Building for the future

Roadworks on the motorway which go on for months; unaccountable delays over the completion of the kitchen extension – the size of the final bill; annoyance and frustration are the feelings often engendered by our encounters with the building and construction industry. David Gann, Professorial Fellow in SPRU not only understands these feelings but has set out to address their underlying causes. David has recently been awarded a highly prestigious research chair in Innovative Manufacturing, and will play a key role in a major new government-sponsored initiative aimed at improving overall manufacturing performance in the construction industry. A major part of his, and his team’s, task is to look at the technical and organisational changes needed to improve those three critical features: quality, cost and time.

In terms of quality, he will be looking at improving the built environment through technological innovation to ensure better use of building structures and infrastructures, for example through the introduction of materials with increased longevity and recyclability. On the matter of cost, David Gann is of the view that construction simply costs too much, a view with which few would disagree. “This is particularly so in relation to other consumer goods, where the relative costs have declined,” he explains. “What needs to be done is to look at ways of improving the business processes in order to reduce those costs.”

Unlike cost, the amount of time spent on a project is not necessarily something that should be reduced. “It would be inadvisable for example, to rush the building of a nuclear power station. But there are clearly many projects which simply do take too long.” One example of a possible way of reducing unnecessary time would be through

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**Research and News**

**Vega Science Trust (continued from front page)**

becoming a regular slot on UK broadcasting schedules. “What I’d like to see is a science channel in which the science community has a forum for voicing its views. I would like to have an archive of our top scientists,” says Sir Harry Kroto, Trustee and co-founder of Vega. “It would have been interesting to have had a film of Faraday talking, to try to understand how he thought,” he added.

Sir Harry, who has been helping to fund the project from his own pocket, recently announced that he would be using his share of the Nobel prize money to underpin the Trust. “At the moment we’re running the Trust at a loss, but I have no intention of letting the Vega Trust fold at this stage because now I’m in a position to support it financially and also to make sure that it is successful.” The success of Vega has further implications for the University. At present Vega uses the University’s MSU to record its films, and intends to continue doing so whenever possible. If Vega achieves its goals, the Sussex MSU could well become the central studio for producing Science Night programmes.

**Building for the future (continued from front page)**

the use of virtual reality. “In construction it is not possible to make prototypes, but the use of virtual reality, literally playing with reality, could transform the client brief, improving quality and reducing time.” Essentially, much of the point is to evaluate the potential use and benefits of technology and examine ways of introducing innovation systematically. “Hitherto it has been used too often simply to deal with problems that have arisen because of mistakes.”

According to David Gann, SPRU is the ideal environment in which to conduct his research. Its interdisciplinary focus enables him to undertake cross-industry comparative analysis, for example, of other project-based industries such as telecommunications. He also describes himself as “an interdisciplinary person” – before coming to the problems from a social science perspective, he took a degree in building construction and management and worked in the industry. He also consults for industry and advises the government on innovation in construction as well as other industries.

The Research Chair in Innovative Manufacturing is provided by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council and the Royal Academy of Engineering on a pump priming basis over five years and, in all, is currently worth around half a million pounds. David Gann is positive about the prospects for change in the construction sector which, he stresses, is far from all bad. “Our best firms are capable of building anything in the world and are among the best in the world. There is also a real will at the top of the industry and at governmental level to improve performance. This Chair is an example of that commitment,” he says, “and I expect to see some real changes during its lifetime.”

**WHAT THE PAPERS SAY**

CHEMISTRY AT SUSSEX was the subject of a full page article in the Independent this week, following Sir Harry Kroto’s Nobel Prize award. The article looks at the development of chemistry here at Sussex and how cross disciplinary collaboration has provided a fertile environment for top quality research. For, as the article points out, Sir Harry is the third chemistry Nobel laureate to be associated with Sussex. Archer Martin won the prize in 1952 (before coming to Sussex) and in 1975 Sir John Cornforth won it for his study of biologically important molecules. According to the article, “An old undergraduate prospectus makes the point that there is something special about the place. Its cover shows a map of Britain with each university’s position denoted by a Bunsen burner. The only burner with a flame issuing from it is the one for Sussex. The message: "only Sussex can light your fire." That particular cover, incidentally, was designed by Harry Kroto.

IN AN ARTICLE published on the front cover of the Independent (11 Oct) Dr Paul Norman’s (CLS) critical report, European Police Co-operation, denounces the National Criminal Intelligence Service. He accuses the NCIS, which is the Home Secretary’s attempt at a British FBI, of failing to to pick up the movements of paedophiles who move from one police force area to another. Paul also attacks them for devoting “few resources” to fight sex tourism, and in being interested only in disrupting sex tourists’ activities rather than trying to help secure convictions.

IN RESPONSE TO Vicki Oyseen’s crusade to implement a law that recognises reckless rape, Prof. Jennifer Temkin (CLS) asks: “Why should there be a separate offence for reckless behaviour? The attitude of the law is that people who deliberately take the risk of harming others commit the offence”, (Guardian 10 Oct). Rather she advocates a system that recognises when a man honestly believes that a woman is consenting.
New Faces
Melanie Roberts, CLS

The Centre for Legal Studies’ new Lecturer Melanie Roberts is quite partial to a spot of globe-trotting. She joins Sussex having spent the summer in Greece, Portugal and Italy, and she has also spent six months backpacking in South East Asia. To top it off she’s a keen sailor as well, having sailed through New Zealand’s waters and the Mediterranean. Every year I go sailing for three weeks, I love it,” To Melanie’s shame she has yet to visit the Marina: “I’ve never sailed in England it’s too cold.” Given that she is a New Zealander who is used to warm waters, it’s quite understandable. Melanie practised law for over six years before she did her LL.M, but her love of teaching and research led her to start preaching what she practised. Her present research concerns the new Family Law Act and the viability of mediators in divorce, comparing the proposals made in Britain with New Zealand’s 15 year experience of mediation.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS – COGS

DAVID RAKISON has been awarded a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Texas, on the strength of his Sussex DPhil achieved this summer. David’s thesis is about the basis for categorisation in early human development. He constructed “confounded objects”, for instance a train with legs, or a cow with wheels, to see how toddlers would group them: they proved happy to group the former with animals and the latter with vehicles, showing that small children treat physical properties such as contour as more significant than intellectual categories such as “animate/inanimate” which some psychologists have claimed to be innately fundamental.

GEOFFREY SAMPSON has been awarded a £208,000 grant by ESRC for a project on “Analytic Standards for Spoken Grammatical Performance”. This is a follow-up to Geoffrey’s research, recently completed, which created the SUSANNE Scheme of analytic standards for computational representation of structure in written English: the new research will extend SUSANNE to cover the special structural features of the spoken language. Alan Morris has been appointed as the project’s first researcher, with other vacancies to be filled shortly; and the project budget is to pay for a replacement for Geoffrey’s teaching and admin duties, giving him two years to work on the research full time from January 1997.

Thirty years of caring
JOYCE PAYNE retired as nursing auxiliary at the Health Centre last month, after working there for more than 30 years. Sharon Gretton, Practice Manager, writes: “Joyce started her career as a cleaner but her good listening ear and calm nature made her contribution to the care of students in the sick bay invaluable. It would be impossible to estimate the numbers of people who have benefited from talking to Joyce. She has a motherly nature combined with good intuitive skills and was often able to offer insights into the understanding of students’ worries and problems. She has helped people to calm down in the face of what seemed insurmountable problems, so that they could go on their way to sit exams or face other hurdles, feeling very much better. She well deserves her retirement and we wish her a long and very happy time with her husband and family.”

In brief

Research Opportunities

For more information, call Mylene Powell in the Research Office, ext 3812 (mornings only), email: M.Powell@sussex.ac.uk

ROYAL SOCIETY EXCHANGES WITH AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND CANADA: Awards for study visits to exchange ideas and information, learn new techniques, develop international collaborative links and enable participation in international programmes. Fellowships for young British postdoctoral scientists. Closing date annually: 17 May.

ROYAL SOCIETY SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES WITH THE FORMER SOVIET UNION: Several schemes covering research in the natural sciences including mathematics, engineering, non-clinical medical research and the scientific research aspects of psychology, archaeology, geography and the history of science.

OTHER ROYAL SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES: conference grants for British scientists to attend international conferences overseas. The Society’s Research Grants Scheme includes overseas field research grants.

BBSRC/ROYAL SOCIETY/EPSRC INDUSTRY FELLOWSHIPS SCHEME: to promote the interchange of scientists between academia and industry. Closing date: Mid-December 1996.


1997/98 LEVERHULME PERSONAL RESEARCH PROFESSORSHIPS: In any field in the humanities or social sciences. Closing date: 6 December 1996.

Looking for Christmas Presents?

The Photographic Department, Photographic & Design Unit in Arts C, is offering a colour portraiture service in their studio. This service, available to all members of the University and their families, will be in colour and offers different packages of prints all for a set charge. Please contact Keith Wilson on 2233 or Keith Hunt on 8041, in PDU, Arts C109, who will be pleased to discuss the range of services and show examples of previous work.
Monday 28 October - Sunday 3 November

Lectures, Seminars, Colloquia

Monday 28 October
2pm CuCoom Lecture: Conception: Narratives and Facts. Sarah Franklin (Lancaster), Gardner Centre Theatre.

3.40 Neuroscience Seminar: Cellular and Molecular Mechanisms of Sensory Neuron Development in Droso-
phila. David Shepherd (Southampton), Biology Lecture Room.

5pm Sociology & Social Psychology Seminar: Language and Identity in Tanisia. Iesh Sachdev (Birkbeck), Room D310.

5pm CPES Colloquium: Biomimetic Materials Chemistry: from Magnetic Proteins to Skeletons in the Beaker. Prof. S. Mann (Bath), MSLT.

Tuesday 29 October

1.30pm Psychology in COGS Research in Progress Seminar: Psychophysiology, Early Cognition & Lan-
guage. Dr Alessandra Sanasavini (Bologna), Room PB2A.

3pm Solid State Materials Seminar: Probing the Surfaces of Oxides using Atomic Computer-Simulat-
one Techniques. Dr S.C. Parker (Bath), Room PB2A.

3pm SEI Research in Progress Seminar: Towards an Effective External EU Policy. Prof. Simon Nuttall (Bruges and LSE), Room A71.

4pm COGS Seminar: Cosmological Psychology: Problems surrounding the Question: "What are agents and where do they come from?" Prof. Robert Shaw (Connecticut), Room PBS C11.

4.15pm Biochemistry and Genetics & Development Seminar: The inactivation of map kinases by dual specificity (TYR/THR) phosphatases in mammalian cells. Dr Steve Keyse (Dundee), Biology Lecture Room.

5pm Social Anthropology Graduate/Faculty Semi-
nar: Life Itself: Gender, Genealogy and Genes. Dr Sarah Franklin (Lancaster), Room A71.

5pm Graduate Seminar in Media and Culture: Global Trends in Broadcasting Markets. Brian Stur-
gess (ING Barings), Room D440.

5pm International Relations and Politics Research in Progress Seminar: Recent Changes in Russian Foreign Policy. Dr Margot Light (LSE), Room D510.

5pm German Research Colloquium: From the Rhine to the Nene. Lotte Kramer (Peterborough), Room A155.


Wednesday 30 October
1.30pm SCOAP: Photonic Surfaces. Dr Bill Barnes (Exeter), Room PB2A.

1pm IDS Seminar: Five Years of Structural Adjustment in India. Prof. Biplab Dasgupta (Calcutta), IDS Room 22.

2.30pm CDE Workshop Meeting: Problems and is-

sues in reconstructing teacher training in Mumunmargga Province. Rupert Baber (Magdalen, Oxford), EDB 205.

4.30pm History of Art Research in Progress Semi-

5pm English Graduate Colloquium: Virginia Woolf's "in love". Rachael Bowby, Arts D640.

Thursday 31 October
12.30pm Postgraduate History and Gender Semi-
nar: Goddess, Wife, Mother or Slave: Will the Real Byzantine Empress Please Stand Up? Liz James, Room D730.

2pm Statistics Seminar: Eigenvectors of transient Markov processes. Laird Breyer (Queensland), Room PB2A.

3.30pm IDS Gender Seminar: Singlehood and other strategies: women negotiating conjugal conflict in Le-
sotho. Dr Caroline Wright (Warwick), IDS.

4pm Geography Research Seminar: Climate Change Impacts on Sand Dune Formation in the Mojave De-
sert. Helen Rendell and Michele Clarke, Room D610.

4pm Laboratory of Experimental Psychology: Visual segmentation, completion and attention. Jon Driver (Birkirk), Biology Lecture Room.

5pm Social and Political Thought Seminar: Eco-
Feminism and the critique of capitalisition. Jenneth Parker (CuCoom, Sussex), Room D630.

5pm History Work in Progress Seminar: An Out-
break of Aladin in Middle Class Middlebrow Musical History. John Lowerson, Room A155.

5pm Sussex Development Lecture: Structural Ad-

Friday 1 November
2pm SPRU Seminar: World class manufacturing: learning from other sectors. Prof. Andrew Graves (Bath), EDB 121.

4pm Astronomy Centre Seminar: White Dwarfs, type Ia supernovae and close binary evolution. T. Marsh (Southampton), Room PB1A.

4.30pm Philosophy Society Meeting: Biological Functions. Caroline Price (Oxford), Room A155.

The Gardner Arts Centre

Les Deux Mondes

The Gardner are delighted to be hosting the only UK appearance of the stunning Canadian visual theatre company Les Deux Mondes as part of the vision 96 Festival of Animated Theatre on Wednesday 28 October to Friday 1 November at 7.45pm.

The Gardner are offering a Free Ticket to this extra-

ordinary show to the first 10 people who come to the box office with their copy of Bulletin.

Film at the Gardner

6.30pm Monday 28 October: A Kind of Loving. 11.30pm Wednesday 30 October: Stonewall (18).

The Meeting House

Lecture

6pm Tuesday 29 October How Original is Sin: Prof. Stephen Jones, Geneticist and Broadcaster, University College, London.

Miscellaneous

MSF Branch Meeting

1-2pm Thursday 31 October, Room AFRC 1B.

Query Seminar

2pm Wednesday 30 October. Reading Effemincency and Reproduction in Different Cultures: Alan Sin-
feld.

Sportcentre Freebie

3-4pm Wednesday 30 October. Women's Squash Coaching (No beginners). Sportcentre - Free.

Law Seminar

1.15pm Wednesday 30 October: Good Name, Fame and Reputation: Sexual Stander in the 19th Century. Prof Stephen Waddams (Toronto), Room D722.

Q Sun Visit

Q Associates, who are Sun dealers, will be visiting the University on Friday 1 November. For more information contact the Computing Service.

CDU Workshops

Monday 28 October
6pm IT/Computing with Logica: presentation by this major graduate recruiter.

Tuesday 29 October
6pm Children's Aid Direct: talk on working overseas for a charity.

Wednesday 30 October
5.30pm The European Commission: work in the EC Institutions and the selection process.

Thursday 31 October
5.30pm Civil Service: The routes in, the application process and the work on offer. For more information or to sign up for a workshop go to the CDU, in Falmer House, with your £5 refundable deposit.

Small Ads

CAMERA FOR SALE: Olympus XA2 plus AltFlash, Compact. Self Timer. Excel. Cond. £45. Tel 813126 or 3846 (Int.).

CAR FOR SALE: Volvo 360 GLS, 2-br, 3-dr, A-Reg., 100k miles, MOT 6 Feb-

ary. Tel. Chris x8434, or 692584.

MUSICIANS WANTED: Montague House is a resource centre for adults with physical disabilities in the Kempton area. Anyone, or group, willing to play at a Christmas party on 17 Dec, please contact Phil Dennis: 687990.

HOLISTIC MASSAGE: Available every Tuesday with Jim Friar (ITEC) at the Sportcentre. Rates per half hour are: Students £6.50, Staff £8.50, Public £10.

WANTED URGENTLY: Good home for very friendly young cat. Loves to be cuddled, hates dog and noise. Tel: 695087.

BROKEN PAVING STONES - FREE: To be collected. Call John Higgins ext. 3311 to arrange collection.

JAPANESE WORD PROCESSOR: Converts Japanese to English. Still in original box. With manual, built-in printer. £30 Tel: ex. 3440, or call 630324 after 6pm.

Bulletin

The Bulletin appears every Friday of term, with copy deadline the preced-

ing Friday lunchtime. We welcome any suggestions for news, events, letters and small ads. Please contact the Information Office, Sussex House on ext. 8209 or email: Bulle-

tin@sussex.ac.uk.