

Aber^rNEWS

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Aberystwyth in the top 40

Aberystwyth University has climbed 50 places in the *Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2015-16* which were published at the end of September.

Ranked in the band of 301-350 out of 800 institutions worldwide, Aberystwyth has also climbed into the top 40 UK institutions featured, at 39th out of 78.

Based on the five pillars of teaching, research, citations, industry income and international outlook, Aberystwyth has excelled in international outlook where it is ranked 162nd, and citations where it is ranked 260th.

Professor April McMahon, Vice-Chancellor of Aberystwyth University said: "This is the latest in a series of league table improvements, mirrored in the most recent *The Times / The Sunday Times Good University Guide* and the *QS World University Rankings*. These rises confirm the growing recognition of our research and of our excellent work to improve the student experience here at Aberystwyth."

The THE World University Rankings was the third league table published in the last month where Aberystwyth University's position has improved dramatically.

Aberystwyth University was a top climber in *The Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide* published on 20 September, up 14 places, and up 100 places in the *QS World University Rankings* published on 15 September.

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Copy deadline for this edition is **Monday 30 November**.



Michal Mos, Head of Science & Technology at Terravesta with a miscanthus plug developed from seed, ready for planting

£898k to produce green fuel faster

Aberystwyth scientists are playing a pivotal role in a £1.8 million project to develop the technology required to plant the energy crop miscanthus from seed.

As part of a project led by Terravesta Assured Energy Crops and funded by AgriTech Catalyst, a team from IBERS will investigate how to optimise conditions for producing seed, and will trial a number of new varieties to investigate their yield and suitability for UK conditions.

Fferm Penglais welcomes 700 students

700 bedrooms have been opened to students at the new £45m student residences, Fferm Penglais. Inspired by the landscape and architecture of rural Wales, it offers some of the best student accommodation in the UK in a series of three storey buildings with flats for six or eight students living in self-catered accommodation.

Jim Wallace, Director of Campus and Commercial Services said: "Student response to the new facilities offered on Fferm Penglais has been excellent and the University is delighted that all 700 rooms which were ready for the new academic year are occupied."

Once completed, Fferm Penglais will offer accommodation for 1000 students. The remaining 300 rooms, will be completed this year, and open to students from September 2016.

Wales Veterinary Science Centre opens

The new Wales Veterinary Science Centre was officially launched by Welsh Government Deputy Minister for Farming and Food, Rebecca Evans back in June. Located on the site of the former Animal and Plant Health Agency's (APHA) Veterinary Investigation Centre, the Wales Veterinary Science Centre has been established by Iechyd Da, a consortium of independent Welsh veterinary practices together with Welsh Lamb and Beef Producers Ltd, and Aberystwyth University.

Rebecca Evans was joined by Professor Christianne Glossop, Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales, Professor April McMahon, the Vice-Chancellor, and Mr Phil Thomas, Director of Iechyd Da.

Iechyd Da was recently appointed by APHA as a third party provider to deliver expert post-mortem examinations of new and re-emerging diseases of farm animals. The service has been operational since April 2015.

Building on the post-mortem examinations for farm animals, Iechyd Da intend to broaden the range of services offered to include companion animals and wildlife species, as well as to develop a range of laboratory diagnostic services to support disease eradication programmes and to support field practitioners in disease diagnosis.

Deputy Minister Rebecca Evans AM said: "I am pleased to officially open the Wales Veterinary Science Centre, which will significantly strengthen and enhance the important contribution the veterinary profession makes to rural life in Wales and raises standards of animal health and welfare. It will also bolster the rural economy by securing technical jobs for the area, benefit the wider economy by supporting our farming communities, and be an asset to the UK by contributing valuable data to the surveillance network."



Professor April McMahon, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Christianne Glossop, Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales, Rebecca Evans, Welsh Government Deputy Minister for Farming and Food and Mr Phil Thomas, Director of Iechyd Da.

Professor Christianne Glossop, Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales said: "The Centre will have a significant role in the protection of animals in Wales and will provide an important contribution to a successful and resilient farming industry, reflecting the essential role of the veterinary profession in Wales."

Professor April McMahon, Vice Chancellor said: "We are very proud that Aberystwyth University has worked in partnership with both industry and private practice to help deliver veterinary provision for agriculture in Wales. The University is growing its capability in animal and human health, strongly linked to our leading research and teaching in agriculture and food production. The Wales Veterinary Science Centre is an example of integrated, partnership working in areas vital to the rural Welsh economy. It is also a key step towards our ambition of developing a Vet School for Wales in Aberystwyth."

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S COLUMN

I'm writing this on a beautiful sunny morning. But it's definitely Autumn. There's a little nip in the air, and while it seems 5 minutes ago there were strawberries and asparagus everywhere, now it's plums, courgettes and sweetcorn cobs as far as the eye can see (maybe I should start adding a recipe or two to this column...).

I love this time of year. I always think of it as New Year (no idea why people make a fuss about January). Children have gone back to school; students have just started at or returned to College or University; and our annual cycle starts again. There is a palpable sense of new beginnings and our Twitter feeds are full of our new undergraduates enjoying life as a student at Aberystwyth.

Believe it or not, this means it's also the perfect time to be planning for next year's student recruitment, and thinking about those prospective students who will join us in 2016 and beyond. Colleagues all around the University have made a magnificent effort in Clearing, but our biggest challenge and greatest opportunity now lies in bringing in more, high quality applications for 2016 – and we must see that as everyone's job and everyone's priority. Aber isn't for everyone (some students definitely want to be in a city; and we don't offer absolutely every subject); but when it's the right choice, we know it makes an extraordinary, life-changing difference. And we know from our alumni that a real affection for the University and the town stays with them, as do many of the friendships they make here.

However, if recruitment and bringing in excellent new students is vital for us all, there are some colleagues for whom it is the absolute core of their role. We spend over £5m a year on people and activities directly related to recruitment, marketing and communications. That's a big number. We must keep investing in these areas of work – that is beyond any doubt. But we also have to be sure, as a responsible organisation in tough times,

that we are getting the best value for that money, and that we are working in a way that allows and encourages genuinely innovative ideas and ways of working to come forward and enhance what we do.

So, we've put in place a high-level Sponsor Group, to look, over the coming few months, at what we do in the general areas of recruitment, marketing, and communications, and how we can do even better in the future. This Group is chaired by Neil Glasser, Institute Director for IGHP, and he and the other members are particularly keen to gather ideas from right across the University, from academic and professional support staff and students. How can we get the good news out most effectively about advances like our investment in the Estate, or our improvements in employability? How can we get on the agenda for prospective students and those who advise and influence them, as a university that has excellent learning and teaching, and student success right at the heart of everything we do?

The Sponsor Group is looking for your thoughts on what we do well, what we could do better, and for your great ideas on improving recruitment, marketing and communications. You can get involved by sending ideas and suggestions to sponsorgroup@aber.ac.uk

We are also starting to think about how this feeds into the new Strategic Plan for 2017-22; but that's a topic for the next column!

Professor April McMahon, Vice-Chancellor



NEWS continued

Tell Us Now

This semester, the University is running a new student campaign called *Tell Us Now* designed to enhance the student experience at Aberystwyth. Professor John Grattan, Pro Vice-Chancellor explains more:

"A key aim for the University is to combine our recognised teaching and research excellence with an outstanding student experience. *Tell Us Now* is part of a long term initiative which launched in September and aims to engage our students to work with us in developing their student experience.

The campaign this semester will primarily focus on a conversation with our second and third year students about the 2015 NSS results.

"*Tell Us Now* will also provide opportunities for encouraging staff-student dialogue through a variety of activity across traditional and digital channels including social media. The project team have developed a range of promotional materials to raise awareness of the campaign including an animated short film.

"Whatever you do and wherever you work at the University you're contributing to the student experience at Aberystwyth. The insights drawn from *Tell Us Now* will help us to understand, reflect and make enhancements to ensure that the Aber experience is the best student experience."

You can watch the film on www.aber.ac.uk/tellusnow



Aberystwyth lecturer voted tenth most influential woman in computing



Dr Hannah Dee, a Computer Science lecturer at Aberystwyth, has been named by Computer Weekly as the tenth most influential woman in UK computing.

Dr Dee is a former deputy chair of BCSWomen, the Chartered Institute for IT's group for women, and is recognised for her work in establishing the BCSWomen Lovelace Colloquium, the UK's main conference for female undergraduates which is now in its

seventh year. Her research areas are computer vision for the analysis of human behaviour, the detection of shadows and reasoning about shadows, and student attitudes to the study of computer science. Dr Dee is the highest ranked academic on the list, which is in its fourth year.

She appears alongside such notable figures as Joanna Shields, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Culture Media and Sport and Digital Economy Advisor to the Prime Minister, and Trudy Norris-Grey, managing director of Microsoft's public sector business in Central and Eastern Europe.

Responding to the announcement, Dr Hannah Dee said: "I was amazed to make the shortlist to be honest, I was checking twitter every now and then and when I saw who placed in the 21-50 spots I was fairly sure I'd not made the top 50 this year. Then my phone went mental... buzz buzz buzz across the table. I think I'm the highest placed academic this year, which is nuts. Nice, but nuts."

Earth's escape from its ancient "deep freeze"

An international team of scientists, including Professor Michael Hambrey from the University's Centre for Glaciology, has discovered how our planet may have escaped from a global deep-freeze about 635 million years ago.

Their research, funded by the Natural Environment Research Council, has recently been published in the journal *Nature Geoscience*, in an article led by Professor Doug Benn of the University Centre on Svalbard.

The team, co-ordinated by Professor Ian Fairchild of Birmingham University, includes scientists from the UK, Norway, France and the USA.

Professor Mike Hambrey said: "This very exciting project has brought together the skills of glaciologists, geochemists, geophysicists and numerical modellers to resolve one of the most intractable problems in Geology.

"The fieldwork in Spitsbergen was challenging at times, especially when we had to regroup after storms destroyed our camps, but we are pleased with the large amount of data we have collected.

"Our new paper will be the first of many, covering not just Spitsbergen but also Northeast Greenland, where we have also worked."



NASMA accredited

George Jones and Janet Hardy from Student Support have achieved accreditation from the National Association of Student Money Advisers, recognised as the leading authority on all matters relating to student advice and funding.

Student Support Services

Student Support Services has been awarded the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation's Approved Provider Standard for both its Learner Support Mentoring scheme (which supports disabled students and those with specific learning differences) and its Signpost Mentoring scheme which primarily supports new undergraduates.

The Approved Provider Standard (APS) is the national quality standard designed specifically for all types of mentoring and befriending projects. Projects which meet the requirements of the standard are accredited for three years.

Centre for Widening Participation, Equality and Social Inclusion

Alongside a change in role for Dr Debra Croft, to Director of Equality, the new "Centre for Widening Participation, Equality and Social Inclusion" now includes Equality and has moved to its new Campus home in the Cwrt Mawr Hub. All are welcome to come and visit – especially with new ideas and thoughts on fairness across services, front of house and behind the scenes, academic departments, staff, and students. The Centre will host an Open Day in November and staff and students are encouraged to drop in for coffee and cake.

Graduation 2015



The four days from 14th-17th July saw eight graduation ceremonies and more than 10,000 graduates along with their families, friends and supporters. In addition to a highly distinguished group of Honorary Fellows, Honorary Degrees were awarded for the first time.

Graduation week is always a fantastic occasion, and we wish all our newest graduates the best of success in whatever they go on to do next.

Fellows

Julia Gillard

The Honourable Julia Gillard, the 27th Prime Minister of Australia, was conferred as a Fellow of Aberystwyth University on 30th June. Born in Barry, Ms Gillard became Australia's first female Prime Minister in 2010, a role she served in until 2013.

Eurwen Richards

Eurwen Richards is the first female Cheese Master in the UK and former President of the Society of Dairy Technology. The Royal Welsh Agricultural Society has named an award after her – 'The Eurwen Richards Award for the Best Welsh-produced Cheeses'.

Robin Williams

Renowned researcher in semiconductor physics and nanotechnology, Professor Williams is a Fellow of the Royal Society and was awarded a CBE in 2004 for his outstanding contribution to research in higher education.

Miguel Alario Franco

Professor Miguel Alario Franco is a renowned researcher in solid state chemistry and former Aberystwyth lecturer. He is President of the Spanish Royal Academy of Sciences and was the founder and first president of the Solid State Chemistry Group of the Spanish Royal Society of Chemistry.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth

Lord Bourne, an Aberystwyth Law alumnus, is Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department of Energy and Climate Change, and the Wales Office. He is a member of the

Advisory Board of Aberystwyth's Centre for Welsh Legal Affairs and Honorary President of Aberystwyth Conservative Future.

Debbie Moon

Award-winning television writer and Aberystwyth Drama alumnus, Debbie Moon is the creator and principal writer of *WolfBlood*, a BAFTA-nominated television series currently in its third series on CBBC.

Francesca Rhydderch

Dr Francesca Rhydderch is an award-winning author and Aberystwyth English alumnus. Her debut novel *The Rice Paper Diaries* was longlisted for the Authors' Club Best First Novel Award and won the Wales Book of the Year Fiction Prize 2014.

Lyn Evans

Internationally-renowned physicist Dr Lyn Evans, a key figure at CERN, led the team that designed, built and commissioned the Large Hadron Collider. He was awarded a Special Fundamental Physics Prize in 2012 for his contribution towards the discovery of the Higgs boson.

Iolo Williams

Wildlife television presenter and naturalist Iolo Williams began working for the RSPB in 1985. He now works for the BBC and S4C and presents *Springwatch*, *Autumnwatch* and *Winterwatch*.

Jeremy Bowen (2014)

Renowned journalist and BBC Middle East Editor, Jeremy Bowen, was presented as a Fellow a year after being honoured in absentia. Jeremy Bowen was unable to attend last year's ceremony as he was reporting from the conflict in Gaza.

Honorary Doctorates

Dylan Iorwerth, Journalist, award-winning writer and winner of multiple literary awards at the National Eisteddfod.

Huw Cathan Davies, internationally-renowned atmospheric physicist.

Honorary Bachelor Degrees

Bryn Jones, co-ordinator of the Penparcau Forum.

Rhian Phillips, former headteacher of Plascrug Primary School.

A Mindful University

In April 2015 the University achieved a silver award in the corporate health standard, and as part of this the University is seeking to promote health and wellbeing in order to create a remarkable workforce. Creating a 'Mindfulness Network' and aiming to become a 'mindful university' is a key part of the university's health and wellbeing strategy. Mindfulness is a secular adaptation of an ancient practice linked to wisdom, which has broad social, economic and health benefits. It is a recognised tool to help reduce stress and anxiety, increase emotional intelligence and improve communication, and for these reasons the University is actively promoting mindfulness practice across the University community including staff, students and members of the public. One of the aims of the Mindfulness Network is to develop individuals and to enable them to practice mindfulness on their own or to small groups.

“ Mindfulness cultivates a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment. ”

In simple terms, mindfulness means 'awareness'. It means paying more attention to the present moment, to your own thoughts and feelings and to the world around you, in order to improve your mental wellbeing. It can be an antidote to the 'tunnel vision' that can develop in daily life when we are busy, tired and stressed and stop noticing the world around us. Mindfulness cultivates a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment. It also involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them; without believing, for instance, that there's a 'right' or 'wrong' way to think or feel in any given moment.

Mindfulness is derived from an essential element of Buddhist practice. It has more recently been popularised in the western world by Jon Kabat-Zinn, who has developed a mindfulness-based stress reduction programme. Consequently, although mindfulness has religious origins it is not, necessarily, a religious practice. Instead it is about reminding ourselves to pay attention to what is happening in the moment. It can be practised informally, simply by trying to focus on the moment and not let our minds wander, or formally in silent meditation with guidance from a teacher or audio tape. Unlike other forms of meditation it isn't about having a blank mind, but is instead about noticing what the mind is doing at all times.

Interestingly, Kabat-Zinn conducted studies into using mindfulness to manage pain, and medical trials have shown significant clinical benefits to meditation in pain management. This is not to say that mindfulness lessens pain; rather that by choosing how to react to pain, it can become more manageable. In the same vein as a toothache can be agonisingly painful when you're sat thinking about it, but ceases to bother you as much when you become busy and are able to push it to the back of your mind, so mindfulness can convey this benefit in a more conscious manner. Mindfulness is about noticing our thoughts and feelings for what they are, but not letting them become all-consuming.

In 2010 the UK Mental Health Foundation published The Mindfulness Report, which concluded that people who practised mindfulness were less likely to experience distress, including depression and anxiety, had less frequent negative thoughts and were more able to let them go when they did arise. People who are mindful have also been shown to have higher self-esteem and more satisfying relationships. They had more success in personal and academic goals, and increased job satisfaction, performance and productivity. There are also physical health benefits; meditation practice in general has been shown to reduce blood pressure and the risk of cardiovascular disease, and to reduce the severity of cardiovascular disease when it does arise. Neuroscientists

SPOTLIGHT

have suggested that mindfulness actually changes the structure of the brain by increasing traffic between the right and left hemispheres, and leading to an increase in cortical thickness which means the brain retains its plasticity into older age.

Mindfulness within the workplace, though, is not about saying there's anything wrong with someone or an illness that needs treating. Mindfulness has been clinically proven to help people manage their stress, respond calmly and objectively, show compassion and build trust with colleagues and other stakeholders. It's something that's catching on in a big way – companies who have already successfully adopted the mindfulness model include Apple, Google, Twitter, Transport for London, Ebay, Yahoo, Procter & Gamble and Deutsche Bank.

There are several different methods of practicing mindfulness, including lying down and performing 'body scans' where you pay attention to different parts of the body; breathing exercises; and thought and sound exercises involving focussing on particular sounds in the room. Eight week training courses for civil servants, which were trialled across Wales and led by researchers from Aberystwyth University, showed excellent results when it came to policy design. Those who had taken the courses were more empathetic, and designed policy in a more realistic manner with an eye for how people actually do act, rather than how we would ideally like them to behave.

The team now working on mindfulness here at Aberystwyth have reported to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Mindfulness at Westminster. Following on from an 8-week mindfulness lunch time class trial in the Department of Research, Business and Innovation and an Administrative Forum taster session, mindfulness was incorporated into the FitTogether programme at the Sports Centre, and participants were invited to attend one hour lunchtime sessions at the Arts Centre. Mindfulness has also been part of the on-going student support programme. The Mindfulness Network aims to bring together all of the existing mindfulness practice within the University to one place in order to make the practice as inclusive as possible to all of our University community. The University is currently running mindfulness sessions bookable as part of the FitTogether programme, facilitated via the sports centre.

When it comes to launching the UK's first mindful university, Aberystwyth does seem the obvious place. Life on the Cambrian coast is something of a slower pace of life to the hustle and bustle of a big city, and people here are known for their friendliness. A network of mindfulness champions could constitute a crucial part of the development of welfare and wellbeing in the workplace.

Mindfulness, ultimately, is about choice. So much of what we do is automatic, whether it be eating that packet of chocolate biscuits at your desk without even really tasting them, or taking the lift instead of the stairs on autopilot. Hopefully by becoming the UK's first mindful university, we can give back some of this choice to you.

mindfulness@aber.ac.uk

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www.aber.ac.uk/en/supporting-staff/work/healthanddisability/health-wellbeing/



Professor Mark Whitehead

Mark came to Aberystwyth in 1994 to study for a BSc degree in Geography. He graduated with First Class Honours in 1997 and was awarded the James Fairgreave and Gregynog Prizes for Geography. In October 1997 he started his PhD, exploring the emergence of sustainable urban development planning in the UK. He was then appointed a lecturer in the Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences in 2000, before successfully defending his PhD thesis in 2001.

Research Equipment

The University has set up an ongoing project to produce and maintain a central database of our research equipment and facilities.

The University's internal database is held in the Current Research Information System (CRIS): www.aber.ac.uk/en/rbi/staff-students/ref-monitoring/pure

Aberystwyth University are also contributors to equipment.data.ac.uk which is funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) for accessing UK wide research equipment within any contributing institution.

The University recently achieved gold compliance with their standards by making its database as freely discoverable and searchable as possible. This has been achieved through the creation of the Java web-app "pureToOORDF" by team members in RBI, allowing the University to be the first HEI in the UK to enable such discovery directly through PURE.

Entrepreneur Wales Awards 2015

Mr. Tony Orme, Enterprise Manager, in Research, Business & Innovation services has been nominated for this year's Entrepreneur's Champion at the Entrepreneurship Wales Awards. The Entrepreneur's Champion award goes to a person or organisation who helps entrepreneurs become successful in Wales. During his 15 years at the University, Tony has nurtured a support service for students, graduates and staff with great success, the awards ceremony takes place on November 12th in Cardiff and we wish Tony the best of luck!

'Research with impact' programme

The ongoing Aberystwyth 'Research with Impact' programme aims to showcase the ways in which excellent research makes a difference outside of academia.

This includes success stories of commercial exploitation of research as well as strategic engagement with non-academic stakeholders.

The Department of Research Business & Innovation is currently looking for new examples of instances where research undertaken at Aberystwyth University has produced significant benefits for any stakeholders outside of academia.

Please contact Christine Szinner (chs37@aber.ac.uk) with some information about your research and any related impacts if you would like for your work to be featured on the 'Research with Impact' webpage: www.aber.ac.uk/en/research/excellence/impact

AU Research Data Management service

Where do you store the data from your research projects? On a workstation? On an external drive? On a USB stick? Or on the internet?

All of these locations have risks and problems associated with them; from accidents to hacking. What would happen if you lost your research data? Research Data Management isn't just about complying with policy; it helps you to keep your data safe, secure, and easily accessible when and where you want it.

The University is trying to mitigate as many risks and problems as possible by launching a new Research Data Management (RDM) service, the aim of which is to support researchers throughout the research life cycle; from planning data needs, to active management and provision of central storage, and finally, archiving and open access publishing of data.

Our RDM website is available from www.aber.ac.uk/en/research/good-practice/data-management and contains lots of useful



information on RDM in general, along with specific information on RDM at AU.

If you have any questions please get in touch by emailing researchdata@aber.ac.uk

Celebrating Aberystwyth University's partnerships at 'Funding for Collaboration' event

Almost 60 delegates gathered at Aberystwyth University Penglais Campus to celebrate working in collaboration with Aberystwyth University under the Access to Masters (ATM), Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships (KESS), and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) initiatives.

The KESS and ATM projects are supported by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government and proved to be hugely successful programmes. Since 2009, ATM and KESS supported 207 and 86 students respectively, who worked on postgraduate projects that were part of Masters and Research Degrees at Aberystwyth University.

107 businesses based in the Convergence area of Wales (West Wales and the Valleys), benefited from the research during the ATM project period, and further 67 took advantage of the KESS initiative.

Following the successful conclusion of KESS with the expected 90% success rate, the Department of Research, Business & Innovation was delighted to announce

the launch of KESS 2, subject to funding, which will continue supporting collaborative research projects with external partners in the Convergence area of Wales.

Aberystwyth University is also actively involved in the government-backed KTP business support scheme, managed by Innovate UK on behalf of several sponsoring organisations. The Regional KTP Adviser highlighted how KTPs can help organisations of all sizes and from all industrial sectors to access specialist knowledge and expertise to tackle a strategically important opportunity or challenge.

Steve Keyworth, Director at Aberystwyth based Environment Systems that has participated in a number of research initiatives with Aberystwyth University, including ATM, KESS, and most recently a KTP, spoke about the benefits of working in partnership.

As a result of this long-term collaboration, Aberystwyth University in partnership with Environment Systems has recently launched a newly formed interdisciplinary research centre, the Aberystwyth Centre for Space and Earth



Monitoring (ACSEM), which was officially launched at the Space Enabled Futures Conference in Liverpool.

Both KESS and ATM are supported by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government.

Business Start-up Week

The University recently held its annual "Business Start-up Week", a bootcamp-style week of enterprise activities to equip potential entrepreneurs with the tools needed to turn a good idea into a viable, new business venture.

BSUW 2015 was funded by the Welsh Government backed Mid Wales Enterprise HUB (part of the Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy for Wales). It was, as always, open to undergraduate and post-graduate students; graduates; members of staff; local small businesses and to local people interested in start-up. Workshops were delivered by experts from our partner organisations: Antur Teifi; Menter a Busnes; Welsh Government; Digital Marketing Mix and IPS Consulting. BSUW delegates were invited to daily networking lunches, an ideal opportunity for "doing business" between themselves and forming useful alliances. This remains, as far as we are aware, the biggest bootcamp-style intensive Start-up Programme in Wales.

The week included:

- 10 workshop-style sessions were held, covering a multitude of subjects important to start-up, including: marketing; digital marketing; financial planning and control; pricing; selling skills and networking.
- 3 Business role models were also invited to present their businesses to delegates during the week, provided by our partner organisation, Menter a Busnes.
- An average of 22 people attended each of the ten sessions (220 in total).
- Of these, 50% were young people (under 25 years old).
- Delegates were from 10 different academic departments: School of Management & Business; IBERS; Computer Science; School of Education & Lifelong Learning; Law; International Politics; Art; History; Department of Information Studies and Geography and 4 service departments: Research Business & Innovation; Student Support; Sports Centre and Development & Alumni Relations Office.
- 8 local small businesses attended workshops.

“Losing Control”:

What Wearable Technology can tell us about the Romantics

Richard Marggraf Turley and Reyer Zwiggelaar

“I’ve got chills, they’re multiplying,” sang John Travolta, dancing off with Olivia Newton John at the end of 1978’s musical spectacular, *Grease*. Travolta – or rather his screen persona, Danny Zuko – could almost be an early advocate of the “Quantified Self” movement, the name adopted by those who use biometrics to capture as much information as possible about physical aspects of their daily life. As well as temperature (chills, flushes), pulse rate skin conductivity, blood-sugar levels, and most recently mood, can all be tracked, and analysed for trends. For some self-quantifiers – or “body-hackers” – the aim is to live happier, healthier, more productive lives. Others are simply fascinated by the data-streams generated by their own bodies. At any rate, these days if you want to know how many chills you’ve got, and precisely how quickly they’re multiplying, you only need glance at your smart watch or health-and-fitness phone app.

The greaser, Danny, was by no means the first person to notice physical changes taking place in his body in response to a strong stimulus (in his case, a black-clad ONJ). We can trace a fascination with the body’s reaction to visual and imaginative stimuli at least as far back as the Romantic period in Britain, to the 1780s–1820s. In this period, a popular new modality had emerged in art and literature: the Gothic. It aimed to produce emotionally vertiginous shocks and thrills; sensations of any kind, in fact, as long as they put the viewing subject – the Self – at the centre of the experience. “O for a Life of Sensations!”, declared the poet John Keats, articulating an important aspect of the spirit of the age.

Romantic writers and painters were convinced that “sublime” art and nature – anything that conveyed massiveness, volume and the all-encompassing – provoked a distinctive physical and emotional signature (terror), which others could “read” in the form of a fevered brow, breathlessness, or flushed cheeks. A craze developed among members of the public eager to experience these changes for themselves, moreover in a self-aware manner. Enthusiasts would slog for miles to stand in exactly the right spot to get the full effect of a dizzying precipice, or gaze up at a thunderous waterfall, or contemplate the dark ruins of a medieval abbey. At home, candlelit connoisseurs would turn the pages of the latest gothic shocker to gasp at the nefarious schemes of a priapic monk or uncanny doppelgänger, or fall headlong and senseless into an engraving of towering waves, and black, depthless, watery vortexes. The goal was to overwhelm the senses, to annihilate Self. In Danny Zuko’s terms, it was all about “losing control” – while loving every minute of it!

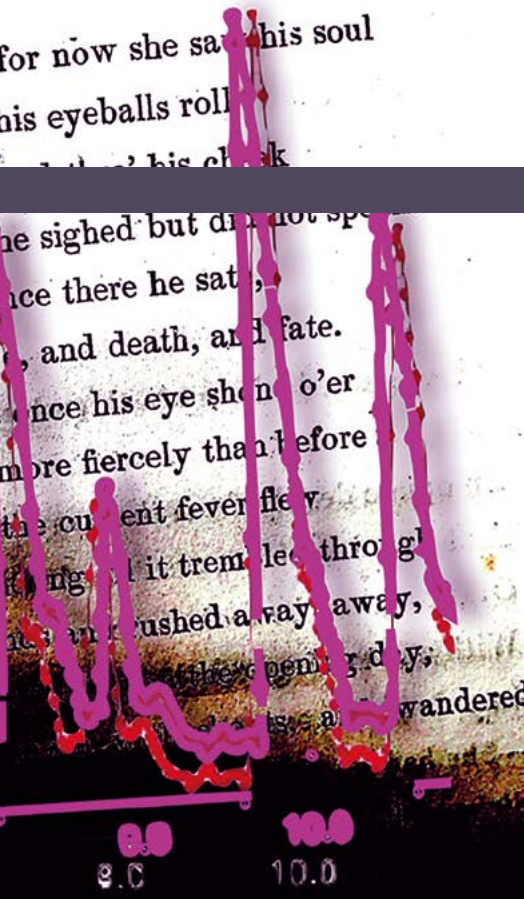
Perhaps Romanticism can lay claim to the first (fictional) Quantified Selfer. In 1816, Mary Shelley drafted her famous gothic novel, *Frankenstein*, while holed up on the shores of Lake Geneva with the self-exiled Lord Byron, Percy Shelley and Byron’s physician, Dr Polidori – author of the *The Vampyre* (1819), the book that spawned a thousand TV series from *Buffy* to *The Strain*. Mary’s classic not only generated chills in its readers, but foregrounded the very issue of how nerves and sinews – the body’s sensorium, or sensing apparatus – came together in the first place. Frankenstein’s creature, obsessed with how he was put together, with the relation between body, mind and emotions, is both proto-embodiment and practitioner of bio-hacking.

The consumer face of self-tracking today – think biometric wristbands like Apple Watch, Android Gear, Nike+ FuelBand, Jawbone and Fitbit – was first developed in the decade in which *Grease* topped the billboard charts. Hardly portable, it was used mainly by researchers who recognized the potential of analysing personal data to correlate useful information about lifestyle. Only in recent years, with the miniaturization of components, has the Quantified Self movement entered the mainstream. Most people who use smart watches to “drill down” into their jogging stats, sleep patterns and heart rate probably don’t think of themselves as bio-hackers anymore, which suggests that self-analysis, or self-surveillance, is fast becoming routinized. Indeed, few of us even stop to think about the possible dangers of allowing so much information about our fitness or daily routines to be mined by third parties. Quite aside from issues of personal privacy, there may be companies out there looking for trends in our health data we’d rather they didn’t know about.

Were the Romantics right about the link between emotional or imaginative stimuli and physical response? Aberystwyth University friend and colleague Professor Reyer Zwiggelaar (Computer Science) and I will be staging an event around art and biometric analysis as part of this year’s “Being Human” national festival of the humanities. Our Gothic-flavoured extravaganza is entitled “The Quantified Romantics”, and will take place in Ceredigion Museum, Aberystwyth, between 11am and 3pm on Saturday 14 November. Members of the public will be invited to enter – if they dare – The Vortex, a dark enclosure in which they’ll be shown Gothic images. While they experience (we hope) an annihilation of Self, Reyer and I will be using a package of

She spoke no more,
Rising in tumult, and

Wholly
Deep crimson shot:
Keeping a horrid site
An aniac, full of lo
Again—the star the
Fresh date it again
Aad thro’ its veins



specially built biometric instruments to measure any changes in pulse rate, and counting chills (multiplying, or otherwise). We'll also be discussing the wider social and political implications of biometric wearables and other self-tracking technologies. The event is free, and everyone is welcome.

Professor Richard Marggraf Turley is Aberystwyth University's Professor of Engagement with the Public Imagination, and teaches in the Department of English and Creative Writing. He has written several books on the Romantic poets, and is most recently author of *The Cunning House*, a crime novel with gothic elements set in 1810.

Professor Reyer Zwiggelaar is Head of Aberystwyth University's Graduate School and Professor in the Department of Computer Science. His research includes the analysis of medical images to assist radiologists in their assessment and the remote analysis of emotions.

"The Quantified Romantics": Ceredigion Museum, Aberystwyth, 11am-3pm, Saturday, 14 November 2015. Free entrance. No booking required.

STUDENT NEWS

Freshers planning and new Students' Union Officers



Eleri Wyn, Communications and Marketing Manager

I am thrilled to introduce the new sabbatical team for the year ahead: Lewis Donnelly as President, Lauren Marks as Education Officer, Kelly Keat as Activities Officer, Ieuan Gregory as Welfare Officer and Hanna Medi Merrigan as UMCA President & Welsh Affairs Officer

Lewis Donnelly: President

Lewis is originally from Bridgend and studied Sports & Exercise Science. This year Lewis will lead the officer team, represent all Aberystwyth students and make sure the student voice is heard on all levels.

Lauren Marks: Education Officer

Lauren, originally from Rugby in Northamptonshire, studied Genetics. Lauren will be representing students on all things education and working with Institute Reps.

Kelly Keat: Activities Officer

Kelly is originally from Bude in Cornwall and studied Sports & Exercise Science. She will be working to create opportunities for students to get involved in sports, societies and volunteering.

Ieuan Gregory: Welfare Officer

Ieuan, who studied History & Education, is originally from Llandeilo. He will be developing the welfare provision for students, covering areas such as mental health provision, student housing issues, and making support more accessible

Hanna Medi Merrigan: Welsh Affairs & UMCA President

Hanna, originally from Pontyberem in Carmarthen, studied Professional Welsh. Her remit includes representing Welsh students and organising events for the Welsh community.

By the time this column is printed, the new team will already have taken office therefore good luck to them.

Don't forget to keep an eye out on our website & social media channels for up to date news.



New Students' Union sabbatical officers (left to right): Hanna Medi Merrigan, Ieuan Gregory, Lewis Donnelly, Lauren Marks and Kelly Keat

Corporate Health Standard - Silver now Gold

Following on from the success achieving bronze standard in 2014 and Silver in 2015 the University Corporate Health Steering Group have now set a target of working towards achieving the Gold standard.

The University was applauded on the excellent work taking place to increase and promote health and well-being among staff and students. This includes work undertaken on stress awareness, promoting healthy eating options at the cafes and restaurants and Fit and Well initiatives.

If you have any further questions regarding health and wellbeing of University staff, please e-mail: wellbeing@aber.ac.uk



Staff members celebrating receiving the Corporate Health Standard Bronze Award which was presented to the University in March.

Health and wellbeing survey

As part of the Health and Wellbeing survey launched in February 2015, HR have held 3 facilitated workshop sessions for staff to be involved in the analysis of the survey findings. Work is still being done to extract the key factors from the survey that will drive towards encompassing a constructive work life balance, motivation, commitment and engaged workforce.

The findings from the Health and Well-being survey will be communicated in **AberNEWS** in due course.

Policy development

In collaboration with the three recognised Trade Unions, we have recently launched the flexi time policy and additional annual leave policy. Both of these policies provide a package of flexible benefits that support the employee and support the University's recovery plan. August will also see the launch of the Coaching and Mentoring policy.

The following existing policies have been updated in line with legislation changes and are in the University committee approval cycle. They include the Flexible working policy, unpaid leave and Flexible retirement policy.

Further information on policy development is available at:

www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/policy-and-procedure/

Stonewall

Work is underway on the University's stonewall accreditation. Further information will be available on the HR website and all staff members have received an e-mail providing a link to the Stonewall survey.

Equal pay review 2014/2015

The University submitted the Equal Pay review to the Professional Development, Staffing and Equality Committee on the 21 May 2015. The scope of the report is to ensure that the University strives to ensure that it has a fair pay system that rewards staff with equal pay for carrying out equal work. A copy of the full report is available to download from the HR website.

Academic Promotions 2015

The annual cycle of Academic Promotions saw Academic staff submitting their application in August to be considered by the panel in November.

Since the Review in 2012, the Academic Promotion cycle has seen a continuous growth in the number of applications from staff members. This is demonstrated by the 42 staff members who applied in 2012 to the 75 in 2014. 2015 has seen the expressions of interest rise to 94 staff members.

HR shortlisted for Times Higher Education leadership and Management Awards.

In April, HR was shortlisted for the Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Award for the work the department undertook which included workforce planning, reward and recognition initiatives and the work on the Corporate Health standard. The awards ceremony was held at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London on the 18 June 2015. Although on this occasion they did not win, it's seen as demonstrating the commitment and drive to be innovative in HR practices.

Celebrating the Diversity of Excellence in Teaching

The theme for this year's Learning and Teaching conference was "Celebrating the Diversity of Excellence in Teaching". Mary Jacob, E-learning Advisor and a member of Information Services' E-Learning Group, coordinated this year's conference. She talks about the conference aims, highlights and future developments.

What's the thinking behind the conference?

The purpose is to build a community of practitioners - academic staff, students and administrators - who come together to share ideas and inspiration. The conference celebrated the wide range of good teaching practice by Aber staff.

This year we welcomed Alison James from the University of the Arts in London, back to Aberystwyth. Alison is Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching at her university, a National Teaching Fellow with the Higher Education Academy, and a Modern Languages graduate from Aberystwyth. She provides a role model for Aber students, showing how much they can achieve.

The conference was a real team effort. The whole E-learning Group contributed to its success and the Pro-Vice-Chancellors' office provided funding.

How does the conference contribute to the learning experience?

It is all about improving the student experience. Our internal keynote speaker, Dr Ayla Göl from the Department of International Politics, won the Excellence in Teaching Award at this year's Student-Led Teaching Awards. She talked about how she is using audio feedback in Turnitin to enhance the feedback she provides to students.

The conference is also associated with professional advancement. Giving a talk at the conference is a way for staff to give back to their colleagues, and that is a strong ethos here - a community of practice moving in the same direction to improve the student learning experience."

How has this year's conference been?

Fantastic! Building on the success of our two previous conferences, we received many proposals for talks and had over 100 attendees. We also relocated to the Think Tank in the Llandinam concourse, which is ideal for poster sessions and sharing experiences.

Highlight of this year's conference?

Our external keynote speaker, Alison James, was certainly a highlight. Alison

spoke about interactive teaching and ways to use physical objects such as Lego to engage students in learning. She talked about bringing all the senses into play to make content more memorable.

"Another highlight was a panel session featuring representatives from Ysgol Penglais and Coleg Ceredigion, discussing the challenges students face when moving from school or college to university and ways that we can support them.

It made me think of what Aberystwyth University is about - a friendly and supportive place where students can get to know staff on a personal level as part of a community.

A third highlight was working with our AberForward graduate trainee, Liz Talbott. Liz designed the conference poster, put together the proceedings, moderated sessions and helped prepare conference materials. She was a real asset and brought a lot of creativity, intelligence and enthusiasm to the organizational side.

What's new for the coming academic year?

Again, the focus is on improving the student experience. Students really like lecture capture, and we have made some changes this year to make it even easier to capture lectures using Panopto.

The CADARN Learning Portal has been extended for another year. That means there will be training from the CADARN technical staff to help lecturers make videos. We have online video editing software, WeVideo, which all staff can use - just register on the CADARN Learning Portal site and sign up for the Aberystwyth group.

There are also some new ways of using the e-submission tool, Turnitin, which makes it easier for students to receive their feedback. It was good to hear Lauren Marks, the Students Union Education Officer, describing the use of Turnitin as 'life changing'.

What next for the conference?

We are certainly hoping to host a fourth Learning and Teaching Conference in

2016, this time at the beginning of the summer. We are also planning a mini 'good practice fair' during this academic year.

Where can I learn more about this year's conference?

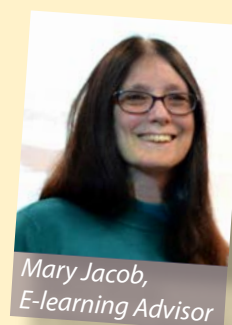
Go to the Nexus website www.nexus.aber.ac.uk, where we are posting recordings, PowerPoint presentations and other materials from the conference.

About Mary Jacob

As E-learning Advisor, Mary Jacob is a member of the E-Learning Group in the University's Information Services. She coordinates some of the work between the CADARN Learning Portal and the University.

Mary joined Aberystwyth University ten years ago from the University of California at Davis (UC Davis), where she was a lecturer in Chinese language and literature. A graduate of San Diego State University where she studied English and a strong Chinese element, Mary taught English in China before returning to study a Masters in Regional Studies East Asia at Harvard University.

During her time at Aberystwyth University, she has completed a Post Graduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education (PGCTHE), has been awarded an Aberystwyth Teaching Fellowship, and became a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. She is currently studying for a PhD in Creative Writing at the Department of English and Creative Writing and aspires to be a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.



Mary Jacob,
E-learning Advisor

Appointments



MODERN LANGUAGES

Dr Wini Davies is a University of Manchester Graduate with a first-class degree in German and Spanish. She taught English at the Universities of Mannheim and Heidelberg before returning to Manchester to be a lecturer in German. In 1988 she was appointed to a lectureship

in what was then the Department of European Languages and promoted to reader in 2006.



CENTRE FOR WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Dr Debra Croft has been appointed Director of Equality at Aberystwyth University. She will hold the post alongside her role as Manager of the Centre for Widening Participation and Social Inclusion.

Working alongside the University Executive Group, Dr Croft will be responsible for developing, publicising and assuring the University's strategic direction in equality and for ensuring outcomes are monitored and delivered successfully.

Dr Croft is a graduate of the University of London (Geology/ Environmental Science), completed an MSc in Mining Geology at Exeter University, and a PhD in Forensic Geoscience from London. She has completed a post graduate certificate, Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, with the Open University, and is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.



COMMERCIAL SERVICES

John Glasby is the new Head of Commercial Services. He joins the University from the Students' Union where he was CEO since 2012. John is an economics graduate from Essex University, and brings with him years of experience in strategic and commercial planning.

The new role of Head of Commercial Services is designed to review and reshape all University trading activities with a focus on creating a sustainable trading model generating incremental surpluses for reinvestment in the student experience.

LAW

Dr Brendan Coyle, Lecturer in Criminology.

Heather Norris, Teaching Fellow in Criminology.

BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

Dr Jane Nolan, Reader in International Management.

Ms Ratnes Alahakone, Lecturer in Management.

Professor Jo Crotty, Professor of Management.

AQRO

Sue Moss, Quality Officer with responsibility for Collaborative Provision.

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Matthew Rees, Welsh medium teaching fellow, funded by the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Laurence Tyler, Teaching Fellow in Robotics and Space Robotics.

Dr Karen Hunsdale, Lecturer in the Mauritius campus.

Dr Harry Strange, Lecturer in Computer Science.

Dr Neil MacParthalain, Research Fellow.

WELSH

Dr Peadar Ó Muircheatraigh, Lecturer

Eirug Salisbury, Lecturer

Dr Richard Glyn Roberts, Lecturer

James January-McCann, Teaching Fellow

STUDENT SERVICES

Lou Hardinge, Wellbeing Manager

Lawrence Railton, Senior Counsellor

Hussam Al Nawab, Student Counsellor

Kate Shelley, Wellbeing Adviser

LIBRARY SERVICES

Elen Howells, Library Assistant

Lloyd Roderick, Subject Librarian

Martin Taylor, Library Collections, Resource and Facilities Manager

Retirements

Anne Jones

Anne Jones started work as a casual administration assistant in the Personnel Office at IGER, Plas Gogerddan in May 1992. Anne left for a brief period in December 1992 but soon returned in the January to work in the accounts department where she remained until the merger with the AU in April 2008, when she took on the role of receptionist until her recent retirement in June of this year.

Anne's friends and colleagues at IBERS would like to extend their heartfelt thanks for all the help and support she has provided over the many years she has worked at both IGER and IBERS and to wish her all the very best on her retirement.

Chris Wilkins

Chris Wilkins started working in the University College of Wales' Rural Sciences Library between 1971-1982, coming back to work in the Hugh Owen Library in 1990 as a Library Assistant. Chris's role throughout her time in the library was to support students to find books, journals and resources to support their studies. Chris made a very successful transition to an increasingly digital library services from the early 1990s onwards, waving goodbye to the printed card catalogue and embracing the new online library catalogue and the online sources of information from the first dial-up online database services such as BIDS to new ebooks and ejournals today. She provided unfailing and cheerful support to all students in finding and using library resources and services always going the extra mile to help with reference and essay queries. Chris retired in June 2015 and she is missed not only due to her huge knowledge of library collections and her excellent support to students and staff but also as a lovely colleague.

Obituaries

Professor Lance Thomas

It is with great sadness that we note the death of Emeritus Professor Lance Thomas, former Head of the Physics Department at Aberystwyth University, who died 30th June 2015.

A graduate of the University College of Wales at Swansea, Lance Thomas developed an international reputation for innovative work in atmospheric physics and he was appointed to the staff of the Radio Research Station at Slough, later the Appleton Laboratory.

He played a national role in science administration, serving on committees of Research Councils and also the governing body of the Institute of Physics. His reputation was recognised by the Institute of Physics in 1991 by the award of the prestigious Chree Medal and Prize. Swansea University made him an Honorary Fellow in 1998 and he was elected to a Fellowship of the Learned Society of Wales in 2014.

Dr Suresh Swain

Suresh joined IBERS in 2010 to work on a BBSRC-funded postdoctoral programme, after spending time in the School of Biosciences, Cardiff University and the School of Biomedical Sciences, King's College, London. After completing his postdoctoral work, Suresh then moved on to become one of the core bioinformatics team at IBERS, specialising in the analysis and assembly of genome and transcriptome sequences. Suresh made a particularly significant and unique contribution to the work of developing a draft genome assembly for perennial ryegrass and the recent advances made in this area owe a great deal to his endeavour. Suresh was hugely enthusiastic about his work, taking great pleasure in developing his own skills and enabling and assisting co-workers within the department to meet their own research goals. Always cheerful and helpful, he was truly a gentleman who will be greatly missed by his friends and colleagues. He leaves behind his wife, Rajashree, and two young daughters.

Ren Brzeski

Ren joined the University in 1999, first working with the postgraduate team before moving to the undergraduate team as the Director of Admissions' secretary.

Paying tribute to her, Nerys Davies, colleague and Undergraduate Admissions Office Manager said, "Ren was an invaluable member of the admissions team and a kind and caring friend. She was a very keen gardener, enjoyed walking and liked to put her language skills to the test when holidaying abroad with her husband. She will be sadly missed and remembered with great affection."

Mike Corlett

Originally from Formby, Merseyside, Mike graduated from University College of Wales, Aberystwyth in 1972 with a joint honours degree in Art and Librarianship.

He then became a part-time Library Assistant in July 1972, before becoming a full-time Library Assistant in the Acquisitions Department of the Library less than a year later.

In 1983 he became a Senior Library Assistant in the Hugh Owen Library, and over a decade later in 1997 became an Assistant Librarian in Information Services.

Mike was also a Branch Secretary of the University's branch of UNISON from 1996 to 2014.

Branch Treasurer for the University's branch of UNISON, Alex Warburton said: "Mike was extremely knowledgeable and experienced, and highly respected by UNISON members here at Aberystwyth University; he was dedicated and compassionate in representing our members and will be remembered fondly for all he has done for members and the Branch over many years."

Away from his academic work, Mike was passionate about art and was an avid collector of books on the subject.

Mike retired at the end of 2014.

Professor David Andrew Trotter

Professor Trotter was head of the Department of European Languages and graduated as a Doctor of Philosophy from Queen's College Oxford. He was one of the country's leading Anglo-Norman specialists.

Professor Trotter was appointed to the position of Chair of French at Aberystwyth University, commencing in October 1993 when he also took on the additional duties as Head of Department. He fulfilled the role of Dean of the Faculty of Arts between 1996 and 2000 and continued as Head of Department for the whole of his period at the University.

Professor Trotter's research spanned historical French linguistics, medieval French, historical dialectology, especially eastern French. He also led the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded Anglo-Norman Dictionary which is based here at Aberystwyth University.

He was President of the *Société de Linguistique Romane* (2013-16), a contributor (on Occitan) to the *Romanische Bibliographie* (De Gruyter), a member of the Peer Review College of the AHRC and a Strategic Reviewer for the AHRC.

Paying tribute to Professor Trotter, Professor April McMahon said: "Professor David Trotter's untimely death represents an enormous loss to research and scholarship. He had an outstanding and well-deserved reputation as a historian of French, and was especially well-known for his Anglo-Norman Dictionary project, which won considerable funding and recognition."

In addition to the day job...

Catrin Fflur Huws works as a Law lecturer and co-ordinator of the Law Department's Welsh medium teaching provision, and specialises in property law and the legal status of the Welsh language. Additionally to the day job, Catrin is a playwright whose play *To Kill a Machine* has toured round Wales and appeared at the Edinburgh Fringe. AberNEWS spoke to her about life outside her day job.

What got you involved in playwriting?

I was involved with Castaway, the amateur dramatics group in the Arts Centre, and I wrote some stuff for a devised show called Return to Albion in 2008 which went down very well.

I then did some Open University creative writing modules, and in 2011 was selected for a programme for emerging writers called Spread the Word with the Sherman Cymru theatre. My current play, *To Kill a Machine*, was written as part of this. They initially chose eight writers from the Aberystwyth area and did a script in hand performance of three of them at the end of the course, and mine was one of those.

When did your play take off?

It was performed in the Arts Centre in 2012 and went down really well, and after that I didn't want to let it go. I got together with Scriptography Productions and we put on a low budget pilot version in autumn 2012 at the Arts Centre, the Sherman in Cardiff and at Swansea University's Alan Turing centenary celebrations.

We applied for Arts Council Wales funding and Kickstarter crowdfunding in April this year to take it on tour round Wales and to go to Edinburgh. We went on tour in May to ten Welsh venues and also the Arcola Theatre in London.

There was a performance in Cardiff on 31st July as a warm up for Edinburgh, and we performed every night except Tuesday for the whole of the Edinburgh festival at the Zoo Aviary, which seated about fifty people.

The first big 'bloody hell' moment was when it was performed in Swansea to about eighty people at the Swansea University Alan Turing centenary celebrations. There have been fifteen performances to about 800 people. I think the most exciting one was in London.

Performing in London was very special for the cast and they gave it a lot more energy. Gwydion [Rhys, lead actor] had tears running down his face for the last third of the performance.



What is your play about?

It's about Alan Turing and his life, work and death; and also about how society forces people to conform. It deals with the fact that he was gay at a time when it was illegal, and that he was chemically castrated. I think a lot of people don't want him to have killed himself but that is consistent with the facts – but then it's also plausible that it was an accident, or maybe something more sinister.

The film *The Imitation Game* was very important in making Turing well known. When I first wrote the play a lot of people hadn't heard of him and I think the film was very important for getting the story out there. I think what my play brings out is that he was a very likeable person; *The Imitation Game* tends to portray him as a bit of a loner.



He was an introvert but also well liked, he was funny and witty. But I also think what my play does is normalise his relationship with other men, and I think the film emphasises too much his relationship with Joan Clark. The play is much more about him than about his work, but his work does inform a lot of the dialogue.

What got you interested in Alan Turing?

I went to Bletchley Park and saw his story on the wall, and how he'd been convicted of gross indecency for being gay and then given female hormones. And then I saw an article he'd written called *'Computing, Machinery and Intelligence'*, about whether

computers can think, which begins with "What's the difference between a man and a woman?" and thinking there is no difference in terms of who you fall in love with.

What are your plans for the play after Edinburgh?

If the opportunity arises the plan is to tour again in the future, a world tour if we can and Aberystwyth is a good place to start from! I've had interest from Australia and Los Angeles, so if it gets good reviews at Edinburgh then we'll probably tour again in 2016.

I think about 800 people have seen it and it's had universally brilliant reviews about

both the writing and performances, and the person playing Alan Turing, Gwydion Rhys, has been involved all the way through and he's brilliant. Robert Harper, who plays the interrogator, was part of the original read through and the 2015 tour. It's an absolutely stunning cast, they're very talented and I hope they stay involved.

I'm very proud of it and the director has really taken it off the page and onto the stage. I've had a lot of support from the Department of Computer Science, and computer scientists have enjoyed and supported it, and colleagues in the Law Department have been very supportive as well.

The main thing for me is for as many people to see it as possible and to realise the damaging effect of prejudice on real people.

'To Kill a Machine is a refreshing antidote to the recent sanitising of the Alan Turing story while standing on its own feet as a self-contained drama.'

'Don't expect some wishy-washy story of a nice geeky guy who happened to be homosexual. No, this is a hard-hitting look at the nature of humanity when confronted with a person who won't – or perhaps just can't – conform.'

Mike Smith, Arts Scene in Wales



WHAT'S ON

SCHOOL OF ART EXHIBITIONS

F. C. Dixon & Colleagues

Prints by Frederick Clifford Dixon (1902-1992) and his colleagues.

30 November – 15 January 2016



F.C. Dixon & Colleagues

Prints by Frederick Clifford Dixon (1902-1992) and his colleagues

Frederick Clifford Dixon studied printmaking at the Royal College of Art between 1924 and 1928. With the help of Martin Ridgwell, Master Printmaker and Fellow of the Royal Society of Printmakers and Watercolourists, his great nieces, Suzy Williams and Sally Taylor, have catalogued, restored and reprinted from some of the original plates.

Martin has applied his skill in breathing new life into the old etching plates to revive the intricate and beautifully executed etchings that beguile, inspire and capture wonderfully a sense of the period.

F.C. Dixon's work has exhibited in the past at the British Museum Department of Prints and Drawings and the Barbican Gallery

This exhibition complements the School of Arts extensive collections of graphic art (prints, drawings, photographs and watercolours), which features a nationally important collection in inter-war year etchings by such famous artists as Graham Sutherland and Robin Tanner.

ABERYSTWYTH ARTS CENTRE

Artist Rooms: Robert Mapplethorpe Exhibition

Until 7 November

For our first project with Artist Rooms, we present an exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe's photography.

Mapplethorpe is one of the key artists of the late 20th century and we are delighted to be able to bring this outstanding collection of his work to Aberystwyth.

Encompassing self portraits and portraits from throughout his career, as well as a small number of flower and still life works, the exhibition allows audiences in Wales to experience something of the quality and the range of Mapplethorpe's extraordinary oeuvre.



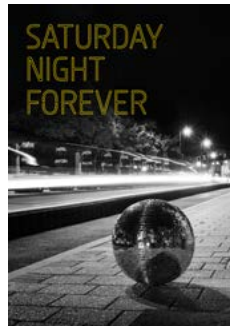
Dreams of Anne Frank

17 - 20 November

In 1942 Anne Frank and seven others were forced into hiding in a secret annexe in Amsterdam. Dreams of Anne Frank brings her story to life in a poignant drama.

Saturday Night Forever

17 November & 4-5 December



A roller-coaster ride through Cardiff's nightlife as gay man Lee breaks up with one lover and resolves never to fall in love again. All around him people are drinking too much, dancing until the early hours and getting it while they can. But when Lee receives an invitation to a friend's house-warming everything seems ripe for change, and it only takes seven hours, a bottle of vodka, and the devil on his shoulder for him to break his promise and fall back into the arms of a new admirer.

Saturday Night Forever follows Lee on a journey through the wreckage of past relationships and the early stages of a promising new love affair. For a short while life is sweet, but after every Saturday night comes the cold reality of Sunday morning, and as Lee cruelly discovers, nothing lasts forever.

The production will be touring venues in Wales and England throughout November and December 2015, and is made possible thanks to support from Arts Council Wales.

The Night Before Christmas: Art Centre's Community Theatre Show

18, 19 & 22 December - 7.30pm

23 December - 2.30pm

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse...

Join us once again for our highly popular pre- Christmas family show! *The Night Before Christmas* brings together the best in classic and contemporary musical theatre with a festive twist.

Begin your Christmas season with a magical time for all the family with beautiful songs and carols and classic festive recitals!