Improving Access for the Disabled

Over recent years, provision for students with disabilities at Sussex has improved with alterations such as the canopy over the accessible entrance to the Library, handrails and hold-back devices on fire doors. However, with undulating local topography and an original architectural design making extensive use of steps, much has still to be done before total access is achieved.

This year, the Students Union Welfare Centre in collaboration with the Estates and Maintenance Division have embarked upon a plan of works, to take place over the next three to five years, aimed at further improving the quality of provision for students with disabilities. £30,000 has been allocated from the Buildings Alterations Fund for this year and since October, tactile paving and handrails have been installed on campus walkways. Other works scheduled for completion over the next few months include ramping of the Computing Centre entrance, improvements to lifts in the Library and Refectory, chairlifts in MAPS and the dropping of kerbs all around campus.

Much of the work has been planned in consultation with the Students Union Disability Action Group and VP Welfare, Anna Barnes hopes to raise awareness of their campaign at a conference – To Enable or Disable? Facilities for students with Special Needs in Further and Higher Education – to be held on Tuesday 21 March in the Terrace Room, Refectory.

If you are interested in finding out more about disabled access on campus, or would like to attend the conference, contact Anna Barnes or Jane Rimington, Students’ Union Welfare Centre, Falmer House on (67)8149.

MEMORY AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Jon with Experimental Psychologist Frances Aldrich

On knows what happened on the day he nearly died, but his memory of the accident is hazy since the severe head injuries and brain damage he sustained left him with epilepsy and extensive memory problems. He also knows that the chances of his memory recovering are slim due to the brain’s incapacity to regenerate damaged tissue, but by participating in an exciting new project at Sussex he hopes to find a way of overcoming some of the problems he faces.

Working with Frances Aldrich, a postgraduate in Experimental Psychology, Jon is testing Neuropage, a novel system designed for people suffering from permanent memory problems. Unlike some older methods of rehabilitation which attempt to exercise and improve the memory, Neuropage uses information technology to provide a memory aid – and it works very simply.

Jon plans a timetable of events – getting up early, feeding the cat, watching the news headlines, and most importantly, taking his medication – which he intends to carry out each day. These messages are then programmed into a central computer and sent to him automatically at the appropriate time via a message pager which he wears throughout the day.

After a two-month trial period, Jon is enthusiastic about Neuropage. “Before I had the pager, I was letting life pass me by, lacking any self-discipline and relying on my parents’ reminders to do the smallest things. Now I feel much more self-reliant, and because the pager doesn’t nag me, I can choose whether to keep on my schedule or ignore the messages, depending on what happens on any particular day.”

One of the messages that Jon cannot ignore reminds him to take the anti-convulsant pills which control his epilepsy. Forgetting, or delaying his medication could lead to seizures and fits, with their attendant risks of injury, and as Jon

Continued on page 2
around the schools – MOLS

A one-day symposium sponsored by Glaxo Group Research Ltd was held in MOLS in December. Second-year organic postgraduates gave poster presentations on their work and there was a programme of lectures by third year students. Prizes were awarded by the judging panel from Glaxo to Sean McCarthy for the best lecture and Safranz Khan for the best poster presentation. Both prize winners will visit the Glaxo Laboratories for a presentation ceremony.

The day was extremely successful and lectures and posters were of a high standard. Glaxo have agreed to sponsor a further one-day symposium at Sussex during the next academic year.

The Royal Society has provided funds for research collaboration with two East European countries. Professor Jenkins and Dr Armes are linked with the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry in Prague for investigations on electrically conducting polymers, and Professor Murrell is linked with the Rudolf Boskovic Institute, Zagreb, for the study of helium atom clusters. The funds allow for travel in both directions for a four year period.

Have you considered becoming a Residential Adviser next year?

Residential Advisers (RAs) are second and third year undergraduates (plus some postgraduates) from both home and overseas who live in University-managed residences, both on and off campus. They are available to advise new students starting their first year at Sussex. They are advisers not prefects, still less any sort of warden – and there are benefits:

- Guaranteed University-managed housing either on or off campus for the full academic year.
- Guaranteed RA rebate, for a job well done, paid termly in arrears.
- Guaranteed a good non-academic reference which could be used for employment applications.

RAs are involved in assisting about 25 new students at the beginning of the Autumn Term with practical help and information to enable them to settle into university life. For many new students, this may be the first time they have lived away from home or for international students the first time they have visited this country. RAs act in an advisory capacity and provide liaison between residents and the support areas of campus.

If you are interested in becoming an RA from October 1995, pick up an application form and information sheet, which is available from York House Residential Reception. All forms should be returned by 5 pm, Friday 10 March.

Interviews and selection will take place in York House on Tuesday 11 April, Thurs-
day/Friday 20/21 April (all in Easter vacation), plus Saturday/Sunday 22/23 April 1995.

Those selected (there are about 100 in total) attend a full weekend training in May. Applicants are expected to discuss the scheme with current RAs before completing the form, as references will be followed up before interview.

Further information is also available from Ann Ryan, RA Co-Ordinator, Residential Reception, York House.
Taking part in the on-going debate on the future of the University, Julian Burke (BIOLS) writes in response to the article in Bulletin (3 February 1995). Because of shortage of space we can only carry an edited version – the complete text has been sent to Tony McCaffery, Chair of the C21 Group.

LOOKING FORWARD – GOING BACK?

What is a university for? It is to provide a stimulating atmosphere for learning and research. This is clearly what the University of Sussex needs to maintain and improve upon into the next millennium. What is quite remarkable about policy documents and debates regarding the future of the University is the lack of any concrete suggestions or the phrase “best practice.” Sussex was radical and innovative but as Tony McCaffery points out, our structures have been copied elsewhere – what he doesn’t say is that in many instances they have been improved upon. Any task force wishing to formulate strategy must do more than “visit two schools for discussions with the Dean...” What has to be done is to determine who is doing research better than us, who teaches better than us and who administers better than us and learn from their experiences.

And where may examples of “best practice” be found? Research – visit departments that have risen from research ranking 3 or 4, to 5. Teaching – perhaps some of the newer universities with demand-led courses will provide the model that should be copied. (We have to accept that Oxbridge is not a good model for Sussex.) Administration – the universities that have increased student numbers, have risen in the research rankings and have a well-managed budgetary system should be visited and examined – they do exist.

Maybe the motto for Sussex in the next millennium should be “Best Practice”. We should take a deep breath and look over the top of the Downs in which the University sits in its cocoon of outstanding natural beauty. It will be tough, as we have to pay the price for the radicalism of the 1960s, and as we all know there is nobody more conservative than an old hippy.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP in higher education

Turn ideas into action

What has Campus Ecology, the environmental newsletter, have to do with Convoy to Croatia, the student run convoy of aid to Croatia? Both are student-initiated projects that Enterprise in Higher Education at Sussex helped fund. Both projects are organised by students and help those involved develop the types of skills employers look for when recruiting graduates: communication, organisation and planning, decision-making, team-work and problem-solving skills.

Why should Enterprise help?
The Enterprise Unit aims to help students develop skills which can be transferred from University to the world outside. Developing these skills will give you a competitive edge in the job market, in whatever sector you want to work, be it public, private or voluntary.

How to apply for funding?
Discuss your ideas with other students, teaching faculty and employers (i.e. representatives from any organisation that employs people). Also, discuss your ideas with Enterprise staff; the more you do this, the more likely you are to get approval for your project. Consider how your proposal fits in with the aims of EHE at Sussex. Prepare your proposal making sure that you include a summary of your project, its aims, who is involved, a plan of action for your project, a contact person, ideas for evaluation, publicity plans, ideas for continuation after Enterprise funding ends, and an itemised list of costs.

If you have an idea for a project you want funded (however wacky it may seem), please see Tessa Gooderson, Student Enterprise Office, Arts D421, for more details and a copy of Guidelines for Proposals. Deadline for proposal submissions: Friday 3 March.

In Brief

Chemistry Essay Competition
The magazine Chemistry & Industry has launched its fifth annual essay competition for university students of Chemistry and related subjects. The writer of the best informal essay on recent chemical research and its application for the benefit of society will win £1000. The competition is intended to encourage young scientists to write about chemistry for non-scientists in an interesting and intelligible way.
Deadline for entries is 13 April. For rules and guidelines write to the Editor, Chemistry & Industry, 15 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PS.

Japanese
The Language Centre offers a three week intensive beginners course in Japanese language and culture for business purposes. The course will run from 23 March to 12 April and will cost £360. Deadline for applications: Friday 10 March. Contact Alex van Westen, ext 8006.

Language Monitors
The Language Centre is looking for native speaker volunteers to check the quality of its cassette and book materials in the 45 or so languages which it supports in Open Access mode, mostly at beginner level. If you are interested in monitoring your language, please contact the Language Centre Reception, ext 8006. A flat rate price may be negotiable in some cases!

Facts and Figures
The 1994-95 up-dated version of the Facts and Figures leaflet is now obtainable from the Information Office, 230 Sussex House, tel: 3766.

Catering Services
Please note that pre-ordered buffets, sandwich lunches and hot drinks for consumption off the Refectory premises will be supplied with disposable plates, knives, forks and cups where appropriate. Anyone wishing to use china crockery etc may hire it from the Catering Office, ext 8221.

Class of 84 – Reunion
A reunion of students who came to the University in 1984 will take place on the evening of 13 May and will cost about £20 per person to include a buffet, supper, wine and disco. There will be a speaker or two and a late bar. Any member of staff/faculty wishing to attend should contact Becky Reid, Alumni & Development Office, ext 8258.
Monday 20 February – Sunday 26 February


Thursday 23 February

12.30pm History and Gender Seminar Group: Mother Bryson. J. Seager, Arts D520.

1pm RUPAG Seminar: Liberalisation Policies and Poverty Impact in India. P. Chaudhuri, IDS 221.

4.30pm Experimental Psychology Colloquia: Permissive Thinking. K. Manktelow (Wolverhampton), Biology Lecture Room.

5pm Geography Research Seminar: Postcolonial Geographies. J. Sidaway (Birmingham), EDB 302.

5pm History Work-in-Progress Seminar: The Lonsdale Affair: An Episode in Hospital History. J. Segar, Arts A155.

5pm Social and Political Thought Seminar: Chomsky and the State. A. Edgley (Kent), Arts D60.

5pm Western Mysticism Lecture: The Value of Doing Nothing - A Fresh Look at the Nieuhu Brothers. Rev B. Haymes, (Principal, Bristol Baptist College). Quiet Room, Meeting House.

Friday 24 February


CCE Saturday Schools - 11 March

Redon and Symbolist Art: Royal Academy exhibition offers chance to examine Redon's symbolist art.

Study Skills: Improve reading skills, note taking, essay writing and exam technique.

The Landscape History of Sussex: An insight into the rich pattern of landscape and life in Sussex.

Studio Photography: Course runs for 3-weekends beginning Sat & Sun 11/12 March and gives comprehensive instruction in the taking of portraits, still-life and table-top photography.

Mother's Day Out: Motherhood and Writing: Opportunity (away from children) to think about the tremendous artistic potential of mothering. Reduced rates for students and staff. All the above events take place at the University. Enrol with CCE on 678527.

Career Development Unit

Professional Skills Development

Tuesday 21 Feb, 3-5pm: Fundraising
Wednesday 22 Feb, 10am-4pm: Journalism Skills
Thursday 23 Feb, 1-4pm: Development

Briefing Sessions

Monday 20 Feb, 2-4pm: Postgraduate Study

Career Issues

Thursday 23 Feb, 10-12am: Mature Students

Identifying Skills

Tuesday 21 Feb, 1-2.30pm: Interpersonal Skills

Pre-booking is essential for all of the above. All in CDU, Palmer House. Contact ext. 8429 for details.