

# english pages

## chevening scholars

Each year the British Embassy offers a limited number of Chevening postgraduate (but not PhD) scholarships, funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Valvasor/Chevening scholarships which are partly funded by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia. Both types of scholarships are administered by the British Council in Ljubljana. For full details, see the British Council web site at <http://www.britishcouncil.si>.

### ► PROFILE – URŠKA DRAŽ – TEXTILE DESIGNER

After taking a degree in Textile and Clothes Design from the Ljubljana Faculty of Textile, and having eight years of working experience in knitting at studio Draž, I decided to get some more knowledge abroad. So I applied and won a Chevening Valvasor Scholarship offered jointly by the British Foreign Office and the Slovene Ministry of Culture to study part of a Master's degree at Nottingham Trent University, Department of Knitting, for a three month period, from January to March 1998. Although I had already spent a lot of time working with Brother knitting machines, and experimenting with materials that are meant and not meant to be knitted with, and had worked for a few dance and theatre performances, I decided to search for different ways of manipulating the knitting yarn and trying to find some new knitting techniques.

Because I was disappointed with the materials that we were expected to work with, I made some simple knitted yarn with stripes in different colour combinations and stuck them with fabric glue on to the cotton fabric to get a solid form. Then I tried to find a factory that makes plastic materials for raincoats that would help me plastify this material. After making several phone calls I found one, but since the first meeting and promises that they would send me plastified samples back in a week, I have not heard from them.

I also worked on machines that were completely unknown to me and tried to create a garment that would evoke in observers' eyes feelings of movement, energy, colours, which myself and my tutor were very satisfied with. We also had some organised trips to designers' studios in London, with the intention of seeing their ways of designing, producing and selling their articles, which were quite different from the studio I work in. But the fact that designers must work closely with users and other professions, and that they should become more familiar with manufacturing processes was known to me before coming to Nottingham.

Opposed to study and work, there was the night life in Nottingham dance clubs that offered a varied choice of music and moods, and my colleagues and myself were happy to improve this side of life as well. Maybe three months were not enough to get a whole picture of my work in England but after coming home to Slovenia, I found out it was just enough, because I had wanted to continue with my work here.



### ► NEW BRITISH COUNCIL DIRECTOR

Steve Green is the new Director of the British Council in Slovenia. The editor caught up with him...



**BIS: What's impressed you most in your first few weeks in Slovenia?**

**SG:** The warmth of the reception I've received from everyone. It's a marvellous tribute to the Council team for building a high reputation so quickly since we opened in 1992.

**What is the Council's role?**

*We've found that most people around the world know of the UK's heritage and history but are less aware of current developments. The UK is now a multi-country, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society; an active international player; it is modernising its organisations and institutions. These changes are releasing a tremendous wave of creativity and innovation. We communicate this vitality in our arts, science and library activity.*

*We want to help people achieve their aspirations: to create opportunities for students (from young school-children to business executives) to improve their English; to gain internationally-recognised qualifications in English.*

*A commentator recently wrote that »mutually supportive networks of companies, research bodies and educational institutions are the building blocks of the competitive economy«. Add »cultural organisations« and this describes the heart of the Council's work.*

*We help develop networks to enable people in the UK and Slovenia to share experience. In education we assist in the implementation of the new curriculum and other reforms. For English language professionals we help them to engage and share with best international practice. We will develop programmes in support of Slovenia's EU accession.*

**Do you see any changes in the Council's work in the next few years?**

*Of course! No organisation can afford to stand still in today's international community. The growth of the international information-led global community offers exciting challenges as does Slovenia's EU accession. More of our work will be delivered through the WWW; we will move from being a donor to a project facilitator. But our prime objective of enhancing the UK's reputation as a valued partner of Slovenia will remain.*