Induction dash induces both sprint finishes and silly walks

No one broke the four-minute mile at the inaugural Induction Dash on 8 October but there was certainly a fight to the finish. Josh Guillemot, a student in the Sussex Law School, won in a time of 4m 39s, just edging out Students' Union president Roger Hylton by one second.

The one-mile dash, organised by Student Experience Manager Shell Morgan, was held to mark the formal end of Freshers' Week. Beginning from Bramber House, more than 100 staff and students took part in the event.

As the seconds ticked down to the start, a rumour spread through the crowd that the real race was between the School of Life Sciences (LifeSci) and the School of Social Sciences and Cultural Studies (SocCul).

Whispers suggested SocCul had registered a slew of people at the last minute so they had a better chance of beating LifeSci.

In addition, their runners were all dressed as robbers or escaped convicts – except for one WPC, whose role was to chase them through the course, ensuring they sprinted. As the race progressed, it became clear she was not doing her job: the robbers were walking!

They certainly weren't the only ones dressing up for the event. Michael Alexander, a student in HumS, called himself 'Buttman' because of his rather revealing costume.

Richard, a SocCul fresher who was too embarrassed to give his surname, was dressed in a bright yellow and black outfit he had bought in Ghana. Richard said he was running because "I like the idea of having a healthy campus, and I haven't had a chance to wear this yet!"

Staff member Tracey Beck gave an insight into the far more serious front runners: "There was a bit of elbowing and jostling, but thankfully no Paul Radcliffe moments." Top women's staff runner was Dr Libby John, Head of Biology and Environmental Science, who came in at 5m 24s; while Maresa Pitt of SocCul stormed in at 5m 43s as fastest female student.

Meanwhile, bringing up the rear was a bevy of East Slope residential advisers whose eight legs were bound together. Singing marching tunes to keep up their spirits, they crossed the finishing line in last place and to the biggest cheer.

So, who won the schools grudge match? As expected, Dr Jonathan Bacon sprinted to victory in the Dean's race. However, SocCul nabbed the awards for most entries and best fancy dress as well as the overall school prize.

But while attention was focused on the main battle, the prize for fastest school (the school with the quickest five over the line) went to neither SocCul nor LifeSci – but, instead, was nabbed from under their very noses by the speedy scholars of Science and Technology (SciTech).

Kroto to leave Sussex

Nobel-winning chemist Professor Sir Harry Kroto is to leave Sussex after 37 years for Florida State University (FSU) in Tallahassee.

Harry says raising funds in the UK for his work will become increasingly difficult after he reaches the retirement age of 65 later this year. FSU has also agreed to support his work to improve the public understanding of science, primarily through the Vega Science Trust, which produces science programmes.

Professor NormanBillingham, Harry's friend and colleague for more than 35 years, said: "I'm very sorry to see Harry going. Unfortunately not many universities here are in a position to offer salary or research support to retired people, particularly in areas of science that need significant funding. The limited resources we have must be put into supporting the next generation of young people who will provide the next generation of Nobel laureates."

The Chemistry department has recently made several young faculty appointments. In a letter to the Guardian this month, Harry said: "I see in them an ambition to equal if not better the outstanding recent record of chemistry at Sussex – 10 fellows of the Royal Society, three Nobel laureates and one Wolf prize winner."

Harry shared a Nobel prize in 1996 for the discovery at Sussex of fullerenes, a new form of carbon. He was knighted later that year and Sussex paid its own tribute to him in 1997 with the award of an honorary degree.

Despite the attractions of the "sunshine state", Harry is not severing his connections with Sussex. He expects to retain an office on campus and to continue to collaborate with research groups here, particularly in the area of biological nanostructures.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, said: "The University is obviously proud of Sir Harry's long and extremely distinguished career here at Sussex. But we understand why he wants to do something new at this stage in his career. We would rather he didn't go but we wish him well in the future."

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Think the London marathon is tough? Try a 150-mile desert run.
Scientists discover how cells repair broken DNA

A team of Sussex-led scientists has identified crucial elements necessary for repairing damaged DNA - the blueprint for all living cells.

Five years of research have lead to a breakthrough that will further our understanding of how diseases associated with DNA instability, such as cancer, arise.

Working with his research team and colleagues in the USA, biochemist Dr Aidan Doherty has discovered how two essential DNA repair proteins repair breaks in genomic DNA, the material in the cell that contains genetic information.

The research team discovered that the process of repairing breaks in DNA was much simpler than previously thought. They have shown that two bacterial proteins, Ku and Ligase, act together to identify DNA breaks and then repair them.

"These findings have important implications for our understanding of repair mechanisms in human cells," says Aidan, who is based in the Genome Damage and Stability Centre.

"Our DNA can be damaged by any number of things from sunlight to oxygen. This happens continuously and most of the time our cells repair themselves correctly. But occasionally inaccurate repair of breaks occurs and this has the potential to contribute to cell mutation, allowing genetic material to be lost, which can lead to DNA instability and ultimately cancer."

"Now that we have identified the essential protein activities necessary for this repair process, we can begin to understand how cells repair DNA breaks."

"There is a great deal of interest in designing drugs that target related repair systems in human cells to inhibit the growth of cancerous cells and we are likely to see new cancer therapies, based on these findings, appearing in the next five to ten years."

The work has recently been patented and is currently being developed as a research tool for the research and biotechnology communities. A paper on the research will be published in Science journal today (22 October).

Aidan’s team carried out the research with financial support from the BBSRC, MRC and Royal Society.

An artist’s insights into Sussex science

A new exhibition of film, sound, digital and drawn images offers an artist’s insights into the research, the politics and the personalities of a Sussex science department.

The artist, Heather Barnett, has spent the last year working with four research groups in the School of Life Sciences, immersing herself in laboratory processes and observing how the scientists approach their work.

"The way the scientists interacted with the artist was fascinating," says Dr Robert Whittle, geneticist and project manager.

"There was a certain worry at sharing red-hot results with an outsider before publishing them, a real excitement when talking about their chosen research area, and a curiosity about whether they will like the perspective that Heather puts on their research via her art."

The scientists will be able to find out what they think of Heather’s art by going to the exhibition, which is on display at Brighton Media Centre in Middle Street. Robert has already made up his mind: "The work is anecdotally yet informative, amusing yet accurate," he says.

Highlights include a collection of scribbles and drawings by scientists, capturing moments of inspiration and revealing their complex calculations. There is also a multi track sound installation exposing how the scientists view their world.

The exhibition runs until 31 October. Entry is free, every day from 1-5pm. Or you just take a walk to the John Maynard Smith (JMS) building on campus.

Georgian justice after the ‘Rose Revolution’

A Sussex law lecturer is helping to reform the justice system in the unstable and crime-ridden former Soviet state of Georgia.

Dr Richard Vogler, who teaches comparative criminal law in the Sussex Law School, travelled to the Caucasus last month at the invitation of Georgia’s Justice Ministry.

On his two previous visits, Richard chaired a working group that struggled to convince Eduard Shevardnadze’s government to adopt a less authoritarian reform agenda. The police force was corrupt and largely unpaid; pre-trial detention facilities were appalling; and human rights abuses were routine.

Since the ‘Rose Revolution’ in 2003 overturned Shevardnadze’s administration in a popular uprising, a very real possibility has opened up for progressive reform of criminal justice.

Out of the seven original members of Richard’s working group, one has been promoted to Minister of Justice in the post-revolutionary government, another to Attorney General and a third to Deputy Justice Minister.

"Alone among the southern states of the former Soviet Union," says Richard, "Georgia now has the opportunity to create a justice system in which due process rights are embedded and effective."
Will new car parks have a negative effect on campus?

Do the 96% of respondents to the staff survey who thought that the campus environment was "good" and the 348 who specifically commented on the "attractive surroundings" support the building of new car parks on the hills to the east and west of campus?

In my view these new car parks will have an extremely negative effect on the campus environment that so many of us seem to treasure. Writing as a current member of staff and a student from 1991–1996, the setting of our campus is one of the defining features about living, studying and working at Sussex.

We now seem on the verge of losing this feature without any meaningful prior consultation with the campus community. The application was approved by the local council in June but the first public announcement came only in the last Bulletin (8 October) and work is due to begin imminently.

As the parent of a toddler in the University creche, the playground of which will be directly overlooked by one of the new car parks, I would have at least expected to see planning notices posted near Norwich House so that comments on the application could have been submitted to the council.

However, I have since been told that consultation is undertaken only if significant opposition is expected to a proposal. Perhaps this reflects the 64% of survey respondents who felt that management do not want staff involved in the way Sussex is run?

Daniel Feakes, SPRU – Science and Technology Policy Research

David Kirkwood, Director of Estates, replies:

There was in fact consultation (including an open meeting and a leaflet) with the University community last May on the overall plans for the future development of campus, including car parks.

The planners want new development to be generally in the centre of the campus and therefore to move car parking on to the peripheral slopes. There are advantages to this, as well as disadvantages, but we have to live with the broad strategy of the planners.

The plan is to add green space at the heart of the campus for everybody to enjoy, in keeping with what Sir Basil Spence did so well in the 1960s. Given that approach, along with the listing by English Heritage of the buildings at the southern end of campus, our options are severely constrained. But the broad strategy of the campus plan is the best way to maintain the environmental and architectural values of the campus, which are of great value to all of us.

The University's parking policy actually seeks to reduce the numbers on cars on site, and to encourage public transport use, and anecdotal evidence is that it has succeeded in this aim. To obtain the broad strategy of the campus plan is the best way to maintain the environmental and architectural values of the campus, which are of great value to all of us.

The University’s parking policy actually seeks to reduce the numbers on cars on site, and to encourage public transport use, and anecdotal evidence is that it has succeeded in this aim. To obtain precise numerical data, the Transport Manager will be conducting a travel survey this academic year (probably spring 2005).

Admit your failings, learn and move on

From the quiet on the front page of the Bulletin of 24 September about the criticisms of senior management – particularly on the planning side – that appear in the staff survey the cynic might presume that nothing much is going to change.

Let’s hope not, for I do see some light and that in making these results public to us all the University is trying in its own way to admit its failings, learn and move on.

Mick Henry, Life Sciences

BITEBACK

In the last issue (8 October) we asked for your views on postgraduate studies: whether it is worth it and if it helps students in their future life.

Biddy Jarzembowski, Psychology, said:

“I have completed a masters degree in Business Administration – General Management. This involved three years of part-time job-related studies (accelerated learning).

My last assignment on US corporate strategy received complimentary remarks from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, but have I been rewarded financially or given a more responsible position? Of course not!

Surely the University should practise what it promotes and reward its own staff for undertaking relevant postgraduate studies.”

Martin Dines, English MA graduate, said:

“My MA at Sussex did exactly what it said on the tin, and it certainly helped me secure funding for the PhD I’m now doing.”

Court dismisses application for injunction to stop new car park

Brighton County Court has turned down a student’s application for an injunction to prevent works to extend the EDB car park.

The student, a parent of a child in the crèche (which is based in Norwich House) had argued in court on Wednesday (20 October) that the work should be halted until the health and safety of the staff and children in the crèche had been given “full consideration”.

The University argued in court that it had taken proper account of health and safety in planning the new teaching facilities, car parking and accommodation on campus. It did acknowledge that there could have been more extensive consultation with those directly affected.

District Judge John Merrick was sympathetic to the student’s case, but said the court had no powers in relation to the application as she had presented it.

He had no reason to doubt that the University was complying with its statutory obligations. He did urge the University to continue its consultation with parents.

“We are in active discussion with the parents of the children in the crèche to understand their concerns and take account of their wishes in the construction process,” said the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith.

“We have told parents we look forward to continued discussion to try to resolve this matter, so that we can continue to improve the campus facilities for staff and students.”

Work had been due to begin on Monday (18 October) on the extension, which will replace some of the parking spaces lost in creating a new teaching building and student residences across the road from Bramber House. So far as the court is concerned, that work can now go ahead.”
Enterprising Sussex student named UK winner

Enterprising Sussex student Martina Rieder has won the national final of a major business competition with her design for a medical product that’s set to benefit thousands of patients.

The 24-year-old Biochemistry and Management Studies undergraduate has been named the ‘UK’s Most Enterprising Student’ on the Shell Technology Enterprise Programme (STEP) 2004. She received a trophy and prize money of £1,000 at a London awards ceremony on 6 October.

Her two projects were selected out of some 1,400 entries in the STEP programme, which offers summer work placements for students at small and medium-sized businesses.

Martina’s eight-week placement was with Welland Medical, a Crawley-based company that makes products for people who have undergone bowel surgery.

She interviewed hospital patients and carried out chemistry research to help design a more durable and comfortable colostomy ‘flange’. Flanges are used to attach waste bags to the skin surrounding a stoma (a surgically created opening in the body). Welland plans to patent the product.

In another project, Martina was able to identify and resolve problems in the production process, saving Welland thousands of pounds.

Dr Romy Smith, Welland director of research and development, said: “Martina has been an outstanding contributor to not just one but two significant projects. Success in one would have been a brilliant achievement, but to have achieved so much both is a tribute to her dedication, energy and commitment.”

Commenting on the award, Martina said: “This is a fantastic award and STEP has been an amazing experience. I hope that with my projects I have really improved the quality of patients’ lives.”

Three stars, three years running

Campus accommodation in Lewes Court and Brighthelm has been awarded a 3-star rating for the third year running following an annual inspection undertaken by Tourism South East.

The audit was carried out under the VisitBritain National Quality Assurance Standard for University accommodation and the grading reflects the high standards of accommodation available on campus.

The inspection covered many aspects including appearance, environment, decorations, furniture, housekeeping and maintenance.

Paul Knight, Trading Development Manager in Student Services, said: “This rating again demonstrates the high standards of care and commitment taken by our staff in Residential Services. “The grading is also a useful benchmark that helps to attract conference and self-catering visitors during the summer vacation period, and this business in turn helps to provide additional income for the University.”

Exemplary performance from Innovation Centre

Business incubator the Sussex Innovation Centre (SInC), which is based on campus, is one of only two such centres to be shortlisted for a national award.

The government set up UK Business Incubation (UKBi) in 1997 to promote good practice in the sector. SInC is in line to win its 2004 National Business Incubation Exemplar Award.

The awards recognise exceptional performance in key areas such as industry and support networks; assistance with access to markets; and finance and mentoring networks.

Each contender submits information on its performance in three of these areas. SInC’s application focused on:

1. the centre’s innovative New Product Network model, which aims to introduce businesses to potential customers,
2. its financial planning service, and
3. the location and facilities offered by the centre itself.

In the final stage of the process, SInC staff will undergo a face-to-face interview with a UKBi judge. The winner will be announced at the UKBi national conference in November.

Mike Herd, executive director of SInC, said: “Our mission is to ensure that every company based here receives the level of service and advice needed to achieve success. The judges’ feedback shows that this can-do attitude was a key factor in us being shortlisted. We’re all looking forward to attending the conference dinner and finding out how we have done.”

Opened in 1996, the Innovation Centre provides support for the creation and growth of technology- and knowledge-based companies in the IT, biotech, media and engineering sectors.
Open house for prospective students

Last Saturday’s open day (16 October) for prospective students was the largest yet, in terms both of visitor numbers and activities on offer.

More than 100 academic and support staff covered 40 desks, offered 51 talks and ran tours of 10 key facilities. Twenty-five residential advisors ran accommodation tours for no less than 3,000 people.

All prospective students who submitted feedback questionnaires said that they were more interested in Sussex as a result of their visit, and all parents who completed forms said that they would now recommend Sussex to other families.

“Of all the open days at universities we have attended over the summer/autumn, Sussex was in a league of its own for its informative, professional and friendly welcome,” said one comment. “It has convinced us that Sussex will be our first choice without any doubt.”

The open day organizers are keen to continue building on this success. Capacity will be the main challenge for 2005, as interest in Sussex continues to rise.

“We may need to consider additional dates and/or weekend or out-of-term dates,” said Tanya Shadrick, head of Schools and Colleges Liaison. “We will also need to run still more talks and department tours than we do currently.”

New scholarships prove popular

Competition for the University’s new international scholarships has exceeded expectations, with 451 applications from 51 countries. “These numbers will be even greater next year,” said Dr Philip Baker, head of the International & Study Abroad Office.

Each year up to 40 scholarships are on offer to overseas fee-paying students applying to study taught programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

The first recipients of the scholarships met at a reception on 11 October, when Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor John Dearlove presented them with certificates.

Postgraduate Ning Zhang (pictured), who is studying the MSC in Multimedia Applications & Virtual Environments, said: “The University is a real international university. I believe I will gain more than just knowledge at university and that the experience will be my best memory ever.”

“Sussex is keen to reward students of high academic ability by offering these scholarships,” said Philip. For full details, see www.sussex.ac.uk/international/cisscholarships/.

Changes to student discipline scheme

Last year saw an increase in inappropriate behaviour (often a result of binge drinking) from a small number of students. The University has responded by introducing some important changes to the rules and procedures on student discipline (known as Ordinance II).

This will allow cases to be addressed more speedily and clarifies that being under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be accepted as a mitigating factor or an excuse and may be regarded as an aggravating feature.

“The University takes the safety and welfare of its staff and students extremely seriously and the Discipline Committee will be carefully monitoring the number and frequency of incidents this year,” said the Registrar & Secretary, Neil Gershon.

The University cannot take action, however, without official complaints being made. The Committee members would encourage both staff and students across campus to report in writing any incidents they are concerned about to the Registrar & Secretary.

Further information about the student discipline scheme, as well as guidelines to help in the writing of incident reports, is available online at www.sussex.ac.uk/secretariat.

For advice on a particular aspect of student discipline, contact Paul Roberts on ext. 3855 or p.e.roberts@sussex.ac.uk.

News in brief ↓

Vice-Chancellor’s open meetings with staff

Professor Alan Smith will be holding two open meetings for staff on Wednesday (27 October). The first is from 1.15-2pm in BSMS Room 1.02; and the second is from 3.30-4pm in Arts A2.

Eating disorders self-help group

Research psychologist Robbie Morris and her colleague Mel Price have launched a drop-in self-help group on campus for students with eating disorders. They both have personal experience of these conditions and are bound by the ethics of the Eating Disorders Association, to which they belong. The group is open to all including carers, friends and family. It meets every third Wednesday of the month from 5.15-6.30pm, at the UNISEX Drop-in, Contact Robbie on ext. 3029 or Mel on ext. 3034.

40 and on the shelf?

This year marks 40 years since the opening of the University’s Library. Did you have a eureka moment in this grand Grade II listed building? Or maybe, like many people, you contracted narcolepsy upon opening a book? Or perhaps you are a member of staff with a tale to tell? Whatever your memories of the University Library, email bulletin@sussex.ac.uk or write to 230 Sussex House. We’ll publish the best in the Bulletin and online.

Empower your students

The Students’ Union is urging tutors to encourage their students to attend its annual general meeting (AGM) on Thursday 4 November. The AGM is the forum where students have a say in how their union directs its focus both politically and financially. It takes place at 1.30pm in Mandela Hall.

All articles are also featured on the internet at www.sussex.ac.uk/press_office/bulletin
Geographer gets more than he bargained for in the Congo

Academics across campus have no doubt been swapping tales of summer field trips and conferences on their return to the routine of a new term, but the adventures of geographer Dr Dominic Kniveton’s will take some beating.

A series of bizarre events left Dominic stranded as an illegal immigrant in the unpredictable political climate of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC, formerly Zaire). He was hidden in a hotel and smuggled out of the country five days later, disguised as a French airline worker.

Dominic, whose research interests include climate change, had been on a trip to the Republic of Congo to discuss flood and drought monitoring in the country.

Business concluded, he headed for Brazzaville airport, only to find his Air France flight was oversubscribed. He was offered a chance to fly to Kinshasa, in the adjoining DRC, to connect with an alternative flight home.

The visit should have involved just a short hop across the tarmac to a waiting flight but, when the air crew refused to recognise his e-ticket or issue a boarding pass, Dominic found himself stranded on the runway, without a visa, in a country recovering from civil war and ravaged by crime and political instability.

"I was absolutely desperate by this point," says Dominic, now safely behind his desk in Chichester. "I was literally hanging on to the plane steps as they were preparing to leave."

A local Air France representative assured Dominic that he would help him get home. This involved an "unscheduled" stop-over of five days in a Kinshasa hotel while hush-hush arrangements were made to get him out of the country.

Unable to tell family, friends and colleagues about his true circumstances, and warned against approaching the British embassy in case he was turned in for having no visa, Dominic had to rely solely on his Air France contact.

Dominic was told he would have to be smuggled on to a flight by posing as an Air France worker. "I don’t speak French and we had to get through three road blocks before we could get on to the runway," he recalls. "So now I’m not just some idiot with no visa – I’m potentially a spy posing as an airline worker."

Dominic has still to receive an explanation from Air France as to why he was subjected to such an eccentric experience. His advice to fellow academic travellers? "Never rely on e-tickets to get you in or out of anywhere."

In the light of Dominic’s adventures, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office’s advice to those travelling to parts of the DRC rings undeniably true: "You are strongly advised to have your own evacuation plan and to regularly review its viability."

For updates on the political, meteorological and economic situation in destinations worldwide, see www.fco.gov.uk.

First Class ↓

Joanne Lawson, who is studying part-time for a DPhil in Psychology while also working as a research officer, was a runner-up in the New Scientist/Wellcome Trust 2004 science essay competition for her piece on "Why children’s fears should be a worry for grown-ups too."

Catherine Smith, a Creative Writing tutor in the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), has been short-listed for a major UK poetry award for her book, The Butcher’s Hands. Catherine will find out if she has won the £2,000 Aldeburgh Jenwood First Collection Prize during a special reading at the Aldeburgh Poetry Festival, from 5–7 November.

Campus computing services restructured

The last year has seen a gradual re-organisation and bringing together of the various computing services across campus, to create a new Information and Technology Services (ITS) Division.

"The main purpose of the restructuring is to allow us to plan ahead, support the University’s strategies and minimise the ‘firefighting’," says Trevor Potton, ITS director.

As well as the 37 staff who made up the former Computing Service (USCS), ITS now includes those who worked in Management Information Systems (MIS), Arts Computing Unit (ACU) and Sussex Direct. The Media Services Unit (MSU) will also shortly become part of ITS.

The work to establish ITS has still to be completed, but the leaders of the new groups are now appointed and are setting up their teams:

- **Client Services** (led by Caroline House) provides information, support and training to staff and students, with client managers for each school/unit.
- **Business Information Services** (John Hinchcliffe) is responsible for the information needs of the University as a business.
- **Workstation Services** (Leila Burrell-Davis) provides and supports workstation environments.
- **Infrastructure Services** (James Goodlet) is responsible for the design, development and day-to-day operation of the campus network and data storage.
- **The Project Office** (Roger Discombe) will focus on making sure IT projects are defined, managed and monitored in the best way and make the best use of limited resources.

"The new-look ITS will allow us to focus on our ‘clients’ to make sure we are able to support your needs, in line with the University’s strategies, and you will begin to see some good changes in how you are supported," says Trevor. "However, it is early days – so please be patient."
Academic aims to race across Sahara

Nice weather for a run: Morocco's punishing Sahara desert.

For most people, running a marathon would be a pretty big challenge. For Dr Val Shilling, who has completed a marathon as well as lots of half marathons, it just wasn’t big enough.

When she hit 30 in April, Val decided that she wanted “a real challenge, something a bit more involved”. So next April – after a year’s training – she will spend six days running 150 miles across the Sahara desert in Morocco, tackling what is known as “the toughest footrace on earth”.

Her preparation for the ‘Marathon des Sables’ mostly consists of lots and lots of running. “I don’t do any of my training on campus,” explains Val, a researcher in the Psychosocial Oncology Group, “as I prefer to head off for long runs either very early in the morning or late in the evening.

“I also do a lot of gym work, as I will need quite a lot of strength to carry my rucksack containing all my food and cooking equipment for the six days.”

Val and the other 650 entrants will have to carry this load over terrain ranging from sand dunes to uneven rocky ground, in temperatures up to 120°F. “My colleagues think I am completely insane and constantly make reference to the heat,” she says.

But Val is hoping for some reward. Five years ago, one of her closest friends was paralysed in a car accident. Since then she has personally witnessed the “fantastic work” of Back-Up, a spinal injuries charity that has helped her friend regain confidence and independence.

So she’s using the event to raise money for Back-Up (www.backuptrust.org.uk). All you’ve got to do is send her some money. All she’s got to do is run the equivalent of a marathon... every day, for six days. To sponsor Val, email v.m.shilling@sussex.ac.uk or look out for her collecting tins in the campus sports centres.

A walk on the wild side ↓

Hello to new readers, and welcome back to ‘old’ ones. At intervals, the editor lets us chat about the natural history of campus. Please feel free to ask any questions and to report what you have spotted; email david@david@sussex.ac.uk.

We are all aware of the approach of winter as the days shorten and leaves cascade from the thousands of trees on campus. For many of our wild neighbours on campus, these seasonal changes have dramatic consequences.

Most of the Swallows that nested here are now south of the Sahara, heading for South Africa. Other birds are arriving to spend the winter here, and during the first fortnight of term large flocks could be seen migrating westwards over campus. These included Fieldfares from Scandinavia and Finland, and daintier Redwings from as far east as the Ural mountains. Some individuals of both these thrush species will stay on campus, gorging on the berry crop.

Years that produce a heavy berry crop are not always the same as those that result in a good nut crop, or what foresters call a good mast year. This year would seem to be an exception, with the hawthorns and holleys red and a good crop of acorns.

Last month we noticed that the ground beneath the large oak between Falmer House and the underpass was littered with fallen acorns, which on close inspection appeared to be extraordinarily misshapen and covered with hard, knob-like outgrowths.

These are ‘knopper galls’ caused by a minute gall wasp, Andricus quercuscalicis. The insect is a relative newcomer to Britain, the first recorded sighting being in 1962. It appears to have arrived naturally from the continent and rapidly spread across most of England and Wales. In 1979 it underwent a population explosion and for a time there was real concern that it would seriously affect the acorn fertility and thus the future of our most iconic tree.

Like most gall wasps, the life cycle is complicated, with an alternation of a sexual and asexual generation each year. Only females emerge from the knopper galls and these lay their eggs in the buds of the Turkey Oak. In the spring this sexual generation causes minute galls in the male catkins. And why ‘knopper’? The Oxford English Dictionary defines a ‘knop’ as “a small rounded protuberance, boss, rud, button, tassel or the like”.

October is when many insects go into hibernation. Look out for groups of adult ladybirds gathering in nooks and crannies to spend the winter. But for some insects this is the breeding season.

While writing this we were disturbed by three November Moths flitting against our lit window. These dull but exquisitely patterned moths are common on campus and will fly at night until late November. The females lay their eggs, which will hatch next April, on the twigs of trees.

Heavy berry: This year campus is awash with both red berries, such as these Hawthorns, and nuts as well,
Academic events ↓

MON 25 OCT
1pm Colloquium: Emma Hajioff, Thomas, title TBA. Pev 1183.

5pm E-Learning lecture: Diana Latifur (Open and Distance Learning). Arts D640.

TUE 26 OCT
12.30pm Life History seminar: Krista Woodley (Sussex), Women and drink in mass Observation, Library Meeting Room.

4pm COGS seminar: Peter Cheng (Sussex), Inferring memory contents from the process of drawing, Arundel 404A.

4.15pm Anthropology seminar: Anne-Melie Fechter (Sussex/European), Episteme vives in Indonesia. Arts D510.


WED 27 OCT
2pm Experimental Particle Physics seminar: Gregor Onken, The deuteron electric dipole moment. Pev 1A1.

3pm Rights, Justice and Violence seminar: David Pratten (Sussex), Youth violence in southern Nigeria. Arts A71.

4.30pm History of Art seminar: Miriam Ferre (Courtauld Inst.), Romanesque architecture and Europe. Arts A103.

5pm Migration seminar: Ron Skeldon (Sussex) and A. Winkles (UEA). Vulnerability and the role of migrant networks. Arts C233.

8.30pm BSMS lecture: Diana Watt (BSMS), Mucociliary on stem cells. BSMS Lecture Theatre.

THU 28 OCT
4pm Colloquium: Robin Goodwin, Belief and knowledge about HIV among children in eastern Europe. Pev 1183.

5pm Q-Soc colloquium: Kali Zuber (Sussex), The dark side of the universe. Chi III R143 (Seminar Room M51).

5pm Lecture: Marjorie Perloff (Stanford): World War I and the European avant garde. BSMS lecture theatre.

FRI 29 OCT

2.15pm SPRU-CENTRIM seminar: Silavio de Miranda (East London), Globalisation and international research cooperation. Freeman Centre G24/G25.


MON 1 NOV
4pm Research on Languages and Linguistics seminar: Seongbook Choi (Sussex), Deriving (a)topic predicates via non-iterative measure functions in Korean. Arts D310.

TUE 2 NOV
4pm SPT seminar: Marcel Stoetzer (Greenwich), The Berlin anti-semitism debate and multi-culturalism today. Arts D630.

4pm COGS seminar: Maggie Boden (Sussex), Attack without apology. Arundel 404A.

4.15pm Anthropology seminar: Catherine Alexander (Goldsmiths), A post-socialist urban pathology. Arts D510.

WED 3 NOV
2pm Sociology seminar: Susie Scott, Jacqueline O'Reilly, Peter Wagner (Sussex). Arts C233.

4pm Migration seminar: Supang Chantawanich (Chulalongkorn, Bangkok, Thai immigration policy. Arts C233.

4.30pm History of Art seminar: Catherine Morancy (Brighton), Issues of work-life balance in the letters of the sculptor Paul Montford. Arts A103.

THU 4 NOV
4pm Colloquium: Nicholas Rumsey, Appearance research in psychology, Pev 1183.

4pm SPT seminar: Peter Wagner (European University Institute), Towards a theory of synagogy. Arts D630.


FRI 5 NOV
2.15pm SPRU-CENTRIM seminar: Keith Sequeira (EC), Towards the 7th European framework programme for research and technological development. Freeman Cen. G24.

Small ads ↓

For sale: Packard Bell Easynote M3235 laptop. 15.4 TFT wide screen, 3.2ghz AMD Athlon processor, 512mbRAM, 52gbhd, CDROM/DVD, 64mb graphics, wireless/network card, Wind.XP £645ono. T 07693 827925, E kagp@Sussex.ac.uk.

For sale: Roland SH101, analog synth, Kenton midi-conv converter, Boss CS-1 compression/stutterer pedal, Boss DS-1 distortion pedal. £350 the lot or may split. E Colin on c.m..clark@Sussex.ac.uk.

Wanted: Room or flat for about 6 weeks from early Nov, for staff member. E chaser@Sussex.ac.uk, T 07991 851645.

Appeal: If you would like to fill a shoebox as a Christmas gift for a family in Romania, call ext. 7989 for a leaflet.


LA Fitness: Membership £35pm. Will pay transfer fees, save £50+. Min. 6 mths membership. E cap2210@hotmail.com.

To let: 1-bed furnished flat in North Lane, available Nov. Suit visiting lecturers or PGs. £600 pcm + council tax. B. T 07899 747772.

Wanted: 1-bed accomm. to rent in Hove/Brighton for PG & partner (un lectures). Up to £275 pm. E jgc20@Sussex.ac.uk.

For sale: Nissan Micra 1l, N reg. (1995), 58K miles, 6mths Mot, 2mths tax. £800 ono. T F. Massey on ext. 3502 or 515333.

E f.p.massey@Sussex.ac.uk.

For sale: 2000 Vauxhall Corsa Envoy, metallic blue, 32K miles. FSH. MoT tax. T Liz on 07891 253621, E left54@Sussex.ac.uk.

For sale: 2 identical Prince tennis rackets, grip size 2. New racket forces sale. £20 each. T Teresa on ext. 2697 or 01252 722596.

For sale: Renault Espace RT 2.9 V6, J reg. 21K miles on new engine, twin sunroofs, swivel front seats. 10 mths Mot. £1,995. T 416467.

For sale: Black, zipped leather jacket, size 14: £40. Nordica ski boots, size 6.5, white: £35. Garden irrigation system, 30m: £35. Treker shoe, size 41, grey/charcoal: £10. Black portfolio case, 62 x 44 cm: £15. E s.goodwin@sussex.ac.uk.

To let: Room in shared 4-bed house, Upper Lewes Rd. Available now, £70p/w. E p.hentges@sussex.ac.uk.

Art events ↓

PERFORMANCE
Sat 23–Sun 24 Oct
Sat 6pm Sun
12noon & 3pm
Théâtre de l'Oeillet - The Star Keeper
Optical effects, puppetry and dreamy music tell the story of a friendly worm as he tries to hang a star back in the sky. GAC.

Wed 26–Wed 27 Oct
8pm Amaljaba – Like Doves We Rise
An intimate portrayal of growing up in South Africa. GAC.

Thu 28 Oct
1.20pm Music recital, Meeting House.

8pm Stan’s Café – Be Proud of Me.
A dark thriller. GAC.

Sun 31 Oct
pm 2p.m. & 3.40pm
James Campbell – Stand Up Comedy 4 Kids. GAC.

FILM
Sat 30 Oct
8pm King Arthur (12A). GAC.

Tue 2 Nov
8pm Woman of the Dunes (18). GAC.

Wed 3 Nov
8pm One for the Road (18), GAC.

EXHIBITIONS
Until Fri 26 Nov
Mon–Sat 10am–6pm
Trish Morrissey: New Works
Photography inspired by family photo albums and family relationships. GAC.

Until Sun 31 Oct
Daily 1–5pm
Metamorphosis & Design: From nanofibres to cuttlefish display
Film, sound, digital and drawn images. Outcomes from an art/science collaboration between artist Heather Barnett and the School of Life Sciences. Friesse Greene Gallery, Brighton Media Centre.

The Bulletin is written and produced by Alison Field and Benedict Brook, with contributions from Jacqui Beating and Maggie Clune. We welcome any news, story ideas, letters or small ads from the staff and students of the University. The next issue will be out on 5 November, with a copy deadline of 1pm on 29 October. Please contact the Press & Communications Office in Sussex House, ext. 8888 or email bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.