

# CASE STUDY



Academic conferences are an indispensable part of academia. Hosting one could be an invaluable opportunity for you to see a number of benefits for yourself, your organisation and your research within your field. Here at Swansea University, we have played host to a number of successful academic conferences across both of our campuses with our event organisers noting significant rewards as a result.



# DO NOT GO GENTLE



## BRIEF

In July 2015, Dr Paul Nash from the Centre for Innovative Ageing (CIA) in the College of Human and Health Sciences approached the Event Services team to assist in organising the annual conference of the British Society of Gerontology.

The BSG is the main body looking at aging within the UK, and with Swansea University being one of the leading centres in the UK, hosting the conference was the ideal opportunity to highlight the University's gerontological expertise and

promote work that is conducted in Wales to an international audience.

Having sat on the BSG Executive committee, Dr Nash was well placed to work with the Event Services Business Development Team to submit a robust bid to the BSG. Swansea University was successful in securing the 46th annual conference, thanks to its overall programme plan, excellent campus facilities, easy accessibility, social spaces and proposed entertainment, flexible conference catering, and fantastic amenities.

## THE ORGANISATION

In order to successfully arrange the conference, the organising committee contracted the Event Services "Event Experts". A dedicated Event Support Officer was then designated within Event Services to coordinate the logistics and fine details needed ensure the smooth running of the conference. Through the Event Experts package, Event Services also created the registration website, handled the finances, managed delegate registration, coordinated accommodation, assisted with marketing and branding, including developing the event flyer, ensuring it was accessible for users, and were the link to the operational teams delivering aspects of the conference.

The team also worked closely with the organisers to choose the perfect menu and liaised with catering to ensure it was delivered.

Working in close partnership with the conference organiser, Event Services ensured everyone and everything was in place, offering advice and guidance about which rooms would be best suited to each element of the conference to help execute Dr Nash's clear vision. This enabled Dr Nash to concentrate on working with colleagues from the BSG to produce and manage the academic programme.

## THE EVENT

Every room in the Great Hall was utilised and delegates came from around the world to attend the conference. The speakers at the conference included leading researchers and practitioners relating to the conference theme: "Do Not Go Gentle" – Gerontology and a Good Old Age.

The faultless weather showcased the venue's beachside view. The first night concluded with a beach BBQ, followed by music and circus demonstrations, with accompanying tuition from 'Circus Eruption', a local community circus group.

Throughout the conference, there was an Artist in Residence, Eleanor Beer, who recorded the proceedings in 'real-time', providing a live representation of the conference.

A 4-course gala dinner, accompanied by music from the Swansea U3A Ukulele Big Band, followed by a disco rounded off the second day of the conference. The guest of honour and after dinner speaker was Welsh television and radio broadcaster, Beti George, whom Dr Nash had invited to speak via a private Twitter message. Beti spoke about her life and late husband, the renowned rugby commentator and broadcaster, David Parry-Jones, who had been living with Alzheimer's disease and for whom she was a carer – she also brought with her a film crew for the documentary she was making at the time.



**THE CONFERENCE PROVIDED US THE IDEAL OPPORTUNITY TO HIGHLIGHT WALES ON A GLOBAL SCALE BOTH IN TERMS OF CULTURE AND RESEARCH.**

Dr Nash,  
Conference Organiser,  
BSG, 2017

## THE RESULTS

The BSG Conference 2017 was an undeniable success, with numerous delegates approaching Dr Nash and sharing their view that it had been "best conference" in BSG history.

This opinion was echoed in the post-conference survey that delegates were asked to complete. The average results showed that, out of 5, when asked if the conference met expectations, delegates answered 4.9, they gave 4.8 for event organisation and when asked if they were glad they attended, they again answered 4.9.

Thanks to a stellar academic program, social activities and inspirational speakers, such as Beti George, who was the first after dinner speaker to ever receive a standing ovation, Swansea University was able to highlight Wales on a global scale both in terms of culture and research.





**THE EVENT EXPERTS APPROACHED EVERYTHING WITH A CAN DO ATTITUDE AND A SMILE. CATERING WERE MORE FLEXIBLE THAN MADONNA IN A 'DOWNWARD DOG', AND THEY WERE SO ON IT!**

**THE FOOD WAS GORGEOUS AND LOOKED PHENOMENAL. IT WAS REPLENISHED AS SOON AS ANY DISH WAS GETTING LOW... AFTER THE CONFERENCE, I WROTE EACH TEAM A LETTER TO SAY THANK YOU FOR THEIR HELP – I COULDN'T NOT THANK THEM AFTER ALL THEY DID**

Dr Nash,  
Conference Organiser,  
BSG, 2017

