

# THE WHITTEN EFFECT

## **Preliminary words for Lloyd Whitten's speech at the opening of the Wes Whitten building 21 Sep 2009**

The best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a'gley.

When Wes worked for the ANU his brief included littering the place with new-born mice week by week on a regular basis. He devised a scheme to fulfil this requirement.

However, this scheme did gang a'gley for there were gaps in the production line for which there was no explanation.

He found the explanation by taking four cages of mice, three of females and one of males. One female cage served as a control. The other three were placed in a wind tunnel. Their oestriol cycles were monitored.

Those that were up-wind of the males were normal but those down-wind were not. Their anomalous reaction caused by the odours from the males gave information that fitted the space in the jig-saw puzzle.

It is what is known as the Whitten Effect.

N. B.

Penny replied something like this.

"Thanks Lloyd, we've always been able to count on you for a good story, but at the risk of editing my venerable uncle I should add that Dad used to joke that it should've been called the 'Male Mouse Effect' because it wasn't Whitten influencing the oestrus cycles.