SUSSEX HONOURS SIR HARRY

The role of scientists in society and the state of science education were among the issues covered by Sir Harry Kroto at the special award ceremony held in his honour earlier this week at which he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Science. The Ambassador of Sweden and many distinguished guests, from all over the world, attended the ceremony at the Gardner Centre to mark Sir Harry’s important scientific achievements which culminated in the award of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry at the end of last year.

In a stimulating and entertaining speech which touched on such subjects as art, literature and the nature of scientific enquiry, Sir Harry also talked about the impact of current funding policies on universities. He expressed the hope that the new government “will try to ensure that the ideal of Robbins, which led to the new universities in the 60s, will be re-addressed and that small universities will be adequately financed”. He went on, “I stayed at Sussex - which came second in chemistry and third in physics in a recent analysis of research impact - because it was a small university with an interdisciplinary infrastructure which suited me and many outstanding colleagues. The ‘all the eggs in the Oxford/Cambridge/London basket’ is ultimately a disastrous policy. It seems obvious to me that what we should be working for is as much diversity and as much intellectual equality among as many universities as possible.”

Sir Harry also criticised the research and teaching assessment exercises, describing them as “inherently dangerous”. “There may be some merit if the objectives were to channel resources into those sectors where shortcomings are perceived. However, the objective has been to re-direct the resources to make matters worse! The recent focusing of research support into fewer and fewer institutions is one typically short-sighted and dangerous consequence.”

Sir Harry was presented for the award by John Murrell, Dean of CPES who originally appointed him to a post at the University. As well as describing Sir Harry’s research achievements, John also talked about his mission to widen the knowledge and appeal of science. This is exemplified by his recent establishment of the Vega Trust, a series of TV programmes aimed at widening scientific awareness in our society and the science education activities which he and his team undertake with school children of all ages.

In his address, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gordon Conway spoke of the importance of maintaining the dual funding system for research which, he says, “enables researchers, such as Sir Harry to engage in research which is purely curiosity-driven, whose benefits are not discoverable at the outset but which, in the fullness of time, contributes to the science base on which the technologies and economies of great modern nations are based.” Sir Harry endorsed this view of the importance of fundamental research, summing it up in a phrase borrowed from the writer, J.R.R. Tolkien: “Not all who wander are lost.”
News from the Space Centre

ENGG supported for Cluster re-flight

The UK Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council has awarded £478,000 to Dr. Paul Gough of the Space Science Centre in the School of Engineering for participation in the new European Space Agency Cluster2 mission. You may recall that the four spacecraft of the original Cluster mission were destroyed when the first of the new Ariane V rockets blew up last June. The four new Cluster2 spacecraft will be launched as pairs on two well proven Russian Soyuz rockets in the summer of 2000. The aim of the Cluster mission is to study the outer edges of the Earth’s environment where the Earth’s magnetic field interacts with the wind of material flowing out from the sun. This science objective was considered so important by the international science community that the refight has been funded despite causing related delays in other important planned missions. This new award from PPARC will support Dr. Peter Davies, Dr. Andy Buckley, and Simon Davis up to in-flight commissioning of the instruments. Then, if all is working well, the mission will be further supported for the two or more years of satellite operations and science data exploitation.

Ukrainian Visitor to Space Centre

Dr. Fedir Doudkin from the Ukraine has been awarded a Royal Society Fellowship to visit the ENGG Space Science Centre for six months from May. Dr. Doudkin is with the Lviv Institute of Space Research of the National Academy of Sciences, and the National Space Agency of the Ukraine. He will be working with Paul Gough, interpreting the results from active space plasma experiments flown on the Shuttle flights STS-46 and STS-75, and also with data from the recent Canadian OEDIPUS rocket flight, launched into the aurora borealis over Alaska.

History of Art celebrations

History of Art at Sussex celebrated its 30th anniversary last Tuesday with a party for past and present members and friends of the subject. The two ‘founding fathers’, Hans Hess and Quentin Bell, who were both concurrently at Sussex from 1967 to 1975, were commemorated with the unveiling of their photographs in the History of Art Image Archive, pictured here with David Mellor, Anita Halpin Hess and Dorothy Scraton.

Letters

Dear Editor

At the risk of clogging your incoming mail further, I noted with interest your attribution of the University of Aalborg (Denmark) to The Netherlands, or the unlikely event that 12 Dutch students studying in Denmark had come en masse to Sussex. While The Netherlands certainly rivalled this country for world empire several centuries ago, it is refreshing to consider that there has been a resurgence. Perhaps all of the European coastal peoples are set to swear allegiance to the Dutch Queen and I have missed it in the excitement of the election.

Best regards, Ed Steinmueller, Science Policy Research Unit

These Dutch students from a Danish University did show a lot of enterprise to come to Sussex, didn’t they? I make no comment, but Tome Nywant sounds quite Danish to me.

Jane ‘Espinasse, EAM

They were indeed Danish. A big apology to the Danish nation. Ed.
**Easter in Antwerp**

Three CLS students studying for their LLM degree in International Criminal Law participated in an ERASMUS intensive seminar on corruption, held in Antwerp during the Easter vacation. They are seen here receiving their certificates from Guy Stessens and Professor Christine van den Wyngaert. Pictured from l to r: Carole Lahana, Guy Stessens, Sophie Vanhosebrouck, Christine van den Wyngaert and Rupert Graham-Evans.

**Science, drugs and serendipity**

Mention of peptidylprolyl cis-trans isomerases (PPlases) may not immediately grab the imagination of the average traveller on the Clapham omnibus, but perhaps it should. To John Kay of BIOLS it is part of a fascinating tale of the serendipity of discovery and the connections between pure science and a multi-billion-dollar drug industry.

The story begins about 15 years ago, with some East German chemists, working on the structure of PPlases, an obscure and apparently unimportant group of enzymes which they thought might influence the folding of proteins when they are made in the body. Routinely, they worked out and recorded the sequences of amino-acids in these enzymes. Meanwhile, a Japanese group was working on the mode of action of Cyclosporin, a wonder drug discovered in the 1970s which suppresses the immune response and has been crucial for the success of transplant surgery. To their surprise, these workers found that the target protein for the drug just happened to match the most abundant of these funny PPlases. Then a group at Harvard discovered that a new rival drug, FK506, also an immunosuppressive, also acted on a PPlase, but this time a different one. As sales of Cyclosporin exceed a billion dollars per year, the interest in PPlases suddenly became more than academic.

□ Safety at Work

A one-day Safety and Environmental conference organised by the Sussex Downland Branch of the Institute of Science Technology was held at the University during the vacation. This was the second time in three years that the Safety Conference has been held at Sussex which was chosen largely because of its "impressive record in promoting health and safety and environmental issues in the workplace." Pictured are three retired members of staff who, as members of the Institute of Science Technology were involved in organising the conference. L to r: Pat Byner, Gerald Massé and John Burns.

**RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES**

This is a selection of Research Opportunities. More details of these and other opportunities are available from Mylene Powell in the Research Grants and Contracts Office, ext 3812 or email: M.Powell@sussex.ac.uk. For an extensive listing of funding opportunities see REFUND linked to the Research web site: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/research or USIS Home Page, select 'For Staff', 'Research Funding'.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE - OCCUPATIONAL ASTHMA: HSE will fund research that will provide an insight into the cellular mechanisms underlying the induction of occupational asthma due to low molecular weight chemicals. Deadline: 23 June.**

**PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF SCIENCE GRANTS: to support new activities or initiatives aimed at improving the public understanding of science, including mathematics, technology and engineering. Deadline: Development Grants: 30 June 1997; Set98* Grants: 30 September 1997; Seed Grants: 31 October.**

**ICSU - FAMILY BUSINESS MEETINGS: The International Council of Scientific Unions provides grants to enable UK scientists to participate in business meetings of organisations within the ICSU community which do not come under the umbrella of overseas conference grants. Deadline: 1 October.**

**ICSU INTERNATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CORRELATION PROGRAMME: to enable scientists to participate in the business associated with scientific activities of the IGCP. No closing date.**

**ICSU CONFERENCE GRANTS: to assist with travelling and subsistence expenses for attendance at scientific conferences including those of the ICSU family. Deadline: 1 March, 1 June, 1 October and 1 December annually.**

**BRITISH ACADEMY RESEARCH READERSHIPS, BRITISH ACADEMY/LEVERHULME TRUST, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS, BRITISH ACADEMY THANK-OFFERING TO BRITAIN FELLOWSHIP: applications invited from serving members of academic staff of UK universities for the above awards. Deadline: 31 July.**

**MAFF FOOD RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS 1998-1999: applications invited for research in many scientific disciplines across a wide range of food related topics, such as food quality and applied nutrition, food safety and food and meat hygiene.**

3
**Monday 19 May - Sunday 25 May**

**What's on...**

### Lectures, Seminars, Colloquia

- **Monday 19 May**
  - 1pm Laboratory of Experimental Psychology: *Eating and attentional bias*. Martin Yeamons, Biology Lecture Room.
  - 3pm Analysis Seminar: *How to hear the shape of a triangular drum*. G. Friedlander (Cambridge), Pevensey Building 2A2.
  - 4.30 pm Neuroscience Seminar: *Active Robotic Vision: the fruits of fixation*. David Murray (Oxford), Biology Lecture Room.

- **Tuesday 20 May**
  - 3pm Sussex European Institute and Centre for Legal Studies Joint Seminar: *The need for formalism in EC law*. Dr Mark Attew (Queen Mary & Westfield College), room A71, SEL.
  - 4.15pm Biochemistry and Genetics and Development Seminar: *Genetic analysis of UV responses in fission yeast*. Jo Murray, Biology Lecture Room.
  - 5pm German Research Colloquium: *Testimonies of Women Refugees*. Christina Brink, room A155.
  - 6.15pm Public Lecture: *Surfing the neural networks of the brain*. Professorial Lecture by Paul Benjamin, Professor of Neuroscience, Chichester Lecture Theatre (formerly MSLT).

- **Wednesday 21 May**
  - 1.30pm SCOPA Seminar: *Precision measurements in the muonium atom*. Dr Klaus Jungmann (Heidelberg University, Pevensey Building 2A2.
  - 2pm Centre for Statistics and Stochastic Modelling Seminar: *Adaptation in a fluctuating environment*. John McNamara (Bristol), Pevensey Building 1A1.
  - 4.15pm Centre for the Study of Evolution Seminar: *Aggregation of variables and emergence in dynamical systems: effects of individual decisions on population dynamics*. Pierre Auger (Lyons) and Jean-Christophe Poggiale (Marseille), Biology Lecture Room.
  - 4.30pm Centre for Legal Studies Seminar: *fiduciaries: when is self-denial obligatory?*. Sarah Worthington (Birkbeck, London), room B355.
  - 5pm South Asia Workshop: *Beyond valorisation or condemnation: community management of van panchayats (forest councils)* in the U.P. hills. Satyaj Singh, room A155.

- **Thursday 22 May**
  - 11.30am Economics Faculty/Graduate Seminar: *Spatial price equilibrium and food market integration*. Bob Bauch (IDS), room D340.
  - 12.30pm Postgraduate History and Gender Seminar: *The Fourth Commandment and morality in Mid-Seventeenth Century England*. Roz Rosenblatt, room D730.
  - 3pm The New Metaphysical Art Seminar: *Is the Art World different today?*. Richard Wolflheim, Music Room, Gardner Arts Centre

**Small Ads**

- **FOUND**: one gold earring with 9 stones in Science car park, 2 May. Please contact Peter on 8102.
- **FOR SALE**: Hoover compact with attachments; good working order £25. Phone 2796 daytime, or 721440 after 6pm.
- **NEED TUTORING** in English grammar, composition, literature, or creative writing? Let a professional writer/editor with a PhD in American literature help you. Reasonable rates, sessions at your convenience during the days or evenings. Call Debra Munn 747200.
- **WANTED**: the Creche needs sun shade umbrellas for the baby-room garden. Does anyone have one they could donate, preferably with a waterfilled base. Please contact Janet or Linda on 8356.
- **WANTED**: a basic desktop personal computer and printer for a child. Are you thinking of updating your system? Please give me a ring and I could take your old one off your hands. Su Balcombe 73664.
- **WANTED**: for work a mature (24) Slovak student (child physiotherapist by profession); gardening, cleaning, childminding, general repairs. Refs available. Please contact Alena 8125 (till 130); 474738 after 2pm.
- **FOR SALE**: Toshiba notebook 486, full colour screen, brand new condition, fax/modem, many extras, only £710. Canon BJ10SX printer v.g.c. £110. Call Jim 602310.
- **TO LET**: spacious 2-bed flat near Preston Park. Fully furnished with w/m, drier, fridge and freezer. Available from 22 June for short/long lease. £440 per month excl. bills. Contact 330620 (email: sbs51).
- **FOR SALE**: External US-Robotics 14.400 fax/modem with v.42 bis; hardly used, together with its communication software for just £40; help with installation, too. Email kyrilakim@cogs.susx.ac.uk
- **RESEARCH ASSISTANTS WANTED**: 2/3 in-house Research Assistants (one an economist) one-year from October or possibly earlier. Candidates should have a Masters, or good first degree in a social science. Contact Rosalind Woodhouse, IDS, tel: (67)8266. Closing date: 30 May.
- **ACCOMMODATION** offered in family house for female students. For further details contact 887831.
- **ACCOMMODATION** wanted during July-August for Polish lady (visiting fellow) and 13-year-old son. Happy to house-sit, share or rent a small flat. References available. Contact Beata Surname 696493.

**Bulletin**

The Bulletin appears every Friday of term with copy deadline the preceding Friday lunchtime. We welcome suggestions for news, events, features, letters and small ads. Please contact the Information Office, Sussex House, on ext. 8209, or email: Bulletin@sussex.ac.uk