

SPRING 2014

Cardiff

University Magazine
— for Alumni & Friends

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Welcome



The theme for this issue of the *Cardiff University Magazine* is **Building for the Future**. This has been our foremost focus over recent months and includes the development of major capital projects to help enable us to deliver our academic ambitions. Cardiff has beautiful listed buildings in the heart of the civic centre and our plans for the redevelopment of Maindy Road will augment these. The new Maindy Road site will be a hub for science, neuroscience, engineering, social science and innovation, involving the creation of some of the finest new facilities in the world.

Building for the Future means more than just bricks and mortar though; we must equip our students with the skills and experience they need to face the world of work in the 21st century. This is why we are creating the Global Opportunities Office, with a team dedicated to ensuring that as many of our students as possible spend time overseas either on work placements, volunteering or study trips. If you think you could help then please contact the Alumni Office at alumni@cardiff.ac.uk.

The future needs of students mean we are also evolving the way we deliver learning. Cardiff University is now part of the FutureLearn project, which delivers tailored learning via Massive Open Online Courses to students wherever they live in the world - for free. This means that the University is engaging with people and communities who would otherwise not have the opportunity to benefit from the academic expertise that is here in Cardiff.

Finally, I'd like to thank all of you who so generously support the Cardiff Fund. This enables many students to benefit from scholarships and bursaries, extra-curricular activities and the global opportunities I mentioned above. These benefit both students and those they are helping. On their behalf, thank you for making this possible. With very best wishes,

Professor Colin Riordan
Vice-Chancellor & President

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Cardiff honours evolution visionary

When asked 'which five people would you invite to dinner?', you'd be hard-pressed to find a list that didn't include Sir David Attenborough. So it was with much excitement that the University welcomed the nation's favourite natural history filmmaker and broadcaster in the autumn.

Sir David visited Cardiff to help celebrate the work of Welsh naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, and marked the start of a series of University events marking the centenary of Wallace's death in 1913.

Thought by many to be the inspiration behind much of Charles Darwin's work, Wallace spent many years collecting and recording bird and animal species in the Malay Archipelago. During this time he concluded that creatures evolved according to their habitat, rather than what was then considered the norm: creationist theory.

More than 1,000 people attended the latest lecture in the annual Hadyn Ellis Distinguished Lecture Series, whose past speakers have included Lord David Puttnam, Jonathon Porritt and Sir Ranulph Fiennes.

Sir David began working with the BBC in the early 1950s, at a time when the majority of the country, him included, did not own a television set. He became a presenter largely by accident, when the zoologist who was to present one of his first programmes fell ill. Since then, he has been involved with a number of globally recognised television series, including *Life on Earth*, *The Living Planet* and *The Private Life of Plants*.

Sir David Attenborough visited Cardiff to celebrate the work of Alfred Russel Wallace

Embracing sustainability

Making tough choices about climate change in an age when we're urged to consume more and more was one of the points raised during the latest debate chaired by Griff Rhys Jones, patron of the Sustainable Places Research Institute and Cardiff University Honorary Fellow.

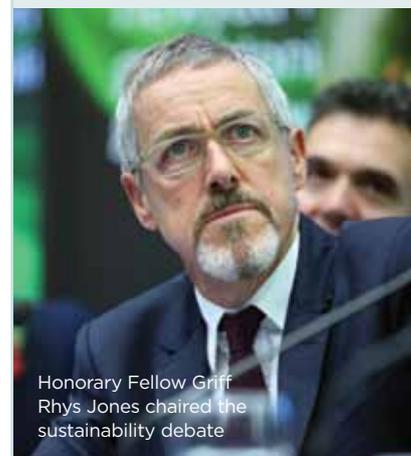
An audience of more than 300 contributed to a session that included panel members from the University, energy sector and Welsh government.

The panel argued that the advertising industry has been successful in linking 'progress' and 'happiness' with 'new' in people's minds, which made some feel that caring for the planet was incompatible with attaining a good quality of life.

Also under discussion were the Severn Barrage, renewable and nuclear energy, and the public's perception of saving energy. *Mind the Gap: meeting the energy challenge in the UK* formed part of the University's Sustainability Week, held in November.

Jones said: "How we produce and consume energy will inevitably change. But what our energy systems in the future will look like is something in which we all have a stake, and so it is vital that as many people as possible engage with this issue."

The Minister for Natural Resources, Alun Davies, said: "My vision is for a thriving green economy in Wales. The Welsh Government is ensuring that we make the most of energy developments for Welsh businesses, communities and our environment, creating local employment, tackling poverty and generating income that can be invested back into Wales."



Honorary Fellow Griff Rhys Jones chaired the sustainability debate



Professor Julie Williams: favouring the collaborative approach

Global Alzheimer's breakthrough

A study jointly led by academics at Cardiff – involving almost 75,000 people in 15 countries and 40 research groups – is paving the way in scientific collaboration.

The research, which has significantly improved scientific knowledge of Alzheimer's disease, has uncovered 11 new susceptibility genes linked with the disease.

Professor Julie Williams, head of Neurodegeneration at the School of Medicine's Medical Research Council Centre on Neuropsychiatric Genetics and Genomics, who led one of the four global research consortia, said: "This research is telling us what the causes of Alzheimer's disease are, especially the common form that occurs after the age of 65 that we're all familiar with.

"By understanding the mechanisms that cause Alzheimer's disease, we can then identify targets that you can change, through drug intervention and other interventions.

44 million
people have dementia worldwide

What our research is telling us is what is causing the disease; we now need to know how these genes are actually contributing to the disease and that's the next major stage."

In less than three years of collaboration, these scientists have been able to identify a greater number of susceptibility genes than have been found in the last 20 years.

Smart concrete on road to success

It may sound like the stuff of science fiction, but Cardiff researcher Dr Diane Gardner's work on self-healing concrete has won the 'You Heard It Here First' event at the September British Science Festival.

Sensing the formation of a crack, self-healing concrete is able to mend itself using bacteria incorporated into the concrete. The bacteria start a rejuvenation process that fills in cracks with biological cement.

This concrete could be used in non-critical structures over the new few years, after which we could see this technology used across the civil engineering industry.

Dr Gardner, Lecturer in Civil Engineering and Co-Director BRE Institute in Sustainable Engineering, said: "In the future, this technology has the potential to reduce or even eliminate costly repair and maintenance activities associated with our civil engineering infrastructure. My colleagues and I at Cardiff, Bath and Cambridge universities are working closely with our project partners to identify applications for this material, and gain further support from the construction industry to further develop and embed this new material in their projects."

HONOURS & AWARDS

Professor Graham Hutchings.

Director of the Cardiff Catalysis Institute, has been awarded the Davy Medal by the Royal Society for the discovery of catalysis by gold and for his contributions to this new field of chemistry.

A Royal Medal for interdisciplinary sciences has been awarded to

Professor Peter Wells, Cardiff School of Engineering, for pioneering the application of the physical and engineering sciences to the development of ultrasonics as a diagnostic and surgical tool, which has revolutionised clinical practice.

Professor Susan Ellen Bale, a visiting Professor in the School of Medicine and Assistant Nurse director, Research and Development, Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board, is awarded an OBE for services to Nursing and Nursing Research.

Professor Nik Coupland, from the School of English, Communication and Philosophy, who also holds a post at the University of Technology Sydney, has been recognised for his major contribution to the field of sociolinguistics by the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

Professor Ian Jones, a perinatal psychiatrist and academic at the School of Medicine, has been named Psychiatric Academic Researcher of the Year 2013 by the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Permanent Secretary of the Welsh Government **Derek William Jones** received a Knighthood for public service to economic and social conditions in Wales. Sir Derek graduated with a BA in Philosophy and was later Director of Business and Strategic Partnerships.

Honorary Fellow **Kevin McCloud** was awarded an MBE for services to Sustainable Design and Energy Saving Property Refurbishment.



Image: Rex

The Welsh capital was voted the UK's number one place to live by young people



Cardiff tops the UK list

In news that will come as no surprise to many Cardiff alumni, the city was recently voted the best city for young people. A combination of good average earnings and a satisfaction with the work-life balance the city offers gave Cardiff the edge over cities including Edinburgh, Liverpool and Bristol.

Researchers, commissioned by Legal & General, asked 18 to 30 year olds what they felt had the most significant impact on their quality of life. Job satisfaction and cost of living proved to be the most important elements recognised by the 2,000 people surveyed.

Where's best to live for young people?

1. **CARDIFF**
2. Coventry
3. Newcastle
4. Liverpool
5. Edinburgh
6. Leicester
7. Brighton
8. Bristol
9. Belfast
10. Leeds

Royal recognition

With over 770 companies benefiting directly from the work that the Geoenvironmental Research Centre (GRC) does, it's little wonder the Centre is being recognised for its achievements with a Queen's Anniversary Prize. These are awarded to universities for work of outstanding excellence, with the Centre among the 2012-2014 winners.

The GRC, based within the School of Engineering, brings together experts from education, industry, international organisations and governments to tackle areas such as sustainable land management, and re-use of alternative materials.

Examples of these successes include helping Welsh companies to produce new and innovative fibreglass seed mulching products, to reuse blast furnace slag waste and to develop industrial waste into cement substitutes.

Established in 1996 and led by Professor Hywel Thomas (see opposite page), the Centre has always made the direct translation of its research to industry one of its guiding principles.

Professor Thomas said: "A growing global population and an ever increasing need for energy means an increasing quantity of waste, lots of waste. As our technologies have become more sophisticated, our pollutants have become more toxic. This is one of the many things that geoenvironmental engineering looks at: how the waste we create affects us, and how we can build structures to safely contain this waste within for years to come."



university view

Aiming for the top

Professor Hywel Thomas, *Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise*, has strategic responsibility for fulfilling Cardiff's ambition to be among the world's top universities



In five years' time, Cardiff University will be consistently among the top 100 universities in the world. That, both myself and my colleagues realise, is a bold ambition, but everything we do, our focus on research excellence and capacity building over the next few years, will be about ensuring that at Cardiff our research has global impact, that it tackles the grand challenges of our time.

Cardiff already has a well-deserved reputation and international recognition as a successful, research-intensive university; the challenge is to enhance that position on an increasingly competitive international stage.

Excellence takes investment – in infrastructure, in collaboration, in new people and in developing current people further. Excellence also takes a slightly different way of thinking. You only have to look to China to realise that investment in basic research pays off, with a 600% increase in publications between 2000 and 2010, together with business investment in R&D soaring during the same period.

I think that the key to success is to provide the intellectual environment and facilities that really matter to high-performance

research staff. Part of that thinking at Cardiff is to create centres that bring together colleagues who may in other ways find it difficult to work together – through our existing and future University Research Institutes. These will be places where there is a critical and growing mass of exceptional PhD students, attracted to Cardiff because our researchers perform, because our new world-class buildings and facilities will be places where people want to be.

These new buildings and research hubs will form part of what we are calling the Cardiff Innovation System, bringing together some basic research, a great deal of translational research, and the innovation support systems and strategic partners to ensure that there is an easy transfer of basic research into translational research, company creation and enterprise support. I want to ensure that our research excellence is translated into economic and social impact, into support for the local economy, and into increased research income for Cardiff University.

I am confident that Cardiff will be among the top 100 universities in the world by 2018; the challenge for us will be to stay there.



Development update

A round-up of the new developments made possible thanks to the support and generosity of our donors

Summit at the Manor

Telecoms tycoon Sir Terry Matthews (right), Patron of Cardiff University's European Cancer Stem Cell Research Institute (ECSCRI), is hosting a conference to discuss cancer stem cells at the Celtic Manor Resort this July.

The three-day event will see experts in cancer research from around the world convene in Newport, which will also see Professor Alan Clarke, Director of the Institute, unveil the body's new approach to tackling cancer.

Outlining the Institute's new strategy, Professor Clarke said: "Cancer stem cells account for only a small proportion of cells in a tumour. However, they could be crucial to the way tumours form, grow and spread. The Research Institute will investigate the possibility that

therapies aimed at cancer stem cells alone will offer a better success rate for cancer sufferers and will, we hope, markedly improve survival rates."

Sir Terry Matthews said: "The impact of Professor Alan Clarke and his team's cancer research has implications way beyond the UK with potential to be world-leading and a huge gain to humanity. I wholeheartedly champion its efforts to develop new treatments across a broad range of cancers."

Over the coming months, the ECSCRI will be moving to brand new laboratory and research space in the Hadyn Ellis Building on the new Maindy Park Campus (see page 14 for more on this stunning new building).



Image: Getty



Supporting excellence

The University was delighted to receive generous support from the **Wolfson Foundation** for the Hadyn Ellis Building. As one of the UK's largest charitable grant-givers, the Wolfson Foundation donated £1.75 million towards the MRC Centre for Neuropsychiatric Genetics and Genomics, which is situated on the third floor of the building and houses multidisciplinary teams of clinicians, geneticists, psychologists, statisticians, bioinformaticians and neuroscientists.

Working together in the new facilities, their world-leading research is helping us to understand the causes of mental illness, by utilising advances in genetics to understand what puts people at risk of brain disorders, and by working out exactly how genes affect the operation of the brain.

Simon Fourmy, Director of Grants at the Wolfson Foundation, said: "We support and promote excellence in the fields of science and medicine, health, education, and the arts and humanities. The Hadyn Ellis Building (left) is a truly wonderful, world-class facility. We are delighted to have worked with Cardiff to build upon our record of supporting leading neuroscience research in the UK."



A legacy of hope

In March 2013, the remarkable life of **Rhiannon Maxwell** (née Roberts) came to an end. Rhiannon, a former Cardiff student who graduated in 1945, was a devoted educationalist until she was forced to retire due to ill health at the age of 55. She was equally devoted to her family – her father and her sisters – all of whom suffered as Rhiannon did from serious mental health conditions.

It was these experiences that led Rhiannon to leave £100,000 to Cardiff University in her Will, which has funded the Rhiannon Maxwell Tissue Culture Suite in the Hadyn Ellis Building. The suite houses technology that will enable researchers to analyse stem cells taken directly from patients.

“This is cutting-edge science and will help us to develop new drugs and treatments for conditions such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder,” said Professor Adrian Harwood, Director of the Neuroscience and Mental Health Research Institute.

Rhiannon suffered severely from both schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, and one of her main concerns was the prevalence of serious mental health conditions in her family, and whether either nurture or nature were to blame. This was part of the reason that Rhiannon left a legacy to Cardiff University in her Will – to try to help others avoid the pain that mental illness inflicts on those who suffer from it.



The Cardiff Fund

Each year, a proportion of the money we raise from our generous alumni through the Cardiff Fund is given to student clubs and societies through the Student Opportunities Fund.

Music, sport, drama, community and welfare activities – there are so many facets of the wider university that benefit students, but which many are denied access to without additional support. Many former students know what a difference these activities make – in terms of forming lifelong friendships and building confidence, as well as general health and well being.

Through a rigorous application process, students can apply for grants of up to £500 to support their club or society – and they must outline the impact any grant will have. The Cardiff Fund has just awarded 13 such grants; you'll find details of three of these grants below.

Sailing to success

The dramatic rise in student members the **University Sailing Club** experienced after their 'Try a Sail' days last year was great news for the club. However, it has meant that having enough good quality safety kit and buoyancy aids for new members has been a challenge. The Cardiff Fund is providing additional RYA standard life-jackets and wetsuits for the Club to ensure that all members are able to sail – whatever the weather. Emily Wiltshire, President of the Sailing Club, said: “Sailing can be an expensive sport, but being provided with the necessary safety kit by the Cardiff Fund means that those students

who would otherwise not be able to afford it can have a go and be active members of the club – thank you so much.”

The missing beat

The **Cardiff Brass Band Society** regularly performs at concerts throughout the city and beyond. However, the band has had one empty seat for quite some time – that of the third tenor horn, an instrument integral to a fully functioning brass band. Tenor horns are expensive instruments, so with the help of the Student Opportunities Fund, the Cardiff Brass Band Society will be pleasing audiences for many years to come – with a third tenor horn. Timothy West, President of the Cardiff Brass Band Society, said: “Thank you so much to the alumni who support the Student Opportunities Fund – our new tenor horn will last the Society,

and those students who are part of the band, for many, many years to come.”

Round the table

The Cardiff University Model United Nations Society is a student platform that educates members about civics, effective communication, globalisation and multilateral diplomacy. Through debate and discussion, both with each other and other Model UN societies around the world, students try and develop solutions to world problems. On 1 March this year – St David's Day – the Society is hosting a three-day conference with student delegates, many of whom may be the diplomats of the future, travelling to Cardiff from around the world. The Student Opportunities Fund will be helping provide conference materials and support for this group of talented students.

Long term benefits

Leaving a legacy to Cardiff University is a wonderful way of celebrating your own life or the memory of a loved one. Endowed gifts are simple to set up in your Will, and they generate income year on year in perpetuity, enabling you to support students at the University for future generations.

For information about helping students at **Cardiff University** through your Will, contact **Eleanor Hewett** in complete confidence: **HewettE@cardiff.ac.uk** or telephone **029 2087 0372**



What will you learn today?

World-class teaching is now available for free, as long as you've got a decent internet connection, discovers Tom Burnett

Anyone with an interest in higher education cannot help but have noticed the increased prominence of what are known as MOOCs – Massive Open Online Courses – over the past few years. Factors such as rising university fees and improved technology are playing a major part, as is a reconnection with a kind of education many will remember being provided by the Open University.

Readers over a certain age will remember the random assortment of late-night lectures that were to be found on BBC2 in the 1970s and 80s, but nowadays, with access to many forms of technology and ever more demands on our time, access to free online education from well-respected providers looks set to alter the way millions learn – at home, at work or on the move.

Sophisticated technology allows hundreds, if not thousands, of people to take a course at the same time. Signing up is straightforward, and the user is then able to browse a huge number of diverse courses that can be taken at a pace that fits in with their life and commitments.



How did we get here?

This kind of remote learning began in 2006, when American hedge-fund analyst Salman Khan created a non-profit educational website to provide “a free, world-class education for anyone, anywhere”. The Khan Academy now reaches around 10 million students each month, and has delivered over 300 million lessons since 2006.

More recently, several US-based online course providers have come to the fore, often linked to well-known universities. Coursera, a for profit

'Access to Welsh higher education has taken a major step forward'

education company, was founded by two computer science professors from Stanford University in 2012. More than 400 courses are provided by 84 universities and colleges around the world, and include short video lectures and the submission of assignments. Another provider, edX, is a joint venture between Harvard University and MIT, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Started in 2012, edX already boasts 1.6 million users, and in late 2013 there were 30 institutions involved with the MOOC provider, including universities in Australia, India, China and Japan.

This kind of exposure gives anyone around the world with a decent internet connection the chance to sample teaching from some of the world's best universities, but what of British involvement?

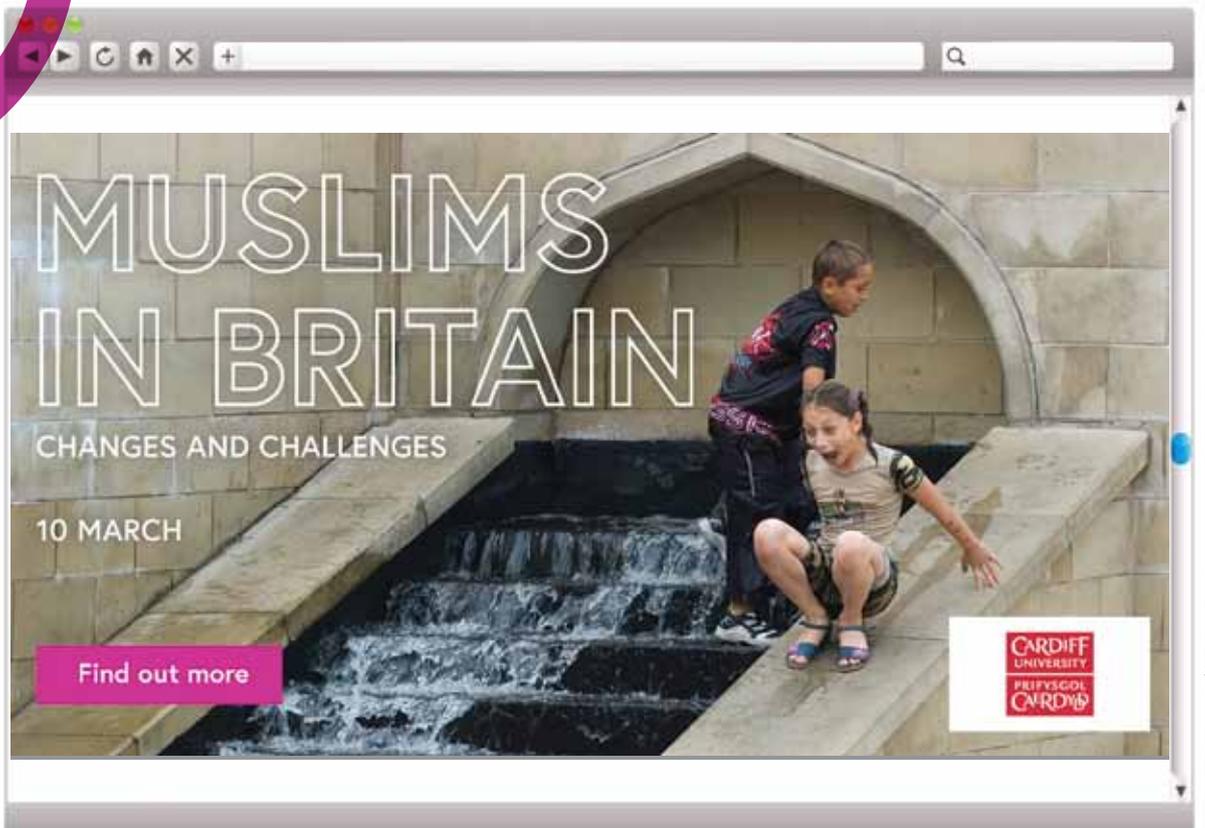
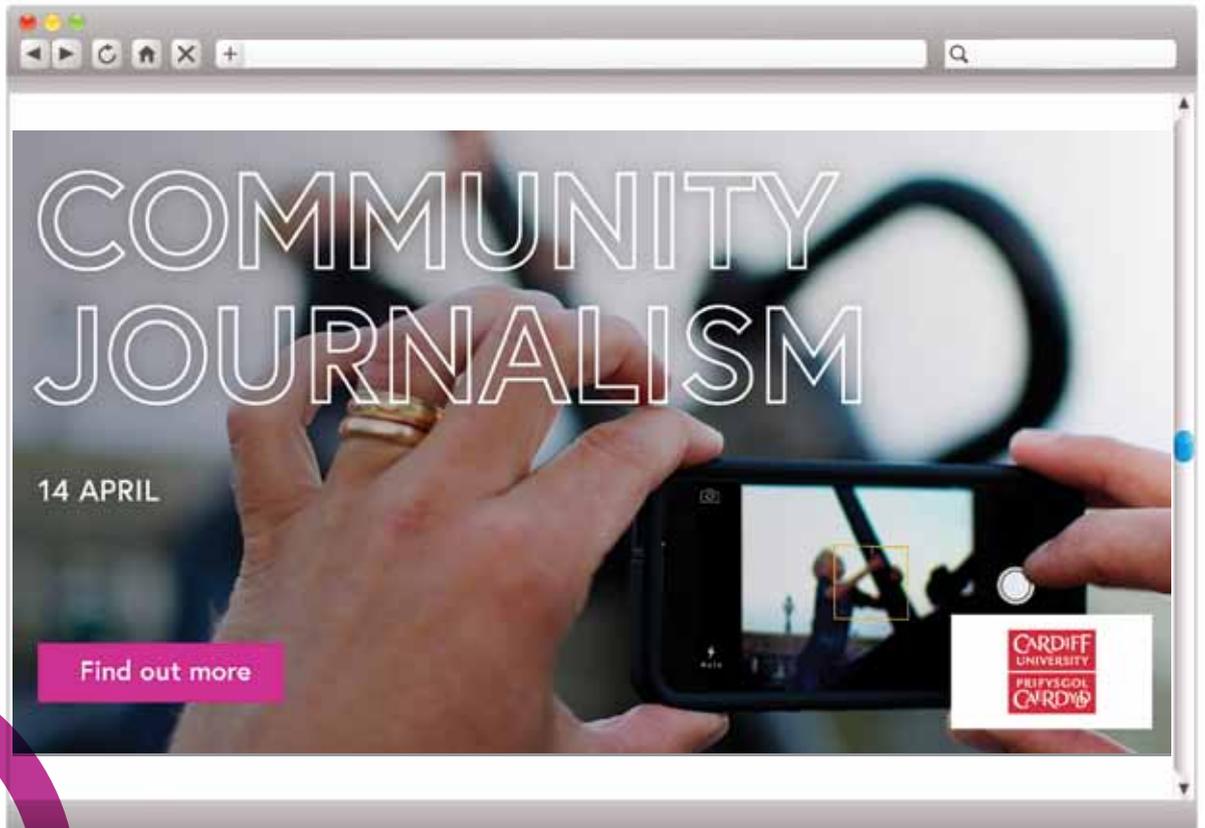
Open for business

Looking to develop the next suite of online educational resources, and provide a platform for the UK's HE institutions to enter the MOOC space, The Open University (OU) launched FutureLearn in December 2012, with the platform going live in September last year. The new social learning platform brings together free, open, online courses from leading UK and international universities and educational institutions, and draws on the OU's experience in delivering distance learning. Forthcoming courses in 2014 include 'Forensic science and criminal justice' from the University of Leicester, and 'Kitchen chemistry' from the University of East Anglia.

Martin Bean, the Vice-Chancellor of the OU, said: “MOOCs represent an enormous development in higher education, one that has the potential to bring about long-lasting change to the HE sector and open up access to learning for a wider range of students than ever before. FutureLearn will take this proud heritage and work with some of Britain's best-known universities to write the next chapter in the story of British higher education.”

FutureLearn courses are made up of strong storytelling elements,

Open to all: Cardiff University's first two courses on the FutureLearn website tackle pressing issues for Britain



Images: Thinkstock /@ Peter Sanders - www.artofintegration.co.uk

Digital education

guiding learners through compelling narrative made up of video, articles, real-life case studies and other rich media features. At the end of the course, learners receive a shareable, on-screen record of learning as evidence of what they've learned, and also have the option to purchase a printed certificate or sit an exam in one of FutureLearn's test centres.

One of the key figures behind FutureLearn's development is CEO Simon Nelson, the man who previously ran the phenomenally successful BBC iPlayer. He said: "There has been rapid and widespread growth in open online courses but until now, UK universities have only had the option of working with US-based platforms. FutureLearn brings together the leading UK and international universities to create a combined and coherent offer for learners around the world."

Cardiff connects

So where does Cardiff University fit into this? Cardiff's Vice-Chancellor Colin Riordan sees the University's role within the new MOOC structure as vital: "From Bangor to Brasilia or Brynamman to Beijing, open access to Welsh higher education has taken a

major step forward. Cardiff is joining together with some of the UK's best universities, matched by the OU's decades of experience in world-class distance learning.

"It's also about breaking down barriers. It could be a former Cardiff steelworker who always aspired to study at Cardiff but never had the chance or time to do so, or the former Cardiff student I met at an alumni event who was looking to gain new skills to help her return to work, whilst juggling her hectic family life.

"For the first time, both of them will be able to access teaching from top-class Cardiff academics regardless of their location, financial means, personal, work or family circumstances: the democratisation of education in its purest form."

To date, the University has two courses available for free through the FutureLearn website – 'Muslims in Britain: Changes and challenges', and 'Community Journalism'. The courses will give a global audience access to two of Cardiff's world-renowned centres of research – the Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK and the Centre for Journalism respectively.



Professor Richard Sambrook
Course leader: **Community Journalism**

"The course will enable people to understand why this type of journalism is growing fast as a new sector in the media."



Professor Sophie Gilliat-Ray
Course leader: **Muslims in Britain: Changes and challenges**

"Many people are keen to have a better, more balanced understanding of the Muslims they see around them."



'Muslims in Britain: Changes and challenges' is open to anyone with an interest in religion, culture and history in Britain, and will look at the growth of Islamic communities across the increasingly secularised Western world. The course providers recognise that although Islam is often in the news, general knowledge of Muslims and their faith can be poor.

Course leader Professor Sophie Gilliat-Ray: "The current discourse on Muslims and their faith, dominated as it is by sensational media depictions, can be a confusing one. Many people are keen to have a better, more balanced understanding of the Muslims they see around them.

"This course allows learners to hear a host of different voices reflecting the diversity of Muslim communities in the UK today. Their stories will reflect the multi-faceted nature of their communities, in contrast to prevalent, often polarised, one-dimensional discourses we often hear."



A voice for the Valley



In the final year of her BA in Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies at Cardiff, Tyler Mears (left) helped to set up Rhondda People, a new community-orientated website in the South Wales town.

“A few of us were interested in setting up something that really appealed to local people in the Rhondda Valley,” says Tyler. “There’s so much happening here that it seemed a shame there wasn’t somewhere people could go to see what was on in their community.”

Tyler and colleagues started to get organised last September, with the website – RhonddaPeople.com – finally launching in January.

“We initially advertised the site through Twitter and now have a Facebook page, which is growing in followers all the time.”

“Everyone involved is a volunteer, we’ve got teachers, business owners, university students. So we can try and include everyone we’re talking to older people in the community to get their stories up online – the response has been fantastic.”

With traditional local news sources such as evening papers feeling the brunt of the changing way people use media, it looks as though energetic news gatherers such as Tyler and her friends at Rhondda People could be calling the shots in the future of local news.



A training day with the Rhondda People team.

Above: Britain’s Muslim communities are an important part of our multicultural society

Think globally, act locally

The ‘Community Journalism’ course also taps into an important aspect of modern life: the decline of traditional local media and what has come to, in part, replace it – what are known as ‘hyper-local’ community websites that are run by local people (see ‘A voice for the Valley’, right, for an example local to Cardiff). The course, which runs over five weeks, will offer insight and practical skills for those interested in community and hyper-local journalism.

Professor Richard Sambrook, Director of the Centre for Journalism and course leader, said: “The course will enable people to understand why Community Journalism is growing fast as a new sector in the media, what the forces are that are driving it and how it relates to mainstream media. People taking the course will also learn how to launch a site, from researching and understanding a community to building a website.”

“They will learn to think through different kinds of news and newsgathering and how to manage a relationship with a community. The course also looks at a number of case studies and key success factors. Students will be given some basic tips on good journalistic practice, and there will be weekly opportunities to discuss the course content and related material with others on the course through discussion forums and a weekly quiz – to test what they’ve learned. We had over a thousand people signing up in the first 24 hours of registration being open, many from overseas. Having access to this kind of course at Cardiff University really does seem to be appealing to people.”

With some of Cardiff’s most inspiring teaching now available for free, it looks as though many people will be able to expand their horizons and access top-class teaching. MOOCs could well pave the way for a revolution in learning. 

Future proof

The completion of the striking Hadyn Ellis Building marks the beginning of a new chapter for Cardiff University – we take a closer look

It has been called Cardiff's flagship building, and demonstrates the University's ambitions not just to the city, but also the wider world. The £30 million facility, named in honour of the late University Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Hadyn Ellis, has given the University the opportunity to bring some of its world-leading interdisciplinary scientific teams together for the first time, and represents the first stage of a 10-15 year development on the Maindy Campus. ►

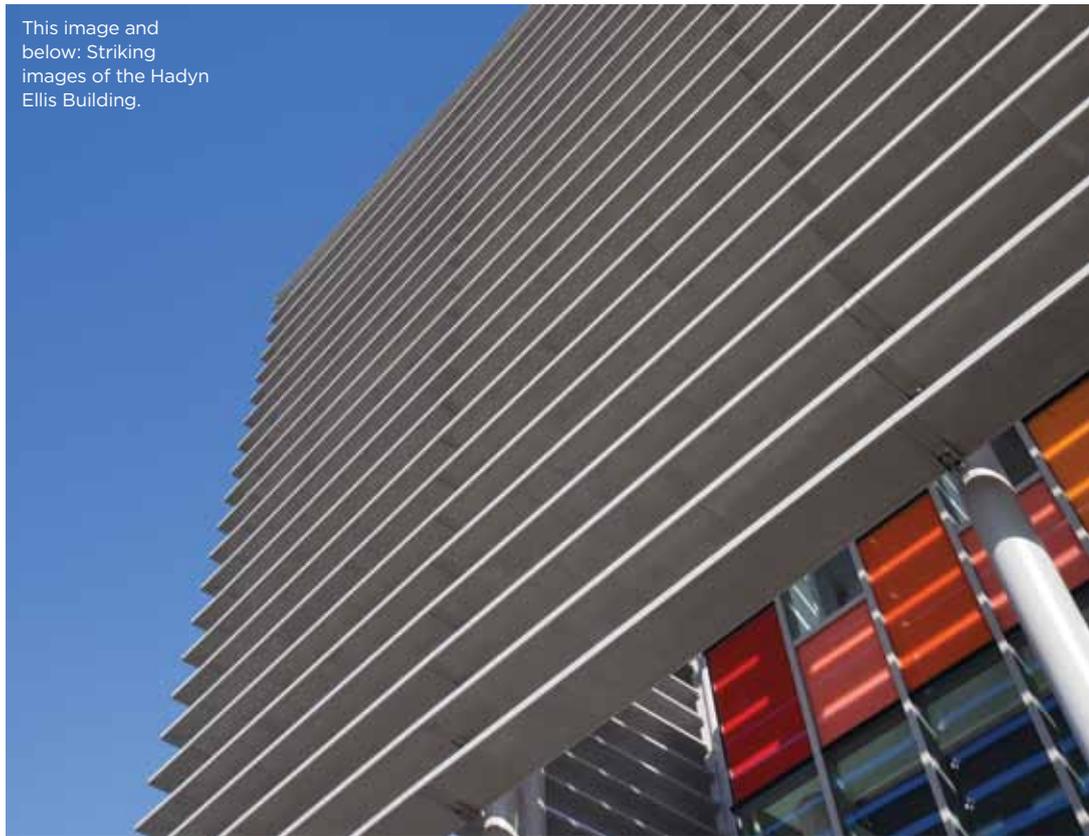


Hadyn Ellis: Environmental credentials

The Hadyn Ellis Building achieved a BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology) 'excellent' rating, partly as a result of the following:

- Passive design features that shade the building and prevent over-heating from the sun
- Solar panels installed on the roof to reduce electricity imported from local infrastructure
- Parts of the building that are naturally ventilated
- Energy efficient lighting and control systems
- Thermal modelling of the building to predict energy use and carbon emissions
- Acoustic features to insulate the building from external noise sources such as Maindy Road and the adjacent road and railway
- Extensive landscaping that will accommodate a diverse range of native plant species
- Facilities for cyclists including cycle racks and changing facilities.

This image and below: Striking images of the Hadyn Ellis Building.



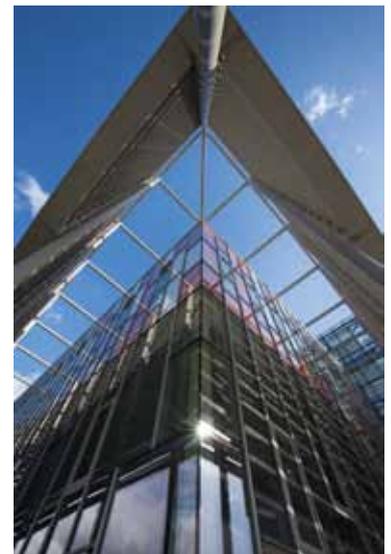
► Using the space are the University's European Cancer Stem Cell Research Institute, Neuroscience and Mental Health Research Institute, MRC Centre for Neuropsychiatric Genetics and Genomics, and the National Centre for Mental Health, as well as Public Health Wales and the University's Graduate College.

The building also includes an exhibition space, 150-person lecture theatre, café, seminar suite, research support services and administrative facilities, and will give the University the space to promote greater public and business involvement in its work.

Professor Julie Williams, head of Neurodegeneration at the School of Medicine's MRC Centre for Neuropsychiatric Genetics and Genomics, said: "In genetics, we have gone from being competitors to being collaborators. That's what we need to do now in the field of molecular biology, to work together, to try and understand the true causes of Alzheimer's disease in the future. Being in the Hadyn Ellis building is enormously important for us, as we've brought the team together. Up until now, people on the clinical side and people on the lab side have been separated. Now we're all together, and it's making a real difference."

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Colin Riordan, said: "The opening of the new Hadyn Ellis Building marks a new and important chapter for the University. As well as a striking landmark development, it is the gateway to the University's ambitious plans for the redevelopment of the whole of the Maindy Road site.

"The building plays host to some of the most advanced facilities. It's a clear indicator of our research ambition to become one of the world's top 100 Universities." 



Hadyn Ellis: Resident organisations

THE EUROPEAN CANCER STEM CELL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Establishing Cardiff as an international leader in cancer stem cell research, the Institute is a catalyst for new collaborations across the University, UK and globally.

www.cardiff.ac.uk/research/cancerstemcell/vision/vision.html

NEUROSCIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH INSTITUTE

This Institute brings together leaders in mental health science, who together are researching some of the most challenging psychiatric disorders that society faces.

www.cf.ac.uk/research/neuroscience/

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL CENTRE FOR NEUROPSYCHIATRIC GENETICS AND GENOMICS

Scientists at the Centre are trying to understand the genetics of psychiatric disorders, and how this information can be used to better understand the disorders to improve treatments and diagnosis.

www.medicine.cardiff.ac.uk/cngg/

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH
Wales' first biomedical research centre, for those working at the NCMH aim to improve the diagnosis, treatment and support for people affected by mental illness.

www.ncmh.info/

Below and far left: Edwina Hart, the Welsh Government's Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, at the official opening ceremony.



Sherlock's in town

A strong relationship between the University and television programme makers means you'll often see film crews around campus, as Lisa Birkbeck found

Benedict Cumberbatch
– frequently seen around
campus



Image: BBC

Cardiff University has a fantastic mixture of architecture – from the stately wonder of the Main and Glamorgan buildings to the impressive modernity of Hadyn Ellis or Cochrane buildings, our campus has been used for many high profile series, including *Crash*, *Doctor Who* and *Wizards vs Aliens*.

More recently, the *Sherlock* team busted into town. As well as booking shoots in Main, Glamorgan and Optometry, their location manager Andy had seen the new Hadyn Ellis building while driving around Cardiff and saw its potential. The only trouble was, it wasn't even open yet! However, the team at Hadyn Ellis were happy to accommodate, so after numerous recce visits, behind the

scenes paperwork, and last minute telephone calls, the crew were ready to call "Action"!

You might not even know which of the scenes actually used our buildings as it wasn't always obvious. Benedict Cumberbatch lying stricken in a hospital bed in the third episode, for example, was none other than an unobtrusive seminar room in the Hadyn Ellis building! There were more recognisable exterior shots of the building and some sweeping shots of the impressive staircase and foyer, which doubled up as a waiting room.

There's a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes, not only from the *Sherlock* cast and crew but staff from various University departments. It's very rewarding to see the University being featured so prominently on these incredible TV shows, and it won't be long before we're back on your screens – the Tardis is back in Cardiff later this year...

To explore filming location opportunities at the University, please contact the Public Relations team: publicrelations@cardiff.ac.uk



The brain machine

Cardiff University's new brain scanning facility will be unique in Europe. Professor Derek Jones tells us how this came about



Professor Derek Jones is Director of the Cardiff University Brain Research Imaging Centre (CUBRIC)

“The idea of a new CUBRIC has been bubbling away in my mind ever since I first joined Cardiff University in 2006,” says Professor Derek Jones. “Neuroimaging technologies develop at an alarming pace and so it’s important to keep an eye on those developments, and to act on them promptly and at the right time in order to remain competitive in the field. So, it was never a case of ‘if’, just a case of ‘when.’”

To accommodate this extra kit, however, a much bigger space was needed than the current CUBRIC – and hence the concept of a ‘Big Brain Centre’ was hatched. The idea got very strong support from those on the University Council, who shared the vision for this world-class facility.

“I was obviously over the moon when Council approved the proposal in full,” continues Professor Jones. “CUBRIC is an extremely vibrant and dynamic community, with a flat structure that nurtures bottom-up creativity. This collegiality has been key to our success in becoming one of the UK’s best-regarded imaging centres in less than

seven years since opening, and in drawing excellent people into the centre. The new CUBRIC will continue in this spirit, armed with a combination of imaging kit that is unavailable anywhere else in Europe. In terms of Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanners, we will have two 3 Tesla MRI systems, and an ultra-high field 7T MRI scanner, only the third in the UK.”

However, Professor Jones cites the ‘microstructure’ scanner as the most exciting addition to CUBRIC’s armoury. This is a custom-built MRI scanner that will allow researchers to probe tissue characteristics in living human tissue at a scale that would only previously be possible by taking a biopsy sample, and looking under a microscope. At present, there is only one other such scanner in the world, based in Boston, USA. So, this



assembly of 4 MRI scanners will make Cardiff truly unique in Europe. Putting these alongside the MEG scanner, brain stimulation suites and state-of-the-art cognitive testing labs, and it's evident that the new CUBRIC is a force to be reckoned with.

Non-invasive research

The 7 Tesla MRI system will allow those working at the new CUBRIC to look in much finer detail at brain structure. It will also allow them to separate the signals from different brain chemicals that are otherwise mixed into a 'soup' of signals at lower field strengths.

"We believe that our ability to quantify these individual chemicals will be key to understanding individual differences in brain function and behaviour in health and disease," says Professor Jones.

"The microstructure scanner will allow us to look at the 'wiring' of the brain in far more detail than ever before, allowing us to understand individual differences in brain function in terms of differences in brain connections. By allowing us to perform 'virtual histology', we will also be able to

characterise tumours completely non-invasively, looking at properties like cell size, cell density and so on.

This could be used to predict therapeutic outcome and to monitor treatment response. Finally, our over-arching strategic aim is to integrate the signals from the different imaging modalities to give us a holistic view of brain function, structure, and biochemistry."

Joining forces

CUBRIC will see several University schools working in collaboration. The School of Medicine is the most obvious partnership, where the School of Psychology have ongoing collaborations with colleagues in the Neuroscience and Mental Health Research Institute, studying a range of mental health disorders including schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, autism and ADHD.

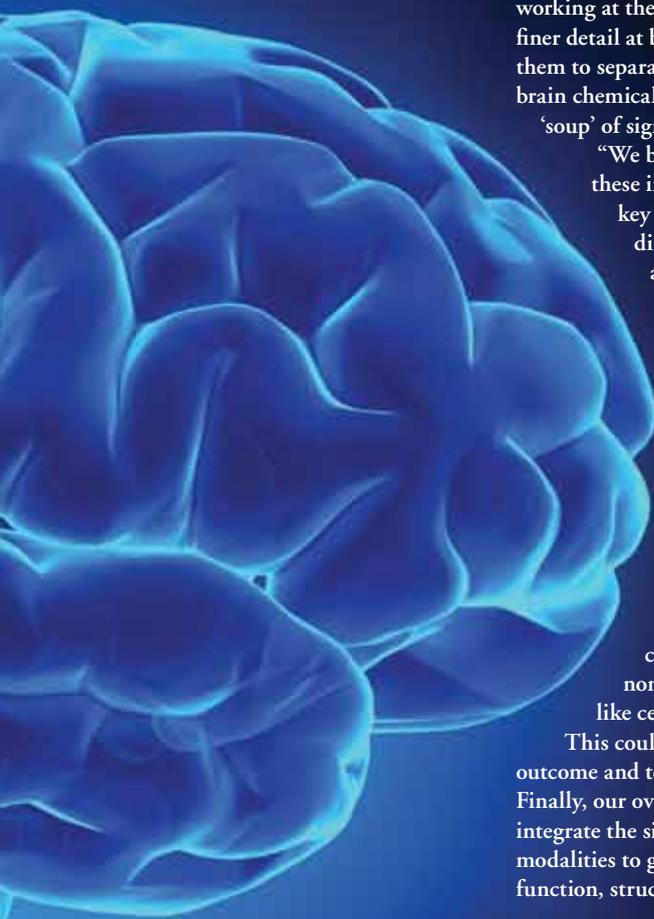
They are also exploring the link between certain genes and brain disorders such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease, and, with neurology, studying patients with epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, and Huntington's disease. Importantly, the facilities will really strengthen cognitive neuroscience activity in Cardiff.

"We also have ongoing collaborations with the School of Biosciences and Engineering (through the Arthritis Research Centre, where we are imaging joints and the brain's response to pain arising from arthritis), the School of Dentistry (where we've been imaging the structure of the muscles of the face), School of Computer Science (teaching computers to 'learn' the shapes of brain connections) and the School of Mathematics (finding ways of speeding up the data acquisition).

"We are also very open to other organisations using the equipment – both academic and industrial. Indeed, the microstructure scanner is to be established as a National Microstructural Imaging Facility, with formal academic partners from Oxford, Nottingham, Manchester, Sussex, University College London and Kings College London. Given this system will be the only one of its kind outside the US, we have had a lot of interest from researchers from all over Europe."

Professor Jones says that industrial interest has also been high, from companies that wish to exploit the advanced imaging to improve the targeted delivery of drugs or cells, through companies looking to improve brain stimulation technologies, to those that are developing new ways to characterise the brain in early Alzheimer's disease.

"As our experience with the new centre grows, we expect an increasing number of academic and industrial partnerships, putting Cardiff firmly on the world imaging map." 



'We are very open to other organisations using the equipment'



What is MRI?

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scanners surround the occupant with a strong magnetic field. Almost exactly half of their hydrogen atoms line up pointing in the direction of the magnetic field, while the other half line up in 'anti-parallel'. The tiny mismatch is detected by the scanner, and as the magnetic field increases in strength, so the mismatch increases, which gives you a clearer indication of what you are looking at on the scan.

Images: Thinkstock



Designs for Cardiff Business School's new building, which will include two lecture theatres and a trading room

A new home for the next generation of business leaders

Cardiff Business School's new Teaching and Learning Centre will be a world-class facility, representative of the School's global academic standing

Pictures courtesy of Boyes Rees Architects

The Cardiff Business School Learning and Teaching Centre will include:

- **250- and 185-seat lecture theatres**, each with a full induction loop, a lecture capture facility, swivel chairs, power and data points
- **Two postgraduate common rooms**, designed to facilitate informal learning and group working
- **An Executive Education Facility**, to promote creative thinking and designed for executives to learn from teachers and one another.
- **56-seat trading room**, one of the largest in the UK, providing students with the practical skills for life on the stock exchange
- **A postgraduate administrative hub**, an administrative home for all postgraduate studies.

Your chance to contribute

There are many ways to get involved with this exciting new project.

For further information about the building, including named sponsorship opportunities, please contact **Rhys Evans** on **EvansR9@cardiff.ac.uk** or by calling **+44 (0) 29 2087 0308**.



“Independent studies tell us that the Business School contributes £76 million per annum to the Welsh economy.” This figure alone, as described by Professor Colin Riordan, Vice Chancellor of Cardiff University, gives a tangible idea of the importance of the Business School to the University and economy as a whole.

“The new Learning and Teaching Centre will help us to sustain and improve that contribution,” Professor Riordan continues. “This investment reflects our confidence in the School’s outstanding performance.”

‘State of the art’ is a phrase you hear a lot these days, but sometimes a design conveys such confidence that it is justified. Set to open in autumn 2014, the new building has been designed with student needs in mind, and will transform the School’s learning and teaching

provision, providing world-class facilities to meet the changing needs of business students.

The University’s £13.5 million investment in the new building will not only provide a unique place for those studying at the University,

it will also provide a focal point for visitors from the business and policymaking world.

Professor Martin Kitchener, Dean of Cardiff Business School, said: “This new building gives us an opportunity to support innovations in our teaching through cutting-edge lecturing facilities.

It also gives us the

opportunity to expand our growing portfolio of executive education with a suite specifically designed to meet the needs of busy professionals.”

As you’d expect, the building will meet the highest environmental standards, and has already been awarded an interim BREEAM rating of ‘Excellent’. 

“This investment reflects our confidence in the School’s outstanding performance”



A meeting of minds

As the number of Chinese students and academics at British universities continues to rise, Tom Burnett looks at those blazing a trail in Sino-Cardiff academic relations

The numbers tell their own story: in the year 2002-03 there were 351 Chinese postgraduate and undergraduate students at Cardiff University, while in 2013-14 this had risen to 1,254. As British universities have increased their focus on recruiting students from around the globe, more students than ever before, as well as academics, are coming to these shores to further their education.

“At Cardiff we’ve been fortunate to welcome a good number of Chinese students to the University,” says Richard Cotton, Director of the International Office. “The growing number of Chinese students coming to the UK is, however, only part of the picture. At Cardiff, we understand the value international students bring to the University but we’re also developing deeper, broader partnerships with universities in China. Increasingly, this involves a two way flow of people and knowledge, sending both UK students and academics to China to broaden their horizons and develop new research links.”

There are now over a hundred Chinese staff members at the University, with many of those who come to the Welsh capital to study staying on to lecture and continue their research. However, it is not always the world-renowned facilities alone that make people think about staying.

“Cardiff is situated in very auspicious surroundings,” says Professor Wen Jiang from the School of Medicine. “I knew when I arrived from China that this was a good place to live – with mountains behind, a river running through and water in front – these are very positive indicators in feng shui!”

As happens with many promising academics in his country of birth, Professor Jiang knew that at some stage the Chinese government was likely to send him abroad to expand on his studies. Wen has just celebrated 25 years at the University – after finishing his doctoral thesis, one position led to the next, and he is now a leading cancer researcher.

Professor Jiang’s links with China and Peking University, where he finished his medical doctorate and surgical training

before coming to the UK, have been instrumental in the strengthening of ties between his old and new universities, as well as other Chinese educational institutions and research organisations.

These numerous partnerships include the Cardiff University-Peking University Joint Cancer Institute, launched in February 2011, which brings together experts from both universities to focus research attention on some of the most aggressive forms of cancer.

“Cardiff has been hosting a large number of cancer scientists and cancer specialists from Peking for the past decade,” says Jiang. “For the Institute in Cardiff, the University has invested in the provision of new space, equipment and new research posts in order to support the existing strength of collaboration here. In Peking, the Institute is located at the nation’s renowned Peking University Cancer Hospital and Beijing Cancer Institute, one of the leading cancer hospitals and cancer research centres in China.”

Another success is the China Medical Scholarship programme, through which medical students from Peking and Capital Medical universities come to Cardiff for between four and 12 months. The scholars gain academic training, while Cardiff gains from working with talented scientists and clinicians.

“A delegation from the University went to China in 2007,” says Jiang, “during which time Hong Kong philanthropist Albert Hung agreed to sponsor this programme. Around 40 Chinese scholars have now spent time at Cardiff. They’ve all done very well – we’ve had to insist at times that they don’t work too hard!”

Working towards a sustainable China

It’s not through medicine alone that Chinese academics at Cardiff are making their mark. Dr Li Yu, Senior Lecturer in the Cardiff School of Planning and Geography, knew plenty about the University after links were initiated between the Chinese



Vice-Chancellor
Colin Riordan
(centre, back row)
and Acting Director
of Development and
Alumni Relations
Sarah Price
(front, left) with
alumni in China.

Government and the University’s planning department in the early 1980s. After spending a year at Cardiff in 1993 to complete his Masters, Dr Yu returned to the city to complete a PhD in 2001, and has been here ever since.

“I received sponsorship from the British Council to finish my PhD anywhere in the UK; returning to Cardiff was an easy decision,” says Dr Yu. “There were no Chinese in the department at the time, now more than a third of all postgraduate students in the School of Planning and Geography come from China.”

The day I interviewed Dr Yu happened to be Chinese New Year, when over a billion of his compatriots were welcoming the Year of the Horse. Dr Yu had spent the previous day celebrating with his family and Chinese students living in Cardiff.

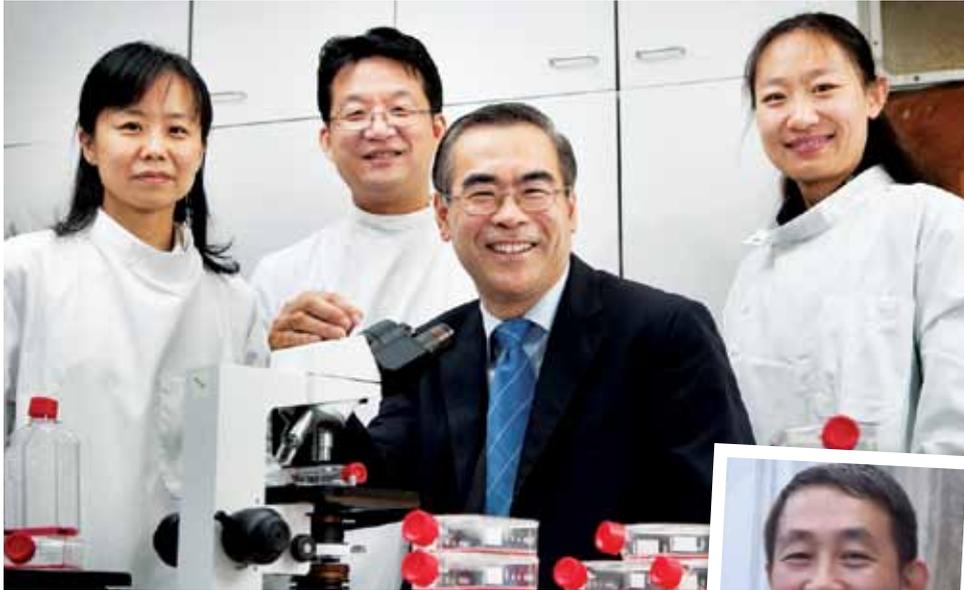
Discussion led to one of his areas of expertise: the migration of people around China, and he explained how Chinese New Year represents an enormous logistical challenge not only for those travelling to see their families, but also for the environment.

“Over the New Year period in China, there are between two and three billion journeys made by people who are travelling to and from their

family villages in the countryside,” says Dr Yu. “As much of the development of China over the past two decades has been on the east coast, and with a good proportion of the migrants who work in these new factories coming from the rural west, this means a huge number of people travel west before New Year and back east after New Year – it’s a logistical and environmental challenge to say the least!”

“The movement of economic migrants to the towns and cities for work also means that many of their villages become ‘empty’, where the only people left are the very young and the very old. This also brings huge challenges for the country as the people who traditionally worked the land have gone to work elsewhere – the government now recognises that there is a vital need for balanced development throughout the country if we are to avoid some of these problems.”

Since being in Cardiff, Dr Yu has been part of a network of academics who advise the Chinese Government on, amongst many other factors, the sustainability of mass economic migration. The establishment of a Low-Carbon Indicator System in 2011 is one of these, and commits China to reducing its carbon dioxide intensity by 40-45% by 2020. ▶



In common with Professor Jiang, Dr Yu's work has led to the development of strong partnerships with Chinese universities. As well as forming partnerships with the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design and the Chinese Society of Urban Studies, a joint research centre – the China-UK Research Centre for Eco-cities and Sustainable Development – was established between Cardiff University and Hefei University of Technology in January 2014.

Global opportunities

To date, the exchange of students between China and the UK has been one way. This is something that Cardiff University is seeking to redress this year, and, from this summer, 25 Cardiff students will be able to gain overseas experience through internships or study placements with Cardiff's Chinese partners in industry and education.

By 2017, Vice-Chancellor Colin Riordan anticipates that 17% of Cardiff's home students will

have studied, worked or volunteered abroad for at least a month during their time at Cardiff.

During a week-long

visit to Chinese universities last autumn, the Vice-Chancellor was awarded an Honorary Professorship by Peking University and made an International Adviser by Capital

Medical University at a presentation ceremony held in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Professor Riordan said: "What pleased me most was the enthusiasm which greeted us throughout our entire visit. Our alumni are spread across a huge range of businesses in China and there are many opportunities for our students to spend time there as well.

"The new prospects that an economy like China offers the University in helping create new research collaborations are exciting – both with other universities and with private companies. These visits help to build further our international profile and to put Cardiff and Wales firmly on the world map." □



Top: Professor Jiang with three of the research fellows from Capital Medical University in Beijing.

Above: Dr Li Yu, helping to promote sustainability in China.

The Chinese student's story

Colin Zhao has been at Cardiff since September 2011, working on his PhD in Computer Science. Here's his perspective on life in Cardiff

"I've enjoyed my university life so far. Apart from doing my research, I joined several societies and even started a new one for Chinese students. I have also been working part time at the University for the past two years. All these activities have enriched my experience here.

I had no difficulty fitting in when I came to the UK, although there are aspects of student life that still surprise me – there's not really the same late night culture at universities in China. However, communicating in other ways with local and international students still gives me a multicultural experience.



I've got to know a lot of Chinese students in Cardiff, both from my work in the University and my daily life. I've been living at two student halls during this time – Liberty Bridge and Mansion Shand House.

My Cardiff life will enhance my CV, both from an academic and work skills aspect. Working in a multinational environment and collaborating with others are two of the most important parts that will definitely benefit my future.

China is speeding up its economy and research abilities, and having a close relationship will benefit both UK and Chinese universities."

Clasur tragwyddol

A timeless classic

Roedd stori Teulu Bach Nantoer yn llyfr angenrheidiol i'w ddarllen gan blant Cymru ganrif yn ôl

Roedd *Teulu Bach Nantoer* yn ffenomen gyhoeddi yn hanner cyntaf yr 20fed ganrif," meddai Dr Siwan Rosser o Ysgol y Gymraeg, a oedd yn gweithio yn ddiweddar gydag S4C i greu rhaglen am y llyfr.

"Roeddwn nid yn unig yn awyddus i ddathlu'r clasur hwn i blant, ond roeddwn hefyd eisiau edrych ar sut mae awduron Cymraeg cynnar yr 20fed Ganrif yn llunio eu barn am Gymru a'i dyfodol. Mae gan y straeon rydym yn eu dweud wrth ein plant lawer iawn i'w ddweud wrthym am ein dyheadau, gobeithion, ofnau a phryderon, ac mae *Teulu Bach Nantoer* yn llawn delfrydiaeth a gobaith am ddyfodol Cymru a'i hiaith."

Un o'r rhesymau pam fod y llyfr yn gymaint o lwyddiant oedd bod ffuglen Cymraeg i blant yn dal i fod yn ei dyddiau cynnar, gydag ychydig iawn o nofelau wedi eu hysgrifennu'n benodol ar gyfer darllenwyr ifanc ar y pryd.

Mae Dr Rosser yn parhau: "Roedd yr ymateb brwdfrydig i'r nofel yn awgrymu bod plant Cymru yn tyfu allan o'r llenyddiaeth ddidactig, efengylaidd a oedd wedi bod yn brif ymborth iddynt drwy gydol y 19eg ganrif, ac roeddent yn barod am straeon dychmygus, sensitif am fywyd yng Nghymru."

"Roedd gwneud y rhaglen yn gyfle i ymgysylltu â darllenwyr, hen ac ifanc, i fesur pam fod y llyfr hwn mor boblogaidd yn ei amser, ond hefyd pam nad oedd yn cael ei ffafrio erbyn diwedd yr 20fed ganrif."

I gyd-fynd â'r rhaglen, mae Dr Rosser hefyd wedi ysgrifennu cyflwyniad i olygiad electronig newydd o *Teulu Bach Nantoer*, sy'n ceisio dod â'r llyfr sydd allan o brint i ddarllenwyr newydd.

"Gellir gwneud mwy yng Nghymru i ddathlu ac archwilio llyfrau plant o'r gorffennol. Mae hefyd yn gyfle i ganiatáu i blant ac ysgolion i gael mynediad i lenyddiaeth gynharach ar gyfer plant yn y Gymraeg – a chredaf y bydd *Teulu Bach Nantoer* bob amser yn berthnasol i'r rhai sydd am ddysgu am y gorffennol, ac yn mwynhau stori dda." 

I gael rhagor o wybodaeth edrychwch ar
www.cromen.co.uk/en/books/nantoer.html

The story of Teulu Bach Nantoer was a must-read for Welsh children a century ago

T*eu*lu Bach Nantoer – The Little Family of Nantoer – was a publishing phenomenon in the first half of the 20th century," says Dr Siwan Rosser from the School of Welsh, who recently worked with S4C to create a programme about the book.

"I not only wanted to celebrate this children's classic, I also wanted to examine how early-20th century Welsh authors constructed their view of Wales and its future. The stories we tell our children have a great deal to tell us about our aspirations, hopes, fears and concerns, and *Teulu Bach Nantoer* is packed with idealism and hope for the future of Wales and its language."

One of the reasons the book was such a success was that Welsh fiction for children was still in its infancy, with very few novels written specifically for young readers at the time.

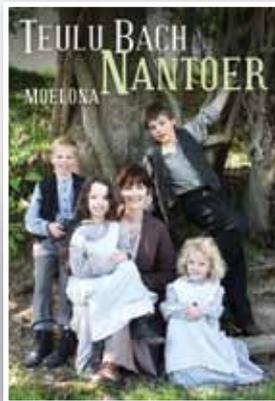
Dr Rosser continues: "The enthusiastic response to the novel suggests that Welsh children were growing out of the didactic, evangelical literature which had been their staple diet throughout the 19th century, and were ready for imaginative, sensitive stories about life in Wales."

"Making the programme was an opportunity to engage with readers, young and old, to gauge why this book was so popular in its time, but also why it fell out of favour by the end of the 20th century."

To coincide with the programme, Dr Rosser has also written an introduction to a new electronic edition of *Teulu Bach Nantoer*, which aims to bring the out of print book to a new readership.

"More can be done in Wales to celebrate and examine children's books of the past. It is also an opportunity to allow children and schools to gain access to earlier literature for children in Welsh – and I believe *Teulu Bach Nantoer* will always be relevant to those who want to learn about the past, and enjoy a good story." 

More at www.cromen.co.uk/en/books/nantoer.html



Network news

Updates from Cardiff
alumni worldwide



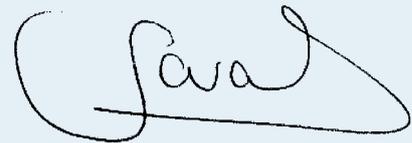
Welcome...

to the Cardiff Network. It never ceases to amaze me the energy, commitment and enthusiasm that many of you have for an adventure. Whether by bicycle, tuk tuk or canoe, ex-students are doing extraordinary things to challenge themselves, and are often raising a great deal of money and awareness for a variety of causes along the way.

Whatever your motivation, to do these things takes guts, determination and a huge amount of planning. University prepares people for life in many different ways; having the confidence to achieve your dream, to try and make a difference, or to aim for your perfect job is, I hope, one of the things that Cardiff helped

you with. Or perhaps it was the skill to anticipate a problem and find a solution – whether it's the challenges of the day-to-day or the adventure of a once-in-a-lifetime experience, I hope that the brain-training you had at Cardiff keeps your body going every day – by whichever means of transport you choose.

With very best wishes to you all,



Sarah Price

Acting Director of Development & Alumni Relations

Speed queen Aggy York Practical Dermatology Diploma, 2009

“My main passion in life is skiing,” says Lancashire-based GP Aggy (right). “I have skied since the age of five, which is late considering my son started at two and now outskies me at seven. I even completed one of my eConferences for my Cardiff diploma at 1,400m in the French Alps!”

Aggy’s favourite skiing destination is Les Trois Vallées in France. “The area has a well-known challenge known as ‘the Escapade’, which involves hitting 18 checkpoints during a week’s skiing. But in 2005, some seasonaires attempted to do this in just one day. This mammoth feat of skiing has been dubbed a thing of legend.”

Aggy’s brother Richard attempted the one-day challenge in 2013 with his good friend Neil Blood, who was tragically killed in a road accident later that year. It was with this in mind that Aggy, her brother and husband Mark decided to attempt the challenge in honour of Neil, and to raise money for Neil’s lifelong supported charity, The Teenage Cancer Trust, and the also for the hospital in Staffordshire where Richard works.

Although the team’s hardest attempts were thwarted by a piste closure, the intrepid bunch still managed to do 55 miles in the day, with a top speed of 53.3mph, as well as raising an amazing £6,000 – well done Aggy.



Long way down

Bruce Maidment

BSc Business Management, 2012

“Deciding to cycle from John o’ Groats to Land’s End was a random act of madness, but one that I will never regret,” says Bruce. “I’d never been to Scotland, the Lake District or many places in the north of England for that matter, so the trip not only gave me the chance to raise money, it also meant I could explore much of my own country.”

The idea of cycling 80-100 miles a day for a period of 12 days may not sound like the perfect holiday to some, but for Bruce, whose sister had been suffering with a chronic illness for several years and was undergoing chemotherapy, being able to raise money for a cause close to his family’s heart made the training well worth while.

“I thought if she can go through all of that and keep going, even setting up her own business in the midst of it all, then I can do this ride, no sweat!”

So Bruce, who is now a procurement consultant for Cwmgran-based Proxima, saved up to buy a decent bike, started picking up self-maintenance tips from his local bike shops and friends, and, most importantly, started his training regime. In September last year, Bruce completed the 1,000-mile route in 12 days, as planned.

“The highlight was riding through Glen Coe in the Highlands. The weather was fantastic, clear blue skies, no wind, and just me on the open road riding through what felt like a scene from *Lord of the Rings*. The worst point was when I reached Bristol, the weather was horrendous, downpour after downpour, with a nasty headwind and some very steep climbs. The rain ruined my two phones which I used for sat nav and back-up, and I kept getting lost!”

Bruce’s fantastic endeavour has so far raised over £2,300 for MacMillan Cancer Support – not bad going considering his initial target was £500.



Around the world in 489 days

Nick Gough BSc Economics, 2008



Readers will remember our coverage of the start of Nick Gough and Richard Sears’ tuk tuk trip around the world, just over 18 months ago. Since then, the pair have driven a record-setting 26,172 miles through 39 countries on five continents, before reaching the finishing line in Buenos Aires in December.

Sponsored by Cardiff University and raising world education awareness as they went, Nick and Richard survived deserts, accidents and never-ending border checks. With the tuk tuk seemingly giving up in Chile, the pair even pulled ‘Tommy’ for three days before a mechanic patched it up for the home straight.

With money raised for the Tuk Tuk Educational Trust along the way, Nick and Richard are donating funds to grassroots education projects that they visited on the journey.

“It helped that we were both pretty obsessed with tuk tuks and just loved being in them when we were travelling!” Nick told CNN.



The Italian job

Max Malpass MSc Mechanical Engineering, 2012

Having already completed the John o' Groats to Land's End challenge in 2011, Max decided to take part in another long cycle trip, this time with cycling partner James Hillary, and to sunnier climes!

"I chose this route because, whilst researching potential challenges, I found a route that followed an ancient trade and pilgrimage route called the Via Francigena," says Max. The medieval route, which translates to 'the road that comes from France', is widely thought to have begun in Canterbury in Kent, and passed through France, Switzerland and Italy as a major pilgrimage route to Rome.

The 1,300-mile route took the pair 21 days, which they travelled unsupported, carrying all their own gear, including camping equipment.

"The highlight of the trip for me was definitely the Great St Bernard Pass, the road which took us over the Alps from Switzerland to Italy, but the day before we were due to finish we got seriously lost on gravelly roads and with no water. Morale was pretty much rock bottom, as we were so



close to the finish line and were completely exhausted. Luckily we came across a farmhouse with an elderly couple outside, they got us water and made us feel welcome – a great relief! It's simple events like this that drive my ambition for travelling and cycle touring.

"I was raising money for the Sparkle Appeal, which supports children and young people with a disability or developmental difficulty. My cousin was born with Cerebral Palsy and is often cared for by the charity. I raised a total of £873.66. James raised £820 for the Willow Foundation, which provides positive and life-enhancing special days for seriously ill 16- to 40-year-olds."

Riding the rapids

Dougal Jerram Geology, 1992

Dougal first appeared on television when he visited volcanoes in Ethiopia with Kate Humble in 2009. Then, during the eruption of – and chaos caused by – the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull in 2010, he became the BBC *One Show's* Dr Volcano, explaining the intricacies of the geology of volcanic areas for viewers.

Dougal has since appeared on a number of popular science programmes, presenting with TV personalities such as Andrew Marr and Tony Robinson.

Readers may have recently seen him at the mercy of the Colorado River as part of *Operation Grand Canyon with Dan Snow*, where the intrepid boaters followed in the footsteps of pioneering geologist John Wesley Powell's 1869 expedition.

"As the expedition ventured further into this geological wilderness," Dougal blogged on the BBC website, "armed with my notebook and camera, I snapped and scribbled like I was measuring up the canyon for a new suit."

"Becoming one of very few men on the planet to have survived tackling the Grand Canyon in the kind of boat you would normally row across a lake with a picnic is also a major achievement for me – and I have the oars in my garage to prove it!"

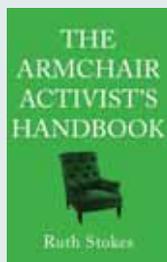


BOOK ROUNDUP

Following last issue's literary focus, four more alumni have sent us details of their work in print – here's a roundup.

Ruth Stokes

The Armchair Activist's Handbook



Ruth became a freelance journalist after completing a postgraduate diploma in magazine journalism in 2008. Since then, she has specialised in environmental and social issues, and writes for a number of magazines and newspapers. *The Armchair Activist's Handbook* is her first book, and guides the committed but non-confrontational user towards making a real difference to their lives.

John Rogers Prosser

The Cool, Coal and Black Lightning



Graduating with a law degree in 1974, John worked in law publishing up until he retired in 2008. With a keen interest in music, including playing the guitar and the banjo, John found another creative outlet as the basis for his first book, *The Cool, Coal and Black Lightning*, a comedy thriller set in the Welsh valleys in the days before the Beatles caught the nation, and world's, attention.

Andrew McConnell Stott

The Vampyre Family: Passion, Envy and the Curse of Byron



Andrew left Cardiff with a BA and PhD in English in 1995, and since then has been writing and teaching at universities in the UK and US, where he is currently Professor of English at the University of Buffalo. His third book, *The Vampyre Family* has received rave reviews in *The Sunday Times* and *The New Statesman*, as well as inspiring an original illustrated front cover for the *Literary Review*.

Bill Trüb

All Men are Afraid



Due out this summer, *All Men are Afraid* is Bill Trüb's debut book. It's a collection of free verse and prose poetry that has been put together over the past 10 years, and stems from Bill's time as a postgrad student at Cardiff. Over the past decade, Bill has been teaching creative writing in London, South Africa and New York, and is now a full-time lecturer at Wenzhou-Kean University in China.



Anchorman

Familiar to millions of viewers in China, Cardiffalumnus **Yang Rui hosts *Dialogue*, a current affairs programme broadcast on the CCTV English channel, CCTV-9**

When did you first learn English?

Back in 1976, when the Cultural Revolution came to an end. My first English teacher was an interpreter in the Kuomintang – the Chinese National People’s Party – during the three-year civil strife. He had graduated from a missionary school founded by the US.

How did your interest in the media develop?

In 1983, representatives from the Ministry of Radio, Film and Television came to Shanghai International Studies University to recruit journalists. I was accepted to join, and from 1986 to 1988 I was subeditor at the world affairs department at the National Radio Service. All news media is state run in China, so I was lucky that my department focused on non-domestic issues, meaning that I didn’t suffer censorship of my work, something that those covering domestic issues had to deal with to a greater extent. This first job helped build the DNA of my media career and form my way of free thinking.

What are your overriding memories of your course?

Studying for an MA in Journalism Studies

from 1993 to 1994 at Cardiff was my turning point. I came to understand the implications of professionalism and the sense of justice. It also taught me that there is no such thing as impartiality, since all media players have their bias based on values and education as well as history. I also learned that the tabloids could be fun, although a price has been paid for this through issues such as the death of Princess Diana and the phone hacking scandals.

And the city?

I liked Bute Park, and the castles scattered across Wales. I was also a waiter at the Riverside Cantonese Restaurant, the funniest part of my life as a guest in the host country! I miss Geoff Mungham, who died about ten years ago. He loved China and Chinese students, and taught me media and politics.

What has been the highlight of your career since you founded *Dialogue*?

My highlights have filled three books! This profession has prompted me to learn more about politics and humanities, and alerts me to the vulnerabilities of human beings and the complex issues of being Chinese in

a huge and dynamic economy. I feel very lucky to be witnessing the rise of China and the way the world is responding to it.

Has the increase of the English language had an effect on China?

English has become the tool for having access to a Western education and the internet. It also helps with the boom in foreign trade, and helps you to come to terms with the world’s rules of the game. ■

Dialogue: the facts

Dialogue’s viewing figures are the highest on CCTV-News.

The show’s guest speakers have included US Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton (below), former Secretary General of the UN Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, foreign ministers and ambassadors, as well as entrepreneurs, scientists, criminals, educators, and government officials.

Guests from different political and cultural backgrounds are encouraged to voice their own opinions.

Viewers are made up of native speakers in China and abroad, those who use English as a working language in China, and those who study English as a foreign language.



I feel very lucky to be witnessing the rise of China and the way the world is responding to it

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