Editorial

It seems like no time at all since the last edition went to print, and yet here we are with the spring edition of The GradPost. The last few months have been awash with both changes and connections. We are very pleased to have an insightful feature in this edition on our Brussels campus: two different perspectives—one from a student and one from a professor—serve to show the campus from very different angles. Our focus on research this issue concerns island ethnobotany, which takes a fascinating look at the effects of loss of diversity in a local sense and how these specifics have implications worldwide. And we have some great success stories to share, and the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology; and the Marlowe Theatre coming back into action.

Finally, I’m delighted to include in this edition some really exciting creative writing, both poetry and prose, to inspire and reflect on campus life—namely on the subjects of head­phones and headaches... Rather apt I feel!

With all best wishes for the coming months,

Kasia Ladds
Co-Editor, The GradPost

Being a POSTie

In September 2011, I took three months out of my PhD to do a fellowship at Westminster in the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST). My PhD in Psychology looks at the consequences of old age stereotypes and the impact of ageism on society. I applied for the fellowship, which was sponsored by the British Psychological Society, because I believe there is huge potential for psychology research to inform policy and parliamentary debates.

POST has a unique role within Westminster by offering impartial advice to both the House of Commons and the House of Lords about all aspects of science and technology. They do this by providing short briefing notes for parliamentarians on current issues or particular topics of interest written by POST fellows, like me. Notes cover a wide range of topics within health and medicine, energy and the environment, communication, engineering and physical science. My task was to produce a note on the impact of video games.

After spending some time getting to know my way around the parliamentary estate, which involves testing how far your pass will get you, finding out where all the bars are and aimlessly wandering the corridors of power trying to bump into MPs... I recom­mend that anyone with an interest in applying their research skills or an interest in science and policy should go for this fellowship, or similar ones offered by other organisations and research councils. It really is a great way to test your skills, get a taste of life outside of academia and experience work in and around the parliamentary estate at Westminster.

The note will be available at www.parliament.uk/post

Hannah Swift
PhD Psychology
I’ve been asked to write a piece for The GradPost so I thought I would give everyone an update on what’s been happening.

The Graduate Student Association (GSA), along with the Graduate School, has been working behind the scenes to try and improve the social and academic space available to postgraduates. We have managed to get Woolf academic building open, including seminar rooms and the café, for a ten-week trial on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6-10pm. It’s not a permanent solution but it is a start and means people are starting to listen to us, which is great! We’ve also ordered some pool tables and a table tennis table, which should be arriving soon! At the time of writing this, I am also waiting for new committee members to get voted in. Having spoken to them and reading their manifestos, they’ve all got some great events and plans lined up, so it’s going to be a really exciting term. If you have any ideas for events, please email me on cp337@kent.ac.uk. Currently in the pipeline are more postgraduate Attic nights, a mixed-sex charity football match, film nights and quiz nights – so keep an eye out.

Claire Powell
GSA President

Postgraduate Research Festival

This year’s Postgraduate Research Festival will take place in June, and is open to all taught and research postgraduate students. Organised by the Graduate School, the Graduate Student Association and Kent Union, the Festival offers all postgraduates the opportunity to present a poster on their chosen research topic. The Festival will also feature presentations by some of the University’s leading academics. Keep up-to-date with the latest developments and invitations for student exhibitions at www.kent.ac.uk/graduateschool/news

Ten lucky people will be selected to win a petite and stylish iPod Nano complete with a multi-purpose touch screen display and FM radio.

The following were recipients of last year’s prizes:

Dimitrina Holder
Jonathan Law
Deborah Leveroy
Philip Wainwright
Susanne Weissflog
Keoluwa Teriba

Take part and you could win an iPod Nano, too!

Postgraduate Surveys

All postgraduate taught and research students will shortly be receiving an email asking them to complete the Postgraduate Survey.

Symbiosis

I wait for you. We both know I am there so it is impolite to make the point that sometimes you try to avoid our date. We have a regular arrangement that suits one of us more than the other. That avoidance hurts you more than it does me.

I feed from you. I need you. You are my sustenance. When I have you, I will not share you. In the darkest hours, you will cry and beg forgiveness from someone, anyone, but it never comes. You will endure, you will not break, as much as you would like to sometimes.

I will hurt you. We both know that too. I am not sorry. I told you, we are a part of each other now and forever. I help you clear away the old and welcome in the new, but first there is the now to contend with.

Oh, such pain my darling! Years of practise to make it an art form; to bring you to that point where you would give anything, anything, for me to leave you alone. But we come through it, you and I, we have had our differences, and sometimes you try to fight me but it is futile.

And when we are done, I will leave you exhausted, euphoric, like a newborn lamb entering the world for the first time. When I have finished feeding, it is your turn.

Symbiosis is about migraines from the point of view of the migraine.

Sarah Quinn
MA Creative Writing
Focus on research

Ceathrúna, eastern part of Cape Clear Island and Roaringwater Bay
Island ethnobotany

Ethnobotany, an evolving discipline since its conception in 1895 by a US botanist, has been taking on much more of the human element in the 21st century. This 'new' bio-culturally based focus has arisen out of the observation that the diversity of plants, cultures and their languages are under threat by many of the same forces, as well as from the perception that loss of diversity has severe implications for all of life on Earth.

Two of the foci are on the relationship between traditional knowledge and the environment, and on the sociocultural and environmental consequences of the loss of these elements. Consequently, a huge biologically and culturally diverse hotspot such as Europe has been the inspiration for the growth in regional studies coming to the forefront in European ethnobotany.

One such region in Europe is a small Gaeltacht island (1.5 miles x 3 miles) on the southern coast of Ireland known as Cape Clear Island or Cléire, which, marginalised by its peripheral location, has only in recent decades experienced the shift to a contemporary tourism economy. This one-time traditional subsistence economy was based on agricultural cropping systems (Triticum spp., Hordeum spp.), the wild harvesting of plants for food (Chondus crispus), medicine (Urtica dioica), firewood (Pteridum spp.), fodder (Taraxacum officinale), tools and dyes (Ulex spp.), and informal exchanges of food and trade items.

Fieldwork examined the transmission of native traditional ethnobotanical knowledge (EBK), suggesting that ongoing sociocultural and economic changes triggered by processes at local and EU levels can result in the loss of EBK and impede its transmission to subsequent generations due to cessation of land-based practices and the lack of constant reinforcement of practices affecting environmental cognition. It was shown that EBK can be dictated by 'environmental' experience, regardless of age or sex, and is not always perceived in the same context by different generations having alternative experiences. In modern Cléire, the younger generations, for the most part, no longer work on the land and are exposed to new environments never experienced by previous generations, such as attending secondary school on the mainland or having their food arrive by boat.

The loss of land-based practices and elements of the land-based kinship system at family and community level have evidenced themselves in the loss of plant identification skills and knowledge in plant use-category. In particular, there has been a profound loss of elements of the overlapping domains relating to the multitude of plant-based practices concerning numerous plant species. This has demonstrated that when the ability to identify and use plants becomes non-essential, the corresponding knowledge can be lost, weakened or endangered, and that what is perceived to be essential increases in relevance. This has been shown by Cléire native women, men and children in the use of new plants in new contexts, such as in the growth of ornamental plant usage (Perlagonium spp; Orchis spp; Hypericum sp), changes in fodder usage, in the planting of non-native trees and shrubs for shelter (Picea sitchensis; Phormium tenax), and in plant-based knowledge acquired through abstract means such as from books, magazines, television and the internet.

However, none of these new uses were perceived as being associated with local EBK and were regarded as part of the new lifestyle that must persist for island life preservation, though with regret. What has been retained is the limited use of a much less diverse number of agricultural crops grown mostly for fodder or for occasional eating. The remainder of plant-based knowledge is recorded in story form only, relayed by the elders to the younger generations. Exposure to this environment varies from one degree to another although, overall, it is minimal. Many elders believe that it was already too late for the study and that those with the knowledge were already ‘buried in the ground’.

Despite the economic pressures at local and EU levels, both natives and immigrants alike have expressed their appreciation of the importance of traditional land-based, ecological and environmental knowledge. The question now remains – what of the future of Cléire?

Ruth Broderick
MSc Ethnobotany

Sea beet (Beta vulgaris ssp. maritimus) and scurvey grass (Cochlearia officinalis), wild sources of food and medicine on the shores of Cape Clear Island, Ireland

Part of a rotary quern used in flour-making, now used as museum artifacts and garden ornaments on Cléire

Foxglove (Digitalis purpurea) grows in abundance on the island

Sea-weed (lóch) was gathered from the shore and used as fertiliser for the gardens and is still used today. It was also used to make various edible dishes or as a medicine to treat colds (carrageen)

Sea-pinks (Armeria maritima) were used in fires to make bastable cakes
A fresh start for the Marlowe Theatre

It’s been reopened for just a few months, but the Marlowe Theatre is already a distinguished landmark in the Canterbury cityscape. It has an impressive visual presence on the city’s skyline.

Those of us who have lived in Canterbury for some years will notice that the architecture varies dramatically from how the Marlowe looked before it was revamped. The new and bold design has produced mixed reactions from both students and residents, both inside and out, but of course any project as important as this will inevitably provoke discussion and debate. The Marlowe Theatre is a part of Canterbury’s history, and the strong theatrical tradition of the city is upheld by its presence today.

Designed by Keith Williams Architects, the rebuilding of the Marlowe Theatre cost £25.6 million in total. The Theatre closed for refurbishment in March 2009 and only reopened in October of last year. Since the reopening, Theatre Director Mark Everett has met with mixed reactions to the new set-up. As with any new building, creases are being ironed out in these initial months to hone and improve the performances from the cast of Cinderella more than made up for concerns over the interior design, and the issues are being smoothed out to make the Marlowe better than ever in the coming months.

The new Theatre is only going to get better in the coming year, with some fantastic future events, including Calendar Girls and comedian Stewart Lee. It really is worth a visit – already at home on our skyline, the new Marlowe is set to continue as an important part of our heritage.

Kasia Ladds
MA Creative Writing

Interview with Professor Wade Mansell

Professor Wade Mansell is a Professor of Law at Kent Law School and founder of the LLM in International Law with International Relations at both the Canterbury and Brussels campuses. Professor Mansell was the convenor until 2011 and has taught the course in Brussels for ten years.

What was your motivation for teaching at the Brussels campus? It was because I was going to start teaching the LLM in International Law with International Relations. I wanted to teach International Law by teaching the method and the context. I was invited to see if I could put forward a course that would complement what was available at the time. Also, Brussels is a cosmopolitan city in which you can get away with speaking only English.

Where do your students come from? Are they from outside Europe or mainly from Europe? My students are from all over the world. About a third come from North America, another third of them from Europe and the rest from everywhere, including New Zealand and Australia.

How would you describe the feel of the campus? The Brussels School of International Studies (BSIS) is on one floor of a large office building, but immediately across from the building is the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and the French speaking l’Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB). Kent students have access to all the facilities.

Interview with Natalia Cochin

Master’s student Natalia Cochin is studying Public International Law at the Brussels campus. After completing her Bachelor’s degree in International Relations at the University of Tsukuba in Japan, she decided to continue her studies at the University of Kent and shares her experiences of the campus and course.

What drew you to studying Public International Law at the University of Kent? When I was in my third year of undergraduate studies, I took my first class in international law, and the teacher was so knowledgeable and discussed the subjects in such an engaging manner that I knew I wanted to know more about international law and maybe specialise in this field.

Did you view the Canterbury campus before choosing Brussels or were you won over by the European experience immediately? One of my advisors recommended the University of Kent’s Brussels School of International Studies (BSIS), Brussels is a really beautiful city; the architecture is amazing and the different cultural elements specific to Belgium are especially fascinating to me. Another reason for my choosing the Brussels campus is a current professor, Yutaka Arai – he is the colleague of one of my advisors in Japan. Being told of his brilliant mind and energetic personality, I very much wanted to be able to study under his guidance. Brussels is still a young, small campus compared to the others, and naturally one would not get as many benefits and advantages. However, the School compensates for this through a very high-quality academic environment.

What are some of the best things about studying at the Brussels campus? BSIS has groups and forums that are very active. You can easily attend a guest lecture on a contemporary international matter, held by people from a diversity of fields of employment or study. Seeing your favourite professor and
Another memorable moment was meeting all that I immediately fell in love with the School. From administration were so helpful and friendly I saw the campus for the first time. The people between students and members of staff. How does the campus function in relation to other international organisations based in Brussels? The Brussels campus was granted accreditation and recognition in 2011 by the Flemish Education System Authorities and Kent is the only British university operating in Brussels, and maybe in Belgium.

How has the LLM in International Law with International Relations programme developed over the years? It started with four students in 2001 and since then the student population has grown to 30-50 students per academic year. Students can also study for an LLM in Public International Law or International Economic Law. The Law School has two full-time Brussels appointments and a number of Canterbury staff travel there to teach regularly.

Why should students come to Brussels? First and foremost, they should come for academic purposes and the quality of the teaching. In addition, as Brussels is the capital of the European Union, it has embassies from almost every country and large numbers of governmental organisations and NGO officers. The European Parliament and the European Commission are located in Brussels. The possibilities for internship or employment opportunities and students networks are therefore substantial in the city.

What would you recommend about the campus? The fact that almost all the students know each other, which means they share academic and social interests in a stimulating environment. Accommodation is private and is probably less expensive than Canterbury. Overwhelming, the majority of students view their time studying in Brussels as a lifetime highlight.

What advice would you offer prospective students who might want to study for a year in Brussels? The best advice I can offer is to visit the School and meet the staff. Members of staff are very welcoming. Sightseeing around Brussels is worth the trip — it’s a very beautiful city with wonderful art décor. I recommend taking the No 44 bus from Montgomery to Tervuren where the African Museum is located for an extraordinary view celebrating the ‘Belgian Colonialism’.

Jumoke Adegbomire PhD International Law

Introduction to Sociology Day, 2nd December 2011

The School of Social Policy, Sociology, and Social Research (SSPSSR) recently hosted an event for Year Eight school pupils from Longfield Academy, Kent.

The aim of the event was to introduce the subject of sociology to 13- and 14-year-old pupils in an exciting and informal environment. The pupils involved had been selected to participate in this event based on their status as ‘accelerated learners’. None of the pupils had studied sociology before. A key objective of the day was to open up their sociological imaginations and to provide them with an insight into what it would be like to study sociology in future years. Sociology is offered as an option for study at A Level and, as accelerated learners, many of the pupils attending this event will begin their A Level studies before Year 12.

The day was facilitated by SSPSSR PhD students, Hannah Perrin, Dan Burrows, Ashley Frawley and Fahid Qurashi, who were instrumental in designing and delivering a series of workshops during the day. Reflecting the diversity of research strengths in the School and drawing on the research expertise of the PhD students involved, workshops covered a range of cutting-edge topics in sociology, social policy, criminology and cultural studies. Workshops included: health and inequalities; terrorism and state crime; gangs, youth crime and the summer riots; and the media construction of social problems. The day culminated in a feedback session and debate that considered the ‘role of sociology in British society’. Feedback from teachers, students and University staff was all extremely positive and there are currently plans to run a similar event in 2012.

The event was organised by Michael Collingwood, Partnership Development Officer, Faculty of Social Sciences, and Dr Kate O’Brien, Lecturer in Criminology and School Outreach representative in SSPSSR.

To find out how you can become involved in working with local secondary schools on outreach events, please contact Michael Collingwood on M.Collingwood@kent.ac.uk

Kate O’Brien
Lecturer in Criminology

at both universities, which include their libraries, sports facilities, cafés and bars. BSIS is quite intimate because the faculty has an open-plan office and it creates a very informal atmosphere between students and members of staff. Striking up a conversation about current world issues in the snack room is not unusual either. This is one of the things that make BSIS special: the relationship between the professors and students. The professor knows all of his or her students by name. The relatively small size of the School makes it a cosy and comfortable place to study.

Are you enjoying your studies and experience at the University of Kent? I do very much enjoy the time spent here. For me, it is especially captivating since I studied in such a different environment during my undergraduate days in Japan. My colleagues and professors are all brilliant people, and it’s a pleasure to be part of such an engaging team. The courses are very relevant to what I actually want to study but, at the same time, they offer the opportunity to gain knowledge in many other fields. I expect that this experience will be the basis for the career path I am pursuing.

What are some of the more memorable moments you’ve experienced at the Brussels campus? One memorable moment was the first day I arrived in Brussels, which was also the day when I saw the campus for the first time. The people from administration were so helpful and friendly that I immediately fell in love with the School. Another memorable moment was meeting all the other students. The BSIS Graduate Union organised a welcome party and we got to meet the professors, some of the former students and our current colleagues. I met people of different nationalities from a variety of backgrounds and with experience in many different areas, such as NGOs, embassies and international organisations.

What would you say to those considering studying your course at the Brussels campus? If one wants a postgraduate experience in international studies, BSIS is definitely an excellent place to do it. The School offers the experience of studying in the capital of Europe, surrounded by headquarters of international organisations, major think tanks and places where the history of international relations and law has unfolded and continues to take place. The course is challenging and you develop the ability to examine and competently analyse proposed topics as well as current international issues. Moreover, as I mentioned before, the School has a close-knit community, with a friendly atmosphere, and one feels a sense of camaraderie among the students and professors. A less official advantage, but an important one nonetheless, is that you can actually have delicious Belgian waffles or Belgian fries between classes.

Pamela Head MA Eighteenth-Century Studies
Film tweets

The new *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* far exceeds the Swedish original and portrays the book as the reader imagines it. ‘The Girl’ is quirky, as you expect, but the dark underlying truth keeps you gripped. Can’t wait for *The Girl Who Played with Fire*!

*Sherlock Holmes 2*: Unless you’re desperate for baffling plot holes and some ambiguous sexual tension between Watson and Holmes, chances are you won’t love this film nearly as much as it loves itself. 4/10

Film reviews in 250 characters. To submit your own tweet contact grad-editors@kent.ac.uk for guidelines.

Poem – ‘Headphones’

amusing music
unseen street screen: war-fire death
deaf isolation

George Bryant Lucas
MA English and American Literature

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Commercialising Innovation – two-day residential workshop

The Graduate School are pleased to announce the introduction of a new workshop this spring. Set in the beautiful surroundings of Canterbury Cathedral lodge, ‘Innovation and Commercialisation’ will take place on 30 April and 1 May.

Commercialisation consultant and trainer, Dr Kevin Parker, will take participants through the diverse aspects of commercialising scientific innovation. Sessions introduce attendees to different facets of making science work in business, from identifying the potential benefits and marketability of technology through to simulations of budget management. Exploring the distinction between invention and innovation, attendees consider the practicalities and potential difficulties of translating science and technology into commercially viable projects. Sessions include ‘Innovation’, in which participants identify the commercial feasibility of inventions; ‘Business Models’ where attendees distinguish between ‘a product’ and ‘a service’; ‘Markets’ where sales plans, business models and market research will be considered; ‘Selling, Communication and Pitching’; ‘The Management of Complex Projects’, including jargon, risks and judging progression; ‘Basic Finance’; and a simulation session on the ‘Technology Stock Market’.

Only 20 places are available for this residential workshop, so book early via the online system https://bloom.kent.ac.uk

Should you have any queries, please contact Rhiannon Binns, Transferable Skills Training Co-ordinator at skills@kent.ac.uk