Celebrating thirty years of SPRU

In 1966 the Science Policy Research Unit was established at Sussex. That was an optimistic time when many governments were increasing investment in research and development at rates of more than ten per cent a year in the belief that development in science and technology could bring prosperity to all. SPRU was set up to look at the implications of technical change.

Times have changed and SPRU has grown into a world class research and teaching institute concerned with the technological challenges that confront decision-makers in government and industry and international agencies and with the public debates that surround these challenges.

In 1966, SPRU’s multidisciplinary research faculty consisted of an economist and a geologist and Professor Chris Freeman was appointed its first Director. In 1996 its research faculty of 40 includes chemists and sociologists, psychologists and physicists, engineers and economists. It has a total staff of over 100 and a thriving graduate programme with over 150 masters and doctoral students.

Many of the staff and students, together with friends of SPRU and former colleagues were gathered in a packed MOLS Lecture Theatre last Wednesday to celebrate its 30th anniversary and to hear the Unit’s three former directors, Chris Freeman, Geoff Oldham and Mike Gibbons review the achievements of the past 30 years and look forward to the challenge of the next three decades.

The challenges they identified were formidable but they were all agreed that SPRU is uniquely qualified to confront them. According to Geoff Oldham, who looked at technology, development and international issues in an attempt to predict what would be on the international policy agenda in 30 years time, “One thing I can predict is that SPRU will still exist and will generate knowledge which will help society worldwide maximise the benefits of science and minimise its harmful effects.”

the Pulse wins Guardian Magazine of the Year Award

Congratulations to the Pulse team for winning the Guardian/NUS Student Magazine of the Year award. The highly competitive contest received over forty entries from around the country, of which seven were short-listed to attend the ceremony at Kings College London last weekend. “We chose the Pulse, from Sussex University, for its mixture of lively writing, clear but striking design and entrepreneurial achievements,” said Tom Hodgkinson of the Guardian. “It’s a self confident title that knows what it’s doing and who it’s speaking to.”

Besides an impressive plaque and £600, the team has also won the chance to get some of their work published in the Guardian, which is a great opportunity for any budding journalist.

Among those present at the ceremony were Rowan McIntyre, last years Editor of the Pulse, and Dave Newton, VP Communications. “I was surprised, I didn’t really expect it to win” admitted Rowan, “especially after hearing rumours of another publication bagging it.” After the awards the team celebrated with champagne and a curry – perhaps not the best mix, confessed Rowan.

As yet there are no definite plans for the prize money, although there is talk of using it to connect the Students’ Union to the World Wide Web, or alternatively to purchase a digital camera for the Publications Unit.

University Public Lecture

Adam Weiler Lecture

Paul Rogers
Professor of Peace Studies
University of Bradford

PEACE AND CONFLICT IN THE EARLY 21st CENTURY

Thursday 7 November
at 6.30 pm
Molecular Sciences Lecture Theatre
ALL WELCOME
In the Bookshop
Recent publications by Sussex authors, all obtainable from Sussex University Bookshop


New Faces
Joan Bliss, Professor of Education

USIE’s newest recruit, Professor Joan Bliss, is a psychologist by trade and comes to us from King’s College London. Joan’s prestigious career started in 1962 when she was an undergraduate at the University of Geneva studying with Jean Piaget. Although she is quick to point out that she is not a Piagetian: “I’m not a disciple of anyone. I believe you should always take the good of others and move on from there.

And indeed she has moved on. After Geneva she did a great deal of work in the far east with the Overseas Development Administration, setting up a child development centre in Sri Lanka. But on returning to England her work with children “became distracted” as she moved on to work with adults. At Chelsea College she conducted a huge survey which sought to improve science teaching in universities, “we had to look at what it was that motivated students to learn. It was all so new we had to develop a new methodology.”

In the 80s she set up an inter-institutional interdisciplinary organisation called the London Mental Model Group which was devoted to modelling cognition. It was then that she received a grant from the ESRC for £1/4m to look at how children think, a theme that features principally in her research to this day: “My present goal is to describe everyday thinking, or common sense thinking, and be able to characterise it and show what it is like. Then we would be able to show teachers what they are dealing with. At the end of the day it would be like building bridges from children’s original knowledge to the new knowledge you want to teach them.” One of Joan’s favourite extra-curricular activities is sailing. “My favourite spot is Greece, I’ve sailed all around the islands.” Joan is also a bit of mean cook: a skill she picked up in Geneva: “When I went over there I was sort of adopted by a French family; they took me into their midsts and taught me lots of things about cooking.”

Staff Development – On-Site Courses

RECRUITMENT Preparation and Interviewing Monday, 25 November 1996, all day

For those involved or about to become involved in recruiting non-teaching staff. This workshop demonstrates a structured approach to recruitment covering: job and person specifications; short-listing; preparing for the interview and employment legislation.

INTERVIEWING Correcting Performance, Dealing with Grievances, Problem-Solving Monday, 9 December 1996, all day

This interactive workshop is concerned with the handling of ‘difficult’ one-to-one communications. We will cover: trying to improve performance; coping with issues and problems raised by an individual; finding solutions to ‘people’ problems; recognising when these situations have become formal. This workshop will involve the use of case studies and role play.

Nominations for the above courses (via Section Heads please) to Alison Lynner, ext 3868 by two weeks before the course date at the latest please. Courses will only run if sufficient places are booked to make them viable.
Alumni Society honours former staff

Several former members of staff will be among those receiving Honorary Fellowships from the University’s alumni society later this month. George Kiloh, who left Sussex last year after his second stint in the Administration, this time as Deputy Registrar, long-serving English and American School Secretary Sheila Brain; and former Admissions Officer and Sussex graduate Penny Spelling (ENG 1968-71), who is currently on secondment to the EC in Brussels, will be presented their awards by recently retired Registrar and Secretary, Dr Geoff Lockwood, himself a former recipient of a University of Sussex Society (UoS) Fellowship.

The awards were introduced by the UoS in 1991 to acknowledge the distinguished service of individuals to the University and to recognise the achievements of Sussex graduates. Others receiving Fellowships at this year’s event include Tom Macan (SOC 1965-68), now British Ambassador to Lithuania and Jonathan Powers (DPhil Philosophy 1965-71), Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Derby.

The event is being held in the Senior Common Room at 7 pm on Friday 15 November. Before the presentations are made Geoff Lockwood, who is now Honorary Chief Executive of the West Pier Trust, will be sharing his views on the restoration and redevelopment of the Pier in a talk which will also focus on how this work is crucial to the regeneration of Brighton as a whole.

All members of the University are welcome to attend, particularly former colleagues and friends of the Fellowship recipients. Tickets (price £9.75 to include a glass of wine on arrival, hot buffet, dessert and coffee) are available from the Alumni Office, Sussex House, Room 206, ext 8258 or email: alumni@sussex.ac.uk.

Overseas Training Programme

If you were given the choice to go anywhere in the world for a year where would you go? A primary school in Malawi? A women’s refuge in Jaipur? Or perhaps a rural secondary school in Uganda? Well that’s where Eleanor Hutchinson, Jessica Neame and Kate Aubrey chose to go. The three AFRAS undergraduates took part in a new placement scheme called the Overseas Training Programme (OTP), a new initiative by VSO.

Eleanor spent 11 months in Malawi teaching English, Music and Drama to children of any age up to 14 in a village on the outskirts of Lilongwe, the country’s capital. “My work with the school was very exciting in terms of development. Malawi, ranges from fifth to the ninth poorest country in the world. So the problems in the towns are pretty dire. However this school had been well built and really well stocked, there were always plenty of text books and equipment. So some kids who wouldn’t normally have time to be educated and who come from families with a very negative attitude towards education, can find themselves in an environment that is totally geared towards them, which I think is very positive.”

Each year the OTP offers 40 undergraduates a chance to work overseas without costing them a penny. The placements are funded by the Overseas Development Administration; the only catch is that you have to organise it. “You get to choose everything, which is great in some ways because you can do exactly what you want. But at the same time you have to make your own contacts” says Eleanor. You are also free to choose from any country in the world, whereas VSO placements are usually ex-colonial countries.

“The scheme is a great opportunity for students to gain experience of working in a developing country” says scheme coordinator Dr Richard Black of AFRAS. The deadline for applications this year (only open to students in AFRAS) is 15 November.

In brief

Research Opportunities

For more information, call Mylene Powell in the Research Office, ext 3812 (mornings only), email: M.Powell@sussex.ac.uk

BBSRC/ESRC MATHEMATICAL MODELLING, SIMULATION AND PREDICTION OF BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS: New interdisciplinary programme aimed at developing new, generic mathematical and statistical approach which address the important issues of nonlinearity, stochasticity and heterogeneity which characterise most biological systems. Closing date 16 December.

UK/GERMANY: The British Council academic research programme to increase collaboration between research groups. Closing date: 31 December 1996.

NHS RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: Call for expressions of interest in submitting proposals for systematic reviews and primary research of priority areas in Health Technology Assessment. Closing date: 2 December 1996.

NHS R&D PRIORITIES IN NUTRITION: ENGLISH NATIONAL BOARD FOR NURSING, MIDWIFERY AND HEALTH VISITING: Research and development projects for commissioning. Various areas of research. Closing date: 2 December 1996.

ROYAL SOCIETY ICSU FAMILY BUSINESS MEETING GRANTS: to enable UK scientists to participate in business meetings of organisations within the ICSU community that do not come under the umbrella of overseas conference grants. Closing dates: per annum 1 March and 1 October.

EPSRC INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT AND DEPARTMENTAL EQUIPMENT: Call for proposals. To provide an opportunity for investigators to request support for the provision of such instrumentation, either by the purchase of commercially available equipment, or by the development of novel instrumentation not currently commercially available. Closing date: 29 November 1996.

CERN FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME: For research work in experimental or theoretical particle physics and the other half is for appointments of Fellows doing advanced development work and related research in a broad range of applied science, computing and engineering.

NATIONAL NHS R&D PROGRAMME ON CANCER: 2nd call for proposals in four areas. Deadline: 11 December 1996.

SPRU Continued from front page

SPRU’s strengths, according to Chris Freeman, derive in part from the commitment to teaching which underpins its strong research base; its graduate students now contribute to policy debate across the world. It is independent, adversarial when necessary and committed to informing the public of its findings, in the belief “that policy is something to which public opinion should contribute. Public opinion can change policy, and the development of informed public opinion is essential to democracy.” Despite the growth in its size and influence over the past 30 years, SPRU retains the key features which characterised its beginnings, including its commitment to multidisciplinarity and empirical research. As its first Director Chris Freeman concluded last Wednesday, “There is only one SPRU.”

SPRU’s three former Directors join Acting Director Keith Pavitt and Jackie Fuller, Director of Admin since its founding, to celebrate the 30th anniversary. L to r: Chris Freeman, Geoff Oldham, Jackie Fuller, Mike Gibbons and Keith Pavitt.
Monday 4 November
12.30pm Continuing Education Research Forum: Sue Bein and Laura Cecili (Hastings College) discuss how working as adult educators in another culture challenges assumptions about adult learning and education. Room D310.

2pm Analysis Seminar: An index theorem for elliptic operators in cone and wedge algebras. B.V. Fedosov (Moscow), Room PB1A1.


4.30m Neuroscience Seminar: Insect Eye Design: Day and night vision in mosquitoes. Mike Land (IRC), Biology Lecture Room.

5pm Extra Social and Political Thought Seminar: Steve Newcombe (Oregon) talking on the rights of indigenous people, Room A155.

5pm Sociology & Social Psychology Seminar: Female heterogeneity and the polarization of women's work. Catherine Hakim (LSE), Room D310.

Tuesday 5 November
1.30pm Psychology in COGS Research in Progress Seminar: The Aetiology and Symptomatology of Eating Disorders, Dr Tony Montgomery (Greenwich), Room PB2A1.


3pm SEI Research in Progress Seminar: The Comparative Politics of Transition in Central and Eastern Europe. Prof. Tibor Navrasics, Room A71.

4pm COGS Seminar: Processes, Times and Type (towards applied metaphysics of computation). Dusko Pavlovic, Room PB5C1.

4.15pm Biochemistry and Genetics and Development Seminar: Selectivity in transcriptional regulation mediated by multiple control mechanisms. Dr Peter O'Hare (Marie Curie R.I.), Biology Lecture Room. Sponsored by GRI Ltd.

5pm Social Anthropology Graduate/Faculty Seminar: What to ask. Dr Stephen Bennett (Royal Society of Chemistry), EDB 121.

4pm Astronomy Centre Seminar: The Hubble Deep Field. RAS Meeting, Room PB1A7.

4pm Social Psychology Seminar: Intergroup Contras Effects on Attitude Polarization. Tom Postmes (Amsterdam), Room D610.

4pm Applied Mathematics and Numerical Analysis Seminar: Blocks, Bridges, Boilers and Graph Theory. John Hogan (Bristol), Room PB1A1.


The Gardner Arts Centre

Bunty Matthias & Co. & Co.
Hot on the heel of her sell-out tour of You Want My Vote, Bunty Matthias (ex Principal dancer with Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company) explodes onto the Gardner stage on Wednesday 6 November with her brand new show Viewpoint.

Film at the Gardner
6.30pm - Monday 4 November: Accident
11.30pm - Wednesday 6 November: The Godfather II

The Meeting House

Lunchtime Recital
1.20pm Tuesday 5 November: Michael Maine - Organ.

Miscellaneous

ERASMUS Information
4.30pm - Wednesday 6 November: Meeting for students interested in studying elsewhere in Europe under the ERASMUS scheme. Room A71.

Thursday 7 November
2pm Statistics Seminar: Mapping of quantitative truce loci using multiple regression. Ion Whitaker (Reading), Room PB2A2.

3.30pm IDS Gender Seminar: The effects of civil war and peacekeeping on gender relationships. Fummi Olotuisuakin (UCL), IIDS Upper Common Room.

4pm Geography Research Seminar: The 'New Ecology' and Social Science: Prospects for Partnership? Ian Scoones (IDS), Room D610.

4pm Laboratory of Experimental Psychology: Internal Clock Processes and Timing Behaviour in Humans. John Wearden (Manchester), Biology Lecture Room.

5pm Social and Political Thought Seminar: How Nationalistic is social theory. Andreas Hess, Room D630.


6.30pm Adam Weiler Lecture: Peace and Conflict in the early 21st Century. Paul Rogers (Bradford), Molecular Sciences Lecture Theatre.

Friday 8 November
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Monday 4 November - Sunday 10 November

Lectures, Seminars, Colloquia

Wednesday 6 November cont.
5pm English Graduate Colloquia: Textualities: The Demands of Literature, The Ethics of Reading and "The Master of Petersburg". Derek Attridge (Rutgers), Arts D646.

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CDU Workshops

Teaching English in Japan
5.30pm - Wednesday 6 November: Find out about the JET scheme.

Newspaper Journalism
12.30pm - Friday 8 November: A Sussex graduate working for the Guardian will be speaking.

Small Ads

CAMERA FOR SALE: Olympus XA2 plus All Flash, Compact. Self Timer. Exc. cond. £45. Tel 813126 or 3846 (Int.).


VOLVO 340: H-Reg, 1700cc, 5-door, 626k Miles. Cat. Red. Full service history £2300 ono. Tel: 698072

HOUSE FOR SALE: 4-Bed, modern house with good garden in Kingston, near Lewes. Tel: 472456

ROOM TO LET: Share flat with mature student. All mod-cons, quiet, sunny room, close to Level, buses, shops, etc. £45 pw excl. Tel: 682639

CD PLAYER: Philips personal CD. Dual D/A Converter, 10hrs play time, AC Adaptor, NiCads and charger, plus full car-kit. Boxed as new. Small, light, sounds great. £90 ono. Andy: 749011 (eves.) or ext: 2765.


TO LET: Large furnished room in house. 1 min. from Bn station. CH, washing mach. Suit p/g or research fellow. Tel: 670964 or 625093.

HOUSE/FLAT WANTED: To rent. 2-beds. Lewes. Please call Neil or Helen ext: 2457, or email: n.a.jacobs@sussex.ac.uk.

ROOM TO LET: In Brighton, with small University family. Suit p/g, non-smoker. Own shower, £45 pw. Please contact P. Drake, ext: 2501 or 705397.

FLAT TO RENT IN HOVE: Bright and spacious 2-bed in Wilbury Rd. Close to buses and BR. Suit mature, p/g, or staff. Quiet non-smoker. £375 pcm exc. Ref and deposits req. 6 nth min. Tel: 722754.

KINGSTON FAMILY HOUSE TO LET: Furnished, detached, modern house with 4 bedrooms and south facing garden in popular village near Lewes. Good local school. Avail, immediately, single occupancy. K. Nixon. Tel: 692005 (wk) and ext. 8356 or 483993 (Hm).

Bulletin

The Bulletin appears every Friday of the term, with copy deadline the preceding Friday lunchtime. We welcome any suggestions for news, events, letters and small ads. Please contact the Information Office, Sussex House on ext. 8209 or email: Bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.