

Farewell after almost 50 years: Paul Marston, Senior Lecturer in Mathematics

On 31 July we say farewell to Paul Marston, who after 49 years here, is our current longest serving colleague.

Paul, a Senior Lecturer in Mathematics, arrived in January 1975, only three years after the Institution formerly known as Harris College became Preston Polytechnic. About a decade later this became Lancashire Polytechnic, and nearly another decade after that the Institution came to be known as the University of Central Lancashire.



What was the world like in 1975?

Courtesy of Derek Ward-Thompson, here's what the world looked like when Paul started, and a message of thanks to Paul.

In politics:

Harold Wilson was Prime Minister, and a semi-unknown MP called Margaret Thatcher became Leader of the Conservative Party and thus Leader of the Opposition, having previously been Education Secretary in Edward Heath's Conservative Government. There was a referendum to leave the European Community – which the 'remainers' won. In America the country was still reeling from the previous year's so-called 'Watergate Scandal', although people were relieved that the Vietnam War had just ended.

In popular culture:

The rock band 'Queen' topped the charts with 'Bohemian Rhapsody' from their hit album 'A night at the Opera'. 'Jaws' was the biggest film of the year, although on a lighter note, the Monty Python team released the film 'Monty Python and the Holy Grail' and the first episode of 'Fawlty Towers' appeared on TV. 'Space 1999'

was also a big hit on television, but the 'Star Trek' TV series had finished, and the 'Star Trek' films were still in the future. A film called 'Star Wars' was no more than a project idea of a relatively unknown director called George Lucas.

In sport:

West Ham won the FA Cup. Wales won what was then known as the 'Five Nations' (as they usually did in those days). Arthur Ashe and Billie Jean King were the respective men's and women's Wimbledon champions. L'Escargot won the Grand National and Australia regained the Ashes (again!).

At home:

The best-selling car was the Ford Cortina. The fastest car on sale in the UK was the Porsche 911 Turbo and the latest household gadget was the micro-wave oven (though few could afford one!).

In science and technology:

Bill Gates founded Microsoft. An American Apollo spacecraft docked in space with a Russian Soyuz. Machines called video recorders were being developed in the form of two competing systems: Betamax and VHS. The laser printer was invented but didn't come into regular use for another 5-10 years. The state of the art in the computer world was the 'Altair 8800', arguably the world's first PC.

At UCLan:

Under the guise of 'Preston Polytechnic' the Institution had a Director called Harry Law, and came under the control of Lancashire County Council. The Polytechnic campus was essentially only a part of what we now call 'South Campus', bounded by Corporation Street, Maudland Road, Leighton Street and Marsh Lane. The buildings comprised Harris, Foster, Maudland, Wharf, Edward, the now-demolished Kendal Building, and various outlying purchased premises, plus the older Avenham building.

A 'Development Plan' had just begun for expansion of the campus that included building the first Halls of Residence and the Students' Union building, and the acquisition of Livesey House and St Peter's Church. The new library building would not open for another 4 years, beginning the expansion of the campus to the north and west.

The Polytechnic, as a whole, comprised just 2,000 FTE students and about 300 staff in total! In 1975 research was not really a part of the Polytechnic ethos, with just 8 research assistants and 6 research students in the entire Institution, with annual funding amounting to just about £30k.

Thank you to Paul

Paul joined what was then the Department of Mathematics and Statistics as a lecturer in Statistics – a topic he has taught ever since. When Paul arrived the head of the Polytechnic was known as a Director, later shortened to Rector, and subsequently renamed as Vice-Chancellor when the Polytechnic became a University. Paul has served under 8 successive Directors, Rectors or Vice-Chancellors, covering roughly one-quarter of the total history of the Institution, going back to 1828.

He also found himself in the early years teaching statistics to business students, but he also developed history and philosophy of science modules as electives. He later ran the elective programme which at that time most students did. He also developed two modules, one for business and humanities and one general science, which were taken by most students on all the courses at that time and had 50 other staff members involved.

It is hard to do justice to such a lifetime of dedication to one Institution. However, it can be said without fear of contradiction that Paul has always put his students first and has a strong sense of academic standards. In addition, he has always put the welfare of all students at the heart of everything he does, particularly helping overseas students across the Institution over many years with matters such as visas, and the other logistics and problems of being an overseas student.

We give Paul heartfelt thanks for a lifetime of dedication to this Institution and wish him a long and happy retirement!

Derek Ward-Thompson

Acknowledgements:

"University of Central Lancashire, A History of the Development of the Institution Since 1828", by Rex Pope & Ken Phillips, 1995, Published by the University of Central Lancashire.

"A History of the University of Central Lancashire", by Keith Vernon, 2018, Published by the University of Central Lancashire.

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