Champagne flows at gala night

The University’s Chancellor, Lord Attenborough, hosted a special event on 5 July to mark the University’s 40th anniversary.

The celebration began with a concert of classical music in the Gardner Arts Centre, performed by the string ensemble of Trinity College of Music, one of the University’s partner institutions.

More than 450 students and staff from the past and present day then mingled with other distinguished guests over a champagne reception and buffet dinner in an adjacent marquee.

The guest list included local MPs David Lepper and Ivor Caplin, alumni such as the broadcasters Dermot Murnaghan and Simon Fanshawe, distinguished Sussex academics Professor Sir Harry Kroto and Professor John Maynard Smith, and three former vice-chancellors.

The current Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, said: “This is an occasion to thank all past members of the University for what they have done to make Sussex what it is.

Those of us still actively engaged with the work of the University should take inspiration from what they have achieved. Working together with enthusiasm and confidence, we can achieve still more. We have pride in the past, and also confidence in the future.”

Clockwise from top left: The string ensemble of Trinity College of Music open the evening in the Gardner Arts Centre; the musicians relax with a well-earned glass of bubbly; Professor Tim Flowers (BIOLS) and Professor Alan Lehmann (Cell Mutation Unit) talk shop; Dr Alison Jolly (BIOLS), Professor Chris Colclough (IDS) and Sarah Butler (Academic Office) smile for the camera; Rosie Murray, Dr Val Jenkins, Louise Leach and Dr Sarah Barker fly the flag for the CRC Psychosocial Oncology Group; Dr Peter Childs (EIT) and Dr Angie Hart (University of Brighton), former housemates in their undergraduate days at Sussex, are reunited.

University honours council chief

Among those receiving honorary degrees at the graduation ceremonies on 17 July were Glynn Jones, chief executive of Brighton and Hove City Council, who became Doctor of the University. Mr Jones (pictured right), who was nominated for the award in recognition of his work in the campaign to achieve city status for Brighton and Hove, said: “I am both delighted and honoured that Sussex has decided to award me an honorary doctorate. Since I came to Brighton in 1989, I have been a member of the Court and Council of the University, and have worked closely with each of its Vice-Chancellors.”

Dr Mamphela Ramphele (pictured right), who received a Doctor of Laws, has been widely honoured for her role in shaping the new South Africa. During the 1970s, while a medical student, she became an activist in the Black Consciousness Movement. Between 1977 and 1984 Dr Ramphele was banished by the government to a remote township, where she worked as a doctor with the rural poor.

In 1986 she joined the University of Cape Town and in 1996 became the first black woman to hold the post of vice-chancellor.

In 2000 Dr Ramphele joined the World Bank as a managing director, with responsibility for its development activities in education, health, nutrition and social protection.

Professor Michael Mingos (pictured right), who received a Doctor of Science, has gained an international reputation for his contributions to chemistry research. Currently principal of St Edmund Hall and professor of inorganic chemistry at the University of Oxford, Professor Mingos gained his DPhil at Sussex in 1968.

Owing to ill health, comedian Spike Milligan, who was to be made an honorary Doctor of Letters for his contribution to literature and entertainment, was not able to attend the graduation ceremonies. The University hopes to be able to confer the degree on him at a future occasion.

See page 2 for more graduation stories.
Two ‘firsts’ for Verity

Verity Johnson became a first-time mum during the final year of her BA in English Literature. And she still managed to get a ‘first’ for her degree, which she collected at the graduation ceremonies on 17 July.

“I hadn’t planned to have a baby, but when I found out I was pregnant I was determined to prove I could do both,” says Verity, 23, “I considered intermittently, but I thought I’d find it hard to get back into studying, and I don’t think it would have been any easier with a toddler to look after.”

Instead, while her classmates were out drinking and socialising, Verity made the most of putting her feet up at home and studying. She completed her dissertation during the Christmas vacation and gave birth in January to her little boy, Dumiso.

Posthumous degree for “excellent student”

A student who died in a car crash last summer received a posthumous degree at this year’s graduation ceremonies.

James Briffit had just finished his year abroad in America, as part of a four-year course in American Studies, when he was killed in a road accident in California. He was 22.

His girlfriend, Emily Hahn, who was studying on the same course, collected James’ degree, as well as her own, at the graduation ceremony at the Brighton Centre on 17 July.

For Emily, it was a celebration tinged with sorrow. She says: “There are no words to describe how special he was and how much we miss him.”

Although James had not completed the course, the University’s exam board were able to award him a degree based on the three years of study he had already done. Dr Andrew Crozier, Dean of the School of English and American Studies, says: “He was an excellent student and the arithmetic added up to award him a degree. In these circumstances there was also a strong case for compassion.”

James’ life as a student at Sussex will be remembered in other ways, too. His friends have planted an oak tree in his honour on campus. “He was a big man, six foot seven,” says Emily. “An oak tree seemed appropriate.”

He was also a keen surfer and his friends raised funds to buy a bench on Hove seafront, which bears an inscription of his own words: “Gaze at the ocean and see the souls of men reflected in the water.”

James died on 4 August last year on the day that Emily herself was flying home from her year in America. “The last time I saw him he had been so excited about his future,” she recalls. “He was so happy. That’s how we want to remember him.”

But she admits that her grief made completing her own degree a struggle. “Everyone in the School was great and made it possible for me to finish this year. I was doing it for the two of us.”

Family celebrate their three degrees

“Although we are a close family, we didn’t deliberately choose to come to the same university,” she adds. Gilman arrived first to do his BSc, then Sam and Jo applied independently. Jo was teaching at Varndean School in Brighton and wanted to return to academia, while Sam was living at the family home in Lancing and was keen to study locally.

Their mother, Carole Grundy, is delighted that their three oldest children were together for part of their university education: “Children tend to grow apart when they go off to college, but this has brought them back together. They realise the strength of unity.”

She also found it more economical for them to be graduating from the same university at the same time. “I managed to get a ‘two for the price of one’ deal on the gown hire,” she laughs.

She and her husband Bob attended the ceremony with their youngest son, Lot, who is studying philosophy at the University of London.

Septuagenarian Ken gets BA in French

Ken Goodwin was the oldest graduate at the graduation ceremonies on 17 July. The 70-year-old retired PR manager for BT in Coventry took a four-year degree course, which involved him spending a year at a university in the South of France.

Orphaned at the age of 12, Ken left school at 15 and originally trained as an electrician. He learned French while in the Royal Navy doing National Service and lived in France for three years when he retired in 1984.

“I wanted to take a degree because I felt I wanted to learn a bit more,” says Ken, who lives in Brighton. “I found the written work quite hard going, but the young people on my course were great. Young people know what life is about and they work hard and play hard. They got me out socialising with them and I’d sometimes roll home after midnight.”

He’s well and truly bitten by the learning experience and will be taking an MA in Early Modern History at Sussex this coming academic year.
At its meeting on 3 July, Senate had a long debate on the proposals to restructure Arts Schools. The debate was constructive and conducted in a good spirit, with mutual respect of opposing views. A full summary of the discussion will be made available at http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/vcoffice very soon.

Senate voted by 33 votes to 14 in favour of the proposal to create two Arts Schools and that proposal has now been adopted by Council. There was enthusiastic applause for Professor Alun Howkins’s appeal that, now the decision is made, we should all work together to make the new structure work.

I am well aware of concerns about the pace of change. We have agreed to a radical reshaping of the Arts curriculum and now to a radical reshaping of the Arts School structure. There are some important matters of detail to be determined – the precise division of subject groups between the new Schools and the configuration of Graduate Research Centres – but no further restructuring of Arts is on the agenda. The task for the next two years is to make a success of implementing what has now been agreed.

Central to making a success of the new structure is ensuring that an organisational division into two Schools does not become a barrier to academic activity. There is no neat academic line between the humanities and the social sciences, and wherever we draw the boundary, there will be degree programmes and research activities which cross that line. The new ‘social sciences’ school is not an expanded version of the existing School of Social Sciences, and might choose a name that reflects the permeability of its boundaries. Interdisciplinarity is not about drawing organisational lines in the right place – it requires a supportive institutional culture and practice. Deans will be expected actively to encourage and support cross-School activities as well as interdisciplinary teaching and research within their Schools.

The new Schools will be of a scale that will allow them to manage much more of their own business: admissions, curriculum management, examinations, research support and finance. I believe that a better balance of power and responsibility between academic units and the centre will make the University a much healthier organisation. Although the new Schools will be larger than our existing Arts Schools, the open School meeting should continue to have its role in our system. We have made a start on using the web to disseminate information and encourage discussion, and that needs further development.

Senate and Council also decided to set up a new Institute within which to locate law, social care, education and CCE. Over time, the operation of the two new Schools and the new Institute may lead to some relocation of faculty, but my strong personal view is that we should resist co-location by subject group so as to create a departmental geography.

There is much work to be done (and a possible restructuring of Science schools still to discuss), but we have an unusual opportunity to do exciting new things, and I hope that all colleagues will seize that opportunity with enthusiasm.

The Genome Damage and Stability Centre, currently under construction on campus, has received a major boost with the news of a generous £750,000 award from the Wolfson Foundation.

The purpose-built Centre, which will house about 100 scientists and support staff, will expand research at Sussex on the links between genome damage, genetic diseases and cancer – or to put it another way, how damage to our genes causes cancer, and why people with certain genetic diseases are particularly prone to cancer.

The new grant is by far the largest ever received by Sussex from the Wolfson Foundation. It will be added to the £5 million that the University was awarded in April 2000 from the Joint Infrastructure Fund (JIF) towards the cost of building the new laboratories, scheduled for completion in January 2002.

The estimated annual research running costs of £4 million will be met with funding from the Medical Research Council (MRC), Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, Cancer Research Campaign, European Union, Association for International Cancer Research, Leukaemia Research Fund, Human Frontier Science Program and the Nuffield Foundation.

The chairman of the Centre will be Professor Alan Lehmann, a molecular geneticist who is internationally renowned for his work on cancer-prone human genetic disorders caused by defects in the ability of the cells to repair genome damage.

"Cancer is in fact not one but more than a hundred different diseases," he explains. "These can be cured only when we understand at the basic level what goes wrong when normal cells change into cancer cells. By concentrating on the study of genetic diseases in which the cells' repair systems are faulty, researchers will eventually be able to diagnose and cure existing conditions as well as begin to understand how cancers arise."

MRC's Research Director in the Genome Damage and Stability Centre will be Dr Tony Carr, a yeast geneticist who studies the ways in which cell proliferation is affected by genome damage. Other senior research staff include Dr Chris Ford, Dr Penny Jeggo, Dr Johanne Murray and Dr Felicity Watts; the University will also be filling two new senior positions with international leaders in specific areas of genome damage and stability.

"Sussex has the highest concentration of internationally renowned experts working in the field of genome damage and stability," says the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Anthony Moore. "Maintaining this outstanding grouping is one of the driving forces behind the establishment of the Centre, whose research will lead to major developments in tackling one of the biggest killers in modern society."
Sussex European Institute founder says “Ciao”

Professor Helen Wallace, co-director of the Sussex European Institute (SEI), was given a warm send-off at a leaving party earlier this month. Helen is leaving Sussex after nine years to become director of the Robert Schuman Centre at the University of Lorraine in France.

At the party, Vice-Chancellor Professor Alasdair Smith reflected on the beginnings of the Sussex European Institute (SEI), at a time when he was Dean of the School of European Studies. It was Margaret Sharp of SPRU (Science and Technology Policy Research) who informed the then Vice-Chancellor, Sir Leslie Fielding, that the Foreign Office was looking to put money into research into European studies.

In the end no such money appeared, but the SEI was born and in the process Professor Jim Rollo, now co-director of SEI, recommended Helen Wallace for the role of director. “Helen’s is the best appointment I have ever made in my academic career,” said Alasdair.

Jim praised Helen’s “concern, commitment and intellectual rigour” and added: “This is not a farewell; Helen will still be a Professorial Fellow and part of the SEI team.”

Helen was presented with a book of comments from past and present SEI staff and students, and she thanked everyone at SEI for their collective efforts over the last nine years. She also thanked in particular Alasdair and SEI’s Executive Officer Viga Nicholson (pictured left with Helen), “to whom I owe a great deal”.

Helen’s replacement will be Professor Jörg Monar from the University of Leicester, who will become Professor of Contemporary European Studies and co-director of SEI at the beginning of October.

Small ads
FOR SALE: Desk-top computer, only £60 ono. Contact a.cheng@sussex.ac.uk or come to Flat 1, York House.

TO LET: Luxury seafront balcony flat in Kemp Town Regency Crescent. Hugge lounge, kitchen, bath/WC, bedroom and large rear patio plus use of private gardens. High ceilings, marble fireplaces, sunset views! Available mid-Sep on annual lease. £600 pcm. Tel. 606415.

FOR SALE: Macintosh Powerbook 1400CS1/17, 16 MB memory, PowerPC 603/117 Mhz processor, MacOs 7.6, Word for Mac 6.0; PCMCIA modem card DTK 2814; CD ROM drive. Sold with StyleWriter II printer. £400. Contact c.surprenant@sussex.ac.uk.

ACCOMMODATION WANTED: Couple (no kids) from USA seek 2-bed flat/house in just outside B’ton, 4 Sept-15 Dec. Ideally close to a bus route and as close to the water as possible. Contact Bensenter@aol.com.

WANTED TO RENT: Furnished flat/house in central B’ton/Hove/Lewes or nearby country from 1 Jan-31 July. For responsible, non-smoking visiting professor and wife. Can provide refs. Contact benedict.3@uoc.edu.

LIFT SHARE WANTED: From Horsham area to Uni and back for member of staff with disabled parking badge and guide dog. Tues, Weds & Fri. Will pay petrol costs. Email jane@jswigley.fsnet.co.uk.

TO LET: Spacious apartment in St Annes Crescent, Lewes. 2 beds/2 recs (or 3 beds/1 rec) on 2 floors of Victorian house. £800 pcm, available 1 Aug. Suit family/faculty. (Sorry, no sharers.) Tel. Karen on 475717 or email karenreaff@hotmail.com.

ACCOMMODATION WANTED: Senior research scientist on sabbatical in B’ton seeks house or flat for rent (Sept 2001–July 2002). Email drakeidf.ext.jussieu.fr.

SHORT-STAY ACCOMMODATION: Wanted for visiting academic to SEI plus husband and son. Fully furnished, self-catering house/flat (pref. 3-bed) in Lewes or B’ton. From last week of July–end Aug. £700 pcm or below. Email kahraman@metu.edu.tr. Tel. +90 312 438 75 00 (eves).

FLAT SHARE: One person wanted for long double room in Hove 2-bed flat. Close to sea, station and shops. Suit professional non-smoker. Available 16 Aug. For min. 6 mths £375pcm excl. bills. Ext. 8146 (day), tel. 727610 (eves), email l.murray@sussex.ac.uk.

Staff vacancies
Apply by 26 July
Secretary, Royal Naval Unit (pt-time, ref 209)
Clerical Officer, International & Study Abroad Office (ref 211)
Student Advice Centre Manager, USSU (ref 212)
Unit Administrator / PA to Director, CRC Psychosocial Oncology Group (ref 021b)
Send two copies of CV to Dr Valerie Jenkins in the CRC Psychosocial Oncology Group, BIOLS.
Cleaner / Tea Person, EIT (ref 020b)
Contact Terry Evans on ext. 8553 for further details.

Apply by 30 July
Clerical Assistant, Academic Registry (ref 208)
For further details, see www.sussex.ac.uk/units/staffing/personnel/vacs or contact Staffing Services on (01273) 678706, fax (01273) 677401, email recruitment@sussex.ac.uk.

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 3 August, with a copy deadline of 1pm on 27 July. Please contact the Press and Communications Office in Sussex House on ext. 8888 or email Bulletin@sussex.ac.uk