Gardner to re-open as Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts

The Gardner Centre is to be renamed as the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts in time for the University’s 50th anniversary celebrations in 2011–12.

Lord Attenborough said: “Sussex has played a vital role in the life of my family. Two of my children each spent three thrilling years there, time I know they found both really enjoyable and of immeasurable value. For me personally my time as Chancellor was one of uninterrupted pleasure and inspiration.

“I am truly excited by the plans for the new Centre and hugely touched by the honour the University grants in naming it after my family.”

Michael Attenborough, director of London’s Almeida Theatre, graduated from Sussex in 1972. He said: “The Arts Centre was integral to my three hugely rewarding years at Sussex and I am proud to have been in the very first student production there.”

Lord Attenborough’s daughter Jane, who died in the Asian tsunami in 2004, will be commemorated in the naming of a dedicated room within the Centre.

Michael Attenborough said: “Jane equally loved her time at Sussex and was passionate about the arts; the establishment of a room bearing her name means more to us than we can ever explain.

“But finally, of course, you honour my father. He is arguably more proud of being Chancellor of this remarkable university than any other achievement in his life-time.”

A Director for the Centre will be appointed this year. Specific dates for a formal opening will be developed by the new Director and, subject to his/her appointment, the building could be in use again during the 2010–11 academic year.

The Gardner name itself will live on within the Centre in recognition of the support given to the founding of the building in the 1960s by the late T. Lydton Gardner.
Technology makes stroke rehabilitation fun

Computer games and motion sensors might soon be able to help stroke patients recover enough upper-arm function to carry out everyday tasks again such as drinking a cup of tea.

A team of researchers from a number of UK universities – Sussex, Nottingham, Sheffield Hallam, Dundee and Oxford – are working together as part of the ‘Motivating Mobility’ project to develop new technologies that people can use on their own at home following a stroke.

Rehabilitation exercises can make a real difference in reducing disability and helping stroke patients recover some use of their limbs. However, people find the exercises boring and difficult to do correctly. The other problem is that there aren’t enough physiotherapists available in the community to properly support people during their long recovery, so motivation can be a real issue.

The aim is to make rehabilitation exercises part of a simple and engaging interactive game so that people don’t realise they are doing exercises. Instead they are having fun, and getting better at the same time.

Dr Geraldine Fitzpatrick, Senior Lecturer in Informatics at Sussex, leads the User-centred Design Team in the project. She says it is important to engage with stroke patients and with their families, carers and therapists to get the design of the technologies right.

As Geraldine explains, "It is critically important that we really understand what life is like for people after a stroke and what sorts of things people would find fun and engaging. Our idea of fun might not be their idea of fun."

“We also need to understand the difference between designing a piece of technology to fit into a hospital setting and a technology that people would be happy to have in their homes.”

The team have spent considerable time at stroke clubs and rehabilitation centres and visiting people in their own homes to understand what sorts of technologies might be acceptable and what sorts of games and interactive experiences people might like.

They have also held a series of workshops with stroke patients and therapists to get feedback on some early design ideas.

A key part of the project is that computer scientists, physiotherapists, designers and engineers are all working together. Researchers bring back their stories about what people with stroke want and the team put these together with what the physiotherapists need for correct movements and what the technologists can do with simple technologies.

The team want to use simple motion and pressure sensors and off-the-shelf technologies such as web cams. The aim is to build a core set of technology components for different types of movements so that patients can then choose from a range of different types of games to suit individual preferences.

Geraldine notes: “However hard it is to build, the technology is the easy bit. The hard bit is getting the technology that will fit into our everyday lives and homes and using it in the right way.”

Sussex biologist gives rainforest talk at Royal Geographical Society

The effects of climate change on one of the most biologically diverse regions of the world was the subject of a talk at the Royal Geographical Society by Sussex biologist and conservationist Dr Mika Peck.

The event on 26 March was organised by international environmental charity Earthwatch and chaired by television presenter and explorer Paul Rose.

Mika runs the Earthwatch Climate Change, Canopies and Wildlife project team, and has spent several years investigating the status of endangered wildlife and the effects of climate change on rainforest in the cloud forests of north-west Ecuador in South America.

The world’s forests are home to an extraordinary range of species and are arguably one of the greatest safeguards against climate change. Yet deforestation, whether for timber, farming or human settlement, continues at an alarming rate – a fact remembered annually on World Forestry Day (21 March).

Mika’s lecture was based on data collected by Earthwatch volunteers, which is used to assess the impacts of climate and environmental change on the cloudforests of north-west Ecuador, home to animals such as the spectacled bear and several species of big cat, as well as a rich diversity of birds, insects, primates and other mammals.

Mika says: “The work being undertaken by Earthwatch volunteers and our team of scientists in the Ecuadorian cloudforests provides scientific information to underpin an integrated conservation initiative to conserve a corridor of forest in a biodiversity hotspot by Rainforest Concern.”

MRC continues funding for GDSC

The Medical Research Council (MRC) has awarded the Genome Damage and Stability Centre (GDSC) £3.6 million to continue its world-leading work on the body’s responses to DNA damage.

Over the next five years, the GDSC aims to integrate clinical approaches with this basic science via a set of new training programmes: a doctoral programme in imaging science and five one-year fellowships to give junior clinicians experience of laboratory science.

In recent years the GDSC has established links with the Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS) and the local NHS trust. Cancer is one of the three research themes around which the Medical School is based (the others being neuroscience and immunology/infection).

Recent investments have established a Clinical Sciences Imaging Centre (CSIC) on the University of Sussex campus and a Clinical Investigation & Research Unit (CIRU) on the hospital campus.

Professor Anthony Carr, director of the GDSC, says: “We intend to use the next five years to further strengthen our international profile in basic science and to promote meaningful crossing points between basic and clinical scientists through joint training, shared methodology and development of resources.”
Sanjeev finally makes it to Sussex

Down to business: Sussex's new Chancellor, Sanjeev Bhaskar, visited campus for the first time on 27 March to chair the annual meeting of Court.

Sussex was Sanjeev Bhaskar's first choice when he was applying for university in the 1980s. But he didn't get the grades and went to Hatfield Polytechnic instead. He finally made it to Falmer on Friday (27 March) and described it as "a kind of supreme irony" that he should visit campus for the first time as the University's figurehead.

Mr Bhaskar, a successful writer and actor, was elected Chancellor at a special meeting of Court in February, and was on campus to chair its annual meeting (when it receives the audited accounts and the annual report for the previous academic year).

He also found time during the day to speak to the Bulletin, when he divulged that it was anything but his first trip to Brighton. "Brighton was the day-trip of choice when I was growing up so from west London we all trekked down to Brighton and there are various photos of me at five, six, seven on the seashore."

Welcoming Mr Bhaskar at Court, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Farthing, said he would "bring a much needed sense of the 'here and now' to the campus and our students."

But the new Chancellor revealed to the Bulletin an affinity with a particular group of students: "My journey through academia was not a particularly smooth one and so I found it very difficult to relate to those who were straight A students. Hopefully I might be able to lend an ear to those students who weren't."

Many students will meet Mr Bhaskar for the first time when they graduate: one of the main duties of a university chancellor is to preside at graduation ceremonies.

Asked about his plans for graduation, Mr Bhaskar said: "You want to be respectful and keep with the tradition and pomp and circumstance of the day, which a lot of people love."

"But at the same time, one of the things that drew me to Sussex originally when I filled in the UCCA (university application) form and this time round was the reputation that Sussex had for being challenging and irreverent. It was one of the things that set it apart certainly from the reputations of other universities."

"And at graduation it is a bit pompous and about dressing up, but it should be memorable. You want to make it relevant but you do want to keep within certain boundaries - just be on the edge of those boundaries."

The new Chancellor will be formally installed during the summer graduation ceremonies at the end of July. This year's graduands will be hoping for a memorable day.

Fresh thinking and development

As we reach the end of the spring term and run-up to Easter, I want to thank colleagues for their hard work and efforts this term. Almost every area of the University has been undergoing fresh thinking and development and, while that is exciting, it can also be challenging.

Prof Michael Farthing, Vice-Chancellor

I am pleased that we were able to formally launch the strategic plan at Court on Friday (27 March). With 200 colleagues gathered from within the University and from bodies across the region, this was a welcome opportunity to set out for the vision for the developing University.

In doing so, I was struck by how important and helpful it is for us now to have one coherent picture within which all activities at the University can be set, and a clear set of goals that shape the direction ahead for Sussex. We were also able to set out in accompanying materials and in the exhibition a rich visual identity for the plan.

"The co-ordination and programme management we put in place is proving its worth"

The exhibition that we put on for Court encompassed current research activity, developments in Professional Services such as Sussex Plus, new campus development plans and some of our high-achieving students. It provided a great showcase of work at Sussex: special thanks to all who were involved in preparing and presenting the exhibits. I would hope we could have a similar showcase event for the whole University to engage with in the future.

Many people were also able to meet for the first time our new Chancellor, Sanjeev Bhaskar, as he presided over his first meeting of Court. He was by turns thoughtful, commanding and funny. It was a pleasure to welcome him to Sussex, and his visit confirmed to me that we have chosen quite a remarkable person as our fifth Chancellor.

His formal installation takes place in the summer and I know that he is looking forward immensely to meeting staff and students at this event and at our graduation ceremonies.

Looking to the summer term, there is much work ahead as we create the new schools. I am conscious that many colleagues in academic and Professional Services alike are devoting time and attention to getting the new structures and processes right. This is important business and the co-ordination and programme management we put in place is proving its worth.

I will personally be spending time on the final stages of recruitment of our remaining heads of school. Getting these appointments right will be key to helping the University develop and grow.

Finally, I am particularly pleased that we have been able to announce the plans for the new Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, which will revitalise the Gardner building. Lord Attenborough and his family have been great friends to Sussex for over 40 years - and this new Centre symbolises the continuing connection between the University and the family.

I hope that everyone will enjoy their time over the Easter period with family or friends to relax and return refreshed for the summer work ahead.
Sussex rugby team stars in TV show

In this age of rapid advancement in media technology, it can be hard for press offices to keep up with the demands of journalists. They don't just want good stories, they also want visuals that can be used across all their media platforms.

While we don't do too badly in coming up with interesting research stories, it can often be problematic to 'sell in' a university story if it doesn't create a picture.

Science isn't so difficult. Meridian TV did a great job of filming Dr Louise Serpell and her research into Alzheimer's (13 March), but that was because they had footage of Terry Pratchett, who is funding Louise's work, and because Louise and her team were able to demonstrate the fancy equipment in her laboratory.

But some of the more esoteric or computer-based areas of research often produce little that can be filmed or photographed.

Fortunately we now have the Creativity Zone on campus, which can be transformed with clever use of lighting and image projection. The Argus carried two stories this week about its uses, including one that involved school children helping to rescue people from a virtual volcanic eruption, and the BBC and Meridian are clamouring to come to film anything new in the space. It is a reminder for all to think visually when seeking publicity for your research.

Meanwhile, coming up on the small screen in the next few weeks are the University's first XV rugby team, who have received some special coaching from Austin Healey for ITV's 'The Big Tackle' (12 April IT4, repeated 15 April ITV1); and space scientist Dr Seb Oliver, who will be on the BBC's 'The Sky at Night' (6 April BBC4 and later BBC1) with Sir Patrick Moore, talking about his involvement with the Herschel space observatory.

For a more comprehensive run-down of the University's media coverage for March, visit www.sussex.ac.uk/pressandcomm/1-4-6.html

Former England rugby international Austin Healey has been putting members of the Men's Rugby Club through their paces for a new television show.

Austin, capped more than 50 times for England, has also made a name for himself as a contestant on TV show 'Strictly Come Dancing', but he was looking to improve the team's defensive skills and passing play rather than their pace doble for ITV's 'The Big Tackle'.

The six-part series shows Austin working with five teams to improve their game. The Sussex team was chosen because it had enjoyed promotion previously, but was struggling to adapt to life in the first division of the South Eastern Conference League after losing a long-standing coach.

Club captain and scrum half Ben Coleman, a third-year law student, said before filming: "The Sussex team was promoted to the top league last season, but we have been struggling to find form. We have great facilities and the structure of the club is there, but our heads had gone down after a bad start."

The team had impressed, however, with their commitment and character - but would they measure up for Austin Healey?

During the hour-long programme, to be broadcast on 12 April on ITV4 and repeated on 15 April on ITV1, Austin watches the team play, leads training sessions and takes the squad out for a day of team-building exercises.

Ben said: "The two training sessions with Austin went well. There was a fair amount of banter between Austin and the team and quite a lot of laughing throughout. On a couple of occasions Austin showed us that he still had skill and ran circles around a few of our players.

Highlights of the week spent filming included a military-style yomp across the Sussex Downs. Ben added: "We were put through our paces by a former special operations soldier. We did a huge amount of running and some pretty tough exercise circuits. After 12 hours of being run around the Downs we were absolutely exhausted but what was good was that the team's camaraderie and unity remained resolute."

The team was also filmed treating Austin to a night out in Brighton. Viewers will be introduced to team characters such as Josh 'Man Bear Pig' Illingworth, Dean 'Ratty' Graham, 'Toothless Tom' and 'Johnny Mac The Country Gent'.

The final programme in the six-part series, to be screened in early summer, will see the team facing the University of Reading team at the Sussex campus. Austin will be watching the game to see how much the boys have improved.

Austin Healey, speaking after the Sussex team's match against Reading, said: "The Sussex team is a truly great bunch of lads who love their rugby and have made really close friendships through the game. In terms of their rugby ability I've met more talented, but few more committed. They were all a real pleasure to meet - even Ratty! They would all be an asset to any team."

Ben said: "It was perhaps an unreasonable expectation that the few training sessions we had with Austin would completely turn our fortunes around for the season. However, the experience has certainly shown the players' determination and commitment towards one another."
Sussex physicist stars on 'Sky At Night'

University of Sussex physicist Dr Seb Oliver joins astronomer Sir Patrick Moore this Monday (6 April) to talk about the launch of the world’s largest ever space telescope on the BBC’s long-running series ‘The Sky At Night’.

The programme (to be broadcast on BBC Four 7.30pm and repeated on BBC One at 12.40am), will explore what Herschel, Europe’s biggest and most expensive space satellite, will do once it begins its infrared exploration of the Universe.

Seb was asked to join Sir Patrick, at the astronomer’s Selsey home in West Sussex, because he is jointly leading one of the biggest projects that Herschel will carry out.

Seb says: “I explained some of the science that Herschel is hoping to do and I demonstrated an infrared camera by filming the temperature variations across Sir Patrick’s face.

“Everyone in the ‘Sky At Night’ team was very friendly and made me quite at ease, though it was nerve-wracking to be quizzed by such an icon. It will be very embarrassing to watch myself and I expect I’ll have to watch from behind the sofa, just like that other TV institution, ‘Dr Who’!”

The European Space Agency’s (ESA) Herschel Space Observatory, to be launched from a site on French Guiana later this month, includes a 3.5 metre-diameter mirror that will give astronomers their best view yet of the distant (and therefore early) Universe, using far-infrared wavelengths.

Herschel’s major objective will be discovering how the first galaxies formed and how they evolved to give rise to present-day galaxies like our own.

Infrared technology detects radiation from very cold and distant objects, such as young stars and evolving galaxies, that would not be visible to other telescopes.

Seb will undertake surveys of galaxies based on data produced by one of three special instruments on board Herschel. He says: “Our surveys will revolutionise our understanding of the formation of stars in distant parts of the Universe. We hope to find hundreds of thousands of new galaxies, seeing them as they were eight to ten billion years ago.”

Sussex the ‘Place to be’ yet again

Sussex has expert lecturers, great ‘faith provision’, a safe and secure campus and, for the third consecutive year, is the “Place to be”, according to the latest results of the International Student Barometer (ISB) survey.

Sussex achieved the highest rating as the “Place to be” out of all 81 institutions in the survey, repeating the distinction it achieved in autumn 2006 and 2007: over 93% of Sussex students rated the University as a good place to be in terms of location, environment and host population.

More detailed results are available in the online version of this Bulletin.

Schools in space race to save island from disaster

Brighton and Hove secondary school pupils used space technology to tackle hurricanes, volcanoes and the evacuation of an island as part of an exciting science event on campus at the end of last month.

The special event – Operation Montserrat – was run by the National Space Centre (NSC) in Leicester. It was a live simulation based on real data relating to an actual disaster – a simultaneous volcanic eruption and hurricane on the tropical Caribbean island of Montserrat in 1996.

The University’s multimedia Creativity Zone, transformed into a high-tech operations room featuring a live video link-up to ‘Mission Control’ at the NSC, provided the setting.

During the two-hour mission in the Creativity Zone, Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils from Hove Park School and Portsdown Community College served as members of various teams that dealt with a mass evacuation of islanders, satellite repairs, communication tasks and handling the media. Pupils had to analyse real science data and consider human dilemmas to make life-or-death decisions.

Operation Montserrat aimed to build students’ enthusiasm for all areas of the curriculum, from maths and science to English, geography and citizenship. It also helped to improve problem-solving and critical-thinking skills and taught the importance of team-work and communication.

Research Fellow Hilary Smith, who helped to organise the event, said: “The e-mission is a real test for the students. They have to think rapidly and communicate clearly within their teams, produce news reports and report to mission control.”

The staging of the event in the Creativity Zone was a result of a collaboration between the Physics department’s programme for gifted and talented students (run by Visiting Research Fellow David Daniels); an e-science usability project in the Informatics department; and InQbate, the Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning in Creativity.

The collaboration brought added technological support and drama to the exercise, while the University’s science bus supported the event by travelling to schools to brief pupils in the run-up to the exercise.

Teamwork: L-R Matt Langridge, Alfred Francis, Chloe Rouse and Raya Supple from Portsdown Community College.
Obituary

Tony Becher, a distinguished Professor of Education at Sussex from 1976–96, died on 9 March, aged 78.

Tony’s most noted research was on the sociology of higher education and on education policy, and he was the author of a classic text on the internal life of the higher education community.

In 1961 Tony became Assistant Director at the Nuffield Foundation, where he was responsible for education projects including the various Nuffield Science schemes. He later became director of the Group for Research and Innovation in Higher Education, which led to developments in teaching and learning in universities across the UK.

This background led him naturally in 1976 to Sussex, where he brought his vast knowledge of educational innovation to an institution already known for its pioneering approach. He directed or taught on various MA courses and supervised numerous MA, MPhil and DPhil students.

As Chair of Education from 1981–86, Tony steered the subject group through difficult times. Until retirement in 1996 he was also director of the Centre for Research and Development for the Professions and the co-director of an influential Accountability Project.

When his period as Chair of Education was over, Tony devoted himself to teaching, research and writing. His achievements in the later part of his career were considerable: he wrote or co-authored 11 books, produced over 50 academic articles and still found the time to be the editor of five learned journals. He was later awarded a PhD from Cambridge for his collected writings.

His most influential and internationally acclaimed work, Academic Tribes and Territories, explored “the diverse characteristics of those who inhabit and cultivate the realms of knowledge”. Published in 1989 and updated in 2001, it is one of the most cited books in this area of research.

Update on linguistics

The Vice-Chancellor updated Council, the University’s governing body, about programme changes in linguistics at its meeting on 27 March.

The Department of English announced last month that it will not be admitting new students in October 2009 to undergraduate programmes in linguistics.

Council confirmed that this is properly a matter for academic management – in this case for the School of Humanities and the English department.

Having reviewed the programmes and research activity being offered, the department is looking to develop further its existing research and teaching across literature, drama and English language.

Current linguistics students will continue to be taught by linguistics staff within the English department and they will be able to complete their degree programmes.

Dr Steve Burman, Dean of Humanities, has assured the 55 continuing students: “We remain committed to providing the highest quality of provision in our teaching of this subject over the next few years and will ensure that there is proper staffing to allow this.”

Meetings have been held with all affected staff. There are currently four members of teaching faculty and three Tutorial Fellows. Because there will not be any incoming undergraduates in autumn 2009, one post will not be renewed for the next academic year.

The remaining teaching staff will continue in post until the current undergraduates have completed their degree programmes. In 2011 staffing levels will be reviewed with regard to the need at that point for teaching and research in English language; this is an area where the University can see growing demand.

The department is retaining its postgraduate MA provision in English Language and Applied Linguistics as this fits well with the future research mission of the new School of English.

A meeting with staff will be held in the first week of the summer term for all current linguistics students.

The decision will then continue to go through the normal process for the withdrawal of academic programmes, including consideration by Teaching and Learning Committee and report to Senate, the University’s academic body.

LETTERS

The importance of historical records

John Murrell’s letter (Bulletin 20 March) about the failure to hold a copy of the official book produced to commemorate our 250th anniversary draws attention to a wider problem for work about the history of the University.

It seems evident that many archival materials have already been lost, unless individual members have kept them so far.

I know that some records were discarded as out of date by school offices when we had our last reorganisation; they were indeed out of date for immediate practical tasks, but not for the history of the institution, though it was not the responsibility of those working in the offices to provide for that. It is only on the basis of such records that serious historical work can be done.

I very much hope therefore that, as part of the preparation for the start of the new schools, provision is being made for records to be selected and preserved to represent the story of the current or older ones.

In particular, course outlines, syllabuses and documentation given to students are of very considerable historical interest; they show how the subjects were conceived at the time, what was regarded as the most basic knowledge that students should have, which books and authors were treated as most important, and so on.

Jennifer Platt,
Emeritus Professor of Sociology

FIRST CLASS

The British Naturalists’ Association (BNA) is to present its Peter Scott Memorial Award to Professor Trevor Beebee on 9 May. Previous recipients of the award – given annually “to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to our understanding of natural history and conservation” – include David Attenborough, David Bellamy, Simon King, Bill Oddie, Oliver Rackham and Tony Soper.

Trevor, Professor of Molecular Ecology in the Biochemistry department, is an expert on amphibians and reptiles.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paul Layzell, has been appointed Chair of the Board and Trustees of AQA, the UK’s largest examination body, from 1 April. AQA is an educational charity offering A-level, GCSE and diploma qualifications; its trustees are drawn primarily from higher education and schools.

The Jewish Quarterly has shortlisted Emeritus Professor Ladislaus Lőr for its Wingate Literary Prize 2009. Ladislaus’ book Dealing with Satan, about Hungarian Jew Rezső Kasztnner, wins him a place alongside novelist Zoë Heller and Labour politician Denis MacShane on a shortlist of seven authors. The judges, including journalist and writer Julie Burchill, will announce the winner at a ceremony on 20 May.

Former winners of the £4,000 prize include Oliver Sacks and Zadie Smith.
Sussex nominated for Good Egg Award

Eggs-ellent news for Easter – Sussex has been nominated for a Good Egg Award by farm-animal welfare charity Compassion in World Farming.

In 2008 Catering Services, which serves a community of more than 10,000 people daily, completed a successful campus-wide switch to free-range eggs.

Today, Catering Services uses only fresh, locally sourced free-range eggs (no powdered or liquid egg) in its food right across campus, including the Downs Restaurant and corporate hospitality. The University uses around 70,000 eggs per year.

Charles Dudley, Director of Residential, Sport and Trading Services, says: “We are delighted to receive this nomination in recognition of our efforts to provide our students and staff with healthy, nutritious food that is locally sourced."

Charles will be joined by colleagues including Hospitality General Manager David Chick, Commercial Operations Manager Sarah Wilkinson and Executive Chef Mark Hancock at a special award ceremony at the Houses of Parliament on 14 May, when the winners of the Good Egg Awards will be announced.

Now in their third year, the Good Egg Awards have been won previously by the European Parliament, Sainsbury’s, the National Trust and Unilever. Compassion in World Farming estimates that so far, more than 15 million hens live cage-free every year as a direct result of award winners’ policies.

Campus to celebrate Green Week

Sussex will go green during the first week of the summer term (week beginning 20 April) to raise awareness of issues facing the environment. A variety of environmental events will be taking place across campus.

Dr Martyn Stenning of the School of Life Sciences has kindly offered his time to conduct two guided ecological walks on Tuesday 21 and Thursday 23 April, and to give a lecture on the effects of climate change on the biosphere.

On Wednesday 22 March a star guest will be appearing at a talk on the conservation of an endangered species of crocodilian – the Gharial (Gavialis gangeticus) – which is characterized by the bulblet growth at the end of its long, thin snout.

Wednesday 22 March will also see an EcoFair in and around Fulton Court (Library Square) from midday. Catering will be providing a barbeque with both meat and non-meat choices, featuring local produce. Staff and students will also be asked to make a personal pledge of some simple environmentally-conscious actions.

And on Thursday 23 March, there will be a participatory workshop with the Transition Network, the movement that offers positive ideas for low-carbon living in so-called ‘Transition Towns’.

Some of the details are still being finalised, so keep an eye on the up-to-date schedule of events at www.sussex.ac.uk/efm/greenweek and look out for the printed flyers that will be distributed around campus.

Patrick Pica, the Energy & Environment Manager, says: “We all have a role to play in protecting the environment, and Green Week is aimed at all students, staff, family and other visitors to raise awareness about how important our environment is.”

A walk on the wild side

Spring is officially here, the clocks have moved forward to ‘summer time’ and campus looks at its best with drifts of golden daffodils beneath the trees.

This is just what Sir Basil Spence and Dame Sylvia Crowe, the most distinguished British landscape architect of her time, intended. As we move towards the celebration of the University's golden jubilee it is a timely reminder that their foundling vision was of a campus where the spaces between the buildings were at one with buildings themselves, each complementing the other – and it is this defining visual unity that we cherish as an essential part of our university’s personality.

Two wild flowers in particular characterise the campus spring: Sweet Violets and Lesser Celandines. Of the violets we wrote last year (Bulletin 8 February 2008) and, although a favourite, we will resist the temptation to talk yet again of their aphrodisiac powers and association with Aphrodite!

Lesser Celandines (right) are everywhere where the grass is not mowed and so form a carpet of golden stars among the bulbs whenever the sun shines. The leaves are glossy and kidney-shaped and the flowers unusually have a variable number of petals, ranging from seven to 12. Although they may not look like them, celandines are actually a species of buttercup.

The name ‘Celandine’ derives from the Greek for the Swallow, ‘Bycause that it beginneith to springe and to flore at the coming of the swallows, and withereth at their returth’ (Henry Lyte, 1587).

The ‘Lesser’ bit distinguishes it from the Greater Celandine, a member of the poppy family whose yellow flowers provide the only point of similarity.

The roots consist of a bunch of finger-like or fig-like tubers, which give rise to the local name of Figwort and its Latin name of Figwort. Indeed, according to the Doctrine of Signatures it was once used as a cure for haemorrhoids! It is a very variable plant with several large-flowered and double-flowered garden cultivars. One particularly striking plant with deep bronze-purple leaves is known to gardeners as 'Brazen Hussy'.

A careful look among the unmown grass with the celandines is likely to reveal a number of small blue flowers with four petals and two stamens, a combination that can only mean Speedwells.

At this time of year three different ones may be found, all mixed up together: Ivy-leaved, Common Field and Slender Speedwells. The last is a perennial with creeping stems and long stalks to the flowers while the other two are annuals, the Ivy-leaved with 3–5 lobes to the leaves and the Common Field Speedwell with toothed leaves.

The interesting thing about all three species is that none of them are native. The Ivy-leaved is a European species that became established long ago, but both the Slender and Common Field Speedwells hail from the Near East and didn’t arrive until the 19th century.
Academic events ↓

**WED 8 APR**

12.30pm Genome Centre seminar: Jin Lukas. Regulator ubiquitylation and its role in dynamic organization of signalling and repair at damaged chromosomes. GDSC seminar room.

**WED 15 APR**

12.30pm Genome Centre seminar: Chris Proulx, mTOR, a master regulator of cell function. GDSC seminar room.

**TUE 21 APR**

12.30pm Life History seminar: Clare Brant (Kings College). Underwater life writing. Russell Building 12.


**WED 22 APR**

4pm Seminar: Maureen McHie, British feminist working-class autobiographical texts of 1880s and 1990s. EDB 341/315.

THU 23 APR

4pm Maths seminar: Mark Broom (Sussex). Models of evolution on structured populations. Marst 2401.

7pm Archaeology talk: Rob Wallace (Sussex). Culver Roman read update. Arts A1.

Small ads ↓

*WANTED:* Furnished accommodation in B’ton for U of Sydney prof + wife approx. 10-25 Aug. Rent or consider non-simultaneous exchange arrangement. E Bob Bookes bobb@psych.usyd.edu.au

*FOR SALE:* Blue Fiat Panda 1.2 Eleganza, March 2005. FSH, roof bars, climate control. £2,650 ono. 01233 488 468 or 07773 044 878.

2009: A campus odyssey

Artists, performers, musicians and schoolchildren from Brighton and surrounding areas will lead visitors on an ‘island-hopping’ tour of campus later this month, in a new artistic collaboration with the University.

Based around the theme of Homer’s Odyssey – the epic tale recounting the adventures of Odysseus as he island-hops his way home to Ithaca after the Trojan War – the tour will lead the audience on a journey across campus, accompanied by a chorus of children from Carlton Hill Primary School in Brighton. It will then pause at six ‘islands’ created by local artists and staff and students of the University, who will use word, image and sound to recreate different aspects of the story.

The idea behind the event was to use parts of the campus that are not normally used for arts events: corridors, bridges and walkways will be reinvented as creative spaces and backdrops to movement and image.

For sales: Blue Fiat Panda 1.2 Eleganza, March 2005. FSH, roof bars, climate control. £2,650 ono. 01233 488 468 or 07773 044 878.

**Hotel competition**

The latest in the University’s series of hotel competitions gives you the opportunity to win a night’s B&B at the Umi Hotel, for two people sharing a double room (from Saturday to Thursday, subject to availability, valid until 31 July).

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To enter, just answer these questions: where is the Umi Hotel, and what is the University of Sussex rate? The answers are in the list of University-approved hotels and guest houses at [www.sussex.ac.uk/about/hotels](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/about/hotels). Send your answers with your name, status (e.g. member of staff/student/alumnus) and contact details to hotelcompetition@sussex.ac.uk. The closing date is 30 April.

**News in brief ↓**

**NSS update**

Nearly 60% of final-year Sussex undergraduates had completed the 2009 National Student Survey (NSS) as the Bulletin went to press. This is already higher than Sussex’s final response rate in 2007 and very close to the number of responses at the equivalent point in 2008, when the University finished with a record 75% participation rate. The survey remains open for Sussex students until 30 April and Ipsos-MORI, who conduct the poll, are currently telephoning students who have yet to complete it. It can also be filled in online at [www.thestudentssurvey.com](http://www.thestudentssurvey.com).

**High-voltage maintenance**

Maintenance works on two campus electricity substations during the Easter closure will affect a number of buildings. On Thursday (9 April) there will be no power supplies to Essex House, Lancaster House, Park Village, Bramber House, Russell Building and Arts D & E for 6–8 hours from 9am. On Saturday (11 April) the Swanborough Building will be without power for 6–8 hours from 9am.

**New website goes live from 15 April**

The University’s new website is due to go live from Wednesday 15 April. All staff and students were emailed a link to the new site at the beginning of March and invited to send feedback and comments to the Web Team. Developments will be ongoing after the initial launch and feedback can still be sent to webteam@sussex.ac.uk. Detailed information about the website restructuring project can be found at [www.sussex.ac.uk/websitestructure](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/websitestructure).

The fortnightly Bulletin is written and produced by Alison Field and James Haines. The next issue will be out on 24 April (after a break for Easter), with a copy deadline of 1pm on 17 April. We welcome any letters or small ads from staff and students of the University and can advise you on ways to tell people about your news or story ideas. Please contact us on ext. 8888 or email internalcomms@sussex.ac.uk. Happy Easter!