



## November 2008



*Minister David Lammy with  
Stuart McDonough*

### **Minister Presents Environmental Award to University**

Bath Spa University has been awarded a certificate by the Carbon Trust in recognition of its plans for cutting carbon emissions. The framed certificate was presented by the Minister for Higher Education, David Lammy, to the University's Corporate Services Manager, Stuart McDonough.

The Carbon Trust Higher Education Carbon Management Programme is a scheme for supporting and assisting universities to develop effective energy saving and carbon reduction programmes. Working with Carbon Trust specialists, the BSU Energy Team developed a detailed, five year Strategic Implementation Programme (SIP) (2007/08– 2011/12) for energy and carbon reduction.

The SIP is in effect a Carbon Management Plan which commits the University to a reduction in carbon emissions of 25 per cent over a five year period. Although the principal means of achieving this will be through reduced energy use (producing projected savings of £450,000 over the five years), the Plan also includes proposals to reduce staff travel in favour of IT solutions (video conferencing etc) and development of waste recycling. The target is to reduce waste to landfill by 50 per cent.

A good start has been made. Already, in the Plan's first year, Bath Spa can demonstrate a reduction of at least 349 tonnes in carbon emissions. This will increase as energy savings and waste recycling gather pace.

The Carbon Trust Certificate makes a hat trick of environmental awards for BSU in 2008. The University previously gained a Bronze, then Silver, accreditation under the national EcoCampus scheme for the higher education sector. Bath Spa was the first university taking part to achieve the Silver level award.

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### **Bath Spa Writing Graduate Wins Second Book Prize**

Author Sally Nicholls has won a second book prize for her debut novel, *Ways to Live Forever*, which she wrote when she was a student on the Writing for Young People Masters' Degree at Bath Spa University.

She was declared the winner of the prestigious Irish prize, the Glen Dimplex New Writers Awards 2008. The judges chose her novel, about a young boy dying of leukaemia, from a shortlist of 30 by emerging writers published in Ireland and Britain.



*Sally Nicholls*



Sally, who won the children's category as well as the overall award, was presented with £20,000 in prize money at a gala dinner in Dublin. In February the 24-year-old was awarded the Waterstone's Children's Book Prize for her novel, which is aimed at teenage readers.

Sally Nicholls became a student on the MA Writing for Young People in 2005. During her course she won a prize for the writer showing most potential.

At the Irish awards ceremony chairman of the judges and poet Gerard Smyth predicted that *Ways to Live Forever* "in time will become a children's classic". He said the book had "qualities of story-telling to draw in readers of any age. It is profound, honest, intelligent, funny and sad, and filled with scenes that continue to haunt after the final, inevitable, chapter."

Julia Green, the Writing for Young People course leader at Bath Spa, said: "This is brilliant news for Sally and everyone involved with our MA course. Winning one book prize, as Sally did earlier this year, was a great tribute to her outstanding talent. For her to carry off a second award is even more remarkable and proof that her novel really is of the finest quality."

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### Big Increase in Science Students



*Science Enrichment in the Lab*

Bath Spa University has bucked the national trend by achieving a significant increase in the number of science students. Latest figures from the University show a rise of 25 per cent in recruitment to subjects in its School of Science and the Environment (SSE) since 2006.

Two years ago the School's undergraduate courses had a total of 295 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) students. In 2007 that figure increased to 324. For this academic year it has gone up again to 371 FTE. The steepest rise is in the popularity of Food and Nutrition courses at Bath Spa, for which recruitment has almost doubled since 2004.

Nationally there has been a decline over recent years in the numbers studying science and maths at university. However the Higher Education Funding Council for England is now predicting a slight increase for next year.

Dr David Watson, Assistant Head of SSE, attributes the dramatic improvement at Bath Spa partly to closer collaboration with local schools and colleges.

During the past year Dr Watson and his colleagues have run a series of science enrichment activities on the University's Newton Park campus for pupils from 27 secondary schools and colleges in the Bath and Bristol area. The seven events, led by Bath Spa staff and student ambassadors, drew in a total of 350 pupils.



As well as the annual Food and Nutrition Awareness Day, which is well established, there have been half a dozen new activity days, taking advantage of the Newton Park site's superb natural environment for field study work and its well equipped laboratories for experimental and analytical work.

Dr Watson is delighted by the increased popularity of science courses at Bath Spa. He said: "We hope we are helping to kick-start a reversal in the decline in numbers of people studying science in higher education. Our staff have increased their collaboration with schools and colleges in the area and this seems to be paying dividends."

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### Design Graduate Anna Is One to Watch

A fashion and textiles graduate from Bath Spa University has won a national competition to find the brightest young talent in interior design.

Anna Hill was chosen from among thousands of hopefuls as winner of the One to Watch competition, run by an interior design website. The judges included leading designers Sir Terence Conran and Philippe Starck.

Anna, who graduated from Bath Spa's School of Art and Design in 2007, impressed the judges with her dazzling bird, animal and flower designs for wallpaper. Her prize is £1,000 cash and a design retail contract.

25-year-old Anna uses computer aided design for her colourful and highly original wallpaper creations. With the prize money she is setting up her own business to help sell them.

The Bath Spa graduate is delighted to gain such an accolade from some of the biggest names in the industry. She said: "It's absolutely amazing that I won – I never expected even to make the top ten. I don't know yet who the contract will be with but I am really excited."

Anna's designs are inspired by the natural world – and especially birds, which she says have always fascinated her. Among those featuring in her work are shell ducks, spoonbills, egrets, hummingbirds and pheasants.

Amanda Goode, lecturer in the Fashion and Textile Design department at Bath Spa University, said: "We are delighted to hear of Anna's success. She was a very talented and completely dedicated student. With her fantastic flair and ability we are not surprised she has done so well."

You can view Anna's winning designs on her website: [www.anna-hill.co.uk](http://www.anna-hill.co.uk)

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*Wall to Wall Success: Anna Hill*





## Open Days Attract the Crowds

There was an excellent turn-out at all three Open Days in October. Bookings for each event, featuring campus and halls of residence tours, subject talks and workshops, had to be closed beforehand due to their popularity.

An estimated total of more than 1,700 potential students attended in all. Over 300 came to the Open Day for the School of Music and Performing Arts on Friday 24 October. At least 600 and 800 respectively were at the general Open Days on Saturdays 18 and 25 October.

Over 60 student ambassadors, as well as large numbers of staff, were on hand to give everyone a warm welcome, show them round and provide all the information they needed.

Each Open Day resulted in plenty of positive feedback from the visitors. Comments included: "The talks were inspirational;" " I found general enthusiasm from staff and students on all aspects of Bath Spa as well as their subjects – couldn't have been better!"

An Open day at the School of Art and Design, for which over 300 people have already booked, is being held on Wednesday 3 December.

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## New Circus Degree Course – As Seen on TV



*Circomedia*

The new foundation degree in Contemporary Circus and Physical Performance has attracted widespread news coverage on regional TV, local radio and in the newspapers. The course is being offered in partnership with Bristol-based Circomedia, Europe's leading centre for circus with physical theatre.

The foundation degree course is unique because it integrates a full range of circus skills, including trapeze, juggling, acrobatics and clowning, with physical theatre and dance techniques and marketing of the students' work.

The first intake of 25 students, who are aged 18 to 41, have started their course in premises converted from a former Victorian school at Kingswood on the outskirts of Bristol. Many of them took part in a special demonstration of their skills to the media on 29 October. It resulted in news reports on BBC Radio Bristol, Points West and ITV West, as well as in the Bath Chronicle, Western Daily Press, Venue and several other outlets.

Over the next two years the students will learn from experienced performance teachers a wide range of disciplines and styles that incorporate circus, dance, theatre and cabaret.

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*Graduate Careers Evening*

## Surviving a Recession – Graduate Advice

Bath Spa has taken action to help its recent graduates survive the economic downturn. The University's careers service, Bath Spa Careers, organised a Graduate Career Development Evening to give them a boost in the jobs market. More than 30 former students who graduated in 2006, 2007 or 2008 attended the event on 4 November at Riverside Court.

The evening was aimed at graduates who want to improve further their career prospects and discover the latest placement, training and development opportunities. Careers professionals from the University, along with specialist industry advisers, gave rapid consultations on identifying each graduate's immediate priorities and longer term goals.

During the event our graduates also provided useful insights into their future career plans, how their courses had prepared them for the 'world of work' and what advice they would offer to current students. The event received news coverage on GWR and BBC Radio Bristol.



*Careers Fair*

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## Careers, Work Experience and Volunteering Fair

What do the following major employers all have in common: NHS, Somerfield, Ordnance Survey, Taylor & Francis, Marriott Hotels, Transport for London? They all, along with around 30 other exhibitors, will be on campus on Thursday 27 November for this year's Careers, Work Experience and Volunteering Fair. It takes place at Newton Park Students' Union from 10.30am to 3pm, with a shuttle bus running from Sion Hill.

The Fair, which is aimed at all Bath Spa students, brings together a wide range of local, national and international employers, voluntary organisations and support bodies to provide a taste of the opportunities available for current students and graduates. It's also a great chance to find out exactly what employers want.

The last Careers Fair, held in April, attracted over 800 students - and much positive feedback. When students were asked what they found most useful about it, typical responses included: "talking to actual employers with real experience" and "knowing the different areas of careers available".

This month's event, presented by Bath Spa Careers and supported by the Students' Union, will feature even more employers and a wider variety of job sectors. Visit [www.bathspa.ac.uk/careers](http://www.bathspa.ac.uk/careers) for the latest information.

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*Tracking School Pollution*

## Technology Helps Young Scientists to Go Green

Experts from Bath Spa University are helping local school children to track pollution in the environment – aided by some of the latest technology. The University's science education researchers have joined forces with a Bath firm, ScienceScope, to devise the project for teachers and pupils at ten local primary schools.

Nine and ten year olds are being introduced to cutting edge technology for monitoring the quality of the environment around their schools. They will learn to measure levels of carbon monoxide fumes, noise and other pollution in the atmosphere, using equipment developed by ScienceScope.

The technology involves an innovative blend of electronic datalogging and GPS, as used in car satellite navigation systems. Information is combined to produce interactive three-dimensional maps of each school's environmental quality, which are superimposed on detailed satellite images from Google Earth.

The team from Bath Spa's Centre for Research in Early Scientific Learning are helping school teachers use this technology to make their pupils better at the interpretation and presentation of complex scientific data.

With the aid of a Bath environmental charity, Envolve, the schools will use the data to become officially certified as 'Eco-schools'. Meanwhile the Science Learning Centre South West, based at Explore@Bristol, will enable all participants in the scheme to share their data via an online portal.

Professor Dan Davies, Head of Research for the University's School of Education, said: "This technology will help children get better at interpreting scientific information and enrich their environmental understanding with some real evidence."

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## Full Houses and Rave Reviews for Bath Spa Live

The Bath Spa Live autumn season has opened with packed houses and glowing reviews. Highlights so far include two performances by Precarious Dance Company, fresh from their run at the Edinburgh Festival; David Benson's moving solo show 'My Life with Kenneth Williams'; and a visit from Croatian experimental theatre company BADco with 'Memories Are Made of This'.

The programme has won lavish praise in the local media, with review comments such as: "Bath Spa University has an excellent theatre programme which is in danger of being missed by mainstream theatregoers in Bath". A stage adaptation of John Fowles' novel 'The Collector' was described in the Bath Chronicle as "another coup for Bath Spa Live".



*Precarious Dance Company*



Plans for the New Year include a major event in February for young people at the Egg Theatre in Bath. 'Club Of Hearts' will be an interactive show for very young children (older siblings and adults allowed if accompanied by a responsible toddler). It will see students from Performing Arts, Dance, Drama, Music and Creative Music Technology working together to create outlandish characters and an environment that combines the eccentric world of Alice In Wonderland with the weirdness of Tim Burton.

For details of the full programme go to [www.bathspalive.com](http://www.bathspalive.com)

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### Alumni Association Up and Running



Bath Spa may be quite new as a university, but it has existed as an institution since 1892. All past students are part of BSU's rich history. Now they can also join in its exciting future – as alumni.

The University has created a new Alumni Association – and already, in less than a year, it has signed up 2,500 graduates. They include alumni from as far back as 1961. The Association is also in contact with many more alumni through active groups on sites such as Facebook and Linked In.

Alumni Officer Abi Thatcher has worked with colleagues across the University to develop an initial offering of services, benefits and opportunities for alumni, which are highlighted on the new alumni pages on the University website.

The value of the Alumni Association lies in participation from all, including lecturers, other University staff and graduating students. There is a growing awareness of the Association and its benefits across the University, and ideas from staff to help make it a really successful venture are welcome.

You can email the Alumni Association via: [alumni@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@bathspa.ac.uk) or visit its website: [www.bathspa.ac.uk/services/alumni](http://www.bathspa.ac.uk/services/alumni)

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### The Return of Dracula – New Reader's Guide



Professor William Hughes

If you fancy getting your teeth into a good read this Christmas how about the latest book on Dracula by Bath Spa's Professor of Gothic Studies, William Hughes? Professor Hughes' *Bram Stoker – Dracula: A Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism* is published on 21 November in hardback and paperback by Palgrave Macmillan, price £13.99 for the paperback version.

The book is a comprehensive survey of the critical response to Bram Stoker's novel from its publication in 1897 right up to the present day. When it first appeared *Dracula* was not an instant commercial success and was dismissed by many Victorian reviewers as lurid and gruesome.



Professor Hughes details how critical opinion has evolved with the passage of time and how the novel's interpretation has been influenced by modern theories associated with psychoanalysis, sexuality and history.

This is William Hughes' fifth book on *Dracula* and its author. His other publications include *Bram Stoker: A Bibliography* (1997 but since revised); *Beyond Dracula: Bram Stoker's Fiction and its Cultural Context* (2000); and, in 2007, an annotated student edition of the novel. He is also expecting his new shorter *Reader's Guide to Dracula* to be published next year.

For more information on *Bram Stoker – Dracula* go to the School of English and Creative Studies website: [www.ecsbathspa.com](http://www.ecsbathspa.com)

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