• SILENT SEAS?
Dolphins damaged by noise

• FESTIVAL FEVER
Plymouth’s music extravaganza

• FILLING THE GAP
Medical School bid for dentists

• WORLD THAT WORKS
Making a sustainable future

NEWS FEATURES REGULAR COLUMNS & MORE
Welcome to the July/August 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

The PR ‘news team’:

Corinne Farrell
Head of Communications
01752 233982
corinne.farrell@plymouth.ac.uk

Paola Simoneschi
PR Manager
01752 233986
paola.simoneschi@plymouth.ac.uk

Samantha McKay
PR Officer
01752 233981
samantha.mckay@plymouth.ac.uk

Front cover: New research shows that dolphins may be damaged by loud noises - see page 3

Page 3
• Silent seas?

Page 4
• Filling the gap
• Going global

Page 5
• AUA award
• A world that works

Page 6
• Protecting our coasts
• Film future

Page 7
• Formula One comes to Plymouth
• Festival fever

Page 8
• Plymouth leads
• Exchange rates

Page 9
• Energy efficiency
• Search our research

Page 10
• UPSU news

Page 11
• In the news
• MRS approval
• Safety success

Page 12
• And finally...

Film: The Grudge, watched from behind a cushion – I’m such a girl!

Song: Varies according to mood so can’t choose just one - Comfortably Numb by Scissor Sisters, Dark Side of the Moon by Pink Floyd, You Get What You Give by New Radicals… the list goes on (much to my partner’s annoyance).

Read: Captain Corelli’s Mandolin by Louis de Bernière.

Food: All of it! Mediterranean or Mexican, I think. Surprisingly for a woman, I’m not really a chocolate fan!

Destination: Peru, but I also love a weekend in St Ives in the winter.

Person: This is hard. Civil rights activist Rosa Parks for her courage and the impact she made, but also Jack Dee, the only person who has managed to make me laugh non-stop for two hours.

Memory: Making it to the Sungate on Machu Picchu. (Okay, so we did take the bus most of the way…)

Crush: My man, of course! But also James Marsters (Spike in Buffy the Vampire Slayer). Actor Sean Bean could also be pencilled in if a window could be found in my hectic social calendar.

Whinge: Men and their obsession with the TV remote control. I’ve forgotten how to operate the thing.

Tip: Trousers then shoes in the morning.
The groundbreaking research is being conducted by Auditory Physiologist and Bio-Acoustician Joe Lovell. He has created a system that enables underwater hearing tests to be carried out on any animal thought to be affected by noise pollution. This can test for deafness in stranded dolphins – and trials already carried out show that a large number of animal species living in our seas can be affected by LFA sonar. Dolphins and whales are thought to be particularly susceptible.

“For years it was believed that invertebrates could not ‘hear’ in the traditional sense, though we can now provide evidence that even shrimp are potentially vulnerable to the sonar,” said Joe. “It’s very possible that dolphins’ hearing could be significantly damaged by loud underwater noise as they are extremely sensitive to the sounds around them.

“My research will show whether LFA sonar has a significant and destructive impact on marine mammal hearing. Dolphins and whales may become deafened and disorrientated as a result of damage to the ear and either beach themselves or become entangled in nets, while over greater distances the noise from the sonar may interfere with their communication skills.”

“We are hearing more and more stories about whales stranding and dolphins getting tangled up in fishermen’s nets. A hearing impairment would certainly make it harder for the animal to avoid approaching fishing gear. It’s a tragedy.”

“To find out more about Joe’s research, contact him on 01752 232411 or email jonathan.lovell@plymouth.ac.uk
FILLING THE GAP

The Peninsula Medical School (PMS) has put forward a bid to open a regional dentist school to help address the decreasing number of dentists in the region.

The Department of Health is aiming to have 1,000 extra dentists by October this year, with 90 to be trained through extra undergraduate places in England. PMS is bidding to bring those to Devon and Cornwall.

“A dental school in the South West would be a step towards alleviating the shortage of dental provision within the region,” said Professor John Tooke, Dean of the School. “We are proposing an innovative approach to dental education that mirrors the philosophy of the Medical School.”

PMS has first to make an ‘expression of interest’ and, if successful, submit a business proposal. Final decisions will be made in the autumn, and the first dentists would begin their training in 2007.

UK SHORTFALL

There are currently ten dentist schools in England, the nearest to Devon and Cornwall being in Bristol, where just 49 dentists are trained each year. The UK shortfall in dentists is predicted by the Primary Care Dental Workforce to rise to between 3,500 and 5,000 by 2011.

If the PMS bid proves successful, students on the four-year course will be based in Exeter, Plymouth and Cornwall. From the second year they would be able to offer supervised dental practices to the local population.

The bid has been supported by NHS Primary Care Trusts in Devon and Cornwall and these organisations will support the dentists that choose to practice in the region after graduation.

Going global!

The university is one of the partners involved in the exciting UK Sailing Academy project to restore and re-launch the Gipsy Moth IV, the boat Sir Francis Chichester sailed around the globe in 1966–67.

The ‘new’ Gipsy Moth IV will set out on another circumnavigation of the globe in September, this time crewed by young people as part of a worldwide educational project. The university’s Dr Andrew Eccleston, a maritime expert and meteorologist, will play a crucial role as ‘weather guru’ for the voyage, and the university will be creating oceanographic experiments for the young crew to complete at sea.

In return for its contribution to the voyage, the university will have the honour of choosing one of its current students to take part in the once-in-a-lifetime trip.

“As a schoolboy, I was inspired by Sir Francis Chichester’s historic voyage,” said Dr Eccleston. “It is a great honour to be associated with such a fantastic project.”

“I am proud to have a professional meteorologist from a top university advising us on our weather routing, a luxury Sir Francis Chichester did not have – he had no alternative but to sail into unknown weather ahead of him!” said David Green, CEO of the UK Sailing Academy.

The university is planning a public lecture – with a live link-up to the Gipsy Moth IV – in October.
Keen to extend her knowledge beyond her specialist area of quality, Sue signed up for the Association of University Administrators’ postgraduate certificate in professional practice and recently became the first University of Plymouth administrator to achieve this Open University-validated award.

“The course helped me become a more reflective practitioner and has encouraged me to question whether there might be an alternative way of doing things.

“Through the assignments I have widened my knowledge and learned more about issues such as funding, governance, the international context and environmental awareness. I have also developed my skills in areas such as presentations and chairing meetings.”

What advice does Sue offer to staff who may be considering the course? “Develop a personal development plan (PDP) based on your strengths and weaknesses – and think about what you want to achieve at the end of your ‘journey’, what support and resources might be available within your department and what is realistic within the constraints of home and work commitments. If possible, involve your manager in your PDP and make sure you have their support for what you aim to achieve.”

Having gained the award, Sue hopes to become a mentor for other participants.

To find out more, contact Staff Development on ext 2475/email: staffdevelopment@plymouth.ac.uk
Experts at the university have formed a new research centre to help protect and manage the UK’s coasts, work that currently costs approximately £325 million per year and is set to rise even further.

The Centre for Coastal Dynamics and Engineering (C-CoDE) was formally launched by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Roland Levinsky, in June. The launch, which received coverage on BBC Online as well as regional television and radio, included keynote seminars from Professor Huib de Vriend, of Delft Hydraulics, and Reg Purnell, Chief Engineer in the Flood & Coastal Defence Division of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs.

Bringing together experts from civil engineering, marine science, mathematics, geography and geology from within the university, C-CoDE aims to undertake research of international excellence in the field of coastal dynamics and engineering by providing a focus for fundamental and applied research, research training, and technical service support for coastal agencies and industries.

The Centre is organised through a steering committee comprising members from most of the Schools currently involved and is chaired by Professor Dominic Reeve from the School of Engineering. All members are leaders in their respective fields and engaged extensively in Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and European research programmes, as well as projects funded by UK government departments and agencies.

“Pressures on the coastal zone are increasing due to climate change, with sea levels expected to rise by 0.5 m over the next century,” said Professor Reeve.

C-CoDE has already been awarded three large grants from the EPSRC, as well as a DTI-EPSRC research fellowship and an EU project. Members are also participating in the EPSRC-funded summer school on mathematics for coastal engineering for research students, led by Principal Investigator Dr Ashwini Otta from the School of Engineering.

For more information on C-CoDE, visit www.research.plymouth.ac.uk/c-code/
September 2006 will see the launch of the festival, which will provide the icing on the cake for the current redevelopment of the city. For five days, Plymouth will ring with all kinds of music, from jazz to opera and gospel to world music.

Two pre-festival events will give a taste of what’s in store for music-lovers…

- On 16 July this year, at the Old Cooperage in the Royal William Yard, soprano Denise Leigh (below), winner of Channel 4’s Operatunity and a sought-after recitalist and oratorio singer, will join Ian Shaw, who was voted best jazz vocalist at the 2004 BBC Jazz Awards, and West End leading man Graham Bickley, for a gala night of opera, jazz and musical theatre.

- The second gala concert will take place at Plymouth Pavilions on 6 September, with international opera star José Cura not only singing but sharing the podium with Simon Ible, the university’s Director of Music, to conduct the Ten Tors Orchestra.

Tickets for these events are available from the box office at Plymouth Pavilions on 01752 229922. Tickets can also be reserved online at www.plymouthpavilions.com.

Formula One comes to Plymouth

A Formula One design expert was on campus recently, talking to GCSE and A-level design and technology students from Devon and Cornwall schools.

Brian O’Rourke, a Senior Design Engineer from Williams F1, spoke about design and Formula One cars at a special Celebration Day organised by the Faculty of Technology.

Twenty-two schools attended the day, with nominated students exhibiting their coursework together with designs and background research. A panel of judges viewed the collection and prizes were awarded for best overall projects and runners-up in the categories of GCSE, AS and A2 level.

“The Celebration Day provided an opportunity for students to network with representatives from the university and industry and to gain information and contacts that may be useful to them later on in their careers,” said Dr Liz Hodgkinson, Research Fellow, Widening Participation.

Formula One Fever

An exciting international music festival, organised by the university in partnership with Plymouth Pavilions and supported by the city council, is set to put Plymouth on the cultural map.
The award given to John Hilsdon, Co-ordinator of Learning Development, is in the Learning Support category of the NTFs, which recognise and reward teachers and learning support staff in higher education for their excellence. His success means that Plymouth is one of the two leading universities for NTFs, matching De Montfort’s total of seven. Karen Mattick of the Peninsula Medical School also won an NTF this year.

As Co-ordinator of Learning Development, John leads a growing and highly successful team. One of his key successes has been the establishment of a national forum – the Learning Development in Higher Education Network (LDHEN) – for practitioners who, like him, spend time looking at learning in higher education from the students’ perspective. Since its inception in 2002, the forum has attracted over 130 members representing more than 50 UK universities, as well as ten from overseas.

In addition, John is leader of the ‘critical thinking and reflection’ element of LearnHigher®, the new Centre for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETL), which involves 16 UK universities.

“This is a huge boost for me and my team. It really shows that the work of supporting learning is seen as important,” said John.

“For students, the key to success is not just to concentrate on their particular subject – it is also to take seriously the whole business of being a student. This means finding out about how to learn and how to do the things that university courses expect of students: reading in depth; writing essays; referring to academic texts; giving presentations, etc. In many cases, students are unclear about how to do these things – and sometimes quite intimidated by them. Our work is about helping them to develop both their abilities to study and the self-confidence to maximise their achievements at university.”

John intends to use the research grant to investigate the most effective ways of encouraging students to learn, in universities here and abroad.

*To find out more about LearnHigher, visit the community on the staff portal.
Visitors to the research section of the university's website will find a substantially revamped research directory, listing all research groups within the university and linking to further information on research group websites.

All research group pages in the directory have been re-designed to ensure they are as user-friendly as possible. They include key information about each group – the focus of their activities, members of staff within the groups (with links to their personal professional pages), study opportunities and useful web links.

The directory is searchable across all these key headings, plus research words, and groups can now be listed alphabetically, or by School or interest area.

Rebecca Lee in Research and Innovation is visiting around 120 research groups to ensure their directory content is accurate and up to date. Don’t miss out – if you’re not in the directory but should be, contact Rebecca on ext 3525/email: rebecca.lee@plymouth.ac.uk

Funding of £11,000 has been awarded to the university for reducing its carbon emissions. The grant from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is the result of the university’s involvement with the UK Emissions Trading Scheme, which it joined when the scheme was launched.

DEFRA is not the only organisation to have recognised the institution’s achievements in this area – the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) recently published a national comparison of estate management statistics. This recognises that the university is delivering a ‘top quartile estate’ in terms of energy efficiency and that our CO₂ emissions are lower than average for the sector.

The report also notes that the university achieved a six per cent reduction in energy consumption when there was a four per cent increase in the size of the estate.

To find out more, visit the Environment community on the staff portal.

Energy efficiency

Full Economic Costing (fEC) is a new method of costing externally funded projects. It will become the basis for costing applications to Research Councils from 1 September this year; and other applications later in the year.

Training is taking place this summer for researchers who wish to submit a Research Council application under the new fEC arrangements in September or October - and more comprehensive training sessions thereafter.

Full details of the training - and further information on fEC - can be found at http://staff.plymouth.ac.uk/research/fec/
Around 1,300 school leavers, some accompanied by parents and friends, descended on the Plymouth, Exeter and Exmouth campuses, as well as Somerset College of Arts & Technology in Taunton and the Knowledge Spa in Truro, where the Faculty of Health & Social Work has bases.

“We were delighted with another excellent turnout this year,” said Andrea Newell, Marketing Manager. “The combined effort of colleagues across the university ensured our visitors had a really positive experience.”

Visitor numbers for the university’s main Open Days soared to a new record this June.

Summer term ended in style with three spectacular summer balls at the Plymouth, Exmouth and Exeter campuses. Some famous faces were there to join in the celebrations...

**Fab Beatles**
Exeter’s was the most successful event ever seen at the campus, with tickets selling out within days. It included several live jazz acts and a casino.
Meanwhile, Exmouth’s ball took place in a marquee on the sports pitches at Douglas Avenue and included a funfair featuring a big wheel and dogems. There was plenty of live music, including tribute band Fab Beatles.

**Karl Kennedy**
Plymouth held the last event of the year at the Guildhall in Plymouth, which was divided into two music halls. In the live music hall the highlight of the night - and the headline of the event - was ‘Dr Karl Kennedy’ (aka actor Alan Fletcher) from Neighbours, who went down a storm playing covers and music from his band’s latest album. Also appearing were Jo O’Meara, formerly of S Club 7, Emma Lanford from Mousse T, Apache Indian, Abba Vision and a Tom Jones tribute act. The underground ballroom also hosted some famous faces, including ‘Keith’ from The Office and Kate Lawler winner of Big Brother, plus The Cut Up Boys of Radio One fame. Feedback has been excellent and we look forward to putting on even a bigger and better show next year.

**Southern extension**
We’re excited that work has already begun for the southern extension of the SU building on the Plymouth campus. The extension will have a new entrance housing meeting rooms, a lounge area, and offices for sabbatical officers and the senior management team. The build will carry on behind the south wall with a knock through planned for May 2006.

See you next academic year!

Kris Talikowski, Students’ Union Finance & Communications Officer, reports on the latest happenings in the SU...
The university’s undergraduate marketing degree has recently been accredited by the Market Research Society (MRS).

The MRS is the world’s largest professional association representing providers and users of market research and business intelligence and is recognised by the UK government as an awarding body for vocational qualifications in market research.

The MRS certificate is highly regarded, not just in the market research profession but in marketing generally, giving our students a head start in their careers.

For more information on the MRS visit the website www.mrs.org.uk/

SAFETY SUCCESS

The university’s safety management has impressed the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

“The award for Plymouth was unanimously agreed,” said a RoSPA spokesperson. “The award is about reinforcing the message that good health and safety is good business and clearly demonstrates Plymouth’s commitment to the achievement of high levels of performance in this crucial area.”
Becky Hawkins (right), a student of MA Fine Art at the university, was recently awarded a prestigious £3,000 bursary from the Fenton Arts Trust. The Trust’s aim is to give encouragement and financial support to those actively contributing to the creative arts. It seeks to assist individuals and groups who are making a worthwhile contribution to the artistic and cultural life of the UK.

Pyrotechnics expert Dr Roy Lowry, Teaching Fellow at the School of Earth, Ocean & Environmental Sciences (pictured), educated and entertained visiting 11 – 13 year-olds during the Salters’ Festivals of Chemistry. The festival at Plymouth was one of a series of 48 at universities across the UK which promote the appreciation of chemistry and related sciences among young people.