• Bounce capital
   Academic goes up in the world

• Cornwall benefits
   Knowledge Spa opens in Truro

• Freshers’ funding
   Bursary boost for students

• Sailing forward
   University and Motorola partnership
Welcome

Welcome to the November/December 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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Front cover: Dr Matthew Watkinson bounces for Plymouth (see below)
Photo credit: Evening Herald.

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BOUNCE CAPITAL

GEOLOGIST Dr Matthew Watkinson gets a special mention for going beyond the call of duty to help Plymouth celebrate its title as the bounciest city in the UK.

Matthew responded to a plea from the university’s press office – part of the marketing and communications department – to jump on a bouncy castle to illustrate the news story in Plymouth’s Evening Herald.

The story came about when it was announced that scientists have discovered Plymouth dips as much as three inches every time the tide comes in, and bounces back again when it goes out. Although the phenomenon has been known about for over a hundred years, it has only recently been measured, and the dipping and rising happens so slowly that it isn’t noticeable.

Most of the UK ‘bounces’ no more than an inch, with Liverpool and London less than a third as bouncy as Plymouth.

Matthew, 40, said: “I’m proud to live in Britain’s bounciest city. It’s fascinating to think that as we walk on the earth’s surface in this country, where there are no major earthquakes, the ground is going up and down underneath our feet.

“Also, the rocks are tugged around by the moon in the same way as the sea, so we get earth tides as well as sea tides, but the movement is so small it can hardly be measured.”

“The main use of this research is for precise engineering projects such as the Channel Tunnel, where the two ends had to meet up exactly. It was impossible until quite recently, when the satellite technology was developed.”
Cornwall-based students of the Faculty of Health & Social Work (FHSW) and the Peninsula Medical School are making use of the latest hi-tech facilities at the new Knowledge Spa (right) at the Royal Cornwall Hospital in Truro.

The £14-million building, which was officially opened by HRH Prince Charles recently, is the training base for FHSW and Medical School students, plus other health and social care students, from the beginning of and throughout their careers.

“This is a very important day for Cornwall not only because of the exciting opportunities it brings for training, but also because of the important opportunities for economic regeneration and the fact that it makes a reality of community involvement in health.”

Alongside its educational role, the Knowledge Spa is also set to become a focal point for medical-related research and development and business incubation in Cornwall. It is anticipated that it will have a major impact on the local economy, attracting in excess of 400 jobs and around £30 million into the county within the next five to ten years.

During his visit, Prince Charles met staff and students and toured the building, which is equipped with the latest technology in broadband information and communication, including teleconferencing, that will play a vital role in providing students with access to the latest developments and cutting-edge research around the world.

Unveiling the special plaque to mark the official opening of the new building, Prince Charles said: “This is a very important day for Cornwall not only because of the exciting opportunities it brings for training, but also because of the important opportunities for economic regeneration and the fact that it makes a reality of community involvement in health.”

For other FHSW and Peninsula Medical School news, see page 9.

HRH Prince Charles at the Knowledge Spa opening.
MARIA Donkin from Biological Sciences recently swapped the lab for the newsroom of Plymouth’s popular local paper, the Evening Herald. Maria sent us this report explaining why... and how she got on.

“On my first day I found myself approaching the Evening Herald offices with some trepidation. I’d come for a week of ‘work experience’ - isn’t that what 16 year olds do?!

“I was there as programme leader for our new degree, BSc (Hons) Science and the Media. With our first student cohort starting in September I’d decided to get some practical experience of newspaper journalism. And since we’d developed this degree with the support of local media collaborators including the Evening Herald, where better to start?

“That first morning saw me in the maelstrom of the newsroom just before first edition deadline – the front-page story had been rewritten to cover the breaking news about the rescue of the three Atlantic rowers off the Irish coast.

One of the rowers, Peter Bray, was born in Plymouth and was hailed as a local hero. It was exciting to see the paper go off to press, and in the Herald’s ‘ship’ building you can literally see and hear the paper come off the huge printing presses.

“The next day I found myself in the Plymouth Crown Court with the court reporter, trying to stifle a coughing fit in case the judge threw me out. We heard the evidence for the defence and the summing up in a difficult case with charges of ‘threatening to kill’ and ‘false imprisonment’.

“From one extreme to another – the following day saw me accompanying a reporter to a champagne lunch where we met Greg Dyke at the opening of a new residential development in Liskeard. I was assured this is not an everyday happening and that most newspaper journalists are lucky if they have time to eat a packet of crisps at their desk.

“My time at the Herald gave me great practical experience with which no amount of theory can compare. I learned how a news story comes about, from the initial idea to its appearance in the final edition – and I had a much better time than I would have had lying on the beach this summer!”

Maria is now back, working with students on the new degree, which aims to equip them as scientists with the skills to understand and communicate science accurately to the public. Graduates can expect to find careers in areas such as scientific journalism, public relations and teaching.

“My thanks go to Bill Martin, Deputy Editor, and John Casey, News Editor, for looking after me, and the rest of all the Herald team who gave up time for me when they were so busy,” she said.

“Special thanks to the Editor, Alan Qualtrough, for allowing me to visit and for his continued support for the science and the media degree.”

To find out more about the degree, contact 01752 233093, or email science@plymouth.ac.uk
Two Plymouth ‘freshers’ met with the Higher Education Minister Kim Howells recently to receive accommodation bursaries that will help their financial situation while they study.

John Cheung, who has embarked on a degree in computer systems and networks, and Natalie Ducker, studying modern languages with business, travelled to the House of Commons to meet the Minister.

Mr Howells presented the students with accommodation bursaries from UNIAID, a charity founded in 2001 to help young people plan and cope with the financial costs of higher education and provide independent financial advice to those who most need it.

With support from student accommodation provider UNITE, the pilot scheme has enabled 22 students from 15 universities across the UK to take up free accommodation places.

Four students from the University of Plymouth were selected to receive the bursaries – as well as John and Natalie, media arts student Tim Fuller and Rose Fallon, who is studying sociology, have also benefited.

"We were keen to get involved in this scheme so that we could help students from backgrounds that, traditionally, have not seen higher education as an option open to them," said Julie Allen, Post-16 Development Officer at the university.

"We are thrilled that four of our students have been successful in gaining the bursaries, which will play a substantial part in easing the financial burden on them while they study."

Speaking in tongues

The European Day of Languages was marked with a celebration at Plymouth Business School’s Business and Languages Information Service (BLIS).

Students and staff pondered over a tricky ‘guess the language’ quiz – “talk to me” translated into the 20 official languages of the newly expanded European Union, which now include Slovenian, Czech and Lithuanian. Appropriately, the winner was Polish student Edyta Knizewska.

Visitors sampled food from European countries while viewing the multimedia facilities in BLIS, and French, German and Spanish language lecturers were on hand throughout the day to advise students of the opportunities to study languages at the university.

BLIS manager Emma Thompson was match-maker for the day, but not in the romantic sense! “The Tandem Scheme matches students from different countries who meet and help each other with their native tongue,” she explained. “One of the trickiest matches yet was made at the event – a Spanish student who wanted to speak Norwegian was put in touch with a Norwegian speaker.”

For further information about BLIS and the Tandem Scheme, contact Emma Thompson or Christine Hathaway on ext 2886 or email: pbsblis@plymouth.ac.uk

Theatre discount

Recreation Services are offering discounted tickets for performances at the Plymouth’s Theatre Royal and Drum Theatre to all university staff and their families.

Whatever your taste, be it musicals, a night at the opera or a Shakespearean experience, there will be a show to suit you.

Contact Lindsay Brooks on ext 2264 for further details.
The University of Plymouth has joined forces with one of its graduates, top British yachtsman Conrad Humphreys, Principal of the Motorola Ocean Racing Team, to form a strategic alliance that will exploit the strengths of each partner.

Conrad, who graduated in 1997, is already working closely with the University’s Recreation Service, which is advising him on diet and fitness to help get him in top condition for the biggest race of his life so far.

On 7 November Conrad set sail on board Open 60 HELLOMOTO to take part in the Vendée Globe, solo, non-stop, around the world yacht race. This 26,000-mile solo marathon around the globe is known as the ‘Everest’ of the sport of sailing.

As well as focusing on his fitness, the university has been exploring other areas in which it can maximise the opportunity of working with Conrad and the Motorola Ocean Racing Team.

In the future, students on courses such as BSc (Hons) Marine Sports Technology and business degrees will have the opportunity to undertake exciting work placements with the team, gaining hands-on experience that will be invaluable to their studies and future careers. In return, Conrad and his team will benefit from technical advice and support, performance analysis and dietary expertise provided by specialists at the university.

“We are delighted to be working in partnership with Conrad and the Motorola team,” said Lesley Coulton, Head of Recreation at the university. “The strategic alliance is still in its early stages but we are looking forward to the opportunities and benefits it will undoubtedly bring in research, training and work placements.”

“I’m proud to be a University of Plymouth graduate,” said Conrad.

“Plymouth and the university have everything I need to help me and the team in our ventures – a first-rate training location, a wealth of expertise and plenty of well-equipped, hard-working graduates. In return, I hope to be a worthy ambassador for the university and the city.”

To follow Conrad’s progress in the race, log on to www.conradhumphreys.com
A team of divers led by university marine biologist Dr Ross Coleman and Plymouth graduate Dr Miles Hoskin has recently completed the first stage of research measuring the success of a major conservation strategy for the marine environment.

“Last March, the island of Lundy, off the north coast of Devon, became the UK’s first statutory No-Take Zone (NTZ). In the designated area, all fishing and collecting of marine life is banned,” Dr Coleman explained. “The NTZ is designated to protect the unique habitat of Lundy and also acts as a means of conserving dwindling stocks of lobsters and scallops, important shellfish in the fishing economy of the South West.”

Dr Coleman and Dr Hoskin, who is based in Falmouth, together with Dr Keith Hiscock of the Marine Biological Association, were awarded a major research grant of £340,000 by English Nature and the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to study the NTZ.

“The success of the Lundy project is key for the long-term outlook for NTZs as a tool for managing fisheries and ensuring that the local fishing economy and the environment both have a sustainable future,” said Dr Coleman. “We need to be able to tell local people and the government how a total fishing ban has affected stocks of shellfish, not just that they may have increased but by however much.

Lundy has some wonderful underwater scenery and many people travel a long way to dive there, so it is also important to see how this affects things. After some pilot work, we are now ready to start looking at the underwater environment around Lundy tracking changes over the next five years - it will be hard work but well worth it.

“Miles and I have assembled a fantastic team of divers and our work is showing interesting developments. As reported on BBC 1, Radio 4 and local television, our first-year results are very interesting, showing a three-fold difference in lobster numbers inside the NTZ compared to other similar places.”
This autumn’s Faculty of Arts graduation ceremonies saw hundreds of graduates receive their awards. They were joined by two honorary graduates, renowned jazz musician Mike Westbrook and David Mackay, the influential architect who has worked with Plymouth City Council on a ‘Master Plan’ for the city.

David, who – with his team – has worked in partnership with the council since January 2003, planning the redevelopment of Plymouth, received his honorary doctorate from the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Roland Levinsky.

David is recognised as one of the world’s leading architects and planners. His award was presented the day after he gave a lecture at the university and signed copies of his book, A Vision for Plymouth, which was published by the university. The book is on sale at Waterstones, New George Street, Plymouth, priced £10.00.

A senior lecturer has authored a comprehensive course in Spanish, thanks in part to feedback received from Plymouth students.

Camino al Español, by Chelo Andres of the Languages Group in the Business School, has recently been published by Cambridge University Press. A groundbreaking course designed to lead the adult beginner to an advanced level, its features include teacher, learner and grammar guides.

“The book has been tailored for university students – and our own students, who have been using a draft of the book for two years, have been an excellent source of feedback and inspiration,” said Chelo.

The university and Paignton Zoo Environmental Park in Devon have joined forces to run a new masters course that has already attracted interest from around the world.

MSc Zoo Conservation combines the university’s strengths in degree courses and research activities in conservation with those of the zoo environmental park, which is one of the UK’s leading zoos.

Graduates from as far afield as Japan and the USA have enrolled on the course, which covers areas of scientific study including ecology, conservation genetics, and animal nutrition, behaviour and welfare.

“This course is a natural development of the university’s long-standing relationship with Paignton Zoo Environmental Park,” said Dr John Eddison, programme leader and co-ordinator of taught postgraduate programmes at the School of Biological Sciences. “We look forward to seeing graduates from this new course having influence in global conservation activities in both zoos and other conservation organisations.”

Paignton Zoo Head of Science Dr Amy Plowman said the course is ‘designed to provide essential background knowledge for professionals in modern zoos and wildlife management organisations’. “The aim is to train future curators, scientific researchers and zoo directors. There is no other course like it in this country. The students are not simply learning the theory; they are getting direct experience at the zoo,” she added.

To find out more about the course, contact the Faculty of Science at science@plymouth.ac.uk
STAFF and students at the new headquarters building for the university’s Faculty of Health & Social Work (FHSW) and the Peninsula Medical School welcomed a VIP visitor in October.

Sir Nigel Crisp KCB, Chief Executive Officer at the Department for Health and the NHS, undertook a tour of the impressive purpose-built HQ, which is linked to Derriford Hospital by a pathway and houses imitation ward environments and telematically linked lecture theatres where experts can interact with students across other sites.

Above: Sir Nigel Crisp with students in the computing facilities in the new headquarters.

During his visit Sir Nigel presented bursaries to four medical students, Paula Fitzpatrick, Laura Burring, Emma Aspinal and Leigh Cowling, and was introduced to students from the FHSW's new programmes in dietetics and physiotherapy.

“We need more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals and we need them from all walks of life,” said Sir Nigel. “I am delighted to be here today to meet with students who are benefiting from the bursaries offered by the Peninsula Medical School Foundation, in order that they are able to study and train for clinical careers.”

“Sir Nigel heard how the faculty and the Peninsula Medical School are working together in providing state-of-the-art accommodation to promote inter-professional learning, most notably in the clinical skills area throughout Devon and Cornwall,” said Professor Mary Watkins, Dean of FHSW.

Sir Nigel’s visit was on the same day that John Reid, Secretary for Health, visited the Knowledge Spa in Truro, the base for Medical School and FHSW in Cornwall.

(For more information about the Knowledge Spa, see page 3.)
TWO podiatry students have had their performance and achievements recognised by a leading pharmaceutical company, Galderma UK, which specialises in dermatology.

First-year student Caron Passmore and second-year Sarah Holt (below) received awards from the company, which is very supportive of podiatry education. Their awards were presented by Faye Doris, Head of the university’s School of Health Professions, part of the Faculty of Health & Social Work.

TWO Plymouth scientists are helping to dispel the myths that surround the profession of politician and scientist.

Research fellows Dr Jason Spencer-Hall and Dr Richard Kirby are part of the MP Pairing Scheme run by the Royal Society, the UK national academy of science. They have already spent a week at the House of Commons as part of the scheme’s Westminster Week, which provided them with a behind-the-scenes insight into how science policy is formed, as well as giving them an understanding of the working life of an MP.

While Dr Hall-Spencer, who is based at the Plymouth Marine Laboratory, spent the week with the Liberal Democrat MP for St Ives, Andrew George, Dr Kirby, from the School of Biological Sciences, was paired with Linda Gilroy, Labour MP for Plymouth Sutton.

Launched in 2001, the MP Pairing Scheme aims to build bridges between parliamentarians and some of the best scientists in the UK. It is an opportunity for MPs to become better informed about science issues and for scientists to increase their understanding of how they can influence science policy.

Richard (left) and Jason are participating in the Royal Society’s MP Pairing Scheme.

Making a difference

An innovative digital system embedded in the architecture of the university’s Portland Square building is enabling people who pass through the building to broadcast the phrase ‘I want to make a difference’.

‘Making a Difference at the University of Plymouth’, a project for i-DAT* by Lucy Kimball, Creative and Performing Arts Fellow at the Ruskin School of Drawing & Fine Art, at Oxford University, is using a system called Arch-OS. This enables passers-by to press a special button to broadcast the phrase around Portland Square and automatically send an email to the Vice-Chancellor.

For more information about the project, visit www.i-dat.org/makingadifference

* i-DAT is a ‘creative playground for trans-disciplinary practice in digital art and technology’.

Enhancing the student experience

THE annual VC’s Conference took place in October, this year’s theme being ‘enhancing the student experience’.

The half-day event was a celebration of the many learning and teaching activities in progress at the university and culminated in the presentation of the university’s Teaching Fellowship Awards by the Vice-Chancellor.

This scheme provides funds so that members of staff have the opportunity to undertake some innovative developmental work in an area of learning and teaching.

Sally Brown, one of the speakers at the conference.
TRACY Wilson, Head of Marketing (Commercial), brings us the latest news on Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP).

• Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP), a national scheme funded by the government and designed to help companies with high-growth potential take advantage of university expertise, has seen 3,000 graduates and firms work together since 1975.

Just halfway through their KTP project with the university, Exeter firm Beale & Cole, a building engineering services company, has had exceptional results. Business information management graduate Matt Simmonds has been working with the company, which has recognised the need to integrate IT systems and processes between its two main sites. “With support from the university’s academic team, Matt has made a significant contribution to our business in a short period of time,” said Managing Director Philip Beale.

“Just a year into the project we are already seeing benefits across business strategy, operations, financial management and communications.”

• Redruth-based company Redwood Joinery was the winner of the University of Plymouth-sponsored Profit from Knowledge award in this year’s Business Challenge. The company triumphed over stiff competition thanks to its outstanding business results, some of which were achieved by Plymouth graduate Sunny Saswata’s Knowledge Transfer Partnership with the firm. Their award was presented by host Jennie Bond and Business Challenge chair, Gaynor Coley, at a gala dinner at St Mellion Golf & Country Club in Saltash.

For further information about KTP, contact Emma Hewitt on 01752 233504/email: emma.hewitt@plymouth.ac.uk, or visit www.ktponline.co.uk

SCHOLAR OF THE YEAR

STUDENT Richard Mann scooped the title of West Country Scholar of the Year following his presentation to the Dairy Crest/National Farmers’ Union Scholarship Fund judging panel. Graham Osborne, Director of Direct Milk Supply for Dairy Crest, presented him with a cheque for £2,500 and a bronze cow trophy.

Richard, aged 22, comes from a dairy farming family at Gulval, Boscreege Farm, Penzance. He is currently in the final year of a degree in agriculture at the Seale-Hayne campus. The course is orientated towards livestock-based systems and in particular the dairy industry, and Richard’s chosen honours project is titled ‘Benchmarking: An effective management tool within dairy farming’.

Dairy Crest is the main sponsor of the Scholarship Trust. “I see this as an opportunity to ensure that high calibre young people are attracted into the dairy industry,” said Graham Osborne. “Dairy Crest is committed to the future of dairying in the South West. This can be demonstrated by our major investment at our Davidstow Creamery in Cornwall, which has developed the site into Europe’s largest and most efficient mature cheddar factory.”

RCN FELLOWSHIP

NURSE Professor Christine Webb has received the highest honour from the Royal College of Nursing (RCN).

The RCN Fellowship bestowed on Christine, who is Professor of Health Studies at the university’s School of Nursing & Acute Care, is in recognition of her outstanding and distinguished career in nurse education and research that has spanned over 40 years.

One of her major achievements has been her use of a feminist perspective to explore the experience of women, both as nurses and patients. Her unique and uncompromising approach has resulted in women’s health issues much higher up the healthcare agenda.

“The RCN is extremely proud to confer our highest honour on Christine, who is a leader in her field, and her work in promoting women’s health,” Sylvia Denton, RCN President.

Professor Webb (centre) with left to right: Sylvia Denton, RCN President, Eirlys Warrington, Chair of RCN Council, Peggy Vidot and RCN General Secretary Beverly Malone.
A team of three agricultural students from Duchy College at Stoke Climsland received runner-up awards in the final of the Farm Planner of the Year competition.

The group were presented with a commemorative goblet by the Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs.

The Duchy College team consisted of sister and brother duo, Liz and David Christophers, and Richard Mann. Lecturer Roger Trewhella persuaded them to enter the competition and acted as their mentor throughout.

The team had to produce a strategic plan for a real-life case study based on one of the largest and best-managed dairy businesses in the south of England. Their objective was to increase the wealth of the partners and their families and illustrate a sustained satisfactory return on the capital invested in the business.

The Duchy College team, together with teams from Writtle Agricultural College in Essex and Newcastle University, were selected as finalists.

“The team did so well – they narrowly missed out on the first prize,” said Roger. “They worked very hard and really applied themselves to the challenge. They really were a credit to themselves and Duchy College.”

Somerset College of Arts & Technology graduate Sarah Baldwin (below) has won the prestigious Graduate Designer of the Year award at this year’s Design & Decoration Awards.

Chosen from 300 nominations, Sarah has been offered a three-month paid work placement in the studio of Osbourne & Little, one of the UK’s most highly regarded interior design firms.

Sarah, who studied textile and surface pattern design at the college, is no stranger to success. Not only did she graduate with first-class honours, examples of her work have been used as ‘inspirational pieces’ by top UK fashion designer Alexander McQueen.

Recently, Sarah has been working freelance as a lecturer, passing on her considerable skills and knowledge to the current student cohort at the college.

Plymouth College of Art & Design (PCAD) student Ella Massingberd (above) recently won the competition to design and create the new ‘Oscars’ for further education staff across the UK.

The Star Awards is a new award scheme created by the Department for Education & Skills ‘Success for All’ strategy to recognise the work of people in the learning and skills sector.

Ella’s striking designs incorporated metal and glass to create a mix of elegance and creativity. PCAD is one of only a handful of colleges nationwide that has a hot glass furnace, and this was used to manufacture the 2004 trophies.

The judges thought Ella’s designs were ‘original and striking’, and she saw the trophies being presented at a gala dinner at the Brewery in London last month.

Ella, who has now completed her studies, is working as a freelance sculptor in Exeter. She welcomes commissions and can be contacted on 01752 226976.
Great start

After many chewed fingernails the Students’ Union commercial services opened for a new year with improved facilities and further success. The bar turnover for the first few weeks exceeded all previous records, and improvements in the facility (many thanks to the university) have continued to impress.

The shop has also gone from strength to strength with record takings. Additional work with customer care policies and product ranges has ensured that we have had the best possible start to the year. The entertainments team have also seen the fruits of their labour with a very successful Freshers’ Fair and superb entertainment schedule.

Despite the fact that costs have had to increase to fund new facilities, the indication so far is that this will be a successful year with many more students leaving with a positive experience and many great memories.

Wonder web

We have launched a new website at www.upsu.com, providing a useful resource for students. Whether they want information on sports teams or the advice centre – or even to check out photos from a night out in the union - will keep them up to date with what’s going on.

The creativity of students such as Chris Blunt, who is in the second-year of the MediaLab Arts degree, was enlisted to give the site a fresh look.

We are already investigating e-commerce so we can sell Plymouth clothing online and looking at enhancing the features by adding a webcam and even an online student radio station. Watch this space!

Branching out

Thirty UPSU staff enjoyed their first-ever Community Volunteering Day so much that they’ve already signed up to do more. Spending the day with local charity Moor Trees, staff got their hands dirty as they got stuck in building a whole new tree nursery in the heart of Plymouth.

“They were brilliant,” said Tean Mitchell, Seeds to Saplings Co-ordinator with Moor Trees. “It was a boiling hot day but they all worked incredibly hard and we achieved a huge amount, building beds, creating paths and digging over the old allotments, ready for seed planting.”

“We enjoyed the time we spent with Moor Trees and are determined to make staff volunteering a key part of working for the Students’ Union,” said Joff Cooke, General Manager of UPSU.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Schools database

Following a successful mailing to 4000 UK schools and colleges, the Marketing & Communications Department’s schools database is available for use by any staff with a schools and colleges interfacing role.

Did you know, the deputy head in a school is the most under-tailed member of staff? To date, the database holds contact details deputy head teachers and for subject areas ranging from art and drama to construction and chemistry, plus widening participation contacts, information on schools interested in receiving details of open days and Clearing.

“The potential for direct marketing with teachers is enormous,” said Marketing Manager Andrea Newell. “And new contacts are being added every day. I urge everyone who interacts with schools and colleges to sign up for the schools database training via the staff development pages on the intranet so that they can make use of the data as effectively as possible.”

For more information, contact Andrea on ext 3992 email: andrea.newell@plymouth.ac.uk
A round-up of where the university has appeared prominently in recent weeks

- The Vice-Chancellor was interviewed by the *Independent* for an article on how universities are responding to the advent of top-up fees. Professor Levinsky focused on the positive changes within the university, including the £7-million library extension. “We have plans with the city council for a big development containing an Olympic-size swimming pool, playing fields and sports halls,” he added.

- Swansea Institute announced it is to drop its surf degree while Plymouth’s, surf science and technology, is still going strong, as reported in the *Guardian*. Swansea’s has been repeatedly labelled a ‘Mickey Mouse’ degree and, while Plymouth’s course has received similar accusations, such is its success that it has been franchised to Australia, with many of its graduates going on to successful careers within the surfing industry.

- Researcher Dr Sarah Collins was featured on the BBC website in connection with research linking the attractiveness of someone’s voice to how adventurous their sex life is likely to be! Dr Collins, who was also interviewed for Capital Radio, said she had carried out research but had not found a definite link. One explanation could be that people found confident voices attractive, she said.

- A ‘taxi driver study’ carried out by the university’s Professor of Dietetics Anne de Looy was included in a Times Online article about the latest diet - one which enables people to eat sweets but still lose weight. Turning conventional wisdom on its head, the study illustrated that a group of overweight cab drivers who were encouraged to eat more sugary snacks managed to lose an average of 12lb over 12 weeks.

Welcome to *UPfront*’s new food and drink consumer column. With Christmas approaching, we asked four volunteer ‘tasters’ to test a selection of mince pies from well-known supermarkets.

Professor Anne de Looy, who heads the university’s undergraduate degree in dietetics; Rob Burton, marketing analyst; Leigh Jones from Personnel & Development, and student Pete Blunden, who is on placement in the Document Production Centre, tickled their tastebuds with mince pies from Morrisons, Sainsbury’s, Marks & Spencer and Tesco, ranking them on taste, texture and overall appearance.

These are the results:

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<th>M &amp; S</th>
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<tr>
<td>Morrisons</td>
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<td>Sainsbury’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tesco</td>
<td>8/10</td>
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So, the clear winner is Tesco, whose mince pies were praised for their ‘good pastry’ and ‘clean taste’.

If you’d like to volunteer for future tastings, email publicrelations@plymouth.ac.uk
WINE AND DINE

RESTAURATEUR, wine and food writer Stephen Barrett is offering a prize of a seafood mezze and wine for two at his restaurant, Bistro One, in Ebrington Street, Plymouth, just a few minutes’ walk from the main campus.

All you have to do to win this sumptuous prize supper is send an email to publicrelations@plymouth.ac.uk giving the correct answer to the following question:

What is zucchini?

Send your answer by 3 December at the latest – the winner will be the first correct answer drawn out of the hat.

For more information about Bistro One, visit www.bistro-one.co.uk

Small ads

FOR SALE: Four-bedroomed detached Victorian house close to Hooe Lake, Plymstock. Large garden, original features, GCH, garage. Offers in the region of £275, 000. Tel: 01752 403044.

TO LET: Four-bedroomed house in Yealmpton, 8 miles east of Plymouth with easy access by bus. Fully furnished. Price negotiable. Tel: 01752 233078 (ask for Rewi), or email: rewinewnham@plymouth.ac.uk

CONCERTS

27 November
A Plymouth Chamber Music concert.
Ruth Palmer (violin) with Alexei Grynuk (piano)
Venue: Upper Lecture Theatre, Sherwell Centre, Plymouth campus, 7.30 pm.
Programme: Bach’s Partita No.1 in B minor, Ravel’s Sonata, Beethoven’s Sonata Op 12 No.3 and Janacek’s Sonata. Tickets £10 (£5 students or registered unemployed) from alice.li@plymouth.ac.uk, security lodge reception or at the door.

4 December
University of Plymouth Choral Society & the Sherwell Chamber Orchestra Christmas
Venue: St Andrew’s Church, Royal Parade, Plymouth, 7.30 pm.
Programme: Vivaldi’s Gloria and Haydn’s Missa Brevis in F major ‘Jugendmesse’, plus traditional carols with audience participation. Tickets £8 (£5 students and children) from Plymouth Music Shop, Mayflower Street. Tel: 670403.

7 December
University Carol Service with the University of Plymouth Choral Society
Venue: St Matthias Church, North Hill, Plymouth, 7.30 pm. Readings and carols followed by seasonal refreshments.

10 December
University of Plymouth Orchestra Christmas Concert
Venue: Main Hall, Davy Building, Plymouth campus, 8 pm. Directed by Simon Ible. The programme will feature orchestral and chamber item. Admission and refreshments free with a parting donation.

15 December
Plymouth Folk Festival Christmas Concert
Venue: Sherwell Centre, Plymouth campus, 7.30 pm. An evening of traditional and unusual Christmas entertainment. Tickets £5 (£3.50 concessions) from marilyngoldsbrough@blueyonder.co.uk or 564847.

LECTURES

8 December
Peninsula Arts Literature Series: Germaine Greer
Venue: Main Hall, Davy Building, Plymouth campus, 7 pm.

As a writer, broadcaster and academic, Germaine Greer (above) is the most internationally renowned feminist thinker of today. This is one-hour reading/lecture followed by a question and answer session.

Tickets are £10 and can be purchased at the Peninsula Arts Office, 2 Endsleigh Place, or by phoning ext 8100 or 8117. Email: alison.whitehouse@plymouth.ac.uk

For details of exhibitions & lectures, visit www.plymouth.ac.uk

Staff wanting to promote an event on campus via the web events calendar should email alice.li@plymouth.ac.uk with details, giving at least one week’s notice. Diary items for the next Upfront should be submitted by 29 November.
A DAM Spencer, a recent graduate of graphic communication with typography at the university’s Faculty of Arts, had his work selected for Digit magazine’s recent ‘New Blood’ feature.

Adam’s striking design, shown right, was chosen from 1,500 entries received by the prestigious digital art and design publication. The magazine named the young designer one of the ‘creative masters of tomorrow’.