

Aber^rNEWS

ISSUE 24 - April 2016



iCub team wins UK science photography prize for second year running

A photograph called *iCub and the tutor* taken by Sandy Spence from the Department of Computer Science has won a top UK science photography award.

The image shows a humanoid robot learning about how to play from a young child as part of robotics research at Aberystwyth University. It won the 'People' prize in this year's Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) Science Photography Competition.

This is the second year in succession that Sandy Spence and colleagues have won the award. In 2015 *The Greatest Discovery* which showed the iCub humanoid robot 'listening' to the unborn child of mother to be Ayesha Jones, won the 'People' prize. A year on, and Ayesha's daughter Caiya features in *iCub and the tutor*, sitting at a table and playing with the iCub robot.

Both images were inspired by the work of the Intelligent Robotics Group at Aber who are applying how young children learn about the world around them to the development of humanoid robots.

In 2015 the group was awarded £560,000 by the EPSRC for a three year research project that sees the group working with developmental psychologists to help robots learn more about the physics of objects and how to use objects as tools.

The competition received over 200 entries which were drawn from researchers in receipt of EPSRC funding. The first, second and third prize winning images with descriptions are all available to download from the EPSRC website www.epsrc.ac.uk

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 Copy deadline for this edition is **Monday 23 May**.

Historian elected Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences



Phillipp Schofield, Professor of Medieval History in the Department of History and Welsh History, has been elected as Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.

A leading international researcher in medieval economic and social history, with a particular interest in matters of credit and debt, Professor Schofield is one of forty-two leading social scientists to be recognised by the Academy.

Professor Schofield obtained his first degree in ancient and medieval history at UCL in 1986 and completed his doctorate at the University of Oxford (Wadham) in 1992. He joined Aberystwyth University in 1998 and is a key figure in the department, which he led for ten years.

He is presently undertaking a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship on the Great Famine in early fourteenth-century England. He is also engaged in writing up Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded research arising from projects on litigation on manorial courts and the use of seals in medieval Wales. A volume for Manchester University Press on *Peasants and Historians: the historiography of the medieval English peasantry* is to be published later this year.

Celebrating excellence in teaching

Three teaching modules have been highly commended by the judging panel in the 2015-16 Aberystwyth University Exemplary Course Awards.

The highest ranked module was 'Developing Internet-Based Application', led by Chris Loftus from the Department of Computer Science.

Also highly commended were the 'Computer Vision' module led by Dr Hannah Dee from Computer Science, and 'Advances in Invertebrate Zoology' led by Dr David Wilcockson from IBERS.

Established by the University's Information Services E-learning Group, which supports technology-enhanced learning and teaching, the annual awards honour modules which demonstrate exemplary practice in four areas: course design, interaction and collaboration, assessment and learner support.

The criteria for the awards is based on the international Blackboard Exemplary Course Programme (ECP). The University's E-Learning Group trains applicants to evaluate how well their course conforms to best practices outlined in the Blackboard ECP rubric, and to enhance their module as appropriate.

The winning modules were selected by an anonymous panel including teaching and administrative staff as well as student representation.

Commendations were also awarded to three modules: the distance learning module 'Art in Wales: The Welsh Depicted', led by Alison Pierse and Dr Jacqueline Jaynes from the School of Education and Lifelong Learning; 'Biomechanical Analysis' led by Dr Marco Arkesteijn at IBERS, and 'Metabolism' led by Drs David Whitworth and Neil McEwan, also from IBERS.

Mary Jacob, from the University's E-Learning Group, who set up the Exemplary Course Awards, commented: "We are delighted with the number of applications received for this year's awards, and encourage all teaching staff who are interested in learning how to use the rubric and applying for the 2016-17 competition award to visit the AU Exemplary Course Award website for more information. The deadline to apply is 17 November 2016."

One of this year's judges said: "This year we received more applications than ever for the Exemplary Course Award. It is worth noting that 80% of the applications came from the Sciences. We would like to particularly encourage staff in Social Sciences and Humanities to consult the ECP rubric, revamp their modules as needed, and apply for this award in subsequent years."

The winners will be presented with their awards at this summer's graduation ceremonies.



L to R: Chris Loftus, Mary Jacob, Dr Hannah Dee, Dr David Whitworth, Dr Neil McEwan, Dr Marco Arkesteijn, Dr David Wilcockson and Alison Pierse with Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor John Grattan.

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S COLUMN

Since the last edition of **AberNEWS** I have visited a wide variety of departments across the University, and the message I am giving to colleagues is clear: our priorities are threefold – recruitment, reputation and sustainability. That’s my mantra and my clarion call to the University.

As a geographer I like to have a compass bearing in the field and know my direction of travel. The same is true of the University – we need to agree what success is and then march resolutely in that direction, uniting on key messages and themes and delivering them.

Aberystwyth is a great University; we just need to make sure that message is out there. There have been many successes of late, and it is important that we take the time to celebrate these.

Firstly, Mauritius Aberystwyth has had a very successful first year of recruitment and is looking like being everything that we hoped it would be.

Also, four of our subjects were described as being amongst the “World Elite” in the latest QS World University Rankings by Subject. Aberystwyth was listed as one of the top 100 universities in the world for the study of Geography, and Politics and International Studies, Agriculture and Forestry, and Environmental Science also featured.

In the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2015-16 Aberystwyth climbed up to 50 places and into the top 40 UK institutions featured. Aberystwyth was also listed as one of the top 200 universities in Europe and 200 most international universities.



Our three-day science fair in the Sports Cage as part of British Science Week was a great success, welcoming more than 1700 school pupils. The fair showcased some of the excellent work that goes on here at the University as well as further afield, and it was great to see the pupils being inspired by the dynamic demonstrations and hands-on science exhibitions. My thanks go to the Centre for Widening Participation, Equality and Social Inclusion for once again organising this excellent event, and the staff and students from across the University who shared their enthusiasm, energy and knowledge.

We are eagerly anticipating the Student-led Teaching Awards on 22 April. The event is one of the highlights of the year, and a chance to celebrate talented and dedicated people who have gone the extra mile when it comes to supporting, teaching and inspiring our students.

To finish, you may have heard I am currently training to take part in Ironman Wales. Not only am I determined to raise serious amounts of money for the Aberystwyth Fund, I also want to inspire colleagues to think about their own health and wellbeing and how they are looking after themselves. I ask for your best wishes and positive thoughts for the challenge facing me - with over 50 years of climbing and sporting injuries in the tank, including a dodgy shoulder and an iffy knee, I'll need all the help I can get!

Professor John Grattan
Acting Vice-Chancellor

THE LEGENDARY 80s MUSICAL SENSATION RETURNS

10-27 August

Gareth Gates as Willard (23-27 August)

Lee Brennan as Willard (10-21 August)

Maureen Nolan as Vi Moore

Footloose THE MUSICAL

★★★★
'Has the audience on their feet'
OK! Magazine*

★★★★
'You leave feeling like you can change the world'
MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS*

*Reviews from previous productions

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ALMOST PARADISE
LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE BOY
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£28 / £26 concession
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BSL Signed show Saturday 13th August matinee

University honours first female lawyer in the West Indies



The chance discovery on eBay of a postcard featuring a portrait of a young black woman in university robes has led to the University honouring one of its alumni.

A study room at the Hugh Owen Library was officially named the Iris de Freitas Room after the first female lawyer in the West Indies. The event formed part of the University's International Women's Day celebrations on 8 March.

Born in 1896, Iris de Freitas was the daughter of a merchant

in British Guiana. She registered as a student at Aberystwyth University in 1919 after a short period studying in Toronto.

At Aberystwyth she studied botany, Latin and modern languages, law and jurisprudence, and lived in Alexandra Hall, the first purpose-built university hall of residence for female students in the UK.

She also became Vice-President of the University's Students' Representative Council and the President of the Women's Sectional Council.

Iris graduated with a BA in 1922, but continued her association with the University and qualified for the degree of LLB in June 1927.

In 1929 she was admitted as the first woman to practise law in the West Indies and was the first female prosecutor of a murder trial there.

Tributes published in the Guyana Chronicle after her death in May 1989 described her as "a pioneer and frontrunner of women who dared enter the exclusively male legal profession", and someone who "blazed the trail for women lawyers".

Members of University staff have been piecing together her story after alumni stumbled across the postcard, described as a "Postcard of black woman wearing Aberystwyth gown 1922-23", online in April 2015.

The reverse side of the postcard featured only the handwritten words "With love and in memory of an enjoyable session, Iris 1922-23", and the photographer's details HH Davies of Pier Street Aberystwyth.

The postcard is now in the University's archive.

Eva De Visscher, from the Development and Alumni Relations Office, and one of the first people to be alerted to the postcard said: "Ceredigion Archives and several alumni expressed an interest in the postcard but, in a wonderful gesture of social-media-conducted solidarity, decided not to bid against the University Archives.

"We are delighted with the outcome and what we have been able to learn about this remarkable woman and her time here in Aberystwyth. It is most appropriate that, on International Women's Day, we celebrate her achievements and association with the University, and in so doing, the importance of making education available to everyone, regardless of gender, race or religion."

The Aberystwyth Fund

A number of grants have been awarded by the Aberystwyth Fund, which was launched earlier this year by the University's Development and Alumni Relations Office.

An evolution of the Annual Fund which was established in 2009 and raised over £600,000, the Aberystwyth Fund is the giving programme for alumni, parents, staff and friends of the University, as well as our wider community of students, to raise funds and support three key priority areas that underpin the student experience here at Aberystwyth University: Student Hardship, Student Welfare and Wellbeing and Student Opportunity.

Thanks to the generosity of all those who contributed to the Aberystwyth Fund, the University's Student Hardship Fund has grown by £33,679. The Student Hardship Fund is able to provide relief and support to students facing genuine, severe and unexpected financial hardship through no fault of their own, in the belief that

no student should be forced to drop out of university as a result of such circumstances.

This Student Hardship Fund is available to UK, EU and international students, and it is the only fund that is open to all students with the only pre-requisite being that they are currently studying at Aberystwyth.

Some types of the unforeseen factors faced by students who have been supported by the student hardship fund include: grant and loan delays; reduction in working hours; redundancy; an emergency at home leading to a temporary suspension of financial support; or the need to travel home at short notice.

In addition, the Aberystwyth Fund has awarded a grant of £3,756 to Nightline, the confidential listening, information and emotional support service. Run by trained student volunteers on behalf of all students at Aberystwyth University,

the grant is a result of a student welfare campaign within the alumni community, where donors requested that their donation be directed towards the overnight student support helpline.

For more information about the Aberystwyth Fund, including how to support it, please get in touch with Dylan Jones, Aberystwyth Fund Officer (dej20@aber.ac.uk).



NEWS

Four final year students win prizes in the NSS draw

As part of this year's National Student Survey (NSS), four lucky students have won prizes following their early completion of the survey. The winners are Ed Fletcher, Matthew Booth, Conner McCaffery, and Alex Hayes and the prizes included a panoramic helicopter tour or iPad mini.

Ed Fletcher, a third year Agricultural student chose the helicopter ride. He said, "I'm excited to go on the helicopter ride as it's something I've always wanted to do and I can't actually believe I won the prize!"

Final year Ecology student Alex Hayes chose the iPad mini. "I'm loving the Pad! It didn't even cross my mind when I did the survey I would win it!"

The NSS is commissioned by government, and is administered by Ipsos-Mori, who randomly picked the prize winners from all those completing the survey at Aberystwyth before the 29 February.

Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor John Grattan presented the prizes to the students on Thursday 17 March. He said, "The NSS provides the University with a wealth of data that helps us to enhance the student experience. I'd like to thank everybody who took part."

This year, the University also offered prizes to the departments with highest and most improved response rate as well for the most innovative campaign. Congratulations to:



Alex Hayes receiving his iPad Mini from Professor John Grattan



Left to right: Connor McCaffery, Professor John Grattan, Ed Fletcher, Matthew Booth

Computer Science - Platinum award for the first department to reach 50% and 70% response rate, as well as third place overall.

DGES - Gold award for highest response rate

Modern Languages - Silver award for highest response rate

Art - Most improved award

IBERS - Most innovative award

English and Creative Writing - Highly commended

All UK universities complete the NSS. Results, which are published each summer after the survey is carried out in the spring, are publicly available to prospective students and their families to help them make informed choices of where and what to study.

Congratulations to the winners and thank you to every single student who completed the NSS.

The survey is open until 30 April.

£272,000 Leverhulme award



Martyn Powell, Professor of Modern Irish History, has been awarded a £272,000 Leverhulme Research Project Grant to study the political work of Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

Playwright, theatre-owner, MP, 'spin-doctor', drinker, debtor – Irish-born Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816) was a notorious figure in the late-eighteenth century, arguably the first age of celebrity.

But while his theatrical works *School for Scandal* and *The Rivals* remain well known and continue to be performed, the significance of his political career has been underplayed. Yet he was reckoned to be one of the greatest speakers Parliament has ever seen – his speech in the trial of Warren Hastings, India's Governor General, perhaps the best in its history.

Professor Martyn Powell will be collaborating with Dr Robert Jones of Leeds University on the four year project which aims to recover and reappraise Sheridan's political career, investigating his national and international significance as a politician and orator, and his wider political activity, including writing for the press – he was an early defender of its freedom, and one of his speeches on this subject is inscribed in the interior of Chicago's Tribune Building.

The project's primary outcome will be the publication of a four volume scholarly edition of Sheridan's complete political works, contracted to Oxford University Press.

SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight on... Design, Print & Postal Services

The University's Design, Print and Postal Services produces a wide variety of print, web and digital media, and processes and distributes all internal and external mail.

When did it all begin?

University printing services began with the introduction of four small print offset machines in the late 1960's, housed in Old College.

The Design and Print department was born during the 1980s, with the appointment of the first design staff and the purchase of the first Xerox machine.

From its humble beginnings, Design and Print has developed into a large and efficiently run department. The department was highly praised by Presstek UK and large paper companies for its excellent set-up for design, print and finishing services. However, with both printers of our litho presses now leaving the University (Geoff Hughes and Arwyn Jones) this section of our service has now come to an end.



What does the department do now?

The department's work supports teaching, marketing and promotion of departments within the University and beyond. The team of experienced designers assist departments across the University by creating professional designs that help to communicate their messages successfully. Documents come to us to be either digitally printed and finished in-house, or procured through us via University approved printers. The service produces course notes, leaflets, booklets, brochures, conference posters, stationery, confidential printing, exhibitions and much more.

Postal Services provide a comprehensive range of internal and external postal services for all departments and units.

Who's on the team?

Along with our manager we have a team of eight in the Design Studio; four graphic designers (one is also our photographer), a web designer, a design assistant and an administrator. Print has a team of four; two digital operators and two finishers for printing and large format projects and Postal Services has a team of three.

How could departments and this service work better together?

Come to us early to discuss your job. We're happy and willing to offer advice and help to establish your requirements. After initial discussion please provide us with the finished and approved text, translation, any images or recommendation of images you



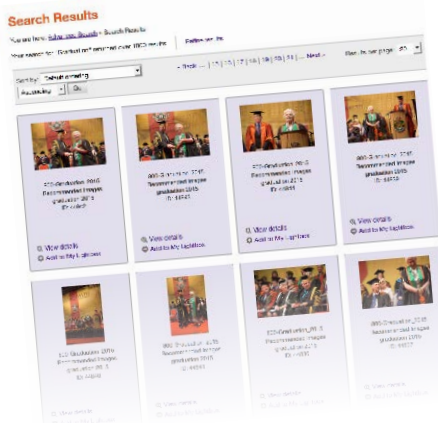
would like included and a deadline date.

If you are one of the small number of staff able to use Adobe InDesign, we still ask that before starting any job, you consult with us to establish the correct format (e.g., corporate identity), current marketing campaigns and technical requirements such as crop marks and bleed.

Our doors are open, come and see us.

Where do we find and choose images and photographs?

We have a large searchable library of photos available (photolibrary.aber.ac.uk). All our images are by professional photographers and are available at high resolution for commercial printing.



If you have a particular subject or event you would like photographed please get in touch and we can arrange for a photographer (design@aber.ac.uk).

For more simple projects can you go straight to print?

Yes, in order to help staff and departments in their presentations and

publications we have provided a series of templates. These templates have been produced following the University collegiate identity and are available as a link on our website www.aber.ac.uk/design-print.

On occasion the digital print team can use artwork provided by departments in Microsoft Word or Publisher format, although

these are not ideal methods for producing artwork. Design and Print can offer advice to departments and customers on how best to produce their artwork, from our recommended document set-up and format, to providing ready-to-print PDFs.

How is your work printed and finished?

Our high quality digital printers offer mono and full colour solutions from a single flyer to large volume, complex booklets.

We have also been developing our large format printing over the last few years to cater for increasing exhibitions and events that the University holds or attends. We have top quality large format printers up to 1300mm wide by any length, with popular sizes being A0, A1 and A2. We can print onto a variety of materials: waterproof poster paper, adhesive vinyls, pvc banner and light stop. We also can mount and laminate to foamex boards, pull-up banner stands and complex framing systems. This facility and expertise enable Design and Print to produce full exhibition stands for events such as the Urdd, National Eisteddfod and Royal Welsh show.

Our finishing services include trimming, folding, lamination, encapsulation and various binding techniques including wire and plastic ring binding.

What about delivery, collection and Postal Services?

Apart from the very important daily collecting, sorting and delivery of all University post, our Post Room staff also have automated enveloping printing, inserting and franking equipment to enable efficient large volume direct mailings. Please ensure you contact the Post Room if you think you require this additional service.

The Post Room also manages the procurement of stationery supplies via Office Depot (postroom@aber.ac.uk).



For more information visit us on our website: www.aber.ac.uk/design-print

SPOTLIGHT

Acting Vice Chancellor Professor John Grattan to take on Ironman for students



On Sunday 18 September, Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor John Grattan will be putting his fitness to the ultimate test by taking part in the Ironman Wales to raise vital funds for the Aberystwyth Fund.

The Aberystwyth Fund is an evolution of the Annual Fund, as the giving programme for alumni, parents, staff and friends of the University support three key priority areas that underpin the student experience here at Aberystwyth University:

- **Student Hardship** - to provide financial relief and support to students facing genuine, severe and unexpected financial hardship, in the belief that no student should be forced to drop out of University as a result of such circumstances.
- **Student Welfare & Wellbeing** – to support the physical and mental well-being of students, through collaboration with Student Support Services, the Sports Centre, Student Clubs and Societies, and Nightline.
- **Student Opportunity** – to give students access, experience and a platform to achieve their potential, through initiatives such as scholarships and bursaries, Aber Opportunities Network, and Widening Access and Participation projects.

John has decided to allocate the funds raised towards Student Hardship and Student Wellbeing, through the Sports Centre and Student Clubs and Societies.

Ironman Wales is renowned for having one of the most challenging bike and run courses on the Ironman calendar. Held in Tenby, Pembrokeshire, it attracts over one thousand competitors and tens of thousands of spectators for race day.

John will face a 2.4 mile sea swim, a 112 mile bike ride, and a 26.2 mile marathon run. The whole event needs to be completed within 17 hours in order to qualify as a finisher. It is the supreme test of physical and mental toughness, and requires both courage and determination, in addition to physical preparation.

Now training hard, working closely with the Sports Centre and the Sports Scientists at IBERS, John is following an intense schedule that will see him accumulate over 500 training hours before the event.

Speaking of the challenge, John said: "The ambition I have for our students and the University will help me through what will



Professor John Grattan training with the Sports Centre Personal Trainer Rich Martin.

be my toughest challenge. We stand for outstanding student experience, and the Aberystwyth Fund has the students at its heart, and I'm determined to raise as much as I can to support the hardship and wellbeing of our students, and to also promote the importance of wellbeing and health amongst colleagues – although not everyone has to do an Ironman."

Louise Jagger, Director of Development & Alumni Relations and Lewis Donnelly, Students' Union President, added: "We are extremely proud that John has chosen to raise money for the Aberystwyth Fund - it's utterly inspiring. His ambition and drive to see the best for our students and University will hopefully inspire everyone to get involved and show support."

Many activities and events will be organised both on and off campus to help John exceed his target. Please keep an eye out and get involved, as we will launch the campaign in April and ask all staff and students to join us and work together to achieve the best for our students.



HUMAN RESOURCES

Universities Superannuation Scheme - Update

Changes to the benefits provided by USS are being introduced in phases from 1 April 2016. The amount you pay for those benefits is increasing, and the University will also be increasing its contributions to the scheme.

USS

For the future

USS has carried out some qualitative research with members, and based on that feedback has named the two new sections of the scheme; the revised career revalued benefits section will now be known as the 'USS Retirement Income Builder' and the new defined contribution section will now be known as the 'USS Investment Builder'. There will be further updates to the USS websites to reflect the new names in the coming weeks.

You will have recently received a leaflet entitled Important Information about Your Pension which provided an outline of the changes, and some of the updates you will receive over the coming months.

The Member Area of the 'USS – For the Future' website, forthefuture.uss.co.uk/member-area, contains a number of

resources to help you to understand the changes and what the new scheme rules mean for you, including:

- factsheets and videos
 - a benefit illustrator to help you to estimate how the changes will affect you and how much you will be paying into the scheme from April
 - an updated Guide for Members
 - an update on transfer of funds from the money purchase Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC) arrangement provided by Prudential into the new USS Investment Builder
- If you have any questions or comments about any of this material you should contact Martin Davies on mad@aber.ac.uk / ext 2033 or Beth Head on myh@aber.ac.uk / ext 8706.

Digital Skills Training

The internet affords a world of opportunity to those able and willing to embrace it. Booking cheaper holidays, ordering groceries, internet banking, and using social network sites to keep in touch with friends are aspects of life taken for granted by people who are competent with using computers and confident with using the internet.

At the University, the new Aber People software is transforming the way people-related services are accessed and delivered across the University, for example changing the way in which staff access their payslip, book annual leave and record personal development.

The Human Resources Department recently arranged a series of Digital Skills Training sessions aimed at members of staff who had not previously used a computer or the internet, or those who could use a computer but wanted to enhance their skills and learn how to use the Aber People software and the University e-mail system.

The course, supported by TUC Wales and Workers' Educational Association Cymru, provided attendees with the skills required to be able to use a range of devices – computers, tablets, smartphones – to access the internet for work and personal use.

Lesley Spees, AU Human Resources Manager commented: "We are really thrilled with the outcomes of the training. We now find ourselves corresponding via email with employees who did not previously use this facility. The training course has enhanced their skills and allowed them to access the many opportunities that the internet offers."

The HR Department are in the process of arranging more Digital Skills Training sessions. If you may be interested to attend, please contact: Diane Jones, Unison Training Representative (dnj@aber.ac.uk), or Lesley Spees, Human Resources Manager (les24@aber.ac.uk).

Cwrs Cymraeg Proffesiynol 2016

Awst/August 15-19 neu/or 22-26
Dyddiad Cau: 14 Mehefin 2016

laith fyw i bawb A living language for all

Cwrs Cymraeg Proffesiynol

Mae'r cwrs Cymraeg Proffesiynol yn gyfle gwych i siaradwyr rhugl i wella eu sgiliau ysgrifennu a chyfathrebu yn y Gymraeg, yn ogystal â magu eu hyder wrth ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y gwaith neu yn y gymuned.

This course improves communication skills of fluent Welsh speakers

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Helping your organisation to comply with Statutory Welsh Language Standards

George Whitefield

Dr David Ceri Jones, Reader in Welsh and Atlantic History in the Department of History and Welsh History recently signed a major contract with leading academic publisher Oxford University Press to publish the correspondence of the 18th century trans-Atlantic evangelical revivalist George Whitefield.



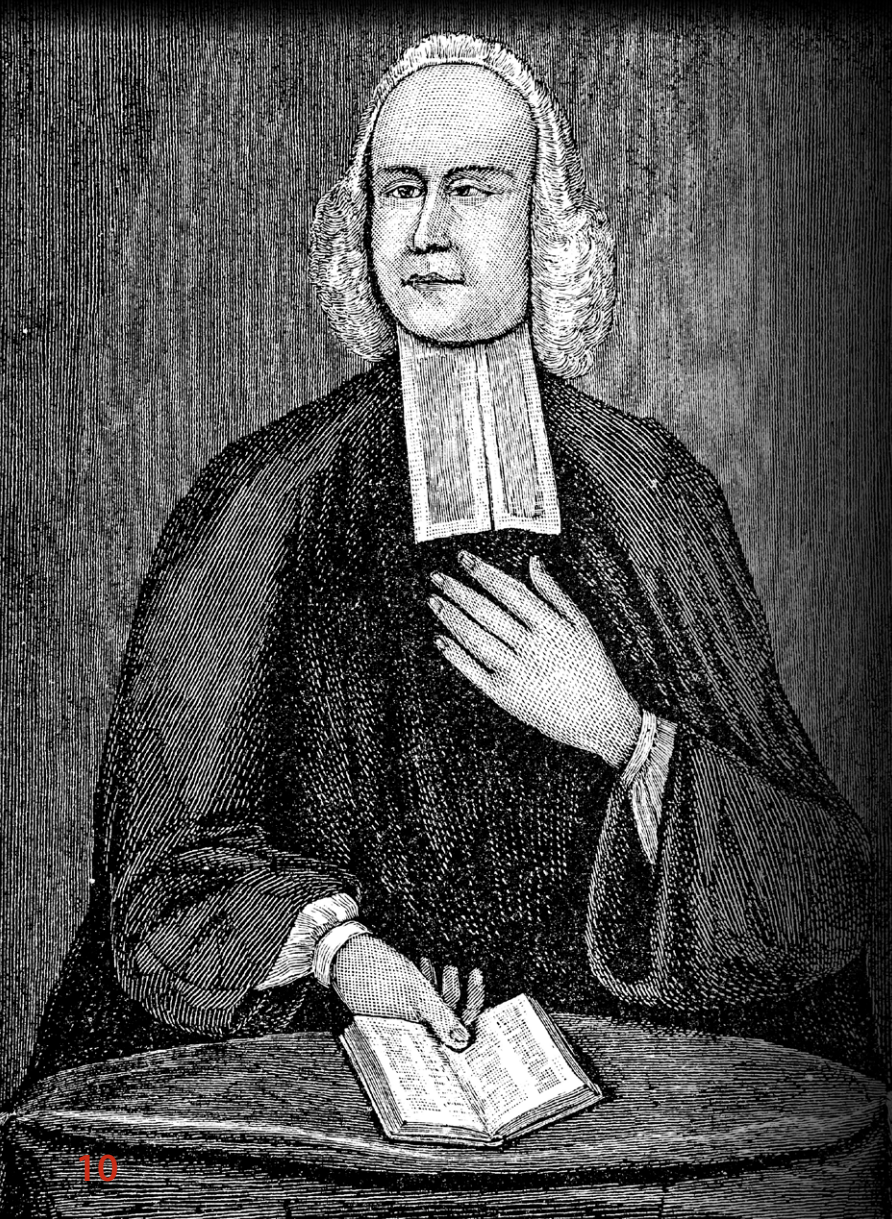
For a time in the middle decades of the eighteenth century, George Whitefield (1714-70) was one of the most famous people in Britain and North America – front-page news on both sides of the Atlantic. In London, Boston, Bristol, Philadelphia, and many places in between, crowds of twenty or thirty thousand people gathered and hung on Whitefield's every word as he preached dramatic open-air sermons. Yet, despite being called Anglo-America's first celebrity, he remains a shadowy and poorly understood figure.

A Church of England clergyman, Gloucester-born and Oxford educated, Whitefield was best known as an evangelist whose itinerant preaching sparked tumultuous religious revivals throughout the British Isles and the American colonies in the 1730s and '40s. For almost forty years, Whitefield was

almost continually on the move, criss-crossing the Atlantic on unprecedented seven separate occasions. An expert networker he connected evangelicals, Methodists and others throughout the Atlantic World often as far removed from one another socially and culturally, as they were geographically. In the process he wove together a new religious movement – Evangelicalism. Today that movement is the dominant expression of the Christian faith in the United States and much of the emerging Global South.

Letters have been called the paste of history, and they were the chief means Whitefield deployed to connect his fellow leaders of the evangelical revivals and many of their rank and file membership to one another. Numbering almost 3000 individual items, and spanning the period from 1734 until Whitefield's death in 1770, the correspondence naturally includes exchanges with all of the leading religious figures of the day. Whitefield's friends and bitter rivals, the founders of English Methodism, John and Charles Wesley figure prominently, some of the leading dissenting ministers of the day such as Philip Doddridge, many of the leading bishops of the Church of England, the Welsh revivalists Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland, the Countess of Huntingdon, who formed her own Calvinist religious denomination in the 1770s, the leader of the German Moravians Count Zinzendorf, as well of members of the emigrant German Protestant community in London and Pennsylvania, and the Americans, theologian Jonathan Edwards and scientist and politician, Benjamin Franklin, all jostle for the limelight. However, what makes the collection of much wider and of compelling interest is its socially-extensive range. Humble converts, local lay Methodist preachers and leaders, an unusual number of literate women, enslaved Africans and even native American voices all feature at various points.

These letters have never been collected together and published in their entirety. No mean feat, Jones has located letters in over sixty locations in America, Britain and Germany. About half are original manuscript letters, the others remain only in various printed sources. The laborious task of transcribing the letters has been made possible by a generous grant from the Leverhulme Trust; thankfully Whitefield's handwriting is not too difficult, but that of many of his correspondents is much more challenging.



STUDENT NEWS

Elections, new CEO and more...

We've been super busy during the start of the year and have plenty of things to shout about...



Elections period flew by once again; congratulations to all 23 new full time officers, part time officers and NUS delegates elected at the 2016 AberSU Spring Elections.

I am thrilled to introduce the new full time officer team for the year ahead: Lauren Marks as President, Ryan Myles as Education Officer, Jasmine Cross as Activities Officer, Naomi Cutler as Welfare Officer and Rhun Dafydd as Welsh Affairs & UMCA President. Read their manifestos here: www.abersu.co.uk/elections/

By the next edition of **AberNews** the new team will be in office - good luck to you all on representing Aberystwyth students. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the current officer team on a very productive and successful year, and wish them all the best for the future...don't forget to keep in touch!

As some of you may be aware, the AberSU team has been recruiting for a new Chief Executive. This process has taken a long time, but finally we have some great news and I am pleased to announce that we have appointed Trish McGrath, as our new AberSU CEO. Trish has a track record in membership services within students' unions, starting off her career as President at Lancaster University Students' Union and is currently the Head of Student Voice at Manchester Students' Union.

This semester we've also been working closely with VMS Live to bring an even bigger and better Summer Ball to Aberystwyth - the Space Ball. We will also bring you the biggest rugby 7s tournament in Wales - Aber 7s, and AberSU's version of the Oscars - the Student-Led Teaching Awards, which recognise exceptional members of staff, student representatives and departments.

Our NUS Extra card printer has had an upgrade too and we're now able to print NUS Extra cards with ISIC as standard which includes the over 42,000 discounts in 130 countries - pop over to the AberSU Welcome Desk to purchase a 1, 2 or 3 year card.

And last but not least, AberSU is making plans for the future and we need your help and your input - we want to hear about you, your experiences and expectations of a students' union. NUS Insights are conducting some independent research on our behalf to find out what you, our students and our stakeholders, think of AberSU and what our priorities should be so that we can do the best for our students.

Keep an eye on our website and social media channels for up-to-date information - www.abersu.co.uk

Eleri Wyn
AberSU Marketing &
Communications Manager

The letters will be lightly edited for publication, and supported by footnotes to help identify many of the main figures mentioned within them. Taken together they will reconstruct Whitefield's worlds.

Despite his best efforts, Whitefield was never able to escape the celebrity and fame of his youth. It has also cast an extremely long shadow over his posthumous reputation and later attempts to understand him. Over-zealous editors keen to celebrate Whitefield's achievements, preserve or enhance his reputation or popularise him through heavily abridged versions of some of his writings, have severely compromised the reliability of his extensive writings, including his correspondence. At the heart of the project to publish these letters, therefore, is an attempt at historical retrieval, cutting through the layers of later scholarship to reveal a more authentic Whitefield.

The appearance of these letters for the first time has the potential not only to contribute to understanding of Whitefield and the eighteenth-century evangelical and Methodist movements, but also much broader questions as well. Whitefield was simultaneously an agent of ever-closer ties between Britain and America, another of the sinews that fleshed out the British North Atlantic community, and a cause of tension between the New World and the Old. For example, his itinerant evangelism up and down the eastern seaboard of the American colonies bound the disparate colonies together for perhaps the first time. Some have suggested that Whitefield should be afforded his place as one of the forefathers of the American Revolution. His passionate defence of slavery in the Americas remains a major blot on his reputation, but this needs to be balanced with his virulent criticism of the Southern plantation owners who kept their slaves in such dehumanizing conditions, and his preaching to slaves and encouraging them to form their own churches. Whitefield remains a controversial and contradictory figure.

The first volume of letters is due to appear in 2018, and six subsequent volumes will appear at roughly eighteenth-month intervals thereafter.



SPOTLIGHT



The University's Director of Equality, Debra Croft, reflects on the year so far for the Centre for Widening Participation, Equality and Social Inclusion (CWPESI)

It has been a busy year so far for CWPESI. We started with welcoming new students in September with a series of events in our new home - the Cwrt Mawr Hub. These events were open to all, but we particularly looked forward to meeting up with our Summer University graduates who decided to enter Higher Education with us (more than 40 this year) and linking them to ex-Summer University students who are already here in years 2, 3 and 4.

We then took our summer Nuffield Research placement students to Cardiff Techniquest to display their project posters and receive their award from Nobel Laureate Professor Sir Martin Evans.



The autumn and winter saw several major projects underway with all Ceredigion Year 9 pupils. On campus they took part in STEM activities, with over 600 pupils coming to the University over six days and visiting Computer Science, Physics, Geography, and the Maths Soc, as well as racing cars and solving puzzles and problems.

We also took groups of Aber students out on the

road to talk about 'Your Choice, Your Future' with an interactive mind map and story-telling activity, before the schools' GCSE choice deadlines.

Continuing our employability theme for Aber students, CWPESI also hosted a work experience and volunteering event in the Hub, in partnership with Psychology and the Careers Service, and took a group to north Wales where we built and raced model cars with school groups at the GB Rally Wales site in Deeside.

A day-long training event for our new crop and old-hand Student Employees was held, with assessed activities, CV and applications critique and development of leadership and team-working skills. Two sponsored First Aid sessions followed which added to their skill bank, and in partnership with Welsh for Adults we have also hosted 'Welsh for Beginners' classes for 12-14 staff and students on a weekly basis.



An achievement of which we are particularly proud is the production of a new Welsh Baccalaureate

learning and teaching

resource for Global Citizenship at Level 3/advanced.

Booklets and USB resources have gone out to all schools in the south-west and mid-Wales areas (part funded by Education Through Regional Working) as well as many Community First area schools in south-east and north Wales. The resource contains lessons, plans, activities and PowerPoint slides, as well as skills development materials, all ready to use in both Welsh and English.

The spring saw a continuation of our weekly GCSE Maths revision classes, 'Expanding Horizons', for local schools, tutored by Aber students, bringing a new perspective to problem solving. We also ran a demanding residential school over the Easter holidays for Year 11 pupils who were on the border of attaining a grade C in maths. This was aimed at schools further afield, with pupils staying with us from Monday to Thursday, and being tutored and looked after by our team of trained Aber students.

This year's International Women's Day was celebrated by a huge calendar of events at the University, and my thanks go to Ruth Fowler for co-ordinating these across campus. The 8th March has been celebrated for almost twenty years by CWPESI, with an event for our local community in Penparcau. This year was no different, and included a debate and discussion session on the big question "Is International Women's Day necessary anymore?" as well as art, science and history sessions, including tours of Old College with DARO. A mix of women of all ages took part and learned from each other in a supportive environment.



International Women's Day 'Art for All' workshop with Karen Pearce



15-17 March saw our British Science Week event, with a Fair loosely themed 'Everyone's a Scientist'. Once again, we extend our thanks to the many staff, students and volunteers who gave up their time to organise a fantastic array of hands-on and interactive stands - too many to mention, but some good old favourites were there - glaciers and river floods, AberRobotics club, marine aquarium, parasites and Seren the cow, with some fantastic new adventures to be had: bug bashing, *Star Wars* corner, cycle sprinting, puzzling maths and the Mars terrain, as well as dressing up and inventing your own science dream.

A stunning 32 school groups from as far as Blaenau Ffestiniog and Crymych, Welshpool and Brecon visited, bringing more than 1,750 pupils from Years 5-8, who were met safely from their buses, and guided and looked after by the CWPESI Science Leaders, with squash and biscuits a plenty!

So, a big thank you to departments, supporters, staff and students! And here's to the rest of 2015-16. If you have any ideas you'd like to discuss with us, or there are projects you'd like to partner with us to develop for the coming year, get in touch, or visit us in the Cwrt Mawr Hub.



Centre for Widening Participation, Equality and Social Inclusion

E-mail: wpsi@aber.ac.uk Tel: 01970 621890 Web: www.aber.ac.uk/wpsi

In addition to the day job...

Jeff Saycell works as Facility Manager at the University's Sports Centre, where he is responsible for the sports facilities and associated sites (Blaendolau and Vicarage Field). He leads on health and safety, compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act, building management, equipment maintenance, timetable allocations, event management and is also the main liaison with the Activity Officer at the Students' Union which has 52 sports clubs. In addition to the day job, Jeff is also one of the key volunteer organisers of the annual Aberystwyth Cycle Festival, which starts this year on Monday 23 May.

AberNEWS spoke to Jeff about the festival's humble beginnings and how it has grown to be one of the standout sporting events in the town's calendar.

Tell us a bit about how the Aberystwyth Cycle Festival came about?

It all started as most good ideas do... in the pub. Shelley Childs (Cambrian Tyres) and I had talked about the races that used to take place on the seafront back in the seventies and eighties, and we thought it would be a good idea to get them back up and running again.

News of the success of our first attempt in May 2010 reached British Cycling and SweetSpot, who organise the Tour of Britain as well as the Tour Series.

Shelley was approached by SweetSpot at the London Bike Show in November that year, and asked whether we would be interested in hosting a round of the Tour Series in Aberystwyth.

And so, in May 2011 Aberystwyth became the first and only Welsh location to host the race - the first major televised event that required road closures in the town.

How has the festival grown over the last few years?

Since its beginnings in 2010, the Aberystwyth Cycle Festival has grown hugely in size and popularity.

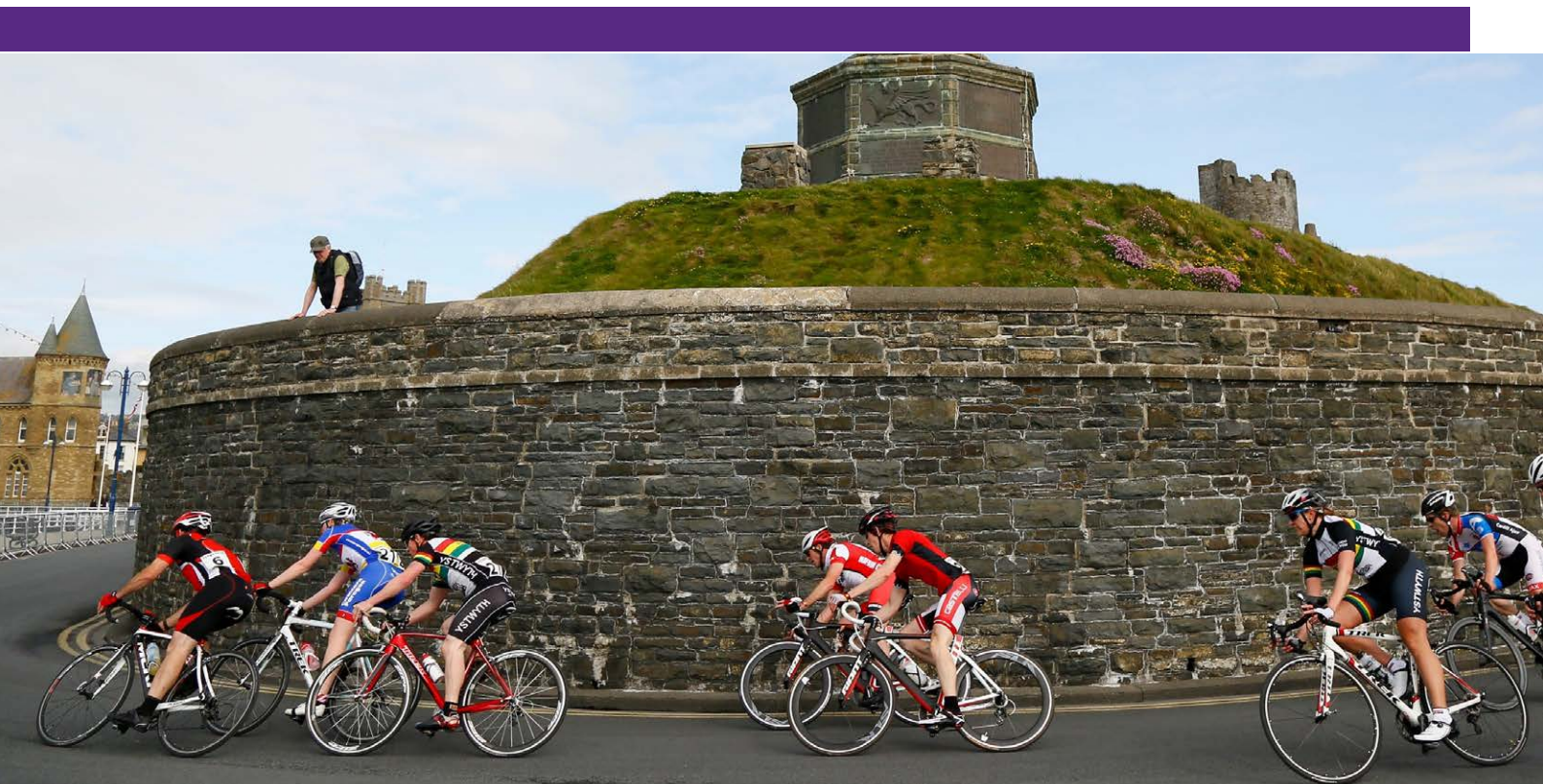
Now in its seventh year, it now includes a whole week of events and activities to celebrate cycling in mid Wales, all leading up to the main event at the weekend.

Back in 2012 we had 500 riders and 9,000 spectators. Last year this had grown to 700 riders and 11,000 spectators, with a further 242,000 viewers watching the race on ITV4, and a total



Aberystwyth Cycle Festival organising team, Left to Right: Jeff Saycell, Clint Middleton, Shelley Childs, Dewi Hughes.





of 94 million viewers watching it on television in another 60 territories!

What can people expect from this year's festival?

This year's festival covers seven days, with events starting on Monday 23 May with a guided mountain bike ride around the trails at Nant-yr-Arian - local bike shop Summit Cycles are helping out with this event.

On Tuesday evening we take over MG's cafe with our Wattbike challenge, with people competing in 200m of flat-out cycling to see who can complete the distance in the fastest time.

On Wednesday we'll be hosting the 'race of truth', a 10 mile time trial starting from Cwmrheidol.

On Thursday we have a Film and Gala evening in the National Library of Wales with a special guest speaker.

Then, Friday 27 May sees the return of ITV's Pearl Izumi Tour Series race, with our support races starting at 2pm, prior to the main televised event at 7pm. Ten of the UK's top domestic teams will be competing to win this year's event, which will include local pro riders Gruff Lewis (Madison-Genesis) and Stevie Williams (JLT Condor).

On Saturday 28 May we will be hosting two events: the now legendary downhill mountain bike race on Constitution Hill, and a new hill climb dual eliminator on what is possibly Wales' steepest hill, Cefn Llan in Llanbadarn!

Finally, Sunday 29 May sees the return of the Welsh Wild West Sportive, which will start and finish from the new bandstand.

What does it involve being one of the organisers of the Aberystwyth Cycle Festival?

It's a challenge, but a rewarding one. The AberCycleFest partnership is unique, as it's coordinated by volunteers from the local cycling club (Ystwyth Cycling Club), along with funding support from the local authority, town council, local businesses and organisations. Within our small team of key people, we

have our own specific roles which are based on our strengths and experience.

My role is to ensure all the logistics are taken care of, writing up the safety documentation (there's a lot to do for this), and strengthening links with people and organisations that want to get involved and can help us deliver an amazing event to the heart of mid Wales.

What has been your most memorable experience of the Aberystwyth Cycle Festival?

Seeing the crowds of people enjoying the racing on the Friday night, banging the boards on Pier Street, and really getting behind the event.

It's also seeing those who have taken part in the event, and listening to them mentioning how good it is (even from those who have taken part in the 112 mile Sportive, which has over 10,000ft of climbing).

How can staff and students get involved in the Cycle Festival?

Staff and students can get involved by volunteering on the Friday, Saturday or Sunday. If you're interested, enter your details and availability on our AberCycleFest web page: www.abercyclefest.com/volunteers

Or they can take part in any of the events. All the information they require to register can be found on the AberCycleFest web page. It would be great to have as many members of staff and students as possible taking part on Friday in the 'Town vs Gown' time allocation.

This year we're offering university staff and students a £5 discount on the entry fee for the Sportive, where they can ride with (or race against) Professor John Grattan, who's doing the event as part of his Ironman Wales training. To get your discount code please log on to Walk the World web page - www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/environment/eventsandschemes/traveltheworld/cyclingtw/

Appointments

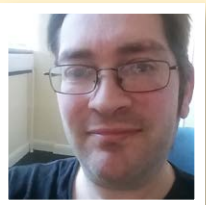
INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND RURAL SCIENCES



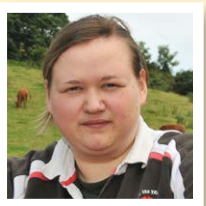
Mike Wilkinson is returning to IBERS in the role of Chair of Upland Agroecosystems after five years in Adelaide where he was Head of the School and Director of the Waite Research Institute. He previously worked in Reading University, the Hutton Institute and Leicester University. His research interests centre on describing and exploiting rapid evolutionary processes. He has published over 100 refereed publications including contributions in *Nature* and *Science*.



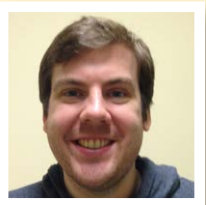
Huw Jones has joined IBERS as Professor of Translational Genomics for Plant Breeding. He will use molecular genetics and *in vitro* cellular technologies to explore gene function and to incorporate that understanding into breeding activities. He also has interests in the risk assessment and regulation of biotechnology. He has a PhD from University of Bristol and worked previously at Long Ashton and Rothamsted Research.



Dr Jim Provan has been appointed as a Reader in Biological Sciences. He has a BSc from the University of Glasgow and a PhD from the University of Dundee, and was previously at Queen's University Belfast for 16 years. His research interests cover all aspects of population and evolutionary genetics and genomics, particularly with respect to responses to global change.



Dr Sarah Morgan has joined IBERS as a Post-doctoral Fellow working on an industry-led project to reduce waste, improve efficiency and meat safety in a UK lamb supply-chain. A former student of Aberystwyth University, Sarah graduated with a BSc (Hons) Animal Science degree in 2011 and went on to complete her PhD in 2015.



Alun Hughes has joined IBERS as a Low Carbon Scientist. After recently submitting his PhD at Aberystwyth University, Alun is undertaking a short project to develop a gene editing system for *Lactobacillus*, and using this to generate a number of potentially commercially important bacterial strains for the production of platform chemicals from perennial rye grass.

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS



Maire Gorman has been appointed as Teaching Fellow in Physics. Maire was awarded an Institute of Physics bursary to attend St Edmund Hall, Oxford, where she obtained an MPhys in 2012. She is currently working towards her PhD, which focuses on theoretical molecular spectroscopy, at University College London. In her post at Aberystwyth, Maire is working with the Brilliant Club, a charity working to address educational disadvantage by widening access to highly-selective universities for pupils from under-represented groups.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND WELSH HISTORY



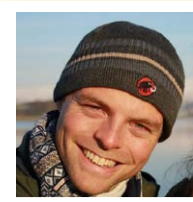
Dr Fergus Oakes joined the History department in January as Research Fellow on the AHRC funded Imprint project. He completed his PhD in medieval history at the University of Glasgow in 2015, where he was also an undergraduate tutor as well as a Research Assistant on the People of Medieval Scotland project.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS



Dr Lorena De Vita has been appointed as Teaching Fellow at the Department of International Politics. A graduate in International Relations from University of Roma Tre (Italy), Dr De Vita also completed an MSc at the London School of Economics and a doctorate at Aberystwyth University. Her research focuses on the political and cultural history of the global Cold War.

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND EARTH SCIENCES



Dr Ryan Wilson joined the department as Postdoctoral Research Associate in February 2016. Ryan completed his PhD in Remote Sensing & Glaciology at the University of Salford before working as a glaciologist at a research institute in Valdivia, Chile. Ryan will be working alongside Professor Neil Glasser on the Research Councils UK and National Commission for Scientific Research and Technology-funded 'Glacial hazards in Chile' project, being responsible for the analysis of glaciological datasets derived from satellite imagery.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE



Mark Godsell was appointed Assistant Director of Finance in January 2016. A graduate of Birmingham University and qualified accountant, Mark has held several senior finance roles including working in Higher Education within Wales. Prior to this he had a 12 year career in housing, focusing on corporate business planning and financing.



Lee Pereira joined the Finance Department as Senior Procurement Officer in March 2016. Lee was previously employed by Ceredigion County Council from 2005 and in a Procurement post from 2012. He gained his professional qualification and full membership of the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply in 2015.

RESEARCH, BUSINESS AND INNOVATION



Dr Marie Neal has been appointed to the post of Research Development Officer for Sciences. Marie will be providing support to IMPACS and DGES (Physical Geography and Earth Sciences) in the development, formulation and preparation of research grant proposals, including identifying and proactively promoting new research

opportunities. Marie will also be the point of contact for the internal NERC demand management process. Marie has a PhD in Computer Science. She worked on several research projects in the Computer Science Department before moving to IBERS, where most recently she was Business Manager of the National Plant Phenomics Centre.

Professor Tim Woods has taken on the role of additional leadership of academic quality during the period in which Professor John Grattan is Acting Vice-Chancellor.

NEW ROLE FOR PROFESSOR TIM WOODS



Professor Tim Woods will assist Professor John Grattan to deliver strategic leadership of learning and teaching and oversee all aspects of academic quality including Chair of Academic Board.

The role will oversee the delivery of the Student Success Plan including Tell

Us Now and respond to any apparent trends, monitor and respond to learning and teaching KPIs, chairing and liaising with Quality Assurance Committee and the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Committee, Special Cases Panels and Senate Examination Boards.

Professor Woods will meet on a regular basis with the Institute Directors of Undergraduate and Postgraduate/ Learning and Teaching to discuss issues relating to Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement with the aim of promoting consistency across the Institutes.

He will continue to lead the Institute of Education, Graduate and Professional Development.



WHAT'S ON

SCHOOL OF ART EXHIBITIONS

21 March – 6 May



Paintings by Paul Newland NEAC RWS and works from the RWS diploma collection

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

21 March – 6 May

Handel Evans (1932-1999):



Small Works

A selling exhibition of small drawing and paintings by Welsh artist Handel Evans. All proceeds go to the Handel Evans Trust Fund.

Degree Show & Postgraduate Exhibition

16 – 26 May – Opening on Saturday 14 May, 3pm till 6pm



Matter of Life and Death - Photographs from the University Collection

16 May – 9 September

Curated by undergraduate students taking the module 'Staging an Exhibition'

ABERYSTWYTH ARTS CENTRE

Mrs Reynolds a'r Cena Bach: Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru

3-4 May, 7.30pm

When Mrs Reynolds' lovingly tended garden is vandalised Jay, a guilty and troubled youth, is sent back by the authorities to help her fix it. Two generations locked in battle; little old Mrs Reynolds with her traditional values and 'nice little life' vs. the textbook hoodie demanding respect but offering little in return. Just as they think they have the measure of each other, something is revealed and they are both shocked by what they find out. *Take advantage of Sibrwd — a smartphone app guiding non-Welsh speakers and Welsh-learners through the performance. Download from App Store and Google Play.*



Wales Festival of Architecture

23 March – 21 May

The Wales Festival of Architecture returns to Aberystwyth in April and May, with a programme of talks, films, exhibitions and book launches, once again exploring 'the power and pleasures of well-considered buildings and places'. Photographer James Morris gives us a fascinating glimpse of what it's like for the residents, workers or students in recent award-winning buildings in Wales, from schools to individual homes. A panel discussion explores innovative ways to reclaim neglected buildings to help solve the challenge of affordable housing in the countryside. With satellite events across Wales, we hope the 2016 Festival of Architecture will have something of interest for everyone who cares about the places and spaces around us.



Hollow: Jenny Hall

23 March – 7 May, Gallery 1



Taking a copper mine as a source of inspiration this exhibition explores the creative destruction involved in the act of construction. The mine is represented as a large hollow sculpture in the gallery and loose cardboard boxes represent the 'ore' that has been extracted from inside.

The public are invited to move, stack, connect and build with this ore while occupying and considering the empty

space left behind. The exhibition also explores displacement: of an idea, of a material. Cardboard boxes are the perfect material for expressing a thing displaced, these connect together with magnets.

Jenny is the director of architectural design practice Craftedspace.

See the Hollow website for more details: hollow.info