

Edge Hill University

Degree°

Issue Eight – Spring 2017

It's Official: We have the Best Halls in the UK
Recognising Excellence: Scholarships Uncovered
Starting University: Your Questions Answered
Send in the Clowns: Putting Smiles Back on Faces
Hug It Out: On the Mental Health Campaign Trail



Welcome

Halls of the year. 4th best facilities in the UK. 2016 was kind to Edge Hill University, at least. The page opposite gives you some idea why these accolades have come our way.

With £1m available in the form of Scholarships in 2016/17, we look at the stories behind some of our latest Scholars, all of whom have achieved some remarkable things in their short time on the planet. And talking of worthy causes, our Students Union has begun another year of campaigning for causes close to our students' hearts, starting with mental health. Highlights of the day are on page 9.

We introduce you to Cathy Butterworth, our new Arts Manager. She won't be compromising on the high quality of the performances audiences are accustomed to, but she is promising to mix things up a bit. There will be clowns.

Talking of which, Edge Hill's resident clown, and lecturer, Barnaby King gives us an insight into this most misunderstood of cultural figures.

Elsewhere, some of the pressing questions arising from the National Student Survey are answered, which will help you to hit the campus grounds running.

Finally, Business lecturer Charles Knight, shortlisted as the one of the UK's most innovative lecturers in 2016, on incorporating technology into his teaching. His philosophy: if the business world uses technology, then so should students. And no, they're not just snapchatting their mates.

With all this and more, we hope you enjoy reading issue 8 as much as we've enjoyed putting it together.

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Production Team
 Nick Lodge (editor)
 Mark Molloy (design)
 Sam Armstrong
 Andy Butler

Photography
 Stuart Rayner, Getty



Every year thousands of people descend on the Edge Hill University campus, lugging what appears to be a lifetime's worth of possessions, in a variety of containers, from expertly packed suitcases to rapidly disintegrating bin bags.

It will come as a relief to Edge Hill's new recruits, then, that our new halls of residence already come with kitchen sinks.

More exciting, though, is the fact that our halls are award-winning, having recently been voted Best University Halls in the UK in the National Student Housing Survey (NSHS) Awards 2016. It must have been the en-suite showers and toilets that clinched it.

Our student accommodation has come a long way since Edge Hill became a fully-fledged university in 2006, with 2,259 rooms now available right here on campus, the majority in modern self-catered flats, with shared kitchen and dining facilities. Most rooms include a fridge, internet-connected computer and flat screen monitor, as well as the aforementioned ensuites.

And it's the perfect place to meet people, according to former Halls resident Cyril: "I was really nervous, didn't know anyone here. We had a little gathering in our flat, and everyone in the whole building came. I met all these people and things sort of clicked."

Our Halls are located in the safest campus in the North West, as acknowledged for the fifth year in a row by the *Complete University Guide*, with the lowest crime rates of all universities in the region, and the 11th most secure in England.

BEST HALLS IN THE UK



Some of the best facilities in the country



And the facilities are pretty impressive too – some of the best university facilities in the UK, according to student reviews at the Whatuni Student Choice Awards 2016, which ranked Edge Hill University fourth nationally.

Over the last six years we've spent millions on campus improvements to make the student experience something to remember.

The brand new £13m **Technology Hub** (above) is the latest campus development, creating a new home for the Department of

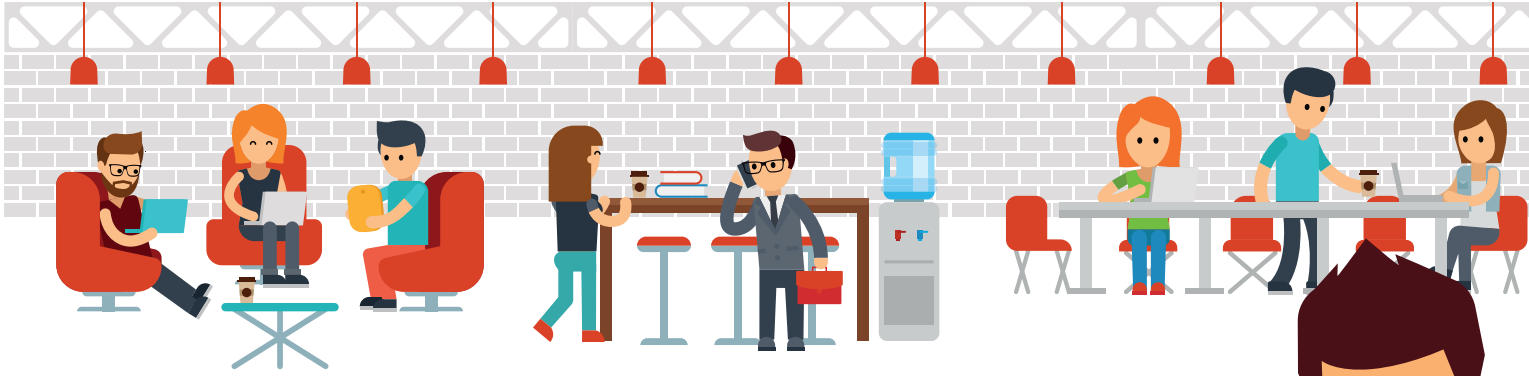
Computer Science, and featuring the CAVE, the UK's first super immersive 3D virtual environment. The CAVE - Computer Augmented Virtual Environment – offers students and businesses the chance to use real data to experience scenarios in 4k resolution. This could be anything from emergency situations to complex surgery. It's not quite *Star Trek's* holodeck, but it's getting there.

Running legend Steve Cram and international heptathlete Katarina Johnson-Thompson were on campus to cast envious eyes over our £30 million **Sports Centre**, when it opened its doors in 2015. The new pool and athletics track sit alongside the gym, sports hall, fitness studio, sauna and steam room to bring us into serious sporting competition with the UK's best universities.

The £17 million **Creative Edge** building, featuring music, tv and radio studios, a suite of brand new **Biosciences** labs, a newly developed **Arts Centre**, and a £13.5 million **Student Hub** for all your social requirements, complete a campus where everything you need is within walking distance.

And more developments, including a new library, are in the pipeline – watch this





REAL WORLD EXPERIENCE



Lydia arrived at Edge Hill determined to use her Psychology degree to follow a career in educational psychology, in the process helping her nephew who has learning difficulties. She kept her options open, though, aware of the University's commitment to its employability programme. And as the course progressed, alternative career avenues opened up.

When the idea of taking an industrial work placement came up during her occupational psychology module, Lydia was all ears, and she left the lecture theatre on a mission to find out more.

First stop was the Uni's employability team. Jay Phoenix is a work placement co-ordinator in the Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS):

"85% of graduate employers now want experience as well as qualifications just to get an interview. Placements provide students with that experience, and are an important way for students to learn about processes and practices within the workplace."

On graduation, many students find themselves in a competitive workplace without any real work experience, or a clear idea of which career path they wish to follow. Subsequently, they apply for an assortment of jobs without any real notion of what they may entail. Jay again:

"On placement students take part in real decision-making processes and tasks that impact on the business, which builds confidence, skills and understanding.

These can't be learned in the lecture theatre."

Lydia set about discussing her career goals with the team, identifying a placement search strategy, and fine-tuning her CV. It's the student's responsibility to find their own placement, but they are supported by the University, who will help students identify what they want to get out of the placement and what skills they would like to develop, how to approach organisations, and how to prepare for assessment processes.

Lydia applied for various placement opportunities, most with rigorous assessment and selection processes, including online assessments which were "always very difficult, and timed!" Subsequently, Lydia received two invitations to attend assessment centres, where she would have the opportunity to show off her skills and work temperament in a more personal environment. She attended the assessment centre of her preferred choice IBM, and was delighted to be offered the placement the very next day.

Jay says placements can prove to be an eye-opener on many levels:

"They provide students with a real insight into different professions, they make jobs real – sometimes making the student realise that this isn't the career for them, but that's good to learn.

"More importantly, they provide knowledge of what employers are looking for and give students the opportunity to develop these skills and have them recorded by an employer for interviews."

Placement opportunities exist on most of our undergraduate programmes. Those

within FAS are generally non-compulsory, but budding professionals from the Faculties of Education (FoE) and Health and Social Care can expect them to be built into the course, an essential element in ensuring they leave University ready to land that dream job.

Nursing students go on a hub – or main – placement lasting 8-10 weeks, and a spoke placement, a specific learning experience lasting 1-4 weeks which complements their central placement. The more adventurous students may also take advantage of international opportunities.

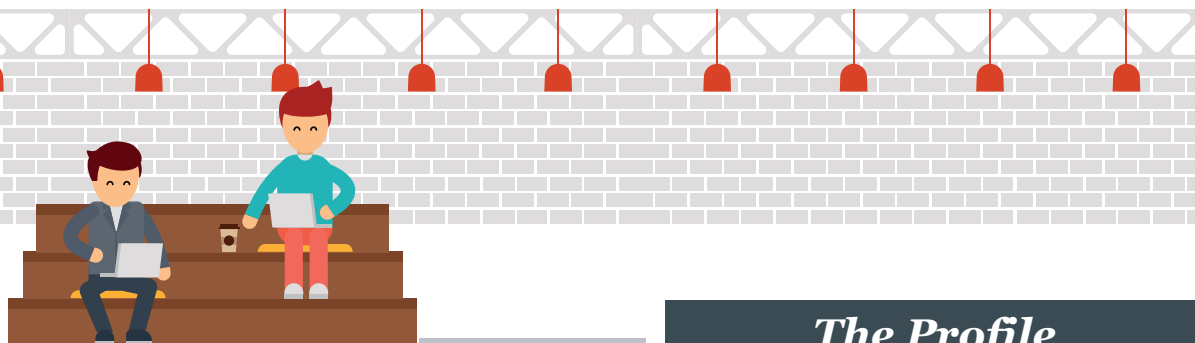
Veronica Vernon is Practice Lead and a Senior Lecturer in Adult Nursing:

"We organise a range of clinical placements, covering patients across the age span, and across a range of specialities. All placements are allocated to ensure we're compliant with professional requirements. However, once on placement students can negotiate exposure to areas of nursing which they wish to explore."

And this commitment to real in-work training, which chimes with individual student interests, seems to be working, with almost 100% of our latest graduate nurses finding relevant employment.

And tomorrow's teachers and education professionals receive a similarly robust service.

All students in the FoE have the opportunity to go on placement, where they gain experience working with a range



of learners, colleagues and other professionals in an educational setting.

For students training to be teachers the placement is a compulsory component of their course. They work alongside professionals in schools and other settings, gaining hands-on experience working with children 1:1 or in small groups, and are judged against the Teachers' Standards, which relates to personal and professional conduct in school. So no running in the corridor, trainees.

Lorraine Partington heads up the work placement team:

"We source placements for all students, so they don't have to find their own, and vet all of our partners. We can follow up suggestions from students for settings where they have links, so if they've been employed in a school or undertaken work experience we can contact the setting to ensure it's suitable."

And the team is willing to cast the net wide to find students the right placement:

"Settings vary greatly; from mainstream nursery, primary and secondary schools to colleges of further education, to special educational needs and disability settings and alternative providers such as charities. We currently have a student on placement in Chester Zoo's education department!"

Perhaps they're teaching those chimpanzees some table manners.

For Lydia career opportunities played a significant part in her decision to come to Edge Hill. And that decision paid off handsomely with a year at the coalface – on a salary. She learnt how to do a real job as part of a team, but, just as importantly, worked out whether this was the path for her.

Setting out on the right career path is often fraught with uncertainty – our work placement teams can help you with that.

So, what do you want to do with *your* life?

edgehill.ac.uk/careers

The Profile



Lydia Suffling spent a year as an On-boarding Co-ordinator with International Business Machines (IBM), Portsmouth, UK.

"My role was to support the deal teams. This essentially involved supporting employees and internal staff with any questions they might encounter during the deal process and managing relevant deal documents. The team treated me like a fully-fledged member of the workforce, and the placement allowed me to experience client interaction, deal negotiation and planning, corporate travel and on-boarding/off-boarding activities.



"I wasn't really sure what to expect when beginning the placement. I imagined that I'd be working in an office-based team, potentially on the phone, emailing, but I never imagined I could be given this level of responsibility. I feel that this is largely down to my manager's trust in me, and dedication to looking for learning opportunities to support my placement year, which I hadn't expected.

"I was also surprised at the extent of support the company provided – I had my manager, team members and an assigned 'early professional manager' to monitor my progress and happiness within the role. The company seems to promote positive actions, rather than focus on penalties for negative behaviour.

"Before my placement, I'd only worked as a waitress, or a store assistant – I'd never worked for a large corporation. I now have a whole new perspective on the workplace and really enjoyed the job that I performed; something that I've never experienced before. My technical and communication skills have benefited tenfold, and so has my confidence – I'm so much more comfortable speaking to others, especially strangers, and can identify the assets and areas I need to work on.

"Although the same basic factors were at play – efficient, intuitive work was rewarded, the difference in the level of responsibility felt huge compared to previous work experiences. I felt my opinion was valued as it helped management to understand the experience of future interns.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the experience I gained in HR, and loved the role that I had. It's given me a great insight into the corporate world and taught me that I'm interested in the business sector, and the kind of leadership and work environment that I thrive in."

Learning Curve

Each year the National Student Survey (NSS) collects the thoughts of students on their experiences in higher education so far. Teaching quality, assessment and feedback, academic support, personal development, facilities, all the usual suspects are covered.

It's essential that we know what our students think of the learning experience we're providing in order to constantly improve.

We did pretty well in the 2015/16 NSS, but the process also highlighted some aspects of university life that students can struggle with, and many revolve around the transition to university-level learning. So we threw those questions back to our in-house experts to shed light on some issues that you will encounter on entering HE, wherever you choose to study.

Q What is the hardest part of university study for first year students? What support is available?

A I think it's partly being in a different place and starting to be more independent than in the past. In terms of support, we do a lot of different things at Edge Hill University. We have an induction week to help people get settled and each student has their own personal tutor. We also have excellent support services that provide guidance. I'd also say our Students' Union is excellent – their societies and events help people get settled in.

Charles Knight
Associate Director, Business School



A I'm someone who needs motivating to do my work and having to just do it of your own accord can be challenging. The way I managed was to just think 'if I finish this now I'll have less to do next week'. I never did 'finish' but it did help to start something, which I could then build on.

Andrew Walker,
BA (Hons) Sports Development and Management

Q What is the role of a personal tutor?



A Every Edge Hill student has a personal tutor, who is there to help you get the most out of university. You see them in a group and also individually two or three times a year, and they're there at any other times to discuss any personal or academic concerns you might have. You usually have the same personal tutor for the duration of your course. But they're not there just for advice and to help you sort out any problems, they're there to push you to do things that develop your confidence and initiative, and to prepare you for what you want to do after university.

Dr Chris Beaumont, Senior Lecturer
in Learning and Teaching Development

Q What is academic writing, and how does it differ from the usual school essay?

A Academic writing is a particular style of writing which you'll need to use when writing formal course assignments.

Think about a time when you've written a personal letter or email to a friend and then compare this to the last time you wrote a science report in school... the style of your writing was different, wasn't it? Well, academic writing is yet another style of writing, but unlike personal writing, the language is more formal and you'll need to follow a set structure and 'academic rules', for example, you'll need to write in the 3rd person.

Writing at university may seem different to other writing experiences, but it's important to realise that it's a skill you develop over time, and not overnight. Your tutors will explain what you need to do and you'll be supported every step of the way with UniSkills as you learn how to express your ideas in a more academic way.

Kate Johnson, Student Engagement Co-ordinator,
Learning Services Academic Support Division



Q What is a seminar?

A It's typically a classroom set-up, with around 12 students, and that allows all the students to contribute. They stay with the same group of students for the year, so they get comfortable within that group, and participate more.

The majority of students are quite nervous to begin with, so you've just got to ease people into it. You can be a passive learner in the school environment, but at this level you have to participate. Their biggest fear is that they're going to be wrong. That's not an issue for me – you just need to contribute.

There are different types of learning within seminar situations. They've got to have research skills, written skills, and oral presentation skills for the discussion. To produce more rounded graduates we're trying to get them to question things, to be more analytical.

Adam Pendlebury
Senior Lecturer in Law



A The lecturers at the University are always willing to expand on course content and aspects that spin off from them, which can lead to thought-provoking discussions in seminars. And tutors are always on hand to answer questions, whether after lectures or through email. It's a great support network on which to base self-learning.

Lydia Suffling
BSc (Hons) Psychology

**Q What is plagiarism?**

A Plagiarism means passing off the ideas of someone else as your own, without including a clear reference to the original source. This includes copying something word-for-word but it would also be plagiarism to reword someone else's ideas without giving them the appropriate credit.

Today, it's very common to find information or media online which has been copied or 'borrowed' from somewhere else and the original author hasn't been credited or referenced. Unfortunately, despite an author's popularity, this is still plagiarism and is something you should avoid in your essays.

Just like school, tutors will treat plagiarism seriously so always double-check you've referenced anything in your assignments which is not your own original work.

To help get your head around referencing and the pitfalls of plagiarism, we provide clear UniSkills referencing guides and face-to-face support.

Rachel Bury,
Academic Liaison Manager,
Learning Services

**Q What is referencing? Why is it important?**

A Referencing is acknowledging all the sources you've used in your assignment. Whether you've used a direct quote or reworded an idea from something you have read, you'll need to add some details about the source to show where you found the information.

Referencing is particularly important because it helps you to back up your arguments, and shows your tutor that you've researched your topic thoroughly, which will gain you better marks.

There are different styles of referencing, but the most common is the Harvard style. At Edge Hill all students can access the *UniSkills Harvard Referencing Guide*, which explains how to reference different sources, with handy examples.

Kate Johnson, Student Engagement Co-ordinator, Learning Services Academic Support Division



A The most challenging part is the referencing within assignments and learning how to reference correctly to avoid plagiarism, it's also been hard to learn how to structure and write essays.

Erin Muir
BSc (Hons) Physical Education
and School Sport



Your first year can be something of a culture shock. New experiences and responsibilities hit you weekly, daily, hourly, even. So hopefully these answers to common questions about the process of learning in HE will provide reassurance and take away some preliminary anxieties.

Remember: everyone is in the same boat, and if in doubt, just ask. Even better, get ahead of the pack and ask your questions at one of our Open Days.

You can also use our online help tool **ASK US 24 hours a day. In Ask Us you can search our FAQs, email us, text us or live chat with us.**

askus.edgehill.ac.uk



Knight Vision

DR CHARLES KNIGHT

Associate Director
Business School

Research

Digital Economy
Mobility
Social Media
Post-humanism

Teaching

Strategy
Success in the Digital Economy
Project Management

Shaping the future of teaching
through technology and innovation.

When it comes to teaching, Dr Charles Knight is more than happy to ride the technological wave.

“Let me tell you a story,” begins Dr Charles Knight, Senior Lecturer in Business and Management. As someone recently nominated for the *Times Higher Education (THE)* Most Innovative Teacher of the Year award, he immediately demands our attention.

“I had to print signs for my project management class because people walking past thought that students were simply messing around while I sat around doing nothing. What they didn’t realise is that these students were working on documents together, assigning tasks and getting on – just like every other knowledge worker in the modern era. Technology itself isn’t a replacement for quality engaging teaching, but it’s part of the toolkit that an academic should have.”

No ivory tower for Charles, then. He likes to engage his students with whatever tools are at hand, and technology is enabling him to lead his students into uncharted territory. Everyone is on a learning curve here. If there’s no place for formal lectures or seminars, then so be it.

“Technology itself isn’t a replacement for quality engaging teaching, but it’s part of the toolkit that an academic should have.”

And both students and Charles appear to be having the time of their lives – it’s the more orthodox that are struggling, perhaps, to keep up.

So why does he eschew the more traditional teaching methods, for a style he describes as being shaped by “rigour coupled with adaptability”?

“I tend to adapt my style based on the topic. So for project management, it makes perfect sense to do active projects rather than lectures. In one of my other modules, Strategy, which is about how companies win, I’ve just ordered a strategy simulator so the students can compete against each other.”

When Charles took on a Project Management module, the module that has seen him shortlisted by the *THE*, he decided it would be led by the students. Undergraduates were set the task of developing a plan for a University-wide enterprise application, making use of cloud-based software, mobile devices and Open Educational Resources.

“It simply didn’t make sense in 2016 to ignore technological progress. The students were the ones who suggested the ideas about how technology can be incorporated, I then just put them into practice. So for example, I get students in one of my classes to write notes in a shared document which wouldn’t have been possible a few years ago. The benefits to each individual student are fantastic – it scales their learning beyond their own individual efforts.

“The students were the ones who suggested the ideas about how technology can be incorporated, I then just put them into practice.”

“While planning this module, it occurred to me that students could use the seminars not to do lots of little written tasks but to do real projects instead, and it all came into place.

“It then logically followed if I wanted it to be active, why would I be doing a taught lecture? And so I started to record my lectures, students would watch them as video podcasts, and we’d discuss them at the start of the session.”

With a pretty active Twitter account Charles likes to have one foot at least in what is happening right now, and that’s where he likes to find his teaching inspiration:

“For example, a recent session looked at the court ruling against Uber because it’s an excellent example of how the economy is changing. I think my basic approach is always the same – what makes this interesting, delivered without reading bullets off PowerPoint slides?”

Dr Knight is no stranger to awards, with three student-led teaching awards in the past four years. The Business School, and Charles, have a sympathetic approach to students experiencing university learning for the first time:

“We have a year-long module that’s designed to encourage the skills needed to be successful. We try and make sure that they understand it’s OK in the first year to try out new things and not worry about getting it wrong, because getting it wrong helps you understand the right way to do things.”

Most of Charles’ students are living independently for the first time, and that means learning to cook, clean, and socialise, alongside all that academic stuff. The support the University offers is vital, with inductions, student advice services,

social opportunities, particularly through the Students’ Union, and personal tutoring, although Charles adds that his assigned students may “end up drinking a lot of espressos” with him.

He’s quick to praise his “brilliant” colleagues, and admits to looking to them for inspiration. But perhaps it’s actually all that caffeine that fires his imagination. His latest brainwave is based on the idea of humour as a vehicle for communicating messages, and he has posed himself a question: “Can I do an academically rigorous stand-up comedy set for one of my modules?”

He’s already got the title: “funny business!” Maybe one espresso too far, Charles? Or perhaps he’ll have the last laugh.

“I think my basic approach is always the same – what makes this interesting, delivered without reading bullets off PowerPoint slides?”

Either way, Charles is a thoroughly modern university lecturer, looking to engage students with innovative techniques, while also preparing them for their working life after university. Whether that’s through humour or the latest app or a real-world approach to learning, he’s comfortable with giving it a go. And if his students can teach him a thing or two about the modern world as well, which he can then exploit academically, everyone’s laughing.

University is a place where learning never stops, whoever you are.°

www.edgehillsu.org.uk


The HUG MANIFESTO

The political campaign trail is littered with broken promises. But when **Lauren Mann**, the Edge Hill University Students' Union (SU) Vice-President for Welfare, declared that student well-being "should be at the heart of everything the Union does, with students and their university experience the clear focus", she meant it.

Elected on a joint platform, Lauren's promises are echoed by her fellow SU officers, **Matty**, **Rachel**, and **Lee**, who all put student issues ahead of party politics.

After the election campaign, then, the real work began, explains Lauren:

"I have loads of campaign plans: alcohol awareness, housing, sexual health awareness, disability awareness, and lots around stressed out students during tough examination and deadline periods."

But top of the list was mental health, something that affects one in four of us, to a greater or lesser degree. It's an issue that is finally being taken seriously by the powers that be, but which has had to fight for a high public profile for years, through constant grassroots campaigning by dedicated activists.

SU team-members each had their own stories of the damage mental health issues can do if left unaddressed, and approached the task seriously.

Their mission was to mark October's World Mental Health Day with a series of awareness-raising activities, designed to encourage students to find out more about mental health, and develop skills that would help them to spot the little signs and symptoms in sufferers. Symptoms such as avoiding activities you enjoy; turning to substances such as alcohol, tobacco or drugs more than usual; loss of appetite and weight, or, conversely, gaining appetite and weight; feeling tired all the time; and regular feelings of restlessness and agitation.

As this was the team's first campaign, they faced a steep learning curve. How do you highlight mental health issues in an entertaining, engaging – and relatively cost-free – way? Well, they say talent borrows, genius steals, and the team were not averse to ransacking the internet for ideas, before setting up a project team to plan the day itself.

"The main feature was the well-being tree, aka 'I be-leaf in you'," explains Lauren. "Students wrote down things that made them happy, cheered them up, or acted as advice to someone that was feeling down. Believe it or not, the most challenging part of organising the event was finding a tree. I had something very specific in mind and at one point I was considering making it myself. That would have been a disaster!"

The tree, which remains in the SU reception for students to access at their leisure, is a symbol that sufferers from mental health issues are not alone, awareness is growing, and easily-

accessible support and advice is blossoming. Messages ranged from the philosophical – ‘Be adventurous’, to the practical – ‘take a relaxing bath’, ‘Eat healthily’, ‘Talk to friends and family’, ‘ride a bike’, while taking in the slightly bizarre – ‘chicken’, anyone? – en route.

Exercising was a popular suggestion, and during the day Edge Hill’s women’s rugby team came down to support the event, skipping, stepping and running for every leaf placed on the tree, while a giant rabbit was on-hand to offer hug therapy.



Held in the Hub, Edge Hill University’s popular communal space where you’ll find everything from cake stalls and juice bars to vintage clothes stands and recruitment counters, the event ended with a bang, as 100 purple balloons descended from the first floor of the Hub, each filled with an inspirational quote.

The SU team had wrestled with its logistical demons and emerged triumphant. But if budget had not been so tight, would they have approached the event in a different way?

“It’s really important for everyone to have the appropriate knowledge and understanding to notice even the smallest signs and symptoms, and to be able to point someone in the direction of the many support services that are available. So, if there was no budget limit, I’d have aimed to get mental health awareness training for every single person at Edge Hill University, staff and students.”

Time is also limited for the SU team, though, and although they will be looking to build on the progress in raising awareness of mental health issues, they have close to a campaign a month to work on over their year in office. Come the end of their term they may well look to the well-being tree for advice themselves, and take a well-earned, relaxing bath.

For further information about mental health visit:
www.studentminds.org.uk
www.mind.org.uk

5 Steps to a Good University Experience



Make friends

It’s normal to be anxious when meeting new people, but a simple strategy can help. Leave your door open, have some refreshments handy, arrange to explore campus or town with a few housemates, and don’t be afraid to say hello – everyone’s in the same boat.

Sleep

A regular sleep pattern will help you approach each day with a clear head. Burning the candle at both ends is tempting and often fun, but a good night’s sleep will do you the world of good.



Eat healthily

Two pints of lager and a packet of crisps is a tasty treat, and it has its place. But ultimately it lacks nutritional value. Eating healthily – and yes, that includes eating your greens – will make you feel much better, physically and mentally.

Exercise

You don’t have to be a world class athlete to benefit from physical exercise. A gentle jog around campus, or a brisk walk into town will help you feel energised and ready to take on your next challenge. And The Sports Centre has plenty more options for the sportingly curious.



Relax

Work is not good for you. Well, certainly not all the time, anyway. Give your brain a break by taking up a hobby, joining a society, or just kicking back with Netflix. You’ll feel much sharper once you do return to the books.

MY EDGE HILL

LAUREN MANN

Students' Union
Vice President (Welfare)

BSc (Hons) Secondary
Education Mathematics with QTS
2016

Originally from North Wales, Lauren would eventually like to teach maths in a Special Educational Needs Secondary School. She is a qualified skydiver with over 200 jumps under her belt, as well as being an avid rugby union player. Although a massive *Harry Potter* fan, she admits that the only decent thing she can conjure up in the kitchen is spag bol. Loyal to a fault, Lauren's biggest inspirations are her family and friends.

Q&A

Q Best place to enjoy a quiet drink?

A Whether it's a pint of cider watching live sport or a cocktail with the girls, the Students' Union bar has your back.

Q Best place for a big night out?

A The Quad, of course! It's actually the biggest nightclub in Ormskirk, and right here on campus. Socials and karaoke are my favourites, but they're hosting more live music events this year which I'm really looking forward to.

Q Best place to get a cheap bite?

A Again, the SU bar. Everything from chicken, pizza and chips to salads if you're feeling healthy. My favourites are the chicken bites and sweet potato fries. The takeaway 'Nom' is open until 2am in case you get late night cravings.

Q Best place to relax in the sun?

A There are benches all over campus – the best ones are around the lakes. But if you're looking for an even better view, you can't beat the roof top gardens, hidden away above the Business School, Creative Edge, and the new Sports Centre.

**THREE WORDS
TO DESCRIBE
EDGE HILL
UNIVERSITY...**

Unique,
Beautiful,
Supportive.



Q Best place to get your groceries?

A In terms of price, you can't really beat the Morrisons Saver range, and there's no shame in going to the reduced section when you're a student. As long as you get a few greens in every now and then, bulk buying super noodles is also completely acceptable.

Q Best place for a day out?

A It depends what sort of mood I'm in. Liverpool, if I fancy the hustle and bustle of a city, with some great places to go shopping and loads of culture to explore. Alternatively, Southport if it's sunny and I fancy a chilled day with friends on the beach.

Q Best place to meet people?

A Joining a society or sports team, definitely. It's the best way to meet other people, and you can get involved in as many as you like. I've honestly made friends for life and would recommend everyone trying out at least one. There are over 80 sports teams and societies, so there should be something for everyone. And if not? Start your own.

Q My sport or society?

A I signed up for loads of sports teams and societies to see what I liked, but I only really stuck at rugby. Honestly, joining that team has given me friends for life and boosted my confidence. It's not just a team, it's a family.

Q Best SU service?

A Our very own Advice and Representation Centre. They provide free, independent, confidential advice and guidance on everything from fees, debt and finance to housing and academic issues.

Q Best full English?

A The SU Bar actually now serves hearty full English breakfasts. It's the perfect way to set yourself up for a full day of lectures and Wednesday game days for sports teams.

Q Best place to play pool?

A Without wanting to sound like I never leave the SU, if you're wanting a few quiet games in the daytime, the most convenient pool tables for students are found in our SU bar. Alternatively, the 22 Club in Ormskirk has a range of snooker tables, pool tables, darts and more.

Q Best place to get away from people for a bit?

A The sunken garden behind The Arts Centre is quite a hideaway. It's beautiful, quiet, and a lovely place to relax.

Q Best place on campus?

A I think, ultimately, it's the Hub. There's always something different going on, from music and entertainment, to stalls and activities. Something will always catch your eye. It's a great environment to be in, with the hustle and bustle of students, and the waft from all the different food outlets always makes it smell great.

Q Song to relax to/revise to/get ready to go out to?

A Whether you're relaxing after a long day, revising for exams or getting ready to go out, you can't go wrong with a bit of Rudimental.

Q Best way to spend Freshers'?

A Make the most of every opportunity. Whether it's an inflatable fun day, mini golf, slumber party film night or massive DJs and live bands taking the roof off the Quad at night, there really is something for everyone.

Q Best university-related trip?

A The trip to Manchester Christmas Markets is organised by the University each year and is a great way to get you in the Christmas spirit. If you haven't been before, I would 100% recommend it.

Q Best uni improvement during my time here?

A When I started at Edge Hill, I was in the old Maths and Technology building. Although useful, this was not my favourite building on campus. Therefore, it was really cool to see the introduction of the Tech Hub which now has tons of great facilities. It's definitely worth popping into the CAVE (Computer Augmented Virtual Environment) when you get a chance.

Q Best way to spend a day off?

A Ormskirk is a great place to be on a day off. There is so much to see and so much to do, from going for a walk around Coronation Park, or browsing around the town centre on market day. And there are loads of lovely little coffee shops around town that you need to check out.

JACK LLOYD
BA (Hons) History
Entrance Excellence Scholar, 2016

ANDREW WALKER
BA (Hons) Sports Development
and Management
Outstanding Applicant Scholar
Excellence in Volunteering, 2015

MELANIE SENIOR
BA (Hons) English Literature
Outstanding Applicant Scholar
Excellence in Creative Arts, 2015

ERIN MUIR
BA (Hons) Physical Education
and School Sport
Entrance Excellence Scholar, 2016

EMILY HODGSON
BSc (Hons) Nursing (Child)
Entrance Excellence Scholar, 2016

Excellence RECOGNISED

LAUREN JOHNSTON
BSc (Hons) Nursing (Learning Disabilities)
Entrance Excellence Scholar, 2016

OWAIN LLŶR PRITCHARD
BA (Hons) Animation
Outstanding Applicant Scholar
Excellence in Creative Arts, 2015

ALEX TENEV
BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Science
Sports Scholar - Gold Level
(Prospective Students), 2016

Melanie has been preparing for her dream career since she was seven years old. She read *Harry Potter* so many times she was practically an honorary member of Gryffindor House.

Despite initial desires to follow a career as “an astronaut, midwife and pop star all at once”, Melanie’s passion for reading led her to journalism. Secondary school magazine projects drew her into writing, and she became a regular blogger, reviewing “everything from *Doctor Who* episodes to Taylor Swift albums.”

By the time she was deciding on university options she’d come to the conclusion that not only did she enjoy reviewing films such as *The House of Flying Daggers* and [Canadian vampire flick] *Suck*, but she wouldn’t mind having a go at writing and producing one herself.

First, Melanie got herself onto Edge Hill’s English Literature degree course. Then her mum spotted the University’s range of Excellence Scholarships, aimed at any applicant who has firmly accepted an offer of a place at Edge Hill and can demonstrate determination, commitment and achievement outside of their studies at school or college. She encouraged her daughter to apply.

Melanie’s impressive portfolio and clear enthusiasm for language caught the eye of the selection panel, and she became one of 24 prospective students to receive a £1,000 Scholarship. She was understandably rather pleased – and not just about the money:

“It felt like all the work I’d put into my writing was starting to pay off. My family and friends had always told me my writing was good, but it felt great to have that validation from an unbiased party.”

Recipients are encouraged to put the money towards personal development in their field of interest, and Melanie plumped for a rinky-dink new laptop, the digital forge upon which she will apply her wordsmithery.

Every year the University invites prospective students like Melanie to apply for Scholarships, alongside current undergraduates, with a stunning £1m earmarked to support our students over the course of the 2016/17 academic year, helping them with both their studies and their extracurricular interests.

Scholarships Administrator Zoe Slater loves discovering the range of talents and passions our students possess:

“They really are very diverse, from knitting to international representation in their chosen sport. Each year we receive an increasing number of applications for Scholarships, all of which never fail to amaze the panel. For me, it’s particularly pleasing to follow the Scholars progress, benefiting from the financial support that the Scholarship brings. We definitely have some stars of the future – so watch this space!”

With that in mind, Melanie has been using her time wisely, learning her craft, surrounding herself with “creative people who’ve inspired me to work harder on my writing. I have so many great ideas I want to work on,” and taking advantage of Free Film Fridays in The Arts Centre. She’s currently honing her literary skills, and focusing on poetry and short stories (of which she’s already got enough to fill a book, if any publishers are reading).

So, Zoe, why should people apply?

“If you’re proud of something you’ve done and can demonstrate determination, commitment and achievement outside of your studies at school or college, then we want to hear from you. Perhaps you’re the next Spielberg, run your own business, play in a band, or stage bake-offs for charity. And if you’re involved in sport in any way, we have a whole set of dedicated sport Scholarships.”

Melanie may once have dreamt of orbiting the Earth while singing *Push It* by Salt-N-Pepa (perhaps), but her career aspirations remain reassuringly ambitious, and still on track following her Scholarship success:

“I’d still love to be an astronaut and pop star (I’ll pass on being a midwife, thanks) – [but now I really] want a BAFTA or even an Oscar. That’s the goal. Don’t laugh at me.”

No chance of that, Melanie, we take our students’ career ambitions very seriously indeed.

For further details on how we can help you make the best of yourself, check out edgehill.ac.uk/scholarships

JACK LLOYD

BA (Hons) History
Entrance Excellence Scholar, 2016

What is your Scholarship for?

I volunteer with the Air Cadets. My role is to recruit new cadets, and help them begin their cadet career and encourage them to get the best out of the organisation.

Why do you do it?

I love my volunteering, and the best part of it is when you watch the kids that you recruited and helped train get so much out of it, and, at the end, thank you for the impact you’ve made on them. It really makes you feel like you’ve made a difference.

How will the award make a difference?

I want to use the funds to continue to raise the profile of the Air Training Corps in the community and the benefits for youths. Also, I want to use it to fund extra courses for other volunteers and cadets to ensure that they continue to access a range of activities which help to build character, skills and confidence and broaden their horizons.



A man with brown hair, wearing a dark blue suit jacket, is holding a large orange card. The card features a green map of the world with various lines and text. The text on the card reads: "You have more power than you think." The card is decorated with string and pins. The man is looking at the camera with a slight smile.



ANDREW WALKER

BA (Hons) Sports Development
and Management
Outstanding Applicant Scholar
Excellence in Volunteering, 2015

What is your Scholarship for?

I volunteered at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014, World Rowing Cup 2013, Ludlow Food and Drink Festival, and helped organise and run the Shropshire School Games. I was a finalist in the Volunteer of the Year award two years running.

What did the Scholarship mean to you?

I was very proud, knowing that a panel had chosen me out of so many other people. Knowing I'd made my mum and dad proud made it even more special. The awards ceremony was a joyous evening. My parents came up for the evening to watch me collect the Scholarship, and seeing them there as my name was read out was a very happy moment.

How has the award made a difference?

I can carry on volunteering here at Edge Hill. I've begun volunteering at the LFC Foundation, helping children and adults with disabilities play sport, and I've joined Everton in the Community to encourage men aged 35-50 to participate in physical activity.

I've also been able to do some coaching qualifications and now coach a recreational volleyball session each week at Edge Hill Sport.

Volunteering highlights?

Last summer I was able to go to Bulgaria to help homeless children. I planned games and activities with them to teach them simple skills like sharing, catching, and drawing. This was a huge challenge but opened my eyes to how other people live in the world. The language barrier was a challenge, but it was an incredibly fun experience. I'd love to volunteer abroad again.

MELANIE SENIOR

BA (Hons) English Literature
Outstanding Applicant Scholar
Excellence in Creative Arts, 2015

What did the Scholarship mean to you?

I was so happy when I found out I was successful. The awards ceremony was amazing because my dad came up to see me and it just felt amazing to see how proud he was of me. He wouldn't like me saying, but there may have been tears.

Have you made progress since receiving the Scholarship?

I've been fortunate enough to surround myself with people who have inspired the way I look at literature and the way I write, both creatively and academically. I feel my Creative Writing skills have vastly improved since last year.

What does the future hold for you?

I have so many great ideas I want to work on. Obviously I want to pursue a career in writing when I graduate so I'm very keen to continue with my interests.



Excellence
RECOGNISED

Excellence RECOGNISED



OWAIN LLŶR PRITCHARD

BA (Hons) Animation
Outstanding Applicant Scholar
Excellence in Creative Arts, 2015

Why did you apply?

I'm studying animation in the hope of getting a job within the industry, the Scholarship opportunity is another step towards achieving my goal. The award money will go towards new hardware, and fees for animation competitions to get my work out there.

Tell us about the Scholarship ceremony.

It was a great way to meet all the other winners.

Do you have any advice for future applicants?

Just give it a go. I was pleasantly surprised when the phone call came through because I thought the Scholarship had to be for academic excellence.



ERIN MUIR

BA (Hons) Physical Education
and School Sport
Entrance Excellence Scholar, 2016

What is your Scholarship for?

I do volunteer work with children in the Blackpool community, such as coaching young female footballers.

Why do you do it?

Over the years I've had so much help from others. They've supported me through everything that I've done, and I wanted to give something back to the younger generation, so they have all of the opportunities that I had, and the skills and confidence to be able to do it.

How will the Scholarship make a difference?

I just remember breaking down into happy tears as all of the hard work and many unpaid hours had been recognised, and I could continue to pursue my voluntary work while at university. With the award I can successfully complete my FA coaching qualification, and hopefully one day I'll be able to manage my own team.

LAUREN JOHNSTON

BSc (Hons) Nursing
(Learning Disabilities)
Entrance Excellence Scholar, 2016

What is your Scholarship for?

I volunteer for HCPT – The Pilgrimage Trust, an organisation who take children and young people with learning disabilities, or who are socially deprived or underprivileged, to Lourdes in France every Easter, a holiday of a lifetime.

Why do you do it?

This is something very close to my heart. I first went to Lourdes when I was 12 weeks old, and have been with HCPT every year since. Recently I've been appointed deputy group leader, which I really enjoy, and hope one day to take a group of my own.

What does the Scholarship mean to you?

I felt very proud and honoured to have been chosen. I feel very privileged to be part of an amazing charity.

How will the Scholarship make a difference?

It costs around £750 per volunteer helper to travel to Lourdes each year, so the Scholarship will ensure I can still travel to Lourdes while studying.





ALEX TENEV

BSc (Hons) Sport and Exercise Science
Sports Scholar - Gold Level
(Prospective Students), 2016

What is your Scholarship for?

It's a Sports Scholarship. I'm a rugby union openside flanker, playing for Liverpool Collegiate Colts, where I was their 2014/15 Player of the Season, and Sefton RUFC. I made my international debut in 2016, representing Bulgaria.

How has the Scholarship made a difference?

The Scholarship will give me the opportunity to work with a nutritionist and personal trainer. Getting really fit will help me to improve as a player.

Do you see yourself as a role model?

I'd really like to see more young people get into the sport I love. I've got my Level 1 coaching award, and have delivered taster and training sessions to local primary school children.

Hopefully it's given them an idea of the difference the sport can make to their lives.

Excellence
RECOGNISED

EMILY HODGSON

BSc (Hons) Nursing (Child)
Entrance Excellence Scholar, 2016

Why did you start volunteering?

Originally I just wanted to help my local girl guiding group as a young leader and it just developed from there because I enjoyed it so much. By gaining experience in hospitals, care homes and schools, volunteering helped me decide that I wanted to study children's nursing.

What did the Scholarship mean to you?

I was surprised because I knew that the standard would be so high, and grateful because I knew that it would help me a lot. I was also proud and honoured as it's something that is prestigious.

How will the Scholarship make a difference?

It will help me continue to volunteer in my local hospital in Accrington, as the money will help towards transport costs, and also help me gain new volunteering experiences.



Excellence
RECOGNISED

“I want to publish my own student newspaper”



Student Opportunity Fund

If you've got an idea which will enhance your employability, you need to travel to get some work experience or you are looking to develop a specific skill through training or volunteering then our Student Opportunity Fund might be the place to start.

The Fund allows current students to apply for up to £2,000 to take advantage of career enhancing and life changing opportunities.

The application doesn't have to be course-related and you don't have to repay the money, individuals or groups can apply for the funding.

Of course, it all starts with YOU. Tell us what you'd like to do, how you're going to do it and explain why the opportunity will enhance your employability and future prospects.

ehu.ac.uk/itstartswithyou

It Starts With *You*



cultural revolution

Dr Cathy Butterworth, the new Arts Manager has a message for the students of Edge Hill: you'd be mad to miss out on what's in store over the next couple of years.

Yes, the more cautious students at Edge Hill may have met their match in Cathy, who has set her sights on getting students – all students – involved in a campus cultural scene that is bursting with potential.

It's certainly a big challenge – “loads to work out...chatting about it, I'm like 'aaaghhhh'” she confesses during an hour of enthusiastic conversation in which her ideas tumble over one another in a race to be heard – but one she's more than willing to take on.

It'll require some vaulting ambition, a fresh mindset, some risk-taking, and an innovative approach to audience development. All of which Cathy has in spades, having cut her teeth on a radical Liverpool cultural scene, including several years spent programming Liverpool's iconic Bluecoat arts hub.

With over twenty years' experience producing and programming events, Cathy's not looking to dispose of what The Arts Centre already does very well – supporting independent theatre companies, showcasing student talent, maintaining the wide range of performance genres on offer.

In her early days she admits she “made a lot of mistakes...put on some dreadful performances.” She even flirted with physical danger, with performers climbing walls without safety harnesses, “but overall it was great because it gave me an opportunity to realise what it is to take risks and push boundaries in terms of arts programming.” And she's bringing all that experience – the highs and the lows – to the challenge of creating an Arts Centre that sits comfortably at the heart of university life.

Part of her remit is to expand the appeal of the University's on-campus venue to more of its resident community: the students. And she's not afraid to give them what they need, rather than, perhaps, what they think they want.

“I've spent 20-odd years programming, I know what's good, and I know what people will be inspired by. So I've got to trust in that a little bit, and not go too far in bringing a name in just to get bums on seats.

“I could put on people from the television, or *X-Factor*-style shows, talent shows with big names, and that theatre would be packed out every single night of the week, but I think the role of The Arts Centre is to keep on pushing the boundaries of students' expectations.”

That means ensuring her programme meets the demands of the performing arts (PA) students, “making it seem interesting and exciting outside of their academic work”, while also appealing to around 16,000 other students, over 2,000 of which live right here on campus, surely any theatre impresario's dream. She's unlikely to be staging too many eight-hour durational performance art pieces:

“[The Arts Centre] can seem intimidating, people can wonder where they belong socially in this space. So one challenge is to create a social space here that people feel involved in.”

To that end, Cathy's introduced a student membership scheme. It is, of course, free, and involves no obligation to see at least one interpretation of a Shakespeare comedy per term. But it does provide them with a handful of free tickets to use through the year, and Cathy hopes that for some, it will be the start of a lifelong relationship with live performance:

“They might come and see one show a season, but if they've put their foot through the door once they will definitely come back. The big challenge is just getting people in through the doors, getting them to know where it is.”

Cathy's many industry contacts (which include...drumroll... Paul Weller's regular skin thumper), the University's partnership with the curators of the Liverpool Sound City music festival, and connections to The Label, the Uni's in-house recording imprint, will enable Cathy to introduce a more adventurous live music strategy, and not being afraid to fail is a key element in that strategy:

“You can try things and it's a one-off – but sometimes you've got to try and fail for twelve months, and then accept defeat [and move on]. The thing that will bring the students in is other students. To develop a music audience you put other students on, first and foremost, that's what students want to see, get them in the habit of coming to see bands, then bring in the bands that you want to showcase.”

Cathy talks a lot about audience development:

“Developing the audience is about developing social behaviour, without sounding too cynical. Audience development isn't sticking something in front of someone and saying 'go to it', that's just programming. Audience development is creating a pattern of behaviour. So if getting people in to listen to music means putting it on when students are in here anyway, eating crisps and playing Hungry Hungry Hippos, that's what we'll do.”



So, she'd like to introduce live music sessions in the afternoon: “Why stick to a public venue programming timetable when we're surrounded by our audience from 9am through to 10pm?” She'd really like to get out onto our award-winning campus and stage a music festival. The Arts Centre's scope is limited only by the imagination. Did we mention Cathy was ambitious?

The core audience, the already converted, needn't worry, though. She's not planning on booking *Cats* for a three-month run just yet – although that would make some purr with pleasure. No, Cathy believes in The Arts Centre's well-cultivated reputation, both for variety and quality, and the link to the local community of Ormskirk and West Lancashire is highly-prized: “It's about staying recognisable to people who enjoy the things we do, while also trying to entice new people in... I'm keen to make sure that we don't just forget about the public audience.”

Cathy is tackling this challenge head on, making innovative changes to attract the new audience, while looking to supercharge the approach to programming with



ambitious, progressive partnerships and collaborations, developing relationships with internationally-renowned companies, such as the RSC and the Southbank Centre, and chipping away at household names to perform pieces from their back catalogue. Why would they want to perform in Ormskirk, we ask, perhaps a little provocatively? Cathy doesn't miss a beat:

“They might come and see one show a season, but if they've put their foot through the door once they will definitely come back. ...”

“It's to do with existing connections, and by being trustworthy, and knowing that the quality of the thing that you will help them co-produce will be really good. Increasingly big organisations are interested in collaborating with smaller organisations to make things happen on a local level, especially when there is big student involvement, because there's a

drive to engage younger people. So feasibly we could be doing a festival this time next year that's a collaboration with the Southbank. That could happen – I'm constantly having conversations.”

She's also keen to work with members of the Performing Arts department in commissioning new work, work that could – could – one day be sitting alongside the work of West End geniuses like Lloyd Webber and Sondheim:

“One thing I want to do is commission things here that then go on tour. So we develop work in collaboration with people at a certain point in their career, and in five years' time we've got our name to some high profile work. I'm looking at commissioning a new piece of musical theatre that potentially could end up in the West End, developed in collaboration with the PA department, the students, and an organisation that develops musical theatre, and who take performances from the real grass-roots level right through to West End success. So if we can seed-fund that kind of thing, we're involved in a high profile event.”

Fast-forward a year, what would represent a successful first twelve months? “I'd like to look back at the programme, after a couple of seasons under my belt, and say, wow, who would have ever thought that we would be collaborating with the RSC in a studio-sized version of a play with this actor in it, who would have thought we'd be collaborating with the Southbank and bringing real big hitters here. That's what I'd like to be doing – shocked by the success of the place.”

And planning for those next couple of seasons is well under way, with some names already pencilled in (trigger warning: there will be clowns), some on Cathy's to-do list, and some still firmly on her wish list.

But suspension of disbelief is theatre's stock-in-trade, and you should be very pleasantly surprised by what is revealed when the curtain is finally drawn back.°



Not Just

CLOWNING

Around

Rachael was a teaching assistant for 13 years. She doesn't want to be one now, not since she studied with Edge Hill's Performing Arts department.

She's just completed a module called Installation and Immersive Performance. Together with course-mates Ellen, Reece and Sam she set up 3rd Self, a 'spa for the soul', somewhere 'to make you look up from your screen', throw away your mobile device and 'open your eyes'. Somewhere to re-connect with the physical world and take another look at what's going on around you.

"We decided, with technology the way it is, and the way people are on their phones all the time, constantly having a screen barrier, that we were going to look into that," Rachael says.

During a six month exchange trip to Finland, Sam had been introduced to the work of Hal Niedzviecki, author of *The Peep Diaries* (2009) which is "about how we're all peeping into other people's lives, but we've also built walls. We know so much about a person, but we don't physically go and see them."

Armed with these concepts, their project took the form of a pop-up well-being spa. Sam has arguably the toughest role – the receptionist who has to prise people from their mobile phones for the duration of the session ("They're gonna freak out"), while Rachael, Ellen and Reece are therapists, each with a different remit, but with a common goal: to help the client rediscover themselves, to re-connect with their life unencumbered by modern technology.

Ellen has come up with strategies to encourage one-to-one conversation, Rachael has devised tasks to enable people to be comfortable with themselves, their inner selves, and Reece, who admits he "would love to go back to the iron age, or go and live in a forest", takes people back to nature, to reacquaint them with a world seen without a technological filter.

All this may strike you as a little unusual, even for an arts-based degree designed to marry creativity with intellectual rigour. But our Performing Arts degree is a little unusual. Any course that has room for a professional clown deserves to be viewed from a less obvious angle.

Now, when we say clown, we are actually referring to senior lecturer in Performance Dr Barnaby King, not a large-shoed, red-nosed character who drives around campus in a rickety miniature car, flinging foam pies at passing students, and pranking the Vice Chancellor with his water-spurting plastic lapel flower. There is, it seems, more to clowning than falling flat on your face to the sound of a honking horn.

"Clowning is the hardest thing I've done," admits Rachael. "I find it very difficult to look into people's eyes when I'm talking to them. I had to learn to open my eyes and look at somebody, and that's where I found confidence."

"You need to put yourself out there...and fail, to be able to find the clown that you are. Some of the exercises are terrifying. They sound very simple: you're standing behind a door, and you have to cover a certain distance, but you can only walk if the audience laugh at you, but you're not allowed to speak, or do anything, just walk. To get them to laugh at you is so hard, and if they don't laugh you've got to go back into the cupboard. On stage you normally act to the other actors, in clowning you act to the audience – it's so difficult to get right. We have new-found respect for people like Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton – phenomenal."

"I find it very difficult to look into people's eyes when I'm talking to them. I had to learn to open my eyes and look at somebody, and that's where I found confidence."

And Barnaby receives equally fulsome praise – "the cleverest clown you could ever hope to meet, the Yoda of clowning," says Rachael – enough to make even a clown blush, perhaps, for both his skill and his teaching ability:

"He can make something funny when you think it wasn't," explains Rachael. "You go on stage and do something and think everyone's going to laugh at that, and you don't get a laugh at all, and then he'll say 'but all you needed to do was this', and then he'll do something like stretching for a phone he can't reach, and he does it in a way that's hilarious."

But clowning is just a small part of the course curriculum, and Barnaby's skillset. He has toured his own solo clown work professionally, but also worked as a performer and director, devising and delivering theatre for young audiences, and his book about clowning culture in Colombia was published in 2016.

The Performing Arts degree straddles a variety of traditional artistic disciplines – drama, dance, musical theatre, theatre design, with less mainstream performance techniques, and the development of props. It's a very unusual course, but perfect for students seeking "to make work which exceeds...boundaries", work which is, in effect, unique. As both teacher and practitioner, Barnaby is an ideal advocate:

"It's more about finding what they're interested in creating, finding their distinctive individual voice as an artist. Yes, it can have a little text-based material, it can have a little movement, music, singing, it can have visual design elements to it as well, and they can bring all those things from quite an early stage together to create their own work. In other words, create a blend and a mix of those different things that might be different for each student."

Rachael revels in the exciting laissez-faire experimentalism of Performing Arts:

"This is how I describe it, on a straight drama degree you'd be learning this much [indicates small gap], if you were doing [this] visual degree I can't put my hands wide enough apart. Last year's course we learnt literally about everything, from John Cage's silence piece right through to Dada, just everything through history that creates a visual stimulus for theatre.

You've got your technical side and your acting side, plus your design side, plus projections, stage management... everything. We've literally learnt everything there is to learn..."

"...puppetry, mask work, projection mapping..." continues Reece.

Barnaby expands:

"The tools and the skills that we're giving them are also not necessarily just limited to traditional categories either. So we're not saying we're teaching a bit of acting, a bit of dancing, a bit of singing, we'll make you an interdisciplinary performer, the skills that we're placing and planting early

on are more like multi-media, for example, use of digital technology, video, projection, editing.

"We also introduce them to what we call physical theatre: movement-based work, physical expression, using the body to express ideas. And what we call visual theatre, which is giving them more traditional crafting and making skills – how do you actually make stuff that you might want to use? Like masks, puppets, or other objects that are actually being animated, manipulated in the space, brought to life, but also objects like suitcases or costumes, just thinking visually. How do you create a visual aesthetic?"

So who does this course appeal to? Rachael, Reece and Ellen (Sam, although most definitely one of the team, is a collaborator from the Theatre Design degree: "This course allows you to collaborate, and connect and learn about other people's courses. And you get to collaborate with designers," explains Rachael) never really had a conscious desire to tread the boards until something triggered latent passions.

Rachael had "an epiphany" when she accompanied A Level students from the school she worked in to a show at Liverpool's Everyman Theatre. "How have I never known about this?" she asked herself, before deciding to do something about it:

"You have to be open-minded," she says. "If you're focused on one art form it's not the course for you, because if you have to work as an ensemble, as we did last year, and you have to have physical contact with someone, and you've possibly not done that before, it could be very difficult to let go and do it."

Reece took drama in secondary school but "wasn't really enjoying it, and [my dad] told me just to muck about, play, enjoy yourself. The next day in drama, I just started mucking around with my friends, and sort of fell in love with it from there." An inspirational teacher gave him the confidence to stick with it, and he finally found his way to Edge Hill: "As soon as I set foot on campus I knew this was where I wanted to be."

He also believes "you just need to be able to accept everything" to succeed on the course.

Ellen was shy and didn't really fit in, and had initially set her heart on being a forensic scientist. Another inspirational drama teacher convinced her to put

herself under the spotlight, and she threw herself into it. She actually began life on the BA (Hons) Dance and Drama, but swapped over, according to Rachael, when she "saw us having so much fun." On graduation she's planning on trying her hand at stand-up comedy. And we thought she was shy. Those clowning lessons must have made a serious impression.

A typical (if that's the word) Performing Arts student is "quite independent, quite driven, curious, non-conventional, quirky in a positive way – they're interested in being a bit different, a bit offbeat," according to Barnaby.

"We find ourselves in a moment in history where a lot of young people are exploring alternative identities, and I think that's something that this kind of course is catering to, giving space for that, so as well as the clowning and circus skills we also have modules like the drag kings and queens, so that gives a flavour of the kinds of alternative artistic practice that we can offer."

Back at the 'Spa for the Soul' they're fully booked, a mixture of friends, lecturers, fellow artists – "which is a bit scary" – and random strangers. Rachael, Reece, Ellen and Sam are discussing the following week's grand opening. They've already begun adjusting the mindsets of their clients with a few preparatory tasks, helping them liberate themselves from modern routines in order to physically and mentally re-connect with everything around them. With no real opportunity to rehearse, the project contains a large element of surprise...and danger.

Very much like the Performing Arts programme itself. A course that puts together all the ingredients necessary to make an impact on the contemporary art scene, then asks students to use their imaginations to come up with their own recipes for success. Intimidating? Very possibly. Challenging? Almost certainly. Life-changing? Definitely.

And Barnaby asks, "I think what we're doing with this degree is saying, there are these traditional arts and crafts and forms that you can learn, like mask work, puppetry, physical mime and storytelling, and we can bring those up to date, connect them with digital multimedia – now, what do you want to do with that?"

The answer? "Be an artist." °

edgehill.ac.uk/performingarts

CLOWN SHOES

Pop culture is full of them, from the lovable and funny to the stuff of nightmares. Here's a list of our favourite on-screen pranksters.

PENNYWISE

Pennywise the murderous clown from Stephen King's *It* is back and ready to scare the pants off you in a remake of the 1990 classic.

It opens worldwide Sept 2017



KRUSTY

Everybody's favourite chain-smoking, alcoholic clown has been entertaining Springfield's kids (and us) for years.

Season 28 of *The Simpsons* airs on Sky1

HARLEY QUINN

While the Joker may be the Clown Prince of Crime in Gotham, it was Harley who stole the show in one of 2016's biggest superhero hits.

Suicide Squad is out now on DVD and Blu-ray



RONALD MCDONALD

Ronald has been hawking hamburgers since 1963, and apparently has a public recognition factor second only to Santa Claus.



NEMO

Not quite a clown, but anyway. A clownfish, goes on an adventure to help his mate find her mum. Too cute. We can't cope.



Finding Dory is out now on DVD and Blu-ray

The Questionnaire

Lecturer in Performance and clown prince of Edge Hill, Barnaby King talks French comedy, Louis C.K. and Jesus Christ Superstar.



Colbert, Late dinner guest

What do you teach, and what are your research interests?

I teach Performing Arts, which includes all kinds of things like circus, clowning, physical theatre and outdoor performance. My research interests (no surprise) are also in the area of circus and clowning.

Best/worst part of your job?

Obviously the admin is no fun. But I love our department. It's full of characters (as a Performing Arts department should be) and there is little better than standing around in the corridor cracking jokes and laughing ourselves silly. I also love seeing the work our students make, especially at the end of their three years with us. It always surprises me.

The clown/performer that most influenced you, and why?

I'm a huge fan of Jacques Tati, the French clown performer and film director. My students don't get him because his films are slow and they're not a gag-a-second, but they are comical masterpieces, lyrical and whimsical and, I think, very funny. If you haven't seen any, try *Mon Oncle* or *Monsieur Hulot's Holiday*.

Holiday destination of choice and why?

I love Latin America. I have spent a lot of time travelling in Colombia, as well as visiting Peru, Chile and Bolivia. I speak Spanish and I love the Latin culture, once you get used to its chaotic and unpredictable nature.

Culturally, I never miss..?

I'm enjoying *Narcos* at the moment. I never miss anything created by Louis C.K., who is a genius. He recently brought out a crazy and disturbing series called *Horace and Pete* which is only available on his website. It's very theatrical, beautifully scripted and acted, and utterly gripping.

Growing up I dreamt of being...?

I guess I always thought it would be cool to be a performer, but I never thought I'd be a clown. I thought a clown was just a Bozo-type figure in a red wig and big shoes. When I found out that clowns were simply the expression of our particular ridiculousness and that I could make audiences laugh by exposing my own flaws, I was hooked.

Who would you invite to your dream dinner party?

Louis C.K., Stephen Colbert, John Hegley, Amy Schumer, Tina Fey. Imagine that. It would be hilarious.

What is the worst job you've ever done?

I used to deliver pizzas in my own car (what a racket). The worst thing was the smell.

Guilty pleasure?

Listening to *Jesus Christ Superstar* by Andrew Lloyd Webber.

How do you relax?

Listening to *Jesus Christ Superstar* by Andrew Lloyd Webber.

What's in your ipod/cd player/streaming device at the moment?

Jesus Christ Superstar by Andrew Lloyd Webber.

For my last supper, I would have...?

See above.

What has been your most embarrassing moment?

Just now, admitting that I listen to Andrew Lloyd Webber.

A common perception is that 2016 was a tough year. What would you recommend to raise public spirits?

Sing songs from *Jesus Christ Superstar* to yourself...e.g. 'Try not to get worried, Try not to turn onto problems that upset you, oh... Don't you know everything's alright, yes, everything's fine. And the world will turn without you tonight...'

Finally, what would your karaoke song be?

Need you ask?

...there is little better than standing around in the corridor cracking jokes and laughing ourselves silly.







DON'T WORRY BE HAPPY

Jaime Monfort Miralles
BA (Hons) Visual Theatre
2011-2014

When I was eight, my parents gave me a digital video camera for my birthday. I ended up using that camera almost every day. I always wanted to finish my homework quickly so I could play with it. I did stupid, absurd things all the time, and even created my own stories, portraying different characters, making different voices, moving in slow motion. I've no idea how much time I spent in front of that camera, but that was the thing I enjoyed most in life. That's how me and my family eventually worked out that what I wanted to do with my life had to be related to performing.

In 2008 I saw Avner the Eccentric's show *Exceptions to Gravity*, and Avner Eisenberg became my role model. For the whole show, I couldn't stop laughing. My jaw, my abs, my whole body was hurting from the laughter. I read that he was a 'clown' and not a regular 'actor'. After watching that show, I said to myself: "I want to be like that man when I'm older."

I chose Edge Hill because my school told me that it had a good Performing Arts department. When I went for my interview, I mentioned Avner the Eccentric and my interviewer, Geof Atwell, had heard of him! At that point I thought: "Ok, this is my university." I loved working with all my lecturers, but Geof and Barnaby King knew a lot about clowning and consider it a great performing art. Writing my 'Theatre Manifesto' during my third year helped me to understand myself and what I wanted to do with my life.

I love the English culture and habits. Rain, cold, grey skies, a hot cup of tea, theatre, music... honestly! I loved studying in England because I also loved the personality of my English friends.

Avner the Eccentric told me that the best physical training for any performer was dancing, during a two-week clowning workshop I did in the USA. When I returned to Edge Hill I joined [all-male dance troupe] Edge FWD. I found myself surrounded by great male dancers and by a marvellous teacher, leader, dancer and person, Debbie Milner. I particularly liked contemporary dance, and the shows were fantastic experiences. I truly believe they helped me improve as a performing artist.

I didn't know how to feel when I was accepted by the Académie Fratellini [one of the world's best circus schools], and as a clown. It didn't feel real, so I just did what I love the most: I laughed. And I still laugh when I think about it. After two years at Rogelio Rivel, the Contemporary Circus School in Barcelona, improving my circus skills, I tried my luck. There are not usually many clowns at the Académie, but I thought that it could possibly be the best opportunity for me to grow as a performer.



Avner the Eccentric

...the shows were fantastic experiences. I truly believe they helped me improve as a performing artist.

To me, a great clown is anyone who makes other people laugh a lot without cheating. When I say "without cheating", I think I mean naturally and being honest to oneself. But I'm just silly, young, and inexperienced and at the start of this adventure of trying to become a clown – ask me when I'm 60 or 70, if I'm still alive. I'm just trying to be myself onstage, trying to show everyone how I believe humans to be. If the audience laughs at this, it's a happy accident.

My most admired clown is Avner Eisenberg, known as Avner the Eccentric, but other influences include The Marx Brothers, Woody Allen, Molière, and [Polish playwright and writer] Slawomir Mrozek.

In Barcelona I learnt how difficult doing a proper circus handstand is... and how little it is appreciated by an audience who do not live in the world of circus. Of course, I don't blame them – it's fair enough. I've also learned some acrobatics and I've constructed a body fit for circus arts. You can't imagine how tough it is! I'm looking to improve my acrobatics, but, what I really want is to improve my clowning/acting/performing so I can accidentally make the whole universe laugh.

My ultimate career ambition is to tour my own solo clown show and basically make as many people as I can happier. I think life is a tragic thing, but we can still laugh in and at it, because it's funny. We are funny. I don't think I am funny, and I don't try to be funny. I just am what we are and what I am.

I've no idea what advice I would give other young people – I'm just a regular person who likes a coffee in the morning, who loves laughing, and who really enjoys it when people are happy and smile or even laugh around him. I love seeing happy faces. Just do what you love to do. Don't trust me – do what you want...as long as we respect everyone and each other.

The best part of being a performance artist is that I'm very happy when I do it and I hope I also make other people happy. But I believe it is just as good as someone who loves being a doctor, curing people and saving lives; or a hairdresser who really enjoys making people look good. For me, the best part of doing anything is being happy. We all die, so we might as well die happy.

My Perfect Cultural Festival: Cathy Butterworth



Play

King Lear, as played recently by Glenda Jackson at The Old Vic.

Film

I, Daniel Blake, which we'll be showing in the Arts Centre. Or a Werner Herzog weekend showing all his films back to back. Not really a crowd pleaser, though!

Dance

Pina Bausch Company, Akram Khan, and Gary Clarke's amazing production COAL, based on the 1984/85 British Miners' strike, which will be on in Liverpool this year as part of Merseyside Dance Initiative's LEAP Festival. Liz Aggiss and Wendy Houstoun, experimental choreographers and performers, and part of our Spring 2017 programme.

Comedian

Stewart Lee, once voted the '41st Best Stand Up Ever', and Liz Carr, comedian and disability rights activist.

Exhibition/Art installation

There was an exhibition at the Barbican in London last year, *Magnificent Obsessions*, a fascinating insight into the personal collections of 14 artists, including Andy Warhol and Peter Blake. I'd love to commission an artist to make a sound work or video walk that audiences can experience across the campus...my dream artist would be Canadian Janet Cardiff.

Book Reading

Michel Faber, author of *The Crimson Petal and The White*, who is actually coming to The Arts Centre in 2017.

Music

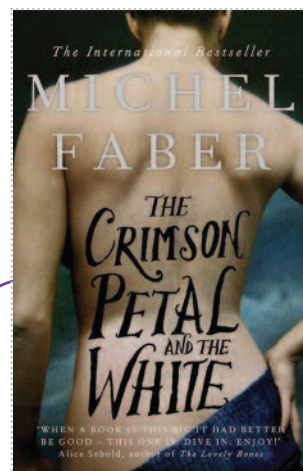
John Grant, PJ Harvey, Joan as Policewoman, David Byrne, Joni Mitchell, The Fall...

Musical

A Pacifist's Guide to the War on Cancer which I saw recently in Manchester. It's a National Theatre production written by Bryony Kimmings, Brian Lobel and Tom Parkinson who all have a background in experimental contemporary performance. I saw *Assisted Suicide: The Musical* as part of DaDaFest recently and am hoping to bring it to The Arts Centre.

Exhibition/Art installation

EHU have a partnership with Tate Liverpool and we have four projects as part of their Tate Exchange programme, an on-going programme of collaborations, performances and workshops. The projects involve EHU students from Dance, Media, Creative Writing and Performing Arts courses so we have the perfect partner to work with on art-based workshops. My dream workshop would have Yoko Ono working with students on a durational Fluxus collaboration. Fluxus artists believed in creating art for the masses, denouncing the concept of high art, arguing that people didn't need to be "educated" to view and understand a piece of art.



Dr Cathy Butterworth was appointed as Arts Manager in June 2016, bringing fresh insight, a wealth of experience and a creative eye to Edge Hill University.

HOW TO GET AHEAD IN MARKETING



Madison Courty, a Film and Media student at Edge Hill University, had only one question on her mind as she approached the end of her course – what am I going to do next?

She'd enjoyed her course, discovering surprisingly complex thought processes behind many films, *The Fast and The Furious* franchise notwithstanding, and developing dexterity and agility when exploring and exploiting digital media.

Despite bearing a name seemingly destined for a long career in the creative industries, Madison felt unprepared for a life in a working marketing office.

By happy coincidence, she spotted a bright yellow flyer on campus. It said:

'Are you about to graduate and want to enhance your employability?'

She discovered that Edge Hill University had teamed up with Agent Marketing, a creative media consultancy, to sponsor a handful of ambitious students on a bespoke eight-week programme – the Agent Academy – designed to help them get a size nine boot in the door of the ultra-competitive digital and creative industries. Madison put in a successful application.

"From day one I was instantly put at ease by the friendliness and the sense of community. I enjoyed meeting the Agent Marketing team, learning about the foundations of their own careers.

"I was aware that there would be other people on the programme with a greater knowledge of marketing than my own. This intimidated me slightly, as I didn't want to be behind everyone. However, I also knew that there would be others in the same position as me, keen to learn."

Madison and nine others from Edge Hill faced a steep learning curve, as they were walked through

Zoe Wallace heads up the Academy, "a solution," she says, "to the issue of young people leaving education without the industry skills to begin their careers. Industry moves so quickly, so it can be impossible for universities to keep up without the industry links that Agent Academy offers."

It's now hosting its fourth intake of young people, an all-Edge Hill affair. And it's a partnership both parties are keen to maintain.

Edge Hill Careers Adviser **Debby Murray** supports students and alumni with career planning:

"The graduate recruitment market is a very competitive arena and students need to be well-prepared and self-aware in order to engage with employers. Agent Academy is such a valuable opportunity for students to develop their employability



the marketing basics before putting what they'd learnt into practice, with challenging projects.

They will have taken inspiration from a plethora of speakers, including the Chief Executives of Liverpool City Council and Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

The programme culminates in a graduation, attended by an impressive roster of local, regional and national businesspeople.

The Academy was launched 18 months ago, a bridge between formal education and the workplace for 16 to 25 year olds.

and gain contacts within the industry."

Madison certainly feels she is now competing on a more level playing field:

"I recently attended a graduate employment session where I was the only one undertaking some practical experience, so I stood out. This programme is a good way to get into the marketing industry, whatever degree you've done."

The partnership with Agent Academy is just one example of Edge Hill's commitment to producing employable students, and Madison and co will hopefully join the string of successful students leaving the University.

MY HEROES

Billy Cowan, lecturer in Creative Writing and playwright. Billy's playwriting career took off when his first play *Smilin' Through* won the Writing Out International playwriting award organised by Finborough Theatre, London. It was nominated as Best New Play 2005 by the *Manchester Evening News*. This year his play *Care Takers* won a Stage Edinburgh Award 2016 at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and was also one of *The Stage's* critic's choices of best plays. The play is published by Aurora Metro Books.



Billy Cowan



Joe Orton

Orton was the true l'enfant terrible of the sixties theatrical scene. His work, like the punk rock movement that it preceded, was irreverent and subversive. It was also very funny. Like Oscar Wilde before him, Orton set out to lay bare the hypocrisy of British society through his plays. When *Entertaining Mr Sloane* opened in London in 1964, *The Times* reviewer

said it "made more blood boil than any other British play in the last ten years." The chairman of London's biggest ticket bureau also said the play should never have been allowed in the West End. Orton himself, as his alter-ego Mrs Edna Welthorpe, loved to send up the outrage caused by his plays by sending in silly letters of complaint to national broadsheets that condemned Orton's supposed contempt for ordinary people. As a new playwright, I was drawn to his provocative playfulness and tried to emulate his work in my plays *Smilin' Through* and *Stigmata*. I was over the moon when *Stigmata* opened at The Drill Hall in London and a critic from *The Stage* favourably compared me to my hero. Favourite play: *Loot*.

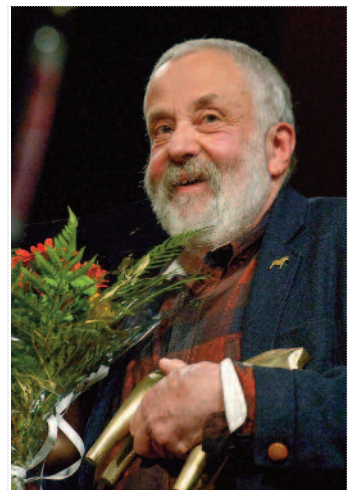
Kate Bush

Whether singing about washing machines or braying like a donkey on *Get Out of My House*, Bush is always the quintessential English eccentric pop star. I fell in love with her the first time I saw her on *Top of the Pops* singing (some say screeching!) about Heathcliff "on the wiley, windy moors". She's a hero to me, not just because she's a musical genius, but because she refuses to be driven by commercial goals. She's an artist in the true sense of the word and shuns the cult of celebrity. She also refuses to let her record company make demands – if a work isn't ready, she'll take her time until it is. There was a twelve year gap between her albums *The Red Shoes* and *Aerial*, but when *Aerial* arrived it was well worth the wait. I was one of the lucky ones who managed to get tickets to see her live show *Before the Dawn* in 2014, her first series of live shows since 1979. I had reconciled myself to never seeing her live. So, when it happened I was very emotional and cried, as did many of her fans around me. Favourite album: *The Dreaming*.



Mike Leigh

If I had to select the one piece of work that really made me want to be a scriptwriter, it was Leigh's iconic *Abigail's Party*, televised on the BBC in 1977. It was the funniest, yet most excruciating, depiction of real life I had ever seen on tv, and it's still as relevant and funny today as it was then. Although his characters are often heightened and absurd, they never fail to move us and his films have made me laugh and cry more than all the other films I've seen put together. His influence can be seen in so many other great works. It's difficult to imagine Caroline Aherne's *The Royle Family*, and even Ricky Gervais's *The Office*, without the influence of Mike Leigh. His commitment to social realism and humanism has been constant over the many years he's been working and his love of real, ordinary people is very evident, and this is why he's one of my heroes. Again, like my other two heroes, he is someone who has forged his own path, without compromise, and created very unique and profound pieces of art. Favourite film/tv: too many to mention – but I have a soft spot for *Abigail's Party*, *Nuts in May*, *Secrets and Lies*, and *High Hopes*.



Edge Hill University

Open Days^o

10am – 3pm

Saturday 17th June

Saturday 7th October

Saturday 19th August

Saturday 11th November

Come and take a closer look...

Edge Hill University, St Helens Road,
Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 4QP

T: 01695 575171

W: edgehill.ac.uk/opendays

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Degree^o

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