INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & LIBRARIES CONTINUED

2008/09 also saw a dramatic increase in the usage of the University portal, My Bristol, with around 300 staff, 5,000 undergraduates and 2,000 postgraduates regularly using the facility since 1 October 2008. The portal is a gateway to web-based services within and beyond the University. By signing in, students and staff can access a range of tools and services in one place, such as email, course details, Blackboard, the Students’ Union and the Sports Centre.

Help for researchers in developing countries

The University’s Institute for Learning and Research Technology has developed a new website for an international project aimed at helping researchers in developing countries to publish their work and advance their research careers. AuthorAID (www.authoraid.info) is a free online community providing access to advice, mentoring, discussion forums and a range of material on best practice in writing and publication. It is based at the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications and supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation and the UK Department for International Development.

Boosting research

The University’s new High Performance Computing system, Blue Crystal, became fully operational, and now has more than 250 active users. The system supports research in disciplines such as aerospace engineering, molecular modelling, climate change and social medicine, among others, with a combined project income to date of around £9.5 million. In November 2008, Blue Crystal was named as the 86th most powerful supercomputer in the world, helping to establish Bristol as a world-leading centre for research. The next stage of development will be the introduction of a large-scale (one petabyte) data-storage facility to complement Blue Crystal’s computational power.

Other significant activities during the year include work with Research and Enterprise Development (RED) on the creation of a research applications and contracts database for better visibility and management of contracts and awards from application through to completion. Work also began on a project with RED and Communications and Marketing Services to develop a new website through which to showcase the University’s research.

Community collaborations

As well as providing tools to enable communication between members of the University, Information Services facilitates projects with external collaborators. During 2008/09, the division worked with the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement to develop web-based resources to support its local and national activities. The Bristol-based Centre is a partnership between the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England and aims to co-ordinate UK universities’ best practice in public engagement and to deepen the social impact and relevance of their work.

Information Services also worked with the Department of Drama and Bristol’s Watershed Media Centre on the Semantic Tools for Screen Arts Research (STARS) project. This provides an innovative way of mapping and annotating connections between artists, video performances and other research centres on the web, supporting new collaborations and new perspectives on screen arts research.

Maintaining high-quality information systems

Underpinning all these developments, the division invested more than £1 million in core ICT infrastructure, such as the University’s data network, IT systems hardware and software and PC provision in Information Services sites. Such investment ensures that critical IT services are robust and resilient and that business continuity plans are established, tested and kept up to date.

ALUMNI DISTINCTIONS & HONORARY DEGREES

ALUMNI DISTINCTIONS

Bristol alumni excel in many fields. The following are among those who were awarded particular distinctions by external organisations in 2008/09.

Fellow of the British Academy

Professor Paul Cloke (DSc 1993), Professor Glyn Humphreys (BSc 1976, PhD 1980), Professor Margaret Snowling, FRSA (BSc 1976), Professor Peter Taylor-Gooby (BA 1969)

Professor Linda Colley, FBA (BA 1972, Hon DLit 2006) Author and Shelby MC Davis 1958 Professor of History, Princeton University, for services to historical studies

Keith Elliott (BSc 1968, Diploma in Social Sciences) Principal at the City of Bristol College, for services to further education

Dr Patricia Hamilton (BSc 1972, MSc/PhD 1976) President, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, for services to medicine

Nicholas Campbell Paul (BSc 1986) Chairman, Advantage West Midlands, for services to business

David Tanner, OBE (BA 1973) Performance Director, GB Rowing Team, for services to sport

Professor Peter Neil Temple Wells, FRSE (MSc 1962, PhD 1966) Research Professor and Senior Scientific Director, Institute of Medical Engineering and Medical Physics, University of Cardiff, for services to healthcare science

Professor Lynn Gladden (BSc 1982) Shell Professor of Chemical Engineering, University of Cambridge, for services to science

Professor Peter Toyné (BA 1962) Lately Vice-Chancellor, Liverpool John Moores University, for services to the community

HONORARY DEGREES

Every year, the University awards its own distinctions. Below we list all those who received honorary degrees from Bristol in 2008/09 in recognition of outstanding achievement.

Dr Philip Ball Science writer and a Bristol graduate, Doctor of Letters

Dr Andrew Garrad Managing Director of Garrad Hassan Group Ltd, Doctor of Engineering

Professor Caroline Gipp Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wolverhampton and a Bristol graduate, Doctor of Laws

The Very Reverend Robert Grimley, President, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, for services to medicine

Caroline James Nurse and chair of Frensham After Burns Children’s Club, Master of Arts (see p30)

Josh Lewsey Rugby international and a Bristol graduate, Doctor of Laws

Sue McMillen Chair of the Vassall Centre Trust, Masters of Arts (see p30)

Batook Pandya Campaigner for racial tolerance, Master of Arts (see p30)

Iain Percy, OBE, MBE Double Olympic gold medalist and a Bristol graduate, Doctor of Laws

Professor Chris Rapley, CBE Director, Science Museum, Doctor of Science

Dr Una Ryan, OBE Formerly President and CEO of AVANT Immunotherapeutics and a Bristol graduate, Doctor of Science

Louis Sherwood Former Chairman of Gateway Foodmarkets, HTV West and Clerical Medical Investment Group, Doctor of Laws

Alwen Williams (BA 1980) Chief Executive, Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust, for services to healthcare

DCMG Denise Holt, CMG (BA 1970) Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain

Olympic medals

Iain Percy, MBE, OBE (BSc 1996) Olympic Gold Medal for Great Britain – Sailing

Tony awards

Peter Darling (BA 1985) Best Choreography in a Musical (Billy Elliot)

Matthew Warchus (BA 1998) Best Direction of a Play (God of Carnage)

BAFTA awards

Esther May Campbell (BA 1995) Best Short Film (September)

2008/09 REVIEW OF THE YEAR
ALUMNI DISTINCTIONS & HONORARY DEGREES CONTINUED

Four of the honorary degrees awarded in 2008/09 deserve special mention. As part of its centenary celebrations, the University conferred honorary Master of Arts degrees on four individuals who have made a significant contribution to the local community. The University teamed up with the Bristol Evening Post to find the four local heroes, with readers nominating 56 individuals in total. The recipients are featured below.

PHILANTHROPY

Teaching and research at Bristol has always been enhanced by the generosity of alumni, friends, companies, charitable trusts, students and staff. In every aspect of life, from the creation of 3G mobile technology, to life-changing research that has saved thousands of babies from cot death, to finding the blueprint which enabled the accurate recreation of the Globe Theatre, the University makes an impact. Philanthropic support makes this great university – the extraordinary outcomes of its research and the successes of its graduates – even greater.
“A good education can have an incredible impact, both for the student as well as the country and potentially the world. Bristol’s current research into climate change is a shining example of this. It is a growing concern not only for our own generation but for generations to come.”

Simon Wathen
(LLB 1972) and Julia Wathen
(BSc 1972)
The Cobden Book of Hours was among 100 treasures from the University of Bristol's Special Collections to feature in an online exhibition of some of the rarest and most interesting items held at the University, organised as part of the University's celebrations of the centenary of the granting of the University's Royal Charter.

The stem-cell research carried out by Professors Anthony Hollander and Martin Pardoe (see p17) appeared in Nature's magazine Top 10 in December, highlighting the importance of this area of research, which has the potential to change the course of medicine. The latest breakthrough in the field has been the production of an artificial human embryo using the technique of somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT). This was announced in July by a team of researchers from the University of Sheffield and the University of Manchester, led by Professor David Catling in the Department of Earth Sciences; and the discovery by Dr Alastair Pike and his colleagues of the earliest evidence of a nuclear family (see p9).

Other photographs supplied by members of University staff and students, and from the Museum of Bristol's collections include a pan-European project to develop biologically inspired artificial intelligence systems. The project, which was launched in March, is being led by Dr Simon Schaefer at the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England, and the University of Sheffield. It is being funded by the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and brings together researchers from across Europe to develop new technologies for the design and development of artificial intelligence systems.

The University of Bristol's Bristol ChemLabS, one of the University's two Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (the other is AIMS – Applied and Integrated Medical Sciences; the other is AIMS – Applied and Integrated Medical Sciences; the other is AIMS – Applied and Integrated Medical Sciences; the other is AIMS – Applied and Integrated Medical Sciences), had a record month for chemistry outreach activities, clocking up around 4,500 face-to-face engagements as far apart as South Africa, France, Spain and Italy.

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