Here comes spring!

- what does your mobile phone say about you?
- a new team and new starters
- secret lives of your colleagues
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What do you think? If you have any feedback about insider - the new look, the content, the style - or would like to suggest stories for future issues, please email insider@bath.ac.uk

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Editor: Claire Hornshaw
Designer: Sue Fairhurst
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Cover photograph of a willow, flowering at the end of February © Sue Fairhurst
Rag Day 2008 saw students on the Parade eating as much jelly as possible to raise money for local charities. Rag Week was set to raise £4,000.
Currently, the Director of Marketing & Communications is responsible for Communications; Imaging, Design & Print Services and Web Services. Under the new structure these corporate communications functions will report to Dr Nicky Kemp, the new Director of Policy & Planning.

Key functions of Corporate Communications Services will be to:
- communicate with the University community
- raise the institutional profile
- present consistent and coherent corporate messages
- enhance the University’s reputation
- promote a sense of corporate identity

The University is seeking to recruit a new Head of Corporate Communications and a new Press Officer, after the departure of Peter Reader and Tony Trueman and imminent departure of Andrew McLaughlin. The new head of department will be responsible for media and public relations, publications, events and internal communications.

While continuing to offer the same services as before, Corporate Communications Services will work closely with colleagues across the University to develop a coordinated approach to marketing with clearly defined branding and key messages.

Corporate Communications Services, key activities:

Corporate Communications:
Recruiting new head
- placing research stories in national & international media
- promoting University activities in the local community
- maintaining internal communication, including news on the homepage and the weekly e-update
- writing publications, including Insider, Annual Report, Facts & Figures, Research and Innovations and BA2
- organising events: including graduation, special lectures and VIP visits

Web Services:
Head: Alison Wildish
- designing and developing the internal and external website to ensure it acts as an effective communications and marketing tool
- strategic management of Web Services, supporting the core aims of the University
- consultancy and advice for academic departments on website design
- online marketing
Recent projects include:
the Learning Materials Filestore (www.bath.ac.uk/lmf), PIP (www.bath.ac.uk/pip), Online Group Manager (www.bath.ac.uk/groupmanager), Holburne Muse (www.bath.ac.uk/holburne/muse), the wiki service (wiki.bath.ac.uk) and the roll-out of an institutional CMS (on-going).

Imaging, Design & Print Services (IDPS):
Head: Louise Paton
- professional event, location, portrait and studio photography supplying high quality images for the University website, publications and external promotional activities
- supplying a wide range of creative design services, including producing the prospectus, departmental brochures and other University publications, and offering a full consultancy and advice service on all aspects of design and print production
- a vast selection of high quality print services including black & white and colour copying and printing, document binding, supplying conference materials, posters and banners

If you have a story that you think might be of interest to a wider audience, within the University or beyond, please contact the corporate communications team on ext 6319 or email comms@bath.ac.uk
Dr Kemp (pictured left) said: “Communication is at the heart of University life and in many spheres we do it really well. We maintain a high media profile, both locally and nationally; publish hundreds of research papers; work closely with industry; run a busy schedule of events for the local community; keep staff aware of activities on campus; and stay in touch with alumni from over 100 countries. Nevertheless in such a large, complex organisation, there are always opportunities for improvement. The Staff Survey identified departmental communication and change management as key areas needing further attention.

Professor Glynis Breakwell said: “Corporate communications have to be both externally and internally facing. I believe these changes are a good first step in response to the feedback we received from colleagues in the Staff Survey.”

Talking about her new role, Dr Kemp said: “I am one of the 89 per cent of staff who said in the survey that the University is a good place to work. As a Bath graduate, I can also vouch for it as a great place to study. Ever since I joined the Registrar’s office in 1997, part of my job has been to promote our activities and achievements, from institutional audit to bid writing. I look forward to playing a more direct role in helping to publicise all the excellent work we do.”
In February 2006, the University announced its involvement in Cityware, a pioneering project that would turn Bath into a ‘pervasive computing zone’, integrating new technology for mobile phones and laptops into the city’s streets and architecture. Two years on, the project has evolved in some unexpected ways, including developing a method of tracking human diseases, and protecting phones from viruses.

The Cityware project was designed to look at the way people interact with space and technology in an urban environment, with a view to informing both future architectural design and the development of wireless communication. Using the City of Bath as its test bed, researchers began the project by mapping the use of wireless technology in the city.

Dr Eamonn O’Neill, from the Department of Computer Science and head of the interdisciplinary project, said: “The project started with some rather grandiose aims of identifying ways in which people use urban space and how, what we termed as, an ‘electronically created interaction space’ could be fused with ‘an architecturally created physical space’.”

The first step was to look at Bluetooth on mobile phones and its potential as a tool for social network analysis. Bluetooth provides a way of exchanging information between devices over a short distance, enabling them to ‘talk to each other’. Primarily it’s been used for sharing audio files and photographs but Cityware research has shown that it is increasingly used as a way of connecting with strangers who might have shared interests.

Dr O’Neill said: “When we started the project and began monitoring Bluetooth activity in Bath it became obvious that it had huge research potential because of the information it could give us about how people interact.”

Bluetooth devices rely on a discovery protocol to identify other nearby devices. The initiating device carries out an inquiry scan and waits for nearby devices to advertise their presence by transmitting their own unique identifiers. In this way, each Bluetooth device can tell which other devices are in range.

To monitor usage in the city, the team positioned computers in a range of busy areas. The computers were programmed to do a sweep of the immediate surroundings and identify nearby devices which had their Bluetooth facility switched on, adding their unique Bluetooth IDs to a database.

When two or more Bluetooth devices were scanned at the same time in the same location, they were said to have had an ‘encounter’.

Because most Bluetooth devices are actually mobile phones, the pattern of these Bluetooth encounters is very similar to the pattern of encounters between people as they move around the city.

By doing this over a period of two years, the team have recorded over 100,000 Bluetooth devices, making it by far the biggest study of its kind in the world, and enabling Cityware to model the encounters and pioneer a new form of network analysis.
Network analysis monitors interaction and communication within a huge range of networks, for example: society, transport, biology and the internet. The limitation of these networks is that they are static, and don’t account for time, whereas the Bluetooth network is very dynamic and constantly changing. Fluid networks emphasise the impact of time – meaning that much of the research done on a static network about how we interact could be misleading.

One unexpected application of the research has been the ability to compare the ‘encounters’ with a biological network – such as an airborne disease like the common cold – and model the spread of the disease. A cold can’t be passed on by just walking past someone – you need to be close to them long enough for it to travel by air, which is also true of Bluetooth connections.

The impact of digital viruses can be monitored in the same way - an area that Dr O’Neill hopes to research further in the future. He said: “As mobile phone technology continues to develop, software will move from computers to mobiles, enabling new services such as mobile banking. Once that moves from computer to mobile the viruses will follow. These aren’t just viruses written by hackers to crash your system but international criminal gangs that write viruses to sit in the background of your computer and steal data and personal information.

“It’s not yet a major problem on mobiles, so little research is being done but it needs to be. We need to model the spread of digital viruses to enable us to start thinking of solutions. It looks like you can protect key points in the network – you need to focus resources on that.”

Another application of the research is to monitor the patterns of connection and look at the number of ‘familiar strangers’. The concept of a ‘familiar stranger’ is a popular idea in research about social networks. It refers to somebody you recognise from daily life but you don’t interact with, for example, the person you see everyday on the train platform but don’t speak to, whose absence you notice when they’re not there. By monitoring encounters, the project can see how many times strangers pass each other in the street.

Next month, the team will launch ‘Bluefish’, a new technology which will project Bluetooth identities, in the form of face icons, on large screens in cafes and bars. If people choose to opt in, their screen will show their Bluetooth name, previous encounters, and a history of where that person’s been and who they have spent the most time with.

Before going public, Bluefish will be trialled on a cohort of local volunteers who have been with the project since its launch. Dr Danae Stanton Fraser, in the Department of Psychology, who founded the project with Dr O’Neill, has worked closely with the volunteers to gather information about how they interact with their phones.

She said: “Bluefish is designed as a ‘privacy probe’ – we want it to provoke a reaction about security, privacy and trust. The reactions of the cohort will give us an idea of how the public might respond.”

Cityware is a three-and-a-half year project funded by the EPSRC, and is due to complete in early 2009. The researchers have already produced over twenty papers on their findings. The partners on the project are: The Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment at UCL, HP Labs in Bristol, the Department of Computing at Imperial College, Nokia and at Vodafone.
Concrete is one of the most important materials in the world, and it is used in such vast quantities that the manufacturing process of cement alone creates about ten per cent of the world’s manmade CO₂. As the department’s new concrete specialist, I will be looking at innovative ways of reducing the pollutant qualities of concrete, whilst maintaining its performance.

I spent the previous nine years in the Concrete Technology Unit at the University of Dundee. It’s an exciting challenge to be the only concrete technologist here at Bath. I think I must have heard all the jokes going about being a concrete expert in a Georgian city built without concrete! In fact, the south is a great place to be located in terms of building relations with industry, both here and in Europe.

The departments here and at Dundee are similar in their performance and ranking but the classes here are much bigger, which makes teaching quite a different experience. The first thing I’ll be doing is obtaining funding to set up a concrete lab to support innovative research and encourage students.

Kevin Paine
Senior Lecturer
Department of Architecture & Civil Engineering
I joined the University at the start of a five-year project funded by the Wellcome Trust. We are studying angiogenesis, the process of growing new blood vessels from pre-existing ones. It is an essential natural process during growth and development, but it has also been recognised as a fundamental step in the transition of tumours from a dormant to a malignant state, and in the development of many serious diseases.

Coming from a microbial biochemistry background, I was looking for a challenging environment where I could apply my knowledge and also broaden it. My new project is very exciting, challenging and demanding and I am very proud to have the opportunity to work within an excellent team. It also gives me a good feeling to know that my work could contribute to eradicating such diseases.

I discovered my interest for proteins during my undergraduate biochemistry and enzymology courses at the University of Bucharest, Romania, but I developed my real love for the subject later, during my doctoral and postdoctoral career in Germany.

My last laboratory looked over a lake up to the Swiss Alps; although I miss the view, Bath already feels like home.
The attention that we pay to quality of life should be extended to include quality of death. Although death and dying is at the forefront of the work done in residential care and nursing homes in the UK, there is very little end-of-life-care training for staff, no real policy framework and very little professional best-practice.

The project I am working on, which is funded by BUPA, will take a closer look at care protocols by surveying the experiences of staff, residents and relatives across 100 homes in the UK.

Research already suggests that while staff deal with deaths in the home very discreetly and privately, the residents find this ‘hush hush’ treatment can create a barrier to discussing something that is often on their minds. A lack of communication can result in residents not receiving the end-of-life care they would have chosen because they didn’t know the options available to them.

The project is affiliated to the University’s unique Centre for Death & Society. My project is one of many looking at the different aspects of death and dying.

Dr John Percival
Research Fellow
Department of Social & Policy Sciences
My first student recruitment trip as an international officer was to Hong Kong, Malaysia and Brunei. I visited education fairs and schools and, in Hong Kong, we hosted a reception for the parents of potential students.

These are countries that have traditionally sent a lot of students to the UK, but the Far East is an increasingly competitive market as Malaysia begins to establish its own universities that compete with us in the world rankings.

In many ways Bath is an easy university to sell – it is in the top 200 world rankings, it has a reputation for safety and student welfare, it is close to London (with lower living costs) and it has a good employability record.

It was a bit nerve-wracking visiting the markets for the first time but I was looking forward to getting out there and meeting people. Hopefully, in the future, I’ll have the opportunity to meet international officers from other universities – I hear there’s a real spirit of sharing best practice.
What’s old fashioned about teamwork, leadership skills, independence and problem solving? Nothing... which is why the Scout Association is as relevant in its centenary year as it has always been. It helps children realise their potential whatever their starting point.

After five years of organising weekly scout meetings, camping weeks and hikes for my local group in Rode, I decided it was time to step down as a leader and join the committee. I think you can lose credibility with the children if they feel you’re too old to be taking them on hikes in the Brecon Beacons.

Now I focus on promoting the value of the Scouts. There are currently about 25 million scouts spread over 210 countries and there would be even more if we could increase the number of adult volunteers.

I think of my work with the Scouts as an extension of the work I do as an Anglican Reader. For me, Christianity isn’t just for church on Sundays but is about helping and engaging with your local community. As well as family services, I’ve been taking funerals and other non-sacramental services for 11 years.

The local community, and my family’s role within it, has always been my priority but the University has always played a big role in my life – as an undergraduate, a postgraduate, a post-doctorate, full-time member of staff and now as part of the Chaplaincy team. My husband describes me as the Cliff Richard of the University of Bath – I make a comeback every decade.
If someone had told me that buying a little kite for a couple of quid when I was on holiday 15 years ago would have ended up costing me thousands, I probably would have bought something else. But I bought the kite and I’ve been hooked on flying ever since.

Competitive kite flying is about team work, precision and creativity. Each team designs a ‘ballet’ which is choreographed to music. It can take all year to write the ballet and to perfect the synchronised flying, but once you know it, it’s burnt on to your brain. It’s a tremendously satisfying sport to be involved in. You’re interacting with the wind and, if you’re good, you’re in control in that interaction. It’s a real adrenalin rush and you never stop learning and improving. I’m always flying better than I was last year.

Four of us, all self taught, fly as Team Flame. We’ve been national champions four times and hope to go to the world championships next year. It’s not a well-known sport in the UK, but in France it has a national coach and a huge spectator following. Hopefully, the better we do, the more likely we are to be taken seriously by the Sports Council.

You can see Professor Burstall & Team Flame flying a kite ballet at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GPSYmhxxTi&v2
Your favourite views of campus

Keep an eye on the website for more information

PHOTOGRAPHS:
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Polly Gould - Peninsular

Saturday 1 March-Friday 20 June, Monday-Saturday 10am-5pm
ICIA Art Space 1

In the time of waiting, with nothing to be done, Gould made a few drawings of her dying father lying against the white expanse of the bed sheets. Still mourning as the third anniversary of his death approached, she resolved to undertake a journey to one of the most remote and least human places in the world: the Antarctic Peninsular. She took the drawings of him with her, and set them out, there, amongst the penguins and ice and the white expanse of glaciers.

In Peninsular, international artist Polly Gould explores mourning, melancholia and the romantic theme of the artist’s lonely journey into awesome and sublime nature, through video, photography and drawing.

www.pollygould.co.uk
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