

Aber^rNEWS

ISSUE 16 - February 2014

Aberystwyth...one of the best places in the world to be a student

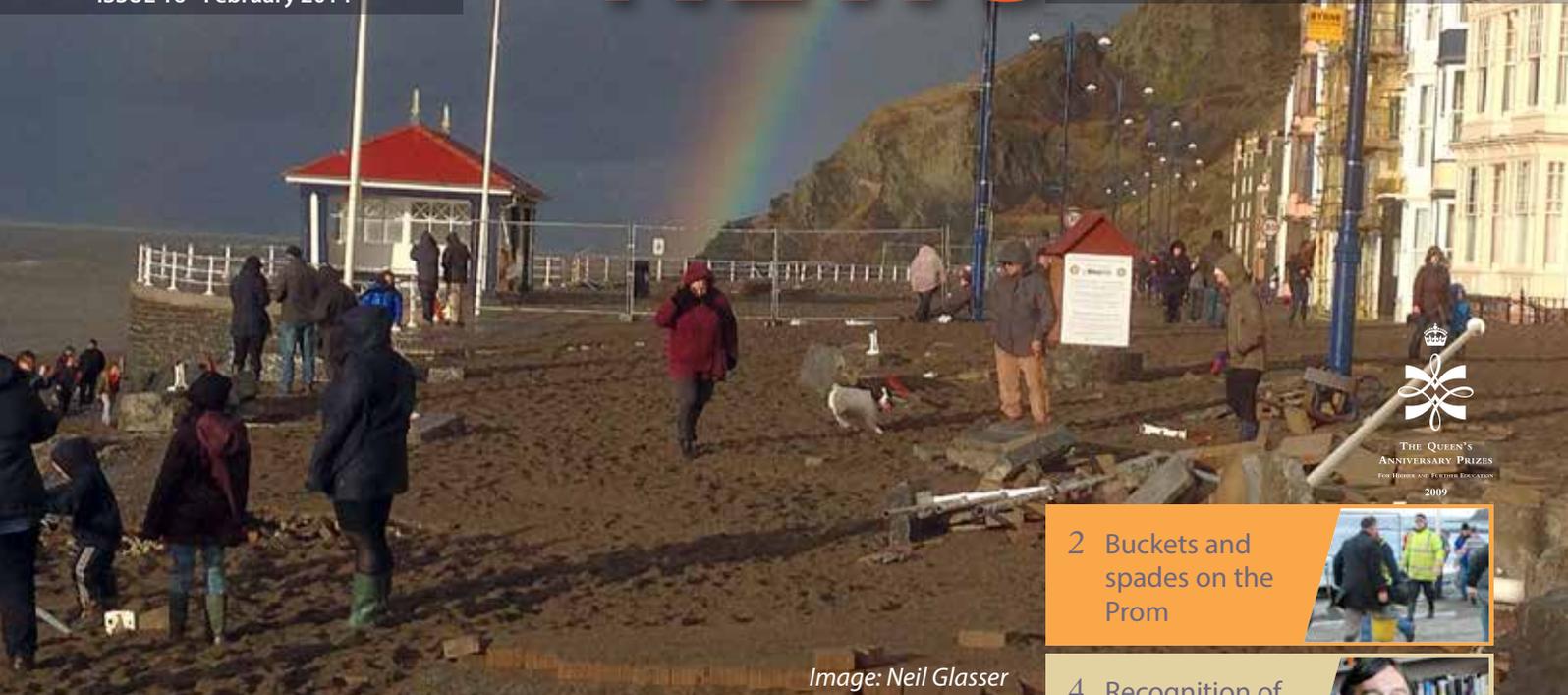


Image: Neil Glasser

Better understanding of flood and water risks

Sara Penrhyn Jones, a lecturer in the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, is the Aberystwyth-lead on a three-year project which will help communities, individuals and policy-makers better understand water issues such as flood risk, drought risk, access to water, supply and waste system security in a creative way.

Sara, who was appointed in 2011 under the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, will work in partnership with nine researchers from other UK universities on the project, which is being funded by a £1.5 million grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Entitled 'Hydrocitizenship: Connecting communities with and through responses to interdependent, multiple water issues', the project aims to use arts-based methods to encourage public dialogue, in order to better understand and communicate with people about water issues affecting their area.

The study will involve four case studies in Talybont and Borth, Bristol, Lee Valley (London) and Shipley in Bradford. Each case study will involve working with artists, community activists and selected community partners ranging from small community groups to larger organisations charged with aspects of regeneration and community resilience.

Along with Alex Plows from Bangor University, Sara will co-manage the case study focussing on Talybont and Borth, which will be facilitated in partnership with Ecodyfi and Creu-ad.

Anyone with an interest in being involved should contact Sara Penrhyn Jones at saj17@aber.ac.uk

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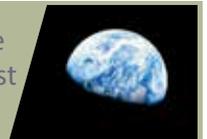
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Buckets and spades on the Prom

In a display of community spirit 200 volunteers, including many students and staff, descended on Aberystwyth promenade on Saturday 11 January, armed with brushes, shovels and wheelbarrows to clean-up the damage caused by unprecedented storm surges that pounded the seafront at the beginning of the month.

The 5.6m high springtide, gale force south westerly winds, and waves that seemed to dwarf buildings on the seafront, lifted paving slabs, railings and benches and left the promenade strewn with debris, driftwood, shingle and stones.

Approximately 150 students were evacuated from seafront halls of residence and were cared for on Penglais Campus. A further 100 students living in private rented accommodation were also affected. The University requested that returning students delay their journey to Aberystwyth and postponed examinations and submission dates for assessments by a week.

The University's seafront buildings were not extensively damaged, suffering only minor flooding, and a few lost slates and broken windows.

However the grade II listed bathhouse shelter on the promenade did not fare so well, and work has begun to dismantle it for repair. The iconic shelter, which has stood on the promenade for 90 years, subsided and partially collapsed when its foundations were undermined by the pummelling waves. Dr Pete Bunting, senior lecturer in remote sensing at the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences produced a 360-degree map showing the extent of damage to the shelter. Using a process called Lidar (light detection and ranging), Dr Bunting produced a video which shows the structure leaning into a chasm below the promenade.

Rebecca Davies Pro Vice-Chancellor for Student and Staff Services reported that spirits had been very good amongst those students evacuated from their residences, and added: "We are also very grateful to members of staff, the emergency services, Ceredigion County Council and Natural Resources Wales, the local community, rail and bus operators, who have been tireless in their efforts to ensure that all our students were safe, dry and out of harm's way."



Aberystwyth students providing hot dogs, bacon sandwiches, and hot drinks for the weary workers



The clean-up operation involved over two hundred volunteers of all ages



Yr Arolwg Cenedlaethol o Fyfyrrwy

The National Student Survey

The National Student Survey ('NSS') has started again at Aberystwyth University. It runs from 27 January to 14 April 2014.

All universities receiving public funding need to ensure their students take part, and the survey is part of the revised quality assurance framework for higher education. The aim is to gather feedback on the quality of students' courses. The results are used externally in the new Key Information Sets, on Unistats and by league table compilers, and the survey provides hugely valuable information to the University at subject level about how we can take action to continue to improve the student learning experience.

We hope that as many students as possible will complete the survey.

Students have received an invitation email to complete the NSS. Those who have not completed the survey are later contacted by post or ultimately by telephone. Early online completion is desirable so please make your students aware of the NSS and encourage them to complete the survey online at www.thestudentsurvey.com. This year we are offering 30 prizes of £50 Amazon vouchers via a prize draw open to anyone completing the survey before 31 March.

John Grattan, Lucy Hodson and Sam Reynolds are leading our NSS promotion, and meetings have been held with NSS Champions in the departments. Sam (smr8@aber.ac.uk) will be able to tell you who your NSS Champion is in your academic department.

Please make sure that your students:

- know that the survey is being carried out and how they can participate – research shows that most students find out about the NSS through lecturers;
- feel free to give their honest feedback;
- are not asked to fill in the survey while a member of staff is overseeing their responses or made to feel that their responses are being monitored;
- are not encouraged to reflect in their answers anything other than their genuine perception of their experience.

If you have any questions please contact Lucy Hodson, Director, Planning Office lh10@aber.ac.uk x2011. If your students have any questions please direct them to www.thestudentsurvey.com or they can contact the National Student Survey team at Ipsos MORI directly atthestudentsurvey@ipsos.com.

VICE CHANCELLOR'S COLUMN

I'm sure everyone is already aware of the extraordinary weather that greeted us in early January. Not only was Aber featured heavily in the UK media, but we've been front page news in the Malaysian Financial Daily, and our Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Chris Thomas, had the distinctly odd experience of watching Swahili television on a research trip to Tanzania and suddenly hearing 'Aberystwyth' and seeing coverage of the Prom!



The flooding and stormy weather really tested our contingency planning systems – to the extent that we felt able to cancel the planned 'mock disaster recovery day' organised for late January! The fact that our teams coped so well is testament not only to our excellent emergency planning processes, but crucially to the fantastic support of our students.

We're well aware that at the start of term, and with exams in prospect, it's unsettling at best for students to have to move out of their rooms, or to be unsure about when they can come back to Aber. We are so grateful for the understanding shown by so many students who heeded our advice to put off returning to university until the storms had passed. And our 'evacuees' were outstandingly patient in moving in and out of the Seafront residences, sometimes at short notice, during that first weekend of term.

There were a few student stars that shone particularly brightly during the storms. In addition to the sterling efforts of our Students' Union sabbatical officers and staff in providing support to evacuated students, there were the student volunteers who donned their yellow Freshers' Heroes t-shirts and were on hand to help any students affected by the storms. An additional thank you must go to Nathan Hazelhurst and Ian Plested who are third year students here and headed up the town's emergency response room in their role as St John's Ambulance volunteers.

Needing to move the exams by a week wasn't ideal, but essential, and the important thing is that the decision was made

and communicated quickly, and everyone was kept safe and well-informed. I was extremely pleased to learn that the revised exams timetable was re-issued within hours of the timetable staff returning to work.

Of course, it didn't stop there. Many students and staff have been helping out with the clean-up of the Prom. I'm aware that the bacon and sausage sandwiches provided by our Student Heroes were a particular hit too!

Despite these environmental challenges, it has been a time when we've been able to connect with our local community, and our community of alumni further afield. The messages of support and comments on social media have spurred us on, and it has been great to hear the level of affection towards the University and the town. We have been sending out messages to alumni that the Bar at the end of the Prom is still there and ready for kicking...

We were concerned we might be having an encore with the high tides at the start of February. But through the dedication and hard work of our University staff, the local emergency services, and support and cooperation from relocated students, we proved that we know how to cope. After all, Aber may be the only university in the world to have received a tweet awarding us '11/10 for conduct in the face of apocalypse'!

Professor April McMahon, Vice-Chancellor

Success at the Times Higher Awards

Aberystwyth University won the Outstanding Contribution to Innovation and Technology category award at the *Times Higher Education Awards* in November 2013. The winning entry focuses on the breeding and development of High Sugar Grasses (AberHSG) in IBERS.

Aberystwyth is unique within the UK Higher Education sector in possessing commercially successful plant breeding programmes that generate products in the form of new varieties that are marketed within the UK and overseas.



Aberystwyth University staff celebrate at the glittering awards ceremony held at the Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane, London

Lord Elystan Morgan building

On 22 November Lord Dafydd Elystan Morgan officially opened the new home of the Department of Law and Criminology, which now bears his name.

A former Labour MP and Judge, Lord Elystan Morgan was educated at Ardwyn Grammar School in Aberystwyth and later at Aberystwyth University where he studied law. Over the years Lord Elystan Morgan has retained a close association with the University and served as its President for 10 years between 1997 and 2007.

The Elystan Morgan Building at the University's Llanbadarn Centre houses more than 850 staff and students. All 119 rooms in the four storey building have been recently renovated, refurbished and equipped with state-of-the-art teaching equipment and IT facilities.



L to R: Lord Elystan Morgan, Professor April McMahon and Professor John Williams

Publishing Success



Kate Hamer

Two postgraduate students in the Department of English and Creative Writing have been signed by major UK publishers.

Kate Hamer, who has just completed an MA in Creative Writing, has been signed to Faber in a two-book deal. Kate's first novel, *The Girl in the Red Coat*, will be published in spring 2015. The novel tells the story of Carmel, a young girl, and her mother. When Carmel goes missing one day at a festival, both mother and

daughter embark on their own individual terrifying journeys, in a mystery with undertones of a fairy tale.

Faber's Sarah Savitt has called Kate "a distinctive new voice in British fiction". The German rights to the novel have also been sold in a six-figure deal.

In addition, PhD Creative Writing student Eliza Granville's novel *Gretel and the Dark* will be published by Hamish Hamilton, an imprint of Penguin, in February 2014. It's a literary novel which takes its inspirations from Grimm's fairytales.

Anna Kelly, assistant editor at Hamish Hamilton, described the novel as "highly original and thought-provoking" and Eliza as a "natural storyteller".

Dr Katherine Stansfield, lecturer in Creative Writing, congratulated both students on their success: "Everyone in the department is absolutely thrilled for Kate and Eliza. Being signed by such important publishers as Faber and Penguin is a fantastic achievement, and testament to the quality of writers working in the department, and the support they receive from staff"



Eliza Granville

Pythagoras Day

In early December, the University was part of a unique collaboration with Ceredigion Museum and Coleg Ceredigion to celebrate one of the most important figures from Ancient Greece.

Around 150 school children enjoyed the Pythagoras Day held at Ceredigion Museum on 5 December 2013. The date itself was carefully chosen since the numbers form a Pythagorean triple (5/12/13 is a Pythagorean triple consists of three positive integers: $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$).

A fascinating mixture of puzzles, demonstrations and maths activities ensured that the glimpse into the world of the Greek philosopher and mathematician was as entertaining as it was educational.

Aberystwyth Law students mooting success

Postgraduate law students, Martin Jones and Robert Donaldson took part in the Irwin Mitchell/University of Leicester Inter-varsity Medical Law mooting competition on 30 November 2013. The team participated in rounds against the University of Leicester, the University of Lincoln, De Montford University and the University of Sussex before reaching the final round against the University of Warwick. Although the University of Warwick won the final, the Judges emphasised that the competition was very close and both teams were praised for their advocacy skills.

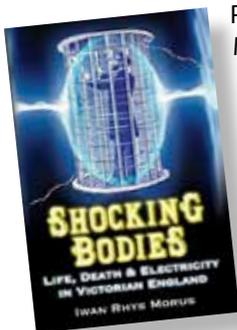
An Aberystwyth University team also recently completed in the first round of the OUP and BPP National Mooting Competition against the University of Edinburgh. The Aberystwyth team comprised of Edward Ditchfield and Lauren Mankee and Sebastian Lim. The completion was hosted by Aberystwyth University and judged by Mr Richard John a partner at Alun, Thomas & John Solicitors Aberystwyth. Aberystwyth lost out to Edinburgh by two points, but Mr John commented on the outstanding presentation skills demonstrated by both teams.



L to R: Mooters, Edward Ditchfield (Senior Counsel), Lauren Mankee (Junior Counsel), and Sebastian Lim (reserve and research assistant)

Recognition of excellence

Professor Iwan Rhys Morus from the Department of History and Welsh History has been awarded the Mrs Foster Watson Memorial Gift (2013) for his book *Shocking Bodies: Life, Death and Electricity in Victorian England*.



The Mrs Foster Watson Memorial Gift is awarded every five years to a member of staff at the University for published work that combines scholarship with general interest. The gift, now in its ninetieth year, was first awarded in 1923.

Books submitted for the Mrs Foster Watson Memorial Gift are considered by a panel of three distinguished assessors, with the award made based on the book's value as a contribution to knowledge and its interest to the educated reader.

Professor Iwan Rhys Morus is a historian of nineteenth century science, technology and medicine.

His book *Shocking Bodies: Life, Death and Electricity in Victorian England* (History Press, 2011) explores how the Victorians thought about electricity, and tried to use its intimate and corporeal force to answer fundamental questions about life and death, and explains how electricity emerged as a powerful new tool for making sense of our bodies and the world around us.

NEWS

Employability and entrepreneurship

Students in the School of Management and Business have been developing their skills of employability and entrepreneurship.

Fifteen students completed a course which sought to develop the essential 'soft skills' vital to success in interviews and recruitment assessments, and to test the application of leadership techniques. Part of a £40,000 Higher Education Academy funded project led by Professor Andrew St George, the course encompassed classroom sessions and exercises in the heart of the Brecon Beacons at Talybont-on-Usk in Powys.

Throughout two exercises, one of which took place overnight, the students worked in teams to complete a series of tasks designed to test leadership and teambuilding skills, with each participant taking their turn to lead their group. The students were supervised by a team of serving and former military personnel from leadership development company DarkBlu, who provided feedback and guidance.

Data from the students will help a team at the School of Management and Business, led by Dr Nishikant Mishra, to develop a leadership measurement tool. The software uses



fuzzy logic and case-based reasoning to assess how people are doing and what they need to improve as leaders.

On 2 December, The Biz (the School of Management and Business' society) hosted Aber's Den, a Dragons' Den-style business competition, with six teams presenting their business pitches to a panel of judges. Each team had to show how they would invest £75,000 in a commercial property in Aberystwyth town centre, demonstrating profitability, creativity and marketing.

The 'Dragons' were Steve McGuire, Julie McKeown, Tony Orme and local entrepreneur Victoria Kearney from Electrical Estimates. They awarded first prize to 'The Morning After' team, consisting of SMB undergraduates Kieren Allen and Charlie Burman, who won a trip to Barcelona.

SMB academics awarded £2.1 million

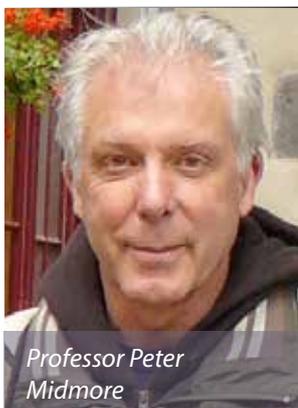
Professor Peter Midmore of the School of Management and Business is leading a £2.1 million project to investigate how scientific research on agriculture affects the economy, society and the environment in Europe.

Together with nine partners across Europe and Aberystwyth University colleagues Professor Andrew Henley and Dr Maria Plotnikova, he will coordinate the IMPRESA (The Impact of Research on EU Agriculture) project over the coming three years.

Professor Midmore explains, "It has long been recognised that both public and commercial investment in research on agriculture has positive effects on farm productivity. Less is known of its effects on farm structure and surrounding rural communities.

"The project will also consider how research can help businesses, both in farming and along the food chain, to cope with likely reductions in public subsidies. A careful analysis of current overall agricultural research spending and objectives will be carried out, and wide-ranging case studies of individual innovations will examine their impacts."

The EU's budget for agricultural research is set to double over the coming years compared with the period 2009-2013. Conclusions from the study will help shape future agricultural research policy in Europe.



Professor Peter Midmore

Translating for Welsh businesses

Three students taking the MA in Applied Translation in the Department of European Languages have been awarded an Access to Masters scholarship and will carry out translations for three Welsh businesses.

Rose Maloney is translating for the Blaenafon Cheddar Company, Abigail Mason for Penderyn Whisky Distillery, and Jessica Dixon for the Vale of Rheidol Railway in Aberystwyth.

The new taught Masters in Applied Translation, developed by the Department of European Languages, is being delivered for the first time this academic year and combines the practical with the theoretical aspects of translation. It is an innovative programme which will deepen the students' understanding of translation as a professional activity and includes modules on Translation for Television, Stage and Screen and Translation for Business and the Community.

Access to Masters is part-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the European Union's Convergence programme administered by the Welsh Government.



L to R: Dr Andrea Hammel from the Department of European Languages, with students Jessica Dixon, Rose Maloney and Abigail Mason

Arts Centre supporting RSPB Wales Giving Nature a Home campaign

Aberystwyth Arts Centre has been chosen as one of five landmark sites in Wales to promote RSPB Cymru's Giving Nature a Home campaign, aimed to inspire more people in Wales to create new homes for nature.

Last June, RSPB Cymru launched the campaign to help tackle the housing crisis facing Wales's threatened wildlife, urging the people of Wales to provide a place for wildlife in their own gardens and outside spaces.

As part of the campaign birds boxes, bug hotels and hedgehog houses have been put up in iconic buildings across Wales. Portmeirion, Menai Bridge, Powis Castle, National Botanic Gardens and St David's Cathedral as well as Aberystwyth Arts Centre have all put up homes for nature to try to attract more wildlife.

The launch of the campaign came a month after 25 wildlife organisations, including RSPB Cymru, released the groundbreaking *State of Nature* report revealing 60% of the wildlife species studied have declined over recent decades. Many garden favourites were among the creatures shown to be in



Rachel Scurlock, Marketing Assistant, putting up a bird box at the Arts Centre. Credit: Arvid Parry Jones

serious trouble including starlings, hedgehogs, some butterflies and ladybirds. All are in danger of further decline unless more is done to provide better habitats.

For more information about the Giving Nature a Home campaign visit the RSPB website: www.rspb.org.uk/homes.

Ornithology prize Understanding the processes that lead to ice mass acceleration

2013 Zoology graduate Stacey Melia has been awarded the Welsh Ornithological Society Prize for the best student project based on a study about how environmental factors alter fish eaten by osprey - one of Wales' rarest breeding birds.

Stacey's research was undertaken in collaboration with the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust at the successful Dyfi Osprey Project based on the Dyfi Estuary near Machynlleth, and studied the effects of environmental conditions on osprey prey choice.



Stacey receiving her prize from wildlife expert, broadcaster and President of the Welsh Ornithological Society, Iolo Williams. Photo by Anthony Walton

Brothers Bryn and Alun Hubbard from the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences have been awarded £340,000 to research the processes that drive the fast flow of glaciers.

The research will involve carrying out surveys and drilling boreholes up to 1,000m deep through an outlet glacier of the Greenland Ice Sheet to make detailed experiments and observations of how such glaciers move over their bedrock and sediment base.

Research shows that in some places the world's glaciers are melting up to 100 times faster than any time during the last 350 years, which will have significant implications for the future. According to the latest International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, the increasing pace at which the Greenland Ice Sheet is losing ice mass could render sea levels 50cm higher within this century.

Professor Alun Hubbard said "Calving icebergs and melt-water runoff from the Greenland ice sheet are making the most significant and direct contribution to global sea level rise, which is currently accelerating at an alarming rate. That is a grim prospect indeed for the very densely populated, low-lying, coastal areas of our planet."



Professor Alun Hubbard drilling into the ice below a lake in Greenland

Telehealth research



Joseph Keenan

Joseph Keenan, a PhD student in the Psychology Department, is the lead researcher on a study looking into the benefits of using telehealth technology with terminally ill patients living in rural and isolated areas in Ceredigion this winter.

The research, which is being funded through the Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships (KESS), will look at how the latest technology can help link health

care professionals with a patient from the comfort of their own homes over the winter months.

Over an intense three-month period from January to March 2014, the study will monitor six patients and their informal carers and identify whether or not they find the technology useful. Emphasis will be placed on whether telehealth affects their wellbeing and welfare and how often they communicate with nurses and practitioners at Bronglais Hospital.

In December 2013, Hywel Dda Health Board was informed that they have achieved the status of University Local Health Board due to its close work with Welsh universities across a wide range of subjects.

Continued accreditation for the International English Centre

The University's International English Centre (IEC) is delighted to have successfully retained its British Council Accreditation for a further four years.

The IEC was inspected in August 2013 and the British Council recognised that its courses and student services meet their exacting inspection criteria, which include standards of management, teaching, resources and welfare.

Accreditation UK, which conducted the inspection, is a specialist quality assurance scheme for providers of English language teaching services in the UK. The aim of the scheme is to give a guarantee of quality to international students who are studying or planning to study English in the UK.

In the IEC significant strengths were identified in teaching and learning, management of student administration and resources, and welfare.

The IEC will continue its efforts to reflect and improve on its range of courses, both pre-sessional and in-sessional, and welcomes the opportunity to develop and strengthen links with departments to provide quality provision for international students at the University.

Rachael Davey, Director of International English Centre, rad27@aber.ac.uk Ext: 1985

Volcano research makes Lloyd's shortlist

Dr Carina Fearnley from the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences was one of five candidates to have been shortlisted for the annual Lloyd's Science of Risk Research Prize this year, which focused on human elements of risk.

Dr Fearnley, a lecturer in Environmental Hazards, made the shortlist under the 'Behavioural Risk' category and looks at the decision-making

processes involved when assigning a volcano alert level and the complexity and risk involved in the process.

Her research looks at Disaster Risk Reduction, and focuses on the role of understanding and communicating uncertainty, risk, and complexity to develop resilience to natural and environmental hazards.

Using interviews conducted from 2007 to 2009 at five US Geological Survey volcano observatories in Alaska, Cascades, Hawaii, Long Valley, and Yellowstone, Dr Fearnley established that warning decisions are not just based on science, but also the social context in which the crises occurs.



Dr Carina Fearnley

Gair yn Gymorth

In October 2013, CAA (Education Resource Publisher) launched *Gair yn Gymorth* ('Words of Support'), a booklet to assist teacher trainees on PGCE secondary courses who use the Welsh medium improvement scheme, *Cynllun Gwella Cyfrwng Cymraeg*.

The aim of the *Cynllun Gwella Cyfrwng Cymraeg*, which is funded by the Welsh Government, is to improve the quality of prospective teachers' Welsh language oral and writing skills for those who are keen to teach their subject through the medium of Welsh. Aberystwyth University has the role of implementing the scheme on behalf of the Welsh Government.

Manon Wyn Siôn, the National Coordinator, said "The scheme is going from strength to strength with over 100 trainees joining us this year. The challenge, of course, is to ensure that the Welsh language skills of trainees are of a high quality and that they are fully aware of the linguistic requirements that come with teaching their chosen subject".

The *Gair yn Gymorth* booklet has been divided into units, which give examples of language patterns and phrases that will be used to help pupils in a range of language tones. The language mats or cards will help trainees to be aware of the essential forms of writing to a high standard.

RESEARCH, BUSINESS & INNOVATION



A significant milestone was met before Christmas with REF2014 successfully submitted on 27 November, two days prior to the official deadline.

For those of you unaware of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), in summary it is a process of expert review conducted every six years to determine the quality of research produced by UK universities (www.ref.ac.uk). We keenly await the outcome of REF2014 in December 2014 and the REF and Research Monitoring team have already started the process of looking ahead to REF2020.

With the New Year upon us, I'm pleased to announce a number of recent appointments within the Department of Research, Business & Innovation. These positions have been created in order to streamline the services we offer, both to colleagues within the University and external customers, through structuring our activities around six pillars (outlined below):

These posts join the existing two managers:



INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

Dr Jenny Deaville
Research Development Manager



CONTRACTS AND POLICIES

Chris Heidt
Contracts & Operations Manager



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Dr Rhian Hayward
Business Development Manager



RESEARCH, BUSINESS & INNOVATION FINANCE

Emyr Reynolds
Research Finance Manager



REF & RESEARCH MONITORING

Hannah Payne
REF & Research Monitoring Manager



RBI PROJECT MANAGEMENT & QUALITY ASSURANCE

Karen Hutton
RB&I Project Quality Assurance Manager

We look forward to engaging with colleagues in Departments and Institutes to share information about our new structure and to discuss opportunities to further support research and enterprise activity across the University. As part of this process, we plan to hold a roadshow of events and information sessions in the Spring which will be publicised through internal communication channels.

Gary Reed, Director of Research, Business & Innovation
www.aber.ac.uk/rbi

In search of student entrepreneurs

For the second year running, Aberystwyth University is holding the student business competition InvEnterPrize, which has a prize value of £20,000 and is open to all students attending the University.

The competition was formally launched on 13 November with entries encouraged from individuals or teams with inventions, business start-up ideas and other ambitious plans. The competition, which is funded by the University's alumni, is open to any student studying at Aberystwyth during 2013/14. The deadline for the competition has been extended to 28 February 2014.

Jake Stainer, a student in Marketing and Spanish at Aberystwyth, won the 2013 InvEnterPrize for his online language-learning website Papora www.papora.com.

The 2014 winning entry will receive a generous prize package including support and investment worth up to £20,000 to start the business. In addition, all shortlisted finalists will receive expert advice from a panel of successful entrepreneurial alumni.

The judging panel comprises seven prominent Aberystwyth alumni, drawing on their experience in a range of industry sectors. Joining the panel for the first time this year is David Sargen, Managing Partner of Derivatives Risk Solutions LLP based in London. For a full list of the panel members, go to www.aber.ac.uk/inventerprize.

Tony Orme, Enterprise Manager in the Department of Research, Business & Innovation said; "If you have an idea for a new product or service which you could turn into a successful venture, this is a fantastic opportunity to turn that idea into a reality.

"Not only will the winner receive financial help, but the backing and support of seven great business men and women who will be able to provide invaluable guidance and advice, which is so important for a young entrepreneur and for a start-up business."

As part of the InvEnterPrize competition a range of workshops and inspirational presentations have been held for students interested in developing their entrepreneurial skills and preparing their entry.

To keep up to date with news relating to the competition, visit www.aber.ac.uk/inventerprize

Working in partnership with the Development and Alumni Relations Office, InvEnterPrize is organised by the Department of Research, Business & Innovation with support from alumni donations through the Annual Fund 2013/14.

RESEARCH, BUSINESS & INNOVATION

Climate Change Matters

Open to all and free to attend, the Climate Change Consortium of Wales (C3W) public lecture series continues during 2014.

Lectures to date have included guest speakers from Aberystwyth University, together with external speakers including Sir John Houghton former Director General and Chief Executive of the Meteorological Office and Dr John Gilliland OBE, former president of the Ulster Farmers' Union and a Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Societies of the UK.

The Climate Change Consortium of Wales seeks to improve understanding of the causes, nature, timing and consequences of climate change and brings together researchers from Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea Universities.

Further information on the lecture series in Aberystwyth can be found at: c3wales.org.

Aberystwyth-Bangor Strategic Alliance

Two years after the signing of the Strategic Alliance between Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities, an event was hosted at the Senedd on 4 December 2013 by Assembly Members Elin Jones and Alun Ffred Jones to highlight the achievements and progress being made.

The event focused on the mutual benefits being realised from the collaboration in terms of increasing effectiveness and efficiency, and in supporting the attainment of international excellence in specified areas of activity.

The Strategic Alliance builds on the work of the Research and Enterprise Partnership established in 2006 with funding from HEFCW to create joint research centres in order to promote collaboration in internationally competitive research.

Professor April McMahon and Professor John Hughes, Vice-Chancellor of Bangor University, set out the successes of the Alliance to an audience including Assembly Members, Welsh Government, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and members of Council from both institutions. Attention was drawn to increased research collaboration, the recent joint submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 in specific areas, a Joint Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy which is pioneering in UK Higher Education, and the development of collaboration in a range of service areas in order to deliver enhanced capacity and quality.

'Hinterland: The Locally Curious'

Ed Thomas, the founder member and Creative Director of independent film and TV production company, Fiction Factory was the keynote speaker at the Aberystwyth University Business Network in December. Renowned for making innovative, popular and award winning drama, Fiction Factory co-produced *Yr Gwyll/Hinterland*, the new detective drama shot back-to-back in English and Welsh in Ceredigion.

An Honorary Professor in the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, Ed took part in an engaging question and answer session chaired by Dr Jamie Medhurst to a full house of external guests and colleagues from across the University.

Further information about the Aberystwyth University Business Network can be found online at: www.aber.ac.uk/network.



Ed Thomas (centre) with Dr Jamie Medhurst and Professor April McMahon

The Strategic Alliance secures the Natural Resources Network for Wales

Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities, under the Strategic Alliance, have recently secured one of three highly prestigious

National Research Networks which form part of the Welsh Government's *Sêr Cymru* programme.

Funded by the Welsh Government and HEFCW, the project has a direct budget of £7m over five years and is expected to leverage further income to the sector in Wales. The network will address the Welsh Government Grand Challenge of Low Carbon, Energy and Environment, and will focus its efforts in supporting, nurturing and developing research at the interface between the NERC and BBSRC science agendas, significant strengths of both institutions.

The network will draw together the best of Welsh science in these fields with the complementary expertise of the Centre for Hydrology and Ecology,

the British Geological Survey and the Meteorological Office. The joint work with Bangor University under the Centre for Integrated Research in the Rural Environment and the Centre for Catchment and Coastal Research has provided a superb base for developing this proposition, leading Welsh science in this field.

The network will build on the research capacity in Wales and support studentships and fellowships across Welsh research institutions to further enhance the excellent capabilities already present. The network is funded for an initial period of five years. Professor David Thomas has been appointed as the network Director, and took up his position on 1 December 2013.



Professor David Thomas, Director of the Natural Resources Network for Wales

New space race tells an old tale of the quest for soft power

Gary Rawnsley, who joined the University in 2013 as Professor of Public Diplomacy discusses the space race of the 1960s and its modern day equivalent, and how both reflect the pursuit of soft power. To follow Gary's blog on Public Diplomacy and International Communications visit www.pdic.blogspot.com.

On Christmas Eve 1968, astronauts Frank Borman, James Lovell and William Anders became the first humans to watch the Earth rise over the moon's horizon. In a live television broadcast which drew the biggest global audience up until that time, Lovell commented on the 'vastness of space' before all three members of the crew read to viewers the first ten verses of the Book of Genesis. Lovell's iconic photo, Earthrise, showed us just how small and fragile our planet actually is.

Forty-five years later, headlines across the world are now predicting that the next man to set foot on the moon will be Chinese. On 14 December 2013, an unmanned spacecraft from the People's Republic of China became the first vehicle in 37 years to make a soft landing on the moon; no man has set foot on the lunar surface since December 1972.

Over half a century of space exploration has confirmed the close symbiotic relationship between politics, science and the exercise of what is today known as 'soft power'. Nothing projects a nation's prestige and prowess like its ability to marshal resources and launch men and machines into the cosmos.

Just as the Chinese people celebrate their space programme's achievement as a demonstration of the country's growing technological, scientific and economic strength, the Apollo 8 mission of 1968 epitomised both the Cold War and the 'white heat' of the 1960s. What became known as the 'space race' between the United States and the Soviet Union began on 25 May 1961, when President John F Kennedy announced America's commitment to land a man on the moon by the end of the decade.

Such brazenness was typical of the ambition of the early 1960s, and was characteristic of the youthful vigour, vision and confidence of Camelot. But Kennedy's aspirations were also the product of Cold War politics: In 1957 the US had been embarrassed by Moscow's launch of Sputnik, the first satellite to orbit the earth, and the humiliation was amplified when the Russians dispatched to the moon's surface Luna 2 in 1959 carrying the first man-made object, and when Yuri Gagarin became the first man to orbit the earth in 1961. Kennedy was also reeling from the Bay of Pigs fiasco, a failed summit with Khrushchev in Vienna, and growing irritations in Berlin and Vietnam. The President needed something to convince the world, but more importantly to convince Americans, that US power and prestige were not diminishing. Hence his commitment to land a man on the moon was a bold attempt to unite the American nation around a single vision and assert America's scientific superiority over its Russian rivals. The ideological competition explains Apollo 8's premature launch after NASA learned that the Russians were on track



Gary Rawnsley



Credit: NASA. 'Earthrise' photographed by Apollo 8 crewmember William Anders on December 24, 1968, showing the Earth seemingly rising above the lunar surface. This phenomenon is only visible from someone in orbit around the Moon. Because of the Moon's synchronous rotation about the Earth (i.e. the same side of the Moon is always facing the Earth), no Earthrise can be observed by a stationary observer on the surface of the Moon.

STUDENT NEWS

to beat the Americans in sending a manned mission into orbit around the moon. Without Apollo 8's success in 1968 it is unlikely that Apollo 11 would have taken man to the moon and back; and without the political motivation of the Cold War, it is unlikely that space exploration would have occurred at such a gallop at all.

The Soviet Union is a footnote in the history books, and the US's interest in space exploration has dwindled. Now, the world's new rivals, China and India, are locked in their own space race, with the former's unmanned mission to the moon launched just days after India's Mars Orbiter began its year-long journey to the red planet. Scientists and politicians in both New Delhi and Beijing have described in detail the scientific value of these missions, while also highlighting their domestic and international soft power benefits. The Chief Scientist of China's Lunar Exploration Programme, Professor Ouyang Ziyuan, said in 2006 that his country's ambition to land on the moon reflected its "comprehensive national power. It is significant," he said, "for raising our international prestige and our own people's cohesion". Meanwhile, India's own space programme, the cost of which is criticised when 53 million people still live in extreme poverty, is likewise a source of self-esteem: when the Prime Minister announced the mission on his country's Independence Day in 2012, the science editor for New Delhi TV asked, "If India does beat China to Mars, can you imagine the national pride?"

In the context of soft power, it is worthwhile remembering that actions always speak louder than words: what you do will always tell a far more convincing and commanding narrative than what you say. While the financial cost of the space race is contentious, the soft power value of participating is undeniable. When Borman, Lovell and Anders gazed on the Earth from over the moon's horizon in 1968, our view of the planet was never the same again, and for a short time at least the US's soft power was assured.

It seems like only yesterday that we were introducing our new full-time Student Officer team, but last semester really flew by at the Students' Union.

As the term kicked off, we opened the doors on our new bakery and pasta bar, Briwsion, which I'm pleased to say has been a great success, with a spot-on offering for staff and students alike. However, it's not just the appealing smell of fresh pastries which has grabbed students' attention. Last semester, we recorded over a third of the student body as being currently engaged in activities, ranging from sports clubs and societies to volunteering projects – a great turnout! It's very pleasing to see so many students getting involved in things outside of their studies.

Last semester also saw other significant milestones achieved: our Education and Welfare Officers, Grace Burton and Laura Dickens respectively, were elected to the NUS Wales National Executive Committee. As a result, the students of Aberystwyth will now be represented on the national stage. This followed our elections success, where the student body elected 10 students to serve as part-time Officers for the rest of the year, with many positions actively working to support and represent Liberation Section groups of students (LGBT, women, disabled and black and minority ethnic students).

Furthermore, we signed the Time to Change Wales pledge alongside the University, which commits us to work on an action plan to eliminate stigma and discrimination around mental health in Aberystwyth. This ties in with the launch of our very own Time to Change student-run society, and we're looking forward to working together to push forward these developments.

Looking ahead, we have some exciting new projects on the horizon. From the start of this term, we'll be rolling out our online Stone Willy's pizza delivery service, available to all halls of residence and offices on Penglais Campus – great for colleagues who fancy a treat or do not have the time to pop out for lunch!

The team at the Union has also been busy preparing for our annual Refreshers' Week (3-6 February), an ideal opportunity for students to sample everything student life has to offer, including the Trade, Sport and Society fairs, and a fresh new joint initiative with the Careers Service - a Volunteering Fair. We're also very excited to be launching the annual Spring Elections, where the student body will be voting on who they want to represent them during 2014/15. A complete overhaul of the rules and candidate training for this core democratic function should ensure an engaging and fair process.

John Glasby

CEO, Aberystwyth University Students' Union



Officers of the Students' Union celebrating the signing of the Time to Change Wales pledge. L to R: Ioan Rhys Evans, Grace Burton, Laura Dickens and Liv Prewett

Employee Assistance Programme

As you may recall, the University introduced an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in November 2012 to provide employees with a suite of support, advice and counselling services covering a broad range of issues. Full details of the services offered can be found at www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/employment-information/eap/.

The University Executive has considered the feedback from employees and reviewed the number of services accessed by staff over the previous 12 months and has taken the decision to renew the contract for a further 12 month period commencing 1 November 2013 with both providers:-

Expert advice, specialist counselling and support

This employee benefit, provided by PPC, is a free, independent and confidential service which offers expert advice, valuable information, specialist counselling and support to enable you to better prepare for and cope with life events. Support is available to employees 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. PPC aim to answer your questions immediately, or refer you on to the most appropriate advisor, counsellor or source of information.

The telephone number and logon details for PPC can be found at www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/employment-information/eap/eap-login/

Therapeutic Counselling Services (TCS)

TCS is the second of the two providers of these services. Under their banner of TimeforTalking they provide a service where managers can refer their employees for face to face counselling and face to face cognitive behavioural therapy. The TimeforTalking service is by referral only through the HR Department. This is an employee support resource which will be used by HR to support individuals who need additional personal and specialist support.

Part Time Teachers Working Group

A small working group has been set up by the University Executive to look at the issues associated with the transfer of hourly paid part time teachers, tutors and demonstrators to AU terms and conditions of employment as required in Section 10.1 of the Agreement on the Application of the National Framework for the modernisation of Pay Structures at Aberystwyth University. The Group has met on a number of occasions since it was formed in October 2013 and intends to present its findings and recommendations to the Executive early in 2014.

New Enhanced Voluntary Severance Scheme

The Remuneration Committee has agreed an enhanced voluntary severance package which will be available from 2 January 2014 to 31 August 2014 for staff leaving the employment of the University no later than 19 December 2014. The enhanced scheme would provide an additional one month's pay on top of the current service related payment. The notice period payment would remain the same, i.e. in line with the individual contractual requirement.

Matching and Slotting Process

Following the introduction of the Institute structure in August 2013, the University has reviewed its structures and requirements for administrative and clerical services in line with the strategic aims and needs of the Institutes and to enhance operational effectiveness across the University.

Discussions have taken place with the trades unions and we are very pleased that a pilot process, which will, wherever possible, facilitate the matching and slotting of staff from existing roles to new roles of a comparable grading, has been agreed.

Consultation with staff and trade unions about the structure is now taking place and it is anticipated that the new administrative structures for the Institutes will be in place from April 2014.

Managing Academic Workloads

In September a working group of representatives from all Institutes, HR and Planning was set up to progress the development of a University-wide allocation model. The group is working on identifying the requirements of such a system, the major part of which is the necessity for flexibility so that it can be adapted to the demands of differing subject areas. University Executive Group and Professional Development and Staffing Committee have approved the proposals and the plan is to roll out a pilot scheme this semester. This will involve asking a few members of staff from each department to assist in gathering data so that a system capable of being used across the University can be developed. The plan is that the collected data will be reviewed by the middle of 2014 and rolled out across the whole University when the system has been standardised.

Grievance procedure

The new Grievance Procedure which will apply to all staff has been agreed by the trade unions. Details can be found at www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/employment-information/grievance/ together with the Collective Agreement which will remain in place for staff covered by Statute pending the Privy Council decision expected in 2014.

Any questions about this new policy and procedure should be addressed to your HR Manager:

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/hr-team/hrmanagers/>

Disciplinary procedure

Negotiations which commenced in 2012 to negotiate a new Disciplinary Procedure which will apply to all University staff recommenced in November 2013. The meetings were facilitated by ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) and on 6 December 2013 a draft procedure was drawn up. The trade unions and management are now considering the draft policy.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Boosting the number of women in science



Dr Rachel Horsley and Dr Pip Nicholas

The University's commitment to gender equality has been given an extra boost with the announcement that two female scientists will be seconded to work, support and develop the IBERS applications for the Athena SWAN Bronze awards in April 2014.

The Athena Swan Charter recognises and celebrates good practice on recruiting, retaining and promoting

women in STEM subjects in higher education and has become increasingly important to Higher Education Institutions and Research Councils in the UK.

Dr Rachel Horsley, a senior lecturer in Psychology in the Institute of Human Sciences, and Dr Pip Nicholas, a Principal Investigator at IBERS with a strong interest in sustainable and organic farming systems, will both work towards making tangible progress towards a better working environment and helping to overcome the challenges facing women at Aberystwyth.

Dr Nicholas, one of the Athena SWAN Diversity Champions, explains "We are finding that women are under-represented in science, especially in more senior roles. We want to start changing this cycle by understanding why this might be and what could be done to help women reach their full potential in the workplace."

Alongside the Athena Swan application, the University is also applying for the Equality Challenge Unit Gender Equality Chartermark (GEM) which is for academic staff, professional and support staff, HR departments, equality and diversity practitioners.

Aber People

During the Spring the University will be launching a new staff self-service system, 'Aber People'.

This means that there will be a number of HR and payroll processes which you can complete entirely online. These include updating your personal details, booking annual leave and accessing your payslip online.

Aber People will give you real time access to your personal details where you will be able to review and update information about yourself without having to fill in paper forms or requesting changes through HR or Payroll.

Centrally, it will enhance the integrity of our staff data, make it easy for you to see your data as well as move away from paper processes which are time consuming and create unnecessary waste. It will also generate value by helping us to improve communication and services and support you receive.

Over the coming weeks we will be updating you on the progress of Aber People, in the mean time you can find out more by following this link:

www.aber.ac.uk/en/staff/aber-people/

Academic promotions

The following members of staff were promoted in the latest round of promotions for academic members of staff:

The following have been promoted to the post of Senior Lecturer:

Dr Ian Keirle - Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences

Dr Daniel Burgarth - Department of Maths and Physics

Dr Xing Li - Department of Maths and Physics

Dr Fred Labrosse - Department of Computer Science

Dr Lucy Taylor - Department of International Politics

Dr Alistair Shepherd - Department of International Politics

Dr Alastair Finlan - Department of International Politics

Dr Gareth Norris - Department of Law and Criminology

Dr David Poyton - Department of Law and Criminology

Dr Uta Kohl - Department of Law and Criminology

Dr Anoush Simon - Department of Information Studies

Dr Guy Baron - Department of European Languages

Margaret Ames - Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies

Dr Paul Newland - Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies

The following have been promoted to the post of Reader:

Dr Rupert Marshall - Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences

Dr Chris Beedie - Department of Sport and Exercise Science

Dr Peter Abrahams - Department of Geography and Earth Sciences

Dr Helen Roberts - Department of Geography and Earth Sciences

Dr Andy Mitchell - Department of Geography and Earth Sciences

Dr Andrew Thomas - Department of Geography and Earth Sciences

Dr Paul O'Leary - Department of History and Welsh History

Dr Siân Nicholas - Department of History and Welsh History

Dr Marco Odello - Department of Law and Criminology

Dr David Russell Hulme - Director of Music

Dr Colin Cruise - School of Art

The following have been promoted to Professorships:

Dr Alun Hubbard - Department of Geography and Earth Sciences

Dr Luis Mur - Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences

Dr Elin Haf Gruffydd Jones - Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies

Dr Malcolm Thomas - School of Education and Life Long Learning

Dr Martyn Powell - Department of History and Welsh History

Planning to deliver our strategy in the new world

Two big things happened two years ago: AU published a Strategic Plan and the funding regime for full time home and EU undergraduates changed radically in all countries of the UK (the 'new world'). Responding to these two events has seen big changes in business and management information and planning.

Bringing together the Business Information Systems team from Information Services (although they still work very closely with Information Services in the Hugh Owen), the governance function of the old Registrar role, and the former Planning Office has led to the setting up of the Planning, Governance and Business Information Department. This means that the University's experts in data capture, processing and management, data analysis, governance and policy are all working much more closely together, to bring a continuous improvement in the planning support we can provide to your teams as you develop and implement your own responses to the Strategic Plan.

Our emphases are:

- Delivering the Strategic Plan through Institutes and Departments by evidence-based target setting and performance monitoring.
- Providing fit for purpose business applications for operational excellence and efficiency, useful, timely and accurate management information and robust forecasting capability.
- Clear and consistent governance structures and procedures which promote action and accountability.
- Enabling the University to be proactive in relation to external factors, impact of policy, benchmarking data and horizon scanning.

The members of the team are:

- Sarah Taylor and Clover Winton-Polak: policy analysis, HEFCW/WG interaction, risk management, key performance indicators for the Strategic Plan, and planning round support.
- Business Information Systems, including our student records system, AStRA: Laurence Dupont, Leslie Johns, Mario Radu, Dylan Williams, Andra Jones, Peter Keating, Ian Owen and Chris Savill.
- Management Information, Statutory Reporting and Data Analysis: Steve Walsh, Jan Howard, Nerys Roberts and Dan Gilbert. Their work is integral in planning to bring a step change in our market position and improve our league table performance.
- Supporting and advising the University's Council, Senate and Finance and Strategy Committees: Geraint Pugh (University Secretary) and Helen Davies. Helen also supports a range of other activities in the department.

We want to work much more closely with our colleagues across the University and are keen to learn what sort of management information would be helpful to you. We now have the capability to provide a vast range of past trends and future projections on student recruitment, employability, league table performance, module efficiency, Welsh medium provision and student satisfaction. We need feedback from you on how best we can help you, so get in touch, come over to Visualisation for a chat, or take a look at our new website: www.aber.ac.uk/en/pgbi/.

Lucy Hodson, Director of Planning.



Lucy Hodson

E-submission

The University will be moving towards e-submission of text-based word-processed assessed work through AberLearn Blackboard from September 2014.

Electronic submission provides an efficient method for collecting assessed work from students. It also offers a wide range of opportunities for staff to provide rich feedback to students (including audio feedback).

An E-submission Task and Finish Group has been established, involving both academic and support staff from across the University. The group is currently drafting the University's E-submission Policy, and considering issues such as online marking, printing, training and support for staff and students.

Kate Wright, from the University's E-Learning Team, comments: "E-submission pilot projects across the University have already had excellent results and a number of departments and staff are already using e-submission successfully. We will draw on their experiences and expertise to make the transition to e-submission as smooth as possible."

If you've not used e-submission before and would like to try it during semester two, you can find out more at nexus.aber.ac.uk/xwiki/bin/view/Main/turnitin. There are guides and videos to get you started, and you can contact bb-team@aber.ac.uk for more help and advice.

Further information about the move to e-submission will be provided to staff over the coming months, and the E-submission Task and Finish Group will work with both Institutes and Departments to help prepare for the transition to e-submission.

If you have comments to be considered by the Task and Finish Group, please email them to e-project@aber.ac.uk.

ABER PEOPLE

An introduction to the new Director of Aberystwyth Arts Centre

I've been asked to write a quick introduction. Not my favourite thing as I never really know what to write, how should I position myself? What's appropriate? Perhaps I should take the opportunity and use it for my own personal gain and self-promotion? Maybe...



Since starting at the Arts Centre at the beginning of November, I really haven't had much time to contemplate the change in my personal landscape. It's been busy to say the very least. There are so many of you to meet (and I will endeavour to continue to meet as many of you as possible, as soon as possible).

So what are the facts? I'm a proud Jack, originally from Morriston; a supporter of Swansea City and the Ospreys. I studied Theatre, Music and Media at Trinity College Carmarthen (as it was previously) and Theatre and Film at Central College, Pella, Iowa.

In my previous role at the Wales Millennium Centre, it's apparent that I'd become accustomed to a particular pace of life and work. Cardiff Bay to Capel Seion. Need I say more?

It's been an interesting learning curve, a tangible sense of self-discovery, adapting and acclimatising to a new way of living and working, coupled with numerous new faces and personalities; there's a lot to take in and digest. Having said that, everyone's been extremely generous, warm and welcoming. I would like to thank the staff at the Arts Centre and those of you I have already had the opportunity to meet. I've been made to feel at home

and have had an incredibly positive introduction to Aberystwyth life. Diolch.

The Arts Centre is brilliant. It's a wonderful place with heart and a profound sense of community at its core. I want us to build on existing successes and reinvigorate the space (inside and out), bringing a bit of sexy to the whole area. In all seriousness, I want us to be a thriving destination – an Arts Centre where our guests are happy, comfortable and proud of their surroundings. Please pop over and say hello at any time, it would be wonderful to see you enjoying all that the Arts Centre offers and I would be more than happy to have a conversation with you about the programme and activity that takes place here and in the wider Ceredigion community. When the sun reappears, we hope to have some exciting announcements about future events and developments in and around the Centre that I trust will enhance all our social and cultural lives.

Gareth Lloyd Roberts

Director of Aberystwyth Arts Centre

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ABER PEOPLE

Person Profile

In Person Profile we focus on a staff member and the role that they do. This edition, we spoke to **Hollie Wynne**, a Technician in the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences.

Tell us a bit about yourself: After completing a BSc and MRes within Department of Geography and Earth Sciences at Aberystwyth University, I was offered a short-term contract as a research assistant within Aberystwyth Luminescence Research Laboratory (ALRL). Since then my role has been made permanent, and expanded to include overseeing the Palaeoecology laboratory too.

Tell us a bit about your current role: I prepare sediment samples for luminescence analysis, and pollen and diatom samples for microscope counting. My role is quite varied and involves me working with everyone from undergraduates through to professors and visiting academics. I process samples for academic staff, for their own research work and as part of external collaborative research projects, and I assist a number of PhD and post-doctoral researchers. I also help out with demonstrating on undergraduate laboratory sessions, and supervise undergraduate dissertation laboratory work.

What is the most enjoyable part of your job?

Seeing the final results of your work is always rewarding. The initial chunk of mud taken for palynology work is refined and processed down to produce slides of pollen and diatoms which can have really beautiful structures and shapes, and can tell us so much about the environment in the past. Similarly, the seemingly endless stirring and sieving of samples for luminescence dating eventually results in a refined sample which can be used to tell us how old those sediments are; some of these samples are hugely exciting, for example

sand surrounding early hominid remains or containing ancient artefacts. It's also fun to see lots of luminescence ages come together, allowing us to work out things like how quickly sand dunes move. Getting to go on fieldwork is great fun - you often need to be quite creative and think on your feet when deciding where and how to sample.

If you weren't doing this job, what would you like to do?

I really don't know - when I was younger I wanted to be a volcanologist, but studying at university convinced me that what I was really interested in was interpreting old records of climate and environmental change, and applying the visible trends of the past to help us better understand what might happen in the future. My work in the quaternary research laboratories fits squarely with these interests, and so I'm really pleased to be doing the sort of past-environment detective work that my role currently involves.

What is your life like outside AU?

I enjoy being outside – the luminescence laboratory operates under red light conditions, similar to a photography darkroom, so beyond work I try to get outside as much as I can. I'm a member of Aberystwyth Athletics Club and race fairly regularly for them. I also do a fair amount of hill walking, and baking (and eating!) cake.



Hollie Wynne

Orchestral manoeuvres

The University's Music Centre has a new rehearsal venue. Until recently the award-winning symphony orchestra, Philomusica, the Wind Band and other groups held rehearsals in the cold and uncomfortable Edwardian Old Drill Hall on Glyndŵr Road. When the orchestra and band moved there, it was intended to be its temporary home, but it has taken some 17 years to find a suitable space so they can relocate.

Now rehearsals are held in the refurbished Old Hall in Old College, to where Choral Union has also moved down the road from the Joseph Parry Hall. Raked seating has been removed in the Old Hall, and there is now a flat floor, as it was when it served as the College's Examination Hall. For many years it was also the Music Department's recital hall, so it already has a long musical history. Conductor of Philomusica and Choral Union, the University's Director of Music, Dr David Russell Hulme, said: "The move for us is a major step forward. Philomusica, the Wind Band, Choral Union and our smaller ensembles all involve students, staff and musicians from the wider community. These groups are great examples of cross-over town-and-gown engagement.



Dr David Russell Hulme conducting Philomusica

Our new venue has a new floor, bright walls and lighting and, best of all, it is warm! For many years, dedicated players in Philomusica, the University Wind Band, and other musical groups had to survive cold and discomfort in the Old Drill Hall. In the depths of winter, heavy overcoats and even fingerless gloves were the order of the day. When the orchestra was working on Vaughan Williams's *Sinfonia Antartica*, players did not need much imagination to get into the mood!"

ABER PEOPLE

Appointments

COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Alwena Hughes Moakes has been appointed Director of Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs. Currently the University's Policy and Executive Officer, Alwena is an award winning PR and communications professional. An Environmental Science graduate of Aberystwyth, she also holds an MA in Management of Change and a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Relations. She joined the University in 2009 from Aberystwyth based PR agency FBA, and takes up her new post on 24 February.



DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

Louise Jagger has been appointed Director of Development and Alumni Relations. With over 25 years experience in fundraising within the UK, Louise has led major capital appeals, fundraising campaigns and regular giving programmes for a range of charities, including Scope, NCH and NSPCC.

An alumna of Bath University, Louise was awarded an MSc Econ in International Politics in 2013 from Aberystwyth. Louise takes up her new post on 3 March.



DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND CRIMINOLOGY

Professor John Williams has been appointed the new Head of the Department of Law and Criminology. Professor Williams, who succeeds Professor Noel Cox in the role, is an authority on older people and the law, with special emphasis on the human rights of older people. This will be Professor Williams' second period as Head of Department, having previously held the post between 1999 and 2009.



IBERS

Professor Chris Thomas has been appointed Interim Director of IBERS. A Professor of Zoology, Chris Thomas joined the University in 2007 and was appointed Pro-Vice Chancellor with responsibility for Research and Academic Quality in June 2013. He has taken this temporary role in IBERS alongside his Pro-Vice Chancellor role.



DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

Dr Bernard Tiddeman has been appointed as Head of the Department of Computer Science. Specialising in facial image analysis, Dr Tiddeman joined the University in early 2010 as a Senior Lecturer. He graduated in Applied Mathematics from University



of St Andrews, completed an MSc in Computer Science at the University of Manchester, and a PhD in 3D facial shape analysis at Heriot-Watt University, before developing an academic career as a researcher and lecturer, first at the University of St Andrews, and more recently at Aberystwyth.

Dr Wayne Aubrey, originally from Tumble in the Gwendraeth Valley, has been appointed as a lecturer at the department of Computer Science under the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol Academic Staffing Scheme. His research interests include computational biology, systems biology and genetic engineering. Dr Aubrey returns to Aberystwyth after 3 years as a post-doctoral researcher at Manchester University.



DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Professor Richard Beardsworth joined the department in September 2013. He was previously Professor of International Relations Theory at Florida International University and Professor of Political Philosophy and International Relations at the American University of Paris, where he also directed the graduate research centre. His interests range over several fields of International Relations: republican political theory and international political theory, international critical theory, international security studies and international political economy.



Dr Andrew Davenport joined the department in September 2013 as a Lecturer in International Politics, having previously taught at Queen Mary College, University of London and been a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Westminster. He was

awarded his PhD in International Relations at the University of Sussex in 2012 for a thesis on the materialist critique of Realism.



Dr Inanna Hamati-Ataya joined the department in November 2013. Previously a Lecturer in Politics at the University of Sheffield, her research lies at the intersection of the fields of international politics, social-political theory, and the sociology of knowledge and science, and focuses on the social foundations and conditions of knowledge-production/transmission in the social sciences, and in International Relations specifically.



Dr Christian Enemark joined as Reader in Global Health and International Politics in autumn 2013. Previously Associate Professor of National Security Policy in the Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University, Dr Enemark has considerable expertise in the field of security studies.



ABER PEOPLE

Appointments

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND EARTH SCIENCES

Dr Andy Harvey joined DGES in September 2013 as Lecturer in Remote Sensing and Geographic Information System, following a two year post-doc in the department studying malaria habitats in Tanzania. Mapping and understanding the processes that control aquatic malaria habitats remain a key focus of Andy's research. Previously he lectured at Newcastle University where he was involved in a number of different projects including mapping snow cover over the western Himalaya.



DEPARTMENT OF WELSH

Dr Rhianedd Jewell has joined the Department of Welsh as a lecturer in Professional Welsh. Appointed through the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Academic Staffing Scheme, she began in post in September 2013. Rhianedd studied Modern Languages at Oxford University and went on to complete a DPhil in Italian there. Prior to joining Aberystwyth, Rhianedd lectured in the Welsh Department at Swansea University.



ACADEMIC QUALITY & RECORDS OFFICE

Emma Williams joined as Head of the Academic Quality & Records Office (formerly the Academic Office and the Dean's Office) at the end of August 2013. Emma was formerly Head of Registry at Falmouth University where she managed academic administration, quality, student records and information. While at Falmouth, Emma played a key role in the University securing taught degree-awarding powers and the right to use the title 'University', and in project managing a successful QAA Institutional Review.



STUDENT SUPPORT

Caryl Davies was appointed as Director of Student Support at the beginning of December 2013. Caryl had previously been Acting Director for two extended periods between 2011 and 2013. Caryl has worked at the University since 2005 having previously worked in both the voluntary and statutory sectors and a range of student support roles at Cardiff University.



Janet Hardy is an Aberystwyth graduate who for a number of years worked in the Department of Computer Science. She moved to Student Support in November 2012, to join the Advice, Information and Money Service as a Student Adviser. When time allows Janet enjoys folk dancing and sailing.



Ben Partridge joined the Student Support Welcome Desk team in August 2013. Originally from Llanidloes, Ben studied at Aberystwyth as an undergraduate and is currently undertaking a part time MA in Art. Before joining Student Support he worked as a technician in School of Art and also teaches print making during the evenings.



Rebecca Pyne joined the Student Support Welcome Desk team in September 2013 having already worked as a Support Worker with Student Support for two years. In her spare time Rebecca enjoys writing scientific articles and short stories and has recently completed a proof reading course.



Retirements

INFORMATION SERVICES

Roger Matthews, Director of Information Services, retired at the end of January having devoted practically the whole of his professional career to providing for the IT needs of staff and students at Aberystwyth University. First employed in the then Computer Unit in 1974, Roger was largely responsible for developing our much valued microcomputer services before becoming Deputy Director of the newly created Information Services in 1996. He was promoted to Director of Information Services in January 2012 and retires with all the best wishes of the University.



LAW AND CRIMINOLOGY

Professor Diane Rowlands joined the Department of Law and Criminology as a mature undergraduate student and later became a lecturer in the department. She has been associated with the department for over twenty years and has held various senior positions within the department, including Deputy Head, and most recently Director of the Centre for Legal Practice. We wish her all the best for the future, and look forward to hearing more about her overseas adventures.



STUDENT SUPPORT

Dr John Powell retired as Director of Student Support at the end of November 2013 after a period of ill health. He joined the University in 2008 having previously worked at Hong Kong University in a similar role. During his time at the University support for students with specific learning differences was brought into Student Support and various services were rehoused centrally within the Student Welcome and Student Wellness Centres.

Aberystwyth Charity 10k

Twenty three members of the Department of Law and Criminology, a mixture of students and staff, took part in the Aberystwyth 10k Charity Race on 8 December 2013.

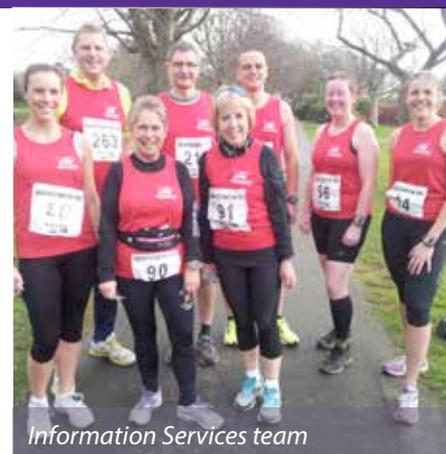


Department of Law and Criminology team

All finished the race with some impressive times. Undergraduate student, Heddwen Daniel, won first prize in the U20 female category.

Eight members of Information Services staff also completed the 10k Race, raising over £1,000

for the Wales Air Ambulance. Team members were Julie Archer, Tim Davies, Lauren Harvey, Peter Hinxman, Rob Johnson, Jean Matthews, Meinir Morgan-Thomas, and Anita Saycell.



Information Services team

Channel swim

Photographed (left to right) are Jackie Sayce (Institute of Geography, History & Politics), Bridget James (University Sports Centre), and Alwena Hughes Moakes and Nerys Hywel (VC's Office) who completed the Aspire Channel Swim 2013. The group undertook the challenge to swim the distance of the English Channel to raise money for people paralysed by spinal cord injuries.

Taking it in turns to swim in the newly refurbished Sports Centre pool, the team covered a total of 88 miles in just 12 weeks and raised over £600 for the Aspire charity, which provides practical support to the 40,000 people with a spinal cord injury in the UK, helping them to lead fulfilled and independent lives.



November

During the month of November, John Harrington, Kevin Rothwell, Doug Kerr and George Jones from Student Support raised £300 in aid of Movember, a charity that aims to raise vital funds and awareness for prostate and testicular cancer and mental health.

The four 'Mo Bros' were joined by the office 'Mo Sistas' in a variety of fund raising events. The four amigos started the month clean shaven and then crafted and preened their Mos until the final shave off on 30 November.

Donations can still be made to the Aberystwyth University 'Student Support Team Movember' page at uk.movember.com/team/1138221.



L to R: John Harrington, Kevin Rothwell, Doug Kerr and George Jones modelling their Mos

Conwy Half Marathon

Rhian Evans, Support Work Co-ordinator in the Student Support Team, ran the Conwy Half Marathon on 24 November 2013, raising £150 for The Alzheimer's Society. Her first half marathon, Rhian ran in memory of her granddad, who lost his battle with Alzheimer's in 2008.



School of Art Exhibitions

Monday 17 February – Friday 21 March

Gallery 1 & 2

Ray Howard Jones 1903-1996: A Retrospective

A University of Glamorgan Touring Exhibition, curated by Professor Tony Curtis.

Rose Marie (Ray) Howard-Jones' life was, in many ways, exceptional. She attended the Slade School of Art where she was taught by Henry Tonks and later worked in the National Museum of Wales. During WWII she recorded loadings for D-Day and was one of only a small number of officially accredited female war artists.

She travelled extensively through Europe after the war and became closely associated with Wales, especially the island of Skomer where she spent the summer for several years. Ray was inspired by nature and the inner spiritual life portrayed in Christian teachings and Celtic mysteries and legends. She had her first solo exhibition in 1935 and afterwards exhibited widely.

The works included in the show cover her time as a war artist and her landscapes, both traditional and abstract, and are taken from public and private collections.

Monday 17 February – Friday 28 March

Gallery 3

Figure and Ground: Keith Vaughan Drawings, Prints and Photographs 1945-55

The exhibition consists of some 50 prints, drawings and photographs selected from nearly 500 Vaughan items held in the School of Art collection at the University and has been on show in National Museum Wales from July to November 2012. This part of the Aberystwyth collection has never been the subject of an exhibition before.

Figure and Ground explores the work of the British artist Keith Vaughan (1912-1977) and the themes that preoccupied him - the male figure and pictorial space.

Initially influenced by Graham Sutherland, Vaughan's early work was Neo-Romantic in spirit. In the late 1950s he developed his semi-abstractist 'assemblies'.

Figure and Ground presents a fresh and original view of this complex artist. This is a significant holding of a wide range of work in different media: drawings for some of his most important book illustration commissions, his experiments in print-making, and his photographs, some of which formed his own selection collected in *Dick's Book of Photographs* (assembled around 1939).

The fully illustrated book which accompanies the exhibition, published by Sansom & Co, contains three essays based on new research on Vaughan and his times by Dr Colin Cruise, Professor Robert Meyrick, Dr Harry Heuser and Dr Simon Pierse of the School of Art. The publication has been supported by The Derek Williams Trust, The Hargreaves and Ball Trust and Aberystwyth University.



The 39 Steps

Adapted by Patrick Barlow from the novel by John Buchan.

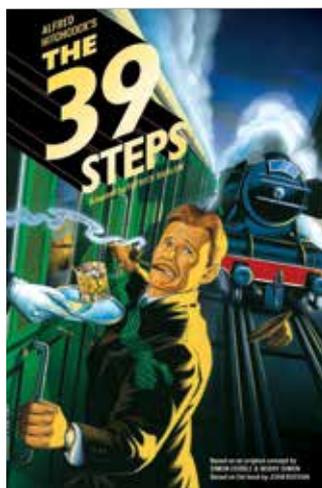
**Wednesday 19 February to
Friday 21 February**

Aberystwyth Arts Centre

Mix a Hitchcock masterpiece with a juicy spy novel, add a dash of Monty Python and you have *The 39 Steps*, a fast-paced whodunit for anyone who loves the magic of theatre! This 2-time Tony® and Drama Desk Award-winning treat is packed with nonstop laughs, missing fingers and some good old-fashioned romance!

A man with a boring life meets a woman with a thick accent who says she's a spy. When he takes her home, she is murdered. Soon, a mysterious organization called '*The 39 Steps*' is hot on the man's trail in a nationwide manhunt that climaxes in a death-defying finale!

www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk/comedy/39-steps



WOW Film Festival

**Friday 21st March -
Thursday 27th March**

Aberystwyth Arts Centre

The WOW (Wales One World) Film Festival returns to Aberystwyth in March with our amazing eclectic selection of world cinema for you to enjoy.

Some of the highlights this year include *Nairobi Half Life*, a rare chance to see a film from Africa this dramatic thriller gives a powerful sense of life in the slums of Nairobi. The visually stunning mountains of Laos provide an evocative backdrop for *The Rocket*, an engaging, gently memorable film about a determined boy struggling against all the life throws at him. The truly captivating *The Patience Stone*, a remarkable film about a woman's life in war-torn Afghanistan. The delightful *Winter Nomads* about the last shepherds to still follow their flock round the mountains of Switzerland won the Best Documentary Prize at last year's European Film Awards. www.wowfestival.com

