

Aber^rNEWS

ISSUE 23 - Spring 2016

Professor John Grattan takes on role of Acting Vice-Chancellor

On 1 February Professor John Grattan took on the role of Acting Vice-Chancellor, following the announcement by Vice-Chancellor Professor April McMahon in December 2015 that she wished to step down on 31 July 2016, at the end of her five-year term of office.

John will fulfil the role of Acting Vice-Chancellor until a new Vice-Chancellor assumes office, with April focusing on externally-facing aspects of the Vice-Chancellor role until the end of July.

A graduate of the University of Manchester (Geography and Archaeology), John gained a PhD from the University of Sheffield where he studied the impact of Icelandic volcanic eruptions on ancient settlements of northern and western Britain. He joined Aberystwyth University as lecturer in 1995, and has since held a number of key internal leadership roles, including Dean of the Faculty of Science, prior to being appointed Pro Vice-Chancellor in 2012.

John is currently Chair of Universities Wales Learning and Teaching Action Group, board member of the Quality Assurance Agency, National Representative on the Higher Education Public Information Strategy Group, and a member of SAGE – Scientific Advice to Government in Emergencies.

He has recently been appointed to the UK Government's Teaching Excellence Framework Design and Implementation Expert Advisory Group, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales Student Outcomes and Achievement Committee, and to the board of Global Wales.

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Aber^rNEWS is published by the **Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs Team**, Aberystwyth University. **Tel:** 01970 622946
E-mail: communications@aber.ac.uk.

The next edition of Aber^rNEWS will be available in **April 2016**.
Copy deadline for this edition is **Monday 29 February**.

Speaking of his appointment, John said: "It is a privilege to be appointed to the role of Acting Vice-Chancellor and I look forward to working with April over the coming months to build on the excellent work that has been done during her time here.

"What has always motivated me is that I believe the primary purpose of universities is to enable people to comprehensively change their lives, to give them the background, foundation and training that will enable them to achieve the life they want - their hopes, aspirations and dreams - and that is based on my own personal experience.

"I didn't go to university until I was 26 years old. At the time I was a motorcycle courier in London and going to university changed everything for me. I fundamentally believe that universities are in the business of transforming people's lives, through our interactions with our students and through our research. If we hold to that mission then we won't go far wrong.

"Aberystwyth, like most universities in the country at the moment faces some deep challenges in terms of recruitment, and in terms of finance. We have to be very clear and focused on the key challenges that face us. My aim in the months ahead will be to focus on key themes that are critical to building a

sustainable university; healthy recruitment and ensuring we deliver the best possible student experience.

"With most students staying close to home these days because of the high cost of going to university both for students and their parents, we have to create real reasons and strong pull factors that will make prospective students actively choose Aberystwyth. They've got to know about us and what we stand for; outstanding student experience and teaching, and excellent research that addresses the grand challenges that people and the planet are facing today, and I fundamentally believe that."

"An immense amount of work has been done by everyone here at Aberystwyth to improve our estate and all aspects of learning and teaching, and I believe this is the year we will reap the benefits of all of that hard work. Together we can build on this, so that Aberystwyth is once more acknowledged as offering one of the best student experiences anywhere."

John is keen to visit all aspects of the University over the coming months. If you would like to invite him to visit your department or group, or to attend an event, please contact Kim Broom at the Vice-Chancellor's Office on 2101 / kmd@aber.ac.uk.

New sports partnership with the Urdd launched

The University has announced a major new partnership with Urdd Gobaith Cymru Sport Department that will provide greater opportunities for young athletes in Wales and promote the use of the Welsh language in sport.

The partnership was launched on 27 January at the Urdd Cardiff City Sleepover in the presence of Ken Skates, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism. Also present were Welsh international rugby player, Elinor Snowsill and BBC Wales Young Volunteer of the Year, Elan Gilford.

The Urdd Sports Department hold eight national competitions every year, with around 45,000 children and young people taking part. The University will have a presence at all events and they will become a key partner in the department's weekly activities throughout Wales to reach 100,000 children and young people every year.

The partnership will also include a financial contribution by the University to sponsor staff kit, support and development of new community initiatives, and office space for a new sports officer.

Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Welsh Language and Culture and External

Engagement said: "The University is a long standing supporter of the Urdd, having actively promoted both its cultural activities at the Eisteddfod and its sports provision, including its Sports Coaching Courses, over many years. We are delighted to be building on this work with the launch of this partnership, and in so doing, providing a platform for young people in Wales to develop their skills and promoting the use of the Welsh language in sport".



Pictured left to right: Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, Pro Vice-Chancellor Aberystwyth University; Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Chancellor of Aberystwyth University; Ken Skates AM, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism; Sioned Hughes, Chief Executive of Urdd Gobaith Cymru; Elinor Snowsill, Welsh international rugby player, and Elan Gilford, Wales Sport Awards' Young Volunteer of the Year

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S COLUMN

If you have recently been wandering along the Prom (or striding purposefully along the Prom, more likely), on your way past the Old College you might have seen two very striking banners attached to the railings. Mary Lloyd Jones, in her inimitable and instantly recognisable style, has generously designed and made these to support the 'New Life for Old College' project. Old College is perfectly placed to be a resource for both the University and the town, providing a future home for public engagement with our interdisciplinary research, student projects, art, performance, and business links with the creative and cultural industries. Thanks to extraordinary hard work by the Old College team and the Project Board, on 1 December this vision came one big step closer to reality with the submission of a detailed proposal for Heritage Lottery Funding.

Heritage Lottery Fund representatives will be visiting us at some point over the next couple of months to assess the practicalities of the proposal and the need for it at first hand, and if you have the chance, I hope you will help them understand how important the Old College is to us here in Aber. We're working to demonstrate that even now through using the building for events, activities and space for our partners.

To give one example, on the morning of 15 October, Aberystwyth University and our local community celebrated Founders' Day, probably for the first time since 1872. I was privileged to speak at the event in the Old College, alongside the Deputy Mayor, the President of our Students' Union, and a local representative

of the Old Students' Association. This was a superb reminder of how our communities – town, current students, staff, and alumni – interact and intersect. The event didn't quite hit the heights of 1872, as I regret to say I don't have the powers to grant a town holiday. The menu was also rather different – the crowd in 1872 enjoyed 'turkeys, chickens, hams, tongues, ducks, grouse, partridges, pheasants, raised pies, rabbit pies, veal and ham pies, aspec and other jellies, &c.', as reported in *The Welshman* from 18 October. We were a tiny bit more restrained, though in common with 1872, our hospitality colleagues still ensured that 'The repast was turned out in first-class style and was well served'.

Many thanks to all those who have already supported the various events we have held and hosted in the Old College, from our (now legendary) mince pie and mulled wine parties to thank colleagues, to Father Christmas's annual visit to younger community members, plus public lectures and student celebrations. Each time you come to an event in the building, you are demonstrating how well it can work for us all – and doing a little bit more to help ensure its development for the future.

Professor April McMahon
Vice-Chancellor



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Fitness, Fun**

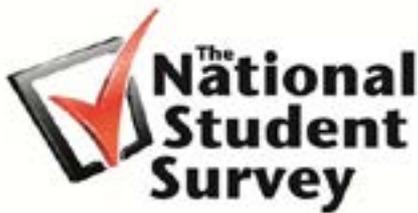
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National Student Survey launched



The National Student Survey (NSS) launched here at Aberystwyth University on Monday 1 February.

The NSS, now in its twelfth year, provides our final year undergraduates with the chance to give their anonymous

feedback on what they loved about their time here, as well as how they feel we could improve the student experience.

Students will be asked questions grouped into seven areas: 'the teaching on my course'; 'assessment and feedback'; 'academic support'; 'organisation and management'; 'learning resources'; 'personal development' and 'overall satisfaction'.

In order to collect the most accurate data possible we want to encourage a high number of responses from our students.

The NSS is promoted to our students through a variety of events and promotions. To enable you to further raise the profile of the NSS with students in your department, a range of marketing materials have been developed which are available at www.aber.ac.uk/en/nss.

As an incentive, Aberystwyth students who complete this year's NSS will be entered into a prize draw to win either a helicopter ride or mini iPad.

There is also a departmental competition to see which department can be first to reach 50% response rate in all its programmes. The winning department will win a table at the Student Led Teaching Awards as well as the coveted NSS Aber duck!

Look out for the pop-up NSS stations around campus from the 1 February, where our NSS teams will be loaded with iPads to help students to complete the survey.

LGBT History Month 2016



LGBT History Month takes place throughout February and, much like last year, the University is looking forward to celebrating the occasion.

ABERRATION, hosted by Ruth Fowler and Spring Out, will be putting on a LGBT History Month event, consisting of talks and live music. The event takes place on Friday 19 February at the Aberystwyth Arts Centre Studio at 7pm for a 7.30pm start. Tickets cost £7.50. All welcome. Please contact Ruth on ruf@aber.ac.uk for more information. Details are available at www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk/music/aberration-2 and www.aberration.org.uk.

If anybody would like to host an event to help celebrate LGBT History month, please contact Ruth Fowler ruf@aber.ac.uk, who is helping to coordinate a series of events.



The AberForward Graduate Scheme has returned!

The Careers Service has arranged for 61 graduates to take part in the scheme this year.

As AberForward Trainees, they are working here for one month, helping out with a range of interesting projects across the University, receiving a programme of employability-related training, and gaining valuable work experience to help enhance their employability.

For further details on AberForward, its various strands and how it can benefit you, please see www.aber.ac.uk/en/aberforward/.



NEWS continued

Aberystwyth glaciologist awarded Polar Medal

The Director of the Centre for Glaciology, Professor Bryn Hubbard has been awarded the prestigious Polar Medal.

The award was made in recognition of Professor Hubbard's work as a "Polar scholar in glaciology, glacial geology and the structure and motion of ice masses".

Professor Hubbard joins an illustrious list of recipients that includes Captain Robert F Scott, Sir Ernest Shackleton, who accompanied Scott during the 1902-4 expedition, and Sir Edmund Hillary and Sir Vivian Fuchs who led the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1957-8.

Instituted in September 1904 to reward the participants in Captain Robert F Scott's successful first expedition to the Antarctic region, in recent decades most awards of the Polar Medal have been made to scientists who over prolonged periods of time and in harsh conditions have worked to advance knowledge of the polar regions.

Professor Hubbard is one of three glaciologists with links to the University to have been awarded the Polar Medal; Professor Michael Hambrey, former director of the Centre for Glaciology, and Professor Julian Dowdeswell, former Head of the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences being the others.



Professor Bryn Hubbard

STUDENT NEWS

Big wins for Aber SU!

A lot has happened since writing the last column in August, therefore here are a few of the 'big wins' we'd like to shout about...



Freshers' Fortnight saw our A-Team volunteers working closely with St John's Ambulance Cymru to reduce Accident and Emergency (A&E) admissions. We are very pleased to say that there was a dramatic 65% reduction in the number of students admitted to A&E at Bronglais compared to last year - eleven students this year, compared to 32 last year. 117 students received St John's treatment and were taken home via the SU Safety Bus, whereas previous years these students would have been taken to A&E or into police care. This new venture has received positive feedback from local taxi companies, Dyfed Powys Police, the Welsh Ambulance Service and Bronglais General Hospital.

The annual RAG month held in November saw clubs and societies working together to raise money for a number of charities, including Ceredigion Care Society, Stonewall and Teenage Cancer Trust. Fundraising events included a 24-hour gaming marathon, kit auctions, fun runs, bake offs and 'biking the equivalent of Everest in a day'. The amount raised currently stands at £16,248.

We've seen a number of academic 'wins' so far this year; students are no longer stopped from graduating due to non-academic debt, a Postgraduate Employment Charter is now in place, Thomas Parry Library has extended its opening hours and Aberystwyth's University Challenge team has made it through to the interview stages.

We have just introduced a Cwtch Loyalty Card, so for every ten drinks you buy at Starbucks at the Cwtch, you get one drink free. Pick up your card from the Starbucks counter now.

The nomination period for the Spring Elections runs from 11 January to 5 February and, after a week of campaigning, the student body will vote on who they want to represent them during 2016-2017. The results will be announced during the Election Results Evening at the Students' Union on 18 February.

We are now in full swing planning the Summer Ball to be held on 6 May, a full weekend of rugby at Aber7s on 30 April-1 May and a perfect excuse to get glammed up for the Student-Led Teaching Awards on 22 April.

Well, that's a quick round up of what we've done so far this academic year and what we've got planned at the Students' Union this semester. Keep an eye on our website and social media channels for up-to-date information - www.abersu.co.uk

Eleri Wyn, AUSU Marketing & Communications Manager



RAG 24-hour gaming marathon fundraising event, November 2015



The background

The University's new student campaign, *Tell Us Now*, was introduced at the start of the 2015/16 academic year. The project has been sponsored by Professor John Grattan (Acting Vice-Chancellor) and led by a project team chaired by Tim Davies (Director of Information Services).

Designed to enhance the student experience here at Aberystwyth, *Tell Us Now* puts the student voice at the heart of the University's plans to deliver student success.

Tell Us Now facilitates an on-going conversation with students through a variety of activity across traditional and digital channels. The key aim is to provide platforms that will help us to engage our students to work with us in improving their student experience.

How is *Tell Us Now* helping?

Whatever you do and wherever you work at the University you are contributing to the student experience at Aberystwyth.

The insights drawn from *Tell Us Now* will help us to understand, reflect and make enhancements to ensure that the Aber student experience is the best it can be.

Tell Us Now is already enabling departments to identify areas of best practice and highlight students' positive experience, as well as empowering them to promptly address any early signs

that students are not receiving the highest quality teaching and feedback, academic or personal support.

What did our students tell us?

Last semester our students completed thousands of surveys covering almost four hundred modules from across the University. They have also completed an online survey focusing on assessment and feedback.

A number of wide-ranging comments have also been received through email and a web form.

What have we done with this information?

We have launched a *You Said, We Did* campaign to highlight the changes and improvements we have made to the Aber student experience as a direct result of feedback received through *Tell Us Now*. So far, there have been over fifty *You Said, We Did* actions.

You will see *You Said, We Did* posters dotted around campus – in departments, libraries and other public spaces, as well as on social media and the website.

The current *You Said, We Did poster* campaign will be running until April 2016.

For more information visit:

www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/tell-us-now/you-said-we-did/

What has changed as a result of *Tell Us Now*?

The improvements made so far as a result of *Tell us Now* include:

You said

We did

<p>You wanted to use the library at any time – day or night</p>	<p>The Hugh Owen Library is now open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during term time. We're also extending the Thomas Parry Library opening hours.</p>
<p>You wanted to submit your work electronically and receive quality, timely feedback</p>	<p>We've developed e-submission and e-feedback systems so departments can continue to meet the 15 working days turnaround for undergraduate modules feedback</p>
<p>You asked for more recordings of lectures</p>	<p>There has been a 45% increase in the number of lectures recorded in semester 1. From September 2016 all lectures will be recorded.</p>
<p>You were pleased with the electronic attendance system as you didn't have to wait to sign a paper register.</p>	<p>Aber Card readers have now been installed in all centrally timetabled teaching rooms across the University, and will be installed in more rooms over the next year.</p>
<p>Department of Psychology You asked for a common room</p>	<p>A student common room will be available in 2016 and a vending machine will be installed for student and staff use.</p>
<p>Department of English and Creative Writing You asked for spaces to meet informally with other students in the department</p>	<p>We've worked on areas of the Hugh Owen Building with the view to reinforcing the idea that students can meet in their departments informally for refreshments; to talk with staff and peers or to spend some quiet time with a book over a cup of coffee.</p>
<p>School of Management and Business You asked whether your timetable would allow you to attend prayer at the Mosque in Aberystwyth</p>	<p>We can reallocate tutorial group slots where possible. There is also an open access prayer room on Llanbadarn campus, located above Blas Padarn.</p>
<p>Department of Physics There weren't enough text books available for a final year module</p>	<p>We have discussed this with Information Services staff who are ensuring increased availability of books through shorter loan periods and ordering further copies of key texts.</p>

New appointments

Nineteen students have been employed as AberTemps to work on the *Tell Us Now* project. Their role includes attending lectures to introduce *Tell Us Now* and to distribute and collect surveys; scanning paper surveys and typing in handwritten comments; and collating and distributing data.



We also welcome two new members of staff to the project.

Faye ap Geraint has been appointed as the *Tell Us Now* Project Manager from January 2016.

Faye explains: "Our priority is to increase student satisfaction by addressing any early signs that students are not receiving the best possible university experience during their university life cycle. I am responsible for managing, supporting, planning and delivering the *Tell Us Now* Project."

Faye graduated from Aberystwyth University with a BA Hons in Childhood Studies in 2012. Prior to university, she was the proprietor of a small business with a number of employees in the sales and customer services sector. She joined Aberystwyth University in 2013 and has worked in a number of departments including AQRO as a graduate trainee, Student Support as a business development manager, project manager and as childcare manager in the University's nursery.

"I look forward to further embedding and engaging all stakeholders with the *Tell Us Now* campaign. Please keep your eyes open for a series of meetings where stakeholders will be invited to feed into the *Tell Us Now* campaign and share best practice," Faye says.



Ryan Owens joined the *Tell Us Now* team as a graduate intern in October 2015.

Ryan explains: "Within a week I was managing the survey delivery, coordinating survey temps to module surveys and

managing rescheduled and posted surveys. I was also responsible for compiling the reports based on data and supplying this information to the relevant members of staff.

"Outside the survey period my position is to support the project where needed, and implement new ideas of the team where possible."

Having graduated in Sport & Exercise Science in 2015, Ryan volunteered at Villa Park during the Rugby World Cup, helping with the implementation and maintenance of various technological aspects.

Faye and Ryan are part of the Project Management and Change Unit (PMCU) based in the Visualisation Building. Faye's e-mail address is faa4@aber.ac.uk, and Ryan's is ryo2@aber.ac.uk.



Tell Us Now feedback workshop

Feedback about *Tell Us Now*

*"The Students' Union is very pleased with the *Tell Us Now* initiative and the progress that has been made in such a short space of time, especially all of the positive changes that have occurred as a result of the feedback gained from students. The student voice is incredibly important, and *Tell Us Now* ensures that this is heard across the University in a variety of ways. Perceptions of *Tell Us Now* and the work the team are doing are so far very positive amongst students, and I am excited to see how this develops in the future."*

Lauren Marks, Students Union Education Officer

*"As with all new big projects, there have been a few gremlins to sort out. The *Tell Us Now* team has been really grateful for feedback from academic staff and departmental administration teams about how to get the best out of the module evaluation survey in particular and will be taking the suggestions forward."*

Lucy Hodson, Director of Planning

*"I have been very impressed by the way that *Tell Us Now* module evaluations have worked so far on my module. The visit caused little disruption, and the student helpers were polite and well organised. I received the feedback within 6 hours (!) and I find the way that the data is set out is clear and coherent."*

Member of academic staff

For more information

For more information about *Tell Us Now*, visit www.aber.ac.uk/en/student/tell-us-now/ or watch the animation at www.youtube.com/watch?v=n72AJh-dn-E

SPOTLIGHT



Spotlight on... the Careers Service

The mission of the University's Careers Service is to help our students and graduates to realise their aspirations, make informed life choices and achieve their potential. To learn more about what their work involves, we spoke to the Director, Siân Furlong-Davies.

What does the Careers Service do?

The main function of the Careers Service is to help our students to plan and prepare for their future career options once they have graduated.

Our role is to support our students to develop the career management skills they need to be able to make career decisions both now and in the future.

Our work is of equal relevance to all students regardless of their future intentions (further study and research, gap year, time off or job hunting) as our focus is on helping the students understand and recognise the abilities they have to offer and how those can relate to future roles.

Without the support of academic and professional service colleagues we wouldn't be able to function effectively, so developing our relationship with colleagues is also a crucial element of our work.

How has the Careers Service changed recently?

As a department we are now entering a very exciting time as we are in the fortunate position of having secured additional funding from the University to increase our staff numbers quite considerably.

This has meant that we are now able to re-focus our activities and offer a far more in-depth service to our academic Institutes. With the appointment of a dedicated Careers Consultant whose role will be to focus on their specific Institute, there is now scope for us to work much more cohesively with academic colleagues to support them in achieving their Institute specific Employability Action Plans and the Key Performance Indicators that have been set for each of them.

An increase in our Employer Engagement Team has also meant that the AberForward project has now been passed over to

the Careers Service to administer, an excellent move that is now allowing us to offer a broader range of work experience opportunities to our students.

In addition, the development of AberTemps is opening more opportunities to students each day. Although this is still in its pilot phase we are anticipating being able to develop this over the coming months in preparation for a greater range of options for the next academic year.

With our front-line services being delivered from our public office in the easily accessible Students' Union building, a greater range of work experience provision, increasing contributions by employers and alumni who offer workshops and mentoring, and our increased capacity to be more active in the Institutes, we are looking forward to increasing our engagement with students and colleagues across the University.

What are the common misconceptions that people have about the work that the Careers Service does?

A common misconception amongst students is that they can wait until the last week of their final year before approaching us or thinking about their future plans. Our work is not about getting a student to choose a job and then fill in application forms and produce a CV. It is much more about getting students to develop as many skills and experiences as possible and, more importantly, recognise the huge range of skills that they have and how those are transferable to other activities and aspects of their lives and their potential future career areas. This starts from day one of year one!

Another common misconception amongst students is that they need to know what they want to do as a job before they come and see us. We work with students across the whole spectrum of career readiness, from absolutely clueless to very focused with a

definite plan - there are always ways we can help and new ideas or suggestions we can offer on how to proceed.

What's on the horizon for the Careers Service?

It's a really exciting time for us now. We are looking forward to introducing a new process that will allow us to better understand the career readiness of our students as they register each year, so that we can tailor our services to better meet their needs, whilst also being able to track their development and assess the impact of our services and activities.

There are plans afoot to develop bespoke work experience opportunities for our postgraduate students via the AberForward scheme that will also harness the opportunities on offer across the community with our local employers.

The Institute focused role of the Careers Consultants is now opening up opportunities to develop far more tailored services for each of our departments and is allowing us to explore more effective ways of working with academic colleagues to benefit our students.

Person Profile – Siân Furlong Davies Director of the University's Careers Service



Tell us a bit about yourself

I graduated from Swansea University (sorry!) with a degree in Geography, a subject I loved and still do for its variety and diversity. After a period in Retail Management I fell into careers work by chance, a happy occurrence that has

given me nearly 30 years of fascinating work in the careers guidance field in some capacity.

After 6 years working overseas, I was fortunate to be offered the post of Bilingual Careers and International Adviser here at Aberystwyth University, an interesting and challenging role that required me to act as an International Officer for 2.5 days a week and a Careers Adviser for the remainder – quite a juggling act with overseas travel to factor in to the equation!

Describe a typical day in the Careers Office

There's no such thing as far as individual members of staff are concerned, as the work is so varied. Nonetheless, there are services that we offer on a daily basis that need to be delivered, such as our front-line public office, our drop-in services and guidance interviews. Around these core activities are a range of employer-led activities, workshops, meetings, planning events, resource development and promotional activities that add to each job role to make them diverse on a daily basis.

What element of your job gives you most satisfaction?

I enjoy the strategic planning and organising aspect of my role. I also get great satisfaction from pulling stats together and working out budgets and finances.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I enjoy horse riding and sailing, the latter only in the summer months as I get too cold otherwise! However, house renovation seems to have taken over my life in more recent months, which is proving to be far more messy and time consuming than anticipated.

Who's Who in the Careers Service

Siân Furlong-Davies

Director
E-mail: ssd@aber.ac.uk
Telephone: (01970) 622378

FRONT-LINE TEAM

Sue Evans

Student Employability
Manager
E-mail: sej@aber.ac.uk
Telephone: (01970) 622376

Carys Mleczek

Student Employability Adviser
E-mail: esm@aber.ac.uk
Telephone: (01970) 622378

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Gwen Adams

Employability Manager
Role includes AberForward & AberTemps responsibilities
E-mail: gwa3@aber.ac.uk
Telephone: (01970) 621536

Jacqui Ho

Employer Liaison Officer
E-mail: jah30@aber.ac.uk
Telephone: (01970) 628670

Ben Jones

Placement Officer
Role includes AberForward & AberTemps responsibilities
E-mail: bej13@aber.ac.uk
Telephone: (01970) 628678

GO WALES TEAM

Lewis Richards

GO Wales Strategic Manager
E-mail: lhr@aber.ac.uk
Telephone: (01970) 622099

Christina Evans

GO Wales Development
Adviser
E-mail: cre@aber.ac.uk
Telephone: (01970) 628509

CAREERS CONSULTANT TEAM

James Cuffe

Careers Consultant – IBERS
E-mail: jpc11@aber.ac.uk
Telephone: (01970) 622378

Beverley Herring

Careers Consultant – IEGPD
E-mail: bch@aber.ac.uk
Telephone: (01970) 622378

Joanne Hiatt

Careers Consultant – ILLCA
E-mail: jeb@aber.ac.uk
Telephone: (01970) 622378

Morwenna Jeffery

Careers Consultant – IMPACS
E-mail: mrj11@aber.ac.uk
Telephone: (01970) 622378

Anna McAdam

Careers Consultant – IGHPP
E-mail: anm43@aber.ac.uk
Telephone: (01970) 622378

Tony Orme

Careers Consultant – IMLIS
E-mail: awo@aber.ac.uk
Telephone: (01970) 622378



L to R. Front Row: James Cuffe, Carys Mleczek, Joanne Hiatt, Lewis Richards, Siân Furlong-Davies.

Middle Row: Tony Orme, Anna McAdam, Sue Evans, Beverley Herring, Morwenna Jeffery, Christina Evans, Jacqui Ho.

Back Row: Ben Jones, Chris Grattan (AberForward), Gwen Adams

Springboard Development Programme



Twenty-five members of staff from across the academic and professional services departments, embarked on the in-house Springboard Development Programme at the end of January.

Springboard is an award winning scheme which offers training to women of all ages and backgrounds aspiring to management and leadership roles. Dealing specifically with issues that women are faced with, this programme aims to inspire and empower women to achieve their goals and ambitions.

The 2016 Springboard Development Programme is being delivered by Joy Arkley from the University's HR department, a Licensed Freelance Springboard Trainer. Guest speakers include the Vice-Chancellor, Jackie Sayce (Institute Manager, Institute of Geography, History, Politics and Psychology), Sue Chambers (Director of HR) and Jane Davidson (Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor and Director of the award winning INSPIRE {Institute for Sustainability Practice, Innovation and Resource Effectiveness} at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David).

Universities Superannuation Scheme



Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) is changing for the future from 1 April 2016.

Currently USS provides two forms of defined benefit pension: Final Salary (FS), and Career Revalued Benefits (CRB). Both provide a pension which is linked to salary, albeit in different ways.

Going forward, USS will provide defined benefit pensions on a CRB basis only. There will also be an opportunity for members to accumulate additional flexible pension saving in the form of an individual defined contribution account.

These changes will be introduced in phases from 1 April 2016, and will affect all current members, as well as those joining the scheme in the future. If you would like to find out more about the new scheme structure, please go to forthefuture.uss.co.uk/member-area or contact Martin Davies (mad@aber.ac.uk), or Beth Head (myh@aber.ac.uk) in the Payroll Office.

International Women's Day

International Women's Day is celebrated on 8 March each year. Last year a series of events were held at the University to mark the occasion, including a lecture by Baroness Kay Andrews OBE, a silent vigil, and a presentation by the Head of the Home Office.

In keeping with tradition, the University would like to put on a series of events from 7-11 March 2016 as a week-long celebration of International Women's Day. If you or your colleagues would like to take part, please contact Ruth Fowler, HR Officer (ruf@aber.ac.uk) with your ideas as soon as possible, and then provide finalised plans by 22 February.

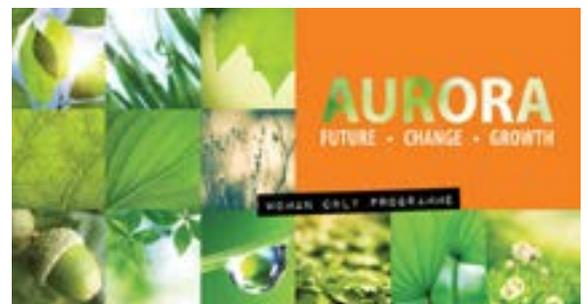
Transgender Awareness Workshops



Thirty staff from across the University attended Transgender Awareness workshops on 18 and 19 January.

With an estimated 1% of the population falling somewhere on the broad "trans" spectrum, staff in universities are almost certain to encounter a range of diverse trans people and students in the course of their professional work.

'Introduction to Trans Awareness', which was delivered by not-for-profit company Gendered Intelligence, introduced the key information people need to know to work with young trans people, or to support trans colleagues. The workshops covered issues surrounding inclusion of transgender and transsexual people, gender reassignment, gender diversity, and rights and responsibilities around trans identities.



AURORA

Seven female members of staff will be completing the next AURORA Programme being held in Birmingham starting in February. Five of the women are being sponsored by IBERS.

AURORA is a women-only leadership development initiative, launched in 2013.

While most leadership programmes are aimed at leaders and managers already in role, AURORA is designed to enable a wide range of women, in academic and professional roles in higher education, to engage with leadership development at an earlier stage in their careers.

The AURORA Programme allows participants the opportunity to think of themselves as future leaders, to develop the skills they will need, and to help their institutions to maximise the use of the skills they acquire.

ABER PEOPLE

Academic Promotions 2015

Congratulations to the following members of academic staff who have been promoted following the completion of the 2015 Academic Promotions process:

The following have been promoted to the post of Chair:



Professor Ian Armstead,
IBERS



Professor Judith Broady-Preston,
Information Studies



Professor Colin Cruise,
School of Art



Professor Glyn Jenkins,
IBERS



Professor Paul Brewer,
Geography & Earth Sciences



Professor John Clifton-Brown,
IBERS



Professor Joanne Hamilton,
IBERS



Professor Helen Roberts,
Geography & Earth Sciences

The following have been promoted to the post of Reader:



Dr Peter Bunting,
Geography & Earth Sciences



Dr Alistair Finlan,
International Politics



Dr Catherine Howarth,
IBERS



Dr Leif Skøt,
IBERS



Dr Daniel Burgarth,
Mathematics



Dr Allen Foster,
Information Studies



Dr Anwen Jones,
Theatre, Film & Television Studies



Dr Bernard Tiddeman,
Computer Science



Dr Anwen Elias,
International Politics



Dr Ayla Göl,
International Politics



Dr Alison Kingston-Smith,
IBERS



Dr Rattan Yadav,
IBERS

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

Dr Natasha Alden, English & Creative Writing
 Dr Rosemary Cann,
 Education and Lifelong Learning
 Dr Amanda Clare, Computer Science
 Dr Rosemary Collins, IBERS
 Mr Prysor Davies,
 Education and Lifelong Learning;
 Dr Arwyn Edwards, IBERS

Dr Kate Egan, Theatre, Film & Television Studies
 Dr Hywel Griffiths, Geography & Earth Sciences
 Dr Jesse Heley, Geography & Earth Sciences
 Dr Gareth Hoskins, Geography & Earth Sciences
 Dr Lin Huang, IBERS
 Dr Catrin Huws, Law & Criminology
 Dr Sharon Huws, IBERS

Dr Tristram Irvine-Fynn,
 Geography & Earth Sciences
 Dr Elizabeth New, History & Welsh History
 Dr Rachel Rahman, Psychology
 Dr Gancho Slavov, IBERS

Promotion, Reward and Recognition Process 2016

The timescale for the Academic Promotions process for 2016 was recently announced.

The timetable for the 2016 promotions process for Senior Lecturer (SL), Reader and Chair is as follows:

25 January 2016 - Window for notifying intention to submit an application opens.

15 February 2016 - Closing date for employees to notify their intention to submit an application.

4 March 2016 - All mentors to be allocated by this date.

10 August 2016 - Closing date for applications.

11-26 August 2016 - Institute Directors to endorse Head of Department proposals for references and external assessor names.

29 August – 21 October 2016 - Assessors reports and internal references to be obtained and applications to be circulated to panel members.

November 2016 - Academic Promotions panel meets.

Employees who wish to indicate their intention to submit an application for Senior Lecturer, Reader or Chair in 2016 should do so by emailing academic-promotions@aber.ac.uk by 15 February 2016.

If you have any questions relating to this process then please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Employee Services Team at academic-promotions@aber.ac.uk

For more information visit: www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/reward-and-recognition/academic-promotions

Appointments

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND EARTH SCIENCES



Dr Marie Busfield has been appointed as Lecturer in Environmental Science. This appointment follows the re-launch of DGES' Environmental Science degree scheme, and continued investment from the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol into Welsh-medium provision of higher education. Dr Busfield's research interests

are in ancient glaciation, sedimentology and palaeoclimate change, specifically focussing on the Neoproterozoic ('Snowball Earth') ice age.



Dr Taulant Guma has been appointed as a Post-doctoral Research Associate to work as part of the ESRC WISERD/Civil Society Research Centre, based in the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences. Dr Guma completed his PhD in Central and East European Studies in 2015 at the University of Glasgow as an ESRC CASE scholarship

holder. He also holds a BSc in Anthropology from University College London, an MSc and an MRes in Russian, Central and East European Studies from the University of Glasgow.

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY



Dr Gil Greengross joined the University in October 2015 as a lecturer in the Department of Psychology. Dr Greengross is an evolutionary psychologist who researches the psychology of humour and laughter. Originally from Israel, he received his Bachelor degree in psychology, anthropology and sociology from Ben-Gurion University. He

earned his Master's degree in statistics and a PhD in evolutionary anthropology from the University of New Mexico.

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS



Dr Mohamed Saeudy has joined the University as a lecturer in Accounting and Finance. His research interest focuses on exploring how accounting practices and finance theories may help businesses to become more sustainable. Dr Saeudy has spent many years working in the banking industry in Egypt and UK, and has

held research and teaching posts at the Universities of Derby, Northampton and Keele.

INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND RURAL SCIENCES



Dr Sebastian McBride is a Liverpool (BSc) and Edinburgh (PhD) graduate who first took up a lectureship position at Aberystwyth in 1996 in what was the Institute of Rural Sciences. He left the Institute in 2005 to extend his research interests in cognitive robotics in the Department of Computer Science (Aberystwyth) and then cognitive

neuroscience at the University of Cambridge. He now returns to Aberystwyth University to take up the appointment of lecturer in Biological Sciences.



Dr Federico Villagra has been appointed as Lecturer in Exercise and Health Physiology. A graduate in Exercise Sciences from Universidad Politécnic de Madrid, Dr Villagra also completed an MSc in Human Physiology and doctorate at University of Birmingham. He has held posts at Newcastle University, the University of Maryland,

School of Medicine/Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and the Clinica Universidad Navarra in Spain.



Dr Andreas Foskolos has joined IBERS as a Research Fellow in Ruminant Livestock Modelling. His scientific background is focused on ruminants with emphasis in digestive physiology, nutrient metabolism and nutritional modelling. He was awarded his PhD in Animal Nutrition from the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain) in 2012, and worked as a postdoctoral associate at Cornell University (USA).



Dimitra Loka has joined IBERS as Research Fellow in Plant Science. A University of Arkansas graduate with a degree in plant physiology, Dimitra's research focuses on the effects of abiotic stresses on plant physiological responses.



Dr Diego Moya has joined IBERS as an Interdisciplinary Research Fellow in Animal Sciences. After completing his DVM, MSc and PhD at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain), he was a post-doctoral fellow at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. His research interests include the study of animal behaviour, physiology and metabolism to understand the interaction of ruminant animals with the immediate environment, as well as to develop new management strategies to optimise nutrition, health and animal well-being while ensuring optimal levels of performance.

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS



Dr Matteo Dalla Riva joins the Department of Mathematics as Marie Sklodowska-Curie Research Fellow. Matteo graduated in Mathematics at the University of Padova in Italy where he has also received his PhD. He held post-doctoral positions in Italy and in Portugal, first in Porto and then in Aveiro. He is an expert in perturbation problems, partial differential equations, and integral methods.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE PUBLISHER

New directors have been appointed at CAA (Cyhoeddwr Adnoddau Addysg/Educational Resource Publisher) – **Delyth Ifan** as Director and **Fflur Davies** as Assistant Director. Between them, Delyth and Fflur have worked as Editors and Project Managers at CAA for almost 25 years.



Delyth graduated with a BA (2:1 Hons) degree and an MPhil degree in Welsh from University of Wales, Lampeter. She worked in the National Library of Wales' manuscripts department and as a translator before joining the team at CAA in 2002.



Fflur gained a First Class BA (Hons) degree in Modern Wales Studies from Aberystwyth University in 2004, and was appointed to a post with CAA in the same year. Fflur also has many years' experience in marketing and publicity work for CAA.

DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICE



Dylan Jones has been appointed Aberystwyth Fund Officer at DARO. He joins from Pugh Computers Ltd, where he was Director of Marketing & Business Development. An Aber alumnus, Dylan brings with him over 10 years' experience in strategic marketing, campaign planning and relationship building.

INFORMATION SERVICES



Martin Taylor arrived in Information Services as Collections, Resources and Facilities Manager in October 2015. Martin joins from the University of Wolverhampton where he worked as Faculty Librarian. He also brings with him significant experience of library management in both the public and FE sectors.

Obituary

David Blumfield (1962-2015)



David Blumfield was a tutor at the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies.

Originally from Birmingham, David graduated in Drama from Bangor University in 1990, and the following year relocated to Aberystwyth.

In 1997, David became Artistic Director of Castaway Theatre Company which subsequently became Aberystwyth Arts Centre's theatre company. He continued to produce outstanding theatre in the community with Castaway at the Arts Centre.

As an actor, David gave some of the best performances seen on the Aberystwyth Arts Centre stage, including particularly memorable appearances as the villain in the acclaimed annual Wardens' pantomime.

David was appointed to the role of Tutor in the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies in 2004 directing student productions such as *Blood Wedding*, *The Dream Play*, *Road* and *The Balcony* to name but a few.

A devoted West Bromwich Albion and Alice Cooper fan David will be fondly remembered by many as tutor, director, friend and colleague.

David Blumfield died after a short illness, aged 53.

In addition to the day job...

Having spent over 15 years as the University's Enterprise Manager, Tony Orme joined the University Careers Service in January as one of the new team of Careers Consultants, specifically working with students in the Institute of Management, Law and Information Science. However, in addition to the day job, Tony is co-owner of a busy paint-your-own pottery business, CRACKPOTS. AberNEWS spoke to him about running his own business whilst also working full-time.



Tony Orme with wife, Cheryl

What made you decide to set up a paint-your-own pottery business?

My wife, Cheryl, has always been very much into crafts and does a lot of "crafting" at home. Ten years ago we, as a family, did some pottery painting at a craft fair we visited in East Anglia. When we saw the results of our efforts we (particularly Cheryl) were very keen to do more. As a hobby to do at home, pottery painting is prohibitively expensive as it requires a pottery kiln but we then hit on the idea of expanding the hobby into a small, local, lifestyle business, alongside our day jobs.

What does running CRACKPOTS entail?

We stock a wide range of pre-formed bisque pottery items (bowls, plates, mugs, money boxes, etc.) which we take to Women's Institutes (WI), Young Farmers' Clubs, youth clubs, birthday parties and a lot of other groups. We do talks on techniques on pottery painting and then encourage people to give it a go. Once we get the painted pottery home to Trefeglwys (near Llanidloes) we glaze and kiln-fire the items before packaging them up and returning them to the customers.

In recent years we have expanded into offering enamelled jewellery making and decoupage parties, which have proved popular.

How do you find working for the University as well as running your own business?

As Cheryl and I work full-time we tend to do CRACKPOTS in the evenings, holidays and weekends. We will typically do 3 or 4 events each month, which increases in the run up to Christmas. Most of the WI events, for example, are held in the evening in village halls throughout North Powys. We pack the car up with everything we need when we get home from work then travel on out, often eating tea on the way. A lot of the glazing, firing and packaging work goes on at weekends, which is also when we do marketing work and admin, such as invoicing.

What are the highs?

CRACKPOTS gets us out-and-about into a lot of local communities and it is great to share in the sense of achievement as customers of all ages create their own "works of art".

What are the lows?

When we load the car up with pottery and all the associated stuff and drive for an hour or so, to find only a few people wanting to paint pots then it can get frustrating, as you can imagine. Kiln firing is also a bit of an "art" and very occasionally something goes wrong with the glazing and firing process, which presents all sorts of problems. The biggest "low" was probably 4 years ago when we were particularly busy; had over 100 items glazed and ready to fire in the kiln... and the kiln stopped working! We were eternally grateful to the Corris Craft Centre Pottery which came to our rescue!





Does running your own business help with the day job too?

Certainly. As I work with students interested in self-employment, I find that running a small enterprise helps me to empathise with the University’s budding entrepreneurs (which also include staff and graduates). I often refer to examples of how we market, organise, promote and control our business when talking to entrepreneurial clients about their new business ideas.

What advice would you give to a member of staff or a student who was considering starting their own business?

Do as much research as possible... know your customers, your competitors and your suppliers... talk to these people and find out what they want and what they will pay for.

Speak to other people who have started and/or who run their own businesses.

Develop some form of “plan of action”.

Don’t just think of self-employment or working for someone else... you can do both, as long as you plan things well.

I use the CRACKPOTS story in local schools and colleges, under the Big Ideas Wales Role Model programme when I do talks to students on how you can run a business alongside a “day job”; something particularly relevant in a rural area like ours.

If you want more information on CRACKPOTS, visit:

www.crackpotsonline.co.uk



Learn something new for 2016
Dysgwch rhywbeth newydd yn 2016



© Teresa Shepherd, Tutor in Art & Design

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WHAT'S ON

SCHOOL OF ART EXHIBITIONS

1 February – 11 March



Stanley Anderson, *Purbeck Quarrymen*, engraving, 1936

21 March – 6 May

(closed for Easter on 25, 28 & 29 March)



Paul Newland RWS, *Still-Life with the Dream of St Ursula*, watercolour/gouache

Unmaking the Modern: The Work of Stanley Anderson (1884-1966)

This exhibition examines the work and world view of painter-printmaker Stanley Anderson (1884–1966). *Unmaking the Modern* is divided into two main sections: one concentrates on his critique of what he called the ‘collective idiocies of “Progress,”’ the other on the ‘continuity and harmony of spirit’ that he sought and found beyond London. Curated by Harry Heuser who is co-author, with Robert Meyrick, of the catalogue raisonné *Stanley Anderson: Prints* and co-curator of *An Abiding Standard: The Prints of Stanley Anderson RA* (Royal Academy of Arts, London, 25 February – 24 May 2015).

An Exacting Taskmaster: Stanley and his Class of 1921

The work of Stanley Anderson’s pupils, taken from the School of Art Collection including prints by Graham Sutherland, Paul Drury, Edward Bouverie Hoyton and William Larkins.

Paintings by Paul Newland and works from the RWS diploma collection

Paul Newland RWS NEAC has a long association with Aberystwyth. This exhibition of works in oil and watercolour reveals the artist’s preoccupation with a spirit of place that he finds in the allotments of South London and the landscape of Ceredigion. Newland is Honorary Curator of the Royal Watercolour Society and his work will be shown alongside a selection of watercolours from the RWS’s prestigious diploma collection, dating back to the society’s foundation in 1804.

Handel Evans: small works

A selling exhibition of works on paper with all proceeds going to the Handel Evans Trust Fund. Interest accrued from the Handel Evans Trust Fund will be used to care for and promote the Collection, provide research grants for the practice of art and art history, assist in the production of art publications, and to acquire works of art and archive material for teaching and research.

ABERYSTWYTH ARTS CENTRE

Site 2 / Saflle 2

15 February – 16 March

The second edition of our innovative micro-festival of theatre performed in new and unusual ways, featuring a range of performances everywhere from down by the seaside to a shipping container, on a stage, in a tiny room and even in the theatre! A feast of new performance to entertain, challenge and stimulate.



Smash it Up, Mr & Mrs Clark



Cysgu'n Brysur

8 – 9 March

Cwmni Theatr Arad Goch in partnership with the Wales Millennium Centre and Aberystwyth Arts Centre

A contemporary Welsh-language musical drama about being young in the 21st Century – the affairs and the flirting, the angst, the gangs and the wild parties in

the forest, morals and immoralities, frustrations with adults and the fears and the dreams. This bold large-scale production features fiery performances from 11 young actors, cutting-edge scriptwriting from Bethan Marlow, and Eddie Ladd’s iconic choreography based on the brilliant songs of the Welsh-language band ‘Bromas’. ‘Cysgu’n Brysur’ promises to be one the coolest Welsh shows for quite a while...

WOW Wales One World Film Festival 2016

11 – 17 March

WOW Film Festival returns with an intriguing and eclectic selection of the very best in world cinema for you to enjoy.

Find the full festival programme at

www.wowfilmfestival.com



Oleksandr Dovzhenko’s 1928 classic *Arsenal* about the tragedy of the Russian Civil War