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Sussex graduate elected Welsh Secretary

Sue Duncan (Arts 1976–77) has been appointed to the post of Government Chief Social Researcher, a newly created post in the Government’s Cabinet Office. Sue was previously Director of Policy Studies at the Cabinet Office and has worked in public policy for over three decades. Her work has included managing a team of researchers, overseeing the UK’s first independent inquiry into social mobility, and developing research and policy on a wide range of topics such as social care, housing, and education. Sue has a strong track record in promoting evidence-based policy making and has published extensively on these topics. Her appointment reflects the Government’s commitment to evidence-based policy making and demonstrates its recognition of Sue’s expertise in the field.

Graduate wins second Knighthood

Sir Ronald Sanders (Arts 1958–60), former Welsh Secretary in the 1997–99 Government, has been appointed to the post of Welsh Secretary. Sir Ronald is a highly respected figure in the Labour Party and has served as a Member of Parliament for Caerphilly since 1987. He has a long history of public service and has held a range of portfolios, including Environment, Transport and Regional Development. His appointment as Welsh Secretary recognises his expertise in these areas and his commitment to improving the quality of life for people in Wales.

How you can benefit from your membership

If you are a member of the Alumni Society, you can benefit from a range of exclusive benefits and services. These include access to the Alumni Centre, Branner House, a welcome drinks reception, and a range of events throughout the year. You can also access the Alumni Magazine, which is produced bi-annually and provides updates on the latest news and events at the University. Additionally, you can access the Alumni Benefits Package, which includes benefits such as discounts on events and services, access to the Alumni Office, and a range of other exclusive benefits.

Alumni at heart of Cabinet Office

Sue Duncan (Arts 1976–77) has been appointed as the first Government Chief Social Researcher, a new position created by the Government to improve the quality of social research. Sue has a strong track record in public policy, having worked in the Office of Deputy Prime Minister, the Welsh Assembly Government, and the Cabinet Office. Her appointment reflects the Government’s commitment to evidence-based policy making and demonstrates its recognition of Sue’s expertise in the field.

Obituaries

Chalmers, Alistair

Alistair Chalmers, a former member of the Alumni Society, has passed away. Alistair was a former member of the Alumni Society and was known for his contributions to the Alumni Centre and its activities. He will be missed by everyone who knew him.

Alumni Teaching Awards

This year’s Alumni Society Teaching Awards have been awarded to five Sussex lecturers in recognition of their outstanding teaching. The recipients were Julian Broughton, Convenor of Music in the Centre for Continuing Education; Dr Helga Dittmar and Dr Andy Field, both lecturers in Psychology in the School of Social Sciences; and Dr Clive Wood, research fellow in the School of Biological Sciences. Upon receiving her award, Dr Dittmar (pictured here) commented: “I’m really thrilled and extremely touched by students’ comments. It feels really nice to be appreciated.”

Alumni to speak at European Convention on the Future of Europe

Norma Reid (MPAS 1972–73, SMS 1973–74), former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Westminster in South Africa, received an honorary degree from the University of Sussex at the Summer Graduation Ceremonies in July. Having grown up in Northern Ireland, Norma chose to study at Sussex because it combined a strong academic reputation with a political edge. The “political awakening” she underwent whilst at Sussex sparked off a lifetime of commitment to equality and opportunity.

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How your gifts are helping a Sussex graduate to enter the Cabinet

Françoise Leake (SOC 1966–69) was awarded a CBE for her life-long services to Education in the 2002 Queen’s Birthday Honours List. Under her leadership, the University of Sussex was twice rated outstanding by Ofsted. Having just retired, Françoise now works as a part-time educational consultant.

CBE for Sussex Graduate

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Falmer
Winter 2002

Falmer
the highly competitive StudentMagazine of the Year Award, which it won in 1996 and 1999.

The £1.7 million laboratory will be opened at the University of Sussex in May 2002.

SEI celebrates 10 years of excellence
The Sussex European Institute (SEI) organised a special three-day conference in July to mark the Institute’s 10th anniversary and commemorate a decade of excellence as a leading postgraduate centre in contemporary European studies.

Since its foundation in 1992, SEI has been successful in building the strengths of the University, which, from its early days, has been a pioneer of European Studies in the United Kingdom and a leading institution in harnessing expertise on an inter-disciplinary basis. Acknowledging SEI’s key contribution to society, Vice-Chancellor Professor Alasdair Smith commented: “SEI’s innovative graduate programmes have attracted many young professionals from Central and Eastern Europe over the past decade. In this way, the University has made a significant contribution to the building of a new Europe, in which we should all take pride.”

SEI has welcomed a multinational team of researchers and has graduated some 500 professionals from Central and Eastern Europe over the past decade. In this way, the University has made a significant contribution to the building of a new Europe, in which we should all take pride.

As film buffs were queuing to watch the new Spiderman movie, undergraduate students from Sussex went one better by discovering a new species of spider during a fieldwork trip to the Seychelles archipelago. “There are around 250 species of spider in the Seychelles, most of them ridiculously small. The new one is actually quite large, by comparison. But at 1.6mm long I don’t think it’s going to be tackling the Green Goblin or Spiderman’s other enemies in a hurry,” said Dr Michael Frogley, Lecturer in Physical Geography. Field trips to distant and fascinating locations are a particular highlight of Geography degrees at Sussex and the latest finding will undoubtedly increase their popularity.

SEI scientist wins top physics award
Dr Jonathan Hare, from the School of Chemistry, Physics and Environmental Science (CPES), has recently received theParticle Physics and Astronomy Students’ Association award for his efforts in promoting physics to the public through lecture tours. “This is a unique and very exciting project. We hope eventually to find out what happened between ‘matter’ and ‘anti-matter’ when the Universe was created,” says Ed Hind, Visiting Professor of experimental physics and director of the new centre. Matter and anti-matter were both formed at the time of the Bing Bang, approximately 15 billion years ago. For every particle formed, an anti-particle should also have been formed. Almost immediately, the equal numbers of particles and anti-particles would have annihilated each other, leaving nothing but light. Somehow, however, more matter than anti-particles must have been created than anti-particles, which is how the stars and planets came into existence. The question of why there is more matter than anti-matter is one that has been the focus of much scientific research for decades. Thanks to advancing technology at the University of Sussex, Professor Hind and his team are now on the verge of a breakthrough.

The centre was opened by Sussex alumnus Alan Anderson (BIOLS 1965-68), editor of the New Scientist.
Astronomy) will be able to map regions where stars millions of light years away are actually in the process of being born. The infrared beam can cut through the dust which blocks these stars off from light waves. In this way, it will also be able to detect elusive brown dwarf stars, and to identify galaxies which we have so far been unable to see. The telescope, which will be located in the Atacama Desert in Chile, will give us our first complete picture of the mappable universe. And, as Dr Smith says “Sussex will be among the first places to have access to the data it produces.”

Cash boost for leukaemia research

A team of scientists from the new Genome Damage and Stability Centre have been awarded £147,000 by the Leukaemia Research Fund to look at abnormalities in DNA damage and repair that occur in some leukaemias and lymphomas. The research team, led by Dr Penny Jeggo, will look at Seckel Syndrome, a rare inherited condition. They have recently discovered that a faulty enzyme in Seckel Syndrome prevents the body repairing damaged DNA. Similar defects in DNA repair have been found to predispose some people to certain forms of leukaemia and lymphomas.

Solving the Alzheimer’s Mystery

Dr Julian Thorpe, head of the Electron Microscopy Lab at the University of Sussex, has received a £247,000 grant from the Wellcome Trust to provide a better understanding of the development of degenerative brain diseases. Dr Thorpe’s research team will be taking a very close look at a possible contributory cause of nerve cell death in a group of conditions related to Alzheimer’s disease. By identifying causal factors of the disease, research into Alzheimer’s will be a step closer towards developing more effective treatments and accurate diagnoses of this complex condition.

A new VISTA of the Universe

Sussex academics are part of a team which has been given the go-ahead to build a pioneering new £25 million telescope. The VISTA (Visible and Infrared Survey Telescope for Astronomy) will be able to map regions where stars millions of light years away are actually in the process of being born. The infrared beam can cut through the dust which blocks these stars off from light waves. In this way, it will also be able to detect elusive brown dwarf stars, and to identify galaxies which we have so far been unable to see. The telescope, which will be located in the Atacama Desert in Chile, will give us our first complete picture of the mappable universe. And, as Dr Smith says “Sussex will be among the first places to have access to the data it produces.”

Art therapy can help dementia sufferers

Experimental psychologists Dr Jenny Rusted and Linda Sheppard from the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Sussex have just completed the first study in the UK evaluating the impact of art psychotherapy on people with dementia.

The study followed 45 elderly people with dementia for 13 months in four care homes in Sussex. One group received art psychotherapy, while the other received regular recreational activity. “What we found was that, initially, any activity improves the participants’ sense of involvement and their mood,” says Jenny. “Then, within about 10 weeks, the recreational group peaked and levelled off, whereas the art therapy group continued upwards on all of the scales.”

Although those in the art therapy group started off with a fair amount of negative feeling towards the art therapy approach, there was a slow but continuous rise in mood, sociality and physical involvement. “What the art therapist is doing is helping the person with dementia to adapt to their changing emotions in terms of the loss of their cognitive skills and perhaps their self-esteem and sense of identity,” explains Linda. “What we’re trying to do is look at ways of broadening resources for people with dementia to improve their quality of living.”

An opportunity to give something back

The University of Sussex MasterCard is a unique way of supporting your alma mater. The card has been designed specially for use by alumni and staff and offers an attractive interest rate and no annual fee. When you take out the card, and every time the card is subsequently used, Bank of Scotland makes a donation to the University for student support at no extra cost to you. More than 1,600 alumni have already got their card, which has generated over £63,000 for student welfare. If you wish to request a free copy of the MasterCard brochure, please contact your Development Officer. For details, please contact the Development Office, Musgrave Park, Hove, East Sussex BN3 3NT, UK. A list of card details are available on request. Robert Stoddart, Head of Development, Bank of Scotland, is a registered body of MasterCard International Inc.
Two new alumni groups will soon be launched in Brazil and Mexico. If you would like to be notified of their activities and events, please email the Alumni Centre at alumni@sussex.ac.uk.

Noel McCarthy (ENGAM 1971-74) and Massimo Toschi (EURO 1992-93) are keen to rekindle alumni activity in New York City. Anyone interested in joining them at future gatherings, please email us at alumni@sussex.ac.uk.

Massimo would also like to hear from anyone working for the UN to discuss the possibility of setting up a group or email list of Sussex UN alumni. If you are interested in this initiative, please contact the Alumni Centre.

Over 200 alumni who started at Sussex in 1992 got back together again for the sort of party most students dream about.

They all gathered in the Grapevine Bar for the Vice-Chancellor’s Champagne Reception, and then made their way into the Downes Restaurant, for a fun and entertaining evening. Dinner was followed by a heavy night down at the Hothouse, where everything stirred to the music of four Hothouse DJs from their time: Kartin Ronzidi (SOC 1992-96, ISS 1996-97), Sunny Patel (MOLS 1992-96), Jaspal Merhay (MAPS 1992-96, CPES 1996-97) and Lewis Claydon (MAPS 1991-96). All night the dance floor was heaving with bodies – all trying to pretend they were students once more. Why not visit the alumni website (www.sussex.ac.uk/alumni) to find out what you missed on the night?

“Thank you for a wonderful and really well organised weekend for the 92 reunion. It was so good to catch up with old friends who I had lost contact with. Definitely a weekend to remember!” David Hegarty (ENGG 1992-96).

In March, Sussex alumni living and working in Brussels joined students from the Sussex European Institute (SEI) for the 10th consecutive year, as part of their annual study trip to Brussels. Students benefited from talking to alumni who offered them an insight into what it is like to work in the Belgian capital. Speakers included Sharon Norton (EURO 1988-91) and Gwenda Jeffreys-Jones (EURO 1993-97), co-ordinators of the Belgium Alumni Group and organisers of the event, Blandine Bourjou (SIE 1998-99), Christian Buelens (EURO 1997-98) and Lynnette Thomas (EURO-CLS 1997-98).

“This informal evening has become a most valuable component of SEI’s annual study trip to Brussels. It does not just offer the opportunity for Sussex students and alumni to mix and to swap experiences, but it additionally serves as a forum through which alumni can pass on advice to the current student cohort on breaking into the Brussels/EU graduate job market,” says Viga Nicholson, from SEI, who accompanied the students to Brussels.

Before the new academic term, Sharon and Gwenda organised the first orientation session in Brussels for local students who were about to start their studies at the University of Sussex. Apart from listening to alumni’s accounts of their experiences at Sussex, students and their parents had the opportunity to ask them as many questions as they needed to put their minds at rest.

“The most memorable question of the evening came from a student who asked us how we found time to study and do all the extra-curricular activities we all did,” said Sharon. “This was a new activity for the alumni group and, seen its success, looks to be one that will be added to the calendar of regular events.”

The logistical challenge of coordinating and transporting relief aid into northern Afghanistan was graphically outlined to alumni in Geneva by Dr Meryll Dean, from SEI, who co-ordinated the group, gave alumni the opportunity to reminisce about their time at Sussex and to hear from Dr Baker about the latest developments on campus.

As many as 22 alumni and new Sussex students got together for the second alumni dinner of the Sussex Cyprus Alumni Group, which took place at the beautiful Sandy Beach Hotel in Larnaca. “It was a very successful event. The environment was very pleasant and we all agreed to meet again at some other time, most probably towards the end of the year,” said Antonis Antoniou (ENGG 1993-95), co-ordinator of the group.

Last April, the Sussex Japan Alumni Group got together for an informal reunion in Tokyo to welcome Dr Mitsu Shippee, Senior Lecturer in Law at Sussex, who gave alumni an insight into her research on human rights in Japan. The event was organised by Christian Buelens, Head of the International Office at the University, for an informal get-together over coffee at the Rydges Wentworth Hotel. The gathering, organised by Alison Harris (EURO 1977-81), co-ordinator of the group, gave alumni the opportunity to reminisce about their time at Sussex and to hear from Dr Baker about the latest developments on campus.

The Sussex Korea Alumni Group organised a dinner at a restaurant south of the Han River, coinciding with Dr Keem McCormick’s visit to Seoul to attend an education fair. The lively event was hosted by the new President of the Korean Alumni Society, Hee-Yol Yu (SPRU 1980-81), Vice Minister of Science and Technology, who recently took over the presidency of the Society from Professor Yang-Chim David Chi (CULCOM 1985-91), founder of the group. The event was a very successful and enjoyable occasion and marked a new phase of the Korean Alumni Group under the leadership of Vice Minister Hee-Yol Yu.

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The lively discussion continued over a relaxed, informal dinner in the historic Château de Penthes, organised by Tony Murdoch (SOC 1962-65). “I’m encouraged by the group spirt and easygoing liveliness, and by the fact that people came from as far away as Basle and Zurich,” commented Peter Holt (CCS 1971-74), co-ordinator of the group.
Last July saw the culmination of years of hard work at Sussex for almost 2,000 new graduands and diplomates. Jubilant and excited, one by one they walked up to the Dome stage to collect their degrees from the hands of the Chancellor, Lord Attenborough, against the backdrop of euphoric claps and cheers from their family and friends.

This was a particularly special year, as it was the first time since 1979 that the ceremony took place at the Brighton Dome, recently restored to its former Art Deco glory. The beautiful Regency building provided the perfect setting to welcome more than 4,000 family members and friends who travelled from all over the world to join in the celebrations and see their loved ones graduate.

And for two consecutive days, the Dome was filled with palpable joy at the celebration of one of the most anticipated days in the life of a student.

As they collected their degrees, many graduands would have undoubtedly looked back over unforgettable memories from their years at Sussex. One of the many finalists who surely revelled in the sense of achievement at completing her degree was 36 year old Helen Ball, a severely dyslexic student who left school with two ‘O’ levels thinking she would never get into university. Yet, on 19th July, Helen graduated with an honours degree in Psychology. “It’s given me an amazing sense of self-confidence. It’s mind blowing, really,” said Helen.

An equally remarkable story is that of former champion runner Jessica Murphy, 23, who through sheer hard work and determination managed to achieve a first in Psychology with American Studies, despite suffering from such a severe case of arthritis that meant some days she could not get out of bed to study. “I really loved my course and this gave me the motivation to keep on going. I got loads of support from my friends and the University,” says Jessica. “I had to choose whether I wanted to suffer because of the pain or succeed despite it.”

Gillian Yates did so well in her studies that she was not only awarded a first, but also the Riverstone Prize and the Royal Statistical Society Prize for the best performance in Mathematics and Statistics. Her achievements seem even more impressive when you learn that she has been partially sighted since birth.

Sussex prides itself on being a leading university in the admission of mature students. Last summer, 249 undergraduates who began their studies when they were over the age of 21 graduated from the University. 35-year-old Moira Woodhouse, who has five children and received a law degree, is one of the many mature students who chose to study at Sussex to boost their skills and increase job satisfaction.

“Studying at Sussex has broadened my horizons and allowed me to mix with a vast cross-section of people,” says Moira. “I had to choose whether I wanted to suffer because of the pain or succeed despite it.”

Thinking of Postgraduate Study?

The University will be holding a Postgraduate Open Day on Wednesday 15th January and a Research Open Evening on Tuesday 25th February in Bramber House on the University campus. The two events will provide you with an ideal opportunity to find out more about the wide range of taught postgraduate programmes and research opportunities available at the university. For further details please email PG.Admissions@sussex.ac.uk or visit: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/central/postgraduate.shtml

What next for graduates?

For many finalists, Graduation day spelled the end of student life, and with it, the end of morning lay-ins after a few too many drinks and sleepless nights before dissertation deadlines. Yet, behind the euphoria of the grand finale, there was also a mixed feeling of excitement, yet uneasy, anticipation, pending the quest for that first step onto the career ladder. With average graduate salaries allegedly 40% higher than non-graduates, the prospects look good for the new generation of young professionals. According to the Institute of Employment Studies, 40% of final year students expect to start work after graduation. At Sussex employment has been the first destination for more than half of graduands in recent years. One of the many fortunate and well-organised finalists is Sara Turnbull, who had already been offered a place on a graduate programme for Kent County Council and an interview for the Civil Service in the Department for International Development well before completing her degree.

About 14% of Sussex graduands will go straight onto a postgraduate programme. Postgraduate training is no longer just the choice of those wishing to pursue their academic interests. In today’s competitive job market, postgraduate education is also the preferred choice of those who, not put off by essay deadlines and sleepless nights, want to increase their chances of getting a head start in the job market.

Taking a gap year after graduation to do voluntary work or to travel are also popular choices among finalists. These provide a good opportunity to gain invaluable experience, as well as the chance to explore new cultures before making it into the ‘real world’.
The name Shobana Jeyasingh (EAM 1970-74) is one that resonates among enthusiasts of contemporary dance and conjures up the distinctive and impassioned style of her productions that has established her as one of the most exciting and ground-breaking choreographers in the country. The dramatic force of Shobana’s work keeps her audiences mesmerised throughout her shows, as they follow the elegant and effortless movements of its performers. Precise gestures and continuous contrasts of tension and ease, and of light and shadow, are meticulously synchronised by the rhythm of equally unconventional live music. ‘I think there’s a difference between music that dialogues with dance, and music that I might want to listen to at home. I think of the composer as a partner, someone to work together with. I think what I respond to is music that shares the same slice of history with me – music that, emotionally, is in touch with the way I live life,’ explains Shobana.

Trained in the classical Indian dance Bharata Natyam, Shobana has used her special choreographic vision to create a distinctive contemporary dance form that has won her international acclaim, and even an MBE for her services to dance. This accolade and the many awards that have come her way throughout the years have reaffirmed her standing as a choreographer of unique power, juxtaposing classical and contemporary style, as well as Indian and Western influences, Shobana’s dance work emerges as a creative and hybrid expression of her own multicultural identity. “The day that I know for certain what my ‘identity’ is will probably be the day that I stop making dance,” jokes Shobana, after her recent performance at Sussex’s Gardner Arts Centre. Born in Madras, Shobana has lived in the UK since she came to study at Sussex in 1970. “I was educated in Sri Lanka and East Malaysia mostly. In Sri Lanka I received a classical Tamil education in a very vocational boarding school and in Malaysia I had a very colonial English education in a Chinese school, so I have always had a kind of multicultural upbringing, and I think that influences the way I make dance pieces,” she says. “I see identity and ‘home’ as things you continually create for yourself, rather than something rigidly fixed. That’s an idea that runs through all my work.”

Like all professional dancers, Shobana’s dance education began at a very young age, and all through her school days, dance always remained an extra curricular activity. “If you are from Tamil Nadu you take it for granted that you’re going to Bharata Natyam lessons, and it was also part of taking pride in being Indian.” After Sussex, where she graduated with a B.A. and an M.A. in English Literature, Shobana’s dance career gradually started to take off, first as a solo performer and later as a choreographer and director of her own company – the Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Company, which she founded in 1988. “After University I looked at the usual options: publishing, teaching – in fact, I did teach English as a Foreign language for a bit. And then I saw a performance by a Bharata Natyam dancer who lived here, and I found that interface – Indian classical dance in London – somehow exciting. So I danced with her and one thing led to another. It wasn’t anything planned; the initiative came partly from others. Eventually I got dissatisfied with using taped music and wanted to bring musicians over from India. That led to fundraising for a touring show with musicians, and in that way it started to build up,” Shobana explains. And it was through choreography that Shobana realised her full artistic potential. “Dancing, for me, was always a critical activity and I found that through choreography I could interrogate dance in a more satisfactory and effective manner.”

Despite having chosen a career path so seemingly distant from her academic background, Shobana acknowledges that her literary training has exerted a stronger influence on her work than might seem apparent. “Literature was probably my first introduction to form and artistry,” she explains. “I guess literature gave me someone like T.S. Eliot as a role model for craftsmanship and structure – quite a challenge to live up to,” she jokingly remarks. Interestingly, like in Eliot’s poems, the meaning and narrative of Shobana’s work is also deliberately and distinctively elusive, and it is perhaps partly this elusiveness that makes her dance language so intriguing and engaging. “I’m a poetry student. Even in prose I have always liked writers who make me want to stop and savour rather than send me rushing to the next page in search of the story. Similarly, I love the way dance can allude to emotions. In a few seconds dance can brush past, can fleetingly evoke a whole series of emotions between two people, yet without a narrative of relationship,” says Shobana. “I have never had any extraneous messages in mind other than the dance itself. I doubt whether dance is the most effective medium for specific message sending. It seems far too slippery. Like in music, the structure is the message – i.e. the choices one makes in the construction and composition of a dance work. That may sound dry, but as the Belgian choreographer Anna Theresa de Keersmaker once observed ‘a perfect structure generates perfect emotion.’”

Needless to say, emotion and passion are ever present throughout Shobana’s repertoire and the dance language of her impressive cast of dancers.

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“Jeyasingh has left tradition behind, forging a dazzling and totally distinct movement language that obeys no-one’s rules but her own.”

The Times

The Independent

Time Out/London

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The Times
David ‘Windy’ Baboulene (EAPS/COGS 1988-1991) had his first book published this year. *Blue Road* is the “hilarious and bizarre true story” (*ABTA Travel Magazine*) of his first journey round the world working on ships. We catch up with Windy now as he looks back along the Blue Road.

I remember at primary school seeing a geography film about rubber production in Java. It blew my mind. I can recall nothing about rubber production – does rubber really come from trees? – but I remember being blown over by the idea of an Indonesian island where there were monosons and jungles and exotic rituals. Croydon had its own exotic rituals, of course, but somehow they didn’t carry the same magic. From that day forwards I simply burned to see the world. I left school at 16, joined the merchant navy, and spent four years travelling the world on rusty old tramp steamers. Ironically, after carrying a flame for Java all those years, when I finally made it there I got shot by a 17-year-old policeman who was trying to rob me – hardly the romance I had hoped for.

*Blue Road* recounts the stories from my first trip. I join the ship in New Orleans a timid schoolboy, and return to Liverpool six months later, a hardened veteran of the seas. It was a strange world on board. No police. No authorities. Just a dozen or so men trying to keep sane, whilst pretending that being isolated on a floating platform in the ocean is a natural thing to do. The Samuel Johnson quote "Once a man comes to like a sea life, he is no longer fit to live on dry land" is about right.

The real fun was in the trips ‘up the road’ in new and exciting cultures. The book finds me and my colleagues irritating the peoples of the world, from the advanced societies of the USA and Australia to more dangerous places, such as Jamaica and Panama, and the benign island paradises of the South Pacific. There was plenty of monkey business on the ship, too. At Panama, they talked me into standing with a bucket of sprouts to feed the mules which pull the ships through the canal. I was so well duped that I believed the mules wore hard hats and got pulled into the water sometimes. It was my job to tempt them inland with sprouts in order that they would avoid drowning in the canal with a hard hat on. On the Big Day, I discovered the truth: the mules at Panama are actually dirty big ‘trains’ running on rails. They don’t eat sprouts, they eat diesel. Nor did they eat the carrots my fellow first-tripper was providing amidships. They weren’t even interested in the Granny Smiths on offer from the engineering apprentice down aft. The photos from that day not only portray me as some sort of greensniff (“with exclusive deals for locomotives”), they also depict me standing next to one of the diesel trains holding a proper-scooper. (Us first-trippers were also apparently responsible for tow path cleanliness amongst our mules...)

I think everyone should travel, and ideally they should do it before they have responsibilities. I have friends who are trying to make up for lost time by travelling in their thirties and beyond, but the thing you can never recapture is the frame of mind. That youthful attitude. We live but once, so take a year out, throw a bag over your shoulder and head off into the sun. Go ooooon – you know you want to. Then write a book about it and make a million! Does rubber really come from trees? It’s bugging me now...
Mandela scholarship revisited

With the old foes seemingly vanquished and South Africa out of the news, that ever-present enemy of change—apartheid—has reared its head. That’s where you come in—those at Sussex with me, you may remember my efforts to part you from some of your grant for the Scholarship. Well, I have the buck out again and I am hoping that you and your fellow alumni will be as generous as you always were. We need ‘only’ a few thousand pounds of additional regular income to secure the Scholarship for another 30 years.

Whether you can make a one-off donation or, better still, a regular gift through a standing order—all your support will be used to fund Scholars, since the Student Union continues to meet all the administrative costs of the Scholarship.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu writes: “Today the need for outstanding black leadership is greater than ever. I therefore call on you to support the Scholarship Fund generously so that young people may be adequately prepared to take on the responsibilities of the future.”

If you would like to make a gift to the Mandela Scholarship Fund, please contact: Sue Cornford, USSU, Falmer House, Falmer, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 9QF. Telephone: 01273 774770. For further information, please visit www.ussu.net/representation/mandela/

Now it’s over to you.

By Daniel Simon (BIOLS 1983-88)

The Sussex Fund

As Falmer goes to print, the Alumni Centre will be launching a new fundraising telephone campaign to seek alumni support for The Sussex Fund. Tamsin Otto, Annual Fund Co-ordinator, reminds us of the importance of alumni giving and the difference your generosity can make in the lives of current and future students.

It is quite likely that many of you reading this article will have recently received a telephone call from one of our student callers about The Sussex Fund. The 2002 telephone fundraising campaign raised funds to support Access Bursaries, giving young people from poorer backgrounds the chance to attend university.

Access Bursaries, giving young people who would otherwise be unable to attend university the chance of a Sussex education; Student Hardship Funds, for home and international students in serious financial difficulty; Postgraduate Research Grants and Student Welfare, covering resources such as books for the library and special equipment for students with disabilities. In the next issue of Falmer, we will be reporting on the success of the campaign, but I would like to return here to the fundamental question of ‘Why does the Fund exist and why should anyone give?’

With the abolition of maintenance grants and the introduction of student fees, an increasing number of students find themselves in financial difficulties, sometimes to the point of being deterred from applying to university. Although the Government has recently promised to review the way HE students are funded, state support is unlikely to be sufficient to cover even the basic living costs of our growing community of students.

Access and equality have always been an integral part of Sussex, which has remained true to its principles of accepting and understanding difference. We would like to be in the position of being able to educate the best students irrespective of their backgrounds. This is why we need to build up our own Fund independent of the status of governmental policies. The Sussex Fund means we can continue providing access scholarships for new undergraduates, whilst supporting existing students through hardship and research grants, and improved resources.

Why should anyone give? I believe that a university education should not only be the privilege of those who can afford increasing tuition fees, but...
should be available to all capable young people. Education is about understanding differences, so that we can improve the society in which we live. I hope you feel that the education you received at Sussex has been a valuable and positive experience, and that you will be able to join us in offering other young people this opportunity. Providing support for students like Sharayi Chakanyuka is possible thanks to the generosity of people like you.

A big thank you to all those who have already contributed to this year’s campaign.

Local Trust funds IT to support visually impaired students

Visually impaired students at Sussex are set to benefit from a generous grant by a local charity. The Blatchington Court Trust (BCT) is giving the University an annual grant of about £10,000 for the next five years.

Sue Yates, Head of Student Support, welcomed the news and said: “The University has recently extended its provision for students with disabilities and this latest donation from the Blatchington Court Trust will help us to expand our services still further.”

Students to benefit from new bursary scheme

Potential students who might not have been able to come to university for financial reasons are being encouraged to apply to Sussex thanks to a new bursary scheme backed by the Rotherwick Foundation. The scheme will see individual students funded to the tune of £3,000 for each year of their degree. The scheme, worth £81,000 over five years, also aims to maximise completion rates for beneficiaries of the scheme.

Rohin Street, Head of Alumni and Development, and part of the team that bid for the money, said: ‘There is limited help for students who get into financial difficulties, but there is nothing to encourage students from disadvantaged backgrounds to apply in the first place, other than a promise of future career prospects that can seem very distant.’

The Sussex Access Bursary will run for a trial period initially and will be awarded to between three and five students from autumn 2003. The £3,000 a year given to students would make it the largest single such scheme offered at Sussex and would go substantially towards paying for the cost of studying and living.

Plans for disbursement of the funds include scanning key academic texts onto CD-ROM, and purchasing more specialist software and adapted PCs. Over the last decade the Trust has given nearly £150,000 to the University, which has been used to:

● fund a major research project on young visually impaired people in Sussex
● support Jubiler Scholarships, awarded to visually impaired students from the country
● assist visually impaired students at Sussex
● enhance specialist equipment in the Library, the Computing Centre and the Assistive Technology Centre
● support the appointment of the University’s Visual Impairment Coordinator, Jane Wigley

BCT was set up as a grant-making charity after the sale of the Blatchington Court School for the Blind in Seaford in 1992. It helps with the education and employment of about 700 young visually impaired people in Sussex. The Executive Chairman of BCT is Dr Geoff Lockwood (USIE 1976-81), who helped to form the Trust while he was Registrar & Secretary at the University of Sussex.

1960s

● After 22 years as Chief Executive of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Dr Peter Briggs (MAPS 1963-66) has moved to the University of Surrey Rotherham as Pro-Rector and Principal of Southlands College.

● James Tomkies (ENGAM 1964-67) has retired from the regular secondary school system after 32 years in the profession and now teaches blind and visually impaired students at the W.Ross Macdonald School for the Blind.

● Having spent 25 years in the world of book publishing, Imogen ‘Mitch’ Dawson (AFRAS 1966-71) is cutting down on the workload. Having enrolled on a part-time degree course to improve her Italian, she intends to spend more time at her house in Italy. She’d love to hear from anyone who remembers her via the Alumni Centre.

● Geoffroy Fernie (ENGH 1968-69), Professor in the Department of Surgery at the University of Toronto, has been awarded the 2002 Dr Jonas Salk Award. The $10,000 prize recognises a lifetime of outstanding contributions to biomedical research. Geoffroy has had a long and distinguished career in bioengineering directed at the alleviation of disabling conditions.

● Sheila Smith (née Elwell) (BIOLES 1967-70) is set to cycle across Cuba to help raise money for the Queen Charlotte Research Centre for family health in Hammersmith, having already traversed Turkey, Israel, Jordan and Egypt. If you would like to help Sheila raise the £2,500 needed, you can email her at smsmith@diug.co.nz or post cheques, made out to ‘The Institute Trust Fund’ with Sheila’s name on the back, to Action for Charity, Cuba Cycle Challenge, PO Box 162, Lymington, SO42 7GF.

● Frederick Toates (BIOLS 1967-71) has recently published two textbooks, Biological Psychology: An Integrative Approach (Prentice Hall 2001) and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (Klass Publishing 2002), part of the latter being based upon his experiences at Sussex.

● Nicholas Woodeson (ENGAM 1968-71) has just returned from New York having played the lead off-Broadway in Alan Ayckbourn’s double play, House and Garden.

● Dr Margaret Mallett (USIE 1969-70) has recently published The Primary English Encyclopaedia: The Heart of the Curriculum (David Fulton 2002).

● Philip Gross (CCS 1970-71) has written two new books, Change of Address (Bloomsbury 2001) and Going for Stone (Oxford University Press 2003). The latter will be available in January 2003.

● Working as a freelance IT consultant, Paul Kuczora (ENGH 1970-75, USIE 1975-76) has recently been working on the interactive digital television version of Who Wants to be a Millionaire.
Unique garden that has been featured in several publications, including Sir Roy Strong's "Disease to Please" (Rob Stolk, 2001) and set up to document the health and well-being of chimpanzees. Julian would love to hear from anyone that remembers him via the Alumni Centre.

Silvia Ricco (EURO 1990-73) is currently enjoying a gap year after 21 years in the hectic world of legal publishing. She is considering retraining in herbal medicine.

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alumni society benefits & services

Since its conception, the University of Sussex Alumni Society has grown from strength to strength, and it now boasts an international community of more than 50,000 former students in over 100 countries around the world. The Alumni team are constantly negotiating new benefits and services for members of the Alumni Society. Here is a list of the many ways in which you can make the most of your membership. If you can offer a new benefit, or have suggestions for new services, please contact the Alumni Centre. We will be delighted to hear from you.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Volunteering Opportunities
- Alumni Consul: assist the International Office at local recruitment fairs, and offer informal advice to prospective students from your country.
- Alumni Co-ordinator: establish and run a new alumni group in your local area.

Professional Networking Events
Further your career through our Education, Management, Media and Science Professional Networking Groups. Contact details of graduates established in these fields are available online (under password protection). Contact us for the password or if you wish to be added to any of the groups.

Keep up-to-date with upcoming events in your local area, please visit the alumni website (www.sussex.ac.uk/alumni).

IN Volunteering Opportunities

● Alumni Consul: assist the International Office at local recruitment fairs, and offer informal advice to prospective students from your country.
● Alumni Co-ordinator: establish and run a new alumni group in your local area.
● Career Development & Employment Centre (CDEC): An opportunity for you to give invaluable careers advice to students and recent graduates from the University through the Sussex Graduate Network.
● Work shadowing/job opportunities: also through CDEC, join a network of UK and European alumni who offer work shadowing and job opportunities to Sussex students.

FINANCIAL BENEFITS

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