

# RESEARCH

@worc



January 2025



UNIVERSITY of  
WORCESTER



# WELCOME

**Professor John-Paul Wilson**

*Pro Vice Chancellor Research*



As another busy year draws to a close, in this edition of *Research @Worc* we reflect on a successful graduation for our doctoral students back in September, with 15 students across our PhD, EdD and DBA programmes successfully completing their studies. We feature 4 of these students here and look forward to hearing more about their future success.

This edition's cover story focuses on Dr Anna Muggeridge, recently awarded a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship, and her project looking at maternal activism in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Anna is herself a former PhD student at the University and her success in winning this funding is a shining example of where a Worcester doctorate can take you.

Elsewhere in this issue we learn more about a number of current and completed projects which highlight the breadth of research at the University: thus, we hear about Dr Jack Brimmell's ongoing research with FIFA exploring athlete's executive function; we are updated on a new project led by our Association for Dementia Studies examining the role of food in creating effective community-based support systems for people living with dementia; and an update on a project led by Professor Gyozo Molnar and Dr Peter Unwin which explored factors that impact on the quality of patient data Gypsy, Roman and Traveller Communities.

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## IN BRIEF

### HOUSE OF COMMONS CONSULTATION

Professor **Suzanne Schwarz** attended a consultation at the House of Commons on Wednesday 16 October 2024 focusing on the planned £100m Waterfront Transformation Project on the historic Royal Albert Dock and Public Realm.

At the heart of this transformation is the redevelopment of the International Slavery Museum. The plans include expanding 'gallery space to address the history of transatlantic slavery and how its legacies continue to affect our everyday lives', as well as the development of a National Centre for Teaching Black History.

Professor Schwarz was invited to act as an external consultant for the project and will be working in collaboration with Michelle Charters, Head of the International Slavery Museum, who was awarded an OBE in King Charles's Birthday Honours for 2024. Professor Schwarz was also an external consultant for the earlier re-development of the International Slavery Museum in 2006-2007, and she worked in collaboration with museum curators to develop courses to support teaching of the slave trade and slavery in secondary schools. A play based on her book *Slave Captain* was commissioned by the International Slavery Museum and performed there in 2010.

### SENIOR LECTURER SELECTED AS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dr **Matt Smith**, Course Leader for Geography, has been appointed as the new Editor-in-Chief of the journal, *Aerobiologia*. The journal focuses on aerobiology and covers the study of bioaerosols, their impact on human, animal and plant health and the effects of climate change on these.

Matt has been working in the field of aerobiology for 25 years and has co-authored 100 peer reviewed scientific journal articles and five book chapters. He has been an Associate Editor for *Aerobiologia* for over 11 years, as well as a Field Editor for the *International Journal of Biometeorology* and a Co-Editor for *Grana*.

### PROFESSOR JUDGES MAJOR DEMENTIA AWARD

In October, BBC One's *The One Show* revealed the five finalists of a prestigious prize on dementia, on which Emeritus Professor **Dawn Brooker** was part of the judging panel.

Dawn was one of ten international judges who was recruited in 2022 because of her expertise in person-centred dementia care.

The Longitude Prize on Dementia is a £4.4 million prize, funded by the Alzheimer's Society and Innovate UK and delivered by Challenge Works, to drive the creation of personalised, technology-based tools that are co-created with people living with the early stages of dementia, helping them live independent, fulfilled lives and enabling them to do the things they enjoy.

24 semi-finalists were announced in 2023 with five finalists announced during a special feature on the *One Show*. The five finalists will share £1.5m to develop their solutions in pursuit of the £1m first prize to be awarded in 2026.

### VISITING COLLEAGUES FROM HALMSTAD UNIVERSITY

Early September saw a welcome visit from colleagues from Halmstad University in Sweden. The team from their Media & Communication Studies (Batchelor) joined staff from UW's Media & Film Studies course to explore both research and teaching collaborations.

Plans are now in the works for a collaborative conference bringing together Halmstad's research interests with the team in Worcester. The research interests of the Halmstad team traverse alternative media, media activism, disinformation, conspiracy theories, digital life amongst young people, digital inequalities, emotional repercussions of digital life, travel journalism, media geography and cultures of sexuality.





## **UNITED NATIONS RECOGNISE WORCESTER BUSINESS SCHOOL**

Worcester Business School is one of only five business and management schools from a global network of more than 800 to be awarded a Recognition for Excellence in SIP (Sharing Information on Progress) Reporting award under the UN's Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) banner. It was the only recipient of such an award in the UK in this year's awards.

Head of the Business School, **Dr Scott Andrews**, said: "*The University's Business School is utterly committed to promoting ethical and sustainable business across the breadth of its activities and in all its practices. We were keen to ensure this was showcased in our second SIP Report to the United Nations and we are delighted that we have been rewarded by the UN with this recognition of excellence.*"

As part of the Business School's commitment to promoting ethical and sustainable business, it has for some time been a signatory to the UN's PRME initiative. Signatories to the UN's PRME initiative commit to promoting and advancing sustainability and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals through equipping today's students with the understanding and ability to deliver change both now and in their future careers, and through its work with local organisations.



*Dr Scott Andrews*

## **NEW INTERACTIVE DISPLAYS IN PLACE AT INFIRMARY MUSEUM**



The three new hands-on pieces of equipment (featured in the previous issue of Research@worc) have been installed at the University of Worcester-run Museum, designed to enhance the visitor experience as well as the University's teaching provision. This project is being supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England of nearly £60,000.

The Amputation Station aims to help children understand the amputation process in more detail and sits alongside

the story of a surgeon of the Infirmary who trialled different amputation techniques.

The Microscope Station gives visitors a closer look at a variety of 'slides' under a 'microscope' using a digital touch screen animation.

The Keyhole Surgery Station offers an opportunity to 'perform' a key-hole surgery. Visitors use real medical instruments to manipulate organs in a model body, whilst looking at a television monitor to see the results of their work.

## **UW BYSTANDER RESEARCH FEATURED BY BBC**

In July, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, **Dr Gill Harrop** spoke with BBC 5 live about the role of bystander intervention in addressing misogyny and tackling violence against women and girls.

Dr Harrop leads the University's Bystander Intervention Programme which offers an evidence-based approach to tackling this issue by showing participants how to identify problematic behaviour and intervene to change it.



## **WORCESTERSHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

In October, **Dr Wendy Toon**, Senior Lecturer in American History, was re-elected to the Council of Worcestershire Historical Society. Founded in 1893 and dedicated to the publication of historical records, the Society's publications are distributed to libraries and centres of learning in this country and throughout the world, shedding light on the county's rich history.

## **LAW WORKSHOP IN THE GAMBIA**

Based on his research on Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in the UK, in August **Dr Michael Lane** delivered an online workshop to lawyers based in the Gambia. The session sought to enhance understanding of the UPR process and explain how UPR recommendations can be used in courts and common law systems to uphold human rights standards. Case studies of the UK's experiences with UPR were also examined in order to equip participants with practical tools for utilising UPR recommendations.

The UPR, established by the United Nations Rights Council, aims to enhance human rights conditions globally through a peer-review process. The workshop was timed in preparation for The Gambia's fourth UPR review, due in January 2025.

## **WOMEN AS MEDICAL MISSIONARIES**

**Prof. Neil Fleming**, from the School of Arts and Humanities, travelled to Canada in August after being awarded funding to research the work women have historically done as medical missionaries.

The Osler Library of the History of Medicine, at McGill University in Montreal, awarded Neil a travel grant for the trip. He examined the ways in which gender and race determined the working practices of women missionaries. Some of the material he is looking at includes Minnie Gomery's papers, a Canadian medical missionary to India.

Women were prominent as missionaries in Asia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when their limited access to medical education often did not lead to jobs at home, which encouraged some to practice overseas.

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH UNNES, INDONESIA**

**Dr Felix Why** from the School of Psychology, Department of Performance, Health and Wellbeing, was invited to Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES), Indonesia, to deliver workshops on quantitative research methods and engaged with staff and students in a discussion on research (13th – 16th August 2024). There was a lively discussion on how to produce research that could be published in Q1 journals in the discussion session. The visit also included the signing of a MOU between UNNES and the University of Worcester to formalise the collaboration for research and teaching. The two universities share a common historical background: both universities began with teacher training programmes that later developed to a comprehensive university that included other disciplines such as Psychology. The visit was fruitful and constructive and Dr Why has been invited to UNNES for 2025.



## **MEDICAL SCHOOL HOSTS INSPIRE RESEARCH CONFERENCE**

In November, the Three Counties Medical School (TCMS) hosted an INSPIRE research conference.

The INSPIRE programme is funded by the Academy of Medical Sciences to encourage and inspire medical students to engage with research.

More than 100 delegates attended the conference, including colleagues from partner NHS Trusts and staff and students from collaborating graduate-entry medical schools at the Universities of Warwick, Swansea and Chester.



## **INTERNATIONAL LAW IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: A TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP**

Hosted by the Constitutions, Rights and Justice Research Group in association with the UK Constitutional Law Association, the University held a conference in November brought together speakers from academia, civil society and legal practice to consider the relationship between the UK and international law.

Dr Michael Lane, who organised the conference, said *"the event served as a timely, important reflection on the UK's relationship with international law. We were joined by a fantastic keynote speaker, Prof. Satvinder Juss, who spoke on the significance of UK Supreme Court's decision in AAA v Secretary of State for the Home Department (aka the 'Rwanda case'). It was a real pleasure to bring together and hear from experts in this area. Attendees spoke highly of the University of Worcester and the research taking place in the School of Law"*

A proposal has been submitted to Hart (Bloomsbury) to publish the proceedings of the conference as an edited collection. It will feature a foreword from former Deputy President of the UK Supreme Court, Lord Mance.



*Dr Michael Lane with Prof. Satvinder Juss*



*Conference contributors with University of Worcester staff and organisers.*

## **LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY FOR WORCESTERSHIRE**

England is recognised as one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world due to historic and ongoing biodiversity declines. In response, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) scheme was launched in 2023 to tackle these pressing issues. The Worcestershire LNRS, led by Worcestershire County Council, brings together a partnership of local organisations in addition to the University of Worcester such as Natural England, Environment Agency, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Severn Rivers Trust, and Worcester City Council, amongst others, to determine key priorities for nature recovery in the region. Representing the University of Worcester, **Dr Kate Ashbrook** has been helping to identify priority actions, measures and species for the region. This strategy aims to integrate nature recovery into the planning system, ensuring that areas with the greatest potential for restoration are prioritised in planning decisions. Crucially, the LNRS is closely linked to Biodiversity Net Gain, a requirement under the Environment Act 2021, which mandates that new developments enhance the natural environment. By providing a clear framework for nature recovery actions, the LNRS ensures that biodiversity net gain efforts align with local nature recovery priorities as well as supporting a cohesive network of restored habitats across England. All local nature recovery strategies across England are expected to be in place by March 2025, making a significant step towards a more biodiverse future.



## **HEALTH PROFESSIONS EDUCATION AND PRACTICE**

A new University Research Group led by **Dr Kay Norman**: 'Health Professions Education and Practice' was launched in June to focus on two broad themes:

- Skills, simulation, and practice learning
- Teaching excellence and student support

Colleagues across the schools of Nursing and Midwifery; Medicine; and Allied Health and Community will have the opportunity to work together on shared research interests, whilst also supporting new researchers to be involved with relevant projects.

A monthly seminar series has been scheduled for this academic year which is open to all colleagues.



## **WORCESTER LAW SCHOOL RESEARCHERS ELECTED TO LEADING ACADEMIC SOCIETY**

**Drs Chris Monaghan** and **Michael Lane** have been elected as the co-conveners of the Public Law section of the Society of Legal Scholars; the leading legal academic society in the UK.

As part of this role, they will be responsible for supporting members of the society with an interest in public law (e.g. by hosting workshops or other small events) and also convening and managing the public law panels at the annual SLS conference; one of the biggest generalist law events of the academic calendar.

## **NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTARY SERIES**

**Prof. Darren Oldridge** has featured as an expert in a TV documentary series called *Witches: Truth Behind the Trials* on the National Geographic Channel.



The series explores the suspects of witchcraft throughout history; poor women, elderly, indigenous people or disabled, unable to defend themselves, through cinematic recreations and expert interviews, and focuses on six true stories across Germany, Scotland, England, America, Sweden and Ireland.

## **LiRE25 ROLE FOR PROFESSOR**

**Professor Alison Kington** has been invited to act as a panel member for a research exercise (LiRE25) at Linköping University (LiU), Sweden. LiRE25 is LiU's first major research evaluation and covers all research at the university. The primary purpose of the evaluation is to provide recommendations for future quality-enhancing initiatives, and Alison will be part of the panel focusing on behavioural and social sciences.

## **LECTURER'S WORK FEATURES IN BRITISH LIBRARY DISPLAY**

A new display opened in the autumn at the British Library featuring the work of a University of Worcester historian and her team to preserve archives of global importance to the history of slavery.

Professor of History, **Suzanne Schwarz**, has been leading a team digitising endangered documents held at Freetown, Sierra Leone. Thanks to her work, in collaboration with the archival team at the Sierra Leone Public Archives, these records will be preserved in digital format for future generations and are already shedding light on the lives of those released from slavery. Professor Schwarz explained how, after British abolition of the trade in 1807, Britain sent out Royal Navy ships to intercept slave ships and as a result of that activity an estimated 100,000 enslaved Africans were disembarked at Freetown, where their details were recorded in registers. Professor Schwarz said over the years the archives had suffered from damp and humidity, putting the documents in a perilous state. Through the EAP initiative, it has been possible to provide specialist training and equipment for Sierra Leonean archivists to undertake the digitisation of the source material. The growing collection of digital material is freely available through the EAP website ([eap.bl.uk](http://eap.bl.uk)) and local archival partners. The project is one of 15 funded by the Endangered Archives Programme (EAP), run and displayed by the British Library, in celebration of the EAP's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## **DISCOVER & CONNECT CONFERENCE**

The IRWB Research Group recently hosted its first in-person Conference, bringing together academics, students, practitioners and industry experts to share new research insights and foster collaboration. The event, held on November 6, featured a series of themed symposia, panel discussion, and individual presentations, that highlighted the diverse and innovative work being conducted across the Group.

Research Group Lead and principal convenor of the event, Dr Sarah Davis reflected, *"It was a privilege to welcome such a talented and passionate group of researchers, practitioners and students to our first conference – we welcomed over 60 attendees across the day, including colleagues from across the University, and external guests from local organisations including Worcestershire Country Council, Herefordshire & Worcestershire Health and Care Trust, West Merica Police, a range of local social work and mental health charities, and academics from the Universities of Leicester and Cardiff. Our speakers shared their insights and knowledge on a range of cutting-edge topics tackling both the 'light' and 'darker' sides of wellbeing and interpersonal relationships that have great potential to translate into new collaborative work and practical applications. The conference also clearly highlighted the challenges of work in these fields, and the evolving landscape of research priorities. I am really pleased to learn that there are already several new research and knowledge exchange outputs planned that have arisen from conversations amongst colleagues and guests on the day, and look forward to seeing the continued impact of these research efforts in the coming months."*

Throughout the day, attendees had the opportunity to engage in lively discussions and network with peers. Researchers and external practitioners presented a diverse array of talks, including on the topic of customer and employee wellbeing in physical and virtual settings (Dr Richard Nicholls, Dr Ria Wiid; Dr Paulo Mora-Avila), positive wellbeing, relationships and mental health (Dr Daniel Farrelly, Nikki Ayles, Dr Naomi Lee, Dr Jack Brimmel, Dr Gill Harrop), critical perspectives on the status and application of Psychology (Dr Béré Mahoney, Dr Sarah Davis, Rich Hadley), career success and evaluation (Dr Barbara Menara; Prof. Lynn Nichol & Dr. Catharine Ross, Dr Pamela Murray), and trauma and violence prevention across different contexts and groups – including women and girls; domestic abuse and dementia within intimate partner relationships; teaching of sensitive topics in Higher Education (Dr Claire McLoone-Richards, Dr Beverley Gilbert and guests – see captions). For anyone interested in this work, please [take a look at the conference website with full speaker profiles and abstracts](#).

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive with many delegates commenting that they would embed learning from the conference into their own professional or research practice. The Group are pleased that *Discover & Connect* was a resounding success and showcased the University's commitment to fostering a vibrant research community and innovative thinking.



## **PROFESSOR CO-AUTHORS NEW NATIONAL GUIDANCE**

New guidance to help prevent student suicide in higher education has been published, co-authored by Worcester **Emeritus Professor Jo Smith OBE**.

[Collective responsibility, collective action to prevent student suicide](#) is a practical guide, based on current evidence from research, serious incident reviews and inquest data and is designed to help providers think through key issues when addressing risk factors and reducing/restricting access to potential means and methods of suicide in a higher education context.



## **INCLUSION BY DESIGN TRANSNATIONAL EVENT WITH MOROCCAN UNIVERSITY**

In November, the University's Inclusion by Design Research Group welcomed Professor Mustapha Aabi, from the University of Ibn Zohr (UIZ), who is Morocco's National Contact Person for Horizon Europe, for a Transnational Event at the St John's Campus. At the event, attendees explored possibilities for future collaboration and research under the Horizon programme, and strengthened links between the Inclusion by Design and UIZ's LARLANCO (Laboratoire de Recherche en Langues et Communication) Research Group.

UIZ is the largest and most prominent of Morocco's Higher Education Institutions. It serves over 50% of the national territory and is renowned for its contributions to academic and research excellence, particularly across Southern Morocco.

LARLANCO is a specialised research lab dedicated to advancing language and communication studies. It is one of the few research labs in Morocco to be awarded the CNRST's (Centre National pour la Recherche Scientifique et Technique) Label. The lab's research encompasses various areas, including intercultural communication, language acquisition, and digital communication technologies, with a strong emphasis on applied research that impacts educational and social inclusion.



*Prof. Mustapha Aabi with Prof. David Green*

## **NEW PERSONAL CARE RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR FAMILY CARERS**

The Association for Dementia Studies is pleased to announce that a series of resources for family carers supporting someone living with dementia with their



personal care is now available. The resources are the culmination of the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)-funded 'Crossing the Line' research project which aimed to gain a deep understanding of the experiences of family carers relating to their provision of personal care to people living with dementia and hear their often-hidden voice. Personal care includes helping with going to the toilet, washing, bathing, dressing, mouth-care, shaving, haircare and foot and nail-care.

Family carers often face challenges adapting to the role that providing personal care brings, which can be worsened by a lack of knowledge and skills, information, guilt and embarrassment. The challenges around personal care are often a tipping point for the person living with dementia to move into a care home. The findings from this project enabled the development of accessible, co-produced educational resources for family carers, including a website, a series of 15 booklets covering a wide range of topics around personal care and dementia, and film clips sharing carer experiences. Health and social care professionals can also use the resources to provide advice, deepen understanding and initiate discussions about caring topics, and they may also be useful in support groups for family or unpaid carers, or to plan training and education sessions.

The Crossing the Line project was funded by the NIHR under its Research for Patient Benefit Programme (Grant Reference Number NIHR202970). The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.

The website – which also hosts the booklets and film clips – can be found at <https://caringhelp.on.worc.ac.uk/>



# Graduation

September 2024



Congratulations to our postgraduate research students who have recently completed their studies!

Dr Buthaina Al Kharusi | Dr Oliver Case | Dr Rebecca Collins | Dr Jennifer Dietrich | Dr Lois Donnelly  
Dr Sarah Elsey | Dr Teresa Grant | Dr Ellie Hill | Dr Angela Hodgkins | Dr Coco Moore  
Dr Harley Jean Simpson | Dr Thomas Smith | Dr Emma Wilde | Dr Colin Williams | Tanushree Gupta





## Dr Rebecca Collins

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

*A very high-resolution analysis of the influence of bank roughness on the rate of river bank erosion processes*

Supervisory Team: Prof. Ian Maddock (DoS), Dr Fleur Visser

**“My learning went way beyond just the academic, teaching me to be resilient, confident, curious and most of all that I am capable of great things when I put my mind to it!”**

I had carried out my undergraduate degree at Worcester in Water and Environmental Management from 2009 - 2012. I also had my little girl in my final year and my son came along the following year. In 2014 I decided I really wanted to come back to university to do a masters programme and so I enrolled on an MSci. My undergraduate tutor and dissertation supervisor, Professor Ian Maddock, was also to be my masters supervisor and we quickly started discussing ideas for my research project. However, all the projects I wanted to do were rather more involved than I could achieve in a 1 year MSci. So we began discussing the possibility of doing a self-funded PhD. After a few weeks of discussions I decided to go for it! And so I transferred onto a part-time PhD and never looked back!

My project made use of very high resolution terrestrial laser scanning to observe bank erosion along a stretch of river bank on the Arrow in Warwickshire. I wanted to try to better understand the processes that result in bank erosion and the part that bank roughness plays in that. I created very detailed 3D-models of the banks I was working on, and compared their surface from one time period to the next to identify areas of change and volumes of sediment loss. During this study I developed a conceptual model of the different process interactions that result in river bank erosion, as well as shedding light onto the effect of roughness scale when evaluating the effect of roughness on erosion.

During my PhD I was awarded funding by the British Hydrological Society (BHS) and the Remote Sensing and Photogrammetry Society (RSPSoc) to help pay for various fees and costs of my PhD. However, the thing I am most proud of is actually finishing it!! Being a mother of two primary school aged children during the pandemic meant that life as I knew it came to a complete standstill, and suddenly I was barely able to spend



more than 10 minutes at a time thinking about my PhD. Instead, like many working parents during this time, I was an entertainer, teacher, chef, nurse and referee, while also trying to keep on top of my day job. The PhD was consigned to the shelf for a while, and some days I wondered if I would ever pick it back up again. But I did! And now it is complete and will stand as a testament to my resilience next time I doubt whether I can do something!

From my first day as a mature (24!!) undergraduate I have loved UoW. My PhD supervisory team have been with me every step of the way and I could not have done this without them. I have made lifelong friendships at the university, and my learning went way beyond just the academic, teaching me to be resilient, confident, curious and most of all that I am capable of great things when I put my mind to it!

### What are you doing now?

For the last three years I have been a lecturer at the University of Bristol in Physical Geography with Quantitative Methods, using the skills I learned in my PhD to teach a new generation of scientists how to collect and analyse complex data to further our understanding of the landscapes in which we exist.



## Dr Angela Hodgkins

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

*Exploring Early Childhood Practitioners' Perceptions of Empathic Interactions with Children and Families*

Supervisory Team: Dr Peter Gossman (DoS), Dr Rachael Paige, Prof. Richard Woolley

After leaving school with few qualifications and working with children for 20 years as a nursery nurse, I can hardly believe that I am now a senior lecturer and course leader at the University of Worcester and will be graduating this year with a PhD and the title of Dr.

I started studying again at the age of 37, achieving a BA and MA while working full-time. I began lecturing at an FE college, then found my dream job at the University of Worcester in 2014. It is the best job in the world!

I am thrilled to be graduating this year at the same ceremony as my BA Integrated Working with Children and Families students. When I decided to embark on a PhD, I knew it would be at the University of Worcester. The PhD program at Worcester is well-structured and extremely supportive. I have had an amazing supervision team who have encouraged and supported me throughout the process. I have learned so much about the subjects I studied, about research, academic writing, and about myself.

My thesis is titled "*Exploring early childhood practitioners' perceptions of empathic interactions with children and families*". I hope this study will help raise the profile of the incredible work that early years practitioners do. The study highlighted the importance of the close, empathic relationships that practitioners build with young children, and it identified the emotional impact of the role. My recommendations include better preparation for this emotional impact in education and training and improved reflective supervision for practitioners.

I have completed the PhD in four years while also working full-time at the University. During this time, I also had two academic journal articles published and presented my research at an international early years conference in Portugal. Additionally, I now have a contract with Routledge for a book based on my thesis, titled "Nurturing compassionate connections: a guide to practitioner empathy in the early years." While I have co-written two books over the past four years, this will be my first solo-authored book.



L-R: Prof. Richard Woolley, Dr Rachael Paige, Dr Angela Hodgkins, and Dr Peter Gossman





## Dr Sarah Elsey

Doctor of Education (EdD)

*'An exploratory case study of teachers' perceptions and interpretation of the curriculum reform in South Wales.  
(Area of Learning Experience: Languages, Literacy and Communication)'*

Supervisory Team: Prof. Jaswinder Dhillon (DoS) and Dr Sean Bracken

**“My time at the University of Worcester has been an incredibly enriching and transformative experience. The university’s strong reputation for academic excellence and its commitment to supporting doctoral students have been instrumental in my success.”**

Throughout my doctoral journey, several experiences stand out as both challenging and rewarding. One of the key accomplishments I'm proud of is navigating the complexities of conducting field research during a period of significant curriculum reform in Wales. Juggling my professional responsibilities in education, family life, and the demands of research was not without its hurdles. The pandemic brought additional challenges, as much of my work had to adapt to the virtual environment. For example, my supervision took place online, which added a unique dynamic to the experience, but it also provided an opportunity to showcase resilience and adaptability.

My research has already begun to influence discussions around curriculum development, particularly in understanding how teachers in Wales navigate their dual roles as educators and curriculum architects. I'm proud that my findings are contributing to the conversation on professional self-efficacy, especially at a time when education systems globally are evolving rapidly in response to both technological advancements and societal changes.

Included is a framework that I devised that depicts the synthesis of findings and research, mirroring the philosophy proposed by Donaldson (2015). This framework serves as a valuable starting point for schools nationally and globally grappling with the early stages of curriculum reform within their specific context. If you wish to know more about this please get in touch at [drsarahelsey@gmail.com](mailto:drsarahelsey@gmail.com).

One of the most significant benefits has been the access to high-quality resources, from comprehensive library databases to well-organised seminars that cover key aspects of research. The support groups specifically designed for doctoral candidates have been invaluable. These discussion groups provided a collaborative space to share experiences, challenges and creating a sense of community that made the often solitary nature of doctoral work more engaging and less isolating. Overall, my time at the University of Worcester has greatly enriched both my academic and professional life, equipping me with the skills and confidence to contribute meaningfully to my field.

I am deeply grateful to Professor Jaswinder K Dhillon for her support throughout my academic journey, as well as to Roy Bhakta, who was present at the outset of my doctorate, and to Dr. Séan Bracken for his guidance in the final stages of my doctoral research.

*“My father, now 86, attended Worcester College of Teacher Training from 1959 to 1961 after gaining a year of experience at a secondary school in Boston, Lincolnshire. He fondly remembers that his accommodation was on campus, specifically in the old Binyon Building. After earning his qualification, he continued his studies at Carnegie College of Physical Education in Leeds. He then taught both Mathematics and Physical Education in several schools throughout Leicestershire until his retirement in 2002.”*

L-R: Dr Sean Bracken, Prof. Jaswinder Dhillon, and Dr Sarah Elsey





## Dr Ellie Hill

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

*A narrative exploration of changing personal values of Gen Z students on undergraduate programmes in an English university*

Supervisory Team: Dr Peter Gossman (DoS), Prof. Richard Woolley

As a fulltime Senior Lecturer at UW, I wanted to study for my PhD in my own university where I knew I would be well-supported by colleagues in my team, my fantastic supervisors and our talented academic librarians.

My study was a narrative study, exploring the stories of what matters to Gen Z students when they are undergraduates. Uniquely, for these Gen Z students, COVID-19 national lockdowns took place during their first and second year. This impacted on their personal values and my study explores this, reporting on their stories from the year before they started university to their final year.

Key findings showed that personal values change from the year before starting their degree until their final year, and often as a result of critical incidents or turning points. For example, acknowledging ones sexuality, being a conduit for student voice, having an intruder in ones' student house, studying abroad, commuting and managing ones' mental wellness. These incidents and turning points happened alongside the global crisis of COVID-19. The wide-ranging student stories shared showed how resilient Gen Z students are. It particularly identified the value of mental health as of importance to Gen Z undergraduates, especially those from the LGBT+ community.

I used a reflexivity tool called the peer debriefer, to ensure the restoried accounts from the participants were authentic. Due to COVID-19, our planned meetings had to be creatively located- for example, on a park bench and in a greenhouse! Meanwhile I have had to balance work and family life with two teenagers.

A paper was published mid-study on the bespoke narrative analysis strategy, and I have presented my research at home and international conferences, and plan to write two more research articles next year.

I am very happy to be graduating in front of my family, colleagues and students, who have all been so supportive. When I was pushing myself at the end I would manifest myself on the stage! It is a really exciting day.

Studying at Worcester was the right choice for me. I enjoyed it all and couldn't have asked for more dedicated supervisors: Professor Richard Woolley and Dr Peter Gossman.







## Dr Oliver Case

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

*'We are extinct, lost in the abysses of time':  
Temporality and the Nonhuman in Virginia Woolf's Late Novels*

Supervisory Team: Dr Whitney Standley (DoS), Dr Lucy Arnold

### "I've loved every day of it"

I had been building and developing my research profile for about a year before applying to Worcester. My MA dissertation supervisor had been helping with this and emailed me to say that Worcester was advertising a PhD studentship in the Environmental Humanities. I submitted an application, and interviewed in July 2020. I was later told I had been unsuccessful, but then received a phone call from Dr Whitney Standley, who told me the selection panel were impressed with my application and wanted to offer me a separate offer of a fee-waiver. I gratefully accepted and started studying under Whitney's guidance in October that year.

The thesis is an ecocritical study of Virginia Woolf's novels from 1927 to 1941 which shows a connection between the ways in which Woolf experiments with narrative temporality, and the ways she writes about nonhumanity and the natural world. The thesis then makes the case that her novels generate a distinctly modernist ethics of extinction which encourages twenty-first century readers in the Anthropocene to reflect upon the current climate crisis differently.

I'm proud of my publication record – I have articles, chapters, and indexes both published and in press, and am currently co-editing two volumes of essays. I've also become a well-known member of the International Virginia Woolf Society, and am now collaborating with the society as an historian and bibliographer. I've presented at nine conferences internationally, and am co-hosting a panel at a tenth in July next year at a conference I will also be helping to organise. I'm also proud of having been able to complete the PhD as a full-time student while working part-time. Most of all I'm proud of the thesis, which passed the viva without corrections in April this year!

It feels fantastic (to be graduating), but somewhat surreal. I lived and breathed this research project for three and a half years, and I'm a tiny bit sad it's over. I've loved every day of it.

Worcester has been great. Even though I've lived in London throughout the project, I feel part of a really lively community of students and researchers. And I can't speak highly enough of my two supervisors, Dr Whitney Standley and Dr Lucy Arnold. They've been consistently encouraging, inspiring, and challenging; it's been a privilege to work alongside them.

#### What are you doing now?

I'm still working (in administration) but am applying for teaching posts across the UK. I'm also planning my next research project and drafting a proposal for a book which will be based on my PhD thesis.

## FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

### EVALUATION OF THE OPEN TO CHANGE DOMESTIC ABUSE PERPETRATOR PROGRAMME

*Women's Aid Swindon*

**Principal Investigator:** Dr Beverley Gilbert,  
School of Psychology

**Research Group/Unit:** Interpersonal Relationships and Wellbeing Research Group

**Value:** £14,189

Swindon Women's Aid have commissioned a full academic programme evaluation of the Open 2 Change Healthy Relationship programme as part of the operational delivery of Swindon Domestic Abuse Service (SDASS). Academics from the University of Worcester's Violence Prevention, Trauma and Criminology team were selected as the evaluation researchers in a competitive tender process.

Dr Beverley Gilbert, Amy Johnson and Dr Mikahil Azad will be conducting quantitative and qualitative research design elements to this evaluation and hope to complete the evaluation report by June 2025. This is a timely evaluation due to the government's prioritisation in tackling violence against women and girls (Home Office, 2021), and need to increase knowledge and understanding of perpetrator behaviours, especially with the objective of informing how repeat and escalating offending can be reduced.



*Dr Beverley Gilbert with Open2Change Programme Lead, Louisa Wrighton*

### STRENGTHENING HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDONESIA AND THE UK THROUGH UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

*British Council (UK-ID Disability Inclusion Partnerships Grant)*

**Principal Investigator:** Dr Sean Bracken, Institute of Education

**Research Group/Unit:** Inclusion by Design Research Group (in partnership with Universitas Indonesia)

**Value:** £29,856

This project addresses the growing need for inclusive practices in higher education institutions (HEIs) across Indonesia and the UK. Its primary objective is to equip lecturers with practical skills and knowledge to make their teaching, assessments, and materials accessible to all students, especially those with disabilities. By building an inclusive and supportive learning environment, the project encourages positive changes that benefit everyone in HEIs. With collaboration at its core, the project promotes a learning culture that values diversity and equal opportunity, ensuring a lasting impact within and beyond the classroom.

The project aims to produce accessible educational resources, enhance lecturer competencies in inclusive teaching, and establish a collaborative network between UK and Indonesian institutions. It seeks to empower students with disabilities by improving their educational experiences and outcomes.



*University of Worcester staff and students with colleagues from Universitas Indonesia*



## THE IMPACT OF “LIVING IN OUR SHOES” FIVE YEARS ON: EVALUATING PROGRESS AND DETERMINING PRIORITIES FOR MEETING THE NEEDS OF ARMED FORCES FAMILIES GOING FORWARD

*Forces in Mind Trust*

**Principal Investigator:** Dr Gabriela Misca, School of Psychology

**Research Group/Unit:** Interpersonal Relationships and Wellbeing Research Group

**Value:** £329,366

‘Living in our Shoes – Understanding the needs of UK Armed Forces families’ was the title a UK Government commissioned report that considered the diverse needs of Armed Forces Families, assessed whether current support arrangements were meeting their needs and made recommendations accordingly. The report was published in June 2020 and contained 110 recommendations, largely directed at central and devolved government departments. The vast majority of these recommendations were accepted. Copies of both the full report and a shorter summary are available on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

In September 2024 funding was granted by the Forces in Mind Trust for a research project aimed at revisiting the findings of the Living in Our Shoes report in light of the current political and geo-strategic context and updating its evidence base while making observations and suggestions to further support the implementation of its recommendations.

This new research review began in October 2024 and is due to run for 30 months.

## CLINICAL STRATEGY EVALUATION

*Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board*

**Principal Investigator:** Prof. Eleanor Bradley, RKE Directorate

**Research Group/Unit:** Living Well with Long-Term Conditions Research Group

**Value:** £44,560

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust has launched a new phase of its Clinical Strategy Implementation Programme, which provides NHS teams with a framework to help them deliver what they think they need in their areas of work. Originally piloted with 6 teams last year, it is now being rolled out to 30 more.

Colleagues have been invited to act as ‘critical friends’, providing independent advice and support to teams within the NHS as they develop, implement and evaluate their projects as part of the Clinical Strategy Implementation Programme.

As human resource and organisational development specialists from outside the NHS, they will be there to encourage and empower teams to make the changes they want, providing an independent sounding board for teams’ plans. The University will also be providing data analytical support for this programme.

The team includes: Prof. Eleanor Bradley (Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange, College of Health and Science); Prof. Lynn Nichol (Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange, College of Education, Culture and Society); Dr Catharine Ross (Senior Lecturer in Human Resources), Dr Cate Rose (Research Fellow) and Jessica Howdle (Research Associate).



*L-R: Jess Howdle, Prof. Lynn Nichol, and Dr Cate Rose*

# SPOTLIGHT



**UNIVERSITY of  
WORCESTER**

## A SPOTLIGHT ON...

**Contemporary Literary  
Cultures Research Group  
(CLiC)**

The Contemporary Literary Cultures Research Group (CLiC) was established in 2021. Comprising members at all stages of their research careers, both within and without the University of Worcester, the group was established to provide a space in which to explore the ways in which the field of literary studies has expanded in recent years to productively encompass disciplines whose engagement with narrative and textuality had previously gone under recognised. To date, the group has organised a number of events, including two online symposia, and a workshop on critical-creative collaboration, and brought to fruition a number of significant publications, both academic and creative.

Research Group Lead Dr Lucy Arnold was awarded an AHRC Research Network Grant in 2022 for her international research network 'Haunting Issues: Children, Spectrality and Culture'. With fellow CLiC member Dr Oliver Case acting as Research Network Assistant, Lucy and the network membership undertook three workshops exploring the themes of the spectral child at the border, mourning the spectral child, and the spectral child and the Anthropocene. These workshops were twinned with engagement projects in collaboration with national charities and arts organisations, resulting in a public art project engaging with a group of asylum seeking children and young people in the Midlands, a creative writing project run in collaboration with the arts organisation New Writing North, and a film festival in partnership with independent cinema Hyde Park Picture House. Though the funding for the network has now come to an end, a special edition of the journal *Children's Geographies*, on the topic of 'The Spectral Child at the Border' is forthcoming in 2025.



*Dr Lucy Arnold at the  
'Dark Archives' event  
in October at  
Worcester City Art  
Gallery and Museum*



Closer to home, group members Dr Jack McGowan and Dr Lucy Arnold have been working with Worcester-based heritage organisations on their 'Can These Stones Speak?' project, using innovative approaches drawn from literary studies and creative writing to provide new modes of engagement with Worcester's historical past. Working with colleagues at Worcester Cathedral, Worcester Museum and Art Gallery, The Commandery and the Tudor House Museum, they have been running workshops with school groups and members of the public which seek to generate new creative histories of heritage sites and structures.

Further building on the relationship with Worcester Museums and Galleries which has been fostered since 2023, CLiC have recently embarked on a critical-creative project which will see group members select objects in the museum's holdings which intersect with their own research interests and produce a written response to them. It is hoped that an anthology of writings will emerge from the 'Dark Archives: Writing the Museum' initiative, which will shed light on the myriad discourses the museum's collections interact with.



*Dr Jack McGowan preparing one of the group's workshops in June at Worcester Cathedral*

Alongside these projects, the CLiC membership have continued to produce a range of critical and creative outputs, including a monograph offering a critical guide to the works of Hilary Mantel, forthcoming with Bloomsbury in 2025, multiple crime novels, poetry collections and chapters in edited collections covering the symbolist poetry, childhood and spectrality in the work of Jesmyn Ward, and articles on non-human temporality in the work of Virginia Woolf.

The group are always looking to expand their membership and activity so please do get in touch if you would like to explore their work further either as a member or potential collaborator.

## MEMBERSHIP

**Dr Lucy Arnold**, Lecturer in Contemporary Literature, University of Worcester

**Dr Jack McGowan**, Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing, University of Worcester

**Dr Ruth Stacey**, Lecturer in Creative Writing, University of Worcester

**Katy Wareham Morris**, Senior Lecturer in Media and Film Studies, University of Worcester

**Dr Oliver Case**, Doctoral Graduate, University of Worcester

**Abbey Ballard**, Doctoral Candidate, University of Worcester

**Beck Lowe**, Doctoral Candidate, University of Worcester

**Trudi Holland**, Doctoral Candidate, University of Worcester

**Prof. Michael Bradshaw**, University of Winchester

**Prof. Paul Newland**, Liverpool John Moores University



## A SPOTLIGHT ON...

### Dr Deniz Göl

Postdoctoral Research Fellow,  
School of Science and  
the Environment

[d.gol@worc.ac.uk](mailto:d.gol@worc.ac.uk)

My research is all about how to protect plants from stress factors. What causes stress in plants? The stressors that constantly affect plant growth and development can be categorized as abiotic (such as drought, salinity, light, extreme temperature, heavy metals) and biotic (such as pathogens, insects, pests, viruses). These stressors cause a significant impact on biodiversity, agricultural production and food security. As sessile beings, plants cannot run away from stressors. So, they produce stress coping mechanisms such as developing an arsenal of enzymes, metabolites and signalling pathways. However, these regulations may fail under severe stress conditions.

Hereby, investigating the underlying mechanisms of plant stress adaptation is of great importance for developing more effective, environmentally friendly and sustainable protection strategies. With the development of low-cost, high-throughout methodologies for studying genomes, intensive research projects have been conducted and unprecedented productivity occurred in biological data accumulation. In the current situation, biological big data could be used in proposing novel methods to protect plants from stressors.

### What is your professional background?

I have a bachelor's degree in biology, and I have always had a strong interest in nature. I completed my master's degree in Molecular Biology and Genetics. I studied the effect of salt stress on tomato plants during seed germination and vegetative growth stages. In this work, we investigated the correlation between morphological and antioxidant enzyme changes in response to salt stress. I pursued my PhD in Biotechnology by working on a project aiming to map lentil genome using molecular marker techniques. After I got my PhD, I worked in Wageningen University and Research Centre for one year. I was part of a project aimed at characterizing genes influencing susceptibility to powdery mildew disease in tomato and eggplant. Additionally, I worked in another project where the ultimate goal was identification of flowering and tuberization gene locus in potato.

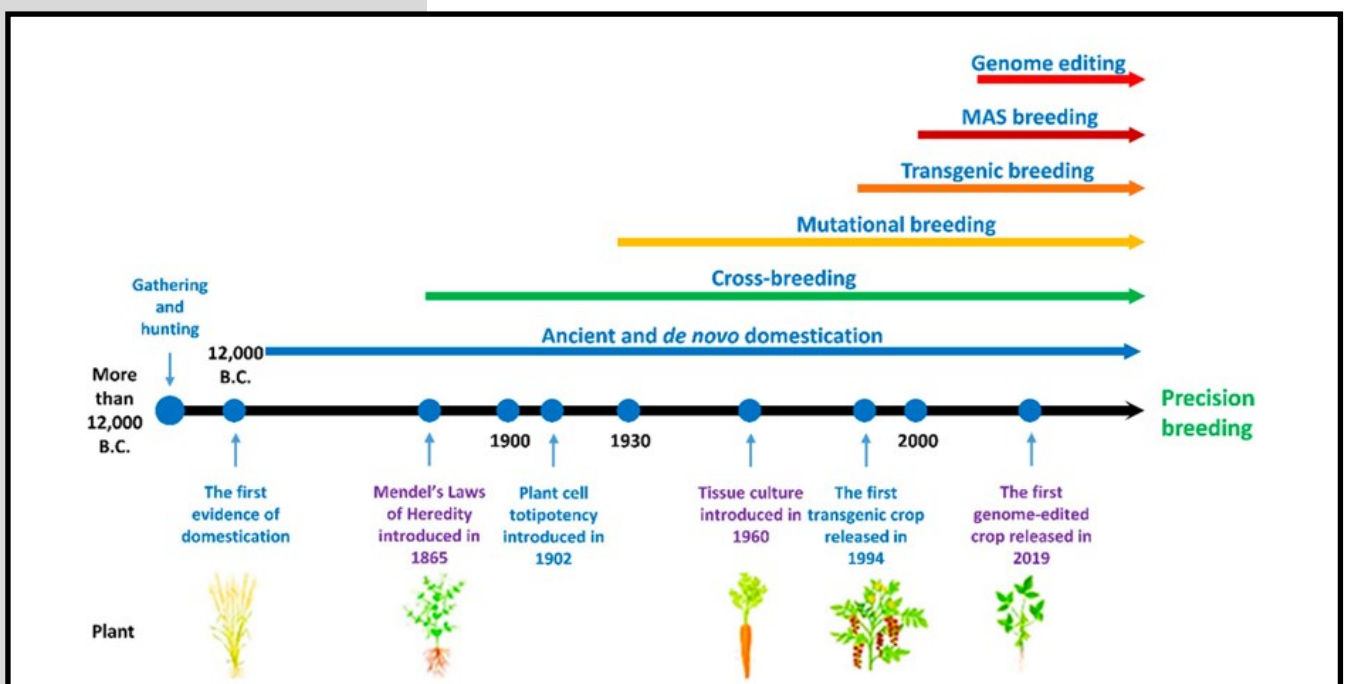


Figure 1. Plant breeding started with the domestication of the first agricultural plants. The discovery of Mendel's genetic laws triggered and enhanced crossbreeding wave. Then the invention of the totipotency of plant cells by Gottlieb Haberlandt opens the door for new era for modern plant breeding (Vu et al., 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00425-022-03906-2>).



### What are you currently working on?

I am currently working on a research project aiming functional characterization of downy mildew pathogenicity genes by using a novel approach called as RNA interference (RNAi). Downy mildew is a destructive disease caused by oomycete pathogens which threaten natural and managed ecosystem. They are causative agents of massive destruction and huge economic losses in greenhouse and farm systems. As previously mentioned, a huge amount of biological data including gene sequences is available for several organisms. In this study, we are using genetic data belonging to the pathogen infecting Arabidopsis plants to evaluate gene functions. Why are we using Arabidopsis plants? Because genetic sequence analysis of the plant and its pathogen is available. What is RNAi and how does it work? RNAi refers to a natural biological process in which small RNA molecules inhibit a specific gene activity. In laboratory, we are mimicking this mechanism with synthetic small RNA molecules to inhibit pathogen genes, to ultimately silence the pathogen genes. If the silent gene is important for the pathogen, it cannot develop or show less development. Thus, we can decipher which genes are important for pathogen development. The ultimate goal in plant protection, synthetic small RNA molecules targeting important pathogenicity genes could be used as RNAi-based biopesticides.

### What is your biggest achievement to date?

I would say that my big achievement is leaving my comfort zone. I am from Türkiye. After completing my PhD, I studied and worked in the Netherlands for a year. Then in 2022, I decided my biggest goal was to work and live abroad for a longer period of time.

### Who has influenced you the most in your career so far?

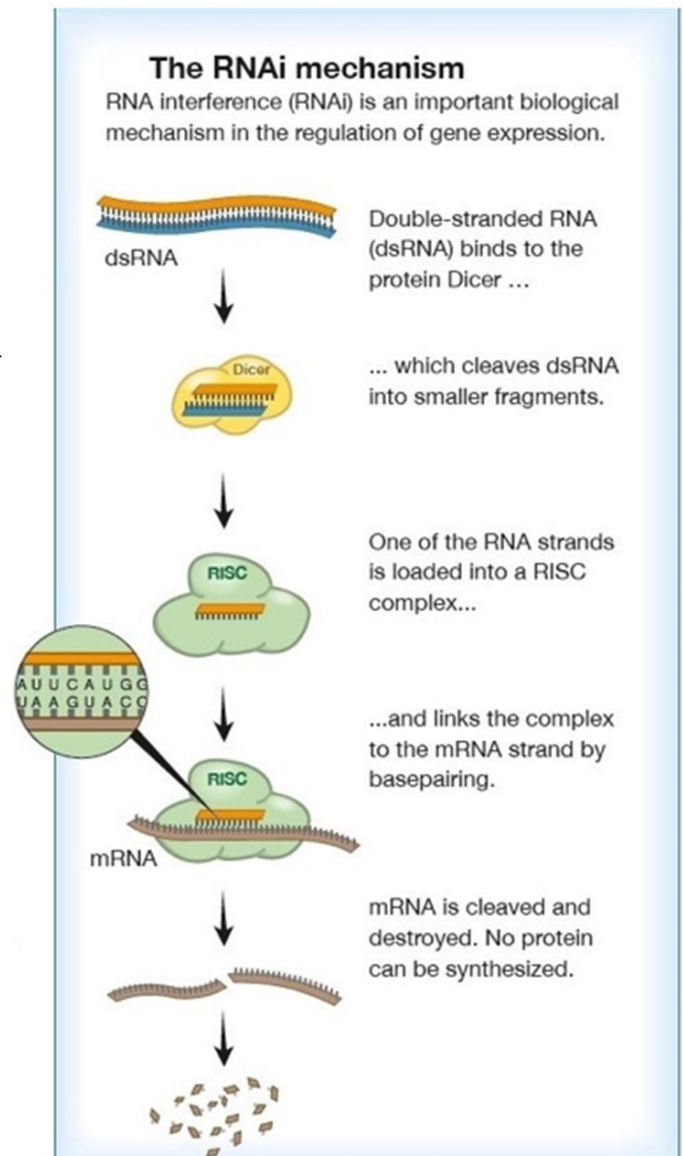
I have been influenced by my teachers, friends and family throughout my career. When I look back, I can see many people who have helped in my life. Thanks for everything!

When it comes to research, my master's supervisor was one of the most important influencers as this was my first research experience. I performed different types of experiments and started to gain a different perspective in my life, and started enjoying research.

My current line manager is another person who has significantly influenced me during my study at the University of Worcester. I have learned a lot about plant-pathogen interactions and RNAi-based functional genomic studies. Moreover, I am gaining valuable work experience while doing my postdoctoral study.

#### Advice for future ECRs

Research is systematic work that involves developing a research question, collection of data, documentation of critical information and analysis of that data. All these stages are interconnected and built upon each other. Each stage will have a different importance and require different actions. I would suggest considering time management. As it directly impacts whole research career. What I really point out here is that planning enough time for studying each stage of the research study is critically important both for project itself and your future carrier.





## A SPOTLIGHT ON...

### George Mycock

PhD Student,  
School of Sport  
& Exercise Science

(Studentship funded by  
University of Worcester  
in collaboration with  
First Steps ED)

*"Policy, knowledge, and practice:  
Supporting men with muscularity-  
oriented psychosocial issues  
in the UK"*

[mycg1\\_22@uni.worc.ac.uk](mailto:mycg1_22@uni.worc.ac.uk)

### Advice for future PGR students

Meet your supervisors before deciding! I am so grateful to have such supportive supervisors who I feel comfortable sharing my anxieties and stresses with. I think having supervisors that are the right 'fit' for you is vital. This is a long road, and there are many uncertainties, so take the time to find the right people to support you through it.

### Supervisory Team:

Dr Christian Edwards (DoS),  
Prof. Gyoza Molnar,  
Dr Una Foye

### Why did you decide to undertake PGR study at Worcester?

I knew I wanted to research men's experiences of eating, exercise, and body image psychopathology, as a man with experience of this. I saw the university had a PhD studentship in the field and it was being overseen by supervisors who I had an opportunity to meet and felt had goals for the PhD that aligned with mine. From there it was a no-brainer!

### What opportunities have you had whilst at Worcester?

During my time at Worcester it's been a real pleasure meeting the incredible academics and fellow students. I have had some brilliant conversations that have steered my thoughts, and my PhD just sat in the café of the Edward Elgar building. I can't speak highly enough of the library services here at Worcester who put on countless seminars and are always there to help with any issues.

In addition, I've had the opportunity to engage in a host of dissemination opportunities to share my research and the work we are doing at Worcester. Earlier this year I interviewed on BBC Radio 5, I was interviewed for an article for the Telegraph, and spoke on a panel at YouTube's London HQ for the launch of the book "Eating Disorders Don't Discriminate" which I contributed too. I've also had the opportunity to disseminate work academically too, having recently submitted my first, first author, academic book chapter and having spoken at a number of conferences and events across academic and clinical sectors.

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

This may sound like a strategic comment to get on their good sides, but it is the truth: So many of the stand out moments for me come during supervisor meetings. My supervisors do a great job at helping me celebrate wins and give me space to recognise my achievements.

### What is your professional background?

I have previously worked as a personal trainer and a freelance nutritionist (having previously completed my MSc in Exercise nutrition). Prior to beginning the PhD I worked for the Royal College of Psychiatrists for their Quality Network for Eating Disorders, where I was work with eating disorder services around the UK to highlight achievements and work on challenges. I am also the found of MyoMinds, a mental health organisation where I am involved in several research projects, host the MyoMinds Podcast, and deliver various forms of training to different audiences (schools, universities, sports coaches, clinicians, etc.)

### What is your biggest achievement to date?

There's two that stick out to me, and both were opportunities to utilise and share my research: 1) being name as one of a six person 'expert panel' on the UK Men's Health Magazine alongside some incredible people. 2) Working on the Netflix show 'Everything Now' and seeing my name in the credits felt like a once in a lifetime experience.

### Where do you see yourself after you have completed your PhD?

I think I want to stay in academia, hopefully continuing my PhD research and expanding to investigate boy's and men's health concerns across various areas.





## A SPOTLIGHT ON...

### Irene Conti

PhD Student,  
School of Psychology

*'An Exploration of the Experiences of Adult Children as Informal Caregivers of Older Parents in a Co-residence Setting'*

[coni1\\_22@uni.worc.ac.uk](mailto:coni1_22@uni.worc.ac.uk)

#### Advice for future PGR students

Being well-organised is essential for navigating this journey calmly. Start as a "blank canvas" - ready to be filled with colours, where each new learning experience, piece of advice, and constructive criticism adds depth and richness. Embrace these "colours" with an open mind, challenging your ideas and continuously refining your perspective.

#### Supervisory Team:

Dr Gabriela Misca (DoS),  
Dr Berenice Mahoney

**Why did you decide to undertake PGR study at Worcester?** I completed an MSc in psychology at Worcester. My experience was overwhelmingly positive, and I found the environment very welcoming. I was fortunate to learn from motivating, knowledgeable, and truly inspiring tutors. The university's support services; such as Academic Writing Guidance and library services, were incredibly efficient throughout my studies. Given such a positive experience, continuing with a PhD at Worcester was a clear choice for me.

**What opportunities have you had during your time at Worcester?** I've had the opportunity for growth - both professionally and personally. I completed research for my MSc, which is currently in the publication process. This experience provided me with valuable insights, deepened my understanding of research, and allowed me to put into practice what I learned during my studies. I also had the chance to present my research findings at the IRWB conference organised by the University last year. Additionally, I'm assisting Trudie Holland in managing the PGN as vice-chair this year. This role is allowing me to immerse myself further in the university community, connect with other students, and contribute to the development of the PGN.

**What has been the highlight of your PGR study so far?** After completing the first year of my PhD and just before starting the new year, I had the opportunity to sit down and reflect on what I had learned and what I still have to learn. This moment of reflection was a true highlight - the sense of fulfilment and amazement at what I'd achieved, the challenges I had overcome, and the personal and academic growth I experienced. Going into the second year of my PhD, I felt a renewed sense of purpose and an expanded perspective, allowing me to critically and meticulously examine my work. This realisation has given me immense motivation to keep going.

**What is your professional background?** I've been an Italian language tutor for over eight years, an experience that has allowed me to learn about diverse cultures through my students and to view the world from ever-new perspectives. This role has also helped me refine my teaching techniques and improve my ability to understand and respond to students' needs - both in learning and in their emotional journeys. In addition to this, I spent about ten years as a performing musician, first as a classical guitarist and later as a singer-songwriter, which gave me valuable experience in engaging with larger audiences.

**What is your biggest achievement to date?** My biggest achievement to date has been completing my MSc in psychology and starting my PhD at Worcester. The MSc was a challenge for me because my background was in a very different field (Food Science and Technology), and I am also an international student. However, even before this, my greatest achievement was learning how to find the tools I needed to reach these goals, such as good organisation and effective strategies for study and work-life balance. I now know I can rely on these skills to overcome any future challenges.

**Where do you see yourself after you have completed your course?** I love every phase of the research process and the impact it can have on people's lives. I'd like to continue working in this field and to remain in the world of education as well, combining my tutoring experience with everything I am learning during my PhD journey.



## A SPOTLIGHT ON...

### Ryan Jones

MRes Student,  
Institute of Arts & Humanities

*'Desensitisation to social media coverage on 'X' to the Russia-Ukraine Conflict'*

[jonr2\\_24@uni.worc.ac.uk](mailto:jonr2_24@uni.worc.ac.uk)

### Advice for future PGR students

My advice to students wanting to study for an MRes is to seize the opportunity. If you have found a subject you have a real passion for, it is a wonderful course to create a truly personal piece of research. Should you wish to continue to doctoral study it can be a great avenue to lay the foundations for that also. Having a passion for a subject is key, your project will be the bulk of your final grade. So choosing something that you have a genuine interest in will be a huge benefit for the duration of your course.

### Supervisory Team:

Dr Luke Devine (DoS)

### Why did you decide to undertake PGR study at Worcester?

Initially I completed an undergraduate degree in History & War Studies, I thoroughly enjoyed every moment of my undergraduate degree. Perhaps my interest in these subjects initially were fostered by the stories that my grandparents would tell me, of how different life growing during the Second World War was. Something I started to ask about as I began to learn about the topic at school. When I finished my undergraduate degree, I felt I wanted to immerse myself into these subjects I had a real affinity for again at postgraduate study. When I found the opportunity of the MRes in History at Worcester University, I saw the possibility to delve into a passion of mine once again. The course structure of the MRes was particularly appealing to me, being able to create such a personal piece of work for my final project. It meant I could once again revisit the subjects of my undergraduate degree and incorporate them into my thesis.

### What opportunities have you had during your time at Worcester?

Currently I am still in the first month or so of my study at the University. However, the opportunity to study alongside lecturers and students on my course has been incredibly rewarding so far already. I have also been given the opportunity to work with an incredibly supportive and knowledgeable supervisor for the duration of my study. Extra-curricular lectures, trips and study skills are all opportunities I have been offered in this short time already.

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

The highlight of my PGR study so far has been the knowledge I have gained through lectures and the extra-curricular opportunities presented to me to really develop my skills as a researcher. Personal development is a fundamental part of PGR study, it will help me throughout the progression of my course and something that I would recommend to anyone contemplating PGR study.

### What is your professional background?

Before starting my course at Worcester I worked as a volunteer researcher in the Interpretation and Research team at the Black Country Museum. This is something I have continued alongside my full-time studies.

### What is your biggest achievement to date?

I think my biggest achievement to date has been completing my undergraduate degree during the COVID-19 pandemic, something most will have personal experience of and the challenges and hardships this presented for many at the time. Without this I would not have been able to pursue my desire to work in a heritage based setting, or successfully achieve a place on the course I am studying today.

### Where do you see yourself after you have completed your MRes?

I would like to use the skills my course will have given me and continue to strive to work in a research based position. I have a personal interest in heritage and in my time as a volunteer, I have met many wonderful people and have seen first-hand the truly rewarding nature and importance of the heritage sector.



# PROJECT FOCUS



## WOMEN DRAWN INTO POLITICS THROUGH MOTHERHOOD

**A new study being launched by a University of Worcester historian will seek to learn more about how women have been drawn into politics and activism due to motherhood.**

Dr Anna Muggeridge has been awarded more than £500,000 in funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) as part of its Future Leaders Fellowship programme to undertake this research.

The 'Voices of Motherhood' project will look at the ways in which women have been politicised by their experiences of fertility, pregnancy, birth and caring for children through infancy and early childhood from the start of the First World War in 1914 through to the present day.

*"Issues surrounding women's experiences of motherhood are very much in the news at the moment like never before," said Dr Muggeridge. "From women choosing not to have children because of the climate emergency; to experiences of birth trauma during childbirth, to access to childcare—motherhood is a key political issue today. But this has a long history, and I want to explore this in this research."*

Dr Muggeridge will capture case studies of maternal activism from across the UK on certain issues, key events or campaigns. One such campaign was for pain relief in childbirth in the interwar years, spearheaded by Lucy Baldwin, wife of then Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin.

The study will draw on existing historical records connected to maternity and motherhood, and also collect oral histories from people covering the last 60 years. She will be working with the George Marshall Medical Museum in Worcester on elements of the research.

Dr Muggeridge hopes to break new ground. She said: *"Motherhood has generally been looked at within histories of welfare, or perhaps medical histories. What I'm doing differently is looking at not the history of particular medical advances that allowed us to do things like IVF or genetic screening, but how having access or not having access to those kinds of things served to politicise women. Previous work has tended to focus on shorter time periods or perhaps just one particular place. I want to broaden that out and look at change and continuity over time."*

The project will look at the different ways in which women took action on a local or national level.

*“Historically, a lot of the ways in which women are politicised by motherhood happen very locally,”* said Dr Muggeridge. *“So you might get women who perhaps have never been on a protest before, or never done anything political, are suddenly told that their local maternity hospital is going to be closed. Women find themselves joining protests to prevent that. Or they might find themselves setting up a charitable organisation which offers support around really challenging issues, like miscarriage. I’m interested in the ways in which these experiences politicised women, and whether and how they continued to be involved in politics.”*

*“I also want to look at areas where women have campaigned against something - where people, including women, have used motherhood, to justify why women can't do something, so to look also at where women have used motherhood more regressively.”*

*“My research will also explore really big historical events, like the world wars or the rise of the women’s liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and how these major historical events were impacting on women’s lives in specific areas.”*



Dr Anna Muggeridge in the Worcestershire Archives in The Hive

## MEASURING EXECUTIVE FUNCTION IN ATHLETES

It is now a commonly held belief that cognitive ability is as important as the historically favoured physical capabilities within footballers. Consider a football player currently in possession of the ball. They must coordinate their own body and the ball, update positional information of teammates and opposition (using working memory), and simultaneously make optimal decisions while inhibiting inferior options (e.g., selecting to pass when a shooting angle is blocked and thus, inappropriate). This kind of situation is frequent in football, and it is the more cognitively adept footballers that will be more successful in such scenarios. As a result, the desire to train cognitive ability in footballers, and athletes more generally, has vastly increased with many tools now publicly and privately available for use (e.g., Nintendo’s Big Brain Academy, Lumosity). However, experimental research has raised serious questions about the effectiveness of such tools to facilitate ‘transfer’ from these generic training tools to on-field performance. Interestingly, research also notes that the lack of transfer is not necessarily due to the fact that such transfer is not possible, but rather because we do not have sufficient tools at the moment.



Dr Jack Brimmell

Therefore, the aim of this FIFA CIES funded scholarship is to build, validate, and empirically test a suite of cognitive ability tasks within modern innovative technologies (e.g., virtual reality [VR]). To date we have developed and built the cognitive tasks within VR and have begun early conversations and pilot testing. The current pattern of results appears to suggest that footballers find our new cognitive tasks more interesting, enjoyable, sport relevant, and immersive than the classic non-football cognitive tasks. There is still plenty to do in this project and our next steps are around better understanding whether our tasks are accurate measures of the cognitive abilities we believe they are.



# FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD: FOOD-BASED COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY DEMENTIA

The Food, Glorious Food project is now underway, aiming to understand the impact of offering food – or activities involving food – for people who attend groups such as Meeting Centres, Dementia Cafés, luncheon clubs, and groups that support older people of South Asian and Black and Caribbean heritage.

Led by Dr Shirley Evans, Director of the Association for Dementia, this first-of-its-kind research is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), as part of its Research for Social Care programme.



Project manager Thomas Morton said: *“There’s lots of research on how to help people to eat well and healthily in institutions like care homes and hospitals – but we’re interested in the psychological and social benefits of food for people with dementia living in the community, like how it might improve their well-being and help them feel more connected to others.*

*“This project is specifically focused on the use of food in community groups: whether that’s eating and drinking, bringing food to share or having snacks together, or activities like cooking, baking, shopping, and even just discussing food.*

*“Food, in these settings, can be amazing. It can encourage people who may be at risk of being isolated to come along and socialise. It can overcome stigma and makes meeting up more enjoyable. It makes people feel more included and it can be a way to recognise and celebrate people’s culture.”*

However, he said, there were real challenges for grassroots support groups that wanted to work with food.



He said: *“Many people living with dementia find their appetite is affected and may find eating and drinking more challenging than it used to be. Groups also need the staff and resources to offer food, and food choices can be very personal – if you don’t get it right, it can put people off coming rather than encouraging them.”*

He added: *“This study is about looking in-depth and detail at what works, for whom, how, and why. At the end of this project, we want to be able to provide help and guidance to community support groups on how to decide what to do with food, and how best to do it.”*

The study will last 18 months, led by the Worcester project team, with colleagues from Cardiff University, University of Wolverhampton, University of Oxford, and the 3 Nations Dementia Working Group.

# UNDERSTANDING PATIENT DATA IN GYPSY, ROMA, & TRAVELLER COMMUNITIES: EQUITABLE DATA COLLECTION

The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are known to face some of the most severe health inequalities in the UK, exacerbated by the compounding effects of other inequalities they face in relation to accommodation, employment, and policing. The Covid-19 pandemic drew much needed attention to existing health inequalities faced by these communities; yet even then poor collection and quality of ethnicity data by healthcare services concealed the extent of the impact on the health of these communities.

Professor Gyozo Molnar and Dr Peter Unwin was successful in applying for a £33,500 award from Understanding Patient Data (NHS Confederation) to explore reasons why many members of the above communities did not declare their ethnicity at services, thus inhibiting any strategic health planning or delivery, and leading to the persistent of severe health inequalities.

The research, carried out in partnership with Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment (GATE) Herts. ran from May to October 2024 and involved eleven focus groups across the UK and a VideoAsk survey, designed to include people with literacy challenges. All research was carried out in co-production with Gypsy, Roma and Travellers as co-researchers, including Stacey Hodgkins from the University of Worcester IMPACT group.

- Barriers to ethnic disclosure were found to include:
- Mistrust in declaring ethnicity due to longstanding discrimination and lack of cultural awareness from services or systems
- Differences in language and communication needs
- Digital exclusion and unreliability of internet access
- Nomadic lifestyles that do not fit with expectations of registered addresses and practices
- A lack of understanding and health staff training about different Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities
- Discriminatory behaviors in health professionals.

## Outcome/Impact

A template designed to include all Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller groupings was produced that could apply across all health services (and possibly wider e.g., ONS). Impact will be considerable in the long-term if such an holistic categorization is adopted. Shorter-term impacts regarding understanding about the reasons for ethnic categorization were evident in the comments from community members during their research participation. Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller agencies have sent out guidance to their members stressing the importance of declaring, rather than hiding, one's ethnicity. for ethnic declaration among their members.

Peter has recently spoken about this research at a conference run by GATE Herts and a short video is currently being produced to further aid dissemination and understanding among health care staff and Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities.



*Dr Peter Unwin with Josie O'Driscoll from GATE Herts*



# RECENT PUBLICATIONS

A selection of research outputs published since June 2024.

## *SOCIAL EXCLUSION, CULTURE AND IDENTITY*

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** *Kyei, S. and Howie, Frances (2024)* **SUPPORTING BLACK AFRICAN STUDENTS TO ENGAGE MORE IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF LIVED EXPERIENCES IN THE MIDLANDS, UK.** In: *Health & Social Care in the Community*. pp. 1-11.

**Aim** To explore how Black African international students adjust to their new university environment and gain insight into how they feel supported to engage in physical activity (PA).

**Background** People from ethnic minority backgrounds have poor physical activity levels compared with white populations in the UK. The Black population is known to have the lowest PA levels among the ethnic minority groups in the UK. This trend is suggested to be the case among university students, but no research has examined this. Ethnic minority students, including international students, encounter adaptation difficulties such as cultural barriers and social isolation which affect their university experiences and health behaviours such as physical activity.

**Methodology** This was a qualitative method, with in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with five African students (two males and three females) aged between 21 and 40 years from a university in the West Midlands. The transcribed interviews were analysed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis. **Results/Findings.** Culture and lifestyle of physical

activity; knowledge, experience, and self-motivation; the effect of various social groups, activities, and services at the university; and weather variations and physical settings were the identified themes. The key finding of the study is that respondents engaged in PA to a greater extent at the British university than they did in their home countries. This was due to a combination of factors, including low-cost gym memberships and events and a general lack of racial or gender-based discrimination.

### **Conclusions/Recommendations**

Participants expressed satisfaction with the cultural and social support systems at their university, such as sports clubs and societies, and mental health support services that encouraged them to learn about and engage more in physical activity. Although some barriers, such as weather variations, were mentioned, various indoor options coupled with cheaper gymnasiums motivated students to remain or become active. Understanding the experiences of minority student groups in physical activity could help in reviewing current provisions and extending them to a wider population.

**BOOK SECTION:** *Sabia, L., Bell, Robin and Bozward, D. (2024)* **SUPPORTING TRANSFORMATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH CROWDFUNDING: THE BIUNICROWD CASE.** In: *Cases on Transformational Entrepreneurship* (Ch. 12). Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, pp. 162-178.

Transformational entrepreneurship is a strategy to reconcile social and economic development, by holistically combining inclusivity and innovation. On the one hand, it revolves around the ability of entrepreneurs to face global challenges to improve the well-being of communities; on the other, it relies on community-based decision-making to ease the formation of ecosystems meant to foster value creation, appropriation, and distribution. Digital platforms have offered a promising tool for transformational entrepreneurship to advance. For example, crowdfunding has established itself as one of the emerging contexts to appreciate how transformational entrepreneurship takes place in the real world by catalysing collaboration. As such, it is

positioned to unleash the potential of public-private partnerships to favour socio-economic development from the ground up. This chapter aims to investigate the match-funding (a type of crowdfunding) programme run by the Italian public University of Milan – Bicocca. The project, named BiUniCrowd, started in 2018 and, since then, has had multiple calls, more than 100 applications and funded projects focusing on tackling contemporary challenges, and the active involvement of thousands of backers along with several affiliate partners. Findings highlight the pivoting role played by digital platforms to help universities encourage transformational entrepreneurship whilst fulfilling their third mission.

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** *Edwards, Christian, Mahoney, Berenice, Richardson, Emma and Lowe, Rebecca (2024)* **STAYING ISOLATED INDOORS MEANS THAT NOBODY SEES ME”: ONTOLOGICAL (IN) SECURITY AND LIVING WITH SIGNIFICANT APPEARANCE CONCERNS BEFORE, DURING, AND ‘SINCE’ COVID-19.** In: *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 19 (1). pp. 1-14.

**Purpose** Though a worldwide period of uncertainty (COVID-19) has ‘ended’, there exists a legacy of maladaptive experiences among people with significant appearance concerns (SAC) that requires care and attention.

**Methods** Using Giddens’ concept of ontological security, we explored how people experienced their SAC before, during and “since” COVID-19. Qualitative surveys allowed us to capture diverse perspectives from individuals transnationally, analysed with deductive reflexive thematic analysis using ontological security as our theoretical foundation.

**Results** Themes named “More Mirror(ed) Time” and “Locked Out, Shut Down, and Shut Out” gave a contextual grounding for the embodied experiences

of this group through times of social restrictions, and the theme “Redefining Relevance” explored the continued legacy of COVID-19 – and continued global uncertainties such as economic hardship and warfare – that impact the wellbeing of people with SAC.

**Conclusions** People with SAC are still ‘locked out’ from essential healthcare support as those providing healthcare are overworked, under-resourced and rely on efficient interactive methods such as tele-health that may be triggers for people with SAC. Care providers may consider expanding appearance concerns verbiage, look to involve trusted others in the care-seeking process, and utilize modalities beyond digital health to support people with SAC.

**BOOK SECTION:** *McCarron, Jemma and Mitra, Barbara (2024)* **EMPOWERING OR SILENCING: THE #METOO CAMPAIGN IN RETROSPECT.** In: *Silenced Voices and the Media: Who Gets to Speak?* Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 179-193.

In 2017 the hashtag #MeToo went viral. Whilst the #hashtag campaign’s awareness-raising success is compelling, there is also evidence of both active and passive silencing taking place within specific contexts. Thematic analysis of #MeToo tweets shared between October 2017 and November 2019 showed that, although privileged voices are still often heard first and loudest, at the same time there can also be silencing on multiple levels from multiple sources. Within the #MeToo Twitter campaign over time there were organic and organised backlashes, as well

as surveillance practices and platform algorithms that may have restricted participation. Examples included dismissal of those sharing their experiences, tone policing, victim blaming, claims of false accusations and trolling. These tactics led to the silencing and subsequent symbolic annihilation of both the individuals and issues being raised. This research explores the narrative presented by Twitter algorithms in relation to the #MeToo campaign and highlights how politicisation subsequently derailed the movement.

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** *Price, Colin and Pethybridge, M (2024)* **ELASTIC COLLISIONS ON A SIMULATED CIRCULAR AIR TRACK.** In: *American Journal of Physics*, 92 (11). pp. 841-846.

Elastic collisions of gliders on linear air tracks are often used to explore conservation of energy and momentum. If one is interested in the glider behavior over a long time span, the analysis involves repeated collisions and is complicated by reflections from the track end-stops. Here we analyze elastic collisions on a novel circular air track; since such a track lacks end-stops, the mathematical analysis of repeated collisions is amenable to our students. Our analysis uncovers a variety of interesting behaviors which depend on the ratio of the glider masses. We examine periodic sequences where the gliders return

to their initial conditions and progressions where (when plotted in polar coordinates), the collision positions take on the locus of a spiral. One set of initial conditions produces an ‘angle trap’ where one glider remains within a certain angular range. We also explore making one glider’s mass hypothetically negative which results in a novel ‘chasing’ motion. Our results were obtained using a 3D interactive simulation (created using C++ within the Unreal engine) which we make available as supplementary material.



**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** *Shomai, Shilla, Unwin, Peter and Sealey, Clive* (2024) **KIDFLUENCERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES OF INFLUENCER CULTURE: A TIME FOR REGULATION?** In: *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* . Vol. 44 No. 11/12, pp. 1109-1122.

**Purpose** “Kidfluencer” is a relatively new term and refers to where young people actively exert influence on lifestyle and consumer behaviour through the use of social media. This study focused on capturing the complexities of this phenomenon, and issues of concern for policymakers that subsequently occur.

**Design/methodology/approach** The study used semi-structured interviews to capture the retrospective experiences of ten young people as “kidfluencers” on the social media platforms, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube.

**Findings** The findings identified several issues associated with being a kidfluencer, such as affecting individuals’ work-life balance, their education, how safe they felt online and physically, how they maintained friendships, pressure to increase their profile and their mental health well-being. Overall, the study suggests that kidfluencing has specific negative effects on kidfluencers and their childhood experiences, which should be of concern to policy makers.

**Research limitations/implications** All participants were above the age of eighteen. Therefore, their contributions reflect upon their past, rather than speaking about their recent experiences, which can lead to retrospective bias. The sample size is small, reflecting the difficulties in accessing this sensitive area for study.

**Practical implications** The study provides support for the decision taken in France to introduce legislation that protects kidfluencers, which may suggest a need for legislation in other countries.

**Originality/value** The study is relevant in the context of the new law adopted by the French National Assembly in 2020 to provide a legal framework for the activities of child influencers on a range of online platforms. To date, France is the only country where such laws have been enacted. So far, there has been no specific evaluation of this law, and very little research on welfare issues experienced by kidfluencers themselves, making this study timely.

## DIGITAL INNOVATION

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** *an der Veer, S., Anderson, N., Finnigan, R. and Kyte, Derek* (2024) **ELECTRONIC COLLECTION OF PATIENT-REPORTED OUTCOMES TO IMPROVE KIDNEY CARE: BENEFITS, DRAWBACKS, AND NEXT STEPS.** In: *Seminars in Nephrology* (151552). pp. 1-11.

Kidney services worldwide are increasingly using digital health technologies to deliver care. This includes kidney electronic patient-reported outcome (ePRO) systems: ambulatory digital technologies that enable the capture of PRO data electronically from people with kidney disease remotely and in real time to be shared with their kidney care team. Current kidney ePRO systems commonly aim to support the monitoring and management of symptoms in patients with kidney disease. The majority have thus far only been implemented in research settings and are not yet routinely used in clinical practice, leaving their readiness for real-world implementation largely unknown. Compared with paper-based PRO collection, ePRO systems have certain advantages, which we categorize as efficiency benefits (e.g., lower administrative burden), direct patient care benefits (e.g., automated PRO-based patient education), and health system and research benefits (e.g., collecting

ePRO data once for multiple purposes). At the same time, kidney ePRO systems come with drawbacks, such as their potential to exacerbate existing inequities in care and outcomes and to negatively affect staff burden and patients’ experience of kidney care. Areas that hold promise for expediting the development and uptake of kidney ePRO systems at the local, organizational, and national level include harnessing national kidney registries as enabling infrastructures; using novel data-driven technologies (e.g., computerized adaptive test systems, configurable dashboards); applying implementation science and action research approaches to enhance translation of ePRO research findings into clinical practice; and engaging stakeholders, including patients and carers, health care professionals, policymakers, payers, ePRO experts, technology providers, and organizations that monitor and improve the quality of kidney services.

**BOOK SECTION:** *Azad, Mikahil (2024)* **AN EXPLORATION OF HOW ONLINE THREATS CAN IMPACT MOSQUE WORSHIPPERS AND THE FACTORS WHICH ENABLE THIS.**

In: *Victimisation in the Digital Age: An Online/Offline Continuum Approach*. Routledge, Abingdon-on-Thames, pp. 70-81.

This chapter critically explores the continuum between online threats of harm and its impact physically and spiritually on Muslim communities in terms of Mosque worship. It investigates safety in and around Mosques, which involves learning about the experiences of members – the congregation, staff, and volunteers. Mosques are considered vulnerable spaces, where the level of vulnerability

will continue to rise in part due to the expansion of the online world, layers of anonymity, and the normalised nature of Islamophobia. The chapter delineates participant narratives, providing them a platform to speak openly about their experiences, which remain unarticulated to Mosque trustees due to relatability.

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** *Davis, Gilda, Gaskin, Kerry, Molnár, Győző and Bentley, Jackie (2024)* **PLACES OF FAREWELL: A SCOPING REVIEW EXPLORING FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHOICE OF PLACE OF DEATH FOR CHILDREN WHEN DEATH IS EXPECTED.** In: *Comprehensive Child and Adolescent Nursing*. pp. 1-19.

Progression of ill health and death trajectories are different for children with a non-oncology diagnosis. As previous research has focused primarily on children with cancer diagnoses, this scoping review explored what factors influence the parent and/or child's choice of place of death for a child with a non-oncological complex care condition, when death is expected. Eighteen papers were identified considering

the preferred place of death. The findings were themed into 1. Diagnostic Factors; 2. Home Factors; 3. Socio-economic Factors; 4. Parent Factors. In conclusion, informed discussions with families that recognise the reason for, and the impact of their choices, are necessary not only for the preferred place of death, but also end of life care.

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** *Nicholls, D., Budd, J., Nunn, P., French, P., Smith, Jo, Gupta, V., Holdship, J. and Quirk, A. (2024)* **INVESTIGATING INEQUALITIES IN PATIENT OUTCOMES FOR FIRST-EPISEDE PSYCHOSIS.** In: *The British Journal of Psychiatry*. pp. 1-7.

**Background** Understanding inequalities in outcomes between demographic groups is a necessary step in addressing them in clinical care. Inequalities in treatment uptake between demographic groups may explain disparities in outcomes in people with first-episode psychosis (FEP).

**Aims** To investigate disparities between broad demographic groups in symptomatic improvement in patients with FEP and their relationship to treatment uptake.

**Method** We used data from 6813 patients from the 2021–2022 National Clinical Audit of Psychosis dataset. Data were grouped by category type to obtain mean outcomes before adjustment to see whether disparities in outcomes remained after differences in treatment uptake had been accounted for. After matching, the average effect of each demographic variable in terms of outcome change was calculated. Moderator effects on specific treatments were investigated using interaction terms in a regression

model.

**Results** Observational results showed that patients aged 18–24 years were less likely to improve in outcome, unless adjusted for intervention uptake. Patients classified as Black and Black British were less likely to improve in outcome (moderation effect 0.04, 95% CI 0–0.07) after adjusting for treatment take-up and demographic factors. Regression analysis showed the general positive effect of supported employment interventions in improving outcomes (coefficient –0.13, 95% CI –0.07 to –0.18,  $P < 0.001$ ), and moderator analysis suggested targeting particular groups for interventions.

**Conclusions** Inequalities in treatment uptake and psychotic symptom outcome of FEP by social and demographic factors require monitoring over time. Our analysis provides a framework for monitoring health inequalities across national clinical audits in the UK.



**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** Casagrande, B., Sherrard, George, Fowler, M., Estadella, D. and Bueno, Allain (2024) **CAPILLARY BLOOD DOCOSAHEXAENOIC ACID LEVELS PREDICT ELECTROCARDIOGRAPHIC MARKERS IN A SAMPLE POPULATION OF PREMENOPAUSAL WOMEN.** In: Journal of Clinical Medicine, 13 (19). pp. 1-15

**Introduction** The relationship between blood N-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid (PUFA) levels and cardiovascular health is known, but direct evidence that N-3 PUFA levels influence electrocardiographic (ECG) parameters is non-existent. In the study described herein, we investigated the relationship between anthropometric biomarkers and capillary blood PUFAs with ECG outputs in a sample population of healthy pre-menopausal women.

**Method** Twenty-three consenting females were recruited, with the study power analysis sufficiently demonstrated. Food intake, anthropometric and cardiovascular parameters were obtained. Capillary blood was collected for fatty acid chromatographic analysis.

**Results** Body mass index, haematocrit, heart rate (HR), mean arterial pressure (MAP) and ECG readings all fell within healthy ranges. Principal component analysis-mediated correlations were carried out controlling for combined Components 1 (age, body

fat % and waist-to-hip ratio) and 2 (height, HR and MAP) as control variables. Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) unequivocally decreased the QRS area under the curve (AUC-QRS) regardless of the impact of control variables, with each unit increase in DHA corresponding to a 2.3-unit decrease in AUC-QRS. Mediation analysis revealed a significant overall effect of DHA on AUC-QRS, with the impact of DHA on R wave amplitude accounting for 77% of the total observed effect. Discussion: Our new findings revealed an inverse relationship between AUC-QRS with capillary blood DHA, suggesting that the association between ventricular mass and its QRS depolarising voltage is mediated by DHA. Our findings bridge a knowledge gap on the relationship between ventricular mass and ventricular efficiency. Further research will confirm whether the relationship identified in our study also exists in diseased patients.

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** John, A., Rouquette, O., Lee, S. and Smith, Jo (2024) **TRENDS IN INCIDENCE OF SELF-HARM, NEURODEVELOPMENTAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS COMPARED WITH THE GENERAL POPULATION: NATIONWIDE ELECTRONIC DATA LINKAGE STUDY IN WALES.** In: The British Journal of Psychiatry. pp. 1-12.

**Background** Concern that self-harm and mental health conditions are increasing in university students may reflect widening access to higher education, existing population trends and/or stressors associated with this setting.

**Aims** To compare population-level data on self-harm, neurodevelopmental and mental health conditions between university students and non-students with similar characteristics before and during enrolment.

**Method** This cohort study linked electronic records from the Higher Education Statistics Agency for 2012–2018 to primary and secondary healthcare records. Students were undergraduates aged 18 to 24 years at university entry. Non-students were pseudo-randomly selected based on an equivalent age distribution. Logistic regressions were used to calculate odds ratios. Poisson regressions were used to calculate incidence rate ratios (IRR).

**Results** The study included 96 760 students and 151

795 non-students. Being male, self-harm and mental health conditions recorded before university entry, and higher deprivation levels, resulted in lower odds of becoming a student and higher odds of drop-out from university. IRRs for self-harm, depression, anxiety, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), drug use and schizophrenia were lower for students. IRRs for self-harm, depression, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, ASD, alcohol use and schizophrenia increased more in students than in non-students over time. Older students experienced greater risk of self-harm and mental health conditions, whereas younger students were more at risk of alcohol use than non-student counterparts.

**Conclusions** Mental health conditions in students are common and diverse. While at university, students require person-centred stepped care, integrated with local third-sector and healthcare services to address specific conditions.

# PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** *Monaghan, Chris (2024)* **CONTROVERSIAL JUDICIAL DECISIONS AND SECURITY OF TENURE: REFLECTIONS ON TRUMP V UNITED STATES, THE MILLER LITIGATION, AND THE ATTEMPT TO REMOVE SIR JOHN DONALDSON IN THE 1970s.** In: *Judicial Review*, 29 (3). pp. 1-15.

This article will consider controversial judicial decisions and the protection accorded to judges when there are political attempts to remove them from office. The independence of the judiciary is essential in a modern democracy. As Victoria Prentice KC, the former Attorney General observed, 'an independent judiciary ensures that government exercises its powers in accordance with the law.' In 2018 Lord Hodge warned about the dangers to judicial independence as a result of populism, and opined that '[j]udicial independence is a critical component of the concept of the rule of law.' Yet controversial decisions by the judiciary, even if legitimately decided on constitutional and legal principles, may risk weakening judicial independence

if those who dislike a decision suggest (or carry out) a reform to the judicial appointment process, or seek to dismiss a judge. Lord Hodge was critical of those who wished to develop US style confirmation hearings for judges on the basis that judges make decisions that might be controversial: '[j]udicial decisions which have political consequences are not the same as political decisions.' We cannot take the political and social circumstances that support the conditions for judicial independence for granted. The United States of America offers a warning to other western democracies of how declining public confidence and the conduct of the bench can undermine the independence of the judiciary. their third mission.

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** *Haist, J., Kurth, P., Lau, Annica, Ritter, M. and Hofmann, S. (2024)* **WORK, PRIVATE, SELF – TOWARDS AN INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK OF ACCOUNTABILITY: THE CASE OF LOW-STATUS EXPATRIATES IN PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT.** In: *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*. pp. 1-32.

Felt accountability, the perceived expectation that one's decisions and actions will be evaluated and rewarded or sanctioned, is a key driver of human behaviour and impacts work-related outcomes such as unethical behaviour and job satisfaction. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of low-status expatriates (LSEs), a vulnerable and neglected group, which is often employed under challenging working conditions in low-status occupations. In this paper, we explore how LSEs experience and manage accountabilities in their often-precarious working lives. We draw on 36 qualitative interviews with LSEs employed in Germany. The data were analysed using a directed content analysis

method. Our findings highlight that while LSEs feel less accountable towards stakeholders within their organisation, they experience accountabilities from multiple stakeholders outside their organisation. We demonstrate that while LSEs consider work-related accountabilities, their key accountabilities are rooted in individuals' private lives and can lead to higher degrees of accountability intensity. This study provides unique insights into the importance of private life accountabilities and how these intersect with accountabilities at work. We offer a revised framework of accountability that includes private life as an important dimension to enhance its applicability to LSEs.

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** *Shah, Aisha (2024)* **THE RULE IN EX PARTE JAMES.** In: *Law Quarterly Review*, 140 (4). pp. 595-619.

This article explores the 'Ex p. James' rule. The rule is important for the reason that, when it is successfully invoked against an officer of the court, the officer of the court cannot insist on their strict legal rights. It thus allows the court to disregard legal principles, in a legal system governed by the rule of law, and introduces into the law what Slade L.J., in 'Re TH Knitwear Ltd', described as a "less welcome element

of uncertainty". The 'Ex p. James' principle has been effectively utilised in a wide range of cases including, but not limited to, to recover money paid by a lender to a bankrupt, recover money paid by a creditor to a trustee in bankruptcy, recover rates paid to a local council, and to recover tax paid to Revenue and Customs.



**BOOK:** *Monaghan, Nicola (2024) CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES IN THE JURY SYSTEM: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE.* Routledge Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice and Procedure . Routledge, Abingdon.

This collection explores a variety of issues facing contemporary juries, bringing together innovative research from different disciplines and jurisdictions. The debate stems from a real concern that criticism of the jury may lead to a loss of public confidence in the institution, and that this may renew Government efforts to further restrict the role of the jury in criminal proceedings in England and Wales. This work offers an interdisciplinary approach presenting insights from legal, psychological and criminological perspectives, thus bypassing traditional borders and presenting a cohesive view. Issues discussed reflect

the rapid advances in technology, changing dynamics and behaviours in society, and challenges that have been aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst the focus is primarily on juries in England, Wales, Scotland and across Ireland in terms of challenges and opportunities, the collection also invites a comparative perspective, drawing on experiences and related research in other jurisdictions. The book will be of interest to academics, researchers and policy-makers working in the areas of Criminal Law and Procedure, Criminal Justice, Criminology and Psychology.

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** *Hodgkins, Angela, Malomo, Michelle and Solvason, Carla (2024) TEACHING ASSISTANTS, RESPECTED ENOUGH TO TEACH, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO BE PAID*

In this article, we examine the role and responsibilities of teaching assistants (TAs) in primary schools in England. A survey exploring the health and wellbeing of educators received 244 responses, with 70 TAs eager to share their experiences. While literature indicates that expectations placed upon TAs are often unclear and fluid, our data suggests that this vagueness can be exploited by leaders. In response to our survey, a picture emerges where the responsibilities of TAs increased exponentially during the pandemic and have not lessened since. In a role that is very poorly paid and

can be relatively unsupported, the inevitable impact of this is a significant increase in stress and anxiety. This stress not only impacts TAs' mental health and wellbeing but also affects their family relationships. In this article we call for a review of this role at school level, and for consideration to be given to clearer pay scales and job descriptions. We advise schools to consider actions that create a more respectful school culture, where the skills, knowledge and wellbeing of TAs is valued on a par with their teaching colleagues.

## SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** *Emblen-Perry, Kay (2024) AM I CARBON LITERATE?* In: The International Journal of Professional Management, 19 (3).

Carbon literacy is not just having an awareness of the carbon dioxide costs and impacts of everyday activities; it's also having the ability and motivation to reduce carbon emissions on an individual or organisational basis. This motivation and ability to contribute to the mitigation of climate change at an organisational level is becoming more important as the market-led decarbonisation approaches adopted to date have not produced the carbon actions and emission reductions expected. This has left the climate in crisis, the planet in danger and businesses at risk.

The understanding of carbon costs and impacts ] facilitated by carbon literacy has a particular value from a business perspective. In the increasingly carbon conscious B2C and B2B marketplaces, 81% of customers now prefer to buy from a company with an approach to the environment they can trust. Larger companies demand carbon awareness and carbon management practices from their supply chain partners. The question businesses must ask themselves is, "am I carbon literate?"

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** Sofiev, M., Palamarchuk, J., Kouznetsov, R., Abramidze, T., Adams-Groom, Beverley, Antunes, C., Ariño, A., Bastl, M., Belmonte, J., Berger, U., Bonini, M., Bruffaerts, N., Buters, J., Cariñanos, P., Celenk, S., Ceriotti, V., Charalampopoulos, A., Clewlow, Y., Clot, B., Dahl, A., Damialis, A., De Linares, C., De Weger, L., Dirr, L., Ekeboom, A., Fatahi, Y., Fernández González, M., Fernández González, D., Fernández-Rodríguez, S., Galán, C., Gedda, B., Gehrig, R., Geller Bernstein, C., Gonzalez Roldan, N., Grewling, L., Hajkova, L., Hänninen, R., Hentges, F., Jantunen, J., Kadantsev, E., Kasprzyk, I., Kloster, M., Kluska, K., Koenders, M., Lafférsová, J., Leru, P., Lipiec, A., Louna-Korteniemi, M., Magyar, D., Majkowska-Wojciechowska, B., Mäkelä, M., Mitrovic, M., Myszkowska, D., Oliver, G., Östensson, P., Pérez-Badia, R., Piotrowska-Weryszko, K., Prank, M., Przedpelska-Wasowicz, E., Pätsi, S., Rajo, F., Ramfjord, H., Rapiejko, J., Rodinkova, V., Rojo, J., Ruiz-Valenzuela, L., Rybnicek, O., Saarto, A., Sauliene, I., Seliger, A., Severova, E., Shalaboda, V., Sikoparija, B., Siljamo, P., Soares, J., Sozinova, O., Stangel, A., Stjepanović, B., Teinmaa, E., Tyuryakov, S., Trigo, M., Uppstu, A., Vill, M., Vira, J., Visez, N., Vitikainen, T., Vokou, D., Weryszko-Chmielewska, E. and Karppinen, A (2024) **EUROPEAN POLLEN REANALYSIS, 1980–2022, FOR ALDER, BIRCH, AND OLIVE.** In: Scientific Data, 11 (1082). pp. 1-19.

The dataset presents a 43 year-long reanalysis of pollen seasons for three major allergenic genera of trees in Europe: alder (*Alnus*), birch (*Betula*), and olive (*Olea*). Driven by the meteorological reanalysis ERA5, the atmospheric composition model SILAM predicted the flowering period and calculated the Europe-wide dispersion pattern of pollen for the years 1980–2022. The model applied an extended 4-dimensional variational data assimilation of in-situ observations of aerobiological networks in 34 European countries to reproduce the inter-annual variability and trends

of pollen production and distribution. The control variable of the assimilation procedure was the total pollen release during each flowering season, implemented as an annual correction factor to the mean pollen production. The dataset was designed as an input to studies on climate-induced and anthropogenically driven changes in the European vegetation, biodiversity monitoring, bioaerosol modelling and assessment, as well as, in combination with intra-seasonal observations, for health-related applications.

**JOURNAL ARTICLE:** Mateos-Fierro, Zeus, Garratt, M., Fountain, M., Ashbrook, Kate and Westbury, Duncan (2024) **WILDFLOWER STRIPS IN POLYTUNNEL CHERRY ORCHARD ALLEYWAYS SUPPORT PEST REGULATION SERVICES BUT DO NOT COUNTERACT EDGE EFFECTS ON POLLINATION SERVICES.** In: Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems, 8. pp. 1-14.

Sweet cherry (*Prunus avium*) production relies on modern growing practices like polytunnel coverings to improve yields but this may interrupt arthropod-mediated ecosystem services. The distribution of beneficial arthropods (natural enemies and flower visitors) and the ecosystem services they provide may be affected under polytunnel systems, especially at orchard edges. Across 10 commercial cherry orchards grown in polytunnels, we explored how wildflower strips mitigated edge effects on beneficial arthropods and pest regulation and pollination services. In each orchard, we established a standard wildflower strip (SWS; single cut at the end of the season) and an actively managed wildflower strip (AMWS; regularly cut at 20 cm height) between tree rows and compared this to a conventional control strip (CS). We recorded natural enemies in alleyways and cherry trees post-cherry anthesis (flowering) and flower visitors during and post-cherry anthesis at different distances from the orchard edge

(2017–2019). In 2019, we deployed insect prey bait cards in trees to measure pest regulation services and recorded fruit quality (2017–2019) and fruit set (2018–2019) to measure pollination services. Distance from the orchard edge did not affect natural enemy density or diversity in any year or under any alleyway treatment, but pest regulation services decreased towards orchard centres with CS (by 33.0% reduction). Flower visitor density (–34% individuals) and diversity declined with distance from the edge during cherry anthesis. For post-cherry anthesis, marginal negative edge effects were observed for flower visitor density and diversity and behaviour. Overall, fruit set decreased towards the orchard centre while fruit quality increased. Our results suggest that wildflower strips are an effective tool to mitigate edge effects on pest regulation services but have limited effects on flower visitors and pollination.



# PUBLIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## POLITICAL IDEAS IN THE ENGLISH CIVIL WARS

**6 July 2024, The Commandery**

Following the General Election, Prof. Darren Oldridge delivered a talk at the Commandery reflecting on the political landscape 400 years ago. *"At a time of political debate, with people making decisions about the nation's future, it is interesting to reflect on the somewhat more violent political controversies and upheavals of 17th-century England,"* he said. *"In the words of one contemporary, the period was 'boiling hot with questions' about the constitution, taxes, the rights and duties of subjects, and the power of religious institutions. These led to the trial and execution of the King and the formation of a republic in the 1650s."*

## FORGOTTEN WOMEN IN WORCESTERSHIRE'S MEDICAL HISTORY, C.1900 – 1939

**8 July 2024, George Marshall Medical Museum**

In this talk attendees were taken 'behind the scenes' of the medical institutions in Worcester and the surrounding area to explore the influence of local women from the early twentieth century whose contributions to these institutions have largely been forgotten. They weren't members of the medical profession—in fact, most had no medical qualifications at all—but they all played a significant role at places like the City Infirmary or Powick Asylum. In this talk, Dr Anna Muggeridge argued that these women, who came from different backgrounds and social classes, all played a vitally important role in keeping these organisations running – and that their contributions have largely been forgotten today.

## WORK, DREAMS AND WIFI

**12 July—16 August 2024, The Arthouse**

Internationally renowned Worcester born artist; Rob Draper, exhibited all his artwork together for the first time at the Arthouse in the summer. Through documenting his work and processes, Rob has amassed a large following through Instagram across the globe and the exhibition provided fans of his work the chance to see his work for the first time ever in the flesh.

The exhibition; 'Work, Dreams, Wi-Fi', included projects from Rob's personal and commercial projects including clients such as The Golden Globes, Nike and NASA.

At the heart of the exhibition was a true recreation of Rob's creative studio, allowing visitors to step into his world and experience his art through his eyes.

Rob said: *"This all really started with unexpected redundancy from my dream job which was relocating. With little opportunity or money, I began to draw on disposable coffee cups as a way to both motivate myself and act as a showcase for what I could do for a brand or product. The cups went viral and while it's not necessarily been smooth sailing, the work has been such a journey, and it will be great to see that journey visually all in one place."*

Draper has played an important role at the University in recent months, leading a team of students in the planning, design, and execution of a 55-metre mural at Severn Campus on the walkway between Hardwicke Close and Hylton Road in the city.

Rob said: *"I have been working with the University since late last year and the staff and students are great to work with so it felt like a natural fit when I was asked if I would be interested in a show. The energy and creativity I have got from the staff and students have taken me right back to how I felt as an art student many years ago, and the vast space at The Art House really allows us to play and experiment with the space and it will hopefully make for a distinctive show."*

Photo credit: James Greenoff



## UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING POSTER DISPLAY

19 July—15 August 2024, The Hive

Following the IQEC 7th International Conference for Inclusive Education held at the University in June, a selection of conference posters were displayed at the Hive. Hosted by the Inclusion by Design (IBD) research group, the conference entitled 'Power of Potential: Sharing Experiences from Universal Design for Learning Journeys' welcomed poster presentations that related to realising learning potential and the diverse experiences of inclusive practice from educators across the world.



If you would like to share your thoughts on enabling accessibility in our wider environment, scan the QR code below. Further information about the conference is available on the [INCLUDE website](#).



## KILLING THE KING: THE DEATH AND LEGACY OF CHARLES I

31 August 2024, The Commandery

The execution of Charles I was the most radical and divisive moment in the English Revolution. It was also, perhaps, the most widely publicised. Prof. Darren Oldridge; Professor of Early Modern History, delivered a talk at the Commandery to explore this further. He shared contemporary printed accounts of this extraordinary event and considered its impact on seventeenth-century society.

## ROBINS, FEATHERS, PEARLS

2 October 2024, The Hive

Winner of the University of Worcester V. Press Prize for Poetry 2023; Ella-Louise Fisher, launched her debut publication 'Robins, Feathers, Pearls' at the first Creative Writing Reading Series event of the autumn semester. Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing, Dr Jack McGowan, said of the title: *"This remarkable debut publication from Ella-Louise Fisher is a powerful reminder of how bereavement can be more than an individual experience. Elegiac work is by nature difficult to write. It is often particularly difficult to communicate the balance between public and private grief which holds the elegy in place, but Fisher's poems skilfully present personal moments from a rich life that frames the context of loss in beautiful, heartbreaking, and strikingly recognisable ways. More than this, Robins, Feathers, Pearls is a true commitment to honouring life as well as reflecting on death, and honesty, integrity, and deep love for family lives in every line"*.



# MUSEUM X MACHINE X ME: PRACTICE RESEARCH DISPLAYS

**2 –6 October 2024, Tate Modern**

Christopher Keenan, Technical Demonstrator for Film & Media Production, has collaborated with an artist on her new work which was displayed in the Tate Modern in October.

Called 'How We Are Where We Are', Christopher's role was as camera and gimbal operator, filming moving shots within the various museums and collections featured in the work. It was shown in the South Tank space at the Tate Modern, as part of MUSEUM X MACHINE X ME.

The work by Yu-Chen Wang is in response to the Transforming Collections Artist Research Residencies. This is a 3-year AHRC funded research project aims are to surface suppressed histories, amplify marginalised voices and re-evaluate artists and artworks ignored or side-lined by dominant narratives.

## BOOK LAUNCH: BRITISH ORIGINS AND AMERICAN PRACTICE OF IMPEACHMENT

**2 October 2024,**

On 2 October the Constitutions, Rights and Justice Research Group held a book launch event for a book co-edited by **Dr Chris Monaghan**. The book *British Origins and American Practice of Impeachment* was published by Routledge in 2024. Including Chris Monaghan the other speakers included: Professor Jack Rakove, Coe Professor of History and American Studies and Professor of Political Science, Emeritus, Stanford University. He is the author of six books, including *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution* (1996), which won the Pulitzer Prize in History, and *Revolutionaries: A New History of the Invention of America* (2010), which was a finalist for the George Washington Prize, and the editor of seven others, including *The Unfinished Election of 2000* (2001). Dr Clodagh Harrington is a Lecturer in American politics in the Departments of History and Government and Politics at University College Cork. Previously, she was Associate Professor of Politics at De Montfort University in Leicester where she taught American Politics and History since 2006. Professor Daniel Plesch is Professor of Diplomacy and Strategy at SOAS University of London and is a 'door tenant' at the legal chambers of 9 Bedford Row, in London. His most recent research *Women and the UN: a new history of women's international human rights* with Professor Rebecca Adami is published in 2021. He is the author of *Human Rights After Hitler* - featured on Netflix, reported on US National Public Radio and in other international media. His previous books include: *America Hitler and the UN*, *Wartime Origins and the Future UN* (with Prof. Weiss) and the *Beauty Queen's Guide to World Peace*.

## FRIENDS IN LOVE AND WAR – L'ÉLOGE DES MEILLEUR·ES ENNEMI·ES

**2 October 2024 - 23 February 2025, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham**

Technical Demonstrator for Art and Design, Luke Routledge, featured in an exhibition at the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham. The exhibition, *Friends in Love and War – L'Éloge des meilleur·es ennemi·es*, interrogated friendship as a fundamental human relationship that is essential to individual well-being and society. Supported by the British Council and presented as part of UK/France Spotlight on Culture 2024 Together We Imagine, the exhibition brought together a range of work by international, critically acclaimed artists, including Kenneth Armitage and Tracey Emin.

## WHO NEEDS A SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL?

**8 October 2024, The Hive**

Freshly returned from Ukraine and Moldova, where she co-launched two International Shakespeare Festivals this year, Professor Nicoleta Cinpoș (Professor of Shakespeare, theatre historian and occasional translator) explored how festivals – of Shakespeare in particular – function as spaces of safety, survival strategies and guardians of heritage.

# CAN THESE STONES SPEAK

Dr Lucy Arnold, Senior Lecturer in English Literature, and Dr Jack McGowan, Principal Lecturer in Creative Writing, teamed up to provide literary and creative writing sessions that reflect on and are inspired by historic or heritage buildings in the City.

This is part of their wider project, called 'Can These Stones Speak', which researches and develops the best ways to give people a sense of connection with local history using literary approaches. The project emerged from a journal article that Dr Arnold wrote on the representation of Worcester Cathedral in Hilary Mantel's novel *Wolf Hall*. *"It was about how historical fiction and heritage tourism co-create each other, how they can be in a conversation - how reading about a space changes your engagement with a space, so [it follows that] writing about that space will change your relationship with it too,"* she said.

Dr Arnold said: *"The project's aims are twofold: to collaborate with heritage organisations to inspire new ways of working using our experience from literary studies and creative writing to engage audiences. Secondly, to use these strategies to engage audiences and invite them to create meaningful engagement with the historic past. It's about opening up spaces where people can make relationships with the past of Worcester and what's important to them, rather than a one size fits all history of Worcester. It's having a sense of ownership of the place where you live."*

Dr McGowan said: *"It's getting people to engage with the spaces in different ways. Can these stones speak, can they present a different narrative? Can you look past what are you told to and instead look at what being in the space is telling you, looking behind the obvious story?"*

They hope to use these and future sessions to produce materials that local heritage institutions can use independently to deliver sessions.

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## DARK ARCHIVES:

### GOthic ADVENTURES IN THE MUSEUM

**19 & 26 October 2024, Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum**

This session covered poisons, potions and chemicals in literature, crime fiction and spooky tales.

Attendees were also encouraged to create their own gothic narratives using the museum and gallery as inspiration.

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## PHANTOM NARRATIVES:

### HERITAGE SPACES AND THE GHOST STORY

**13 November 2024, The Commandery**

This session explored how heritage spaces and historical architecture have a unique relationship to the ghost story genre. Participants produced written work in response to this historical setting, with the opportunity to walk around the building after hours.

## THE DEVIL IN STUART ENGLAND

**26 October 2024, The Commandery**

In the age of the English Civil War, the Devil loomed as a powerful and terrifying figure. In this presentation, Prof. Darren Oldridge explored the pages of seventeenth-century books that describe his various manifestations: from a spirit in the mind to a physical creature that could annihilate sinners.

## THE ROLE OF THE JUDICIARY IN 17C ENGLAND

**29 October 2024, The Hive**

Principal Lecturer in Law, Dr Chris Monaghan, delivered a talk organised by the Battle of Worcester Society exploring the reputation and role of the judiciary during the reigns of James I and Charles I. During this talk, Dr Monaghan chronicled how judges both challenged and upheld royal authority during a time of significant constitutional conflict.



## CREATIVE WRITING READING SERIES: JENNY HOPE

**30 October 2024, The Hive**

Jenny Hope, a writer, poet, workshop facilitator and presenter, featured in a session as part of the Creative Writing Reading Series hosted by the University's Creative Writing course. Jenny spoke about her writing and read new poems from her forthcoming collection *Wild Boar*.

## SEX AND THE DEVIL

**31 October 2024, The Hive**

The Devil has long been associated with dangerous sexual passions. This talk by Prof. Darren Oldridge explored the history of this complicated relationship - from the punishment of sexual transgressions in hell to the imagined excesses of seventeenth-century witches - and reflected on some of its implications today.

## NUDGE BEHAVIOUR: PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH STRATEGIES FOR HEALTHY DIETARY CHOICES & BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

**1 November 2024, The Hive**

Psychological research investigating indirect methods to create healthy behavioural change has been flourishing in recent years. From moving your biscuits to the top shelf (adjusting your physical surroundings) to adding a new smell into the environment (using sensory cues) methods of changing behaviour involve a diverse set of strategies that can be applied cross-culturally with great success.

In this session, Dr Felix Why; Senior Lecturer in Psychology, presented recent collaborative research with the Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES; Indonesia). This session showcased how indirect methods can be incorporated in the workplace and to explore collaborative opportunities between UNNES, the University of Worcester, and the wider non-academic community for further research.

## TRANSFORMATIVE TALES

**12 November 2024, The Hive**



As part of a wider international event, the Social Pedagogy Research Group co-hosted a hybrid event in November. It that explored why stories matter, how they can build agency and hope, and how they can underpin meaningful relationships with those that we support (in ways that they feel truly heard and genuinely understood) in professional, academic, or personal contexts.

*Transformative Tales* took place simultaneously across 8 world-wide locations, including London, Athens, Aberdeen and Slovakia with each location connected virtually for the collective, online part of the event.

*L-R: Dr Angela Hodgkins and Dr Carla Solvason*

## THE EMOTIONAL WORLD OF A BABY

**12 November 2024, The Hive**

Denisse Levermore, Course Leader for the BSc Child & Adolescent Mental Health Top-up, delivered a public talk at the Hive to provide an overview on supporting the social and emotional development of infants.

*"A renewed focus on infant mental health and the importance of the first 5 years of life (even before birth) highlights the need to support parents and young children as early as possible. The aim being to prevent and treat mental health conditions and promote infant mental wellbeing and resilience (RCP, 2023). An infant's mental health and wellbeing is located within the relationship with the adults in their lives. This talk aimed to increase understanding of the importance (and the science behind) how to build a baby's emotional brain. Good infant mental health promotes positive outcomes during childhood, adolescence and influences the adult we become. More than anything it helps us to support pregnant women and very young babies/children, who deserve the very best of care and support within this wonderful and exciting period of life."*

# BEING HUMAN FESTIVAL

Being Human is the UK's national festival of the humanities. A celebration of humanities research through public engagement, it is led by the School of Advanced Study at the University of London, the UK's national centre for the pursuit, support and promotion of research in the humanities. The festival works in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Academy to support humanities public engagement across the UK. For further information please see [beinghumanfestival.org](https://beinghumanfestival.org).

This year, under the theme of 'landmarks', the University has been involved with two events across the city:

## 'A STITCH THROUGH TIME': MAKING A HISTORY OF WORCESTER'S WOMEN – CREATIVE WORKSHOPS

**9 November 2024, Tudor House Museum Worcester**

Organised by the Tudor House Museum, Dr Anna Muggeridge, Lecturer in History, ran a workshop that explored 'ordinary' women's lives in Worcester during the Tudor and Victorian periods, and the Second World War.

Participants took part in an interactive session where they heard about women's lives and explored objects from the museum's handling collection, followed by a chance to have a go at some of the heritage crafts that they would have done. These included weaving on a replica sixteenth century loom, rag rugging (making a rug from scraps of material) and 'make do and mend' activities that were common during the Second World War.



Dr Anna Muggeridge

*Dr Muggeridge said: "It can be hard to find histories of women's lives in the past, particularly women from working-class or ordinary backgrounds because they tended not to leave 'public' records behind in an archive in the same way that more prominent men did. So, as historians, we need to use other kinds of records to reconstruct their lives, particularly day-to-day life. One way to do so is to look at domestic objects and clothes, which can tell us much about the people who made these objects, as well as how they used them".*

## WHAT IS WORCESTER TODAY?

**16 November 2024, Worcester City Centre**

Organised by Katy Wareham Morris (Institute of Arts and Humanities), Esther Dobson (Doctoral School), and Gee Cartmell (The Hive), this guided writing and walking workshop focussed on how we see Worcester today, and encouraged adults from a range of age groups, backgrounds and writing experience to engage in creative writing, exploring personal perceptions of the city.



Katy Wareham Morris

Participants walked through the city, pausing to write and listen to poetry. Katy Wareham Morris; Head of Department for English, Media & Culture, provided writing inspiration based on Worcester's exciting cultural landmarks and performed from her published poetry live on location.

*Wareham-Morris said: "Our interpretation of the theme is thinking about Worcester and its historical, cultural, social and also personal landmarks. That really aligns with my poetry and interest in psychogeography and walking poetry. Psychogeography explores how our geographical environment affects our thinking and behaviours. Places and spaces have significant meaning to us for different reasons: maybe it's personal histories and memories. Maybe that synchronises with the social and historical context, but maybe it doesn't. A landmark doesn't have to be a physical building. It might be a landmark moment in your personal history, so people won't necessarily have to write about the 'landmarks' they see, but maybe how these physical landmarks trigger a memory linked to their personal history or landmark moment, things that have happened in their life."*



## **ARTS AND HEALTH RESEARCH GROUP TALK SERIES: DEMENTIA AND MARK MAKING**

**20 November 2024, The Art House**

As part of the Arts and Health Research Group seminar series, doctoral student Gemma Moore discussed her research question: *Can mark making and exhibitions be used as methods of exploring communication, expression and the lived experience of people living with dementia attending Meeting Centres?* Outlining the background and exploring the current stages of the project.

## **CREATIVE WRITING READING SERIES: SABEEN CHAUDHRY**

**27 November 2024, The Hive**

As part of the Creative Reading Writing Series, Sabeen Chaudry; poet, producer, researcher, and editor, delivered a talk at the Hive. Her poems have been published in magazines such as *Gutter*, *SPAM*, *Worms* and *Ludd Gang*. *Rimming the Event Horizon* is her first collection, poems from which have been longlisted for the Ivan Juritz Prize and highly commended in the Forward Prizes.

## **ARTS AND HEALTH RESEARCH GROUP TALK SERIES: NON-BINARY IDENTITY, PERFORMANCE AND HEALTH CARE**

**4 December 2024, The Art House**

Dr Daniel Somerville, Senior Lecturer in the Institute of Arts and Humanities, gave a talk as part of the Arts and Health Research Group Talks Programme around non-binary identity and onstage performance.

Dr Somerville spoke about an ongoing research project he is undertaking. He said: "*As a performance researcher I am interested in how non-binary people present themselves on stage - the non-binary performative. The aim of the project is to identify and analyse how non-binary performers perform their non-binary-ness and then to set them a task with a specific audience in mind. What would they like to say, via the medium of drag and queer cabaret, to health professionals?*"

## **R V SUSSEX JUSTICES, EX PARTE MCCARTHY SYMPOSIUM**

**6 December 2024, Online**

The Constitution, Rights and Justice Research Group co-convened a symposium with Alistair Mills from the University of Cambridge to mark the 100th anniversary this year of the decision in *R v Sussex Justices, ex parte McCarthy* [1924] 1 KB 256 and Lord Hewart's famous statement about the importance of justice being seen to be done, not merely done: it '*is of fundamental importance that justice should not only be done, but should manifestly and undoubtedly be seen to be done.*'

## **ARTS AND HEALTH RESEARCH GROUP TALK SERIES: FROM THE EDUCATION OF THE SENSES TO CREATIVE HEALTH: REIMAGINING AESTHETIC EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

**18 December 2024, The Art House**

Dr John Cussans, Senior Lecturer Fine Art, gave a talk in December exploring the future of arts education and its alignment with Creative Health, noting the struggle of regional arts programmes and the gaining momentum of the government's Creative Health agenda.

**Research, Innovation and Impact Office** / [researchoffice@worc.ac.uk](mailto:researchoffice@worc.ac.uk)

**Doctoral School** / [research@worc.ac.uk](mailto:research@worc.ac.uk)

**Ethics** (existing applications) / [ethics@worc.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@worc.ac.uk)

**Ethics** (general enquiries) / [ethicshelp@worc.ac.uk](mailto:ethicshelp@worc.ac.uk)

**Researcher Development** / [researcherdevelopment@worc.ac.uk](mailto:researcherdevelopment@worc.ac.uk)