

Aber NEWS

ISSUE 25 - October 2016



Acting VC made of iron

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Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor John Grattan has raised almost £8,000 for student hardship after successfully finishing one of the world's toughest sporting challenges.

John completed the Ironman Wales triathlon in Tenby in just under 17 hours. During that time he had to complete a 2.4 mile sea swim, cycle 112 miles and run a full 26.2 mile marathon.

He crossed the finish line late on Sunday 18 September, cheered on by a crowd of supporters.

Wearing his yellow Aberystwyth University shirt, John was among two thousand athletes to sign up for this year's Ironman Wales contest.

Speaking after the event, John said: "This was without a doubt the toughest physical challenge I have faced so far and I'm delighted that I managed to complete the course within the qualifying time.

"I would like to thank everyone who has sponsored me and supported me in my bid to conquer the Ironman Wales challenge. I'm very proud that all the money raised will go to the Aber Fund and will be used specifically to help student hardship and student welfare projects."

Donations to the fund can still be made online through John's Ironman page:
www.everydayhero.co.uk/event/ironmanVC

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Copy deadline for this edition is **Monday 12 December**.



New seating on the Arts Centre piazza



Llandinam tower stairwell, before



Llandinam tower stairwell, after

Campus investment and improvement

Maria Ferreira from the University's Estates Development Department describes the investment and improvements that have taken place on the University campuses over the summer months.



As staff and returning students will know, the University Estates Development Department has a proactive plan of maintenance and improvements for all University buildings and infrastructure.

Whilst students are enjoying a well-deserved break and catching up with their family and friends back home, the summer is one of the busiest times of the year for many University departments, and the Estates Development Department is no exception.

Thanks to investment approved by the University Council, 2016 has been an especially busy year right across the department, from the Project Management section working on large scale works, right through to the Property Services and Grounds Teams.

A great deal of work and investment has taken place on the infrastructure on Penglais Campus lately. Work has been carried out to replace transformers and switchgear, install a new generator and boilers, replace water mains, and rewire the Physical Sciences building. Also at the Students' Union, a new lift is being installed to assist students with disabilities.

In addition to providing safe services, these works also ensure that our buildings are becoming more energy efficient and sustainable, enabling the University to meet its carbon commitments.

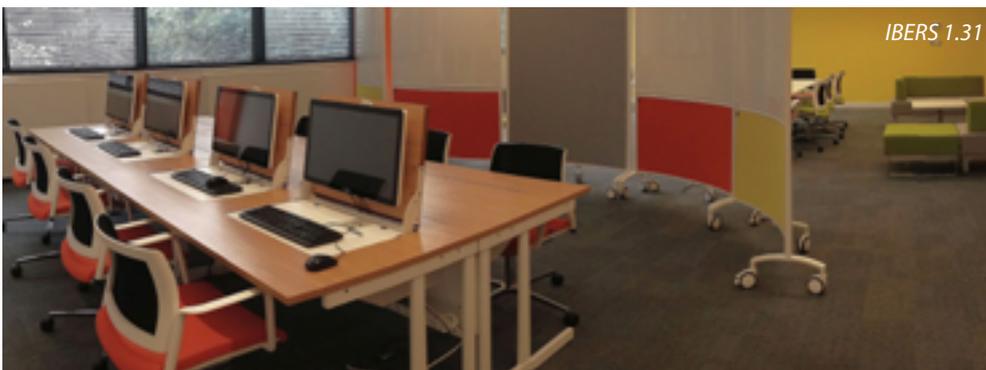
As a direct result of our 'Tell Us Now' campaign, the University has also invested significantly on improving lighting on Penglais and Llanbadarn campuses, giving additional security to our students during the dark winter nights.

Whilst much of this work will not be visible, plenty of work has taken place that can be clearly seen by students, staff and visitors to our campuses.

We have installed new kitchens in some student accommodation blocks such as Rosser; fitted new showers in Trefloyne A; added lots of splashes of colour - for example in Llandinam tower and IBERS 1.31; fitted new carpet in the Thomas Parry Library; as well as cladding Cledwyn Bridge, which will improve the overall image of the building in addition to ensuring it becomes more energy efficient. Roads are also being resurfaced and new signs are being installed in many buildings.

Our Property Services and Grounds Teams have been just as busy sprucing up the campuses with painting, additional seating, planters, flower beds and hanging baskets.

We hope that you enjoy the benefits of the work that we have carried out over the summer months and that you are pleased with what you see.



IBERS 1.31

ACTING VICE-CHANCELLOR'S COLUMN

I'm writing this a few days after finishing one of the toughest of sporting challenges. On Sunday 18 September, I was among two thousand athletes lined up at the start of the Ironman Wales triathlon in Tenby, Pembrokeshire. It was a daunting prospect to say the least. There were times I admit when the going was tough and I felt like giving up, but I kept chipping away and shortly before midnight (nearly 17 hours after I started), I finally crossed the finish line.



One of the things that kept me going was my pledge to raise money for the Aber Fund, in particular for Student Hardship and Student Welfare. Since it was set up in 2009, the Aber Fund (previously called the Annual Fund) has given a helping hand to dozens of students at risk of having to leave University due to financial difficulties, and precious projects like Nightline have been given a lifeline.

It's likely that many of you reading this will never have taken on an Ironman triathlon (and I doubt that I will ever undertake a second) but I'm sure most of us have faced up to some pretty hefty challenges at some point in our lives. Hopefully, we pull through stronger, leaner and even more determined to succeed. It's just the same with the University - as an institution we have faced the occasional uphill struggle, but we regroup and pull together to make things better.

Our recent results in this summer's National Student Survey (NSS) and *The Times* and *The Sunday Times Good University Guide* are examples of what can be achieved by concerted effort. We climbed over 100 places in the NSS league table, and were one of the highest climbers in the *Good University Guide*, up 23 places. Just like my triathlon training, these results came at the end of a concerted campaign. We are investing time, toil and treasured funds into ensuring the student experience here is the best it can be, and that Aberystwyth continues to be an exceptional place to learn and live.

Professor John Grattan
Acting Vice-Chancellor

NSS Results

In August, we celebrated the news that Aberystwyth University had done exceptionally well in this year's National Student Survey (NSS).

The University is rated the best in Wales, the fourth best broad-based university and one of the top ten of all higher education institutions in the UK for overall student satisfaction.

The results show that overall satisfaction amongst students at Aberystwyth University stands at 92% - six percentage points higher than the UK figure of 86%. The University climbed more than 100 places in the NSS table since last year.

The yellow duck made a special appearance as Professor John Grattan held a series of staff meetings across the campuses on the day that the results were released to thank staff for their contributions, saying: "This would not have been possible without your continued commitment and hard work in ensuring that Aberystwyth remains an exceptional place to learn and live."

Following the publication of the NSS, the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams AM, wrote to Professor John Grattan and asked him to pass on her congratulations to staff, the students' union and all involved in delivering such excellent results.

She stated in her letter: "I know how much hard work and effort,



across academic and professional services staff, will have gone into delivering Aber's commitment to the student experience." Focus will switch now to the 2017 NSS which will start in January with some changes to the usual questionnaire.

New Fellows of the Higher Education Academy

Eight members of staff were recently awarded Fellowships of the Higher Education Academy (HEA), through the Aberystwyth and Bangor Joint Scheme for the Recognition of Continuing Professional Development in Teaching and Supporting Learning.

Eleri Pryse (Physics), Joanne Wallace (IBERS) and Reyer Zwiggelaar (Computer Science) were made Senior Fellows of the HEA; Karen Hunsdale (Computer Science),

Catherine O'Hanlon (Psychology), Loai Alsaïd (Business) and Victoria Wright (Psychology) were made Fellows of the HEA, and Sylvia Degen (Modern Languages) was made an Associate Fellow of the HEA.

HEA Fellowships are a recognised teaching accreditation across the sector, and represent an important route to recognition for experienced staff with no previous teaching qualification.

There are two application deadlines each year. The next deadline is in mid-December. For more information about applying for HEA fellowships, email fellows@aber.ac.uk.

A full list of all Aberystwyth University HEA fellows can be found at: www.aber.ac.uk/en/cdsap/hea-fellowships/senior-fellow/senior-fellows-by-date/

RM Davies Prize



The annual RM Davies prize is awarded to a Postgraduate

student for outstanding research in a Physics-related field.

The nominations consist of two parts – a piece of work (publication, poster), and a list of achievements or highlights.

The 2016 competition attracted several high-quality entries. Four of the competitors had high-quality refereed publications in high-impact international journals that made the judges' decision quite difficult. Research highlights included collaborative trips to Hawaii, field trips as members of an international team, tool development for quantum computing, several conference presentations and seminars, and observation time on major scientific facilities. In summary, the quality of the competition was very high.

The winner was Joe Hutton, a 3rd year PhD student in the Solar System Physics group, for a publication titled: *Erupting Filaments with Large Enclosing Flux Tubes as Sources of High-Mass Three-part CMEs, and Erupting Filaments in the Absence of Enclosing Flux tubes as Sources of Low-mass Unstructured CMEs*, published in the high-impact *Astrophysical Journal*.

Competition organiser and Reader in the Physics Department, Dr Huw Morgan, said: "This is an impressive study that applies powerful new image processing techniques to reveal structural details of large eruptions from the Sun. The work has implications for understanding how the eruptions are formed, and how they are classified, and is thus of international importance."

Joe Hutton was delighted with the award: "Research is often a tough job, but winning this prize has made the long hours all worthwhile." Joe has not decided what he will spend the generous financial award on, but his short-term priority is to finish writing and submitting his thesis over the next couple of months.

KESS II launched



The second European-funded Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarships project, KESS II, was launched in July.

Following the highly successful KESS project which operated from 2009-14, KESS II will link companies and organisations with academic expertise in the Higher Education sector in Wales to undertake collaborative research projects.

Consisting of a £26m investment through the European Social Fund, KESS II will provide scholarships to over 600 students.

Aberystwyth University will offer scholarships to 58 PhD student and 65 Research Masters students.

The next call for KESS II project applications at Aberystwyth will open in January, but Research, Business & Innovation (RB&I) are currently accepting expressions of interest. When the call opens in January, applications will be accepted for PhD, MPhil and MRes opportunities.

Project proposals need to be scoped by an Aberystwyth University academic and a company partner, with the project focusing on addressing a company need.



Aberystwyth student Adrian Mironas speaking at the KESS II launch event about what KESS means to him and the benefit he has received from participating in the project.

For more information please see the RB&I webpage: www.aber.ac.uk/en/rbi/staff-students/knowledge-economy-skills-scholarships/

If you have any questions regarding the call or the application process in general, please contact the KESS II Project & Business Development Officer, Gwern Hywel - gwh5@aber.ac.uk or 01970 628579.



NEWS

Aberystwyth Graduate Opens New Zoo

Three years after graduating from Aber, Zac Hollinshead has realised a lifetime dream of running his own zoo.

Zac completed a degree course in Zoology at IBERS in 2013 and he's now opened the WILD Zoological Park in Shropshire.

Zac said: "This new venture is the realisation of my lifelong dream to own my own zoo. I had a collection of animals when I came to study in Aberystwyth which I was fortunate to be able to keep at Borth Animalarium and I subsequently became Head Keeper there. Whilst studying for my Zoology degree, I also set up my own outreach company called

Zac's Wild Encounters; and it's really just gone from there."

Zac grew up on a farm outside Wolverhampton and has always been interested in animals. Family friends ran the West Midlands Safari Park and he spent a great deal of time there when growing up.

Zac added "The zoo aims to deliver a once in a lifetime, memorable, hands on experience to educate guests about animals, with a vision to conserve wildlife. WILD Zoological Park was born out of a dream to educate the public about different animals, poke holes in common

misconceptions and to remove stigmas commonly associated with animals that aren't so cute and fluffy!

The animals and staff at WILD Zoological Park are here to conserve wildlife and teach the general public about all forms of wildlife, with the hope that through teaching and deeper understanding, there will be a stronger drive to help us conserve the world's wildlife."



Busy summer at the International English Centre

It has been another busy summer for the International English Centre (IEC), with over one hundred students studying a range of courses including Pre-session English and Study Skills, General English and Communicative Skills, Teacher Development, English with Water Conservation and English with Sports Science.

Rates of satisfaction were high, with 95% of students stating that they would recommend their IEC summer course to others,

and 98% stating that they were satisfied with the quality of teaching on their IEC course.

2016-2017 sees Law added to the portfolio of International Foundation Certificate Courses that the IEC already offers. Potential law students will study a combination of English and Law studies which, on successful completion, will allow them to enter an Undergraduate programme in Aberystwyth Law School.



Life at Mauritius Branch Campus

Dr Karen Hunsdale is Scheme Leader and Lecturer in Computer Science at Aberystwyth University, Mauritius Branch Campus. AberNEWS spoke to Karen to learn more about her, her role, and some of the differences between Aberystwyth and Mauritius.

Tell us a bit about your background

I am originally from Manchester. I studied Chemistry at the University of Manchester and worked in pharmaceuticals for four years.

I was always interested in technology, and due to my work involving the use of computational applications, I decided to go back to university to study for an MSc in Computing and Information Science. Following completion of my postgraduate degrees I was inspired to study further, which led to the completion of a PhD focusing on Artificial Intelligence and the application of conversational agents.

My passion is computer science education and I always enjoy investigating alternative approaches to the teaching and learning of the subject material. I actively seek to inspire and engage students to study computer science and participate in changing the future by impacting positively on people's lives.

I have worked in a range of educational institutions from secondary schools, further education colleges and now higher education. Along with this experience, I completed an MA in Education and I am now Fellow of the Higher Education Authority.

This is my first role for Aberystwyth University and first time in Mauritius.

What is it like working at Aberystwyth University, Mauritius Branch Campus?

The campus is located at Quartier Militaire, a rural spot in the centre of the island. It is slightly cooler here than the coastal parts of the island.

Teaching on the campus is in the subject areas of Computer Science, Law, Business and Management and Accountancy and Finance.

Our students come from a range of countries including, Nigeria, Botswana, Bangladesh, Tanzania, and of course Mauritius. Students work hard and are conscientious and dedicated.

We also have a great range of staff, and it is a supportive environment.



Dr Karen Hunsdale with a student



Aberystwyth University Mauritius Branch Campus

What does your job entail?

I teach undergraduate computer science, including modules; Introductory Programming, Mathematics, Telematics and Communications and Computer Architecture.

We are in the process of establishing a research group with a focus on Artificial Intelligence and technology-enhanced learning.

As a department we are currently submitting a bid for funding to the Mauritius Research Council to investigate alternative approaches to supporting teaching and learning within a select group of secondary schools here in Mauritius.

I am also engaged with open day and outreach activities to promote and highlight the excellence of the University on the island.

How does the University year differ in Mauritius?

We have two intakes for part 1 students here - October and March. This is because in Mauritius, school pupils receive their Higher School Certificate results (the equivalent of A-levels) in February.

We have three semesters here. Semester 1 begins mid-October and runs until the end of December. Exams take place in

January, followed by semester 2 beginning in March. Semester 2 comprises of cohort 1 and the second intake, cohort 2. Semester 2 exams take place in mid-May, which then leads straight into Semester 3. Semester 3 is the final semester for cohort 2 with their exams beginning in August. Each semester is 9 weeks long.

What is a typical working day like for you?

At the moment I am in the process of planning and preparing for the new semester. We have access to all modules taught at Aberystwyth University through the VLE Blackboard pages. Therefore, I communicate regularly with staff back in Wales to coordinate the teaching of the materials here in Mauritius.

In recent weeks I have also been involved with a range of open day activities and events at local shopping malls recruiting for this October.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I like to walk but it can get exceedingly hot here, so only at certain times of the day – morning and evening. I have also been on a number of catamaran trips from the south east of the island. I live a short distance from the beach, which I like to visit regularly and take a dip in the sea.



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In addition to the day job

Marc Welsh and **Laura Jones** are Post-Doctoral Research Associates in the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences. They are part of a team of volunteers who tend the Penglais Community Garden situated behind the Students' Union building. AberNEWS spoke to Marc and Laura about how and why they got involved, and how others can join in.



How did the Penglais Community Garden on Penglais Campus come about?

Marc: It was started about five years ago by a couple of Food and Water Security postgraduates keen to try growing their own food. With the support of the Students' Union they were able to turn the green space behind the SU building into a decent veg garden. They have since moved on but different people, ourselves and Jane Powell (from Organic Centre Wales) included, have got involved and we've collectively continued to develop and expand the garden with help from the SU and the Estates department.

Who is involved in the project?

Laura: It's a mix of staff, postgraduate and undergraduate volunteers but is also very much open to the wider community too. We've called it the 'Penglais Community Garden' to emphasise that it is for anyone and everyone to take part in, to visit and to enjoy and we do tend to attract a lot of passing interest and questions about the garden due to its location between the Arts Centre and visitors' car park.

Why did you choose to get involved?

Laura: I'd been growing fruit and veg at home for a few years but the garden on campus presented the opportunity to grow things in a more communal and sociable way, as well as being able to share some of the skills and tips that I'd learnt and learn new things from other people. I'd also been volunteering for a couple of years at the National Botanic Garden of Wales, so it was nice to get involved with a project a bit closer to home!

Marc: I had a tiny plot for a couple of years in the back garden, though I never really knew what to do with it, and then moving to a flat meant I no longer had a plot. So the community garden was ideal really, I was able to do some gardening and most importantly learn from the experience of others, like Laura and Jane Powell who both know their stuff! It's surprising what you soak up just by getting involved.

What is grown in the allotment?

Laura: A mix of vegetables, salads, soft fruit, herbs and edible flowers, as well as some ornamental plants and flowers to attract pollinating insects. As an organic garden we practice a yearly crop rotation of the vegetable beds, alternating where we grow beans and peas, root crops, potatoes and brassicas each year. We also try to grow a few different crops

each year in addition to the staples – this year's experiment is sweet potato, which we're looking forward to digging up and harvesting during the next month.

Marc: And it's worth mentioning that what we grow is dependent on what people want to grow. It is a group effort and constantly adapting. We've had a couple of groups experimenting with different plants, taking on a bed to try something different, but sticking to the organic ethos of the garden.

What happens to the produce grown in the allotment?

Marc: The philosophy of the garden is 'take out what you put in', so the majority of what we grow is shared out amongst our volunteers. This year we have tried selling some of the excess (and there is usually a glut runner beans or courgettes!) to raise funds for seeds and materials for the next growing season. There is an honesty box at the entrance to the garden, and we've even sold a little veg to The Treehouse organic food shop in town.

What sort of tasks to volunteers need to do?

Laura: There is always something to do, but it depends on the time of year; from digging, composting and bed preparation to sowing seeds, pricking out seedlings and harvesting crops, as well as the inevitable weeding!

Marc: And over the winter months we also try to get bigger one-off projects completed to develop the garden site as a community space beyond the vegetable beds. These always involve more 'people power' for things like constructing the shed, making raised beds, laying some (extremely heavy!) paving for a seating area. So as well as planting side of things there is the opportunity to develop your wood work and other gardening design skills.



What are the highs?

Laura: I think being involved in the whole process from seed to plate is really rewarding, so from sowing a seed in the spring to watching it germinate and grow, to then harvesting, cooking and eating the fresh, tasty and sometimes wonky produce that the plant produces - whether it's a broad bean, beetroot or sweetcorn cob. And of course eating peas straight from the pod is always a summertime treat to be savoured!

Marc: I quite like the standing back and looking at what we've been able to achieve in a few hours. That 'many hands make light work' saying really is most obvious when you garden as a group.

What are the lows?

Laura: Like most gardeners, I'd say returning after a day or two to find that your lovingly tended seedlings have been munched by slugs!

How does somebody who would like to volunteer get involved?

Marc: That's easy. Just get in touch by email (maw@aber.ac.uk or lgj@aber.ac.uk) or Facebook (www.facebook.com/tyfuaber/) or just turn up!

Between March and early October we meet every Wednesday between 4.30 and 6pm. From October to April we normally meet for group work sessions every second Saturday of the month between 10.30am to 1pm – while we try not to be fair



weather gardeners we do use an email list and the Facebook group to keep people informed if plans change.

Laura: And in early October we'll hold an introductory session for any new or existing students and staff who'd like to get involved so contact us or check out the Facebook page for details.



Making the world of printmaking a safer place

Andrew Baldwin is Senior Technician and Tutor in Printmaking and Photography in the School of Art. A practicing printmaker, Andrew writes about the innovative etching ground he has developed and produced as part of a drive to reduce some of the more hazardous processes in printmaking.

We live in a world where we are frequently being informed of the negative impact our everyday actions could potentially have on us and our planet. Whether it's washing our hair with shampoo containing millions of microscopic plastic beads or walking down our streets breathing in the particulates from car exhaust fumes, people are becoming more aware and better informed about the potential hazards confronting them.

Everyone would agree that becoming well informed is a positive first step towards attaining a healthier environment and a healthier 'me'. However, the utopia to which many of us aspire can sometimes be more difficult to achieve than we may at first think. "Old habits die hard" and "ignorance is bliss" characterise just two of the obvious potential attitudes we are faced with when we try to confront change, even if we know it is for the better.

These attitudes are amongst the biggest hurdles that challenge some of us who work within the specialism of fine art printmaking. Not to be confused with its more commonly understood cousin of industrial printing, fine art printmaking is steeped in tradition, and therein lies the problem.

Ironically, industrial printing has reacted positively to the warnings of potential environmental risk, whereas fine art printing (whether in a professional environment of a studio or school, or in a domestic one at the kitchen table) has remained somewhat impervious to the rumblings of change.



Andrew Baldwin, 'Punch Drunk', etching. Won the printmaking section of Welsh Artist of the Year 2007.

This is not to say that there have been no attempts to confront the more hazardous processes within fine art printmaking, for example inks are now being produced with lower volatile organic compounds (VOC) and some inks can now be removed without the need for solvents.

Within my own specialist field of etching, there are still many areas of potential hazard, including the mordants used to etch the metal plates. The traditional acid used to bite the plates is nitric acid, which in the process of etching creates noxious and highly toxic fumes. This is despite there being safer and cheaper mordants such as ferric chloride. The substance traditionally used to resist the bite (the ground) is also a dangerous material to handle, containing arsenic, mercury and lead.

However, it seems that tradition wins out, as both nitric acid and toxic grounds are still being used across fine art printmaking studios, especially in Britain. Safer alternatives over the years have lost out to tradition, due to several important factors, most importantly of which was the quality of the etch.

Many fine art printmakers have turned away from less toxic materials and methods due to this significant disadvantage, myself included. Over many years of involvement in etching, my drive to discover safer, less harmful resources and methods was fuelled by concerns for my own health (eroding teeth due to nitric fumes), the health of my students and wider concerns for the health of the environment. This led me in 2000 to visit the studio of one of the early pioneers of safer alternatives in etching; Edinburgh Printmakers.

Learning from the innovative approaches in Edinburgh, my colleague Paul Croft and I set about adopting many of their processes in the School of Art, such as clearing away oil based inks with vegetable oil and washing up liquid, negating the need for toxic solvents.

However, feeling the need to push further with investigating less toxic approaches, both in the School of Art and in my own studio Trefeglwys Printmakers, I set about researching how I could develop a less harmful etching ground.

From my research in 2000, emerged what has become Baldwin's Ink Ground (BIG) a product that has been independently verified by a chemical testing laboratory in America and one that over the next 16 years has proved to be a safer alternative, whilst not compromising the accuracy required of an acid resist.

Alongside the etching ground I have also developed techniques that remove some of the other dangerous processes. So now you will see instant coffee, icing sugar and soy sauce on the shelves of a studio rather than the traditional toxic alternatives.

Little did I realise when I developed these safer alternatives that they would lead me to travel the world meeting like-minded artists, passionate about printmaking and environmental issues.



In 2003, a printmaker from a studio in Massachusetts took part in a non-toxic printmaking workshop at Edinburgh Printmakers who were now using my etching ground BIG. Impressed by the product, the studio owner, Liz Chalfin visited my studio in Trefeglwys to learn more about it. As a result, Liz took the ground back to the USA to her own studio Zea Mays, which advertises itself as an entirely non-toxic print studio. Liz has gone on to become an ambassador for BIG in America where it is now used widely in many studios across the country. This has led to opportunities for me to visit these studios to demonstrate BIG across America and in Canada both in private studios and in university art faculties.

Fifteen years on from the final version of BIG, an exhibition is opening in October at the School of Art which will celebrate the exciting journey that both BIG and I have travelled. A request was sent out via social media for printmakers using BIG to submit work that would demonstrate the versatility and the safer aspects of the ground. Delighted by the responses, there is work from France, Colombia, Germany, Australia, the Netherlands and South Korea as well as from Britain and America.

The research continues.

ABER PEOPLE

Juggling parenthood and parasitology



At the Student Led Teaching Awards in April this year, Jo won the award for Undergraduate Supervisor of the Year, and was Highly Commended for the Exceptional Contribution to University Life award. Photo Credit: Alex Stuart (AJFS Photography).

Professor Jo Hamilton is a Lecturer and Director of Student Experience in the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS). **AberNEWS** asked Jo how she manages to tackle a hectic academic teaching schedule, with her busy life as a parent to two young children.

As a Zoologist with a passion for parasites my role is diverse, challenging and fun.

Through leadership in teaching and academic and pastoral student support, no two days are ever the same!

Teaching a wide variety of subjects at each level of undergraduate and postgraduate study is exciting and my research explores host-parasite interactions addressing real world medical and veterinary problems.

My fascination with animals began

early, through madcap British family adventures in a “modified” minibus (no posh VW campervan for us) and washing worms in the bathroom sink!

My passion for parasites developed during my degree and doctoral studies at Bangor University and the Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London. My research took me to Africa and the company of iconic wildlife and people living in extreme poverty - the most exuberant people I have ever met; truly humbling and truly inspirational.

Having witnessed first-hand the effects of HIV coupled with parasitic infections in Africa, I was fortunate enough to become a volunteer director for a local HIV/AIDS respite centre in North Wales.

These experiences made me realise that I was as interested in people as I was other animals and have shaped my academic practice.

I am acutely aware of barriers to education from my own personal experiences growing up in a deprived part of Liverpool. As was pointed out to my family “people who live in houses like yours do not go to schools like that”.

However, I had (and continue to have) fantastic family support, and when I found myself in an academic position I was determined to champion support for students and young people to help them realise their ambitions.

Postdoctoral research on blood-sucking insects and disease vectors led to my appointment as a Lecturer in Parasitology at Aberystwyth in 2002.

Following the birth of our first child, Kai, I became the Director of Learning and Teaching in the Institute of Biological Sciences in 2007, Assistant Director of Learning and Teaching with the creation of IBERS in 2008 to 2015 and Senior Lecturer in Zoology and Parasitology in 2009.

Our second child, Amelie, was born in 2010. In September 2015 I became IBERS’ Director of the Student Experience and was stunned, very honoured and extremely humbled in November 2015 when I was awarded a Personal Chair.

I particularly enjoy working with students, especially in the practical aspects of my role. This may be working with students in the lab, in teaching environments, sharing research through public engagement (especially our schools project SusNet) or supporting students academically and pastorally.

I am extremely privileged and very lucky to work in such a diverse and supportive University community and in the stunning natural environment of Aberystwyth.

As a full-time working mum, balancing work and home life can be extremely challenging, especially as Kai has additional needs because of his Cerebral Palsy. My supportive full-time working husband, Danny, understands that this is not a 9-5 job and has refocused his career to create more flexibility for our family.

Teamwork is our key to juggling family and professional responsibilities but we don’t always get it right of course!

Carefirst Employee Assistance Programme

The University's Employee Assistance Programme offers a comprehensive suite of support, advice and counselling services covering a broad range of issues. Full details of the services offered can be found at www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/employment-information/eap/

Revisions to Policies and Procedures

With the support of our recognised trade unions, the University has agreed a number revisions to our policies and procedures during the academic year 2015/16 which apply to all members of staff.

These are: Flexible Working Policy, Flexible Retirement Policy, Unpaid Leave Policy, Parental Leave Policy, Matching and Slotting Process, Redundancy Avoidance Procedure, Capability Procedure and Grievance Procedure.

Details of all these policies and procedures can be found on the HR Website at www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/all/

Effective Contribution Scheme

A new simplified performance management process has been introduced for academic staff.

The new Effective Contribution Scheme (ECS) incorporates the Staff Development and Performance Review (SDPR) process, the Personal Research Plan (PeRP) process and Workload Allocation Management Model (WAMM).

In summary the Effective Contribution Scheme is:

- At least one meeting – once a year between the individual member of staff and their designated reviewer (usually the line manager) about the quality and impact of the employee's performance. For academic staff this combines the 3 elements: SDPR, PeRP and WAMM;
- A conversation which will include clarification of the expectations and flexibility of the role, linking individual goals and objectives to the aims of the Department/Institute, the planning and budget round submission and to the University's three core aims; Recruitment, Reputation and Sustainability;
- A way of linking the requirements of the role to career development – in particular for REF 2020 and for the contribution of all staff to their Department/Institute and to the University;
- A performance review process which includes those new to the university and on probation – no additional forms are required for probation;
- The opportunity for staff to explore health and wellbeing issues and their work-life balance.

A portal has been developed so that the form can be completed online and uploaded on to ABW. The link to the portal and to further information about the scheme can be found at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/ecs/>.

Although the combination of SDPR, PeRP and WAM affects only academic staff, for ease of reference the SDPR process for professional support staff will also be re-named as the Effective Contribution scheme.



Health and Wellbeing

The Corporate Health Standard, run by the Welsh Government, is the quality mark for workplace health promotion in Wales. It is presented in bronze, silver, gold and platinum categories to organisations implementing practices to promote the health and well-being of their employees.

As you will be aware, the University, has already achieved the Corporate Health Standard Bronze and Silver Awards.

As we work towards the Gold Award, we will develop a cohesive and strategic well-being model which will include workplace initiatives to support people's health and well-being. A number of good suggestions for this model are already apparent from the Health & Wellbeing Survey undertaken in 2015 and the subsequent focus groups that have taken place.

We will also be developing an occupational health strategy and further revising our policy framework to support staff in terms of physical activity, nutrition, employee engagement and health related initiatives.

We remain interested in your views on health and wellbeing. If you would like to contribute any ideas or suggestions please email wellbeing@aber.ac.uk.

Good line management is also central to healthy relationships in the workplace and is a crucial part of any organisation's absence management and stress management provision, as well as enabling effective employee engagement, personal development and an open and collaborative culture.

On recommendation from the Corporate Health Steering Group, the University has embedded a health and wellbeing objective into the Effective Contribution Scheme for our senior managers. This will be underpinned by a number of management and leadership development programmes available for 2016/17.

Leadership and Development Programmes for 2016/17

The University Executive are committed to the development of leaders and managers, and continue to explore the most effective ways of providing managers the opportunity to strengthen their leadership and management skills.

The Effective Leadership module continues to be offered to staff in 2016/17. Three further elements will be added following feedback from participants: A senior leadership and management development programme, a compulsory induction programme for new managers including delivery of sessions by Governors and senior managers, and further sessions of the successful 'Developing a Coaching approach as a leadership way of being'.

We are also continuing to offer the very successful Springboard Programme this year, as well as places on the Academi Wales summer school 2017.

EQUALITY

Equality update

Earlier this year the University published its Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2016-2020 which sets out our commitment to promoting a fair, equal and diverse community for our students, staff and visitors. The plan, and its associated Action Plan for delivery can be seen on the new Equality and Diversity webpages: www.aber.ac.uk/en/equality/.

The Action Plan emphasises the need for communications and training, with one of the key goals being to 'communicate our commitment to Equality and Diversity both internally and externally and promote a cultural shift'.

A number of groups within the University are carrying out some great work in this area: the LGBT Staff Network, chaired by Ruth Fowler; the newly formed BME Staff Network, chaired by Dr Engobo Emeseh; and our Equality Champions and Equality Chartermark Implementation Group, both chaired by Dr Debra Croft.

Staff and students alike have requested more, different and better training. In addition to the online e-diversity training for all staff, the Equality Team have been involved in a number of programmes and schemes which provide training to students and staff. These include the Springboard and Aurora leadership programmes for women; gender diversity and identity training from Gendered Intelligence; and The Role Models Programme from Stonewall which gives individuals the opportunity to consider how they can help to create an inclusive environment for everyone.

Dr Debra Croft also delivered an interactive session at the University's Learning and Teaching Conference in July. The



The AU Equality Team: Dr Debra Croft, Director of Equality and The Centre for Widening Participation and Social Inclusion (CWPEI) and Ruth Fowler, Human Resources Officer

session entitled 'Equality anyone?' explored aspects of equality from legal protection to inclusive curriculum.

The Equality Team has also begun delivering departmental briefings on equality. To date briefings have been held with Information Services, AberForward Summer Interns and AberForward Graduate Interns. The briefings are being rolled out to all academic and service department this year.



As well as working with student groups (Malaysian, Afro-Caribbean, Pride, Feminists) and the Students' Union to support student campaigns, the team also provided a stand at the Open Days over the summer to ensure that prospective students know that Aber is serious about equality, diversity and fairness in all aspects of University life.

The team have also been lucky to take part in some really fun things too. CWPEI were sponsors of Aberration, an LGBT event organised by Enfys Aber (the University's LGBT Network) and Spring Out (an LGBT events company). The event took place on 27 May at Aberystwyth Arts Centre and had a diverse mix of artists perform, from spoken word to performance to song.

So, come and visit us at an Open Day, or check out the webpage and links, and for all our updates on everything Equality be sure to follow us on twitter: @AberEandD .



The University was also a sponsor of this year's Pride Cymru in Cardiff on 13 August (co-funded by the Marketing Department and CPWESI).

Spread the word about sustainability



Dr Heather Crump from the University's Health, Safety and Environment Department explains some of the ways the University is working to improve its sustainability credentials and protect the environment; and how in order to achieve real change, we need to work together with a shared responsibility.

Here at Aberystwyth University we are privileged to work, learn and live in an exceptional environment.

As an institution, we strive to protect and enhance our beautiful campuses and surrounding landscape, and aim to continually improve upon our sustainability credentials, preserving the environment for generations to come.

Our campuses have received national recognition as some of the very best green spaces in the UK with the presentation of Green Flag Awards.

Over the past three years, our staff have been awarded 36 NUS Green Impact awards for 'greening-up' offices.

Our hospitality outlets pride themselves on their sustainability successes, having been presented with a Bronze Food for Life certification by the Soil Association and proudly representing the fairtrade badge for Aberystwyth.

The Health, Safety and Environment Department are leading the development of an internationally recognised environmental management system within the University, via a higher education platform called EcoCampus.



The EcoCampus system covers all aspects of the University's operations including waste management, energy use, water efficiency, sustainable purchasing, construction and refurbishment, biodiversity, travel and community involvement. It also promotes staff and student engagement activities.

Some of the ongoing campaigns include:

- NUS Green Impact (launching for its fourth year on 12 October – register an interest at :

<https://goo.gl/forms/LelPUltOzbNeVuv83>

- NUS Blackout (next event 11 November)
- NUS Student Switch Off
- 'Love Food Hate Waste' cascade training
- Travel the World
- Bin the Bin

Everyone has a responsibility to look after the environment they live in. The more people get involved in sustainability campaigns, the bigger the drive to protect our environment.

From small changes such as taking the stairs rather than the lift, to the larger changes such as commuting on public transport, it all makes a big difference.

We need your help to spread the word about sustainability and environmental management at the University and to assist the successful enhancement and protection of our environment.

To find out more and to contribute to the Sustainability Strategy which is currently live for consultation, please visit www.aber.ac.uk/en/sustainability or email: sustainability@aber.ac.uk.

Useful websites

Aberystwyth University is a member of Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges Resources. Select 'Aberystwyth University' from the dropdown menu to register to access member-only resources.

http://www.eauc.org.uk/members/choose_subscription.php?type=institution

To learn more about NUS Green Impact visit: <http://sustainability.nus.org.uk/green-impact>



The biodiverse green roof on the IBERS building, Penglais Campus

Further information: Health, Safety and Environment Department

Webpage: www.aber.ac.uk/en/sustainability Tel: 01970 622073 Email: sustainability@aber.ac.uk

ABER PEOPLE

Appointments

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

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND EARTH SCIENCES



Dr Sophie Yarker has joined the department as a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD). Her research interests include the nature and expression of local identities, community resilience and local response to global change. Sophie has previously worked as a Teaching Fellow at Newcastle University where she received her PhD in Human Geography in 2014.



Dr Francesca Fois moved to Aberystwyth in May to work as a Post-Doctoral Researcher on the project '*The Global Countryside: Rural Change and Development in Globalization*' (GLOBAL-RURAL) led by Professor Mike Woods. Francesca will mainly conduct research on rural development in China and Brazil. She was previously employed as a Teaching Associate in Economic Geography at the University of Nottingham and has recently finished her PhD at Newcastle University.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS



Professor Richard Beardsworth has been appointed as Head of the Department of International Politics. He joined the University in 2013 from Florida International University where he was Professor of International Theory. Before that, he was Professor of Political Philosophy and International Relations at the American University of Paris. He became Aberystwyth's Director of Ethics in 2015 responsible for the work of developing, publicising and assuring the University's strategic direction in ethics, and will continue to do so in his new role as Head of Department.



Dr Iain Johnston-White has been appointed as a Lecturer in the Department of International Politics, teaching Military History and Strategic Studies. His research interests span the history of war and empire in the modern era. His book *The British Commonwealth and Victory in the Second World War* is due to be published in October.



Dr Meighen McCrae has joined the department as a Lecturer. She completed her DPhil at Linacre College, Oxford. From there she moved to King's College London at the Joint Services Command and Staff College where she worked as a Teaching Fellow. Her research focuses on coalition warfare in the First World War and more broadly the history of warfare in the 20th Century.



Dr Warren Dockter has joined the department as a Lecturer. A graduate of the University of Tennessee, he gained his PhD at the University of Nottingham in July 2012. He has taught at the University of Exeter, the University of Worcester and the University of London. Warren has been a Junior Research Fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge and an Archives By-Fellow at Churchill College, Cambridge. His research interest lies in British Imperialism in the Middle East during the late nineteenth and twentieth century as well as international relations.

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE



Liping Wang has joined the department as a Postdoctoral Research Associate. Liping completed her PhD in Aberystwyth in July 2016, working on 3D brain Magnetic Resonance Image Analysis. Liping will be working on prostate cancer detection, classification, active surveillance and staging in multi-parametric Magnetic Resonance Imaging.

Dr Christine Zarges joined the department as a Lecturer in August. She has a PhD from TU Dortmund (Germany) and was previously a Birmingham Fellow and Lecturer in Computer Science at the University of Birmingham for four years. Her research focuses on the theoretical analysis of all kinds of randomised search heuristics such as evolutionary algorithms and artificial immune systems. She also has interests in computational and theoretical aspects of natural processes and systems.



Dr António dos Anjos has joined as a Lecturer in Computer Science. He completed a PhD in Informatics Engineering at the University of the Algarve (Portugal), and previously worked as a lecturer at Instituto Superior Manuel Teixeira Gomes (Portugal). His research interests include image processing, computer vision and machine learning.

ABER PEOPLE

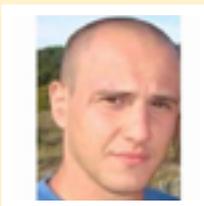
Appointments (continued)

INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND RURAL SCIENCES



Dr Gemma Beatty has been appointed as a Lecturer in Agri-Environment and Grassland Ecosystems. She has a PhD from Queen's University Belfast. Her research focus is in using genetic approaches to study the distribution

ranges of natural populations and the various factors that determine these ranges. She is also interested in examining the effects of threats to biodiversity.



Dr Ricardo da Costa has joined IBERS as a Postdoctoral Fellow working on a project which aims to develop novel technologies for diagnosing and monitoring pulmonary diseases, partially funded by cancer charity Tenovus. In parallel, Ricardo is

also working as a research associate in the area of lignin isolation and bioconversion, as part of a major industrial biotechnology initiative: OXYPOL. Ricardo completed his PhD at Aberystwyth and much of his previous work focused on the study of plant cell walls.



Christopher Nunn has been appointed to the post of Life Cycle Analyst for the BEACON project at IBERS. With an undergraduate degree in Cybernetics and control engineering from the University of Reading, his PhD research focused on

modelling growth of the biofuel crop *miscanthus* at IBERS.

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS



Dr Denny Vitasari joined the department as a Research Associate in May, and is working on a project about mathematical simulation of foam flowing in narrow complex geometries. Denny obtained her PhD degree from the Department

of Chemical Engineering at the University of Manchester in July 2014. Before coming to Aberystwyth she worked as a lecturer at the Department of Chemical Engineering at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta in Indonesia, her home country.

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE, FILM & TELEVISION STUDIES



Dr Ffion Jones has been appointed as Lecturer in Practical Theatre at the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies (TFTS). Having received her BA and MA at TFTS, she has recently graduated from the department for a third time with her

doctorate, which utilised an interdisciplinary and artistic approach to upland sheep farming in Wales.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS



Esther Prytherch was appointed Head of Communications and Public Affairs in June. An experienced journalist, Esther started her career on the *Cambrian News* in 1983 and went on to work for the BBC for more than 20 years. She was a lecturer in Radio Studies and Journalism in the

Department of Theatre, Film & Television Studies at Aberystwyth University from 2006-2008. Some of you may also know Esther from her previous role in Y Ffarmers at Llanfihangel y Creuddyn.

RESEARCH, BUSINESS AND INNOVATION (RB&I)



Dr Jenny Deaville has been appointed Deputy Director of RB&I, during Gary Reed's two year secondment to the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. Jenny has a PhD in Rural Geography and a post graduate qualification in Public Health and Epidemiology. Between 1998 and

2010 she was Research Manager at the Institute of Rural Health (IRH) in Gregynog. She joined the Research Office in February 2010 as Research Development Officer for Social Sciences and has been Research Development Manager since January 2014.



Dr Katja Daniels has joined RB&I as Research Development Officer for the Social Sciences. She completed her PhD in the Department of International Politics in Aberystwyth in 2015, and has since worked there as a seminar tutor. Her research interests are international

investment law and theories of global capitalism.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT



Rhian Linehan joined the Finance Department as Management Accountant in June. A graduate of Aberystwyth, Rhian was previously employed by a local firm of accountants where she gained her professional qualification and achieved full membership of the Association of

Chartered Certified Accountants in January 2016.

ABERYSTWYTH LAW SCHOOL



Dr Sam Poyser joined IBERS in May as a Lecturer in Criminology. She has a BA (Hons) from the University of Exeter and an MSc and PhD from the University of Portsmouth, where she maintains strong links as a visiting academic and member of the Centre of Forensic Interviewing. Her

research focuses on the harms inflicted by the powerful upon the powerless (human and non-human animals), in a variety of settings. These interests have led to her developing a number of innovative undergraduate and postgraduate modules at universities across the UK, relating to areas such as miscarriages of justice, animal abuse and wildlife crime.

INSTITUTE OF LITERATURE, LANGUAGES AND CREATIVE ARTS



Professor Tim Woods has been appointed Director of the Institute of Literature, Languages and Creative Arts. He joined the University

in 1990 as Lecturer in English Literature and American Studies and is currently Professor in English and American Studies. He most recently took on the role of additional leadership of academic quality during the period in which Professor John Grattan is Acting Vice-Chancellor.

INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Professor Judy Broady-Preston has been appointed as the Director of the newly-structured Institute of Professional

Development. Judy joined Aberystwyth University's Department of Information Studies in 1990 and last year celebrated 25 years at DIS. Before moving here, she was a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Engineering and Informatics at Leeds Metropolitan University and a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Information Studies at University of Sheffield.

INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS AND LAW



Professor Jo Crotty has been appointed Director of the Institute of Business and Law. She joined the School of Management and

Business just over a year ago as Professor of Management having previously worked at University of Liverpool Management School, Aston Business School and Salford Business School in Manchester.

Obituaries



AJS 'Bill' Williams (1920-2016)

Bill graduated from Aberystwyth in 1950 with a first-class honours degree in Chemistry. Shortly after he was appointed as assistant lecturer, becoming lecturer and then senior lecturer, teaching organic Chemistry at the Edward Davies Chemical Laboratories until his retirement. Following his retirement, he was appointed honorary tutorial fellow and as recently as last year continued to tutor in IBERS, simply because he loved to talk about Chemistry. His enthusiasm and commitment to *Science and Energy* brought many awards, including an MBE for *Services to Science and to Young people*. He was recently recognised by the RSC as one of its "175 Faces of Chemistry". In July the University awarded him a posthumous Honorary Fellowship.



Professor Emeritus Robin Whatley (1936-2016)

Professor Emeritus Robin Whatley joined the staff of the Geology department as Assistant Lecturer in 1965 and was appointed Professor in 1988, a position he held until his retirement. Robin was a micropalaeontologist of international standing specialising in Ostracoda, a field of study which took him around the world. He trained a generation of Aber micropalaeontologists, many of whom went on to successful careers in the oil industry.



Professor Mike Foley (1948-2016)

Mike Foley joined the academic staff at Aberystwyth in 1974 as a Lecturer in American Government and Politics. Mike's reputation as a leading researcher in his field is immense. He also served in a variety of leadership roles in the Department of International Politics including Director of Graduate Studies and Director of Research, and most recently Acting Head and then Head of Department. Colleagues and students will remember Mike as a committed teacher, a dedicated researcher and a very kind and thoughtful man.



Professor Kevin Shingfield (1968-2016)

Originally from Norfolk, Kevin graduated from the University of Nottingham with a degree in Animal Science in 1990, and obtained his PhD from the Scottish Agricultural College studying dairy cow nutrition. Kevin worked as a Research Scientist at MTT Finland in the area of dairy cow nutrition and physiology, and was made Professor in 2010. In 2013, he joined Aberystwyth University as Chair in Nutritional Physiology in IBERS. Kevin was an internationally renowned scientist who made a large contribution to ruminant animal science, and in particular to our understanding of nutritional approaches in the dairy cow to improving the lipid profile of milk. Away from work, his passions were rugby, motorbikes and his unique music system. He will be greatly missed.



Mrs Mair Williams

Whilst Mrs Mair Williams was never employed by the University her work for the British Council supported many overseas students through their time at Aberystwyth. When they arrived nervous and tired after their journey, she would greet them off the train and her smile and genuine care would lift their spirits. She befriended both the students and their families and is still fondly remembered in many parts of the world. For many years, Mair was also a respected and valued member of the University Council.

WHAT'S ON

ABERYSTWYTH ARTS CENTRE



© Nick Danziger / nb pictures

Nick Danziger – Revisited

Gallery 1, 28 September – 12 November

Nick Danziger documents life on the edge and explores whether the Millennium Development Goals have succeeded in giving families a better life – are the children still hungry? Are girls now able to go to school? Or did the UN's stated intentions end up as nothing more than a feel-good exercise to ease the consciences of world leaders?

For ten years, across eight countries on four continents, Danziger worked among individuals and families living in both rural and urban areas; hamlets, villages, border towns and city slums, reflecting what has changed over the past ten years for those who have the least.

SCHOOL OF ART EXHIBITIONS

The School of Art Gallery is open Monday to Friday 10am – 5pm. Admission is free.

10 OCTOBER – 18 NOVEMBER, 2016

Breaking New Ground



'Artist', sandpaper aquatint

An exhibition of international prints celebrating 15 years of BIG, a non-toxic etching process developed by Andrew Baldwin.

Andrew Baldwin is a senior technician and tutor at the School of Art. In the mid-1980s he began making etchings and was immediately fascinated with the medium. Over time,

like many other printmakers using traditional, toxic etching materials, he found that the process was having a detrimental effect on his health. He began to explore the possibilities of using less harmful materials and eventually produced his own non-toxic etching ground, BIG (Baldwin's Ink Ground).

He introduced the ground to students at School of Art fifteen years ago and since then he has travelled across the world promoting and demonstrating the product to students of art and experienced printmakers.

BIG is now used by printmakers from South Korea to Columbia, in Australia, Ireland and the USA. This exhibition is a celebration of the first 15 years of BIG and showcases the many and diverse ways that etcher-printmakers have used the ground. Please also see p.10.

Backstage

Prints and drawing by John Vivian Roberts (1923-2003) from the School of Art Collection

In early 2003, the School received a V&A/Re:source Purchase Grant to acquire 20 works from painter and printmaker John Vivian Roberts for its permanent collection. Others have since been acquired by gifts from the artist and the Arts Council of Wales.



'Ride a Cock Horse', etching, 2003, gift of the artist

The collection of his work in Aberystwyth demonstrates Roberts' versatility working in a range of media. It illustrates his enduring interest in the costume and ritual of circus life and also street life at home and abroad. Much of his work was autobiographical and this exhibition contains portraits of those he loved, narrative works about unrequited love and melancholic, sometimes eerie, depictions of clowns and circus performers.

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