Welcome

Welcome to the May/June edition of UPfront

The July/August edition of UPfront will be a web version. 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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e-mail: das@plymouth.ac.uk

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

Film: Gladiator. Russell Crowe plays Maximus Decimus Meridius, which sounds like a muscle in the body!

Song: REM’s Everybody Hurts.

Read: Lance Armstrong’s It’s not about the Bike: My Journey Back to Life. This man is an inspiration to everyone.

Food: Chilli con carne.

Destination: Wanaka, South Island, New Zealand. A great place to go and chill out or explore.

Person: Can I have two? Lance Armstrong and Steve Redgrave. Two people who have become the best at their sport despite health problems.

Memory: Travelling through Australia and New Zealand for 18 months – being at the Sydney Cricket Ground when Darren Gough took his hat trick in 1999; skydiving over the Southern Alps near Wanaka, and swimming with dolphins in Tauranga.

Crush: My girlfriend, Liz.

Whinge: Untidiness. If you make a mess, clear it up!

Tip: Never quit. As Lance Armstrong said, “Pain is never permanent, quitting lasts forever.”
Two separate projects – in the Faculties of Health & Social Work and Education – are giving children, parents and teachers plenty to chew over.

A recent competition organised by the staff and students from the university’s dietetics degree and Public Health in Plymouth challenged six- and seven-year-olds and their parents to create a healthy packed lunch. They were asked to produce artwork and costings for their meal, which had to be nutritionally balanced, delicious, filling but not fattening, and quick and easy to make – all for under £1.50.

Part of Public Health’s Plymouth Healthy Schools initiative, the competition attracted entries from across the city which were judged by the dietetics students. The winning entries, which came from Drake and West Park schools, will appear on laminated cards for inclusion in lunchboxes in Plymouth primary schools.

“We hope to make this an annual event,” said Anne de Looy, Professor of Dietetics at Plymouth. “It’s vital that young children are educated about healthy eating so that they can be encouraged to make the right choices that will help their growth and development.”

Meanwhile, increasing numbers of primary school children are getting active with the Take 10 project managed by Tania Markham, Senior Lecturer in Physical Education and Education Studies.

Take 10 is a resource pack containing DVDs, books and a teachers’ guide for schools looking to generate whole school improvement by engaging their pupils in daily physical activities such as skipping and aerobics. The success of the project in a number of schools has resulted in the Devon Health Authority funding a copy for every primary school in the county and the resource going on sale nationally.

With over ten years’ experience in the health and fitness industry and an interest in researching the benefits of physical activity on emotional well-being and children’s ability to learn more effectively, Tania was the ideal person to manage the project.

In the planning, writing and filming of the materials, she worked closely with teachers and pupils, whom she found ‘extremely enthusiastic’.

“Take 10 promotes ten-minute bursts of activity throughout the day and is not designed to replace schools’ physical education sessions,” Tania explained. “However, with many children getting just two PE sessions a week, we needed to find ways of increasing their activity to help stem the rise in obesity and major diseases such as cancer and diabetes.

“But it’s not just about the physical benefits of exercise. I have seen for myself that getting children involved in regular bursts of activity increases their concentration and readiness to learn.”

Take 10 may soon be part of the school day Stateside too – Tania recently returned from a visit to the University of Fredonia, which expressed interest in a student teacher exchange so that they can assess the project’s suitability for use in elementary schools.
Parlez-vous Français?

Are you eager to brush up on your French language skills but less keen to go back to the classroom? The Business School’s Pause Café could be just what you’re looking for.

Set up by Dr Marie Marthe Gervais-le Garffe, Head of Modern Languages, the café, which is in the Language Library in the Business School, provides a relaxed atmosphere where staff and students can practice French conversation, regardless of their level.

Regular attendees say they have found it an excellent way to develop their skills.

French exchange student Julie Meric said it was also ‘a great benefit’ for native French speakers, giving these students the chance to meet and chat informally with English students and staff on a regular basis.

Any staff who fancy brushing up on their French are welcome to attend. For further details contact the Business and Language Library on ext 2886.

Politics students and staff at the university were able to take part in a conference that was video-linked with 23 other sites, including those in Scotland, Palestine, Croatia and Australia, thanks to VidLink, part of the video conferencing facilities available at Plymouth.

Although they were sitting in the Stonehouse lecture theatre in the Portland Square building, the sophisticated technology enabled them to experience some of the incredible atmosphere at the McEwan Hall in Edinburgh, where international relations expert Professor Noam Chomsky (pictured) was giving his guest lecture, The Fateful Triangle: The US, Israel and the Palestinians. The Plymouth students were privileged to be asked to provide one of the six questions for Professor Chomsky, which was made possible by the video-link.

“The fact that we were linked to so many sites around the world made this a truly international conference,” said lecturer Dr Declan O’Sullivan.

VidLink is part of the portfolio of video services offered by Information & Learning Facilities, and is now widely available with 14 access points at dispersed sites from Bristol to Truro, where it is used for meetings, international interviews, PhD vivas, and both local and international teaching and research.

Over 200 successful video conferences have already been hosted from Plymouth this academic year. To book a session, just go to the staff portal and click on ‘How To/Video Conference’. Further information is available from Sheila Buckingham at sheila.buckingham@plymouth.ac.uk

The VC’s Learning and Teaching Conference will take place on 24 June, giving staff the opportunity to share in the many learning and teaching initiatives taking place across the university. Put the event in your diary!

The conference is also a chance for dissemination and networking across a broad range of topics and key issues.

Pauline Kneale, Professor of Applied Hydrology with Learning and Teaching in Geography at the University of Leeds, will give the keynote presentation on Juggling a Career in Universities (Making Time for Sailing).

The event will include the presentation of the university’s Teaching Fellowship Awards by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Roland Levinsky (above), and a buffet lunch will be provided.

To reserve your place contact Elizabeth Garland at elizabeth.garland@plymouth.ac.uk

JOIN IN!

FACE TO FACE – AT A DISTANCE
The Students & Refugees Together (START) project, pioneered by the Faculty of Health & Social Work as a placement opportunity for students, has grown from humble beginnings to a successful full-time service that has its own premises and has helped over 130 refugees to date. Its aim is to help integrate asylum seekers and refugees into their local community and enable them to access the services they need, providing practical support and guidance on everything from housing and obtaining national insurance numbers to combating feelings of isolation.

In particular, the ‘Cultural Kitchen’ provided by the project has proven extremely popular, giving refugees the opportunity to cook familiar dishes and eat together while developing their skills and making new friends.

START is a truly multi-disciplinary project – although most of the students are drawn from the degree in social work, they work alongside those studying community development, health, occupational therapy, publishing and accountancy. As well as providing hands-on experience that helps them get a head start in their careers, their involvement is giving them the chance to make a real difference to the lives of one of the most vulnerable groups of people.

One student’s persistence in obtaining a translator for a refugee woman resulted in her receiving a life-saving operation for an infection – the woman had previously been dismissed as an attention-seeker. Another successfully reunited a family after accessing the International Red Cross Tracing Service to find the husband and father, who had fled to another European city.

Placement student Michelle Lobb got involved in the project because it represents everything she believes in. “Refugees and asylum seekers suffer so much discrimination but, if efforts are made to integrate them into the society in which they live, they can become truly valuable members of that society,” she said. “I am passionate about social justice for all and START has given me the opportunity to pursue this interest.”

Avril Butler, Senior Lecturer in Social Work and leader of the START project, sees it as an essential service. “The START project aims to work with the strengths of refugees in England, and the success of the project is testament to what can be achieved,” she said. “We provide students with high-quality placement learning that makes a profound difference to people’s lives. The students are providing a vital service - indeed, they are the lifeblood of the project.”
During their visit, the girls got involved in hands-on activities, including a bridge-building competition, remotely controlled boat competition, playing with autonomous robot dogs (above) and testing the strength of materials.

The girls-only visits have been added to the faculty’s growing portfolio of school outreach events, with the aim of increasing the participation of female students, who are currently under-represented on many technology courses. The objectives are to raise girls’ awareness of technology opportunities, increase confidence, skills and knowledge and encourage them to consider pursuing the disciplines into higher education.

“We feel it is important to offer girls the opportunity to try activities that have traditionally been boys’ subjects,” said Liz Hodgkinson, who co-ordinates the visits. “If girls can develop their confidence and skills in a fun and supportive environment, they may be encouraged to consider pursuing ‘non-traditional’ technology options through to GCSE and beyond.”

These single-sex visits have been extremely well received by teachers, and the faculty has already taken bookings through to the end of the summer term.

When asked whether they think the visits are a good idea, the girls have agreed overwhelmingly. As one participant commented, “The boys take over and are usually good at a lot of things that girls aren’t, so it gives girls a chance to do things.”

For further information about Girls into Technology events, contact Liz on 01752 233693 or email liz.hodgkinson@plymouth.ac.uk
Dr Morris was one of the first UK scientists to participate in the new Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP), a multi-million dollar international research project that explores the history and structure of the earth as recorded in seafloor rocks and sediments. He was part of a 25-strong, multi-disciplinary scientific team – drawn from institutions across the world – on the research ship JOIDES Resolution. The team sailed to a point close to the Azores, where the deepest levels of the earth’s oceanic crust have been exposed on the seafloor as the crust has been pulled apart by faulting along the Mid Atlantic Ridge.

Dr Morris’s role was to measure the magnetic properties of the rocks, data that provides valuable information on the deformation of the crust and its mode of formation. “This was a remarkable experience for me, especially as I had never been to sea for any real length of time,” said Dr Morris. "The technology involved in coring hard, igneous rocks several kilometres underwater, while staying at precisely the same position in rough seas, was astonishing. Ocean drilling has revolutionised our view of earth history and global processes and the IODP represents the largest ever research undertaking in earth sciences.”

Unlocking the secrets of how the earth’s crust forms in the deep oceans was the aim of a fascinating research expedition attended by Dr Antony Morris (right) of the Geodynamics & Paleomagnetism Research Group.

Plymouth is collaborating with the University of Cambridge in research aimed at improving understanding of the fluctuations in beach levels. Professor Dominic Reeve from the School of Engineering is working with Dr Mark Spivack at Cambridge on the project, which has received £145,000 from the Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council and will support a post-doctoral researcher for three years.

While general trends in sediment movement on beaches are relatively well understood, the random nature of storm waves means making accurate and definitive predictions of beach movement is difficult. Under government guidance, Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) have been developed, providing a framework for planning coastal regions around England and Wales that take into account changes in shoreline position up to 75 years into the future.

Despite the use of structures such as artificial headlands, beaches change shape in response to prevailing environmental conditions – a combination of waves, currents, water levels and wind, explained Professor Reeve. Big changes can have serious repercussions, affecting the safety and amenity of beaches. A better means of providing a quantified measure of uncertainty is required by coastal managers. In this project we will be working to develop a statistical theory for describing beach response to random sea conditions. We will be testing the theories against historical data provided by our collaborating partners, including consultants Royal Haskoning, who have been involved in the preparation of SMPs.
Education

The Faculty of Education has been under the leadership of a new Dean since last summer and, earlier this year, it was announced that the bid for a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, led by staff in the faculty, had been successful. Read on to find out about this — and more.

At the helm

It was in August last year that Professor Peter John became Dean of the Faculty of Education, having joined as Associate Dean in January.

With a wealth of experience in education from more than a decade of teaching at two large comprehensives and just over 14 years at the University of Bristol, Professor John was ideally placed to join the senior management of the faculty and recognised the ‘enormous potential’ there.

“I saw possibilities not just to make a significant contribution to education nationally and internationally but also to influence the emergence of the robust academic and research agenda emerging across the university,” he said. “Plymouth was clearly going places and I felt — and still feel — that education has a central role to play in that development process.”

Not surprisingly, coming to a modern university from the ‘red brick’ tradition of the University of Bristol, Professor John experienced a number of culture shocks. “I was amazed at the sheer size of the university, the huge range of courses and the social variety amongst the students,” he said. “I was also confused about the ‘hourly culture’ and the way in which the currency of time influenced so many of the relationships between staff.”

Eight months on from his appointment as Dean, he sees his ‘friendly, supportive and thoughtful’ colleagues as one of the best features of faculty life. “Whatever the challenges and difficulties, they always give a hundred per cent to the students,” he said.

Other highlights include ‘seeing staff develop their research potential and finding ways of harnessing their enthusiasm and abilities’, ‘working with students who have often had to overcome enormous difficulties to enter university’, and ‘making new friendships with close colleagues whose advice and ideas I value deeply’. And what does the Dean see as the biggest challenge that lies ahead? “Creating a dynamic yet distinct academic and professional culture — one that honours our commitment to professional education in all its forms — but one that also sees research and scholarship as vital to the process.”

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Taking the lead

While sustainability seems to be the buzzword and is increasingly on the global agenda, education for sustainability is not well represented in higher education curricula. Now, however, one of the university’s four Centres for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETLs) is aiming to address this shortfall.

With universities tasked with attracting more young people to HE, it is important that students are well equipped with understanding about sustainability in all areas. The CETL for Education for Sustainable Development is taking an holistic approach, working towards embedding sustainability in all areas of university life, from energy conservation and procurement policies to social justice.

Links with the Higher Education Academy, partners including the Eden Project, Schumacher College and Forum for the Future, and staff with a strong record in this area, make Plymouth well placed to take a national lead. And the timing couldn’t be better; according to David Selby, Professor of Continuing Professional Education and CETL leader: “This year kicked off the UN’s Decade of Education for Sustainability, and the Education Secretary recently launched a Sustainability Action Plan,” he said. “The CETL has the potential to play a vital role in the development of ESD locally, nationally and internationally.”

All the CETLs have their own communities on the staff portal – watch out for more information there over coming months.

Stopping the bullies

A guide written by a former teacher who now lectures and undertakes research as the university has become a best-seller.

Preventing Bullying in Schools (Sage/Paul Chapman) by Dr Chris Lee is exceptionally popular with teachers, teaching assistants and other education professionals, providing them with practical advice on how to prevent bullying in schools through class-based or staffroom-based activities.

Dr Lee, who is Head of the School of Continuing Professional Development, has experience of teaching in both secondary and special education. He said the book shows what can be done to tackle an area of great concern to pupils, teachers and parents and makes powerful and realistic suggestions for ways forward.

Dr Lee’s latest project looks at bullying in girls grammar schools. Watch out for more news about his work in future editions of UPfront.
**Emergency Nurse** carried a feature by Annie Jenkin, Principal Lecturer in Emergency Care. The article provided advice to help emergency nurses prepare for media presentations and promote emergency departments to the general public. Annie based the piece on experience gained through the leadership and management elements of the university's degree in emergency care, in which students have the opportunity to practise effective communication strategies and deal with location, remote and studio interviews.

**Joshua Lee Chun Yee**, a talented perfumery graduate who was awarded the best student medal for the postgraduate category in the European Fragrance and Cosmetics Masters (EFCM), has been featured in the *Malaysia Star*. Joshua was presented with his medal by the International Federation of Essential Oils and Aroma Trade (IFEAT) at its annual conference in Lisbon. He won the award after his lecturer Dr Tony Curtis submitted Joshua's winning thesis – ‘The Future of the Men's Skin Care Market in the UK’.

**Both the International Herald Tribune and New York Times** ran articles featuring comment from Kim Bard, a primatologist at the university, who has spent more than a decade observing chimpanzee babies. The articles focused on the various animal research projects being carried out to establish what makes human babies cry.

**Fundraising forum**

Sharing ideas and co-ordinating the many charity fundraising activities with which staff are involved is the aim of the newly established university Fundraising Forum. Led by Active in Communities, the forum has already co-ordinated successful appeals for Red Nose Day and the Tsunami relief, proving that working together can often be more effective – and more fun! To find out more, visit the Active in Communities community on the intranet or contact Melanie Lonsdale on ext 2708/email: melanie.lonsdale@plymouth.ac.uk

**FAREWELL**

Colleagues from across the university gathered for the farewell party for Clare Broom, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), who has taken early retirement.

Clare (left) was Dean of the then Faculty of Land, Food & Leisure before joining Chancellery in 2002 and made an outstanding contribution to the university.

We wish her well for the future.
RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Tracy Wilson, Head of Marketing (Commercial), brings us up to date with news from Research & Innovation.

Our Centres of Expertise have been taking centre stage…

• The Centre of Expertise for Health & Social Care Interdisciplinary Innovation & Research (CHIIR@UP) was launched recently, with over 200 delegates attending a Plymouth campus-based conference covering the many aspects of research in health and social care in the region. Opening the conference, Professor Mike Beveridge, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, emphasised the disciplinary nature of the centre, recognising the many university researchers within and outside the Faculty of Health & Social Work who are already, or could, apply their expertise to health and social care problems.

Keynote speakers included Mike Kelly, Director of Research for the NHS Health Development Agency. Thanks to video conferencing, they were able to present simultaneously to the Portland Square delegates and those at other sites. They were also part of a ‘webcast’ on the internet.

• The Science Research Innovation Centre of Expertise – which incorporates marine, agrifood and environmental technologies – played a big part at the Exeter Festival of South West Food & Drink, encouraging regional food and drink producers to make the most of new technologies.

In April, the Advanced Composites Manufacturing Centre of Expertise was in France, representing the university at the JEC Composites event in Paris.

• In June, our Social Research & Regeneration Unit is supporting the Home Office Civil Renewal Unit’s third national conference of the Active Learning for Active Citizenship. The university is hosting the event, which is part of the European Year of Citizenship through Education and is based on the theme ‘Learning for Empowerment’. It aims to identify effective and sustainable approaches to learning for empowerment in a local, European and global context.

Centres of Expertise

Aligning university research strengths with the South West’s regional priorities, our faculty-based Centres of Expertise bring together experts in related fields from both within and outside the university, providing bespoke solutions to organisational needs. They work closely with Research & Innovation to deliver seamless support across the research continuum, from applied research and consultancy through to blue sky research.

In addition to our specialist Centres of Expertise, the university has other recognised areas of excellence, which can be browsed on the extranet research directory. Rebecca Lee from Research & Innovation is currently developing this key resource in conjunction with research groups from across the institution.

Crime and punishment in the 18th century was just one of the topics that helped give Year 12 students a taste of university-level history when they visited the Plymouth campus recently.

The event, organised by the Faculty of Arts, also saw the Head of Humanities, Dr Harry Bennett, encouraging the group to question films such as Saving Private Ryan that re-create historical events.

The students, who came from schools across the region, said they enjoyed getting a taste of campus life, seeing the facilities and getting a flavour of HE-level history. The visit was also welcomed by their teachers, who have expressed interest in arranging similar events with the university.

History visit

Richard Williams presenting his talk on crime and punishment in the 18th Century.
Developed by the university’s Careers Service with Exeter University and Graduate Prospects, Graduate Case Studies is part of the Aim Higher Peninsula Project. As well as encouraging ‘non-traditional’ students into HE, the profiles will be of interest to anyone considering further study or wanting to find out what they can do when they graduate.

“One of the main benefits is helping current students with their career planning, but the database should also help the university recruit students,” said Marc Lintern, Head of Learning Development & Guidance. “We hope the experiences of our graduates in the labour market, and their comments about their time at Plymouth, will not only make students think about HE but our programmes in particular.”

As well as appearing on the university’s website - at www.plymouth.ac.uk/careers/gcs - the profiles will be on partner sites, including www.gradsouthwest.com and www.prospects.ac.uk, meaning that the profiles can be accessed by several different routes.

“Adding profiles is simple – staff just need to ask graduates to register online and they can then input their case study,” said Marc. “And if the graduate hasn’t got internet access we can provide a paper form for them to complete and input the details for them.”

Departments are being encouraged to provide a link from their own pages to the profiles, and in the near future new features such as photos and video clips of the graduates will be added, helping bring their experiences to life.

If you have any questions contact Marc Lintern on 2764 or email marc.lintern@plymouth.ac.uk

New developments on the university’s intranet are helping staff publish and manage information.

Developments mean that you can now:

• create electronic ‘discussions’ in your community
• select who will be contacted when anyone provides feedback to your community
• create the front page of your community with a ‘mini edit’ tool
• create online calendars to use for events diaries, team meetings, etc. An example is the University Calendar at http://intranet.plymouth.ac.uk/calendar
• store links to frequently used websites on your own webpage – see Intranet Favourites in the Communities & Favourites menu.

The new training course University Intranet Web Enhancements covers these developments. Information and booking details can be found at http://intranet.plymouth.ac.uk/staffdev/courseinformation/

If you would like intranet-related training tailored for a group of staff, please email: it-training@plymouth.ac.uk with your request.

Equality Update

• The 2005 Staff Baseline Data Report is available to view on the Equal Opportunities community on the staff portal. In support of the equality targets in the Human Resources Strategy, it examines the ethnic origin, gender and disability status of all full- and part-time staff by grade and contract type.

• The Equality Bill being implemented later this year introduces a ‘positive duty’ on institutions to promote equality between the sexes. This will be supplemented with specific duties for public sector bodies, prohibiting sex discrimination in the exercise of public functions. The Equality Challenge Unit is developing a project to support institutions in drafting a ‘gender equality plan’.

The bill will also establish a single equality body, the Commission for Equality & Human Rights, in 2007. This will produce a ‘state of the nation’ report which will examine each branch of the public sector, judging its progress towards full equality of opportunity. It is likely the HE sector will be considered as a separate branch and it is worth noting that institutions may be held to account on their equality practices and procedures.

Graduate Case Studies

Graduate Case Studies is a new database enabling departments to publish profiles of their graduates to encourage students from non-traditional backgrounds to consider higher education.

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A member of the Faculty of Science has been given the opportunity to visit China, thanks to winning a prestigious Travelling Fellowship from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust. Senior Administrator (Computing) Nigel Marley (pictured) went through a rigorous selection process to win the award, which he will use to find out about biodiversity and conservation research in China, with a particular focus on microscopic animals. Nigel has received funding for a four-week stay, during which he will visit the Institute of Zoology and the Natural History Museum in Beijing. He hopes that those he plans to meet will give him a ‘broad perspective’ on how ecology and biodiversity research has changed under the various administrations in China. Nigel also plans to gain some hands-on research in helping to describe new species.

“For me, this is the opportunity of a lifetime,” said Nigel. “As well as experiencing Chinese culture I will be able to meet people who are conducting similar research to mine.”

Hat-trick!  

A celebration of Cornwall College’s hat-trick of prestigious Beacon Awards took place in April. The awards are the ‘gold standard’ of the further education sector and it is believed Cornwall College is the first college in the country to scoop three in one year. Two of the Beacons – Partnerships in Basic Skills and The Learning & Skills Council Award for College Engagement with Employers – were awarded to Duchy College, part of the Cornwall College Group.

Investing in the future  

The new Health & Social Care Centre at Somerset College of Arts & Technology (SCAT) had its official launch on 28 April. The impressive four-storey building (pictured) is the final structure in the £15-million restructure of the college and is co-managed with the university’s Faculty of Health & Social Work (FH&SW), which has been based at Somerset College for more than six years. The new centre is home to the Division of Health & Social Care, which has 1,120 students on a wide variety of courses, ranging from NVQs to degrees. With over 12 per cent of the working population of Somerset employed in health and social care, this new investment demonstrates both SCAT’s and the university’s commitment to the sector.

“The university is committed to modern, creative and inter-professional health education and so we are delighted with this new facility, which provides first-class amenities for our students and staff in Taunton,” said Mary Watkins, Dean of FH&SW.

Nanotechnology and News Production, an Economic & Social Research Council-funded study by members of the School of Sociology, Politics & Law, has been attracting national and international attention.

Involving Professor Alan Petersen and Dr Alison Anderson at Plymouth and Dr Stuart Allan at the University of the West of England, the project examines media and scientists’ views of the news coverage emerging nanotechnologies are attracting. Nanotechnology has received coverage in a diverse range of media, from health and science publications to business news and film reviews. Preliminary findings of analysis carried out on news articles published in 2003/04 suggest that while there has been some controversy and concern around the likelihood of ‘grey goo’, the potential benefits of nanotechnology have also attracted attention. Plymouth Research Fellow Clare Wilkinson recently presented these preliminary findings at the American Association for the Advancement of Science annual meeting in Washington. She also took part in a ‘dialogue’ in London, broadcast live on the internet, discussing the realities of a ‘nano-future’.

For more information, visit www.research.plymouth.ac.uk/nanotechnology
UPSU has been thriving with activity since Easter, with a fitness and mental health campaign being kicked off before the summer and a new sabbatical team to train before they take over on 1 July.

**Best bar none**
The UPSU bar was assessed by the local licensing authority and the police and received accreditation in the form of the ‘Best Bar None’ award at the recent NUS Services Convention. This is national recognition for our commitment to promoting responsible drinking and operating safely managed licensed premises, which helps clamp down on excess drinking and alcohol-related crime.
The award is a well-respected external assessment of how student unions operate their licensed trade operations and how this compares with providers on the high street.

Thanks to the SU’s work in promoting responsible drinking, Plymouth now has a national influence on licensing issues. I have been elected to the national board of directors of NUS Services (the body that acts as the purchasing consortium for all students’ unions). This means we can help set the national standard for responsible drinking policy and have input to the commercial development of students’ unions.

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**Pressing ahead**

The university has launched the University of Plymouth Press (UPP), which will use both print and new media to broaden the accessibility of knowledge.

Located within the School of Media & Photography, the project has been spearheaded by Paul Honeywill, leader of the university’s masters degree in publishing.

A Devonshire House: The Story of Poltimore, by local author Jocelyn Hemming, is the first title to be published by UPP. Jocelyn was at the UPP launch in April, signing copies of the book, which includes a forward by broadcasting star Joan Bakewell, an avid supporter of the restoration of Poltimore.

To find out more about UPP, visit www.uppress.co.uk

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**HEIST AWARD**

The Aim Higher Peninsula Programme has scooped a national award in recognition of its innovative approach to widening participation in higher education (HE).
The award—from Heist, formerly the Higher Education Information Services Trust—is the second to be won by Strand 1 of the programme, which is administered through the university. In 2001, it was given a gold award.

Now its fifth year, the programme operates across the South West peninsula, involving five HE institutions and 18 further education colleges. Strand 1 works with the under-16s in over 100 schools in the region, raising their awareness and aspirations.

Our over-riding aim is to provide a positive learning experience at each of our events that in some way benefits their levels of confidence and self-esteem, said Dr Jane Cavanagh, who co-ordinates the work of the Peninsula Programme Officers.
LOOKING BACK

A public lecture programme organised by the Faculty of Arts is providing a fascinating insight into life in Devon in the 1940s.

“The series is our contribution to the 60th VE day anniversary, celebrating and commemorating our regional and local history,” said Sandra Barkhof, Head of Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning for the faculty.

The remaining lectures in the series are:

- **26 May:** From Farm Help to Front Line — 56th Independent Infantry Brigade Autumn 1943-Normandy 1944 (by Andy Holborn)
- **2 June:** Fashion in the Forties — patriotism and austerity (by Sandra Barkhof)

The lectures take place in the Stonehouse lecture theatre in Portland Square on the Plymouth campus, starting at 7 pm. To find out more and purchase tickets, contact Sandra Barkhof on 01752 238124 or email: sandra.barkhof@plymouth.ac.uk

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**Small Ads**

**LODGER WANTED** to share quiet, attractive house with 1 other and two cats. Single room. All mod cons inc satellite TV. Less than 5 mins walk from Plymouth campus. £300 pcm (inc bills). Available late June. Contact: Samantha on 01752 233981 / 07876546330.

**CYPRUS:** 2 bedroomed house to rent in Pevia, nr Pafos. Small complex, communal pool, 2m beaches. Beautifully furnished. A/c and all services included. £40 - £65 per night, flexible bookings to suit flights. Contact Rob Mawby on 01752 233208/rob.mawby@plymouth.ac.uk
For the second year running, the university’s robot football team has trounced the competition in the UK Robot Football Championships. Broadcast by Sky Sports, the final saw the Plymouth warriors battling it out against their old rivals from the University of Warwick, with Plymouth winning both the three-a-side and five-a-side competitions.

In the contest, 7.5 cm³ robots are guided around a tournament pitch by machine vision systems rather than human operators, with DVT sensors enabling the robots to see and each player able to make autonomous decisions and take independent action. The robots are programmed to defend, attack or keep goal — each robot has something to do but the team must act as a unit.

Great credit for our victory must go to our research and development team, which includes Joerg Wolf, Soo-Mi Yang, Phil Hall and Lawrence Broadbent, said Paul Robinson, Principal Lecturer in Robotics & Automation.