University rejects racist views

The University of Sussex strongly dissociated itself this week from the personal views on race of Geoffrey Sampson, Professor of Natural Language Processing.

Professor Sampson (pictured) had posted an item on his personal website called 'There's nothing wrong with racism'. The Observer newspaper ran a story on Sunday (12 May) exposing his views, in an apparent attempt to embarrass the Conservative party, for which Professor Sampson was a district councillor on Wealden Council. The article appeared in the wake of a turbulent period for race relations in Britain and continental Europe.

In a statement, the University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, said: "The University of Sussex does not share or condone Professor Sampson's personal views on race in any way. We have a long and proud history of teaching and research involving staff and students of all backgrounds, from the UK and overseas, and strong involvement in international development issues. This will continue to be a core part of life at Sussex." He affirmed the University's commitment to equality and diversity.

Professor Sampson stood by his article. He told the Bulletin: "People have very much misunderstood what I was trying to say. It has been misinterpreted to mean things that I wouldn't dream of believing. But I very much regret the headline, which was provocative and misleading."

A number of individuals, both within and outside the University, have contacted the Vice-Chancellor to express their concern both at Professor Sampson's racist views and that the University should not be identified with them.

"Some have gone further and demanded his dismissal. In his statement, however, the Vice-Chancellor said: "The principle of academic freedom recognises an individual's right to express personal views, however unpalatable they are to others."

Professor Sampson also insisted that he was entitled to stay in post: "I would hope that a university would recognise the right of its members to pursue thoughts in directions including ones that may be unpopular."

In its official response to Professor Sampson's article, the Students' Union expressed concern about the potential effects of his views on his teaching: "Mr Sampson's views could well have an unfair impact on the way that he treats his students, and would clearly make ethnic minority students in his classes feel uncomfortable."

Professor Sampson responded: "I've always kept politics and my professional life entirely separate. I treat individuals as I find them. To treat individuals differently on the basis of race would be an appalling thing for any of us to do."

The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that the University would be very careful to ensure that Professor Sampson's views do not affect his treatment of students or other staff. He said: "If any member of the University were guilty of discriminatory behaviour, we would treat that as a matter of the utmost gravity."

For he's a jolly good fellow

Chemist Professor Tony Slade, from CPES, learnt this week of his election as a new Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS).

Election to the Fellowship of the Royal Society is recognised world-wide as a sign of the highest regard in science. A maximum of only 42 Fellows may be elected annually. Candidates must be proposed by at least six existing Fellows and are assessed by committees in each major field of science.

Tony, aged 53, first came to Sussex in 1974 as a research fellow and was awarded his professorship in 1993. He is the leading UK expert on gas-phase microclusters.

"Microclusters consisting of finite collections of atoms and molecules can be used to examine the relationship between the chemical and physical properties of a substance and its size," he explained. For example, we might wish to know how many copper atoms it takes to construct an electrical conductor, or how many water molecules we need to dissolve sodium chloride.

Within the past 20 years, methods have become available that make it possible to produce microclusters from almost any material. Recent experiments have ranged from the search for superfluidity in helium clusters through to studying the onset of cloud formation via ion nucleation processes at very high altitudes.

Tony's own work in recent years has concentrated on the development of techniques for generating stable transition metal complexes in the gas-phase. He said: "This has opened up a new field of experiment which promises to advance significantly our fundamental understanding of the behaviour of metal ions in solution."

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International education research workshop

Researchers from Botswana and Ghana joined USIE faculty last month for an international workshop at Sussex to discuss findings from their research project entitled ‘Gendered school experiences: Impact on retention and achievement’.

This project has involved two teams of researchers collecting data from six case-study secondary schools in their respective countries. Although the project includes quantitative data, it is the scale and depth of the qualitative data that is breaking relatively new ground in the international education scene, as very little in-depth work has been done within schools and classrooms.

Botswana and Ghana were chosen to take part in the study because they represent different configurations of access, retention and achievement in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study, which is funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), explores how secondary schools constitute and/or reinforce gendered identities, both in formal and more informal aspects of their institutional life.

According to USIE’s Dr Mairéad Dunne, “So far this has proved a very rich arena for research, raising significant issues that have implications for educational institutions in all sectors and in other national contexts, irrespective of their economic status.”

Big bucks for Big Bang scientists

A £1.7 million science laboratory for studying one of the great mysteries of the Universe opened on campus this week.

The Centre for the Measurement of Particle Electric Dipole Moments has been equipped with the very latest technology to help scientists discover what happened in the aftermath of the ‘Big Bang’.

Ed Hinds, Professor of Experimental Physics (pictured) and director of the new centre, says: “This is a unique and very exciting project. We hope eventually to find out what happened between ‘matter’ and ‘anti-matter’ when the Universe was created.”

The question that has vexed scientists and astronomers for decades is why there is more matter in the Universe than anti-matter. Both were formed at the time of the Big Bang, which is predicted to have been about 15 billion years ago. For every particle formed, an anti-particle should also have been formed. Almost immediately, however, the equal numbers of particles and anti-particles would have annihilated each other, leaving nothing but light. The theory is that somehow – we do not know how – more particles must have been created than anti-particles, which is how the stars and planets came into existence.

Anti-matter now exists only at the sub-atomic level. Ed and his team therefore need high-powered microscopes and lasers for their study. The work involves looking at neutrons and electrons within atoms and measuring the distribution of their electric charge, or their “electric dipole moment”.

“We haven’t yet been able to see these dipole moments,” says Ed, who has spent the past 20 years in this area of research. “But with advancing technology, we’re now on the verge of a breakthrough.”

Funding for the project has come from the Office of Science and Technology, overseen by the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC). The centre was opened by Alun Anderson, editor of the New Scientist and a Sussex alumnus.

Research funding opportunities

More details of these and other research opportunities are available from the Research Services Division (RSD). Please contact your Research Support Officer for more information. For an extensive listing of funding opportunities, see COS at www.cos.com

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<tr>
<th>Scheme</th>
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<td>AHRB Resource Enhancement</td>
<td>The scheme provides awards up to £300,000 (max. £100,000 per annum) to support projects that are designed to enhance access to and the availability of research materials and resources of key importance to the arts and humanities.</td>
<td>31 May</td>
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<tr>
<td>European Science Foundation Collaborative Research</td>
<td>Applications are invited for projects on any topic within the social sciences that demonstrate an international framework for research collaboration. Funding of up to 5 years for travel, exchanges, workshops and postdoc salaries.</td>
<td>1 June</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBSRC Responsive Mode</td>
<td>The next administrative cut-off date for research grant applications to be considered at the October committee meeting is 10 June. Please note that the BBSRC will now automatically reject incomplete or late applications. Please contact the RSD for the BBSRC checklist.</td>
<td>10 June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leverhulme Symposium</td>
<td>Applications are invited for a new scheme that will fund one major symposium in 2004 up to a maximum value of £250,000. The symposium should be multidisciplinary, engage a wide audience and reflect the benefits and consequences of research.</td>
<td>15 June</td>
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<td>EPSRC Industrial Sustainability Networks</td>
<td>Proposals are invited that link academic and industrial groups. Among the key themes are: product life extension; design for remanufacture; miniaturisation; and industrial symbiosis. Funding of up to £60k</td>
<td>20 September</td>
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Levelling the playing field

Disabled students at Sussex

September 2002 sees the introduction of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, which will have a major impact on the provision universities will be expected to make for students with disabilities. In the first of a series of articles highlighting disability issues, Bulletin spoke to Andy Dalby-Walsh about his experiences at Sussex.

Andy’s particular gripe is with the steps around campus – almost every single one of them. The problem is, that to a visually impaired person, the uniform colour of the steps makes them particularly difficult to navigate: “The steps all just blend together. It’s not too bad going up because you can feel them, but going down I’ve almost fallen countless times.”

The solution is to paint white stripes on steps. These stand out against the dark natural colour of the steps and help the visually impaired to see them. At the Library’s disabled entrance this was done but, according to Andy, it’s not enough: “They painted them such a long time ago that half of them have got paint and half have lost it. So effectively it’s even worse than none being painted at all!”

Andy is about to complete his second year of an undergraduate degree in Social Policy. Registered blind, his eyesight began to deteriorate three years ago. Andy’s genetic disorder (Lebers Optic Neuropathy) means he has no central vision, only peripheral: "To put it simply, I can’t see what I look at. And everything I do see is a blur."

When he arrived at Sussex, Andy was assessed to gauge what his particular academic needs were. These include a special talking computer that reads scanned book pages to him, as well as funds for note takers and readers. Note takers jot down notes for Andy in lectures, then email them to his talking computer. Readers enable Andy to work from books that might be available only in the Library. Luckily, his reader is also on his degree: “She has a bit of knowledge about what I’m doing rather than someone with no idea, which can waste a lot of time.”

With these resources in place, Andy gets on with his studies much like other students: “I’ve been very fortunate. There aren’t many of us on Social Policy and the lecturers are extremely sensitive to my needs, even down to not leaving stuff on the floor of seminar rooms in case I trip.”

However, he still has some problems in seminars involving videos: “Most of the time I can pick up the gist from the narration, although I skipped one seminar because I knew the video would show subtitles. But I knew and accepted that when I started the degree.”
All in a day's work

Alison Field
Communications Officer

To say that Professor Geoffrey Sampson has hogged the headlines in recent days would be putting it mildly as far as the University of Sussex is concerned. The Observer broke the story on Sunday (12 May) that the COGS professor, who was also a Conservative councillor in Uckfield, had posted an article on his personal website entitled 'There's nothing wrong with racism'.

Geoffrey defended his views both nationally (on the BBC Radio 4 'Today' programme) and locally (to the Argus), but did resign as a councillor and Conservative party member. Regional media – including the press, radio and TV – all picked up the story and many journalists contacted the University for comment.

Meanwhile, Professor Ed Hinds from CPES was having a number of dipole moments on the occasion of the launch of a new centre funded by £1.7m from the government's Joint Infrastructure Fund (JIF). Ed appeared this week on regional BBC radio and TV and in the local press. He also has high hopes of making it into the New Scientist seeing that it was the magazine's editor, Dr Alan Anderson, who declared the new centre officially open.

Another scientist, Dr Jonathan Hare, continued to entertain viewers with his experimental antics on BBC TV. 'Rough Science' – a challenge show set on an island in the Caribbean – will be appearing weekly on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm until 12 June.

Rather closer to home, Geoff Mead could be heard on Radio 4 today (17 May) taking 'Ramblings' presenter Clare Balding for a walk from Berwick to Glynde. The series explores the British landscape and our relation to it, so listeners could not have had a better companion than Geoff, who teaches landscape studies for CCE.

Rumour has it the Bolthole café in the Library has started selling Red Bull to enable finalists to stay awake during their revision. A steady stream of students must be buying the sticky energy drink and waiting for its caffeine buzz to sink in. Certainly the Library air is thick with the chatter of deadlines and spectacular computer crashes wiping years of work. Saskia Sano, in her final year of an Italian Studies degree, isn't worrying too much, though. She thinks she's got this finalist thing sorted.

At the moment I'm working on a 4,000 word essay on Galileo. I've got a week to go and I'm halfway through writing it. Next Monday's deadline is certainly looming but compared to some people I think I'll be OK. I aim to get all my work in for nine o'clock on the dot. I just can't be doing with the stress of the final year. You see people running around like banshees, sobbing into their 12th tea that day and cursing the fact they even started uni. And the thing is I could be like that as well. But I've forced myself to be organised because of the horror stories. You know: quarter to five on deadline day in Pevensey and the printer finally dies. I mean, how awful has that got to be? Your dissertation's scuppered by a piece of machinery. Then there's the five o'clock run where people who have handed their work in sit on the grass outside Falmer Bar and cheer the strugglers sprinting past them. I'm not going to be one of those runners!

Quarter to five on deadline day in Pevensey and the printer finally dies. I mean, how awful has that got to be?

I can't let myself do either of these so I've got a plan together – to treat it like a job. I get up at eight and get to the Library for about nine. I spend some time in there researching and making notes and then head down to the language labs in EURO to use the computers. By about four or five I just decide that's it and I head home. I live with my boyfriend who's not a student so I can switch off at night and watch TV. Sometimes I might do notes but you have to know when to stop working.

The weird thing is, though, I'm eating more! It's like as soon as I get into the Library I feel hungry and I just end up constantly going for breaks to snack. Sandwiches, chocolate, coffee ... I'm sure it has absolutely nothing to do with procrastination.

I still manage to fit in a job as a barista at Starbucks. I've worked there since it opened two years ago and when I finish my degree I'm going to work full time as assistant manager to save up some cash. So it seems silly to stop now. It's not always easy to make lattes when you know you have all these essays hanging over you and I did cut my hours down, but it has its perks. Firstly, working one day a week lets you think about something else and you still earn money. Besides, an Italian girl called Catorina also works at the shop and she helps me with my oral Italian while we mix frappuccinos.

I'm writing essays on a few of my courses that I did before Christmas, and it's a struggle to always remember that far back when your most recent courses are freshest in your mind. But it's a bit like stressing out. We're all in the same boat and we all have essays to do about subjects months old. You've just got to do it.

When I hand in my work on Monday 20 May I'm not going to sit on the grass outside Falmer bar. Instead I'm going straight to the airport. Between Monday and Wednesday I'm going to stay with my ex-flatmate Claudio in Bologna, just before my Italian exams. I figure the best way to revise for my oral is go and speak it in Italy. And yes, I shall be getting drunk on Monday night; but because I'll be in Italy I'll be revising as well!

To tell the truth, I just want to finish, do my exams and have done with it. And a lot of my friends do too. Because of the year abroad, this is my fourth year on the course and although I love Italy I just want to stop studying it and start doing it. I'm itching to spend another year in Italy and travel a bit.

My work here will soon be done. Thank god!
Letters

Dear Editor

We wish to condemn the statements of Geoffrey Sampson, who, in his position as a professor at the University of Sussex, has publicly justified racism.

Sampson’s justifications, as stated on his website and in the media, are based on a discredited pseudo-psychology.

(1) Current research and theory in psychology and biology suggests that there is no genetic basis for ‘racial’ categories. What counts as ‘racial’ similarity or dissimilarity is socially, culturally and historically constructed.

(2) The use of biological arguments for genetic self-interest to naturalize and reify supposed preferences for those who are ‘similar’ to ourselves thereby fails. Moreover, history and contemporary research is replete with examples of shared commitments which cannot plausibly be reduced to explanations in terms of genetic commonalities (as well as group conflicts which cannot plausibly be explained in terms of ‘race’, even were there a genetic basis for this construct).

(3) Research does not support the view that different ‘races’ have different average levels of general intelligence. Available research on IQ differences has not adequately controlled for differences in environmental circumstances. It remains unclear, therefore, what factors lead to group differences in IQ scores. Sampson’s view does not reflect evidence-based theory in psychology.

Contrary to Sampson’s claims, it is not the mixing of ‘different peoples’ that is inherently dangerous, but the use by academics of arguments which indicate that racism is natural and inevitable.

We the undersigned think that it is deplorable that a university professor, who is in a position of power among students of different backgrounds, should be actively involved in the rationalization of racism. Professor Sampson’s views stand in stark contrast to moves towards widenidng access to, and ensuring equality of opportunities within, higher education.

Yours sincerely

Prof Charles Abraham, Dr Helga Dittmar, Dr John Drury, Dr Donna Jessop, Prof Karen Long, Prof Peter Smith, Dr Paul Sparks, Dr Viv Vignoles (Social Psychology, University of Sussex)

Dr Andy Field, Dr Graham Hole (Psychology, University of Sussex)

Dr John Dixon (Lancaster), Prof Michael Billig (Loughborough), Prof Clifford Stott (Liverpool), Prof Ian Parker (Manchester Metropolitan), Michael Burt, Andrea Loftus, Rachael Powell, Dr Steve Reicher (St Andrews)

University silver on display

Three items from the University’s silver collection are on loan for the next five years to Brighton Museum, which re-opened this month after refurbishment.

The three water jugs, each one part of a pair that were presented to the University when it was first established, provide an important example of silversmith design for the 1960s and complement both earlier and later exhibits.

“it is a great delight for us to have them on public display,” said Dorothy Sheridan, Head of Special Collections. “They look lovely in the cases.”

Oarsome couple win sports awards

Guests at the Sports Federation awards ceremony on 10 May were surprised to find out that the University of Sussex sportsman and sportswoman of the year came from the same sports club. But the twon winners have more in common than that: they are in a relationship!

Tom Pattichis, an English finalist and Karen Goodwin, a second year Maths student, are both part of the rowing team that took most of the honours at the awards ceremony at the Hilton Brighton West Pier hotel. Karen also received a Sports Federation award, while rowing was named overall club of the year.

Karen said of the double honour: “We were both obviously thrilled, but to be honest we were more interested in rowing winning club of the year than anything. The club is the reason we put the effort in we do, and while it’s nice to be recognised individually we were more pleased that rowing won a total of four awards on the night.”

Tom said of the award: “The fact I won sportsman and then my girlfriend won sportswoman of the year made the whole night unbelievable.”

The sportsman and woman awards were shared this year with John Cruft from men’s rugby and Sorcha Matthews of women’s basketball. Women’s football grabbed team of the year.

A new innovation this year was the inclusion of a staff award. Wish Mary Sciretta went off with the inaugural honour for her work in setting up Scratching the University ballet club. A performer and a teacher, which includes being a former ballet mistress with the Royal Ballet in Covent Garden, Wish has built up the club to four classes a week and has been known to come on to campus to teach just one student.

Karen Dunster, Head of Sport, who was involved in the organisation of the event, was highly impressed at the success of the evening: “It was an excellent night and full credit should go to the Sports Federation executive for running it. I think Sussex has been long overdue in having an annual sports dinner and its success has more than justified it as an annual event.”

Final year performance exams

After three years of study, music finalists will be performing various works at the Gardner Arts Centre and the Meeting House this month.

The day-long event begins at the Meeting House at 10.00 am with Tom Norrell (percussion) followed by Jane Wilce (violin) at 10.45 am. The event then moves to the Gardner Arts Centre for pianists Heather Bowling at 11.45 am and Jo Rayner at 12.30 pm. At 2.15 pm, back in the Meeting House, Heidi Norris-Jones plays the saxophone followed by Suzie Barrett on cello at 3.00 pm, Gemma Partridge on viola at 3.45 pm and finally Fiona Titbury on saxophone at 4.30 pm. All are welcome and admission is free.
Obituary

Joy Bright

Joy Bright, a switchboard telephone at Sussex for 17 years from 1966 died on Wednesday (15 May) at the age of 69. Joy had been suffering from cancer for the last six years and died at the Martlets hospice in Hove. As well as being a keen cyclist, canoeist and photographer, Joy also had a hörris hawk that she trained and flew on campus. Telephone operator Pat Lamminman said that she was "just very nice, a very unobtrusive sort of person". Diane King from Estates, who had known Joy for many years, agreed: "She was a lovely person, very helpful and extremely good at what she did."

The Times league table

The Times newspaper has ranked Sussex 44th out of 101 universities in its annual league tables. This is one place lower than last year, when it was placed 43rd.

Subjects in which Sussex appears in the top ten are American Studies (=3rd), Anthropology (5th), Linguistics (6th), Media Studies (7th), Music (8th), Philosophy (9th) and Sociology (3rd).

Sussex is not alone among leading universities in having a number of serious concerns about the methodology used by The Times to produce its league tables.

In particular, the score for teaching quality (which is given a high weighting towards the overall total) relies quite heavily on subject assessments, which are now over eight years old and which were not intended to be used for comparative purposes.

It is disappointing for the University to drop one place in the overall table since last year given that its performance has improved for eight of the nine indicators used by The Times. Overall, in the 2001 table the University's total score was 70.8 per cent of the maximum possible, whereas this year it is 75.8 per cent.

Barbara Castle, ‘founding mother’ of IDS, dies

Barbara Castle, who died on 6 May, played a critical role in the establishment of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) on campus.

As the first-ever Minister of Overseas Development (in the Labour government elected in 1964), she promoted proposals for establishing a special institution for training and research, and then decided to locate it at the new University of Sussex rather than at Oxford, which had also put in a bid.

In the summer of 1965 the newly founded Ministry's first White Paper was issued, announcing a "major new initiative": a development institution, to be established at Sussex. The first staff arrived in January 1966 and the IDS opened in April of that year.

Dr Richard Jolly, Emeritus Fellow at IDS, said: "We can all thank Barbara for her pioneering leadership and determination – and for creating IDS and bringing it to Sussex."

Tommy Gee, the first Administrative Secretary of IDS, referred to Barbara Castle as its "founding mother". He said: "One of her bigger achievements ... was IDS, which has had a far greater influence on the world in general and British overseas development policy in particular, than her other activities."

First class

Professor John Dearlove has been appointed as one of four non-executive board members of the New Brighton and Hove City Primary Care Trust. John is a former non-executive director of the East Sussex, Brighton and Hove Health Authority.

Professor John Nixon (CFES) recently travelled to Bayreuth in Germany to receive the Alexander von Humboldt Research award for his "trail blazing achievements in phospho-organometallic chemistry".

Small Ads

TO LET: Single room in quiet Hanover house. Suit non-smoking PG/staff/mature student. Telephone number. £120 PCM, £150 All Inc. Own room. Tel 670099.

WANTED: 2-bed flat/house in Hove for family members visiting from Hong Kong 7-13 Aug. B&B only, spending most of the day out. House/pet-sit and/or pay agreed rent. Contact Janet Stuart on 8711 or 883619.

TO LET: 3-bed house with garden in Fiveways. Suitable for family or visiting or temporary family. 19th Dec to 31st Jan. £300 PCM. Replaceable. Tel 645 7777.

TO LET: Furnished apartment in Victorian house in Lewes. 2 large beds, 2 large recs, kitchen, bathroom + 2nd WC. Suitable for family or executive. £550 PCM. Available from 1st Aug. Email ray@ray(mail)internet.co.uk or phone 07876 626930.

For further details, see www.sussex.ac.uk/units/staffing/personnel/vacancies or contact Staffing Services on ext. 6706, fax 67041, email recruitment@sussex.ac.uk.

Visit our website at www.davidspenceifa.co.uk or CALL NOW on FREEPHONE 0800 3898 125 or email us at: clientservices@davidspenceifa.co.uk

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Vegetation that isn’t vegetarian

Christopher Swayne
Biology finalist

Have you ever been curious to know how certain plants are able to catch and ‘eat’ insects? Maybe it seems slightly strange to you that while numerous humans choose to eat solely plants, some plants themselves seem quite happy eating flesh! Well, your questions may soon be answered by a group of faculty members and undergraduates from BIOLS.

If you’re interested in carnivorous flora you’re in good company; the eminent Charles Darwin was fascinated by insectivorous plants and undertook much of the early work on the subject. Since his initial work many other scientists have aimed better to understand the complex biology of these intriguing species.

Collectively the carnivorous plants are a much more diverse group of flora than most people realise. Simply mentioning the words ‘carnivorous’ and ‘plants’ to most people will typically conjure up a mundane image of the spring-loaded traps of the Venus Fly Trap (Dionaea muscipula).

In reality, however, there are more than 500 species of carnivorous plants that utilise an extensive variety of trapping mechanisms. They can be above or below ground, aquatic or terrestrial, active or passive, even sticky or deadly smooth. However, they all have one thing in common: they are very well adapted to attracting, killing and digesting their main insect prey.

Dr Peter Scott and Dr Carlton Wood, together with four finalists from BIOLS (including myself) are currently in the process of completing an interactive CD-ROM that encompasses all aspects of the fascinating biology of the carnivorous plants.

The aim of the project is to accumulate as much scientific information as possible on carnivorous plants and to present this information in an informative and educational manner. The short-term goal of the project is to promote the CD-ROM for school and university use, and the long-term plan is to turn the information amassed within the CD into a reference book on carnivorous plants.

State of a nation addressed

Islam, abortion, born-again virgins – all are topical issues facing America today and all were explored in an innovative student-led conference on 2 May.

‘Unravelling the Stars and Stripes: Thoughts on America’s Past and Present’ was organised almost entirely by final-year American Social Studies and American History undergraduates. Throughout the day a series of talks were given by each student on their dissertation topic, interspersed with debates chaired by students. For instance, ‘Bush vs bush’ included a debate and talks focusing on changes in attitude to sex education and abortion since George W. Bush came to power.

The highlight of the day was a talk by Afro-American writer and critic Bonnie Greer, who regularly appears in the Guardian and on the BBC’s ‘Newsnight’ review. She suggested that history is constantly in danger of being ‘revised’, citing the example of the ‘rehabilitation’ of ex-president Richard Nixon’s legacy, recasting him as a peacemaker while sweeping away his corruption scandals. Moving onto today, she asked: “What would George Bush be without September 11? After all, he was simply a joke before it.”

Commenting on the campus event, she said, “This conference has been very powerful to me. The students here are demonstrating new and varied approaches to America, which is like a breath of fresh air.”

Now in its second year, the conference is organised by volunteer students from American Studies with the help of Dr Annis May Timpson, a careers tutor in the School of English and American Studies. She sees the project as a new way to both engage with and take something useful from their studies: “The point of the exercise is to help students develop some transferable skills around conference organising and presentation. But it has also made them aware of each others’ findings.”

Funding of £2,000 was provided by HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England), which also supported the conference last year.

Student Nicky Gunter, who chaired a talk on Washington’s world view, says she found the conference a positive and rewarding experience: “Preparing for the conference helped me get more involved with my research and to receive vital feedback from others.”

Students suddenly die outside Library: all survive

Around 20 students simultaneously died in Library Square last Tuesday (7 May). Blood-splattered bodies littered the concrete while onlookers stared at their lifeless faces. Luckily, after about 10 minutes they dusted themselves down and resumed living.

Organised jointly by the student societies of Amnesty International and People and Planet, the event was a mass ‘die-in’ to raise awareness of new arms-control laws in Britain.

Flanked by a banner reading ‘No More Blood on British Hands’, Mark Rowley, a 3rd year BIOLS student and organiser of the event on behalf of People and Planet, said: “The new laws do restrict the activities of British arms dealers in the UK, but not abroad. So a dealer could simply hop across the border and do a deal there to oppressive regimes. This new legislation also turns a blind eye to the end use of such weapons and allows no parliamentary scrutiny of arms sales.”

Protesters urged passers-by to sign letters to MPs – either with a pen, or with a bloody hand print (simulated by red acrylic paint). Anna Weschke, a 1st year AFRA student and Amnesty International organiser, was clearly pleased after her near-death experience and commented about the event’s success: “This is so much better than just standing around shouting!”

The 2002 Bulletin is published on 17 May 2002. It includes articles on the conference, the Die-in, and a report on the students who died.
Lectures, seminars, colloquia

Mon 20 May
12.30pm Continuing Education Research Forum: Margaret Pl首届ington, (Sussex), Active citizenship and the environment: Responsibilities or rights. Arts D310.

1.00pm Experimental Psychology Seminar: John Worley and Charlotte Roberts (Sussex), Tracking median vertical plane contunity. EP Seminar Room 4D/13/4D.

2.00pm Research on Languages and Linguistics Seminar: Patrick McConville (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies), Focus, pronominal enclitics and relative clauses in Nguumpin-Yapa languages (Australia). Arts A155.

4.00pm Quresy Seminar / English Graduate Colloquium: Leo Bersani (Berkeley), Sociality and cruising. Arts A5.

4.30pm Organic Chemistry Colloquium: Clive Cornell (SCNWXIKS Europe), New Approaches in the design and synthesis of biologically active compounds. CH13-3R24.

Tue 21 May
1.00pm IOD Seminar Series on Crisis, Islam and Development: Deniz Kandiyoti (SDAS), Islam in post-Soviet Central Asia, with special reference to Uzbekistan. IDS 120.

2.15pm SEI Research-in-Progress Seminar: Prof Maes (Louvain, Belgium), On the origins of the Franco-German EMU controversies. Arts A71.

4.15pm Biochemistry and Genetics & Development Studies: Mark O'Driscoll (Sussex), Defective DNA nonhomologous end-joining in humans: Clinical and cellular features of DNA lissave IV syndrome. Biology Lecture Theatre.

5.00pm Creative Writing Open Seminar: Poets Andreilla Hollandi Budy and Paul Matthews share a platform and read from recent work. Meeting House Quiet Room.

5.00pm American Studies Open Seminar: Catherine Clinton (The Citadel, South Carolina), Arts A71.

Wed 22 May
1.00pm IODS Special Seminar: Daw Nita Yin Yin May (BBC Burma Section), Aung Moe Zaw and Jaquelline Ann Pollock, 'Challenges for the transition to democracy in Burma'. IDS 221.

4.30pm History of Art Research Seminar: Charlotte Townsend-Gault, (British Columbia), Masked relations display and disguise on the Northwest coast. Arts A103.

5.00pm Migration Research Seminar: Jacqueline Andall (Bath), Second-generation attitude? African-Italian in Milan. Arts D630.

Thu 23 May
12.30pm Inorganic Discussion Group: Matthew Davidson (Bath). Title TBA. Chichester 3R143.

1.00pm IOD Seminar: Resisting 'development?': Protest and the pursuit of alternatives: Lyla Mehta (Sussex), Gender, displacement and resistance. IDS 221.

1.45pm Gordon Gribble (Dartmouth College, USA), Novel indole chemistry in the synthesis of heterocycles. ENGS 2-A3.


Fri 24 May
2.15pm SPRU Friday Seminar: Nick Jagger (Sussex), The recruitment challenge for British science. EB 121.

3.30pm Philosophy Society: Jonathan Wolff (UCL), Why can't I sell my job? Arts A155.

Mon 27 May

1.00pm Experimental Psychology: Pascal Gyggay (Sussex), Understanding characters' emotions in text. Does this man feel sad, or just useless? 4D13/4D.

5.00pm Literary and Intellectual History Seminar: Abigail Williams (Oxford), Whatever happened to Charles Montagu? Whig poetry and the formation of the 18th-century canon. Arts B261-265.

Tue 28 May
2.15pm SEI Research-in-Progress Seminar: Sean Hanley (Brunel), The centre right in post-Communist east central Europe: Comparative issues and comparative analysis. Arts A71.

4.00pm CDOG Seminar: Kevin Warwick (Reading), When will cyborgs rule the world? Biology Lecture Theatre.

4.15pm Biochemistry and Genetics & Development Studies: Chris Proud (Dundee), Signalling to translation: The control of protein synthesis by nutrients and hormones. Biology Lecture Theatre.

5.00pm American Studies Open Seminar: Susana Araujo (Sussex), title TBA.

Wed 29 May
2.00pm Centre for Life History Research Seminar: Ken Pimmmer (Essex), Documents of life: Issues and transformations in life history research. Meeting House.

4.30pm History of Art Research Seminar: Vahid Sadr (Sussex), On reading buildings: Two Indian courtyard. Arts A103.

5.00pm Migration Research Seminar: Ricardo Sabates (Wisconsin), Migration from Mexico City to medium urban centres. Arts D630.

Thu 30 May
12.30pm Inorganic Discussion Group: Robert Davies (imperial), title TBA. Chichester 3R143.