100 years of LIFELONG LEARNING

WHY RESEARCH Matters

HAS LIFE EVER EXISTED ON Mars?
Welcome to this edition of PROM where we are delighted to share some of the latest news from around the University.

In September 2019, we kicked off the new academic year with the wonderful news that we have been named Welsh University of the Year for 2020 by The Times / The Sunday Times Good University Guide. Receiving this accolade after being University of the Year for Teaching Quality for two successive years is no mean feat and is testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff right across the University.

The news also came hot on the heels of coming top in all of Wales and England for student satisfaction and second in the UK in the National Student Survey.

The economy of mid and west Wales is facing significant challenges and uncertainty. Needless to say, at such a time investment is key. The project to breathe new life into Old College is a game changer for the University and the town, and on p.6-7 we share some fantastic news about our goal to transform Old College by our 150th anniversary in 2023.

Excellent progress is being made on Pantycelyn, and we look forward to welcoming our first residents into the refurbished hall in September. The Aberystwyth Innovation and Enterprise Campus will be fully operational by August 2020. Representing an investment of just over £40m, AberInnovation includes Centres for Biorefining, Future Food and Advanced Analysis, as well as an Innovation Hub and the University’s Seed Biobank which features more than 35,000 seed varieties collected from all corners of the world over the past 100 years.

Over the last year we have been celebrating the centenary of plant breeding at Aberystwyth, and of the Department of International Politics, and in 2020 we mark 100 years of Lifelong Learning, the second oldest department of its kind in the UK, and the first to be established in Wales.

With the £4.2m development of the VetHub1 research facility, the opening of the Aberystwyth School of Veterinary Science, and initial proposals for a new degree in Nursing all planned for the next two years, these are exciting times for the University as we head towards our 150th anniversary.

Professor Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor
AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

Welsh University of the Year

Aberystwyth has been crowned Welsh University of the Year for 2020 by The Times / The Sunday Times Good University Guide. This latest accolade means the University has been recognised by the Guide for three consecutive years, having been named University of the Year for Teaching Quality in 2017 and 2018.

Top for student satisfaction

Aberystwyth was rated the top university in England and Wales, and second in the UK for overall student satisfaction in the National Student Survey (NSS) 2019. Likewise, the 2020 edition of The Guardian university league table reported that Aberystwyth University has some of the most satisfied students in the UK, topping the table for student satisfaction with feedback, and coming second for student satisfaction with teaching and student satisfaction with course.

Stonewall Top 100

The University has been named one of the most inclusive employers in the UK by LGBT equality charity Stonewall in its Top 100 Employers List for 2019.

Whatuni Student Choice Awards

The University picked up three accolades in the 2019 Whatuni Student Choice Awards. The University won gold in the Postgraduate category for a second consecutive year, and silver in the University of the Year and International categories.

NEWS

First protection of a nature site supported by environmental DNA evidence

Rare species of fungi detected by a new environmental DNA technique developed at Aberystwyth University has led to the designation of a new Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) near Birmingham. In a world first, the Leasowes Country Park in Halesowen was denoted an SSSI in February 2019 after Aberystwyth scientists used the innovative method to detect the presence of an unusually high diversity of waxcaps. Developed by Dr Gareth Griffith, Reader in Mycology at the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences, the eDNA technique can reveal the existence of these colourful fungi at any time of year, even in the absence of any mushroom being formed.

Old College basks in the limelight of TV royalty

Aberystwyth’s Old College is one of the stars of the show in the acclaimed Netflix series, The Crown. The much awaited third series was released in November 2019 and features The Prince of Wales’ time as an undergraduate at Aberystwyth University. The Old College, alongside Pantycelyn hall of residence, provide two of the locations for the sixth episode which tells of Prince Charles’s time as a student at Aberystwyth in the spring of 1969, and his investiture as Prince of Wales in Caernarfon.

Are men really funnier than women?

Researchers at Aberystwyth University and the University of North Carolina have been testing the commonly held view that men are funnier than women. They completed the first ever systematic review comparing men’s and women’s ability to produce humour. Their findings show that on average men have higher humour production ability than women.

Evolutionary Psychologist Dr Gil Greengross from the Department of Psychology at Aberystwyth explains: “Humour is a complex phenomenon that involves social, emotional, physiological, cognitive, cultural and evolutionary influences, to name a few. One important aspect is the ability to make others laugh. Why would men have higher humour ability than women on average? The evidence does suggest that humour plays a major role in mating, with a strong evolutionary basis. Humour is strongly correlated with intelligence, which explains why women value men with a great sense of humour, as intelligence was crucial for survival throughout our evolutionary history when we mostly lived in hunter gatherer groups.”

“Men, on the other hand, prefer women who laugh at their humour. That means that over our evolutionary history, men likely had to compete harder with other men to impress women with their sense of humour.”

Aber scientists awarded funding to tackle diabetes in Africa

Scientists in the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS) have been awarded funding to develop crops which can help stem Africa’s growing diabetes problem.

The number of type 2 diabetes sufferers in Africa is estimated by the World Health Organisation to be over 25 million today, and projected to reach 41 million by 2045. Now the UK’s innovation agency, Innovate UK, has co-funded a £500k project led by scientists at IBERS to develop crops specifically varieties and hybrids of pearl millet – which can thrive in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Pearl millet has been found to help prevent consumers from developing type 2 diabetes, as well as helping sufferers to control their condition. It has high fibre content as it is digested slowly, helping to maintain blood sugar levels over a relatively long period of time. The project will seek to maximise resilience of pearl millet crops with a low glycaemic index for farming in the region.

Gifted goalie is latest recipient of Aber Town Football Club

Talented goalkeeper Alex Pennock has been awarded the Aberystwyth Town Scholarship. Eighteen year old Alex from Aberystwyth is a first year student studying a BSc in Sport and Exercise Science. Whilst studying, he will play for Aberystwyth Town Football Club, in the Welsh Premier League and also the Aberystwyth University BUCS (British Universities & Colleges Sport) football team. The Aber Town Football Club Scholarship is worth £4,000 a year, with a range of additional benefits including Platinum membership of the University Sports Centre, football coaching development opportunities, medical insurance, access to physiotherapy, match and training kits. The scholarship is jointly funded by Aberystwyth Town FC and the University’s Aber Fund, which receives donations from Aberystwyth University alumni all over the world. Aberystwyth University is the principal sponsor of Aberystwyth Town Football Club for the 2019-20 season.

Dr Rattan Yadav from IBERS who is leading the work on pearl millet

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The scholarship is jointly funded by Aberystwyth Town FC and the University’s Aber Fund, which receives donations from Aberystwyth University alumni all over the world. Aberystwyth University is the principal sponsor of Aberystwyth Town Football Club for the 2019-20 season.
Has life ever existed on Mars?

A small red dot in the night sky has the potential to answer one of our most fundamental questions – is life unique to the Earth?

Dr Matt Gunn, Aberystwyth University

“ It’s really exciting making hardware for a Mars rover and knowing that they and the Aberystwyth University logo will be on another planet.”

Franklin will carry a drill to collect samples from up to 2 metres below the surface where it will have been more protected from the radiation. This is all easier said than done – finding a suitable place to drill from over a hundred million kilometres away is not entirely straightforward. As we would on Earth, the best way to do this is to look around for the right kind of rocks at the surface, and this will be the job of the Panoramic Camera system ‘PanCam’.

PanCam is a sophisticated instrument capable of capturing colour, stereo (3D information) and multispectral (allowing us to get spatially resolved mineralogical information). The development of PanCam is led by UCL’s Mullard Space Science Laboratory (MSSL), with components and subsystems provided by specialists from all over Europe – including Aberystwyth University.

The Departments of Physics and Computer Science at Aberystwyth University are providing several key contributions to the PanCam team: designing and manufacturing hardware, simulating the camera system to help plan operational procedures, carrying out the calibration of PanCam, and writing the software to process the images captured by PanCam.

Aberystwyth University have provided the PanCam ‘Small Items’: A colour calibration target, a set of fiducial markers to check geometric accuracy, and writing the software to process the images captured by PanCam.

Camera calibration is the process of documenting and understanding the capabilities of a camera, including understanding the imperfections. Without adequate calibration, we have no way of knowing that the data captured by the camera is accurate. The data processing applies the calibration corrections, so the scientists are presented with accurate, correctly coloured and meaningful images.

Calibration is performed on the completed camera before launch but continues during the mission. A rigorous pre-launch test campaign was carried out earlier this year in cleanrooms at MSSL and Airbus in Stevenage (where the rover was assembled), to determine how the camera responds. In order to get accurately coloured images we must determine the white balance of the Martian sunlight. On Earth this process would involve the photographer tweaking camera settings and deciding what looks best, but with a remote rover on Mars we don’t have the time or ability to send back lots of images in order to tweak the settings. Instead we use something we know the exact colour properties of: a colour calibration target.

The Rosalind Franklin rover carries the PanCam calibration Target (PCT) which was developed and manufactured at Aberystwyth University for this purpose.

The rover is now fully assembled and is currently undergoing environmental testing in Toulouse. Once this is complete it will be integrated with the landing platform and cruise stage before it is transported to Baikonur for launch in autumn 2022. The journey to Mars will take many months and it should touch down on the Martian surface in spring / summer 2023. The next time we take pictures of the parts manufactured by Aberystwyth University they will be on the surface of another planet.
Launch of New Donor Recognition Opportunities

Be a part of our vision
We have come a long way since we outlined our plans in the last PROM. The support of alumni and friends around the world has been absolutely crucial to our progress. You have helped us to:

- promote the importance of the project and create a movement to secure the future of this much-loved and iconic building;
- shape the innovative and creative designs and activities that will benefit our students, staff, community and visitors;
- formulate our plans with expert advice on our activities and business plan;
- raise an incredible £950,000 towards our £3 million appeal target with gifts donated at all levels that helped trigger major grants.

These donations and major grants are significant sums in today’s highly competitive climate. They clearly demonstrate the quality and high confidence in our plans for the transformation, ongoing sustainability and development of Old College as a centre for learning, culture and enterprise of local, national and international appeal; with much needed student study and support facilities in town, hotel rooms, a range of cafes, bars, dining options and rooms for hire by student clubs, our community and businesses.

Major grants secured
Your collective contributions and the momentum of this support have been instrumental in helping us to secure these major grants in January 2020:

- **£10 MILLION** National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- **£7 MILLION** Welsh Government & EU.
- **£1.2 MILLION** Major trusts and foundations, many of which have not previously given to the University or in Wales at the levels awarded.

70% raised of total project costs of...

The project team are now busy drawing together the many strands in preparation of starting the renovation works later this year – and to open in spring 2023 in the University’s 150th anniversary year. Visit www.aber.ac.uk/theplans to learn more.

Donor Recognition Opportunities at Old College
Our creative donor recognition opportunities have been developed with alumni, donors and our architects to ensure that the contributions of donors are permanently acknowledged and celebrated across Old College, and at all levels of giving.

Details of these opportunities in the Library, Quad, new Centre for Dialogue, Science Centre and Atrium can be found at www.aber.ac.uk/donorrecognition.

If you would like to discuss particular personal ideas for recognition that could be accommodated into our plans, please contact us on alumni@aber.ac.uk. Alumni who donate £1,000 including Gift Aid automatically become members of our new Vice-Chancellor’s Giving Circle. This initiative has become very popular with alumni around the world, with its special gold pin worn in celebration at events across the UK, US and Malaysia.

Major grants secured

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<th>Date</th>
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Thank you for your tremendous support of our vision for Old College during the crucial early years. I am deeply grateful to the Old Students Association for their strategic support and encouragement as we built our capacity and launched the fundraising appeal. We have come such a long way thanks to the incredible support and generosity of so many alumni and friends, but there is a still a way to go.

Going forward, I cannot stress how crucial our continued fundraising is to the success of the project. By working together and sharing ideas, I am confident that we can raise the final £2 million and achieve our £3 million appeal target. We will continue to invite donations and pledges right up to 2023 through fundraising campaigns and activities that inspire support, and shared ambition with our alumni and friends as one global community.

Thank you again for all your encouragement, advice and donations in support of this once-in-a lifetime opportunity to secure the future of the Old College for students, staff, alumni and our community.

Whilst we are unlikely to be able to declare the reopening as a public holiday, as the University did when Old College was opened in 1872, the Vice-Chancellor, staff, students, alumni and community are already planning the biggest party since then! We very much hope that alumni will join us from around the world in celebrating and we look forward to working with you on the event and our wider anniversary plans.

You can be part of this vision and support the appeal by donating online at www.aber.ac.uk/en/appeal.

Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM (Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism); Vice-Chancellor, Professor Elizabeth Treasure; Baroness Kay Andrews OBE, UK Trustee and chair of The National Lottery Heritage Fund in Wales.

NEW LIFE FOR OLD COLLEGE

by Louise Jagger
Director, Development and Alumni Relations

OPPORTUNITIES

London Head Office
by Louise Jagger
Director, Development and Alumni Relations

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Old Students’ Association

Aber for ever!

by Gwenda Sippings
OSA President 2018-20

One of the best things about being a Life Member of the Old Students’ Association (OSA) is meeting students from all generations and disciplines, and sharing experiences of our time at Aberystwyth. We can communicate easily because of the strong links that bind us to the University and the Town. Of course I keep in touch with close friends from my time in Aberystwyth anyway, but meeting a wider community of former students has certainly enriched my life now I’ve returned to live here following a career in Bedford and London.

Representing OSA Members as President for 2018-20 is very special to me, and I’m grateful to all the people who have volunteered their time over the years to help the Association thrive. The Old College Project has made me think more of the small group of former students who raised the equivalent of £1 million in today’s money to wipe off the debt on the College Building in 1892, and formed the Old Students’ Association. The Quad still houses the statue of the first President who did so much for the University and the Association. OSA Branch members have recently transcribed into digital format the early volumes of Student Registers, and revealed more about those first students. Until the 1990s when the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) was established, and the Internet appeared, the Association was the only formal way for Old Students to keep in touch with each other and with the University. Today we benefit from being able to communicate through email, and the Web and social media, as well as face to face at Branch Meetings and other events, and the Annual Reunion jointly celebrating centenaries of International Politics and Plant Breeding in 2019 and looking forward to Computer Science’s 50th in 2020.

Since 2013 all students have been enrolled as Associate Members of the OSA on graduation, and welcome at our Annual Reunion, run jointly these days with the University’s excellent team at DARO. However, Life Membership gives access to an independent group of former students, with a particular interest in the ongoing success of the University. We attend University Court, Founders’ Day and other events, representing former students and contributing our views on developments at the University from our own pool of experience and expertise. We are looking forward to contributing to the 150th anniversary plans in 2022/23. Life membership involves only a one off payment of £20, and that money is used to support University and Student led Initiatives, and promote community amongst former students in the UK and internationally. We are proud to have such a wide membership worldwide, and are always delighted to welcome more of you into the Association. If you left a bit of your heart in Aberystwyth, Life Membership is a small but effective way of paying tribute to those important days, and ensuring they continue for future students.

Find out more about becoming a Life Member of the OSA at www.aber.ac.uk/en/development/osa For information and news about the OSA www.osaaber.org and www.ccfaber.org @Aber_OSA

Alumni Events

Every year we host a variety of events for alumni and friends – here on campus, across the UK and internationally. We are grateful to all those who attend and for their help in organising these events, as we continue to grow our global network.

Many of you will also hold your own reunions throughout the year, and it’s fantastic to hear your stories and to see the group photos. Please continue to share with alumni@aber.ac.uk You can view our upcoming events at www.aber.ac.uk/en/development/newsandevents

26 - 28 JUNE
OSA Reunion and AGM - Celebrating 50 years of the Department of Computer Science, and 100 years of Lifelong learning.

20 - 23 JULY
OSA and Aberystwyth University at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show.

13 - 17 JULY
OSA at Aberystwyth Graduation Ceremonies.

1 - 8 AUGUST
OSA and Aberystwyth University at Esteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru Tregaron.

Hay Festival | May 2019
A series of three prestigious lectures and an alumni reception were held at the 2019 Hay Festival programme as part of a new partnership between Aberystwyth University and the major cultural and literary event.

Alumni Club of Malaysia | April 2019
It was a pleasure to welcome Dato’ Azlan Alymann, President of the Aberystwyth Alumni Club of Malaysia, and his wife, Nazdriah, back to Aberystwyth as part of their visit to the UK and to see their son Iman, current President of the Student Malaysian Society and a Psychology student.

Founders Day
11 October 2019
Staff, students and alumni members of the local community came together as part of the annual Founders Day celebrations, which mark the anniversary of the University first opening its doors in 1872. Led by Vice-Chancellor Professor Elizabeth Treasure, the hardy group of walkers honoured the long-standing Aberystwyth tradition of ‘kicking the bar’ outside Alexandra Hall, before returning to Old College for a celebratory breakfast.

This celebration at Aberystwyth is then followed by a well-attended annual Founders event at the Pierhead building in Cardiff.

Xi’an, China | 20 March 2019
We were delighted to host and welcome so many alumni for our reception in Xi’an, as part of the University’s visit to develop academic partnerships and to continue to grow our student recruitment in the region. We look forward to visiting again this year, along with planned visits to other cities in China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia.

Alumni Reunion | 21-23 June 2019
We welcomed over 150 alumni back to Aberystwyth for a reunion with the Old Student Association to celebrate the centenaries of Plant Breeding and the Department of International Politics.
Lifelong Learning still going strong after 100 years

by Alison Pierse
Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator

This year marks a century since Aberystwyth University first set up a department to provide lifelong learning to the local community. Alison Pierse is one of the current tutors and here, she takes a look back at the history of the department as well as highlighting what it has to offer the next generation of students.

The Department of Lifelong Learning has had many reincarnations. We’ve been known as the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, Continuing Education, and Community University of Wales. For us though, the name doesn’t matter - it is what we do that counts. We change lives, we offer friendship, we question, we problem solve, we facilitate wellbeing; and that is what drives us as tutors. Our reward is changing viewpoints, and watching students blossom and thrive.

During the 2019-20 academic year, we are celebrating and giving thanks to the University for appointing the Reverend Herbert Morgan in 1920 as Director of the first Department of Extra Mural Studies in Wales. Born in the Welsh valleys, Morgan had a poor start when it came to education due to the family’s straitened circumstances, but he was given opportunities to excel at a later age.

The early extra mural classes were ‘tutorial classes’, where the tutor encouraged students to develop a broad and open mind. In 1919, there were 3 tutors, 7 classes and 167 students. This number grew quickly following publication in Westminster of a Report on Adult Education, arguing that the continuing education of adults was of vital importance to the nation’s welfare and security.

Rev Morgan retired in 1940, leaving a department on successful and secure footing. Because of his legacy and that of other directors who followed him, thousands of students have received tuition and life-changing experiences.

Lifelong Learning creates a secure learning environment, fulfils aspirations and nurtures individuals. It fosters students who may be seeking the knowledge and new skills to change direction for their career, recover from crisis or integrate within the community. Our students all have one thing in common - they are hungry to learn. And the common thread that links all directors and tutors is the great understanding of our students’ individual needs; we can deliver learning flexibly and engage students of all abilities.

Today, Lifelong Learning reflects contemporary interests and its aims are firmly focused on the future. We deliver courses in Professional Development, Art, Art History, Modern Languages, Ecology, Family History, Social Sciences and Humanities which are often accessed by students keen on professional development. And we don’t just deliver courses in Aberystwyth - we currently offer classes in five Welsh counties.

Why not help us to celebrate our landmark birthday by coming back to Aber and joining one of our intensive weekend courses? There are plenty of places to stay, and if you’re lucky you may catch a famous Aber sunset at the end of the day.

Pantycelyn

In September 2020 Pantycelyn will re-open its doors and welcome a new generation of Welsh speaking students and learners.

With an investment of £16.5m, including £5m from Welsh Government, the hall which opened its doors for the first time in 1951 is being transformed into en-suite accommodation for up to 200 students.

In its new form, Pantycelyn will continue to provide a home from home for students who want to live in a Welsh-speaking community as they benefit from leading teaching and research experiences.

And, in keeping with its homely atmosphere, it will be the only hall of residence in Aberystwyth where food will be provided within the price of the accommodation, offering excellent value.

The facilities available there will include quiet study rooms with computer facilities and excellent connectivity, meeting rooms and four common rooms, making it the ideal place to study and socialise.

To find out more, visit www.aber.ac.uk/en/pantycelyn.
Dato’ Mohamed Sharil Tarmizi graduated in Law from Aberystwyth in 1992, was called to the Bar at Gray’s Inn and has since followed careers in legal practice, regulatory work, financial services and startup ventures. He was recently appointed to the international advisory board of the United Nations University Institute in Macau. In 2017 he was conferred as a Fellow of the University. I talked to him by video about his time in Aberystwyth and his motivations since.

It was early morning in Aberystwyth, late afternoon in Kuala Lumpur and there was a thirty degree temperature difference. With his office window shaded from the Malaysian sunshine, Sharil finished up some last minute calls and joked whether he should wear a jacket for the interview.

I asked him what led him to choose Aberystwyth for his undergraduate degree.

“Aber was not a very obvious choice. When I was looking to apply to university, there was much more awareness of universities from England as opposed to Wales – in Malaysia anyway. I found Aberystwyth by happen-stance, I went to a British Education Fair and met faculty members from the University. I found them to be very nice people and they gave me a sense of confidence.”

When you arrived here, what were your first impressions?

“I didn’t know what to make of Aberystwyth to be honest. Back then I did not know that England and Wales were different countries – different culture, different people, different language. I ended up in Pantycelyn, and it was a very interesting revelation! I lived in Pantycelyn because at that time Penbryn was full – and these were the only two options offered to freshers. I stayed in Pantycelyn for a term, above the kitchen, and learned the Welsh language. By total immersion!”

Were there any particular staff in the Law Department who you were glad to study with?

“Many! But if I was to name one, it would be Professor John Williams. At that time he was just a lecturer, and he taught me International Law in the first year. He had a very interesting style, and I was very touched when I received my Fellowship from the University in 2017 that he was one of the people on stage with me.

When you weren’t studying, what did you spend your time doing in Aberystwyth?

“I studied all the time, what do you mean?” he laughed. “No, I got involved with a range of extra-curricular activities. I did some SCUBA diving with the university team, did a bit of golf, a bit of rambling – and all the student stuff. Aberystwyth gives you the opportunity to be yourself – to find yourself, to explore, to get to know other people. When I visited in 2017 I was surprised how much Aberystwyth has grown, and in some ways I miss the old Aber – it was much simpler”.

Are you still in touch with any of your Aberystwyth cohort?

“Facebook and LinkedIn have been great for this, but there are some I have lost touch with, especially some of the Welsh lads. I wish I could catch up with more of them! It would be nice to reconnect and see who is doing what, and where”.

Sharil is also heavily involved with the Alumni Club of Malaysia.

“When we left Aber after graduation, we all took a little bit of Aber with us back home. As alumni, we try to continue to foster the ‘family spirit’ of Aber especially in helping each other in the area of business or corporate networking”.

Which aspects of your career have given you the greatest personal satisfaction?

“I’ve had a very diverse career so far, but one of the things I have felt very strongly about is that everything I do should have a positive impact in transforming people’s lives. Some of my friends had ambitions to be at the top – the top lawyer, the top banker in the city – I didn’t find that to be my calling, which is why I left a very successful legal practice and joined the public service and became a telecoms regulator. At the time they were trying to push the adoption of a new regulatory framework (the first of its kind in the world) in the country – so I took a pay cut and changed vocations. To this day, this is some of the most fulfilling work I have done.

Of all your activities, which single project are you most pleased with?

“We had a dream... How could we help people in the rural villages of Malaysia, and globally, through the use of technology to transform their lives and their livelihood? The programme that we started in Malaysia was replicated by various organisations around the world. Today it is called ‘social entrepreneurship’, back then we just called it ‘Everything is possible with Broadband’. That was the tagline, and that was the belief. My feeling was that my children, living with me in the city, had access to all the technology – but what about these kids in the countryside who may be disenfranchised? Our ‘Universal Service Programme’ providing access to communications and broadband was quite new back then, but it was well received by the United Nations and the International Telecommunications Union”.

Sharil has a continuing involvement with the UK – not least as a board member for Lotus Cars.

“I was involved in the corporate turn around of Lotus’s parent company. The new owners of Lotus have asked me to also help progress the transformation of Lotus going forward to bring the brand back to the global stage, hence my position on the Board of the company”.

My time was up, but as we said our goodbyes I couldn’t help thinking that we will be hearing even more from Sharil Tarmizi in the future.
Alumni volunteering

Whatever stage you’re at in your career, volunteering is a fantastic way to give back to your university. An opportunity to inspire, guide and advise the next generation of Aber alumni. Our volunteers help us to enhance the student experience and improve career prospects. As alumni, you are fundamental to Aber’s development, reputation and global outreach.

Here are a few examples of how alumni have supported our students:

- If you have an interest in becoming an alumni volunteer, please email alumni@aber.ac.uk

Industry Insight

Ben Thompson (Film & Television Studies & Drama 2002) Film Maker Relations Manager and Shorts Programmer for the Tribeca Film Festival, New York.

Ben invites students to travel to New York and experience first-hand how the film industry works from the inside, enabling them to network and connect with filmmakers and enthusiasts from all over the world providing valuable opportunities. He also engages with students by giving regular Skype talks.

"My time at Aberystwyth University had a hugely positive impact on my life and career. By helping to bring students to New York to experience an event like the Tribeca Film Festival it is my hope that it inspires and energizes them to use their experience at Aber as a launchpad for their own dreams and aspirations."


Steve has been sharing his experience and knowledge by providing support, advice and career guidance as part of The Peter Hancock Scholarship Fund. He inspires students in pursuing their career goals and develop their confidence.

"I had a wonderful time as a student at Aber in the 1970s and, through the University’s Old Student’s Association, I have been able to retain strong links with the ‘College’. It has been a particular pleasure to be involved with the Peter Hancock Scholarship Fund as a Mentor. There is a great satisfaction from seeing students develop and progress in both their academic pursuits and personal lives. Mentoring is also a fantastic way for alumni to re-engage with their alma mater and helps provide a stronger network of individuals working to improve the undergraduate experience."

PH scholars 2019/20 from left to right: Chiara Paini, Girly Harrison (deceased), Wiktor Gawornski, Amy-Anne Williams, Fatima Orujova

Mentoring

Katie Hope (Physics With Planetary and Space Physics 2016)

Katie is now Head of Physics at Ysgol John Bright in Llandudno and recently gave a talk to 2nd year Physics students on how she got into teaching following her degree.

“The Computer Science department supported me with my career path of becoming a teacher from day one. I have a tendency to be quite headstrong and a little bossy but this worked really well as we started the Aberystwyth Robotics Club. We managed to create a family of young local students who came to the campus every week and felt safe to explore their interests in robotics whilst gaining skills that would set them ahead of the game for life.

Because I was able to gain so much experience from the university I want to give back to the students now that I have experience to share with them. I also give a prize to a student who is going on to be a Physics teacher and provide a mentor scheme for them along the way.”

Career talks

Tom Jones (History & Welsh History 1970) UK Delegation Member, European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels.

International Politics students have had the opportunity to travel to Brussels to shadow Tom in the European Economic and Social Committee, as well as observe other EU political institutions.

“It is a privilege, as an ex Aber student, to offer opportunities to the current generation to meet governmental officers in Brussels, quiz them about their work and witness representatives from across Europe participate in policy making. Diversity enriches debate, listening deepens understanding.”

Work placement visits

Students meeting Jill Evans MEP in Brussels

Tom Jones (History & Welsh History 1970) UK Delegation Member, European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels.

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InvEnterPrize yields profitable harvest for budding agri business

A new venture designed to help Colombian farmers improve crop productivity was the 2019 winner of the Aberystwyth University’s ‘Dragon’s Den’ style student entrepreneurship competition, InvEnterPrize.

Developed by an interdisciplinary team led by PhD student Liliana Castillo from Colombia, Amigrow uses satellite technology and machine learning to assist farmers with decision making.

Along with the 2019 InvEnterPrize title, Amigrow received £10,000 to invest in the development of the concept to bring it closer to market.

Amigrow was one of 15 entries for InvEnterPrize 2019, and six finalists to present their ideas to the judges on 29 March 2019.

InvEnterPrize organiser and Aberystwyth University entrepreneurship champion, Tony Orme, said: “The quality of the entries this year was exceptional and the final proved to be very close run. We are immensely grateful to our panel of judges for their valuable time and expertise in this year’s search for a winner, and to the University’s alumni who make this competition possible via the Aber Fund. We look forward to working with Liliana and colleagues on Amigrow, as the concept is developed.”

Amigrow also won the best InvEnterPrize presentation in the bioscience, agri-tech, and food and drinks sectors, securing them a year’s office space at AberInnovation – the Aberystwyth Innovation and Enterprise Campus, a £40.5m development at the University’s Gogerddan Campus.

Now in its sixth year, InvEnterPrize was established to encourage a culture of entrepreneurship. It is part of a full programme of events organised at the University to support entrepreneurial activity amongst students, alumni and staff. To find out more visit: www.aber.ac.uk/en/careers/starting-business/enterprise
Giving to Aberystwyth University in 2018-2019

Thanks to your continued support of Aber students, your positive impact has been felt across the University.

You have offered the best possible experiences and support to inspire students from all backgrounds to achieve in their studies and beyond. You have also helped research solutions to global challenges such as climate change and disease.

Crucially, you have come together as a community to help secure vital funds towards the future of the Old College (see page 6), whilst maintaining the amount raised for student support.

It is heartening to work together with such an inspiring community of alumni and supporters who make a huge difference to Aber. We could not be more grateful for your support.

Thank you to all our donors who are listed in our online annual donors list: www.aber.ac.uk/thankyou

Your giving in 2018-19

Across our three fundraising priorities:

- The Old College Appeal: £149,905
- Research and Academic Developments: £71,315
- Student Support (AberFund): £18,391

“Felt extremely privileged to have received funding which really helped me during a financially difficult time and allowed me to complete my thesis. I hope that, in time, I am able to bestow on future generations of Aber students the generosity that you have shown me. Thank you.”

Laura, PhD History, Student Hardship grant recipient

You gave £239,611 during 2018-19

Average regular monthly gift: £14
Average single gift donation: £96
Individual donors: 816
From Trusts and Foundations: £230,298

You have funded 23 student projects

Helping students take part in new projects that would not have been possible without your help.

Supporting over 1,800 students

To alleviate student hardship; support student wellbeing; and enhance the number of student opportunities open to all students.

The Old College Appeal
Research and Academic Developments
Student Support (AberFund)

Your impact 2018-19

Telephone Campaign success

Thank you to everyone who donated in response to the telephone campaign last year. 35 student callers reached out to more alumni than ever before, reconnecting with alumni and supporters around the world. Your exceptional support resulted in £104,498 being pledged towards the Old College appeal.

AberArchers take to the international stage

Students Beth and Alex had the once in a lifetime opportunity to represent Team GB at the European Archery Championships. Flying the Aber flag in Gothenburg, Beth said:

“Without the Travel Bursary from the Aber Fund towards my costs, I don’t think this tournament would have been possible for me.”

WWI project

A placement bursary enabled students Jack and Alice, to participate in and contribute to the collaborative research project, Aberystwyth at War: 1914-19.

“The experience has undoubtedly advanced my research skills and historical knowledge. From exploring primary records at Ceredigion Archive to identifying where soldiers lived in Aberystwyth – working for this project has been an invaluable experience and one which may influence my future career path. I’ve enjoyed every bit of it!”

Alice, BA History student

Student Money Mentors

‘Money Mentors’ is a new project launched by Students’ Union and Student Support Services. Student volunteers (“Money Buddies”) are trained to provide advice and guidance to fellow peers who find it difficult to manage and control their finances.

Money buddy volunteer, Pippa explains:

“Money is definitely an important part of student life. Maintenance loans don’t always go far enough, and part-time work is only so good until the hours and university deadlines start to stress you out. If we can help then it’s one less thing to worry about during time at University, giving more time to focus on studies. Thank you, alumni, for making this happen!”

More stories of your impact can be found at www.aber.ac.uk/your-impact

Supporting the University

Your support is vital for Aber’s continuing success, and we appreciate every single gift no matter the size.

Working together we aim to significantly increase our fundraising income across our three priority areas:

Student Support (The AberFund)
The Old College Appeal
Research and Academic Developments

You can make a difference by donating

- Online: you can give regularly or a single gift at: www.aber.ac.uk/give
- Post: set up a regular gift through our donation form, or single gift by cheque
- Overseas: international supporters can give in conjunction with our partners: SWIFT System; American Fund for Charities (AFC); and British Schools & Universities Foundation (BSUF).

For further details or to discuss a donation, please contact Hayley Goddard in the Development and Alumni Relations team on: 01970 622083 or hvg@aber.ac.uk
Why research matters

Research matters. It matters for a wide variety of reasons, but here I would like to focus on three principles, which inform our new Research and Innovation Strategy.

Firstly, research informs our teaching at Aberystwyth and enhances the learning experience. Our students are taught by staff who shape our understanding of the world in which we live and who are pushing back the frontiers of what we know, providing a distinctive and exciting learning environment. For example, a range of Departments have been undertaking research on climate change over many years, including world-leading work on the erosion of glaciers. This has allowed us to introduce a new degree scheme in this critically important area, with the first cohort of students arriving in September 2020. We see this linkage between research and teaching across the whole of the University, adding value to the learning experience and providing our students with access to leading edge thinking from performance art to phenomics.

Secondly, our research benefits society. It has an impact on the economy, on improving the environment, on public policy and on cultural life in Wales and beyond. It is outward looking, engaging with communities. And through commercial partnerships, it helps to develop new products and techniques. Over the past two years we have recognised this contribution by presenting awards for outstanding impact at graduation, where our students and their families can see how the work we do benefits the world in which we live. These awards have included innovative research in the control of malaria, policy developments to protect and promote the Welsh language, and using genetic methods to support effective and sustainable fisheries management across the globe. But this is the tip of a very large iceberg, with over 50 outstanding examples of impact featuring later this year in our submission to the UK’s Research Excellence Framework. These impact case studies range from protecting tuna stocks in the Indian Ocean, to research on medieval seals opening up the potential for improved digital forensics; from supporting older victims of domestic abuse, to helping the World Health Organization develop a new framework for military assistance in health emergencies; and from work on the European Space Agency’s Mars Rover, to making poetry in Welsh exciting and accessible for a new generation of schoolchildren.

And for the future, we look forward to opening this year both the Innovation and Enterprise campus at Gogerddan and the VetHub facilities on Penglais.

Above all, research is a quest for knowledge. As a species, we are curious – about the world in which we live, about other worlds whether real or imagined, and about ideas. It is our role as a University to pursue this in a rigorous and non-partisan manner, and it often begins with a question. How strong are solar flares? How are bubbles formed? How did the arrival of the Normans in 1066 affect the development of the English language? How can we place a value on biodiversity? Can sport transform societies? Can noise be art? But it is also about pushing boundaries, whether in film and creative writing, in developing new crop varieties, or pushing the limits of supercomputing.

All of these and more make Aberystwyth an exciting and important place to study and work. And it is the role of the new Research and Innovation Strategy to further develop an ambitious, inclusive and outward looking research environment, working for our students, for society and for the sake of simply knowing more about the world in which we all live.

Professor Colin McInnes took up the post of Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation in October 2019. A member of staff at Aberystwyth University for over 30 years, Professor McInnes was previously Head of the Department of International Politics, Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Director of Research Excellence. He holds a personal chair in the Department of International Politics and between 2007-18, held the UNESCO Chair in HIV/AIDS and Health Security - the first UNESCO Chair in Wales. He is currently Chair of the UK National Commission for UNESCO and represents the UK on UNESCO’s Social and Human Sciences Commission. Here, Professor McInnes talks about the importance of research at Aberystwyth.
Honours

A number of individuals were honoured by the University as part of the graduation ceremonies in July 2019.

HONOURARY FELLOWSHIPS

Alan Phillips
- retired peripatetic music teacher who worked for Ceredigion Music Service for 35 years (alumnus - BMus, 1981)

Professor Frank N. Hogg OBE
- first Principal of the College of Librarianship Wales

Ruth Bidgood
- Welsh poet and local historian

Professor R Geoff Richards
- Director of the AO Research Institute in Davos, Switzerland (alumnus - BSc Cell and Immunobiology, 1990; MSc, 1991; PhD, 1997)

Emyr Jenkins
- first Director of the National Eisteddfod and former Chief Executive of the Arts Council of Wales (alumnus - BSc Physics, 1961)

Professor Virginia Gamba
- leading expert in the field of disarmament research and policy formulation (alumnus - MSc Strategic Studies, 1981)

Ian Hopwood
- former UNICEF representative (alumnus - BSc Ec Politics, 1970)

The Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM
- former First Minister of Wales and Leader of the Welsh Labour Party 2009-18 (alumnus - LLB, 1998)

Judith Diment
- a leading global figure in the campaign to eradicate polio (alumnus - BSc Geology and Geography, 1967)

Achievements

Congratulations to the winners of the 2019 AberSU Staff and Students Awards including Professor Karl Hoffmann (Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences) who was awarded Supervisor of the Year, Doug Kerr (Student Support Services) who won Support / Service Staff Member of the Year, Professor Andrew Evans (Physics) who was named Personal Tutor of the Year and Deena Bhoyroo (Aberystwyth Branch Campus Mauritius) who received Lecturer of the Year. Psychology was crowned Department of the Year 2019.

The winners of the first Aberystwyth University Sports Merit Awards, which recognise students who have excelled in their chosen discipline and their contributions to the University’s sports clubs and societies, were Christopher Cassells (Archery), James Coulton (Rugby Union) and Zenan Ibrahim (Pool). These new awards are funded by alumni through the Aber Fund.

The winners of the 2019 Aberystwyth University Gŵyl Dewi Awards, which recognise the contribution of students and colleagues to the Welsh language, were: Janet Hardy (Exceptional Learner - staff), Trish Sadler-McGrath (Promoting Welsh in the Workplace), Demi John (Welsh Medium Study), Anne Robbins and Rebecca Snell (Welsh Language Champion - student), and Dr Elin Royles (Special Contribution to the Welsh Language)

BSc Agriculture student Steffan Rees from Llanarth, Ceredigion, was runner up in the prestigious Royal British Dairy Farmers Association Dairy Student 2019 competition.

Students Jenny Edwards and Ola Tomkiewicz (Theatre, Film and Television Studies) won a four day visit to New York’s Tribeca Film Festival in April 2019, funded by contributions from alumni via the Aber Fund.

A team of BSc Agriculture students from the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences - Philip Dray, Olivia MacGarvie, William Watson and Will Davies - defeated other university and college teams to win the 2019 NiAB Agronomy Cup. IBERS is the first team to lift the trophy twice since the competition began.
Migration law and human trafficking expert, Professor Ryszard Piotrowicz (Law and Criminology) has been elected Vice President of GRETA, the Council of Europe’s Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings based in Strasbourg.

Professor Matthew Jarvis, Professor Peter Midmore, Dr Helen Ougham, Professor Philipp Schofield and Professor Elan Closs Stephens were elected as Fellows of the Learned Society of Wales in spring 2019. Biochemistry student Eleanor Wilson was named overall winner of The Telegraph STEM Awards for her radical proposal for a portable test to detect TB in humans.

Dr Alexandros Koutsoukis and Dr Jenny Mathers (International Politics) were awarded the British International Studies Association’s Excellence in Teaching International Studies Prize for innovative use of topical news stories in their module ‘Behind the Headlines’.

Dr Lowri Cunnington Wynn (Law and Criminology) won the prize for the best article published in Gwreddon over the last two years. Lowri’s winning article discusses the out-migration of young people from the Welsh-speaking heartlands in terms of aspirations and their hopes for the future.

Alison Pierse, Lifelong Learning Tutor in Art, was awarded the 2018-19 Aberystwyth University Exemplary Course Award for her Art History distance learning module, Figuratively Speaking: The History of Western Figurative Sculpture. Highly commended were: IBERS Distance Learning Team - Research Methods, Dr Stephen Chapman, IBERS - Future of Packaging, Dr Alexandros Koutsoukis, International Politics - Behind the Headlines and Dr Jennifer Wood, Modern Languages - Spanish Language (Beginners).

Professor Colin McInnes (International Politics) was presented with the University’s Award for Exceptional Impact in Social Science, Arts and Humanities Research for his research which led to the development of the World Health Organisation’s framework for civilian health and military collaboration in disease outbreaks.

Professor Paul Shaw (Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences) received the Award for Exceptional Impact in Science Research for his work using genetic methods to support effective and sustainable fisheries management.

ALUMNI

Six Aber alumni who reached the shortlist for the 2019 Wales Book of the Year - Emry Lewis (Twist Loli), Manon Rhys (Starfell fy Haitl), Jerry Hunter (Whys Fadog), Heidldwen Tomas (Eugyn) Andrew Green (Cyrmu mewn 100 Gwrtbych) and Mari Ellis Dunning (Galaciu).

Film and Television Studies graduate Richie Driss, took over presenting Blue Peter on CBBC in April 2019.

Political Studies graduate, Virginijus Sinkvičius from Lithuania, has been elected EU Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries. History alumnus, Katy Bourne OBE who is the Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex, has been elected as the chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.

In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we record the loss of alumni, fellows and members of staff, past and current, of whose passing we have been informed during the last year. Our sincere condolences go out to the family and friends of those listed here.

*Denotes OSA member

FELLOWS

Adams, Mr Leslie (Education, 1992), died 2019*
Ashley, Ms Gwéllian, née Jones (Agriculture, 1999), died May 2019
Barber, Dr Peter (Geology, 1972), died December 2018*
Bohain MBE, Mr Roy (Music, 1959), died January 2019*
Bown, Professor Kenneth (Music, 1953), died September 2018
Brace, Mr John (Education, 1949), died June 2019*
Burden, Mr Arthur (Economics, 1956), died May 2019*
Carlet, Miss Sarah (Business Studies 2001), died December 2017
Davies, Dr Hubert (Mathematics, 1941), died July 2018*
Dawson, Ms Daphne Art, (1981), died 2018
Hayhurst, Dr Ann Elaine, née Lewis (Chemistry 1980), died July 2018*
Hides, Dr David (Agricultural Botany), died July 2018
Hudson, Mrs Suzanne, née Powell (Geography and Earth Sciences, 1964), died May 2019*
Hughes, Mr George (Politics and Economic History, 1986), died January 2019*
Hughes-Jones, Mrs Glenys, died January 2019
Humphreys, Mr Geraint (Politics, 1970), died December 2018
Keittia, Mr Iain (History, 1980), died January 2019
Lewis, Miss Jenny Vernon (Geography and International Politics, 1948), died 2018
Loveland, Ms Josephine, née Eider (Politics, 1972), died September 2018
Mason, Professor Hyadn (French, 1949), died August 2018*
Matthews, Ms Barbara (Fine Art, 2005), died November 2018
Morgan, Dr Dennis (Chemistry And Agricultural Chemistry, 1949), died February 2019*
Morgan, Mr Eric (Geography, 1950), died April 2019*

STAFF

Batten, Professor David, died February 2019
Dieneman, William Wolfgang, died 2018*
Greaves, Professor Neville, died June 2019*
Green, Dr David, died January 2019*
James, Paul, died 2019
Jones, Professor Bill, died July 2019*
Lewis, Dr C Roy, died 2019*
Lloyd, Professor Noel G, died 2019*
Mills, Professor Medwyn, died November 2019
Rees, Mr Barry, died 2019
Turner, Dr John, died August 2018

Professor Colin McInnes - Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation
Mr Nicholas Rogers - Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Professor lain Donnison - Head of the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS)
Professor Emry Lewis - Head of the Department of Law & Criminology
Professor Andrew Thomas - Head of Aberystwyth Business School
Dr Sarah Davies - Head of the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences
Mr Simon Banham - Head of the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies (until July 2020)
Dr Patrick Finney - Head of the Department of International Politics (until August 2020)
Professor Simon Cox - Head of the Department of Mathematics (reappointed)
Professor Nigel Holt - Head of the Department of Psychology (reappointed)
Dr Louise Marshall - Head of the Department of English and Creative Writing (reappointed)

APPOINTMENTS

Professor Colin McInnes - Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation
Mr Nicholas Rogers - Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Professor lain Donnison - Head of the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS)
Professor Emry Lewis - Head of the Department of Law & Criminology
Professor Andrew Thomas - Head of Aberystwyth Business School

If you know that our information is incorrect, or would like to report the death of an Aberystwyth University graduate, please let us know by emailing: alumni@aber.ac.uk

Morgan, Mr Phillip (Mathematics, 1971), died January 2019*
Morgan, Mr Gareth (Mathematics, 1974), died May 2019
Phillips, Mr Nicholas (Mathematics), died September 2018
Prosser, Mr Colin (Chemistry 1955), died August 2018*
Pyrah, Mr Patrick (Physics, 1947), died May 2019
Robinson, Mr Geoffrey (Biolgy), died November 2018
Rowlands, Mrs Gillian, née Rees (Education, 1963), died January 2019*
Semple, Ms Isabella, née Martin (Education, 1976), died June 2019
Sullivan, Ms Rebecca (French, 2016), died October 2018
Williams, Mr Meirug (Physics, 1972), died December 2018*
Williams, Mr Llew (Politics and Modern History, 2004), died April 2019
Wilson, Miss Fayle (Zooloogy, 2007), died 2019
Wright, Mr Wally (Geology And Geography, 1957), died April 2019*
Atgofion Chwaraeon | Sporting Memories

Mae myfyrwyr Aber bob amser wedi bod yn griw bywiog, yn cymryd rhan mewn chwaraeon o bob math, boed yn gystadleuol neu ddim ond am hwyl. Isod mae ychydig o ddelweddau o Archifau'r Brifysgol, sy'n dangos rhai o'r gweithgareddau a'r cyfleusterau ar hyd y blynyddoedd.

Rydym wastad yn chwilio am fwy o luniau, yn enwedig o'r 1970au ymlaen, felly ymunwch â'r sgwrs a rhannwch eich atgofion â ni:

@AberUniArchives
archives@aber.ac.uk
Cyn-fyfyrwr.Aber | Aberystwyth Alumni

Aber students have always been an active bunch, taking part in sports of all kinds, whether competitively or just for fun. Below are just a few images from the University Archives, showing off some of the activities and facilities on offer through the years.

We are always on the lookout for more photographs, particularly from the 1970s onwards, so please join the conversation and share your memories with us:

Raced ‘Y Cythraul’. UWCW Tennis Club, 1905, a enillwyd gan F. Gauntlett ac M. Williams

UCW Tennis Club, 1905
Ladies Doubles Handicap, won by F. Gauntlett and M. Williams

Women’s Boating, c.1909
Byddwch wyliadwrus o'r ci!

Basketball in the sports hall

Y trac rhedeg ar Benglais, yn dangos y pwl nofio cyn adeiladu'r neuadd chwaraeon

The running track on Penglais, showing the swimming pool before the building of the sports hall

Cynllun ar gyfer y Neuadd Chwaraeon arfaethedig ar Benglais

Design for the proposed Sports Hall on Penglais

Cynllun ar gyfer y Neuadd Chwaraeon arfaethedig ar Benglais

XI cyntaf ffin
Pêl-droed, 1894-5, gan gynnwys y gol-goeaw Leigh Richmond Roose

XI football XI, 1894-5, including goalkeeper Leigh Richmond Roose

XI cyntaf ffin
Pêl-droed, 1894-5, gan gynnwys y gol-goeaw Leigh Richmond Roose

XI football XI, 1894-5, including goalkeeper Leigh Richmond Roose

Tynnu rhaff, Cychod yn herio Pêl-droed, Mai 6, 1911, Caeau Ficerdy

Tug-of-war, Football Vs Boating, May 6, 1911, Vicarage Fields

Pêl-fasged yn y neuadd chwaraeon

Basketball in the sports hall

The Demon’ racket.

UCW Tennis Club, 1905
Ladies Doubles Handicap, won by F. Gauntlett and M. Williams

Women’s Boating, c.1909
Byddwch wyliadwrus o'r ci!

Basketball in the sports hall