

Quality News



Prifysgol Cymru
University of Wales

Issue 33

December 2011

Meeting our

FRESHERS



Freshers' Fayres take place during the first two weeks of the academic year and provide an opportunity for students to meet with organisations who have an impact on their time at University. Therefore, we were delighted to take the opportunity to attend the Freshers' Fayres at institutions in the UK for the third year running, and by so doing, welcome our new students to the University.

Our 'Students at the heart of UW' campaign came into its own this September. We represented UW at both Freshers' Fayres and Student Induction events, meeting new UW students at over 25 institutions. There we gave presentations on UW and set up stalls so that we were able to meet our students individually, providing specific answers to questions about UW and its student provision. In addition to highlighting the engagement mechanisms currently available between students and UW, we took the opportunity to collect students' contact details – approximately 1500 students in total – to allow us to send relevant information to each student. We also advertised the role of student representatives on UW boards and Committees. Those students who decide to join the University of Wales Student Committee Member Register will have the opportunity to represent their peers

at a formal level, and will undertake training designed specifically to support a more in-depth representative structure for students across the range of UW programmes.

Freshers' Fayres are also a great opportunity to promote and reinforce the UW brand. We provided a number of promotional materials which were given out to students, allowing them to familiarise themselves with the UW brand as they go about their day-to-day lives. This year the most popular item was the heart-shaped stress ball, which embraced the 'Students at the heart' motto quite literally!

Our main objective at these events is to promote knowledge and understanding of the University, and answer any queries that new students might have. Through the work of current and former student representatives on the Student Submission, we know that students often are unsure about exactly what we do and the role that UW plays during their time at university. By maintaining a presence at Freshers' Fayres, we hope to remedy this, and send a positive message to our students – they are, after all, at the heart of everything we do.

Rhys Parry
Student Liaison Officer

Research at the University of Wales: CAWCS

Dr David Parsons, Senior Research Fellow at CAWCS, shares some of his current research with *Quality News*...

What does Merthyr Tydfil have in common with the south of France? Not the climate, perhaps; but new research at the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies (CAWCS) suggests that there may be a direct connection between Welsh *merthyr* names and a dozen or so small places in south-western and south-central France called Martres. Both are derived from terms that derive from some form of Latin *martyrium*, denoting the burial places of early Christian 'martyrs', which suggests that they belong to the early medieval centuries, fifth–seventh centuries AD, when the cult of martyrs became important in the Christianity of early western Europe.

It has been thought that the Welsh type's origin, in names like Merthyr Tydfil, is to be sought at the burial place of a particular named martyr, someone who died for their faith, just as Saint Tydfil is said to have lost her life at the hands of

the pagan Saxons in various late tales. The French parallels, however, suggest that a plural, *martyres*, was used to denote early Christian cemeteries in general and without reference to a particular saint. There are reasons to think that this may have been the active sense when the term was first introduced to north-west Europe (including Wales, Cornwall and Brittany), and that the association with particular named saints was a later phenomenon, encouraged by the fact that Latin *martyrium* and plural *martyres* would have fallen together at an early stage—both developing as *merthyr*—in later Welsh.

It may be that this connection between south-western France and west Britain reflects direct contact between the areas when shorter sea-crossings between Christian Britain and Gaul became less accessible, after the collapse of the Roman Empire and the Anglo-Saxon settlements. That these contacts may be traced through names and language is a possibility which my research seeks to investigate.

This work grows out of a larger project entitled 'The historic place-names of Wales', which aims to collect the earliest forms of all Welsh place-names in a web-accessible database in order to promote historical and linguistic research of this kind. For updates on progress visit

<http://www.wales.ac.uk/en/CentreforAdvancedWelshCelticStudies/ResearchProjects/CurrentProjects/WelshNameStudies>

The research on *merthyr* names will be published in full during 2012.



Dr David Parsons
Senior Research Fellow
Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies

Dr David Parsons joined CAWCS in 2009. He is Deputy Director of the Survey of English Place-Names and sits on the committees of the British Royal Academy/ Royal Historical Society Anglo-Saxon Charters Project, and the British Academy Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture. He directed the AHRC-funded 'Perceptions of Place' Project at the University of Nottingham, and has published extensively on the subject of place-names and the early languages of Britain.



The distribution of Merthyr names, past and present, in Wales

Forthcoming events December 2011

- 14 December Inter-disciplinary Sustainability Education: Insights, Momentum and Futures
York
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/2011/academyevents/14_December_ESD_InsightsMomentumFutures
- 12 January The Revised UKPSF: A new framework for supporting excellence in teaching and supporting learning
Aston Business School
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/2012/12th_Jan_12_Birmingham_ukpsf_post-launch_event
- 19 January Internationalising the Student Experience: Creating Globally Attractive Universities
London
http://www.insidegovernment.co.uk/economic_dev/international-student-experience/

The text of this publication can be made available in alternative formats - please contact the University.
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Commons and WMC host twin launches for Lord Morris autobiography

The First Minister of Wales and Bafta-winning journalist Huw Edwards were among the notable figures to attend the launches of Lord Morris of Aberavon's critically lauded autobiography.

Fifty Years In Politics and Law, the new autobiography of Lord Morris of Aberavon, was this week celebrated in two launch events, organised by its publishers, the University of Wales Press.

On Monday 17 October, the House of Commons in London played host to the first launch event which was attended by a number of Lord Morris's peers, luminaries in the field of law, MPs and literary enthusiasts.

His autobiography provides a fascinating insight into personalities and events encountered from childhood in mid-Wales, entry into politics in the late 1950s, appointment to Secretary of State for Wales in 1974 and the devolution era of the 1970s; and finally to his role as Attorney General for England and Wales at the end of the 1990s.

Extraordinary events such as his involvement in the decision to bomb Kosovo are included in the book, as well as his role in the development and implementation of devolution for Wales, and his tireless efforts to promote the Welsh language.



Speakers included the Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP; Bafta-winning journalist, Huw Edwards; Professor Lord Morgan; the University of Wales Vice Chancellor, Professor Medwin Hughes and Assistant Editor of *The Guardian*, Michael White.

Wales's Millennium Centre in Cardiff Bay was the venue for the second launch event. Speakers there composed of The First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones AM, John Davies, Professor Peter Stead, the Rt Hon Lord Morris of Aberavon KG QC and the Director of the University of Wales Press, Helgard Krause.

Having represented Aberavon as its Labour MP from 1959, Lord Morris retired as the longest serving Welsh MP in 2001. He is one of only a small handful of Labour ministers to have held office under Harold Wilson, James Callaghan and Tony Blair.

Speaking of his new book, Lord Morris said:

“My tale recounts the riding of two horses, politics and the law, for over fifty years and focuses on my relationship with the three Prime Ministers under whom I served – Wilson, Callaghan and Blair. Since all my life has been concerned with Welsh politics it traces the part I played and the development of the idea of devolution. In the last part I record my appointment as Attorney General and spell out the issues arising during my stewardship as Chief Legal Adviser to the Government and the war in Kosovo in particular.”

Today, Lord Morris is Chancellor of the University of Glamorgan, a position he has held since 2002.

Tom Barrett
Communications Officer