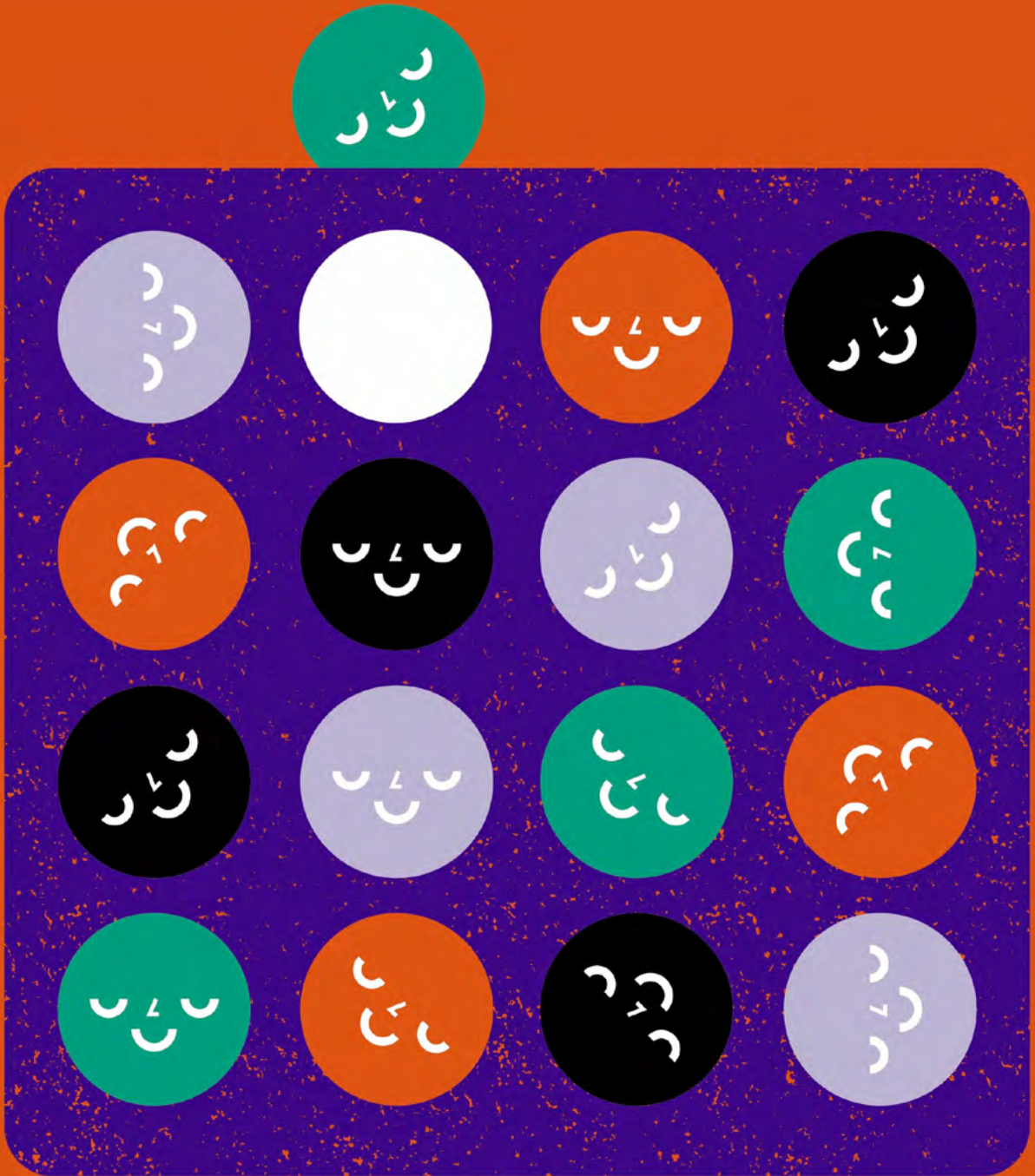


Community

How communities play a pivotal role both within and outside the University



University of
Chester



Everyone has a place ...

ACH1EVE

Contents

Page 4	Page 16
Chester Students' Union: Empowering Students, Fostering Communities, and Celebrating Diversity	Alumni Book Club
Page 6	Page 17
Charities and Community Fundraising	The Alumni Archive
Page 8	Page 18
The University of Chester Law School	Work Based Learning
Page 10	Page 20
What does community mean to me?	Graduate Outcomes Survey
Page 12	Page 21
My Chester Story; Llinos Edwards	Team spotlight: Outreach Team
Page 14	Page 22
Community Career Change	Alumni snapshots
	Page 23
	One to watch

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Chester Students' Union: Empowering Students, Fostering Communities, and Celebrating Diversity

Page 4

The University of Chester Law School

Page 8

Cover Art

By Claudia Gambles 2023

The Alumni Archive

Page 17

Contributors



Rebecca Lees (2012)

Becky graduated from the University of Chester in 2012 after studying Law with Journalism before taking on the role of Chester Students' Union Vice-president. She went on to study her Masters in Theology, Media and Communication whilst working for the University. In 2018 she joined the Sustainability team at Britain's Favourite Baker, Warburtons.



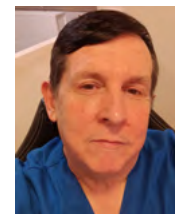
Kim Wright (2015)

Kim graduated in 2015 after studying Drama, Theatre Studies, and Events Management. After completing an internship with The Clatterbridge Cancer Charity during her time at university, Kim then went on to work for them full time after graduation. Since then Kim has gone on to work at multiple charities and is now the Community Fundraising Executive for the North West at the Children's Air Ambulance.



Llinos Edwards (2022)

Llinos Edwards recently completed a Masters in Special Educational Needs and Disability from the University of Chester and achieved a Distinction. Her studies gave her a detailed understanding of inclusive practice and its application to education and society, particularly in terms of behaviour and autism. She also completed a Postgraduate Certificate in Autism and holds a First Class (with Hons) in Early Childhood Studies. She is also a member of the Children and Childhoods Research Group at Chester and was awarded with the Susan M. Chance (St Peter's, Saltley) Prize in 2021.



Vincent Gibbons (2013)

Vincent Gibbons earned a Diploma of Higher Education in Nursing from the University of Chester's Leighton campus in 2013. In 2014 he was awarded a BSc (Hons) in Nursing, after furthering his studies while working as school nurse. He has since gone on to work in geriatric, end of life and dementia nursing.

Editor's note



Welcome to the 2023 issue of ACH1EVE - the official magazine for University of Chester graduates and alumni.

In this year's edition we are focusing on the theme of community. Our incredible front cover is designed by a current third year Graphic Design student, inspired by the game Connect Four, celebrating individuality within a community. You can read more about her illustration on the back page.

Community is at the heart of our Chester stories, from being a part of societies to now being a part of our amazing alumni community. Within this edition we hear from current students, alumni and staff who share their own stories of how the University of Chester community has affected them. I hope that you enjoy reading their fascinating perspectives and achievements.

If you would like to contribute to the magazine, or if you have a particular subject you would like us to cover, please get in touch. We would love to hear from you!

Olivia Atterbury Editor, ACH1EVE

A message from the Vice-Chancellor

A warm welcome to the 2023 issue of ACH1EVE, the official magazine for University of Chester graduates.

Community is at the heart of what we are about here at Chester, so I am delighted to introduce you to this edition of ACH1EVE which features community as its theme. We feature some wonderful personal accounts from graduates of the University in all different stages of their careers and the impact they have on their communities, including Vincent who undertook a complete career change after 30 years in journalism to become a School Nurse.

I am so proud of the work undertaken by staff and students in our Chester Law School by helping to support our communities

through the award winning 'Chester Community Law Project'. It's also wonderful to hear from our outgoing Chester Students' Union President on the super campaign work they have undertaken this last academic year in response to the Cost-of-Living Crisis, which was shortlisted for a national award.

I am very excited to see the Alumni team discovering and cataloguing our extensive archive collection which all comes from donations from former graduates like yourselves. I look very much forward to seeing the project develop and to discover more hidden gems.

I do hope you enjoy reading all about our wonderful community activities,

achievements and impact and I also hope you are able to engage with our brand-new Alumni book club!

I look forward to engaging further with the amazing alumni community that we have here at the University, having now reached over 100,000 alumni, and thank you for your continued support.

Professor Eunice Simmons
Vice-Chancellor
and Principal



CHESTER STUDENTS' UNION: EMPOWERING STUDENTS, FOSTERING COMMUNITIES, AND CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

The University experience is a journey for students that goes beyond the academic experience. It is a time for personal growth, self-discovery, and building lifelong connections. At the heart of the University of Chester's vibrant campus community stands the Chester Students' Union, an integral part of student life. The Union plays a pivotal role in empowering students, fostering supportive communities, celebrating diverse cultures, serving as the principal representation channel for students, and providing invaluable academic advice. Through its dedication to inclusivity and student-led initiatives, Chester Students' Union has become an essential pillar of the University's thriving community and embedding the Citizen Student Strategy into student life.

Recognising the importance of building connections and fostering a sense of belonging, the Chester Students' Union places great emphasis on creating and supporting student-led societies. These societies are important in instilling a sense of belonging within the university community, offering students a multitude of opportunities to connect with like-minded individuals, pursue shared interests, and explore new passions. From academic societies focused on specific disciplines to cultural, sports, and hobby-based groups, the Union provides a diverse

range of student-led societies, ensuring that every student can find their place and develop friendships beyond the lecture halls. By nurturing these communities and facilitating their growth, the Union contributes to a vibrant and inclusive campus environment where students can flourish both academically and socially.

Chester Students' Union serves as a powerful voice for students, advocating for their rights, needs, and interests within the University of Chester. By providing a platform for students to voice their concerns, ideas, and suggestions, the Union ensures that students have a say in shaping their own student experience. Through a range of democratic structures, such as Elected Officer representatives and a dedicated Student Council, the Union amplifies the collective voice of the student body, engaging with the University to bring about positive change at all levels of the University structure. It is through this collaborative approach that the Union empowers students to actively participate in decision-making processes, contributing to the continuous improvement of the University's academic and non-academic offerings.

The Union has also been able to enact change through my Cost-of-Living campaign, which was launched in September and aimed to create support for students during the

Cost-of-Living Crisis. This campaign saw all students supported with access to hot water and warm spaces, hot food and hot drinks, reduced pricing on washing machine facilities on campus, and the introduction of free sanitary product provisions across all campuses. A bespoke Cost-of-Living fund was also launched for a month, which students could apply for to get financial aid if they had been affected by the crisis. Through working collaboratively with the University on this campaign, our efforts placed us 2nd at the What Uni? Student Choice Awards 2023 for the submission-based Cost-of-Living award. It also served as a reminder of what collaborative working can look like between students and the University with support from the whole University community, from the students to the Senior Executive Team.

Chester Students' Union's event calendar is also filled with opportunities for students to come together and celebrate. In March, there was a Chestival event where over 1000 students got together to celebrate before the end of the Spring term. It was a free event with fairground rides, ice cream, food, and live music, and students valued how accessible the event was for everyone to enjoy in the sunshine. Our societies have also hosted a range of events within their communities this year too, with the Indian Society hosting a Holi event that saw an attendance of over 100

students. Other highlights from the year included Pride on Campus, Eid celebrations, and Nigerian Independence Day, all of which were run by students within their societies.

Chester Students' Union is striving to become a more dynamic students' union and create an environment that truly caters to the needs and aspirations of its members, fostering a stronger sense of community, representation, and academic support. The Union is currently on a journey to reinvigorate itself and make sure that it is keeping up to date with student needs and have just embarked on a 12-month change programme under Scott Farmer as the Change Director. It is becoming increasingly important with the ever-changing student demographics here at Chester to ensure that we provide a supportive environment for all. Partnership working with the University is going to be vital over the next year to guarantee a successful change programme.

During my journey at the University of Chester, I was given many opportunities to grow and develop personally and professionally through Chester Students' Union. As a student, the Union empowered me through the Student Voice Representative system, which paved the way for me to run for an Elected Officer position. As President, I have learnt so much about bettering the student experience, and how the



needs of different students can all feed into CSU's future. Working within such a fast-paced and changing organisation, I have learnt to deal with adapting to change quite well, and the support of both the University and the Union have been integral to this. In the midst of all the change, I am very proud of the great work that could still be achieved by the Cost-of-Living campaign this year, as it has created change and offered lasting support to our students.

This year has allowed the Union to refocus on what is important, and how we continue to foster supportive environments for all of our students. I am confident that with the right leadership in place and a roadmap for the future, Chester Students' Union can continue to thrive for years to come.

By Lauren Friel, Chester Students' Union President 2022-2023

Charities and Community Fundraising

Written by KIM WRIGHT

My journey into the charity sector began during my second year of university when I was engrossed in my studies of Drama, Theatre Studies, and Events Management. It was during this time that an unexpected email landed in my inbox. I received an email from The Clatterbridge Cancer Charity, offering a three-month events internship – a chance that seemed tailor-made for me. The excitement was palpable as I read through the details of the internship and envisioned myself contributing to a cause I deeply cared about.

But as fate would have it, a mix of circumstances led to a heart-sinking realisation – I had missed the application deadline. The disappointment that followed was a bitter pill to swallow. As I replayed the missed opportunity, I knew that dwelling on regrets wouldn't get me anywhere. It was time to shift my focus from what had gone wrong to what I could do to make things right.

I began to stay actively engaged with The Clatterbridge Cancer Charity – following their updates on social media, subscribing to newsletters, and

keeping a watchful eye on their announcements. I reached out to them, expressing my sincere interest and explaining the unfortunate mishap, I hoped that my genuine passion and eagerness would resonate with them. To my amazement, the charity acknowledged my enthusiasm and granted me the opportunity to take on the internship! As the weeks unfolded, I found myself fully immersed in the realm of charity events.

This experience taught me the significance of seizing opportunities, even when the curtain seems to be falling. It highlighted the power of reaching out and expressing genuine intentions, as well as the value of second chances. My journey into the charity sector had not only begun with a missed beat but had also evolved into a harmonious melody, one that echoed the importance of resilience and the transformative magic of a heartfelt connection with a cause. A lesson that has aided me every year since.

My journey with the charity was nothing short of transformative. Even after donning the graduation gown and stepping out of the University, I

found myself drawn back to the world of giving, of making a meaningful impact. Volunteering had become more than just a phase; it was now an integral part of who I was.

In those initial months after graduation, when the future seemed both exciting and uncertain, destiny played its hand once again. The charity that had already been such a significant part of my journey posted a job opening – a chance to step into the world of fundraising as an assistant. The prospect was as daunting as it was thrilling, and it was my mentors who gently nudged me towards seizing this opportunity.

I took the leap, applied for the role, and to my sheer delight, I landed the job. Little did I know that this position would become the cornerstone of my career path, shaping my understanding of the charity sector in ways I could have never imagined. Those early days as a fundraising assistant were a whirlwind of learning and growth, a journey that unveiled to me the multifaceted world of volunteering, fundraising events, supporter care, community engagement, and so much more.



Kim taking part in the Arctic Survival Challenge

I gained a wealth of knowledge, each experience adding depth and dimension to my understanding of how charities function and create impact. It was in the detailed planning of fundraising events that I saw how communities come together to support a shared cause. It was in the interactions with supporters that I grasped the true essence of gratitude and stewardship. And it was in the collaborative efforts of community fundraising that I witnessed the incredible potential of collective action.

Fast forward to the present, and my journey has brought me to a new role – one that allows me to extend my passion even further. I am now the Community Fundraiser for the North West at the Children's Air Ambulance, a national charity that, while not as widely known in this region, carries an immense weight of purpose. This journey has taught me that the significance of communities and volunteers within charities is not just a concept; it's a living reality.

Communities hold within them the power to uplift and change lives. Volunteers, selflessly dedicating their time and skills, create the gears that propel charitable endeavours forward. The magic happens when individuals are given the opportunity to intertwine passion with purpose, to create an impact that extends far beyond our own selves.

In this journey, I've learned that charities aren't just entities; they are living organisms fuelled by the heartbeats of communities and the dedication of volunteers. As I work to make a difference in the lives of others, I am reminded of how far I've come and how much further there is to go. And from my perspective, the intersection of communities, volunteers, and charities is a realm of boundless potential, a realm where a single spark of generosity can ignite a fire of positive change.

It's been an absolute privilege to immerse myself in the world of charity,

to lend my efforts to remarkable organisations like The Clatterbridge Cancer Charity, North West Cancer Research, Stick 'n' Step, and Children's Air Ambulance. I am very much looking forward to seeing what the future holds.



Bucket Collections

The University of Chester Law School

The University of Chester Law School is an established department offering a range of courses in the heart of the city. Based at Wheeler, Law students learn in Chester's 'legal quarter', sitting right next door to Chester Crown Court and close to Chester Magistrates' Court, and in close proximity to most of Chester's legal firms and barristers' chambers.

The University of Chester Legal Advice Centre houses five separate projects. The first three, the Chester Legal Advice Clinic (dealing with Family and Consumer Law issues), the Enterprise Clinic (dealing with Commercial Law queries) and the Employment Law Clinic involve student volunteers directly advising clients from the local community on their legal issues.

The Legal Advice Clinic (offering free legal advice to members of the local community) was set up in the 2021-22 academic year and from a standing start in that year, it has now progressed to assisting 48 individuals by way of letter of advice or signposting to other sources of advice during the current academic year. The total number of queries received during 2022-23 increased by 57.4% compared to the previous year, showing an increased demand in the community. Students take pride in playing their part in meeting the huge demand for legal advice, all whilst enhancing their professional skills and benefitting from being under the supervision of qualified solicitors who volunteer their time to assist with client cases.

Students have also recently been doing several school visits to deliver sessions to various year groups. One of these

was a suite of three sessions to a group of Year 10 students from Beamont Collegiate Academy in partnership with Higher Horizons. The sessions covered, Human Rights, Criminal Law, and Environmental Protection.

Beamont Collegiate Academy said: "All presenters were extremely knowledgeable and passionate about the chosen topics. Presenters were reactive to students' questions and requests - even including a bit about manslaughter as our students seemed to have a fixation with asking questions about this! All presenters were engaging and polite. They managed to maintain professionalism throughout whilst also allowing humour and rapport with the children. Our students gained a lot from speaking to university students and learning first-hand what the experience is like."

The Chester Community Law Project

The Chester Community Law Project (CCLP) encompasses a variety of projects that are all entitled 'Reach Out', reflecting the projects' aims of reaching out to, and impacting the lives of, members of local, regional, and in some cases national, communities. Every Reach Out project is headed up by a Student Project Manager who leads the student team on the project's activities. The project sees approximately 40 Law students from across all year groups committing their time to researching, designing, and delivering interactive sessions, videos and leaflets aimed at empowering members of our local communities as well as raising aspirations for local

school pupils. The projects aim to help a wide number of communities ranging from school pupils to foodbank users, doctors' surgery patients, mothers facing discrimination in the workplace and older generations.

The work done by students as part of the CCLP was celebrated earlier this year when they were recognised for the Best Contribution by a Team of Students in the 2023 LawWorks and Attorney General's Student Pro Bono Awards. The Awards celebrate the best pro bono activities - legal advice or representation provided free of charge in the public interest - undertaken by Law students and Law Schools from across the UK.

Students from the University were nominated in three of the five awards categories and alongside the win, were highly commended by the judges for the Best New Pro Bono Activity. The commendation celebrated partnership work with Pregnant Then Screwed, a charity that seeks to tackle the root causes of maternity discrimination and promote the rights of women.

The Best Contribution by a Team of Students award win highlights the outstanding contribution to pro bono activities of five students involved in the Immigration Project this year, by assisting refugees to work, study and settle in the UK.

The student volunteers assist a Legal Aid caseworker in their life-changing work with refugee clients, over 80% of whom have been forced from their homes by the war in Syria, in supporting the drafting of applications, as well as providing advice and guidance. Their support helps to

ensure they are provided with the assistance they need - and a decision on their future more quickly.

Annabel Priest, who is one of the initiative's Student Project Managers and was also nominated for the Best Contribution by an Individual Student award, said: "The success of this project has pivoted on the willingness of others to help those most in need. It has been an absolute pleasure to manage this project alongside my fellow student Brad, and I hope that this success continues long after our graduation later this year.

"Thank you to Simon Clark from Eastgate Chambers, without whom we would not have been able to achieve this and thank you to both Megan Cowan and Andrea Todd from Chester Law School for all of the encouragement they have provided to us in reminding us that we are far more capable than we realise."

Andrea Todd, Associate Professor of Active Citizenship and Director of Pro Bono and Community Engagement at Chester Law School said: "It is wonderful to have the hard work, dedication and passion of our student volunteers recognised for such a prestigious award by such an esteemed panel of judges. We are incredibly proud of the achievements of our student volunteers each and every day."

The University of Chester Law School would not be able to run these

projects without the incredibly kind support of the volunteer solicitors from local, regional and national law firms, to whom the Law School are very grateful for their time, energy, expertise and kindness in supervising the students' endeavours.

If any of our alumni are currently in a legal role and would like to give something back to the Chester community (at the same time as helping to develop the next generation of lawyers), please contact legaladviceclinic@chester.ac.uk. You can also get in touch to find out more about taking on a volunteer role to supervise our clinics or other pro bono projects. You don't need to be based in Chester as supervision can be done over Teams, and you can give as little or as much time as suits you. Ideally you would have at least two years' PQE/call, but if not, if you have a colleague in your work environment with two years' PQE/call who could check over your work, this could also work well.



What does Community mean to me?

Written by
REBECCA LEES



Growing up in Burnley in Lancashire I lived in a fractured community. In the summer of 2001, the town erupted in violent scenes that saw cars and buildings go up in flames. It was a culmination of many years of simmering racial tensions, poverty, and segregation. What happened on that warm weekend in June, sparked widespread outrage yet ironically inspired the pathway for the rest of my life.

In the years following the disturbances, national and local organisations came together to address the deep-rooted issues that led to the violence in the hope of harnessing greater community cohesion. Whilst it's still up for debate to what extent the collective action made a difference to the community in Burnley, I learnt three fundamental lessons during this restorative period.

Building strong communities requires us all to play our part

Creating inclusive spaces where individuals from diverse backgrounds can come together to debate and tell stories which builds empathy, respect and understanding. It's through these interactions that prejudices can be challenged and stereotypes addressed

When I grow up, I want to make a difference

Learning these lessons in my late teens was crucial for the decisions I would go on to make. Like, what University shall I

go to? Clearly, Chester with its wide range of courses, volunteering opportunities and community initiatives was my first choice, and I loved every minute!

Following three years of an unforgettable student experience I was elected as Vice President of the Students' Union (2012). In this role, I channelled my early learnings by making it my mission to listen carefully to and represent marginal groups and support these students to use their platform to bring about change in their university community. One of my proudest moments; supporting a second-year mental health nursing student and her lecturer launch the first university wide campaign about mental health leading to wide range change in support for students and a national Student Nurse award for the change maker to boot - shout out to Julie Sheen & Lisa King!

On the flip side, a challenge of the role was maintaining cohesion within the local community of the Garden Quarter. Working in partnership with the Council, residents, and the University we all wanted to foster a shared community where each person felt welcomed, and their contribution valued. Our annual community clean ups demonstrated the care and pride we had for our local surroundings and other events helped to break down barriers between students and the local population. Although relations were positive, we were always battling with the over excited students going out or coming home from a night out! Like any community project, you can't always guarantee consistent cohesion, but you can give your best and take people on the journey with you.

So here we are in 2023. I now work for Warburtons, Britain's Favourite Baker leading on sustainability and

community projects. If you asked me when I was VP whether I'd ever join a corporate business (as opposed to a charitable organisation or education provider), I would have said no! Yet another vital lesson I've learnt is that good, responsible businesses can make a difference and boy do we have impact in our communities! Just this year we will donate 1.25 million products to local groups and breakfast clubs; donate thousands to community groups; raise millions for Cancer Research and run two excellent education programmes. For the teachers reading this, check out our Bake The Most for Life free online resources for Primary and Secondary teachers and children - you can thank me later!

I am incredibly proud to work for Warburtons. I am proud that what we do is part of our DNA, it's been our bread and butter since day one. I am proud that we are not only encouraged but expected to give back to our communities.

I am proud that my career is aligned with the values and pathway I've set out to follow - to always make a difference.

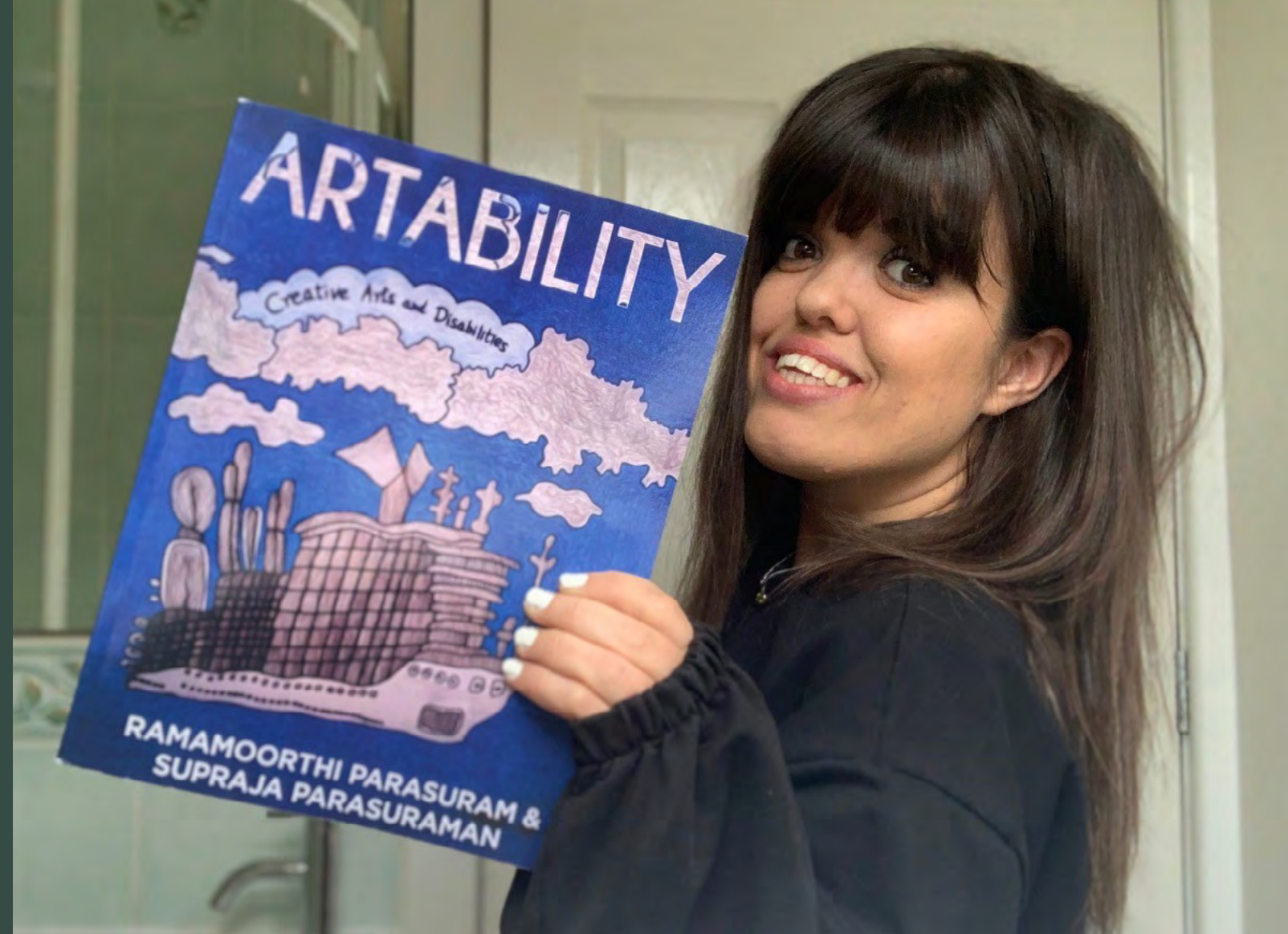
So back to the essay question – what does community mean to me?

For me, communities are the lifeblood of society. They bring people together, foster connections, and create a sense of belonging. I believe strong, united communities are the key to building a society that thrives economically, socially, and emotionally.

And at a time where society in the UK is under increased economic pressure, political division, and social isolation it's now more important than ever that we all do our bit to make a difference today and every day that follows.



MY CHESTER STORY: Llinos Edwards



When I was little, I was always aware that I was quite 'different'. I knew that I looked physically different to everyone else, and whatever I did or wherever I went, I'd always be reminded of it, be that consciously or subconsciously. I was born with a common form of dwarfism, and I was always more of a shy character in school. It would take me ages to feel more comfortable in a space and it was always harder when I was being followed and observed by every eye in every room. If someone told me then that I'd go on to study at university and pursue my love of education, inclusion, and diversity, I'd probably have thought that they were just silly. I never thought of myself as being capable of such a thing, as if it just wasn't an option for me, but life is unpredictable.

During my first month in Sixth Form, it was one of my lecturers who had asked me if I had considered going to university. I didn't know how to respond; I was just trying to get my head around what had been asked. It was from this conversation that I started to consider what I wanted to do at university and what it would be like. I was also undergoing some complex surgery on my legs at the same time for limb lengthening. At the time of writing, I have now undergone 16 operations. This process involves breaking the bone and applying an external fixator which is pinned to the bone. It is an intensive process and with the support of the frame and a strict program, I have manually lengthened both my arms and legs by 1mm per day, allowing new bone to form over time. It is highly intensive and due to its

sensitive nature, much of the procedure restricted me to a wheelchair, greatly limiting my mobility, muscle strength and independence. As the bone grew stronger, I had to continually adjust to a new height, and length and I had to regain muscle strength and learn to walk again, repeating this process for every surgery.

During this time, the University of Chester came up quite a few times and I was really impressed by their Faculty for Education and Children's Services. Following a very sunny and enjoyable open day that summer, I knew that this is where I wanted to study. Having to balance my studies alongside my surgeries was always a significant challenge. Although this process was becoming 'normal' to me at the time, I realised the heavy

pressures of weekly hospital appointments and physical therapy, complications and complex surgeries alongside full-time education were an intense combination to balance as I didn't live a typical 'student life'. I was in and out of the hospital, working unconventional hours and putting every bit of spare time into my studies, recovery, and physiotherapy. During hospital stays, I would be studying there to ensure I was putting absolutely everything I could into my studies, and I managed to fulfil every placement opportunity. The support I had from the University during this time was amazing and I couldn't be more grateful. To achieve a First-Class degree and contribute to various publications felt immensely rewarding. It made all the hard work worth it.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at the University of Chester and my own experiences from working in education, inclusion and diversity, furthered my passion to pursue a Masters in Special Educational Needs and Disability at the University of Chester. Whilst undergoing the same sort of surgery for my arms and working for the Test, Trace and Protect service in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, my studies have provided me with a renewed passion for early education and inclusion, as well as the conceptual frameworks and research methods relevant to SEND to translate theory into practice. My final thesis explored the impact of practitioners' perspectives on inclusion and SEND, as well as the associated challenges and support systems, earning a Distinction overall.

I'm not sure if my time at the University of Chester is over just yet, but the support I've had throughout both my undergraduate and postgraduate studies has been incredible. From all the placement, research, volunteering and employment opportunities, the encouraging learning environment at Chester has provided me with so much. I particularly want to thank Dr Jane Bulkeley, Tracey Patterson, Dr Chandrika Devorakonda and Dr Paula Hamilton who have all been so incredibly supportive throughout my operations and studies. I have been provided with so many skills and experience to pursue my passion for inclusion and diversity and for that, I am immensely grateful.



Community Career Change

Vincent Gibbons has been a registered adult nurse for more than a decade, having gained a Diploma of Higher Education and a first-class Honours Degree from the University of Chester. Here he looks at how he swapped one career in the community for another, having made a dramatic career change in his fifth decade.

As I walked through the streets of Sandbach one Saturday afternoon in the Spring of 2004, I was approached by an elderly lady who asked me if I was still a reporter with The Chronicle in the town. Not only was this a tribute to the fact that I was still recognisable through the ravages of more than 20 years, but also to how much journalism had been a local, community-based career in the 1980s. Back in those days I had lived and breathed my local community, attending every gathering and event, formal and informal, trivial and important, to bring pretty much every jot and title to the press and ultimately the streets of Sandbach.

As it happened, by then I had long since moved on from the Chester Chronicle's satellite office in Sandbach and although I still lived in the town, was the Deputy Editor of the Staffordshire Newsletter, happy in my work and blissfully unaware that within five years I would be on an altogether different career path, but one still leading to the heart of the community.

One day while I was away from my Stafford office base, one of the advertising reps felt ill and after a lie

down, drove home to Wolverhampton. It was not too far a trip and no one thought much more of it, other than to wish him a speedy recovery. That was until he was diagnosed as having had a stroke.

As a direct result of this unfortunate event, I decided to become the office's qualified first aider. I thought it would be a good idea to maintain my skills between three-yearly requalification's and decided to join St John Ambulance. I enjoyed the community events and progression I made within the organisation so much that I took the decision to leave journalism after 30 years and train to become a nurse.

I wisely decided to become a Health Care Assistant at Leighton Hospital in Crewe first, to see if I liked health care and it liked me, and in the Spring of 2010, I was fortunate enough to become a member of the March cohort of the University's nursing intake based at Leighton.

It was very much a case of exchanging a community-based career to entering some outstanding community-based training. My first placement was with an organisation which supported adults with learning disabilities in their homes and communities and I soon had the privilege of working with and learning from the District Nursing team in the communities in and around Holmes Chapel and Middlewich. There were some sobering encounters on this placement, even for someone with three decades' experience as a journalist. I witnessed first hand men and women

battling cancer and debilitating diabetes in their own homes, while the nurses used every clinical tool at their disposal to battle the scourge of community acquired pressure injuries.

But some learning experiences were not so serious. The second time I accompanied a district nurse to change the leg and foot dressing of an elderly gentleman in the rural retreat that was his home, I was invited to take his existing dressing off, cleanse the wound and put a new dressing on. Slowly and nervously, I began my task, with my anxiety not being assuaged by the look of apprehension on the gentleman's face. I rolled the dressing down from his knee to his ankle and just as I thought I was doing a half decent job my patient let out what can only be described as a blood curdling scream. I almost jumped out of my skin and was overcome with equal portions of horror, sympathy, and regret. As I spluttered over my fifth straight apology in as many minutes, the gentleman and nurse could contain themselves no longer and crumpled in laughter. I was the umpteenth student nurse victim of a pre-arranged prank, designed to scare a trainee medic. And boy, did it work.

The learning opportunities in the community continued throughout my nurse training at the University of Chester and I was so taken by them that I attempted to gain my first nursing role in the community. I was fortunate enough to be successful and was delighted to utilise and develop my community nursing skills as a School Nurse.

The Alumni Book Club

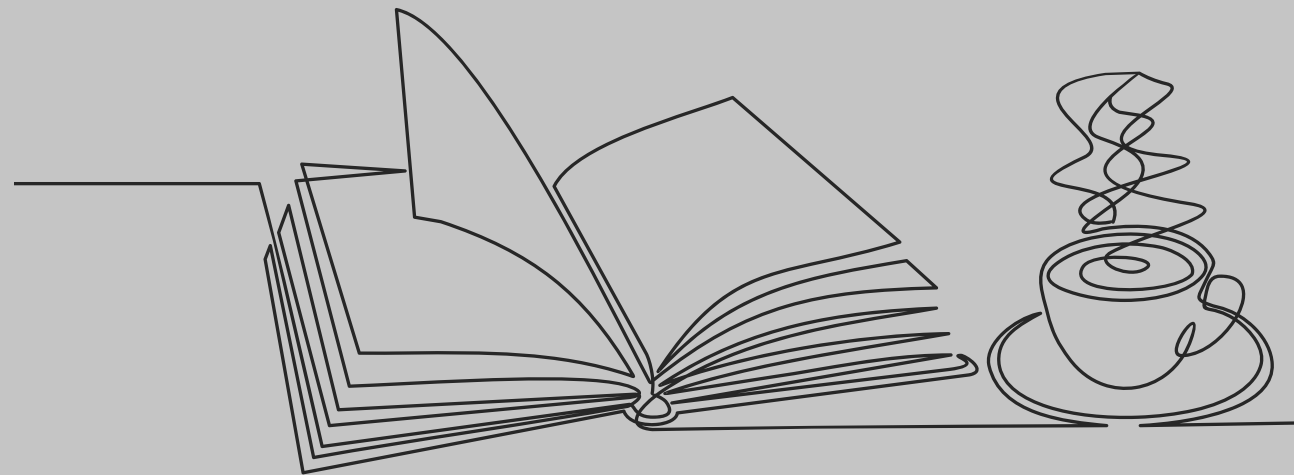
We would like to introduce you to our brand-new alumni book club! We know that many of our alumni love to read. That's why we've set up the Alumni Book Club. It's the perfect way for you to talk about books with fellow alumni around the world.

Try something new today and connect with fellow alumni to read and discuss books. There is no cost to join, you just have to source a copy of the books. It will be hosted online, so you can join in from anywhere.

The first book will be preselected but after that a vote will be held regularly so members can choose themselves. One book will be read every two months. If you have on average 30 minutes a week to read you should be able to finish each book. There is no required level of participation in group discussions; so, if you don't have time to read one of the books that's okay.

The first meeting will be held in January, and you can find out about our first book below!

If you would like to join the alumni book club – please email alumni@chester.ac.uk to register.



MEMPHIS TARA M. STRINGFELLOW

FAMILY CAN HOLD YOU TOGETHER. AND TEAR YOU APART.

Joan was only a child the last time she visited Memphis. She doesn't remember the bustle of Beale Street or the smell of honeysuckle as she climbs the porch steps to her aunt's house. But when the front door opens, she does remember her cousin Derek.

As Joan learns more about her family's past, she discovers she's not the only North woman to have experienced great hurt. But she also sees their resilience and courage, how these extraordinary women fry green tomatoes and braid hair and sing all the while.

Joan can't change the past, but she can change her future. It's time to find her own song to sing.

Please be aware that this book covers sensitive topics including racism, sexual abuse, and violence.



THE ALUMNI ARCHIVE

Chester is home to an abundance of rich history from **Fortress Diva, the Roman invasion, the erection of the city Walls by the Romans, the siege of Chester during the English Civil War, not to mention the history that is held within the Cathedral.**

We are excited to share with you the development of the Alumni Archive, which is now held in the holding cells below Chester Crown Courts in the Wheeler Building. Chester Crown Court was built in 1801 and designed by

architect, Thomas Harrison. The court has seen many high profile cases such as those of Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, known as the Moors Murderers. In April 1966, Myra Hindley was held in one of the cells.

Now the cells are home to archives from across the University including our Alumni Community archive, that has been built over 100 years with many artefacts donated by you, our dedicated community.

Soon we will be at work cataloguing and organising the many boxes that have been carefully and tirelessly moved by our Facilities team. We are excited to keep you up to date with developments.

The Alumni Relations Office would like to thank Andy Compton (Head Of Strategic Space Planning), Richard Jarvis (Site Assistant) and anyone involved with the archive move for their support and organisation of this project.



↑ Botanical slides from the Hooper estate

↓ Personal letters from John L. Bradbury Vice-principal 1951-65



The holding cells ↑

Alumni team cataloging the archive ↓



Work Based Learning

BY RACHEL MORRISON

(Placement Co-ordinator within Work Based Learning)

Did you undertake a Work Based Learning placement during your studies at Chester? If so, did you gain employment as a result of it? Did it confirm your choice of career or steer you into another profession entirely? Did you learn skills that you now use in your present employment or did you make contacts who have been helpful in your career goals?



Many students opt to take the Work Based Learning module in their second year, if their degree course allows it. Some degrees do offer their own experiential learning module. The placement period for Work Based Learning takes place during the summer term and lasts for five weeks. All students must undertake a minimum of 150 hours on placement. Some students try to find a placement that ties in with their degree course. However, this does not have to be the case and some students find very rewarding placements working in sectors that they had not considered before.

Robyn Yates (2020) graduated in Forensic Biology and undertook her Work Based Learning placement as a Technician in the Biological Sciences department at the University of Chester. She has fond memories of looking after the frogs that were kept in tanks in a room at the top of the building. She also got to handle voles out in a field, whilst checking them over for parasites. She felt that the placement gave her a chance to learn skills which she could use in multiple career fields. Robyn said "This was my first job in which I felt a part of a team, this allowed me to gain valuable experience with regard to cooperation and communication". Robyn is now employed by the University in the Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans, where she has to liaise and communicate with a number of different stakeholders.

One of Robyn's colleagues in the Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans, Lauren Graham (nee West) (2018) also did her Work Based Learning placement at the University. Lauren studied Business and her placement

was with LIS. Lauren helped staff the Helpdesk on different university sites, as well as conducting library tours, sorting books, activating library accounts and maintaining the upkeep of the library. Lauren felt that the placement gave her an insight into how the university works and that helped her also get a job at the University, as she was familiar with processes, such as how to manage Portal. As Executive Assistant to Professor Alan Finnegan, Lauren said that "it did help me prepare, it provided me with a variety of skills that were transferable in my current role. I think that doing my placement within the university helped me to get a job, as I was already familiar with the processes and policies".

Steph Taylor (2020) studied Digital Photography with Radio Production, at the Warrington campus and undertook her placement, as a photographer, at Cycling Projects Warrington. "I photographed lots of different events across the North-West from big cycling events to small disability cycling events. I came up with new PR ideas and got to put press releases together and create newsletters using the photographs I took". As a wheelchair user Steph even got to try out an electronic bike which could be added to her wheelchair. Three years later she now has one of her own, which if she had not been asked to photograph the event, she would not have been aware such a product existed. Steph felt the placement taught her so much, gave her confidence and showed her exactly what she was capable of, as well as giving her the opportunity to try new things. Steph feels that placements allow you to learn about yourself and what you want to do in the future.

If you undertook a Work Based Learning placement, we would love to hear from you, especially if you gained employment at the organisation that you were placed at. Please consider completing an online [WBL Alumni Case Study Interview](#). Equally you may now want to consider offering a placement to a University of Chester student giving them the opportunities that you had. If you would like more information please contact wbl@chester.ac.uk or find more information at <https://www1.chester.ac.uk/work-based-learning>.



Above and across: Photo of Lauren Graham (on the left) and Robyn Yates (on the right) at the Flag Raising Ceremony outside the Binks Building in recognition of Armed Forces Day.

Photo of Steph on her Work Placement at Cycling Projects



@WBLChester



**Use your
graduate
voice**

**Let us know
what you are
doing after
university**

**Complete
your Graduate
Outcomes
survey**

You'll be contacted 15 months after your course

Make sure your contact details are up to date
Graduates: www.chester.ac.uk/alumni Students: eVision via Portal

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

The giving of time and funds is part of the fabric of who we are and has been since the beginning of our institution – starting with a city subscription to support the founding of a College, and students volunteering their time and talent to build our Chapel.

Awards, Bursaries and Scholarships are critical in helping to support the next generation of students and graduates. We've been thrilled to be able to support students through many of these, including the ACH1EVE Fund, The Emma Galton Award and many more.

Funding an award or bursary, as an individual or an organisation, is an incredible way to support our current students and recent graduates, so that they can reach their full potential during their time with us, and beyond. There are many ways in which you can help a University of Chester student or graduate, by giving your time, talent or by regular giving.

We can't do this without you! You can find out more about how you can continue your Chester story here chester.ac.uk/giving

Team spotlight Outreach team

When you tell people that you work in Outreach, they often have questions... the first of which is usually 'what is outreach exactly?'. It's one of those terms that is used as a catch-all for any kind of community activity, and as a result, it can be tricky to define – but answering questions is our bread and butter, so we'll give it a go.

The primary aim of the Outreach team at the University of Chester is to support everyone that we work with in making informed, empowered decisions about their future.

Early Summer is our busiest time of year, with almost non-stop events scheduled until the end of the school term in late July. Considering the range of questions we'll be asked over that period can be a good way to understand the breadth of our work. Whether it's primary school students who want to know if you have to do homework at university, or an adult returning to education that needs to know about childcare support whilst studying, people want to know what university is for, how it works, and if it will work for them. For many, when they first meet us, we don't just speak for our university, but all universities.

We work with two specific but overlapping audiences – the first and wider are the schools, colleges and organisations in our local community. The second, which can be found amongst the first, are those from demographics that are statistically less likely to progress to university than their more privileged counterparts. One of the hardest things about our work is the knowledge that we can't fully address these socio-economic imbalances. Working with our

communities to try and do so is both a challenge and a privilege.

Our activity operates in four stages. Research, planning, delivery and evaluation. We use complex data sets to establish where our work is most required. We work closely with

our colleagues from primary, secondary, and further education to meet the needs of their students, and support them in meeting the needs of their stakeholders, which are as diverse as ours. Providing support for teachers, advisors, parents and caregivers as well as students is key. Once the whirlwind of June and July is over, we'll sit down, reflect, and refine our offer, to make sure that it is as effective as it can be, and ready to go for September.

We're practical people and we prefer to show our communities what university can offer, rather than just telling them about it – it is the most efficient and enjoyable way to ensure that those that wish to progress to university feel confident in doing so. Every year we welcome thousands of visitors from across Chester, Cheshire West, Warrington, The Wirral, North Wales, Shropshire, Staffordshire and beyond to university sites. Our current students are our richest resource and we involve them in our events whenever we can, as they are the best possible people for our visitors to meet.

Each school year group have a focus, depending on the decisions they are about to make, and whilst university is at



the heart of our activities, we explore all possible options, including employment, apprenticeships and further training. We always look for the most engaging way to share this information, and put a genuine emphasis on each individual's interests, skills and aspirations. The variety and creativity of outreach is what we enjoy the most.

That creativity isn't just a perk of the job however, but a necessity, with careers services increasingly limited in schools, colleges and the community, the ability to flex to fit the needs of those around us is essential.

To return to the question of 'What do Outreach do?', there's no typical week, we might be playing a game about post-16 qualifications one day, supporting one of our many departments in showing our visitors how to use a 3-D scanner, or examine a medieval skeleton the next. It's complicated, challenging, sometimes difficult and often wonderful work.

We'll finish with the most Outreach sentence of all, if you have any questions, or would like to work with us, please don't hesitate to ask, that's what we're here for.

 @UoC_Outreach

 @UoC_Outreach

 www1.chester.ac.uk/departments/outreach

Alumni snapshots

Bryan Lewis (2023) achieved a Bachelor's in Photography and a Master's in Fine Art - the culmination of eight years of part-time study at the University of Chester. Having left school at 14, Bryan went on to work in a hospital X-ray department, Kodak and then the University of Liverpool, managing the Zoology Department Photographic Unit, until he took early retirement in 2000. After taking evening classes to gain further education, Bryan decided to take on the challenge of higher education. He said "Initially it was a challenge to be back in education. How would a 70-year-old fit in with young students? It was daunting to start with, but I came to love being with the students and helping them with my technical experience." At university, he faced many challenges – two surgical procedures as well as COVID-19. Despite these obstacles Bryan achieved his Master's and is looking forward to exhibiting more of his work. Bryan, who is turning 78 this year, will also be carrying out duties in his role as a Freeman of the City of Chester, an honour that goes back several hundred years in his family.

Alumna, **Rebecca Brett (2020)**, studied Natural Hazard Management with International Development Studies. Rebecca was inspired to choose a different course than originally planned after attending an open day at the University and seeing the enthusiasm from the Geography and International Development Department. After finishing her degree Rebecca went on to study for her Master's at Durham University. Then moving on to work for COCO, a UK-based charity with the mission of providing sustainable sources of quality education to children living in poor and marginalised communities. As part of her role, Rebecca was able to visit Kenya last year and see the programmes first hand, she said "This



was an incredible experience that I wish everyone could have as it taught me a lot about my job, but also the importance of community, and the potential for innovation through education and agriculture." Rebecca said of her experience since graduating: "None of this would have been possible without the support I received during my time at the University of Chester, so thank you!"

Alumnus **Louis Hill (1994)** who studied Geography & History, pursued

a career in PR after he graduated. Early on Louis worked at Cohn & Wolfe, working with clients such as Visa International, Barclays Bank, Pedigree Petfoods and Reebok. After that Louis was the first external PR specialist appointed by Marks & Spencer to help manage the media during a turbulent time of change for the business. Later going on to be appointed as head of UK communications at Kellogg's. In 2008, Louis decided to step away from the corporate world and set up Source PR to deliver PR support to SMEs

across the North-West. The business has won numerous awards for its communication campaigns and has now grown its offer to provide clients with a broader range of services including social media management and other digital marketing services. Source PR is now one of the region's leading PR & digital agencies supporting a range of organisations across the UK with their PR, social media management and digital communications.

One to watch



Final year student, Lyndon Howson, is studying Zoology and will graduate next year. He told us all about his experience so far...

Starting university at the age of 24, I didn't realise just how many opportunities studying at Chester was going to bring about for me. After several years of building a career, leaving work to return to education was a drastic change for me, and I came into university with the mindset that I'm going to make the most of my time here and seize any opportunity that comes my way. Fortunately, this mindset really did bring about a range of opportunities, from being an academic representative in my first year, to being The Project Leader

for the Hedgehog Friendly Campus Project in my second year, with this project supporting my Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award journey and supporting me in producing a project proposal for a PhD. While settling into my first year, I reached out to lecturers, volunteer groups, and course mates to involve myself in university groups, from helping at the University allotment to becoming the student representative for my course year. By connecting with these people, I was offered the opportunity to become the project leader for the Hedgehog Friendly Project, something that I have always shown deep interest towards. Since undertaking this role, I have been able to learn new skills and build up a growing team of over 100 student volunteers who actively engage and participate with the project. We have made leaps and bounds within the past year, with a record number of hedgehogs being recorded on campus alongside other wildlife. My commitment to this project was made even more memorable when I presented the project with my fellow project leader at the Volunteering Awards in May this year. My volunteering journey with the University also supported my Duke of Edinburgh Award, which enabled me to receive my Gold award at Buckingham Palace in May. What made this experience even more

special was that I was chosen as the Young Speaker, representing all the Gold Award holders of the past year, describing my journey, and congratulating everyone who took part in the award. This opportunity meant that I spoke on stage alongside His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh, and Lioness Jill Scott. I was able to express my passion for wildlife and the increasing need for conservation in the UK, and how even small steps can create profound effects on nature, using the Hedgehog Friendly Campus Project as evidence for this. Without the support and opportunities of the University, these achievements would likely not have occurred, and have paved the way forward for my desire to continue with education upon graduation, onto a PhD. With my PhD being inspired from my work with hedgehogs, my idea investigates the role of education providers when considering conservation management of hedgehogs. Reflecting over the past two years I can see how much support and opportunities the University has made possible for me. I plan on continuing my volunteering journey over my last year and into my future, as well as finalising my PhD proposal which I am very much looking forward to pursuing upon graduation.



Cover art by Claudia Gambles (2022)

This year, we are thrilled to have front cover artwork created by current Graphic Design student, Claudia Gambles. You can read more about her inspiration below...

"My illustration 'Everyone has a place...' is based around the game Connect Four and represents the theme of community. The counters represent the people and the board itself depicts a community; each gap is filled by a counter to show how there is room for everyone. The lilac, orange, green and black shades celebrate the individual identities within a group, whilst the colour palette as a whole represents the sense of belonging that comes with being part of a circle of people that understand and support one another."

ACH1EVE

/ə'tʃi:v/
verb

1. Successfully bring about or reach (a desired objective or result) by effort, skill or courage.

We believe that being a graduate of the University of Chester is a significant achievement, and we know that our alumni continue to achieve long after leaving University. We also recognise that our current students and staff are achieving more than ever before.

Whether you are still here in CH1, or have continued your Chester story beyond, at the heart of what you ACH1EVE is Chester.



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