



# ABER News

## Next Vice-Chancellor announced

Professor Jon Timmis has been appointed as the next Vice-Chancellor of the University, and will take up the role on 1 January 2024.

Professor Timmis is currently Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Commercial) of the University of Sunderland where he is the executive lead for academic and service planning, research and knowledge exchange, strategic development, international activity, student recruitment and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Professor Timmis is a former student of Aberystwyth University, having studied Computer Science as a mature student before then embarking on a PhD in artificial intelligence.

After studying at Aberystwyth University between 1993 and 2000, Professor Timmis joined the

University of Kent in 2000, where he became Senior Lecturer. In 2005, he joined the University of York as a Reader between the Computer Science and Electronic Engineering departments, before becoming Professor. He was York's head of the Electronic Engineering department between 2015 and 2017, then Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Partnerships and Knowledge Exchange between 2017 and 2019, prior to joining Sunderland.

Professor Timmis is a former recipient of a Royal Society-Wolfson Research Merit Award and a Royal Academy of Engineering Enterprise Fellowship. He has published around 300 papers and raised more than £30 million in research funding.

Professor Timmis will succeed Professor Elizabeth Treasure, who will retire from the institution at the end of 2023 after nearly seven years in the role.

# Thousands raised for Charity of the Year

Staff and students have raised £20,597 to support the new Chemotherapy Day Unit at Bronglais General Hospital.

Fundraising events and activities have taken place during the year to raise money for the cause, which was voted by students and staff as the University's Charity of the Year for 2022-23.

In May, a group of University and Students' Union staff completed the Welsh three peaks challenge. Setting out before dawn, the team of 21 climbed yr Wyddfa, followed by Cadair Idris, and finally reached the summit of Pen y Fan in the evening sunshine, completing the challenge in 16 hours.

Later the same month, student nurses and nursing lecturers from the University's Healthcare Education Centre collected sponsorship to walk the length of the prom 10 times.

In July, a team of staff and postgraduate students from the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences raised money by running, walking or cycling from Penglais Campus to the University's upland research centre at Pwllpeiran, near Cwmystwyth.

Money was also raised through a special charity event to celebrate the 150th anniversaries of Aberystwyth University and the Scarlets Welsh

Rugby Union team, and by a University team taking part in the Aberystwyth 10K. There was also a host of on-campus fundraising activities.

The new chemotherapy day unit at Bronglais Hospital, which is due to open in late 2024, will provide a larger, purpose-built treatment area for patients, including an isolation facility, along with reception, outpatient and waiting areas, as well as consultation and examination rooms. Additional facilities will include a meeting room with video-conferencing facilities, counselling rooms and private spaces for patients.

Bettina Vance, Chemotherapy Clinical Nurse Specialist at Bronglais Hospital, said:

"We are absolutely thrilled by the incredible fundraising by students and staff at Aberystwyth University for the chemotherapy day unit at Bronglais. The unit delivers cancer services to patients from across mid Wales. The donations will support the department to provide services and activities above and beyond what the NHS can provide, and will have a big impact on the experience of patients, families and staff. On behalf of the unit I would like to say a huge thank you for your support."





## Vice-Chancellor's Column



It is heartening to see the campus buzzing with students once again. My thanks to all the volunteers who helped to greet and signpost our new cohort and their families during the Welcome period and ensure their positive first impressions of our town and University.

For me, this is a particularly poignant time – welcoming my final intake of students before my retirement at the end of the year.

It is too soon for goodbyes, as there is far too much to do over the coming months. However, with the next edition of *ABERNews* not due until early 2024, this will be my last VC's column – so please do forgive a little reflection.

I have loved living here in Aberystwyth and will miss it terribly. I have gained a great deal during my time here and have learnt so much of, and about, the Welsh language.

Thinking back over my time at Aber there are many developments that I'm particularly proud of, but I think the opening of the School of Veterinary Science and the launch of our Nursing degree schemes are firmly at the top of my list.

I'm also proud that research is back on track, with our research grant income having gone up from £18m-£24m during 2022/23, due to a huge amount of hard work across the University. As you are all only too aware, we are living in an incredibly challenging financial climate, so this increase in research funding is of course important, but the real success is in the vibrance of our research community.

Clearly, given the economic climate, financial challenges will continue, and the University

will again need to pull together as we find the right solutions for us. However, we have some huge advantages working in our favour. Our collective efforts through some difficult times over recent years have put our institution on a far firmer footing. It is also reassuring that our student numbers are growing.

I have already engaged with the incoming Vice-Chancellor to plan the handover and the two of us are already having very positive conversations – be in no doubt he will get a full account of what a wonderful institution he will lead.

We have achieved so much over the past 7 years – our fantastic record in teaching and learning, our strides forward in research and innovation, a renowned reputation for student experience, our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and so much more. Yet the thing that has left the biggest impression on me is the determination of our staff to pull together for the sake of this University, and this town. It really is inspiring – and long may it continue.

**Professor Elizabeth Treasure**  
Vice-Chancellor

## A minute with incoming Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jon Timmis

Following the announcement of his appointment, ABERNews caught up with Professor Timmis to find out a little more about him and his background.



### **Congratulations on your appointment. How does it feel to be coming back to Aberystwyth University?**

I am really looking forward to joining you all in January as your next Vice-Chancellor. Everyone has been so welcoming, and for that I'm really grateful.

As you might know by now, I am a proud alumnus of the University, studying for my degree in Computer Science, and then a PhD here some time ago, when I was a mature student. I firmly believe in the transformational nature of education and of research, that can transform lives of individuals as well as transform wider society for good. I am not exaggerating when I say that Aberystwyth University changed my life through the education and experiences that it gave me.

### **Could you tell us a bit more about your previous time here, and how that has influenced your career so far?**

My own experience was one of coming to university slightly later than some. I didn't really enjoy school if I am honest. I left at 16, with not the best grades at O level. I moved to Aberystwyth some years later and thanks to some amazing support and guidance I returned to education, taking a BTEC in Computer Studies at Coleg Ceredigion which then led me to be able to study at Aberystwyth University.

I had a great time studying at Aberystwyth University. The lecturers I had in Computer Science were fantastic and engaging, they made the whole subject accessible and crucially interesting! After my degree, I worked as a research assistant for a while on a fascinating project looking at the immune system. This

really captured my imagination, so much so I ended up doing a PhD on it and focusing on that area for a large part of my academic career after I left Aberystwyth. I have been lucky to have an exciting and rewarding career in higher education ever since. For me, the transformational power of education became very real – but there is no doubt that it all started at Aber.

### **What aspects of your career have you found most rewarding so far?**

As an academic I have been lucky enough to work with a variety of students, colleagues and industry collaborators over the years. Whether that was teaching first year programming to computer science and engineering students, to supervising some incredible PhD students, or working on challenging research projects, they have all been incredibly rewarding. The ability we have to really make a difference through our work is so important and the role we can play, as individuals as well as institutionally, is critical as well as exciting. I think this in part has motivated me over the years to be involved in public engagement of science, as I feel it opens up what we do to such a wide audience and tells the story of why what we do can matter so much.

One of the things I have loved about working at universities is seeing how people are motivated by different elements of our work. Everyone's perspective and journey is different, and we all have our own story. I am looking forward to learning more about all my new colleagues when I join you in January.



# Charity of the Year

Staff and students have voted Wales Air Ambulance as the University's Charity of the Year for 2023-24.

If you are raising money or taking part in charity events this year and would like to support them, please email [communications@aber.ac.uk](mailto:communications@aber.ac.uk)



“ In rural communities such as Ceredigion, the service provided by the Wales Air Ambulance is vital. It will be a pleasure to raise money for such a fantastic cause, and to play a small part in helping to keep its helicopters and rapid response vehicles responding to incidents and saving lives. ”

**Professor Elizabeth Treasure**  
**Vice-Chancellor, Aberystwyth University**

“ We are absolutely thrilled and honoured to have been voted Aberystwyth University's Charity of the Year. This recognition is a testament to the unwavering support of the students and staff at Aberystwyth University, and it means the world to us at the Wales Air Ambulance charity.

"At the Wales Air Ambulance Charity, we provide the highest level of critical care to the people of Wales. With over 46,000 missions completed and a 24/7, 365-day presence across Wales, we are committed to being there for our communities whenever and wherever they need us.

"We rely entirely on your charitable donations to raise £11.2 million every year to keep the helicopters in the air and rapid response vehicles on the road across Wales, saving precious time and lives. Thank you, Aberystwyth University, for believing in our mission and joining us on this life-saving adventure. ”

**Siany Martin**  
**Corporate Fundraiser, Wales Air Ambulance Charity**





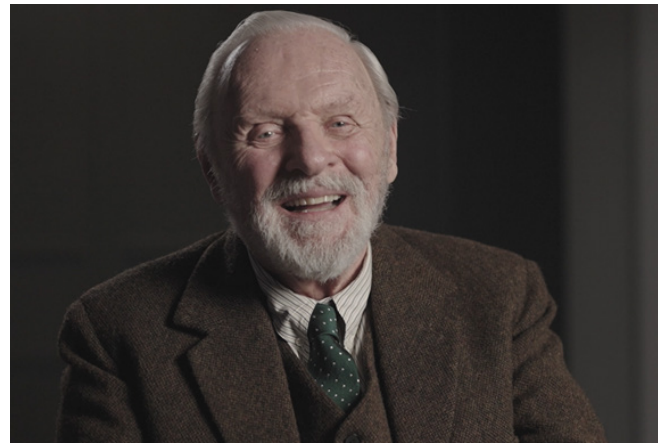
## Sir Anthony Hopkins delivers video message to TFTS 50th anniversary event

Oscar-winning actor Sir Anthony Hopkins delivered a video message to students who worked as crew on a new Andie MacDowell film shot in Aberystwyth as part of a special screening.

The special screening of *My Happy Ending* took place on Saturday 7 October at Aberystwyth Arts Centre as part of the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies' 50th anniversary celebrations.

Twenty-four students as well as lecturers from the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies worked with some of cinema and television's most famous faces on *My Happy Ending*, which was shot in Aberystwyth in 2021.

Sir Anthony, the Port Talbot-born star of *The Silence of the Lambs*, *The Remains of the Day* and *Nixon* opened the screening with a special



Sir Anthony Hopkins

video message, wishing the department a happy birthday and remarking that his cousin studied there.

Starring Andie MacDowell, Miriam Margoyles, Tom Cullen, David Walliams, Sally Phillips, Tamsin Greig and Rakhee Thakrar, *My Happy Ending* is a poignant female ensemble comedy based on a play written by one of Israel's most acclaimed and popular playwrights, Anat Gov. It follows the story of Hollywood star Julia Roth (Andie MacDowell) who finds herself in a British hospital room with three other women who help her on the road of self-discovery.



The steps leading to Aberystwyth Arts Centre were transformed into the venue for a movie premiere during the filming of *My Happy Ending*.

## Sir Brian May shares farm TB eradication experience

World-famous musician Sir Brian May has shared the experience of efforts to eradicate tuberculosis on a farm he sponsors in a lecture at Aberystwyth University.



Professor Glyn Hewinson, Head of the Sêr Cymru Centre of Excellence for Bovine Tuberculosis (left) and Sir Brian May (right)

Backed by Sir Brian May, south Devon milk producer Gatcombe Farm has been testing strategies to combat the disease.

Working with the guitarist and anti-cull campaigner, the farm has trialled a series of alternative tests for detecting TB, as well as improving biosecurity measures and slurry management.

Speaking after addressing an audience of vets, farmers and academics at Aberystwyth University, Sir Brian May said:

"I began researching bovine TB ten years ago, when I founded the Save-Me Trust; together we embarked on a mission to find out the truth about cows and badgers and the scourge of bovine TB, in which the badgers stood accused

of being a 'wildlife reservoir' of disease. After an introduction from the NFU, we set to work in collaboration, to battle the disease first-hand, at the dairy farm at Gatcombe in South Devon.

"I am hoping my work will pave the way for a better understanding between the various stakeholders in the fight against Bovine TB, and will eventually lead to a better life for farmers, cows, and badgers in the UK. It is clear that Aberystwyth University is doing very important research in this field, and their work deserves support from all involved so that the scientific research on this disease can continue apace."

The lecture was hosted by the Sêr Cymru Centre of Excellence for Bovine Tuberculosis at Aberystwyth University.



# The Pursuit of Peace - Festival of Research

1-7 November

The 2023 Aberystwyth University Festival of Research will take place from 1-7 November. It will showcase research that is being done around the University through a variety of formats and activities that are designed to engage audiences ranging from University students and academic staff to communities in Aberystwyth, across Wales and beyond.

The theme of this year's Festival is *Hawlio Heddwch/The Pursuit of Peace*.

The theme was inspired by the centenary of the Welsh Women's Peace Appeal of 1923-4, which marks the extraordinary achievement of the collection of 390,296 signatures from women across Wales in an appeal addressed to the women of America to work together for a more peaceful world.



The Festival will include events that are specifically about the Appeal and its centenary, such as the launch of the book *Yr Apêl/ The Appeal 1923-24* (forthcoming from Y Lolfa Press) co-edited by Professor Mererid Hopwood (Department of Welsh and Celtic Studies) and Dr Jenny Mathers (Department of International Politics). But much of the focus of the Festival will be on the pursuit of peace

now and into the future, and on the possibilities that can be achieved through connections and collaborations between academic research and communities.

In keeping with the Festival's emphasis on community, and as a way of marking another important peace-related anniversary in 2023 - the Good Friday Peace Agreement of 1998 - the keynote speaker for the Festival is Eileen Weir, a Belfast-based peace activist. Weir has worked with the Shankill Women's Centre since the 1990s, building bridges across political, religious and other divides throughout the island of Ireland and campaigning for the rights of ordinary people to live in peace and dignity.

The keynote event will take the form of a conversation with Eileen Weir, where she will reflect on

a lifetime of personal experiences at the heart of the community activism that laid the foundations for political change in Northern Ireland.



In addition to the book launch and keynote event, the Festival will include thought-provoking panel discussions on topics such as paths to peace in the 21st century, overcoming



rural divides to broker peace in communities, the connections between Ceredigion, climate change and the pursuit of peace, and possibilities for peace in Ukraine.

The connections between peace and Welsh literature will be explored, and a writing workshop will invite participants to experience the ways that creativity can contribute to the achievement of peace in everyday life.

A workshop on community transport will focus on another aspect of everyday life: the need for peaceful streets in Aberystwyth.

The contributions of theatre, drama and film to the pursuit and understanding of peace will be demonstrated and examined, including the mission of the BBC that "nation shall speak peace unto nation".

And multi-media exhibits will highlight peace-related research at the University into such topics as food security, the experiences of war refugees and the contributions that computer science can make to happier and more peaceful lives.

Finally, there will be a chance to step into an evening of enchantment and solidarity as we come together to support three incredible causes: AberAid, Ukraine Train, and the Syrian Dinner Project at 'Hope and Harmony: A night of music, poetry and Syrian cuisine'.

The wealth of events and activities that make up this year's Festival of Research is made possible through collaboration with partners including the National Library of Wales, the Ceredigion Museum, Academi Heddwch, and the Ceredigion Association of Volunteer Organisations. Events will be hosted by the National Library and the Ceredigion Museum, as well as at locations across the University such as the Aberystwyth Arts Centre, the Students' Union and the new research dialogue hub, Tŷ Trafod Ymchwil.



Members of the public as well as the University are warmly invited to participate in this year's Festival and to help us all make those vital connections between research and practice, thought and action, university and community, that will enable us to envision more peaceful futures and take steps to turn those visions into reality.

PHOTOS

*Photo 1: The delegation of women who took the historic peace petition to the United States of America in 1924 was led by Annie Hughes-Griffiths who is pictured holding the appeal on the steps of the White House in Washington DC with (L-R) Gladys Thomas, Mary Ellis and Elined Prys.*

*Credit: Welsh Centre for International Affairs.*

*Photo 2: Eileen Weir won the Community Relations Council Exceptional Achievement Award in 2018*

*Photo 3: Evelyn and Marion Porak, two young refugees, pictured on Aberystwyth promenade in 1939. The Porak sisters stayed with a family in Aber, before emigrating to the US in 1947*

*Copyright: Brian Pinsent*



## Tŷ Trafod provides new hub for research and knowledge exchange



If you've been into the Visualisation Centre on Penglais campus in recent weeks, you'll have noticed a few changes. Firstly, the main entrance has moved to the side of the building. More importantly, the ground floor foyer area has undergone a transformation.

What was once used mainly as a thoroughfare to the rest of the building is now home to a new research dialogue hub known by its Welsh name, Tŷ Trafod Ymchwil or Tŷ Trafod for short.

The redesigned area offers a contemporary gathering space for researchers and external collaborators or partners as well as a range of flexible layouts for knowledge exchange and dialogue events.

Tŷ Trafod is made up of two rooms. A large lounge and meeting space on the ground floor is equipped with whiteboards, sofas, tables and chairs, as well as a kitchenette for making coffee and tea. By the end of the year, it will also include cameras, microphones and speakers for hosting hybrid events. On the first floor, there's a smaller breakout meeting room set out in a boardroom style.

Dr Jennifer Wolowic, Principal Lead of the University's Dialogue Centre said: "Tŷ Trafod is an important addition to knowledge exchange activities at Aberystwyth University. We want to create new spaces where dialogue can happen between researchers, partners and communities. We hope academics will view it as their space and use it as an informal place to gather and share ideas as well as for special



events which inform their research.”

Project Manager Jonathan Lubikowski from the University’s Department of Estates, Facilities and Residences, said: “We were delighted to have worked with the Dialogue Centre and the Department of Research, Business and Innovation to create a flexible, contemporary space which supports the University’s knowledge exchange and research activities. The Visualisation Centre on Penglais campus is one of our flagship buildings and in repurposing the foyer area, we are using our estate to respond effectively to strategic priorities and research needs.”

Tŷ Trafod is open most of the working week for informal use by researchers and RBI staff, and

Salto access is being added to their Aber cards. However, there will be occasions when the place has been reserved for a particular event and staff can see any bookings by searching ‘Tŷ Trafod’ on the list of locations in their Microsoft Outlook calendar.

If you’re keen to reserve Tŷ Trafod for a research or knowledge exchange event, please send your event’s date, time, title, and purpose to [dialogue@aber.ac.uk](mailto:dialogue@aber.ac.uk) using ‘Tŷ Trafod’ in the subject line.

The Dialogue Centre will have a future home in the Old College when the building reopens after major restoration work.



*Tŷ Trafod was opened by Professor Colin McInnes on 31 August 2023 at the end of his term as Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Knowledge Exchange & Innovation.*

Find out more about the Dialogue Centre by visiting [dialogue.aber.ac.uk/about/dialogue-hub](https://dialogue.aber.ac.uk/about/dialogue-hub)

## Spotlight on...

# the Health, Safety & Environment Team

There have been a few changes in the Health, Safety and Environment (HS&E) Team recently, so we thought it was a good time to catch up with the University's HS&E Manager, Claire Williams, to find out who's who and what they do.

### **What does the work of the Health, Safety and Environment Team involve?**

The HS&E Team has a diverse workload - our main responsibilities are to protect people, our environment, and to support the University to flourish.

This is achieved through planning, implementing strategies, procedures, guidance, and systems for the University to comply with our legal obligations, which in turn helps us to prevent accidents, injuries, and damage to the environment and the University's estate and equipment.

### **How many people work in the team and what are their roles?**

We are a team of 8 with experts in Business Continuity, Environment & Sustainability, Fire Safety, Scientific Safety, Health & Safety including Training.

### **How has the HS&E Team changed recently?**

In the last two years, we have had 5 new staff join the Team and/or the University - Arwel James, Fire Safety Advisor; Caroline FitzPatrick, HS&E (Scientific) Advisor; Scott Friel, HS&E (Business Continuity) Advisor; Sarah Hawkins, HS&E Officer and most recently Jess Farmer, Sustainability Officer. They join Dewi Day, Sustainability & Environment Advisor; Llyr Jones, HS&E (Training) Advisor; and Claire Williams, HS&E Manager.

### **Describe a typical day in your office?**

A day in the office can vary. With such a range of activities across the University's portfolio, we can be advising on Asbestos one minute to Zoonosis the next and the full alphabet in between.

Within the workload we can have a variety of emotion - happy, fun moments, to sad upsetting situations and of course, we can also feel frustration, which is usual in a busy challenging job role.

The day usually starts and ends with a cuppa though, and normally there is cake, biscuit, or some chocolate available too - all in moderation, of course!



### **What is the most rewarding aspect of the team's work?**

The most rewarding part of the work is being able to help colleagues across the University deliver their services safely and sustainably, whether that is part of the arrangements for



open days, Graduation, refurbishments, or construction work. Or being a very small part in assisting colleagues to deliver their research projects, with a vast array of hazards and innovative control measures for them.

### **What is the most challenging part of the team's work?**

The most challenging part of the job is to balance the risk with benefit of the control measures. In a Utopian world, where funding and resources are limitless, you can put all the controls imaginable into controlling our risks. However, in all organisations, funds are finite, and therefore balancing the benefits of those control measures against risk level to ensure the University can deliver its business can be very challenging.

### **What are the common misconceptions that people have about the work your department does?**

The largest misconception in the HS&E industry, is "you can't do that, HS&E does

not allow it". And if you add to this the most common question to the team, "do I need a risk assessment for that task?", you can understand how the industry may have obtained its image of being a preventor of activities. The team work hard to be an enabler of safe activity within the workplace.

Many people believe that you need a risk assessment for all activities that we undertake in work. This isn't the case - you only need a risk assessment for hazards that have the likelihood to cause significant harm to you, someone else or the environment.

If you need more information on a risk assessment you or your team should have, please contact the team on [hasstaff@aber.ac.uk](mailto:hasstaff@aber.ac.uk) or come along to one of our training courses - [www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/training](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/training)



*Left to right: Dewi Day, Jess Farmer, Scott Friel, Llyr Jones, Caroline FitzPatrick, Arwel James, Sarah Hawkins, Claire Williams*



# AberSkills



## Supporting students on their academic journey

by Non Jones, Subject Librarian, Information Services

In the ever-evolving world of education, students are constantly seeking resources and support to excel academically, develop their study skills, and prepare for their professional careers. With the launch of AberSkills, a newly updated bilingual website by Aberystwyth University, students now have access to a comprehensive one-stop-shop designed to meet all their academic, study and professional skills needs. This integrated website is packed with valuable information and resources consolidated in one convenient location, making it easier than ever for students to find the required information and succeed in their academic pursuits.

Whether it's a first-year student looking to enhance their study skills, an international student seeking language support, or a final-year student wishing to boost their employability, AberSkills is available to steer them towards the resources they require. It embodies the University's commitment to supporting students in their quest for knowledge, personal growth, and professional success.

AberSkills isn't just for students; it also supports academic staff in their efforts to enhance the learning experience. The platform offers guidance on embedding

skills sessions into the curriculum, helping educators provide comprehensive support to their students. AberSkills serves as a valuable reference site for academic staff and personal tutors in particular to direct and refer their students towards.

Starting university is a significant milestone, and the transition can be overwhelming. AberSkills recognises this and offers expert guidance to help students seamlessly adapt to university life. From settling into their new environment to managing their time effectively, they'll find valuable insights and practical tips to make this transition smooth.

It offers students the convenience of booking skills sessions tailored to their specific needs. Whether they're looking to improve their essay writing, presentation skills, or time management, there's a session for all categories of students.

AberSkills consolidates the information provided by service departments for one-to-one sessions, streamlining the process for students to access it when required, thus enhancing accessibility.

The platform provides valuable guidance on adhering to sound academic principles and good practice, mastering the art of proper

referencing, and equipping students with essential knowledge in these areas.

AberSkills recognises the importance of mental and emotional well-being in a student's life. The platform offers valuable resources and guidance on managing stress, maintaining a healthy work-life balance, and seeking support when needed.

The updated AberSkills website provides valuable guidance on mathematics and statistics, offering expert advice to help students excel in these subjects. Preparing for exams can be a daunting task and the website provides a wealth of resources, including exam tips and strategies. AberSkills also offers guidance and instruction on the use of different technologies employed at the University.

AberSkills offers students practical guidance on how to learn and how to make the most of their study time. The updated website also equips students with essential library and information skills, helping them find and evaluate academic sources, cite references correctly, and effectively utilise library resources to enhance the quality of their work.

In summary, AberSkills is a comprehensive and updated website designed to support students in every aspect of their academic journey. With a focus on academic and study skills, transitioning to university life, well-being, employability, and the effective use of technology, AberSkills is a valuable resource that aims to empower students and equip them with the tools they need to excel in their studies and beyond.



Find out more about AberSkills by visiting [www.aber.ac.uk/en/aberskills](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/aberskills)

## In addition to the day job...

Miranda Whall is an artist and lecturer in the School of Art. She is passionate about using artistic performance to bring new audiences into conversations about the climate emergency. One wet and windy weekend in August, she live-streamed from a ditch high in the Cambrian Mountains to raise awareness of the plight of our upland areas. ABER News spoke to Miranda about the experience and her work:

### Tell us a bit about the Soil Voices project?

Soil Voices was the creative component of a Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) funded discipline hopping project titled *Making the invisible visible: Instrumenting and interpreting an upland landscape for climate change resilience*. The Aberystwyth University academic team were myself, Professor Andrew Thomas from Geography and Earth Sciences, Dr Fred Labrosse from Computer Science, Professor Mariecia Fraser from IBERS; and Dr Pete Todd from Mathematics.

My role in the project was to visualise and present high-resolution soil sensor technology data from a new sensor network to be installed over 3 sites on the land managed by Pwllpeiran Upland Research Centre.

My aim was to offer a new perspective on the scientific research by literally embedding my body into the landscape to embody the physical, material, and technological aspects of the project. I wanted to entangle myself with the soil and its statistics to become a creature of the mud, the matter, the flesh of the world and embodied technology simultaneously, a kind of cyborg, a human, animal, plant, and machine.

My hope was that a decentred, non-hierarchical, and interconnected perspective would enable audiences to listen, literally and metaphorically, to what the earth is telling us about its condition and how it needs to be managed and protected to sustain human, animal, vegetal, fungal, and bacterial livelihoods as we move into more extreme and unpredictable weather conditions.

*Miranda helping to install the soil sensor network with Dr Fred Labrosse and Dr Pete Todd, Pwllpeiran Upland Research Centre. Photo by Dr Pete Todd, August 2022*





I lay amidst the soil sensor network in a pre-prepared self-dug 2ft ditch on the plateau known as the Ffridd (the upland fringe) at 600m approx. On the hour every hour, for about 30 minutes each time, I received and recited the data from the sensors through headphones via Dr Pete Todd's specially built 'talkie box'. The data stream communicated the fluctuating soil moisture and soil temperature readings from each sensor every fifteen minutes. The durational performance was intended to be 24 hours, sadly, but maybe prophetically, the tech failed me and so I performed for 13 hours from 3pm on Saturday 12 August to 4am on Sunday 13 August.

I livestreamed the durational performance via social media so that the event would be accessible, both to cultivate a sense of global togetherness and to occupy a platform that is synonymous with a limited attention span. I wanted people to drop into the livestream whenever they could for as long or little as they wanted, offering audiences freedom to experience my locatedness, my rootedness



Soil Voices rehearsal, Pwllpeiran Upland Research Centre. Photo by Ashley Calvert, August 2022

in physical, environmental, and geographical terms in relation to their own location, mobility and transience. I liked the idea of becoming a stationary reference point, proposing a kind of new temporal and spatial mapping. I wanted my global audience to experience my presence as continuous, just as we trust that the sun or moon will always be there, I wanted to be there, as a constant. I believe this reflects our relationship with the soil, i.e., we cannot fully comprehend that it will not be there, healthy, and fertile, whenever we need it, and for as long as we need it.

### **Can you describe what it was like in the ditch?**

While very snug and cosy in my dry suit in the ditch, I was preoccupied with a number of things: I was listening to the squeaking, crackling, scratching, spitting and hissing of the radio frequency interference in the 'talkie box', which often fooled me into thinking that a frog or mouse had fallen into the ditch; I was watching the frenzied fighting grasses bash each other repeatedly above my eyes; when there was light I was watching the clouds, when it was dark I was watching the rain, and feeling it tickling my face; I was imagining extra-terrestrial life signalling to me through a kind of mycorrhizal network of electrical currents in the earth; I was anxious about the 'talkie box' failing; I was anxious I wouldn't be able to recite the digits as they came through to me too thick and fast; and I was thinking about the friends, family and strangers who had been sending me messages on Facebook from all over the world. Overall it was a profoundly moving experience.

### **You describe your work as 'gentle activism' and 'silent protest'. Can you explain this?**

In her essay *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985), in which the concept of the cyborg represents the rejection of the separation of human from animal and human from machine, Donna Haraway said that "we must learn to stay with the trouble". By this she meant that living and

dying together on a damaged earth will prove more conducive to the kind of thinking that would provide the means to building more liveable futures. The umbrella title for my current projects is *Co-becoming: multispecies mingling and the art of attentiveness*; my intention for these projects is to explore "staying with the trouble" - I interpret this to mean getting down, getting in, being together and paying attention. To protest is to make a statement or action expressing disapproval of or objection to something; my protest or request is a gentle reminder to us all to slow down, get down, and pay attention to our non-human cohabitants, I am arguing for sentiocentrism over anthropocentrism.



When I was up there in the ditch, I was mingling with microorganisms and vegetal beings. To be still and enmeshed with other species for a slightly beyond usual and comfortable duration of time, a 24-hour cycle, is to propose an alternative way of thinking and being. The temporary close encounter I had with the ecosystem within and around the ditch was a great privilege; the work was an attempt to share my privileged vantage point.

Activism tries to bring about social and political change; my gentle activism, a removal of myself from the business as usual, a lie-in protest of sorts, is an attempt to encourage a change in perspective to enable a change in thinking and ultimately a change in behaviour. In this work I wanted to "materially collide, congeal, morph, evolve and disintegrate" to quote Michael Serres in his book *The Birth of Physics*,

to directly explore material entanglement, to explore a new position for ourselves in the order of things.

**Like much of your work, 'Soil Voices' was a hybrid art-science piece of work. Why do you think it's important to encourage non-scientists to be part of the climate change conversation?**

Interconnected thinking and being is a recognition that we need to bring everyone and every living thing together to find a way through and beyond the climate emergency, as well as mass extinction, environmental destruction, white supremacy, economic exploitation, misogyny, and gender oppression.

It is essential that art practice is in the 'conversation' because art can reside beyond definition. When people say, "this isn't art" or "is this art?" I always reply, "well what else is it?". Relational, socially engaged artists often feel they don't belong, we are forever finding ourselves in collaborations where we are the non-specialist. From a de-centered (humble, respectful, and caring) position we intentionally put another person at the centre so we can listen, watch, and ask questions; in this position we become useful as processors, connectors, and conduits.

Artists and art practice can change perspectives and enable and assist new imaginings. While specialists - scientists, engineers, lawyers, statisticians, and politicians etc - can get caught in the details specific to their field or to their goals, artists are good at squeezing in between the gaps or climbing up to get an overview.

Artists enjoy not knowing, we seek the borderlands, the liminal spaces of the unspeakable and unknowable. K. Melchor Quick Hall in her co-edited book *Mapping Gendered Ecologies* refers to the "Shoal" as a place beyond the shallow waters "where two or more cultures edge each other...in a constant state of transition" this fluid, dynamic





and moving space is where we need to be in the climate change conversation. Art cannot solve anything on its own, but in the company of other thinkers, makers, and doers in an “ecological space made of both water and not water”, artists can contribute to change.

**Prior to 'Soil Voices' you have completed several crawling performances, including as a sheep wandering the Cambrian Mountains, and through the streets of Glasgow and the deserts of Egypt to United Nations climate conferences carrying a living tree on your back. Where will your work take you next?**

My current work explores the interactions, ideas, and practices of multiple species, an exploration of the pluriverse, a world in which many worlds collide, and my attempt to experience and present post-anthropocentric

perspectives. I have been agitating the same hunches and probing the same propositions through different media and from multiple perspectives for many years. Each project is a proposition or series of propositions that I don't know the answers to – I feel I've just got to keep moving into entangled worlds of uncertainty.

My current umbrella title *Co-becoming: multispecies mingling and the art of attentiveness* is so far encompassing 3 main projects: *When Earth Speaks*, *When Seeds Speak* and *When Stone Speaks*. All 3 projects begin with 'dirty data' or source or unprocessed data and the writing or drawing of that data; the performative element of each project will be explored through collaboration with musicians, dancers, voice artists, sound artists, composers, and filmmakers.

## Aberystwyth Arts Centre Winter Craft Fair

17 November - 22 December

Ideas to inspire! The Arts Centre's annual extravaganza - over 50 stalls selling a wonderful array of crafts and gifts, many produced by local makers from Ceredigion and mid Wales.

### Opening hours

Monday - Saturday: 10am - 8pm  
 Sunday: 12pm - 5pm



# Spotlight on... Sociology

In 2019, the University launched a single-honours Sociology degree scheme. Convened by Professor Rhys Jones in the Department of Geography and Earth Science, the study scheme has been a great success, with an increasing number of students choosing to come here to study the subject.

In September 2022, Dr Bethany Simmonds joined the University as Senior Lecturer to lead and develop the new programme, and in September 2023 she was joined by two new sociology colleagues, Dr Yvonne Ehrstein and Dr Emma Sheppard.

As the first Sociology lecturers to be appointed at the University for over thirty years, *ABERNews* invited Bethany, Yvonne and Emma to tell us more about themselves and their plans for the course.

## Dr Bethany Simmonds

I completed my undergraduate degree at the University of Bath and my PhD awarded by the University of Southampton explored older people's experiences of physical activity in rural areas. I have spent twenty-five years studying and researching in the discipline of Sociology, mainly in the field of ageing and health. After six years as a Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Portsmouth, I was looking for opportunities to develop, and shaping a new Sociology programme is a rare and exciting prospect.



## Dr Yvonne Ehrstein

I gained my PhD in Sociology from City, University of London where I also taught for five years and was part of the Gender and Sexualities Research Centre's Organising Committee. My doctoral research explored discourses of equality, work and care on and beyond Britain's largest parenting website Mumsnet.com. Prior to joining DGES, I taught at the University of Essex on their Sociology programme. I am passionate about teaching and thrilled to contribute to shaping and growing Sociology at Aberystwyth.



## Dr Emma Sheppard

My research explores disability, time and imagined futures of care and joy. My teaching focuses on gender, sexuality, and disability - and social theory. I was awarded my PhD in 2017, by Edge Hill University; this was followed by a period as a Teaching Fellow with City, University of London, and as a Lecturer at Coventry University - and I have a strong interest in access and inclusion in teaching. I am really excited to bring my research and over fifteen years of teaching experience to developing Sociology at Aberystwyth.





Sociology was taught at Aberystwyth from the late 1960s until the late 1980s, by academics who were renowned for their ground-breaking work in rural ethnography. Our aim is to expand this work and look at the intersections of age, disability, class, gender/sexuality, and ethnicity, in relation to key contemporary issues of precarity (like the crisis in health care, immigration, the welfare state or the climate crisis) where sociological theory can be applied and have real world significance.

These themes draw on the expertise of the sociology team, as research driven teaching is vital in delivering quality education to students.

Bethany's research expertise is in the sociology of ageing and health. She recently published a book entitled *Ageing and the Crisis in Health and Social Care* (2021) in the *Ageing in a global context* series in Bristol University Policy Press. It examines the impact of globalisation, neoliberalism, austerity policies and ageism on health and social care systems in the UK, Sweden and Germany. It came to the conclusion that the pandemic drew attention to some precarious systems and some which do not provide a dignified service for older people. The book discusses some of the applied health research Bethany carried out as a Research Associate in the Department of Social and Community Medicine (and other departments) at the University of Bristol. She is currently developing some of the themes which emerged from her book, including moving towards a feminist ethics of care instead of necropolitical state decision-making of ageing/death in health and social care systems, and exploring the use of the concept of 'precarity capitalism' to galvanise intergenerational grievances around climate justice.

Yvonne's research expertise is in the sociologies of gender, work and the digital. As a feminist sociologist, her work is animated by questions about inequalities and power relations. In her current research, she explores what the 'digital turn' means in particular for mothers and people with caring responsibilities. Her work

on gender, social reproduction and digital parenting is published in the journals *Feminism & Psychology* and *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, and in the edited book *Neoliberalism in Context*. Yvonne's broader research interests centre around social, cultural and (post) feminist theory, the neoliberalisation of culture, conceptualisations of care and work-life balance across the online-offline spheres, as well as digital and innovative social research methods.

Emma's research expertise is in critical disability studies, particularly the lived experience and sociocultural understandings of pain and fatigue. She has recently published her first book, *Chronic Pain, BDSM and Crip Time* as a part of Routledge's *Interdisciplinary Disability Studies* series. In this, she explores how thinking about chronic pain and fatigue with 'crip time' exposes normative, ableist, assumptions underlying both how pain and the ideas of cure and recovery are understood. Her wider research encompasses disability futurities, time, and joy.

The emphasis placed on providing hands-on research methods supervision is a unique characteristic of the Sociology programme at Aberystwyth. For instance, in the second year, students get a week of intensive academic supervision when collecting data in groups. This level of support in data collection also improves students' transferable research skills for future careers.

In fact, employability is addressed in every aspect of our Sociology degree programme. The course will provide students with the opportunity to develop critical thinking, knowledge and research skills useful in government, third sector organisations and social policy. They will graduate with the breadth and flexibility of skills needed to address some of the key challenges facing contemporary society, setting them in good stead to be in a position to consider a wide range of careers after graduating.



# Digital support for new teaching staff

by Dr Sioned Llywelyn, Digital Skills Lead, Information Services

In September 2023, Information Services launched IS [Digital Essentials for teaching](#), a new Blackboard Learn Ultra site designed to support new teaching staff at the University.

## What is the 'IS Digital Essentials for teaching' and what is its purpose?

The main aim of the site is to ensure that all new University staff are 'digitally' prepared for teaching, by bringing together all the advice, guidance, and helpful information from Information Services in one easy-to-access space.

With a helpful checklist and automatic access for all staff through Blackboard Learn Ultra, this should save precious time for teaching staff, as well as being a helpful resource for all departmental staff.

## What can I expect to find in the site?

The site contains a wide variety of resources, including guidance on using the OneDrive to store work; how to set up a new module in Blackboard Learn Ultra; guidance on lecture capture; and information about useful training sessions and opportunities from Information Services.

We've organised these resources into the following three main folders to make it as easy as possible to navigate:

- The first folder equips you with the essential guidance for your pre-teaching preparations.
- The second provides guidance on the essential technologies and systems you'll need for your initial weeks of teaching.
- The final folder contains the resources you may wish to explore to further enhance your teaching.

Also, there are two extra folders dedicated to enhancing teaching accessibility and supporting your personal development.

## How can staff access the site?

All staff should have automatic access to the site through Blackboard Learn Ultra under 'Organisations'. Please [take a look at the introduction to the site](#) to learn how to get started.

## How can staff provide feedback?

We welcome feedback on all aspects of the site, from its content to user experience. Your feedback will directly influence our ongoing enhancement of the site to make it as valuable a resource as possible for new teaching staff at the University.

Please contact the Digital Skills Team with any feedback or questions - [digi@aber.ac.uk](mailto:digi@aber.ac.uk).



# Representing Wales in Hong Kong

Andrew Fleming from Estates, Facilities and Residences will be travelling to Hong Kong to represent Wales at an international lawn bowling event in November.

The annual Hong Kong International Bowls Classic, which takes place from 11-19 November, is a prestigious event in the international bowling calendar.



A member and qualified coach at Clwb Bowlio Machynlleth Bowling Club, Andrew has been playing bowls for 35 years and plays as many as six times a week during the summer months.

He is no stranger to international competitions, this year reaching his 70th cap.

He has won a number of tournaments and titles, and representing Wales at World Bowls in Australia, and bowled at events in New Zealand, America, Cyprus, and Israel, and competed in the Commonwealth Games in Delhi in 2010.



**Hawlio Heddwch**

**Pursuit of Peace**

1-7 Tachwedd 2023

1-7 November 2023

1872 PRIFYSGOL ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY

Gŵyl Ymchwil Festival of Research

## An update from AberSU

We were thrilled to welcome students back into the Students' Union at the beginning of the new academic year and were happy to hold a variety of events and activities over the Hello! / Welcome period to give first year students and returning students the best Freshers experience possible.



During Welcome Week we held the annual Freshers Fair in a "big top" on Chapel Green (with the third day relocating last minute into the Great Hall in the Arts Centre due to Storm Agnes). The 3-day event showcased 155 stalls to over 3,000 students.

We also worked with the University's Commercial Services team to host a range of evening events at the same venue, ranging from a *Barbie* film evening to Bingo Lingo, which attracted 3,200 attendees over the course of the week.

Over 120 *TîmAber* Sports Clubs and Societies hosted a range of welcome events during the first two weeks of the new academic year - to

welcome new students, share a taste of what the group has to offer and provide plenty of opportunities to socialise. 22% of Aberystwyth students are already a member of *TîmAber* sports clubs and societies.

AberSU also held a range of in-person meet-and-greet events for liberation groups attended by almost 300 students.

41 'A Team' student volunteers gave over 660 hours towards 200 volunteering opportunities in order to welcome and support students arriving at Aber over the 10 days of the welcome period (on top of the 260 hours of training they attended that was led by AberSU staff in the lead up to Welcome Week). This includes the



night team who were out-and-about in town during the evenings to help any student needing a little helping hand.

Our Officer Team (as well as a team of academic volunteers) have been working hard to welcome new and returning students to Aberystwyth on welcome stalls and spoke at over 30 welcome talks over Welcome Week.

Our Advice Service has continued to support students throughout - with a mix of drop-in sessions available for all Aber students and a health and wellbeing stall for the three days of Freshers fair - raising awareness of safe drinking, giving out over 3,000 latex-free condoms for students and also raising awareness of the Helo Period campaign in partnership with student support (with free reusable period products available for Aber

students).

Here at AberSU we are a small but dedicated team of 15 permanent professional staff members and 5 full time student officers (as well as our super volunteers and student staff). We are extremely grateful to each and every AberSU member of staff, officer and volunteer for working tirelessly in order to provide all of the above for Aber students this year.

We would also like to thank University departments, especially the Commercial team and the Arts Centre, for working closely with AberSU over the welcome period to provide opportunities for Aber students to love student life in Aberystwyth.

Diolch yn fawr iawn.



AberSU volunteers

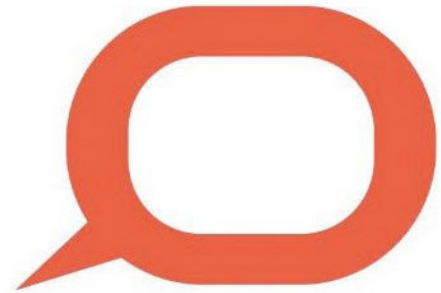
## Writing for *The Conversation*

Four new short online training courses have been launched to help academics understand how *The Conversation* works, learn about the editorial support that is provided, and to develop the skills to write for non-academic audiences.

These free courses are available for researchers, academics and PhD candidates to access at a time to suit them.

Find out more:

[www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/conversation](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/news/conversation)



THE CONVERSATION



### The library and information association

Simone Anthony, the University's Healthcare subject librarian has been awarded a place on the Library and Information Association (CILIP) 125 list as one of "the next generation of professionals who will help lead the sector into a new age of information."



The CILIP 125 list recognises and celebrates a new generation of librarians, information, and knowledge management professionals who drive positive change, make a difference, and have an impact across all sectors.

Simone is one of only ten people from the Welsh library and information sector to receive this honour.

Responding to the news, Elizabeth Kensler, Customer Services and Academic Engagement Manager in Information Services, said:

"Simone has shone since her first days with Aberystwyth University libraries, with a clear passion to help staff and students reach their potential. She is warm and supportive, both to her library colleagues and to library users, and

is a knowledgeable, dedicated, and creative subject librarian.

"All Simone's colleagues in Information Services extend to her their warmest congratulations on this exciting achievement."

Announcing the 125 list, CILIP Chief Executive, Nick Poole, said: "As we face more change and opportunity in the coming years, navigating a rapidly evolving digital landscape, with the added challenges of censorship and disinformation, and an increasingly urgent need to live and work in more sustainable ways, these 125 new professionals will be leading the way. This is a set of passionate individuals, contributing energy, knowledge and impact to the institutions, organisations and communities they serve."



## Academic Promotions

Following this year's Academic Promotions round, 31 of our academic colleagues are celebrating their promotion to Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer, Senior Research Fellow and Research Fellow in the 2022-23 academic year.

### Our new Professors are:



**Professor Louise Marshall**  
English and Creative  
Writing



**Professor Andrea Hammel**  
Modern Languages

### Our new Readers are:

**Dr Jesse Heley**  
Geography and Earth Science

**Dr Tristram Irvine-Fynn**  
Geography and Earth Science

**Dr Kerrie Farrar**  
IBERS

**Dr Elin Royles**  
International Politics

**Dr Russell Morpew**  
Life Sciences

### Our new Senior Lecturers are:

**Dr Aloysius Igboekwu**  
Aberystwyth Business School

**Dr Chuan Lu**  
Computer Science

**Dr Helen Miles**  
Computer Science

**Dr Neil Taylor**  
Computer Science

**Dr Ann Matthews**  
English and Creative Writing

**Dr Rhys Dafydd Jones**  
Geography and Earth Science

**Dr Sinead O'Connor**  
Geography and Earth Science

**Dr Charalampos Efstathopoulos**  
International Politics

**Dr Kamila Stullerova**  
International Politics

**Dr Kathy Hampson**  
Law and Criminology

**Dr Marco Arkestrijn**  
Life Sciences

**Dr Sebastian McBride**  
Life Sciences

**Dr Roger Santer**  
Life Sciences

**Dr Christopher Finlayson**  
Physics

**Dr Victoria Wright**  
Psychology

**Paul Croft**  
School of Art

**Dr Kate Woodward**  
Theatre, Film and Television Studies

**Elin Morse**  
Theatre, Film and Television Studies

**Dr Simon Rodway**  
Welsh and Celtic Studies

**Elizabeth Morse**  
Welsh and Celtic Studies

### Our new Lecturers are:

**Dr Martine Garland**  
Aberystwyth Business School

**Dr Harry Toland**  
Geography and Earth Science

### Our new Senior Research Fellows are:

**Dr Mike Brookes**  
Theatre, Film and Television Studies

**Our new Research Fellows are:**  
**Luned Roberts**

IBERS

## Awards for Exceptional Research Impact

The winners of the Aberystwyth University Awards for Exceptional Research Impact 2022 have been announced.

The awards recognise the important benefits Aberystwyth University researchers and their work make to society.

The award for impact achieved in the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities was awarded to Professor Ryszard Piotrowicz from the Department of Law and Criminology for his outstanding work on human trafficking law and policy. Professor Piotrowicz's research focuses on the legal regulation of trafficking of human beings. His research clarifies the rights of people who have been, or are at risk of being, trafficked to legal protection, and the obligations of States to provide such protection.

The award for impact arising from the Sciences was awarded to Professor Mike Christie from Aberystwyth Business School for his work for the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Professor Christie's research contributed to the IPBES 'European and Central Asia' (ECA) assessment, which provides a framework to incorporate economic and socio-cultural values of nature and its services into public policies.



*Professor Elizabeth Treasure presenting award to Professor Ryszard Piotrowicz*



# Senior appointments

## VICE-CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE



**Professor Angela Hatton** joined the University in August as Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation. Angela was previously Chief Scientist and Director of

Science and Technology at the National Oceanography Centre (NOC) in Southampton. A former Research Director for the Scottish Association for Marine Services where she worked closely with the University of the Highlands and Islands, Professor Hatton is the Principal Investigator for the Climate Linked Atlantic Sector Science Programme, which delivers the UK's contribution to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission led Global Ocean Observing System. She is a graduate of Liverpool John Moores University and the University of East Anglia where she completed a PhD in Marine and Microbial Biogeochemistry.



**Dr Patrick Finney** from the Department of International Politics has joined the Executive team on a temporary basis as Pro Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, covering

Professor Anwen Jones, who has embarked on a four-month period of research leave.

## ACADEMIC REGISTRY



**Trevor Pearce** has joined the University as Interim Academic Registrar. He most recently worked at the Wellcome Sanger Institute as Head of Project Support and Operations and previously worked at the

Royal College of Art. Trevor has 25 years of experience in a wide range of roles in higher education administration, specialising in institutional governance, policy development, registry processes and systems and quality assurance.

## FINANCE AND PLANNING

**Simon Crick** joins the University this month as the new Director of Finance and Planning. Simon has almost 15 years' extensive experience in senior finance roles within the education and healthcare sectors. He previously worked for the University of Suffolk, where he was Interim Director of Finance and Planning, leading the institution's financial operations and supporting its strategic plan. He was formerly the Vice Principal of Finance and Resources at Coventry College and Chief Finance Officer at Warwick Medical School. Simon was also Chief Finance Officer for Staffordshire Police and Crime Commissioner and spent many years in a variety of senior roles in the NHS.

## PLANNING

**Helen Eustace** will join the University this month as Head of Planning. Helen joins from Wrexham Glyndŵr University, where she was Planning and Reporting Manager since 2019 and coordinated the University's strategic planning. She was formerly Planning Manager and Project Manager for Horticulture Wales at the same institution and also worked for the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board as its Acting Head of Dairy Market Intelligence.

## SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE



**Professor Louise Marshall** has been appointed as Head of the new School of Languages and Literature, which comprises the departments of English & Creative Writing, Modern Languages, and Welsh and Celtic Studies.



**Dr Rhianedd Jewell** has been appointed Deputy Head of School and Head of Department of Welsh and Celtic Studies.

# Appointments

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

## ABERYSTWYTH BUSINESS SCHOOL



**Benjamin Awuah** has joined the University as a Lecturer in Accounting and Finance. He is a qualified accountant (Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana) and currently a doctoral candidate

at Bournemouth University. Prior to joining Aberystwyth Business School, Benjamin worked as a part-time lecturer at Bournemouth University and Nottingham Trent University. His research interests include sustainability reporting, corporate governance and sustainable development.



**Dr Alex Bawuah** has joined the University as a Postdoctoral Research Associate in Rural Health Economics. Dr Bawuah holds a PhD (in Economics) from the University of Nottingham Ningbo China. His

research focuses on applying econometric techniques to evaluate/analyse policy-relevant health issues, especially in the areas of quality healthcare, maternal health, child health and child development.

## DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE



**Dr Arina Buzdalova** has joined the department as a lecturer. Prior to this, she held a role in teaching and research at Swansea University. Dr Buzdalova obtained both her MS degree and her PhD in Computer Science

from ITMO University (Russia). Her research

interests include evolutionary computation, specifically parameter control for evolutionary algorithms and hybridising machine learning with randomised search heuristics.

## DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES



**Dr Karen Jankulak** has joined the Anglo-Norman Dictionary as a part-time Editorial Assistant. She gained her PhD from the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto, in 1996. After a period teaching and

working at the Dictionary of Old English in Toronto, she was a postdoctoral researcher at the School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, then Lecturer/Senior Lecturer at the University of Wales Lampeter (later Trinity Saint David). Her research explores the connections between Britain, Ireland, and Brittany in the early and central Middle Ages, chiefly through the lens of hagiography and pseudo-historical literature. She is also active in disability projects and social health projects, drawing on her experience caring for her son, who is profoundly disabled.

## DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND EARTH SCIENCES



**Dr Thomas Dekeyser** has joined the department as a 150th Anniversary Research Fellow to research the social implications of Artificial Intelligence. He is a cultural-digital geographer and

experimental film maker who investigates technological politics, with a focus on practices and theories of refusal. Before moving to



Aberystwyth, he was a British Academy Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Royal Holloway, University of London.



**Dr Emma Sheppard** has joined the department as a Lecturer in Sociology, coming from Coventry University. She is a sociologist in critical disability studies, and her research includes exploring chronic pain and fatigue, queer-crip futurities, and time. She also has a secondary interest in accessible research and teaching.



**Dr Yvonne Ehrstein** has joined as a Lecturer in Sociology specialising in the sociologies of gender, work and the digital. She gained her PhD in Sociology from City, University of London where she

also taught for five years. Most recently, Yvonne taught at the University of Essex on their Sociology programme. Preceding this and the PhD, she completed an MA (Dist) in Sociology and worked in several capacities at the interdisciplinary gender research centre at the University of Frankfurt. Yvonne's broader research interests centre around feminisms and inequality, the politics of social media, as well as conceptualisations of care and work-life balance.

### DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY



**Ioana Mihai** joined the department as a Lecturer. After completing her MSc in Psychology at the University of Pavia (Italy), she pursued her PhD at Bangor University, focused on developmental cognitive neuroscience.

While still at Bangor, she obtained an ESRC postdoctoral fellowship to explore the links

between loneliness and social attention. Ioana is interested in the role of social connectedness in shaping cognitive development, and especially attention, and in supporting healthy aging. Her methods involve eye-tracking, behavioural paradigms and questionnaires.

### CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS (CBTB) FOR WALES



**Bev Hopkins** has recently joined the CBTB team as a part time veterinary research associate. Bev also works at the Wales Veterinary Science Centre and is a visiting lecturer at Aberystwyth School of Veterinary Science on the Veterinary Biosciences degree courses.

### STUDENT SERVICES



**Manon Charles** has joined the Careers Service as a Welsh Medium Careers Consultant, and is the new link Consultant with DGES, Psychology and Welsh & Celtic Studies. Prior to joining the University, Manon worked

as a qualified Careers Adviser with Careers Wales in Aberystwyth. She supported people of all ages to identify and develop their skills and overcome barriers.



**Karleene Evans** has recently joined the Student Services Wellbeing Department as a Student Wellbeing Practitioner – Counsellor. She is a BACP (British Association of Counselling and

Psychotherapy) registered Therapist whose core training is in a person-centred and experiential way of working. Karleene has experience of working in the further education sector and also as trauma-informed therapist supporting Children and Young People.

# Aberystwyth Arts Centre

## The House with Chicken Legs

Les Enfants Terribles Theatre Company

**18 - 20 October**

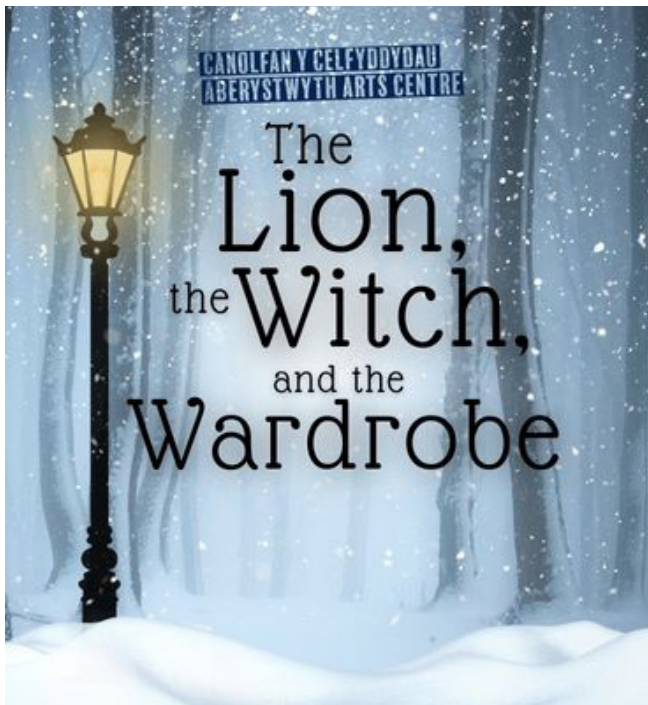
Marinka dreams of a normal life, where she can stay somewhere long enough to make friends; but there's one problem - her house has chicken legs and moves on without warning.

Based on Sophie Anderson's much-loved novel, the story comes to life with puppets, live music and magic in this co-production from award-winning theatre company Les Enfants Terribles and HOME Manchester.

We follow Marinka, a young girl trying to find her feet when her home is quite literally pulled from under her. The show is funny, thought-provoking and full of life as it deftly navigates the complexities of loss from a whole new perspective.



[www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk/theatre/house-chicken-legs](http://www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk/theatre/house-chicken-legs)



## The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe

Aberystwyth Arts Centre Youth Theatre

**14 - 16 December**

Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy embark on a magical mystery tour to the Land of Narnia through the wardrobe. There they encounter the wicked White Witch, representing the forces of evil, and the King of the Beasts, Aslan the lion, representing all that is good and right. The White Witch is destroyed, allowing good to triumph over evil in the time-honoured way.

[www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk/theatre/lion-witch-and-wardrobe](http://www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk/theatre/lion-witch-and-wardrobe)

[www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk](http://www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk)



# Aberystwyth Arts Centre

## Abertoir

14 - 19 November

Abertoir, Wales' International Horror Festival, turns 18 this year! With an absolutely crammed schedule, we'll be covering everything from classic films to sneak previews of movies not even released in the UK. Throughout the festival, we'll be taking a look at the history of the 18 certificate, Bruceploitation, a special talk on the minefields of trying to distribute cult horror movies in the 90s, and we'll be screening some brand new Welsh horror films with a connected discussion on Welsh death customs and omens throughout history.

Special guests include broadcaster Robin Ince, who will be performing a special horror edition of his show *Bibliomaniac*, along with a live recording of his podcast *An Uncanny Hour*. We've played *The Wicker Man* plenty of times in the past, so to celebrate its 50th anniversary, we're putting our tongue firmly in cheek and inviting everyone to "Sing-a-



long-a-Wicker Man!". There will be an offsite screening, comedians Nicko and Joe will be back to make fun of a particularly bad movie, and we welcome Jeremy Dyson (*The League of Gentlemen*) along with acclaimed director Gary Sherman to reveal an extremely exciting project that's so special we're not going to reveal it here. There will be plenty more to come, so keep up to date at [www.abertoir.co.uk](http://www.abertoir.co.uk).

## Teulu / Family

1 December - 7 April (Oriel 1 / Gallery 1)

Teulu (Family) will see families from Ceredigion, Powys and Gwynedd working with Aberystwyth Arts Centre to co-curate a major exhibition that will take inspiration and show works from our national collections at National Library of Wales and National Museum Wales - Amgueddfa Cymru. It is a project that breaks new ground, is innovative and which is trying to find new models of working that puts the public at the heart of decision-making. At its core is the aim to break down the barriers that prevent family audiences from enjoying and taking part in the arts.




[www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk](http://www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk)