Investing in excellence

Outline plans for the future academic size and shape of the University – showing areas for investment and development and areas for reduction or removal of activity – were presented today (10 March) to the new Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC).

The committee was asked to endorse the University’s academic development plan, which – if approved – will then go to Senate (the academic body) on 17 March and Council (the governing body) on 24 March.

Deans in each school and members of the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive Group (VCEG) have been developing the plans this term, after taking a comprehensive evidence-based look across all academic activity at Sussex.

They have taken into account the latest picture of research health, student recruitment and ‘third-stream’ activity (income from business engagement), alongside latest financial projections.

The five-year financial forecasts presented to Council in summer 2005 made clear the continuing need to improve the financial performance of the University.

“The aim of the strategic planning process is to allow Sussex to focus on academic excellence and secure the University’s financial health,” says the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith.

“We need to strengthen our academic and financial performance and that will require some tough decisions to be taken and some changes to be made. We also need to generate more income to support our academic base.

“We have confidence that Sussex can build on the strong research and teaching activity that exists across all schools. Because we are taking a strategic approach, our plans provide for immediate investment in academic posts in areas of strength.”

There will be open meetings with staff on Monday (13 March) and Thursday (16 March) to outline the proposals. Monday’s meeting is in the Terrace Room in Bramber House, at 12.30pm; and Thursday’s meeting takes place in the Gardner Arts Centre at 9.30am. There will be an open meeting for students in the summer term.

Detailed plans will be developed by schools during the summer term, involving colleagues in professional services. Planning for professional services themselves will follow over the summer and autumn to align support with the plans for the schools.

The proposals and the main paper being presented to the Committee will be made available online at www.sussex.ac.uk/invest from Monday (13 March).

External provider sought for campus bookselling

The University is responding to changes in the market for academic books by seeking an external provider to take over the running of the campus bookshop. This decision reflects the difficult operating climate and the University’s continued commitment to maintaining a good book-retailing service for students and staff.

“Small, independent academic bookshops like ours do not have the buying power of the large chains,” explains the manager, Kristian Berggreen, who has 48 years’ experience in bookselling. “That means we cannot compete with them on price and we don’t have the same profit margins. Increasingly, as well, people are buying their books online.”

Kristian is confident that the decision to seek an external provider will “protect book retailing on campus and offer opportunities for business development and growth”. He adds: “If we don’t take action now, it may be too late, because every year there is increasing uncertainty in the market and new ways of accessing information.”

An advert appeared in the Bookseller magazine today (10 March), inviting ‘expressions of interest’. The new provider is expected to be announced in June.

Bookshop staff would transfer from the University’s employment to that of the new provider in accordance with regulations on the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment), or TUPE. The University has already entered into discussions with the staff concerned and their representatives.

The new company would contract to buy the business and stock and lease the premises at a commercial rate. It is expected that they will invest in modernising the shop.

The issue of quality of service and supply would be a key feature in the negotiations. A service level agreement would cover issues such as how course reading lists would be serviced, whether the Body Shop franchise would be retained, etc.

The plan is for the business to transfer to that company on 1 August, so that the shop is ready for the new academic year in the autumn.

The University has made assurances of full consultation with staff and unions during the transitional period. “I appreciate that the next few months will be an unsettling time for bookshop staff,” said Kristian. “We will keep staff and unions fully informed of developments, although there will be commercial sensitivities.”
Sussex astronomers first to see new stars and galaxies

Sussex astronomers will be among the first to discover unknown stars and galaxies at the far reaches of the Universe following the launch of the world’s most advanced infrared space telescope.

Dr Seb Oliver and Dr Richard Savage, based at the Astronomy Centre, are working with a UK team of scientists involved in analysing data produced by the Akari telescope, which blasted off from the Uchinoura Space Centre in Japan on 21 February.

As it orbits Earth, Akari, developed by Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) with European partners, will map the Universe at infrared and far-infrared wavelengths, revealing the heat glow of objects hidden behind clouds of cosmic dust. The survey will study some of the rarest objects in the Universe including ‘starbursts’ – dramatic explosions of star formation.

Seb says: “The Sussex team is responsible for a key element of the data analysis for the far-infrared all-sky survey. The major product of the mission is to map the entire sky and produce a catalogue of millions of galaxies. Our role is the final stage – actually discovering the stars and galaxies.”

Richard adds: “This is ‘Big Science’ in its grandest sense. The legacy value of Akari should be incredible. It will see everything from asteroids in our own solar system to galaxies most of the way back to the Big Bang, along with everything in between. The sheer range of science we can address is staggering, from features of our own solar system all the way to Dark Energy and the nature of the Universe in which we live.”

Million pounds for astronomy research

Sussex astronomers have won a total of just over £1 million from the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC).

The theoretical astrophysics research programme, led by Professor Andrew Liddle with Dr Mark Hindmarsh and Professor Peter Thomas as co-investigators, has received a new five-year rolling grant worth £699,000.

The grant, uniting researchers in the Astronomy Centre and the Theoretical Particle Physics group, will fund continuing investigations into the nature of our Universe, particularly the origin and evolution of galaxies and the nature of the dark matter and dark energy believed to be the dominant forms of material within it.

The Astronomy Centre has also received expanded funding of £26,000 over three years for a programme of national and international research visitors to Sussex.

Separately, Mark and Andrew are investigators in a national consortium led by Professor Stephen Hawking, which has won £316,000 to fund 24 months of continuing operations of the COSMOS supercomputer, based in Cambridge. This funding secures continued Sussex access to one of the world’s biggest supercomputers dedicated to cosmology research.

You’d have to be barking to volunteer for this research

Can you tell if a dog’s bark is worse than its bite? Possibly not, but it could be that dogs are able to weigh up each other just by hearing each other’s growls.

DPhil student Anna M. Taylor is planning to record the growls of hundreds of dogs, for a project on dog vocal communication supervised by psychologist Dr David Reby and behavioural ecologist Dr Karen McComb.

And to achieve that, she is looking for around 300 canine volunteers. “To get a good sample, I’ll need dogs of all shapes and sizes,” says Anna. “I’d also like the dogs to be friendly and not averse to being handled. And they need to be noisy.”

Anna will also film, weigh and take the head measurements of each dog, to provide valuable data for her investigation of how and why dogs use sound to communicate.

To begin with, Anna plans to isolate and analyse growls emitted in each recording. Dog growls are made up of sound components called formants (which form the basis of vowel sounds in human speech).

These formants are believed to convey a lot of information about the dog making them, including body size, sexual aggressiveness or weight – important information for animals competing for territory, food or a mate.

Anna will investigate whether the formants are related to the length of each dog’s vocal tract – the space that runs from the nasal and mouth cavities to the larynx in the throat and which produces the formants.

All of the information collected should allow Anna to verify whether or not there is a link between the formant produced and size/type of each dog – and whether this information is available for human and canine listeners.

In the longer term, Anna hopes her research will feed into a better understanding of vocal communication in dogs. She says: “There are evolutionary implications in all of this, to do with the domestication of the dog.

“Co-evolutionary theory suggests that the evolutionary history of humans and dogs is inextricably linked, and it may be that domestic dogs vocalise primarily for their human companions.

“It would be interesting to test this theory, for example, by modifying the recordings, then playing them back to humans and other dogs to see how they respond, hopefully showing which acoustic notes are important for which species.

“Owners like to think they know what their dog is saying when it barks. Hopefully, this research will help to reveal scientifically what man’s best friend is really communicating.”

Dog owners are invited to sign up for the experiment by registering their contact details plus information about the dog’s breed, age and sex. Anna will then advise when a recording session is due.

Email admin@vocaldog.com or register online at www.vocaldog.com, where Anna’s progress as her research gets properly under way can also be viewed.
BSMS to get new oncology unit

Roedean resident Michael Chown has made an initial commitment of more than half a million pounds towards the establishment of a new unit for oncology (the study and treatment of tumours) at Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS).

A previous donation from Mr Chown enabled BSMS to establish its new imaging unit, which is due to open later this year. Medical imaging is an important part of the focus on research in oncology.

Mr Chown said: “It has been a pleasure over the past couple of years to become involved in supporting the Medical School and I am delighted that my recent gift will enable the creation of an important new department in clinical oncology.”

Professor Jon Cohen, Dean of BSMS, said: “This donation will make a significant difference to academic activity at BSMS. The creation of an academic department of oncology will enable us to work towards developing new and improved treatments for the cure of cancer, and to strengthen research into what is already a key area of expertise at the school, as well as building important links with colleagues in both the parent universities and in the NHS.”

Professor Alasdair Smith, the Vice-Chancellor, said: “This is a very significant gift, for which the universities [Sussex and Brighton] and BSMS are immensely grateful to Michael Chown. It will have a big impact on the development of the already impressive range of BSMS work in oncology and it will make a real difference to the treatment of cancer patients in Brighton.”

Fundraising for BSMS is handled by the Development and Alumni Relations Office at Sussex.

Mass-Observation Archive snaps up missing papers

Staff at the Mass-Observation Archive, based in the University Library on campus, are “absolutely delighted” to have bought some Mass-Observation papers that they were unable to afford when the documents first became available.

The Archive results from the work of a social research organisation founded in 1937 to study the everyday lives of ordinary people in Britain. One of the ways in which it gathers information is to issue “directives” on particular topics.

A few years ago a private dealer put some replies to a Mass-Observation directive from 1939 on the open market. Dorothy Sheridan, director of the Mass-Observation Archive, recalls: “We were bitterly disappointed that we did not have the funds to buy them at the time.”

The papers once again appeared on the open market recently. Dorothy says: “We are extremely grateful to our five generous donors who responded so swiftly to our appeal at the end of February and enabled us to purchase the papers and return the documents to where they rightfully belong.”

News in brief

Change to date of professorial lecture

Paul Gough’s professorial lecture on space weather has been postponed to Monday (13 March). Find out how solar wind interacts with planets and their environments in the BSMS lecture theatre, from 6.30p.m. Call ext. 7707 to book your free ticket.

Staff Appraisal Scheme – responding to your feedback

The Staff Appraisal Scheme Guidelines and Appraisal Form have been modified to reflect valuable feedback from schools/units and individual staff on their 2005 appraisal experiences. The revised documents are on the Staff Development Unit (SDU) webpage (www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/staffing/staffdev/), plus details of forthcoming appraisers and appraiser workshops and one-to-one appraisal surgeries. Contact the SDU if you need further clarification on any aspect of staff appraisal: email sdu@sussex.ac.uk or call ext. 7188.

Correction

In the last ‘Bookmark’ column (Bulletin 24 February) we omitted to mention that Dr Melanie Green, co-author with Dr Vyvyan Evans of Cognitive Linguistics: An introduction, is a Lecturer in Linguistics and English Language at Sussex.

University of Sussex Golf Society 2006

If you want to play in any of the following fixtures, contact Professor James Hirschfeld on ext. 8080, email jwh@sussex.ac.uk.
• v. Pitfield, Wed 19 April, 4pm
• v. The Dyke, Wed 26 April, 4pm
• v. Ham Manor, Thu 4 May, 3.30pm
• v. Hollingbury, Thu 25 May, 4pm
• v. Lewes, Wed 7 June, 4pm.

Print Unit restricted access

The production cycle for exam papers runs from 20 March until the end of April. During this period any collections from and drop-offs to the Print Unit should be restricted to mornings if possible.

New TSM for LifeSci

Dr Teresa Knapp joined the School of Life Sciences at the beginning of term as its Technical Services Manager (TSM).

All articles are also featured on the internet at www.sussex.ac.uk/press_office/bulletin

Development economist speaks on ecology and hunger

Professor Sir Gordon Conway, former Vice-Chancellor, returned to Sussex last month to give a lecture to students and staff in the School of Life Sciences. Sir Gordon, who is now Chief Scientific Adviser at the Department for International Development (DID), spoke on 'Ecology and hunger: Food for all in the 21st century'.

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Tree marks choir's campus connections

A beech tree dedicated to the Brighton Festival Chorus (BFC), which has rehearsed on campus for the past 35 years, was planted last month in front of Falmer House.

The tree was given by the Argus local newspaper, which has decided to mark its 125th anniversary by donating 125 trees to be planted around Brighton in recognition of people and organisations that have made a contribution to the life of the city.

Planting the tree on campus recognises the strong association between the BFC and the University, and the fact that many staff and students have sung in its ranks.

The BFC was founded in 1967 by Laszlo Heltay, who at the time was Director of Music at the University. A pupil of Hungarian composer Zoltan Kodaly, he had escaped from Hungary in 1956 and subsequently emerged as one of the world’s foremost choral directors.

He was asked to form the Chorus to take part in the second Brighton Festival in a performance of Belshazzar’s Feast, conducted by its composer, William Walton.

Under Heltay’s guidance, the BFC developed into one of the country’s major choruses, performing at major venues throughout England and Europe.

In 1994 Heltay retired to Spain but he has been persuaded to return to Brighton to conduct Kodaly’s Missa Brevis on Sunday 14 May in a performance at the Dome celebrating Brighton Festival’s 40th anniversary.

The Chorus is always on the lookout for new members in all voices. Details of its activities and membership can be found on www.bfc.org.uk.

Roger Walkinton, Development & Alumni Relations Office:

"My wife Jill and I were both students here in the late 1970s and sang in both the University Chorus and Brighton Festival Chorus under Laszlo for many years. He is one of the best and most revered chorus masters in the world.

"Because of BFC rehearsing on campus, many world-famous conductors have been to Sussex over the years including Yehudi Menuhin (I remember he conducted us in parts of the Messiah in the Meeting House in May 1978), André Previn and Sir Simon Rattle."

Film marks Mozart’s birthday

A film about composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, featuring Nicholas Till from the Music department at Sussex, will have its Brighton premiere on Sunday (12 March) at the Dome.

"Nicholas was more than generous with his contribution to the film and features substantially in it," says Leigh Gibson from Seventh Art Productions, the Brighton-based TV production company that made In Search of Mozart.

The film, made to mark the 250th anniversary of Mozart’s birth, traces the composer’s life through his music and extensive correspondence and features more than 80 of his works. It was broadcast on Five in January.

Reviewing the film in the Independent, Anna Picard wrote: "Tracing a life lived, as musicologist Cliff Eisen puts it, at fast-forward necessitates rapid edits. But such is the quality of the commentary from Eisen,
Healthy hopefuls: the update

Back in January the Bulletin reported on the beginning of a quest for five healthy hopeful staff and students. The mission, which they chose to accept, was to improve their health with the guidance of the experts at SussexSport. The aim was to build good diet and exercise into everyday life to create a healthier being. So how have they done? Rather well, it would seem. Judge for yourself...

David Bowell: former staff member, BIOLS and the Innovation Centre

David says: "I've survived – and I'm still enjoying it. My biggest worry was that I'd stop when it got tough. I've cut out meat on two days a week and have fish on another two days. Eating more fruit and veg means I've not gone hungry.

"I've been shown how to use the gym equipment so I can select the right settings for a session. My favourite is the cross trainer, which doesn't put excess strain on my knees.

"Some of my friends have already said that I'm looking better for the exercise."

Personal trainer Terry says: "David has made major improvements. He has reduced body fat by 2% (2kg) and increased muscle by 2kg. David has maintained activity levels of three times a week, using a combination of walking, cross training and cycling. This and a better diet have contributed to results. David's Body Mass Index score has also reduced to 25.1. (healthy range 20-25).

"David has surprised himself and friends with how he has maintained activity, and how easy it has been to achieve results."

Gill Johnston: Development Officer, Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU)

Gill says: "I feel much better for the exercise – I have more energy, I feel less stressed and it's making me feel more cheerful."

"I'm still learning to love the gym! But with my personal trainer Tine's encouragement I go there for an hour once or twice a week, doing rowing, cycling, weights and cross training. I must admit I wouldn't do it at all if Tine wasn't there to support me. She compiles an exercise plan, which stops it getting stale.

"In addition I do classes at the Sport Centre – pilates, swimming, circuit training and yoga, which is very refreshing first thing in the morning.

"Having Tine has made all the difference and I'm very pleasantly surprised with what I've achieved and I'm very pleased to be part of this initiative."

Personal trainer Tine says: "Gill has lost seven inches all over and has shown great improvement in her cardiovascular training. She comes to the gym three times a week, doing yoga and circuits training once a week each. She has started to feel a lot better, getting down a good night's sleep, and she's started to notice her body changing shape."

Samantha Fuller: Secretary, SussexSport

Sam says: "I confess to hating the gym and would prefer to exercise by walking. I certainly wasn't walking so much before I started Everyday Sport as my nearest bus stop is a two-minute walk, but I have found that I enjoy walking 20 minutes to another stop and it saves money! I would still like to lose more weight and have a target weight in mind. I know that this will take time but at least I'm on the right path."

Personal trainer Matt says: "I'm very pleased with Sam's progress. Her blood pressure has gone down and she has lost 4.5kg in just over a month; her body fat is down by 1% and her BMI is now 28.8.

"She walks around campus more often, catches a bus three stops away from her normal stop and is attending weight sessions. These sessions help women of any age tone and help prevent osteoporosis in later life."

For an update on the other healthy hopefuls, go to www.healthycampus.com.

Are you inspired by the healthy hopefuls' success? For ideas about how to incorporate exercise into your everyday life, see www.everydaysport.com. Why not start by joining a lunchtime walk, either on Monday starting at 1pm from the Post Office or Friday from 1.05pm departing from the Sport Centre.

Sporting success for Sussex

The Sussex women's basketball team, the University's first-ever team in the BUSA (British Universities Sports Association) Premier League after their promotion last year, have had another great year to date and are off to the quarter-finals of the BUSA championship in Sheffield.

The women's volleyball team, who play in Tier 1 (the second-highest league), are through to the semi-finals and men's squash, also in Tier 1, have made it to the quarter-finals.

Runner Ben Warren came fourth last month in the 3,000m at the BUSA indoor athletics championships in Sheffield. He has the outdoor 5,000m race coming up in May. "This is a stronger event for Ben and he favours running outdoors, so we are expecting good things," says Luke Ternill, Sports Development Officer.

Karen Crefield, Head of Sport, adds: "These results, combined with our gold medal from Laurence Halsted in the individual BUSA fencing championship, are brilliant results for Sussex. They will also help us maintain our current BUSA rankings, which have improved by over 60 places since the introduction of a budget for coaching three years ago."

Summer of sport to come

Wimbledon, Ascot, Lord's, Wentworth, Falmer: all of the great venues host major sporting sports this summer.

On campus, the emphasis is more on taking part than winning, which means it's time now for you to start working out so that you're ready for your event. (Sussexsport staff can help you with a personal training programme.)

The inaugural Fun Run around the campus boundary (a total of about three miles) takes place on Wednesday 10 May. If that seems a long way to jog, just take it easy and walk the route instead, or volunteer to act as a marshal.

The annual Staff Sports Afternoon is back on Friday 19 May. Last year's event included netball, pool, darts and rounders, with the bar and barbecue also proving popular.

Then in June there's the annual Charity Sports Night (Wednesday 7 June), which usually involves "It's a Knockout"-style games and quizzes.

And if none of these events appeal, you can always get a taste of the sporting action by watching it on the big-screen TV at the Falmer Sports Complex. There really is something for everyone.
Obituaries

Emanuel Eppel

Professor Emanuel Eppel, the first director of the University’s Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), died on 18 February aged 85. Also known as Manny, he came to Sussex in 1964 as Senior Lecturer in Developmental and Educational Psychology. In 1968 he became Professor of Continuing Education and the founding Director of CCE.

Until retirement in 1986, Manny built CCE into a significant academic unit and a major player in continuing education. A forceful and charismatic figure, he enjoyed a close and fruitful relationship with Asa Briggs, then Vice-Chancellor. His strength of personality and his considerable professional skills enhanced CCE and made a reality of his vision of university lifelong learning.

As Director, Manny was responsible for building a strong team of academic and administrative colleagues. A broad range of liberal adult education courses, open to anyone in the region who wanted to join and run in collaboration with a host of partner organisations, was complemented by many other media, including courses on BBC Radio Sussex.

On retirement Manny became an Emeritus Professor and continued to serve on the University Court. Manny had broad ranging academic interests, some shared with his wife May, who was also a member of the University, and survives him.

Fred Gray, Professor of Continuing Education and Dean of the Sussex Institute

Hans Singer

Professor Sir Hans Singer, one of the world’s most eminent development economists, died on 26 February aged 95.

Hans left the United Nations (UN) in 1969 to become one of the first research fellows of the newly founded IDS at Sussex. He did much to attract international recognition both to the University and IDS.

In his early years at IDS Hans was chairman and co-author of the radical and wide-ranging joint IDS-SPRU report, Science and Technology to Developing Countries (1970), which was referred to the UN General Assembly as the Sussex Manifesto. He played a leading role in the initiative of many UN agencies designed to help the world’s poor.

In 1990 the University of Sussex awarded Hans – by now a Sussex Emeritus Professor and Professorial Fellow of IDS – an honorary Doctor of Letters degree.

Professor Sir Richard Jolly, Director of IDS from 1972–1981, said, “He was an outgoing and most generous colleague, and had many friends within the University, especially in the areas of economics and international relations.”

AUT takes industrial action

Sussex members of the Association of University Teachers (AUT) went on strike this week as part of a national pay dispute. They joined colleagues at other English universities in a one-day strike on Tuesday (7 March).

In addition, “action short of a strike” began on Wednesday (8 March). This action consists of a refusal to carry out student assessment and examination activity; refusal to cover call-out or absences; and refusal to participate in staff appraisal or job evaluation. AUT members will work as normal in relation to other duties.

A contingency group at Sussex has been established to look at arrangements for managing the period of action short of a strike.

Nationally, UCEA – the employers body – are seeking to resolve pay issues with the AUT and have offered dates for discussions to achieve this. The industrial action applies only to AUT members and not to other Sussex staff.

National sources of information are available from www.aut.org.uk and www.ucea.ac.uk.

HEFCE funding for Sussex to rise again

The University’s financial settlement for 2006–07 from HEFCE (the Higher Education Funding Council for England) will be £45.2 million, an increase of 6.8% on the £42.1 million allocation for 2005–06. It follows an 8.6% rise from 2004–05 to 2005–06.

Of the £45.2 million, just over £1 million is for additional numbers of students, mostly in the Medical School and for the BA in Social Work, as well as for taught postgraduates in Engineering and Informatics.

The element of the grant for widening participation is also up again, by more than 14% (from £1.42 million to £1.6 million), to reflect funds awarded to support part-time students from disadvantaged backgrounds and to improve retention rates for these students.

Changes to the HEFCE research funding stream will bring more than had been anticipated: an extra £1 million. The overall teaching grant is in line with the original forecasts.

The Deputy Director of Finance, Ian Child, welcomed the grant allocation. “Overall, this is £750,000 better than we anticipated,” he said. “However, some of the funding remains earmarked for particular purposes. The implications are still being considered.”
LETTERS

Where to site a wind turbine

If seeking a site for a new campus wind turbine (Bulletin 24 February), Sussex could do worse than consider co-operating with the University of Brighton. Working for BSM on both Falmer campuses, I can assure you that it is often blowing a gale on the Brighton side when at Sussex all is calm and clear.

Dr John Kay, BSM

Why I need a car

Chris Wadey's reply to a letter in the Bulletin of 24 February said, "we hope that most staff and students will start to think of the car as their second option ...".

This is a response which misses the fact that many staff here are in fact part-time and that not all the day is spent on campus.

As a CCE (Centre for Continuing Education) part-time tutor and convenor it often requires me to be on campus for part of the day, teaching off campus later, yet need to be back for teaching on campus later.

Many staff on part-time contracts work away from campus and often have to transport book boxes, projectors and various kit to and from venues; this can only be done with a car.

Geoffrey Mead, CCE

Too far from the car?

Having given up precious time away from my desk (who takes a lunch hour these days?) to attend one of the Vice-Chancellor's open meetings this week, I couldn't believe my ears when discussion turned to that old favourite - car parking.

Was I really hearing how awful it was to have to walk a matter of at most 20 metres (round trip) to get a parking display ticket? And as for the difficulty of keeping a supply of pound coins to feed the meter with, well, let's not go there.

I'm lucky enough to be able to afford a car but there are plenty of staff who by choice or economic reality don't have one and rely on public transport. They have to endure the vagaries of delayed trains and buses in all weathers, as well as the walk to/from their home to the nearest station/bus stop.

Come on guys, get a life! There are people in this world who have to walk miles to their place of work under a burning sun, but we all huff up about taking a bit of daily exercise between the car and the parking meter. Or have I missed a bigger issue?

Rossaiana Dowsett, Research and Regional Development

Saving the environment?

Why does the University vociferously state that it wants to save the environment by imposing parking fees but yet fails to provide facilities for staff to recycle bottles and cans?

Dr Helen Stewart, BSM

Why I need a car

Andy Jupp, Assistant Director of Facilities Management, replies:

The University takes recycling seriously and has forged many new recycling initiatives over the last 18 months [see Bulletin 4 June and 10 September 2004]. Helen will be pleased to note that we have a recycling point for tin cans near the BSMS cafe. There are bottle banks outside York House and close to Brighton House. Further upgrades to external recycling areas are planned and will of course be advertised when installed.

Turning turtle

I'd like to offer an explanation to Richard Price (Bulletin, 27 January) for the alignment and location of the stone turtles at Arts A.

In their original home at the Isle of Thorns the turtles faced towards the centre of the paddling pool. Now that they have won a place at Sussex, we have tried to make them feel at home here too.

The pond at Arts A is the closest approximation to where they were before. The thought process was something like this:

Can they go at the back of the courtyard? Not ideal, because they'd be tucked away and obscured by plants and benches in front.

At the front, then? If they faced the pond they would present a plain and not altogether appealing aspect to their public, approaching from Library Square.

On the other hand if they faced south, to smile upon visitors as they walk up the campus, the turtles would be turning their backs on both the pond and the school that was so keen to accommodate them.

Admittedly a compromise, facing each other seemed a reasonable solution.

Far from confronting each other, I like to think that they're gazing adoringly into each other's eyes. It's unusual among turtles to mate for life, but quite in keeping among the 1960s 'Summer of Love' buildings on campus. Hearts of stone? I think not.

Rob French, Special Projects Manager, Estates & Facilities Management

A walk on the wild side

This year, the vagaries of the Easter calendar meant that February finished on Shrove Tuesday. This was the original mardi gras ("fat Tuesday"), a riotous feast preceding the Lenten fast. For our ancestors, being careful with food at this time of shortage made a virtue out of necessity. By contrast, for many animals Lent - which means spring - is a time of increasing plenty.

Early spring flowers provide some of this extra food. Goat Willows - often called Pussy Willows - grow not only on campus, but also across most of Europe and northern Asia. Male trees shed vast amounts of pollen into the wind and some of this is blown to female flowers. Pollen is also moved by animals ranging from tiny insects to birds as large as Great Spotted Woodpeckers, all seeking nectar from the catkins. Blue Tits will be regular visitors to willows like the female tree in the LifeSci loading bay until early April.

Introduced plants also supply nectar. The Mahonia bushes at the Sussex House bus stop provide a good example. When undisturbed by people, their sweet-scented yellow flowers are visited by birds including Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs. Mahonia are related to the more familiar Berberis and are natives of Asia and North America. They became popular garden plants in the 18th century because they flower in winter.

Oregon Grape Mahonia aquifolium was introduced from America in 1823 and initially cost £10 per plant. It gets its English name from the blue-black berries it bears in summer. The shrubbery by Sussex House contains a mixture of Oregon Grape and the much more dramatic Mahonia japonica, introduced by Robert Fortune from Japan in 1845.

March is the month of the daffodil, hence its local name of Lent-Lily. The drifts of naturalised plantings on campus were part of Sir Basil Spence's original vision for campus; formal flower beds had no place in his plans.

There are roughly 3,000 different garden varieties of daffodil. Most of the conventional types, with the trumpet (corona) at least as long as the petals, are derived from the Wild Daffodil and its hybrids. In most flowers the colourful petals differ from the green sepals that lie beneath them. Daffodils have no such distinction; in such cases botanists often refer to tepals rather than petals.

Genuine Wild Daffodils can still be found in the woods and fields of Sussex, but care is needed to distinguish them from garden escapes. Their small stature and their trumpet being a darker yellow than the petals are good clues. Look out for any possible candidates on campus.

David Harper
Life Sciences

David Streeter
Life Sciences

The old saying "If March comes in like a lamb, it will go out like a lion" captures the changeability of the month's weather well. This year, March began on campus with brilliant sunshine and hardly a breath of wind. Look out for storms ahead!
Academic events ↓

MON 13 MAR
2pm Music seminar: David Osmond-Smith (Sussex), Cathy Berberian: Singer and score. Falmer House 120.

THU 16 MAR
4pm History seminar: Becky Taylor (Sussex), Unsatisfactory households and problem families. Arts A105.
4pm SPT seminar: Gregor Nol (Lund), Asym claims and the translation of culture into politics. Arts C223.

FRI 17 MAR
2.15pm SPRU 40th anniversary seminar: Paolo Guerrieri, (Rome), Is the Lisbon strategy useful? Freeman G04/25.

WED 22 MAR
1pm IDS seminar: Melissa Leach (Sussex), Governing science and technology. IDS 221.
1pm Genome seminar: Val Macaulay (Oxford), The contribution of IGF signalling to the DNA damage response. GDSC Seminar Room.

FRI 24 MAR
2pm SPRU-CENTRIM seminar: William Walker (St Andrews), Technological change and international relations. Freeman Centre 624/25.

Arts events ↓

PERFORMANCE
Mon 13 and Tue 14 Mar
7.30pm Sussex University Drama Society (SUDS) - Shanenijans
A night of student-written comedy, featuring coarse language, statutory sex, mindless violence and perverted humour. Hothouse.

Tue 21 and Wed 22 Mar
8pm Renegade Theatre - Rumble
Inspired by Shakespeare's tragic love story Romeo and Juliet, Rumble swaps the feuding families of Verona for rival breakdance crews in a piece of urban hip-hop dance theatre played out on two massive scaffolding towers. Video footage and technical trickery which will make you view the world from a new way.

CATERING OUTLETS
Baguette Express: 8.30am–4pm
Dhaba (Arts C): 9am–4pm

EASTER VACATION OPENING TIMES ↓

Easter vacation: 18 March–18 April inclusive
Closure days: 13 April–18 April inclusive. All locations closed. Closing times and closure days unless stated
Bridge Café: 9am–4pm

CATERING OUTLETS
Baguette Express: 8.30am–4pm
Dhaba (Arts C): 9am–4pm

East Slope Bar: Daily 11am–4pm except Sundays, 12noon–10.30pm
Bistro: 9am–4.30pm

Library: Mon–Thur 9am–8pm, Fri 9.30am–5.30pm, Sat & Sun 1pm–6pm. Closed 14–18 April inclusive

CDEC: 20 March–7 April 10am–3pm; 2pm–5pm. Closed 10–18 April

WEDNESDAY 15 MAR
1pm Law seminar: Paul Lapsley (Essex), A critical analysis of New Labour's legislation against ' Hate'. Russell 10.
1pm IDS Asian Drivers seminar: Ricardo Gottschalk (Sussex), The macro challenges of China's demand for primary commodities for Latin America. IDS 221.
1pm Genome seminar: Kai Stoeber (UCL), The DNA replication licensing machinery. GDSC Seminar Room.

Small ads ↓

For sale: Double bed £70; single bed £50; dining table + 4 chairs £150; low table £10; round table £5; leather armchair + footstool £200; 2 wardrobes (wooden-covered frames) £5. T 727350.
Summer let: 3-bed house in Rounhill area. £395 + bills, June-Aug. T Kathy/Mike on 488205.

For sale: Under offer

Village Lounge; Pitstop; Closed
SCHOOL CAFES; Closed
Arts B and EDB: Closed
Bridge Café: 9am–4pm

Chichester: 8.30am–4pm
Dhaaba (Arts C): 9am–4pm

FILM
Sun 12 Mar
2pm Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit (U), GAC.
Sun 19 March
2pm The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe (PG), GAC.

IDS Bar: 12noon–2.30pm
IDS Restaurant: 8am–2pm
Laines Restaurant: 12noon–2pm

CAMPUS SHOPS
Book Shop: 9am–5pm
Newsagents: 8am–4pm

Students’ Union Shop (Falmer House): 20 March–11 April, 9am–3.30pm;
4pm–9.30pm

For sale: Law books, first and second-year LLB. £5 or less. T Claire for titles on 01225 767240.
For sale: Second-hand £10; single bed £50; dining table + 4 chairs £150; low table £10; round table £5; leather armchair + footstool £200; 2 wardrobes (wooden-covered frames) £5. T 727350.
Summer let: 3-bed house in Rounhill area. £395 + bills, June-Aug. T Kathy/Mike on 488205.

University: The next issue will be out on 24 March, with a copy deadline of 1pm on 17 March. Please contact the Press & Communications Office in Sussex House, ext. 8888 or email bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.

The Bulletin is written and produced by Alison Field and Clare Potter, with contributions from Jacob Bealing, Maggie Cruze and Rob Read. We welcome any news, story ideas, letters or small ads from the staff and students of the