On your bike!

Coxswain Natalie Reeves is so proud of the University rowing club that she is swapping blades for brakes as she undertakes the annual London to Brighton bike ride for the first time on Sunday (18 June).

"My pride in the club is the main reason I am donning full team lycra," she says. "I am hoping to raise our profile, as so many people have said, 'Oh, I didn’t realise Sussex had a rowing club!'" Natalie (pictured right) cycles at least twice a week from her student room in East Slope to the club’s boathouse, eight miles away in Shoreham. And after crossing the finish line on Madeira Drive, she will be steaming on to Hove to cheer her team-mates in the Brighton & Hove regatta, which is taking place just off the beach.

Another novice on the 58-mile ride will be Rob French (pictured below), whose duties in Buildings & Services include responsibility for handling transport issues on and near campus. A year ago Rob had an epileptic seizure on campus (after a 10-year period without any fits). "I had to surrender my driving licence, and therefore rewrite large parts of my existence," he says. In other words, he bought a bike.

Rob hadn’t sat on a saddle since his student days in the 1980s. He began riding – irregularly – the three miles from his Brighton home to work. "I’m a fair-weather cyclist," says Rob, who prefers to get wet by training for the ride in the swimming pool.

As for the future, Rob has applied for his licence back, "But I will probably continue to use bus, bike and foot for a lot of my travel because it’s proved so easy – much more so than I thought it would."

Recommendation for grounds maintenance contract

Following a market-testing exercise for maintenance of the campus grounds, the University Estates Committee has recommended that the contract should be awarded to Ecovert South Ltd.

A proposal to undertake market testing was endorsed by the University Council last year. Following lengthy consultation with relevant staff and trade unions, the University sought bids for the provision of grounds maintenance and received five tenders from interested suppliers, including an in-house team.

The bids were considered by an Evaluation and Monitoring Panel, set up by the Estates Committee to monitor independently the bidding process for fairness and objectivity, in accordance with the published award criteria.

Following supplier presentations on 19 May, the Panel’s unanimous decision was to select Ecovert South as the ‘preferred supplier’ without the need to shortlist further. Post-tender negotiations are currently taking place with this company. Continued on page 3.

Fun in Chemistry: oxidation, fire and the discovery of new drugs

Philip Parsons
Professor of Organic Chemistry
Tuesday 20th June 2000
Lecture starts 6.30pm
Chichester Lecture Theatre
University of Sussex
Prehistoric Lecture
Public Lecture - All welcome

If Rob’s experience inspires you to commute to campus by bike, give your wheels a whirl on Tuesday 20 June (national Bike to Work Day) and get down to the Meeting House.

• 9.00–10.00am: Claim a free breakfast as a reward for using pedal power.
• 10.00am–3.00pm: Ask Dr Bike to service your mean machine (free of charge) and carry out any minor repairs (with a possible small charge for any parts used).
• 10.00am–3.00pm: Donate some money to the National Asthma Campaign and have a go on the ‘unridable bike’.

You’ll have to turn up to find out why the bike is unrideable, but Amanda Hastings, Environmental Officer, can give you other information about Bike to Work Day. Tel. 6678904, email A.Hastings@sussex.ac.uk.

And if you get truly bitten by the cycling bug, why not consider joining the local BUG (Bicycle Users’ Group), which includes an active group of University members. For further information, email bug@sussex.ac.uk.
The beginner’s guide to opera

For all those who don’t know their arias from their Il Trovatore, the University has the answer. A part-time programme on opera has been introduced by the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE).

The two-year certificate, which begins this autumn, involves learning about opera and its place in cultural history and examining the stormy relationship between music and words. There will also be study days at Glyndebourne Opera House.

Programme convenor Julian Broughton, who is a composer and a conductor, said: ‘Opera may not be everyone’s cup of tea, but it’s not elitist any more. In Italy it has always been a popular art form. We’re getting a lot of interest from students.’

The programme is one of nearly 30 on offer by CCE this year. They include media studies, landscape studies, management development and creative writing. Another new certificate programme for 2000-2001 is field geology, which will involve studying the evolution of soil types in Sussex.

The part-time programmes range from certificates to degrees and postgraduate diplomas. Most do not require specific qualifications. The closing date for applications for programmes beginning in October is 31 July. For a copy of the prospectus and details of fee waivers for members of staff, contact the CCE office on ext. 8040.

‘Mr Motivator’ gives maths masterclasses

Breakfast TV has fitness guru ‘Mr Motivator’ to help viewers get their bodies in shape. Now the University has come up with a rival, whose recent appearances on the small screen have encouraged school pupils around the world to exercise their brain power.

Dr John Haigh, whose bestselling book on probability (and the perils of gambling) appeared last year, was one of five mathematicians asked to take part in ‘Motivate’, a pilot programme to raise aspirations amongst disadvantaged school students.

The programme is the first to be developed by the Millennium Mathematics Project, a new initiative which aims to persuade teenagers that maths is interesting, accessible and relevant. Motivate received start-up funding from NESTA (the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) and is intended to act as a template for similar projects nationwide.

John’s involvement began with his first masterclass, on 4 May. From a video-conferencing suite in Cambridge, he talked to 50 students in north London and Cape Town (South Africa) about his career in mathematics and what it means to him.

John used games such as ‘Rock, scissors, paper’ to illustrate the basic concepts of probability (the mathematical way of looking at random chance) to the Year 8 pupils, all aged 12 or 13.

To finish this first ‘Launch’ session, John assigned each school group a slightly different, but related, mathematical task to carry out in collaboration with their classmates. Details were available on the web (http://www nrch.maths.org.uk/) and each school was sent a video recording of the session.

By the time of the second video-conference, a ‘Talkback’ on 8 June, each group had prepared material and visual aids for a presentation to John on the class findings and the work that had gone into them.

“Two or three of the presentations showed wonderful imagination and willingness to explore the unknown,” said John, “and most of the reports were also mathematically correct! Some of the schools were very inventive in coming up with games based on chance.”

Video films of the combined Launch and Talkback conferences will be made for use as a teaching resource in schools and courses for teachers. Articles by John and each of the other mathematicians (including John Barrow, who was Professor of Astronomy at Sussex until last summer) are published on the web site, together with reference information, video clips and students’ solutions to their tasks.

By the end of the school year, 150 pupils will have participated in the five pairs of Motivate video-conferences. Altogether 600 are involved in the London group of schools and the web material enables anyone, anywhere, to try the tasks. It could be you ...

• John’s book on the pitfalls of probability has just appeared in paperback. Taking Chances is published by OUP at £8.99, and is available from the University bookshop.

Poems of madness

Although you may not have heard of Ivor Gurney, his contemporaries regarded him as one of the most promising poets and composers of his generation.

Unfortunately, Gurney suffered increasingly from depression, and in 1922 he was certified insane and committed to the City of London Mental Hospital. He remained there until his death 15 years later, forgotten by all but a handful of loyal friends and supporters.

Despite the severity of his mental illness, Gurney did not stop writing. Rewards of Wonder: Poems of Cotswold, France, London, written between 1921 and 1924, was the first of many volumes of poetry that he completed in hospital.

Taking moments of powerful epiphany as their central theme, the poems range across the landscapes of Gurney’s home county, Renaissance and contemporary London and, for the first time since the Armistice, his wartime experiences on the Western Front.

Now George Walter, Lecturer in English, has brought out a critical edition of the collection. "What makes Rewards of Wonder so interesting and unique," he says, "is that it’s the only coherent, unified volume of poems by Gurney to have been begun before his final breakdown and finished when he was acutely schizophrenic three years later."

"Given this, you’d expect there to be a clear distinction between the ‘same’ and ‘mad’ parts of the book, but there isn’t – Gurney seems to be in total control of his poetry, even when he’s really ill. This raises really important questions about his development as a writer and, more importantly, the relationship between schizophrenia, creativity and language."

• Rewards of Wonder: Poems of Cotswold, France, London is published by Carcanet and is available from the University bookshop at £9.95.
Mike sets up new centre

When geochemist Dr Mike Ramsey (CPES) came to Sussex in October 1999, he set about contacting colleagues on campus who share his interest in environmental research science. To his surprise, he found that many researchers were unaware of each others' work and were often operating largely in relative isolation.

Mike’s response was to set up a new Centre for Environmental Research (CER), to facilitate interdisciplinary environmental research across campus. “There is an increasing awareness that most environmental problems need an interdisciplinary approach,” said Mike, “and cross-School collaborations within CER should be an ideal way to facilitate this.”

CER research seminars have been running since autumn 1999 and 35 members of faculty (in BIOLS, CDE, CPES, IDS, SLS and SPRU) have so far expressed interest in joining the centre, which was officially launched on Wednesday (14 June).

Mike wants to make the environmental expertise at Sussex known and accessible to the outside world. “Personal representation at international conferences is a first step,” he said. An embryonic web site (www.cpes.sussex.ac.uk/cer/) also helps to increase CER’s profile and shows users the range of its members’ expertise.

The new centre aims to foster research collaboration by CER members with external organisations, such as government departments or industry. According to Mike, “The objective will be for members to broaden and strengthen existing collaborations, by bringing together new interdisciplinary partnerships that would not have happened without the catalyst of CER.”

“In the area of contaminated land for example, where some of my research has been focused, there is the potential for research proposals that draw upon not just sound environmental science (e.g. CPES), but also an appreciation of governmental policy (e.g. SPRU) and the legislative regime (e.g. SLS).”

Finally, the Centre for Environmental Research aims to provide high-quality postgraduate training. Its excellence as a venue has already been recognised by the EU, which has approved a Marie Curie Training Site at the centre. CER will probably apply to become an EC Research Training Network, and another possibility is the development of a new interdisciplinary MSc programme, bringing together the breadth and experience of CER members.

* If you are interested in attending CER seminars or joining the centre, contact Mike on m.h.ramsey@sussex.ac.uk.

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Recommendation for grounds maintenance contract

*Continued from front page.*

Many factors, not simply price, were taken into account by the Panel when evaluating the different bids. Key considerations included future employment prospects for grounds staff; pensions, training and staff development; and staff-induction procedures, equal-opportunities and employee-relations records of the bidders, as well as their commitment to quality assurance and the environment.

However, Ecowert South did make the most cost-effective offer, which will produce savings compared to existing costs – savings that will be used to fund teaching and research activities. The Estates Committee met on Wednesday (14 June) and agreed to recommend to Council the award of the contract for grounds maintenance to Ecowert. If the recommendation is accepted there will be a transitional period until the contract comes into full operation in November. The contract is for a period of five years (with an option for two additional years).

Ecowert South would take over the contracts of employment of all staff in grounds maintenance, in accordance with TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment) regulations. Ecowert South has stressed its commitment to both the ‘letter and spirit’ of TUPE, pointing out its strong track record in this important area.

The University has made assurances of full consultation with staff and unions during the transitional period. "I appreciate that the last few months may have been an unsettling time for grounds-maintenance staff," said the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, in a statement. "The University has always striven to keep staff and unions fully informed of developments, and we will continue to do so."

"Staff interests have been a major factor throughout the bidding process and in the Panel’s recommendation," he said. "The Panel members have sought and gained assurances that all staff transferred will be given every opportunity for staff development and career opportunities in this large, specialist organisation – arguably greater opportunities than those available in the limited confines of the University."

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GAC showcases the EAZ

A celebration of the first year’s work of East Brighton Education Action Zone (EAZ) takes place at the Gardner Arts Centre all next week (19 to 23 June), with Showcase 2000. Some 150 children from the ten schools in the zone will take part in activities that include poetry, dance, drama and music on the theme of ‘natural and built environments’.

An exhibition of their artwork will be on display at the Arts Centre’s gallery, while storytelling will take place in a Mongolian yurt (a circular tent) on the lawns nearby.

Under the supervision of teachers, organisers and volunteers, the children will also be taking part in sensory trails (while blindfolded) and will be studying areas of local woodland. The week will culminate with a fashion show.

The University is among local organisations and businesses that support the East Brighton EAZ, which is part of a government initiative to raise education standards in identified areas.

There are five primary schools, one infant school, one junior school, two secondary schools and a special school in the local Action Zone, which takes in Beverdean, Coldean, Moulscombe and Whitehawk. Its directors chose the Sussex campus as the venue for Showcase 2000 to encourage children to regard universities as accessible places.

Professor Joan Bliss, director of the Institute of Education, said: “We are delighted to be hosting this event. It is an ideal opportunity for children to see our university as a welcoming, friendly environment and the events should be a lot of fun for everyone involved.”
University’s health check – the results

Last year, the University, in a joint undertaking with campus trade unions, commissioned the Industrial Society to carry out an independent survey of its employees’ attitudes on a wide range of workplace issues. The survey, described as an ‘organisational health check’ by the Society, achieved a 52% response and can be seen as a representative snapshot of employee opinion.

In general, the results showed that staff at Sussex have a more positive attitude about working relationships with their colleagues and immediate managers and also have a greater awareness of the University’s aims than workers in other organisations. On the down side, responses were negative about opportunities at Sussex for growth and career development, rewards for performance and the availability of resources. Of the staff who responded 40% believed they were placed under unreasonable work pressure. There was also criticism of the University’s senior officers. Staff felt that communications between University senior officers and staff were inadequate and that their views were not sufficiently valued.

The Vice-Chancellor and his team have addressed the survey findings at a number of levels. There was clearly a need to improve communications from the centre and, as well as his Bulletin articles and broader consultation with Deans and campus unions, the Vice-Chancellor has now initiated regular termly meetings for staff groups to discuss their concerns informally with him. Access to information should also be improved by greater use of the University’s web site for this purpose and new or changed policies and procedures will be notified to staff by direct mailing.

The negative results on career and growth issues were a matter of serious concern. Two new Staff Development Officers were appointed earlier this year and their annual planning and strategy is being developed through wide consultation with schools and other units. In addition, there will be a greater emphasis on the effective implementation of appraisal, with clearer information and training being provided to staff on the processes. Induction courses are also to be reviewed and their content revised.

As regards staff views on pressure of work, a new Stress Management policy is currently awaiting final approval by Council and will then be sent out to all staff. This policy will be complemented by the provision of a full Occupational Health Service (Brighton Health Trust) with a regular presence on campus from August 2000. It is also likely that a follow-up survey will be carried out in due course to assess the impact of these and subsequent changes on staff opinion.

If you need more information or wish to discuss any of these issues further, whether as an individual or as a group, please contact the Staff Welfare Officer, Richard Price (Arts B20, ext. 7712, email sefa@ sussex.ac.uk).

Reserve your books from the comfort of your armchair

Forgotten what books you have out on loan? Want to find out about a book in the Library but stuck at home? Well, help is now at hand – the Library is introducing a new web-based catalogue system that will allow you to find this information for yourself from the comfort of your own armchair.

The new system, which will be functional from early August, will be accessible from any computer via the Sussex website (www.sussex.ac.uk).

The system has a much more user-friendly interface than the existing one and offers a range of facilities for anyone wishing to use the Library’s resources. Members of the University will be able to access information on their loans by entering their Library card number. Once in to this section, users will be able to check their own loans, place and check reservations, renew books and check outstanding fines and charges. As Maggie Fieldhouse, Sub Librarian (Systems) and manager of the one-year implementation project, says: “There will be no more excuses for forgetting you had a fine!”

The new catalogue system also has a more sophisticated search facility so users can now search by author and keyword, and author and title. The keyword facility has also improved; the system will search for a specific word anywhere in the catalogue record, i.e. including subject information and subtitles.

Reading lists will also be available on the system. It is envisaged that, in the future, there will be links from the reading lists to external resources – for example, when a tutor recommends that students read a particular paper that is available on the web. It is also hoped that direct links will be available from the catalogue pages to online papers and journals.

It is planned that a catalogue terminal will be based in the Library from early July to allow users to have a look at the new system. The catalogue system is self-explanatory, but help will be available on the Library website and from Library staff.

Don’t look down!

It was a long way down for Nicola Harold (pictured above), a first year in EIT, when she dropped over the edge of the Grand Hotel in aid of charity. Nicola was one of 15 members of the University Mountaineering Club who last month abseiled down the 100ft Brighton building and raised over £450 for Save the Children.
One-way system on campus

The system of one-way traffic flow on Boiler House Hill and Eastern Ring Road was introduced in November 1998 to reduce long delays experienced by drivers leaving campus each evening. Experience over the last 18 months has shown that this aim can be achieved by one-way operation on Eastern Ring Road alone. Boiler House Hill can, therefore, be returned to two-way traffic flow.

There are two main reasons for considering this change:

- Safety of cyclists. While cyclists are discouraged from travelling down Boiler House Hill, the alternatives are much longer and are unpopular with cyclists.
- Safety of pedestrians. Surveys show that one-way traffic systems tend to increase the speed of vehicles. This has certainly been the experience of pedestrians at Boiler House Hill, at both the foot of the slope and the zebra crossing at the top. Two-way operation should improve this situation again.

The trial change will be implemented over the weekend 17–18 June, to coincide with the start of the conference season and the departure of many students for the summer. The trial will be for 12 months (assessed after six), but will be abandoned in a shorter timescale if it is conspicuously unsuccessful.

The map outlines the main features of the trial system, which will still allow busses priority use of the left-hand lane on Eastern Ring Road to speed their journey off site.

The change will be well marked, with arrows on the road surface, new signs and bollards at critical points to isolate traffic on opposite sides of the road. Traffic marshalls will be present on Monday, 19 June.

Note: The one-way system will remain on Eastern Ring Road. All traffic entering the campus at Knight’s Gate Road (Falmer Village entrance) must continue to turn left down Southern Ring Road.

Over the coming months, further works will be carried out to make permanent the features of the one-way system now that it is no longer a trial, e.g. at the junction of Knight’s Gate Road and Eastern Ring Road.

On an associated issue, the University has been working closely with the Highways Agency and East Sussex County Council over recent months, exploring the possibilities of signal control at the roundabouts on either side of the A27. Survey work and computer modelling have both been carried out. The next step is likely to be a trial of temporary peak-time traffic lights to reduce queuing in both the morning (A27 slip road) and evening (Knight’s Gate Road).

If you have any queries or further suggestions, please contact Rob French on ext. 8306, email R.W.French@sussex.ac.uk.

News in brief

A study by Professor Jennifer Temkin (SLS), published this month by the Journal of Law and Society, examines the attitudes of barristers to women who report rapes. Jennifer interviewed a small sample of 10 barristers (all with extensive experience of prosecuting or defending rape cases) and they told her that the accuser’s behaviour, lifestyle and dress can mitigate against them in court. She argues that barristers should be trained specifically to challenge their “misogynistic attitudes and stereotypical assumptions”.

Second-year students have returned from the annual Arts/Science trip to Dieppe, where they practised the skills acquired over a year of language study. The greatest challenge came in attempting to buy chocolate, as organiser Jenny Hill explained: “They did not want alcohol or nuts in the chocolate and, as the shopkeeper did not speak English, a fairly complicated conversation ensued, but the students emerged triumphant.”

Ros Barber, who lectures in creative writing for CCE, has won second place in a national fiction competition for women that attracted more than 900 entries. Her prize in the contest, which was run by the Asham Literary Trust, was a cheque for £500 and the appearance of her story ‘Reshape Whitsl Darn’ in an anthology from London publisher, Serpent’s Tail.

Will Eagle, a second-year philosophy student in COGS, has been awarded a scholarship to attend a six-week summer session at Cornell University, in Ithaca, New York. The Scholarship has been funded by the Cornell Club of London, which comprises alumni of Cornell who live in the UK. Each year it awards one scholarship to a UK undergraduate student to attend the summer session, which starts on 26 June. Sussex regularly receives visiting students from Cornell University.

A report published by SPRU argues that the government needs to put billions of pounds into research and development if the UK is to match competing nations. The report says: “The current relatively low level of UK investment in publicly funded research hampers the ability of the UK to participate in the global knowledge-driven economy.”

SLS students were in the dock for a recent mock trial (meeting competition) at Lewes Crown Court. Winners Karen Moss and Louise Roxe were the most successful in arguing their case before circuit judge Michael Kennedy QC.

Martin Butler, Reader in Music in CCS and a renowned composer, will be honoured with a mini-festival on 26 June in celebration of his 40th birthday. The New Ensemble performed several of his works in an anniversary concert at the Royal Northern College of Music and the festival also included workshops and talks on Martin’s compositions.

Geographer Professor Russell King (EURO) has been appointed editor of the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.

Geography undergraduate Giles Haywood was picked for British Universities cricket squad, which played against New Zealand at Oxford on 11 June and will play Zimbabwe at Cambridge on 21-23 June.

Teaching Opportunities in China:

Two EFL teachers to teach IELTS; help with UCAS preparation and completion, and organisation of seminars on Western culture. Requirements – graduates with a degree in English language with TEFL certificate; experience important but not essential.

One physics teacher to teach university foundation physics and help promote English speaking on campus. Requirements – graduate with a degree in physics and good knowledge of A level physics, especially in electronics and circuits.

Both posts are initially a one-year contract from October 2000, which can be renewed. They offer a competitive salary, free food, free accommodation and return international flight tickets.

For more information please contact: Dr K. O. Li (Sussex COGS graduate), Director of Studies, AIA, 988 Xin Da Lu, Beilin, Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, 315800, PR China. Tel./Fax 086 574 687 8481, email AIA@mail.nbpttt.zj.cn.
All in a day's work

"Good morning, University of Sussex ..." Pam Lamminman says that nearly 450 times a day in her job on the University's switchboard. But Pam doesn't mind, it's her calling, and here she tells us what it's like to be the voice of the University ...

I've always been a telephonist, I started here in March 1989 and I was trained initially in London. The training takes six weeks and it covers everything from engaged signals to no reply, how to talk to customers, how to handle the call, etc. We're all trained in the office: there's myself, Brenda Hawkins and Paul Hobbs.

Paul joined in January. It's very unusual to have a man working for us. It took everyone by surprise to start off with, because they were so used to just hearing female voices. He's got a very distinctive voice, a very deep voice, so we got quite a few comments - none of them adverse, I have to say; they are all well impressed by him. He gets quite embarrassed about it.

The way we work has changed a lot over the years. When I first came there were just three ordinary consoles, as opposed to the screen consoles that we have now, and we had a separate VDU for the directory. Now it is all combined in the one, so you've got the directory and you've got everything else there on the screen in front of you, which makes it much quicker. So it's just like working on a computer.

My day starts with the paperwork. From 9.00 to 10.00am I do any administration that needs sorting out. This may mean sending out the monthly bills, which we get from the central computer system, or it may be updating the Oracle database, which holds all the staff contact details. At the start of every term the Schools should send us details of who has left or started, changed rooms, changed extension numbers, etc. This information is very important as we use it to update the Oracle and we rely on it ourselves. It's very frustrating when you put a call through to someone and the person on the end of the line has never heard of them, because you have the wrong number for them.

Then for the rest of the day it's answering calls and trouble shooting. I used to just answer calls all the time, but now it's much more interesting. As well as doing the paperwork, I can set people up on Amanda, which is the voicemail system. And I can arrange for them to have a DDI (Direct Dial In) line as well.

We're also getting involved more and more in the techie side of things. So we're actually going out and fault-finding. If there's a problem with a phone line we can check the mainframe here in the office. If the problem isn't at the switch, Paul or I can come up to your office and see if we can track down the problem at that end. I find that really interesting; instead of being just telephonists per se we are now getting involved in the other side of it as well. You're learning new things all the time and each day is varied because you are doing different things.

We call the bit from Sussex House through to the estates buildings [Hastings building] Cardiac Hill! And we all try to avoid having to go up there. If a fault comes in that's up Cardiac Hill I always say to Paul, "Oh, you can do that one!" I did a fault in Lancaster House last week and when I came back I was absolutely glowing because I'd had to walk. Because of course I'm used to sitting all day and I said: "I need oxygen, give me oxygen!"

We also do directory enquiries now. We took about 1,400 calls in the first month. If you call 192 internally, the call comes through to us. We have the software on our computers and it's very easy for us to find out the information. When the switchboard isn't open, or if we are very busy, the calls go straight through to directory enquiries. I don't mind doing it, believe it or not, because it's something else that adds interest to your work.

I retain a lot of information. If someone asks for the hospital or the police I can give them the number straight away. And Brenda and I know half the extension numbers in the University anyway, without looking in the directory. But funny enough, if somebody said, "Who is on extension 8209?", I can't do it. I can't switch it round. It's really weird.

The part of my job that really frustrates me more than anything else is if people don't let us know that a whole office is going off for a meeting. If you put a call through to the office and it comes back, you try the next extension and it comes back, then you have to tell the poor person who has been hanging on to call back, and then you have to go through the whole process again.

There are never any periods throughout the year that are quiet. When the students break up for the summer, then the conferences and things like that start, so we never really ever go quiet. We get really busy around Clearing; that time is manic. And straight after that, students are trying to get their accommodation and sort out their finances, so it can get busy then as well. The first month of the autumn term is busy too.

I like the fact that I am representing the University and am the first point of call, I think that is always very important. It's never boring because we are doing so many different things all the time, and learning. To go from being just a manual operator to learning to do things on the computer as well, that's very interesting and I would like to know more.

I never go home and answer my own phone by saying, "Good afternoon, University of Sussex". People always ask that, but I never do. I just switch off from work as soon as I leave.
Pollution from traffic threatens crops

Ozone from traffic pollution may be costing British farmers much more than they realise according to the results of a field study conducted by researchers at the University of Newcastle. Even without visible damage, yields of oilseed rape and winter wheat fell by more than 10% when the experimental plots were exposed to levels of ozone now typical of more than 90% of UK arable land. This could be costing farmers hundreds of millions of pounds.

None of this is surprising to Karen Welfare and Tony Yeo of the Plant Stress Unit in BIOLS, although, as they say, it focuses attention much nearer to home. It shows that the vehicle-related ozone problem is world-wide and not just confined to countries like India and Pakistan, with vast urban areas and hot sunny climates.

As in Britain, ozone pollution is worse in rural areas than in cities because the pollution (mainly from vast numbers of vehicles clogging cities such as Delhi and Lahore) drifts away across the countryside where ultraviolet radiation from strong sunlight aids its conversion to ozone.

The Plant Stress Unit at Sussex has collaborated for over seven years in joint studies with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Karen has shown that ozone in the concentrations found in the Indian countryside can have serious effects on major crops (Bulletin 15th January 1999). Photosynthesis in a range of rice varieties is reduced by an average of 32%, in otherwise good conditions, and as much as 60% when the rice is grown in saline conditions (a common problem). This shows that the effects of different stresses can be additive. Ozone can have an even greater effect on chickpeas, a vital component of the predominantly vegetarian diet.

The Newcastle study, says Tony, suggests that even with our ‘relatively clean’ cars, traffic pollution may be a serious threat to crop production in the UK, particularly in years with hot, dry summers. The south east may be particularly vulnerable. Sussex has some of the warmest and driest weather in the UK and regularly records high levels of ozone in the depths of its countryside.

Letters

Dear readers

The University bookshop is owned by the University of Sussex and has been providing a service to staff and students for over 35 years. We are operating in fast changing and challenging times within the book industry. Although we are currently taking steps to defend our position against the onslaught of online sellers etc we more than ever need your support if we are to survive and improve the service that we provide to the local community.

You may recently have been approached for reading list information, from outside, by some of the Internet ‘booksellers’ that are currently trying to get into the textbook market. I do not believe that it is in the University’s interest to provide information of this nature to outside commercial bodies.

Most online sellers do not intend to provide a full service but aim at creaming off the major textbook sales on which our livelihood depends, often with the promise of a discount on selected titles. Some are asking for a one off annual fee, payable in advance for this ‘service’.

Our bookshop has an ordering service - if you order a book (from over 250,000 titles in stock) before 5.00pm, it will be in by 11.00am the next day.

For textbooks not covered by this service, we operate a 48 hour hotline service on most recommended texts (during the autumn and spring terms).

The bookshop has a website (www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/business/bookshop) which we are planning to improve and expand this summer.

I hope that both staff and students will continue to support their local bookshop to the benefit of the university and all our customers.

From Kristian Berggreen, Bookshop Manager

European Research Funding Opportunities

More details of these and other opportunities are available from the European Liaison Officer, contact Ross Dousett on ext. 8238 or email R.L.Dousett@sussex.ac.uk. For an extensive listing of funding opportunities see REFUND on the Research Web site at http://www.susx.ac.uk/Units/research/

EU call – Growth programme (Industrial Technologies):

The deadline for submission of proposals is 29 September 2000.

Research priorities are:

• Innovative products, processes and organisation (£43m)
• Sustainable mobility and intermodality (£62m)
• Land transport and marine technologies (£1.2m)
• New perspectives in aeronautics (£1.2m)
• Materials and their technologies for production and transformation (£49m)
• Measurements and testing (£61m)
• Targeted Research Action (TRA) on ‘Products: Evolutionary value-added and resource saving products-services’: simulation, design aspects and manufacturing of future products-services, such as integration of new miniaturised systems, micro components and embedded intelligence. There will be synergy between this call and the call to be announced in June 2000 for the Information Societies Programme on Microsystems (£12m).

This call will fund RTD proposals and thematic networks. A minimum of two EU/Associated state partners (average is seven) is needed. For the Work Programme, the Guide for Proposers etc. see http://www.cordis.lu/growth/calls/200002 Pre-Proposal checks are available up to 1 September.

Project co-ordinators can submit an outline of their project, the indicative budget and partner list. The EC will provide feedback which should assist proposers in improving their proposals prior to submission.

For the pre-proposal form see http://www.cordis.lu/growth/src/ppc

Marie Curie postdoc fellowships:

Do you have contacts with other research groups around Europe who have young (under 35) postdoc researchers interested in working with you or in your field? If so, why not consider a Marie Curie fellowship? The funding enables young researchers from the EU/Associated States to undertake a research project in a research group in another EU/Associated State other than their own. The young researcher makes the application direct to the EC with the help of the Host Institute. This is open to all science and applied social science disciplines. For more information see http://www.cordis.lu/improving/

The next deadline for submitting applications: 13 September 2000.

1.00pm Experimental Psychology Lunchtime Seminar: Zoltan Dienes, Traditional Chinese medicine and the martial arts: An experimental test. BLR.

4.00pm Sociology and Social Psychology Graduate/Faculty Seminar: Nathalie van Meurs, Preferred Dutch and British conflict management strategies: Values, communication style and approach to hierarchy. D310.

4.30pm Neuroscience Seminar: Martin Todman, Rectifying electrical synapses? A Drosophila model. BLR.

Tuesday 20 June 12.30 Centre for Life History Research Seminar: Margaret Homburg (Queen Mary and Westfield), Bedlam and the Bastille: Stories from 19th century lunatic asylums and prisons. Library Meeting Room.

4.15pm Biochemistry and Genetics & Development Seminar: Andrew Smith, Structural determinants of lignin peroxidase activity. BLR.

Wednesday 21 June 2.00pm Queery Seminar: Meredith Miller, Rosie and the lesbians: Work, identity, and the late capitalist novel. A71.

5.00pm Statistics Seminar: Alexia Zaganides, Evolving the probability of survival after acute myocardial infarction. PE2A2.

Friday 23 June 1.00pm Challenging Dominant Models of Sexuality in Development Seminar: Bridget Byrne, Troubling race: Using Judith Butler’s work to think about racialised bodies and selves. IDS room 221.

4.30pm Philosophy Society Lecture: Ron Chrisley, title TBA. A155.

Monday 26 June 12.30 Sussex Continuing Education Research Forum: Juliet Merrifield (Learning from Experience Trust), Mapping APEL in higher education. D310.

4.00pm Sociology and Social Psychology Graduate/Faculty Seminar: Bev Barstow, The British Sociological Association’s Women’s Caucus. D310.

Tuesday 27 June 2.15pm SEI Plenum: An open forum for all SEI students and staff. A71.

4.15pm Biochemistry and Genetics & Development Seminar: Karl-Heinz Herzog (Tumor Biology Center, Freiburg), Functional analysis of checkpoint control genes in the nervous system. BLR.

Thursday 29 June 4.30pm Politics & International Relations/Social and Political Thought Graduate Programme Seminar: Cate Eschle, Engendering global democracy. D630.

Friday 30 June 1.00pm Challenging Dominant Models of Sexuality in Development Seminar: Screening of Fire by Deepa Mehta. Followed by discussion chaired by Sangeeta Budhiraja. IDS room 221.

Small ads

TO LET: Costa del Sol, 3-bed detached villa on hills side overlooking sea between Malaga and Nerja. Rates for villa from £150 p/w. Tel. 472831.

WANTED: Flat for University couple up to £650pcm. Starting from August, preferably in Brighton or Hove. Please contact Thomas on ext. 8122 or by email T.Caspari@sussex.ac.uk.

FOR SALE: Apple Multiscan 15” colour monitor – £100. Pace 56 voice mac modem – £90. Mac OS 8.5 including 8.6 update – £30. Various types of memory for the PowerMac *200 range. Email pfritz@hotmail.com.

ACCOMMODATION: Large room available from the end of June for mature, considerate, non-smoking person in beautiful Kemp Town flat. Share with male owner. £70pw (excluding phone). Tel. 692920. Email d.p.forges@sussex.ac.uk.

WANTED: Flat for quiet, mature postgraduate couple, from Canada, one year from Sept/Oct. 2000. Prefer Brighton/Hove, house-sit or rent up to £400 pcm. Refs available. Please contact beth.ward@utoronto.ca.

FOR SALE: VW camper 1979, interior and mechanically in excellent condition, pop top, cooker, sink etc., 11 months MOT and tax, reluctant sale – £2700. Ono. Tel. 671149.

FOR SALE: Nissan 100NX Targa, bright red, sunroof, J reg, automatic, power steering, central locking, electric windows etc. Two doors, rather low-slung and sporty, two previous owners, 81,000 miles. £3,200 ono. Contact Mike Boice on ext. 2534 or email m.boice@sussex.ac.uk.

Open Day on 27 June 2000 for prospective undergraduates

The event includes a full programme of tours and talks throughout the day. There will be a lot of extra people around campus on this day. Please be patient and if you see anyone who looks lost help them with directions.

For further information please contact Jon Cohen on ext. 8417.

TO RENT: Maisonneuve – top two floors of Victorian house in Lewes. Fully furnished. Three bedrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom/WC and shower room/WC, GCH. Available mid July. Rent £950 pcm. Tel. 472542 or email ray@rthomas14.freeerve.co.uk.

FOR SALE: Umax Astra scanner 610p. 600 x 600 dpi optical resolution. Good condition – £20. Phone ext. 7435 or 720810 on or email H.J.S.Stewart@susx.ac.uk.

WANTED: Professional family seek to rent pretty country cottage with garden near Brighton during August. Please telephone (027) 620 2636.


WANTED: House or flat wanted for lecturer for the period of 29 July to 6 September. Contact Maurits van der Grinten at m.van-der-grinten@sussex.ac.uk or tel. Laura Rheeber on 4714/9.

FOR SALE: Child’s bike seat. Hamax, 1–5 years, detachable seat. VGC – £20 pounds ono. Email Richard on R.Wilson@sussex.ac.uk.


FOR SALE: Black round dining table (90cm diameter) plus four chairs – £25. Good condition. Contact Cat, ext. 8676 or email cats@admin.sussex.ac.uk.

Campus activities

Computer training

Word processing – A step further, Tuesday 20 June 6.00–8.30pm.

Introduction to spreadsheets, Thursday 22 June 6.00–8.30pm.

To book (£3 each) please contact Computer Service Reception, Chichester 1.

Concert

Sussex University Philharmonia on Thursday 22 June at 7.30pm in the Meeting House. Ian Macrae (conductor), Hannah Baxter (guitar), Copland Rodeo Suite, DVorák Symphony No. 8, Rodrigo Concierto de Aranjuez.

Summer 2000 reunion

Saturday 29 July at 7.15pm in the Hilton Brighton Metropole Hotel for all 1998–1999 graduates and their friends. Please contact Clare Stephenson in the Alumni Centre on ext. 8258.

University Rescue Team

We need suitable recruits (male and female) to join us. We act as a first-line rescue service for any emergency on campus. The team is trained by the East Sussex Fire Brigade and is provided with high-quality equipment. Members receive full training and also get to meet a great bunch of people. If you can commit to two–three hours per month and would like to volunteer, contact the following people for more information and an opportunity to meet the team:

• John Welling (Safety Officer) ext. 2799

• Roger Bates (Rescue Team Leader) ext. 3785

• Steve Gurr (Deputy Team Leader) ext. 3111.

Bulletin

The next issue of the Bulletin will be out on Friday 30 June with a copy deadline of 1.00pm on Friday 23 June. This will be the last Bulletin of the summer term.

We welcome any suggestions for news, events, letters and small ads from staff and students of the University. Please contact the Press and Communications Office in Sussex House on ext. 8888 or email Bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.