On top Down Under

THEY MIGHT LIVE Down Under, but when it comes to the classroom, Australians are on top.

Professor of Psychology, George Butterworth, has discovered that young children in Australia have a far better grasp of basic geography and astronomy than their counterparts in England.

Almost 100% of Australian youngsters think that the world is round, whereas a fifth of English four to seven year olds suspect that it might be flat. And though nearly all Australian seven year olds know that people can live all over the world without falling off, half of English children are not so sure.

George has undertaken a comparative study of children’s geographical knowledge. Along with colleagues Michael Siegal of the University of Queensland and Marcy Katz of COGS, he studied children from schools in Brisbane and Newhaven. His findings suggest that cultural influences may accelerate the learning of elementary geographical knowledge. "The most striking difference between the two groups was in their knowledge of where other countries are located. Australian children are almost as good at pointing to England on a globe as they are at locating Australia. But only a tiny proportion of English children of the same age were able to locate Australia," he says.

These cross-cultural variations suggest that geographical knowledge is a form of ‘situated cognition’ – it depends on the context in which it is acquired. "Many Australian children are second generation expatriates who retain strong cultural links with people in the Northern hemisphere," George explains. "At an early age, they are exposed to a great deal of information about their geographical situation. This exposure accelerates the process whereby their intuitive grasp of geography and astronomy is replaced by conventional scientific wisdom.”

Professor Butterworth hopes that his findings will shed light on the ways in which culture and biological processes interact in early intellectual development.

PRIZE VIDEO

Last night five second-year Media Studies students were presented with a Commendation for their video, The Bouncer, in the Royal Television Society’s 1993 Student Video Competition.

The award was presented by director Vernon Lawrence at the Meridian television centre in Southampton.

Jane King, J-J Maurage, Julian Pye, Emma Wellstead (all pictured right) and Katya Cosh produced a portrait of a bouncer at the Paradox Club in Brighton – a character with a colourful past in the music business and with dreams of a greater future.
Special ticket offer for Bulletin readers

Critically acclaimed physical theatre company Scarlet Theatre present their latest slice of humorous and imaginative theatre The fruit has turned to jam in the fields at the Gardener Arts Centre on Wednesday 20 March at 7.45 pm.

Join them on a surreal adventure into TV sitcom nostalgia to meet three war-zoned women (Captain Mandarin, Sergeant Winsome and Corporal Trout) defending the home front with an explosive mix of heroism, romance and unlimited fruit scones.

The Gardener Centre have 30 free tickets (two tickets can be claimed per Bulletin reader) to give away to the first readers to present themselves at the box office with their copy of the Bulletin.

Paradox sub-aqua boat launch

Two years hard work by University of Sussex Sub-Aqua Club members, past and present, culminated yesterday in the launch of their brand new boat, The Paradox, at Newhaven’s Marina. USSAC members can take the plunge in style now from the deck of their brand new 6m rigid inflatable, complete with outboard engine.

Financial assistance was given by the University’s Community Development Fund, the Students’ Union Sports Federation, Sub-Aqua Club members and the Paradox Nightclub. “We are proud that most of the funding for this project came from our own members,” said Diving Officer, Damon Deans-Cane.

COGS whiz kids

COGS finalist, Alan Morris, won first prize in the 1995 International Systems Research Institute (ISRI) Award Programme last week. Alan was presented with his prize, a personal computer, in the Terrace Room, Refectory Building. His project, The Brunswick System, devised a way of cataloguing the position of the objects inside buildings. Alan catalogued the contents of a Regency house in Brunswick Square, Hove, which is laid out exactly as it was in Regency times.

“The project was set up to bring together the worlds of education and commerce, specifically in the field of information technology,” said Peter Hall, chairman of ISRI.

“This year’s competition was restricted to COGS students who had designed projects with industrial relevance,” said COGS lecturer, Stephen Wickens. “Next year it will be nationwide, with every university computing department in the country being invited to enter.”

COGS undergraduates returned triumphantly from the regional heats of the 1996 British Computer Society Programming Competition (sponsored jointly by British Aerospace and the Computer Sciences Corporation), held at DRA Farnborough in February. This is the 13th year of the ‘Mind Games’ competition, open to the young professionals group – members of the Society up to age 30; but only the second year that the University of Sussex has participated. This year COGS sent two teams, representing finalists and second-years, who vied with eight other teams from industry and universities elsewhere in fighting the clock to solve programming problems. With ten teams competing, the heat results began:

- 1st: COGS (Sussex) third years
- 2nd: COGS (Sussex) second years
- 3rd: ...

Phil Duffen, team manager, commented that it was a good move to send two teams this time: they were so determined to thrash each other that the rest of the competition were left standing. Now we wish them good luck for the national finals!

What the Papers Say

MALCOLM KITCH, Reader in history and Reformation expert, featured in The Times last week with EAM student, Ray Hatley, for setting up the first computer database of original texts from the Reformation period. As well as including most of the 265 major texts from the period, the database will have images and music. “This project will allow students to read these essential texts on a PC and to download them onto their own computer,” says Ray. “Currently, the only access to these texts is through a large number of books, most of which are long out of print and impossible to find.” (6 March)

“SUSSEX UNIVERSITY is advertising for someone to fill a job created by Hollywood film director Steven Spielberg,” announced the Argus dramatically in February. Would-be Indiana Joneses will be disappointed though. The job is a research fellowship in the Centre for German-Jewish studies, backed by a £100,000 gift from the maker of Schindler’s List. “We are expecting a large response and competition for the position will be very open,” said Edward Timms, the Centre’s Director. “We are suggesting that the Fellow focuses on the refugee community and its contribution to public life.” (20 February)

LAST WEEK’S announcement that scientists had cloned two identical sheep, Megan and Morag, without the need for sperm, sent the Telegraph into a state of panic. “The humiliation of men is complete,” began an anxious science editor. “First came the rise of the New Man and the adverts that depicted sad, ineffectual wimps. Then the decline in sperm counts... Now it seems men could soon be redundant.” John Maynard Smith, Sussex Emeritus Professor of Biology, came to the rescue with three good reasons why sex makes sense in evolutionary terms. However, he says, “I have been wondering about this for 50 years, and I don’t claim to have solved the problem. For me, the problem is that in the short run, abandoning sex would be an enormous advantage, at least for females.” (8 March)
GREEN NEWS

Nature Reserve
Ambitious plans are afoot for the newly-created nature reserve on Lewes Railway land. The reserve has been nominated as one of only four sites for a national research project on environmental education based at Sussex. Local children are helping develop a multimedia package for use in schools.

Green Student Map
Ever wondered where you can recycle scrap metal in Brighton? Want to get involved in a local environmental group? Need a snapshot of public transport services to Falmer? The brand new Green Student Map will give you the answers.

The map, a section of which is shown below, is the result of a joint collaboration between the Students’ Unions of Sussex and Brighton, with assistance from both Universities. The colourful poster of Brighton is packed with useful information. On the reverse, you’ll find information about a range of environmental issues from transport to fair foreign trade. The map will be distributed at the beginning of next term. Free copies are available from Sussex House Reception or the Students’ Union. Some of the Map’s contacts are listed right.

Composition with Sir Harrison Birtwistle
This year, the South Bank Centre and Philharmonia orchestra are staging a Festival of Birtwistle’s music, including performances of many of his works. As part of the festival, nine Sussex postgraduate composers are writing pieces for a specially-designed composition project organised by South Bank Education and funded by them and CulCom. There will be a series of workshops and rehearsals run by Sir Harrison himself and eminent Birtwistle expert (and former Sussex lecturer) Jonathan Cross. These will culminate in a concert on May 2 in the Royal Festival Hall featuring the postgraduates’ work and given by members of the Philharmonia.

Birtwistle is an important and occasionally controversial figure in British musical life, the recipient of many international awards and honours and a Sussex honorary Doctor of Music. His music is regarded by most in the profession as some of the finest and most challenging being written anywhere, but has from time to time been the focus of public outrage, most recently evidenced by the hostile reception of Panic at the 1995 Proms.

The project is an exciting and timely focus for the compositional strength of the Music Subject Group which now attracts very high quality applicants to its recently-introduced DPhil programme, and has a unique reputation for teaching and research in contemporary music.

Sir Harrison, Jonathan Cross and the Philharmonia ensemble will be at Sussex on the first day of the Summer Term, Monday 22 April to run a workshop and take part in a seminar on Birtwistle’s music. All are welcome, free of charge – the workshop is in the Meeting House from 9.30am to 12 and the seminar in the Gardner Centre auditorium from 2.00 to 5.00pm

Some Green Groups and Contacts in Brighton...
- BRICYCLES campaigns for cycle provision in Brighton and Hove, and organises cycle rides around Sussex and abroad. Contact: Russell Hawkes, 696079.
- BRIGHTON AND HOVE FRIENDS OF THE EARTH works closely with other groups on issues including transport, sea pollution and countryside protection. Contact: Jane Knight, 677284.
- The local GREENSPACE SUPPORT GROUP raises funds for research, lobbying and peaceful direct action around the world.
- The BRIGHTON PEACE CENTRE SHOP sells fairly-traded goods, and the One World Library includes books, pamphlets, periodicals and videos on peace, justice, development and the environment.

At Sussex University...
- The ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISER is Penelope Chappell, 678904, who can tell you about all aspects of the University’s environmental policy.
- STUDENTS’ UNION ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER: Rachel Holmwood, 678555.
- THIRD WORLD FIRST campaigns to raise awareness of development issues.
- ECO-ACTION campaigns about local and global environmental issues, encouraging students to become involved with local campaign groups.
- The DIRTY WEEKENDERS make trips into the Sussex countryside to do conservation work every Sunday during term-time.

Robin Lee Poetry Competition 1996
This is an annual competition which is open to all students and staff of the University (except faculty). Cash prizes are awarded to the winner and the runners-up. Entrants may submit up to four poems, totalling not more than 100 lines in all.

Robin Lee was a student here at Sussex in the 1960s and on his death his mother set up and funded this competition

Entry forms obtainable from: Joanna Cheetham, EAM Arts B239, ext 2154

Closing date: Wednesday 8 May 1996
What's on...

Easter Minimum Service Days

During the Easter Vacation, the University will operate minimum services on Thursday 4, Friday 5, Monday 8, Tuesday 9 and Wednesday 10 April.

Lectures, Seminars, Colloquia

- **Monday 18 March**
  4.15pm Chemistry Colloquium: *Femtosecond dynamics in chemistry and biology*, G. Fleming (Chicaco), MSLT, MOLS.
- **Friday 22 March**
  2pm SPRU Seminar: *The European Community's research and technology policy: trends and tensions*, T. Luukkonen (Finland), EDB 121.
- **Thursday 4 April**
  2.15pm South African Studies Seminar: *Regional development in South Africa: case study of North-West Province*, S. Coetzee (Potchefstroom), IDS Rm 221.

Summer Term Dates

The summer term begins on Monday 22 April and ends on Friday 28 June. There are two Bank Holidays on Monday 6 and 27 May.

Summer Graduation

The Summer Graduation Ceremony 1996 is on Tuesday 16 July at the Brighton Centre. There are two ceremonies, one beginning 10.15am, the other 3pm. Please return your forms to Brenda Smith (p/gs) or Anna Wynne (u/gs) by 26 April.

Staff Training in IT

The following training courses, run by the Computing Service, are aimed particularly at staff. Places still available, bookable at the Computing Centre:
- 2.30-4.30pm, Tue 19 Mar: *Word Mailmerge*
- 2.30-4.30pm, Thu 21 Mar: *ECS mail introduction*
- 9.30-12pm, Fri 29 Mar: *Access database introduction*

Free Eye Tests for Staff

Free eyesight tests are available for all members of staff from Specsavers, who will provide spectacles for under £75 if a prescription is necessary. Tel: Richard Price, Staff Welfare Officer, for details x3598.

Language Centre

- **Unusual Languages**
  The Centre is considering putting on courses in more unusual languages such as Russian, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, Czech and Polish from Oct of next year. If interested, tel: Alex x8006, or email: lang.centre@sussex.ac.uk.

Easter Sports for Kids

Places still available on the Children's Easter Sports Programme at the Sports Centre.
- Cricket 1-3 April, 11-1pm, £12
- Soccer 1-3 April, 2-4pm, £12. Both, with supervised lunch, £20. Tel: Karen x3947.

Vacation Opening Hours

- **Library**
  Monday: 9am-5.30pm.
  Tuesday: 9am-7.30pm.
  Wednesday-Friday: 9am-5.30pm
  Closed at weekends except for Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 April: 12.30pm-6.30pm.
  Closed from Thursday 4 April to Wednesday 10 April.
- **Computing Centre**
  Monday-Friday: 9am-9pm.
  Closed at weekends.
  Closed from Thursday 4 April to Wednesday 10 April.
- **Sports Centre**
  Monday-Friday: 9am-10pm.
  Weekends: 9.45pm-5.45pm.
  Closed from Thursday 4 April to Wednesday 10 April.
- **Career Development Unit**
  Monday-Friday: 10am-5pm (closed 1-2pm).
  Closed at weekends.
  Closed from Thursday 4 April to Wednesday 10 April.
- **Health Centre**
  Monday-Friday: 9am-5pm.
  Saturday: 11am-12pm for emergencies only.
  Closed on Sundays.
  Friday 5 April: closed
  Monday 8 April: closed

CCE Saturday Schools - April

- **Saturday 13 April**
  Ceramics - *painting and time*: a re-examination of the most difficult and rewarding artist of the Impressionist generation.
  *Avebury and the Neolithic in Wesse*: an exploration of the Avebury region, probably the most impressive concentration of surviving Neolithic sites in Europe.
  *Woodlands ancient and modern*: learn how to recognise ancient woodland in Sussex and discuss the ecological history and management of woods.
- **Friday 19 April**
  Water wildlife of Woods Mill: A mainly practical day, including pond and river sampling.
- **Saturday 20 April**
  Attic to Bell Jar: women's madness in literature.
  Where do the dangerous mad women in literature come from, and what do they mean?
  *Genetic engineering/ Biogenetics*: the ethics, use and abuse of genetic engineering will be studied using case studies.
  *The French connection*: Iron Age hill forts in *Sussex and Haute Normandie*: examining the similarities and differences between hill forts in the two regions.
- **Saturday 27 April**
  Celts and Romans on the Rhine: highlighting the importance of the Rhine to the history of Gaul, the German Provinces and the Western Empire.
  *Learning to sing Haydn's Creation in a day*: practical workshop of choir singing for sopranos, altos, tenors and basses.
  *The Requiem Mass*: from Mozart to Britten: examining different approaches to the Requiem Mass.
  *What is Cultural Studies?* Examples from poetry, popular song, cinema, TV, theatre, advertising etc.
  *Structure in your garden*: learn how to create one.
  Reduced rates for students/staff. Most events taking

Small Ads

- **ROOM TO RENT**: in shared Hanover house. £45pw incl. except telephone. From early April. Tel: 701553.
- **FLAT FOR SALE**: two bedroom, purpose built, well proportioned, all amenities, close to University and shops. £35,000. Tel: 774138.
- **CAR FOR SALE**: Volvo 340, 17,000 cc, H reg, 5 door, 62,000 miles, catalytic converter, bright red, full service history, £2500 ono. Tel: 698072.
- **AMSTRAD FOR SALE**: PC W10 with printer, excellent condition, £100. Tel: 400484.
- **MACINTOSH FOR SALE**: 512k, keyboard, mouse and MacWrite. No hard disk. Any offers? Tel: 724729.
- **FRENCH CONVERSATION**: offered by native speaker. Tel: Yolaine de Carne 542911.
- **HOUSE TO RENT**: 3 bedroom terrace house, Preston Park area. Available July onwards. Tel: x8076.
- **COMPUTER FOR SALE**: Amstrad PC 1512 with printer, wordprocessing & spreadsheet. £150 ono. Can deliver. Tel: 401033.
- **LIFT WANTED**: Would you be able to give someone a lift to central/Northern London around 23-29 March? Tel: James 679763.
- **LARGE ROOM TO LET**: from 20 April to mid-July. £41 pw. Sharing with 4 others. 2 mins from Lewes road Sainsbury's. Tel: Kelly 681413, MOLS u/g pigeon holes, email: kasey@sussex.ac.uk.
- **ROOM WANTED**: Visiting research fellow seeks furnished 1 or 2 bedroom let through mid-July. Quiet setting essential. Must be near public transport. Lewes preferred, or Hove. Tel: 207278.
- **BABYSITTING OFFERED**: Responsible au pair available for babysitting. Tel: x8022 or 272119.
- **COMPUTER FOR SALE**: BBC Master Computer, colour screen, printer, software and computer table, excellent condition. £350 ono. Tel: Margaret x3757.

Books for Bosnia

A collection of teaching materials will be distributed in Bosnia in April. If you have any unwanted materials, please give them to the Students Union by 25 March.

Bulletin

The Bulletin will be back after the Easter break on Friday 26 April. Please send us any suggestions for news, details of events, letters and small ads by Friday 19 April. Contact the Information Office, Sussex House on ext. 8209 or email: bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.