Stricken sycamore reveals its secret

The sycamore tree next to the Meeting House that came down in the latest round of storms was hiding a rare species of lichen in its canopy, an ecologist in BIOLS has discovered.

It was only when the tree's canopy came crashing to the ground during high winds that the rare lichen became visible.

In England, the lichen known as Physcia leptalea is usually restricted to the south-west. "Before this, it's only been seen in Sussex three times," said David Streeter.

Lichens are fungi that live in a symbiotic association with an alga, often on trees. The branches of the stricken tree - which David will now use for teaching - provided the habitat for at least a further seven species of lichen in addition to the Physcia.

The tree's demise will also enable David to estimate its age, by counting the number of rings on a section from the base of the trunk. The parts that he was not able to make use of have been removed and shredded by staff from Ecouvert, the company that is now responsible for grounds maintenance on campus.

Certain information about the sycamore had recently been recorded as part of an evaluation of the condition of all 1,500 mature trees on the University campus, which involved tagging each one with a numbered metal disc.

Arboriculturists from a firm based in Southerham, near Lewes, estimated the height of tree number 332 at 17m. They recorded that its trunk was in a poor condition, with a heavy lean to the east, and recommended that the plant be reduced and reshaped.

The Estates and Facilities Management Division had commissioned the survey to assess the health and safety of the trees in and around campus. The arboriculturists made numerous site visits between May and August this year and identified 72 species, of which sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) was the most common.

The catalogue that has been compiled can also be used for educational and research purposes and to provide a framework for future management goals.

"The topographical layout and location of the campus and the varying soil types across it make it an ideal site for tree growth," the draft report concludes. "Relatively the number of trees in poor condition throughout the campus is very low. Specimen 332 was one of those few - and now only its stump remains."

Sporting stars support new programme

An initiative to increase sporting performance and excellence at Sussex had its official launch on Saturday (11 November).

Olympic gold medallist Tessa Sanderson and Romek Krwald, director of the Brighton Bears basketball club, attended a gala event at the Brighton Centre to celebrate the start of the Focus Sport Programme, which is a joint initiative between the University, the Brighton Bears, Sussex Magic (a women's national-league basketball club) and Lewes Hockey Club.

The programme is designed to raise sporting standards at the University through quality coaching and support services, such as fitness tests and specific training programmes. Four focus squads in basketball and hockey have been selected. The men's basketball teams are being coached by Bears player Dave Wahl and the hockey squads are fortunate to have secured the services of ex-South African goalkeeper Chris Hillbert.

"The University is well placed to support both hockey and basketball development," says Karen Dunster, Head of Sport (pictured with Tessa Sanderson). "In addition to receiving Sport England lottery funding for a new all-weather hockey pitch, we are one of the few centres in the region able to boast two sports halls."

The long-term aim of the programme, in addition to improving sporting performance, will be to provide scholarships to help attract students who wish to have support to play sport at a high level alongside their academic studies.

The launch on Saturday followed a televised viewing of the Bears game against the unbeaten British Basketball League team, the Chester Jets (who duly won 101-74). Bears director Romek Krwald has been particularly supportive of the programme. He said: "We are pleased to provide professional coaching to the University as well as working in partnership to develop grassroots basketball throughout our joint campus. The Bears are able, as a result, to utilise some of the best basketball training facilities in the south of England, on the Sussex campus."
**Bookmark**

New books by Sussex authors

**John Baker (Professor of Mathematics, SMS)**

*Decision Theory: An introduction to dynamic programming and sequential decisions* (Wiley, £80.00 (hardback), £24.95 (paper))

The publisher says: "Mathematical induction and its use in solving optimization problems is a topic of great interest with many applications. It enables us to study multi-stage decision problems by proceeding backwards in time, using a method called dynamic programming. All the techniques needed to solve the various problems are explained, and the author's fluent style will leave the reader with an avid interest in the subject."

**Trevor Beebee (Reader in Chemistry, BIOLS) & Richard Griffiths**

*Amphibians and Reptiles* (Harperscollins, £19.99 (paper), £34.99 (hardback))

**Lynne Botelho and Pat Thane (Professor of Contemporary History, SOC) (eds)**

*Women and Ageing in British Society Since 1500* (Pearson, £16.99 (paper))

**Deborah Cherry (Professor of the History of Art, CCS)**

*Beyond the Frame: Feminism and Visual Culture, Britain 1850-1920* (Routledge, £45.00 (hardback), £19.99 (paper))

The publisher says: "In this rich and challenging study, Deborah Cherry discusses painting, sculpture, photography, engravings, embroidery and comic drawings of the period, to build a picture of how artists participated in the social upheaval of the day, campaigning for and against women's rights, spoke out on sexuality, and intervened in the visual languages of the day to create challenging new images of women... Cherry analyses the links between visual culture, modernity and imperialism, and offers new ways of reading 19th-century visual images."

**Michael Hutchings (Professor of Ecology, BIOLS), Elizabeth John (Senior Lecturer in Ecology, BIOLS) & Alan Stewart (Lecturer in Ecology, BIOLS) (eds)**

*The Ecological Consequences of Environmental Heterogeneity* (40th Symposium of the British Ecological Society) Blackwell Science, £29.95 (paper), £59.95 (hardback)

A set of 10 papers delivered at the 40th Symposium of the British Ecological Society, held at Sussex in March 1999.

The publisher says: "This includes discussion of the effects of spatial and temporal heterogeneity on individuals, populations, communities and biodiversity, and of the management and conservation implications of environmental heterogeneity."

**Russell King (ed.) (Professor of Geography, EURO)**

*The Mediterranean Passage: Migration and the new cultural encounters in Southern Europe* (Liverpool University Press, £15.00 (paper))

**Nicholas Royle (Professor of English, EAM) (ed.)**

*Deconstructions: A user's guide* (Palgrave, £14.99 (paper))

All titles are available from the University Bookshop. If you are a Sussex author and have a book coming out, let us know on ext. 8888 or by email at bulletin@sussex.ac.uk

**Your representative in Brussels**

New Brussels Liaison Officer Korrina Stewart made the first of many flying visits to campus last week – on this occasion, to meet Neil Gershon as well as staff in SPRU and the Research Services Division.

Korrina works for the South East Brussels Office (SEPBO), which represents the interests of a partnership of three universities (Sussex, Surrey and Brighton) and eight local authorities in Surrey and Sussex.

Since September, the SEPBO has been located with other partners from the south-east region in the same building in Brussels, in order to reduce duplication on costs and to advance common aims.

Professor Alasdair Smith and Peter Brooks, Director of Research Services, flew to Belgium to attend the opening of South East England House by European Commission Vice-President, Neil Kinnock.

Korrina's role in Brussels, where the Commission of the European Communities has its HQ, is to supply the partnership with information on European Union policy, legislation and funds; to assist the partners in obtaining access to funds; and to represent their interests in the city.

Over the coming months Korrina will be developing close links with the University's European Liaison Officer, Ross Dowsett, who provides advice and guidance on EU funding and assists with the preparation of EU research applications. Korrina and Ross will be co-ordinating an EU funding seminar on campus in the new year – details to come.

**Research funding opportunities**

More details of these and other research opportunities are available from Debbie in the Research Services Division (RSD), on ext. 3812 or email D.Foy-Everett@sussex.ac.uk.

For an extensive listing of funding opportunities, see REFUND on the RSD website, www.sussex.ac.uk/units/research.

**British Academy Small Research Grants**

Small grants of up to £5,000 are available for research and secretarial assistance; consumables; and travel and subsistence. Overseas conference grants are available to contribute to the travel expenses of individuals delivering a paper at an overseas conference.

**EPSRC Networks in Mathematics**

Three-year networks should focus on an identified research theme in an interdisciplinary topic. Networks should be UK based but may include overseas collaborators. Up to £200,000 is available for equipment, travel and subsistence, staff and consumables.

**Royal Society- Leverhulme Senior Research Fellowships**

Applications are invited from scientists in any subject and provide opportunities for mid-career scientists to be relieved of all teaching and admin duties for between one term and one year to do full-time research.

**Royal Society University Research Fellowships**

Researchers under 40 who have between two and seven years post-doc experience can apply for five-year fellowships available in all branches of natural science. Fellowships must be held at a UK university and applicants must be EU citizens.

**Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851**

Applications are invited for Research Fellowships in science or engineering. Awards enable young researchers (under 30) to conduct research for a further two years in any of the physical or biological sciences, mathematics, applied science, or engineering.

**Deadline: 2 March 2001**
In my last Bulletin column (20 October), I wrote about the proposed undergraduate medical school. Good progress is being made with this proposal, and I am pleased to report that Senate and Council have given their approval with great enthusiasm. The formal proposal will go forward at the end of this month.

A second area of possible academic development is at a much earlier stage of consideration, but potentially is of just as much importance as the proposed medical school. We currently have a number of promising activities in the area of management studies, and it is time to discuss whether what further developments we might like to see.

We have to bear in mind that business and management studies is an area of large and growing student demand, including from overseas students. Equally we have to bear in mind that there already exist a large number of business and management schools, so any developments at Sussex have to be distinctive if they are to be successful.

The management studies programme in the science Schools is growing at a healthy rate, and SPRU's responsibility for that programme is an excellent example of building on strength. SPRU’s reputation as the world leader in the study of technology policy and the management of innovation gives a distinctive and attractive focus to that programme.

There are interesting and successful programmes in management studies in CCE, in Social Work, and in USEI, offering students opportunities for specialised study in areas such as the management of the professions and arts management. There is exciting potential for new initiatives in the area of continuing professional development.

Mary Stuart is leading a team that is considering ways in which we might develop these and related activities, and would be very happy to receive ideas and proposals.

I have this week had a letter of complaint about faculty misuse of University stationery. A motorist who was involved in an accident complained that a witness statement had been provided to another party on University stationery, and that this was improper.

In fact, the witness had good reason to use University stationery, as her role in the University was relevant to her credibility as a witness, and I have responded to the complainant to say so. I also said that the University encourages its staff to report anti-social and dangerous driving behaviour.

Seasonal greetings cards for sale

The 2000 Christmas card shows a wintry artist's impression of the planned Freeman Centre at Sussex.

When completed, the Freeman Centre will form the largest research centre in the world devoted to science and technology policy issues. It combines the joint expertise of SPRU - Science and Technology Policy Research, from the University of Sussex, and the Centre for Research in Innovation Management (CENTRIM) from the University of Brighton.

The cards cost 40p each (or 35p each for orders of more than 10) and are available from the Press and Communications Office in Sussex House, ext. 8888 or email: information@sussex.ac.uk.

Languages make all la différence

A French academic's discussion visit to Sussex was so successful that she'll be back again soon, but this time at the front of a lecture hall.

Political scientist Dr Anne-Marie Motard is the academic coordinator at one of the University's partner institutions for study abroad, the Institut d'Etudes Politique (IEP) in Bordeaux.

During her stay, Dr Motard met with staff in the French subject group, EURO and the International and Study Abroad Office to discuss developments in student exchanges and teaching exchanges.

As a result of the visit, Dr Motard and Dr Sue Collard (EURO), whose research on contemporary French politics mirrors her Continental counterpart's interest in the British Labour party, are planning a future teaching exchange.

The exchange will be financed from the SOCRATES-ERASMUS action on teaching mobility. Teaching faculty who like the sound of a sojourn on the Continent can contact Emily Sinclair (email e.sinclair@sussex.ac.uk), European Programmes Officer, for further information on the funding of teaching mobility.

Dr Motard is pictured talking to Tony Blair (in French) at a Unison reception during the recent Labour Party conference in Brighton.

Photograph: Andrew Wiard
One gene, two functions, three diseases

Postgraduate admissions increase

Admissions to taught postgraduate programmes are up 10 per cent on 1999, Assistant Registrar Terry O’Donnell (pictured above) announced last week. The total intake of overseas students to taught programmes – which has risen year on year since 1995 – increased by an impressive 15 per cent and the intake of home students went up by 8 per cent.

Admissions for postgraduate research are also up, by 3 per cent. Although the intake of postgraduate research students from overseas decreased, this was balanced by a 16 per cent increase in the number of UK and EU students who began research degrees.

“The intake figures on the whole are very positive,” Terry said.

Sussex Postgraduate Fair

The Postgraduate Fair, which provides an ideal opportunity for anyone interested in postgraduate study to discuss the wide range of Sussex masters and research programmes that are available, takes place on Tuesday (21 November) in Brabourne House between 12 noon and 2pm.

University faculty representing a range of subjects will be available to answer specific questions on courses and programmes and will advise on entry requirements.

The Career Development Unit will be running a series of workshops on how to fund postgraduate study and will also be available to advise on career opportunities.

It is not necessary to book in advance and the Postgraduate Fair is free of charge to attend. For more information, contact Terry O’Donnell in the Postgraduate Office on ext. 3654.

“Curing cancer is one of the major challenges of the current millennium,” says Professor Alan Lehmann. “And you can only hope to cure cancer if you understand how it is generated in the first place.”

The ultimate goal of a cure is still a long way off. But the progress made by Alan and his scientific colleagues in an international research consortium was recognised at a ceremony in Brussels last week, when they received one of three Rene Descartes prizes awarded by the European Commission.

More than 100 networks of teams competed for the prize, worth about £40,000 to each of the winning laboratories.

Making the presentation to Alan, Research Commissioner Philippe Busquin said: “This new prize recognises successful cross-border teamwork and European networking, which is often a determining factor of outstanding quality of science.”

Promoting trans-national research co-operation is not a new idea in Europe and the European Union (EU) has been funding such partnerships for 15 years. Alan’s team at the MRC Cell Mutation Unit currently has EU funding for three collaborative projects, of which the prize-winning study is one.

Over the past decade, the Sussex team and their colleagues in Italy, the Netherlands and France have been looking at a number of diseases in which a faulty gene means that the body is unable to repair damage to its DNA, or genetic material.

Their work involves beaming ultraviolet light on to abnormal skin cells – as well as a control sample of normal cells – and then analysing the DNA for damage.

The prizewinning consortium has focused in particular on just one gene, called XPD, which demonstrates unusual characteristics. In most cases, a defect in a gene can result in only one genetic disorder. The researchers made the remarkable discovery, however, that not one but three conditions can result from a faulty XPD gene.

In some cases, it can cause xeroderma pigmentosum (XP), which gives sufferers a hugely increased chance of developing skin cancer. In other cases, the faulty gene is linked to two quite different diseases, trichothiodystrophy (TTD) or Cockayne Syndrome.

“This discovery was very surprising, because the diseases are completely different,” says Alan. “It’s a bit like finding that a fault in your fuse box can wreak not only your electric supply but also the water supply.”

“Nobody had expected this,” recalls Alan. “It was a staggering discovery and everybody was quite astonished. But once it was made, it immediately provided a lot of possible explanations.”

The breakthrough in explaining how a single gene could cause three different disorders came with another surprise discovery: that the XPD protein – the molecule that does all the work in the cell – has not one function, as is the case with most proteins, but two.

It is needed to repair damage in the DNA caused by sunlight, but is also used in the quite different process of transcription, the mechanism with which the cell reads genetic information and converts it into proteins.

“Nobody had expected this,” recalls Alan. “It was a staggering discovery and everybody was quite astonished. But once it was made, it immediately provided a lot of possible explanations.”

The researchers suggested that if the fault in the XPD gene affects DNA repair, the patient has XP, but if it alters transcription, TTD or Cockayne Syndrome will develop. In their next series of experiments, they were able to show that this was indeed the case.

Armed with this knowledge, Alan and his Sussex team can now help doctors around the world in diagnosing patients by examining their cell tissue.

Early diagnosis of XP – at birth or even in the womb – means that parents can make sure their child wears protective clothing and keeps out of the sun. “If you look at children who have been well protected from birth, you can barely tell they’ve got XP,” says Alan.

The three diseases can only be cured, however, if scientists can work out how to replace the defective XPD gene – and Alan estimates that this breakthrough is at least another five or 10 years away.
Letters

Dear Editor,

I'd like to suggest that the University sets up a web cam pointing at the roundabout at the campus exit, so that we may note the number plates of all the selfish persons – I have refrained from using a more frank and forceful description – who consistently use the 'left turn only' lane to go straight across the roundabout. Enough is enough. Name and shame, I say!

Andy Clews
Computing Service

Dear Editor,

I have just read your article ‘The ride idea for the South Downs’ in the Bulletin of 3 November. I do not doubt that Roger Simmons has letters from cyclists complaining about the dangers of cycling on the B2123; it is a very risky route. I have been cycling up and down this hill on a daily basis for about ten years now and have often thought that a separate cycle lane would be a great idea.

However, providing a gravel-surfaced cycle path is, in my opinion, not a suitable solution. A gravel path is a reasonable surface on flat, well-drained ground. On the Falmer Road, however, the ground on either side turns into a free-running bog/stream during the wetter months and mud slides are not uncommon.

When a path of this nature gets wet it is unusable, as the gravel mixes into the ground to create a sort of wet, concrete-like gloop. Therefore during the darker, wetter months (when we most need a separate route), this one will not be available.

Andrew Gattiker says that "gravel is cheaper and suitable for all but a very few bikes". By this means road bikes – we who use this route tend to be on road bikes. Yes, it is more expensive, but may I suggest that a tarmac surface be used?

And as for tarmac looking a “bit urban”, this is an area where we have built two universities and a bypass and now propose a football stadium – well rural!

Graham Curry (cyclist in a right shop)

Catering Admin Manager

Have your say on campus travel

Amanda Hastings Environmental Officer

How do you travel to campus?
Do you prefer bus, bike, road or railway?
And what would persuade you to change?

The University’s Environmental Advisory Group need answers to these and other questions and we’ll be sending out a transport questionnaire from Monday (20 November) to thousands of staff and students across campus. All returned questionnaires will be entered in to a cash prize draw at the end of term.

The questionnaire has been developed from issues raised this autumn at a series of focus groups involving staff and students. The results of the questionnaire will help to shape the content of a University travel plan, which is aimed at promoting a wider range of travel choices to people who visit the campus, improving transport services to the site and reducing the impact of travel on the campus environment.

The types of initiatives to be included in the plan will also take account of the size of the organisation, the campus location and the existing transport infrastructure, as well as the varied nature of University business and the resources available.

To make your views count – and to be in with the chance of a cash prize – please complete and return the questionnaire if you receive one.

A lost budgie was found flying around the Library courtyard last month has yet to be reunited with its owner.

The male bird, with green and yellow colouring, is still recuperating after its ordeal on 30 October, when Library staff noticed its feely flapping outside their windows.

Louise Mayers, from Reader Services, went to its rescue. “He wasn’t frightened and has clearly been a much-loved pet,” she said.

“I approached him with caution and, as soon as I was close enough, I gently placed an apron over him.”

Louise, who has previously been called upon to catch all manner of birds, bats and squirrels that have wandered into Library territory, put the bird in a box until a cage could be brought in.

The animal was taken home by Library assistant Heather Tigwell, who keeps finches at her Saltdean home and had a spare cage. “We checked him over and he had no visible signs of injury,” she said.

“He was rather quiet for a few days, but then started to cheep and be more cheerful.”

The budgie does not have a name tag or say anything, so Heather has no idea about his identity. “We did contact a woman who had put an advert in the paper about her lost budgie. But when she came to see ours, she said it wasn’t her Joey.”

Quite how the budgie came to be in the Library courtyard is a mystery. Students aren’t allowed to keep pets in University accommodation, so the bird must have been blown along by high winds. Budgerigars that have been kept as domestic pets in this country cannot survive in the wild.

If no one comes forward to claim the bird, Heather intends to keep it. “My husband Paul and I have decided to change our careers and become Saltdean Bird Sanctuary,” she laughed.

“We only bought the finches because they didn’t look all that happy in a pet shop. And a couple of months ago we adopted a lost chicken that we found near our home – after first checking with the police that one hadn’t been reported lost.”

The budgie is still without a name, although Library staff are toy ing with the idea of calling it after a mountain because of Louise Mayers’ interest in mountaineering. “We haven’t yet thought of a name you could call out easily,” added Louise.

Staff in the Press and Communications office would like to make the following suggestions:

• Gregory (after Gregory Peck)
• Charlie (after Charlie ‘Bird’ Parker)
• Alcatraz (as in The Birdman of Alcatraz)
• Fergie (the author of Budgie the Helicopter)
**Book news**

**A-mail Academic**

Keep up to date with information from leading academic publishers by registering your details with A-mail Academic.

The company provides teaching and research faculty free of charge with current, tailored material in their fields of interest and now has 455,000 academics on its database.

Contact A-mail Academic by phone on (01865) 327245, fax (01865) 327702 or email tinley@globalnet.co.uk.

The company needs to know your teaching and research interests and the address to which material should be sent.

**Bookshop orders online and via the hotline**

Kristian Berggreen Bookshop manager

The University bookshop has found that new and improved distribution arrangements and online links with major publishers and distributors have paid big dividends in sales and customer loyalty.

The ideal situation is still to be able to have the right textbooks in stock at the right time but, failing that, the bookshop is able to order books faster than ever before. Most academic publishers operate a ' hotline' service whereby they are able to supply the bookshop within 24 or 48 hours.

In addition to this, the bookshop has access to online ordering facilities from the three major UK wholesalers, which means that any one of several hundred thousand titles can be delivered the next day if ordered before 5.00pm.

If you come across any textbook offers online, let the bookshop know and we will try to match them, taking the postage into account.

**Small ads**

**FOUND**: Male budgie rescued from Library courtyard Mon 30 Oct. Tel. 678572 if it's yours.

**FOR RENT**: 2-bed flat in Kemp Town. One double, one single room, on split level. Well kept, CH, few mins' from sea/town centre, lots of buses. £725 pm. Call Gail on 60791.

**FOR SALE**: Colour TV, about 20"-22", £77. Tel. Chompasari Ali on 07944520921, email laud@central.sussex.ac.uk

**FOR SALE**: New Taiwanese rice cooker (multiple use), can cook everything, £40; hair dryer (ES), electric extended line (1m long and with 6 set, £3); saline (480ml, each £2); Renu multi-purpose solution for contact lenses (365ml, each £6); quilt & pillow (£6), Call ext. 6686 or email macle27@hotmail.com.

**FAMILY WANTED**: 24-year-old physics graduate/au pair seeks family in Bn or Hove. Quiet, reliable, with excellent references. Available from end Dec. Tel. 380848.

**WANTED**: Tinned/dry pet food, to be donated to RSPCA and National Canine Defence League in time for Xmas. Donations to Peter Anning, Porters Lodge, Bramber House.

**INTERVIEWEES WANTED**: Lesbian researcher, practising counsellor, therapist and Sussex DPhil student wants to interview lesbian/bisexual women about their counselling/therapy experiences. Tel. Cordelia Galgut on 772408 or 0208 865296, or email cpgalut@susanet.com.

**FOR RENT**: Luxury holiday villa in Florida. Three beds, private heated pool, near Disney and other attractions. Sleeps 6 to 8, from £275 per week. See www.villausa.com or call Brian on 678963.

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**Staff vacancies**

Apply by 21 November

Services Co-ordinator, BIOLS (ref 532)

Apply by 23 November

Clerical Assistant, Estate Office (ref 526)

Finance Office Assistant (ref 526)

Apply by 24 November

Research Assistant (Archives and Publications), Centre for German-Jewish Studies

Apply by 28 November

Subject Assistant, IR and Politics (ref 529)

Apply by 30 November

Student Advisors, CCS (ref 522), EURO (ref 523) and AFRAS (ref 524)

Admin. Secretary, Fullerene Science Centre (ref 531)

Apply by 1 December

Research Fellow, BIOLS (ref 509)

Receptionist, Sport Service (ref 533)

Apply by 4 December

Development Co-ordinator, CCE (ref 530)

Clerical Officer, EAM (ref 531)

Apply by 14 December

P/T Tutor, Arts (ref 534)

For further details, see www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/staffing/personnel/vac or contact Staffing Services on (01273) 678708, fax (01273) 877401, email recruitment@sussex.ac.uk.

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**Eduard Goldstücker**

Eduard Goldstücker, Professor of Comparative Literature in EURO during the 1970s, has died aged 87 in his native Prague. A leading figure in the 'Prague spring' reform movement of 1968, he came to Britain and the professorship at Sussex after the Soviet-led invasion forced him into exile. Professor Goldstücker returned to Czechoslovakia after the collapse of communism in 1989.
Economics subject review

A score of 21 points out of a possible 24 in this month’s assessment of teaching by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) came as a disappointment to the Economics subject group. “I thought 22 was what we deserved,” said Dr Barry Reilly, who has been Subject Chair since 1997.

The group, which has 14 teaching faculty, an average of 25 postgraduates and an undergraduate intake of 75–80 each year, took heart from the numerous positive features identified by the review team.

The assessors praised the subject group’s effective use of diagnostic testing, leading to streaming for some first-year courses and the selective use of postgraduate teaching assistants.

“If students are taught within a pretty homogenous group, they don’t feel as intimidated,” said Barry. “The monitoring procedures we have in place suggest that students favour this. They’ve felt it has enhanced their learning.”

The review team described the teaching by postgraduate assistants as “excellent” and praised the subject group for its established peer observation scheme, which involves junior faculty observing senior faculty and vice versa.

The QAA team also commended the group’s web provision and teaching materials, for which Shoshana Ormonde (the Subject Group Co-ordinator) is responsible. “As a teaching aid they’re very important,” said Barry. “We use them a lot in the first and second years, for core courses.”

Barry said that the students themselves gave the assessors a very positive account of their learning experience. “At the end of the day, it’s the students who’ll make a judgement about us – and our students seem extremely happy; with the way we’re teaching them, how we’re teaching them and what they’re learning.”

From Bath stone to Brighton rocks

A Sussex student was attacked last week when he gave chase to a gang of teenagers who stoned the coach in which he was a passenger.

The coach, on hire from Brighton & Hove Buses, was bringing 45 international students and two members of staff back to campus from a day trip to Bath on 9 November.

One of three vehicles to be attacked that night, the coach was hit at 8.45pm when it stopped at traffic lights at the junction of Coldean Lane and Lewes Road.

The youth – estimated to be 15 or 16 years old – used traffic cones and rubble from nearby roadworks as ammunition, with one stone smashing a window behind the coach driver.

A 28-year-old exchange student who was sitting at the front of the coach suffered minor eye and knee injuries when he went in pursuit of the offenders. “I just felt that something must be done,” he recalls. “I thought I could catch a couple of them and bring them to justice.” But he got more than he bargained for when the vandals started kicking and throwing punches.

As soon as police arrived on the scene, the youths ran off through an underpass at the junction and disappeared into the Mouseecombe estate. The student and a police officer then escorted the estate by car but were unable to find the ringleader or any of the other gang members on the deserted streets.

The episode has failed to put the exchange student off similar outings in the future. He has signed up for International Office day trips to Cambridge and Canterbury, but says that he will probably sit at the back of the coach.

After the incident, which was only the latest in a series of similar attacks on vehicles from Brighton & Hove Buses, the company threatened to suspend services along the Lewes Road.

Managing director Roger French told the Evening Argus that he was seriously considering withdrawing services in the area, rather than risk the safety of passengers and drivers. As the Bulletin went to press, but services to campus continued to operate.

Intelligent students develop intelligent systems

The winners of an academic bursary for Sussex students were announced last month during the annual prize-giving ceremony at the London headquarters of Searchspace, a multi-national company that develops intelligent systems for business automation.

Three winners (pictured with Jason Kingdon, chief executive of Searchspace) were selected to receive awards for their MSc dissertations:

- John Welch (standing, left) – MSc in Evolutionary and Adaptive Systems
- Harry Brignull (seated right) – MSc in Human-Centred Computing Systems
- Zoe Lock (seated left) – MSc in Intelligent Systems.

Mr Kingdon sees academic exploration helping to drive commercial IT development. “It is vital to international commerce that people enter the industry who really do want to question and improve the existing methods of operation. Through their exciting and provocative dissertations, these students do just that,” he said.

Searchspace – whose co-founder, Suran Goonatilake, studied at Sussex – has awarded the academic bursary on an annual basis since its foundation in 1993. Commenting on the scheme, Mr Kingdon added: “Searchspace takes seriously its role supporting UK academia, and the School of Cognitive and Computing Sciences at Sussex in particular, as vanguards in research in the computer science and artificial intelligence fields.”
Mon 20 Nov 12.30pm–1.55pm Continuing Education Research Forum: Rosie Spooner, (The Learn Shop, CCE), Developing learning advocacy and the Dopoulos experience. D310.

1.00pm–2.00pm Experimental Psychology Seminar: Dan Wright (Sussex). BLR (EP 3.9).

2.00pm Falmer Language Group: Paul Cullen (Sussex), title TBA. A155.

3.00pm International Relations and Politics Research-in-Progress Seminar: Aiko Yuichi (Sussex), a contextual analysis of Immanuel Kant’s perpetual peace project. C219.

4.00pm Sociology and Social Psychology Graduate/Faculty Seminar: Peter Bull (York). No audience. appolised only ‘claptrap’ in political speeches? An analysis of invited and uninvited applause. D310.

4.30pm Sussex Centre for Neuroscience Seminar: Mike Land (Sussex). Steering with the head: Visual strategies of a racing driver. BLR.

Tue 21 Nov 12.30pm–2.00pm Centre for Life History Research Seminar: Pat Sikes (Sheffield). Truths and lies revisited: Mendacity and qualitative research. Library Meeting Room.

1.30pm Psychology Research-in-Progress Talk: Andy Field (Sussex), You were afraid of the big bad wolf? A prospective study of Rachman’s indirect pathways in children. PEV 2, SA19.


4.15pm Biochemistry and Genetics & Development Seminar: Chris Hunter (Sheffield), Quantitative approaches to studying molecular recognition. BLT.

5.00pm American Studies Open Seminar: Ghislain Reza Sami Gorgan-Roodi (Sussex), The crisis of the American dream in Clifford Odets’ ‘Paradise Lost’. A71.

5.00pm History and Theory Open Seminar: Martin Dzelzains (Royal Holloway), ‘Marvell and the Publicist-Drudger:’ The censoring of ‘The Rehearsal Transprosd’. D610.

5.00pm Graduate Seminar in Media Studies: Ewan Kirkland (Sussex), ‘Peter Pan is my Daddy?!’ – The man-child persona of Robin Williams. C219.

Wed 22 Nov 2.00pm–4.00pm Music Graduate Seminar: Edward Jessen (Wesley and York), Recital Room, Falmer House. Peer Group 1.

4.30pm History of Art Research Seminar: Maurice Howard (Sussex), ‘Queen Elizabeth slept here’: Creating the mythology of the royal lodging. A1103.

4.30pm Migration Research Seminar: Ron Skeldon (Sussex), The trafficking of the Chinese peoples. D630.

5.00pm English Graduate Colloquium: William Baker (Northern Illinois), Editing Wilkie Collins’ letters. D640.

Thu 23 Nov 12.30pm–2.00pm Geography Research Seminar: Grace Canwell (Sussex), A contribution to the population-environment debate: The case of Kigino, Uganda. D710.

12.30pm–1.30pm Environmental Research Seminar: Jeff Leigh (Sussex), A new European initiative on Arta Sea. PEV 2A12.

12.30pm Inorganic Discussion Group: Sean McGrady (Kings College, London), Non-classical bonding in inorganic chemistry: Coordination, catalysis and crystallisation. CHI 3RI43.

4.00pm Mathematical Physics Seminar: Simon Singh (author of The Code Book and Fermat’s Last Theorem), How to send a secret message. PEV 1A6.

4.00pm–5.30pm Economics Research-in-Progress Seminar: Neil McCulloch (IDS), Poverty, inequality and growth in Zambia during the 1990s. D510.

4.30pm Social & Political Thought Graduate/Faculty Seminar: Amy Bartholomew (Carlton), Constitutional patriotism. D630.

5.00pm Centre for Statistics and Stochastic Modelling (CSSM) Seminar: Jon Forster (Southampton), Bayesian estimation of small population frequencies. PEV2A2.

5.00pm History Research-in-Progress Seminar: Mary-Clare Martin (Sussex), New perspectives on the history of children, 1740–1870. A155.

Fri 24 Nov 2.15pm SPUV Seminar: Martin Fransman (Edinburgh), Evolution of the telecoms industry into the internet age. EDB 121.

4.00pm Astrophysics Seminar: Tom Thurne (Cambridge), Finding fossils of the Dark Ages in the Lyman-alpha forest. D630.

4.30pm Philosophy Society: Alistair Young (Sussex), Scepticism about other minds. A155.

Mon 27 Nov 1.00pm–2.00pm Experimental Psychology Seminar: Anne Jackson (Sussex). BLR (EP 3.9).

3.00pm International Relations and Politics Research-in-Progress Seminar: Otto Holman (Amsterdam), EU integration theory, transnational business and EU expansion towards European Central. C219.

4.00pm Sociology and Social Psychology Graduate/Faculty Seminar: Adam Rutland (Abderdeen), ‘Who do we think we are?’ Self-categorization and self-stereotyping. D310.

4.30pm Sussex Centre for Neuroscience Seminar: Sue Wonnacott (Bath), Nicotine: pariah or panacea? BLR.

5.00pm–6.50pm Women’s Studies Research-in-Progress Seminar: Sybil Oldfield (Sussex), A woman dies in warfare: Responses to Virginia Woolf’s suicide in 1941. A155.

Tue 28 Nov 1.30pm COSIS Psychology Research-in-Progress Talk: Beena Khurana, Configural processing in human faces. PEV 2A19, SA19.

4.00pm–5.00pm Experimental Psychology Colloquium: Trevor Robbins (Oxford), BLR (EP3.9).

4.15pm Biochemistry and Genetics & Development Seminar: Julian Thorpe, Pin1: a protein to unravel the tangles of Alzheimer’s disease? BLT.

4.15pm Social Anthropology Graduate/Faculty Seminar: Angela Bradlow (Sussex), ‘The arts and craft of novel writing, EDB 303.

5.00pm Graduate Seminar in Media Studies: Christine Hine (Brunel), Virtual ethography. C219.

5.00 pm History and Theory Open Seminar: Robert Young (Oxford), title TBA. D610.

Wed 29 Nov 4.30pm History of Art Research Seminar: Paul Beardsley (’The), ‘Applied Kandinsky’; 50’s applied design as West German pop culture. A103.

4.30pm Migration Research Seminar: Randall Hansen, Citizenship and immigration in post-war Britain. D630.

5.00pm English Graduate Colloquium: Sophie Thomas (Sussex), Seeing things (‘as they are’). Corderie, Schiller, and the play of semancy. D640.

Thu 30 Nov 12.30pm–1.30pm Environmental Research Seminar: Andy Stirling (Sussex), Risk, science and precaution: Some problems and solutions. PEV 2A12.


12.30pm–2.00pm Geography Research Seminar: Franz Berekhout (Sussex), Socio-economic futures scenarios in climate impact research. D710.

4.00pm–5.30pm Economics Research-in-Progress Seminar: Jonathan Wadsworth (LSE and Royal Holloway), Two sides to every story: Issues in measuring homelessness at the level of the household. D510.

5.00pm History Research-in-Progress Seminar: Deborah Cherry (Sussex), Lynne Walker (RIBA), Image, identity and space: Elizabeth Garret Anderson in 19th-century medicine. A155.

Fri 1 Dec 2.15pm SPUV Seminar: Speaker and title TBA. EDB 121.

4.00pm Astrophysics Seminar: Graca Rocha, title TBA. Arundel 401.

4.30pm Philosophy Society: Kathleen Stock (Leeds), Objections to the possibility of a definition of art. A155.

Exhibitions

Until Thu 30 Nov Anita Barratt (First in a series of PhotoWorks exhibitions, designed to showcase the work of emerging photographers and artists in the south-east.

Until Sat 2 Dec Charles Haddock Charles’ sculptures are inspired by a variety of sources: the repeated motif in music, engineering achievements of the past, architecture, mathematics and nature.

Sun 19 Nov

3pm Galaxy Quest (PG)
6pm Brazil (15)
8pm X-Men (12)

Mon 27 Nov

8pm The French Connection (18)