• PAGE TO STAGE
  Neuropsychology in the limelight

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NEWS FEATURES REGULAR COLUMNS & MORE
Film: Too difficult to think of my all-time favourite, but the best film I’ve seen for a while is *Broken Flowers* with Bill Murray. It’s funny, very cleverly written and Bill Murray is great in it.

Song: I really like *Unfinished Sympathy* by Massive Attack – that’s a classic. Anything by Blur but particularly *No Distance Left to Run*, a great song.

Read: Really enjoyed reading the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Most of Nick Hornby’s books are pretty good. A book that I couldn’t put down though was *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*.

Food: Anything I ate while on holiday in Florence. Just fantastic food. I’ve got to say though you can’t beat a Jake’s melt after a night out.

Destination: Edinburgh during the Fringe festival. Such a great festival to go to – I highly recommend it.

Person: Any of my friends and family. They’re all great, especially my brother who’s just got back from Iraq. I’m very proud of him.

Memory: Loads and loads of these. Holiday to Ibiza with my friends back home, probably. I can’t mention most of those memories but some were pretty funny! Also, the view from Piazza Michelangelo in Florence, and graduating last year.

Crush: She knows who she is… but if she doesn’t it’s you, Sophie.

Whinge: It’s got to be rude and aggressive people. For example, people who like to shout at shop assistants for things that obviously aren’t their fault. Also, sweetcorn – I hate it!

Tip: When microwaving soup, avoid scalding your fingers by simply using two slices of bread as insulating gloves – not only will your hands be burn-free but you can eat any spillages later!
A bestselling book by a member of staff has inspired a play that has attracted praise from the national media, including The Times and The Guardian.

Neuropsychologist Dr Paul Broks’ book Into the Silent Land - which was short-listed for the Guardian First Book Award in 2003 and has been translated into ten languages to date - is the inspiration behind a fascinating play, On Ego, showing at London’s Soho Theatre.

Dr Broks, Senior Lecturer in Clinical Psychology at the university and Honorary Consultant Neuropsychologist with Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust, joined forces with Mick Gordon to write the play, which combines art, science and philosophy to examine the idea of ‘the self’.

On Ego begins with an accident during a teleportation experiment, which leads to a neuroscientist being duplicated. As he wonders which is the real ‘him’, the greatest scientific and philosophical riddle of all is posed: how does the brain construct a ‘self’? Dramatically juxtaposing ‘ego theory’ with ‘bundle theory’, On Ego explores whether we are simply skin, bone and a hundred billion brain cells, or feeling, loving, thinking individuals.

“Our challenge was to bring the neurology and the philosophy to dramatic life. We want to move and inspire as well as to inform,” said Dr Broks, who has written regularly for Prospect magazine over the past five years, taking in philosophy, brain science and football in his column, Out of Mind.

On Ego is the launch production of On Theatre, a new company founded and directed by Mick Gordon, which explores the fundamental preoccupations of modern life through bold, intelligent theatre.
In this new series, the UPfront editorial team introduces you to some of the ‘movers and shakers’ whose lives impact on the University of Plymouth in one way or another. First up is Alan Qualtrough (right), Editor-in-Chief of the Western Morning News and Evening Herald.

Corinne Farrell reports.

After a successful career on a variety of national newspapers, Alan Qualtrough moved to Plymouth in April 2001 to edit the Evening Herald (part of the Northcliffe Newspapers Group Ltd, whose titles include The Daily Mail as well as five evening and two morning newspapers in the South West). He joined at a difficult time – low staff morale after a series of budget and staff cuts and a declining circulation. In his four-year stint at the Herald, he turned the newspaper around: developing a more modern, up-to-date design, focusing the paper closely on its target readership, introducing new features, news sections and campaigns (eg bringing back the three-hour train journey from Plymouth to London) and increasing sales. He focused his energy and enthusiasm to position the Herald as – in his own words – ‘the spirit of the community’, backing many city initiatives including Women of Achievement, Enterprising Plymouth, the city’s rebranding project, the Mackay vision and major university initiatives such as Peninsula Arts. And then he moved on. Fortunately for the city and the university, he retains his links with Plymouth and the region: his new appointment, from 1 August 2005, was to the position of Editor-in-Chief, Western Morning News and Evening Herald.

DELIGHTED

Speaking of his recent appointment, Alan said, “I was initially involved in interviewing applicants for this post, but none of them was quite right. And it gradually struck me that probably no-one was in a better position than me to take this role on – I live here already, am familiar with Westcountry issues, the Northcliffe organisation and all the staff. So I was delighted to be asked to take the job on.

“That's not to say it was easy leaving the Herald. I felt almost as though it was my baby, and I was going through a period of ‘mourning’ when I moved on. But I do still have a watching brief on the Herald, and work closely with the new editor, Bill Martin. I knew I was leaving the paper in very capable hands, because Bill supported me initially as News Editor and latterly as Deputy Editor.”

Alan’s role spanning the two publications signals change: some departments (including features, sports and photography) are being merged and will in future serve both titles. This will deliver efficiencies and savings that Northcliffe demands – but the news desks will continue to be separate and independent, reflecting their differing readerships.
The Marine Institute has been created to help consolidate Plymouth’s unique position at the forefront of research and teaching in the marine field and will include the relevant research centres and groups from the Faculties of Science, Technology and Social Science & Business.

The institute will work towards closer integration with the university’s partners in the Plymouth Marine Sciences Partnership (Plymouth Marine Laboratory, the Marine Biological Association, the National Marine Aquarium and the Sir Alister Hardy Foundation for Ocean Sciences). Jointly, these organisations represent one of the most important bodies of expertise in marine science and technology in Europe and a closer working relationship will help to establish Plymouth as an international leader in this field.

Professor Mee has previously worked for the United Nations as Head of the Marine Environmental Studies Laboratory in Monaco and was founding co-ordinator of the six-country Black Sea Environmental Programme.

Exciting plans for the launch of the university’s Marine Institute are underway, following the recent appointment of Professor Laurence Mee (right) as Director.

Alan plans to develop the Western Morning News so that it continues to serve its ‘staple’, rural readership, whilst being more inclusive to the more urban areas of the region – which should mean a much closer relationship with the university in future. The business pages will be developed, alongside editorial lifestyle ‘themes’, which reach out to a broad audience and encompass much about what makes the Westcountry a unique and special place to live.

“‘Food and drink strategy’ which not only keeps rural and farming issues on the agenda, but spans food production and distribution, catering and tourism. Farming is clearly key for our region, but it doesn’t end there. There’s a production and distribution chain before we buy in shops, markets and restaurants. We want to champion quality across our region in all these areas.”

Other themes to look forward to include sustainability and renewable energy. Alan also believes it is important to retain separate Devon and Cornwall editions of the paper, and hopes to do for Cornwall what the Herald has done for Plymouth, by pursuing initiatives such as Women of Achievement in Cornwall.

The editorial changes will be gradual: Alan estimates it will take him five years to achieve everything he is already planning, but the challenge is one he is already clearly relishing. The period of mourning for the Herald is over … there’s a new project to throw his enthusiasm into.
WHAT’S YOUR BIG IDEA?

The university’s popular entrepreneurship evening workshop programme, run by Research & Innovation, kicked off again on 17 January.

Aimed at helping budding entrepreneurs develop their skills and knowledge on how best to commercialise their business ideas, more than 300 staff and students have already been through this free programme, attending workshops on subjects such as effective market research, protecting ideas, business planning and employment law.

The workshop programme isn’t just aimed at people who dream of running their own business – it has also proved invaluable for those seeking to be more entrepreneurial in the workplace as well as those thinking of taking their hobbies to the next level. Just like Lisa-Marie Brooks and partner Stuart Jacques, university staff who have set up a Cornish motorcycle race team, TFR Racing.

“Although we’re non-trading we face many of the same issues as a traditional business – in our case we have to attract commercial sponsorship in order to survive,” said Lisa-Marie. “Through this programme I have learned to develop my skills in building the TFR Racing brand and successfully promoting it to local businesses, as well as generating media interest in our progress and successes.”

To register for the programme contact the Short Course Unit on ext 3304/email: scunit@plymouth.ac.uk

And don’t forget to enter the university’s new Business Ideas Challenge, intended to help turn your ideas into reality and provide high-profile exposure to investors. Due to the generosity of the sponsors the total prize package stands at over £30,000, including substantial cash prizes and valuable professional services. More information is available at www.plymouth.ac.uk/bpchallenge, where you will find a short application form. Don’t delay – enter today!

Calling culture vultures!

Packed with events following the theme of ‘alchemy’, the Peninsula Arts spring season has plenty to keep culture vultures happy.

February and March will see the eagerly awaited Wine Appreciation Course run Liam Steevenson, the world’s youngest wine master, while the season’s music highlight is the Peninsula Arts Contemporary Music Festival, Voices (24 – 26 February). The weekend of performances, lectures and workshops showcases computer music research at the university. Visiting composers and performers include Kate and Mike Westbrook, Frances M Lynch and Karen Wimhurst.

In conjunction with the Lenkiewicz Foundation, Peninsula Arts is hosting Colloquium, including academic appraisals of Lenkiewicz’s work as a painter, thinker and collector of books. So, whether you’re a budding wine buff, jazz junkie or art addict, you can find out more about these and a host of other events on the website at www.peninsula-arts.com
Kevin, a talented designer himself, is no stranger to the university. He has given a talk at the Peninsula Arts lecture series, and has since formed strong links with the institution. Professor Steven Parissien, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, said he was thrilled to be able to honour Kevin: “This award is not just a celebration of all Kevin has done for design so far, but represents what we hope will be a beautiful friendship between Kevin and our Architecture and Design departments in the future.”

Recently retired governor John Warren was honoured at the same ceremony. Resident in Devon for the past 35 years, he has been responsible for many major building projects and has been active in the promotion of the region and the profession of architecture through local and national bodies.

The winter graduation ceremonies also saw one of our own ocean science graduates, sailing star Conrad Humphreys, collecting an honorary master of science. Conrad, who continues to work closely with the university, was joined at the Faculty of Science ceremonies by fellow honorary awardees, Baroness Wilcox and Professor Peter Fookes. Former University of Plymouth governor Baroness Wilcox is currently President of both the Institute of Trading Standards Administration and the National Federation of Consumer Groups. Professor Fookes has been an external examiner for the university’s geology and earth sciences degree courses three times, and is best known for his work on many of the great civil engineering projects of our time, including the Thames Barrier and the Channel Tunnel.
Facility Focus

University of Plymouth Colleges

The university has long been recognised for its pioneering, high quality partnership work with further education colleges throughout the South West. And, since becoming a faculty in its own right in 2003, University of Plymouth Colleges (UPC) has continued to go from strength to strength – UPfront takes a closer look at recent developments...

Getting to know you

A survey conducted on behalf of the UPC has provided a wealth of information about first- and second-year students within the faculty. 548 students completed the questionnaire – approximately 10% of the 5,500 HE students in the colleges at the time. The 36 questions were broken down into six main categories: student background, HE perceptions, progression, tuition fees, the student portal and UPC recognition.

Subject interest (80%) was regarded as being more important than career considerations (53%) when choosing a course – although nearly everyone (91%) thought that ending up with a well-paid job was quite important, important or very important.

Brochures (55%) topped the list of popular information sources – with the internet in second place (38%) and open days in third (22%).

The message about progression to the university’s honours degrees is clearly getting through – 96% of respondents said they were aware of the opportunities. When asked what appealed most about progression, 48% of respondents cited the prestige and 47% said getting a better job. Expense (59%) topped the list of reasons for not moving on to honours.

Tuition fees were perceived as a major factor in HE decision-making with 51% saying they thought the fees would put other people off applying for a course and 50% saying that the overall expense of being a student would also be a deterrent. When asked to predict their own level of debt after graduation, 29% of the students said £10,000 and above, 53% said up to £10,000 and 14% said they would have no debt.

Awareness of UPC and their college’s partnership with the university was good, with 95% of the students saying that they knew about the link. 55%, however, said that they did not feel part of the university.

“This survey is an important step forward in our understanding of the UPC student profile,” said Dr Ian Tunbridge, Dean of UPC. “The survey covered some key areas and issues, and the results, which will inform faculty and college strategies, have provided a very useful insight into student perception and motivation.”

One person in particular has already benefited from completing the questionnaire – South Devon College student Rob Radmore (pictured below) won a brand new iPod Nano when his response was pulled out of the hat.

“I can’t believe my luck,” he said. “I was thinking about buying an iPod so winning one has certainly saved me a few quid and that’s something students are always trying to do!”
Honorary award

David Trueman, the retired Principal of North Devon College in Barnstaple, has been made an honorary master of science. UPC’s very first honorary award was presented at the biggest graduation event the faculty has yet held.

“I am proud and delighted to be honoured in this way,” said David. “North Devon College took its first tentative steps towards partnership with the university in 1985 and, since then, there has been a significant expansion of higher education provision, which has undoubtedly had a positive impact on the local economy. Our young people no longer have to move out of the area to receive degree-level tuition and that, in turn, means that businesses in North Devon are benefiting from having more graduates in the community.”

David was Principal of North Devon College for 21 years. During that time the college consistently achieved results above national benchmarks.

“The award of an honorary degree is a fitting tribute to David’s outstanding achievements,” said Dr Ian Tunbridge, UPC Dean.

A new HE centre – to be known as the University of Plymouth in North Devon – will be opened at the college this September.

Proud moment

Devina Davidson, 28, is feeling understandably proud of herself. She recently graduated from Exeter College with a foundation degree in management.

Devina, who is dyslexic, was one of the 49 Exeter College graduates who received their higher education awards at a special graduation ceremony in Plymouth. As well as foundation degrees, the awards included higher national diplomas and higher national certificates in subjects including professional accounting, legal practice, engineering and sports and recreation management.

“I’ve really enjoyed the course and it’s certainly been useful,” said Devina. “My aim now is to become a teacher.”

The graduates’ awards were presented by Dr Ian Tunbridge, Dean of the University of Plymouth Colleges (UPC) Faculty.

“UPC was launched to provide local higher education opportunity and I’m delighted that so many Plymouth students are achieving excellent, employment-related qualifications,” said Dr Tunbridge.

At the click of a button, partner college staff can now keep abreast of all the latest developments, thanks to a UPC staff community at http://staff.plymouth.ac.uk/upcgen

Items include a calendar highlighting important diary dates, details of professional development events and information about the Higher Education Learning Partnerships, one of the university’s Centres for Excellence in Teaching & Learning.

Feedback on the community is welcomed, as are suggestions for additional information and resources. Comments can be emailed to marian.stringer@plymouth.ac.uk
Equality Update

The university has appointed a Head of Fundraising to support the institution’s mission by developing and establishing long-term fundraising strategies across the organisation.

Helen Pearson is based in the Marketing & Communications Department in Hepworth House on the Plymouth campus. She was most recently involved in the £13-million redevelopment of Arnolfini, a contemporary arts centre in Bristol, which re-opened to the public last September. In her early career she also worked in and with the Enterprise units of Leeds Metropolitan University and Leeds University, and the Royal Society for Encouragement of Arts’ Higher Education for Capability programme.

Helen can be contacted on ext 3344 or at helen.pearson@plymouth.ac.uk

NEW APPOINTMENT

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Equality Update

INCREASING DIVERSITY

This year’s statistical report on the university’s undergraduates by gender, age and social class, and the report on postgraduate students, provide interesting insights into the changing student population and demonstrate the increasing diversity of our students. Institution-wide changes and findings highlighted by the reports include:

- The number of undergraduates with a known black and minority ethnic (BME) background has risen by 17.9% between 2003-4 and 2004-5. Overall student numbers rose by less than 0.3%.
- Only half of our undergraduate BME students are international - the percentage of BME students from the UK has also risen. BME students from Devon and Cornwall have risen by 10%, the rest of the South West by 33% and ‘other UK’ by 12%.
- 14.84% of postgraduate research (PGR) students are from BME backgrounds.
- 8.44% of undergraduates had a disability in 2004-05, a rise of 0.78% on 2003-4 compared to the overall rise in student numbers of 0.25%
- 10.14% of postgraduate research students had a disability in 2004-05.
- In 2004-05 there were more undergraduates aged 25 and over (42.3%) than students aged 21 and under (35.9%).
- 62% of undergraduates and 62% of taught postgraduates are women.

More details, including those on specific your faculties and schools, are available on the Equality community at http://staff.plymouth.ac.uk/equality/reports/intranet.htm The Equality & Diversity Office can be contacted at equality@plymouth.ac.uk
GOODBYE... AND HELLO

Sir Brian Pearse has retired from his position as Chair of the Board of Governors after a three-year tenure.

“It’s not easy to say what I have enjoyed the most but it has probably been attendance at the graduation ceremonies,” he said. “To have the opportunity to share in some small way the many and varied successes of our students always makes me realise why we are here and what the work of the university is all about.

“The biggest challenge has been keeping pace with the rapidly changing scene in higher education and supporting the Vice-Chancellor and his colleagues in their efforts to improve the performance of the university.”

Asked about his future plans, Sir Brian said: “I have served on the boards of Kings College, London, and Plymouth for a total of 16 years. However, I did not attend university myself so I am looking at the possibility of taking a degree over the next few years. In addition, I intend to record some of my experiences with Barclays, HSBC, the Housing Corporation, Lucas Industries and other activities which I have undertaken. It will probably not be publishable but it may interest my family.”

Existing governor Barbara Bond has been appointed as the new Chair of the Board, which has recently welcomed four new governors, Mike Leece OBE; Michael Pearson; Mark Taylor and Ellen Winser.

Look out for details of all the governors in the next edition of UPfront.

In the News

The VC’s vision for the university’s future attracted national attention from the Education Guardian. Professor Levinsky seized the opportunity to set out the benefits of centralising the university, such as enhancing collaboration between academics. He also paid homage to the success of the Centres for Excellence in Teaching & Learning.

A friendly and welcoming place to work for ethnic minorities... that’s what a leading national education supplement said about the university. The Times Higher published a report on ethnic minority staff numbers in UK universities and profiled Plymouth academic, Faye Doris, who spoke of her positive experiences and the university’s proactive approach to recruiting ethnic minority staff to senior positions.

A Plymouth graduate has topped the charts! Computer Arts magazine carried a feature on Laith Bahrani, who studied MediaLab Arts (now Digital Art & Technology). The 26 year-old (pictured below) is the creative genius behind the simple yet captivating video for Nizlopi’s ‘The JCB Song’ which helped the single whiz to the top of the charts before Christmas. Laith was contacted by Nizlopi after his uncommissioned video for Radiohead’s ‘Creep’ brought an avalanche of interest in him and his company, Monkeehub.

The university’s annual Sports Scholarships Awards have produced a radio personality. When coaching mentor and university fitness instructor Emma Renyard appeared on BBC Radio Devon to talk about the awards, she was such a hit with the audience, she was asked back for a regular fitness slot. Emma is helping listeners lose those unwanted post-Christmas pounds!

Sir Brian (right) with Barbara Bond and the Vice-Chancellor.
Queen’s Award
Professor Rod Blackshaw from the School of Biological Sciences has received a prestigious Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service.
Before moving to Plymouth in 1996, Professor Blackshaw worked in Northern Ireland. The award was made in recognition of his voluntary work on the management committee of the Aghalee Village Hall in County Antrim between 1982 and 1988.
The hall was one of six community facilities funded by the Carnegie Trust in the 1920s, the halls being the only ones in the country that are independent of any religious or political affiliation, serving both nationalist and unionist communities. Professor Blackshaw was one of those honoured for their part in raising sufficient funds to fully refurbish the hall when it was under threat of closure due to failure to meet safety regulations.

Supporting sustainability
The Centre for Sustainable Futures, one of the university’s Centres for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETLs), has established a scholarship scheme for staff.
The scholarships are being used to support staff attendance at courses at Schumacher College in Dartington, led by internationally renowned scholars and teachers and addressing the many and varied aspects of sustainability. The scholarships cover course fees, accommodation and food at the college, and applications are now invited for the period 15 April – 30 July.
Want to know more? Visit www.plymouth.ac.uk/cetl/esd - but hurry, applications must be submitted by 1 February.

Help at hand
The Marketing & Communications Department is launching a new and improved community on the staff portal, making it as user friendly as possible.
The community – at http://intranet plymouth.ac.uk/mcd/intranet.htm - will provide access to information and a number of features, including a suite of university presentation slides. It will also include a feedback button so that staff can make comments or requests in relation to marketing and provide links to associated communities and websites.
“The community will provide information and assistance on all the areas covered by the department,” said Director of Marketing & Communications, John Griffiths.“And we welcome feedback from staff, whether they want to make comment or request advice.”
The new community will be up and running from the beginning of February.

Students’ Union Finance & Communications Officer Kris Talikowski brings us the latest news from UPSU...

SPIKE
For the second consecutive year UPSU has run the SPIKE campaign to raise awareness among students of the dangers of leaving their drinks unattended.
Gemma Farrell, UPSU Welfare Officer, promoted the message to students across the Exeter, Exmouth and Plymouth campuses, and badges, balloons and stickers were handed out to help spread the word.

Welcome to Roland
UPSU has welcomed Roland Wills, who replaced Paul Clayton as Commercial Services Manager. Paul was instrumental in strengthening the relationship between the SU and the university, resulting in a commitment to work closely to enhance the student experience.

Referendum
In December, we ran a referendum to decide on the future structure of UPSU. The current Executive Council has spent a lot of time considering current roles and has proposed a new structure that will improve the service to students. Students have been given the opportunity to vote on these changes – at the time of going to press it was still to be decided whether these will be presented to the Board of Governors for ratification.
With Valentine’s Day not far off, staff reveal their choice of dinner date - with a difference: the historical figure they’d most like to dine with – and why...

Hmm, I think Cleopatra. She was a very astute woman who caused such a ruckus in the Roman Empire. And did I mention that she was a total babe?

Tim Hortopp, Senior Computing Officer, Web Team

As a scientist, I’d love to have had the chance to talk to Paul Dirac, who predicted antimatter and said, “Physical laws must have mathematical beauty.” His fundamental work gave us so many methods to understand the quantum world. Dirac was supposed to be a man of very few words though, so a meal with Goscinny, the inventor of Asterix, Lucky Luke, etc, might be more fun!

Martin Lavelle, Principal Lecturer, Mathematics & Statistics

My choice would be Ole Blue Eyes, Frank Sinatra. He sang fondly about my favourite city in the world, and he fulfils my criteria as a perfect Valentine’s date – a man with presence, who would treat me to an old-style New York night out: drinks, dinner and dancing – a glamorous night with a leading legend. My photo was taken in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, NYC – the perfect location for a date with Sinatra.

Emma Hewitt, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships Manager

While it wouldn’t be romantic, I’d like a dinner date with Michael Faraday. Having started as Humphrey Davy’s assistant, he worked his way up to professor at the Royal Institution, publishing hundreds of papers on chemistry and physics and starting two series of public lectures (one of which continues as the RI Christmas lectures today). He was also heavily involved in his church and family. We’d discuss the impact of his work on our modern-day world and the connections between science, society and faith. Currently, these are seen as separate issues, but to Faraday they were all facets of the same ideal – the thirst for knowledge.

Dr Roy Lowry, Principal Lecturer in Physical Chemistry

It would have to be Shakespeare. I can’t imagine there being any embarrassing gaps in the conversation as neither of us is known for being at a loss for words! But never mind music being ‘the food of love’ – we’d be enjoying the best Italian meal ever. And maybe – after a few glasses of vino – I’d find out if it really was him who wrote all those plays.

Paola Simoneschi, PR Manager

Christopher Columbus... I would be wined and dined and have sweet nothings whispered to me in Italian. We could talk sailing and travel adventures all night, while smoking Cuban cigars!

Annette Nicholas, Widening Participation Officer, Health & Social Work

Helen of Troy. Any woman that an army spends ten years holding a city to siege for must be worth meeting. She could tell me about her life and times while I admired ‘the face that launched a thousand ships’. She could also explain how the Trojans could have been so stupid as to fall for the wooden horse. Could be a problem communicating however as I don’t speak ancient Greek!

Neil Chambers, International Admissions Assistant
The event, which aimed to give students of chemistry and related subjects a greater understanding of the options available to them, was attended by global companies such as Astra Zeneca and Tripos as well as South West organisations, including Devon & Cornwall Police and Key Organics. All provided information about the varied and exciting career opportunities on offer – which range from environmental chemist to pharmaceutical development chemist.

The companies praised the enthusiasm of the students and the smooth running of the event, while the students found it ‘inspirational’ and ‘informative’.

Careers commendation

The Careers Service website is one of the top four of its kind in the UK, according to a recent survey of students.

This success resulted in the site being one of two commended at the Awards for Excellence ceremony organised by the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services, Plymouth was particularly commended for its ‘needs-based’ approach and its ‘excellent use of links and consistency throughout’. “Just over two years ago we took the decision to deliver our careers information predominantly online,” said Chris Samuel, Careers Information Manager. “And being at the forefront in this development we delivered a very successful session to other services on the transition process. “All members of the Careers Service contribute to the development of the site. The main emphasis of all marketing activity in the future will be to embed our site within the university’s website so that users can access it from many starting points.”
Watch out Tiger Woods! Keen golfers from the university revelled in the opportunity to show off their back swings at the annual Staff Christmas Golf Tournament.

Staff ranging from security to lecturers supported the event, which took place at Wrangaton Golf Club. The star sportsman was Benn Lines (below), Senior Lecturer in Electrical & Electronic Engineering, who won the tournament. Also ‘on par’ were, Nigel Garland from the Plymouth Business School and Jock Crawford from Security.

Dave Furniss, from Recreation, organised the event and said a fun time was had by all: “The day was a great success. We were lucky with the weather, and the hospitality we received from the club was first class.”

In the swing

Small Ads

HOLIDAY HOUSE in rural northern Spain. Los Robles is a lovely detached house, sleeping 5, privately situated in over an acre of its own land on the edge of Redes National Park. Stunning panoramic views. Centrally located in Asturias - only 45 mins from the airport and within easy reach of the Costa Verde and the mountains. 2006 rental rates range from £175 to £375 per week. Tel: 0034 985 66 16 93/email: vistadelmonteholidays@yahoo.co.uk for more info.

DOG WALKING and pet minding. Female animal lover with experience in veterinary work available to walk your dog or care for your animals. Can provide transport to and from the vets. Please ring Carol on 0789 6347951.

VEND & SPEND

Think of vending machines and coffee, fizzy drinks or chocolate are likely to spring to mind, but a newcomer to the university is taking convenience to the next level.

A vending machine in the Open Access Area of the Babbage building on the Plymouth campus can supply IT items ranging from CDs and memory sticks to webcams and MP3 players, all at competitive prices and with the university receiving ten per cent of the profit. Currently, the machine is cash-only but chip and pin technology is coming!

If the appliance proves popular with staff and students, it’s likely that more will follow.

FISHTALES

Marine experts in the School of Biological Sciences are celebrating the publication of a trio of tomes.

• Professor of Marine Biology Mal Jones’ illustrated guide to the ecology and biota of estuaries, Life in the Estuary: Illustrated Guide and Ecology, proves these dynamic ecosystems are more than just muddy, smelly waterways – they are unique coastal environments teeming with life. The new guide aims to increase appreciation and understanding of estuarine environments by describing the dominant organisms and their ecology.

• Katherine Sloman, Senior Lecturer in Marine and Freshwater Biology, is the author of The Behaviour and Physiology of Fish, which presents a comprehensive synthesis of current research focused on interactions between behaviour and physiology in fish.

• Meanwhile, Professor Martin Attrill has contributed three chapters to Estuarine Ecology – ‘The Deep Sea’, ‘Mangrove Forests’ and ‘Seagrass Meadows’.
A group of international students spending Christmas in Plymouth added some flavour to the season, by kicking off the festivities South Asian style.

An entertaining array of songs, dances, plays and instrumental music, the event celebrated the festive mood of Christmas and the New Year, but also acted as a cultural platform, encouraging people of all ages and faiths to show off their talents and promote cultural peace and harmony in the wider community. The event was co-ordinated by Dr Sanjay Sharma, an engineering lecturer at the university who is also a trustee of the South Asian Society. This is the first time that such an event has been organised exclusively with the help of local talents and students, with all 80 tickets snapped up within just a week of the event being announced.