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Inside: If You Don't Snooze, You Will Lose: The Importance of Sleep (Page 19)

Matt Hancock's Whatsapp messages leaked

Francesca Ionescu
Politics Editor

Journalist and ghost-writer Isabel Oakeshott has leaked over 100,000 WhatsApp messages made available to her during her work on Matt Hancock's book 'Pandemic Diaries'. Oakeshott broke her non-disclosure agreement (which was using the messages solely as confidential background information for the book), defending the breach by saying it was 'in the overwhelming public interest'. The journalist's heavy criticism of lockdown measure implementation has been condemned by Hancock's spokesperson. While a UK public inquiry has been opened on the government's handling of the pandemic, she was wary of how long the conclusion could take. She has passed the trove to The Telegraph but has not yet confirmed how much she got paid for it, saying anyone believing she did this for the payment 'must be utterly insane'.

The messages have caused controversy regarding officials' attitude to the COVID-19 lockdowns and the people affected by it, such as those kept in 'shoe box' rooms in hotels. Simon Case, currently Cabinet Secretary, asked Hancock the day after England introduced mandatory quarantine from 33 countries 'how many people we locked up in hotels yesterday'. Upon being told that '149 chose to enter the country and are now in quarantine hotels due to their own free will', Case replied with a short 'hilarious'.

The Shadow Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper, has reacted to the ministers' texts regarding pandemic law enforcement, where Hancock referred to the officers as 'the plod'. Cooper has called out the minister's 'arrogance and shameful lack of respect'. The ministers received criticism from Cooper and the public alike, as last year it was revealed

that they were attending 'lockdown parties' that were breaking the law.

Further messages reveal that Hancock was advised in April 2020 to test all residents going into care homes. However, the mandate passed only required testing for those leaving hospital. The messages claim that care-home testing would "muddy the waters". Despite this, a spokesperson has claimed the messages to be 'doctored'. According to the ONS, there were 43,256 deaths between March 2020 and January 2022 in care homes in England alone.

Hancock also messaged the Education Secretary at the time, Sir Gavin Williamson: 'What a bunch of arses the teaching unions are', to which Williamson replied 'I know they really do just hate work'. The texts came after A-level exams were delayed by a shorter period of time than the unions asked for. The Education Secretary also asked for help acquiring PPE before schools reopening, then followed up with: 'some will want to say they can't [open] so they have an excuse to avoid having to teach'.

Messaging to his adviser, Hancock seemed to fear Sadiq Khan's push for stricter restriction in December 2020, following the same reaction from Andy Burnham, Greater Manchester Mayor. Hancock had planned a timeline to "deploy" a new variant of Covid to the media, saying: 'We frighten the pants of everyone with the new strain'. The conversation took place on December 13, and a new variant that affected primarily south-east England was announced on December 14.

To read Francesca's full article on the impact of the earthquakes, turn to page 8

Image: Number 10 (via Flickr)



Diwrnod Rhyngwladol y Menwyd 2023

Nansi Eccott
Pennaeth Taf-od

Cynhelir Diwrnod Rhyngwladol y Menwyd 2023 ar 8 Mawrth 2023 ac eleni'r thema yw #Cofleidiog Tegwch. Mae'r diwrnod wedi'i ddathlu'n flynyddol dros bedwar ban byd ers 1911 ac yn ddiwrnod sy'n dathlu menywod y gorffennol, presennol a dyfodol gan nodi eu cyflawniadau diwylliannol, gwleidyddol, cym-

deithasol, economaidd a mwyl. Mae'r diwrnod hefyd yn gyfle i dynnu sylw at annhegwch sy'n parhau ac i alw am gydraddoldeb llwyr rhwng y rhywiau.

Dywed trefnwyr Diwrnod Rhyngwladol y Menwyd, mai "Cydraddoldeb yw'r nod, a thegwch yw'r ffordd o gyrraedd hynny. Drwy sicrhau tegwch, gallwn gyrraedd cydraddoldeb."

Mae Rhwydwaith Cydraddoldeb Menwyd (RhCM) Cymru yn fudiad sy'n cysylltu, ymgysylltu (dros)

a dathlu menywod a'u hawliau. Eu gweledigaeth yw 'Cymru sy'n rhydd o wahaniaethu... lle mae gan fenywod a dynion awdurdod a chyfle cyfartal i lywio cymdeithas a'u bywydau eu hunain.'

I ddarllen erthygl Nansi am y dathliadau yng Nghymru, trowch i dudalen 10

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Vegetable shortage hits supermarkets

Beca Dallis Williams
News Editor

If recently you've tried, like me, to compensate for your post-night out McDonalds by trying to make a salad, you've likely been disappointed to discover that tomatoes and other vegetables can scarcely be found in UK supermarkets.

The UK government has said that there have been limited supplies of vegetables coming to the country from mainland Europe and Africa due to poor weather.

To read Beca's article on the impact, turn to page 5

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National Science Week

Gracie Richards
Contributor

Between the 10th and 19th of March, National Science Week will be celebrated in Britain.

After long period of isolation during the Coronavirus Pandemic, it has been decided that the week's theme this year will be 'connections'.

The week is celebrated annually, with the previous three themes being 'Growth', 'Innovating for the future' and 'Our Diverse Planet'.

To read Gracie's article on the celebrations, turn to page 14

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Paul v Fury: Serious or Celebrity?

Jessica Margetson
Contributor

Tommy 'TNT' Fury breaks down in tears as he WINS by split decision, despite suffering a knockdown to end the 'Problem Child's' undefeated streak in Saudi Arabia.

It's been a long two-year wait since this rivalry was first announced and with several cancellations and delays.

The Paul-Fury fight has been derided by many but drew more interest than a title fight on the same bill.

To read Jessica's article on the highly-anticipated fight, turn to page 24

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A note from the Editor

Nodyn gan y Golygydd



Does the sporting world embrace equity?



Over 300 million people tuned in to the women's Euros Image: Liondarts (via Wikimedia Commons)

Yw'r byd chwaraeon yn cofleidio cydraddoldeb?

Gwylodd dros 300 miliwn o bobl Ewros y menywod. Image: Liondarts (via Wikimedia Commons)

Beth Williams
Editor-in-Chief

Celebrated globally on Wednesday, March 8th, International Women's Day is a chance to recognize the achievements of women across all aspects of society. Over the past twelve months, women have made their mark, this is notable within sport.

From the history-making boxing match between Savannah Marshall and Claressa Shields to the Roses' defeat in the Rugby World Cup final, women's sports viewing is on the rise as many watch for the first time. The women's Euros captured the attention of Europe and beyond in 2022, with a record audience of 365 million. 50 million alone watched as the Lionesses' won over Germany in the final, over three times the amount that watched the 2017 final. The stand-out moment is responsible for inspiring more girls than ever to try their hand at the sport, with over 1000,000 more girls playing football in England compared to five years ago.

While the theme of 2023's International Women's Day is #EmbraceEquity, is equity really being embraced in the sporting world? This Winter, multiple women's matches in the WSL were postponed or cancelled due to frozen pitches, while their male counterparts at the same club continued with almost no interruptions. England

and Arsenal player Beth Mead tweeted: "one of the top leagues in Europe and we are cancelling games because of frozen pitches. Not good enough, the women's game is heading in the right direction but still a long way to go".

Female athletes have also been vocal about the added obstacles that impact their performance and what needs to be done for them to receive equity within the sport. In the Summer, sprinter Dina Asher-Smith confessed that her period cramps were responsible for dashing her success in the 100m sprint at the European Championship. She urged the government and sports bodies to invest more time and money into researching the relationship between periods and sports performance.

Despite examples of unfairness, the last year has seen proactive changes. The Football Association of Wales announced in January that their male and female players will be paid an equal amount for the very first time. Irish women's rugby has also made changes to their kit, swapping white shorts for navy to make players on their periods feel more comfortable when playing.

A petition has now been started to make underground heating mandatory in the WSL, but time will only tell if this and many other issues will have been addressed by 2024.

Beth Williams
Prif Olygydd

Wedi ei dathlu'n fyd-eang ar Fawrth 8fed, mae Diwrnod Rhyngwladol y Merched yn gyfle i adnabod cyflawniadau menywod ar draws gymdeithas. Dros y flwyddyn ddiwethaf, mae menywod wedi serennu, gan gynnwys o fewn y maes chwaraeon.

O gem bocsis hanesyddol Savannah Marshall ac Claressa Shields i'r Rhosod yn cyrraedd rownd derfynol Cwpan y Byd Rygbi, mae'r nifer o wylwyr chwaraeon merched yn cynyddu, gyda sawl yn eu gwyllo am y tro gyntaf erioed. Wnaeth Ewros y menywod dal sylw Ewrop ac tu-hwnt yn 2022, gyda chynulleidfia byd eang o 365 miliwn. Wnaeth 50 miliwn gwyllo tra enillodd y Llewod dros yr Almaen yn y ffeinal, dros dair gwaith y nifer a wylodd y ffeinal 2017. Mae'r foment fythgofiadwy yn gyfrifol am ysbrydoli fwy o enethod nac erioed troi llaw i'r gamp, gyda 100,000 fwy o ferched ifanc yn chwarae pêl-droed yn Lloegr i'w gymharu â phum mlynedd yn ôl.

Tra themâu Diwrnod Rhyngwladol y Merched 2023 yw #EmbraceEquity, yw cydraddoldeb gwirioneddol yn cael ei gyflawni yn y byd chwaraeon? Gaeaf yma, gohiriwyd sawl gem pêl-droed menywod yn y WSL oherwydd caeau wedi rhewi, tra oedd timau dynion yr un clybiau yn gallu parhau heb bron dim problem. Ar Drydar, dywedodd Beth Mead, chwaraewraig Lloegr ac Arsenal: 'Un o

cyngheiriau uchaf Ewrop ac rydym yn canslo gemau oherwydd caeau wedi'u rhewi. Ddim digon da, mae gem y menywod yn mynd yn y cyfeiriad iawn ond mae dal ffordd bell i fynd".

Mae athletwreigiau hefyd wedi codi ymwybyddiaeth dros yr heriau ychwanegol sydd yn amharu ar eu perfformiad a beth sydd angen ei wneud i gyflawni cydraddoldeb o fewn chwaraeon. Yn yr haf, datgelodd y rhedwraig Dina Asher-Smith mai crampiau mislif oedd yn gyfrifol am rwystro ei llwyddiant yn y ras 100m yn bencampwriaeth Ewrop. Ysodd ar y llywodraeth a chyrrff rheoleiddio chwaraeon i fuddsoddi mwy o amser ac arian i ymchwiliad yng nghylch y berthynas rhwng y mislif a pherfformiad chwaraeon.

Er esiamplau o annhegwch, mae'r flwyddyn ddiwethaf wedi gweld newidiadau cadarnhaol. Yn fis Ionawr, cyhoeddodd Cymdeithas Pêl-droed Cymru fod chwaraewyr y timau dynion a merched am dderbyn tal hafal am y tro gyntaf. Mae rygbi menywod Iwerddon hefyd wedi newid eu cit, yn cyfnewid siorts glas am rhai gwyn er mwyn ceisio gwneud eu chwaraewyr teimlo'n fwy cyfforddus wrth chwarae ar eu mislif.

Mae deiseb wedi ei chychwyn er mwyn gwneud gwres dan-ddaear yn orfodol yn yr WSL ond dim ond amser bydd yn datgelu os fydd hwn, a sawl problem arall yn cael ei datrys erbyn 2024.

Significant increase in electric vehicle production

With a rise in electric vehicle production, George Symonds details the ethical issues.

George Symonds
Head of News

With the 2030 ban on the sale of petrol and diesel cars rapidly increasing within the UK, the sales of electric cars have understandably increased. Sky News Business Reporter, James Sillars, reported that “almost 500,000 new hybrid and electric cars will be seen on UK roads this year, according to new industry projections, following a spurt in production and sales. The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) said pure electric vehicles (EVs) accounted for almost a quarter of the market last month as sales rose by 18.2% during February. The body said overall sales were 26.2% higher than in the same month last year - with 74,441 new registrations - completing seven consecutive months of growth.”

However, a key dilemma arising

with the production of EVs is the use of lithium batteries. Lithium iron phosphate technology accounted for about half of the battery capacity of EVs sold in China last year, according to research from consultancy Adamas Intelligence. In the US the technology represented only 9 percent of capacity in 2022, up from zero the year before (Financial Times). Despite the batteries often being built in China, the mining process often occurs elsewhere (mainly in South America) and has come under ethical and environmental scrutiny. According to a report by Friends of the Earth (FoE), lithium extraction inevitably harms the soil and causes air contamination. As demand rises, the mining impacts are “increasingly affecting communities where this harmful extraction takes place, jeopardising their access to water,” says the report (EuroNews). The mistreatment of miners, the overuse of freshwater

sources and the destruction of local ecosystems continues to be a major problem. Despite this harmful mining process, the continuous argument that EVs are better for the environment than petrol or diesel vehicles is now being disputed. The American ‘Alternate Fuels Data Center’ published a detailed report weighing the benefits and detriments of the use of EV’s. With regards to vehicle emissions, EVs were evidently better for the environment- “Electric and hybrid vehicles can have significant emissions benefits over conventional vehicles. All-electric vehicles produce zero tailpipe emissions, and PHEVs produce no tailpipe emissions when operating in all-electric mode. HEV emissions benefits vary by vehicle model and type of hybrid power system.” Conversely, the availability and affordability of EVs used to remain just for the wealthy. The New York Times examined a rise in EVs in suburban

areas of the states of New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. “Whilst the earliest purchases of electric vehicles were mostly in affluent areas, over the past two years there has been explosive growth in ownership in moderate-income counties in and around the states.” The reasoning behind this has been linked to the growth in model variation, expansion of EV production, more public charging stations and now prices between EVs and petrol/diesel vehicles have become competitive. Nissan’s chief operating officer, Ashwani Gupta, warned the BBC in February that due to the United Kingdom’s high energy bills and inflation, the production of British EVs is becoming increasingly more challenging within the market. In order to make new models of EVs the “economics have to work”. To follow more information on the use of EVs, head to the British government website.



George Symonds



Shivika Singh



Lowri Powell



Luis Atkinson



Beca Dallis

Uncovered sexual abuse on Kenyan tea farms

Lowri Powell
Deputy Head of News

More than 70 women had been sexually abused by their supervisors on Kenyan tea farms owned by two British companies, Unilever and James Finlay & Co. They supply some of the UK’s most popular brands, including PG Tips, Lipton and Sainsbury’s Red Label. These tea brands supplied Sainsbury’s, Tesco supermarkets and Starbucks. BBC Africa Eye and Panorama conducted a joint investigation which discovered evidence of sexual harassment of workers. The BBC sent secret filming to the Kenyan tea farms which showed managers pressuring the undercover reporter for sex in return for work. This led to three managers being suspended. A number of the tea farm workers, for both companies, spoke to BBC’s Tom Odula, African Eye reporter. The women said they have no choice but to give in to the sexual demands or face having no income. They said work is scarce in the area. “I can’t lose my job because I have kids,” said one tea farm worker. One tea farm worker said a manager



Abuse on Tea Farms: Undercover reporting showed evidence of sexual harassment on Kenyan tea farms. Source: Patrick Gaudin (via Flickr) claimed she could not work until she agreed to have sexual intercourse with him, whilst another claimed she had been injected with HIV by her supervisor at work. The BBC recruited an undercover reporter to gather more evidence about the allegations of sexual harassment. Firstly, the undercover reporter was invited to a job interview in a hotel room. The reporter then was pinned against a window and asked to touch and undress the interviewer, Mr Chebochok. He worked on Finlay’s tea plantations for more than

30 years, as an estate manager and then as the owner of a contracting company. “I’ll give you some money, then I’ll give you a job. I have helped you, help me,” Mr Chebochok said. “We’ll lie down, finish and go. Then you come and work.” The undercover reporter did not consent to his demands. A member of the production team later phoned the undercover reporter to give her a reason to leave the hotel. After the BBC contacted James Finlay & Co, Mr Chebochok was suspended

with immediate effect. The undercover reporter also attended an induction day at a tea farm, managed by Unilever. Divisional manager, Jeremiah Koskei, discussed the company’s zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment. This contradicted the treatment of the undercover reporter, when he invited the undercover reporter to meet him in a hotel bar and tried to pressure her into having sex with him in his compound. Later, the undercover reporter was moved to the weeding team, with long and hard days, six days a week. The supervisor, Samuel Yebei, gave the undercover reporter the option to exchange sex for lighter duties. Unilever was “deeply shocked and saddened” by the sexual harassment allegations made against their supervisors. Sainsbury’s said: “These horrific allegations have no place in our supply chain.” They later updated their statement saying it will “take robust action to safeguard workers” in its “tea supply chain.” Starbucks also issued a statement following the sexual harassment allegations, saying they are “deeply concerned” and have taken “immediate action” to suspend purchasing from James Finlay & Co in Kenya.

PM in Northern Ireland discussing Brexit

Eva Castanedo
Contributor

The UK Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, and President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, announced a new deal on Monday to address post-Brexit difficulties in Northern Ireland. The Windsor Framework includes a new system of green and red lanes for goods, with products coming into Northern Ireland through the green lane experiencing significantly reduced checks and paperwork. Goods at risk of moving onto the EU will be directed to the red lane, and businesses moving goods from Northern Ireland to Great Britain will not be required to complete export declarations. Bans on certain products, such as chilled sausages, entering Northern Ire-

land from Britain will be lifted, along with bans on seed potatoes and 11 native British trees. Medicines for use in Northern Ireland will be approved by the UK regulator, with the European Medicines Agency not having any role. Parcels will not be subject to full custom declarations, and from 2024, parcel operators will be required to share data with the EU to manage smuggling risks. Under the Northern Ireland Protocol, EU VAT rules could be applied in Northern Ireland. However, under the new deal, UK VAT and excise rules will apply to Northern Ireland for alcoholic drinks for immediate consumption and immovable goods such as heat pumps, while EU VAT rules will still apply for other items. The agreement reduces the proportion of EU rules applied in Northern Ireland to less than 3%, and introduces a “Stormont brake” which allows the Northern Ireland Assembly to raise an

objection to a new goods rule. The process would be triggered if 30 representatives in the Stormont from two or more parties sign a petition, and the brake cannot be used for “trivial reasons” but reserved for “significantly different” rules. Once the UK tells the EU the brake has been triggered, the rule cannot be implemented unless both parties agree. Disputes will be resolved through independent arbitration, and the EU has its own safeguard, with the power to take “appropriate remedial measures” if Northern Ireland starts to diverge significantly from the bloc’s rules. The Northern Ireland Protocol Bill, which would have given the UK the power to scrap the old protocol deal, has been scrapped. The government confirmed there is “no legal justification” for going ahead with it. However, former Prime Minister Boris Johnson criticised the new frame-

work, saying it was “not about taking back control” and that he would find it “very, very difficult” to vote for Mr Sunak’s deal. Despite this, Downing Street has said the prime minister is willing to clarify any “misunderstandings” about how the deal will work. The Windsor Framework comes after months of talks, and while it has been welcomed by some, including the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), others have expressed concern. Northern Ireland Secretary, Brandon Lewis, said the deal provides “greater certainty” for businesses and communities, while DUP leader, Jeffrey Donaldson, welcomed the “positive and significant” changes. However, Sinn Féin’s Northern Ireland deputy First Minister, Michelle O’Neill, expressed disappointment, saying the deal “falls short of what was required to protect the Good Friday Agreement, protect peace and stability, and protect our economy”.

ELSEWHERE IN NEWS

Amber warnings for heavy snow across large parts of UK
The weather shut hundreds of schools in Wales and the West Midlands with hundreds more elsewhere closing early.

Labour's unveils five missions

Shivika Singh
News Editor

Labour leader, Keir Starmer, has revealed his five mission plan to “give Britain its future back” as he promised a “mission-driven government” if he wins power at the next election. Starmer’s “five missions” covering the economy, the NHS, crime, the climate crisis and education, signify the seriousness of his Prime Minister candidacy for the 2025 general election.

Polls suggest the Labour leader is the favourite to become the U.K. prime minister at the next election, which must take place by January 2025. Labour has a lead of around 20% over the Conservatives in opinion polls, suggesting the party is on course to win the general election.

The five goals set out by the Labour leader which will be at the core of his manifesto, are:

- Secure the highest sustained growth in the G7
- Build an NHS fit for the future
- Make Britain's streets safe
- Break down the barriers to opportunity at every stage
- Make Britain a clean energy superpower

“Polls suggest the Labour leader is the favourite to become the U.K. prime minister at the next election”

In a speech in Manchester, Sir Keir said: “These missions will form the backbone of the Labour manifesto. The pillars of the next Labour government.

“They will be measurable, so we can track progress and be held to account. Long-term so we can look beyond the day-to-day. Informed by experts and the public, so we can build a coalition for change.

“And each will support our drive for growth. Each will help us get our future back.”

Starmer’s speech promised “laser-targeted” policies with “clear, measurable outcomes,” which he contrasted with “Rishi Sunak’s five promises to clean up his own mess” announced in January.

However, when pressed by journalists, he said he wanted to be “humble” and not take victory for granted, but the problems he had identified could not be fixed within five years.

Labour’s five-page document misses a list of deadlines, hard numbers, or full detail. Labour said it would only set out “a measurable goal” and “timeline” for each mission “in the coming months.”

“Starmer’s speech promised “laser-targeted” policies with “clear, measurable outcomes”

King marks respect as war reaches first anniversary

With the war in Ukraine reaching one year, Luis Atkinson discusses global sympathies.

Luis Atkinson
News Editor

As the war in Ukraine passes its first anniversary, support and tributes from leaders around the world have continued to blossom. According to data provided by the US military, at least 100,000 soldiers of both Russian and Ukrainian nationality have died as a result of the invasion. Thousands of civilians are also said to have either died, with beyond 13 million Ukrainian civilians being made refugees, or displaced from their homes, according to the BBC.

As the first anniversary of the invasion comes, respect from leaders around the world has taken place. The extent to which these tributes have been given is reflected by King Charles, who has released a statement saying that Ukrainians have “suffered unimaginably” since the invasion began.

In light of the thousands who have been injured or killed as a result of the conflict, the King praised the Ukrainian nation as having “remarkable courage and resilience” due to the invasion. The message from the King stated that “the people of Ukraine have suffered unimaginably from an unprovoked full-scale attack

on their nation. They have shown truly remarkable courage and resilience in the face of such human tragedy.”

“The world has watched in horror at all the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon Ukrainians, many of whom I have had the great pleasure of meeting.”

Having met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky at Buckingham Palace earlier this month, the King further stated that “I can only hope the outpouring of solidarity from across the globe may bring not only practical aid, but also strength from the knowledge that, together, we stand united.”

At a vigil gathering in Trafalgar Square on the evening of the 23rd of February, crowds listened to recitals of the Ukrainian poem Take Only What Is Most Important by actress Dame Helen Mirren, who was also personally and emotionally moved. UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace also paid his tributes, calling Ukrainian soldiers the “bravest of the brave.”

Additionally, the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has spoken about calling for peace. Archbishop Welby said, whilst speaking to Radio 4’s Thought for the Day, “There must be a future with a just and stable peace - a free and secure Ukraine - and

the beginning of a generation’s long process of healing and reconciliation.”

Tributes have been demonstrated by the British Ambassador to Ukraine, Dame Melinda Simmons, who recalled the outbreak of the invasion last February as “such a traumatic time.”

Speaking to Radio 4’s Woman’s Hour, she informed the presenters about how her job role changed since the invasion began, as “a life because war isn’t just a five-day thing”. Moreover, bans on exports which are believed to be potentially used by the Russian military have been announced by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office. Foreign Secretary James Cleverly has imminently announced sanctions on products such as radio equipment, electronic components and aircraft parts.

However, NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg believes the organisation and its allies could do more to deter Russian aggression.

Addressing a press conference on Friday, Stoltenberg stated how sanctions against Russia by the West “do not seem to have dented the Kremlin’s ability or desire to wage war”. The anniversary has come in light of President Zelensky asking its allies for more ammunition and fighter

jets to bolster Ukraine’s defence. In response, although the UK has yet to supply fighter jets to Ukraine, the UK will start training Ukrainian fighter pilots to use NATO-standard aircraft. Regarding the UK’s position on providing fighter jets to Ukraine, Mr Wallace has declared that he is “very happy” to supply such reinforcements to allies in Eastern Europe, so said allies could give their Soviet-era jets to Ukraine. This method is seen to be faster as the Ukrainian military would already be familiar with Soviet-era jets since they already have been using them.

Ultimately, whilst addressing the G7 group of advanced economies, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has declared that increasing support for Ukraine is “what it will take to shift Putin’s mindset”.

Mr Sunak had addressed the proposition of providing Ukraine with “longer-range weapons” to restrict Russia’s capability to damage Ukraine’s infrastructure, notably electricity, energy and food supplies. Mr Sunak said that “instead of an incremental approach, we need to move faster on artillery, armour, and air defence”, claiming that supplying Ukraine with long-term political, security and military promises will “send a strong message” to Russia.

Japan: a cry for child protection laws

Beca Dallis
News Editor

Consent in Japan is poised to change from 13 to 16, due to criticism that existing laws do not protect children from sexual offences. There will be a justice ministry proposal submitted to parliament soon to be under review. People are also calling to review the criminalisation of voyeurism, grooming minors and expanding the definition of rape.

Japan currently has the lowest age of consent in the G7 group and in developed countries. The G7 group is a group of industrialised democracies that include France, Germany, Italy, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union. They aim to



Japan: The age of sexual consent is set to change in Japan from 13 to 16. Source: Caribb (via Flickr)

influence and tackle worldwide issues, with a focus on global crises.

Consent in Japan has been at age 13 since 1907. The laws have received both attention and criticism following several rape acquittals in 2019 that caused a public uproar. A case that sparked anguish was a case involving a man accused of raping his teenage daughter. The Nagoya district court stated that

there was no defensive proof that the girl was unable to resist, although it was apparent that she didn’t give consent. A higher court sentenced the man to 10 years in prison after further investigation. Local ordinances do prohibit ‘lewd’ acts, which do include intercourse with those under 18. These penalties are much lighter than a rape charge which is a minimum sentence of 5 years.

“A total of 11 Welsh projects were granted £208 million as part of the Levelling Up Fund n a bid to drive forward Sunak’s pledge to grow the economy”

In a statement Human Rights Now, an international human rights organisation based in Tokyo, Japan, saw this as a step forward, although they did note that it “still fails to meet international rape legislation standards” and that the government needs to “redefine the crime of rape as all non-consensual sexual intercourse”.

The recommendations have been submitted to the justice minister, Ken Saito. Although, the Japanese government will consider changes no earlier than this summer.

Controversy over changes to Roald Dahl’s novels

Sucheta Chaurasia
Contributor

Several popular children’s books by Wales-born author Roald Dahl are set to be edited and republished to avoid words that might be offensive for a few readers. This revision takes place to make the literature more inclusive in terms of age, gender, race, weight, mental issues, violence, etc.

The Roald Dahl Story Company (bought by Netflix in 2021) acknowledged that it started reviewing the books in 2020 along with Puffin, the publishers after the Dahl family apologized for the author’s anti-semitic remarks. The changes implemented are “small and carefully considered,” the company said.

A spokesperson from the Roald Dahl Story Company is reported to have remarked, “We want to ensure that Roald Dahl’s wonderful stories and characters continue to be

enjoyed by all children today.” The changes are a part of usual revisions in addition to the page layout and book cover,” he added.

According to the Guardian, Dahl’s children’s books (not his adult works) underwent over 100 edits, ranging from minor word changes to complete couplet rewrites, by sensitivity readers, a group of individuals who are “passionate about inclusion and accessibility in children’s literature.”

Owing to the changes, the word “fat” has supposedly been removed from all of the books, and Augustus Gloop from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory is now called “enormous”. Also, the following lines in James and the Giant Peach “Aunt Spiker was terrifically fat / And tremendously flabby at that,” and “Aunt Spiker was thin as a wire / And dry as a bone, only drier” has been changed to “Aunt Sponge was a nasty old brute / And deserved to be squashed by the fruit,” and, “Aunt

Spiker was much of the same / And deserves half of the blame.”

Dahl has been criticized for his misogynistic writings that have an inferior representation of women. Hence, many revisions have been made in his books to amend this.

For example, the Cloud-Men from James and the Giant Peach are now called Cloud-People. Similarly, Mrs Twit’s ‘fearful ugliness’ has now been rewritten as ‘ugliness’ and Mrs Hoppy in Esio Trot is not an ‘attractive middle-aged lady’ but a ‘kind middle-aged lady’.

Miss Trunchbull in Matilda, who was described as the ‘most formidable female’ is now the ‘most formidable woman’. And she no longer has a ‘great horsey face’.

Dahl’s comments on race and ethnicity were highly problematic and his publishers are now trying to make up for it. Oompa-Loompas of the Charlie and Chocolate Factory who earlier were ‘small men’ from the African Pygmy tribes have now

been changed to ‘small people’.

However, several authors, politicians, and parents have called these revisions a ‘ridiculous’ step. Owing to these disagreements, Penguin publishers have decided to keep the unedited version in their Classic collections.

Dahl fans would be able to purchase both the original and the revised versions, as they prefer. Meanwhile, Puffin publishers emphasize that books written hundreds of years ago but are enjoyed till date should regularly be reviewed for the language so that it can be “enjoyed by all today”.

“Dahl’s children’s books (not his adult works) underwent over 100 edits, ranging from minor word changes to complete couplet rewrites”

Shamima Begum: radicalised or threat?

Followers of the Begum case since 2015 are divided in opinion over her rebuked citizenship.

Emily Cottle
Contributor

Shamima Begum's recent appeal for British Citizenship has been revoked by the UK Government in a tribunal that was held last week. This case began in 2015 when Begum and two school friends left the UK for Syria, compelled by terrorist propaganda to join the Islamic State. In 2019, the Government first removed Begum's citizenship after she was found in North-East Syria in a refugee camp; she has stayed there since but wishes to return to the UK.

The Government's reason for this decision is the safety of the UK due to the brutality of the terrorist organisation Begum was a part of. A Home Office spokesperson suggests that they 'will robustly defend any decision made' in 'maintaining the [...] security of the UK'. The Special Immigration Appeals Commission

acknowledged that Begum could have been radicalised for sexual exploitation, however, there was not sufficient evidence and the danger of her return still remained and the decision must be made by the home secretary.

Opposer's of Begum's rebuked citizenship are outraged at the responsibility attributed to the now 23 year old who was radicalised when she was just 15. Jonathan Sumption writes that 'children who make terrible mistakes are surely redeemable', in a letter to the Guardian expressing his concerns of how young Begum was when she moved to Syria naive to the harsh realities of the terrorist organisation. Begum's life in Syria from her arrival has been filled with destruction: her marriage to an IS fighter and the grief of losing three children due to the poor living conditions. In a recent BBC documentary, Begum expressed

deep regret saying 'it kills me inside' and is willing to be prosecuted for her involvement.

Through Begum losing the appeal, questions have been raised whether the reason for UK safety is credible. The independent reviewer of Terrorist legislation opposed the government's decision highlighting the benefits to Begum's return. Jonathan Hall KC argues that Begum being in the UK or overseas still poses a risk and considers her gender as a variable making her significantly less likely to commit a violent terrorist attack. Hall will express the importance of prosecution if Begum were to return, suggesting that 'it is only human to want to see these individuals punished for their choices.'

A recent Guardian article on Begum's appeal brings attention to controversies surrounding this case. One concern raised was the Secretary of State 'downplaying the significance

of radicalisation', seemingly brushing off Begum's case as it was not unusual. Sayeeda Warsi in the article pointed out the weighted cases of rebuked citizenships with Muslims completely at odds with the preached fairness of 'British Values'. The article emphasises the racist policies of the UK, suggesting that Britain is behind Europe and the US in its 'refusal to repatriate nationals from refugee camps in north-east Syria.' There seems to be great concern that the government in the guise of security is failing to take responsibility for a citizen that was once theirs.

Followers of this case since 2015 are divided in opinion by Begum's rebuked citizenship whether Begum is a danger to the security of the UK or a regretful young adult radicalised by a violent jihadist group. It seems this debate will continue, for now Begum will remain in Syria.

America hit with disastrous weather

Owen Russell
Contributor

North America has been hit by disastrous weather recently. This last week has seen North America hit by a bizarre mix of blizzards, heat waves and tornadoes.

An icy storm has caused chaos and disruption in parts of the USA. Over half the country received winter weather warnings in February, with around 75 million people situated in; 28 states have also been placed under alert.

Northern states have been particularly affected by blizzards, with schools and businesses being forced to shut in some states. States such as Nebraska experienced up to two feet of snow, the most seen there in this century.

The storm made its way across to the north-eastern states, with parts of New York and New Hampshire experiencing snow. The storm system travelled 1,300 miles between Nebraska and New Hampshire.

Although usually mild and sunny throughout winter, even California experienced some snow. In a rare case of winter weather in the state, 51,000 were without power in early March.

The San Bernardino mountains experienced a worrying 7 ft of snow, with residents being snowed in and cars buried. The governor of California Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency in 13 counties.

The record-breaking snow also caused Yosemite National Park to be closed indefinitely. Avalanche warnings were also put in the Sierra Nevada mountain range due to reports of intensifying blizzards.

Canada was not immune to the storm, with large parts of the country being under weather alerts. Toronto is seeing snow, ice and rain in March. Disruptions followed, with Air Canada cancelling a quarter of its scheduled flights by the 22nd of February.

In a strange contrast, the USA also experienced rare and record breaking heat in February. Temperatures in McAllen, Texas were reported as 95 degrees Fahrenheit – a tropical 35 degrees Celsius.

Washington DC saw temperatures of 80 degrees Fahrenheit, breaking a record set in 1874. Orlando, Florida and New Orleans, Louisiana saw even higher temperatures, 90F for Orlando and 84F in New Orleans.

This pattern was recorded all winter, according to Columbia University researcher and climate scientist Andrew Rudzewicz, who said that "where the western US is seeing below-average temperatures and the eastern US is seeing above-average temperatures".

The brutal weather continued in the United States, as Southern and Central states fell victim to tornados. Texas, Louisiana, Missouri and Oklahoma were all affected by twisters.

Oklahoma, the state most affected by the weather, recorded 7 tornados on the 26th of February. Tragically, one of these tornados resulted in the death of a 62 year old Billy Trammel, according to local media. At least 12 people were also reported as being injured

Near the Oklahoma border, in Northern Texas, winds of up to 114 mph were recorded, this is the equivalent of a Category 3 hurricane. Video footage saw the hurricane's rampage, with cars overturned and the roofs of homes collapsed.

Madeleine McCann claimant comes forward

Mahala Gainer
Contributor

A woman in Poland has gone viral after creating an Instagram account on which she claimed she believes she could be missing girl Madeleine McCann.

Julia Wendell, a 21 year old woman, said she overheard something her grandmother said which led her to believe she may be McCann. She also claimed to have a speck in her eye and freckle on her leg that matched with the missing girl.

Wendell created an Instagram account last month named @iammadeleineMcCann and began posting TikToks which gained attention over the internet. She has now deleted both accounts.

Her Instagram gained over one million followers and her TikTok account

led many people sharing their opinions about the case on the platform. The TikToks and Instagram posts showed her presenting photos comparing her to the missing girl and pointing out similar features.

Her Instagram bio stated "I think I can be Madeleine. I need a DNA test. Police investigators from the UK and Poland try to ignore me. I will tell my story in posts here. Help me."

Wendell has also claimed that although she does not remember being taken, she doesn't have many memories of her childhood at all.

McCann went missing during a family holiday to Portugal in 2007 at the age of three. This would make her 19 now, two years older than Wendell however she believes her age may be incorrect.

She alleges that she has been in contact with the McCanns and will be undertaking a DNA test. The family has not yet confirmed whether they have agreed to this DNA testing yet.

A source close to the McCann's said "The family are taking no chances, they are willing to look at all leads. It is important they look at all of the factors, the girl does look similar. There's no disputing that."

Wendell's family have declined her request for them to take a DNA test which could confirm if she is biologically related to her family.

Francisco Marco, the private investigator who initially led the investigation into McCann's disappearance, has broken his silence in regards to the claims. "Without knowing the details in depth, it doesn't add up to me. I don't think it's her" he told the Spanish newspaper El Independiente.

Despite these claims, German police confirmed in June of 2020 that McCann had died and that they were now treating the case as a murder. The police reportedly contacted her parents to inform them that they had evidence she was no longer alive.

The German police believe she was killed by a known sexual predator, Christian Brueckner, however he has continued to deny any involvement in the girl's disappearance. The German police do not have enough evidence to prove that he is guilty.

I need a DNA test. Police investigators from the UK and Poland try to ignore me. I will tell my story in posts here. Help me." Wendell's Instagram bio.

Cucumber and tomato crisis hits UK supermarkets

Beca Dallis
News Editor

If recently you've tried, like me, to compensate for your post-night out McDonalds by trying to make a salad, you've likely been disappointed to discover that tomatoes and other vegetables can scarcely be found in UK supermarkets.

The UK government has said that there have been limited supplies of vegetables coming to the county from mainland Europe and Africa due to poor weather in these regions. Consequently, supermarkets have been forced to limit the quantities of certain vegetables that customers can buy.

Tesco, have had to limit sales of peppers, cucumbers and tomatoes to three per customer. Tesco has also added a label to their cherry tomatoes to reassure customers that despite the tomatoes looking lighter than usual, they are still safe to eat. Students' favourite budget supermarkets Lidl and Aldi have also placed limits on the sales of some products.

The main reason for the short-



The UK government has blamed poor weather on the short supply of fruit and veg. Source: Hippobox

ages is because of poor weather in countries like Spain and Morocco. In winter months the UK becomes more reliant on Spain and countries in North Africa; we import 95% of our tomatoes and 90% of our lettuces from these regions. However, Spain has been experiencing unusually cold weather, making salad vegetables harder to grow. The vegetable shortage comes as parts of Barcelona became covered in seven centimetres of snowfall and as Majorca issued a rare red winter weather alert. Temperatures in Barcelona in February are usually between seven and fifteen degrees Celsius.

Domestically, the UK is also ex-

periencing cold weather with the Met Office predicting a freezing spell this March. This has led to the National Farmers' Union warning the planting of onions, asparagus and rhubarb could be impacted.

However, cold temperatures aren't the only issue facing UK vegetable supply chains, as last year's scorching summer begins to show its impact. The Chief Executive of the British Grower's association has warned that last year's drought could lead to consumers struggling to buy traditional British vegetables like leeks and carrots.

This precarious situation has led to some people questioning whether

this crisis has been made worse by the UK being outside of the EU, as seen when President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen visited the UK last month people asked on Twitter "can you bring us some tomatoes?"

However, experts claim Brexit has played only a tiny role in the shortage. Michael Winter, Professor of Agricultural Change at Exeter University, believes climate change and a lack of investment in domestic industry have been more prominent catalysts. It is also important to note that shortages have been reported in Spain and Poland.

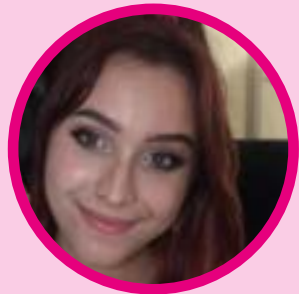
UK Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Secretary, Thérèse Coffey, caused a frenzy when she said in Parliament that the British public "cherish the specialisms we have in this country" suggesting we eat turnips instead.

The Labour MP for Exeter responded on Twitter with "Let them eat Turnips! #TomatoShortages". Downing Street defended Coffey's comments, saying she was promoting British farming and rejected claims that Brexit was the cause of vegetable shortages.

POLITICS



Katherine Seymour



Francesca Ionescu



Jade Heath



George Gourlay

ELSEWHERE
IN POLITICS

-UK Government release bill on illegal immigration

The bill is controversial as there are questions as to whether it is compatible with the ECHR.

-Some train strikes halted as workers vote on new pay offer

The UK's biggest rail union RMT has suspended strikes at Network Rail and will hold a vote on a new pay offer.

Israelis protest far-right government over threats to judiciary

George Gourlay reports on recent protests in Israel

George Gourlay
Politics Editor

Israel's new government, a 'Religious Zionist' coalition between the returning Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and an assortment of right-wing extremist parties has sparked widespread protest over its proposals to overhaul the state's judiciary. The incoming legislation is viewed by many as an attack on democracy which has prompted worry that the Jewish state is teetering on authoritarian rule by religious extremists.

The protests, which have been going strong for over two months, have witnessed over 200,000 people taking to the ancient streets of Jerusalem and other cities across the state. Demonstrators have blocked roads and massed outside the Knesset, Israel's parliament, and several industries have held strikes.

Israeli PM, Benjamin Netanyahu, has denounced the outcry against his new government, stating: "The people made their electoral choices and the representatives of the people will exercise their right to vote here in the Knesset. That's called democracy." Those representatives have also reinforced their position on the

"The legislation is viewed by many as an attack on democracy which has prompted worry that the Jewish state is teetering on authoritarian"



Previous protests are depicted here where similar scenes have been seen in recent days Source: Nir Hirshman(via Wikimedia Commons)

intended overhaul of the judiciary, with the Justice Minister stating that the public dissent "will not stop the legislation". In Tel Aviv, protestors staging a 'day of disruption' were attacked by police with tear gas and stun grenades.

Israel's 'new' government, elected in December, is headed by a returning Netanyahu, who had previously served as Prime Minister from 2009 to 2021 and, before that, from 1996 to 1999. However, as the state has shifted rightwards through decades of increasing violence with its displaced Palestinian populations, the returning incumbent has allied himself with the extremist Religious Zionists and other far-right parties to solidify his anti-Arab, Zionist-Nationalist rhetoric. Alongside UN condemnation, there is a mounting international

consensus that the sacred homeland of many of the world's faiths has lost a moral standing.

Some of the voices from the new coalition include Bezalel Smotrich, head of the Religious Zionist party and now Finance Minister, who has called for the incorporation of traditional Jewish law into Israel's legislation. Also in government is Itamar Ben-Gvir, the populist leader of the Otzma Yehudit ('Jewish Strength') party which pledges a hardline approach to ridding the state of all "enemies of Israel", previously calling for the deportation of all Arabs from Israel.

Though the demonstrators' fervent waving of flags donning the blue Star of David may present a united opposition - even persuading figures from industries not publicly in-

"There have also been reports of violence between Israelis and Palestinians during the protests"

volved in politics to join them on the streets; from those in tech to bankers, and representatives from the army and intelligence - the protests have also brought to light the state's tarnished relationship with democracy as it pertains to its Palestinian population.

Notably absent from the white and blue ripple of flags are the Palestinian colours, banned by the organisers as a result of right-wing speakers refusing to share the stage with Israeli-Palestinians. There have also been reports of violence between Israelis and Palestinians during the protests, despite the two sides sharing some common ground on the issue of Israel's governance.

The organisers of the demonstrations have reinforced the need for a focus on the single issue at hand, side-lining the wider debate on the Israeli government's latest atrocities against Palestinians. Israel's recent raid of Nablus in the West Bank resulted in 11 dead; it was followed by bombing of the densely populated Gaza Strip. The recent violence prompted condemnation by the UN's special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, Tor Wennesland, who said he was "deeply disturbed by the continuing cycle of violence and appalled by the loss of civilian lives."

Child benefits should be cut to solve truancy, says Gove

Jade Heath
Politics Editor

At an event held by centre-right think tank Onward, Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove has suggested that child benefits should be stopped for the parents of children regularly skipping school. This approach to tackling truancy is not a new phenomenon for Gove. He first attempted to enforce this measure during the coalition government in 2010 in his role as Education Secretary. After being blocked by then Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg, he pushed for its inclusion in the Conservative manifesto for the 2015 general election, but the measure was never implemented.

The idea was originally introduced by Tony Blair in 2002 while Labour Prime Minister, but the current fining system was introduced instead.

This sees parents at risk of being issued £60 fines if their child misses school, which can double if not paid in a 21 day period. The fines tend to be issued by local councils.

"He (Gove) first attempted to enforce this measure during the coalition government in 2010 in his role as Education Secretary."



Michael Gove has been known for making controversial suggestions to address problems in the country. Source: UK Government (via Flickr)

In Gove's speech, he emphasised 'parental responsibility'; something he argues the proposed penalties would restore. He stated: "Particularly after Covid, we need to get back to an absolute rigorous focus on school attendance, on supporting children to be in school." During the COVID-19 pandemic, issues regarding attendance (and therefore the distribution of non-attendance fines) were diminished due to lockdowns and ever-changing self-isolation rules. However, the BBC obtained figures for

the academic year of 2021-22 which revealed that almost 1.8 million children regularly missed school, resulting in parents being fined £3.7m.

At the Onward event, the Levelling Up Secretary linked persistent absenteeism to involvement in antisocial behaviour. A month prior he had claimed that antisocial behaviour should be considered a gateway path to more serious crimes, and that reducing truancy is central to preventing this. The Times has reported that Gove is preparing an action plan for

"The idea was originally introduced by Tony Blair in 2002, but the current fining system was introduced instead."

Rishi Sunak to reduce antisocial behaviour, which is believed to include the benefit cuts proposal.

Gove's suggestion has received criticism, including from Liberal Democrat education spokesperson, Munira Wilson. Wilson argued: "if Michael Gove thinks that the solution to encourage children back to school is to impoverish them, then he is living in a different century." The NAHT union (which represents school leaders) also condemned the proposal, stating that it was "likely to be counter-productive". General Secretary Paul Whiteman said: "Persistent absence can only be successfully tackled by offering help, not punishment."

"At the Onward event, the Levelling Up Secretary linked persistent absenteeism to involvement in antisocial behaviour"

Plans to scrap EU laws pose risks of 'sidestepping' devolved parliaments

Laila Dawelbeit
Contributor

The Retained EU Law Bill, introduced to Parliament in September of last year, will see thousands of EU laws ditched by the end of 2023 and this has been criticised by the devolved legislatures of the UK.

A culmination of the Brexit journey, the bill will allow Welsh and UK ministers to scrap, amend or replace EU law that was retained during the Brexit transition period. While there has been a slight shift away from these laws during the transition period, thousands of regulations are still in force. According to the government however, they "never intended to sit on the statute book indefinitely".

The bill contains a "sunset clause" which details that by the end of the year, laws that have not been saved, reformed or removed will automatically expire.

The UK government said the bill

“One report says that these plans will concentrate too much power in the hands of Welsh and UK government ministers, creating an “unacceptable power imbalance.”



Devolution could be heavily impacted by the 'sunset of EU laws (Scottish Parliament showed here) Source: drgillybean(via Flickr)

will prevent EU laws from “dragging down the UK” and allow the UK to take “advantage of the benefits of Brexit.

One report says that these plans will concentrate too much power in the hands of Welsh and UK government ministers, creating an “unacceptable power imbalance”. Boris Johnston's prorogation of Parliament in 2019, which the Supreme Court ruled to be unlawful, shows that this is not

the first time the actions of the executive risk side-lining the parliaments of the UK.

Members of the Senedd are particularly concerned with the Bill as it impacts many laws it is responsible for. Mick Antoniw, Welsh government senior advisor on legal matters, fears that the bill would give UK ministers “unfettered authority to legislate in devolved areas,” risking a “reduction of standards in important areas includ-

“The chair of the Senedd committee, Huw-Irranca Davies, holds that the bill will reduce “proper scrutiny from the Senedd”

ing employment, health and the environment”.

The chair of the Senedd committee, Huw-Irranca Davies, holds that the bill will reduce “proper scrutiny from the Senedd” and that in order for there to be “good laws” in Wales, they must have “proper oversight and time to consider legislation”. He calls the sunset clause an “unnecessary deadline”.

The Welsh government has encouraged Senedd members to not give their consent to the legislation. The Sewel convention sets out that the UK parliament “will not normally legislate with regard to devolved matters without the consent” of the devolved legislatures. Despite this, the Senedd's decision will not block the bill from coming into effect.

The Bill has been through the House of Commons and is currently in the House of Lords, where it is expected to experience significant opposition.

Kate Forbes causes controversy during SNP leadership bid

Eva Castanedo
Contributor

Kate Forbes, one of the candidates running for the leadership of the Scottish National Party (SNP), has caused controversy with her views on equal marriage. Forbes, who currently serves as the finance secretary in the Scottish government, has expressed her views on equal marriage, stating that she believes marriage should only be between a man and a woman.

Forbes' comments have sparked a backlash, with many members of the SNP and LGBT+ rights activists criticising and referring to her views as out of touch and discriminatory. SNP MP Stewart McDonald called on Forbes to “rethink” her position, while LGBT+ rights group Stonewall Scotland accused her of promoting “harmful and exclusionary” beliefs.

Forbes has defended her stance, stating that she supports equal rights for all and that her personal beliefs should not impact her ability to lead the party. However, her comments have raised questions about her suitability for the leadership role, particularly given the SNP's commitment to LGBT+ equality.

The SNP has been at the forefront of LGBT+ rights in the UK, with the Scottish government legalising same-sex marriage in 2014. The party's current leader, Nicola Sturgeon, has been a vocal advocate for LGBT+ rights and has consistently championed equal marriage.

Forbes' comments on equal marriage have therefore been seen by many as a departure from the SNP's progressive stance on LGBT+ rights. Some have questioned whether she would be able to effectively represent the party's values and priorities as a leader.

The controversy surrounding Forbes' views on equal marriage comes at a critical time for the SNP, as the party prepares to elect a new leader following Sturgeon's announcement that she will step down. The leadership contest is expected to be highly competitive, with several prominent SNP figures already throwing their hats into the ring.

The controversy has also highlighted the importance of political leaders' personal views and beliefs and the impact they can have on their ability to lead and represent a party. It has sparked a broader debate about the role of personal ideas in politics and whether politicians should be held accountable for views that may be seen as discriminatory or out of touch with their party's values. The outcome of the SNP leadership contest will be closely watched by SNP members and supporters and by those interested in Scottish politics and LGBT+ rights more broadly.

Starmer denies abandoning leadership pledges

Katherine Seymour
Head of Politics

Keir Starmer has faced renewed accusations that he has moved too far from the pledges which solidified his election as Labour leader following Jeremy Corbyn. The controversy renewed when he unveiled Labour's 5 missions for a better Britain - seemingly moving away from some of his more radical promises.

Starmer laid out five key missions for a Labour Government, arguing that Conservative leadership had not supplied a plan for the last 13 years for the country. He also said that the last 13 years had been plagued by a series of “sticking plaster politics” with short-term solutions, rather than political leaders getting to the crux of the problems facing the UK. The promises had a focus on economic growth, green energy, improving the NHS, increasing opportunity, and making Britain's streets safer.

Following the announcement, Chris Mason, BBC Political Editor asked Starmer why people should trust that he'd stick to these pledges when many had accused him of abandoning those that secured him as Labour leader. Starmer clarified

“While his leadership promises took on a more left wing approach, presenting him as a logical heir to Corbyn, he has moved the party closer to the centre during his leadership”



Starmer has also been seen making various international appearances since the Pandemic. Source: World Economic Forum (via Flickr)

that during the leadership hustings he argued that none of his promises would be possible without getting Labour into government. Now, he claims to have made the party appear electable again.

While his leadership promises took on a more left wing approach, presenting him as a logical heir to Corbyn, he has moved the party closer to the centre during his leadership. Many have compared his policies to those of Tony Blair and New Labour. He unveiled the commission on the UK's future report alongside Gordon Brown, former Labour Prime Minister. The plan was cited as a plan for a 'new Britain', harking back to the “New Labour, New Britain” slogan used in the last

Labour Government. Furthermore, he has taken on other slogans from that era, saying “tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime” during his speech when unveiling the five missions for a Labour Government. Starmer argued that even though we might have heard it before, it is the right approach.

Although there have been questions raised on his commitment to his promises, it cannot be denied that he has stuck by some. He has continued to argue that tax should be raised on top earners, has stuck to Westminster reform pledges, and has made the Labour party an effective opposition to the Tories. However, more traditionally left wing policies such as abolishing tuition

“Many have compared his policies to those of Tony Blair and New Labour.”

fees and bringing in more public ownership seem to have been abandoned by the party. While the Great British Energy company creation is an example of him sticking to this, there aren't any others which people immediately remember when thinking about the Labour Party today.

The overarching sentiment from Labour Party members seems to be that Starmer has made the party electable. Arguably, the party is much more united than it had been under previous leaders. Labour remains many points ahead in the polls. The general consensus is that it has to achieve an election win to be able to implement more radical policies (which grassroots members in particular are hugely committed to). Many believe that the missions for a Labour Government have demonstrated Keir Starmer's ambition for Downing Street and have further presented him as Prime-Minister-in-waiting presenting a real plan for a Labour government - with plans for at least a decade in power.

“The overarching sentiment from Labour Party members seems to be that Starmer has made the party electable.”

India moves to amend Indus Water Treaty

Akash Dhanurkar
Contributor

In 1960, India and Pakistan signed the Indus Water Treaty under the leadership of then Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, and then Pakistani president, Ayub Khan. The demand to renew the treaty isn't new but a lot remains questionable when the political relations between Islamabad and New Delhi are worsening. India and Pakistan have often locked horns militarily with each other and then diplomatically at the United Nations. But, the Indus water treaty survived three significant wars between the two nations and is now standing at the risk of faltering.

“India and Pakistan have often locked horns militarily with each other and then diplomatically at the United Nations. But, the Indus water treaty survived”

Pakistan is facing its worst economic crisis in 2023. The International Monetary Fund has predicted that Pakistan's economy will slow down and the GDP is expected to fall from 3.5 percent to 2 percent. Amidst its worst economic collapse, India in its unprecedented move issued a notice to Pakistan over the Indus Water treaty. According to a report published by the Indian Express, Pakistan's refusal of intergovernmental negotiations with India is considered to be a factor behind issuing a notice.

Pakistan is objecting to India's decision to build two hydroelectric water projects worth \$ 15 billion in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan has time and again expressed its objections over the development of power stations on the river Kishanganga, which is a tributary of river Jhelum, and the Ratle project on the Chenab river. It is understood that the flow of water would be disrupted due to the installation of two hydro projects which will directly affect 80 % of irrigated crops.

“I say the way you look at these projects, it is not purely a hydro project. Broaden it to a strategic water management, border management problem, and then you put in money,” the top-ranking official in the power ministry, Pradeep Kumar Pujari quoted in his response to the notice.

“Pakistan is objecting to India's decision to build two hydroelectric water projects worth \$ 15 billion”

Pakistan has opposed India's notice to modify the treaty. In its statement, Attorney General, Shehzad Ata Elahi's office, called India's move misleading. “Submission of a belated request for the resolution of disputes raised by Pakistan was a demonstration of India's characteristic bad faith. The two countries have been arguing over hydroelectric projects (HEPs) on the shared Indus river and its tributaries for several years. The Treaty cannot be unilaterally modified. This is an attempt to divert attention from the ongoing proceedings at the Permanent Court of Arbitration under the Indus Waters Treaty,” said his office as a response to India's notice.

Matt Hancock's WhatsApp messages leaked

Francesca Ionescu
Politics Editor

Journalist and ghost-writer Isabel Oakeshott has leaked over 100,00 WhatsApp messages made available to her during her work on Matt Hancock's book 'Pandemic Diaries'. Oakeshott broke her non-disclosure agreement (which was using the messages solely as confidential background information for the book), defending the breach by saying it was 'in the overwhelming public interest'. The journalist's heavy criticism of lockdown measure implementation has been condemned by Hancock's spokesperson. While a UK public inquiry has been opened on the government's handling of the pandemic, she was wary of how long the conclusion could take. She has passed the trove to The Telegraph but has not yet confirmed how much she got paid for it, saying anyone believing she did this for the payment 'must be utterly insane'.

The messages have caused controversy regarding officials' attitude to the COVID-19 lockdowns and the people affected by it, such as those kept in 'shoe box' rooms in hotels. Simon Case, currently Cabinet Secretary, asked Hancock the day after England introduced mandatory quarantine from 33 countries 'how many people we locked up in hotels yesterday'. Upon being told

that '149 chose to enter the country and are now in quarantine hotels due to their own free will', Case replied with a short 'hilarious'.

The Shadow Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper, has reacted to the ministers' texts regarding pandemic law enforcement, where Hancock referred to the officers as 'the plod'. Cooper has called out the minister's 'arrogance and shameful lack of respect'. The ministers received criticism from Cooper and the public alike, as last year it was revealed that they were attending 'lockdown parties' that were breaking the law.

Further messages reveal that Hancock was advised in April 2020



Matt Hancock was at the heart of the Government's Covid response and leaked messages are said to be public interest. Source: Number 10 (via Flickr)

to test all residents going into care homes. However, the mandate passed only required testing for those leaving hospital. The messages claim that care-home testing would 'muddy the waters'. Despite this, a spokesperson has claimed the messages to be 'doctored'. According to the ONS, there were 43,256 deaths between March 2020 and January 2022 in care homes in England alone.

Hancock also messaged the Education Secretary at the time, Sir Gavin Williamson: 'What a bunch of arses the teaching unions are', to which Williamson replied 'I know they really do just hate work'. The

texts came after A-level exams were delayed by a shorter period of time than the unions asked for. The Education Secretary also asked for help acquiring PPE before schools reopening, then followed up with: 'some will want to say they can't [open] so they have an excuse to avoid having to teach'.

Messaging to his adviser, Hancock seemed to fear Sadiq Khan's push for stricter restriction in December 2020, following the same reaction from Andy Burnham, Greater Manchester Mayor. Hancock had planned a timeline to "deploy" a new variant of Covid to the media, saying: 'We frighten the pants of everyone with the new strain'. The conversation took place on December 13, and a new variant that affected primarily south-east England was announced on December 14.

Rishi Sunak has said that he will not comment on 'piecemeal' information, and instead supported the government inquiry as 'the right way for these things to be looked at'.

The former Health Secretary has called the leak a 'massive betrayal and breach of trust' and stated that 'Isabel repeatedly reiterated the importance of trust throughout'. The journalist has claimed that Hancock's response was a threatening message, to which he responded by stating he just texted her saying the leak was a 'big mistake'.

Labour announces five “missions” for government

Angelie Marwaha
Contributor

Keir Starmer has announced five “national missions” for his proposed Labour government in a major speech in Manchester on the 23rd of February. These will form the basis for his proposed “decade of national renewal”, with Starmer arguing that the divided nature of the country under Conservative rule will need more than one parliamentary term to fix.

Calling the current government “divided, weak and clapped out”, Starmer stated that he plans to stay in office for at least 10 years, bringing much needed stability, and continuity. A core component of his five aims

is to economically outstrip all the G7 countries, meaning higher economic growth than France, Italy, Germany, Canada, the US, and Japan. Starmer admitted that this endeavour “is going to be tough”.

While highlighting the economic drawbacks of Brexit, he maintained that there had been a large economic decline long before Britain withdrew from the European Union, thus Brexit is not solely to blame. He also laid out a desire for a Labour government to improve UK-EU relations and to implement a more amicable trading rapport, especially regarding the Northern Ireland protocol.

His other five aims revolve around improving the NHS, raising educa-

tion standards, making Britain a clean energy superpower by removing fossil fuels from all of Britain's electricity generation by 2030, and reforming the justice system.

His last aim raised more questions to be addressed before the upcoming May elections. Starmer wants to tackle the current justice system's punishments, echoing Tony Blair's New Labour mantra: “tough on crime, tough on causes of crime”. Additionally, he has directed attention to tackling violence and aggression against women and girls, aiming to evaluate the system's approach to this.

Despite his assurance of a potential future government being “mis-

sion driven”, he has received backlash from Conservative party chairman, Greg Hands, who accused Starmer of saying anything “if the politics of that moment suit him”. Hands also said he lacked principles and that Labour's five aims were generic and nothing new.

The left-wing group, Momentum, has also condemned Starmer for abandoning promises he made in the 2020 Labour election, including common ownership of rail, energy, and water. He has also drawn criticism from members within his own party, due to his statement that he would draw from public and private investment, to bring success to the UK.

New Northern Ireland EU arrangement announced

Tom Nicholson
Contributor

Rishi Sunak has been negotiating a new deal with the European Union to combat the current Northern Ireland protocol. The Brexit deal negotiated by Boris Johnson left Northern Ireland with close ties to the EU, as it is the only part of the UK that borders an EU country, the Republic of Ireland. The current deal means the EU/UK border is moved into the Irish Sea, causing goods to be checked from Great Britain into Northern Ireland.

Sunak must change the current deal with the EU as businesses are being negatively affected within Northern Ireland, by the increased paperwork and the increased shortages of

goods being exported and imported into the country. Furthermore, Unionists and DUP believe Northern Ireland is being treated differently than the rest of the UK, as EU laws still apply to them, even though they have left the Union.

On the 22nd of February 2023, before Sunak's plans for Northern Ireland had been revealed, he was questioned in the House of Commons over his talks with the EU. While being questioned by the leader of the opposition, Keir Starmer, Sunak did confirm that he wants to have a free flow of goods between the UK, as well as access to the EU market as a whole. However, Sunak's side-stepping of questions allowed him to evade two crucial questions – will the government drop the controver-

sial protocol bill and will parliament be allowed to vote on his new deal?

However, since his questioning, Sunak has now announced his deal: The Windsor Framework. This new deal has confirmed the answers to those questions he avoided. It established that the new deal will replace the Northern Ireland Protocol, as he plans to introduce a new high-tech data system, which will use data to see which goods will remain in Northern Ireland with no checks and which goods are going to the EU.

Furthermore, he has announced that the deal will be voted on by parliament. Before the Windsor Framework was announced, Keir Starmer was adamant that Labour would support his new deal. However, Sunak's biggest challenge is to convince the

“Sunak's biggest challenge is to convince the DUP and unionists. (That the Windsor Framework is a response which they can support)”

DUP and unionists. These Unionists continue to have concerns that the new deal still causes Northern Ireland to be treated differently compared to the rest of the UK. It's all down to the DUP, as without the party's support, some of Sunak's conservative Brexiteers may vote against him, stopping the Windsor Framework from being implemented.

Oedran priodas cyfreithiol yn codi i 18 yng Nghymru a Lloegr

Millie Stacey
Golygydd Taf-od

Mae deddf newydd wedi'i chyflwyno yng Nghymru a Lloegr sydd wedi codi'r oedran cyfreithlon ar gyfer priodas i 18. Daeth y newid i mewn ar ddydd Llun, Chwefror 27. Cyn y gyfraith newydd hon, gallai pobl briodi'n gyfreithiol

yn 16 neu 17 oed os oedd ganddynt ganiatâd rhiant. Mae'r ddeddfwriaeth newydd hefyd yn ymdrin â seremoniau nad ydynt yn gyfreithiol-rwym. Mae 18 oed yn cael ei gydnabod yn eang fel yr oedran pan fydd rhywun yn dod yn oedolyn ac yn ennill hawliau dinasyddiaeth llawn.

Daw'r newid newydd wrth i fesurau gael eu rhoi ar waith i helpu plant bregus rhag cael eu gorfodi i briodas. Daw'r gyfraith newydd i rym yng Nghymru a Lloegr, fodd bynnag, nid yw'r newid yn berthnasol i'r Alban na Gogledd Iwerddon. Er hyn, mae'r

gweinidogion yng Ngogledd Iwerddon wedi datgan o'r blaen eu bod yn bwriadu cynyddu'r isafswm oedran priodas i 18 ond gan nad yw'r llywodraeth ddatganoledig yn gweithredu ar hyn o bryd ni ellir cyflwyno deddfwriaeth.

O dan y Ddeddf Priodas a Phartneriaeth Sifil (Isafswm Oed), mae'r rhai a geir yn euog o drefnu priodasau plant yn wynebu deddfrydau o hyd at 7 mlynedd yn y carchar.

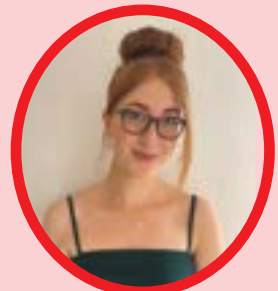
Yn 2021 bu'n rhaid i Uned Priodasau dan Orfod y llywodraeth gefnogi 118 o achosion yn ymwneud â dioddefwyr dan 18 oed. Bydd

y deddfau newydd yn cael eu gweld a'u dathlu ledled Cymru a Lloegr fel cam cryf ymlaen i amddiffyn plant a phobl ifanc. Mae'r ddeddfwriaeth newydd yn rhan o ymrwymiad parhaus y llywodraeth i fynd i'r afael â thrais yn erbyn menywod a merched.

“Stonewall: “mae'n hanfodol bod y gwasanaeth carchardai yn asesu pob carcharor yn unigol”.”

“Stonewall: “mae'n hanfodol bod y gwasanaeth carchardai yn asesu pob carcharor yn unigol”.”

TAF-OD



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Raab yn cyflwyno polisi i garcharorion traws

Lowri Davies
Golygydd Taf-od

Mae'r Ysgrifennydd Cyfiawnder Dominic Raab wedi cyflwyno polisi carcharorion trawsryweddol newydd o fewn fframwaith synwyr cyffredin cryfach a fydd yn gwella diogelwch carcharorion ar draws Cymru a Lloegr ar y 27ain o Chwefror, 2023.

Mae rheolau newydd sy'n gwahardd rhai menywod trawsrywiedol o garchardai merched yng Nghymru a Lloegr wedi'u hymestyn eu cwmpas, meddai'r ysgrifennydd cyfiawnder.

Roedd Dominic Raab eisoes wedi cyhoeddi ym mis Hydref na fyddai menywod traws sydd ag organau cenhedlu gwrywaidd neu sydd wedi cyflawni troseddau rhyw yn cael eu caniatáu mewn carchardai merched.

Dywedodd y byddai mesur

pellach o gynnwys merched trawsryweddol yn euog o droseddau treisgar fel rhan o'r gwaharddiad yn rhan o'r polisi newydd.

Rhannodd Mr Raab i trydar: “Bydd ein polisi carcharorion trawsryweddol newydd yn dod i rym - fframwaith synwyr cyffredin cryfach a fydd yn gwella diogelwch carcharorion ledled Cymru a Lloegr.”

“Fel rydyn ni wedi addo eisoes, ni fydd menywod trawsrywiedol sydd ag organau cenhedlu gwrywaidd neu sydd wedi cyflawni troseddau rhywiol yn cael eu cadw mewn carchardai merched mwyach - oni bai yn yr achosion mwyaf eithriadol, sydd angen cymeradwyaeth benodol gan weinidog.”

“Rydyn ni wedi mynd un cam ymhellach - gan newid ein canllawiau fel na fydd menywod

trawsrywiedol a gafwyd yn euog o droseddau treisgar hefyd yn cael eu cadw mewn carchardai menywod prif ffrwd.”

Dywedodd elusen LGBTQ+ Stonewall ei bod yn hanfodol bod y gwasanaeth carchardai yn asesu pob carcharor yn unigol ac yn cynnal asesiadau risg manwl.

Daw ar ôl y dadlau ynghylch Isla Bryson, dynes drawsrywiedol 31 oed a gafwyd yn euog o dreisio dwy ddynes cyn trosglwyddo o ddyn o'r enw Adam Graham.

Cafodd Bryson, 31, yn euog ym mis Ionawr ac aed â hi i Cornton Vale, cyfleuster benywaidd, lle cafodd ei chadw ar wahân tra'n aros am ddeddfryd.

Yn dilyn protest gan wleidyddion a'r cyhoedd, cafodd ei symud i garchar dynion o fewn dyddiau. Ond dywedodd Mr Raab nad ymateb i achos Bryson oedd

y rheolau. Dywedodd fod y llywodraeth eisiau cael “agwedd ryddfrydol, sensitif, goddefgar” at y gymuned LHDT, sydd yn “dioddef llawer yn y wlad hon” gyda materion iechyd meddwl.

Yn y flwyddyn a ddaeth i ben ym mis Mawrth 2022, roedd 230 o garcharorion trawsrywiedol allan o bron i 80,000 o garcharorion yng Nghymru a Lloegr, yn ôl ffigurau'r Weinyddiaeth Gyfiawnder.

O'r rhain, nododd 187 eu rhyw cyfreithiol fel gwryw a 43 fel benywaidd.

“Stonewall: “mae'n hanfodol bod y gwasanaeth carchardai yn asesu pob carcharor yn unigol”.”

Uchafbwyntiau cystadleuaeth Cân i Gymru 2023



Tant ac Alun gefn llwyfan Canolfan y Celfyddydau, Aberystwyth. Tarddiad: Siwan Iorwerth

Anest Williams
Taf-od

Roedd Elin fflur yn llygad ei lle pan ddywedodd y dylai diwrnod Cân i Gymru fod yn wyliau cenedlaethol bob blwyddyn. Yn sicr mi oedd hi'n teimlo fel un

yn ein tî ni ar Fawrth y trydydd eleni. Dyma uchafbwynt calendr s4c i nifer, boed hynny i weld outfit Elin Fflur, gwallt Trystan, cynnwys twitter, y cweryla rhwng Arfon Wyn ac Ifan Swnami neu'n unswydd er mwyn y caneuon (ond annhe-

bygol). Er efallai i nifer honni nad oedd safon eleni cystal â blynyddoedd eraill o ran sawl un o'r ffactorau uchod, yn sicr fe gawsom ni wledd o wahanol fathau o gerddoriaeth a pherfformiadau, o ganeuon gwerin i bal-lads a roc.

Ymysg y cystadleuwyr eleni roedd un o aelodau'r Gymgym, Siwan Iorwerth, sydd yn ei blwyddyn olaf yma ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd yn astudio'r gwyddorau biofeddygol. Gyda gweddill o aelodau grŵp 'Tant', Elliw ac Angharad, fe berfformiodd Siwan y gân 'Cysgu' gan syfrdanu Caerdydd a Chymru gyfan. Wrth sôn am y profiad hwn, dywedodd Siwan fod y tair ohonyn nhw

wedi “joio'n ofnadwy, chuffed efo'r canlyniad i feddwl bod ni yn erbyn caneuon ffab eraill” a'u bod nhw'n “falch cal neud o i Alun hefyd achos mae o wastad di bod mor gefnogol ohonom ni ers ni gychwyn perfformio”. Mae Alun Evans, cy-fan-soddwr y gân 'Cysgu', yn wyneb cyfarwydd i'r gystadleuaeth, wedi cystadlu pedair gwaith fel rhan o'r wyth cystadleuydd terfynol ac wedi dod i'r brig yn 2010 gyda'r gân 'Bws i'r Lleud'. Dywedodd Siwan ei bod hi “di bod mor lyfli cal cyfarfod yr artistiaid eraill” a bod “pawb yn gefnogol o'i gilydd” gyda “atmosffer yn braf iawn drwy'r paratoi a drwy'r rhaglen i hun.” Cyfansoddodd Alun Evans y

gân hon ar noson dyddiad cau'r gystadleuaeth ac felly diolch byth ei fod wedi gan i'r perfformiad arbennig hwn ennill y drydydd safle iddo eleni.

Yn yr ail safle roedd 'Cân i Mam' gan Huw Owen ond yn fuddugoliaethus eleni roedd Alistair James gyda 'Patagonia'. Efallai mai vibes latino, unigryw'r gân lwyddodd hoelio sylw'r cyhoedd ac ennill y gystadleuaeth i'r cyfansoddwr, roedd hi'n sicr yn chwa o awyr iach i Cân i Gymru.

UCAS yn penderfynu gwaredu'r datganiad personol

Megan Haf Davies
Golygydd Taf-od

Os gofynnwch chi i unrhyw un sydd wrthi'n gwneud cais am y brifysgol, bydd y geiriau "datganiad personol" yn codi ofn arnynt rwy'n siŵr. Wedi dweud hynny, ni allwn ddadlau ei fod eisoes wedi dod yn rhan annatod o geisiadau prifysgol ar hyd a lled y wlad. Mae'n gyfle i fyfyrwyr nodi eu personoliaethau, diddordebau a chyflawniadau sydd yn eu gwahanu nhw o'r gweddill. Felly, a ydy dileu'r datganiad personol yn gyfan gwbl yn syniad da?

Cyhoeddodd UCAS yn ddiweddar fod y datganiad personol yn cael ei ddisodli gan gyfres o gwestiynau. Mae'n debyg fod y cwestiynau yma am gynnwys themâu e.e eich cymhelliant i'r cwrs, eich paratoad am y cwrs, eich paratoadau drwy brofiadau eraill, eich amodau esgusodol, eich paratoad am addysg ac eich hoff ffordd o ddysgu. Wrth archwilio'r chwech agwedd yma,

“ Gobeithia UCAS fydd y cynllun newydd yn dod ag “egllurder a ffocws i fyfyrwyr” ac yn “lleihau'r angen am gymorth”.



Mae'r penderfyniad wedi drysu sawl. Tarddiad: Daniel Foster (via Flickr)

fydd tîm derbyn eich prifysgolion dethol yn gallu dadansoddi'ch addasrwydd i'w cwrs nhw.

Gobeithia UCAS fydd y cynllun newydd yn dod ag “egllurder a ffocws i fyfyrwyr” ac yn “lleihau'r angen am gymorth”.

Mae'n gred i lawer fod y datganiad personol yn gatalydd holl bwysig i'r rheswm dros gael eu derbyn i'r brifysgol. Dylunnir y dasg fel cyfle i ddangos eich gallu i arddangos eich cyflawniadau. Dysga llawer o bobl sut i ddewis a dethol eu profiadau gorau ac maent yn annog myfyrwyr i ymchwilio ar beth mae'r prifysgolion yn edrych am yn eu cais. Dyma sgiliau blaenllaw fydd yn angenrheidiol i gael yn y byd

gwaith ac yng nghyfweliadau cyflogaeth.

Ond ar hyd y blynyddoedd does dim amheuaeth mai'r datganiad personol yw un o'r camau sydd yn rhoi'r straen mwyaf ar fyfyrwyr. Gyda gofyniad o 4000 cymeriad (neu 47 llinell) gofidiau lawer ni fyddent yn gallu ei lenwi i'r uchafswm. Yn dibynnu ar eich ymroddiad i fywyd yr ysgol ac yn allgyrsiol, gall ysgrifennu dros dudalen am eich diddordebau brofi i fod yn heriol. I ychwanegu at hynny, nodir bod y cymorth wrth ysgrifennu sydd ar gael i ddisgyblion yn amrywio o ysgol i ysgol. Dywed 'UCAS' fod y datganiad personol yn ffafrio ymgeiswyr o'r dosbarth can-

ol. Ymhellach, amrywir maint ysgolion a niferoedd y grŵp blwyddyn, golygai hyn fod rhai yn cael mynediad at fwy o amser un-wrth-un wrth ysgrifennu eu datganiadau.

Dywed rhai ei fod yn rhy amwys a bod myfyrwyr wedi eu drysu yn achos hynny. Amlygir bod galw am strwythur mwy penodol ac felly ceir dadleuon am degwch y datganiad personol mewn sawl sgwrs.

Pwrpas y datganiad personol o'r cychwyn oedd paratoi ymgeiswyr am addysg uwch. Canmolwyd y datganiad am wahaniaethu myfyrwyr sydd â'r un graddau. Ond, mae dileu'r cam o'r broses cais yn sicr yn palmantu llwybr ar gyfer proses ymgeisio fwy cynhwysol i'r dyfodol.

“ Mae'r cymorth wrth ysgrifennu datganiad personol yn amrywio o ysgol i ysgol ac yn yn ffafrio ymgeiswyr o'r dosbarth canol, medd UCAS.”

Dathlu Diwrnod Rhyngwladol y Menwyod 2023 gan Gofleidio Tegwch

Nansi Eccott
Pennaeth Taf-od

Cynhelir Diwrnod Rhyngwladol y Menwyod 2023 ar 8 Mawrth 2023 ac eleni'r thema yw #CofleidioTegwch. Mae'r diwrnod wedi'i ddathlu'n flynyddol dros bedwar ban byd ers 1911 ac yn ddiwrnod sy'n dathlu menywod y gorffennol, presennol a dyfodol gan nodi eu cyflawniadau diwyllianol, gwleidyddol, cymdeithasol, economaidd a mwy. Mae'r diwrnod hefyd yn gyfle i dynnu sylw at annhegwch sy'n parhau ac i alw am gydraddoldeb llwyr rhwng y rhywiau.

Dywed trefnwyr Diwrnod Rhyngwladol y Menwyod, mai “Cydraddoldeb yw'r nod, a thegwch yw'r ffordd o gyrraedd hynny. Drwy sicrhau tegwch, gallwn gyrraedd cydraddoldeb.”

Mae Rhwydwaith Cydraddoldeb Menywod (RhCM) Cymru yn fudiad sy'n cysylltu, ymgychu (dros) a dathlu menywod a'u hawliau. Eu gweledigaeth yw ‘Cymru sy'n rhydd o wahaniaethu... lle mae gan fenywod a dynion awdurdod a chyfle cyfartal i lywio cymdeithas a'u bywydau eu hunain. Ers 2011, mae RhCM wedi cynhyrchu pecyn

cymorth o adnoddau i ysgolion a grwpiau cymunedol ddathlu Diwrnod Rhyngwladol y Menywod. Mae cannoedd o ysgolion a grwpiau cymunedol wedi defnyddio'r pecynnau i addysgu oedolion y dyfodol am bwysigrwydd cydraddoldeb rhwng y rhywiau ac am gryfder a chyflawniadau menywod ein byd.

Eleni ar yr 8fed o Fawrth fe gyhoeddodd RhCM, eu prosiect diweddar, mewn partneriaeth â ‘Elect Her’ sef ‘Mae Lle i Ni’. Fel rhan o'r prosiect fe fydd diwrnod y menywod yn cael ei gynnal yn y Senedd ym mis Hydref wrth i fenywod gymryd y llyw gyda'r nod o ‘gysylltu, ysgogi a hyrwyddo eu rôl yn nemocratiaeth Cymru.’

Mae Elin Jones AS, Llywydd y Senedd, yn falch o gefnogi'r prosiect hwn a chryfhau lleisiau benywaidd yn y byd gwleidyddol a chyhoeddus. Dywed: “Dyma gefnogi nod Lle i Ni i'r eithaf, er mwyn grymuso ac ysbrydoli amrywiaeth ehangach o fenywod i roi cynnig ar fyd gwleidyddiaeth. Mae gan y Senedd hanes cryf o gynrychiolaeth gan fenywod, ond rhaid inni barhau i wneud popeth o fewn ein gallu i annog y genhedlaeth nesaf. Bydd y digwyddiad neilltuoel yma'r

hydref hwn yn cynnig cyfleoedd i fenywod ddod o hyd i'w llais a mynnu eu lle wrth galon gwleidyddiaeth Cymru.”

Bu dathlu Diwrnod Rhyngwladol y Menywod dros hyd a lled y wlad gan gynnwys yma yn Undeb Myfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd. Cynhaliwyd noson o berfformio ar y 7fed o Fawrth gan Emily Carr, Swyddog Menywod yr Undeb ar y cyd â chymdeithas ffeministiaeth y brifysgol. Un a aeth i'r perfformiad oedd Deio Owen, Swyddog y Gymraeg presennol yr Undeb, a myfyriwr trydedd flwyddyn. Dywedodd: “Roedd y noson yn un gwerth chweil gyda pherfformiadau dawn, cerddoriaeth, barddoniaeth a mwy. Diolch yn fawr iawn i'r gymdeithas ffeministiaeth a'r swyddog menywod am drefnu noson wych!”

Yn ôl Jane Hutt AS, y Gweinidog Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, mae cydraddoldeb yn bwnc llosg i'r Llywodraeth ac yn rhywbeth sydd angen i holl Gymry'r wlad gefnogi er mwyn ei gwireddu. Dywed: “Rwy'n credu mai drwy ein ffocws ar groestoriadedd, cydraddoldeb canlyniadau a chyfiawnder cymdeithasol y byddwn yn symud tuag at ein gweledigaeth o Gymru lle mae

“ Cydraddoldeb yw'r nod, a thegwch yw'r ffordd o gyrraedd hynny. Drwy sicrhau tegwch, gallwn gyrraedd cydraddoldeb.”

cydraddoldeb rhwng y rhywiau. Ni allwn adael unrhyw fenyw na merch ar ôl. Byddwn [y Llywodraeth] yn gweithio gyda a thros fenywod Du, Asiaidd ac Ethnig Leiafrifol, menywod anabl, menywod LHDTG+, menywod mewn tloidi, menywod hŷn, merched ac eraill ledled Cymru er mwyn sicrhau cydraddoldeb a chyfiawnder cymdeithasol iddynt.

Mae gan bob un ohonom rôl i'w chwarae wrth ddatblygu cydraddoldeb rhywiol yng Nghymru. Mae'n hanfodol bod yr holl gyfranogwyr... yn barod i weithio mewn partneriaeth, troi'r deial a gwneud cynnydd gwirioneddol, ystyrlon a chyflym i sicrhau... Cymru lle mae cydraddoldeb rhwng y rhywiau.”

Beirniadu geiriad nofelau Roald Dahl

Efa Ceiri
Golygydd Taf-od

Dros yr wythnosau diwethaf, gwelwyd beirniadaeth gref ar lyfrau'r awdur enwog o Gymru, Roald Dahl. Yn wreiddiol o Landaf, mae Dahl yn adnabyddus iawn am ei nofelau enwog megis 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory', 'Matilda', a 'Fantastic Mr. Fox'. Mae nofelau Dahl wedi'u cyfieithu i hyd at 63 o ieithoedd ac wedi gwerthu mwy na 200 miliwn o lyfrau ledled y byd.

Ond yn ddiweddar, gwel-

Mae nofelau Dahl wedi'u cyfieithu i hyd at 63 o ieithoedd ac wedi gwerthu mwy na 200 miliwn gwaith."

wyd llawer yn galw am newid o ran disgrifiadau ymddangosiad rhai o gymeriadau Dahl er mwyn eu gwneud yn addas ar gyfer cynulleidfia fodern. Yn ôl Cwmni Llyfrau Roald Dahl, mae newidiadau "bach a gofalus" wedi'u gwneud i lyfrau Dahl ers 2020. Yn ôl y Telegraph, nid yw'r gair 'tew' bellach yn cael ei ddefnyddio i ddisgrifio cymeriad 'Augustus Gloop' ac yn y nofel 'Mr & Mrs Twits', nid yw "iaith Affricanaidd ryfedd" bellach yn cael ei alw'n 'rhyfedd'. Mae'r gair 'gwallgof' wedi cael ei ddileu o ganlyniad i bwyslais ar iechyd meddwl.

Mae rhai yn credu bod angen trin nofelau plant yn ofalus iawn, yn enwedig wrth ystyried y ffordd mae rhai o'r cymeriadau

yn cael eu disgrifio, ond mae eraill o'r farn y dylid cadw'r nofelau fel y maent yn wreiddiol. Yn ôl llefarydd ar gyfer y Prif Weinidog, Rishi Sunak dylid cadw gwaith ffuglen fel y mae a pan yn dod i ein hetifeddiaeth llenyddol cyfoethog, ni ddylem chwarae o gwmpas â geiriau. Mae'r nofelwr Sir Salman Rushdie hefyd wedi lleisio ei farn am yr addasiadau hyn gan ddweud ar Trydar, "Roald Dahl was no angel but this is absurd censorship... Puffin Books and the Dahl estate should be ashamed."

Ers hyn, datgelir y bydd llyfrau Dahl i'w cadw mewn print gwreiddiol. Er y feirniadaeth ddiweddar, cyfiawnhaodd Penguin, eu penderfyniad i barhau i gynhyrchu'r fersiynau gwreiddiol gan eu bod yn 'cydnabod pwysigrwydd

cadw testunau clasurol Dahl mewn print."

Nôl yn 2020, ymddiheurodd teulu Dahl am ei sylwadau gwrth-Semitaidd mewn cyfweiliadau yn 1983 a 1990. Dywedodd y teulu eu bod yn ymddiheuro yn fawr am y 'loes parhaol a dealladwy a achoswyd'.

Ydych chi'n credu ei bod hi'n dderbyniol i barhau i gynhyrchu fersiynau gwreiddiol o nofelau Dahl?

datgelir y bydd llyfrau Dahl i'w cadw mewn print gwreiddiol."

Barn y Pwyllgor: Eisteddfod Ryng-gol

Elan Jones, Catrin Edith Parry, Beca Dalis Williams a Glain Olwen

Pwyllgor y Gymdeithas Gymraeg (GymGym) 2022/23

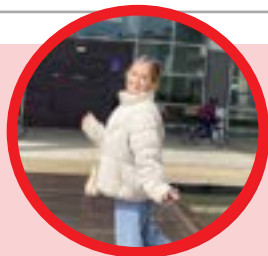
Rydyn ni fel pwyllgor yn gallu cytuno mai penwythnos a hanner oedd hi yn Llambod! Heb os nac oni bai, dyma uchafbwynt eleni i ni'r pwyllgor hyd yn hyn. Mae'r GymGym wedi joio mas draw a hefyd wedi profi mai ni yw'r brifysgol sy'n gwybod sut mae cael amser da!

Ar brynhawn Gwener roedd cystadlu ar hyd y campau gan gynnwys rygbi, pêl-droed merched a bechgyn a'r bêl-rwyd. Roedd y GymGymwyr yn gefnogwyr brwd ac yn sicr roedd hyn o gymorth i'n harwain i'r brig. Caerdydd oedd yn fuddugol yn y chwaraeon ac mi gafodd y cwpan ddigon o hwyl ar y nos Sadwrn yn mynd o dafarn i dafarn ac yna lan i Aber. Ond peidiwch â phoeni mae hi nôl yn ddiogel yn Cathays!

Ar y dydd Sadwrn, roedd y cystadlaethau llwyfan. Efallai mai prin oedd ôl ymarfer Caerdydd ond doedd neb yn ofn mynd ar lwyfan a rhoi tro arni. Cymryd rhan sy'n bwysig cofiwch! Un uchafbwynt penodol o'r Eisteddfod i'n his-lywydd, Catrin Edith, oedd y GymGymwyr yn dod at ei gilydd a chantio 'Edith! Rydyn ni'n siwr fod cartwheel Cynwal yn ystod y dawnsio disgo yn aros yn y cof i sawl fyfyrwr oedd yno ddydd Sadwrn! Braf oedd gweld pawb yn dod at ei gilydd o holl brifysgolion Cymru i gystadlu, ond bwysicaf oll, i fwynhau.

Balchder oedd y gair i ni fel pwyllgor i ddisgrifio'r penwythnos wrth i ni gefnogi bob aelod trwy ddawns, chwaraeon, can a chwrw. Roedd cipio'r wobwr gyn-taf yn y twrnamaint chwaraeon yn binacl ar benwythnos gwyh! Nid yw'r dathlu wedi stopio eto, rydyn ni'n edrych 'mlaen i'r 15fed o Fawrth i'r Crôl y Champions, i barhau'r dathliadau. Welwn ni chi yno!

Pryd o Daf-od Gracie Richards



Dathlu Wythnos Gwyddoniaeth ym Mhrydain

Rhwng y 10fed a'r 19eg o Fawrth mae wythnos Gwyddoniaeth yn cael ei dathlu ar draws Prydain. Ar ôl i ni wynebu cyfnodau hir o ynysu oherwydd Covid-19, y thema eleni bydd cysylltiadau.

Mae'r wythnos yn cael ei dathlu yn fynyddol, gyda'r tair diwethaf yn dilyn y themâu 'Tyfiant', 'arloesi ar gyfer y dyfodol', ac 'ein planed amrywiol'.

Beth yw'r wythnos dathlu Gyddoniaeth ym Mhrydain?

Rheda'r 10 diwrnod gan Gymdeithas Gwyddoniaeth Prydain er mwyn dathlu Gwyddoniaeth, technoleg, peirianneg a mathemateg. Mae'n cael ei dathlu ar draws y DU trwy ddigwyddiadau ar gyfer amrywiaeth o oedran-

nau a phobl.

Mae'r wythnos yn darparu llwyfan i ysgogi athrawon, gweithwyr proffesiynol STEM, cyfathrebwyr gwyddoniaeth a'r cyhoedd i gynhyrchu a chymryd rhan mewn digwyddiadau a gweithgareddau STEM.

Mae'r sefydliad yn darparu pecynnau gweithgareddau ac adnoddau cymorth i unrhyw un sydd eisiau trefnu digwyddiad.

Ymgrych chwalu ystrydebau dros gyfryngau cymdeithasol.

Trwy'r ymgrych #SmashingStereotypes (chwalu ystrydebau) mae'r wythnos hefyd yn gweithredu dros chwalu ystrydebau hirsefydlog trwy gasgliad o dros 40 o broffiliau i annog mwy o bobl ifanc, o bob cefndir i weld eu hunain yn wyddon-

wyr.

Mae'r proffiliau yn ardangos straeon o unigolion a thimmoedd, er mwyn newid canfyddiadau o bobl gyda gyrfaedd yn STEM, gan gynnwys:

Troir angerdd o chwarae gemau fideo mewn i yrfa, Seyed Nasrollahi,

Arloesi pŵer di-carbon, Lauren Doyle,

Llwybr anghonfensiynol o ddod o hyd i yrfa yn STEM, Donna Gowland,

A nifer mwy. I weld mwy am hyn gellir edrych ar y gyfres o ffilmiau byr ar YouTube.

Mae'r ymgrych yn galw i bobl dangos sut maen nhw'n chwalu ystrydebau trwy ardangos beth yw eu swyddi, ac ardangos sut maen nhw'n chwalu'r ystrydebau trwy ddefnyddio'r hashnod.

Am mwy o wybodaeth ar

yr ymgrych mae yna pecyn cymorth digidol sy'n cynnwys asedau i lawrlwytho a phosau cyfryngau cymdeithasol enghreifftiol ar gyfer unigolion a sefydliadau.

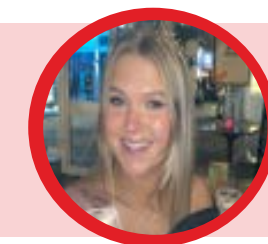
Beth sy'n digwydd?

Dros y DU mae yna nifer o ddigwyddiadau i bawb. I weld beth sy'n digwydd yn eich ardal mae'r wefan 'Science live' cynnwys popeth.

Mae Prifysgol De Cymru yn cynnal cyfres o ddarlithoedd ar-lein yn ystod amseroedd cinio yn cwmpasu gyrfaedd STEM, sut i gael gyrfa yn y byd meddygol, addasu i newid hinsawdd, a nifer mwy.

I blant iau, 3-14 oed mae yna hefyd cystadleuaeth poster sy'n cau ar gyfer cynhigion ar y 31ain o Fawrth, gyda'r ennillwr yn medru ennill gwobr.

Trafod gyda'r Taf-od Ffion Davies



Beth wyt ti'n astudio ac o le wyt ti'n dod?
Cymraeg, Rhosfawr.

Oes gen ti unrhyw arferion drwg?
Byw ar un pryd y dydd

Hoff jôc?
Beth wyt ti'n galw dynas sydd yn sefyll yn rili bell i ffordd? Dot

Hoff gân carioci?
Since u been gone - Kelly Clarkson

Vodka neu Gin?
Vodka

Hoff albwm?
21 - Adele

Sut wyt ti'n gwella hango-ver?
Dwi ddim, jyst diodda

Pwy yw dy celeb crush?
Tom Holland!

Beth yw dy farn amhoblogaidd?
Dw i'n hoffi pinafal ar bitsa!

Beth wyt ti'n edrych ymlaen at wneud eleni?
Wythnos y GymGym!

Beth oedd y ffilm ddiwethaf i ti wylio?
Good Will Hunting

Pwy fydd yn trafod gyda'r Taf-od wythnos nesaf?
Brianne Davies



Cornel Cyfieithu

Learner's Corner

In this issue, our Welsh Editor Malen shares the months of the year.

January	Ionawr 'Yon-owrr'
February	Chwefror 'Khwe-vrrohrr'
March	Mawrth 'Mowrth'
April	Ebrill 'Eh-brihl'
May	Mai 'My'
June	Mehefin 'Me-he-vin'

Yn y rhifyn yma, mae ein Golygydd
Cymraeg, Malen yn rhannu misoedd
y flwyddyn.

Cornel Cyfieithu Learner's Corner

July	Gorffennaf ‘Gor-fen-have’
August	Awst ‘Owst’
September	Medi ‘Med-dee’
October	Hydref ‘Huh-drev’
November	Tachwedd ‘Tahkh-weth’
December	Rhagfyr ‘Hrag-virr’

SCIENCE



Edward Sutton

Aditi Kallanagoudar
Girish

Freya Shepherd

ELSEWHERE
IN SCIENCE

Oceans littered with 171 trillion plastic pieces

The concentration of plastics in the oceans has increased from 16 trillion pieces in 2005, data suggests.

science@gairrhydd.com

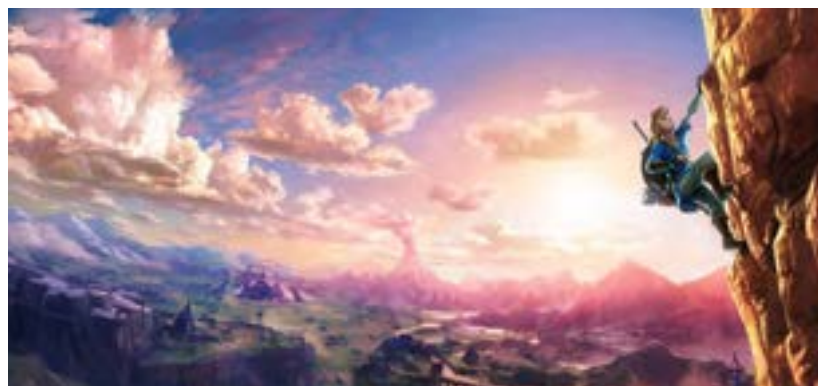
Is the Nintendo magic wearing off? Or is it just the nostalgia talking...

Edward Sutton
Head of Science and Tech

Since getting my DS long, long ago, I've always been Team Nintendo. The wave of excitement around new hardware used to sweep me up thinking about what they might pull out of the bag next, and the Switch was the culmination of this. The best of all worlds console was ground-breaking and a breath of fresh air for a company that was struggling. The Switch is now 6 years old, and it shows. The flaws in the console are getting clearer but there doesn't seem to be much change on the horizon. This may seem like a niche thing to complain about, but I think it reveals a wider problem with Nintendo.

When we all reminisce, we often look back on things much more fondly; I have that with the 3DS. One feature that stood out to me was the themes on the 3DS. They completely changed

“Charging that price for a game to run on such old hardware is going to be a hard sell to some”



The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild was a smash hit when the Switch first launched. Can its successor do the same? Source: Tofoli Douglas (via Flickr)

the look and feel of the console and made the whole experience more personal. This might seem a bit over the top to some but it showcased the deep connection gamers had with the many famous brands and properties that Nintendo owns. I have a funny feeling I'm not going to have that same reminiscent feeling when I reflect back on the Switch. The basic black and white feels devoid of any fun and I think it shows the extent Nintendo has toned down its user experience – and not in

a good way.

There seems to be a new trend emerging during the last few years of offering less for more. What spurred me to write this article is the debate going on at the moment over the revealed £60 price tag for Legend of Zelda Tears of the Kingdom, the highly anticipated successor to Breath of the Wild. The game has been in development for 6 years, and is bound to be a success, but charging that price for a game to run on such old hardware is going to

be a hard sell to some. Compare this to a new AAA game on the PS5 that will run 4K/60FPS for the same price. I know that PlayStation and Nintendo aren't aiming for the same market of gamers, but the comparisons aren't worlds apart. It reminds me of the debate over Virtual Console – the old way to buy games from old Nintendo systems. This was scrapped on the Switch in favour of putting them behind a paywall. This unsettling theme is only going to put more gamers off and slaps as another corporate money grab. The dust has settled on that debate now but the similar themes reemerging now, after all this time, highlights a weak point of the Switch. Nintendo used to pride itself in its difference compared to conventional consoles, but now the overlap is greater than ever.

Whenever the next generation of Nintendo consoles arrives, I hope it addresses the concerns of the players. With the cost of living bearing down on all of us, these kinds of purchases are not as easy to justify. Good value doesn't have to just be a low-price tag but offering products and services that add to the value – however small or niche they may be.

National Science Week is here!

The 10 day celebration of science, technology, engineering and math.

Gracie Richards
Contributor

Between the 10th and 19th of March, National Science Week will be celebrated in Britain. After long period of isolation during the Coronavirus Pandemic, it has been decided that the week's theme this year will be 'connections'. The week is celebrated annually, with the previous three weeks representing the themes of 'Growth', 'Innovating for the future' and 'Our Diverse Planet'.

The ten-day scheme is run by the British Science Society to celebrate,

“It has been decided that the week's theme this year will be connections.”

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics. It's celebrated across the UK through events for a range of ages. The week encourages teachers, STEM professionals and the public to take part in STEM events and activities. The scheme offers activity packs and support to anyone who wants to organize an event.

Trwy'r ymgyrch #SmashingStereotypes, the week also aims to disprove long-term stereotypes through a collection of over 30 profiles to encourage more young people from different backgrounds to see themselves in the STEM field.

The profiles showcase personal and team stories in order to change expectation of people with careers in STEM, including Seyed Nasarollahi on how he turned his passion for playing video games into a career. Another profile is

“The profiles showcase stories in order to change expectation of people with careers in STEM.”

of Chemical Engineer Lauren Doyle who is pioneering carbon-free power and Donna Gowland who had an unconventional path to finding a career in STEM. They also feature as short videos on YouTube.

The campaign calls on people to show how they #smashstereotypes through sharing their jobs and by using the hashtag.

For more information on the scheme, there's a digital support pack that includes links to download worksheets and example social media posts for individuals and businesses.

There are events across the UK suited to everyone during the week.

The University of South Wales is hosting a series of online lectures during lunchtimes to share information on topics like Stem Careers, how to pursue medicine, and adjusting to climate change. For 3-14 year olds, there is a poster competition which closes on the 31st of March, with a prize on offer to the winner.

To see what is happening in your local area, visit the Science Live website.

Turn to Taf-Od to read the Welsh version of this article.

From seawater to green hydrogen, researchers make a breakthrough.

Aditi Kallanagoudar Girish
Science and Tech Editor

An international team of scientists in the University of Adelaide have split naturally occurring seawater into hydrogen and oxygen with an efficiency of almost 100% using the simple process of electrolysis.

The team which was headed by Professor Shizhang Qiao and Associate Professor Yao Zheng from the School of Chemical Engineering used completely natural seawater as a feed-

“Seawater, being a virtually infinite resource, is a much more sustainable alternative.”

stock and did not subject it to any kind of pre-treatment processes like purification, alkalisation or desalination by reverse osmosis. In addition to this they achieved this feat using a cheap, non-precious catalyst such as cobalt oxide with chromium oxide on its surface, and a commercial electrolyser.

Despite the simplicity of their methods, the electrolyser achieved an efficiency close to that of running highly deionised pure water as feedstock and using a rare platinum or iridium as the catalyst.

The reason seawater electrolysis has been very underdeveloped in comparison to pure water electrolysis is due to the complications caused by corrosion and electrode side reactions. It has also a lot more expensive to convert seawater to pure water

through desalination and deionisation which is a problem that has now been solved.

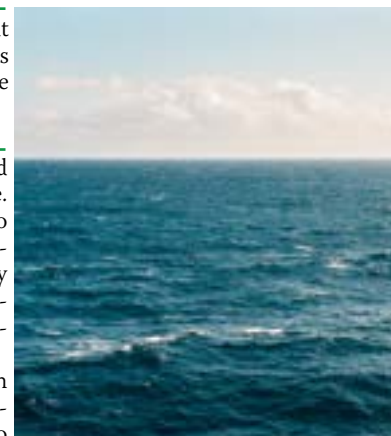
“Our work provides a solution to directly utilize seawater without pre-treatment systems and alkali addition, which shows similar performance as that of existing metal-based mature pure water electrolyser,” says Assistant Professor Zhang.

If the team can scale up their system by using a larger electrolyser and utilize this method in commercial processes such as hydrogen generation for fuel cells and the synthesis of ammonia it would significantly reduce the intense pressure on highly limited pure water resources. Seawater, being a virtually infinite resource, is a much more sustainable alternative that can act as a natural feedstock electrolyte.

“They achieved this feat using a cheap, non-precious catalyst such as cobalt oxide with chromium oxide.”

“Current electrolyzers are operated with highly purified water electrolyte. Increased demand for hydrogen to partially or totally replace energy generated by fossil fuels will significantly increase scarcity of increasingly limited freshwater resources,” said Associate Professor Zheng.

The only limitation of this system is that unlike pure water, this practice would be regionally limited to places with a proximity to seawater as it would not be practical in an area without long coastlines or abundant sunlight.



Source: Kellie Churchman
(via Wikimedia Commons)

Big Tech Disappoints in Q1 Earnings

Apple, Amazon, Alphabet face setback with thier earnings have been announced.

Megha Roy
Contributor

The big tech giants, Apple, Amazon, and Alphabet, all faced disappointment as they reported their earnings results on Thursday, whereas Facebook's parent company, Meta, bucked the trend and delivered better-than-expected results. The downbeat news from the tech industry's leading companies raised concerns about the future of the technology sector.

Apple's first-quarter earnings report was particularly disappointing, as the company missed expectations on revenue, profit, and sales for the first time in seven years. The iPhone maker saw its largest quarterly revenue drop in nearly seven years, reporting \$117.2 billion, down 5.49% from the previous year. The figure was lower than the average estimate of \$121.10 billion by analysts. The strict lockdowns in China, which produces 90% of its devices sold globally, cost the company approximately \$4 billion in lost sales in 2022, and iPhone production was impacted by the Covid-19 lockdowns and

“ Apple has so far avoided the mass layoffs seen by its peers in the tech sector.”



Wall Street will want some answers from Big Tech about their earnings. Source: Sam Valadi (via Flickr)

related protests.

Apple CEO, Tim Cook, admitted that the company's results were affected by the headwinds in the market, but he emphasized that iPhone production was back to pre-shutdown goals. Analysts say that the results show that even Apple, known as a safe haven for investment in the tech sector, is not immune to the challenges facing the tech industry.

Amazon reported worse than expected earnings, with a net loss of \$2.7 billion for 2022, compared to a net income of \$33.4 billion the

previous year. The company's most reliable division, Amazon Web Services, reported sales of \$21.4 billion, an increase of 20% from a year earlier, but below analysts' estimates. The company is facing a reset after its pandemic boom and recently announced 18,000 job cuts.

Alphabet also missed analysts' expectations, signaling lower demand for its search advertising during a slowing economy. Sales at the company reached \$63.1 billion for the quarter, slightly below the projected \$63.2 billion. Last month, Alphabet

cut 12,000 jobs, or 6% of its global workforce, and vowed to create a leaner and more efficient company, but was later hit with a lawsuit from the US Department of Justice accusing it of abusing its dominance in the digital advertising business.

In contrast, Facebook's parent company, Meta, had a positive quarter, with its shares surging as much as 26% on Thursday, its biggest one-day jump in nearly a decade. Meta's CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, vowed to make the social media company leaner, and analysts welcomed the move, upgrading their recommendations on the stock.

Apple has so far avoided the mass layoffs seen by its peers in the tech sector, but in Thursday's call with investors, Cook did not mention layoffs but said the company would be closely monitoring its labor expenses. "We're cutting costs," he said. "We're cutting hiring, we're being very prudent and deliberate on people that we hire."

In conclusion, the disappointing results from Apple, Amazon, and Alphabet show that even the largest tech giants are not immune to the challenges facing the technology sector, and raise concerns about its future. However, the positive news from Meta suggests that there is still hope for the industry, and that the technology sector will continue to evolve and grow in the future.

EU's ban of TikTok on commissioned devices

Alys Jones
Contributor

Staff working at the European Commission have been ordered to remove TikTok from commissioned devices, with the measure implemented to "protect data and increase cybersecurity". The 32,000 permanent and contract employees at the Commission have until March 15th to remove the app, including on personal devices that have official apps installed. EU spokesperson Sonya Gospodinova said that the measure aims to "protect the Commission against cybersecurity threats and actions which may be exploited for cyberattacks against the corporate environment of the commission".

“ Last year, the US government banned the app on federal government-issued devices.”

Since its launch, TikTok has grown rapidly and was the first non Meta app to reach three billion downloads worldwide, according to analytics firm Sensor Tower Data.

TikTok expressed disappointment toward the Commission's decision, with a spokesperson stating that they believed it was "misguided and based on fundamental misconceptions". The ban follows increased Western scrutiny in recent months and allegations that TikTok, which is owned by Chinese company ByteDance, harvests users' data and gives it to the Chinese government. Last year, the US government banned the app on federal government-issued devices due to national security concerns and fears that the Chinese government may leverage TikTok to access devices and US user data. The European Commission's decision to ban the app follows advice reportedly given by the Dutch government last month which urged public officials to steer clear of the app over safety concerns. In a recent interview with Sky News, the chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee in the UK, MP Alicia Kearns also urged users to delete the app.

The BBC has reported that the Council of the European Union is also in the process of implementing measures similar to those taken by the Commission with a spokesperson stating that the Parliament is "constantly monitoring cybersecurity threats".

“ TikTok has grown rapidly and was the first non Meta app to reach three billion downloads worldwide.”

A mysterious object is being pulled into a black hole...

Prasanna Mangesh Joshi
Contributor

Astronomer Anna Ciurlo and her team at UCLA have noticed that an unusual object in space, coined 'X7', has significantly changed shape. The new shape suggests that X7 is probably made up of debris or a cloud of gas and dust that resulted from two stars crashing into each other. By studying 20 years' worth of observations, the researchers found that X7 has expanded to more than twice its original size. This discovery could shed new light on the mysteries of the universe.

“ Study shows that the shape of X7 has changed with time.”

Quoted in ScienceDaily, Anna Ciurlo said that no other object in this region has displayed such an extreme evolution.

A recent study by UCLA and the Keck Observatory has found that X7, which has a mass similar to 50 Earths, is likely to break apart in the coming decades. The gas and dust that makes up X7 will be pulled towards the nearby black hole, known as Sagittarius A. X7 is currently moving in a path that takes around 170 years to complete one orbit, however this orbit may never be completed, as it is predicted to be torn apart by the black hole around 2036. The study was published in The Astrophysical Journal on February 21st.

Sagittarius A, an enormous black hole that weighs as much as 4 million suns and is positioned 26,000 light years away from Earth, is at the center

of our Milky Way galaxy. Although it was only recently captured in the first-ever image of a black hole by the Event Horizon Telescope in April 2019, scientists have been studying Sagittarius A for many years by examining the movements of stars that orbit around it. By doing so, they were able to confirm the existence of this cosmic giant.

According to the co-author Mark Morris, UCLA professor of physics and astronomy quoted in Scitech daily, it is anticipated that X7 will be ultimately torn apart by the strong tidal forces exerted by the galactic black hole before even one orbit is completed.

Study shows that the shape of X7 has changed with time, morphing from a bow-shock-like structure to a more elongated, linear structure as it approaches the black hole. X7 has lengthened considerably as it has ap-

proached the central black hole, but there is no evidence that this elongation has been accompanied by a corresponding significant change in surface brightness with time.

In 2020, astronomers got better pictures of X7 and noticed it might be breaking apart. This is interesting because X7 is behaving differently from all the other stars around it. Scientists will continue to monitor X7 for changes, and to observe its eventual tearing apart by the black hole.

“ It is anticipated that X7 will be ultimately torn apart by the strong tidal forces exerted by the galactic black hole before even one orbit is completed.”

Earthquakes reveal secrets about the inner core.

Caitlin Rider
Contributor

For years the earth's core has been thought to be split into two layers – the outer core and the inner core. However recent discoveries have led scientists to theorise this is not the case. Through studying the reverberations of earthquakes, it has been found that the inner core may be split into two layers.

“ It has been found that the inner core may be split into two layers.”

Both proposed layers are made of an iron-nickel alloy however these alloys contain different crystal structures; the transition between layers is believed to be very gradual. The exact properties of the two distinct layers remain unknown. Research has been conducted since the idea was first brought to light in 2002. In recent years many more seismic sensors have been installed therefore allowing scientist to more thoroughly analyse the weak signals produced from rebounding waves

Researchers used the reflections of waves as they bounced from one side of the earth to the epicentre of the earthquake. Geophysicist Hrvoje

“ Researchers used the reflections of waves as they bounced from one side of the earth to the epicentre of the earthquake.”

Tkalčić (from the Australian National University) states, "Earth oscillates like a bell after a large earthquake, and not just for hours, but days." Some of the recorded waves travelled through the inner core five times.

When waves reach the inner core, they travel faster through the innermost part. They also travel slower in one direction in the innermost inner core than in the other direction on

the outer layer of the inner core. This shows that the iron in each layer is organised differently.

Researchers believe this discovery could help explain the formation of the earth's magnetic field; the inner core provides the heat needed for convection currents in the outer core. The magnetic field plays a major role in protecting the earth from cosmic radiation therefore the

study of the inner core can play a major role in the research of earth's development.

COMMENT



Clelia Frondaroli



Evan Johnson-Charteris



Frances Marsh

✉ gairrhyddcomment22@gmail.com

Frances Marsh
Comment Editor

Are we 'literally' all chronically online? The Internet and the death and evolution of language

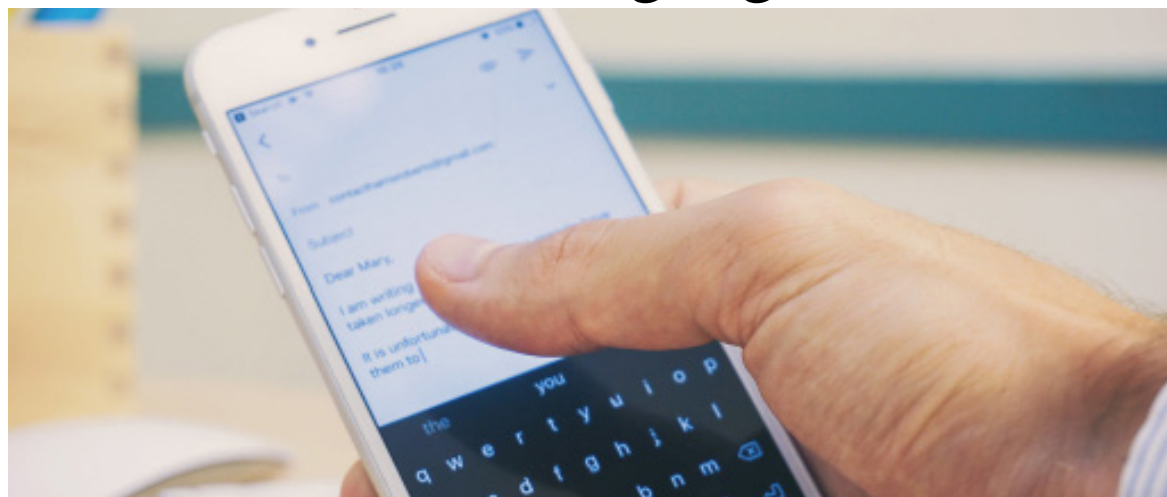
Evan Johnson-Charteris
Comment Editor

If you have spent any time online recently then you may have run into new internet terms such as “chronically online”, “on fleek” or “yeet”. Or perhaps you may have run into language that has begun to get a whole new meaning such as terms like “cap”, “cancelled” or “gaslighting”. Either way, and despite it being inherently ‘cringe’ to write these out, the internet has proven to be a haven for the progression of language, but is this for better or for worse?

Linguists primarily sit into two camps when it comes to the progression of the English language in any way. On one hand there are prescriptivists, who largely view new iterations of English as straying away from the golden age/version of English, usually Queen’s English (or rather King’s English now). On the other hand there are descriptivists who view English language progression as natural, something to be observed rather than controlled.

In the case of internet language, the former camp is where you will hear most opinions being sprouted from, especially in

“Cast your mind back to only a decade or two ago into the infancy of online culture and you will find a vast array of neologisms that we no longer use”



How does our slang, speech and the words we use change as technology develops? (Source: Mary Cullen Via Flickr)

publications falling on the right wing side of the political spectrum. Cast your mind back to only a decade or two ago into the infancy of online culture and you will find a vast array of neologisms that we no longer use such as “rofl”, “swag” and “luv” and some we still use such as “lol”, “omg” and “yolo” (granted the last mainly means Wednesday nights to most of us now).

Plenty of commentators viewed these as the end of language as we know it, bemoaning the lack of effort these text abbreviations took to write as meaning that formal register as we know it would be doomed to fail. Furthermore, if you want to find some more prescriptivist outrage, simply do a Google search on the word ‘literally’ and its broadening of meaning to include things that are not quite ‘literal’, and you will see an

onslaught of takes on why that spells the end of language as we know it.

But did formal language and language as a whole die? No, not at all, we can all code switch between writing academic papers and talking to our friends, and to do so is one of the key skills for succeeding in the modern world. Plus the fact a lot of the old text neologisms died out is merely indicative that they served their purpose as text limits and charges subsided in the 2010s, and that language adapts to the context it is used in.

So what does this mean for the modern day use of language on platforms such as Tiktok? Well for the most part it is the exact same and people are merely using the language they see in their day to day lives. However, there can be something to be said for the trivialisation of more seri-

“But did formal language and language as a whole die? No, not at all we can all code switch between writing academic papers and talking to our friends”

ous words such as chronically, gaslighting, depression and so on. They might literally be seeing the same semantic broadening as... literally; but there can certainly be some valid concerns that by overusing these terms we dilute their original meaning so much so that they no longer have the right weight to illustrate what the speaker is trying to convey.

But then again is that just a 2020s version of the prescriptivist view?

Opinion: It's time for teen dystopia to make a comeback

Frances Marsh reflects on the fall of teen dystopia and the potential for a commercial resurgence

The 2010s saw an explosion in the teen dystopia genre. Stories like ‘The Hunger Games’ became an international success and there wasn’t a teenager in the country who hadn’t at least heard of a book from the genre. Despite the cultural phenomenon it became, the craze seemed to die out as fast as it took off, with the last film in the ‘Divergent’ series never even making it to production. Many have speculated why this is the case, as the genre certainly had the potential to become a staple in teen literature.

The simple answer is market oversaturation. A common criticism of the genre was the formulaic narratives, and once it exploded into the mainstream it was suggested by some that these

were becoming predictable. The genre was firmly cemented in the consciousness of tweens in the early 2010s, but it’s easy to see how it quickly became too much of a good thing.

This being said, I would argue that over a decade on from the initial craze we are now in a time when teen dystopia could (and should) make a significant comeback. Of course, the genre itself never disappeared. Authors and filmmakers continue to write and produce these stories, but the hunger for them that existed in the early 2010s just isn’t there anymore, and perhaps I can speculate as to why.

As the trend progressed, the formula that these books tended to follow started to feel outdated. They often focused on a love triangle or romance at the core and whilst this is a trope that is by no means going anywhere, in this particular case it just stopped resonating with consumers. Many of these stories are set in futuristic societies where mod-



Are teen dystopian novels having their comeback? (Source: Rawpixel)

ern societal expectations can be played with and changed, yet many of the most popular centred around a female protagonist with a male love interest. Surely, in a setting where contemporary norms are being challenged, it only makes sense to play with the idea of gender and sexuality in a more subversive way? For me, this was missed opportunity

which could be explored better today, when conversations on these topics have entered the mainstream in a much more significant way.

Furthermore, at the heart of these narratives there was usually a message, and whilst this may have gone over my head as a pre-teen reading them for the first time, it is now blindingly

obvious. The Hunger Games is a perfect example, at the peak of its popularity it was often reduced to its central love triangle and admittedly hot protagonists, but when looking at it several years later the more complex themes are what stick out to me. The books explore the power of propaganda, a tyrannical government, the class divide, and the ability of one individual act of rebellion to spark change. The imagined future of a war-torn country segregated into districts is clearly one inspired by modern America and if the genre shifted to aim itself at a young adult audience, rather than the younger teenagers it initially attracted, these are themes which would likely be well-received and discussed today. With some changes, this is certainly a genre which I can see having a resurgence over a decade after the initial craze began.

“Over a decade on from the initial craze we are now in a time when teen dystopia could (and should) make a significant comeback”

The commercialisation of the body beyond death

Inside the unregulated world of donating your body to 'science' in the US

Clelia Frondaroli
Head of Comment

Cremations or funerals? An open casket or a wake? There's a lot to contemplate about life after death however one thing is certain: it is not cheap to die. Yet, what happens if you have no choice but to pick the cheapest option. What if the cheapest option means surrendering your body to science?

It is clear, from both historical and modern accounts that the study of the human body has helped advance medical research exponentially. Beginning from the 14th century in Western Europe, anatomical dissections of the body allowed students to understand variations in the human anatomy and provided the ideal training ground to practise surgical procedures that are still widely used by medical practitioners today. Without the physical study of the human body, medicine would not be at the standard it is now and it is important that the people who chose to donate their bodies to science are recognised. However, this piece is not about denying the benefits of body donations but rather the dangers of an unregulated body donation market (such as the one in the US) and the rise of the body trade- where body parts of donors are bought, sold and shipped both domestically and internationally for profit.

In 2021, a video emerged online of a live dissection occurring in a hotel ballroom in Oregon. The incident revealed that members of



Why is it acceptable that companies are profiting off body donations in the US? (Source: Navy Medicine, Via Flickr)

the public had paid up to \$500 per ticket for the entertainment of attending the live dissection of David Saunders, whose body his widow had attempted to donate for medical research. The company she had donated his body to, Med Ed Labs, had leased him to Death Science for the event- an organisation which states it hosts events for 'educational purposes' to paying members of the general public. His widow had not been consulted and assumed he had gone to medical students until she learnt of the incident online. Yet, occurrences such as this one were not (and still aren't) strictly illegal. Laws surrounding body donations in the US are so loosely regulated that almost anyone is able to legally sell or buy body parts and, in a trade where a leg can go for £1,100 and a cadaver reaches amounts surpassing £4,000, it is not surprising that the commerce of body parts

takes place.

This is not an isolated incident either. Marie Gallegos found that her husband's head had been sold to dentistry students in Israel and the urn of ashes that had been shipped back to her were only a fraction of his. In 2016, a Reuters investigation discovered that over twenty bodies had been sold to the US military as 'blast dummies' without the explicit consent of their families, where they were used to examine the effects of various explosives on the human body. In a country where funeral costs are increasingly unaffordable, companies specialising in the commerce of bodies offer grieving families free cremations in return for donating their loved ones' bodies to 'advance medical science', meaning that those with lower incomes are the ones exploited.

This is the nature of body brokers in the US, where free and generous

“ In a trade where...a cadaver reaches amounts surpassing £4,000, it is not surprising that the commerce of body parts takes place’

donations of loved ones can command steep profits for the companies that go on to sell them internationally. In the same investigation by Reuters, they found that in three years alone one broker earned over \$12.5 million dollars in profit from the body parts business. Lack of regulation also has meant body parts may be stored in unsanitary and unsafe conditions; in a storage facility (owned by Bio Care) officials found over 127 body parts laying unrefrigerated. This, paired with the potential spread of infectious diseases (as many donated bodies that end up within the body brokering business are rejected by medical schools for having serious illnesses), speaks of heightened risk associated with the trade of bodies as 'raw' materials.

This clearly shows that something within the US body donation system needs to change. It is vital that laws surrounding the sale of cadavers must be tightened and regulated as well as the people who are legally allowed to make these sales. The trade in body parts, especially one which operates without the consent of next of kin and exploits those who have no other options but to consent to donation, is one that crosses ethical and moral boundaries and needs to be stopped.

Armchair Detectives: Helpful or harmful to true crime cases?

Genevieve Gunn
Contributor

Whodunnit? Was it the jealous mistress, fed up with false promises and a broken heart – or was it Mrs Peacock in the dining room with the candlestick? Crime has long been a popular genre of entertainment, it's not a fluke that games like Cluedo and shows like Criminal minds have become so well liked. We're human. We love to speculate and ask questions, especially when it comes to crime. How can a person go missing and never be found? How can a case remain unsolved? Let's be honest, we've all had a go at playing armchair detective with our friends and family, maybe even online.

You wouldn't be the only one though, the commercialisation of true crime and the development of a so-called 'true crime community' lends its creation to the success of YouTubers and Podcasters, with their sponsored makeup tutorials or mukbang's. 'Crime Junkie' has been listed as being the most listened to, shared and followed podcast in 2022 on Apple Podcasts. The increased accessibility of real crime to the general public (as opposed to fictional crime), treads a fine line between being dangerous or helpful. And I would go as far as saying that, on most occasions, it is both harmful and disrespectful to the victims of such cases and their close ones. Not only this but it has led to the commodification of crime – true crime fans have forgotten that missing persons are real people, with real lives and real families, who have to deal with the loss of their loved ones every single day.

That is not to say that armchair detectives can be helpful and spread awareness about lesser-known cases. No one can deny this. Take the example of Adnan Syed, who's murder conviction was overturned after spending 23 years in jail for the murder of his ex-girlfriend's murder during high school. There is a chance that this would not have happened had the 'Serial' podcast not featured the case in one of their episodes.

Nonetheless such examples are few and far between, what we are seeing happen more commonly is the false accusation of people involved in crimes that are still being investigated. Conspiracy theories run rampant on platforms such as Twitter and Tiktok and can seriously hinder the success of detectives in conducting their investigations, as well as the process of prosecuting murderers and kidnappers. Moreover, those who are falsely accused by the public have to live with the damage it does to their reputation, as well as the loss of the individual – especially if it was a close friend or family member.

Whilst the public feels that they can't always trust the police force to carry out an impartial investigation (case in point: bias runs deep in the force, as seen in the 'racism, misogyny and homophobia' piece by Public Policy Exchange, which have prevented them from catching serial killers like Dennis Nilsen earlier), they are no more qualified to play pretend at being an investigator. Because when they do, real people get hurt.

Why are age-gap relationships more acceptable in Hollywood?

Carys Thomas
Contributor

What is it about age-gap relationships that catalyses such heated speculation and discussion? Relationships where a considerable number of years stand between partners have always been a hot topic. Social commentators collectively flock to their platform of choice to share their opinions on the matter. A-Lister Leonardo DiCaprio's love life is currently rumoured to be dating 19-year-old model Eden Polani, who is 29 years his junior. Regardless of the decades long age gap, in the eyes of the law the relationship has been given the green light. So what's the problem? Why is there an en masse discomfort for this particular relationship, when age-gap relationships are so prevalent within Hollywood?

Many stars are guilty of this ambiguous crime, as age-gap relationships are customary within the industry. George Clooney, Jason Statham, Jeff Goldblum, and Michael Douglas are all at least 17



Should we just grow old with people our own age? (Source: Stocksnap.io)

years their wives' senior, to name just a few. Although not as common, relationships where women hold seniority are known in Hollywood. Most notably Sam and Aaron Taylor-Johnson's relationship has recently been subject to scrutiny online. Their relationship began when he was 18 and she 42, a gap of 24 years, where they met as director and rising star.

So rich and powerful celebrities are 'trading in for a younger model', what's new? They've chosen youth and beauty, and we, the public, begrudgingly accept that if we could, maybe we would too. The topic conjures up mental im-

ages of Hefner-esque stars with leggy, blonde 'eye candy' on their arms.

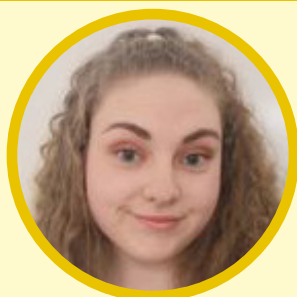
The looming aspect of power, in both age and affluence, creates an unfair dynamic in favour of one party. This imbalance, especially in the case of such young women, potentially puts them at a disadvantage, and arguably more so in Hollywood than in everyday life. Unfortunately, the bright lights of stardom often disguise actions which we would otherwise question, in all aspects of life. Celebrities' blunders, large or small, criminal or otherwise, are afforded the free pass of fame; drugs, alcohol

“ Many stars are guilty of this ambiguous crime, as age-gap relationships are customary within the industry’

and immoral acts are chalked up to a 'rock and roll' lifestyle. If your 48-year-old neighbour began dating a teenager young enough to be his daughter, would your opinion of him change?

Leonardo DiCaprio's string of relationships with much younger women is the extreme of this industry trend, with online commentary highlighting that the star has never dated a woman over the age of 25. However, the age-gap relationship taboo still stands within society; is age ever just a number? In short: celebrities are afforded more acceptance because of their social standing, adulation, and the power they hold. A middle-aged man and his teenage girlfriend was always going to raise eyebrows, and perhaps DiCaprio has brought to light what makes age-gap relationships uncomfortable, chipping away at the impenetrable veneer of fame.

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World Book Day: My relationship with books

Dilichi Dieobi
Contributor

For many people, the first thing that comes to mind when they think of books is boredom. Eyes spending hours perusing over pages of words, words, and more words. However, when I think of books, I think of incredible escapism, adventure and fun! That being said – I used to be one of those people who could not stand the thought of having to actually read something, but now my relationship with books is a happy one. I believe that this is something everyone can achieve with the smallest bit of work!

I have found that one of the best ways to keep up with reading is to make it a habit. This can be done by setting goals for the day or the week and allocating a few times to reading when you know you'll be able to. Usually, I find before bed to be one of the best times, especially if you normally find yourself doom-scrolling on social media instead of going to sleep. As I am sure you have heard time and time again, reading before bed benefits the quality of your sleep – so switch out that half an hour (or God knows how long) of blue light for a few pages of a

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If you don't normally carry a bag big enough to hold a book, audiobooks/ebooks are also a great option.”



Source: Huỳnh Đạt (via Pexels)

good book!

You could also start carrying a book around with you, so that when the unexpected opportunity presents itself, and that friend who said they would meet you at 3, turns up at 3:30, you can squeeze a few pages in. But if you don't normally carry a bag big enough to hold a book, audiobooks/ebooks are also a great option. This way you'll be sure to have a book with you everywhere you go. As for goal setting, there are tons and tons of free apps that can help with this. My personal favourites are Goodreads and Storygraph, where you can set and track

yearly goals, leave reviews, and keep up with your friends' reading. When I see my friends' reaching their reading goals for that year, this often kickstarts me to pick up that book I forgot I was reading.

Now that you know how to keep up with reading, you might be wondering where you should start with books? What on earth should you read? This is where the internet and social media are helpful.

If you're on TikTok, you have most likely heard of the niche “BookTok”, where people talk all about reading. There are millions of videos not

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I have found that one of the best ways to keep up with reading is to make it

only on TikTok, but also on YouTube where influencers share their favourite books, and some books to help people ease into reading. A few of my favourites include Jack Edwards, Ebony Kenae, and Léa Crumpton.

To conclude, here are some of the best books that I have read over the past few months which I recommend to everyone looking for something to read! First is Olive Kitteridge by Elizabeth Strout. This contemporary novel follows the life of Olive, a woman in her 60s, and her life in Maine with her husband Henry. Although she leads a somewhat boring life, Olive is such a fascinating character, and Strout tells her story in 30-page long anecdotes. Another is Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway, a classic that is accessible, and such a treat! The novel spreads across one day in June 1923 in London, as Clarissa Dalloway prepares for her party and reflects upon her youth and lost love. Lastly, Bernadine Evaristo's stellar novel, Girl, Woman, Other which explores the reality of being a black woman in a range of decades.

Now that you're all set, happy reading and happy World Book Day!

Neurodiversity celebration week

Megan Shinner debunks the biggest myths about neurodiversity.

Megan Shinner
Head of Advice

If you are unfamiliar with the term, Neurodiversity was a label established in the late 1990s to refer to those that think and process information differently from the majority of the population. In the key stages of development, like childhood, a neurodivergent individual's brain would have developed in a different way for a certain reason, whether this reason is known or unknown. For example, trauma at birth, genetics, and catching infectious diseases are all things that can influence the onset of a neurodevelopment condition. According to ADHD Aware, about 15% of the UK population identify as neurodiverse. As a neurodivergent individual myself, there are as many things to celebrate about being neurodiverse as there are stereotypes to overturn. Just as the positives are unknown, the stereotypes are too far spread, and there are neurodiverse individuals out there who have no idea that they fit within this collective group, which has an extraordinary amount of unshared benefits.

Contrary to popular belief, neurodiversity is a fluid bracket that is constantly changing. It includes many different types of learning disabilities and mental health conditions. That being said, neurodiversity is NOT a mental illness within itself. It is simply a term that is used for someone who thinks and processes informa-



Contrary to popular belief, neurodiversity is a fluid bracket that is constantly changing. Source: Thirdman
Image: Pixabay (via Pexels)

tion in an alternative way.

Neurodiversity includes more than just ADHD and Autism and doesn't just affect men. Learning difficulties that would classify as neurodiverse include; Autism including Asperger's Syndrome, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, and Dyscalculia. Those who have Tourette Syndrome would also be classed as neurodivergent. However, several mental health

conditions such as Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, and Obsessive-compulsive Disorder are all neurodiverse conditions due to the way they affect the brain's functioning.

However, the biggest myth to debunk is that just because some people think differently, it doesn't mean it's a bad thing. In fact, the term “neurodivergent” was created so it could identify and acknowledge that

not everyone thinks in the same way, and to therefore prevent mistreatment or discrimination against those who do. Many workforces now adopt certain policies and recognise their neurodivergence in order to make suitable changes in the workplace to help everyone reach their full potential, despite how they may think.

There are many positives to being neurodivergent. Those who have

dyslexia may struggle with reading, yet they may be able to absorb considerable amounts of information and have a fantastic memory compared to someone who is not dyslexic. Neurodivergent individuals also have a heightened awareness of their ability. They can more easily identify their strengths and weaknesses and work on the weaknesses and use their strengths to their advantage. The last of many examples of positives in neurodiversity is the ability to empathise. Particularly individuals that have OCD and other mental health conditions have an incredible ability to empathise with others and read their body language, being able to understand how one feels with minimal or no verbal communication.

On a final note, the whole concept of neurodiversity encourages everyone, neurodivergent or not, to start conversations about diversity in brain patterns. Simply by recognising that your neighbour may interpret something differently from you can go a long way in terms of understanding someone. Recognising neurodiversity allows everyone to question how and why we do things, and therefore acknowledge how we can be better and provide equal opportunities for everyone, neurodivergent and neurotypical.

Sharing with Shaniece Advice Column



Source: Public Domain Pictures

Next Steps: Life after Graduating

Disclaimer – this advice is written by a student. This is not professional advice*

Shaniece O'Keeffe
Advice Editor

The most talked about transition is going from school to starting university. It was one of the biggest changes I anticipated, but as my fourth year of studying for my undergraduate and postgraduate degree comes to the end, I think the scariest transition is leaving. I had 4 years of independence and now going back to my family home for a few months feels like I'm regressing. I struggled, thinking "Wait, I'm not coming back here after summer" not because I was going to miss the place, it just became part of routine. 'Leave for the summer and come back at the start of the new academic year'. My life is not revolving around the academic year and now I almost don't have the comfort of university, it's me and the 'real' world. Over the past few months of my journey, I've been thinking positively about the whole situation as a positive transition and an exciting fresh start to my life. I know I am not the only one going through this strange feeling of excitement but also with the added scary feeling of transition being constantly on my mind. With people always asking "so what's the plan for after university?" "how's the graduate job search going?" or "something will work out" it becomes a pressure

to have a solid plan. It took changing my whole outlook on life after university to realise I'm doing just fine and so are you. The rest of this article will give you advice on how to ignore the nosey questions, gain confidence and provide techniques to set yourself up for the coming transition.

Try to stop comparing yourself to the people surrounding you. You're not any less ready to transition into a job than the next person. Just because some people around you are more ahead of the job search than you are, or maybe even have a job already lined up, that doesn't mean that they are any better or more ready than you. Career paths are different, company recruiting styles are different and remember that's okay! For the current career path I am looking (I say current because I know my mind may change in a few months) there aren't a whole lot of graduate jobs. This means finding a graduate job or any job after university for me will be a little different. A tip would be to tailor your job search to your career path. The career I am looking to go into would be most beneficial to build my contacts up within the profession. Making yourself stand out and be memorable is key. Attending networking events, talks by people within the profession and finding relevant work experience can be great ways to get your foot in the door. Build your personal brand. It's not too late to start making yourself a desirable candidate for any job. Interact on platforms like LinkedIn, and why not set up your own personal website? Something that's full of jobs you're looking for. This is a perfect way to showcase a range of work that could potentially be

seen by future employers.

While you are still studying at university it is the perfect opportunity to use all the amazing free resources that are provided. If you are at the first stage of figuring out your next steps, maybe speak with a careers advisor or attend a careers fair. Immersing yourself in the possibilities and opportunities you have after completing your degree will allow you to see more easily, your next steps beyond where you see your next steps beyond university. Keep a look out of the Cardiff website and Cardiff university socials as well as the SU as they are always advertising talks and opportunities. I think hearing people in your desired industry talk about their career, how they got there and the advice they have about entering into this profession can either inspire or make you realise maybe this isn't for you. Either response is positive.

During the time of thinking about your next steps it's important to take care of your mental health. In such a time of worry and uncertainty with the cost of living crisis it is even more important to get a job straight out of university. One that pays well and you find yourself most able to grow in is a whole lot of pressure. This can have severe impacts on people's mental health. If there are periods after university where you feel like you are almost floating through or not doing much, get a solid routine down. For me routine is so important in keeping my mental health in order. We are at constant speed while studying, working part-time and partaking in extracurricular alongside our studies as well as socialising; there's barely a

moment of rest. When your life drastically changes it can bring up a lot of negative feelings, feelings of not doing enough or feeling like you are currently failing at life. This is something that we need to change. Award yourself that break after the climax of completing education. Read more, see friends, travel, pick up your hobbies again; do all the things that you weren't able to do. Start appreciating calmer moments in life because you deserve it. If the thought of moving into a different stage of your life causes anxiety, contact the health and wellbeing services, speak to professionals about what is scaring you. The change can be so daunting and it's best to talk about these worries with professionals if things get too scary.

The most important thing to remember is that we are all different, we all see change differently and can all react completely differently. That's just being human. If you ever think that you aren't as successful as you could be or didn't envision such a struggle coming out of university, it's important to look at what you've achieved. Your friends will all be at different places in their lives. Some deciding to travel, some landing amazing graduate jobs and some who haven't found something they want to commit to or are struggling with the search. The best thing is not to compare yourself. Appreciate the last four months of university. Make the most out of the resources you have, create memories with the people around you and look forward to the start of your post-uni life.

If You Don't Snooze You Will Lose

Lucy Matthews
Advice Editor

Ironically, I am writing this mid yawn and am counting down the hours until my head will greet my pillow in a long-awaited exchange. Falsely promising that I would go to bed earlier last night like the average human, capable of sleeping, I now sit here nursing a tired mind, dealing with the consequences of my own actions. With doom-scrolling temptations handed to us on a plate by social platforms, we are now immersed in the sleep-deprived world of short videos and random clips, watching them until the coming day is heralded in through the rising sun and the morning call of birds outside.

Participating in the addictive world of social media before bed will leave our sleep broken and restless; it is an endless, exhaustive cycle that is only opted out of when we choose to leave the screen be. As mothers and fathers announce 'it's time for bed', our younger selves would harrumph and heckle, perceiving this order like that of a conscription of war. Leaving designated bed calls behind as we grow older, up all night we scroll, exchanging a good-night's sleep for a good night's social surf.

It's 2018 and Apple has just showcased a new feature available on the iPhone known as 'dark mode' in an effort to combat the blue hue of the phone screen that is keeping our brains alert and awake. Despite its tactical approach to protecting the sleeping routines of all iPhone owners out there, Apple cannot control the overall cognitive and psychological stimulation that the owner is exposed to when simply on their phone. When preparing for a good night's sleep don't reach for night mode and hope for the best, try lowering the amount of exposure and quantity you have with simple acts of scrolling, texting and posting. Essentially these are all given actions that come with owning a phone and if you were already feeling the effects of tiredness before sleep then going on your phone will not inhibit this in any way.

As we spend one third of our lives sleeping it comes as no surprise that our bodies are putting this time to good use in terms of repair and regrowth during the slumbersome states. Getting to work removing the waste products from our brain cells and preserving our memory by processing what we learned during the day means that poor sleep hygiene feels the effects of these processes, trading in crucial memory function and leaving our brains lacking efficient cell growth. This means that not only are we interrupting the night to day cycle of our brain ability but we are putting ourselves more at risk of cognitive complications in the future. The 4-7-8 breathing method alongside putting any digital threats down 30 minutes before bed are just a few of the methods you can try out improve your sleep hygiene. Resting your mind before your body is crucial and just remember- if you don't snooze, your brain cells and memory function will lose.

“During the time of thinking about your next steps it's important to take care of your mental health.”

REVIEW



Alice Moore



Billy Edwards



Haris Hussnain

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 Billy Edwards
Review Editor

Nestled in the corner of Cardiff's National Museum is a brand-new exhibit that celebrates a century of BBC broadcasting in Wales. It's completely free and well worth a visit. It explores every aspect since its very beginning, particularly as radio and then television.

The exhibit begins with an emphasis on a gradual process to Wales-centric transmissions. The British Broadcasting Company opened its

Don't Hug Me I'm Scared: Reboot

Alice Moore discusses "one of the most infamous web series in history"

 Alice Moore
Head of Review

Don't Hug Me I'm Scared (DHMIS) is one of the most infamous web series in the history of YouTube. Since its pilot episode in 2011, Gen Z has collectively been stunned, and confused, by the nature of its story, forever questioning why "green is not a creative colour". The main premise of DHMIS surrounds three characters (known as 'Red Guy', 'Yellow Guy' and 'Duck') learning about different aspects of life in a children's television show. Each episode begins with the three protagonists experiencing a problem, and an anthropomorphized object (such as a clock, a notepad or a can of beans) teaching them how to tackle it through song. However, it is very quickly revealed that this show has been twisted into a dark, controlling nightmare, with lessons that teach the opposite of what is right, leading to graphic and heinous consequences.

After the success of the six-episode YouTube series, creators Joseph Pelling and Becky Sloan brought DHMIS to Channel 4, wid-

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Each episode begins with the three protagonists experiencing a problem”

ening their audience and commercialising the series with a bigger budget. Despite this shift in platforming, the quality of the content is not compromised. In fact, it is arguably better than the original series. Now spanning to a total run time of twenty minutes per episode, the audience are treated to in-depth character development and more coherent plotlines that pad out the previously ambiguous DHMIS universe.

In episode 1, 'Jobs' is a perfect pilot for the series. It follows the three protagonists finding themselves bored of doing nothing all day, and subsequently being greeted by a singing briefcase encouraging them to find a suitable career, and transporting them to a factory that creates 'bits and parts'. However, in typical DHMIS fashion, everything is not as it seems. Yellow Guy is indoctrinated into the mindless, repetitive work of meaningless labour, and Duck has anxieties about unemployment that remain ignored by management, which Red Guy is chosen to lead due to his lack of interest in doing 'anything'. After a horrific climax involving Yellow Guy being injured by machinery, the triplet are transported back to their home. Rightly confused, Duck asks "what was it all for?", to which the briefcase hands him a single coin, seemingly implying that money heals all wounds, no matter how

bad. This episode was an obvious satire on working life, highlighting the flaws of devoting your life to labour for the sake of being able to afford to live. In light of the Cost Of Living crisis in the UK, Pelling and Sloan's message is very relevant.

Episodes 2 to 5 follow a similar pattern, highlighting themes of death, family, friendship and transport in the same satirical manner. However, episode 6 introduces an entirely new element to the story. After a typical lesson on electricity, Yellow Guy reveals that he is powered by batteries, but they are entirely corroded (explaining his dopey, infantile demeanour). The other two friends decide to swap his batteries for the one inside their teacher, a power box called Electracry. In doing so, Yellow Guy becomes super smart, but also self-aware of the universe he is in. He discovers a flight of stairs leading to the top of their house, where we find the only human character in this series: an older woman who introduces herself as Lesley. In Lesley's attic room, she has a dollhouse which perfectly matches the triplet's house, and we realise that she has been puppeteering the whole show as an escape from losing her son David, who Yellow Guy represents. This changes the entire perspective on the show so far, explaining why the three friends are unable to leave their home or make their

“

The audience are treated to in-depth character development and more coherent plotlines’

own choices. They are figments of Lesley's imagination, trapped in her mental prison as a way to deal with her grief. However, as Yellow Guy turns to leave the attic, the camera pans to another flight of stairs that he missed – could this be a way to escape from this time loop and free Lesley from her pain?

In all, the Don't Hug Me I'm Scared reboot has been a great success. Pelling and Sloan have taken a famously authentic version of their previous web series and have made it even better – something that appears very hard to do in modern days. It is unsure whether there will be a second series to join up any dots, but I also see the value in letting the viewer decide the triplet's fate and interpreting the show for themselves.

“

Pelling and Sloan have taken a famously authentic version of their previous web series and have made it even better”

The BBC 100 Exhibition

Billy Edwards visits the exhibition at Cardiff's National Museum

Cardiff station in 1923, visualised through many of the very first radios still in very good shape – of course, television would follow a few decades later. As a separate Welsh Region comes into effect approaching the Second World War, I found it interesting how listeners would hear everything from household tips, children's stories to the all-important headlines in the Welsh language. The introduction of television in Wales too is fascinating – there's lots of bulky, original TVs emitting black-and-white Welsh landscapes. The exhibit pays tribute to Welsh broad-

casters like Brian Hoey and later, comedians Ryan Davies and Ronnie Williams. A brilliantly garish 1970s living room is recreated with lots of little details to explore - It looks much like Del Boy's flat from Only Fools and Horses, and suitably you can hanker down on the sofa and get a taste of the Christmas programming.

There is also a very sweet section on children's programming, including a treasure trove cabinet of vintage merchandise, including a slightly worn Basil Brush puppet, the Wombles, Paddington, and more contemporary artefacts from Blue Peter. I was very moved by the original Bagpuss puppet, still shining pristine in his cuteness. As you turn into the hall it's hard to miss a TARDIS – the Eleventh Doctor Matt Smith's version in particular, Who fanatics – and lurking behind, a brilliantly-bronzed Dalek and Jodie Whittaker's costume, for perhaps the most significant programme to be produced by BBC Wales in recent years is Doctor Who. The exhibit illustrates how very familiar locations in Cardiff and beyond have been utilised in filming, with the series continuing to go strength to strength with new Doctor Ncuti Gatwa shooting in Cardiff Bay's "Bad Wolf Studios", a huge aircraft carrier-like building! I found screens of Welsh pioneers of



Credit: Billy Edwards

computer-generated effects on TV discussing their work - creating aliens, spaceships and alien worlds for example - very revealing. There's also great costumes to be examined from Sherlock, His Dark Materials and Keeping Faith. You can have great fun recording your own news bulletin from a BBC Wales news desk if you fancy yourself a presenter.

If that doesn't sound like a lot to look and have a go at, the museum

is also running special family events. It just so happened that on the day of my visit they had many opportunities: including getting a fake wound by a leading make-up artist on Casualty, dressing up as a favourite Doctor Who, and listening to violinist students from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama play a variety of TV themes amidst a gallery of paintings. It's a fabulous experience for all.



The New Age of Empire- Kehinde Andrews

“I would recomend this book to everyone and anyone”

Haris Hussnain
Review Editor

I’ve been reading “The New Age of Empire: How Racism and Colonialism Still Rule the World ” by Kehinde Andrews. It is a thought-provoking and insightful analysis of the continued influence of colonialism and racism in contemporary society. I feel Andrews’s book is very relevant to today more

“ Overall, “The New Age of Empire” is an important and timely book”

than ever. Andrews argues that despite the formal end of colonialism, its legacy still dominates the world’s economic, political, and cultural systems. He asserts that racism is not a byproduct of colonialism but is, in fact, a key component of the colonial project. The author argues that the global North has constructed a narrative of progress, and development that justifies their continued exploitation of the global South. One of the book’s strengths is the author’s ability to connect historical events and trends to present-day issues. Andrews illustrates how current power dynamics, such as the United States military presence in

the Middle East and the global trade system, are rooted in colonial practices of domination and control. The book is also powerful in its analysis of the relationship between racism and capitalism. Andrews argues that the exploitation of people of colour is essential to the functioning of global capitalism. He shows how multinational corporations exploit cheap labour and natural resources in the global South, leading to economic devastation and environmental degradation. Overall, “The New Age of Empire” is an important and timely book that comprehensively critiques the ongoing impact of colonialism and racism on the world today. Andrews

“ One of the book’s strengths is the author’s ability to connect historical events and trends to present-day issues”

offers a compelling argument for the need for a new approach to international relations that prioritises the dignity and agency of all people, regardless of their identity. I would recommend this book to everyone and anyone, and I would suggest that readers use it to educate themselves on how colonialism affects society today.

Netflix’s Full Swing- “Captures the beauty and intensity of

Eva Castanedo
Contibutor

Full Swing is an exciting new series that brings the world of competitive golf to life. You can find it on Netflix, and the show follows a group of up-and-coming golfers as they strive to make it to the top of the professional ranks. With stunning cinematography, first-class golfers, and thrilling tournament action, “Full Swing” is a must-watch for fans of both sports and documentary filmmaking.

There are injuries, setbacks, and unexpected twists of fate that test their resolve and force them to dig deep to find the strength to keep going. But there are also moments of triumph and joy as they experience the thrill of victory and the satisfaction of seeing their hard work pay off.

Made by the producers of “Formula 1: Drive to Survive” and its Tennis version “Break

“ There are injuries, setbacks, and unexpected twists of fate”



Can ‘Full Swing’ do for golf what ‘Drive to Survive’ did for F1? Credit: Lotus Head (via Wikimedia Commons)

Point”, it follows the lives of high-profile players across a season of high-stakes competition during the PGA Tour. The growing popularity experienced in Formula One over the last few years is inextricably tied to Drive to Survive, but can “Full Swing” do for Golf what “Drive to Survive” Did for F1? As English Pro Ian Poulter jests about in the trailer, the producers picked one hell of a year to start following the PGA Tour. “Full Swing” documents the civil war that the world of golf is living between the PGA Tour and LIV Golf,

though it has to be said that even though the LIV matter was used to spark more interest around the launching of the series, the eight episodes do not provide with much content about the dispute, and it overlooks the greater meaning and politics behind the controversy. But going back to the series, one of the most impressive aspects of “Full Swing” is the way it captures the beauty and intensity of golf as a sport. From the lush green fairways to the precision of each shot, the series immerses viewers in the world of golf and shows us what makes it

such a compelling game. The series has the ability to capture the excitement and drama of golf like never before. It is currently the second most popular show on Netflix, and golf enthusiasts all around the world are hoping for the docuseries to bring more fans into the sport, which is commonly considered on the duller side of the spectrum of sports-watching due to the long hours that are required for its play. But beyond the sport itself, “Full Swing” is also a powerful exploration of what it means to pursue a dream. Each of the golfers in the series has their own unique story and struggle, but they all share a common goal: to be the best at what they do. Through their journeys, we see the sacrifices they make, the challenges they face, and the resilience they need to succeed. Whether you’re a die-hard golf fan or just looking for a great new series to binge-watch, “Full Swing” is definitely worth checking out.

“ “Full Swing” is also a powerful exploration of what it means to pursue a dream”

Breaking Bad- a show that lives on

Thomas Mahoney
Contirbutor

A high school chemistry teacher (Walter White) joins forces with a former student (Jesse Pinkman) to boost his income via the methamphetamine industry in light of a cancer diagnosis. Perhaps it was through a family member, a social media post, or even that outspoken classmate back at school who had always watched TV shows years in advance of others; we’ve all somehow heard of the American hit TV series Breaking Bad. It’s also likely that if a friend recommended it, they’d be melodramatically adamant that you joined them on carriage A of the hype train. I’m a very picky customer when it comes to TV series (particularly American ones) and was convinced Breaking Bad would be nothing but a sensationalist flurry of police chases, or

even a glorification of the US drug trade. I was unequivocally wrong, and have yet to start the final season myself. There are so many areas in which this show excels, even aside from the obvious ones like directing and plot-writing. The Albuquerque setting is optimal for such a plotline: barren, isolated, and seemingly dreary. But through the ingeniously angled camera eye, the audience soon observe the initially dull city the way main characters White (Bryan Cranston) and Pinkman (Aaron Paul) do – as a whirlwind of opportunities, threats, police encounters, and danger. Music is used sparingly: Intense, foreboding music is used to intensify key plot developments, whilst light-hearted tunes eerily contrast some of the bleakest portrayals of US society you’ve ever seen. The plot develops incrementally, and as it does, the audience is sporadically reminded

of crucial cut scenes from previous episodes which at the time seemed puzzlingly irrelevant. Moreover, the audience is often left with time to catch their breath after the most intense episodes, before everything explodes back to life a few more later. The directors extract cinematic value from what appear to be the most insignificant features of Albuquerque’s landscape, leaving viewers enthralled by linkages between characters, locations, and objects. As someone who has never visited the USA, this really added to my enjoyment of the show. Contrast is a key theme of Breaking Bad. The iconic duo of austere Walt and hedonistic Jesse provide a specific unpredictability, supplemented by hilarious yet plot altering characters like Hank Schrader and Saul Goodman. Walt’s gut-wrenching business ventures traipse dangerously close to his cosy family life, whilst Jesse constantly tries to juggle his

obnoxious criminal persona with his tender, emotional side. The events of Breaking Bad invite the viewer to empathise with the impossible moral dilemmas characters often face, and after every episode the question ‘what on earth would I do in that situation?’ provides an intriguing thought experiment. I would therefore strongly recommend Breaking Bad to any student looking for a new show, but be warned: there are 62 episodes, each nearly an hour long, so try not to let it destroy your degree!n’ roll show for the ages.

“ There are so many areas in which this show excels”

Escape Rooms Cardiff

Gracie Richmond
Contributor

If the idea of a truly immersive experience involving clues, puzzles and codes excites you, then I would definitely recommend Cardiff Escape Rooms. I recently took a trip to what they call ‘The Ultimate Challenge’ for my first attempt at an escape room and was not disappointed. They have six different rooms to choose from and the themes massively differ between each one. From helping Owain Glyndwr storm Cardiff Castle, to finding yourself in the midst of a zombie apocalypse, there really is something for everyone. You are given an hour to complete the room with your guide watching and listening to your movements to ensure you are on the right path to escape. ‘Moriarty’s Revenge’ is the room that we tried our hand at. The setting was Sherlock’s iconic office and our mission was to help Moriarty get his revenge by swapping a file containing a grand plan to end Sherlock. The room itself felt realistic, with Sherlock’s desk, fireplace, and iconic hat making us fully engrossed in the challenge. Even the windows had a sepia effect making the streets of Cardiff appear Victorian, which I thought was a really nice touch. We were moving our way through the clues with a few helpful hints on a screen when we were off track. However, unfortunately, we did not complete the file swap and escape the room. We still felt proud of our effort and were determined to try again... It only took 24 hours for us to book the next room and have another go. We felt more confident and clued up in how escape rooms operate and were excited for the next challenge: ‘Oculus’. For lovers of true crime documentaries or psychological horror films, this room is made for you. We were trapped in the notorious serial killer, Oculus’ flat who is known for his obsession with gauging the eyes of his victims. The challenge was to find a suspected captive and escape the room before he returns and finishes the job. The creepiness of the room made this escape feel scarily real. We were greeted by the sound of a TV playing unsettling static sounds and warped classical music which instantly put us on edge in the best way. There were many eye-related objects around the room, from battered glasses cases to gouged eyes, making the killer’s niche clear. Luckily our eyes were intact, and we escaped with a minute to spare! It felt gratifying after our first failure and being told that this was their most complex room. As I have enthusiastically expressed, I thoroughly recommend trying an escape room. Whether it be for a birthday, a housemate activity, or a break from university work, give it a go. It is the perfect opportunity to fully immerse yourself and focus on completing the challenge set out where working out the clues and codes is extremely satisfying. I am excited to try my next one!

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SIMBEC-ORION

GB claim 3 medals at European Indoor Championship

Jasmine Jones
Head of Sport

Team GB have won three medals in Istanbul during the European indoor world championship with Neil Gourley claiming the men's silver in the 1500m and teammates Daryll Neita and Melissa Courtney-Bryant both winning bronze.

Gourley entered the championship in his best form in years, confident of continuing his winning streak after setting a British record in Birmingham the week prior. Running an impressive race in Istanbul, Gourley chased the pace set by rival Ingebrigtsen right until the last sprint, but the Norwegian athlete ultimately came out victorious, leaving Gourley to settle with silver.

"It was important to win a medal, I hadn't done that yet - winning a major medal - so it was important to get that started", Gourley stated

“ Neil Gourley claimed men's silver in the 1500m and teammates Daryll Neita and Melissa Courtney-Bryant both secured bronze.

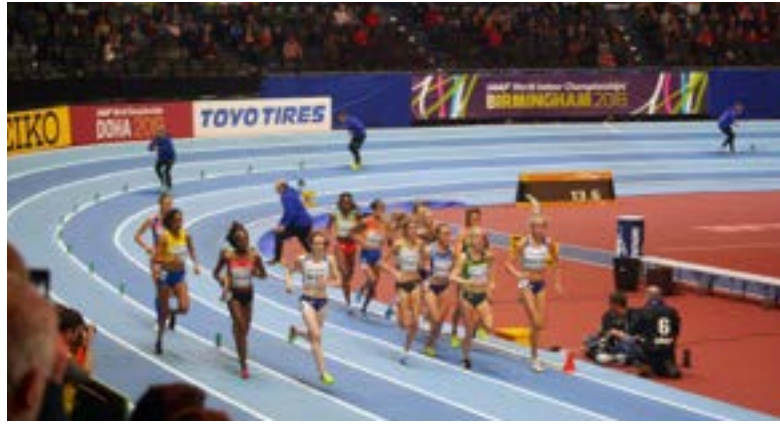
as he spoke to BBC Sport about his historic medal victory.

"I believed I could do it, I put myself in the right places and I just got beaten by somebody who was better. I have to take that on the chin," 28-year-old Gourley told BBC Sport.

Elsewhere in the championships, Daryll Neita ran a 7.12 second 60m final race, edging her into the bronze medal position. The former British champion was ranked second fastest this season heading into the event behind world champion Mujinga Kambundji who ended up claiming gold emphatically, equaling the all time championship record of 7.00 seconds. Poland's Ewa Swoboda crossed the finish line second in 7.09, leaving Neita to settle for Bronze.

Neita claims that it was a slow reaction time from the start that cost her winning the championship considering she performed better in the semi-final race the day before with a time of 7.07. Expressing her disappointment, Neita said that "It feels amazing to bring a medal home. It's been a fun indoor season and I've really enjoyed it but I'm not particularly happy with this result".

Melissa Courtney-Bryant on the



Source: the justified sinner (via Flickr)

other hand defied all odds to claim bronze in the 3000m final, emotionally saying it was her "sweetest win" to date. The Welsh athlete had her Olympic dreams abruptly ended in 2021 after suffering a serious foot injury that has kept her out of competitions for almost a year.

Finishing behind German athletes Klein, who ran a remarkable personal best of 8 minutes and 35.87 seconds to win gold, and Klosterhalfen who claimed silver, Courtney-Bryant can be proud of her run, finishing well clear of the rest of the field to claim third with a time of 8

minutes and 41.19 seconds.

"After everything with my injury, just to be back here took a lot of belief and support from my coach, my family and my husband. This feels so much sweeter than Glasgow, it's really emotional in a good way," said the British athlete.

“ I believed I could do it, I put myself in the right places and I just got beaten by somebody who was better”

Domestic game set for major shake-up with new regulator

Ryan Jewell investigates the future of Football after new regulator plans are announced

Ryan Jewell
Sport Editor

Football is set for a major shake up with the announcement of a new independent football regulator.

The role, announced on the 23rd of February by the U.K government, is set to have major ramifications for the future of the game in England.

Originating from the fall-out of the failed Super League launch in 2021, the role is intended to revamp the way the game is governed at the very top level.

"The English game remains one of the UK's greatest cultural exports, with clubs and leagues around the world modelling themselves on its success", said a government spokesperson.

"That is why the government is today taking the necessary and targeted steps to ensure that continues for generations".

Intended as an independent body, the regulators powers will include the ability to block English clubs from joining closed-shop competitions such as the previously mentioned European Super League.

The regulator can also introduce a more stringent owners and directors test in order to help prevent the financial mismanagements of clubs such as Bury FC, who were expelled from the Football League in 2019 over unpaid debts.

The current owners test has been widely criticised for failing to prevent similar scenario's like Bury, whilst also failing to prevent foreign-backed companies from purchasing football clubs as a form of sportswashing.

Several clubs in the Premier League, such as Manchester City



Source: Reubentg (via Wikipedia)

and Newcastle United, are currently owned by groups backed by the Saudi Arabian government. Whilst talks are currently ongoing between the current owners of Manchester United and the Qatar Islamic Bank.

However, there are doubts that the new test will be able to curb the influence of foreign governments in the game, as there are currently no checks included in the test regarding to a potential owner's human rights records.

“ The English game remains one of the UK's greatest cultural exports, with clubs and leagues around the world modelling themselves on its success”, said a government spokesperson.

"The state side of things is obviously a matter for the foreign office, we're not talking about foreign policy here" said the sports minister Stuart Andrew.

"As far as we're concerned, the really important thing is that those individuals are [tested] in the way that other individuals will be by other regulators, in the financial world for example".

A new licensing system will also be introduced which will see clubs from across the top five divisions in England being required to prove that they have a sustainable financial model, before they are allowed to compete in their respected leagues.

The proposed regulator plans are also aimed at improving the power of fan's voices.

The introduction of an independent football regulator was one

“ A new licensing system will also be introduced which will see clubs from across the top five divisions in England being required to prove that they have a sustainable financial

of the recommendations included in the fan-led review launched by the MP Tracey Crouch in the aftermath of the failed Super League launch.

Back in 2021, six English clubs attempted to join six other teams from across Europe as part of a new closed-off league system that was intended to replace the UEFA Champions League as the new main continental competition. However the move saw widespread fan protests outside of grounds across the country.

As part of the new plans, owners will now be required to consult fan groups before changing any cultural aspects of the club such as their name, badge or traditional kit colours.

"we warmly welcome the historic commitment from the Government to introduce an independent regulator of English football", said Kevin Miles Chief Executive of the Football Supporters Association.

The regulator will also have the power impose financial settlements with the aim of redistributing wealth across the footballing pyramid.

Discussions are currently ongoing between the Premier League and the EFL, with the latter wanting a 25% share of the current broadcasting revenue generated by the Premier League. But if these negotiations were to collapse, then the regulator would have the power to force a deal through.

SPORT



Jasmine Jones



Ryan Harris-Jewell



Eloise Martin



Rohan Kakar

ELSEWHERE IN SPORT

-Girls granted equal access to sport as Lionesses campaign pays off

Schools in England must deliver at least two hours of PE each week and girls and boys should be able to play the same sports

- Bahrain GP: Max Verstappen dominates F1 2023 opener

Max Verstappen wins by 12 seconds from Sergio Perez, as Red Bull left their competition behind

Lionesses beat Belgium to lift Arnold Clark Cup

Bryana Francis
Contributor

The Lionesses took home their second Arnold Clark Cup after a thumping victory over Belgium at Ashton Gate, setting them in good stead for this summer's World Cup.

Having beaten Italy 2-1 and South Korea 4-0 earlier in the competition, braces for Leah Williamson and Chloe Kelly and a Belgium own goal helped the Lionesses secure a heroic 6-1 victory at Ashton Gate in front of 26,169 fans.

Sarina Wiegman's team started the game strong, creating multiple chances and ending the first half with a 2-goal lead. Kelly scored after a

“ Leah Williamson and Chloe Kelly and a Belgium own goal helped the Lionesses secure a heroic 6-1 victory

great run by Lauren James and a Williamson header doubled the damage.

The second half saw a keeper mishap give England a 3rd of the game and Kelly a 3rd of the tournament, confirming the Manchester City forward as the winner of the Golden Boot (and she could've scored more). England got another in the 78th minute from a Belgium own goal caused by Stanway's dangerous pass into the box. 10 minutes later Lucy Bronze scored from a free kick to earn England a 5th. But the game was far from over at 90 minutes and a late Belgium long-range shot from substitute Dhont, which was their only shot on target in the game and arguably the best goal of the night, softened the blow for the Belgians. But the Lionesses weren't finished, and it was closely followed by a late Williamson goal which gave England the final say.

Chelsea's young Lauren James took home the Player of the Tournament award, the Belgium game was only her 8th appearance for the sen-

“ Chelsea's young Lauren James took home the Player of the Tournament award

ior side, promising a bright future for the Lionesses with her pace and attacking prowess down the right.

Whilst an England win was expected against the team ranked 16 places lower in the FIFA rankings, a 6-1 scoreline, 70% possession and 31 shots demonstrates the outstanding form they are in despite having experimented with personnel at this tournament. This result marked 29 games unbeaten by the Lionesses, their 3rd trophy in 12 months and 2 in 2 Arnold Clark Cup victories fuelling excitement for this year's Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand in July.

The doubling of fans since the Lionesses last played at Ashton Gate in 2015 only 7 and a bit years ago, shows the growth of the women's game in



Source: Liondarts (via Wikimedia Commons)

recent years and how much England's Euros 2022 victory has done for the game in this country.

The team will next meet up in the last international break before the tournament for a friendly against Australia next month fresh from an Arnold Clark Cup title defence and wins for the team at the 2022 Best

FIFA Awards. Wiegman, who has an unbeaten run with England, was named the Women's Coach of the Year for the 3rd time and Mary Earps won the Women's Goalkeeper of the Year following her performance at the Euro's which saw her concede only 2 goals.

Six Nations Roundup: Wales 10-20 England

Megha Roy
Contributor

England has secured a nervous 20-10 victory over Wales in the Six Nations encounter. The win marks England's second successive win following the home victory over Italy but made it three defeats out of three for Wales. The result is a wretched week for Wales, who threatened to strike in their row with the Welsh union. England full-back Freddie Steward was named player of the match as he dominated the aerial battle, with Wales continually kicking at him. The defeat means Wales will drop to 10th in the world rankings, and they have to travel to face Italy and France to avoid a first Six Nations whitewash in 20 years.

England started strong with an early penalty from Owen Farrell and a try for Anthony Watson, making his first start in two years.



Source: European Professional Club Rugby (via Wikimedia Commons)

Wales briefly gained the lead after an intercept try by Louis Rees-Zammit at the start of the second half. However, England regained the lead after Kyle Sinckler burrowed over, and Ollie Lawrence added another well-crafted try to make the game safe only 10 minutes from the end.

England dominated most of

the second half, but they missed several chances to extend their lead, including four missed kicks from captain Owen Farrell, who struggled in front of the posts. Despite their dominant performance, England will need to improve if they want to compete with the top teams in the championship.

Wales, on the other hand, had a chaotic last 10 days in the Welsh game that saw them suffer a third successive Six Nations defeat since Warren Gatland's return as head coach. The build-up to the game was marred by a player contract row that threatened to see the game called off. Despite fielding a side with nine changes, Wales were unable to overcome their troubled preparation and suffered their worst start in the tournament since 2007.

England full-back Freddie Steward was named player of the match as he dominated the aerial battle, with Wales continually kicking at him. Steward's performance helped England secure their first win at the Principality Stadium since 2017 and their biggest victory in Cardiff since 2003.

England's victory puts them in a good position in the

championship, with two big games against France and Ireland to come. Ireland currently leads the Six Nations after three bonus-point wins, but Scotland faces France in Paris on Sunday.

Overall, it was a scrappy encounter that showed how much both teams have to do to become competitive in the championship. England will need to improve their accuracy in front of the posts, while Wales will need to regroup and overcome their troubled preparation to avoid a first Six Nations whitewash in 20 years.

“ Wales will need to regroup to avoid a first Six Nations whitewash in 20 years.

Paul vs. Fury: Serious or Celebrity?

Tommy 'TNT' Fury breaks down in tears as he WINS by split decision, despite suffering a knockdown

Jess Margetson
Contributor

It's been a long two-year wait since this rivalry was first announced and with several cancellations and delays, fans were certainly rewarded for their patience.

The Paul-Fury fight has been derided by many but drew more interest than a title fight on the same bill. Both Fury and Paul have generated large online followings away from elite sport, establishing themselves as celebrities through reality TV and online influencing. Despite this, Paul-Fury appeared as the main event on a professional fight card in Saudi Arabia in what could reasonably be described as the most highly anticipated fight of 2023 so far. Describing Paul-Fury as one

of the most anticipated fights of 2023 also goes deeper than simply highlighting the popular appeal of the two names fighting. It is a damning indictment of the professional boxing landscape, where fans are often left frustrated by the lack of genuine rivalries and big fights put on. It is a problem that continues to plague the sport in the elite ranks, as the biggest fighters and best pairings fail to come to fruition for various reasons.

Neither fighter was as polished as other pro boxers however this fight displayed the potential both have to succeed in their careers. They showed true passion and character in the ring.

Fury had incredible pressure coming from a boxing background, representing his family name, and battling the social media backlash.

As dramatic and emotional as the fight was, the technique was a bit scruffy, illustrating their inexperience on the big stage.

TNT was floored by the former YouTube star in the eighth and final round but recovered to edge victory via split decision. Fury moved to 9-0 after the judges' scorecards read out: 75-74 Paul, 76-73 Fury and 76-73 Fury. These scores declared the Brit victorious by split decision.

Paul meanwhile was handed his first defeat since stepping inside the ring but has already publicly declared he will invoke the rematch clause, stating,

“ TNT was floored by the YouTube star in the eighth and final round but recovered to edge victory

“All respect to Tommy, I will come back, I think we deserve the rematch.”

Despite the pair certainly delivering a spectacle, many question if a rematch is needed.

An emotional TNT confirmed his interest in a rematch.

“This victory...it may as well be a world title. I'm here, I'm a real fighter.” “Would I like to do it again? 100%.”

Tyson Fury was among the supporters to have proclaimed their eagerness for a rematch.

“What a fight, great fight! I'd like to see it again; it was a brilliant fight. You never know what's going to happen, it was absolutely amazing.”

Despite these comments, many have criticized the spectacle, believing that YouTubers and celebrities have been making a

mockery of the sport. The huge interest in influencer boxing over the past few years is very real and represents a growing business in which promoters and fighters get involved.

One of the most surreal things about the fight in Saudi Arabia was not the sheer amount of interest from fans and celebrities (with the likes of Mike Tyson and Cristiano Ronaldo in attendance) but the fact that the Paul-Fury fight eclipsed a real-world title fight demonstrating the legitimization of their boxing careers.

The reality of the situation is that elite boxers need to do better at selling their business and serving as self-promoters, which includes building a larger fanbase online, in the same way that these influencers have.