Beer is key to astronomy scoop

BRIBERY will get you everywhere, according to a group of astronomers in CPES who have just scooped the astronomical world, thanks to some quick observation and the promise of beer. The group, led by Dr Paul Roche, has identified a star which is the optical counterpart to a unique X-ray source. Known by the uninspiring name of SAX J1808.4-3658, this bizarre X-ray source consists of a normal star from which material is pouring onto the fastest spinning X-ray pulsar ever discovered - a dead star weighing as much as the Sun, but only 20 km across and spinning 400 times a second! Such a system was hypothesised over a decade ago as the "missing link" between various classes of X-ray and radio stars, and the hunt for such a system has been something of a Holy Grail to workers in this field.

A picture is worth 1000 words, or in this case 10 pints! The circled star is present only when the X-ray source is active, and disappears shortly after the X-rays vanish.

Following a tip-off from a friend at MIT, Paul Roche obtained optical and infrared images of the area on the sky where the X-ray source was located. This was done by the rather unorthodox technique of promising to buy beer for the regular observers on the Canary Islands and Hawaii.

"Some might consider this a little unfair, as these poor guys are stuck 3 km up a freezing cold mountain, late at night with their brains starved of oxygen," says Paul. "But they'd do anything for the promise of a beer, and I'm prepared to suffer a night out in the name of science!"

The observations were taken swiftly as the X-ray source flared up rapidly but then faded, and it has since vanished. Research students Luisa Morales and Rob Hynes have revealed the presence of a 'new' star (see picture, left) which was confirmed as the X-ray source by colleagues in Australia. The chase is on to study it before it fades too, as it is currently 100,000 times fainter than stars which can be seen by the naked eye. His interest generated by these results has produced two papers currently in press, to be published in Nature.

From the art of BIOLS: Simon Lane (left) with Oliver Darlington and their find

Tune in, turn on, look out: another artwork by former artist-in-residence, John Upton, has been liberated from the School of Biological Sciences following our plea for hidden treasures in a recent Bulletin. Dr Oliver Darlington, BIOLS Sub-Dean, recalled seeing the painting in a computer lab. "I'd seen the John Upton mural, Christ's Entry Into Brighton, and recognised the style," said Oliver. He contacted Simon Lane who is compiling a database of University-owned works of art. The painting, entitled And She Was The Princess, is believed to depict the artist's daughters. Mystery surrounds the painting as it is not on the inventory of University-owned art, although a number of Upton pieces are listed.

If you spot any hidden treasures please contact Simon on ext 3500.

PUBLIC LECTURE
The Wynne Baxter Godfree Law Lecture
The Rt Hon Lord Wakeham
Chairman: Press Complaints Committee
CAN SELF-REGULATION ACHIEVE MORE THAN LAW?
Friday 15 May at 6.00 pm
Chichester Lecture Theatre
ALL WELCOME
At the Gardner

Thursday 14 May at 7.45 pm
ANDY AND EDIE Inside Andy Warhol’s Factory. Fireraizers’ new multi-media production

Friday 15 May at 7.45 pm
LARRY GARNER sings blues from the USA. Born in the American Deep South, Garner is a blues composer with a powerful voice and biting guitar that produces fresh, subtle and swinging music. FREE TICKETS for this show to the first 10 people to appear at the Gardner Box Office with a copy of this Bulletin.

Falmer House facelift

HOME of the Student’s Union, Falmer House, is to get financial aid for long-awaited repairs. The Grade 1 listed building is to be awarded a grant from the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) and the University for much-needed heating, electrical repairs and waterproofing. It is hoped that these structural repairs will be combined with internal refurbishment to make better use of the space, including installation of a lift for the disabled. Students’ Union president, Catherine Copenhagen, hopes to confirm details by July, but said that the improvements may not commence until early next year.

Father Trevor Huddleston

Tributes have flowed throughout the world to that implacable opponent of apartheid, Father Trevor Huddleston, on his death last week. Sussex has special cause to commemorate him, as he was a Founding Patron of our Mandela Trust, which still supplies scholarships for scholars from South Africa and Namibia to study here.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language

THE Sussex Language Institute runs a one week intensive Initial Teacher Training for TEFL course at the end of every term. The next course dates are
29 June – 3 July, fee £120
For further details and enrolment form contact Linda Gunn, Arts B141, ext 2175 or the Sussex Language Institute reception, Arts A, on 8006.

Name: Gavin Ashenden
Job Title: University Chaplain; lecturer in the Psychology of Religion.
Appearance: an affable academic / clergyman. No dog collar, but a collared dog called Gideon - his trusty canine companion - who lives in his office.

Most ridiculous pastime: singing opera while falling off his sailboat in Shoreham Harbour; he also fences, acts and walks his dogs.

Favourite method of avoiding people/paperwork: “...falling into a deep, mystical reverie at will and putting a metaphorical ‘do not disturb’ sign on my lapel.”
But he enjoys talking to people as well as indulging in the odd meditation? Yes, when people “...begin to formulate real questions about themselves and their work. Those with a metaphysical itch can talk here in relative academic safety.”

Metaphysical itch? Yes, one reason for working at Sussex was the appeal of the University atmosphere which “stimulates the head (academically) and heart (with religion).”

Favourite thing in his office: Bust of Gandhi and icon of Jesus because they remind me of the one thing I’m missing – Obi Wan Kenobi

Favourite place (on campus): a circular copse of trees in Stanmer Park which is “almost certainly ridden with lay lines.”

Favourite method of getting off campus at 5.30: “I have a method that I can’t divulge.”

Is it illegal then? “No. But I can say that it doesn’t involve the one-way entrance onto campus.”

Most likely to say: This looks like a perfect day for sailing.
Least likely to say: “Politics and religion don’t mix.”

Gets annoyed by: religious and atheistic bigots
Bizarre item in his ‘fridge: “A huge piece of self-cloning Stilton from Le Grand Fromage – it’s too strong to eat huge amounts, but too good to throw away. I have (cunningly) concealed it from my wife by wrapping it in foil labelled as ‘cabbage’.”

Not to be confused with: Gavin Henderson, the Vicar of Bray, Robin Williams.

Sweet nightingale

“To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!”

WHAT a way to go. Like Keats, many of us long to hear the nightingale but the annual wait is becoming increasingly anxious because this “light-winged Dryad of the trees” has been declining in Britain for at least 50 years. 1998 is the year of the British Trust for Ornithology’s Nightingale Appeal launched, this April, in London’s Berkeley Square, by Dame Vera Lynn. Sadly, the nightingale in the song was probably a robin, although nightingales did nest in Regent’s Park until about a century ago. Beware, says Dr David Harper of BIOLS: other birds, especially robins, may sing at night and nightingales often sing by day.

Sussex, says David, is still one of the nightingale’s strongholds in Britain and it is possible to experience the unforgettable sound of several males singing at once. Males return from wintering grounds in West Africa a few days ahead of females, launching into song by day and night. This spring, they arrived early and Dr Martyn Stemming (BIOLS) and his CCE evening class heard and saw one near Ditchling on the unusually early date of 29 March. In mid-April, an unprecedented trio of males sang together on and around campus and, before moving on, overshadowed the almost equally beautiful songs of our nesting blackcaps, blackbirds and song thrushes.

Nightingales, says David Harper, seem most at home in damp scrub. To hear Keats’ “darkling”, he says, visit the commons near Burgess Hill or Henfield, or try large areas of tall, dense, scrub on the downs. The best time for hearing them changes as the season progresses. In 1996 and 1997, Robert Thomas (BIOLS) found that unpaired males sang most at night but, once paired, switched to singing most at dawn and dusk. The famous nocturnal song, which contains more whistling “peeeo” notes, seems to be especially important for attracting females which arrive during the hours of darkness.

Already the males are singing less by night, and at least some females are incubating clutches of four or five olive eggs. The speckled youngsters of the only brood of the year start leaving the nest in mid-May. By then song will have become sporadic, finally dying out completely towards the end of term. After this we will have to wait until another year.

“Was it a vision, or a waking dream?”

2
**Acting VC in action**

Professor Alasdair Smith has been Acting Vice-Chancellor since the beginning of April when Professor Gordon Conway left the University to become President of the Rockefeller Foundation. Alasdair came to Sussex from the LSE in 1981. He was appointed to a Chair in Economics and has, during his time at Sussex, held a number of officerships within the University including that of Dean of EURO. Immediately after relinquishing the Deanship in 1994, he held an ESRC Senior Research Fellowship for a year, and, prior to becoming Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor in 1997, was working in the Sussex European Institute on the labour market effects of international trade.

The length of tenure of the role of Acting Vice-Chancellor is uncertain: Alasdair has agreed to continue until such a time as the new Vice-Chancellor takes up his or her post. But despite this uncertainty, the office of Acting Vice Chancellor does not lack clarity or purpose, nor is it in any sense a "holding operation". According to Alasdair, "There is no problem in defining the role at the moment because of the number of very important issues facing us which have to be pressed forward immediately and which cannot wait for a new VC. Amongst these are preparing for the next research assessment exercise, preparing for the institutional audit by the Quality Assurance Agency and making progress with the University budget."

**Typecasting by design**

TYPEFACES used to indicate other nationalities, such as 'Chinese' or 'Indian' lettering on ethnic foods could potentially perpetuate racial stereotyping, says a research student in the Graduate Research Centre in the Social Sciences.

Fonts which are used in the West to depict other nationalities conjure up images of cultural stereotypes, says Tim Reed. These fonts do not reflect 'Chinese-ness' (for example) but are the product of graphic design conventions. Designers interviewed for the study generally shared the opinion that using these fonts was 'harmless, inappropriate and fun', in contrast to members of the ethnic groups, who found the practice 'patronising' and 'isolating' and a source of resentment.

"These arguments are reminiscent of the debates concerning the removal of the 'golliwog' logo from the labelling of a well-known jam, the disbanding of the Black and White Minstrels, and the banning of Little Black Sambo books," says Tim. "The representation of stereotypes through typeface design does matter, because culture-specific fonts are objected to by members of the signified culture."

Tim's work was submitted as his final year project as a sociology undergraduate, and has won an $800 prize from Alpha Kappa Delta, the international sociological honour society, to present his work at the prestigious International Sociological Association World Congress in Montreal this July.

**Changing face of campus**

The Estates Division is undertaking the following work. Please take care in the vicinity of the work, and stay outside any safety barriers.

**WORK IN PROGRESS**

- Bicycle racks: upgrade of existing and installation of new racks continues.
- Campus Signposting: removal of redundant signs and improvement of building name signs.
- Pevensey I: Level 1. Alterations and some upgrading to provide new open access computing, due for completion at the end of June.
- CRPC: upgrading ventilation and cold water services, due for completion in August.
- Playing Fields Pavilion: new artificial grass pitch, completion ready for September.

**Extension and alterations to provide a fitness suite, and refurbishment of changing rooms and showers, due to start soon, to open in the Autumn term.**

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The following applications for listed building consent (LB) and planning permission (FP) are being submitted. A copy of applications made by the University may be seen at the Estates Building:

- Gardiner Arts Centre: installation of a satellite dish. (LB and FP)
- ENGG I: installation of service equipment to the north of the building, to be screened by planting hedge and shrubs. (LB and FP)

**Research Opportunities**

This is a selection of Research Opportunities. More details of these and other opportunities are available from Mylène Powell in the Research Grants and Contracts Office, ext 3812 or email: M.Powell@sussex.ac.uk.

- **BBSRC SUPPORT FOR MODULAR TRAINING FOR INDUSTRY**: Proposals invited for the development of short training course 'modules' at Masters level. To provide flexible technical update training for graduate biologists working in industry. Deadline: 31 August 1998.

**ROYAL SOCIETY INDUSTRIAL FELLOWSHIPS**: Applications invited in all science areas. The scheme enables industrial scientists, mathematicians and engineers to work in a university, and for academic staff in the same fields to work in industry. Deadline: 5 June 1998.

**EXCHANGES WITH CHINA, HONG KONG, TAIWAN, AND MONGOLIA**: The Royal Society has both formal and less formal agreements with leading scientific organisations in the above countries. Study visits; China Fellowships; China Joint Projects and Kan Tong Po visiting Professorships are available.
Monday 11 May
1.00 pm Experimental Psychology Seminar: Anna Bosman (University of Nijmegen) The 'I' in 'over' does not equal the 'I' in 'over' and over does not equal otter: about phonology and semantics in reading. Biology Lecture Room (EP 3.9).
2.00 pm Particle Theory Group Seminar: Hong Liu (Imperial) SU(5) monopoles and the dual standard model. Room Pevensey 2A1.

Tuesday 12 May
4.00 pm COGS Seminar: Shimon Edelman, Visual object representation in the human brain: part-based structural descriptions or holistic similarities to multiple prototypes? Room COGS 5C11.
4.30 pm Social and Political Thought Seminar: Gareth Bish, Ernst Bloch and the secret agent. Room D630.
5.00 pm Social Anthropology Seminar: Harri Englund (Manchester University) Winning elections, losing legitimacy: multipartism and the partisan state in Malawi. Room D722.
5.00 pm International Relations and Politics Seminar: John MacLean, Political risk reconsidered. Room D640.
5.15 pm German Research Colloquium: William Kaczynski (London) Internet mail from refugees in World War II. Room A155.

Wednesday 13 May
3.00 pm Sussex Centre for Optical and Atomic Physics Seminar: Stuart Swain (Queen's University, Belfast) Interactions of atoms with squeezed light. Room Pevensey 2A2.
3.00 pm Centre for Statistics and Stochastic Modelling Seminar: Martin Crowder (University of Surrey) Alcohol, random effects and non-regular behaviour. Room Pevensey 2A12.
4.30 pm Centre for Statistics and Stochastic Modelling Seminar: Deborah Ashby (St Barts & the Royal London MDS) Casting a sceptical eye over the data. Room Pevensey 2A12.
4.30 pm Centre for Legal Studies Seminar: Catherine Jenkins, The South African truth and reconciliation commission. Room D610.
5.00 pm English Graduate Colloquium: Jeffrey Meyers (biographer, critic and editor) The politics of High Noon. Joint meeting with the American Studies seminar. Room D640.

Tuesday 17 May
Thursday 14 May
1.00 pm IDS (Participation Group) Seminar: Jutta Blauert, Participation for accountability? Participatory monitoring and evaluation in the sustainability area. Room IDS 221.
4.00 pm Geography Research Seminar: Paul Farres (University of Portsmouth) Modelling microtopographical change of soil surfaces. Room D610.
5.00 pm Centre for Modern French Thought Seminar: Howard Caygill (Goldsmiths) Levinas and national socialism. Room A71.
5.00 pm History Work in Progress Seminar: Michael Sanderson (UEA) Student troubles of the 1960s: the case of UEA. Room A155.

Friday 15 May
2.00 pm SPRU Seminar: Dan Corry (Special adviser to the President of the Board of Trade, DTI) The policy-making process: the government utility review. Room EDB 121.
4.00 pm Astronomy Centre Seminar: Max Pettini (Cambridge, RGO) Galaxies and large scale structure at z=3. Room Arundel 401.

Miscellaneous
- Lunchtime recital at the Meeting House - Robert Munnis (organ) 12 May at 1.20 pm in the chapel.
- Come and join the Bisexuals Coffee and Cake mornings, every Wednesday from 11 am. Two hours of informal discussion in a support/social group, including summer sports, tai chi, massage and poetry. For details contact Sonia on 248181 or e-mail: sau30@central.sussex.ac.uk.
- Introduction to spreadsheets - Thursday 14 May 6 - 8.30 pm. The course trains delegates to create, edit, save and print worksheets, use formulae and create simple charts using Excel 5. For further details, contact Computing Services Reception. Please book now, places are limited.
- Mixed doubles tennis tournaments - Tuesday 26 May and Tuesday 16 June, from 5.30 pm, maximum 12 pairs per tournament, £2 entry fee per pair. For more information, or to sign up, please see staff at the SportCentre Reception.

Small Ads
FOR SALE: Pentium IBM Thinkpad notebook, 11.3" colour, 810(1.4 gb) HD, multimedia, built-in soundcard, speakers, mouse. Win 97, Office 97, bag, excellent condition, half price, £800. Olympus OM10 SLR camera, with lens, dedicated flash, powered winder, case, £85. Contact Rez on 271933.
FOR SALE: Toshiba Pentium, large colour screen, 500 (1.0 gb) HD. 16 RAM, Win 97, Office 97, executive bag, manuals, modern, excellent condition, £750. Front loading VCR, good working order, £50. Contact Farzi on 602310.
FOR SALE: Comquest learning lap-top, age 6 -10, includes 15 number and spelling games, three difficulty levels, perfect condition, new £70, going for £35 o.n.o. Contact ext 2010.

PERFECT ROOM: next to Moulesseochampton in shared house with four friendly students. Living room, telephone, washing machine, garden, available now until end of term or until June '99, £42/week. Please contact Jason on 601346, 772548 or e-mail: bduyu@sussex.ac.uk.

ACCOMMODATION WANTED: three/four bedroom furnished house in quiet neighbourhood near university from August to September until December. Please e-mail: gmoore@space.uta.edu.

FOR SALE: Suzuki 400F motorbike, W-reg, 30,000 miles, vgc, excellent runner, crash bars, MOT, £900 o.n.o. Contact ext 8560, 683752, or e-mail: lefc3@sussex.ac.uk.

HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION: stone holiday cottage next to farm-house in Musbury, near Axminster in Devon. Fully modernised, well-equipped kitchen, three large bedrooms, sleeps eight plus baby. Contact Penny Corbett on 01297 552068.

BEAUTIFUL BLACK KITTENS need good homes. Please contact Sherry on 472940 or e-mail: S.Ferdman@sussex.ac.uk.

Bulletin
The Bulletin appears every Friday of term, with copy deadlines 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.