New scheme aims to recycle half campus waste

Recently, you may have noticed the odd member of Estates smelling distinctly like they’ve been rooting about in the bottom of a bin. If so you are not mistaken; they have indeed been frolicking among mouldy banana skins and unwanted ink cartridges.

Masterminding this orgy of bin rummaging has been Amanda Hastings, Safety and Environment Officer, in her quest to find out exactly what we are recycling – or rather, not recycling.

"Recycling does happen on campus," says Amanda, "but in a very limited and unco-ordinated way. Bramer House, for instance, recycles only cardboard. And we had no way of knowing for sure whether it was even being recycled, or just ending up with all the other waste in the landfill."

To find out the murky truth, Amanda and colleagues donned gloves and boiler suits and conducted a 'bin audit'. The results were depressing: "Overall 43% of the campus' landfill waste is actually recyclable," she reports.

The picture varies widely across campus. The Park Village residences came out on top, with 80% of the bins' contents non recyclable, and therefore OK to go into the back of a normal dustcart. The recycling bins were also well used. Meanwhile, occupants of the Freeman Centre were praised for flat packing cardboard and ensuring that recycling bins were not contaminated by non-recyclable rubbish.

However, these were the exceptions. Hastings Building and Sussex House were bottom of the recycling league, with the latter's bins two-thirds full of completely recyclable white paper. Oddy, the occupants of Sussex House also threw away more cake boxes than anyone else.

In 2003 the University threw away 1,318 tons of waste. Currently the University pays £1.15 in tax per ton of rubbish thrown into landfill; government legislation means this will rise to £3.50 per ton.

"All our landfill sites are getting full, and new legislations means the polluter, i.e. Sussex, will pay," explains Amanda. "We need to recycle because we'd rather spend the money on education than getting rid of waste."

To address the issue, a two-month recycling trial begins on 7 June. Staff will be encouraged to separate out recyclable material and dispose of it in large recycling bins outside each building. Cardboard should be flat packed and porters will then dispose of it. Cleaning staff will empty waste, not recyclables.

Twice a week a dustcart will collect all recyclable material and take it to a new recycling depot near Falmer Sports Complex. It will then be sorted and sold directly by the University, providing an income to help pay for the service.

If successful, the trial will become permanent. But, as Amanda points out: "This has to be a success because in a few years it will be mandatory anyway. We should be up and running, because we will be penalised if we're not."

A leaflet explaining the trial will soon arrive on staff members' desks. If you have any comments, email esfmfeedback@sussex.ac.uk.

Top marks for Sussex from QAA

The official body responsible for assessing teaching standards in higher education has expressed the highest possible level of confidence in the University's procedures.

"We got the best we could have: 'broad confidence'," said Dr Mary Stuart, Pro-Vice-Chancellor. "The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) highlighted as good practice our restructure, our student support systems and our periodic review process. We did get some recommendations but no essential ones, so overall very, very good."

A team of auditors visited campus last month to meet staff and students and scrutinise a range of documentation, including samples of student work.

The auditors identified some particular features of good practice:

- "the care and insight with which the University has radically reviewed and reorganised its structures";
- "the University's robust process for internal periodic review";
- "the imaginative and distinctive approach to creating an integrated system of academic and pastoral student support within the school".

The draft report will offer some recommendations for consideration, including "further enhancement of the programme approval process" and "greater consistency in the quality and quantity of information provided by departments and schools in the annual monitoring process".

Mary is inviting all members of staff who were involved in the QAA audit to a celebratory drink on Wednesday (9 June) at 5pm in the Sussex House committee room.

English at Sussex tops charts

The Guardian gave English at Sussex the top spot in its University Guide, released last month.

Other top ten places went to American Studies (6th), Anatomy and Physiology (6th), Anthropology (10th), Electrical and Electronic Engineering (2nd) and Media Studies (8th).

American Studies also featured in The Times top ten, coming in at 4th. It was joined by Linguistics (3rd), Philosophy (9th) and Sociology (7th).

The Guardian put Sussex 28th overall, up from 33rd the year before and compared to 39th in The Times.

President

Hums administrator to UNISON president. We chat to Pauline Thorne.

Duckings

The campus duck may have succumbed after all.

The latest news.

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Venus
Two heavenly bodies meet for the first time in over a century.

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Sussex runners-up in continental robot challenge.

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VC's best bits
The juiciest chunks from the VC's recent meetings with staff.

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President

Duckings

The campus duck may have succumbed after all.

The latest news.
A room with a computer-generated view

A Sussex lecturer has been helping scientists in the USA to advance virtual reality research during her sabbatical at NASA.

Virtual reality (VR) simulations are used in a variety of situations, including the training of astronauts and aircraft pilots, and their success depends on convincing the human mind to accept an artificial environment, so that a 'real' experience is offered.

One of the major problems for VR developers is overcoming the time delay between a person's movements and actions and the response from the system with which they are interacting.

For example, someone wearing a head-mounted display that was projecting images of a pretend world in front of his eyes would expect the scenery to change instantly as he moved his head. Instead, there is a short time lag between the actual movement and the images that appear within the field of vision.

Sussex informatics lecturer Dr Katerina Mania researched this time delay - called latency - at the NASA Ames Research Centre in California, where she collaborated with the Advanced Displays and Spatial Perception group, world leaders in research on human issues related to VR, including latency. The initial findings have just been accepted for publication at the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society meeting in New Orleans, USA (September 2004).

Katerina explains: "The experiment began with the minimum delay possible - 12 milliseconds - and was then stepped up, with eight milliseconds added each time. The results show people are very sensitive to picking up on delay and this stays true across different VR environments. Most people notice the visual consequences of latency at around 15 milliseconds, but some are very sensitive down to changes of five, even four milliseconds."

"Related research gives VR developers a clearer idea of the limits they have to work with to improve the science further."

Children are learning how to handle their feelings alongside their maths and English lessons as part of a major research project into social relationships at school.

The Children's Social Behaviour (CSB) project, a University of Sussex-led study sponsored by Brighton and Hove City Council, involves children from seven local primary schools. Its purpose is to develop ways of identifying and supporting children with social interaction problems before their behaviour starts to impact on others and their schoolwork.

The research team, led by Sussex developmental psychologist Dr Robin Banerjee, has been following 330 children aged five to ten over three years of primary school since 2002 to see how problems in peer relations and social interaction develop. Researchers will continue with the study until the end of the next school year.

Fun tasks and interactive computer games were used to determine children's thoughts and feelings about everyday social situations, as well as to ascertain how children rated each other and themselves in terms of social behaviour and popularity.

Results reveal that children who were generally rejected by their peers were viewed as disruptive and aggressive by their classmates and displayed distinctive ways of thinking and feeling about social situations. Negative thinking patterns were also associated with feelings of loneliness, anxiety and low self-esteem.

Robin says: "This project has given researchers and educational psychologists a valuable opportunity to work together to develop effective strategies for supporting children's social and emotional development. We are currently exploring ways of feeding our work into the relevant national programmes coordinated by the Department for Education and Skills."

The project has already resulted in a learning programme to enable children at Key Stage 2 of the National Curriculum to understand their own feelings and those of others. It was presented to educational psychologists and other practitioners at a one-day conference on campus last month (21 May).

The programme, developed by Brighton and Hove educational psychologist Bob Daines, features 40 short, hypothetical, illustrated stories about everyday life, which can be woven into literacy, art, drama and even PE classes.

Five themes are explored: words for feelings, mixed feelings, hurt feelings, displaying feelings; and changing feelings. The curriculum also focuses on interaction between children as they discuss and explore the issues raised. Teachers have already reported that these activities were often the first time when children in the class listened to and showed interest in each others' opinions.

Research funding opportunities →

More details of these and other funding opportunities are available from your Research Support Officer in the Research & Regional Development Division. For an extensive listing of funding opportunities, search the Community of Science (COS) database at www.cos.com

DTI Technology Programme Support is provided through two mechanisms: Knowledge Transfer Networks (managed networks, information networks and issues networks) and Collaborative Research and Development. An outline application form must be completed for this second call, which is open to several areas. Deadline: 21 June.

EPSRC/MAHR Designing for the 21st Century These two funders are taking forward a joint initiative to support leading-edge design research suitable for the challenges of designing for 21st-century society. The initiative is relevant for all researchers with an interest in design and at least £4m will be committed to this initiative over the next five years. Deadline: 30 June.

EPSRC INTERACT This is the second call of the initiative to increase new collaborations between the UK and China and Japan. Grants for travel and subsistence will enable groups of UK scientists and engineers to visit, develop contacts and explore ideas for collaboration. The limit for project grants in this call is £20k. Deadline: 27 July.

British Council China Student Grants These grants must be used to make significant contributions to this area and demonstrate a long-term benefit to both partners' ability to develop a strong partnership with China. Grants between £1,000 and £5,000 and can be used for most costs except equipment and materials. Deadline: assessed September, but application should be well in advance.

MRC/BBSRC/ESRC Discipline Hopper Awards These awards provide support to pump prime new collaborations between engineers and physical scientists with life scientists, with the aim of fostering long-term interaction. The aim is to provide contact time between scientists using funds to 'buy out' their own time with funding for replacement salaries. Deadline: 23 September.
Venus goes for a spin across the Sun

Scientists and amateur astronomers are eagerly awaiting the rare celestial spectacle of the planet Venus crossing in front of the Sun during the morning of 8 June.

To help explain the importance of this ‘transit of Venus’, Dr Peter Schroeder of the Astronomy Centre has compiled a star-gazing beginners’ guide, addressing the most commonly asked questions:

What is it? The planet Venus passes between the Earth and the Sun by crossing the solar disk. The first recorded transit viewing was in 1639.

When is it? At 06h 19m 54.8 BST on the morning of Tuesday 8 June. It will take about 20 minutes for Venus to fully move onto the solar disc. The event ends around noon.

Why is it so special? A transit of Venus is a very rare event. Usually, whenever Venus passes between us and the Sun, it misses the solar disk. The last transit of Venus was in 1882, so no living person has seen such an occurrence.

Is this an important event for scientists? Venus transits caused great scientific interest in the 18th and 19th centuries, as they were used in an attempt to find the distance scale of the solar system. Since then, however, much more accurate methods have emerged, for example, measuring the delay time of radar reflections.

Can everyone see it, and what will it look like? You’ll need to use strong, safe filters – never use sunglasses. The small, black-as-ink disk of Venus will be visible even to the unaided eye, as it will cover 1.32th of the apparent diameter of the solar disc. There are many supervised viewing events planned around the country and viewing goggles are available from the British Astronomical Association for £1.

Is there a safe method to observe this event with a small telescope? Yes. Project the image of the Sun onto a white sheet of paper or cardboard, using a low-power eyepiece. You can then see the progress of the black disk of Venus on its transit across the white solar disk – on paper. This also works with binoculars mounted on a tripod.

When is the next transit of Venus? They come in pairs, about eight years apart. The next one will therefore be in 2012, but only part of it will be visible from the UK. For the next pair of transits, however, you will have to wait until 2117 (but that transit won’t be at all visible from the UK).

University seeks new PVC

The University is seeking a new Pro-Vice-Chancellor to replace Dr Evelyn Welch, who is leaving Sussex in September to take up a professorship in Renaissance Studies at Queen Mary’s, University of London.

An expert on Italian Renaissance art and culture, London-based Evelyn is looking forward to developing Renaissance studies at Queen Mary’s and establishing a programme in art history.

“She has an exciting and wonderful year establishing important projects as a Pro-Vice-Chancellor at Sussex,” she says. “They are now well under way.”

One of her main responsibilities has been the project to develop a new science curriculum. “The University is committed to continuing the science project,” she says, “and I feel Dears now have a real grasp of what the issues are and are taking forward the project in exciting ways.”

Evelyn’s replacement as Pro-Vice-Chancellor will continue to be responsible for the science curriculum project, as well as other elements of teaching and learning policy including e-learning.

Some details of the portfolio will be determined only after the appointment is made, but the main elements will also include teaching quality assurance and enhancement, as well as staff development.

Members of faculty who wish to be considered for appointment should write to the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, by Wednesday (9 June), enclosing a CV and a letter of application.

Anyone who wishes to discuss in more detail the duties included in the portfolio is welcome to speak to Evelyn and/or Dr Mary Stuart.

News in brief

Photo exhibition:
Children of Iraq’s wars

Photos of Iraqi children by a Japanese photo journalist will be on display from 7-9 June, 12noon-5pm, on the ground floor of Arts D. For exhibition details, see www.chimerafilms.co.uk/children.html.

Gearing up for Bike Week

Try cycling in Bike Week (12–20 June): that’s the message from the new Brighton and Hove ‘City Cycling’ initiative, which the University of Sussex is part of.

On Thursday 17 June, you can join organised bike rides to campus from Montacute Road in Lewes and The Level in Brighton. Each ride begins at 8am and finishes at the Meeting House, where from 8–10am there will be a free breakfast for all travellers using sustainable transport.

And you can have your bike checked out for free from 10am–4pm in Library Square (Fulton Court).

Brighton based Cycle Training SE is also offering a 10% discount on all cycling lessons booked during Bike Week: contact Ian Davay on 01273 272155.

New transport assistant

If you have any transport-related enquiries, email transport@sussex.ac.uk or call ext. 6538. They will be dealt with by the new transport assistant, Suzanne New.

Open day 22 June

All academic departments will be taking part in the University open day on Tuesday 22 June, which is aimed at school groups of pupils in Years 11 and 12.

Representatives from every department will be offering individual consultations and many departments will also put on subject talks and tours. General talks are provided on a host of topics including finance, student life and applying to university.

Drivers should note that the open day will entail the closure of the Science car park and temporary parking in the field behind the Manteil building.

Tissue expert gives Med School talk

One of the country’s leading scientists was guest speaker at a lecture last month organised jointly by the University of Sussex, South Downs Health NHS Trust and the Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS).

Professor Dame Julia Polak is founder and director of the Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine Centre at Imperial College London. Her work centres on researching ways of growing lung and bone tissue to provide an alternative to transplantation.

She became interested in this area of research after undergoing a double heart and lung transplant in 1995 as a result of pulmonary hypertension.

Dame Julia is pictured with (from left to right) Professor Alasdair Smith, Sussex Vice-Chancellor; Quintin Barry, Chairman of South Downs Health; and Professor Jon Cohen, Dean of BSMS.

All articles are also featured on the internet at www.sussex.ac.uk/press_office/bulletin
What do users think about the Library?

A Library survey of users' opinions on its services showed high satisfaction ratings for the catalogue, the enquiry and lending services, opening hours and individual study facilities.

Respondents were least satisfied with the availability of PCs, the availability of course books and essential texts, photocopying and audiovisual resources.

The Library received more than 1,400 responses to its survey, conducted earlier this year. The findings will be used to inform planning of Library services over the next few years.

For further information see www.sussex.ac.uk/library/news/survey.shtml.

How is the Library responding to users' top priorities?

More copies of core texts / more digitised texts, including electronic journals and books
To help improve access to core texts the Library will:
• Work with teaching staff to improve planning of compulsory readings
• Encourage greater use of existing electronic information resources
• Pilot use of electronic books during 2004/05.

More up-to-date material on the shelves
This issue is more important in some subjects than in others. The Library has begun a programme of stock reviews in different subject areas. The work is time consuming and best done during the summer months. It will take a number of years to make significant progress.

Put more resources into re-shelving
The Library introduced new re-shelving procedures in the spring term. This led to immediate improvements over the position in the autumn term.

Links to e-journals from the Library catalogue
The Library need to resolve some technical issues in order to achieve this, but plan to provide links to e-journals from the Library catalogue by September 2005.

More photocopyers
The Library's photocopying service is run on a full cost-recovery basis. The service contract for photocopyers will be reviewed in the near future and the Library will explore the financial viability of providing additional photocopyers.

More consultation with departments about the selection of materials
The Library is keen to work closely with academic departments to ensure that services meet their needs as far as possible. It has taken a number of initiatives in this regard over the last year and others are planned.
Sussex robots reach European final

Two engineering students were so enthused by an international robot competition that they are already designing and building their entry for next year.

Graham Ross (on the left of the picture) and Arthur Guy came second in the Melexis Safety Trophy at their first attempt and won £3,000 worth of electronics vouchers between them.

The two first year Electronic Engineering students travelled to Leuven in Belgium, where they beat off strong opposition in a field of 24 enthusiasts from various European countries.

Each entrant had built an autonomous robot (without remote control), which had to navigate its way through a 20-metre course littered with obstacles and obstructions.

The robot entered by Graham and Arthur made it all the way to the final, when one of the drive motors failed, leaving the robot stranded.

For further information on the contest, see www.trophy.melexis.com.

Entrepreneurs for tomorrow

The success of an event on campus to inspire the entrepreneurs of tomorrow has encouraged the organisers to roll out the competition across the country next year.

The competition was launched at the University in January, when 270 Year 10 students from across East and West Sussex attended activities to inspire and motivate them to think about how to plan a new business.

A total of 18 secondary schools entered the competition and nearly 40 business plans, representing 130 students, were submitted.

Six schools were short-listed as finalists and invited to present their plans to an audience of friends and family in Bramber House last month. The panel of judges acted as though venture capitalists, with the difficult task of choosing which of the presentations they felt would have the most investment potential.

Four budding tycoons from Causeway School, Eastbourne, won first prize with their idea for organising teenage parties. Their company targeted a niche in the party planning market for teenagers wanting exciting events while being able to reassure their parents that they are in a safe environment.

At a special award ceremony the University’s Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, presented the quartet with certificates and prizes of handcrafted digital organisers.

Second place went to a team from Robertsbridge Community College, who modelled their innovative designer clothing range and demonstrated how hi-tech print techniques would respond to different lighting and temperature conditions.

The ‘Entrepreneurs for Tomorrow’ competition was run jointly by the University of Sussex, the Sussex Innovation Centre, Ringmer Community College and the Specialist Schools Trust, which now plans to organise a nationwide competition next year.

Not the usual work experience

CDEC (the Career Development and Employment Centre) is appealing to employers to let Sussex students see how they do their jobs.

The work shadowing scheme gives students on specific courses the opportunity to see what it’s really like to work in that discipline. Unlike work experience, which is seen by many as allowing a 16-year-old to make tea for a week, the work shadowing scheme is shorter but more intense. Students are allowed to really take part in the work of an organisation and for many it helps to decide whether this career is for them.

Habi Racs, a geography student, was placed with the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) at their Pulborough Brooks nature reserve in West Sussex. She saw her three days there as very much a learning experience and asked her ‘work guide’, RSPB warden Peter Hughes, many questions on his role.

Habi said: “[Work shadowing] has inspired me to volunteer in this field, which was one of the points hugely emphasised as a way of gaining experience and is highly regarded by employers.” She went on: “This experience has been much more permeating than reading a text book or random article about conservation.”

Ellie Hailey, an English student, did her work shadowing at the Financial Times. Like many who go into a big organisation, she was daunted at first: “I began to enjoy the experience on the second day, and by the third day I didn’t want to leave.”

Ellie assumed she would be a dog’s body, so was pleasantly surprised when her articles appeared in the FT: “They didn’t ask me to perform menial tasks, such as photocopying, but allowed me to write pieces for the paper and even a longer article!”

Claire Ward, a Career Development Adviser with responsibility for the scheme, says it gives students a realistic view on possible career paths: “Work shadowing allows students to be informed and do successful job applications.”

But what is an employer expected to do to become a work guide? “We send employers an information pack, but it is the students who make contact, arrange dates and any specifics, such as dress codes,” says Claire.

At the moment there just aren’t enough places to fulfill the demand. Those who reckon that they, or a friend in any field, might be able to squeeze in an eager student, for one day or several, should contact Claire in CDEC by emailing c.b.ward@sussex.ac.uk.

LETTERS

Persuasion tactics

I was interested in the report of Dr Helga Dittmar and Emma Hallwill’s research on the psychological tactics behind doorstep selling (Bulletin, 21 May).

These techniques seemed vaguely familiar, then I remembered … we learned the same techniques on a recent staff-management training course: how to

persuade others in the workplace!

I have to report however that, to my dismay, the techniques are ineffective when used on economists.

Mike Barrow
Chair, Department of Economics
Staff member to become national union president

A Sussex member of staff is about to take the reins of the UK's largest trades union, as she becomes president of UNISON.

The position will see Pauline Thorne, currently a School Administrator in Humanities, working closely with UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis on many issues including policy.

She will also chair UNISON's meetings, the national executive committee, and conferences, "of which there are 12," says Pauline, "including the national conference, which has over 2,500 delegates!"

Besides the day-to-day business of spearheading a union of 1.3 million members, Pauline also plans to help various charitable initiatives. With the title comes an office in London, and even a work of art for the president to commission.

Pauline is clearly chuffed at her year-long posting: "I'm looking forward to it. I never hoped, I never aspired to be president. I can't quite believe it."

Arriving at Sussex 37 years ago, Pauline has worked in admissions and exams, and, up to last year, she was famous on campus as School Admin Officer of CCS, one of the old schools of studies. She also worked her way up through UNISON, as a branch activist and then secretary; at the moment she is national vice president of the union and chair of its insurance arm.

Wearing her UNISON hat, has she had a cordial relationship with the University management? "Well, I've negotiated with almost all the VCs," replies Pauline, "and when Alasdair [the current Vice-Chancellor] announced I was to become president, he said he admired our style of negotiation. We've had our differences, but we've always talked."

What about all the students and academics at Sussex, what has she thought of them over the years? "Young people take an awful lot of criticism but I've met some tremendous students here. Also, I am full of admiration for the many wise and caring academics that I have known. The University is very different from when I started," she continues, "but the founding fathers were so amazing, and this is an excellent place."

Vice-Chancellor's staff meetings: A round-up

At times it seemed more like an open meeting with the Transport Manager than one with the Vice-Chancellor.

Staff at the meeting on 12 May had transport questions about a promised car-share scheme (imminently available now that the software has been bought); enforcement of car-parking charges (to which more resources have now been allocated); the possibility of higher charges for staff earning over £40,000 a year (not an option as part of a system that is already very complex); and the ongoing problems with driving off campus at the end of the working day (the responsibility of the Highways Agency, which is more interested in doing something about the dangerous Ashcombe roundabout near Lewes).

Many of these issues were revisited at the second meeting, on 19 May. They were raised partly in the context of a long-term masterplan for the future development of campus, currently being developed by Estates. A key objective of the plan, said the Vice-Chancellor, is incrementally to move car parking to the edges of campus and to keep the central roads traffic free.

In the shorter term, there are plans for another set of office moves this summer as the co-location of schools and departments continues. Professor Alasdair Smith emphasised in both meetings that lessons from last year had been taken on board, that the exercise would be on a smaller scale this time round, and that more managerial resource has been made available.

Also well under way is another round of academic recruitment. Appointing committees are pleased with the calibre of faculty applying for posts, Alasdair reported, even though the fields are smaller this year than last (because of increased competition from other universities).

Now that the dispute between the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and employers has been resolved, staff in Human Resources are working with trade unions on implementing the new pay framework.

Human Resources are also co-ordinating a staff attitudes survey, involving all staff on campus. "It's very important for us to find out how the University is functioning as a community," said Alasdair, particularly because of the rapid pace of change on campus in recent months.

One area of significant change has been the introduction of a new visual identity. "In general, the response has been positive," said Alasdair. Although some elements will need "tweaking", he emphasised that most work well and said he is "very pleased with how it's turned out". Asked about the effectiveness of the new look, he said: "We'll find out next year if the student-recruitment materials are working better."

At the first of the two meetings there was a lively discussion about the student-recruitment difficulties in Chemistry and the consequent refocusing of the Chemistry department towards chemical biology.

This was allied to a feeling expressed by some staff that there isn't support from the centre for the sciences at Sussex. "We have to keep science under close scrutiny," said the Vice-Chancellor, "because we don't have unlimited resources if things don't turn around." But the Dean of Life Sciences said he thought Chemistry was getting "tremendous support" from the centre, citing four new academic appointments, £2m funding for spectroscopy, and the provision of new teaching laboratories.
Education link visit to Pakistan

A visit to Pakistan by two Sussex education faculty provided opportunities for extensive discussion and exchange of views not only on educational issues but also on the current global political climate.

The key objective of the visit by Dr Máiread Dunne and Sara Humphreys from the Centre for International Education (CIE) was research capacity development.

The central activity was a two-day research conference at the University of Peshawar’s Institute of Education and Research (IER), attended by around 200 participants including faculty and education students.

Sara and Máiread led the participants in a range of sessions on the research process, research design, the development of research proposals and the use of qualitative and quantitative methods in research. Faculty and students worked in groups to discuss research ideas and develop outline proposals around priority educational issues in Pakistan.

Máiread and Sara also met faculty and students at the University of Kohat and FEPA Kohat, which is devoted to providing in-service training and development to practising higher education lecturers—a development that has not yet occurred in the UK.

The final part of the programme entailed travelling to Islamabad’s Foundation University, and involvement in another interactive research session with faculty members and research students.

Campus ducklings: the plot thickens

Biologist Dr David Harper thinks he’s been proved wrong—not by one of his academic colleagues, but by a pair of mallard ducks.

The Bulletin reported last month (21 May) that a breeding pair of ducks on campus had lost all of their nine ducklings, perhaps to predators, and that in David’s opinion they would not breed again this spring.

But now he’s changed his mind and thinks they have mated once more. If he’s right, the female has laid anything between six and 12 eggs, which will hatch within a day of each other in late July.

Unconfirmed reports suggest that the season’s first clutch were not killed by predators, as David had thought possible, but removed by the RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals).

And his plea to staff and students is to leave any forthcoming clutch well alone. “Ducklings can look a lot more pathetic than they really are,” he says, referring to well-meaning efforts to provide the youngsters with ramps to help them climb out of the campus ponds. In fact, one of the main problems can be if some of the brood get stressed out by all the interest in them and become separated from their mother.

This also means that no one should attempt to take any ducklings across the busy A27 road to Falmer pond. As David points out, they may not want to go (if they originate from Stammer pond, for example), and the female would feel unhappy in the wrong place.

If David is right this time and the campus mallards have mated again, the next clutch will have a smaller chance of success in the wild because of their late birthday. But it seems we can all give them the best possible chance of survival by leaving them to their own devices.

A walk on the wild side

Readers will be familiar with the large spoil tip at the south-east corner of the field behind East Slope. Over the years it has become colonised by an astonishing variety of plants, many of which are either arable weeds or typical of disturbed ground.

At the moment it is sporting a spectacular crop of tall plants with glossy, strap-shaped leaves with wavy edges. The inconspicuous yellow flowers are clustered together in an elongated spike at the end of the stems, which may grow to a height of 1.5 m.

This is Weed or Dyer’s Rocket, which was used since Neolithic times as an important source of a yellow dye and which, together with Woad and Madder, formed the staple of the dyer’s armoury. It remained in use until the advent of chemical dying and, although a native plant, it was widely cultivated in eastern England from Kent to Yorkshire as well as being supplemented by imports from France.

In the wild it can be found throughout the country but it gets scarce in the north and has a clear preference for calcareous soils, where it is frequent on waste ground such as field margins, roadsides and abandoned quarries.

More colourful and conspicuous at the moment is a fine show of Wilted Thistles—the first thistle of summer, flowering earlier than the more familiar Creeping and Spear Thistles. Its flower heads are a great attraction for bees, butterflies and hoverflies. Look out for Painted Lady caterpillars in silken ‘tents’ inside rolled leaves.

Passing the Boiler House recently we were attracted by a commotion in an Ash outside Engineering II: a Crow was trying to swallow a Magpie chick! Both parent Magpies crashed into the Crow so violently that the branch beneath it broke, and all four birds tumbled to the lawn. The chick, which had left its comfy nest only the day before, looked confused but was otherwise unhurt by its adventure. Its attacker slunk off to find an easier meal; despite their fearsome reputation, Crows usually eat worms and insects.

Crows always nest as isolated pairs, rather than in noisy colonies as Rooks do. An adult Rook is easily identified by the large patch of greyish-white skin around the base of its bill. Young Rooks will not develop this feature until next spring and so are harder to tell from Crows. One clue is that Rooks have long, fluffy feathers on their thighs: they appear to be wearing baggy trousers rather than tight jeans. Their beaks are more slender and in flight their wing feathers are more widely spread.

The typical calls are also distinctive. Crows really roll their r’s to give a deep croak ‘krrrrr’, which is often repeated three times. Rooks give single ‘kaaaw’ calls, all too familiar to anyone trying to study or sleep near a rookery.

Dyer’s rocket, so called because of its ancient use as a dye, thrives on the heap in the field behind East Slope.
Lectures, seminars and colloquia

MON 7 JUNE
5.00pm Education Open Seminar: Stephen Ball (Institute of Education), Education, distinction and the middle classes. Arts C233.

5.00pm New Metaphysical Poetry at Sussex Seminar: Pauline Stainer and Paul Matthews (poets), New metaphysical poetry. Music Room, Gardner Arts Centre.

TUE 8 JUNE
12.30pm Centre for Life History Research Seminar: Dorothy Sheridan, Fiona Courage, Sandra Kooi Wing (Sussex), The Mass Observation Project: Discussing the writers' records. Library Meeting Room.

1.00pm Perception, Action & Communication Seminar: David Reby (Sussex), Lanyngot descent in a non-human mammal. Pevensey I 1.83.

2.15pm SEI Research-in-Progress Seminar: Jim Mathis (Amsterdam), The EU's external regional policy. Arts A71.

4.00pm Biochemistry and Genetics & Development Seminar: Tracay Hinton (Sussex), Translation initiation in equine rhinitis viruses. JMS Lecture Theatre.

4.00pm COGS Research Seminar: Ted Dunning, E-commerce as a micro-economic microscope. Anurad 404A.

WED 9 JUNE
12.00 noon Experimental Particle Physics Seminar: S. Abel (Durham), Neutron EDM: Beyond the standard model. Pevensey 1 A3.

THU 10 JUNE
4.00pm American Studies Open Seminar: Elizabeth Emma Ferry (Brandeis, Boston), Dancing with the 'Indios': Performing mestizaje in a Mexican town, Arts A71.

FRI 11 JUNE
4.30pm Philosophy Society: Stella Sandford (Middlesex), Plato, Freud and the phenomenology of Eros. Arts C233.

MON 14 JUNE
12.30pm CCE Research and Practice Forum: Margaret Pilkington (Sussex), Science in the countryside: Lifelong learning for ecological citizenship. Arts D310.

1.00pmBehavioural and Cognitive Neuroscience Seminar: Matt Field, Attentional bias and cue approach in drug users. Psychology conference room.

4.30pm Neuroscience Seminar: Katherine Buchanan (Cardiff), Do stressed birds sing different songs? Genome Centre Seminar Room.

5.00pm Education Open Seminar: Judy Sebbia (Sussex), Assessment for learning: The evidence, policy and practice. Arts C233.

TUE 15 JUNE
4.00pm Biochemistry and Genetics & Development Seminar: Nigel Brissett (Sussex), Effects of space on peroxidase function. JMS Lecture Theatre.

4.00pm COGS Research Seminar: Richard Cox (Sussex), Semantic organisation of external representations: Assessing 'graphical literacy.' Anurad 404A.

WED 16 JUNE
12.00 noon Experimental Particle Physics Seminar: A. Watson (Leeds), Progress towards discovering the holographic nature of elementary particles. Pevensey 1 A3.

THU 17 JUNE
4.00pm Psychology Departmental Colloquium: Constantine Sedikides (Southampton), Don't look back in sorrow: Content, affective signature, triggers, and functions of nostalgia. Pevensey I 1A7.

6.30pm BSMS Professional Inaugural Lecture: Jonathan Cohen (BSMS), Septic shock: Patients as their own worst enemy. BSMS Lecture Theatre.

FRI 18 JUNE
1.30pm HCT Seminar: Miguel Garcia (Colima, Mexico), title TBA, Pevensey I A2.

4.30pm Philosophy Society: Jennifer Robinson (Cincinnati), How our emotions help us to understand music. Arts C233.

Small ads

For sale: Lec 4 star upright granite, white. £650ono. Email T.Donnelly@sussex.ac.uk.

Proof-reading: By native English-speaking Sussex PG. DPhil theses, Masters' dissertations, journal articles; all subjects. £129ph (neg.). Email A.F.Lloyd@sussex.ac.uk.

Holiday let: 2-bed furnished condo (slps 4) in Key West, Florida, 17-24 July. Two pools, bikes available. £600. Call 470769 or 07900 736379, email kmc23@sussex.ac.uk.

For sale: MESH PC + Windows 98, DVD/CD ROM, 17" monitor, keyboard, printer, mouse, speakers, internet ready. £230 ono. Tel. 07730 877054.

Wanted: Friendly student to share with 2nd yrs; good location, for next yr and this summer. £355pw incl. Call 0842289 or 07899 950503.

To let: Single room in Brunswick Place flat. Available July, share with PG. £70 pw incl. bills. Contact Phil on 07779 788553 or aphilipnorton@yahoo.co.uk.

For sale: Volvo S40, 2.05, automatic, W reg, white, 46000 miles, CD, air conditioning, FSH, MoT, tax. Call 0508171128.

To let: From July, purpose-built studio flat in Lewes. £430 pcm. Email j.asley@sussex.ac.uk or call 0475321.

To let: 2-bed furnished garden flat, Park Crescent. Available late June. £460 pcm incl CH. Access to 3.5 acre private garden. Email j.m.shaw@sussex.ac.uk.

Wanted: Host family/exchange for 17-yr-old French boy, for 2-wk stay to improve his English. French family live nr Paris, have children aged 14-19. Email m.j.shaw@sussex.ac.uk.

Wanted: Room for DSPh student, from 26 June for 3 mths. Email tr23@sussex.ac.uk or call 07799 448094.

For sale: African 10 stringed guitar-type instrument. £69 decorative, painted hide covering. £30. Call est. 8289.

To let: Single furnished room in Hanover house. Share with three PGS or mature student pref. £245 pcm + bills. Available from, soon. Email Jz221@columbia.edu.


To let: 4-bed house nr Preston Pl. Fully or part furnished subject to neg., from 1 Aug, £1650 pcm. Tel. 0553425, email t.larkin@sussex.ac.uk.

For sale: Blue Falcon Meridian bicycle. Men's 21' frame. Hardly used. £120. Email hanyttr@sussex.ac.uk.


For sale: Sony Vaio PCG-FX901 laptop. 1GHz processor, 256MB RAM, 20GB HD, 14.1" TFT, Windows XP, WiFi card Dink DLW650+, £550 ono. Email claudia@o2uba.fr.

To let: Grade 1 listed, 4-bed furnished Bn house. 3 living rooms, 3 balconies, patio, private communal gardens. £1,850 pcm. From Aug for 1 yr. Email nicholas.rohi@virgin.net.

To let: GF 1-bed furnished flat in North Laine. Suit visiting lecturer or mature student. £550 pcm + bills, council tax. Available mid June, initial 6-mth lease. Call Alex on 07899 747772.

Gardner Arts Centre

Box office 01273 685861
www.gardnerarts.co.uk

Sussex students and staff are eligible for tickets at concessional rate to all events on presentation of a valid ID card.

FILM
Free pair of tickets for each film; just be the first Bulletin reader to the box office

Sat 5 June
8pm House of Sand and Fog

Sun 6 June
8pm The Dreamers (18)