

CONNECT

150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Sky high hopes for University's landmark year

BIRTH OF A FACULTY

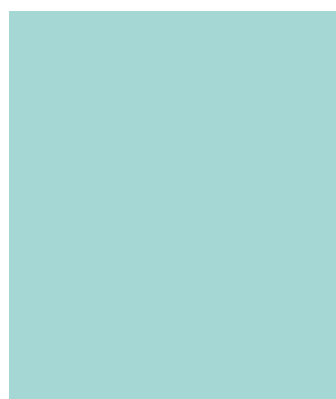
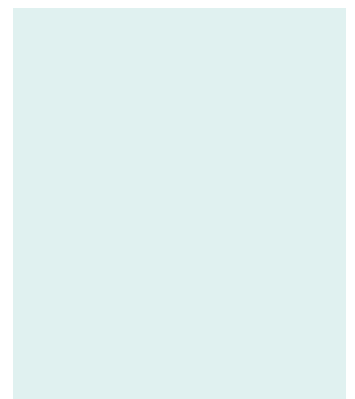
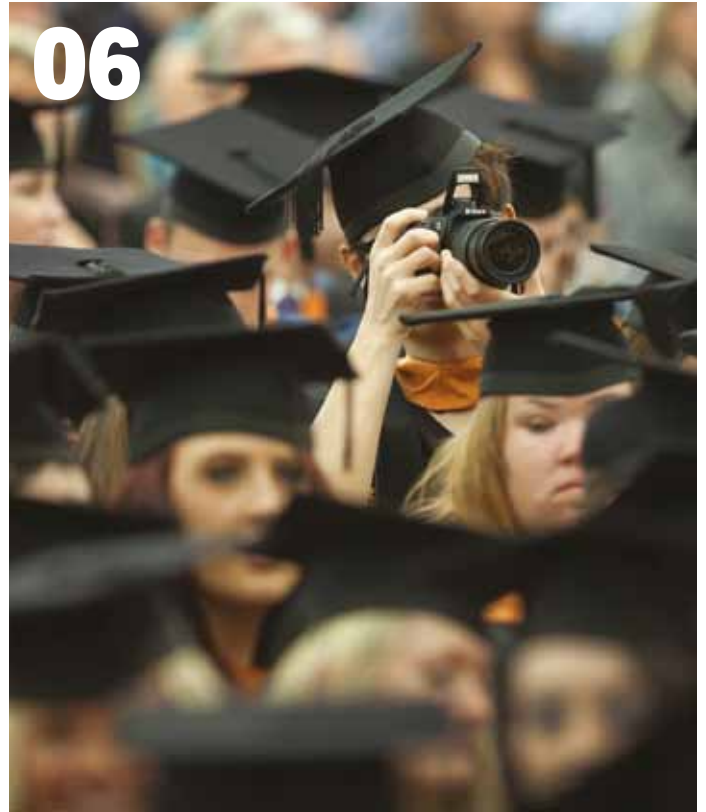
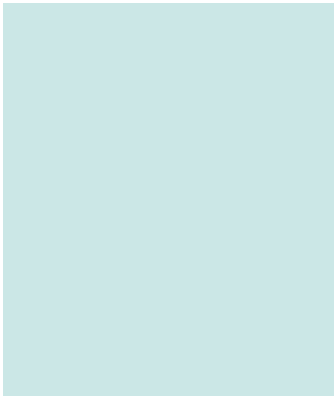
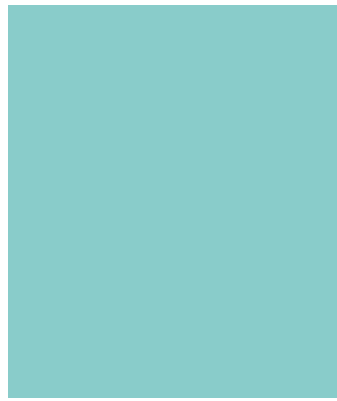
Introducing the Faculty of Health, Education and Society

GRADUATION 2011

Under the global spotlight with the America's Cup

ACADEMIC SPOTLIGHT

Eduardo Miranda, Phil Gee and Dan Livingstone take a bow



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WELCOME

Welcome to... **CONNECT**, the new magazine for Plymouth University.

First, let's scotch the rumour: no, *UPfront* has not become embroiled in the News International phone hacking scandal and been forced to close in disgrace. The decision to rename the venerable publication was taken for two reasons: firstly, with the new brand identity fundamentally altering how we frame our visual communications, it felt an appropriate moment to thoroughly refresh the magazine. Secondly, the name **CONNECT** expresses our editorial aim to shine a light on those innovative and engaging people in our University, in the hope that it might foster connection, ideas for partnership, and a sense of the bigger picture.

So in this issue you'll find features on Professor Eduardo Miranda, Associate Professor Phil Gee and Associate Professor Dan Livingstone, who are pushing boundaries in research, teaching, business engagement and the student experience. And you'll hear from the leaders of the Faculty of Health, Education and Society on why they want people across the University to work with them in addressing some of the grand challenges of modern Britain.

As ever, we welcome your feedback, and we especially invite your ideas and suggestions for future stories. Why not tell us who you think we should be connecting with?!

Enjoy the magazine.

Andrew Merrington,
Editor

CONNECT WITH

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150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

As the helicopter steadied itself in the breeze, the sun emerged from behind a cloud, and bathed the Hoe in its photogenic light. Nearly 2,000 people below waved to the unseen photographer... and the shot was taken.

This spectacular aerial photo – capturing hundreds of graduates from the Schools of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, and Computing and Mathematics, not to mention family, friends, staff, and one Sir Ranulph Fiennes – has laid down the marker for Plymouth University’s 150th Anniversary.

Officially launched by Professor Wendy Purcell at the third annual Vice-Chancellor’s Enterprise Awards a few days earlier, the 150th will be a year-long celebration, with scores of high profile events.

These will include a series of prestige lectures; a number of major arts and cultural events and performances; hosting and organising national events in the marine and enterprise sectors; and a huge staff and family day in spring.

Tracy Wilson, Head of Corporate Marketing, is coordinating the celebrations with the help of a cross-faculty and directorate operations group. She said: “Our 150th will glance back to celebrate the value of our legacy, while also looking forward to how we might develop as an institution in the future.

“Everything we are doing – whether it is planting rare trees on campus

to celebrate our international partnerships, commissioning a sculpture from our students or developing arts and heritage trails on campus – is designed to have its own legacy value and reach all of our audiences.”

The line up of events is growing by the week, but among those confirmed include the commissioning of a student sculpture, the winner of which will see their work displayed on campus and used in miniature form for the 2012 Vice-Chancellor’s Enterprise Awards trophy. A number of commemorative plaques celebrating the historical roots of the campus and its buildings will also be unveiled, and together with the sculpture will form part of a city-wide heritage trail.

The University is a partner in the Plymouth Marine City Festival, an event which will include the opening of the new marine facility and several Marine Institute conferences. It is also hosting the prestigious International Enterprise Educators Conference, and is organising the Plymouth International Book Festival, which will feature a special Moby Dick ‘big read’ event with a host of celebrities.

A commemorative CD, supported by Seth Lakeman, John Matthias, Nick Ryan and guitarist graduate

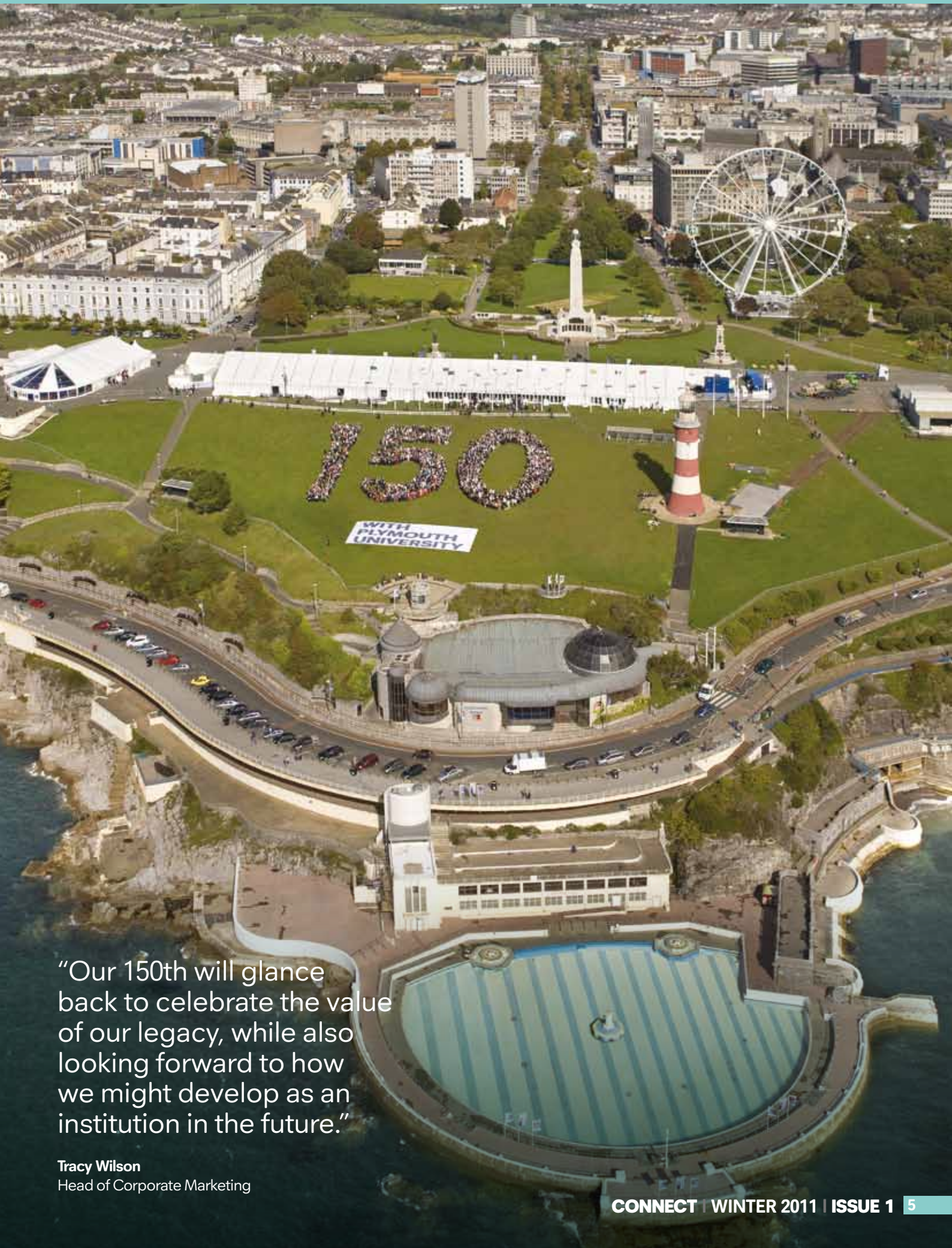
Will McNicoll, will also be produced and released. This will lead to a spectacular musical finale with a live performance on October 27th, closing the celebration.

Tracy said: “We’re also creating 150 scholarships, with our Development and Alumni team coordinating fundraising activities, and we’re working with our Sports and Recreation team to secure 150 places in this year’s Plymouth Half Marathon.”

Tracy added: “On a personal level, I’m proud to be associated with an institution that uses its roots and heritage to shape the world around it. So I’d appeal to all staff to get involved – whether that is joining us on the operations group, supporting the events during the course of the year or contributing to the 150 scholarship fund by buying a badge from cafés across the campus.”

A special version of the aerial picture will be displayed in the window of the Roland Levinsky Building in December, with a list of all of the names of those who took part.

For more information about our 150th anniversary celebrations visit www.plymouth.ac.uk/150; and to view the video from the day go to <https://staff.plymouth.ac.uk/grad/intranet.htm>



“Our 150th will glance back to celebrate the value of our legacy, while also looking forward to how we might develop as an institution in the future.”

Tracy Wilson
Head of Corporate Marketing



"I cannot imagine there is a finer place in the world to graduate than Plymouth."

Phillip Schofield



GRADUATION 2011

Plymouth's highest attended ceremony so far!

"I cannot imagine there is a finer place in the world to graduate than Plymouth." So said a certain Phillip Schofield as he looked across the Hoe having just received his Honorary Doctorate of Arts.

For Phillip, Graduation 2011 was something of a 'homecoming' as he reflected upon his ties to the city, where he is patron of a local commercial radio station. For Sir Ranulph Fiennes, Honorary Doctor of Science, it was an opportunity to pay public tribute

to friend and guest at his ceremony, Mike Reid, who suffered serious head injuries in a polar bear attack in Norway. And for World Champion diver Tom Daley, who became one of the first recipients of a University honorary sporting colour, it was a platform to thank the city for its support.

It would be impossible to do anything other than record mere fragments of what Graduation meant to the 20,000 people who attended this year – the biggest number yet for the ceremonies.

That it ran like clockwork was a tribute to the 'well-oiled machine' that is the Registry team, who also helped to accommodate a week of events prior to Graduation, which included a certain America's Cup.

Rich Avery, Deputy Academic Registrar, said: "This was the fourth year of being down at the Hoe and we made some fine adjustments that really helped things run smoother than ever. ▶



ENTERPRISE WITH PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY

“We did this while also increasing the number of people that could attend the ceremonies, and we had up to 1,500 people in some of them. A huge vote of thanks has to go to those colleagues across the University who gave up their time to volunteer – from the staff in the graduation marquees to the student ambassadors down at Millbay during the America’s Cup.”

With the America’s Cup organisation team based in the Graduation Lounge, the fortnight of events kicked off almost immediately with a special welcome barbecue that drew 600

attendees, including crews, staff and key partners – and a special appearance from the oldest trophy in world sport.

The Graduation team then helped to lay on a special staff and family day, which proved to be a huge success thanks in no small measure to the contributions of the Mount Batten Centre, Stonehouse Play Association and Plymouth Raiders.

While all of this was going on – and with thousands of people drawn to the Hoe for a glimpse of the action – the

University staged a host of engaging events that pulled in hundreds of punters.

The Science and Technology Showcase proved a huge hit with the young and old alike, with scores of interactive stands and attractions, including a special guest appearance from Ferdinand, the recently crowned World’s Fastest Robot.

The launch of the Faculty of Health, Education and Society (see pages 10-11) drew a wide range of key stakeholders from across the region,

“Such has been the success of Graduation that we already have had lots of enquiries for next year – 2012 is going to be even bigger still with our 150th celebrations!”

Lisa Phillips
Academic Registrar

and the third Vice-Chancellor’s Enterprise Awards once again welcomed the great and the good of the region’s business and social enterprise community to celebrate innovation and entrepreneurial success.

Such was the calibre of the fortnight that the national and regional media were drawn to the marquees on a number of days – whether it was the chance to photograph Ferdinand, or interview some of the honourees. Lisa Phillips, Academic Registrar, said: “We were really under the spotlight,

and the city as a whole stepped up to the mark. With so many people drawn to Plymouth, the economic impact that we are helping to generate really cannot be underestimated.

“Such has been the success of Graduation that we already have had lots of enquiries for next year – 2012 is going to be even bigger still with our 150th celebrations!”



Main image:
2011 Vice-Chancellor’s Enterprise Awards

Top right:
Ferdinand, the World’s Fastest Robot,
at the Science and Technology Showcase

Bottom right:
The 2011 America’s Cup

BIRTH OF A FACULTY

The University has brought together its Faculties of Education and Health into a new strategic entity – the Faculty of Health, Education and Society. We sat down with the leadership team to find out more.

Q How have the two faculties embraced this opportunity?

RS We have had a fantastically enthusiastic response from our staff. The two faculties were already enjoying strong synergies and relationships prior to the merger, especially between academic members of staff in research and teaching.

WMB Absolutely – the response from across the Faculty has been very good, with ideas and enthusiasm for interdisciplinary working coming to the fore.

RS Due to the professional and vocational nature of our programmes, we share a high degree of commonality in our external and internal relationships, particularly in the areas of quality assurance, placement learning, liaison with commissioning bodies and professional bodies.

Q Have any key interdisciplinary opportunities been identified at this early stage?

RS The Faculty will focus on social inclusion across the 'life-course'. To this end we are already seeing

exciting new academic synergies aligned to early childhood, youth and adolescence, and later years. These ventures are bringing together all our disciplines, including those from our partner service providers and the wider Plymouth University academic community, to create a distinctive multi-disciplinary lens through which to explore the whole experience of the life course and life transitions.

AH By working across the piece, we will be able to better define the necessary elements required by a multi-agency whole system approach to social wellbeing, and the workforce entrusted to deliver it – and therefore better positioned to meet individual and community needs.

TOH It is clear that there is a common thread that runs through the FHES, which is the support and development of outstanding professional practice through praxis. It was inherent in Education and is fundamental to Health. By working together across the four Schools of the new Faculty we can make an exceptional offer to students who wish to become tomorrow's sought after professionals!

GS We are also extending this vision and approach across international communities, and our research and education is increasingly focussing on the global society, such that we bring more global experiences to bear on local initiatives and utilise local initiatives to generate global solutions.

Q Have you been able to gauge a reaction from partners and stakeholders, whether internal or external?

WMB The reaction I have had from external partners has been positive to date, with most understanding why we would want to align as a new faculty and able to see the opportunities for them in working with us.

RS Absolutely, the first responses have been strong. It is important to remember that we are moving on a journey that our partners and stakeholders are also undertaking – and sector reform is generating new opportunities and new spaces for activity on the boundaries of existing provision. We are building new relationships – for example with the social enterprises that will commission and deliver healthcare in the region –



From left: Professor Graham Sewell, Head of the School of Health Professions; Dr Ann Humphreys, Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery; Professor Richard Stephenson, Dean of the Faculty of Health, Education and Society; Associate Professor Will McBurnie, Head of the School of Education; Dr Tanya Ovenden-Hope, Acting Head of the School of Social Science and Social Work

and looking to co-generate different models of practice so that we can co-produce the knowledge, skills and actions required in the future.

TOH I have been approached by partner colleges who are keen to work with us on enhancing knowledge and skills across the 'life course'. Our current multi-agency offer for the Children's Workforce is testament to cross-school and cross-partner working, bringing together Education, Sociology and Social Work and partner colleges in both a central University offer and a validated college provision, responding to local authority and agency needs.

Q With the new Optometry degree proving to be an instant hit, does this demonstrate the need to be in tune with the changing needs of the sector?

GS I think the optometry programme has been so well received because of the consistency with the themes above. We have tried to engage this programme with industry and produce students that are 'work-place ready'. This will mean a placement in their first year and the opportunity to

involve themselves in practice-related charitable work, which again we encourage.

RS The programme is also founded on strong interdisciplinarity, and the research teams are already developing strong links across the Faculty. For example, the role of visual deficit or visual perception in falls links strongly to our later years agenda and brings researchers from neurophysiology, pathology, rehabilitation and nursing together, whilst retinopathy links across to colleagues working with diabetes, long-term conditions, later life, etc.

AH We're also among the first universities in the country to adopt the new nursing standards as a core component of the curriculum. By focussing on inter-professional learning, we are broadening the range of skills at nurses' disposal, providing them with a wider and more inclusive societal perspective, enabling them to better address the needs of patients, especially those with learning difficulties, mental health issues, children and pregnant women.

Q What opportunities and challenges do you see on the horizon?

RS We are founded upon excellence in research, education and enterprise, with an established record in producing high-quality and highly employable graduates. In aligning our interdisciplinary expertise more strongly with employer needs through our partnerships, our capacity for innovation through translational research and workforce development is greatly enhanced. Our student experience will be far richer through this engagement. The opportunity to continue to expand the globalisation of our curricula and to increase our international partnerships in research and education is hugely exciting. As the landscape and architecture of society changes, in particular across education, health and social care, the Faculty, through its unique multi-professional and multidisciplinary lens, can be at the forefront of these developments. The primary challenge now is for us to harness this capacity, including that afforded to us through cross-faculty working and our wider networks, such that we fully realise our potential.



Dan Livingstone

INTERACTIVE SYSTEMS STUDIO

DAN LIVINGSTONE

Interactive Systems Studio puts Plymouth at the head of the game

“The first hurdle of enterprise is the need to develop an investable prototype,” says Dan Livingstone, a man who knows a thing or two about the value of a proof of concept.

With a ten-year track record of initiating graduate start-up companies in the creative industries, Dan is leading the new Interactive Systems Studio, which will look to deliver the first rapid prototyping service for software in the University – or anywhere else in the higher education sector for that matter.

Working as an interdisciplinary resource within the Faculty of Science and Technology, the Interactive Systems Studio will engage graduate developers through a sponsored internship programme to deliver live projects for a range of academic and commercial partners.

This means using the technology more commonly associated with video games to bring to life the visions of enterprising people across the University and in the business community. In doing so, it will enable Frontier IP, the University’s intellectual property partner, to pitch even more compelling investment opportunities to potential funders. It will also provide an additional touchstone for businesses looking to engage with the University beyond the Knowledge Transfer Partnership route.

Dan said: “Anyone who understands the rules of the Dragon’s Den will know that you need a business case and a tangible demonstration in order to pitch for funding. If we can make the value of a project transparent through intuitive gaming mechanisms

that reward exploration, we have something that can enhance the work of our research groups and generate income for the institution.”

The studio was officially launched at the Extended Play 2011 event in Plymouth in November, the first large-scale digital interactive festival to be held in the South West, and co-sponsored by the University.

Dan said: “Plymouth University has produced some fantastic graduate companies in this arena, such as Mutant Labs and Remode, and yet the city too often loses its best talent to London. Sometimes really innovative undergraduate IP is abandoned in the haste to move into employment.

“A core activity for us is rapid software prototyping for ‘Serious Games’ ie using games technology to provide rich, immersive experiences, simulations and real-time visualisation. As a Faculty we also have the infrastructure to build our own proprietary interfaces, control systems and hardware solutions, an early example of this being the paraglider simulator featured at the Faculty showcase on the Hoe.”

“We need to be flexible and in tune with the needs of the industry – whether it is developing for iPhones, Xbox or Android. We want to be at the forefront of establishing Plymouth as a major hub for video game software development.”

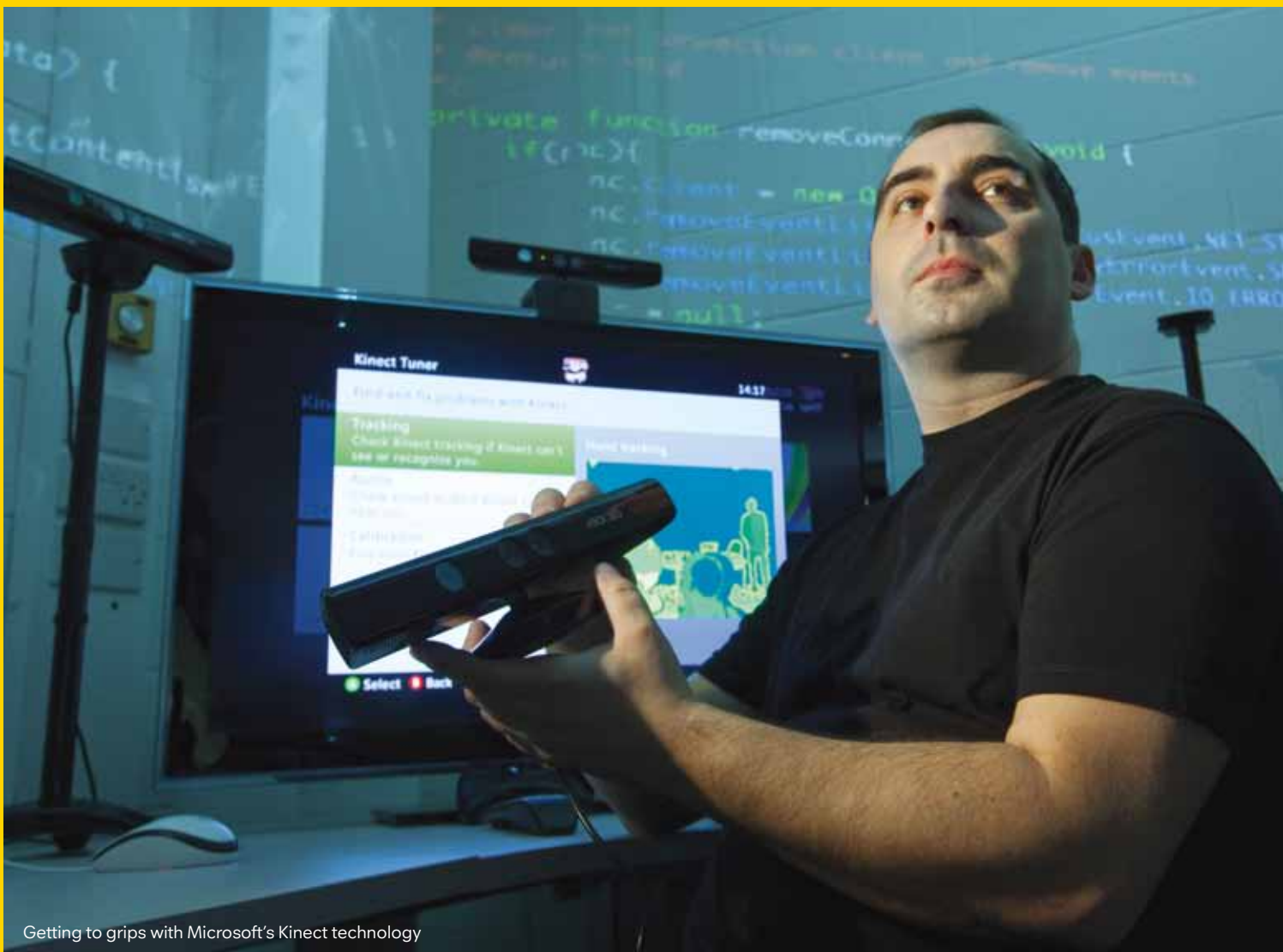
“We can now offer that graduate the opportunity to develop their idea with our team of experts, and develop a commercial prototype. In doing so we’ll retain more talent in the South West, and boot strap the local economy in this strategically important industry sector.”

The Interactive Systems Studio builds upon several other key developments within the School of Computing and Mathematics’ support for the video games industry. This year has seen the launch of its first BSc Computing & Games Development degree, which was over-subscribed despite not being officially advertised in the prospectus.

And the £80,000 invested in the new industry-standard facilities in the Babbage Building, including a ceiling-mounted gantry and motion capture technology, is providing opportunities for those on degree and CPD courses to pick up transferable skills across many platforms.

Dan said: “We need to be flexible and in-tune with the needs of the industry – whether it is developing for iPhones, Xbox or Android. We want to be at the forefront of establishing Plymouth as a major hub for video game software development.”

For more information please visit www.plymouth.ac.uk/iss



Getting to grips with Microsoft's Kinect technology



PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS TO BENEFIT FROM E-NGAGING NEW DIGITAL BOOK DEAL **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PHIL GEE**

The value of textbooks as a pedagogical resource has been set in bold type by an innovative new student offer from the School of Psychology.

The School has negotiated a digital book deal, believed to be the first of its kind in the Higher Education sector, which will enable all first-year students on psychology degrees to download core texts to their laptops, iPads or iPhones.

The four-year contract with digital giants Cengage will save each student over £500 on the list price, by providing free access to the e-versions of 12 books, covering all the core areas of the psychology programme, including: social psychology, developmental psychology, research methods and statistics, and clinical psychology.

The arrangement is testament to the vision and work of Associate Professor Phil Gee, who in his own words “has always been an advocate for good quality text books.”

Phil told CONNECT: “Lectures should be there to orientate students and to set them on the right path. But they are not enough – we need to signpost students to books so that they can develop their critical faculties.

“What is exciting about this arrangement is that we can guarantee that every first year student has that opportunity to learn – and the technology opens some interesting possibilities for us.”

Among them is the ability to annotate texts and upload comments, which will then be shared with those who have subscribed to the notes facility, and the way that hyperlinks will now provide a portal as much as a signpost.

The deal will cover any updates to the texts, and Phil is also positive about the potential impact the arrangement could upon the University’s library.

“We have around 360 first year students, which represents a huge amount of bookshelf space in the library if we were stocking copies of these books. Now, we can devote that space to other texts that will enrich their learning.

“This is a fantastic deal for our students; it represents an exciting and modern development for the School; and will provide us with a pedagogical advantage as a university.”

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Bill Rammell added: "This is a fantastic example of how staff can be enterprising and make a genuine impact upon the quality of the student experience that we offer. We will be monitoring progress closely, because there is the potential here to develop something that will offer us a competitive advantage in the sector."



Pictured right: Phil Gee, centre and back, with some of his first year psychology students



STOP PRESS!

QUEEN'S ANNIVERSARY PRIZE SUCCESS FOR THE UNIVERSITY

As the magazine was going to print, news emerged that the University is to be honoured with a Queen's Award for Higher and Further Education, in respect of its outstanding marine research and teaching heritage.

The announcement was made at St James's Palace on November 24, signalling that the University, in its 150th anniversary year, will receive the award from the Queen herself during her Diamond Jubilee.

The next edition of **CONNECT** will feature the University royal appointment at Buckingham Palace, on February 24th.



OK COMPUTER: PLYMOUTH'S MUSIC MAN AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY PROFESSOR EDUARDO MIRANDA

Q Which piece of research that you have led on has had the most impact on society and why?

I think the one that has had most impact so far was the development of a brain-computer music interface which allows people with severe disability, such as severe paralysis due to stroke, to play music. With this interface a person can control an electronic musical instrument with brain signals detected with electrodes placed on the scalp. The system was tested with a severely paralysed patient at an international conference in a neurological hospital in London with great success. The research got reviewed in *Nature* and attracted the attention of the press worldwide.

Q What research are you undertaking at the moment?

I am doing so many things that I would need several pages to describe them all (who said that men cannot do parallel processing?!), but my main research at the moment is into raising money to continue the brain-computer music interface project.

“who said that men cannot do parallel processing?!”

Q What's the most 'unusual or quirky' piece of research that you have been involved in?

I think the most unusual was a robotic project I developed with my research students and the Robotics Group, whereby we programmed robots to learn to sing. It started as something just fun to do, but then it got serious and I ended up developing a novel machine learning algorithm, which was published in the *Journal of Experimental and Theoretical Artificial Intelligence*. The nicest thing is that the Science Museum in London heard about the work and invited us to take our robots to London to sing 'Happy Birthday' at the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the museum!

Q What part of your teaching or research are you most proud of?

I am very proud of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Computer Music Research which I created here a few years ago. In just six years or so we have become world-leading on a number of topics pertaining to music and technology.

Q How has your discipline evolved in the past decade?

Although I am in the Faculty of Arts, the development of my area moves in tandem with developments in technology, particularly computing technology. This is perhaps an indication of how my discipline evolved: it became more interdisciplinary and more connected with the present world we live in. Hardcore academics and scientists no longer regard music as merely entertainment. Music is increasingly becoming an important domain within science, technology and medicine.

Q What challenges do you foresee in the future in your discipline?

The great challenge is funding. The current tendency of research funding agencies to concentrate allocation of funding to projects with short-term returns is very detrimental. I sympathise with the fact that a lot of public money has been spent on worthless research projects, but this does not mean that the so-called blue sky research should be avoided altogether. In my experience, great ideas originate without a clear purpose in mind.

“I found myself sharing the stage of the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London with Jarvis Cocker, the lead singer of Pulp.”

Q What innovative teaching methods have you/do you plan to use to enhance the student learning experience?

I am a firm believer that students learn best by doing, not just by reading, watching and indeed copying others. I am increasingly trying to expose my students to real-world scenarios, where they are confronted with real-world problems. This is an effective way to put the theory they learn in the classroom into perspective.

Q How has the University supported your research and your course?

The University has supported me by believing in my potential. I always had

freedom to think out of the box and have always received encouragement to develop my initiatives. I sometimes even received internal funding to develop things I am sure the Evaluating Committee would not have fully understood what they were about. This is what I call trust!

Q Tell us something about yourself that staff at the University might not know...

Last June, I played on a laptop with the BBC Concert Orchestra, as a soloist of my own symphonic piece *Sacra Conversazione* and I found myself sharing the stage of the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London with Jarvis Cocker, the lead singer of Pulp.





STUDENTS' SILVER SERVICE

"It's difficult for a university to obtain an exclusive relationship with a major brand in the industry, so this is a real feather in our cap!"

Mandy Aggett
Hospitality Management Lecturer

Plymouth University is one of the first institutions in the country to enjoy an exclusive link-up with a major hotel chain to help students gain vital experience in the hospitality industry.

Students from the School of Tourism and Hospitality are currently on work placements tailored to their individual career aspirations at four of Hilton's hotels in the South West.

Students are putting theory into practice and experiencing all aspects of hotel operations, from managerial responsibilities to front-of-house duties, during the 48-week paid placements.

The benefits of the link-up include students gaining a vast range of skills and knowledge, developing an awareness of organisational culture, and getting brand experience.

The exclusive 'rolling placement' with the hotel group sees one batch of students complete their placement year, as another begin theirs.

Mandy Aggett, Lecturer in Hospitality Management at the University, said: "Our courses in hospitality are designed to produce professional

managers who have the skills to function and communicate in one of the world's fastest-growing industries.

"It's difficult for a university to obtain an exclusive relationship with a major brand in the industry, so this is a real feather in our cap!"

"Fundamentally, a placement enhances our students' employability – particularly in an industry such as hospitality which prefers potential employees to have experience."

Emma Keitley, a Business and Tourism student at the University, said: "Going on a placement year was one of the best things I could have done, especially with Hilton.

"I have learnt so much while I have been working with them and they have offered me a lot of training. It will help me find a job once I graduate, as I also have experience in the industry, as well as having a degree."

Several former Plymouth students now work for Hilton including Hospitality alumnus James Montague, a Sales Executive and rising star in the organisation, who has been nominated as Employee of the Year.

Jenni Byatt, Training Manager at Hilton for the region, said: "The students are involved in holding the keys to a multi-million pound business and dealing with all the day-to-day activities that are involved in keeping a Hilton hotel operating at its peak.

"I have been impressed with how quickly the students have adapted to work life and settled into our culture.

"We are keen to develop our relationship with Plymouth University, as we believe in the vital partnership between learning theory and practical experience, leading to the strong employability status of students when they graduate."

The School of Tourism and Hospitality is consistently ranked in the top ten in the country for its hospitality management in key independent national assessments.

A WING AND A PRAYER! FRANCIS REIS

Our very own
'Wing Commander'



Whether it's helping to save lives in treacherous weather conditions on Dartmoor or climbing hazardous mountains, Francis Reis combines his management of the Document Production Centre by day with a packed diary of volunteering commitments outside of the University.

His involvement with the Plymouth and Cornwall Wing of the Air Training Corps has provided many wonderful challenges and opportunities, including taking command of hundreds of Air Cadets in the South West – a feeder for many youngsters into the armed forces and a great grounding to gain new life skills.

Francis has now been promoted to Wing Commander of the local Air Training Corps – the most senior rank attainable and one of just 36 people in the country to hold the position. That means he is responsible for 21 squadrons, 663 cadets and 187 staff,

officers, senior non-commissioned officers such as sergeants, and civilian instructors in an area stretching from Kingsbridge to Helston and up to Okehampton. He said: "I have been in leadership and management for a number of years now at the University and this has helped me tremendously with my career in the Cadets – the skills are interchangeable from both organisations."

Francis joined as a cadet in 1973 and has been decorated for his unstinting service – including receiving the Commander in Chief's Award as part of the New Year Honours List in 2009 in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Cadets.

Recalling some of his most memorable moments volunteering, Francis said: "I have done many things with the Cadets over the years, from Ten Tors to overseas camps.

"I was involved with the evacuation of all the Ten Tors participants in 2007 from Dartmoor and helped to lead 600 youngsters off the moors to waiting transport. The weather was absolutely horrendous and it was like wading through a giant river!

"And on only my third ever flight in a Chipmunk aircraft as a cadet, I remember the pilot saying 'you can land this', and he placed his hands on his helmet, and let me get on with it. That was ok – until I heard on the radio that there was a Hercules following tightly behind and air traffic control wanted us out of the way!"

As part of his new role, Francis is looking to increase local Cadet numbers, and develop community engagement and fundraising to reduce the reliance on the public purse.

If you would like to get involved, a squadron is based on the University campus at Kirkby Terrace and meets on Tuesday and Friday evenings from 7pm-9.15pm. To join the local branch – either as either a member of staff or cadet – contact Francis on **01752 587262**.

"And on only my third ever flight in a Chipmunk aircraft as a cadet, I remember the pilot saying 'you can land this', and he placed his hands on his helmet, and let me get on with it."



DELIVERING IMPACT THROUGH KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PARTNERSHIPS

Plymouth University's Knowledge Transfer Partnership team is celebrating its most prestigious accolade yet after it won national recognition for a project that helped to secure more than 60 jobs.

The KTP with Bombardier Transportation won the Best Business Impact Award for 2011 from the Technology Strategy Board in recognition of the legacy that the partnership has had.

The two-year project, which helped to create an innovative new train detection system, EBITrack 400, has generated millions of pounds worth of sales and ensured the long term survival of the Bombardier site in Plymouth, securing 60 jobs in the research, design, development and manufacturing functions.

Emma Hewitt, Head of Knowledge Transfer and External Business Development, said: "The Impact Award gets right to the heart of what KTPs are about: bringing together academic and business communities to make innovative things happen and generating tangible success for the economy."

The Bombardier academic team, Dr Marcel Ambroze and Dr Mohammed

Zaki Ahmed, of the School of Computing and Mathematics, added: "This project has enabled us to apply our theoretical research to a new area. The cooperation between research centres and industry is seen as a key indicator in measuring research excellence, and we are proud that our expertise has had a real impact in the South West."

The national win follows the best regional KTP triumphs in 2009 and 2010 with Goss and Zoefitg respectively. Emma said: "This has been a 20-year journey for Plymouth University, building our reputation and institutional know-how through delivering over 200 strategic projects."

Managing around 20 KTPs at any one time across the University, the Knowledge Transfer and External Business Development team liaises with businesses, academics and graduates, and leads the sector with funding success rates.

The range of projects also speaks volumes for the willingness of academics across the institution to engage with KTP. Professor John Dinwoodie, for example, worked with School of Management colleagues Dr Sarah Tuck and James Benhim

on a partnership with Falmouth Harbour Commissioners – a KTP that recently received a coveted Grade of Excellence from the Technology Strategy Board.

The scope covered a number of port operations, from assisting with research for the Falmouth Port Development Initiative to developing an environmental management system and improving communication with stakeholders.

John said: "Undertaking a KTP offers academics a tremendous opportunity to deliver research in an applied context. I've been teaching systems analysis in shipping for 25 years, and this has enabled me to transfer theory into an operational setting. A good KTP can also refresh your case studies, strengthen links with professional bodies and industry contacts, generate field trips and student projects, and create visiting speaker opportunities."

The KTP has also generated a number of conference opportunities and academic papers, and led to further European funded projects.

If you would like to get involved with KTP please contact Emma Hewitt, Research and Innovation.



MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING IS A PIECE OF CAKE FOR BECKY

What is the collective noun for cakes? That was the first thing that sprung to mind when **CONNECT** was confronted by the sight of so many frosted and fruited sponges in Crosspoint earlier this term.

Peeking out from behind this veritable smorgasbord of treats was Becky Smith, who had undertaken the task of gathering all manner of lemon drizzles, victoria sponges and rocky roads in support of Macmillan's World Biggest Coffee Morning.

Working with her colleagues in Estates and Facilities Management, as well as Claire Lyons from the Faculty of Health, Education and Society, Becky secured a number of corporate donations – both cakes and raffle prizes – before giving up her free time to run her stall, greeting staff, students, and members of the public.

Becky raised over £520 for Macmillan. She said: "We had a wonderful reaction from everyone who stopped, and it was heart-warming to hear so many people just open up and share their personal stories and experiences.

"We had lots of people coming over from the British Arts Show who were then able to stop and sample the atmosphere in RLB."

Congratulations to Becky and her team on all of their efforts.



POLLYANNA MAGNE

In the final edition of *UPfront* we featured the story of Pollyanna Magne, an Educational Developer, who was off to teach at a secondary school on the outskirts of Misikhu, near Kenya's western border with Uganda. We asked her how she had got on...

"It was an amazing experience. The school had four classrooms, with a tin roof that meant when it rained, you could not hear anything. Another four classrooms were being built, they had no glass in the windows or desks, but the students were already piling in for lessons. There were not quite enough pens to go around, and no text books – this really was teaching at its most fundamental; just you and the students," she said.

Despite the lack of resources, Pollyanna was able to draw upon her teaching skills to provide new experiences for the children. "The students know that education is the route to better prospects, but they had never experienced active learning before," she said. "I introduced lots of classroom activity based on group work and encouraged them to apply their knowledge. It was a challenge, but they rose to it. At one point we staged a court case featuring characters from one of their English texts – both the students and staff loved this."

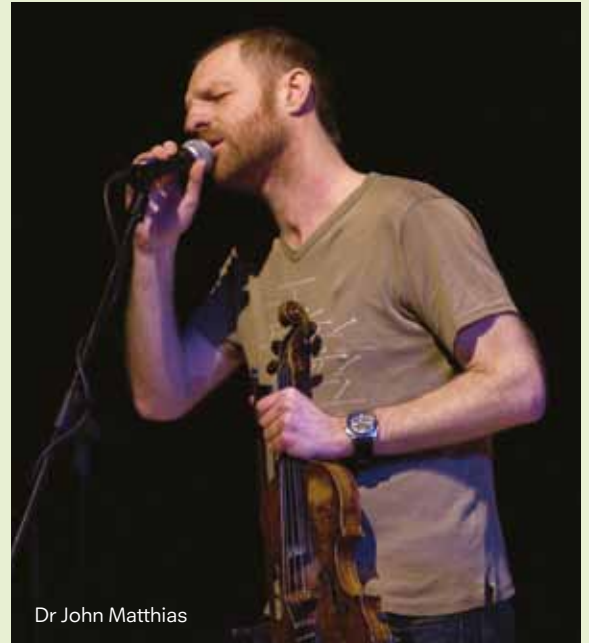
Many of the children are orphans, and the sobering socio-economic situation in the country means that for many, just getting to school might require a six-mile walk at great risk to their personal safety.

Pollyanna is now looking into the possibility of developing future projects with student teachers enrolled on Plymouth University degree courses and the Widows and Orphans in Rural Kenya (WORK) charity.

SONIC BOON FOR FACULTY OF ARTS RESEARCHERS

Dr John Matthias was commissioned with long-time collaborators Jane Grant and Nick Ryan to make a sound installation for the onedotzero 'Adventures in Motion Festival' at the BFI, in London, last month. The show opened with a new choral work written by John and 2009 Plymouth University Honorary Doctor of Arts Nick, which fed into the audio-visual installation. The show will now tour around the UK and internationally, with venues confirmed in St Petersburg and Beijing for 2012. The work will use the NeuroGranular Software developed at Plymouth University.

In an exceptionally productive few months, John has also given a talk at The Royal Institution, London, on the subject of 'The Sonification of Networks'; worked with guitarist Will Dutta on his new solo album; and teamed up with Jane Grant again to produce 'Ghost', an eight-channel sound installation in the iconic octagonal Maksem building, in Taksim Square, Istanbul.



Dr John Matthias

TOP OF THE PODCASTS FOR CYBERSECURITY EXPERTS

With cybersecurity a continuing hot topic, podcasts produced by Plymouth's Centre for Security, Communications and Network Research, have been a popular download via the iTunesU facility. 'Strange things about human behaviour and security' was one of a number to appear in the What's Hot listing, receiving over 620 downloads in a week.

Plymouth's prowess in this field was also demonstrated when Trevor Gabriel, a part-time MSc Computer and Information Security student, was awarded the 2011 student dissertation prize from the London Chapter of ISACA (a worldwide association of information security professionals). Trevor's project found a link between an individual's personality and their security behaviour perceived by workplace colleagues. These findings could pave the way for a new selection and recruitment approach in roles where information security is integral to the success of a company.



SEABED STUDY WINS NERC SEAL OF APPROVAL

Researchers in the Marine Physics Research Group (MPRG), in the School of Marine Science and Engineering, have been successful in a £220,000 bid to the Natural Environment Research Council as part of a joint proposal. The COHBED project will investigate the growth, movement and stability of bedforms (ripples and dunes) that consist of mixtures of sands and muds, a natural condition that is very common but has rarely been studied before.

In a new departure, this work will see a multidisciplinary team from the Universities of Bangor, Plymouth, St. Andrews, Leeds and the National Oceanography Centre Liverpool working together to study the physics, mathematics, sedimentology, and biology of these systems.

MPRG's Dr. Sarah Bass will coordinate the COHBED field campaign to deliver unparalleled measurements of the nature and dynamics of bedforms in a complex mixed sediment environment, typical of many environments in the UK, using cutting-edge field methodologies. Dr. Robert Schindler will lead the series of flume experiments and data analysis which will ultimately be used to develop new bedform prediction tools. Dr Andrew Manning, a cohesive sediments expert, will supervise the collection of sedimentological data.

GEOLOGIST HONOURED

Dr Richard Twitchett, of the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, has been honoured with the 2011 James Lee Wilson Award by the Society of Sedimentary Geology. This is awarded for excellence in sedimentary geology research by a young scientist and was given to Richard in recognition of his contribution to palaeobiology, the understanding of extinction events and the recovery of ecosystems after crises.

PEDRIO PUBLICATION PROWESS

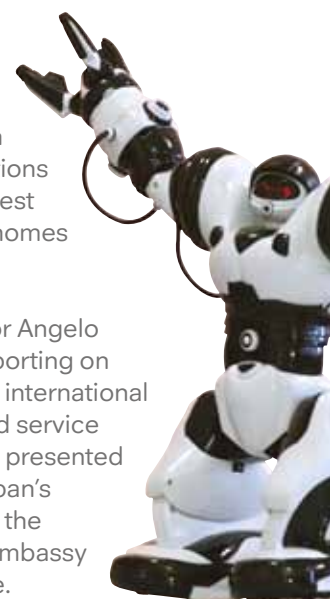
Two articles written for PedRIO (the Pedagogic Research Institute and Observatory) have been ranked among the most popular to have been published last year. *Further and Higher Education Category Cultural differences, learning styles and transnational education* by Troy Heffernan, Mark Morrison, Parikshit Basu and Arthur Sweeney, was listed in the Routledge Education Class of 2011. The second, *Educational Media and Technology Category Effective e-learning? Multi-tasking, distractions and boundary management by graduate students in an online environment*, by Jennie Winter, Debby Cotton, Joan Gavin and Jon D Yorke, was also listed and both will be freely available and widely promoted by Taylor and Francis.

GRANT SUCCESS FOR PLYMOUTH'S ROBOTICS RESEARCHERS

The Centre for Robotics and Neural Systems has been awarded two new Framework Programme (FP7) projects totalling more than €1.6 million over the next four years.

The first, POETICON++, will continue to support the language acquisition research being done with the iCub robot, and will see CRNS working with a consortium of institutions from Europe and the US. The second project, ROBOT-ERA, will expand the University's area of expertise into the field of robot companions for the elderly. A European consortium, involving academic institutions and industry and council partners, will test the use of mobile robots in residential homes in both Italy and Sweden.

Both projects are being led by Professor Angelo Cangelosi, with Dr Tony Belpaeme supporting on ROBOT-ERA, and will further sustain the international reputation of the centre in cognitive and service robotics. To that end, Dr Belpaeme also presented the University's robotics research to Japan's industry and academia when he toured the country in October as part of a British Embassy and Knowledge Transfer Board initiative.



OFSTED RECOGNITION FOR FRESHLINGS NURSERY

The University's Freshlings Nursery has received a glowing report from Ofsted, after it was rated as 'Outstanding' across all 17 categories following its most recent inspection. The education watchdog said that the nursery skillfully used the new education guidelines to promote children's development through play. It added: "Excellent teamwork is extremely well supported by very good leadership and organisation, where everyone works well together to maintain high standards of care and work together on identified areas for development."

Barbara MacPherson, Childcare Manager, paid tribute to the "fantastic team", and said: "It speaks volumes for the close and supportive relationship we have with the parents – together with the support network within the University."



CONNECT WITH PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY



PICTURE THIS

Plymouth University is fortunate to have a pair of tremendously talented – and busy! – photographers in Lloyd Russell and Alan Stewart.

But, in an institution brimming with creativity, we'd like to offer you the chance to showcase your own photographic prowess by setting aside the back page of future editions for your snapshots of life. There are no prizes or lucrative contracts on offer, merely the respect and adoration of your peers! If you'd like to submit a picture, send it in JPG format (minimum 500KB in size / 300dpi resolution) to publicrelations@plymouth.ac.uk



The deadline for editorial submissions is **JANUARY 31, 2012.**

Please contact
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