Success for 3D designers

Seeing is believing

Visual language research

Tomorrow’s doctors

PMS welcomes first students

Institute for science education

There’s more to it than test tubes!
I would like to introduce myself as your new Vice-Chancellor. Many of you will have met me at the Managing the University (MTU) conference in February, but for most, you will only have seen my photograph and will now be wondering what type of person has been chosen to succeed Professor John Bull.

Over the next month or two I intend visiting every department, both academic and administrative, on all the campuses, and meet as many of the staff and students as possible. Clearly, I will not remember everyone, but hopefully my memory for names and faces will improve with time.

Let’s start with my style of leadership. I firmly believe in an open-door policy and hope that you will want to discuss how to take the University forward with me. In time we may develop a VC’s bulletin board for electronic discussion, but initially I would prefer to meet you in person. Mary Ostle, my PA will try to juggle my diary to fit you in.

Over the next few months, I intend initiating wide-ranging discussion about the future direction of the University. Its current mission statement says that the University wishes to become a world-class university by the year 2020. World-class is a difficult concept to define in abstract, and I prefer the concept of the University of Plymouth becoming an excellent regional university which delivers research and teaching to world-class standards. (Benchmarks for both exist.) The fostering of scholarship and culture needs to be included in our mission as well as reaching out to the community in a comprehensive and inclusive way.

The University has always had a reputation for friendliness and this must not be lost. In striving for these world-class research and teaching qualities it is important that the friendly ambience and facilities are enhanced such that Plymouth becomes the university of first choice for students from the south-west and that we retain our high-quality staff and attract many more to join us.

Universities are not static organisations. Reviewing how we operate is good for a university, and we must not be frightened of change. However, the changes we make over the coming months and years will be by evolution, not revolution, and will only come about after full discussion with all staff who wish to participate.

I am excited by the potential which the University offers, and hope that we can achieve the University’s mission together.

Professor Roland Levinsky
Dr Dave Harwood (pictured on right of the front cover, next to colleague Dr Dave Croot) has led and taught on the highly successful Extended Science programme throughout its 12-year history. It is one of the UK’s few generic science foundation courses and one of the largest, with an annual intake of 150 students. The programme boasts an average pass rate of around 86%, putting it way ahead of its nearest competitors.

This experience made Dr Harwood the natural choice to head up the new Institute of Science Education (ISE), which aims to provide support for students making the transition to University, excite young people’s interest in science through a programme of outreach to schools and provide support in teaching and learning activities throughout the Faculty of Science, disseminating good practice across the HE sector.

“Extended Science is pivotal to the ISE. The lessons learned in dealing with non-traditional students are highly applicable to the undergraduates we recruit across the Faculty – some departments are more experienced than others at working with these students.

“The Faculty needs to address the national climate change of shrinking applications to science subjects – we have conversion rates that are already the envy of many HEIs, but there is room for improvement. We must increase both applications and student retention.

“We want to help all those who have the ability to obtain a degree in science by providing a firm foundation. For most mature students in these financially constrained times, commitment is not an issue.

“The ISE will manage widening participation for the Faculty – a WP worker will be appointed to work alongside Dr Dave Croot, who has a great deal of experience in this field.

“Mainstream educational research has focussed primarily on sixth formers – little has been done to investigate how mature students fare in HE and the ISE has much to contribute to this area.

“Another major focus will be student ‘tracking’, monitoring students’ performance from the beginning so that any weak areas are spotted early and addressed. Mature students tend to be vulnerable as they have been out of education for a long period but younger students, with weak A levels, also need their confidence building and often need to be prompted to ask for help.

“The pastoral role is also key. This can be difficult because of the large numbers of students, but good practice exists and can be shared. The ISE will not impose – we intend to work developmentally with staff to improve particularly the early undergraduate experience.”
Picture the scene: you've just been asked to teach a session. As you arrive, all eyes are on you – your heart is pounding, your mouth is dry – where do you start?

Don’t panic – help is at hand! Since 1996, the Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) course run by the University’s Educational Development Department has been used to support the work of those who have some responsibilities as part-time teachers, demonstrators or teaching assistants. Whether you’re a postgraduate who has taken up some teaching to support your study, or you simply want to improve current skills, the course will enhance both your capability and the learning experience of your students.

The ten-week course includes five face-to-face sessions with Jon Yorke, Lecturer in Learning Technologies, delivered at roughly fortnightly intervals. In addition, there are weekly online ‘learning sets’ using computer conferencing software. Sessions cover subjects such as presentation and demonstration skills, group work, assessment and feedback techniques.

To find out more, visit www.gtacourse.net, which includes contact information and an online registration form.

If you find yourself in Sherwell Lane on the Plymouth campus during Freshers’ Week, you may well see a long queue of people outside the Chaplaincy. The reason? Free food!

For the past six years the chaplains have offered all new students a free evening meal during their first week. This provides an opportunity for students to meet each other, the Chaplaincy team – and any other staff who drop by – in a relaxed, friendly setting.

“In the early days, we thought feeding 70 students a night was amazing,” said Barry Hallett, Head of Chaplaincy. “But last year we made over 200 meals most evenings, so word has got around. Previously, food has been provided and cooked by the chaplains, along with help from the local church community. However, numbers have increased so much we have had to go professional! This year most of the food will be cooked by Grub’s Up, a local project that helps young people gain experience in the catering industry, cooking mostly vegetarian food. So, if you happen to be passing and are tempted by the aroma of freshly cooked food, just join the queue!”

Finally, if you’ve ever wondered what happens to the food left behind by students when they leave their halls of residence, Barry holds the answer:

“Food that can be stored is ‘recycled’ by our team. We’ve been known to collect as many as 500 tins of baked beans! Nothing goes to waste – most things go to the local Shekinah Mission, which feeds the homeless of Plymouth, and the remainder is given to needy students to help see them through the summer period.”

The Peninsula Medical School, which opens its doors to its first students this autumn, has celebrated its launch in style with the help of train operator First Great Western.

At Plymouth train station on 14 August, Professor John Tooke, Dean of the School, unveiled the high-speed train power car named after it. The assembled guests, including the Vice-Chancellors of the Universities of Plymouth and Exeter, staff from the School and the NHS and representatives from First Great Western, joined in the celebrations to the accompaniment of jazz music courtesy of Roy Pellet’s Hot Four.

“Many of our students will potentially travel on the trains between Plymouth and Exeter, and it is great that First Great Western are showing their support for us in this way,” said Professor Tooke.
The University is to launch a comprehensive support package aimed at helping students who lack confidence and skills in mathematics or statistics. The SUM:UP (Support for Undergraduate Maths at the University of Plymouth) service will be piloted in two faculties – Science and the Business School. It will comprise diagnostic testing of numeracy skills during the induction period, online and paper-based follow up support to address any weaknesses identified, and a drop-in centre where students can receive one-to-one assistance in a relaxed environment. The support materials and drop-in centre will be available to students in all faculties.

Staff interested in finding out more are invited to attend the launch at 11 am on 26 September (middle floor of the Library, Plymouth campus). Look out for an in-depth article about the new service in the November/December edition of UPfront.

Students of three-dimensional design at Exeter School of Art & Design are celebrating full order books and national awards thanks to their attendance at the annual New Designers event at London’s Business Design Centre.

Designer maker students received orders for their objects, artefacts and prototype designs, while – in addition to receiving orders for several of his furniture designs – Sam Brown was presented with the Future of Design Sheepskin Furniture Award. Simon French won the Design and Futures Allemuir Furniture Award, and fellow student Mel Du Pontet also had good reason to celebrate – he received an audience with Habitat’s Tom Dixon, resulting in a promise to develop his adaptable sofa for production and possible sale in Habitat stores.

New Designers is firmly established as the degree ‘super show’ for up-and-coming designers and annually launches the careers of over 4,000 design graduates. The unique event provides trade and consumer visitors with the opportunity to witness a hotbed of European talent and innovation.

The results of the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) are now available online at www.hero.ac.uk/rae. The online database allows for browsing, and searches can be conducted by institution and subject (unit of assessment), providing a unique insight into the research activities and achievements of HE institutions in the UK.
In the summer, Dr Roy Lowry (right) of the School of Environmental Sciences boarded a train to Birmingham. His destination? The BBC’s Pebble Mill studio, where he was due to join 139 other hopefuls auditioning for the role of presenter on Tomorrow’s World. Roy gives us the lowdown on his day...

9.10 am: Board the train. I use the journey to prepare – the letter telling me I had been selected from over a thousand applicants arrived just a few days ago! I have to bring an object connected with my work and give a minute-long talk to camera about it. I have chosen a lightstick.

11.00 am: I’ve heard some unusual train announcements in my time, but this one takes the biscuit – “Will passengers with radios please keep the volume down because many people don’t want to know the score until they can watch the game on TV.” I had forgotten that England were playing Argentina in the World Cup!

1.10 pm: Even the taxi driver who takes me from the station to Pebble Mill is listening to the match on the radio. We barely exchange a word.

1.20 pm: You guessed it – everyone at the studio seems to be glued to the football. The jovial mood helps me to relax.

1.45 pm: I’m given information about the other object that I’m required to demonstrate. It’s a small device that sticks to a smooth surface and turns into a loudspeaker for a personal stereo. It works due to a rod of material called Terfinol, the molecules of which elongate when exposed to a magnetic field. Hurrah! This combination of electronics and physical chemistry is my area and I’m happy.

2.15 pm: Having signed a form giving the BBC rights to recordings of me and sorted out expenses, I meet one of the show’s producers and have a dry run of my demo.

2.30 pm: Wired for sound and facing an enormous monitor and two other producers, I demonstrate the loudspeaker device. All seems to go smoothly, which is just as well because this is one take only! I then demonstrate the lightstick to an audible ‘ooh!’ from the assembled producers. There are a few questions to answer before I’m hurried out to make way for the next hopeful.

4.00 pm: Back at Birmingham New Street and reality kicks in – it’s raining and I hear a more familiar announcement: “Due to engineering works…” The outcome? I didn’t make it into the final eight selected to take part in the Tomorrow’s World roadshow. However, it was a valuable experience and it was great to see what goes on behind the scenes of the ever-popular programme.

“I had forgotten that England were playing Argentina in the World Cup!”
Two groups of civil engineering students from the University are celebrating their success in national design competitions.

Third-year MEng (Hons) students Ian Dawson, Ed Dwight and Michelle Yates recently won first prize in the Steel Tubes National Design Competition, having impressed the judges with their design for a walkway supported on three equally light arches. “The University of Plymouth entry was outstanding in its graphical presentation,” said the panel.

BEng (Hons) final-year students James Morgan and Peter Spear came third with their entry in the Structural Designs National Design Competition. The pair rose to the challenge of designing an attractive airship hangar for the Gloucestershire countryside.

Dr Clive Williams, Head of the School of Civil & Structural Engineering, said: “These national competition wins are the latest in a long line of similar successes for the School. The two groups of students demonstrate the talent that the School produces. Their enthusiasm and ability is indicative of the aptitude of our students and graduates.”

The School of Civil & Structural Engineering can be contacted on ext 01752 233665.

European Day of Languages, on 26 September, is being celebrated at the Business School with refreshments. An open day at the Business and Language Information Service (BLIS), in the Cookworthy Building, is aimed at promoting language learning as part of the Council of Europe’s annual event.

The theme for 2002 is lifelong learning and those involved in delivering language courses are being encouraged to make it easier for people to study languages. Last year, millions of people across 45 countries took part in the special day and it is hoped the success will be repeated this year.

“While many people in this country agree that everyone should be able to speak a second language, not nearly enough are able to do so effectively,” explained Professor David Head, Head of the Department of International Business at the University. “But with the globalisation of business and over 60% of British trade being with non-English-speaking countries, foreign language skills can give students a competitive edge in the job market.”

An on-going study by the Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) reviewing first destination data, shows that language graduates do well in terms of employment. Only new graduates in medicine, dentistry, veterinary science and education have lower unemployment rates than new graduates in French and German.

The recent overhaul in language provision at the Business School reflects the University’s commitment to providing increased access to foreign language study. Languages can be studied as a major or minor, and in addition to degrees in languages, international business and European studies, students from across the University can complement their main degree subject with electives in French, German and Spanish from beginner’s to advanced level. Modules in international communication and area studies also add an international flavour to study.

To support this focus on language provision, the Language Group has been established within the Department of International Business. The Group replaces the Centre for Modern Languages and members of the team can provide information and advice about language study. Contact the Department of International Business on ext 2885 for further details.

The postgraduate prospectus for 2003/04 is now available. With a fresh look including a range of images from across the University, the publication provides details of research opportunities and taught programmes. To obtain copies, contact Liz Bell, Department of Marketing & PR, on ext 3987/email: elbell@plymouth.ac.uk
Between 30 October and 20 November, members of staff have the opportunity to exhibit their artwork free of charge in the Sherwell Centre on the Plymouth campus.

So, if you’re a secret Cezanne or a budding Botticelli what are you waiting for?

“This is the first open art exhibition at the University and we’d like to encourage all staff who produce art – whether as a hobby or on a professional basis – to submit their work,” said Nicola Griffin. “We will include as wide a selection as possible from what we receive.”

Artwork, which should be taken to the Sherwell Centre any time between 21 and 25 October between 9 am and 7 pm, should be framed and marked with your name, contact details and the title of the piece. All exhibits must include a device for hanging – a wire across the back is sufficient. Unfortunately, three-dimensional work cannot be displayed.

For further details, contact Nicola on ext 2027/email: n.griffin@plymouth.ac.uk

Those involved in the HEFCE/University of Plymouth Occupational Stress in HE project would like to thank everyone who completed questionnaires for the first phase of this major national study.

The response rate was 50% – compared with an average of 38% in other participating institutions. Either Plymouth staff are very committed to ensuring the project’s success or they’re particularly keen to express how stressed they feel!

This is the first large UK study to focus on non-academic staff as well as academics, and the project team – Christine Webb, Michelle Tytherleigh, Pam Jacobs, Chris Ricketts and Clare Grey – based in the Institute of Health Studies – is collaborating with 14 English universities to collect data on current stress levels in all categories of HE staff.

The next stage begins this autumn, with a workshop to present the baseline results to consortium representatives and discuss the way forward. The team will work with consortium members to develop stress management strategies. These will be implemented in the individual institutions and, in two years, the questionnaire exercise will be repeated to assess progress.

To find out more visit the website at www.ihs.plymouth.ac.uk/stresshe, or contact Research Fellow Michelle Tytherleigh at mtytherleigh@plymouth.ac.uk

Plymouth/consortium representative Roland Buckley at rbuckley@plymouth.ac.uk

Hands on heart: In the summer, a group of children from the Plymouth Education Action Zone took part in a workshop organised by Dr Karen Gresty and Pete Smithers of the Department of Biological Sciences. Much to the children’s delight – and disgust! – the workshop involved learning about the differences between ox and lamb hearts and their own (see above). Another two workshops, organised by the same staff, involved outdoor bug hunts and were also deemed a big success.
What does the term ‘volunteer work’ mean to you? If it’s something you only associate with students or the retired, it’s time to think again! Volunteering has many benefits for staff, including the opportunity to enhance management, coaching and counselling skills, which may aid occupational, as well as personal, development.

Through the government’s Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF), the University has received funding that will be used to enhance the key role played by the University in its local communities and develop community volunteering opportunities for staff and students. This will help them gain new perspectives and develop their employment skills while enhancing the quality of life in disadvantaged sections of the community.

“The University already has an excellent record of working in partnership with business and community organisations in the region,” said Louise Parkin, recently appointed Co-ordinator for the University’s Active in Communities initiative. “It is hoped that the Students’ Union and the faculties on all campuses will be heavily involved in this drive to support the mission of the University to contribute to the well-being of the region, particularly in relationship to social and economic regeneration.”

Louise is keen to hear from staff currently involved in voluntary work and those who are interested in finding out more. (Funding may be available to facilitate secondment to community projects.) Staff who feel their students could enhance their career opportunities through volunteering should get in touch as opportunities and funding for subject-related volunteering may exist. Louise can be contacted on ext 2708/ email: louise.parkin@plymouth.ac.uk.

Active in Communities will be launched in October. Details of opportunities for staff and students will be available from the Careers Service, Student Community Action Projects (SCAP) in the SU and, from 2003, on www.gradsouthwest.com

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**cannabis: legal or not?**

The Home Secretary recently proposed that cannabis be reclassified from a ‘class B’ to a ‘class C’ drug. The resulting mixed messages in the media have caused much confusion so Tony Davey from Plymouth’s Harbour Centre, which gives advice and support to those with drug- and alcohol-related concerns, provided UPfront with the following information.

“The reclassification is likely to take place by July 2003. Cannabis will remain illegal, the maximum penalty for possession being two years’ imprisonment and/or a fine. In practice, people caught with a small amount will receive a reprimand or warning from the police. A final warning to repeat offenders is likely to be followed by a court summons.

“The Home Secretary has indicated that he will introduce a maximum penalty of 14 years’ imprisonment for dealers – currently, the maximum sentence for dealing a class C drug is five years – and there will be tougher sentences for anyone caught dealing to minors, or near schools.

“However, it is not just the legal aspects that people need to know about. Research has shown that regular use of cannabis can cause psychological dependence and bring out underlying mental health problems. It is also associated with damage to respiratory function and has been linked to lung cancer. Some users also report short-term memory loss and lack of concentration.”

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If you have any concerns or questions about cannabis, contact the Harbour Centre on 01752 267431. Alternatively, you can call the National Drugs Helpline on 0800 776600.
Dr Paul Russell of the Institute of Marine Studies is leading a £0.25 million research project investigating the role of swash in shoreline change, funded by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). Dr Tony Butt and Dr Jon Miles are the Research Fellows on the project, which includes collaboration with the world-famous Scripps Institute of Oceanography in California.

With the rising sea levels and increased storminess expected as a result of global warming, it is vitally important that the processes that control shoreline change and coastal erosion are better understood. Research to date has shown that many of the important processes take place in the swash zone – the so-called ‘biting edge’ of the sea, where the waves meet the shore.

As part of the research, the team involved has carried out large-scale field experiments at two contrasting Cornish beaches, Perranporth and Sennen Cove, under a wide variety of wave conditions. Drs Russell and Butt have recently presented some preliminary results, describing how the shore erodes and builds up in response to different swash conditions, at the 28th International Conference on Coastal Engineering, in Cardiff.

“It was clear from the conference that coastal scientists and engineers are realising the importance of the swash zone and that Plymouth is one of the world leaders in this area of research,” said Dr Russell.

Next May, further results are due to be presented at the International Symposium on Coastal Dynamics, in Florida.

In their ‘spare’ time, Drs Russell and Butt have been busy working on a book to support the University’s highly popular degree in surf science and technology. Surf Science: An Introduction to Waves for Surfing, (Alison Hodge Publishers, Cornwall) priced £18.95, will be in bookshops from 26 September. An introduction to oceanography and the science of waves, it is the first book to include in-depth coverage of the science of waves from a surfer’s point of view. Topics range from where waves come from and what makes each one different to the factors affecting the behaviour of a surfing break.

The authors are well qualified on their subject – both have PhDs in wave motion and coastal sand transport and are avid surfers. Dr Russell was twice European Surfing Champion, while Dr Butt is a regular contributor to European surf magazines and runs a wave prediction website: www.swell-forecast.com
We’ve all had the experience of asking a passerby for directions, only to have to ask another person for directions just a few metres further along the route. Understanding how people talk about where objects and places are is the main focus of the Spatial Language Group, which comprises academic staff and researchers from the Department of Psychology, the School of Computing, the Institute of Neuroscience and the Department of Modern Languages. The Group, co-ordinated by Dr Kenny Coventry in Psychology, has a range of research projects underway dealing with both small-scale space (eg talking about objects on a table) and large-scale space (eg navigating around a city environment).

One project, funded by the Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and run by Drs Coventry, Angelo Cangelosi, Dan Joyce and Lynn Richards, is developing a neural network model that grounds linguistic descriptions directly in the visual processing of the scenes to be described. In particular, the focus for much of this work has been on how spatial prepositions (words such as in, on, over, or phrases like ‘to the left of’), map onto scenes involving real three-dimensional objects.

“Spatial prepositions are notoriously difficult to acquire when learning a second language because languages differ considerably in how they ‘carve up’ the spatial world,” explained Dr Coventry. For example, in Spanish there is a single word, en, which maps onto the meanings of both in and on in English. Conversely, other languages subdivide containment and support relations more than does English. However, in Dutch there are two words corresponding to on in English: ann is used in examples such as ‘the handle is on the door’, and op is used in examples such as ‘the cup is on the table’.

Developing a computational model that will help people to learn spatial prepositions in any language is one of the goals of the project. Dr Coventry has recently returned from Virginia, where he presented the latest findings from this project at the Cognitive Science Society. His book, Saying, Seeing and Acting (co-authored with Professor Simon Garrod from the University of Glasgow), will be published later this year.

As well as understanding how people describe spatial scenes and environments, the Spatial Language Group is examining how language can be used as a means of training robots to navigate around environments. This work, headed by Dr Guido Bugmann of the School of Computing (and again funded by the EPSRC) opens up the possibility of instructing machines using just natural language in the future.

For other information on the Spatial Language Group, visit www.psy.plym.ac.uk/new/research/slg/
The University's Procurement Unit has announced the first of three training modules for staff involved in procurement. The modules are on offer in the new academic year through the University's Staff Development Programme.

*Essential Purchasing Skills* will run on the 22 October and is designed to provide an overview of the University's purchasing procedures, to provide help and guidance to staff who undertake a purchasing role and to ensure that good practice is disseminated across the institution.

The *Whole Life Costing* module will run in January 2003 and will be relevant to any staff who are purchasing capital equipment, particularly researchers who will more frequently be required to provide evidence of whole life costing to support their bids for research funding.

The third module, *Preparing Specifications*, will run in March 2003 and is again highly relevant for staff responsible for purchasing research equipment, or high value goods and services.

In addition to these three modules, the Procurement Unit is happy to provide training tailored to particular groups of staff where appropriate. Please contact Jenny Wilson, Head of Procurement, on ext 2295/email: j.e.n.wilson@plymouth.ac.uk for further details.

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The Honorary Awards Committee will meet in December to consider nominations for honorary degrees for 2003, and staff are invited to submit nominations.

The University may award honorary degrees to individuals who have either earned distinction for activities associated with education, business, culture, the professions, creative work or public service, or who have given particularly outstanding service to the University or its partner colleges.

Nominees should normally have a tangible connection with the University, or the potential for developing such a connection should be clearly demonstrated in the nomination. Nominees who are not, and will not be, connected with the University can be considered, but the nomination should include a strong case that demonstrates unequivocally that the University of Plymouth is the appropriate institution to be conferring an honorary degree.

The University does not confer honorary awards on individuals who are current staff members or serving governors of the University or its partner colleges.

There are two categories of honorary degree:

- an honorary doctorate, awarded to those who have made a significant contribution at national and/or international level, or made a major contribution to the corporate life of the University
- an honorary masters, awarded to those who have made a major contribution to the region or within a specific area of the University.

Staff are invited to submit nominations by 15 November 2002 to Jane Hopkinson, University Secretary and Academic Registrar. Nomination forms and notes for guidance can be obtained from Margaret Metcalfe, Office of the Vice-Chancellor, on ext 2017/email: m.metcalfe@plymouth.ac.uk

Since not all nominations are approved by the Committee, nominees must not be contacted about nominations, which must be made in confidence.

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“Do I have to go home on Friday?” and “I already feel more confident about going to university” were just two of the comments from the group of 40 Year 11 students who descended on the University for a summer school in July.

The majority of the group came from backgrounds where there is little or no tradition of higher education. They stayed in a hall of residence, experienced subject tasters and social activities, made new friends and got a taste of living away from home, gaining insight into life at one of the UK's largest universities. “It was interesting to see that the students' greatest concerns were about self-confidence and fitting in with the group. The range of activities undoubtedly helped put them at ease,” said Jayne Stanyer, Widening Participation Worker at the University.

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Honorary graduate of the University, Sir Trevor McDonald.
Plymouth Library Services has recently launched Applause South West (www.applausesw.org.uk), the Library’s first online digital archive. The new website showcases theatre in south-west England over the past three centuries and features an extensive multimedia database of actors, theatres, shows, backstage tours, an in-depth view of the work and people involved in producing theatrical shows, plus games and puzzles, virtual reality and an online forum. It is designed for people of all ages and will be an invaluable and unique local resource.

The project, which is funded by the New Opportunities Fund, involves staff from the University as well as the Library and Plymouth Theatre Royal.

The Technical Board of the International Federation of Automatic Control (IFAC), the premier organisation serving the engineering community worldwide, has elected Professor Robert Sutton to chair its Technical Committee on Marine Systems. Professor Sutton, who is based in the University’s Department of Mechanical & Marine Engineering, will serve the Committee for the next three years.

An exciting new chapter in the University’s history is about to unfold with the arrival of the first students of the new Peninsula Medical School. The 130 students – who come from all over the country – will enrol on 30 September, ready to begin their studies at either Plymouth or Exeter.

Amongst those embarking on the innovative degree programme is Rob Lee, a qualified chef who has always wanted to study medicine and successfully completed the Extended Science year at Plymouth. Another of the students is Laura Nutt from Cardiff, who has A levels in biology, chemistry, geography and French and an impressive amount of work experience, including working as a healthcare assistant in the operating theatre of her local hospital.

The Peninsula Medical School – one of the first medical schools in the UK for almost 30 years – has come a long way since it started, in 1998, as a response to a government initiative to increase the number of doctors in the UK. The unique collaboration between the Universities of Plymouth and Exeter and the NHS in Devon and Cornwall will revolutionise the way medicine is taught and has met with much praise – not just from prospective students and their parents and advisors, but from medical practitioners from across the world who have been eager to be involved.

As Professor John Tooke, Dean of the School, explained: “This is a time of change within the NHS. There will be an increasing emphasis placed on health services within a community setting, and less obvious divisions between primary and secondary care. The patient of the future will receive care from teams of healthcare professionals working together. What is so special about our course is that, because it is new and we are unhampered by existing structures, we can design it around the latest health service plans to produce doctors equipped to rise to the challenges that lie ahead.”

Peninsula Medical School students will be based at either Plymouth or Exeter for their first two years. All students will have full access to the facilities of both Universities, on production of their PMS identity card (right).
An end-of-year fashion show at Somerset College of Arts & Technology was a sell-out success.

Hundreds of people turned up to see the superb collections put together by the College’s students at the charity event hosted by Hilary Alexander, Fashion Editor of the Daily Telegraph, who made a grand entrance dressed in a stunning black flamenco skirt.

The show included collections from fashion and textile students on the diploma and degree courses. Highlights of the evening included Wendy Syred’s Rainwear Revolution, Dizzy Tights from Jenny Coralie and Structured Uniformity by Kathryn Eden, and a total of £4,100 was raised for St Margarets Hospice.

Not to be left out, pupils from local schools were able to watch the catwalk show at a special matinee performance and enter the Young Fashion Designer of the Year competition. Outfits and accessories were judged on use of colour, style, fun and originality. Winners were Sophie Kean for her holographic material dress and Amy Crossman for her peacock feathered hat.

The Business School will be welcoming students from the University’s partner colleges to the final year of the BA (Hons) Business Administration course again this year.

The students, who have successfully completed their HND in Business, now have an opportunity to ‘top up’ their qualification to a full honours degree. They should be encouraged by the success of their predecessors – of the 22 graduates from the course who obtained a 2:1 degree in 2001, seven came from partner colleges.

Three students from Truro College’s HND Sound Engineering and Multimedia Integration course have had an exciting time during work experience in the entertainment business.

Mark Borrow’s placement at the BBC gave him the opportunity to work on the Jonathan Ross Show, Later with Jools Holland, Tomorrow’s World and Blue Peter. Fellow student, Phil Collins, worked at Olympic recording studios (the top ten hit factory), while Geoff Gibson tried out his skills at Peter Gabriel’s Real World studios and also worked on the main stage at this summer’s Glastonbury Festival.

A North Devon College lecturer has recently celebrated winning a top award. John Sandbach was delighted when he came top in his category for the South West Teaching Awards, winning a prize of £3,000 for the College.

Former pupil, Lucy Hill, nominated John for the BP Award for Science. She described John as ‘the best A level biology teacher’ she had ever had. “He made science understandable and always had our whole class in stitches,” she said.

John goes forward to the Teaching Awards 2002 National Ceremony in October.

The Teaching Awards Trust aims to use the awards, which were established four years ago, to publicly acknowledge and celebrate the crucial role teachers play in the lives of their students, their community and the nation as a whole.

John Sandbach receives his award from Rachel Gourdin of BP (British Petroleum).
The May edition of UPfront reported that a Race Equality Working Group, chaired by Ann Jeffries, was developing the University’s response to the Race Relations Amendment Act. The Group drafted the required Race Equality Statement, Policy and Action Plan for EOC and it has since been approved by the Board of Governors. The challenge now is to raise awareness of, and implement, this policy as required by the legislation.

The black and minority ethnic (BME) population of the South West is around 1.9%, which means that robust race equality measures are even more crucial than in those areas of the country with more diverse populations.

As a public sector body, the University has a key role to play in eliminating racial discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. In addition to British BME staff and students, we welcome students from over 100 international backgrounds – and our community benefits from the resulting cultural diversity.

For more information on what the new legislation and the University’s Race Equality Policy means in practice for you, visit: www.plymouth.ac.uk/equalopportunities

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There was an invasion of friendly Vikings in Plymouth recently, when the University’s TV centre welcomed its Danish partners in the VirTEPPE (Virtual Training in Environmental Protection for Printers in Europe) project.

VirTEPPE is a European Union project funded under the Information Society Technologies (Advanced Training Systems) programme. Set up to explore the potential for training worker-learners in the print industries of Denmark and the UK, it focuses on the issues of environmental protection.

The project includes a novel virtual learning environment that combines high quality video content via satellite with interactive text messaging and PowerPoint presentations via standard modem connection, all delivered to the PC screen. The unique learning environment provides training to Europe and beyond without the need for cable, ISDN or ADSL broadband connection.

According to Dr Adrian Vranch, the University’s VirTEPPE Project Researcher, the project has highlighted the fact that Danish printers are more aware of environmental protection than their UK counterparts and the ADSL infrastructure is more widely available in Denmark.

“The advantage of the VirTEPPE approach is that we can reach trainees anywhere within the satellite ‘footprint’ to deliver high quality video – and we can extend to other countries, regardless of whether or not they have a terrestrial broadband infrastructure.”

More information on VirTEPPE can be found at www.virteppe.net/

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Following the publication of the A level results, staff involved in clearing were busier than ever – over 2,500 telephone and 100 electronic enquiries were handled on the first day alone. Fay Steer, Head of Marketing, explains what went on during this hectic period...

“A great deal of effort goes in to the clearing operation across the institution, with planning commencing almost a year beforehand. This year, the Actionline team was even bigger than before – with 14 students and six Marketing & PR staff – and a number of new initiatives ensured that the telephones didn’t stop ringing:

- Registry staff ran a dedicated ‘Head of 6th’ hotline for schools and colleges in our top 20 postcode areas
- over 12,000 ‘remember the University of Plymouth’ postcards were sent to all ‘conditional firm’, ‘conditional insurance’ and ‘conditional declined’ applicants, which yielded some very positive feedback
- PR produced a tenth-anniversary newspaper supplement, which was distributed with the Western Morning News, Plymouth Evening Herald, Exeter Express & Echo and Torbay Herald Express.

“Other developments included improvements to the news release pack, which boosted our local and national media coverage; to the online clearing enquiry form; and to the training programme for the Actionline team.

“By the end of the second week, the University had dealt with 5,955 telephone enquires, 562 electronic enquiries and 166 visitors, generating 1,036 potential clearing applicants as of 30 August. In addition, the website recorded a staggering 280,000 hits during this time.

“Thank you to everyone who was involved, for all your time and effort.”

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An isolated beach hut built from timber salvaged from the Kodima made local and national headlines when it was discovered by a swimmer. The ‘shipwreck shack’, revealed to be the creation of University design students, attracted attention from the Daily Telegraph, Guardian, Sun and several regional newspapers, including the Evening Herald and Western Morning News.

Professor Tim Perfect from Psychology gave Prima readers some useful advice for those ‘tip-of-the-tongue’ moments. “Thinking around the subject or going through the alphabet can help, but the best thing you can do is talk about something completely different,” he explained. “The word will then pop back into your head, just when you’re least expecting it.”

A Scuba World reporter praised the professionalism of staff and students after spending a day at the University’s Diving & Sailing Centre. “The operation ran smoothly and efficiently with a careful eye being kept on safety,” he said. “Everyone seemed to understand the intricacies of the dive. Well done, Plymouth University.”

BBC History magazine celebrated the recent revival of seaside puppets Punch and Judy. “Set up a Punch and Judy show and a crowd will gather,” said Dr Harry Bennett, Lecturer in History at the University. “It is incredible to think that the children who will sit down on the sands at Exmouth this year are participating in something that has its roots in Italian popular culture of the 1500s.”

The Times Higher reported fears that teachers are relying too heavily on downloading government maths lesson plans from the web. “It is fine to have guidelines, but don’t lose the creativity,” warned Education Lecturer Denis Hayes, who is based in the Faculty of Arts & Education.

The University enjoyed widespread coverage during this year’s clearing period – with advice and case studies appearing in the Guardian, Independent, Daily Express and London Evening Standard, as well as in local newspapers. The Plymouth Extra dedicated its front page to information about the University and the support and guidance available to students.

Meningitis kills over 300 people a year and leaves many more with permanent disabilities, but recent research conducted by the Meningitis Trust suggests that over 90% of adults don’t know that they, not just children, are at risk. That’s why the theme of this year’s Meningitis Trust Awareness Week, between 23 and 29 September, is ‘meningitis – adults get it too’.

“Meningitis can kill within hours if left untreated, which is why it is vital to be aware of the symptoms,” said Alex Brown, the University’s Head of Health & Welfare. “However, it is important to remember that only some of the typical symptoms may show. Anyone who suspects that they, or someone they know, has meningitis or meningococcal septicaemia should contact their GP immediately, or go to the nearest accident and emergency department. With prompt treatment many sufferers make a full recovery.”

For more information, visit the Meningitis Trust website at: www.meningitis-trust.org, or call the 24-hour helpline on 0845 6000 800.
After graduating in 1994 with a degree in fine art, University of Plymouth graduate Rachel Wood (below) worked on oil painting commissions for a year before joining software giant Codemasters as a graphic artist. Seven years on, she has progressed to the role of Senior Lead Artist, working on chart-topping computer games.

“I first became interested in computer games design for a number of reasons,” she says. “It gave me the chance to learn a new medium, work as part of a team and contribute to a young, creative and growing industry.

“One of the best elements of student life was having the opportunity to work in a studio space every day, surrounded by other creative people, and without any real financial constraints. Three years of creative exploration also meant that I had time to reconsider where my interests lay and hone artistic skills – this came in very useful when I found myself at the beginning of this process once again, this time in front of a computer.”

Rachel, 29, had little understanding of computers when she first joined Codemasters, but has developed both her technical knowledge and management skills and now oversees teams of artists developing the latest in games software.

“I’m fortunate that Codemasters has had a steady stream of hit games, and I’ve been privileged to work on a string of number one hits such as Micro Machines V3, Colin McRae Rally, TOCA Touring Cars and LMA Manager.

“I’m currently working on a new product called Club Football. Codemasters has acquired the rights to 15 of the top European football clubs, including Manchester United, Liverpool FC, AC Milan, Bayern Munich and Barcelona. We are modelling all of the first team players in 3D, which is a huge challenge, and this has meant travelling to the clubs to photograph the players and stadia to ensure the results are as accurate as possible. There is a good feeling amongst the team about this title, and I’m looking forward to seeing it completed at the end of the year.

“With the launch of next-generation consoles, the games industry is moving ever closer to that of film, and this opens up the scope for artists in the field. At the moment I’m happy to see where this takes me, but I haven’t given up on the fine art just yet!”
**Exhibition**

**30 September – 25 October**
- Monday to Friday, 9 am – 7 pm, Sherwell Centre: Paintings by Dan Wheatley
- Dan is a painter with a preferred medium of oil paint on canvas. Born in Sydney, he started painting at an early age, influenced by his grandfather, who was a well-respected painter in Australia. He has set up a business painting murals with the help of the Prince’s Trust and specialises in Trompe L’oeil. In September 2000 he began studying with the late Robert Lenkiewicz.

**30 October – 20 November**
- Monday to Friday, 9 am – 7 pm, Sherwell Centre: Open art exhibition for staff
- This is the first open art exhibition by the University aimed at giving people the opportunity to exhibit their artwork – see page 8 for further details.

**Concerts**

**4 September**
- 7.30 pm: Emma Kirkby – soprano with Jakob Lindberg – lute

Lute songs and solos from England and Italy. Campion, Morley, Dowland, etc.

Emma Kirkby performs throughout the world and has made over 100 recordings, ranging from Hildegarde of Bingen to madrigals of the Italian and English Renaissance. She will be joined by the Swedish lutenist Jakob Lindberg, one of the most prolific performers in Renaissance and Baroque music. The concert is sponsored by Gill Akaster Solicitors.

Tickets cost £14 (£8 for students/registered unemployed).

Venue: Sherwell Centre.

**16 October**
- 7.30 pm: Mandelring String Quartet


The Mandelring Quartet is from Neustadt An Der Weinstrasse, Germany. In 1991 the Quartet won the international competitions for string quartets in Munich and Evian, and came first in the 1994 Paolo Borciani Competition in Reggio Emilia, Italy. Tickets cost £14 (£8 for students/registered unemployed).

Venue: Sherwell Centre.

(NB Change of venue since the last UPfront.)

**16 November**
- 7.30pm: Eimer Piano Trio


The Eimer Piano Trio was formed in 1997 and was trio-in-residence for two consecutive years on the Department of Social Policy & Social Work.

**Lectures**

**20 September**

Venue: Upper Lecture Theatre, Sherwell Centre, Plymouth campus.

**30 September**
- 5 pm – 7 pm: A Social Policy Research Seminar by Professor Sylvia Walby, Professor of Sociology at Leeds University, on ‘Modernities, Globalisation and Complexity’. All are welcome to attend. Contact: Val Woodward on ext 30202/val.woodward@plymouth.ac.uk.

Venue: Yealm Room, Babbage Building, Plymouth campus.

**Awards Ceremony**

**19 October**
- The Faculty of Land, Food & Leisure will hold its annual awards ceremony in the Sports Hall on the Seale-Hayne campus, from 12 noon. Graduates will be receiving their certificates from the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Roland Levinsky.

**22 October**
- 7.15 pm: ‘The Use of Visual Aids in an Age of Electronics’, a talk and discussion led by Commodore David Squire CBE FNI, as part of the Nautical Institute’s international investigation into establishing the seafaring communities’ needs for visual navigation aids in an age of electronics systems. Contact: Paul Wright, ext 2466/p.wright@plymouth.ac.uk.

Venue: Lecture Theatre 5, Babbage Building, Plymouth campus.

**23 November**
- 7.30pm: Piano recital by International Tchaikovsky Competition prizewinner Dr Alexander Tselyakov in support of the EarlyBird Diabetes Trust.


The concert is sponsored by Wrigleys. Tickets cost £10 (£5 for students/registered unemployed).

Venue: Sherwell Centre.
**BADMINTON players of reasonable standard wanted for Monday-night club in Mannamead, Plymouth. All ages welcome. Contact Andy on ext 3831/a.dickens@plymouth.ac.uk**

**Orlando – Luxury villa to rent. 5 bedrooms/4 bathrooms. 30’ x 15’ pool with jacuzzi. Near to all main attractions. Website: www.orlandoluxuryvilla.com email: z.lethbridge@plymouth.ac.uk phone: 01726 883741.**

**Lecturer is looking for a studio/1 bed SC flat or house in central Plymouth from October. Contact: Joasia, 07718 586993.**

**For sale: Tanglewood electro-acoustic guitar & Laney 50 watt amplifier. Both excellent condition. £250 ono for joint sale, or can sell separately. Contact Andy on ext 3831 or a.dickens@plymouth.ac.uk**

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### small ads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name</strong></th>
<th>Simon Paice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job title</strong></td>
<td>Technical Manager, Faculty of Human Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Campus</strong></td>
<td>Plymouth</td>
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**Three desert island discs?**
*August and Everything After* by the Counting Crows, *Californication* by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and *Barbi Girl* by Aqua – just to remind me that being stranded on a desert island and isolated from popular culture isn’t without a few benefits!

**Pet peeve?**
Fire doors.

**Who do you most admire?**
Lance Armstrong – cancer survivor and four times Tour de France winner.

**Proudest moment?**
Graduating from the Royal Naval Engineering College with a first-class degree: I was the only one in the whole passing out parade marching in step!

**What kind of car are you like and why?**
A five-year-old Rover: solidly built but lacking some style, not that quick and a little temperamental on cold mornings.

**Any claims to fame?**
I’ve seen inside the Queen’s handbag.

**First crush?**
Oh, now that would be telling….

**Favourite dessert?**
All of them.

**Who would you like to swap places with for a day?**
Steven Hawking – it would be so novel to be able to think about the nature of the universe without giving myself a migraine…

**What three things would you rescue if your house was on fire?**
My wife, the cat and the house insurance policy documents (not necessarily in that order).

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**In a new series, UPfront puts some searching – okay, downright nosy! – questions to a member of staff.**

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The Alumni & Development Office has recently launched the gift collection, a new range of University merchandise. Among the items available are fountain pens, paperweights, mugs, business card holders and, of course, teddy bears!

“We have sourced the best products at the best prices to keep costs as low as possible,” said Dave Briggs, Alumni Development Officer. “The products are of exceptional quality and are suitable as gifts or souvenirs. We will continue to add new items so that the range expands over the coming year.”

The Alumni & Development Office is happy to source merchandise of all kinds, saving staff the time and trouble of doing this themselves. Contact Dave Briggs on ext 3983 or email: d.j.briggs@plymouth.ac.uk for further details, or visit www.plymouth.ac.uk/gift_collection

“gift collection”

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What is the caller saying to University photographer, Lloyd Russell? There’s a £20 music voucher for the writer of the wittiest caption. Please email your entry - along with your name, job title and department - to Paola Simoneschi at p.simoneschi@plymouth.ac.uk, or send it to her at the Department of Marketing & Public Relations, 6 Portland Villas, Plymouth campus. The closing date is Wednesday 16 October 2002.