

“The way to avoid disillusionment is to try to avoid illusions in the first place”



In an interview with Gair Rhydd, Neil Kinnock, former Labour leader and President of Cardiff students' Union discusses his university days, the state of politics, devolution and what makes a 'successful political career'.

**James Roberts
and
Ruaidhri Gillen Lynch**

Lord Kinnock, thank you for having us. Your political career began in Cardiff, where you were the SU president. Could you begin maybe by describing your time in that role?

I've been a member of the Labour Party since I was 14. I was allowed to join three months before the official date by a very friendly county counsellor in Tredegar, which is where I was born and brought up. And then I went to Cardiff and joined the Socialist Society. As these things happen, I was elected Secretary after being in university for about three or four months. Then the following year I talked a young woman from Anglesey into becoming secretary in her third week in university. I married her five years later. I then became President of the Socialist Society, and we were extremely active politically, not just in student politics, indeed, not even mainly in student politics. In 64, there was the general election in

which labour won after 13 years of Tory rule, and then 66, when Labour won a big majority. In between times, of course, there was the Cuban Missile Crisis, there were the Rivonia trials of Nelson Mandela and his colleagues, and the '60s, the late '60s, were a swirl of political activity in which we were heavily engaged. So that was not a baptism of fire, but fire wasn't absent.

Do you feel that the role prepared you for your political career?

Not really. I would have been active and engaged in politics in any case as an activist. What did assist, I guess, is that when I went to university, the first year, I played rugby and I sang a lot and I was out with the lads a lot. Then Glenys arrived. I met her, poor girl, on her first day in university and I started to take her home, but I had a kick in the head and I was suffering from a delayed concussion. So, I passed out and she ended up taking me home from our first date. In order to impress her the following Friday, I spoke in the Union Debate for the first time. *The debates union in the University in those days was very active, packed out, and very, very rumbustious.*

There was a complete absence of deference and good manners. So it was hellish. But I managed to get through that, and I managed to impress her, which was the intention. Then I found myself stuck with being, not only actively engaged in the Socialist Society, but in the politics of the Union. So, in a sense, it was a sort of involuntary training, because I learned to take the punches as well as giving them, learned to be indifferent to insult and to enjoy a little bit of praise. I suppose that's a fair old grounding in active politics. ^[P.1] **And as you mentioned, you were SU president during the upheaval of the '60s, and known to support anti-apartheid efforts. What do you think of the efforts by Cardiff University to prevent protests by legal injunctions?**

I think that if it involves invasions of premises, the University is within its rights to try to prevent the possibility of damage and of disruption that could affect students who are not directly engaged. Otherwise, I think that efforts to prevent protest as a general practice are fruitless in any case.

And on that topic, do you feel that

student politicians have the same voice and agencies that they might have done in your day?

We had no voice or agency. We made a hell of a lot of noise, and nobody took any notice, as you would expect. I can say from the great height of being 83 years of age, there are times when much more notice should be taken of youthful opinions and concerns. The fact that they are held by young people doesn't invalidate them in any way...

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Check out our Instagram for News and updates

Team Cardiff raised over £30,000 in Half Marathon

**Grace Byrne
Contributor**

On Sunday 5th October 2025, the city of Cardiff was filled with energy and anticipation as over 27,000 determined runners set their sights on running 13.1 miles across the capital. This is the 22nd year the race has taken place in Cardiff and, once again, it proved to be extremely popular, with places selling out within 12 hours of the registration opening. Over 29,000 people signed up to take part, setting a new record..

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Gŵyl Sŵn yn “codi proffil cerddoriaeth Gymraeg”

**Gwenno Davies
Golygydd Taf-Od**

Ym mis Hydref eleni, daeth Gŵyl Sŵn yn ôl i Gaerdydd i lenwi'r strydoedd â chyffro, bwrlwm, a llawer o sŵn! Gŵyl gerddoriaeth tair noswaith o hyd yw Gŵyl Sŵn, sydd wedi denu llu o gefnogwyr yn flynyddol ers 2008.

Mae'r Wyl yn rhoi llwyfan i artistiaid newydd mewn gigiau ar hyd a lled y ddinas – gan gynnwys yng Nghlwb Ifor Bach, Fuel, The New Moon, Tiny Rebel, Jacob's Basement, The Canopi, Tramshed, Eglwys Sant Ioan, a Porter's.

I ddarllen, gwelwch dudalen 14

The UN at 80: time for a change?

**Megan Warren
Contributor**

Tomorrow marks a very happy birthday for the United Nations, which was founded on October 24, 1945, to promote peace, security, and cooperation in the post-World War II global landscape. Its purpose was to replace the failed League of Nations, an organisation some at the time blamed for the lack of cooperation and peace leading to the Second World War. The United Nations sought to establish a platform for international cooperation and peace. But 80 years on, it begs the question...

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A Note From the Editor

I, like many third years, having gone through probably my last freshers' week (which of course Cardiff has a way of making feel like a month), am now facing up to the reality of life beyond university in an uncertain job market.

What will I do? Where will I go? Questions to which I have not yet established a clear answer.

Nonetheless, I hope the subject of this edition's feature will provide inspiration to readers, as an example of a Cardiff graduate who, despite narrowly missing out on the prime ministership, has made a substantial contribution to public life. Now a member of the House of Lords, Neil Kinnock has been a friend of Student Media for many decades, and it was a great privilege to meet him in London to discuss a number of topics. His words are steeped in the wisdom of a long political career, and I hope they will be insightful to our readers. More details of his career and our interview can be found in an article by Ruaidhrí in the Politics section.

Despite a slightly frantic time making the last edition, which resulted in the occasional spelling error, it has been extremely encouraging to witness the excellent engagement with which the paper has been met. Our social media views have increased sevenfold, and we have had to constantly refill the distribution points across campus.

We are near to fixing the website with the help of the SU internet team—stay tuned for an announcement on our Instagram when we are done.

We are trying to increase *Gair Rhydd*'s presence as a source of original journalism, but we are always in need of stories to report. Do you have some



thing you want to tell us? Share it confidentially using the QR code in the News section.

Finally, whilst none will appear in this edition, we are hoping to provide court reports through the paper and website. Working with the Crown Court in Cathays Park, we now know of upcoming trials. If you want to get involved as a court reporter for *Gair Rhydd*, please get in contact via Instagram or email me at editor@gairrhydd.com. This is a great opportunity for those studying law, as you can gain valuable experience of real-life court proceedings and build up a portfolio of work. We have no expectations, and you can do as much, or as little as possible.

Likewise, if having read the last edition, you are interested in joining *Gair Rhydd*, contact my editor's email. Membership of the paper is five pound (insurance money if we get sued!). We post pitches on our Facebook chat "Gair Rhydd Contributors 2025–2026" at the start of each new print cycle. For those more experienced, there is also the opportunity to join the main editorial team.

I want to say thank you to all our committee members in all their roles. *Gair Rhydd* is a student paper, made by a wonderful team of volunteers, without whom the paper would cease to be.

Diolch yn fawr



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(Front page) Reproduced courtesy of CUTV



Plaid Cymru Say NO to Independence in a Possible First Term

Rhys Lock
Contributor

Plaid Cymru leader Rhun ap Iorwerth has rejected a referendum on Welsh independence if his party is successful in next May's Senedd elections. Speaking to Nick Robinson on BBC Radio 4 ahead of Plaid Cymru's annual conference, Ap Iorwerth said "this isn't an independence referendum coming up next year", following up with "there won't be a referendum in the next five years at all". These remarks echo his previous claim made to BBC WalesCast in May when the Ynys Môn MS rejected the idea of an independence referendum, instead wishing to highlight the issues of health, education, economic growth, and "getting to grips with child poverty".

"This change in priorities marks a sharp contrast with Plaid Cymru's former leader"

The party, currently polling narrowly ahead of Reform UK according to a recent YouGov/ITV Wales opinion poll, have put their immediate focus on addressing more traditional and immediate devolved issues as they seek to form a government not led by Labour for the first time in the history of Welsh devolution next May. A party political broadcast, released in time for their annual conference in Swansea, focused on issues including the NHS and "backing Welsh businesses and local jobs" while emphasising a two-horse race between the left-wing civic nationalist party and Reform UK as both parties seek to win over disaffected Labour voters. Plaid Cymru also announced a new free childcare policy for all children under four, dedicated library in every primary school, and extra pay for teachers to stay in Wales, alongside a 127-page economic plan published earlier this year.

This change in priorities marks a sharp contrast with Plaid Cymru's former leader, Adam

Price, who promised to hold an independence referendum within their first term had the party won the 2021 Senedd elections. The former leader pushed the idea of Welsh independence to the forefront of the Welsh nationalist party's agenda and made it a committed manifesto pledge for the first time in a Senedd election. Following Price's resignation in May 2023, Rhun ap Iorwerth, who was elected as Price's successor unopposed, has mellowed the messaging around independence as the party seeks to win over former Labour voters.

However, Plaid Cymru have tried to ease concerns among some party members that the party is abandoning its dream of an independent Welsh state by noting it is still a long-term ambition, albeit not an immediate priority. Ap Iorwerth, in his recent 46-minute-long conference speech stated that a Plaid Cymru government would "kickstart the national debate on independence" and promised to "build on the excellent work of the Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales by establishing a Standing Commission". The Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales, reporting in January 2024, listed independence as one of three "viable" options for Wales in the future alongside a federal model

"72% of 25–34-year-olds in Wales would vote 'Yes' if a referendum were held tomorrow"

and "enhanced devolution".

Plaid Cymru, alongside the Green Party, remain the only major parties in Wales to support Welsh independence despite a surge in support in recent years, increasing from 17% in 2018 to as high as 41% (excluding don't knows) as recently as April this year. The same Redfield and Wilton Strategies poll taken on behalf of YesCymru, the grassroots campaign for Welsh Independence, found that (when don't knows are excluded) 53% of 18–24-year-olds and an astonishing 72% of 25–34-year-olds in Wales would vote 'Yes' if a referendum were held tomorrow.

Ticketing Trouble: Cardiff Students Frustrated by Queues and Resales

Megs O'Neil
Contributor

Students are back! What does this mean? Full clubs! With the return of the university students in Cardiff this means many things including, busier pubs and busier clubs. As of the 2023–24 university year 33,000 students were enrolled at Cardiff University, with most students living in Cathays, Roath, or Gabalfa. So, every year when students are back in September, it's no wonder that entry to clubs becomes more difficult. Each week the queue for YOLO on a Wednesday seems to get longer, with an average wait time of over an hour, unless you get there for opening. Some students said they waited in the YOLO queue for over two and a half hours after Cardiff Clash on Wednesday 1st October.

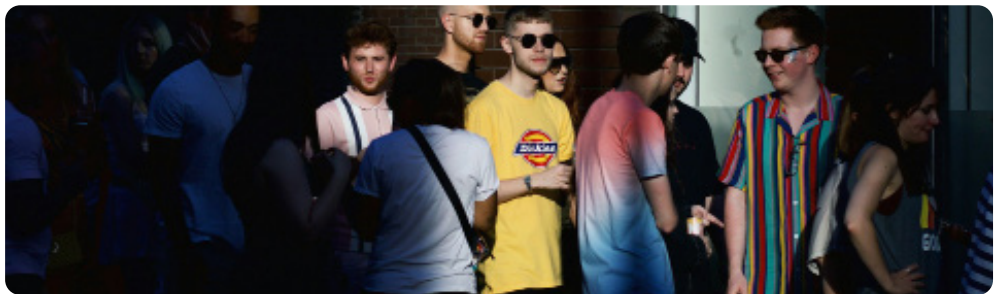
As well as this, there was the YOLOWEEN ticket war that many people lost out on, with tickets sold out within the first ten minutes of release. Many may be asking how the university is going to try and combat this growing issue. The answer to this is that they have teamed up with the Cardiff Box Office partner Ticketswap. Ticketswap provides a safe space to buy and sell unwanted tickets. The Y Plas nightclub, home to YOLO, posted on Facebook on the 7th of October to let students know about this new way of purchasing tickets without the risk of getting scammed by re-selling tickets independently.

The ticket scamming problem has been an ongoing issue regarding tickets for club and music events in Cardiff. Overheard at Cardiff University is a Facebook page made for Cardiff University students. Currently, it has 55.2k members, and is where everyone goes for any information or gossip about Cardiff—from being used for finding housemates or renting out rooms, to making a public service announcement about houses getting "baked beaned". Overheard is also most commonly used for asking for or reselling tickets.

Many people, myself included, have brought tickets from someone selling on Overheard and have had no problems. However, it is becoming increasingly common for people to be scammed out of their ticket or having to pay for an over-priced one. When asking students about how much they have paid for a resale ticket, one student said they had paid £60 for a Varsity YOLO ticket last year which were originally sold for £7. Paying £60 for a ticket to YOLO seems like an extortionate amount, but some students are willing to pay, likely due to FOMO.

So, how can you make sure you do not get scammed or overcharged on Overheard? Unfortunately, the only answer is to not buy secondhand tickets unless you know the seller, as there is no way to know whether they will be good on their word. It is a risk that you take when buying from Overheard. The only way of securely getting resale tickets for club events at Y Plas now is from Ticketswap, the official partner. But will this new method from Y Plas stop some students from reselling tickets for immense profits online?

Another problem with Cardiff nightlife at the moment is the queue times, whether it's YOLO on a Wednesday or Misfits Friday, the queues seem to be getting longer and longer. Misfits has taken action to help combat this problem by implementing an online queue system. This is to prevent people from queueing down Miskin Street and clogging up the road, as well to stop people from getting cold waiting for hours in the queue. This seems to be working somewhat successfully, as people are arriving at Misfits when it is their turn in the queue and not waiting longer than 20 minutes or so. Let's just hope this solution continues and we can get back to enjoying a good night out in Cardiff rather than stressing, rushing, and overpaying; feelings Cardiff students currently know all too well.



#TeamCardiff Raised £30,000 in Half Marathon

Grace Byrne
Contributor

On Sunday 5th October 2025, the city of Cardiff was filled with energy and anticipation as over 27,000 determined runners set their sights on running 13.1 miles across the capital. This is the 22nd year the race has taken place in Cardiff and, once again, it proved to be extremely popular, with places selling out within 12 hours of the registration opening. Over 29,000 people signed up to take part, setting a new record for 2025. This year's race also attracted the largest ever number of international runners, with people travelling from across the globe to participate. Amongst the lively crowd was #TeamCardiff, Cardiff University's fundraising team, which included over one-hundred Cardiff University alumni, students, and staff members. #TeamCardiff was running for a variety of admirable causes to raise funds for Cardiff University research, support-

ing neuroscience, mental health, and cancer research. The team raised a remarkable £30,000, an amount to be incredibly proud of. This is the second consecutive year where #TeamCardiff has raised £30,000 or more.

The funds will go towards supporting the next generation of cancer and neuroscience researchers, helping to advance discoveries and "develop treatments for a range of cancers, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, ADHD, depression, and schizophrenia". I spoke to Professor Karin Wahl-Jorgensen, a professor from Cardiff University's School of Journalism, Media and Culture (and Dean of Research Environment and Culture), who participated in this year's race. Speaking about her motivation to run the Half Marathon, she said: "I have been running regularly (and slowly) for many years, and I find I very motivating to be signed up for a race ... after initially failing to get a place for this year's half, I kept my eyes open for any last minute exchanges and finally managed to get a place in August. For me, run-

ning a half marathon is a massive physical and psychological challenge—but also a fun way of being part of something bigger." It is no surprise that the event is so popular, and the buzz of the day was only amplified by a variety of bands, DJs, and choirs who helped to provide entertainment for both the runners and their supporters.

The scenic route included running past some of Cardiff's most famous landmarks, including the Principality Stadium and the Welsh Millennium Centre, and luckily storm Amy did not impact the day! With many of the #TeamCardiff runners motivated to take on the Half Marathon due to personal reasons, like fundraising in celebration or memory of loved ones, the comradery and supportive atmosphere was warmly received. Speaking about the atmosphere of the day, Karin said: "I absolutely loved the atmosphere. I find it really moving that the whole city comes out to support the runners, and at times the crowd noise was deafening! It really helps to take your mind off your exhaustion and painful legs when

people are shouting your name, waving signs, handing out sweets and playing music—and it's especially touching that the crowds are coming out for us ordinary, slower runners." Karin commented that she hadn't taken part in the Cardiff Half Marathon for about a decade, but had noticed that in the last 10 years, it has become "a massive event" and is "keeping her fingers crossed" to take part in the event again next year. At #TeamCardiff's cheer station, situated at mile 8, #TeamCardiff received an extra boost of encouragement as friends, family, and the Cardiff University Brass Band came together to raise the runners' spirits. Even the Cardiff University mascot, Dylan the Dragon, made an appearance to show his support! This was bound to give them the extra push needed to conquer the final 5 miles to the finish line.

Physiotherapy students from the School of Healthcare Sciences also showed their support by providing free post-race massages to exhausted runners.

Farage Says the “Status Quo” in Wales Would Change if Reform Has Their Chance

Caitlin Thomas
Contributor

Nigel Farage has vowed that Reform UK will “change the status quo” in Wales and has promised that “fresh thinking” will characterise the party’s programme ahead of the 2026 Senedd election. The Reform leader insists that the party aims to give voters an alternative to what he has described as “decades of complacency” in the devolved government, as Welsh Labour faces growing pressure from Plaid Cymru and Reform.

Welsh Labour has led the Senedd since its establishment in 1999, ensuring its strong influence over Welsh policy. However, if recent polling is any indication, the political balance that has been in place for over twenty years seems to be shifting. Both Plaid Cymru and Reform are gaining momentum, and there are some surveys to suggest that Reform is ahead of the Conservatives in some parts of the country. Farage believes that this is an indication of people’s desire for “something new—a government on the side of people working and people having jobs”.

But, what would Reform mean for Wales? This is a question that lacks a clear answer. Despite Reform’s growing popularity, the party has not yet outlined any specific policy commitments for Wales. Farage has admitted that the

party’s manifesto for the devolved government is still “in development” and has said that there is a “full-time team” in place working on policies relevant to the current Welsh political landscape. This would be a first for the party, which in the past has prioritised the politics of Westminster.

This absence of clear policies within the party has left Reform UK vulnerable to criticism. In particular, Plaid Cymru leader Rhun ap Iorwerth has warned that it will be “in the interest of Wales” to ensure that Reform’s influence in the Senedd remains limited. However, Plaid Cymru itself is standing on a platform of change, placing the party as another alternative to Welsh Labour, but one that is rooted in Welsh values, rather than simply being a party of protest.

Recent defections to the Reform movement have also added to the increasing momentum of the party. Laura Anne Jones, Member of the Senedd for South Wales East, left the Welsh Conservatives to join Reform in July this year, and she became the first MS to make the move. But what led her to do so? She talked of the “frustration” that she felt at the state of Welsh politics. Her defection was described by Farage as a “major step forward” as well as a sign that “the tide is turning”.

All of this comes at a time of change for the devolved government in Wales. The Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024 will

come into effect for the 2026 election, expanding the Welsh Parliament from 60 to 96 members, as well as introducing a proportional representation voting system. These reforms are intended to modernise Welsh democracy and improve the representation of the parliament, but they will also allow new opportunities for smaller parties such as Reform and Plaid to gain influence.

Farage’s message of “fresh thinking” strikes a chord with voters in Wales frustrated by the status quo—particularly when it comes to the economy and the NHS—and with those who are looking for a change from Labour’s long-established rule. But until a concrete manifesto is reached, Reform is likely to face criticism and questions about what their promise of change will look like in practice, with little substance to their credibility until their manifesto is shared with the Welsh public it is attempting to win over.

As the 2026 Senedd election looms, it seems that Wales and its government are heading towards a time of change. Welsh Labour is facing scrutiny following more than two decades of power, Plaid Cymru stands on a platform of change centred on issues of Welsh identity, and Reform is gearing up to shake up the system. But we will have to wait and see what it really means for Farage’s party to change the “status quo” in Wales.

Cathays Crimewave: Are we at Risk?

Gabriela Hunt
News Editor

Cardiff’s crime rate is currently recorded to be higher than the Welsh national average, with 2025 reporting an average of 83 crimes per 1,000 people. The “most dangerous” areas in 2025, according to CrimeRate’s statistics, are Adamsdown, Riverside, Butetown, and specifically St Mary’s Street. It is interesting to see where Cathays lies in all of this and why there is a intensification of crime in the area in comparison to other suburbs in Cardiff.

The city is home to three universities—Cardiff University, Cardiff Metropolitan University, and the University of Wales—so it’s granted that the area will be home to many students, especially during term times. In 2013, university students made up around a fifth of Cardiff’s population, according to WalesOnline, and this number has only grown since. With Cathays being the largest home to non-halls housing for students, it is interesting to see how crime rates vary in the area, and the effect this has on

“Students still feel safe living in the area”

students.

Wales Online reported in September that “most” of the students they spoke to said that “they’d always felt safe” in Cathays, due to the sense of “community” they felt from the area being full of students, especially when discussing walking back later at night. According to a new study of police crime data and estimated data for UK student suburbs, Cathays is the “most dangerous” university suburb. The popular Facebook group “Overheard at Cardiff University” has yearly reports of crime from students, from car burglaries to noise complaints, antisocial behaviour, and theft. But is this being recorded within crime statistics? According to Overheard there seems to be a large number of unreported “minor crimes” in the area which are not presented in the statistics.

A recent graduate and resident of the Cathays area since 2023 revealed that throughout their time in Cathays, there had been multiple incidents where their car had faced damage via hit-and-runs, and shared their view that “it is not worth reporting” and that “nothing changes”. Another recent graduate told me of having their car vandalised by someone who carved words into the bonnet with a rock, and how “she didn’t feel comfortable reporting it” at risk of “not being taken seriously”. When discussing the ever-present issue of vehicle crime in Cathays, another resident brought up being witness to multiple wing mirrors being smashed on Column Road by drunk students during their first years. They also reported being too uncomfortable to say anything.

Further discussions with friends and fellow students raised the topic of sexual violence and harassment in Cardiff, which whilst it seems to be a lot more common in the city centre, is still an issue in nightlife venues in Cathays, as well as popular streets such as City Road. Regardless of the presence of students there, the number of reported crimes has seemingly remained at a similar average for the past three years. Crimes such as violence, sexual assault, and shoplifting are continually higher than others. There has been a recent call for Cardiff University Students’ Union to do more regarding sexual violence both on and off campus.

Nevertheless, it remains true that despite the high rate of both reported and unreported crimes in Cathays, students still feel very safe in this local community.

Central Square: A Makeover for Cardiff’s Media Hub

Gracie Bradley
Contributor

When thinking of Wales, particularly Cardiff, what is the first thing that comes to mind? Sheep? Rugby?

Perhaps even green, green grass? Well, to many, Cardiff can be seen as a “concrete jungle”, especially to those that commute via train to the busy Welsh capital. Cardiff’s Central Square has been criticised recently for its vast surroundings of grey, “boring” buildings, which is usually the first thing someone sees as they step off the platform and into the city. The square, also known as the city’s media hub, is home to many businesses, including BBC Cymru, Cardiff University, and the Cardiff bus station.

“The competition was put into place by The Royal Society of Architects”

Renovated in 2016, locals and citygoers alike have a lot of opinions when it comes to its appearance, some going as far to call the square “derelict” and “unwelcoming”. Cardiff’s Central Square plays many important roles when it comes to events, serving as the queuing area for all rugby games, some football games, and even concerts.

As Cardiff is the capital of Wales, many think that it deserves a makeover into something more practical, such as more seating areas; something more prideful, such as Welsh flags and heritage information; and something more visually appealing than the “cold-looking”, “colourless” image of the square. After all, Cardiff is supposed to be the heart of Wales—a vibrant, passionate nation known for its success in sport, its powerful coal industry, and its beautiful, unique flag.

The area has been slandered so much, that a “hypothetical” competition has been put in place to hopefully provide ideas and stir creativity to improve the city’s appearance, and provide the Welsh with something to be, perhaps, a little

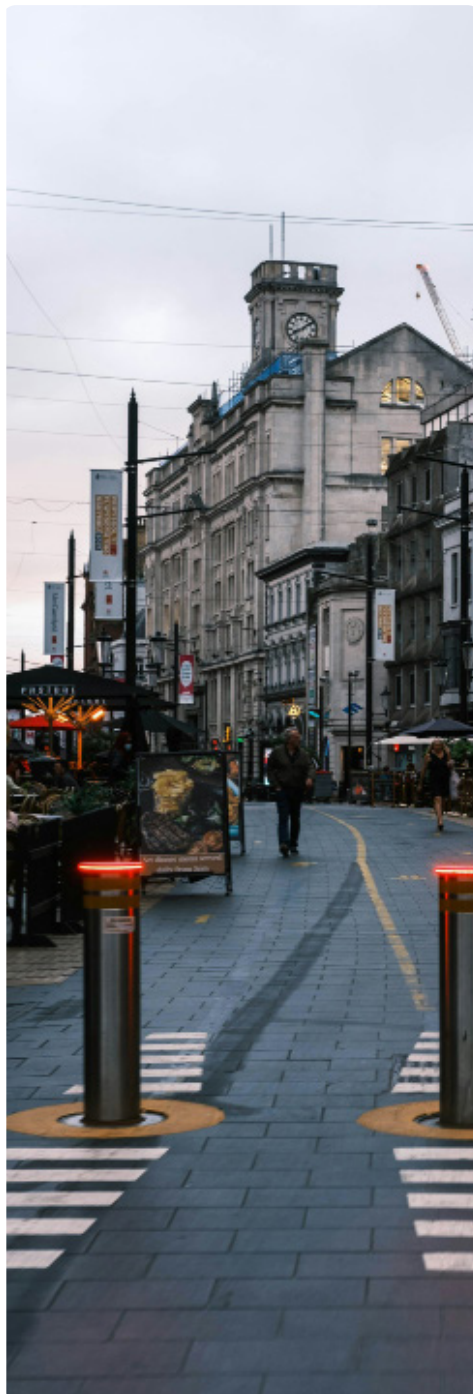
prouder of. Architects have been asked to provide information and insight on what they think could improve the appearance of the square, and what can be done to create a space of inclusivity, diversity, and pride as part of a nationwide competition. While they receive no prize for their creativity, the task at hand has proven to be difficult, so bragging rights seem an appropriate replacement. The competition was put into place by The Royal Society of Architects with hopes to achieve a better design for the square, and opportunity to redevelop the area.

“It just does not show anything about Wales”

So, what does the public think? When asked for thoughts on Cardiff’s Central Square, there were varying opinions, some positive and most negative. A student studying at Cardiff’s School of Journalism, Media and Culture (JOMEC) said that “The buildings here are very modern, they give a clean feeling to the area; however, it is quite bland.” Another member of the public said, “It just does not show anything about Wales. Are we known for the BBC or a bus station? That is what people would think if they came here.”

These opinions leave citygoers with the question of what can be done. Perhaps with renovation and rebuilding, Cardiff’s Central Square could be a new sightseeing essential for tourists, a proud addition to the city, or even a place where students and workers can go to enjoy their break or study. Improving the look of the square will surely bring more patriotism and tourism to Wales, so the Welsh government should look at ways of improving it. Other respondents’ suggestions included more benches to allow people to rest around the area, greenery to make the surroundings more welcoming, and things that showcase Welsh heritage and tradition.

The main argument is that Wales has a lot of things to be proud of, and with such a significant location, Cardiff’s Central Square should be the place where these are shown off and celebrated!



A Degree of Difficulty: New Graduates Struggling in the Current Job Market

Advait Gangawanwale II
Contributor

Graduates are struggling in the current job market, as graduate jobs are declining. However, what can we learn from Cardiff students who have gone through the process of hunting jobs?

Cardiff University student Shayna is one example. As her course was coming to an end, she could finally see the future she had always hoped for. Shayna had landed a job at Barclays after applying to more than 150 jobs in just three months, all while completing her dissertation at Cardiff University, showing the hard work and sheer number of applications it takes for students to get job security.

Shayna's story is a bright spot in a bleak year for UK graduates. According to Indeed's 2025 Labour Market Update, graduate job postings are now at their lowest level since 2018, with a 33% annual drop. The total number of job listings in the UK is now below pre-pandemic levels with graduate role advertisements having fallen by more than 10%. In discussions surrounding her many applications, she said: "Waking up every day to five rejection

emails is tough, but you must keep going. It's not personal, you never know when the next application will be the one."

As competition is intensifying, a typical graduate job vacancy now receives around 140 applicants, almost a 60% increase from the previous year, according to Institute of Student Employers.

Graduate roles have significantly dropped in banking, finance, accounting, and software companies since 2019. In this tight graduate job market, Shayna's race against the clock began late. "I didn't even start applying until three months before graduation," she says. "At first, I would apply on LinkedIn and get rejections almost immediately."

But with mounting visa deadline pressure, her mother stepped in from India to help. Shayna says her mother took charge of going to LinkedIn and started sending applications on her behalf so that she could focus on her dissertation. Fortunately, sending in lots of applications before completing the course helped her, she landed an opportu-

nity through a recruitment agency named Inspire Talent which placed her at Barclays as a Java developer. Shayna says that she was not the most technically advanced in her class, but her previous job at EY had taught her valuable communication

and problem-solving skills which helped her navigate interviews.

"In interviews, I reasoned through

problems, talked about alternatives and showed how I think."

Shayna, says that out of her 50 classmates, only 8 to 10 have landed full-time jobs. She told us how one peer lost hope after submitting more than 500 applications and returned to China. Another applied to over 600 positions and received just two interview offers.

While Shayna's journey was fast and exciting, Rohit, another Cardiff University graduate, endured a much longer struggle. After completing a master's in computing in 2024, he spent over a year applying to jobs, but to no luck. "Each application wasn't just a click, it took hours", he says. "You would do assessments, interviews, tailor

everything, and still get rejected. It was exhausting." At one point, Rohit paused his job hunt for two to three months due to burnout. After tailoring CVs and cover letters to apply for more than 300 jobs over a year, Rohit finally landed a job in London.

What eventually changed things for him was not a job portal, it was networking. He attended an AI summit in Cardiff and met someone working at Tech Mahindra, where, luckily, his uncle also worked. With both referring him, Rohit finally got his break as a product engineer. "It's a combination of luck and consistency", he says, "building connections really made a difference". Since he had a background of mechanical engineering, he lacked prior experience in computing, but Rohit says his ability to communicate effectively became an asset. "There are times when communication matters more than your skillset. If you can clearly explain what you know, that can outweigh inexperience."

This case exemplifies that whilst jobs are declining, applicants are only increasing; the reality of the graduate job market paints a grim picture.

"The reality of the graduate job market paints a grim picture"

Why Does Cardiff Have So Much Rubbish?

James Burns
News Editor

Ever strolled around Cardiff and noticed its finest qualities? Its vast green spaces, its fine Victorian homes, and beautiful modern bay, all adequately placed to be explored conveniently on foot. The Welsh capital has a lot going for it, but the result of such considerations of its offerings has often landed at the same unfortunate exception in conversations with my fellow students. Why is there so much rubbish?

A commute on foot throughout the city that doesn't feature dodging piles of litter, or bearing witness to a seagull persistently scavenging at a ripped bin bag is an unlikely occasion. So, what is going wrong? Cardiff Council spends £7mn a year on keeping the streets clean, so what is making Wales' most notable city an

urban centre clogged up by the waste of its own citizens? Rachel from Penylan noted that the "Black bins are small, and they're only collected once every two weeks, so as soon as you have a backlog of rubbish there's no way to get rid of it all unless you've got a car and can book a slot at the tip. If you don't have a car, you're unlikely to have a spare £150 to pay a licensed waste removal specialist to take it. So, it gets dumped wherever is convenient". Other residents on various Cardiff-based forums concurred with this message suggesting how easy it is to fall behind on collections when they only take place every week or two with just individual bins.

This appears a valid concern, especially when considering Cardiff's high percentage of HMOs (Homes of Multiple Occupants), which is over 20% in many areas of the city. The changes to the system in the last year also appear to have done more harm than good. Charlotte, a student living in Roath says that the change of the green bin bags to the re-usable bags has "made things worse" with difficulties in personal sorting and unsecure design resulting in rubbish strewn across streets after an encounter with seagulls and storms.

A look from afar does give kinder viewing. Last year saw Wales named the second-best country in the world for recycling, just behind Austria in the global rankings, with both countries recycling 59% of their waste. A closer inspection, however, provides a slightly different narrative; according to My Recycling Wales Cardiff ranks as the joint lowest recycling rate amongst all of Wales' local authorities, with a rate of 60%. Although, compared to cities across the border, Cardiff is doing well, with the

average recycling rate in England at just 44%. Wales' statistics soar above their neighbouring nations for a number of reasons: Welsh households have had food waste bins for over a decade, and local authorities have prioritised improving their rates.

The root of the problem lies with an examination of antisocial behaviour. According to Keep Wales Tidy, an annual report found the worst results for street cleanliness in the 17 years since the charity's surveys began. The charity noted that the rise was mainly being driven by a huge increase of on-the-go food and drinks packaging, as well as pressure on council street cleaning budgets.

This applies to the whole of the UK. Just recently, Birmingham saw rubbish and bin bags laid to waste across the city following strikes by workers. Evidently, this is a nationwide issue. Many countries around Europe do not solely rely on this kerbside collection method, with countries like Spain and the Netherlands having large communal bins. This could potentially work in Cardiff, with people lacking the space to store their excess waste, leading to the array of fly-tipping spaces throughout the city. A change to both attitude of its residents, and actions of its council are required for a cleaner, more prosperous city.

"There's no way to get rid of it all unless you've got a car"

Indiana University Fires Student Media Director for Refusing to Censor Newspaper

Kani Abdullah
News Editor

Indiana University has ordered the *Indiana Daily Student* (IDS) to cease printing new editions and has fired the student media director who refused to remove certain news stories from the homecoming issue. This decision has caused controversy at the university because students have raised questions about the student journalists' First Amendment rights and created concerns amongst pupils about censorship. Within the university, the Hoosiers football team celebrates its highest national ranking ever, therefore, it is believed that the university wanted to avoid distractions during homecoming weekend.

Supporters of student media, *Indiana Daily Student* alumni, and public figures like billionaire Mark Cuban have criticised the university for interfering with the newspaper's independence. Cuban wrote in a post on X: "Not happy. Censorship isn't the way."

It is said that the *Daily Student* receives around \$250,000 each year from the university's media school to help offset declining advertising revenue. Therefore, it is known to be one of the biggest college newspapers in the States. Now, the *Indiana Daily Student* said that the university has "fully cut print, including our special editions". *IDS* continued to claim that they were not included in the decision to have the print version of the student newspaper cut.

"I had to make the decision that was going to allow me to live with myself", said Jim Rodenbush, the paper's adviser, who was fired by the university after he rejected a demand to force the student editors to ignore news stories that were related to the homecoming celebration from the print edition. "I don't have any regrets whatsoever. In the current environment we are in, somebody has to stand up". The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression named Indiana University the country's worst public university for free speech. The low rating comes mostly from the university's handling of pro-Palestinian protests in spring 2024.

"Your lack of leadership and ability to work in alignment with the University's direction for the Student Media Plan is unacceptable" wrote Dean David Tolchinsky, the IU Media School, in Rodenbush's termination letter. Along with this statement, *IDS* editors Andrew Miller and Mia Hilkowitz said: "Telling us what we can and cannot print is unlawful censorship, established by legal precedent surrounding speech law on public college campuses." Miller continued to add that Rodenbush "did the right thing by refusing to censor our print edition" and called the termination a "deliberate scare tactic towards journalists and faculty".

Naturally, this story raises concerns for student media everywhere.



Do you have something you want to tell us? Use the QR code to access our 'tell us' form



Cardiff's third coolest neighbourhood is a student must see

Molly Spencer
Spotlight Editor

Whilst Cathays is a classic amongst students, a recent article by Time Out has named Canton the third coolest neighbourhood in the UK, so it simply had to be explored.

Just a twenty-minute walk west from Bute Park, Canton has roots dating back to the thirteenth century. Previously the home of a medieval market, Cowbridge Road East is now the hotspot for independent shops and cafés. And, in the 2011 census, it was found that roughly 19% of Canton residents were Welsh speakers. Making it one of the highest Welsh speaking neighbourhoods in Cardiff.

Although most of Canton can be seen from 'the strip' of Cowbridge Road East, close by is Victoria and Sanatorium Park where you can escape the busyness of the City Centre and branch out from the classic Bute Park. Beautiful greenery and a peaceful atmosphere provide a great alternative to other parks in the city that students may find themselves migrating to.

Alongside this, there are many vintage and classic shops for students to pop their heads into and see what the fuss is about; with a variety of jewellery and retro fashion brands up for grabs, the high street is worth a look.

Within the long list of cafés and shops, students will find many places to drift to in the dilemma of choosing somewhere to work and eat. In the middle of Cowbridge Road East, you will find Haystack Café, with a local pub The Admiral, and a Wetherspoons: The Ivor Davies, either side of it. All three are a must visit for stu-

dents. Whether you enjoy a pint in a pub with the locals, or prefer to stick to café classics, Canton is bustling with diverse communities. Fortunately for students; there are restaurants ranging from all different cultures. For the foodies: 'Vivo Latino' brings a Latin American spice, 'Fizz n Flour' is a hit with the pizza lovers, or there is 'Mattancherry Canton' for the curry fans. All can be found along Cowbridge Road East with dishes under £14 – making it close to the city centre and not blowing through your student loan.

When discussing Canton, the Chapter Arts Centre is a must visit. Just off Market Road, it features cinemas, theatres, studios as well as a café. Students are welcome, with student prices available in the cinema, the theatre, as well as the café with available workspaces open to students. Alongside this, there is also the Everyman Theatre Company opposite – the ideal place for the drama fanatics looking for a show.

Now the big question: does Canton deserve a top three spot in the coolest neighbourhoods of the UK? After walking around the neighbourhood, there is definitely a lot of potential with Canton, from the growing diversity of businesses to the parks and wide range of shops. Whilst I would argue that there are other neighbourhoods around Cardiff that also deserve to be on the list such as Pontcanna or Llandaff, Canton is slowly making its mark on Cardiff – so a top three spot is not undeserved.

Whether you are just looking to explore Cardiff's local neighbourhoods or escape Cathays for an afternoon – Canton's community and charm should make it the top of every student's list.

Wagamama's Student Night Just Got Hotter

Rachel Bedding
Head Of Spotlight

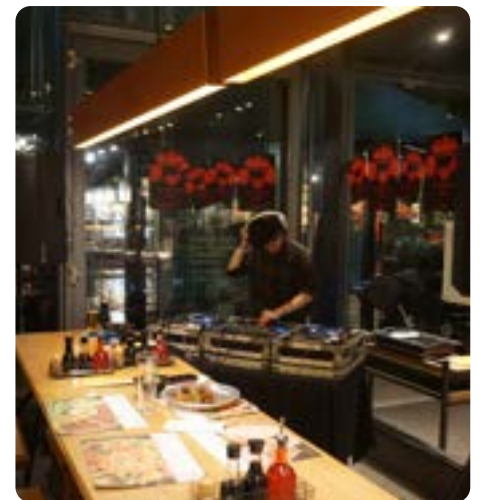
Wagamama's is basically a household name in a student city. A reliable weeknight takeaway spot with fun fresh food. I'll admit, before this evening, I'd never set foot in a Wagamama's, as takeaways were enough to fulfil me.

But, if you're finding yourself with not a lot to do on a Wednesday night, (maybe YOLO's queue is looking unappetising in the rain), get yourself down to Wagamama's where they're hosting their new collab with Locked On Records, bringing dance music to the forefront of the restaurant. Until the 12th of November, they are offering a 20% discount on all bills, free Asahi, and back to back DJs on the playlist for the night, from eight PM until close. On our night, they were host to live guest DJ Kow; who's a Warwick business student and part-time artist who mixes beats full of punch and energy. For an hour, he accompanied our dinner with a mashup of popular and new songs, and some of his own work was thrown in the mix. Born and raised in Japan, whilst Kow is happy with music as a hobby, he does want to be recognised for his skill with club music, representing a small number of Japanese artists who are popular in the DJ scene. From teaching himself his technique since high-school to having an agent sitting next to him whilst we chat, I'd say that he has a promising future.

At night, Wagamama's transforms from a hot stopover to a restaurant with an impressive evening atmosphere – low lighting and soft music wash over you as soon as you step through the door. At seven forty-five, there was a buzz of energy in the restaurant – a mix of people of all ages and numbers. Plenty solo diners were co-sied up on tables as well. Everyone who served

us for the night, gracious and chatty, plied us with menus and recommendations. Of course we started with cocktails, and if you've never had one there, then you are missing out. Strong, fairly priced, and delicious, we managed four between us before the night was out, alongside a selection of dishes. Although the new bao flavours were all unavailable, we got our hands on their katsu udon – a new and fully customisable noodle dish – and even tried the recently added panko baos for dessert.

This new era for Wagamama's has proven to be a lot of fun for them. The new Student-beans and eat-in lunch deals have brought in the masses between eleven AM and three PM, Locked On supports the diners who are a little bit later in the day. It has been good fun for Wagamama's to host, our servers say, although it's hard to get the word out as most students are out on a Wednesday. But if you're bored of the wait-times on a Wednesday, or if your body is feeling the effects of the last five weeks, then make the time for a little low-key evening, and if you can't bring a date, bring a mate!



Sephora in Cardiff: What It Means for Students (and Their Bank Accounts)

Ellie Evans
Spotlight Editor

After years of anticipation, Sephora is finally making Cardiff home to its first store in Wales, officially opening this Thursday, 3rd October, at St David's Shopping Centre. I had the pleasure of attending their VIP party on Wednesday night to celebrate the upcoming launch, where live performances and an inspiring talk from the Managing Director of Sephora UK, Sarah Boyd, made for a captivating celebration.

Marking Sephora UK's third birthday, the energy was electric from the very start – and DJ Fancy Shews only fuelled the energy further. Immediately upon entering the store, it is inevitable to get lost in the sheer variety of aisles, each offering something new to explore. From Rare Beauty to Charlotte Tilbury, there is something for everyone. Not to forget the mesmerising Lady Gaga set by Actavia, a contestant on the sixth series of RuPaul's Drag Race UK, which brought everyone together in the infectious atmosphere. With an array of Welsh influencers in attendance, phones lit up the crowd, ready to capture every moment of the unforgettable performance.

The best surprise of the evening, for

me, was the impromptu performance of Chapell Roan's Pink Pony Club by Cardiff Arms Park's all-male choir. With a heart-warming performance from a local choir and locally sourced Welsh food, Sephora eagerly set out to celebrate local culture as they dive into Cardiff's retail scene. Managing Director, Sarah Boyd, claims that the "Cardiff community is quite undeserved



for beauty", hence Sephora sets out to "bring our amazing temple of beauty" to the community.

In conversation with Boyd, she gave insight into the importance of such a successful organisation coming to the UK, telling us that she "was absolutely adamant that we needed to come". She emphasised that their goal with this Welsh store is to bring Sephora's sense of community, creativity, and empowerment to a

new audience in Cardiff. When asked about how she got into the industry, Boyd reveals, "my first beauty role was at L'Oréal", which is where she fell in love with the inclusivity of the beauty industry, labelling it as a "fundamentally happy thing to work in". With the genuine passion and enthusiasm of Boyd, the success of the night is inevitable, promising the Cardiff branch an exciting future.

For students in Cardiff, the arrival of Sephora is both a dream and a danger to budgets – but with up to 15% off using their student discount through Student Beans and Unidays, a 'retail therapy' spree is that much easier to indulge in. Aside from their never-ending collection of luxury names, their 'Sephora Collection' range offers more affordable products that are more student-friendly! For students aspiring for a future in the beauty industry, Boyd leaves us with some words of advice: "do it!", advising students to "apply for different companies, go to brands, go to retailers" as Boyd reassures us it is a "very welcoming industry".

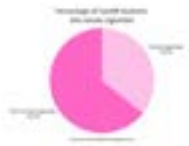
With goodie bags brimming with customer favourites from Olaplex to Paula's Choice, Sephora's Welsh debut left quite the lasting impression. This launch is only a sneak peek of what's to come for their Cardiff store!



Smoking More Common Among Cardiff Students Than Average Population

Seven Standen
Design Deputy

It has been 18 years since Wales introduced a ban on smoking in public places. It's clear how this legislation impacted the public opinion of smoking: while 24% of adults smoked in 2007, it's estimated to be around 13% today. Following this success, the Welsh government aspires for the country to be 'smoke free' by 2030. However, the habit remains popular among young people. A survey of Cardiff University found 36% of students smoke, with 14% of them also using vapes. This is higher than the national average, which may suggest students are more likely to smoke than the average adult. Students fit into the 'cluster' described by Public Health Wales as mostly single with no children, educated and employed, facing less deprivation but with poorer mental health. Their research showed smoking was more common (39%) among this 'cluster'



than other groups of adults. But why is it so prevalent among these particular adults? Students may take up smoking due to mental health problems. An esti-

imated 30% of smokers in the UK have a mental health condition. In a survey of Cardiff students, autism, depression, and self-harm were the most common diagnoses among smokers. Other conditions reported were chronic illness, eating disorders, anxiety, and other disabilities. In recent years, mental health problems have tripled for university students, which could correspond with an increased rate of smoking or vaping.

But it is a chicken and egg situation. It isn't clear whether people start smoking because of ill health or if smokers are more prone to mental health problems. Smoking can cause anxiety, as well as financial and health issues which may worsen someone's wellbeing. There is evidence to show it makes users more vulnerable to mental health problems, particularly depression and schizophrenia. It can also cause pre-existing conditions to progress. Although there is a clear relationship between smoking and mental health, there's no way to prove the cause and effect.

The survey also doesn't have a baseline, as it didn't establish the prevalence of diagnoses in people who didn't smoke. Plenty of people deal with depression without cigarettes or vapes. Similarly, smoking has been associated with poor academic performance. A study in Saudi Arabia found university students have lower

GPA's, higher absenteeism rates, and more academic warnings if they smoke. This may not be applicable in Wales, but other UK studies have shown smoking to be associated with lower educational attainment in secondary schools. It may be people who struggle more at university start smoking as a coping mechanism or there could be a confounding factor. For example, poor overall health could be linked to both smoking and problems in education.

Social factors also have a huge impact on smoking. This is partially why it was banned in public places in 2007, as it being constantly present in people's lives makes them more likely to start.

Professor Graham Moore, Director of Social Sciences at Cardiff University, said: "When you grow up with it, where smoking is the norm, you are much more likely to take it up yourself." Data from Cardiff students supports this, as smokers usually started before attending university, with some quitting and others continuing. Furthermore, all smokers reported that people in their social circle at university shared the habit. They did not have any non-smoking friends. This lends credence to Moore's suggestion that social environment is crucial to whether or not people smoke. While smoking had no impact on whether or not students would befriend

someone, it did make a difference when it came to romantic relationships. A sizable minority of non-smokers (38%) expressed they would be unwilling to date a smoker.

Since Wales introduced Smoke Free Premises Regulations, Cardiff University has made efforts to reduce smoking around campus. Current policy states 'smoking is not permitted in or on any university premises'. However, it is not unusual for smoking to take place in these spaces, particularly outside university buildings. These rules also don't apply to e-cigarettes. Notably, Cardiff students considered vaping to be less harmful to their health than drinking alcohol or smoking cigarettes. This could be related to stricter laws regarding smoking.

While the number of smokers has decreased in the last 18 years, young people still take up the habit, despite being aware of the risks to their health. This could be attributed to the ongoing mental health crisis in the UK, as well as other stressors like the cost of living and struggling at university. Although it is difficult to pin down cause and effect when it comes to smoking, it is unlikely Wales will be smoke free by 2030 without any serious policy changes.

Cardiff Music City: a fortnight of Performance and Creativity

Eve Harris
Spotlight Editor

Cardiff Music City, part of the 70th Anniversary celebrations, brought two weeks of immersive music experiences to the Welsh Capital at the end of October. Over the last fortnight, businesses in Cardiff have worked to "harness the power of music, performance and tech to unite and inspire", bringing a wave of creative and innovative live music and DJ sets to a range of venues throughout the city.

The festival originated in 2019, based around encouraging a resurgence of music in Cardiff, and has since developed into an exciting annual cultural event. So far, it has been widely popular, with 2024's festival including performances from international artists such as Kneecap and Lauryn Hill. The highlights of the 2025 line up included the much anticipated Sŵn weekend. Welsh for 'sound', Sŵn places emerging artists in the spotlight, from both Wales and beyond the borders supporting and

celebrating grassroots music venues throughout Womanby street and the city centre; like Clwb Ifor Bach, Tramshed, the New Moon and Porters.

Having visited Womanby street on Saturday night, the atmosphere was certainly full of life, with both locals and students pouring into the various music venues situated all down the street. The events that took place throughout Music City offered an impressive range of music genres and experiences, reaching across the entire city: from intimate acoustic and jazz performances to experimental electronic acts, incorporating unique sound and creativity throughout Cardiff. Through this approach to music, the performances break down the barriers between the artist and the audience, creating a sense of community and reshaping what the industry means for Cardiff and its local creatives and musicians. More interesting and unusual elements of the festival include late night pop ups in Cardiff Market, with experimental

and electronic DJ sets. Meanwhile, those who prefer a more sophisticated, relaxed evening could enjoy live jazz performances drifting through the Castle Arcade, with 'Maison de Bouef' and 'Gin & Juice' providing a warm vibrant evening of dinner and drinks.

It has provided a space for industry professionals and music fans to come together. With live music, open mic nights and talks, this has encouraged positive interactions across different areas of the creative sector. Elements of the festival such as these emphasise the vital importance of community within the creative industry, as it becomes increasingly challenging to enter. Overall, Cardiff's Music City festival has successfully established an important and celebrated place for music in the Welsh capital, embedding musical culture into the city's everyday life. But the anniversary's celebrations don't end here – the next couple of weeks encompass Cardiff's rich history.

The YOLO Queue – Mayhem or Moral Panic?

Eve Yates
Spotlight Editor

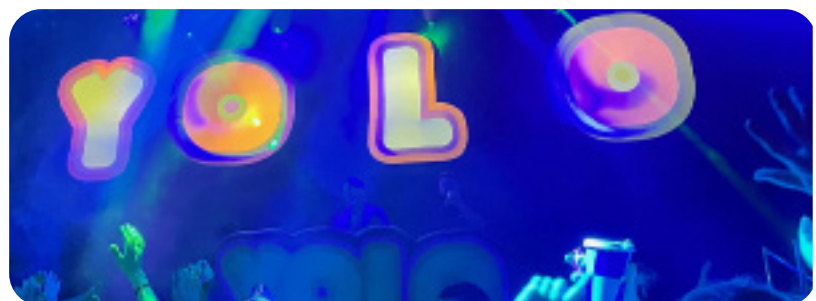
For anyone who is a regular YOLO go-er, or even just enjoys a society social, I'm sure you're aware by now the nightmare that the queue has been as of late. We've all heard the horror stories of hours spent queueing, people frantically running over the Cathays bridge at half-past-seven, and societies who start pre-drinks as early as five p.m. Well, this week I'm putting myself at the forefront of the mayhem to see why the infamous YOLO queue has earned its reputation as the damn to a Wednesday night.

I've been watching the Y Plas Instagram page for the last few weeks from the comfort of my own home, and I was shocked to see that at eight pm, (when YOLO usually opens), the queue was full. So, why is this? Just another moral panic that will hopefully die down within the next few weeks?

Despite the Student Union's best efforts to quell the chaos and warn students, it doesn't seem to be working. The Student's Union keeps encouraging people to come

to YOLO later in the evening when the queue is shorter, but this doesn't seem to be persuading many people. Maybe this is because of the addition of the ten pm toll.

On Wednesday, alongside most other societies, I started drinking at six, to head down to YOLO at six forty-five. I was expecting chaos in Cathays, with hordes of togas and cowgirls frantically running to the Student Union, but to my pleasant surprise, at five-past-seven, there was barely a queue. However, this did not last long - in the space of ten minutes, a large line had formed behind me



that reached the end of the SU, and by half past, the queue was as expected; horrendous.

By eight, the student union was full. The regular weekly announcement was dropped on the Y Plas Instagram page, and the ever growing line outside the SU was at a standstill. Inside, queues for the bars were around fifteen minutes, and the line for the toilets? No better.

As far as I can recall, in my first year of university I don't remember the queue for YOLO being this much of a talking point. Have more first year students discovered YOLO and are choosing to go every Wednesday? Or, have more people got that dreaded nine am on a Thursday and are choosing an earlier night out?

If you want my advice as someone who has three years of YOLO experience under their belt; hold off on those tickets for a few weeks. If you want to do what I did, and pre-drink at six to get in the queue for seven-fifteen; then go for it! There are benefits to this;

by eleven I had secured a pizza from MAMA's and was tucked up in bed. But, if you want to avoid

the stress and hours of queues of YOLO, come back in a few weeks. As term progresses and more deadlines start coming round, less and less people will be going out every Wednesday. Or try going in reading week, as fewer students will be in Cardiff and you can join the queue at a reasonable time. But for now, I think I'll spend my Wednesday nights watching *Celebrity Traitors*.

A Hollywood Without Stars

The film industry needs AI rules now

Abby Neve
Contributor

Have you heard of Tilly Norwood, the newest face in Hollywood? Her unique selling point is that she is not real: nothing more than AI generated code. You'd be forgiven for thinking differently, as her beautifully waved hair is just dishevelled enough to look human, and her dimpled cheeks give her a warmth not associated with ChatGPT.

She made her acting debut in a comedy sketch called AI Commissioner. Actors across Hollywood responded with a mix of outrage and fear, and rightfully so. *Black Mirror* fans may remember Hotel Reverie, a story about an actress who is plunged into a simulation full of AI versions of previously dead actors. While heavily dramatised, the idea of films being created using entirely AI versions of real actors no longer seems like a far-fetched sci-fi episode.

So should we be worried? AI actors have already been used in films for smaller roles, like younger versions of actors (see Will Smith in *Gemini Man*), stunt doubles (see *Fast and Furious*) as well as background characters (see *Love, Death, & Robots*). When used in these ways, AI can be a useful storytelling tool. After all, you can't go back in time and shoot scenes with younger versions of actors in real life, so, AI brings about new possibilities.

But could they replace actors entirely? Currently, AI actors are not cheaper to use in film than real actors, but this could change. Actors

need only worry when companies can make more money without them, which could eventually be the reality.

The film world is beginning to respond, perhaps too slowly. California has just passed a new law (AB 1836), which means that actors must give their consent for their likeness to be used in film, requiring contracts to include clear descriptions of the intended use of the performer's likeness. Another law (AB2602) also protects the dead – actors' likeness cannot be used if they are not alive to give consent. California is not the first place to enforce restrictions on AI using people's likeness, but it is the first to

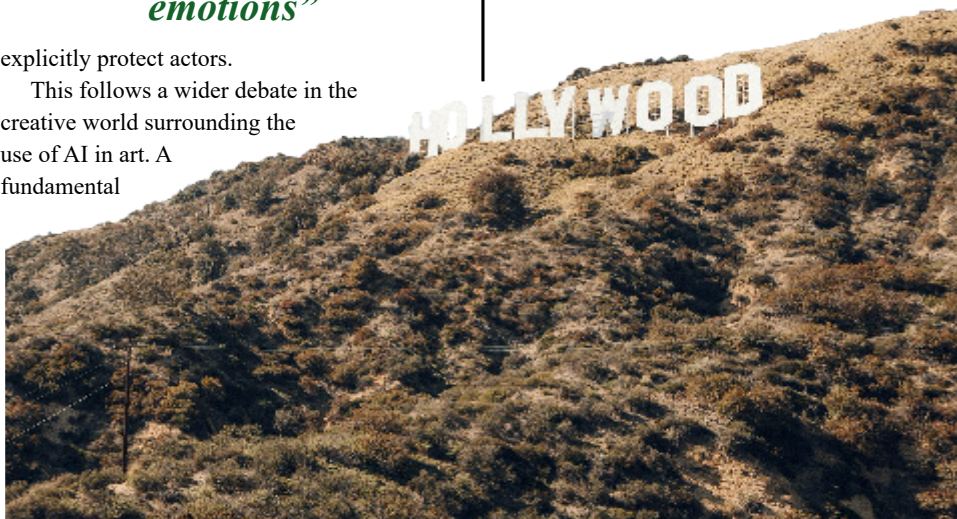
"We want real people with the full range of human emotions"

explicitly protect actors.

This follows a wider debate in the creative world surrounding the use of AI in art. A fundamental

aspect of what makes us human is our ability to create. Rather than using AI as a tool in art, as it has before by artists such as Refik Anadol or Anna Ridler, actors fear that AI could replace them in the film world.

But, California offers a glimmer of hope in the film industry. These new laws reflect a truth: that we humans will always prioritise human art. California's new laws show that we don't want a film industry full of Tilly Norwoods. We want real people with the full range of human emotions in our films. While it doesn't seem likely that we are at risk of losing this any time soon, the rest of the world needs to match the speed of technology and legislate against the unauthorised use of actors' likenesses in films.



'King Kylie' is a Kringey Cash Grab

Helen Turnbull
Opinion Editor

Kylie Jenner's recent collaboration with Terror Jr marks the official launch of her music career. Donning the identity 'King Kylie', a nod to her alter ego from 2016, her voice features on the track 'Fourth Strike'. Harking back to almost 10 years ago, the experimental pop group's track with the reality TV star is a continuation of an ad campaign for Kylie Cosmetics, where their song 'Three Strikes' featured. Alongside this song release, Kylie Jenner announced that the 'King Kylie' collection of cosmetics will launch on October 18th. Bearing that in mind, Terror Jr, an American pop duo formed in 2016, started the group as a 'social experiment'. So how far is this break into music a massive PR stunt? Can celebrities easily cross into music success just down to the gravitas of their name?

The general consensus on social media is that Kylie's feature is overpowered by autotune, as well as heavy criticism of the uninspiring lyricism: "One strike, two strike, let me get the mood right / I just wanna tell you, 'I'm sorry' / Touch me, baby, tell me I'm your baby / Write your name all over my body / Cross the line, I might do it again (Oh) / Do it on purpose just to see how it ends."

The *Keeping up with the Kardashians* star ends her verse by whispering, "King Kylie", sealing the deal for me that this is merely advertisement for her brand.

But should celebrities stick with what they're good at instead of vying to make more money and gain larger exposure? Regardless of your personal opinion on Kylie Jenner, she has gained huge traction about her music release, with opinions split: some siding with a celebration of the nostalgic 2016 trends and music, vs others arguing the tacky and unsuccessful attempt to stay relevant.

This attempt by celebrities to vie for relevance via musical endeavours has been seen before, even by Jenner's sister, Kim Kardashian.

In 2011, Kim Kardashian released 'Jam (Turn It Up)' and received huge criticism. Jim Farber, writing for the *Daily News*, called the song a "dead-brained piece of generic dance music, without a single distinguishing feature,". Comparing this to Kylie's song 'Fourth Strike', I'm inclined to echo the same criticism.

Addison Rae's transition into music has been met with mixed reviews, but perhaps a more positive reception. Rae's debut single 'Obsessed', to me is undeniably ultra-processed, sounding hugely generic and was panned by critics. However, her recent single 'Diet Pepsi', was well-received and has over 500 million streams on Spotify. There is proof that the transition can be done well, but I'm inclined to describe Kylie Jenner's music venture, as a flop. Yet if this venture was all for publicity, I can't deny that it has worked. Here I am contributing to her publicity as I write this piece.

So, can 'Fourth Strike' be deemed as a music flop or a clever PR stunt? Up to you to decide your opinion, but I know where I stand.

'Rip-off Degrees' aren't Less Valuable

Bethan Jones
Opinion Editor

The annual Tory conference has whipped around in a flash. Speeches were filled with the usual anti-immigration, anti-woke, anti-welfare rhetoric that curates the party's current image, with Kemi Badenoch at the face of it all. Once she peeled herself away from discussing stamp duty and inheritance tax, she couldn't help diving into one of the Tories' current obsessions: rip-off degrees.

This discourse has loomed over the Conservative Party since last year's General Election. It begs the question: why do we always look down on the arts and humanities? This long fixation on STEM and apprenticeships pumping out money-making careerists is a common belief not just held by politicians, but society as a whole.

I am reminded of Neil Perry, a young student in *Dead Poets Society*. His father's continuous pressure for him to attend medical school, despite Mr Keating's encouragement for him to follow his dream for acting, eventually drives him to suicide.

Now, let's not get ahead of ourselves. This isn't the extreme that Badenoch is advocating for. But the narrative is hauntingly familiar: those who pursue the arts are to be punished, deeming them less valuable and 'easier' in comparison to their scientific sisters.

I have noticed a phenomenon in education. When women start becoming the majority in a subject, people begin to regard it as 'easier' to study. Take the physical sciences. While more women are entering fields like biology and chemistry, physics remains male-dominated and is increasingly framed as a more prestigious degree. That's not even touching on how psychology has long been dismissed as a true science – a field now made up of over 80% women. Badenoch's praise of these male-dominated disciplines only feeds into the patriarchal notion that men's work holds value, whilst women's contributions are yet again, sidelined.

"Badenoch continues to push the idea students should be punished for prioritising passion over profit"

This bash on 'low-earning' degrees is an attempt to divert the public's eye to the real problem: funding. The limitations on international students' visas have led to their decline, causing a significant cut to university income. Slashes to research, driven by the loss of EU funding, is another way the Conserva-

tives have undermined these institutions. While Badenoch was quick to criticise the £7 billion pounds of unpaid student loans that get written off annually, she failed to mention that the 2015 Conservative government is to blame. They replaced maintenance grants with high-interest loans that students can rarely pay off. Still, Badenoch continues to push the idea that students should be punished for prioritising passion over profit – as if valuing anything over money is a problem to be fixed. '...Medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for'. The famous words from Mr Keating echoes in our heads. In a time where anti-intellectualism is on the rise, creative and critical thinking are not a luxury – they're a necessity. Yet, once again, the Conservatives turn up their noses.



Images: Unsplash.

Run Like Everybody's Watching

Nancy Roberts
Opinion Editor

I trained for a half marathon in the age of Strava. The performance anxiety was almost as exhausting as the race itself. According to Strava's 2024 trend report, roughly one in six of their 153 million users has completed a half marathon. Being the attention seeker I am, I decided this would make a sensational personal arc. For years my relationship with running was limited to being late for lessons or the random urge at 2am after a night out. Then, a friend dragged me out for a reluctant jog, and I realised I needed to change that.

Like many in their early twenties, I was seeking direction and discipline. I wanted something convenient and 'easy' to keep up my fitness, and set myself a goal.

But, modern running is no longer just putting one foot in front of the other. The constant documentation on TikTok and Strava has created a frenzied, competitive culture. A fancy sports watch and the newest trainers is the adopted uniform.

As a newbie, I felt intimidated. The pressures of social media made it feel like

a performance, and I was about to go on stage.

When the day came round to the half, my lack of training felt obvious, and I felt like an imposter. But at least I looked the part, kitted out with a fancy new sports watch and the latest running trainers.

The adrenaline of the day had me in good spirits and got me over the start line. I took on the Jeffing method, a run-walk technique. This got me up the hills, especially Roath Park.

At times, it felt impossible, I heavily regretted my decision to sign up, and thought I possibly should have trained more. But as the distance got shorter, I no longer cared about a time, instead helping myself to the free Haribos and high fiving my friends and family who came to cheer me on. In the end, over 24,600 people completed the Cardiff Half Marathon, and I was one of them. I ran (Jeffed) with the charity, Cancer Research Wales, who were an amazing and supportive community.

Would I have done it if I couldn't tell anyone? Honestly, probably not. But I'm glad I did. If you're thinking about it: walk, run, or Jeff your way through. My new watch and trainers didn't even matter once I was running. What I found most exciting about the day wasn't my mediocre time or running credentials, but the atmosphere and energy from everyone lining the streets. After all, I only signed up for the attention.

Accentism Shouldn't be Acceptable

Oliver Hanlon
Opinion Editor

In modern Britain, all other prejudices are rightly shunned, but accentism is allowed to rear its ugly head far too often; it is ingrained in our institutions and an accepted part of life here, but why should it be? From a young age, many are taught that there is a right way of speaking and that if they do not adhere to these standards, their prospects in life will be severely limited. Honestly, this is not entirely untrue; potential employers are allowed to discriminate against you based on your accent, and many do. Accents are an essential part of identity, being a marker of where you're from first and foremost, so for an employer to extract negative stereotypes from your accent is flat-out discrimination and an unjust way to assess someone's character and credibility. So why are we so accepting of accentism?

Negative attitudes towards accents that deviate from the standard (Generic Southern English) are instilled in children from an early age in education, when they are corrected on their accents and internalise that there is a correct way of speaking, and that they cannot attain this. Many of these children can be understood perfectly; it is not an issue of intelligibility but rather preparation for the real world, where 'non-standard accents', a dog whistle usually meaning traditionally working class accents, will be mocked, ridiculed, and dismissed. A study this year from the University of Cambridge found that "Brits still

associate working-class accents with criminal behaviour", those accents mainly being Scouse and Brummie, which are particular favourites for ridicule in Britain. I'm sure many would have heard the jokey stat that people would prefer to have chlamydia rather than a Brummie accent. A 2022 study by the Sutton Trust found that 35% of university students were self-conscious about their accents, that 41% of Northern students were worried their accent might affect their future success, and 29% of senior managers from working-class families have been mocked for their accent at work. The data backs it up. Accentism is more than playful banter; it's creating a lot of self-doubt in some very talented people and also actively preventing those talented people from realising their potential in some cases.

I'm in no way arguing that people should not be able to playfully joke about their friends' accents, but instead that more needs to be done to fight the attitudes that underpin accentism in our institutions. Children should not be told that the way they speak is wrong, as it has been shown to alienate them from the classroom. Employers should not be using accent as a justification to discard applicants who are qualified and a good fit for a role, and students should not be made to feel unwelcome or stupid in university by their peers or teachers based on the stereotypes of where they're from. As a nation, we need to stop buying into the tribalism that sets us against one another because in another town they say 'bath' instead of 'batht'.

Hot Topic of The Month

The Downfall of Taylor Swift

Miriam Southall
Head of Opinion

“Everybody's so punk on the internet. Everyone's unbothered 'til they're not. Every joke's just trolling and memes.” To me, this sounded like poetry written by some angsty Gen Z teenager. Shockingly, the real author is supposedly a great songwriter and lyricist, Taylor Swift. This lyric features on the track Eldest Daughter from her controversial album, *The Life of a Showgirl*. The album caused a frenzy of debate and disagreement. Musicians often face a backlash with new music, so what makes this album different?

Swift's 12th studio album *The Life of a Showgirl* was released on 3rd October. The event was deemed so momentous, cinemas hosted official release parties showing exclusive performances, behind-the-scenes footage, and more. This skilfully marketed global event shows how popular she is as a business and brand, not merely a celebrity pop star. However, the initial thrill of the album's release is wearing thin as listeners have noticed problems scattered throughout the album.

Lyricaly, I found it exceedingly challenging, making me cringe during many tracks and some I couldn't even finish. Many fans described similar feelings, especially with the tracks “CANCELLED” and “Wood”, containing cringeworthy lyrics and Gen Z slang phrases. This contrasts with Swift's previous albums, which often contained poetic storytelling through lyrics. Indeed, it seems the latest lyrical themes are out of character for Swift, disingenuous and disconnected from the real world, focusing on celebrity status and her NFL fiancé. I and others felt her showgirl character was inauthentic and just didn't work. We can compare this showgirl character to the character Pamela Ander-

son plays in the film *The Last Showgirl*. This highlights themes of aging, self-worth, and motherhood. The contrast between glamour and rawness demonstrated the superficial nature of Swift's album for me: a showgirl characterised as having expensive, perfect clothing and makeup in videos and photoshoots.

Swift is losing her originality and attempted to copy other female artists. Sexuality is a theme in this album not witnessed in her previous work. The lyrics are crass instead of clever. Following recent collaborations with Sabrina Carpenter, she has seemingly copied her focus on sex appeal. Perhaps Swift's team saw how much attention Carpenter got and decided to imitate accordingly. Swift is attempting to emulate Lana Del Rey's whimsical yet troubled character in the aesthetic of the album. There are clear similarities between melodies in this album and songs by Lana Del Rey. The Fate of Ophelia's melody and pace is uncommonly similar to Del Rey's song Text Book. Also, in the track Father Figure, the line “Mistake my kindness for weakness” is a near copy of a line from Del Rey's song Mariners Apartments Complex, “They mistook my kindness for weakness”. It causes a loss of identity for Swift by seemingly copying others to garner more devotees. Many Swifties believe through her music they knew her on a personal level. This shift in tone and direction is creating a separation, a new Swift that they do not recognise.

What happens when an idol like Swift falls from their podium? We have seen division amongst Swifties with some unable to defend her whereas others do so strongly. This division demonstrates the current state of music and other creative industries where copying seems to be rife in the race to stay relevant, sacrificing originality. No matter how hard Swift tries, her showgirl character seems out of touch

Not Your Daddy's Capitalism

James Kitterhing
Opinion Editor

We live in a world which bears little resemblance to that of our parents. The rules dictating our lives shifted subtly as the 20th century transitioned into the 21st. Now, we find ourselves in a new social paradigm where two parallel economies exist.

The more recognisable of the two economies is traditional capitalism; which is still dictated by rules of scarcity, labour, supply, and consumption. Then, there is another economy taking over the digital space. Online, products never degrade and the supply of content vastly outpaces the demand. The digital economy is now influencing its counterpart and distorting how the regular economy would ordinarily work.

In the traditional capitalist economy, the values of goods and currencies are drawn from human labour. Under capitalism, control of production comes from power over human labour. In the digital economy, human labour is worth next to nothing. The products could remain on the internet forever and, for the first time in human history, production vastly outpaces any possible rate of consumption.

To add to this devaluation, we have AI systems able to generate content faster than any human. The integration of large language models, like ChatGPT,

across the internet exemplifies the process of an attention economy. AI is exorbitantly expensive and often met with opposition when added to pre-existing platforms. Despite this, we continue to see it pop up everywhere because the goal of AI integration is not consumer satisfaction or profit. Instead, AI's role in this new economy is reducing the mental burden of individuals so they can waste their attention on something else.

Human labour does not dictate value or wield substantial power in the digital economy. Instead, an individual's attention and ability to consume have become the point on which power hinges. To be powerful in the modern world is to command an audience and hold their finite attention. The chief concern in our lives is no longer where and how we get our material things; instead, we are concerned about which material things we should spend our time with.

Just as advancements in farming technology allowed for the transition from feudal sustenance-farming to capitalist mass production. Advancements in mass production and communication technology have freed portions of the population from industrial production. Consequently, we see the rise of a new class who acquire their fortunes through exploiting the new value of attention.

However, this new economy is not a departure from capitalism but an evolution of it. Having domi-

Does *The Traitors* promote immoral behaviour?

Hannah Wearing
Contributor

With the much-anticipated new *Celebrity Traitors* series hitting our screens after the show's major success with previous seasons, is it time to start questioning the ideas that lie within the show's premise?

The first series of *The Traitors* premiered on UK screens in November 2022, and since then has had two seasons, with everyday people from different backgrounds competing for the prize fund. Following the great success of those seasons and with our attention grabbed, a celebrity season is currently being watched by millions as they battle it out to uncover the 'traitors', all in aid of giving the prize fund to their respective charities. The series, presented by Claudia Winkleman, is situated in the Scottish Highlands and takes us on a journey along with the contestants, as they try and decipher the 'faithful' from the 'traitors' amongst the group.

The Traitors is a BBC TV series that's deemed as 'reality TV', although different in its format to programmes like *Love Island* or *The Circle*. So, how is it different? Well, instead of attempting to create love matches to win a prize fund, there is a puzzle to solve where human skills like observation and communication are tested in a high-pressure environment. But to what extent? A fundamental aspect of the show is for the 'traitors' to lie, and for uncertainty between the two sides, indeed amongst the 'faithful' themselves, to be accepted. In this way, the show rewards duplicity and promotes the undermining of trust for its success and the audience's enjoyment. Is this an appropriate, or indeed moral, message?

"Should the negative parts of humanity be displayed?"

Morality is defined as the principles regarding a distinction between right and wrong, or good and bad behaviour. Is that at play in the series? Do we see a clear distinction between good and

bad? Many believe that there is a complex imbalance between the two and although that is the nature of the game, there is also a human discomfort that comes with it. As humans, we aren't designed to be immoral, which could be why many contestants visibly struggle with the challenges of the show. The show's structure promotes behaviour that many would be uncomfortable with, as lies and manipulation aren't human skills that we hold dear.

In a game that explores human psychology, should the negative parts of humanity be displayed so obviously? Or is it just enjoyable TV? Many will argue that in the era of streaming services, it's refreshing to have such a thrilling TV programme in the BBC's primetime 9pm slot. It's therefore no surprise that the show is so popular, especially with its perfectly crafted celebrity line-up that draws in all age groups. However, does the show promote the wrong ideas to its audience? The idea that there's a need to lie, manipulate and deceit to win, is not a positive outlook to broadcast or for audiences to absorb. But, is it all okay under the acknowledgement that "It's just a game"?

Fans are becoming too parasocial

Lucy Haines
Contributor

On Friday 10th, artist Billie Eilish was attacked by an alleged fan during the Miami show of her North America Tour, social media videos showed a man violently yanking the singer against the barricade, before being pushed off and removed by security. Despite the outrage of the surrounding crowd, Eilish only glared at the assailant before continuing the performance, suggesting that unfortunately such events have become the norm for the singer. Currently boasting over 110 billion Spotify followers, Eilish is known for her emotional lyricism and openness about personal struggles, allowing her fans to connect with and relate to her music. However, like many celebrities with dedicated fanbases, attention from some supporters seems to stem increasingly from unhealthy, parasocial attachments.

The term 'parasocial relationships' has been a hot topic in recent years, noticeably since the Covid-19 lockdowns, which saw dramatic increases in social media usage. Whether expressing their appreciation for fans, or sharing information about their lives and future projects, social media has become the primary place for celebrities and fans to interact directly, and for fans across the globe to come together in idolisation. Even when celebrities choose to stay offline, platforms function as tools of surveillance, circulating gossip and invasive speculation about celebrities' personal lives and relationships.

But as society grows dangerously reliant on social media and privacy becomes a

luxury, the lines between reality and the digital world start to blur, leading some fans to forget the celebrities they idolise are unaware of their individual existence.

More than ever, many fans are appearing to misinterpret appreciation and recognition as genuine friendship. But, is social media entirely to blame for facilitating parasocial behaviour? Not when stereotypes like the hysterical fangirl and the crazed stalker have existed in popular culture long before its invention. Titles like Stephen King's *Misery* in 1987, helped popularise the portrayal of the unhinged fangirl, showing the violent consequences of one-sided attachment. Recent media like 2023 series *Swarm* also explores the dangers of toxic stan culture, through a grieving fan whose loneliness makes her dangerously overprotective of her favourite artist. While social media has undeniably changed the landscape of fan culture, isolation, insecurity and a lack of healthy relationships with our peers can also foster unhealthy obsessions with celebrities.

Are fans becoming too attached to celebrities? The obvious answer is yes, though arguably this statement has been true for

decades; after all, the key characteristic of a parasocial relationship is that attachment is one-sided and needs no reciprocation. Put simply, history has proved that many fans are perfectly capable of forming obsessions without social media's influence.

While Eilish's assault in Miami shows the more sinister side of fan devotion, other experiences perhaps reflect the deep-seated desire of humanity for meaningful connection. While appreciation of a celebrity certainly inspires us, it is essential to remember that

We need a break from biopics

Ffion Perkins
Opinion Editor

In the past few years, many notable musician biopics have hit the big screen. From Elvis to Amy Winehouse, singers both past and present are getting their stories produced. In early 2024, director Sam Mendes announced his plans to direct four separate but interconnected films on each of the Beatles, which will all be released on the same day. As a self-proclaimed Beatles connoisseur, I can only wonder - are 4 known Hollywood actors and a multimillion-dollar budget going to encapsulate the story of four working class boys from Liverpool's rise to success? Biopics made of musicians have had their fair share of criticisms - *Bohemian Rhapsody*, the biopic of iconic band Queen was said to have 'played it safe' in the events covered, and placed too much focus on Freddie Mercury himself, rather than the whole band (though the casting was exceptional). Whereas last year's, *'Back to Black'*, Amy Winehouse biopic was targeted as too superficial and lacking the depth and nuance to properly reflect Amy and her legacy. So, the question stands - is Mendes going to play it safe and give us a watered-down version of the Fab Four? Or will he take a risk and give us the raw authenticity and controversy that made the band so timeless in the first place?

Making movies about notable musicians is a risk in itself, never mind four who are so universally known and have already been portrayed and referenced in film and television. There is a particular sensitivity that must be had when dealing with real people and their lived experiences - ranging from drug misuse to adultery, and the inevitable gun violence that led to the murder of John Lennon. It will

be interesting to see how Mendes can illustrate these delicate moments alongside the more joyful aspects of the Beatles' career - if he touches on them at all, that is.

The Beatles and their legacy have lasted generations since their formation in 1960. Despite only being together as a band for a decade, their music and their artistry have inspired generations of performers and formulated pop culture that is still around today. Though it does make sense to capture this integral part of the music industry in a biopic-style movie (or in this case, four), I am curious as to how well a modern-day production will portray the distinctiveness that was Beatlemania in the 1960s, and even more to how a Gen-Z audience will receive it.

The creation of musician biopics in the past decade has skyrocketed with upcoming features, including Michael Jackson and Bruce Springsteen alone debuting in the upcoming months. In many ways it can be seen as a 'Hollywood cop-out' - why bother coming up with original ideas when you can make a film about a dead singer?

Not only are the excessive releases of these films creatively risky, but it also sets an interesting precedent for the future of moviemaking and whether this is an attempt at making a tribute to musical icons, or a lazy cash-grab that requires no real thinking. Ies with some not being able to continue to defend her whereas others defend her strongly. This division can be compared to everyday life in politics, a divide over a political figure or view. It also demonstrates the state of the music and other creative industries where copying seems to be rife in the race to stay relevant, sacrificing originality. No matter how hard Swift tries, this character of the showgirl seems out of touch and inauthentic, perhaps a mirror of people in power today.



Myfyrwyr Caerdydd dan bwysau i ddod o hyd i dŷ yn gynt nag erioed

Elen Morlais Williams
Golygydd Taf-Od

Mae myfyrwyr yng Nghaerdydd yn teimlo pwysau cynyddol i sicrhau llety ar gyfer y flwyddyn academaidd nesaf. Er bod y broses chwilio am dai fel arfer yn dechrau tua mis Tachwedd, eleni mae llawer wedi dechrau ymweld â thai ac arwyddo cy-tundebau yn barod.

Mae nifer o fyfyrwyr wedi mynegi pryder bod y broses o chwilio am dai yn digwydd yn gynt bob blwyddyn, gan roi straen ychwanegol ar fyfyrwyr ar ddechrau'r flwyddyn academaidd. Un o'r rheiny sy'n poeni yw Gwenno Davies, myfyrwraig yn y drydedd flwyddyn. Dywedodd "Blynnyddoedd o'r blaen, fi 'di teimlo pwyse i sorto tai mas yn rili gynnar yn y flwyddyn, tua diwedd Hydref neu dechrau mis Tachwedd.

Mae e'n lot i feddwl amdano pan ti'n trio setlo mewn i'r cwrw. Fi'n teimlo fel ma pobl yn sortio tai yn gynt bob blwyddyn. Ma' chwaer fi yn ei blwyddyn gyntaf a ma' hi wedi sortio fe yn barod a dim ond jyst 'di dechrau yn y brifysgol 'ma hi."

Mae Gwenno hefyd yn sôn am y pwysau i wneud penderfyniadau cyflym: "Yn y flwyddyn gyntaf, ti'n ganol setlo mewn, ti'n dechre dod i wybod pwy yw dy ffrindie di a'r peth nesaf ti'n gorfod penderfynu pwy ti am fwy 'da am y flwyddyn nesaf." Mae'r galw am dai myfyrwyr yng Nghaerdydd felly yn cynyddu'n gyson gydag asiantau rhentu yn marchnata tai yn gynt bob blwyddyn gan gyfrannu at ymdeimlad o frys ymhlith myfyrwyr sy'n ofni cael eu gadael gyda dewisiadau

cyfyngedig.

Meddai Anest Cunliffe, myfyrwraig yn y drydedd flwyddyn: "Nathon ni arwyddo contract tŷ blwyddyn dau ym mis Tachwedd a tŷ blwyddyn tri tua diwedd mis Hydref achos o'n i'n pryderu byddai'r tai yn mynd yn gyflym. Ma' fe'n lot o straen achos ti ddim yn siŵr os wyt ti'n gwneud y penderfyniad iawn a does dim amser 'da ti i feddwl am y peth. Odd landlord ni 'di gofyn i ni neud penderfyniad erbyn yr 8fed o Hydref er nad oedden ni wedi byw yn y tŷ am fis eto! Fi'n credu bo' landlords yn rhyddhau tai yn gynt bob blwyddyn a bydde fe yn well tase hwn yn digwydd yn hwyrach yn y flwyddyn fel bod gan fyfyrwyr amser i ystyried pwy maen nhw am fyw gyda a ble."



Hannah Williams
Pennaeth Taf-Od

Addewid Plaid Cymru i athrawon dan hyfforddiant yn cynnig gobaith i fyfyrwyr

Yn gynharach fis yma, cyhoeddodd Plaid Cymru gynllun i dalu hyd at £30,000 i athrawon dan hyfforddiant, os daw buddugoliaeth i'r blaid yn yr Etholiad Seneddol nesaf.

Cafodd y cynllun ei gyhoeddi yng nghynhadledd flynyddol Plaid Cymru ar y 10fed o Hydref, gan y llefarydd addysg, Cefin Campbell. Dywedodd y byddai Llywodraeth Plaid Cymru yn cynnig "cymhellion teg a chystadleuol i ddenu a chadw athrawon" yng Nghymru. Eu bwriad fyddai cynnig taliadau cyfatebol i'r rheini sydd ar gael yn Lloegr erbyn 2030.

"Gweithio oriau athrawon, heb eu tâl"

Byddent yn canolbwyntio ar athrawon pynciau blaenoriaeth a'r rheini sy'n addysgu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, ar yr amod eu bod yn aros i weithio yng Nghymru am 5 mlynedd wedi eu cyfnod prawf.

Daw'r cyhoeddiad mewn cyfnod pan fo llawer o fyfyrwyr y brifysgol yn ystyried eu camau nesaf, wrth iddynt baratoi at raddio ymhen rhai

blynnyddoedd. I rai, mae'r polisi hwn yn un a allai ddylanwadu'n fawr ar eu penderfyniadau.

Mae Mari Jones, myfyrwraig yn ei thrydedd flwyddyn, yn ystyried dysgu fel gyrfa, ac wrth ymateb i gynllun Plaid Cymru, meddai, "Mi fyddai tâl cymhelliant fel hyn yn denu mi i'r yrfa ac yn gorbwyso unrhyw anfanteision ac amheuan eraill."

Dywedodd, wrth hyfforddi "rhaid gweithio oriau athrawon, heb eu tâl. Dwi'n nabod myfyrwyr sydd wedi gweld y flwyddyn yn anodd iawn yn enwedig yn ariannol. Rydw i'n siŵr byddai'r tâl cymhelliant yn help mawr i fyfyrwyr y dyfodol i osgoi'r gofid ariannol hwn."

Hefyd yn ystyried hyfforddi fel athro, y mae Teifi Mead, myfyriwr ei ail flwyddyn. Dywedodd, "Byddai'r arian yn help mawr o ran talu am drafnidiaeth i'r gwaith ac i'r gwahanol leo-liadau swydd y mae athrawon angen eu gwneud wrth hyfforddi."

"Mae'r ffaith bod y taliadau ddim yn gyfwerth â Lloegr yn y lle cyntaf yn rhywbeth ofnadwy. Os ydy Llywodraeth Cymru rili am weithredu dros y Cymry, dylse bod canfasio a sicrhau hafalrwydd rhwng taliadau athrawon Cymru a Lloegr yn flaenoriaeth. Dim esgus."

Ychwanegodd, "Mae athrawon a'r byd addysg yn sector sydd ddim wedi cael digon o gymorth am ddegawdau yng Nghymru, ac i fod yn onest mae'r dyfodol yn edrych yn un tywyll i athrawon

Yn ôl gwefan Undeb Myfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd, mae'r farchnad rhentu breifat fel arfer yn hysbysebu tai ar gyfer y flwyddyn academaidd nesaf o gwmpas diwedd Hydref. Maent yn rhybuddio y gallai'r opsiynau fod yn fwy cyfyngedig os bydd myfyrwyr yn aros yn rhy hir, ond maent yn awgrymu i gymryd amser i wneud penderfyniadau.

Serch hynny, er gwaethaf cyngor yr Undeb i gymryd amser cyn arwyddo, mae'r sefyllfa'n parhau i roi pwysau ar fyfyrwyr, gyda llawer eisoes wedi dechrau chwilio am dai ar gyfer y flwyddyn nesaf. Mae'r pwysau hwn felly yn codi pryderon am les myfyrwyr, yn enwedig yn ystod cyfnod cynnar yn y flwyddyn academaidd. Wrth i dai ymddangos ar y farchnad yn gynt ac yn gynt bob blwyddyn, mae'n werth ystyried a yw'r system bresennol wir yn gweithio er budd y myfyrwyr.

o dan y blaid Lafur."

O dan y Llywodraeth Lafur bresennol, mae athrawon pynciau blaenoriaeth yng Nghymru yn gymwys i dderbyn £15,000 mewn grantiau. Ond bydd Llywodraeth newydd yn cael ei hethol fis Mai nesaf, ac mae'r arolygon barn diweddaraf yn awgrymu mai Plaid Cymru sydd ar y blaen o ran bwriadau pleidleisio. Byddai potensial i gynllun y blaid ddyblu swm y grantiau presennol sydd ar gael i athrawon dan hyfforddiant.

"Methiant Llafur i gael hyd yn oed y pethau sylfaenol yn iawn"

Cyhoeddodd Cefin Campbell y byddai Llywodraeth Plaid Cymru hefyd yn cymryd camau allweddol eraill i adfer safonau addysg yng Nghymru, yn dilyn yr hyn a ddisgrifiodd ef fel "methiant Llafur i gael hyd yn oed y pethau sylfaenol yn iawn". Mae'r rhain yn cynnwys cyflwyno cynllun llythrennedd a rhifedd, cynnwys llyfrgell ym mhob ysgol gynradd a chynnwys darllen drwy gydol y cwricwlwm.

Yn sicr, bydd Etholiad Seneddol 2026 yn dyngedfennol i benderfyniad nifer o fyfyrwyr i fentro i'r sector addysg, ac i ddyfodol y sector yn gyffredinol.

Diwrnod Rhyngwladol Iechyd Meddwl

Ela Rhys
Golygydd Taf-Od

Sut mae Myfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd yn mynd ati i warchod eu hiechyd meddwl?

Ar ddydd Gwener y 10fed o Hydref roedd hi'n ddiwrnod Iechyd Meddwl y Byd – diwrnod rhyngwladol i godi ymwybyddiaeth am gyflyrau iechyd meddwl amrywiol ac i hyrwyddo pwysigrwydd gofalu am ein hiechyd meddwl ein hunain. Pob blwyddyn, mae thema'n cael ei benodi ac eleni cafodd y sylw ei hoelio ar 'fynediad i wasanaethau iechyd meddwl yn ystod argyfyngau a thrychinebau.'

Mae ffyrdd amrywiol o ofalu am ein hiechyd meddwl ond, beth mae myfyrwyr y Brifysgol yn ei wneud er mwyn sicrhau eu bod yn blaenoriaethu eu hiechyd meddwl eu hunain? Dyma beth oedd gan rhai o'n myfyrwyr i'w ddweud:

"Rwy'n hoff o iawn o chwarae pêl rwyd ac mae cael y cyfle i wneud hynny sawl gwaith yn ystod yr wythnos yn un o'r prif bethau rwy'n blaenoriaethu er mwyn sicrhau fy mod i'n

gwarchod fy iechyd meddwl. Rwy'n aelod o dîm Cymric ac yn hyfforddi a chwarae gyda nhw dwy waith yr wythnos a hefyd yn rhan o dîm y Gym-Gym. Mae'r elfen gystadleuol a chorfforol heb os yn un o'r prif ffactorau pam fod hyn yn fuddiol i'm iechyd meddwl gan fy mod i'n cael y cyfle i ffocysu ar rywbeth y tu hwnt i astudiaethau'r brifysgol. Mae pa mor gymdeithasol yw'r ddau dîm hefyd yn sicr yn fuddiol gan 'mod i nid yn unig yn cael y cyfle i sgwrsio'n gyffredinol gyda sawl un ond mae cael trafod un o'm prif ddiddordebau yn fodd o gynnal iechyd meddwl iachus. Buaswn i'n annog unrhyw un waeth beth yw eich gallu corfforol i fynd ati i gwblhau oleiaf un gweithgaredd ymarferol mewn wythnos, mae wir yn gwneud byd o wahaniaeth."

"Mae rhywbeth mor syml â threfnu i fynd

"Mae dal i fyny a rhoi'r byd yn ei le gyda ffrind yn ffordd syml ond effeithiol"

am baned a sgwrs gyda ffrind yn rhywbeth yr

wyf i'n ceisio blaenoriaethu o fewn fy wythnos. Er bod bywyd y brifysgol yn wych, gall fod yn anodd ymdopi gyda'r ffordd o fyw, y llwyth gwaith a bywyd mewn dinas yn gyffredinol o bryd i'w gilydd. Dyna pam felly fod sicrhau awr neu ddwy boed ynghanol yr wythnos neu ar benwythnosau i ddal i fyny a rhoi'r byd yn ei le gyda ffrind yn ffordd syml ond effeithiol o ofalu am fy iechyd meddwl." - Lili Gray.

"Ers fy mlwyddyn gyntaf yn y Brifysgol rwyf

"Mae cael y cyfle i fynd allan o'r tŷ pob nos Fawrth a chymdeithasu yn gwneud lles mawr i m"

wedi bod yn aelod o Aelwyd y Waun Ddyfal; aelwyd sydd wedi'i leoli yng Nghaerdydd ac yn croesawu aelodau rhwng 18 a 25 mlwydd oed. Mae canu'n gyffredinol yn fodd o warchod fy iechyd meddwl ond mae cael y cyfle i fynd allan o'r tŷ pob nos Fawrth a chymdeithasu yn

gwneud lles mawr i mi. Gan fod yr aelwyd yn cynnal cyngherddau amrywiol ac yn cystadlu yn yr Eisteddfod mae'n ffordd o sicrhau fy mod i'n medru cadw mewn cysylltiad gyda fy nghydaelodau gydol y flwyddyn law yn llaw â gwneud yr hyn sy'n dod â mwynhad mawr i mi." - Gruff Wyn.

Os am dderbyn gwybodaeth bellach am 'Ddiwrnod Rhyngwladol Iechyd Meddwl' neu am iechyd meddwl yn gyffredinol, ewch i ymweld â :

Mental Health Foundation - mentalhealth.org.uk
Mind Cymru - www.mind.org.uk
Y GIG - www.nhs.uk/mental-health



Gair Rhydd Meets...

Keep an eye out for the CUTV documentary!

Words have been edited out for clarity, to read the full article please see our online edition on Issuu.

NEIL

Lord Kinnock, thank you for having us. Your political career began in Cardiff, where you were the SU president. Could you begin maybe by describing your time in that role? I've been a member of the Labour Party since I was 14. I was allowed to join three months before the official date by a very friendly county counsellor in Tredegar, which is where I was born and brought up. And then I went to Cardiff and joined the Socialist Society. As these things happen, I was elected Secretary after being in university for about three or four months. Then the following year I talked a young woman from Anglesey into becoming secretary in her third week in university. I married her five years later. I then became President of the Socialist Society, and we were extremely active politically, not just in student politics, indeed, not even mainly in student politics. In 64, there was the general election in which labour won after 13 years of Tory rule, and then 66, when Labour won a big majority. In between times, of course, there was the Cuban Missile Crisis, there were the Rivonia trials of Nelson Mandela and his colleagues, and the '60s, the late '60s, were a swirl of political activity in which we were heavily engaged. So that was not a baptism of fire, but fire wasn't absent.

Do you feel that the role prepared you for your political career?

Not really. I would have been active and engaged in politics in any case as an activist. What did assist, I guess, is that when I went to university, the first year, I played rugby and I sang a lot and I was out with the lads a lot. Then Glenys arrived. I met her, poor girl, on her first day in university and I started to take her home, but I had a kick in the head and I was suffering from a delayed concussion. So, I passed out and she ended up taking me home from our first date. In order to impress her the following Friday, I spoke in the Union Debate for the first time.

"The debates union in the University in those days was very active, packed out, and very, very rumbustious."

There was a complete absence of deference and good manners. So it was hellish. But I managed to get through that, and I managed to impress her, which was the intention. Then I found myself stuck with being, not only actively engaged in the Socialist Society, but in the politics of the Union. So, in a sense, it was a sort of involuntary training, because I learned to take the punches as well as giving them, learned to be indifferent to insult and to enjoy a little bit of praise. I suppose that's a fair old grounding in active politics.

And as you mentioned, you were SU president during the upheaval of the '60s, and known to support anti-apartheid efforts. What do you think of the efforts by Cardiff University to prevent protests by legal injunctions?

I think that if it involves invasions of premises, the University is within its rights to try to prevent the possibility of damage and of disruption that could affect students who are not directly engaged. Otherwise, I think that efforts to prevent protest as a general practice are fruitless in any case.

And on that topic, do you feel that student politicians have the same voice and agencies that they might have done in your day?

We had no voice or agency. We made a hell of a lot of noise, and nobody took any notice, as you would expect. I can say from the great height of being 83 years of age, there are times when much more notice should be taken of youth-

ful opinions and concerns. The fact that they are held by young people doesn't invalidate them in any way whatsoever. In fact, in some cases, it makes those concerns more profound, and it makes some of the answers more useful. But in the nature of human society, very little premium is attached to 'youthful wisdom'. In fact, that's thought to be a confusion in terms. So, I would have liked more interest to be taken and



action to be taken on the basis of my generation's recommendations, but it was never going to happen. I don't think people ought to be disappointed or frustrated when they're not heeded today. That's in itself a kind of lesson and the spur to further motivation. People shouldn't worry too much about that. The thing is, if what people are doing is born of serious purpose, progressive, and enlightened purpose, and their convictions run deep, they'll hold on to them and be able to apply them in practical conditions. If the convictions are shallow and they're afraid of compromise and not aware that most progress is gradual and cumulative, then the convictions that they've got are not really worth having in the first place.

"There's just one lesson I draw and it is that the way to avoid disillusionment is to try to avoid illusions in the first place. And if people can do that while sustaining serious enlightened purpose, that's a good combination."

So, you would say a lot of what was happening in those days was an illusion?

No, no, no, the concerns that people had arose from serious purpose. The terror that people felt over the Cuba crisis for instance, the bitterness that they felt partly because of acquaintance with students from the Middle East, over conditions in occupied Palestine, the West Bank, the treatment of Kurds and concerns that people had about living conditions in the United Kingdom, rack-rent landlords, abuse of landlord's rights, low pay, all those concerns that are still tragically current. They're worth bothering about. So, they weren't illusory in any way at all. Anybody who thought that there was some sudden and dramatic immediate way of resolving the concerns would have been suffering from illusions. But I don't think there were many people who thought change could happen with dramatic suddenness. The test always is, can you endure when you appear to be making little headway? The tribute I'd pay to some of my colleagues is that they went on, in very many cases, to gain distinction in their fields of study and in their professions and still endured in their convictions. I think that's highly commendable. They didn't become disillusioned

because they didn't start with illusions. We're marking 40 years since your speech in 1985, where you tested the two themes of conviction and endurance. Do you think the current party leadership have gone too far in abandoning the ideological elements of the labour movement in favour of electoral success?

Well, I'm not keen on ideology because it too easily turns into dogmatism and that, to me, is poisonous. I t

means fixed ideas that don't pay

sufficient attention to inevitable and continual changes in circumstances. I have always tried to avoid or discourage ideological stances, doctrinaire stances. However, having a sense of conviction or having principles that can be effective in practice, which is the only real test I think necessary. Politics that lacks conviction, lacks direction. There's no compass, there's no chart. And it can mean that politicians who are without that equipment can be driven by the winds. And the winds change. So, I think it's stupid to have fixations, ideologically, but I think you're impoverished if you don't have basic values that are applicable in practical conditions.

Do you think the winds are pushing around the current Prime Minister?

I know that he's a man of very deeply rooted principles, and highly intelligent and in many, many ways admirable, not only because of what he's accomplished in his life, but because of what he wants to do for the country and the rising generations. He's inherited appalling conditions. And I think what'll get him through is the values that he holds to. I just wish they were expressed with greater determination and clarity, so that the Labour Party generally and the country generally had a clearer indication of purpose and direction.

"I'm certain that Kier knows what he's doing and why he's doing it. In conversation, I'm sure he could convince anyone of the fact that those attitudes, those values that he has, are productive and essential guidance, I just wish he'd communicate those with more assertiveness and greater transparency."

And on that general topic of the emphasis of finding solutions and real world progress, you've spoken out about that topic and said that for the government to kind of slow down the growth of parties like reforms, for example, that there needs to be....

No, they've got to combat. Not slow down, combat and overcome. To combat parties, like Reform.

Given the current economic climate and the emphasis on that, what would you say to the

people who say that the government ought to be a lot more radical in their policy decisions?

Well, radicalism without means is just a word - it doesn't mean a hell of a lot. So, the important thing is to ensure that you've got the resources, the revenues, that enable you to fund effective change that can alter people's lives to their advantage. The major challenge that the government faces at the moment, of course, is obtaining those revenues. Now, the challenge comes at two levels. One is the obvious direct challenge of achievement, of restoring so many of the vital public services, including the NHS and much of education. That is absolutely vital. But the other challenge is a political one, and it arises because we've endured over a decade of conservative government, which effectively stripped the services bare and guaranteed underperformance in the wider economy by underfunding public investment in both the physical and the intellectual infrastructure. So the economy is weakened in any case, and it means that the communities that were devastated by the years of Thatcherism and what followed from it over the subsequent period, rightly, feel that they've been neglected, 'left behind'. Their resentment takes the form of votes for populist nationalist parties and it does mean that the current government has to face a challenge arising out of conditions that are not in any way their fault.

"They've got to try and repair the devastation that is cumulative and has a terrible effect over the best part of 30 years, whilst dealing with fresh challenges deriving from everything from Brexit, to Coronavirus, to Putin's murderous criminality in Ukraine, and the challenge of China and the mindlessness, the cruel mindlessness, of Donald Trump."

They've got to fight today's battles while helping as much as they can to overcome the consequences of what occurred in this country in the 1980s and early 90s. Now, I'm not trying to avoid responsibility on their behalf. But I think when that dimension of inherited devastation is comprehended people can understand the current challenge both in direct policy terms and also in political terms. They can then see why populist nationalism has surged and is having an appeal. If they think about it hard enough, they begin to comprehend how it can effectively be combatted and the tide turned so that rational, responsible, accountable democratic politics can be reasserted in our country. That's a main challenge for the government.

Do you think that reform poses a threat to democratic politics?

Yes. Simply because it relies so heavily on sowing and harvesting grievance, resentment, division. I know why its messages have achieved appeal. I also know that they're entirely superficial and exploitative. And I think given long enough, people realise what a bunch of snake oil salesmen and con men they really are. But we haven't got the time to allow for consciousness to improve. I think we've got to assist it by pointing out what they've stood for, what they stand for, what their so-called policies are, and how superficial and synthetic they are, how impractical and divisive they would be if they were ever put into practice.

"So I think that one of our duties is the nonest exposure of Farage and Reform for the charlatans that they really are."

KINNOCK

Staying on the general topic, when you led labour, Britain was very strongly of a two party system in the 92 election labour and the conservatives. It was starting to change. Today, especially with the current challenges to the popularity of Labour and the Conservatives, we're seeing a much more split-up electorate who are backing very diverse parties. Might it be the time with that mind to start strongly considering options of reforming the electoral system?

Yes, certainly. I'm in favour of a more proportionate system and there are some systems that could really benefit the United Kingdom, especially proportionate systems that would sustain the constituency system, which I think is crucially important. I don't want multimember constituencies. One constituency, one representative I think benefits clarity and transparency, as well as the quality of public service. So, I'm very much in favour of a more proportionate system - I have been, especially since 1983, when Margaret Thatcher got a thousand percent of the power on 42.7% of the vote. The division in the anti-conservative majority provided massive benefit to the Conservative Party for most of the last century. So I'm in favour of securing change. The real difficulty we've got now is, first of all, there are people in all parties who still continue to believe that the current first-past-the-post system provides stability and continuity. I think that you only have to open your eyes to see the absolute falsehood of that. It did exist, as you suggest, when British political opinion was broadly divided into two and a bit parties. There was a rough proportionality about election results. That rough proportionality has turned into disproportionality now, which is why it's got to be rectified. We now have a country with a first-past-the-post system and a tactically voting electorate, which means we've got a proportional representation electorate and a first-past-the-post system. That difference has got to be rectified. **So where would you say Britain is as a country at the minute, with national positions on various issues like we've spoken about, perhaps having shifted in recent years, what do you think the political identity of Britain looks like today?**

I think it's confused. I really do think the country is confused. Some of the confusion is attributable to the means of communication we've got, notably a press-which is still significant that is almost entirely owned by billionaire tax exiles, who then give us lectures on patriotism. I find that very interesting [he said with some irony through gritted teeth]. Anyway, the confusion, if we were want to be very grand about it, is to do with a system which has taught generations that this was a great imperial power, that fought two world wars, had its moments of heroism, (which is the true bit, because of the endurance and courage of the population generally) and then fell into lassitude and laziness and ineffectuality. That, of course, is entirely manufactured. But there are now people who are earning reputations and gaining political support by offering this extremely inaccurate and very misleading nostalgia in place of accurate history. They also make a living and gain support out of bemoaning the

condition of the country, giving the impression that it's 'broken', that it's damaged beyond repair, and the only way in which past glories can be restored and 'Britania made great again' is if we stop immigration. You know the narrative. I don't have to tell you anything about that. Of course, most of it is complete rubbish, particularly the part about immigration. In an ageing society, with demography demanding intelligent responses, we need the nourishment of a lot of young people who come here to work to earn and to pay their way in order to sustain the decent standard of living for an increasingly large older generation, which includes me. I think that people would have a more accurate perspective of where we are as a country if they were given a clearer and more accurate view of what the past 80 years have really been about. They would also appreciate that for 30 years after the war, the United Kingdom, in common with much of the rest of the world, prospered because of intelligent economic policies in several countries that understood that the role of government was to sustain stable and advancing rates of economic growth, which generated pretty widespread prosperity and justice and enabled the development of the welfare state. And it was only when that was brought to a crashing halt by serious economic crises in the 1970s followed by the years of Thatcherism that we really started, as a country, to lose confidence in ourselves, to believe the worst about ourselves, to have such doubts about our capacities, that the soul of the country to some extent, has been endangered. But the soul of the UK is not gone. There are still great instances of inventiveness, community spirit, audacity, constructiveness, originality, creativity, all wonderful characteristics, but they so rarely appear on the front pages of newspapers and other means of communication, so this confused characteristic of the country at the moment is generated and sustained. I very much regret that, as George Orwell said, "If you want to control the future, control the past". And to some degree, there are malign forces at work that are making quite a practice of inventing the past and controlling a distorted version of it.

And do you think, on the soul of Britain, that perhaps the aspect of multiculturalism is particularly unstable at the moment with that challenge of people who are trying to put the message forward?

Yes, the unfortunate thing about multiculturalism is that it's been allowed to become a label when it's a reality. The world in which we live is, by definition multicultural and we are part of that world - partly because the United Kingdom did have an empire and the empire is coming back home. We are bound to be multicultural. The revolutions in transport and technology guarantee, in any case, that society is more mixed and diverse than it was even 20 years ago, let alone 50 or 80 years ago. I think that because multiculturalism is asserted as a curse from some quarters

and as an unqualified blessing in other quarters, that we've actually got something called the Culture War. All wars are pretty stupid, but this one is probably the stupidest of all. I mean, multiculturalism is a reality. Deal with it. Certainly, enjoy it. Take advantage of it. The moment that it's regarded with suspicion or as a malevolent force, I think we're trying to step off a moving world. That's simply not realistic.

You've been in this building around Westminster for a very long time. 55 years.

Do you think in the last two years you've seen a real shift in the political atmosphere here with those what you describe as malignant forces taking more of a share of the attention.

We have five reform MPs, if that's what you mean.



Full Interview

You said that they do a lot of press conferences, do you think that the commons itself has been sidelined as a space for debate? Do you think that a lot more politics takes place outside the chamber than it would have done in the past?

To some extent, that's inevitable. The existence of 24/7 rolling news and new technology means that Parliament is going to have to work very, very hard to maintain its status and function as the crucible of national opinion. So, to a degree, what you describe as 'sidelining' is inevitable. It's still the place where the law is made and it's still the place where major political collisions will continue to take place. But in its day-to-day business, it really, in many ways, can't hope to rival the instantaneous nature of news creation and broadcasting. And it shouldn't try to do so. The principle that government statements should be made first to the commons and not to press conferences, is a principle really worth sustaining in the name of accountable democracy. But other than insisting on that principle, enforced by the speaker, and respected by members of Parliament, it's very difficult to see how the commons can match the generality of coverage, which is now available by other means.

You talk about the movement of debate outside of the Commons and, of course, in

Wales, we have the Senate which is over 20 years old. We discussed the confusion in the country and its lack of direction in some ways. But do you think that and, I know that you were hesitant about devolution....

No I wasn't hesitant, no, it's a good point for you to raise. I've never been hesitant about devolution. I'm entirely in favour of decentralisation and I have been since I was in my teens, especially in a country, which has increasingly been disadvantaged by being overcentralized. So I'm in favour of devolution as a purpose and a principle and a practice. What I opposed - I wasn't hesitant - what I fiercely opposed in the late 70s was the form of devolution that was on offer and which we've ended up with. My argument was then, and is now, that if devolution is a good idea, which it is, decentralisation is a good idea, which it is, essentially, then it's good for everybody. The great fault of the 1978-79, and the flaw in what we've got is the fact that we've got it in Scotland, we've got it in Wales, but in England, we've now got a patchwork quilt of mayoralities, counties, unitary authorities, and it just goes on forever in utter confusion. Now, if only the people directly involved, the councillors and the members of the Scottish and Welsh parliaments were affected, well, who gives a damn? But actually, the people - the public - are affected. They're not getting the quality of governance that they should, because there is a completely incoherent system of financial allocation. Wales is underfunded by about 3 billion pounds on a 25 billion budget, so it's a hell of a lot of money. It's underfunded partly because of the formula being employed.

"Joel Barnett was a friend of mine. He started arguing against his own formula within about a year of him inventing it literally overnight 47 years ago."

We've still got it and it should be changed. It's the fact that decision making about the use of resources and the collection of revenues is really centralised. It just means that, instead of enhancing confidence in democracy because of proximity of decision making and accuracy of political perceptions, the devolution we've got is having the opposite effect. People are switching off because they can't see

an advantage. They can't see progress being secured by what I call the sliced loaf form of devolution we've got. I think that, despite the very best efforts of great people like Eluned Morgan, and she's a wonderful woman, it's got to be rethought. We've got to have universal decentralisation, not pick and mix decentralisation. What I call sore thumb decentralisation, which is the form of devolution we've got, against the background of the patchwork quilt.

Do you think that the separate institutions are sort of creating a drifting effect within the country? You see in Scotland, do you think that actually that's damaging the country or do you think it might be an advantage?

Well, it doesn't help. And it's inevitable, the kind of divisions we've got. What you've got in Whitehall, in Westminster, a government of one party, and in Edinburgh or Cardiff, a government of a different party, you've got an automatic tension built in. You've also provided the party in Edinburgh, the party in Cardiff with an automatic alibi for anything that goes wrong because it's either because this centre has allocated the power, but not the money the real power to operate. And so you've got devolved institutions that are eunuchs. They've got all the responsibility and inadequate resources to exercise their power. Now, that is a very confused and unsatisfactory set of conditions. Then you get the same party in power in Whitehall and Westminster and in the devolved administrations. So, the devolved administrations carry responsibility for the central government, as well as for themselves. But you haven't changed the funding formula, and you haven't altered the status of this devolution. The consequence is that the same party is in two different places,



and is going to be pulverised from both ends. You can see it happening. I take no pleasure at all in saying 'I told you so'. But I did warn about all this in 1978 and it wasn't rocket science. It's organically part of politics. It's so easy to analyse and to see, but people who wanted it claimed it would 'polish off' nationalism. That's really worked, hasn't it? Especially in Scotland. It didn't polish off nationalism, it gave nationalism its great opportunity, which they've seized. They've been able to rule for, what, the last 18 years, having a degree of power and great significance in Scotland without bearing full responsibility. So it's quite nice for them, and it doesn't work for the people, which is the real test.

Exclusively Online

Do you think Britain might have lost its international influence in the last few years?

Yeah, scrapped it with Brexit. Because, there are people, lots of people actually, who understand that the engagement in the European Union wasn't simply an economic integration. It was a very, very important political alliance between a large number of sovereign democracies, unique in the world. What some people realise too, though it should have been pointed out, more effectively than it ever was, is that Britain exercised disproportionate influence in that. I celebrate that, not for nationalistic reasons, but because, generally speaking, that influence was progressive and benign.

"The problem is that for much of the time that we were in the European Union, we had governments by a Conservative Party that after initial strong enthusiasm started to treat the European community, the European Union, as if it was the Eurovision Song contest."

It was all about who won and who lost and what did we gain and how did we do down the others, and how they were trying to pillage our influence, our power, our economy. And of course, that's not the reality. It's not the reality of the Community and the Union. It puts us at an unnecessary disadvantage. Even though British civil servants, British commissioners, British ministers, British members of the European Parliament, were listened to with greater attentiveness than those of just about any other country. Only Germany matched this in influence and that's because Germany is much the strongest, biggest economy. So, they earned influence by their economic efforts and their inventiveness. Our influence derived from the quality of our representation and our diplomacy. The European community was not built upon a British model or anything like that, but the activity that we undertook in all the Institutions benefitted the continent and greatly benefitted Britain. Now, withdrawing from the European Union sabotaged all that. It means that not only are we outside our largest market which, until Brexit, was impediment free. If you dealt with Poland, it was only the same as dealing with Northumberland or Devon, it was simple as that. That's all changed. So we're outside the Single Market, we're outside the Customs Union, and that's inflicted, very serious economic harm, which is lasting. But the political harm is just as great. It's being partly repaired in response to the menace of Putin's imperialism. They are more aware than they have been, for all the wrong reasons, they're more aware of the need for cohesion and unity of purpose across the European continent.

And our government is taking a leading part in trying to restore that sense of interdependence and strength inside the European Union. But there was an automatic system for providing for that. We're having to reinvent it now. I'm very glad that that's being done. But it shouldn't really be necessary, and we sacrificed it by withdrawing. It also means that, more widely, the leadership of so many other countries, especially democracies, were aghast at the decision taken by the British people and what it implied for the conduct of global political affairs. They just couldn't believe it. Many of them still can't understand why we should sever such absolutely fundamental and obviously advantageous relationships. So, our diplomats are still having to spend time explaining how it happened and why it happened. Very gradually there is a process of healing, but it'll never replace the advantages of full membership, which is why I want us to re-enter as quickly as possible. I won't live to see it. I know my grandchildren will, I think my children might.

Looking back over your career, how would you describe a successful political career to Cardiff graduates who are looking to go into politics?

Well, I think that a successful career must involve winning, the reason being, that if you win, you get the democratic power to do things, to secure improvement.

"If you don't win, then there's a certain virtue in striving, but it's not the same thing as securing the democratic power, which is the objective of being in democratic politics."

Now, winning comes in a lot of sizes. If I manage to secure housing for a family that were ill housed, or a pension for a war veteran who wasn't getting a pension, or a Social Security benefit for an invalid or an elderly person in need, that was a win. I fully enjoyed that. I got very frustrated by the reality that because we so often had a Tory government, with laws that didn't take the people that I was representing in the proper account, that I wasn't winning enough. Then, of course, I became the Leader of the Party, and I was defeated twice. The second time, very marginally. The bottom 11 Conservative majorities, when John Major got a majority of 21 in the House of Commons, totalled 1,240 votes. So it was narrow. But it's not winning. It's coming second and it meant that we didn't get the democratic power to make the changes that would have benefitted the country. They had to wait another five years for those policies.

"But what about youngsters who are thinking about becoming active in politics? Do it. Our democracy depends upon it. You will feel justified in doing it. You also have some fun, which is very important and you might be able to contribute to the progress that you're seeking. But don't think of it ever, not for one millisecond as a career."

As a vocation? It's got to be a vocation and if you're going to get elected to anything.

you can do a lot of hard work, you can gain a lot of respect, you can manifest your talents: you can do all kinds of wonderful things. But if you don't get lucky, it's not going to happen. So a hell of a lot of it is luck and as long as you understand that and are still willing to try to stand up for your fellow men and women, then you should get engaged in politics. If you're doing it for yourself, please do something else. Take up disco dancing or fly fishing, it's less harmful. There are too many people around who really do fulfil or validate the

description of politics as being 'showbiz for ugly people'. One of those is too many. So, it's much better when people are trying to "do good", because it is a hell of a sight better than doing harm. And it's even better than doing nothing. Neil Kinnock thank you very much.

Image (Neil Kinnock 1993) Courtesy of Robert Watkins



Cyngor Caerdydd yn “an-wybyddu” Myfyrwyr y Ddinas

Ifan Meredith
Golygydd Taf-Od

Mae Cabinet Cyngor Caerdydd wedi cadarnhau diwygiadau i drwyddedi parcio i fyfyrwyr gan olygu mai dim ond un drwydded bydd yn cael ei roi i bob tŷ.

Mae Martha Thomas yn fyfyrwr Addysg Gynradd ym Mhrifysgol Met Caerdydd ac yn galw ar Gyngor Caerdydd i “wrando ar fyfyrwyr a deall bod anghenion myfyrwyr hefyd yn bwysig”

“Dwi’n teimlo’n nerfus o ran blwyddyn nesaf achos bod fy nghwrs yn golygu bod rhaid defnyddio car i fynd i ysgolion.”

“O ran fi, mae angen i mi fynd ar ddiwrnodau ymarfer dysgu ar draws de Cymru sydd yn anodd iawn i gyrraedd heb gar.”

Trafnidiaeth gyhoeddus “ddim digon da”

“Mae’r car yn rhoi rhyddid i mi fynd adref yn rhwydd gan nad oes yna wasanaeth trên rhwng Caerdydd ac Aberystwyth.”

“Dydy trafndiaeth gyhoeddus yng Nghaerdydd a Chymru ddim digon da i gyfiawnhau tynnu ceir myfyrwyr oddi wrthyn nhw.”

“Gyda saith ohonom yn byw yn y tŷ mae’n mynd i fod yn anodd i gwtogi’r trwyddedi i un yn unig gyda phob un ohonom yn teithio i wahanol lefydd.”

Un drwydded fydd hawl gan bob tŷ myfyrwyr

ymgeisio amdani yn ôl y cynlluniau newydd.

Maent hefyd yn datgan y bydd nifer o drwyddedi ymwelwyr ar gyfer myfyrwyr hanner y nifer mae gan breswylwyr yr hawl iddynt.

Bydd gan fyfyrwyr yr hawl i hyd at bedair trwydded y flwyddyn i bob tŷ ar gyfer symud i mewn ac allan o’u tai.

Mewn cyfarfod cabinet ar ddydd Iau, y 16eg o Hydref, cytunodd y cynghorwyr i’r newidiadau oedd yn cynnwys:

Cyfyngu trwyddedi parcio tai myfyrwyr i un i bob tŷ;

Lleihau’r nifer o drwyddedi ymwelwyr i fyfyrwyr;

Cynyddu ffi drwydded ar gyfer ceir mawr (SUV)

Bydd y ddinas yn cael ei rhannu mewn i dair ardal wahanol; ardal y ddinas, yr ardal fewnol a’r ardal allanol.

Yn ôl Cyngor Caerdydd, mae cerbydau mawr yn beryglus ac yn rhoi mwy o straen ar heoldd.

Yn ôl y Cynghorydd Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd, Cynllunio Strategol a Thrafnidiaeth, Dan De’ath, “nod Cynllun Parcio’r Ddinas yw cyfrannu at waith y ddinas yn ymateb i’r argyfwng hinsawdd.”

Ychwanegodd bod “rhaid gwneud penderfyniadau anodd i gydbwyso anghenion trigolion, busnesau, ymwelwyr a grwpiau sy’n agored i niwed.”

Mae disgwyl i’r cynllun ddod i rym yn y ddinas yn raddol dros y degawd nesaf.

Cymru yn erbyn Lloegr: Buddugoliaethau tu hwnt i’r

Erin Davies
Golygydd Taf-Od

Pan wynebodd Cymru Lloegr yn y gêm gyfeillgar ar y 9fed o Hydref, roedd y canlyniad ar bapur yn glir. Colled 3-0. Fodd bynnag, i lawer o gefnogwyr Cymru, ac i chwaraewyr fel Ffion Morgan, nid dyna hanfod y noson.

Mewn TikTok poblogaidd, rhannodd Ffion Morgan y chwaraewraig pêl-droed Cymru sydd hefyd yn chwarae i West Ham United, ei meddyliau am y noson. Er ei bod yn rhoi clod i Loegr am y “sioe oleuadau cŵl” cyn y gic gyntaf, roedd ei sylw’n troi’n gyflym at rywbeth llawer mwy pwerus. Yr awyrgylch a grëwyd gan gefnogwyr Cymru.

I Gymru, nid yw gêm fel hyn yn ymwneud â goliau ac ystadegau yn unig. Er byddai buddugoliaeth dros Loegr, wrth gwrs, wedi bod yn anhygoel. Mae’n ymwneud â phreseinoldeb, llais, a hunaniaeth. Hyd yn oed ar ôl colled, roedd yna deimlad clir o fuddugoliaeth yn y modd roedd y cefnogwyr yn canu, y ffordd roedd y chwaraewyr yn ymfalchïo yn y bathodyn, a’r ffordd roedd y tîm yn uno’r genedl. Teimlad a oedd yn fwy pwerus na’r sgôr terfynol.

Mae Morgan yn ychwanegu, bron yn ymddiheuro, “Sorry I’m not making this into a England V Wales, but it tends to happen that way. It’s a big rivalry guys”.

Ac mae ganddi bwynt. Mae’r gystadleuaeth rhwng Cymru a Lloegr wedi’i gwreiddio’n ddwfn mewn hanes, diwylliant ac emosiwn. Pan fydd y ddwy ochr yn dod wyneb yn wyneb ar lwyfan mor fawreddog â Stadiwm Wembley, mae’r ornest yn fwy na dim ond

gêm, mae’n gyfle i brofi pwy ydyn ni fel cenedl.

Mwy na gêm, ond balchder cenedlaethol

Yn y dorf roedd Meilir Rowlands, myfyriwr yng Nghaerdydd wnaeth deithio i Wembley er mwyn cefnogi Cymru.

Wrth siarad am ei brofiad, dywedodd “Dwi’n teimlo fel oedd y gêm yn un gystadleuol iawn, i feddwl mai gêm gyfeillgar oedd hi”.

Er gwaethaf y sgôr, nododd “Roedd awyrgylch da i gael yn y stadiwm, gyda chefnogwyr Cymru yn canu er bod ni 3-0 lawr. Gyda chefnogwyr yn parhau i ganu dim ots am y sgôr”.

Yn ôl Meilir, dyna sy’n gwneud cefnogwyr Cymru mor arbennig, yr angerdd.

Pan ofynnwyd iddo ai cystadleuaeth chwaraeon neu falchder cenedlaethol oedd hwn, atebodd “Mae o’n gyfuniad o’r ddau. Mae gweld y cefnogwyr yn trafailio yr holl ffordd i Lundain yn arwydd mawr o falchder cenedlaethol, ond hefyd roedd o’n ddiddorol gweld Cymru yn chwarae Lloegr mewn stadiwm mor fawr â Stadiwm Wembley”.

Mae hynny’n tanlinellu’r syniad bod y gêm yn fwy na 90 munud cystadleuol, ond yn gyfle i ddathlu’n hunaniaeth mewn ffordd weladwy, bwerus.

Efallai nad oedd y sgôr yn destun balchder, ond mewn gemau fel hyn, mae’n glir bod ysbryd y tîm a’r cefnogwyr yn rhywbeth na ellir ei fesur mewn niferoedd. Yr anthem. Yr awyrgylch. Y balchder. Yn y categorïau hynny, roedd Cymru ar y brig. Ac weithiau dyma’r buddugoliaethau sy’n cyfrif fwyaf.

Gŵyl Sŵn yn “codi proffil cerddoriaeth Gymraeg”

Gwenno Davies
Golygydd Taf-Od

Ym mis Hydref eleni, daeth Gŵyl Sŵn yn ôl i Gaerdydd i lenwi’r strydoedd â chyffro, bwrlwm, a llawer o sŵn! Gŵyl gerddoriaeth tair noswaith o hyd yw Gŵyl Sŵn, sydd wedi denu lluo o gefnogwyr yn flynyddol ers 2008.

Mae’r Wyl yn rhoi llwyfan i artistiaid newydd mewn gigiau ar hyd a lled y ddinas – gan gynnwys yng Nghlwb Ifor Bach, Fuel, The New Moon, Tiny Rebel, Jacob’s Basement, The Canopi, Tramshed, Eglwys Sant Ioan, a Porter’s.

Profodd yr Wyl lwyddiant ysgubol eto eleni, gyda’r tocynnau ar gyfer y nos Iau, y nos Wener, a’r nos Sadwrn, yn gwerthu allan cyn y digwyddiad. Ac mae’n siŵr byddai pawb a fynychodd Glwb Ifor Bach wedi’r gigiau ar y nos Sadwrn yn cytuno bod yna ddigon o gynnwrf a thwrw yn perthyn i’r lle!

Disgrifiodd Efa Jones, myfyriwr fynychu’r Wyl fel “profiad cyffrous.”

“Ges i’r cyfle i ddar-artistiaid newydd mewn bach a chlyd ar draws y ddinas. Roedd cymysgedd o fandiau Cymraeg ac creu awyrgylch agored a chyfoes. Roedd yr ŵyl yn teimlo’n

gymunedol ac ysbrydoledig, gan agor drysau i wrando ar gerddoriaeth newydd a gweld y sîn Gymraeg ar ei gorau.”

Y Gymraeg yng Ngŵyl Sŵn

Mae Gŵyl Sŵn yn unigryw o’i chymharu â Gwyliau cerddoriaeth eraill yng Nghymru am i artistiaid Cymraeg rannu llwyfan ag artistiaid o’r Deyrnas

Unedig yn ehangach a thu hwnt. Gwnaeth nifer o artistiaid Cymraeg serenau yn yr ŵyl eleni, gan gynnwys Georgia Ruth, Buddug, Cyn Cwsg, Ani Glass, Sywel Nyw, Peiriant, a Gruff Rhys.

Mae Efa yn ystyried hyn yn rhywbeth cadarnhaol iawn, sy’n “gwneud i’r Gymraeg deimlo’n naturiol ac amlwg yn y sîn gerddoriaeth.”

“Mae’n golygu bod y cynul-leidfaoedd sy’n dod i y cyndd-weld artistiaid rhyngwladol neu Seisnig hefyd yn darganfod cerddoriaeth Gymraeg yn naturiol.”

“Mae hwn yn effeithiol ac yn bwysig gan ei fod yn normaleiddio’r Gymraeg yn y sîn gerddoriaeth ehangach. Roedd e’n neis i weld bod pobl di-gymraeg yn dod i ddathlu cerddoriaeth ac artistiaid Cymraeg.”

Coffi, Clonc a Llyfrau

Myfyrwyr Ysgol y Gymraeg yn sefydlu grŵp cymdeithasol newydd

Gwilym Morgan
Cyfrannwr

Mae grŵp o fyfyrwyr o Ysgol y Gymraeg, Gwernan (Bl.3), Anna (Bl.3), Freya (Bl.1) a Gwilym (Bl.2) wedi dod at ei gilydd i sefydlu clwb clonc ymlaciol i fyfyrwyr Cymraeg, gyda’r nod o greu lle hamddenol i drafod llenyddiaeth Gymraeg dros baned.

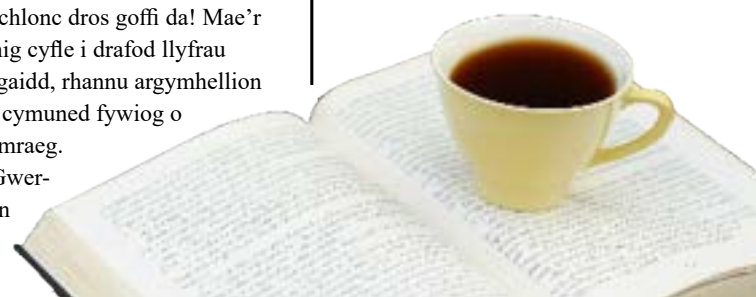
Mae’r grŵp yn cwrdd ddwy waith y tymor mewn caffis lleol yng nghanol y ddinas, gan gyfuno dau o hoff weithgareddau’r myfyrwyr – darllen a chlonc dros goffi da! Mae’r sesiynau’n cynnig cyfle i drafod llyfrau Cymraeg poblogaidd, rhannu argymhellion darllen, a chreu cymuned fywiog o ddarllenwyr Cymraeg.

Dywedodd Gwernan (bl.3 sy’n un o’r trefnwyr) “Dwi’n

ofnadwy o gyffrous am y cyfle i gymdeithasu mewn awyrgylch wahanol i’r arfer.”

Cafodd y digwyddiad cyntaf ei gynnal yn Hoffi Coffi ar yr 22ain o fis Hydref, ac roedd yn hyfryd gweld grŵp o fyfyrwyr yn cael clonc a sgwrs am y llyfr Tim, o’r gyfres Y Pump.

Er mai myfyrwyr Ysgol y Gymraeg yw’r prif aelodau ar hyn o bryd, mae’r grŵp yn agored i unrhyw un sy’n hoffi darllen ac sydd eisiau gwella neu gynnal eu Cymraeg mewn awyrgylch cyfeillgar.



Illuminations at Cardiff Market

 **LOCAL**

Andrew Stewart
Contributor

From the 16th to the 18th of October, Cardiff's historically significant indoor market underwent a remarkable transformation. It was transformed into a glowing nocturnal venue for the Cardiff Night Market, integral to both the Cardiff Music City Festival and Sŵn Festival. This Victorian-era market—which is typically frequented for daytime shopping and quick meals—became a multisensory experience marrying illumination and culinary delights.

Central to this transformation was an immersive installation by Neon Black, a design studio recognised for high-profile projects like “The Sphere” in Las Vegas. The studio's lighting transformed the market's glass roof and iron arches into a dynamic play of colour and

reflection. The resulting visual spectacle rendered the market's familiar architecture as an expansive light installation, illustrating that historical venues can feel entirely new through creative reinterpretation.

To complement the visual atmosphere, Radio Sudd provided a live broadcast from the heart of the market. This featured guest DJs curating a selection of ambient and electronic music. This auditory experience overlaid the usual market hustle with interwoven rhythms, evoking the ambiance of a late-night club, while maintaining the warmth characteristic of a community gathering space. The synthesis of bespoke lighting and curated soundscapes effectively transformed Cardiff Market into more of a living art installation than a conventional shopping venue.

Gastronomy played a pivotal role throughout the weekend with

popular local vendors such as Dirty Gnocchi, The Bearded Taco, Ffwrnes Pizza, and The Real Ting maintaining a steady flow of patrons eager to sample street-food staples ranging from gnocchi bowls to jerk chicken and wood-fired pizza. The aromatic blend wafting through the aisles significantly enhanced the festival atmosphere, showcasing Cardiff's burgeoning food scene while bolstering small local enterprises. The combination of eclectic music and the diversity of food options resulted in an almost European night market ambiance that diverged from the typical Welsh high street experience.

Inevitably, the event experienced some logistical challenges. The concise three-night schedule left some wishing for an extended duration and certain stalls faced congestion during peak hours. Additionally, as seating was limited, there was an inherent

constraint in a space not originally designed to accommodate evening crowds. However, these minor inconveniences did little to detract from the overall excitement. The event's organisation proved efficient and a vibrant atmosphere was sustained without lapsing into disorder.

In summary, the Cardiff Night Market re-envisioned a familiar setting while preserving its historical character. This event exemplified a harmonious balance between innovation and heritage. It emphasised that fostering creative expressions within the city does not always require new construction or substantial investment. Oftentimes, it simply involves perceiving long-standing spaces through a fresh lens.

For one autumn weekend, Cardiff Market became a showcase of the city's creativity and community spirit, leaving people eager for its return.

Opera, Theatrics, and MAYHEM! *Lady Gaga kicks off her European tour*

Emma Sansum
Contributor

Launching to a sold-out crowd of 20,000 “Little Monsters”, The Mayhem Ball was a celebration of Gaga's two decades of hits. Debuting at No. 1 on Billboard's Top 200, marking Gaga's seventh Consecutive No. 1 album, many critics consider *Mayhem* to be the singer's best work since her 2008 dance-pop debut *The Fame*.

“Gaga explores... the internal struggles she has faced”

The five-act narrative houses duality and chaos as Gaga explores the darker sides of fame, and the internal struggles she has faced dealing with who Stefani Germanotta is (her real name) and who Lady Gaga is.

Set amongst the gothic and operatic backdrop of the “Opera Haus”, Gaga enters in a crimson Proscenium curtain steel-cage gown, revealing her troupe of high energy monsters; resemblant of her “Gagachella” entrance earlier this summer. Transitioning through operatic renditions of “Judas” and “Scheiße”, the stage is transformed into the striking visual of a giant red and white chess board for “Poker Face”, in which Gaga is confronted by a doppelgänger dressed head to toe in white lace (a nod to her 2010 Brit Awards Outfit). Gaga's triumph over her past self, de-

“She embraces the fractured ‘pieces’ of her personality”

claring “off with her head”, symbolises her own separation of Gaga and Germanotta.

The “Perfect Celebrity” burial scene features Gaga emerging from a shallow grave laying beside the ghost of her past, illustrating the torture and immense pressure of stardom. Gaga then revives the iconic crutches and Joan of Arc armour from the “Paparazzi” music video, and drapes the stage in an angelic rainbow cloak to demonstrate the healing nature of music and the love of the queer community.

The high-energy shift into Act III sees her *Wednesday* co-stars Emma Myers and Evie Templeton join her onstage for their zombie-like choreography of “The Dead Dance”. Even her Oscar-winning *A Star Is Born* ballad “Shallow” has a gothic twist, performed from a gondola in the river Styx, backed by an unsettling synth pulse.

Act IV, “Every Chessboard Has Two Queens”, reflects Gaga's acceptance of her duality in both her public persona and her private self as she embraces the fractured “pieces” of her personality.

The finale culminates in the powerful defeat of the “Mistress of Mayhem” through a dramatic medical operation in which Gaga emerges triumphant and victorious over her past and inner chaos.

Common/Wealth Brings Spy-Cop and Police Out- rage to Newport

Ruby Collins
Head Of Review

Reeling from local events, Demand The Impossible explores the experience of the Cardiff Anarchist Network when an undercover police officer invaded their circle. This ‘part performance, part punk-gig, part-sensory experience’ takes theatre in a particularly unique direction with its use of live cinematography, live music and live projection.

In this production, three main protagonists battle for the spotlight: a Black Lives Matter activist, a blacklisted construction worker and an environmental activist. The actors move around the concert hall, allowing the audience and the band to follow their promenade through the open space. While initially intimidating, the spacious room meant movement wasn't necessary, but optional.

“Actor, audience, and musician blur expected boundaries”

The highlight of this immersive, 360 experience, must have been the live band and their lead singer. Not only was the passion of the vocals clear, but the punk, drum-heavy, densely lyrical style of music aligned itself thematically with the mood of the drama. Nothing was contained in this performance: actor, audience, and musician blur expected boundaries. As such, the lead singer immerses himself amongst the conversation: calling for the attention of ‘riders and punks, punks and riders’. This choice imbued the performance with compelling instability—anyone around you could be part of the demonstration.

Other stylistic choices lifted the performance and gave it a life of its own. Live cinematography on a nostalgic camcorder followed the actors around the space, and was broadcast onto sheets of thin fabric hung around the venue. Notably, projection of spy-cop court procedures onto these tarps was highly gripping, effectively highlighting the barbaric immoralities of officers engaging in intimate relationships when undercover.

At times, this stylistic decision was not only bubbling with creativity but helpfully practical, as the audience are relieved from chasing at the promenade's heels, when the action is broadcast onto the walls. At other times, rapid camera movement and quieter music left the audience with squeaking shoes and chaotic panting.

“This performance brings some refreshing political conversation to South Wales”

The content of the drama had a more varied impact. Each aspect of the characters were driven from real people and real events. The actors make this as explicit as possible—calling on local incidents of racially prejudiced policing and police brutality. Among those mentioned are Mohamud Hassan, Frank Bailey and the Cardiff Five (John Actie, Ronnie Actie, Stephen Miller, Tony Paris and Yusef Abdullahi). Ignored, harmed or unfairly arrested by police: these names spark the anger behind the writing and acting.

The writing itself was exciting and unapologetic—‘Welcome to the 21st Century Holocaust’ where ‘if you are poor, you are fucked’. Where the drama falls behind, perhaps, is in how it takes on the messiness and disorder of the institutions it castigates. The subject matter of police injustice, brutality and deception are complicated, nuanced and chronic. Addressing each of these topics in their overwhelming variety causes the drama to feel, at times, scattered—covering Gaza, BLM, class injustice, blacklisting, climate change and undercover policing in about an hour.

Profusely punk in its anarchy and eagerly innovative in its style, this performance brings some refreshing political conversation to South Wales.

 **LOCAL**

Returning to Y Plas

Los Campesinos! don't describe themselves as a Cardiff band

Marcus Stevanoski
Contributor

I'd like to teach the world to scream at all of the above: anxieties, maladies, and falling out of love", sang frontman Gareth David in one of his band's more empowering ballads, "Long Throes". As I joined the choir of a thousand impassioned fans crying the line back at him at the Students' Union last Sunday, I couldn't suggest a more appropriate mission statement for *Los Campesinos!*, the Cardiff indie-rock septet still riding high almost 20 years in.

"You'll find a treasure trove of references to the city"

Although, ask David where his band feels most at home, and he won't say Cardiff. Though forming at university here in 2006, none of the seven are Welsh, and only one continues living here; they have more fans in Bristol, and tend to skip Cardiff on UK tours. "I think so much of being celebrated in Cardiff and in Wales is reliant on you being Welsh, which I think is understandable, because there's a lot of public money going into it", he told me.

Nevertheless, if you dig into David's lyrics, you'll find a treasure trove of references to the city, the setting of countless late nights stumbling home and paddling in the fountain, as per their biggest hit "You! Me! Dancing!". The Cathays streets that David and bandmate Neil Turner used to live on are recalled in "Here's to the Fourth Time!", which made a rare appearance in the band's encore ("Hirwain, Minny, Tewkesbury, or Brook Street/ What I'd not give just to have another week"), while an old local gets a mention in 'Baby I've Got the Death Rattle' ("On the walk back to your house in the cold from City Arms.")

Performing their biggest anthems about Cardiff felt sensible at the Students' Union, their first time back since 2010. Listing the music venues he frequented before they closed, like The Moon, Dempsey's, and Barfly, David was saddened by the gentrification of Y Plas, which was formerly known as Solus. However, one positive:

the VK vending machine, which he noted on stage in a moment of disbelief. "Solus was horrible, but it was horrible in a way you'd want a nightclub to be", he told me.

A proudly independent outfit, *Los Campesinos!* are an outspoken and unflinchingly progressive force in the UK scene. Flying a banner on stage preaching "safety, dignity and healthcare for all trans people", they only play at venues with gender-neutral facilities, they set aside a portion of tickets for every show for low-income fans, their opening acts always include at least one non-male member, and in a highly publicised move, last April they refused a £45,000 song licensing deal from Airbnb on the belief the company profits off of stolen Palestinian land. If turning down an eye-watering sum seems like a difficult move, David is quick to clarify.

"For a band like us, these decisions are easy. We've not got a label saying that money could help us do this and that", he said, before forgetting the exact amount even offered, as if it wasn't worth a second thought. David also recalled when *Los Campesinos!* were approached to have their music used internally by an arms company. "As a band, it's very important for us to practice what we preach. And yeah, this was a total no-brainer."

"I think when people become an LC! fan, it's for life"

Diverse in age and gender, the crowd at a *Los Campesinos!* show is united by their cult-like obsession with the band's music. Old heads sat together on the mezzanine floor, while the youngest of Generation Z shuffled to the barricade: a divide made apparent when David asked to see the many hands of those not even conceived when the band formed. "One of my favourite things that people say about our band is when they've grown up with our music", he said while reminiscing through their musical evolution over 19 years, all the way from 2008's carefree, raucous *Hold on Now, Youngster...* to the pensive, mature *All Hell* from just last year. "I think when people become an LC! fan, it's for life."

Images: @social (Instagram)



The Smashing Machine

Dwayne Johnson plays himself again

Thomas Cunnick
Review Editor

In the grand tradition of the cameo, and especially that of the sports cameo, *The Rock* (or, Dwayne Johnson) seems to be the current epitome. The former WWE wrestler seems to easily slip into roles that are essentially extensions of himself, or ones where the script is written with him in mind. If you have seen films such as the *Baywatch* reboot, *Central Intelligence*, *Jumanji* (another reboot), or even *Moana*, you may recognise this.

"This fall from grace in 1999 is the central theme of the plot"

His newest film *The Smashing Machine* (2025), does see a shift, however, as he plays famed MMA fighter Mark Kerr in what seems like a radical change to his career. The film focuses on events in Kerr's career between the years 1997 to 2000, and specifically appearances at international fighting competitions alongside his coach and mentor Mark Coleman.

Central to the film's plot is the notion of the seemingly invincible fighter losing a key fight, and the inevitable physical and psychological fallout that follows; affecting those around him - not only Coleman but also his partner Dawn Staples—played by Emily Blunt.

This fall from grace in 1999 is the central theme of the plot: feelings of anger, guilt and failure are projected onto his entourage, with Staples especially being blamed. Kerr spirals into addiction whilst the heavy toll of this becomes unbearable on his partner with devastating consequences.

"Personally, I can only see him as Dwayne Johnson"

Kerr's rehabilitation and return to competition is somewhat predictable, but

what is more refreshing is that he seems more mature and accepting of his fate, which manages to swerve a few obvious clichés along the way. There has been some discussion however as to the accuracy of the events, plot and eventualities, sweetened for a contemporary audience.

Much has been made of Johnson's central performance, the script writing and indeed the film's technical quality, shot in an appropriate "period" aesthetic and overall impact (winning the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival and tipped as a possible outsider for an Oscar nomination).

Ultimately though, does Johnson manage to transcend what seems to be the curse of being too recognisable in himself to be anyone else? Personally, I can only see him as Dwayne Johnson. Because of this and the script, the film is held back and is not as good as it could be. Other than that, it is okay and is worth watching.



Plaid say independence, but not yet

Daisy Davies
Contributor

August 2025 marked the centenary of Plaid Cymru. When the party began, it prioritised promotion of Welsh language, culture, and ‘self-government’ for Wales. Independence was not a priority when so much was yet to be achieved. But in a time of increasing divisions in the United Kingdom, independence is seen as part of Plaid Cymru’s core. So why has the party’s leader said a Plaid Cymru government would not pursue an independence referendum in their first term, if elected next May?

Rhun ap Iorwerth became leader of Plaid Cymru in 2023, and since then, has been driving Plaid in the direction of government. After “terrific” General Election results in 2024, they are looking to go even further in the Senedd elections next May. YouGov polling data from September showed that Plaid are leading in the polls, though only marginally; just one percentage point behind is Reform UK. Welsh Labour, the party that has governed Wales since the

dawn of devolution, and has won every election in Wales since 1922, is third, and their chances of continuing their reign look slimmer by the day.

This election is as fragile as it could be; Plaid Cymru are eager not to jeopardise their chances by calling for independence. “Independence is a journey”, according to Llyr Gruffydd MS, and Plaid must build trust with the people of Wales before they can have discussions about a possible referendum. If independence is to happen, it needs to be done right; Plaid must promote open

“Plaid Cymru now have a platform in which they can share their plans for government”

debate, and show what pro-Wales governance can look like, before any referendum.

No matter how strongly you favour independence, the support isn’t there yet. Polling conducted earlier this year by Redfield and

Wilton Strategies showed that 41% of voters would support independence in a referendum; excluding those who said, ‘don’t know’. Support is growing, and Rhun ap Iorwerth noted on the *For Wales See Wales* podcast that independence is a “live issue”. What Plaid Cymru must therefore focus on is ‘indy-curiousness’ to promote inclusive debate on a matter that would have seismic implications on the people of Wales and our standing in the world.

Plaid Cymru are being subject to exposure within British media in ways they have never seen before. In the run-up to the 2024 General Election, Rhun ap Iorwerth appeared on Good Morning Britain, where it was clear that the presenters did not understand Welsh issues. Earlier this month, ap Iorwerth’s leader’s speech at Plaid Cymru’s conference was broadcast in its entirety on BBC Radio 5 Live. Plaid Cymru now have a platform in which they can share their plans for government. Support for independence is not at the levels Plaid Cymru would like, which is why it is vital that they focus on being a successful Welsh Government which, for now, remains part of the UK. Questions around independence will

likely follow, but only if a Plaid government is willing to show the people of Wales what that future could look like.

Plaid Cymru want 2026 to be the dawn of a new era in Welsh politics. It is therefore imperative that they act as a government for the present, and the future. Focus on fixing the NHS and the economy now, to have discussions on independence in the future. ‘Indy-curiousness’ continues to grow; just consider how this may change again with a pro-independence government.

Plaid Cymru have made clear there will not be a referendum on independence in the first term. At the party conference, ap Iorwerth promised to “kick start the national debate on independence.” The Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales concluded in 2024 that independence is a viable option, and Plaid hope that if elected in May, these discussions could become more widespread across Wales. Until then, Plaid Cymru must remain focused on delivering for the people of a Wales which, for the next five years at least, is part of the United Kingdom.

What’s Behind the Conservative’s U-turn on the ECHR?

Rowan Stanger
Politics Editor

In a speech at the Conservative conference earlier this month, party leader Kemi Badenoch pledged to withdraw the UK from the ECHR if elected to government as a strategy to cut down on immigration. This was a policy she had previously rejected when proposed by her leadership rival Robert Jenrick, taking to X to warn us that “Easy answers today just mean bigger problems tomorrow.” However, in a change of heart, she has positioned herself as an advocate for leaving the agreement, describing it as vital in “controlling our borders and strengthening our economy.”

The international treaty was signed by 46 countries after WW2 to prevent abuses of human rights, such as freedom of expression, assembly, religion, and prohibiting torture and discrimination. Crucially for the conservatives, it also includes restrictions on deporting refugees to third world countries – a point of tension between the party and the ECHR in recent years. In 2022, it was the ECHR that blocked the implementation of the government’s plan to relocate refugees to Rwanda, stopping the first flight until asylum seekers had the chance to have their cases heard by the court.

The Conservative leader’s pledge followed the results of a review by a Conservative lawyer which found that the ECHR was blocking migration reform and placing “significant restraints” on deporting illegal immigrants. Discontent with the convention has been on the rise among the party, along with a heightened emphasis on cutting down immigration, with Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philip claiming that “dangerous foreign criminals routinely use it to stay in the UK.” Previous opposers to the withdrawal have also voiced their opposition to the ECHR following the conference, including former Conservative leadership candidate Penny Mordaunt.

However, Badenoch has made it clear that her government’s efforts to reduce the number of overseas residents. Her conference speech included a proposal of a new agency modelled off ICE in the US in order to carry out a mass deportation of 150,000 migrants. The speech did not offer any indication of where they would be deported to. When asked this question in an

interview with the BBC she simply responded “it doesn’t matter, all that matters is they should not be here.”

These promises come at a historic low point for the party, polling at only 16% compared to Reform’s 34%. A recent Yougov poll concluded only 11% of British voters think they are fit to govern and are expected to win only seats at next general election. Badenoch’s speech was not delivered to a roaring crowd. Instead images from the conference show rows of empty seats and one attendee likened it to “being at a wake.”

A Labour spokesperson has criticised this policy change over the ECHR, suggesting it was motivated by the party’s decline, calling Badenoch “too weak to stand up to her own party in the face of Reform.” Concerns have also been circulating within the Conservatives. Former Tory attorney general Dominic Grieve was among them, saying “I think it is a death wish for the Conservatives to essentially make them the same as Reform and making them indistinguishable.”

Leaving the ECHR has also been criticised as a threat to human rights in the UK more widely with warnings that could open the gates for violations of other freedoms protected under the agreement. A statement from Amnesty International UK’s Chief Executive, following Badenoch’s announcement, noted “we should all be very cautious of politicians who try to take away the very rights that hold politicians themselves to account.” Further emphasising the roles the agreement has played in delivering justice for victims, upholding freedom of speech and expression. Polling also suggests very little appetite from British voters for leaving the treaty, with only 27% in favour of a full withdrawal in a poll from June this year.

This raises the question over whether Kemi Badenoch’s change of heart over the ECHR was motivated by the interests of the British people or rather the growing pressure Reform’s success is putting on the Conservative Party to respond to growing hostility towards migrants.

Drill, Baby, Drill: Notes on an Angry Planet

Sophie Scott
Politics Editor

For a generation that has been given every reason to be rightfully angry, we seem to be angry about all the wrong things.

Instead of directing our rage towards systems that are failing us: political distractions, environmental collapse and systemic inequality, we unleash ourselves in the comfortable anonymity of comment sections. From the warmth of our beds, we feast our souls on pointless arguments and performative outrage.

We’ve seen it all before, people fighting online with those who disagree with them, even when they know it won’t change a thing. People fighting with those who agree with them, just not quite enough. These are arguments without consequence, stored forever in the digital void. If everything else crumbles and the only remnants of our civilization are forum threads and Instagram reels, I despair for whoever finds them amongst the rubble. Hopefully they’ll use their shovels to bury it back up.

In an age where we can share so much of ourselves, we instead choose to hoard what matters and scatter our shallowest thoughts. You love matcha. You hate matcha. You love the Dubai chocolate flavour matcha that matches your green Labubu. These are the hills we’re dying on.

Phones have become word factories, smoking up our environment with too many words and too much noise. The smog has covered our eyes from anything important whilst we squabble amongst ourselves. If the climate crisis doesn’t kill us first, maybe that will: the noise, the distraction, us choking on our own words.

And yes, maybe it’s hypocritical for me to be ranting like this, an observant pessimist using an article to share my concerns rather than a comment section. Maybe it makes no difference that you’re reading this in print instead of online. But I hope it at

least makes you consider how apathy is quickly becoming the chains against action. Because we can make change, even if it’s just small acts: go to a protest, read a manifesto, email your MP, register to vote. Even if it’s just choosing the lesser of two evils, you owe it to yourself to know which is which.

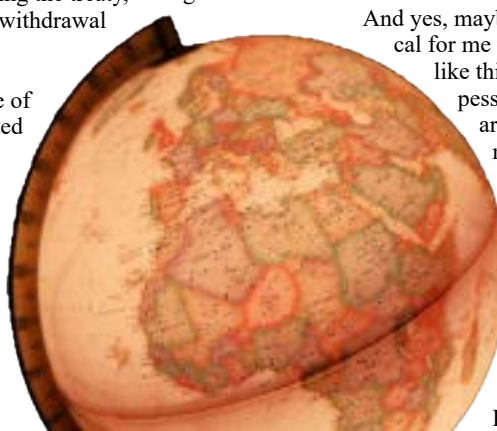
Some of the earliest words that left Donald Trump’s mouth in his second go at playing president were: “Drill, baby, drill!”, a perfect slogan for a man determined to ignore the climate crisis. In a YouGov survey commissioned by Greenpeace, 600 school students under the age of 12 were asked if they were concerned about climate change. 72% said yes—a staggering number for a group whose biggest worry should be growing up, not whether there will be a livable world to grow into.

This contrast between the worry of children and the unresponsiveness of those in power is disturbing. Worse still is how we treat those who do care. Greta Thunberg, a teenager demanding real change, was mocked and bullied by adults. Meanwhile, Trump was re-elected with a full gilded fanfare amid criminal cases.

How many concerns do you carry about politics? Have you stopped watching the news? Has social media poisoned your trust in institutions? Nobody warns us that burying our heads in the sand isn’t always out of ignorance, it’s for comfort. We’d rather not watch the world collapse around us.

But we have to look into the heart of the explosion. We have to know the world we’re inheriting. And it’s messy. There are so many inequalities, so many injustices, so much suffering. But we have a chance, now more than any time in history, to create real change. Our ability to communicate, and to share is such a unique human adaptation. We can help each other with so much more ease than ever before. It’s not easy though. The people we have put into power are supposed to reflect our will, but they won’t unless we push.

We have more access to knowledge, more tools for change, and more reasons to act than any generation before us. And yet, here we are getting angry at matcha, at each other, at nothing. Maybe it’s time to get angry at the right things.



Big ideas...

The Democratic Case for Proportional Representation

Jonathan Lu
Contributor

The result of the 2011 referendum on electoral reform seems to have closed the book on Britain's voting system. However, the 2024 General election, which delivered Labour a landslide with just 33.7 per cent of the popular vote, the lowest winning share in history, has reignited this debate. The verdict is clear: Britain's First Past the Post (FPTP) electoral system is no longer fit for purpose.

Defenders of the FPTP system usually lean on two main arguments: tradition and political stability. The FPTP system as we know it today was only consolidated after the Second World War with the Representation of the People Act 1948. This was mainly driven by administrative convenience. Although it is partially politically motivated, given that both Labour and Conservatives have governed together in wartime coalition, they stood to benefit as the system's two dominant parties. However, between the Act of Union to the Second World War, Britain experimented with various forms of proportional or semi-proportional representation. The Limited Vote and Cumulative Vote were designed to facilitate fairer representation, while the Single Transferable Vote (STV) were operated in university constituencies and in Ireland, to the displeasure of Protestant unionists. There were of course, also forms of "unproportional representation" such as Plural voting, which was defended by John Stuart Mill, arguing that those with greater education should have additional votes to balance mass suffrage with misjudgment. Hence, the historical reality is that this "tradition" is a relatively recent invention.

In Europe, proportional representation appears closely tied to both political stability and democratic freedom. Among the top 20 countries in global political stability rankings, all except France use some form of PR. Moreover, nine of the ten highest ranked countries on the 2024 Human Freedom Index employ PR systems, all of which are European. Supporters of FPTP might object that Britain's political culture is radically different from continental Europe. Let us then look at the last coalition gov Britain has had, the Cameron-Clegg years. Despite the inherent com-

promises within the coalition, the government retained enough coherence to act with Cameron as the predominant leader, though constrained. This suggests coalitions need not spell chaos. Compromise also might not necessarily be a bad thing. I don't believe it is a coincidence that the Brexit debate intensified after the Liberal Democrats left the government, which allowed Eurosceptic voices to dominate unchecked. Since the referendum, Britain has lurched from one political crisis to another, reflecting the dangers of majoritarianism without checks and balances.

In light of this, Britain should replace the FPTP, which rewards the duopoly party system Britain has, with proportional representation. My preference is the Single Transferable Vote, which is endorsed by the Electoral Reform Society, because it empowers voters rather than political parties. Under STV, voters rank candidates in order of preference, and their votes transfer if their first choice is eliminated or has surplus support. This ensures nearly every vote counts toward eventually electing a candidate. Hence, incentivising parties to field a diverse range of candidates representing different voters' concerns.

The STV would allow political parties across the spectrum to confront genuine internal diver-

"Bringing together both left- and right-leaning parties can help curb populism on both sides"

sity rather than suppress it for fear of vote splitting. Smaller parties could gain meaningful representation, contributing to coalitions that reflect various beliefs of the electorate. Furthermore, in my view, taking into account the global wave of populism, PR can help contain them. Germany's Mixed-Member Proportional system ensures that no party can gain an outright majority without broad national support. While the AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) dominates in the states of the former East Germany, it cannot govern alone, and mainstream moderate parties are incentivised to form coalitions without it. Resulting in a coalition between the centre-right CDU/CSU bloc and the centre-left SPD. A diverse coalition as such

bringing together both left- and right-leaning parties can help curb populism on both sides and enable a more moderate, stable governing body.

However, the case for PR should not rest solely on its ability to ensure a moderate government. The deeper argument is fundamentally democratic. A government should reflect the society it governs, and British politics today simply doesn't. Under FPTP, millions of votes are wasted in "safe" seats, young and minority voters are underrepresented, and public trust in the political process continues to erode. If Westminster want to keep the title of Mother of Parliaments, it needs to reinvent itself to the ideals of what a parliament is.



Interviewing Neil Kinnock, a day with Gair Rhydd

Ruaidhri Gillen Lynch
Head of Politics

Neil Kinnock – born in Tredegar, South Wales, 1942 – has been among the most influential and well-known names in the Labour movement for over 40 years. Leader of the Labour Party from 1983 to 1992, Kinnock was credited with modernising the Labour Party, expelling militant tendencies and shifting towards a more centrist, delivery-driven approach, famously giving his 1985 Labour Conference speech commenting on such topics. Though having not won the office of the Prime Minister, many consider him the best or most notable PM that never was, a figure against the politics that the Thatcher government stood for, having most notably lost the 1992 election to John Major's Conservatives by a slim margin. Following his career at the party's top, Kinnock served as a European Commissioner, where he served as Vice President for some of his time on the commission. He became a life peer in 2005 and remains an influential elder statesman known for his eloquent oratory, Welsh identity, as well as his advocacy for social democracy and European cooperation.

Before the high-flying careers in London and Brussels, Kinnock was already a well-known face on campus around Cardiff. While studying industrial relations and history at Cardiff (called the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire at the time), he was active in student politics and the Labour Students movement and served as president of the Students Union. While studying here, he met his wife, Glenys Kinnock (nee Parry), who went on to be a Labour politician and an MEP.

Taking the Great Western Railway service to London Paddington and the Circle Line to Westminster, Gair Rhydd Editor-in-Chief, James Roberts, Cardiff Union TV group members, and I arrived to interview the man. From the red leather sofas to the old wooden beams to the stained-glass panels, entering the House of Lords up to his office was a process of walking through procedure, history, and symbols of British politics which have stood for centuries. Sitting across the man discussing topics from his days in Cardiff or as Labour Leader, to devolution and the political identity of the UK, in an office packed with books and comic drawings, was an opportunity that felt quite surreal in the moments of pause. After concluding the filmed interview, he continued his generosity with his time, showing us around different halls of the buildings, explaining history and telling stories. This Welsh man's significance and impact on politics were felt on the day and can be read about in this edition's feature piece and watched on CUTV.

Can a New Party Leader Revive Labour?

Oliver Dermody
Politics Editor

Even the most ardent Keir Starmer fan will tell you that the last 15 months of power have not gone smoothly. From backbench rebellions, race riots, U-turns, and demagogic speeches, Labour has found its time in government much harder than expected. Keir Starmer bears part of the responsibility for Labour's failure to convey confidence in their ability to lead.

So, would a new leader in Number 10 inject life back into Labour and help them claw voters back to their side? Andy Burnham clearly thinks so. Launching into a series of attacks on Starmer in recent weeks. He has claimed that Labour has a "climate of fear" that stifled policy debate and stated that they were wrong to remove the whip from Labour MPs who had opposed Starmer's two-child benefit cap, claiming that this was "unhealthy in a democracy,"

Burnham has clearly expressed his dissatisfaction with the way the PM is leading the Party.

A leadership change would be a high-risk, high-reward option. It would make Labour look weak and will be publicly stating that the PM they chose hasn't been governing the country effectively. However, it would also present an opportunity to change the strategy, away from the safe, slow approach of Keir Starmer, into something more radical, from the centre or from the

"Which candidate could mount a challenge against the PM?"

left of the party. Labour may have a great deal of time to turn the pessimistic mood around, but if Starmer cannot inject life back into the Party, more dissident voices will emerge.

It is important to state that Labour does not

have a vote of no confidence they could enact to change leaders. Instead, 20% of MPs (80 MPs) must choose a candidate to trigger a leadership contest. This does not seem insurmountable, given the number of MPs who have defied Starmer in votes in parliament, with the welfare bill being defeated by Labour's own MPs.

So, which candidate could mount a challenge against the PM? Angela Rayner, former deputy leader, is an effective communicator, something the party desperately needs to win back working-class votes that have fallen out of love with Starmer. Wes Streeting, Health Secretary, would also be highly likely to be put forward if MPs wanted to be rid of Starmer. He would represent the safer option, ideologically closer to Starmer than Rayner is.

The possibility of Andy Burnham becoming PM is distant. Whilst he has been described by a senior Labour individual as "the most popular politician in the country," he would face a tough task of being eligible to be a candidate. Burnham would have to become an MP again through a

by-election victory, which Starmer would devote as many resources as possible to prevent. So, his attacks at the Labour conference against the PM may have been premature, a wiser strategy may have been to return to Westminster

"Many... disagree with the direction that the PM has chosen to take"

before going public with his dissatisfaction.

It is a challenging time for Labour. Many within the party disagree with the direction that the PM has chosen to take. There is still plenty of time for them to regain polling figures, however, the longer they languish behind Reform, the more credible the idea of replacing Keir Starmer becomes.

Can Port Talbot Forge a Future for Steel?

Oliva Griffin
Contributor

For more than a century, Port Talbot has been more than a town; it has been the furnace of a nation. Its skyline, dominated by blast furnaces, once symbolised not only industrial might but the grit and pride of Wales itself.

In 2024, Tata Steel’s decision to close its two blast furnaces marked the end of an era and the beginning of a reckoning. Backed by a £500 million government grant, the company’s shift to electric arc furnaces promised to cut carbon emissions by 90 percent – a cornerstone of Britain’s green industrial transition. But for the people of Port Talbot, this transformation was not simply environmental. It was personal.

Around 2,800 jobs vanished almost overnight, taking with them decades of skill, tradition and identity. “It’s heartbreaking,” one worker told The Guardian, echoing a sentiment that has become all too familiar in post-industrial Britain. For communities forged in the heat of the steel-works, the shift to “green steel” has felt, at times, like a cold replacement.

Steel has always been political. From Margaret Thatcher’s clashes with unions in the 1980s to New Labour’s promises of regeneration, the industry has been both a symbol and a battleground for Britain’s economic philosophy. Welsh steel, in particular, helped build not only ships and railways but the very infrastructure of the modern state.

To lose primary steelmaking capacity in Wales, critics warn, is to lose a measure of sovereignty. Electric arc furnaces rely on recycled steel; vital for sustainability, but not for independence. Without blast furnaces, the UK risks dependence on imported raw steel, raising questions about security, resilience and national pride.

In April 2025, these anxieties reached Westminster. Parliament passed the Steel Industry (Special Measures) Act, granting the government powers to intervene in the sector and secure the survival of British Steel in Scunthorpe. The message was clear: steel is not just another industry, it is a strategic asset. Yet for many in Wales, the legislation arrived too late to save the heart of Port Talbot.

Despite the pain of transition, efforts are underway to reimagine Welsh industry for a greener age. The UK government’s £2.5 billion National Wealth Fund promises long-term investment in decarbonisation, while Tata Steel has pledged £750 million of its own towards the electric arc furnace project.

Meanwhile, the SWITCH centre (a £20 million research hub at Swansea University) positions Wales at the cutting edge of sustainable steel-making. There, researchers are exploring how technology can make Welsh steel not only cleaner, but globally competitive. The goal is clear: to ensure that the story of Welsh steel does not end

“We don’t just want compensation. We want a future”

in nostalgia, but evolves into a new chapter of innovation.

Still, the challenge is profound. As Plaid Cymru and local unions have warned, government subsidies cannot replace the livelihoods lost or the communities reshaped. The debate is not just about decarbonisation, it is about justice. How can the green transition uplift, rather than abandon, the working-class communities that powered Britain’s industrial rise?

In Port Talbot, solutions are taking root from the ground up. Local councils, unions and colleges are working together to retrain workers in engineering, renewable energy and advanced manufacturing; sectors are expected to thrive as the UK pursues net zero. Apprenticeships once linked to the steelworks are being redirected into green energy infrastructure, recycling and construction.

The £11.7 million regeneration fund announced this year aims to attract new businesses to the area, while community cooperatives are exploring ways to keep profits, and purpose, local. As one former steelworker told Nation.Cymru, “We don’t just want compensation. We want a future.” That future may lie in ensuring that Wales doesn’t merely host the green transition, but leads it.

There are lessons here for the rest of Britain. A “just transition” cannot be dictated from Westminster boardrooms. It must be built in places like Port Talbot, by the people who understand what industry means to a community. For decades,

Jake Hopper
Contributor

As the war in Ukraine continues in its 3rd year, Russia seems to be mounting a covert operation to evade western sanctions and launch hybrid attacks against European nations. In 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine, in response the west placed heavy sanctions on Russia and continue to do so to cause disruption to the Russian war effort. G7 countries swiftly implemented price caps on all Russian gas imports to limit Russian earnings from oil exports and limited the flow of oil. From this, the Russian Shadow fleet was identified in 2022, estimates suggest between 1,100 - 1,400 ships are involved in the fleet, with around 400 of these ships being used for crude oil.

The main goal of this shadow fleet is to evade western sanctions and keep Russia’s oil revenue afloat. But why can’t countries just stop the boats? Many of the ships within the fleet disable their AIS (Automatic Identification System) to avoid tracking, making it harder for maritime security forces to identify and intercept. Ships also conduct ship-to-ship transfers in international waters, making it much harder for the blame to be pinpointed to just one ship.

The Russian shadow fleet has been involved in numerous events that have ramped up tensions in the region, just recently French authorities intercepted and boarded the Boracay, an oil tanker

Two Years After October 7th

Arielle Melamed
Contributor

In 1974, Leonard Cohen released *Who by Fire*. The song is a meditation on death, inspired by the Unetanneh Tokef prayer which is recited in synagogues during the Jewish High Holy days. The prayer asks who will live and who will die and by what means. Central to the song is the repeated lyric, a question, “who shall I say is calling?” It may be interpreted as a questioning of divine will, or perhaps a lapse of faith, but it also is simply a poignant and personal plea for understanding. Cohen wrote the song after performing for Israeli soldiers on the battlefield of the Sinai Peninsula, during the Yom Kippur War, the deadliest conflict at the time for Israel.

50 years later, on the 7th of October 2023, after the Hamas led massacre left a nation traumatized, a song written half a century ago with lyrics that stem from an ancient prayer almost a thousand years old, resonated with Jews around the world. It was difficult to comprehend October 7th whilst it was happening, the livestreamed footage of Kibbutzim being burned down, the kidnapped being driven to Gaza. There was anumbing feeling of disbelief watching the BBC live reporting tentatively but steadily raising the death toll as the scale of the tragedy unfolded.

There is no shortage of accounts of the massacre. Survivors reported seeing rockets fly above them as gunshots echoed around them. Border communities describe hiding for 13 hours as they heard their neighbours be murdered in their own homes, as they barricaded their doors with all their furniture. Babies, the elderly, men, women and children alike, shot, burned, stabbed and kidnapped.

Two years on, it is impossible to tie everything to October 7th. As images and stories poured out of Gaza, as we saw children covered in dust and blood, bodies pulled out of the rubble of buildings, the justification that this was a war for self-preservation wearing thin. Decades of simmering tensions, growing radicalism, and an increasingly polarised society. The warning signs had been there for years, the apathy towards settler violence, the military’s dehumanization of the Palestinians. Statements from certain ministers that were steeped in racism,

that was linked to Russia’s shadow fleet. French authorities at the time of writing are also investigating the ships role within the drone incursions in Denmark that disrupted flights and forced the country’s government to halt all flights, showcasing that the shadow fleets could potentially be being used for offensive operations in Europe. Furthermore, on the 25th December 2024, the tanker Eagle S was suspected of damaging the Estlink 2 undersea power cable between Finland and Estonia by dragging its anchor across the seabed, marking a significant escalation in Russia’s hybrid attacks on its neighbours.

Hybrid attacks from ships like Tanker Eagle S

“Russia is able to keep a constant covert presence in strategic maritime areas”

have caused major power outages and disrupted communications in the Baltic region. This has led to an increase in the presence of maritime security forces in the region with both Finland and Sweden launching investigations into cable severing in the Baltic Sea.

These hybrid attacks in turn have major security implications for the European Community, as undersea cables carry over 95% of the world internet, which if damaged can cause major disruption to energy grids, financial systems, and even military headquarters. Not only is it a threat

and incited hatred.

Just weeks after Hamas’s attack, New York Times Columnist, Ezra Klein emphasized the need to learn from 9/11 “That attack” he reported on his podcast “drove us mad with fear.” And in response, we shredded our own liberties. We invaded Afghanistan. We invaded Iraq. Our response to 9/11 led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent people.” 2 years of war and a reported Gazan death toll of nearly 70,000, Klein’s sinister prediction now rings true.

“Many Israelis feel indifferent toward the suffering in Gaza”

Israel a pariah state, shunned internationally, led by Netanyahu, a man who besides facing a barrage of previous corruption charges, must answer for his accountability in being unable to prevent October 7th and the subsequent atrocities that have followed. The country has never been more divided, 2025 has seen an estimated 30% increase in settler violence toward Palestinians. Various polls find that many Israelis feel indifferent toward the suffering in Gaza with the Pew Research center even finding that 34% of the public believe that the military had not gone far enough.

There were always, however, glimmers of hope, voices demanding peace and signs of humanity. After being released from Hamas captivity, Yocheved Lifschitz turned back and shook the hand of her captor, ‘shalom’ she said. The IDF has seen attendance amongst reservists, plummet and a small but growing group of veterans who have expressed their opposition and outrage. The hostage families, who protested almost daily and demanded a ceasefire.

20 years of a government that has shifted steadily to the right with a lack of strong left-wing opposition, Israel being in constant ‘survival mode’ has meant fertile ground for an ‘us or them’ mentality to fester. Despite a pivotal turning point in public opinion, October 7th is not the sole reason behind the horrors of Gaza. As the future of Gaza hangs in the balance, propped up by a ceasefire orchestrated by the Trump administration, 2 years on and Leonard Cohen’s lyrics speak volumes. “Who shall I say is calling?” The Israeli public must now reckon with their government’s actions.

to infrastructure but Russia is able to keep a constant covert presence in strategic maritime areas, causing major problems to Russia’s adversaries. The Fleets operations have caused the militarisation of maritime security as the U.K leads operation “Nordic Warden” using AI technology and satellite tracking systems to increase awareness and create a deterrent.

The Shadow fleet has created significant economic implications, as the fleet blatantly ignores western sanctions, Russia continues to produce billions of dollars annually which funds its war effort in Ukraine. Furthermore, 70% of its seaborne oil exports come from the shadow fleet itself, meaning Russia’s ability to bypass western restrictions has improved.

The transfer of Crude oil through covert passages distorts global oil pricing and disrupts supply chains by introducing uncertainty to the market. Countries that are targeted by the shadow fleet are also having to invest heavily into their maritime security forces and naval forces to be able to deal with the threat to sovereignty by the shadow fleet. For example, Denmark has announced a new “naval plan” to create 26 new navy and surveillance vessels, which enables them to patrol and secure their maritime borders but to also respond to potential oil spills. Despite western sanctions and pressure to disrupt Russia’s war effort, Russia has chosen not to stay quiet.

Russian Ghost Ships in the Baltic



Why Caerphilly's By-Election will Shape Wales' Political Future

Kyle Bright
Contributor

Just under eight miles as the crow flies from the Welsh Parliament in Cardiff Bay, sits Caerphilly. Known typically for its vast castle – as Wales' largest, and only second in the whole of Britain to Windsor – it has gained a new political relevance over the past couple of months.

The valley town has become the backdrop for a by-election which itself is atypical. The stakes in this by-election are high, with the winner potentially diminishing Labour's control in the Senedd, and the election being an early indicator of the changing political climate in wider Welsh and UK politics.

Yet, it has often been described as the "election that no one wanted." Caerphilly's by-election was triggered by the tragic loss of constituency MS, Hefin David, who was found dead in his home in mid-August, the day before his 48th birthday.

A declaration followed for a by-election to take place, and at the time of writing, we have arrived at the day itself – Thursday 23rd October. Candidate selections have trickled in, with the candidates finalised by the end of September.

"Will the century-old Plaid Cymru be beaten by Reform UK?"

While candidates were put forward by eight parties, including the Liberal Democrats, Green Party, UKIP and Gwlad, the parties

worth taking focus on from the polls are the remaining four. An interest by pollsters has sparked in Labour and the Conservatives. Not because they are believed to have a chance, but for the damning decline these parties face. What once was believed to be the two immovable forces of the two-party system in UK politics, are now mere distant bystanders according to opinion polling. Polling for this by-election puts Welsh Labour behind now at a mere 12%. While the Tories aren't known for success in Caerphilly, their position is a similarly ruinous one, falling to fourth place at 4%.

To contextualise how significant this is – Caerphilly has always elected a Labour politician, ever since the birth of the Welsh Assembly (now the Senedd) in 1999. Not only that, but the late Hefin David won the seat in the last Senedd election in 2021 with nearly half the vote. In place of Wales' Labour-Tory duopoly, according to the most recent polls, rise Plaid Cymru and Reform UK. Currently, the two dominate the Welsh polls. The by-election is expected to echo this, placing Reform at 42% and Plaid at 38% of the vote. This two-horse race materialises in the fight the parties are putting into Caerphilly. Plaid Cymru have been out on the doorstep. Their candidate, Lindsay Whittle, has been described in the local press as 'Mr. Caerphilly'. Reform UK, and their candidate Llŷr Powell, have even opened their own campaign headquarters for the by-election. It occupies what once was a phone shop on one of Caerphilly town's main shopping streets.

The by-election has not been without controversy however for Reform UK. Their candidate was pulled into criticism after the

former Reform leader in Wales was found guilty of taking Russia-linked bribes. Powell worked for the MEP at the centre of the scandal, Nathan Gill, up until December 2017.

The reason parties are committed to Caerphilly is the political context. For a majority in the Senedd, a party requires 31 seats. Most recently, Labour managed to maintain this vital 31 by their own 30 MSs, plus striking a deal with the lone Liberal Democrat Jane Dodds. If Labour lose the Caerphilly seat, it leaves them with 29 of their own Members of the Senedd, meaning they must reconsider how they meet that 31-seat threshold. This is particularly vital for the Welsh government budget. If Labour can't manage deals with two MSes in addition to their 29 MSes, they won't be able to pass their spending plans. In order to pass them, they will likely have to make concessions with other party politicians.

Failing to pass a budget would enable automatic cuts under devolved law where only 75% of the budget can be spent, which could ultimately lead to vital cuts to local services and redundancies according to Welsh Labour politicians. Of equal importance is the 2026 Senedd Election on the horizon, the optics of supporting the budget of a party in decline in the polls may not be considered desirable for competing parties ahead of that election. This makes the Caerphilly seat rich in soft political power, and the by-election high stakes. Outside of Welsh politics, onlookers across the UK will also view this by-election closely to fathom whether Reform are truly dominating to the extent reflected in the polls, and whether Labour and the Tories are truly a distant memory.

Will the century-old Plaid Cymru be beaten by Reform UK, a party still in its infancy? From here, Caerphilly decides, and it's those residents who will determine part of Wales' future.



Free Speech Protection Has Gone too Far

Ellie Powell
Contributor

The rise of provocation and bigoted discourse in the UK is blurring the lines of free speech. When Reform UK rallies chant harmful rhetoric shrouded in the guise of patriotism, law enforcement often fail to act. Whereas pro-Palestine marches across the UK are repeatedly harried by police for their opposition of genocide. These juxtaposing consequences begs the question: why is one a potential act of terrorism when the other is brushed off as dissent?

On the 12th of July, 80-year-old Marianne Sorrell was arrested at a pro-Palestine rally in Cardiff. The South Wales police not only detained her for over 24 hours, but they also entered her property for a search. She told The Guardian that she has been left "very traumatised" by the incident. The coverage of this protest online reinforces that it was conducted peacefully and only lasted one hour. Another 13 individuals were arrested at this demonstration under Section 12 of the Terrorism Act 2000.

At the most recent Unite the Kingdom rally in London, Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson) sat on the shoulders of many far-right predecessors all with one aim, to kick diversity out of Britain. Sam and Suzanne Philpott travelled from South Wales to attend what she

describes as a "family festival (atmosphere)."

However the BBC's coverage of events fails to display this idea of unity the right so desperately want to parade to the masses. Many in attendance set out with the sole intent to intimidate opposition and behave violently when their divisive views were challenged. The BBC states "When officers intervened to block their path they were assaulted with kicks and punches."

The aggressive nature of the rally conveys the physical threat Robinson's ideology poses. A lack of infringement on his version of free speech can cause so much damage when left uncontested. Eric Zemmour gave a statement at the rally, filled with divisive language and clear intent to disrupt the lives of so many. He referenced the Great Replacement theory. The concept's roots are overwhelmingly anti-immigrant and work to dog-whistle prejudice views on individuals, in his own words, "coming from the south and of Muslim Culture."

Should we be silencing anti-genocide rhetoric

"The ignorance displayed throughout right-wing discourse follows a desire to whitewash the nation"

in South Wales while letting hate speech thrive? Volker Turk, Human Rights Chief for the UN,

shared his thoughts on the UK government's decision on Palestine Action stating that "It misuses the gravity and impact of terrorism to expand it beyond those clear boundaries." This suggests that while bigoted theories are given the platform to propagate in several major cities across the UK, anti-genocide protests are treated as a crime due to a forced rule-stretch that conveys unashamed bias towards the aggressor.

Protecting free speech that actively incites violence against vulnerable groups is allowed to prosper despite its clear influence on far-right extremists and the radicalisation of the UK. This conversation reflects the larger issue with our culture today and the ongoing pressure to 'protect' Britishness. The ignorance displayed throughout right-wing discourse follows a desire to whitewash the nation. What many individuals fail to recognise is that the successes the UK has been exposed to whilst welcoming immigration and multi-culturalism in our cities is staggering.

Despite there being concrete evidence, illustrating several arrests from both sides, the intentions behind one protest heavily contrast the other. With one showing solidarity with a country and people that have suffered displacement and ongoing violence, the other commandeering hate in Britain.

The UN at 80: Time for a Change?

Megan Warren
Contributor

Tomorrow marks a very happy birthday for the United Nations, which was founded on October 24, 1945, to promote peace, security, and cooperation in the post-World War II global landscape. Its purpose was to replace the failed League of Nations, an organisation some, at the time, blamed for the lack of cooperation and peace leading to the Second World War. The United Nations sought to establish a platform for international cooperation and peace. But 80 years on, it begs the question - not much from the 1940s is fit for purpose today, is the United Nations any different?

It is argued that the United Nations remains relevant only if it adapts to modern challenges. Its peacekeeping missions, such as UNMISS in South Sudan and UNDOF between Syria and Israel, alongside humanitarian operations and development programmes run through agencies like UNICEF and WHO, demonstrate its continued influence on the world stage. Yet the organisation's moral authority and institutional framework cannot compensate for outdated approaches. When programmes fail to address contemporary crises, the UN risks applying 1945 solutions to 2025 problems. A recipe for irrelevance in an era that demands fresh thinking.

The Security Council's structural paralysis offers the clearest evidence of the UN's failure to modernise. Dominated by the P5 (Permanent 5), the UK, USA, France, Russia, and China, the Council still reflects the power dynamics of 1945 rather than today's multipolar reality. Former UK International Development Secretary Claire Short pointed to the dysfunction and scandal which shrouds the Iraq oil-for-food programme, where oil was sold for humanitarian supplies: "It was the Security Council's Sanctions Committee, which was dominated by the US and the UK, that failed to take action against the widespread reports of corruption." From Rwanda to Syria, the pattern repeats, when action threatens P5 interests, the veto enables paralysis.

Meanwhile, rising powers remain shut out. Brazil, Germany, Japan, India, and South Africa have emerged as major economies since 1945, yet none hold a permanent seat or veto. The result is a profound deficit of legitimacy: critical decisions affecting global security rest with five nations whose interests often contradict broader international consensus. Agnès Callamard, Secretary General of Amnesty International, put it bluntly; "The US has brazenly wielded and weaponised its veto to strong-arm the UN Security Council, further undermining its credibility and ability to live up to its mandate to maintain international peace and security." When the system protects narrow national interests instead of preventing global conflict, the system fails its founding purpose.

The United Nations' ability to enforce its own resolutions has long been a point of contention, with them often being flat-out ignored. In theory, Security Council resolutions are meant to be binding, in practice, they're frequently ignored by powerful states such as Russia and Israel when it suits their interests. Countless resolutions calling for an end to Israeli settlement expansion, such as Resolutions 2334, 446 and 452, or demanding Russia's withdrawal from Ukraine, have gone unenforced. It's like they make a wish and blow out the candles, expecting anything to change without proper enforcement. The UN can pass motions, issue condemnations, and call for ceasefires, but it has no standing army or coercive power of its own to make them happen. As a result, the UN's authority can feel more symbolic than substantive. However, the UN was never supposed to be a global governing body with its own army or coercive power. Its strength lies in diplomacy, legitimacy, and collective action, not imposed through force.

Ultimately, at eighty, the United Nations stands at a crossroads. Sink or swim. Reform could reignite life back into its mission, restoring its role as the guardian of peace and justice. But if it continues down the path of outdated solutions and unequal power dynamics, the world will carry on without it. The choice is clear: evolve or end, just as the League of Nations did.



Macron's Weakening Causes Instability in France

Oskar Hyams
Contributor

President Macron of France faces increasing pressure as his government (led by Prime Minister Lecornu) survived two no confidence votes on Thursday (16th October) by as little as 16 votes. Lecornu is now President Macron's seventh Prime Minister across his two terms in office and his fourth in barely a year. What has led us to this point and why is Macron's government facing such high parliamentary pressure?

In June last year, President Macron shocked many in France by calling for snap legislative elections and dissolving Parliament (following his party being crushed in the preceding EU parliamentary elections). This was in an attempt to gain a majority in Parliament to prevent the need to use Article 49.3 of the French Constitution (which allowed him to pass laws by decree, but which would lead to votes of no confidence in his government every time it was invoked). Much to his dismay, however, his Ensemble coalition lost 76 seats in these elections, with the left-wing coalition (New Popular Front) becoming the largest parliamentary party on 188 seats and former Presidential Candidate Le Pens right-wing National Rally coming third with 142 seats (despite getting the largest proportion of the votes with 37.1% of

"This Prime Ministerial 'musical chairs' arguably shows the lack of Parliamentary support"

votes). Why has this led to such a high number of Prime Ministerial resignations and how have we ended up with Lecornu? Immediately following the 2024 snap legislative elections, then Prime Minister, Gabriel Attal offered his resignation following Ensemble's defeat. Just three months later, Attal's successor Barnier was then toppled by a no confidence vote and forced to resign following the presentation of an austerity budget. Lecornu was then appointed following the resignation of Barnier's successor Bayrou due to another lost vote of no confidence. Lecornu, prior to his appointment as Prime Minister, had been defence Minister for 3 years and was known as a close ally to Macron. Lecornu himself has been forced

to resign once following controversy as his first cabinet remaining largely unchanged from that of his predecessors, leading to most major parties to withdraw from budgetary negotiations. He was however, after 4 days, reappointed and instructed his ministers to find a budgetary compromise. This Prime Ministerial 'musical chairs' arguably shows the lack of Parliamentary support for an Ensemble

"Whatever Macron chooses he risks a more polarised government"

and Macron led government.

However, the Lecornu government has managed to gain the support of the socialists after delaying his party's controversial pension reforms until after the 2027 presidential elections. This support was vital for his survival during Thursday's no confidence votes, with only 7 members of the socialist party voting against Lecornu. It is not clear if this uneasy alliance will last however, as the socialists have called for a 2% wealth tax on the top 0.01% of wealth holders in France but several Macron-supporting centrist members of the Assemblée Nationale have shown a great deal of opposition to such a policy.

With a hung Parliament and policy disagreements between members of Lecornu's uneasy and non-binding Parliamentary coalition of centrists and socialists, what options are now left open to Macron? He could resign, triggering an early Presidential election but with National Rally leading the national polls by 20 points (in a hypothetical first round of voting), he may fear this would essentially hand the presidency to the far right and when contacted, he refused to offer comment regarding the possibility of his resignation. He could call fresh legislative elections but again, he faces the possibility of a National Rally and him being forced to appoint a far-right Prime Minister as National Rally lead the polls by 10 points in Parliamentary voting intention polls. His final option is he could do nothing, and hope Lecornu can negotiate a budget without being removed.

Overall, whatever Macron chooses, he risks a more polarised government in an increasingly partisan France, leading to greater instability. France now looks to him to find a bipartisan solution to break the Parliamentary stalemate and to end France's political instability.

Following the money

How Reform UK Gets Funded

Reuben Badman
Contributor

Reform UK's surging rise since 2024 has elevated Nigel Farage's party from a fringe movement to a prominent political force, claiming to speak for Britain's 'forgotten majority'. Yet, as their influence has grown, so have questions about their financial base. So, who funds Reform, and what does that money buy?

Why Does Political Funding Matter?

Political funding is never neutral. Money lies behind every aspect of party operations, advertising, staffing, research, travel and event organisation. Vitally, these funds circulate exactly where policy is created. As a result, wealthy donors can steer party agendas, pick candidates and shape policy. Such practices are frequent among parties relying on wealthy backers, a common reality for parties reliant on big backers. Therefore, transparency is vital for democratic accountability. Public trust and genuine intentions decline when funding becomes opaque or controlled by a few elite donors. For a movement like Reform UK, which emphasises 'people power' and an anti-establishment message, relying on elite, individual financial reliance raises absurd contradictions.

Who funds Reform UK and how do they do it?

Reform UK's money trail speaks volumes. Reform UK received £26.1 million from just 331 donors. Around 82% of the party's income is from individual donors and 80% of

these donors gave more than £100,000, highlighting the party's reliance on a tiny circle of ultra-wealthy backers. Christopher Harborne, a multimillionaire investor and Reform's biggest donor, has pumped more than £13.3 million into the party, more than half its declared income. Having previously bankrolled the Conservatives and the Brexit Party, Harborne embodies the elite entrepreneur interested in market deregulation and freedom. His influence has likely shaped Reform's frequent calls towards low-tax and pro-business policies. Also in the mix is Jeremy Hosking, businessman and political donor, who ranked 351st in The Times Rich List in 2019, and poured £2,000,000 into Reform. Like Harborne, Hosking has previously backed the Conservatives and the Brexit Party. He exemplifies the wealthy financier driven by a 'Britain first' outlook, one that fuels division and dismisses global cooperation. His money is likely pulling Reform's policy agenda towards narrow national interests, serving his own strategic interests. Fiona Cottrell, the mother of fraudster George Cottrell, has given £750,000 to Reform. George, a senior adviser to Nigel Farage, complicates the party's stand against establishment corruption. Fiona's large donation highlights these cloudy connections, raising suspicion about the party's integrity. The connection gravely risks skewing policy towards protecting personal interests, rather than pursuing genuine Reform, leaving policy vulnerable for corruption.

How do other Party's funding compare?

Reform's donor profile is extremely concentrated. Tracing through the full record of declared political donations shows the Conservatives collected £626 million from nearly 29,000 donors, drawing on corporate and private wealth, but spread across a much broader base. Labour logged 22825 donations, dominated by 11,359 donations from trade unions and 3920 individual supporters, reflecting collective support rather than corporate influence. The Liberal Democrats raised £160 million from 18,795 donations, while the Green Party declared 2292 contributions worth £14.7 million, largely small and locally sourced. Against this, Reform's top-heavy model, made up of 331 donors, underscores the enormous sway of a handful of backers.

Can a Party Funded by the Elite Truly Represent the People?

Reform UK claims itself a party for 'ordinary people', yet is funded almost entirely by elite investors, property moguls and businesspeople with a clear interest in deregulation, low taxes and narrow national priorities. Their money doesn't keep the party running, it drives the agenda. Labour and the Greens rely on unions and community networks, while the Conservatives draw on a broad business base. Reform's set-up is narrow, exclusive and elite fuelled, exposing the gap between rhetoric and reality. Trust in a party isn't built on slogans or promises; it lies in who controls the money. In Reform's case, it unmasks the illusion behind its populist rhetoric.

Is Reform UK Revolution Just Another Elite Project?

Reform's 'people's revolution' is powered by the wealthy few, not ordinary voters. Behind the lies, they are party protecting elite interests, a clear reminder that in politics, follow the money and you will find the truth.



Behind Every Pass: In Conversation with Cardiff University Netball

Ella Simons
Head of News

Cardiff University Netball Club is a supportive community where genuine connection is partnered within team culture, where there is not only support on court, but off it too. When speaking to President Georgia Abiona, goalkeeper for the University 2s team, and Vice President Meg Lawrence, goal shooter for the University's 2s team, their adoration for the club beamed through the conversation.

What is the process to become a part of Cardiff University Netball?

In their roles as President and Vice President Georgia and Meg shared the challenging steps it takes to be part of Cardiff University Netball. Cardiff University Netball is made up of eight teams, from the 1s to the 6s who play in the BUCS league, and then two teams called the DEVS who play in the IMG league. Those in the BUCS league play against other university teams, whereas those in the IMG league play other teams within Cardiff University, most commonly course teams. The trial process to make it onto a team focuses on scouting players based on netball ability, fitness, and potential to contribute to one of the club's multiple teams. They said that this year there are "quite a lot of changes" and everyone must "re-trial each year". Georgia says this is the best way they can per-

form the trialling process as it "gives people an opportunity to grow and prove themselves". This year, they believe there was over 100 girls who trialled, but only 15 made it into BUCS and 15 into DEVS, showing the high standard of quality of the teams. Meg, who is also the coach of the DEVS teams said: "The DEVS teams are a massive focus for the club this year, as it gives girls who are committed and dedicated opportunities to move forward!"

What are your main goals on and off court?



This year, the pair shared that the club has very clear goals that go beyond just winning matches. On the court, the club looks for top performances and progression, from the BUCS teams to the DEVS. Moving ahead into the new season, the club is heavily focused on getting the 1s promoted after getting relegated two years ago to Prem 2. To do so, they said they want "each team watching and supporting each other and more spectators coming to games, to build the support for the girls". Netball matches are on Wednesdays at Talybont Sport Centre, and they often livestream the games on their Instagram "CardiffUniNetballClub". Meg and Georgia hope "growing that community support will shine through" especially within game play, where the club are equally committed to building a supportive atmosphere, as well as winning games.

President Georgia said: "Lots of people think we are really serious, but we have so much fun outside of training and matches and this is the side the club we want people to see and support!"

What is the current performance of the team like?

President Georgia said the "key aims that what we want to work on are building a really strong foundation from our pre-season training". She proudly shared that "we've put in the work, so it hopefully will give us the results we need!" Georgia and Meg shared how much hard work is put into all aspects of the club, adding that "my life is BUCS, and sometimes I forget I am doing a degree". Vice President Meg added that "everyone has got the motivation to work hard and prove themselves", especially in the "western conference trophy cup" which all teams are involved in, and the two heads of the club shared their admiration to all the team girls and their "dedication and commitment" to all leagues and competitions.

Cardiff University Netball Club also has some brilliant rising stars in Welsh netball. Firstly, Ellie Blackwell, who is part of NXT GEN, Feathers, Welsh Nationals, and Celtic Cup, with the potential to go to the Commonwealth Games. Next, Izzy Fletcher who is a part of Cardiff Dragons and NXT GEN. Then, a final spotlight moment to Beca Parry who is a part of the High Performance Programme. This, among a pool of players who also have such talent, truly shows that the "the players at Cardiff University

are of such a high standard".

What are you most looking forward to this season?

It is no secret that Cardiff 1s had an unfortunate loss against Swansea 1s at Varsity last year after a long winning streak. Georgia said it was "tough losing and seeing the disappointment on the girl's faces" and that the "disappointing result, just makes the girls want to work harder for it next time!" Georgia and Meg shared that Varsity this year will be a defining moment for the club and that "everybody really cares and wants to see only the best for this club" and that the 2026 Varsity will be their biggest opportunity to show off their hard work. Oh, and one last thing they said...

"Swansea we're coming for you next year!"



Wales Continue to Hit the Bullseye on the World Darts Stage

Mathéo Canal
Contributor

Between established players and rising young talent, 2025 marks a year of controlled transition for Welsh darts. While icons like Gerwyn Price and Jonny Clayton continue to shine among the PDC elite, a new generation is emerging, determined to make its mark on the professional scene.

Gerwyn Price, former world number one and 2021 World Champion, remains one of the leading figures in Welsh darts. Currently ranked 11th in the PDC rankings with £491,750 in prize money, "The Iceman" has shown flashes of brilliance this season, reaching several quarterfinals and semifinals on the European circuit. Despite not winning any

major titles in 2025, his consistency has kept him just outside the world's top ten.

His compatriot Jonny Clayton, currently ranked sixth with £566,500, continues to impress with his accuracy. "The Ferret" added another title to his list of achievements by winning the Dutch Darts Championship in May 2025 and finishing second in this year's Masters, confirming his place among the most consistent and respected players on the professional circuit.

Behind these two leaders, Jim Williams and Nick Kenny are ensuring the next generation of Welsh players in the middle of the table. Williams, a former BDO World Championship finalist, now ranks 60th with £94,500, while Kenny, 58th with £95,000, continues to distinguish himself on the ProTour circuit, regularly reaching the final stages of Players

Championship tournaments.

However, Wales can count on young talent for the future, notably the 2002-born Lewy Williams, who is active on the PDC Development Tour. He is ranked 167th, and, despite his young age, his liveliness and confidence already reveal a talent in full bloom. Even younger is 14-year-old Nico Adams, who recently made a name for himself by winning the regional "JDC Volts Wales" championship title, confirming the dynamism of Welsh youth academies. On the women's side, Rhian O'Sullivan remains to be the benchmark. This experienced player and regular on the PDC Women's Series currently ranks 14th with approximately £1,200 in winnings. Her greatest achievement in 2025 remains her victory at the Dutch Open Darts, confirming her status as the most successful player on the Welsh

women's circuit. Welsh women also have a motivated younger generation: at just 14 years of age, Elonwy Thomas embodies the future of women's darts in Wales. Selected for the British Internationals Tri Nations Darts, she demonstrates remarkable maturity and precision for her age.

The darts scene in Wales is strong and has sustainable momentum. Buoyed by the experience of Price and Clayton and supported by emerging players like Thomas and Adams, Wales seems capable of maintaining its presence at the highest level.



Belgium Make Huge Dent in Welsh Hopes of World Cup Qualification

George Jones
Head of Sport

The CCS saw yet another instalment of the Wales-Belgium footballing tussle, who met each other for the 11th time since 2012 on Monday 13th October. The game itself had everything riding on it from a Welsh perspective, with it being billed as make or break in regard to being able to qualify automatically for the World Cup by winning the qualification group.

Despite Cymru taking an early lead, Belgium broke Welsh hearts thanks to inspired performances from current and ex Manchester City players, respectively, Jeremy Doku and Kevin De Bruyne as Belgium emerged victorious in Cardiff. Joe Rodon headed home from a corner on the 7-minute mark to put Craig Bellamy's men 1-0 up; but that lead was to be lost just ten minutes later,

as Kevin De Bruyne slotted home a penalty following a controversial decision from VAR accusing Ethan Ampadu of a handball offence.

Following the equaliser, Belgium began to dominate and really put the Welsh defence under the cosh. Belgium were justly rewarded after some great play from Doku set up Thomas Meunier, who smashed into the roof of Karl Darlow's net to give the Red Devils the lead in the 24th minute. After going into the halftime interval with Belgium still leading 2-1, Cymru fans were expecting a spirited second half performance, but unfortunately saw quite the opposite. Bellamy's side looked devoid of any creativity or attacking threat whilst simultaneously being ran-ragged by Belgium's Champions League-level wingers, Trossard and Doku.

Around the 75-minute mark, Belgium were awarded yet another penalty for a handball against Leicester City midfielder Jordan James. However, this time there was no

controversy as replays showed an obvious handling of the ball by James who strangely lunged his elbow towards the ball, this following a defensive mix-up from Cymru.

Kevin De Bruyne stepped up again and coolly converted once more, this time to the bottom right corner having placed in bottom left earlier in the game. After finally making some substitutions, Wrexham duo Kieffer Moore and Nathan Broadhead were both brought on and linked up well in the 89th minute to give Wales some hope as Broadhead fired in to make it 3-2. Cymru's hope of possibly being able to salvage a draw was depleted to merely a brief, fleeting moment as just seconds after the restart following Broadhead's late consolation; Arsenal's Leandro Trossard hammered home the final nail in the Cymru coffin which emptied the CCS as fans realised that any hope of automatic qualification had been lost. The final score saw Wales lose 4-2 to Belgium.

The loss leaves Craig Bellamy's men in a precarious position going into the last two fixtures of the qualifying campaign which will take place during the November international break. An away fixture to Liechtenstein, who are yet to gain a point, seems to be a must-win, but is actually the least important of the two as Wales' last fixture is at home to North Macedonia who currently sit above Wales in the table. Due to same points tallies being decided on head-to-head, after drawing in Skopje in March, a Welsh win guarantees a finish above North Macedonia.

Cymru's destiny is in our own hands; a second placed finish gives us a playoff spot in which we will likely just have to win two home games to qualify for the World Cup, but for now all eyes are on November.

What to know ahead of the Quilter Nations Series

Luke James
Sports Editor

Weeks are away from the 2025 Quilter Nations Series' first kick off, and the excitement is building. Squads are being named, star players selected, and questions are being asked if anyone can go unbeaten.

Fifteen countries are taking part in the series, including Tier 2 sides Chile, Tonga, and America, alongside the rugby giants of New Zealand, Ireland, and, the World Champions, South Africa. The Home Nations have tough battles but will look to try to gain some victories against some of the most brutal opponents possible.

On paper, Wales have the toughest run of fixtures; facing all four Rugby Championship sides, as well as Japan. England face Argentina, Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia, while Scotland take on the USA, New Zealand, and Tonga. Ireland battle the All-Blacks in Chicago for a second time, the first being

a triumphant victory for the men in green, as well as Japan, Australia, and the World Champions. Who will go unbeaten? Perhaps the All-Blacks; Scott Robertson's men tend to perform well under pressure. Alongside this, the threat of Ardie Savea at the breakdown has provided crucial turnovers that could be vital in victory. The All-Blacks have seen a return to dynamic kicking games, as well as using passing to open space into wide channels, carving up defences, and scoring wonder-tries. All this combines into New Zealand being a tough side to beat.

France have also performed well. Winning the Six Nations will provide some confidence going into the series. Fabian Galthie's side will have one match in focus: South Africa. A repeat of the 2023 Rugby World Cup Quarter Final played back on the same pitch. The French will also look to dominate Fiji and defeat Australia and so have a good chance of coming home without loss.

Ireland's form has been noticeably

poor; a below-par Six Nations alongside an ageing squad does not help their chances. That said, Andy Farrell's time coaching the Lions may have sparked new ideas and playstyles. If Ireland can conquer the Boks and repeat their performance at Soldier Field against the All-Blacks, they have a strong chance of going unbeaten.

England's chances are not too bad, but they have tough opponents. Australia, arguably at a lower form managed to steal a last-minute win in their fixture in their previous matchup; and the All-Blacks are relentless, with England having only beaten them last in the 2019 Rugby World Cup Semi Final in Japan, the score 19-7. Fiji may seem an easy task, but they thrive in broken spaces and managed to win at Twickenham in 2023. Steve Borthwick has a tough job to do with his side, but this team is talented enough to win games here.

The Springboks have looked shaky at times but can definitely win all five fixtures. They seem quite hit-and-miss. Are there

channels to exploit? Potentially, but the speed of the defence is too fast. In particular, Canan Moodie's defensive reading has improved drastically over the past year and he now looks to be as good in the channel as Jesse Kriel. The Boks' depth is also one of a kind; only Les Bleus come close. Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu has exploded onto the scene, and although this is his second year of international rugby, his game has reached even higher levels and he is improving further. If he performs at his absolute best, the Boks will be unplayable thanks to his playmaking. If the Boks can take on Ireland successfully, as well as beat the French at Stade Français, there is no doubt that they will go unbeaten.

As the Quilter Nations Series approaches, I cannot be more excited. International, cross-hemisphere rugby is back, who will take it all? Will Wales surprise us? Will the World Champions show themselves as even better than they were last year, or will a Tier 2 side jump at us? All eyes will be on November 1st to see how events unfold.

Welsh Legend Fishlock Hangs Up Her Boots

Rosa Simkin
Contributor

The term legend is often overblown in professional sport. There are few that embody the phrase quite like Jess Fishlock. Born and raised in Cardiff, Fishlock has spent over two decades building a legacy that transcends goals, appearances, and medals. Instead, her story is one of grit, growth and changing the game.

In 2025, women's sport globally is being shaped by sudden development: record crowds; huge media interest and coverage; rising investment; and an influx of opportunities for the incoming generation of stars. Cymru Women have aligned with this trend. Over 16,865 fans watched on in Cardiff in December for the first leg of the team's playoff final against Ireland, before 25,000 watched in Dublin as they sealed their tickets to Switzerland, confirming their place in their first ever European Championship Finals.

At the centre of it all was Fishlock, Wales' record appearance holder and goal scorer. It was only fitting that she went on to score the country's first ever goal at a major tournament, and at 38 she became the oldest scorer in the competition's history. A poetic moment, that neatly encapsulated her entire career: leading from the front and breaking new ground. However, when Fishlock made her debut just over 22 years ago with Cardiff City Ladies, the landscape looked vastly different. In 2005, just one year before Fishlock made her international debut, the Welsh FA decided not to fund the women's squad for their European Championship qualifying campaign. In fact, Fishlock's career began as a part-timer, training in the evenings and balancing other jobs to pay her way. It was not until 2019, 13 years into her international career, that she wore her name on her back whilst representing Cymru.

Despite the barriers, Fishlock's career has been nothing short of remarkable. Her journey has taken her across eight countries: Wales, England, the Netherlands,



Australia, USA, Scotland, Germany, and France, winning trophies in five of them. Alongside this,

she pioneered the transformation of the Women's game in Wales. Fishlock did not just witness the growth of the game, she willed it into being. Her influence stretches far beyond the pitch. A vocal advocate for equality and LGBTQ+ representation in sport, Fishlock has utilised her platform to push for change both within football and outside it. Whether calling out inequalities in funding or speaking openly about identity, she is the perfect model for authenticity in elite sport.

Her journey will come full circle this month, after Fishlock announced her intention to retire from international football after Cymru's friendly against Australia in Cardiff on October 25th. It will be a fitting farewell, one last chance to wear the red shirt in front of a home crowd that has watched her drag Welsh football from obscurity to a major tournament stage.

In her retirement message to the Red Wall Fishlock said: "The shirt is being passed on in a better place, and that is my biggest achievement of all." It is a line that perfectly encapsulates the midfielder. Over 165 caps and 48 goals later, Fishlock leaves behind a Wales side unrecognisable from the one she joined as a teenager. Yet her closing statement is shaped by a selfless message, grounded in the idea that legacy is not about personal accolades, but instead collective progress.

As the curtain falls on her international career, Fishlock has earned the title of Cymru's greatest female player. Her name will forever sit alongside the likes of Ian Rush and Gareth Bale in the pantheon of Welsh football icons. But her greatest legacy lies in something simpler. In the idea that the next girl from Cardiff, picking up a ball for the first time, no longer has to fight the same battles she did, because Fishlock has already won them.

Mighty Millie Bright: A Reflection on Her Footballing Career

Gracie Bradley
Contributor

Millie Bright hung up her boots on the international stage on the 13th of October 2025, just before the selections took place for the 2025 Euros within the England team. Bright has had a lengthy career, spanning just under ten years. As a young player, Bright made her senior debut for England in 2016 and her first Euros in the following year, where England reached the semifinals. Since then, the centreback has collected 88 winning caps throughout her international career.

Bright underwent knee surgery over the summer and started counselling sessions, which required a significant amount of time out of the game. The Chelsea captain then withdrew from the most recent Euros in July, claiming that due to a lack of mental and physical health she could not give her all to the tournament. This shocked and saddened many fans, as Bright has proven herself to be a strong and competent player for the Lionesses. In 2022, the year the Lionesses claimed victory over Spain, Millie Bright started every game and earned a total of six goals throughout the tournament. The following year, Bright captained England to World Cup qualification.

Bright provided the world with a female superstar footballer. Her raw talent and strength as both a player and a person remain celebrated within her retirement. For Millie Bright's extraordinary services to football, she received an OBE last year. Her many

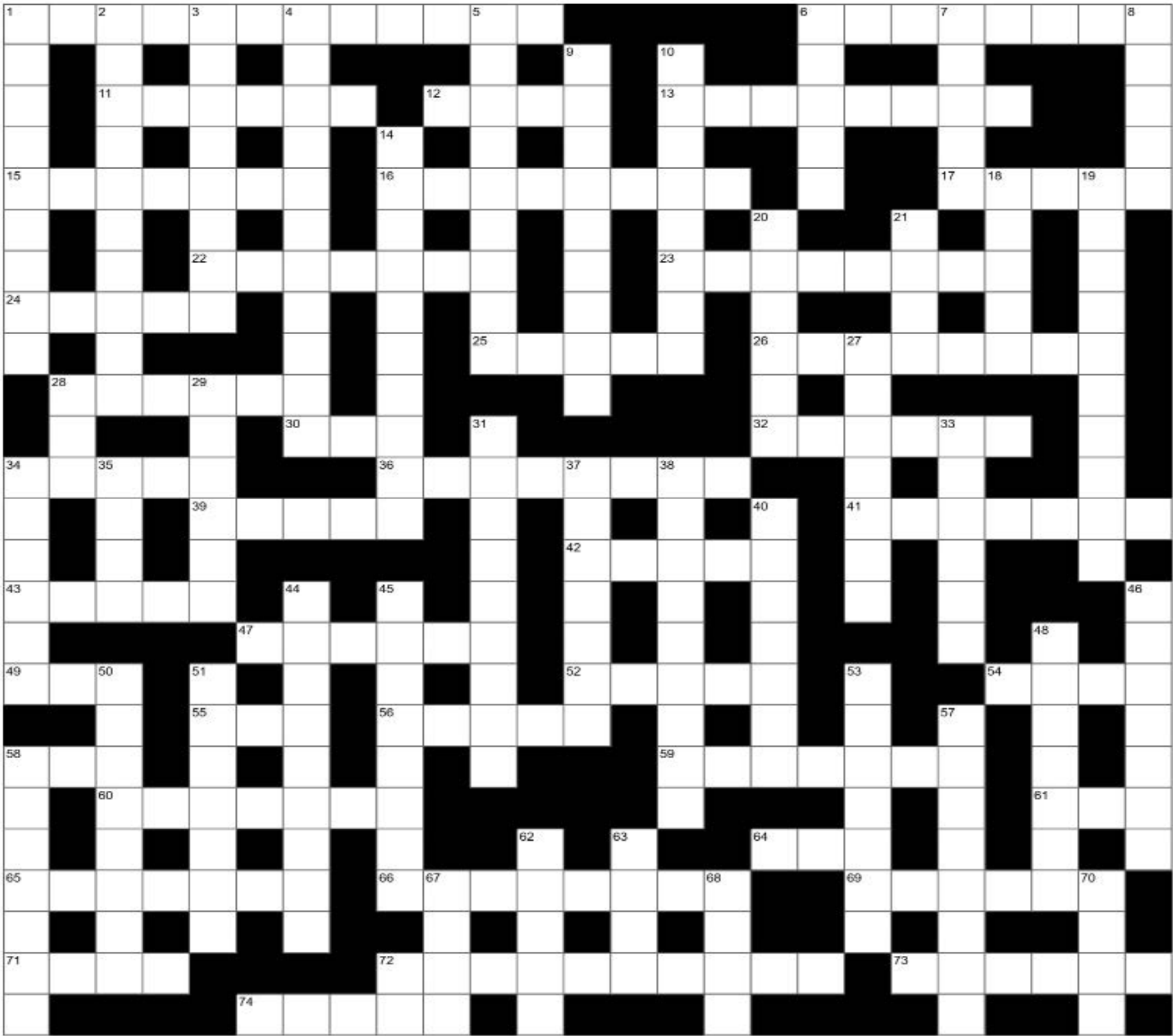
trophies and medals are proof of these many achievements, having secured countless Women's Super League (WSL), FA Cup, and many international tournament titles.

With such big boots to fill, the question stands who will be the next England centreback? England and Arsenal captain, Leah

Williamson, is eyeing up the role as she has proven herself to be a strong and competent defender. With both her footballing and leadership skills, Williamson is a top contender. Another player is Esme Morgan, who is also a Lioness defender. Morgan is a centreback for her league team, Washington Spirit, and shows a lot of potential and talent. Both are strong contenders for the role. However, Millie Bright will be hard to replace.

Millie Bright was and still is an exceptional player, exemplifying passion and talent, and most certainly someone that the English Lionesses will miss. Her dedication to sport and football over her whole life will continue to be highly respected, along with the legacy she has created. From her sporting beginning at clubs such as Sheffield United and Leeds Ladies, to Chelsea and England, Bright has shown class and represented women and girls for almost a decade. Thanks to Millie Bright, girls have someone to look up to when starting their sporting careers. Bright has not fully retired from the sport, she will stay as captain for Chelsea's WSL team, and has a lot to look forward to as the new footballing season continues. Chelsea remain the number one team and have plenty of games next month. The next game is against London, and Millie is in great form to play. England, however, will be absent of Bright, which will prove a great loss. The Lionesses have many excellent players to look after the team and continue its legacy, but Millie Bright will be greatly missed by both fans and the England team.





ACROSS

1. Ghostly double of a live person (12)

6. Socialistic settlements (8)

11. Bhamini and Aneurin’s editorial role (6)

12. Level (4)

13. Tubular conduit (8)

15. Describes some Orthodox Jews (7)

16. Unreified; report prologue (8)

17. French man (5)

22. Perfidious one (7)

23. Bullet bounce (8)

24. Ingrained (garage?) gunk (5)

25. They can succeed Instagram and lamp (5)

26. Proto text message (8)

28. Singular garment (6)

30. Investment yield; king, to Jacques (3)

32. (Euphemistic) erotic companion (6)

34. Sedimentary rock; to criticise harshly (5)

36. Maritime (8)

39. Past wind (4)

41. Tomato, tuna, hard-boiled egg salad (7)

42. V-shaped indentation; *Minecraft* maker (5)

43. Insect preservative (5)

47. Roundabout route (6)

49. Refuse to share; porcine adult (3)

52. Tennis tie (5)

54. Autumn in Austin (4)

55. Crumb-carrying critter (3)

56. “The ____ mightier than the sword” (3, 2)

58. Two-piece piece (3)

59. (Sharper flavoured?) Moroccan port city (7)

60. Pointless mountain top (7)

61. Audi alternative (3)

64. Obstinate equine (3)

65. Harry, William, George (7)

66. (River) bank accumulations (8)

69. Passed wind (6)

71. Retain; castle component (4)

72. Hard sweet ball (10)

73. Plundered pyramidal Parisian place (6)

74. Christ opp (5)

DOWN

1. Expel or let go; such fluid expelled (9)

2. Unimaginative; perambulator (10)

3. Speed up (8)

4. Unwelcome guest (11)

5. Spy aurally (9)

6. Pec place (5)

7. Ice Spice insult; *The Scream* artist (5)

8. Wheel part; prated (5)

9. Leftist anti-state ideology (9)

10. Spooks (8)

14. Supreme strategist (10)

18. Mink relative (5)

19. Adherent of a style characterised by spare-ness and simplicity (10)

20. Death often comes with it? (6)

21. Bengaluru butter (4)

27. Subject of those incessant threatening letters we all keep receiving (7)

28. Hooter (3)

29. Shish kebab prerequisite (6)

31. _____ *Heights* (9)

33. Ruckus; illegal scheme (6)

34. Pumpkin kin (6)

35. Oman man (4)

37. Guts (7)

38. Ancient times (9)

40. Santiago citizen (7)

44. The spirit of the times (9)

45. Multi-element chemical (8)

46. All _____’ Eve (7)

48. Characterised by death or gruesomeness (7)

50. “Lead” (8)

51. Equilibrium; scale (7)

53. Craving libation or copulation (7)

57. Conforming to the traditional doctrines (8)

58. Custom-made (7)

62. A free elf (5)

63. Digital data aggregation; queue (4)

67. Swift epochs (4)

68. Purpose or end; rice beverage (4)

70. Forgetful fish (4)

72. ____ Rule (2)