BBC series benefits from expert advice

Richard Carter, convenor of field geology in the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), has been giving his expert advice on archaeology for a new BBC series.

Richard explained, "I have kept in touch with him and he asked if I was able to help with finding suitable sites on the High Weald."

The BBC 2 series follows bushcraft expert Ray Mears (pictured below) as he investigates the foods that Stone Age hunter-gatherers would have eaten and the techniques that they would have used.

"The co-presenter of the series is Professor Gordon Hillman, who was my archaeobotany lecturer at the Institute of Archaeology at UCL,"

Richard identified a Mesolithic site (c. 10,000-6,000 years ago) at Chiddingey Woods Rocks, near Ardingly. The area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Scheduled Monument, with no sign of human interference and little erosion.

"I spent a day with Ray and the film crew at Chiddingey Woods Rocks and advised on the type of evidence that is found at these rock shelter sites and the sort of activities that may have occurred during the Mesolithic era," says Richard.

These activities included seasonal hunting expeditions, the clearance of areas by fire to attract deer and to improve visibility, and the use of watercourses. Richard also helped prepare some tubers using an enormous pestle and mortar to remove the toxins, and between filming he sat and chatted with Ray about his travels and experiences with modern-day hunter-gatherers.

Ray Mears' Wild Food continues on BBC 2 on 17, 24 and 31 January at 8pm.

A new VC: give your views

Staff and students are being invited this month to offer views on the role and qualities of a new Vice-Chancellor, as work to make the appointment moves swiftly ahead.

Following discussion at Senate on 8 December and approval at Council on 15 December, the Selection Committee for the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor for Sussex has started its work.

To inform the work of the Selection Committee, it is now seeking views from staff and students on the responsibilities and role of the Vice-Chancellor and the qualities of the person who should be appointed.

Responses should be sent by 10am on Monday 22 January, or sooner to newvc@sussex.ac.uk, and all of them will be seen by the Committee's chair, Simon Fanshawe.

At its first meeting on 19 December, the Selection Committee appointed executive search firm Perrett Laver, which previously worked with Sussex on the appointment of the new Pro-Vice-Chancellors, to support the University.

As part of the preparation process, Simon Laver and Siborhan O'Dowd of Perrett Laver will be holding meetings with groups of staff and students in the week beginning Monday 22 January.

These meetings will include an open forum on Tuesday 23 January, at 12.30pm in the Terrace Room, Bramber House. All staff and students are welcome to attend.

The Selection Committee will be aiming to approve a draft job description and person specification in the week beginning 29 January, and then consulting within the University, prior to advertising the post.

More information on the appointment process, including a draft outline timetable, is available online at www.sussex.ac.uk/wo/1-3-3.html.

Health Week 2007: strive for five

The focus for this year's campus Health Week from 22 to 26 January is 'strive for five', which represents the national guidelines for the amount of activity sessions we should be achieving every week and the portions of fruit and vegetables we should be eating every day.

The Health Week programme is packed with ideas to get you new year off to a good start.

Get one of your five activity sessions in with a multi-activity taster session or by joining one of the guided walks around Stanmer Park.

To help you meet your target of five daily portions of fruit and vegetables, check out the stalls at the Health Fair on Tuesday 23 January or the Farmers Market on Wednesday 24 January. Both events take place in Mandela Hall.

And you can combine physical activity with healthy eating by trying out a bike that makes fruity smoothies and energy drinks. The 'smoothie bike' will be on the patio of Falmer Bar for the first three days of Health Week.

Most events are free of charge. For programme details, see www.healthycampus.com or the leaflets around campus.

Inside

2 Broadcast Who's been in the headlines?
3 First class An MBE for David Street, a book prize for Andrew Hadfield
3 Your views? Staff and students are being consulted on a new research strategy
3 Wild side Flowers on Common Gorse and Berries on Dogwood
4 In brief PG Open Day, 17 Jan, where to recycle your Christmas cards ...
National Student Survey 2007

The third National Student Survey takes place this term, with students at Sussex due to be contacted in Week 4 (starting Monday 29 January). An independent organisation, IPSOS, conducts the Survey on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

The Survey, which first ran in 2005, produces results for student satisfaction on a range of measures across teaching, assessment, academic support, organisation, learning resources and personal development. A key purpose of the NSS is to provide useful feedback to institutions on the student experience. The information is also used by those compiling university league tables, as part of the rankings for the sector.

Sussex has done well on teaching scores in the past, but the results have shown that more focus is needed on areas such as assessment and personal development.

Led by Professor Joanne Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) – and working closely with colleagues in the Students’ Union – departments and units at Sussex have been working hard on addressing the issues arising from the previous survey results.

More information about the action being taken to address a range of student issues can be seen at www.sussex.ac.uk/ev/1-3-4.html

Results from the 2007 Survey will be published in August or September.

National Teaching Fellowship Scheme 2007

Nominations are now open for the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS). Fifty Individual Awards of £10,000 will be made to recognise and reward individual excellence.

Sussex currently has four National Teaching Fellows and is looking forward to continuing this record of success in 2007.

Award winners come from a wide variety of academic and professional roles that support the student learning experience, including professionals involved in learning support.

Further information is on the website of the Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU), www.sussex.ac.uk/tldu/1-5-9.html, and scheme guidelines can be found on the Higher Education Academy website, www.heacademy.ac.uk/NTFSindividual.htm

Completed nomination forms should be sent to Sue Clayton at TLDU in the Mantell Building, email s.b.clayton@sussex.ac.uk, by Friday 19 January.

FIRST CLASS

The Sixteenth Century Society and Conference awarded its 2006 Roland H. Bainton Prize for Literature to Professor Andrew Hadfield for his book Shakespeare and Republicanism. The prize came with a cheque for £500.

Emeritus Professor of Anthropology Peter Lloyd has received a Volunteer Recognition Award from charity Action in Rural Sussex, which helps rural communities in the county to remain vibrant places for living and working.

Since retiring from university teaching 15 years ago, Peter has used his academic skills in a wide range of activities for the organisation: writing briefing papers, commenting on consultation documents, managing and facilitating research projects, etc.

Dr Rocco Potenza, who was awarded his Sussex DPhil last summer, has jointly won the 2006 Richard Way Memorial prize. The prize (worth £200) is awarded annually by the UK Universities Internal Combustion Engines Group (UniCEG) in recognition of an outstanding doctoral thesis on any aspect of internal combustion engines.

David Streeter, Reader in Ecology, was awarded an MBE in the New Year’s Honours List, for “services to higher education”. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alan dair Smith, said: “David contributes greatly to ecology and conservation in our region through his work at Sussex and as an expert adviser to conservation and wildlife groups. It is fitting that his many years of scholarship and service have now been recognised.”
Research strategy: Your views count

Staff and students are being consulted on the creation of a new research strategy for the University, as Sussex looks to develop its research goals for the next 10–15 years.

The strategy will be developed alongside that for teaching and learning, on which Professor Joanne Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), led consultation during the autumn term.

Senate and Council also agreed to establish a University Research Committee and to regularise school and department research committees, to promote and develop a strong research culture and ethos across the University, encouraging activity that is consistent with an internationally outstanding institution.

The Research Committee will meet for the first time this term. An early item of business will be to receive the responses to the consultation document and help draft the University research strategy. The strategy will be presented to Senate and Council at the end of this term.

RAE Code of Practice

Following discussion and approval by Senate and Council at their meetings in December, the University’s Code of Practice on preparing submissions to the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and selecting staff for submission has been published.

The Code of Practice outlines the positive steps being taken to ensure that principles of fairness and equality are being applied in determining staff who will be included in the University submission to RAE 2008.

The document has been recommended nationally by the academic staff union, UCU, as a model of good practice. It is available online at www.sussex.ac.uk/spg/1-4.html.

2007: the year of hard work for RAE 2008

With all the talk of RAE 2008, staff not directly involved might be forgiven for not realising that preparation activity in universities actually culminates in 2007.

The RAE preparation timetable now published at www.sussex.ac.uk/spg/1-4.html shows the final steps to the University is taking towards the November 2007 deadline for submission to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

By March the University has to make to HEFCE its submission intentions. A second RAE simulation exercise will be held in April, and the end of August is the deadline for heads of department to make their final submissions to the Sussex RAE Strategy Group.

The timetable ends with a celebration event for Sussex, which Professor Bob Allison, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), has promised will be a fitting tribute to the hard work and effort that is being put in right across the University.

A walk on the wild side

Wandering along the edge of Tenant Laine at the top of the field behind East Slope on the first day back, a splash of yellow ahead catches the eye. A single gorse bush in full flower!

In January? Well, yes, that’s OK! Common Gorse will come into flower as early as the end of November, so this isn’t yet another piece of presumed evidence of climate warming.

This is the first time that we have had occasion to mention this very distinctive member of our native flora. The reason is that gorse is not by nature a plant of the chalk. It is most at home on dry sandy soils - often where there has been some disturbance - as on the heathy slopes of Ashdown Forest, which at the end of March are ablaze with its golden blossom.

Indeed, there is a well-known story of doubtful authenticity, that when Linnaeus first saw the plant flowering in this country he fell to his knees thanking heaven for having created a flower so beautiful!

There is certainly an almost universal country saying that, “when gorse is in flower, kissing’s in season!” What makes this such a satisfactory little aphorism is that in most parts of the country there are two species of gorse – the Common Gorse and one or other of two species of dwarf furze – and happily they have overlapping flowering times!

The flowers of Common Gorse have a strong scent, resembling coconut, and attract many nectar-feeding insects at a season when blooms are in short supply. Their shape reveals that this densely spiny bush is a member of the pea family. This explains why local farmers used to say that there was money under gorse: plants in this family have nitrogen-fixing bacteria in their roots that increase the fertility of the soil.

This may be the last time we mention Common Gorse: the number of bushes on campus has fallen dramatically over the last decade. Some bushes have succumbed to competition from larger plants. Others have been grubbed up, one recent loss being caused by the reshaping of the slope between the Manteell Building and the Boiler House.

A new cluster of Dogwood shrubs now grace the base of this slope. Their blood-red stems add a splash of winter colour, as do those of our native Dogwood species – the aptly named Cornus sanguinea – which is widespread on campus.

The new shrubs betrayed their garden origins last term when they bore white berries rather than the expected black. While birds gobbled the black Dogwood fruit up by November, the white ones were largely ignored and by early January had shrivelled up without being dispersed. This illustrates how what is good for gardeners, in this case long-lasting berries, can be bad for the plant and wildlife.
Academic events

MON 15 JAN
5pm Education seminar: James Avis (Huddersfield), Reproduction and the individualisation of educational relations: The case of post-compulsory education. Arts E419.

TUE 16 JAN
12noon Biochemistry and Genetics & Development seminar: Christopher C. R. Allen (Queen's Belfast), Expanding the potential for arena dioligosaccharide enzymes in organic synthesis. JMS lecture theatre.

2.15pm SEL/Politics seminar: Sharmil Saggar (Sussex), Western Muslim communities: Tackling political and religious extremism. Arts C233.

4.15pm Anthropology seminar: Magnus Manden (Cambridge), Islamic reform and impermissible fun in northern Pakistan. Arts C233.

WED 17 JAN
1pm Controversies Seminar: Science & Technology seminar: David Ockwell & Ben Martin (Sussex), Why does policy often ignore empirical evidence? Freeman Centre.

MON 22 JAN
4pm Research on Languages and Linguistics seminar: Nicola Woods (Sussex), Sound change in New Zealand English: Real or apparent? Arts D440.

5pm Education seminar: Tony Booth (Canterbury Christ Church), Demoralisation in education: How can inclusive values help? Arts E419.

TUE 23 JAN

2.15pm SEL/Politics seminar: Helen Wallace (European University Institute, Italy), Consensus and contestation in EU policy-making. Arts C233.


6.30pm Professional lecture: Kees Van Der Pijl (Sussex), Transnational classes and global political economy. Michael Chowen lecture theatre, BSMS. RSVP essential: ext. 7707, E events@sussex.ac.uk.

WED 24 JAN
1pm Controversies Seminar: Science & Technology seminar: Ed Steinmuller & Paul Nightingale, Does additional CCTV coverage make us safer? Freeman Centre.

6.30pm BSMS inaugural lecture: Hugh Critchley (BSMS), Anatomy of feeling. Michael Chowen lecture theatre, BSMS. RSVP essential: E lectures@bsms.ac.uk

8pm Archaeological Society lecture: Rob Wallace (UCL), The archaeology of Culvermead and other Barcombe Roman Villa environs. Arts A1. £3 (£2 members).

THU 25 JAN
4pm Psychology seminar: Lars Muckli (Max Planck Institute, Frankfurt), Recurrent feedback activation for apparent motion perception: Brain imaging studies using fMRI, EEG and TMS. Pevensey 1, 183.

6.30pm Lecture: Michael Freut (Sussex), Professional learning in the workplace. Chichester U. RSVP essential: ext. 7707, E events@sussex.ac.uk.

FRI 26 JAN
2.15pm Freeman Centre seminar: Gloria Laycock (UCL), Crime control in the 21st century: Changing the agenda. Freeman Centre.

Postgraduate Open Day
The Postgraduate Open Day will take place on Wednesday (17 January) in Bramber House between 12 noon and 3.15pm. It provides an opportunity to meet academic faculty representing a wide range of taught degree programmes and research subjects, and to talk to current students about life as a postgraduate student. There will be information on accommodation, careers, computing services and sport as well as how to fund postgraduate study.

Barlow Gallery online catalogue goes live
The full contents of the Barlow Collection of Chinese Art (house in the gallery near the Library entrance) is now available to view online at www.sussex.ac.uk/barlow. The most up-to-date scholarship has been used in the compilation of this catalogue and each entry comes complete with a set of high-quality images. Any feedback can be sent to Aiden Leaves at barlow.gallery@sussex.ac.uk

Yvonne says thank you
Yvonne McGearl, Dean’s Office Co-Ordinator in the School of Life Sciences from 2003 and before that the Subject Group Secretary for History of Art, has swapped Sussex for the University of Brighton. She writes: “Thank you to all my friends and colleagues in Life Sciences and across the University for giving me such a wonderful send-off. Your kind messages and generous presents are so much appreciated. I wish you all a very happy new year.”

Small ads

For sale: Brighton Furniture warehouse 175 voucher for £70. E.1, deng@sussex.ac.uk or ext. 2857.


Arts events

FILM
Sun 14 Jan
4pm Parr’s Labyrinth (13), Gardiner Arts Centre (GAC).

7pm Borat (15), GAC.

Sun 21 Jan
4pm The Wizard of Oz (U), GAC.

7pm London to Brighton (18), GAC.

Poppy Appeal raises a thousand pounds
The Poppy Appeal collection on campus last term raised £1,026.21. Organiser Diane George invites anyone who would like a collection tin for 2007 to contact her on 644048.

Please recycle
Please recycle your Christmas cards, by placing them with any cardboard for collection by local ports. Envelopes can be placed in the paper recycling bins as normal. Because of its inferior quality, wrapping paper cannot be recycled.

The Bulletin is written and produced by Allstaff Field, with contributions from Jacqui Bealig, Maggie Clune and Rob Rawl. 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 26 January, with a copy deadline of 3pm on 19 January. Please contact the Press & Communications Office in Sussex House, est. 88888 or email bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.