AUT take industrial action

Teaching, research and administration were disrupted on Wednesday (25 February) when Sussex members of the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and National Union of Students (NUS) took part in a national day of joint action.

The disruption was part of a national week of strikes by AUT members, which included a day of action at Sussex and other English universities on Tuesday (24 February). The AUT co-ordinated Wednesday's day of action across the UK with the NUS, who are campaigning against variable top-up fees.

The AUT objects to a proposed overhaul of the pay framework for university staff and to the proposed pay increase for this academic year and next.

Sussex branch president Jim Guild said: "Under the current proposals on pay - because of decreased annual increments and longer scales - many lecturers lose up to £6,300 over eight years, researchers lose £17,300 over nine years and related staff lose £47,000 over 21 years. "In addition, the employers seek the freedom to introduce unregulated local pay and grading structures, and to remove the link between the pay and grading of academics and academic related staff."

Of the union's 47,000 members around the UK, 54.4% took part in the postal ballot: 66.6% of those voting backed strike action and 81.2% backed action short of a strike.

The University of Sussex has 1,200 staff eligible for AUT membership, of whom 460 are actually members. The ballot was decided on a simple majority of those voting nationally, not on the majority of members.

Reacting to the news of the AUT vote for industrial action, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, said: "I am of course not in favour of strike action being taken that disrupts the provision of teaching to students and our services to the wider community. The University is doing all it can to ensure that services operate normally. "However, I do understand why staff feel so strongly about this issue and I am very sympathetic to their concerns. The fact is that staff are underpaid, since universities have been systematically underfunded for many years. "The strike is actually about new pay structures. Most of the other trade unions in higher education have signed up to the new pay structures, and I hope that discussions between the employers and the AUT nationally can resolve outstanding issues before too long."

The Vice-Chancellor said that the two days of pay withheld from AUT members taking strike action will be donated to the Sussex Fund, which supports student welfare, bursaries and hardship funds.

AUT leaders have also announced action short of a strike starting on 1 March.

Students organise yellow ribbon tribute

Yellow ribbons were sold on campus last week in memory of Natalie Naylor, the 20-year-old Sussex student who died from meningitis last month. The ribbons were sold for £1 each to support meningitis research and the Natalie Naylor Trust, established by Natalie's parents to support meningitis research and raise awareness of the disease. Natalie was a member of the University women's rugby team and many of her sporting peers, along with friends and fellow students, helped to promote the sale of yellow ribbons across campus.

Lizzie Brown, rugby team captain (pictured far right with Natalie's parents), said: "The team was fortunate enough to have Natalie join us this season as a new recruit. She was a bubbly, happy and beautiful girl. "By wearing the yellow ribbons, we can keep Natalie with us and, at the same time, raise awareness about meningitis in the hope of preventing such a tragedy happening again."

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, described the campaign as "a fitting tribute to a popular student who will also raise funds for vital research into meningitis".

Natalie died at her family's local hospital in Carshalton, Surrey on 24 January. Blood tests showed that she had the group B strain of the meningococcal bacteria.
Chocolate temptation
Claudia Munn
Biology finalist, LifeSci

Experimental psychologists at Sussex have been tempting students with chocolate: continual exposure made them more likely to give in, but it was the ‘dieters’ who succumbed more easily.

Dr Martin Yeomans and colleagues tested 60 Sussex students, half of them dieters. The dieters had scored highly for dietary restraint, in a standardised eating habits questionnaire; non-dieters had low scores. None of the participants were obese or overweight.

The students were divided into two equal groups. One group had to take chocolates home with them the day before the experiment; the other, the control group, took none.

The first group had to carry the chocolates with them all the time, and could look, touch, and smell, but not eat any. They had to rate their feelings about the chocolate at regular times throughout the day, to keep them thinking about it.

They were also told to count them. This served as the ultimate temptation: Martin had cunningly told them that there were 25 chocolates in the bag, but there were actually 30. This allowed the participants to believe that they could eat some of the chocolates without anyone knowing.

Dieters succumbed, reporting later that they had found it hard to resist the chocolates when they had to think about them all the time.

When it came to the test, participants were allowed to eat as much chocolate as they liked (up to 561g), under the pretence that they had to guess which bowl of chocolate (out of three) tasted best.

The group that had taken chocolate home ate significantly more than the others, a general effect seen whether they usually dieted or not. But it was the dieters in both groups who ate the most.

Martin’s work shows that tasty foods (such as chocolate) that are seen as forbidden can tempt you more if you are constantly thinking about them. Dieters, who should be used to restraining themselves, surrender more easily to temptation.

Constant reminders could be a problem for people trying to control their weight. We are continually being bombarded by advertising, encouraging us to eat tasty, high-fat foods, all of which can lead to obesity — a huge and growing problem in the UK.

“We have created an environment where food is cheaper, more readily available, more varied and simply nicer tasting,” says Martin, “but certain individuals, it seems, cannot resist all these sensory cues.”

Putting Sussex on the map in China

Chinese scientist Dr Jianfeng Feng is helping to strengthen links with his home country in the field of brain research.

“In China no one knows where Sussex is and it is sometimes hard to convince Chinese people to come and work here,” says Jianfeng, Reader in Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence.

But recently he secured a visiting fellowship from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) for Professor Yingchun Deng, a mathematician from the Hunan Normal University.

Together they are using computational neuroscience to try and unravel the mystery of how the brain processes information.

The brain sends information using electrical pulses, known as spikes. Neurons can communicate with each other by sending and receiving spikes. Inside the brain there is a complex web of interconnected and layered neurons, called a neural network.

Jianfeng and Yingchun carry out modelling over a range of scales, from the giving and receiving of one spike all the way up to the neural network activity involved in a person moving their arm.

By trying to develop a theory that bridges the spiking of a single neuron and a spiking neural network, the Chinese researchers hope to open up applications in biology and engineering. For example, if they can build up a model of the neural network activity that occurs when the brain processes an image, they may be able to develop a technique for implanting retina into people’s eyes.

Other potential applications include the treatment of Parkinson’s disease; neuro-prosthetic limbs for paralyzed people; and neuro-robots that are controlled by brain signals from human operators.

Many of these applications are still some way from becoming reality. But by attracting researchers like Yingchun Deng, Jianfeng’s research group is gaining worldwide recognition and he is certainly helping to put Sussex on the map.
Fair trade fever

Fair trade products could become more widely available on campus, following a decision by the Sussex branch of trade union UNISON to encourage their promotion.

UNISON passed the motion in support of fairer trade with developing countries at its annual general meeting last week (19 February).

The Fairtrade mark on goods guarantees a fairer deal for workers in developing countries: decent working conditions, fair wages, health and safety standards, security of long-term contracts, fair terms of trade and guaranteed better prices.

UNISON members agreed to work with groups such as the student Fairtrade Society and other trade unions to encourage the promotion of fair trade products on campus.

They also agreed to approach Catering Services with the aim of establishing a partnership working towards the expansion of fair trade products in all campus cafés.

Phillip Booker, Catering Manager, says “the University does not have an ‘official’ position as such on fairtrade.”

Sussex was in fact one of the first universities to trial fair trade products almost five years ago, according to Phillip, “little success as customers reacted against both the product (coffee) and the premium fair trade products carry.”

When the Medical School café opened last September Philip took the opportunity to introduce several fair trade products, again on trial, with reasonable success.

Last month Catering Services switched to fair trade coffee in the Dhala café and, following the success of that trial, intend to do so in certain other outlets in due course.

“I have a personal and professional interest in promoting fair trade products,” says Phillip, “but also appreciate this cannot be done to the financial detriment of the University or be in breach of our legal and economic obligations.”

As part of the nationwide Fairtrade Fortnight from 1–14 March, the Fairtrade Society are organising a series of events on campus:
- Monday 1–Wednesday 10 March: exhibition, Arts Coyer
- Tuesday 2 March: talks in the Meeting Mouse, 5–7pm
- Thursday 4 March: market in Library Square, 12noon–3pm
- Monday 8 March: 10th anniversary birthday party and raffle night at East Slope bar.

Women’s group produce new magazine

To celebrate International Women’s Month in March the Women’s Rights Group (WRG) has produced a one-off magazine on global women’s rights.

Globally, women face a number of challenges including gender and internationalisation, women in North America, female refugees and the future of feminism.

The group produced the publication with financial support from the University’s Career Development and Employment Centre (CDEC). The project will culminate next month in a seminar that will provide a forum for the authors of the articles to discuss the issues raised and begin a wider audience.

The core members of the WRG are students from the MA in International Human Rights and MA in Gender and Development, but its bi-monthly meetings are open to all.

Guidance for disabled staff and students now online

The University’s comprehensive Disability Policy covering students and staff has now been formally approved and is available on the Disability website (www.sussex.ac.uk/disability).

The website brings together information for disabled staff and students and also contains all the policies, procedures and guidelines relating to disability, some of which have been developed in response to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). It also provides information on what are reasonable adjustments in relation to disabled staff and students.

An important feature of the website is the inclusion of guidelines on teaching and assessment. These provide simple and clear guidance on how to work with students with a range of disabilities including mobility difficulties, sensory impairments and dyslexia. There is also a section on teaching contexts such as labs, fieldwork and lectures and their implications for disabled students’ learning.

Sue Yates, Head of Student Support, is keen to ensure that students and staff are aware of this website which, she believes, will prove to be an extremely useful and accessible source of information and guidance.

“We hope it will prove particularly useful for academic staff working with disabled students,” she says. “There is sometimes quite a lot of unnecessary anxiety about what reasonable adjustments for disabled students might entail. In fact in most cases these adjustments are quite straightforward, easily achieved and are simply good teaching practice – no more, in fact, than what many tutors at Sussex do anyway in the course of their teaching.”

For further information on support for disabled students, contact the Student Support Unit on ext. 7466, email studentsupport@sussex.ac.uk.

Donate your unwanted books

The Gaza Library Project collects and dispatches books and periodicals to 12 universities and colleges in Gaza and the West Bank (Palestine), which have no budgets to buy publications themselves. Unwanted copies of academic books, textbooks, journals or CDs from any discipline are welcome, but should have been published within the last 10 years. Material that is very specific to the UK may not be suitable.

Deadline for the next shipment is mid March. Contact Dr Fiona Leach in the Sussex Institute on f.e.leach@sussex.ac.uk.

Local libraries work together

The Library has been awarded a research and development grant by the South-East Museums Libraries and Archives Council (SEMLAC). The grant will fund research on a Learning City project for Brighton and Hove, in which local libraries will work together to support lifelong learning. As a first stage, adult learners will be surveyed about what they want from library services. For further information contact the Project Manager, Mary Nixon, at m.c.nixon@sussex.ac.uk.

‘University Challenge’: students wanted

Can Sussex repeat, or even better, its winning ways in ‘University Challenge’ this year? The heats for current students begin soon and the Students’ Union are keen to hear from budding quiz champions. An initial heat will be held before the end of term, and those wishing to take part should email Nick Scott, USSU Communications Officer, at ussu-comms@sussex.ac.uk.
Teaching awards

Two academics received awards at the graduation ceremonies on 20 February in recognition of their excellent teaching.

The annual Teaching Awards scheme is open to all academics at Sussex who teach courses or supervise higher degrees. Shortlisted nominees prepare a portfolio of evidence for consideration by a judging panel, which is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith.

The 2003 panel, while impressed by the achievements and sustained commitment of all those on the shortlist, chose Dr Marie Denbou, Rena Feld and Dr Claire Langhame as the latest winners.

Dr Marie Denbou, Lecturer in Law, will receive her Teaching Award at the future graduation ceremony.

Rena Feld (above right) has taught in the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) for several years, mainly on the Certificate in Life History Work but also on open courses.

Not only does Rena have a wonderful rapport with the very diverse group of students she teaches and great knowledge of her subject, but she constantly reviews her teaching and reflects on ways to improve the students' learning experience.

One of the methods Rena uses to do this is to keep a reflective journal of her teaching practice. "She always refers to it when we have meetings to discuss the progress of the course or in planning future courses," says Dr Gerry Holloway, convenor for the Certificate in Life History Work.

"This seems to me to be an example of good practice that should be encouraged more widely among teaching faculty."

This reflective practice is combined with notable enthusiasm for her subject. "I don't seem to lose my own excitement for life history work," says Rena, "and I know that does communicate itself."

Dr Claire Langhamer (right) is a scholar of 19th- and 20th-century British history, specialising in gender. She teaches a very wide range of undergraduate history and interdisciplinary courses as well as MA programmes.

Her former Dean, Carol Kedward, says that Claire "clearly exhibits all the characteristics of the gifted teacher. She is thoroughly in command of and enthused by her material: her personal love of learning, challenge and widening her horizons lies at the heart of her wish to take students with her on a similar voyage. It is clear from student feedback that she is able to do just that."

A notable aspect of Claire's teaching is her on-going course revisions, on the basis of student feedback as well as her own reflections on the success of a course and developments in the subject. Fellow historian Professor Sadie Dubow highlights "the genuinely reflective manner in which she thinks about her role as a teacher."

Claire's active involvement in the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) for history is another indication of the seriousness with which she takes all aspects of learning and teaching.

Nobel laureate returns to Sussex for graduation honour

A Nobel Prize winner and former University of Sussex physics professor said that he felt "very privileged" to receive an honorary degree at the winter graduation ceremonies last week.

"The work that helped me gain the Nobel Prize in 2003 was done while I was a Sussex faculty member," said Professor Anthony Leggett (pictured right), "and I think the relaxed atmosphere of the department contributed to my research."

Honorary degrees were also awarded to two other men whose work is of international significance in their specialist fields: Sussex graduate Suma Chakrabarti, Permanent Secretary for the Department for International Development; and Professor Peter Sellars, professor of world arts and cultures at the University of California.

More than 500 students, together with their friends and families, gathered at the Brighton Dome for the graduation ceremonies. The degrees, diplomas and certificates were conferred by the University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, at two ceremonies on 20 February.

Congratulations to the following members of staff who graduated:

- Alison Bambridge, Research Project Assistant and Data Technician in the School of Humanities; MA Digital Media
- Sandra Baxter, Administrator in the Institute of Development Studies (IDS); MA Anthropology of Development & Social

Transformation

- Geoffrey Mead, Convenor of Local History and Landscape Studies in the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE); MA English Local & Regional History
- Henry Orthwaite, Operations Officer for the Sussex Institute; MA Media Studies.
Letters

Funding for education

I would like to make a small complaint about the Vice-Chancellor’s address at the winter graduation on 20 February. Does he regard the event suitable for a blatant political speech in support of the proposed top-up fees legislation?

Would he mind telling me for whom he speaks? I’m certain that for the majority of faculty and students alike, his opinions are in opposition to theirs.

For a man who has received a rather large pay rise that takes his salary over the £120,000 mark, comments such as, “We are here primarily for the love of education and not the money” (or words to that effect) stick in the throat.

Perhaps the powers that be should start to view the University as the educational establishment it is rather than as a business, whereby the quality of education takes precedence over the numbers that are crammed through the doors, and also have a broader appreciation of the effects that expansion will have on the environment.

The Vice-Chancellor correctly says that all students should have the opportunity to gain a university education and that money should go to all levels of education; with this I totally agree.

However, it is the motivations and beliefs within all people, especially those of the lower classes, that need to be addressed. The education system must be financed and improved in a bottom-up process, targeting ability, confidence and intrinsic motivation. You cannot build a strong house on weak foundations.

Perhaps a democratic debate is required rather than an autocratic speech.

Joe Hinds, Department of Psychology

‘Sales pitches’ at graduation

On Friday 20 February, I was one of approximately 500 graduates who had come to the Brighton Dome to receive their degree with family and friends’ support.

It was disappointing that most of the Deans of the new schools chose to talk about their achievements regarding funding and research — probably the last thing on our minds, as for many of us this was the final goodbye.

Furthermore, many of the families and friends had travelled for miles and I felt particularly sorry for them while they had to sit through these ‘sales pitches’ by the speakers. It must have been especially irrelevant for those who came from abroad and are unfamiliar perhaps with British academia.

I appreciate Sussex is going through some important changes, but I felt that the ceremony was not the time or the place to highlight the achievements of individual departments — even if it is customary to do so every year (I wouldn’t know, I don’t graduate often).

I hope Sussex will soon find its bearings and turn to focus on those who ask to be taught and inspired, as they are the ones who motivate others to come here and are potentially the ones generating funding through (postdoctoral) research, lecturing and consultancy work in the future.

Dr Nathalie van Meurs, Department of Psychology

‘Neutron Ron’ gets masters at 73

Former accountant Ron Baskin, 73, was awarded a masters degree in experimental particle physics at the University’s winter graduation ceremony on 20 February.

Ron, who lives in Worthing, was a chartered accountant for 45 years and had climbed to management level before rediscovering his boyhood fascination with maths problems and physics. After retiring in 1990 he took an undergraduate degree in physics at Sussex and then found himself returning to start an MSc.

“I came from a poor Russian immigrant family and there was not the option for me to go to university when I left school,” said Ron. “I used to come top in physics and maths, but my parents had to take me out of education. Fortunately, they got me articulated to a chartered accountant.”

“When I retired my wife complained about me getting under her feet, so I did a foundation course in maths and physics and signed up for a degree course. I graduated in 1996 and I thought I had achieved my lifetime ambition. But I soon missed the studying and so I began a part-time MSc course in 1998.

“I had hardly touched a computer before I started my masters degree, but I ended up doing high-level problems using state-of-the-art mathematical software.”

Ron was plagued by ill health and heart problems, which resulted in him completing the course in four years instead of two. But he is continuing to work with the particle physics group at Sussex in supporting their research into the behaviour of neutrons.

Ron was accompanied to the ceremony by his wife, Valerie, and their two daughters, Louise and Charlotte.

Valerie said: “Ron has always enjoyed reading books about maths, but I thought he was extremely brave to go to university. It has given him a new lease of life. It’s far better than sitting in an armchair just waiting to pop off.”

Ben Bradshaw leads MP campus surge

The Sussex campus is clearly a more exciting place to be than the Houses of Parliament, if the number of recent visits by MPs is anything to go by.

First up was Sussex graduate Ben Bradshaw, now a Labour MP and junior minister in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. On 19 February Mr Bradshaw (pictured) came to the Meeting House to talk about politics — the impact of faith.

Next to visit was Andrew Mackinlay, on 17 February. The Labour MP for Thurrock took part in an evening of debate and conversation organised through the School of Education.

‘Citizenship with History’ PGCE course.

Last, but by no means least, Sussex graduate Hilary Benn returned to campus yesterday (26 February) to give the Sussex Development Lecture in his capacity as Secretary of State for International Development.
Colin Eaborn

Professor Colin Eaborn, aged 80, died peacefully in his sleep on 22 February after a long illness. He was one of the first four science professors appointed in 1961 and a powerful driving force in the development of the University generally, and the School of Chemistry and Molecular Sciences (now part of Life Sciences) in particular. He was first Dean, then the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Science). Within 15 years or so he established a school with 40 faculty (including seven Fellows of the Royal Society and two Nobel Laureates), 160 research students and postdoctoral fellows, and 250 undergraduates.

Colin was the author of a seminal book on Organometallic Chemistry, author or co-author of over 500 scientific papers, the first editor of the Journal of Organometallic Compounds, and the chair of an influential report on the relationship between university courses and the needs of industry.

He was elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society in 1970, and among his many awards were the prestigious Frederic Stanley Kipping Medal of the American Chemical Society and the Ingold Medal of the Royal Society of Chemistry. Colin retired in 1988 but remained active in research and his last comments on the presentation of a scientific paper were made only a few weeks ago. He will be missed by his numerous friends, colleagues and students both here and throughout the world, for his sharpness of mind, his stimulating conversation, his irresistible urge to tease, his generosity and kindness, and the encouragement he gave to others.

All are welcome to a service of thanksgiving for Colin at 2.30pm on Tuesday (2 March) in the Meeting House.

Dr David Smith, Department of Chemistry

Peter Jerrard

Peter Jerrard, a technician in the School of Life Sciences, died in hospital on 18 February. He joined the University in November 1991, following a 32-year career in the civil service: initially in the British Museum's Department of Entomology and Department of Zoology; and from 1966-91 as a pest infestation officer in the Ministry of Agriculture. "Peter has always had a lovely smile for me and a cheery hellos," said one of his Sussex colleagues. "He was a gentle and kind man and will be sadly missed."

Christopher Ryan

Christopher Ryan, Emeritus Professor of Italian, died on 20 February after a sudden illness.

Small ads

TO LET: 1-bed UF 1st-floor flat, large sunny lounge, adjacent London Rd station, £155 pw, suit PG/professional. Call Mel on 500782.

WANTED: Non-smoking female lodger to share quiet house with couple nr Queen's Park. £300 pw inc. Tel. 07976 902416.

FREE: 3 single bed + two underdrawers & clean mattresses. From non-smoking household. Own transport required. Tel. 070671.


TO LET: 1-bed G/F flat in Brunswick St West. Patio garden, own street entrance. Available now. £675pcm. Call Denise on 303276.

TO LET: Furnished room in shared house. Coombe Rd area. £300 pcm inc. Suit mature or foreign student. Flexible tenancy. Call Harri on 277998.

FOR SALE: Set of 5 Fierelli Scorpion tyres 255/65 16 on P38 freestyle alloy wheels. Suit Range Rover or Discovery series 2. £130 ono. Call Pete on ext. 8250 or email p.j.cockaday@sussex.ac.uk.

FOR SALE: 4 stripped antique pine doors, with slight cracks. £20 each. Call ext. 8947 or email R.Marden@sussex.ac.uk.

FOR SALE: Cheap children's/adult skiwear. Email A.Drew@sussex.ac.uk.

TO LET: Furnished room in shared house, Coombe Rd area. £300 pcm inc. Suit mature or foreign student. Flexible tenancy. Call Harri on 277998.

TO LET: Double room in top-floor, purpose-built flat, Tunton Close. £375 pcm incl. Furnished or UF. Share with professional male owner, gay, 41. Call Alex Pollard on 600728/H, 764200/ W, email alex.pollard@ thtsouth.org.uk.

HOUSE SWAP: Ex-Sussex employee & student offer 3-bed, 2-bath villa in Bali (child-friendly, air con., nr sandy beaches), as swap for home in Lewes/B'don area. Last wk June + 1st two wks July. Email dianeandphilmilligan@yahoo.com.

FOR SALE: 3-dr Rover Metro 1.4 auto. J Reg., 45k miles, 4 mths Mot, tax end May. £325 ono. Call Chris on 292128 (day) or 697539 (eves).

FOR SALE: 4 blue-cushioned chairs, £10 each. 2 blue-cushioned sofas, £15 each. Call Sammy on 07708 056908.

FOR SALE: U/F 2-bed flat + garden in 7 Dials. Suit professional couple.

Available 1 Apr. Email donna.crisfield@gardenerarts.co.uk.


FOR SALE: 2-bed flat nr Preston Pk station. £170K. Call ext. 8882.

FOR SALE: Fur, 3-bed house overlooking Queens Pk. 2 studies, garden. Available late Mar for 3 mths, also next academic year. Suit staff or PG. Contact eileen.yle@nath.ac.uk, tel. 682855.

FOR SALE: Lancia, 1992, MoT Feb 05. £400. Email stbp4@hotmail.com.

TO LET: UF 1-bed patio flat, nr Preston Park. Available March. £500 pcm. Call 07966 021874.

FOR SALE: Dell Pentium III PC + HP deskjet printer. 667MHz. PII CPU, 512MB RAM, 15GB hard disk, CD-R/RW drive, 56k internal modem, ethernet card. £250. Email C.Limb@sussex.ac.uk.

TO LET: Room in Hove maisonette (no A27 bypass) from 1 Apr for PG/staff/mature student. Share with professional woman. £70/wk incl. M or F, N/S pref. Tel. Nikki on 773324.

FOR SALE: Ford Mondeo GLX. L reg. Engine approx. 1 yr old. £900. Call 07720 811167 or email stff@beth.ac.uk.
Artwork seeks new home

Got a large area of blank wall that could do with brightening up? An historic artwork commissioned to celebrate Sussex students’ first ‘University Challenge’ victory is looking for a new home.

When Sussex won the screen quiz in 1967, victory brought with it a prize of sizeable proportions: Granada TV commissioned two artists, David Lloyd Jones and John Langton, to design a ceramic mural.

The mural is currently hanging in the Senior Common Room (SCR), which will be closing in a couple of months’ time to create more space for the Alumni & Development Office. And if your unit could provide a new campus home for the mural, Karen Watson (pictured right) would like to hear from you.

Karen is the project officer for a 10-month Library project to rehouse the University’s art collection and review the catalogue prepared in 1998/9 by History of Art Image Archivist, Simon Lane.

Sussex has an eclectic art collection of more than 400 catalogued items (including 20-30 pieces of silverware). Some are on display around campus, but many more are in store in the building that used to house the Cell Mutation Unit.

As part of the project, funded by an award from the Research Libraries Support Programme (RSLP), Karen is organising more appropriate storage space for the artworks, in environmentally controlled conditions. However, some are available for display by any units on campus that have wall space. Contact Karen on ext. 7085, email k.l.watson@sussex.ac.uk, if you’re interested in housing the ceramic mural or finding out what else might be on offer.

All artworks in the University collection are now the responsibility of the Librarian and are managed by the Head of Special Collections, Dorothy Sheridan. She is concerned that artworks may be damaged or lost in the process of campus moves or refurbishment. “Please contact us before you move any work of art,” asks Dorothy.

Barlow Collection celebrates 30th anniversary

Art historians celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Barlow Collection of Chinese Ceramics, Bronzes and Jades this month with a lecture on ‘Contemporary ceramic art in China and Turkey: Revolution by revival’ by Professor Henry Glassie, from the University of Indiana.

The 400-piece collection was formed by Sir Alan Barlow and bequeathed to the University in 1968 so that it could be used for teaching and display purposes. Many of the pieces have been on display since 1974, when the Barlow Gallery opened and the first Barlow Lecture was given.

Among the finest collections of Chinese ceramics in Britain, the Barlow Collection is actively used for research and for teaching, giving students of art history the opportunity to learn about museum practice and Chinese material culture.

A walk on the wild side

David Harper and David Streeter LifeSci

We have been accosted several times recently by people demanding to know whether we are responsible for the groups of students observed doing unkind things to the trees on campus.

The answer, as in all good diplomatic exchanges, is ‘yes’ and ‘no’! ‘Yes’ because the students were carrying out a practical project at our instigation and ‘no’ because what they were doing was not unkind to the trees.

They were looking at the distribution of lichens on different tree trunks as part of the first year course on the Diversity of Life. Between them, 83 students collected 441 records of 19 different species of lichens on four different tree species.

Happily, the results confirmed a familiar piece of folk craft saying that more lichens grow on the wet-lit side of trees (with more moss on the north side). Ash and Elm supported the most species and Beech the least, with Sycamore intermediate.

The commonest lichen on the campus trees was the bright orange Xanthoria parietina (found on half of the trees examined by students), a species that particularly appreciates a spot of nutrient enrichment such as bird droppings. In second place came the conspicuous yellow-green patches of Flavoparmelia caperata (found on just under half of the trees).

One surprising observation was the complete absence of two common grey-green species (Evernia prunastri and Hypogymnia physodes) from Beech, a feature that does not seem to have been remarked upon before.

Lichens are dual organisms consisting of an intimate relationship between a fungus and a green alga or photosynthetic bacterium and are particularly sensitive to atmospheric pollution.

Thirty years ago David Hawksworth and Francis Rose devised a method whereby the levels of sulphur dioxide in the atmosphere could be deduced from the assemblage of lichens growing on tree trunks. Applying this scheme, the lichens on our trees suggest that the campus atmosphere contains an average winter sulphur dioxide level ofabout 60 mg/m³.

Long-tailed Tits are easy birds to identify, resembling tiny black-and-white lollipops flitting between trees, with high-pitched trilling calls. They are currently even more interesting in lichens than our students.

This is because they are already building their beautiful little domed nests. These are made from moss and spider silk, lined with feathers, and then the outside is painstakingly covered with thousands of tiny flakes of lichen.

Long-tailed Tits usually select grey-green lichens, such as Evernia prunastri (found on about a quarter of trees). Some lichens, such as Parmelia species (found on nearly half of trees), have black undersides. The birds always hide these from view when adding them to their nest. A pale surface may help camouflage the nest against the sky.

Certainly, Weasels and other small mammals climbing up into trees and bushes from below seem to be the most serious threat to the eggs and chicks.
Lectures, seminars, colloquia

Mon 1 Mar
12.30pm CCE Research Forum: All Thompson (Sussex), Using different types of life story sources in social and historical research, Arts D310.
1.00pm Behavioural and Cognitive Neuroscience Seminar: Sam Knowles (Sussex), The effects of alcohol on memory for emotionally-significant events. Pei V 1B3.
2.00pm International Relations Research-in-Progress Seminar: Jeroen Merk (Sussex), The collective worker in the athletic footwear industry. Arts C713.
4.00pm Clinical & Health Psychology Research Seminar: Speaker TBA, Evidence for two memory systems in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Pei V 1B3.
4.00pm ROLLS: H. Wind Cowles (Sussex), An electrophysiological study of informational and contrastive focus. Arts D310.
4.30pm Neuroscience Seminars: Adriaan Thomas (Oxford), Aerodynamics of insect flight. Genome Centre.
5.00pm Geography Research Seminar: Ben Rogaly (Sussex), Seasonal work migration, Arts C175.
5.00pm Education Open Seminar: Paul Yates (Sussex), The tyranny of empiricism. Arts C233.

Tue 2 Mar
12.00pm Physical Chemistry Seminar: J. Reid (Birmingham), The spectroscopy and dynamics of water droplets. Chi III R143.
12.30pm Life History Research Centre Seminar: Les Everist (Royal Holloway), Nostalgia and loss in the life stories of Bosnian survivors living in London. Library Meeting Room.
2.15pm SEI Research-in-Progress Seminar: David Bostock (European Court of Auditors), Some reflections on the European Court of Auditors, Arts A71.
4.00pm CCGS Research Seminar: Maria Roales (Kent), title TBA. Arundel 404A.
4.00pm Biochemistry and Genetics & Development Seminar: Stephen Bornemann (John Innes Centre), Oxalate-degrading enzymes in plant disease resistance. JMS Lecture Theatre.
4.15pm Anthropology Seminar: Nayanika Mookherjee (Lancaster), Genealogies of war-babies and the Bangladesh nation. Arts C233.
6.30pm Professorial lecture: Alan Garnham (Sussex), Models in the mind. BSMS Lecture Theatre.

Wed 3 Mar
12.30pm Experimental Particle Physics Seminar: Ed Hindu (Imperial), Particle dipole moments. Pei V 2A1.
1.00pm South Asia Seminar: Gurminder K. Bhambra (Sussex), Postcolonial theory: Refiguring modernity. Arts C162.
4.30pm Research in the History of Art Seminar: Vitali Szychowicz, Modernity in an Indian state. Arts A103.
5.00pm Migration Research Seminar: Albert Kraler (Sussex), Some reflections on Rwanda's post-independence Tutsi refugees. Arts C233.
5.00pm English Graduate Colloquium: Philip Horse (UCL), Life and death in the cinema of Krzysztof Kieslowski. D510.

Thu 4 Mar
4.30pm Social and Political Thought Graduate/Faculty Seminar: Gerald Delany (Liverpool), Cultural translations and multiple modernities. Arts D360.

Gardner Arts Centre
Box office: (01273) 658561
www.gardnerarts.co.uk

Performance

Tue 2 Mar
8.00pm Henri Gouike Dance Company - Front Line/White
Space/PS/Fina

Four pieces danced to live music. Two free tickets: be the first at the box office with your Bulletin.

Sun 7 Mar
7.00pm AGAS (University of Sussex African Caribbean and Asian Society)
Culture Festival
From dance acts to spoken word, drama to live music, the AGAS Culture Festival works to inspire and educate.

Wed 8 Mar
8.30pm Jocelyn Pook - Speaking in Tunes
The composer presents her latest work, a multimedia performance. Be the first to the box office and save £2 with a free pair of tickets.

Exhibition

Until Sat 27 Mar
George Chakaravarti Barfites
Transvestites put their new identity to the test in a video trayptch.

Cinema

Sun 29 Feb
5pm Master & Commander [12A]
8pm In America [15]
Thu 2 Mar
5pm Noi Atibino [15]
Thu 9 Mar
8pm Lost in Translation [PG]

One pair of tickets going free for each film: first comers only.

Bulletin

The Bulletin is written and produced by Alison Field and Benedict Brook, with contributions from Jacqui Beale, Maggie Clune and Alix Macfarlane. We welcome any news, story ideas, letters or small ads from staff and students of the University. The next issue will be out on 12 March, with a copy deadline of 1pm on 5 March. Please contact the Press and Communications Office in Sussex House on ext. 8888 or email Bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.