

A selection of unusual, notable, or just plain photogenic, events from the University year.



AUGUST

ALSPAC throws a party for 14,000
The first day of Bristol's 2005 Balloon Fiesta also marked the first ever meeting of a group of teenagers collectively known as the Children of the 90s. The organisers of the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) invited all 14,000 Children of the 90s to a giant party, 14 years after their pregnant mothers joined this world-famous research project. The party, at Ashton Court Mansion, was a 'thank-you' to the parents and children for giving enormous amounts of time and effort to help improve the health of future generations.



SEPTEMBER

Tango accentuates the positive
World-class tango stars, Diego 'El Pajaro' Riemer and Mercedes 'Mecha' Espinel, gave a class at the Department of Drama during Positive Working Environment Week. The week was part of the ongoing PWE initiative, which has as its mission 'Making working life productive, rewarding, enjoyable and healthy'. Among the week's 80 other events were trampoline lessons, tips on how to relax, a look behind the scenes at Goldney Hall and a bike-to-work festival. Over 1,200 people (20 per cent of the workforce) took part in the week, which is likely to become an annual fixture.



OCTOBER

Competition entries bridge the gap
Pretend there's no Clifton Suspension Bridge; that was the brief for a competition, launched by the University and *New Civil Engineer* magazine, to design a crossing to span the Avon Gorge using modern technologies and materials and those anticipated over the next 50 years. The Clifton Crossing Competition, endorsed by the Royal Academy of Engineering, was a re-run of the competition won by Isambard Kingdom Brunel in 1831. Professional engineers, engineering students and school pupils brought their ingenuity to bear on the task. The winner, announced in July, was Youssef Ghali from Egypt.



NOVEMBER

Silence in Hispanic Studies
The Department of Hispanic Studies hosted a public staging of a new play about a political prisoner's 13 years of confinement and torture – featuring a performance by the former prisoner himself. *El Arte del Silencio* (The Art of Silence), by Jennifer Hartley, recounts the experience of Paraguayan theatrical activist Emilio Barreto during his imprisonment under the dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner for expressing views offensive to the regime. There was also a discussion with Jennifer Hartley and Emilio Barreto (who performed the play with Nelson Viveros), and a workshop with the author and actors.



DECEMBER

Degree for Great War veteran
The University awarded an Honorary degree to a special visitor at the annual meeting of the University Court. Harry Patch, a 107-year-old veteran of the Great War and a member of the workforce that constructed the Wills Memorial Building, was honoured with the degree of Master of Arts – in the Great Hall of the landmark that he helped to build. After being wounded at the Battle of Passchendaele, Harry worked as a plumber on the Wills Building. He was at the topping-out ceremony and remembers placing newly minted coins under the lead sheeting at the top of the tower.



JANUARY

Brunel 200 begins with talks
At the beginning of the 200th anniversary of the birth of the world's most famous engineer, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the University held a series of public talks. These highlighted how Bristol's world-leading engineering experts are continuing Brunel's legacy by tackling the challenges facing the modern world. Topics included climate change and floods (Professor Ian Cluckie, Civil Engineering), the future of air travel (Professor Nick Lieven, Aerospace Engineering), designing for earthquakes (Professor Colin Taylor, Civil Engineering) and telecommunications (Professor Joe McGeehan, Communications Engineering).



FEBRUARY

Bristol Sport Volunteering Fair
Sporting enthusiasts who were considering becoming more involved in supporting local community sports had a chance to survey the projects available, at the Bristol Sport Volunteering Fair, held at Ashton Park Sport Centre and hosted by the Bristol Sport Education Forum, in which the University is a key partner. Many community sport initiatives across the city rely on hundreds of volunteers to give up their time to help run the numerous sports and activity clubs in Bristol; the annual Fair aims to attract people interested in volunteering and show them how they can get involved.



MARCH

New Botanic Garden opens
The University's new Botanic Garden opened to visitors, who were able to see the first phase of its development. The garden has four core collections: Evolution, Rare and Threatened Natives, Mediterranean Plants and Useful Plants. Most plants have been propagated over the past two years, but new plant material, particularly for the Evolution Collection, is being acquired from other botanic gardens such as Kew and Edinburgh, and in the case of the most 'primitive' living flowering plant, *Amborella trichopoda*, from New Caledonia. The garden should be formally opened by summer 2007.



APRIL

BAFTA nominations for TV academics
The BBC Two series *Coast*, whose presenters include Dr Mark Horton (from the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology), Dr Alice Roberts (from the Department of Anatomy) and Bristol graduate Miranda Krestovnikoff, was nominated for two BAFTA awards: one for Best Factual Series, and the other for Interactivity. At the BAFTA ceremony the following month, the series won the Interactivity award for the special features on the *Coast* website that enabled users to download 30 'audio walks' onto an mp3 player or mobile phone.



MAY

Chinese Ambassador visit
The University's Language Centre was honoured by a visit from a delegation led by His Excellency, the Chinese Ambassador, Zha Peixin and his wife, Zhang Xiaokang, former Ambassador to the Republic of Ireland. The reason for the visit was to hand over a donation of over 500 books, CDs and interactive materials for the teaching of Mandarin Chinese. Bristol was selected as a result of the Language Centre's enthusiasm and initiative in introducing Mandarin Chinese into its portfolio of programmes and the commitment shown by the University in establishing the Centre for East Asian Studies.



JUNE

Prime Minister comes to Bristol
A long while ago, the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, was invited to give a lecture at the University. He did so in June. He spoke about the criminal justice system and the balance between the rights of criminals and those of victims. He was joined on the podium by Rod Morgan, Chair of the Youth Justice Board and an Emeritus Professor at Bristol, and by Michelle Bernasconi, who won a Home Office award for bravery in taking a stand against criminal behaviour on her estate. The Vice-Chancellor hosted and chaired the occasion, which attracted a massive amount of publicity.



JULY

New veterinary service for exotic pets
Cats, dogs and exotic pets are now being treated at new facilities at Langford, after the Department of Clinical Veterinary Science opened its first-opinion Small Animal Practice. The expanded practice provides increased kennelling for hospitalised cats and dogs, a new canine hydrotherapy unit, and a suite of specialised wards and treatment rooms for some of the more exotic pets that are increasingly seen in veterinary practices around the UK. The Small Animal Practice is dedicated to the training of Veterinary and Veterinary Nursing undergraduates.