Lesley’s a leading light

One of Britain’s leading cancer psychologists joined the University this week. Professor Lesley Fallowsfield, Director of the Cancer Research Campaign’s Psychosocial Group and a former Sussex student, arrived at the Trafford Centre on Monday with her 11-strong team to continue their pioneering work with cancer patients and specialists.

“This is going to be a wonderful opportunity to expand the research areas in which I am interested,” says Lesley, who was previously based at University College London. “I have been given excellent facilities. I will also be looking to recruit staff from the vast pool of qualified people already living in Brighton.”

Lesley, who lives in Brighton, trained at Guy’s Hospital, London and was a nurse at the Royal Sussex County Hospital before gaining a BSc and a DPhil in experimental psychology from Sussex.

It was while finishing her DPhil 17 years ago that a personal loss inspired her to specialise in the psychological aspects of cancer. “One of my closest friends was diagnosed with myeloid leukaemia and said I should do some work on why doctors don’t tell cancer patients enough about their disease,” remembers Lesley. “She had been hugely supportive towards me when I was studying and her subsequent death had a very profound effect on me. I began doing this for her.”

For the past few years a major part of Lesley’s work has involved encouraging cancer doctors to improve their communications skills. “Communication is an important but often neglected factor that influences the quality of cancer care,” she says. “Doctors and nurses usually spend more time talking to patients than they spend on any single medical procedure. But few receive adequate communication training, often to the detriment of patients.”

Lesley runs training courses using actors from The Bill, Casualty, Peak Practice and The Archers, who pose as patients to help doctors gain the vital skills that can so influence a patient’s treatment and quality of life.

She also works closely with healthy women at high risk of breast cancer who are offered the controversial double mastectomy operation to reduce their chance of getting the disease. She recently published a paper in the *British Medical Journal* (13 January) that highlighted the counselling and information needs of these women.

As well as her research work, Lesley lectures in psychology in universities across the world and trains doctors from several countries, including Germany, Switzerland, Canada and Italy. She is the author of a number of books, including *The Quality of Life: The missing measurement in health care* and *The Experience of Breast Cancer*.

Professor Anthony Moore, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, said of Lesley’s arrival: “We are delighted to welcome her back. She is an established figure in the growing field of psychological medicine and she and her team will further consolidate the University’s position in medically related research.”

Jean King, Director of Education Programmes at the Cancer Research Campaign (CRC), which funds Lesley’s work, says: “Professor Fallowsfield is one of the Cancer Research Campaign’s leading lights and thanks to her work hundreds of cancer patients are being given more emotional support and improved quality of life.”

As well as CRC funding, Lesley has recently been awarded a grant of £1.4 million from the Medical Research Council to look at the psychosocial aspects of ovarian cancer screening.

Two other members of her team, Dr Hazel Beveridge and Dr Valerie Jenkins, also hold doctorates from Sussex.

Sir Harry hands back honour

Nobel prizewinner Professor Sir Harry Kroto (CPES) has returned an honorary degree from the University of Hertfordshire in protest against cuts in its chemistry department. He told the Times Higher Education Supplement, “The recent plans to reduce the amount of chemistry taught at Hertfordshire below the threshold of viability have forced me to reconsider the honour and regretfully ... I feel that I must return my degree.”

Sir Harry was awarded the honorary Doctor of Science degree in 1997. He holds 15 other honorary degrees from universities around the world (including Sussex) and was awarded the Nobel prize in 1996 for his contribution to the discovery of buckminsterfullerene (aka ‘buckyballs’).

“I felt I had to take a stand,” Sir Harry is quoted as saying. “Maybe that is the value of an honorary degree in society. Going into the 21st century, universities must recognise that chemistry is a core subject. These are difficult times for the sciences, but it is up to the universities to find ways of helping graduates go into the world with an understanding of science.”
Guzzle guts

Hester Tilbury
Human Sciences finalist, BIOLS

Ever wondered at your stomach’s amazing capacity to demolish a three-course meal yet still be grumbling for more? Figures detailing how Britain is fast becoming the ‘fat capital of Europe’ (second only to the USA) suggest we are indulging a little too much.

Dr Martin Yomans (BIOLS) may be able to help us understand why our appetites apparently are ‘crying wolf’ (or should that be ‘grumbling wolf’?) and allowing us to eat more than we should.

Martin’s research has found that if we think something is exceptionally tasty, we can ignore our body’s cues that tell us we are full, and carry on scoffing. Interestingly, it appears that we are much better at knowing when enough is enough for food that isn’t so tempting.

Martin explains that the pleasure we get from indulging in naughty foods is caused by certain chemical endorphins in the brain known as opioid peptides. “When you have a food in your mouth which you know something about, the sensory information goes to your brain and causes the release of these opioid peptides, and that gives you the feeling, ‘Oh that’s good, I’ll have some more.’”

The pleasure produced by these peptides actually counteracts feelings of fullness – allowing us to eat more of what we fancy. Opioids also play a part in drug and alcohol addiction and may be one reason for us becoming food junkies too.

The ability to gorge on nice foods (often high in calories) was probably well suited to our hunter-gatherer ancestors, for whom food was scarce. However in our society, a pizza is just a phone call away, and that’s the problem in a nutshell: easy access to foods, with little (if any) energy expenditure to get them.

So how do we curb our self-destructive rush to adiposity? “Persuading people to cut down on nice food is almost impossible,” reckons Martin.

Instead he recommends weight control programmes that combine some dieting elements with exercise. “But, even by itself, more exercise would probably go a long way to resolving the problem,” he says.

So the good news is that with enough exercise you can probably keep on enjoying your food. With the success of Health Week on campus last month, it looks as if students and staff at Sussex are putting their best trainers forward and are well on the road to a healthy lifestyle.

Martin and his team are collaborating with Sheffield University and will publish their findings on appetite control later this year in the International Journal of Obesity.

A day in the life history

One of the most exciting and challenging intellectual developments in recent years has been the ‘biographical turn’ in social-science and humanities research.

The Centre for Life History Research is organising a research day on 2 June that aims to explore issues posed by this ‘biographical turn’.

The event will showcase life-history research in progress by members of the University, as well as the work of current community-based life-history projects in the Sussex region.

The keynote speaker will be Joanna Bornat from the Open University, a long-standing editor of the journal Oral History, one of the founders of the British Reminiscence movement, and co-author of The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Sciences.

Faculty and postgraduates – from any section of the University – are invited to offer a presentation about research that has involved working with people’s life stories. Presenters are encouraged to use their own recent or current research to highlight and explore an issue of general concern in life-history research, such as:

- how life-history research can contribute unique social or historical insights
- the challenges of cross-cultural life-history research
- how new theoretical understandings are generated by interdisciplinary life-history research
- the significance of narrative form – for example in the distinction between written, spoken or visual life stories
- the methodological challenges of working with people’s life stories
- ethical concerns and the potential for participatory and empowering life-history research
- how life-history research might inform professional practice.

If you would like to present a paper, contact Dr Alistair Thomson in CCE via a.s.thomson@sussex.ac.uk.

Research funding opportunities

More details of these and other research opportunities are available from Debbie in the Research Services Division (RSD), on ext. 3612 or email D.Fey-Evenett@Sussex.ac.uk. For an extensive listing of funding opportunities, see REFUNDO on the RSD website, www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/research.

NERC Environmental Genomics Programme
A new programme has been established with a four-year budget of £11.6 million. The programme will exploit existing and emerging genomic knowledge and technology to advance and test evolutionary and ecological theory, and so provide a better understanding of ecosystem function in the context of biodiversity.
Deadline: 26 February for outlines

British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships
Up to 30 three-year fellowships are available for applicants who have never held an established teaching post in an HEI. Candidates must have obtained their doctorate by 30 June 2001 but normally not before October 1999. The emphasis is on the completion of a significant piece of publishable research.
Deadline: 26 February

Royal Society Conference Grants
Grants are awarded to scientists based in the UK presenting their own paper or poster, or chairing a session, at an overseas conference, where conference participation is the main or sole purpose of the visit. The conference must be on a subject within the natural sciences.
Deadline: 1 March

BBSRC Exploiting Genomics
Applications for large projects (£500k-E1m) are invited that combine genomic approaches with advanced research in science or engineering, to address problems of relevance to the needs of end users and/or to develop innovative post genomic technologies which underpin this aim.
Deadline: 30 April & 26 November

Leverhulme Trust Major Research Fellowships
Up to 20 two- or three-year fellowships are available for those over the age of 35 in all fields in the humanities and social sciences. The scheme enables fellows to devote themselves to a single project free from teaching and administration commitments through the provision of a full-time replacement.
Deadline: 4 May
Dear Editor,

The last issue of the Bulletin (26 January) announced the imposition of 'new regulations' banning staff from smoking in their own individual offices. No explanation for this new policy was offered, nor were we told who had made this decision.

I realise that it is open season on smokers, but don't stark announcements like this raise some rather important issues about protection of personal liberties, not to mention open and accountable decision-making processes? Smokers' rights seem to receive rather less protection than those of foxes nowadays.

So: who imposed these new regulations, and why?

Peter Saunders (non-smoker)
Social Sciences

Dear Editor,

Max Wheeler's letter (Bulletin 26 January) notes the recent loss of parking spaces. This problem is only going to get worse as more new buildings appear - some occupying space previously used for parking - and their occupants try to park their cars.

Obviously new buildings indicate a healthy and dynamic university, but the rest of the infrastructure needs to keep pace. Surely the time has come to grasp the nettle and introduce some form of controlled parking on campus, perhaps in combination with enhanced public transport links.

Most campus-based universities I have visited in recent years already have a scheme of this kind. There must be sufficient information available on the success of these schemes for Sussex to produce a viable and fair system.

The present free-for-all (unless you work in one of the buildings with hived-off parking!) is becoming a serious impediment. Staff, students, and visitors can no longer expect to keep appointments on campus because they spend so long finding somewhere to park.

George Mather
Biology

Open and accountable

Clive Parkinson
Director of Safety

Who imposed the new smoking regulations?
The changes to the existing smoking policy were approved by Safety Council after a period of consultation with representative groups throughout the University (including all union representatives and all Building Safety Advisors).

Each member of Safety Council (44 in total) was asked to collate responses against the following three options: 1) Total ban in all buildings 2) Ban in all buildings except residential and designated communal areas such as bars. 3) Each building to decide.

After due consideration Safety Council voted in favour (15 for, 3 abstentions) of option two. Safety Council delegated to a small working party to decide on the designated areas.

Council accepted the Safety Council's recommendation and changed the University smoking policy from 1 August 2000.

And why?
The Health & Safety Executive published a consultative document in the spring of 2000, proposing an Approved Code of Practice (ACoP), which would give clear guidance on smoking at work. This proposal was accepted and the change in University policy merely pre-empted the introduction of the ACoP, which has legal status: as such the University has to show that it has taken appropriate steps to comply with the law.

Smokers who want to quit can contact Nurse Val at the Health Centre or Chris Barker (Occupational Health Adviser) for an individual counselling session.

Highlands and a fling too

Scot Graham Hendry dressed in style to receive his MA in Contemporary European Studies at the graduation ceremony on 26 January. Graham, from Falkirk, is pictured celebrating with other students from the Sussex European Institute.

Also graduating that day were James Wilson and Sarah d’Arbeloff-Wilson (pictured), who met in the chemistry labs on campus and married while both were studying for DPhils.

Francesca Havens also experienced a dramatic change in personal circumstances while she was studying. Francesca, who was pregnant for the majority of her time at Sussex and gave birth to her son Reuben five days after she handed in her MA dissertation, received her degree certificate with baby in arms.

In the case of Joanne Greenwood, who graduated with a DPhil, it was what she did before coming to Sussex that brought her to the attention of the Bulletin. Joanne came into the Foundation Year in Engineering in 1993, having run her own turkey farm in Israel.

She graduated with a first-class degree in 1997 and went on to undertake a doctorate on instrumentation for jet engine rigs, working in the Thermo-Fluids Mechanics Research Centre with Dr Peter Childs. "This was a highly successful piece of research resulting in a patent, three journal articles and commendations from the external examiner," he said.

Joanne has now given up turkeys for good and is working for Edwards High Vacuum, based in Burgess Hill.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor Mary Stuart was particularly proud of Graham Butcher and Max Neve, from the Ore Valley estates in Hastings, who both received the Certificate in Advocacy and Empowerment. Mary said: "These students have come through CCE's widening-participation activities and have progressed from having no qualifications five or six years ago to receiving an undergraduate certificate."

She added: "This highlights our involvement in giving local people opportunities to learn in higher education and the need to ensure that funding for this work is not just short term; the process is a long-term one and can then produce results."
All in a day's work

Jacqui Bealing
Press Officer

With winter graduation ceremonies and an event to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, the last days of January were something of a media feast at the University.

Winter graduation received extensive coverage in the Evening Argus (25 and 26 Jan), including interviews with honorary graduates Caroline Brown, director of the Hanover Band, and Con Ainsworth, former CCE archaeology tutor. Caroline was also interviewed by BBC Southern Counties Radio and was clearly thrilled with becoming an honorary Doctor of Music.

A day of films and talks, organised by Chana Moshenska of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day also attracted print and broadcast media. Meridian TV sent their cameras to cover the event on 24 Jan; Chana and John Jacobs, sub-dean of CCS, were both interviewed by BBC Southern Counties Radio; and the Evening Argus ran several pieces in connection with other Holocaust stories.

On the same day Professor Bryn Bridges, director of the Cell Mutation Unit, responded quickly when BBC South Today rang the Press Office with a request. The programme makers were looking for an expert to talk about the dangers of mobile phones and Bryn agreed to appear in the studio the same evening for a live interview in which he explained the dangers of radiation in the environment.

Finally, the arrival at the Trafford Centre this week of cancer psychologist Professor Lesley Fallowfield, Director of the Cancer Research Campaign's Psychosocial Group, created interest in newsrooms in the Sussex area. Southern FM, BBC Southern Counties Radio and the Evening Argus all requested interviews.

Feeling low? No place to go?
Staff Welfare Officer Richard Price can't guarantee to solve all your problems, but as a former social worker and qualified counsellor, he can fight your corner or simply offer a sympathetic ear.

I have to be a jack of all trades: for instance I might have to argue with the housing department that someone shouldn't be evicted, or make sure somebody's getting the right benefits. But the main areas are personal problems and relationship problems at work. And given my background, it's personal work that's most important to me.

My workload varies an awful lot. The first two weeks of the academic year are usually quiet, because everybody's so busy. Then after that, it starts escalating rapidly as people become tired and more stressed.

I take anything that comes in through the door and either deal with it myself or, if I can't, refer it on to an agency. The main thing is that staff have an immediate source of support or advice, or even just a place to come and offload, which is what a lot of people do: they cry, and get angry, and shout.

I have to do less with faculty than support staff, who don't have the resources to buy counselling. So I provide a service they're not able to access otherwise (although now they can also go to Chris Barker in Occupational Health for short-term counselling). And having this resource means that staff don't have to go to some organisation they've never encountered before or find threatening, like Social Services.

A lot of people refer themselves, mostly at short notice. Because I don't have any secretarial support, I manage my own diary. Confidentiality is very important: if I take somebody on for counselling, whatever happens, it stays in the room. And of course, being completely outside the hierarchy, having no authority over anybody, has its advantages, because people are willing to be more trusting when they know I don't have a management role.

Quite often, staff come to me cold and I don't know what's going to happen. But over 12 years in this job, certain themes have emerged: stress, bullying, increased workloads, and reorganisation.

Management change seems to be one of the biggest issues at the moment. Some staff feel very insecure and worried about the future: the process of change, how they're going to be affected by it, and the quality of the information they get about it. I think what staff would like more than anything is much clearer information about what the future holds and a sense that they're going to be involved.

Bullying within the University is a recurrent issue. If it's obviously related to sexual or racial harassment of some sort, there are procedures to follow. I'm currently trying to finish a new harassment policy for the University, which will take into account things like this. One of my tasks is to produce policies that are relevant to staff welfare.

Chris Barker and I have just been to talk to the unions about the stress policy. The unions refer staff directly to me, but I'm not a union representative: that's something I have to be very careful about. I send people to the union if they need to be involved and I get involved in negotiation with management if it's appropriate. I have to take on the system sometimes.

Chris and I are now trying to implement the stress policy through staff training. I get involved with a variety of things as a trainer. For example, I run the University's retirement course - a day on finance, benefits and pensions. That's offered to every member of staff aged 58 to 65, so they can think about the issues before retiring.

I used to run staff induction, but Staff Development have taken that on. I work with them whenever I can. Obviously my angle is different, because it's related to individuals and casework, but there are lots of areas where we can work alongside each other.

It can be a very frustrating job sometimes. Sometimes it's hard for me personally - sickness and bereavement can obviously be quite difficult, for instance - but having been a social worker, I've got quite a lot of resilience. I don't discuss individual cases with my line manager, but I do have a counselling supervisor (who's not connected with the University) I can talk to regularly.

And the work can be very satisfying. Once I found a missing person, somebody's grown-up son. People and their issues are all different. I like being pretty autonomous, and the job really is varied.

* If you need to talk, contact Richard in Arts B20, ext. 7712 or email R.A.B.Price@sussex.ac.uk.
I want to live forever!

The Eighties revival starts here!
Fame – The Musical, the latest production by Sussex University Musical Theatre Society (SMuTS), is on at the Gardener Arts Centre from Wednesday 21 February to Saturday 24 February.

Director Stephen Baker, a Law finalist in SLS, spoke to the Bulletin about the show and the pressures of juggling his academic work with rehearsals. "I spend three evenings a week on rehearsals and meetings for the show, then on the other two I work at Lloyds TSB. It's a big demand which needs good time management," says Stephen.

Set at New York City's High School of Performing Arts in the early 1980s, the musical builds on the successful film and TV series, for which all those of a certain age will have a soft spot. Stephen acknowledges this: "There seems to be a real fondness for the 1980s at the moment, and hopefully we can jump on that bandwagon!"

First auditions were held in mid-October last year, followed by seven weeks of rehearsals before the Christmas vacation (which the cast used to learn their lines) and then six more weeks before the opening night.

This will be the first time SMuTS has put on a production that is playing in the West End at the same time (at the Victoria Palace Theatre). At £6.00 (or £4.00 with concessions), it is certainly a lot cheaper to catch SMuTS' production than to make the trip to London.

Stephen, who directed City of Angels last year, has enjoyed the experience so much that he has secured himself a place at the Central School of Speech and Drama on the MA in Advanced Theatre Practice. "I loved the buzz," he says. "Law's loss could well be the theatre world's gain."

With a 25-strong ensemble cast (which creates a slight problem as to who gets to take the last bow—"Some egos are coming into play about that.") a full orchestra on stage and a staircase to be built as part of the set, SMuTS have had their work cut out to make their budget stretch. "We are well known as the cheesiest society on campus," says Stephen, possibly referring to their Full Monty fundraising night.

SMuTS' next production is likely to be Jesus Christ Superstar, the performing rights for which have recently become available. In the meantime, members of the cast of Fame will be distributing flyers in town on the two Saturdays preceding the opening night. "We all share the responsibility to sell the show," says Stephen. 

Queer About Campus

A homosexual history of Sussex is told in Queer About Campus, an exhibition opening tomorrow (10 February) in the Debating Chamber, Falmer House.

The centerpiece of the exhibition, 18 months in the making, is a campus bed with stories around it of the fun that many students have had in halls of residence.

Listening posts, display boards, banners and photos — including this one of a campus kiss-in some time during the mid 1990s — celebrate the history of lesbians and gay men at Sussex, from political activism to women's football and the naval cadets.

Queer About Campus will be launched with a reunion in Falmer Bar, where Unisex (the sexual-health project for the two local universities) will also be holding its 10th anniversary party.

The exhibition is then open Monday to Saturday, 12 noon to 5pm, until 24 February.

In brief

Housing advice workshops
Run by staff of the Student Advice Centre and Housing Office, these advice sessions are primarily for students moving into private-sector accommodation from halls and will look at finding accommodation, contracts and problems. Sessions will be held in the Lancaster House Common Room on Monday 19 February, 1–2pm and Tuesday 27 February, 6–7pm; in the Orange Room, Bramber House on Tuesday 20 February, 1–2pm and Friday 23 February, 1–2pm; and in Holland House on Thursday 22 February, 6–7pm.

Give generously for Gujarat

A sale of goods to raise funds for the victims of the Indian earthquake will be held from 12.30–3pm on Thursday (15 February), at the Institute of Development Studies in the Upper Common Room.

Donations of books, CDs, plants, home-made cakes, good-quality clothing, etc. welcome. Contact Diane Frazer-Smith, ext. 8264, email j.d.frazer-smith@ids.ac.uk.

Top marks for philosophy

Philosophy at Sussex received a maximum 24 out of 24 in the latest Subject Review by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), conducted in the week beginning 29 January. The QAA review team praised the quality of teaching and learning at both undergraduate and postgraduate level and commended the philosophy subject group on many aspects of good practice.

Healthy prize

Jen Lyden, a visiting student in CCS, will have some extra luggage when she returns to her home in Massachusetts. A state-of-the-art Trek mountain bike was her reward for taking part in the campus Health Week from 15–19 January. Sandra Ogunya, a maths undergraduate in SMS, won a year's pass for the fitness room and Lucia Palombi won two free flights donated by Aossa.
Alumni Society Teaching Awards

Neil Thew
Head of Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU)

The University’s Alumni Society sponsors an annual award to recognize excellence and innovation in teaching and learning at Sussex.

Each year, up to three awards – each worth £1,000 – are made, and the scheme is open to all those teaching or providing academic support for courses approved by the University at any level, from Foundation to DPhil.

Nominations for the 2001 Teaching Awards are now being sought. Candidates may be nominated by peers, students or alumni or may be self-nominated. After the initial nomination round, short-listed candidates will be asked to put together a portfolio of evidence to be considered by the awards panel – chaired by the VC and representing alumni, students and faculty – in the Summer Term. The awards will be presented at the summer graduation ceremony.

The closing date for initial nominations is Friday 2 March. Further details, and a nomination form, may be obtained from Rebecca Powell-Tuck in the TLDU (Arts D 421), or downloaded from the TLDU website at www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/TLDU.

The awards scheme is a significant way of celebrating the diversity, achievement and quality of the teaching work of colleagues that might otherwise remain unrecognized. The scheme has traditionally attracted a good number of very high-quality nominations, and we hope that 2001 may reveal the best field yet.

Small ads

WANTED: Brighton Beattiks, pref. from the 1950/60s, to be interviewed for fashion & style exhibition at Brighton Museum & Art Gallery. Also Beattiks photos, cine films and clothing. Tel. 292767 or email angela.carlise@ brighton-hove.gov.uk.

FOR SALE: Apple Power Macintosh 7600/120, 48Mb RAM, 1.2Gb HD, CD-ROM, video input, MacOS 9, Office 98, with software and Apple Multiple Scan 15AV display. £380 ono. Tel. 620201.

HOUSE SWAP: Flat/house in Brighton or Lewes in exchange for house in central Toronto. Mid-June to early August 2001. Contact Penny Chaloner, ext. 8314, email karf7@sussex.ac.uk.

WANTED: A loving married couple who dearly love to have children. If you are between 21 & 36 years of age (any nationality) & willing to help by donating eggs anonymously (reasonable travel expenses paid), tel. Lena (co-ordinator) at the Lister Hospital on 020 7259 9038. Quote ref. 247496.

WANTED: Participants for experiments. Pays £5, lasts 30-50 minutes. Involves rating pictures on a computer. Please call Kristy Lascelles on ext. 7216, or email kristy@ccgs.sussex.ac.uk.

FOR SALE: Red Vauxhall Nova saloon (1.2 Merit, E reg.). 79,000 miles, good condition for year. 1 yr MOT, 6 mths’ tax, complete with Panasonic stereo, roof bars, etc. Can be seen on campus. £375. Ring Jon on 556484 after 6pm, or email jkn@unicorp.fsl.co.uk.

WANTED: VW Polo, E reg., 6 mths’ MOT and tax, LHD, good working order, £350 ono. Contact V. Straub, ext. 2710.

WANTED: Residential Advisors (RAs). Contact Ely Adams on ext. 7250 for application forms. Closing date 16 Feb.

Staff vacancies

Apply by 12 February
Lecturer, COGS (ref 109)
Apply by 15 February
Initial Teacher Education Admissions Co-ordinator, Institute of Education (ref 125)
Security Patrol Person (ref 124)
Team Leader, Computing Service (ref 122)

Support Services Assistant, (ref 123)
Lunchtime Ancillary Assistant, Nursery (ref 126)
Apply by 16 February
2 x Cleaner / Tea Person, EIT (ref, 130)
Apply by 22 February
Residence Porter, Park Village (ref 128)

Apply by 23 February
Database / Website Officer, CCE (ref, 131)
Administrative Secretary, Fulleren Science Centre (ref, 528)

For further details, see www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/staffing/personnel/vacs or contact Staffing Services on (01273) 678706, (01273) 677401, email recruitment@sussex.ac.uk.

First class

Andrew Liddle, Professor of Astrophysics in CPES, has been awarded a Philip Leverhulme Prize for "outstanding young scholars of substantial distinction and promise", aged 35 or under. Andrew is among 35 of the best young academics in the UK to be honoured, winning £50,000 each from the Leverhulme Trust to spend as they choose in support of their research.

Undergraduate Panagiotis Stavropoulos scored a hat-trick of prizes at the School of Engineering and Information Technology (EIT) presentation ceremony, held at the end of January. His third-year project in mechanical engineering won him the Farnell Components Prize and two prizes from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE). Christopher Afia (Mechanical Engineering with Business Management), Matthew Cleveland (Mechatronics) and Lydia Thanasou (Mechanical Engineering) came away with two prizes each from the IMechE. Awards also went to James Bell, Thomas Jonathan Deveraj, Kshitij Dhar Sinha, Cherif Sahyoun, Philipp Schuff, Nishad Sowky and James Yule.

Language learning centre set to re-open

Sue Sheerin
Director, Language Institute

The newly refurbished and re-equipped language learning centre will open its doors to students on 19 February.

Delays in the start, duration and, therefore, completion of the necessary refurbishment work meant that the centre was still a building site at the beginning of this term – the date originally planned for the centre's re-opening. (Leaks in the roof throughout this period did nothing to help the situation!)

Now that the building work has finally been completed, the mammoth task of installing and configuring all the new equipment has begun, but it is impossible to complete this work by 19 February. In spite of this, the decision was made to re-open as soon as possible with limited access.

From 19 February, one of the two self-access rooms will be fully available for student use. This room will be equipped with satellite TV in all languages taught on campus, together with video and audio cassette players for films, documentaries and other material. Current international newspapers and magazines will also be available, as will the whole range of EFL and MFL dictionaries.

The new digital language lab will also be ready shortly for tutorial staff to begin their training and this room will be available for classes as soon as individual tutors feel confident that they have mastered the operation of the new digital technology.

The second self-access room, in the octagonal building, will be available for student use from the beginning of the Summer Term. This room will be equipped with 21 computerised digital workstations, each with internet and satellite TV access together with CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) programs, CD-ROM, DVD and video playback facilities.

Despite the unavoidable delays in completion, and the consequent inconvenience experienced by all of us involved in language teaching, staff and students of the University can now look forward to enjoying state-of-the-art facilities for language learning that will be the envy of many. We look forward to welcoming all language learners!
USA Today

Life in the States - what's it really all about? Final-year American Social Studies students revealed all when they were given an opportunity to present aspects of their dissertations to a wider audience this month.

The Simpsons, abortion rights, the US elections and high school massacres were among the topics up for discussion at a conference, entitled Student Perspectives on Contemporary America, on 1 February. Those attending included Tom Reid, London Bureau Chief of the Washington Post, and Pro-Vice-Chancellor Dr Nigel Llewellyn, as well as fellow students and friends.

Dr Annis May Timpson, lecturer in American Studies, helped the students organise the event in CCS Conference Room with a £2,000 grant from HEFCE. She said: "The point of the exercise was to help students develop some transferable skills around conference organising and presentation. But it has also made them more aware of each other's research and findings."

She added: "It would be good to have this as an annual event, as the students certainly benefited from it. Even if they weren't giving presentations, they were all involved in some way. It's a shame it can't be used as part of their course evaluation."

Student Jane Andrews, who gave a talk based on her research into violence against American abortion providers, said: "Preparing for the conference helped me to get more involved with my research and to receive vital feedback from others."

Schools in step

Robotics expert Dr Phil Husbands (COGS) addressed a youthful audience in the lecture theatre last Friday (2 February). Phil demonstrated his collection of autonomous robots not to the undergraduates he usually teaches but to a group of teenagers from three local schools.

The 14-year-olds are all taking part in the pioneering Instep project, which brings together pupils from two Brighton state schools – East Brighton College of Media Arts and Falmer High School – and the independent Brighton College to break down barriers and promote collaboration between them.

The year-long venture is one of only 19 Independent/State School Partnership initiatives in the country that are currently being funded by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). The nationwide scheme, which was set up in 1997, aims to raise standards, enhance educational opportunities for all pupils and promote collaborative working between the independent and state-school sectors.

Because the Brighton project is co-ordinated by Dr Julie Coulta, a research fellow in the University's Institute of Education (USIE), there is an added bonus. "It forms a strong link between the schools in our local area and the University," she says.

As part of the scheme, Julie has just launched a GCSE media-arts project for Year 10 pupils, which will culminate in an exhibition of their work at the Gardner Arts Centre in June. Other activities being planned will involve Years 7 and 8 in a local-history project and Year 9 pupils in making a promotional video about a local MENCAP sports club.

Part of Julie's responsibility is to conduct research – looking at why there are such different levels of achievement among the schools – and to evaluate the Instep project. She has already detected a change in attitudes: "The students have realised that although their schools and backgrounds are different, they do view some things in the same way."

Now Julie hopes that a bid to the DfEE for further funding will be successful, so that she can carry out more detailed research into whether levels of attainment have improved at the three schools.

A walk on the wild side

David Harper and David Streeter BIOLOG

Schools in step

For the past weeks the grass under the trees between the Sussex House car park and the underpass has been a carpet of Snowdrops. They share with other white flowers a folklore that foretells ill-luck if brought into the house. Richard Mabey, in his Flora Britannica, records that in some parts of the country single flowers especially are viewed as death-tokens. Paradoxically the Catholic Church has long regarded the pure white flowers as a symbol of Candlemas (2 February).

The campus Snowdrops have clearly been planted but in many parts of the country they grow apparently quite wild. However, a search of the records shows that although grown in gardens since the 16th century, Snowdrops were not recorded from the wild until the 1770s. The general view is therefore that they are not truly native anywhere in Britain, however natural and at home they may look.

Another foreigner that can be seen on campus is the Grey Squirrel, which was introduced to Britain from North America. After releases in Kent and Surrey between 1900 and 1910, it spread into the Falmer area during the 1930s, totally replacing the native Red Squirrels. Now, the nearest wild Red Squirrels to campus are those on the Isle of Wight. Despite intensive research, nobody knows why Red Squirrels were exterminated over most of Britain.

The Grey Squirrels on campus can currently be seen either collecting and burying seeds, such as those of Beech trees, or in wild pursuit of one another. Although these frantic mating chases will continue for a while, many females are already pregnant and will soon build new dreys (nests) or repair old ones. The dome-shaped dreys are usually in tree branches, but some are in holes in trees or buildings. They can be distinguished from Magpie nests (such as the one at the junction between North-South Road and Arts Road) because dreys contain leaves.

This is the time of year when any walk in the country will generate an optimistic whisper of spring and the Elders in the strip of woodland along the east side of campus are showing more than a hint of green. The plant is especially characteristic of disturbed and enriched soils such as are found around Rabbit warrens.

There is probably more folklore associated with Elder than with any other British plant. It was traditionally grown near the house to keep the Devil at bay, but burn it and you would be confronted by Satan himself.

Although January was rather grey and wet, as was confirmed by the University Weather Station records, it was sunny enough on the 25th for another herald of spring. This was an early male Brimstone, the original bright yellow 'Butter Fly', seen flying outside CPES.

These monthly articles about campus wildlife are available on the Bulletin's website (www.sussex.ac.uk/press_office/bulletin/) with links to pictures and additional information.
Lectures, seminars, colloquia

Mon 12 Feb 3.00pm–5.00pm International Relations and Politics Research-in-Progress Seminar: Noriko Fujishita (Sussex), Causation, ethics and 'common but differentiated responsibility'. C219.

4.00pm–5.00pm Experimental Psychology Colloquium: Gerry Allman (York). The time-course of constraint-application during sentence processing in visual contexts. Pev 2A12.

4.15pm–5.15pm Biochemistry and Genetics & Development Seminar: Mark Searle (Nottingham). Design of protein Beta Sheets. BLT.

5.00pm–6.30pm MA Creative Writing Arts & Education Open Seminar: Nicholas Royce (Sussex). Deconstruction and creative writing. EDB Room 303.


6.30pm Professorial Lecture: Craig Clunas (Sussex), Givers and receivers in Chinese art. Gicheser Lecture Theatre.


Thu 15 Feb 11.30am–1.05pm Economics Research-in-Progress Seminar: Susan Harkness (Sussex). Trends in female employment since the 1970s. D310.

5.00pm–6.00pm Development Lecture: Richard Wilson (Sussex). Human rights, reconciliation and revenge. A1.

5.00pm English Graduate Colloquium: Tiltotama Rajan (Western Ontario), Negritude, potentiality and the symbolic in Hegel’s aesthetics. A103.

5.00pm–6.30pm Media Studies Lecture: Stephanie Donald, title TBA. EDB 302.

5.00pm History Work-in-Progress Seminar: Nigel Hare (UCL). The wig ascendency. Why did men wear wigs in the long 18th century? A155.

5.30pm Postgraduate Research Seminar in Byzantine Studies: Angeliki Lymperopoulou (Birmingham), Churches in Cyprus. B355.

Fri 16 Feb 11.30am–12.30pm CCGS Pattern Recognition Seminar: Ben Taiter (Sussex), Vision in the natural world. Arundel 404A.

2.15pm SPRU Seminar: David Kelly (MoD). Technology governance, and the use and implementation of Iraq’s cease-fire undertakings. EDB 121.

5.00pm Poverty Research Unit Conference: Hans Binswanger, Reviving the stalled growth of rural poverty reduction: Challenges and opportunities. Terrace Room, Bramber House.


4.00pm–5.30pm Organic Chemistry Seminar: A. Spivey (Sheffield), title TBA. 3R241 (MS3).

4.00pm–5.00pm Sociology & Social Policy Graduate Faculty Seminar: Derek Rutter (Kent). Predicting and measuring attendance for breast screening. D310.

5.00pm–6.00pm Women’s Studies Research-in-Progress Seminar: Denise deCaires Netar (Sussex).

Contemporary postcolonial women’s writing: A global sisterhood? A155.

Tue 20 Feb 12.30pm–2.00pm Centre for Life History Seminar: Kevin Howells (South Australia). Pathways to violent crime. Library Meeting Room.


4.15pm–5.15pm History, Politics and Economics & Development Seminar: Frank Uhlmann (Imperial Cancer Research Fund), Separating sister chromatids, BLT.

5.00pm–6.30pm MA Creative Writing, Arts & Education Open Seminar: Maggie Gee, Can you be a creative writer and a critic? EDB 303.


5.00pm History Work-in-Progress Seminar: Rachel Hammersley (Sussex), Le Vieux Cordelier: A link between English and French republicanism. A155.

Fri 23 Feb 11.30am–12.30pm CCGS Pattern Recognition Seminar: Michael Tipping (Microsoft Research). Relevance vector machines. Arundel 404A.


Bulletin

The fortnightly Bulletin is written and produced by Alison Field and Peter Simmons, with regular contributions from Jacqui Bealing. We welcome any news, story ideas, letters or small ads from staff and students of the University. The next issue will be out on 23 February, with a copy deadline of 1pm on 16 February. Please contact the Press and Communications Office in Sussex House on ext. 8888 or email Bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.