SciTech staff and students hog the limelight at Christmas bash

If imitation really is the sincerest form of flattery, TV’s ‘X Factor’ judges Sharon Osbourne and Simon Cowell must be feeling very pleased with themselves following the first (and last) performance of the ‘Sussex Factor’ on 8 December.

The spoof of ITV’s hit reality show, in which celebrity judges act as both mentor and critic to aspiring singers, was staged by members of the School of Science and Technology (SciTech) to celebrate Christmas.

Staff and students donned wigs, frocks and sparkly glitter and were transformed from mere undergraduates and research assistants into superstars.

Mathematics lecturers Dr David Kay and Dr Vanessa Styles became Kylie and Jason, except David was Kylie and Vanessa was Jason; Chris Jenkins, Systems Administrator in Informatics, turned into Ozzy Osbourne; and Informatics lecturer Dr Paul Newbury became both Britney Spears and the Bee Gees. Even SciTech dean Professor Ben du Boulay got in on the act, singing the classic ‘Danny Boy’ using a comb and paper as a novel lo-tech instrument.

Marketing and Admissions Coordinator Heather Wilkinson, who produced the show, said she was hoping the audience would be “astounded beyond their expectations”. But she had little time to worry about this on the night because, as well as organising the show, she was also interviewing acts backstage on camera before their performances as they psyched themselves up.

“The backstage chats are another way of making sure the performers actually get on stage,” said Heather, obviously worried that Britney might get stage fright and run off before her moment in the spotlight.

Heather’s interviews (in the style of ‘X Factor’ host Kate Thornton) were then fed to a screen above the stage – one element of an intriguing night of amateur performances combined with somewhat more professional lighting and audio befitting the University’s most technological school.

Keith Harris, a student adviser in SciTech and an organiser of the show, explained that the SciTech Christmas party tradition began when the new schools were formed in 2003. “Two of our biggest parts of SciTech had a long history of doing social events. COGS used to do a panto each year and Engineering a games night. Last year we decided to come together and do something the whole school can enjoy.”

“...it’s a good way of getting everyone together, as both staff and students are involved with putting it together.”

And if you missed out on the ‘Sussex Factor’ there’s no need to worry – there’s a DVD with special bonus material coming out soon.

Another chance to win a hotel stay

First you had the chance to win a night at the Drakes Hotel in Brighton. And what a sought-after prize that turned out to be, with more than 500 entries.

This time you could be spending two nights at one of Brighton’s newest hotels, Amherst Hotel, in Lower Rock Gardens, combines traditional surroundings with contemporary décor and boasts “a stylish yet comfortable experience”.

To be in with a chance of winning this fine prize, you need to answer just one question: what is the University of Sussex rate for a single-occupancy double room in the Amherst Hotel? The answer is lurking on the online list of University-approved hotels and guest houses, available at www.sussex.ac.uk/about/hotels.

Send your answer to Caroline Lehany at c.lehany@sussex.ac.uk or drop it in to 1.11 Sussex House. The closing date is Friday 27 January 2006.

The two-night midweek stay must be taken in February 2006 and is subject to availability.
Scientists’ ‘recipe’ to help build a quantum computer

Scientists have come up with a “recipe” to help build the world’s first quantum computer – a new generation of super-fast machines set to revolutionise scientific discovery.

Quantum technology could be used to crack codes – valuable for national security – and already in some bank transactions. Future developments could involve understanding chemical reactions creating medicines, ultra-fast communications systems and seemingly impossible simulations, such as the creation of our universe.

A quantum computer would use the seemingly magical properties of tiny particles such as atoms to hold, process and transport the vast amounts of information – and all in the fraction of the time it would take a conventional computer.

The atoms would first need to be isolated from the billions around us, then converted into ions (charged atoms) and manipulated to perform tasks by use of electric fields. This is done using an ion trap. Scientists have so far trapped single atoms, but the real challenge lies in being able to orchestrate the millions of atoms needed to build a quantum computer.

Dr Winfried Hensinger, Lecturer in Atomic Molecular and Optical Physics at Sussex, was part of a team in the USA that has developed a new way of mass-manufacturing ion traps using microchip technology.

This technique means that the traps, which need to be the size of a human hair to make a quantum computer of feasible scale, can be made quickly and sophisticated enough to allow useful computations. Details of the research, led by Professor Chris Monroe at the University of Michigan, were published in the science journal Nature Physics this week.

The process – photolithography – produces a 3-D “nano sculpture”, chemically etched out of gallium arsenide (a semiconductor material similar to the silicon used in microchips).

Winfried says: “Making a nano sculpture to trap single atoms and control their motion is very difficult. What we have done is to refine the recipe used in microchip manufacture to make traps for single atoms. Now we could make any kind of trap we need, in the quantity needed. This takes us a step nearer to building the first quantum computer.”

Quantum computers are important, says Winfried, because they will help to unlock some of science’s biggest secrets, not only by processing information faster, but giving far more accurate results.

He says: “A quantum computer would allow us to solve some very big physics problems, where before the scale of the computer needed, and the time it would take to process data, would make the experiment unfeasible. It will have a huge impact on areas such as chemistry and in understanding nature as we know it. It will revolutionise all of science.”

Winfried now intends to continue his research into the development of a quantum computer at Sussex, where he has set up the Ion Quantum Technology Group.
SEASONAL

VOICE

It being the season of goodwill, the Vice-Chancellor has agreed to hand over custody of his regular column to someone with a more seasonal perspective. So the Rev Dr Canon Gavin Ashenden gives us his view on what two of December’s biggest films have to say about good and evil.

It would be surprising if there were more than a few members of the University community who escape seeing either the latest Harry Potter, or the new Narnia film, "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe." The pressure from children, grandchildren, siblings, younger cousins — the "inner child" — means that not many people will escape both films, even if they want to.

Gavin Ashenden
University Chaplain

The stimulus that these two films provide is more than just seasonal entertainment. The issues they provoke have their place in a university too, and more widely than just the remit of media studies.

I got a freebie. BBC radio paid for me to take my seven-year-old daughter Emily to the Brighton Odeon to watch it, and then come on Southern Counties and give the kid’s take on Narnia. They began, of course, by asking whether she preferred it to Harry Potter. She said she preferred Narnia.

I think most people will prefer Potter. Why? Narnia seems to have got a lot of religious people excited because they think that it conveys the moral and narrative essence of Christianity. That’s enough to really annoy a large slice of our own indigenous culture. But it left me cold, too.

What’s sad about the Narnia film is that it plays into some of the lazier preconceptions we have about how easy moral decisions are to reach. The good people are good, the evil people are evil, and the main moral lesson is to try hard not to be treacherous and backstabbing. Well, there is something in that, but not nearly enough.

In Potter, the audience has to work hard and long with trying to tell the difference between the strands of complicated moral issues. The world is not divided in a Manichean way between good and evil, light and dark.Appearances are deceptive — always a good start! Sirius Black looks and sounds like a baddie, but he isn’t. Tom Riddle looks and sounds like a goodie, but he isn’t.

After a while even the kids begin to get it: you can be a good person even if you look like a baddie or vice versa, and the most destructive people can appear as the most attractive, initially, and for some time after.

I find myself still being surprised at the contrast in a university culture at the sophistication of expertise that we achieve in intellectual disciplines on the one hand, and the superficiality of near-reflex reactions that religion or spirituality — and sometimes ethics — expose, on the other. Perhaps we have just run out of time to ask the wider questions of our culture? But the academy used to manage a lot of cross-fertilisation and, if we don’t do it, who else will?

And if you want a book to provoke and entertain and give as a Christmas present that has everything to do with exposing our own preconceptions, and nothing — thank God — to do with religion, read the blurbs on Professor Paul Pearsall’s latest book, subtitled, "Repress your anger, think negatively, be a good blamer, and throttle your inner child." Main title The Last Self-Help Book You’ll Ever Need. It will make you laugh, and that may be one of the best things we can hope for over the closure.

Park for a pound a day

From the summer term 2006, staff and students who park their cars on campus will pay a simple pound a day.

Senate approved proposed changes to the system for parking charges at its meeting on 9 December and Council is expected to ratify the decision at its meeting today (16 December).

David Kirkwood, Director of Estates, says: "The current arrangements, which were a genuine attempt to satisfy all stakeholders, are confusing for staff, students and visitors alike."

In reviewing the system, the Estates and Facilities Management division aimed to make it simpler to understand (and to administer), as well as transparent and convenient. Other objectives in the review included encouraging drivers to pay on a daily basis (to encourage them on other days to use other transport methods such as buses, trains and bicycles)

The new plan is to charge staff and students a standard pay-and-display rate of £1 per day, payable by cash or rechargeable cards. The minimum charge will be for half a day's parking.

Another important change is that parking charges will be payable on every normal working day of the year -- and not just during term time.

Annual permits will still be available, but at new rates: £150 per year for students; £240 for staff earning £12,000 to £22,000; and £390 for staff earning above £22,000.

Staff earning less than £12,000 per year will continue to be exempt from all parking charges, as will staff and students with mobility disabilities.

Senior management developments

A new Vice-Chancellor’s Executive and Senior Managers’ Forum (SMF) will lead the senior management of the University, alongside reformed decision-making committees, if proposals going to Council today (16 December) are approved.

After discussion, Senate on 9 December backed plans to create much a clearer management structure involving the most senior academic and administrative managers at Sussex from January 2006.

The new Executive would include the Vice-Chancellor and the Deputy and Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar & Secretary, Director of Finance and Director of Human Resources.

Meeting weekly, the Executive would advise the Vice-Chancellor on the day-to-day working of the University and help to develop University strategy and planning.

Approval of strategies, plans and policies would continue to be directed through University committees, leading to Senate and Council.

Members of the Executive would provide the formal senior management support to deans and to the heads of professional services (administrative units, ITS and Library).

The SMF would bring together the deans and the heads of the professional services, creating for the first time a single forum where the senior admin and academic managers can meet and discuss key University developments.

The current school management arrangements, which bring together deans, directors, heads of department and SAMS, will continue to operate for school strategy and planning.

The existing committee structures that underpin the formal University policy and decision-making in Senate and Council have built up over the years and will undergo radical revision to create a simpler and more focused structure, the detail of which will be developed over the spring term.

At the heart of the new structures would be a joint Senate and Council committee focussed on strategy and resources. This committee would bring together members of the Executive, lay members of Council, deans and other academic staff, and a student representative.

Senate will for the first time be supported by three committees, focusing on research, learning and teaching, and enterprise and innovation. Part of the new approach would be to reduce the layers of sub-committees and free staff time from unnecessary and unproductive meetings.

As plans are developed in the spring, all existing committees would be reviewed to see where their work best fits within the new structures.
LETTERS

The Sussex Language Institute does exist

Your front-page article ‘New international study centre at Sussex’ (Bulletin 2 December) did not come as a total surprise to most of my colleagues and myself at the Sussex Language Institute – we had been warned about the predations of Study Group some weeks before.

However, we were very much taken aback by the way the article was worded, suggesting, as it does by omission, that our Institute does not exist. Perhaps the editor did not have the time to adapt Study Group’s own publicity hand-out?

I myself have been teaching here for over 12 years, a few others even longer, and it is somewhat galling to read an article that suggests that international students “are being offered a new opportunity to study at Sussex” (my italics), as if we had not been doing just this for many a long year. It was left to the students in the badger to explore the newcomer more carefully.

Perhaps the editor might, by way of making amends, allow us to pen an article for the next issue, outlining our history, what we have done, and will be doing to prepare international students for undergraduate and postgraduate degree-level study at Sussex?

David Bryer and also for Andrew Blair, Jane Brooks, Rachel Cole, Jennifer Book, Sandra Piai, Ray de Witt, Alison Chisholm, Matthew Platts, Robin Lee, Alexandra Loské, Rachel Playforth ... and many others comprising the staff of the Sussex Language Institute

Owen Richards, Academic Registrar, replies:

I am delighted to take the opportunity to confirm what a good job the Sussex Language Institute (SLI) does in providing English-language preparation, language learning and degree-level language teaching for international students at Sussex.

This story was about creating general awareness in the University of the new development of the International Study Centre (ISC) and was necessarily pitched at a relatively simplified level.

Direct communications with potential students are a different matter. SLI offerings, for example, will now have a much stronger presence in the undergraduate prospectus being finalised for 2007, and the SLI and ISC offerings will be presented clearly and distinctly.

The Director of the SLI has been involved in discussions with Study Group from the beginning. The ISC is providing new foundation year opportunities for international students recruited specifically to these new programmes, and the English-language and study-skills support provided as an integral part of that are not in competition with what SLI offers to the wide range of students on Sussex courses and programmes. The relationship is complementary.

Finally, I wish the badger had done the kind of good job you claim. In fact they seriously misrepresented the venture, made unfounded allegations and didn’t actually seek comment from the University. And I note that they also didn’t mention the SLI either.

Owen Richards, Bulletin editor, replies:

We are delighted to feature news about all parts of the University, and for example covered a new initiative by SLI in October. The next news opportunity you have, just let me know.

Falmer stadium: A precedent for further development?

I cannot agree with George Mather (Letters 18 November) that John Prescott’s approval of a stadium at Falmer is “a welcome development”. If the stadium is built it will inevitably set a precedent for the further urbanisation of the downland around the campus.

I am particularly concerned by the VC’s statement (Bulletin 4 November) about the possibility of “new elements” being proposed to the scheme which would alter its “nature and character”. Is he referring to the possibility of commercial developments on the site of the stadium, say a shopping centre, and if so what will the University’s response be to the prospect of such developments?

Dr Andrew Chitty, Philosophy

Professor Alastair Smith, Vice-Chancellor, replies:

At present, there is no indication that Brighton & Hove Albion will seek to add large-scale commercial development to the stadium project. If such a proposal were made, I would strongly recommend that the University oppose it.

“...If the stadium is built it will inevitably set a precedent for the further urbanisation of the downland around campus.”

Poppy Appeal

I am writing to thank everyone who works or lives on the campus, or in Falmer and Stanmer villages who contributed in any way to the recent Poppy Appeal. Once again, the collection was up on the previous year. This time, between you, you raised the magnificent sum of £1,140.33.

Mrs D. George, Honorary Organiser – Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal
What would lead a student to willingly plunge head first towards the ground from 150 feet up in the air? Essay stress? Relationship breakdown? Week 10 blues?

The actual reason was a combination of raising money for the Darfur region of Sudan and because, well, it's the most fun you can have in a car park in December.

Thirty students lined up on 6 December to take part in a sponsored bungee jump, organised by the RAG (Raise and Give) society. Each person taking part had to raise at least £70 to take part.

Lizzie Charles, a third year English and Cultural Studies student and RAG Publicity Officer, said the society hoped to make more than £1,000: "It's going really well," she said, desperately trying to distract herself from the fact that, in just a few minutes' time, she too was to take the plunge. "At the moment I'm more nervous about organising the jumps, but when I'm up there it's going to change."

RAG chair and Sociology student Caroline Tomes had just finished her jump after spending longer than most frozen stockstill at the top of the crane: "I was all enthusiastic until the crane went up, then I was like, 'What am I doing?' My toes were over the edge of the cradle and I knew that was the only way out." So what was it that finally pushed her over the edge? "I just thought, 'Screw it. It's for charity and I've told everyone I'm doing it.'"

It wasn't all 20 somethings taking up the challenge. Falmer village resident Raymond French, in his 60s, was in fine fettle after his bungee jump: "It was great, fantastic. The wife went as well."

Raymond and his wife were first alerted to the jump when they saw a cloth advertising banner as they walked onto campus to use the bank: "We saw the cloth and we said we'd go for it." He added: "I want to do a lot of things before I pop my clogs and I'll raise money for anybody. That's what you do when you retire - it gets me out."

Meanwhile Caroline, fresh from her dive, had some advice for aspiring jumpers who might be nervous at the thought of plunging head first towards a car park. "Look towards the horizon," she suggested, "not down at the concrete."

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Man behind JCB song digs into happy Sussex memories

Luke Concannon, Sussex graduate and half of pop folk duo Nizlopi, is set to top the charts this week with JCB.

Luke, who graduated in 2000 with a degree in English, remembers his time at Sussex with great affection - unlike the misery of primary school that inspired the extraordinarily successful JCB.

Luke talked to the Bulletin while he was in Ireland, part of a hectic promotion schedule that includes TV and radio appearances across the UK. He said: "Sussex? I loved it. The first year [1997] I fell in love, wrote songs and played at the jam nights. I went round Brighton playing in venues and asking for gigs. And I cooked food for mates and sat singing while we ate and drank crap wine. I just loved the engagement, a chance to be loved for being my self. And a chance to sing regularly."

Nizlopi hit the road in earnest after Luke graduated. His teenage friend John Parker joined him in Brighton for a while before they both returned to their native Leamington Spa, where they are still based. Years of small-venue gigs and recording ensued, but things really began to take off this year with their debut album.

Now the duo are setting their sights on the hotly contested Christmas number 1 slot, pitching their eclectic brand of jazz/folk/hip-hop up against the likes of Robbie Williams, Mariah Carey, James Blunt, the England cricket team, Westlife and The Crazy Frog.

Accompanied by a delightful animation that can be viewed online (see www.jcbsong.co.uk), JCB tells the tale of five-year-old Luke escaping the school bullies and spending the day riding in his dad's big yellow digger.

It's proved a hit with children and parents alike. Its success grew through word-of-mouth support rather than a big music industry promotion, and culminated in a live 'Top of the Pops' performance on Sunday (11 December).

Reflecting again on his time at Sussex, Luke said: "By my third year I was bustling to be engaged in the real world, being of service to people rather than to my studies. I worked a lot in schools doing music workshops with kids, and played in three different bands."

"Now, in the heart of all of this music and travel, I do have a hunger for reading, thinking and reflection time. It's funny how we hunger for balance. It's about mixing our passions with the needs of the world."

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Mathematicians pass out

Fifty young mathematicians received certificates at a ceremony this month to mark the completion of eight testing weeks of masterclasses.

Selected from more than 30 local schools, the talented 12- and 13-year-olds had spent their Saturday mornings throughout the autumn term grappling with tricky but enjoyable tasks.

Each session featured a different visiting speaker and a fresh range of mathematically based activities. The aim was to have fun, be challenged and learn something new every week.

Sussex maths masterclasses are supported by the Royal Institution of Great Britain and organised by the local branch of the Mathematical Association including Charles Goldie, Professor of Statistics at Sussex.
Obituary

Dick Grimsdale

Dick Grimsdale’s arrival at Sussex in 1967 as Professor of Electronic Engineering was just the latest development in an already distinguished career. He had just left a job in industry to join the recently founded School of Applied Sciences.

Dick had been educated at Manchester Grammar School and Manchester University, where he took both his BSc and PhD. Although he was already an accomplished electrical engineer, he had no knowledge of computation until he was sent on a programming course to Cambridge. Back in Manchester, he was put to work writing diagnostic programmes.

As Dick’s work developed he found himself at the forefront of the development of the digital computer. He was to remain at the University until 1961, when he decided to move into industry.

At Sussex, Dick branched out into the quickly developing applications of computers. His work took him first into digital communications, where he worked on distributed computing and networking. He organised a number of prestigious conferences at the University, and it was at one such conference, in September 1973, that a group of American academics working with Dick sent what is reputed to have been the first transatlantic email message.

Dick, who in his research interests was forever spinning off ideas, developed his work into computer graphics and in the late 1980s (after a four-year spell as Dean) began work on highly integrated devices for computer graphics applications. His research group developed a high reputation that was to survive well past his normal retirement date.

He continued to teach and supervise labs and, until a few weeks before he fell ill, was contributing solidly to new curriculum developments. His involvement with one of the Department’s most recent research projects led to two patentable ideas in just a few months.

Dick relaxed with his family and by simply making things. He loved practical engineering, either through the construction of electronic circuits in his office or using the Meccano in his attic at home.

He was an accomplished organist and would while away the evening hours at the Meeting House. He was by far the longest-serving member of the ‘Staff Badminton Club’ and in recent years could be seen spending hours waiting for the gymnasium to open to book courts for the following week.

Dick had a love of engineering and enshrined all the best things about the profession. He died on 6 December, aged 76. We’ll miss him greatly but his ideas and accomplishments will no doubt live on.

Professor Richard Stobart
Head of Engineering and Design

Head of Internal Audit to leave Sussex

Mike Townsend will be leaving Sussex at the end of January after five years as Head of Internal Audit.

Employed by an NHS internal-audit consortium, he will be Head of Internal Audit for about half a dozen NHS trusts in Sussex, with a total income/expenditure of approx £1 billion.

Mike describes his new job as “a significantly bigger role with a much larger team”. He adds: “After getting to grips with the higher education sector, I am now looking forward to facing a whole new set of challenges.”

AUT to merge with NATFHE

Members of the AUT (Association of University Teachers) and its sister trade union NATFHE (National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education) have voted for their two organisations to merge.

AUT is one of the recognised unions on the Sussex campus, with more than 500 members. Nationally, 17,748 of its members (36.9%) voted and 79.2% of them were in favour of the merger. A higher percentage – 95.7% – of NATFHE members supported the proposal.

The new union, the University and College Union (UCU), will represent further and higher education lecturers, managers, researchers and many academic-related staff such as librarians, administrators and computing professionals across the UK.

AUT and NATFHE will amalgamate on 1 June 2006, and then enter a transitional year until full operational unity is achieved in June 2007.

First Class

Sussex graduate Shamshad Akhtar has been appointed governor of Pakistan’s central bank, making her the first woman to hold the post. The new governor holds a master’s degree in Development Economics from Sussex. She is currently director general of the Southeast Asia department of the Asian Development Bank, which she joined in 1990. Previously, she had been a World Bank economist in Islamabad.

At its termly meeting on 9 December, Senate noted the promotion to professorships of Dr Keith Caldecott (Biochemistry), Dr Michael Fielding (Education), Dr George Kemenes (Neuroscience), Dr Max Wheeler (Linguistics) and Dr Ann Whitehead (Anthropology).

Professor Edward Timms was made an officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in a ceremony at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday (13 December). Edward, founder of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at Sussex, received news of the award in the Queen’s Birthday honours list, published in June.
MP Des Turner goes back to the lab on Sussex visit

Brighton MP Des Turner will be swapping the corridors of power at Westminster for the labs of the Informatics department when he visits campus today (Friday).

The visit by Dr Turner, a botanist and biochemist who has been a leading member of the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee, is part of the Scientists and Parliament Scheme run by the Royal Society to introduce politicians to scientists and stimulate dialogue between them.

The link between science research and national policy-making is seen as increasingly important in a society that demands clearer communication on issues from bird flu and obesity to nuclear power and climate change.

Dr Diana McCarthy, a Royal Society Research Fellow in the Informatics department, was one of 25 scientists partnered with an MP for the scheme. In November she joined Dr Turner for a week at Westminster, where she experienced the working life of an MP and saw how Parliament deals with science issues.

During that week, Diana saw parliamentary debates in the Houses of Commons and Lords, watched Tony Blair in operation at Prime Minister's Questions, saw the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee at work, attended a Science in Parliament seminar and sat in on a session of the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee on Carbon Capture. The week ended with a reception at the Royal Society.

Now Diana will host Dr Turner's day-long visit, when he will view the work of the department - which covers computer science, artificial intelligence, neuroscience and robotics - and learn about the issues that researchers face.

Diana says: "I now have a better understanding of the parliamentary process, so if in the future there is something that I wish to raise I now know who I can go to in government. That is a valuable thing for scientists to know - how science issues such as global warming, obesity and GM foods are dealt with in the political forum."

Dr Turner is becoming a familiar face on campus. Last year, he tried his hand at some experiments, including growing yeast cultures, when he joined Dr Paula Clements for a day at the Genome Damage and Stability Centre.

New consortium aims to improve access to education in developing countries


Below: CREATE is led by Professor Keith Lewin of the Centre for International Education in the School of Education.

A new research centre based at Sussex aims to improve access to education for children in developing countries.

The Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE) was launched this month at an inaugural conference on the Sussex campus.

"Education is at the heart of development since lack of access to education is part of the definition of poverty. Knowledge and skill are essential means to improve well-being and meet basic needs for human development," says Professor Keith Lewin, who leads the new consortium.

More than 100 million primary age children are currently out of school and a further 275 million are excluded from secondary schooling. Many more leave school prematurely without basic knowledge and skills that can reduce poverty, diminish morbidity and lessen inequalities.

CREATE seeks to encourage more evidenced-based policy and practice informed by research to enhance educational services in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, especially for the poorest. It will work with its national partners and international development agencies to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Nearly 190 countries have signed up to the eight Millennium Development Goals, which were agreed at a United Nations summit in 2000. They include universalising access to basic education and achieving gender equity in schooling.

Sussex was successful from a field of over 170 applicants in bidding for a £2.5 million grant from the Department for International Development (DFID) to establish the new research centre.

It is a research partnership with the Institute of Education and Development at BRAC University in Dhaka, Bangladesh; the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration in Delhi, India; the Education Policy Consortium (EPC) in South Africa; the University of Education at Winneba in Ghana; the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex; and the University of London's Institute of Education.
News in brief↓

Christmas closure arrangements

On Friday 23 December, the normal working day will end at 3pm and minimum service arrangements for Christmas will then apply. This means that staff, other than those providing essential services, can expect to finish work at 3pm. Any minimum cover or on-call arrangements required by particular units or sections would continue to operate. The University will re-open fully on Wednesday 4 January at the normal start time.

Postgraduate Open Day

The Postgraduate Open Day provides an ideal opportunity to obtain more information about the University's wide range of taught postgraduate programmes and research opportunities. It takes place on Wednesday 11 January 2006 in Bramber House, between 12 noon and 3.15pm. Bookings can be made via an online booking form.

Coming onto campus over Christmas?

Over the last few years there has been a tendency for more and more people to come onto campus during the Christmas/new year closure period to do some work or collect items - with the expectation that Security will give them access and lock up after their visit.

The Security Unit would appreciate it if, wherever possible:

• Staff wishing to gain access during the closure period (24 December – 3 January inclusive) are familiar with any access codes required and are in possession of relevant keys. All staff should also be aware of their Unit’s procedure for lone working.

• Arrangements for the delivery of goods are not made during the closure period; Security have not got the storage space in York House. Not only are goods stacked in the foyer a fire risk but Security cannot guarantee security of any such item.

Correction: ‘Down the drain’

The last issue of the Bulletin (2 December) contained an article about the Students’ Union Annual General Meeting. We said USSU President Roger Hylton “tabled a motion of no-confidence in Council”, which suggested he proposed the motion. In fact it was SocColl student Adele Burrow who proposed the motion. Roger did, however, second the motion.

Conference Centre hosts 500th event

Cheers: Registrar & Secretary Dr Philip Harvey presents Samantha Dunnett and Peter Leach of private medical group BUPA International with their celebratory bottle of bubbly.

The Conference Centre on the top floor of Bramber House has hosted 500 events for fee-paying customers since the refurbished facilities were opened in January 2004.

BUPA International, a health-insurance company that has held a number of training and development sessions at the Conference Centre, happened to be the client organising event number 500.

The University’s Registrar & Secretary, Dr Philip Harvey (on the left of the picture), marked the occasion on 8 December by presenting a bottle of champagne to Samantha Dunnett from BUPA International.

Small ads↓

Press Gang: Staff member & printmaker exhibiting at Thebes Gallery, Lewes until Wed (21 Dec). 10.30am-1.45pm, 2.30-5pm.

Four sale: Several reindeer. Hard workers but somewhat past prime. Can fly. Available from 26 December onwards. E s.claus@sussex.ac.uk.

For sale: Old pine table, stripped & waxed, turned legs, small drawer: £75. Modern white bookcases/storage units, approx 5' 4" high, 4/5 shelves: £10 each or 2 for £15. Wooden chapel chairs: £20 a pair. T 01825 767240.

To let: 1-bed flat in Kemp Town. Free parking. £600 pcm. Available now. E n.j.marchant@sussex.ac.uk.

To let: 3-bed cottage in Offham. Parking, oil CHN, wood-burning stove in lounge, shared garden. £880 pcm + bills. Suit PG/PhD staff. Available now. T Richard & Christine Hearnley on 01474173/400680.

Xmas dinner: Chef working in Michelin 3* restaurant available to cook special meal for you & your friends in your kitchen over Christmas & New Year. For details and sample menus, E j.b.pryor@sussex.ac.uk or ext. 7144.

To let: 2-bed u/f flat nr Sainsburys, Lewes Rd. Garden, w/m. Suit staff or PGs. £675 pcm. T Michael Browne on 475989.

For sale: Holiday for 2 (dates available during March/April or May). ‘Highlights of Italy’ bus/tour trip. 7 days/6 nights. £300 ono. T Lena on 07742 738872.

For sale: Nordic ski boots, brand new, size EU 5, 5/5.5. £65. E s.goodwin@sussex.ac.uk.

Wanted: Studio/1-bed flat, or room in shared house with PGs/postdocs, from Jan for 6 mths. E j.queda@warwick.ac.uk.

To let: Room in central flat opposite park. Cable, internet, own phone. Short let (max. 6 mths) from early Jan 06. Suit visiting research staff. E m.kayani@btopen.co.uk.

Arts events↓

PERFORMANCE

Until Sat 7 Jan
The Tinderbox
This magical tale by Hans Christian Anderson traces the story of Jones, a handsome young soldier who discovers treasure beyond his wildest dreams when he comes across a tinderbox that gives him power beyond any other mortal.

Gardner Arts Centre.

If you need a good reason to join us in 2006...

You're less likely to be discriminated against - Black and Asian trade unionists earn 32% more than their non-unionised colleagues.

Will that do? To join Union, contact Felicity Harrison on 8888 or F.A.Harrison@julep.ac.uk.