Because of us ...

Sussex research was showcased in a major dinner held at the Royal Society in London on Monday (25 June).

Academics from all schools at Sussex, and from BSMS and IDS, were present to talk with guests about their research and to promote Sussex as a leading home of research on areas such as biosciences, medicine, engine technology, computing, international development, migration, visual studies and education.

The guests included leading figures from the research councils and research foundations, including Professor Alan Thorpe, chief executive of the Natural Environment Research Council, and Lord Selbourne, chairman of the Foundation for Science and Technology, and donors and friends of the University.

Hosted by the Chancellor, Lord Attenborough, the event was the first in what Professor Bob Allison, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), expects will now be a regular event for Sussex.

Bob, the driving force behind the initiative, was delighted with the success of the event: “Since I arrived at Sussex in September, I have been struck by the contribution that Sussex research makes to society. I want us to celebrate and showcase that work, and make sure the world knows that Sussex has world-class research to be proud of.”

Hilary Benn MP, a Sussex graduate and now the Secretary of State for International Development, was the main speaker at the dinner, in his first public engagement since the Labour Party deputy leadership election (in which he and fellow Sussex graduate Peter Hain MP were both contenders).

The Secretary of State spoke passionately about the importance to him personally of his experience at Sussex, with its values of social engagement and world-class learning, and the importance now of Sussex’s and IDS’s research to his work in government at the Department for International Development.

Addressing wider issues, he also made clear how significant the role of research would continue to be in helping society to understand and engage with the challenges facing Britain and the world in the coming century.

To support the event, and future profile-raising engagement on research, the University has produced some striking printed material. Under the slogan ‘Because of us…’, a report and postcards highlight the contribution made by Sussex research, with examples of life-changing research drawn from across the arts and sciences.

Preparation for the event has also allowed the University to update and improve the presentation of research information online. The Sussex homepage now carries a new banner and imagery, linking through to more detailed research information from the annual review and beyond.

And, in a first for the University, this theme will extend to a focused advertising series over the month ahead at Victoria railway station, continuing to raise the profile of Sussex research.

Plans for next year’s event are already under way. Bob will be delighted to hear from any staff who think their research should be part of the showcase next year.

Smoking banned indoors from 1 July

The University has updated its Smoking Policy to ensure that it complies fully with regulations banning smoking in the workplace and enclosed public places, which come into force on Sunday (1 July).

In preparation for the new law, the University is also placing no-smoking signs at entrances to the campus and in work vehicles.

The law will cover virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces – including offices, shops, bars and cafes – and work vehicles used by more than one person.

Failure to comply with the law will be a criminal offence, for which individuals and the University itself are liable to prosecution. Staff and students who breach the Smoking Policy will be subject to relevant University disciplinary procedures.

The University’s Smoking Policy:
- prohibits smoking in all University buildings, except in designated residential study bedrooms
- prohibits smoking within two metres of any part of a University-owned or managed building
- prohibits smoking in University vehicles
- allows smoking in designated study bedrooms but not in any common area within student residences
- requires students in a study bedroom to stop smoking if asked to do so to allow work to be carried out (such as cleaning or maintenance)
- designates external areas where smoking is allowed.

Clive Parkinson, Director of Safety, says: “The overarching aim of this policy is to encourage a sensible approach to smoking and to accommodate the views of both smokers and non-smokers.”

The University already offers sessions at the Sportcentre to help staff and students to quit smoking, but will provide additional support from 1 July.

For detailed information and the full Smoking Policy, see www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/safety

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Fay Weldon brings smiles to humour conference

Celebrated author and professor of creative writing Fay Weldon was the guest speaker at a conference on campus that hoped to encourage serious study of humour.

Entitled ‘Joking Apart: Gender, literature and humour, 1850–present’, the two-day event on 28–29 June included presentations on sexual differences in comedy, feminist ‘funny women’, Freudian jokes, and the politics of laughter.

Professor Weldon, author of more than 20 novels, including The Life and Loves of a She-Devil, as well as short stories, screenplays and journalism, said: ‘Humour is enormously important in people’s lives. Women tend to use it as a defence mechanism to make things more tolerable, and it becomes more important the older you get. It keeps you young and healthy.’

She added: ‘Academia is one of this country’s great strengths, but we cannot rest on our laurels. If students were encouraged to study humour it might make them read more books.’

The conference was organised by Dr Sophie Blanch, Research Fellow in English Literature. She said: ‘While humour studies has fast been emerging as a productive and energetic field of cultural and critical inquiry in the United States, an equivalent network of scholars has still to be identified within the UK.

‘The point is not to analyse humour forensically to find out what is funny, as that can be the death of any good joke; it’s more about why humour is important within a society.’

Sophie is currently researching and writing her own work on the relationship between humour and gender. To be published under the title Lively Words: Wit, women and writing (1905–1939), it focuses on the humorous writing of women such as Virginia Woolf and the American authors Gertrude Stein and Djuna Barnes.

‘Recent critical attempts to assert the seriousness of women’s contributions to literary modernism have overlooked much of the playfulness and pleasure of these texts,’ she said.

‘My research will seek to reclaim the relationship between wit and women’s writing in the period to suggest it posed an effective challenge to Freud’s suggestion that jokes are merely a comic conspiracy on the side of men.’

Final excavations under way at Barcombe

A seventh and final season of archaeological excavations has begun at Barcombe Roman villa, near Lewes.

The investigations are part of a joint project by the Centre of Continuing Education (CCE) and the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team.

This work will continue investigations at the southern part of the villa complex. Last year they focused on a courtyard wall, which is represented by chalk footings, abutted by a linear stretch of flint masonry at its western end.

These flint foundations proved to be a means of reducing an original wide entrance or space between the south-west corner of the courtyard and a previously unrecorded building to the west. This new masonry building also had chalk foundations and comprised a large rectangular hall with one much smaller room added to each side at the southern end.

The function of this building, which is located outside the main villa complex (a situation that has a possible parallel at the Sparsholt villa in Hampshire), is uncertain, but could be agricultural or living accommodation, or perhaps a combination of the two.

Excavation of the new building will be completed this summer and the remainder of the villa courtyard will be uncovered.

“Here we expect to discover more roundhouses,” says David Rudling from CCE, “and perhaps features associated with the activities going on in the courtyard during the height of the villa’s life.”

You can be part of the investigations by undertaking volunteer work at Barcombe, either at weekends or for 5-weekday blocks. In either case, call 01323 871021, email chris@realtub.fsbusiness.co.uk or see www.mslat.com.

There will also be an Open Day from 10am to 4pm on Saturday 28 July.

During July and August the project will include various short CCE training courses, some of which carry academic credit. They will cover excavation techniques; planning and section drawing; first aid for finds; and site photography for archaeologists.

All courses are suitable for beginners or those with some experience, e.g. prospective archaeology students, amateur archaeologists, undergraduates, etc. For further information, call ext. 8527, email si-enquiries@sussex.ac.uk or see www.sussex.ac.uk/cce/archaeology.
VC's VOICE

After nine years and about 100 of these columns, it is now time to sign off. Being the Vice-Chancellor of this great University has faced me with many challenges but also many opportunities, and this would be an obvious opportunity to look back over the past years and offer my own assessment of successes and failures. However, this is a task best left to others and best undertaken from a slightly more distant perspective. The pleasant task of thanking the very large number of people to whom I am indebted is also best done elsewhere.

So I would like to sign off by looking forward rather than backward, and offering my own perspective on what I would like to see the University achieving in the years ahead.

We operate in a highly competitive environment, in which the University’s ability to increase its income will be critical to its success. There are promising signs of progress in research grants and overseas student recruitment; and it is pleasing that, after several years of unsatisfactory financial performance, the University is now expecting to report a financial surplus for 2006–07. But more needs to be done. There’s a virtuous circle here: the faster we move into a strong financial position, the more we will be able to invest in our existing academic strengths and in exciting new developments.

There are important questions to ask about strategy. On research income, should we focus on what we do best, which is generating support from the funding council (via the RAE) and the research councils, or should we put more effort into diversification: working with companies and with public bodies? How much priority should we give the enterprise agenda in teaching as well as in research?

I’d like to see the University achieving better alignment between research strength and student recruitment. We have struggled for many years to recruit enough students into some departments that were strong in research. But in the long run, it is not possible to build research strength without a strong student base, and we need to have an academic portfolio that is strong and sustainable.

The University needs to provide a good student experience, and for that we need a continuing commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, and investment in teaching space, in residential accommodation and in sports and leisure facilities. The counterpart is a student commitment to academic excellence. There are aspects of the UK student culture that are unhealthy, most notably the dominant role that alcohol plays in social life. I’d like to see Sussex leading the way to a healthier, high-achievement student culture. I’d also like to see our students’ union more focused on the interests of the majority of students.

All of us, staff and students, want Sussex to be an institution in which we take pride. That means an institution in which everyone is treated with respect, whatever their position; in which all are engaged in a collective agenda; and in which staff are committed to a high-reward, high-performance culture.

The campus environment is a major asset to the University; we need to remind ourselves that the landscape is as integral a part of our architectural heritage as the buildings and treat our physical legacy with the respect it deserves.

I sign off with an extract from the University’s own ‘vision’ statement: ‘Sussex pioneers new thinking, and has a tradition of internationalism and social engagement. In our people, in our campus architecture, and in our teaching and research, we have set leading standards of excellence, creativity and innovation.’ It has been a great privilege for the past nine years to have led an institution with such an inspiring vision and I wish Sussex every success in the future.

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Financial position continues to improve

Allan Spencer, the Director of Finance, will be reporting today (Friday 29 June) to Council that the University continues to make progress against financial targets set by Council to achieve a 3–4 per cent surplus on annual turnover over the next few years. This surplus is required to give the University capacity for investment in its strategic priorities.

In summer 2006 Council approved plans for a small operational deficit of just under £400,000 for 2006–07. The current forecast for this year is for an operational surplus of £1.8m – an improvement of over £2m.

The key elements of improvement include:
- better financial control and planning by schools and professional services units;
- better forecasting and certainty on fee income;
- beneficial effects of more cautious original budgeting on utilities.

In addition, the University has achieved lower-than-forecast spend on bursaries, scholarships and other support for widening participation under the new fees regime, despite exceeding benchmarks and targets on widening access.

Allan said that this strengthening financial position was part of the long-term move towards robust financial health, and the reflected hard work by staff across the University, supported by more prudent financial planning and better financial control.

"I want to thank all staff who have played their part in these important steps forward. By sustaining and continuing these improvements, we can generate the capacity for investment that will develop Sussex for the future." Allan was also able to report the forecast of an even larger consolidated surplus of £5.5m – taking account of budget for exceptional items. Although this is welcome, Allan explained to Council that because the consolidated surplus reflects one-off items (e.g. costs of change, planned property sales), the operational income and expenditure result is the more significant indicator of long-term health.

The forecast results will improve the University’s overall reserves and cash position, and better enable it to operate from a financially secure base in 2007–08.
Teaching Awards 2007

Three academics are to receive awards at the graduation ceremonies next month in recognition of their excellent teaching.

Dr Paul Basu

Some people suggest things, Dr Paul Basu, who joined the Anthropology department in September 2003, does things.

Many of his initiatives are in course design and delivery. For example, a new course in 'Ethnographic Methods' that he introduced for first year Anthropology undergraduates has developed the use of team work.

Paul has a very large class (about 100 students) and develops their methodological skills through huge but very popular workshops using a wide range of teaching techniques, and then through the development of a research project that the students conceive and conduct in small teams.

Paul also gained funding for an action research programme that is developing teaching and learning resources based around museum collections as a way of revealing the implicit anthropology content in many A level subjects (geography, sociology, etc.).

He has linked up with the curators at Brighton Museum and is piloting the project with Brighton schools, with the aim of finding ways to popularise anthropology in schools and thus to improve links between A level subjects and university anthropology.

"This is very innovative work," says Professor James Fairhead, head of the Anthropology department.

In addition, Paul trained and worked in film and television production for several years and he has been developing links between anthropology and visual culture.

Dr Darrell Evans

Traditionally, anatomy is a subject little enjoyed by medical students. At the Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS), Dr Darrell Evans and his senior colleague Professor Dr Lawrence-Watt have turned this tradition upside down. Anatomy at BSMS consistently scores as the most popular science subject in the curriculum.

"Darrell teaches with verve and enthusiasm," says Professor Lawrence-Watt. The School’s Associate Dean, Professor Richard Vincent, adds: "His preparation is thorough and he is undoubtedly demanding, but at an appropriate level and with a manner that promotes learning rather than discouragement."

Beyond his own specialism, Darrell has contributed importantly to the five-year undergraduate degree in medicine. He is the senior academic responsible for the first two years of the curriculum and is accountable for four modules in each of the two years, supervising the work of module leaders and their teams as well as playing an active part in course development, delivery and assessment.

He has recently been asked to form and chair a working party to review assessment processes in the undergraduate degree. He also sits on the BSMS Curriculum Development and Curriculum Management Group.

Darrell also trains and inspires other teachers. As a member of the Medical Education Unit (MEU), Darrell plays a key role in the introductory course for new BSMS teachers, which is run about 12 times a year.

Cath Holmström

Cath Holmström’s strong and personalised support for the diverse group of undergraduates on the BA in Social Work begins even before they apply and continues through the admissions process and into the first term of the degree. She is both the director of the BA programme and its admissions tutor.

Cath provides her students with a highly effective combination of support, stimulus, challenge and creativity, helping them to become confident, active learners. She is also innovative: one example is the inclusion of service users and carers in student selection and in teaching.

Cath’s enthusiasm for enhancing students’ learning extends to her own professional development: she reflects openly and honestly on feedback and experience, seeking continuous development of her approaches to and styles of teaching. She is also studying in the Sussex Institute for a professional doctorate, with her research leading to new ideas and developments in the BA degree and beyond.

Her colleagues in the Social Work department say that Cath’s ability to be creative inspires them, as well as students, to develop and learn. For example, she has supported colleagues with the introduction of e-learning and pioneered its use within the department.

And the impact of Cath’s work is felt far beyond Sussex: her work on admissions to higher education has placed her in a national leadership role, making her an excellent ambassador for the University.
Summer open day is a great success

The sun managed to break through the clouds on the campus open day, when 3,500 prospective students and their families enjoyed a wide range of activities including talks, department tours and accommodation drop-ins.

More than 350 academics and support staff, alongside 90 student helpers, worked together to make the event on 16 June an effective showcase for all that the University has to offer. They came from units across campus including the schools, Catering Services, Security, Estates and the Conference Office.

The event was co-ordinated by Syrie Hall from Student Recruitment Services. She said: "The success of the event relies on everybody working well together. My team and the student helpers, alongside staff from across the University, pulled together to produce a well-organised and professional event. A number of prospective students commented on how happy we all were."

“"It looked really good, and somewhere I could imagine myself being.” Visitor to Sussex

The feedback was certainly positive. Visitors were impressed with the Conference Centre, which was used for the first time as the main exhibition hall.

One mother was so impressed with the day that she commented: “This is our first university visit and it’s set a very high standard of expectation for our other visits.”

Comments from open day visitors:

“Enthusiastic talks and students as well as a really nice feel to the campus.”

“Everybody’s happy!”

“Sussex University is an inviting place that is keen to get everyone involved in all that they offer.”

“It looks like a nice place to go, with a friendly bubbly atmosphere with great opportunities.”

Sun, sea, sand, and science

The first (and hoped-to-be annual) staff beach volleyball tournament took place on Wednesday 20 June.

Teams were entered from SocCul, IT Services, Life Sciences and Sussexsport.

The event took place at the newly built Yellowave beach sports centre on Brighton beach.

A closely fought competition resulted in a final between Life Sciences (aka the Ostriches) and Sussexsport B (the Jedi Knights).

Life Sciences, captained by Inga Zeissel, ran out eventual winners 21-17 and claimed the title of Sussex University staff Beach Volleyball Champions 2007.

Luke Terrill, Sports Development Officer and event organiser said: “Everyone had a great evening. The weather was excellent and the Yellowave centre is a great addition to Brighton seafront.

“The competition was keenly contested and played in a sporting manner. I have had a lot of positive feedback on the event and we will certainly look to run it again next summer.”

Bring out the barbeque

It was the beginning of summer and the end of the academic year. Bring out the barbeque!

About 250 alumni and staff, as well as their families and friends, made sure that the first ever Sussex Summer BBQ on Saturday (23 June) was a great success.

As well as a delicious barbeque outside Falmer Bar, there were activities to suit everyone, ranging from crafts and face painting for the younger children to fun sports activities for the older ones.

The bouncy castles were for adults as well as children, and everybody had the chance to have a go at breakdancing.

A jazz band entertained the visitors with live music and a caricaturist drew personal portraits of them to take away as a souvenir of the day.

And, as if that were not enough, current students led campus tours so that the Sussex graduates could see how things have changed since their day.
Astrophysicists use statistics to help unborn babies

They’re more used to studying stars and galaxies, but Sussex astrophysicists are using their specialist knowledge in statistics to help save the lives of unborn babies.

Professor Andrew Liddle, Dr Rich Savage, Dr Seb Oliver, Dr Pia Mukherjee and Dr David Parkinson are working with data from a recent clinical study of premature infants at Leeds Infirmary to spot subtle combinations of genes and demographic factors that indicate particular risk of conditions, such as chronic lung disease.

They will then use this information to build a statistical model that can be used to predict at-risk pregnancies, which will lead to doctors being able to apply pre-emptive treatment to reduce or prevent the conditions.

The joint project, which is funded by a Scientific and Technology Facilities Council grant, came about after a personal contact at Leeds Infirmary asked Rich to help analyse the data.

Rich says: “The signals astrophysicists have to deal with are often extremely faint, which means we end up using some very advanced statistical techniques to analyse them. Because these techniques are so powerful, there are often other contexts in which they can be useful.

“The data in this case are so complex because the diseases can be caused by complicated and often subtle combinations of different factors. For example, if one smokes and is a certain age and has a certain set of genes then a given disease might be likely, but all three must be true. In this case, there’d be no single test one could do to determine the risk.”

The Sussex scientists are using Bayesian statistical classification techniques to predict the predisposition of mother-baby pairs to four major disorders of prematurity (periventricular leukomalacia, chronic lung disease, retinopathy of prematurity and necrotising enterocolitis) leading to permanent disability in later life.

“Bayesian” refers to a particular type of statistics that can be particularly flexible for combining all pertinent information into a single analysis, to get the best possible results.

Conference honours Sussex sociologist

Professor William Outhwaite has been clearing out his office, and says it is tidy for the first time in a long time. That’s because he leaves Sussex this summer after a grand total of 34 years as a member of faculty.

William’s heading north, to live in Edinburgh and to work at the University of Newcastle. “It will be healthy to have a change,” he says, apparently unfazed by the prospect of leaving the institution where he has taught since 1973.

To mark his departure, William’s colleagues in the Sociology department are today (Friday 29 June) holding a one-day conference in his honour.

Academics from Sussex and other UK universities will be presenting papers on William’s areas of research interest, which include social and political theory; globalisation will be a strong theme of the day’s discussions.

Dr Susie Scott is one of the event organisers. She says: “This conference is intended to celebrate William’s work, show how much we appreciate him, and of course stimulate debate across the social sciences.”

Astronomers celebrate 40 years of MSc

The first of its kind to be established in the UK, the MSc in Astronomy at Sussex is still going strong 40 years later.

To mark the 40th anniversary, about 60 present and former students gathered in the Conference Centre for a party on 19 June.

Six graduates from the very first group were present, including science writer Dr John Gribbin, who claimed to have been the very first student, because he had also been an undergraduate at Sussex. John also remembered being “captured” for the MSc by the first Professor of Astronomy at Sussex, Bill McCrea, whom he met after attending a lecture by him.

Dr Robert Smith, who has been at Sussex since 1968, spoke about the history of the Astronomy Centre and the MSc, while Professor Andrew Liddle, the current Director, reviewed developments in astronomy over the last 40 years.

A booklet was produced with biographical summaries for many of the students. Current jobs range from director of an observatory to a vicar, and many of the nearly 300 MSc graduates now hold senior positions in the UK and overseas.

FIRST CLASS

Dr John Gribbin, Visiting Research Fellow in Astronomy, has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in recognition of his efforts in promoting science.

Derek Hunnisett, an ambassador for the University in its fundraising efforts, became an OBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours, published on 17 June. Mr Hunnisett, formerly chairman of Hanningtons department store in Brighton, was honoured for his charity work in East Sussex – both on behalf of the University and more widely. He sits on the University’s development council, has been a director of the Martlets Hospice in Hove for nine years, and is vice-president of the Rockinghorse Appeal (a charity that focuses on children in Sussex hospitals).
New boilers delivered

The 6 million pound project to install a new heating system on campus took a major step forward this month with the delivery of two new boilers.

The new boilers have been positioned in the central Boiler House (which will become an Energy Centre) and are now being connected up.

They will act as back-up to a new combined heat and power unit, which is due to be delivered to the Energy Centre in August.

The work taking place this summer is the second phase of the heating project. Phase one was completed last summer, with the laying of 7km of pipelines under paths, roads and soft ground.

The new pipework is being connected into a total of 49 plant rooms, which are located in each of the core buildings on campus.

Completion of the entire project by the end of September will mean that staff and students can enjoy the benefits of a reliable new heating system from the 2007-08 winter onwards.

The new system will generate around 20% of the University’s electricity at only marginal cost. It will also be easier, and consequently cheaper, to maintain and operate.

LETTERS

Beware hungry seagulls

Further to your article regarding the health and welfare of the Hastings Building seagull mum [Bulletin 15 June], I have to report a very different state of affairs around Essex House and the Arts D and E buildings.

Be warned if you are contentedly sitting on the grass in this area, having your lunch. Keep it very close to your chest – do not get distracted from eating until you are finished. If you remotely move the food away from your body or if you are distracted in any way, by mobile, friend or just looking in the opposite direction, you are at very high risk of being mugged by this flying peril!

I suggest borrowing one of the workmen’s hard hats if you are in this area!

Val Oramge, Sussex Institute

Sussex energy savings inspire others

The University’s success in saving on energy costs and reducing carbon emissions is being used to inspire other higher education institutions to do the same.

The Carbon Trust, which works with business and the public sector to cut carbon emissions, is featuring Sussex as a case study to promote its Higher Education Carbon Management (HECM) programme.

When Sussex joined the programme in April 2005, it had an annual energy bill of more than £3.2 million and annual emissions of carbon dioxide – the most significant greenhouse gas – of approximately 8,000 tonnes.

The 12-month programme led to a number of initiatives that are helping the University to cut energy use. Energy-efficient light bulbs have been installed in a large number of buildings, for example, as well as timing controllers to regulate heating.

These practical actions are in addition to the major £6 million project currently under way to install an entire new heating system on campus.

The changes that are being made have already had a demonstrable effect. During 2004 8,315 tonnes of CO2 were emitted from the campus buildings. From the beginning of 2005 until the end of 2006, the total was just 13,781 tonnes.

These figures represent a reduction of 1,252 tonnes, or 15%, in 2005; a further reduction of 345 tonnes during 2006; and a total reduction since 2004 of 19%.

Paul Feast from Estates and Facilities Management said: “I am delighted that our work with the Carbon Trust enabled us to identify the means to reduce CO2 emissions.

“There is more work to do but the initial effect is that we have reduced consumption of gas and fuel oil on campus, we have reduced costs for the University, and the environment has benefited accordingly.”
Two for one entry to Charleston

This summer all University employees can get 2-for-1 entry to Charleston, the Bloomsbury house museum near Lewes.

Just show your staff ID on arrival and bring a friend for free.

Charleston was the home and country meeting place for the writers, painters and intellectuals of the 'Bloomsbury group'.

The interior was painted by the artists Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, and together with their collection, forms a unique example of their decorative style.

The house is open from Wednesdays to Sundays; for more information visit www.charleston.org.uk or call 01323 811626.

Set up by the Development and Alumni Relations Office, this arrangement is for the 2007 summer opening season.

The partnership is particularly appropriate as Special Collections in the Library houses the Bloomsbury Archives, including the papers of Virginia Woolf (the Monks House Papers) and Leonard Woolf and the Charleston Papers.

Small ads

For sale: IKEA 'Docksta' dining table + 'Gilbert' dining chairs (white). Hardly used. £175 ono. Pick up only (Hove). Tel Kat on 07843 239133.

Free: Cardboard removal boxes (tea-chest size & smaller), packing paper, bubble wrap. E h.e.smith@bsms.ac.uk to arrange collection (central B'ton).

News in brief

Enrolments now open for Open Language courses

Enrolments are now open for Open Language courses for the 2007–08 academic year with the Sussex Language Institute. Arabic, Czech, French, German, Japanese, Latin, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Russian and Spanish are offered from beginner to advanced levels. Sussex staff and full-time students qualify for a reduced rate. For more information and to enrol online, see www.sussex.ac.uk/languages/1-4-2-1.html, call ext 2575 or email opencourses@sussex.ac.uk.

MSU moves out of EDB

Due to major building works in the Education Development Building, the Media Services Unit will be moving out over the summer. Telephone support for audio-visual equipment will continue to be provided, the numbers remaining the same (8022 or 7181). For bookings and other enquiries, continue to email msu@sussex.ac.uk.

Bramber House catering

The Downs Restaurant in Bramber House will be closed to Sussex staff and students from 2 July to 4 August and from 3 September to 1 October, while it is used to service the University’s conference business. The Coffee Shop and the Baguette Express in the same building will remain open between these dates. Meanwhile, work continues on a major project to create new teaching space on level 2 of Bramber House, in the space formerly occupied by the Laines Restaurant and Grapevine Bar. By the start of the 2007–08 academic year, there will be 16 new seminar rooms, an area of flexible teaching space and an open-access computer cluster for students.

Hockey coaches needed

The hockey teams are desperately in need of coaches for the 2007–08 season. Training times are Mondays 8–10pm for the women’s squad and Tuesdays 5–7pm for the men’s squad. If you are interested, contact Luke Terrill, Sports Development Officer; email l.o.terril@sussex.ac.uk or call ext 7687.

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