



# ABER *News*

## Wear Red Day

On Friday 1 March the University will be holding a special event to raise money for the Wales Air Ambulance, which is the Vice-Chancellor's Charity of the Year for 2018-19.

As well as being St David's Day, 1 March 2019 marks the 18th birthday of the Wales Air Ambulance. Launched on 1st March 2001, the Wales Air Ambulance flew its 30,000th mission in 2018.

On Friday 1 March, Aberystwyth University staff are invited to come to work wearing something red and make a suggested minimum donation of £1 to the Wales Air Ambulance charity.

At lunchtime, TaMed Da will be offering a selection of delicious Welsh dishes, with a donation from each dish sold going to the Wales Air Ambulance. There will also be a raffle with some delicious Welsh goodies as prizes.

If staff would like to fundraise in other ways on the day, such as organising a cake stall in your department, this would add to what is going to be a fun fundraising occasion.

Please let the Communications Team know if your team or department is planning to do something and send us your photos for the next edition of *ABER<sup>News</sup>* - [communications@aber.ac.uk](mailto:communications@aber.ac.uk)

*Main Photo: Staff members getting ready for Wear Red Day. Left to right: Chrissy Gates, Richard Dunkley-Waring, Lisa Massini, John Currie, and Molly Longden.*

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## Aber 10k

Congratulations to students and staff who completed the Aberystwyth 10k on Sunday 9 December.

Pictured are Tîm Aber who raised £905 for the Vice-Chancellor's Charity of the Year, Wales Air Ambulance.

Left to right: Arthur Dafis, Kath Williams, James Chaytor, Paul Gatehouse, Adrian Harvey, Mark Whitehead, Stephen Tooth, Andrew Thomas, Neil Glasser. Final member of the team not shown on photograph, David Moyle.

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TaMed Da lunchtime menu

### Wear Red Day

Friday 1st March 2019

Raising money for the Vice-Chancellor's Charity of the Year



#### Main

Roast Welsh Topside of beef with Yorkshire pudding  
Roast Leg of Ceredigion Lamb with homemade mint sauce  
£6.50  
(£3.00 donated to Wales Air Ambulance)

Leek and Caerphilly cheese tart  
Pearl barley and lentil vegetable stew  
£5.50  
(£3.00 donated to Wales Air Ambulance)

#### Cookery Theatre

Lamb or Vegetable Cawl served with  
Welsh cheese and breads  
£4.50  
(£2.00 donated to Wales Air Ambulance)

#### Soup of the day

Leek and potato soup with bread  
£1.99  
(£1.00 donated to Wales Air Ambulance)

#### Hot Pudding

Bara Brith and chocolate bread and butter pudding  
£1.95  
(£1.00 donated to Wales Air Ambulance)

## Safe driving

Although we don't like to think about it, getting behind the wheel of a car is probably the riskiest thing any of us do on any given day. During 2017, there were over 170,000 casualties on Britain's roads; 1,793 of these were fatalities – an average of 5 a day. It is estimated that a quarter of all journeys involve someone driving as part of their work.

As an employer, we have a duty of care to ensure our staff are safe at work, and this duty of care extends to any vehicle that is being driven as part of an employee's work. We recently commissioned a comprehensive review of health and safety and management for all our driving-related activities. The detailed report, produced by an independent professional road safety consultant, cites some excellent practices already in place, but also highlights some gaps and makes recommendations for improvements.

A working group has been established to consider the proposals, and begin to implement them through a staged process. The process will take some time and will involve everyone. In the coming weeks you will see more about this important issue, and will be asked to play your part in creating a safe driving culture across the University.

**Stephen Forster** is Director of Finance and Corporate Services and chairs the University's Fleet Management Working Group.



The Vice-Chancellor's Column



For me, one of the highlights of Aber life is the annual staff and student awards run by our Students' Union. It's a wonderful event for many reasons. It's memorable for the heartfelt testimonials written by students about staff who have made a difference to their lives,

be they in academic or support roles. Their words are an uplifting affirmation of why we are here and how we can have a transformative effect on so many futures.

UMAbSU Celebrates is not only about recognising staff; it also highlights the sometimes unsung successes and achievements of our students who give up their time voluntarily to lead a society or excel in a particular sport. Altogether, our Students' Union runs more than 150 different societies and sports clubs - ranging from conservation, crisis games and creative writing to cricket, karate and kayaking. Joining one of these groups brings an added dimension to student life, developing new skills as well as being a font of fun and lasting friendships.

The awards ceremonies are held over three nights, with the societies on Monday 1 April, staff and students on Tuesday 2 April and sports on Wednesday 3 April. The planning behind these events is meticulous and a real credit to the fantastic team of officers at the Students' Union so thank you to all involved and best of luck with the preparations.

Look out for full reports and photos online as well as in the next edition of *ABER News*.

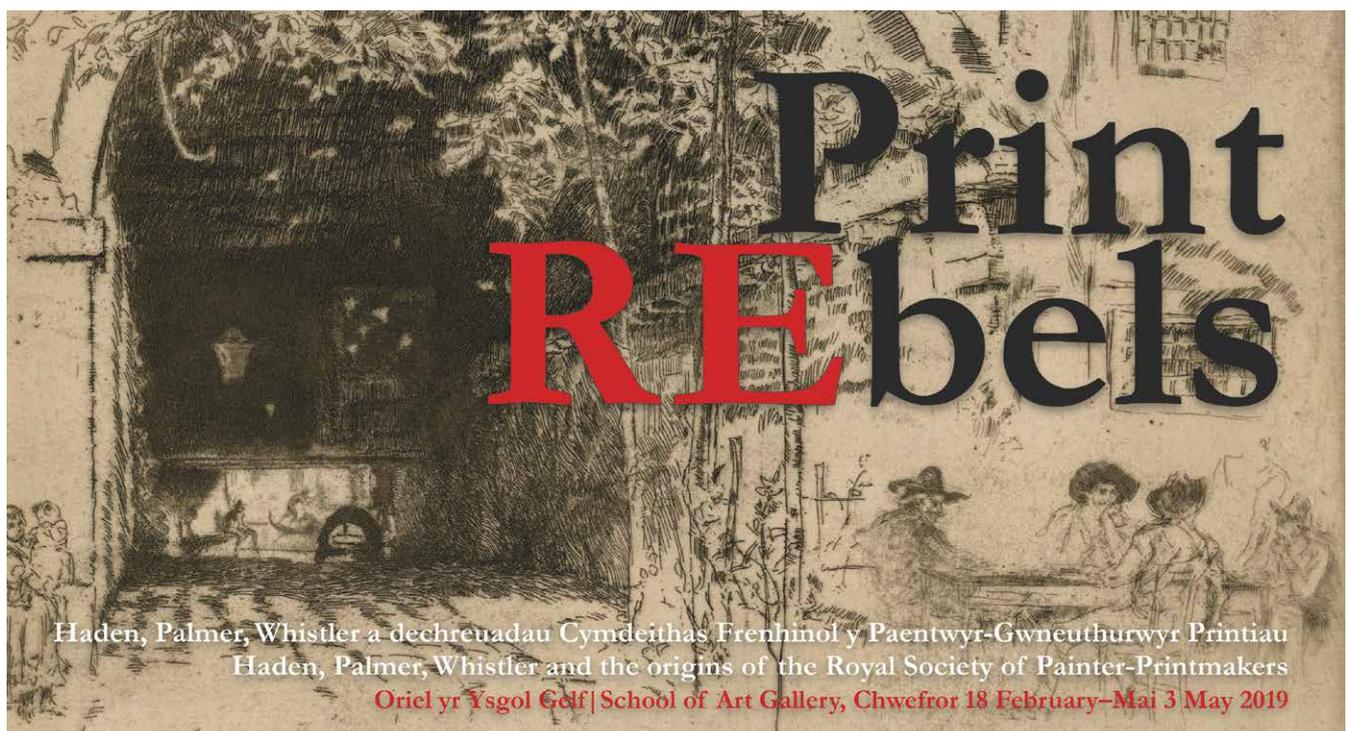
The month of March brings another opportunity to applaud the achievements of staff and students; this time, at the University's annual Gwobrau Gŵyl Dewi Awards held in the Old College. In the month of our Patron Saint, it is fitting that we recognise and reward those who have made an outstanding contribution to the University's Welsh identity and use of Welsh - be that by making an effort to learn and use the language, overcoming hurdles to study through the medium of Welsh, or going the extra mile to ensure the language is used in the workplace.

On St David's Day itself, I hope you will join me in wearing red to work and raising money for the very worthy cause voted this year's Vice-Chancellor's Charity namely the Wales Air Ambulance. Their airborne paramedics carry out more than 2,500 missions every year and I'm sure many of us will have a personal connection to at least one of those rescues. This Friday 1 March is extra special as it marks the charity's 18th birthday. You can read more about what's planned and how to get involved on the cover of this edition of *ABER News*.

We're raising money too for the Old College as we work to secure the long-term future of this fabulous Grade 1 Listed building, which is so integral to our heritage and our founding mission as a Welsh institution offering higher education to all. Please read more about this on p.12 and lend your support if you can as we preserve our past and refresh our legacy for the generations to come.

If you want to get in touch with me, please feel free to email [vcostaff@aber.ac.uk](mailto:vcostaff@aber.ac.uk) and I will respond.

**Professor Elizabeth Treasure**  
Vice-Chancellor



Haden, Palmer, Whistler a dechreuadau Cymdeithas Frenhinol y Paentwyr-Gwneuthurwyr Printiau  
Haden, Palmer, Whistler and the origins of the Royal Society of Painter-Printmakers  
Oriel yr Ysgol Gelf | School of Art Gallery, Chwefror 18 February - Mai 3 May 2019



# Centenary of the Department of International Politics

Events to celebrate the Centenary of our Department of International Politics continue throughout Semester 2, led by **Dr Jan Ruzicka**.

The world's first department of its kind was established thanks to a generous endowment of the Woodrow Wilson Chair in International Politics by David, Gwendoline, and Margaret Davies of Llandinam, within weeks of the armistice in 1918.

The Centenary Speakers Series, opened in October 2018 by First Minister Carwyn Jones, will bring to Aberystwyth such noted speakers as Professor Louise Richardson, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford (7 February); Gideon Rachman, Chief Foreign Affairs Commentator of the Financial Times (4 April) and Princeton University Professor G. John Ikenberry (2 May). Two individuals with close ties to Aberystwyth will also be featured in the Series – Professor Ken Booth, the longest-ever serving member of the Department, will deliver the David Davies Memorial Institute Annual Lecture (21 February) and Professor Steve Smith, Vice-Chancellor of Exeter, will speak on 5 March.

The Centenary is a wonderful opportunity to strengthen the ties with the Department's graduates. We will be holding Alumni Crisis Game at Gregynog (3-5 May), Centenary Academic Conference (17-19 June), and Centenary Alumni Reunion in collaboration with the Old Students' Association (21-23 June).



'One Hundred Years of International Relations: Continuity and Change'.  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office Practitioners' Workshop, London, 22 January 2019

One of the key missions of the Department has always been public engagement, which is reflected in our jointly held events with the Learned Society of Wales (12 March) and the National Assembly (30 April).

This engagement has already started with a highly successful workshop – 'One Hundred Years of International Relations: Continuity and Change' – organised in collaboration with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that took place on 22 January.

All of our events are open to the public and to learn more, follow us on [@InterpolAber](#) or visit the website [www.aber.ac.uk/en/interpol/about/centenary/](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/interpol/about/centenary/)

**Dr Jan Ruzicka**  
Lecturer in  
Security Studies



Rt. Hon. Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister, opened the Centenary Speakers Series in October 2018.

# Hospitality Survey

The Commercial Services department is responsible for the running of various trading operations across the University including hospitality, retail, sport and conferences and events.

In November 2018 we carried out a review of the 'on campus' food and drink outlets to help establish whether the current hospitality offering is meeting your needs as consumers.

We asked you what you think about the type of food and drink currently offered on campus, where and when it is available, how much it costs, and lots more.

As well as an online survey we also carried out three focus groups.

Our survey achieved an excellent response rate of 1,251 (702 Students, 409 staff, 140 public/others).

We are delighted to have achieved over 80% satisfaction in 7 out of the 9 key areas. This great result reflects the skill and dedication of the hospitality staff team.

However, there is always room for improvement and we are launching a programme of exciting new initiatives based on some of the feedback received.

These include:

- **sandwiches** - local sandwich suppliers are being trialled in IBERbach and Tamed Bach
- **lighter options** - jacket potatoes and soup will soon be trialled in IBERbach, salad choices will be updated and expanded and kids meals offered in the Arts Centre
- **a larger selection of vegetarian, vegan and gluten free hot meals** will be offered in TaMed Da, the Arts Centre Café and the bakery in the Student Shop
- **plain food** - more protein options will be available with no added sauce or spices/herbs



## The key results of the survey were as follows:

- Cleanliness of hospitality outlets - **95%** were satisfied or very satisfied
- Choice of beverages available - **90%** were satisfied or very satisfied
- Quality of food available - **88%** were satisfied or very satisfied
- Choice of food available - **83%** were satisfied or very satisfied
- Opening times of outlets - **83%** were satisfied or very satisfied
- Dietary requirements being met - **81%** were satisfied or very satisfied
- Speed of service in outlets - **81%** were satisfied or very satisfied
- Clarity of pricing and signage in outlets - **71%** were satisfied or very satisfied
- Value for money of food and drink available - **60%** were satisfied or very satisfied
- Students appear to be marginally more content overall, recording higher levels of satisfaction to the majority of questions compared to University staff
- Specific areas for improvement with the current offering/service were highlighted in 137 free text comments.



- **value for money** - more 'bundles' will be offered such as meal deals and trading up at discounted prices
- **service speed** - initiatives are being considered to speed up service in IBERbach and the Arts Centre café.

**John Glasby**  
Head of  
Commercial  
Services





# In addition to the day job

On Saturday 23 June 2018, twelve boys aged 11-16 went exploring in Thailand's Chiang Rai province with their coach after football practice and to celebrate a birthday. The group became trapped by rising water, deep inside the Tham Luang cave which snakes beneath the mountain range that separates Thailand and Myanmar.



The tense and dramatic rescue bid that followed gripped the world. While the cameras of the world's media were focused on the divers taking part in the rescue, however, a group of unsung rescuers were working behind the scenes to ensure that the divers had all the kit and support they needed. One of those working in the background was **Dr Peter Dennis, Reader in Ecology in the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences**. He had been elected as chairman of the British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC) just a few weeks before the desperate plea for help was received from the Thai authorities.

ABER News spoke to Peter about what it was like being involved in what he describes as *"one of the most extraordinary cave rescues we have seen."*

### Explain what the British Cave Rescue Council is?

Ordinarily, the British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC) is the co-ordinating body of the 15 individual teams that provide cave rescue cover across the UK and Ireland. We represent the interests of these volunteer search and rescue teams, facilitate training and the exchange of information and best practice amongst the teams. It is only during occasional international incidents that BCRC transforms into an operational rescue organisation.

### At what point were the BCRC asked for assistance in the Tham Luang rescue effort?

After the boys went missing there was a little bit of traffic online noting that a cave rescue had been initiated in Thailand following the discovery of the boys' bicycles at a show cave entrance. However, it was an ex-patriot British caver, Vernon Unsworth, who lives close to Tham Luang cave who witnessed

the alarming rise in water levels that followed heavy rainfall and strongly advised that specialist cave divers would be required to search the cave given the deteriorating conditions underground. We received informal and later formal requests for assistance over the Monday-Tuesday.

### What help was requested of the BCRC at this point?

British cave rescue teams are well versed in methods to negotiate small, constricted passageways flooded with water with limited to no visibility.

The initial request was for experienced cave divers who could advise the Thai Navy divers on diving in confined spaces.

### What were the challenges facing the rescuers?

Initially, dealing with the chaos on the site of the rescue camp. At the beginning, there was poor co-ordination of the many military and civilian helpers that had gathered at the camp. Conditions around the cave entrance were poor due to the effects of the rain and mud. Then there was the state of the cave itself. British divers Rick Stanton and John Volanthen managed to dive quite soon after arrival but encountered very

difficult diving conditions, with strong currents in the partially and fully flooded sections of cave passage.

As water levels abated slightly into the weekend, we received notice that the divers had made good progress, feeling their way and installing heavy gauge dive line along the route.

Rick and John discovered the boys, alive and well in a dry chamber on Monday 2 July. BCRC was then immediately inundated with hundreds of media enquiries and thousands of messages of good will from the public both home and abroad. It was necessary for us to develop a system to handle the immense media interest, so that the UK rescue control staff could focus on ensuring that divers, support personnel and equipment reached the rescue camp in Chiang Rai province when it mattered.

BCRC set up a communication system of daily media briefings and a team to field media enquiries and direct requests for interview to many veterans of cave rescue and caving around the UK. This minimised distraction of the Rescue Control team in the UK and the divers and support personnel in Thailand.

**What were some of the ways that people suggested to get the boys out of the cave?**

The initial euphoria upon the discovery of the boys was supplanted by questions about how they might be safely brought out.

We began to receive numerous suggestions of alternative rescue methods. There were oil companies offering drill rigs to bore an escape shaft, but since there was no precise survey of the cave system, there was no target for any drilling rig to aim for. This, along with the long delay that would have been added whilst a forest road was driven through the rainforest covered mountain slopes, made the escape shaft option unrealistic.

There were many suggestions that were variations on the theme of passing a tube through the flooded parts of the cave, which could be pumped dry of water so that the boys could crawl out to safety (as opposed to shrink wrapped and suffocated, which would be the reality!)

Many people described some kind of rescue pod that could be drawn through the flooded passages by the divers or haulage rope, but these were suggested in ignorance of the extremely constricted dimensions of the cave passage in several places.

Just two options remained. Stockpile food and drinking water so that the boys could remain over the monsoon season, or immediately bring the boys out through the flooded passages with cave diving methods.

**Was there a point at which you began to doubt that the boys would be brought out alive?**

Yes. After establishing that the boys were alive and well and laying the divers' guide line through the murky water, the

BCRC divers were stood down solely to advise the Navy SEAL divers.

The BCRC divers were convinced that the only way to bring the boys to safety was by a dive operation before the full onset of the monsoon. However the Thai rescue Joint Command Centre continued to dismiss their plan as too risky, and instead place their hope in pumping out water or supplying the chamber where the boys were stranded.

No decision had been made five days after the boys had been found. With the tragic death of Thai ex-Navy diver, Saman Gunan, and the reticence of the serving divers to enter the cave, we began to be concerned that the rescue operation could well be suspended to avoid further loss of life.

This would have left the boys to their fate because no significant stockpile of food, nor air supply, communications or power cables had reached the chamber where the boys waited. However, with some evidence of a decline in the boys' condition and a reduction in oxygen in the air of the chamber, it became increasingly clear to those in the Joint Command Centre that this strategy would not work. They were forced to consider the risky but viable alternative.

**What did preparations for the rescue effort involve for the BCRC?**

Whilst the BCRC divers in Thailand worked on a feasible rescue plan, those of us in the UK arranged additional divers and surface support personnel to send to Thailand. For this the BCRC depended on the support of member rescue teams and the UK Cave Diving Group; working with the FCO to ensure that visas and insurance were arranged, whilst Thai Embassy staff arranged transport on flights by Thai Airlines.

We also sourced essential equipment. A particular challenge was sourcing child sizes of specialist diving equipment, but UK cave rescue teams assisted and one member of the South & Mid Wales Cave Rescue Team found himself driving at high speed under police escort along the M4 after collecting children's full-face dive masks from a generous commercial diving supply company in Cardiff.

The divers in Thailand contacted divers with specialist medical training, namely Australians Richard Harris (an anaesthetist) and Craig Challen (a vet), who also travelled to the rescue camp. Without their blend of medical background and diving skills, the rescue plan could not have proceeded.



Top Left: The twelve boys before they went into the Tham Luang cave.  
 Top Left inset: Dr Peter Dennis at the Speaker's House reception in the House of Commons to honour the bravery of the divers and thank supporting members of the BCRC, 22 October 2018.  
 Right: Press conference at Heathrow, 13 July 2018.



Dr Peter Dennis being interviewed by Evan Davis on BBC Newsnight, 3 July 2018

Different methods to fit breathing masks, attach the air supply and carry the boys were tested and refined in a local swimming pool with the help of children of similar ages to those stranded in the cave.

The BCRC engaged Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) diplomatic support, assistance from US military personnel from the US Pacific Command with their considerable logistical expertise, and a delegation of British diplomats from the Consular Office and British Embassy in Bangkok, to help to convince the Thai authorities in the Joint Command Centre to trust our divers' judgment and meticulous planning of the dive rescue. We were so very relieved when the plan was finally authorised late on Saturday 7 July.

**How was the decision made which boys to bring out first, and which to leave until last?**

The boys were asked to decide for themselves the order in which they would be dived out. I was impressed to learn that they chose that sequence based on the distance each boy lived from the cave, those furthest away had to cycle further to get home to get a dinner from their mother. That was the rationale and charming basis for the decision and reveals much about the fine character of those boys. That premise was of course flawed because they were unaware that they would be transported straight to an isolation ward at Chiang Rai hospital and after that experience a period of meditation at a Buddhist monastery!

**How did it feel when you heard that the rescue had been a success and the dive team were welcomed back from Thailand?**

Huge relief on Tuesday when news that each of our cave rescue divers had safely emerged after the last of the boys had been brought to safety. Also, enormous pride in what they had managed to achieve - to dive to safety so many non-cavers and for them all to have survived the arduous route out of the cave was truly remarkable.

The main party of BCRC cave divers and support personnel arrived back at Heathrow early on Friday 13 July. We hastily organised a Press Conference at the airport, to try to diffuse the intense media interest and clamour to access the divers for interview and appearances.

**What has happened since?**

There has been sustained and unprecedented public interest in the rescue operation, with many audiences and accolades to celebrate this remarkable good news story. There were receptions to recognise the 'selfless humanitarian act' by the Prime Minister at No. 10, by the Thai Ambassador and staff at a Garden Party in London, the Speaker and various Ministers and MPs at the House of Commons and HRH Duke of Cambridge at Buckingham Palace. It was quite a surreal experience to find myself introducing these public figures to the divers at various receptions.

The divers have been much in demand to appear on TV current affairs programmes, and offer advice or appear in various documentaries and feature films. Engagements have included the *Daily Mirror*-ITV Pride of Britain Awards where the divers were reunited on stage with the boys they had rescued, and ITV's *This Morning*.

It was tremendous to learn that several of the BCRC divers received awards or honours in the New Year Honours list, including Rick Stanton and John Volanthen being awarded the George Medal; Jason Mallinson and Chris Jewell the Queen's Gallantry medal and Connor Roe and Josh Bratchley, MBEs.



Emma Porter and Graham Smith at BCRC Rescue Control in Shropshire.



## It's all about Debate!

As a Students' Union our core beliefs, policies and positions are decided by students. We largely support students to set the direction in two ways, through our Senedd and our Annual General Meeting.

### Senedd

As officers, we have to follow what our students say and the main ways we can do this is through the policies voted in at our democratic meetings. Last year we saw a decrease in students getting involved in policy making and only 2 out of our 5 Council meetings were quorate and able to make decisions. So, we carried out a fab reworking of our Council model to create our Senedd.

The Senedd is a smaller and more intimate system of elected representatives from sports, societies and faculty reps meeting to make decisions after discussing and debating ideas submitted by any student. It made the world of difference and all of our Senedd meetings in term 1 were quorate.

We are really excited to see the new ideas, debates and policies that will be debated in term 2.

### Annual General Meeting

Each year we hold a large democratic meeting where any student can submit ideas, debate and vote. 100 students are needed to attend to debate and make decisions. This year over 150 students attended our AGM. Policies passed at the Big Meeting that we have started working on include:

- More funding for sport across the University;
- Changing the voting system for Senedd and the Big Meeting;
- Get a Mascot;
- Palm Oil Sustainability;
- Reverse the boycott on Prevent



The AberSU Officer Team 2018-19. Left to right: Anna Wyn, Bruce Wight, Molly Longden, Meg Hatfield, and Louisa Fletcher

### Know someone who would make a great Officer?

Elections for the next Officer team will happen in March and any registered student can stand for our Full Time, Volunteer and Faculty roles between now and 12 noon February 26th.

We want to hear about who think would make a great officer! You can suggest them to us easily and quickly online here:

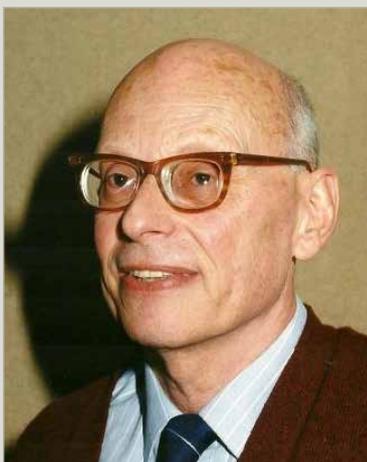
[www.abersu.co.uk/shapeaber/elections](http://www.abersu.co.uk/shapeaber/elections)

A member of staff will then get in touch with them to let them know that someone thinks that they would be a great Officer and encourage them to stand.

### The AberSU Officer Team 2018-19

## Obituary

### William Wolfgang Dieneman 1929-2018



William Dieneman was Librarian at Aberystwyth University from 1970 until 1995.

Born in 1929 in Cottbus, he spent his early childhood years in Berlin. His father was a judge but the family suffered persecution under the Nazi regime and William escaped to Britain in 1939 at the age of nine on the Kindertransport, although fortunately the family were later reunited.

After the war he attended Christ Church College, Oxford, gaining early

experience as a trainee in their library while studying for his degree.

From the 1950s until 1970, William held roles in a number of libraries in the UK and in Nigeria.

He was appointed as Librarian at Aberystwyth University in 1970, and worked here until his retirement in 1995. He was heavily involved with the planning and execution of the new Hugh Owen Library site, bringing together the previously disparate library services through the University.

# The Real Living Wage



In November 2018, the University was officially accredited as a Real Living Wage employer.

ABER *News* spoke to **Heather Hinkin**, Interim Head of Human Resources, to find out more about what this means and why it's important.

**Could you explain what the Real Living Wage is?**

The Real Living Wage is an independently-calculated rate

of pay based on what people need to earn in order to meet the basic costs of living.

It is set by the Living Wage Foundation, and is higher than both the National Minimum Wage and the UK Government's National Living Wage.

The Real Living Wage is currently £9 per hour across the UK and £10.55 in London for all people aged over 18; as opposed to the UK Government's National Living Wage which is currently £7.83 per hour for over 25s (regardless of where in the UK they live).

**Is it compulsory to pay the Real Living Wage?**

No - paying the Real Living Wage is voluntary.

Employers that pay all of their directly employed staff the Real Living Wage, and have a plan in place to extend that to regular sub-contracted staff as well, can seek to be accredited by the Living Wage Foundation.

The University is one of 174 employers in Wales who have now received this accreditation.

**When did the University decide to become a Real Living Wage employer?**

Following a decision by Council, the University began to pay the Real Living Wage in April 2018 to most of its staff who were on lower hourly rates than the Real Living Wage. Work then began with the Agricultural Wages Board to reach agreement to vary the rates of pay for our farm workers.

The University achieved full implementation of the Real Living Wage in August 2018, and then began the accreditation process with the Living Wage Foundation.

**Why do you feel that it was important for the University to pay the Real Living Wage?**

As one of the biggest employers in Mid Wales, I believe that it is important that the University addresses the issue of low pay. It is only right that people receive a wage that is deemed to meet the basic costs of living, and as a University we are proud to have been able to deliver this by becoming a Real Living Wage employer.

*“Employers that pay the real living wage enable their workers to live a life of dignity, supporting them to pay off debts and meet the pressures of rising bills.”*

**Tess Lanning**

Living Wage Foundation Director



**Mohamed Cheggaf**, who works as a porter at the University, is among those to benefit from the higher rate.

*“Receiving the Living Wage rate has made a big difference. The cost of living is increasing all the time, with shopping and other bills becoming more expensive.*

*Now that I am earning the Living Wage, paying these bills is easier and life is better for me and my family,”* said Mohamed, who has also learnt to speak Welsh since moving to Aberystwyth.



## Corporate Health Standard Silver Award

The University has been re-validated for the Silver Award under the Corporate Health Standard (CHS), the quality mark for workplace health promotion run by Welsh Government.

The Corporate Health Standard is delivered by Public Health Wales, and organisations are assessed across four levels from bronze, silver, gold to platinum categories according to their practices to promote and enhance the health and wellbeing of their employees.

The University was first awarded the Corporate Health Standard Silver Award in 2015, and after being reassessed in October 2018, has been validated for a further three years. Interim Head of Human Resources, Heather Hinkin, said:

*"This is fantastic news and reflects the commitment of the University to supporting and promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace. There is a great deal of excellent work taking place including stress awareness, promoting healthy eating options in our cafes and restaurants, the Fit and Well initiative,*

*supporting staff who wish to give up smoking, and our annual Travel the World campaign which encourages people to take regular exercise. I would like to thank the Corporate Health Steering Group whose contribution to the ongoing work of promoting health and wellbeing at the University has laid the foundations for retaining this award."*

Similarly to other workplace quality initiatives, the Corporate Health Standard initiative is a progressive programme and organisations are reassessed every three years. Based on the positive feedback from the revalidation assessment, the University will now be evaluating the criteria for the Gold Award against our current provision.

*Above: The University's Human Resources team celebrating the Corporate Health Standard Silver Award re-validation.*

## Springboard

WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Seventeen women from across the University have embarked on the Springboard Women's Development Programme, which is running at the University for the sixth time.

An award-winning international programme, Springboard is designed for women from all backgrounds, ages and stages of their lives. The programme is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2019. Springboard allows women to enhance their own skills and abilities, challenge power

and equality, while building confidence, assertiveness and a positive image. It allows participants to identify clear, practical and realistic steps they want to take, and to develop the skills and self-confidence to take those steps. During the programme participants will review

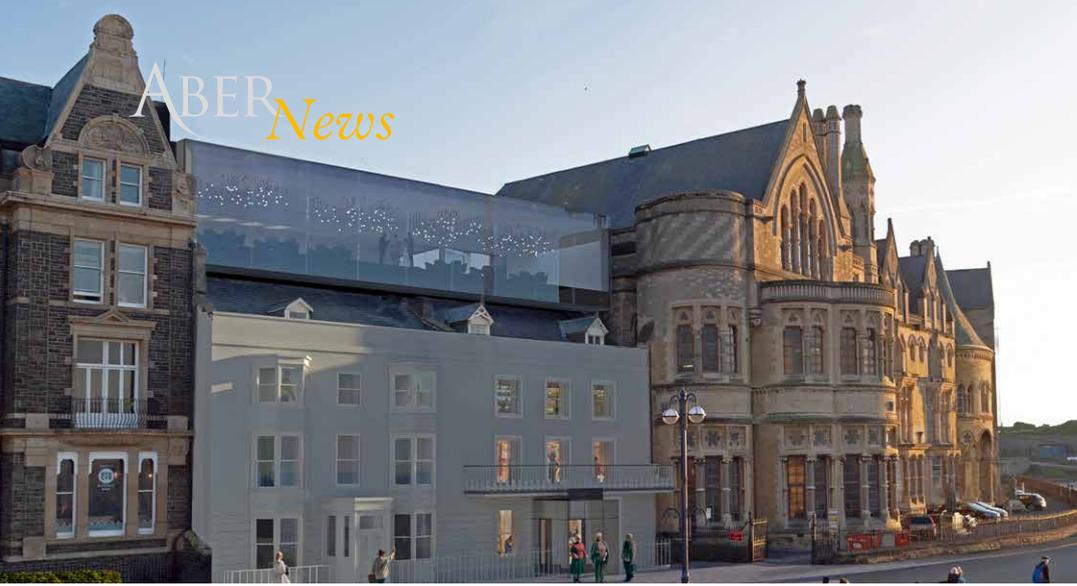
topics such as qualities, strengths, networking, goals, assertiveness, dealing with pressure and managing their image and visibility.

As well as the opportunity to network with other colleagues, the participants will have the chance to hear from

inspirational women guest speakers who will share the challenges they have faced and overcome in their personal and professional lives. If there is sufficient demand, the Springboard Programme may be run again later in the year.

If you would be interested, or for more information, please contact **Joy Arkley** in the HR Department, who is a licensed freelance Springboard trainer:

[joa19@aber.ac.uk](mailto:joa19@aber.ac.uk)  
extension 3070.



## New Life for Old College

Detailed proposals to transform the Old College into a vibrant centre for education, culture and enterprise were unveiled just before Christmas. The ambitious project is being led by **Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan**, the University's Director of Welsh Language and External Engagement. Here's his report on the latest developments.

As I write, the detailed applications for planning approval and listed building consents are being finalised for submission to Ceredigion County Council. It has taken some time for us to get to this stage but I believe we now have a proposition which will secure the future of the Old College for generations to come. Multiple generations will have worked or studied within the historic walls of the Old College, and it holds fond memories for many. With its castellated turrets and towers, it is one of the most recognisable buildings in Wales and it has both national and international significance.

The Old College was the birthplace of the University of Wales back in the late nineteenth century and it remains a symbol of the value we place here on higher education, on its transformative impact and on making it accessible and welcoming to all. Our vision now is to throw open once more the doors of this striking Grade 1 listed building for the benefit not only of University students and staff but for the wider community too.

The proposed redevelopment will see a new 24-hour study space for students, a new home for interdisciplinary research centres, and a new centre for dialogue, debate and academic conferences. Another key feature will be the creation of 12 business units thanks to European Regional Development Funding of almost £1m through the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO). These units will be for graduate start-ups, for spin-outs

or other innovative enterprises based on the creative technologies.

The stunning wood-panelled Old Library will be available as a space for a range of events, performances and festivals, while the upper floors will offer high quality, four-star accommodation in around 30 rooms. The Old College will also host exhibitions with an emphasis on inspiring learning, showcasing the wonderful legacy of the University's ground-breaking teaching and research.

If you go to the website you'll see that the two Georgian villas adjoining the Old College and owned by the University have been sensitively incorporated into the proposals. A six-storey atrium will be created above and behind these two properties, providing contemporary lift and stairwell access to the Old College as well as a rooftop function room with stunning sea views. The carefully preserved historic villas will provide a much needed seafront entrance as well as a café and bar.

Together, the project proposals aim to create around 40 new jobs and attract more than 200,000 visitors a year, acting as a catalyst for economic regeneration in this part of Wales. So how much needs to be spent on the renovation? Clearly, it will be quite a challenge given the building's historic features and listed status. Recent costings have been prepared by quantity surveyors, working with our experienced design team, and the total figure is estimated at £26.2m.

These costs will be met partially through the University's capital investment programme but the main source will be external funding, including grants from public sources, trusts, foundations and other types of fundraising.

You may remember that in July 2017, we were granted Round One Development Funding of £850,000 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to allow us to develop detailed proposals. We'll be submitting these to the NLHF's Second Round later this year and we expect a decision on a bid for nearly £10m by early 2020.

To help us reach our target, we have also just launched a £3m public fundraising appeal - the biggest appeal of its kind since the legendary 'pennies of the people' helped establish our University back in 1872. More than £300,000 has already been pledged by our alumni, friends and supporters across the world so please contribute if you can. As in the past, every penny will indeed count.

I hope you will be inspired to help breathe new life into this much-loved building as we work towards reopening the Old College to coincide with our 150th anniversary in 2022-23. As well as donating yourselves, you can also help the University by being an advocate for this ambitious project and encouraging others to consider making a donation.

**You can find out more about the project and how to donate on our website**  
[www.aber.ac.uk/oldcollege](http://www.aber.ac.uk/oldcollege)

# Aberystwyth Arts Centre - What's On

## Anweledig (Cwmni'r Frân Wen)



**National Dance Company Wales:  
Awakening  
Tuesday 5 March – Friday 8 March**

Healing is messy....  
A powerful and harrowing Welsh language production that follows the journey of Glenda, played by

Ffion Dafis, as she battles to live with severe depression. In this new, fiercely relevant version we witness Glenda's harrowing confrontations with the illness. Will she find light at the end of the deepest and darkest tunnel?

This is the final instalment of Aled Jones Williams' *Anweledig* that was inspired by medical records from the old Denbigh mental health hospital in North Wales.

**Unsuitable for under 14s.**

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

## Nish Kumar: It's In Your Nature To Destroy Yourself

**Wednesday 6 March**



Double Edinburgh Comedy Award Nominee Nish Kumar is taking his brand new show on a national tour of the UK! The title is a quote from *Terminator 2*. There will be jokes about politics, mankind's capacity for self-destruction, and if this will lead to the end of days. GOOD FUN STUFF. He's the host of the *Mash Report*, which you might have seen on BBC 2 or on a Facebook video posted by someone you went to school with but haven't spoken to in a while. As seen on *Live at the Apollo* (BBC2), *Taskmaster* (Dave), *Live From the BBC* (Netflix), *QI* (BBC2) *Have I Got News For You* (BBC1) and *Joel & Nish Vs The World* (Netflix/Comedy Central).

**Age Guidance: 16+**

[www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk/comedy/nish-kumar-16yrs](http://www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk/comedy/nish-kumar-16yrs)



## Ian McKellen on stage Friday 15 March

An intimate show which is a mixture of anecdote and acting, including Tolkien, Shakespeare, others...and you the audience.

Message from Sir Ian McKellen:

"I'm celebrating my 80th birthday by touring a new solo show to theatres I know well and a few that I don't. The show starts with Gandalf and will probably end with an invitation to act with me on stage. In-between there will be anecdotes and acting. I open at my local arts centre in January and end up by August in Orkney. This will be my first visit to Aberystwyth. Better late than never! Profits go to the Arts Centre's programme of theatre for young children and families. See you there, I hope!"

[www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk/theatre/ian-mckellen-stage](http://www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk/theatre/ian-mckellen-stage)

## Arad Goch Opening Doors Festival

**Saturday 16 March - Saturday 23 March**



Opening Doors Festival is organised by Cwmni Theatr Arad Goch and is Wales' only established international festival for the performing arts for young audiences. Opening Doors is a week filled with some of the world's best performances for young people and children, open air

events, workshops, professional seminars and lots more. With events for schools, families and fringe events in the evenings, Opening Doors Festival has something for everyone.

[www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk/family/gŵyl-agor-drysau-festival](http://www.aberystwythartscentre.co.uk/family/gŵyl-agor-drysau-festival)

## Awakening (National Dance Company Wales)

**Wednesday 24 April**



Three unique dances to amuse and amaze. *Afterimage* is a unique theatrical experience, using a mixture of mirrors and creative dance. *Revellers' Mass* gathers an unlikely group for a dinner party, where etiquette is put to the test. *Tundra* is an ultra-modern retelling of history books about Russian folk dance and revolution. Choreography by: Fernando Melo, Caroline Finn and Marcos Morau.

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



## Côr Cymru

**Semi Finals 15-17 February  
Finals 5-7 April**

Take your seat in the audience to enjoy the best of Welsh primary schools performing and competing to win the title of Côr Cymru Cynradd 2019.

**For tickets please phone 029 2022 3456**

**or e-mail [corcymru@randomedia.co.uk](mailto:corcymru@randomedia.co.uk)**

**Tickets are free of charge.**

Make sure you pick up the Arts Centre spring brochure, which is also available on the website:

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



# Appointments

## Planning Department



**Steve Walsh** has been appointed to the post of Head of Planning. Having worked in the Welsh Agricultural College and the Institute of Rural Sciences, he then went on to study for his MBA at Twente University (Netherlands) before working on environmental consultant contracts and corporate team development. Steve returned to work at Aberystwyth University in 2011, initially in Geography & Earth Sciences and then the Planning Office. He was previously Head of Data Analysis and Reporting.

## Department Of Geography And Earth Sciences



**Dr Sarah Davies** has been appointed Interim Head of Department for DGES until 31 July 2019. Sarah joined DGES in 2002 as a lecturer in Physical Geography and Environmental Science and was appointed Reader in 2014. Her research focuses on reconstructing

climatic and environmental change using evidence from lake sediments. She also works on sedimentary and historical records of climatic variability and extreme weather and their impacts in Wales and the UK.



**Dr Chris Owers** has joined the department as a Project Research Scientist. Chris recently completed his PhD at the University of Wollongong, Australia. He will be working on the Living Earth project, implementing land cover classification and evidence-

based change mapping, with Professor Richard Lucas and Dr Pete Bunting.



**Dr Suvarna Punalekar** has joined as a Postdoctoral Researcher on the Ser Cymru funded Living Wales project. The project aims to develop a continuous land cover monitoring system by combining a wide range of remote sensing based inputs. The system can potentially be

deployed anywhere in the world and offers huge advantage over a conventional classification algorithms in terms of consistency, reproducibility and ability to deal with variety of changes in the land cover.

## Department of International Politics



**Dr Núria Franco-Guillén** is a new postdoctoral research associate in the Department of International Politics. She will be working on the Horizon 2020 project IMAJINE, on spatial justice. She obtained her PhD in Political and Social Sciences at Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona), where she examined stateless nationalist parties' discourses on immigration.



**Dr Farrah Samir Hawana** has joined as a Lecturer in International Politics and Security. She recently moved from Geneva, Switzerland, where she worked as an Associate Researcher/Project Coordinator for the Security Assessment in North Africa at the Small

Arms Survey. Awarded her PhD by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) in 2016, her doctoral research focused on civil-military relations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region with particular reference to Egypt.



**Dr Christopher Phillips** has joined as a Lecturer in International Security. He obtained his PhD in History from the University of Leeds in 2015, and has previously taught at Leeds Trinity University and the University of Huddersfield. He is currently working on

a monograph entitled *Civilian Expertise at War: Britain's Transport Experts and the First World War* - to be published by the Royal Historical Society - and has research interests in the interactions between state, military, and private enterprises.

## Institute of Biological, Environmental And Rural Sciences



**Glyn Hewinson** has been awarded a Ser Cymru II Chair to establish a Centre of Excellence for Bovine Tuberculosis within IBERS. Glyn received his DPhil in Microbiology from the University of Oxford where he also was also a postdoctoral fellow.

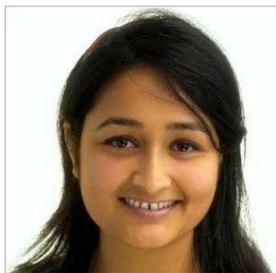
He has worked in the field of bovine tuberculosis for 29 years and was, until recently, the Lead Scientist for Bovine Tuberculosis at the Animal and Plant Health Agency.



**Martin Vordermeier** has joined the new Centre of Excellence for Bovine Tuberculosis for Wales as Sêr Cymru II Professor. Martin received a his doctorate in microbiology from the University of Tübingen (Germany). After post-doctoral positions in Adelaide (Australia) and the MRC Tuberculosis & Related Infections Unit (London), he joined the Animal and Plant Health Agency in Surrey to lead a team developing vaccines and diagnostics for bovine TB.



**Bernardo Villarreal-Ramos** has joined the University as a Professor of Immunology within the Ser Cymru II funded Centre of Excellence for Bovine Tuberculosis. He graduated as a biologist from UNAM in Mexico City. He received his PhD in Immunology from University College, London. He has worked on bovine tuberculosis since 2000.



**Dr Shikha Ojha** has joined as a Lecturer in Food Science in the BioInnovation Wales Project. Dr Ojha obtained her PhD in Food Science and Technology from University College Cork, Ireland and spent a year as a postdoctoral researcher in Advanced Food Technologies

group in Teagasc, the Agriculture and Food Development Authority of Ireland. She won the 2018 International Union of Food Science & Technology Young Scientist Award.



**Dr Chao Chen** has joined as a Sêr Cymru II COFUND Research Fellow. He received his PhD from China Agricultural University, and worked for five years as Assistant Professor in the Beijing Academy of Agriculture and Forestry of Sciences. His project focuses on understanding

perenniality in *Molinia caerulea* and its links to invasiveness. His main research interests include grassland ecology, invasion ecology and cultivated plants.



**Jake Henry** has joined the BioInnovation Wales team at IBERS as an E-Learning designer, managing a small team supporting the project's lecturers in creating innovative distance learning materials. Jake studied at Lampeter University and

previously worked as a multimedia artist at See3D, a former AU spinout company. He has spent the last 6 years in a series of technical management and project management roles at the National Library of Wales.



**Jackie Sayce** has joined IBERS as the Project Co-ordinator and Business Development Officer for VETHUB1, a £4.2m EU funded project. The aim of the project is to provide modern, fully equipped, state of the art laboratories and office spaces to promote and protect both animal and human health. VETHUB1 will make a valuable contribution to the rural economy and to the livestock industry in Wales and farther afield. The project team will work in collaboration with the Growing Mid Wales Partnership, the Wales Veterinary Science Centre and other partners.

#### Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies



**Simon Banham** has been appointed Interim Head of Department until 31 July 2019. Simon joined the department in September 1999 and is now Reader in Scenography and Theatre Design. Previously he worked as a professional designer and was Head of Design at Contact Theatre, Manchester. As a practicing scenographer he has a continuing relationship with Music Theatre Wales and National Theatre Wales. Most of his current research is created with the performance company Quarantine, co-founded in 1998 with directors Richard Gregory and Renny O'Shea.

#### School of Art



**Dr Samuel Raybone** joins the School of Art as a Lecturer in Art History. His research examines the art and visual culture of nineteenth-century Europe, most specifically Impressionism, photography, and ephemera. After reading for a PhD at the Courtauld Institute of Art,

Samuel taught at the Courtauld and the Universities of Oxford, Essex, and Leicester.

#### Aberystwyth Business School



**Dr Julio Munoz** has joined as a Lecturer in Tourism. Originally from Chile, he obtained his Bachelors and Masters degrees at the University of Otago in New Zealand and gained his PhD from the University of Surrey School of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

His research looks into the visitors' experience of university cities and in particular how students play a role in attracting visitors.

## University Executive Group

Following the University-wide restructure, here's an at-a-glance guide to the responsibilities of the Executive Group.

