



PROM



**Human Trafficking
Women in Computing
The Dearth is Great
An Eye for Beauty
The Sands of Time**



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DRAMATIC BEGINNINGS

It's been a challenging start to the year for us in Aber with unprecedented storms experienced in January and February that damaged the Prom. We've been fortunate that, through exceptional contingency planning and a tremendous contribution by our staff and other agencies, all our students have stayed warm, dry and well-informed – even though about 150 'evacuees' had to be moved up to the Penglais campus overnight at one point. Our buildings, some minor flooding and a few broken windows apart, are not extensively damaged. You will be very pleased to know that, despite the ferocious waves and the countless kicks of our students and alumni, the Bar is still standing. Sadly, one of the famous shelters where so many of us have sat and watched the waves hasn't fared so well. Many thanks to all those alumni and supporters who have sent messages of support. We are delighted to report that Aber is fully open for business and much of the restoration work will be completed by Easter.

The Old College, in particular, survived the gales and stormy seas with only a few slates lost. However, it has had a more chequered history just lately – and anyone approaching the Old College on the evening of 17 October would have been forgiven for thinking something had gone very wrong. The building was bathed in blue light and liberally festooned with 'scene of crime' tape and Heddlu/Police signs – all that was missing (thankfully) was the outline of a body on the pavement outside... But surely all those people arriving were far too well dressed and cheerful to be attending a police station or reporting a crime? Even in Aberystwyth?

Of course, as you'll have figured out by now, we were all gathering for the première of *Y Gwyll/Hinterland*, the stunning new television detective series

which has now completed its run with S4C in Welsh and the BBC in its English version.

The University was honoured to be hosting the launch event, which was attended by a range of industry luminaries, not least our recent Honorary Fellow, Ian Jones, who introduced the screening of the first episode. I can say with confidence that *Y Gwyll/Hinterland* is putting Aber and west Wales on the map in a way it's never been before. While the human stars are suitably brilliant, the producers from our partner Fiction Factory are particularly to be congratulated in capturing our fabulous landscapes and bringing the charisma of Aber town to the screen – this is a place with personality, and to some extent it steals the show.

Our Marketing colleagues are now cheerfully wrestling with the challenge of how we combine our usual portrayal of Aberystwyth as a very safe place to study, with a body count from the TV series roughly on a par with the complete cases of Sherlock Holmes. We really are the safest University in England and Wales (Complete University Guide 2013), or even in the world (International Student Barometer 2012) – but if I was a prospective student in my late teens with an eye on all that's edgy and cool, the *Y Gwyll/Hinterland* effect would definitely have me reaching for my UCAS form and adding Aber.

Glitz and glamour (and buckets of blood) apart, filming the series brought a very definite positive impact to us in the University, because so many of our students in Theatre, Film and Television Studies, coincidentally celebrating its 40th birthday this year, were fortunate to have placements on the production. They talk eloquently about the positive impact this has had on their employability, and the production team have been wonderful in engaging with the students and in

praising their efforts and contribution. So this has been a terrific relationship all round. It was also excellent to see the mansion at Gogerddan (which some of you will recall we very nearly lost after the floods in the summer of 2012) making many appearances in the series – you won't necessarily recognise it, but take a very close look at the internal shots of the police station...

In fact, our Estate and our buildings have been a much more general focus of activity this past year. Those of you who might have some rather sad recent memories of Llanbadarn, following the demolition of the halls of residence and the withdrawal of most facilities and services, are welcome to revisit following our £3.5m million investment in five buildings over the summer. Llanbadarn now provides a new academic home for the Institute of Management, Law and Information Science, along with Blas Padarn, possibly the restaurant and coffee shop with the best views in Wales (which is open to the public, by the way). We've also invested £640,000 in refurbishment of the teaching and learning spaces on the Penglais Campus, as the first part of a series of planned works to transform our labs, lecture theatres and seminar rooms. We're determined to show how highly we value teaching and the student experience, and that must be manifested in developing places and spaces our students and staff will be proud to work in. And to end where we began, on the Prom at the Old College, our feasibility study has now provided a hugely exciting series of options for future development. We hope before long to share with alumni our plans for a thriving Postgraduate Centre; much-needed accommodation for key workers; and an art gallery, shop and coffee shop to appeal to residents and visitors to the town. I know you'll want to be part of this – even after the 'scene of crime' tape, and the storm damage, have gone.



**Professor April McMahon,
Vice-Chancellor**



ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY WINS IN THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION AWARDS 2013

IBERS won the Outstanding Contribution to Innovation and Technology category award at a glittering ceremony held in November in London and attended by over 1,000 guests including government ministers and university staff.

The University's winning entry focused on the breeding and development of High Sugar Grasses (AberHSG) by scientists at IBERS, and Aberystwyth is also a member of Welsh Crucible which won the award for the Outstanding Contribution to Leadership Development.

The Awards represent a unique and high-profile opportunity to celebrate the excellence and achievements of UK Higher Education Institutions and the two core pursuits of higher education: teaching and research.

The winning combination of excellence in 'challenge-led' and interdisciplinary research and a strong entrepreneurial culture is behind the successful plant-breeding programme at IBERS.

The researchers honoured with this year's award developed new strains of grasses that can make beef, lamb and dairy farming more productive and more environmentally friendly.

Aber High Sugar Grasses, developed through traditional breeding techniques to have increased sugar levels, allow cattle and sheep to use more protein from the grass. Tests show that this increases the production of meat and milk by 24 per cent while reducing emissions of methane, a greenhouse gas, and other pollutants by up to 20 per cent.

Marketed through a partnership with seed company Germinal Holdings, varieties of the grasses now account for some 175,000 hectares of UK grassland. Supermarkets Asda and Sainsbury's, which promote the grasses on their farms, estimate that their use has cut carbon dioxide emissions by 186,000 tonnes a year and increased profitability by £10 million a year.

Some varieties also provide sugar for conversion into



Members of the IBERS team celebrate at the 2013 Times Higher Education Awards

bioethanol, a source of renewable energy.

Awards judge Chris Cobb, chief operating officer and secretary of the University of London, said Aberystwyth's innovations won out against an excellent field. "The combined impact on food production and the environment makes this bid doubly compelling and a worthy winner."

Aberystwyth is also a member of the Welsh Crucible, which won the award for Outstanding Contribution to Leadership Development for its 'game-changing' efforts to develop future research leaders for Wales.

The Welsh Crucible is run by the St David's Day Group – Aberystwyth University, Bangor University, Cardiff University, Swansea University and the University of South Wales – and is supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales.

Mark Pegg, chief executive of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education and a member of the judging panel, said: "Feedback is overwhelmingly positive, with game-changing impacts on attitudes and behaviours."

DEBATING ON THE WORLD STAGE

Roberto Sarrionandia and Ollie Newlan of the Debating Society took some notable scalps at the World Universities Debating Championships held in Berlin.

Duelling against teams from some of the world's leading academic institutions, the pair defeated the London School of Economics and Harvard as they argued their way into the last sixteen.

After nine days of intense debate, they finished in 11th place over all, having progressed further than Yale, Princeton, Cambridge B, Durham, University College Cork, Stanford, Bristol, and McGill University.

Full story: www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/archive/2013/02/title-126959-en.html

PSYCHOLOGY SUCCESS

The Department of Psychology has been awarded national accreditation by the British Psychological Society, the internationally recognised learned society responsible for ensuring standards of quality within the subject. This accreditation shows that students receive the best training in psychology and will graduate with the right foundations for job prospects and a successful future.

Set up only five years ago, the Department has already achieved top place in the National Student Satisfaction Survey.

Full story www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/archive/2013/06/title-136726-en.html



Image: Gareth Hall

MAJOR INVESTMENT IN ACADEMIC FACILITIES

Blas Padarn, with its panoramic views across Llanbadarn and the lower Rheidol Valley, provides a beautiful informal study space and restaurant on campus.



The University's programme of investment has included £3.5m for the Llanbadarn Campus, and after months of preparation and renovation, the campus is now the new home for the Institute of Management, Law and Information Science (IMLIS), hosting the departments of Law and Criminology, Information Studies and the School of Management and Business.

Llanbadarn Centre is set in beautiful grounds with plenty of pedestrian areas, green spaces and parking. The refurbished buildings are accessible, bright and vibrant. Inside, each has been reconfigured, refreshed and re-equipped with state-of-the-art teaching rooms, non-traditional teaching spaces, meeting rooms, social areas and IT facilities, ensuring they meet modern learning and professional development needs.

There is also a dedicated library based in the Thomas Parry building, stocked with all the necessary textbooks, journals,

and learning support material, as well as full access to the latest electronic resources.

In conjunction with the investment in teaching, learning and research facilities on Llanbadarn, Aberystwyth is also undertaking a rolling programme of refurbishment and redecoration of teaching rooms, the first phase having been completed over the summer 2013 in the Hugh Owen Building on Penglais Campus.

This initial investment, worth £640,000, has provided for improved teaching technology systems, energy efficient lighting, new writing and projection surfaces, hearing induction loops, wireless coverage, furniture, flooring and window coverings for each room. As well as the latest in technological teaching equipment, rooms have been refurbished to allow for a variety of layouts accommodating different teaching and learning styles, with vibrant colour schemes adding the finishing touch.

JANUARY STORMS

The New Year in Aber started dramatically with one of the most violent storm and tidal surge combinations for many decades pounding the seafront mercilessly. The emergency services and Met Office issued warnings that during the high tide periods there was significant danger to property and lives. Images of the terrifying waves made news stories around the globe, and at the University, emergency procedures were implemented. On two occasions the seafront halls and private accommodation were evacuated with students moved up the hill to Penglais, where staff, the Students' Union and volunteers all made a huge effort to ensure that everyone affected was warm, well-fed and had a bed for the night.

Happily no-one was hurt (although one or two got rather wet) and the damage to the buildings along the seafront was not severe. The Prom, however, did not come off so lightly, with paving slabs, benches and lamp-posts thrown around and smashed, and the whole covered in a thick layer of shingle, sand and stones. The public shelter at the north end of the Prom suffered significant damage before the sea breached the wall below it and washed away the foundations, leaving



a gaping hole into which the shelter subsided on to the foundations of a Victorian bath-house below.

The University received countless messages of concern and support from alumni around the world, underlining once again the great affection for Aber from its extended community. Local (and some not so local) people turned out the following week at the invitation of Ceredigion County Council to help shovel and sweep some of the sand back on to the beach, making a physical demonstration of their determination to help restore one of the great assets of Aberystwyth.

With the backing of the extended Aber community, town, gown and alumni, Aber has bounced back and we are already welcoming Spring visitors.

NEW STUDENT RESIDENCES ON FFERM PENGLAIS

As part of a major investment programme at Aberystwyth, the University is currently building new student accommodation on Fferm Penglais which will offer the very latest in purpose-built residences for 1000 students. Individual rooms will be bigger than anything the University has offered before and the development includes 100 studio flats specifically designed for postgraduate students.

Located next to the Pentre Jane Morgan student village, the new development is situated conveniently close to the Penglais Campus. The new facilities will offer plenty of space for living and studying and will be equipped with hard-wired and Wi-Fi internet access. Inspired by the landscape and architecture of rural Wales, the development features a series of two and three storey buildings with flats for six or eight students living in self-catered accommodation.

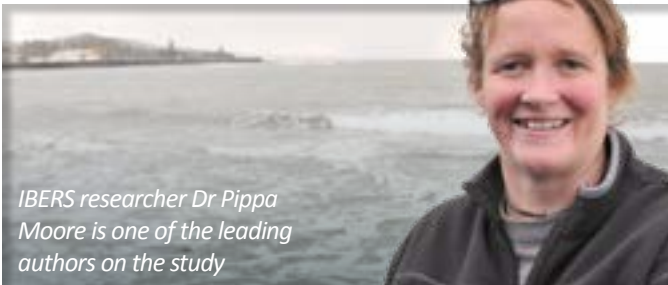
A central hub will also provide a range of social, learning and living functions including communal space for clubs and societies, computing and study facilities, launderettes and bike stores, along with a new grass sports pitch.



Opening to residents at the beginning of the 2014 academic year, Fferm Penglais will become the focus for the Welsh-speaking student community currently accommodated in Pantycelyn, giving them the opportunity to enjoy the most modern student residential facilities available in Aberystwyth.

Take a virtual tour of the new development:
www.aber.ac.uk/en/university/future/residence-project

TRUE SCALE OF OCEAN WARMING REVEALED



IBERS researcher Dr Pippa Moore is one of the leading authors on the study

A three-year global research project has shown that warming oceans are causing marine species to change breeding times and shift homes with expected substantial consequences for the broader marine landscape.

Widespread systemic shifts in measures such as distribution of species and phenology – the timing of nature's calendar – have been revealed on a scale comparable to or greater than those observed on land.

Full story: www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/archive/2013/08/title-139151-en.html

THE SAFEST PLACE TO STUDY

Aberystwyth has been ranked as the safest University in Wales and England to study following a report published by the Complete University Guide.

Compiled from official police data, the ranking gives the clearest picture possible of the crime rates for almost 120 universities in England and Wales, with Aberystwyth having the lowest incidence of student-relevant crime within three miles of campus.

Full story: www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/archive/2013/07/title-138240-en.html

CARE-LEAVER SUPPORT RECOGNISED



Buttle UK, the largest UK charity providing support for children and young people living in poverty, has given Aber a glowing report, recognising that the University's support structures meet and exceed the needs of care-leavers. Aber was first recognised for its work in this area in 2008 with the award of a Buttle UK Quality Mark, and the new report follows a visit from Chair of Trustees, David Anderson, in May 2013.

Full story: www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/archive/2013/05/title-130740-en.html

INNOVATION AND DIFFUSION CAMPUS



Combined investment from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and Aberystwyth University, expected to total in the region of £35m, will bring a new UK Innovation and Research Campus to the existing Gogerddan campus just outside Aberystwyth.

The Aberystwyth Innovation and Diffusion Campus (AIDC) will bring great benefit to the economy and society, from the local to the global, by harnessing Aberystwyth's unique natural resources of people and place and its interdisciplinary capabilities.

Building on the research and academic strengths found at IBERS, the AIDC will become a cutting-edge facility to enable UK expertise in agricultural science and technology to achieve world-leading status. Work will focus on food and renewable energy and forms a key part of the Agri-Technology Strategy launched by the Ministry for University and Science in 2013.

New infrastructure and facilities will be developed to attract companies and researchers interested in creating

commercially viable new products, based on modern approaches to plant breeding. Researchers across the University and businesses will be able to work together to realise the potential of commercially viable ideas, addressing international concerns around the future of food security and boosting the UK economy.

Of the total amount invested, up to £2.5m is earmarked to develop the Pwllpeiran Upland Research Centre near Aberystwyth, a unique facility which will concentrate on enhancing and improving upland agriculture through research, training and development.

Pwllpeiran has been a research centre since the 1930s, working to improve the viability of farming uplands. These uplands in Wales encompass 80,000 hectares, and this natural resource provides essential services including water, food, fuel, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitats, biodiversity havens, flood alleviation and recreational space.

The challenges of food security, greenhouse gas reduction and protection of biodiversity require better use of the uplands and the development of new plants and animal systems to enable achievement of government targets. There is a need for innovative, science-driven approaches to meet these challenges.

Professor Wayne Powell, Director of IBERS said: "This investment is a vote of confidence in the work we do here at IBERS, and will enable us to build on the heritage of this site and to further enhance our position as global leaders in translational agricultural research.

"Agriculture is the cornerstone of some of the major challenges facing society in the 21st century, and our vision is to convert these grand challenges of food, water and energy security into sustainable and prosperous opportunities for society, recognising that innovation in agriculture will play a critical role in fostering a knowledge based bio-economy."

Work on the new Aberystwyth Innovation and Diffusion Campus is expected to commence in 2014.

FIRST COMMUNITY DAY A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

More than 400 visitors took advantage of an open invitation and a warm welcome to the University's first community open day, Access All Areas, on Saturday 22 June 2013.

Staff from all aspects of the University put on a wide variety of activities, exhibitions and demonstrations to highlight the exciting work taking place at the University, with the individuals involved present to offer detailed knowledge and answer questions.

The BeachLab event at the Bandstand also drew a large crowd of families and individuals fascinated by the Computer Science Department's robots, and particularly by the robotic orchestra, made up with discarded instruments and controlled by two tiny Raspberry Pi computers.

Many also took advantage of a guided tour of the National Plant Phenomics Centre, a world-leading research greenhouse facility located on the Gogerddan campus, where all aspects of the growing conditions can be minutely controlled to mimic any natural environment.

Other activities included live music, micro-classes, tours, experiments, sports taster sessions, culinary demonstrations, face painting and web games.

The Arts Centre's free annual music festival, MidMad, finished the day in fine style, with a total of 3000 local residents and music lovers enjoying free live music on the MidMad stage on the Chapel Court. Bands performing included The Bhagdaddies, PigBag and Sound Assembly, whilst the Bandslam competition for local bands was won by Arms Like Legs.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Myths and the Realities | *Words by Ryszard Piotrowicz*

In November 1989 the Berlin Wall fell, and few outside the East German government saw beyond the immediate joy of the occasion. It was an occasion for celebrations.

A quarter of a century later we live with the consequences (good and bad) of that great event.

The immediate and obvious benefits for the peoples of Eastern Europe of course were the freedom to travel, the chance to make real money (there was no hard currency in Eastern Europe, only hard toilet paper) and the right to elect their own governments. The disadvantages and the risks of change were not

so readily anticipated: mass unemployment and impoverishment, and immense social upheaval as hundreds of thousands migrated from east to west in search of a decent living. Even the strongest economies in the east, Poland being the best example, still have to cope with real poverty. Some, like Moldova – officially the poorest country in Europe – seem to offer no hope at all.

It is that dire combination – poverty and lack of hope or perspectives for the future – that has exposed many young people to the risk of human trafficking.



Trafficking in human beings (THB) is a most serious crime. It is a process tantamount to enslavement, where people are moved between countries, and often within the same country, to be illegally exploited by others, with vast profits made by all except the victims.

There are many myths about trafficking; often arising out of that enforced migration from Eastern Europe, but I want to explain some of the realities, to expose what really happens when a person is trafficked.

MYTH ONE:

Victims are often not really victims because “they know what they are getting into”.

This shows a complete failure to understand the nature of THB. Trafficking entails the establishment of control over another person, whether by force or deception or some other means, for the purpose of exploiting them. It is a process: anyone who is knowingly involved is a trafficker – from the person at the dodgy recruitment agency promising big jobs in the west, to the hotel owner who allows the victims to be locked up overnight on their premises whilst in transit, knowing that the victims are going to be exploited, to the bar-owner who buys the girl for enforced prostitution, or the drug dealer who locks up the teenage boy and forces him to work 16 hours a day cultivating cannabis. Each of them is a trafficker, each has played a role in the exploitation of the victim and each has benefited from that exploitation.

Once you understand that THB is a *process*, involving often several perpetrators and very diverse methods of recruitment and control, it should be pretty clear that you cannot consent to be trafficked: THB by definition means the exploitation of someone (including the deprivation of their liberty and the use of physical, sexual and psychological violence to maintain control). Victims may *appear* to have consented but that is because they did not know what they were consenting to: there are plenty of cases of young women who knew they were going to other countries to work as prostitutes, who appeared to consent because they believed they would choose their clients and keep their earnings. Whatever you think about prostitution, it is not in itself THB. The reality, however, is one to which no person would ever consent – being forced to work for little or nothing, where all the money earned goes to pay off spurious debts for accommodation and food, in which the victims are not allowed to leave the premises, where discipline is enforced (and dissent punished) with extreme violence, and where they are blackmailed with threats to inform their families about what they are doing. No one consents to that.

MYTH TWO:

Trafficking is just about sexual exploitation.

For sure, THB is often for sexual exploitation – usually of women and children. This happens, and it happens a lot. But people are trafficked for many other kinds of exploitation: young Vietnamese are trafficked to the UK for forced labour (for example in cannabis cultivation). Men are trafficked to

the UK (including from other EU countries) to work in the agriculture sector. Children are trafficked for forced begging – Romania is a major source country for this. The children are often kept in dire conditions and are forced to hand over all the cash they beg. There are cases of people being trafficked for their body parts, and for forced marriage (this often as a means to gain control over a woman before exploiting her through prostitution).

MYTH THREE:

THB is always from Eastern to Western Europe.

This has been the pattern in Europe in the past, particularly because of the social upheaval and economic collapse in Eastern Europe after the demise of communism. In reality, THB happens throughout the world: from south to north, east to west and within continents. The list is almost endless. Some countries are known source countries (where the victims are recruited – usually poorer countries); some are transit states (where exploitation also occurs), then there are the destination countries (usually, but not always, wealthier countries). The UK is very much a destination country.

THB takes place within countries too. The recent scandals over the sexual exploitation of teenage girls by adult males in the north of England involved the trafficking of the victims.

“Victims of trafficking in human beings are everywhere, though they are not always visible...”

MYTH FOUR:

Trafficking and smuggling of human beings are the same thing.

They are not. THB involves the exploitation of the victim, without their consent. People smuggling, by contrast, occurs with the consent of the person being taken across international borders without the knowledge of the authorities. People pay to be smuggled into another country because it is probably the only way they can get in. It is a constant issue on the southern frontier of the USA, a target for poorer people throughout Latin America who see the USA as a place where they have a chance to get on in life. But when someone is smuggled, they are free to go once they reach their destination. They are willing participants. A trafficked person may believe that they are willing participants because they have been deceived about what will happen to them at the end. And some people, who believe they are being smuggled, end up being trafficked. There is sometimes a very fine line between the two.

MYTH FIVE:

THB is a violation of human rights.

You would think, when you read about the physical and sexual exploitation of trafficked people that takes place, that serious human rights violations are happening. But THB is primarily a private criminal enterprise. If I punch your nose or steal your wallet, I commit a criminal offence against you but I do not violate your human rights: human rights are obligations owed by the State towards those in their jurisdiction; they redress the imbalance of power between the State and the individual. It is only where the State is involved that THB becomes a human rights issue. So, for instance, where the State becomes aware that someone has been trafficked or is at risk of being trafficked, it has a positive obligation to take steps to protect them. That duty is based on the State's human rights obligation to prevent slavery, servitude or forced labour. The State may also have a human rights obligation to allow a foreign person to stay in its territory if, by forcing them to go home, they are exposed to the risk of being trafficked.

So, there is a human rights *dimension* to THB. I am not just playing with words here: there are significant practical ramifications. State authorities need to know where the criminal law applies and where human rights law applies, so that they can as effectively as possible deploy their resources and ensure that their domestic legal regimes are as well

drafted as possible to address the threat of THB. This is much more important than the easy, and lazy, rhetoric of calling something a human rights violation when it is not.

MYTH SIX:

THB has nothing to do with me.

Actually, it does. Most decent people, if they see someone injured in the road, will try to help, even if all they can do is call an ambulance. Victims of THB are everywhere, though they are not always visible. They might be cleaning the hotel room you are staying in; they might be sitting next to you on your flight back to the UK – with someone waiting at the other side of passport control to confiscate their passport and take them off to a brothel in Cardiff or London. If you think someone is at risk, you have a choice: you can turn a blind eye and get on with your comfortable life, or you can inform the police. 📌

Ryszard Piotrowicz is Professor of Law at the Department of Law and Criminology. He is a member of GRETA (Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings) and a member of the European Commission's Group of Experts on Trafficking in Human Beings.



Image: Seb Balcombe



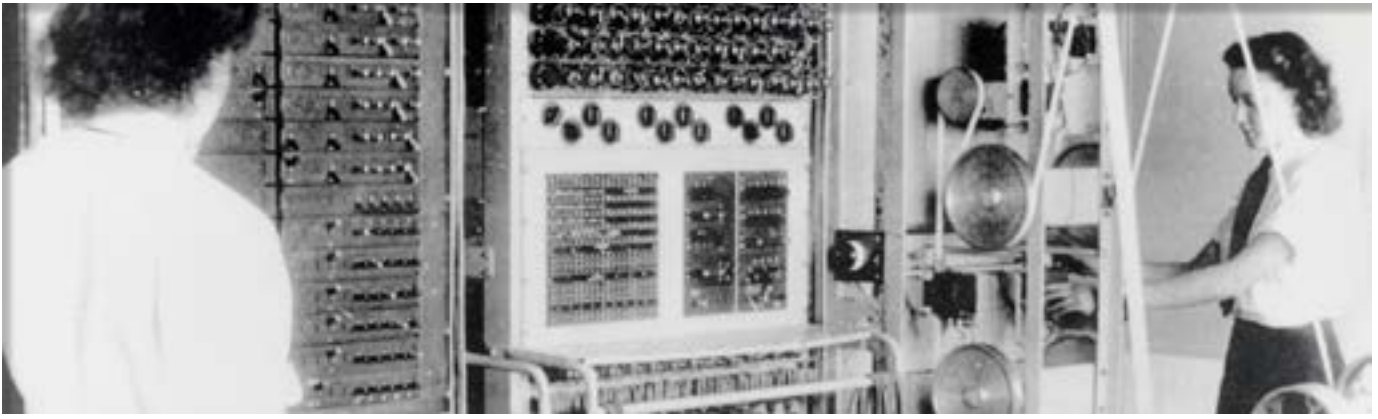


The early years of computing were full of women. It's estimated that over 80% of the staff at Bletchley Park during the war were women, operating some of the world's first computational machines, and contributing to the foundations of British computing. Early computing courses attracted fairly equal numbers of men and women students. Indeed, the first meaning of the word 'computer' was to refer to someone - usually a woman - performing routine sums. Sometime around the 1970s, this changed. Computing became a discipline and indeed a profession with a gender problem. Now, women number about 15% of the technical workforce, and there is a clear 'leaky pipeline' with women choosing to drop out at each stage of educational progression.

WOMEN IN COMPUTING:

*the problem, why we should be
bothered, and what we should be
doing about it*

Words by Hannah Dee



Why this is happening is hard to determine: it happens in most western countries, but less so in other parts of the world. Maybe women just aren't interested in computers. Or maybe there's something that's putting women off – for example, maybe there's something about school computing that makes women think computing is not for them. Or maybe there's a broader image problem.

When you ask children to draw a picture of a computer scientist, they usually draw a guy, wearing glasses, probably with spots, hunched over a keyboard. If you do an image search for 'computer scientist', the first page is full of pictures of stereotypical nerds - the ones for 'programmer' are just the same. Whatever we want to say about the discipline and the profession, one thing is clear, and that's that computing has an image problem.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SCHOOLS?

There's been a crisis in school computing which came to a head last year with the Royal Society calling for a major reform of the technical curriculum in their publication *Shut down or restart?*. The problem was that the nation's schoolkids simply don't know what computer science is – in schools, students study information and communications technology (ICT), which involves spreadsheets, word processing, and maybe some databases or web design. Computer science – systems, programming, networks, algorithms – doesn't get a mention. In universities we see this at interview every year, and in computing departments across the UK there are freshers wondering what they've let themselves in for. This isn't a problem that's unique to computing (most law students, for example, haven't studied law before they get to university), but coupled with our image problem it has major implications, particularly in terms of gender.

In 2012, the number of women choosing to do computing at A-level fell to 297 (that's 297 women across the whole of the UK - there were just 38 women A-level computing students in Wales). Computing in the broadest sense has been falling across the board though, not just with women: ICT A-level numbers dropped 34% between 2003 and 2012, and computing A-level dropped 60% in the same period. At university the gender imbalance from A-level continues. In Computer Science at Aberystwyth, we're pretty much average in terms of student gender ratio - hovering between 10 and 15 percent.

So we've got a problem: computing in schools is not actually

computing, and the general image problem of the subject as a solo pursuit dominated by guys means that students looking for other careers – creative, social careers - don't think of applying.

COMPUTING CAN BE FUN

I realise that some of my students might disagree, but I firmly believe that computing can be an incredibly rewarding subject. When you're programming, you're quite literally building things out of ideas, and the sense of achievement you can get from getting a tricky piece of code to work is great. When I'm programming, those "Aha!" moments are actually quite common. But computing isn't just programming: there's system design, algorithms, user experience design (making interfaces), software testing, user testing, technical training, technical writing, networking, user support and helpdesk roles, and lots of other careers. And that's before you consider management and analyst roles, further up the business tree. Only a handful of these potential careers have the opportunity to sit in a cubicle on your own writing code: the vast majority are team-based careers, requiring teamwork, creativity and (dare I say it) social skills.

SKILLS GAPS, JOB MARKETS, AND THE POWER OF DIVERSE TEAMS

One of the turning points of the last decade has been recognition from business that diversity is something to be valued. The global management consulting firm, McKinsey, have released a series of reports under the "Women Matter" banner, which show - from a fairly hard-nosed, business perspective - that diverse teams perform better within the business world. As an example, when you compare companies in the top quartile for executive gender diversity against companies with no women on their executive board, those with diverse boards have 41% better return on equity, and 56% better earnings before interest and tax¹. It's important to note that these teams aren't doing better because women are more talented at business; they're performing better because diverse teams behave differently. Monocultures tend to be self-reinforcing: if all your decisions are taken by one sector of the population, then the decision making and management style is going to be similar. What diverse boards provide is a range of different backgrounds and management styles, all engaging in the business process, and when this happens, McKinsey show that the resultant

business process is more effective.

There are other arguments for diversity in the workplace: in professions with heavy gender imbalances, the minority gender generally has a more difficult time. Male nurses take more sick days, female accountants are more likely to register on the anxiety and depression scales². There's a term - *sex role spillover* - for the way in which unrelated aspects of gender roles seep into a profession when that profession has a major gender imbalance. There's no need for computing system administrators to be interested in beer and trains: having unrelated but common interests doesn't make you a better sysadmin (although it may make it easier to chat with colleagues).

There's also a skills shortage in certain IT roles. Neelie Kroes, the EU commissioner for the digital agenda (and EU vice president) has recently proposed grand coalitions to address technical skills gaps. Skills gaps aren't uniform across the entire ICT/computing field, but exist in most sub-domains; for example, the UK's National Audit Office has recently said that unless recruitment to computing courses increases dramatically we face a 20 year wait for enough skilled professionals in the cyber security domain.

So diverse teams perform better, and there are lots of jobs (in some parts of the profession, at least). What are we doing to try and encourage girls to enter computing? Could we do more? What can be done to help?

GIRL GEEKS AND CODER CHICKS

Computing now pervades our lives. Most of us have computers in our pockets that are far more powerful than the computers used on the space shuttle; there's more processing power in some washing machines than was available to the computing pioneers of the sixties. Social networking has taken off to such an extent that now the gender ratio of computer users, gamers, and purchasers is pretty much equal: indeed the largest growing demographic in computer games is my own (35-55 year old women). So women are active consumers of technology, we're just not getting involved as creators.

Organisations and events targeted at women exist to try and break this pattern. These can be linked to professional societies, like BCSWomen (the British Computer Society's group for women in technology). Or they can be grassroots organisations, like Girl Geek Dinners, who put on talks and dinners around the world for women. There are also organisations aimed at particular areas within computing, like MzTek which targets women interested in computing and art, or CAS #include (Computers At School) which works to make computing in schools more inclusive. Dr Reena Pau, a member of CAS #include, says "we want to offer opportunities for as many students as possible to be able to experience computing - whilst of course realising it will not

be for everyone!" These organisations provide a space for women to meet and network, but they also provide support and mentoring opportunities.

Within Aberystwyth there's a group called Aber Comp Sci Ladies, started by Phoebe Murphy, who says she started it "to try and help the women in the department feel a bit less isolated and to help us support each other" (Phoebe's an undergraduate, now in her industrial year at Blackberry). School computing is being rejuvenated, by organisations like CAS, and a lot of the big companies are coming on board to help out (Microsoft, Google and IBM have all been sponsors of some of the initiatives I've mentioned). Right now, one of the really big issues is training enough teachers to deliver the new curriculum.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION?

- Encourage children in creative computing – things like the programming language Scratch (<http://scratch.mit.edu>) introduce programming concepts to children from the age of about 7.
- I've written a family programming day for Android phones, where we've had 6-year old girls making their first app (just a farmyard noises app, but everyone has to start somewhere!); it's free online at www.hannahdee.eu/appinventor - you could get hold of the materials and give it a go yourselves.
- More technical people could help out in schools - www.computingplusplus.org links programmers with schools across the UK.
- To find out more, the book *Little Miss Geek* by Belinda Parmar is a great introduction to this general area, and *Delusions of Gender* by Cordelia Fine is a more academic (but still readable) take on gender differences across the board.

In the words of the late Karen Spärck Jones "Computing's too important to be left to men". 🐣



Dr Hannah Dee is a lecturer in computer science at Aberystwyth, who does research into computer vision and teaches web programming. She's also on the national committee for BCSWomen, and runs the BCSWomen Lovelace Colloquium, the UK's main event for women undergraduates. She's a Science Champion on the GOWS (Get On With Science) project, and is involved in programming workshops for children and their parents in Wales and across the UK.

¹ www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/dotcom/client_service/Organization/PDFs/Women_matter_oct2010_english.ashx McKinsey, Women Matter at the top of corporations, 2010.

² [dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536\(01\)00044-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(01)00044-2) Olga Evans, Andrew Steptoe, The contribution of gender-role orientation, work factors and home stressors to psychological well-being and sickness absence in male- and female-dominated occupational groups, *Social Science & Medicine*, Volume 54, Issue 4, February 2002, Pages 481-492.

GRAPHENE BREAKTHROUGH

Materials physicists at Aber led by Professor Andrew Evans have discovered a new method for producing graphene, a single layer of carbon atoms bonded together in a similar way to graphite.

However, it has material properties very different and superior to graphite including amazing optical and electrical properties.

Experiments have demonstrated that graphene is one of the strongest known materials, many times stronger than other materials and much faster and lighter than other materials in electronics such as silicon. It is a remarkably sensitive gas detector, being able to sense single molecules and is one of the best conductors of heat and electricity, whilst also being almost transparent to visible light.

Professor Andrew Evans, Director of IMAPS, who headed up the research team said: "Graphene will be to the 21st century what plastic and silicon were to the 20th, being a material that can be used in diverse number of ways which will create faster, thinner, more flexible and cheaper devices."

One of the main challenges in developing commercial graphene is to find economic ways of producing large areas of high quality graphene that can then be processed into small, light and efficient devices.

Equipment developed at Aberystwyth has enabled the team to grow sheets of graphene by controlling the exchange of carbon from the surface of a diamond into a perfect crystal of graphene. The diamond is first treated with a few layers of iron that act as a catalyst, and it is then heated to initiate the exchange.

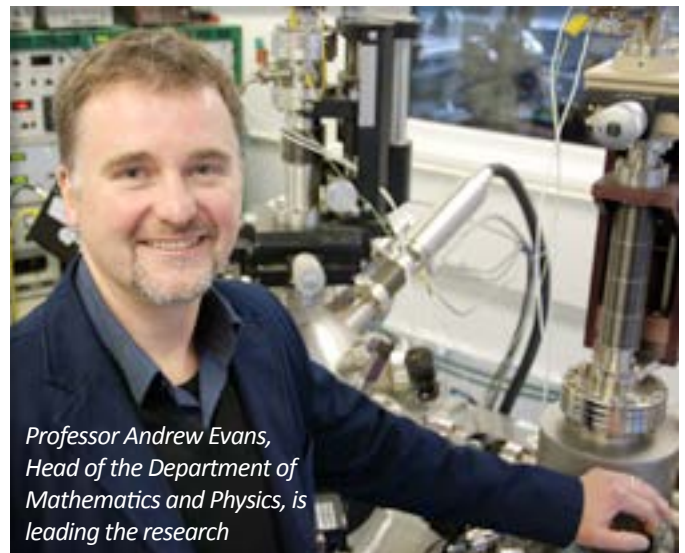
They have shown that it is possible to halt the process at a single graphene layer and then carry on to two, three, four or more layers. Compared with other methods for preparing graphene, this new process can be performed with a lower fabrication temperature and offers a larger area of crystalline quality.

Working in collaboration with colleagues at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, Norway and at MaxLab in Lund, Sweden, they have shown that it is also possible to turn silicon carbide into graphene using the same method and the same catalyst, in this case reducing the temperature needed from over 1000C to a more industrially realistic 600C.

The team has now filed an international patent application for this novel method of making graphene.

This research work was funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and carried out within the Centre for Advanced Functional Materials and Devices, a HEFCW-funded research and enterprise partnership between Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities.

The full paper is available online at www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0008622312005696



Professor Andrew Evans, Head of the Department of Mathematics and Physics, is leading the research

COMEDY NIGHTS

A bit of Aber came to central London, when Comedy Works on the Thames returned for a third outing on 13 November 2013 aboard the Tattershall Castle, a refurbished paddle steamer permanently moored opposite the London Eye. Around 100 alumni enjoyed a fantastic night from four of the UK's rising stand up stars. Event organiser Steve Pickup said, "It is great to see such strong support for this – it is a hugely fun event to be part of and an ideal opportunity for our alumni in London to catch up and have a few laughs together."

Comedy Works on the Thames will return in 2014 and has recently made its debut in Cardiff!

RIGHTS OF THE ELDERLY

Researchers from the Centre for the Study of Ageing, Abuse and Neglect are exploring barriers to accessing justice for older victims of domestic abuse.

Every year it is estimated that more than 500,000 older people experience some sort of abuse in the UK.

In a bid to tackle elder abuse as a form of domestic abuse, academics are examining a range of factors that may influence whether older victims choose to access criminal or civil justice processes.



Left to right: Rebecca Boaler, Jeremy Newman and Sarah Wydall from the Centre for the Study of Ageing, Abuse and Neglect.

DESERT EYE TEST



Dr Stephen Pugh

Dr Stephen Pugh, a space scientist from the Institute of Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science, travelled to the Atacama Desert in Chile for a seven day field trial as part of the continuing preparation for the 2018 ExoMars mission to Mars.

Dr Pugh works on the ExoMars Panoramic Camera Instrument (PanCam) which will be the science 'eyes' for the mission. PanCam features a novel colour correction system to ensure that images sent back to earth truly represent the colours found on Mars.

BIG CAT DISCOVERY

Max Blake, an Aber PhD student, rediscovered a big cat in a storeroom at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery.



Max Blake, who discovered the specimen.

Analysis of the animal's skeleton and skin showed it to be a Canadian lynx which had been shot in Devon in the early 1900s, making it the earliest example of an alien big cat at large in the UK countryside. The discovery established that feral big cats may have lived wild in the UK much earlier than the introduction of the 1976 Wild Animals Act, following which many exotic pets are believed to have been released.

Link to web story www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/archive/2013/04/title-129638-en.html

PENGLAIS CAMPUS BIOBLITZ

Pipped to the World Record by driving rain and freezing winds



At 3.30 am on 11 May 2013 the last few stragglers from the May Ball were wending their weary ways home. At the same time a group of twenty or so bat enthusiasts were just starting their day by assembling outside the entrance to Penglais Campus. These were the *avant-garde* of Bioblitz. The brave few set off, ultra-sound detectors in hand, for two hours and returned still full of enthusiasm having not heard a squeak! Yes the weather on Penglais Campus for Bioblitz was truly horrible; cold, wet, even hailing at times, but that did not stop more than 200 enthusiasts from turning up through the day. A whole host of experts from many local interest groups helped lead sessions for the general public that covered everything from microbes to man. The entire event took place over a frantic 24 hour period from midnight on Friday night to midnight on Saturday, with a handful of hardened fruit-bats staying awake throughout the entire night and day. When the dust finally settled on Bioblitz it was clear that our total of 2407 species was tantalizingly close to beating the unofficial world record by just 112 species. Our finds included: 1062 microbes, 450 higher plants, 14 mammals, 40 birds, 24 insects, 2 reptiles, 3 amphibians and 7 fish, the highlights being new records for spiders and centipedes. For those more attracted to the cute and cuddly we also managed to see badgers, rabbits and squirrels, in spite of the dreadful weather and the May Ball. Finally, as the event was approaching its closing hours, the hardy bat enthusiasts were rewarded by sightings of two species, the Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle, and as we all know – bats are "ultra-sound".

ENGAGING THE WORLD

An interview with the professors of public engagement

Words by John Gilbey

Early in 2013, Aberystwyth University appointed its first Professors of Public Engagement. Nigel Scollan of IBERS has taken the role of 'Professor of Public Engagement with Science' and Richard Marggraf Turley of English and Creative Writing that of 'Professor of Engagement with the Public Imagination'. John Gilbey talked to them about their appointment, the roles and their plans for the future.

In retrospect, it was clear that I could have chosen a better day for our discussion. We met, in the caffeine rich environment of the IBERbach café, on the eve of 'Access All Areas' - Aberystwyth University's major public event for 2013. As we settled at a table, I realised that Nigel and Richard were busy resolving the final details, sorting through mini-bus keys and checking logistics for the morning.

I asked Nigel about the event, and what the reasoning was behind it. "It is the first of its kind in many years for the University. Yes, we have many open days but they are largely targeted towards recruitment and marketing for our degrees. This is about opening up our doors for the public to understand what it is that we do. We will be there to assist and facilitate the overall event and to help our colleagues across both the academic and service departments – many of whom are represented."

Of these varied elements, how much would be specific to the work of Aberystwyth? "A very important example would be what is happening down at the bandstand on the seafront with Computer Science and BeachLab – but equally, if we go the other way up to the Gogerddan campus IBERS will be featuring the new national plant phenomics facility – first of its kind in the UK – a unique resource. Many people drive past and see the new developments, see yet another glasshouse there, and think 'what is that all about?' We know that a lot of people just want to know what is happening in there, and there is a really exciting story which I think the public will be quite amazed to see."

There is clearly more to the role than events such as 'Access All Areas', so I asked Richard whether there is a definition of public engagement. To me, it seemed a very broad term – and I wondered if this was intentional.



Professors Nigel Scollan (left) and Richard Marggraf Turley

“The definition that most universities work with these days is pretty close to the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) definition, which describes it as ‘a two-way process with mutual benefit’. There’s been something of a paradigm shift away from ‘knowledge transfer’, which tended to be one-way in direction – imparting knowledge held centrally outwards. Now the emphasis is more on co-production, dialogue and co-ownership.”

With two Professors of Public Engagement, I wondered whether they would end up competing over the same territory. Are the roles of Professor of Public Engagement with Science and Professor of Engagement with the Public Imagination complementary? Richard is quite convinced that they are. “That’s one of the exciting things: they dovetail.”

Nigel was equally positive, “The synergy has actually been quite remarkable – and that is the important element of the combined roles, looking at how you can bring those two – not extremes, but two significant differences - together for increased impact as a result.”

In terms of Aberystwyth itself, what kicked off the process? What was the vital spark that brought about the appointment of the two Professors of Public Engagement? Richard was refreshingly forthright. “You could say we were slightly ‘off the pace’ in terms of having a fully coordinated strategy, and that’s something Nigel and I have been tasked with: to design an Engagement Strategy that will connect dynamically with the University’s Strategic Plan. Some universities have established PE centres and units, variously constituted – but there’s no ‘one-size fits all’ solution. At any rate, we’re now able to see what other institutions have been doing and look for differentiation – that is, what makes engagement from a base in mid-Wales unique? It’s a great opportunity for us.”

Nigel agreed. “There are many universities in the same position, and this is also an evolution from ‘impact’ to ‘public engagement’. If you think of how universities are assessed in life, which is largely through the Research Excellence Framework (REF), then the big agenda has been impact. The actual metrics around engagement are going to be very important to REF 2020. The universities are very much gearing themselves up to be able to get their strategy in place and build on what they do in the broad arena of public engagement.”

As the discussion grew increasingly complex, Nigel was keen to point out that here, as in much of university life, definitions are important. “What is ‘public’? Because it is wider than running events to talk and listen to people about a particular piece of research. Yes, it includes that – but it also goes through to other groups including the whole commercial business group, including government themselves and policy engagement, it includes working with health authorities and various non-governmental organisations and so on.”

“So it is much wider than just running an event like tomorrow – that is just one aspect of engagement. There really are four or five big areas that we do at various levels of the University - but we don’t package it as such and present it as ‘this is our public engagement strategy’. The word ‘publics’ comes into play to define the range of different audiences that we should be engaging, listening to, collaborating with.”

This was a theme that Richard picked up on. “It’s about

ensuring a return – that deadening language! – to stakeholders and beneficiaries. We’re largely publicly funded bodies and – not all, but a good proportion of – the research conducted here, and much of the time to do it in, relies ultimately on public money. So it’s about properly distributing the benefits of our research, at the same time as drawing on the expertise of our various publics as we conduct that research. Another helpful way of thinking about engagement is to look at how the engagement professors are working closely with Communications, Public Affairs and Events on the one hand and the Research Office on the other – I think that underlines the increasingly public nature of research in a modern institution.”

It was clear that this is an area that Nigel knows well. “The commercialisation of research and enterprise is extremely important, as Richard knows, to my position in the University. That is engagement with business, to explain to them what I do, what my colleagues do, across the University – in our research, in our teaching and learning, in our knowledge exchange and share with them what we do. Because if we don’t share they don’t understand – so we have to build relationships in there to inform them, and from that relationship build a rapport where we build a partnership.”

As the warm Aberystwyth drizzle began to fall on the terrace outside the café, I asked what the triggers were for them in applying for the roles?

Richard was in no doubt. “I can answer that question quite easily, since the ‘public imagination’ aspect immediately appealed to me as a Romanticist. The Romantic poets theorised imagination in terms of social mission. For writers like Keats and Coleridge it was a space that could be inhabited politically. I was also drawn to the new role because, again invoking the Romantics, the imagination is where we construct, and conceivably might change, our relationship with the world. It seemed to me that a lot of what I taught was precisely about this, and now there was an opportunity to put it into practice.”

Nigel described similar motivations. “I feel in many ways what I do in my work is all to do with engagement. In my own research, in what I teach, it is very much to do with putting into practice what engagement is. I’m very passionate about building partnerships, of engaging with people – whether that is public or whether it is private – because only through that engagement and understanding and trust that we can build will we be able to help people to understand the important role that universities play in society. So to be able to take that ethos, and look across the University, and to assist the University in developing that as a strategy to uplift engagement - then I was particularly attracted to that.”

Two academic backgrounds, two sets of perceptions and one evolving vision and strategy. It is going to be very interesting to see what happens next. 📍

John Gilbey is a writer and photographer living and working in Aberystwyth. His work has appeared in the science journal *Nature*, *The Guardian* newspaper, *New Scientist*, *The Times Herald-Tribune*, *Times Higher Education* and a number of other titles.



*Sir Ian McKellen and William Gaunt
in Trevor Nunn's King Lear (2008)*



Photo: Manuel Harlan © Royal Shakespeare Company

‘THE DEARTH IS GREAT’:

Shakespeare's hungry times

*Words by Dr Jayne Elisabeth Archer,
Professor Richard Marggraf Turley
and Professor Howard Thomas*

▮▮ The gods know I speak
this in hunger for bread, not
in thirst for revenge. ▮▮

(Coriolanus, 1.1)

William Shakespeare lived during hungry times.

The Golden Age of Queen Elizabeth I and the early years of her successor James Stuart were designated times of 'dearth'. A series of failed harvests and natural disasters meant that grain, the principal ingredient in the two basic foodstuffs, bread and ale, was scarce. Throughout Europe at the turn of the seventeenth century, food prices soared. Those who sowed, ploughed, reaped and threshed – history's unsung heroes, the agricultural labourers – could not afford the food they produced. A new and particularly grim literary genre emerged in response to these conditions: the 'famine pamphlet'. In lurid detail, authors of famine pamphlets described the lengths to which the hungry were prepared to go in order to quieten their rumbling bellies. According to a pamphlet published in London in 1590, the citizens of Saint Denis, Paris, resorted to eating bread made from peas, oats, acorns, sawdust, and, eventually, the ground-up bones of the dead. Elizabeth and James attempted to contain the crisis with a series of proclamations in which the price, purity and conditions of sale of staples such as grain were carefully monitored. Punishments for those found guilty of violating these measures and for stockpiling foodstuff for their own use or for resale on the 'black market' at inflated prices came hard and fast.

How did Shakespeare respond to his hungry times? From the vantage point of the twenty-first century, we might be forgiven for imagining that the writer of escapist fantasies such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and patriotic celebrations like *Henry V* was largely free from such concerns and sought to offer his audiences a brief but all-important release from the harsh realities of daily life. But playwrights in early modern England were also likely to be living close to the 'breadline'. Many of Shakespeare's most talented fellow dramatists spent long periods living in debtors' prisons. Before the introduction of the first copyright laws in 1662, the author of a play performed on the public stage did not own his (and, before 1660, it was always his) play: he sold it for a one-off payment to the owner of a playing company or playhouse. The purchaser could do with the text what he wished, editing and staging it as he saw fit, commissioning rewrites, changing the ending and perhaps, if the play proved popular, having it printed in a cheap quarto format. With the playhouses closed during summer months as a precaution against plague, the playwrights of early modern England were likely to be as hungry as the poorest members of their audience, the groundlings: knowing where their next literary commission was coming from was essential to a playwright if he was to know where his next meal was coming from.

No one in Elizabethan and Jacobean England became rich writing plays for the public stage – no one, that is, except for Shakespeare himself. He was able to retire to Stratford-upon-Avon in his late forties as one of the largest property owners in his home town. His assets, as revealed in legal documents held in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Stratford-upon-Avon, and the National Archives, Kew, included town houses, over 120 acres of arable land, and interests in the annual profits gleaned from food-producing land and pasture.

How did Shakespeare make his money? The answer is

twofold, and it requires us to challenge cherished ideas of Shakespeare as a timeless genius and reconsider what we think we know about the business of authorship. First, Shakespeare harnessed the financial opportunities presented by purchasing part ownership of the playing companies, and, later, the playhouse, for which he wrote; secondly, using those profits, he speculated in the business of hunger, stockpiling food and purchasing the rights to food-producing land. Over a fifteen-year period, during time of dearth, he purchased and stored grain, malt and barley for resale at inflated prices to neighbours and local tradesmen. Profits were channelled into a programme of land purchase, comprising in 1602 not just bricks and mortar (or, rather, timber and thatch, wattle and daub), but twenty acres of pasture and 107 acres of land suitable for the cultivation of arable crops. In addition, and looking to the longer term, he acquired tithes on local produce, including 'corn, grain, blade, and hay', thereby allowing him to cream off the profits from the manual work of others.

Hunger is, according to a popular Renaissance figure of speech, 'all-devouring'; it is insatiable, never satisfied. Shakespeare wrote in a time of dearth, and he safeguarded himself and his family by remaining astute to the opportunities as well as the responsibilities created by food insecurity. Whilst he sold grain to the hungry in Warwickshire – or, more likely, the thirsty, for Stratford-upon-Avon was home to many brewers – he catered to the appetites of Londoners by writing plays about dearth, responding to it both as the most pressing political issue of his day but also tracing its impact on hearts and minds. But how to represent the absence that is hunger on stage? Echoing the empty bellies of the groundlings, hunger is one of the dominant tropes rumbling throughout the language and imagery of Shakespeare's plays. Hunger tortures and perverts language, turning words in on themselves, obscuring meaning. Hamlet, having just killed Polonius, says that his victim is:

At supper ... Not where he eats, but where he is eaten. A certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet. We fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes, but to one table. That's the end.

(Hamlet, 4.3)

Polonius is not simply dead; according to Hamlet's twisted logic, the former royal advisor is eating and he is being eaten – he, and we, are food being processed and redistributed. Hunger and feeding are, for Hamlet, social levelers: a worm eats the bodies of king and beggar, and the king and the beggar become one body inside a worm. A king has become a beggar: Hamlet's rendering of the food chain enables him to imagine an act of social transformation that was impossible in real life.

In *King Lear*, written following the accession of King James and amid attempts to unite the Crown of Scotland with that of England and Wales, the King does the impossible and becomes a beggar. Lear is cast out of the courts of his two elder daughters Goneril and Regan because they claim they cannot feed his hangers-on and their lands cannot sustain their father's daily hunt. It is the play's self-proclaimed 'bastard', Edmund, who recognises this world as one of 'dearth' and who harnesses the perverted appetites and unnatural natural forces unleashed by Lear's mismanagement of the land and its resources. This mismanagement and its impact on food supply is captured towards the end of the play in the potent image of Lear in a field of 'high-grown' corn, the royal crown replaced by one woven from 'darnel, and ... idle weeds' (*King Lear*, 4.4). Lear's failure to govern his lands has resulted in civil war and foreign invasion. The harvest stands unharvested and choked with weeds including 'darnel', whose psychotoxic properties on entering the food chain resulted in blindness, stupor and madness. The people of Lear's Britain will go hungry, and those who are able to scratch a meal are likely to join their former king in going mad.

Underlying Shakespeare's representation of dearth, its causes and possible remedies, is a realisation that food insecurity has the potential to fuel the emergence of popular dissent and revolutionary, quasi-republican impulses. Overwhelmingly, plays such as *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Coriolanus* suggest that the worst effects of hunger can be ameliorated by careful governance. The latter play, written amid the Midlands food riots of 1607 and 1608, when Shakespeare's own property was in danger, is Shakespeare's most complex and sophisticated analysis of the politics of food security. In the Rome of *Coriolanus*, 'The dearth is great', and civil war (as well as foreign invasion) loom as the hungry plebs protest against the ruling classes, the patricians, who they suspect of hoarding grain for their own use. Senators blame the 'gods' for the famine which enflames the plebs in *Coriolanus*, but, as the citizens are quick to point out, the senators would say that, wouldn't they?

Our own world is marked by food insecurity. In *Coriolanus*' standoff between the ruling classes and the 'mob' are key questions of food policy that are as pressing in the twenty-first century as they were to Shakespeare's contemporaries. How do we feed a growing population when resources are finite and harvests uncertain? Should the price and distribution of food be controlled by legislation, or should they be left to market forces? Should a government store food, knowing that some will starve sooner so that fewer will starve later? The latter question returns us to Shakespeare



Portrait of William Shakespeare, oil on canvas, 1610.
National Portrait Gallery.

himself, the businessman behind the plays, who, in storing food during a time of dearth, acted illegally. If we condemn him for these actions, then we have to ask whether, faced with our own hunger and that of our family, we wouldn't do the same. 🍷

Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Richard Marggraf Turley (Department of English and Creative Writing) and Howard Thomas (Professor Emeritus in IBERS) have co-authored a number of articles on Shakespeare and food security, including *The Autumn King: Remembering the Land in King Lear*, which was published in the Winter 2012 issue of Shakespeare Quarterly, and *A Tragedy of Idle Weeds*, which appeared as a commentary in the *Times Literary Supplement* in February 2010. Their essay *Reading with the Grain: Sustainability and the Literary Imagination*, which considers Shakespeare's plays in light of his grain hoarding and other business activities, won the 2013 INSPIRE/ASLE-UKI essay prize on the theme of 'Literature and Sustainability'. It was presented as a public lecture at the Hay Literary Festival in May 2013.

AN EYE FOR BEAUTY

At a first meeting with Francis Prior he is clearly an amiable, quiet young man, but a brief glance through his portfolio of images online quickly reveals both a driving passion in his life and a real talent for discovering the beauty of the miniature insect world surrounding us all.



Currently a second-year BSc Biology student in Aber, Francis also finds time to build his own macro photography kit (for a fraction of the cost of commercial systems), with which he reveals the intricate detail and beauty of insects commonly overlooked by the human eye in everyday life.

Francis has always had an interest in animals, and having become aware of the photography of Thomas Shahan, at 16 Francis found a part time job and bought his first camera. Impressed with Shahan's work, he set out to emulate his methods, but rapidly began to develop his own techniques. With a little help from a practical friend ("he's always been good at building things"), some research on the internet and a few canny purchases, Francis built his own insect macro photography rig for around £20 (the commercially available equivalent would be in the region of £500), and started to photograph the animals which so interest him.

He takes a series of images and stacks them, one on top of the other, using a software package to sharpen them, but he does not add any colours; the appearance of the insect is unenhanced.



“ People don't appreciate the beauty of insects because they don't see them in enough detail... ”



Francis receiving his award from Bill Oddie

“Building my own kit and stacking the images is like painting a picture – I get satisfaction from actually building the image up. The best thing for me is showing insects as they are. Spiders are fascinating, particularly the eyes.”

One of his favoured subjects is the jumping spider and with twelve species found in the UK, they are relatively common.

“If you hold them, they look up at you – they have an uncanny way of doing this – they have 360 degree vision, but they always turn to look at you. All spiders have eight eyes, all structured differently in the position and angle of each eye, depending on the species.”

It was an image of the eyes of one of these jumping spiders which brought Francis's work to the attention of a wider audience, when he won the 2012 RSPCA Young Photographer of the Year award for an image entitled *Through the Looking Glass*. Looking like a work of art, the image shows the spider's purple glassy eyes fixing the viewer with a hypnotic stare.

“Some of the colours on insects really blow you away – particularly female horseflies and stick insects. People don't appreciate the beauty of insects because they don't see them in enough detail.”

Capturing his first image of a female horsefly took almost two years, but despite being bitten on occasions, the horsefly has become one of his favourite subjects for the stunning colours of their compound eyes. Moths also feature high on Francis's list of favourite subjects, not only for their rich colours, but also their habit of sitting still, sometimes aided by a bribe of honey!

Despite his success in the RSPCA Young Photographer competition and the media attention which followed, including interviews with the *Daily Mail* and the *Liverpool Post* and praise from TV wildlife presenter Chris Packham, Francis does not cash in on his achievements. “I don't show my work, I just do it for a hobby, and to show people how beautiful insects really are.” He is also keen to share how he builds his macro systems on a budget with anyone who is interested.

Francis' eye for a beautiful image extends beyond the minute; he is also a talented landscape photographer with some wonderful shots of Aber on a winter's evening and Liverpool docks in amongst his magical creatures. Admire his work on Flickr at www.flickr.com/photos/sequentialmacro

THE SANDS OF TIME



EXPLORATION SOCIETY TRIP ACROSS THE SAHARA

Words by Barrie Dennett



*Ready to embark
— a dry run at Ynyslas*



How are friendships forged?

Is it a fusion of like minds, a chance meeting with the pleasant realisation of company mutually enjoyed or is a friendship forged in heat and hardship? Maybe it's a combination of all of these things, and when the mixture is right, that friendship can survive the years, a little benign neglect and geographical distance.

Take for example a group of eight Aber students whose friendship began with the lure of adventure in the Aber Exploration Society's trip across the Sahara in 1966. Almost half a century later, the surviving seven members of the original group met on the Prom in Aber. Not all had stayed in touch with each other and every one of them had gone on to careers which took them all over the world, but they quickly slipped back into the easy camaraderie which had built a team capable of overcoming the extremes of climate, terrain, bureaucracy, mechanical frailty and conflict to make the journey across the Sahara to Nigeria and back via Timbuktu.

In the current fashion for gap years, aided by international air travel to almost anywhere, credit cards, mobile phones and the internet, it is easy to forget that fifty years ago none of these things were available. The team had to raise enough cash



Left to right: Bill Dean, Dai Pugh, Barrie Dennett, Dick Davies, Richie Baker, Bob Meddins, Bob Gardener

to take with them and then carry it, as cash, to exchange into local currencies as needed. Supplies were bought, borrowed or begged and stored in the Society's room at the top of Old College before being stowed in the vehicles. One team member told his mother that "of course everything would be fine; there was a daily bus service across the Sahara..."

In the end everything *was* fine, but their shared experiences of hardship, adventure and joy have truly forged their friendship. This is their story.

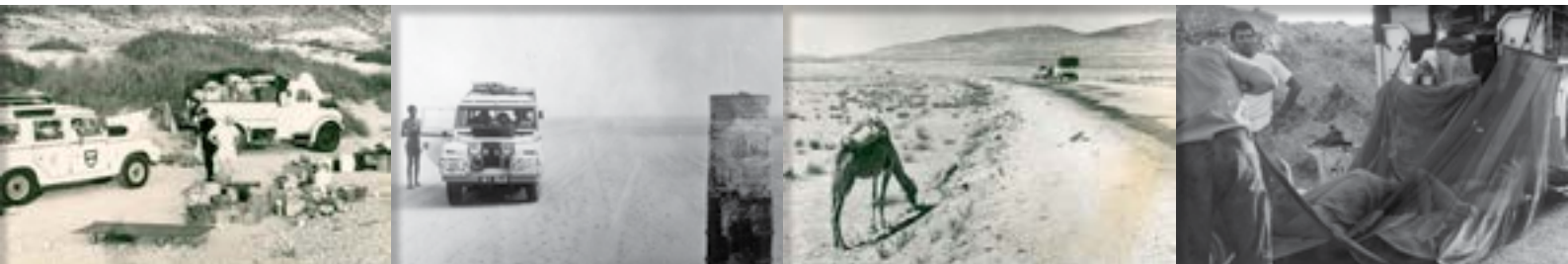
A few months ago I was clearing out my attic when I found an old diary describing a trip by a naïve group of students across the Sahara, the world's most inhospitable desert. The diary describes an extraordinary 12,000 mile journey made in the summer of 1966, nearly 50 years ago, by eight students from Aberystwyth.

It made a fascinating read. As they got into the desert, the group realised they were not prepared for the heat which at times was well over 50 degrees centigrade – hot enough to fry eggs on any exposed metal. Nor were they prepared for the impact on their vehicles – an ex-army truck and a long wheel-based Land Rover: both reacted badly to the heat, the fuel simply evaporating before it could reach the carburettors, making travel impossible.

The diary describes the pleasant trip from Aber down through Europe ending up at Gibraltar, then over to Oran in Algeria before preparing to take on the desert. There have been many books written about Sahara crossings, some describe the beauty and emptiness, others like *Trek* by Paul Stewart, are bleak reminders of the seriousness of a desert crossing, especially the Sahara, and how things can go fatally wrong. The team had only read the books with the good endings, they were young and convinced they could handle anything.

As they travelled south into the heart of the desert the diary tells of increasingly serious incidents of heat exhaustion causing hallucinations and extreme fatigue along with chronic dysentery. By the time they finally reached Agades, the ancient desert trading town in Niger on the southern edge of the Sahara and their target destination, they were in a sorry state. Two or three weeks rest and some scientific experiments later they started the return journey through the desert. They took a different route, detouring through Mali and the legendary Timbuktu. Driving was difficult, with mud and swollen rivers on the southern edge of the Sahara and countless miles of drifting sand further north. Ferocious sandstorms reduced visibility to zero and made travel and navigation extremely difficult. Two thirds of the way back through the desert, having just passed through a deserted French nuclear underground testing site, the diary suddenly stops. There are no last messages to loved ones, no final words. On the 4th of September 1966 it ends with the words "camped in very high winds, it's unbearable hot, we are all exhausted, the Land Rover has a bent axle..."

The mystery was easy to solve, I was the diarist and, although memory fades after all those years, I am guessing everything had become routine, we were desert veterans, or perhaps I had just lost my last pen!



Recently the surviving members of the University College of Wales 1966 Trans-Sahara expedition had a reunion in Aberystwyth. Sadly one of the team, Dave Thompson (1967 Geography) died a couple of years ago but the seven, all now 65 plus, met up at the Belle Vue on Marine Parade.

Bill Dean (1965 BSc Geology) had managed to pull together some old movie footage and a collection of the photographs taken on the trip. Memories flooded back, like the extraordinary visitor who rode his camel into our camp one morning when we were many miles from the nearest water. Another strong recollection was the gazelle hunt with a detachment of Algerian soldiers. After an hour long breakneck Land Rover chase across desert plains, a lucky shot finally brought the beautiful animal down. Dick Davies (1967 Zoology), skinned, gutted and butchered the animal and we had fresh meat for the first time in six weeks.

Bob Meddins (1967 Physics) and I were the 'expedition physicists' on the trip, as we had been sponsored by the Dry Lands Research Institute of the University of California and a large electrical company to test out variations on solar stills designed to extract water from soil or sand and organic material.

The team had a host of other projects, including Richie Baker's (1967 Geography) geological survey of a spectacular remote ridge about 100 miles south of our base camp in Agades. Richie was dropped at the ridge whilst the Land Rover went on another few hundred miles to Kano in Nigeria to pick up delicate scientific equipment which had been air freighted out to us. Richie still talks about his growing paranoia as he began to think about his isolation and fear that the Land Rover might not return for him.

Bob Gardner (1967 Zoology), who the year before had been on a University expedition to Arctic Norway with Richie Baker, largely conceived and put together the expedition. One dark winter's night, probably in an Aberystwyth pub, Richie drew a 5,000 mile radius circle centred on Aberystwyth and basically that's how we ended up in Agades.

He soon recruited a group of rookies for this adventurous trip including me, Bob Meddins, Dick Davies and Dave Thompson. Bill Dean and Dai Pugh (1963 Physics) were both expedition veterans; Bill had desert experience since he had recently led a team to Trucial Oman which is now part of the United Arab Emirates. Dai was an extraordinarily important team member; not only was he a physical tower of strength and an experienced traveller, but also he was a very accomplished mechanic.

Apart from the physical problems we all suffered, there were quite a few amusing incidents which showed our naïvety; like the occasion when we lost the marker barrels indicating the route through the Sahara. Having camped for the night and fearing we had gone quite a long way off our planned route, we thought it might be a good idea to check our location with the sextant the geography team had acquired. It soon became apparent that this was going to be a problem since no-one was sure how to use the instrument and it was useless anyway because we had forgotten to bring the tables which would have given us the latitude fix. Luckily for us our camp fire was visible for many miles in the blackness of the clear desert night and it attracted a French army convoy, which was sensibly travelling when the sun had gone down. They detoured to investigate and after sharing drinks and pleasantries they went on their way. The next day we followed their tracks back to the main route and the marker barrels.

The reunion in October of 2012 was quite something; we visited our old student haunts and tried to buy beer at 1966 prices. We visited the campus on the hill and the magnificent Arts Centre. We even reproduced, with two greying elderly gentlemen, a photograph taken in the Physics lab at the end of term in 1966.

It is interesting to see what an impact the Sahara has had on us all. Despite joints and limbs which don't seem to work as well as they used to, we all, without exception, still love adventure and the outdoor life. At the reunion we found we had a mountain rescue specialist, a long distance cyclist (John O'Groats to Land's End), long distance walkers (coast to coast and long European and Australian trails), long distance wilderness

canoeists and I think all of us have lasting passion for travel, wilderness camping and deserts.

It was also interesting to catch up on the lives we have lived since most of us last met up. Amongst the team we have a retired Lieutenant Colonel, a retired mountain rescue leader, a semi-retired head hunter, a seismic oil survey expert, a retired university lecturer, a successful company director dealing in plant and machinery and finally a retired jack of all trades who ended up running a huge Australian mining organization.

The Belle Vue with its faded charm was the perfect place to meet, but for our 50 year reunion we are already planning to meet in Tamanrasset in the middle of the Sahara.

This time, however, we can and will fly there. 📍



HINTERLAND

A new player has emerged in the popular thread of Nordic-noir detective dramas. Set in the dramatic backdrop of the countryside around Aberystwyth, *Y Gwyll / Hinterland* breaks new ground by being filmed simultaneously in two languages, for broadcast on the Welsh language channel S4C and in English on BBC Cymru Wales and BBC Four. Subtitles have become much more acceptable to viewers through popular imported Scandinavian dramas such as *Wallander* and *The Killing*, and *Y Gwyll/Hinterland* also makes use of subtitling to reflect the naturally bilingual nature of the community. The series brings the Aber region to an international audience, with Danish broadcast rights sold to DR Denmark even before screening in the UK.

Aberystwyth alumni watching the programmes will be reminded not only of the beautiful bleak winter backdrop which is so reminiscent of Aber outside the tourist season, but also the language and sense of Welsh community, where both languages mix in casual conversation and everyone knows everyone else – six degrees of separation reduced to around two! Familiar bits of the Aber we know and love (without the grisly murders, of course), and some familiar faces, appear in every episode.

However, it's not so much the final product that has had an impact on the University, but the process of production. Once the decision had been made to set the series in Ceredigion, opportunities opened for Aber students to gain

invaluable hands-on experience of the production of a major international television series, with Fiction Factory a willing host. Students were able to undertake work placements, shadowing professional roles and appearing as extras on film.

Ellen Dingstad from Norway, a third year Theatre, Film and Television Studies student, said, "Working alongside industry professionals was not only educational, but also exciting and fun. I applied for the placement through the encouragement of my lecturers, and was granted the post of 'Producer'.

"My tasks were similar to that of a runner on set, but I was also fortunate enough to work in the production office. When my placement ended I was even offered a part time job. The placement has improved my CV and my understanding of what it takes to work in the business. It might not be the easiest profession to get into, but the reward of helping to create something is unsurpassable."

Dr Jamie Medhurst, Head of the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies at Aber said, "The partnership with Fiction Factory, one of the UK's foremost production companies, during the production of *Y Gwyll/Hinterland* highlighted how a world-class teaching and research department such as the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies was able to provide first class placements for its students, all of whom benefited immensely from working with the company.



“I’m extremely grateful to Fiction Factory for providing such positive experiences for our students and, indeed, staff who worked with them during their time in Aberystwyth. The partnership also demonstrated the Department’s commitment to working with the creative and cultural industries in Wales and beyond for the benefit of students, staff and the production company.”

The University also provided some of the locations for filming, with Plas Gogerddan appearing as the interior of the police station and beautiful Old College having some cameo appearances. Old College starred again in October when the official première was held with a party in the Quad. With atmospheric lighting and strategically placed ‘Police/Heddlu Scene of Crime’ tape, the building was transformed for the first screening.

Aber alumni featured throughout the project, including producer Gethin Scourfield and actor Aneurin Hughes (Chief Superintendent Brian Prosser). *Y Gwyll / Hinterland*



was produced by Fiction Factory in association with S4C, Tinopolis, BBC Cymru Wales, S4C Co-Production Fund and All3Media International Ltd. The series will be sold to broadcasters across the world through distributors and co-production partners ALL3MEDIA International. Following its world debut on S4C in October 2013 it was broadcast on BBC Cymru Wales and BBC Four in early 2014 and by Danish broadcasters DR Denmark. 📺



GRADUATION 2013

Graduation is the time when Aber celebrates the achievements of its students, and in 2013 more than 2,700 graduated in nine ceremonies between 9 and 12 July. For the first time there was also a ceremony for those successfully completing the Postgraduate Certificate in Education. Families and friends from around the world joined in marking the occasion, with those who couldn't be present following the live-streamed video service. A marquee and the Arts Centre Cinema also showed a live broadcast, and even the weather joined in the spirit of the week, with bright sunshine!



FELLOWS 2013

Graduation 2013 also saw the installation of ten new Honorary Fellows to the University, an award made to exceptional individuals who have a close association with Aberystwyth University or who have made an outstanding contribution to professional or public life in Wales. The 2013 Aberystwyth University Honorary Fellows are:



IAN JONES

Ian Jones (BSc Econ Economics, 1980) played an instrumental role in the launch of S4C in 1982. After a period working at ITV and as an independent producer, he re-joined S4C as Director of Business, S4C International and Co-productions in 1992. Since then he has worked in senior positions for Scottish Television, United News and Media, (ITEL), Granada International (now ITV Global) and served an unprecedented two years as Chair of the British Television Distribution Industry Association (BT DIA). He was President of National Geographic Television International then Group Managing Director of Target Entertainment before becoming Managing Director, Content Distribution and Commercial Development, International for A+E Television Networks in New York. Thirty years after helping to launch the channel, Ian returned to S4C as Chief Executive in January 2012.



NEIL BRAND

Neil Brand (BA English and Drama, 1979) is a writer, composer, and a regular on BBC radio and television, but above all is 'the Doyen of silent film accompanists' (Torin Douglas, Radio 4). Neil has presented the Radio 2 *Arts Show*, is a regular contributor on Radio 4's *The Film Programme*, director of the British Silent Film Festival, a visiting professor at the Royal College of Music and is considered one of the finest exponents of improvised silent film accompaniment in the world. He has been accompanying silent films for nearly 30 years, throughout the UK and at film festivals globally.



GWYNETH LEWIS

Gwyneth Lewis was Wales's first National Poet from 2005-06. She has published eight books of poetry in Welsh and English, of which *Parables & Faxes* (1995) won the Aldeburgh First Collection Prize, *Y Llofrudd Iait*, the Welsh Arts Council Book of the Year 2000 and *Sparrow Tree* the Roland Mathias Poetry Award 2012. Gwyneth was awarded a Society of Authors Cholmondeley Award for a distinguished body of work. In addition to this, she has written two volumes of non-fiction, *Sunbathing in the Rain: A Cheerful Book on Depression* and *Two in a Boat* and penned the words which appear on the front of the Wales Millennium Centre.



RICHARD LYNCH

Richard Lynch (BA Drama, 1986) has worked extensively in theatre and television, becoming one of Wales' most respected actors. A principal actor for leading theatre companies including The Royal Shakespeare Company, Y

Cwmni, The Royal Court, Almeida Theatre and Brith Gof, he is particularly proud of his close association with National Theatre Wales for whom he recently played the title role in their production of *Coriolanus*. He has continued his close relationship with *Lurking Truth/Y Gwir sy'n Llechu* which he co-founded with David Ian Rabey as an undergraduate, directing Howard Barker's *I Saw Myself* at Chapter in Cardiff.



SHARON MAGUIRE

Sharon Maguire (BA English and Drama, 1982) worked in publishing before following a postgraduate course in journalism and entering the world of media. Sharon directed numerous television programmes and commercials

including *The Late Show*, *Bookmark*, *Omnibus*, *MediaShow* before directing the blockbuster film, *Bridget Jones' Diary*. In 2007, she wrote and directed the film *Incendiary* and now works as a screenwriter and director in TV and film.



JUDGE NICLAS PARRY

His Honour Judge Niclas Parry (LLB Law, 1979) is a Circuit Judge on the Welsh Circuit dealing with Criminal Law cases at the Crown Court. Inspired by his late mother's experiences as a Justice of the Peace, Niclas was keen to follow

a career in the Law and on completion of his studies, he became a lawyer specialising in criminal and family law. Niclas is also a well-known sports presenter and commentator on radio. Recently honoured as a member of the National Eisteddfod's Gorsedd of the Bards he is known as Niclas y Llais (Niclas the voice)!



BETSAN POWYS

Betsan Powys (BA German and Drama, 1987) went on from Aber to complete an MLitt at Jesus College, Oxford. Currently Editor of Programmes for Radio Cymru, Betsan has a wealth of broadcasting and presenting

experience. She joined the BBC in 1989 as a news trainee and has since carved out a successful career as a bilingual bi-media presenter and political blogger. A familiar face on the BBC and S4C, Betsan has presented a number of political news programmes including *Panorama*, *Week In Week Out* and *Byd ar Bedwar*.



DR EMYR ROBERTS

Dr Emyr Roberts (PhD Geography, 1989) started his career with the National Farmers' Union, joining the Welsh Office in 1991. Following posts in health and culture, he was promoted to Chief Executive of the Welsh

European Funding Office in 1997. From 2005 until 2012, Emyr held various posts within the Welsh Government, including Director of the Department for Social Justice and Regeneration; Director of the Department for Social Justice and Local Government; Director General, Public Services and Local Government Delivery and Director General, Department for Education and Skills. In November 2012, he was appointed the first Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales.



DR ELAINE STORKEY

Dr Elaine Storkey (BA Philosophy, 1966) is a well-known academic and broadcaster. Following her degree at Aberystwyth, Elaine pursued postgraduate studies in Canada before a distinguished academic career in

Philosophy and Theology. She also holds a Doctorate of Divinity in Sociology and Theology from Lambeth and an honorary Doctorate from Cheltenham and Gloucester College. Since 2008 she has been a member of the High Table at Newnham College, Cambridge. President of Tearfund since 1997, Elaine is also Director of Education for the Church of England Church Army. The author of eight books, she is also a regular writer for journals and newspapers and a frequent contributor to Radio 4's *Thought for the Day*.



PROFESSOR DOUGLAS KELL

Professor Douglas Kell is a former member of staff at Aberystwyth University, and was Chief Executive of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)

from 2008 until October 2013. An acclaimed academic, Douglas began his career at Aberystwyth in 1983 and from 1997-2002 he was Director of Research for the Institute of Biological Sciences. Aber Instruments, a company he co-founded, received the Queen's Award for Export Achievement in 1998. Douglas has been a pioneer in a variety of areas of computational biology and experimental metabolomics and also contributed to the discovery of the first bacterial cytokine, presently on trial as part of a vaccine against tuberculosis. He was awarded a CBE in the New Year Honours list 2014.

INVENTERPRIZE

Open to all students and encouraging entrepreneurship, InvEnterPrize is a new competition first run in 2012/13 and funded by the 2011/12 Annual Fund. The aim is to stimulate new ideas for products or services which could be developed into a successful business. Applicants undertook a structured series of workshops and events designed to build a business case which was then put to a panel of judges. The finalists were: **Marc Diaper**, in the School of Management and Business with *YouAndIUNI*, an online community for students to sell their skills; **Michal Konieczny** in the Department of European Languages with *Elemarketing*, providing specialist advertising services; **Luke Marr**, English and Creative writing, with *Constitution Films*, making corporate films; **Michael McMonagle**, a postgraduate student in IBERS, with *AlgiBloom*, a seaweed-based plant stimulant (commended); **Alex Pitchford** in Maths and Physics with *HYDROcache*, providing distribution of peak demand electricity (commended), and the eventual winner, **Jake Stainer**, a student in Management and Business with Spanish and his company, *Papora*, providing online language-learning services.

Jake was the first overall winner of the competition, and since then *Papora* has expanded rapidly, with extended courses, an app for iPad and iPhone, and talks are under way with schools and education providers to bring the service to a wider market. Jake has also appealed for further backing through crowd-funding, and regular updates can be found on his blog at inventerprize.wordpress.com/tag/jake-stainer



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Finalists and Judges for the 2013 InventionPrize competition

InvEnterPrize is judged by a panel made up from prominent alumni who have distinguished themselves in business and enterprise:

- **Jane Clayton** is a qualified chartered accountant and an experienced non-executive Director.
- **Nigel Davies** has worked for 30 years in corporate technology and business including founding a technology consultancy company.
- **Tony Diment** is an experienced venture capitalist with interests including seed-funding bodies for business start-ups.
- **Donald Davies** is Emeritus Professor in Toxicology at Imperial College London and a Founding Director of ML Laboratories plc.
- **Peter Gradwell** founded an internet communications company, Gradwell dot com Ltd, whilst still a student at Aber.
- **Huw Morgan** was Head of Business Banking in the UK for HSBC Bank plc and is a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Banking.
- For the 2014 InvEnterPrize competition, the panel will be joined by **David Sargen**, Managing Partner at Derivatives Risk Solutions, which provides support to the financial services industry. He has an interest in innovative ways of raising capital against intellectual property.



2013/14 ANNUAL FUND



Aber's Annual Fund is now in its fifth year, firmly established as a fixture in the University calendar and putting Aberystwyth clearly at the top of the leader board in Welsh university fundraising. This is entirely due to the wonderful generosity of you, the alumni, who have taken the projects and our current students to your heart.

The Fund's aim is to provide the resources for achievable projects and awards every year which will broaden the life and educational development of our students. All the money raised each year is spent on these projects, and you can read more about the current and previous projects at www.aber.ac.uk/en/development/support/annfund/af1314



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ABER OPPORTUNITIES NETWORKS GROW

In the last edition of PROM Lucy Spencer described her internship with international communications company, SyQic in Kuala Lumpur with three other students, courtesy of Aber alumnus Jamal Hassim. Since then, Jamal and other alumni have been working with Aber's Careers Service to give our students a range of wonderful opportunities to benefit from the experience of alumni. There have been visits to companies, placements and work experience, and talks and workshops in Aber.

To expand and develop the Opportunities Network, we are

now working to establish an on-line mentoring service open to all students and recent alumni who might appreciate a little additional help or advice on their chosen career. With support from the Annual Fund and a group of successful alumni volunteers as mentors, the Aberystwyth e-Mentoring Service will put students and recent graduates in touch with potential mentors. Mentors will choose their level of commitment to the scheme, and students will be able to search for a mentor with the experience to offer relevant advice and support.

If you would like to help with this new initiative, or would just like to know more, please contact development@aber.ac.uk or 01970 621568 or see www.aber.ac.uk/aon

ABER ABROAD

In 2013 Aber alumni receptions were held around the world from China to the US, in Washington DC, Hong Kong, Dubai, Shanghai and Cologne. The Washington event was kindly sponsored by Margaret and Thomas West, enabling us to use the prestigious Cosmos Club for a gathering of Aber enthusiasts hosted by the Vice-Chancellor. Aber staff met with alumni and their guests to enjoy sharing memories and learning about the new developments at Aber, all with a generous dash of Welsh hospitality. Our staff are planning more trips in 2014, particularly in Europe and we hope to hold receptions where we have a cluster of alumni so to secure an invitation, be sure to let us know where you are! You can easily update your details through Aber Connect, the online database or by contacting us at development@aber.ac.uk



Scan this code with your QR scanner on your phone for a quick link to the website



Saf and Nargiz, who met at Aber, lending a hand in Vancouver

OLD STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

An interesting year and an enlightening experience is how I would describe my second year as President. Actions have been set in place which will hopefully accelerate convergence of OSA into the wider alumni movement; improve the management of, and return from, OSA's funds and improve communication and reciprocal information exchange by using the Internet to make the Annual more of an on-going publication.

The increasingly 'silver-top' balance of OSA was emphasised by our witnessing the sad passing of firstly Ifan Moelwyn Hughes, stalwart of OSA for so long, in March; and especially of the seemingly eternal Mary Llewelfryn Davies in August, an event which cast something of a shadow over the BKB weekend. What, if anything, can replace her Sunday morning reception at Reunion?

I have enjoyed several occasions when attending as OSA's representative. The highlight was my visit with Heide to Malaysia in January 2013 when I represented OSA at a special ceremony conferring an honorary doctorate on HRH Muhriz (Aber law graduate); shared top table at a commemorative dinner given by Malaysian Alumni to celebrate Muhriz's 65th birthday; attended a birthday honours ceremony when former OSA President Arshad Ayub

received the highest honour bestowed by the State of Negeri Sembilan; and finally sitting in the front row of the audience when UiTM Mara (200,000 undergraduates) performed over 4 nights to packed houses a musical written by them to celebrate *The Life of Arshad*.

I represented OSA at the Hay Festival, (my red and green striped tie massively upstaged by a glorious red and green striped blazer), the Llandovery lecture, the Eisteddfod – special thanks to our Vice-President Ina Tudno Williams who

covered for my lack of Welsh. An eye-opening experience came on Graduation days – a total of nine separate sessions over four sweltering days in July. As your President I attended four sessions and reflected wryly on the fact that in my day the whole process spanned about two hours in one afternoon in the old King's Hall, followed by afternoon tea in the Belle Vue for the well-heeled. A more powerful illustration of the expansion which has occurred I cannot imagine.

Tom Morgan, OSA President 2012/14



Arshad and Zaleha with Tom and Heide

MEMBERS REMEMBERED

During 2013 the Association recorded the sad loss of three of its stalwart members, who will each be greatly missed for their unique contribution:

Ifan Moelwyn Hughes was always an enthusiastic member of the OSA and the local branch. His contribution over the years was enormous, particularly on the committee as secretary, vice-president,

president, editor for many years and always our semi-official photographer.

Mary Llewelfryn Davies, widow of Professor David Llewelfryn Davies, will be remembered by generations of law students who were invited to tea at her house. An indomitable character, Mary died at the age of 97, the just before Reunion 2013.

Gwen Owen served as the Bangor and North Wales Branch representative on the Committee, making many friends and earning great respect for her gentle and thoughtful nature. Gwen was truly a delight to know, both in her work for the OSA and socially; she will be greatly missed.

Reunion 2014 will be held in Aber on the weekend of Friday 13 June to Sunday 15 June, with the Annual Dinner on Saturday 14 June in Medrus, Penglais, Aberystwyth. Please contact development@aber.ac.uk or 01970 621568 for more information.

Members of the OSA attending the Annual Dinner 2013 at the reunion weekend were delighted to hear, whilst dining in style in the Quad, about the University's enthusiasm for breathing new life into the fabulous Grade 1 listed Old College. On the following morning they returned to hear a fascinating presentation on its history and take a short tour, courtesy of Dr Elgan Davies and culminating in his rendition of the College Yell, a sound not heard within those walls for many decades! In the Quad a display of memorabilia from the earliest history of the College to the present gave a backdrop to the architect's impressions of what the future interiors could look like. The Alumni Express provided an evening trip on the Vale of Rheidol narrow gauge steam railway to Devil's Bridge, where local singing group Sgarmes entertained as dusk fell and sparkling wine flowed.

The Llandoverly Lecture celebrated its 21st year in 2013 with an account of the treatment of one of Aber's most colourful and talented Professors, Hermann Ethé, at the outbreak of the First World War.

This shameful episode, in which Ethé, a German national, was hounded out of town, was brought to life by Tegwyn Jones in a moving and thought-provoking manner, engendering a sense of moral outrage in the audience when looking back over a century, but also questioning just how our community might react in a similar political situation today.

The Llandoverly Lecture 2014

will be held on Saturday 31 May 2014, 10.30am at Llandoverly College, by kind permission of the Warden. Dr Rachel Bryan Davies will speak on, "From Aber to Alexandria; the Davies Bryan family's gift of Penglais". Tickets are £20 to include coffee, lecture and lunch. Contact the OSA office on osaadmin@aber.ac.uk or 01970 621568 for more information.

The Holiday Club continues to thrive under the enthusiastic direction of Eleri and Mike Samworth with recent adventures including the Minoan

palace at Knossos, the vineyards of the Danube, the Terracotta Warriors and the Great Wall of China. Eleri and Mike are full of ideas for new destinations, but if there is anywhere you'd like to add to their list, they'd be very pleased to hear from you. Contact osatravelsamworth@hotmail.com to find out more about travelling the world in the company of other Aber alumni.

The OSA Annual, having been printed and distributed to members for more than a century, is now joining the 21st Century! The new online format will reach more members in a more economical way, with interactive features, news and updates of branch activities. Make sure we have your current email address to send you the link, and those who do not use the internet will not be forgotten; a paper update will be available to any member who needs one! Contact the OSA on osaadmin@aber.ac.uk or 01970 621568 for more information.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARIES

The 50th Anniversary for Physics grads of 1964 is coming! For the graduation Class of '64, 2014 will be the 50th Anniversary. If you would like to join **William Williams** and others from Physics for a get-together in the summer of 2014, contact DARO on development@aber.ac.uk or +44 (0)1970 621568 for more information.

Chemistry

In 1963 twenty-four of us graduated from UCW Aber with honours degrees in Chemistry. Resulting from a chance electronic contact, we decided to get as many of the group as possible together for a reunion in Aber for the 50th anniversary. Thanks to the painstaking detective work of Diane Markey (Davies), Jennifer Horgan (Davies) and Karyl Swinney (Owens), ten of the original class were located and we also learnt that, sadly, Sister Catherine Egan, whom we remembered with great affection, had died.



On 23 September 2013, seventeen guests including former staff, dined at the Marine Hotel. Attendees came from as far afield as Durban, SA and Burlington, Canada, not to mention Blaenplwyf and New Quay. Recognition was not always immediate, but once identifications had been made, animated

conversation followed. Many wondrous tales were told, not all totally true and, where memory failed, colourful imagination took over. The evening ended with a ritual kicking of the bar.

Many thanks to Diane Markey, who ran the event with a precision befitting a former headmistress, and for information on the next Chemistry reunion, please contact either Diane Markey or Tony Ford via development@aber.ac.uk, but we're not leaving it so long the next time.

The Aberystwyth Old Students' Association was established in 1892. If you would like to become a life member of this historic Association, please see www.aber.ac.uk/alumni or contact osaadmin@aber.ac.uk



MY ABER: THE HARBOUR TRAP

PhD student Kat Dawes describes her favourite part of Aber.

The long winding coast road to Aber from my home village offers plenty of tantalising glimpses of surf, and if there are waves there, there are bound to be waves at the Harbour Trap.



few photos and feel quite glad that I didn't have to get togged up in the hood, gloves, boots and thick wetsuit required in winter, or battle the pack and the current for a wave.

Over Trefechan Bridge and left, the crush of tall buildings and narrow streets opens out like a river delta as it approaches the sea until there's nothing but a bit of prom and the ocean in front of you. Left again and the harbour soon appears. While the marina itself has afforded me many happy daydreams of boat-owning and globe-trotting, it is the open sea to the west that is the real draw, where the promenade ends and there's nothing but the lifeboat station building on the road facing the sea.

When I worked in Information Services I used to escape down here to watch the surfers at lunchtime. An hour wasn't enough time for me to surf though, and the crowds put me off. There were (and still are) always more goatboats (kayaks) than I could handle, plus groms (young surfers), kooks (beginners), rippers (surfers way better than me) and planks (longboards). I would crack open my lunchbox, take a

But it was always a bit of a cop-out — a challenge unmet. By the

time I returned to Aber for my PhD, I had become a better surfer; I also had more opportunity, and the day came where the waves were clean and there wasn't a soul out — surfing gold. It was time to suit up and dive in.

The view from the line-up is awesome. The harbour wall and rocky beach floated in front and to the south of me and I could see people sitting in their cars watching. Further north were houses, more prom, the castle and the war memorial, all tilting gently as the swells pushed beneath me. A little boat chugged out past the harbour's protective arm. Ten minutes to get the place dialled, and I surfed three good waves, taking the steep drop and racing along with my back to the water before bogging down as the wave's energy dissipated. My first surf at the Harbour Trap, and it won't be the last. 🌊

PADARN HALL REUNION

In 1961, a new hall of residence opened in the converted Lion Royal Hotel at the top of Great Darkgate Street.

Padarn Hall, as it was known, accommodated 50 to 60 students, the first Warden being Dr Ken Walters, who had been appointed as a Lecturer in Applied Mathematics in 1960.

Many of the students who were a part of those early Padarn days have kept in close contact with each other over the subsequent decades. Evidence of this camaraderie is provided by the fact that on 13 May 2013, a group of the class of 1961 – 1963 met for a reunion lunch in Shrewsbury, along with Ken Walters, now a Distinguished Research Professor at Aber.

Padarn Hall was an excellent example of the warm family atmosphere that many Aber students have appreciated during their stay here.

The photograph from the reunion includes some of those who are also in the 1962 soccer team photo - matching the faces is a challenge after 50 years!

Ken Walters



The 1961 – 1962 Padarn Hall Soccer Team. Ken Walters, third from right in the back row, Emlyn Rawson (Ross) Jones, OBE, who organised the 2013 reunion, second from right in the front row



The 2013 Reunion. Emlyn Rawson (Ross) Jones OBE, third from right in front row; Roger Banner, now a member of Aber University Council, is fourth from right and Stephen Wood, Director of Research, Innovation and Business Services at Aber from 1992-2002 is second from right in the back row.

OBITUARIES

It is with great sadness that we record the loss in these pages of alumni, students, 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.

D Ellis Evans 1930 - 2013



The Professor of Celtic at Jesus College, Oxford, from 1978 to 1996, D Ellis Evans took as the field of his research the culture of the early continental Celts,

particularly its relationship with that of the classical world, and the history of the insular Celtic languages, especially Welsh and Irish, and their literatures. He will be remembered mainly on account of his *Gaulish Personal Names: a study of some Continental Celtic Formations*, which appeared in 1967, a magisterial work of immense scholarship that explores the foundations of European civilization and remains the standard book on its subject.

David Ellis Evans was born in 1930 at Llanfynydd in Carmarthenshire. He received his secondary education as a boarder at the County School in Llandeilo, where he was unhappy on account of the anglicised atmosphere of both school and town, especially after the outbreak of war when an army camp was opened in the vicinity. After a year at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, and following the death of his father, he moved to University College, Swansea, where he graduated with a First in Greek, Latin and Welsh.

As a postgraduate student who went up to Jesus College on a Meyricke Scholarship in 1952, he was among the first to be supervised by Idris Foster. He returned to Oxford in 1978, after teaching in the Welsh Department at Swansea, where he had been promoted Professor in 1974, and remained at Jesus until his retirement in 1996.

He held many offices in the life of the University and beyond its walls. He served as Chairman of the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages, Curator of the Taylor Institution, Secretary of the 7th International Congress of Celtic Studies which took place in Oxford in 1983 and of the North American Celtic Studies Congress held in Ottawa in 1986. He was also a member of the International Committee of Onomastic Sciences, the Irish Texts Society, the Council for Name Studies of Great Britain and Ireland and the Unesco International Committee for the Study of Celtic Cultures.

In Wales he was Vice-President of the Clwyd Place-Name Council, Chairman of the Welsh Dialect Studies Group, a Governor of St David's College, Brecon, and a member of the Welsh Arts Council and the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments. He was also editor

of the Language and Literature Section of the Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies from 1973 to 1993. In 1992 he was made a Fellow of Aberystwyth University.

Unlike many other distinguished scholars, including his predecessor, Ellis Evans played no part in the affairs of the National Eisteddfod, although he was elected to the White Robe of the Gorsedd of Bards by virtue of his standing as Jesus Professor of Celtic. Nor did he seek the limelight on Welsh radio and television. Indeed, he was not at all well-known in Wales, except among a small circle of scholars and friends from his Swansea days. But there was nothing of the ivory tower about him and, an amiable man, he took great delight in the company of his colleagues and students.

David Ellis Evans, Celtic scholar: born Llanfynydd, Carmarthenshire 23 September 1930; Lecturer and Professor of Welsh, University College, Swansea 1957-78; Jesus Professor of Celtic, University of Oxford 1978-96, then Emeritus; married 1957 Sheila Jeremy (two daughters); died 26 September 2013.

Meic Stephens, first published in the Independent, October 2013.

SINCERE CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF:

Allen, Mr Barrie Ralph, died March 2013 (Geography 1971)
Barr, Mr James Alexander, died September 2011 (Biochemistry)
Begley, Mr Hugh Joseph, died October 2012 (Welsh 1989)
Bourne, Mr Timothy Huw, died October 2012 (Music 1982)
Bowen, Mr Henry Gwilym, died January 2013 (History 1953)
Buckler, Dr Nigel Edmund, died May 2013
Buften, Miss Patricia Ann, died December 2012

Cameron OBE, Mrs Susan Mary, née Price, died January 2013 (Geography 1968)
Campbell-James, Mr John Brian, died March 2013
Ceredig, Mr Huw, died January 2013 (Physics 1969)
Dallison, Miss Rachael Hannah, died May 2013 (Environmental Science 2012)
David, Mrs Pamela, née Pring, died August 2013 (Botany 1962)
Davies, Mr Aneurin, died March 2013 (History 1947)
Davies, Ms Caroline Louise, née Williams, died August 2013, (History 1990)

Davies, Mrs Elizabeth Mary (Betty), née Herriman, died November 2013 (History 1948)
Davies, Mrs Mary Cavell Llewelfryn, (née Thomas), died August 2013, (Welsh 1937)
Davies, Mr Mervyn, died December 2013
Davis, Mr John, died August 2013 (History)
Derrick, Mr Bruno Michael, died December 2012 (History 1985)
El-Hosaini, Dr Tarrick Samir, died July 2013 (Biology 2009)
Emmanuel, Mr Clive Robert, died December 2012 (1971)

STUDENTS

Melissa Bridge

Melissa Bridge, a final year student from the Departments of English, and Theatre, Film and Television Studies, died in May 2013. Dr Jamie Medhurst, head of TFTVS, said, "This was a terrible shock to staff and students. Melissa was a popular, well-liked and respected student, who always gave of her utmost in her studies."

STAFF

Professor Gareth Elwyn Jones, MBE, 1939 – 2013



Professor Gareth Elwyn Jones began his career with Aberystwyth in October 1990 as Professor in education and was appointed Head of

Department of Education and Dean in October 1991 until his retirement due to ill-health in July 1993. His boundless energy, interest and enthusiasm for education generally, let alone history, inspired everyone who knew and worked with him. He was highly respected by staff and showed support to students and colleagues alike.

Richard Iorwerth Isaac, 1918 – 2013



Richard Isaac was born in 1918 and, apart from war service, spent his entire life in Aberystwyth. Having graduated from Aberystwyth in Zoology,

Richard put his training to good use during WWII when he joined a Malaria Field Laboratory of the Royal Army Medical Corps stationed in Nigeria, a unit responsible for safeguarding soldiers and airmen from malaria. In 1945 Richard returned to Aberystwyth and was employed as a research technician, retiring from his post as chief technician in 1981.

Ian Gulley, 1949 – 2013



Ian Gulley worked as a cartographer in Geography and Earth Sciences for 25 years, adapting his skill as a draughtsman to advances in computer

mapping to produce many thousands of beautiful maps and diagrams that have illustrated research monographs, textbooks and papers. A good natured, private and diligent craftsman, Ian was a valued colleague and will be missed by those who respected his work, as well as by those who shared his passion for music and who will remember his role in founding the Aber Folk Club.

Dr John Trethewey, 1932 - 2013



John Trethewey was a Lecturer in the French Department, and subsequently the Department of European Languages, from 1970 until

his early retirement in 1993, after which he continued to teach part-time for some years. A specialist in seventeenth-century theatre and seventeenth-century French literature, John was also a keen walker and jazz aficionado, and a popular and witty lecturer.

Howard Williams, 1926 – 2013

Howard became a technician in the geography department in 1956, becoming senior technician in 1964 and retiring in 1985. He was a notable fly fisherman and musician, teaching piano to many local children well into his retirement.

Lynda Rollason, 1946 - 2013



Lynda joined the Careers Service in 1998 and became the University's Placement Manager for Cymru Prosper Wales and subsequently for GO

Wales. A well-respected and popular member of staff, Lynda would always go out of her way to support students, colleagues, and employers alike, and will be remembered fondly for her boundless energy and enthusiastic approach to her work.

Gillham MBE, Dr Mary Eleanor, died March 2013 (Agriculture)

Grenby, Dr Trevor Hilary, died July 2013 (Chemistry and Agricultural Chemistry 1955)

Harding Roberts, Ms Mair Elizabeth, died December 2012, (Welsh 2005)

Harris, Mrs F Greta, née Thomas, died July 2013 (Latin and Greek 1939)

Harris, Mr Stuart A, died September 2013 (Accounting and Finance 1991)

Hemming, Ms Lyn Tracey, died January 2013 (Botany 1992)

Isaac, Dr Philip John, died October 2013 (Physics 1953)

Isherwood, Mrs Molly, née Tyvold, died March 2013 (Agricultural Botany and Dairying)

Jackson, Mr Harry Alexander Graham, died January 2011 (Business Studies)

Jardine, Mr Malcolm, died July 2013 (International Politics 1984)

John, Ms Susan Catherine, died June 2013 (Botany and Zoology 1976)

Jones, Mrs Diane Christine, née Williams, died February 2012 (History 1967)

Jones, Mr Rhys Mostyn Jenkins, died February 2012 (Geography 1950)

Jones, Mr Haydn Davies, died August 2012 (1947)

Jones, Mrs Doris, died December 2012

Jones, Mr Rhodri Wynne, died April 2013 (Drama 1989)

Jones, Mrs Sian Iilar Beynon, née Davies, died May 2013 (Education 1975)

Jones, Mrs Joan, née Parker, died July 2013 (1945)

Lawson, Dr Robert Peter, died September 2012 (Chemistry 1978)

Lewis, Mr Alexander Cedwyn John, died April 2013 (Biochemistry 2002)

Lewis, Mr Geinor Bevan, died November 2013 (Geography 1950)

Leyshon, Mr John Mostyn, died August 2013 (Geology and Botany 1961)

Lythe, Mr Tony, died March 2013 (English and American Studies 1966)

Medley, Ms Frances Victoria, died September 2013 (Agricultural Economics 1990)

Middendorf, Mr Julian Paul, died March 2013 (Performance Studies and Drama 2003)

Moore, Dr Lynne, née MacDonald, died December 2011 (Zoology 1973)

Morgan, Mrs Doreen, née Robinson, died November 2012 (Agricultural Economics 1951)

Iona Jones



Iona joined the University in 1992 as a secretary and continued until her retirement in 2004. She worked tirelessly and loyally for TFTS for 12 years and

will be sadly missed by staff and former students all of whom will have very fond recollections of her care and support for the well-being of all. Many a time she would plead a case for a student whose work had been submitted late or who had been reported for non-attendance – ‘But she’s a lovely girl, Jamie!’ – all done with genuine care and affection.

Rowland Maddock, 1937-2012



Rowland, a native of south Wales, graduated from the University of Wales and taught Economics at Aberystwyth, Keele and Lancaster before

transferring to International Politics at Aberystwyth, where he was a lecturer and senior lecturer. He specialised in economic aspects of International Relations and global environmental issues. After his retirement from the University he served as an external examiner for modules studied through the medium of Welsh at the Department of International Politics. His former colleagues in the University remember him very fondly, as an excellent colleague and an exceptionally kind and caring human being.

Ifan Moelwyn Hughes, 1931-2013



Ifan Moelwyn Hughes graduated in Physics from Aberystwyth in 1954. After working for a number of years in London, Ifan returned to Wales in

1970 and was appointed head of the Computer Unit at a time when computer science was evolving rapidly. Ifan brought expertise to his role and was adept in identifying emerging trends. When he retired in 1996 he left an operation vastly more complex than the small beginnings of the 1960s. Ifan also gave his time generously to the Aberystwyth Old Students’ Association and Seilo and Morfa chapels, as well as serving on the council of the National Library of Wales.

Gillian Price, 1949 - 2012



Gillian graduated from AU in Computer Science in 1986. She joined the University as a member of staff in 1991, and worked in Information Services

for many years, before transferring to Student Support Services from 2009-11. She subsequently returned to the Department of Computer Science until she became seriously ill in summer 2012. All who worked with Gill were struck by her commitment to delivering the very best experience to our students. Wherever she worked benefited from her dedication and professionalism.

David Causton, 1939 - 2013



Dr David Causton joined Aberystwyth University in 1970 as a lecturer in Botany, having completed his PhD here in 1967. Before returning to Aberystwyth in

1970 he worked as Scientific Officer in the Plant Physiology Section at East Malling Research Station and then as Senior Scientific Officer in the Statistics section of the Forestry Commission’s Research Branch based in Roslin, Scotland. Dr Causton retired in 1997 but continued to work as a part-time lecturer at IBERS until May 2013.

Tony Landeg, 1943 – 2013

Tony Landeg worked in the Finance Office from 1986 until his retirement in 2008. Initially the Head of the Income Office, he was later responsible for the Research Grants and Contracts Section, as well as being the Finance Office’s liaison with other areas such as the Arts Centre and Halls of Residences. A highly valued member of staff, he could be relied upon in all situations. He will be sorely missed.

We are delighted to report that **Mr Brian Alexander Dingwall** (Law 1988) whose name was listed in error in the obituary column of PROM 20 is alive and well and our apologies go to Brian, his family and friends.

Morris, Mr Huw, died August 2013 (English and American Studies 1979)

Nicholas, Mr Jâms, died September 2013 (1952)

Owen, Mr Richard Morgan, died May 2013 (Law 1963)

Owen, Mrs Gwenllian Nest, née Hughes, died August 2013 (Geography 1952)

Owen, Dr Sian, née Williams, died October 2013 (Physics 1986)

Parsons, Ms Amanda Jennifer Penelope, née Evans, died January 2011 (Religious Studies and Education 1978)

Pierce, Mr Kenneth Douglas, died December 2012 (Art and History 1971)

Pryce-Jones, Dr Trevor, died September 2012 (Chemistry 1960)

Raw-Rees, Mrs G E Anne, née Evans, died April 2012 (Economics 1954)

Rees, Mrs Barbara Challice, née James, died February 2013 (Law 1946)

Richards, Mr David John Einon, died January 2011 (Maths and Physics 1952)

Richards, Mrs Margaret Elizabeth, died July 2013 (Law 1953)

Roberts, Mrs Joyce Mary, née Lewis, died June 2013 (Latin, Philosophy and Education 1954)

Rowe, Mr Adam David, died October 2012 (Classical Studies and English 1991)

Scanlon, Mr Sean Patrick, died August 2013 (Biology)

Shaw, Dr James Howard, died December 2012 (German 1967)

Sherrington, Mr Emlyn, died January 2013

Thomas, Mrs Heulwen Mills, née Morgan, died February 2013 (Welsh 1945)

Trevena, Dr David Henry, died August 2013 (Physics 1947)

Williams, Mr Arwel John, died December 2011 (1967)

Williams, Lady Edythe Joan, née Bevan, died November 2012 (Welsh 1946)

Williams, Miss Menai, died January 2013

Williams, Mr David Wynne, died February 2013 (Zoology)

Williams, Dr Ronald J H, died June 2013 (Biochemistry and Agricultural Biochemistry 1962)

Wilson, Mrs Pamela, née Beattie, died May 2012 (Botany 1981)

Woodhouse, Mr Brian, died April 2013 (Statistics 1976)

BOOKSHELF

The following are just brief outlines of some of the many books produced by Aber academics over the last year.



Fighting the Mau Mau: the British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Emergency

Huw Bennett, International Politics

British Army counterinsurgency campaigns were supposedly waged within the bounds of international law, overcoming insurgents with the minimum force necessary. This revealing study questions what this meant for the civilian population during the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya in the 1950s.



Performing Violence: Literary and Theatrical Experiments of New Russian Drama

Birgit Beumers, Theatre, Film & Television Studies and M Lipovetsky

'New Russian Drama' began its rise at the end of the twentieth century. This volume examines the representation of violence in these new dramatic works and seeks a vantage point for the analysis of brutality in post-Soviet culture.



The Vulnerable in International Society

Ian Clark, International Politics

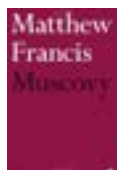
This book brings an 'international society' perspective to understanding the nature of the vulnerable. It demonstrates the ways in which international society contributes to the creation of the vulnerable in the fields of political violence, climate change, human movement and global health.



Lygad yn Llygad

Huw Meirion Edwards, Welsh

This is the much awaited first volume from poet Huw Meirion Edwards, who won the Newport and District National Eisteddfod Chair in 2004. Dafydd Pritchard said of *Lygad yn Llygad*, "I can make two claims about Huw Meirion: he's a craftsman and he's lyricist. This is an excellent book."



Muscovy

Matthew Francis, English and Creative Writing

A collection of poems including narratives and personal lyrics, Matthew Francis' fourth Faber collection explores a world of marvels, real and fantastic. The joys of the world and of the imagination find their equivalent in Francis' joy in the possibilities of language.



Rescaling the state: Devolution and the geographies of economic governance

Martin Jones, Rhys Jones, and Mark Goodwin, Geography and Earth Sciences

Rescaling the state provides an informed account of the process of devolution undertaken in the UK since 1997, focusing in particular on the devolution of economic governance. Using case studies the book examines the reasons for, and the unintended consequences of, devolution.



Counter-Terrorism Networks in the European Union: Maintaining Democratic Legitimacy after 9/11

Claudia Hillebrand, International Politics

This book explores the challenges posed to democratic legitimacy by current practices of EU counter-terrorism policing. It is concerned with the increasing international cooperation between police and intelligence actors in this field and analyses how far traditional mechanisms of accountability are keeping up with this development.



The Elect Methodists: Calvinistic Methodism in England and Wales, 1735-1811

David Ceri Jones and Erin Mant White, History and Welsh History

This first full-length study of Calvinistic Methodism, a movement that emerged in the eighteenth century as an alternative to the better-known Wesleyan branch, charts the history of the Calvinistic branch in England and Wales.



Changing Behaviours: On the Rise of the Psychological State

Rhys Jones and Mark Whitehead, Geography and Earth Sciences

By tracing the influence of the behavioural sciences on Whitehall policy makers, this book analyses how the nature of the human subject itself is re-imagined through behaviour change, and develops an analytical framework for evaluating behaviour change.



Russia's International Relations in the Twentieth Century

Alastair Kocho-Williams, History and Welsh History

Surveying the whole of the twentieth century, this book is as an introduction to the development of modern Russia in an international context, through the key questions concerning Russia's post-Soviet development throughout the century.



Democratic Futures: Revisioning democracy promotion

Milja Kurki, International Politics

Democracy promotion has been an influential policy agenda in many Western states, international organisations and NGO actors. But what kinds of models of democracy are promoted? This work examines the conceptual orders that underpin democracy support activity, and the conceptions that democracy promoters work with.



**Seals in Context:
Medieval Wales and the Welsh Marches**
John McEwan, Elizabeth New and Phillipp Schofield, History and Welsh History

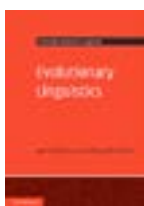
This volume, published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name held at the National Library of Wales between April and September 2012, highlights the range of seals that survive from across Wales and the Marches.



Global Health and International Relations

Colin John McInnes, International Politics

This ground-breaking book encourages readers to step back from problem-solving to ask how global health is being problematized in the first place, why certain agendas and issue areas are prioritised, and what determines the potential solutions put forth to address them?



Evolutionary Linguistics

April McMahon and Robert McMahon, Vice-Chancellor's Office; European Languages; Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences; School of Education & Lifelong Learning

How did the biological, brain and behavioural structures underlying human language evolve? When, why and where did our ancestors become linguistic animals, and what has happened since? This book, written in an approachable style, provides a comprehensive but lively introduction to the debate.



Mobility, Space and Culture

Peter Merriman, Geography and Earth Sciences

This book provides an important and timely contribution to current concerns with mobility in the social sciences and humanities, giving a critical evaluation of the relationship between 'mobility' and 'place/site', reformulating places as in process, open, and dynamic spatial formations.



Sydney Lee: Prints: A Catalogue Raisonné

Robert Meyrick, School of Art

Sydney Lee is one of Britain's most underrated painter-printmakers who did much to advance printmaking as an original expressive art form; pushing the boundaries of traditional practice. Until now, his prints have never been catalogued and there has been virtually no critical appraisal of his contribution to British art.



British Films of the 1970s

Paul Newland, Theatre, Film & Television Studies

This book offers fresh insights into a range of British films of the period, focussing on the filmmaking culture of the period, and the fragmentary nature of the nation that these films represent. It demonstrates that while the 1970s was a period of struggle and instability, it was also a period of new ideas and profound change.



Claiming the Streets: Processions and Urban Culture in South Wales, c.1830-1880

Paul O'Leary, History and Welsh History

Street processions were a defining feature of life in all Victorian towns; diverse in character they took place regularly throughout the year. This book examines how urban communities in Victorian Wales created inclusive civic identities by using the streets for peaceful processions.



The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Legal and Procedural Issues

Marco Odello, Law and Criminology

The book considers the possible implications of the work of this Committee on other UN Committees, such as the Human Rights Committee and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as considering the repercussions of its work on the international protection of fundamental rights.



Popular Reading in English Evidence and Experience c 1400-1600

Elisabeth Salter, English and Creative Writing

This book focuses on the kinds of literatures that were readily available to the widest spectrum of the population, based on real rather than ideal readers. Salter attempts to arrive at a better understanding of how people may have read and what they may have read.



Losing an Empire and Finding a Role: Britain, the USA, NATO and Nuclear Weapons, 1964-70

Kristan Stoddart, International Politics

This book sheds fresh light on developments in British nuclear weapons policy between October 1964, when the Labour Party came back into power under Harold Wilson following a thirteen year absence, and June 1970 when the Conservative government of Edward Heath was elected.



Literary Ghosts from the Victorians to Modernism: The Haunting Interval

The Haunting Interval

Luke Thurston, English and Creative Writing

This book resituates the ghost story as a matter of literary hospitality and as part of a vital prehistory of modernism, seeing it not as a quaint neo-gothic ornament, but as a powerful literary response to the technological and psychological disturbances that marked the end of the Victorian era.



Cleddyf ym mrwydr yr iaith?:

Y Bwrdd Ffilmiau Cymraeg (A Sword in the battle for the language?: The Welsh Film Board)

Kate Woodward, Theatre, Film and Television Studies

The Welsh Film Board was set up as one of several innovative attempts to both protect and empower the language through cultural means. This volume, written in Welsh, on the history of the Board analyses it as part of the struggle for the protection and conservation of the Welsh language and the desire to ensure its continuity.

APPOINTMENTS

We have many reasons to celebrate the achievements of Aber's alumni, staff and students. The list below is just a selection of these; congratulations to everyone on their successes over the past year.

At Aberystwyth University



Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan has been appointed Pro Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for the Welsh Language and Culture, and External Engagement.



Professor Chris Thomas has been appointed to the role of Pro Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for Research and Quality Assurance.

Heads of Department



Dr Cathryn Charnell-White, Welsh



Professor Rhys Jones, Geography and Earth Sciences



Dr Jenny Mathers, International Politics



Professor Steven McGuire, School of Management and Business



Gary Reed, Director of Research, Business and Innovation



Dr Elisabeth Salter, English and Creative Writing



And at Aberystwyth Arts Centre the new Director is **Gareth Lloyd Roberts**

Personal chairs



Professor Kate Bullen Department of Psychology



Professor Henry Lamb Department of Geography and Earth Sciences



Professor Robert Meyrick School of Art



Professor Nick Perdikis School of Management and Business



Professor Heike Roms Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies



Professor Mark Whitehead Department of Geography and Earth Sciences



Two new Chairs have also been created to promote engagement with science and the public imagination.

Professor Richard Marggraf Turley is Professor of Engagement with the Public Imagination, and **Professor Nigel Scollan** is Professor of Public Engagement with Science. See the interview on page 20 for more information about these new roles.

And outside Aberystwyth University



Judith Diment (Geology and Geography 1967) has been appointed Chair of Rotary International's Global Polio Advocacy Committee, which works towards the global eradication of polio.



Technology transfer specialist in the Research Business and Innovation department at Aberystwyth, **Dr Rhian Hayward**, has been appointed to the Welsh Industrial Development Advisory Board.



American alumnus **Professor Jerry Hunter** (Welsh 1989) has been appointed Pro Vice-Chancellor for Welsh Medium and Civic Engagement at Bangor University.

Kelly Hynes, (Law 2004) has been appointed Deputy District Judge in north Wales, possibly the youngest Deputy District Judge in Britain.



Professor Aled Gruffydd Jones, former Pro Vice-Chancellor and Head of the Department of Welsh at Aber, has been appointed as Chief Executive and Librarian of the National Library of Wales.



Professor Martin Jones, former Pro Vice-Chancellor, has been appointed Director of the White Rose Social Science Doctoral Training Centre, a collaboration across the social sciences at the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York.



Animal behaviour lecturer, **Dr Rupert Marshall**, has been elected to the governing council of the International Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour.



Professor Wayne Powell, former Director of the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences has been appointed Chief Science Officer of the CGIAR Consortium a global partnership that unites organisations engaged in research for a food-secure future.



Cheryl Martinez Thibodeau (Art 2004) has been appointed as the first Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations for Clayton State University in Georgia, USA.



Professor David Trotter, Head of the Department of European Languages, has been elected President of the Société de Linguistique Romane for 2013-16, only the second British academic to be so honoured. Founded in 1924, the Société de Linguistique Romane is the most important and most prestigious international learned society for the Romance languages.

NEW INSTITUTES

In February 2013, Aberystwyth University launched its Strategic Plan for 2012-2017, (www.aber.ac.uk/strategicplan) to ensure that Aber not only retains the special characteristics that give it an enduring place in the affections of its students, staff and alumni, but also to enable it to grow and capitalise on its undoubted potential. The overall goal set out in detail in the Plan is to ensure that by 2017 Aberystwyth is consistently ranked in the top 30 universities in the UK, and the top 250 in the world.

One of the biggest strategic changes within the University is the grouping of its seventeen academic departments into seven interdisciplinary Institutes. The academic departments will continue to provide their excellent teaching and research in their subject areas, but will now be better placed to take advantage of working alongside complementary disciplines within their Institute under a more streamlined management structure.



Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences

Set up some years ago by bringing together the departments of Biology and Rural Sciences with IGER, the grassland research institute based at Gogerddan. **Interim Director:** Professor Chris Thomas.



Institute of Education, Graduate & Professional Development

School of Education and Lifelong Learning, the Careers Service, the International English Centre, Learning Support, the Centre for the Development of Staff and Academic Practice (CDSAP), and the Graduate School. **Director:** Professor Tim Woods.



Institute of Geography, History & Politics

Departments of Geography and Earth Sciences, History and Welsh History and International Politics. **Director:** Professor Neil Glasser.



Institute of Human Sciences

Departments of Psychology and Sport and Exercise Science. **Director:** Professor Kate Bullen.



Institute of Literature, Languages and Creative Arts

Departments of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, English and Creative Writing, European Languages, the School of Art and the Department of

Welsh and Celtic Studies. The Institute also includes Aberystwyth Arts Centre and Aberystwyth University Music Centre. **Director:** Professor Sarah Prescott.



Institute of Management, Law & Information Science

Departments of Law and Criminology, Information Studies and the School of Management and Business. **Director:** Professor Andrew Henley.



Institute of Mathematics, Physics & Computer Science

Departments of Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science. **Director:** Professor Qiang Shen.

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS



Owen Ashton (Agriculture 2013) won the title Dairy Student of the Year whilst still in his final year. He was presented with a £1,000 cash prize at an awards ceremony

in London and the University received £500 towards a dairying educational project.



Professor Sir **George Berwick** CBE (Education 1971) was awarded a knighthood in the New Year's Honours List for his services to education.



Richard Body (Computer Science and Statistics 1988) was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list for services to the hydroelectric industry with his volunteer work for Torrs Hydro New Mills Ltd - the first community owned and funded hydroelectric scheme in the country.

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS (CONTINUED)

Congratulations to **Alan Cole** (Geology 1997), GB triathlete and member of staff at Aber who won a gold medal at the European Triathlon Age-Group Championships held in Turkey in June 2013.



Alan Cole

Vivian Ezugha, a current student at the School of Art, has been awarded a Windsor Fellowship in Fine Art for black and minority ethnic undergraduates committed to working in Wales.



Vivian Ezugha

Dr **Ron Fuge** (Chemistry and Geology 1964 to 1976, and member of staff) has been awarded the International Association of GeoChemistry Distinguished Service Award for 2012-2013.



Ron Fuge

Sarah Hall, (English and Art History, 1995), has won the BBC National Short Story Award 2013 with her story *Mrs Fox*, as well as being named one of the twenty best young British novelists in *Granta* magazine's once-in-a-decade list.



Caryl Hughes

Caryl Hughes (Agriculture 2012) has become the first winner of the National Trust's Llyndy Isaf scholarship. Caryl will be in charge of the iconic 614-acre upland farm in Snowdonia saved for the nation through the NT Snowdonia Appeal in 2012.

Glesni Haf Jones (Welsh and Drama 2007) was the winner of the Drama Medal at the 2013 National Eisteddfod in Denbighshire.



Glesni Haf Jones

Llion Jones (Welsh 1985) won the People's Choice award in the Wales Book of the Year 2013 competition for his work *Trydar Mewn Trawiadau*.

Member of staff and poet, **Jemma L King**, is one of the seven shortlisted writers in this year's £30,000 Dylan Thomas literary prize.



Stacey Melia

Stacey Melia, (Zoology 2013) has been awarded the Welsh Ornithological Society Prize for the best student project for her work on ospreys.



Rhodri Meilir (left), (Theatre, Film and Televisions Studies 2000) and **Michael Sheen** (right), OBE (Fellow 2012) were both in the running for best actor at the British Academy of Film and Television Arts Cymru Awards 2013, with **Michael Sheen** emerging victorious on the night.



Debbie Moon

Wolfblood, the CBBC teen drama written by alumna **Debbie Moon** (Drama 1992) was been nominated for four Children's BAFTA awards, including Best Writer and Best Drama.

Congratulations to **Charles Nelson**, (Botany 1971), winner of Reference Book of the Year at the 2012 Garden Media Guild Awards for his work *Hardy Heathers from the Northern Hemisphere*.

Eleanor Paish (Zoology 2013) was one of three finalists for the Biology Student of the Year award in the 2013 European Science Engineering & Technology Awards.



Eleanor Paish

Professor **Judith Phillips** (Geography 1980) was awarded an OBE for services to older people in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. Professor Phillips is Professor of Gerontology at Swansea University and director of the Older People and Ageing Research and Development Network in Wales.



Judith Phillips

Two members of the department of English and Creative Writing, Professor **Sarah Prescott** and Dr **Mary Chadwick**, were presented with the M Wynn Thomas Prize celebrating Welsh writing in English, Sarah winning the Open prize and Mary the New Scholars category.

Francis Prior, currently a student in IBERS, was named Young Photographer of the Year at the RSPCA awards in December 2012. *See the cover and page 22 for more information about Francis' skills.*



Laura Wall

Laura Wall, (Film and Television Studies with Art, 2006) was voted Best Up and Coming Artist 2013 in the Fine Art Trade Guild Awards, and Laura also made the finals of the People's Book Prize 2013 for the fourth book in her Goose series for children, *Goose Goes to the Zoo*.

Dave Webber, whilst still in his second year as a geography student at Aberystwyth, became the first team manager of Dolgellau Athletic, making him, at 19, the youngest manager of a senior football team in the history of British football.

HOME FROM HOME

Eurig Salisbury

At the end of August this year I celebrated my thirtieth birthday - bringing my twenties to a close and, shortly afterwards, becoming Rhiannon's husband.

And I also started to become accustomed to the fact that over a decade has passed by since I came to university in Aberystwyth.

In May 2004, when I was in my second year at college, there were other birthday celebrations afoot on Penglais Hill. The hall of residence that was my home during my first two years as a student was thirty years old that year – Pantycelyn Hall, the temporary home of so many fervent Welsh youngsters through the years. A gig was held in the Students' Union ... but, for some reason or other, I have very little recollection of that night!

What I do remember well is the enjoyment I had in writing a *cywydd*, in its strict poetic metre, to celebrate the event. I had glimpsed, in a frame on the desk in Dilys' office, a similar *cywydd* by Myrddin ap Dafydd, one of Pantycelyn's students in the hall's early years. I was eager to set my own poetic stamp on the place, having progressed from a shared room on the ground floor in my first year to a single room on the second floor at the furthest end of the building.

The concept of writing a poem to a building was not new to me. At school I had become familiar with Iolo Goch's famous *cywydd* to Owain Glyndŵr's hall at Sycharth, and now, studying the poetry of the Middle Ages in the Welsh Department, I had the opportunity to delve deeply into this particular tradition. I was also aware of the tendency for some contemporary poets to compare the halls and castles of the old poets with unsightly taverns or homes. But Panty was a proper hall, a huge, long solid building of which Owain himself would have been more than proud!

2004 was a thrilling year for Panty residents. At the beginning of May that year hundreds of students staged a protest march to call for Welsh education in the form

of a federal college – an action that contributed to the establishment of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol in 2011. This was the seventh protest in ten months. Aberystwyth's Welsh Students' Union (UMCA) and the Geltaidd society were full of commotion and rebellious excitement – so rebellious, indeed, that my *cywydd* remained unframed! Pantycelyn, naturally, was the focus of all this exuberance.

And yet the hall was older than its inhabitants. Thirty meant little to me who was yet to reach my twentieth birthday – '*At thirty the gifts are pretty sad I am told, / Travel clocks and on-sale socks...*' Unlike most buildings, Pantycelyn could rejoice in the fact that its spirit, however old its stones, was forever young – '*Now does not age*'. And I can also rejoice in the fact that I partook of a little of that youthful vitality for an unforgettable period of time -

What is death? The present memory is forever young.

That second year student who wrote the poem had no idea that the window of his room at the back of Pantycelyn faced the building where he would continue to study the poetry of the Middle Ages ten years later. From my office window in the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies I can almost see, when winter has blown away the leaves, some semblance of myself looking towards me. My hope is that every bit of that youthful aspiration that I experienced at Pantycelyn will remain alive within me as I set forth on a new chapter in the company of a girl that I first set eyes on, not at Panty, but in a lecture room in the Old College when the words of the bardic tradition were for once not quite as engaging! 📖

Eurig and his wife Rhiannon on their wedding day, photographed in the lecture room in which they met

KICKING THE BAR

High spirits and higher hemlines | Russell Davies

1974 A year of high spirits and higher hemlines. But, what a year for pop music – ‘we were young, we had fun, we had seasons in the sun’. When the singer died, we cried. Leonard Cohen, David Bowie and Bob Dylan went on world tours – and are yet to return. In Wales, Man called us Rhinos, Winos and Lunatics and a man with a giant leek was live in Treorchy. *Duw it’s hard*. Whisper it gently, at the Carmarthen eisteddfod, Edward H, Ac Eraill and Sidan sang the story of Nia Ben Aur, y ferch o Tir na nÔg. It was the closest to heaven we’ll ever get, for we were young, we had fun.

It was a good year for women. The Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act were drafted. Contraceptives were free on the National Health Service, Virago press began and Eve’s Garden opened. As ever, the politicians let us down – the winter of discontent turned into an oil crisis and, as if one wasn’t bad enough, we had two general elections.

It was a terrible year for fashion – we wore bell-bottoms, shirts with big collars and ties that were wider than Cyril Smith’s waistline. As the disco leotard appeared, unbelievably Welsh fashion conquered the heart of *haute couture*, as Laura Ashley opened a shop in Paris. Just before the bells rang out to herald the year’s end, news reached us that the Japanese World War II soldier, Private Teruo Nakamura, finally surrendered on the Indonesian island of Morotai after 34 years – and we thought Aberystwyth was behind the times. But it wasn’t. For in Aberystwyth, an important decision was taken.

A group of academic staff and lay members persuaded the University Council to establish a mixed hall of residence dedicated to Welsh speakers. It was a doubly radical move. The dark curtains of Victorian respectability still hung heavy over the morals of the small Welsh seaside town in the 1970s. Such people were concerned that bringing the Welsh-speaking male students housed in Carpenter and Ceredigion on the seafront, together with their female equivalents who presided in Alexandra and Penbryn, could create the environment for a frenetic orgy in Aberystwyth. We lived in hope. Others considered the University controversial in supporting the Welsh language. That the Council, in effect, would in Pantycelyn, create a ghetto in which Welsh speakers would be isolated.

Arguments raged back and forth in an issue that proved to be controversial and divisive. Yet that group which ranged broadly across the University (staff and students) the town and nation, including Welsh-speakers and non-Welsh speakers, retained their faith in the idea and the ideal that a dedicated home for Welsh-speakers would be a good thing. But *er gwaetha pawb a phopeth* (despite them all) the decision was

taken to establish a University residence for Welsh-speakers. It opened its doors in 1974, instantly becoming the largest single community of Welsh-speakers in the world.

Pantycelyn. It is hard to say the name without a smile – and a grimace at the recollection of the unique smell of disinfectant. I was there from 1976-1985. Age and alcohol have dimmed the memories, but in my mind’s eye I can walk again with those loved, loving and lovely people who made the transfer from adolescence to adulthood (maturity? – no) such an enjoyable experience.

In its decision to establish Pantycelyn the University Council in effect created a national institution which has played a significant part in the life of Wales. Those rebels clad in denim, all bright-eyes and enthusiasm, who went through the solid oak doors have finished up in respectable business suits. Amongst the alumni are classrooms full of teachers, headmasters and headmistresses, clutches of scientists, a balance of accountants, an eloquence of lawyers, solicitors, barristers and high court judges (should their collective noun be a deceit?), and a claque of politicians (including a prime minister).

Pantycelyn has made a signal and significant contribution to the cultural and creative life of Wales. How many chaired and crowned bards have lived within its walls? How many musicians, authors, writers, dramatists and novelists have articulated their angst into ink in the hall? How many pop groups began to strum their beats in the old basement bar?

The eternal questions remain. Which are the funniest encounters? Which are the best memories? Which were the most outlandish stunts? (Driving the mini down the corridors *Italian-Job*-style must surely be up there somewhere - minis, like me, were thinner then). Which were the best years? Which was the best generation? The answer, of course is emphatically offered by each generation – “it was ours”.

Like many of us who were there towards the start, the dear old building is showing signs of her age and is now sadly in need of renovation. Like Miss Havisham, the magic of make-up is no longer enough, even the embalmer’s art cannot hide time’s attrition. Thus, forty years later, the ground is being dug for a new Pantycelyn. Purists proclaim that things will never be the same. That the old spirit of Pantycelyn will not translate into a new residence. One has considerable sympathy with such views. But, Pantycelyn was never so much the building as the people and the convivial community they created. This generation, and future generations of students, deserve their opportunity to create their future, in a new home. 🇬🇧



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