Summer 2009 Issue 59

university of plymouth magazine

upfront

TALL STORY
Marine science makes waves

MARS TO PLYMOUTH
NASA and ESA come to town

OPEN WIDE
Dental facility launches

ART OR VANDALISM?
Students blaze a trail

NEWS FEATURES REGULAR COLUMNS & MORE
Welcome

Welcome to the summer edition of UPfront, which brings you the latest news from across the university.

Plymouth has a reputation for being innovative and breaking new ground so it was fitting that NASA and the European Space Agency chose the city for their annual summit in late June. The university hosted a civic reception for the prestigious guests, strengthening its links with the agencies, and staged an exciting related exhibition. Read all about it on page 8.

Also in this edition is more evidence of our enterprising students’ impact beyond the campus, some of them making their mark in the community – quite literally! – and winning awards and accolades from local, national and international organisations.

Please send any contributions or ideas for the autumn edition to the Public Relations team at publicrelations@plymouth.ac.uk marking the subject ‘UPfront’ by 17 August.

Paola Simoneschi
Editor

Thanks to the following contributors: Karen Mason, Elizabeth Parks, Alice Li, Sarah Dunstall, Tracy Wilson, Karen Ellis, Philip Selbie, Colin Munn, Fern Cargill, Laura Wilson, Michael Taylor-Wilson.

Front cover: Plymouth’s Dr Andrew Eccleston and a marine science student on board the tall ship Eendracht – see opposite page for details.

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The university is committed to the promotion of equality and diversity. Our policies are available on the website: www.plymouth.ac.uk/equalopportunities

Equality update

The University’s Equality and Diversity team has recently published three annual reports on race, gender and disability, which are all available via the website at www.plymouth.ac.uk/equality.

In addition, the university has applied to renew its Bronze Scientific Women’s Academic Network (SWAN) Charter Award, a national and prestigious award that recognises good practice in improving the number of women in top posts in science, engineering and technology subjects in higher education and research.

The bronze award enables the institution to identify itself as an enterprising employer of choice, not only to staff but also students, funders, research councils and industry. Plymouth was one of the first universities to win an award in 2006, along with only one other post-1992 institution.

Intern of the Year

Marketing student Joni Roberts, whose skills and talent helped her secure a year’s placement at Microsoft MSN in London, so impressed the world-renowned company that she scooped its Intern of the Year award.

This is the first year the organisation has made such an award, with Joni securing the accolade against stiff competition from the 95 other interns. The bonus is that Microsoft has decided to sponsor Joni’s final year at Plymouth.

The sponsorship, part of Microsoft’s Retainer Scheme, means Joni will receive financial support as well as being able to keep her work email account, enabling her to keep up to speed with all the latest happenings in the company and across the industry. She will also have the option of helping with occasional projects as and when her busy study schedule allows.

Joni has found the experience invaluable. “Personal challenges included learning how to prioritise tasks and manage my time,” she said. “I also learnt the importance of how to communicate to different cultures and markets – each have individual working practices.”

Wheel work

Students have been awarded prizes for taking part in trials to test the new Wattbike – the only indoor bike to be endorsed by the British Cycling Organisation.

Plymouth was one of only five universities in the country to trial the bikes as part of the Everyday Cycling initiative designed to encourage more people to take up cycling and to spot potential.

Organisers Kate Fidler and Mary Coles, university fitness instructors, set up a number of physical challenges, with the ultimate aim of getting as many students as possible to sign up to the initiative.

“We’ve been really pleased by the number that have taken part in these challenges,” said Kate. “It has been great to have so many people of different ages and abilities participating in cycling events.”

Josh Wilson and Charlotte Bedford both won a mountain bike and helmet for their top ‘peak power’ scores, and a participation prize was awarded to Jonathan Bray.

Public and private sector come together

An initiative, called Sell2Plymouth, sees the university Plymouth City Council and Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust come together for the first time to advertise contracts worth up to £20,000 on an internet portal which allows a single and simple registration process for businesses.

The idea came from the Plymouth Procurement Forum, which has been set up by Plymouth 2020 – the city’s Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

The portal presents easy access to each of the organisation’s requirements through direct links to their procurement web pages and tendering sites. Sell2Plymouth will also have direct links to business support agencies to access help and advice in applying for and winning public sector contracts.

For more details, email businessservices@plymouth.ac.uk.
Ocean’s Eleven

Marine science students from the university had the experience of a lifetime when they sailed a tall ship from Dublin to Holland in June.

The 11 lucky ocean yachting undergraduates took part in an international student exchange project which saw them team up with students from Holland, Belgium and Denmark onboard Eendracht, a 60m, three-masted schooner.

Stopping off at Plymouth en route, the Plymouth students enjoyed showing their counterparts the university and the city.

As well as the opportunity to live and work in close company with students from other nations, the voyage provided a platform for the Plymouth 11 to put into practice some of the skills they have gained in lectures and practical sessions. They obtained hands-on experience of navigation, watch-keeping, steering, chart work and using radar, as well as all aspects of work on-deck such as mooring operations, anchoring, hoisting and trimming the sails.

“Plymouth prides itself on the quality of the student learning experience and producing highly employable graduates,” said lecturer Dr Andrew Eccleston, who accompanied the students as their mentor. “It’s opportunities such as this that enthuse them about their studies and give them the edge upon graduation – not many others can say they navigated a tall ship on a European voyage as part of their degree course!”

Not many can say they navigated a tall ship as part of their degree.
The fine art students behind the mysterious white lines on pavements, grass and roads that appeared in Plymouth over a weekend are Sue Austin and Jack Morris, who created the trails as part of their Freewheeling project using temporary pitch-marking paint, Sue’s specially developed paint wheelchair and a paint bike.

The tracks led to the iconic Roland Levinsky building and the Royal William Yard, the venues for the show which presented the work of final-year students across areas ranging from art, design and architecture to media and humanities.

The city was immediately buzzing with talk about the lines, supporters vocal in their appreciation of the ingenuity and creativity of the work while others spoke out about what they saw as ‘vandalism’.

“I created the tracks through the city as a way of drawing positive attention to the wheelchair as a symbol of freedom, power and fun,” said Sue, 43, whose mobility problems mean she needs to use a wheelchair. “While we understood people’s concern and were aware that some of the lines may have inadvertently caused confusion, it’s great our work created debate, which is exactly what we believe art should do.”

Jack created his lines by encircling the city centre with his paint bike – seen from above, his trail outlined the profile of a face. The third student involved in the innovative project, Shirley Phillips, brought the country into the city by creating and installing a plaited grass spiral at Frankfort Gate.

“It’s clear that the work has had an impact and we encourage all our students to be adventurous and ambitious in their projects,” said David Coslett, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Pro Vice-Chancellor.

With media interest in the students’ work ranging from BBC Spotlight and the Plymouth Herald to an online national disability arts forum, this year’s show enjoyed an especially prominent profile.
When a brand new Plymouth primary school opens its doors this September, pupils will be proudly showing off their new uniforms – with the logo designed by our very own students!

Mayflower Community School is the latest in a succession of new schools born out of recent school amalgamation projects, this one being located at Ham Drive.

The students’ involvement came about when Philip Selbie, Lecturer in the Faculty of Education and governor at the school, heard there was just under a fortnight in which to get a suitably professional logo designed. Undeterred by the daunting deadline, which coincided with a very busy period of work on their end-of-year degree show, second-year students Jake Jennings, Mario Picariello and Catherine Pritchard agreed to take on the challenge.

Jake and Mario recently visited the site to get a feel for how their work will contribute to the life of the school. “It’s been of great use for us to work on a live project, gaining a taste for real-life design and seeing a project used in our local community,” said Mario. The final logo image was enthusiastically accepted by Marian Bartlett, the headteacher of the new school.

“This has been a particularly good example not only of faculties collaborating but the university’s clear commitment to support the community, producing tangible benefits for all involved,” said Philip. Mayflower Community School opens in early September, following the closure of North Prospect Community School and South Trelawny Primary School at the end of August.

Looking Local

This year, for the first time, the work of humanities students was also included in the Degree Show. The Barbican Local History project – supported by Groundwork South West – saw 30 Year 8 pupils from John Kitto Community College working alongside history, media arts and performance students at the university.

Having researched topics from the Pilgrim Fathers to slum conditions and resulting outbreaks of disease, the collaborators created footage of their own dramatic interpretations, plus newspaper articles and audio-visual work on historic buildings – all of which were on display.

“It was great to see how this project boosted young people’s interest in their surroundings and enhanced their understanding of their community and heritage,” said Alison Valerio, Widening Participation and Schools and Colleges Liaison Officer for the Faculty of Arts. “We hope the public will enjoy seeing the results of their work, which give a fresh perspective on the history of the Barbican.”
ENTERPRISING STUDENTS

Winners of the Student Enterprise Awards were rewarded for their entrepreneurial talent and creative thought recently. Sponsors of the awards included Business Link, the Tamar Science Park, Ginsters and Plymouth Gin – in addition, the Sheila Lamey Enterprise Award recognised an outstanding creative activity linking art with the improvement of community or individual health.

As well as receiving a cash prize to advance their activity, each winner has been linked with an alumni mentor to advise them on their project. This year’s winners included psychological research methods student Jacqueline Turner, who plans to establish a sustainable garden project with the Longreach charity in Plymouth. This will assist with the rehabilitation of women who have been dependent on drugs and/or alcohol. During the project, Jacqueline – who scooped the Ginsters Award for the best South West student involved in a community-based enterprise project – hopes to use her research to establish the benefits of gardening as a therapeutic treatment.

Details of the other winning projects are available at www.plymouth.ac.uk/alumni, where you can still submit entries to the Student Enterprise Award for international students, sponsored by Plymouth Devon International College.

If you would like to find out more about sponsoring an enterprise award or about being an alumni mentor, email Karen Teague, Alumni Relations and Development Manager, at alumni@plymouth.ac.uk.

THE ENTERPRISE UNIVERSITY IN CORNWALL

The university’s support for Cornwall and its contribution to the county were proudly displayed on its stand at the Royal Cornwall Show in June.

With support from across faculties and other directorates, Head of Commercial Marketing, Tracy Wilson, successfully pulled together University of Plymouth representation at the show, from 4 to 6 June.

Held at its vast permanent Wadebridge showground, the Royal Cornwall Show is attended by around 130,000 people every year and is one of the largest events in Cornwall. As well as a visit by HRH Princess Alexandra, this year’s event featured a large variety of agricultural and equestrian show classes, displays from military dog handling teams, a human cannonball, farming and food pavilion and hundreds of trade stands.

Designed to promote the university and increase awareness of its contribution and commitment to the county, the colourful and prominent Enterprise Solutions stand featured information about study and career opportunities in the Duchy together with information about support for individuals, business and the community. Interactive activities led by university students included a live painting demonstration, hand washing challenge, and microscopic viewing of 12,000 year old volcanic fossils.

Tracy said: “Through our partner college network, our Faculties of Health and Education, and our commitment to widening participation, we ensure HE is accessible in local communities throughout Cornwall, and through activities such as Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, we have significant engagement with the county’s businesses, public sector and community. Attending the show enabled us to enhance recognition for this.” For event highlights, visit www.plymouth.ac.uk/rcs.
Experts at Plymouth are teaching robots to sing – with the aim that collaborations between the robots will one day help them compose music no human would ever have produced.

Professor Eduardo Miranda, a composer and computer music scientist who is based in the university’s Interdisciplinary Centre for Computer Music Research, equips each robot with software that mimics the human voice, and gives each a microphone that acts as its ears and a camera for its eyes.

One robot begins by babbling a random sequence of about six notes. When the second robot hears this, it responds with a babble of its own. The first robot then compares the two strings of notes. If it deems them to be similar, it nods. The second robot detects this and ‘memorises’ the settings that created the sequence. If the noises are dissimilar, the first robot shakes its head, causing its partner to discard that sequence.

“The robots develop their own musical culture. There are no pre-programmed musical rules,” said Professor Miranda, who leaves the two ‘warblers’ to their own devices for up to a fortnight, finding that when he returns they are still cooing in their eerily human voices but have ‘evolved’ to sing a repertoire of 20 sounds together.

Since only sounds that both robots know about are recorded, gradually their memories fill up with similar sounds. Professor Miranda, whose research in this area was recently published in *New Scientist*, likens this to the emergence of a very simplistic, shared culture.

To find out more about the work of the ICCMR, visit www.cmr.soc.plymouth.ac.uk.

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**SPIN-OUT SUCCESS**

The university has a strong record of supporting the exploitation of expertise in a commercial environment. Researchers, lecturers and other staff who have commercially valuable expertise to exploit have many options open to them, one route being to develop a University of Plymouth spin-out company.

One of the most successful examples of such a company is ICO3, which like most small companies has had its ups and downs over the years but has held its own, even in difficult times.

Born as a continuation strategy for part of the EU-funded ADAPT CUCOL Project, which ended in 2000, ICO3 has four directors, Dr Neil Witt, Mark Stone, David Gadd and Bob Baggott, who represent the university’s shareholding.

David, Managing Director, has seen the company grow steadily from a £40,000 turnover in its first year to a projected turnover in 2008/09 of over £200,000.

“Developing and growing a business from an academic environment wasn’t easy. We faced all sorts of challenges and issues which were completely alien to us,” he said.

“Arrangements for staff contracts, tendering, managing the books, developing contracts and intellectual property rights were all time consuming and challenging. On top of that, you just can’t believe how quickly money is spent on a new business even when you’re being careful. In our first year we were supported by the university, trading as a ‘business unit’. While all of these things reduced costs substantially, that first year was a struggle!

“The most valuable advice I would give others is to develop a good relationship marketing strategy and look at strategic account management. It’s not so much about trying not to lose clients, but creating the environment in which clients don’t want to leave. Our clients are our best advert; they recruit a great deal of our new clients.”

The links with the university and through this ultimately links to the academic sector have been crucial. Both Mark and Neil have helped to develop several key academic contracts with organisations such as Action on Access and JISC. The company also works closely with Research and Enterprise, who have helped with marketing, business advice and developing links with other staff in the university who need to purchase domain names, hosting, website design, or to develop small project websites.

University clients who have worked with ICO3 include SERIO and the Gees Subject Centre, to name two.

For more information, visit www.ico3.com.
FROM MARS TO PLYMOUTH

Senior personnel from NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA) were welcomed to Plymouth in late June, with the university hosting the civic welcome reception and an exciting Space and Exploration exhibition featuring a rare public appearance by Bridget, the ExoMars Rover.

The prestigious space agencies were in the city for their annual Bilateral Science Summit, discussing science and robotic exploration. Joint missions in development include the James Webb Space Telescope, where Europe provides major instrumentation, and the Ariane launcher.

Dr Ed Weiler, Associate Administrator of NASA’s Science Mission Directorate, and Professor David Southwood, ESA’s Director of Science and Robotic Exploration, both gave speeches at the reception, which was held in the Roland Levinsky building.

“It is a great pleasure to have the annual summit in my home city in the UK, especially so when we are going to be discussing the next steps of space exploration and both Plymouth and Devon have played so much a part in exploration,” said Professor Southwood.

Other speakers included Linda Gilroy MP, newly appointed Assistant Minister for the South West, the Lord Mayor of Plymouth Councillor Kenneth Foster, and the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Wendy Purcell.

The university, which already has close links with ESA and NASA through its experts’ collaboration with the space agencies on projects including robotics and error-correcting codes, is keen to explore further opportunities for collaboration for the benefit of the organisation and the city as a whole.

“This visit will serve to further strengthen our links with ESA and NASA in the city, bringing young people into science and growing our world-class research and international links,” said Professor Purcell.

£10m FOR ENERGY RESEARCH

The South West’s ambition to be a global centre for harnessing energy from the sea has received a major boost with the announcement of a £10.3–million investment in marine energy research. The bulk of the investment – £5.3 million – has come from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Convergence Programme in Cornwall.

The Peninsula Research Institute for Marine Renewable Energy (PRIMaRE), set up two years ago by the Universities of Plymouth and Exeter with funding from the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA), will use the cash to recruit more academic and support staff, buy new equipment and collaborate with businesses.

Match funding comes from the South West RDA and both universities, and there is further investment from the ERDF Competitiveness Programme in the rest of the South West.

PRIMaRE, which has 12 key academic staff, will recruit to a further 35 posts including academics, researchers, PhD students, technical staff and a dedicated team to work on collaborating with businesses to support high-quality job creation across the South West.

There will be substantial investment in new equipment, including wave- and tidal-measuring devices, wave-making facilities, subsea electrical equipment, collision avoidance and monitoring equipment, and research into the environmental impact and benefits of marine renewable energy.

PRIMaRE will support and complement the South West RDA’s pioneering Wave Hub project, which will create the world’s largest wave energy farm ten miles off the Cornish coast and is on course to be built next year.

“This new funding recognises the very substantial expertise in marine energy, research, development and innovation now present in the South West and provides additional support for engaging business with world-class research for the benefit of our region and the wider environment,” said Professor Wendy Purcell, Vice-Chancellor of Plymouth.

“In partnership with Exeter, we will generate important new marine knowledge to inform the emerging renewable energy sector, positioning the region at the forefront of marine science and technology expertise.”
The new facility, which boasts 40 dental chairs, plus seminar rooms, an IT suite and a clinical skills laboratory, is the first purpose-built dental education unit in the UK for 30 years.

Lord Colwyn praised the Peninsula Dental School for the meticulous and imaginative planning that has produced not only a fresh and innovative approach to dentistry, but also the buildings required to support the community ethos of the Peninsula Dental School and the dentists it trains.

“We are delighted that Lord Colwyn, who is a respected figure in the world of dentistry, agreed to officially open our clinic,” said the Dean of the Peninsula Dental School, Professor Liz Kay. “My thanks go to him, and to my colleagues and our partners who have worked so hard to make the clinic such a success. It’s being very well received within Devonport, and it is providing our students with vital firsthand contact with NHS patients.”

“As a key partner in the Peninsula Dental School, the University of Plymouth is committed to leading transformational change in the city and region,” said Professor Wendy Purcell, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of the University of Plymouth. “This new facility will play a vital role in furthering the regeneration of Plymouth as well as offering free community access to an important health service.”

A range of dental care is available free of charge from dental students under the supervision of a qualified dental tutor including check-ups, X rays, oral hygiene advice and fillings and extractions.

After first opening its doors to patients in April, the Dental Education Clinic at Devonport, part of the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry, was officially opened on 19 June by Lord Colwyn, Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords and Vice-Chair of the House of Lords Dentistry Group.

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CRUISING TO SUCCESS

Students on the Cruise Management degree course have been given a first-hand look at life on board a busy cruise ship.

The group of 12 first-year students were accompanied on the three-day cruise, from Southampton to Lisbon, by Hospitality Management lecturers Dr Wai Mun Lim and Jo Wills.

The orientation cruise is an annual event that allows students to go behind the scenes and see what goes on in all areas of the ship so that they get a complete understanding of what life is like for a manager working in the hotel department of a cruise company. For the last five years, Princess Cruises and P&O Cruises have employed Plymouth students as hotel interns or trainee hotel managers on board their ships. Strong links have been developed between the Plymouth Business School and the companies, with regular visits to the companies’ ships.

Lecturer Dr Lim said the trip gave the students a useful grounding in the practical aspects of cruise ship management: “The students are introduced to another aspect of cruise ships beyond the carpeted areas of chandeliers and champagne. Behind-the-scenes areas are what the students got to see, areas where they could be working in.”

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It’s that time of year again when the current executive members of the Students’ Union pass on their pearls of wisdom to the newly elected student officers and say good-bye to all those they have worked with over the past year.

This year isn’t quite so clean cut though! Although I am moving on to pastures new, I’m handing over the mantle of SU President to Aleshia Sampson, who has been my trusty deputy for the past year. And I am pleased to announce that James Redfearn, Vice President (Activities and Communications) and Chris Rees (Vice President Sports) are staying on this year. However, we are welcoming two new officers – Tom Vennard (Deputy President) and Ed Marsh (Vice President Education and Welfare).

The past year has seen a significant time of change at UPSU, restructuring the whole of the SU internally and in how it works in partnership with the university. We have also had plenty to celebrate, winning national awards on sustainability and various campaigns.

It has been such a rollercoaster year, working at such speed and growing to love UPSU and what it stands for. We recently circulated a brochure to all university staff summarising our purpose. For more information, email president@upsu.com.

The key to our success has been the strength of the executive team – all have been fantastic and it’s because of this that we’ve achieved so much. I will leave the last word to incoming president, Aleshia: “Having had a fantastic year as Deputy President, I look forward to enhancing my work with the university and the community in my new role. The coming year is going to be particularly challenging as we implement the changes put in place this year for our journey towards third sector professionalism – I’m looking forward to taking on that challenge.”

The university is regularly in the headlines for its ground-breaking research, new initiatives and staff and student successes...

The Daily Telegraph reported the case of resourceful Plymouth student Alice Williams, who got caught up in the four-month strike at French universities. Geography student Alice, who was in Bordeaux to study the history of wine, was unable to attend classes due to the picket lines she faced every day. Deciding to turn the situation to her advantage, she came up a novel idea – studying the strikers themselves.

Researchers from the university featured in an article in Dogs Monthly magazine about Seizure Alert Dogs – dogs who react when they spot tell-tale signs of impending epileptic seizures in their owners. Val Strong and Stephen Brown from the Development Disabilities and Education Group examined the cases of 36 pet dogs who had suffered adverse health effects after developing this ability to react to their owner’s seizures.

The Times Higher’s What are You Reading?, the weekly ‘look over the shoulder’ of its scholar-reviewers column, recently featured the university’s Sue Child. A Research Fellow in the School of Psychosocial Studies, Sue revealed she was re-reading George Ritzer’s The McDonaldization of Society. “I am currently finding it useful to assist my structuring of an in-progress journal article that examines what I consider to be the McDonaldization of nurse practitioner roles in English GP surgeries,” she said.

Media ranging from the Financial Times and the Sunday Times to Sky News called on the expertise of Professors Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher both before and after the recent European and local elections. The duo, Directors of the Local Government Chronicle Elections Centre, based in the Faculty of Social Science and Business, also featured in international media, including The Boston Globe and The Australian.
Young people from eight Plymouth schools will look east for a production of Romeo and Juliet with a West Side Story theme this August, working with schools in Jiaxing, Plymouth's partner city in China.

The 12 Plymouth students, who are aged between 16 and 18, and theatre consultants will travel to Jiaxing on 1 August. Rehearsing with their Chinese peers, they will form a theatre troupe and perform in the country before returning to Plymouth en masse.

From 15 August, the theatre in the university's Roland Levinsky building will be the venue for the troupe's rehearsals, followed by performances there on 21st and 22nd, starting at 7pm. The summer break makes it the ideal time for school students to stage the performance and everyone is invited to attend.

For more information, contact Jill Bailey, International Development Officer at Plymouth City Council, on 01752 306392 email: jill.bailey@plymouth.gov.uk, or visit www.plymouthinternationaleducation.co.uk.

**CHILDCARE VOUCHERS**

With the cost of living soaring and childcare costs rising, it's hardly surprising that childcare vouchers are becoming a popular option for working parents.

If you are using registered or approved childcare, you can choose to take part of your salary in childcare vouchers to pay for it and save money at the same time. That's because childcare vouchers are tax and NI free up to £243 per month which means you could save around £1,000 a year.

How you choose to spend these savings is up to you – maybe you would spend it on a holiday, treat the family to a day out or put it towards your childcare costs – the choice is yours!

The savings you can make are per person – so if you have a wife, husband or partner who also works for the University of Plymouth or another employer that operates a scheme, you could double your savings.

Childcare vouchers are not just for babies – they can be used to pay for the care of children up to the age of 15 (or 16 if they are disabled) including minders, nannies, play school, crèches, after school/breakfast clubs and holiday clubs.

As an added benefit when you choose childcare vouchers, you will be able to access a free and confidential helpline, offering support on a wide range of issues that may affect you and your family.

It's easy to join the scheme so if you would like more information, simply visit www.childcarevouchers.co.uk, click on 'JOIN NOW' in the Parents' area and enter Scheme ID UNIV6202.
The research, overseen by Professor Jon Marsden, is informing Podiatry Lecturer Emma Cowley’s study into the effects of a long distance race on the individual foot posture. Volunteers were invited to the Peninsula Allied Health Centre a week or so prior to the event to undertake a pre-half marathon gait analysis and to receive advice on appropriate footwear for running. They also agreed to have their feet measured within minutes of crossing the finishing line.

“Thankfully the sun was shining and we had all the equipment out on the grass,” said Emma. “Based on estimated times we prepared to see a runner every three or four minutes – to say there was a constant flow is an understatement! We were so thrilled all 30 runners made it back in one piece and now we look forward to analysing the results.”

Thirty participants in the recent Plymouth Half Marathon put their feet in the hands of researchers from the university after completing the gruelling race, which took place on one of the hottest days of the year so far.