



2010/11

Annual Fund and Annual Giving Report

Making a difference

Aber Supporters lead the way in Wales



In March 2011 the Ross-CASE Survey for 2009-10 was published. Reporting on fundraising in the UK Higher Education sector, it showed that Aber alumni made up **61% of all alumni donating to Welsh universities**. This is a giving rate five times the Welsh average, and only ten Universities in the whole of England and Wales exceeded this rate. Additionally, the £250,000 raised by Aber supporters for the Annual Fund that year represented **72% of all Annual Fund receipts in Wales**.

Aberystwyth University is very proud of, and grateful to, all those who have so generously supported our work, which has resulted in this outstanding achievement, and who continue to make contributions to support Aber's current undergraduate and research students.

“ My time at Aber was, for me, truly transformative. I vividly recall arriving at Pantycelyn on my first day and the sense of excitement I felt at the prospect of starting out – and the beauty of Aber in the Indian summer of 1972. Everything was new. I was independent. I was living away from home. I could reinvent myself. I was an undergraduate! In no time at all, Aber was home to me. I owe the College and the place a debt of gratitude. If a bit of support from me can help others to experience something of the Aber spirit which I felt, then that's a good thing. ”

Robert Smyth
BSc Economics 1975

“ Like so many alumni, I loved my time at Aber and am still in contact with friends I made during those days. I donate to the Annual Fund because I did not pay for my education and I am not happy that young people are required to pay so heavily for theirs. ”

Linda Whitlock
BA History 1978

Join Aber's Supporters

If you would like to be part of the group of alumni and friends making a difference at Aber, by donating or getting involved as a mentor, please visit:

www.aber.ac.uk/supporters

Front cover: Students enjoying additional seats and planters on the Piazza (09-10 Annual Fund Environmental project)



Today's alumni are proud to uphold the tradition of giving to Aber

Public and private subscriptions funded the creation of Aber, the first University in Wales. Since then, supporters have continued to make a significant impression on the Aber landscape, from helping to fund the construction of the Edward Davies Building, which houses the School of Art, to the major gift of the land which is now the Penglais campus.

Donors have also been instrumental in establishing some of our most renowned departments; the first Chair in International Politics at Aber in 1919 as well as a modern building to house it in 2006. Over the years, donors have also endowed a wide range of scholarships, bursaries and awards that improve access to the University, helping to populate its hallways and reward excellence in our students. The University continues to attract other regular gifts, for example to the General Fund, a valuable, unrestricted resource that can be used widely, from buying books to aiding building works.

The Annual Fund

The Annual Fund is the cornerstone of Aber's fundraising. Since it launched in 2009, nearly 2500 alumni and friends have upheld this tradition of giving to Aber by supporting small projects which visibly improve the lives and educational experiences of Aber students. During 2010-11, nearly £200,000 has been donated to Annual Fund projects, which include a universally available Hardship Fund, PhD Studentships, and a Mentoring Network to improve the employability and work experience of current students and recent graduates.

The majority of Annual Fund donations result from our telethons. Twice a year, in November and February, a group of current students make calls to alumni to share news about the University and ask for support. These have proven to be immensely popular with both alumni and students. For the students it is a wonderful opportunity to talk to alumni about life since leaving the University and to trade

experiences about Aber. For alumni it is an invaluable opportunity to hear about life at the University now, to find out what else they can do to help and to ask questions about the Annual Fund and University in general. It is also a great way to update current donors about how students are benefitting from their financial support.

Donors' Reception: Celebrating giving

This year we want to bring our supporters together to showcase the impact that their contribution has across the campus and beyond.

A reception, hosted by the new Vice-Chancellor April McMahon, will be held at **12pm on Saturday September 3rd**, at the Visualization Centre on the Penglais Campus. This event is open to donors, other supporters and anyone who is considering making a gift to the University in the future. It will be attended by a number of the recipients, both students and academics, of support made possible by our donors.

To register your place at the reception, please contact alumni@aber.ac.uk or call 01970 621568.





Shaping the future

In the past academic year, the University has received a number of significant gifts from individual donors and trusts towards specific causes.

During 2010-11, donations were made to the **JDR and Gwyneth Thomas Scholarship Fund**, the **Politics Library**, the **Richard Ithell Memorial Prize** and the **University Sports Centre**. The University also received a substantial gift from the **Fergus Johnston Studentship Foundation** to establish an endowed PhD Studentship in the humanities. All of this support was given added value by the HEFCW Matched Funding scheme, which matched every pound with an additional fifty pence.



Each year, Aber students are awarded numerous scholarships and prizes which were founded through legacies left to the University.

A £20,000 legacy from Mrs Elizabeth Davies in 2000 established the **RM Davies Research Prize**, an annual award in memory of her late husband, one time Professor of Physics, Rhisart Morgan Davies. The award supplements the normal research grant of a postgraduate student of Physics.

In 2010 the prize was awarded to postgraduate student **Sebastian Wildfeuer**: "The R M Davies Prize provided a great opportunity to present my research in an engaging way. The prize money helped pay for me to attend a conference in Denmark which provided me with a platform to present the research to an audience of world leading experts in the field. I am very thankful for the issue of the prize which has been of great help to me."

The University has recently published a new guide to leaving a bequest to Aber. If you are interested in finding out how you could support future generations at Aber by leaving a gift in your Will, you can request a copy of the brochure by contacting us on 01970 621568, or you can view it online at www.aber.ac.uk/supporters.

“ Aber has always been a part of my life. My parents, my daughter and I all studied here. Now I am glad to be able to make a contribution. ”

Ann Robertson
BSc Physics 1957

In April 2011, Aber alumna Ann Robertson made a generous gift to the University which allowed the Aber Sailing Club to purchase a ribbed safety tender – a motorized boat – as well as making a significant contribution to the Annual Fund in general. A retired tutor in computer science, Ann met her husband, David, in the Sailing Club at Aberystwyth University. The Sailing Club is very grateful indeed for Ann’s support, and will be launching the vessel during sports week in September 2011.

If you are considering making a special or specific gift to the University and would like to discuss your options in confidence, please contact us on 01970 621568 or email development@aber.ac.uk



PhD Studentships

Through postgraduate scholarships, we can attract exceptional individuals to address pressing global issues. It is also essential we have the resources to provide postgraduate opportunities, so we can continue Aber's outstanding record and contribution in research. Every year since 2009, the Annual Fund has been able to fully finance three-year **PhD Studentship** to support a postgraduate student at a Department in Aber. The studentship covers full fees, living and travel costs.



In 2009-10 money was raised to support a Studentship in Environmental Politics at the University's world-leading Department of International Politics. Having just completed her first year on the very first Annual Fund PhD Studentship, Katja Daniels writes about her time at Aber, her research, and the difference that having a funded PhD has made to her life. A first class student, Katja's work demonstrates the challenges of ensuring democratic human rights around the globe.

"As an undergraduate I studied International Relations at the University of Exeter, graduating with the highest degree results in my subject. I proceeded to complete an MA in International Relations Theory (with research training) at Aberystwyth. I then spent a year working at the Åland Islands Peace Institute in Finland and doing an internship at a cancer charity in Beijing."

"For my PhD I am exploring the difficulties faced by developing countries in taking measures to protect their environments, and in the legal and political framework of globalization and its environmental impact."

"Since I arrived back in Aber, I cherish the fact that I can attend three or four reading groups or research seminars a week and still have a difficult choice to make on which to attend, and I have greatly appreciated the chance to try my hand at teaching the introductory undergraduate course in IR. In terms of my research I am currently working myself through a body of literature that looks at how neoliberal reforms undertaken in the last couple of decades are being 'locked in' through legal and institutional means."

"I greatly appreciate this studentship and I eagerly look forward to studying a topic that I believe is important not only from an environmental perspective but also in the sense that such restrictions on a country's right to regulate can undermine basic democratic rights."

Thanks to the generosity of our alumni and friends, the 2010-11 Annual Fund campaign has successfully funded a PhD Studentship at the School of Management and Business, a Department described as 'world-leading' in the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in 2008. The PhD will be in the area of international management, particularly the interaction of international relations and business.

Student Support



Aber is committed to encouraging talented students from any social background. In the current economic climate, it is more important than ever that we offer greater support to today's students and can demonstrate to applicants that if required, a support structure is in place. Since 2009, the Annual Fund has raised money to provide constructive financial advice as well as additional hardship funds to assist in cases of genuine financial need.

Donors in 2010-11 have enabled the engagement of a Student Finance Adviser (Money Doctor) to counsel and assist students with unexpected financial problems, in particular to teach vital money management skills as well as dispensing emergency funds. Past experience has shown that 50% of student finance support users go on to decline further assistance after their first meeting with an adviser.

Nia Jones, International Student Adviser, explains how this support structure operates: "The Adviser has engaged with a very high number of students, providing advice and guidance on budgeting, debt management etc and ensuring that students have received all of the funding support that they are entitled to. On average, the Student Adviser meets with 12 students per day during the busy periods, and this has been an invaluable service, which has meant that we have been able to retain students who might otherwise have left due to financial constraints."

The Annual Fund Hardship Fund (established

in 2009-10) has also enabled Aber to support students by providing direct funding.

"We established an emergency food voucher scheme last year, to ensure that students were able to receive immediate support, whilst long term financial plans were put into place.

Three students were given a grant to compensate for their loss when they became victims of accommodation fraud; another student received payment to cover the cost of returning home from a year abroad when a parent became unwell; and a student, who lost everything when the floods in Pakistan in 2010 meant that his village was no longer able to fund him, was also supported.

You can support the **Hardship Fund** by donating through our website: www.aber.ac.uk/supporters

For more information about Student Support services at Aber, please visit: www.aber.ac.uk/en/student-support



Careers and Employability support

In an increasingly competitive employment market, graduates need to be well prepared for the workplace, and work experience and mentoring programmes have a proven benefit. Studies by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) have shown a clear correlation between work experience undertaken during a degree and early employability after graduation.

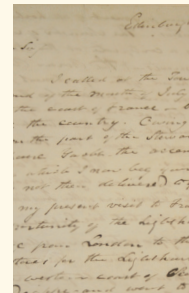
Thanks to the generosity of 2010-11 Annual Fund donors, finances are in place to establish an **Alumni Mentoring Network** at Aber. Emma Harrison, Director for Careers, explains the aims and benefits for this service:

“In an increasingly competitive employment market, there is no substitute for one-to-one advice from people who are successful in their chosen fields. The Careers Service is now working on this donor-funded project to put current students in touch with their predecessors – and is extending the original concept to now source and promote work experience opportunities with those individuals. A key element of the project is to ensure that both alumni and students are

clear about what they can offer and what they can expect, but it is also crucial that it is sustainable into the future. The Careers Service has looked at projects set up in other universities and is working with Information Services to put systems in place which will support all those taking part.

If you would like to register your interest in becoming a mentor or to offer work experience placements or other means of support, please email development@aber.ac.uk or fill out the online questionnaire at www.aber.ac.uk/info/alumni_emp_e

Investing in **accessible technology**



With the online availability of academic resources becoming so widespread and the technology for doing so continually improving, there has never been a more exciting time to begin digitizing items from Aber's own special collections. This involves placing high-resolution images online, a move that significantly improves access to materials which are normally held in restricted or humidity-controlled locations.

Thanks to the generosity of 2010-11 Annual Fund donors, Information Services at Aber can begin to **digitize** their archive and rare book collections. Bill Hines, Assistant Director for Library Services, explains how this forward-thinking programme for improving access will encourage new research and help build a permanent picture of Aber.

"We are currently embarking on a pilot digitisation exercise. As a priority we want to cover part of the photographic collection relating to the activities of the University over the past 140 years. We receive regular requests for information about past events and activities from both the media and researchers and it will be very useful to pinpoint and exploit our collections more effectively. In some cases we have photographs which are not fully identified and we hope that their presence on the web may jog memories among alumni. So far as other parts of our rare book collections are concerned, we will be looking to include sample images of some special items to encourage their greater exploitation. An important example from our collection would be the 1747 Warburton edition of Shakespeare used by Dr. Samuel Johnson in the compilation of his Dictionary."

