

Public Lecture



Exploring "The Edge:" Historical Perspectives on the Canadian Light Source

Ken Coates

**7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, December 7, 2005**

**Convocation Hall, College Building
University of Saskatchewan**



The opening of the Canadian Light Source represents a major milestone for the University of Saskatchewan and for the scientific enterprise in Canada. The World Year of Physics and the establishment of the Canadian Light Source provide an occasion to reflect on the historical significance of this singular achievement in this year of Saskatchewan's Centennial. The scientific and professional roots of the Canadian Light Source at the University of Saskatchewan warrant particular attention. The decision to construct the country's largest scientific instrument in Saskatoon puzzled many observers but, in the context of the history of the University and the Department of Physics and Engineering Physics and other units on campus, the selection was logical, if still controversial. There is another historical context worthy of consideration. The scientists using the Canadian Light Source are exploring on the edge of knowledge, generating new insights that will challenge our understanding of the natural world. There is much to be learned from the experience of early explorers, who like contemporary scientists, faced the formidable challenge of explaining their work and discoveries to skeptical audiences. Explorers in the past shocked humanity with geographical, biological, cultural and scientific discoveries and alerted the world to new opportunities and challenges; it falls to synchrotron scientists to find the descriptive powers necessary to generate excitement and understanding about their discoveries and insights.

Presented by the
**Department of Physics and Engineering Physics,
Department of History
and the Canadian Light Source**



Ken Coates was Professor of History and Dean, College of Arts and Science, at the University of Saskatchewan. He is completing a book on the history of the Canadian Light Source.