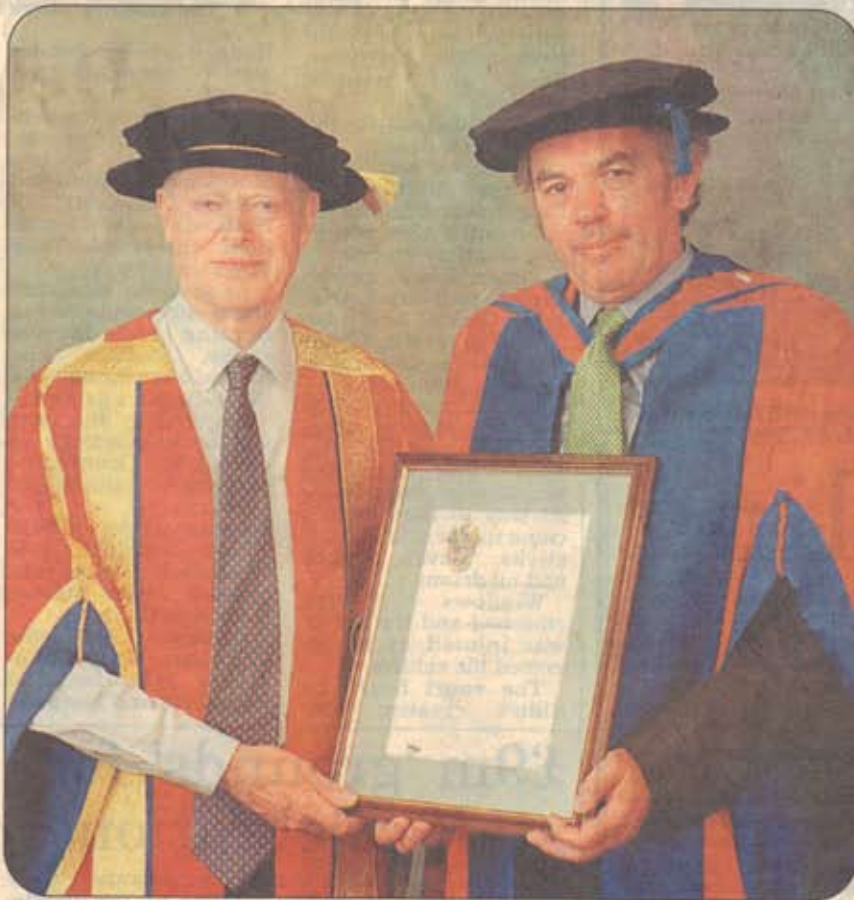


Honorary doctorate



The Chancellor of the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, Dr J.H. Hooper (left) presents an Honorary Doctorate of the University to John Davidson for his achievements in the field of environmental partnerships at the University awards ceremony at the Grimsby Auditorium (Ref G210797N)

A SCUNTHORPE man has received an honorary doctorate from the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside.

Born and educated in the town, John Davidson (58) is the former National Chief Executive of the Groundwork Trust, which he co-founded.

He was guest of honour at a degree ceremony in Grimsby for the University, where he presented prizes and certificates to around 500 graduates.

Mr Davidson read geography at University College, London.

His first job was in local government with Essex County Council, where he qualified as a chartered town planner.

In 1974, he became assistant director of the Countryside Commission.

Six years later he helped set up the Groundwork initiative, running a pilot project to regenerate derelict and waste land on Merseyside.

Groundwork is now the leading environmental partnership organisation in the UK. Mr Davidson retired as its chief executive last year.

He already has one honorary doctorate from Birmingham's University of Central England.

Green initiatives win John a New Year OBE

A FORMER Scunthorpe man who has spearheaded green initiatives across the country has been awarded an OBE.

John Davidson, who was born, brought-up and educated in the town, has been honoured in Prime Minister Tony Blair's first New Year Honours List.

He was awarded the Order of the British Empire for services to organisation Groundwork and to Environmental Regeneration.

Mr Davidson (58) was born in Avenue Vivian, educated at Scunthorpe Grammar School, worked at Scunthorpe Steel Works and went to University College in London.

He was the co-founder of the Groundwork Foundation in the 80s, a non-profit-making organisation formed to promote partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors to restore and improve the environment, particularly

By **SARAH ARNOLD**
of towns and cities, and was chief executive until November 1996.

He said: "Groundwork is an organisation located in what was formerly industrial regions across the country and its purpose is to help cities to improve their environment."

Turnover

Today the organisation employs around 800 people, has 40 locations throughout the UK and has a turnover of around 30 million.

"I never imagined it would get this big but I did have a vision and I had the idea of a large organisation which could do something for cities," he continued.

"The upbringing I had in Scunthorpe in-

fluenced the work I did as I was brought up in an industrial town, I worked in the Steelworks and I could see then the need for better integration of business and the environment."

Last year father-of-two Mr Davidson also collected an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside for his work.

His parents Winifred and Norman Davidson, who played for Scunthorpe United and is a former Steelworker, and still live in Scunthorpe, said they were delighted at the news.

The Prime Minister used his first Honours List to recognise people's efforts including from sport, education, literature and business.

Mr Davidson joined the ranks of those like athlete, Tessa Sanderson and Vivien Saunders, one of Britain's leading golfers.



NEW YEAR Honour for John Davidson OBE.

Businessman's service honour

A SCUNTHORPE-born man who heads a leading environmental organisation has been awarded an honorary doctorate.

John Davidson, chief executive of the Groundwork Foundation, was given the award by the University of Central England in Birmingham for distinguished service to the community.

Mr Davidson went to Scunthorpe Grammar School and University College, London. He began his career in local government and was later in the senior management team at the Countryside Commission. He was



John Davidson

appointed chief executive of the Groundwork Foundation in 1985.

An environmental partnership organisation, Groundwork is active in 120 towns and cities throughout the country. It helps

people to improve the environment and economic prospects of their local area through a network of 32 trusts.

Groundwork's partners come from all sectors of the local community, including business, schools and local authorities, involving and enabling them to take environmental action.

Groundwork is developing international contacts, particularly with Japan, North America and Europe. The European Commission has funded a number of studies in mainland Europe to assess the feasibility of extending the Groundwork approach to other member states.

HONORARY DOCTORATE - MR JOHN DAVIDSON

Chancellor, Pro-Chancellors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The University of Central England in Birmingham today honours Mr John Davidson, Chief Executive of the Groundwork Foundation with the award of the Honorary Degree of Doctor of the University.

John Davidson was educated at University College London where he obtained degrees in Geography and the Conservation of Natural Resources. The latter postgraduate course was in fact the first of its kind in the UK. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Town Planning Institute and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

His career began in Local Government but in 1966 he joined the National Parks Commission of England and Wales which later became the Countryside Commission. He held several senior posts at the Commission and was a member of the senior management team from 1974/75 as Director of Policy and then Director of Operations.

In 1985 he was appointed Chief Executive of the Groundwork Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation formed to promote partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors to restore and improve the environment, particularly of towns and cities. Groundwork, which is run on franchise lines, currently consists of a network of 32 independent operating companies working within the umbrella of the national Groundwork Foundation. The network is planned to grow to 50 by 1995.

The organisation is currently developing international contacts with Japan, Europe and North America. The European Commission has funded a number of studies in mainland Europe to assess the feasibility of extending the Groundwork approach to other member states.

Working in some of the more run down areas Groundwork helps local communities undertake environmental projects which meet their needs and which are affordable, repeatable and sustainable. Services have been developed to help businesses become involved with the community in practical ways. Other services have been designed to introduce small and medium sized firms to those environmental issues which directly affect business success.

Groundwork has an enviable record of practical and pioneering achievement. It is very easy for partnerships between the private, public and voluntary sectors to become unwieldy bureaucratic talking shops - the fact that this has not happened with Groundwork is due largely to John Davidson who, though I am sure he would claim enormous support from his colleagues, is very much the brains and the driving force behind the organisation.



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In my researches for today's ceremony, I have been struck by the great respect and admiration he commands. I suspect that his can be a very lonely job - attempting to lead a national network of autonomous organisations without any formal line management, and yet he manages to get across his entrepreneurial approach and is truly inspirational - always ready to offer whatever help and support is needed. He insists on working in partnership, on involvement and commitment. He sets great store by personal development and his caring, personal approach ensures that every individual's potential is developed.

He is a very creative man - a man with the vision to make the connections between the problems of people at local level and those in power at national level - those with the power to get things done.

His whole career has been dedicated to the environment in which he believes passionately - a passion I know which is shared by many of us here today. We are fortunate that Groundwork, which has such a fine reputation at national level, is based here in Birmingham and we are proud that John Davidson can be counted amongst our friends and we look forward to a long and fruitful association between this University and the Groundwork Foundation.

It is therefore a great privilege for me to present for the award of the Honorary degree of Doctor of the University HONORIS CAUSA - Mr John Davidson.