



January 2009



Good Results for Bath Spa in RAE 2008

Bath Spa University has performed well in the latest official rankings for the quality of university research across the UK. In league tables that take into account the number of academic staff entered the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2008 placed Bath Spa at around 80th out of 132 universities and among the top third of post-1992 universities.

The work of 86 academic staff from Bath Spa in 10 subject areas was submitted for RAE 2008 – in Art and Design, Biological Sciences, Communication/ Cultural and Media Studies, Education, English, Geography, History, Music, Psychology and Theology and Religious Studies.

Each of the 10 submissions was graded according to whether the work was nationally recognised (1*), internationally recognised (2*), internationally excellent (3*) or world-leading (4*).

Five submissions (Art and Design, Communication/ Cultural and Media Studies, English, History and Music) were judged to have some of their research at world-leading (4*) level. Nine of the 10 submissions achieved a proportion of internationally excellent (3*), or better, ratings.

All 10 submissions contained some research graded as internationally recognised (2*) or better – most notably 85 per cent of Art and Design, 80 per cent of English, History and Music and 70 per cent of Psychology.

The funding which will accompany these results will not be announced until March 2009.

Full results of RAE 2008 are available at <http://www.rae.ac.uk>



Holly Simpkins

Fashion Student to Showcase on London Catwalk

A fashion student from Bath Spa University, Holly Simpkins, is being given a rare opportunity to showcase her designs on the catwalk in London.

She has been selected as a finalist for a national design competition, which allows her work to feature in a catwalk show during London Fashion Week in February.

Holly is a third year Fashion Design student. She had to submit a sketchbook and illustrations for the competition, which is run by a charity, Fashion Awareness Direct (FAD). It aims to launch young designers and bridge the gap between college and industry.



One of Holly's Designs

As one of 14 finalists in the FAD competition Holly now receives £100 towards the cost of making her outfits for the London Fashion Week show.

The overall winner, to be judged by a panel of industry experts, will be awarded £2,000 and a work placement. There are also prizes of £1,000 each and work placements for two runners-up.

Louise Pickles, Fashion Course Leader, said: "Holly is the first fashion student from Bath Spa to reach the finals of a national design competition.

"We wish her all the best for the final catwalk show in February. The competition offers a great opportunity for Holly to have her work recognized on a national scale."

Classroom Invasion by Trainee Teachers



'Saturation' Teaching at
Culverhay School

Schools are sometimes criticised over the size of their classes and lack of individual attention for pupils. Bath Spa University has now come up with an answer – saturation teaching. Large groups of the University's trainee teachers have been drafted into the same classroom all at the same time to help 14-year-old children at a comprehensive school in Bath.

For Year 9 science lessons at the boys-only Culverhay School the regular teacher is joined once a week by as many as 16 trainees from the Bath Spa Secondary PGCE course in science teaching. It means the class of 28 boys has a pupil/teacher ratio of just 1.6 to 1 for these lessons and many children can be taught virtually on a one to one basis.

The aim is to improve their performance in exams and, in particular, give them better preparation for answering questions at GCSE level.



The student teachers work in teams to deliver the lesson, while sharing their innovative ideas with everybody. They focus especially on simple but practical devices to make science more accessible and interesting for boys, such as stretching a supermarket bag to demonstrate the laws of physics. They are also improving the boys' skills in measuring, drawing graphs and making calculations.

The scheme was created by John Lee, Bath Spa's PGCE course leader in Secondary Science. Mr Lee, who is a former acting school head, says the children and his trainees all benefit:

"The pupils' attention spans have improved, they are very focused on the activities because we make them slightly competitive and we relate science to everyday things. The initial feedback from our trainees is that it has improved their confidence and ability to engage with the children before they go on official teaching practice."



The University's 'saturation teaching' approach at Culverhay School has proved so successful that it is being extended to classes in PE, English and Music. John Lee hopes his idea will eventually be taken up by schools across the country.

Bath Spa Writer Pens Christmas Cracker at Egg Theatre

An adaptation of Hoffmann's classic tale *The Nutcracker*, which has been enthralled audiences at Bath's Egg Theatre over Christmas and New Year, was written by Bath Spa lecturer Hattie Naylor.

Hattie, who teaches scriptwriting on the University's Creative Writing courses, was part of the Egg creative team responsible for this world premier production.

Her script for *The Nutcracker*, inspired by Hoffman's original version of the story, was first commissioned for BBC Radio 4 in 2004 and broadcast at Christmas that year.

For the Egg show Hattie joined forces with director Lee Lyford, composer and musician Paul Dodgson and set designer Hayley Grindle to create a magical blend of words, music and artistic vision loved by children and adults alike. It's the seventh production on which the team have all worked together.

Hattie has won many other accolades for her theatre and radio scripts, including *Writing the Century: A Paintbrush Reporter*, which was serialised recently by Radio 4.



Hattie Naylor

Wanted - Entrepreneurs of the Future

With Britain in the grip of a recession young entrepreneurs need all the help they can get. So if you have a bright idea for a new product or service, why not enter Bath Spa's Business Plan Competition 2009?

The competition, with a top prize of £1,000, is open to all our students, including postgraduates. It offers an opportunity to develop an idea into a structured plan for starting your own business. This year a £500 prize for Enterprise in the Curriculum has been introduced, covering projects linked to students' courses.

Last year's winner, ceramics student Claire Baker, designed a prayer pot during her studies in the School of Art and Design and set up a company, Poetic Earth, to mass-produce the pots in China.



2008 Winner Claire Baker

The University's Business Support Office, which has organised the competition, is providing workshops on how to structure a plan and pitch for business. There is also a six-week short course, 'Creating Your Business Plan', on Wednesdays 5-7pm from 21 January. It's run by Cathy Leng, Subject Leader in Business and Management.

The closing date for business plan applications is 3 April. Those selected as finalists will make a presentation to a judging panel of academics and business representatives, followed by the awards ceremony, on 30 April.

To apply for the competition or to book a place on the workshops contact Susan Cherrett in the Business Support office on 01225 875556
s.cherrett@bathspa.ac.uk

Netball Star Serena Nominated for Sport Award

England netball star Serena Guthrie, who is also a Bath Spa student, has been nominated for the Channel Islands Sports Personality of the Year 2008.

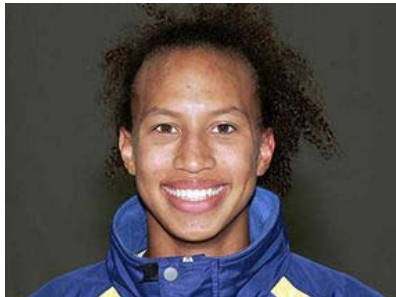
Serena, now in her first year studying for a Geography degree at Bath Spa, is from Jersey. She plays wing defence for Team Bath and has emerged as one of the country's best young netball players.

The 18-year-old is already in England's senior squad, having been promoted from the England Under 21s team. She gained her first full international cap last year.

For the Sports Personality award Serena faces strong competition from four other Channel Islanders – Bath Rugby player Matt Banahan, tennis star Heather Watson, badminton's Elizabeth Cann and bowls player Alison Merrien.

Staff and students who would like to vote for Serena can do so online at <http://www.channelonline.tv/channelonline/displayarticle.asp?id=378461> or by phoning 0901 801 3242. Phone calls cost 10 pence from landlines and Sportingbet will match every 10 pence, making a charitable donation to disabled sports in Jersey and Guernsey.

Alternatively you can text your vote by texting SERENA to 07911 714777. Normal network rates apply. Voting closes on 29 January.



Serena Guthrie



Prof Denise Cush

The Cush Witch Project

Professor Denise Cush, Head of Department for Study of Religions and Philosophy and Ethics, has been talking to the BBC about her research on paganism. As part of her ongoing long-term study she has interviewed young people who call themselves witches.

In a lengthy interview for the BBC News website Prof Cush claims to have identified an increase in the number of teenagers saying they are witches.

She said: "A lot of young people know about it, or are interested, or are aware of it enough to be able to talk about it. I also spoke to whole classrooms of 13 or 16 year olds and this was not something new to them."

Prof Cush found that paganism attracts young women in particular. She has interviewed witches as young as 13:

"The word witch does set off all those alarm bells – and indeed in different cultures and places it would mean something different. I think what it means to these young people is someone who practices ritual magic. For most of them I would say that their rituals and practice of magic are for positive ends."

You can read the whole article at:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/local/bristol/hi/people_and_places/religion_and_ethics/newsid_7760000/7760383.stm

Greta's Poetry Pipped for Costa Book Award

Poet and Bath Spa lecturer Greta Stoddart has narrowly missed a prize in the Costa Book Awards. Greta, who teaches on the Masters Degree in Creative Writing, was on a shortlist of four in the poetry category of the awards for her second collection of poems, *Salvation Jane*.

However the Costa judges chose *The Broken Word* by Adam Foulds as their poetry winner.

Greta says she is not disappointed: "I was just delighted to be on the shortlist, which was a real achievement in itself. Anything else would have been a massive extra."

Another consolation for Greta is that her shortlisting has led to a huge boost in sales for *Salvation Jane*, which was published by Anvil Press Poetry last October and has already gone to reprint.



Greta Stoddart



Mackerel Shoal by Gillie Harris

Gillie's Art Helps Regenerate Town Centre

An artist who studied at Bath Spa University is involved in a project to transform empty shop fronts in the Gloucestershire town of Dursley. Gillie Harris has been exhibiting some of her sea creature paintings in a vacant shop window in the town centre.

Gillie was one of several local artists invited to display their work in this unusual way as part of a scheme to regenerate Dursley's main shopping street. She considers herself a late developer in art after graduating from Bath Spa in 2000 with a degree in Creative Arts when she was in her mid 40s.

Gillie has been living in Stinchcombe, near Dursley, for 20 years. She has exhibited her paintings and art textiles at galleries in London, Oxford, Bath and Plymouth but is keen to support this new initiative, turning disused shops into contemporary art exhibitions.

Gillie said: "This is such an innovative idea that it should surely be heralded as an example to many towns across the country struggling to maintain a positive and successful front during the economic downturn."

Her paintings of fish and other sea creatures can be seen at 25 Silver Street in Dursley until late January, or visit her website www.gillieharris.co.uk