



Centre opens the curtains on suburban studies

Picture: The Times



Dr Vesna Goldsworthy is a staunch defender of suburbia.

Kingston University has launched the country's first research centre dedicated to the study of suburban life. Based within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Centre for Suburban Studies is poised to establish the University as a world leader in the subject. Headed by Director Dr Vesna Goldsworthy, staff will investigate the historical development of the suburb and its ethnicity. They will also explore fictional, media and film representations of suburban life and undertake a comparative study of neighbourhoods in different countries.

The centre, which has already attracted widespread interest in the national and international press, will promote suburban studies as a new area of academic research. "In this country, the city and the countryside have their interpreters and defenders, but suburbia is not really represented," Dr Goldsworthy said. "We hope the establishment of this centre will go some way towards addressing differences between urban and rural ways of life and give suburbia a true sense of identity."

Suburban issues were first brought into the public eye by BBC sitcom *The Good Life*, which made Surbiton in South West London famous in the late 1970s. Dr Goldsworthy said the stereotype of upmarket suburban Britain was now no longer accurate. "There was a time when suburbanites were in the minority but that has changed," she said. "Now suburbia sprawls further and further out of cities, it is not so middle class and not so white. In Kingston we are perfectly placed to study the reasons for this. Neighbouring New Malden, for example, has a large Korean community while nearby Southall has been transformed into an Asian metropolis."

A debate on suburbia was staged as part of the centre's official launch in April when a panel of experts challenged traditional images of typical families living in three-bedroom houses with neat lawns and picket fences. Planning is now under way for the centre's first one-day conference, called *The Good Life*, which will be held in September. Guests will include producers of the original television series.

Digital detective work to tackle crime

Experts from the Digital Imaging Research Centre are heading a major investigation that could help police officers solve crime more quickly. They have joined forces with Surrey University and independent research organisation Sira for a project entitled REVEAL (Recovering Evidence from Video by Fusing Video Evidence Thesaurus and Video Meta-data). The partners have been jointly awarded £390,000 from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council to find ways to cut the time it takes officers to examine CCTV footage of crime scenes.

The University has received £209,000 for its role in the three-year venture, which is tailored to the requirements of the Police Information Technology Organisation and Police Scientific Development Branch. The Director of Kingston's Digital Imaging Research Centre, Dr Graeme Jones, said CCTV played a central role in

identifying people and vehicles involved in criminal activity. During the next three years, the project team hoped to develop a system that would automatically extract and record evidence from such footage.

With input from Sira, Dr Jones and the Head of the School of Computing and Information Systems, Professor Tim Ellis, plan to produce a surveillance system that will automatically generate a gallery of suspects and vehicle registration plates for all moving objects caught on camera. "The technology will find the clearest image of a person or vehicle and track their movements, even predicting their position when out of camera range," Dr Jones explained. "For example, in the case of a car break-in, there might be a description of a suspect wearing red trousers and an approximate time for the incident. By inputting these details into a computer, officers will be able to pull off a



report of all cameras that have recorded potentially relevant activity."

Gathering evidence at the moment involved committing officers to the time-consuming task of manually reviewing CCTV archives, Dr Jones said. It could take them up to four hours to mark up a single hour of footage. "That makes any technology for recovering intelligence automatically from video footage a priority for the police," he said. "Such advances will free up officers and allow investigation teams to solve crime more efficiently."

The project coincides with the Home Office's five-year strategy to ensure the police service exploits science and technology to provide effective law enforcement.

Digital imaging experts hope to reduce the amount of time police officers spend manually reviewing CCTV footage.

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V-C'S COLUMN

I have never made a secret of the fact that I am strongly opposed to higher fees (or any fees at all – at any rate for 'initial' higher education). But – occasionally – I wonder whether I am just out-of-touch, a prisoner of the welfare state in which I grew up and which Margaret Thatcher began so determinedly to dismantle a quarter of a century ago (and which every Prime Minister since has, effectively, continued).

- After all, although the University had yet to take a formal decision on whether to charge higher fees when this was written, it will be very surprising if Kingston does not end up charging new students £3,000 from 2006. To charge any less would not only amount to an admission that the education we provided was lower value (and therefore, presumably, lower quality) but also starve the University of extra resources it badly needed.
- After all, after two or more decades of underfunding, universities certainly need more cash – and (maybe) higher fees are the only way we will get it. Personally, I am sceptical whether the Treasury will 'overlook' the extra fee income in fixing public expenditure on higher education for very long, but I may be wrong.
- After all, the new fees, although much higher (and bound to get even higher) will no longer have to be paid up front. Paradoxically, after 2006 students may actually have more disposable income. Of course, they will have to pay these higher fees back once they graduate – but (effectively) free of interest. In any case, why should higher education be an exception from the general credit culture of consume now pay later that has swamped Britain?
- After all, most vice-chancellors support higher fees – the overwhelming majority of 'old' university vice-chancellors (there are some honourable – and surprising – exceptions) and, perhaps, even a majority of new university vice-chancellors (shame). Of course, their motives are mixed – ranging from gung-ho enthusiasts for privatisation to the 'cruel necessity' brigade. But I have to admit I am in a small minority.
- After all, the game is up surely? Despite its narrow victory on the second reading of the Higher Education Bill, the Government got its way. Nothing now can stop higher fees being introduced. The media and the politicians have forgotten all about top-up fees. Maybe it is better to concentrate on orderly implementation (of course – but not by 'selling out?') and damage limitation (by backing the Office for Fair Access, which most universities want to marginalise?).

All this is true – but I remain as strongly opposed to higher fees as ever. Why? There are lots of reasons. Some are based on calculation. For example, as I have already said, I simply do not see the Treasury ignoring the additional fee income in future public spending reviews (especially as it has to fund this 'private' income up front). Nor do I believe that, once the principle of top-up fees has been accepted, it will be possible to hold the line. The £3,000 cap will inevitably rise – and rise.

Some of my reasons are more personal. Like many of you, I was a first generation student. When I went to university, I paid no fees and, in addition, received an adequate student grant. No one, to the best of my recollection, tried to make me feel guilty about being subsidised by tax-payers; in fact, I think I felt I was doing them (as well as myself) a favour. I know that



times and circumstances change, but I cannot completely shake off the feeling that what was good enough for me should be good enough for today's and tomorrow's students (and also another feeling, of distaste, about those who want to pull up the ladder they clambered to their present success).

But the main reason for my (implacable) opposition to top-up fees goes deeper. How universities are funded and how students are supported are not merely technical questions – they reflect our understanding of what higher education is for, of what kind of institutions universities should be and (if this does not sound too pretentious) of what kind of society we want to build. In other words, funding and governance, management and all the rest of the scaffolding that surrounds higher education are ultimately about values, pre-eminently scientific and intellectual but also social and cultural.

There is a well-known book – or, at any rate, a book with a catchy title – called *The Strange Death of Liberal England* by George Dangerfield. It tries to explain the sudden collapse of (essentially high-Victorian) liberalism in the years just before, during and after the First World War – not simply the eclipse of the Liberal Party itself, but the abandonment of a whole value system in which individualism and collectivism, free enterprise and state action were (in our eyes, confusingly) combined, a world so dominant and so quickly lost.

I feel something rather similar has been happening to higher education. A few weeks ago I spoke at a conference to celebrate the centenary of my former institution, the University of Leeds. What struck me listening to the other speakers, starting with Richard Hoggart, was the universal acceptance, from the early years of the 20th Century when Leeds got its independent charter until very recently, that universities were public institutions transcending (even ennobling?) the gratification of individual needs – in the interests, variously, of science, of culture, of democracy.

Today this sense of 'public' higher education is in danger. Top-up fees are simply the latest episode in this abandonment of the 'public' quality of universities and colleges. Yet it is on this quality that our present system of higher education has been built. Massive student expansion, the new universities of the 1960s, the former polytechnics, ground-breaking science, world-class research – all have been 'public' enterprises. It is difficult to see how any of them would – could – have happened otherwise. Even if they had, they would have happened differently – and worse. That, essentially, is why I continue to oppose top-up fees.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Academic advocates return to global forum

A senior University staff member is helping to spearhead the campaign to resurrect Britain's role in the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Professor Richard Ennals, who is the Director of the Centre for Working Life Research, has been appointed to the provisional steering committee for the United Kingdom's National Commission for UNESCO. The committee has been created in a bid to promote Britain's return to the organisation after an absence of almost 20 years. The United Kingdom withdrew its membership in 1985 after then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher came under pressure from American President Ronald Reagan.

Professor Ennals is Director of the Council for Education in World Citizenship, a co-founder of UNESCO. Last year he was appointed Deputy Chairman of the United Kingdom's UNESCO Steering Group, which makes recommendations to Secretary of State for International Development Hilary Benn. "I've been campaigning for our

Professor Richard Ennals has become a member of the steering committee for the United Kingdom's National Commission for UNESCO.



return to UNESCO for the past 18 years so it is pleasing to be on the verge of achieving our long-term goal," Professor Ennals said. "My work championing UNESCO's cause will also help give Kingston University the international profile it deserves."

Professor Ennals recently met UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura in the lead up to this autumn's launch of the National Commission.

Competition sparks chemistry between pupils

The next generation of chemists has gone head to head in a competition hosted by Kingston University. Pupils from 13 schools took part in the South East regional round of the Royal Society of Chemistry's schools analyst competition, held in the University's state-of-the-art laboratories in the Eadward Muybridge Building.

Staff from the School of Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sciences assessed the 16 and 17 year olds on their ability to complete a series of

experiments and the accuracy of their findings. Working in small teams, the pupils tackled challenges that included measuring the amount of alcohol in dark rum using a gas chromatography technique. They were also treated to demonstrations of the Faculty of Science's sophisticated analytical equipment, including its new inductively coupled plasma-atomic emission spectrometer.

Competitor Andrew Tolley, from King's College School in Wimbledon, said the event had made him more enthusiastic about continuing his chemistry studies at university. "I wouldn't normally get the opportunity to test such advanced equipment, so seeing everything that's available at the University has been a real eye opener," he said.

Judge Dr Stephen Barton said the competition had been a huge success. "It proved an ideal way to increase awareness of analytical techniques among the young scientists. We were very pleased to have such an exciting opportunity to share our expertise with the participating schools."

Teams from Tiffin School in Kingston and Strode's College in Egham will compete in the national final of the competition later this month.



Student Andrew Tolley conducts an experiment in the Royal Society of Chemistry's schools analyst competition.

New President for Students' Union

A business student from Ghana has been elected President of the University's Students' Union. Arnold Kemevor, who has just completed the final year of his business management degree, takes over from outgoing President Jonathan Chibafa next month.

The 22 year old, who received almost twice as many votes as his nearest opponent in the poll, has already pledged to continue the fight against top-up fees. He also intends to tackle everyday issues affecting fellow students. "I'm really looking forward to taking on the post and I'm confident I will be able to meet the many challenges ahead," Arnold said. "I'm a strong negotiator as well as being a good listener and I understand students' concerns. I want to make sure the Union contin-

ues to improve and am determined to be a great ambassador for Kingston students."

Arnold also hopes to encourage more students to get involved in Union activities. "My aim is to open up the existing channels of communica-

tion by making better use of the intranet and our own dedicated website to speak to the students on a more frequent basis," he said.

Once he has completed his year-long term heading the Students' Union, Arnold plans to study for a postgraduate law degree. "My father is a barrister and has always encouraged me to follow in his footsteps. I'd like to become a solicitor and hope to specialise in business and commercial law," he said.



Arnold Kemevor is stepping into the President's post at the Students' Union.

Healthy working experts come to commuters' rescue

New research being conducted at the Kingston Business School could radically improve the lives of worn-out workers in South East England. Experts at the University's Centre for Working Life Research are investigating the feasibility of setting up designated centres across the region to allow people to work closer to home. The proposed system of remote working would see employees from different companies operate side by side, sharing facilities and ideas instead of enduring a lengthy daily commute. The researchers have received £100,000 from the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) for their Healthy Working Centres project, also financed by the European Social Fund.

Lead researcher Dr Anne Marie McEwan said it was time to reverse the trend of people putting their jobs before their own well-being. "Many workers in this country lead very stressful lives which is unhealthy not only for them but also for their families and the economy as a whole," she said. "The long working day, which has become part of British culture, means some firms are struggling to retain skilled staff and it's clear working practices need to change. With advanced technology, employees shouldn't have to spend hours commuting to such places as central London when much of their work can be done at home or in their local area."

The research team has sent 3,000 questionnaires to small businesses in South East England to gauge their attitudes to remote working. The sample includes companies specialising in finance, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals and new media. In instances in which businesses do not allow staff to work away from the office, the survey is designed to find out what assistance would be required for them to support such a move.

Individual traders have also been targeted to discover whether working on their own increases feelings of social isolation. "One issue associated with remote working is that staff can get cut off and are not able to bounce ideas off colleagues," Dr McEwan said. "Healthy working centres would have the advantage of reducing such isolation. We already know that some of the most profitable companies in the world are those that share knowledge and expertise, so this project definitely has the potential to improve firms' productivity."

At least 180 companies will participate in a series of workshops and online networks later this year to help the research team determine the best approaches to promoting remote working. The researchers will also explore the structural and cultural changes firms would need to undergo to support such a system. The findings will be combined with the results of the employers' survey before final recommendations are submitted to SEEDA in December.



Dr Anne Marie McEwan is heading a research project that could signal significant changes to office working practice.

Civil servants get helping hand up the career ladder

Kingston's Business School has teamed up with the Government's leading training centre to launch a qualification for high-flying civil servants. The new Master of Human Resource Strategy and Change is designed to equip students with the skills needed to move on to senior management. It will bring participants up to speed with the latest developments in strategic thinking and explore fresh techniques for building relationships in the workplace.

The course is being run in partnership by the University's School of Human Resource Management and the Centre for Management and Policy Studies (CMPS), part of the Cabinet Office's Corporate Development Group. Starting in November, the one-year programme will be taught in three five-day blocks at the CMPS residential centre in Sunningdale. The qualification supports the Government's Modernising People Management agenda and will give students plenty of scope to examine human resource issues within their specific organisations.

Head of the School of Human Resource Management Professor Christine Edwards said the programme would teach students the importance of strategic leadership. "This is a wonderful opportunity for the Kingston Business School to broaden its portfolio of courses into management development in the Civil Service. It also meets our goal of improving individuals' prospects by opening the door for middle and senior managers to move up the career ladder," she said.

The new partnership would be responsible for producing the next generation of top

officials, CMPS programme director Sue Treharne said. "It will improve the level of professionalism in the civil and public services and ensure staff have the knowledge and skills to assume management responsibilities at the earliest opportunity," she added.

The Kingston Business School is recognised by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development as a Centre of Excellence.



Staff from the Kingston Business School mingled with high-ranking civil servants at the launch of the Master in Human Resource Strategy and Change.

Get to know the Governors

Entrusted with shaping the educational character of the University and fine-tuning the focus of the institution's activities, Kingston's Governors have plenty of responsibility resting on their shoulders. Board member Gren Collings explains why he decided to take on such an important role in higher education.



Governor Gren Collings is also chairman of the University's facilities management company, KUSCO.

What is your background?

After graduating from the College of Estate Management in 1970, I spent 12 years working as a chartered surveyor in the private sector, eventually becoming a partner in a firm of property consultants. In 1982, I was appointed chief estates surveyor at Royal Mail and, in 1999, was promoted to managing director of Royal Mail Property Holdings. Although I officially retired at the end of last year, I am doing some work with health trusts on a non-executive basis. I am also a fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

What prompted you to become a Governor?

I already knew Board chairman Jerry Cope through my connections with Royal Mail. Living in Surbiton, I was also aware of the University's growing stature locally, nationally and internationally, so it was an institution with which I wanted to become involved.

Do you have other Board responsibilities?

I sit on the Finance Committee and am also chairman of the University's facilities management company, KUSCO.

What have been the highlights of your time as a Governor?

Three specific aspects stand out. Firstly, meeting people at all levels in the University and seeing first hand their enthusiasm and desire to build an excellent place of learning. Secondly, I have been impressed by Kingston's recognition that students have to be at the centre of everything it does. Finally, I think the diversity of experience among the Governors gives Kingston the best possible chance to keep moving forward.

What do you believe are the major challenges facing the University?

Our main challenge is the New University Project. We have to ensure the University is flexible enough to grow into a better institution. The probable purchase of County Hall provides a superb opportunity to create a main campus in the heart of Kingston and we must take full advantage of that.

What is your vision for the University?

The University has developed significantly during the past five years and has an enviable reputation in subjects such as aeronautical engineering and business. I hope it becomes even more widely recognised as a centre of excellence, both nationally and internationally.

• *The University's Board of Governors is made up of 24 members – 12 independent representatives, another eight who are co-opted, two academic staff, one student and the Vice-Chancellor. Meetings are usually held six times a year.*

Liz brings literature to life

A lecturer from the School of Education has taken her expertise in children's literature back into the classroom. Liz Broad, Deputy Director of the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (Primary) programme, has been working with the same class at Bishop Gilpin School in Wimbledon for the past seven years on a range of literary projects. She first linked up with the children, now aged 10 and 11, to help them learn to read when they were in reception class.

Lately Liz, who is a governor at the school, has been developing ideas for text-based study in response to the Department for Education and Skills' Excellence and Enjoyment strategy. The initiative allows primary schools to take control of their own curriculum and become more innovative. Last year, her pupils studied the structure of fairy tales before writing their own. Their efforts were read and reviewed by children in Year 1. "The idea was to motivate those pupils who don't usually want to express themselves through writing. Because their stories were going to be read by the infants, they knew they had an audience and a purpose to write," Liz explained.

This term, the Year 6 pupils have been studying the story, *Holes*, by Louis Sachar. With a film version of the book released last autumn, the class has explored how the plot and its characters have been translated on to the big screen. "Using a variety of story and word games, they have drawn evidence from the text to support their arguments. Between sessions, I've encouraged the pupils to stick post-it notes on a board to tell me what they want to discuss," Liz said.

Although her budding bookworms will move on to secondary school at the end of term, Liz is planning to cultivate another set of junior reading enthusiasts from September. "The project has shown that it is possible to connect with pupils who previously haven't show an interest in reading and writing. It has also given me an opportunity to reflect on current teaching practice and take this experience back to share with my students at the School of Education," she said.



Lecturer Liz Broad is helping pupils at Bishop Gilpin School in Wimbledon to improve their literacy skills.

Designers declare war

Inventive undergraduates have been engaged in battle in a project to design robot fighting machines for a major theme park. Specialist robotics manufacturer RobotsRus invited a group of second year design students to come up with concepts for its new game, Robbageddon, being installed at Chessington World of Adventures. The product and furniture design specialists were also asked to devise a trailer able to transport a version of the game between other parks.



Above: Matthew Fenwick's Legobots go into combat. Below: A specially-themed mobile trailer formed part of the Legobots concept.



The students had six weeks to come up with solutions to the challenges posed by Andrew Cotterell, managing director of RobotsRus, and project partner Legoland's art and design director Justin East. Matthew Fenwick fought off stiff competition to clinch the £300 first prize for his combative creation called Legobots. The 21 year old said he had focused on ways to maximise the game's entertainment value while ensuring a rapid turnaround of players. "My concept gives competitors two minutes to build a robot from Lego before mounting it on a robotic combat vehicle, which they control. Pieces can be fitted together really quickly, so it could potentially be a very profitable venture," he explained.

The health and safety of players and bystanders was a key consideration for Matthew. "Lego pieces could go flying since the aim of the game is to flip opponents using the robot's extendable scoop, so I recommended building a thick perspex fence around the playing arena to protect onlookers," he said.

Matthew also earned praise for his use of graphics on the mobile trailer. "I wanted to maximise the advertising opportunities it presented," he said. "In particular, I thought about how children aged between six and 12 would react if they saw the trailer on a motorway. Replicating a large piece of Lego seemed the most logical way to capture their attention."

Senior lecturer Jakki Dehn said that presenting work to the industrial clients had been an invaluable experience for her students. "Being given the opportunity to test their ideas and, in some cases, have them accepted by leading product designers really gives their confidence a boost," she said.

Real estate champions prove hot property

Surveying students from Kingston University have been pronounced among the best in Europe after carrying off top honours in a prestigious international competition. Six final year real estate management students lined up alongside counterparts from Denmark, Holland and Poland for the European Real Estate Challenge. Backed by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the contest saw the students come to the rescue of a fictitious multinational finance company eager to relocate its European operations to a major city. Assuming the role of commercial property consultants to General Power Financial Services, seven teams with members from five different European educational institutions set to work. At an initial conference in Copenhagen last September each group was given a city in which to find suitable head office space. The teams were then given four months to gather information about the company's requirements and the location itself. The project included a visit to allocated cities to inspect possible sites and discuss proposed locations with real estate agents. It also involved weekly team meetings staged with the help of the web-based Blackboard learning management system.

In January, the students presented their final recommendations to judges posing as the company's board of directors. The top three teams, which all included Kingston students, then tackled the task of selling their proposals to an international panel of real estate experts.

Kingston students Kate Flaherty and James Duck, whose research took them to Copenhagen, were part of the winning team. "The main point we had to consider was the company's need for a round-the-clock working environment with scope for expansion," Kate said. "We were asked to find a prestigious building, but not

one that customers might think the business had spent all their money buying. We worked with students from Eindhoven and Warsaw and graded each building we saw on how closely it matched the specifications."

Course director Tim Bennett, who oversaw the challenge, said it had given the students the opportunity to work to a realistic client brief. "Many property consultancies which employ our graduates are multinational firms with a worldwide business remit. Understanding the process used by such organisations to select office buildings will be an immense asset to the students along with the inter-cultural communication skills they have acquired along the way," he said.



Kate Flaherty and James Duck were part of the team that scooped top honours in the European Real Estate Challenge.

Young adventurers reach new heights

Daring teenagers from South London built a bridge to a life in higher education during an action-packed weekend away from the capital. Year 10 pupils from schools in Wandsworth and Croydon got to grips with activities such as abseiling, climbing and orienteering at last month's Engineering Summer School, run by the University's widening participation team and the Faculty of Technology. The 20 teenagers, aged 14 and 15, teamed up with Kingston students for a guided tour of the Roehampton Vale campus before heading to an outdoor activity centre in Kidderminster.

Widening participation co-ordinator Jayne Clanfield said the summer school, supported by the European Social Fund, had helped promote university life to potential school and college leavers who might not otherwise consider signing up for a degree. "Although the pupils involved won't apply to university for at least another three years, we wanted to press home the importance of achieving good GCSE grades," she said. "By giving them a glimpse of the University's facilities, we also opened the door for them to explore careers they might not have previously contemplated. They had a lot of fun taking part in our programme of engineering-related activities, including bridge building, and we hope the experience will encourage them to keep on with their studies."



Above: Anna MacShane, left, buddied up with Southfields Community College pupils Rashiel Bailey, centre, and Asmayt Tekalehaymanot at the Engineering Summer School.



Left: Student ambassador Karen Clarke got into the swing of the summer school activities.

Asmayt Tekalehaymanot, a pupil at Southfields Community College, credited the event with giving her the incentive to progress on to higher education. "I was really curious about university life beforehand and I was amazed by the facilities I saw when I looked around the campus at Roehampton Vale. I now have a far better idea about what I want to do with my life," she said.

Third year drama with psychology undergraduate Anna MacShane, who was one of the students on hand to answer questions, observed a big increase in the pupils' self-confidence. "Many of them had preconceived ideas about university and I was able to help them shake off any doubts they may have had," she said. "Giving them the chance to interact with other young people from different schools was a great taster for what lies in store in their first year."

Pupil puppeteers silence Picker Gallery

Almost 90 schoolchildren packed into the University's Stanley Picker Gallery last month for a screening of short films produced as part of its Primary Schools' Outreach Project. Pupils from The Mount, King Athelstan and St John's Primary Schools spent four weeks creating their own puppet-style animations using images of themselves set against a 1920s backdrop.

As part of the project, the nine and 10 year olds learned how silent movies were developed by early 20th Century animators, film-makers and actors without the use of colour or sound. Led by professional artist Emma-Jayne Taylor and assisted by second year illustration student Matt Latchford, the children prepared storyboards before making simple props for their films. Classic movies from the silent era and early cartoons, such as Betty Boop, were screened at workshops at each participating school to provide inspiration.

Gallery administrator Jackie Thomas developed the project with support from the University's Widening Participation Unit. "Children are exposed to colour and sound on a daily basis but not many of them would have seen black and white silent movies before. Working alongside a professional artist, they really enjoyed thinking about alternative forms of communication and their reaction to the screening of their films was a joy to see," she said.



Organiser Jackie Thomas admires puppets produced as part of the Stanley Picker Gallery Primary Schools' Outreach Project.



Pupils from The Mount Primary School display their hand-made puppets.

Debut for degree show

The doors have opened on the University's first ever Humanities Degree Show. Hundreds of University staff and students headed for the week-long exhibition last month, keen to see the best work produced during the year.

Subjects showcased at a series of events organised by Dr Meg Jensen and Anna Kiernan ranged from creative writing and journalism to English literature and languages. Highlights included the joint presentation of short dramas and documentaries made by film studies students alongside digital media projections from the media and cultural studies field. Elsewhere, the Reg Bailey Theatre was filled to capacity for three consecutive nights as second year drama students performed their latest play, *Shakers*. Posters, poetry, websites and weblogs created by students from each area were also on display throughout the week.

Creative writing student Jonathan Willock, who read his work publicly for the first time, said it had been exciting to have one of his stories scrutinised by people other than his coursemates. "It was really rewarding to be able to show students from other parts of the University what we have been doing," he added. "I enjoyed meeting people from different courses and finding out about their degrees too."

Dr Jensen said the show, which is set to become an annual event, had raised the School of Humanities' profile around the University. "It demonstrated just how much effort is put in by staff and students during the course of the year," she said. Co-organiser Ms Kiernan believed knowing their work was going to be exhibited had given the students an extra reason to excel. "The show also increased their appreciation of their peers' efforts in other fields," she added.



Creative writing student Jonathan Willock, centre, read his short story to an audience at the Humanities Degree Show, which was jointly organised by Dr Meg Jensen, standing right.

New research projects under way

Academic staff have commenced another round of research projects after securing backing from a variety of funders.

Grant Holder	School/Centre	Project Title	Funding Body	Amount/Duration
Dr G Jones	Computing and Information Systems	REVEAL – Recovering Evidence From Video by Fusing Evidence Thesaurus and Video Meta-data	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council	£208,894 – three years
Dr J Manning	Music	The Vocal Instrument in Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire: Legacy and Performance	Arts and Humanities Research Board	£148,000 – three years
Dr A Creigh-Tyte	Design	Developing and Exploiting Intelligent and Interactive Clothing (Fabric)	Department of Trade and Industry	£30,000 – 13 months
Professor M Hart	Small Business Research Centre	Phoenix Development Fund Evaluation	Department of Trade and Industry	£5,405 – 18 months
Professor M Hart	Small Business Research Centre	Women and the Information Technology Sector	Exemplas	£12,300 – six months
Dr T Zhang	Engineering	NANOPOL – Polymer Nanocomposite Coatings	EU Growth Programme	£10,000 – two years
Professor F Nectoux	Humanities	Labour Flexicurity	European Foundation of Social Quality	£5,000 – three months
Professor S Sayce	Surveying	Jones Lang LaSalle Educational Grant	Jones Lang LaSalle	£120,000 – three years
Dr N Walford	Earth Sciences and Geography	Directory of Scottish Rural Data Sources	Scottish Executive	£30,800 – five months
Dr P Garside	Centre for Economic Research and Intelligence	Dismantling Employment Barriers in South East England	South East England Development Agency	£99,100 – 15 months
Mr D Livingstone	Computing and Information Systems	Unravelling Workforce Discrimination in the South East of England – Geographical Information Systems and Hot Spot Mapping	South East England Development Agency	£5,000 – six months

Future of author's archive secured

The University has scored a literary coup by purchasing acclaimed author Iris Murdoch's working library. The collection of more than 1,000 books – many with her own notes in the margin – influenced the writer from the time she began her first novel in 1952 until a few years before she died of Alzheimer's disease in 1999. The archive contains such treasures as a notebook in which Murdoch penned her thoughts on a lecture given by Jean-Paul Sartre in Brussels. It will now be preserved in Britain for the use of scholars.

The author, who was made a Dame of the British Empire in 1987, penned 26 novels during her career and accumulated a number of awards, including an Honorary Doctorate from the University in 1993. News that her books had been put up for sale last autumn sparked a flurry of interest, prompting fears they would go to a buyer in the United States. The University eventually managed to secure the archive with the help of a public appeal launched by the Iris Murdoch Society, which raised more than £40,000. A contribution of £20,000 was also made by the V&A Purchase Grant Fund, with additional backing provided by the University itself.



The University has become the owner of late author Iris Murdoch's working library.

Senior lecturer Dr Anne Rowe, who headed the archive appeal, said the response reflected Murdoch's status as a major 20th Century novelist. "The enormous support we received demonstrates the importance of her writing to individual readers as well as a real determination that important archives should be kept in this country," Dr Rowe said. "We were very fortunate that the seller, Rachel Lee Rare Books, resisted higher offers and was prepared to hold out for a British bid." The collection is due to be catalogued and archived during the summer.

The University is now in the process of establishing a Centre for Iris Murdoch Studies, which will stage exhibitions and displays and provide state-of-the-art research facilities. It will be launched at an international conference on the author in September.

University dispenses pharmacy degree

The Faculty of Science is getting set to prescribe a new course to its students. The Master of Pharmacy programme, which will be run jointly by the University and St George's Hospital Medical School, has been accredited by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB). It will accept its first intake of 45 aspiring healthcare professionals in September.

Head of Kingston's Department of Pharmacy Professor John Brown said the four-year programme would help address an acute shortage of qualified pharmacists in the United Kingdom. "There are many openings for qualified staff, mostly in hospital pharmacy departments and community pharmacies, but also in drug development and manufacture within the pharmaceutical industry," he said. "The challenges faced by pharmacists are likely to increase in the next few years as they begin to take on a more prominent role in healthcare, prescribing drugs for example."

Kingston's pharmacy degree is one of only a handful of similar courses in southern England. Students will learn about the formulation, supply and monitoring of medicines for the treatment and prevention of disease. They will also gain first-hand experience of the job role through regular visits to both hospital and community pharmacies. As the course develops they will undertake week-long placements, during which they

will interact with patients, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals.

Staff from the Schools of Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Life Sciences will deliver four main subjects – pharmaceutical and biological chemistry, physiology and pharmacology, pharmaceutical technology and professional practice. Some modules will be taught by practising pharmacists to ensure the material covered in the professional and clinical segments of the course is relevant and up to date. Staff from St George's Hospital and Kingston Hospital NHS Trusts, Moss Pharmacy, the Day Lewis Pharmacy Group and Lloydspharmacy will share their expertise during laboratory and workshop-based sessions.

Three specialist laboratories are being equipped to cater for pharmacy practice and pharmaceutical technology training. From 2005, students will also have access to facilities for training in aseptic dispensing, which involves the preparation of sterile drugs and nutrient solutions. To become qualified pharmacists, graduates will be required to undergo a further year of pre-registration training before passing the RPSGB's professional registration examination.

The Department of Pharmacy, currently within the School of Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sciences, hopes to achieve full school status in 2006.



Professor John Brown is counting down to the launch of the Master of Pharmacy programme.

Students go online for academic success

Director calls for students to be at the centre of change

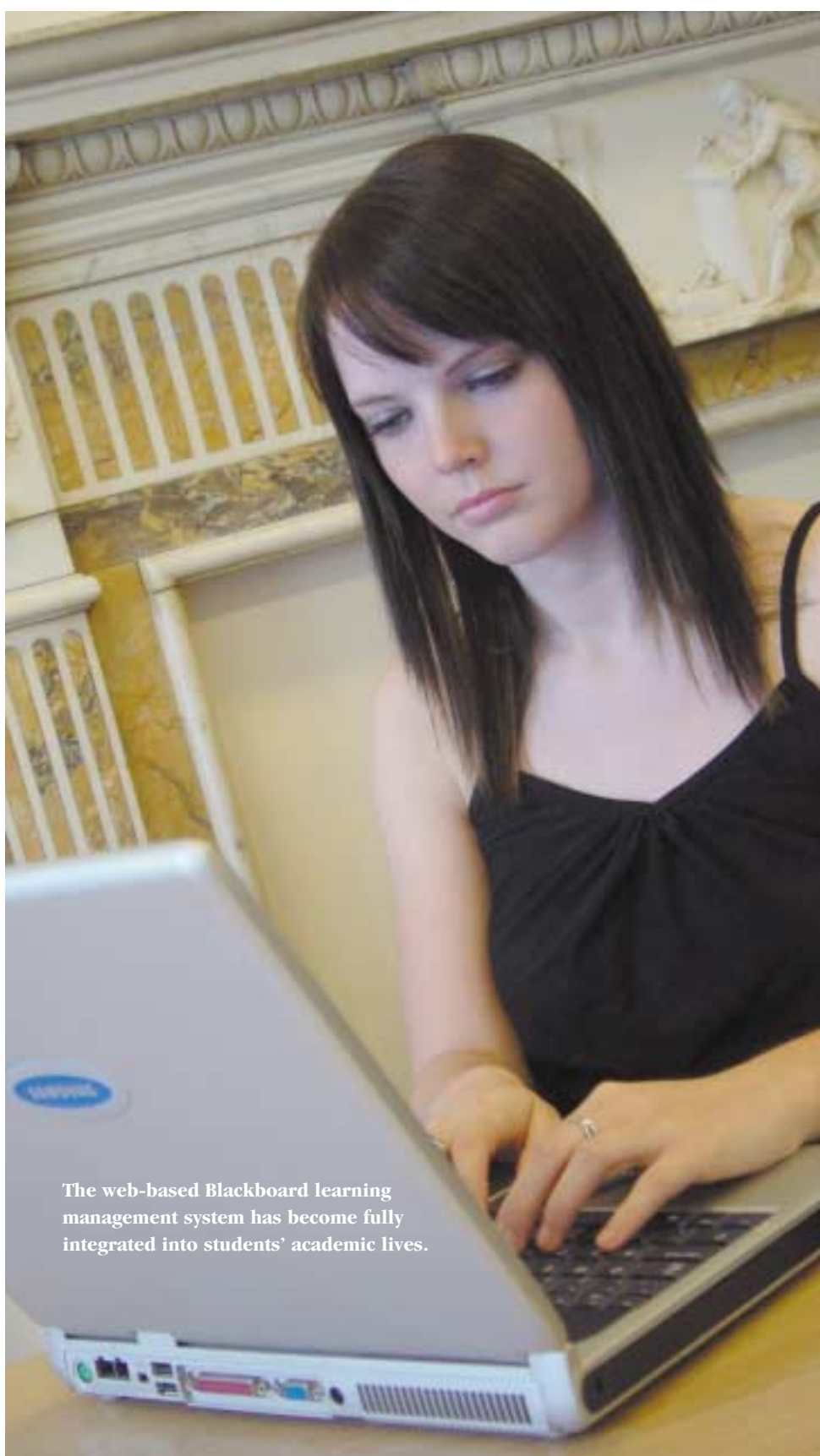
Research has uncovered huge demand for the online learning resource, Blackboard. More than 12,000 Kingston students and staff now regularly log on to the web-based system and regard it as a vital component of coursework.

The ongoing Widening Access and Success research project has been comparing undergraduates' use of Blackboard in different Faculties. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Caroline Gipps said one of the most interesting findings was that students tended to use Blackboard to complement traditional teaching methods, rather than to replace them. "We expected them to say they found Blackboard helpful for revising and for catching up on classes they had missed," Professor Gipps said. "In fact, it turns out that almost 40 per cent read notes on Blackboard as part of their preparation before classes and then also attend the lectures concerned."

The system is also likely to prove an increasingly valuable resource for assessment. Research carried out as part of the First Year Experience Project had indicated that exams could put undue pressure on students in their first semester, Professor Gipps said. That had prompted the University to try to find ways to provide more online testing through Blackboard. "Previous experience has taught us that, using this method, first year students perform better than in a formal setting," Professor Gipps said. Such a system was also likely to have the added advantage of freeing up staff time.

Almost 80 per cent of course modules are available on Blackboard. Head of the Educational Technology Unit Dr Tim Linsey said there were now many excellent examples of Blackboard materials being developed to support learning across the University. "These include imaginative use of video, audio, quizzes, bulletin boards and chatrooms. Our plan is to extend this type of innovation across all courses," he said.

Head of Academic ICT Services Dr Demetra Katsifli said the University was now investing significantly in its information and communication technology infrastructure to support Blackboard's growth.



The web-based Blackboard learning management system has become fully integrated into students' academic lives.

The University's first Director of Student Services intends to ensure students' needs are at the forefront of decision-making about future development. Claire Schwartz believes it is vital students' interests are at the top of the agenda when proposed structural and reorganisational change takes place.

Claire has been promoted to the Director's post, created earlier this year when former Dean of Student Services Dr Ken Hopkins was chosen to head the New University Project. Her main remit is to create links between Student Services and the Faculties and Departments who, in turn, are responsible for seeing students receive all the support they require while at Kingston.

Born in Scotland, Claire studied business organisation at Heriot-Watt University before heading to the Highlands to work in the oil industry. She re-entered the world of education when she emigrated to Australia in 1986 and took up a position at the University of Western Australia.

Claire lived Down Under for almost 18 years, increasing her experience in the education sector working for another university and a private education group. Two years ago, she moved back to Britain when her husband, Steven, took up the Vice-Chancellor's post at Brunel University. Soon



Claire Schwartz has assumed the role of Director of Student Services.

after, Claire joined the staff at Kingston as Head of the Student Life Office – one of the two sections within Student Services.

Claire is confident she can rise to the challenge of managing a diverse group of people offering a wide range of support. "We can't expect to provide the best services for students unless we get the most out of our staff, so I'm committed to enabling every member of the Student Services team to meet his or her full potential," she said.



The new Legal Information Point at the Kingston Hill campus is proving an asset for staff and students.

Volunteers lay down the law

Students and staff on the Kingston Hill campus have been among the first to benefit from the launch of the Law School's Legal Information Point. The service is the brainchild of Director of Clinical Legal Studies Lancelot Robson, who set it up to help counter the shortage of advice available in the local area.

Housed within the Law School and established with the assistance of student volunteers, the information point consists of a carousel stocked with leaflets on such topics as debt, human rights, tenancy and immi-

gration. The material can be accessed at any time, while there are also slots when students are on hand to offer guidance on specific issues or point inquirers in the direction of further help.

Take-up has exceeded all expectations. "Most of the leaflets disappear at night, which gives an interesting perspective on how people feel about asking openly for help," Mr Robson said.

Mr Robson was also responsible for establishing the School's Legal Advice Clinic which has operated since 1998 with the blessing of

the Law Society. It is run along similar lines to a Citizens Advice Bureau, with students working in pairs to take a brief from a client, before researching the problem and providing appropriate advice by letter. The clinic had been inundated with cases, including some from residents in the area, Mr Robson said. "The response is another clear indication of the lack of legal advice open to local people," he said. "It's fantastic that we are able to use the service to educate our students at the same time as fulfilling an important community need."

Exhibitions and Events...

JUNE AND JULY 2004

EXHIBITIONS

THURSDAY 17-THURSDAY 24 JUNE

Faculty of Art, Design and Music Degree Show
A collection of work by students graduating from the Schools of Architecture and Landscape, Art and Design History, Fine Art, Design, the Department of Fashion and the HND in Graphic Design.
Knights Park campus

*Opening times: Monday-Friday 10.00am-8.00pm;
Saturday 10.00am-4.30pm*

A private view will be held on Thursday 17 June from 6.00-9.00pm

SATURDAY 3 JULY-SATURDAY 17 JULY

Kingston Contemporary Open Art Exhibition
Featuring a selection of film, video and photography.
Stanley Picker Gallery, Middle Mill, Knights Park

Opening times: Monday-Saturday 10.30am-5.30pm

MONDAY 19 JULY-FRIDAY 30 JULY

Drawing As Process
Featuring work by MA Drawing as Process students.
R K Burt, 61 Union Street, London

EVENTS – JUNE

SATURDAY 5 JUNE

7.30pm **Kingston University Chorus and Orchestra**
A performance of Mendelssohn's Elijah.
St Andrew's Church, Maple Road, Surbiton

TUESDAY 15 JUNE

3.00pm **University Fashion Show**
Atlantis Gallery, Truman Brewery, Brick Lane, London

FRIDAY 25 JUNE

3.00-8.00pm **University Birthday Party**
An afternoon and evening of activities for staff, students, alumni and their families.
Coombehurst Lawn, Kingston Hill

EVENTS – JULY

SATURDAY 10 JULY

7.30pm **Thames Philharmonic Choir Summer Concert**
St Paul's Church, Augustus Road, Wimbledon Park

SATURDAY 10 AND SUNDAY 11 JULY

Kingston Amateur Regatta
Organised by the Kingston Rowing Club and sponsored by Kingston University.
Barge Walk, Kingston Bridge

Illustrators line up for long-distance learning

A ground-breaking Kingston University design course taught using the worldwide web has produced its first group of graduates. Twenty-five students from the South Korean capital Seoul have completed a creative illustration programme delivered online by staff teaching Kingston's MA in Illustration and Animation.

The two-year postgraduate programme was set up by course director Brian Love in collaboration with the Froebel Institute in Seoul following a visit from a group of Korean illustrators in 2000.



Top: Work by student Hee Young Kim forms part of the New Illustration from Korea exhibition. Above: Suk Kyoung Kim combined colour and creativity completing the coursework.

Fashion ace swaps centre court for catwalk

A semi-professional tennis player has foregone his dream of winning Wimbledon to serve up a champion collection at Kingston University's Fashion Show. Talented Robbie Blundell spent two and a half years at the prestigious Bruguera Tennis Academy in Barcelona before deciding his true calling lay closer to the catwalk.

Speaking in the lead-up to this year's annual show at the Atlantis Gallery in London, the 22 year old said he had no regrets about turning his back on the tennis court. "I gained a lot from my time in Spain, not least the discipline the training instilled in me. I worked hard, running up and down mountains every morning before playing matches in the afternoon and I've carried that dedication and determination into my studies," he said.



Former semi-professional tennis player Robbie Blundell is now scoring points with his fashion collections.

Inspired by artist Danny Treacy, Robbie's womenswear collection received a rapturous reception from the employers and industry representatives who thronged to the show. "Treacy collected items of clothing belonging to people from all walks of life and mixed the styles to form his creations. My own collection is both modern and traditional, a rich mixture of Aran knits pieced together with nylons, polyesters, herringbone tweeds and old denim," Robbie said. "It pushes the boundaries beyond mainstream fashion and I'm very pleased with the result."

Robbie quickly emerged as a rising young star when he joined Kingston's Department of Fashion after completing a foundation art course at Richmond upon Thames College. In 2003, he received the most promising second year student award from Fashion Show sponsors the Dewhurst Group. Head of Department John McKitterick predicts Robbie will have an equally bright future. "He is an exciting design talent whose vision is underpinned by a strong work ethic and advanced practical skills. I am sure Robbie will become a major player in the industry along with many of his peers," Mr McKitterick said.

Elsewhere in the Faculty of Art, Design and Music, other undergraduates have been showcasing their final year projects at the 2004 Degree Show. Now in its ninth year, the event at the Knights Park campus features an array of exhibits, ranging from fine art to product and furniture design. Works include James Parry's Diving Pal, an underwater robot able to follow divers and feed back video images and life support information to a safety boat. Jonathan Lane-Smith's Strip Table, which adds another dimension to informal dining by allowing the top to be removed to reveal a series of trays and cushions, has also been grabbing show-goers' attention.



Product design student James Parry's Diving Pal shared top billing at the Design Degree Show.



Student Jonathan Lane-Smith hopes his Strip Table will be a hit with fans of informal dining.

Editorial Information

Editor: Nicky Baird, ext 63166 (internal); 020 8547 7166 (external)

University staff are invited to submit ideas for possible stories and features. Contributions should be sent by email to bridge@kingston.ac.uk or by internal mail to Bridge, Room 6, River House.

The editorial team reserves the right to amend articles as appropriate.

The students consolidated their knowledge through a series of intensive personal tutorials and workshops delivered by email and through a dedicated website. To complement the online delivery, senior lecturer Robin Harris travelled to South Korea twice a year to hold a series of masterclasses and group seminars. "We looked at various methods of story-telling through colour, composition, drawing and character creation before asking the students to produce their own picture book for young readers," Mr Harris said. "Although most of them were experienced book illustrators, they had never actually illustrated their own stories before. Each student had a page on the website so I could check their progress online and give them instant feedback by email."

The final picture books went on show at the Coningsby Gallery in London in April in an exhibition entitled New Illustration from Korea – Chasing the Future on the Tiger's Back. Student Hee Young Kim, whose artwork depicted her childhood memories, said it was the first opportunity her coursemates had been given to display their talents to a European audience. "There aren't any courses like this in Korea and I know the skills I have developed will benefit my career. I'm determined to succeed in the European market, as well as having my work accepted in Korea and it has been fascinating to experience the difference in illustration culture," she said.

Mr Harris believes there is huge potential for the students to succeed in the Korean market. "Just 20 per cent of Korean children's books are produced in their country, while the rest are imported. Several publishers have claimed there isn't currently the artistic talent in Korea to warrant commissioning work from their own national illustrators. This course will definitely bridge that gap," he said.

The graduates' exhibition will go on show at the Dukwon Gallery in Seoul later this month.