RESEARCH @worc

January 2024



University of Worcester

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Cover image: Researchers working in the CO-LAB Digital Innovation Hub

WELCOME

In this edition of Research @Worc, research addressing two of the "Areas of Challenge", as articulated in our current Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy, is particularly prominent in various of the news stories and articles within. This edition highlights that the University is driving applied research focused on Human Health and Wellbeing and in particular across the region of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Over the last few months that University has signed two important and potentially game-changing agreements to govern our collaborative research, one with the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated care Board – the initial product of which is set out in our cover story – and the other with the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust.

This edition also has a strong focus on our Sustainable Futures area of challenge, showcasing the wide-ranging and impactful work of our Sustainable Environments Research Group, whilst elsewhere we report on findings from a research project focused on Natural Flood Management and on a student-led initiative providing sustainability audits to businesses across the region.

Finally, just as we went to press, we had the exciting news that Dr Jessica Mee had been awarded a prestigious UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship to explore . No doubt we will be hearing a lot more about this research in future editions of the magazine.

Professor John-Paul Wilson
Pro Vice Chancellor Research



IN BRIEF

BEAVER-LIKE DAMS CAN PROTECT COMMUNITIES FROM FLOODING

According to research carried out in collaboration with Cardiff University, beaver-like dams can protect communities from flooding.

Prof. Ian Maddock, from the School of Science and the Environment, worked with colleagues at Cardiff on the study, carried out on a river in Shropshire.

The scientists said findings from their study could be used by government and industry to develop flood defences for smaller, more frequent storms and to help create an approach for modelling leaky barriers during larger storms.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND HOT YOGA

Dr Jessica Mee, Senior Lecturer in Sport and Exercise Science, has published a piece in *The Conversation* (in collaboration with colleagues from Anglia Ruskin University) exploring the science behind hot yoga.

The article is available to view and listen to here.

OUTSTANDING RESEARCH SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR

In September, **Prof. Alison Kington**, was shortlisted in the Times Higher Education (THE) Awards under the category of 'Outstanding Research Supervisor of the Year'.

Prof. Kington; Professor of Psychology of Education, has worked at the University since 2012. In additional to the 8 students that she is currently supervising, Alison has overseen 20 doctoral completions whilst at Worcester.

"It's lovely to be recognised for my supervisory work. I'm thrilled to be nominated"

The awards ceremony took place on the 7th December 2023 at ACC Liverpool.

THE POWER OF A (LORD) CHIEF JUSTICE

In July, Senior Lecturer in Law; **Dr Josie Welsh**, published a blog with the UK Constitutional Law Association, about the role of the Lord Chief Justice. This followed the appointment of the first female Lord Chief Justice in England and Wales (Dame Sue Carr) after the retirement of The Rt Hon. Lord Burnett in September. The blog is available to view here.

RIGHTS AND JUSTICE: IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

The University hosted a one-day conference on 5th September 2023 which explored key themes relating to rights and justice. It was convened by members of the Constitutions, Rights and Justice Research Group: **Dr Chris Monaghan** (University of Worcester), **Dr Josie Welsh** (University of Worcester) and Dan Jasinski (University of Northampton).

Panel discussions and papers explored the following themes: constitutional matters, citizenship and access to justice; criminal investigation and procedures (pre-trial); human rights and justice; criminal justice and procedure – the trial and beyond; rights and justice - reproduction and education; rights and justice – civil; rights and justice - balancing acts and comparative analyses; and, justice and security.

The conference was based upon two forthcoming academic books edited by Dr Chris Monaghan, Dr Josie Welsh and Dan Jasinski.

THE SUSTAINABILITY OF MEETING CENTRES

In July, the University's **Association for Dementia Studies (ADS)** launched its findings from a two-year research project. The NIHR funded 'Get Real with Meeting Centres' project investigated the various factors – positive and negative – that may influence the sustainability of Meeting Centres for people affected by dementia.

A series of booklets and short videos have been created to disseminate the findings and recommendations. These can be found on the project website.

IMPROVING FEMALES' HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE BY MITIGATING HEAT STRAIN



Dr Jessica Mee has recently been awarded £753,880 as part of the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship Scheme for her research project, 'Improving females' Health and Performance by Mitigating Heat Strain'.

"Climate change refers to the long-term shift in global temperatures, which may occur naturally, but human activities relating to burning fossil fuels is considered a main driver. As a result, the frequency and intensity of heat waves is increasing, exposing humans to unseasonable and dangerously high temperatures which harms human health.

The overarching aims and objectives of this proposal is to support females to navigate extreme heat episodes. This will be achieved by assessing strategies to help females adapt and manage heat strain and by developing bespoke female heat mitigation guidelines.

The findings from this proposed programme of research would have scope to directly influence local, regional, national, and international public health heatwave plans, to reflect the bespoke heat mitigation strategies for females. By disseminating the research findings to charities and other industry sectors, practitioners will be better informed to provide guidance to females on how to better cope in the heat. The research findings will also have the potential to feature in sporting heat policy developments both in the UK and internationally."

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER & HEREFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH AND CARE NHS TRUST

The University of Worcester and Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust have forged a new partnership to advance health research in the region. The Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations marks a significant step forward in the pursuit of innovative healthcare solutions and improved wellbeing for the people of the two counties.

The two organisations will work together in the development of health research initiatives. By combining their respective expertise, resources, and networks, the partnership aims to tackle pressing health challenges and make a lasting impact on the wellbeing of communities.

Prof. John-Paul Wilson, Pro Vice Chancellor Research at the University, said: *"The University has a longstanding and productive relationship with the Trust but this MoU provides an opportunity to develop further our research collaboration in shared areas of focus. The research that will flow from this collaboration will very much have real world impacts, improving the quality of life for those living with long term physical and mental health conditions."*

The MoU sets the stage for collaborative research projects that draw upon the unique strengths of both organisations. By sharing knowledge, data, and infrastructure, researchers from both sides will be able to access new perspectives and approaches, leading to more comprehensive and impactful research outcomes.It also aims to nurture the next generation of health researchers, through training and knowledge exchange.

Sarah Dugan, Chief Executive at Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust said: *"I am delighted that our partnership with the University of Worcester has been strengthened further with a collaborative approach to health research. By working closer together we can increase the focus on research, improve health and wellbeing and encourage the future generation of health researchers."*

John Devapriam, Medical Directorate at Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, added: *"Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust has strong relations with the University of Worcester, and this MoU strengthens our commitment to enabling research in particular. I am excited about the opportunities this brings to the system in terms of research activity, workforce development and high-quality care for the citizens of Herefordshire and Worcestershire."*

NATIONAL REPORT ON EARLY YEARS EDUCATION



Dr Pammie Murray, Senior Lecturer in Leadership and Organisational Behaviour in the Business School and member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on a Fit and Healthy Childhood, has contributed to a new publication from the Children's Alliance, The Role of the Family in Early Years Education.

The national report emphasises the need for digital support for parents and families, and the importance of developing a cohesive and aligned 'learning community' to support a child.

The report is the second part of the APPG's Eye View Series and explores the needs of the family and the child, includes case studies, and makes suggestions for the way forward.

EMERALD LITERATI AWARDS 2023

A paper authored by **Sarah Waller CBE**, **Dr Simon Evans** and **Jennifer Bray** from the Association of Dementia Studies won an Outstanding Paper Award at the 2023 Emerald Literati Awards. The article '*Designing inclusive environments for people living with dementia: how much do we really know?*' was published in the journal Working with Older People, and describes the environment assessment tool originally developed by Sarah when at The Kings Fund and now managed by the Association for Dementia Studies.

DEMENTIA ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT TOOL AVAILABLE AS AN APP

A special environmental assessment tool to assess how dementia-friendly care environments are, has been turned into a free digital app.

The app is available in both Welsh and English and is aimed at helping health and care staff, together with people living with dementia and their carers, to assess and improve care environments for people living with dementia. The tools are available for wards, hospitals, care homes, supported housing, health centres and gardens/outdoor spaces.

The app has been developed by experts in the University of Worcester's **Association for Dementia Studies**, along with creative digital agency Crystal and with funding and support from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board in Wales.

The app is available to download for free from the University of Worcester's website, from where the original paper-based tools on which the app was based are also still available.

CLIC: TO EXIT - A SYMPOSIUM ON LITERATURES OF ENDING

On Tuesday 7th November the Contemporary Literary Cultures Research Group held their second online symposium CLiC: To Exit - A Symposium on Literatures of Ending. This day-long event included papers spanning a range of fields including video game studies, musical theatre, television and film, poetics, literary studies, and apocalypse studies, with an international range of speakers.

WILDFLOWERS AND GREEN WINE

A new collaboration between the University of Worcester and the Royal Agricultural University will investigate how effective wildflowers can be when it comes to making cleaner and greener wine in the UK.

Currently, most vineyards require the extensive use of chemicals like insecticides to control diseases and pests but the use of these products has implications for our health, biodiversity, and the environment.

Because of the ongoing concerns around their direct and indirect impacts, there's increasing pressure on growers to reduce their reliance on chemicals.

Over the next three years a study will look at how effective wildflower habitats are in the alleyways between rows of vines in supporting the natural enemies of the pests attacking the grapes and how these habitats can improve soil health, boost biodiversity and the overall health of the vines.

The overall objective is to develop a more resilient and sustainable approach to grape production in the UK.

The study is being funded by the Perry Foundation, the University of Worcester, the Bumblebee Conservation Trust and Everflyht Vineyard.

BILL BARLOW AWARD



The Remote Sensing & Photogrammetry Society's (RSPSoc) 2023 Bill Barlow Award was awarded to PhD student **Amritha Nair** from the School of Science and the Environment. Amritha's research looks at *'Mapping plant stress in submerged aquatic vegetation using very-high and ultra-high resolution multi-spectral imagery and structure from motion photogrammetry'* . The award supports the cost of "non-conference-related activities in the fields of Remote Sensing, Photogrammetry, Earth Observation and other related disciplines".

Amritha has subsequently presented her research at the Trevor Platt Science Foundation symposium, the British Geological Survey for the RSPSoc Conference, and the British Ecological Society Aquatic Ecology conference.

BUSINESS SCHOOL LECTURER NAMED IN PRESTIGIOUS WORLD LIST OF SCIENTISTS



Dr Sajad Rezaei, Senior Lecturer in Digital Marketing, has been named in a list of the world's top 2% of scientists with most influence for the fifth consecutive year. The list of 'Top 2% Most Influential Scientists', compiled by Stanford University and published by Elsevier, celebrates the outstanding contributions of scientists whose research has had a substantial impact in their respective fields. The list consists of researchers from different countries and research fields and in particular considers citations from the previous year.

Dr Rezaei's interdisciplinary research outputs include over 70 single or jointly authored refereed research papers published in world-leading publishers in the areas of digital business, innovation, analytics, sustainability and productivity. He was recently awarded The Productivity Institute Business Innovation Grant (Co funder: Economic and Social Research Council) for his research exploring artificial intelligence for the social care system in England.

REPORT ON MENTAL HEALTH IN GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER COMMUNITY

Dr Peter Unwin, Principal Lecturer in Allied Health and Community, has led a report looking at mental health care among the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller population in the UK.

The report, funded by the NHS Race and Health Observatory, and produced in collaboration with a number of partners, was launched on the Thursday 28th September 2023 and looks at the difficulties for people from these communities in seeking and accessing appropriate care. The report contains policy and practice recommendations for change across all services.

THE ETHICAL AND MORAL CHALLENGES OF RESEARCH



Dr Claire-McLoone Richards, from the School of Psychology, has edited the volume, *Researching Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence; Critical Perspectives for Student-Practitioner Researchers.* The book features contributions from researchers and graduates of the University's Masters in Understanding Domestic and Sexual Violence programme.

The book looks at the ethical and moral challenges from the perspective of student practitioners and researchers of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Chapters feature different authors who give their insights and experiences of doing such work.

ISCHP FEMINISM & PSYCHOLOGY AWARD



In July, PhD student **Beck Lowe**, won the Feminism & Psychology Award for Best Student Presentation at the 13th International Society of Critical Health Psychology conference. Beck presented her master's dissertation research on the 'Transgender and Non-Binary Perspectives on the Period Positive Movement' online to the conference in Rancagua, Chile. Following her award, Beck was interviewed on the ISCHP Career File. This can be accessed on the ISCHP website.

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF THE INVICTUS GAMES

On 7th Sept. 2023, the research team involved in the evaluation of the 2023 Invictus Games set off on a ten-day fieldwork trip to Düsseldorf.

The evaluation centres on the games and related recovery experiences of three key groups:

- **Competitors** – exploring how the competitors' mental health and wellbeing will have been impacted by their Invictus Games experience and how their identity will have been shaped;
- **Families** – understanding how families are impacted by the competitors' injury and their recovery journey; and how they support the recovery journey of the competitors;
- **Coaches** – investigating how coaches are supported to facilitate the most valuable recovery environments possible and how they balance their roles supporting performance and aiding recovery.

Due to special focus on family and friends, the research team actively sought out UK team competitors' families and friends and invited them to undertake an interview to share their experience of the Invictus journey. 23 family members (e.g., parents, spouses and siblings) shared detailed accounts of how they perceived their own side of the recovery journey and to what extent the Invictus Games had contributed to that journey, providing invaluable insight into the challenges and struggles the participants had experienced.

The next phase of the evaluation includes further interviews and follow up surveys with competitors.









Photo credit: Royal British Legion and Dr Emma Richardson

BERA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023

The annual conference for the British Educational Research Association (BERA) took place in September, at which members of Social Psychology of Education Research Group presented a symposium of their work entitled 'Mapping primary teachers' peer relationships across a career'.
The symposium focussed on the nature, dynamics and quality of teachers' peer relationships and how they are characterised in the different career phases.

Presentations inlcuded:

- *'There's no place I'd rather be!' The importance of peer relationships in early career teachers' decisions to remain in the profession* - **Dr Karen Blackmore, Dr Ben Looker, Prof. Alison Kington and Tom Weaver**
- *Tales from the watershed: Peer relationships and the construction of mid-career primary teachers' professional identity* - **Prof. Alison Kington and Ben Looker**
- *A place to forge alliances? The role of school staffrooms in fostering peer relationships for veteran teachers* - **Dr Karen Blackmore and Prof. Alison Kington**

THE SINGAPORE EXPERIENCE OF CRACKING THE MULTIFACETED NATURE OF TEACHER RESILIENCE

In November, the University welcomed academic visitor **Dr Yangping Fang** from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. During her visit, Dr Fang delivered a presentation on her research into teacher resilience.

"Teacher resilience, a complicated, multi-faceted concept, is often understood fragmentedly, both conceptually and methodologically when mainly approached through individual qualitative cases. The methodological challenge we face is to capture its dynamic, longitudinal, process-oriented nature of teacher resilience. To address this challenge and achieve a well-rounded understanding of teacher resilience as a social practice, we started and closed with teacher life narratives across over a decade and intermingled with a large-scale quantitative survey in 2021."

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Building upon the University of Worcester's Expertise in violence prevention, three PhD students from the School of Psychology recently presented at the European Conference on Domestic Violence in Reykjavík, Iceland.

Carolyn Ball, whose doctoral research looks as how the experience of intimate partner violence victimisation can influence men's experience as fathers, and **Harriet Bromley**, who is exploring resilience in domestic and sexual violence advocates, presented posters of their research.

Lois Donnelly, whose doctoral research focusses on Intimate Partner Abuse and Family Courts, presented two papers:

- *'Survivors of intimate partner abuse in the Family Court: A qualitative analysis of opinions on the use of special measures'* which was part of Lois' PhD project.
- *'Developing an intersectional feminist approach to ethics in Violence Against Women and Girls: Recommendations and good practice for researchers and policymakers'* delivered with academics from other institutions (Tanya Frances, Lucy Thompson, Emma Turley, Lisa Lazard) as the Intersectional Violences Research Group.





TALK BY WORLD RENOWNED ILLUSTRATOR

In October, Visiting Professor Piet Grobler, delivered a talk about his illustrative practice at the Arthouse.

Piet Grobler is a world-renowned South African illustrator of children's books. He has illustrated ninety five books, which have been published in many languages, and he has won a number of awards, including two silver medals at the Noma Concours (Japan), the Octogone de Chêne (France) and a Golden Apple at the Biennial of Illustration in Bratislava.

PHD STUDENT CONTRIBUTES TO RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS OR MUSCLE DYSMORPHIA



George Mycock; PhD student and Founder of Myominds, has recently consulted on new Netflix show 'Everything Now'. George was able to bring ideas from his PhD research as well as his lived experience.

"I was over the moon when asked to work as a consultant for the Netflix show 'Everything Now'. This show views the life of Mia, a young woman who has recently left an inpatient eating disorder service. Mia returns home and sees friends for the first time since leaving and attempts to catch up on all the experiences she fears she has missed. Left Bank Pictures contacted me to assist with the development of some of the men in the show, as someone researching men's experiences of disordered eating and body image, and as someone with lived experience of this. It was an excellent opportunity to be able to disseminate knowledge of how men commonly experience these issues, in a creative manner"

Other recent awareness raising activities have included:

- Being featured in a LADbible Roundtable video; **How Body Dysmorphia Took Over My Life**, where 6 people who have struggled with body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) share their stories (October 2023).
- Contributing to a Channel 4 Documentary; **Obsessed with My Muscles: UNTOLD**, presented by Made in Chelsea's Miles Nazaire looking at Muscle Dysmorphia, also known as Bigorexia (November 2023).
- Contributing to an edited volume '**Eating Disorders Don't Discriminate: Stories of Illness, Hope and Recovery from Diverse Voices**' due for release in February 2024.

"I have been campaigning for over 4 years about my experiences of muscularity oriented disordered eating and body image issues, and how they affect others, and I am researching this here at Worcester. I hope my lived experience ...adds to this work and raises awareness for this often overlooked problem."

PRO- AND ANTI-WAR VOICES CONFERENCE

In November, the University of Worcester welcomed historians from across the United Kingdom and Europe to deliver papers at the 'Pro- and Anti-War Voices Conference'. A range of speakers, including experienced scholars and postgraduate researchers, participated in the event which aimed to encourage career development, networking, and engagement within the community of Americanists in Britain.

Talks focused on the pro- and anti-interventionist debate in response to the outbreak of World War II in Europe; transatlantic responses to the War of Independence; World War II Conscientious Objectors; Pro-Union Welsh Americans during the Civil War; public reaction to the potential use of the atomic bomb in the Korean War; right-wing women's opposition to World War II and the Korean War; intellectual criticism of the Vietnam War; Japanese American pro-war voices during World War II; active-duty service personnel's dissent in the Vietnam War and female Confederate nationalism.

The impetus for the project came from **Dr Wendy Toon**'s existing interest in World War II, and a 2022 research trip conducted by **Joseph Rix** (History PhD candidate) and Dr Toon in which they travelled to Seattle (WA) to interview a group of Vietnam-era GIs and their wives. Joseph's work centres around these GIs who protested the Vietnam War whilst serving in the US Military in the early 1970s and Wendy's research highlights the role of left-leaning women associated with the GI Movement.

Joseph said: *'The chance to hear the work of so many brilliant, established scholars as well as the new research of some excellent PhD students and soon-to-be academics, was fantastic and really valuable to me personally and professionally. The atmosphere was calm, friendly, and supportive. Instead of being nervous to share your research, the experienced voices in the crowd helped to encourage you and to create a supportive environment'.* Joseph and Wendy would like to thank the British Association for American Studies for their granting of an award to facilitate this conference.

FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

EVALUATION OF PREVENTIVE OUTREACH PROGRAMME

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board

Principal Investigator: Prof. Eleanor Bradley, College of Health and Science

Value: £30,000

SUPPORTING THE INTRODUCTION OF DEMENTIA FRIENDLY DESIGN AND THE EHE ASSESSMENT TOOL APP

Betsy Cadwaladr University Health Board

Principal Investigator: Dr Shirley Evans, Association for Dementia Studies

Value: £4,400

IMPROVING FEMALES' HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE BY MITIGATING HEAT STRAIN

UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship

Principal Investigator: Dr Jessica Mee, School of Sport and Exercise Science

Value: £753,880

ESTIMATING SOIL EROSION USING DRONE SURVEYS AND GIS MODELLING

Natural England

Principal Investigator: Prof. Ian Maddock, School of Science and the Environment

Value: £19,777

UNLOCKING COLLECTIONS—THE INFIRMARY WORCESTER

Arts Council

Project Team: Dr Paul Newland (College of Education, Culture and Society), Harriet Hathaway (The Infirmary Museum

Value: £59,916

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND DIPLOMATIC PROTOCOL PROGRAMME

International Centre for Protocol and Diplomacy

Principal Investigator: Dr Scott Andrews, Worcester Business School

Value: £3,750

SPOTLIGHT



A SPOTLIGHT ON...

Sustainable Environments Research Group (SERG)

Who are we? The Sustainable Environments Research Group (SERG), established in 2019, currently includes around 20 members made up from staff and postgraduate students mainly from the School of Science and the Environment, and is led by Alan Dixon, Professor of Sustainable Development. It aims to connect and support colleagues that share research interests in environment-society inter-relationships, and whose work is contributing to the University's Sustainable Futures strategic area of challenge, and ultimately the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

What do we do? We can think of 'sustainable environments' as those in which natural capital, ecosystems or the environment in its broadest sense, is maintained or enhanced through mutually reinforcing social and economic development goals. Hence, an important part of our research is about exploring the interactions and connections between these three areas; in effect understanding how people and society shape environmental outcomes, and how environmental change impacts people in different places. As a result, SERG's research is transdisciplinary in nature – our work includes a range of different themes, from ecology, conservation, ecosystem services and water management, to rural and urban development, livelihoods and food security, but it also involves collaboration with organisations across the public, private and civil society sectors, both nationally and internationally.

Our impact-driven research in recent years has addressed many of the 'big issues' of our time such as climate change adaptation and mitigation, enhancing biodiversity in vulnerable environments, developing climate-smart sustainable agriculture, and delivering sustainable development in the global south.
Some of our recent research projects include:

- **Enhancing the environmental sustainability of UK grape growing** – Joe Leaper is working with UK vineyards to evaluate the impact of wildflower alleyways on pest control, soil health, biodiversity and wine production itself.
- **Disaster risk reduction in Nepal** – Beas Banerjee is collaborating with Nepalese company Naxa to explore how UAVs (drones) can complement more traditional household vulnerability assessment techniques, and enhance resilience to natural disasters such as flooding and earthquakes.
- **Conservation agriculture** – Josie Lynch is using UAVs to investigate the impacts of conservation agriculture on soil erosion and agricultural production in farms across Worcestershire, Hereford and Powys.

  In Malawi meanwhile, Prof Alan Dixon has been working with development NGO Tiyeni to understand how conservation agriculture impacts food security, livelihoods and climate resilience among subsistence farmers.
- **Natural flood management** – Prof Ian Maddock and Josie Lynch are identifying priority sites for nature-based solutions such as 'leaky dams' and floodplain storage, and evaluating their effectiveness after implementation to reduce flooding in parts of Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire.
- **Bumblebees and wildflower habitats** – Andrea Tapia, Dr Kate Ashbrook and Dr Fleur Visser, in collaboration with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, are investigating the use of remote sensing techniques to identify high-quality grassland habitat for pollinators, guiding conservation management on the ground.
- **Functional landscapes and local institutions in sub-Saharan Africa** – Prof Alan Dixon is working with Self Help Africa to develop community-based institutional arrangements for sustainable wetland management.
- **Mapping plant stress in submerged aquatic vegetation** – Amritha Nair and Dr Fleur Visser are investigating how remote sensing can be used to assess aquatic vegetation and the ecological health of streams and rivers.

In addition, SERG has recently integrated the research and expertise from the Pollen and Aerobiology Research Group, in which Dr Beverley Adams-Groom provides national forecasts of airborne allergens across the UK and Ireland, and associated research into aeroallergen trends, detection methods and timing of the seasons. SERG members also work closely with the University's Sustainability Department, headed by Katy Boom, collaborating on projects ranging from carbon literacy training for external organisations, to working with Worcester City Council on the development of bike-sharing schemes, as well as many other initiatives that seek to enhance on-campus sustainability.

What we have achieved In REF2021, SERG's research was recognised as internationally excellent while also demonstrating 'very considerable impacts and significance for society'. Our collaborative work on landscape approaches in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, has informed NGO field interventions that have delivered food security and sustainable livelihoods to over half a million vulnerable people. Elsewhere, our research with fruit growers and retailers has led to the widespread adoption of wildflower strips in apple and cherry orchards across the UK that have reduced the industry's dependence on ecologically harmful insecticides and herbicides. From a health and wellbeing perspective, our research into the enhanced detection of airborne allergens at the species level has allowed more detail to be included in pollen and spore forecasts and calendars, providing additional benefits to respiratory seasonal allergy sufferers. SERG has also been at the forefront of using UAVs to monitor flood management interventions and ecohydrological change in rivers, with some of this work recently attracting the attention of national and local news media.

What next? Given the interdisciplinary nature of what we do, that spans the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability, we're keen to reach out to colleagues across the university and beyond to explore the potential for collaborative research across these areas. Perhaps SERG members have some experience that could add a new dimension to your existing research – in terms of a new disciplinary approach, geographical location (e.g. sub-Saharan Africa), or a particular methodology (e.g. UAVs)? Perhaps collaboration could help open up new funding opportunities? If so, we'd love to hear from you (and of course anyone is welcome to join the group).



A SPOTLIGHT ON...

Katy Small

MRes Student in Sociology,
School of Humanities

"'A choice between the AMERICAN DREAM and a SOCIALIST NIGHTMARE': Analysis of Donald Trump's use of the terms 'communist', 'socialist', 'Marxist' and 'leftist' in the creation of a ' counter-exceptionalist Other'"

mak1_19@uni.worc.ac.uk

Supervisory Team:
Dr Luke Devine (DoS)

Why did you decide to undertake PGR study at the University of Worcester?

While completing my undergraduate degree at Worcester I found the part I enjoyed most was the dissertation and the ability to look at a topic I was passionate about in depth. The MRes allowed me to continue this type of independent research and doing so at Worcester meant I had the opportunity to work with staff who knew me and my research area.

What opportunities have you had during your time at Worcester?

Being able to network with both lecturers and fellow postgraduate students at Worcester has allowed me a number of opportunities I feel have enhanced my experience. These include; presenting at the PGRC, giving guest lectures to undergraduate students, volunteering at events such as the history project 'Their Finest Hour' run by the University of Oxford, and attending other academic conferences with speakers from other universities such as the English Literature conference: 'Human | Nature: Transplantation, Liminality, and Territory'.

What has been the highlight of your PGR study so far?

The highlight of my PGR study so far has been presenting my research at the University of Worcester Postgraduate Research Conference 2023 'Ignite - Connect - Engage'. To be able to present alongside PhD candidates and graduates at an event with speakers from international backgrounds was a moment I feel very proud of and was a great learning experience.

What is your professional background?

I worked several years in retail before deciding to get back into education and starting my undergraduate at Worcester in 2019.

What is your biggest achievement to date ?

My biggest achievement to date is carrying out some guest lecturing work in one of the undergraduate Politics modules at the University during my first year of the MRes. My intention is to become a lecturer after my studies are complete so to be offered the opportunity to give a lecture so early in my postgraduate studies is something I am very grateful for and proud of.

Where do you see yourself after you have completed your course?

I hope to continue my academic career by completing a PhD and continuing my research, possibly applying the framework I used for my MRes research to other politicians, as well as eventually becoming a lecturer myself.

What would be your one piece of advice to students wanting to study for an MRes?

My one piece of advice to prospective MRes students is to choose a topic you are truly passionate about as you will be immersing yourself fully in the literature and research surrounding the topic – it really helps if you find it enjoyable!



A SPOTLIGHT ON...

Beas Banerjee

PhD Student,
School of Science and
the Environment
(Studentship funded by the
University of Worcester)

"Drones, Development and Disaster Risk Reduction in Nepal: Towards an Anticipatory Action Approach"

banb1_23@uni.worc.ac.uk

Supervisory Team:
Prof. Alan Dixon (DoS)
Prof. Ian Maddock

What is your area of research? My research focuses on using geospatial data collected by drones to map geographical hazards and combine it with socio-economic data to assess the vulnerability of disaster-prone communities in Nepal.

Why did you decide to undertake PGR study at UW? Two main reasons influenced my decision. Firstly, I found the research topic to be very interesting and engaging. It also aligned with my research interests and goals. Secondly, my previous background and experience made the topic well-suited to me. This gave me confidence that I could make a valuable contribution to the field. Additionally, the University of Worcester offers a funded PhD program that helps international researchers like me to pursue our research goals.

What opportunities have you had during your time at Worcester? During the first year of my PhD, I had the privilege of working with wonderful supervisors who helped me develop my research skills. I was able to explore a dynamic and multi-disciplinary research field and interact with other PhD researchers who shared their work with me. It was a fantastic opportunity to learn and grow as a researcher.

What has been the highlight of your PGR study so far? During my first year as a PhD researcher, I had the privilege of attending the "Creating Warning for All" conference at UCL, where I was able to discuss my research with experts in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction. Additionally, going on a scoping visit to Nepal was also a standout moment for me.

What is your professional background? I hold an MSc in Climate Change, Development, and Policy from the University of Sussex in the UK. After completing my degree, I interned with the United Nations Environment Programme in Jamaica. Later, I worked with The International Organization for Migration in Ukraine, where I was involved in developing projects and programs aimed at addressing the intersection of migration, environment, climate change, and disaster.

What is your biggest achievement? I feel incredibly grateful to have been awarded this PhD studentship, to be able to work with my amazing supervisors and to have had the opportunity to work alongside such dedicated individuals at the International Organization for Migration in Ukraine.

Where do you see yourself after you have completed your course? I enjoyed working in the development sector and love research. So maybe being involved in research that makes an impact on the grassroots level!

What would be your one piece of advice to students wanting to study for a PhD? One important advice I have for students who are about to embark on a PhD journey is something that one of my lecturers once told me. They said, "Don't view your PhD as simply another degree that you have to obtain. Rather, recognize it as a journey that you will undertake. Only embark on that journey when you have found a subject that you are truly passionate about."

What do you enjoy doing outside of study? I recently learned how to swim, so I am still a beginner, but it is something that I like to do. I also enjoy going on hikes and travelling. I have a bit of a nerdy side, as I love reading and watching documentaries about historical events and people. It worked out in my favour, as Worcester is a historical place with captivating stories.



Beas with colleagues during a recent research trip to Nepal.



A SPOTLIGHT ON...

Joe Bryant

PhD Student,
School of Sport and
Exercise Science

"Effects of static stretching intensity on performance and range of motion"

bryj1_21@uni.worc.ac.uk



The isokinetic dynamometer used in Joe's studies.

Supervisory Team:
Dr Matthew Cook (DoS)
Dr Darren Cooper
Prof. Derek Peters

Research area

My research area is in the School of Sport and Exercise Science examining the acute effects of static stretching on strength and power, specifically how the intensity of a stretch effects subsequent strength and power performances. We are testing the reliability and validity of a specific method of producing a high intensity stretch and then how a high intensity static stretch effects the strength and power of the muscle stretched. After this, we will be comparing the effects of high and low intensity static stretches on strength and power.

Why did you decide to undertake PGR study at the University of Worcester?

Coming out of the pandemic, sports science jobs were few and far between so applying to undertake a PGR degree seemed like the next best step. I chose Worcester because when I first emailed Dr Matthew Cook, my supervisor, about possibly applying, he was very quick to respond and was enthusiastic about my research idea. And, I knew Worcester was not a massive city which definitely helped with choosing to come here.

What opportunities have you had during your time at Worcester?

Being able to undertake a PhD has been a great opportunity in itself. While at Worcester, I have had the opportunity to give some lectures in the strength and conditioning module in the Sport and Exercise science undergraduate degree, this is something I never thought I would do and am keen to do more.

What has been the highlight of your PGR study so far?

Two highlights come to mind, the first is my first study, *The effects of static stretching intensity on range of motion and strength: a systematic review*, has been published, this was hugely exciting and came around a lot quicker than I thought it would. The second highlight is starting laboratory data collection, it took a long time to piece together what exactly I would be doing in the lab and I am thoroughly enjoying it.

What is your professional background?

My professional background is in the fitness industry, specifically strength and conditioning. I have worked with athletes from a variety of sports such as basketball, powerlifting and American football. While completing my PGR study, I have worked part time as a personal trainer at Life@Whitehouse, the leisure centre at the Whitehouse hotel in Worcester.

What is your biggest achievement to date?

I think being accepted onto a PhD course is my biggest achievement. I struggled in the early days of my undergraduate and now I'm doing a PhD, it still hasn't quite sunk in.

Where do you see yourself after you have completed your course?

My main plan after finishing my course is to build a private strength and conditioning company to provide professional strength and conditioning for recreational athletes. I will also look into possibly lecturing at other universities or work as a sport science laboratory technician. At the moment, I am just focusing on getting my PhD finished and then we'll see what happens.

What would be your one piece of advice to students wanting to study for a PhD?

My biggest piece of advice to someone thinking about doing a PhD is to not be afraid to ask for help and admit you don't know something; your supervisors are there to help you. I think there is a misconception that PhD students should already know everything about how to do a PhD, unless you've already done a PhD or know someone who has then you won't know everything.



A SPOTLIGHT ON...

Thomas Morton

Research Associate,
Association for Dementia Studies,
School of Allied Health & Community

t.morton@worc.ac.uk

What is your area of research?
My work so far has revolved around how best to deliver and sustain community-based group support for people living with dementia, and those that care for them.

How long have you worked at the University of Worcester?
In 2017 I did an MSc in Psychology at Worcester, off the back of which I did summer work in 2018 as a research assistant with the Mood Disorders Unit here. I enjoyed that so much that when I saw a more substantial research post come up at the University - with the Association for Dementia Studies (ADS) - I leapt at the chance.

What is your professional background?
My first degree was in psychology and philosophy, and I taught both subjects at A Level for about 6 years before making a career leap to journalism (a long story). I became a newspaper reporter for about 7 years, before deciding to return to something a little more academic again (another long story) – so I'm on my third career at this stage!

What are you currently working on?
We have just completed the Get Real with Meeting Centres project, investigating factors involved in keeping Meeting Centres (community group dementia support) going long-term. I've now joined the team on the Crossing The Line study, looking at the experience of family carers delivering personal care to people with dementia. Next year I will be embarking on Food Glorious Food, a project investigating the benefits and challenges of providing food and food-related activities in community groups for people with dementia.

What advice would you give to those looking at moving into an Early Career Researcher (ECR) role?
Have a go at stuff when you get the chance – get involved in things like learning new methodologies, writing papers and writing bids, as the best way to learn is definitely to do. Research is full of people with imposter syndrome, because there will always be those who know more than you about certain things, literature you've not read, approaches you're not familiar with – but you've got to start somewhere, so don't be intimidated and dive in!

What is your biggest achievement to date?
Landmark professional moments include getting my first peer-reviewed research paper published, successfully completing the Get Real project as project manager, or bagging a big research grant for a project I co-designed and co-wrote; but personally, it's simply looking back and seeing how far my knowledge, skills and confidence have come since 2017/18.

Who has influenced you the most in your career so far?
Dr Béré Mahoney (my supervisor on the MSc), Professor Lisa Jones (then at the Mood Disorders Unit), Professor Dawn Brooker (former ADS director) and Dr Shirley Evans (current ADS director). Each have been both inspiring and supportive, and gave me the opportunities and confidence to try things that have pushed my skills and experience to new levels.

RESEARCH ON TOUR

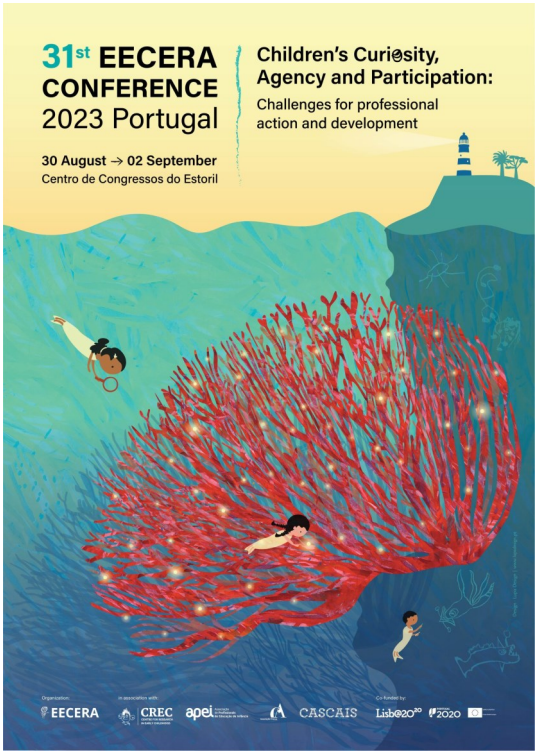
ESTORIL, PORTUGAL

European Early Childhood Educational Research Association Conference



Angela Hodgkins, *Doctoral Student, Institute of Education*

Thesis Title: "Exploring Early Childhood Practitioners' Perceptions of Empathic Interactions with Children and Families"



From Thursday 31st August till Saturday 2nd September 2023, Angela Hodgkins, a senior lecturer in the Department for Children and Families, attended the European Early Childhood Educational Research Association (EECERA) conference. The conference is held annually at a different European city each year; this year it was in Estoril, Portugal.

The conference theme was 'Children's curiosity, agency and participation: challenges for professional action and development' and there were over 1,100 delegates attending. Angela presented her PhD research on empathy within early childhood practice to an international audience.

Presentations were organised into symposia; the other presenters in this symposium were Suvi Puolakka from the University of Helsinki, Finland, and Susanna Isotolo from the University of Jyväskylä in Finland. The three presenters are hoping to collaborate on an academic journal article based on their presentations.

As well as presenting, Angela listened to a range of presentations on all sorts of subjects, including 'what children really think about sitting straight, golden time and reward charts', 'young children's voices – do we really listen to them?', 'Early childhood workforce stress', 'practitioner coping strategies during the coronavirus crisis', 'professionals' emotional availability', 'teachers' eye gaze in toddler groups', and 'supporting childminders in Quebec!" There were also keynote speeches by well-known writers and pioneers Catherne L'Ecuyer, Jóhanna Einarsdóttir, Luis Ribiero and Freire Laevers.



The conference provided an opportunity for networking with early childhood practitioners from across the world, as well as listening to examples of practice from different countries. The main thing we all learned was how similar our experiences are in working with young children.

The conference provided a good opportunity for Angela to discuss the research and answer questions, in preparation for her upcoming PhD viva.

RESEARCH ON TOUR

DRESDEN, GERMANY

Virtual Geosciences Conference 2023

Josie Lynch, *Doctoral Student*
Dr Des McDougall, *Principal Lecturer in Geography*
Prof. Ian Maddock, *Professor of River Science*
School of Science and the Environment





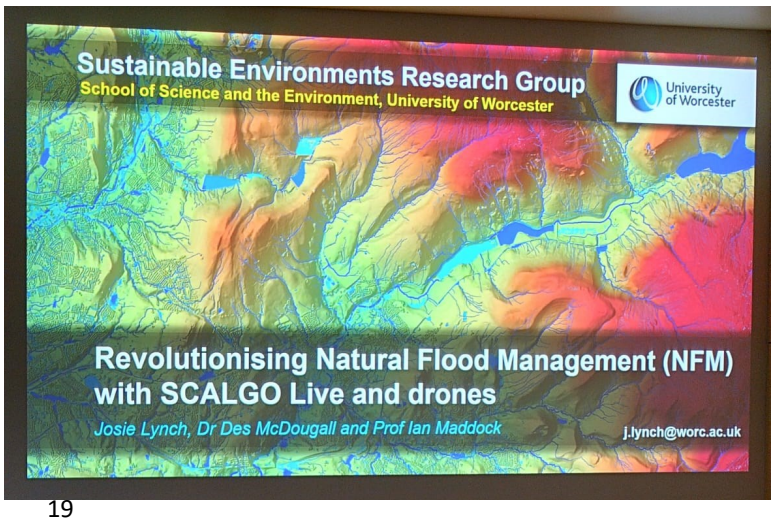


In September, we travelled to Dresden, Germany to attend the Virtual Geosciences Conference 2023 to talk about our research focusing on applications in hydrology and virtual fieldwork. At the conference and associated networking events, engaging in conversations with peers in our field was both enjoyable and enlightening. Hearing about their ongoing projects and gaining insights proved invaluable for our future work. Additionally, reconnecting with familiar faces from other universities was a pleasant experience as Josie had previously spent time in Dresden in 2021 as part of a COST Action Short Term Scientific Mission. We also cherished the opportunity to briefly discover the city in the delightful sunny weather and savor a traditional bratwurst at a local market.

Josie Lynch discussed how Natural Flood Management (NFM) is used to address flooding in the face of climate change. The conference presentation highlighted the need for a systematic NFM site selection strategy instead of relying on landowner involvement. The project employed web-based tools, GIS, and drone data. SCALGO Live identified flow paths and storage areas, while SCIMAP assessed environmental factors, such as soil erosion. This research underscores the importance of data-driven NFM site selection in mitigating flood risks while enhancing biodiversity and human well -being.

Prof Ian Maddock presented the use of 360° video in education to create immersive learning experiences, offering greater interactivity compared to traditional photos and videos. A University of Worcester project used 360° video for a virtual field trip in the Swiss Alps to study mountain stream sources. It included nine field sites with data assessments, recorded with ground-based and aerial cameras, enhanced to 8K resolution using AI. The field trip utilised Google Earth Web, providing 360° panoramas and videos for student engagement, with future plans to add ambisonic VR audio and 3D models.

Dr Des McDougall showcased how the More Inclusive Fieldwork (MIF) project, funded by the Natural Environmental Research Council, aims to enhance fieldwork accessibility in geography, earth, and environmental sciences courses through virtual reality (VR). VR enables students to preview sites, reduce anxiety, and adapt to field conditions. It also offers access to remote or changing locations and serves as a backup during adverse conditions. The project provides pedagogic and technical guidance on VR-based fieldwork and encourages collaboration among institutions to create more inclusive resources.





CAREER INSIGHT

Prof. Lynn Nichol

Professor of Human Resource Development
& University Staff Researcher Development Lead

Prof. Lynn Nichol gives us an insight into her career and how she progressed to the role of Professor.

Thinking back over my 30+ year career I can identify 5 distinct phases development that have shaped my working life.

Phase 1: Vocational Trainer

At the start of my working life, after a degree in Classics and postgraduate study in Business Administration, I joined Reckitt and Colman plc in Hull as a trainer. With its organizational culture rooted in Quaker origins, Reckitt and Colman had always invested in the welfare of its workers and their families and the well-resourced YTS Scheme in Business Administration continued this tradition providing access to vocational qualifications, training, and long-term jobs.

For me, the big reward was seeing trainees, who often had left school with few GCSEs, thrive in the working environment and succeed in their vocational qualifications. I was hooked, I could see the impact on individuals of investment in training and development. I wanted to be involved in developing people. I studied for an MSc in Training and HRM part time and moved on to associate lecturing work in Higher Education. I joined Humberside Polytechnic as a lecturer in HR and Business Administration.

Phase 2: Scholarly Practitioner

Being a scholarly practitioner for me, is about fusing together your practitioner and academic self to help students to bridge the academic/practice divide. Anyone who has ever taught seasoned HR practitioners will recognise that credibility with the students is often linked with your perceived ability to understand their professional world and being able to apply theory into it. In this phase of my career, as a lecturer and then senior lecturer in HR at the University of Gloucestershire I focused on working with HR professionals returning to study part time and aiming for Chartered Membership of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). I continued to develop my own professional credibility becoming a CIPD Chartered Fellow. I moved into course leadership. My key networks, CIPD and RSA were professionally focused on the needs of the HR community and the delivery of vocationally orientated qualifications.



Prof. Nichol with colleagues from Worcester Business School

Phase 3: Becoming a Researcher

In my teaching focused career, the world of active research often felt like a parallel universe inhabited by only a few of my colleagues whilst many of us concentrated on course leadership and teaching. In 2006 I became a principal lecturer in HR and programme director for HR postgraduate academic and competence-based programmes. I started a PhD programme part time and began to enter this new world of research. It was a time of personal growth and expanding opportunities. My networks expanded into the academic world and the international network, University Forum for HRD (UFHRD) became a key source of academic interaction and dissemination of my work. Once I had completed the PhD, I expanded my teaching and leadership roles into doctoral work; I joined the DBA teaching team and became the Faculty Director for PhD programmes.

Phase 4: Manager, Teacher and Researcher

In 2013 I joined the University of Worcester. I left behind my work with part time professional HR students and engaged in two new areas; launching the new Doctorate in Business Administration Programme with our partners, FhM in Germany and Head of Department for Management and Finance at Worcester Business School. My teaching become more focused on doctoral work with doctoral supervision and teaching on the DBA. I worked on several funded research projects with the NHS. My contribution to my academic network expanded and was a key focus for research collaborations and I began to take on external leadership roles.



Prof. Nichol with DBA students at Fachhochschule des Mittelstands (FhM) in Germany

Phase 5: Leader

I'm still juggling. I was appointed as Professor of Human Resource Development in 2021. At the University I lead staff researcher development. Externally, I've been elected as co-chair for UFHRD from 2024 and have been appointed to the Church of England's National Remuneration and Conditions of Service (HR) Committee. I teach on doctoral programmes, the Researching Professional on the DBA, lead Approaches to Research on the Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods and supervise 10 doctoral students. My research interests continue to be in human resource development and working with colleagues across universities in the UK.



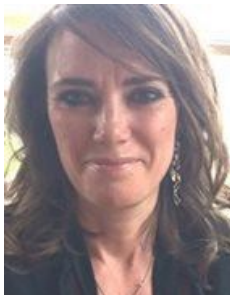
Prof. Nichol speaking at the Church of England General Synod in February 2023

PROJECT FOCUS

DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE DIGITAL SOLUTIONS TO HEALTHCARE CHALLENGES ACROSS HEREFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE

An exciting, new partnerships between the University of Worcester and the Hereford and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board is driving improved health outcomes for people across the two counties.

The University of Worcester has developed a strong partnership with the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB), inputting to a range of developments and activities designed to support improvements in the health and wellbeing of people across the two counties. Research is an important part of this partnership and work in this area is underpinned by a recently agreed Memorandum of Understanding that sketches out the areas in which the University and the ICB will work together.



Professor Eleanor Bradley
College Director of RKE



Dr Cate Rose
Research Fellow



Jess Howdle
Research Associate



Lois Donnelly
Research Associate & Doctoral Student



Dr Frances Howie
Senior Lecturer, Department of Apprenticeships & CPD



Dr Peter Unwin
Principal Lecturer in Social Work

The primary focus of research activity is on the Co-Lab, a digital innovation hub opened in 2022, designed as a space for clinicians to test out new healthcare technologies. Our researchers are evaluating how these healthcare technologies showcased at the Co-Lab, can benefit patient care and clinical teams in practice. Amongst the latest cutting-edge technologies on display at the Co-Lab are a sensory pod, which offers a multi-sensory virtual reality experience to support mental health and wellbeing, a portable VR headset for chronic pain relief and anxiety, and a pod for remote consultations which simulates a consulting room and features equipment for recording an electrocardiogram and checking basic observations.

The University's work in this area is led by Professor Eleanor Bradley, Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange for the College of Health and Science. Professor Bradley states: "The University of Worcester shares common interests with NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB, in that both organisations are committed to tackling health inequalities and helping people live well and stay well in their local community. This collaboration fosters a closer working relationship between us and will help us both meet our objectives."

The University has invested in a new Research Fellow role to support the activity of the Co-Lab. Dr Catharine Rose, who has a PhD in health psychology, has been appointed to this post for 15 months in the first instance. She is currently exploring how the remote monitoring pod can be used to support telemedicine training for

both healthcare students and staff. She is also planning to evaluate how a community cancer support group is using the Co-Lab to facilitate their recovery following cancer treatment.

The collaborative working, however, extends beyond the Co-Lab. The ICB is further supporting a project, led by Professor Bradley's research team, to evaluate the impact of two mobile preventative healthcare place-based services across the two counties: 'Talk Wellbeing' (Herefordshire) and 'Your Health' (Worcestershire). The services are delivered by dedicated vans that travel around the region to offer a range of preventative health interventions, including routine health checks and vaccinations. Staff who provide this service are drawn from across the multidisciplinary team, and services offered can include virtual GP contacts and access to social prescribers. Venues attended to date include community centres, family fun days, supermarkets, and hostels. The overall aim of the programme is to support a reduction in health inequalities across the region, bringing preventative healthcare services to people currently identified as underserved by existing services. In our region, this includes people drawn from migrant populations, seasonal workers, those living in remote, rural communities and those experiencing homelessness.

The evaluation team are conducting a 'real-time', mixed methods evaluation project, collecting data from the on-vehicle healthcare team, from residents who have accessed the service, as well as from people living and working in the areas visited. An important aspect of the work is the coproduced nature of the activity. To support this, co-researcher groups are being established in both counties. These groups are comprised of local residents who will be supported to participate in this project, but also provided with support to identify and develop new areas of interest for research. The co-researcher groups will be particularly important when interpreting emerging findings from the evaluation work, to understand these from a place-based perspective. All emerging findings are shared routinely with the ICB team, to enable service amendments and enhancements.

This work supports the developing theme of research across the University to reduce health inequalities, particularly those associated with rurality. It also adds to the portfolio of work at Worcester designed to deliver research with impact and meaning for those living in our local communities. This includes the well-established IMPACT group.

Commenting on the collaboration, Simon Trickett, Chief Executive of NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB, said: "It's great to see a partnership with the University of Worcester, which is focused on delivering the best patient care for the people of Herefordshire and Worcestershire."

More information about The Co-Lab digital innovation hub can be found at:
[The CO-LAB Digital Innovation Hub :: Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System (hwics.org.uk)]

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System

University of Worcester

NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire



TRACKING BLAENAU GWENT DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICE



Dr Alison Prowle
Senior Lecturer,
Institute of Education



Stuart Gallagher
Senior Lecturer,
Institute of Education



Dr Carla Solvason
Senior Lecturer,
Institute of Education

The University of Worcester's Institute of Education has collaborated with Blaenau Gwent Disability Service (BGDS) for several years, working closely with their staff and service users to help them to continue to develop their offer. DCF carried out a key evaluation of the service in Autumn 2020 which proposed significant changes; these changes were subsequently implemented. This was followed up in Spring 2022 with an investigation into the impact of these changes. This second evaluation was a positive one, and it was proposed that there now be a period of consolidation. However, this is not where our researching role ended.

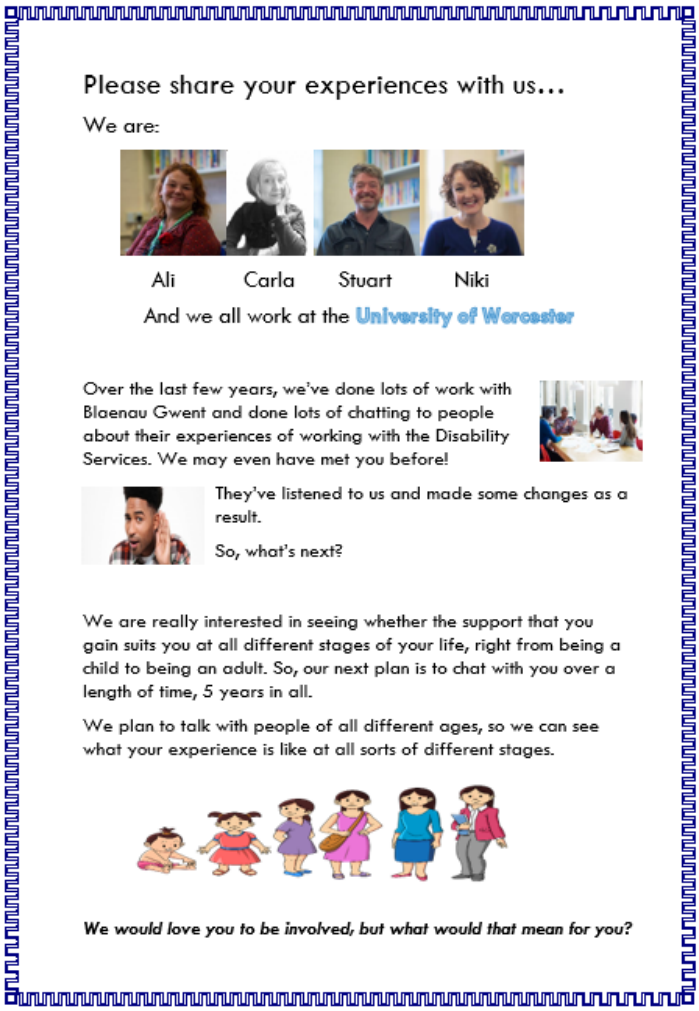
As a forward looking service, BGDS were eager to discover how the changes that had been implemented over recent years were influencing children and young people (CYP) and, more indirectly, their families during their life course. There was a particular interest in the more challenging periods of transition. To this end our research team planned a study that would track a group of CYP with disabilities, and the support that they received, from their teenage years into adulthood.

Research Aims

The aim of our current research is to paint a multifaceted picture of the support received from a range of Blaenau Gwent Disability Services by CYP, at various phases during their lives. It will do this through researchers building positive relationships with a small group children and young people of various ages (from14 to 23) and meeting with them to review the support received at regular intervals. Our aim is to create a picture of the child's support experience across their transition from teenager to adult, illustrating 'constellations' of the support received by individual children/ families at various points in their lives. Although existing local authority data is useful when establishing context, the voices and experiences of children, young people and, where relevant their families, is central to this research. We are attempting to maximise opportunity to hear those voices by offering a range of innovative, multi-modal data collection methods (including digital/photography and 'scrapbooking') with the CYP and families.

The research approach and the ethical dimension

The research team bring a wealth of experience to this project, not only in terms of research, but also through their hands-on work with children and families. This includes work both in, and with, schools (mainstream and special), local authorities, varied nursery and pre-school settings, children's homes (including those for children with disabilities), safeguarding teams and social services. This expertise was important when considering the complex needs that our participants brought to the project. CYP and families were encouraged to take part in the research with an easily accessible, illustrated, invitation to take part (shown below). All other information, including participant information letters and consent letters, were checked with specialist support workers for clarity, and discussed with participants to ensure comprehension.



Please share your experiences with us…

We are:

Ali Carla Stuart Niki

And we all work at the University of Worcester

Over the last few years, we've done lots of work with Blaenau Gwent and done lots of chatting to people about their experiences of working with the Disability Services. We may even have met you before!

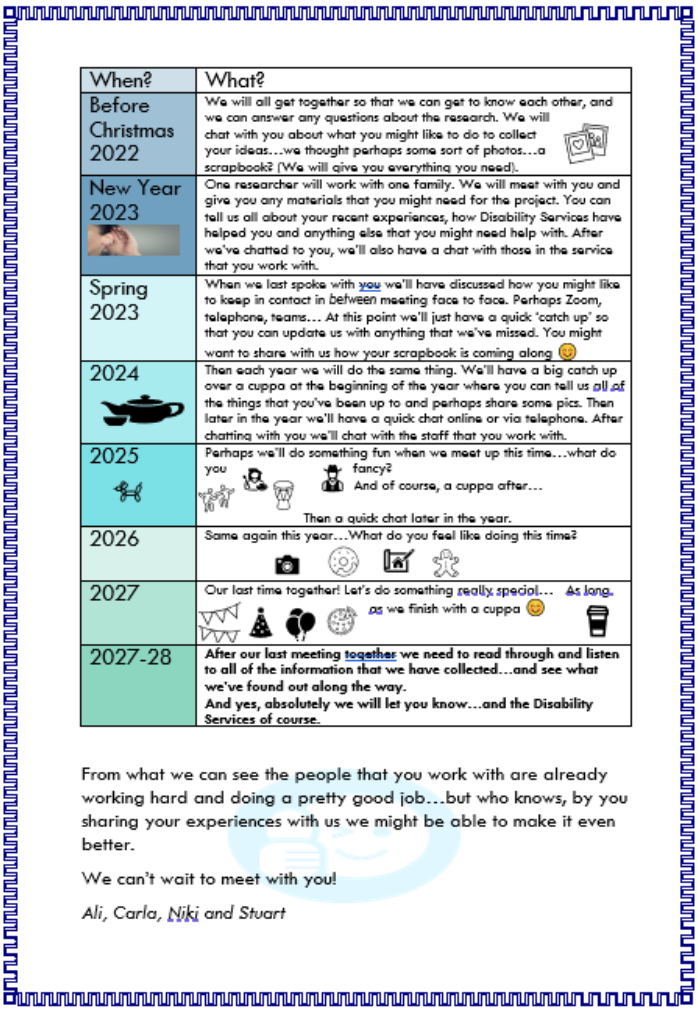
They've listened to us and made some changes as a result.

So, what's next?

We are really interested in seeing whether the support that you gain suits you at all different stages of your life, right from being a child to being an adult. So, our next plan is to chat with you over a length of time, 5 years in all.

We plan to talk with people of all different ages, so we can see what your experience is like at all sorts of different stages.

We would love you to be involved, but what would that mean for you?



When?	What?
Before Christmas 2022	We will all get together so that we can get to know each other, and we can answer any questions about the research. We will chat with you about what you might like to do to collect your ideas…we thought perhaps some sort of photos…a scrapbook? (We will give you everything you need).
New Year 2023	One researcher will work with one family. We will meet with you and give you any materials that you might need for the project. You can tell us all about your recent experiences, how Disability Services have helped you and anything else that you might need help with. After we've chatted to you, we'll also have a chat with those in the service that you work with.
Spring 2023	When we last spoke with you we'll have discussed how you might like to keep in contact in between meeting face to face. Perhaps Zoom, telephone, teams… At this point we'll just have a quick 'catch up' so that you can update us with anything that we've missed. You might want to share with us how your scrapbook is coming along
2024	Then each year we will do the same thing. We'll have a big catch up over a cuppa at the beginning of the year where you can tell us all of the things that you've been up to and perhaps share some pics. Then later in the year we'll have a quick chat online or via telephone. After chatting with you we'll chat with the staff that you work with.
2025	Perhaps we'll do something fun when we meet up this time…what do you fancy? And of course, a cuppa after… Then a quick chat later in the year.
2026	Same again this year…What do you feel like doing this time?
2027	Our last time together! Let's do something really special… As long as we finish with a cuppa
2027-28	**After our last meeting together we need to read through and listen to all of the information that we have collected…and see what we've found out along the way. And yes, absolutely we will let you know…and the Disability Services of course.**

From what we can see the people that you work with are already working hard and doing a pretty good job…but who knows, by you sharing your experiences with us we might be able to make it even better.

We can't wait to meet with you!

Ali, Carla, Niki and Stuart

Due to the sensitive nature of the participants and the data involved in this project, a particularly thorough approach was taken to ethics. Meetings with families were arranged initially with colleagues in BGDS, and the researchers were led by these colleagues' knowledge of the individuals involved. Where appropriate, support workers joined researchers for their initial meetings with the CYP and families. In some cases, though, the CYP were happy to attend with a parent or carer. The researchers were also led by participants, or their support worker, as to where the CYP would be most comfortable meeting; the local coffee shop turned out to be a favourite.

Where are we now?

Contact has now been made with the initial twelve families by their specifically allocated researcher. During the first meeting between CYP and researcher, researcher and participant got to know one another, and preferable ways of meeting up with, and collecting data from participants in the future were decided upon. For some these will take place in their place of education or employment, for others these will take place in their sheltered accommodation, accompanied by their support worker. The participant 'packs', including, instamatic camera and scrapbook were also passed on during the first meeting. During the project, each child, young person, and, where appropriate, family's needs, will be catered to individually, as the research tries to understand and authentically record their unique support journey.

ROYAL ATTITUDES TO THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE AND ABOLITION



Professor Suzanne Schwarz
in Windsor Castle's reading room (photo courtesy of the Royal Archives © His Majesty King Charles III 2023)

Following the launch of the Georgian Papers Programme (GPP) by Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2015, Suzanne Schwarz, Professor of History at the University of Worcester, was one of the first recipients of a GPP fellowship. This fellowship at the Royal Archives, awarded in 2016, was funded by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, and provided the opportunity to examine official and private correspondence of King George III and his family. Professor Schwarz's article on 'Royal Attitudes to the Atlantic Slave Trade and Abolition in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century' has been published in *The English Historical Review*, which is 'the oldest journal of historical scholarship in the English-speaking world'.

Selected as 'Editor's Choice', the article is on a very topical subject relating to the royal family and slavery. By piecing together fragmentary evidence in the Royal Archives, Schwarz traced some divisions of opinion on the slave trade and abolition in George III's family. Prince William Henry, third son of King George III and Queen Charlotte, who was created Duke of Clarence in 1789 and later acceded to the throne as William IV, was an effective spokesman for slaving interests and systematically used his position in the House of Lords to oppose measures for the regulation, limitation and abolition of the trade. His efforts were acknowledged with the presentation of a 'Diamond Star' by the Jamaica Assembly in 1788, as well as a dinner service of silver gilt, comprising six ice pails, two five-light candelabra, two oval tureens, a sauceboat and salts in the early nineteenth century. By contrast, the king's nephew, Prince William Frederick, second duke of Gloucester and Edinburgh, championed the abolitionist cause and challenged the views of Clarence, his more senior cousin, in speeches in the House of Lords. In 1808, Thomas Clarkson, a leading abolitionist, praised the Duke of Gloucester for 'having opposed the example of his royal relations on this subject in behalf of an helpless and oppressed people'. The evidence indicates that Gloucester was the only dissenting voice in the royal family, and that his presence and advocacy in the House of Lords was regarded as vital to the progress of abolition by the prime minister, Lord Grenville.

Building up a clear picture of George III's attitudes to the Atlantic slave trade was complicated by various methodological challenges created by areas of silence and conflicting evidence in the Royal Archives. On balance, however, the article concludes that George III was pro-slavery in his outlook and, together with his sons, used his political influence to defend the wealth and property rights of Caribbean planters, as well as the commercial freedom of British slave merchants to profit from the forced transportation of enslaved Africans. The role of the royal family in supporting slavery and delaying abolition had a tangible human impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of Africans uprooted and displaced by the trade.

The publication of the article followed shortly after King Charles III signalled his support for research into the monarchy's links to slavery, and has attracted considerable academic and public interest. Since its publication in September 2023, the article has had over 2,000 views and is listed as one of the most read articles published by the journal (https://academic.oup.com/ehr). The article was discussed at length in a BBC News report by the royal correspondent, Sean Coughlan, when King Charles visited Kenya in October 2023. Commenting on the significance of Schwarz's research, Professor Trevor Burnard (Director of the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation), notes that:

> *'No-one else has provided such a great deal of information conclusively proving, in a nuanced and non-controversial way, the Royal Family's connections to supporting slavery in the second half of the eighteenth century. As such, and as recognised by publication in Britain's most prestigious historical journal … [the] article makes a major contribution to debates over the royal family and slavery and abolition in ways not done to date'.*

OVERCOMING STUDENTS' RELUCTANCE TO TAKE A 'YEAR IN INDUSTRY' THROUGH THE SHORT-TERM STUDENT-LED ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY PROGRAMME



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Despite the well-recognised personal, professional, and academic benefits that a traditional 'year in industry' placement can offer, there has been a significant downward trend in number of students opting for such a long-term placement. This may be due to a lack of confidence and/or self-awareness, personal responsibilities, unwillingness to leave friends and family, a lack of understanding of the benefits of taking a placement, or desire to complete formal education as soon as possible. However, the authors recognise that without the real-world job experience offered by such a placement, students are less likely to compete effectively in the hyper-competitive graduate job market.

To overcome this reluctance to take a year in industry and equip students with the business skills that are recognised as lacking in graduates, Worcester Business School (WBS) have launched a new short-term placement opportunity to offer students a novel approach to real-world learning: Student-led Environmental Consultancy. This offers local SMEs the opportunity to employ a Student Consultant for a three-month period to undertake an environmental improvement project within their organisation; all projects begin with an environmental audit to establish the baseline from which to understand and the improve environmental impacts of the business. The student and SME foci were chosen for the Student-led Environmental Consultancy Programme as WBS is located within a region dominated by SMEs. Environmental management is a known skills gap for them, and students will need environmental management knowledge and skills in their future workplaces.

The programme team comprising Dr Kay Emblen-Perry (Principal Lecturer and WBS Lead for Sustainability, Impact and Accreditation), Jo Murphy (WBS Business Development Manager) and Janey Robins (WBS Placements and Internships Coordinator) worked together to develop a multi-dimensional approach to placements, using the expertise of each member to ensure each project is tailored to meet address specific environmental concerns within the organisation and the interests of the Student Consultant. To maximise the value of this opportunity for both the student and SME, we offer ongoing support and guidance where and when appropriate.

These short-term placements are designed to provide a less challenging route into work experience; they can encourage students to explore career options in a real-world business environment whilst adding value to an SME. It also provides businesses with an affordable, skilled, and innovative resource to complete an improvement project, prime their recruitment pipeline and contribute to the organisation's CSR strategy.

Feedback on the projects undertaken so far is 100% positive from both the Student Consultants and the SME employers. The SME participants reported they have been helped to recognise their current business impacts and presented with realistic and affordable opportunities to improve their environmental performance. An additional benefit that many were not expecting has been the cost benefits of adopting environmental impact reduction opportunities; most SME participants have seen cost savings from environmental improvements. The students have also recognised the value their project offered, including, but not limited to, gaining real-world business experience, skills in data collection, analysis and communication, and presentation skills. From the teams' perspective the most valuable learning was summed up by a student consultant as, "I learned to communicate my ideas and thoughts effectively", an academic and business skill that will contribute to future success.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

A selection of research outputs published since July 2023

SOCIAL EXCLUSION, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

BOOK: *Monaghan, Chris and Flinders, M.* (2023) **QUESTIONS OF ACCOUNTABILITY: PREROGATIVES, POWER AND POLITICS.** Hart Publishing, Oxford.

This book explores accountability from a range of perspectives, crossing traditional disciplinary, thematic, and professional boundaries. It asks fresh questions about accountability and its place and importance in democratic societies.

Accountability matters. It matters because it connects the governors with the governed, and for this reason it is a hallmark of democratic governance. And yet, amidst a backdrop of concerns about democratic back-sliding, the rise of populism, the role of algorithmic governance, moral barbarism, and post-truth politics - to mention just a few issues - a number of potentially far-reaching questions of accountability have been asked. It is for exactly this reason that this book explores the concept of accountability from a range of perspectives, crossing traditional disciplinary, thematic, and professional boundaries. It asks fresh questions about accountability and its place and importance in democratic societies.

The book considers the questions raised by the shifting architecture of accountability. Whilst some scholars suggest that accountability processes have never been so effective -trumpeting the rise of monitory democracy with its dense array of watchdogs, sleaze-busters, auditors, legislative committees, statutory supports, and investigative mechanisms - others express concern about the risk of 'overloads', 'gaps', and 'traps'. This has led to a focus on fuzzy accountability and diagonal accountability, pointing to increasing conceptual confusion.

Bringing together world-leading scholars and former politicians and public servants, the book cuts through this confusion and provides the reader with the answers to the most debated issues, including rarely discussed 'pathologies of accountability', post-human governance, and a novel focus on balance and proportionality.

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Schlief, M., Rich, N., Rains, L.S., Baldwin, H., Rojas-Garcia, A., Nyikavaranda, P., Persaud, K., Dare, C., French, P., Loyd-Evans, B., Crawford, M., Smith, Jo, Kirkbride, J.B. and Johnson, S.* (2023) **ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN RECEIPT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS IN EARLY INTERVENTION IN PSYCHOSIS SERVICES IN ENGLAND – A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY.** Psychiatry Research, 330.

There is some evidence of differences in psychosis care provision by ethnicity. We investigated variations in the receipt of CBTp and family intervention across ethnic groups in Early Intervention in Psychosis (EIP) teams throughout England, where national policy mandates offering these interventions to all.

We included data on 29,610 service users from the National Clinical Audit of Psychosis (NCAP), collected between 2018 and 2021. We conducted mixed effects logistic regression to examine odds ratios of receiving an intervention (CBTp, family intervention, either intervention) across 17 ethnic groups while accounting for the effect of years and variance between teams and adjusting for individual- (age, gender, occupational status) and team-level covariates (care-coordinator caseload, inequalities strategies).

Compared with White British people, every minoritized ethnic group, except those of mixed Asian-White and mixed Black African-White ethnicities, had significantly lower adjusted odds of receiving CBTp. People of Black African, Black Caribbean, non-African/Caribbean Black, non-British/ Irish White, and of "any other" ethnicity also experienced significantly lower adjusted odds of receiving family intervention.

Pervasive inequalities in receiving CBTp for first episode psychosis exist for almost all minoritized ethnic groups, and family intervention for many groups. Investigating how these inequalities arise should be a research priority.

MIDLAND HISTORY JOURNAL Five historians at the University have contributed to the most recent issue of the journal Midland History to mark Worcester's 400th anniversary as a city.

Fleming, Neil (2023) **EMPIRE, COMMUNITY, AND THE LIMITS OF 'SEA-MINDEDNESS': THE NAVY LEAGUE AND WORCESTER, C. 1896–1914**. Midland History, 48 (3).
Worcester was the site of one of the earliest branches of the Navy League. It attracted the support of leading political figures in the county, as well as working- and lower-middle class members. It channelled imperialist enthusiasm in the locality, distributed flags and literature among schools, and had access to local schoolchildren. Its efforts met with little opposition, though it encountered mockery in some quarters. The widespread acceptance locally of its message, however, did not mean that the branch was able to maintain the momentum of its early growth. Its membership stagnated as rival patriotic leagues emerged that were better able to harness local imperialist sentiment. The branch's decision in 1906 to concentrate on schools did little to stem its decline, and an effort to revive it on the eve of the First World War was undermined by that conflict. Examining the Navy League in Worcester reveals how a section of the city's community vigorously promoted imperial patriotism and the limits of what they could achieve.

Oldridge, Darren (2023) **OLIVER CROMWELL AND THE DEVIL IN WORCESTER**. Midland History, 48 (3).
On the eve of the Battle of Worcester in 1651, Oliver Cromwell was reputed to have sold his soul to the Devil. This article examines the construction of this legend and places it in the larger context of English Protestant thought about the "ancient enemy". It argues that the story originally arose from the circumstances of Cromwell's death on 3 September 1658, but later came to focus on events before the battle seven years earlier. The legend illustrates the persistence of ideas about a physical Devil, despite the emphasis on Satan as an invisible tempter in much English devotional literature. This portrayal emerged from the polemics of the 1640s and 1650s, and had something in common with the demonisation of the royalist commander Prince Rupert. But it drew mainly on earlier stories that circulated widely in the period. The most important of these was the legend of Johann Faust, which provided many of the core themes in the tale of Cromwell's supposed diabolism.

Muggeridge, Anna (2024) **'THAT SO ANCIENT A CITY SHOULD HAVE ELECTED A WOMAN AS MAYOR IS A SIGN OF THE TIMES': WOMEN AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN WORCESTER BEFORE 1939**. Midland History, 48 (3).
This article explores women's experiences of local government in Worcester between 1907 and 1939. The city saw a limited suffrage movement, and to date has never elected a female MP. Yet while women in Worcester arguably played little role in 'national' politics, they were active in local government, first through wartime local authority committees, and then, in the interwar years, when seeking election as Labour, Liberal, Conservative or Independent candidates, with Conservative women being most successful. Drawing on city council records and local newspaper reporting, the article considers the ways in which women made an impact on Worcester's government, particularly as elected councillors. Some women were also involved with more ceremonial – and consequently more visible – roles in local government, though these were generally the preserve of elite women. As such, the article contributes to wider debates about the changing nature of women's political activism post-enfranchisement.

Professor Emerita of Cultural History, **Maggie Andrews,** wrote on Worcester during the two world wars, exploring how these impacted on the lives of the city's housewives and mothers. Professor Emeritus of Business History, **Howard Cox**, surveyed Worcester's role as a pioneering provincial centre of medical publishing in the early nineteenth century.

BOOK: *Binns, T., Nel, E., Dixon, Alan and Lynch, K. (2023)* **AFRICA: DIVERSITY AND DEVELOPMENT (2ND EDITION)** Routledge, Oxon.

The book examines the background and diversity of Africa's social, cultural, economic, political and environmental systems, as well as key development issues which have affected Africa in the past and are likely to be significant in shaping the future of the continent. These include: the impact of HIV/AIDS; sources of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction; the state and governance; the nature of African economies in a global context and future development trajectories. This second edition features new chapters on history and governance, health, separate chapters on rural and urban development and updated content on all aspects of the continent, particularly aspects of culture and ethnicity. It is richly illustrated throughout with diagrams and plates and contains a wealth of detailed up-to-date case studies and current data.

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Schwarz, Suzanne* (2023) **ROYAL ATTITUDES TO THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE AND ABOLITION IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES'.** The English Historical Review, cead108.

Recent historiography has placed particular emphasis on the social origins and influence of individuals who took opposing sides in debate on the abolition of the slave trade between 1787 and 1807. There is no doubt that family networks and connections influenced patterns of pro-slavery and abolitionist support. Despite this familial focus, comparatively little attention has been paid to the attitudes and interventions in debate of King George III and his family. As early as 1808, Thomas Clarkson's History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by the British Parliament, recorded how Prince William Henry, duke of Clarence, and his younger cousin, Prince William Frederick, second duke of Gloucester and Edinburgh, held diametrically opposed views on the issue. Evidence that has recently come to light in the Royal Archives makes it possible to assess whether the divide between George III's son and nephew points to a royal family riven by disagreement on the rights and wrongs of slavery. By broadening the canvas of study to include other royal dukes, this article contributes to a much fuller understanding of the family's reaction to one of the most pressing moral and economic questions of the day. Their views were not just a matter of their own personal opinions; their interventions in debate affected (and on balance, impeded) the progress of abolition and had direct repercussions on the lives of hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans.

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Andrews, Maggie, Lomas, J. and Muggeridge, Anna* (2023) **HOMES, FOOD AND DOMESTICITY: RETHINKING THE HOUSEWIFE IN TWENTIETH CENTURY BRITAIN CENTURIES'.** Women's History Review. pp. 1-6.

This forum was inspired by the Women's History Network (WHN) Annual Conference held online in September 2021. Its theme, 'Homes, Food and Farms', reflected the significant contribution made by women's history to expanding debates within these areas of research. The conference came after eighteen months of trials and tribulations for historians of women and women historians caused by the Covid pandemic, as they navigated restricted access to historical archives and the challenges of online teaching. Many even tried to undertake academic research alongside homeschooling children. Given these circumstances, it was wonderful to see approximately fifty scholars showcasing their work-in-progress at the conference; many of the strongest papers sought to interrogate and expand our understanding of ideas around homes, domestic life and labour. In this forum, we bring together five examples of this research, which explore the complex inter-relationships between homes, housewives and domesticity. They have been chosen not to provide a definitive survey of the academic scholarship in the field, but rather to stimulate further debate and discussion.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Maulana, R., Kington, Alison, Ko, J., Feng, X., Helms-Lorenz, M., Looker, Ben, Hibbert-Mayne, Kimberley and Blackmore, Karen* (2023) **OBSERVING EFFECTIVE TEACHING BEHAVIOR IN THE NETHERLANDS, ENGLAND, AND THE UNITED STATES USING THE ICALT OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT.** Frontiers in Education, 8.

The purpose of this study was to examine measurement invariance in observer scoring of effective teaching behavior in three secondary education contexts–the Netherlands, England, and the United States. It also aimed to describe what effective teaching behavior looks like in secondary education across the three education contexts.

A uniform observation measure called International Comparative Analysis of Learning and Teaching (ICALT) was used to observe teachers.

Results revealed that the hypothesized factor structure of effective teaching behavior was confirmed for the Dutch and English data, but not for the US data. Teachers in the Netherlands showed higher levels of more basic teaching behaviors, but lower levels of more complex teaching behaviors, compared to teachers in England.

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Snelling, Paul* (2023) **AM I MY STUDENTS' NURSE? REFLECTIONS ON THE NURSING ETHICS OF NURSING EDUCATION.** Nursing Ethics.

Despite having worked in higher education for over twenty years, I am still, first and foremost, a practicing nurse. My employer requires me to be a nurse and my regulator regards what I do as nursing. My practice is regulated by the Code and informed by nursing ethics. If I am nurse, practicing nursing, does that mean that my students are my patients? This paper considers how the relationship that I have with my students can be informed by the ethics of the nurse/patient relationship. After some initial theoretical preparation concerning argument from analogy, the paper identifies some areas for comparison between the two relationships. Areas of similarity and difference identify two areas of concern: Nurse education and educators regularly engage in coercion and surveillance in an attempt to increase student success, both of which would be considered outside nursing ethics. It is concluded that these coercive practices are not conducive to an environment where character is cultivated. Despite current financial and workforce pressures, nurse lecturers and more especially their managers would do well to return to the professional ethics of nursing to question and guide their practice.

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Richardson, S. J., McRobert, A. P., Vinson, Don, Cronin, C. J., Lee, C. and Roberts, S. J.* (2023) **SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF SPORT COACHES' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND APPLICATION OF GAME-BASED AND CONSTRAINTS-LED PEDAGOGY: A QUALITATIVE METASTUDY.** Quest.

This study represents the first comprehensive qualitative systematic review on sport coaches' and teachers' perceptions and application of Game-Based Approaches (GBA) and Constraints-Led Approach (CLA). From searching 12 electronic academic databases from 1982 to 2020, 29 studies met the eligibility criteria and were included in the meta-study. Data revealed studies were conducted in several different countries, and case study design was the predominant methodology. The main data collection method reported was cross-sectional interviews. There were inconsistencies in the quality of reporting methodologies, sampling procedures, data analysis, and assessing quality. The meta-theory analysis identified weaknesses in the methodological and conceptual approaches, and a low number of studies stated philosophical perspectives. The meta-synthesis identified assumptions about learning, pedagogical knowledge and skills, content knowledge, and support as the overarching themes reported to impact coaches' and teachers' perceptions and application of GBAs and CLA. Finally, some recommendations for future research and practice are provided.

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Richardson, Emma, Nagata, S., Hall, C., Akimoto, S., Barber, Lerverne and Sawae, Y.* (2023) **DEVELOPING A SOCIALLY-JUST RESEARCH AGENDA FOR INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN JAPAN.** Quest.

Ethnocentric models of disability and inclusive pedagogical practice have resulted in an ontology of disability that rarely embraces the cultural nuances and social structures of specific countries. There have been increasing calls from scholars to expand understandings of disability beyond this hegemonic focus and develop new ways to do culturally specific and respectful inclusive work. Utilizing a novel methodological approach based on Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", we problematized past research and the current knowledge landscape of inclusive physical education (PE) in Japan. We identified that PE teachers were constantly 'Grappling with Conflict' regarding their intrinsic desire to include disabled students in PE, and the cultural, institutional demands that instructed them how to teach. We drew upon numerous holistic, cultural, and Globally Eastern philosophies of thought to interpret these findings and move beyond ethnocentrism that has previously dominated this research. From this reinterpretation of findings, we developed a future research agenda for improving inclusive PE in Japan to support teachers and students in culturally respectful and contextual ways.

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Allardyce, J, Cardno, A, Gordon-Smith, Katherine, Jones, Lisa, DiFlorio, A, Walters, J, Holmans, P, Craddock, N, Jones, Ian, Owen, M, Escott-Price, V and O'Donovan, M* (2023) **SPECIFICITY OF POLYGENIC SIGNATURES ACROSS SYMPTOM DIMENSIONS IN BIPOLAR DISORDER: AN ANALYSIS OF UK BIPOLAR DISORDER RESEARCH NETWORK DATA.** Lancet Psychiatry, 10. pp.623–31.

Current definitions and clinical heterogeneity in bipolar disorder are major concerns as they obstruct aetiological research and impede drug development. Therefore, stratification of bipolar disorder is a high priority. To inform stratification, our analysis aimed to examine the patterns and relationships between polygenic liability for bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder (MDD), and schizophrenia with multidimensional symptom representations of bipolar disorder.

In this analysis, data from the UK Bipolar Disorder Research Network (BDRN) were assessed with the Operational Checklist for Psychotic Disorders. Individuals with bipolar disorder as defined in DSM-IV, of European ancestry (self-reported), aged 18 years or older at time of interview, living in the UK, and registered with the BDRN were eligible for inclusion. Psychopathological variables obtained via interview by trained research psychologists or psychiatrists and psychiatric case notes were used to identify statistically distinct symptom dimensions, calibrated with exploratory factor analysis and validated with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). CFA was extended to include three polygenic risk scores (PRSs) indexing liability for bipolar disorder, MDD, and schizophrenia in a multiple indicator multiple cause (MIMIC) structural equation model to estimate PRS relationships with symptom dimensions.

Of 4198 individuals potentially eligible for inclusion, 4148 (2804 [67·6%] female individuals and 1344 [32·4%] male individuals) with a mean age at interview of 45 years (SD 12·03) were available for analysis. Three reliable dimensions (mania, depression, and psychosis) were identified. The MIMIC model fitted the data well (root mean square error of approximation 0·021, 90% CI 0·019–0·023; comparative fit index 0·99) and suggests statistically distinct symptom dimensions also have distinct polygenic profiles. The PRS for MDD was strongly associated with the depression dimension (standardised 0·125, 95% CI 0·080–0·171) and the PRS for schizophrenia was strongly associated with the psychosis dimension (0·108, 0·082–0·175). For the mania dimension, the PRS for bipolar disorder was weakly associated (0·050, 0·002–0·097).

Our findings support the hypothesis that genetic heterogeneity underpins clinical heterogeneity, suggesting that different symptom dimensions within bipolar disorder have partly distinct causes. Furthermore, our results suggest that a specific symptom dimension has a similar cause regardless of the primary psychiatric diagnosis, supporting the use of symptom dimensions in precision psychiatry.

Funding Wellcome Trust and UK Medical Research Council.

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Fiori, M., Agnoli, S. and Davis, Sarah K* (2023) **EDITORIAL: NEW TRENDS IN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: CONCEPTUALIZATION, UNDERSTANDING, AND ASSESSMENT.** Frontiers in Psychology, 14.

Over the years, significant strides have been made in refining the conceptualization and measurement of Emotional Intelligence (EI) (e.g., Brackett and Mayer, 2003; Joseph and Newman, 2010; Andrei et al., 2016; O'Connor et al., 2019). Researchers have developed various tools and methods to assess both ability EI and trait EI, providing valuable insights into individuals' emotional capabilities and tendencies. These advancements have helped distinguish different aspects of EI, understand its underlying mechanisms, and identify real-world implications (Martins et al., 2010; Perera and DiGiacomo, 2013; Miao et al., 2017; MacCann et al., 2020). However, the field of EI is ever evolving, and new perspectives continue to emerge. The current Research Topic identifies emerging trends in EI research that draw from various approaches. More specifically, the work of D'Amico and Geraci and Maddocks addresses the conceptualization of EI, Gottfredson and Becker examine factors that may influence emotionally intelligent skills, and Gillioz et al. explore the assessment of EI.

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Guintivano, J., Byrne, E., Kiewa, J., Yao, S., Bauer, A., Aberg, K., Adams, M., Campbell, A., Campbell, M., Choi, K., Corfield, E., Havdahl, A., Hucks, D., Koen, N., Lu, Y., Mægbæk, M., Mullaert, J., Peterson, R., Raffield, L., Sallis, H., Sealock, J., Walker, A., Watson, H., Xiong, Y., Yang, J., Anney, R., Gordon-Smith, Katherine, Hubbard, L., Jones, Lisa, Mihaescu, R., Nyegaard, M., Pardiñas, A., Perry, Amy, Saquib, N., Shadyab, A., Viktorin, A., Andreassen, O., Bigdeli, T., Davis, L., Dennis, C., Di Florio, A., Dubertret, C., Feng, Y., Frey, B., Grigoriadis, S., Gloaguen, E., Jones, I., Kennedy, J., Krohn, H., Kallak, T., Li, Y., Martin, N., McIntosh, A., Milgrom, J., Munk-Olsen, T., Oberlander, T., Olsen, C., Ramoz, N., Reichborn-Kjennerud, T., Robertson Blackmore, E., Rubinow, D., Skalkidou, A., Smoller, J., Stein, D., Stowe, Z., Taylor, V., Tebeka, S., Tesli, M., Lieshout, R., van den Oord, E., Vigod, S., Werge, T., Westlye, L., Whiteman, D., Zar, H., MDD Working Group, T., Wray, N., Meltzer-Brody, S. and Sullivan, P.* (2023) **META-ANALYSES OF GENOME-WIDE ASSOCIATION STUDIES FOR POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION.** The American Journal of Psychiatry.

Postpartum depression (PPD) is a common subtype of major depressive disorder (MDD) that is more heritable, yet is understudied in psychiatric genetics. The authors conducted meta-analyses of genome-wide association studies (GWASs) to investigate the genetic architecture of PPD.

Meta-analyses were conducted on 18 cohorts of European ancestry (17,339 PPD cases and 53,426 controls), one cohort of East Asian ancestry (975 cases and 3,780 controls), and one cohort of African ancestry (456 cases and 1,255 controls), totaling 18,770 PPD cases and 58,461 controls. Post-GWAS analyses included 1) single-nucleotide polymorphism (SNP)–based heritability (), 2) genetic correlations between PPD and other phenotypes, and 3) enrichment of the PPD GWAS findings in 27 human tissues and 265 cell types from the mouse central and peripheral nervous system.

No SNP achieved genome-wide significance in the European or the trans-ancestry meta-analyses. The of PPD was 0.14 (SE=0.02). Significant genetic correlations were estimated for PPD with MDD, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder, insomnia, age at menarche, and polycystic ovary syndrome. Cell-type enrichment analyses implicate inhibitory neurons in the thalamus and cholinergic neurons within septal nuclei of the hypothalamus, a pattern that differs from MDD.

While more samples are needed to reach genome-wide levels of significance, the results presented confirm PPD as a polygenic and heritable phenotype. There is also evidence that despite a high correlation with MDD, PPD may have unique genetic components. Cell enrichment results suggest GABAergic neurons, which converge on a common mechanism with the only medication approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for PPD (brexanolone).

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Russell, Christopher* (2023) **"WE CAN DO THIS!" THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN WHAT COMES NEXT FOR DEMENTIA.** International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 20 (15). p. 6503.

There is increasing interest in physical activity as a response to the harm caused by dementia. The focus has been upon interventions to prevent or delay symptoms, or to support people living with the condition to reminisce. Welcome though this is there are other features inherent to physical activity that remain unrecognised or underutilised, and consequently its full potential for good is unrealised. Most prominent is the ability physical activity has to enable participants to claim and sustain a place in the world through what they do, crucial to a context where the impact of dementia tends to annihilate this for those living with the condition. The article addresses this gap by highlighting features such as person-centred care, human rights and social citizenship, all of which are fundamental to enabling people with dementia to live lives of quality. It identifies synergies with what physical activity can offer and emphasises the value of bringing this together; to illustrate how physical activity can contribute to enabling people with dementia live lives characterised by quality and sustenance of their place in the world. The article concludes by suggesting what must come next to ensure physical activity can play the fullest role possible.

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Tischler, V., Zeilig, H., O'Malley, Mary and Asker, C.* (2023) **TOGETHER YET APART: RETHINKING CREATIVITY AND RELATIONAL DEMENTIA CARE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.** Geriatric Nursing, 54. pp. 99-107.

Culture Box was a creative project that responded to deprivation and distress experienced by those with dementia in care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote and digital creative activities were designed and delivered as 'Culture Boxes' to care homes, aiming to alleviate social isolation and loneliness for people with dementia. Eighty-eight people with dementia and 33 care staff from 33 care homes across England were recruited to the study, with 68 people with dementia and 28 staff completing the study 12 months later. Participatory Action Research combining mixed methods was used to evaluate the project. Baseline and follow-up surveys and dialogic interviews at 3 time points during the study collected quantitative and qualitative data and were analysed descriptively and via inductive thematic analysis respectively. Qualitative findings indicated that the project activities facilitated relational care through creative experiences characterised by sharing, building relationships, and developing a sense of community. Social health was promoted via participation in social activities and fostering independence. Future studies should further explore the utility of creative practices to develop relational care, to support care staff, and to maximise wellbeing benefits for those living with dementia.

SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Mockford, Alice, Urbaneja, A., Ashbrook, Kate and Westbury, Duncan* (2023) **DEVELOPING PERENNIAL WILDFLOWER STRIPS FOR USE IN MEDITERRANEAN ORCHARD SYSTEMS.** Ecology and Evolution, 13 (7).

To support sustainable food production and the delivery of ecosystem services through ecological intensification, wildflower strips have become a popular strategy. Despite their success in temperate orchard systems, they remain understudied in Mediterranean ecosystems, which poses a significant barrier to uptake. In order to further promote their adoption, seed mixes must be optimised for commercial orchard systems and for the Mediterranean climate. Plant species should be selected for their consistent performance, whilst the availability of resources for ecosystem service providers determines the quality of the wildflower strip. In this study, the suitability of 12 native perennial forbs and two tussock-forming grass species for wildflower strips in commercial Citrus orchards was assessed over a 3-year period. Distinct resources for natural enemies according to the different plant growth stages were used an indicator of wildflower strip quality. The wildflower strips were managed under two different cutting strategies: standard management, in which wildflower strips were cut once annually in February, and active management, in which wildflower strips were cut two additional times each year. The establishment and success of the sown species were compared. The influence of wildflower strips and their management on plant species richness, community structure, and the provision of resources was com -pared with a control treatment, in which alleyways were managed conventionally by cutting any naturally occurring vegetation to a height of ≤5 cm, four to five times annual. For the first time, the performance of native perennial plant species has been assessed in Mediterranean orchard systems and a seed mix developed for targeting pest regulation services. The wildflower strips were successful in increasing plant species richness and the available resources expected to support natural enemies. However, only wildflower strips managed with cutting once annually enhanced vegetation cover relative to the control, whilst extending the flowering period. This study therefore provides crucial tools for the further development of sustainable approaches to food production in Mediterranean orchard systems.

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Devran, Z., Özalp, T., Studholme, D.J. and Tör, M.* (2023) **MAPPING OF THE GENE IN TOMATO CONFERRING RESISTANCE TO ROOT-KNOT NEMATODES AT HIGH SOIL TEMPERATURE.** Frontiers in Plant Science, 14. p. 1267399.

Root-knot nematodes (RKNs, Meloidogyne spp.) can cause severe yield losses in tomatoes. The Mi-1.2 gene in tomato confers resistance to the Meloidogyne species M. incognita, M. arenaria and M. javanica, which are prevalent in tomato growing areas. However, this resistance breaks down at high soil temperatures (>28°C). Therefore, it is imperative that new resistance sources are identified and incorporated into commercial breeding programmes. We identified a tomato line, MT12, that does not have Mi-1.2 but provides resistance to M. incognita at 32°C soil temperature. An F2 mapping population was generated by crossing the resistant line with a susceptible line, MT17; the segregation ratio showed that the resistance is conferred by a single dominant gene, designated RRKN1 (Resistance to Root-Knot Nematode 1). The RRKN1 gene was mapped using 111 Kompetitive Allele Specific PCR (KASP) markers and characterized. Linkage analysis showed that RRKN1 is located on chromosome 6 and flanking markers placed the locus within a 270 kb interval. These newly developed markers can help pyramiding R-genes and generating new tomato varieties resistant to RKNs at high soil temperatures.

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Cevher-Keskin,, B., Yildizhan, Y., Sekmen-Cetinel, A.H., Ozer, B., Fayetorbay, R., Onarici, S., Turkan, I. and Tör, M.* (2023) **DECIPHERING DROUGHT RESPONSE MECHANISMS: TRANSCRIPTOMIC INSIGHTS FROM DROUGHT-TOLERANT AND DROUGHT-SENSITIVE WHEAT (TRITICUM AESTIVUM L.) CULTIVARS.** bioRxiv.

Drought stress poses a significant threat to wheat (Triticum aestivum L.) cultivation, necessitating an in -depth understanding of the molecular mechanisms underpinning drought response in both tolerant and sensitive varieties. In this study, 12 diverse bread wheat cultivars were evaluated for their drought stress responses, with particular emphasis on the contrasting performance of cultivars Atay 85 (sensitive), Gerek 79, and Mufitbey (tolerant). Transcriptomic analysis was performed on the root and leaf tissues of the aforementioned cultivars subjected to 4-hour and 8-hour drought stress and compared with controls. Differentially expressed genes (DEGs) were categorized based on their cellular component, molecular function, and biological function. Notably, there was greater gene expression variability in leaf tissues compared to root tissues. A noticeable trend of decreased gene expression was observed for cellular processes such as protein refolding and cellular metabolic processes like photorespiration as drought stress duration increased (8 hours) in the leaf tissues of drought-tolerant and sensitive cultivars. Metabolic processes related to gene expression were predominantly activated in response to 4-hour and 8-hour drought stress. The drought-tolerant cultivars exhibited increased expression levels of genes related to protein binding, metabolic processes, and cellular functions, indicating their ability to adapt better to drought stress compared to the drought-sensitive cultivar Atay 85. We detected more than 25 differentially expressed TFs in leaf tissues under 4-hour and 8-hour drought stress, while only 4 TFs were identified in the root tissues of sensitive cultivar. In contrast, the tolerant cultivar exhibited more than 80 different TF transcripts in both leaves and roots after 4 hours of drought stress, with this number decreasing to 18 after 8 hours of drought stress. Differentially expressed genes with a focus on metal ion binding, carbohydrate degradation, ABA-related genes, and cell wall-related genes were highlighted. Ferritin (TaFer), TaPME42 and Extensin-like protein (TaExLP), Germin-like protein (TaGLP 9-1), Metacaspase-5 (TaMC5), Arogenate Dehydratase 5 (ADT-5), Phosphoglycerate/ bisphosphoglycerate mutase (TaPGM), Serine/threonine protein phosphatase 2A (TaPP2A), GIGANTEA (TaGI), Polyadenylate-binding protein (TaRBP45B) exhibited differential expression by qRT-PCR in root and leaf tissues of tolerant and sensitive bread wheat cultivars. This study provides valuable insights into the complex molecular mechanisms associated with drought response in wheat, highlighting genes and pathways involved in drought tolerance. Understanding these mechanisms is essential for developing drought-tolerant wheat varieties, enhancing agricultural sustainability, and addressing the challenges posed by water scarcity.

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Bell, Robin and Bell, H.* (2023) **ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.** Entrepreneurship Education, 6. pp. 229-244.

Generative artificial intelligence has seen fast paced developments, with it being utilised in numerous contexts, including both entrepreneurship and education. This has led to calls to integrate generative artificial intelligence into entrepreneurship education, to help prepare students to take advantage of future entrepreneurial opportunities. The technology also has the potential to influence pedagogy, teaching practice, and assessment and has raised concerns and questions within education about how educators can train students to use the latest technology to prepare them for the future, whilst managing potential changes to teaching practice. However, given the rapid emergence of the technology, discussion as to the implications for education and particularly entrepreneurship education is limited and there have been calls for further exploration and discussion. This paper addresses these calls by discussing some of the potential implications which generative artificial intelligence brings to entrepreneurship education and the entrepreneurship classroom, at both a macro and curricular level. The advancement of generative artificial intelligence furthers the need for entrepreneurship educators to embrace the technology in a managed way, develop students critical and reflective thinking, and foster the development and assessment of practical and technical entrepreneurial skills, to support student's effective utilisation of generative artificial intelligence. Educators should also be aware of the potential effects which generative artificial intelligence poses to teaching and assessment.

JOURNAL ARTICLE: *Anderson, N.E., Kyte, Derek, McMullan, C., Cockwell, P., Lee Aiyegbusi, O., Verdi, R. and Calvert, M.* (2023) **GLOBAL USE OF ELECTRONIC PATIENT-REPORTED OUTCOME SYSTEMS IN NEPHROLOGY: A MIXED METHODS STUDY.** BMJ Open, 13 (7).

The use of electronic patient-reported outcome (ePRO) systems to support the management of patients with chronic kidney disease is increasing. This mixed-methods study aimed to comprehensively identify existing and developing ePRO systems, used in nephrology settings globally, ascertaining key characteristics and factors for successful implementation.

ePRO systems and developers were identified through a scoping review of the literature and contact with field experts. Developers were invited to participate in a structured survey, to summarise key system characteristics including: (1) system objectives, (2) population, (3) PRO measures used, (4) level of automation, (5) reporting, (6) integration into workflow and (7) links to electronic health records/national registries. Subsequent semistructured interviews were conducted to explore responses.

Eligible systems included those being developed or used in nephrology settings to assess ePROs and summarise results to care providers. System developers included those with a key responsibility for aspects of the design, development or implementation of an eligible system. Structured survey data were summarised using descriptive statistics. Interview transcripts were analysed using Codebook Thematic Analysis using domains from the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research.

Fifteen unique ePRO systems were identified across seven countries; 10 system developers completed the structured survey and 7 participated in semistructured interviews. Despite system heterogeneity, reported features required for effective implementation included early and sustained patient involvement, clinician champions and expanding existing electronic platforms to integrate ePROs. Systems demonstrated several common features, with the majority being implemented within research settings, thereby affecting system implementation readiness for real-world application.

There has been considerable research investment in ePRO systems. The findings of this study outline key system features and factors to support the successful implementation of ePROs in routine kidney care.







Graduation

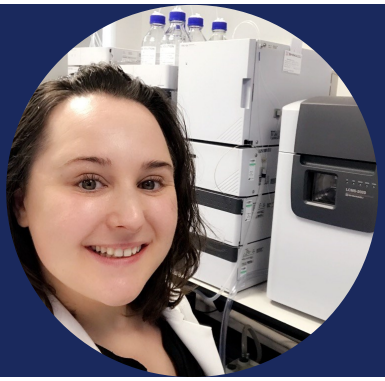
2023











Dr Ellen Joyce

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

'The combined effects of plant polyphenols and fatty acids on protective cellular mechanisms associated with molecular perturbations of obesity and neurotoxicity'

Supervisory Team: Dr Allain Bueno (DoS), Dr Steve Coles and Dr Amy Perry

"I am immensely happy to be graduating with a doctorate this year. Having come back to post-secondary education as a mature student, it marks a major milestone and personal achievement for me and feels like the best conclusion to what has felt like unfinished business."

Having first gone to university straight out of secondary school, only to find I was not ready for it, I came back to full-time education in 2012 as a mature student, undertaking a joint honours degree in Human Biology and Human Nutrition (BSc) at the University of Worcester. I chose Worcester at it was one of the few establishments nationwide that allowed me to combine both degree subjects together.

I then went to do a Masters (MSc) degree in Molecular Cellular Biology with Bio-innovation at University College Cork, Ireland.

I subsequently joined the Department of Biosciences in the School of Science and the Environment as an Associate Lecturer in 2016. When the opportunity for a studentship-funded PhD became available, I successfully applied and started my PhD in biochemistry a year later at the end of 2017 under the directorship of Dr Allain Bueno and co-supervisors Dr Amy Cherry and Dr Steven Coles.

Throughout my doctoral studies, I have had the opportunity to establish collaborations with colleagues from both the University of Worcester and Federal University of São Paulo, Brazil. This has already resulted in my first publication (https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-82837-6) using methods I set-up at Worcester during my PhD. I am currently working on a series of articles for publication based on my doctoral studies.

Although the pandemic caused a lot of disruption to my studies, one silver lining occurred with international conferences moving online. With the constraints of international travel removed, I was able to present and disseminate much more of my research to a wider international audience. I have fortunately presented 8 international conference posters from my doctoral studies to date with more planned in the future. The move to online conferencing also gave me to opportunity to jointly present a 1 ½ hour virtual conference talk alongside my Director of Studies Dr Allain Bueno.

My PhD research, under the directorship of Dr Allain Bueno and co-supervisors Dr Amy Cherry and Dr Steven Coles, focused on understanding the complex relationship of obesity and neurotoxicity, induced by a high-saturated-fat western-style diet, and the effect of treatment with standardised *Ginkgo biloba* leaf extract A high-saturated-fat diet is associated with an increased risk of inflammation, obesity, diabetes, cognitive impairment, anxiety, stress, and depression. *Ginkgo biloba* is one of the most globally consumed plant-based dietary supplements known for its strong anti-inflammatory and antioxidant capacities and beneficial effects on cardiovascular and neurological health.



Dr Ellen Joyce

My doctoral studies involved establishing an in-house laboratory-based neuronal cell model to test the effects of *Ginkgo biloba* in a high-fat-diet environment. My studies also involved collaborative work with Dr Monica Telles and Dr Bruna Hirata from Federal University of São Paulo, Brazil and their animal-based studies involving *Ginkgo biloba* treatment in high-fat-diet-induced obesity.

My research has shown that long-term consumption of a high-fat diet leads to obesity and changes in body composition. A high-fat diet increases the ratio of saturated fats and decreases the ratio of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats stored in tissues like adipose (fat) cells, the liver and the hypothalamus, a key region of the brain associated with regulating appetite. Together these changes can negatively impact health by not only inducing obesity but also increasing the risk of metabolic disfunction such as chronic inflammation and diabetes. The research also shows that Ginkgo biloba treatment helps to reduce calorie consumption and improves the distribution of both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats in the body which may help reduce inflammation and its negative effects on metabolism. I have been privileged to conduct my doctoral research with Dr Allain Bueno at the University of Worcester and also in collaboration with Dr Monica Telles' research group from the Federal University of São Paulo, Brazil, who together have already worked extensively on exploring the effects of Ginkgo biloba on obesity. My doctoral findings have helped build upon my colleagues previous and ongoing work while contributing a greater understanding of the dynamic effects Ginkgo biloba has on high-fat diet-induced obesity and my work is helping to shape the direction of further clinical trial research.

They say a PhD is a marathon, not a sprint, and with the pandemic hitting just over halfway through mine, at times it felt like that marathon had suddenly become an unquantified ultra. So, I am immensely happy to be graduating with a doctorate this year. Having come back to post-secondary education as a mature student, it marks a major milestone and personal achievement for me and feels like the best conclusion to what has felt like unfinished business. This achievement of course wouldn't have been possible without the constant support and encouragement of my loved ones and mentors and an acknowledgement of the collective sacrifices made to allow me to achieve this. I am also very grateful to the University of Worcester for the studentship funding they granted me to enable this PhD, as well as the yearly academic achievement scholarships they awarded me in my undergraduate degree. Worcester has really felt like a home-away-from-home for the past 10 years or so, and I carry with me such fond memories from all the opportunities the university offered and the friendships it cultivated. This has been very personally rewarding experience for me.

What are you doing now?

I am currently working on a series of articles for publication based on my doctoral studies and on further collaborative work with our colleagues in Brazil.



Dr Annica Lau

Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

"Investigating young professionals' psychological contracts to advance human-centred human resources management strategies: A multi-method qualitative research"

Supervisory Team: Anne-Marie McTavish (DoS) and Dr May Bratby

"The experience of graduating as a doctoral student is a profound and transformative milestone in my career journey. This significant achievement evokes a range of emotions and elicits a sense of accomplishment, pride, and fulfilment."

Throughout my professional career, I have encountered numerous young individuals who were dissatisfied with their entry into the workplaces. Of particular concern were the statistics on apprenticeship dropouts in Germany, which personally affected me deeply. Subsequently, I delved into an in-depth exploration of why many young professionals experience a rocky start to their careers. My objective is to assist organisations in creating a better foundation for young employees, fostering positive collaboration and engagement. My qualitative study provides in-depth knowledge about young professionals in the world of work. The contribution provides insights into the formation of job expectations within the concept of the psychological contract.

My research findings demonstrate that various factors, such as the university attended, historical events like the COVID-19 pandemic, and societal influences, can generate diverse trends regarding expectations of an employer. These trends generally reflect an increase in expectations, resulting in higher demands that may not always be fulfilled by the current employer during the onboarding process. I have gained new insights into the origins of job expectations among young professionals, the factors and events that influence them, and the key considerations organisations should prioritize during the early stages of their careers. To facilitate the establishment of employee-employer relationships aligned with the needs of young professionals, I present recommendations for implementing human resource management processes e.g. career-boarding.

I am a pracademic, which means I actively engage in both practical and academic realms, integrating research and teaching with the aim of successfully bridging scientific theories and practice. During my DBA journey I raised my daughter (from 2 to 6 years), faced the challenges of working part-time during the pandemic. I was very lucky to have my viva in Worcester on the sunniest day in January 2023. My supervisor Anne-Marie was a great support during my viva but died shortly after I graduated. During my journey I attended several doctoral colloquia and the BAM conferences. I won the Developmental Paper Award: Highly Commended at the British Academy of Management Conference in 2021. I have recently published a paper with my second supervisor May Bratby about a data collection method: video statements, for my 2018 cohort I am the student representative and I have started to host monthly virtual writing groups to support a growing network of doctoral student and alumni at the Worcester Business School. I present my research to the public by attending science slams in Germany (like Pint of Science in the UK).

What are you doing now?

Currently I am employed in an international organisation in the baking ingredients industry: Martin Braun-Gruppe (belonging to the Geschwister Oetker Beteiligungen). Am a part-time lecturer at IU International University of Applied Sciences and Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft. I am attending conferences, doing science slams and started to engage in other research projects. I am also doing guest lectures around the World (so far UK, Germany, Denmark and South Africa).



Dr Inga Knoche

Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

"Exploring Digital Transformation in German Mittelstand to Identify and Advance Future Key Competencies from a strategic Human Resource Management Perspective – A Grounded Delphi Study"

Supervisory Team: Dr Vessela Warren (DoS), Prof. John Sparrow and Dr Holly Andrews

"It is a feeling that fills me with pride to have successfully completed this journey. What I have learnt about myself, what I can accomplish, will stay for the rest of my life."



L-R: Dr Annica Lau and Dr Inga Knoche

I have researched the digital transformation in German Mittelstand (GM) and in particular the impact on the future necessary and elementary competencies that people need to bring or acquire in this rapidly changing world of work. To this end, I have developed a model that complements the findings in a strategic human resource management (SHRM)-model to understand the different elements that influence the future competencies of people in the digital transformation in context to enable measures to advance competencies in GM companies.

Cognitive, emotional and social competences are of particular importance for the expected future development of the digital transformation. The willingness to actively help shape a changed working world of the future and to find one's way in it is in turn very closely linked to personality traits such as openness or curiosity. The imparting of technical or methodological knowledge will therefore recede into the background in the future, which is why the design of the work situation will gain in importance for the promotion of future key competences.

To enable the promotion of competences and the necessary mindset for the digital transformation in the organisation, the owner has a special role and responsibility.The developed model not only eliminates common weaknesses of SHRM models, such as the lack of practical relevance or the shift of an otherwise rather common stakeholder perspective of SHRM in favour of the employees, but also develops a comprehensive framework and recommendations for leadership in corporate practice.

At the beginning of my second round of data collection, I was hit with a message I had always been very afraid of: my dad was diagnosed with cancer, incurable with only a few months left to live. Events came thick and fast and we only had a few weeks left together - he died a week before Christmas 2021. I never had to promise my father that I would complete this big project - my DBA - he never had any doubt about that. I took this trust he had in me to fight my way back from deep grief and to give structure to my everyday life by throwing myself fully into its completion. Even though my dad could no longer be alive to see it, he is always with me and I am happy that my mum can be there and that we can celebrate this achievement together with my other loved ones at the graduation.

What are you doing now?

I am in the same digital strategy consultancy as I was at the beginning of my DBA journey. Since completing my DBA, I have been leading the digital competencies business unit, developing business advisory services and implementing them in companies with my team.



Casey Maeve

MRes Sociology

'The influence of structure and agency on tutor approaches to facilitating problem-based learning across disciplines'

Supervisor: Dr Luke Devine

"I'm so grateful for the wealth of opportunities that the University has given me, and I can't wait to see where it will take me in the future. "

I have studied at the University of Worcester during undergraduate and at post-graduate, and overall I've had an incredible experience. My area of research initially developed within the History of Sexuality module in my final year of my bachelor's degree in joint politics and Sociology.

I developed interest in Sappho and discovered a vast expanse of 19th century Sapphic literature whilst undertaking my dissertation, which I received a first classification for. My background in politics enabled me to apply critical theoretical perspectives to ancient literature. I also found myself inspired by reading and analysing such a diversity of beautiful poetry and fiction, which has always been a love of mine.

I applied for the Sociology MRes in 2022 with the help of my supervisor Dr Devine, who has supported and encouraged me throughout my academic journey. During the MRes, I was lucky enough to be selected as Course Representative and contributed to the development of the course during meetings across the year. I found it extremely challenging through COVID to undertake the majority of my undergraduate degree and the MRes from home. I often found myself overwhelmed by the pandemic and the stress of global affairs, but I managed to push through with the support of family, friends, and colleagues. Through the PGR team Coffee meet-ups, I found a wealth of support from fellow students, who were similarly finding academia challenging, with issues such as imposter syndrome. Whilst academia is often isolating and intimidating, it was amazing to speak to so many different people and realise that I wasn't alone in my experience.

In May 2022, I took part in my first ever conference at the university, 'Sociology: Political Bodies', giving a presentation to my peers and academics about my research. In the end, I achieved a first in my thesis and a first class MRes overall. My thesis was entitled ''Merciful rage and violent desire': Sapphic discourses in Amy Levy's 'Xantippe' and Charles Swinburne's 'Anactoria.' I am now developing my application to study a PhD about gender discourses and 19th century Sapphic art and literature. I am currently working at the University of Worcester as an Associate Lecturer in the Department of History, Sociology and Politics, and have loved every second of it so far. I am also planning to participate in the 2023 PGR Conference and present the initial findings of my PhD research. I'm so grateful for the wealth of opportunities that the University has given me, and I can't wait to see where it will take me in the future. My ultimate aspiration is to lecture full-time and write my own poetry books.



Dr Heather Fraser

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

'The influence of structure and agency on tutor approaches to facilitating problem-based learning across disciplines'

Supervisory Team: Prof. Jaswinder Dhillon (DoS) and Prof. Maggi Savin-Baden

"I am looking forward to spending some time with my family at graduation. It is often said that a PhD journey is a team effort and will be taking some time to acknowledge the impact of my sister's extra efforts in supporting my mum on this journey. "



L-R: Prof. Maggi Savin-Baden, Dr Heather Fraser and Prof. Jaswinder Dhillon

My research explored what shapes practice in facilitating problem-based learning across five different disciplines in UK universities, including law, two science sites, and two health sites. I used a narrative methodology and so was interested in the stories that tutors told me about what shaped their practice, and I also attended their problem-based learning sessions to observe practice.

I found that tutors were influenced by their disciplinary identity, as well as the habits and traditions of teaching, learning, and knowledge in those disciplines. There were also site-specific influences such as tutor roles, classroom design, and processes such as timetabling or admissions processes. I argued that universities should consciously consider whether the key influences of problem-based learning are the ones underpinned by pedagogical reasoning.

Completing a part-time PhD whilst working full time was challenging, and the COVID-19 pandemic brought additional challenges. Working as a senior lecturer and course leader for a health course brought a diverse range of challenges far beyond re-writing the course for an online delivery. This ate into weekends that I had previously tried to protect as PhD time.

Additionally, as my mum was severely clinically vulnerable during the pandemic, my sister and I made the decision to cancel her care package and live with mum for a fortnight each, and this added seven months of living between two homes that were 300 miles apart.

What are you doing now?

Whilst undertaking the PhD, one of my supervisors offered me the opportunity to write a book with her. We submitted a proposal which was accepted, and this meant that my weekends of writing a thesis changed to weekends of writing a book. We submitted this a few months after I submitted the final version of my thesis, and I am looking forward to it being published a few weeks after graduation.



Dr Amanda Sheehy

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

"Promoting gender equality in primary schools through teachers' reflection upon their own constructions of gender and the implicit messages that they may convey to pupils"

Supervisory Team: Dr Carla Solvason (DoS) and Dr Mandy Duncan

"I feel such a sense of accomplishment to be graduating. There are plenty of milestones at various stages when undertaking doctoral research, and many moments from which to take pride but the official ceremony of graduation is an opportunity to celebrate the overall personal achievement and celebrate the skills, confidence and knowledge acquired along the way."



Dr Amanda Sheehy

I have been a primary school teacher since 2006 and have, over the years, been interested in the way that pupils often seem to place restrictions on their own behaviour because of their gender. I have worked hard to try to challenge gender stereotypes in my own school and wanted to find out more about it. After some months reading in the Hive, I made the decision to take on further study. My undergraduate degree was undertaken at UCL in the 1990s and I did my PGCE at the University of Worcester in 2006 but after a long break from academia, I decided to apply to do a PhD at the University of Worcester and began in 2018. I continued to work three days a week in school and studied part-time.

My thesis focussed on the role of primary school teachers in promoting gender equality for their pupils. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 14 teachers from schools in Worcestershire and London who reflected on their own gender constructions, who and what had influenced them and how their understandings of gender might be inadvertently passed on to their pupils. Their reflections were fascinating and illuminated many of the ways we are influenced by society however, what was most striking was the powerful effect of the process of reflection itself in bringing about change in attitudes amongst educators.

I loved every minute of my research and completed in 2022. That said, undertaking a research study alongside working and managing family life through a pandemic was not without its challenges. Independent research can be a lonely business so it was good to have contact with other research students and a wonderfully supportive supervisory team.

Since the completion of my PhD, I have begun to share the findings of my research though academic publication. I have contributed a chapter to an edited book, a journal article soon to be published and have more in the pipeline. I have also shared the key findings with headteachers from schools across the county and have been invited to deliver workshops in some schools. I intend to extend this offering in the future as it is extremely rewarding, enabling me to play a part in achieving fairer outcomes for children of all genders. I continue to teach in a primary school where my new knowledge has enabled me to enhance my own practice and share this with my colleagues.

What are you doing now?

I work as an associate lecturer at the University of Worcester and am involved in research projects as a result of the relationships I built during my time as a post graduate student and these ties are an enriching part of my career in education and my personal development.

PUBLIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

GET REAL WITH MEETING CENTRES CELEBRATION EVENT

Wednesday 12th July 2023, The Arena

The Association of Dementia Studies hosted a public celebration event at the Arena to disseminate their findings from the 'Get Real with Meeting Centres' research project. The event also saw the launch of the booklets and videos developed to help share those findings. Speakers included: Dr Shirley Evans, Prof. Dawn Brooker, Thomas Morton, Nigel Hullah (*3 Nations Dementia Working Group*), Dr Ruby Swift, and Dr Michela Tinelli (*London School of Economics and Political Science*).



As part of the celebration event, the Meeting Centres family blanket was displayed. Meeting Centres from across the UK were invited to work with their members and carers to create squares that represent their Meeting Centre and what it means to them. The squares were then sent in to the Association for Dementia Studies and combined into a blanket.

TALK OF THE DEVIL: EVIL SPIRITS IN TUDOR AND STUART ENGLAND

Thursday 27th July 2023, Harvington Hall

The Devil was a commanding figure in the Tudor and Stuart age, and also a fascinating one. Prof. Darren Oldridge spoke to 100 attendees at Harvington Hall about the 'Prince of Darkness' in various contexts, including demonic temptation, apparitions, and witchcraft.

EXHIBTION: DEMENTIA IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

August-September 2023

In August, an interactive exhibition was launched in the Infirmary Museum, exploring the depictions of dementia in children's literature. The exhibition was devised by Jean Webb; Professor of International Children's Literature , and drew upon her research on the topic.

Prof. Webb is also Director of the International Forum for Research in Children's Literature, which brings together researchers in children's literature from the University and more widely internationally. The idea for this exhibition was sparked by a chapter she produced for a recent book that explored how dementia develops understanding between young and old in contemporary children's literature.



Prof. Jean Webb
Professor of International Children's Literature, School of Humanities

GONE WILD FESTIVAL

Sunday 28th August 2023, Powderham Castle, Devon

Dr Daniel Farrelly, Principal Lecturer in Psychology and member of the Interpersonal Relationships and Well-Being research group, was an invited presenter at this year's Gone Wild Festival which took place in August at Powderham Castle, Devon.

Daniel was the presenter on a session entitled Attraction Lab which headlined the final night in the Guerilla Science tent, which was all about what things are attractive to us in romantic partners as well as other personal relationships.



ART HOUSE OPEN LECTURE SERIES

The annual Art House open Lecture Series (a collaboration between Meadow Arts and the School of Arts) has provided the public to hear firsthand from some of the most exciting contemporary artists currently making work in the UK. Talks this semester have included:

Elisha Enfield - **Tuesday 26th September**
Rosie McGinn - **Tuesday 17th October**
Dean Kenning - **Tuesday 21st November**
Square Art Projects - **Tuesday 5th December**

CULTURAL STUDIES READING GROUP

October 2023, the Hive

Following the success of a summer short course for members of the public by academic staff in Media and Culture, a Cultural Studies Reading Group was launched in October. The fortnightly sessions introduced participants to some of the key critical and theoretical texts which underpin the discipline.

Participants were given a short academic book chapter or peer-reviewed journal article to read and, two weeks later came back together to discuss the key ideas and their application in an informal and friendly setting.

THE ROLE OF CLAIRVOYANTS IN CONTEMPORARY FICTION

Wednesday 25th October 2023, the Commandery

Dr Lucy Arnold, Senior Lecturer in English Literature, delivered a talk in The Commandery's atmospheric medieval Great Hall in October. The talk explored a range of fictional mediums and the messages they convey, seeking to establish what they might communicate about our relationship with the dead, grief and mourning, with modern technology and our intimate entanglements with it, and the figure of the author themselves as a conduit through which the dead might speak.

WRITING WITCHCRAFT SHOWCASE

Wednesday 25th October 2023, the Hive

In October, Ruth Stacey, Lecturer in Creative Writing, led a discussion with members of the public at the Hive about the figure of the witch in literature. This included readings featuring witchcraft and magic.

TWO SIDES OF CONSENT: HEARING NO AND SAYING YES

Wednesday 25th October 2023, Online

As part of the Interpersonal Relationships & Wellbeing Research Group Research Café series, Dr Gill Harrop and Holly Barnes-Bennetts delivered a public session on the 25th October entitled 'Two Sides of Consent: Hearing No and Saying Yes'. This talk considered two different approaches to the issue of sexual consent: hearing and recognising when someone does not consent and knowing how to communicate a 'yes' when one does consent. These issues were considered within the context of positive sexual behaviour, as well as the prevention of sexual harm.



Dr Gill Harrop
Senior Lecturer,
School of Psychology



Holly Barnes-Bennetts
Lecturer,
School of Humanities

DO WE STILL NEED THE DEVIL?

Tuesday 31st October 2023, the Hive

"This Halloween let's spare a thought for the Devil. Once a huge and terrible figure in western culture, he is now largely a historical curiosity. But should we miss him?" In this talk, Prof. Darren Oldridge, Professor of Early Modern History, explored ways that people have engaged with the prince of darkness in the past and present, and the sometimes surprisingly positive results.

EXHIBITION: PLEIN AIR A SITE FOR RESISTANCE AND

10 October - 10 November 2023,
The Art House

Division of Labour

SoA SCHOOL OF ARTS UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER

An exhibition of drawing and painting by : Andee Collard, Angelina May Davis, Elisha Enfield, Lewis Graham, John Timberlake, Let's Paint TV, Yelena Popova, Danny Markey.

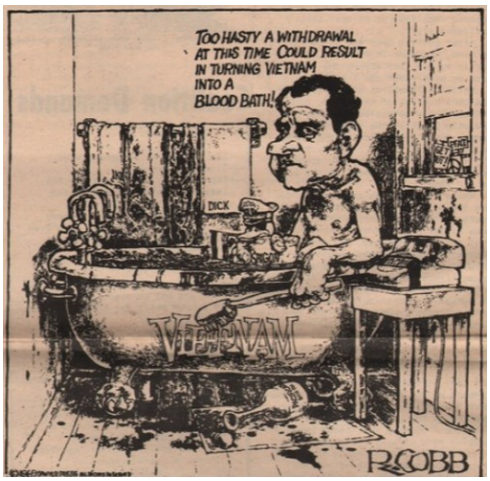
Plein Air a Site for Resistance and Remedial Action at The Art House in Worcester marks a year-long research project with undergraduate students from Worcester University School of Art looking at act of painting outdoors.

Questions posed by the group include; Is the Plein Air painter an autonomous actor, light of foot, not confined to a studio or institution. Is the Plein Air painter the last radical in a professionalised art world?

Does working outdoors bring you happiness? Is there a virtue in being in the outside world working? How does the corporeal reality of making surrounded by the outdoors, ambient noise, weather conditions, distance and movement and daylight affect your mental health?

EXHIBITION: PRO AND ANTI-WAR VOICES

3-13 November 2023, The Hive



Inspired by their research, PhD student Joseph Rix and Dr Wendy Toon, curated a historical exhibition, entitled 'Pro- and Anti-War Voices', which was held from 3-13 November in The Hive. Parts of the exhibition visually represented Joseph's work on the GI Movement against the Vietnam War and Wendy's research on the Mothers' Movement during World War II and the role of women in Vietnam War protest. Additionally, Dr Toon's other PhD candidate Maddie Hale's study of Japanese American Assembly Centres in World War II was also on display. This exhibition focused on engaging the public in knowledge exchange and was designed to illuminate some of the "voices" of "ordinary" Americans from a range of political persuasions and ethnicities during wartime. Joseph and Wendy invited scholars from across the UK and Europe to contribute primary sources related to their current research to add variety to the wars covered and the voices that could be "heard". In this way, the exhibition provided views of both supporters and detractors during the War of Independence, Civil War, World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War.

The exhibition was a great way to involve the public in some of the most exciting academic research currently being conducted about these issues. As war is often studied from the "top-down", i.e. from the perspective of the government and important figures, these panels were an engaging way of exposing the public to a "bottom-up" viewpoint. The exhibition coincided with an academic conference of the same name and was designed to give an accessible, physical representation of some of the papers given at the conference. One viewer described the event as 'a most interesting take on the pros and cons of difficult times' focusing specifically on the 'excellent summaries written for each main subject'.

Joseph and Wendy would like to thank the British Association for American Studies for their granting of an award to facilitate this exhibition. Nearly 16,000 people visited The Hive over the course of the exhibition and the library team have noted that spectators were more likely to linger and engage with the panels than pass through. Overall, the response has been overwhelmingly positive.

GUNPOWDER, TREASON AND PLOT: ANTI-CATHOLICISM IN 17TH-CENTURY ENGLAND

Sunday 5th November 2023, The Commandery

On the anniversary of the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot on 5 November 1605, Prof. Darren Oldridge, returned to The Commandery to explore the moment in history known today as Bonfire Night.

The seventeenth century was a time of intense religious conflict and intolerance. The talk revealed the importance of anti-Catholicism in this period, and the major part it played in the English Civil War.

71ST LOVATT LECTURE IN GEOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHIES OF SPORT: FOOTBALL, CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

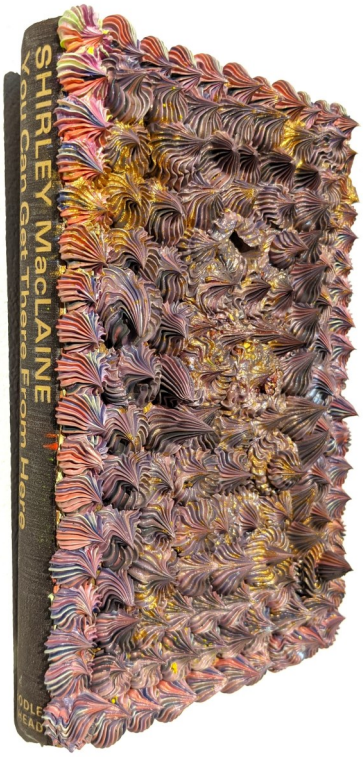
Thursday 9th November 2023, St John's Campus

Professor David Storey; Honorary Professor of Geography, delivered this year's Lovatt Lecture in November. Prof. Storey explored the complex issues of citizenship and national identity through the prism of football.

"Sport, in particular football, can provide a useful means through which to explore issues of national identity. In international competition, footballers don the national colours, sing the anthem and 'fly the flag', and in doing so become the embodiment of the wider imagined community. In recent years, the selection by international sports teams of competitors born in other countries has become increasingly common. The declaration of a sporting nationality that may differ from an 'official' one highlights the need to see identities as more fluid and flexible. This focus on sport provides insights into the complex nature of national identity, territorial allegiances and the linkages between people and place."

EXHIBITION: KAREN DAVID: *COVE*

10-30 November 2023, The Art House



Karen David, *'Monday (Season 6, Episode 14)'*, 2023, oil and pearlescent pigment on found book.

This exhibition presented Karen David's PhD research at the University of Worcester titled *Commune of the Viable Essence: Creating Myth in Artistic Studio Practice through Fictional Narrative* . It was presented as an archive of *CoVE* with written materials, maps and artworks including oil paintings, acrylic marbling and glazed ceramics.

This PhD examines fiction as a tool for practice-based research through the *Commune of the Viable Essence (CoVE)*: a fiction and a studio device for generating ideas. Through characters resident in an abandoned commune, a search for a mutation of Greenberg's 'viable essence' occurs: a substance that the residents believe holds both material and spiritual qualities. The imaginary commune is activated as David identifies how fiction and materiality might operate together.

***Karen David** makes, writes, lectures and curates around the theme of fictional narratives, weaving the historical and the imagined together examining in the process belief systems and rituals. She graduated MA Fine Art at Wimbledon College of Arts in 2012. In 2014 she undertook a research trip to Marfa, Texas and Roswell, New Mexico, in 2015 was Artist in Residence at Islington Mill, Manchester, in 2016 won the Artist in Residence award on the BA Painting Wimbledon College of Arts, and in 2018 was a visiting artist at the Bauhaus, Dessau, Germany.*

AUTHOR TALK: LIZ BERRY

Wednesday 15th November 2023, The Hive

As part of the *Creative Writing Reading Series,* the University welcomed award-winning poet and author, Liz Berry, to the Hive to deliver a reading and writing workshop.

Liz Berry is author of the critically acclaimed collections *Black Country* (Chatto, 2014); *The Republic of Motherhood* (Chatto, 2018); *The Dereliction* (Hercules Editions, 2021), a collaboration with artist Tom Hicks; and most recently *The Home Child* (Chatto, 2023), a novel in verse. Liz's work, described as "a sooty soaring hymn to her native West Midlands" (Guardian), celebrates the landscape, history and dialect of the region. Liz has received the Somerset Maugham Award, Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize and Forward Prizes. Her poem 'Homing', a love poem for the language of the Black Country, is part of the GCSE English syllabus. Liz is a patron of Writing West Midlands and lives in Birmingham with her family.

THE WAITING

Thursday 23rd November 2023, Belli Theater, Rome

Simon Bovey, Lecturer in BA (Hons) Screenwriting and BA (Hons) Film Making, had a play opening at the Trend Festival, New Frontiers in British Drama, in Rome today on the 23rd November.

The play is called The Waiting, and is a claustrophobic thriller about the power of paranoia on a small group as they gather prior to an illegal activity. It has previously been performed twice in the UK where it was described as 'Waiting for Godot for the Tarantino generation.'

INTERNATIONAL 16 DAYS OF ACTION AGAINST GENDER -BASED VIOLENCE

Monday 27th November 2023, Online

To mark the annual campaign; 16 Days of Action against Gender-Based Violence, the Department of Violence Prevention Trauma and Criminology, organised a public webinar. The keynote presentation entitled 'The optimism of women supporting women with shared lived experience: Peer mentoring with women who experience multiple and complex disadvantage' was delivered by Dr Beverley Gilbert; Senior Lecturer in Violence Prevention & Criminology. Presentations were also delivered by University of Worcester alumni Jade Jeffrey and Ayla Nasuh on their research relating to Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

AUTHOR TALK: LUKE WRIGHT

Wednesday 29th November 2023, The Hive

Renowned poet and raconteur, Luke Wright, delivered his *Silver Jubilee* touring show at the Hive on the 29th November. Luke specialises in live spoken word poetry and delivered an hour of poems and stand-up about his life, combining emotional material with comedy. Topics included the frustrations of the family, politics and masculinity in 21st century Britain. After a quarter of a century on stages across the world, Luke provides regular tour support for fellow poet John Cooper Clarke and has won four Saboteur Awards.

This event was organised by Ruth Stacey, Lecturer in Creative Writing, as part of the *Creative Writing Reading Series.*

POETRY ON FIRE!

Wednesday 6th December 2023, The Hive

Celebrating recent published graduates of the Creative Writing Course, *Poetry on Fire!* Saw six former students give readings of their work. Hip-Hop, pastoral landscapes, social history, feminism and female characters of Greek mythology are all topics that these writers have explored in their work.

Event organiser Ruth Stacey, said: *"This is a good opportunity for people in the City to hear some of the most successful poets in the country, while getting a taste of the future talent coming through our Creative Writing course. We are always keen to open up learning opportunities to the public as well as our students. For those out there either wishing to just enjoy some live poetry on their doorstep and for others wanting some tips on their own verses, they should definitely check out what the University has on offer. The fact that we're able to offer sessions with some very well-known faces in the industry completely free, compared to the cost of attending a literary festival to see them in action, is also fantastic."*

AUTISM AND THE MILITARY: *"WHEN ONE MEMBER SERVES THE ENTIRE FAMILY SERVES"*

13 December 2023, Online

In December, Dr Gabriela Misca (Senior Lecturer in Psychology) and Philippa White (PhD Student), delivered a talk that provided an overview of the evolving position of the Armed Forces' recruitment of autistic individuals.

Findings from a qualitative research study on the perceptions of care giving parents raising autistic adolescents in a military family was discussed. The talk also highlighted the strategies that these parents use to support their autistic adolescents amidst the military lifestyle, including seeking stability and advocating for them.

CHRISTMAS, CRACKED

Tuesday 12th and 19th December 2023, The Hive

How can you use psychology to navigate the work Christmas party? Why is music so important in the John Lewis festive advert? And why do we eat the food we do at Christmas?

A group of University of Worcester academics delivered a series of talks in December to discuss the biggest questions around Christmas.

Tuesday 12th December 2023

- Festive Food, Celebration and Ritual - Holly Barnes-Bennetts and Robyn Platt, Media & Culture
- Festive Spirits: A History of the Christmas Ghost Story - Dr Lucy Arnold, English Literature
- Group Dynamics at Christmas - Dr Tanya Carpenter, Psychology

Tuesday 19th December 2023

- Festive Family Films - Katy Wareham-Morris, Media & Culture
- Christmas, Covered. All the Small Things: Communicating the Bigger Picture - Lou Aimes-Hill, Media & Culture

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