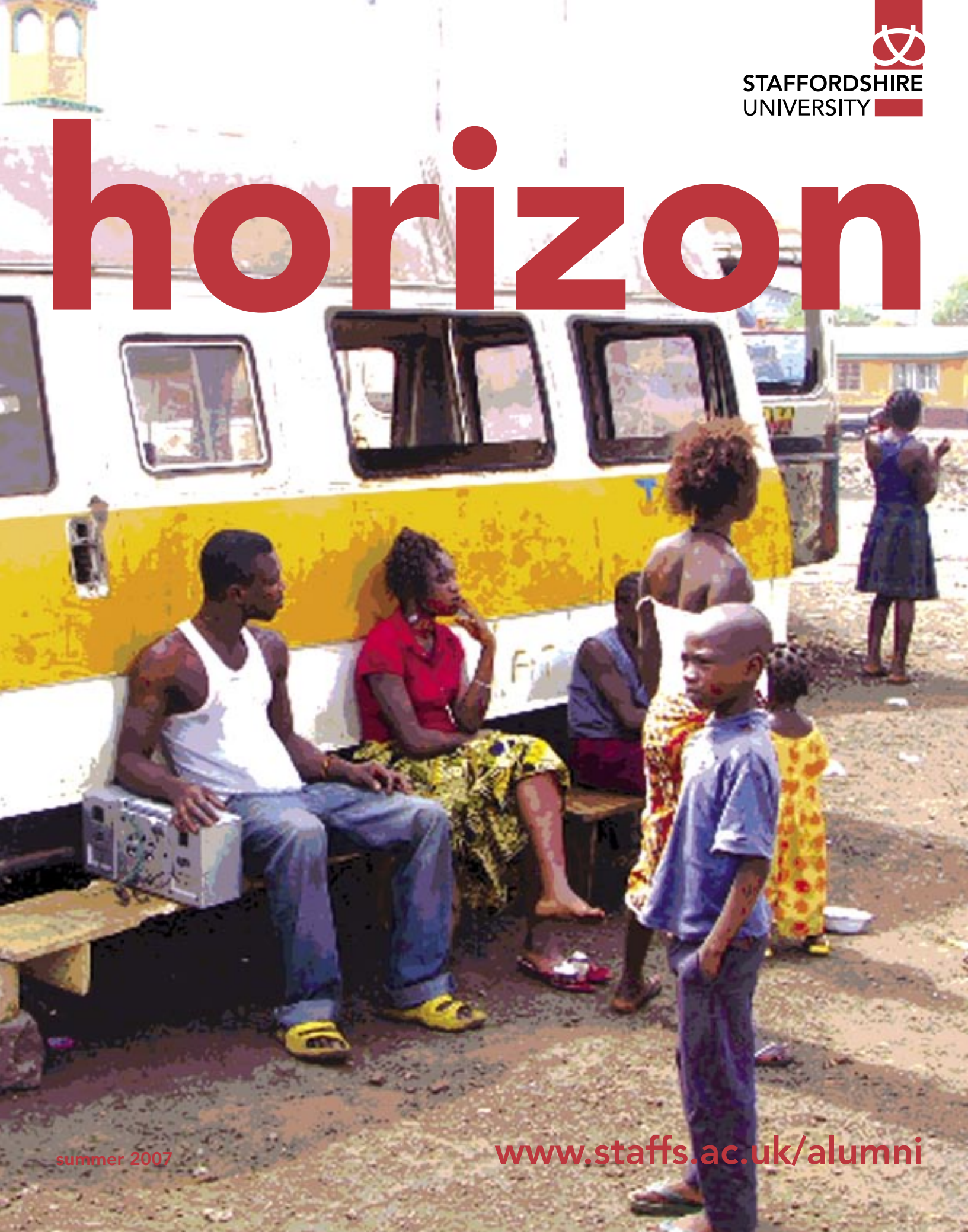




STAFFORDSHIRE
UNIVERSITY

horizon



summer 2007

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If you have a story that you would like us to include please contact us on t: 01782 294942 or e: graduate.relations@staffs.ac.uk

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back to school

Three graduates go back to the classroom to help pupils thinking about university

A scheme designed to excite young people about university and to remove some of the worries they have about Higher Education, is set to go back to school. This follows a successful pilot which involved former graduates visiting local schools and colleges with a series of imaginative workshops, ranging from a fun 'Student House' style exercise designed around student living to practical advice and help on finance and university study.

Currently under the leadership of Project Manager, Isabelle Killicoat, three former graduates have been employed to take the programme to another level and reach out to sixth forms and colleges regionally and nationally. Student Advisor, Gareth Hughes, who was involved in the pilot, said: "I was always unsure about going to uni but I had the time of my life and got everything out of it that I wanted to."

Gareth, 25, who graduated with a degree in Media Production, recently organised a film festival event at the University and is developing the Student Advisors' Myspace page to attract prospective students, as well as delivering presentations and workshops in local schools and colleges. Gareth, whose patch includes Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, has recently been joined by Kate Gould, BA(Hons) Sports Studies graduate and James Albins, who achieved a BA(Hons) in Cultural Studies and Media Studies.

Kate will be working in schools and colleges in the North West and has already received lots of interest from schools and colleges in the area. She said: "I wanted to do something working with young people and university has given me a lot more confidence and taught me to be independent." Kate is working with Faculty staff to add to the Open Day experience with a series of sports specific presentations throughout the day.

James Albins, 26, from Colchester came as a mature student to Staffordshire University. He said: "I didn't do particularly great at school. I did my NVQs and youth training and when I was working at University of Essex, I did A levels in the evening. I hope to bring a new energy and new ideas to the programme. Already we're working on a new workshop to prepare students for the transition to Higher Education, a Student Finance activity based around Deal or No Deal, and plans for a music festival." James will be working in the West Midlands and Shropshire and also doing some outreach work in his hometown of Colchester and the surrounding area.

For further information about the project, please contact Isabelle Killicoat, Project Manager on:
t: 01782 292785
e: i.killicoat@staffs.ac.uk.





dark cataclysm

World of online role play to be given a new lease of life in a cutting edge game, designed by a budding entrepreneur

Dominic Took, 20, from Stafford, is in the process of designing Dark Cataclysm, an online role play game that is set to rival existing sites such as the popular World of Warcraft and The Legend of Mir, Everquest II.

Dominic was inspired to design the game while studying Games Design and Programming. With encouragement from his lecturers, he decided to set up the online games development company, Transient Innovations, at the University's Business Village in Stoke. He has employed three other students from the University to help with its production and hopes for the game to be up and running by 2011.

He said: "I came up with the idea for the game after developing a short story, at a time when I was playing a lot of online role play games myself. I realised that they didn't hold my interest as they should and therefore decided to design a more adaptable and original game, based around the plot of the short story."

"Our game is completely 3D, more dynamic than existing competitors and the characters and content are much more customisable. We are trying to bring new graphics into the game and will keep up with new technology and software, which is important to keep ahead in the market. The idea is to make the gameplay more immersive so that each player can have a truly unique experience."

People who buy the company's game software will be granted access to the game and website for a subscription fee of £9 a month. This will

give members unlimited play time and access to a social community of users and will allow the company to fund the maintenance and development of the game.

When he is not working or studying, Dominic spends his limited spare time writing sci-fi novels. His second novel, *The Storms of Acias* was published last December and is available from Waterstone's bookshops and www.amazon.co.uk. He is currently going through the editing process of his third book, *The Voices of Light and Dark*, a dark fantasy science fiction, modern day thriller. He said: "I usually spend the weekends working on my book and spend three days a week on university work, leaving me with two full days to work on the business. I wouldn't be happy if I couldn't do all of these things, as I love writing and I love working on the game."

"It can be difficult fitting it all in but being at the University has made it easier as I get lots of practical help with techniques and the training I receive is fantastic. It is great to be able to ask advice about the industry and the lecturers are all very knowledgeable and have been excellent in supporting me."

As part of his course, Dominic is required to take a year out to gain valuable work experience in his chosen field, before undertaking his final year. He will use this year out to work full-time within the business and hopes to bring in investors as well as continuing the game's progress. For more information about Transient Innovations and Dark Cataclysm, visit www.darkcataclysm.com.

studio star

BBC Studio Manager, Gary Boast, took some time out from his degree to hit the airwaves

Gary, 21, was studying towards his BSc in Music Technology when he embarked on a six-week training course with Radio Stoke. At the time, Gary was working at University radio station GK, but went on the training course to become acquainted with all the technology and equipment used in a professional studio.

Soon after, Gary was offered a place at Radio Stoke answering phones, a job that was to be his first step to a successful career. He said: "I initially came in to the station and shadowed other people there, before getting a regular job answering phones. One evening, as I was about to go home from doing a shift, the guy who normally drove the desk for sport hadn't turned up and I was the only one around who had any idea of what needed doing. I sat down and managed to work my way through the show and after that I started doing regular Tuesday night shifts."

After working at Radio Stoke, clipping pieces of audio, putting together audio packages and driving the desk, Gary applied for a work placement at the BBC through their website. "The placement allowed me to shadow the studio managers who run the studios for



Radio 2, Radio 3, Radio 4 and documentaries for the World Service. It was brilliant, as it gave me a broader knowledge of the area I wanted to work in."

After initially applying for a Trainee Studio Manager position at the BBC in the summer of 2006, Gary was eventually offered the opportunity to go straight into the TV Centre as a Studio Manager, due to his previous experience. After much debating, he decided to accept the job offer and made the difficult decision of intermitting his University course.

He said: "Everybody at Staffs encouraged me to take the job as they felt an opportunity like that may never come up again. I took a weekend to decide and I do hope to return to the course part-time or through distance learning, as it would be a shame not to finish the qualification. The skills I have learned on the course have helped me in my job, so indirectly, it has helped me immensely in my career path, the most important aspect being my involvement with the student radio station."

Gary now drives the desk for various BBC news shows, including the Today Programme on Radio 4 and Breakfast on Five Live. He also establishes all of the lines for contributors to the programmes, works on pre-records for different shows and puts together packages and news pieces for some of the programmes.

He said: "The best thing about my job is being able to work alongside some big names including John Humphreys, Nicky Campbell and Eamon Holmes and the opportunity to work on such great radio programmes every day. There is a lot of weekend work though and the shift times can be pretty gruelling as most start at 4:45am, or 3pm through to midnight, so there is no routine at all!"

"If a student at the beginning of their career path wanted my advice as to how to get into the industry, I would tell them to be eager and get involved in as many things as you can and try to be in the right place at the right time. Always keep a focus on what it is you want to do and if possible, add some journalistic knowledge and experience to your studies, as I would have found it very useful."

Gary hopes to progress into working in live music radio in 10 years time, doing location sound and outside broadcasts. Eventually, he would like to start his own business but in the meantime, he is more than happy to continue working for the BBC for many years to come.

Stafford Alternative

A Staffordshire film maker has embarked on a mission to revitalise the local music scene. Chris Atkinson of Jasper films, Stafford, spoke to many bands, musicians and music lovers in the local area.

He realised that though there was an increasing wealth of musical talent in the area, many of the previously popular venues had closed down, making it difficult for the flourishing scene to really take off.

After graduating from Staffs in 2005, Chris set up his film production company, Jasper Films, in the heart of Stafford. With this latest project, he hopes to promote Staffordshire's full creative potential. He said: "There is a buzz of talent around Staffordshire which seems to have sprung up out of nowhere. I came across the problem of having a lack of suitable venues after filming at lots of events and gigs."

Chris decided to make a DVD to promote the growing music scene. Stafford Alternative - a guide to Staffordshire's Music Scene, shows the evolution of the scene over the years. He enlisted the help of many local bands, promoters and established local legends such as Derek Holt of Blues Climax, to put together his film. It is a documentary and a showcase for new talent and also an argument for why the area needs more music venues.

He said: "We really want to start a music revolution in the area and put Staffordshire on the musical map. Culturegen has agreed to help our campaign and we hope to get a new music venue in Stoke or Stafford as soon as possible."

Some of the talent involved includes Regards, Magica, Always Loving Lisa, Robert Carey and Staffs Uni graduate band Hips Like Cinderella.

"Everyone involved has been really helpful and it is obviously something a lot of people feel passionately about. I think this DVD will show exactly the sort of talent that is coming out of Staffordshire and I hope it will also be something people will look back on as a commentary of their time spent in the area. I hope it really makes a mark on people's lives."

To view the trailer, visit www.film-studios.co.uk and follow the link to Jasper Films. For information, please contact Jasper Films on 01782 416371.



Graduate reaches national final

A Staffs Uni computing graduate has made it to the finals of a national competition. Clifford Goodwin, who graduated with first class honours in Computer Science, was one of four finalists in the Student Project section of the National Computing Awards for Excellence, run by Computing Magazine.

The event, held at Battersea Park's Events Arena, was hosted by Graham Norton and included a black-tie dinner. Other universities present at the event included Aston University, Warwick, and Northumbria. Cliff was announced as runner-up in the national competition for his final year project which was a computer-based learning package, focused on Staffordshire Police Special Constabulary.

His project previously scooped top prize in the Computer Science category of the Gradex Awards. Cliff, who is the son of Dean of FCET Mike Goodwin, worked as a Special Constable while studying for his degree. He is currently working with Staffordshire Police in developing their web site and also advising them on how the training CD for Special Constables could be implemented. Cliff is hoping to join the Police Force as a Constable next year.



sporting new degree

A unique degree course which equips professional footballers to reach new career goals has been launched

Nineteen footballers and one cricketer have so far signed up to the two-year BA(Hons) Sports Writing and Broadcast Journalism course which is the brainchild of award leader Lawrie Madden.

Lawrie developed and promoted the course in conjunction with the Professional Footballers' Association which is financially supporting players enrolled on the course. Working around club training and matchdays, players spend two days a week at Uni. As well as continuing their studies throughout the summer, players are expected to attend Uni for a full week in May and will be completing a work placement in June.

Lawrie, a former professional footballer, turned freelance Sports Reporter, said: "It's quite intensive as they don't get a break. They study Law and shorthand – all pre-requisites for the National Council for Training of Journalists professional exam which they can take. They will also be hands-on in the newsroom and will be trained in how to use the technology and how to edit."

Rotherham's Scott Minto and Neil Cutler are among players from 10 clubs who have signed up. Scott, former West Ham, Benfica and Chelsea defender, is already putting his experience to good use and has travelled to Moscow and Barcelona to report on Arsenal and Chelsea in the Champions League. He said: "I enjoyed the media side

when I was playing and this was a glorious opportunity to learn from someone like Lawrie who has been a player and a journalist himself. Goalkeeper Neil, is enjoying his twice weekly return to Stoke where he was goalkeeper between 2001 and 2004. He added: "I am getting married in the summer and I wanted to go on this course, but without the financial support of the PFA, I wouldn't have been able to. This gives me a chance to study for a degree while I am still playing and helps me plan for my future."

The course has been actively promoted to players with relevant entry qualifications or those capable of passing a professional standard entry exam. Lawrie added: "The whole point of this is that we want participants to go into the industry with the skills to progress. As the average football career is six to eight years, most are faced with finding an alternative career. Our first cohort are proving very committed."

Gordon Taylor, Head of the PFA said: "The professional footballer is still a young man on retirement and this is just another example of how the PFA looks to safeguard its members' futures, not only during their careers but on retirement as well." Completing the side is Glamorgan batsman and wicket keeper Mark Wallace, who after completing his A levels, served as Captain of the England U 19s team.



RTS finals for graduates

Talented young film makers were given the star treatment during a champagne reception at a prestigious television awards ceremony. Winners, Clairellen Sutton and Lewis Hughes, graduated from Staffordshire University's Media Production course in July 2006 and are thrilled to have picked up separate accolades at the awards.

Clairellen, 21, was presented with the award for Best Factual Film in the Midlands Regional Royal Television Society Student Awards, for her documentary, *Social Butterfly*; a revealing look into the world of a single mother who also works as a stripper. She said: "It was a really exciting night. I got to meet some professionals from the industry and it was fantastic to have my film recognised at such a prestigious event."

TV Presenter, Ben Shepherd, presented the winners with their awards at the ceremony held in Birmingham's Hyatt Hotel. The Media Production course at Staffs Uni, had a total of four film nominee's, with Sarah Cogdon's, *The Gathering and Every Day's the Same*, by Amy Wakefield also in the running. Lewis Hughes' film *12:30*, was also entered into the Student Awards. He won the Best Drama prize and scooped the award for the Best Overall Film.

Lewis, 22, said: "After all those months of working on the film, it is nice to be recognised for that hard work. *12:30* also won Best Drama at the Stafford Film Festival, so to win that category again in these



awards was extremely nerve wracking, but very exciting. I was really surprised to receive Best Overall Film too, but it seems all the hard work is paying off." Both Clairellen and Lewis have been entered into the national finals, which will take place in London.

award winning film

Corporate communications company, ST16 Ltd, whose Directors are both Staffs graduates secured more recognition for their work when they recently bagged a British Association of Communicators in Business (CiB) accolade at the Central Region awards ceremony at the Heritage Motor Museum in Warwickshire. "It is fantastic to have staved off some of the regions best talent to secure an award," said Simon Crofts who directed the film.

The award was secured for 'The Keeper', a film produced for the Moorland Association, which aims to change perceptions of Game Keepers and educate people on how to behave responsibly while enjoying moorland spaces. "People don't take notice of lecture-style films these days," said Producer Jeremy Stinton and added "So we came up with a fresh approach to ensure the key messages were conveyed and taken on-board in an entertaining, attention holding way."

More information about ST16 can be found on their new website www.st16.co.uk



Sierra Leone

Students visit to film promotional video



Two Staffordshire University Students and Sponte Volunteers: Kwasi Boakyee-Akyeampong and Tony Lawson visited Sierra Leone to film a promotional video for St George Foundation, Sierra Leone.

Two students from the St George Foundation Charity residential school in Freetown, travelled over in March 2006 courtesy of the St George Foundation. It was a fundraising tour and as part of their visit they gave a talk at Staffs Uni. Kwasi and Toni attended this talk and were moved by what the children had to say. The children had lived on the streets and were rescued by St George Foundation. St George Foundation gave them a home, food and an education.

Many of the children rescued by the St George Foundation have been child soldiers and worked as child prostitutes. They have been forced into a life on the streets through child poverty. Sierra Leone ranks 98th of 103 countries in the UN Human Development Index (which measures poverty) making it one of the world's poorest countries.

Tony and Kwasi decided that they wanted to help. They worked tirelessly from March until December 2006, fundraising for their trip. They raised cash for St George Foundation so that the charity could pay for them to travel to Sierra Leone. They filmed a promotional video for the charity. This way the charity can use the video to fundraise.

Kwasi and Tony have not only shown great commitment through their fundraising but have also taken a risk by travelling to a country that

is settling down after the ten-year civil war ended in 2002. The FCO still considers the country to have risk attached to visiting it. Despite this, Kwasi and Tony have been determined to help the children of St George Foundation by producing a promotional video.

For more information on St George Foundation, visit www.adecentlife.com
To find out more about Sierra Leone, visit www.sl.undp.org/hd_index.html





THE
CIVIC
& WULFRUN
MUSIC FESTIVAL
STAGE PASS

Marvyn Oates

Sweet melodies, harmonic tones and sincere lyrics are just part of what is on offer from an up and coming artist due to become big in the music business

Marvyn Oates, from Stafford, has been hitting the local music scene with a passion for a little over a year and has already had some big achievements, including supporting The Bluetones in Wolverhampton's Wulfryn Hall, just 5 months after forming his band.

With the launch of his new EP, Thoughts in Words, Marvyn's already extensive fan base, looks set to expand as he continues to produce material that some critics are comparing to The Beatles.

Marvyn graduated from Staffs Uni in 1999 with a BA in Media Studies. Determined to follow in the footsteps of his musical heroes, Marvyn, or Matt Biggs to his University friends, advertised on campus for like minded musicians to join his band.

After a few initial problems with the line-up, Marvyn eventually found the perfect band to compliment his meaningful lyrics and distinctive vocals.

Dan Watson - keyboards, Tim Ash - guitar and vocals, Danny Rush-drums and John Caulton - Bass, have now joined Marvyn's campaign for good harmonies, good performances and good music in general.

Marvyn said: "I wanted to record my own material as a solo artist so decided to get a band together to play live. We had our first gig in November 2005, I had always believed in the songs that I write but I was delighted with the reaction from the crowds."

"I have known that I wanted to perform on stage since I was 17, Nirvana Unplugged and just wanting to express myself through music, were my main inspirations and my musical heroes are Lennon and McCartney, and Morrissey and Marr, so I like to think that I do myself justice and have quite a unique sound with strong 'byrds-esque' harmonies."

Dan Watson, originally from Norwich, joined Marvyn as a keyboard player after seeing his adverts. He was in his third year, studying towards his BSc (Hons) Film Production, when the band first formed.

He said: "I planned my Uni work around the band most times, we tended to book gigs around deadline weeks and I also had a job at one of the banks. This made things tricky at times but the University was extremely helpful when it came to juggling work and education and my final year Project Supervisor was really supportive."

"Marvyn taught each of us the songs on the first EP, which was recorded by Marvyn just before we all formed and he played all the instruments. Each band member brought his own style to the music and there are many inspirations that make up the sound, with songs inspired by The Beatles, The Byrds, The Zombies and the Charlatons, but each member draws on his own experiences."

"We have a strong and harmonic sound. Very few bands harmonise anymore and when you get it right, the sound is mesmerising."

Marvyn Oates and his band all agree that the highlight of their work so far, was supporting The Bluetones at the Wulfryn Hall, Wolverhampton.

"The Bluetones were really accommodating, fantastic on stage and their fans were great. We were awestruck at getting free bottled water from the bar as you usually never get anything on the gig circuit, but when we came off the stage, someone had kindly filled our dressing room fridge with beer!"

Marvyn added: "It was great, I felt I was where I belonged and so did the band."

Marvyn Oates and the band have plans to perform at Staffordshire University and The Swan in Stone in the near future.

For more information about Marvyn Oates or to experience their sound, visit www.marvynoates.com or www.myspace.com/marvynoates

learning the lingo

Five weeks working in India proved to be the experience of a lifetime for student Nurse

Claire Denison, 32, from Shropshire, chose to go to India as part of her DIP HE in Adult Nursing Practice at Staffordshire University. Her course required her to carry out a period of nursing work experience, so Claire decided to really put her skills to the test and travelled to work in a village hospital in Karnataka State, Southern India.

She said: "I have travelled before but I have always wanted to go to India. I have never known hospitality like it. I was made to feel safe and at home and all the people there were really helpful so I soon picked up the local language, Kannada and was able to fully experience hands on nursing care with the local village people."

During her time there, Claire was able to experience many different aspects of health care in India. This included working on a labour ward where she helped to deliver twins, watching operations, working in casualty, helping out in the special care baby unit and observing students working in the local community.

"The Holy Cross Hospital and School of Nursing in Kamagere Village was really remote. All the Head Nurses there are Nuns and they made it possible for me to see many illnesses and diseases. I soon realised how many snake bite victims are seen every day, as there were Cobras, Vipers and Pythons in the fields. When I went to Bangalore, the state capital, I was able to visit a huge hospital called St Johns where I also saw specialist wards for burns victims and people with leprosy."

During this time, Claire lived in a hostel run by Catholic Nuns with 120 other students; she travelled in the mountains surrounding the area; visited other hospitals; spent two days visiting a hospice called Karunashraya – a model of health care; visited a Tibetan settlement of 30 villages for refugees who had fled from Tibet in the 1960's and spent two days in a slum creche looking after young children.

She said: "I had such an excellent experience and it really gave me the chance to see how healthcare works in another country. People may expect hospitals and healthcare to be basic in India, but the places I visited were really well run."

Claire plans to return to India as soon as possible to see all of her new contacts and revisit some of the places she has grown to love. In the meantime, she is working at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital as a Staff Nurse. She said: "If any nursing students are thinking of carrying out their work experience in India, they should make it happen. It is a chance of a lifetime and a really great experience."

"India's culture is full of diversity and there is such a mix of people that everyone is laid back, friendly and welcoming. Everyone I met really wanted to share their knowledge and Staffordshire University was so supportive, that I would really recommend anyone planning to work abroad to just go for it."



'The Power' commits to get fit

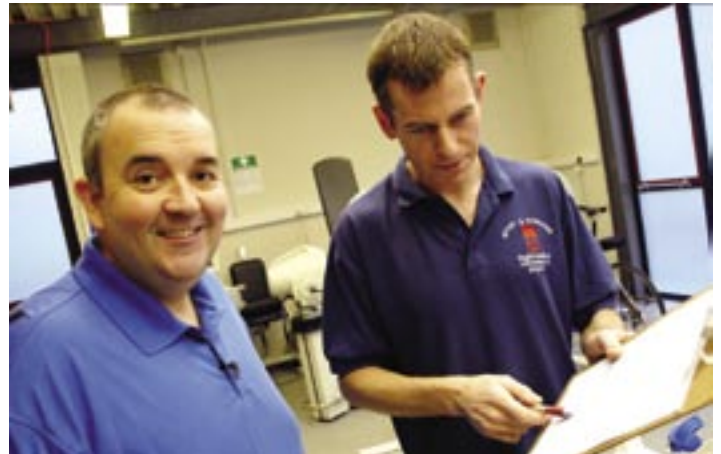
BBC Midlands Sports Personality 2006 and 13 times World Darts Champion, Phil 'The Power' Taylor, has embarked on a 12-week fitness campaign, designed by experts at Staffordshire University.

Phil hopes the move will result in a complete lifestyle change for him in his bid to recapture his world crown. Phil, who lost out to Dutchman, Raymond van Barneveld, in an epic world final, believes his stamina let him down and is now committed to improving his fitness to ensure he adds to his long list of world titles.

"I'm on a mission – it's something I have to do. Five or six years ago I'd have walked that final, but I ran out of steam and I'm determined to put that right" said Phil during his initial fitness assessment at the University's Sports Performance Centre. He added "but it's not all about darts; it's also about enjoying my life with my family and by improving my physical fitness, that's what I intend to do. If I can motivate others to do the same, brilliant!"

The programme, is the brainchild of Sport England West Midlands Director, Steve Town and is being co-ordinated by the County Sports Partnership – Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent of which Staffordshire University is a member.

Phil's fitness programme is being designed and monitored by staff at the University's Sports Performance Centre. Andy Bloomer, Exercise Physiologist at the University said: "Phil is an honest guy; he knows there's work to do but he has the right attitude and determination to put the work in to make a real difference."



newly signed partnership

Staffordshire University has teamed up with a new overseas partner. The University has signed an Advanced Standing Agreement with Neusoft Nanhai College, specialists in information technology learning based in China.

Professor Yang Li, President of Neusoft Nanhai College, visited the University's Stafford campus as part of a fact-finding tour that included a visit to the newly opened Television Centre. He also met Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Paul Richards and other senior managers to further discuss the working partnership.

Professor Yang said he was very impressed with the range of University facilities and felt that there were many areas where the two institutions could work together.

Professor Yang's tour followed an earlier visit by Dr Lee Zhuang, Director of China Partnerships, and Faculty Director Professor Adrian Low, who attended a formal ceremony at the Chinese college where the Advanced Standing Agreement was signed.

This agreement allows graduates of Neusoft to progress onto a range of Staffordshire University's business and computing courses. During his speech on behalf of the University, Dr Zhuang referred to the common characteristics between the two institutions, including "internationalisation and practical scholarship".

Neusoft Nanhai College was co-funded in 2002 by Neusoft Group Ltd and the Dalian Yida Group. Neusoft Group is the largest software company in China and the fifth largest in the world. It has 4,000 full-time students, but is expected to reach 6,000 by 2006 and 10,000 by 2010.



Lenzflare

Film company expand on their range of projects

Lenzflare has produced work for clients all over the UK and provide a full production service, working with ideas from script to screen. Some of the services offered include corporate video production, training videos, promotional videos, events filming and educational videos. As well as producing videos for UK clients, Colin and Kathy have recently been flown to Boston to produce a corporate video about Fender guitars.

The project meant Kathy and Colin spent five days in America. Kathy said: "The Fender guitar project has been a really inspirational and exciting project to work on. We spent five days in America filming on high definition equipment with two incredible guitar players.

"The DVD is about the history of Fender and incorporates models of guitars from over several periods of the Fender company. It is a really informative DVD with some great information about each guitar. It will accompany a book that will be sold internationally."

Over the next few months, Lenzflare has a range of projects on the go, Kathy added: "We will be continuing to work with our Fender client on a range of other projects to commence in May this year. These will also accompany books that will be available to buy in bookshops around the world.

"We have six documentaries in production, commissioned by the Arts Council England, which includes a project that we will be heading to Barcelona for in the summer. We are also working with Science Learning Centre West Midlands, Telford Culture Zone and Arts Extend, as well as several Staffordshire based schools, to training young filmmakers."



From January 2007 Lenzflare has been using High Definition format for all their productions. The decision was made to provide higher quality products their clients. High Definition video, also known as HD or High Def, has six times the resolution of standard definition video which makes films really stand out.

The move into HD production will also increase the longevity of films. Lenzflare's co-owner, Colin Mottram said: "This is a really exciting move for Lenzflare and its clients, being able to produce films of such high quality, will make sure our business and our clients businesses stand out from the crowd and remain at the forefront of our industries.

"We have also migrated to a complete HD tapeless production workflow and over the next 6-12 months, we will be expanding our post-production facility, which will dramatically shorten our projects turnaround."

For those who hope to enter the world of self-employment, Kathy and Colin seem to have nothing but enthusiasm for their chosen profession, Kathy added: "The best part of being self employed is being able to make decisions, push boundaries and take risks.

"Running the business gives us a chance to do something we are passionate about and not everybody gets to say that when they wake up to go to work in a morning. We get to make key decisions about the work that we do and where we want to be in the future.

Being self-employed Kathy identified: "The most challenging aspect is finding the time to self-evaluate and look at the bigger picture. In employment and education, there is always someone there who tells you how you are doing or reviews targets with you, but being self-employed means that you are responsible for all of that yourself! However, this is just another learning curve, which there are so many of in business.

"From our experience, the one thing Colin and I could say is to use the people around you, there are great facilities in Staffordshire that provide great business support, like HE full Circle, which has been key to helping us get started. Running a business can be quite insular and so surrounding yourself with a good network of people is key. Also it is natural to make mistakes, the key is learning from them and not making the same mistakes twice."

Lenzflare always welcomes questions about its services and Kathy and Colin are happy to discuss no obligation ideas for forthcoming projects.

They also welcome any opportunity to tender for video production projects and if you require further information or would like a copy of their show reel, please contact Kathy or Colin on 01782 415033.



e-know.net

Four Staffs graduates are currently working at the cutting edge of technology providing support to businesses of all sizes

e-know.net is a well established Microsoft Gold Certified managed solutions supplier, with its headquarters and state-of-the-art £3 million server farms based in Telford. With a proven track record e-know.net customers take advantage of the best in class technology combined with unrivalled customer support and the e-know.net team now serve in excess of 65 companies, with over 1,400 users supported worldwide.

The Staffs graduates employed are Nigel Redwood, 31, Managing Director, a BA(Hons) Business Studies graduate, Technical Director Steve Brown, 28, BSc(Hons) Computer Science, Assistant Technical Manager Darren Chapman, 28, BSc(Hons) Computer Science and Technical Support Consultant Jamie Booth, 30, BSc(Hons) Computer Science.

e-know.net provide complete business solutions, without the need for an initial high capital investment that is generally associated with the implementation of an in-house IT infrastructure and business software. A solution from e-know.net maximises efficiency by providing access to the business systems anywhere at any time with a system that is secure and hassle free – fully managed by e-know.net.

e-know.net



The e-know.net team will work with a company to remove their on-premises IT solution and replace it with a hosted solution, by formulating a full business support plan to develop a 'corporate desktop'.

Steve started his career at Datal in Stoke, which is a leading developer and manufacturer of videogame enhancement products. He said: "My computing course definitely gave me the foundation to apply to my career when I started out."

"During the degree I think you learn how to learn. Everyday we get new technologies coming in that we have to work with, but the skills that I learned I continue to use now," added Darren.

"The clients that we work with range from General Electric Homecare Division down to one and two-man operations. We perform an initial analysis, assess their systems on site and set up what is needed. We then leave them and maintain their provision here."

Each graduate went on a work placement, all with high profile positions. Nigel worked for Bass Brewers, Darren for Hewlett Packard in Germany, Steve for Eurocopter in Germany and Jamie for Wedgwood in Barlaston. All found the work placement part of their course to be really useful, "it was a certainly a kick-start for my career," added Jamie.

Darren added: "One of my best memories is the Summer Balls. They were always a really good laugh."

All the graduates agreed that their courses had given them a really good start to their careers and that although they have moved on to using different cutting edge technologies, they can see how their degrees gave them a good grounding in their subject and that now as managers, they believe that graduates are vital to the business that they are working in.

Nigel added: "I have used what I learned at University every single day. It gave me the basic knowledge and understanding of business that has been necessary in every role I have worked in, but more so as Managing Director for e-know.net as I require skills in business report writing, giving presentations and negotiating."

creative recruitment

High flying alumnus, Marc Shelkin, has been enjoying his success at a top creative recruitment agency in London

Marc, 22, graduated from Staffs Uni in 2005 with a degree in Product Design. After spending three months looking for work, he decided to post his CV on Monster.co.uk. That same day, he received job offers from six different companies in London who were interested in employing him.

He said: "It was a strange experience as I still didn't know what I wanted to do, but I had a couple of friends who were in medical recruitment and were making good money and then I had a phone call from a recruitment agency called Opera Creative, who specialised in creative recruitment."

"I went for two interviews and got the job starting on £17k. I was recruiting Art Workers and Print Designers in London and learned the basics in the trade, but after three months I approached their competitors, Purple and managed to get a job with this better known company where I started on £19k.

"I'm still with Purple and I think the work I have done for them has been my biggest achievement so far. In the first three months, I managed to make the most amount of money for the company, I've also made the second highest placement figure and with commission, I took home £55k in my first year there.

"This has enabled me to buy my first flat in London, which to me, is an achievement, as the prices in London are so expensive!"

"I still make a lot of mistakes and am still learning so there are always highs and lows and it's difficult to shut off from the stress at the end of the day but it's worth it. I'm proud of my job and its great to be able to take clients out for lunch and dinner and I have also been able to find jobs for several of my University friends in London, which is fantastic to be able to give them the same opportunity I had."

On a daily basis, Marc recruits Web Designers, Online Art Directors, Online Copywriters and Creative Directors and other creative positions with salaries from £18k-£120k. Although he has to deal with extremely important clients and has a stressful job, Marc is also rewarded for all his hard work and has been sent to Prague and New York on all expenses paid trips by the company.

At the moment he is happy and enjoys working in recruitment, but in the future, Marc would like to begin working in property development, or to even set up his own company in fashion.

He said: "My Uni course definitely helped to increase my creative ability and awareness and I always wanted to work within the creative industry but it originally didn't pay enough money. Hopefully, by working in recruitment and saving up for a few years, I will be able to afford to give it up and return to my first passion, the creative industry."





winning women

Whirlwind few months for Debbie

Business Studies graduate, Debbie Wilson, has been busy making her name with a unique range of jewellery. Debbie, 24, launched her business, Rosie Wilson, in 2006 after testing the market during the final year of her degree through the Young Enterprise Scheme. The idea came during her placement year in China's fastest growing city ChongQing. She was successful in gaining a marketing placement in a private English language school and worked weekends teaching English to kindergarten children.

During the year, Debbie embraced the Chinese approach to business which also helped inform her dissertation on Chinese work ethics. She said: "It's all about face and reputation. Most of my friends were American business women and I went out for many meals. Everything is done around the meal and you earn respect by eating and drinking alcohol with them. I thought it was great and travelled all round China during the year. As I've always wanted my own business, I was looking for an idea. I used to make my own jewellery and sell to shops and so I bought around five or six pieces back to test out."

Based on her market research and with backing from Young Enterprise, Debbie submitted her first order and hasn't looked back. Debbie graduated with a 2:1 and set about taking her business to the next level. With financial and business support from HE Full Circle, she changed the name to Rosie Wilson and made a three-week return trip to China to source manufacturers and suppliers. She said: "I bought a couple of hundred pieces back and they sold out in two weeks. I immediately placed another order and again demand exceeded expectations and stocks."

So far, Debbie has been selling her jewellery in person at pub parties, at the hospital during lunch times, at craft and church fairs and through

an order system which operates in a similar way to book clubs. Longer term, she is looking to get more of her products in jewellery shops and boutiques and to add to her range by branching out into wedding jewellery and accessories. "In two years time, I hope to be able to earn a living from the business. At the moment, I'm putting everything back in but the ultimate for me is that Rosie Wilson will become a name the jewellery shops will know."

HE Full Circle provides a year's free membership to the North Staffs Chamber of Commerce which has won Debbie many useful contacts and the opportunity to pass on the benefits of her experience. She has recently spoken to students at Keele University and at the Britannia Stadium as part of National Enterprise Week. "Success is often down to who you know and if you've got money you can make money but I've gone out there and found it myself. Another important thing is listening to people in business, as to be successful you have to be prepared to change and to accept that some things don't work."

"The Business Studies degree helped me most because of my placement year and it's a very good degree for people who don't know what they want to do. It opens your mind to different ways of marketing and other places to go with your business ideas." Debbie believes both luck and self confidence have played their part in her achievements so far which are all the more impressive given that she has Dyslexia and by her own admission "can't write, can't spell and never wrote a lecture note during my time at Uni."

She added: "I was lucky. I was never picked on for it through school and had a lot of good friends I could ask for help and that has enabled me to work round it and put my efforts into doing what I'm good at."

mobile master

Well-deserved rise to the top for Staffs graduate

In the summer of 2006, James McNab took on the position of Director of Marketing at PNC Telecom Services Ltd. The position came after a career in marketing that took him from consultancy to merchandising to telecommunications. James, 32, from Ballymena, Northern Ireland, left Staffs in 1998 with a BA(Hons) International Communications and an MSc Global Marketing. He said: "Apart from the endless nights in the Students' Union bar, the best thing about Uni would have to be the friends I made that I am still in touch with today. Despite the hard work needed to gain my degree it was, looking back, a happy balance between study and play. No change for me now in fact!"

He started out at Stafford Borough Council as Assistant Press and Public Relations Officer leaving in 1999 to be a Marketing Consultant to small businesses. This led to him setting up his first company, Conozco, which is where he gained experience handling contracts in a wide variety of industries. James said: "It was during this period of my career, that I was able to work in two industries, I based my dissertations around – football and Formula 1."

"As a Consultant, I worked with The Juice Group on merchandising activity within the football market, promoting own branded toiletries. I consulted on the expansion of the business to the Portugese market by securing deals with the three major football clubs, Sporting Lisbon,



Benfica and Porto. I also secured a contract with PSM Formula 1 Management, a specialist sponsorship management agency, working directly with teams of Formula 1 and was privileged to work with global brands such as Coca-Cola, BT and HP." In October 2000, James joined Cable & Wireless as European Marketing Campaigns Manager. He commented, "it was the perfect opportunity to enter the telecommunications market with responsibility for all direct marketing activity across 12 European markets based from Ireland."

In 2001 he moved to join Freephone Telecommunications Ltd in the UK, to lead the Marketing Department and re-brand the company to Totem Communications Ltd leaving in 2003. Opera Telecom, a competitor to Totem, then approached with the opportunity to head up their Marketing Department. Opera Telecom now has a turnover of £144m and operations in five continents. James was promoted to Head of Corporate Affairs in April 2004 and Head of Communications at Telecoms TV and Head of Marketing at Mobile Services Network, both subsidiary companies of Opera Telecom."

Last year, James moved to PNC Telecom Services Ltd. He is also an elected member to the editorial board of Mobile Entertainment, a leading publication in the mobile content arena and contributes regularly to trade publications and is a speaker at leading telecom events relating to Mobile Marketing. In February 2007, 2929 Interactive Limited was launched, a consultancy and interactive service provider to the telecoms, broadcast, print media and mobile content industries. James is now looking at opportunities to launch TV channels. "The best thing about my job is the variety, I have the opportunity to constantly employ new technologies in a day-to-day environment and the corporate hospitality events are always worth a mention."

He currently splits his time between the Isle of Man, Stafford and London with his partner Claudine and her son, Jake. "I'm most proud of my family, but on a business side I am proud of being one of the first people to have a published article in the industry press, promoting the virtues and benefits of the use of Mobile Marketing, at a time when few companies were partaking of this medium. In addition, launching Panorama Europe, a pan-European interactive TV advert at MIPCOM in Cannes to the broadcasting world and its journalists, also being involved in the creation and marketing of the world's first mobile soap opera 'FanTesstic' in conjunction with Endemol."

James has this piece of advice for anyone starting out: "Never underestimate the importance of first impressions and be tenacious. Marketing, especially in mobile, is a tough arena to break in to; it may take a while of banging on the right doors but stick with it. Don't be fooled by the common misconception of Marketing as a fun and easy ride, if you are fortunate enough to travel, be aware of the pitfalls as well. The perception of working in new markets, with broadcasters and media companies is one of glamour and parties – it is hard work and I have spent the last six years living out of a suitcase. Finally, the higher up the career ladder you go, the more you need to have overall business acumen so try not to become too blinkered on the way up."



a hit for hips?

First release for local band

Hips Like Cinderella are taking it to the next level as they release a three-track EP in HMV and online.

The band formed in 2004 and quickly achieved recognition by winning the Signal One, Battle of the Bands. All members are graduates of Staffordshire University and studied for a range of degrees including Music Technology with Management and Sports Technology. They cite their influences as The Smiths and Joy Division.

Recently, the band has been featured in a DVD created by fellow Staffs graduate Chris Atkinson, whose company is Jasper Films. He made a DVD about the Stafford Music Scene and they are also having their video shown on a new programme called Choon on Proppeller TV (Sky Channel 195). Apart from that, they are also gigging across the country, whilst looking forward to the EP as it is their first proper release.

The tracks featured on the EP include:

Love Will Appear
Black and White
Can't Fake Pity
+ Music Video for Love Will Appear

For more information or to sign up for news about the band, visit www.myspace.com/hipslikecinderella



graduate futures

Event to showcase a successful employability project attracted a large audience to the Television Centre

Over 100 people from across the UK attended The Graduate Futures project event that was filmed. Participants received advice on the tips and pitfalls on running employability courses for unemployed graduates, as there are not many free courses of this kind in the UK. Presentations were given alongside graduate success stories and a short movie of the project filmed by Staffordshire students was also shown.

Currently, of the 245 participants that started the course in the last 18 months, 102 Graduates are now in full-time employment and 6 have become self-employed. Another 24 have entered further education, training or studying to take them towards their career goal. "The figures change daily," says Clare Keegan, "and every time the phone rings, we are delighted to hear more good news."

Beverley Haywood of Derby University commented " I would not only like to congratulate you on the content of the day but also how you presented the day, I thought it was great – many congratulations."

Graduate Futures is a two year project, co-financed by the European Social Fund. Graduates benefit from an increased understanding of the graduate recruitment process, improve their presentation and interview skills and take part in group exercises, to boost confidence levels.

Clare Keegan said: "The graduates particularly like the individual attention they receive on the course and the project staff continue to offer support on applications and career direction, until the graduate enters employment.

"Many graduates face financial pressures and can be tempted to take the first job they are offered – after they have attended the course they are equipped with career plans and strategies that they will use throughout their working lives.

If you have graduated in the last three years and need some career help, please contact Graduate Futures on t: 01785 353247 or e: k.s.England@staffs.ac.uk or visit www.staffs.ac.uk/graduatefutures



Staffordshire's online graduate careers fair

linking Staffordshire employers to graduates

www.staffs.ac.uk/careers/fair



■ CREATE THE DIFFERENCE



Want to work in Staffordshire in 2007?

Register NOW for Staffordshire's first Online Graduate Careers Fair!

18 June - 13 July 2007

Staffordshire University will hold the County's first online graduate careers fair this summer. Showcasing employers and their vacancies from across the county and featuring Stoke-on-Trent as a great place to live and work, it will be open to graduates nationwide.

The idea for the online careers fair, was a direct response to feedback from Staffordshire University students, many of whom want to work in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire but find it hard to find suitable employers and their vacancies.

Mark Kent, Head of the Careers and Employability Service at Staffordshire University said: "This service will offer real benefits to graduates. From their own desks they will be able to 'meet' and communicate with employers across the County."

Skilled graduates nationally, in particular from Staffordshire University, will be encouraged to search for and identify appropriate Staffordshire employers and vacancies at the fair, enter into quality online dialogues and pass on their CVs. Professional bodies and other organisations will also be available to give individual advice.

The fair is being developed by the Careers and Employability Service and is jointly managed with HE Full Circle and supported by Advantage West Midlands, North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone and North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce. Graduates looking for work in Staffordshire in 2007, can pre-register now for this online fair and find more information at:

www.staffs.ac.uk/careers/fair

diverse fashions

Successful show part of Celebrating Differences month

Staffs Uni Students' Union held a fashion show which sought to challenge stereotypes and welcome diversity in an exciting and undoubtedly memorable amalgamation of cultural music, style and visual effects.

The evening provided an opportunity for students to showcase what they learned and developed in their classes, on a live, vibrant platform: from photography and design to media and show production. Community involvement featured strongly in the show with local colleges, businesses, charities and guests present on the evening.

Students, staff and members of the Students' Union worked the stage, lights and sound whilst budding models worked the catwalk. The High Street section saw clothes sponsored by New Look and Peacocks, whilst other features included were a Young Designer Showcase, Cultural Fashions which demonstrated the colourful make-up of our student population, as well as the more alternative fashions!

Rhythm Factory Dance Loft, dazzled the audience with their funky and energetic dance routines. Hair and make-up for the show was kindly designed and styled by Eden - House of Hair, Beauty and Holistic Therapies.

The Enterprise Fellowship Scheme and SPEED project, supplied the chance to win a digital camera for the best business start-up idea submitted by one of the guests. The panel of judges chose Jermaine Blake as the lucky winner, with his Diverse Fashion website search engine idea.

Event Organiser, Donna Johnson, said: "The event has been an amazing success and the amount raised for the Douglas Macmillan Hospice is fantastic. It has been a real team effort and everyone involved has worked so hard."

The event had a prestigious guest list and raised over £800 for the Douglas Macmillan Hospice.



inspired film and video

Film production company helping other businesses become more interactive

Inspired Film and Video, came into business in August 2006, when a group of journalism students decided to put their skills into practice by becoming business partners.

Managing Director, Daniel Stubbs, Project Director, Ryan Lloyd, Technical Director, Owen Shiels and Marketing and Sales Director Chris Gibbs, met while studying at Staffordshire University. After making the decision to go into business, they turned to the Enterprise Fellowship Scheme for the financial help they needed to get the company off the ground.



Chris Gibbs, 30, from Stoke-on-Trent, was studying for his MA in Sports Broadcast Journalism at the time. He said: "We were made aware of the Enterprise Fellowship Scheme and applied for it immediately. We gave a 15 minute presentation and were accepted onto the scheme. We received a £6,000 grant and a training budget of £2,500, in addition to some premises to work from."

"The financial aspect was tough but we persevered and made it, with a lot of hard work and a refusal to be beaten."

Chris had worked as a freelance Radio Broadcaster for the BBC since 2000, with his field of expertise being as a cricket and football commentator. Therefore, he was keen to include this passion in the new business and enjoys working on sports-based projects.

He said: "One of our most memorable projects, was providing a corporate film for Bill Bratt, the Chairman of Port Vale Football Club. We had to detail the new security system that had been installed at Vale Park and the resulting film was shown to all 92 football league clubs and the Football Association."

Chris and the rest of the Inspired team, also worked at Staffs Uni's own graduation ceremony last summer, producing a video diary of the week's events as well as producing some documentary work about the year's honorary graduates.

On an average day, the team spend a few hours filming footage and then they begin the editing process in the afternoon. Chris said: "I personally spend a lot of time chasing up potential new business, attending networking events and liaising with our existing clients to ensure they are getting the service they expect."

"We are a dedicated team of film makers providing short films for the corporate sector and primarily, we look to help companies become more interactive in the 21st Century."

"Our input directly impacts on our lives, but despite the very early starts and invariably late finishes, I believe that our hard work will pay off, which is the best thing about running your own business!"

In July, Chris will officially graduate from Staffordshire University with his MA. In the meantime, the whole Inspired team, will continue working towards their ultimate aim of producing award winning, quality documentaries and film for television and the corporate sector.

For more information about Inspired Film and Video, or to view a portfolio of their work, please visit www.inspiredfilmandvideo.co.uk or phone 01782 442810.

picture nation

Website offering an online platform for photographers is growing in success

A new UK based website that offers an online platform for photographers to sell their work, has been growing in success since its launch in November last year.

Jane-Louise Green set up Picture Nation, based at Leek Road Business Village in Stoke, in response to a growing demand for more accessible and affordable digital images over the internet.

Jane worked for the BBC for 20 years as a Television News Director, Journalist and Online Producer, and left in May 2006 to work on Picture Nation full-time.

She approached Staffordshire University to find out more about the EFS scheme and received advice, grants and bursaries, with the University eventually buying a 10% share in the company.

She said: "I was producing content for three BBC local websites and was wasting a third of my time looking for images to illustrate stories. My department didn't have a big enough budget to afford Getty or Corbis pictures and I only needed compressed, web ready images."

"There was nothing available to me as an Online Producer and many of my colleagues in marketing and PR were complaining of the same problem."

Jane then got together with Matt Perry, a colleague who specialised in software development and they spent the next two years researching and building Picture Nation.

"Picture Nation is so new I'm looking for images of anything and everything. In particular, I want to build a pictorial record of 21st Century Britain. We want great travel shots and to cover all cultures and ethnic festivals. I'm looking for spontaneous shots rather than stock and studio images and I want local."

Registering and uploading images is free on the site, with commission rates of 40%. Photographers keep their copyright and all images sold will be royalty free, with prices ranging from as little as 20p to £75.

Jane is also hoping to make digital images more affordable to schools, colleges and small businesses. "More and more schools are getting interactive whiteboards which use pictures, but how many schools can afford rights-managed images for their classes? What business seminar is without a Powerpoint presentation and how many homes have their own printers to print out leaflets and invitations? We're living with a new language and it talks pictures."

The Picture Nation team have a combination of IT and media skills that mean they know how to build and run websites that are visible, easy and quick for clients to use, with no jargon that may frighten off potential buyers.

They currently employ two graduates from Staffordshire University but are looking for three more employees to join the team.

For more information about Picture Nation, visit www.picturenation.co.uk or email info@picturenation.co.uk



window of opportunity

Inspiration for would-be entrepreneurs

The annual Staffordshire University Enterprisefest was held for all staff and students of West Midlands Universities, as well as local FE students, entrepreneurs and business people alike.

Simon Woodroffe, who founded YO! Sushi, local entrepreneur, Mo Chaudry and Strategic Development Specialist, Amanda Brooke, were speakers at the high profile and informative event held at the Ashley Centre on Leek Road.

Enterprise Co-ordinator, Chris Garner said: "All three speakers were very inspiring and although very different in style, all three gave the audience the same message – entrepreneurship is about determination and risk taking but you can reap great benefits and not just financial ones!"

Mo Chaudry explained how he had developed his businesses and gave the audience a background into his life and achievements. Mo, the self-made multi millionaire owner of Waterworld and a string of properties, was born into a poor family in Punjab, Pakistan and one of his aims in life was to make his first million by the time he was 30. He did this two months before his thirtieth birthday. He credited his rather difficult childhood and his determined streak to achieve his goals, as key drivers for his success.

Amanda Brooke has been successfully self-employed for seven years after a career in the Civil Service. She now works as a Facilitator for businesses and one of her goals was to be happy – which she can now say she is, with an excellent work life balance and a growing company to run.



The final speaker, Simon Woodroffe, gave an eclectic talk, focusing on the risks involved setting up on your own. Simon spent a large portion of his life designing stages and sets for musicians, such as Rod Stewart, Madness and George Michael. In the 90s he moved into television deals and by 1997 had founded Yo! Sushi, a conveyor belt sushi bar. His enthusiasm for the Yo! Brand is clear and he is now developing a whole range of Yo! Spin-offs, such as YOTEL and Yo!Zone spa's.

Simon said: "You have to believe in the part of your brain that tells you that your idea is a good idea. There were many times along the way when I thought to myself, this seems to be going too well, if it was such a good idea, someone else would have done it by now! If I had listened too much to my doubts then I wouldn't be standing here today."

The well-attended event, organised by the HE Full Circle team, inspired and informed those who attended. Also available, was free expert advice from professionals, a free 'business start-up pack' and also an exhibition of business support agencies including Business Initiative and the Business Innovation Centre.

Also, five students were the lucky recipients of an iPod.

For further information on how HE Full Circle can help your business develop, contact Chris Garner on t: 01782 294243 or e: c.garner@staffs.ac.uk.

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