



STAFF AND STUDENTS AWARDS: 10 YEARS OF CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

ABER News

10

The annual *AberSU Celebrates Staff and Students Awards*, which celebrated their tenth anniversary this year, took place online on 6 May 2021.

The evening saw the **Department of English and Creative Writing crowned Department of the Year**, with students' nominations praising not only the department's academic excellence and outstanding efforts during a challenging year, but also its dedication to the wellbeing of its students through the creation of a supportive community beyond the classroom.

The awards, which are organised by Aberystwyth Students' Union with the support of the University, support best practice by highlighting teaching excellence and recognising the contributions of staff and students to the Aberystwyth student experience.

Congratulations to all the award winners announced on the evening:

Lecturer of the Year

Panna Karlinger, Department of Mathematics and the School of Education

Personal Tutor of the Year

Dr Susan Chapman, School of Education

Supervisor of the Year

Dr Simon Payne, Department of Psychology

Support/Service Staff Member of the Year

Lorraine Spencer, Student Support & Careers Services

Academic Representative of the Year

Jake Christie, Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies

Postgraduate Teacher of the Year

Yuyao Wang, Aberystwyth Business School

Student Mentor of the Year

Cat Oliver, Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences

Student Staff Member of the Year

Tom Mumford, Department of Computer Science

Student Volunteer of the Year

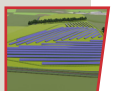
Adam Burlingham, Department of Law and Criminology

Open Category Award

Beth Wright, Geography and Earth Sciences & Joel Adams, Department of Computer Science

All of the award details can be found on the AberSU webpage:
[AberSU Celebrates Staff and Students 2021](#)

4 Plans for major renewable energy project



5 InvEnterPrize



7 Hedgehog Friendly Campus



8 Spotlight on GO Wales



16 Sports Centre Staff Training



Academic Promotions 2020-21

Congratulations to the following members of academic staff who have been promoted following the completion of the 2020-21 Academic Promotions process:

The following have been promoted to the post of Chair:



- Professor Hazel Davey, IBERS



- Professor Sarah Davies, Geography and Earth Sciences



- Professor Mariecia Fraser, IBERS



- Professor Joe Gallagher, IBERS



- Professor Gareth Griffith, IBERS



- Professor Andy Mitchell, Geography and Earth Sciences



- Professor Bernie Tiddeman, Computer Science

The following have been promoted to the post of Reader:

- Dr Arwyn Edwards, IBERS
- Dr Elizabeth New, History and Welsh History
- Dr Olaoluwa Olusanya, Law and Criminology
- Dr David Wilcockson, IBERS
- Dr Sarah Wydall, Law and Criminology

Promoted to the post of Senior Research Fellow:

- Dr Kerrie Farrar, IBERS

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

- Professor Matthew Jarvis, English and Creative Writing
- Dr Andy Hardy, Geography and Earth Sciences
- Dr Huw Lewis, International Politics
- Dr Kim Knowles, Theatre, Film and Television Studies
- Dr Pip Nicholas-Davies, IBERS
- Dr Wyn Morris, Aberystwyth Business School
- Dr Rhianedd Jewell, Welsh and Celtic Studies
- Dr Tom Holt, Geography and Earth Sciences
- Dr Stephen Atherton, School of Education
- Dr Christine Zarges, Computer Science

The Vice-Chancellor's Column

I want to begin by conveying my continued thanks and admiration for the way that everyone has pulled together over the last fourteen months. In the extraordinary circumstances we have found ourselves operating in, colleagues from across the University have faced the difficulties and uncertainty with a determination and a resolve to continue to deliver an Aberystwyth student experience to be proud of.

It was a real pleasure earlier this month to hear some of the uplifting nominations for the AberSU Staff and Students Awards. Much of what makes Aber such a fantastic place to work and learn is achieved through a partnership between staff and students, and these annual awards are a wonderful opportunity to thank and celebrate exceptional people and departments. The student voice has never been more important, and I have appreciated the constructive dialogue we have had with the student body throughout this year, which has helped us to maintain our high quality student experience.

As we collectively look ahead to academic year 2021-22, I appreciate that we are as yet unclear as to how we will be working going forward. We are determined to preserve the best from COVID-19, but also to bring back the best of what we are missing, including bringing our staff back onto campus. We are currently weighing up different ways of working and expect that there will be more working from home - we are aware that there will be colleagues who will welcome this, and there will be those that will not.

Your opinions are really important to us, and the staff survey, *Have your say*, which launches soon will be your chance to let me and my executive team know how you feel about working here. By sharing your honest feedback, you'll be helping us to understand what we do well and what we can do to improve, so please do engage with this process so that we can get a fully representative sample of staff views.

Financially, we continue on the road to recovery, although next year will be challenging and a continued year of belt-tightening. Currently the bids for new posts and other revenue funding are ten times more than the available resource, and the bids for capital development (estate and information technology) amount to more than double the funding that is available.

There is also much to be positive about. I was delighted to be able to recently announce the members of staff who had been promoted as part of the 2020-21 Academic Promotions process. As you know, this process had been paused whilst we confronted the savings required under the Sustainability Implementation Plan, and it is a real pleasure to be able to once again reward academic staff in this way.

We anticipate improved student numbers for September, though we will have a smaller than normal third year. While we have seen a big reduction in applications from Europe, these



have more than been replaced by an increase in applications from Wales and the rest of the UK. In addition, we have seen a good increase in international applications and acceptances; however whilst these mark a welcome expansion in an area of potential growth for the University, they are unfortunately so dependent on the pandemic and whether travel restrictions allow these students to enter the country.

We know that a number of funding opportunities and prospects for growth are in the pipeline. The core research budget at UKRI has been increased which will lead to additional availability in funding for research, and increased resources are also available for innovation. There is the possibility of accessing replacement Horizon money to boost collaboration and pioneering research, and the potential to access the 'levelling up fund' for regenerative projects in mid Wales.

Growing research offers a key opportunity for the University over the next couple of years. I am excited to see several significant research and innovation developments coming to fruition - Sêr Cymru Veterinary Research Laboratories and the state-of-the-art facilities at VetHub1 - these will boost our research and development capacity and the potential to attract new investments and collaborations.

After all that talk of looking forward, I will close by saying that, I am very much looking forward to the days when I will see more of you face-to-face and in-person.

Professor Elizabeth Treasure
Vice-Chancellor

Successful solar eclipse expedition

When a team of scientists from Dr Huw Morgan's Solar System Physics group travelled to Argentina to observe the total solar eclipse on 14 December 2020, little did they know that they would end up being one of the only science teams in the world to successfully view the eclipse.

On the day of the eclipse - a rare event when the moon passes directly between the Sun and the Earth - much of the path of totality across Chile and Argentina was shrouded in cloud.

However, after several months of preparation, enthusiasm and dedication to the project, the team comprising of PhD students Gabriel Muro, Bradley Ramsey and Kaine Bunting were undeterred by the unfavourable conditions.

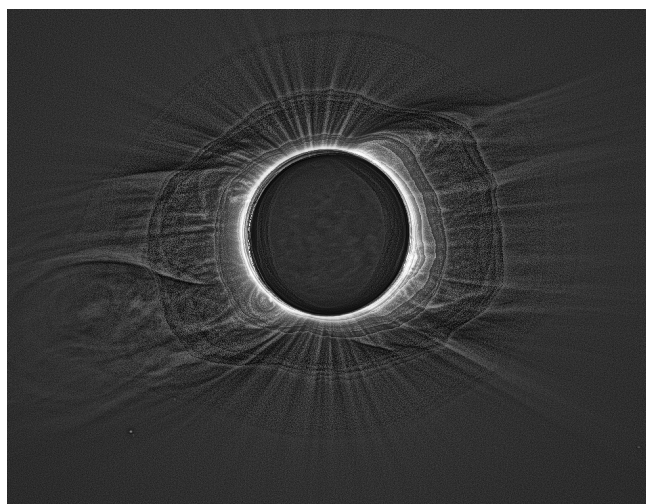
Whilst other observers were stymied by rain and travel restrictions, the Aberystwyth team located a window of clear skies in Neuquén Province, Argentina.

With optical instrumentation expertly built by Dr Matt Gunn with portability in mind, and software written and tested by Computer Science PhD student Tomas Fearn, the team were able to take an early morning drive and set up quickly in an ideal location, from where they had an unrivalled experience of the solar event.

Results from the expedition will provide critical information about the temperature, density, velocity and distribution of plasma in the low solar corona, the region where solar storms develop.

Total solar eclipses provide the only opportunity to make detailed visible light measurements in this part of the solar atmosphere and help scientists prepare for major disruptive events that occur about once in a hundred years.

[Watch the team's sped up video of the eclipse here](#)



Left to right: PhD students Kaine Bunting, Gabriel Muro and Bradley Ramsey

Plans for major renewable energy project

The University is planning to install state of the art solar panels at a site adjacent to Fferm Penglais, representing a significant step towards its ambitious goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

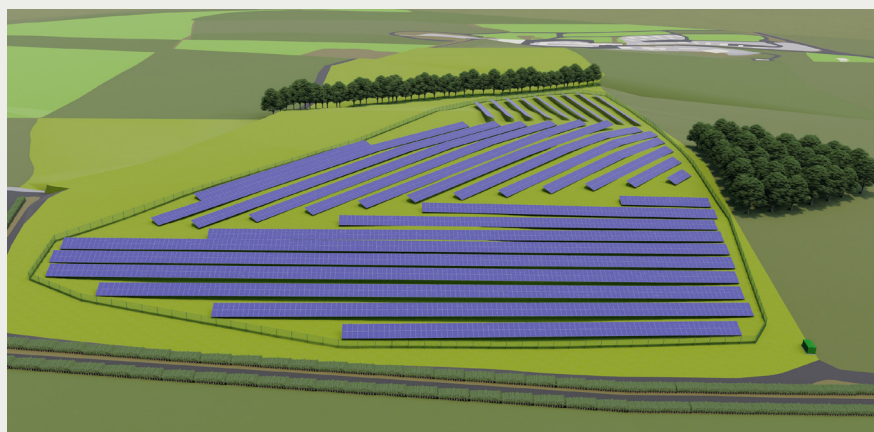
Once operational, the photovoltaic solar panels will generate approximately 25% of the annual electricity requirements of Penglais Campus- equivalent to the energy used by over 500 homes. In doing so, it will generate carbon savings of 550 tonnes per year.

The 4 hectare facility, which will be situated on land already owned by the University, will cost just under £2.5m and will generate annual energy savings in excess of £300k per year. Over the lifetime of the panels, the University

is expected to save almost £18m in electricity costs.

Subject to planning permission being granted, the plan is to progress with installation of the solar panels from autumn this year.

Artist's impression of the Aberystwyth University solar development, looking East.



InvEnterPrize 2021

Computer Science final year student, Karl Swanepoel, won over the judges in this year's Aberystwyth University InvEnterPrize student ideas competition to secure a £13,000 investment.

Held annually, the InvEnterPrize competition is sponsored by contributions from the alumni AberFund, and organised by the University's Careers Service. This year's InvEnterPrize finalists were from a wide range of academic disciplines, who pitched ideas ranging from drinking straws made out of grass to thermally-insulated paint.

Karl's winning business idea is a website/app named Topwork, which will match talented freelancers with small start-up businesses which are seeking digital services, such as graphic design, writing, programming, and media.

Along with securing £10,000 to invest in equipment, facilities or professional services to turn his business idea into reality, Karl also bagged a separate prize of £3,000 sponsored by Engineers in Business, awarded to the winning entry from a student or student team from Computer Science, Maths and Physics.

Also on offer as a prize in this year's competition, was a year of office space, mentoring and investor-readiness training provided by AberInnovation, awarded to the strongest entry from the bio-sciences, life sciences and agriculture sector. This was awarded to innovative ethical tea company, Eisa Tea Co, the business idea of Psychology student, Emily Knipe and English graduate, Amy Aed.

The final prize, the GRAaIN £500 prize for Rural Business, was awarded to a website/app to help touring cyclists find appropriate overnight accommodation. The business idea of

Business student Thomas Lancaster and Geography graduate Emily Stratten, Ride Dyfi (www.ridedyfi.co.uk) connects mountain bikers with bike-specific accommodation in the Dyfi Valley and Snowdonia, and aims to become the go-to information hub for mountain bikers interested in riding in the area.

For more information about the University's programme of events to support entrepreneurial activity amongst students, graduates and staff, visit the [AberPreneurs webpage](#)



Karl Swanepoel



Searching the internet for global reforestation

In March 2020, the University installed Ecosia as the default search engine on student workstations across campus.

Ecosia is different to other search engines because it uses its advertising revenue to plant trees around the world.

The company is committed to planting a tree for every 45 internet searches performed.

Now with over 15 million users worldwide, Ecosia has already planted over 125 million trees in areas of the world where they are needed most; benefiting people, the environment and local economies.

How you can help

In order to contribute to the University's tree planting total, staff and students can make Ecosia the default search engine on University-owned and personal devices by following the simple instructions at: <https://ecosia.co/AberystwythUniversity>.

Further information

For more information about Ecosia's tree planting projects visit blog.ecosia.org

For FAQs see <https://ecosia.zendesk.com/hc/en-us>





Exemplary Course Award 2020-21

The University has recognised the innovative use of technology in learning and teaching with the presentation of its annual Exemplary Course Award.

Overseen by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit, the award is designed to recognise the very best practice and use of the University's Virtual Learning Environment, Blackboard.

Assessed across 4 areas: Course Design, Interaction and Collaboration, Assessment, and Learner Design, the award requires candidates to outline their innovative teaching practices.

The winner of this year's award is Dr Hanna Binks from the Department of Psychology for the module *Introduction to Research Methods in Psychology*.

The module was commended by the panel for its innovative assessment design and support, clear and logically ordered learning materials, and for offering multiple ways for students to engage with learning activities.

On winning the award, Dr Binks said: "After a difficult year, it was nice to be recognised for the hard work that went into the module. *Research Methods in Psychology* is a large bilingual core British Psychological Society module, however, it's often not students' favourite module and it can be quite

daunting. Many of our students arrive with preconceived ideas about their own ability with statistics, so it's important that the module content is accessible and easy to navigate for all students. To highlight why *Research Methods* is important, I try to link the content to its application and use the different range of assignments to demonstrate the ways research can be communicated."

In addition to the winner, four other modules received highly commended awards: Dr Martine Garland (Aberystwyth Business School) for the module *Marketing Management*; Dr Rhianedd Jewell (Department of Welsh and Celtic Studies) for the module *Trafod y Byd Cyfoes twy'r Gymraeg*; Prysor Mason Davies (School of Education) for the module *Children's Rights*; and Mary Jacob (Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit) for the module *Action Research and Reflective Practice in HE*.

The practices in these modules demonstrate the very best use of technology to enhance student learning, engage students in meaningful activities, and build a learning community, and the transition for more online teaching in response to the pandemic.

9th Annual Learning and Teaching Conference

The University will be hosting its 9th Annual Learning and Teaching Conference online between 30 June and 2 July.

Organised by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit, this year's conference theme is Improvisation within *Constraint: Reshaping a Learning Community in a Time of Change*.

The last year has been a challenge for the University as a whole, and staff have adapted their curricula to address teaching in several different ways. The aim of this year's conference theme is to reflect on and celebrate the creative and innovative solutions that have given rise to new potentialities in higher education teaching.

The conference will host external speakers to lead workshops and

presentations over the three days. Dr Chrissi Nerantzi, a trail blazer in online and flexible pedagogies from Manchester Metropolitan University, will be opening proceedings. Chrissi's keynote is rooted in notions of connectedness, the power of creativity, and the building of community within curricula. We will also be joined by Andy MacGregor from JISC who will be talking about what lies in store in the future for assessment design, as well as Joe Probert who will give staff advice on how to make the most of online polling in their teaching.

In addition to the external speakers, we will be welcoming presentations and

workshops by colleagues from across the University to really showcase and celebrate the diverse, innovative teaching solutions and experiences on offer to our students.

Running the conference online last year was a great success, which saw an increase in attendance, and we hope to build on that this year. As we move towards our 10th annual conference next year, it's hoped that we'll be back face to face again, and we aim to do something really special to reflect the last decade of learning and teaching conferences.

[Book your place](#)

Hedgehog Friendly Campus

In March 2021, thanks to the efforts of colleagues in the Grounds Team along with Estates Facilities & Residences, Aberystwyth University achieved bronze accreditation as a hedgehog friendly campus.



Hedgehog numbers in the UK have halved since the year 2000 and there are now estimated to be fewer than a million left. Described as being at risk of extinction, last year they were given 'vulnerable' status in the Red List for Britain's Mammals.

The Hedgehog Friendly Campus scheme is a national biodiversity programme for universities. Funded by the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, the programme aims to raise awareness of hedgehogs and to help them to thrive on university land.

Alongside numerous other activities to improve the biodiversity of the University estate, a range of activities have been undertaken focused specifically on helping hedgehogs on campus:

- establishing an internal biodiversity working group to explore the current status of hedgehogs across our estate, and identify steps that we could take to help them
- applying stickers to Grounds Team machinery to alert users to potential danger to hedgehogs
- Grounds Team undertaking training on what to do if they find an injured hedgehog
- Grounds Team attending workshop to learn how to construct survey stations so that we can record hedgehog activities and log sightings online
- Raising money for the British Hedgehog Preservation Society through a collection box in the University Sports Centre
- Awareness raising of staff and students through leaflets and [webpage](#)

Dr Neil Waghorn, the University's Sustainability Officer explains: "We're lucky to have such a great range of biodiversity in the local area and this represented an opportunity to help raise awareness of some of the issues surrounding hedgehogs, and some of the ways in which people can help.

"The Grounds Team were already doing a great job helping the local biodiversity and were really enthusiastic to take part in the workshops and activities, so I'm really happy we got this certificate, as it gives them some much-deserved recognition.

"Likewise, thanks to the work of the Grounds Team, and policies in place, we're already well on our way towards reaching the silver certificate, which we'll submit an application for later in the year.

"We've already had several offers of help from students and staff, but more volunteers to help us survey for evidence of hedgehog activity, publicity campaigns and fundraising events would be most welcome!

"On a similar vein, hedgehogs are only the start. If you are aware of any biodiversity or environmental schemes that you feel we should, or could, be taking part in, please get in touch - njw11@aber.ac.uk."

Members of the Grounds Team holding hedgehog footprint tunnels at a workshop to construct survey stations. Left to right: Jo Wilkinson (Hedgehog Friendly Campus), Andrew Best (Grounds Technician), Dan Southgate (Grounds Technician), Connor Murphy (Grounds Technician), Paul Hancox (Grounds Technician), Martin Williams (Grounds Team Leader) and Stephen Short (Grounds Technician).



Spotlight on... GO Wales

In an increasingly competitive job market, students and graduates want to stand out from the crowd. What can really boost a candidate's application is relevant and distinguishable work experience. It can be a challenge to balance your studies and find the type of work experience employers are looking for. Here at Aberystwyth University, the Welsh Government-backed GO Wales initiative is helping students who face barriers in securing work experience to address this, boosting employability prospects and preparing them for the world of work.



Left to right - Christina Evans (Development Advisor), Lewis Richards (Strategic Manager) and Lorraine Spencer (Development Advisor)

GO Wales provides students with tailored, bespoke and relevant work experience - relevant to their degree scheme, and career aspirations. The GO Wales team aims to work around students' other commitments, ensuring that their placements don't impact on their academic progress.

As Project Manager Lewis Richards is keen to point out, his team's support around practical considerations is an important factor: "GO Wales is determined to help students reach their potential, regardless of any difficult circumstances. This is why we provide funding for accommodation and travel (if necessary) in order to facilitate work experience for our students. Part of our ethos is widening participation, making work experience available for all."

Students who wish to participate must be under 25 years of age, in full-time education and meet at least one of the following to be eligible:

- Have a disability or work limiting health condition
- Be from a Black and Minority Ethnic background
- Have caring or childcare responsibilities
- Be in care or a care leaver
- Be from a low higher education participation neighbourhood
- Be estranged from family

There are few better advocates for the scheme than current Aberystwyth Students' Union President, Nate Pidcock. Before becoming AberSU President, Nate studied Theatre and Mathematics. He says he often struggled with low self-esteem and was unaware of his career ambitions, but that GO Wales helped him hugely. "My first placement was at a theatre company where I got to work behind-the-scenes and understand the industry in much greater depth. My second placement was at Ysgol Penglais, in a classroom observation



Cyflawni drwy Brofiad Gwaith

Achieve through Work Experience

capacity. These experiences proved vital in sharpening my skills and helping me secure a place on a PGDE at Liverpool John Moores University. My confidence also grew, so much so I ran and became the SU President! Lewis was such a genuine character who I could turn to in a time of need. I can't thank him enough!"

Qualifying students are assigned an Advisor who will guide them through the process of identifying what kind of work experience they want, how to prepare and critically reflect. The benefits here are twofold; students develop and gain key skills highly sought after by employers and they are able to determine what their career aspirations are. It's a relaxed and friendly service, something that the GO Wales team at Aberystwyth has been praised for. They guide and oversee students throughout the work experience, providing advice and encouragement. Where students may struggle with nerves and anxiety when beginning work experience, the Advisor is happy to accompany the student to make them feel at ease.

Lorraine Spencer is a GO Wales Development Advisor. She has worked with countless students, looking to develop their skills as they prepare for life after University. "GO Wales at Aberystwyth has consistently ranked as one of the highest performing GO Wales teams across higher education institutions", says Lorraine.

"We have met 96% of our target for students accepted onto the scheme, and 84% of our participants have undertaken work experience to help reduce their risk of being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) after graduation. The data shows the difference the scheme makes for students' prospects, so the need for this initiative is clearly evident. GO Wales are very grateful for the cooperation and continued support from other departments who have offered work experience."

The scheme has provided students with opportunities to work with departments across Aberystwyth University and with a whole range of other organisations from the BBC to construction companies Morgan Sindall Ltd and Willmott Dixon, as well as institutions such as Ceredigion County Council, Literature Wales, and the National Library of Wales.

Former Microbiology student Stanislav Kollarik now works as a Medical Laboratory Assistant at Public Health Wales. He is clear that the opportunities he got through GO Wales helped him secure his current role. "I struggled with anxiety

and couldn't put myself out there. My Advisor, Lewis, made all the difference. He took away the daunting negotiations and organising aspects to locating work experience, meaning I could concentrate more on my studies and the placements themselves. In the end, he secured three amazing opportunities for me. The first placement was with a healthcare consultancy company where I was trained in medical communications and was able to increase my theoretical knowledge of microbiology. The second placement granted me access to a research and development lab, while the third was to a medical lab, allowing me to contrast the operations between these two industries. This not only helped me determine my career preference for the medical sector but was key in helping me solidify my understanding of practical microbiology. As it turns out, these placements were instrumental in getting me to where I am today."

The pandemic has not halted the team's progress. With companies turning away from office working to the virtual world, this has opened new doors for students through GO Wales, accessing virtual work experience across the UK. But the team is always on the look-out for new opportunities to offer their students. To get involved, email gocstaff@aber.ac.uk.

GO Wales is part of the wider provision of the Careers Service here at Aberystwyth University. It is funded through a joint partnership between the Welsh Government and the European Social Fund of the European Union.



A minute with... the University's new Creative Exchange Fellow

Professor Matthew Jarvis from the Department of English and Creative Writing was recently appointed as the University's new Creative Exchange Fellow. We asked him about his new role:

My role as Creative Exchange Fellow is all about developing partnerships around the creative industries. It's funded by the Higher Education Council for Wales, and although it's based in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, it has a University-wide scope.

The role will involve supporting creative practitioners and humanities researchers to explore new cross-disciplinary research opportunities and to generate funding applications. It's also about cultivating rich links with key external bodies, such as businesses, third sector organisations, charities, and voluntary groups, which could benefit from our creative and humanities expertise.

I'll be looking to cultivate collaborations with local organisations, because helping to enhance the mid Wales economy is crucial to our impact as a University. But extending the reach of our creative engagement is also vital, so I'll be trying to seek out connections that extend beyond our immediate locale too.

Within the University, connections are going to be of crucial importance as well, and the potential of cross-disciplinary and cross-faculty engagement is something I'm especially keen to explore.

What's the aim of all this? Well, the research projects and connections that we hope will be generated will bring knowledge transfer and innovation opportunities to students and staff across the University, and will help to strengthen and enhance Wales' creative and cultural industries.

Ultimately, I aim to establish a cross-disciplinary 'Creative Exchange Network' that will support these hugely important interactions over the long-term, and allow external organisations to benefit from the wide spectrum of creative practitioners here at the University.

Commitment to the creative arts has been absolutely central to my career, whether through my own research or my involvement in Wales's cultural industries, so I am really excited about the new role.



I have longstanding engagement with Wales's creative and cultural industries and it will be a privilege to put that experience and those links to work in supporting my colleagues at the University.

Finally, it's important to say that I'm keen to hear from researchers from outside the creative or humanities spheres, who could make use of creative expertise - perhaps as a way of driving impact in their own research work. Also, if colleagues know of any external bodies that would be keen to work with our creative practitioners and researchers, I'd be really interested to hear from them - maj52@aber.ac.uk.

An update from AberSU

Election results and 10 years of celebrating success

For the first time ever our annual Spring Elections voting week was held completely digitally in March, with 24% of Aber students turning out to vote for the next team of full time officers and volunteer officers to lead the Union and represent Aber students.

Congratulations to all candidates and good luck to the incoming officer team;

- SU President - Sabina O'Donoghue (English & Creative Writing)
- Welsh Culture Officer and UMCA President - Mared Edwards (Welsh & Celtic Studies)
- Student Opportunities Officer - Rachel Barwise (TFTS)
- Academic Affairs Officer - Elizabeth Manners (Psychology)
- Wellbeing Officer - Hannah Lunnon (Psychology)

Full Spring Election results can be found [online](#).

At the time of writing the column, we have just concluded our AberSU Celebrates week; our chance to recognise the hard work and achievements of students and staff across Aberystwyth University.

Like last year, the three awards evenings to celebrate societies, sports, staff and student achievements were held digitally via our website and social media channels, and a Zoom party for those who wanted to get dressed up to celebrate the occasion.

This year we celebrated ten years of the Staff and Students Awards (previously known as the Student Led Teaching



Awards), and in order to mark the occasion we invited previous AberSU Education and Academic Affairs Officers to look back at some of the big achievements and changes that have happened across the University and Students' Union over the past decade. For a trip down memory lane or to see how much has changed over these years, [have a look at the AberSU Celebrates section of our website](#).

Thank you to everyone who submitted a nomination and congratulations to our deserving AberSU Celebrates winners. The evenings' culminated in Harriers Athletics and Running Club winning this year's title of Sports Club of the Year, Aberystwyth Conservation Volunteers being crowned Society of the Year and English and Creative Writing being awarded Department of the Year.

All of the results for AberSU Celebrates [Societies](#), [Staff and Students](#) and [Sports](#) events can be found on the AberSU website.



KEEZLE WACKA

ABERNews has invited the University's Information Governance Manager, Julie Archer, to contribute occasional articles providing us with a glimpse of some of the remarkable nuggets that have been preserved in the University Archive.

In this, the second in the occasional series, Julie along with the University's Collections Research Co-ordinator, Cara Cullen, expand on the concept of #ObjectsOfAbership and explain how you can get involved.

When the Old College opens its doors in 2023, as well as providing space to house visiting exhibitions, its new gallery spaces will also showcase the University's history through items from our collections. As we think about displaying our first 150 years of university life, we want to hear about the stories and objects that are important to you. By 'you', we mean we'd like to reach absolutely anyone with an Aber connection: current and former staff and students; landlords; landladies; tradespeople who worked on the University's estate; local residents ... the list is endless. It

could be you, or even a generation or two removed. We know there are plenty of staff with historic family, friend and neighbour connections. And we're issuing a particular plea to diverse communities who feel that 'their Aber' is not currently reflected in our collections to please share your stories and objects.

And what are we looking for?

The University's varied special collections already contain a plethora of weird and wonderful objects. Driven by the desire to see these and other items on display, we're using this as an opportunity to uncover University-related material out there 'in the wild'.

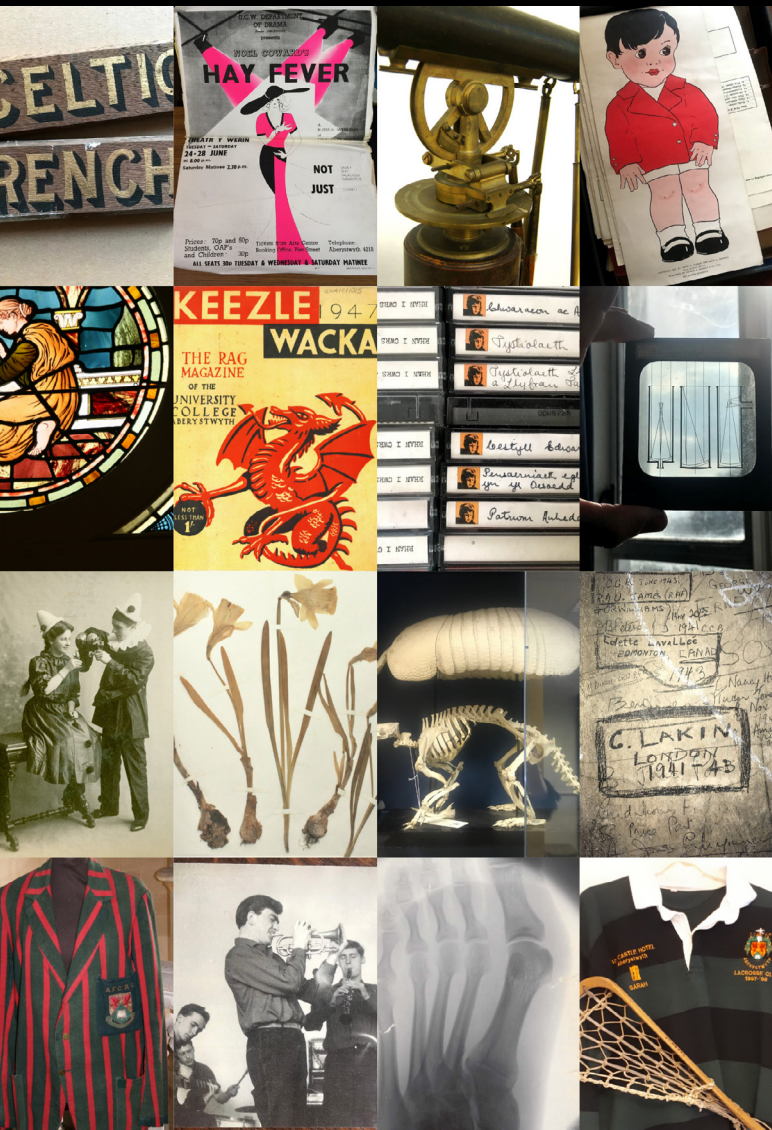
One thing the Covid-19 pandemic has done is to give us the free time to be able to go through long-forgotten boxes in the loft, garage or under the bed. We want to hear about your (re)discoveries, and the quirkiest, the better.

We want to hear about anything and everything, from Rag trophies to sports clothing; protest banners to photographs; home movies to audio recordings of lectures. 'Corporate' records and objects might be our bread and butter (we're looking at you, governing body minutes and prospectuses) but they never get old. You may think we've got every copy of *AberNews*, or every degree congregation, but you just might have one that fills a gap. Equally, we're *fascinated* by the non-corporate, by the student-designed publications and clothing (TCE Hall led the way in witty garb, it seems), by unofficial departmental societies, by staff research, by objects that reflect our more hidden histories.

There are things we know existed but whose whereabouts are unknown, and there are, certainly, objects whose survival was threatened thanks to departmental moves or closures, but were rescued by quick-thinking staff or others. If you caught our webinar, you'll have heard that we're keen on the idea of an amnesty. If something has ended up in your possession, whether by accident or by design, this is your opportunity to unburden yourself, with no questions asked (unless you want to share, in which case we're all ears).

It would be great to have the opportunity to borrow some of these items for display or, in some cases, to ask you to consider donating them to the archive or to the wider University collections.

If you would like to share your #ObjectsOfAbership, the online form will stay open until Thursday 20th May. Please spare a few minutes to tell us about what objects you have, or perhaps just remember seeing somewhere. We're also hoping to map University life, so do share with us those places on the



University estate, in town, or in the hinterland, that mean something to you.

And please do share the link to the form with anyone you think may be able to help.

In case you missed it, the recording of the recent webinar on #ObjectsOfAbership and research to date is available via the University's [YouTube channel](#). A follow-up session focusing on stories and items from the archive will take place on Wednesday 19th May [Register here](#).

The column's title is taken from the Aberystwyth 'College Yell', which originates from 1905 when the decision was taken to establish a chant with which to support fellow Aber students at inter-college sporting events. Following a competition in the Old College Quad when a number of proposed yells were demonstrated by their composers, a winning yell was adopted. The expression 'Keezle Wacka' used in the Aberystwyth College Yell was later chosen as the title for the Aber RAG magazine which ran for several decades, and seemed an appropriately quirky title for this column.

Aberystwyth University Research Forum

Professor Bryn Hubbard chairs the Steering Committee of the newly established Aberystwyth University Research Forum. We spoke to Bryn to find out more:

What is the aim of the new Aberystwyth University Research Forum?

The aim of the Research Forum is to stimulate and support research across the University. The main way we hope to do this is by providing a forum for all staff and graduate students with an interest in research to correspond effectively, sharing ideas and information. We anticipate no calls on members' time and we hope that being a member of the Research Forum will be efficient and effective.

Who runs the Research Forum?

The Research Forum has a Steering Committee (listed below), but our intention is that the Forum will be run by researchers for researchers.

Who can become a member of the Research Forum?

We want to reach out as broadly as possible. Membership is offered to all AU staff and research students. Participation is voluntary and all members have an equal voice.

What will the Research Forum do?

Currently, the Research Forum has a Steering Committee and a (Microsoft) Team. The Team has channels dedicated to Research Activities, Research Expertise, Research Funding, and Research Publishing.

In time, we anticipate that the Research Forum may well take on an occasional advocacy role in presenting a voice for AU-based researchers. The Forum may also advertise (or eventually organise and host) occasional guest lecturers by internal and external speakers, and support other occasional activities such as training workshops and showcase events.



What is the next step?

Join the Team and engage!

To do this, within Microsoft Teams select 'Join or create a team' and 'Join a team with a code', using the following code:

dpzeOtc

The more the AURF is used, the more traction it will gain, so we encourage any engagement, including suggestions for improvements.

We look forward to interacting on the Team and developing the AURF further.

AURF Steering Committee

Dr Jennifer Deaville

Research Development Manager, RBI

Chris Henderson

PhD Final year, IBERS

Professor Bryn Hubbard (Chair)

Director of Research, DGES

Professor Alison Kingston-Smith

Associate Dean - Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation, FELS

Katherine Parsons

PhD Year 1, Psychology

Hannah Payne

REF and Research Monitoring Manager, RBI

Professor Helen Roberts

Director of Research Excellence & Impact

Dr Sarah Wydall (Deputy Chair)

Associate Dean - Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation, FASS

Professor Reyer Zwiggelaar

Associate Dean, Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation, FBPS & Head of Graduate School

Writing for *The Conversation*

Launched in 2013, *The Conversation* is an independent repository of news and commentary, which showcases the highest quality research undertaken in universities today.

As a contributing member of *The Conversation*, articles by Aberystwyth University staff and postgraduates have been read more than 2 million times, in more than 200 countries. Their articles have been frequently republished in other media outlets, including *The Independent*, *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *WalesOnline*.

The Conversation bridges the gap between academic and popular audiences, an all-too-common pitfall when promoting your academic research. *The Conversation's* dedicated in-house

team of editors work closely with you from the start, identifying ways to convey your message in straightforward and succinct language.

Aberystwyth academics and postgraduates who have written for *The Conversation* have found that it provides an opportunity to engage in and discuss contemporary issues in their own words - a prerogative not typically afforded by other media outlets.

Ready to write? The Communications Team have arranged Zoom briefing sessions and writing workshops with an editor at *The Conversation* from 10am-12pm on Wednesday 26 May and Wednesday 23 June. If you are interested in attending one of the sessions, please find more information on the [website](#).



"It was an incredibly smooth process. I received excellent editorial support, which enabled me to develop my piece to maximise its relevance and impact. My piece for *The Conversation* has easily been the most read article I have ever written. It was picked-up by *Metro News* and *The Jakarta Post*.

"While I was given editorial guidance and support, *The Conversation* piece enabled me to provide a clear and unfiltered account of the results of my research. *The Conversation* is a superb outreach platform. Not only is it well read itself, but it is also very well connected with other prominent media outlets which routinely pick up its content. My piece opened up a series of engagement opportunities. Members of the public have engaged with my article and I was interviewed on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's *Click* programme."

Professor Mark Whitehead

Department of Geography and Earth Sciences



"Working with *The Conversation* is very straightforward. Sometimes I pitch an idea for them, although now that I have written for them several times, an editor will now contact me when topical issues arise that fall within my area of expertise. The editors are very good at finding relevant images, crafting eye-catching headlines and headings to make sure the article looks polished and professional, and my approval is necessary before the piece goes live."

Dr Jenny Mathers

Department of International Politics



"I found writing for *The Conversation* to be a great opportunity to share some of my research work with a wider (and not necessarily academic) audience. The articles I have written have elicited some interesting responses - and at times a dialogue over email has ensued! The editors with whom I've worked have been helpful and supportive and whilst they have edited some of the work, the finished and published product has always been overwhelmingly my own words and thoughts."

Dr Jamie Medhurst

Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies



THE CONVERSATION

Sports Centre staff excel in online training during coronavirus pandemic

It's been great welcoming our members back to the Sports Centre over the past fortnight and helping get you back on track with your health and wellbeing. Thank you for all your support over the last twelve months, during which time Sports Centre staff have been busy upskilling and updating their training.

Adapting a practical hands-on workforce to online learning during a pandemic was never going to be easy, but whilst the world's leisure and fitness industry was forced to shut its doors to customers, the University Sports Centre staff didn't want to rest on their laurels and do nothing.

Many of the core staff, already championing an 'active body/active mind' mantle, decided to maximise their development opportunities via a comprehensive programme of upskilling and refresher training activities.

The University's core training modules such as Unconscious Bias, Prevent, Information Security, GDPR, Equality and Diversity in the Workplace, were quickly digested and completed, followed by further training on Microsoft packages, such as Excel, Publisher and PowerPoint, improving their online and computer skills. Customer Care, Time Management, Effective Communication and diplomas in Mental Health Assessment were all enthusiastically attended, providing staff with confidence to support and improve the customer experience on reopening.

As the pandemic continued and the science and understanding of COVID 19 developed further, industry national governing bodies such as Welsh Sports Association, UK Active and Cimpsa began to deliver online resources for the sports and recreation sector to help them to prepare for reopening, and staff completed modules which would help them to deliver the new control measures required for indoor and outdoor exercise.

Over recent weeks, staff have also completed the newly adapted Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) Pool Lifeguard Award, Emergency First Aid at Work and automated external defibrillator training, with special attention given to the new emergency procedures for lifeguarding and administering first aid.

Our Welsh learners have also completed the Croeso Cymraeg Gwaith and the Croeso 'Nôl Cymraeg Gwaith certificates so please give them a big 'Bore da'.

All in all, a total exceeding 260 certificates were completed from online modules, diplomas and courses during the 8 months our staff were placed on furlough.



Outside of the training, our team continued to work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure our facilities were ready for re-opening and we have done everything possible to maintain customer and colleague safety to ensure we meet all COVID-safe guidance.

Darren Hathaway
Head of Sport and Grounds

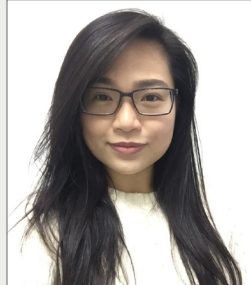


Appointments

A warm welcome to colleagues who have joined the University in recent months, including:

INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND RURAL SCIENCES

Dr Tiffany Lau has joined IBERS as a postdoctoral research associate (PDRA) working on the Interreg Valusect project, a European project aimed at strengthening the transnational cooperation and exploitation of research on insects as resources for the development of (semi) finished food products. Tiffany completed her PhD in Food Science and Nutrition in 2018 at the University of Reading, where her project focused on food waste valorisation - specifically ways to upcycle the cob of sweetcorn. Tiffany has since worked in a PDRA role at the University of Reading.



SCHOOL OF VETERINARY SCIENCE

Dr Sophie Regnault has joined the School of Veterinary Science as Senior Lecturer in Veterinary Science (Anatomy and Physiology). Sophie qualified as a vet and worked for the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals, before attaining a PhD from the Royal Veterinary College studying comparative evolutionary biomechanics. Since then she has worked as a postdoctoral research fellow at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology and as an



anatomist at the University of Surrey School of Veterinary Medicine.

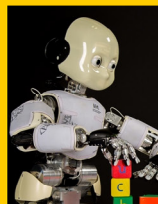
DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND CRIMINOLOGY

Caroline Whitby has joined as a lecturer in law, with responsibility for developing vocational aspects of the department's activities. Caroline gained her law degree from the University of Birmingham, and qualified and practised as a solicitor, before working in the regulation and training of solicitors, and in qualifications.



DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

Dr Donya Yazdani has joined the University as a lecturer in Computer Science. Prior to this, she was a postdoc researcher in the Algorithms Group, University of Sheffield. She received her PhD from the same department in 2020. Her current research interests include theoretical analysis of evolutionary algorithms, dynamic optimization problems, and combinatorial optimization.



Wythnos Roboteg Aberystwyth Aberystwyth Robotics Week Mehefin 19-25 June 2021

Mae cymaint i'w wneud a'i weld

- Labordy Traeth
- Gweithdai
- Gweithgareddau
- Crefftau

#WythnosRobotegAber

There's so much to do and see

- Beach Lab
- Workshops
- Activities
- Crafts

#AberRoboticsWeek

Am fwy o wybodaeth: / For more information:
roboticsweek.dcs.aber.ac.uk / roboticsweek@aber.ac.uk