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Ben Gascoyne

A University of York lecturer, Professor John Stranger Holman, has been given a knighthood in the recent New Year's honours list.

The Salters Professor of Chemical Education, who since 2006 has been working with the government as the national director of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, guiding government groups in assisting education in these areas, is to be knighted for his long-term services to education.

The list, released on the 31st December 2009, awards Holman the prestigious honour of Knight Bachelor.

Holman expressed his gratitude, saying: "I'm delighted; it's an enormous personal honour and somewhat overwhelming. But more importantly I think that it's a recognition of the importance of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to the future of the UK and to the lives of millions of young people."

In his role as Salters Professor, Holman had led a team of 26 people from the University of York Education Group. The centre, based on the University of York campus, aims to further educate and inspire secondary school teachers. Their specialist central facility at York was opened by former Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2006.

In the 1980s Holman also wrote the National Curriculum for Science.

Several other members of staff at the University of York will receive honours in the Queen's New YearâÂ€Â™s Honou List. Dave Coulthard of the Physics Department is to receive an MBE for services to science education, while Professor John A. McDermid, Head of the Computer Science Department, is to receive an OBE for services to the defence industry.

Professor Alastair Fitter, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and a Fellow of the Royal Society, is to receive a CBE for services to environmental science.