with him in the field. At the last count half a dozen university departments have been engaged on projects which he has inspired. At least six professors of archaeology started their careers working on his sites, and I am delighted to say that some of them are here today.

Martin Green has been a particular friend to this university. We have inspected his sites so often that he is virtually part of the syllabus. He is extremely generous in sharing the results of his research, not only with fellow archaeologists but with a much wider audience, for he is not just a scholar, he is an active conservationist. In this, as in so much else, he sets an example to us all. Students have taken samples
from his excavations, some have written dissertations on the artefacts he has discovered, and I no longer remember how often he appears in the acknowledgements of Reading PhD theses.

He also does what academic archaeologists do. He has written a wonderful book on the evolution of the landscape he knows so well and has collaborated on many other publications. In fact he writes more than many people faced with the Research Assessment Exercise, and what he writes is rewarding and original. He is a regular speaker at conferences here at overseas. He can also do what most academics cannot manage. He makes his own flint axes and he reads the ancient landscape with a farmer's eye. He even grows his own woad.

How does he do it? I really don't know. It is true that he lives in one of the richest archaeological landscapes in Britain, but he has a penchant for finding the unexpected and seeing what others have missed that is unmatched in archaeology today. This uncanny combination of eagle eyes and green fingers (no pun intended) might suggest something slightly monstrous, but Martin is modest about his achievements. I'm not even sure that he is aware of them. But many people are, and I am glad to say that some of them are present at this ceremony.

Mr Vice-Chancellor, I present Martin Green for the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science of this University.