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Gair Rhydd

Cardiff University's Student Paper | Established 1972

20 Tachwedd 2023

20 November 2023

Rhifyn 1194

Issue 1194

Finance is Here!
Turn to Page 20 to see the Brand New Section!

Time to Act:

Students and societies come together shedding light on the issue of sexual violence on campus

The Carbon Offset Scam

Joseph Hawa
Contributor

In an era where environmental responsibility takes centre stage, a pressing question arises: are businesses truly aligning their actions with their carbon neutrality and net-zero goals, or are some merely using 'greenwashing' tactics for profit and a polished public image? Companies find themselves under increasing pressure from both customers and investors to ensure that their operations, services, and products meet carbon-neutral standards. While many organisations genuinely excel in their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) efforts, it is unfortunately all too common for larger corporations to resort to a questionable practice — carbon offsetting.

If you've ever come across a company promoting a product as 'carbon neutral', chances are it achieved this status by purchasing carbon credits in a surprisingly unregulated financial market. For instance, if Company A manufactures lamps and emits one tonne of carbon dioxide during production, they can buy a one-tonne carbon credit to compensate for these emissions and legally label their lamps as 'carbon neutral'. But who sells these carbon credits, and why do companies invest substantial sums in them?

If a company can successfully have its carbon offsetting activities validated by Verra or Gold Standard, they can then sell specific carbon units (e.g. lamps) to businesses like Company A at a significant markup. Company A is often willing to pay this premium as it allows them to market their products as 'carbon neutral'. While this might appear promising in terms of reducing carbon emissions, the reality is often quite different.

To read the rest of Joseph's piece, head to page 20

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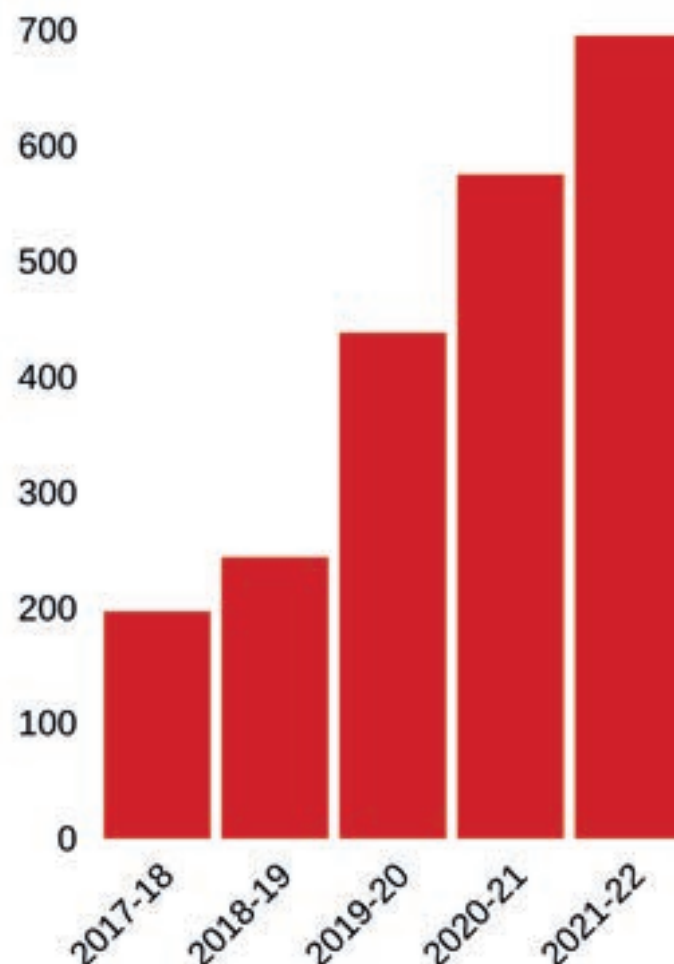
Ian Barbour via Flickr

Visualising the Data

In a special report, Gair Rhydd look at data obtained in a FOI request to the University by former Womens Officer, Emily Carr. We have also asked students and societies to write pieces about the data, the challenges facing action around sexual violence on campus and what we as students can do to help.

Below is a graph that shows the number of referrals made to the disclosure response team since its introduction in 2017.

To read the special report, turn to page 12



Mis Codi Ymwybyddiaeth Diabetes

Efa Ceiri
Pennaeth Taf-od

Mae mis Tachwedd yn fis codi ymwybyddiaeth diabetes ac fel un sydd yn byw â'r cyflwr ers bron i bum mlynedd bellach, dyma ychydig ar sut roedd yn rhaid i mi ddygymod gyda diabetes yn fy arddegau drwy alaru'r bywyd oedd gen i cyn y diagnosis.

Nos Wener arferol oedd hi i fod y noson honno ym mis Ionawr 2019, ac minnau'n 16 doeddwn i'n poeni am ddim ar y pryd, heblaw ambell arholiad ar y gorwel.

I ddarllen gweddill erthygl Efa am diabetes, trowch i dudalen 10

10 →

The Return of David Cameron

Cerys Upstone
Politics Editor

Rishi Sunak performed a dramatic reshuffle of his cabinet on the 13th of November, which has raised questions regarding the Tory Party's sense of direction ahead of the general election next year.

One of the most shocking changes: Suella Braverman lost her position as Home Secretary after defying No. 10 by writing an article which accused the Metropolitan Police of bias in the policing of protests.

To read Cerys' analysis of the reshuffle, turn to page 5

5 →

Women's Super League Controversy

Prashana Joshi
Contributor

Behold the cosmic wonder that NASA's James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) captured! Witness the breathtaking birth of a new star, HH 212, near the famous Orion constellation. At an estimated age of 50,000, this astronomical wonder remains obscured by a dense disk of gas and dust. A stunning, high-resolution image displays the vibrant pink-red jets shooting in opposite directions. It shows the energetic processes surrounding a Class 0 protostar to our Sun's early stages.

To read Prashana's article, turn to page 21

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Gair Rhydd 2023/24

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Daniel Raybould

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Honor Mitchell-Brock

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Annabelle Lee

Finance

Lucy Treloar

Coordinator

Elaine Morgan

Write to the Editor
editor@gairrhydd.comA note from the Editor
Nodyn gan y Golygydd

Being the Change

Bod y Newid



Me last year with some of the leading students leading the charge against sexual violence on campus. Source: Emily Carr

Movements are important, so understanding and engaging them is vital, especially as students.**Mae symudiadau yn bwysig, felly mae deall ac ymgysylltu â nhw yn hanfodol, yn enwedig fel myfyrwyr.**Edward Sutton
Editor-in-Chief

We're currently living through a very tumultuous time in modern history, wars raging around the world, governments in chaos with elections looming and the ever-present threat of climate change. With all these events however, it's important not to forget the human element in all of these situations. The civilians caught in conflict, the people whose rights are at risk and the communities on the frontier of extreme weather events. It can be hard to see where we can help in all of this, so where can we be the change?

There are the more obvious ways to help like financially and with our time – but let's be honest, as students, we don't have much money and our time is usually spread across a myriad of things. I have the upmost respect for you if you can do these things but for the rest of us it doesn't mean we have no way to contribute to causes. Some people might think that "Instagram Activism" has had its time, but we

all have a platform and from there we can highlight and inform our friends and family.

You may have noticed that this is a special edition of the paper. We are highlighting the recent revelations about sexual violence here on campus. Emily Carr, the former women's officer, compiled Freedom of Information requests from schools and the Uni itself and shone a light on systematic failures to tackling the issue. In a recent BBC article and interview with BBC Wales, Emily went into more details about the findings saying there was a "dismissal of rape culture that continues to fester throughout the university". I was honoured to be a part of a continuation of this movement by giving them a platform here in the student newspaper.

Gair Rhydd is the voice of the student population, and we have a duty to highlight the issues affecting students on campus right now. Sexual violence must be stamped out on campus to make the student experience the best it can be for everyone.

Edward Sutton
Prif Olygydd

Ar hyn o bryd rydym yn byw trwy gyfnod cythryblus iawn yn hanes modern, rhyfeloedd yn cynddeiriog o amgylch y byd, llywodraethau mewn anhrefn gydag etholiadau ar y gorwel a bygythiad parhaus newid hinsawdd. Fodd bynnag, gyda'r holl ddigwyddiadau hyn, mae'n bwysig peidio ag anghofio'r elfen ddynol ym mhob un o'r sefyllfaoedd hyn. Y sifiliaid sy'n cael eu dal mewn gwrthdaro, y bobl y mae eu hawliau mewn perygl a'r cymunedau sydd ar ffin digwyddiadau tywydd eithafol. Gall fod yn anodd gweld lle gallwn ni helpu yn hyn i gyd, felly ble gallwn ni fod yn newid?

Mae yna ffyrdd mwy amlwg o helpu fel yn derfynol a gyda'n hamser – ond gadewch i ni fod yn onest, fel myfyrwyr, nid oes gennym ni lawer o arian ac mae ein hamser fel arfer yn cael ei wasgaru ar draws myrdd o bethau. Mae gen i'r parch mwyafrag tuag atoch chi os gallwch chi wneud y pethau hyn ond i'r gweddill ohonom nid yw'n golgygu nad oes gennym unrhyw ffordd i gyfrannu at achosion. Efallai y bydd rhai pobl yn med-

dwl bod "Instagram Activism" wedi cael ei amser, ond mae gennym ni i gyd blatfform ac oddi yno gallwn amlygu a hysbysu ein ffrindiau a'n teulu.

Efallai eich bod wedi sylwi mai rhifyn arbennig o'r papur yw hwn. Rydym yn tynnu sylw at y datgeliadau diweddar am drais rhywiol yma ar y campws. Lluniodd Emily Carr, y cyn swyddog menywod, geisiadau Rhyddid Gwybodaeth gan ysgolion a'r Brifysgol ei hun a thalodd golau ar fethiannau systematig i fynd i'r afael â'r mater. Mewn erthygl ddiweddar gan y BBC a chyftweliad gyda BBC Cymru, fe aeth Emily i fwy o fanlylion am y canfyddiadau gan ddweud bod yna "ddiswyddo diwylliant treisio sy'n parhau i gronni ledled y brifysgol". Cefais y fraint o fod yn rhan o barhad y mudiad hwn drwy roi llwyfan iddynt yma ym mhapur newydd y myfyrwyr.

Gair Rhydd yw llais y boblogaeth myfyrwyr, ac mae gennym ddyletswydd i dynnu sylw at y materion sy'n effeithio ar fyfyrwyr ar y campws ar hyn o bryd. Rhaid cael gwared ar drais rhywiol ar y campws i wneud y profiad myfyriwr y gorau y gall fod i bawb.

SPOTLIGHT



Belle Lee



Nancy Cook

Interview with John Steele – Head of Student Development

Belle has the pleasure of talking to John Steele about his career before his retirement

Belle Lee

Head of Spotlight

I sat down with John Steele, the Head of Training and Development at Cardiff University, to ask him some questions before he retires later this year. He has been working at Cardiff University since 2003.

Can you briefly explain your role at Cardiff University?

Some of the main duties are delivering soft skills, such as presentation and leadership skills. We help students with certification and make them equipped to face the employer. Some of my responsibilities include curriculum management, quality assurance and managing the budget.

What has changed the most during your time at Cardiff University?

COVID unequivocally had an effect on students. They have come back with a different mindset and it might take them a few years to get reorientated to what university is about. However, over the last fifteen years, the biggest change was a shift to technology. Students seem to be using devices more commonly today than when I



John Steele worked at Cardiff University since 2003 and will retire in 2023

Source: Reading Tom (via Flickr)

first came here. I had never even used email before I came to Cardiff University!

What has been your fondest memory working here?

Firstly, getting the job was a massive bonus as I had worked in the railway industry since 1975 and it was there that made me realise that I had an interest in helping others. I never thought I'd find myself working in higher education, however, a lot of my skills from the railway industry were relevant here. Another fond memory

of being asked by the School of Pharmacy to go to Gloucestershire and run a leadership programme. I thought it was fantastic! I wouldn't go back and change anything!

What are you looking forward to in retirement?

I've still got to pinch myself and ask myself if I am making the right decision. There were a few surprises from my team that I was leaving. I've taken the department as far as I can and I am just looking forward to keeping fit and spending time with my family. Maybe

do some travelling. Just enjoy my life!

What does the future hold for Cardiff University, in your opinion?

I think that some departments may combine and the number of degrees may be reduced. I think Cardiff may become a bespoke university where they focus on degrees such as medicine and engineering. Maybe some reductions in central services. **It would surprise me that in 10–20 years, Cardiff become the only university in the city and takes over the whole of student life.**

Lasting advice for students?

Get yourself professionalised before you graduate. Talk to people. Have debates. Ask questions. Use all the opportunities handed to you.

“ We thank John for all he has done for the university and wish him a happy retirement!”



Source: Larry Darling (via Flickr)

Taylor Swift Society – 'The 1' society you need to join

Kira Meehan

Contributor

For teenagers, especially girls, our bedrooms are a sacred sanctuary. It's a place we can gossip without friends, have sleepovers, cry over the boys who've wronged us and, most of all, dance around listening to whatever 'cheesy' pop hits are currently in the top 40 charts.

Sociologist Angela McRobbie calls this 'bedroom culture' — the theory argues that teenage girls experience pop culture and much of their core teen memories from the comfort of their bedrooms, as the outside world is deemed unsafe or perhaps doesn't provide a judgement-free outlet for our complex emotions and feelings.

Taylor Swift society aims to be that outlet for not just young girls and women, but anyone simply looking for

a space at uni that has the same coziness and comfort as their bedroom back at home, where they can be their most authentic selves. Our goal is to provide a safe, non-judgemental space for all; from the Taylor Swift enthusiasts who just enjoy the hits, to the die-hard fans who live and breathe all things Taylor Swift.

A typical month in the Taylor Swift society calendar would include at least one themed club night (usually at Revolution or in Circuit) where we have Taylor and similar artists playing until the early hours, as well as 'Typical Tuesday night' study/craft sessions, as an ode to Taylor's 2008 hit You Belong With Me. During these sessions we provide snacks and drinks to our members, whilst we sit on tables in The Lodge, a private room within the Students' Union. In the study sessions, members are free to do as they wish, whether that's getting on with assignments or chatting

with their friends and enjoying the selection of snacks we offer.

Occasionally, we turn these sessions into craft nights — some of these past craft events have included friendship bracelet making, recreating Taylor's Junior Jewels T-shirt (as spotted in the You Belong With Me music video), ceramic pot painting, and colouring in. Our most popular events, though, are the listening parties we host when Taylor releases an album. So far this semester, we have hosted a Speak Now (Taylor's Version) listening party, to celebrate the album's release over summer and then a 1989 (Taylor's Version) listening party, complete with inflatable seagulls! Both of these events were resounding successes, selling hundreds of tickets each, so they definitely aren't something to be missed.

At the time of writing, we have 'The Eras Tour Party' at Ballie Ballerson

coming up on November 13th, where we will be encouraging Taylor-themed fancy dress, as we have a sing and dance to the setlist for Taylor's most recent recording-breaking tour. It's our most ambitious event yet and we've already sold almost 150 tickets for this event, with the aim of selling at least 200 before the event.

Our events are filled with all different, vibrant and non-judgemental people, who share a passion for music, so if this sounds like something you would love, consider coming to one of our upcoming clubnight events such as *Swift-mas!* We will be hosting this night of festive fun on December 12th at Revolution — expect to see Santa hats, light-up batons, and festive photo props and of course Taylor playing all night long...

We would be so enchanted to meet you at one of our future events!

Things to do on a rainy day in Cardiff

Rhianne Talling

Contributor

When in Cardiff, you can always expect that you'll have to face a rainy day once in a while. That's not going to be an issue for you, however, as Cardiff offers a wide range of activities that you can do when the bad weather decides to hit. Here are a few of our favourite suggestions:

Cafés with a Twist:

There's nothing quite like a café on a rainy day, but why settle for just a cup of coffee when you can add a bit of fun into it too? For £2 per person, you can add board games to your drinks and food for an entire hour, at Chance and Counters. Alternatively,

if you're just not feeling the vibe with Chance and Counters, but still want to play some board games over coffee or drinks, head one street over where you'll find Scaredy Cats, another board game café with a different energy.

Day Drinking Done Right:

There's nothing stopping you from getting your booze on when it's raining, but if you're going to get a bit of day drinking done, you might as well do it right and throw in a game or two. Luckily for you, Cardiff has a range of fun and boozy activities such as Golf Fang, Roxy Lanes, or NQ64. You can get your game on whilst enjoying some cocktails or shots and be completely out of the rain as you do it!

Indoor Climbing:

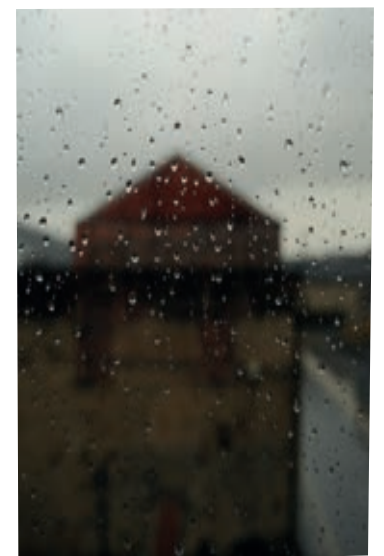
For those of you who just cannot sit still on a rainy day and need to get all of your energy out somewhere, it might be worth checking out one of the rock-climbing places in Cardiff. There are three main indoor rock-climbing venues in Cardiff: Boulders Cardiff East, Boulders Cardiff West, and Flashpoint. They're a great way to let time slip away from you on a rainy day, whilst also getting out any of that excess energy you would have to hold in if you were to sit at home all day.

Treat Yourself to a Spa Day:

Maybe running around, drinking, and games just isn't your vibe. Per-

haps you prefer more to lie back and relax. Well, luckily for you, Cardiff is home to an astonishing number of spas, ranging from posh hotel spas to Thai or Indian ones. In Cardiff, there is always a spa for you. What better way to let a rainy day flow away than with a relaxing day at the spa.

Hopefully, the next time it rains in Cardiff (which, let's be honest, will probably be sometime this week), you won't get trapped in by the rain, and can still find fun things to go out and about to do!



Source: Steven Lilley (via Flickr)

Walkabouts in Wales – Not the club!

Nancy tells Gair Rhydd readers about the best place for some student strolls

Nancy Cook
Spotlight Editor

This article explores some in and around the city, some of the best and most frequented spots for walking this autumn, all you need is yourself, probably 17 layers, and maybe a hot drink if you're feeling extra or simply run on coffee like me. Call me old but I genuinely think going on a wander everyday is what keeps me going, and there is no better (or I should say cheaper) way of making your house feel warm than coming in from an even colder walk and wrapping up

Roath Park:

For a more relaxed, but perfectly scenic experience, Roath Park is a gem nestled within the heart of Cardiff, and in my 2nd and 3rd years, a personal favourite. It's so close to Cathays with an easy walk down past the cemetery (another genuinely beautifully kept space to appreciate in a quiet moment) and honestly, I'm escaping there every five minutes to stay sane. Start your journey in the Victorian gardens, adorned with vibrant flowerbeds and sculptures and go on to the lake itself. The well-maintained paths encircle the lake



Source: Heather Smithers (via Flickr)

and make your way to the iconic Scott Memorial Lighthouse. Roath Park provides a delightful combination of natural landscapes and man-made beauty, creating a peaceful retreat within the city. For those of you who run, the outer loop is almost exactly 5 km when done twice, which is super nifty, and pretty flat too. You only have to navigate the geese and swans who rule the paths!

Garth Mountain:

Garth Mountain, standing proudly just north of the city, offers a refreshing change of scenery a little distance

from the city itself. A short drive away (can be super nice to drive a little to a walk or beach if you can to explore the area!), the circular route starts at the Gwaelod-y-Garth village, leading you through enchanting woodlands and meadows. Begin your ascent gradually, allowing the panoramic views of Cardiff and the Bristol Channel to unfold.

To descend, follow the trail down the opposite side of the mountain, passing through open fields before rejoining the initial path. The Garth Mountain walk provides a perfect blend of nature and tranquillity, mak-

ing it an ideal choice for both seasoned hikers and casual strollers like —my housemate.

Bute, of course:

Bute Park and the whole route along the River Taff (the river is almost as well known as the pub) presents a walking experience steeped in history, and wherever you go in the city, it's probably at most 10 minutes away. Begin at Cardiff Castle, for example, where the Taff Trail leads you through the heart of Bute Park. It's genuinely huge; you could walk a different route through it every day of the week. You can almost forget you are in the middle of a city. Perhaps, past the 11th-Century Blackfriars Priory and the grandeur of Sophia Gardens before crossing the iconic Millennium Bridge. The Secret Garden Cafe in the middle of the park is the sweetest coffee stop, which is ideal in these winter months where I cannot justify my heating costs, but a hot chocolate or a coffee just somehow can be done. You can't really go wrong in Bute. At any time of year it's a staple. The perfect walk to take any visiting family!

Book nooks in Cardiff – Where to buy and read books

Emily Clegg recommends her favourite spots to buy and read the classics

Emily Clegg
Contributor

Nestled amidst the vibrant streets of Cardiff, book lovers can discover a myriad of charming bookstores and cozy reading spots to cater to every literary taste. The city's range of parks, cafes and both chain and independent bookstores has loads to offer for every reader. Here are some of my personal recommendations:

Troutmark Books

Hidden in the Castle Arcade, Troutmark Books offers a large variety of secondhand books at affordable

prices. The independent store has a diverse array of titles on offer, from classic literature to non-fiction and biography. The store's quaint intimate space and friendly staff create a welcoming atmosphere for those searching for their next winter read.

Albany Road

This busy shopping street has 8 practically consecutive charity shops just on the one street alone. This range of shops offers countless, cheap pre-loved books allowing you to fill your bookshelf whilst also supporting charitable causes. The street also has various cozy cafes for you to warm up in and make a start on your new novels.

Waterstones

Proudly holding the title of the biggest bookstore in Wales, Waterstones is an absolute classic destination for any book lover. Located on The Hayes,

Cardiff Waterstones offers a truly vast selection of books spanning all genres and interests. They always have the newest mainstream releases widely available as well as an extensive collection of basically any type of book you could dream of. Although it is a spacious store, it is very easy to navigate and has the friendliest possible staff should you need help finding anything. As well as all this, there is also an extremely snug café always full of people immersed in their books as well as their lattes.

Bute Park

This picturesque city centre park is the ideal spot for you to lose yourself in a great read. The scenic greenery and stunning gardens make it a perfect backdrop for relaxation and concentration. Bute Park offers an escape from the bustle of the city centre, offering a tranquil atmosphere always

ideal for reading. There are many benches as well as a serene spots to sit by the river Taff and read surrounded by nature. The park's combination of beauty, accessibility and tranquillity makes it one of my fave spots to read in Cardiff.

Cardiff University Libraries

People often disregard the university's 11 libraries as being full of stressed students and dusty textbooks. However, I think they are underrated venues to read in. Quietness is almost always guaranteed and with students getting free access to the university collection of over 1 million printed books it's difficult to see the drawbacks. The

main building library is particularly impressive with its stunning architecture and dark academic style making it a gorgeous venue to get stuck into a good book!

Pottery painting – The city's hidden gem

Belle Lee
Head of Spotlight

Only a bus ride away from the City Centre, you will find Peggy's Pots - Cardiff's only Pottery Painting business. A small and quaint business with an inviting atmosphere, you are invited to paint pottery in a number of colourful and renovated shipping containers where you can throw your own pot, mould clay pieces or choose from their extensive selection of pottery to paint on.

The staff is enthusiastic and friendly. Whether you are a first-time painter or a seasoned artist, the staff provide extensive guidance and support. We had the privilege of being in the same

room as a session of pottery-throwing and the staff's endless encouragement and laughter was infectious. Never failing to compliment a piece or assist with colour selection, it is a credit to the business to have such friendly and warm people who are clearly passionate about their artistic pursuits.

They cater to large groups as well as individuals who want to engage in a new, hands-on skill. Bring Your Own Booze pottery painting sessions are available for groups so instead of spending that money getting drunk Live Lounge, have a night of painting and drinking with your closest friends and take home some pottery to remember the night.

The quality of the materials pro-

vided is outstanding. A selection of raw pottery, the size range and the quality of paintbrushes and sponges, it truly encourages you to create a lasting masterpiece to cherish forever. Ensuring access to premium materials, Peggy Pots is insistent on allowing creativity to shine in their cosy containers.

It strikes a tremendous balance between affordability and quality, as you only pay for what you have painted, rather than a fee for the session. This is particularly appealing to students, making it the perfect way to spend a rainy afternoon. The extensive range of pieces to paint makes this experience one of a kind. From mugs to Christmas ornaments and quirky figurines, there is something

for everyone.

Personally, I would have liked there to be music playing in the containers while painting however I understand it's not ideal for everyone's concentration. If you are like me and need music to concentrate, I would strongly recommend some headphones.

Peggy's Pots is located in the Boneyard, a popular shipping container village at the bottom of Paper Mill Road in Canton. It is truly a hidden gem of the city.

“It strikes a tremendous balance between affordability and quality,”

SPOTLIGHT

Gem&Ange Review

Welcome back, groovy Gair Rhydd goblins, to our second featured review! Have you followed us on Instagram yet? If so, you will have seen our venture to the cosiest establishment of them all for the beautiful Belle's birthday bash (the editor of spotlight) (we aren't nepo babies... we promise).

COSY CLUB!

Ange quaffed two-for-one cocktails and mightily enjoyed with a giggle — or two. She rates them a 8.2/10, but the price (£12 for 2) added major bonus points.

Gemma, on the other hand, indulged in Cosy Club's supply of white wine. She gives it strong 7/10. Far better than Ange's regular companion on a Wednesday night, Zesty White Wine. Bleugh!

Moving on to what you're all here for... the MEAL.

Ange the Vegetarian (#saveth-eplanet #wokeylefttyloony) had a 'Halloumi and Warm Harissa Baked Squash Salad' What a mouthful to say, and what a mouthful to eat! The flavours were flavouring with the delicate balance of sweet, salty, and sharp. The only let down was the slightly soggy texture. Thus, the score comes to: 8.4/10

Whereas juvenile Gemma chowed down on the delicious-looking 'Dirty Chicken Burger' (#mypronounsareUSA). Upon further inspection, the 'dirtiness' was in regards to the additional 'deep fried mac and cheese thing' (its technical term, of course) which was NOT a welcome addition — overkill. Ange liked it though, as it was the only part she could try. Overall: 7.3/10.

Many kindest regards to our fans, followers, stalkers, and haters — we hope you had a restful reading week. See you next time!

Gemandangereview

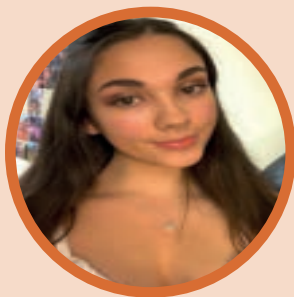


Source: TD Jodie Parkes (via Flickr)

POLITICS

COVID-19 inquiry unveils shocking revelations

“Not a single day passed where Downing Street was compliant with COVID rules.”



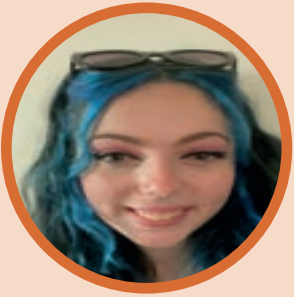
Lauren Tutchell



Laila Dawelbeit



Adam Dunstan



Cerys Upstone



Thomas Wilson

ELSEWHERE
IN POLITICS

Rwanda asylum plan confirmed as 'unlawful' by UK Supreme Court

Therese Coffey says she nearly died due to stress

Keir Starmer pushes for Labour vote on Gaza conflict

Lauren Tutchell
Head of Politics

The UK COVID-19 inquiry, which is investigating the government's response to the pandemic, has been holding hearings for the best part of the past few months, yet it has only been in recent weeks where it has finally broken into headline news as key political players like Matt Hancock and Dominic Cummings have started stepping into the box.

For most of us, the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns may feel like a lifetime ago, but not everyone can forget so easily. Over 200,000 people are reported to have died from the virus, and thousands of others are still suffering from long COVID symptoms today.

During this terrifying and unprecedented time we all turned to our government for guidance, and yet what the COVID inquiry is slowly unveiling is that this was a grave mistake.

It's painting a picture of abject chaos and indecision at the heart of our government, where crucial decisions were decided over WhatsApp by politicians who had absolutely no idea what they were doing, and often refused to listen to the advice of those that did.

Government advisors have openly spoken about how centralised decision-making was during the pandemic, and Boris Johnson's most trusted advisors have voiced their frustrations about how he profusely refused to listen to them. Instead of



Boris Johnson at a COVID-19 press conference in 2020
Source: Andrew Parsons / No. 10 Downing Street (via Flickr)

uniting together during this time of crisis, it is slowly becoming apparent that Downing Street was in a state of civil war.

The inquiry has also unveiled how insensitive and cruel senior politicians were during this time of global crisis, with our former Prime Minister callously remarking that “the virus is just nature's way of dealing with old people” as he then later commented that he would rather “let the bodies pile high” than impose a new lockdown. The government's chief scientific adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, also provided evidence from a notebook entry in 2020, where he wrote that Boris Johnson was “obsessed with older people accepting their fate and letting the young get on with life”.

It was also revealed that Boris had asked “Why are we destroying the economy for people who will die anyway?” in a meeting with senior advisors

and had referred to the deadly virus as not a “big deal” and similar to the swine flu. He felt so strongly about this that he even considered injecting himself with COVID on national television during the early stages of the pandemic.

The blatant disregard for lockdown restrictions by the same senior ministers who actually implemented them was also uncovered by the inquiry, with one Civil Servant admitting that “not a single day passed where Downing Street was compliant with COVID rules”.

This has been further amplified by the revelations of the numerous parties held in 10 Downing Street during the pandemic which have been shockingly depicted in Channel 4's new docudrama *Partygate* based on evidence from this investigation. Although some ministers were served fixed penalty fines for breaking the

rules, the most they had to pay was £50, whereas members of the general public were receiving fines of up to £10,000. This has caused public outrage over the unfairness of the policing behind the lockdown restrictions, especially as new statistics reveal that fines were seven times more likely to be issued in poorer areas and were predominantly handed out to young people (aged 18–24). Former home secretary Priti Patel herself even admitted during her hearing that these fines were not proportionate.

Matt Hancock, who was Health Secretary at the time, has also come under fire by former colleagues, who described him as displaying “nuclear levels” of overconfidence when discussing his handling of the pandemic. Following on from this, Lord Stevens informed the inquiry that Hancock often took the position that “[he], rather than the medical profession or the public, should ultimately decide who should live and who should die”.

Overall, the inquiry has showcased so far that important decisions were heavily centred around a small team of men in Downing Street who valued their contributions over those of scientists and professional advisors, who had a complete lack of respect for the lockdown restrictions and a complete disregard for the health and safety of the most vulnerable people in our country.

If this inquiry has showed us anything, it's that these people are not to be celebrated for their contributions during the COVID pandemic but to be condemned, and that their names will go down in history but for all the wrong reasons.

Suella Braverman is out, David Cameron is in

Cerys Upstone
Politics Editor

Rishi Sunak performed a dramatic reshuffle of his cabinet on the 13th of November, which has raised questions regarding the Tory Party's sense of direction ahead of the general election next year.

One of the most shocking changes: Suella Braverman lost her position as Home Secretary after defying No. 10 by writing an article which accused the Metropolitan Police of bias in the policing of protests.

This is now the second time she has been removed from office, with the first occurring under Liz Truss' premiership when it was discovered that Braverman had shared confidential cabinet papers with a Tory MP without the Prime Minister's permission.

Despite this, Jacob Rees-Mogg said the sacking was “a mistake” that will hit the Conservatives' chances of winning the next general election as “Suella understands what the country thinks about migration” and she was “determined to get it down”.

James Cleverly has replaced Braverman as Home Secretary which suggests a more moderate centrist approach to the role than the hard-right stance of his predecessor.



David Cameron as Leader of the Conservative Party in 2010
Source: Chatham House (via Wikimedia Commons)

In response to her dismissal, Braverman has written a three-page letter to Sunak, in which she accuses him of betrayal.

She argues “your plan is not working, we have endured record election defeats, your resets have failed, and we are running out of time”. This therefore surfaces further questions about the Tory Party election strategy.

Another big change has been the appointment of former Prime Minister David Cameron as Foreign Secretary.

This move has received criticism, given Cameron is no longer a sitting MP. In order to be appointed to the

cabinet, he has been awarded a life peerage, meaning he now sits in the House of Lords.

This has raised questions regarding the mandate of the government to appoint an unelected member into the government.

Cameron backed Sunak's leadership, claiming he “is a strong and capable prime minister, who is showing exemplary leadership at a difficult time”, despite the fact he has “disagreed with some individual decisions”.

His appointment as foreign secretary raises questions in the context of Brexit, given his pro-Remain stance during his time as PM, which could

cause tensions within the pro-Brexit party.

Cameron is the first former Prime Minister to re-enter government since Alec Douglas-Home in the 1970s.

Sunak has also appointed what has been dubbed a ‘common sense minister’, in the form of right-wing GB News presenter Esther McVey.

She has officially been appointed as a minister without portfolio, but it is assumed she will bring an anti-‘woke’ agenda to the focus of the government.

Among other changes, Environment Secretary Therese Coffey was replaced by Steve Barclay, the former Health Secretary. He has been replaced by Victoria Atkins, which again promises a more centrist stance to the role.

The main takeaway from this switch-up can be the ideological changes within the Conservative Party, with many of the new appointments coming from the centre of the party, rather than the more extreme right-wing MPs.

Former Cabinet Minister Jacob Rees-Mogg claimed the party was “in danger of losing votes to the Reform Party”. However, it is widely accepted that these changes form part of Sunak's electoral strategy ahead of next year.

Suella Braverman claims tents are a lifestyle choice

“Tents cause nuisance and distress. There are other options for people.”

Zoe Picton
Contributor

Walking along the streets in the UK, it is almost expected to see homeless people camping out rough on the streets.

It is a rife and ongoing issue, with ONS statistics revealing 3,069 people in the UK were sleeping rough on a single night in Autumn 2022.

A widespread and unfortunate problem such as this seems like something the government desperately needs to resolve. Home Secretary Suella Braverman, for one, has highlighted this issue lately — but in a rather vulgar way.

She has controversially labelled homelessness as a “lifestyle choice” and suggested banning homeless people sleeping in tents on the streets as a solution to the problem.

With the claim that tents in public spaces “causes nuisance and distress to other people”, she wrote on X (formerly Twitter) that “there are options for people who don’t want to be sleeping rough”.

The 1824 Vagrancy Act makes it illegal to beg or sleep rough in England and Wales; Braverman has outlined a plan to repeal this legislation to in-



Source: Elvert Barnes Photography (via Flickr)

clude the banning of sleeping in tents on the streets.

The 7th of November marked the state reopening of Parliament, during which the King gave a speech outlining the government’s new plans for the year ahead. Within this he spoke about the Criminal Justice Bill; although not confirmed, it is speculated it will later introduce her proposal.

Braverman’s plans have, unsurprisingly, received serious backlash. Numerous charities tackling

homelessness have signed an open letter to the Home Secretary urging her to reconsider these plans, including Housing Justice, Crisis, St. Mun-go’s, and The Refugee Council.

They explain the consequences that could ensue if the proposal passes: “At the extreme end we will see an increase in deaths and fatalities which are totally preventable.”

Moreover, comedian Joe Lycett launched a campaign to raise money for Crisis following Braverman’s com-

ments, successfully achieving his target of £50,000 before the King’s speech last Tuesday. The Prime Minister himself, although choosing to somewhat avoid the question, doesn’t seem to be critical of Braverman’s proposal.

At a gas terminal on the 6th of November, when asked about if her language was “offensive”, Sunak declined to give a response, merely stating that “we’ll keep going so that nobody has to sleep rough on our streets”.

In contrast, many other Conservatives have openly opposed Braverman’s rhetoric, even with calls for her to be sacked.

Tory MP Richard Graham has criticised her idea of banning tents, while the Whips’ Office has been dealing with multiple complaints about her ill-mannered comments.

Needless to say, Braverman is facing a fair amount of backlash for her statements, and only time will tell if the proposal will be passed as law, and if so, how extreme it will be.

“ [Suella Braverman] has controversially labeled homelessness as a ‘lifestyle choice’ and suggested banning homeless people sleeping in tents as a solution to the problem.”

Conspiracy Britain

Thomas Wilson

In July, thirty protestors gathered outside Liverpool Town Hall demonstrating their opposition to the proposals to make Liverpool a ‘15 minute city’. Activists vented their fury as councillors entered the Georgian hall; labelling them “treacherous traitors” and accusing them of “betraying” the city. Yet as Councillor Liam Robinson has pointed out, the council have never supported implementing the policy nor were they convening to deliberate upon introducing the policy that day.

This incident appears symptomatic of a problem which is plaguing Britain, with the intimidatory tactics deployed reminiscent of that used by 40 anti-vaxx protestors, who encircled and trapped Cardiff North MP Anna McMorrin as she was driven into Parliament, or the harassment of Matt Hancock, whose harasser accused him of “murdering millions of people” in front of London Underground commuters. The connection between these cases is how the perpetrators are aligned in their conspiratorial convictions — convictions which appear to be seeping into the mainstream. Take the case of Andrew Bridgen, the Conservative representative for North West Leicestershire since 2010. After four years in the Commons, Bridgen found himself submerged in controversy after denouncing what he described as the “Jewish lobby” during a Parliamentary debate, much to the disgust of peers, many of whom labelled Bridgen’s remarks as antisemitic. Fast forward to January 2023 and Bridgen was suspended from the Conservative Party after comparing the vaccine programme to the Holocaust, prompting a fierce response from Prime Minister Rishi Sunak who declared his desire for the “scourge of antisemitism to be eliminated” in his tweet confirming the suspension of Bridgen. Following his suspension, Bridgen has delivered speeches at anti-vaxx rallies sharing platforms with activists such as Kate Shemirani, a sacked nurse who compared David Attenborough to Joseph Goebbels and whose rhetoric correlates with that of Bridgen, from labelling hospitals “the new Auschwitz” or claiming that “the nurses of the Third Reich are here today”.

Once upon a time, deplatforming was seen as the key means of acting as a bulwark to the spreading of misinformation, yet as research has shown from Cardiff University’s Crime and Security Research Institute, deplatforming has a “limited impact”, with an example being the surge Shemirani’s videos had in the months following her deplatforming in October 2020. Despite Bridgen’s association with such an activist, he has since joined forces with his parliamentary colleagues by becoming a member of the Net Zero Scrutiny Group, a group comprised of disgruntled MPs united under an ideological umbrella of climate scepticism, be they Jacob Rees Mogg who spoke of his desire to “stop the demonising of oil and gas” or NZSG founder Steve Baker, who has claimed climate science is “mostly contestable” and “sometimes propagandised”. Unperturbed by his suspension over the sharing of disinformation and antisemitism, Bridgen has remained a prolific member of the NZSG months after his removal of the whip. The case of the NZSG seems symbolic of the issue of disinformation infiltrating the mainstream, with members openly sowing the seeds of doubt into the electorate when it comes to climate change.

Starmer’s refusal to back ceasefire divides Labour Party

Laila Dawelbeit
Politics Editor

Keir Starmer, the leader of the Labour Party, is currently faced with the prospect of a rebellion in his party.

Four Shadow Ministers are prepared to quit in the coming days and up to ten are on ‘resignation watch’ after frontbencher Imran Hussain resigned in protest of Starmer’s refusal to call for an Israeli ceasefire.

Starmer told an audience at the Chatham House international affairs think tank in London that while he “understands calls for a ceasefire at this stage”, he does not believe it is “the correct position”.

“ Hamas would be emboldened and start preparing for future violence immediately,” he said, advocating for a “humanitarian pause” instead.

Many Labour MPs have expressed that they are facing pressure from constituents and other party members to deviate from Keir Starmer’s stance and take a firmer stand for a ceasefire.

Recently, the Senedd backed an immediate ceasefire in a vote, raising questions about how Starmer would approach a similar vote at Westminster. While Welsh Labour government ministers abstained, Labour backbenchers were given a free vote, with eleven backing the motion.

Labour MP Andy McDonald was suspended for saying in a speech at a pro-Palestine protest that “we will not rest until we have justice. Until all people, Israelis and Palestinians, between the river and the sea, can live in peaceful liberty”.

The Labour Muslim Network has



Kier Starmer with Chatham House think tank in 2017

Source: Chatham House (via Flickr)

called the suspension “both obscene and deeply offensive” and said that those who made this decision do not think Palestinians and Muslims deserve the “fundamental right to live in peace, with liberty and self-determination”.

Since then, McDonald has sued Conservative MP Chris Clarkson, who has accused the Labour MP of “seeking to justify the murderous action of Hamas” in the Israel-Hamas war.

In what many deem an attempt to appease Muslim communities after his remarks on Israel’s imposition of a blockade on Gaza, Keir Starmer made a visit to the South Wales Islamic Centre.

He has been accused of having “gravely misrepresented” the meeting in a statement the Mosque posted.

“Members of the community directly challenged Keir on his statements made on the Israeli govern-

ment’s right to cut food, electricity and water to Gaza, warranting war crimes as well as his failure to call for an immediate ceasefire”, the statement said.

With the rise in Islamophobia since October 7, many question whether the UK’s Muslim communities, many of which traditionally vote for the Labour Party and support the Palestinian cause, will revolt against the party in a general election, either by abstaining or casting their vote elsewhere.

The Muslim Council of Britain has warned of “sinister rhetoric against Muslims in general and pro-Palestinian supporters in particular” in response to Suella Braverman’s, “divisive” language used to describe the largely peaceful pro-Palestine marches.

Following a public row between Braverman and the Metropolitan Police, as well as violent clashes between far-right anti-Palestine protesters and

the police near the Cenotaph on Armistice Day, which she has been accused of inciting, it remains to be seen whether Rishi Sunak will sack the Home Secretary.

As the death toll exceeds 11,000 in Gaza, Israel has continued to attack hospitals, with at least 16 of the 35 hospitals in Gaza being out of service.

Al-Shifa Hospital, which is the Gaza Strip’s largest medical facility, is completely out of service after it struggled to treat thousands of patients.

The medical facility and its external surroundings have been targeted by the Israeli military as well as anyone walking inside the courtyard and between its various buildings. Israeli forces claim that the hospital is located above the headquarters of Hamas, a claim which Hamas has rejected.

The French President, Emmanuel Macron, has said that Israel must stop bombing Gaza and killing civilians, urging other leaders to join his calls for an immediate ceasefire.

This comes as a significant change from Macron’s former position and France’s banning of pro-Palestinian rallies since the beginning of the war. Several countries have also withdrawn diplomats from Israel amid global criticism of Israel’s continued attack on Gaza.

“ Starmer told [...] that while he ‘understands calls for a ceasefire at this stage’, he does not believe it is ‘the correct position’. ‘ Hamas would be emboldened and start preparing for future violence immediately,’ he said [...]”

Could Donald Trump become President again?

Ellie Gosley
Contributor

Despite becoming the first former US President to testify as a defendant in over a century this week, it is still looking very likely that Donald Trump will win the Republican Party primaries and put up a strong fight against President Biden, who is hoping to be re-elected.

Trump has been testifying in a New York courtroom as part of a civil fraud trial, just one of a number of charges he is facing. Justice Engoron, who is overseeing the case, has already ruled that the Trump Organisation did commit fraud by inflating the value of properties and other assets.

The purpose of this trial is therefore to determine the penalties he will face, with prosecutors seeking a \$250m fine and strict business restrictions.

Trump appears to be using his testimony as an opportunity to further his presidential campaign, with Justice Engoron repeatedly asking Trump to stick to answering the questions instead of making speeches, reminding him that “this is not a political rally”.

It is perhaps of little surprise then that this trial, and the other 78 felony charges he is facing across 3 criminal cases, seem to be doing no damage to Trump’s reputation and popularity against Republican voters.

Recent polls highlight that Trump is in a strong position to win the Republican primaries, with him being put at 30 points ahead of the next most popular candidate, Florida Governor Robert DeSantis.

DeSantis’ campaign also seems to be losing momentum, with his biggest donor publicly declaring that he is thinking about switching support to Trump. Robert Bigelow, who has donated over \$20m to the DeSantis campaign, described Trump as the “strongest commander” that DeSantis would struggle to beat.

Polling also shows that if Trump were to win the Republican nomination, as looks likely, and face Biden in the 2024 election, Trump is currently the favourite to win. A CNN poll of registered voters saw Trump leading with 49 percent compared to Biden’s 45 percent.

Perhaps the most troubling information for the current President is that Trump’s polling is up amongst voters under 35, a previous stronghold for Democrats, with 48 percent saying that they would vote for him.

The felony charges Trump is facing in cases concerning his alleged attempt to overturn the 2020 election result, and the retention of classified documents, mean that Trump could be sentenced to prison time.

However, he has made it clear that he is willing to campaign from behind bars and the US Constitution does not stop those with criminal convictions from running for office.

Therefore, Trump could find himself in the extraordinary position of not being able to vote in the election, while being on the ballot and perhaps even winning.

Labour considers uni loan write-offs to tackle NHS crisis

Joseph Heppenstall
Contributor

Leading up to next year’s General Election, politicians are actively gauging public opinion through a mix of inspiring rhetoric, persuasion, and, at times, misinformation, all in the pursuit of shaping the political landscape in shades of Red, Yellow, and Blue, with the ‘Blue Wall’ potentially facing a significant challenge. But who will be the headline front runner?

One issue taking centre stage in the election discourse is the state of the NHS. With the healthcare system facing an undeniable crisis marked by underfunding, staff shortages, and increasing patient demand, Labour’s Shadow Health Secretary, Wes Streeting, has rumoured a radical policy.

Streeting is considering a plan to write off student loans as an incentive to attract and retain clinical staff within the NHS, ultimately increasing the pool of healthcare professionals who are needed more than ever following the aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

His proposal seems to be a hasty



Source: Spc. Ashleigh Maxwell / U.S. Army (via Flickr)

attempt to find a quick remedy for a complex issue that demands a much more thorough and sustainable solution.

Using a short-term, politically motivated approach is unlikely to lead to lasting improvements in healthcare which requires attention from all angles. The concern is that this approach would create an imbalance in terms of who bears the cost of ad-

ressing the NHS crisis. It may also disproportionately benefit a specific group of individuals: those who have attended Health Education Courses.

This raises further questions about whether the financial responsibility for funding healthcare services and addressing NHS challenges would unfairly fall on those who did not pursue Health Education Courses or accrue university debt in non-health-

related fields.

Furthermore, the Labour Party’s proposal lacks a clear long-term plan for ensuring NHS sustainability. Writing off university loans is a one-time solution that does not address the fundamental issues plaguing the healthcare system.

The NHS requires comprehensive reform, increased funding, and a strategic approach to tackle issues such as staff shortages, inefficient bureaucracy, and rising healthcare costs.

For instance, The Welsh Government incentivises students to study in Wales and to work within the healthcare sector for up to two years through the NHS Wales Bursary Scheme as a condition of having their tuition fees paid and receiving a bursary for living costs.

As election year approaches, the future of the NHS remains a key issue for voters to consider.

While the proposal to write off student loans may grab headlines, it may be evident that a more comprehensive and sustainable approach is required to ensure the long-term health and success of the NHS.

In Conversation with Mick Antoniw What will a hung parliament mean for Britain?

Thomas Wilson
Politics Editor

On the third floor of the Cathays Park government office rests the illustrious office of Mick Antoniw MS, current Counsel General for Wales. Before his political ascension, Mick Antoniw was an undergraduate reading Law at Cardiff, a time he evidently remembers distinctly, such as his recollection of the “quagmire of politics” on campus centred upon issues from the coup in Chile to South African apartheid.

However, he speaks bluntly of the student population being “more middle class” and those from “working class backgrounds being a small population”. When I question him as to why studying law appealed, he eloquently states of how “law is pure politics” and how “it is not about the administration of rules but the execution of power”. Given his area of legal intrigue was “things that relate to politics and the labour movement”, it comes as no surprise he soon began working for Thompson’s Solicitors, in a move he describes as a “natural step given the firm being very political and it’s association with the labour movement.”

Elected as a councillor to the South Glamorgan County Council in 1981, one can sense his animosity at the Thatcherite reforms of the 1980s, as Antoniw perceives that “the 80s saw the abandonment of the concept of equality with wealth becoming concentrated into fewer and fewer hands.” However, much to his delight Wales would vote for devolution five years after the departure of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister, in a vote that he believes was primarily fuelled by the people’s desire to “not be controlled by Westminster any more” and as part of a broader

growth of people focusing on the importance of “regional identity as also seen in Liverpool and Manchester with their regional mayors.” For Antoniw, the 1997 vote was symbolic of a “substantial cultural change” in Wales, a change that “devolution has helped to nurture.”

Despite the votes for devolved powers, Antoniw remains perturbed by the political climate, particularly his view of “Parliament becoming less representative in terms of class” and the issues of leadership courses, such as Oxford’s Political Leadership Scheme, which “implies there is a well-educated class who should decide on behalf of the poor, uneducated class”. On the issues surrounding so-called ‘career politicians’, Antoniw espouses the view that “politics should not be a career but a vocation” and for “people who believe there is a purpose to make society better” before he candidly quips “maybe we need less lawyers”; although he is quick to stress the “importance of having a few”.

Looking forward to the future, Mick Antoniw boldly asserts that “there is no doubt the Tories will be wiped out at the next election”, given that the party are now “incapable of doing or changing anything” and are currently “clinging on by their fingernails” to power. Only time will tell if the Counsel General’s electoral optimism will be substantiated via a general election defeat for the Conservatives in what would be the first electoral victory for Labour since 2005.



Angelie Marwaha
Contributor

What is a hung parliament?

A hung parliament is when no single political party wins a majority of seats in the House of Commons, subsequenting in no overall control. This means a party may have the most seats, but it still doesn’t control the Commons, making passing legislation and pushing through daily politics innately difficult. There is speculation this could happen in the UK’s next general election, if Labour, who are expected to gain the most votes, do not gain an overall majority. To move forward with a hung parliament, coalitions can be formed, most recently seen in 2010 when the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats worked together. A hung parliament can also result in something less formal, seen using a confidence and supply agreement which the Conservatives did with the Democratic Unionist Party in 2017.

The Liberal Democrats are an obvious possibility when arranging an agreement in the wake of a hung parliament. While not only being potentially hugely beneficial and necessary to Labour without a majority, it’s an opportunity to implement their electoral revival, and status as 3rd biggest political party since their decline in 2015, alongside the rise of the SNP.

Ed Davey, leader of the Lib Dem’s has recently held the party conference in Bournemouth and explicitly ruled out electoral aid to the Conservatives, arguing his party could “play a critical role” in removing the Conservatives from power. The party also resounds a lot of anti-Tory rhetoric, heightened by their demise after the 2010 coalition ended in 2015. However, he has not demonstrated this attitude to Labour, when asked about formal or

informal support. Labour Leader Keir Starmer has equally not ruled out a deal with the Lib Dems, highlighting a very real presence of discussions over a hung parliament within the House of Commons, and political parties setting in motion preparations for alternative electoral outcomes.

It is difficult to answer what this would mean for Britain as the Liberal Democrats and Labour do not share many manifesto policies. Although we know social care is at their forefront, alongside a historic demand for electoral reform with Davey being no different from his predecessors and advocating for proportional representation. Equally, the Lib Dems will have greater leverage the more seats they win. However, the issue with a coalition is that any two parties involved naturally have different stances on most issues, with different extents of agreement and opposition. Although a hung parliament could be an opportunity for the Liberal Democrats to reclaim their position and stay present in the political limelight, it could equally be stagnant and impossible to get through any policies and manifesto promises. Something that brought down Nick Clegg throughout his leadership with David Cameron in the most recent coalition in 2010.

For Britain, it is unclear what will happen. In the case of a hung parliament, the Liberal Democrats will most likely form a coalition with the Labour Party, however it will be Labour who will numerically have the most votes and seats in the Commons, thereby reducing scope for Lib Dem policies and legislation. Starmer may be minimised in his power, but realistically, this will be minimal, and the potential for Liberal Democrat propositions to be at the forefront of Britain, is unlikely.



Efa Ceiri



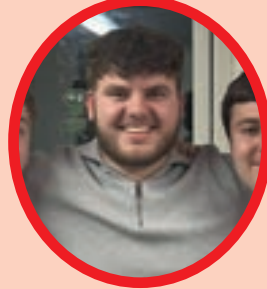
Beca Dalis



Llyr Eirug



Ffion Wyn Jones



Jack Thomas



Millie Stacey

Hwyl yr Ŵyl! Nadolig yn y Brifddinas

Beca Dalis

Golygydd Taf-od

Ydych chi wedi sylwi ar yr olwyn fawr ger Neuadd y Ddinas? Dyma'r arwydd fod y gaeaf ar droed ac mae'r Nadolig yn agosáu! Trwy astudio ym mhrifddinas Cymru mae yna ddigon o gyfleoedd cymdeithasol trwy gydol y flwyddyn, ond mae'r rhai Nadoligaidd hyd yn oed yn fwy arbennig! Dyma rhai syniadau i chi a'ch fflaf, ffrindiau neu deulu ei wneud yn ystod yr Ŵyl!

Fel roeddwn yn sôn mae'r olwyn fawr wedi cyrraedd Caerdydd, felly yn amlwg un o'r pethau mwyaf poblogaidd i'w wneud ydy mynd i Winter Wonderland. Mae rhan

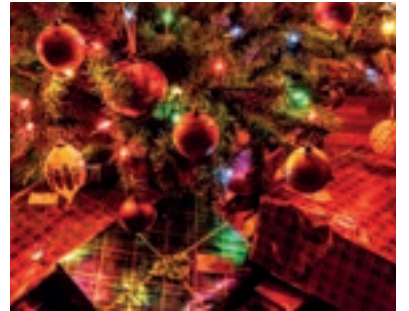
o'r amryw o atyniadau sydd ganddyn nhw i'w gynnig yng Nghastell Caerdydd yna mae'r rhan arall ger Neuadd y Ddinas. Mae'r Ŵyl ar agor o 16eg o Dachwedd hyd at yr 2ail o Ionawr, felly mae digon o amser i wneud sawl taith yno! Bydd yn rhaid talu ar gyfer chwarae neu brofi'r atyniadau, er hyn mae mynediad am ddim – mae'n le hyfryd i fynd am dro. Mae tocynnau ar gael ar lein ar gyfer y sgelfrio ia, y Bar la a hefyd yr olwyn fawr.

Un peth rydw i'n edrych ymlaen at weld eto ydy Marchnad Nadolig Caerdydd ar hyd yr Ais. Mae busnesau lleol yn cael cyfle i arddangos eu cynnyrch mewn hytiau ar hyd y stryd. Yn ogystal, mae stondinau bwyd a diod, gyda man i eistedd a chymdeithasu. Mae'n

digwydd ar hyd strydoedd siopau Caerdydd. Agorodd y Farchnad ar y 9fed o Dachwedd ac maent ar agor hyd at 23ain o Ragfyr.

Eleni eto mae Parc Biwt yn cynnal arddangosfa golau anhygoel. Ar ddechrau a diwedd y llwybr mae yna stondin fwyd a Phentref Nadolig. Mae'r sioe olau yn digwydd o 24ain o Dachwedd hyd at y 1af o Ionawr. Mae'n brofiad i'r synhwyrâu gyda goleuadau, cherddoriaeth a bwyd, ac mae tocyn i oedolyn yn £19.50.

Gobeithio bod hyn wedi eich ysbrydoli i wneud y mwyaf o'r Nadolig yng Nghaerdydd!



(Tarddiad Via Wikimedia Commons)

Ymddeoliad Leigh Halfpenny

Millie Stacey

Golygydd Taf-od

Roedd y 25ain o Hydref yn nodi'r diwrnod y cyhoeddodd un o hoelion wyth Cymru ei ymddeoliad i Gymru a gweddill y byd. Y tro diwethaf iddo gerdded allan dros Gymru oedd ar y 4ydd o Dachwedd, gêm a gynhaliwyd yn erbyn y Barbariaid. Mae Halfpenny wedi ennill 101 o gapiau dros Gymru, gan sgorio 801 o bwyntiau, ac wedi chwarae pedwar gêm Brawf i Lewod Prydain ac Iwerddon. Gadewch i ni edrych yn ôl ar daith Halfpenny a'i harweiniodd i heddiw.

Dechreuodd Halfpenny chwarae rygbi i Gorseinon, cyn iddo dod yn aelod o

academi'r Gweilch cyn iddo arwyddo i Gleision Caerdydd cyn tymor 2007-08 - gan ennill Cwpan Eingl-Gymreig 2009 a Chwpan Her Ewrop 2010 gydag ochr y brifddinas. Yna arwyddodd i

Toulon yn ôl yn 2014 a arweiniodd at ennill Cwpan Pencampwyr Ewrop 2015 gyda thîm Ffrainc, i gyd cyn dychwelyd i Gymru gyda'r Scarlets ychydig flynyddoedd yn ddiweddarach yn 2017. Chwaraeodd Halfpenny yn ei drydydd Cwpan y Byd ar rownd derfynol yn nhwrnaint 2023.

Ond penderfynwyd mai nawr fyddai'r amser gorau i ymddeol, gan gyhoeddi ei fod yn ymddeol o rygbi rhwngwladol yn dilyn ymadawiad Cymru o Gwpan Rygbi'r Byd. Fodd bynnag, datganodd y chwaraewr 34 oed ei awydd i

barhau i chwarae rygbi clwb. Penderfyniad sy'n mynd ag ef i ochr arall y byd wrth iddo gyhoeddi ei fod wedi arwyddo cytundeb blwyddyn gyda'r Crusaders o dîm Super Rugby Seland Newydd. Y Crusaders, sy'n cael eu hyfforddi gan gyn-hyfforddwyr Munster Rob Penney, yw'r tîm mwyaf llwyddiannus y tu allan i'r gêm ryngwladol mewn hanes ar ôl cael eu coronio'n bencampwyr Super Rugby 11 o weithiau. Fe fydd yn un o ddau chwaraewr rhyngwladol Cymru fydd yn cystadlu yn Seland Newydd y tymor nesaf gyda'i gynchwaraewr o'r Scarlets Rhys Patchell wedi arwyddo i'r Highlanders.



Trafod Tai yn Undeb y Myfyrwyr

Llyr Eirug

Golygydd Taf-od

Dydd Mawrth (14 Hydref 2023) cafodd sgwrs ei chynnal yn Undeb Myfyrwyr Caerdydd i drafod a chodi pryderon dros sefyllfa dai presennol myfyrwyr yng Nghaerdydd. Yn ogystal â, hyn cafwyd trafo-daeth am bryderon unigolion am eu cymunedau adref.

Yn ôl Undeb Myfyrwyr Caerdydd:

'Mae angen newid y ffordd mae'r system dai yn gweithio yng Nghymru. Mae angen sicrhau tai teg i fyfyrwyr tra ein bod ni'n astudio ac yn ein cymunedau ar draws y wlad.'

Yn ôl ffigyrau Cardiff Student Community Partnership ac Undeb Myfyrwyr Caerdydd, mae dros 6,000 yn fwy o

fyfyrwyr llawn amser wedi cofrestru yng Nghaerdydd eleni i gymharu efo 2019. O ganlyniad i hyn, mae dros 96% o safleoedd PBSA (Purpose-Built Student Accommodation) yn llawn ym mis Mai 2023.

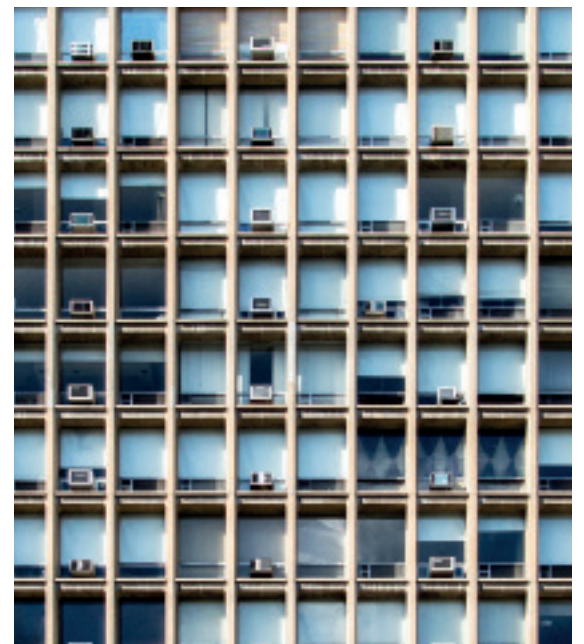
O ganlyniad i hyn, mae'r Undeb Myfyrwyr wrthi'n gweithio i wella sefyllfa dai myfyrwyr yng Nghaerdydd, er mwyn sicrhau fod gan bob myfyriwr man i fyw, gweithio ac i gymdeithasu ynddo. Yn ogystal ag sicrhau fod yna ddigon o neuaddau, tai a llety ar gael ar gyfer nifer cynyddol o fyfyrwyr sy'n penderfynu astudio ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd.

Yn ogystal ag Undeb Myfyrwyr Caerdydd, roedd cynrychiolaeth o Gymdeithas yr Iaith, Owain Meirion, yn bresennol yn y cyfarfod i drafod am sefyllfa presennol y farchnad tai yng Nghymru gyfan. Yn ôl Owain: 'Mae 90 mil

o bobl yng Nghymru ar hyn o bryd ar restrau aros ar gyfer tai cymdeithasol ac mae dros 10 mil yn ddigartref mewn llety dros dro'. O ganlyniad i hyn, mae Cymdeithas yr Iaith yn gweld effeithiau diffyg argaeledd tai ar cymunedau leol ar draws y wlad.

Yna yn rhannu eu pryderon dros sefyllfa dai myfyrwyr Caerdydd oedd 'Cymdeithas Plaid Cymru Ifanc Prifysgol Caerdydd' teimlai'r gymdeithas fod diffyg wybodaeth clir a dealltwriaeth am farchnad tai myfyrwyr yn gamarweiniol. Hefyd gwel y gymdeithas effaith y farchnad tai ar ei cymunedau leol ac teimlai llawer na fydd hi'n bosib iddynt ddychwelyd adref yn y dyfodol.

(Tarddiad Dan DeLuca Via Flickr)



JOMEC Cymraeg ar Drothwy Dathlu 10 mlynedd

Efa Ceiri
Pennaeth Taf-od

Ar y 5 Rhagfyr eleni, mae adran Cymraeg ysgol Newyddiaduraeth, Cyfryngau a Diwydiant y brifysgol – JOMEC Cymraeg yn dathlu 10 mlynedd ers sefydlu. Mae JOMEC Cymraeg yn ganolbwynt i holl ddiwylliant newyddiaduraeth y brifysgol ac fel un sydd yn y drydedd flwyddyn yn astudio BA Cymraeg a Newyddiaduraeth, rwyf wedi elwa yn gryf o allu dilyn y modiwlau drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.

Ers degawd bellach, mae JOMEC Cymraeg yn cynnig amrywiaeth eang o fodiwlau sydd yn cynnig cyfoeth o wybodaeth a sgiliau trosglwyddadwy, gan agor drysau i amrywiaeth o yrfaeoddi ym

maesydd newyddiaduraeth, y cyfryngau neu'r tu hwnt. Wrth ddilyn y cwrs drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, mae cyfle i ddilyn modiwlau megis 'Deall Newyddiaduraeth', 'Cymru: Y Senedd, Y Straeon a'r Spin', 'Yr Ystafell Newyddion' a 'Palu am y Gwir'. Mae'r modiwlau hyn i gyd yn ddechrau gwyh i rhywun sydd â diddordeb dilyn trywydd newyddiadurol.

Mae 'Llais y Maes' yn brofiad mae JOMEC Cymraeg yn ei gyn-nig i fyfyrwyr yn flynyddol. Mae'n gyfle i fyfyrwyr fynd ati i ymchwilio, ysgrifennu a golygu straeon sydd yn berthnasol i gynulleidfaoedd ifanc ar faes yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol. Mae'n gyfle gwyh i fyfyrwyr gynhyrchu pecynnau newyddion ac i gael blas ar waith newyddiadurol proffesiynol. Dywedodd Alys-Mai Walters, sydd yn ei thrydedd flwyddyn yn JOMEC Cym-

raeg fod ei phrofiad hi o fod yn rhan o Llais y Maes Eisteddfod Tregaron wedi bod yn 'fythgofiadwy'. "Roedd cael gweithio fel newyddiadurwr mewn gwyl mor bwysig i mi yn sicr yn rhywbeth byddwn yn ei drysori am byth" meddai Alys.

Yn ogystal â hyn, mae myfyrwyr yn cael y cyfle i gynhyrchu podlediadau gan gyfweid â unigolion proffesiynol ym maes newyddiaduraeth a'r cyfryngau. Mae modd gwrandao ar y podlediadau hyn ar gyfrif JOMEC Cymraeg / Y Darlledwyr ar Spotify. Mae sawl gwestai cyfarwydd yn y byd newyddiaduraeth a'r cyfryngau ar gael ar y podlediadau gan gynnwys Manon Stefan Ross, Connagh Howard a Catrin Heledd.

Andrew Weeks a Sian Morgan Lloyd yw arweinyddwr modiwlau JOMEC Cymraeg a gallaf gadarnhau eu bod wastad yn barod i gynnig cymorth ac i'n rhoi ar ben ffordd. Yn sicr mae'r cwrs yn gyfle gwyh i fyfyrwyr ifanc gael y cychwyn gorau mewn gyrfaeoddi yn y maes newyddiaduraeth, diwylliant a chyfathrebu.

“ Mae Caerdydd yn lwcus iawn i gael adran newyddiaduraeth cyfrwng Cymraeg mor gryf. Ymlaen i'r 10 mlynedd nesaf!”

Barn Y Bobl- Yw dechrau Tachwedd yn fuan i feddwl am y Nadolig?

Elan Jones
Blwyddyn 3
Cymraeg

Hysbysebion 'dolig wythnos' gyntaf Tachwedd? Dwi'n siwr y byddai llawer o rieni bron â mynd o'u co pe bawn nhw'n troi'r teledu mlaen ddechrau fis Tachwedd ac yn gweld hysbysebion Nadolig, digwyddiad bron ddau fis i ffordd, wedi'u cyhoeddi – a'r haf newydd ddod i ben. A'u plant yn gweiddi'n gyffrous ar y sgrin yn mynnu i gael sach o anrhegion newydd sbon ddydd Nadolig. Er fy mod yn cydnabod fod gweld yr hysbysebion hyn yn sioc i'r system i lawer o rieni a phobl ar draws y byd, credaf fod hyn yn amser addas a phwrpasol i gyhoeddi'r hysbysebion am nifer o resymau...

Os ydych yn berson trefnus, mae hysbysebion ddechrau fis Tachwedd yn ddelfrydol i chi. Dyma gyfle i fanteisio ar y cyfle i ddod o hyd i'r 'sales' yn y siopau a'r bargenion sydd ar gael ar ein cyfer, cyn i bawb arall gymryd y cyfle!

Heb os, mae'r hysbysebion yma mewn ffordd yn ein helpu i beidio bod yn funud olaf. Er mwyn osgoi'r siom Noswyl Nadolig fod anrheg heb gyrraedd mewn pryd neu ddim ar gael yn y siopau, mae manteisio ar siopa pan fydd yr hysbysebion dolig allan ddechrau fis Tachwedd yn syniad da.

Wedi dweud hyn, efallai y bydd plant ifanc yn mynd yn ddi-amynedd o weld yr hysbysebion yn gynnwys cyn y 'dolig, oherwydd y byddant yn disgwyl a disgwyl am eu anrhegion ond mewn realiti, mae bron dau fis i fynd cyn iddynt gael cyfle i wneud defnydd ohonynt! Heb os nac onibai, mae dwy ochr i'r ddadl ond o ystyried mor fawr mae Gwyl y Nadolig wedi mynd, efallai bod hi'n werth dechrau ar yr ysblander yn gynnwys er mwyn ymlacio a chael amser da gyda theulu a ffrindiau dros yr adeg!



Graddedigion JOMEC Cymraeg yn Diolch

Efa Ceiri
Pennaeth Taf-od

Yn sicr, mae dilyn cwrs JOMEC Cymraeg wedi bod yn fuddiol iawn i lawer o newyddiadurwyr ifanc heddiw sydd bellach yn gweithio gyda corfforaethau megis y BBC, Sky News, Newyddion S4C a llawer llawer mwy.

Yn ôl Meleri Williams, sydd yn ysgrifennu, gohebu, cynhyrchu a cyflwyno yn adran newyddion BBC Cymru ers dwy flynedd bellach, fe gafodd hi "gyfleoedd gwerthfawr iawn wrth astudio yn JOMEC a chymaint yn fwy drwy astudio'n Gymraeg."

Llais y Maes oedd uchafbwynt mwyaf Meleri gan mai dyma'r "cyfle cyntaf i holi gwleidyddion, gohebu ar straeon a pheidio bod ofn mynd i siarad â phobl."

“ Dywedodd Meleri hefyd bod ei dyled yn "fawr iawn i holl staff y Brifysgol!"

Newyddiadurwr talentog arall sydd hefyd yn gyn-fyfyrwr yn JOMEC Cymraeg yw Tomos Evans, sydd bellach yn ohebydd Cymru i Sky News.

Dywedodd Tomos mai dilyn cwrs Cymraeg Jomec "oedd un o'r penderfyniadau gorau i mi ei wneud."

"Rydym ni fel graddedigion yn hynod o ffodus i fod wedi dysgu cymaint gan ddarlithwyr gwybodus a phrofiadol. Tu hwnt i hynny, roeddwn yn ffodus i fanteisio ar gyfleoedd allgyrsiol

gwerthfawr gan gynnwys fod yn rhan o gyfryngau Cymraeg Caerdydd. Dwi'n parhau mewn cyswllt a nifer o'm cyd-raddedigion sydd wedi mynd ati i weithio yn y maes newyddiaduraeth ac yn falch iawn o'u gweld yn llwyddo a thorri tir newydd", meddai Tomos Evans wrth edrych drafod ei gynnod yn y brifysgol.

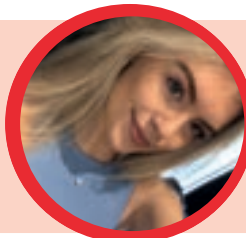
Dywedodd Tomos fod modiwlau fel Y Senedd, Y Straeon a'r Spin "heb os wedi rhoi fi ar ben ffordd cyn dechrau fy ngyrfa newyddiadurol a dwi'n hynod ddiolchgar i griw JOMEC Cymraeg am hynny."

(Tarddiad John Goodman Via Flickr)

“ Hir oes i'r cwrs a phob dymuniad da iddo i'r dyfodol!” Meddai Tomos Evans, Sky News.



Trafod gyda'r Taf-od Elen Morlais



Beth wyt ti'n astudio ac o le wyt ti'n dod?
Dwi'n astudio Cymraeg a Newyddiaduraeth ac yn dod o Gaerdydd

Vodka neu Gin?
Vodka

Beth yw do hoff raglen deledu?
Normal People

Oes gen farn amhoblogaidd?
Mae pinafal ar pítsa yn hollol dderbyniol

Hoff albwm?
O mi awn i am dro - Fleur De Lys

Beth wyt ti'n edrych ymlaen at wneud eleni?
Mynd i Dulyn 'da Gym Gym

Hoff ffilm?
St Trinians 2

Sut wyt ti'n gwella hango-ver?
Diet Coke a ready salted crisps yn sortio bob dim

Hoff gân carioci?
Un ydym ni

Oes gen ti stori embarrassing meddw?
Sdim rili da fiun, er fi yn tueddu i gwmpo i gysgu ar nifer o nosweithie allan sy'n eitha embarrassing!

Mis Codi Ymwybyddiaeth Diabetes

Efa Ceiri
Pennaeth Taf-od

Mae mis Tachwedd yn fis codi ymwybyddiaeth diabetes ac fel un sydd yn byw â'r cyflwr ers bron i bum mlynedd bellach, dyma ychydig ar sut roedd yn rhaid i mi ddygydd mod gyda diabetes yn fy arddegau drwy alaru'r bywyd oedd gen i cyn y diagnosis.

Nos Wener arferol oedd hi i fod y noson honno ym mis Ionawr 2019, ac minnau'n 16 doeddwn i'n poeni am ddim ar y pryd, heb law ambell arholiad ar y gorwel. Ond ychydig oriau'n ddiweddarach wedi i mi orfod mynd i'r ysbytu ar frys, fe ges i ddiagnosis o ddiabetes math 1.

Roeddwn wedi cyrraedd sefyllfa ble'r oedd fy nghorff mewn Keatoacidosis diabetig – cyflwr all arwain at ddisgyn mewn i goma os nad yw'n cael ei drin ar frys.

Treuliais y dyddiau dryslyd nesaf mewn uned ddibyniaeth uchel yn ysbyty Gwynedd yn ceisio dod i delerau gyda'r newid byd dychrynlyd oedd o'm blaen. Gwelais hi'n anodd i dderbyn y ffaith nad oeddwn i bellach yr un person ag oeddwn y blynyddoedd cynt. Er fod fy nghyfnod yn yr ysbyty yn teimlo fel 'fever dream', dwi'n cofio pob manylun fel pe bai'n ddoe.

Hyd heddiw, rwyf yn parhau i deimlo elfen o gwilydd am y peth i fod yn onest, yn enwedig o ystyried y 'stigma' a'r diffyg dealltwriaeth sydd o amgylch diabetes – nid yw diabetes math 1 yn rhywbeth mae rhywun yn ei gael ar ôl bwytâ gormod o siwgr, ac yn nid yw'n rhywbeth mae modd cael gwared ohono.

Mae diabetes math 1 yn gyflwr awtoimiwnedd ble mae'r pancreas yn methu a chreu'r inswlin sydd ei angen i symud glwcos y gwaed i fewn i gelloedd y corff, a'i ddefnyddio ar gyfer egni. Mae'n rhaid i mi chwistrellu inswlin am weddill fy oes er mwyn atal y glwcos rhag casglu yn llif y gwaed

Yn ol elusen JDRE, mae o gwm-pas 400,000 o bobl ym Mhrydain yn byw gyda Diabetes math 1. Mae diagnosis cynnar a rheolaeth dda yn hanfodol er mwyn osgoi cymlethodau.

Y peth cyntaf (a'r gwirionaf) dwi'n cofio ei wneud yn yr ysbyty wedi cywed y newyddion oedd darllen am y cymlethodau sy'n gallu codi o ddiabetes math 1. Mae'r rhestr yn un hir a nid ydw i'n argymhell i neb wneud hynny ar ol derbyn diagnosis o'r fath.

“Wedi'r diagnosis, dwi'n cofio teimlo fel fy mod i wedi colli rhan ohonaf, ryw elfen o ryddid ac fy mod yn gwbl ar ben fy hun.”

Heb os, mae'n gallu bod yn gyflwr hynod o unig ar adegau ac mae'n anodd edrych yn ôl ar y blynyddoedd ble'r oeddwn yn byw bywyd hollol wahanol, ble nad oedd angen i mi orfod meddwl am faint o inswlin sydd angen i swpar.

Ond, er y newid byd, dwi'n ceisio peidio gadael i'r cyflwr fy nal yn ôl rhag byw bywyd llawn – dwi'n sicr wedi cyflawni cymaint â phawb arall sydd o'm cwm-pas.

Credaf ei fod yn bwysig i unrhyw un byw â'r cyflwr i gyd-nabod pan mor anodd ydyw ar adegau. Nid oes dianc ohono ac mae'n rhywbeth trwm i orfod deffro pob bore yn gwybod ei fod arnoch chi i aros yn fyw.



Llywydd ac Is-Ganghellor Newydd i Brifysgol Caerdydd

Efa Ceiri
Pennaeth Taf-od

Ers dechrau'r flwyddyn academaidd, mae Prifysgol Caerdydd wedi croesawu Llywydd ac is-ganghellor newydd, yr Athro Wendy Larner. Cyn ymuno â ni yma yng Nghaerdydd, roedd yr Athro Wendy Larner yn gweithio fel Profost yn Te Herenga Waka sef Prifysgol Victoria Wellington yn Seland Newydd. Yn ôl gwefan Prifysgol Caerdydd, mae'r Llywydd a'r is-ganghellor yn cael ei disgrifio fel 'gwyddonydd cymdeithasol uchel ei pharch yn rhyngwladol' ac ei bod hi'n 'frwd dros gefnogi a hyrwyddo cydweithwyr ar ddechrau eu gyrfa'.

Nôl ym mis Mai eleni, penodwyd yr Athro Elwen Evans KC fel y fenyw cyntaf i fod yn is-ganghellor

Dyma'r Is-Ganghellor benywaidd cyntaf yma ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd, ac yn ôl yr Athro, roedd hi'n 'hen bryd' cael menyw wrth y llyw.

ym Mhrifysgol Cymru a Prifysgol Cymru y Drindod Dewi Sant.

Fel rhan o'i swydd, mae gwefan Prifysgol Caerdydd yn nodi bod Athro Larner yn gyfrifol am arweinyddiaeth a rheolaeth gyffredinol y Brifysgol, cynnal safonau rhagorol o atebolrwydd ar draws y Brifysgol a safonau rhagorol o lywodraethu corfforaethol, yn ogystal â atebolrwydd i'r Senedd am ddefnydd o gronfeydd y Brifysgol.

Yn ychwanegol i hyn, mae hi hefyd yn gyfrifol am egni ariannol ac academaidd cyffredinol y Brifysgol ac mae hi eisioes wedi datgan bod trefn ariannu prifysgolion 'wedi torri'. Mae hi eisioes yn galw am newid o ran y ffordd y mae sefydliad ariannu prifysgolion yn gweithio. Yn ôl BBC Cymru Fyw, mae'r Athro Larner wedi dweud y bydd 'sgwrs fawr' gyda staff a myfyrwyr am ddyfodol Prifysgol Caerdydd er mwyn 'bod yn wahanol ar gyfer y dyfodol'.

Golygai hyn y bydd siawns o dorri'n ôl ar weithredoedd y brifysgol, yn ôl yr Athro, a oedd yn cydnabod bod y pandemig a'r cynydd

costau byw yn golygu cyfnodau 'anodd' i fyfyrwyr. Ar hyn o'r bryd, mae myfyrwyr cartref, sydd yn astudio yng Nghymru yn gorfod talu £9,000 y flwyddyn, ble mae'n ddisgwyliedig i fyfyrwyr sydd yn astudio yn Lloegr dalu £9,250. Fel ymateb, dywedodd llefarydd ar ran Llywodraeth Cymru eu bod yn "ymgysylltu'n rheolaidd ac yn adeiladol â'r sector ynghylch model cynialadwy ar gyfer Addysg Uwch."

Ydych chi'n cytuno â Llywydd ac is-ganghellor newydd y brifysgol bod angen newid sefydliad ariannu prifysgolion yma yng Nghymru?

(Tarddiad: Via Flickr)





Cardiff
Students'
Union

Undeb
Myfyrwyr
Caerdydd

AGM

*Debate and determine the
direction of the Students' Union*

17:30 Thursday 23rd November

*Scan to
find out
more*



The Great Hall, 1st floor

Behind the Numbers

Understanding the epidemic of sexual violence.

A joint statement from students and societies involved with the campaign.

We have spoken for the need for a collective consensus on this issue. Not just the desire, but the need for representation and intersectionality to champion this movement.

We stand together in our respective groups, and we stand with you to advocate for a better and safer Cardiff for all free from the fear of rape culture.

It is clear that the current systems are not working. You do not need statistics to know that you just need to listen.

The systems in place are

not representative of marginalised communities. This is not about ticking boxes of charters but being proactive and engaged with change.

It is about owning up to past failures. Acknowledging wrongdoing and believing survivors who for so long have told you that this is not working. It is time to right these wrongs, it is time for official statements and apologies, it is time to move away from the victim blaming narrative and complacency- it is time for change.

All victims, survivors or

any student for that matter must feel safe within the University which is being lost due to the wilful neglect of the institution in their legal duties of care to students.

The University has a chance to do better, to stand for not just the perfect victim but for every student, to recognise the institutional failings by the investigatory measures in place and to stamp out the increasing rape culture we see as the University continues to fail us.

Every word written in this has come from a place of

necessity for you to do better. We need you to hear us Cardiff University, we need you to not be bystanders and be part of the solution. The time is now, students past and present have waited long enough for action and we can't wait anymore.

We thank each and every one of you for your support and for your kindness with our cause. We are so proud to be part of this Cardiff community, we hope you are too. We look forward to you joining us for change-together.

We all deserved and deserve better. We know it,



Cardiff Feminist Society

The Stats, the Stories, the Truth and the Reality

Becca Rumsey, Emily Carr and Bethia Tucker breaks down the data from the FOI.

When you look at these numbers, we want you to look at the people around you. In your house, in your team, in your lecture hall, or the people around you in the SU smoking area.

Look at these people and then look back at these statistics. How many people in that room could be represented by these statistics?

Is it the 3-4 next to you? Is it half the room? Could it be everyone there?

That is the reality of these statistics.

And these are those statistics alone. Look around again at the people in your life, what about your life? How many people do you know who have had an experience with

sexual violence?

Is it the 3-4 next to you? Is it half the room? Is it every single person you know?

We want you to remember that these statistics tell only half of the grim reality of Cardiff University students. Not everyone reports, for whatever reason. In fact, the majority do not. I know I did not. You do not have to report to be seen or believed. We believe you.

When we use these statistics, we are showing people physical evidence of an epidemic of sexual violence in Cardiff. But when we show these statistics, you need to know that the scale of this issue is not quantifiable. This cannot be fathomed by numbers alone

These statistics, they are not just numbers. But stories of individuals.

Stories that were told.

The stories of those untold and unspoken. The stories you yourself may hold. The stories of the people you love. In the place that you love.

Cardiff University is a place we love, it is a place that has given us lifelong friends and a place that will always be dear to our hearts; however, we cannot ignore the culture around us any longer. We cannot ignore stories both unspoken and spoken.

The Time to Act campaign is one that was born for the necessity of students to have better. We saw students all throughout Cardiff being failed by the institutions around them as they weren't protecting, preventing, or even trying to eradicate

sexual misconduct from campus.

The ideas that have been proposed for future implementation all concern how the institution can do better for us, it sets out realistic goals and expectations of what we need to see the University do. It's not enough these words alone, it is time we take a stand, it's time to act.

Over 2,000 of you have engaged with the 'Cardiff University, it's time to act' post, and quickly rising. That is over 2,000 people calling for action. That is over 2,000 people ready for change.

That is your housemates, your team, your lecture hall, the people next around in the SU smoking area. That is the people in your community. That is you.



Emily Carr



Emily Hasling



Ishani Patwal



Daisy Tipping



Becca Rumsey

Moving Cardiff Forward

The Womens Officer, Daisy Tipping, gives her thoughts on the statistics.

These statistics are damning for Cardiff, but this doesn't mean that change cannot be made. The University has prided itself on its zero tolerance approach to sexual Violence, and I do believe that we could get to this point which is why I have authored a proposal directly to the university titled 'Empathy in Action: A Proposal for Comprehensive Reform in the Treatment of Sexual Violence Victims'. This motion, as suggested in the title, will focus on victims treatment, on increasing punishments for students who are found to of sexually assaulted, for the currents systems to be investi-

gated, and for systems to be put in place to actively support victims in their healing process as well as others. This proposal will be available on the Womens Officer Instagram page, @womensofficercsu and hopefully on the SU webpage.

This, however, is only the start. Students should not have to be victims, Sexual Violence is a larger societal issue, but Cardiff can do its part on finding proactive preventative measures to ensure that students are safe. These may include: compulsory bystander and consent training, encouraging a culture of responsibility; promoting of consent culture that emphasises the importance of clear, enthusiastic consent in relationships which stats in orientation programmes and goes further throughout students time at cardiff; establishing further community partnerships to collaborate with the local government and

businesses to address sexual violence across cardiff as a whole, and support and introduce preventative measures across campus. The most important part of this is for there to be consistent climate surveys, and constant open communication with students, policies will only work when they are matching student experiences, and transparency is the way forward.

I look forward to seeing how Cardiff improves, as the proverb goes 'The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.' Mistakes have been made,

By moving forward with empathy and transparency we can see a Cardiff we can be proud of"

Daisy Tipping
Womens's Officer

DISCLOSURES MADE RELATING TO THE 3 CATEGORIES OF SEXUAL ABUSE OR VIOLENCE

Academic Year	Unwanted Sexual Contact	Sexual Assault	Rape	Total	Referrals Recorded
2017-18	54	76	49	179	187
2018-19	62	67	28	157	244
2019-20	77	55	48	179	438
2020-21	47	55	35	137	575
2021-22	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA	699

REFERRALS MADE TO THE DRT AND PERMANENT EXCLUSION AS A SANCTION

Academic Year	Referrals Recorded	Students Permanently Excluded
2017-18	187	1
2018-19	244	0
2019-20	438	0
2020-21	575	0
2021-22	699	NO DATA

Students should not have to be victims, Sexual Violence is a larger societal issue, but Cardiff can do its part on finding proactive preventative measures"

Supporting victims and survivors:
Graphs from FOI Data



Moving Cardiff Forward: Source: Reading Tom (via Flickr)

The importance of intersectionality in understanding victimhood



Sharon Ng'ang'a
Ishani Patwal

For rape culture to flourish, doubt, disbelief and degradation of victims and/or survivors must be the norm. In opposition to this, the phrase 'believe survivors' gained popularity, however, the question remains which survivors are we being called to believe?

As our sisters in the Black feminist Combahee River Collective have taught us, all systems of oppression are interlocking and interdependent. As such,

“POC and LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to be exposed to stigmatisation, prejudice and discrimination, and the aid they have avail-

white supremacy, queerphobia and transphobia are pervasive within rape culture and further skew who we believe to be real victims, real survivors.

The position of all victims as a disadvantaged group is further amplified when they hold places in multiple marginalised identities. People of colour (POC) and LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to be exposed to stigmatisation, prejudice and discrimination, and the aid they have available following these instances is often in itself tinged with prejudice. Where cisgender heterosexual white women may face gender discrimination and sexual violence, and could then report it to a human resources department, the police, her boss – these avenues are much less accessible for POC and LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly as they have historically faced institutional

discrimination and power imbalances from the very people who are meant to aid them. Negative experience with the law, culture in the workplace, and lack of culturally competent resources are some of the reasons why POC and LGBTQ+ survivors feel that reporting sexual violence is not an option for them. The scale of this is oftentimes not fully comprehensible to cisgender heterosexual white people, and for POC and LGBTQ+ individuals, this leads to a different perception of their communities and the support they have available to them. When their positions as survivors and POC, or members of the LGBTQ+ community, (or both), overlap, it makes for an environment that is extremely isolating and unsupportive.

This isolation and lack of support is only furthered by the fact that the primary face of anti-sexual violence activ-

“Push back against the doubt, disbelief and degradation of all victims and survivors.”

ism, in that those believed to be the primary victims and survivors of sexual violence, are cisgender heterosexual white women. We too often forget that sexual violence has long been used as a tool of colonial subjugation against non-white indigenous people. We too often leave unaddressed the “curative” and punitive sexual violence faced by our queer and trans siblings. The fight against sexual violence and rape culture must be intersectional. We must move those at the margins to the centre as the Combahee River Collective and countless others have stated: once the most marginalised of us are free, then all of us will be free as all systems of oppression and their supporting ide-

691

Reported cases of sexual misconduct from 2017-2021

No Public Data

Prior to 2017

1 Expulsion

From 2017 - 2021

No Data

Individual data not recorded after 2021

Survivorship in Cardiff

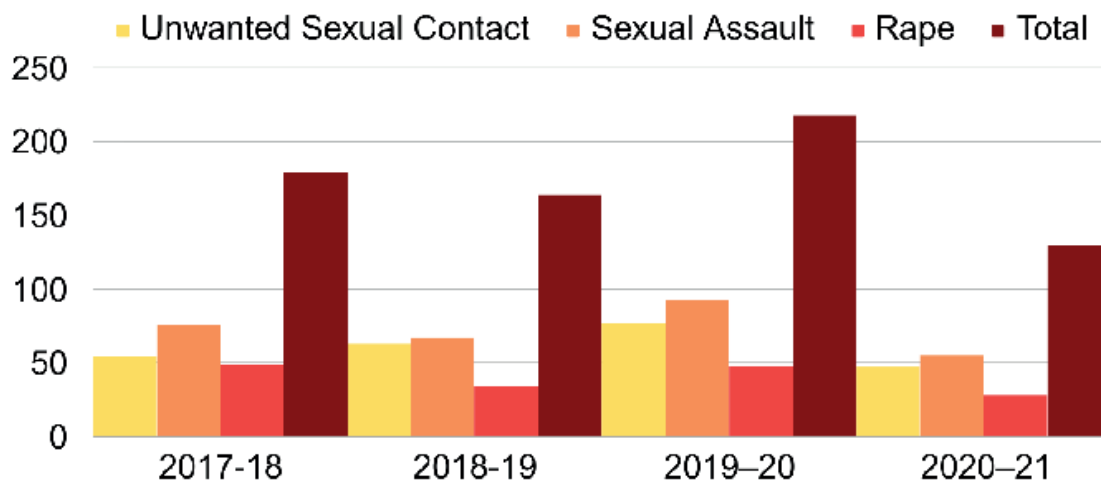
The damage of statistics for survivors and the impact of the University's response.

Emily Hasling
Contributor

The statistics that have been released in relation to sexual violence at Cardiff University are truly harrowing, as an institution it is evident that there has been complicity and a lack of action. The statistics, which show that 0.3% of reports have resulted in an expulsion or suspension, are distressing to students across Cardiff University, and are particularly damaging to survivors and ideas of survivorship.

If the statistics weren't debilitating enough for students and survivors, the university's response has only worsened the situation. The university claim to be looking to 'find ways to improve' and yet did not manage to apologise to victims in their response once. For survivors this is the bleak reality, a lack of acknowledgement, responsibility or action by the institution which is incredibly harmful. With survivors not feeling able to come forward and the downplay of the severity of the

“Those from marginalised communities, who are disproportionately impacted by sexual violence,”



Visualising the Data: Disclosures made relating to the three categories of sexual violence.

situation, it is evident why students feel angry and neglected by these statistics. Within the university's response, there is mention of their work with South Wales Police, although this is in relation to the University and not the Student's Union, it is critical that we do not diminish the student voice from the 2022 AGM; in which students overwhelmingly voted to have a bare minimum police presence on campus, via the 'Cops Off Campus' motion. This is not to say that all students or survivors do not want to interact with police, however many students feel unsafe

with police presence – events such as Sarah Everard's murder in 2021 as well as South Wales Police's crimes including the substantial records of violence against women, police brutality, racism and corruption over several decades. Those from marginalised communities, who are disproportionately impacted by sexual violence, oftentimes do not feel comfortable engaging with the police and thus the university's response is wildly unhelpful for many as well as dismissive.

However, despite the university's

lack of action, as seen with the statistics, we must not dismiss the incredible work of students – especially that of third-year Law student, Hannah Norman. Hannah set up the Student Led Service, Stronger Together which supports survivors in collaboration with Cardiff Women's Aid. Holding weekly meetings, the Stronger Together committee provide space sessions on a range of topics relating to sexual violence. The safe space provides survivors a supportive environment to share their stories, obtain support and find resources as well as providing others a

“We must not dismiss the incredible work of students – especially that of third-year Law student, Hannah Norman.”

space to learn how to support friends and family. Stronger Together run weekly sessions 3-5pm on Thursdays in the Student's Union.

There is so much more to be done, and we are disappointed that students and survivors have had to take it upon themselves to create accessible spaces, instead of the university providing genuine support.



Bethia
Tucker



Sharon
Ng'ang'a

Support available for people who have experienced sexual violence

Here are some support networks:

Rape Crisis - Call 0808 500 2222 or visit <https://247sexualabusesupport.org.uk> to chat online or find out more about this service [England and Wales]

The Survivors Trust-Call 0808 801 0818 or visit <https://www.survivorsuk.org/> you can also email them on helpline@thesurvivorstrust.org

Live Fear Free-<https://gov.wales/live-fear-free>
Phone: 0808 80 10 800 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Text: 07 860 077 333 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) Wales and Welsh Speaking

National Online Helpline for Male Survivors-
Live chat, SMS and email support:
<https://www.survivorsuk.org/>
England and Wales rape crisis line: 08085002222

@ RAPE CRISIS WEBSITE
Victim support England and Wales
08 08 16 89111

Live fear free helpline: 0808 80 10800
BAWSO in Wales for survivors from ethnic minorities: 0800 731 8147

Now and Then': The last Beatles' song

Dilichi Dieobi
Head of News

Sixty years after the Beatles released their first single, the infamous band has dropped their final track. 'Now and Then', originally a five-minute piano solo demo recorded by John Lennon, was released earlier this month, on November 2nd. With today's fascinating technological advancements, remaining band members Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr were able to use artificial intelligence to isolate Lennon's vocals from the noisy tape and include George Harrison's guitar tracks. In 1995 Harrison, McCartney and Starr did attempt to finish the song as they reunited to work on new songs that would be released on the band's Anthology albums. They were able to successfully complete 'Free as a Bird' and 'Real Love' as they layered new ar-

rangements over Lennon's old demos. They attempted to do the same with 'Now and Then', but they were unable due to poor sound quality. Progress and development on this song eventually stopped as McCartney said in a mini documentary that "John's demo tape the piano was a little hard to hear. And in those days, of course, we didn't have the technology to do the separation". After Harrison's death in 2001, there was further doubt that song would ever be released. However, artificial intelligence has been able to fix this.

Thanks to director Peter Jackson and his team, a technology was developed that enabled them to take any musical piece, including age-old demos and separate the various components based on machine learning. This technology was created earlier this decade when Jackson was working on his Get Back

documentary for Disney Plus. McCartney and Starr saw this as their chance to "make a proper record" of 'Now and Then'. Alongside Lennon's vocals and Harrison's guitar tracks, producer Giles Martin composed a string arrangement similar to what his father (Sir George Martin) "would've done in the old days". Then Martin, McCartney, and Starr's recordings from earlier this year were all added to complete the song.

The song was released with the band's first single 'Love Me Do' as a B-side. McCartney stated in an interview that "John's voice [is] crystal clear. It's quite emotional. And we all play on it, it's a genuine Beatle's recording." Despite some anxiety and discomfort from fans, everyone who was involved with the project is fully comfortable with how 'Now and Then' came together. Suffice it to say that with-

out AI this ultimate Beatles track would have remained hidden in the Then, never to be heard Now.

Source: George M. Groutas
(Via: Flickr)



Iceland PM joins strike on gender pay gap and gender based violence

Imogen Edmonds
Contributor

On Tuesday 24th October, thousands of women across Iceland decided to strike for the day. Protesting the gender pay gap and gender-based violence, women stopped both paid and unpaid work to make a stand. This included Prime Minister, Katrín Jakobsdóttir, who refused to call a cabinet meeting on the day, stating that she was prioritising 'showing solidarity with Icelandic women' and expected her female colleagues to also take part in the strike. In 2018, 'the Republic of Iceland

became the first country in the world to require companies to pay all employees an equal salary for jobs of equal value or under the same roles, regardless of their gender, ethnicity or sexuality'. However, despite Iceland's relatively progressive reputation with regards to women's rights, organisers of the strike claimed that women's work still remains undervalued and underpaid; this is evident as Icelandic women still earn 21% less than men in some professions. Figures also show that gender-based violence also still persists, with more than 2/5 of women in Iceland having experienced gender based or sex-

ual violence in their lifetime. The strike demanded action against this, calling for greater emphasis on those who commit these crimes, as well as the closing of the gender pay gap, by disclosing the salaries of workers in female dominated professions. The strike had an impact on various services and institutions. Some preschools, primary schools, museums, city libraries, and zoos were affected by the strike, with closures and reduced services. Hospitals, despite the majority of their employees being female, continued to provide emergency services and urgent surgeries. However, Runólfur

Pálsson, the director of a hospital where over 80% of employees are women, said that some activities were reduced to allow as many staff as possible to participate in the strike. This is the first women's all-day strike since 1975, when 25,000 people protested in the country's capital, Reykjavík, to highlight the crucial work of women which contributes greatly to Iceland's economy and society, and to protest gender pay gaps and marginalisation in the workplace. However, the demand for women's work to be valued equally to that of their male counterparts persists 48 years on.

ELSEWHERE IN NEWS

Teacher who waved placard depicting Rishi Sunak and Suella Braverman as coconuts interviewed by police.

Israeli troops enter Gaza's largest hospital after gun battle at gates.



Welsh course on Duolingo to be paused: What does this mean for the welsh-speaking community?

Selma Vikene Braarud
Contributor

Starting this November, the popular language learning app Duolingo will no longer continue updating its Welsh language courses. The Welsh language course has been used over 2 million times since it first launched on Duolingo in 2016, but now users fear that the course will stagnate.

From 2016 up until 2021, the course was entirely written and maintained by volunteers such as language tutor Richard Morse. However, the responsibility for maintaining the course was later transferred to the National Centre for Learning Welsh. Spokesperson from Duolingo assures users that the course will remain free and available on the app. However, updates will be indefinitely

paused as no new material for the course will be created by the National Centre for Learning Welsh from this November onward.

Many people have been using the course on Duolingo as a means to connect to their roots and embrace Welsh culture, both inside and outside of Wales.

However, despite Duolingo's repeated claims that they are committed to preserving and platforming indigenous and endangered languages, they have stated that they will shift their focus and utilise their resources to expand and develop the high-demand language courses such as German, French and Spanish, instead prioritising a wider UK and international user base and more popular languages. Although, in 2020 Welsh has, according to Duolingo themselves,

become the fastest growing language in the UK.

Furthermore, Duolingo has been a tool to help the Welsh government reach its goals of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. As a less commonly spoken language, it has fewer accessible and free learning resources available for those who wish to begin learning or those who wish to maintain their Welsh skills. The pausing of the Welsh Duolingo course will undoubtedly have an impact on whether the Welsh government can reach its goal by 2050.

Naturally, the decision has been met with backlash. A petition addressed to the First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford, has been created to urge him to intervene and encourage Duolingo to reconsider its decision on pausing the Welsh language course. The petition currently

has over 3600 signatures but is still far from reaching its goal of 10000 signatures.

Jeremy Miles, the Welsh government's minister for education and the Welsh language, has already reached out to Duolingo asking them to continue developing the course, reaffirming the course's importance in helping the Welsh government reach its target for a million Welsh speakers by 2050. Duolingo has responded to Jeremy Miles as well as reached out to Tech minister Alex Davies Jones, who also contacted Duolingo due to concerns, stating they are hopeful they can potentially continue developing the language course sometime in the future. However, Duolingo has not made any firm commitment to creating any new material or other updates for the course as of now.

Who is George Santos and why is he in trouble?

Tom Nicholson
Contributor

Trust is a commodity that should not be undervalued in politics. Unfortunately for George Santos, congressman for the state of New York, public trust has decreased dramatically.

As the first openly gay Republican politician to secure a seat in the House of Representatives as a non-incumbent, his victory was a triumph for diversity. However, his brief career in politics has called into question the authenticity of who he says he is.

Firstly, his resume; Santos has claimed he attended New York University, worked on Wall Street for Goldman Sachs, was a professional volleyball player and owns 13 properties. However, The New York Times recently discovered that there is no evidence to support Santos's claims, putting his qualifications into a shadow of doubt.

Then, his heritage, family and beliefs. Santos sparked more controversy when he stated that his grandparents fled antisemitism in Europe due to them being Jewish. He has also stated that he is a "proud American Jew". However, there is no evidence to suggest that his grandparents fled Europe, and when questioned about his faith, he has stated that he was "Jew-ish, when in reality, he is Catholic.

If this was not enough, he claims his mother was in the south tower of the World Trade Centre on 9/11 - this was debunked. Moreover, his claim that he was a donor to help produce the infamous Spider-man musical on Broadway was also lie.

The lies Santos spread about himself do not stop here though. The congressman also faces federal charges including two counts of wire fraud, conspiracy to commit offences against the United States, two counts of aggravated identity theft, and two counts of making false statements to the Federal Election Commission.

He has pleaded not guilty to all accusations and has acknowledged that he is a "terrible liar", unusual for an active politician. He has also allegedly laundered campaign funds for personal expenses, claimed unemployment benefits illegally and reported non-existent loans to his campaign.

Despite his controversial time as a politician and current legal turmoil, the House of Representatives did not expel him when they had the opportunity to do so. Only 5 congressmen have ever been expelled by the house after they were convicted of federal charges. Santos's survival has allowed him to sponsor a controversial bill to make the AR-15 the "national gun of the United States" and has given him the opportunity to cast the deciding vote on the Republican bill to raise the nation's debt ceiling.

The House of Representatives may have faith in Santos, but his constituents don't. It has been reported that a staggering 80% want him to resign.

With his trial set for the 9th of September 2024, George Santos not only has to worry about the courtroom but also public scrutiny, with many questioning his integrity and identity. His political future is uncertain and unstable - it is up to the one million New Yorkers whom he represents to decide if he should continue after his past exaggerations of the truth.

Source: Trong Khiem Nguyen (Via: Flickr)



Why is India considering a 70-hour working week?

Megan Huws
Editor

Narayana Murthy, co-founder of Infosys has been met with controversy due to his advocacy for young people to work 70 hours a week, in an attempt to increase India's productivity. Infosys, a prominent company specializing in software development, maintenance, and independent validation services for various sectors, has long been associated with the technological advancements driving India's economic growth. This 70-hour work week, which works out as working over full-time for 6 days a week, is supported by many in an effort to increase productivity. This can be seen through MP Manish Tewari on X (formerly Twitter), who explained that he regularly works hours longer than 70 hours a week. He explained that 'If India has to truly become a great power one or even two generations have to make 70 hours a week their work ethic.' However, many people have found this claim controversial, as a 70-hour work week could lead to burnout, reduced productivity and negatively impact employee's work-life balance. According to the International Labour Organisation, Indian workers currently work an average of 47.7 hours a week, which is higher than other Asian countries such as 46.1 hours in

China and 42.6 in Singapore. This debate is starkly contrasted in Western countries, where there is an increase in focus upon employee's mental and physical health, which has promoted talk of a 4-day work week. This contrast in focuses is echoed by the current average, in which the UK works 35.9 hours a week and German workers at an average of 35.9 hours a week. This contrast emphasises a cultural difference in focus upon the countries productivity versus the individual worker's well-being. As both sides have valid reasons for the length of their work week, it is up to the individual managers to decide what hours they think is best. This debate, with a large range of potential hours highlights the need for finding a middle ground that acknowledges both the importance of productivity but also employee welfare to find a compromise that works well for everyone.

Source: Optimal Power (Via: Flickr)



Kenyan Holiday aims to plant 100 million trees

David-Owain Leah
Editor

Kenya has gained a special holiday which aims to encourage "each and every Kenyan, to their own initiative" to help the government reach their ambitious goal of planting 15 billion trees in the next decade.

Kenyan Environment Minister, Soipan Tuyu, hopes to encourage Kenyans to plant at least 2 seedlings, which she hopes will to the 100 million target. In 2022, the Global Carbon Budget released data showing Kenya has contributing 0.05% of Global Carbon emissions, so, by making 150 million seeds available in public nurseries the Kenyan Government hopes to tackle the climate crisis and their carbon footprint despite it being considerably lower than countries such as the UK, US and China.

The government are monitoring the scheme with the Jazza Miti App which they hope will boost engagement through in-app activities such as the opportunities to record their activities, including the date and time, date and species of tree planted. Not only this, but the environment ministry said the app will recommend appropriate seedlings by matching their site and location with appropriate tree species. Commenting on the initial success of the scheme and app, Ms Tuyu, the first Massai woman to hold Office in Kenya, told local TV that there had already been 2 million registrations on the app by Sunday (12th November).

The effects of the climate crisis have been widespread and lethal in the East African nation, as it is currently grappling with the aftermath the El Niño rains which decimated the north eastern region of the country in particular, leading to dozens of deaths with even more displaced. Last month the

OCHA- the UNs Humanitarian agency- warned that the Horn of Africa would be likely to receive heavier rainfall than normal during the months of October and November. For this reason, it was announced that planting of the seedlings would not be happening in the north eastern regions

Whilst many Kenyans, as well as many in the international community, have praised the initiative of Tuyu and the Kenyan Government, there have been concerns regarding the scheme and its holiday. Despite supporting the initiative on a broader scale, environmentalist Teresa Muthoni Maina Gitonga, had concerns regarding the organisation, stating it wasn't implemented in a way that would ensure everyone was planting trees. On this issue, that said "many people have to continue with their work to put food on the table [...] it is coming at a time when our economy is not doing well so a lot of people are struggling financially".

The Kenyan environmentalist also criticised the type of trees made available in the public nurseries were exotic, noting that "it is very important to plant the right trees in the right place".

The government has also been increasingly condemned for their apparent hypocrisy for championing tree planting despite failing to tame illegal tree logging in the public forest. Despite recently lifting the ban on logging, Tuyu said in her broadcast on Sunday that only commercial forests will be affected by the recent lifting of the ban. Commercial forests make up 5% of Kenyan woodland

Despite criticism, the Government said the planting will continue after the holiday, with aims of planting 500 million trees by the end of the December rainy season.

The life of Matthew Perry: Commemorating his impact

Adam Gaston
Contributor

The 28th October 2023 is a day many lovers of popular sitcom 'Friends', and those helped by Matthew Perry's activism on addiction will mourn. A day where a much-loved actor, friend, and television personality sadly passed away in his home in Los Angeles, California. Obviously, many reading this story and have tuned into the coverage of his passing will recognise Perry for his iconic role as 'Chandler Bing' in 'Friends'. Here his stardom was actualised as he featured for ten years on the show, capturing the hearts and minds of those entertained by his sarcastic yet charming character. Perhaps for many, he felt like a friend of their own. However, to commemorate his impact as merely an actor on a popular show would do a disservice to a man who despite his troubles with substance abuse, used his platform for good to help people, who like himself,

suffer from addiction.

Perry was widely considered as a comedic 'genius' which is certainly a phrase fitting of his acting career. "As a teenager Perry moved to Hollywood with the hope of reconnecting with his father" who had left the family to start an acting career himself. Here, Perry began to enjoy acting, scouted initially by director William Richert as he was 'charming a bunch of young women'. Richert left him a note offering him a role in the film A Night in the Life of Jimmy Reardon in 1988 (Source: The Guardian - 2023). The film was Perry's film debut with other roles coming in tv series such as 'Boys Will Be Boys' and CBS sitcom 'Sydney'. His big break and starring performance came in the hit sitcom Friends which first aired in 1994 with Perry playing Chandler Bing, A wise cracking, quick witted, self-deprecating character. A helpless romantic until he fell for his "lobster" Monica, to create one of the most iconic couples in TV history. His deadpan delivery and relentless sarcasm had and still has audiences in

stitches still to this day. There is no denying, his portrayal of Chandler is a masterpiece.

However, away from the limelight, the actor had his problems. An alcoholic for a significant chunk of his life; he had his first drink at the age of 14, and then became addicted to painkillers after his first pill prescribed after a jet ski accident in 1997. Perry described himself as a 'ready-made, just add water addict'. (Source: The Guardian 2023). He once famously claimed he couldn't even remember filming series 3 to 6 of 'Friends' and in the later seasons of the show he was routinely drunk, high or hungover on set, prompting concern from his co-stars with the entire cast attempting to stage an intervention. His struggles still continued when the show finished in 2004. His career continued of course, but would never hit the height Friends did. In January 2022, he underwent his fourteenth surgery relating to his drug addiction.

Despite his struggles, it is important to remember that Perry did not let his addiction define his legacy. The actor worked hard to

destigmatise substance abuse disorder speaking openly about his own experience, which has in turn helped others. His advocacy work culminated in his book released in 2022, a memoir titled Friends, Lovers, and the Big Terrible thing where Perry "detailed his sobriety and relapses with substances". Perry was a relatable figure and helped many through his openness about his struggles.

Whether as an addict or not, both in his role as an incredibly talented actor on 'Friends' or through his advocacy work, Matthew Perry has touched the hearts of many people and left a legacy worth remembering. To conclude, here is a quote from the man himself when asked how he would like to be remembered during a Q&A with Tom Power in 2022: "The best thing about me, bar none, is if someone comes up to me and says, 'I can't stop drinking, can you help me?' I can say yes and follow up and do it. I've said this for a long time, when I die, I don't want Friends to be the first thing that's mentioned, I want that to be the first thing that's mentioned."



Welcome to Opinion

The Right to Protest is in a Dark Place

MJ Tomlin
Contributor

It's a very recent phenomenon for peaceful protests to be demonised in the way they are right now. The crackdown by the British state and much of our national media on our freedom to protest is also disproportionately targeted at causes which those at the top don't favour. In the autumn of 2000, lorry drivers and farmers blockaded oil terminals, refineries and petrol stations, bringing the country to a near-standstill. There was consensus that these blockades were 'legal', and they were supported by the Conservative party and national media such as the Express and The Times. These protests were over fuel duty, and despite the habit of New Labour governments to infringe on some civil liberties, emergency measures were put in place for the police and army to work around the protests instead of breaking them. Soon after, the government conceded some ground on the issue of fuel duty. The ideas of mass arresting protestors or injunctions on oil infrastructure (which mean prison if broken) were viewed as overreaches of the law. Its worrying that only two decades later, there has been a massive shift away from that attitude. Today, Extinction Rebellion (XR) and Just Stop Oil (JSO) haven't managed a protest which comes close to the disruption of those fuel protests, yet they are clamped down on by the British state and national media far more. The reaction over the past three years to XR and JSO has seen thousands of arrests and over one hundred imprisonments. This has been added to by the criminalization of mass trespass, noisy protests, and gluing or handcuffing yourself to anything in protest (illegalising past actions by the suffragettes and football fans). The unprecedented use of injunctions has also been wielded to stop blockades of oil refineries by JSO last year. The latter prompted JSO's move to slow marches, which have been common for years and don't prompt hysteria when used by many causes, yet are decried on social media

by The Sun, among others, when JSO organise them. Furthermore, hundreds of ULEZ cameras in Greater London have been vandalised or destroyed this year, but only five related arrests are listed on the Metropolitan Police's website, and there's no sign of injunctions. The way UK Government ministers respond to non-violent protest also seems ideological; Deputy Conservative Chairman Lee Anderson advocated the decency of anti-asylum seeker protests outside hotels, despite such protests often having proudly far-right organisers and arrests for missile-throwing at one in the month before his statement. Yet, in April this year Anderson decried the Met Police Chief in a Parliamentary select committee for not clearing Parliament Square of a peaceful protest he didn't like, and has previously called for water cannons to be used on XR. Today our civil liberties are being threatened more than any other time in recent history. How badly this affects you depends on if the political leaders and senior journalists of the day side with your cause. The UK Government and their supportive media outlets are currently against protests from the climate movement, as well as Palestinians, Black Lives Matter and others, in an attempt to deter us from supporting these causes and from holding them accountable in the streets.



Richard Ashurst - Flickr

Are you TikTok pretty?

Meg Jenkins
Opinion Editor

Put at the top of the ever-growing list of ways to climb to the top of the tik tok ladder is almost a cliché. A consensus has reached the ways in which you can be 'tik tok pretty'. As opposed to the Eurocentric beauty standards already perpetuated by the media, 'tik tok' pretty seems to be a level above the rest. Characteristically, it's described as someone hyper conventional to what we already consider 'pretty'. The people labelled by this arbitrary tag are often young girls, adorned for nothing more than the way they look. Although this is not a new phenomenon, I wouldn't be delusional in reminiscing in a brief period, where feminism became trendy, and body positivity was an everyday Instagram slogan (the trendiness of this being an issue in itself). Much like the 'fox eyes', 'heather', standard pretty, 'popular pretty', TikTok users continually categorise, label and analyse the faces they are presented with, adoring those who they believe to be worthy. In the name of #girl power, it's our duty to lift each other up, but we slowly drift further and further towards awarding the best in show likes, comments, sponsors, while almost unknowingly projecting the same beauty standards we've tried to dispel for decades.

According to more recent research the viewing of these idealised body images, a representation of a minority of body types, increased dissatisfaction and low mood and increased women's self-objectification. Self-objectification is where a woman views herself in the third person, placing 'a greater value on their physical appearance over other aspects of themselves'. TikTok's content however is entirely created by individuals, so how much can we really prevent poor representation. The lack of representation online spans across multiple areas. Race, age, sexuality, and gender are all effected by this very issue, but uniquely the content created isn't viewed with any conscious effort, made by individuals who do not hold the same responsibility as media

companies. It is TikTok itself that designs your feed based on what it thinks you will like. Images of what we may consider 'the perfect body' are sandwiched between incessant ads for 'greens', 'apple cider vinegar gummies', leggings which make our bums look bigger and spandex to make sure we know what's the problem. This accompanies the 'beauty filter' which clears our skin to an impeccable standard, and almost undetectable. A current trend on TikTok is the 'that girl' audio, associated now with @bigpapakayy (aka Kaylee), who rose to fame with comments on her looks, beauty and the same cadence as Meredith Grey. She recently has spoken herself about her own use of the beauty filter, which many were surprised to find out she used as she showed her real skin. There is no denying that regardless, Kaylee is gorgeous and the audio is ultimately a bit of fun, however posted for potentially the world to see and so she used the beauty filter as a 'security blanket', the same reason many of us do. It is a toxic circle we wind ourselves in, a spell that needs to be broken.

How can we make this better? I don't think we can. As we are all sucked in by the same addictive scrolling tik tok gives us, unlike other social media platforms, even avidly following a wider representation of people won't change much about the coveted 'for you' page. Tik Tok seems to have created a platform which taps into our subconscious, almost 'knowing' us better than ourselves, making assumptions based on our peers and viewership. With tik tok fame to some extent comes with responsibility, but to what extent can we expect often teenagers and young people to put their own feelings aside and risk the rejection of the for you page for not being 'aesthetic' enough. Are any of us really tik tok pretty? Is the normal-ness of the tik tok famous too easy to practice a parasocial relationship, when they often are just as fictional as the celebrities we have criticised for this objectification?

The 'what about me' Effect

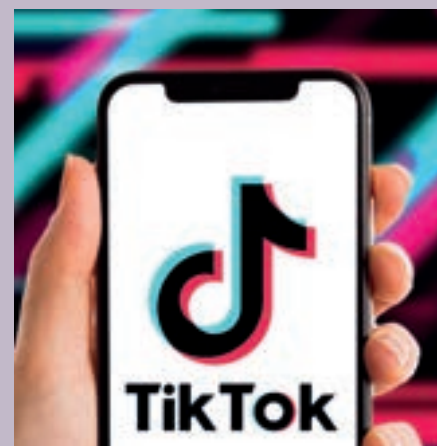
How social media has created a generation of 'main characters' - Faith Price

It is fair to say that social media curates certain social media personalities that have become 'main characters'. It is just inevitable in society that there are certain people we are just drawn to, especially when alluring aspects we're conditioned to prefer can be showcased under creator control. However, since the rise of TikTok, this has amplified the attraction to these new found 'main characters'. Alix Earle, former student of the University of Miami, has notably become one of the biggest it girls on social media. From filming TikTok get ready with me's in her bedroom, to now being invited to speak at Forbes 30 under 30. Alix Earle has shown being

herself and open and honest with her followers has built up a trust in her community where people ultimately look up to her as someone they aspire to be like which makes her main character worthy. Who looks up to her? Why? What does she talk about? It cannot go unnoticed that she has even made the University of Miami popular on TikTok with people posting videos to a sound made about the university simply because Alix Earle studied there. Another notable up and coming main character is sixteen year old Ami Charlize. The youtuber and tiktoker has been creating content on social media since 2019 and has gained a staggering

304,000 subscribers at such a young age. Not only is she popular on YouTube but she has gained 2.9 million followers on TikTok. Young girls have been drawn to Ami Charlize due to her relatable content from talking about her issues at school to what skincare products she uses. Why is that relatable? Does she have solutions? What are the issues surrounding? At that age, some young girls are starting to get into makeup and skincare and are wanting to reach out for advice with this and Ami Charlize has become a main character to some young girls that want to follow in her footsteps. Not what a main character is. Although

all social media platforms have their main characters to some extent, they do not create them like TikTok does. Nowadays, if you're wanting to have growth on Instagram this is almost impossible without the help of a post going extremely viral and even then it is hard for engagement to last. However, on TikTok it can be easier to naturally grow. The for you page is designed to show videos that are like those you have engaged with. For this reason, people with different interests can find content they relate to, and this usually comes with a certain creator having a niche in a certain subject. This is how there can be main characters created from every



Via Flickr

How to cope with seasonal depression: A look into why so many people suffer from it and tips on how to cope

Ella Lane
Opinion Editor

As the seasons change, the days get shorter and the nights feel longer, leaving many students feeling low. This phenomenon is known as SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder), which is a type of depression that becomes more or less severe with the change of the seasons. Although the feeling returns like an old burden, there are many ways to cope with these difficult feelings. Why do students feel this way, and how does this affect them? Through interviews I have identified some possible causes. One second year student Carys Francis said, “the dark mornings and nights when you do a 9-5 university course means I basically see no light hours, making me less active and much more tired.” Research into the causes of SAD point towards reduced levels of serotonin, imbalances of melatonin and vitamin D deficiency caused by less exposure to sunlight. Another third-year student Paulina Filipiak said, “It mostly affects me when it comes to attending university and working on my assessments, though sometimes it can make me isolated from my friends as well. Depression can often prevent us from engaging in everyday life, making us feel worse. Reaching out to friends is often the first step, however overwhelming assignments, dark and cold nights and a stretched bank account can make socialising during the winter a less appealing ordeal. The tiredness often associated with a rise in melatonin can also make this more exhausting in the short term, despite its long term benefits.

Others may find winter in particular to be a difficult time due to the festive season. With such emphasis on family, joy, happiness and gifts, there can be a lot of pressure to perform festivities and guilt for being a ‘scrooge’. If Christmas for you lacks a certain movie magic, it can be a bleak reminder. But like every year, it is temporary, and there are many outlets to manage these feelings as some of these students suggested. Many pointed to distraction techniques, including making time to wind down time after university, as well as talking to friends they suggested watching films, reading, writing, listening to music and walking. Interestingly, these are all activities that involve staying sober in a university environment which is so heavily steeped in drinking culture. Another student pointed towards making people aware, such as close friends and family, so that they can support you when you’re feeling low during these

cold and dark seasons. Although this vulnerability can be daunting, it will always be worth it, and your close friends will be grateful you trust them with this vulnerability. During Men’s Mental Health Month (also known as Movember) there is strong advocacy to speak up about your emotions. This applies to everyone, but men in particular can find it difficult to openly express their emotions, but with the wonder of the moustache around campus, we can all find ways to ‘grow out’ the stigma of mental health.

One second year student said her best way to cope is “Vitamin D supplementation. It’s essential for everyone in winter but especially those prone to ill mental health.”

If none of these coping mechanisms that work for others seem to work for you, or if you are feeling overwhelmed, there are many resources available to you. Cardiff university holds a wellbeing drop in which must be booked in advance. The appointments can be both in person and over zoom, according to what you prefer. These drop-in sessions can lead to a referral for counselling, or you can self-refer for regular sessions through the student connect portal.

As cliché as it may sound, it reigns true always that you are not alone if you feel this way. There are ways to manage this tough time of year which many people apply to everyday life, and if you need extra support, don’t hesitate to reach out to close friends, family, Cardiff University wellbeing team, or a multitude of help lines ready to take your call 24/7 such as:

Samaritans: 116 123

NHS 111: press 2 to be put in touch with a mental health worker, free of charge



James Roberts
Contributor

As the eyes of the world have turned to the conflict in Gaza over the last few weeks, it seems the Ukraine has lost its place at the centre of international discourse. When our attention eventually returns to that region, perhaps we might come back to it with a new and more nuanced perspective on the situation. Both in terms of how best to resolve the problem and what role we in the west play in that resolution.

Is it time for a new approach to the Ukraine war?

Before I say anything, I want to dispel any accusations of being Pro-Putin, I am not, nor have I ever been. And I fully accept that the Ukrainian nation has a right to defend itself. Yet for the last few months I have become more sceptical about the approach our government, and seemingly every other western government, has taken regarding the war. That being a completely uncritical support of the Ukrainian government and the sending of billions upon billions worth of arms to prop up their military. At a time when our roads are full of potholes, crime is on the rise and many thousands of private and public buildings are unsafe or decayed, where did the government find the money for the 14 Challenger 2 tanks we sent to Ukraine? Of course, this has nothing to do with the influence of arms manufacturers in the business of parliament. When we look at the state of conflict now, it is very different to how it was in the first year or so. Kiev is no longer at risk of capture and the battlefield, despite Ukraine’s best efforts remains static. Both sides lack a strategic edge on the battlefield, making a complete victory impossible. And with some historical literacy about the nature of conflicts with Russia, something our ruling class seem to lack, you begin to realise the futility of trying to fight a protracted land war against them. A country which has successfully resisted the likes of Hitler and Napoleon. Of course, the state has collapsed a few times like in 1917. But I would rather avoid a civil war in a country with over 5000 nuclear bombs.

For the west, a diplomatic resolution to war should now be our main objective given the futility of further armed conflict. This would mean getting off our moral pedestal, but would that be so hard given we support the brutal regime in Saudi Arabia? A treaty with Russia, even if it meant concessions of land in eastern Ukraine, would have several advantages. Not least the ending of a conflict which has claimed the lives of thousands and displaced millions. In addition, if a land transfer was to occur perhaps this could provide some resolution to the cultural and linguistic divides which are in part responsible for the conflict. The reality is that many people in the east of Ukraine don’t speak Ukrainian and identify wholly or partly as Russians. I don’t think it’s likely that these same people who overthrew the authorities in that region back in 2014 are going to be eager to come back under Ukrainian control. A redrawn Ukraine would likely be more politically united and able to move closer to

the EU, something always opposed by the pro-Russian eastern regions. In a treaty with Russia, Ukraine might be able to negotiate a guarantee from Putin to respect this direction and their eventual EU membership. The truth is that until the conflict is resolved in this way, no progress will be made on further EU integration. Some people will be appalled by this suggestion, but sometimes doing a deal with the devil is the only way. The regime in the Kremlin has been weakened by the war and no doubt wants to return to the fold of the global market. As a nation under heavy sanctions the ruling classes in St Petersburg and Moscow are no doubt feeling the impact of sanctions on their previously global lives. This class of people might be the key to future success in negotiations, and I think that their discontent will motivate the return of some of the captured territory. Perhaps in exchange for some amount of economic reintegration. Russia may also want to be rid of some of its newly acquired territory, given it will have to deal with a hostile populace in areas further west, such as those around Mariupol. Instead of seeing Russia from a western perspective, as one great scary monolith, we should be prepared to understand and negotiate with them. To bring back stability to eastern Europe.

Eastern Europe has been reshaped many times and will continue to be redrawn until the end of time. Looking at a map of the region from 100 years ago reveals just how much has changed. For example, Lviv in western Ukraine was a Polish city until 1945. Fluidity and change have always defined eastern Europe from the division of Poland-Lithuania to Potsdam and the fall of the USSR. And so, I find it hard to say that Ukraine has an absolute right to retake areas such as the Donetsk region. When given its place at the crossroads of Europe and the Caucasus, so many people groups have laid claim to it. We see in Gaza how a dangerous mixture of binary ideological thinking, too many weapons and a lack of resolution have created decades of suffering. We can avoid the same in Ukraine, if only we have the confidence to take another path. One which doesn’t prioritize an imaginary victory on the battlefield but instead seeks to end the suffering of the people caught in the violence. I hold out little hope for this given the lack of imagination among our leaders. But if it could be done, then maybe Ukraine would be spared decades of suffering.

Is ChatGPT Dangerous to Students?

By Aneurin Davies - Contributor

ChatGPT’s rise to fame (and infamy) this year has everyone questioning how useful AI can be in their daily lives. It’s incredibly easy to look at ChatGPT as a useful tool that aims to advance your own academic work, but is this really the case? With around 180.5 million users, ChatGPT is in constant use. From people using it for leisure to people using it to assist them in their work. It’s almost impossible to argue that ChatGPT and AI tools like it aren’t tempting to use, simply because they are. I’m sure everyone’s had a similar thought that using ChatGPT would just get rid of some of the pressures of academia. Maybe you’ve even used an AI tool to write an essay.

But the question is: is that truly your own work? When asked about the ethics of using AI tools within essays, one student at the University of Sussex (who wished to remain anonymous) said that “it’s similar to asking another person to do your work for you”. When asked to write essays, AI tools essentially take the works of many academics, and compile them. It’s easy to see the issues this raises in terms of plagiarism. When you’re relying on an AI tool to help write your essays, it’s important to question what affects this has on you as a student. While using AI, learning and education are dampened. As university students, most of

us have chosen our specific subjects as we truly enjoy learning about them and enjoy working hard to achieve a high grade. Furthermore, by using AI we miss out on really coming to grips with academic literature. Although some may see university as another step to a job, it is a privilege to access the knowledge obtained by centuries of academics whose motivation was little but passion. One Cardiff University student describes how using AI tools is “unfair to people who have to work hard and will do worse”. So, even if you do get that all-too-important first or 2.1 that you’ve been wanting, is it worth going the easy route and using an AI tool?

This raises important questions about academic complacency. We all use technology to enhance how we write our essays. From laptops and computers, to different apps and websites that enhance the writing experience. But AI may just be taking the creativity out of academic work. With more and more uses, a student may just become reliant on these tools, losing out on valuable experience in higher education. It’s impossible to deny that AI and ChatGPT don’t have their uses. Disregarding AI as a whole would be the wrong thing to do. They have their places within society. Fraud protection, healthcare, programming - all things that can be



Via Flickr

REVIEW



 review@gairhydd.com

Cat Person (2023) – A Muddled and Misguided Mess

Tamsin on how the film adaptation of the viral short story misses the mark

Tamsin Fraser
Head of Review

Kristen Roupenian's short story *Cat Person* became an overnight sensation after its publication in the *New Yorker* in 2017. It was incredibly bold and contemporary in its portrayal of digital-age sexuality, focusing on the morally dubious relationship between 20-year-old student Margot and mysterious older man Robert. Roupenian's unflinching writing style was both relatable and shocking as it navigated the issues of consent, power dynamics and sex-positivity in a concise 7201 words.

Unfortunately, as groundbreaking as *Cat Person's* publication was, its adaptation into a feature-length film was wholly unnecessary from the get-go. Its brief word count did not allow for a 118-minute runtime without a significant amount of filler involved, which is unfortunately what the audience received in its 2023 revival, starring Emilia Jones — recent star of Best Picture winner *CODA* (2022).

“Thus begins a bizarre attempt to humanise all of the film's male characters after they have been (rightfully) painted as mi-

This originally simple narrative quickly became convoluted to reach feature length, with mundane plot points on college life and friendship drama taking centre stage over the romance that made the short story viral in the first place. Several new archetypal characters are added to the mix that add nothing to the plot; the overly woke best friend, the useless police officer, and the firm-but-fair biology professor who seemed to exist only to spout heavy-handed metaphors. In fact, it seems the only reason that Margot was made a biology student for the film adaptation was so the screenwriter could bombard the audience with constant references to the role of the Woman in nature (ants actually live in a matriarchy, don't you know?).

The pacing was also incredibly mismatched, with a tedious first act building to the scene that made *Cat Person* famous to begin with: the darkly comical hookup between Margot and Robert. And in fairness to the film, it was pretty perfect. Genuinely funny cutaway gags to an imagined couples' therapy session allowed insight into Margot's train of thought during the awkward encounter, similar to the short story. This, combined with cynical play-by-play narration from Margot's disassociating self, successfully shows her naivety and the subsequent power imbalance

between the two characters.

Nicholas Braun excelled in the role of the blundering love interest, bringing a tangible feeling of secondhand embarrassment whenever he graced the screen. Without spoiling anything, several moments during the aforementioned sex scene caused the entire cinema (myself included) to audibly groan, which is as good of a testament to Braun's acting ability as anything. His awkward body language, cringy dialogue, and constant desire to emulate a Harrison Ford-style suave was the 'ick' encapsulated, and he played it to a tee.

After this optimistic turn, however, the film quickly descends into a wildly unbelievable third act and unnecessarily dramatic conclusion that quashes any previous relatability the film had to offer. Thus begins a bizarre attempt to humanise all of the film's male characters after they have been (rightfully) painted as misogynistic or predatory. For example, Robert is meant to be sympathised with after we learn he works as a nurse — despite the fact he spends the entire film pursuing an inappropriate relationship with a much younger girl.

The character of Taylor — Margot's best friend — is also used to represent the dangers of extreme feminism; she's depicted as a liberal, man-hating nightmare whose radical views cause her and Mar-

got to get into a massive fight. Her crimes? Yelling at a group of men who walked into her dorm unannounced and being angry that a man had posed as a woman on her female-only online forum. She is then given a ride home for free by said man in another endeavour from the filmmakers to prove that not all men are terrible — a pointless play at devil's advocate that goes back on everything the short story initially tried to achieve.

Cat Person is no longer the story of Margot as much as it is the story of the men around her. More specifically, how the men around her are not as bad as you'd think because they work in a predominately female workplace and perform basic acts of human kindness. Never mind the stalking.



Source: Larry D. Moore
(via Wikimedia Commons)

Five Nights at Freddy's (2023) – An Enjoyable but Flawed Adaptation

Tegan reviews the long-awaited film adaptation of the iconic horror game series

Tegan Davies
Contributor

The film adaptation of Scott Cawthon's indie video game darling *Five Nights at Freddy's* was first announced in April 2015, only eight months after its initial release. After multiple script rewrites, two different production companies and directors, and a plethora of cast members signing on to star in the highly-anticipated blockbuster, the film was finally released in cinemas worldwide on October 25th. As a hardcore fan since the first game's release, I managed to see the film after years of impatience on the day of the UK release.

With the worldwide gross box-office intake currently sitting comfortably at over \$250 million, the film comes second only to *The Super Mario Bros. Movie* in the biggest opening for a video-game-to-film adaptation. But *Five Nights at Freddy's* is no stranger to such success. The *FNAF* series — consisting of thirteen games, twenty-eight books and novels, and now the newly released feature film — has sold 33.5 million units worldwide.

First released independently on Steam, the game was an overnight success, amassing a cult following through the gameplay's simplicity and sheer scare factor. It is its

extensive backstory, perhaps, that is most to blame for the dedicated fan base that Cawthon has created. This iceberg of lore has been picked apart by fans for years, with each new release adding to (or, in some cases, further entangling the wires of) the deeper tale behind the original game. The cohesiveness of the series' lore is largely credited to YouTuber MatPat, whose analyses of the series' narrative made him a celebrity within the fandom, ultimately earning him a cameo in the film itself.

Despite the film's perceived success, *Five Nights at Freddy's* has accrued widespread negative reviews from critics — with Rotten Tomatoes giving the film a critic score of just 30%. However, after watching the long-awaited film on opening night, I can safely say... it isn't that bad. To begin, I'll address the massive, animatronic elephant in the room: it bore little to no relation to the official, canon lore developed over the nine years the franchise has been around. The fundamentals were similar; fursuit-clad-killer lures children into the back of a popular 80s pizzeria, stuffs their bodies into the suits of four singing animatronics and drives them to kill future employees of the restaurant. This allowed the general premise to be easy to follow for new audiences whilst keeping its

core plot points true to the original.

Unfortunately, there were parts of the film that were just, for want of a better term, cringe-worthy. The scene where Mike, Abby, and Vanessa build a fort with the possessed, murdering robots was simply odd to watch and ended with general disdain among audience members when Bonnie goofily falls onto his back and gives a thumbs-up when asked if he is okay. The film's overall pacing seemed clunky in places — too much time focusing on a lore-irrelevant custody battle that never materialised, not enough time adhering to its core elements of horror. Jump scares were few and far between, with the only three jump scares throughout the film being of the same character.

The casting, however, was spot-on. Josh Hutcherson really carried the emotional depth needed in his role of volatile security guard Mike Schmidt. Matthew Lillard sparked zero doubt in anybody's mind that he would be able to bring tension to his role after an outstanding performance in *Scream* (1996). Elizabeth Lail is no stranger to being a powerful, borderline scream queen after a stint in Netflix's *You* (2018), and her portrayal of enigmatic police officer Vanessa arguably made the film.

Jim Henson's Creature Shop

brought the four animatronics to life freakishly well, with an almost uncanny likeness to them that I had longed for before the release. Personally, I wish that this was preserved through the character's movements, which lacked the same robotic edge that made them so horrifying in the games. The eyes glowing red, whilst undoubtedly a good ode to the books, stripped them of their lifelessness, and seemed almost too obviously-petrifying.

The film's soundtrack was perfect, with *Talking in Your Sleep* by The Romantics a period-accurate, sinister and spectacular choice for the animatronic band's performance — it was exactly what I had envisioned the band to sound like.

Five Nights at Freddy's is a clever little film, you can tell it has been curated with the best interest of the fans at heart. Yes, its gore was underwhelming, with the film lacking many elements that make it worthy of being dubbed a horror film, but it is still an enjoyable, nostalgic watch. With many of the cast having signed on for at least three films and a confirmed second film already in production, we will have to wait eagerly for the next instalment in the series.

Hopefully, this sequel doesn't take another nine years.



Golden Freddy as seen in the *Five Nights at Freddy's* games

Source: SFMSG64 (via Deviantart)

Maisie Peters Live at O2 Academy Bristol – Concert Review

Katie on the explosive Halloween show

Lydia Barnes
Contributor

Maisie Peters' spellbinding Halloween performance at the O2 Academy Bristol captivated everyone. Strong foundations for the night ahead were built by Gretta Ray, an Australian singer and close friend of Maisie. It was extremely encouraging to see her strong stage presence: she won the crowd over straight away and everyone was in awe of her appearance.

Once Gretta had completed her set, it was evident that people couldn't contain their excitement for the leading lady herself. With it being Halloween, there was a huge buzz in the air that added to the night's atmosphere. So, once *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) soundtrack started playing, the crowd couldn't contain their excitement any more. There were huge cheers for Maisie — it felt like magic when she appeared wearing her pink ball gown dress, which glistened in all the stage lights.

Of course, both the soundtrack and Maisie's costume played tribute to her latest album *The Good Witch* — with her band also accompanying her in similar, Oz-themed costumes.

Maisie opened the night with a magical rendition of *The Good Witch*, followed by *Coming of Age* to an ecstatic crowd. Just days before the concert, Maisie had released six new songs — showcasing her incredible talent for writing poetic yet relatable songs on overcoming a breakup and gaining self-confidence. However, the night consisted of a range of music, from some of Maisie's first releases to her most recent. Intimacy was also created within the grand space of the arena by Maisie playing a number of mesmerising acoustic versions of some of her tracks.

Towards the end of the night, Maisie played the songs *Not Another Rockstar* and *Blonde*, — whose high energy left the crowd screaming at the top of their voices. Maisie's voice

was incredibly powerful throughout, and it was great to hear how strong her vocals were. Gretta Ray made a second appearance during the encore, leading to an inspiring duet be-



Maisie Peters performing at El Rey Theatre in 2022

Source: Justin Higuchi via Wikimedia Commons



Oppenheimer – A Career Best by Christopher Nolan

James Burns
Contributor

Whenever a Christopher Nolan film is released in theatres, moviegoers tend to sit up, book a ticket, and travel to the nearest cinema on release day. He is one of the few directors working today who possesses the same — if not more — pull than A-list actors.

His filmography includes a combination of time-bending elements, a non-linear approach to storytelling and complex labyrinth plots. This interesting narrative-based style, along with his prioritisation of utilising real filming locations and practical effects in a time where CGI-fuelled superhero movies rule the box office, is where Nolan stands out from the crowd. This year's *Oppenheimer* was no different, as the summer hit grossed \$950,000,000 worldwide. Perhaps, a figure aided by the phenomenon of 'Barbenheimer', in which two comically opposed films managed to turn competition into collaboration.

Oppenheimer comes with all the same hallmarks of a Nolan movie wrapped into the form of a historical biopic, with all the sensitivity and responsibility attached to it. He undoubtedly succeeds in this feat, as he combines all his usual gravitas and spectacle with real people and events into a 3-hour experience. While the film focuses on the Manhattan Project, it is rather the father of the atomic bomb that Nolan intends to explore. As the title suggests, *Oppenheimer* is about the man himself and all the conflict, pressure and complex emotion that comes with being a self-proclaimed "destroyer of worlds".

Cillian Murphy delivers a faultless performance as J. Robert Oppenheimer; approaching the character in an almost Shakespearean manner; rife with flaws and a certain haunted nature constantly shrouding him. Nolan's direction and Murphy's portrayal paint a man who is neither a villain nor a hero, but instead a perfect example of the dark side of human nature. The many close-up shots that force the audience to stare deep into Murphy's eyes successfully convey the duality of a man. In

one scene, Murphy can portray a genius scientist burdened by knowledge and intellect. Next, he can become a man with hate and great moral conflict.

Ludwig Göransson's masterful soundtrack captures the essence of these emotions with the ever-looming feeling of a ticking time bomb, which conveys the fast-paced race to nuclear arms against the Nazis alongside Oppenheimer's internal battle with morality. In typical Nolan fashion, the theme of time is prevalent, with the sounds of a ticking clock often harmonising with the drama on screen. This tension is always one tick from going over the edge, making the 3-hour run time feel much shorter.

Matt Damon and Emily Blunt provide stellar performances as General Groves and Kitty Oppenheimer respectively. Robert Downey Jr. gives an arguably career-best performance as Lewis Strauss, acting as the perfect foil to Murphy's Oppenheimer — interactions between the two marvellously capture the spiral and downfall of a two-faced man.

Nolan overlays the origins of Oppenheimer, the Manhattan Project, and the aftermath of the atomic bomb in his quintessential time-shifting narrative structure, requiring the audience's attention to be engaged at all times. Along with its masterful cinematography, *Oppenheimer* becomes unmissable.

While the long, dialogue-heavy run time may be too much for some viewers, the sheer tension and impactful drama will have others glued to their screens. Its importance as a story is encapsulated by its final scene, leaving the audience with more questions about the contemporary world than before and cementing Robert Oppenheimer's story as integral to modern society.

Nolan's masterpiece is a vehicle for this tale, making it a must-see for all who want a greater understanding of our world.

“*Oppenheimer* comes with all the same hallmarks of a Nolan movie wrapped into the form of a historical biopic, with all the sensitivity and responsibility attached to it.”

Past Lives– The Trouble of Communication in the Modern Age

Rimsha Ali
Contributor

Celine Song's first feature film *Past Lives* made audiences cry internally and externally in its depiction of two childhood sweethearts, with many profound themes intertwined.

We are first introduced to the film's two protagonists as children, which foreshadows the constant theme of communication throughout. The power of silence is first used during the revelation that Nora (Greta Lee) is leaving for Canada. Teo Yoo's portrayal of the stoic Hae Sung is perfect as he shows physical upset but cannot communicate his emotions to Nora.

The film jumps forward 12 years later, with Nora residing in New York. Nora recalls Hae Sung upon learning that he has been trying to search for her on social media, leading to a scene showing the effort that Nora takes to translate her laptop keyboard into Korean by physically writing it down. By reconnecting with her childhood friend, she is also able to reconnect with her inner child as she interacts with the Korean culture she so sorely misses. Thus starts an ambiguous relationship between the two as they reminisce about their past and share aspirations for the future.

The difficulties of communication are shown again during Nora and Hae Sung's series of video calls, where Nora is unable to truly show her feelings for Hae Sung by making up excuses for him to visit her. She is holding back from expressing the feeling of wanting to see him in person. You continue to see this misconnection due to long distances, poor Internet connection and differing time zones. During these scenes, the lighting is extremely dark throughout, displaying how closed off the protagonists are from each other.

Another 12 years later, the audience is given a glimpse into Nora's married life with American writer Arthur. Arthur's willingness to learn Korean displays the effort he has taken to communicate with Nora in contrast to her

more stilted communication with Hae Young.

A long-awaited reunion between Nora and Hae-Young shows the pair's growth over the 24 years they have spent apart. It is the first time the audience sees clearer communication between the two as adults.

Tension builds gradually until the final scene, with excellent use of body language; Nora's clenched fists imply her readiness to finally open up to Tae Young about her true feelings.

Throughout the film, a philosophical question is asked of how the characters will interact with each other in their next lives, playing into the common Korean superstition of *inyeon*. The ending, which focuses further on this concept, provides a sense of closure that allows its protagonists to say goodbye to their pasts and subsequently their inner children.



The cast and crew of *Past Lives* promoting the film at the Berlin International Film Festival
Source Martin Kraft via Wikimedia Commons

The soaring cost of attending University

Is it causing inequality in education?

Lucy Treloar
Head of Finance

With the cost of attending university forecast to increase by £5000 this year alone, it is becoming increasingly difficult for students to access higher education. Despite the minimal support provided from student loans, the cost-of-living crisis had meant that students are finding it near impossible to afford just basic necessities such as food and rent. Beyond this, the cumulative hidden costs of textbooks, transportation, and social activities is pushing many students to their absolute limits, which has resulted in a 28% rise over 5 years in the number of students dropping out of a university programme. The newspaper *The Express* conducted a poll on 500 undergraduates, which revealed that a huge 85% were worried about how they were going to afford living costs for the upcoming term, with 75% saying they will have to resort to savings in order to afford living at university.

The cost-of-living crisis has seen massive increases in rent, energy bills, and food prices — with rent prices in Cardiff alone increasing by an average of 11% since 2021/22. Despite

this increase, the government is still unwilling to provide students with enough in order to afford these increases, meaning that the option of attending university is becoming impossible for many young adults who don't have financial support from their family to fall back on.

It is evident that all students have been somewhat affected by the increase in living costs; however, it is important to note that not all students have been impacted equally. Socio-economically disadvantages students have been hit the hardest by this financial pressure, often having to seek paid employment just to pay their bills — working 30-hour weeks alongside their studies. These students have reported having to skip classes, often falling behind on work as a result of having to prioritise earning money. Researchers have said that unless action is taken urgently, this financial crisis could reverse the progress in equality within higher education by making university accessible only to the most privileged groups in society.

Apart from putting students in significant financial uncertainty and insecurity, the cost-of-living crisis has also had a detrimental knock-on effect to their mental health and wellbeing.

With students having an extremely limited budget, this is causing many to have to choose between simply eating and socialising — with a survey from the polling company Savanta reporting that over a quarter of students are having to skip meals in order to save money on food. This is consequently having a significant impact on their health and concentration, in turn affecting their academic performance.

Many also reported not being able to take part in social events and societies due to lack of finances. This is preventing people from being able to make friends, forcing many students into an extremely isolating and lonely environment. Whereby university is advertised as being the 'best years of your life', for many the reality is far from this — living off beans on toast, working long hours, and not being able to heat their freezing accommodation.

The cost-of-living crisis is an issue that needs to be addressed by educational institutions, policymakers, and society in general. It is jeopardising the academic success of current students and preventing access to higher education for thousands of individuals. The Russell Group Students' Union is an organisation which has been set up to represent over

70,000 students at Russell Group Universities, partitioning for the government to increase maintenance loans in line with inflation and consider the reintroduction of maintenance grants to support the most disadvantaged students.

Cardiff University has a support system in place for students struggling financially, with a number of scholarships and bursaries available to UK students. The Financial Assistance Programme is also an emergency hardship fund which can be applied for to help with unexpected short-term financial problems. Students are also available to book appointments with the financial support team (located in the Centre for Student Life) for free advice and support.

“Whereby university is advertised as being the 'best years of your life', for many the reality is far from this — living off beans on toast, working long hours, and not being able to heat their freezing accommodation.”

Unveiling Carbon Offsetting: The Green Illusion and Scam

Joseph Hawa
Contributor

In an era where environmental responsibility takes centre stage, a pressing question arises: are businesses truly aligning their actions with their carbon neutrality and net-zero goals, or are some merely using 'greenwashing' tactics for profit and a polished public image? Companies find themselves under increasing pressure from both customers and investors to ensure that their operations, services, and products meet carbon-neutral standards. While many organisations genuinely excel in their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) efforts, it is unfortunately all too common for larger corporations to resort to a questionable practice — carbon offsetting.

If you've ever come across a company promoting a product as 'carbon neutral', chances are it achieved this status by purchasing carbon credits in a surprisingly unregulated financial market. For instance, if Company A manufactures lamps and emits one tonne of carbon dioxide during production, they can buy a one-tonne carbon credit to compensate for these emissions and legally label their lamps as 'carbon neutral'. But who sells these carbon credits, and why do companies invest substantial sums in them?

Two nonprofit organisations, Verra and Gold Standard, effectively dominate the carbon credit market. While these entities don't directly remove carbon emissions, they subcontract other companies to carry out this crucial work. Verra and Gold Standard also rigorously audit projects related to carbon sequestration, forestry, and agriculture. Therefore, for a business to earn Verified Carbon Units, they must provide proof to Verra or Gold Standard that they have either removed one tonne of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere or prevented its release. However, these organisations maintain stringent application and verification processes.

If a company can successfully have its carbon offsetting activities validated by Verra or Gold Standard, they can then sell specific carbon units

(e.g. lamps) to businesses like Company A at a significant markup. Company A is often willing to pay this premium as it allows them to market their products as 'carbon neutral'. While this might appear promising in terms of reducing carbon emissions, the reality is often quite different.

This situation raises two critical questions: why are companies willing to pay a premium for these carbon unit products, and why does this carbon offsetting strategy frequently fall short of truly offsetting CO2 emissions?

To address the first question, companies often use the purchase of carbon credits to showcase their ESG credentials. The demand for companies actively reducing their carbon footprint and promoting environmental sustainability has grown since the rise of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investing starting around 2008. It's now sought after by the public and shareholders as a mainstream characteristic. This approach increases a company's chances of being listed on an ESG fund, thereby attracting more potential investors and capital for the company and its senior managers. One of the most effective ways to gain acceptance in these ESG funds is by selling carbon-neutral products. However, it's become increasingly clear that a company's ESG status is not necessarily reflective of its overall performance.

According to a recent study published in the *Journal of Finance*, the University of Chicago analysed sustainability ratings across more than 20,000 mutual funds and their corresponding companies. The study found that high sustainability funds did not consistently outperform low sustainability funds. Investment firms like Vanguard and BlackRock, which had substantial stakes in ESG and mutual funds on behalf of their clients, have started to scale back their ESG initiatives and investments. This shift is primarily due to the realisation that carbon offsetting strategies, which were employed to sell carbon-neutral products, have proven to be ineffective.

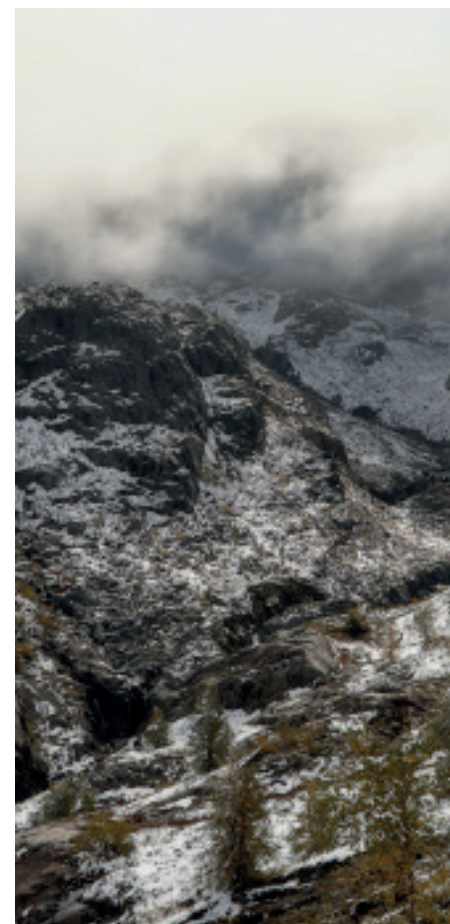
A study led by Cambridge University revealed that in 40 Verra-approved rainforest projects, approximately 94% of the sold carbon credits did

not result in actual carbon removal from the atmosphere. Yet, these credits allowed companies to label their high-emission products as 'carbon neutral'. This raises the question of how these practices persisted. Although Verra and Gold Standard are nonprofit organisations, they rely on fees paid by project leaders and companies during the verification process to generate income and sustain their operations. This financial model incentivises these organisations to sell as many carbon credits as possible.

One might reasonably assume that carbon offsetting primarily involves large industrial machines actively removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. However, a significant portion of offsetting efforts is channelled into rainforest projects. This allows companies seeking carbon credits to exploit a clever loophole. These projects would purchase parcels of rainforest land for preservation, and any trees left standing were accepted by Verra as carbon that had been 'prevented' from entering the atmosphere, making them eligible for carbon credits. The issue with this approach is that the projects would acquire land where the trees were never intended to be cut down, often because of their remote or inaccessible location. Consequently, the land was relatively inexpensive to purchase. Essentially, this strategy allowed projects to claim trees as carbon credits that were never going to be released into the atmosphere.

Since this report by Cambridge University came out, the ex-CEO of Verra, David Antonioli, has resigned for 'unrelated reasons'. Regulators have started to shift their focus on the cracking down on carbon neutral marketing, including 'net-zero' claims. As well as a steep decline in the value of carbon credits. One carbon credit that was worth around \$19 in January 2022, is now worth only \$1.77 as of September 2023, a fall of over 90% in a year and a half. Trading firms that had recently bought up a vast amount of carbon credits, with the intention to hold as a long-term investment, have had to write these off as completely worthless. In an interview with Bloomberg, the head of Carbon Trading at Trafigura Group, which is, as of now, the largest carbon credit trader in the world, stated that the complete loss of value seen in some

corners of the voluntary carbon market is unlike anything she's witnessed in oil markets. Companies have become no longer interested in buying them. Carbon offsetting can be a genuinely excellent strategy to help mitigate CO2 emissions, but if they are not going to be done correctly, they are nothing more than a distraction, used to milk investors and customers into falling for unsustainable, ineffective, and superficial carbon neutrality schemes.



Source: Carl Graph (via Flickr)

SCIENCE

Aditi Kallanagoudar
Girish

Caitlin Rider

ELSEWHERE
IN SCIENCEUS and China agree joint mea-
sures on climate changeIceland volcanic eruption still
likely, say scientists

Source: GetArchive (via Pixabay)

science@gairrhydd.com

James Webb Telescope Captures Amazing Cosmic Image

Prashana outlines NASA's groundbreaking image of a new star's birth near Orion

Prashana Joshi
Contributor

Behold the cosmic wonder that NASA's James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) captured! Witness the breathtaking birth of a new star, HH 212, near the famous Orion constellation. At an estimated age of 50,000, this astronomical wonder remains obscured by a dense disk of gas and dust. A stunning, high-resolution image displays the vibrant pink-red jets shooting in opposite directions. It shows the energetic processes surrounding a Class 0 protostar to our Sun's early stages.

The photo reveals the complex hop of Herbig-Haro objects — luminous areas that form when stellar winds collide with nearby gas and dust, producing shock waves. What sets this image apart is the deployment of infrared imaging by the James Webb Telescope, enabling scientists to penetrate the veils of obscuring gas and dust and explore the star's outflows with unparalleled clarity.

The image highlights bow shocks to the southeast and northwest, accompanied by a narrow bipolar jet powering them. The inner jet's sym-



Source: Tom Ray / ESA/Webb, NASA, CSA (via Web telescope.org)

metrical movement could be due to an unresolved binary star system. It is worth noting that the James Webb Telescope's observations have a 5 to 10 times higher spatial resolution than any previous images of HH 211, which provides an unparalleled opportunity to observe this cosmic event.

Prior ground-based telescope observations had unveiled giant bow shocks and cavity-like structures in shocked hydrogen and carbon mon-

oxide. The James Webb Telescope's new findings reveal that HH 211's outflow is comparably slow, challenging previous assumptions about protostar evolution.

Velocity measurements of the innermost outflow structures, ranging from 48 to 60 miles per second, indicate that the outflows from the youngest stars are predominantly composed of molecules. Unlike more energetic processes that break down molecules into simpler

components, the lower shock wave velocities in HH 211 do not lead to molecular disintegration.

NASA released an article on September 13th that showcased the impressive capabilities of the James Webb Space Telescope. The telescope's high-resolution, near-infrared view of Herbig-Haro 211 provides a detailed look at the outflow of a young star, offering stunningly intricate insights.

As the world's premier space science observatory, the James Webb Space Telescope, led by NASA in collaboration with the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Canadian Space Agency, continues to unravel the mysteries of our solar system and beyond.

This groundbreaking image, visible near the easily seen Orion constellation, promises to deepen our understanding of the universe's structures and origins, offering an unprecedented glimpse into the cosmic ballet of creation.

2023 predicted to be the hottest year ever

Caitlin Rider
Science Editor

Across the planet October 2023 was the warmest October on record. This follows a year of extremes with July thought to be the hottest month in 120,000 years. Scientists believe that if this trend continues for the next months, then 2023 could become the hottest year ever recorded. Samantha Burgess, the Deputy Director of the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said "We can say with near certainty that 2023 will be the warmest year on record".

In October global temperatures reached 1.7 °C over the estimated average temperature during the pre-industrial period (1850-1900). The average sea surface temperature between 60 °S and 60 °N also reached 20.79 °C which is the highest recorded for October. Before this year, the highest average for October was reached in 2019, however

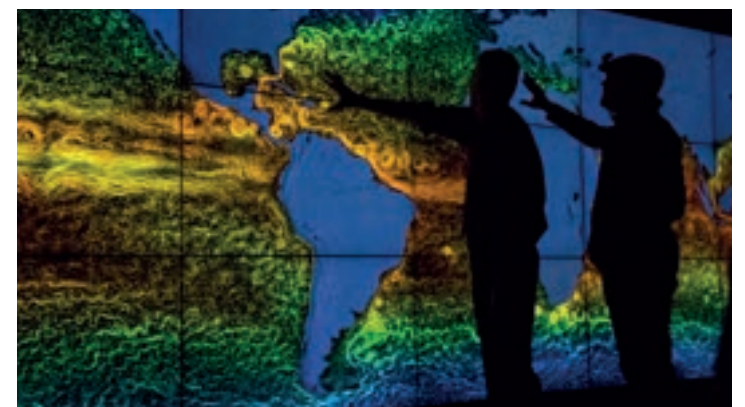
this was 0.4° C cooler than 2023.

In the UK, temperatures were 1 °C above the average for October with Southern areas reaching higher temperatures of 1.7 °C above normal. Similarly, precipitation was also recorded to be 40% above the average levels for October. Both of these dramatic increases are thought to be driven by climate change.

The main cause of climate change is the release of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide into the atmosphere as humans burn more fossil fuels. This has been occurring since the beginning of the industrial revolution. It is predicted that temperatures will continue to rise unless drastic and instant action is taken to combat the emission of greenhouse gases. Without this action many more record temperatures and weather events will be experienced.

It is also thought that warming this

year was further heightened due to recent natural changes caused by the formation of El Nino. Normally, temperatures will further increase the year after El Nino forms, therefore meaning 2024 could be even hotter than 2023. This will also be more likely if excessive emissions and warming of the planet continue.

Source: NASA Goddard Space
Flight Center (via Flickr)

Elon Musk unveils new artificial intelligence chatbot, Grok

Lily Mott
Contributor

Tech mogul Elon Musk unveiled his latest creation, an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot, named Grok, on Nov. 5. Known for his ventures in technology and space exploration, Musk's announcement garnered attention, with some touting Grok as a breakthrough in AI.

Grok's appeal lies in its unconventional approach to conversational AI. Musk revealed that Grok has access to posts from X which it uses to respond to questions and commands. Unlike traditional AI chatbots that provide meticulously

crafted responses, Grok leans into sarcasm, making it a unique addition to the AI landscape.

Staff at Musk's new AI startup, xAI, said Grok is inspired by the cult sci-fi comedy book, The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. The chatbot is "intended to answer almost anything and, far harder, even suggest what questions to ask" according to xAI's November 5 post on X.

Musk expressed his fears about the impact AI could have on humanity at the AI Safety Summit at Bletchley Park just three days before unveiling his own AI chatbot. Musk said he hoped xAI would develop AI "in a good way" in a con-

versation launching xAI on X (formerly Twitter) in July 2023.

Not everyone is as enthusiastic about Musk's latest venture. Hannah Grady Williams, the founder of d'Skills, an online community dedicated to helping young people harness the capabilities of AI, said, while Grok and X are getting some publicity, all Grok appears to be is a chatbot with looser answer parameters. "At the end of the day, I think smart people will see it for what it's meant to be — kind of a humorous, raw, and sarcastic form of getting the essence of X as a chatbot," said Grady Williams.

Grok is still in early testing and not available to the general public.

Verified X users can participate in an early access program before the chatbot is accessible to the general public, according to the Grok website.

xAI said they have an "exciting roadmap" ahead for Grok and "will be rolling out new capabilities and features in the coming months", according to a recent blog post.

“The chatbot is ‘intended to answer almost anything and, far harder, even suggest what questions to ask’ according to xAI [...]”

Elon Musk, founder of xAI
Source: Danny Oberhaus (via Flickr)

Emma Hayes to leave Chelsea Women at the end of the season

Grace D'Souza
Sport Editor

English football icon Emma Hayes will depart Chelsea after 11 years in charge of the blues.

The Barclays Women's Super League simply won't be the same without the managerial legend. According to Chelsea Football Club, Emma Hayes is looking to pursue a new opportunity outside of Women Super League and club football, which has caused fans to speculate that she will be the new head coach for the USA's women's national team. With

“It is always a day I never wanted to see come. But I feel like I have to put myself first.

this information being released, Chelsea Women's fans are worried that Emma Hayes leaving Chelsea may persuade the super striker, Sam Kerr, to leave Chelsea at the end of the 2023/24 season as well. Obviously, this will be a huge loss to the blues and whilst they do have other strikers, such as Lauren James and Erin Cuthbert, they are nowhere near the skill level of Sam Kerr. This, in turn, could lead to Chelsea to buy a new striker next season, with Rachel Daly being the number one target, especially as Aston Villa have had such a poor season so far, sitting bottom of the Women's Super League table. If England international Rachel Daly was to join Chelsea next season, she would play along her best friend and fellow Lionesses teammate, Millie Bright. Rachel Daly is a decorated and creative player who can play in any position on the pitch

so she will definitely be a great asset to Chelsea if given the chance to join the sensational side. During her time at Chelsea Emma Hayes has won six Barclays FA Women's Super League Titles, five Vitality Women's cup, two FA Women's Conti League Cups, one spring series trophy and one FA Women's Community Shield. Hayes managed the team to win a historic double and has also won one domestic treble. On six occasions Emma Hayes has won FA Women's Super League Manager of the Season and on five occasions she has won the League Managers Association Women's Super League of the Season. In an interview with Chelsea TV Emma Hayes said, “It is always a day I never wanted to see come. But I feel like I have to put myself first. You dedicate so many hours to this job.. I have taken this team to the top. I always said

that I wanted to leave at the top. And I will maintain that, that is what I want to do.” The beautiful game definitely won't be the same without her but with her winning everything she possibly can at Chelsea the move seems like a good and positive decision for such a talented manager.

This weekend's WSL results:
Man United 5-0 West Ham
Spurs 1-1 Liverpool
Everton 0-3 Chelsea
Man City 0-1 Brighton
Bristol 0-2 Aston Villa
Leicester 2-6 Arsenal



Source: Maggie Jones (via Flickr)

Leigh Halfpenny makes his final international appearance

Sophia Crothall
Contributor

Wales full-back Leigh Halfpenny had the perfect send-off for retiring following a 49-26 victory over the Barbarians at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff on the 4th of November 2023.

Halfpenny converted five tries and received a standing ovation from the crowd when substituted by Kieran Hardy in the 65th minute.

He is confirmed to be making the move to Super Rugby champions the Crusaders, on a one-year deal.

In addition to Leigh Halfpenny, crowds also said farewell to Justin Tipuric and Alun Wyn Jones, who received 158 caps for Wales and 12 Tests for the Lions, making him world rugby's most capped player.

Wales head coach Gatland said, “For the three of them, to have that game here in the stadium was incredibly special, I thought the crowd were amazing in recognising that as

well”.

Shortly before the game kicked off, Fiji international Api Ratuniyarawa, who was due to play for the Barbarians, was revealed to be in court after being charged with sexual assault. The 37-year-old was released on bail and is set to appear at Cardiff Crown Court on the 4th of December.

During the game, hooker Dewi Lake, wing Tom Rogers and fly-half Sam Costelow crossed for Wales in the first half, with Simione Kuruvoli touching down for the Barbarians. The hosts secured a 21-5 lead during

the first half.

Taine Plumtree scored a fourth try for Wales after half-time, followed by Aaron Wainwright and Kieran Hardy.

In the second half, an early cross from Jones secured Wales a two-point lead, with Nicolas Sanchez adding a conversion to double.

Replacements Taine Plumtree, Aaron Wainwright and Hardy claimed second-half touchdowns for Wales, with Halfpenny and Cai Evans adding two conversions each.

Tom Hooper also scored a try for

the Barbarians.

Commenting on the teams' match performance, Gatland stated, “To score 49 points, you've got to be pretty happy. We probably left a few out there in the first half, with some of the opportunities created.”

“I am pleased where we are, I am pleased with this group of players” he added.

All the controversies of the Las Vegas GP

Aimee Szulczewski
Head of Sport

The inaugural Las Vegas Grand Prix debuted last week, however, the newest Formula 1 circuit has faced criticisms about the event.

The Federation Internationale l'Automobile (FIA) and Formula 1 made the Las Vegas Grand Prix the spectacle of the 2023 Formula 1 calendar. They have organised a 'Race to the Altar' chapel, Elvis Presley tributes, and even a television special 'Netflix Cup'. It is not the first time that the pinnacle of the racing world has taken place in the vibrant American gambling capital. Bernie Ecclestone, former chief executive of the Formula One Group, held a race back in 1981 in the unsuitable venue of the Caesars Palace casino car park.

Now, over forty years later, the location is back, and all the stops have been brought out for its return, bringing as many controversies as the last event.

One of the three straights in the

track goes through 'The Las Vegas Strip', which has caused difficulties for many locals. Developing the roads to be sufficient for the Grand Prix has led to several construction delays and unannounced closures. As a result, residents have become aggravated by this construction, as many struggle to get to work or university. The University of Nevada even considered shutting the institution and hosting virtual learning for their students facing delays.

A serious issue arose, as construction worker, Tizzy Antonio, sadly passed away because of an injury he faced during the construction of the Grand Prix grandstands. Formula 1 have failed to comment on his death, despite his passing being a result of the work being done for its event.

Due to these delays, key areas for the Grand Prix were still being built on the Wednesday before the race. The racing paddock for teams only finished this penultimate day of the race week, meaning million-pound race cars were being stored in tents and shipping containers on the road

beside the construction work.

With the construction, the layout of the brand-new race track has raised serious doubts about the quality of racing. The track has three lengthy straights, including an almost 1.2-mile flat-out section down the Las Vegas Strip. As many motorsport fans know, this will become a challenge for teams, as the tyre cool down on long straights will hinder their racing ability. Teams must consider the implications of this, which will bring an interesting race. On a fan-based level, Formula 1 claimed that they hosted this race to 'expand the American audience'. A local start time of 10:00 pm means that the East Coast of America will have a start time of 1:00 am. These start times have favoured their massive European audience, allowing them to watch at a more reasonable time.

Alongside this, the sky-high race-day ticket prices have hindered the opportunities for locals to watch this milestone for their city. The cheapest ticket being priced at around \$500 has left residents and fans upset that they cannot watch

the event.

Additionally, the lack of tickets sold has been considered in the construction process, as thick barriers have been put up to prevent anyone who does not have a ticket from seeing the race for free. This has included the multiple bridges which span the Las Vegas roads and road-side access. Plus, the FIA asked all hotels which had a view of the track to pay a fee for the privilege, leading to hotel staff striking in disgust.

Finally, FIA and Formula 1 bosses have come out and admitted that they forgot to consider the weather implications of the race. This will be the coldest Formula 1 race in history, hitting 3-6 degrees during the race.

For Formula 1, their newest track will most definitely go down in motorsport history, however, the reasons for this may not be the ones originally expected.

Source: LG (via Flickr)



A Look into Aerial Fitness at Cardiff University

Honor Mitchell Brock
Sport Editor

Aerial fitness is one of the many fabulous sports societies running currently here at Cardiff University. The society offers a wide range of classes and also welcomes anyone with any ability to come along. Aerial fitness not only teaches beginner to advanced classes in pole and hoop aerobics but also provides strength and conditioning, flexibility sessions and flow classes too. Whether you are an experienced hoop gymnast or fancy learning some moves in the flow dance classes, aerial fitness has you covered.

For many people, including myself, the realm of pole and hoop fitness is an unknown one. The ladies running the classes and members of the club are all incredibly talented. The instructors along with the committee are very friendly and always aim to create a positive and uplifting atmosphere. Members are a part of an incredible community which empowers and strengthens those taking part.

Although the club promotes such

a positive environment it still faces its challenges. The society performs in a variety of competitions such as the SWPC and Welsh Dragon Pole and is a Gold Tier society. However this academic year will only be their third year performing at Varsity ever, with their first year being an unofficial competition. There also seems to be no ability for the club to grow at Cardiff, with limiting studio space and an inability to use certain equipment, the societies are restricted to what they already have. But committee President, Larissa Palmer, aims to expand the club to be able to get even more variety and more people involved. Even though the club have only performed at Varsity twice they have been successful champions both times and hopefully they can keep up the winning streak this year.

With aerial fitness being a female dominated sport the club promotes awareness of the issues that can arise from certain stereotypes. They have introduced talks and have teamed up with societies such as the feminist society and the uni boob team in the past to stimulate important discussions surrounding the sport. The so-

ciety encourages body positivity and creates an atmosphere for people's confidence and self-esteem to dramatically improve. Along with competitions, the club also puts on showcases twice a year. With an enthusiastic and encouraging audience the showcases are a great chance for beginners and members to perform and express themselves.

The club also does their bit for charity. After giving 50% of their Give it a Go revenue to Velindre cancer health board they managed to raise an amazing £430 from one week of sessions alone.

So, if you are wanting to have a bit of fun trying something new, to improve your confidence, and create new friends, I would thoroughly recommend joining the aerial fitness society.

Sorce: Honor Mitchell Brock



A New Era for Professional Netball

Aimee Szulczewski
Head of Sport

Following the historic Netball World Cup this summer, England Netball has announced the first steps to professionalise the game, with the introduction of the Netball Super League (NSL).

Driving towards professionalism for the domestic sport, England Netball's announcement of the relaunch of the NSL in 2025 will completely transform the sport, on and off the court.

Significant changes will deliver extraordinary fan experiences and the power to grow the game. This includes clubs playing in bigger venues and arenas, enhancements in match day events, and competition improvements to deliver a more thrilling game.

For fans, opportunities for live and TV viewing of matches will bring greater availability for the sport, and capture a bigger audience across sports fans.

England Netball are welcoming existing clubs, who have the ability to play a part in this new era, express their interests ready for the league in 2025.

Netball is now the number one team sport for women in England, with over three million people playing, changes to

Is the Welsh Rugby Union failing the women's game?

Freddie Sheppard
Sports Editor

The WRU have had a lot to answer for in the last year, regarding their commitment to women's rugby. After promising to right the wrongs of the past, there has unfortunately been little progression...

I interviewed Cardiff alumni Ffion Revell, where she talked me through some of the failures of the WRU in catering for women looking to play a high standard of rugby in Wales.

Ffion told me, "unless you go over the border, the standard slips" when you progress from junior into senior rugby. The set up in Wales is not good enough to cater for the demand, sending floods of future Welsh stars across the border into England. With the whole of the current Welsh squad

playing their club rugby in England, there are clearly deeply rooted issues in the WRU's commitment to the women's game.

England proved their investment in the women's side, offering full time professional contracts to players from 2014. It took Wales almost 10 years to offer the same to their international athletes. In 2023, the WRU initially announced 12 full time contracts, with a further 17 on six-month contracts. This plays a vital role in the success of these athletes, as Ffion stresses "they

“For a country so proud of their rugby, it is a failure by the WRU to not provide a competitive set up for the tens-of-thousands of girls and women. so many hours

go into work nine to five when training... it should have come a lot earlier."

The highest standard of women's rugby in Wales is the Premiership. Often winning with a comfortable lead, Ffion's team, Llandaff North are currently holding first place, often winning with a comfortable lead, and this is meant to be the most competitive standard of rugby in Wales... Ffion went on to admit "If I'm going to play a competitive game, I'm going to have to go". By go - she means leave Wales and play for a team in England - words that don't come easy for a Welsh woman!

The WRU scrapped the regional set up when COVID hit. The old set up mirrored that of the male side with Scarlets, Cardiff, Ospreys, Dragons and RGC playing each other in a highly competitive and well-established system. This system was scrapped for women's rugby during COVID and

hasn't been brought back, meaning U18's girls who dream of becoming Wales' next international stars have no realistic progression at senior level in Wales. An attractive and successful system exists for the men, so there is no reason why this should not be the case for women too.

For a country so proud of their rugby, it is a failure by the WRU to not provide a competitive set up for the tens-of-thousands of girls and women playing rugby in Wales. The question remains, do the WRU have what it takes to transform the women's system in Wales and do what's right - or have they gone too far in wrecking a system that it is now impossible to repair?

Retirement for Fury?

Adam Gaston
Contributor

Rumours have been circulating around boxing media that Tyson Fury is set to retire after his close split decision victory over former UFC heavyweight champion Francis Ngannou.

This comes after former super-middleweight champion George Groves stated it was his belief that Fury may retire after his nery win over Ngannou as he simply could not be ready for his proposed fight with Oleksandr Usyk. He also questioned whether Fury still has the same hunger for fighting that he used to have.

Since then, Fury's camp has confirmed that this rumour is not true.

Fury's manager, Spencer Brown, dismissed the talk of retirement saying: "There is absolutely no truth in this, none whatsoever". Adding that "Tyson is raring to go" for his Heavyweight Championship unification clash with Usyk.

However, there is no doubt the performance in Riyadh was concerning for the Englishman who was dropped in the third round with an overhand left. Fury was expected to dominate Ngannou, but many claim the Cameroonian should have won the fight having landed the heavier shots.

It can be said that Fury was never really in control of the fight and struggled to figure out how to combat the awkward style of the mixed martial artist. Former British boxer, Jonny Nelson, speaking to boxing media

outlet Seconds Out believes Fury 'didn't deserve the win' and worries that the Gypsy King's 'legs have gone'.

Moving forward this begs the question, is Tyson Fury really ready for his Unification fight with Usyk and is he past his best? Post-fight Fury said Ngannou had given him one of his toughest fights in ten years and that he could have no excuses adding that 'Francis is a good fighter'.

Fury's comments have been pragmatic and humble suggesting he himself knew he didn't perform to the levels required. Top Rank president Todd duBoef played down concerns believing the fight can serve as a positive for Fury in the run-up to the Usyk fight and that Tyson will be "razor, razor-sharp" the next time you see him.

DuBoef also confirmed that the

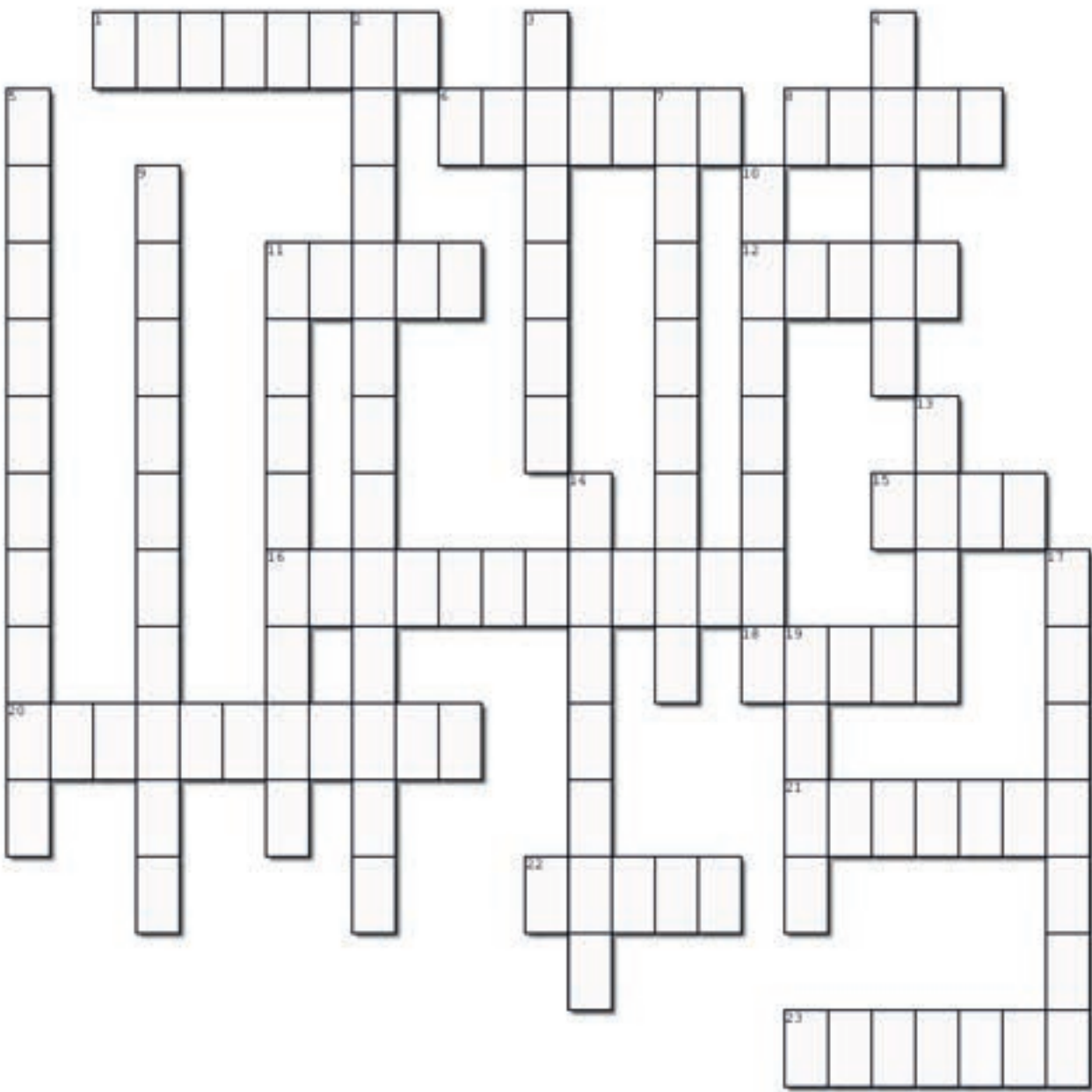
"heavy lifting" has been done in agreeing the fight between Fury and Usyk, again putting to bed rumours of an early retirement for Fury.

Source: Leonid Mamchenkov (via Flickr)



BONUS STORY





Across

1. I am not at all ___ to attend my thursday morning seminar (8)
6. Loved bin men and less beloved train line have in common (7)
8. Many a chirp from Elon (5)
11. Smooth, debonair, he thought he was being ___ he was not (5)
12. Coming ___ at the seams (5)
15. I feel like everyone's gone one (4)
16. The next step none of us want to think about just yet (12)
18. What is the ___ for Wednesday again? (5)
20. The workload is increasing at an ___ rate (11)
21. Small antelope, he was as graceful as a three legged one staggering home (7)
22. Main ingredient for both a Tom Collins and a hangover (5)
23. Shifty, evasive (7)

Down

2. How you feel hearing about the night before, vexation (12)
3. Elaborately adorned (6)
4. Matthew, in fond tribute (5)
5. Marketed by a talking tiger, solid start to the day (10)
7. Join the bangles in walking like one (8)
9. Impervious to water, essential in Wales most of the year (10)
10. David Cameron's reappearance in it was jarring no? (7)
11. Can we start yet for Christmas? (8)
13. ___, actually (4)
14. Gair Rhydd is nearly on its 1200th (7)
17. Could this clue BE any more obvious (7)
19. Grant, of sense and sensibility (4)

Find the Answers on our Instagram @gairrhydd