Triumph for graduates from home and away

Against the odds

Two students from war-torn Kosovo joined 600 others at the winter graduation ceremonies in the Gardner Arts Centre.

University Chancellor Lord Attenborough conferred MA in Contemporary European Studies on Filloreta Bytyçi, 37, and Besa Ilaçi, 30, ethnic Albanians from Pristina, who completed their degrees under the most stressful circumstances imaginable.

They first arrived in Brighton in autumn 1998, as Yugoslav forces mounted a systematic campaign of persecution and mass deportation of Kosovo’s ethnic Albanians.

"It was hell for them personally", said Dr Paul Taggart of the Sussex European Institute. "It was almost impossible for them to concentrate on their studies while the situation in Kosovo was so tense."

Although some of Filloreta’s relatives escaped to Macedonia, her parents remained in Pristina throughout the crisis. 'It was a very bad situation’, she said. ‘We didn’t know what was happening to our families. We could phone sometimes, but it wasn’t so often."

Both families survived and Filloreta and Besa returned to Kosovo in September after Serb forces had left the province.

Filloreta is now considering a number of job offers from local non-governmental organisations and international organisations in Pristina. Besa is working for the United Nations Development Project in the province.

A learning organisation

Joanna Cheetham somehow managed to combine being the extraordinarily busy co-ordinator for English (the largest subject group in arts) with a part-time MA in English Literature. Her tutor, Dr Jenny Taylor, described Joanna’s job as ‘one of the most demanding in the University’.

Joanna started the job in 1996 and began her degree the following year, after being inspired by the students and academics she met.

Bookie’s best bet

Bookmaker Andy Briggs was odds-on favourite to complete his doctorate in Mathematics at Sussex.

Andy, 39, who has also been a policeman and an insurance salesman, first came here as a maths undergraduate and stayed on after gaining his BSc. Although obviously an expert in the field of chance and probability, he is now hoping to work in the City in financial mathematics.

Never too old

Age is no barrier to learning, as octogenarian graduate Laurette Elliot has proved.

Laurette, 80, completed an MA in Russian and Eastern European Studies at Sussex and even braved living on campus for 15 months before deciding to commute from her home in Portsmouth.

But she was no stranger to student life: she already had a BA in Russian Studies (which involved spending a year abroad in St Petersburg) and an MA in European Studies from the University of Portsmouth.

And she’s not done with studying yet. Laurette, whose dissertation at Sussex considered the influence of Peter the Great on art and culture, said she is now considering an MPhil: “A research degree wouldn’t involve so much travelling”, she reasoned.

Real-life reward

Bosnian refugee Zafir Behlic, who left Sarajevo in the grip of conflict eight years ago, has gained a distinction for his MA in Migration Studies at Sussex.

He was the first student to enrol on the course in 1997 and combined part-time study with working for Refugee Action in London.

Zafir, 32, said: “Sussex was so supportive. People took me for what I was. All the way through I received nothing but support.”

His tutor, Professor Russell King, said: “The course enabled Zafir to put his own personal and professional life experience into practice. He was a wonderful student.”

Zafir, who also has a degree in journalism from Sarajevo University, now plans to work in international development. He eventually hopes to return to Bosnia.
Physics ahead in the race toward new discoveries

Physicists at Sussex have been given a major boost with several new appointments and thousands of pounds of funding. These achievements have placed us at the forefront of world research into what lies beyond the 'standard model' of particle physics.

The 'standard model' describes all the known elementary particles and their interactions, but physicists believe that it is incomplete, and that we need new discoveries in order to answer fundamental questions about nature. The recent successes at Sussex will place its physicists amongst the leaders in the race towards this goal.

The latest award to the theoretical physicists comes from the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC) in the form of funding in excess of £250,000 for two researchers investigating the behaviour of particles beyond the 'standard model'. One of the researchers, Dr Steven Abel, will move to Sussex from CERN, the European particle research centre near Geneva. The other is yet to be appointed. The award "to encourage truly innovative research, demonstrating originality and creativity", is a PPARC Opportunity Award, and out of 115 applications to PPARC only 11 awards were made.

PPARC Chief Executive Professor Ian Halliday said that "the scientists who have won these research awards are those whose proposals stand out for their originality and highest international scientific quality - we explicitly aim to encourage the British scientists who we hope will be the Nobel prize winners of the future."

The award follows hot on the heels of the recent appointments of Dr David Wark and Dr Mauritz Van der Grinten to the Experimental Particle Physics group, and the Joint Infrastructure Fund (JIF) award of over £1.7 million made jointly to the particle experimentalists and Sussex Centre for Atomic and Optical Physics (SCoAP). The experimenters will work closely with the newly appointed theorists in their efforts to prove beyond the 'standard model'.

Teaching Awards Scheme

The University's Alumni Society makes up to three awards annually with the aim of promoting excellence in teaching and learning at the University. The awards are open to all those teaching or providing academic support for university courses and for MPhil and DPhil supervision. Applicants for an award may be nominated by members of staff and/or students and alumni of the University, or be self-nominated. The 2000 scheme begins this term, with an initial deadline for nomination of Friday 3 March 2000.

Nomination forms and notes for guidance are available from Anne-Marie Mitchinson, Sussex House; email A.F.L Mitchinson@susx.ac.uk or on the web at www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/TLDU/t-awards.html.

Science and Technology Media Fellowships

Opportunities for scientists and engineers to work in the media

During a 4-8 week summer placement working with a newspaper/magazine, radio or television, the media fellowships offer professional scientists and engineers, of any discipline, first hand experience of how the media works. In previous years placements have included The Guardian, Tomorrow's World, BBC Radio Science Unit and New Scientist.

Deadline for applications: 31 March 2000. For further information or an application form contact:
The British Association, 23 Savile Row, London, W1X 2NB Tel. 020 7973 3069, email meenal.gupta@britassoc.org.uk or web www.britassoc.org.uk.

International Christian University, Tokyo

The University has an exchange agreement at undergraduate level with the International Christian University near Tokyo, Japan, and students are invited to apply for entry in September 2000.

Any student interested in spending a year in Japan should contact Liz Akerblom in the International and Study Abroad Office, Arts B164 for further information and application forms. There is also a possibility of a Scholarship from Japan to cover living expenses. Closing date for applications: 15 March 2000.
We're responsible for the administration of all recruitment right across the University. Since January 1999 we've advertised over 250 posts in the press and we've got over 40 on the go at the moment. We recruit everybody from manual staff to professors and we oversee everything from placing the ads to getting all the applications in, processing all the information, and then seeing candidates through to if, and when, we appoint them. We then maintain the staff side of the database.

Another highly important part of our role is to advise managers across the University on personnel issues, and to ensure that approved guidelines are followed. We all have to be abreast of current changes in the law that might affect employment issues, and of course any advice we give has to be in line with University policy. We have over 10 categories of staff here, all with their own set of contractual conditions, so we have to absorb and disseminate some quite intricate details.

Some of this information can have substantial consequences. It's incredible for example how many people try to employ others from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) without the necessary permission; one of our roles is to persuade the Home Office to allow us to employ such people, but we can't do that unless managers let us know of their intentions. On rare occasions we've had to tell people to leave the UK to allow us to apply for the proper legal entry and this obviously has a profound effect on their personal circumstances.

From advertising to appointing, ideally the whole process takes about eight weeks, although some senior teaching posts can go on for months and months.

We use the Internet a lot more now for advertising and we get a massive response from the @jobs.ac.uk website; sometimes one advert for a lectureship can get over 2,000 hits. The most popular academic post we've had since I've been here would be a lectureship in English, which attracted 300 applications. Changes in technology have increased the number of applications and, generally speaking, all the posts are getting more and more popular. We get over 500 telephone calls a week, and about two-thirds of those are external, from people responding to adverts.

Most people applying to work here cite the university atmosphere and the student vibe as the main reasons. People seem to think it will be a nice culture to work in. We get lots of graduates applying for teaching, clerical and manual jobs. We'll get 300 applications through the post a week, maybe 20 by fax and 100 by email. The worst applications are the ones where people have so obviously been forced to apply by the job centre, which is a waste of time. Reasons for applying? 'Because I've been made to.'

When people start work here, they come down to the office to get their staff card so we do get to meet the people that we've been in contact with. Mostly they are grateful for what we've done.

The first point of contact within our office is Claire Green, the division's secretary, who helps us beyond the call of duty and is central to how we function. We're a great team and work extremely well together. We can get quite frazzled, especially if all five telephones are ringing, we've got two or three people waiting to be seen to in person, and we know that we've got contracts to do for people who are starting work the next day. We've worked so closely for so long that we're able to gauge when one of us is getting particularly agitated and we can compensate for each other. We all just get on very well, so that relieves a lot of the tension.

When we're not discussing work issues, the conversation usually turns to cooking, home decorating and other girly things like football (Man Utd or Leicester). We are also the proud founders of the Sussex House staff calendar, featuring stars from Management Accounts, Catering and ACS. If you haven't seen it, come along to room 227 – it's a must!

The interesting part of this job is that no two days are the same. As we get more qualified (Sarah and Maddy are also IPD students), we're getting more involved in more interesting things. Because we've got people who are training towards their IPD, who want to pursue a career in human resources, we're all interested in personnel issues on a wider scale and we can provide a much more professional service. We really couldn't work any harder!
Lectures, Seminars, Colloquia

Monday 14 February 12.30pm Sussex Continuing Education Research Forum Seminar: Liz Somerville and Sally Wilks, D310. 1.00pm Experimental Psychology Seminar: Ashok Janani, Consabulations: Fabrications or just mis-combined elements of veridical events? BLR. 4.00pm Sociology and Social Psychology Seminar: John Holohan, After reflexivity: The displacement of explanation in recent theories of social inquiry. D310. 4.00pm SCOAP Seminar: Mark Plummer (Carnegie, TNA), BTA. PE21A2. 4.30pm Neuroscience Seminar: Pedro Loveren (Manchester, Manchester), Genetic intervention in brain disorders: Moving neurological therapeutics into the molecular area. BLR. 5.00pm Women's Studies Research-in-Progress Seminar: Shirin Rai (Warwick), Gender, development and globalisation: Some reflections. A171.

Tuesday 15 February 12.30pm Inorganic Discussion Group: Alex Hulkes, Some mixed organothanhenium –iridium halogen chemistry. Lawrence Booton, 1-azaazulene and a b-diketimino metal complexes as potential catalysts for polymerisation. CHI 3R143. 2.15pm SEI Research-in-Progress Seminar: George Schofield, SSES, London Post-Communism and the triple transition: Globalisation, Europe and democracy. A71. 4.00pm American Studies Research Seminar: Sue Currell, The problem of leisure in 1930s fiction. A71. 4.15pm Social Anthropology Seminar: Dolores Martinez (SOAS), Shifting culture: Servants, schools and ex-pats in the Khatmandu valley. C233. 4.15pm Biochemistry and Genetics & Development Seminar: Colin Stirling (Manchester), Protein sorting in eukaryotic cells. BLT. 5.00pm Media Studies Graduate Seminar: Frank Webster (Birmingham), Virtual society: The limits to choice. EBD 125. 5.15pm German Research Colloquium: Leonard Olschner (London), Paul Celan and the poetics of homecoming. A155.

Wednesday 16 February 5.00pm English Graduate Colloquium: Margaretta Jolly, Pat Barker and the body. D640. Thursday 17 February 4.00pm Experimental Psychology Colloquium: Alan Baddeley (Bristol), The episodic buffer. BLR. 4.00pm Mathematical Society Lecture: Simon Singh (author of Fermat's Last Theorem and The Code Book), The history of cryptography. PEV 1A6. 5.00pm Science & Society: Malcolm Armstrong (Therapeutic Pyrotechnics), James Bond special effects. CLT. 5.00pm History Work-in-Progress Seminar: Sara Knott (Oxford), Gender, sensibility and revolution in 18th-century America. A155. 5.00pm Queering Development Seminar: Marc Mathuray, On the national question: Imagined masculinities, enforced sexualities and the African romance for India. IDS room 120. 5.00pm Student Action for Refugees Lecture: John Morrison, The cost of survival: Refugees and human trafficking. C133.

Friday 18 February 2.15pm SPRU Seminar Series: Colin Ramsay, High Performance (Low Costs), Process intensification and innovation in the pharmaceutical and chemical industries. C133. 4.30pm Philosophy Society Seminar: David Charles (Oxford), Aristote's craftsmen and Wittgenstein's builders. A155.

Monday 21 February 12.15pm Economics Practitioner's Seminar: Barry Jackson, The municipal Infrastructure Investment Unit, South Africa). Private sector finance for infrastructure development in developing countries. D610. 12.30pm Sussex Continuing Education Research Forum Seminar: Cathie Edwards (Warwick), What we assess is what we value? D310. 2.15pm SPRU Environment Programme Brown Bag Seminar: Jacquieetta Lee (Rolls Royce), Technology strategy and the environment: A Rolls-Royce view. Mantell 2A3. 4.00pm Sociology and Social Psychology Seminar: Rupert Brown (Kent), Conflict, contact and identity as determinants of inter-nation attitudes in Europe. D310. 4.30pm Neuroscience Seminar: Paul Benjamin, A systems approach to learning and memory (or snails are brighter than you think). BLR. 5.00pm Women's Studies Research-in-Progress Seminar: Nadje Al-Ali, The women's movement in contemporary Egypt: Divisions and debates within the movement. Tuesday 22 February 12.30pm Centre for Life History Research Seminar: Celia Hunt, Fictional autobiography as self exploration. LMR.

Thursday 24 February 4.00pm Experimental Psychology Colloquium: John Towse (Royal Holloway), Control freaks, all of us. BLR. 5.00pm History Work-in-Progress Seminar: Anna Gamble (Kent), Regions, nations and the UK: Conceptualising the economies of Union, 1800-1939. A155. 5.00pm Queering Development Seminar: David Forrest, Post-modernity, post-development and the appeal of the queer: A Cuban case study. IDS Room 120. 6.30pm Royal Statistical Society Local Group Seminar joint with the London and South East Operational Research Society: Ian Diamond (Southampton), The development of a one number census for 2001. PEVIA7.

Friday 25 February 2.15pm SPRU Seminar Series: Maurizio Zollo (INSEAD), Management and organisational routines to dynamic capabilities. C133. 4.00pm Astronomy Centre Seminar: Mike Edmunds (Cardiff), The origins of carbon, nitrogen and dust in galaxies. Arnott 207. 4.30pm Philosophy Society Seminar: Beatrice Haan (Essex), Foucault and Heidegger on Kant and finitude. A155. 4.00pm Physical Chemistry Seminar: A. B. Horn (York), Infrared spectroscopy applied to atmospheric catalysis: New challenges for RAIRS, ATR-IR spectroscopy and TPD. CHI3-3R241. 5.00pm Science Lecture: Cyril Isenberg (Kent), What you always wanted to know about but were afraid to ask: Catalysis and the science of soap bubbles. BLT. 8.00pm Concert by Sussex University Chamber Choir and 20th-century Music ensemble: Music by Lassus, Mannenz, Maxwell Davies and Birtwistle. Meeting House. For small ads visit the Bulletin on the web at www.sussex.ac.uk/information_office/bulletin

Bulletin

The next issue of the Bulletin will be out on Friday 25 February with a copy deadline of 1.00pm on Friday 18 February. 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 8888 or email Bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.