



Distinguished director collects Honorary Degree

A screen legend who has enjoyed more than 60 years both in front of and behind the camera has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Kingston University. Lord Richard Attenborough, who has directed, produced and starred in more than 70 films during a celebrated career dating back to 1942, was named an Honorary Doctor of Arts.

Lord Attenborough's long line of internationally-acclaimed films includes the 1982 epic *Gandhi*, which won eight Oscars, including one for best director. Now aged 83, he remains as active as ever and has just finished work on his latest production, *Closing the Ring*, starring Shirley MaLaine, Christopher Plummer and Mischa Barton. His own appearances in *Brighton Rock*, *10 Rillington Place*, *The Great Escape* and, more recently, *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*, have also made him a firm favourite with movie-goers the world over.

When not in the director's chair or on set, Lord Attenborough devotes much of his time to supporting a string of charities. He has been a goodwill ambassador for UNICEF since 1987 and has worked tirelessly to reduce child poverty and help the disabled. He is currently President of the Muscular Dystrophy Group of Great Britain and President of the Gandhi Foundation.

Lord Attenborough's Honorary Doctorate is the latest addition to a sizeable collection of awards. Knighted by the Queen in 1976, his other accolades include the Evening Standard Film Award for 40 years' service to British cinema and the Martin Luther King Junior Peace Prize for outstanding contributions to European cultural heritage.

Throughout his career, Lord Attenborough has had a long association with the university sector, following in the footsteps of his father, Frederick, who was Principal at University College Leicester. The life peer, who has been Chancellor at the University of Sussex since 1998, believes higher education has an important role to play in promoting the arts and is a strong advocate of degree-level study. "Almost the greatest regret of my life is that, because of World War Two, I never went to University so my Chancellorship at Sussex and, indeed, my Honorary Degree from Kingston University mean a great deal to me," Lord Attenborough said. The prolific film-maker also holds Honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Leicester, Kent, Sussex, the American International University in London, Newcastle University, the University of Wales Bangor, the former Manchester Polytechnic and Dickinson College in Pennsylvania.

The Dean of Kingston's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Professor Gail Cunningham, said it was a significant coup to have such a successful actor and director affiliated to the University. "Lord Attenborough is a tremendous inspiration to our students, many of whom will go on to work in the film industry and the creative arts," Professor Cunningham said.



Veteran film-maker Lord Richard Attenborough received a rapturous reception when he collected an Honorary Degree at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences' graduation ceremony.

Vice-Chancellor receives New Year's knighthood

Kingston University's Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Scott has been knighted for his services to higher education. A leading figure in the sector after a career spanning three decades, Professor Scott was selected for the award in recognition of his longstanding contribution both in the national arena and working for individual institutions. The knighthood, announced in the New Year's Honours list, is due to be bestowed at a special investiture ceremony at Buckingham Palace in May.

Since joining Kingston University as Vice-Chancellor in January 1998, Professor Scott has worked tirelessly to open up access to university education. He is currently chairman of the Universities Association for Lifelong Learning and President of the Brussels-based Academic Cooperation Association and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Professor Scott said he was extremely flattered to have been awarded a knighthood. "I regard this great honour as a tribute to Kingston University's success," he added.

Educated at Oxford University, Professor Scott was editor of *The Times Higher Education Supplement* for 16 years before joining the staff at Leeds University in 1992. While at Leeds, he served as Director of the Centre for Policy Studies in Education and as Professor of Education before being promoted to the post of Pro Vice-Chancellor for External Affairs. Professor Scott was a member of the board of the Higher Education Funding Council for England from 2000 until 2006

and chaired its Quality Assurance Learning and Teaching strategic committee. His research interests include the governance and management of universities and colleges, expanding access to higher education and the links between further and higher education.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Mary Stuart said the knighthood was fitting recognition of a distinguished career in higher education and the vision and leadership Professor Scott had displayed during his nine years as Vice-Chancellor at Kingston. "Peter's insights into the changing nature of higher education and knowledge creation have been a vital contribution to the sector and these achievements are symbolised by this honour," Professor Stuart said. "I am sure under his leadership the University will continue to go from strength to strength."

Professor Scott also holds Honorary Doctorates from the University of Bath, the University of Manchester's Institute of Science and Technology, the former Council for National Academic Awards, Anglia Polytechnic University and Grand Valley State University. He is a member of the Academia Europaea and belongs to the Academy of Learned Societies for the Social Sciences.



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V-C'S VIEWPOINT

These are troubling times for free speech – everywhere, but especially in universities which not only have a special responsibility to respect freedom of expression but would not be able to function without the free circulation (and challenge) of new ideas.

The 'threats', some of which arise from the best of intentions, come from several directions. The most obvious is the spreading conception of 'terrorism', no longer simply confined to acts of political violence but now extended to fostering a milieu in which the potential for such violence may be encouraged to develop. Forgive my clumsy formulation – but imprecision is inevitable at a time when incitement to commit acts of terrorism seems to be becoming a dangerously elastic category.

Another 'threat' comes from much maligned political correctness. Some student Christian (and other religious) societies are complaining that they are being threatened with de-recognition by Students' Unions unless they publicly declare their acceptance of gay marriage (although press reports have been rather misleading – the real objections seem to be to their restrictive constitutions rather than to their beliefs). There are even suggestions that employees may be disciplined if they criticise, too publicly, the full canon of equal opportunities and diversity. There was an incident involving a lecturer at the University of Leeds last year which was interpreted, maybe wrongly, in that light.

These are critical issues for Kingston – for both particular and principled reasons. The particular reason is that the University has a large number of Moslem students. No one can deny that it is young, and activist, Moslems who are the main targets of the current campaign against terrorism. It is not an accident that the leader of the British National Party was acquitted of inciting racial violence while one of the leaders of the protest outside the Danish Embassy has been convicted of incitement to murder – not, on the face of it, a good example of impartial justice. Just as the University can never condone criminal activities, nor can it deny its responsibility to stick up for those who may be unfairly targeted.

Kingston is also a large and multi-cultural institution and widening participation is a key element of the University's mission – a 'democratic entitlement' it says in our mission statement. We are – justly, I believe – proud of reaching out to all kinds of students, regardless of social class, gender, religion or ethnic origin, and of being an open, and inclusive, university. So diversity is not just an abstract ideal; it is part of Kingston's day-to-day functioning. Without practising, as well as preaching, diversity we would not be able to achieve some of our core academic goals. In a university like ours there are multiple 'others', all deserving of respect.



But the principled reason is just as important. Like all universities we have to navigate a tricky course between permitting, indeed promoting, vigorous debate and apparently standing aside while serious offence is caused to members of the University community, between radical (and absolutely necessary) challenges to mistaken policies (for example, the invasion of Iraq) and allowing a climate of intolerance, intimidation and even violence to spread unchecked.

We have always to remember these are not simply pragmatic judgements, 'getting it right', a quick calculation of costs and benefits, 'codes of conduct' on acceptable staff behaviour developed by human resources departments or 'protocols' on visiting speakers agreed between Students' Unions and their universities. Instead they go to the heart of what universities are meant to be about – on the one hand, to think the unthinkable, to acknowledge the unacceptable even; on the other, to create an environment of civility, respect and tolerance in which ideas and beliefs can be freely debated, without rancour. Two principles are at war – to push against, and across, the known, respected (and respectable?) frontiers; but also to ensure that scientific evidence is properly weighed, that hypotheses (however prized) are never exempt from intellectual challenge.

I often say that Kingston, like other universities, is a 'secular' institution. But, in saying this, I do not mean to imply that religious beliefs do not deserve to be respected. Unlike Richard Dawkins, I do not believe that God is a 'delusion' – although, of course, he must be entirely free to express that view. In fact, when I say that Kingston is a 'secular' institution, I mean the opposite – that all religious (and political) beliefs should be respected which, of course, means there can be no place for dogmatism or intolerance in the University. It is not always easy, I admit, to respect the beliefs of those you sincerely believe to be 'wrong'. But, in the end, it is much easier than not to respect them, because your beliefs will not be respected in return.

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IN THE NEWS

Partners seal new institutional alliance

A new collaborative venture between Kingston, St George's, University of London and Royal Holloway, University of London has been officially launched. Known as the South West London Academic Network (SWan), the alliance was formally cemented at an inaugural reception at the Royal College of Surgeons attended by more than 120 representatives from member institutions.

The setting for the event had been particularly appropriate since the new partnership would focus principally on health and biosciences education, Kingston's Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mary Stuart, said. "It had been clear for some time that this part of London could benefit significantly from enhanced healthcare education provision," she said. "By working together and pooling our respective expertise, we will be in the perfect position to tailor courses to specific regional needs and increase opportunities for research and professional development," she said.

The partnership was formed following the allocation of a £4 million award from the Higher Education Funding Council for England. The first course to run under the SWan banner – a new Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Informatics – has already commenced. The appointment



Royal Holloway, University of London Principal Professor Stephen Hill, left, Kingston Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Mary Stuart and St George's, University of London Principal Professor Michael Farthing signed the accord launching the South West London Academic Network.

of directors for the alliance's institutes in biomedical sciences, leadership and management education, and inter-professional practice and learning is now under way.

Network nurtures graduates' entrepreneurial flair

A senior academic has called for more graduates to channel their skills into initiatives to boost the regional economy. Dr Martha Mador's plea coincided with the launch of Kingston's Enterprising Graduates' Network, set up to steer alumni through the business start-up process.

Dr Mador, who heads the Entrepreneurship Centre based within the University's Enterprise Exchange, said the network aimed to assist graduates who were either considering setting up ventures or were already working through the initial stages. "Having the backing of a group of like-minded individuals is always a tremendous asset during those early phases," Dr Mador explained. "Our primary goals are to put enterprising alumni in touch with each other and offer support, whether that's in the form of further training,



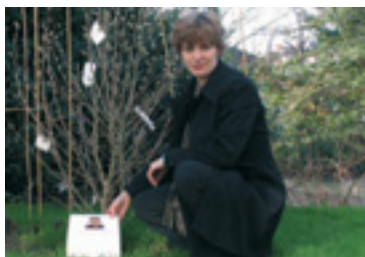
Dr Martha Mador has been championing the need for more graduates to make the most of their entrepreneurial talents.

advice on obtaining funding or providing introductions to expert mentors." More than 100 graduates have already signed up to the scheme and Dr Mador hopes that number will continue to grow.

The network was unveiled at a two-day workshop at the Penrhyn Road campus in January, when 35 participants honed business techniques and discovered more about catering to customer requirements. Established entrepreneurs and representatives from the Kingston Chamber of Commerce and Kingston Innovation Centre reinforced the lessons by providing insights into their own experiences of the commercial sector. Plans are now being finalised for a series of follow-up events which will allow the would-be entrepreneurs to mix with leading members of the business community keen to share knowledge, skills and contacts.

Ceremony commemorates life of star student

A tree has been planted at the Knights Park campus in memory of a talented architecture student who died in an accident at Earls Court station late last year. The magnolia stellata was positioned near the banks of the Hogsmill River at a special ceremony staged in tribute to Vũ Quang Hoàng Tú. The 25 year old had just embarked on a year-long postgraduate programme at Kingston when he was



The Head of the School of Architecture and Landscape, Professor Sarah Chaplin, led the tree planting ceremony held in memory of architecture student Vũ Quang Hoàng Tú.

killed last November after he was knocked from a platform while waiting to catch the tube. Mr Vũ had travelled to London to fulfil his dreams of furthering his education after spending six years studying at Hanoi Architectural University in his native Vietnam.

Head of the School of Architecture and Landscape Professor Sarah Chaplin said the dedication ceremony in January had been timed to mark the 49th day after Mr Vũ's death, in accordance with Buddhist tradition. Family members and officials from the Vietnamese Embassy and British Transport Police joined University representatives at the private service. "The tree we chose seemed particularly fitting given that it has its origins in Asia and is more commonly known as the star magnolia," Professor Chaplin said. "Tú was a young man who displayed great potential and would have undoubtedly gone on to become a star student had he had the opportunity to continue his Masters course."

Mr Vũ's aunt, Tam Ngo, who helped plant the tree, thanked the University for the support it had extended to the family since the tragedy. "We all loved Tú very much and have drawn great comfort from seeing how popular he was with his friends, teachers and colleagues," she said.

Research highlights need for constructive communication

Managers must work far harder to improve the ways they communicate with their staff, an in-depth study conducted by Kingston researchers has found. Job satisfaction, stress levels and the impact of a growing culture of long hours have all been placed under the microscope by experts from the School of Human Resource Management in a quest to find out how businesses can enhance employees' enthusiasm. The results of the Working Life: Employee Attitudes and Engagement study show a general lack of confidence in managers and demonstrate the need for organisations to do much more to ensure staff feel their voices are heard.

Commissioned by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and completed with support from Ipsos MORI, the report provides a detailed picture of the factors that motivate workers in the 21st Century. Lead researcher Professor Katie Truss hopes it will steer businesses in the right direction as they strive to bolster staff morale. "Ensuring employees are passionate about their work has become the new management mantra," Professor Truss said. "After all, employers need employees who actively participate as much as possible, because they are vital in promoting their organisation. Many companies, however, appear to be making



Professors Katie Truss, left, and Christine Edwards have played a major role in research highlighting the need for managers to pay closer attention to communication with their staff.

fundamental errors preventing them from achieving that goal."

The research found employers were routinely failing to win the hearts and minds of their staff, meaning they were less likely to be emotionally involved with their work or willing to go the extra mile on their company's behalf. Only one third of workers surveyed described themselves as passionate about their jobs and just 34 per cent trusted their senior managers and directors. The survey also revealed 37 per cent of employees had no confidence whatsoever in their managers, while a mere 13 per cent believed what they were told by their organisations. "It was clear managers could do a lot to increase employees' involvement by simply ensuring they were better informed," Professor Truss said. "Businesses that pay attention to this lesson stand to benefit from more dynamic and dedicated staff."

CIPD employee relations adviser Mike Emmott said the findings would underpin the development of improved guidelines for personnel professionals. "Productivity levels in the United Kingdom depend on employees feeling adequately supported and confident that their hard work is recognised and we now have further evidence to confirm that management communication is critical in ensuring this occurs," he added.

Centre secures missing link in author's archive

Almost 100 books providing new insights into novelist Iris Murdoch's life have been added to the University's library collections. The literature, which once took pride of place in the late author's flat in Kensington, London, includes 12 texts heavily marked with notes. They are expected to give researchers glimpses of Murdoch's thought processes while she was creating some of her most critically-acclaimed works.

Senior lecturer Dr Anne Rowe said the latest acquisition was an enormous boost for the University's Centre for Iris Murdoch Studies, which is already home to more than 1,000 books, handwritten notes, manuscripts and letters from the author's Oxford library. "Iris Murdoch made a major contribution to 20th Century literature and it has always been our goal to offer scholars from around the globe access to the most comprehensive range of information available as they explore her

work," Dr Rowe said. "We are now even better equipped to provide them with material to explore both Murdoch's intellectual ability and lesser known aspects of her personality. This will, in turn, lead to a greater understanding of the 26 novels she produced before her death in 1999."

The collection, purchased from booksellers Bertram Rota with the support of the Iris Murdoch Society, reveals more about the author's interest in education and politics. It includes leather-bound versions of her 1978 Booker Prize-winning tale of love and loss, *The Sea, The Sea*, and *The Good Apprentice*, which was shortlisted for the Booker finals in 1985. A cherished Bible bearing the inscription "To Iris, From Grannie, Christmas 1929" is also among the contents. Another significant feature is a copy of Colin Wilson's *The Outsider*, published in 1956, filled with handwritten clues to Murdoch's influences at the time of writing *The Bell*, printed in 1958.



Senior lecturer Dr Anne Rowe helped spearhead a successful bid to acquire the library from late author Iris Murdoch's London flat.

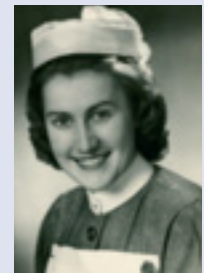
Nurses' memories make medical history

A project giving nurses the opportunity to record their recollections of life on the wards of some of London's leading hospitals has been expanded after attracting further funding. The Nurses' Voices Oral History Study, being completed by researchers from Kingston University and St George's, University of London, has been awarded an additional £40,000 from the Florence Nightingale Museum. The windfall has enabled the project to branch out to incorporate interviews with current and former nursing staff from Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals.

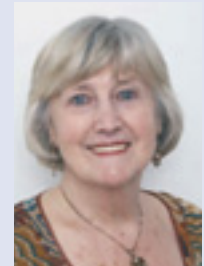
Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences Kath Start, who heads the research programme, said the grant would lead to the establishment of a more extensive archive of medical memoirs than originally anticipated. The extra funding had also provided the resources to carry out interviews with past and present patients.

More than 150 nurses and midwives with careers spanning as far back as the early 1930s have already shared reminiscences about their time on the staff at St George's Hospital in Tooting during the first phase of the study, which got under way almost three years ago. "We have collected more than 1,000 hours of recordings along the way, not only reflecting personal experiences but also touching on such topics as how it felt to work in the sector when the National Health Service was first introduced," Mrs Start said.

Former nurse Averil Wingent got so much out of recounting tales from her days working at St George's that she signed up to interview nurses from Guy's and St Thomas' for the next stage of the study. The 72-year-old grandmother, who was based at St George's from 1952 to 1957, still vividly remembers the impact of rationing on hospital meals and the atmosphere when she was travelling to work on the day of the Queen's coronation. "Among the most striking things I have noticed in my interviews with nurses from the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s are the moves away from formal uniforms and having the matron as the ward figurehead," she said. Despite those changes, nurses down the generations appear to have a lot in common. "All the people I have spoken to have emphasised how the profession has touched on every aspect of their lives," Mrs Wingent said. "We all seem to possess an inbuilt sense of compassion and take real pride in the fact that we chose to serve as nurses."



Averil Wingent was working on the wards at St George's Hospital in Tooting when the Queen's coronation took place in 1953.



Averil Wingent has uncovered many shared experiences during interviews with staff from Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals as part of the oral history project.

University scoops top trophies at British Invention Show

Budding inventors helped on their way by Kingston University swept the board at the latest British Invention Show. Students, alumni and businesspeople who had tapped into the expertise of the University's Enterprise Exchange walked away with a clutch of awards, including the coveted British Inventor of the Year title. The haul also included a platinum award, eight gold medals and one silver.

Leading the way was Dominic Robinson, a graduate of the University's predecessor Kingston Polytechnic, who was named Inventor of the Year after impressing judges with his concept for a more spacious aircraft seat. A pop-up hood for rainwear secured designer Sarah London platinum and gold medals in the leisure section, while the originators of the Buggy Boot – a holdall that straps to pushchairs to help parents manage heavy shopping – also took centre stage. Young mothers Carolyn Jarvis and Charlotte Evans picked up gold medals for design and invention in the consumer category. Kingston also made a strong showing in the industrial category, with Matthias Luethi claiming golds for innovation and design after creating a prototype for an environmentally-sensitive wind turbine.

Members of the Kingston Round Table of Inventors, a club set up by the University to encourage innovation in the surrounding region, were also applauded for their initiative. They included Andrew Cordani, who won a double gold award in the leisure category after developing an electronic percussion instrument called the Midistick, and businessman Andy Griffin, awarded a gold medal for innovation in the consumer category for devising software to help smokers quit the habit.

Enterprise Exchange staff including, from left, Marie Withers, John Halliday and Director of Enterprise Marguerite Lipscomb, have guided scores of entrepreneurs and inventors through the business start-up process.



Director of Enterprise Marguerite Lipscomb attributes the successes to the University's commitment to helping inventors transform their initial ideas into marketable products. "We attach great importance to sharing the University's expertise, not only with students, but also with businesspeople in the wider community so they can come up with innovative solutions to age-old

problems," Mrs Lipscomb said. "So often we are contacted by people who have marvellous ideas but lack the business know-how to get their projects off the ground. By offering specialist advice, helping them source funding and providing access to state-of-the-art facilities, input from the Enterprise Exchange team is able to make a tangible difference as they strive to achieve their goals."

High-flying designer prepares for take off

Contending with cramped conditions in economy class might be about to become a thing of the past for holidaymakers. A new aircraft seat, recently voted British Invention of the Year, could soon revolutionise air travel by offering passengers a more comfortable alternative. The brainchild of interior designer Dominic Robinson, who created the device with the support of experts from the University's Enterprise Exchange, the seat will help in the battle to reduce deep vein thrombosis by giving travellers more space on long-haul flights.

The invention relies on a unique tilting mechanism able to move the seat without altering the position of the main frame. It enables passengers to stretch back in comfort without nudging the seat in front. The prototype was developed after Mr Robinson approached the Enterprise Exchange for advice, armed with initial drawings and computerised models. After securing funding, he was put in contact with experts at the Faculty of Engineering who helped build a more advanced model and used computer simulation to analyse how the seat would respond in different flight conditions. Student Neil Connor, who has just completed an MSc in Virtual Product Design Engineering, was chosen to carry out the computer tests required to take the project forward. "Transferring my skills to a real-life situation was an enormous challenge," the 29 year old said. "It's extremely rewarding to think that I had a part to play in the early stages of a design that could have a significant impact on flights all around the globe."



British Inventor of the Year Dominic Robinson enlisted the help of Kingston University's Enterprise Exchange to fine-tune his prototype for a more comfortable aircraft seat.

Mr Robinson, who was awarded the prestigious diamond award at the British Invention Show, credits the University with helping him get a step closer to his goal of transforming air travel. "Getting help from people who backed my idea along the way was exceptionally important when it came to turning that dream into a reality," he said. Mr Robinson is now in talks with a major seat manufacturer interested in piloting the concept. If all goes to plan, it could be in the air in about a year's time.

The Faculty of Engineering's director of undergraduate study Dr Peter Barrington predicts the aircraft seat will generate strong interest within the industry. "Freeing up more leg room and reducing the weight of seats in aeroplanes is an area aviation experts are particularly keen to explore at the moment," he said. "This design has enormous potential to make a real difference to the future of travel in our skies."

Software gives smokers fresh incentive to stub out cigarettes

S smokers struggling to give up the habit will soon have a high-tech support system at their fingertips. Quitmate, a computerised program that allows users to track exactly how many cigarettes they have each day and sets targets to help them reduce that amount, is due to be released on to the market later this year. Devised by businessman Andy Griffin, a member of Kingston University's Round Table of Inventors, the technology has already sparked widespread interest, even earning its designer a gold medal in the consumer category at the British Invention Show.

The enterprising sales manager came up with the software in an attempt to help wife-to-be Helena Raccach give up cigarettes. It allows smokers to enter information about the frequency of their habit straight on to their mobile phones.

The details are then transformed into easy-to-read graphs to help them monitor their cigarette consumption and spot possible patterns in their behaviour. The system also sets goals for gradually cutting back and, as an added incentive, tallies up how much money smokers could save in the process. "The beauty of the software is that it makes people really stop and think about what triggers them to reach for that next cigarette and helps them identify when they may be particularly susceptible to the urge to light up," Mr Griffin said.

Guided by University staff and fellow members of the Round Table for Inventors, Mr Griffin originally toyed with the idea of manufacturing the

design as a handheld device but eventually opted to launch the first phase of the service as a download to mobile phones. "That way I will be able to gather customer feedback, refine the software if necessary and acquire the capital to move on to manufacture a version for people who don't want it linked to their phones," he explained.

The system has already produced its first success stories. Julia Robinson, who used to smoke up to 15 cigarettes a day, managed to give up altogether after volunteering to take part in initial trials. "I was shocked to see the charts and realise how much I smoked, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights," Miss Robinson said. "The information really motivated me to cut down and, after two months, I'd stopped completely. I'm quite competitive so having targets to beat definitely helped."



Software produced by entrepreneur Andy Griffin has given smokers a new tool to help beat the habit.

Product brings promise of retail therapy for hard-pressed parents

Shopping trips with children in buggies could be about to become less onerous, thanks to the ingenuity of two working mothers. Charlotte Evans and Carolyn Jarvis have come to the rescue of parents who struggle to manage a pushchair when they are weighed down with heavy bags by creating a practical design solution known as the Buggy Boot.



A practical holdall attachment designed by Charlotte Evans, left, and Carolyn Jarvis could soon be a must-have item for parents tired of contending with pushchairs and bulky shopping bags.

The multi-purpose accessory, designed with the support of Kingston University's Enterprise Exchange, consists of a shopping holdall on wheels able to be attached to the rear of a buggy. The hard-based bag with adjustable fastenings is easy to access and has plenty of room to hold purchases, while its top doubles as a resting place for shopping baskets as parents make their way around stores. "From our own personal experience we knew standard lightweight buggies simply weren't designed to cope with shopping bags," Ms Evans said. "Every time I tried to put any shopping on the handles of my buggy it would topple over, leaving me with items strewn across the floor and a child in tears. After talking to friends, it was clear there was a definite gap in the market for a foldable shopping bag that could easily be attached to a buggy and wouldn't make it overbalance."

Realising they needed expert guidance to work through the complexities of turning their initial concept into reality, the duo approached the University's Enterprise Exchange for help. They signed up to The Virtual Company scheme, gaining immediate access to a wealth of business knowledge and services. Under the watchful eye of mentor Alan Finn, who provided advice on market and patent research and design modifications, the pair applied for funding and visited their first trade shows. "With our mentor's assistance, we were able to adopt a step-by-step approach, working through the process of what to do next and managing the early stages of the development of the prototype," Ms Evans said. "He also helped us secure £29,000 of funding from the South East England Development Agency, which was a vital boost for the project."

Expected to roll off the production lines later this year, the Buggy Boot is already generating considerable interest in the marketplace and has attracted a stream of conditional orders at trade fairs. The idea has been so well received that Ms Evans and Ms Jarvis were shortlisted for the British Female Inventor and Innovator of the Year title in 2006.

Innovator adds modern technology to the menu

A young entrepreneur has come to the aid of restaurants seeking to streamline the way they cater to customer demand. Business information systems graduate Mark Parry has just overseen the release of a flexible online booking system which allows diners to instantly check table availability and make a reservation with the click of a mouse.

A family connection with the restaurant industry coupled with practical entrepreneurial skills picked up on his Kingston University degree gave Mr Parry the confidence to get his business, The Booking People, off the ground. "I'd found that restaurant managers always complained about two things – managing reservations and juggling staffing requirements which tended to take up a lot of time and distract them from their diners," he said. "It struck me that an online system could be the perfect way forward, giving them far better control of their diaries so they could easily assess how many tables were free at any given time during the week, enabling them to maximise bookings and ensure they were adequately staffed."



Kingston graduate Mark Parry, left, toasts the launch of his online reservations system with restaurateur Peter Bagatti.

Mr Parry began fine-tuning the concept, which operates through a simple, intuitive booking form linked to participating restaurants' own websites, during a year-long work placement built into his degree. He recently celebrated the launch of his venture in the United Kingdom and now has his sights set on expansion overseas.

Restaurateur Peter Bagatti said he had noticed significant customer service benefits only three months after signing up to the system. "In the past we've received emails from people wanting to arrange bookings but responding individually could prove time consuming, particularly if we weren't able to accommodate their requests and needed to suggest alternative arrangements," the manager of Bagatti's, in Croydon, said. "Giving people the option to make a booking that suits their schedules quickly and easily through our website is much more efficient and could be the difference between them choosing to eat with us or not."

Mr Parry's entrepreneurial flair has also attracted compliments from other quarters. He was named runner-up in the UKSEC network's National Business Plan challenge late last year, just months after carrying off one of the top awards in the Bright Ideas competition, organised by the WestFocus consortium of universities.

Text service set to shore up support for young families

A psychology student in the throes of setting up a fledgling advice service for teenage parents has unexpectedly found herself transformed into a social entrepreneur. Debbie Smith plans to use her knowledge and skills to put something back into the community, armed with business acumen acquired through the University's Enterprise Exchange.

Miss Smith is gearing up for the launch of the text message-based support service, conceived while she was carrying out interviews for her PhD, as soon as her thesis has been completed. "One of the things I kept hearing from the young mothers and fathers I spoke to as part of my research was that they wanted more guidance both during and after pregnancy, but didn't necessarily want to visit their health centres and weren't sure who else to approach," she explained. "During our sessions, I noticed how frequently their mobile phones seemed to ring and it occurred to me that setting up a service using text messaging could be the answer." Such a system was all the more important given the fact that, while the United Kingdom had the highest level of pregnancies recorded amongst under-18 year olds in western Europe, findings had shown that fewer than 50 per cent made use of official healthcare and education systems, Miss Smith said.

Once up and running, the service will enable inquirers to text requests for information ranging from recommended vaccination dates for babies to details of networks for young parents to a central co-ordinator. A response will be guaranteed within 24 hours.

The proposal has already attracted high-profile attention, earning awards from the WestFocus consortium of universities and the South East

England Development Agency. Miss Smith has also travelled to Hungary to take part in discussions hosted by the Budapest Round Table examining ways to boost the number of socially responsible entrepreneurs.

The head of the University's Entrepreneurship Centre, Dr Martha Mador, said the feedback demonstrated the value of encouraging students

from arts and social science backgrounds to hone their business and project management skills. "People often mistakenly assume being an entrepreneur is simply about making money," she said. "Debbie's text messaging concept is a fine example of the far wider reaching benefits the development of new products or services can bring."



PhD student Debbie Smith hopes her text message-based advice service will encourage more young parents to access support.

Research receives funding boost

Academic staff have secured funding for a number of high-profile research projects.

Grant Holder	School/Centre	Project Title	Funding Body	Amount/Duration
Dr D Makris	Computing and Information Systems	PRoCeSS: Pose recovery in context specific scenarios	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council	£107,949 – three years
Dr X Wang	Computing and Information Systems	Developing a Universal PAN Architecture for Monitoring Multiple Chronic Conditions	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council	£207,954 – three years
Dr A Tanner	Social Science	Great Ormond Street Hospital Historical Archives Database Project	Friends of Great Ormond Street Hospital	£12,000 – one year
Professor R Ennals	Centre for Working Life Research	Informing Healthcare	Informing Healthcare	£5,000 – one year
Dr S Velastin	Computing and Information Systems	Student Bursary	Ipsotek	£5,100 – six months
Dr Y Yao	Engineering	Visiting Fellowship	Leverhulme Trust	£24,000 – 10 months
Dr A Seddon	Life Sciences	Obstetrics and Gynaecology PhD Studentships	New Victoria Hospital	£480,000 – three years
Mr J Eldred	Marketing	2006 Staff Survey	Royal Borough of Kingston	£7,200 – six months
Professor G Sewell	Pharmacy and Chemistry	Studies on the Stability and Reconstitution of Cytotoxic Agents Using a Novel Fluid Transfer Device	Teva UK Limited	£50,000 – 18 months
Dr S Bryan	Earth Sciences and Geography	Support for PhD Student	Waihi Gold Company	£16,000 – three years
Dr J McGill	Marketing	Development of Strategy to Enhance Market Penetration for Alexanders	Department of Trade and Industry and Economic and Social Research Council	£110,528 – two years
Mr R Nicholas	Marketing	To Develop and Implement a Marketing Strategy to Increase Turnover for Windmill Organics	Department of Trade and European Social Fund	£110,528 – two years
Dr E Longfellow	Humanities	To Enhance Historic Royal Palaces' Ability to Develop Programmes that will Boost Visitor Numbers	Arts and Humanities Research Council	£170,502 – three years

• The University also received a total of £1.9 million from the Higher Education Innovation Fund between 2004 and 2006 to support a further 17 Knowledge Transfer Partnership projects.

Academic accomplishments

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

Robert Brooke-Mellor has been awarded a Doctor of Philosophy after analysing 'Innovation Nuclei in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Involved in Internet B2C E-commerce'.

Annabelle Boulay has become a Doctor of Philosophy after completing 'An Analysis of Farm Diversification in France and the United Kingdom Based on Case Studies in Sud Manche and West Dorset'.

Rafiq Chandio has been named a Doctor of Philosophy following his assessment of 'Economic Growth, Financial Liberalisation and Poverty Reduction in Pakistan, 1970-2000'.

Adamantios Koumpis has been awarded a Doctor of Philosophy after completing a study of the 'Use of the Concept of Situation Room Analysis and the Relevant Enabling Technologies to Support Collaboration in Information Technology Product Development'.

Ouranita Liari has become a Doctor of Philosophy after examining the 'Development and Application of Non-destructive Biomarkers for Monitoring Endocrine Disruption in Pinnipeds'.

Rosemary McNiece has been named a Doctor of Philosophy after conducting 'An Investigation into the Statistical Modelling of Data from Longitudinal Studies for the Study of Educational Attainment and Development'.

Julian Millet has been awarded a Doctor of Philosophy after undertaking a study of the 'Approaches Towards a Stereo-selective Nicholas Reaction'.

Carolina Sanchez-Hernandez has become a Doctor of Philosophy after examining the 'Land Cover Mapping of One Specific Protected Habitat under the Requirements of the European Union Habitats Directive Using Remote Sensing'.

Sapna Thakur has been named a Doctor of Philosophy after carrying out an 'Assessment of Protease Activity in Endothelial Cells and its Role in Tumour Angiogenesis and Spread'.

Haifa Khaldi has received a Master of Science by Research following the conclusion of her study entitled 'Chemostratigraphy of the Bireno Member (Turonian, Upper Cretaceous) in the Sfax Area, Tunisia: Characterisation of a Petroleum Reservoir'.

Komathi Paramasivam has been awarded a Masters by Research following the conclusion of her investigation in to the 'Immunology of Human Breast Milk: A Comparison of Immune Factors in Banked and Fresh Breast Milk'.

Study set to prevent children slipping through the safety net

Research being undertaken by the School of Social Work could have major implications for the future of child protection across Britain. The Safeguarding Children: Conflicts of Interest for GPs project aims to explore the difficulties faced by doctors concerned about suspected neglect or abuse of children and young people.

Jointly commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health, the project has received £125,000 from a £2.25 million fund established

in the wake of the murder of eight-year-old Victoria Climbié in 2000. "The tragedy prompted renewed emphasis on early intervention to ensure children like Victoria did not slip through the safety net again," Head of School Hilary Tompsett, who is leading the seven-strong research team, explained. "At the moment, family doctors often have to contend with the ethical dilemma of dealing with both a child who might be at risk and their parents or guardians while ensuring they also comply with a myriad of protocols set down by official bodies. These guidelines often aren't particularly helpful when it comes to sharing assessments with families, paediatricians, social services, schools and the police."

The Safeguarding Children project, which also draws upon the expertise of researchers from St George's, University of London and Royal Holloway, University of London, would lead to a better understanding of the issues faced by all the agencies involved in child protection, Mrs Tompsett said. Since it commenced last May, questionnaires have been sent to 480 GPs asking them to share their experiences of dealing with children at risk, highlighting approaches that worked well and any problems and conflicts they had encountered. Follow-up interviews will be held with GPs and a range of stakeholders including health visitors, social workers, psychiatrists and teachers.

Recommendations for good practice would be developed by a group of experts using the Delphi technique to reach a consensus on the complex issues surrounding safeguarding children, Mrs Tompsett said. The first stage was already under way, using fictitious case studies to explore panel members' views and experiences. Later phases would include discussion centred on the research findings, followed by evaluation and agreement on the best ways forward in the future.

A final report is due to be presented to the Department for Education and Skills in December. "At the end of the process we hope to have distilled all the information gathered into a practice guide that will assist doctors rather than giving them another set of rules to follow," Mrs Tompsett said. Government officials and leading childcare organisations have already acknowledged the importance of the study, with the Children's Commissioner for England, Professor Sir Albert Aynsley-Green, expressing a personal interest in examining the conclusions.



A major research project being completed by the School of Social Work is likely to lead to the refinement of systems safeguarding children from neglect and abuse.



Students' Union volunteers Hannah Smith and Daniel Czako have been helping to spread the word about sustainable business practice.

Students step forward to save the planet

Environmentally-friendly Kingston students have carried off a prestigious accolade for their efforts encouraging organisations in the borough to help save the planet. They have picked up an Outstanding Project Award from the Higher Education Active Community Fund after setting up the Positive Environment Kingston programme – a partnership between volunteers from the University's Students' Union and officials from Kingston Council.

The scheme, in which students acting as mentors undertake green audits and advise companies about sustainable business practice, got under way early last year.

The 13 volunteers included environmental science student Daniel Czako, who worked with the Kingston Chamber of Commerce to identify ways it could improve waste management. "Staff really wanted to change their ways but, as in most organisations, the biggest problem the chamber faced was finding someone with the time to investigate how that could be done efficiently," the 24 year old explained. "I was able to make an impact by doing such things as sourcing the best value recycled paper from a local supplier to reduce unnecessary transport and pollution."

Fellow volunteer Hannah Smith turned her attention to producing a comprehensive environmental policy for performing arts company MeWe Arts and Education. "Being a small organisation, the prospect of finding information about recycling services and ecologically-conscious contractors seemed quite daunting," deputy chief executive Werner van Staden said. "Hannah came to our rescue, quickly identifying realistic steps we could take." Hannah, meanwhile, credits the experience with helping her secure her first job as an assistant on Kingston University's sustainability team. "By taking part in the project, I gained better communications skills and established good contacts across the business community," she said.

Kingston Council's community and environmental officer Carlos Queremel attributes the success of the programme, which is being rolled out again this year, to the students' enthusiasm and the ongoing support they offer the organisations involved. "By providing a blend of encouragement and practical solutions, the Council and Students' Union have proven that, through working together, it really is possible to change attitudes and encourage the community to adopt more sustainable approaches," Mr Queremel said.

Botanical breakthrough sows seeds for further discovery

While most visitors come away from Kew Gardens dazzled by the exotic plants on show, Kingston University student Alastair Muir has an even more special memory of his time at the world famous venue. The biology student, who completed a 12 month work placement at Kew's prestigious Jodrell Laboratory during his third year, made a discovery likely to have important implications for scientists – unearthing a new jumping gene in a plant belonging to the lily family. The finding could help solve questions which have long puzzled experts, such as why some plant species have considerably more DNA than humans.

The breakthrough came after Alastair was asked to investigate an unusual pattern of DNA fragments which had already been detected in the Crown Imperial Fritillary. Using a scientific technique known as genome walking, he was charged with figuring out the full code for the jumping gene, referred to as a retrotransposon

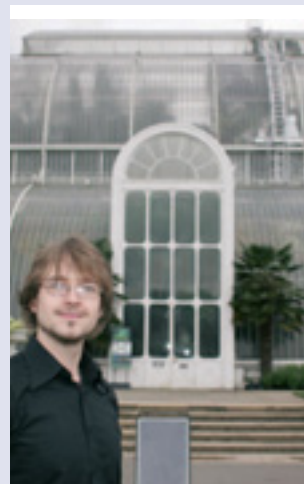


The jumping gene was discovered in the Crown Imperial Fritillary, which is a member of the lily family.

in scientific circles. Alastair used test-tubes containing DNA from the plant, specially designed molecules and enzymes warmed in a heating block to build up the complete sequence. Working with the laboratory team, he then transferred his findings on to computer, gradually unravelling almost the entire genetic code.

Being the first to discover the jumping gene, Alastair also had the honour of naming it. He chose FiRE (Fritillaria imperialis RetroElement), based on the lily's Latin name. "Since the 1950s experts have been interested in why different organisms have varying amounts of DNA. It's humbling to think that the information I uncovered will help scientists keep chipping away at a puzzle that has been intriguing them for years," he said.

Researchers at Kew plan to use the advance to explore the distribution of jumping genes in plants and their role in evolution. Kew's Head of Genetics, Dr Mike Fay, said the outcome demonstrated the important contributions students could make in the workplace while still completing their degrees. "Spending time at Kew gives them the opportunity to investigate an array of factors affecting plant life around the globe. Every now and again, like Alastair, they are even lucky enough to come across something that will have a lasting impact on wider research," he said



Investigations into plant evolution have been boosted by student Alastair Muir's discovery of a jumping gene during a work placement at Kew Gardens.

Laboratory positions Faculty at forefront of advances in architecture

A brand new facility containing equipment able to assess the lighting, acoustics and thermal efficiency of buildings has been installed at the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture. The Architectural Science and Technology Laboratory, more widely known as the ArchiLab, is being used by students and researchers to hone practical skills and analyse complex design issues. Established with a grant of more than £40,000 from the Higher Education Funding Council for England's Science Research Investment Fund, it will be officially opened on 20 March.

Director Dr Stephen Pretlove said the centre, located within the School of Architecture and Landscape at the Knights Park campus, had three principal purposes. It would lead to a greater assimilation of science and technology into course teaching and boost specialist research. Its advanced equipment would also give academic staff more scope to share their knowledge through externally-funded consultancy work.

The ArchiLab's features include an artificial sky created by mirrors and lights positioned to reproduce a typical overcast day. The setting enables students to compare external daylight levels with those

inside model buildings. Another high-specification piece of diagnostic equipment, the heliodon, allows users to investigate the way direct sunlight affects a structure depending on its location and seasonal variations. Students also have access to sound meters, thermal imaging apparatus and ventilation testing devices.

The days in which architecture students focused predominantly on the visual impact of buildings were long gone, Dr Pretlove said. "They are now required to give just as much thought to the wider specifications of a site and the environmental factors that might affect a final design. By encouraging a more considered, hands-on approach to teaching and learning, the ArchiLab will help them embrace the practical elements of design while they master the theory to become industry professionals," he said.

The ArchiLab will also serve as a resource for practising architects who will be encouraged to make use of the facility to test their own models and plans. "This will give us the means to generate income as well as provide a service while, at the same time, forging relationships with built environment experts and integrating the School in the wider community," Dr Pretlove said.



Dr Stephen Pretlove demonstrates the effect of the artificial sky created by mirrors and lights strategically positioned in the new ArchiLab at the Knights Park campus.

Exhibitions and Events...

Kingston University London

MARCH–APRIL 2007

EXHIBITIONS

UNTIL SATURDAY 3 MARCH

Slightly off the Ground – Showcasing music posters created by graphic designer Vaughan Oliver.
Stanley Picker Gallery, Middle Mill, Knights Park

THURSDAY 15 MARCH – SATURDAY 31 MARCH

The Dummy Project – Featuring artwork by Charlotte Cullinan and Jeanine Richards affixed to mannequins and tailors dummies.
Stanley Picker Gallery, Middle Mill, Knights Park

MONDAY 19 MARCH – FRIDAY 23 MARCH

Clever Things: A New Generation of Intelligent Design – A series of displays, interactive workshops and events being staged as part of the Think in Kingston Festival to highlight the diverse uses of digital technology.
Stanley Picker Gallery, Middle Mill, Knights Park

WEDNESDAY 18 APRIL – SATURDAY 5 MAY

GEST: Future Criticism – An exhibition exploring art criticism and looking at new ways to make art more accessible to non-specialist audiences.
Stanley Picker Gallery, Middle Mill, Knights Park

Gallery opening times:

Tuesday–Friday 12.00–6.00pm; Saturdays 12.00–4.00pm; Mondays (by appointment only)

EVENTS – MARCH

THURSDAY 1 MARCH

12.00–2.00pm **Genocide in the Former Yugoslavia from the 1940s to the 1990s** – A Helen Bamber Centre seminar. Speaker senior research fellow Dr Marko Hoare. Room TA3, Penrhyn Road campus

6.00pm–7.30pm **Like a Rolling Stone: What Direction Home for Music Industry?** – Part of the Strategy into Practice Lecture Series and Think in Kingston Festival. Guest speaker Jonathan Wheeldon, EMI Group senior vice-president for corporate development. Lawley Lecture Theatre, Kingston Hill campus

TUESDAY 6 MARCH

6.15pm **Coastal Management** – Part of the Geographical Association Evening Lecture Programme. Guest speaker Dr Peter French from Royal Holloway, University of London. Roberts Lecture Theatre, Penrhyn Road campus

6.30pm **Streets of Inspiration: Excellence in Public Art** – Part of the Think in Kingston Festival. Guest speaker public art commissioner Vivien Lovell. Room 9, Town House, Penrhyn Road campus

WEDNESDAY 7 MARCH

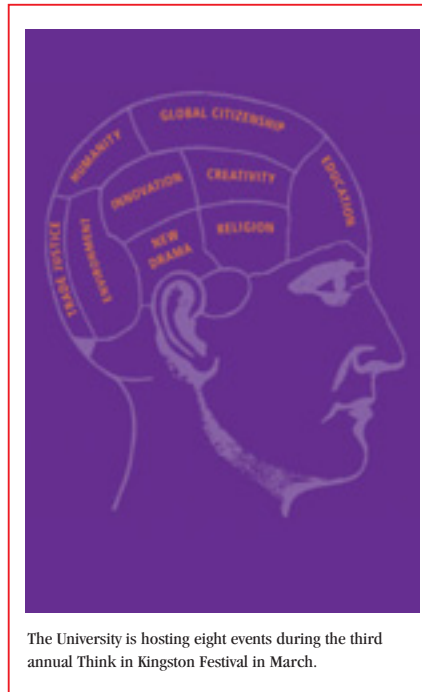
1.15pm **Big Band Concert** – Featuring a selection of music performed by the University's Big Band. Coombehurst Studio, Kingston Hill campus

THURSDAY 8 MARCH

6.00pm **The Entrepreneurship Experience: Health versus Wealth** – A panel discussion exploring social entrepreneurship being staged as part of the Think in Kingston Festival. Lawley Lecture Theatre, Kingston Hill campus

MONDAY 12 MARCH

7.30pm **Student Bands' Showcase** – A concert featuring rock, pop, blues and urban music groups from the University's School of Performance and Screen Studies. Ram Jam Club, 46 Richmond Road, Kingston



TUESDAY 13 MARCH

6.00pm **Utopia and Apocalypse: The New Politics of Faith** – A lecture from John Gray, Professor of European Thought at the London School of Economics, being staged as part of the Think in Kingston Festival. Room 9, Town House, Penrhyn Road campus

THURSDAY 15 MARCH

12.00–2.00pm **Stalin as Totalitarian Democrat** – A Helen Bamber Centre seminar. Speaker Dr Paul Auerbach from the School of Economics. Room TA3, Penrhyn Road campus

6.00pm–7.30pm **Partnership for Success** – Part of the Strategy into Practice Lecture Series. Guest speaker Steve Wells, partnership development manager at Pfizer. Lawley Lecture Theatre, Kingston Hill campus

FRIDAY 16 MARCH

3.00pm–5.00pm **Current Issues in Benchmarking and Regulation – An Interprofessional Perspective** – A Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences' lecture. Guest speaker former Dean Professor Mike Pittilo, now Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen. Boardroom 2, Level 2, Hunter Wing, St George's, University of London, Tooting

SUNDAY 18 MARCH

2.00pm **Jazz Futures** – A festival presented in association with the Royal Borough of Kingston, featuring the University Big Band performing alongside a line-up of other contemporary jazz and blues stars. McClusky's, 4 Bishops Hall, Thames Street, Kingston

MONDAY 19 MARCH

2.00pm **Vox Fusion** – A performance featuring Kingston University vocalists backed by Vox Fusion band. Ram Jam Club, 46 Richmond Road, Kingston

TUESDAY 20 MARCH

6.00pm **Official opening of the Architectural Technology and Science Laboratory (ArchLab)** – Speakers Professor Randall Thomas and Dr Stephen Pretlove. School of Architecture and Landscape, Knights Park campus

WEDNESDAY 21 MARCH

6.30pm **Sustainable Homes and Cities** – Dr Ros Taylor from the School of Earth Sciences and Geography chairs a discussion on the environment and urban living as part of the Think in Kingston Festival. Panellists include Penney Poyzer, presenter of BBC2's No Waste Like Home, and Nick Marks, author of the Happy Planet. C-SCALPE, Penrhyn Road campus

7.30pm **Civic Concert in Aid of the Mayor's Charities** – Including a performance from the University's Symphony Orchestra conducted by Dr David Osbon. St John's Church, Grove Lane, Kingston

TUESDAY 27 MARCH

6.30pm **The State of the Future** – A lecture from Paul Crake, the programme director of the Royal Society of Arts and head of the Millennium Project, being staged as part of the Think in Kingston Festival. Room 9, Town House, Penrhyn Road campus

WEDNESDAY 28 MARCH

10.00am–1.00pm **Ethics, Practice and Interprofessionalism** – A seminar featuring speakers Professor Pam Shakespeare from the Open University, Professor Sarah Banks from Durham University, Dr Richard Rowson from the University of Glasgow and Dr Ann Gallagher from Kingston's School of Nursing. Room 6139, Frank Lamp Building, Kingston Hill campus

1.15pm **Kingston University Chamber Choir** – A performance of Fauré's Requiem. St John's Church, Grove Lane, Kingston

THURSDAY 29 MARCH

12.00–2.00pm **Stateless Person as Political Non-subject** – A Helen Bamber Centre Seminar. Speaker Kelly Staples, lecturer in politics and human rights. Room TA3, Penrhyn Road campus

6.30pm **Go Wild – Biodiversity in Your Back Garden and Beyond** – A session focusing ways to improve local habitats and ecosystems being staged as part of the Think in Kingston Festival. Clatteram Lecture Theatre, Penrhyn Road campus

EVENTS – APRIL

THURSDAY 26 APRIL

12.00–2.00pm **Promoting Reconciliation Among Youth in Belfast: Various Forms of Inter-ethnic Community Mobilization** – A Helen Bamber Centre Seminar. Speaker senior research fellow Dr Anika Kasic. Room TA3, 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 or by internal mail to Bridge, Room 2, River House.

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