

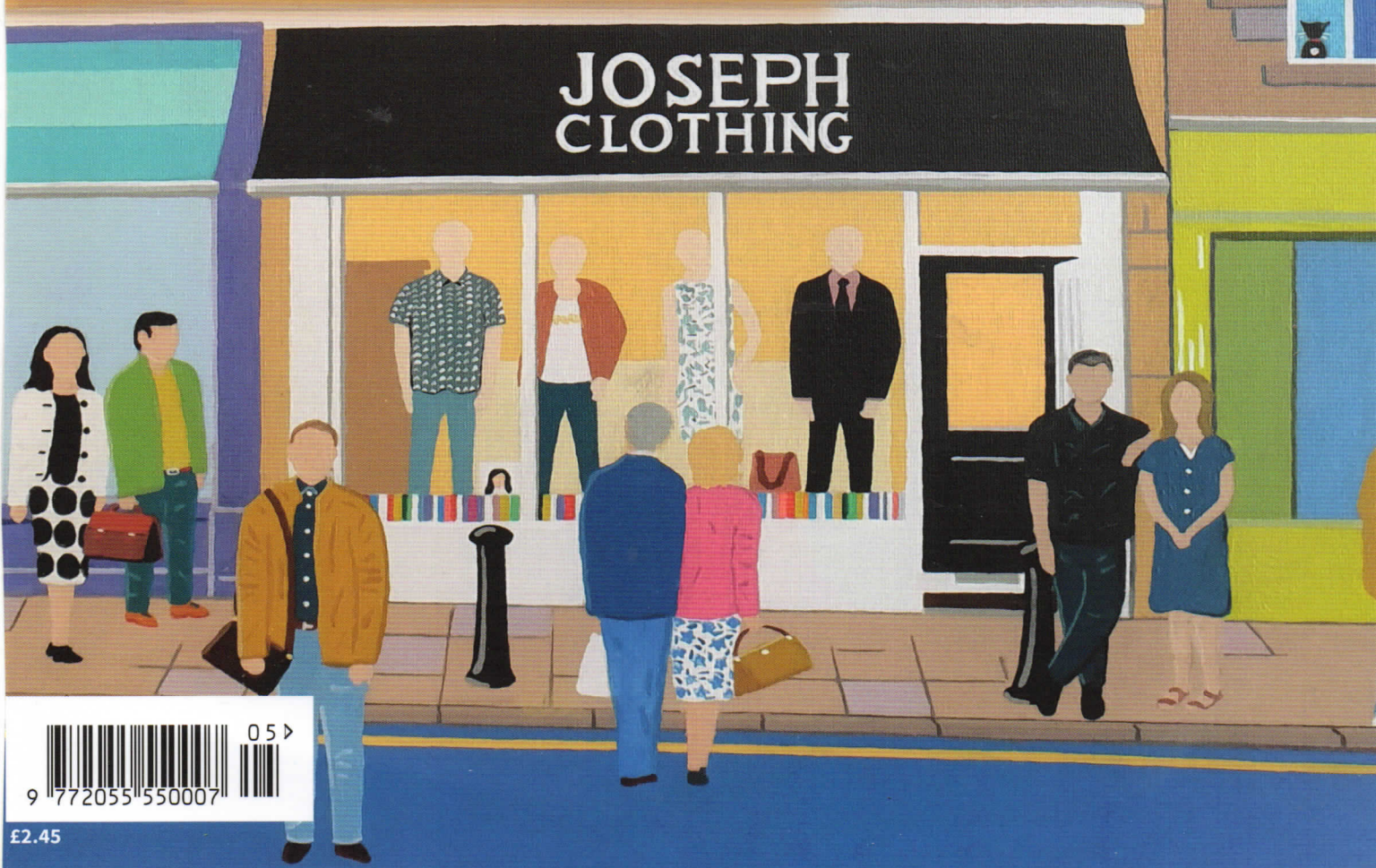
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May 2020

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A Guide to Universities of the North West



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The Universities of the North West

Universities are crucial to the success of our region and our region is lucky to have twelve of them. They include the best, the largest and the most-improved. This is their story.

By Andrew Harris

The University of Lancaster is the regional winner. Although it was only founded in 1964 it is consistently ranked in the top 10 of UK universities. On the latest ranking it is number 7 – out of 131 - nationally and number one in the north west. It is one of only six collegiate universities in the UK with eight undergraduate colleges using historic Lancashire names such as Bowland, Furness, Fylde, Grizedale and Pendle. Each college is semi-autonomous with its own residential block, common rooms, administrative staff – and bars. All are

located in the 300-acre Bailrigg campus which integrates teaching, social and residential functions and is two and a half miles south of Lancaster city centre. With about 16,000 students it is only the 7th largest university in the north west but its focus is on quality rather than quantity. The Times and Sunday Times have recognised the spectacular success of Lancaster University by awarding it the accolades of University of the Year for 2018 and International University of the Year 2020. Their Good University Guide commented “Few universities can match

Lancaster’s record for exporting British higher education to the world while at the same time offering opportunities to their UK-based students to incorporate a global learning experience within their degree programme. Our award is designed to recognise both achievements as Lancaster stood out in a crowded marketplace.” That is why Lancaster University is the regional winner.

With about 40,250 students the University of Manchester is the largest in the north west – and second largest in the UK - ranking second in our region



Lancaster University from the air.

and 15th nationally. It was formed in 2004 by the merger of Manchester Victoria University and UMIST but can trace its origins to 1824 when it was the Mechanics Institute which became UMIST. Manchester University has always been strong in sciences. It is where Ernest Rutherford discovered the nature of the atom and the staff and students of the current and former universities have been awarded 25 Nobel Prizes. The University was named the Sunday Times University of the Year in 2006. It teaches more academic subjects than any other British university and attracts thousands of students from 154 countries throughout the world. It is also famous for the Manchester Museum, Whitworth Art Gallery, Jodrell Bank Observatory – a UNESCO World Heritage site – and the new Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre dealing with cutting-edge materials technology. It is a huge asset for our region.

The University of Liverpool is in third place for the north west and is

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ranked 28th in the UK. It was founded in 1881 and was one of the original six 'red brick' universities. With nearly 30,000 students it is the 3rd largest in our region and can boast 10 Nobel Prize winners from its alumni. It offers more than 230 first degree courses across 103 subjects and pioneered new departments for oceanography, civic design and biochemistry. It is also unusually enterprising as it was the first

UK university to create an independent university in China. The main campus of the university is about 100 acres at Mount Pleasant - just 5 minutes walk from Liverpool city Centre. This site accommodates faculties for Health & Life Sciences, Humanities & Social Sciences plus Science & Engineering. There is also a Veterinary Teaching Hospital and Ness Botanical Gardens on the nearby Wirral peninsula.

Lancaster's Info Lab - serving information & communications technologies.





Next comes Manchester Metropolitan University which is ranked 4th in the north west – 56th nationally – but with about 33,000 students it is the 2nd largest university in our region. It is the former Manchester Polytechnic which achieved university status in 1992 along with many other polytechnics. It is also home to the Manchester School of Art, the Manchester School of Theatre and – with Manchester University – the Manchester School of Architecture. The university is - after Manchester University – the second most applied to in the UK and is organised in 5 faculties

- Arts and Humanities
- Business and Law
- Education
- Health, Psychology and Social Care
- Science and Engineering

Manchester Metropolitan University has successfully moved from polytechnic to university status and offers an extraordinary range of vocational courses .

Edge Hill in Ormskirk only became a university in 2006. It was founded as the first non-denominational teacher training college for women in 1885 but admitted male students from 1959. It is now ranked 58th out of 131 universities nationwide and 5th in our region - quite an achievement! With fewer than 14,000 students it is only the 9th largest in the north west but offers courses in education, arts and sciences as well as health and social care. It is based on a

160-acre campus in Ormskirk – midway between Liverpool and Preston – with another campus at Woodlands in Chorley. It boasts outstanding facilities in a Business School, Arts Centre, Sports Centre, a Library, the futuristic Student Hub and Halls of Residence as well as accommodation for Performing Arts and the three faculties. It has come a long way in 14 years. It is a university for the future.

Liverpool Hope University is ranked 6th in the region and 62nd nationwide. With only 5,100 students it is the smallest university in the north west. It can trace its origins back to teacher training for women in 1844 but only became a university in 2005. It now has three faculties for Arts & Humanities, Education and Science. The main campus is Hope Park in Childwall between Garston and West Derby in Liverpool. The university also has The Creative Campus in Everton and Halls of Residence across the city at Aigburth. The three faculties are organised into 19 departments which offer a huge range of subjects. The university is unusually outward looking as it has partnerships with Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou, China, and Christ University in Bengaluru, India. Liverpool Hope exchanges students and collaborates on research with both. It is a small but enterprising university.

Also in Liverpool is the Liverpool John Moores University. With more than 24,000 students it is the 4th largest in the region and is ranked 7th in the

north west and 62nd nationwide. Its origins go back to 1823 when it was the Liverpool Mechanics' School of Arts which sounds contradictory. After several mergers it became Liverpool Polytechnic in 1970 then Liverpool John Moores University in 1992. It is named after the benefactor John Moores who founded the Littlewoods empire which was based in the city. The university has 3 main campuses: the City Campus in central Liverpool, the nearby Mount Pleasant Campus for the study of business and law and the IM Marsh Campus in Aigburth for the study of education, community and leisure. The university has 22 schools or centres organised into 5 faculties for business & law, arts & social studies, health, science and engineering & technology. LJMU – as it is known – is particularly strong on physical education, dance, sport and exercise science. It is the only UK university to be awarded an Ofsted Grade A for physical education. It reflects the enterprise and energy of a great city.

The main campus of the University of Central Lancashire – aka as UCLan – is in central Preston but it also has sites in Burnley, West Cumbria and Cyprus. With more than 23,000 students it is the 5th largest university in the north west, is ranked 8th in our region and 75th out of 131 nationwide. Its origins go back to The Institution For The Diffusion of Useful Knowledge which was founded in 1828 when names like that were tolerated. It eventually became Preston Polytechnic

Liverpool University



Edge Hill University.



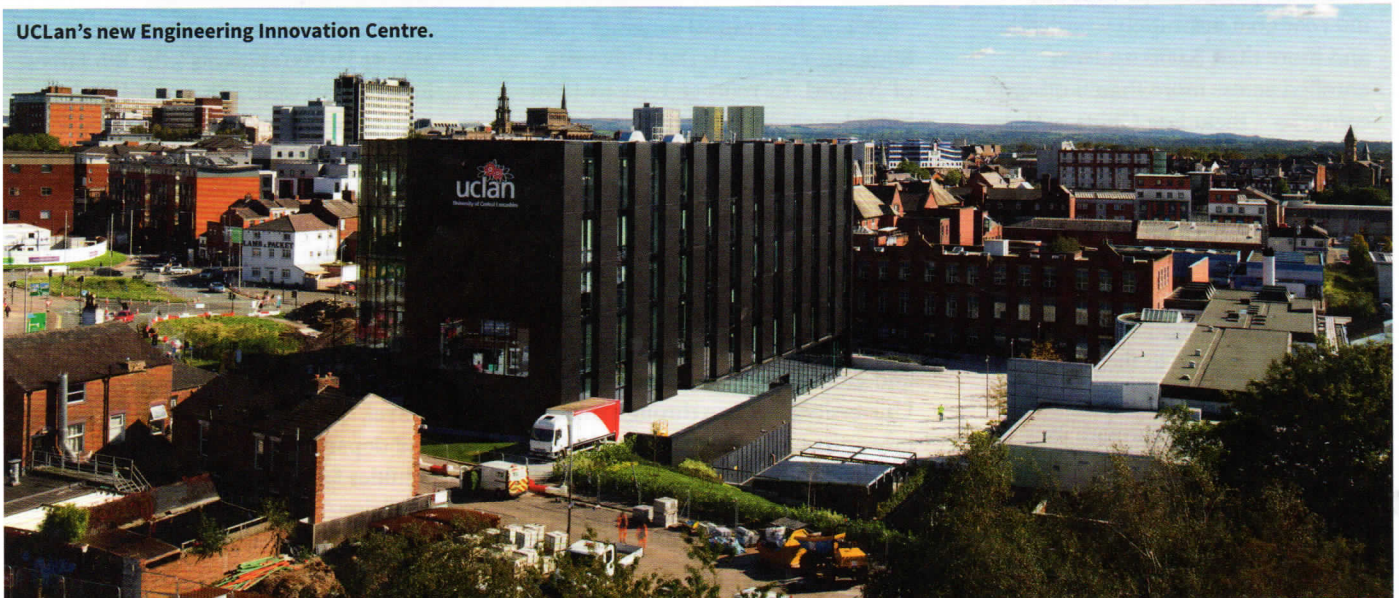
Manchester Metropolitan University.



Liverpool John Moores University



UCLan's new Engineering Innovation Centre.



The future UCLAN civic square and buildings. This and the previous image courtesy of UCLAN.



Salford University



then Lancashire Polytechnic then – in 1992 – the University of Central Lancashire. UCLan has a number of unusual features –

- With students from more than 100 countries, partnerships with 125 international institution worldwide and more than 3,000 students enrolled across more than 6 other countries – including China and the USA – it is a global institution.
- UCLan has jumped an unprecedented 27 places in the ranks of UK universities.
- It is likely to climb higher as in 2016 the Centre for World University Rankings placed it in the top 3.7% of universities worldwide.
- UCLan is part way through its Master Plan 2020 – a £200 million investment providing new social spaces (completed), an ambitious new Engineering Innovation Centre

(completed), a new Student Centre (underway) and an adjoining new civic and university square (the size of Trafalgar Square) to complete next year. The pictures depict the present and the future.

9th in the regional rankings – and 80th nationwide - is the University of Salford. Its roots go back to 1896 but it became a College of Advanced Technology in 1956 and a university in 1967. With about 20,000 students it is the 6th largest university in the north west . The main Peel Park campus has been described as “a relaxed campus close to Manchester city centre (less than 1.5 miles away) but cheaper and greener.” In recent years Salford University has gone through huge investment and many reorganisations resulting in 4 schools for arts & media, science, engineering & environment, health & society and business. It offers special advantages for student nurses

and midwives due to hospital links and media students because the university has learning, teaching and research space in the nearby, booming and famous Media City which is home to five BBC departments.

The University of Chester is - with almost 15,000 students - the 8th largest in the north west. It is ranked 10th in our region but only 101st nationwide. It gained university status in 2005 after being the Chester Diocesan Training College from 1839. It operates from the Parkgate Campus in Chester and 4 other sites in Chester, Warrington and the University Centre Shrewsbury. It also uses a number of bases on NHS sites across Cheshire and the Wirral. The university has 31 schools and departments organised into 7 faculties for arts & humanities, business, medicine/dentistry & life sciences, science & engineering, social sciences, education & children’s services and



Cumbria University plays to its strengths.



The sports facilities at Cumbria University.

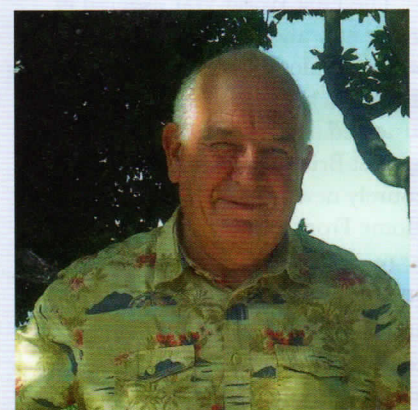
health & social care. It also supports a number of research centres linked to these faculties. Most students are from the UK, a quarter are mature and two-thirds are female reflecting the university's focus on nursing and midwifery.

The University of Cumbria is ranked 120th nationwide and 11th in our region. It has about 7,600 students which makes it the 3rd smallest university in the north west. It is unusual because of its history and local geography. With origins going back the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts in 1822 and a teacher training college founded in the 1890s it became a university in 2007. It serves a dispersed rural community through institutes for business, health, arts, education and science, natural resources & outdoor studies. It is responding to local needs more than many other universities and is especially strong in

sport, physiotherapy and rural topics. Its main campus is in Carlisle but operates through sites in Lancaster, Ambleside and Workington with close links with Furness College in Barrow.

The University of Bolton is also unusual. It serves about 6,000 mainly local students – the 2nd smallest - but is ranked last in the region and 128th nationwide. There are only 131 UK universities. It became a university in 2004 and is best known for its vocationally focused and industry-relevant taught degrees. It was, strangely, the only university unwilling to provide information or an illustration. To paraphrase Churchill it is a 'modest university with much to be modest about.'

The north west is, overall, well served by its universities. We have world-winners and local servers. We are lucky. We need them all.



Andrew E. Harris is grateful to all the universities which helped in the production of this article. Unless otherwise attributed the images are procured via Shutterstock or are by your columnist. Our March 2016 article about the University of Central Lancashire can be viewed at www.andrewharris.co.uk under published articles/community topics.