

IC holds position in league tables

Imperial College has taken third place in *The Times* Good University Guide for the third year in a row. *The Times* league tables, published on 19 May, ranked Cambridge in first place, with Oxford a close second.

The Planning Division, which handled the application, had warned that Imperial could slip in this year's rankings. Fortunately this did not happen. "We have retained our overall third position in *The Times* table, even though this year the method of calculating the ranking excluded two measures in which Imperial had always come top - research income per academic, and the proportion of staff with PhDs," said Rodney Eastwood, Director of Planning, Management, and Information Services.

The Guide also listed the top 20 universities in twelve subjects. In some areas, the College was ranked high, taking third place in Chemistry and first in Civil Engineering. "Since *The Times* Good University Guide is now well-established, and prospective students will undoubtedly be aware of it, I was gratified with the

top ranking for Civil Engineering," said David Lloyd Smith, Director of Undergraduate Studies. "However, no league table presents the full picture. We are fully aware of the need to perform well in the Teaching Quality Assessment exercise in order to retain our top ranking."

Other departments suffered in the *Times* league tables. The Department of Mechanical Engineering, for example, was ranked eighth. "We feel aggrieved," said Professor Gordon Williams, Head of Department. "The position was dictated by the teaching assessment, in which we were rated satisfactory, despite the fact that we never had a visit. We felt it was impossible to grade without a visit, so we appealed, but were turned down." The Department of Geology, despite the fact that it had been rated excellent in the recent teaching assessment, was ranked eleventh in *The Times* Guide.

"This overall result was pleasing, though it must be said that the methodology used in the whole exercise is highly suspect," Rodney Eastwood commented.



Neville Miles, College Photographer

Is this Imperial College's youngest professor? See the profile of Chris Toumazou on page two.

IN BRIEF

New Pro Rector announced

Professor Timothy Clark, Dean of the National Heart and Lung Institute, has been appointed Pro Rector (Medicine) for a period of two years, starting on 1 August 1995. He will advise the Rector on general medical issues.

Acting Dean of St Mary's

Professor John Caldwell, currently Deputy Dean of the Medical School, has been appointed Acting Dean for a period of seven months, with effect from 1 September 1995. Professor Caldwell will exercise full decanal powers and responsibilities.

Science writer-in-residence wins £10,000

Dr John Emsley, Imperial's science writer-in-residence, received the General Rhone-Poulenc Prize for Science Books. He was awarded £10,000 for his entry, *The Consumer's Good Chemical Guide*, which describes itself as a jargon-free guide to the chemicals of everyday life. A review of the book can be seen in *IC Reporter* issue 4.

Aleksander becomes foreign fellow

Professor Igor Aleksander has been elected to the Fellowship of the Finnish Academies of Technology for contributions to neural network technology. He will be a foreign fellow, the first Briton to be honoured in this way.

Medal for research fellow

Dr James Durrant, a BBSRC Advanced Fellow in the Department of Biochemistry, has been awarded the Meldola Medal of The Royal Society of Chemistry for his contributions to the biophysics of photosynthesis.

Leonardo Society events

Classes organised for June include life drawing, a wood carving demonstration, animation and silk painting. For information contact the Leonardo Society via e-mail Leonardo@ic.ac.uk.

College funding and estates strategy explained

At a joint presentation held in the Clore Lecture Theatre on Wednesday, 1 June, Professor John Archer, Deputy Rector, and Professor Bill Wakeham, Head of the Department of Chemical Engineering and Shadow Director of Estates, spoke on two topics close to everyone's heart - money and plans for the College estate.

Professor Archer outlined the complex way IC is funded, and the equally complex way its income is disbursed. He pointed out that the higher education sector has expanded and diversified, and that the College is unique amongst Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funded institutions. "With our high percentage of postgraduate students and focus on science, engineering and medicine, it is inevitable that IC will be an outlier where funding is concerned."

After reviewing the current situation, and outlining future opportunities, particularly for medical education, Professor Archer handed over to Professor Bill Wakeham.

He underlined the aims and objectives of interim Estates Strategy, sent to HEFCE on 29 March, "The general objective is to provide appropriate academic, social and residential facilities to support and enhance the academic

performance of the College with a high quality campus life and affordable student accommodation, and to increase the College's competitiveness with other institutions at home and abroad. This will be achieved by rationalisation, improvement and development."

The document lays out the College's proposals for its estate over the next 10 years, with particular emphasis on the impact of the planned Imperial College Medical School.

Professor Wakeham detailed the main ways of maximising the estate:

- *Basic Medical Sciences Building* In September 1998, the pre-clinical departments of St Mary's Hospital Medical School and Charing Cross & Westminster Medical School will move to the South Kensington campus. These departments, along with the Department of Biology, will be housed in a new Basic Medical Sciences Building (see *IC Reporter*, issue 1). In order to make sufficient space for the building, the College plans to demolish RCS2. Construction is due to begin in April 1996 and be completed by April 1998.
- *Refurbishment of Sheffield* Sheffield "is an inefficient building", according to the strategy, which proposes to "refurbish (it) to create a modern open working environment". As Professor

Wakeham said, "40 per cent of the building is space, in contrast to modern office buildings which have no more than 25 per cent space."

More controversially, the plan calls for ICU to be moved from Beit Quadrangle to Sheffield "to create a social centre at the heart of the campus", although the traditional bar may be retained. Catering and retail areas will also be refurbished and enhanced. Work is planned to begin in April 1996, with completion by September 1998.

- *Library extension* Beginning in April 1996, Level 4 of the library will be extended, and a new Level 5 will be constructed, in order to house a biomedical library. This should be completed by September 1997.
- *Construction and refurbishment of student accommodation*

Once the Department of Biology and ICU have moved out of Beit, the entire Quad would be used for student accommodation. The plan also calls for new construction in two areas of Prince's Gardens - the site above the Sports Centre, and the site where the tennis courts are currently located.

In addition, current student accommodation will be refurbished. Since the government does not provide funding for student housing, projects must be self-financed. For the purpose-built

accommodation from the sixties, this is possible. However, in the case of older, converted properties, some buildings may have to be sold to pay for the refurbishment of others.

- *Enhancing social and cultural facilities* The strategy recognises that the range of student support facilities is inadequate. The plan proposes extensions to the Sports Centre and the Boat House, and possibly a consolidation of the playing fields in Harlington and Teddington. It also calls for improved social facilities for staff and alumni.

Controversial aspects

According to Professor Wakeham, the issues involved in estates planning on this scale should not be underestimated. Imperial is the eighth largest campus in the UK, with a total of 300,000 square metres - the equivalent of at least 30 big office blocks.

"People must understand the balance of the College priorities in debating issues on a large scale," Bill Wakeham said. "The College has difficult choices to make. Given finite resources, expenditure in one area penalises another. For example, to fund sports facilities for students, this may mean that resources are withdrawn from departments' budgets."

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Media mentions

Green claims untrue

Research by Mr Gary Morse, Professor John Lester and Professor Perry, Department of Civil Engineering, received a mention in a *Sunday Telegraph* article (14 May) about false environmental claims by soap powder manufacturers. The report says advertising for 'green' detergents that condemn phosphate-based powders is untrue. The researchers conclude that neither phosphate-based detergents or the phosphate-free varieties which use zeolite chemicals can be shown to have an environmental advantage.

Public sector MBA programme

Professor David Norburn from The Management School was interviewed by *The Times* in an article of 18 May which discussed the new public sector MBA programme to be run at Imperial. The Management School successfully bid to offer the degree after a competition held by the Cabinet Office. Prof Norburn commented: "Our MBA has to be concerned with what works and what doesn't work. We don't want to train an ivory tower elite. It is a matter of making civil servants more aware of the rigours of commercial management."

Compulsory competitive tendering

Compulsory competitive tendering (CCT), used by the government to force local authorities to test manual services against the market, was the subject of a *Financial Times* article of 22 May. The traditional Labour view of CCT, that it produces poorer standards of service, is challenged by research from Dr Stefan Szymanski, the Management School. His study shows that for refuse collection not only are standards often higher but costs can be 20 per cent lower. Dr Szymanski said: "Labour would be crazy to abandon CCT at this stage. It seems to me that it should be welcomed as a good thing if it can reduce costs."

Education matters and IC students

Three Imperial students will feature in the Radio 4 programme *Education matters* to be broadcast on Wednesday 12 June. The students, all due to finish their degrees this summer, will talk about future plans and employ-

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Estates strategy

When the plan was submitted to HEFCE, the College stressed that the strategy was interim, and that a revised version incorporating some of the issues raised by the medical merger would be issued in July. In terms of the South Kensington campus, the July version is unlikely to have any substantial differences.

Interested staff or students should send comments to Ian Caldwell, Director of Estates, Sheffield 529.

New ICCET group sponsored

Denton Hall Burgin and Warrens, the international law firm, has sponsored a new environmental law and management group at Imperial. The Denton Hall Environmental Law and Management Group, part of the Centre for Environmental Technology (ICCET), was launched on 30 May.

The group, led by Dr John Mumford, consists of four permanent academic staff from a variety of backgrounds. John, a biologist, brings expertise in resource management. Nicola Atkinson, a solicitor, offers specialist knowledge of environmental law, while Peter Pearson is an expert in environmental economics. Bill Sheate offers a background in environmental impact assessment, partly gained during the controversy over the Twyford Down motorway construction.

The academics at Imperial and the lawyers at Denton Hall will work closely over the next three years on a range of initiatives. One venture is a series of joint seminars on subjects such as biotechnology and biodiversity, fraud and crime, contaminated land, and pesticides. Another possibility is joint consultancy work.

According to Nicola, companies have been under increasing pressure over the past four years to improve their environmental performance. "On one side, the UK government has been pressing for deregulation while encouraging voluntary environmental initiatives. On the other, a fundamental policy of both the UK and the EC is 'the polluter pays' - that is, businesses should be held financially responsible for any environmental pollution they cause."

While law firms have been responding to this new development by establishing environmental law groups, it is often difficult for them to keep up with the scientific aspects of the field. This is where Imperial comes in. "A business faced with legislation must change its approach," Nicola said. "Therefore the business needs to understand the technical options, as well as the legal issues. It will expect its solicitors to set their legal advice in the technical context. There are inevitably a variety of ways of achieving a single policy goal - the real question is how to get there most cost-effectively."

For students on the MSc course at ICCET, the group will offer a new specialist option in environmental law and management - one

Continued on back page

The view from the tower by Don

Glib commonroom talk among aficionados of 'surfing the Internet' may leave some of us feeling that we are missing out on an element of Californian bliss. Recent personal experience, however, has made it seem more akin to getting sand in the wrong parts of the anatomy rather than the implied exhilaration of surfing. If you actually discover something into which you want to sink your teeth, (say that you are desperate to learn more about what biologists are doing with snails at the University of Hawaii) you 'click the mouse' on the appropriate words and expect all to be revealed.

But none of it - after about two minutes of irritating suspense it is likely that a message will appear which informs you that 'you have used an old path, if you still wish to pursue this path click here'. Which you do. Another two or three minutes and something like 'unable to reach host' appears. Eventually it becomes clear that our surfing enthusiasts must be persons of leisure. Not only do they suffer these rejections patiently, but they must also have the time to sit there and unravel an object which resembles a ball of wool wound from a million little lengths. Will it ever be possible to say "World Wide Web is a time-waster" without being labelled as a troglodyte?

It is a bit irritating when words such as 'surfing' are used to suggest that by using them and accepting their implications you get to join

some exclusive kind of club. This could be the case with 'league tables' for universities - they were published last week in the *Times* and the *Higher*. At first sight they could be useful. We could ask ourselves why our undergraduate dropout rates are 11 per cent when Cambridge, Oxford, Manchester and St Andrews appear to manage just 2 per cent. We could then enjoy discovering that we are at the very top in volume of graduate students as a percentage of the rest. We can also bask in the knowledge that our student-to-staff ratios are positively luxurious (10 as opposed to, say, 17 for our colleagues at the LSE or 21 at Brunel). Stepping back from the detail it becomes worth recalling that the words 'league table' come from football and the like. League tables are there to rank the excellence of teams who have pitted their strengths against one another in combat. It is a legitimate fear that publishing league tables leaves the public with the impression that universities (or schools, hospitals and whatever else has fallen prey to the 'measurement at any cost' culture) are locked in competitive battle against one another. I have little doubt that all universities would like to be excellent, but if they were, the league tables would still manage to pick enough nits to not make it seem so. In science it is common to assign a validity factor to various forms of ranking. The league table culture carefully avoids being as scientifically honest as it might be."

STAFF PROFILE

At 33, is Chris Toumazou IC's youngest ever professor?

Chris Toumazou describes his career and plans for the future.

"I've come at this from a very unconventional background," says Chris Toumazou of his recent appointment as Professor of Analog Circuit Design.

At 33 he is possibly the youngest ever professor at Imperial College, an achievement which is made more impressive when you discover the route by which he came here.

"There were no O levels at my comprehensive school and I just about got into a technical college. I did an extra year on a type of national diploma course, studying the fundamentals of electronics. At that stage someone said to me, 'You're on the wrong course - you should be doing catering'. It just made me even more determined to do well."

Graduating from Oxford Poly with a first he then studied for his PhD at Oxford and UMIST. Chris joined the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering in 1986 as a research assistant to work on gallium arsenide communication filters. This project was a big success, producing the fastest filter in the world. He became a lecturer in 1987 and a reader in 1991.

His enthusiasm for analog circuit design is very apparent as he explains his research and plans for the future: "We're starting to get a strong reputation in the medical field for cochlea implants. If we design these in an analog fashion we can model the physiology of the ear with the basic physics that we've got in silicon devices. So we can make electronic silicon implants, fully integrated. You don't need to carry any external battery packs or boxes. It's what I call creating with silicon - we're not relying upon logic and binary codes. It's a very attractive subject because it combines creativity with science."

Chris believes there is currently a tendency for basic electronics to be overlooked as concentration on the area of software and digital logic increases. "At the moment we're churning out engineers with flat fingers and ones and noughts coming out of their ears. My motivation is to bring back the solder burns and the fundamental understanding of currents and voltages. I think it's important for the UK, industry and academia."

He has close links with Mahanakorn University in Thailand who are particularly interested in analog electronics. "It's a very good relationship - a kind of technology transfer. They have really bright students and

good facilities but they lack the know-how. So we can train their staff, who return to Mahanakorn to train others and continue the research. Mahanakorn have funded my readership and a new analog laboratory. I will also use some of the funds to research the biomedical uses of analog design, like the cochlea implants. I go over there about three or four times a year to give lectures and run courses."

Chris's interest in the Far East stems from his childhood. He took up the practice of Kendo, Japanese sword fencing, at the age of 11. He is now a black belt and represented Great Britain in the 1980 World Championships. Chris says the strong philosophical side of Kendo has developed his understanding and respect for Far Eastern culture, so aiding the successful collaboration with his Thai counterparts.

Achieving a professorship at the age of 33 suggests a hectic work schedule and Chris is grateful to his wife, Ann, for all her support: "She is very understanding and has put up with my long hours at work and trips abroad".

They both moved to London when Chris started at IC and lived in Evelyn Gardens, where he was a warden for seven years. "The College saw me as the right sort of character to handle the freshers down in Evelyn Gardens, away from the campus. It was quite a challenge. You've got to gain the respect of the students but also be authoritarian - it's a fine balance between the two. It was very interesting". After their first child was born they found the combination of bringing up a family, the wardenship duties and his work rather difficult. They now live in Oxford with their children, Marcus and Georgina, who are four and two.

And is the success and recognition of a professorship going to change him and his working life? He laughs and suggests he might spend 10 years holidaying, then says, "I hope it's going to give me more freedom to dictate what I want to do. I would like to concentrate more on 'blue sky' research". He would also like to find the time for a sabbatical at Berkeley or CalTech, but thinks that Imperial is the best place in Europe to carry out his research. As he put it "there's simply nowhere else to be".

If you know who is the youngest professor Imperial College has ever had, please write to IC Reporter. We can then tell everybody else.

BOOK REVIEW Facts of life

Review by
Janet Smith

The Facts of Life: The Creation of Sexual Knowledge in Britain, 1650-1950

Roy Porter and Lesley Hall
Yale U.P. 1995
£19.95 hbk

This scholarly work by prominent historians of medicine is one that will also interest and entertain the general reader.

It examines literature on sex education written from after the Restoration to the middle of the present century, which was aimed at the public at large and circulated for a substantial period of time. There are fascinating illustrations, some more curious than others, and the writing is pithy (the preface beginning 'This book is scarcely an instance of *ejaculatio praecox*, and the authors are grateful to [their publisher] for his patience in tolerating its slow coming').

Modern concerns with psychological and social aspects of sex are strikingly absent from the earliest work discussed. The falsely attributed *Aristotle's Master-Piece* of c.1680 apparently set out to advise the newly married on the efficient procreation of healthy offspring of the desired sex, in an era when family size was of crucial economic importance. Women, far from being a problem, were assumed to be as libidinous as men, and misogyny is not generally evident, except in so far as women were held responsible for failure to conceive or for producing monsters.

The picture rapidly becomes more complex with advances in medical knowledge during the Enlightenment, through the religious, moral, social and psychological developments of the nineteenth century, to Marie Stopes' *Married Love* (1918) which aimed to give 'average, healthy, mating creatures...the key to happiness'. The authors relate these works to organisations, campaigns, and legislation, while not losing sight of such cross currents as erotica and persisting folklore, such as the notion that venereal disease could be cured by passing it on to someone else!

How the works were received and used by their readers is difficult to assess, as there is little evidence until the time of Marie Stopes, who, among others, received unsolicited letters, some of them very strange. And some of the works themselves may have been written as much for reading between the lines as for their expressed purpose.

This is a very readable account of the complex ways in which British sexual knowledge has taken shape. It challenges much of our current perspective and demonstrates that sexuality is a far from static phenomenon. I recommend it highly.

Please see *New in the Haldane* for recent editions to the Haldane collection.

Janet Smith is the Haldane Librarian

Coffee Break: are we all specialists now?

The answers to last week's quiz by Professor Bryan Coles

deal answers would have been as follows:

1. *What is important about mitochondrial DNA?* It carries genetic information only in the female line.

2. *What early insights are supported by the theory of plate tectonics?* Continental drift indicated by the shapes of continents.

3. *Outside the City of London why is the Big Bang important?* It is a widely accepted theory of the early universe.

4. *Where did structuralism begin and where now is deconstruction taking place?* In France in linguistics (Saussure) and anthropology (Levi-Strauss), but applied in literary deconstruction in Cambridge and Rummidge.

5. *Who was Lucy?* Gracile australopithecine fossil giving information about hominid evolution and upright stance.

6. *How many quarks to a proton and*

what holds them together? Three; gluons or the strong force.

7. *Who worries about finite elements, chemists or engineers?* Engineers, who use this method in analysis and design.

8. *What was the most exciting result of the decipherment of Linear script B?* That this early script from Crete was used to write Greek.

9. *Why can it be argued that the battle of Bouvines was the most important European battle between Hastings and Waterloo?* Because Phillippe Auguste gained authority over the French barons by winning, John lost authority over his and had to sign the Magna Carta the next year. Frederick established the Ghibelline emperors by defeating Guelph Otto IV.

10. *What sort of mathematician has defeated a monster?* A major breakthrough in Group Theory concerns the Monster Group.

11. *Where did the ribs appear, Durham or Milan?* In Romanesque architecture it has been established

that the high vault in Durham (1093) predates that in San Ambrogio (1120).

12. *Where are (or were) Catal Huyuk and Mohenjo-Daro?* Important Neolithic sites in Anatolia and the Indus valley.

13. *Do vent communities disprove the single food-chain based on photosynthesis?* Yes, in respect of the current situation since sulphur-processing bacteria are at the base of the food chain, but the multicellular organisms in it are not of independent evolution.

14. *"Malt does more than Milton can, to justify God's ways to man." Who is doing more than Milton to put chaos on the map?* Mathematicians and physicists concerned with non-linear behaviour.

15. *Is the transformation BRUNO to BEROWNE Galilean?* The scholar Frances Yates has suggested that Berowne in *Love's Labours Lost* was Shakespeare's tribute to the hermetic philosopher Giordano Bruno burned for heresies that Galileo was suspected of sharing.

ICU cinema

ICU Cinema was set up two years ago by Ian Nichol and Steff Laugharne in order to provide a cheap alternative to the commercial cinemas of London. It is located on the second floor of the Union building.

Films are exhibited in industry standard 35mm on a 33 foot screen, which is larger than any local cinema. Recent improvements have included the installation of dolby stereo, and a new lamphouse on the projector, which provides a very high intensity light source for the screen.

The cinema has a capacity of 272, which is often achieved with big hit films such as *Pulp Fiction* and *Reservoir Dogs*. There are usually four or five screenings per week, each of a different film. Prices are £1 for members (£10 annual membership), £2 non-members and £3 for guests. Admission is limited to students and staff of the University of London, and their guests.

ICU Cinema is fully air-conditioned and provides disabled access. Drinks from DaVinci's Bar are welcomed in the auditorium. Due to popular demand, there is a no smoking policy.

ART REVIEW

Annual staff and student exhibition



Scene from a Venetian honeymoon by C. Raymond

VAT slogan winner announced

The winning slogan has been chosen by the Rector's panel, and been approved by the VAT man.

The slogan is: *At the leading edge of research, innovation and learning*

Use of the slogan on course advertising will qualify the advertisement for VAT exemption.

The winning slogan is a combination of two entries, sent in by Liz Boden of the Registry and Dick Campain of Geology who will each receive a choice of a book token or wine to the value of £15. The panel wishes to thank all those who sent in their suggestions.

The annual staff/student art exhibition, organised by the Leonardo Society, is currently on display in the Sheffield Ante-room.

The open exhibition includes over a hundred works, some of which are for sale.

The wide variety of artistic endeavour is impressive. The exhibition includes landscapes, portraits, photography, sculpture, even origami figures. My favourites included *France - Untitled*, a pleasantly naive painting of steps leading to the sea, and *Long Lilies I, II, and III*, a series showing the development of a water-colour painting from the pencil sketch through to completion.

It is easy to see where some artists got their inspiration. C. Raymond's landscape, titled *Impression Monet*, makes it quite clear. Jon Jordan's *Head I* and *Head II x 6* surely owes a debt to Andy Warhol's triptyches, while Pradeep Luther's photographs of flowers are reminiscent of Robert Mapple-Thorpe's work.

The show also contains the requisite amount of drug-inspired art, including the rather unambiguously titled *Shop Selling Drugs* (nothing to do with Boots, as far as I could surmise).

Unfortunately, some of the art was too much to my taste, such as a bowl turned out of a single piece of wood, made by A.E. Rippon. I left the exhibition with £30 less in my pocket.

The exhibition was reviewed for IC Reporter by Carrie Gohus, Media Liaison Officer

New in the Haldane

Recent additions to the Haldane Collection (all published 1995) include:

Oliver Sacks, *An Anthropologist on Mars* (Picador). On the paradox of the creative potential of disease.

Carol Cooper, *Surviving at Work* (Health Education Authority). Practical advice on coping with workplace adversity from back strain to bullying.

John King and Richard Nebesky, *Czech and Slovak Republics: a... Travel Survival Kit* (Lonely Planet). Cultural and travel information for a range of budgets.

Geoff Simons, *Korea: the Search for Sovereignty* (Macmillan). History from earliest times to present. Challenges established view of recent years. Foreword by Tony Benn.

Lynda Mugglestone, *'Talking Proper': the Rise of Accent as Social Symbol* (OUP). Traces shifts in attitudes to language, including evidence from literature.

Robin Allan, Philip Homes, Tom Lundskaer-Nielsen, *Danish: a Comprehensive Grammar* (Routledge). Reference source for all levels of student, beginners to advanced.

David Seed, ed. *Anticipations: Essays on Early Science Fiction and its Precursors* (Liverpool UP). Looks at convergence of different genres and how fiction engages with contemporary issues.

Kenneth McConkey, *Impressionism in Britain* (Yale). Catalogue of exhibition at the Barbican Art Gallery.

David Fraser, ed. *Fairest Isle: BBC Radio 3 book of British Music* (BBC). Illustrated survey from c.1000 BC to Michael Nyman, by leading scholars and critics.

D I A R Y

June

COLLEGE EVENTS

6 - 8 June

Record sale

Sale of classical album records (orchestral music). To be held in the Haldane Library at 14.00-17.00 hours.

Wednesday 7 June

ICCET symposium on the environment and health

To be held in the Clore lecture theatre (Huxley 213), all day. Further information from Diana Paterson-Fox, extension 49274 or e-mail d.pfox

Wednesday 14 June

Imperial College Environment Day

The day will consist of a series of presentations, an exhibition and the launch of the environment brochure. Further information from the Graduate School of the Environment, extension 47460 or e-mail GSE

Friday 16 June

Department of Physics' first year undergraduate projects open day for schools

The Department will be open to fifth and sixth form students from 13.00-17.00 hours. Any staff member who would like to forward a poster for this event to a school contact, ring Bob Speer on extension 47514.

Monday 19 June

Town and gown reception, Friends of Imperial College/Knightsbridge Residents Association

19.00 hours at 170 Queen's Gate

Thursday 22 June

College open day

All departments will be open for fifth and sixth form students. Further information from the Schools Liaison Office, extension 58042/3.

Saturday 24 June

St Mary's students' Summer Ball

To be held at the Park Lane Hotel, Piccadilly. Further information from Robert Hughes, telephone 0171-725 5196.

26 June - 7 July

WISE courses

A series of two-day residential courses in science and engineering for lower sixth girls. Further information from the Schools Liaison Office, extension 58042/3.

EXHIBITION

Until 3 September

T.H. Huxley Esquire, scientist, artist and educator

Organised by the College Archives. Science Museum Picture Gallery.

LECTURES

Wednesday 7 June

Inaugural lecture

'The nine numbers of the cosmos'. Michael Rowan-Robinson, Professor of Astrophysics. To be held in the Blackett laboratory theatre 1 at 17.30 hours.

Wednesday 14 June

Inaugural lecture

'Virtual ecology'. Professor John Woods, Department of Mineral Resources Engineering. To be

held in the Clore lecture theatre at 17.30 hours.

Wednesday 14 June

Lecture on the Science Museum

Sir Neil Cossons, Director of the Science Museum will talk about its origins and future. To be held in the lecture theatre at the V&A Museum at 19.15 hours. Complimentary tickets available to IC staff. Telephone 0171-938 8407.

CONFERENCE

Saturday 10 June

South Kensington Institute for the History of Technology Conference

'Chemistry in English universities in the early nineteenth century'. To be held in the Conference Room of the Science Museum and Imperial College Libraries. The meeting fee is £4.00 plus lunch (£3.50). Further information from John Hudson 01223 363271 extension 2380.

TRAINING PROGRAMME COURSES

Monday 19 June

Health and safety course

'Working with display screens/VDUs'. Afternoon course. No charge. For further information ring extension 49422.

Wednesday 28 June

Course for academic and research staff

'Facing the media - TV and radio'. No charge. For further information ring extension 45521/0.

Thursday 29 June

Course for academic and research

staff

'Facing the media - the telephone interview'. No charge. For further information ring extension 45521/0.

July

COLLEGE EVENTS

Saturday 1 July

Street party and Hospital open day

To be held in Norfolk Place at 12.30-15.30 hours. Further information from the Project Manager 0171-725 1330.

Friends of Imperial College, day

visit to Silwood Park

Call Penny Berkut for information, extension 48740.

7 - 9 July

UK Alumni Weekend

The College welcomes former students to a day of lectures and demonstrations, with reunion dinner and dancing in Beit Quad. In particular focus will be the departments of Chemistry, Computing and Materials.

Thursday 13 July

Annual research student barbecue

Queen's Lawn, 18.30 hours. Call HUB office for information, extension 48740/1.

TRAINING PROGRAMME COURSES

Tuesday 4 July

'Career development workshop for women academics'

No charge. For further information ring extension 45521/0.

NOTICE BOARD

UK/Hong Kong joint research scheme

We are invited to submit research proposals under this scheme for 1995/96. The scheme, which has been running since 1991, is designed to promote research collaboration between British universities and seven higher education institutions in Hong Kong. Information about the scheme, and application forms are available from the International Office, Room 321, Sheffield Building, extension 58040. The closing date for applications is 1 August 1995 and have to be made jointly through the Hong Kong partner institution direct to the British Council in Hong Kong.

AWISE

AWISE (Association for women in science and engineering) is a forum, a resource, a collective voice for women in science, engineering, technology and medicine. The AWISE aim is promotion of science for women, beginning with schools and extending to universities and industry. To join the new South Kensington Group e-mail majordomo@doc.ic.ac.uk Leave the subject line blank and include 'subscribe awise' in the body of the e-mail.

Vacancy for Assistant Warden

Applications are currently invited for the post of Assistant Warden of Wilson House, the hall of residence for medical students in Sussex Gardens, W2. Rent-free accommodation in a self-contained flat offered in exchange for pastoral duties within the House. Any non-undergraduate member of the College is eligible to apply. Details and application forms available from Personnel, room 511, Sheffield. Extension 55513.

IC Reporter

IC Reporter will be published fortnightly during term time. Contributions for the next issue should be received by Friday 9 June.

These can be sent to Victoria Browning via e-mail (vbrowning) or internal post (Rm 546b, Sheffield Building). Extension 46697. Fax 0171-594 6700.

Please note the editor reserves the right to cut or amend the articles as necessary. Information correct at time of going to press.

Letters to the Editor

RPMS response to short-term contracts

Dear Editor

I have followed the recent correspondence in the IC Reporter with some interest not least because the RPMS has over 400 staff on fixed-term contracts and is, of course, scheduled to become part of Imperial College in 1998. I hope, therefore, you will permit comment from an outsider.

In 1978 this School made three key decisions regarding staff on fixed-term contracts:

- i) waiver clauses were abolished;
- ii) all conditions of service for staff on fixed-term contracts were harmonised with conditions for established staff so that the only difference was the inclusion of a termination date; and
- iii) length of contract was in all instances to be coterminous with the period of funding.

These principles have remained unaltered for seventeen years. During that time we have paid two redundancy payments and have never had a case of unfair dismissal brought against the School as a consequence of the expiry of funding.

We believed in 1978 and still

believe today that it is morally indefensible to treat staff differently simply because of the funding source. We acknowledge there is a great difficulty in providing career security for staff on fixed-term contracts although this is a national not a local problem. However, it is our firmly held view that as an employer we should do everything we can to mitigate the disadvantage that staff on fixed-term contracts already suffer, as it is wholly counter-productive to encourage such staff to spend a significant proportion of their time seeking alternative employment.

Yours faithfully
Neil Gershon, Secretary.
Royal Postgraduate Medical School

Pimlico Connection

Dear Editor

I see to my dismay that IC Reporter has repeated an error from a Times Higher report of the recent IC/BP conference on student tutoring. The Pimlico Connection is not for the chop: funds have been secured for a 0.5 FTE coordinator. (Incidentally, the reports in the Times Higher and the TES contained many other errors - but too

trivial to correct.) It would be good if this misapprehension could be corrected.

With best wishes
Sinclair Goodlad
Director, Humanities Programme

Apologies for this error. Information in the Media Mentions column is compiled by the Press Office from newspaper clippings. Unfortunately the papers don't always get things right!
Ed.

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ICCET group sponsorship of the first courses in the UK to be offered on this subject. The course is unique in the UK in that it offers a technology-based approach, aiming to prepare students for careers in the burgeoning fields of environmental consultancy or environmental management.

The students will also benefit from the partnership between Imperial and Denton Hall. Students will have the opportunity to understand the true implications of environmental law for business, as well as to assess the role of law in environmental policy.

SuperJANET visit

The president of the South Korean National Computerisation

Agency, Dr Chui-Soo Lee, visited the College with two of his colleagues to see SuperJANET in action.

The visit, on Tuesday 16 May, was organised by the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency to help the South Korean agency gather information to launch a project similar to SuperJANET.

Professor Bob Hynds and Henry Gluck of the Centre for Computing Services held discussions with the visitors.

The Space and Atmospheric Group in the Blackett Laboratory, represented by Dr Joanna Haigh and Conrad Winchester, demonstrated the use of SuperJANET in the scanning of satellite images from the archive at DRAL, and in the inter-university UGAMP atmospheric modelling project.