Grange Hill Graduate Gonch Joins Sussex

The tally of Sussex student celebrities has risen with the arrival of John Holmes to study on the Common Professional Examination course in CLS.

John’s alter ego, Gonch, was a Grange Hill stalwart from 1984 to 1989. One of the most cherished in the Grange Hill canon of Tucker-style likely lads, Gonch was a wheeler-dealer scam artist whose madcap schemes were always doomed to failure.

John’s progression through academia may have been looked upon with horror by the entrepreneurial Gonch, though the street nous of his on-screen character could come in handy in the law profession. John is at pains to point out that “Gonch wasn’t very trustworthy - I’m much more trustworthy than him”. Even so, he admits that the man and the scam were hard to prise apart - “Though I never adopted any of the schemes, there was a bit of a chicken and egg situation going on. I did the programme for so long that I wasn’t sure where he finished and I began!”

Unlike Gonch, whose distrust of educational authority was notorious, John has taken well to academia, studying politics and economics at Norwich as an undergraduate before becoming involved in Union politics as a sabbatical officer.

Younger students may sadly have missed John’s time as Gonch, though as he points out, “they may have seen me on the recent repeats.” John played an 11 year old at the age of 14 - which caused some severe continuity blunders when his voice broke mid-term - so he is no stranger to being older than the students he is surrounded by. At 28, though, he stresses that he has “never felt in any way mature.”

From behind-the-bike sheds to a calling to the (East Slope) Bar may seem an obscure transition, but John is coping well - “Gonch would probably be an Only Fools and Horses- style market trader by now, but I get to have two careers. As barristers are self employed, you can choose what to do with your time to a certain extent, so I won’t rule acting out completely as a future career.” We endured Tucker’s Luck - will the next big thing be Return of the Gonch?
GORDON'S A WINNER WITH HIS LITTLE BLACK BOX

The Shell STEP scheme has again proved a route to success for a Sussex student. Gordon Marsh, who’s studying Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence in COGS, took first place in the regional finals of the STEP awards and went on to compete in the National Finals, beating 1,500 other students.

Gordon’s work placement was with the Flight Data Company at Heathrow. All commercial aircraft are fitted with a flight data unit, or ‘black box’, and after an accident, analysts can determine the cause using data encoded in this box. But FDC attempts to prevent accidents from happening in the first place. The company have been able to detect incremental change in a plane’s safety well before the critical point where an accident may be likely to occur.

Gordon’s prize-winning invention involved changing the way the data in the black box is analysed, making the whole process automated and computer-controlled. Because of the software he designed, FDC will save three days of labour every month, as well as saving up to £22,000 a year. Most importantly, though, the software will reduce accidents by cutting out the margin of human error - “in a small way, I’m glad I’ve done my bit to make flights safer,” says Gordon.

Being a third year, employability is at the forefront of Gordon’s mind - “being at COGS really helped me get the placement in the first place because I had the skills they were looking for”. As he points out: “all employers are looking for experience, and now I’ve really had a chance to gain some self confidence and prove that I can succeed in the workplace. The company have even offered me a job for next year.”

DROUGHT AND RESURRECTION

Michelle Norwood, a D.Phil. student in BIOLs, is beginning to unravel the secrets of resurrection - the way in which some plants can dry up during drought but revive from apparent death when the next rain comes. One of these ‘resurrection species’ is Craterostigma plantagineum, a small herbaceous flowering plant, found in South Africa, which can lose up to 90% of its water content, remain in a dried-up state for as much as a year or more, and then return to normal within 24-hours when it rains.

Few plants can survive for long without water, so how do resurrection plants do it? Michelle, who works in the Plant Stress Unit, thinks she has at least part of the answer. As drought takes hold, sucrose (ordinary common household sugar) accumulates in the leaves and this helps the tissues of the plant to withstand the stresses which accompany shrinkage during water loss and expansion later on contact with water. The sucrose comes from the breakdown of a larger molecule sugar, octulose, which is peculiar to these plants.

Drought is usually fatal for crop plants and for many plants which otherwise could be used to combat soil erosion. Michelle’s work could eventually lead to genetic engineering to give these more useful plants the capacity to resurrect. It could also help to make house plants less vulnerable during the holiday season.

Good news for PGCE

Sussex has received good results from the Secondary PGCE OFSTED inspection carried out last year. Out of 24 aspects of the training, the course gained 4 grade ones (very good), 18 grade twos (good) and 2 grade threes (satisfactory). Outstanding features identified by the inspectors were the quality of the university teaching and partnership between the schools and the university. The process was particularly stringent as the course was being inspected against the new standards for teacher training which had only just been introduced.

Gerald Massé

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the death of Gerald Massé on the 3rd October 1998 aged 73 after suffering with cancer for some time.

Gerald was the first Laboratory Superintendent of the School of Mathematical & Physical Sciences, when it was formed in 1962. He came to Sussex from Imperial College where he was a research assistant with interests in Geology and Physics.

Despite a severe leg injury, sustained in the Normandy landings in 1944, Gerald worked hard at setting up the technical and building services for the then new buildings. He was also an active member of the Institute of Science and Technology for 30 years, being its Vice President and chairing the Downland branch for ten years. He continued to be involved with the I.S.T after his retirement in 1985. Because of his dedication and participation in the development of the School’s technical services at the University, Sussex awarded him an Hon. MSc in 1986.
James Cook and Catherine Macmurdohave gravitated towards each other as fellow county-dwellers. They are both from Devon but lived about forty minutes away from each other, so haven’t discovered any mutual friends yet - but they probably will! James, who thinks that everything is “alright, yeah,” is pretty enthusiastic about coming to Sussex - besides saying “it’s alright, yeah,” he points out the benefits of living in East Slope: “at first it was weird living with six strangers, but we’re getting on brilliantly.” He says that nothing bad has happened to him so far “apart from getting a bit lost,” and that the best thing has been “meeting loads of really nice people” - though he definitely misses his Mum’s cooking. James is studying Ecology and Conservation after finishing A-levels in Geography, Biology and Art. He’s hoping to make it into Brighton soon to sample the nightlife - so far he’s been too busy enjoying the pubs on campus!

Catherine is in East Slope too, and she says: “I really like the fact that it is a flat and not a dorm - we’re all different, but we’re getting on really well.” She’s just done A-levels in Geography, Chemistry and Biology and is studying for a Geography BSc. “It was a bit daunting arriving by myself, but I’ve made new friends quickly, which is great. I’ve definitely taken to the social life on campus, and so far I’ve been to everything that’s been on offer! Although moving in and getting things sorted out at first was a bit horrible, I’m having a really good time.” Unlike James, Catherine isn’t missing her Mum’s cooking - she doesn’t miss her parents at all, and says she is “glad to have so much independence.” She came to Sussex because of its location and Brighton’s club scene, but she’s looking forward to getting away already on the “brilliant field trips people who do my course go on.”

Laura Loh has come to Sussex on an exchange from her hometown, Los Angeles, where she went to UCLA. She says “Brighton is a big change from LA - both the University and the town are very different. The weather is a bit dreary, but I’m getting used to it. And I’m closer to the sea here than I was when I lived in Los Angeles. The main difference I’ve noticed so far between the two universities is that Sussex is so much smaller and more cosmopolitan than UCLA. I prefer the size, it’s much more friendly.” After watching a lightning production of Hamlet staged by SUDS in the middle of the societies fair, Laura says she is tempted to join the society: “they made it look like fun.” Her one bad experience so far was trying to open a bank account in town - “I was really offended that they just assumed I was from overseas,” but she says everything else has been good and people have been really friendly to her. An English major back home, she will be studying English here, and chose Sussex “because of its strong English department.”

Darren Norris came to Sussex after studying for the Access course at Chichester, which he says was “a really good course.” He’s finding it all “quite hectic - I’m having trouble trying to work out where to go and when,” but says “so far everyone I’ve talked to seems really nice.” Darren is pleased he’s been able to get a grant this year, but he’s still on a tight budget, so he hasn’t been participating in as many of the revelries as he might have liked. He’ll be commuting from Chichester which means “I’ll have to spend half my life on the train,” but “I’ve only got one 9.00 seminar so it should be OK.” He’s studying history in AFRAS and is really enthusiastic about his course - “Every lecture I’ve had so far has been quite inspiring.” He says - “the whole place seems great - I can’t wait to really start.”

Ali Bird, studying social anthropology, has come to Sussex after 12 years working for an EFL company. She says she’s always had the idea of coming to do a degree "up her sleeve", but was waiting for the time to be right before she did it. She is interested in AFRAS because "I want to explore my colonial roots - I was brought up in Kenya and I want to face the implications of my colonial past." Ali has been "surprised by how many people there are chasing few services - for example, in the queues for registration. But the academic side is well organised and clear and the faculty have been welcoming." She feels "incredibly privileged to have had a chance to come to University, not only because I’ve actually been admitted, but also because I can afford the fees." As a mature student, she says "I don’t feel my experience would be wildly different from a younger student - but then I don’t feel very mature!"
Lectures, Seminars, Colloquia

Monday 19 October 2.00 pm Doctoral students roundtable: What is the disciplinary basis of IR doctoral research? D310.

4.00 pm Mathematical Analysis Seminar: M Kelbert, Swansea, Range of Fluctuations and intersection properties of Brownian motion on Riemannian manifolds. Pevensey, 2A2.

4.00 pm Sociology and Social Psychology Graduate Faculty Seminar: Carole Burgoyne, University of Exeter, Poor peoples experience of poverty. D310.

5.00 pm Women's Studies Research in Progress Seminar: Susie Jolly, Grassroots Feminist and Lesbian Action in Beijing. Arts D610.

Tuesday 20 October 2.15 pm Sussex European Institute Research-in-Progress Seminar: Rilka Dragneva, Sussex European Institute, Corporate Governance through Privatisation: Does Design Matter? (the case of Bulgaria). Rm A71, SEI.

4.00 pm COGS Seminars: Prof. John Bardom, University of Birmingham, Metaphor, Mental States and AI System. COGS, 5C11.

4.15 pm Biochemistry and Genetics and Development Seminar: Dr Alex Bateman (and Ewan Birney), Sanger Centre, The majority of proteins belong to 1000 families. BLT.

4.30 pm Social and Political Thought Seminar: Luke Martell (Sussex) and Stephen Driver (Roehampton), New Labour, New Britain: One nation and national identity. D630.

5.00 pm Social Anthropology Graduate/Faculty Seminars: Will Rea (Goldsmiths College), Strategies of Representation: Ekiti Yoruba Masquerade. D722.

5.15 pm German Research Colloquium: Ulrike Walton-Jordan (London), The impact of German refugee lawyers on the development of British legal policy towards Germany, 1942 to 1949. A155.

Wednesday 21 October 2.00 pm USIE Faculty Seminar: Dr Meg Maguire, King's College, Education Markets in the Post 16 Sector. Arts D710.

Thursday 22 October 4.00 pm CPES School Colloquia: Dr Steve Howdle, Nottingham University, Supercritical fluids: their fantastic properties. Chichester Lecture Theatre.

1.00 pm IDS Environment Group Seminars: Laura Rival, University of Kent,Privatising Aid: Community Based and Participatory Forestry in Esmeraldas, Ecuador. Rm 221.


5.00 pm History Work-in-Progress Seminar: Anastasia Nicole Hackett, Russian Revolutionaries in America, 1915-19. A155.

Friday 23 October 2.00 pm SPRU Seminar: Prof. Don Kast, George Mason University, USA, The Complexity Challenge: Technological Innovation in the 21st Century. EDB Lecture Theatre (Rm 121).


Miscellaneous

Budding journalists required for university publication - possibility of interviewing famous people! Contact Rebekah Reid on extension 8258 or by e-mail R.E.Reid@sussex.ac.uk.

EARN MONEY AND GET FREE DRINKS!! During the Winter and Spring Terms I will be conducting studies on the effects of alcohol and other drugs on mood and liking for alcoholic beverages. As a volunteer, you could earn up to £50 for participating in one of these studies. If you would like further information, please contact Dr Anne Jackson on 01273 877031 or emailjackson@epunix.susx.ac.uk.

A205 Culture and Belief: Have you done this OU course? Do you want to sell your textbooks? If so please contact Carol (x3853) c.t.sterenberg@sussex.ac.uk.

The South Asia Workshop in CDE, AFRAS, is sponsoring a three day documentary film festival entitled Himal-Travelling Film Festival South Asia. The festival is from Friday, October 30 (5-9 pm) to Sunday November 1 (Sat and Sun, 9-6 pm). Arts C133.

The University website has been restructured with a new look, why not check it out? You can find it on www.sussex.ac.uk

CDU Information

Employer Talks and Presentations - if you are interested, please sign up in CDU beforehand.

RAF - Wednesday 21 October 6.00 pm, CDU, 1st Floor, Falmer House. Presentation on their opportunities for any discipline.

Institute of Chartered Accountants - Thursday 22 October 6.00 pm, Refectory, Top Floor. Accountancy careers for students of any discipline.

Marks and Spencer, IT Division - Monday 26 October 5.30 pm, CDU, as above. Opportunities for graduates of any discipline.

Staff Development Opportunities

Funding may be available from Staff Development for faculty to attend the following events. Please contact the Staff Development Officer, ext 7188, for details of these events:

Effective lecturing in large classes - Oxford (Brookes) Centre for Staff Development, at UMIST, Manchester, 28 October.

Developing a teaching and learning strategy - Oxford (Brookes) Centre for Staff Development, UMIST, Manchester, 4 November.

Introducing international education - UKCOSA, London, 5 November.

Small Ads

FOR SALE: Rover 216 'Sprint' F Reg - New MOT Sunroof, radio - good runner - £3750 ono. Phone 01273 701762.

TO RENT: Lewes Rd area £230 pcm, inclusive of all bills except phone. Mature student/PG preferred. Phone Claire, 677473.

TO LET: for 1-3 months from mid-October. One bedroom balcony flat in Brighton seafront square. Stylishly furnished. Weekly rent £180 to include all bills (ex. telephone). Contact Norma Binnie. Tel/Fax 01273 542736.

ACCOMMODATION WANTED: for new faculty member 3-4 bed needed for self, spouse and child. Beg. December. Short - around 7 months - or long term, furnished or unfurnished. Please phone US-1-412 521 1447 or email: halperin@vma.cis.pitt.edu.

FOR SALE: Raleigh racing bike: good working order, new brakes, £50 ono. Tel Julia 01273 636875, or email: juliah@central.sussex.ac.uk.


HOMEOPATH AND MASSEUR AVAILABE: Homeopathic sessions half price at the Student Advice Centre 19 Oct, 9 Nov, 7 Dec. £20/hr. Massage therapy and reflexology, also at the Student Advice Centre 19 Nov and 3 Dec, £12.50/hr. Book a place and pay at USU reception.

TO LET: Modern, furnished, newly decorated, detached family house in Kingston Nr Lewes. Available immediately. 3 bedrooms. Couples or families only. Tel: 692205 or 483993 or ext. 8536.

Bulletin

The Bulletin appears every Friday during term time with copy deadlines the preceding Friday lunchtime. We welcome any suggestions for news, events, letters and small ads from staff and students of the University.

Please contact the Information Office in Sussex House on Ext. 8209 or Email: Bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.