



# Bridge

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## Institutions form pioneering partnership

**K**ingston University has teamed up with St George's University of London and Royal Holloway University of London to form a collaborative venture set to have a major impact in the healthcare, biosciences and business sectors. One of the main aims of the consortium, which has been awarded £4 million by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, will be to meet the need for a larger, diverse and more flexible workforce by training senior executives. It will also provide students with greater opportunities to obtain qualifications for careers in

science, health, social care and allied subjects. Stimulating new research by pooling resources and embarking on an increased number of joint projects will also be a major priority.

Kingston's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Peter Scott, said the alliance would build on the University's close links with St George's. "We are presently celebrating a decade of education provision through the joint Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences run by Kingston and St George's which has supplied the region's workforce with thousands of highly-skilled and qualified staff," Professor Scott said.

"Extending that relationship to include Royal Holloway will provide us with the scope to train an additional 500 students a year, develop our course portfolios and delve into new aspects of research." The venture would draw on the teaching strengths of Kingston and St George's as well as the impressive research capability of both Royal Holloway and St George's, Professor Scott added.

To date, partnerships between universities had mainly taken the form of mergers or resulted in smaller colleges amalgamating with larger institutions, Professor Scott said. "In this instance, we are taking a more flexible approach tailored to regional and sector needs," he said.

The three institutions intend to combine their teaching resources to offer new courses in biological and biomedical sciences and leadership and management education as well as to enhance continuing professional development training. A Health Sciences Foundation Degree with routes into other degrees such as medicine, nursing and practitioner training will be among the first courses to be rolled out.

A portion of the Government funding has been earmarked for a flagship building at St George's. The complex will provide a venue for some of the non-laboratory based activity to be carried out by the three universities, including postgraduate management programmes. Staff and students at institutions belonging to the consortium will also benefit from Kingston's expertise in e-learning through access to the web-based learning management system, Blackboard.

The three institutions had recognised that their combined and complementary strengths represented a real opportunity to make significant advances in higher education, Professor Scott said. "Together we have the knowledge and resources to establish a centre of excellence able to address the Government's agendas for major improvements in delivery," he said.



A three-way alliance between Kingston University, St George's University of London and Royal Holloway University of London will boost research capacity.

## Scholarship honours victim of London bombings

**T**he University has named the first winner of a scholarship commemorating a graduate killed in the 7 July bombings. Law student Tanya Cunningham intends to use a £5,000 grant from a travel scholarship launched as a tribute to business alumnus Philip Russell to undertake voluntary charity work in Cambodia.

The scholarship scheme was set up after Philip, a keen traveller who completed a BA in Business Studies at Kingston in 1998, died following the explosion aboard a Number 30 bus in Tavistock Square. The 28 year old had been on his way to work at asset management specialists JPMorgan at the time. Contributions from Philip's family, friends and colleagues were matched by his employer, swelling the total fund to almost £60,000.

Becoming the holder of the inaugural scholarship award will allow 23-year-old Tanya to fulfil her dream of spending six months in Cambodia working on humanitarian projects for the charity Legal Services for Children and Woman. "The legal system in Cambodia was virtually wiped out during the Khmer Rouge regime and I hope that, in some small way, I'll be able to play a part in rebuilding it," she said. "I also plan to spend three months on the road assisting women and children who have been victims of exploitation and human trafficking which will give me an important insight into the challenges they face readjusting to society."

Three second year students from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences have also benefited from the first award allocation. Dominic Stevenson, Danielle Nicholls and Simon Cartlidge are



Law student Tanya Cunningham will undertake voluntary work in Cambodia after becoming the first holder of the Philip Russell Travel Scholarship.

currently in Nepal after each receiving special grants of £1,000 to work with children being cared for by the Esther Benjamins Trust.

Philip's father, Grahame, and mother, Veronica, who both sat on the scholarship selection panel, said they had been extremely impressed by the calibre of the applicants. "Philip's death is a tragedy from which the family will never recover, but to have been given the ability to create a memorial that will further the education of some while benefiting those less fortunate is, in itself, a fitting tribute to his name," Mr Russell said. "Philip spent four happy years at Kingston University immersing himself in student life. The friends he made and the memories he created would have undoubtedly remained with him forever."

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## V-C'S COLUMN

**A** couple of things have happened recently that are connected – but in a complicated way. The first was Gordon Brown's announcement that the Research Assessment Exercise was to be scrapped after (or even before) RAE 2008. The second was a Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) initiative with a title which George Orwell would have been appalled by – Third Leg as Second Mission.

The scrapping of the RAE came as a surprise – in two senses. First, it's just been revamped – with super-panels (to make sure that interdisciplinary work is not ignored and to ensure consistency across subjects) and so-called graded profiles (to avoid the cliff-edge funding changes produced by the old grades). After an extensive consultation everyone, including Kingston, had said they wanted to keep the RAE. Secondly, it's not really the Treasury's business. After all, the RAE was invented by the Funding Councils (actually the former University Grants Committee) as a mechanism for distributing the research half of what is still meant to be a block grant to universities (over which politicians are not meant to have any say).

Leaving aside this rather important constitutional point (which I care about, even if no one else does), the sudden death of the RAE may not be so surprising after all. There were already some emerging issues – such as the fact that panels have been selected in such a 'politically correct' way (lots of consultation with subject associations and so on) that the whole thing has begun to feel a bit like a producers' cartel, or the fact that the graded profiles would cluster around the 2\* and 3\* researchers (because no one will want to enter many 1\* researchers and to be a 4\* researcher you have practically won the Nobel Prize already), or like the mounting RAE-mania.

But the real reason the Treasury intervened to scrap the RAE is that it doesn't believe the kind of research reward with high grades (or profiles) is the kind of research that really stimulates innovation and boosts productivity – in other words, it's not 'useful' enough. That is why it is so hung up on 'metrics'. (In fact there are plenty of 'metrics' in the RAE, but clearly the wrong kind). It doesn't take much imagination to guess which kind of 'metrics' the Treasury would prefer.

The HEFCE initiative Third Leg as Second Mission is linked to the scrapping of the RAE. It is not really an initiative to persuade the new universities to abandon so-called academic drift, stop being obsessed by the RAE and stick to applied-research-and-all-that instead – although it may have started out like that. Its main purpose is to begin to counteract the scepticism of the Treasury, which isn't much more convinced by successive enterprise initiatives (the latest of which is the Higher Education Innovation Fund, HEIF) than it is by the RAE when it comes to stimulating innovation and boosting productivity. HEFCE wants not to put the ex-polytechnics back in their box but to convince the Treasury that HEIF-and-all-that is not just about ticking boxes and counting beans and can really make a difference.

Of course, the Treasury is wrong about both the RAE and HEIF. The real point (or, more accurately, effect) of the RAE is not to distribute research funding (apart from a few smaller



mono-technic higher education institutions there is remarkably little change from one RAE to the next); it is to drive up quality, to benchmark United Kingdom research against the best in the world and to encourage universities to manage research properly. Equally, however bureaucratic some HEIF processes may be, few can doubt that for many universities there has been a step-change in their engagement with industry and business (and, let's not forget, their communities) in the past 10 years – not, of course, that universities weren't key economic players before that.

What are the implications for Kingston? I am sorry to see the RAE go because I believe its benefits have far outweighed its perverse effects (there have been some, of course). I am also concerned that RAE 2008 may be destabilised, even undermined, by the Treasury coup. But, in the end, it doesn't make much difference. We will still need to give RAE 2008 our very best possible shot – because our grade profiles will have a long shelf-life (in terms of reputation if not funding). And Kingston's fundamental research strategy – to encourage and support the very best research while developing an inclusive research culture – must remain unchanged. Above all, the scrapping of the RAE must not provide an excuse to retreat from our ambition to improve our research performance and increase our research profile – for reasons we all understand (and which have nothing to do with academic drift).

However, the scrapping of the RAE does perhaps provide an opportunity to 'join up' research and enterprise in novel and imaginative ways. We all recognise that there is a spectrum of 'knowledge' activities ranging from pure research through to applied research, technology transfer and enterprise. We all recognise too that these labels are anachronistic and that the relationships between these different activities are far from being in one direction (or even linear). So I think there is no harm in Kingston expressing interest in the Third Leg as Second Mission initiative – provided, of course, we are allowed to subvert both labels! 'Third Leg' needs to be stretched to embrace the 'Second Leg', i.e. research, and maybe include quite a lot of the 'First Leg', i.e. teaching, as well – while I dislike these attempts to carve up what should be a holistic university mission into disconnected fragments of teaching, research, enterprise and whatever else is coming along.

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## IN THE NEWS

### Dean destined for top job at Design Museum

When Kingston's Dean of Art, Design and Architecture, Deyan Sudjic, becomes Director of the Design Museum this autumn he is determined that its good relationship with the University will be strengthened even further. "The museum already has excellent links with Kingston through its involvement in running the very successful MA in Curating Contemporary Design and I am eager to build on that close association," he said.

In his new role, Mr Sudjic will be charged with overseeing the expansion and relocation of the Design Museum from Butler's Wharf to London's Bankside. "The museum is set to move into a space behind the Tate Modern by 2012 which will triple its size. This will provide the opportunity to create a much more layered experience for visitors, enabling it to stage popular shows as well as



Dean of the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture Deyan Sudjic will take on the top job at the Design Museum in September.

exhibitions focusing on scholarly research," he said.

Mr Sudjic has relished the challenges of working in academia during his time at the University. Securing funding for the installation of a television studio, the creation of an MA in Design and the development of a degree in automotive design in collaboration with the Faculty of Engineering are among the high points of his tenure. "The talent in the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture is immense and working with the next generation of artists, designers and architects during my time at

Kingston has been truly inspiring," he said.

Mr Sudjic will be succeeded by Dr Simon Ofield, who is currently Academic Group chair and a principal lecturer at Middlesex University's School of Arts. Dr Ofield will join the staff at Kingston in August.

### International institution recognises contribution of Kingston specialist

A senior lecturer from the Faculty of Engineering has added a leading role within the International Space University to his academic credentials. Dr Chris Welch is the only British expert to have been appointed a faculty member of the institution.

Highly regarded in the sector for his expertise in astronautics and space technology, Dr Welch joined the staff at Kingston 18 years ago. He described his appointment as a tremendous honour which would ensure Kingston University remained at the forefront of space-related education in the United Kingdom. "I am very excited at the prospect of having greater input into the running of such an intercultural and interdisciplinary institution, which draws together professionals and students from all backgrounds and cultures," he said.

The International Space University provides graduate-level training at its central campus in Strasbourg, France, and at locations around the globe. It specialises in disciplines ranging from space science and systems engineering to policy and legislation. Agencies such as NASA are heavily

involved in its programmes and Dr Welch's fellow faculty members include researchers from McGill University in Canada and the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in the United States.

Kingston's Faculty of Engineering is the only affiliate of the International Space University in the United Kingdom and enrolls more students for its summer schools and Masters programmes than any other institution in the country.



Dr Chris Welch's contribution to astronautical education in the United Kingdom has been recognised by the International Space University.

### Archaeologists commence campus excavation

Engineering students have been rubbing shoulders with archaeological experts after a team from the Museum of London began exploratory



Bottles were the first items unearthed by Museum of London archaeologist Ryszard Bartkowiak during a survey of the Roehampton Vale campus.

investigations at the Roehampton Vale campus. The work follows the announcement that Wandsworth Council had granted the University planning permission for an extension to the existing building at the site which is home to the Faculty of Engineering.

A condition of the planning consent specified that the University must liaise with English Heritage representatives to conduct a survey of the grounds before any building work commenced, Director of Property Management and Development Andrew McEwan explained. "It will be the first time that the campus, which was formerly occupied by Smiths Industries, has been redeveloped and the area could potentially be of archaeological interest," he said. "I imagine there will be a lot of curiosity amongst staff and students at Roehampton Vale about whether there is anything of historic significance on the site," he said.

A contractor will be chosen to begin construction on the site once the excavation has been completed.

# Roles change as University Secretary retires

**U**niversity Secretary Raficq Abdulla steps down from one of the institution's most senior positions in July. His retirement ends a 10-year involvement with Kingston which he describes as providing one of the high points in a career that has also included roles as a company secretary and legal adviser and three years as deputy secretary for national charity Scope.

Mr Abdulla assumed an ever-increasing remit after joining the staff at Kingston in 1996. "As a lawyer I fulfilled the legal aspects of the role myself but, as the University evolved, risk management, data protection, freedom of information and increased governance issues also came under the remit of the University Secretary's Department."

During the past decade, Mr Abdulla has witnessed a number of other changes across the University. "Rapid growth has resulted in a significant rise in student numbers and this new generation is, rightly, demanding much more from its university experience," he said. "The volume of work has increased accordingly to meet the demands of this new consumer culture."

Mr Abdulla's most memorable achievements include the establishment of Kingston University

Innovations Limited – a company set up to ensure the University's enterprise activity was governed effectively. He also takes pride in

the fact that there are now standard contract procedures and a robust intellectual property rights policy for the organisation.



Retiring University Secretary Raficq Abdulla will retain close connections with Kingston by becoming a visiting fellow at the Faculty of Business and Law.

Retirement will be far from quiet for Mr Abdulla. His diary is already brimming with engagements and he is also set to remain a familiar figure around the University. He will share his expertise serving as a visiting fellow within the Faculty of Business and Law where he will lecture on legal matters and creative leadership. Off campus, he plans to pursue his passions for poetry and literature. A respected member of the Muslim community, he will also maintain a strong involvement in inter-faith work.

Incoming University Secretary Donald Beaton takes on his new responsibilities in August. As well as serving as clerk to the Board of Governors, Mr Beaton will also oversee human resources, estates and the New University Project following a review of the University's administrative structure. Formerly Director of Human Resources at Warwick University, Mr Beaton said he looked forward to joining the University at what was an exciting period in its development. "I gather I have a hard act to follow, but I'm primed and ready to take on the challenges that lie ahead," he said.

## New Director to oversee changing face of University

**S**taff and students must be prepared to embrace change if Kingston University is to achieve its ambitious goals for the future, according to Director of Property Management and Development Andrew McEwan. The first holder of the newly-created post, he has been entrusted with making a significant difference to how the University looks and operates in the long term.

A former consultant for property company Mace, Mr McEwan arrived at Kingston late last year when he was appointed interim Director of Estates. Eight months on, he has stepped into his new role armed with a solid knowledge of the institution. He now shoulders an amalgam of the responsibilities held by former Estates Director David Sanders, who left the University to join the



Ensuring the University makes the best possible use of space will be a major focus for Director of Property Management and Development Andrew McEwan.

Natural History Museum, and some of those of recently retired Pro Vice-Chancellor for Strategic Development Dr Ken Hopkins. "Bringing together the estates function and strategic responsibility for the New University Project will inevitably involve dealing with some major cultural shifts, but I'm a believer in change as a catalyst for advancement," he said.

Mr McEwan has been charged with keeping the University's estate in good order and developing a strategy to ensure it meets the institution's teaching and learning objectives. A major focus would be the effective use of space, he said. "The priority for the New University Project is to align the physical

structure of the institution with the academic configuration," he explained. "It's a bit like tackling a huge, three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle where moving one piece has a consequence on another on the other side of the board."

The level of energy consumption at the University will also be an important consideration for Mr McEwan's team. "As well as negotiating the most cost-effective fuel deal, we need to think seriously about what we can do to reduce usage," he said.

Dr Hopkins said Mr McEwan would bring a wealth of experience to the post. "Andrew's civil engineering background and wide experience of management will have considerable benefits for the University," he said.

## Personnel head packs away her staff files

**P**ersonnel Director Liz Lanchbery will be answering her final professional development query and signing off the University payroll run for the last time when she retires in July. Her departure marks the conclusion of an 18-year association with the institution.

Mrs Lanchbery joined the then Kingston Polytechnic in July 1988 bringing nearly 17 years' personnel and training experience gained within the National Health Service to the post. Kingston had been a very different institution in those days, Mrs Lanchbery said. Polytechnics were overseen by local authorities so academic staff were employed by Kingston Council. The lecturers were managed by the Local Education Authority while there was a small human resources team dedicated to the staff who filled other professional and support roles. There were, however, huge changes to come. "When the organisation became incorporated as a higher education institution on 1 April 1989, it was no longer under local authority control and we had to manage staff matters ourselves," Mrs Lanchbery said. "There were only five personnel officers at that time and, between us, we had to set up all the new systems, including payroll, from scratch."

Highlights of Mrs Lanchbery's time at Kingston include her role in the establishment of the Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences, run in partnership with St George's University of London, in the mid-1990s. "My health service background stood me in good stead when we were masterminding the joint bid for funding with St George's and my knowledge of how the sector worked proved an invaluable asset while we were negotiating the deal," she said. She was also heavily involved in the formation of the University's facilities management company, KUSCO.



Outgoing Personnel Director Liz Lanchbery has overseen major changes to human resources systems during 18 years at the University.

More recently, the development of a new online human resources system and the implementation of the national pay framework have featured prominently on Mrs Lanchbery's list of priorities. "I feel that I can move on now safe in the knowledge that the Department, which these days also includes well-established training and development, health and safety and equality and diversity functions, can handle anything that comes its way."

Kingston staff are still likely to bump into Mrs Lanchbery around campus. She is taking up an honorary position advising on the launch of a BA (Hons) in Dance. She will also continue to put her years of personnel management experience to good use outside the organisation undertaking consultancy work including executive coaching and workplace mediation.

## Students have success all wrapped up

**A** fresh approach to use-by date labelling for food has earned three graphic design students national acclaim. Kirsten Elliott, Françoise D'offay-Smith and Alice

Boardman have received an RSA Design Directions award after inventing a flower-shaped touch-by date label they hope may one day reinvent markings on packaging. Able to give

an accurate reading of the life span of dairy, meat and fish products, the concept consists of a cluster of petals that change colour and become raised to touch when foods emit gases as they start to deteriorate.

The design was commended by the RSA awards panel for being readily accessible to consumers, especially those with disabilities. Kirsten hopes the team will now be able to convince a major retailer to adopt the idea. "At the moment, it is not always clear when a product is safe to eat. Food can sometimes go off before or after the date specified on the wrapping and the markings themselves can be difficult to locate and read," she said. The invention would be particularly beneficial to the 10 per cent of Britain's population who were visually impaired, Kirsten added. "We believe our idea will help people who have problems with their sight identify whether their food is still safe to eat more easily."

Senior lecturer Mike Bond said the project had given the students valuable experience working within a competitive creative environment. "The

result is a really positive example of how our graphic design students can apply the skills they acquire as part of their course to everyday scenarios," he said. "Their simple, easy-to-use solution to a common problem is likely to have considerable appeal to potential investors. Having such prestigious recognition as an RSA award on their curriculum vitae will also stand the students in good stead when they start to apply for jobs."

Run by the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce, the awards encourage emerging designers to engage with the broader social and environmental context in which they work. They attracted more than 1,600 entries this year, with the Kingston students receiving £5,000 for their success in the inclusive worlds category. Chair of the judging panel Professor Roger Coleman, described the touch-by date concept as "an exceptional example of a solution which benefited from in-depth understanding of areas outside the immediate design discipline as well as a thorough examination of user needs".



Graphic design students, from left, Kirsten Elliott, Françoise D'offay-Smith and Alice Boardman have devised a new approach to use-by-date labelling for food products.

## Fashion newcomers set the trend

**S**tudents from Kingston's Department of Fashion have showcased their final-year catwalk collections to head-hunters from some of the most influential firms in the industry. Talent spotters from Harrods, Paul Smith, Abercrombie and Fitch and Brooks Brothers were among the big name employers who lined the front rows at the University's annual show at the Banqueting House in central London hoping to discover the next Stella McCartney or Alexander McQueen.

The collections included work by up-and-coming designers Katy Biddulph and Lili Golmohammadi. James Bond fan Katy added a touch of glamour to proceedings, unveiling an assortment of stylish, high-performance skiwear. The range included Swarovski crystal-encrusted

ski boots and goggles, fringed jackets and metallic ski pants fit for any of 007's beautiful sidekicks. "The whole look relied on using luxurious and expensive-looking materials and just wouldn't have had the same impact without the crystals," Katy said. "Getting sponsorship from Swarovski meant I was able to use the gems to embellish goggles, ski boots, jackets and toggles and I loved the effect they created on the metallic fabrics."

Lili meanwhile spent hours researching bikers' passion for motorcycling before setting to work on her outfits. "I realised that under the tough image sometimes associated with bikers there was actually a softer side and I tried to capture that in my designs," she explained. The results included a leather and knit swing coat, a grey full circle wool skirt with a Swiss darned motorcycle motif and a pair of brightly-coloured Fair Isle knitted leggings.

Course director Elinor Renfrew said the calibre of the collections reinforced the University's reputation for producing students cut out for the realities of working in the fashion industry. "Employers are always commending the Department for ensuring Kingston fashion graduates are able to hit the ground running without having to go through a steep learning curve when they take up their first jobs," Mrs Renfrew said.

The latest graduates were launching their careers at a time when the industry was facing enormous challenges, Mrs Renfrew added. "The current cheap chic trend in shops and even supermarkets will be difficult for manufacturers to sustain. I predict this will lead to a shift from the present discounting trend back to niche markets," she said. "Fashion houses will inevitably return to their core businesses and redevelop specialist lines such as sports clothing and childrenswear. The University's graduates will be entering the market at a difficult time but I am confident they will embrace the changes with passion."



Student Lili Golmohammadi gave the traditional motorcycling image a makeover with a fashion range blending multi-coloured knitwear with leather.



Crystals from top manufacturer Swarovski added a touch of sophistication to fashion student Katy Biddulph's final-year collection.

# Suzy Lamplugh Trust backs school safety project

**T**he Suzy Lamplugh Trust has lent its support to a Students' Union initiative set up to make primary school children more aware of the potential dangers posed by strangers. The Trust is backing a project that has seen student volunteers from the University visit 20 schools in the Kingston area to spread the message about personal safety by performing a modern-day re-enactment of the classic fairytale Little Red Riding Hood.

Written and produced by Students' Union volunteering development co-ordinator Catherine Attridge, the production *Stop Red! Keep Safe* was rolled out across the borough after being piloted in selected schools two years ago. The drama tells the story of Red, who is distracted listening to music and playing computer games with a friend instead of going straight to her grandmother's house after school. Setting out after dark, she encounters a wolf who tries to win her trust with the promise of concert tickets. "The underlying messages are extremely serious but they are explored in a fun way so the children don't realise they are being taught a valuable lesson," Ms Attridge said. "The action stops just before the end of the play and the audience is asked to decide what Red should do to stay out of harm's way. Through taking responsibility for the final scenes, the children feel stronger and more empowered to take responsibility for their own safety and that of their friends."



Students' Union volunteer Matthew Dye, left, acting as the wolf, gets the cold shoulder from fellow Union volunteer Emma Lawrence, second left, and Moor Lane Junior School pupils Courtney Rees and Ousama Sad, far right, during a performance highlighting stranger danger.

Suzy Lamplugh Trust spokesperson Lizzie Bruce said, despite safety awareness being included in the national curriculum, more still needed to be done to increase knowledge, particularly at primary school level. Set up in 1986 following the disappearance of 25-year-old estate agent Suzy Lamplugh, the trust is marking its 20th anniversary by stepping up activity to educate young people about personal safety issues. "We were extremely impressed by the thought that had gone into the Kingston University Students' Union production," Mrs Bruce said. "Using an adaptation of Little Red Riding Hood helps children to engage instantly with characters with whom they are already familiar. The messages in the play also reinforce the points the trust is promoting in its Safe Schools Charter."

The show's audiences included more than 90 pupils from Moor Lane Junior School in Chessington. Deputy head Neil Meehan said staging the performances in the run-up to the summer holidays had given pupils a timely reminder about taking extra care when they were out and about. "The Students' Union volunteers are to be commended for the contribution they have been making to the community through this project," he said.

## Trainee teacher chalks up continental classroom experience

**A** French textbook was a top priority for trainee teacher Hannah Tyrrel when she packed her bags for a school trip with a difference this semester. The 25 year old had good reason to brush up on her vocabulary – she was setting off to spend a month at a primary school near the French city of Besançon as part of her Kingston postgraduate certificate in education studies.

Adapting to a different education system provided plenty of challenges for Hannah. Since lessons were long and her French was not fluent, she settled on an interactive approach – using role plays to engage with the children. "The experience was really intense because I was living with a French family and speaking French at school all day," Hannah said. "Lessons lasted 90 minutes, with the school day starting at 8.30am and finishing at 5.00pm – although lunch was a leisurely two hours. It was a long day even for an adult and I could sometimes see the children struggling to remain focused." Hannah was struck by the emphasis placed on grammar and the way lessons were drilled into the young students with little reward. "The system obviously works as the pupils generally appeared to be ahead of children in the United Kingdom academically, but I sensed that they missed out on some of the more creative elements of classroom activity as they got older," she said.

Senior lecturer Gordon Phillips, who is responsible for organising the School of Education's annual exchange programme to France, Spain and Germany, said being able to observe other countries' approaches to teaching made the Kingston students more well-rounded professionals in the long term. "Taking charge of a classroom in another country can be quite an intimidating prospect but one which gives the participants increased enthusiasm for their vocation and the confidence to tackle the many demands of everyday school life," he said. The experience also enhanced trainees' employment prospects, particularly at a time when primary schools were placing more emphasis on including modern foreign languages in the curriculum and seeking staff with the relevant specialist skills, Mr Phillips said.



Hannah Tyrrel brushed up on her vocabulary during a month-long teaching exchange at a French school

## Tools take trauma out of trip to doctor

**A** new set of diagnostic devices could soon help alleviate children's anxiety about visits to the doctor. Product and furniture design student Michelle Taite has created a set of child-friendly medical aids which she hopes will become a regular feature in GP's surgeries and paediatric wards. Called MediMates, the range includes a stethoscope with two earpieces allowing both young patients and doctors to monitor heartbeat and breathing, a neuro hammer to test leg reflexes and an ophthalmoscope for eye examinations.

A routine visit to her doctor gave Michelle the inspiration for the equipment, which she created using zoomorphic shapes to give each item an animal-like appearance. "I was sitting in the waiting room and it struck me how nervous the children seemed in such an unfamiliar environment," Michelle explained. "I wanted to find a way to eliminate that fear and make the doctors appear more approachable."

The 25 year old set to work mindful that she not only needed to come up with concepts that had close connections with children's understanding of the world around them but would also win parents' confidence and provide a fully functional alternative for doctors. She collaborated with medical staff in London, Boston and Tel Aviv to research the attitudes of young patients aged between two and five and the health professionals caring for them before testing prototypes of her designs on the same sample group. "During my research and testing I found the children were more inclined to relax when they encountered an implement that seemed familiar, while the tools still proved practical enough for the medical specialists using them," Michelle said.

Exploring funding and production options for her designs will be high on Michelle's agenda when she moves to Boston later this year following her graduation. She has already approached major American toy and infant product manufacturer the RC2 Corporation in a bid to stimulate interest in her ideas.

Michelle Taite hopes her range of child-friendly medical tools could soon be used to make youngsters' visits to the doctor less daunting.



# Research reveals ethical dilemmas have little impact on attitudes to face transplants

**A** study carried out at Kingston's School of Social Science suggests public opinion could be veering in favour of face transplants. In a two-year project headed by senior psychology lecturer Dr Jess Prior, researchers have explored attitudes to facial disfigurement and questioned whether the ethical concerns surrounding the controversial operation are outweighed by the potential benefits.

The possibility of taking on someone else's identity had been a source of fascination since people first put masks on, Dr Prior said. "But, while doctors have grappled with the technicalities of face transplants, crime writers and Hollywood directors have only looked at the more sensational aspects of the procedure," she said.

Of the 22 people chosen to take part in the qualitative study, eight were from a medical background, including one who was a facial surgeon. A further six were students at the University who classed themselves as having some form of facial disfigurement, such as birth marks, burns or other scars, while eight were members of the public representing a cross-section of ages and backgrounds. "The majority of respondents were broadly in favour of the procedure, although many stipulated it should only be carried out in very severe cases and only as a last resort," Dr Prior said. "One person commented that the procedure was a scientific advance that would give hope to those without any other options."

All the individuals surveyed had assumed that people with severe disfigurements would be socially isolated and depressed and that

transplants would therefore be the answer for them, Dr Prior said. Research had however found that the opposite was the case. "Many people with significant facial disfigurements are able to lead full and successful lives as they have generally come to terms with their appearance. Bearing that in mind, serious thought needs to be given as to whether there is actually a market for face transplants."

The Kingston research had confirmed that there was very little understanding, even among the medical community, about the implications of the face transplant process, Dr Prior said. "We think this lack of awareness may be a factor in the largely positive attitudes to the procedure," she explained. "Many people don't realise, for example, that transplant recipients will be on anti-rejection drugs for the rest of their lives or that it is impossible to predict what the rejection rate will be because skin on the face is unlikely to react in the same way as other body parts that can be transplanted." Serious thought would also have to be given to alternatives if the body did reject a new face since it would not necessarily be possible to do another transplant, she added.

Despite high levels of public interest in the subject, there have to date only been a handful of papers published on the subject worldwide. "In the two years that we have been working on the Kingston study, two partial facial transplants have taken place on a woman in France mauled by her dog and on a Chinese man attacked by a black bear. Last month, it was reported that the medical ethics committee at the Royal Free Hospital in London was

discussing the possibility of one of its surgeons carrying out a full face transplant on a 22 year old badly scarred in a house fire when he was 10," she said. "However, there is a danger that the technology is getting ahead of the debate. There is an ethical vacuum which is not being helped by the sensational way the subject is reported in the media."

The final research report is due to be released early next year. Dr Prior hopes to then continue her work in collaboration with other universities and charities, focusing more on people with serious disfigurements. "There are so many issues that need to be investigated in greater detail," she said. "There is a whole Pandora's box of problems surrounding the issue of donors for face transplants alone which has only just begun to be explored."

## Academic accomplishments

The University has announced the latest recipients of its prestigious research degrees.

Phylomena Badsey has become a Doctor of Philosophy after completing her study of 'The Political Thought of Vera Brittain.'

Yasir Elhag has been named a Doctor of Philosophy after conducting an 'Investigation of the Boiling Process in a Water Evaporator with Internal Capillary Structure'.

Salem-Abdulzahra Garawi has become a Doctor of Philosophy after undertaking a 'Performance Analysis of a Mobile Robotic Tele-Ultrasonography System over a 2.5-3G Communications Network'.

Isaam Tlemsani has been named a Doctor of Philosophy after exploring 'The Compatibility of Islam and the West: The Context of Global Banking'.

Ying Zou has become a Doctor of Philosophy after examining the development of 'A Mobile Diabetes Management and Internet-working System'.

Evros Agamemnonos has been awarded a Master of Arts by Research after completing a study of 'Financial Liberalisation in the Mediterranean Region'.

Yan Li has received a Master of Science by Research after devising 'A Service to Evaluate the Performance of Tracking and Recognition of Events'.



Dr Jess Prior believes that much more work needs to be done to bring the public up to speed on the long-term ramifications of face transplant surgery.

## 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
Professor A Augousti	Life Sciences	INTERACT India: Collaborative Research in Photonics and Optical Instrumentation	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council	£16,751 – one year
Professor M Stuart	Education	Survey of Assessment and Feedback	University of Sheffield	£27,512 – nine months
Professor J Wen	Engineering	Glazing Response in Fire	Pilkington Technology Management Limited	£22,575 – two years



Professor Christine Edwards, left, and PhD student Weiwei Xu have founded a new research centre being run in partnership with China's Tsinghua University.

## International initiative breaks new ground

A doctoral student's work analysing personnel practices within the British and Chinese press has led to the launch of a cross-cultural research collaboration. Kingston's School of Human Resource Management has joined forces with Tsinghua University in Beijing to set up a centre dedicated to evaluating employment systems and procedures used by media outlets in both countries. The Centre for Human Resource Management in the Media will enable staff based at Kingston's Faculty of Business and Law to pool their expertise with academics from the Chinese University's School of Journalism and Communication. The venture is expected to raise Kingston's profile in an increasingly important international market while enabling Chinese academics to tap in to examples of Western innovation.

The centre was the brainchild of Chinese scholar Weiwei Xu, who has been examining the workings of the British and Chinese media sectors during three years of PhD studies at Kingston. "So far the media and the creative industries haven't undergone the professional scrutiny to which other industries have been subjected," Ms Xu, who will serve as the centre's co-ordinator, said. "This collaboration will see Kingston University leading the way in China in what is potentially a huge

area of research." Plans for the centre include specialised training courses, a website and annual conferences to be held alternately in Britain and China. The team hopes to be able to secure financial backing from the Chinese government.

The Head of Kingston's School of Human Resource Management, Professor Christine Edwards, has been appointed director of the research centre. Senior lecturer Dr Miao Zhang, a human resources policy expert on China, will also be part of the centre team. China now had a burgeoning economy and the launch of Kingston's partnership with Tsinghua University coincided with a new phase in the country's international development, Professor Edwards said. "Previously Chinese labour markets were extremely restrictive, with hierarchical relationships and no tools to motivate or train staff," she said. "The Chinese government now acknowledges that effective human resource management is essential for it to be able to compete on an international scale, however, and has a clear commitment to learning from other countries. Links with such a prestigious institution as Tsinghua University will position Kingston at the heart of some significant developments as China builds a professional workforce fit for the challenges of the 21st Century."

## Pupils urged to make higher education a top priority

More than 1,000 pupils from schools across Kingston and neighbouring boroughs have been getting a feel for university life. They have been the latest participants in a series of events organised by the University's Education Liaison team to increase awareness about higher education amongst school children. Activities have included conferences and discovery days for pupils in Years 7 to 9, subject taster days, summer schools targeted at pupils in Year 10 and open days. The action-packed programme has also included information events for teachers and careers advisers.

Education liaison manager Jayne Clanfield said her team had just wrapped up an intense six-week schedule, including a schools conference for 190 pupils and a science and technology challenge attended by a further 50 school children. "Many of the young people don't realise that university could be an option for them because they're worried about financial constraints or simply don't think their grades will be good enough," Ms Clanfield said. "Our aim is to set their minds at rest and convince them that they actually do have the potential to complete a degree."

The science and technology challenge, which took place in July, was run specifically for pupils in Years 8 and 9 who had shown an aptitude for those subjects. It was aimed at some of the highest achievers in borough schools who tackled a range of group tasks, designed to broaden their attitudes to science and encourage them to go on to study the subject at university.

The events were particularly important for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 because they encouraged them to think about the wide range of subjects they could study at degree level at a time when they needed to start giving some serious thought to their futures, Ms Clanfield said. "It's important for teenagers to be able to see for themselves just how university could improve their career prospects and, perhaps most importantly, how enjoyable it can actually be," she added.

Nearly 30 pupils from Christ's School in Richmond attended a schools' conference held at the Kingston Hill campus in July. The school's flexible learning co-ordinator, Sarah Brown, said it had been an invaluable opportunity to show her pupils the options that were available to them. "Many pupils wonder why it's important to do well at school and interactive sessions such as these put things into context for them," she said. "Attending workshop sessions gives them the confidence and inspiration to take more control of their lives and

they begin to understand that their approach to lessons now will have a big impact on the choices they are able to make in the long term."

The Education Liaison team has complemented its events activity with visits to more than 25 schools in the region during the past two months, giving lectures and informal talks to pupils, parents and teachers. Kingston undergraduates have also been doing their part to spread the word about the importance of higher education by speaking at schools and colleges and by running tours on campus.



Pupils from Mitcham Vale School have visited the University to learn more about the opportunities available studying science and technology.

### SPRING 2006

#### EXHIBITIONS

##### WEDNESDAY 20 – WEDNESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER

**Product and Furniture Design Degree Show**  
Featuring a selection of work completed by Kingston graduates during the 2005-06 academic year.  
The Old Truman Brewery, Brick Lane, London

#### EVENTS: AUGUST

##### TUESDAY 22 AUGUST

6.00 – 8.00pm **Is There A Book in You?**  
A reception being hosted by the Faculties of Business and Law and Arts and Social Sciences to mark the publication of senior lecturer Alison Baverstock's latest book.  
The Bonham Hotel, Edinburgh

#### EVENTS: SEPTEMBER

##### WEDNESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

9.30am – 7.30pm **New Perspectives on Mary Tudor**  
A symposium drawing together academics from across the United Kingdom hosted by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.  
Hampton Court Palace

##### FRIDAY 15 – SATURDAY 16 SEPTEMBER

**Iris Murdoch: Morality and the Novel**  
The third annual Iris Murdoch conference hosted by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences focusing on the author's relevance to contemporary debate on morality and literature and exploring the ways in which her moral philosophy manifested itself in her novels.  
Penrhyn Road campus

#### 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](mailto: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.**

## Production proves true test of students' stamina

**D**rama students learned the true meaning of the catchphrase the show must go on when they sacrificed sleep and home comforts for one of their latest course challenges. Every minute mattered when the stars-in-the-making set to work writing, casting and rehearsing their latest theatrical offering, knowing the curtain would go up in a mere 24 hours' time.

Organised by third-year drama students Matt Dye and Aaron Minnigin, the round-the clock project got underway with 25 actors assembling at the University's Reg Bailey Theatre braced to work through the night. A seven-strong writing team quickly crafted a series of 20-minute plays before parts were allocated during an early hours' audition session.

Matt, who has aspirations of forming his own theatre company once he graduates, said the troupe had shown tremendous resilience in the ensuing rush to learn lines, run through scenes and ensure staging, props and lighting were of a suitably high standard. "The demands of getting a creative group of people

together all working to a tight deadline meant I had to draw on all the theatre management skills I've developed while completing my degree," he said. "Despite some minor setbacks, including actors taking a nap and plays not being fully completed, the participants' talent and enthusiasm really shone through. Once we found ourselves in front of a live audience, the adrenalin kicked in and it was a fantastic feeling when we received a really positive reception."

Head of the School of Performance and Screen Studies Frank Whately said the project proved the students had the motivation essential to succeed in a stage career. "It is never easy to bring together a large, multi-skilled group and come up with a product that is slick, well put together and seamlessly presented, let alone to achieve such a feat without any sleep and in such a short space of time," he said. "The endurance and determination the students displayed will be enormous assets when they move on to join professional theatre companies."



Round-the-clock theatre marathon organisers Aaron Minnigin, left, and Matt Dye snatched every available spare minute for impromptu rehearsals.

## Technology aids performance techniques

**S**ingers and actors from the School of Performance and Screen Studies have been putting their vocal prowess to the test in trials of new performance-enhancing software. They have been taking part in a pilot of computerised systems being created to help artists track their progress during lessons and rehearsals.

The studio sessions are being completed under the watchful eye of singing and voice teacher Heather Keens, who is undertaking doctoral research at the University evaluating the impact of different learning approaches on vocal style. Ms Keens hopes her findings will help software designers in the United Kingdom and Australia fine-tune sophisticated programs devised to improve understanding of the physical processes involved in producing dialogue and song. Relying heavily on graphics that can pinpoint characteristics such as pitch and tone, the technology is also able to aid singers and actors keen to boost projection without harming their voices.



Drama student Frances Lea, left, has tested Sing and See software in studio sessions run by researcher Heather Keens.

Bonuses included the option of using a computer camera to run footage of students alongside the graphical analysis to help them observe and improve their posture, Ms Keens said. Superior internet links also meant teachers and students would no longer necessarily need to be in the same room for a lesson to take place. "One-to-one teaching time is at a premium at universities across the world, so any advances that can both speed up and improve the learning process are likely to be viewed as significant breakthroughs," she said.

Trial participant Jen Byrd believes the technology has the potential to transform singing tuition. "Being highly visual, it's easy to work with and definitely makes me think more about all the factors I need to consider to achieve the best results," she said.

Deputy Head of the School of Performance and Screen Studies, Dr Carol Gartrell, said another advantage of the software was its ability to help users adapt their individual styles to different settings. "Singers and actors take part in a wide range of activities in locations ranging from small halls to large opera houses so it is vital they have strategies in place not only to aid their delivery but also to protect their voices," she said. "Initial feedback from the Kingston research indicates that the new technology will prove an invaluable tool in helping performers achieve these dual goals."