

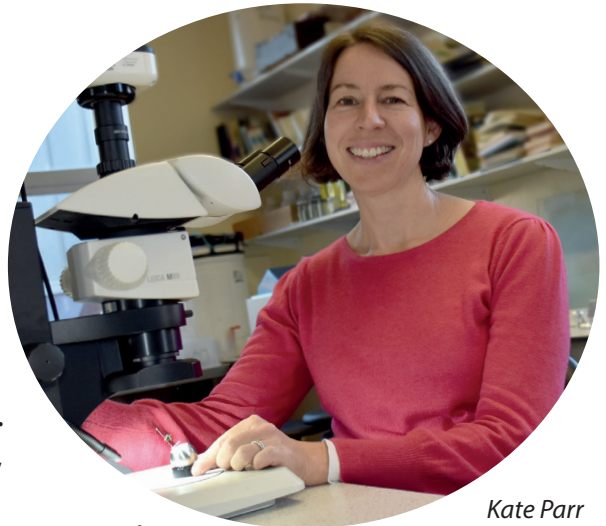
School of Environmental Sciences





Introduction

We compiled this booklet to celebrate the diversity of female staff in our School, to share lessons learnt, and to inspire others. The accounts of their pathways into the School of Environmental Sciences are varied, but all are honest, frank and refreshing. And, while all the stories are individual, collectively they highlight themes of confidence, resilience and tenacity - consequently, their stories are genuine and important. We hope they will encourage and guide our students and staff to pursue their passions.



Kate Parr

*Professor Kate Parr, James Utley & Dr Barbara Mauz
On behalf of the Diversity & Equality Committee (DEC)*

Environmental Science offers a huge range of opportunities for exploration and understanding of our world and it is my strong conviction that the combination of diverse strands of experiences, talents and skills is what leads to strong education and research in academia. In their own words, a sample of some of our female colleagues reflect on the motivations that brought them into their careers, and on the highlights and challenges encountered along their way into our School of Environmental Sciences and the University.

“Inspiring” is both a worthy description of the remarkable people that are featured in this booklet and at the same time a statement of the impact that we trust their example will have in encouraging other women to follow their lead.



Doug Mair

*Professor Doug Mair
Head of School of Environmental Sciences*

Mhairi Birchall

Teaching & Research Support Technician

In 2003, I graduated from Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh with a First Class Master's degree in Chemistry with Industrial Experience, and in 2007, I graduated from the same university with a PhD in Physical Chemistry. I got a taste for research during my undergraduate dissertation project, and becoming a postgraduate meant I could do more. I enjoyed my PhD as it gave me the opportunity to use specialist pieces of equipment and become an expert in the specific area of science that I was interested in. I also developed a range of transferable skills including working independently, managing my own time, and prioritising workload, which I thought would be useful in a future career.

Following my PhD in 2009, I did a PGCE in Secondary Science. I have always had a passion for science and I wanted to share that enthusiasm with others, and in particular to inspire young people. I then worked as a teacher in a secondary school in Cheshire for six years. It was during this time, in 2014, that I became pregnant with my first son, Joseph. It was his arrival that prompted me to leave teaching as I wanted a better work/life balance so I could spend more time with my family. I resigned from my teaching job whilst on maternity leave, and although I had originally planned to take 12 months leave, a new job opportunity and career change meant I only had nine months off. I have no regrets cutting short my maternity leave however, as at that time I was ready to return to work. I joined the University of Liverpool in 2015 as a Teaching Laboratory Technician covering a maternity leave. When this ended I joined the School of Environmental Sciences as a Research and Teaching Laboratory Technician. I love this job because it combines the best of both worlds: research, which I enjoy doing after my PhD and teaching which I enjoy after working in a secondary school. In 2016, I gave birth to my second son, Alexander.

Managing family life alongside a career hasn't been easy, but I have a fantastic support network. The combination of an amazing husband who does all the



I am motivated by my passion for what I do and my desire to be a good role model for my sons

nursery drop-offs and pick-ups, brilliant grandparents who help out with childcare and who, because they are retired, can step in at a moment's notice to watch the children if they are too poorly to go to nursery, and an understanding boss, has allowed me to have both a family and a career. There are times when juggling work and home life can be hard (especially when sleep deprived because one of my sons has kept me awake all night), but I am motivated by my passion for what I do and my desire to be a good role model for my sons.

Now that my family is complete, I feel that I can focus on advancing my career. I would like to remain within technical services with a view to taking on a management role in the future.

Jenny Bradley

Teaching & Research Support Technician

I am a teaching and research support technician in the Geography Department at the University of Liverpool; I've been here nearly two years and am lucky enough to say that I love my job. I studied Physical Geography at the University of Leeds, and my three years there were some of the best in my life. I made great memories and learnt invaluable skills. Having the opportunity to go on great field trips, work in the labs, and be surrounded by enthusiastic academics encouraged me to become passionate about the world around me and to pursue a career in science. I graduated in 2011 and began the MSc in Environment and Climate Change at the University of Liverpool, chosen mainly for the lab experience I felt I would gain. I spent time in labs both in Liverpool and in Shanghai, China, for my dissertation. I found that working in the lab was equal parts methodical and experimental; I loved every minute of it.

I met my husband, Lee, at university, and he has constantly encouraged me to pursue a career in science. The wanderlust I got from my trip to Shanghai never really disappeared, so Lee and I went travelling for three months in SE Asia after my MSc. Before leaving for SE Asia I worked on a short-term contract for Brookes Bell, a marine forensic company, to gain commercial experience. I returned to work for them after travelling in 2013 to complete a project. After leaving Brookes Bell, I worked at Liverpool Mutual Homes as an intern alongside the environmental team. I calculated the company's carbon emissions and wrote a report to suggest a new tree planting policy. I left in 2014, at the end of the project, to work at Atlantic Container Line, a shipping company in Liverpool.

I subsequently started my job at the University of Liverpool in 2015. I get to use so many of the skills that I learnt through my previous jobs and both degrees. I have opportunities to go on field trips within the UK, including the Lake District and the Peak District, as part of student courses and for research projects. Whilst field trips are hard work, they are a lot of fun and collecting the samples helps your understanding of the material when back in the labs. I've also developed a coastal erosion experiment which I use for outreach projects.



Having the opportunity to increase awareness in younger children of Geography, and science in general, is very rewarding

Having the opportunity to increase awareness in younger children of Geography, and science in general, is very rewarding; their enthusiasm is contagious! I've also had the opportunity to work in a smaller research lab, which has greatly increased my confidence.

Working in science is something that I fought hard to achieve: I have taken short-term contracts, very low-paying roles and roles that paid nothing, to gain valued experience. I have endeavoured within every role to complete it to an excellent standard, and have pushed for further experiences and responsibilities. It took me a little while to find my niche, but finally I have a job that I am satisfied with. I enjoy working in the labs and hopefully, by becoming more involved with research projects, I will be able to develop my role further.

Clare Davis

Post-doctoral research associate

A little over 10 years after graduating from my undergraduate degree, I find myself in the same familiar haunts of the Nicholson lecture theatre, except this time I am the one giving the lecture. If you had asked me where I saw myself in 15 years when I was growing up in Cornwall and reluctantly filling out my UCAS application form, I would have probably answered along the lines of “travelling the world and living by the ocean”. Although it may not seem like it, that is pretty much exactly what I have achieved, although I took a different path than I expected to get here.

At school, I had little interest in going to university. I had never struggled at school but also never really felt challenged and so was largely disinterested. But, most of my friends were going to university and I couldn't afford a gap year so I thought – what's the harm in three years of student parties? Growing up in Cornwall I had a great love of the sea, so when it came to university applications Oceanography seemed like the natural choice for me. I went to a few open days and settled on Liverpool for my first choice.

Within a couple of weeks of starting the course, I would never look back. The subject was interesting - applying science to the real world and environmental issues that I cared about, like climate change. I met some of the best people I would ever meet, and I was living in a city that was so busy and exciting compared to rural Cornwall, with the bonus of the North Wales coastline on my doorstep. Over the course of my higher education, which included an MSc and a PhD after my BSc Hons, I have maintained my teenage dreams of living by the sea and travelling – I have been fortunate enough to go to Spain, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Trinidad, New Orleans, New York, Goa, Guadeloupe, Tenerife ... and I have spent nearly a year of my life sailing the high seas - all in the name of work. I have met some of the most wonderful and inspirational people in the process.

I have learnt that science is so much more creative and full of new discoveries than I was ever told at school.



Through my work I have realised that science is the magic behind everything around us

At school, it seemed like a black box that some people required for medical degrees, while for the rest of us it would never be useful. Through my further study and work in natural sciences I have now realised that science is the magic behind everything around us, and there is still so much that we don't fully understand. To me that is exciting, and it's a privilege to be able to help piece together the puzzle through my work.

Janet Hooke

*Professor of Physical Geography and
the John Rankin Chair of Geography*

During my school career at a girls' grammar school in the 1960s, I became very interested in Geography. I applied to Cambridge University because it was offering new, quantitative and scientific Geography. I was accepted but they didn't have enough places - it was ten times harder for a woman than a man to get in then - so I went to Bristol University and spent three wonderful years there studying Physical Geography. We had an almost equal number of females and males in our group and I do not recall any sexist attitudes. I also met my future husband there, who has shared enthusiasm for the subject and fieldwork ever since. I decided I wanted to do research and, if possible, have an academic career. Interested in rivers, I applied for PhD studentships and ended up at Exeter University studying river meander changes. I encountered some rather prejudiced attitudes there but following my PhD, I was offered a 1-year Tutorship, becoming the first female member of Geography staff. I found it much harder when applying for permanent jobs: I had twice been selected for temporary positions before a male colleague but I was not even being considered for permanent posts while he was getting interviews. Despite the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act I was frequently confronted by prejudiced attitudes and discrimination along the lines of "We would never appoint a woman, you'll just go off and have babies".

Eventually, I obtained a Lectureship at Manchester Polytechnic (now Manchester Metropolitan University). I subsequently moved to Portsmouth Polytechnic (later University), and, although I had a high teaching load, I forged an active research career, publishing papers and a book and initiating field projects, some of which persist. When I gained my first job my partner followed me and indeed we have always moved for my job. We were both radical thinkers and had discussed extensively how we would organise our lives. When we had children, my husband gave up his job and stayed at home to look after them. We had two daughters in quick succession and it worked wonderfully for everyone. Our family arrangements have enabled us all to go on sabbaticals to Australia and the USA.



*Believe you can do it and make
it happen, and show that you are
at least as capable!*

When I was appointed Reader, then later to a Professorship (1996), I became one of a handful of female Geography Professors nationally. In 2007 I joined the University of Liverpool. I was honoured to be awarded the Royal Geographical Society's Busk Medal (2009), and the title of the John Rankin Professor of Geography at Liverpool (2017), the first woman holder in its 100-year history.

Through the luck of finding a like-minded and supportive partner, I have been fortunate in having everything: pursuing a fulfilling career and having a wonderful family. I always wanted to be accepted as an equal and treated the same as my male colleagues. This hasn't always been easy, especially in the early part of my career, and I have had to be determined and thick-skinned. Overall though, my advice is to believe you can do it and make it happen, and to show by example that you are at least as capable!

Janine Kavanagh

Lecturer

Throughout High School I was academically successful and enjoyed taking part in extra-curriculum activities. Like many students, I struggled to decide which subjects to continue at A Level. My career ambitions spanned being a dancer to an archaeologist, an opera singer and an architect. A not-so-helpful careers survey questionnaire suggested 'fence erector' was something to aspire to, but I thought otherwise.

Going to university at the age of 18 was a big leap into the dark. I was the first person in my family to go to university, and didn't know anyone who had been to university. I remember feeling anxious as my parents dropped me off for the first time at the Student Halls in Bristol, the city that would become my home for the next 10 years. There I met people from a huge diversity of backgrounds and experiences, made strong friendships and met my future husband. Moving away from home was quite a big decision, but it just seemed the right thing to do. I studied geology, as I wanted to explore the world and thought geology might enable me to do that. How right I was. Geology and I had a bit of a 'rocky' start though (apologies for the pun). Gone were the 'right answers' from A Level; instead there were multiple(!) viable hypotheses. However, geology has become my passion: it has made me see the world in a different way.

After my MSci degree in 2005, I awarded a PhD scholarship to work on numerical modelling of volcanoes that erupt diamonds. I couldn't have imagined such opportunities would exist. As a PhD student, it was challenging becoming an independent researcher, sometimes feeling overwhelmed and anxious about what the next four years would entail. Yet, it was rewarding time as I became part of a research group, carried out fieldwork abroad and travelled the world presenting my research at international conferences. After completing my PhD, my love of science and volcanology was crystallised, and I was determined to try and stay in academia. I gave myself one year to find an academic position, taking on short-term research contracts and just about managing to pay the bills. In 2011, my perseverance



Being willing to push myself outside of my comfort zone has been very important in shaping who I am today

was rewarded as I started a 'Women in Science' postdoctoral fellowship at Monash University, Australia.

Moving to the other side of the world to follow my career ambitions, and leaving my family, friends and my partner to go 'volcano hunting', was a big step. Ultimately it was so rewarding: my confidence increased, I recognised the skills I developed, and realised I had a valuable contribution to make. Fast-forward to 2017 and I am a Lecturer at the University of Liverpool. My now-husband holds the fort at home whilst I am away, looking after the cats and (sometimes...) watering the plants. Life as an 'academic' has its challenges, but overall I feel very fortunate to have this career and the opportunity to inspire the next generation of scientists. Following my passions, being willing to take advantage of opportunities and push myself outside of my comfort zone has been very important in shaping who I am today and the experiences I've had. I'm feeling optimistic for the future and I wouldn't change a thing.

Nicoletta Leonardi

Lecturer

I am a Lecturer in Coastal Resilience, having joined the department of Geography and Planning at the University of Liverpool in January 2016. My current research projects include the effect of hurricanes on salt marshes, and coastal processes and their role in coastal recovery. In 2016 I was awarded an international prize by the Italian National Academy of Science, conferred at the presence of the Italian Head of State, for my work on coastal wetlands.

I am interested in my field of study because under climate change our coastlines and their sustainable use will be threatened and under increasing pressure due to sea level rise, hurricanes activity, and overpopulation. I enjoy my work because I really like to study, constantly learn new things, and use computer programming.

Before joining the University, I obtained my PhD at Boston University (USA), a Master of Engineering (summa cum laude) and a Bachelor of Engineer (summa cum laude) from the University of Pisa (Italy). My civil engineering background included a large component of hydrodynamic, river and coastal modelling, which are all aspects I became gradually more interested in.

Having lived in three different countries and travelling a lot around the globe for my work, whether for conferences or fieldwork, has been mind-opening and allowed me to meet and collaborate with people of many different nationalities and backgrounds. These experiences allowed me to discover new cultures in a much deeper way than what I could have done by travelling for leisure. It also shaped who I am now, and made me more flexible and easily adaptable to any external environment.



Travelling a lot around the globe for my work, whether for conferences or fieldwork, has been mind-opening

Elisabetta Mariani

Senior Lecturer

My research focus is on understanding the tectonic processes that shape our planet. I study the “flow of minerals” (or rheology, from the Greek rheo, “flow”, and logia, “study of”) at the small scale, in rock samples from the field and from lab experiments. I link my lab results to the larger scale of the Earth, to advance our understanding of the rheology of the Earth’s crust and mantle.

Since I can remember I have always had a sense of how small we, as humans, are and how precious and small Earth is in the Universe. My parents used to take me trekking in the Alps looking for crystals with fascinating geometries. From this I developed a deep-seated interest in crystals, rocks and mountain belts and the processes that form them. After finishing my Laurea degree in Italy in 1996 (I was the first person in my family to achieve a degree) all I wanted to do was to learn more about Geology and about the methods and scientific procedures that help us further our understanding. So I moved to Manchester for my MSc and then a PhD in the field of Experimental Rock Deformation. Just before my PhD viva, early in 2003, I was interviewed for, and offered, my first postdoc position at the University of Liverpool.

I married Julian in 2003 and my eldest son, Claudio, was born in 2004. Two years later, my daughter Elena was born. Those were difficult and uncertain times as I had two children and my husband and I were employed on temporary research contracts. After a further postdoc position in Liverpool, I was employed as a Lecturer there in 2009. We were fortunate not to have to move as Julian obtained a permanent post in Manchester shortly after. In 2012 our youngest son, Leonardo, was born. For all my children, I took ten months maternity leave; it was important to me to be there for my children when they looked so young and vulnerable.

I love my job because my research is varied. My field studies bring me in close contact with the natural environment and are a constant source of inspiration for new lab experiments. Teaching students also enthuses me because I see it as a way of communicating my passion for research, and as my direct contribution to



*Teaching enthuses me because
I see it as a way of
communicating my passion
for research*

society. My career is based on a combination of hard-work, efficient time-management, Julian’s support, and luck. Having three children has often been challenging, particularly in terms of time-management, but it’s immensely rewarding too. When I returned to work, the children went to the local nursery, and my husband and I shared family and household responsibilities equally. Julian is in the same job and understands the commitment that being an academic requires. This enables me to take on and cope with periods of intense commitment at work. One of the things I learnt was keeping my family time completely separate from my work. While this is hard to do always, it has meant that I now work more efficiently and feel that I can enjoy both my family life and my job more.

Fabienne Marret-Davies

Reader

When I was a teenager, growing up in the southeast of France, I oscillated between wanting to be an astronaut (I blame Jules Verne), or staying on Earth exploring uncharted territories of the Amazon Basin or the deep oceans (because of Jacques-Yves Cousteau). It was my enthusiastic female biology teacher who motivated me to study Natural Sciences at the University of Aix-Marseille (France). Although I had wanted to dabble in science from an early age, it was only after listening to *the* lecture about the making of the Moon and the Universe by my first year university lecturer that I decided to become a Geologist.

Nothing is impossible if you know where you are going

At university, I particularly enjoyed topics on the biosphere and the geosphere, and I ended up doing a PhD in Oceanography at the University of

Bordeaux (France)/Institute of Palynology in Göttingen (Germany), studying the climate of West Equatorial Africa during the Late Quaternary using vegetation and phytoplankton. While doing my research in Germany, I had the exciting opportunity to participate in a palaeoceanographic cruise in the Southern Ocean (Indian Ocean) where I can confirm that the Furious Fifties and Screaming Sixties are appropriately named!

After my PhD studies, I went to spend a few years in Canada, Montreal, as a post-doctoral fellow, then in North Wales as a research fellow. Eventually, I came to Liverpool, joining the Department of Geography as a Lecturer in 2005 and I have been a Reader in Physical Geography since 2012. I have now spent more than half of my life outside the country I was born and have travelled to places I never thought possible when I was little. One of my most memorable scientific trips was to camp on top of the Stromboli, a very active volcano in the Tyrrhenian Sea, where we watched a very colourful “firework” display at night. I have walked with King penguins and admired elephant seals fighting on Crozet Island, explored the Greenland icesheet and watched glaciers calving, looked over the middle Atlantic ridge in Iceland, participated in a two-week conference in the Mauritanian desert under Acacia trees, and experienced earthquakes in a very recent sabbatical leave in New Zealand.

Although I travelled extensively when I was “younger”, now as a family of three whenever possible, we explore the world together – this freedom is one of the great aspects to academia. During our six month visit to New Zealand, my daughter was immersed in many cultures that I hope she will remember all her life. She was also the first one to get under the table during a very strong earthquake!

Having a family while being a female academic can be very challenging as priorities are more family-focused but I find it to be so invaluable and inspiring. One thing that I have learned as my career has progressed and I have become a mother, is the need to be very organised as nothing is impossible if you know where you are going and what you want.



Sam Patrick

Senior Lecturer



When I was 17, I went to volunteer on Skomer Island in South West Wales, met a research scientist, and realised this was what I wanted to do. I started my science career as a PhD student at the University of Oxford in 2004, working on fidelity and personality in great tits. While I enjoyed my thesis, I decided to change research area for my first post doc, at the University of Plymouth, beginning my work on spatial ecology. After this I held a Marie Curie fellowship at Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in France and began working on albatrosses. Following this, I held another short fellowship before I started a Lectureship in Marine Biology, in the School of Environmental Sciences, at the start of 2015. My passion and love of research comes from the ability and freedom to explore interesting and novel questions. The excitement of new discoveries and the opportunity to work with some of the greatest scientists of our generation makes this an incredible job which I feel lucky to be able to do every day.

Since completing my PhD, I have lived in seven countries on four continents, for periods ranging from two months to two years. Moving so much was an amazing opportunity, both personally and professionally, but was also associated with instability

I have been lucky enough to have exceptionally supportive and encouraging mentors

and constant change. However, I saw these negative aspects as a trade-off, as increased experience would allow me to apply earlier for permanent posts. Now I have a lectureship, I have developed a compromise where I go to exciting, remote field sites at both poles one to two months per year, but still have a permanent home to come back to.

Throughout my career I have felt less confident than those around me, and this has at times posed challenges. However, adaptation is key, and I have been lucky enough to have exceptionally supportive and encouraging mentors, whose confidence has been infectious! I learnt to put myself forward for things, even when afraid I will not succeed, and surrounded myself with enthusiastic and positive collaborators. While I feel I may never have the confidence of others, I have overcome these barriers and developed a wide scientific network.

Kim Peters

Senior Lecturer

I'm somewhat an accidental academic and although many academic trajectories are filled with twists and turns, my career path probably hasn't been typical. I completed my A levels at evening college whilst working full time, first in Superdrug, then at the Inland Revenue. I always enjoyed studying but I was from a background where no one had any experience of applying to university, let alone studying at one, and I didn't go to a school where that route was expected. However, I did have a lot of people who encouraged me – at home and at work – and I went to study a Planning degree at Cardiff University with the aim of completing a course that would lead directly to a job. My plans shifted when during my degree I took a module in Geographical Theory - I was introduced to the concept of place, and I was hooked, Human Geography seemed to have so much to offer and it helped me make sense of my own place in the world.

I applied to several universities for funding for an MA and PhD, and eventually won an Economic and Social Research Council open award to study at Royal Holloway, University of London. It was then, when I began to research, but also to teach tutorials and practical sessions, I realised I wanted to work as a lecturer. Yet at the end of it all, I couldn't find a job. I worked selling and fixing bikes in a London cycle store before getting a post in travel planning for the NHS. However, I had to move back home with my mum and at points I wondered how far I'd really come and if I was just back where I'd started. After many failed applications for an academic post in a competitive marketplace, my persistence paid off and I was successfully appointed to a short-term teaching post in Sheffield (having never really been north of the M25!). After a year, I gained my first permanent lecturing post in Aberystwyth. I was there for four years (2012-2016) before moving here to Liverpool.

Perhaps the trickiest thing has been having to move around the country. It has been hard at times to uproot and re-root often far from my family and partner, and I know many academics – irrespective of gender,



My pathway shows what is possible, regardless of background or gender

whether they are early career or established - face the same. Moving to Liverpool has been very positive though as my research focuses on the seas and oceans from a Human Geography perspective. I'm especially interested in how water worlds are managed and governed, so being in a maritime city and working with other maritime scholars has been incredibly insightful for developing my research.

Lecturing has involved a lot of long hours (I am sure all academics would say the same!) and at times it has felt an upwards battle with a lot of knockbacks. However, with my most recent book coming out in 2018, good teaching feedback and interesting projects on the go, my pathway shows what is possible, regardless of background or gender.

Claire Rimmer

Student Experience Co-ordinator

Michael Palin once remarked “Geography is a living, breathing subject, constantly adapting itself to change. It is dynamic and relevant. For me geography is a great adventure with a purpose”.

I took those words to heart: even now 14 years after graduating with a Geography degree I still have a curiosity (or general nosiness) for the world around me, including the world of university administration. Geography informs us of the places and communities in which we live and work, the interconnectedness of the world and our communities, how and why the world is changing globally and locally, and how individual and group actions contribute to those changes.

Before completing my degree at the University of Huddersfield in 2003 and returning home to the Wirral, I started applying for university administration roles, knowing that my transferable skills - thinking analytically and critically, good team work, creativity, numeracy, problem solving, ability to integrate ideas effectively - would be valued. Within six months of graduating I started my university admin career path in the Department of Geography at the University of Liverpool, in the School Support Office. Fourteen years later I am still a part of the Student Experience Team in the School of Environmental Sciences which includes the Department of Geography and Planning and the Department of Earth, Ocean and Ecological Sciences.

My job roles to-date have been diverse: School Timetabling Coordinator (36 programmes, 80 plus academic staff, 1500 students, 1800 taught activities - apologies for those 9am starts!), Undergraduate Programme Administrator (Admissions, Open Days, Applicant Discovery Days, Welcome Week, admin support for field classes), Deputy Team Leader (Secretary to the Learning and Teaching Committee and Board of Studies, administration support for: programme and module development, Periodic Reviews, Annual Subject Reviews). Providing support for Open Days, Applicant Discovery Days and Open



My time at Liverpool has given me a wide range of opportunities

House events - Meet the Scientists is particularly rewarding; I enjoy the interaction with visitors, especially watching the faces of budding scientists as academic and technical colleagues allow them to participate in practical experiments such as river catchment simulations, rock identification, salination of sea water, and meeting marine life.

I can honestly say my time at Liverpool has given me a wide range of opportunities that may not have been on offer had I not entered the world of university administration after completing my Geography degree.

Although I no longer have the youthful glow of a recent graduate, I still have immense enthusiasm for supporting my academic colleagues and the wider university community, and helping ensure our students succeed on their great science adventures.

Leonie Robinson

Senior Lecturer

As a teenager I was an avid David Attenborough fan, loved being in the sea and was fascinated by the oceans. I chose to study Marine Biology because of this; I wanted to understand the oceans and their animals so that I could have an informed role in helping to conserve them. Studying Marine Biology was wonderful, but I had no clear idea of what kind of job I would find at the end of my degree. However, within three months of graduating I felt strongly that I missed learning and my subject. Having stayed in contact with my tutor, I was lucky enough to be offered a research assistant job and spent 12 months undertaking field and lab work based on the beautiful Northumbrian coast. I still use this story to encourage current students on the importance of being enthusiastic and keeping in touch with their lecturers; for me, that initial job then opened the door to a PhD and onwards.

I spent the next three years doing my PhD based in the Dove Marine Laboratory (Newcastle); this basically meant studying at a desk on a beach looking straight out to sea. It was great, although hard work, as I spent many hours identifying little marine beasties and thinking about how better to understand their role in the World. As an undergraduate I had been most excited by coral reefs and marine fish, but having subsequently studied the ecosystems on the dark and deep floors of temperate seas through my PhD, I realised it was actually all of marine biodiversity that I was interested in - I have continued to widen my interests ever since! Saying that, I did get the opportunity to go to Fiji for six weeks to work on a coral fish project with a friend during her PhD – a truly fantastic experience and one I'll never forget. Marine Biology is most certainly a global subject and I would encourage any of our students to embrace this when, and if, the opportunities arise.

After my PhD I moved on to work for the Scottish Government at the (then) Fisheries Research Services Marine Laboratory, in Aberdeen. I spent two months at sea surveying the animals living all over the North Sea and had some fantastic experiences developing



My greatest achievement is coordinating a consortium of researchers from across Europe on how to better manage what we do to marine ecosystems

my understanding of how fisheries and other human disturbances can influence biodiversity. But I missed the freedom of academic research and I had come to realise that I might actually like teaching! So, I applied for a position at Liverpool and was delighted to be offered it. I have worked at Liverpool since 2006 and in that time have learnt how to teach and enthuse students, worked on projects with academics and stakeholders from all over Europe, got married and had two children. Other than having my children, my greatest achievement thus far has been coordinating a large consortium of researchers from across Europe on a project around exactly what has excited me from the start – how to better manage what we do to marine ecosystems.

Inspiring Women



First edition 2018

Design by Suzanne Yee
Photographs (except Jenny Bradley and Fabienne Marret Davies): Suzanne Yee