Welcome to the summer edition of UPfront

If you have any feedback or ideas for future editions, please contact Paola Simoneschi, Public Relations Manager, on ext 3986 or email paola.simoneschi@plymouth.ac.uk

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If you require any part of this magazine in larger print, please contact: Disability ASSIST Services on ext 2289 email: das@plymouth.ac.uk

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

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HOLIDAY SPECIAL

So here they are – the results of the staff holiday survey. If you don’t want to bump into your boss on the beach, we suggest you read on! Thanks to everyone who took part – we had great fun reading your answers.

Top 10 most popular holiday destinations 2006

1. Spain
2. France
3. America
4. Greece
5. Australia
6. Portugal
7. Italy
8. Canada
9. South America
10. Tunisia

..And where you wish you were going

1. Caribbean
2. South America
3. New Zealand
4. Australia
5. Thailand
6. America
7. Japan
8. Canada
9. Africa
10. Switzerland

A bottle of wine is on its way to Noreen – how about a nice Liebfraumilch?!

Holidays from hell

Sounds like you’ve all had your fair share of holiday horrors…

“Finding out too late that ‘third class’ on a boat from Madras to Penang meant wire cages for sleeping and a communal bucket of rice as a food supply!”

Pat Parkins (Careers Assistant, Learning & Guidance)

“Getting caught in a compromising situation with my husband while on my honeymoon in the States, by the hotel maid. I’m not sure who was more embarrassed!”

Liz Bell (Senior Administrator, Marketing & Guidance)

“But – for sheer endurance alone – the winner is Noreen (Research Fellow, Neuroscience):”

“I went as a helper on a school trip and I got left at the border crossing between Belgium and Germany, with no passport, purse or anything! I went to the loo and no-one noticed – they drove off without me. Several hours later they came back and we arrived very late at the hotel, where the manager proceeded to shout at us in German for nearly an hour. This was after travelling for over 24 hours in a coach from Cornwall with 24 tired school kids. If that wasn’t enough of an ordeal, that night there was an earthquake which measured 5.5 on the Richter scale – the strongest in Germany for many years!”

A bottle of wine is on its way to Noreen – how about a nice Liebfraumilch?!
The opening of the HQ at Kirkby Lodge on the Plymouth campus had guests – including staff, students and community members – rocking to the sound of junk funk from Weapons of Sound and whizzing around on Segway scooters, which are both noise and pollution free.

Another highlight was a talk from Dr Stephan Harding, author of the recently published book, *Animate Earth*, which helped to show that CSF’s aims are more than simply the ‘greening’ of the campus.

“Sustainability is a key national and global agenda, and effective education for sustainable development is crucial to ensuring its implementation,” said Alan Dyer, Associate Director of CSF.

“CSF is seen as the key to the enrichment and expansion of education for sustainable development (ESD) within the university and its environs. The centre will act as a forum for discussion, a resource centre for ESD learning and teaching materials and, above all, a driving force for change.”

Using an old building that will have a minimal ecological ‘footprint’, the centre will provide a supportive base for students interested in learning more about ESD and a home for Plymouth-based and visiting academics to work on ESD-related teaching and research. It will provide a meeting place for staff and students from a wide range of disciplines and arena for the exchange of ideas. Its core activities will be curriculum/teaching development, research and dissemination.

Guests at the opening heard about the university’s START (Students & Refugees Together) project, which is helping refugees and asylum seekers build new lives in the city, with project leader Avril Butler explaining the social justice aspects of sustainability.

Another expert who took part was CSF Fellow Dr Steve Goodhew, who leads university’s environmental building courses.

He demonstrated a £50,000, cutting-edge thermographic camera, which he is using in a groundbreaking project to – quite literally – show the university’s buildings in a new light. The infrared device picks up heat loss and captures heat variations in garish, heat-leaking colour. Dr Goodhew is using the campus survey to teach a new generation of students how to use thermography.

To find out more about the work of CSF, visit www.plymouth.ac.uk/cetl/esd
The memorial (see model pictured right) – by local sculptor Frances May Favata – has the strong support of the families affected when the bombing of the Portland Square underground shelter caused the loss of 76 lives. The tragedy, which happened on the night of 22 April 1941, saw by far the heaviest loss of civilian life in any single wartime incident in the city.

Backed by Plymouth’s Evening Herald and the City Council, the university’s appeal to raise £40,000 towards the cost of the 8 ft sculpture was launched in May. Since then, donations have poured in – but there is time for staff to show their support by making a donation before the planned unveiling on 21 April next year.

Not only will the sculpture be a fitting memorial, it will form part of the university’s long-term strategy of enhancing the campus and represent the ‘re-birth’ of Plymouth, in terms of business and education.

“This sculpture encapsulates all that is positive about the city and its people and I hope it will bring the local community and the university together in enjoying public art,” said the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Roland Levinsky.

How can you get involved in this piece of Plymouth’s history? It’s easy – just send your donation (cheques made payable to the University of Plymouth) to Helen Pearson, Head of Fundraising, Room 205, Hepworth House, Plymouth campus. You can increase your donation by signing a gift aid declaration form available from Helen on ext 3344/helen.pearson@plymouth.ac.uk

The university’s appeal to raise funds for a public sculpture commemorating a World War II disaster that devastated Plymouth has got off to an encouraging start, with donations flooding in from all sectors of the local community.
COASTAL CO-ORDINATION

An expert at the university is at the forefront of the drive for co-ordinated sustainable coastal development in Europe.

Professor Andrew Chadwick is leading the UK contribution to the European Network for Coastal Research Co-ordination Action (ENCORA) and its theme concerning long-term coastal evolution and climate change impacts. The UK network is COZONE, and Professor Chadwick is supported in this work by Plymouth graduate Juliette Jackson, the ENCOR A UK contact manager.

Professor Chadwick explained the need for ENCOR A and its mechanisms: “The capacity to generate knowledge for sustainable coastal development is spread over numerous institutes and research groups across Europe. Although there are similarities in the tasks they carry out, existing links between the coastal science and practitioner communities are weak.”

“ENCORA aims to overcome this fragmentation, and mechanisms are being developed to share knowledge and experience within and between the communities of coastal science, policy and practice. These mechanisms will be implemented by co-ordination offices, which have been established in 13 countries and for 10 themes. The offices rely on national, thematic and affiliated networks – ENCOR A is a European network of national and thematic networks that share a common interest.”

The networking activities encompass all disciplines relevant to research, management and policy of coastal zones. ENCOR A will enable a European wide vision to efficiently tackle the challenges posed by our coasts in the future.

For further information, visit the website at http://cozone.org.uk/

The university’s commitment to energy efficiency has been recognised at national level with the institution being ‘highly commended’ in the Green Gown Awards.

Left: Chris Bunce, Deputy Director of Learning Facilities (right), receives the award from Robin Leake, Vice Principal for Physical Sciences & Engineering at the University of Glasgow

The awards – which are sponsored by organisations including the Energy Consortium (Education) – were established to raise awareness of the increasing pressure for better environmental performance by universities and colleges.

The commendation for Plymouth is for work undertaken to reduce water consumption. The university instigated a water conservation programme in 1991 and, by 2004, had made a saving of £1.6 million, no small feat given that the South West has some of the highest water charges in the UK.

“We’ve worked hard to make these savings so it is great to have our efforts recognised at this level,” said Paul Lumley, the university’s Energy & Environmental Officer. “Much involved in water conservation isn’t rocket science. A lot of money can be spent on the new and innovative, but it’s important not to forget the ‘bog standard’ things that cost a fraction to implement but can make all the difference.”

You can find out more about the Green Gown awards – and the university’s project – at www.leepi.org.uk
The diverse programme is part of the International Festival 2006 and includes events at a variety of venues in the city. At the time of going to press, the following had been confirmed:

• 16th Sept – Peninsula Arts Chorale sing Bach’s Magnificat
• 17th Sept – Choirs from Plymouth’s twin city of Brest, Peuples et Chansons
• 20th Sept – Philharmonia Orchestra with Alexander Lazarev and Vasselin Stanev perform Tchaikovsky and Smetana
• 21st Sept – Celebrity pianist Nikolai Demidenko performs Mussorgsky’s Pictures at an Exhibition
• 23rd Sept – An evening with US star mezzo-soprano Maria Ewing
• 23rd Sept – Grimethorpe Colliery Band
• 24th Sept – Ten Tors Orchestra with Simon Ible & New Zealand baritone Jonathan Lemalu

The full programme giving venues and ticket information is available at www.plymouthpavilions.com

In addition, a series of Peninsula Arts exhibitions – including Capturing the Dream, Simon Standing’s photographic record of the development of the new Faculty of Arts building – is running at the university from September. Keep an eye on the website – www.peninsularts.co.uk – for further details.
The meeting was set up by the Royal Entomological Society as the first in a series of interviews with high-profile entomologists to appear in the society’s in-house journal, Antenna. Pete takes up the story...

“As a boy I was transfixed by Sir David’s early programmes, such as the Zoo Quest series. They inspired me to take a serious interest in biology and, as a result, I tracked his career closely.

“So how did the man compare to my boyhood hero? He was unassuming and completely disarming so I’m not surprised that he was recently voted the most trustworthy man in Britain. “When I asked about his plans for the future he replied, “I am 80 this year and not as young as I was. The trouble is, I can’t climb trees any more.” To me, this encapsulates his resilience and drive. He remains an adventurer hunting for those stories that reveal the wonders of the natural world, a man dedicated to sharing these with everyone, a man who still has plenty to offer. Let’s hope that those steely-eyed controllers continue to approve Sir David’s projects for many years to come.”

David Attenborough’s next series Life in Cold Blood will be on our screens in 2008.

Healthy outlook

Did you know the Occupational Health team can help with everything from back pain to stress – in fact any physical or mental problem that impacts on, or is exacerbated by, work?

It seems that many of us are unaware of the broad remit of the team, which provides impartial and confidential advice to staff and students and guidance for managers. Full-time Clinical Nurse Specialist Sarah Boxall and the rest of the team, part-time Occupational Health Advisor Edel Rogers and Administrator Jenny Gibbons, are part of Advisory Services and are based on the first floor of the Mary Newman building on the Plymouth campus. Both the Exeter and Exmouth campuses also have Occupational Health Advisors – Janis Boxall and Pat Dowie respectively.

“Occupational Health is a nurse-led, professional, confidential service available at all campuses,” said Sarah. “Staff experiencing any health problems impacting on them at work are encouraged to self-refer by contacting the advisor on their campus or, for Plymouth staff, Jenny Gibbons.

“The service is appointment-based with flexible appointments available to suit staff timetables.”

Contact Janis (ext 5127), Pat (ext 5407) or Jenny (ext 2668) for more information.
The competition attracted nearly 100 entries from aspiring entrepreneurs among staff, students and alumni, partner college students and CUC staff and students, and the awards evening drew in 200 people to see who would make it through to the all-important second stage.

John Tregaskes of Business Link Devon & Cornwall, who presented the awards, told the audience he was overwhelmed by the talent in his midst. “The calibre of entries demonstrates that Devon and Cornwall are not short of innovative business ideas or the entrepreneurial people to take them forward,” he said.

Dr Susan Boulton, IP and Entrepreneurship Manager for the university, explained what happens next: “Stage 2 is the preparation of full business plans to help exploit the entrants’ ideas. This will be supported by free advice, including professional mentoring and entrepreneur workshops. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors we have a total prize package worth over £30,000 up for grabs.”

The entrants who are successful at Stage 2 will be announced at a celebratory event on 29 June – an announcement on the staff portal will bring you the latest news.

The awards of up to £5,000 have been given to diverse groups, ranging from the START (Students & Refugees Together) project to academic staff working with the NHS and Social Services. All of them will use the money to support the CEPPL’s aims of further developing placement learning practice in collaboration with partners – funding could be used to employ a research assistant or to attend conferences, for example.

“We hope the projects will in due course help transform learners – and ultimately health and social care – to the benefit of users,” said CEPPL Director, Professor Susan Lea.

For further details of the successful projects and more information on the CEPPL, visit the CEPPL community on the staff portal.
The annual event was attended by prospective students and their families, university governors and sponsors, and included a prize-giving for the most talented students. Among those who received a prize was Stephen Rackham (pictured top left), whose Driver Alertness Monitor prototype has the potential to save hundreds of lives by rousing drowsy drivers before they nod off at the wheel. The national media was quick to draw attention to Stephen’s invention, with coverage on BBC Radio 2 and in Auto Trader and What PC? magazines.

Exhibitors and sponsors at the project day included Allen & Heath, Becton Dickinson, Devonport Management Ltd, DSTL, Farnell Electronic Components, HSBC, Rapid Electronics, Rhode & Schwartz, Professor GW Skates and Tektronix.

Visitors to open day showcasing the project work of final-year students in the School of Computing, Communications & Electronics got a glimpse into the future – or at least some innovations that may well impact on us in years to come.

Tomorrow’s World
Unbelievably, we’re almost at the end of another academic year – time to celebrate our students’ achievements over the past 12 months.

Sporting Awards
Our sporting results during the past year are impressive and we recently awarded our sports ‘colours’ (presented by Scott Dann, British and Commonwealth Middleweight Champion) to students who’ve shown individual excellence or commitment to sport. Successes include:

- **Surfing** – British University Sports Association (BUSA) champions;
- **Table tennis** – BUSA silver and bronze individual medal winners;
- **Snowboarding** – Chris Allodi, fourth-year science student came fourth in British University Snowboarding Championships, while the university came first in the team event;
- **Octopush** – national champions;
- **Golf** – women – BUSA finalists;
- **Rowing** – Head of River Champions;
- **Trampolining** – BUSA individual gold medal, and
- **Tae kwondo** – third in team event at the British Students Tae Kwondo Federation.

Volunteering Awards
Earlier this summer we presented our Volunteering Awards in recognition of the work student volunteers have undertaken in the past year. The annual ceremony was held at the National Marine Aquarium and was supported by the Active in Communities Project. Volunteers in Plymouth include over 400 students who regularly give time and effort to help with very worthwhile projects. The work they do benefits the local, national and international community and ranges from building and maintenance work at Cornwall’s Monkey Sanctuary to creating a ‘sensory garden environment’ for young adults with learning disabilities in Romania.

It has been another busy year for UPSU and we’re looking forward to the future, with this autumn seeing the opening of the newly extended and improved SU building at Plymouth. See you in the next academic year!

LEADING THE WAY

As one of the first market research managers to be employed full time by a university, Plymouth’s Dr Rob Burton was well placed to co-organise a recent national conference for market researchers working in universities and colleges.

Rob, who has been in post since 2000, was delighted with the enthusiastic response to the event, which he organised in collaboration with Damian Stevenson of Nottingham Trent University. Delegates representing over 30 institutions ensured a lively debate on the new – and growing – industry.

“Formal market research within HE is relatively new, but the sector’s rapid expansion over the past decade – coupled with the government’s drive to get more people into HE – has meant increasing challenges for marketing and recruitment in universities and colleges,” said Rob. “In order to help meet the challenges, more and more institutions have realised the value of employing market research professionals to help identify the needs and preferences of their customers, prospective students and employers.”

The HEI Market Research Forum has now attracted 60 members representing over 50 universities, and a follow-up meeting is planned for October.
Ahoy there!
Whether you’re an experienced sailor or yet to find your sea legs, why not join the university’s Staff Sailing Club? The club welcomes staff from all areas of the university regardless of level of sailing experience and aims to be affordable and fun. Annual membership is just £12 per person and goes towards boat maintenance and fuel. Alternatively, you can pay per session. For further details, visit the Recreation Service community on the staff portal.

The Reverend Canon John Ford, newly appointed Bishop of Plymouth, was on campus recently as part of his ‘getting to know the city’ meetings.

The bishop (pictured with Plymouth SU President Emily West and Chaplain David Vardon Evans) received a warm welcome from staff and students and spent time finding out about the life of the university.

The league table of universities produced by The Guardian in May showed Plymouth at number 43 – up an impressive 30 places since last year. The newspaper’s profile of the university called Plymouth a ‘forward-thinking’ institution.

The launch of the new Marine Institute attracted attention from Lloyd’s List. The article explained that with over 160 staff, the institute will help consolidate marine research and teaching activities provided by the Faculties of Science, Technology and Social Science & Business, and will work towards closer integration with partners in the Plymouth Marine Sciences Partnership.

BBC’s Watchdog paid a visit to the university to interview podiatry lecturer, Emma Cowell. In an investigation into Clarks shoe chain stopping their odd-sized shoe service, Emma provided expert opinion on the issue.

The British Medical Journal has published first author research by Ray Jones from the Faculty of Health & Social Work. The research explores the effect of different forms of information produced for cancer patients on their use of the information, social support, and anxiety.

Information security was the topic of a feature in national magazine, Computer Weekly. Dr Steven Furnell, Reader in Information Systems Security, provided expertise on the internal info security threat as opposed to more commonly addressed problem of external internet hackers.

Small Ad
To let: Two self-catering cottages on the harbour in Mousehole, nr Penzance, each sleeping four and with sea views. Available for holidays and short breaks. See www.mouseholeholidays.co.uk for more details, or call Nick Cutts on 07889 609939.
An innovative piece of equipment designed and created by experts at the university is wowing visitors to Plymouth's National Marine Aquarium (NMA).

EmPod, a virtual scanning microscope, is the brainchild of staff from the Electron Microscopy Centre and the Institute of Digital Arts & Technology, and is one of the major exhibits in the NMA's exciting ExplorOcean development.

Visitors of all ages are using EmPod to zoom in thousands of times to get a close-up, clear view of microscopic marine life. The invention uses image sets created with the scanning electron microscope at the EM Centre to enable users to delve into aspects of the university's marine research using sophisticated equipment that they wouldn't normally be able to access.

The images show EmPod in action and one of the wonders of the microscopic marine world. These are coccolithophores - tiny marine plankton, only 10 thousandths of a millimetre in diameter, which can give insights into climate change.

The EM Centre is working with the Marine Biological Association to investigate the biology of these fascinating organisms to help us understand the effects of global warming on our oceans.

Go to the website at www.national-aquarium.co.uk/exploroecean and try a simplified version of EmPod for yourself.