



Read Online

Welcome back - Have a great Spring Semester! Croeso nôl - Mwynhewch Semester y Gwanwyn!

Source: Yorick (Via Flickr)

Labour abandons £28bn green spending

Lauren Tutchell
Head of Politics

On the same day we found out that global warming exceeded 1.5C across an entire year for the first time ever, Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer announced he will no longer be committing to his £28bn 'Green Prosperity Plan'.

The spending pledge, initially announced in 2021, was celebrated for striving the UK in the right direction towards reaching important climate targets, as well as creating new green jobs and reducing household bills.

The defining aspect was the creation of a state-owned energy company which would see the country invest in more renewable sources of power, such as offshore wind farms.

This would allow the UK to reduce its reliance upon unreliable fossil fuels, removing the ability of energy-producing countries to monopolise on their fossil fuel exports for political gain, reducing geopolitical tension and spikes in energy prices like the ones we have seen as a consequence of the Russia-Ukraine war. It would also help reduce the UK's contribution to climate change, as well as reducing household bills, with wind energy being nine times cheaper than gas.

The UK also has some of the oldest and draughtiest housing stock in Western Europe, and the Green Prosperity plan aimed to tackle this by providing up to £6bn a year on loans and grants for families to improve home insulation.

It also included funding to aid the development of electric vehicles, improving transport infrastructure and the decarbonisation of British industries.

The hefty £28bn was set to be funded from borrowing which, at the time of initial unveiling, was a largely uncontroversial statement as interest rates sat at an attractive 0.1%. Since then, they have soared to a whopping 5.25%. This drastic change in economic situation has thus caused concern

about the financial implications of the plan, coupled with Starmer's fear of the recurring narrative being parroted by the Tories that Labour cannot be trusted with the public finances.

For months now there has been an intense debate within the Labour Party over whether or not to water down the target, but on Thursday Starmer finally decided to pull the plug.

The U-turn was met by a sea of criticism from many environmental groups, including 'Just Stop Oil' who accused Labour of being "complicit in killing millions", as well as 'Friends of the Earth' who warned that cuts would be "short sighted and cost the country dearly".

The announcement was also condemned by both sides of the political spectrum, with a spokesperson for the left-wing campaign group Momentum saying: "This latest Starmer U-turn represents yet another capitulation to right-wing interests."

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak also joined in, commenting: "This is a serious moment. This was the flagship plan of Labour's economic policy and it now looks like he's trying to wriggle out of it. I think it demonstrates exactly what I've been saying, that he U-turns on major things, he can't say what he would do differently because he doesn't have a plan. If you don't have a plan, then you can't deliver change for our country."

It's clear that Starmer made a big mistake by attaching such a hefty pound sign to one of his key missions, and perhaps that's why all further pledges and policies he's made since then have been so vague. He's learnt the hard way that making such a bold promise to people two years before the election is not the brightest idea.

To read the rest of Lauren's reporting head to page 5



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Gearing up for a General Election - Sources: Kier Starmer and Number 10 (Via Flickr)



Social Media and the Difficulty of Sharing

Aneurin Davies & Ella Lane
Opinion Editors

In an age where digital means of communication are becoming more prevalent by the day, it's become easier than ever to share our opinions online. Whether these be our thoughts about films, or political values, it's obvious that comment sections across the internet have been flooded with personal views

and opinions. In this article, we aim to investigate some of the positives and negatives associated with being able to share our every thought with the Masses. What are the impacts of being able to share our opinions anywhere at any time? Firstly and most obviously, it is easier for everyone to share their thoughts online. All we have to do is pick up our phones, type a response and hit post - it really is as easy as that! People no longer have to consider what

they are saying and how this might affect the person at the other end of the phone because social media has created a whole new faceless type of communication.

To read the rest of Aneurin and Ella's piece, turn to page 17

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Ionawr Sych neu Win Sych

Beca Dalis
Golygydd Taf-od

Oeddech chi wedi cymryd rhan yn Ionawr Sych, 'Dry Jan'? Oeddech chi'n llwyddiannus, neu a'i damp Jan oedd eich mis chi? A wnaeth yr Ionawr Sych droi i win sych?

Roedd ymchwil gan Alcohol Change yn dangos fod 30% o ddynion a 26% o fenywod o'r DU yn datgan eu bod nhw eisiau lleihau'r cyfanswm o alcohol maent yn yfed yn 2024. Dengys ymchwil fod 53% o fyfyrwyr yn yfed yn wythnosol.

I ddarllen gweddill erthygl Beca, trowch i dudalen 8

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Interview with Chapter Arts Center

Belle Lee
Head of Spotlight

I sat down with Claire Vaughan who is the Cinema Programme Manager at Chapter Arts Centre. Chapter Arts Centre very kindly allowed the Spotlight Team watch a free screening of Priscilla before this interview. Can you explain your role at Chapter Arts Centre?

I am the Cinema Programme Manager and that means I essentially run the cinema, choose the films, write the copy, and run the events

To read Belle's interview, turn to page 3

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Six Nations Opening Weekend

Freddie Sheppard
Sport Editor

The 2024 mens Six Nations campaign began with an astonishing win to last year's grand slam winners, Ireland. Beating a French side who, without their talismanic captain Antoine Dupont, looked ill-prepared, frantic and unorganised.

The 38-17 win was secured by five well worked tries from the Irish side. Jack Crowley, looking calm and composed took on the infamous Irish number 10 jersey.

To read Freddie's article, turn to page 22

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Gair Rhydd 2023/24

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It's tricky finding the right mix of study and fun

Mae'n anodd dod o hyd i'r cymysgedd cy-wir o astudio a hwyl

Edward Sutton
Editor-in-Chief | Prif Olygydd

Finding your feet during your first year in university is, in my opinion, a false narrative. It took me till at least the spring semester of my second year to really hit my stride and feel like I had found the societies, sports and communities that really matter to me. This is not to say I had a bad first year, I had a great time and had a wonderful flat and friends. Uni was such a departure from my norm—as it is for many of you—and there was just so much I had to decode, reorganise, and understand. We can all testify to the fact that there is a lot going on all at once in the first year of uni and I sincerely wish that my uni experience was longer now to compensate for the lost time.

How I've managed to anchor my time is the same as many of you, with activities that interest me. I run the newspaper you're reading right now, which takes up an awful amount of time, but at least I enjoy doing it. My swimming with the Athletic's

Union adds further structure to my week, with training being a key part of my downtime. And with that comes the highlight of my week: YOLO. Joining the Boxing Society for their socials is another little highlight and spending time with mates in weird and wonderful themed outfits just adds to that joy.

Going out for some is great, but not all of us enjoy that kind of night. For me, it may be a time off, but it does have its knock-on effects for me. My Thursdays take a while to get going—at the jeopardy of my other work and commitments. So, am I really benefiting myself by doing it? I like to think I am, though you might have a different opinion. It's what takes my mind off the work—for me that's key.

Something else that I feel isn't talked about enough is the work/work balance that is quite often a uniquely student experience. I found it challenging over the Christmas holidays with both my

job and uni work occurring at the same time by necessity. Exams are never an entertaining way to spend your holidays, but definitely doesn't help when I'm wrapped up in my burgundy jacket at Sainsbury's at a time where I should be writing an essay. It's during these times that I really feel my work suffers most, because, even in my third year, I still haven't been able to find the equilibrium that I so desperately want. I want to take a second and tip my hat to the people who work continuously throughout term time. It is not an easy task, but I hope you're trying to find that balance.

With my graduation looming ever closer, my attention turns to the new work/life balance I must create. I catch a glimpse of it when I go back during the summer. The long break brings out the new routines that, for me, differ greatly from uni life. Everything here in Cathays is so close—the gym, uni, my friends—are all within walking distance. I took the

ease of getting from work to "life" for granted in second year until summer rolled around and I was once again in my burgundy Sainsbury's uniform. Once I get into the world of work and I am out of my hometown, I will have to start from scratch with new routines. I guess that's the crux of what I'm rambling out—the resilience of our routines. I've tried to identify elements that are transferable wherever I might go, like the gym and my swimming. Once I have a place, those are easy to pick back up wherever I might be. Maybe have a think about your routine and what elements of it are transferable.

Now that spring semester has started, I'm picking up my uni routine for the final time. I hope in this semester you can start or improve your work/life balance and see where you can find those moments of relaxation. We've got a long road ahead of us till summer and I for one don't want to be an academic waif by the end of it.

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SPOTLIGHT



Belle Lee



Nancy Cook

Interview with Claire Vaughan at Chapter Arts Centre

Belle spoke with Cinema Programme Manager to Find out More about the Film Industry

Belle Lee
Head of Spotlight

I sat down with Claire Vaughan who is the Cinema Programme Manager at Chapter Arts Centre. Chapter Arts Centre very kindly allowed the Spotlight Team watch a free screening of Priscilla before this interview.

Can you explain your role at Chapter Arts Centre?

'I am the Cinema Programme Manager and that means I essentially run the cinema, choose the films, write the copy, and run the events. Basically, anything to do with the cinema is me! I do everything apart from project as we have a very experienced projection team who have worked with every type of film and are truly the backbone of our cinema.'

What factors do you consider when selecting films for a cinema programme?

'There is something called a 'Filmslate', where distributors and producers will decide where to place their film in the



Chapter Arts Centre is an independent performance space and cinema
Source: ROB (via Flickr)

calendar. For example, Dune comes out on the 1st of March so other directors will not choose their film to be released on the same day. My process involves looking at what comes out on the 'slate' and placing it into a grid that schedules them. We focus on quality here; I try to watch as much as I can through industry networks before I book them. Sometimes, we decide on other factors such as the director, or the actors within them however, if people send me a film and I really like it, that will also get shown. These

are the joys of being an independent cinema: that all the films are not the same and heavily commercialised.'

How have you differentiated Chapter from your average cinema experience?

'Chapter is the only cinema still screening 35mm in all of Wales. We do VHS, 16mm, 8mm – all sorts of weird formats to display movies here at Chapter. But the main difference between Chapter and commercial

cinema is that there is a person, it is so personal what we do here. We try to demystify the industry and bring the magic into cinema – it doesn't make it any less magic just because you know how it's made.'

How do you support young and local talent at Chapter?

'We run Chapter MovieMaker which is a short film showcase that happens on the first Monday of every month and has been going on for decades. It is currently run by our host Tom Betts. It is a way of, wherever you are in the industry, showcasing your film or whatever you've been working on to audiences for feedback or pleasure. It is also BAFTA-qualifying screening so we have had people win BAFTA awards from showcasing at MovieMaker in the past. The amazing thing about MovieMaker is getting local talent onscreen and hopefully becoming a

“These are the joys of independent cinema that film do not need to be commercialised”

Cardiff University's Alternative Music Society

Daws and Lunson
Contributors

A word from the co-founder and president Adelaide Daws:

Starting at Cardiff University in 2022 I had trouble finding like-minded people, as someone with a strong aversion to clubbing, socialization was particularly difficult for me. Aside from what my friends over at Live Music Society provide, I felt there was a gap in what could be a thriving alternative scene if the heavier gothic rock and industrial mental persuasion of GRIMSOC is not for you. I co-founded the Alternative Music Society over the summer after my first year with a friend who has since left the committee but without whom the society would not exist. We founded AMS intending to create a space for like-minded people

to share an appreciation of alternative music, making a historically male-dominated scene accessible to all.

I wanted to society to be free from the pretentious attitudes often associated with alt-music listeners, welcoming everyone from classic rock and hardcore punk fans to listeners of ethereal psychedelia, shoegaze, and neo-soul/funk-rock fusion.

Since starting up in September we have become a thriving society with 100 wonderful members and a plethora of events on offer. We hold bi-weekly socials and are currently working towards many exciting collaborations with a range of societies and alternative music venues across Cardiff. If you haven't found your people yet at university and our society sounds like your kind of thing, get in touch over Instagram @ams_cardiff with any questions and we will

make sure you are welcomed into the society to meet new people and bond over a love of great music.

A word from our newly elected Vice President Isabel Lunson:

"When I started out at University this year, I knew I wanted to take part in something, but I wasn't sure whether I wanted that to be a sport or a society.

Going to the freshers' fairs I was overwhelmed with options, I could join pretty much anything I wanted which was amazing, but everything got booked up so quickly, so I never got around to attending any 'give it a go' sessions or buying any memberships. I had heard of AMS, and it sounded like my cup of tea with lots of gig socials and opportunities to waffle about music. So soon after freshers, when some of my friends mentioned

there was a bar t-shirt pub crawl, I knew I had to go. I ended up having a wicked night and meeting some of my closest friends, every person I spoke to was incredibly welcoming, friendly, and down to earth. From struggling to make friends at the beginning of uni, I've now found a group full of lovely people (with pretty good music

“I felt there was a gap in what could be a thriving alternative scene if GRIMSOC is not for you.”

tastes) to be a part of. When I put myself forward for vice president, I didn't think I would be voted in, but I wanted to push myself out of my comfort zone. I can't wait to watch this society grow and help put on amazing socials where everyone is welcome and included.



Source: Next Droid (via Flickr)

JOMEC Fashion Swap - 13th of March 2024!

Christina Vainer
Contributor

The media continuously tries to convince us to buy newer, trendier clothing, just to discard it when it goes out of style. An estimated 93 million garments are burned or landfilled each year. That's about a full garbage truck's worth of textiles every second!

However, a growing number of people are attempting to recycle their clothing; yet there are still situations when the environmental benefits of this sustainable practice are difficult to measure.

If sustainability is one of your goals for 2024 the best place to start may be a

fashion swap, like the one JOMEC is hosting.

To receive your tokens on the day of the actual swap, you must give your clothing this March starting the week of 04/24. The swap is your opportunity to pay attention to style in a new setting. More crucially, a chance for students to rebrand their clothing in an environmentally friendly way. By exchanging your clothing, you can be sure it won't end up in landfill.

However, giving them to a friend or stranger is simple and satisfying, knowing that the clothes will be given another life! Circularity is also observable and tangible thanks to swaps. In conclusion, this is your opportunity to engage in tiny deeds of kindness

within the JOMEC community; by attending this swap, you will be taking a stand against garment waste and fast fashion. We want to see you on March 13th on the social stairs, where there will be refreshments, music, and friendly volunteers!

If you would like to donate clothes for the swap, clothes must be bought to JOMEC on the 4th of March. Bags of clothes must be clearly labelled with your name and year of study. Clothes must be clean and washed.

JOMEC Sustainability's vision is to create a greener, cleaner future in our University space. From reducing single-use-plastics to supporting eco-friendly brands, every small action counts!



Source: Kamal Hamid (via Flickr)

Celebrating Lunar New Year Away From Home

Rhianne tells Gair Rhydd Readers how to Celebrate Lunar New Year in Cardiff

Rhianne Talling
Contributor

With the Lunar New Year coming up, we can imagine that it is a time of incredible homesickness for some of our international students. Especially when it's your first time celebrating away from home. Although it's not the same, it might help a bit to gather some of your friends around and try to make it feel as close to home as you can get with these ideas of how to celebrate in South Wales.

Visit Local Asian Restaurants!

Food, family, and friends are some of the biggest parts of the Lunar New Year. So, it might be worth bringing your university friends along with you to celebrate by visiting some of the more authentic Asian restaurants in Cardiff. Although all of us Asian students know very well that it is difficult to find an Asian restaurant that doesn't serve chips, there are a few restaurants out there that are on the more authentic side, with some of our recommendations being Happy Gathering, Chinese Fast Street Food, and Happy Lok. Of course, many other



Source: Skyseeker (via Flickr)

restaurants out there serve Asian cuisine on the more authentic side. Bringing your friends to some of these might help you celebrate an important part of your culture.

Lunar New Year Party at Circuit Night Club!

Everyone knows that when you're a fresher you can't resist a night out. Even though it's not a very traditional way of celebrating the Lunar New Year, heading to the Circuit Lunar New Year party might be a good way to combine this important holiday with stereotypical student ways of celebrating. So, consider dragging

your housemates on a night out to celebrate the lunar new year in the most Fresher way possible!

An At-Home Potluck Party!

Of course, we are university students, and sometimes we can't afford to go out and have a big dinner together, or splurge on a night out. In that case, it might be worth throwing an at-home potluck party. Get some people together and have everyone bring a traditional Lunar New Year dish of their choice and have a night of celebrations. Not only is this a great way of getting your friends together to celebrate, but by having them bring a dish

they made, you are also encouraging them to get involved in a meaningful holiday. That effort could make it all the more special.

Make some Traditional Lunar New Year food with your Friends.

Maybe you don't want to risk a potluck, the chances of multiple non-Asian friends showing up with egg fried rice are high, after all. Instead, it could be fun to get a few of your housemates into the kitchen with you and make some traditional Lunar New Year food together. If you're a natural cook, you could teach them to make the food you love, and if you're not, you could all have fun following a recipe together. By working together to make the food, you can embrace the sense of friendship and culture to make your Lunar New Year as special as it can be.

We hope that these ideas help you celebrate the Lunar New Year even when you're away from home and away from the people whom you'd typically celebrate with. These ideas will let you feel at home with your university friends during an important holiday.

SPOTLIGHT

ARE YOU
INTERESTED
IN CARDIFF
CULTURE?

WHY NOT
BECOME
A
SPOTLIGHT
EDITOR?

Gair Rhydd is looking for new editors for our spotlight section! If you have a keen eye for editing, want to gain some journalistic experience or simply want to be involved with a fun and collaborative team, then Gair Rhydd might be for you!

Spotlight focuses on highlighting Cardiff activities, University societies and upcoming events while also allowing contributors to highlight their own achievements! We also get invited to review things around Cardiff for free!

If you are interested, send an email to spotlight@gairrhydd.com and we will give you all the details about how to get involved!

We will look forward from hearing from you - Belle and Nancy, the Spotlight Team!



Cardiff University Boob Team

Millie Welch - The President of Cardiff University's Boob Team - Tells all about the Society!

Millie Welch
Contributor

Hi readers, I am Millie, and I am the President of the Cardiff Uni Boob Team. You might be thinking, wow there is a society for everything these days! However, before you scroll away, this society may one day save your life so please stick around and keep reading!

The Cardiff Uni Boob Team are the ambassadors for the breast cancer awareness charity Coppafeel! here at Cardiff University. Coppafeel! is a breast cancer awareness charity all about educating and reminding people to get to know their boobs to catch breast cancer early. They do this by educating people on the signs and symptoms of breast cancer, encouraging them to get to know what is normal for them and empower-

ing young people to have the confidence to see a doctor if they notice anything that isn't right for them. Our job at UBT Cardiff is to make sure that Coppafeel's important message is spread to the students at Cardiff University while also raising money for charity! I joined UBT Cardiff in September 2022. The previous year, I was passionate about raising awareness for breast cancer after my Auntie had been diagnosed with breast cancer and was receiving treatment. When Madison reached out to me and mentioned she was looking for more members to join the society, I jumped at the opportunity. I soon after became Vice President and a year later, I am running the society which I am incredibly proud of.

I think one of the biggest joys of being in this role is that I can spread such an important message in such a fun, enjoyable way. There is so much variety in what we do as a society.

Every event, fundraiser, or social is different from the other and no two days are the same. One of our biggest fundraisers this year is our Boob Schools. A Boob School is where we go along to a society's training session, class, or meeting and give them a talk all about boobs and breast cancer. In this talk we go over the facts and figures of breast cancer, what the signs and symptoms to look out for are, and a boob-checking guide. We also encourage everyone to pink and make the session as fun and as boob themed as possible, and often people bring along donations as well to raise money for Coppafeel! We did over 40 Boob Schools in the first term alone and they have been one of our biggest successes this year, winning us Coppafeel's Breast Cancer Awareness Month Award in 2023!! We had a lot of fundraisers which contributed to our successful first term, such as our Boob Ball (Dodgeball) tourna-

ment, glittering at YOLO during Pink Week, and our Winter Showcase Raffle. We ended up raising £3545 in term one!! We also have more of our weekly socials, with activities such as Boobie Bingo, decorating pancakes as boobs and jewellery making expected this term.

Please check out our Instagram @ubtcardiff to keep up to date with what we get up to. Please feel free to send us a message whenever you would like to get involved with the society as well. If you would like to know more about breast cancer and the resources Coppafeel! offer, please check out <https://coppafeel.org/> as well. We also have a free monthly text reminder service as well, so make sure you text 'UBT CARDIFF' to 82228 to get your monthly reminder to check your boobs, pecs, and chest!!

Cardiff University's History Society

Ellis Hinton
Contributor

Cardiff University History Society is one of the biggest humanities-based course societies.

Our goal is to provide and maintain a social community for both history students and those who have an interest in the subject. This year we have run a range of socials, ensuring that the society is inclusive to those looking for a more relaxed daytime social, or a club night out.

For sober socials, we have run a cinema trip to see Napoleon, a study social and a Christmas quiz. Our study socials are to be held regularly, with the increased workload of the second

semester and upcoming assessments. We make sure we are available to lend support to students throughout their degree. On the other hand, we have run various nights out with different themes and for different events, including: a 'Give It A Go' pub crawl to start the academic year, a 'Bones and Jones' joint social with ANARC society, a Halloween social, and a joint social with Pride Society for LGBT+ History Month.

The latter was very much designed to promote diversity and inclusion and ensure everybody feels welcome and safe within the society.

In sync with this, we have added three new positions to the committee: a diversity and inclusion officer, a wel-

fare officer, and a second social secretary. With these new roles, the History Society is in a much better position to run more events. We uphold that our events are considerate and inclusive of everybody, no matter their gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

Coming soon, we have an inter-society Pub Quiz in aid of charity, a trip to The National Museum of Wales, and a social to mark Women's History Month in March. We'd love to see you at one of these events and have you as a member of our society! If you would like to get involved, find us at @cuhistorysoc on Instagram, and purchase a membership on our page at www.cardiffstudents.com

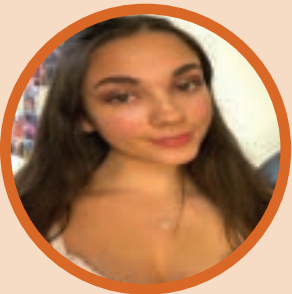


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“Our goal is to provide and maintain a social community for history students”

Source: Open Grid Shudeler (via Flickr)

POLITICS



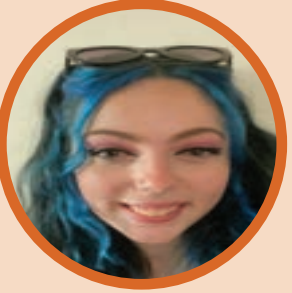
Lauren Tutchell



Laila Dawelbeit



Adam Dunstan



Cerys Upstone



Thomas Wilson

ELSEWHERE
IN POLITICS**Sunak declines to apologise over Trans comment****Farming unions warn of huge unrest and protest****Sunak admits he has failed to cut NHS waiting lists** politics@gairrhydd.com

Labour abandons £28bn green spending plan

“This is short sighted and will cost the country dearly.”

Lauren Tutchell
Head of Politics

On the same day we found out that global warming exceeded 1.5C across an entire year for the first time ever, Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer announced he will no longer be committing to his £28bn ‘Green Prosperity Plan’.

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The defining aspect was the creation of a state-owned energy company which would see the country invest in more renewable sources of power, such as offshore wind farms.

This would allow the UK to reduce its reliance upon unreliable fossil fuels, removing the ability of energy-producing countries to monopolise on their fossil fuel exports for political gain, reducing geopolitical tension and spikes in energy prices like the ones we have seen as a consequence of the Russia-Ukraine war. It would also help reduce the UK's contribution to climate change, as well as reducing household bills, with wind energy being nine times cheaper than gas.

The UK also has some of the oldest and draughtiest housing stock in Western Europe, and the Green Prosperity plan aimed to tackle this by providing up to £6bn a year on loans and grants for families to improve home insulation.

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Keir Starmer at the Labour's Women's Conference, Liverpool

Source: Keir Starmer (via Flickr)

development of electric vehicles, improving transport infrastructure and the decarbonisation of British industries.

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groups, including ‘Just Stop Oil’ who accused Labour of being “complicit in killing millions”, as well as ‘Friends of the Earth’ who warned that cuts would be “short sighted and cost the country dearly”.

The announcement was also condemned by both sides of the political spectrum, with a spokesperson for the left-wing campaign group Momentum saying: “This latest Starmer U-turn represents yet another capitulation to right-wing interests.”

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak also joined in, commenting: “This is a serious moment. This was the flagship plan of Labour's economic policy and it now looks like he's trying to wriggle out of it. I think it demonstrates exactly what I've been saying, that he U-turns on major things, he can't say what he would do differently because he doesn't have a plan. If you don't have a plan, then you can't deliver change for our country.”

It's clear that Starmer made a big mistake by attaching such a hefty pound sign to one of his key missions, and perhaps that's why all further pledges and policies he's made since then have been so vague. He's learnt the hard way that making such a bold promise to people two years before the election is not the brightest idea.

The £28bn figure had thus become a millstone around the neck of the Labour Party every time they tried to portray themselves as fiscally disciplined. Reeves is keen to be taken seriously as chancellor, but is abandoning her most distinctive policy the best way of doing that?

All Labour want to do is win this general election, and they're evidently trying to remove every unpredictable element that might derail the campaign in order to do so.

Two years ago, when the policy was first announced, Labour was keen to define themselves as distinctive and different from the Tories in their bid to win votes. Yet their strong lead in the opinion polls, paired with the current chaos of the Conservative government, indicates that Labour doesn't need such drastic ideas in order to win anymore.

Despite vowing to be Britain's first “green chancellor” if Labour wins the election, Reeves has turned her back on the environmental policy she helped create. Is this a responsible and sensible decision by Labour which demonstrates their ability to protect the public purse? Or is this just yet another example of them backpedaling on a key Labour policy?

Are Tory MPs plotting to get rid of Rishi Sunak?

Joseph Heppenstall
Contributor

Rumblings within Westminster hint at a storm brewing, threatening to reshape the Conservative Party. Insiders whisper of a plot to unseat Rishi Sunak, with corridors echoing fears of an electoral disaster unless there's a leadership change.

This atmosphere of unease underscores deep concerns about the party's future. Intrigue thickens as Sunak's loyalists face off against a faction of rebels. The latter, spurred by the spectre of electoral defeat, see change as imperative.

With the party at a crossroads, the debate over issues like immigration policy and tax cuts has intensified, drawing in voices from across the party spectrum. Sources suggest significant discontent over these issues, fuelling the fire of rebellion.

The call for leadership overhaul grows louder, with immigration handling and tax reduction demands at the forefront. This growing clamour for change reflects a broader dissatisfaction within the party. High stakes and tensions define the landscape.

Richard Tice and Reform UK, critiquing Sunak's immigration stance and championing tax cuts, resonate with some Conservatives. Their cri-



Picture by Lauren Hurley

Source: No 10 Downing Street (via Flickr)

tique taps into a dissatisfaction that could signal a shift in political winds.

In private, Tory MPs express fears of a devastating loss in the upcoming election. This dread underscores an urgency for dramatic leadership change, revealing deep-seated anxieties about the party's direction and electoral prospects.

Is Nigel Farage poised to capitalise on this Conservative discord? The internal strife, coupled with his positioning, marks a pivotal moment that could redefine the party's direction and the broader UK political scene.

The potential for Reform UK to benefit from Conservative disarray adds complexity to an already tumultuous situation.

Standing at a critical juncture, the Tories face a stark choice: stand with Sunak or pivot to address the electorate's concerns more directly.

This decision, transcending mere leadership, touches on the party's identity and its alignment with national sentiment.

As the General Election approaches, the importance of the leadership decision escalates. The tension sug-

gests a crisis not just of leadership but of existential proportion, requiring strategic foresight. The Tories' internal dilemma is a profound battle for the party's soul.

With Reform UK and Farage waiting to exploit any missteps, the Conservatives' decisions are crucial. Their choices will resonate through British political history, potentially redefining the party and the nation's political landscape.

With the election drawing closer, the internal conflict highlights a period of critical decision-making. The party's future, and potentially the UK's political direction, hangs in the balance, underscoring the high stakes and uncertain outcome.

As the Conservatives deliberate, their decisions will impact beyond party lines, shaping the party's electoral fate.

This moment of soul-searching is a test of resilience and adaptability. This defining period offers the Tories a chance to align with public priorities or face electoral fallout.

As the debate continues, the nation watches, recognising the significance of the choices made in navigating this pivotal crisis.

Is conscription the solution to a shrinking British Army?

Megan Evans
Contributor

General Sir Patrick Sanders has stressed that the UK Government must increase its military capacity to fight future wars.

The UK Defence personnel statistics show that in the 12 months leading to March 2023, there was an overall decrease of 5,400, meaning that more people have left the British Army than joined. This can also be seen from the 57% reduction rate in inflow to the UK Regular Forces between 1990 and 2023.

Former British Army Colonel, Tim Collins said in a Sky News interview: "This country is absolutely not ready for war; our military is a shadow of itself." This has come in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine where he went on to say: "Ukrainians are fighting for their liberty through the illegal invasion from Russia and if they do not win that, we are next."

Col Collins stated that the recruiting system of the armed forces has "failed miserably". Conscription would mean that, legally, certain groups would have to join the armed forces.



Source: Cpl Si Longworth RLC (via Flickr)

The National Services Act 1939 made conscription mandatory to all males aged between 18 and 41 in World War Two and those registered would undertake six months of military training.

Conscription ended in 1960 and former UK Defence Minister Michael Fallon has described it as "completely antithetical to the British thinking on the military".

Although, given the attacks in the Red Sea, the latest air-

strikes in Yemen, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the ever-increasing threat of China's takeover in Taiwan, global events are undoubtedly increasing the pressure for MPs to think carefully about what a future military should look like.

Defence Secretary, Grant Shapps delivered a speech at Lancaster House earlier this month where he spoke of the UK moving from a "post-war to a pre-war world".

In this speech, he announced, 'Exercise Steadfast Defender', one of NATO's largest deployments since the end of the Cold War, which will see 20,000 military personnel joining forces with counterparts from 30 NATO countries to provide resistance against Russia.

Calls for a 'citizen army' have been suggested to prepare the UK if NATO goes to war with Russia. General Sanders has raised the idea of a one-month long summer course which would give youngsters an insight into what it is like to be in the army.

This could be targeted towards school leavers who may be on a gap year or who are waiting to go to university, in the hope that they may join the reserves afterwards.

However, a spokesperson for Rishi Sunak shook off suggestions of conscription last week, declaring that the British military has a "proud tradition of being a voluntary force", and it currently has no plans of changing this.

By-elections

Cerys Upstone

Ahead of the imminent 2024 General Election, which could be held at any point this year, February 15th brings about two by-elections in the constituencies of Wellingborough and Kingswood.

In Wellingborough, the previous MP was Conservative Peter Bone, who served as MP for Wellingborough from May 2005 to December 2023.

He was removed after a complaint, and subsequent report found that he had committed acts of bullying and one act of sexual assault. Bone denied the claims, but he lost the Conservative whip, and the recall petition was successful meaning he lost his right to the seat.

In Kingswood, it is Conservative Chris Skidmore's seat that needs replacing. He served as MP for Kingswood from May 2010 to January 2024, having resigned from the position in a protest against the Offshore Petroleum Licensing Bill, which threatens to set back previous net zero targets.

Skidmore, a previous minister in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy claimed the relaxation of net zero targets was "the greatest mistake of [Sunak's] premiership".

These by-elections hold significance due to their proximity to the upcoming election. Labour and the opposition see it as an opportunity to claim precious ground and enhance their standing as the potential future governing party. Labour successes would also be a clear indicator of the party's lead over the Conservatives.

Campaigning efforts have been ramping up, with Damien Egan, Labour's Kingswood candidate looking to take control of the region and overturn the 11,000 Conservative majority that was won in 2019.

Kingswood has been known to swing between Labour and Conservatives over the last 50 years, and since the Kingswood constituency is set to be abolished at the General Election due to new boundary changes, Egan is keen to take the chance and give Labour a last attempt in the area.

Gen Kitchen, Labour candidate for Wellingborough is keen to win given her loss against Conservative Andrea Leadsom in the South Northamptonshire constituency in 2019.

She hopes to overturn the 18,540 majority, claiming "Labour has a plan to tackle these issues that impact so many here, but I will start by giving Wellingborough a voice in Westminster and working hard to restore pride in our town and villages."

The Conservatives are keen to retain control however, with Peter Bone's partner Helen Harrison running as the Conservative candidate in Wellingborough. Sam Bromiley, Conservative candidate for Kingswood hopes his experience as South Gloucestershire councillor and his lifelong residency in Kingswood will provide voters with confidence, claiming the protection of green spaces is a priority. He stated "I will work hard to stop Labour's disastrous plan to build on the greenbelt. I want to work with our local community rather than imposing further unwanted developments upon them."

Either way, it is clear that all political parties will be watching carefully and hoping for some post-valentines love on February 15th, with these elections being key predictors ahead of the general election.

Can we rely on mainstream Western media?

Laila Dawelbeit
Politics Editor

40 beheaded babies and several demonstrations across Britain during which hundreds of thousands of people "voiced their backing for Hamas". Israelis being "killed" or "murdered" actively while Palestinians have "died" passively. Israeli hostages, including "children", were exchanged with Palestinian prisoners, including "people aged 18 and younger". These are only some examples of unsubstantiated or misleading reports that have come out during the Israel-Hamas conflict from, what are meant to be, reliable and reputable Western mainstream media outlets with widespread, global reach.

Many of the big names in mainstream media champion their "impartiality" and lack of bias in their guidelines. Yet there have now been too many occasions in which these same outlets have had to apologise for or walk back on their lack of impartiality in their representation of the conflict.

"There are scores of international journalists in Israel who can cover every detail of every atrocity," HA Hellyer, from the Royal United Services Institute, said. "But there is nothing of similar depth available when it comes to the incredible civilian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza". This has the effect of dehumanising Palestinians as nameless victims of a natural disaster. "Westerners are more immune to Palestinian civilian suffering than to Israeli suffering," Hellyer said.

The long displacement of the Palestinian nation since the 1948 Nakba; the occupation of the West Bank,



Source: Laila Dawelbeit

which is carved up by illegal Israeli settlements and functions under a system of apartheid; and the blockade imposed on the Gaza strip since 2007, which many rights groups have referred to as the largest "open-air prison" in the world, is crucial context to the current conflict that has been missed out by the big outlets.

Since October 7, Israel has been said to have violated a number of international laws with its "collective punishment" of Palestinians and its "total blockade" on Gaza. This is not just the view of sympathetic activists, but the view of the United Nations, which is arguably one of the most important sources of international law, the World Health Organization (WHO) and several human rights groups such as Amnesty International.

Journalists are trained to account for the fact that most people

don't read beyond the headlines or first paragraphs so the exclusion of such context is critical. How are normal people, like you and I, meant to achieve a holistic understanding of the current conflict without the context that predates it by decades and a simple understanding of international law?

And the journalists who want to speak out against their network's pro-Israel bias fear losing their livelihoods and careers said Layla Maghribi, a British freelance journalist. Other journalists who are not reporting on the conflict have been fired for comments or actions that imply empathy with victims in Gaza.

This atmosphere of intimidation against journalists and the failure of mainstream outlets to humanise Palestinians is causing the Arabic-speaking world and diaspora in the West to lose even more faith in the credibility

of Western media coverage.

The distance, literally and figuratively, from the region should make readers question whether Western media coverage will give them the full story. When one is reporting from the safety of a London or New York office, how can an accurate, non-eurocentric representation of the Palestinian struggle be achieved? Perhaps this is why many have chosen to turn to non-Western media outlets; such as Al Jazeera, Middle East Eye and Haaretz; for coverage of the conflict.

It doesn't help that many journalists in Gaza have been killed by Israel's airstrikes and ground assault. At least 122 journalists and media workers have died since October 7, most of whom were Palestinians documenting what Western mainstream media has conveniently missed out of headlines.

"CPJ emphasizes that journalists are civilians doing important work during times of crisis and must not be targeted by warring parties," said Sherif Mansour, the Committee to Protect Journalists' Middle East and North Africa program coordinator. "Journalists across the region are making great sacrifices to cover this heart-breaking conflict."

Does this all reveal a wider crisis in journalism? Are outlets willing to bend their impartiality rule when it comes to a certain part of the world but vehemently adhere to it when it comes to another? Is it that for mainstream media, the West's vested interests in Israel are more important than the freedom, self-determination and livelihood of Palestinians?

"We're not just witnessing a breakdown in humanity," Layla Maghribi told Al Jazeera. "We are witnessing a breakdown in the profession."

When will Sunak call the next general election?

Adam Dunstan
Politics Editor

Since the start of the year, discussions about the election felt different to how they did in 2023. The election is within touching distance now, meaning questions about whether Labour can maintain their double-digit poll lead and whether the Tories will have a new leader prior to the election, will soon have answers. But when will it occur?

At the beginning of the year, the Prime Minister came under increasing pressure to answer this question. In accordance with the Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act, the last date an election can be called is 28th January 2025. However, Sunak ruled out a 2025 election at a gathering of journalists in December meaning an election will occur this year. When asked by the BBC in January, Sunak said it was his “working assumption” that an election would occur in the second half of the year. This flattened debates that an election would be held in the usual May time, with some believing an election could occur concurrently with local elections. However, Sunak’s wording in his answer doesn’t completely quell this speculation, suggesting that he’ll call the election at the point when he believes his party will be most likely to win it. Additionally, this month the Prime Minister is facing two by-elections in previously Conservative held constituencies. One in Wellingborough and one in Kingswood near Bristol. The results of these elections will weigh heavily on the Prime Minister’s mind in the run up to the election, as it’ll be less easy for him to dismiss Conservative defeats as “mid-term blues”. Conservative losses will also heighten speculation that a Labour victory in the election is becoming more likely. Therefore, if Sunak loses these by-elections, he’ll likely delay the election until the end of the year to allow for as much time as possible to rehabilitate his party and hope for Labour to fall in the polls. In my opinion, a November election is looking increasingly more likely, as an election is unlikely to occur during Parliament’s summer recess (beginning on 23rd July) and a November election would allow for the parties to fundraise during the party conference season in October. It’s important to remember though, that the US Presidential election is also due in November with UK security personnel warning of security and misinformation risks if the two happen too close together. The last times this occurred was in 1964, at the height of the Cold War following JFK’s assassination, and in 1992 when there were six months between them. With all this in mind, I’d bet that this year’s election will occur on 21st November. This would allow for two weeks between the US and UK elections and just about avoid potential campaigning in the depths of winter in December. But it all depends on how the Conservatives and Labour perform throughout the year.

Compensation for Post Office victims is ‘cruel’ and ‘offensive’

Laila Dawelbeit
Politics Editor

Alan Bates, the former Post Office operator who inspired the ITV drama ‘Mr Bates vs the Post Office’ will reject the government’s Post Office Horizon scandal compensation offer, describing it as “cruel” and “derisive”.

Since Bates was forced to stop running his Post Office branch in 2003, he has played a significant role in the fight for justice and compensation for the more than 700 post office operators who have been wrongly prosecuted between 1999 and 2015 for theft, fraud and false accounting.

What has been described as the biggest miscarriage of justice in UK history was caused by faulty accounting software, called Horizon, which is still used by the Post Office today.

Installed in the late 1990s, sub-postmasters quickly complained that the system had bugs after it falsely reported shortfalls - often for thousands of pounds.

Many affected by the scandal say that it ruined their lives. Because contracts with the Post Office stated that post office operators were re-



Source: Rodhullandemu (via Wikimedia Commons)

sponsible for any unexplained loss, some used their own money to cover non-existent shortfalls. Many faced bankruptcy and lost their livelihoods due to their damaged reputation and extortionate legal fees.

With marriages breaking down, many families believe the stress led to debilitating health conditions and addiction, and there are four suicides linked with the scandal.

A group of 555 post office operators took legal action against the Post Office in 2017. £58m in compensation was agreed to be paid to them in 2019, but much of the money was spent on legal fees. Only 95 convictions have been overturned, even though campaigners have won the right to have their cases reconsidered.

The Post Office has come under fire for late payments, with dozens

of victims having died before they received compensation. It has also been criticised for tax being charged on compensation and bosses offered £1.6m in bonuses.

The Post Office has almost halved the amount set aside for payments to branch managers in December as fewer than expected have won or brought appeals. It is now holding £244m for compensation payments related to overturned convictions, down from £478m a year ago, after 38% of appeals against convictions were either turned down, withdrawn or unsuccessful.

Claiming that it is only about a sixth of what he requested, Alan Bates will reject the government’s compensation offer. “Full and fair” might be his majesty’s government’s interpretation, but in reality the offer is derisive, offensive and after all this time, yes, cruel,” he said to the Telegraph. “It is just a terrible way to treat human beings”.

On Wednesday, the business minister, Kevin Hollinrake, will meet union officials as well as representatives of post office operators to discuss taking the Post Office out of government.

Will the new migration rules ruin our social care sector?

Lauren Tutchell
Head of Politics

It’s been less than two years since skilled worker visas were opened up to people over-seas to tackle the record staff shortages experienced in care homes across the UK.

But now, as part of Home Office plans to cut migration levels, the Government have announced changes which many care companies fear will put off potential foreign recruits from coming over to help our social care sector in the future. From this spring, overseas care workers will no longer be able to bring their family with them to the UK using their visa. According to the legal migration minister, Tom Pursglove, the decision has come about as the Government feel “there is a much better balance to strike” when evaluating the ratio of workers to family members that are coming to the UK.

Home Office figures suggest that out of the 144,000 care workers who arrived here last year, 174,000 family members were brought with them. This new legislation has caused immense controversy, with critics viewing this as a dangerous attempt from the Conservative party to try and reduce migration figures before the next general election, to the detriment of our struggling social care sector.

There were 152,000 social care vacancies in England in 2022-23, equivalent to 9.9% of all roles. Last year, there was also a 13% drop in the applications for those wanting to go and study nursing. But why? The low pay and cost-of-living pressures is a significant factor which is putting off many UK citizens from working in the sector, especially when they are often paid more for stacking shelves in supermarkets than they are working long shifts looking after the ill and elderly. Staff recruited from abroad were thus celebrated for “saving” the social care system

from collapse when they first arrived on our shores, and yet now - in a desperate attempt to appeal to voters before the general election - our Conservative government is willing to turn their back on these very same people.

In a sector where the pay is so low, ensuring a better life for their families is one of the major motivations for workers from overseas to come to the UK and work in care homes. 28 year old Ghanaian Harriet Mensah, a nurse with Stow Healthcare based in Norfolk, responded to the Government’s statement, saying: “Growing up in Ghana, I always dreamt of practising nursing somewhere in Europe. My husband has played a vital role. He has been able to help me take care of my child. Obviously I can’t do it alone.”

The measures, which were announced by Home Secretary James Cleverly in December, are proclaimed to be “robust changes” which will “crack down on rising migration” and “curb abuse of the migration system”. Yet those working in the care sector fear this will have dire consequences.

Mike Padgham, who runs five care homes in North Yorkshire, said: “I think we are going to find more businesses failing and care homes closing.” Caroline Abraham, from the Care and Support Alliance, also voiced her concerns, explaining that people needing care would “pay a heavy price” for these changes to the migration system.

The Government has attempted to address these issues by unveiling a new package of measures to help to recruit and retain more UK citizens into the sector by providing accredited qualifications, digital training and funded apprenticeships, but many fear this will simply not be enough. Reforms to how the care system is funded have also been announced, although these have been pushed back to beyond the next general election.

The decline of UK universities

Thomas Wilson
Politics Editor

The 1990s are widely viewed as being a good time to be young; from the optimism

sweeping corners of post-Thatcher Britain to ‘football coming home’, (ish), or ‘Britpop’ ruling the sound waves.

In the year Britain’s youth were first introduced to Oasis’ Half The World Away, being a young person in Britain changed forever through the insidious introduction of tuition fees.

Whilst the cost of fees were set at a cosy £1,000 a year in 1998, by the end of the following decade, the cost of a university education was raised to £9,000 a year in 2010.

England had slumped miserably to a 4-1 thumping courtesy of Germany and Oasis had imploded. The optimism of British youth had fizzled out in just twelve years.

In a matter of twenty five years the venue that plays host to the zenith of one’s youth - universities - have undergone a seismic reconfiguration.

Universities, once the bastion of free debate and discussion, are changing, particularly after the Higher Education Act became law over the summer, with Arif Ahmed given the role of Director of Speech and Academic Freedom of the Office for Students, or ‘free speech Tsar’ as he has been ordained.

The former Cambridge professor and appointee to the ECHR Board by Tory Minister Kemi Badenoch now finds himself in the rather omnipotent position of being the free speech crusader to act as a check and balance on ‘cancel-culture’ in universities.

Yet, the power he wields in this role appears to bring his benign im-

age into doubt, as Ahmed told the Times he has the power to not only discipline academics for social media

posts but also the ability to impose fines on student unions if they elect to disinvite speakers, even though such ‘disinvitations’ are often the result of students balloting for such action to be taken.

Despite Ahmed’s proclamation to “defend all views”, it would appear student unions and academics are not to be included in this bracket.

Aside from the threats posed by the ‘free speech Tsar’, our universities are attempting to undergo an endogenous cultural change, with a particular focus on drinking culture.

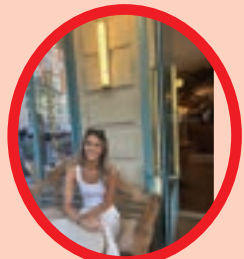
Despite a survey showing over eighty percent of students view drinking as an integral part of university life, such views have been disregarded by some universities, such as Aberdeen University who announced the closure of their student bar, despite it’s £200,000 refurbishment over the summer, for three months in September 2023.

In an act of seemingly pseudo-solidarity, Exeter University rebranded their ‘freshers week’ to ‘welcome week’, as a means to de-alcoholise the opening weeks of university, in a move that has no doubt seen the Real Ale Society in uproar.

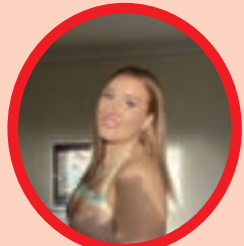
Although the clampdowns on freedom of speech may juxtapose with the desires to change university drinking culture, they are both signs of a changing British university culture which sees students pay more, drink less and lecturers think twice before voicing their views.

Only time will tell if such reforms will lead to more productive and improved British universities.

TAF-OD



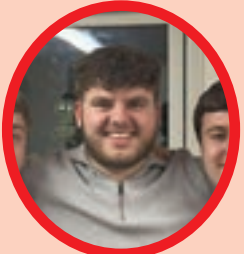
Efa Ceiri



Beca Dalis



Ffion Wyn Jones



Jack Thomas



Llyr Eirug



Millie Stacey

Adolygiad Traitors

Alys-Mai
Cyfranwr

Ewch yn llw i wylwio cyfres fwyaf poblogaidd teledu Prydain ar hyn o bryd - 'The Traitors'. Wedi cynhyrchu gan y BBC, mae'r gyfres hon wedi curo miliynau o wylwyr ers cychwyn nwl ym 2022. Yn fras, mae'r gyfres gêm realiti hon yn cyflwyno 22 o ddieithriaid gan wneud iddynt gwblhau amryw o dasgau gwahanol er mwyn curo'r wobwr o £120,000. Yn ychwanegol i'r tasgau, mae heriau seicolegol pellach ymysg y gêm, wrth i ambell cael eu dewis fel 'The Traitor' sydd wedi cynllunio i dwyllo'r

chwaraewyr eraill. Wedi'i chyflwyno gan Claudia Winkelman, mae'r sioe yn elwa o gael cyflwynydd sy'n llywio cymhlethdodau'r gêm, gan hefyd creu awyrgylch cyffrous a braf ymysg y chwaraewyr. Un o nodweddion gorau'r sioe yw ei allu i gadw'r gynulleidfa yn dyfalu am bwy, neu bydd y 'Traitors' penodol. Mae'r elfennau o ddirgelwch ynghylch yr unigolion dewisiadol yn ychwanegu haen o amheuaeth i'r gêm, gan hefyd creu ambell densiwn ymysg y chwaraewyr. Yn sicr, mae'r heriau a gyflwynir i'r cystadleuwyr yn y sioe nid yn unig yn gorfforol, ond hefyd yn trethu'n fedyddiol; gan greu awyrgylch dwys sy'n

cadw ni, y gynulleidfa wedi gwirioni o'r dechrau i'r diwedd.

Yn sicr, nid sioe gêm realiti yn unig yw 'The Traitors', mae'n brofiad hollol wahanol o unrhyw gyfres arall. Mae'r defnydd o gyfuno heriau a gemau strategol gyda drama ddynol yn arddangos y sioe yn un llawn cyffro a thensiwn, sy'n cadw ni, fel y gynulleidfa yn ysu i wybod mwy amdano. Er mwyn gwylwio'r gyfres, dilynwch y linc - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer>. A chofiwch, edrychwch allan am 'The Traitor'!

(Tarddiad Steven Penton via Flickr - Ucheldiroedd yr Alban)



Llywodraeth y UD yn mynd i'r afael â'r cynydd yn nifer y bobl ifanc sy'n feipio

Efa Ceiri
Pennaeth Taf-od

Fel rhan o gynllun Llywodraeth y DU i leihau'r nifer o bobl ifanc sy'n feipio, mae disgwyl gwahardd feipiau tafladwy neu 'disposable vapes' ym Mhrydain erbyn diwedd 2024 neu dechrau 2025.

Yn ôl Llywodraeth Cymru, mae Llywodraeth y DU, ar y cyd â llywodraethau Cymru a'r Alban yn bwriadu cyflwyno deddfwriaeth i wahardd feipio yn sgîl eu 'heffeithiau amgylcheddol'.

Yn ôl ystadegau 2022 y GIG dangoswyd fod cynydd mewn feipio, gyda 9% o blant rhwng 11 a 15 mlwydd oed yn defnyddio e-sigarêts. Roedd hyn yn gynydd sylweddol o 6% o'i gymharu

â'r ystadegau yn 2018. Er ei bod hi'n anghyfreithlon i unigolion o dan 18 oed brynu feps yn y Deyrnas Unedig, mae Dr Mike McKean, is-lywydd polisi ar gyfer Coleg Brenhinol y Pediatregwyr ac Iechyd Plant, yn tybio fod feipio ymysg plant yn eu harddegau yn dod yn "epidemig", ac yn broblem y dylai'r DU ei gymryd o ddifrif.

Mae tystiolaeth meddygol yn dangos bod y defnydd o'r feipiau hyn yn gallu arwain at risgiau megis caethiwed i nicotin, anhwylderau hwyliu a gostyngiad barhaol rheolaeth o ran ysgogiad. Er hyn, mae

Mae dylanwad marchnata hefyd cyfrannu at ddenu plant a phobl ifanc at y feps. Gyda'r rhan fwyaf o bobl ifanc yn defnyddio cyfryngau cymdeithasol yn ddy-

ddiol, mae cynnwys marchnata a gynhyrchir gan ddefnyddwyr a dylanwadwyr ar gyfryngau cymdeithasol yn ddylanwad allweddol ar ran ddealltwriaeth pobl ifanc o e-sigarêts.

Bydd y pwerau newydd sy'n cael eu cyflwyno i gyfyngu ar flasau sydd yn cael eu marchnata'n benodol ar gyfer plant. Yn ogystal â hyn, bydd dirwion newydd o £100 yn cael eu cyflwyno i siopau yng Nghymru a Lloegr sy'n gwerthu feipiau yn anghyfreithlon i blant. Bydd 'nicotine pouches' hefyd yn cael eu gwahardd i blant

(Tarddiad: Lacey Krusmark Flickr)



Ionawr Sych neu Win Sych

Beca Dalis
Golygydd Taf-od

Oeddech chi wedi cymryd rhan yn Ionawr Sych, 'Dry Jan'? Oeddech chi'n llwyddiannus, neu a'i damp Jan oedd eich mis chi? A wnaeth yr Ionawr Sych droi i win sych?

Roedd ymchwil gan Alcohol Change yn dangos fod 30% o ddynion a 26% o fenywod o'r DU yn datgan eu bod nhw eisiau lleihau'r cyfanswm o alcohol maent yn yfed yn 2024.

Dengys ymchwil fod 53% o fyfyrwyr yn yfed yn wythnosol.

Mae cwarter o Gen Z

ddim yn defnyddio alcohol.

Mae Elan Jones, cyn-lywydd y Gym Gym yn dweud nad oedd hi'n teimlo ei bod hi'n gallu ymgymryd ar yr her fel myfyriwr prifysgol, gan fod y diwylliant yfed yn rhan anochel o fywyd prifysgol.

Dywedodd 'pan oeddwn i adre ddechrau'r mis roeddwn i'n gallu peidio yfed ond wrth ddod yn ôl i'r brifysgol roedd gwledd y Gym Gym a gweld pawb eto yn beth naturiol i gymysgu cymdeithasu ac alcohol.'

Roedd ymchwil yn dangos fod 81% o fyfyrwyr yn dweud bod yfed a meddwi yn rhan o bro-

fiad prifysgol.

Yn 2023 mi wnaeth 175,000 o bobl gofrestru ar yr her o Ionawr Sych gydag Alcohol Change.

Yn ôl ymchwil gan The Guardian roedd tafarn-dai yn dioddef oherwydd bod llawer o bobl wedi ymgymryd ar yr her, gyda chanran gwerthiant spirits wedi lleihau 19% yn y bythefnos ddiwethaf.

Un o'r tipiau sydd yn cael ei awgrymu ydy fod pobl yn dod o hyd i ddi-od di-alcoholig sy'n amnewid dros y diodydd arferol.

Roedd The British Beer and Pub Association wedi datgan fod tafarn-dai wedi gorfod addasu

yn gyflym a stocio mwy o ddiodydd di-alcoholig.

(Tarddiad Denise Mattox via Flickr)

Roedd llawer o ddylanwadwyr fel Alix Earle ar TikTok yn gwneud y sialens 30 day hard, ac un o'r gofynion ydy peidio yfed alcohol. Un o nodweddion brand Alix Earle ydy mynd allan i glybiau nos Miami ac felly roedd llawer o'i dilynwyr yn amheus.



O Gaerdydd i Manchester United: Hanes y chwaraewr pêl-droed o Gymru a'i frwydr gydag iechyd meddwl.

Jack Thomas
Golygydd Taf-Od

Dros 20 mlynedd yn ôl, roedd Rhodri Jones yn serennu mewn rhaglen S4C, erbyn hyn mae'n hyfforddi meddyliau "pobl sy'n creu pethau mawr yn y byd".

Yn 1996 ymunodd Rhodri Jones gyda chlwb Pêl-droed Manchester United. Roedd y bachgen o Gaerdydd wedi symud i ymuno gydag academi'r clwb, symudiad oedd yn "profiad anhygoel" yn ôl Rhodri ar bodlediad newydd 'Pen yn y Gêm'. Roedd yn rhaid i Rhodri symud o adref yn ifanc, profiad a oedd yn ei orfodi "i dyfu i fyny yn gyflym". Er bod Rhodri ym Manceinion, roedd sylw a chefnogaeth Cymru ganddo ar ôl i gamerâu S4C ei ddilyn mewn rhaglen ddogfen "Giggs, Rhodri a Beckham". "Roedd y rhaglen ddogfen yn dilyn fi yn fy trydydd tymor yn Man U" eglurodd Rhodri. Aeth ymlaen i sôn pam roedd amseru'r rhaglen o bosib yn anffodus. "Na'th y rhaglen cael ei ddarlledu dros Nadolig, a t'mod roedd y cynnwys i gyd yn eithaf positif, a wedyn ges i fy rhyddhau gan Man United, gan Syr Alex, ym mis Chwefror neu mis Mawrth". "Rhan o fi ar y pryd yn meddwl 'O'dd hwn-na ddim yn help'". Fe wnaeth y ddogfen ei wneud yn anoddach iddo ddod adref, yn ei lenwi gyda theimladau "embarrassing, [yn enwedig] gyda ffrindiau fi".

Wrth adael Manchester United, mynegodd Rhodri "doedd dim" ar gael o ran cymorth iddo, ond roedd yn benodol bod hyn "ddim yn beirniadaeth o'r clwb, ond efallai'r cyfnod".

"[Doedd neb] yn sylweddoli faint mor bwysig yw mindset o ran perfformiad a hefyd o ran siomedigaethau" medd Rhodri. Roedd meddylfryd penderfynol ac uchelgeisiol Rhodri yn rhoi llawer o bwysau arno, a chymerwyd ergyd mawr pan gafodd ei ollwng o Man U.

"Fi 'di dysgu lot ohono fe, ond 'odd e'n cyfnod caled" eglurodd.

"Mae cael dy ryddhau gan Syr Alex yn ddigon o siom".

Erbyn hyn mae Rhodri yn rhedeg busnes hyfforddi meddyliol ei hun, lle mae'n gweithio gydag amryw o bobl i weithio ar eu meddylfryd er mwyn creu unigolion penderfynol, creadigol a hyderus.

"Mae beth i fi'n gwneud ddim yn therapi" eglurodd, "Fi'n gweithio gyda pobl busnes, actorion. Pobl sy'n creu pethau mawr yn y byd".

Mae Rhodri hefyd wedi gweithio gydag ymgyrch 'Amser i Newid Cymru', ymgyrch ariannir gan Lywodraeth Cymru i "rhoi diwedd ar stigma iechyd meddwl yng Nghymru" yn ôl eu gwefan.

Mynnai Rhodri fod hi'n "bwysig codi ymwybyddiaeth" am iechyd meddwl, ac mai dyma yw amcan ei waith gyda'r ymgyrch.

Mae'r cyfweiliad llawn ar gael rhwng Rhodri Jones a Jack Thomas ar sianeli'r podllediad 'Pen yn y Gêm', podllediad sy'n trafod chwaraeon ac iechyd meddwl/meddylfryd.



Tarddiad: Rhodri Jones (via WalesOnline)

Mwynhewch y Chwe Gwlad yng Nghaerdydd

Tips Taf-Od ar sut i wneud y mwyaf o bencampwriaeth y chwe gwlad yng Nghaerdydd.

Os nad ydych chi wedi sicrhau tocynnau i gemau'r chwe gwlad eleni, peidiwch â phoeni – mae digon o lefydd i fwynhau'r bencampwriaeth tu hwnt i'r stadiwm Principality.

Wedi gêm agos iawn yn erbyn yr Alban ar y 3ydd o Chwefror, mae Cymru yn wynebu Lloegr ar yr 10fed, Iwerddon ar y 24ain, Ffrainc ar y 10fed o Fawrth ac yna'r Eidal ar yr 16eg o Fawrth.

Heb os, mae strydoedd Caerdydd yn fwrlwm yn ystod y bencampwriaeth ac os ydych yn edrych am rhywle i ymuno â'r cyffro yn y Ddinas, dyma rhai o awgrymiadau;

Walkabout

Mae'r bar / clwb Walkabout ar ben stryd St Mary yn adnabyddus iawn yn ystod gemau bencampwriaeth y chwe gwlad. Ar adegau, mae'r ciw tu allan yn gallu bod yn hirfaith a prisiau 'megapints' yn medru rhoi tol i'r cyfrif banc, ond mae'r 'buzz' sydd i'w gael tu mewn yn gwneud y profiad yn werth chweil. Mae Walka-

bout yn dangos gemau chwaraeon byw o'r Premier League, i'r Chwe Gwlad ac mae'n rhywle gwych i fyfyrwyr fwynhau diwrnodau rygbi. Mae modd archebu tocynnau oflaen llaw yn ogystal.

Peppermint

Os yw'r ciw yn rhy hir i Walkabout, yna ewch dros y ffordd i Peppermint sydd hefyd yn dangos holl gemau'r bencampwriaeth. Cewch gyfle i fwynhau'r rygbi gyda coctél neu pítsa yn eich llaw.

Coyote Ugly + Brewhouse

Hefyd ar stryd St Mary, mae Cayote Ugly a Brewhouse hefyd yn leoliadau sy'n dangos y holl gemau'r bencampwriaeth.

Woodville + Mackintosh

Os nad ydych am fentro i fewn i ganol y ddinas i wylïo'r gemau, mae sawl lleoliad yn dangos y bencampwriaeth yn Cathays. Mae'r tafarndai Gassy's The Woodville a Mackintosh hefyd yn dangos holl gemau'r chwe gwlad.

(Tarddiad: Ben Salter, Cartridge Save A Day and John Greenaway via Flickr)



Trafod gyda'r Taf-Od

Nel Llyn
Cyfranwr

1. Beth wyt ti'n astudio ac o le wyt ti'n dod?
Dwi o Ben Llŷn ac yn astudio economeg yng Nghaerdydd.

2. Beth wyt ti'n edrych ymlaen at wneud eleni?
Taith Dilyn a 'Steddfod Rhyngol' fo gym gym

3. Beth yw dy hoff raglen teledu?
Modern Family

4. Sut wyt ti'n gwella hangover?
Cysgu drwy y fo neu cawod oer os dwi'n goro mynd i neud wbath

5. Vodka neu Gin?
Vodka

6. Beth yw dy farn amhoblogaidd?
Dwi'n meddwl fod vapiro'n stupid

7. Hoff albwm?
IV - Cowbois Rhos Botwnnog

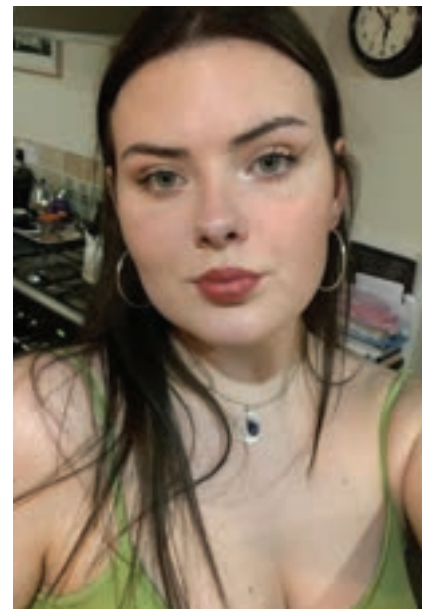
8. Hoff ffilm?
Little Women

9. Hoff gân carioci?
I want you back - Jackson 5, er nai byth neud carioci chwaith

10. Stori embarrassing meddw?
Genai lwyth, ond dwi'n meddwl mae'r ora ydi pan neshi ddislocatio mhen glin mewn sesh ar lan mor ty-

wyn yn 16 a un o'r hogia'n hitio fo n'ol i'w le.

11. Pwy fydd yn trafod gyda'r Taf-od wythnos nesaf?
Sion Wyn neu Aron Brenig



Barn y Bobl - Safbwynt Cymreig ar ymchwiliad Covid-19 yr Alban

Thomas Pugh
Cymraeg

Daw Ymchwiliad Covid-19 y Deyrnas Unedig i Gaerdydd i asesu ymateb Llywodraeth Cymru i'r pandemig rhwng y 27ain o Chwefror a'r 14eg o Fawrth. Ar hyn o bryd, mae'r ymchwiliad yng Nghaeredin yn craffu ar ymateb Llywodraeth yr Alban i'r pandemig. O ganlyniad, gorchuddiwyd papurau newyddion ar draws Prydain yn ddiweddar gan gyfuniad o benawdau chwerthinllyd a rhai eithriadol ddifrifol. Credaf fod yr hyn a welwyd yn yr Alban yn arwyddocaol iawn i ni yng Nghymru am fod gan Lywodraeth Cymru gwestiynau difrifol i'w hateb.

Un o'r datguddiadau mwyaf trawiadol oedd rhai o negeseuon WhatsApp Nicola Sturgeon a gyfeiriodd at Boris Johnson fel '****ing clown' a dywedodd fod ei weithredoedd a'i gyhoeddiadau yn ystod y pandemig yn '****ing excruciating'. Yn anffodus, nid yw'r fath gyhuddiadau am

Boris Johnson yn syndod mawr i unrhyw un sy'n gyfarwydd â helyntion y cyn-Brif Weinidog, neu wleidyddiaeth Prydain yn fwy cyffredinol. Er hyn, y tu hwnt i'r cweryla a all ymddangos yn ddifyr, dylem yma yng Nghymru bryderu'n fawr am oblygiadau negyddol perthynas ddiffygiol rhwng llywodraethau'r Deyrnas Unedig.

Pennawd arall yn ddiweddar oedd dagrau Nicola Sturgeon, menyw a fu'n hollol gadarn a dianwadal drwy ei gyrfa wleidyddol, wrth iddi ddatgan y bu farw 'gormod' o bobl yn y pandemig, er iddi honni y ceisiodd ei gorau glas i atal hynny. Cyhuddwyd Nicola Sturgeon o droi Covid-19 yn fater gwleidyddol er mwyn hyrwyddo annibyniaeth i'r Alban. Gwrthodwyd y cyhuddiad yn chwyrn ganddi. Yr oedd yr ymchwiliad yn heriol iawn i Lywodraeth yr Alban, fel y bu i Lywodraeth San Steffan hefyd, ac mae'r honiadau o ddileu negeseuon ac ymateb yn rhy hwyr ac yn aneffeithlon yn broblemau y bydd yn rhaid eu hatal rhag digwydd eto. Y mae gweld bai ar unigolion wedi i'r pandemig orffen yn hawdd, ond nod Ymchwiliad Covid-19

y Deyrnas Unedig yw canfod atebion i'r dioddefwyr a gwella'r ymateb i bandemig arall yn y dyfodol. Rhaid i ninnau yng Nghymru fynnu gwell gan ein gwleidyddion a'u bod yn cydweithio er ein lles ni. Yr wyf o'r farn y bydd ymateb Llywodraeth Cymru i'r ymchwiliad yn ddadlennol iawn a dylem beidio â'i ddiystyru'n achos cyfreithiol diflas oherwydd bydd ei ôl-effeithiau a'i ganlyniadau'n bellgyrhaeddol.

Tarddiad: Transformer18 (via Flickr)



A oes Consgripsiwn arall am gael ei gyflwyno?

Llyr Eirug
Golygydd Taf-od

Gyda Syr Patrick Sanders, Pennaeth y Fyddin Brydeinig, yn rhybuddio bod bygythiad cynyddol Rwsia yn golygu bellach bod yn rhaid i'r DU bellach at ryfel, a'r potensial o orfod cymryd rhan mewn rhyfel o'r fath yn bosib, beth yn union yw oblygiadau hyn i ni?

Wrth ystyried risg y Deyrnas Unedig o fod o dan fygythiad mewn rhyfel newydd a yw hi'n debygol y byddai consgripsiwn yn cael ei gyflwyno? Golyga hynny y byddai'n rhaid i grwpiau o bobl penodol o fewn y gymdeithas ymuno â'r Lluoedd Arfog yn ystod gwrthdaro arfog dwys. Does dim consgripsiwn wedi'i gyflwyno yn y Deyrnas Unedig ers cyfnod yr Ail Ryfel Byd (1939-1945).

Dywed Cyn-ysgrifennydd Amddiffyn y Deyrnas Unedig, Michael Fallon, ei bod hi'n amser i 'think the unthinkable', gan ychwanegu ei bod yn amlwg, os na fydd gwelliant yn nulliau recriwtio'r Lluoedd Arfog, y bydd yn rhaid ystyried opsiynau eraill, petai'r wlad yn dod wyneb yn wyneb â gwrthdaro.

O ystyried yr hyn a ddywed Michael Fallon, nid yw'n amhosib na fyddai consgripsiwn yn cael ei ystyried yn y dyfodol. Wrth gwrs, ni fyddai cyflwyno a gorfodi cyfraith o'r fath yn cael ei groesawu gan y cyhoedd. Pan gyflwynwyd Consgripsiwn yn ystod y Rhyfel Byd Cynaf (1914-1918) protestiodd mwy na 200,000 o bobl yn ei erbyn. Mae'n bur debyg mai'r un fyddai'r darlun petai'r sefyllfa'n cael ei hail-adrodd

heddiw, o ystyried canlyniadau pŵl piniwn diweddar a ddengys mai dim ond 7% o bobl rhwng 18-40 oed ddatganodd y byddan nhw'n fodlon arwyddo i fod yn rhan o'r fyddin pe bai rhyfel byd arall yn torri.

Rhannodd un fyfyrwraig ei barn hi ar y posibilrwydd o gonsgripsiwn yn dod i rym. Dywed Lili:

"Dwi yn erbyn consgripsiwn oherwydd nid ydy'r bobl mewn grym wir yn beco am fywydau pobl gyffredin mewn unrhyw wlad. Maen nhw'n gwrthio'r syniad o 'wladgarwch' a Phrydeindod er mwyn cael pobl gyffredin i frwydro dros eu buddion gwleidyddol nhw, ond yn gwneud dim ond eu hecsbloetio a'u gadael mewn tlo-di a phoen ar ôl rhyfel. Mae tlo-di ar ei anterth yn y DU, ac mae ein hawliau yn cael

eu cymryd i ffwrdd ohonom ni bob dydd. Pam ddylsen ni frwydro yn enw'r rhai sy'n ein gormesu ni ac eraill ar draws y byd?"

Felly ai consgripsiwn yw'r cam nesaf yng nghynllun y Llywodraeth neu a fydd gwrthwynebiad y cyhoedd yn effeithio ar hynny? Amser a ddengys.

Tarddiad: Steven Lilley (via Flickr)



LISTINGS FOR ALL UPCOMING
SHOWS IN Y PLAS & GREAT HALL

RHESTR O SIOEAU I DDOD YN
Y PLAS & NEUADD FAWR



Dylan



Caity Baser



Example

February/Chwefror

Rend Collective
01/02/2024 | £28.00

James Marriott
02/02/2024 | £28.00
**SOLD OUT / WEDI
GWERTHU ALLAN**

**Frank Carter and
the Rattlesnakes**
06/02/2024 | £29.50

Trevor Nelson
09/02/2024 | £25.00

The Dualers
16/02/2024 | £26.60

**Bombay Bicycle
Club**
18/02/2024 | £35.00
**SOLD OUT / WEDI
GWERTHU ALLAN**

The Blackout
22/02/2024 | £25.00
**SOLD OUT / WEDI
GWERTHU ALLAN**

Example
23/02/2024 | £27.50

Dylan
24/02/2024 | £20.00

Alestorm
29/02/2024 | £30.00

March/Mawrth

**Elvana: Elvis
Fronted Nirvana**
01/03/2024 | £27.50

Mother Mother
04/03/2024 | £22.00
**SOLD OUT / WEDI
GWERTHU ALLAN**

**Bedlam ft Hybrid
Minds**
08/03/2024 | £22.50

Feeder
09/03/2024 | £29.50

**Echo and The
Bunnymen**
10/03/2024 | £38.50

The Longest Johns
14/03/2024 | £18.50

Declan McKenna
23/03/2024 | £32.50
**SOLD OUT / WEDI
GWERTHU ALLAN**

Yard Act
24/03/2024 | £24.00

Taking Back Sunday
28/03/2024 | £32.50

**From the Jam: 'All
Mod Cons' 45th
Anniversary Tour**
29/03/2024 | £32.50

April/Ebrill

Lordi
04/04/2024 | £22.50

The Hives
05/04/2024 | £35.00
**SOLD OUT / WEDI
GWERTHU ALLAN**

Caity Baser
06/04/2024 | £25.00

Johnny Marr
09/04/2024 | £34.00

Tom Walker
18/04/2024 | £29.50

The Warning
26/04/2024 | £16.50



BOOK HERE
ARCHEBWCH YMA

Lexie Hugo

I'd like to thank Lexie Hugo for her incredible Gair Rhydd poster. This design was used by us at the Freshers Fair as our new banner. As a recent graduate of Cardiff Met, it was wonderful to have a fellow Cardiff based student create a wonderful motif around all we do as a newspaper.



From Aberystwyth to Cardiff

The Student Newspaper Experience



Daniel Raybould
Deputy Editor

On Friday February 2nd, the Media Office at Cardiff University's Student Union was far busier than usual. The editorial team of Gair Rhydd, the beloved publication you're currently holding in your hand, was blessed with a surprise visit from a fellow Welsh student newspaper team all the way up north in Aberystwyth: Mouth of the Ystwyth. They were lovely enough to reach out to us a few weeks prior to propose a meet-up in the hope of fostering a relationship between our universities' student orgs.

The exchange began with our benevolent dictator and editor-in-chief Edward Sutton, accompanied

by two of his most loyal Gair Rhydd minions, rendezvousing with our Aberystwyth analogs outside BBC Cymru Wales for a Cardiff-centric experience. By all accounts, the visit to the BBC was a huge success, with a chance to see impressive media sets, production tech like enormous cameras, and a lot to learn about the inner workings of Wales' media landscape. It also yielded an immaculate video of our Supreme Leader Edward Sutton giving a weather reading on set, a pleasure privy only to the Gair Rhydd inner circle. From what I could tell, everyone got along splendidly and had a wonderful time.

After an unfortunate failed attempt at visiting Cardiff University's building for the School of Journalism, Media and Culture, we

moved on to our workshops. The Mouth of the Ystwyth's president, the wonderful Hope Whiteheath, delivered a passionate and engaging workshop on her love of stand-up comedy criticism—a type of writing that I, even as a review editor, was completely ignorant of how to approach, having never considered the nuances of this niche. I may have to try one out in a future edition of this paper. Afterwards, Supreme Leader Ed led a brainstorming workshop about how to improve our workflow and where to go creatively with Gair Rhydd, taking on advice from The Mouth of the Ystwyth about their process.

Having checked off our nerdy cultural and journalistic obligations, the evening was spent getting the true, authentic Cardiff ex-

perience: a social getting sloshed at The Vulcan and a night out in Misfits Social Club. What better a representation of our divine city than that? I hope that I can speak on behalf of everyone that attended when I say that it was a great time and that I hope to see them again sometime in the future. May this exchange be the start of a healthy inter-university dialogue between our newspapers.

If you'd like to check out some of Mouth of the Ystwyth's online journalism, head to <https://dbiw.co.uk/wordpress/> to see their slick website (which puts our online pres-

“From what I could tell, everyone got along splendidly and had a wonderful time”



Photo from the BBC Cymru visit
Source: Edward Sutton

Visiting BBC Cymru in Central Square

Iestyn from Mouth of the Ystwyth Student Newspaper shares his thoughts

Iestyn Tudor
Mouth of the Ystwyth

This is an excerpt a multi-part travel log I have published on my Instagram account. Visit @iestyntudorwriting on Instagram to read the full account.

I am the editor-in-chief for Aberystwyth University's student newspaper, The Mouth of the Ystwyth. We met with Gair Rhydd and visited the BBC Cymru Wales studio in the city. We also held a joint workshop session before going out for a night. We had a brilliant time. I hope Gair Rhydd enjoyed having us.

02/02/2024
10:42AM

We've met the editor-in-chief of Gair Rhydd and two other members of the Cardiff student newspaper.

We're in the BBC Cymru building. The tour guides are showing us around all of the studios, and we'll be going up floor-by-floor. All of this technology is mind-blowing. Extremely bulky modern cameras surround the desks

in each studio. There are more cameras and bulky speakers in the ceiling, looming over each room. Most of these rooms are absolutely gargantuan.

Wynne Evans just waved at us as we passed him in a recording booth. He's famous in Wales for the GoCompare adverts, which at this point are considered crucial British culture. I wonder if we'll see any other familiar faces.

Now we're in a radio studio, the largest in the building. They usually get bands in here when they interview them. There are microphones and computers situated around a large desk in the centre of the room. It's such a nice little setup. I listen to a lot of podcasts. I can imagine that this is how some of the higher budget podcasts are recorded—in a studio with the best microphones available.

We are now in the main room where they present BBC Wales Today. There's the desk in the centre and gigantic screens across three walls. The fourth wall is actually glass. Through it you can see the journalists and researchers at their desks, sifting through information. On another wall there is the live weather board. We had the chance to take photographs of us standing in front of the main camera as though we're on TV. It would be funny if we're actually on air right now, our confused wonder on display for the entire country to see.

“I hope we work together more in the future. We'll probably end up visiting Cardiff again at some point.”

We've visited other parts of the studios—the scheduling room, a little history corner, a small lounge on the top floor—but they've concluded the tour. It has been illuminating. I'd love to work with the BBC at some point. It's fascinating to see what goes on behind-the-scenes. It's so easy to forget that there are actual production considerations behind the camera. This has been a fantastic tour. I envision myself revisiting these studios within the next few years. The building is directly opposite Cardiff Central train station. The last time I was in Cardiff, they were still building it. I'm so glad to have had the opportunity to see inside.

2:48PM

We're at the Cardiff Student Union. They have a great bar called The Taf. I ordered mac and cheese with some chicken and a side of garlic bread. We all enjoyed eating there.

We've held a joint workshop session between the Mouth of the Ystwyth and Gair Rhydd. We used their student media office, a large room upstairs in the Cardiff Student Union building. It's lovely to meet some more of their members and learn about their pro-

cess.

This I hope future. Cardiff am, but the new



Photo from Gair Rhydd / Mouth of the Ystwyth exchange
Source: Edward Sutton

Check out these great articles in full on the Mouth of the Ystwyth site

To Aberystwyth
by Narayan Jesse Jhutti

To where shall we go? To Aberystwyth we shall;
The hills she bears are uncompromisable
The cold misty air is almost chastisable...

Feminism at Aberystwyth
by Uvarshi Verma

While growing up, I was always termed as "the feminist" by those who were around me. As a teenager, I never really knew what it... meant. For sure, I was and still am an avid supporter of equal rights...

Cocaine Bear Review
by Ruby Fitzer

When I went to see *Cocaine Bear* at the Commodore Cinema, I expected to see a bear doing cocaine, and that is certainly what I saw...

Starting a Newspaper
by Harry McPhail

I was meant to be writing an essay when I came up with the idea to set up a newspaper. I was sitting in front of my laptop trying to will words onto my screen. Nothing was coming, my mind wasn't in it.

Discord: What is it?
by Urvashi Verma

As students, we are using the Microsoft Teams app, extensively. Its use was magnified during the pandemic. For almost 1.5 years all communication, lectures, assessed presentations were conducted...

NEWS

ELSEWHERE
IN NEWS

King Charles III diagnosed with cancer identified during treatment for enlarged prostate.

World exceeds 1.5C of global warming for entire year according to EU.

Pakistan votes in widely disputed election.

EU announces plan to cut emissions by 90% by 2040.

Israel rejects Hamas cease-fire proposal.

Musician busking every London Tube station has received “acts of kindness”

Katie Storr
Contributor

David, who is raising money for every charity at every London Underground station, will be the first person to ever achieve this. He has been endorsed “with acts of kindness” by the public since he began his challenge.

Dan Tredget, 27, musician from Perth, Australia, set himself the mission of busking at all 272 Tube stations across London. Since he began he has been sharing his experience on his TikTok account @dantredgetmusic, amassing more than 132,000 followers in the process.

David started his challenge in April 2023, and has since worked his way through all the stations on the Piccadilly and Northern Line, equating to at least 108 stations. Currently, David is working his way along the Victoria Line.

He told the PA news agency: “I’m starting to get recognised a lot more and the donations are going up more and more, which is great.”

David originally began busking, after a student had to cancel a lesson: “A student that I teach guitar to cancelled their lesson so I thought, ‘Oh well, I might as well just make up for the time by going into town and just busking and I might as well film it as well’”

It wasn’t until David busked at 30 stations that he decided it would be a good idea to turn his mission into a charity fundraiser. He decided to pick Glass Door Homeless Charity, which helps provide care and services for people affected by homelessness around London.

David said: “I started doing research on different charities and then eventually decided that the best thing to do would be to make it local, make it about London, since it is a challenge on the London Under-

ground.”

His donations keep growing—between physical money and online donations he has now raised £800 for Glass Door. President and general manager at Justgiving, Pascale Harvie, said: “Dan’s busking challenge is like nothing I have ever seen before. It was inspiring to hear that Dan took a personal challenge he set himself and selflessly turned it into a fundraiser for an amazing charity that does so much work to help the homeless in London.”

David has gained support and recognition from people all around the world. In December 2023, he had the chance to perform the opening acts for the Sugababes at their pop-up concert at Paddington Station. On New Year’s Eve, at Tooting Broadway station, he raised a personal record of gaining £52 in half an hour. Commenting on this feat, David said this was one of his highlights so far, as it was also the day that marked

the 100th station.

www.justgiving.com/page/dan-tredget-272 is the fundraising page to follow if you would like to know more about his story and the money he has now raised.



Source: PickPik.com

Quinta Brunson wins historic Emmy

Dilichi Dieobi
Head of News

This year’s Emmy Award show saw a real variety of nominees, ranging from the infamous drama-comedy *Succession* to the widely adored reality show *RuPaul’s Drag Race*, to *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, which everyone knows is to be a classic. However, history was made by the creator and lead actress of *Abbott Elementary*, Quinta Brunson.

This year, Brunson was the first black woman in more than forty years to win the award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series since Isabel Sanford won in 1981 for her role in *The Jeffersons*. She was up against

Christina Applegate (*Dead to Me*), Rachel Brosnahan (*The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*), Natasha Lyonne (*Poker Face*), and Jenna Ortega (*Wednesday*).

Despite Brunson’s show *Abbott Elementary* being nominated for a range of Emmys in 2022, only this year did it win big. In previous years such as 2022, the show received nominations including Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series, Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series Outstanding Comedy Series.

Carol Burnett presented Brunson with the award and “the Philly native”, as CBS News called her, was overcome with emotion. As she held her statuette and fought back tears, Brunson told the audience: “I love making

Abbott Elementary so much and I am so happy to be able to live my dream and act out comedy.” She also said that she loves her entire family, alongside her husband and her *Abbott Elementary* cast. This win has now made Brunson a two-time Emmy award winning actor and writer, as in 2022 she previously won an award for Outstanding Writing in a Comedy Series for her work on *Abbott Elementary*.

But what is the show actually about? *Abbott Elementary* is a mockumentary sitcom which follows a group of teachers at a public school in Philadelphia, where, despite their lack of resources and funding, they work towards helping their students achieve and succeed. Brunson stars as Janine Teagues, an incredibly dedi-

cated and passionate teacher who devotes her time to her students. Other starring actors in the show include Tyler James Williams as Gregory Eddie, Janelle James as Ava Coleman and Sheryl Lee Ralph as Barbara Howard. The show began airing in 2021 and still has new episodes being released serially on streaming services. The show was an instant success and is now available to watch on Disney Plus.

CBS News has described Brunson as “breaking boundaries in the comedy world” with her sitcom. On the actress’s Instagram page she has received nothing but love and praise for her work with comments from fans and fellow actors including Reese Witherspoon and Mandy Moore.

JK Rowling branded “Britain’s nastiest novelist”

Ellie Gosley
Contributor

A *New Statesman* article written by Nick Hilton has recently described best-selling author JK Rowling as “Britain’s Nastiest Novelist”. While Rowling is most famous for penning the *Harry Potter* series, the article largely focuses on Rowling’s work under her pen name Robert Galbraith in the *Cormoran Strike* crime series. He argues that ever since she has become outspoken with her views on transgender women in particular, “the nastiness of her fiction [...] has bubbled up to the surface like lava.”

Hilton describes the setting of Galbraith’s Britain as “a landscape populated by paedophiles and domestic abusers, rapists and far-right terrorists”, who often don’t turn out to be the murderers in the novel. Hilton also suggests that

while Rowling condemns the tabloid media and keyboard warriors in the series, she engages in similar reactionary behaviour online. He asserts: “In another world, JK Rowling could be a character in a book by Robert Galbraith: brittle, insecure, cruel.”

The essay generated so much controversy online that the headline was changed, within hours, from “Britain’s Nastiest Novelist” to “Britain’s Gloriously Nasty Novelist”, and the writer has deactivated his account on X. In particular, Hilton has been accused of misogyny. Users on Mumsnet have objected with the use of the word “nasty”, arguing that this would not be used about a man in this context. Journalist Hadley Freeman also commented on Hilton’s essay on X, stating: “The main complaint in this piece seems to be that Rowling does not write nice ladylike novels about nice ladylike things.”

The *New Statesman*’s piece pur-

ports to have dubbed Rowling as “Britain’s nastiest novelist” due to the content of her crime series, with Hilton sharing his essay on X (while he was still active) with the caption “I’m only interested in the books...” Her supporters, however, have taken this article as an attack on Rowling for her gender-critical feminism. For a number of years, Rowling has been called transphobic and faced calls to apologise, including from Harry Potter star Daniel Radcliffe, for her comments on gender identity and whether trans women should be allowed into women-only spaces. Many writers and commentators who agree with Rowling’s previous comments on gender have come to her defence. For example, Brendan O’Neill, Chief Political Writer at *Spiked*, has said that it is not Rowling’s “temerity to write about dark things” that is the issue: “Her sin is to know biology.” A common criticism Rowling faces is that she is a

TERF (trans-exclusionary radical feminist), which O’Neill describes as “PC-speak for witch.”

This in turn has created a discussion about whether it is possible to separate the art from the artist. This issue is becoming an increasingly common debate with social media and its easy access to information making it easier to learn about the vices of our favourite writers, actors, and musicians. O’Neill accuses Hilton of attacking Rowling for her personal views “under the cover of literary critique.”

JK Rowling seems unlikely to back down on her views, and has even gone as far as to say that she would happily spend time in prison rather than be silenced for her views. Therefore, it is likely that arguments about the morality, and perhaps ‘nastiness’ of her fiction will continue to emerge.

Paralympian convicted of murder to be released on parole

Camille Valere
Contributor

The defamed 37-year-old South African Paralympian, once known as the “Blade Runner,” has recently been released from Atteridgeville Correctional Centre on parole after serving 11 years for the manslaughter of Reeve Steenkamp.

In their home in Pretoria on Valentine’s Day 2013, 29-year-old Reeve Steenkamp died in her bathroom after multiple bullet wounds were shot through the door by her boyfriend Oscar Pistorius.

The murder shocked the world, just a year after the London 2012 Olympics in which Pistorius shone as a role model for disability in sports after being the first double amputee to compete in an Olympic event.

The former Paralympian has maintained his story in court and throughout the last years, that he had mistaken Steenkamp for a burglar. Despite this, investigations uncovered that she had fled to the bathroom after a row and the shooting was premeditated.

The following year, in 2014 after a series of

heavy trials with intense coverage by global media, Pistorius was convicted of murder and sentenced to 13 years and 9 months in prison. He was released on house arrest on appeal in 2015 and eventually sent back to prison in 2016.

Now at the age of 37, Pistorius has been released on parole decided by the South African Constitutional Court, with a set of conditions, including a five-year conditional period lasting until December 2029 after serving the minimum term of his parole petition.

Within the last month in an exclusive interview given to *Good Morning Britain*, Reeve’s Mother, June Steenkamp highlighted the emotional toll that the tragic death and the case has had on her family. With the death of her late husband, Reeve’s father passed away in September, months after Pistorius was deemed eligible for parole. Despite an acknowledgement in the “inevitability” of his release, Mrs Steenkamp said that she will never come to terms with the narrative Pistorius presented and continues to maintain surrounding the death of her daughter.

When the verdict was originally released, it

sparked conversations by advocates for women’s rights and anti-violence groups that more needed to be done to stop domestic violence and that the death of Reeve was not done justice by the sentence given to Pistorius. Controversially it was also flagged up that the Paralympian was given a lesser sentence due to his athlete status and disability.

The South Africa’s Department of Correctional Services (DCS) have assigned Pistorius with a monitoring official to oversee his activities, job opportunities, and residential changes. The requirements also include attendance at gender-based violence programs and ongoing sessions on anger management, as confirmed by the Steenkamp family lawyer to ensure further rehabilitation.

With his release, questions have been raised to whether this is a setback for women’s rights and campaigns against domestic violence. South Africa has one of the world’s highest levels of violence against women globally and the announcement of parole being granted was ironically given a day before the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

In forgiving Oscar Pistorius, June Steenkamp hopes that he has taken his time in prison to undergo rehabilitation and show some remorse, but claims this has not been the case with Pistorius maintaining his version of events and not succumbing to the circumstances.

Oscar Pistorius will now reside at his uncle’s mansion in a suburb in Pretoria with maximum security.



Oscar Pistorius at the first round of the 400m at the London 2012 Olympic Games
Source: Jim Jurston (via Flickr)

A Chinese EV Company taking Tesla’s Crown

Sophia Crothall
Contributor

For many, when you think of electric cars, Tesla is the first to come to mind and has enjoyed dominance in the sector that other carmakers have been trying to shake. However, a Chinese rival has now succeeded in doing just that. BYD, a Shenzhen-based EV giant, sold 526,000 fully electric vehicles compared to Tesla, who sold 484,000 in the last three months of 2023. This is the first time a company has outpaced Elon Musk’s monopoly.

BYD, which stands for Build Your Dreams, manufactures passenger battery electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, known as new energy vehicles in China. Founded in 2003, BYD’s ascent is a result of China’s yearslong push to build an automotive manufacturing base and po-

sition in the global car market. Last year, China surpassed Japan as the world’s biggest automobile exporter. Canalis, a market research firm, expects EVs will have made up around 40 per cent of those exports. Beijing has continued to pour billions of dollars and a range of resources into EV manufacturing, with BYD being at the forefront.

Erica Downs, an expert in Chinese markets at Columbia University’s Center on Global Energy Policy shared that the “government in China went all in on EVs”. Downs also shared how the government knew it wanted to develop the industry, and “they made sure that they had the different building blocks needed for success in place—so there were subsidies to EV manufacturers; there were subsidies to EV buyers; and they’ve been working on making sure there is adequate charging infrastructure.”

Both Washington and Brussels fear

that an influx of Chinese-made vehicles could strain their domestic markets. Washington has imposed export controls and unveiled new legislation, such as the Inflation Reduction Act, aimed at strengthening domestic capabilities and attracting more manufacturing to U.S shores, to tackle China’s technological advancement in sectors such as semiconductors and artificial intelligence.

Washington has also begun hiking up tariffs on Chinese EVs, facing a 25 per cent tariff. “There’s a real concern in the United States about having Chinese EVs come into the market and dominate and put domestic producers at a disadvantage” Downs said.

Fears have also been growing throughout the European Union, which launched an investigation into Chinese EV subsidies last autumn as concerns grew over Beijing’s EV ambitions. Across the last three years, Beijing’s global EV exports have in-

creased by 851 per cent. The ongoing probe in Brussels could lead to additional tariffs on Chinese exports.

With China being the world’s largest automotive market, Beijing has a key advantage. The country’s domestic production is projected to rise to 35 million vehicles by 2025, according to the U.S. Commerce Department.

Tesla has spent billions of dollars building a ‘gigafactory’ in Shanghai, where it produced more than half of its cars in 2022. Both Volkswagen and Volvo have also made investments and entered joint ventures with Chinese counterparts, helping China enhance its own car-making chops. As Xiaomeng Lu, a director in the Eurasia Group’s geotechnology practice said: “It just defies logic for them not to be there, and I think that’s why this particular sector is kind of the glue among the European companies, American companies, and the Chinese market.”

South Africa’s case to the ICJ over genocide in Gaza

Megan Huws
News Editor

The conflict in Gaza has been on our screens, in our news and conversations for many weeks now, with many debates surrounding the events and faults of the conflicts. The many protests, such as outside the Cardiff University Student Union on the 7th of February, are constantly reminding us of the suffering and conflict which has tragically occurred. Many are calling for a ceasefire, hoping to end the horrific conflicts and genocides occurring in the region.

This has been escalated by South Africa, in which they have asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to consider whether Israel is committing genocide against Palestin-

ians in Gaza. Within the large document of evidence submitted to the ICJ, the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation issued a statement warning that “the crime of genocide, sadly looms large” in Gaza. The South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Naledi Pandor, has also addressed the United Nations Security Council on the 24th of October 2023, reminding “the international community not to stand idle while another genocide is unfolding”.

As highlighted by the report, the assault on Gaza has been described as one of the “heaviest conventional bombing campaigns”, with the deaths of ‘at least 21,110 Palestinians in Gaza [...] and over 55,243 other Palestinians have been wounded, many severely. The death toll in-

cludes over 7,729 children”. Whilst this report and argument is generally supported, a final verdict could take multiple years to be ruled.

In response, Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said “It is not we who have come to perpetrate genocide, it is Hamas” and that “It [Hamas] would murder all of us if it could” in reference to the October 7th attacks in Israel.

South Africa has submitted this report to the International Court of Justice, inspired by their long solidarity to the Palestinian cause, which they’ve long argued can be seen to parallel their struggle against the apartheid. Whilst many hope this report is a big step in the direction towards a ceasefire in the region, there are still many steps that we as the public can take. Alongside attending protests and helping in-

form the public around the atrocities in Gaza, there are also calls to communicate with your MP. The UNA-UK has great resources on how to write to your MP to help call for a ceasefire.

In a demand for an “immediate ceasefire” called for by the Scottish National Party’s King Speech amendment, over 294 MPs voted against. Instead, they claim that the call for a break would be more appropriate. However, some MPs did vote for this ceasefire. The majority of these were Labour MPs, who went directly against Starmer’s instructions to abstain from the vote, and MPs from the Scottish National Party. The lists of MPs are easily accessible to check if your MP did vote, with Cardiff Central’s (which includes Cathays) MPs, Jo Stevens choosing to abstain from the vote.

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Opinion



Meg Jenkins
Opinion editor

Stop calling Clwb Ifor Bach "Welsh club"

In recent years, Welsh independence groups within Wales have increased rapidly, with Welsh culture becoming a larger conversation and furthermore, preserved by Welsh youth and renewed. Welsh Language especially has become a coveted skill for Welsh people, and there is more fluency every year especially within business, performers, artists, patriots and anyone else who relies on the population of Cardiff to pay their bills. Wales is even becoming a desirable location for Hollywood and other creative industries for its talent, geography and cashing in on its unique beauty and culture for tourism.

Although the culture is rich, there is one infamous club and venue that seems to be a favourite amongst students, especially ones looking for more intimate sets, underground artists and indie rock bands, steering away from the weekly playlist heard through St. Mary's Street and strolling down Womanby Street. How many of these students though, students from England specifically, know that "Welsh Club" is named Clwb

Ifor Bach.

Clwb for decades has played a vital role in the music scene in Cardiff, being a registered charity, working to promote the "appreciation of contemporary music, including music of Welsh origin / language". The necessity of this promotion is largely down to a long history of neglect to Welsh culture and history, spanning back to earlier centuries where Welsh culture was actively stripped from Wales, by the hands of the English who sought to rule it. For the same reason the title 'Prince of Wales' being given to English royalty, leaves a sour taste in the mouths of many Welsh republicans, insisting on Clwb Ifor Bach to be nicknamed "Welsh club" is a deeper kick in the teeth than first thought.

English students are entitled to enjoy what Clwb offers. To enjoy the edge that Clwb Ifor poses, the certain care for underground artists, discovering something new and creating a space for creatives, music lovers and importantly, Welsh speakers and Welsh music should be encouraged! But to denounce the purpose entirely,

by misnaming it as "Welsh Club", keeps up a bleak tradition of keeping Wales within its palatable translation for English people. "Welsh" even, derives from the Anglo-Saxon for "foreigner", as that is what Cymru has been and remains for many English people. Wales may be a part of the United Kingdom, but Cymru remains a foreign concept continually undermined and considered unimportant. Anglicising Welsh place names is not a new conversation. Formerly known as Snowdon or Snowdonia, the mountain situated in North Wales has returned to its Welsh title as Yr Wyddfa after a petition was one to return to its original Welsh name.

An annoyance with students coming from England is often un-serious and petty, a jab over rugby teams, a comment about how the Welsh language is "just a bunch of letters", or outdated claims of it being a dying language; all these things are microscopic but accumulate to the bigger picture. Wales is not England's sidekick, and while no one expects you to learn the whole language (although you are welcome to), there is nothing dif-

ficult or unwelcoming about Clwb Ifor Bach (Club Ee-vor at least).



A 2010 live show at Clwb Ifor Bach
Source: MangakaMaiden Photography (via Flickr)

TikTok and the Popularisation of Short-Form Content

I'm sure many of you can relate to me when I say I have a short attention span. As somebody living in the modern age where I can consume hundreds of different videos on TikTok in minutes, I find it hard to settle down to watch a film or read a book on just one subject. But why has the way we consume media changed so much? Through this article I want to investigate why short-form content has exploded in popularity, and how this could lead to the death of traditional forms of media.

So why is this a problem? Firstly it feeds into clickbait culture. In an era where views and engagement online

is the main goal, the increased production of short-form content leads to both sensationalism and exaggeration in efforts to grab an audience's attention in such a short timeframe. This is why we tend to see inaccurate headlines designed to shock us into watching, which leads to our superficial engagement with content. As well as this, I'm sure many of you find yourself becoming bored easily, and feel the need to scroll endlessly, or speed up the videos you watch on TikTok. This is because short-form content lends itself to rapid consumption leading to our newfound decreased attention spans.

Of course, the popularization of short-form content can also be a positive thing. It is easily accessible meaning we can share and learn new information with millions across the globe leading to human connection only made possible by the power of the internet. We can also consume TikTok videos on the go, meaning during any downtime, whether that be breaks at uni or work, as well as commutes, we can be easily entertained. Short-form content is also incredibly easy to create, meaning anybody has the ability to engage with this. This has led to the creation of new and interesting storytelling

Ella Lane
Opinion Editor

techniques, visual effects, and filters to adapt to this new form of media.

It is easy to become overwhelmed by the need to scroll and consume mindlessly, but I wanted to share some of the positives and negatives of short-form content to inspire all of you to think about how TikTok and other social media may have affected your attention span. I believe it is always worth taking some time to prioritize long form content, as this is often richer and more engaging, once I force myself to stop scrolling.

British Dining Could Take a Lesson on Culture

Luke James
Contributor

When we imagine, or see posh restaurants in films and television, we picture a quiet setting, with refrained lighting, some light jazz in the background, and low-level chatter. Waiting staff are expected to hurry from place to place, speaking in a middle-England accent, accentuating every letter. Sure, it is a tried and tested eloquent way to do things, and holds a certain level of 'class', but sometimes it could be made more fun, however, dining could be made more of a diverse experience.

Whilst in my homeland, South Africa, we went to The Plettenberg, a posh hotel and restaurant, for Christmas lunch. When we sat down, by all accounts it was almost identical to the dining experiences at high-brass restaurants in the UK (albeit being 28 degrees), with the usual over the top starters with reductions and sauté's. As you can tell, I am not well

versed with posh food, I prefer a braai (similar to a barbecue) in the bush to fine dining. Nevertheless, I expected the meal to be pleasant, but uneventful, with my family enjoying it in peace. I could not have been more wrong.

After the starters came the mains, either kingklip, or lamb shoulder. I had the latter, and it was perfectly cooked. The charade of a normal experience continued as we finished our plates off, when the musician in the corner (who had been playing old classics such as Sultans of Swing) started to play Shosholozo. The unofficial second national anthem, and an old mining song, it is sung and played as a form of unity and togetherness. Still sitting at the table, I watched as the entire waiting staff started to dance and sing in between the tables and in front of the musician and his guitar. A chorus of voices singing proudly encouraged the diners to follow suit, to take part and just enjoy the moment. We danced and sang and once we finished, we just returned to our meals or back to work. Then des-

sert came and went, and before we could get the bill, we were back dancing and singing along, all together smiling and clapping. A cacophony of sound echoed through what I had previously assumed to be another uptight institution.

What this thus encompasses is that dining in prestigious places does not have to be dull. Fun can be had, with great spirit and energy. The African ability to get up, dance, and have fun whenever and wherever is something to be fascinated by. Whilst we sit reserved and content with only our tablemates, they bring everyone in to enjoy the moment, no matter how poor their singing or dancing is. Positivity flows through the soul of this practice. It must be admitted that this isn't an everyday event, it happened because it was Christmas Day, but it is still far more than we have in the UK. Perhaps it is time we look to our southern friends and bring across some of that spirit and passion.



The Ritz Restaurant in London
Source: Check-In London (via Flickr)

Social Media and the Difficulty of Sharing

Aneurin and Ella reflect on how technology has shaped the way we engage with our opinions

Aneurin Davies & Ella Lane
Opinion Editors

In an age where digital means of communication are becoming more prevalent by the day, it's become easier than ever to share our opinions online. Whether these be our thoughts about films, or political values, it's obvious that comment sections across the internet have been flooded with personal views and opinions. In this article, we aim to investigate some of the positives and negatives associated with being able to share our every thought with the Masses. What are the impacts of being able to share our opinions anywhere at any time? Firstly and most obviously, it is easier for everyone to share their thoughts online. All we have to do is pick up our phones, type a response and hit post - it really is as easy as that! People no longer have to consider what they are saying and how this might affect the person at the other end of the phone because social media has created a whole new faceless type of communication.

The simplicity of this faceless communication has created the potential to overshare, which many of us have surely fallen victim to. Our lack of physical communication has created a desire for connection, leading to our tendency as social media users to overshare private details about our lives online. Having access to social media can absolutely be valuable in society, it's another way to connect with others around us - and even people who we'd never have met without it! So why not use it?

Without this technology, it'd be harder for everyone to voice their opinions on a global scale - something everyone can now do which is an incredible thing. We now have millions of voices who we'd never have heard before now being involved in global discourse. People in the UK arguing with Americans over geo-conflicts, people in Europe arguing with Australians about their own politics.

The floor for discussion has never been more open. You could even go so far as to say opinion sharing on social media is more democratic, because, in theory, one person's opinion is just as important as everyone else's. One of the best effects of this ability to share our opinions online is the potential for human connection with the ability to meet like-minded people online. Our shared interests which we can speak about in group chats or forums can be a great source of joy and entertainment, especially if it's an interest we don't share with anyone we know in person.

On the other side of things, there are drawbacks to the insane amount of opinion-based comments we see as social media users every day. When you have millions and millions of voices on these platforms (TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter), it can be hard to feel like your own opinion is being heard. If you're reading hundreds upon hundreds of comments a day on TikTok where people are arguing about things you feel really passionate about, you might think it's just unnecessary to comment your own opinion. Maybe it's already been commented on, or maybe people are already dogpiling it without you even

stating it. We also often tend to respect the opinions of those who already have a following online. This means we may fall victim to idolizing our favorite influencers' opinions, leading to more misinformation and disinformation because their opinions are taken as fact.

The issue with respecting their opinion over others' is the simple fact that they don't know everything! It's that simple. Even if this influencer has done hours and hours of research, they still might be wrong. It's better to do your own research instead, and come to your own conclusions. Political debates on TikTok have shifted from real political issues to trivial arguments about how people choose to take care of their pets which seems absurd when living in such a politically turbulent age. It seems like people are disheartened with the current state of politics and are deciding to argue about increasingly menial topics just out of boredom.

Echo chambers have also become so common that chances are you, yourself, have been in one without really knowing. Echo chambers are spaces where someone only comes in contact with people who share the same opinion. Say, for example, you're a Socialist on TikTok and you 'like' posts that are related to socialism - chances are you're going to encounter this content more often because you've interacted with similar content in the past. This may seem like a good thing to start with, but it comes with many, many issues. Without any other voices and opinions that are different to yours, how can you be certain

that yours is the right one to have? With so many people echoing your own opinion, your own certainty just becomes even more concrete. You need to be challenged on your own opinion, otherwise it's impossible to know what's really right and what's really wrong.



Twitter: where debate goes to die
Source: Wisnu Priyono (via Pexels)

Conscription? No thanks!

James gives his perspective on the recent talks of conscription in Europe

James Robert
Contributor

I am generally not someone who worries about the legacy of the British Empire, it was such a large and varied phenomenon of the past that it cannot be surmised in binary terms. Nor do I really care to get involved with the cultural psychodrama about how we "confront" this past. One area, however, where I do get concerned and even annoyed is when we see the militaristic inheritance of our former power influence policy. Among those who rule us there seems to be a lingering conception of our country as a "great power" with the fortitude and capability to intervene for the good of the world. Such a view has come to the fore once more with talk of conscription and a possible land conflict, initiated by comments made by former army commander Sir Patrick Saunders. His speculation of a new major war was echoed by sabre-rattler Tobais Elwood MP who compared our current situation to that of 1939. Both men seem to think that military intervention is very possible in the future. Unfortunately, as with many politicians, they seem to be incapable of looking into the past and therefore considering the horrific reality of war.

It might be the ever-growing distance of our time to that of the Second World War, or our willingness to believe that every war is in some way a repeat of 1939-1945, that blocks some people from considering the human cost of conflict and its general futility. One needs only to look at photos from the past, of vicious wounds and shattered bodies or to look at cemeteries in France or more recent ones in Bosnia to realise the truth. War is not just another decision in favour of our interests but the utter devastation of a nation's youth, something Ukraine is currently realising. We are blessed with a great nature de-

fence, the sea, which effectively guarantees our sovereignty, or at least it did before the Navy was decimated by budget cuts. Thus, we have a greater degree of separation from any theoretical land conflict which might occur. Why then is there this eagerness to send men, and it will be mostly men, to fight and die?

As I said in a previous article on the Ukraine War, I am not a supporter of the Russian government, although some will still allege that I am. What I think however, in contrast to most of the media and establishment, is that we must learn to live with the Russians. Putin is not a "new Hitler" nor is he a fascist, instead he is simply just the latest iteration of Slavic despotism, surrounded by his boyars and keen to maintain his extraordinary privilege and wealth. Yet the idea that Putin is in fact a megalomaniac has some appeal for the NATO-minded establishment, who need an enemy for the sake of military spending. War of course appeals to leaders in trouble, Boris Johnson cynically abused the conflict in Ukraine to promote his own image as a great statesman, and it seems likely that our current weak Prime Minister may pull a similar trick.

But what would we the youth be fighting for? Ukraine? A country which is not particularly democratic, and as was pointed out by Peter Hitchens, is riddled with corruption and waste. And let us not forget that Zelensky has effectively muzzled the press, cancelled elections and even re-shaped the liturgical year to be more aligned to the west. If you ask me—and I suspect most other people—to fight for that, I would flatly refuse. Of course, people who are drawn to this kind of conflict will say that one must fight for one's country, *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*. But what country would I be fighting for? With its semi-feudal class structures and millionaire Prime Minister—no thanks. I would of course always defend the actual

landmass of Britain, but that is not what has been suggested. Instead, we must fight for our "interests"—whatever that means. Let us not forget this appeal to national defence has even failed in Ukraine, and I personally met many deserters in Poznań last summer.

Perhaps it would remove the last scraps of our national confidence, but I feel that we must move away from the inherited view of our country as a sort of global policeman, demoted since the war but still somehow important. Why do we need to get involved in so many wars across the world? With only the 6th largest economy and a GDP set to be overtaken by Poland in the next 10 years, could we maybe take a step back?

Maybe we might build some new schools, improve the railways or sort out the numerous problems which have arisen under Tory rule, before charging into battle. If there is to be war, how about a compromise whereby every Member of Parliament, civil servant, journalist, or "expert" who moves us towards a war with Russia, Iran, or North Korea, gives up themselves or their children to fight. Not in the Officer Corps, but in the lower ranks. Let's see how eager they are when they are deprived of the public to fight on their behalf.

It is probable that there won't be a war with any of the assorted baddy nations of the world. But there is rising tension, which could lead to conflict and it is clear that some are willing to talk of it without considering how disastrous it would be. It is therefore essential for those of us who oppose it to speak up and counteract the warmongers in places of influence. Not as 'Stop the War' weirdos or Marxists but with the insight to understand the immense tragedy that war ultimately is.



British World War I recruitment poster
Source: Halloween HJB (via Flickr)

REVIEW

Kira Sutton
Contributor

The Hunger Games Renaissance in The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes

One of the most anticipated films of the year has finally been released, and fans are already demanding more! For those who have been a fan of the *Hunger Games* world created by Suzanne Collins, this film was much overdue. Since the final movie of the trilogy in 2015, fans have been desperate to see more of this incredibly dystopian universe and the history of the *Hunger Games*. Many fans of the franchise, including myself, have been eager to see more of the world and the resurgence of the dystopian genre. There has been an intense excitement amongst the fans which is evident through the show winning the domestic weekend box office by holding off both *Trolls Band Together* and *The Marvels* by earning \$44.0 million in ticket sales in the first weekend.

The film takes place 64 years before the first film and follows 18-year-old Coriolanus Snow, the future sadistic president of Panem, and his journey being a mentor in the 10th Hunger Games. This job is to attract more people to view and support the games and if successful, he will be rewarded with a large monetary prize. He is assigned to mentor Lucy Gray from the impoverished District 12, which is traditionally the worst-performing district due to its lack of basic necessities and resources. However, Snow soon realises that Lucy is not to be dismissed due to her lack of physical strength, but supported because of her intriguing personality. At the reaping, she is seen putting a snake down the mayor's vindictive daughter's dress

and then singing on the stage. Snow sees this as an opportunity to use Lucy's unique and intriguing personality to inspire people to watch the games. The rest of the film follows the harrowing Hunger Games and Snow's influence on them. We uncover the truth of Snow's family and Lucy's life as part of the Covey, a musical group, and District 12.

What makes this film so fascinating is viewers are given the opportunity to see the evil and sinister President Snow in a completely new environment. The Snow we see in the original trilogy is evidently blood-thirsty and wicked from the moment we meet his character. However, even though 18-year-old Coriolanus definitely displays some alarming qualities, he is not yet the evil villain we know he transforms into. The film does an excellent job of making the audience feel sympathy and understanding for the 18-year-old, whilst also providing reminders of the monster he eventually turns into and was always capable of being. Without revealing any spoilers, we see many instances in the film where Snow's true colours are relieved and we are reminded of what he is and has always been capable of. The film portrays how Snow's overwhelming thirst for power and control overtakes any other emotion he is feeling and will do anything and hurt whoever he feels necessary to achieve what he wants.

One question that has always left fans yearning to understand more of the game's origins and how it developed. Viewers will be happy to know what the film tells us about how the idea of the Hunger Games was invented and who came up with it. Again, without giving away any spoilers, the characters

whose idea it was to invent the games may surprise you. We also see how Coriolanus Snow had a profound impact on some of the now common practices in the games such as sponsors, bettings, and getting the audience personally invested into the tributes and who wins. The latter is what also led to the tribute's interviews and how many of them would put on a persona in order to gain the public's attention and affection.

One of the stand-out attributes to this film which has already claimed to be a profound success, would be its highly talented cast members. The film has its two protagonists, Coriolanus Snow and Lucy Gray Baird portrayed by Rachel Zegler and Tom Blyth. Both actors have been credited for their sensational portrayal of these characters. Both actors represent the complexity of their characters amazingly and truly make the audience feel connected to them. Other magnificent actors in the film include Josh Andrés Rivera as Sejanus Plinth, Hunter Schafer as Tigris Snow and Peter Dinklage as Casca 'Cas' Highbottom. However, one of the actors that stood out to me is Oscar Winning Viola Davis who portrays Dr. Volumnia Gaul, who is the sinister game maker of the 10th Games. Her portrayal of the villain was honestly quite unsettling to watch at times. This ominous character has a profound impact on Snow and her power and influence over him is likely what began his spiral into control and thirst for death.

Overall, this film definitely lived up to its expectations and did an excellent job of portraying the dystopian world of the *Hunger Games* and the complexity of the characters. The direction is amazing and the visuals are



Source: Kendra Miller (Via Flickr)

If Walls Could Talk: A Healthcare Drama Society Production

Ed Gent
Contributor

I am no stranger to a Healthcare Drama Society production. Having attended all of their shows in the previous year, I recognise and appreciate the breadth of talent and amount of hard work that goes into organising and developing these events – and their most recent show was no exception. *If Walls Could Talk* is an original musical from the society that explores the depths of the human experience through three different stories. It deals with issues such as emotional domestic abuse, toxic over controlling parenting as well as substance abuse and subsequent addiction. An incredibly emotional and moving show. You are taken on a “journey of empowerment” as we follow the protagonists who encounter such tragedy and strife, making for an incredibly moving and inspiring performance by all members of the cast.

The music used throughout the show felt fitting and deftly appropriate within the contexts of which they were used, with the show opening on the titular song: *Walls Could Talk* by Halsey and closing on *Turning Tables* by Adele. It must be said that they all performed brilliantly, and that the choreography flowed well. I also thought that the way in which the actors interacted with space was very clever, even though it was apparent they were all in different locations,

the characters utilised the same set effectively to convey their separate stories. In reading the programme for the show, I really appreciated the resources and organisations that were included as a guide for getting help (should that be something you need).

Now, with regards to the main plot of the show. We are first introduced to Sam (Anwen Crawford), an A-Levels student who is struggling under the immense pressure that his parents—Bernie (William Owens) and Jessie (Katie Worrell)—are placing on her. Their expectations of ‘success’ (as based on their own academic prowess) do not align with Sam's future wants and wishes. She dreams of acting, a career that Bernie and Jessie explicitly look down on and attempt to push her away from. The lack of support and constant criticism takes a massive toll on Sam, who, at the end of the play, makes the decision to run away from home, in an incredibly harrowing scene. I felt really sympathetic for Sam, and I thought that the way the writers chose to wrap up her story was incredibly effective, the audience does not know what becomes of her, but we are made to feel that this is the best decision for her. Overall, I was really impressed by her story and thought that the performances of all involved were really strong; you could physically feel the tension between Sam and her parents, it was palpable.

The second story focuses on the friendship between the characters:

Alex (Mimi Brown) and Riley (Amelia Jenkins), navigating the impact that Riley's new relationship—with the manipulative and controlling Mel (Harry Still)—has on them both. Harry Still was so fantastic in their role as the toxic partner, it was almost scary. *If Walls Could Talk* did an excellent job in portraying the tactics employed by emotional abusers such as Mel, from controlling behaviours to gaslighting speech. It highlighted how physically and mentally isolating such behaviours can be for the victim and their friends. Mel pushes Riley away from Alex, who is already struggling with low mental health, in an effort to micromanage her life. It was wonderful to see Riley stand up to Mel in the second act, and subsequently reunite with Alex, who is able to support her in healing from this trauma as she seeks help for her own issues. I think of all the stories featured in this musical, this one has to be my favourite because of how sensitively the matter of abuse is dealt with. *If Walls Could Talk* emphasises this idea that you are never alone, no matter how isolated you have been made to feel. It also does the right thing in not romanticising Mel's behaviour, by highlighting the damage it does to people, it brings a light to an issue that is so often not discussed or taken seriously by other forms of media.

Then there is Jack, a newbie solicitor, who struggles and eventually succumbs to their office's drinking

culture as a result of their deep-rooted anxieties and inner turmoil. This progresses into active drug and alcohol addiction that impacts upon all areas of their life—including their capacity to work and general health. I found it much harder to connect with Jack's story, I think in part because the topic of substance abuse is not something I am familiar with, but more so because it was not as relatable as the other character's journeys. I resonated much more with Riley and Sam's stories, as their experiences were identifiable within my own life. Moreover, it felt that they were better connected, as the characters were both young and experiencing problems in their interpersonal relationships—whereas Jack was clearly meant to be older (with an office job and all), and was experiencing active addiction, a very different issue altogether. It felt as though there was greater overlap with the former's stories than the latter's.

That isn't to say that Jack's scenes were not good—in fact I was really impressed by how their character progression was acted out. The audience saw them develop from this anxious young solicitor to becoming slightly more confident (but very inebriated), before their subsequent breakdown. Moreover, the scene in which they asked for help was really impactful and inspiring. It goes to show that despite everything, there is, and always will be, the hope that one day it will get better.

(P.S. if you get the chance, I implore you to watch their upcoming shows!)



Source: Michael Havens (Via Flickr)



Source: Pedro Cambra (Via Flickr)

American Nightmare: The Shocking Case of Denise

Emily Jo Cottle
Editor

Netflix has long been the hub for various crime and murder documentaries to submit our natural morbid curiosities. American Nightmare is a new Netflix documentary that follows a kidnapping affecting Denise Huskins and her boyfriend Aaron Quinn. The documentary begins with a 911 call in the late afternoon of March 15th 2015 from Aaron to report that his girlfriend Denise had been kidnapped in the early hours. Aaron described that he had been tied up by the kidnappers and unable to leave his bedroom, hence why he did not report the crime directly after it occurred. The first episode, of the three part series, places Aaron in the hot seat as Vallejo Police working on the case disbelieve the wild story of Denise's kidnapping and look to Aaron as the orchestrator of her disappearance.

The police immediately dig into Aaron and

Denise's relationship to find any cracks which would put Aaron in a position to harm Denise. In this search they find messages to and from an ex partner days before the kidnapping took place. Vallejo Police are relentless in their narrative of Aaron's guilt and frame their investigation to make him the orchestrator. Even going so far as to tell him he failed the lie detector test (which he passed) and telling him they knew he was at fault for her disappearance. The three part series is gripping in that it withholds the truth of the kidnapping from the viewer and we watch alongside the investigation and uncover the evidence with those investigating it. The first episode focuses on Aaron, the second places Denise at the fault of her own kidnapping when she arrives back at her family home two days after her disappearance. The investigation gained popularity under the name of the 'Gone Girl' case. As similarities were contrived between Denise's kidnapping and the film Gone Girl starring Rosamund Pike. Vallejo Police, having shifted their blame from Aaron to Denise, believed that Denise faked her own kidnapp-

ing to spite Aaron for his contact with his ex-girlfriend. The third and final episode reveals the truth of the shocking case which I will leave you to discover. The evidence, I will say though, was found by another department as Vallejo police were still unrelenting in their accusations of Denise and Aaron.

Criminologist David Wilson spoke on This Morning about the popularity of this fascinating case particularly the pitfalls of the American police force dealing with the kidnapping. Wilson queried Vallejo Police and their handling of the case which was completely aimed at proving the guilt of Aaron and Denise and their seemingly unbelievable and fictitious story instead of looking for anyone who could have kidnapped her. Wilson acknowledges the merit of this documentary for exposing the biases within criminal cases and the victims of police inadequacies. This shocking story of Denise Huskins kidnapping is a woman's worst nightmare. The documentary does involve discussions of sexual assault and rape which could be distressing for some

viewers. At the core the most disturbing aspect of this documentary is not only the brutality of the kidnapping but the disbelief of Denise Huskins and the contrived narrative of her as the perpetrator not the victim of this horrific crime. This documentary whilst being gripping and enthralling is an astounding comment on the victims of a broken system and specifically the disbelief of female victims of sexual crimes.



Source: Loppear (via Flickr)

Joan Is Awful - Black Mirror Review

Susie White
Contributor

What would you do if your life was replicated and published for entertainment? In the era of voice data personalised advertising, extensively long terms and condition lists, cookie collecting and personal AI's, it wouldn't be a stretch of a statement to assume that this could happen in the near future. Charlie Brooker's Black Mirror's anticipated release of season 6 saw the primary episode exploring issues around data privacy, and for most of us, it hit a little too close to home.

We see Joan's day; starting off by laying off an employee, followed by reconnecting with her ex and sharing a kiss, then finally confessing to her therapist that she finds her boyfriend bland, 'like his cooking'. This is not exactly something we'd want reanimated for the general public, right? As Joan and her boyfriend, Krish, settle down to watch 'Stream-Berry', a nod to Black Mirror's streaming platform, 'Netflix', 'Joan is Awful' appears; Salma Hayek sporting Joan's distinctive blonde fringe in an apparent remake of Joan's day.

The episode strikes unnerving points of comparison with our real life media consumption habits. After it was disclosed that Joan had agreed to this exploitation through the terms and conditions, I, along with I am sure many other watchers, felt chills run down my back. In an era of data saturation, what have we agreed to already? And as AI and smart computers integrate their way into the bare bones of society, what could we agree to in the future?

Later on, Salma Hayek invokes herself into the legal battle after Joan, in retaliation to her series, purposefully defecates in a church to acquire Salma's attention; the resultant episode depicting Salma committing this act. The purchase of image rights by intelligence companies falls directly under the issues established in the recent Hollywood strikes, with the incorporation of AI tools by producers reforming media production. Additionally, recently we have seen the first case of this, with Bruce Willis selling his image rights to an AI intelligence company, 'Deepcake'. Viewers can't help but wonder about the future of

entertainment production; with producers favouring quantity over authenticity, what are the implications when a film can be created in an hour?

In the finale both Salma and Joan break into the StreamBerry HQ; in order to physically destroy the quantum computer in charge of producing these AI productions, when it is revealed that they are an AI production themselves. Brooker, in a statement to Netflix, recognised that AI content "has no genuinely original ideas of its own: It hooovers up material other people have already written – without paying them for the privilege – and attempts to pass itself off as human. And in doing so, churns out stuff that's either generic or derivative". Consequentially in this episode, it was revealed that Joan and Salma were not in reality, but in fictive level 2, which was replicated from fictive level 1, and this replicated from the source Joan in the Joan multiverse.

Brooker takes a comedic approach to the exploitation of algorithm generated entertainment, drawing on the specificity of the lack of new content. Joan and Salma decide to destroy the machine, eradicating their fictive level, doing this under the guise that the source Joan must have done this same thing. It would have been impossible for their own storyline to have been manifested through AI without an original muse. The episode ends depicting source Joan having opened up her own coffee shop, and is friends with Annie Murphy (fictive source level's Salma Hayek), all whilst under house arrest. She tells her therapist, ironically, that she finally feels like the main character in her life.

This episode explores effectively, future manifestations of our concerns regarding data privacy and its implications on material life. It covers an incredibly relevant topic relating to the recent AI Hollywood strike, and inhibits a cynical take upon the use of AI generated content. Crucially, Brooker is warning us of the merging of the real and produced, and possibly in the future we need to stick to one rule; read the terms and conditions!

The Iron Claw -Zac Efron Stars in heartbreaking movie

Rimsha Ali
Contributor

The most heartbreaking movie I have seen recently in cinemas in a long time. A biopic about a wrestling family Von Erichs called 'The Iron Claw'. The film follows the story of Fritz Von Erich, the father who encourages his sons Kevin (Zac Efron), David (Harris Dickinson), Kerry (Jeremy Allen White) and Mike (Stanley Simons) to become wrestlers and the challenges they face as a family in the wrestling industry. The family based in Texas was allegedly known to be cursed as tragic events would take place affecting them eventually earning the name "Von Erich curse".

The director, Sean Durkin, physically missed out on one brother called Chris because they did not want to make the story seem repetitive through the tragic events, even though his true story event is tragically devastating, hence not making this a true biopic. This, in my personal opinion, irritated me because his story was just as (if not even more devastating) than the other brothers especially being the youngest and facing that immense amount of pressure of your other brothers succeeding.

Although not mentioned in the dialogue, their actions and expressions conveyed a clear message. The close-up zooms and sound design intensified the scenes, making them even more powerful. Even at times making it uneasy to feel settling into the scene of the scenario. Certain characters present in scenes of the film but physically being blocked out by the frame showing the importance or the disregard of those characters creating a thrilling haunting effect to the storyline emotion.

It was heartbreaking to see the children suffer and be unable to speak up against their father or to be heard by their mother. As even a problem does arise or they want to speak to her about it the film demonstrates her reasoning through religion. Portraying both parents as conservative Christians. The father's dialogue often felt surface-level and explanatory, in contrast to the powerful performances of the sons.

Zac Efron's portrayal of Kevin Von Erich, the eldest child, was exceptional. How he not only had responsibilities for himself but also his family and made those life-deciding decisions regarding them. Efron could emotionally bring

the character to life but also physically transform into him which must have taken a lot of stamina. Efron deserves an Oscar nomination for his performance and it was a shame this went unrecognised compared to other biopics nominations.

Although the film is about wrestling, it taught me more about performance. The choreography of the body language to not only entertain the audience but also us as the viewer seeing how ostentatious it is. Also performing in regards to succeeding in making the family proud as the lack of love and compassion provided is through the parents intrinsically and the children have to perform to earn their love and affection. This was emotionally draining to see the physical and mental strain the sons had to go through and left me feeling extremely hollow.



Source: MartialArtsNomad.com (Via Flickr)



Source: Miguel Discart (Via Flickr)

Cardiff Council Overwhelmed by Surging Rates of Homelessness in this Winter.

Lucy Treloar
Head of Finance

Councils across the UK are urgently seeking funding to support the homelessness crisis that has unfolded this winter. With unprecedented demand for shelter, support services and affordable housing, the number of individuals facing housing insecurity has skyrocketed- leaving many individuals turning to the streets as their only option. In 2023 alone, there was a 26% annual jump in the number of rough sleepers, with 279,400 people in temporary accommodation in England and Wales last year.

In the heart of Wales, Cardiff is amongst many of the major cities struggling to cope with the pressing issue of homelessness. With councils being unable to support the rising demand for shelter, many individuals and families are finding themselves exposed to the harsh elements this winter- having a detrimental effect on physical and mental health. This winter alone, Cardiff has seen the death of many rough sleepers due to the freezing temperatures and dismal conditions that are exacerbated at this time of year. 56-year-old Richard O'Brien was

one of these individuals who sadly passed away at the end of last year outside Burger King on Queen Street, after falling unwell during the night.

This is a very urgent situation that needs support and funding from the government. Councils are being put under immense pressure to address the crisis; however, the insufficient resources and budget constraints are making the situation nearly impossible to deal with. The Welsh Government has agreed that in the year 2023-2024, it will be investing over £210 million into homelessness prevention and housing support services, alongside a record high of £330 million into social housing. The Cardiff Council has also been able to secure the exclusive use of hotels in the city centre to accommodate people seeking urgent help until more permanent housing can be found.

The collaborative support from communities is also crucial in aiding this national crisis. Community driven initiatives in Cardiff are working tirelessly to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable. Helping our Homeless Wales is a self-funded charity organisation that walk the streets of Cardiff every week in order to provide food, clothes and essential items

to support those sleeping rough. They also provide emergency items such as bedding, sleeping bags, hot drinks and toiletries. The BBC are also encouraging individuals to be aware of the symptoms of hypothermia this winter, and to contact health services when concerned for someone's wellbeing.

“ The Welsh Government has agreed that in the year 2023-2024, it will be investing over £210 million into homelessness prevention and housing support services, alongside a record high of £330 million into social housing.



Source: conceptphoto.info (via Flickr)

Against the odds: Working-class women of diverse backgrounds have less chance of success in the finance industry than white males.

Natalie Kenny
Editor

Could white male privilege be the golden ticket to a successful career in finance? According to a recent article by the BBC, 'white men from higher socio-economic backgrounds are thirty times more likely to succeed in the financial services than working-class ethnic minority women.' A study of 150,000 people conducted by the Bridge Group observed how socio-economic background affected the recruitment and professional advancement of individuals in the major finance companies in the UK. The research was authorised by the body, Progress Together, a group aimed at raising senior-level opportunities for people of all socio-economic backgrounds.

According to the Bridge Group, some of the other key findings of the study reported that career progression into senior roles was twenty-one percent slower for working-class women than women from high socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, white people from high socioeconomic backgrounds occupied half of all senior roles in the financial services industry and twenty percent of

those in senior roles went to a private school despite the national average being 6.4 percent. Grace Houghton, a politics and economics student, spoke about her experience during a spring week she had undertaken in her first year at university. The spring week was dedicated to female students seeking to enter the industry and included all female speakers. Addressing her experience, she said

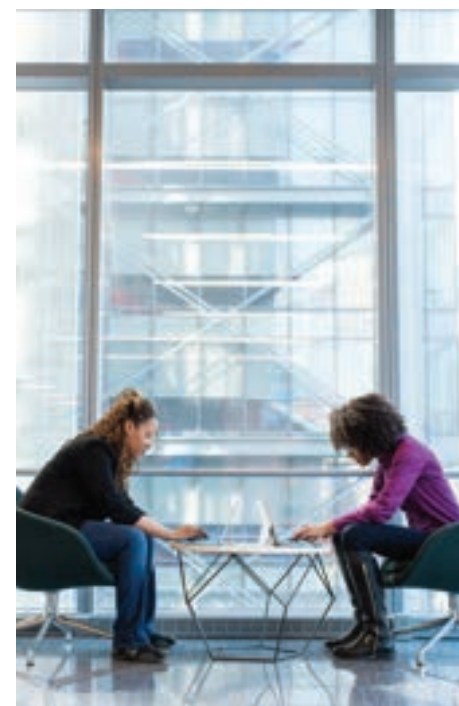
“ White people from high socioeconomic backgrounds occupied half of all senior roles in the financial services industry and twenty percent of those in senior roles went to a private school.

‘[the organisation] demonstrated a real motivation to increase the number of women being hired for internships. They also had spring weeks dedicated to black students from disadvantaged backgrounds [...] I definitely found the diversity I saw inspiring. The mere fact that they had opportunities just for women and ethnic minorities meant that the company was pushing for better equality on their internship programmes.’

Although it is encouraging that efforts are hap-

pening at the grassroots level, there is an importance for these efforts to translate to senior levels in organisations in the finance sector as the Bridge Group study highlights. Nik Miller, CEO of the Bridge Group, stated on their website that 'this research also highlights important relationships between socio-economic background and gender. Women typically experience the negative effects of being from a lower socio-economic background more significantly than men.'

It is encouraging that there are opportunities out there for training programmes that address gender biases and encourage diversity; however, there needs to be ample opportunities for all demographics further up in leadership roles. Increased diversity and opportunities for women of all socio-economic backgrounds are important for having a range of perspectives included in decision-making roles. Not only does this support the value of creating equal opportunities but also allows underrepresented groups to showcase diverse strengths and contribute innovative ideas.



Source: WOCinTech Chat (via Flickr)

Financial conduct authority to quiz top firms on sexual misconduct

Lucy Treloar
Head of Finance

The UK's top financial regulator, FCA, is set to challenge a number of banks, insurers and brokers on reported sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace. The concern comes after 40 women from 30 different finance firms met anonymously last November to share personal experiences of sexism and misogyny they had encountered in the workplace. It was also made apparent that

many of the women feared reporting such misconduct, as typically it resulted in the victim being forced to move teams, or even leave the company.

There has also been reports of Non-Disclosure Agreements being signed in sexual harassment cases, to protect the firms from reputational damage, as well as the perpetrators involved in the accusations.

Following these allegations, the Financial Conduct Authority has recently announced that it will be surveying the banking industry alongside the insurance market, in order to un-

derstand the extent of these claims and ensure misconduct is being handled in a fair and transparent manner.

Although there has been supposed progress in workplace culture for women over the last few years, many females still believe that issues persist- with sexual harassment now commonly taking place outside of office environments in events and work-related trips. The decision to further investigate these claims marks a significant step towards fostering a culture of respect, specifically in supporting women within the corporate environment. The Financial Conduct

Authority is threatening fines and penalties for those companies found condoning and hiding sexual misconduct. Nakhil Rathi, the Chief Executive of the FCA, emphasised how the Financial services workplaces need to be a safe place for women, and we must be proactive about dealing with serious issues in order to protect employees.

SCIENCE

Aditi Kallanagoudar
Girish

Caitlin Rider

ELSEWHERE
IN SCIENCE

Facebook turns 20 years old

Antarctica to be mapped out
by a robotic plane

Source: Neeraj Kumar (via Flickr)

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Perseverance Rover discovers ancient lakes on Mars

The rover finds conclusive data on the Red Planet

Aditi Girish Kallanagoudar
Science Editor

NASA's Perseverance rover has unearthed conclusive data confirming the existence of ancient lakes on Mars from sediments deposited by water in the Jezero Crater on Mars. The radar observations into the basin by the robotic rover have bolstered the theory of past water bodies and potential microbial life on the Red Planet.

The study, led by teams from UCLA and the University of Oslo and published in *Science Advances*, analysed subsurface radar data collected by the rover over several months in 2022. The six wheeled Perseverance rover traversed from the crater floor to adjacent sedimentary-like features resembling river deltas seen on Earth.

The discovery sets the stage for a closer examination of Jezero's sediments in the future. The sediments, believed to have formed approximately 3 billion years ago can be studied further once samples are collected and transported to Earth by Perseverance.

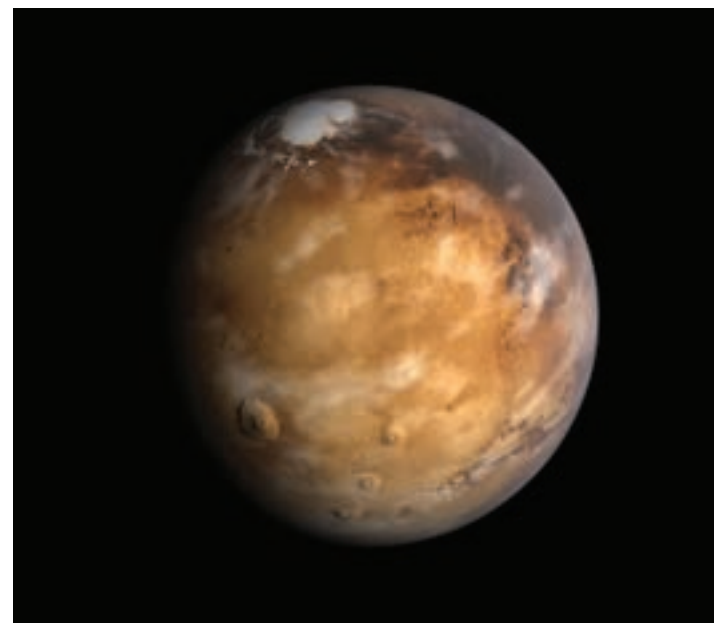
Utilising the rover's RIMFAX radar instrument, scientists obtained subsurface scans, revealing layers of rock up to 65 feet (20 meters) deep, "almost like looking at a road cut," said UCLA planetary scientist David Paige, one of the authors of the research.

These layers unequivocally indicate the deposition of soil sediments by water, mirroring processes observed in terrestrial lake environments. The findings reinforce the possibility of Mars' warmer, wetter past, in contrast to its cold, arid conditions in the present.

Remote analysis of core samples at sites near Perseverance's landing site revealed unexpected volcanic rock, instead of the expected sedimentary - suggesting an even more complex geological history than previously thought.

These rocks also showed signs of being altered by water exposure, aligning with the narrative of Mars' wetter past. The RIMFAX radar readings further unveiled evidence of erosion preceding and following the formation of sedimentary layers, adding nuance to the region's geological evolution.

This convergence of data has provided deep insight into Mars' geological and hydrological history.



Source: Kevin Gill (via Flickr)

Recent extreme hurricanes means new category may be needed

Caitlin Rider
Science Editor

With hurricanes increasing drastically in their intensity, scientists are beginning to debate if further categories need to be added to the current rating system. With 5 storms exceeding wind speeds of 192mph (all of which occurred since 2013), there is clear evidence for the change in both intensity and frequency of hurricanes in recent years. This is occurring as human activities increase greenhouse gas emissions, therefore warming the Earth's atmosphere and creating the perfect conditions for the formation of tropical storms. The danger these more frequent hurricanes bring is being heightened by the increased heat of the planet causing more evaporation, in turn creating more intense rainfall; this greatly increases risk of flooding.

Currently, the Saffir-Simpson scale is used to determine the severity of a hurricane.

Each storm is given a category from 1-5 with 5 being the strongest and deemed to have the potential to cause 'catastrophic damage'. These storms have wind speeds of over 156mph with no upper limit. The proposed idea is that this category should be capped at 192mph with any storm exceeding this being classed as a Category 6 hurricane. Scientist at Lawrence Berkely National Laboratory, Michael Wehner, stated that a storm at this speed would be "probably faster than most Ferraris, it's hard to even imagine".

The most prominent example of a hurricane that reached this wind speed is Typhoon Haiyan which hit the Philippines in 2019 bringing wind speeds of 195mph. This hurricane had massive impacts with 90% of the city of Tacloban being destroyed and killing over 8,000 people. Extreme storms like Haiyan are becoming more frequent, this is causing the current scoring system to become outdated as it doesn't

differentiate the devastating impacts of those with exceptionally high wind speeds.

It is predicted that at the current rate of emissions, global temperatures will continue to rise. This will further increase the risk of more frequent and intense hurricanes. Our current methods and ways of rating hurricanes will need to develop as the world and its weather changes.

Source: NASA Goddard
Space Flight Centre (via Flickr)

Observation of Great White Shark Reproduction on California's Coast

Prasanna Joshi
Contributor

A drone captured footage off the coast of California last year that could help scientists understand where great white sharks give birth and how they reproduce. The video shows a newborn great white shark, about 1.5 meters long, wrapped in a milky substance. This suggests that the sharks are born surrounded by a delicate layer of their mother's milk, which is a unique reproductive process for sharks. The video was published in the journal *Environmental Biology of Fishes*.

A recent sighting of an undocumented reproductive behaviour in an enigmatic creature has been described as exhilarating by Phillip Sternes, a co-author and organismal biologist at the University of California, Riverside. The discovery has the potential to unlock key insights into the behaviour of these creatures, which have long remained a mystery. This finding could pave the way for new discoveries and research in the future.

In July 2023, wildlife filmmaker Carlos Gauna achieved extraordinary proximity to great white sharks off Carpinteria, California. Employing a drone to capture shark footage, Gauna encountered a peculiar sight—a relatively small and unusu-

ally chalky great white. In contrast to the typical grey hue found on the backs of great whites, this shark displayed an abnormal appearance. Upon closer inspection, fragments of the baby shark's usual grey skin were visible through a gooey white substance, creating the impression that it was sliding off the animal.

Scientifically known as *Carcharodon carcharias*, the great white shark stands as a formidable extreme predator in coastal waters. Bragging a strong, torpedo-shaped body, pointed snout, and large triangular teeth, these sharks, ranging from 15 to 21 feet in length, exhibit a diverse diet, including seals, sea lions, other sharks, and large fish. Their curious and sometimes ag-

gressive behaviour, coupled with exceptional sensory abilities such as a keen sense of smell and the use of the ampullae of Lorenzini, adds to their mystique. Despite not being endangered, great white sharks still face threats, emphasizing the importance of conservation for their crucial role in marine ecosystems.

“The discovery has the potential to unlock key insights into the behaviour of these creatures, which have



Source: Elias Levy (via Flickr)

Welsh Varsity 2024 : Swansea University v Cardiff University

Wednesday 24th April 2024 SAVE THE DATE



Varsity Sports

Ladies Tennis	Sailing
Ladies Volleyball	Athletics
Men's Football	Rowing
Men's Tennis	Clay Pigeon Shooting
Men's Ultimate Frisbee	Karate
Mixed Fencing	Ladies Cycling
Freshers Rugby	Men's Cycling
Ladies Basketball	Ladies Canoe Polo
Ladies Squash	Men's Canoe Polo
Ladies' Water Polo	Golf
Ladies Ultimate Frisbee	Ladies Triathlon
Men's Lacrosse	Men's Triathlon
Men's Hockey	Swimming (Short Course)
Kickboxing	Rifle
Ladies Badminton	Aerial Fitness
Ladies Cricket T20	Archery
Ladies Football	Men's Badminton
Men's Volleyball	Men's Squash
Men's Water Polo	Netball
Men's Basketball	Tae Kwon Do
Ladies Rugby	American Football
Men's Cricket T20	Ladies Hockey
Men's Rugby	
Equestrian	

Photos: Cardiff Students Union

History of Welsh Varsity

Welsh Varsity started out 24 years ago as a rugby match between Cardiff University students and Swansea University students. Today it's so much more than that. In recent years the

match has been played at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff and the Swansea.com Stadium in Swansea, with live coverage on S4C. Past student players have gone on to play for the Cardiff Blues, Ospreys,

Llanelli Scarlets and even internationally for Wales so expect a high standard on the field. Not an avid sports fan? Welsh Varsity is a great day out even if you don't know your shuttlecocks from your

wickets. There's an amazing atmosphere on the day as thousands of students cheer on different teams so don't let a lack of sporting knowledge put you off.

The Six Nations opening weekend kicks off with a bang!

Freddie Sheppard
Sports Editor

The 2024 mens Six Nations campaign began with an astonishing win to last year's grand slam winners, Ireland. Beating a French side who, without their talismanic captain Antoine Dupont, looked ill-prepared, frantic and unorganised. The 38-17 win was secured by five well worked tries from the Irish side. Jack Crowley, looking calm and composed took on the infamous Irish number 10 jersey that has been home to Johnny Sexton for the last 14 years. Despite a nervous looking start, opting to kick to the corner rather than get-

ting an early lead by taking a shot at the goal, Crowley seemed to relax into the game, slotting all five conversions and orchestrating a confident Irish side. France suffered ill-discipline with Paul Willemse receiving an upgraded red card after repeat offending shoulder to head contact. Down to 14 players, France showed glimpses of excellence with Damian Penaud scoring his 36th try for France. Saturday kicked off in Rome with a strong looking Italian side, allowing the hosts to sail ahead at half time 17-14. The underdogs in years gone by, Italy were looking sharper than ever, keen to start of their Six Nations campaign with a win

England, with several fresh faces in the squad looked to settle into the game, coming back after half time intent to put some more points on Italy. England managed to exploit a new Italian defense which aimed to apply huge amounts of pressure on the English attack, resulting in dog legs that England could punch through. New Italy defense coach, former Springbok centre Brennan Venter will be looking to neaten this up before Italy play top of the leaderboard Ireland in the next round. Cardiff saw an end to end game of rugby where Scotland managed to sneak away with a 27-26 victory. Their first win in Cardiff in 22 years! Scotland were 20 points ahead

at half time. The young but determined Wales side came out on fire for the second half, nearly stripping the game from Scotland, scoring four electric looking tries. Bringing the game to a narrow win for a Scottish side that looked composed and self-assured in the first half.

“

It [the Grand Slam] is not won or lost at this stage, but it is about building on this win
- Andy Farrell



Premier League Darts

Gerwyn Price gets defeated by Micheal Smith on the opening night in Cardiff

Aimee Szulczewski
Head of Sport

Last Thursday evening, the likes of seven-time champion Micheal van Gerwen, 17-year-old superstar Luke Littler and home favorite Gerwyn Price took the stage at the Utilita Arena Cardiff for the first round of the Premier League Darts. Despite the volatile Cardiff crowd, former world champion, Micheal Smith, silenced the whistlers to win the opening night with a wonderful performance and claimed maximum points. The evening kicked off with Rob Cross beating Peter Wright 6-3 for a place in the semi-finals. Followed by chants of Wales, Wales, Wales as Gerwyn 'The Iceman' Price made his way up to the stage, hoping for another win like last year in Cardiff. Aspinall missed two double 10s, letting Price win with a 120 checkout. Next up was a repeat of the World Championship final from last year, as Micheal Smith took on Micheal van Gerwen. The Dutchman had an early blow, with Smith winning the opening leg on a double 5. As van Gerwen, who



Source: Gareth Williams (via Flickr)

had just won the Dutch Darts Masters at the weekend, banged a 180, Smith checked out on a 120. The pair fought it out between legs, arriving at the final with 5-5, as Smith managed to get the victory. Fan-favorite, Luke 'The Nuke' Littler was up next, repeating the World Championship final pairing against Luke Humphries, who won the WC last year. Littler, who is now 17 years old, won the first leg as he claimed to

be "one of the big boys". Humphries seemed to be distracted with the crowd booing him as Littler swept the floor against him. Littler got revenge on Humphries as he went on to face Micheal Smith in the semi-finals. The clock hits 21:30 as two-time World Cup winner Gerwyn Price rakes on former world champion Rob Cross. Fans in the stadium cheered shouts of encouragement as the Welshman landed 121 and 128 before winning the

match on tops to reach the final. Teenage sensation, Littler, then went against Micheal 'Bully Boy' Smith, a reflection of the 2023 World Youth Champion taking on the 2023 World Champion. After the first four legs, Littler landed a double 10 to make it a level game, but Smith got the better of him, despite some members of the crowd attempting to put him off on his doubles. As security tried to find these whistlers, Smith had the last laugh winning the match to go on to the final. The Cardiff crowd went on as Smith went up against Price, who got the hold he wanted with an 80 out-shot on tops. Bully Boy then got his first break in the final on tops for a neat 75 finish, and silenced the crowd as he went on to be two legs away from victory in the capital. After beating Price, Smith apologized to the whistling fans for winning and said he didn't blame the Cardiff fans for shouting at Gerwyn Price's opponents - probably the 'price' to pay for playing in someone's home country. It was a chaotic and marvelous first round in Cardiff, and a lot of fans are ready for the next in Berlin.

SPORT

Meet the Team!



Aimee Szulczewski



Grace D'Souza



Freddie Sheppard



Honor Mitchell Brock

Guiness Six

Nations on now!



 sport@gairrhydd.com

The mighty Manchester United knock Newport County out of the FA Cup

After a very strong performance from the exiles, the red devils progressed into the next round of the FA cup

Grace D'Souza
Sports Editor

County gave it all they had and United definitely seemed out of the depth throughout the match. Bruno Fernandes scored the opening goal in the 7th minute at Rodney Parade which gave Manchester United the confidence to go 2-0 up with the young superstar Kobbi Mainoo scoring the second goal in the 13th minute. Manchester United's first goalkeeper André Onana was away on international duty at the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) and therefore missed the fixture so the reserve goalkeeper Altay Bayindir had to step up. Unfortunately, he was not in best form his passes were dispossessed and the back line was open at times giving Newport County the perfect opportunity to score just before half time with

Bryn Morris scoring in the 36th minute bringing the score to 2-1. Newport County's fans were right behind them it did not take long for them to equalise after the second half whistle blew it took two minutes into the second half for the exiles to score bringing the score to 2-2. Cardiff Metropolitan's finest Will Evans striking a beauty into the back of the net and his celebration was as cold as his goal. I am sure Chelsea's Cole Palmer would have been happy seeing Evans using his celebration. United's Alejandro Garnacho had

“ A counterattack gave Rasmus Højlund a 90+4-minute goal sealing United's victory 4-2.

a very selfish performance a lot of the time he went for a goal when a simple square or cross to his unmarked teammates would have easily given Manchester United the lead. It was a very tense twenty minutes until Antony stepped up to the plate and scored in the 68th minute giving United the crucial 3-2 lead. Manchester United looked more confident on the ball and essentially parked the bus the defense was like a brick wall. A counterattack gave Rasmus Højlund a 90+4-minute goal sealing United's victory 4-2. A sold-out Rodney Parade with 9,086 fans in attendance is a victory in itself. The FA Cup Replays are as follows: Coventry v Sheffield Wednesday Plymouth v Leeds Southampton v Watford Nottingham Forest v Bristol City Aston Villa v Chelsea With all the fifth-round fixtures be-

ing played on Wednesday 28th February 19:45 KO. Manchester United will play an away fixture against Premier League side Nottingham Forest or Championship side Bristol City depending on the replay result. The robins have already caused a severe upset in the third round of the Emirates FA Cup competition knocking out UEFA European Conference League (UECL) champions West Ham United after winning their third-round replay 1-0 at Ashton Gate. Of course, if Bristol City do play Manchester United in the fifth round it would be an incredible fixture especially as Bristol City have previously sent Manchester United packing in the 2017 Carabao Cup quarter-final with a 90+3 minute winning goal securing the robins a 2-1 win over the red devils. Fingers crossed that the robins pull through for the must-see match fifth round fixture.

Wrexham Women washed out by Cardiff City

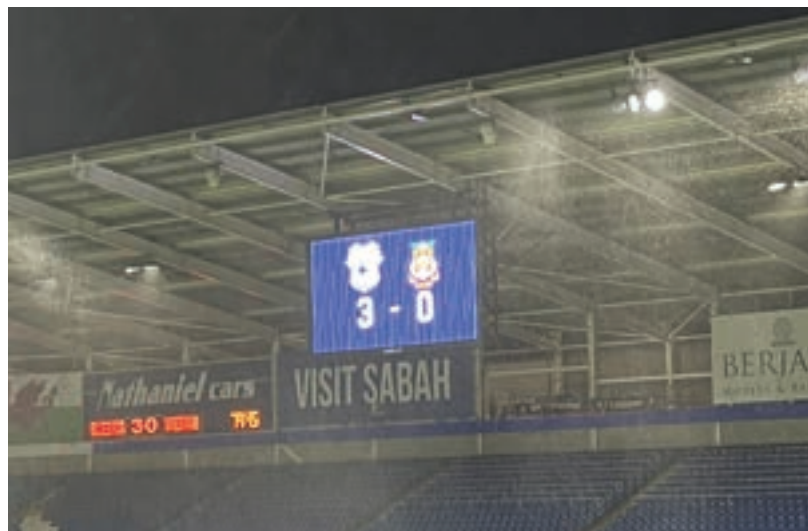
Grace D'Souza
Sports Editor

Storm Isha did not stop 1312 fans attending Ninian Park for the iconic fixture.

Cardiff City's Eliza Collie showed Wrexham who was boss when she smashed 2 goals into the back of the net before half time. Collie scored in the 7th and 34th minutes with Tija Richardson rubbing salt into wounds sealing a 3-0 victory against their Wrexham rivals. Cardiff City Women currently sit at the top of the table with south Wales rivals Swansea close behind and Wrexham sitting comfortably in third place. Women's football

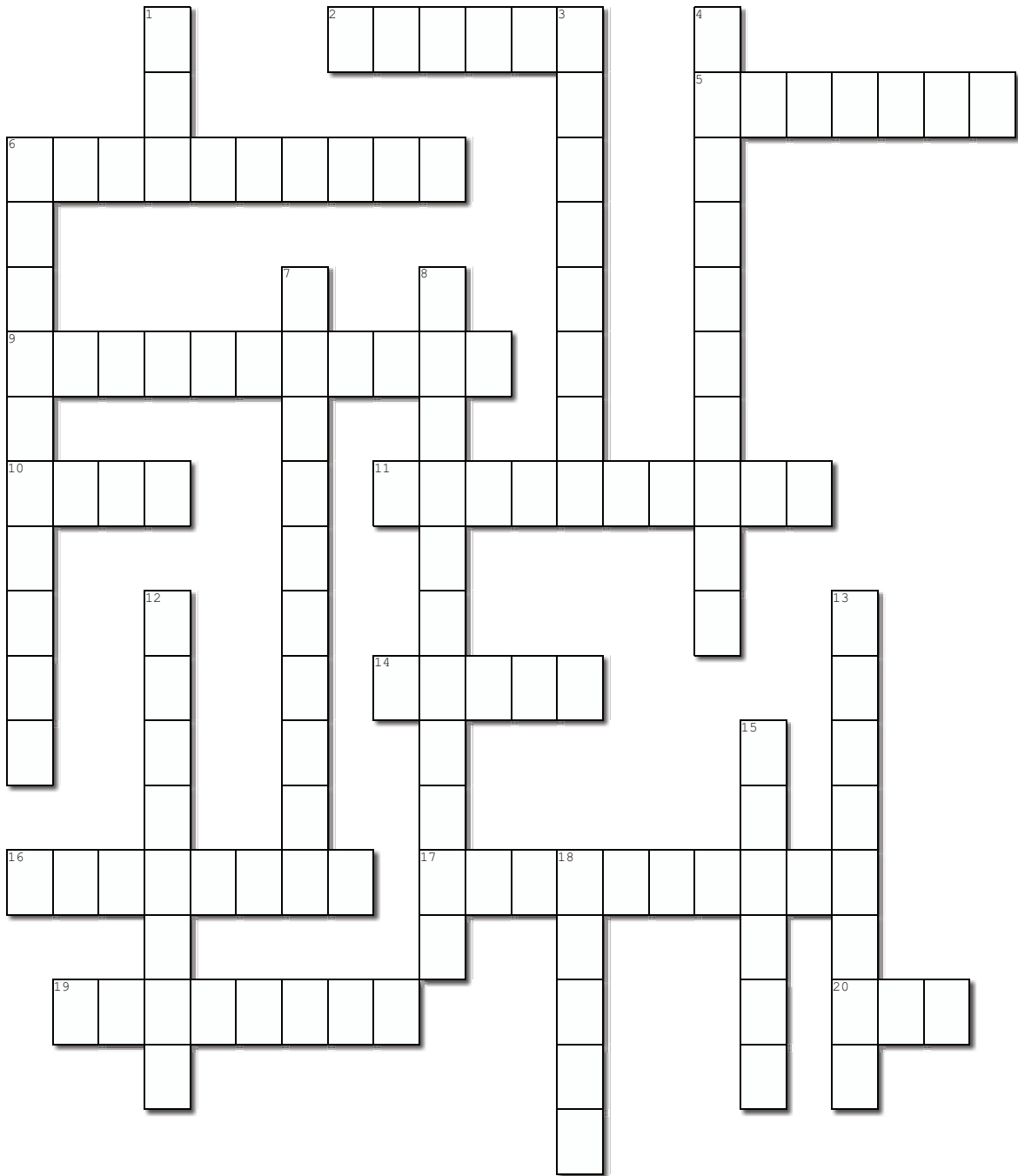
has come a long way but of course there is still a long way to go to get to the same level as the respective men's teams. Ninian Park is Cardiff City's club as well as the Wales National Teams football club and it has a total capacity of 21,508 so just over 6% of the stadium was full compared to Cardiff City v Bristol City or Swansea City which are normally derby day sell outs in the championship. Although the Welsh Premier Womens League has 8 teams compared to Championship which has 22 teams. Upcoming Fixtures for the Welsh Premier Womens League: Barry Town v Pontypridd Town Aberystwyth v The New Saints Wrexham v Cardiff Metropolitan Cardiff City v Swansea City

Source: Grace D'Souza



Crossword | Croesair

Nancy Cook



Across

- 2. Places where dragons roam and accountants fear to tread- 6
- 5. A beach rat out in just as much force as actual rats in Cardiff- 7
- 6. Where did the murder happen? On the ____ - 10
- 9. A tragic mixer and Irish rock band- 11
- 10. 2011 comical alien and Andrew Scott’s co star - 41
- 1. For my cinephiles in Review- where are you

- uploading your ratings- 10
- 14. You ____ fresh- 5
- 16. Quench is one - 8
- 17. A waterfall impersonating a rain shower, or an average downpour in Cardiff- 10
- 19. The feeling when you finally crack an assessment, light bulb moment- 8
- 20. Higher population than people in our wonderful city- 3
- Find the Answers on our Instagram @gairrhydd

Down

- 1. The UK’s televisual treasure trove: where accents are refined and drama unspools. - 3
- 3. It is a serious ____ to do literally anything on a Thursday morning -7
- 4. The discipline where everyone wants to analyse everyone else - 10
- 6. Keeps chaos from running amok- 10
- 7. The end of a university era – 10
- 8. Happy accident that leads to a fortunate discovery- 11
- 12. Coordinated around a central motif, a good sport social a good Spotify playlist have this in common - 81
- 3. Tales, myths, legends depicted in an immaculate 2020 album- 8
- 15. Gair Rhydd is blessed with the best ____, maestro of the written word - 6
- 18. Gather the troops, we must ____ if we are going to get to misfits before the queue- 5