Many of Sussex's most longstanding academics will formally retire at this month after distinguished careers on campus.

One of them is Professor Jennifer Platt (pictured right), whose career has spanned many leading roles in the world of sociology, as well as a landmark campus pregnancy.

Jennifer arrived in 1964, barely three years after the University first opened. Her office was in a terrapin opposite what is now Bramber House, and there were no school common rooms. Instead, all the campus academics would meet in the Senior Common Room (then in Palmer House).

Jennifer went on to marry mathematician Charles Goldie, now Dean of SMS. Her ensuing pregnancy came in an era when time off to have a baby was unheard of. She took sick leave – the first pregnant woman at Sussex to do so – and shortly thereafter, a committee was set up to make proposals for maternity leave.

Outside Sussex, Jennifer became president of the British Sociological Association. To mark her retirement a conference will be held next week (27 and 28 September) exploring the history and practice of sociology and social research, Jennifer’s particular areas of study.

Professor John Nixon (pictured right), who will shortly turn off his Bunsen burner for the last time, has been at Sussex for almost as long as Jennifer and has had an equally auspicious career. Dean of MOLS from 1989-92, he was also made a fellow of the Royal Society.

Like Jennifer, he remembers how the Senior Common Room (SCR) was the hub of faculty socialising in the 1960s: “There was this jazz band called the Sussex Truggs that was completely made up of academics. They would entertain us all in the SCR. Then there were the SCR cricket teams, made up of a mix of arts and science faculty.”

As well as becoming dean, John also served on Planning Committee. He enjoyed both roles immensely: “I would urge everyone here to take on some form of administrative role to get an insight into how the University works and influence changes in your own field.”

John’s fellow chemist Dr Richard Jackson also says his goodbyes this month, after perhaps the longest period of continuous employment by any member of staff at Sussex. Richard arrived on campus as a young lecturer in 1962, just a year after the University opened.

Other academics with long-service records who are retiring include Dr Stephen Medcalf and Professor Tim Triggs, who arrived in 1964; Professor David Boden and David Streeter (1965); and Professor Peter Townsend (1966).

And the University also wishes a happy retirement to a number of others (who’ve been here a fair few years themselves): Professor James Hanson, Professor Rod Kedward, Professor Keith Pavitt, Professor Mike Pendlebury, Dr Peter Smith, Dr Peter Unsworth, Dr David Walton and Professor Cedric Watts.

The politics of protest in the age of globalisation

The Countryside Alliance march in London on Sunday (22 September) is likely to come under discussion at a conference on ‘the politics of protest’ this month at the University of Sussex.

Dr Alex Colas, Lecturer in International Relations & Politics, is organising the conference on ‘The politics of protest in the age of globalisation’, which takes place from 26-27 September.

“The form of politics which the Countryside Alliance represents emerges at a time when mainstream politics and the channels of representation appear to be in crisis,” says Alex. “If they feel that their voice isn’t heard and that they can’t trust councils or political parties then they may resort to direct action.”

Recent years have also seen huge anti-globalisation protests in the cities of Seattle, Prague and Genoa. Since the events of 11 September last year, we have heard a lot less of such protests. “Anti-capitalist protests are not limited to what the media portrays in these big confrontations – it’s an ongoing process. But there’s no doubt that the events of 11 September have caused the so-called anti-globalisation movement a problem,” says Alex.

“Protesters in the US now have to face a state, backed by the majority of the population, that is re-enforcing mainstream ideas of the American way of life. So there’s a problem, as any dissent can be easily associated with a lack of patriotism.”

The tactics used by protestors can be drawn from history. For example, the fuel protests in the UK two years ago explicitly compared themselves to the Jarrow marchers – a comparison that drew fierce criticism from those who had been part of that march in the 1930s and who saw little parallel between the two issues.

Alex’s interest in protest is not merely academic. “I’ve been involved politically on the Left since I was a teenager in Spain,” he says. “I find that what I do when I teach and write is often affected by getting involved in concrete political action.”
Obituaries

Peter Ansell

P
eter Ansell, Head of Security Services, died suddenly in hospital on 12 September after a period of illness. Peter, who joined the University in 1988 as Head Porter and Security Supervisor, was well known across campus by both staff and students.

The 56-year-old loved music and had been a drummer in a local band in the 1960s. Director of Estates Tony Middleton recalls: "You could often hear him singing Beatles songs as he walked around the campus."

Norman McLeod

A
former student who set up University Radio Falmer has died in a car crash at the age of 48. Norman McLeod helped to get the station on the airwaves while studying electronics at Sussex from 1971–74.

He went on to work locally in the radio industry and was involved in setting up special temporary stations for the Brighton Festival.

Winifred Bishop

W
inifred Bishop, who died on 4 September, graduated from Sussex with a music degree in 2000 at the age of 66.

Winnie was a popular and active musician who played violin in the University orchestra, sang in the University choir and took part in orchestral weekends at home and abroad.

Letters

Dear Bulletin

O
ne of the great perks of life at Sussex has to be access to the excellent facilities offered by the Sport Service. Members of the University community have until recently been doubly fortunate, in that the amenities in question have been very reasonably priced, thereby encouraging participation and, in some small way, compensating for the lack of buying power associated with working or studying in higher education. One is certain that this has in no small part contributed to the general sense of vitality and joie de vivre that one experiences on campus.

I was therefore saddened to discover that the Sport Service had recently introduced a massive price hike across the entire range of its services; in the case of hall booking, for example, by some 108 per cent. While I'm certain that the overall rates remain "commercially" competitive, I am concerned that such an enormous and sudden change in pricing will impact most heavily on those least able to afford it and have a negative impact on the health of the University community as a whole.

Richard Tammar
Web Editor

Karen Dunster, Head of Sport, replies:

We have received a lot of feedback from staff expressing dissatisfaction and disappointment about recent price increases.

It will continue to be our policy to keep rates as low as possible and to encourage staff and students to take part in exercise and sport. The Sport Service philosophy strongly supports the evidence that a healthy lifestyle and regular participation in activity are significant factors in maintaining a positive and healthy workforce.

In an ideal world we would be embracing this and investing more rather than less. However, we no longer have the budget to subsidise activities to the same extent as before and now receive less support from Estates for maintaining and refurbishing facilities. As a result we have spent all of our reserves on improving facilities: £200k on changing rooms, £15k on squash courts, £37k on tennis courts and £8k on decoration.

We have looked carefully at prices and introduced peak and off-peak schemes. All rates are still much cheaper than the commercial sector.

In short, as a service, we are as disappointed as most of our customers!

Rough scientist wins Public Awareness of Science award

A Sussex scientist has landed a top award from the Institute of Physics for his efforts in promoting physics.

The Public Awareness of Physics Award recognises the work of Dr Jonathan Hare, who spends much of his time promoting science to the public and schools through lecture tours and a variety of television programmes.

Jonathan set up a Creative Science Centre on campus to act as a focus for his popular science workshops and talks. One of his most popular activities is a workshop in which participants get to make a model of a carbon molecule known as a 'Buckminsterfullerene'. His television credits for the BBC include Tomorrow's World, Horizon, Hollywood Science and Rough Science (which returns to our screens for a third series on 25 October).

When asked what he enjoys most about communicating science to others, Jonathan said: "When I am with a group of people and we are relaxed and just chatting about science, I know things are going well. So I like trying to communicate science by leaving out some of the technical details and aim to enjoy sharing a moment with people."

Jonathan is one of five winners to receive a Public Awareness of Physics Award from the Institute of Physics and was presented with his prize this month in Leicester during the British Association Festival of Science.

Cash boost for leukaemia research

Scientists from the Genome Damage and Stability Centre have been awarded £147,000 by the Leukaemia Research Fund (LRF) to look at abnormalities in DNA damage and repair that occur in some leukaemias and lymphomas.

The research team, led by Dr Penny Jeggo, will look at Seckel Syndrome, a rare inherited condition. They have recently discovered that a faulty enzyme in Seckel Syndrome prevents the body repairing damaged DNA. Similar defects in DNA repair have been found to predispose some people to certain forms of leukaemia and lymphoma.

This work will throw light on the way this repair mechanism functions and how, when it goes wrong, it can lead to leukaemia and other immune disorders like Seckel Syndrome.

"This research will provide us with a unique insight into what happens in the cell when DNA is damaged," Penny said.

The team believe their findings could make treatments more effective for patients. "Understanding how the damage response mechanisms help to maintain genetic stability could potentially provide an improved basis for drug targeted treatment," Penny said.

Dr David Grant, Scientific Director of the Leukaemia Research Fund, said: "We see Dr Jeggo's work as a way forward to more effective treatments for patients with leukaemia and lymphoma."
Changing the way we work

Key new staff have been appointed to drive forward the University's Human Resources Strategy.

They include Helen Bonnick, the new Deputy Director of Human Resources, who will be responsible for issues related to pay and grading; and Liz Burchett, who has taken on the new post of Equalities Co-ordinator. There will be three new posts in staff development, to be funded from the Human Resources Strategy.

In addition, Kelly Lewis (above) has replaced Elaine de Sousa as Personnel Officer responsible for all personnel matters in Arts, plus SLI, USIE and the Computing Service. Her other responsibilities include co-ordinating the clerical annual review.

Sarah Marshall (above) has returned to the University as Personnel Officer to replace Jessica Teer. She deals with personnel matters in CPES, COGS, EIT, SMS, CCE and the Library. Sarah is also responsible for co-ordinating the technical annual review.

A walk on the wild side

David Harper and David Streeter BIOLS

We need your help! Look out for the handsome Wasp Spider Argiope bruennichi, which may well be eluding us on campus since it occurs nearby. The females are unmistakable: large (up to 15 mm long) and stunningly patterned in yellow, white and black, they hang upside-down in the middle of a large web.

The web is also distinctive: positioned vertically in low vegetation wherever grasshoppers are abundant, it often has a zigzag band of fuzzy silk across its middle. The function of this stabilimentum is unclear.

The pale-brown males are tiny (less than 5 mm), but can sometimes be spotted lurking around a female's web. After mating, the females – which are often still active in October – lay eggs in large flask-shaped egg-sacs which are attached to grass blades. Since the young do not hatch until the following July, Wasp Spiders thrive only if the vegetation is left uncut. So please tell us if you spot one.

This Mediterranean species was first recorded in Britain in 1922 at Rye Harbour in Sussex. Until 1990 it was rare and restricted to the south coast, but it is now widespread south of a line from Essex to Cornwall, with scattered records north to Derbyshire. It has also spread elsewhere in northern Europe, reaching Denmark in 1992 and Sweden by 1995.

The bank behind the car park opposite Bramber House sports a splendid array of chalk shrubs, both native and introduced, that are all 'berrying up' nicely. One of the most prominent at this time of year is Dogwood, as the leaves are taking on the characteristic vivid red hue caused by the late-summer build-up of anthocyanin pigments. This, together with its red twigs, accounts for its specific name of sanguineus.

A dog's tail in a plant's common name usually signifies an inedible or other unpleasant characteristic, but it is hard to see Dogwood's offence. Recently Richard Mabey has defended its reputation, suggesting that the name is a corruption of 'dag wood', from its one-time use for making butchers' skewers or 'dags' and in some parts of the country it is still known as 'skewer wood'.

Its black berries ripen this month and are eaten by small birds such as Robins and Starlings. On campus Dogwood often grows companionably with its much-planted North American relative the Red-Osier – which has larger, more tapering, leaves.
ADBIB goes live

Hidden away in the libraries, museums and universities of Brighton and Hove are more than 120,000 books and journals dedicated to art and design. Yet these amazing resources, stored all over the city, have often gone unnoticed. A new project, in which the University is a partner, hopes to enable everyone to discover these buried treasures.

The ADBIB (Art and Design Books in Brighton) website goes live on 26 September. In one place — www.adbib.ac.uk — it pulls together details of the many and varied art and design resources all over the city. Web users can search by topic and see an example of the work housed in each collection.

Mary Dixon, project manager, says ADBIB allows users not only to find collections but also to make connections across them: "Take the Festival of Britain: the Design Council archive at Brighton University allows you to see the history of its design and formation, while Sussex's Mass-Observation Archive lets you understand the social reaction to the project."

Other featured collections at Sussex include the Barlow Gallery of Chinese ceramics and the Centre for German-Jewish Studies.

Some of the more intriguing collections include the Vokins Archive, relating to the world of the now defunct North Street department store; and a collection of toys from the 19th century at Hove Library.

"There are 53 separate collections in Brighton," says Mary, "from beer bottles to street furniture. The ADBIB allows you to search through them all easily."

ADBIB was funded by the Research Support Libraries Programme, which has distributed public money for programmes aimed at making research easier at Britain's libraries and special collections. The Universities of Sussex and Brighton were partners in the project, together with Brighton and Hove City Council and the Regency Town House.

Sussex graduates launch world's largest online directory of UK history resources

A team of Sussex graduates has developed the world's largest online directory of British history. The new, free-to-access web site lists more than 25,000 places and organisations across the UK, including museums, archives, libraries and history experts. It is aimed at all types of historian, from amateur researchers to professional historians.

Sussex history graduate Ray Hatley has developed the site (www.historyuk.com), launched this month. He picked the research team, which is based at the Sussex Innovation Centre on campus. Features editor Alix Macfarlane (who also did history at Sussex) has written a searchable timeline of UK history from 10,000 BC to date. Content editor Shan Vaswani, (who has an MA in media studies from Sussex) is responsible for the development and upkeep of the web site's database.

Small ads

FOR SALE: 1999 Peugeot 306 XS 1.8, 29K miles, alloys, a/c, electric windows, FSH, £6,500. Tel 07973 133578 or 01232 464872.

TO LET: 2-bed house nr B'ton station. GCH, parking. Suit faculty/PGs, £630 pcm inc. council tax. Tel. Alex on 0795 475 609.

TO LET: 2-bed/2-rec Victorian flat, Lewes, £825pcm. Tel. 07876 629930, email karenzett@hotmail.com.

ACCOMMODATION: Large bed-sitting room available in exchange for help with housework and some babysitting (boy aged 11). Suit PG with genuine interest in children. Tel. 678446 or email baf6@sex.ac.uk.

TO LET: Room in owner's house. Suit PG/mature student. Veggies welcome. £75 pw. Call Michelle on 677244.

WANTED: P-t nanny in Lewes. Non-smoker, driver, child-care experience essential. May suit PG. Tel. 474133.

TO LET: Room in furnished 2-bed flat, Roedean Rd. All mod cons. £300 p/w incl. Contact Stephen or Dina on 077809 53216.

TO LET: Room in Lewes. Share facilities with owner. £50 p/w. Tel. 474738 (eves).

TO LET: 2 double-bed flat, Ferndale Road, £720 pcm, available now. Suit PG/faculty. Tel. 888779 or 07919 105007, email mmff0@sex.ac.uk.

WANTED: Mature Japanese PhD student (male, n-s) seeks bedsit or single room in shared flat in B'ton/Hove, for 4-6 mths from start Oct. £300 pcm max. Email aiko.yuchi@hotmail.com.


Bulletin

The fortnightly Bulletin is written and produced by Alison Field, Peter Simmons and Benedict Brook. We welcome any news, story ideas, letters or small ads from staff and students of the University.

The next issue will be out on 4 October, with a copy deadline of 1pm on 27 September. Please contact the Press and Communications Office in Sussex House on ext. 8888 or email Bulletin@sex.ac.uk.