Mural gives a brighter welcome to Sussex

The pedestrian underpass between campus and Falmer Station has been given a facelift.

Bus and train users will have seen the brightly painted mural which replaced ugly graffiti and flyposters. It was completed on 8 December. The official opening by the Vice-Chancellor was attended by 40 painters (students, former students and staff), Des Turner, MP for Brighton (Kemp Town), and representatives from some of the sponsors.

The joint idea of graduates Kate Aubrey, Nick Ford and Kate Osborn, the project took six months of planning. Kate Aubrey devised surveys to ask people their opinions about designs for the mural, and from this research the group drew sketches incorporating everyone’s ideas. The final design was approved by the Department of Transport and comprises 42 pictures on the themes of campus, Brighton, fantasy and the four seasons, against a background of sky, sea and forest.

“Everyone who passed through the tunnel during the painting was gobsmacked by thirty of us standing here on the coldest weekend in December! It will be inspiration for other students to express their creativity,” said Kate Osborn.

Student Development provides funding of up to £650 for creative student projects such as this. For more details contact ext 8543.

Clockwise from top left: front end of cow; the Vice-Chancellor Gordon Conway with MP Des Turner, back end of cow; the painters.

Successful outcome for Media Studies

Media Studies is the latest subject group to be visited by assessors from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAAHE). The Group achieved one of the highest set of grades so far in England and Northern Ireland for this subject. The grades were:

Curriculum Design, content and Organisation 3
Teaching, Learning and Assessment 4
Student Progress and Achievement 4
Student Support and Guidance 4
Learning Resources 4
Quality Assurance and Enhancement 2

The assessment team gave its provisional comments at an oral feedback meeting at the end of the visit.

The Group was commended on the flexible, cross-disciplinary curriculum, and the cohesion of the MA programme. According to the assessors, teaching, learning and assessment is informed by staff research and professional practice, and the learning environment is supportive. There is a buoyant demand for the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and students achieve good rates of success and relevant employment.

As with other assessment visits at Sussex, the personal tutoring system was praised, as were services such as Counselling, the Career Development Unit and the Student Employment Office. The assessors commended the Library systems and induction, and the public access computers and network facilities. Liaison between the Subject Group and the Library and Media Services Unit were also singled out, together with productive links and collaboration with local media organisations. The QAAHE was impressed by the range of staff development opportunities and the level of support available for new staff.
A Short Visit

Clare Short, the Secretary of State for International Development delivered the final lecture in the Autumn Term series of Sussex Development Lectures at the beginning of December. Before a packed audience she spoke about the White Paper on International Development, the first white paper on development for over 20 years. She outlined the government's policy as set out in the paper "Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the 21st Century" and described how it was starting to implement that policy. In her lecture, Clare Short also made particular reference to the strength of research and teaching on development at the University and IDS which, she said, had made a major contribution over the years to thinking and practice on development, not just in Britain but with a wide variety of our development partners.

Before the lecture Clare Short met three AFRAS students, Jo Bryant, Elizabeth Parker and Jessica Witchell (pictured 1st r with Clare Short, below). The three have recently returned from placements overseas under a scheme funded by VSO in which AFRAS has been participating for several years. The aim of the scheme is to develop a core of young professional development workers by providing them with an opportunity to learn through practical experience with local development organisations and institutions in the Third World. Ms Short talked to Jo, Elizabeth and Jessica about their experiences in Fiji, Tonga and Nepal respectively. They also discussed projects they were now involved in with local schools, aimed at stimulating interest in development issues, and workshops they were setting up within the University to inform students about work in developing countries.

Sussex instrument rockets into space

Last month a US NASA sounding rocket was successfully launched from Svalbard (Island of Spitzbergen). Included within this rocket was an instrument from the Space Science Centre (ENGG). Back in July, Professor Paul Gough took the completed instrument to San Antonio, Texas for testing and integration with the rest of the rocket payload. The Sussex instrument had been built with the help of Martin Shrimpton and Frank Emerson-Smith from the School of Engineering Electronics Workshop. On Svalbard the rocket was counted down each day, awaiting the correct geophysical conditions before launch into what is known as the cusp of the Earth's magnetic field. The cusp is a weakness in the dayside magnetic field where solar particles can penetrate directly down to our atmosphere. All experiments on the rocket worked well, geophysical conditions were ideal, and the Space Science Centre now looks forward to analysing the unique dataset.

The Space Science Centre is also involved in the ESA Cluster II mission, four satellites due for launch summer 2000, to study the outer regions of the cusp.

COGS Workshop

A workshop on children’s understanding of emotions and cognitive development took place recently at the Innovation Centre. The event was run by the Social Cognitive Development research group in COGS and included participants from both British institutes and abroad, including experts in linguistics, philosophy, artificial intelligence, as well as clinical and developmental psychologists.

The researchers study children aged three to ten years old. Topics covered at the workshop included the child’s ‘theory of mind’ – how children interpret thoughts and feelings and strategies children use to cope with stress or depression. Dr Nicola Yuill (COGS) said that the workshop was a constructive way of bringing together clinical work on emotion regulation with research on cognitive skills in understanding emotions and motivation. Papers from the workshop will shortly be published in the COGS Technical Report series.
A tale of two universities

Sussex researchers were invited to ‘Science en Fête’, an annual event which takes place all over France. Its aim is to promote the understanding of science and its applications to both the layperson and students pursuing scientific studies. Sally Wilks (BIOLS) was there and wrote a diary for Bulletin.

Only a few hours after leaving Sussex we arrived in the beautiful town of Amiens in Picardie. We had been asked by the University of Picardie Jules Verne to mount a stand at the Science Park in Amiens, so a representative group from COGS, BIOLS and CPES ensured that Sussex University made an impact at this event.

This was the first time Sussex had taken part in Science en Fête and we were not quite sure what to expect, or what would be expected of us. Prepared for almost anything, we had come armed with prospectuses, posters, information about different schools, innovative teaching software, a PC to demonstrate it on and even a few back copies of Bulletin. We walked into a very high-tech venue with displays from local businesses and universities ranging from molecular sugar sculptures to high precision laser etchings. Marble was being cut into thin slices and designs with tiny, powerful water-jets in one room whilst video-conferencing was allowing artists in New York and Amiens to talk in the Virtual Gallery. It was a privilege to be part of this exciting Tomorrow’s World atmosphere and felt that visitors to our stand enjoyed the experience. The teaching software proved a hit and even the president of the University of Picardie played with it for a few minutes. The language barrier was not too much of a problem as most of our French visitors spoke very good English. Unfortunately, the same could not be said of our abilities in French and most of us have decided to improve our language skills as a result of this visit.

Early on Sunday morning, before the town of Amiens was fully awake; the Sussex group took a walk around the cobbled streets in the mist. The gothic cathedral dominates the scene and we felt that we’d stepped back in time. A sharp contrast to the event in the Science Park. The old town is dissected by small waterways with terraces of pretty, pastel-painted and beamed houses. Restaurants and bars are everywhere; we had enjoyed a meal the night before at the Broken Tooth! After a few glasses of the excellent wine it was easy to make the mistake of thinking the ‘man in the river’ (pictured below) was real. In the cold light of day it was obvious that he was an example of one of the beautiful sculptures that we found all around the cathedral area.

The hospitality of our French hosts was wonderful and we were very grateful that the participation of Sussex at the event was made possible by European Community funding. This is aimed at promoting transfrontier co-operation between member states and specifically to enhance mutual awareness and build permanent links between the Universities of East Sussex and the Seine-Maritime and Somme regions.

If you would like to know more about European Community funding for such projects, please contact Ross Dowsett (European Liaison Officer) on 8238.

In brief

- Congratulations to Professor Margaret McGowan who was awarded the CBE for services to French Cultural Studies in the NewYear’s Honours List.
- The Christmas Charity Challenge held at the Sportcentre on 10 December in aid of The Sussex Cancer Treatment Fund raised just over £400. The Sport
- Service would like to say a big thank you to all those who took part.
- Sussex has won a 400,000 ECU and Tempus programme to assist the universities of Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Tuzla to establish curricula in European Studies and in transition and reconstruction. This will involve exchanges of students and faculty and assistance to the libraries of all three universities.
- Alumnus Tim O’Shea (BSc in Mathematics and Experimental Psychology) has just become Principal of Birkbeck College. The first Sussex former student to be a member of CVCP? asks Dean of SMS Peter Bushell.

Research Opportunities

More details of these and other research 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 ‘Teaching & Research’, 'Research Funding at Sussex'.

DOROTHY HODGKIN FELLOWSHIPS: applications are invited for post-doctoral fellowships funded by the Royal Society and targeted at the early careers of able young scientists (up to 35 years of age). This scheme, for research in the natural sciences, is particularly beneficial for female scientists. Deadline: 13 March 1998.

HUGH LE MAY FELLOWSHIP: Rhodes University invites applications for the year 2000. The Fellowship is available in alternate years to applicants who wish to devote themselves to advanced work (post-doctoral) in the following subjects: philosophy, theology, classics, ancient, mediaeval or modern history, classical, biblical, mediaeval or modern languages, political theory, law. Deadline: 31 July 1999.

ASSOCIATION OF RHODES SCHOLARS IN AUSTRALIA TRAVEL BURSARY 1998/9: to bring an overseas student to Australia to consult with leading scholars in their research area and undertake research in Australia relevant to their thesis project. Deadline: 1 May 1998.


NERC URBAN REGENERATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT - URGENT: to stimulate the regeneration of the urban environment through greater understanding of natural processes. The programme focuses on four areas: the shallow sub-surface, urban ecology, hydrological balances and atmospheric dynamics and chemistry. Deadline: 12 February 1998.

Monday 12 January – Sunday 18 January

Miscellaneous

Thank you: to all friends and colleagues in Sussex House for the generous Christmas gift received by Alex and Peter the Sussex House porters, and Jean in the tea bar.

New Year’s Resolution: stop smoking, save money, feel fitter! Come and discuss quitting with Nurse Val at informal meeting in the Health Centre, Wednesday January 14 at 3.30 pm.

CCE Saturday Schools-January

Hardy: Tess of the d’Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure: In his last two great tragic novels, Hardy tackled head-on the great Victorian sacred cows of religion, virginity, marriage and class barriers in education. With Fran and Geoff Doel. Course No: D6197, 24 January

English Musical Renaissance: in the closing decades of the last century, English music found a distinctive voice and entered a period of creativity unparalleled since the Renaissance. Putting the music in its historical context with examples from a range of English composers. With Peter Copley. Course No: D6297, 24 January

The Bronze Age in Greece: the Aegean Bronze Age saw the rise of two flourishing cultures - Minoan and Mycenaean, both of which disappeared suddenly. Examining reasons for their decline and how they relate to the Homeric and Atlantids legends. With Louise Bashford. Course No: D14497, 24 January

To enrol on any of the above courses, please contact CCE on 673926. Course fees are: students £12.50, staff £8.25

Classes and Courses

Introduction to Access: the Computing Service will be running a two-part introductory course on the Access database on 12 and 15 January from 10 am to 12.45 pm. For further information contact reception on ext 8090

Expression I at the Sportcentre: working with body awareness and self-expression to discover the unique dancer within us. This eight-week course runs on Tuesdays from 12 to 1 pm from 20 January, and costs £15 for staff/students and £19 for members of the public. A taster session on 13 January costs £1

Expression II at the Sportcentre: explores creativity and self-expression through movement, focusing on breathing, attention and awakening awareness in the body. This four-week course runs on Saturdays from 11 am to 1 pm from 24 January, and costs £15 for staff/students and £19 for members of the public. An introductory three-hour workshop on 17 January at 11 am costs £6 for staff/students and £7 for members of the public.

Well-being class at the Sportcentre: concentrates on accessing energy through pressure points, breathing, movement and listening. This eight-week course runs on Wednesdays from 1 to 2 pm from 14 January, and costs £16 for staff/students/members of the public.

For more details of these courses, contact the Sportcentre on ext 8228.

Development Opportunities

Funding may be available from Staff Development for faculty to attend the following events. Please contact the Staff Development Officer, ext 3849, for details of these and other events.

Supervising undergraduate dissertations: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development, University of Reading, 20 January

Basic advisory skills for those working with international students: UKCOSA, London, 22 January

Transforming lecturing: CHES, London, 22/23 January

Problem based learning: CHES, London, 5/6 February

An introduction to international recruiting and marketing: UKCOSA, London, 10 February

Assessing students: CHES, London, 25/27 February

Small Ads

FOR SALE: Jamey lowering springs for Ford Escort car, new, offers invited. Contact Barbara on 693301 or ext. 8995

ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE: between January and March for faculty only. Kingston near Lewes. Contact 486235

FOR SALE: Vauxhall Astra 1.3, C-reg, tax and MOT until April 1998, £700 o.n.o. Contact 207941

FOR SALE: Renault 25 GTi, E-reg, one owner, excellent condition, 68,000 miles, metallic blue, electric sunroof, central locking, power steering, tax and MOT until October 1998, £1750. Contact ext 3526

TO LET: large room in North Laines house, 5 mins from station. Suit non-smoking female, share all facilities with landlady, £50 per week inclusive. Contact Claire on 682929

FOR SALE: Intel Pentium PC, 60 MHz, 16 MRAM, 510M HDD, CD-ROM, modem, 14 SVGA, speakers, Win 3.11, MS Office, SAS, Papyrus, £425. Contact Mr Lim on 739871

Bulletin

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