

THE TIMES
 THE SUNDAY TIMES

**GOOD
 UNIVERSITY
 GUIDE
 2018**

**UNIVERSITY
 OF THE YEAR
 FOR TEACHING
 QUALITY**

Dr Dylan Gwynn Jones from IBERS teaching students in the Botany Gardens Glasshouses.

ABER *News*

University of the Year for Teaching Quality

Aberystwyth University has been named University of the Year for Teaching Quality in *The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2018*.

It is the first time a university in Wales has been awarded the prestigious accolade by the Guide, which was published on Sunday 24 September 2017.

The Guide's league table also propels Aberystwyth University into the top 50 universities in the UK, up nine places on last year and ranked 47th in the UK of 131 higher education institutions.

For student experience, Aberystwyth University is in the top ten in the UK and first in Wales – up 11 places on 2017.

The Editor of the *Sunday Times Good University Guide*, Alastair McCall, said Aberystwyth University had taken strides in recent years to improve the student experience: "Students at Aberystwyth know they are on to a good thing and have been swift to

acknowledge it. The university has secured some of the most remarkable scores in the UK from students for the quality of teaching it offers. It is one of a very few universities to increase its student satisfaction scores in this area from last year, against a backdrop of a much tougher National Student Survey."

The Vice-Chancellor of Aberystwyth University, Professor Elizabeth Treasure, said:

"I am delighted that our high pedagogical values have been recognised by the *2018 Good University Guide*. This independent accolade is a resounding endorsement of the exceptional efforts made by our staff to maintain the highest of standards and to ensure that Aberystwyth graduates are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve their potential."

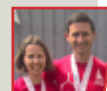
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Honorary Awards 2018

Graduation is the highlight of our academic year. Not only do we celebrate the successes of our graduands, we also take the opportunity to confer Honorary Awards. Traditionally, these have been Honorary Fellowships, but since 2015 we have also conferred both Honorary Doctorate and Bachelor degrees.

Somehow, we manage to keep the names of those who will be receiving Honorary Awards under wraps until just before graduation week - this is no mean feat considering that the actual process to agree and offer these Awards gets underway the previous autumn.

The whole process starts when the University community is invited to nominate suitable individuals to be considered for an Honorary Award. These nominations are then presented to the imaginatively-named Committee on Honorary Awards for further consideration. This Committee typically meets during late October / early November and is charged with whittling the nominations received down to 12 or so names to be recommended to Senate and then Council for approval.

Once the names being recommended for Honorary Awards are approved by the Senate and Council, the University then gets in touch with these individuals to see whether they would be prepared to accept these awards. It's one of the reasons why confidentiality is so important for the process as not every nomination can progress to the next stage. Equally, some individuals may for whatever reason choose not to accept the offer of an Honorary Award and would prefer not to publicise their refusal.

How to nominate

All staff and students, as well as members of the general public, can put forward nominations. Full details, including a nominations form, can be found online at: www.aber.ac.uk/en/about-us/honorary-awards. This website also gives the eligibility criteria against which the Committee on Honorary Awards considers the nominations.

For Graduation Week 2018, the deadline for nominating individuals for consideration is **Monday 23 October 2017**. Nominations can nevertheless be submitted throughout the year, and then held back until the next meeting of the Committee. And if you're unsure about submitting a name for consideration, you can seek informal advice via secretary@aber.ac.uk.

The more nominations we receive, the better. The aim is to have an interesting mix of individuals being recommended for Honorary Awards - individuals whose achievements and contributions we can celebrate, and who will inspire the whole University community.

Geraint Pugh, University Secretary



Treasurer Dr Timothy Brain awarding Dai Alun Jones with Honorary Bachelor Degree in recognition of his services to sport and the local community.

This year's honours

Eight individuals were honoured by the University during the 2017 graduation ceremonies, which took place at the Arts Centre from 18-21 July.

Honorary Fellowships

Six Honorary Fellowships were presented to individuals who have, or have had a connection with Aberystwyth or Wales, and who have made an outstanding contribution to their chosen field:

Lance Batchelor, Aberystwyth alumnus and Chief Executive Officer of Saga plc.

Professor Martin Conway, Fellow and Tutor in History at Balliol College, Oxford, and Professor of Contemporary European History.

Heini Gruffudd, Aberystwyth alumnus, teacher, author, and language campaigner, and chairman of Dyfodol I'r Iaith, the lobbying organisation for the Welsh language.

Gareth Howell, an Aberystwyth law graduate who has shown innovative leadership in devising practical solutions to problems in countries facing extreme transitions in their national life.

Dr Louise Rickard, Welsh Rugby centurion and Aberystwyth alumna, and currently Head of Biology at Woodbridge School in Suffolk.

Dato' Mohamed Sharil bin Mohamed Tarmizi LLB, an Aberystwyth University alumnus and former telecoms, media and postal regulator in Malaysia.

Honorary Bachelor Degrees

Two Honorary Bachelor degrees were presented. These are presented to individuals who are members of Aberystwyth University staff without an entry-level degree in recognition of long-service, contribution and dedication to the Institution; and members of the local community who have made a significant contribution to Aberystwyth and the area:

David (Dai) Alun Jones, Vice President of the Football Association of Wales (FAW) and President of the Central Wales Football Association.

Alan Lovatt, Senior Grass Breeder in the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS).

Nominations for Graduation Week 2018 close 23/10/17

The Vice-Chancellor's Column



Like me, I'm sure the news that we have been selected University of the Year for Teaching Quality has put a spring in your step at the beginning of another academic year. What better way to greet our new and returning students than with the news that their university had picked up one of the top titles in *The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2018*?

The award is a resounding endorsement of all the hard work by staff and students to raise Aberystwyth to even higher standards of scholarship and learning. As we say in Welsh, *nid da lle gellir gwell*. We do not settle for good when we can do even better so as the bar is raised once more, may I thank you once more for contributing to this latest success. And let's not forget either that this accolade follows a second year of outstanding NSS results, as well as higher than ever rates of graduate employment. These are real achievements of which we can all be proud.

The dramatic improvement in our league table rankings gives us a solid foundation on which we can build our vision of an inclusive, welcoming and diverse university; a university which values teaching and research to deliver a transformational student experience. As our current five-year Strategic Plan draws to an end, I am focussing firmly on the future. The key question for me - and for the institution as a whole - is where do we want to be five years from now? What kind of university do we want Aber to be for staff and students? I am not talking about wholesale change but we do need to define new objectives and aspirations to guide us as we meet the

challenges of today. Now is the time to make your voice heard. I will be holding a staff briefing soon as well as inviting you to submit your comments and contributions online - anonymously if you prefer. Please take the opportunity to feed into this process as we shape our University for the future.

During the six months since taking up my post, I have seen real changes across the estate. The recent landscaping around the Hugh Owen building is eye-catchingly elegant; the cladding on Cledwyn Bridge strikingly smart, and I am enjoying the new open vista from the Arts Centre piazza following the removal of the footbridge. Like the league tables, these developments make an impression on our visitors too and strengthen the University's increasingly positive narrative.

I look forward to sharing the University's good news at our second Open Day of the autumn on 13 October. Thank you again for all your hard work and support.

Professor Elizabeth Treasure
Vice-Chancellor

New Chair of Council appointed

Dr Emyr Roberts has been appointed the next Chair of Council for the University.

Dr Roberts is currently Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and will be retiring in October 2017 after five years at the helm.

Before joining NRW, Dr Roberts held a series of senior civil service roles within the Welsh Government including Director General for Education and Skills, Director General for Public Services and Local Government, and Chief Executive of the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO).

Born in Benllech on Anglesey, Dr Roberts has close links with Aberystwyth University. He graduated with a PhD from the University in 1988; he became an Honorary Fellow in 2013, and has been a member of the University's Council since 2015.

Dr Roberts will take up his duties as the Chair of Council in January 2018 and succeeds Sir Emyr Jones Parry who has held the position of both Chair of the Council and University Chancellor for a full ten-year period.



The University decided earlier this year to separate the two roles with Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd - the former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales - taking on the honorary role of Chancellor from January 2018.

Society of Rheology Fellowship

Professor Ken Walters MSc PhD DSc (Wales) FLSW FRS, has been made a Fellow of the Society of Rheology, in recognition of his outstanding scholarship in the field of Rheology.



A Distinguished Research Professor in the Institute of Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science at Aberystwyth University, Professor Walters is currently one of only two Fellows from the United Kingdom.

In his academic career of over fifty years, Professor Walters has made a number of significant contributions to rheology and the development of rheological science in the UK. He has published extensively on the subject, including his book, *Rheometry*, which is a standard work of reference.

He was awarded a DSc degree of the University of Wales in 1985, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1991, and a Founding Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales in 2009.

He was presented with an Honorary Doctorate by the Université Joseph Fourier, Grenoble, France, in 1988, by Strathclyde University in 2011, and by Aberystwyth University in 2016.

He has received several awards for his work, including the British Society of Rheology Gold Medal in 1984 and the Weissenberg Award of the European Society of Rheology in 2002.

Advising National Assembly on Brexit trade challenges

Professor of International Business at Aberystwyth Business School, Nicholas Perdikis, is providing specialist research advice to the National Assembly for Wales on how Brexit is likely to impact the Welsh economy.



Professor Perdikis, who is a leading expert on international trade and trade policy, has taken up a five month Academic Fellowship with the National Assembly for Wales Research Service to explore the potential implications of the UK's departure from the EU on key sectors of the economy.

His appointment is part of a pilot Fellowship scheme that enables senior academics at Welsh universities to spend time at the Assembly Commission working on a project of mutual benefit.

Until January 2018, Professor Perdikis will divide his time between the National Assembly's home in Cardiff Bay and Aberystwyth University.

As part of his brief, he will examine how a range of scenarios could impact on trade in Wales, including no deal or trading on World Trade Organisation terms as well as membership of the European Economic Area as a transitional arrangement.

Cledwyn Building given Grade II listed status

Cledwyn Building, the earliest building to have been built on Penglais Campus, has been given Grade II listed status to protect it for future generations.

Cledwyn was designed by Sir Percy Thomas (1883-1969), one of Wales' leading architects of the twentieth century, and was an important component of the first phase of development of Penglais Campus.

The University had previously occupied the Old College on the seafront, but when 36 hectares of the Penglais site was acquired in 1929, plans were made to concentrate future building developments on the new site.

In 1935 Percy Thomas prepared a plan for the layout of a new campus, and was appointed as architect for the first three buildings to be constructed - Cledwyn, Pantycelyn and the swimming pool.

Cledwyn Building, which originally housed the Welsh Plant Breeding Station and the Department of Agricultural Economics, opened in 1937.

The building was later named after the late Welsh Labour politician Cledwyn Hughes, Baron Cledwyn of Penrhos CH PC (1916-2001), who was President of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth from 1976 to 1985.





Every Researcher Counts

As part of the University's commitment to delivering support for the career development of researchers, staff are being offered a number of excellent training opportunities.

On **Wednesday 22 November**, Dr Andy Cope, the Founder of the Art of Being Brilliant, will be leading an interactive training session.

The aim of the session, which takes place from 9am-1pm, is to share some of the secrets of positive psychology, focusing on learning new habits of thinking and behaviour that will sustain personal brilliance. It is about the 'whole you' and, as such, is applicable in and out of work. This is open to all researchers including post-doctoral research assistants as well as staff actively researching and on non-research contracts.

Places are limited for this inspiring and life changing and affirming programme.

Book your place by emailing drbi@aber.ac.uk

Research Business & Innovation (RB&I) has also developed a new programme of seven one-hour sessions for anyone new to a research active role in the University (research active staff including post-doctoral research assistants).

Topics to be covered are:

- Applying for research grants
- Research ethics and integrity
- Research data management
- Research impact (engaging the public)
- Managing research grants
- Open communication of research
- What is the REF?

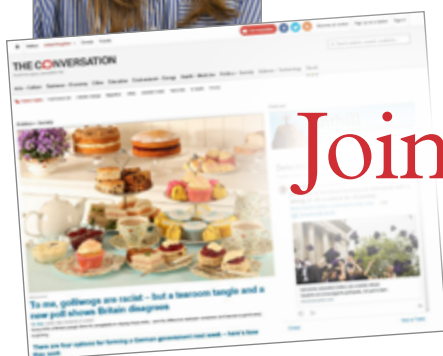
RB&I aim to run this programme several times a year depending on demand, the first programme starting on **Wednesday 25 October**. Sessions will include the principles of each topic and also the Aberystwyth protocols. For further information please email drbi@aber.ac.uk

What's it like to be a PDRA at Aber?

We want to know what it's like to be a Post-Doctoral Researcher at AU. Complete the short online survey for a chance to win an Amazon gift voucher: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Q5K7LJ7



Aberystwyth University recently joined *The Conversation*, an independent news and commentary website produced by academics and journalists. The Wales Editor of *The Conversation* is Ruth Dawson, and here she explains the aims of the website and how Aber academics can get involved:



Joining in THE CONVERSATION

The Conversation was first launched in Australia in 2011 and has since expanded into several international editions, including the UK in 2013.

The site is an independent source of news and views sourced from the academic and research community and delivered direct to the public. It aims to offer a better understanding of current affairs and complex issues through access to independent, high quality, authenticated journalism.

All active researchers at Aberystwyth are able to contribute, including PhD students.

Writing for *The Conversation* can mean commenting on current affairs, breaking news, explaining research, or even developing more feature-style stories.

Though researchers are assigned an editor to work with, the editing process is in place only to ensure the content is clear and accurate. Editing is a collaborative effort, and the team are open to discussion and suggestions. In addition, before any article can be published with a researcher's byline, the academic must give final approval.

As Wales Editor, my role is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council

for Wales to work specifically with academics in Welsh Universities to develop content for *The Conversation*.

I will be at Aberystwyth University one day a month to run introductory or training sessions, and one-to-one discussions with those interested in contributing to *The Conversation*. I can help you get to grips with contributing to the website, build on media skills, and advise on what stories work, how to pitch, and general writing skills.

Please contact me if you would like to find out more, and in the meantime please feel free to browse the website (theconversation.com/uk) and sign up to our newsletter.

Spotlight on... Estates Department

The University has one of the most diverse property and building stock of any campus-based university in the UK. As well as historic buildings, the University owns farms, an Arts Centre and award-winning, innovative buildings.

Our campuses, land and buildings are much more than bricks and mortar; they provide a wide variety of learning spaces, work places, commercial operations and one of the leading residential student experiences.

With these fantastic resources comes a substantial responsibility to maintain, enhance and develop our estate in a sustainable and efficient manner. That's where the work of the Estates Department comes in. ABERNews spoke to Operations Manager, Maria Ferreira.

What's changed recently in the Estates Department?

The department has seen some significant changes over the last twelve months or so, with the appointment of Andrea Pennock as the Director in December 2016; the return of the Property Services team, and the University's Health, Safety and Environment team now sitting in Estates. We've changed our title from 'Estates Development Department' to 'Estates Department' to better reflect the wider scope of our work.

We've also moved premises, and are now based at the former Penglais Day Nursery building on Penglais Road.

What is the current focus of the department's work?

In 2015 the University's Council agreed to some substantial capital funding under the Protect and Stabilise scheme (a minimum of a five year project), to support major refurbishment of the estate.



Cledwyn bridge and spur before improvement works were carried out.



Cledwyn bridge and spur after the addition of insulated cladding, installation of modern double glazed window units and replacement of roof surface.

The primary focus of the capital works are on building fabric such as repair of concrete, roofs and windows but also taking the opportunity, where possible, to look at more significant works in parallel with other potential funding streams. It also focuses on replacing infrastructure such as electrical and other services, and on areas of hard landscaping, car parks and roadways.



To help with prioritising the work, we have appointed consultants to undertake a Condition Survey. Phase One of this work has been completed, and the consultants are shortly beginning Phase Two. We are currently reviewing the reports and, together with our knowledge of backlog maintenance, will be preparing a detailed schedule of works for each building.

What improvements have already been made?

The significant investment began with the upgrading and refurbishing of centrally timetabled teaching rooms in 2014, replacement of water mains, and the installation of new boilers and controls and the operation, for the first time, of a biomass boiler and ground source heat pump, which provides a sustainable source of heating for University buildings.

This summer, as well as carrying out works behind the scenes, we also carried out some high visibility work which created a lot of interest. To name a few, we clad the Cledwyn Bridge, removed the bridge leading up to the Arts Centre and completely refurbished lab C66 in Llandinam, in time for the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences to celebrate their centenary.

What are the highs?

Our work is very visible and we can make a big impact on enhancing the experience of students, staff and visitors to the campuses. Seeing people make use of new and refurbished facilities is extremely satisfying. It is rewarding to see the campuses look their best, especially for key dates such as

Graduation and Open Day, and to get positive feedback.

What are the lows?

The work of construction is never black and white, and people don't always understand when things don't go as planned. Budget restraints can be frustrating, along with the small window of opportunity we have to carry out significant works - the University operates almost 365 days a year so it is difficult to keep everybody happy.

What's on the horizon for the Estates Department?

The University is on the verge of some very exciting times. There is a growing realisation that our estate needs to evolve, and that the strategic development of the estate needs to be considered a central element in the University's emerging wider strategic mission.

We have already invested millions in improvements, but it will take further investment to attract and retain the numbers of quality staff and students needed to maintain Aberystwyth's position as a world-leading teaching and research University with a truly unique campus experience to offer.

For further information, including how to contact us, please visit our website at www.aber.ac.uk/en/estates

Dismantling the Arts Centre Piazza bridge



Mark Whitehead is a Professor of human geography in the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences. He won Lecturer of the Year at the AberSU Teaching Awards 2017. However, in addition to the day job Mark is completing a '13 in 12 Challenge' this year – that's running thirteen half marathons in twelve months.



Mark with his wife Sarah, and daughters

In addition to the day job

What was your motivation behind this challenge?

My primary motivation is raising money for Meningitis Now who support research into the development of vaccines for different strains of the disease. This is a dreadful illness, which effects young and old, but for which cures can be found. A secondary motivation is keeping fit and active in my forties, which is always a challenge.

What is your training regime like?

On a week when I am not running a half marathon I would normally complete 2-3 runs of between 5 and 10km. I also try and do two swimming sessions a week to save my legs. Now and then I will also do some longer runs of about 15km. When I am running a half marathon, I would probably just do one training run during the week and get plenty of rest.

How do you spend the day before you are running a half marathon?

This is very much a day of rest. So it is feet-up. I try and explain to my wife that I should really be abstaining from domestic duties, but she doesn't seem to be buying this!

What's the first thing you do after you've run a half marathon?

If I can, the first thing I do after a half marathon is try and get my legs in some cold water. This really helps recovery. I actually completed three half marathons while on holiday in Pembrokeshire - then I was able to go straight in the sea. If I can't get my legs iced then the days after a half marathon are usually spent hobbling around (stairs can present a surprising challenge).

What have been the high points so far?

The high point was completing the Chester Half Marathon. I managed to run a good time, but the real high point was seeing my wife and two daughters on the finish line.

What have been the low points so far?

During my first half marathon I was running with a calf strain in my right leg. 6 miles in my other calf went. Those were a long final 7 miles.

What spurs you on if you are struggling?

I am often struggling when I run. My motivation comes from the cause I am running for and those who have kindly sponsored me.

What kinds of things do you think about as you run?

How long have you got? All sorts really. My main focus is always on having a nice cup of tea at the end of the run.

Would you like to do a full marathon?

I have run a couple of marathons in the past (the first was, again, to raise money for Meningitis Now). Two was definitely enough though.

Do you have any tips for anybody interested in getting into running?

It will be tough at the start, but the physical and psychological rewards are certainly worth it. There are two things I try and remember when I run. The first is not to run to live longer, but to run to live better. The other is that it doesn't get easier, but you do get better.

Can people sponsor you to support you in this gruelling feat?

Yes - if people want to sponsor me, they can go to:

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/mark-whitehead10

My next run is the Conwy Half in November.

Fit* Together

Group Exercise

October 2017

Let's get fit together

MONDAY	
TIME	CLASS
09.15 - 10.00	Good Morning Spin
12.00 - 13.00	Sportive Spin
12.15 -13.00	HIIT
13.10 - 13.55	Aerobics
14.00 - 15.30	Introduction to Yoga
16.00 - 17.00	Young Yoga*
17.00 - 19.00	Ashtanga Yoga
17.30 -18.30	Step and Tone
17.45 - 18.30	Mixed Ability Spin
18.30 - 19.30	Pilates
19.00 -20.30	Hatha Yoga

TUESDAY	
TIME	CLASS
12.10 - 12.55	Hills and Thrills
12.15 - 13.00	Pilates for Back Care
13.10 - 13.55	Abtastic Core
13.15 - 14.00	Hills and Thrills
16.00 - 16.45	Teen Circuit*
17.30 - 18.30	Aber Circuits
17.30 - 18.30	Step and Tone
17.30 - 18.15	Beginners Spin
18.30 - 19.30	Bodyfit
18.30 - 19.30	Zumba
19.00 - 20.00	Triathlon Swim

WEDNESDAY	
TIME	CLASS
07.30 - 08.15	Early Morning Spin
09.15 - 10.00	Good Morning Spin
09.30 - 10.15	Parent & Baby
12.10 - 13.00	Hills and Thrills
12.15 -13.00	Bodyfit
13.10 - 13.55	Fit Ball Pilates
17.30 - 18.15	HIIT
17.30 - 18.15	Dumbbell Workout
18.15 - 19.15	Pilates
18.30 - 19.30	Cardio Combat
19.30 - 20.30	Yoga for All
20.30 - 21.30	Dance Ffit Dark

THURSDAY	
TIME	CLASS
07.15 - 08.00	Triathlon Swim
08.15 - 09.00	Morning Spin
12.15 - 13.00	Abtastic Core
12.15 - 13.15	Hills and Thrills
13.10 - 13.55	Pilates
16.15 - 17.00	Dance Ffit Young*
17.30 - 18.30	Aber Circuits
17.30 - 18.30	Dance Ffit
17.30 - 18.15	Begin 2 Spin
18.30 - 19.30	Zumba
18.30 - 19.30	Bodyfit

FRIDAY	
TIME	CLASS
07.30 - 08.15	Early Morning Spin
10.30 - 11.15	Aqua Gym
12.15 - 13.00	Work it Circuit
13.10 - 13.55	Dumbbell Workout
16.00 - 17.00	Power Yoga
17.00 - 18.30	Yoga for All
17.30 - 18.15	HIIT
18.00 - 18.45	Hills and Thrills
18.30 - 19.30	Zumba Toning

SATURDAY	
TIME	CLASS
09.05 - 10.05	Hills and Thrills
09.30 - 10.30	Bodyfit
10.45 - 11.45	Pilates

SUNDAY	
TIME	CLASS
09.05 - 09.50	Good Morning Spin
11.00 - 12.00	Zumba

Tel: 01970 622280

Email: sports@aber.ac.uk

www.aber.ac.uk/en/sportscentre/classes

The management retain the rights to alter the programme at short notice.

For current information please visit:
www.aber.ac.uk/en/sportscentre/classes/timetable

All classes finish 5 minutes prior to the stated time to allow for change overs between sessions

To find out who is teaching a session and for more information please visit our web pages



For staff and student membership visit:

www.aber.ac.uk/en/sportscentre/membership/

Campws Arloesi a Menter Aberystwyth Aberystwyth Innovation and Enterprise Campus



Preparing for partnership at AIEC

Dr Rhian Hayward MBE, Chief Executive Officer of the Aberystwyth Innovation and Enterprise Campus (AIEC) describes the latest development in the £40.5m project - the provision of refurbished office space for innovators in the biosciences and agri-tech sectors.

Aberystwyth Innovation and Enterprise Campus team are now underway in their goal to support the growth of collaborations between the business community and the University. Co-locating businesses with academic staff is a key component of the plan, and this is now possible at our Gogerddan site.

In June this year, Aberystwyth Innovation and Enterprise Campus Ltd, the subsidiary company of the University that will operate the Innovation Campus



Richard Glover-Davies from Groversure Ltd with Rhian Hayward

buildings, became an official tenant of the University - at the former Countryside Council for Wales building at Gogerddan.

The Innovation Campus team then worked quickly to open the newly refurbished building to business tenants.

'The Innovation Campus Office Building' has 17 furnished offices, ranging from one person to four person in size. All the offices are fully serviced and ideal for entrepreneurs and their start-up/spin out activities, for growing businesses needing professional space and as satellite offices for larger companies headquartered outside the locality.

The Innovation Campus Office Building



The Innovation Campus Office Building also hosts the Project Team, tasked with delivering the main Innovation Campus construction project, and offers us the chance to build a new business community with a physical hub. The Innovation Campus team launched the intention to develop a new business community at the Royal Welsh Show in July this year to very positive feedback.



Offices at the Innovation Campus Office Building

In parallel with opening the offices for company tenants, the Innovation Campus team has started to grow. Expanding to include a new Administrator and a Marketing and Partnerships Manager, the team will be working closely with the University to develop shared strategies for engaging with businesses and growing collaborative, long-term relationships with industry as a route to research impact.



As well as the opportunity to be full-time tenants, businesses can engage with the Innovation Campus community by taking an Associate (part-time) Membership or a Virtual Membership of the offices - allowing them use of the spaces and engagement with academic staff, without the larger commitment of full-time occupation.

The Aberystwyth Innovation and Enterprise Campus business community has already started to grow, with the first tenant - GloverSure Ltd - having taken tenancy in June.

The Innovation Campus Office Building is already proving a useful focal point for the University to develop and extend its business links, and to demonstrate to industry the breadth and depth of collaborative potential that we have to offer.

Gloversure, founded by Aberystwyth University Computer Science alumnus Richard Glover-Davies, has added Aberystwyth as its fourth operating base alongside premises in Welshpool, Builth Wells and Chester in order to grow its recruitment of Aberystwyth graduates and to launch an exciting Agri-Tech mobile app in 2017.

Business engagement with local and national SMEs and large companies is already being facilitated, with business-focused networking events such as 'Meet the Funders' held on 13 September. With presentations from Welsh Government, Finance Wales, Business Wales and Innovate UK, this event was held with a capacity audience of businesses and entrepreneurs in the Innovation Campus Office Building board room.

For more information, and support in building business contacts visit: www.aberinnovation.com/en/working-with-us/office-space/
Twitter: @aberinnovation



CLr Ellen ap Gwynn, Leader of Ceredigion County Council, Elin Jones AM, Llywydd of the National Assembly for Wales and Rhian Hayward, at the launch of a new business community event at the Royal Welsh Show 2017

GO Wales - Achieve through Work Experience

The GO Wales team forms a part of the University's Careers Service and supports students who face barriers to employment by arranging work experience opportunities.



Cyflawni drwy
Brofiad Gwaith
Achieve through
Work Experience

What is GO Wales - Achieve through Work Experience (AtWE)?

GO Wales - AtWE is designed to help those students who are statistically more likely to have difficulties in finding graduate employment. We specifically work with students under 25 who fit one or more of the following criteria:

- Are from a black and/or ethnic minority background
- Have a work-limiting health condition
- Have a disability
- Have childcare/care responsibilities
- Are a care leaver
- Are from a low HE participation neighbourhood.

We work with students to explore their career goals and the kinds of work experience that will help them meet those goals, and try to find them career-relevant work experience.

What kind of work experience is available?

We can arrange work experience anywhere in Wales in any industry. There are three options:

- **Work Shadowing** - Up to three days of unpaid work experience where the student observes someone in their role to understand how they do their job.
- **Work Taster** - Up to two weeks of unpaid work experience where the student has the opportunity to learn about work and the working environment by observing and undertaking some tasks.
- **Work Placement** - Four to six weeks of paid work experience where the student gets hands-on experience or works on a project.

A student can do any number of work experience opportunities and we can support them throughout their time at university.



The GO Wales Team, left to right: Lorraine Spencer, Lewis Richards, Christina Evans

How are students finding the project?

The experience is very beneficial, as one of our students explains: "I came to GO Wales looking for help finding graduate-level work experience. As a student with a disability, it was difficult to find part-time work to supplement my studies, and I had no idea about the kinds of opportunities that were available for me or what employers would be looking for. The adviser I saw at GO Wales was approachable, friendly and incredibly efficient about the whole process. She helped me to pinpoint exactly what I wanted to achieve from the process and facilitated a placement which was suitable for me - which eventually led to an opportunity for me to interview for and then accept a position with the department for whom I had worked during my placement. I am confident that this is due to the GO Wales scheme and the help I was offered during my time with them, and I look forward to using the skills I developed through my placement in the workplace now and in the future."

What financial support is available?

We pay travel and accommodation costs for students undertaking unpaid work experience outside of Aberystwyth, and we can also help with care/childcare costs. For employers offering paid placements, we provide a subsidy of half the salary.

How are employers finding the project?

Employers have been impressed with the work of the students we have placed, as Gwen Davies of *New Welsh Review* details: "New Welsh Review enjoys the particular perspective that GO Wales students bring to us. They give us the opportunity to play our part in making publishing more diverse. The GO Wales students placed with us that have differences in terms of neurology or mental health, I have found to be especially enjoyable to work with. One example, a student who identified as being 'neurodiverse' was a joy to be with over an extended placement. She knew her areas of difference and, although only in her first year at undergraduate level, had already

Teaching and learning inspiration for the new academic year

developed areas of compensation in which she excelled (for example dealing with people and written skills as opposed to planning). Thus we were able to shape her placement around these strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, her insight may inform our website development in a way that would make it more accessible and appealing to others with such differences."

How can University departments support the project?

Many AU departments have offered work experience through the GO Wales scheme, and this can be especially helpful where students are anxious about entering the workplace. As the University is familiar territory, just a few days of work experience here can help build the confidence a student needs to undertake work experience further afield.

The GO Wales team are happy to work with departments to promote the scheme to their students. We also welcome referrals of students from University staff.

How does the future look?

It looks likely that the project will be extended to January 2022, so we are excited about the many students we'll be able to support during this period. The Aberystwyth University GO Wales team is currently leading the way when it comes to targets, ahead of every other HEI in Wales, and we want to ensure this pattern continues.

The GO Wales scheme is supported by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government.



'Raising Awareness of Neurodiversity with AU staff through Inspiration' was one of six projects that received funding from this year's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Fund.

The project focused around the fact that holistic, visual learners (those that prefer to use images, pictures, colours, and maps to organise information and communicate with others) find it particularly challenging to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through the linear format of many university assignments e.g. essays, reports, presentations.

Led by Caroline White, John Harrington and Janet Rowland from Student Support Services, the project aimed to promote the use of concept-mapping as a learning tool.

Through the project, Student Support Services have made it possible for all staff and students to download a free copy of a program called Inspiration®.

Inspiration® facilitates the recording of ideas in either a visual or linear form and, significantly, the conversion between the two forms. Work completed in the program can be exported to Microsoft Word, Powerpoint and as PDFs.

Using Inspiration®, the learning outcomes of a module can be mapped and the links between different outcomes made visible. An illustration of an assignment's requirements can be linked to more

detailed documentation to increase the accessibility of the assignment. A map of a lecture's content can be created, to which students can add notes and to which reference can be made during the lecture.

It is envisaged that representing knowledge and understanding in the form of diagrams, with the formation of links between different parts of a diagram, will facilitate synthesis and analysis.

The incorporation of this visual approach is part of anticipating the different needs of our students and enabling them to reach their academic potential.

Staff have also reported finding Inspiration® useful in their own research, in note-taking from papers and talks, in checking their understanding of ideas and in problem solving.

To download your own free copy of Inspiration®, visit the 'Software' page of the Information Services web pages.

If you have any questions or comments about the work of this project please contact Student Support Services at accessibility@aber.ac.uk.

If you have an idea for a project aimed at enhancing learning and teaching and positively impact on the student learning experience, find out more about the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Fund at www.aber.ac.uk/en/cdsap/teaching/ltef/.



Vietnamese high school pupils who completed the UK University Experience Course this summer, being presented with certificates by Vice-Chancellor, Professor Elizabeth Treasure.

Spotlight on... International English Centre

It has been a busy time for the University's International English Centre (IEC), which offered a warm Aberystwyth welcome to 130 students from 14 countries this summer.

Participants aged from 16 to 58 took advantage of IEC's courses to experience Aberystwyth, a community some fell in love with.

"What impacted me the most is the people here. They are so friendly that I really don't want to leave."
Fang Yanqiu from China

"My memories from Aberystwyth are the most precious in my life. Daily life and studying couldn't be better. The people are the most kind I have ever met."
Ma Jianye

IEC's 2017 summer courses included:

Pre-session course

Students from Thailand, Mali, Japan, China, Turkey, South Korea and Azerbaijan took this summer's intensive pre-session course. The course develops students' language, research and study skills, and provides insight into the expectations of British academic culture enabling students to begin their degrees with confidence. The pre-session course is aimed at students with conditional offers from Aberystwyth University, and successful completion meets the language conditions of their offer.

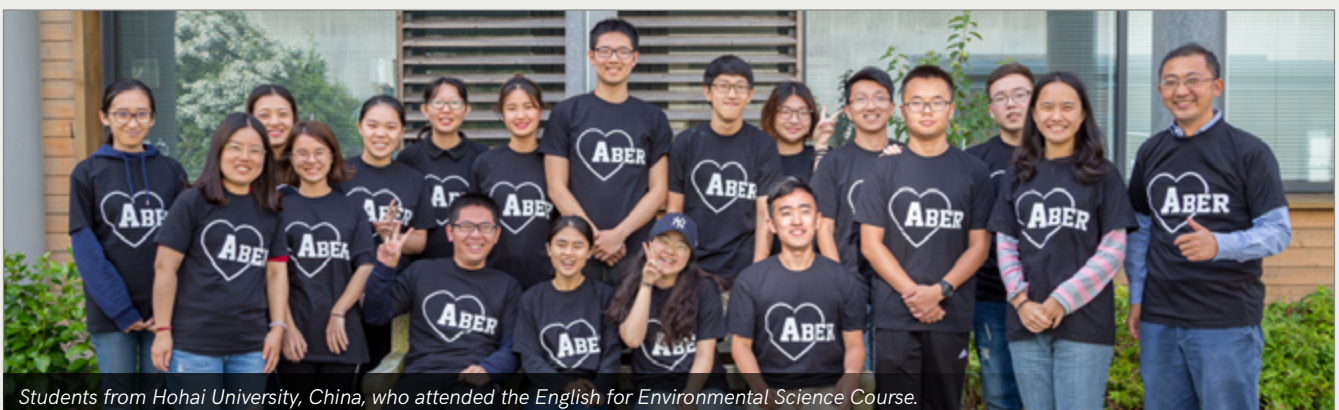
UK University Experience Course

IEC's unique UK University Experience Course gives high school pupils a taste of university study overseas.

Senior students from Nguyen Tat Thanh High School in Hanoi, Vietnam immersed themselves in Aberystwyth University life this summer, with a packed programme of English classes, seminars and workshops in academic departments, plus plenty of trips and social activities.

A highlight for many was their time with the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, where they created a short film about their time here. Their film, *My Aber is Wonderful*, captures their enthusiasm.

"I loved every moment here. It's a dream place to be and to study... Every morning I woke up with excitement about all the activities I would be doing throughout the day."
Vu Phuong



Students from Hohai University, China, who attended the English for Environmental Science Course.

English and Communicative Skills Course

Groups from Chinese, Japanese and Korean universities joined independent travellers from various European countries, to enjoy an IEC course which takes a creative approach to language learning and offers a lively evening and weekend social programme. Mornings are spent in the classroom, while in the afternoons the learning goes outside with activities as varied as "The Great IEC Cook Off" (laver bread, Welsh cakes, Glamorgan sausages and Welsh rarebit were on the menu this summer), film-making, drama, and beach-combing.

Several students were back for a second summer, and three members of Aberystwyth's Syrian community also took part in this year's course.

Bespoke courses

Working with academic departments, IEC also hosts unique tailor-made courses for partner universities overseas, combining English study with subject-based practical experience.

This summer's offerings included English for Environmental Science and English with Water Conservation, both delivered in collaboration with the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences.

Alongside their language study, students took part in seminars, field trips and lab sessions covering a range of environmental issues and exploring GIS and remote sensing techniques and applications.

Professional Development Courses

English teachers from Spain, Italy, China, Japan and France came together to gain fresh inspiration and share best-practice during a two-week professional development course at IEC, with additional input from colleagues in the School of Education.

Nicola Busetto, a participant from Italy, concluded: "*The teaching staff, University facilities and accommodation in Aberystwyth are top quality*", while Tian Min, a middle school teacher from China, commented that her time at Aberystwyth University will "*inspire and enhance*" her teaching.

British Council Accreditation

In August, the IEC received its latest accreditation report from the British Council, following an inspection in March.

The scheme gives an assurance of quality to international students who are taking or planning to take courses in English as a foreign language in

universities and colleges and schools in the UK.

The British Council's 2017 accreditation report notes strengths in areas including teaching, care of students and accommodation, and notes that the University's "*resources for learning and teaching are of very high standard and excellent technological equipment and support is available*".

During term-time, IEC supports the academic success of home, EU and international students through one-to-one writing consultations, one-to-one language consultations, credit-bearing writing and skills modules, and academic skills seminars.

www.aber.ac.uk/en/student-learning-support



Pre-sessional students enjoying the Think Tank group study facilities.

Focus on... the Effective Contribution Scheme

Ruth Fowler from the Human Resources Department spoke to Dr Anwen Jones (Head of the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies) to gather her thoughts and opinions on the University's simplified performance management process, the Effective Contribution Scheme:



What do you think of the Effective Contribution Scheme?

Going through the Effective Contribution Scheme (ECS) has been a positive experience, and I'd say it's a really valuable staff tool from the perspective of the employee and the employer. The new scheme feels less clunky than the old Staff Development and Performance Review (SDPR) scheme. Lecturing is a very varied job, but I think the ECS allows the staff member to take a step back and look at their job objectively and review the entirety of the post.

The ECS enables considered reflection on key professional activities that are often categorised under broad headings such as research or teaching and scholarship, and facilitates our understanding of how each distinct activity speaks to a coherent professional agenda.

How useful has the Scheme been as a Head of Department?

I found it invaluable to be honest, perhaps more so for me because I am a new Head of Department. The process gave me an overview of how the Department works, where we needed to make things more seamless, and where we needed to separate particular areas of work.

It allowed me to understand the needs and shape of the department, and the needs of the staff much better, and made sure I was plugged in in a way I wouldn't have been otherwise.

Not everybody knows what everyone else is doing, but I felt as

Head of Department that the ECS allowed me to put staff with shared areas of interest in touch with each other.

As a manager, to have an hour with an individual where they can talk to you and you can find out what they're doing, discuss areas of work they would like to develop further, and identify training needs, is a very good thing.

How have your staff found the scheme?

I've been pleasantly surprised. I think most staff have felt that the time spent on the ECS process has been a really worthwhile investment.

Form-filling is never popular, but I think that staff have enjoyed the experience and found it instructive in terms of engaging with their career more strategically.

There are certain sections on the form that they find more challenging. However, some of the more difficult questions, such as how their work fits in with the overall aims and ambitions of the University, have been useful as they have alerted staff to what these aims are and consider how their work fits in with these.

I think staff enjoyed the experience of reflecting on what they'd done and, more often than not, the record of achievement was very substantial. Capturing and recording these achievements is invaluable for staff members when they are considering career progression.

Springboard

Another cohort of staff members have completed the Springboard Women's Development Programme, taking the total number of staff to have completed the course since 2014 to almost one hundred.

An award-winning course, Springboard is designed for women from all backgrounds, ages and stages in their lives who want to make a better world for themselves at work and home, whilst building the practical skills and confidence to take these steps.

Delivered over three months, the programme consists of five simple, and yet powerful, ingredients, all grounded in reality:



1. The superb Springboard workbook, regularly updated and covering all the material for the entire programme.
2. Four action-packed one-day workshops spread over three months. Staff are only out for one day a month.
3. Inspiring role models – people that staff can really relate to, and who will put a spring in their step.
4. The encouragement of effective networks within the group, so their progress becomes self-perpetuating.
5. A local support system to keep them going.

The success of the programme is thanks to support from many staff at all levels across the University. Speakers on the programme have included former Minister Jane Davidson, Professor Elizabeth Treasure, Dr Debra Croft, Dr Rhian Hayward, and Jo Hopkins.

If anyone is interested in attending the next workshop then please contact Joy Arkley, joa19@aber.ac.uk. If there is sufficient demand a new programme will commence in autumn 2017.



My research

In this edition, Dr Fiona Corke, Smarthouse Manager at the National Plant Phenomics Centre (NPPC) at IBERS Gogerddan, describes her work.

For those of you who are yet to visit our facility, the NPPC is where we grow plants on in an automated glasshouse on conveyor belts. Phenomics is a fancy word for measuring how an organism grows and changes over time or in response to some treatment.

Obviously people have been “measuring” plants for millennia as they selected ones with more seed or bigger fruit. Breeders measure their plants more carefully but this type of work has been very time consuming.

The difference in NPPC is that our set-up runs 24/7 and takes regular images, which are analysed to extract information on size, colour and other characteristics over the lifespan of the plant. Importantly, the automation also extends to watering control, with the water use of each plant recorded.

We are a National Facility so we also take experiments from across Europe and the UK as well as IBERS and on a wide variety of crops from oats to wheat, grass, clover and biofuel crops.

I help ‘customer’ scientists to plan their experiments in our unique facility. Much of the work is targeted towards understanding the effects of drought, heat and nutrient stress on plants in the context of changing climate.

I am responsible for monitoring the glasshouse conditions via control software, but visiting the plants and checking on their progress is an important part of my job. I love working with the plants, sowing, scoring or harvesting, but have some very able assistance as much of my time is tied up with data

analysis. Most of the experiments need hundreds of plants, so there is never a shortage of data!

We do get lots of visitors through Phenomics, ranging from politicians, academics and farmers to school pupils and Erasmus students, so there are plenty of opportunities for me to explain our science! This has included working with Professor Jo Hamilton through her SUSnet programme to introduce research to local 6th form science students.

I am passionate about enthusing young people on the importance of plants and introducing them to the wonders of plant diversity, which has led me to organise a local event for the International Fascination of Plants Day in Aberaeron for the past couple of years.

I always been interested in natural history and this led me to study Plant Science at Nottingham University, followed by a PhD at the John Innes Institute in Norwich. Recently I attended the ‘State of the World’s Plants Symposium’ at Kew Gardens which showcased the amazing breadth and depth of plant research around the world beyond the lab, glasshouse or field environments.

Outside of work I currently chair the local group of the Wildlife Trust which serves to highlight the amazing diversity of wildlife and specialist knowledge we have in this area.



Appointments

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

Finance Department

Robert Eastwood joined the University in July as Interim Director of Finance for six months, whilst a permanent replacement for the Director of Finance is sought. He has a wealth of experience in the field of higher education finance and has worked as Director of Finance at the University of Liverpool and Brunel University.

Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences



Dr Caitlin Potter has joined the University as a postdoctoral researcher on the PollerGEN project, which will apply DNA-based techniques to the identification of airborne pollen. She completed her PhD in Biological Sciences at Bangor University, and previously held a postdoctoral role in the Department of Life and Environmental Sciences at Bournemouth University.

Dr Ally Evans has returned to IBERS as a postdoctoral research associate after completing her PhD in marine ecology in the department in 2015. She will be working on the new EU-funded Ecostructure project, investigating ways of enhancing biodiversity in artificial marine habitats.



Dr Ludi Wang has been appointed as Postdoctoral Research Associate. Ludi obtained her MSc and PhD from the University of Bath, and has spent the last eight months working as a research technician at the University of York. She is based on the Gogerddan campus, working on a BBSRC-funded project



entitled 'F-actin associated proteins implicate new mechanisms involved in plant self-incompatibility induced programmed cell death (SI-PCD).'

Department of Physics



Dr Simon Cooil recently joined the department as a postdoctoral research associate on the SPARC II project, which is investigating and growing new advanced functional materials for solar photovoltaic technologies. Simon received his PhD in Physics from AU, and has since been working at the

Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). He maintains strong links with his Scandinavian colleagues, having also been appointed as an adjunct Professor in the Department of Physics at NTNU.

Department of International Politics

Dr Xymena Kurowska

joins the department as Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow. Xymena received her doctorate from European University Institute in Florence and she is currently Associate Professor at Central European University in Budapest. Her project at Interpol focuses on border politics and European border guard training.



Aberystwyth Business School



Sue Fowler has returned to Aberystwyth Business School to work with Professor Peter Midmore on the Horizon 2020 project SURE-Farm. Sue has previously worked for the University periodically since 1986, as researcher, extension officer, policy officer and Director of Organic Centre Wales.

Student Support Services

Melissa Croxon has been appointed Student Wellbeing Practitioner - Counselling Specialism, based in the Student Welcome Centre. Originally from Shropshire, Melissa graduated from AU in 2012 with a BSc in Psychology, and went on to study an MA in Clinical Counselling at Chester University.



Retirement

At the end of July, Campus and Commercial Services bade farewell to Residence Supervisor **Marina Vaughan**, who had worked for the University for 45 years. She'd seen a lot of changes since arriving for her first day in work back in 1971 and before she left, she shared some of her memories with **ABERNews**.



Marina began working as a trainee cook in Penbryn Hall of Residence at 17. She went on to spend almost three decades carrying out catering and domestic duties in the seafront halls of residence, firstly Carpenter and then Plynlimon.

"Things were stricter back then, with set mealtimes for breakfast, lunch and dinner. And there was none of this arriving in your dressing gown! The food used to be more basic and traditional - roasts and bangers and mash. You ate what you were given - the only choice was with or without gravy."

Remarking on how times have changed, Marina recalled that in the 1970s students had to go to lectures dressed in cap and gown, tutors frequently visited students at their residence, and students were invited once a term to eat at the top table with the warden, with Marina and colleagues providing silver service.

Marina is now enjoying retirement with her husband (a retired builder) and their two Jack Russells. She enjoys cooking for the Salvation Army, singing in the Tenovus Choir and visiting son Stuart in Cardiff. However, Marina has not ruled out returning to the world of work, and says she may get a part time job.



One of Marina's many highlights was waiting on Prince Charles in Pantycelyn in 1983. At the wine reception, three of the serving staff sidled up to Prince Charles for this unsolicited photo, for which they were reprimanded by his security detail. Left to right: Liz Scurlock, Prince Charles, Marina Vaughan and Ena Gough.



Marina in Carpenter Hall kitchen, 1990s. In November 1998 when four of the seafront halls of residence were destroyed by fire, the relief effort was based in Carpenter Hall, where Marina and colleagues provided refreshments for emergency crews, and a base for the collection of toiletries and clothing for displaced students.



Marina was thrown into the sea by the chef and other colleagues on the day that Carpenter Hall kitchen closed in c.1999.

Obituary



Professor Emeritus D. J. Bowen (1925-2017)

Professor Bowen graduated with First Class Honours from the Department of Welsh at Aberystwyth University in 1949, followed by an MA. He was on the staff of the National Library's Manuscripts Department for a period

before he was appointed lecturer in his former Department in 1953. He was promoted to a Personal Chair in 1980 and retired in 1989. His area of expertise was the work of the Cywyddwyr (poets who made use of the cywydd form) and he was one of the leading authorities on the work of the Poets of the Nobility. He published widely on the work of Dafydd ap Gwilym and the early Poets of the Nobility and his masterful edition of the work of Gruffudd Hiraethog (d. 1564) *Gwaith Gruffudd Hiraethog*, was published by University of Wales Press in 1980. Many of his colleagues and former students will remember his brilliant scholarship and his priceless contribution to the history of Welsh literature.

Aberystwyth Arts Centre

Phill Jupitus: Juplicity

Thursday 12 October

Join stand-up comedian, poet, improviser, and TV stalwart Phill Jupitus for over an hour of tales, laughs and diversions. Watch in delight and/or horror as this experienced funny man drags laughs out of the chaos of his own life and the uncertain world that surrounds it.



Photo by Andy Hollingworth

Adult themes and situations, but delivered childishly.

The East Pointers



Wednesday 18 October

Formed in 2014, each member of The East Pointers – banjoist/vocalist/step-dancer Koady Chaisson, fiddle player/vocalist Tim Chaisson, and guitarist/vocalist Jake Charron –

is an accomplished musician in his own right, and their union produces a blend of Celtic tunes, songs and step-dances molded into something uniquely Canadian through a history which goes back generations.

How to Win Against History

Tuesday

31 October and

Wednesday

1 November

Henry Cyril Paget, 5th Marquis of Anglesey, was one of the Earth's wealthiest men, until he lost it all by being too damn fabulous. Seiriol



Davies's fierce, hilarious, tragi-gorgeous, ripped-up new musical about being too weird for the world (but desperately not wanting it to forget you) was the solid gold, sparkly-diamond-studded hit of the 2016 Edinburgh Fringe. It now tours Wales in proud association with Pontio, Bangor, supported by Arts Council England and Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru, The Arts Council of Wales.

School of Art Exhibitions

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

Outside In: Abstracting the Landscape

9 October – 10 November

Prints, drawings, paintings and photographs from the School of Art Collection



'Black Rabbit', Graham Sutherland. ©The Estate of Graham Sutherland



'Tears of Heraclitus', Frances Woodley

Speak to Me: Contemporary Conversations with the Still Life Tradition

16 October –

10 November

Frances Woodley (PhD exhibition, Gallery 3)



'Conwy', Peter Davies (glass and mixed media)

Peter Davies: Peregrination

27 November 2017 –

2 February 2018

An exhibition of ecological journeys, riding with Beca and her daughters across the political state, influenced by Welsh history, culture and people.

Recapturing 'Mighty Joe Young': The Movie, the Memory, the Make-believe

20 November 2017 –

2 February 2018

A post-production Hollywood album from the School of Art Collection

