

Cartref Cymraeg yn Llys Senghennydd

Darllenwch ar dudalen 9



Cardiff University's Gas Bill Hits £1m During Summer Months

A freedom of information request by *Gair Rhydd* has uncovered that Cardiff University spent £1,123,760 on gas across their estates between the months of April and September 2025. During these months, most students are not on campus due to the summer break. Gas is used to heat the

university's buildings as well as water heating, laboratory processes, food preparation, and other operational requirements...

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Timetable Chaos

Students abandoned after botched university job

Alex Portman Ross
Politics Editor

I've got my timetable!' Was the shout heard in some student accommodation across Cardiff on the 25th of September. This shout came three weeks after the university's own deadline. Worse still, *Gair Rhydd's* polling indicates 29% of students were greeted by blank timetables on what was supposed to be the last day of this fiasco. So, what went wrong and how were students, staff and local businesses affected?

Delays were initially soft launched on the Cardiff Students app before Hybs contacted students. This transpired when the £9 million system failed students for the second consecutive year. The system was then condemned by students, staff and the Students' Union.

Condemnation of a system which scheduled lectures in toilets last year is unsurprising. Some students were surprised to receive their timetables on the same day they did last year, which was 3 days after the deadline. However, for many students, especially those studying joint honours, the fiasco persisted.

Gair Rhydd spoke to a joint honours student from the College of Arts, Humanities. "I did everything I was expected to do — I submitted my choices on time and planned my modules carefully around the restrictions I was given." They were understandably "frustrated" especially because their modules were initially approved. The student's frustration was compounded by how this failure came to light as they told *Gair Rhydd*, "I was not contacted about this clash, I found it myself..."

This comes after the University assured *Gair Rhydd* they were using the last days "... to identify and resolve as many timetable clashes as possible... To provide [students] a timetable that is as complete and reliable as possible when it is released..."

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University Halls to Be Sold to Cardiff Met by July 2027

James Roberts
News Editor

Earlier this month, Cardiff University announced a plan to sell University Halls, a large residences site for over 650 students, to Cardiff Metropolitan University for an undisclosed sum.

The acquisition comes as part of a broader re-shaping of Cardiff University's estate, which has been characterised by a reduction in its overall portfolio in a move to downscale.

With student numbers falling at Cardiff University, the sale will mean that University Halls, known for its distance from campus, will welcome students from Cardiff Met from September 2027 onwards...

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Blue Shirts, Bullying, and Booze

Initiations and hazing are, as with many other UK universities, a persistent issue here at Cardiff University.

Last academic year, the issue of initiations forced its way into the open when the Cardiff University Men's Cricket Club was suspended by the Students' Union amid allegations of degrading rituals. Witness accounts described recruits being subjected to verbal abuse and hold-

ing wet socks in their mouths; a witness referred to the incident as a "form of human torture"...

Read Our Feature On Pages 12-13



The Move from Halls to Housing

Isabella Schraibman
Contributor

When arriving in Cardiff as a fresher, you'll soon hear people talk about Cathays as if it's a mythical legend. Often described as the land of rats, cheap pints, Mama's kebabs and 'Misfits Monday', Cathays is Cardiff's unofficial heart of student living and the ideal place to call home in second year. But, before rushing to sign on the first house you view, there are a few important things to consider such as, location, housemates, rent and what you want to prioritise...

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A Note From the Editor



To quote the first ever *Gair Rhydd* published in 1972, “perhaps we’d better explain”.

Gair Rhydd, ‘Free Word’ in Welsh, is your student newspaper. We are here to amplify your voice, your concerns, your University. Whether our original news and investigative work, our University sports coverage, culture work, or anything in between, there is something for every Cardiff student in the pages of *Gair Rhydd*.

In short, if it matters to you, *Gair Rhydd* reports it. We exist because you pay outrageous rent for a mouldy house in Cathays to come to repeatedly rescheduled lectures, and someone should be asking why.

Since 1972, *Gair Rhydd*’s student journalism has held the University, Students’ Union, and other students, to account, as well as put the spotlight on the areas of student life that deserve it, and this year is no different.

Regular readers will have noticed that we have a brand new website this year, and, with this first edition, have officially launched *Llais Rhydd*. Piloted last year, *Llais Rhydd* (‘Free Voice’) is *Gair Rhydd*’s podcast - available on Spotify. Astute readers will also notice the new Culture section, here to talk all things Cardiff culture - check it out!

But here is what I want to ask of you: make *Gair Rhydd* yours!

Write for us, tip us off, tell us what we are

missing, use us as the space to platform what matters to you!

Every single part of the paper you are reading is the product of students and their passion. If that inspires you, message us on Instagram, or email editor@gairrhydd.com.

Finally, I want to say thank you to our fantastic new editorial team, Staff Writers, and contributors. Without the hard work of these countless Gair Rhydders, this edition wouldn’t be what it is.



Llais rhydd

Llais Rhydd, ‘Free Voice’ in Welsh, is *Gair Rhydd*’s brand new podcast.

Whether you’re a politics regular who reads all our interviews, a sports fanatic wanting a round-up, or a culture lover wanting to hear more about the beating heart of Cardiff, *Llais Rhydd* allows you to engage with *Gair Rhydd* on the go.

Listen along while walking down Cathays Terrace, through Talybont, or even during a particularly boring lecture!



YOLO Entry-Slot System Causes Controversy

Elisabeth Ounsworth
Head of News

Last week, Cardiff University's Students' Union imposed a new system requiring students to buy timed entry tickets in an attempt to mitigate long queues for their weekly Wednesday student night, YOLO. However, despite good intentions, the first use of the system did not go as planned on the Monday, with technical issues leaving many students unable to access tickets.

Following criticism from students regarding the original plan to charge £2 per time slot, the Union U-turned the charge by the time the first tickets went on sale at 4 PM on Monday, 5th October.

The Y Plas Instagram page stated that students must arrive within their chosen time slot. Students who fail to obtain a timed entry ticket are required to join the queue as normal from 9:30 PM onwards, at which point they will be granted entry based on the capacity inside the SU. Students who wish to enter from 10 PM onwards will be charged an entry fee. The amount has not been disclosed on Y Plas' Instagram page, but in previous years, entry after 10 PM has cost £8 per person.

The system of obtaining a ticket, unfortunately, proved to be less than straightforward for many. A waiting room was operated for students to be entered at random into a virtual queue, after which they would be redirected to sales on the Ticketmaster site.

However, the system of allocating students a slot in the virtual queue at random meant that students who entered the waiting room first were not guaranteed tickets over someone who may have entered two minutes before ticket sales began.

One Cardiff University student stated that they entered the queue at 3:10 PM, 50 minutes before ticket sales started, only to be placed at the back of the queue which meant that the tickets were

sold out before they reached the front.

Others claimed that the links provided on the Y Plas Instagram stories did not work, with Ticketmaster showing a screen telling students that the "event was over" while tickets were still on sale and providing no way to buy tickets.

The statement suggests that this is a "three-week trial during one of YOLO's busiest periods", and that the new policy will be reviewed after each event. Societies that have arranged sponsored social bookings with YOLO entry will be exempt from this policy.

One anonymous student stated to Gair Rhydd that they felt the new system was "jeopardising potential new members joining [their] society",

and voiced concerns that the changes could pose risks to freshers' safety, as they may be separated from friends or older students within their society. Many people on Y Plas' Instagram account also reacted to the initial announcement with similar concerns that many societies who usually attend together will be split up, leaving freshers who are less experienced with student nights to navigate the queueing system alone or wait inside the venue alone.

The statement added that the recommendation for students facing this situation is to "coordinate your booking [with friends] so you choose the same arrival slot, subject to availability" or "alternatively, set a meeting point in Y Plas and reunite after phased entry". However, with tickets selling out just 20 minutes after sales began, and technical difficulties rendering some unable to access tickets, it is likely that many students will be forced to choose the second option.

This new system may also be driving business away from

the SU, as one fresher told *Gair Rhydd* that they and their friends found the new system "overwhelming" and had therefore chosen not to go to YOLO and to go out in Cardiff city centre instead.

The Students' Union also appear to be placing heavy sanctions on individuals found to be reselling entry-slot tickets, with Y Plas stating that "if you attempt to resell your ticket for a profit, your ticket will be cancelled and any future access to tickets removed", claiming they have "already cancelled tickets of some identified ticket scalpers". Students are also warned "do not purchase scalped tickets from resellers", suggesting that students who missed out on tickets who attempt to buy them second-hand may also be punished.

Meanwhile, the Students' Union President Joshua Tandy claimed in a post on the Facebook group 'Overheard' that SU sabbatical officers are "not in charge of SU operations", seemingly suggesting he and other VPs had limited influence in the decision to begin ticketed time-slot entry to YOLO.

While Y Plas maintains that safety is "always [their] number one priority" and was the main motivator behind these changes, questions continue to be raised. Will this system solve the age-old queueing crisis, or

could it risk isolating Cardiff University students from their official SU club night

and jeopardise the safety of students by forcing individuals to become separated from their societies, clubs, and friends?

Cardiff University's gas bill hits £1m during Summer months

Ifan Meredith
Deputy Editor-in-Chief

A freedom of information request by *Gair Rhydd* has uncovered that Cardiff University spent £1,123,760 on gas across their estates between the months of April and September 2025. During these months, most students are not on campus due to the summer break. Gas is used to heat the university's buildings as well as water heating, laboratory processes, food preparation, and other operational requirements.

For the second year running, Cardiff University ran on a deficit of £33.4m in the financial year to April 2025 which increased from £31.2m in the previous year. In plans to cut their spending, the university, under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Wendy Lerner, proposed major changes under their 'Academic Futures' plan. Among those was cutting 400 jobs and merging schools, as well as bringing some courses to an end.

From September 2026, schools within the university have been merged, staff given voluntary redundancies and research hours slashed in an aim to save money.

However, Cardiff University still spends over £800,000 on gas while fewer students and staff are on campus during the summer months. Officially, the Spring semester comes to an end at the beginning of May with the exam season stretching until mid-June and the re-sit period runs between the 17th and 24th August before

students return at the end of September.

Gair Rhydd can reveal during these times, that the university spent £880,219 on gas between the months of April and July 2026.

Meanwhile, during term times, the university spent £2,842,878 on gas across their estates between the months of September 2025 and April 2026 with the biggest gas bill coming from their Main Building on the Cathays Campus.

With the rising cost of fuel, it raises the question: how much money will the university spend on gas this winter and how much have they spent on gas over the warm summer months we've just had?

A Cardiff University spokesperson told *Gair Rhydd*: "During late May, June, July, August, and early September, heating systems are generally shut down and subject to planned maintenance and overhaul works in preparation for the next heating season. As a result, gas consumption recorded during these periods will predominantly relate to non-heating activities."

"University buildings are generally 'heated' during agreed operating hours from 1 October to 30 April, with heating systems controlled to achieve a target temperature of 19 degrees Celsius in occupied spaces."



University Halls to Be Sold to Cardiff Met by July 2027

James Roberts
News Editor

Earlier this month, Cardiff University announced a plan to sell University Halls, a large residential site for over 650 students, to Cardiff Metropolitan University for an undisclosed sum.

The acquisition comes as part of a broader re-shaping of Cardiff University's estate, which has been characterised by a reduction in its overall portfolio in a move to downscale.

With student numbers falling at Cardiff University, the sale will mean that University Halls, known for its distance from campus, will welcome students from Cardiff Met from September 2027 onwards.

In an online statement, Cardiff University claimed that the sale will mean "more students in the capital will live within walking distance of where they study".

Rachael Langford, Vice-Chancellor of Cardiff Met, said, "This is a key strategic acquisition for the university and will allow us to further develop the experience for our students, particularly those whose studies

are primarily based at our busy Cyncoed campus". She added that the transfer "forms part of our commitment to invest further in an excellent student experience".

Current tenants will not be affected by the changes, as most will have left by the time of the transfer. However, in an email to staff, Debra Jones noted that "we have a small number of contracts with later, non-standard end dates and we will be reviewing those and liaising with those students further".

Jones' email to staff made clear that Met intends to acquire University Halls "as an ongoing concern".

Around 21 members of staff are expected to be transferred to Cardiff Met

in accordance with Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE).

Cardiff University Estates is currently running a consultation with staff which began on 12th October and is expected to end on 22nd January.

Campus, Corporates, and our Right to Protest

Hugo Keenan
News Editor

This month marks three years since Israel's military offensive in Gaza, a conflict that has fuelled sustained calls across UK campuses for universities to divest from organisations linked to Israeli military operations. Britain's largest defence contractor, BAE Systems, has become a particular focus due to its pivotal manufacturing role in international defence supply chains, including the F-35 fighter jet programme, components of which have been used extensively by the Israeli Air Force in Gaza.

Late last month, investigations by prominent media watchdogs Liberty Investigates and Al Jazeera, uncovered email correspondence and internal documents showing that 13 UK universities in fact discussed pro-Palestine protest management with British Aerospace Systems. The discussions reportedly, and controversially included security arrangements, communications strategies, and responses to criticism surrounding university partnerships with BAE. One presentation is alleged to have even encouraged institutions to develop messaging to "counteract" narratives advanced by protesters.

The universities identified in the investigation are described as strategic partners of BAE Systems, and remain the sector's major target Universities, such as the University of Manchester, Nottingham, and Southampton. Collectively these institutions received funding in the tens of millions through research collaborations, technology development schemes, and graduate recruitment pipelines. These partnerships are often justified by their economic and academic benefits, helping to fund research and provide high-skilled employment opportunities for graduates.

In response, these academic institutions have largely defended the interactions on the basis that engagement with corporate partners on operational matters is routine and that decisions regarding safety, communications, and disciplinary procedures remain their own. Yet some critics contend that the issue is not whether universities communicated with BAE, but whether they were taking guidance from an organisation that was itself the target of student protest. However, criticisms remain that a corporate partnership extended to campus control protocol

manifests as an inappropriate overreach. What stands out is a broader concern, whether major UK universities are prepared to sideline student concerns, safety, and potentially the spirit of free expression on campus, in order to protect lucrative corporate partnerships and valuable graduate recruitment pathways.

That concern sits at the centre of the controversy. Those who contest the development insist that universities occupy a pivotal position in our democratic society, where expectations of intellectual inquiry, critical debate, and free expression form a core part of their institutional purpose. If the Russell Group institutions at the very top are failing in this, might this signal a wider and more concerning drift away from the established role of the university as an independent and formative space for critical thought?

Furthermore, the controversy extends beyond the social expectations placed upon universities. It raises questions about broader legal and democratic principles. Freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are protected under the European Convention on Human Rights, under which we are subject following the UK's Human Rights Act of 1998. While universities have legitimate responsibilities to preserve safety and order on campus, restrictions on protest must be proportionate and justified. Critics therefore pose a well-grounded legal question around whether adopting security strategies influenced by external corporate actors risks eroding political expression protected by law.

At the same time, following the appointment of Ed Miliband to the role of Foreign Secretary, Britain's position on the international landscape appears to be shifting. Should the government continue to implement a more critical position towards Israeli policy in line with Miliband's most recent criticism of Israeli settlements on the West Bank? If so, the political climate surrounding pro-Palestine activism may change considerably. Universities could face increasing pressure to engage with student concerns, while defence contractors linked to the conflict may find themselves under greater public and political scrutiny.

As campuses continue to serve as arenas for political engagement, universities today face a challenge that goes to the heart of their purpose, safeguarding both institutional partnerships and the freedom to question them. Irrespective of the recent government position, the credibility of academic freedom in Britain may depend on how successfully they navigate that tension.

Image: Wikimedia Commons



Universities Abandon Turnitin Over AI Concerns

Kyle Bright
News Editor

Universities across the UK are debating whether to continue using Turnitin, the assignment submission software, as criticism mounts over the company potentially using student work to train AI tools.

The software, which continues to be used by Cardiff University, is primarily used to deter plagiarism by checking the originality of texts submitted by students, it also offers the ability to check whether text is written by artificial intelligence.

The issue at hand revolves around a proposed change to Turnitin's end user license agreement (EULA), which led to questions mounting over data privacy and intellectual property.

Several universities responded by starting to phase out the service, including the universities of Southampton, Westminster, and Newcastle. Aberdeen University has said it is "reviewing" its use of Turnitin, while the University of Cambridge has also pushed back on Turnitin's proposed new policies.

In response to the widespread pushback, Turnitin said in a statement that it had "postponed the issue of a new EULA until September 2027", and has "committed to redrafting the EULA" in partnership with universities to ensure any issues are addressed.

Turnitin, who are based in California, also confirmed that student data has not been used to develop generative AI models or large language models (LLMs), and that they have no intention to use student essays to do so in future.

While Cardiff University is yet to act, another Welsh institution shows a potential path for Cardiff if they were to transition away from the software. Aberystwyth University has allowed its students the option to submit assignments through Blackboard, the virtual learning environment, also known as Learning Central to Cardiff University students.

When it comes to detecting the use of generative AI in assignments, the owners of LLMs, such as Claude, are implementing invisible watermarking on generated text. It follows the introduction of the EU's AI Act, which requires generative AI providers to mark generated content in a way that can be identified by users.

For some universities, the improvement of cheaper and, or alternative tools to detect generative AI usage, is what is actually driving institutions to reconsider whether Turnitin's services are worth committing to.

The University of Westminster, who have chosen to end their contract with Turnitin in July 2027, described the company's AI detector as "probabilistic rather than conclusive", and said its core plagiarism checker was "largely ineffective" at dealing with generative AI content.



Cardiff Real Ale and Cider Society raises £3000 for Mind

Ruaidhrí Gillen Lynch
Editor-in-Chief

Those reading this who were around campus last week may well remember Cardiff Real Ale and Cider Society's 'Beer & Cider Festival' back in February — or maybe not, if they particularly enjoyed the day!

This past February, the festival raised over £3000 which Cardiff Real Ale and Cider Society donated to Mind, the UK charity for mental health support. As a result of their generosity and charitable work, Mind got in touch with Cardiff Real Ale and Cider to present them an award for their work.

The society has been running their annual festival in the Students' Union for "longer than any current members can remember", says Secretary Dan. This past year, the festival took over substantial parts of the Students' Union's second floor for two days, with a variety of 36 different beers and 40 boxed ciders for students to choose from.

What makes this festival better than others for students in Cardiff to go to, aside from the great selection, is the charitable intentions behind it. For many years now, the society has been giving a significant majority of the profits made by the festival to Mind.

Speaking about the charitable nature of the festival, Secretary Dan says that the society's decision to donate the majority of the proceeds to support Mind was "made right at the start of our year when we first began planning", adding that "although the festival has little to do with Mind, we think it's important that the benefits of having the festival are shared not just with those who are able to attend, but also with the people Mind support".

Dan says that the society's choice to support Mind was made by the committee many years ago which committees over the years have honoured as the society remains "big fans of their work". So, in Dan's words, the work is "part tradition, part genuine dedication to the cause". Having spent over £8000 to put on the festival, and profiting over £12,000, the society decided to donate the lion's share of that profit to Mind. Dan and the committee, in discussion with *Gair Rhydd*, were also keen to stress their thanks to many of the local breweries who supplied the event, many of whom having donated the alcohol after believing in the cause, and some having made their own financial donation to the event as well.

Gair Rhydd can also happily confirm that Cardiff Real Ale and Cider will be hosting their festival again this year, open to students and non-students alike, again donating a significant chunk of their profits to Mind. To hear more details as they are confirmed, follow them on Instagram [@cardiffrealale](https://www.instagram.com/cardiffrealale). *Gair Rhydd* will see you there!

Plans to Replace ‘Park and Ride’ with AI Data Centre Face Further Setback

Kyle Bright & Meghan O'Neill
News Editors

Plans to replace a free hospital park and ride with an AI data centre will face more hurdles after an intervention by Welsh ministers which could give them power to make the final call on the proposals.

Founded by the local health board, the 900 space park and ride facility is served by the free H59 shuttle bus to the nearby University Hospital of Wales. A holding directive, which is a temporary order that prevents a council from approving a planning application, was issued by the Welsh Government in August to give time for considerations over whether Welsh ministers ‘call in’ the data centre plans for the area of Llanrumney in East Cardiff.

Should the plans be successfully ‘called in’, Senedd politicians would have control over whether the proposals are given the go-ahead, instead of Cardiff Council. Until a decision is made, the future for the hospital park and ride site, located just off the A48, remain uncertain.

In a letter to local councillors, Cardiff Council confirmed that the planning application would not be covered during the Planning Committee meeting on the 8th October. It will instead be pro-

visionally pushed back to the next meeting on the 5th November, but the council added that consideration of the plans could still face extra delays.

A considerable community response has given heavy pushback on the proposals, with nearly 1,300 formal objections, criticisms by local Senedd members, and councillors across the political spectrum, as well as a campaign led by community union ACORN.

Local campaigners believe that losing the park and ride would be detrimental to the patients, workers, and visitors who rely on the service. While the council and local health board say they will seek an alternative site for the facility, objectors want to see a replacement fully operational before any spades go into the ground for the potential data centre works. The proposals have also drawn criticism over the environmental impacts of data centres.

It is proposed that the centre is powered for five years by a ‘temporary energy centre’ which generates up to 49 megawatts of electricity by burning gas.

Afterwards, it would be connected to the grid, at which point the

data centre would need to draw up to 150 megawatts of electricity continuously. That would be equivalent to the consumption of around 536,000 separate households.

Local MSs for Caerdydd Ffynnon Taf, Nick Carter and Zaynub Akbar, echoed these concerns, while also raising criticisms of the air quality assessments completed by the developer. In a joint statement, they said they “did not agree” with the developer’s conclusions in the air quality assessment.

The initial January 2026 assessment says that

the backup generators would breach safe limits if used for over 30 minutes

and that guidance would have to be issued for residents to stay inside and close all windows.

A later assessment, dated April 2026, added guidance that each individual backup generator is tested weekly and that nitrogen dioxide emissions were considered “acceptable”. The developer, Curtis Hall Limited, responded that the addition of low emission generators as part of the later assessment meant that the plans met national air quality standards, and the risk to the public would be regarded by regulators as “not significant”.

‘Y Taf’ Pub Undergoes Transformation

Elisabeth Ounsworth
Head of News

Summer 2026 saw some impactful changes for Cardiff University Students’ Union pub, previously known as ‘The Taf’. Through a combination of aesthetic changes, internal updating, and even a name change, the SU’s efforts have been to make this space more inclusive and enjoyable for the student body. But, with so many students to cater to, with a range of varying and often competing needs, will these updates be interpreted as beneficial by everyone?

A Students’ Union spokesperson told *Gair Rhydd* that they “regularly refresh and invest in our building to make sure it remains welcoming and fit for students”, claiming that this year their aim was to “update the Taf’s visual identity”. When asked about the name change to the Welsh ‘Y Taf’, they stated that due to the SU’s bilingual policy, “this better reflects our commitment to increasing the visibility and everyday use of Cymraeg across the Students’ Union”.

Although they declined to comment on the cost of the renovations, they did state that “the most significant investment was in the toilets”, as “their condition had been raised with us by students over a number of years, and they [...] [required] frequent repairs and maintenance”.

As well as carrying out general maintenance on the toilets,

arguably the biggest change to Y Taf is that the toilets are now all gender neutral

with signs on the doors indicating whether the toilet contains urinals or not. The spokesperson stated that “it is important to clarify that we have not made all toilets within

the Students’ Union gender neutral. “Across the building there is a mixture of toilets for all, single-sex provision and individual toilet cubicles”, and that the changes have been introduced “as a trial”. They claim to have sought initial feedback from some unspecified student groups before the start of term, and said they plan to “gather wider feedback from students during the term and review how the provision is working before making any longer-term decisions”. They urge students who want to share their views on this to contact the Sabbatical Officer team.

The general perception among students that *Gair Rhydd* has contacted is that this is an impactful renovation that has improved the aesthetics of the venue, with some Welsh language students also stating that they felt the name change was more inclusive and made sense in line with the other SU venues, including the ‘Y Plas’ and Balconi.

The toilet changes have, however, provoked a more mixed student reaction. While all those spoken to acknowledged the improved inclusivity of gender neutral spaces, including those who identify as gender neutral who claimed the venue now feels more welcoming, some students have expressed anxiety over the lack of cameras for safety in the shared sink areas of the toilets. Some female students stated that they would avoid using the toilet with the urinals as they found this to be “uncomfortable”.

Bar staff at ‘Y Taf’ have allegedly been given a suggested script to follow in case customers ask about the new gender neutral toilets, in an attempt, it seems, to ensure a correct and respectful response informing them about the new system.

While the bathroom spaces are still in their trial period, the changes seem to have been generally well received and well managed by the SU to avoid harm done to students and maximise student comfort.



Cardiff University Loses Welsh University of the Year to Bangor University

Meghan O'Neill
News Editor

Cardiff University loses the award of Welsh University of the Year to Bangor University in ‘The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2027’.

Cardiff remains Wales’ number one ranked University, followed by Swansea University and Bangor University. However, Cardiff University has also fallen out of the top 30 UK universities, dropping four places from 28th

down to 32nd, in ‘The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2027’.

Cardiff remained within the top 30 in certain categories, such as research quality, graduate prospects and continuation rate, but ranked considerably lower in areas such as teaching quality, retaining its 2026 ranking of 113th.

However, Cardiff’s academic reputation is excelling after it scored brilliant results in the latest Research Excellence Framework, rising thirteen places to 21st, which The Times reported as “one of the biggest risers among Russell Group institutions”.

Other university guides, such as the ‘Complete University Guide’, have ranked Cardiff within the top 30, ranking 27th, four places lower than the year previously.

‘The Guardian’s University Guide’ has ranked Cardiff University even lower in joint 43rd place

with Queen’s University, Belfast.

Other noticeable changes to The Times’ league table are that both Oxford and Cambridge Universities have fallen short of the top three for a second year running.

Bangor University had a successful year in The Times’ rankings, winning two awards, Welsh University of the Year and University of the Year for Sustainability.

Some key highlights of the rankings of the Welsh Universities according to ‘The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2027’ position Swansea at 28th, Aberystwyth at 63rd and Cardiff Metropolitan - 78th.

Cardiff University and Bangor University were approached for a comment but both didn’t provide *Gair Rhydd* with a response.

Time to Turn Away From Turnitin as AI Invades Integrity Institution

Isaak Hewitt
Opinion Editor

After universities including Cambridge and Southampton dropped Turnitin over its plans to use students' work to train AI systems, is it time for Cardiff University to do the same?

As calls across the country for universities to distance themselves have increased in volume, Cardiff's startling silence so far reads as a flagrant disregard for students' autonomy over their own work. Despite Turnitin's position that consent is given upon submission of work, submission of assessed pieces through Learning Central is often a requirement rather than an option for Cardiff University attendees. This rhetoric of acceptance is at odds with the fact that, in lieu of sending work through the system, students risk failing.

While

“forced consent”

to new AI-training measures is disturbing enough: that consent for these measures may now also be backdated is particularly insidious. Frankly, it's dystopian to consider the thousands of students Turnitin has collected data from throughout Cardiff University's over-a-decade-long partnership with the institution. This news must be particularly upsetting for second- and third-year students as well as postgraduates, who have already submitted to the service.

Most courses will have to deal with the updated measures, but it's the more written-based degrees, such as those offered by the School of Global Humanities, that will face the brunt. A rising sentiment among students undertaking such education is that AI has no place there; indeed, artificiality seems contradictory to the humanity that the field takes its name from. Yet, it's also these areas that have the most material to be scraped, regularly submitting essays worth thousands of words. In a world where AI is regularly making human contributions redundant, including in the humanities sector, the idea that submitting work might further these systems leaves a sour taste.

It's certainly something that Linguistics and Spanish undergraduate Tolly opposes, arguing that the increasing prominence of AI in academia is a move towards

“technofascism”

that only benefits the owners and propagators of AI companies. “The ultimate goal for them is to cut out humanity entirely,” she went on to state to *Gair Rhydd*.

Furthermore, Turnitin's AI advances mark a promise to

“cut up and repurpose”

the essays and efforts of those submitting to their system, something she believes is “antithetical” to the study of humanities and “completely the opposite” of students' desires. To ignore that would be “a moral lacking on the part of the university,” she concluded.

Meanwhile, Emma Williams, a Mental Health Nursing student, told *Gair Rhydd* that the new regulations are particularly scary for her and her cohort. “We are already so worried that our work will be flagged because Turnitin is already so unreliable,” she wrote. “Using our work to train AI surely makes it so that AI will begin to sound like us: regular students that don't use generative AI in work.”

This common sentiment among students is certainly not an unfounded one in light of official university courses taking action to assist against the potential problem. For example, a mandatory first-year module for English, Communication and Philosophy undergraduates, ‘Writing at University and Beyond’, now includes lectures and resources to help protect students' work against unfounded accusations of AI abuse. However, for as forward-thinking as these curricular additions are on the part of the module's creators, it only raises the question of why this burden should fall on the staff and students at all, rather than those in a position to re-evaluate the cooperation with Turnitin on a larger scale.

It remains to be seen just what Cardiff University will do in the face of such controversy, if anything. While its officials have stayed opaque, its students have made their view utterly transparent: to renew their relationship with the disgruntled tech giant would be nothing short of

“a slap in the face”

to both past and future alumni who have been violated by the new rules. Perhaps, it would be best for the university to turn away from Turnitin before their own integrity is compromised...

When Does Cardiff Become Home?

Milly Arthur
Opinion Editor

When we think of home, we often think of it as the place we come from or where we were born. However, home can also be something we create over time. In Cardiff, home develops through the people we meet, the places we become familiar with and the memories we make. Perhaps, over time, this secondary home can even rival the places we originally came from.

Whether Cardiff is completely new to you or you've spent the last few years calling it home, September has a way of making us all feel like Freshers' again. At the beginning of term, Cardiff becomes flooded with students hauling suitcases, frantically logging into the CU Wi-Fi and, of course, queuing along the Lidl bridge just to get into lectures.

For Cardiff returners, the city and campus stay reassuringly familiar. Greggs is still there, Bute Park continues to turn red and green, much like the infamous Welsh flag. The streets also remain the same, with the iconic Red Bull car parked outside. Yet the people around us change, friendships grow and our lives here become wider.

An indicator of somewhere being home is the instinctive ability to know the place like the back of your hand. In Cathays, where the streets seem to loop back to one another, navigation becomes a process of trial and error. Upon arrival, the campus section of the city acts as a tight-knit zone, built around a Lidl, the Students' Union and at least five perfect MiXR-accepting pubs. Slowly, the comfort of Cathays expands to the city centre, beautiful Bute, and wider Cardiff, as you explore Penarth and Cardiff Bay. Very quickly, you can leave the house with-

The Sensitive Issue of Consent

Bhamini Khandige
Aesthetics Co-Head

From moments of palpable tension, to the breaking of silence with a steamy scene, we've romanticised chemistry. We've glorified impulsivity. And we've completely misunderstood the meaning of consent. Silence is often mistaken for desire, and as humans we are prone to acting on this ‘desire’. The truth is, consent is not optional, awkward, or a ‘mood-killer’ — in fact it is foundational to healthy relationships. But in this age, have we misunderstood consent and what it means?

Modern media has a long-standing tradition of mistaking silence, force, and boundary-pushing for high-stakes passion. In traditional Hollywood framing, wordless spontaneity is treated as the ultimate indicator of sexual chemistry, which frequently leaves consent completely out of the equation. As mass media heavily shapes social learning, these highly romanticised, but legally and ethically non-consensual tropes, often blur the lines of what safe, respectful intimacy looks like.

At its core, consent is about having the freedom of choice. Boiling consent down to a strict black-and-white binary fails because human relationships operate entirely within grey areas. Treating consent like a simple light switch ignores several compounding realities.

Firstly, there is the reality of non-verbal cues. In real-world encounters, young people frequently communicate through subtle body language, awkwardness, or hesitation rather than explicit verbal declarations. A binary approach leaves no room to interpret freeze responses, compliance driven by fear, or passive submission. Binary models implicitly suggest that if someone hasn't actively said ‘no’, a ‘yes’ can be assumed. This completely invalidates the modern, ethical standard of affirmative consent, which requires enthusiastic, active, and ongoing mutual willingness. To further complicate the taught binary model of consent, a simple ‘yes’ can be hollow. It fails to account for how external

factors such as severe peer pressure, the desire to fit in, substance use, or a stark imbalance of power, can compromise a person's actual freedom to choose.

The understanding of consent is heavily split along gender lines, largely due to heteronormative dating scripts, early socialisation, and exposure to digital media. Studies have found a major discrepancy between young men and women when understanding consent. Men are often conditioned to assume the role of the sexual pursuer, which creates intense pressure to initiate and escalate, leading to anxiety around misreading signals or missing cues. Meanwhile, young women are socially conditioned to prioritise harmony, deflect tension, and avoid conflict. This makes explicitly stating boundaries or saying ‘no’ feel incredibly awkward or socially risky.

As for the interpretation of silence, men are more likely to interpret compliance, silence, or a lack of resistance as active permission or validation. Women often navigate encounters by relying on non-verbal discomfort or subtle deflections, hoping the other party will intuitively read their hesitation. External influences on men are disproportionately impacted by toxic online subcultures, dominant peer groups, and early exposure to pornography, which warp expectations and normalise aggressive entitlement. Young women disproportionately experience unwanted sexual acts and boundary oversteps, causing them to view consent primarily through the lens of safety and risk management.

When exploring the sensitive issue of consent, the core problem is that traditional frameworks treat consent as a static, legalistic transaction rather than a dynamic, social-emotional skill. For decades, education systems and public awareness campaigns have relied on rigid, binary logic to explain a deeply nuanced human interaction. This historical approach creates significant blind spots in real-world application, leaving young people ill-equipped to navigate the complexities of intimacy and relationship power dynamics. The lack of understanding surrounding consent is a case of systemic failure, and will require a re-education.

If you have been affected by any of the issues discussed in this article, please contact Rape Crisis England & Wales for free and confidential advice on 08080 500 2222, or use Cardiff University's Report and Support system to report sexual violence on campus.

out checking maps.

Perhaps the biggest change is the people. In first year, your flatmates, like siblings, are not people you necessarily choose to live with. You move into a flat with complete strangers and suddenly share a kitchen, bathroom and, if you're lucky, a living room. Then there are people you meet through societies, your course, work, sport, or simply going to the pub. The people you initially meet because you happen to sit next to them become the people you see several times a week. A one-off pub trip becomes a tradition. A society becomes something you look forward to every week. These things seem small, yet together they make the city feel lived in. Walking through campus, you can soon spot the underpass and be hit with half-memories of YOLO.

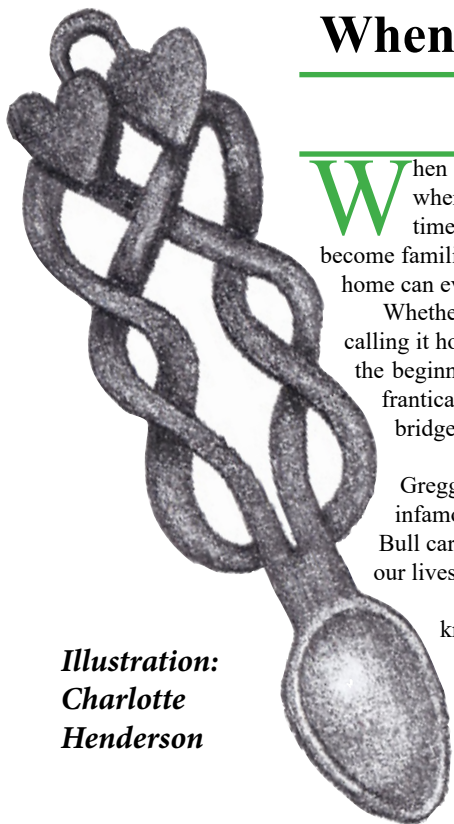
One student told *Gair Rhydd*: “You don't need a big group, you just need one person to make you feel like you have roots here, someone you can speak to.”

Unlike home, where many relationships are pre-existing, Cardiff gives you the opportunity to create your own community. A trip to the pub with lecture friends or watching *The Traitors* with your flatmates can slowly build relationships that become part of everyday life.

This extends to the spaces we live in. First-year accommodation can feel like somewhere you live rather than somewhere that is yours: clean countertops, identical rooms and fire-escape blankets can feel strangely sterile. Moving into a house allows you to make a space your own. Parents decorate your home; at university, you make your own, bringing your own pieces and quirks into a space shared with friends. Snapchat group chats become iMessage chats; strangers become people whose lives intertwine with yours.

Cardiff is a home like all dysfunctional homes: you can still get lost, forget things, or queue for YOLO far earlier than necessary. You perhaps don't realise it is home because it happens so gradually. But it is. It is your space, and you can make it your own. Maybe that is what makes Cardiff unique. It is a home that does not replace the one you came from but grows alongside it.

Illustration:
Charlotte
Henderson



What is So Interesting About Odour Anyway?

Bethan Jones
Head of Opinion

When was the first time you noticed you had a smell? I'm guessing you were around the age of 13, sitting in class with your school uniform tight under your arms. It was probably late June and as you lifted your elbows, you caught a slight whiff from your pits that had not been there before.

That feeling is unavoidable. We were warned of puberty's wrath: hair springing from places you didn't know existed, spots sprouting on your face, and sweat dripping from every pore (no wonder we were all so annoying). This was probably the first time we noticed our bodies had an odour; a new griminess compared to the inodorous bodies of our childhood. So what actually is smell and why do we turn our noses up to some in disgust?

Whatever the answer is, we spend the rest of our lives trying to hide it: showering every day, layering on antiperspirant deodorant, or filling our houses with candles and diffusers. But at what point does this habit of cleanliness move towards something more obsessive? And when will we admit to ourselves that our idea of cleanliness is virtually unobtainable?

I started thinking about this during the festival season over summer. Like many other sheeple I trekked across several fields, pitched a tent, and spent five days listening to hard D&B — sounds appealing, right? With showers sparse, or non-existent, we had to resort to the dreaded baby-wipe wash. But weirdly enough, the longer the weekend went on, the less I seemed to notice everyone's disgustingness.

The reason, I realised, was that there was nothing in the field telling us what clean should be. Covered in sweat and dirt, with no showers or baths around, there was no standard to reach for. You simply festered in your filth until you stopped noticing it. And it did make me wonder, what even is cleanliness if it is something we are not naturally pre-disposed to?

Scent has quietly shaped humanity for centuries. It is something we have learnt and adapted over time. In ancient Egypt, perfumes, tobacco, and incense were used to display wealth and status. By the 14th century, after the Black Death, scent started being associated with disease and illness: something which has seemingly stuck around ever since.

As humanity has progressed, we have moved our existence indoors, and a sterile existence has followed, one where hygiene comes from chemical-filled sprays and diffusers. We follow trends that tell us what is meant to smell good until we have landed on the latest one — odourlessness. We now wish to smell nothing.

And yet, scent is one of the most important aspects of living. Our brains use it to detect danger and sickness, it reminds us of old people, places, moments. But it is also tangled up in our social hierarchies of class, race, and gender. Capitalism feeds on this insecurity, selling us products to make us think we are more pleasant than we actually are.

Scent is the very essence of an animal. I have heard countless women say that the smell of their boyfriends' pits is one of the most attractive things about him. But to deem men's musk as sexy and rugged whilst condemning women's odour as unhygienic is to hold a double standard that some can never break free from.

Worse still, all this scrubbing could actually be worse for us, compromising our immune systems and leading to more allergies or illnesses. Especially since COVID, our bodies are not being exposed to bacteria that build our immunity to fight off the simplest of colds.

So next time you buy a vanilla perfume, or slather on that antiperspirant, maybe stop to think about what is so wrong with a little bit of sweat or dirt? And when you are out swimming on a beach, or sitting around a fire with your friends, being a little bit grimy isn't as bad as it's all made out to be.

Image: Wikimedia Commons

Did School Set Us Up Properly?

Kathryn Rees
Contributor

Nobody talks enough about the giant leap that students take from getting their GCSEs and A-levels in school to attempting to get a degree at university. So, let's talk about it.

While in school, students have the opportunity to learn academics, participate in sport, and find friendships for life. But what schools do not offer is how to adapt to the lifestyle and education taught at uni. While both teach academics, there is still a massive divide.

University has a lot more content, reading and overall work than school has ever taught us, and we are supposed to learn it all in the space of three years. Nobody really knows what to expect when going to their first lecture and seminar. Being at a city-based university, like Cardiff, also means that students, particularly freshers, may find it hard getting from one place to another, as school is always taught in just one place.

There is no mention of this in our school curriculum; I think that can be considered a problem for students as they have no idea what to expect. This is particularly hard for freshers and here is why: One of the main things that students struggle with is adapting to the university lifestyle. When at school, it's simple. We wake up, get dressed, have our breakfast, go to school, then come home, and that's it on repeat. However, uni is different.

Firstly, students don't have lectures and seminars in the same places each day. They must figure out where to go and try not to get lost. Secondly, when students go back to their accommodation, they

How to Stay Single: A Comprehensive and Realistic Guide

Arielle Melamed
Opinion Editor

Too often, we're bombarded with unsolicited advice on our love lives. From self-proclaimed gurus preaching self-love, to Redditors with names such as lonelyboy1998 dispensing dubious advice that would make any therapist weep.

But what if you don't want tips on finding love? What if instead you prefer to remain single without becoming insufferable, moving to a monastery, or developing an unhealthy attachment to your houseplants?

Fear not. This is not your run-of-the-mill self-help guide promising transformation through meditation and half marathons. Nor is it a Reddit thread written by someone whose last romantic encounter was in 2017. No. This is a field-tested guide on how to actually stay single.

Step 1

Buy a longish water bottle (those weird ones that you find in markets) and every night before bed pop the kettle on and snuggle up with it to emulate the body heat of another individual (ideally in a position where your arm almost immediately gets pins and needles).

Remain in that position until you think your hot water bottle has fallen asleep or at the very least wouldn't be offended if you rolled over so you could properly drift off.

Step 2

Head to Slug & Lettuce for happy hour and order an Old Fashioned. It signals stability, maturity and a departure from your past antics which featured chaotic neon-coloured VKs. Photograph it for Instagram with the ceiling out of shot, leaving your loyal story viewers to ponder the probability of another person being there.

Step 3

At night, settle into bed for a little quality time with yourself. Unfortunately, your £50 investment in self-love appears to have other plans. Adjust it slightly. Nothing. Try another angle. Worse. At this point, you're less in the mood for romance than conducting a product review.

After twenty minutes of what can only be described as a technical troubleshooting session, consider consulting the instruction manual. Unfortunately, it cannot account for the fact that you are both the customer and the customer service representative, and neither of you has any idea what you're doing.

Eventually, give up and reach for your phone. Scroll through Instagram, stumble across a photograph of a happy couple, and feel a sudden urge to launch your expensive purchase out of the window. Resist. It cost £50, and in this economy, you can't afford to make brazen financial

decisions.

Remember, the evening isn't necessarily about reaching a satisfying conclusion. It's about learning to enjoy your own company, even when your idea of a romantic night in has turned into a customer-service nightmare.

There's always the hot water bottle. At least that knows how to hold you properly.

Step 4

Revisit messages you sent an ex-lover. Scroll until the text bubbles feel like archaeological evidence of an ancient civilisation you once inhabited. Re-read the paragraphs explaining your feelings and double-texts beginning, "Hey, I know you're probably busy, but..." Appreciate the sheer unbridled audacity of believing someone might want to hear from you.

For maximum effect, revisit messages sent after they started pulling away. Relive the feeling of offering someone the chance to hurt you a second, third, fourth time as if you were running some kind of loyalty scheme. Cringe at your own sincerity. Question your judgement. Consider throwing your phone into the Taff.

Step 5

Watch Wong Kar-wai's *In the Mood for Love* alone, late at night, ideally in miserable weather. Fantasise that you're in a Hong Kong apartment in 1962, doomed to pine for someone you can't have. Savour the lingering glances, silk dresses and agony of two people standing three centimetres from happiness.

Convince yourself your love life is equally cinematic. Consider sending a message you really shouldn't. Resist. You are not Maggie Cheung, your ex is not Tony Leung, and your life has no Nat King Cole soundtrack.

Step 6

Make a playlist titled 'Songs for the Girl Who Doesn't Need Anyone'. Feel like an enigmatic indie-film protagonist strolling through a foreign city with a cigarette and an unshakeable sense of self.

In reality, you're trudging to Lidl for oat milk. Since when do you drink oat milk?

A love song comes on. Skip it. You have standards.

Step 7

Become insufferable about your independence. Brag about having the bed to yourself and doing whatever you want, whenever you want. Emphasise this especially loudly to someone in a relationship.

Step 8

Finally, learn to love yourself, or at the very least tolerate your own company without treating singledom like a waiting room. Retrieve your hot water bottle and settle in for another night of blissful solitude.

are alone, without their family. They must make their own food and clean their own clothes. Some freshers may find this completely normal and are already used to this lifestyle, but that is not because of school: it is because they lived independently from a younger age, due to the way they have been brought up. Others may struggle with this, and it's because all they ever learnt in school was education, not lifestyle, and their families have always cooked and cleaned for them.

Another thing that school doesn't prepare you for is the great separation from your family. We are used to seeing our parents every day after school and telling them how our day has been. Parents were people not for students to rely on, but our inner child.

And the worst part now is that we are now miles away from our familiar safe place and are forced to stand on our own two feet independently. Some look at this as an opportunity, while others look at this as a huge step out of their comfort zone. School never prepared us for this, and I think of everything, that separation from comfort is the worst part, particularly for those that are close with their families.

So, to answer the question 'did school set us up properly?'. No, they did not. It may have helped educate us and get us into our dream universities, but it did not teach us what to expect with lectures and seminars, with lifestyle, or even with being apart from people we love.

This doesn't mean that school is not beneficial. It just means that maybe there is room for improvement and that maybe, someday, schools could have weekly sessions during students' last year before university, teaching them what to expect and leaving them prepared for their future.

Wikipedia: Have We Been Told a Lie?

Ellie Dixon
Staff Writer

Any student who has researched anything at any time of their lives has been told the same thing: “never trust Wikipedia, anyone could write anything on there”. The site is vilified by parents and teachers alike for its alleged unreliability, but is Wikipedia truly the misinformation bogeyman that we have been told it is?

Now more than ever, I find myself coming to Wikipedia’s defence. However, it would be wrong to present it as flawless; ironically enough, the site actually has a page detailing its many controversies and failures to uphold neutrality — one of its ‘five pillars’. The page is a detailed and surprisingly entertaining read. From staff of eventual US President Joe Biden to journalists, celebrities, and even regular citizens, it seems countless people have attempted to edit Wikipedia pages either in their favour: to further their own agenda, or even as a form of character assassination against their nemeses.

While these tales of online turf wars are certainly amusing, some of Wikipedia’s fumbles are far less so. In 2023, Wikipedia pages had been edited as part of a “systematic” campaign that sought to minimise the role of Polish society in the Holocaust, as well as blame Jewish people for their own persecution. Likewise, in 2007, Turkish professor Taner Akcam was detained by authorities at a Montreal airport. Their reasoning was grounded in a print-out of his Wikipedia page, where he had been falsely labelled a dangerous terrorist in an act of online vandalism.

However, does the blame for these incidents lie solely with Wikipedia, or is there a deeper issue at play with our own critical thinking?

Far bigger organisations have made far worse blunders than Wikipedia, from *The Sun*’s slanderous coverage of the Hillsborough tragedy to our own government’s fabricated claims of WMDs to justify the Iraq War. It seems absurd that Wikipedia of all organisations holds itself most accountable where misinformation is concerned. Because while a page outlining your own shortcomings may seem like a hilarious own-goal, Wikipedia’s honesty on this front is actually a credit to its dependability. It even offers full transparency on when a page was edited and by whom, allowing the reader to assess the source of

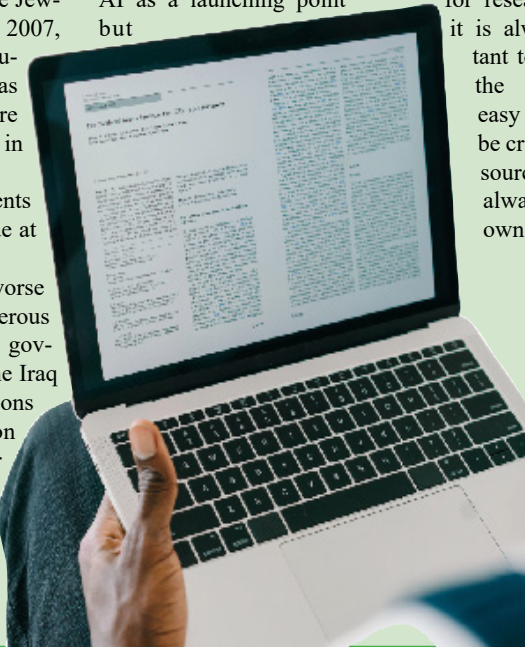
the information given for themselves.

The issue, of course, is that not everyone uses the site in this way — most people simply want pre-digested information which is instant and accessible. And where people once turned to Wikipedia for this, a more sinister source of misinformation has taken its place.

Google’s AI summaries are notoriously unreliable. Incorrect dates and statistics are regularly pulled from Facebook and Reddit (its second and fourth most-cited sources which are, ironically, heavily restricted by Wikipedia). Yet, many now trust it blindly as a source of information: no thanks to Google forcing it upon browser users as the very first search result for quite literally anything. Unlike Wikipedia, AI cannot be held accountable — there are no human fact-checkers and sources are not scrutinised as they should be. Truth comes at the cost of convenience and critical thought.

This is the root of the issue. People want convenience; nobody wants to dig through textbooks and reports when they can just ask ChatGPT or Gemini or skim a Wikipedia page. But this blind faith in flawed sources of information can, as we have seen above, cause real harm.

The “don’t trust Wikipedia” mantra is a band-aid solution for a far more complex issue. Because, in reality, using Wikipedia or (as much as I personally despise it) AI as a launching point for research is fine: it is always important to go beyond the comfortable, easy answer, to be critical of your sources, and to always do your own research.



Lost in Translation

Julia Witek
Contributor

Globally, language is the foundation for every human life. This ability to successfully communicate intent and purpose through language is what has aided the development and evolution of humanity to what it is today. Slang and humour strongly depend on the historical and cultural context of the community in which this form of communication takes place. In Britain, there are jokes that are seen as classic staples of the culture, such as “can’t park there”. However, this sense of humour may be lost on people who are not from here.

As an individual who was raised in an immigrant household of two hard-working Polish people, I was taught the fundamentals of both English and Polish from childhood. By the time I began school, I had the ability to properly communicate my needs and wants in both languages; however, when it came to the English language, I lacked the cultural knowledge of British jokes, slang, and sarcasm. These aspects of the language were never explicitly taught to me, since during my childhood, my family primarily opted for Polish slang and humour. However, since then, I have been able to find my footing with British slang through exposure to that cultural humour through friends and media.

Language is not only a form of communication but also plays a significant part in a person’s identity. It may be that restricting the expression of someone’s identity is like restricting communication between languages, since the observer or recipient is not receiving an actual depiction of a message or personality.

A more local example of this is the experience of Welsh-speaking students at Cardiff University. English-speaking students outnumber the Welsh-speaking students at a large scale, despite the university being the largest and most popular in Wales. In the 2020/2021 academic year, 9.9% of the students spoke Welsh, with only 4.8% of them being fluent.

Consequently, even when attending a Welsh university, Welsh students often feel isolated and disconnected from their peers. This is not because of difficulties in translating and understanding the Welsh and English languages but rather because they feel limited in their expression of their personal identity. The university actively makes attempts to rectify this issue by promoting Welsh-only modules and seminars in different courses and promoting Welsh societies and language translation. Translation issues do not always come in the form of the languages themselves, but can also stem from cultural and ideological differences.

Languages around the world are vastly different, with different rules and terms that must be followed in order to successfully communicate information and ideas in a grammatically correct way. They play a role in how people perceive their environment and how much attention to detail they have in their everyday lives, as some languages require specific verbs or information to properly describe the situation.

Some argue that to learn a new language is to learn a new way of thinking, as a person may need to adapt to new ways of logical processing to accurately communicate. It is important to note that people’s intelligence is not dependent on the number of languages or which languages they know, and therefore somebody’s viewpoint and contribution should not be disregarded because of their linguistic background.

Overall, language shapes our identities, experiences and ideologies, helping establish a person’s position within a community or culture. It is influenced by internal and external factors, including historical events. With tolerance, kindness and patience, the limitations of translation between languages become minimised as we take the time and effort to understand each other to the best of our ability.

The Impact of Writing

William Jackson
Staff Writer

It cannot be misunderstood that writing invites itself into every corner of our lives. It is an exercise that is rehearsed, polished, and expanded when it needs to be. No doubt we write a lot, despite its linguistic difficulty or our struggle to find the right word in our expansive catalogue of synonyms and antonyms.

However, this struggle conveys a slow construction of an integral part of our identity. Writing is a personally possessive trait. It should not be only subjected to competence. No, it is more than that. Writing is our personal brand — a signature, a celebration that is a visible expression of our social, political, cultural outlook.

Writing is the utterance of our language, an image of our language. But what makes writing enthralling is its vastness. Another arm of consciousness, writing is a way of deeply translating our attitudes, interpretation, covering every detail more clearly than, say, speaking. Writing has no boundaries, no distance. It seems to be poetically symmetrical with the world: we can write about anything without it feeling out of reach. Like painting, we

have a palette that we use, including conciseness, clarity, and above all, conviction. We can style how we want to come across, or how we want to frame it. Quite simply, we are only limited by our enlightened creativity.

Writing is an exercise that seems to always generate intellectual excitement or discussion. Some writers, like Susan Sontag, saw writing as a compulsion, a literary engine that never seems to exhaust itself.

Further, writing is a vehicle for describing what it means to be independent individuals or thinkers. It facilitates advocacy, virtue, debate, personality, or brutality, but it can also summon beauty and defining prose. No doubt the greatest writers — Hemingway, Morrison, Orwell, and Kafka — saw writing as a form of emotional and intellectual endurance, a way of unveiling a new sensation previously hidden, not properly thought of, or treated with suspicion by those who saw it as a threat to power.

Following on, thinkers saw it as a means of advocating protest, a demonstration to regimes or policies that denied the rights of being human, be it Václav Havel, Franz Fanon, or Harriet Beecher Stowe. Writing can spawn change, and it is certainly the most human trait we possess.

As with a sport or a muscle, practising writing daily registers greater depth and nuance in what we see through writing. It should not be confined to a classroom. We should practise through journalling, through a simple gesture of appreciation, or by writing a personal essay ungraded. Strengthening writing elsewhere can be emotionally and cognitively beneficial. Writing about the

best moments of our lives can help us remember them even better. We can describe scenes in depth: who we were with, the lighting, the joy, what we saw, and so forth.

It seems essential to write in the same way we choose to read, and it is detrimental if we refuse to write. We are not ‘bad’ writers. None of us are. Writing can explain who we are, what can be conveyed across, and help us understand our identity or who we are more intimately.

Writing for ourselves is a message to ourselves; understanding the feelings or interpretations can articulate a lot more than simply registering an emotion or idea and severing engagement. Writing is by no means an easy feat, but it is truly rewarding. So next time, keep a little notebook, write down something you want to remember. Writing anything is a motif of our identity.

Images: Wikimedia Commons



Gwireddu Breuddwyd: Cartref Cymraeg i Fyfyrrwyr yn Llys Senghennydd

Ela Rhys
Pennaeth Taf-Od

Yn dilyn cadarnhad gan Brifysgol Caerdydd ym mis Rhagfyr llynedd y byddai pob un o fflatiau Cymraeg Llys Senghennydd bellach mewn un bloc, mae'r myfyrwyr cyntaf wedi setlo yno.

Er fod Llys Senghennydd yn draddodiadol yn cael ei adnabod fel y cartref i fyfyrwyr Cymraeg Prifysgol Caerdydd; dydy'r neuadd yn y blynyddoedd a fu heb fod yn uniaith Gymraeg.

Wedi'i gwasgaru dros 3 bloc oedd y fflatiau ar gyfer myfyrwyr Llys Senghennydd oedd â'u bryd ar rannu llety gyda siaradwyr Cymraeg eraill. Golyga hynny fod y fflatiau gyda siaradwyr Cymraeg yn rhan o'r bloc oedd hefyd yn cynnwys siaradwyr ieithoedd eraill.

Fodd bynnag, eleni, am y tro cyntaf erioed yn hanes Llys Senghennydd, mae'r myfyrwyr a ddewisiodd llety Cymraeg yn y llys mewn un bloc. Mae hyn yn gwireddu breuddwyd nid yn unig y myfyrwyr ond Is-lywyddion Cymraeg Undeb Myfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd sydd wedi ymgychu yn gyson dros y blynyddoedd.

“Dyma gyfle euraidd i fyfyrwyr adeiladu cymuned ieithyddol Gymraeg o'r cychwyn cyntaf”

Owain Siôn yw Is-Lywydd y Gymraeg eleni ac mae'n hynnod o falch bod lleisiau myfyrwyr Cymraeg wedi cael eu clywed, dywedodd:

“Wedi dros ddeugain mlynedd o ymgychu, mae'r Undeb Myfyrwyr ac UMCC yn falch iawn bod lleisiau myfyrwyr Cymraeg wedi eu clywed a bod fflatiau iaith-Gymraeg Senghennydd bellach i gyd o dan yr un to.”

“Er yn gam gymharol fach tuag at gampws gwirioneddol ddwyieithog yng Nghaerdydd, dyma gyfle euraidd i fyfyrwyr adeiladu cymuned ieithyddol Gymraeg o'r cychwyn cyntaf - un fydd yn rhoi'r hyder iddynt fyw bywyd academiaidd a chymdeithasol gwbl-Gymraeg trwy gydol eu hamser yn y brifysgol.”

“Yn wir, roedd hi'n siomedig clywed bod nifer wedi methu cael lle yn y fflatiau hyn, ond mae hyn yn atgyfnerthu ein pwynt bod cymuned Gymraeg fywiog i'w gael ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd a bod cryn dipyn o waith dal i'w wneud.”

“Mi fyddwn ni nawr yn gweithio'n adeiladol gyda'r brifysgol i sicrhau eu bod yn barod i ymateb i'r galw cynyddol am lety Cymraeg fel y gwelwyd eleni, a bod creu lle ac awyrgylch i'r Gymraeg ffynnu wrth galon unrhyw gynlluniau i adnewyddu ac ail-siapio'r campws yn y dyfodol.”

Yn naturiol, mae hyn am arwain tuag at feithrin cymuned Gymreig glos i las-fyfyrwyr gan hwyluso'r brosoes o ymgartrefu yn y brifddinas ac mae sawl un yn gredinol o hyn yn barod.

“Mae wedi gwneud i mi deimlo'n gartrefol yn syth”

Merch sy'n dyst i hyn yw Elliw Siôn. Mae hi wedi dechrau ei thaith yn y brifysgol eleni ac wedi ymgartrefu yn Llys Senghennydd.

“Braf yw cael bod yng nghanol bwrlwm bloc Cymraeg Senghennydd gan ei fod yn le croesawgar a chyfeillgar. Mae wedi bod yn berffaith wrth i mi symud i'r ddinas a dilyn cwrs nad oes cymaint o Gymru Cymraeg yn ei ddilyn sef Cyfrifeg a Chyllid.

“Mor braf ydi hi i gael cyfle i gymysgu â Chymru o bob cwr o'r wlad a dod i adnabod pobl newydd yn y neuadd breswyl.”

“Mae'r gymuned Gymraeg wedi gwneud i mi deimlo'n gartrefol yn syth sy'n deimlad arbennig iawn” meddai.

“Teimlad braf ydi cael defnyddio fy iaith gyntaf mewn lle dieithr”

Newydd gychwyn ei blwyddyn gyntaf mae Mei Madrun yn ogystal ac mae hithau hefyd yn preswyluo yn Llys Senghennydd. Dywedodd Mei bod cael byw mewn bloc Cymraeg yn deimlad “arbennig” a'i bod hi'n “anodd credu nad yw hyn wedi bodoli'n y blynyddoedd diwethaf.”

Wrth siarad â *Gair Rhydd*, dywedodd Mei, “mae'n sicr wedi fy helpu i ymgartrefu'n y ddinas gan ei bod hi'n fwy naturiol i mi siarad Cymraeg wrth ofyn cwestiynau a chyfathrebu'n gyffredinol. Teimlad braf ydi cael defnyddio fy iaith gyntaf mewn lle dieithr.

“Dwi'n meddwl y bydd hyn yn yn fuddiol ar gyfer cynnal yr iaith yn y ddinas gan ein galluogi i greu cymuned Gymreig cryfach wrth ymgynnull a threfnu digwyddiadau.”

Ar drothwy cyfnod cyffrous yn hanes y Gymraeg ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd, mae mawr obeithio y bydd hyn yn arwain tuag at hwyluso bywyd y myfyrwyr ynghyd â sicrhau fod y Gymraeg yn ein cymuned yn mynd o nerth i nerth.



O'r Garreg Las i Gaerdydd: Edrych ymlaen at Gaerdydd 2028

Sami Sullivan
Golygydd Taf-Od

Daeth miloedd o bobl at ei gilydd i ddathlu'r iaith Gymraeg, diwylliant, cerddoriaeth a chreadigrwydd, a hynny o ganlyniad i Eisteddfod hynod lwyddiannus, y Garreg Las, dros yr Haf. Wedi wythnos o gystadlu, perfformio a chymdeithasu, mae'n amlwg bod y Brifwyl yn chwarae rôl ganolog fel rhan o ddiwylliant Cymru.

Heidiodd dros 100,000 o bobl i'r ‘Rifera Gymreig’ wrth i Lantwd gynnig amrywiaeth o fandiau, cystadlaethau newydd ac ymweliadau pwysig. Treuliodd y Prif Weinidog ddigon o amser ar y maes, yn sgwrsio a mwynhau. Bu'r maes yn orlawn cyn i'r Bandana gamu ar lwyfan, am y tro cyntaf ers deng mlynedd o saib, ac yn wir, aeth bawb i “sefyll wrth y bar” ar ôl y gig.

Dywedodd Fflur James, Cadeirydd Pwyllgor Maes B, fod yr Eisteddfod hon wedi “torri tir newydd gan gwmpasu tair sir - Dê Ceredigion, Gogledd Sir Benfro a Gorllewin Sir Gâr”. Soniodd hefyd am yr “ymdrech cafodd ei roi yn lleol er mwyn cynnal yr Eisteddfod mewn ardal Gwledig”.

Ceir trafodaeth ynghylch tuedd newydd yr Eisteddfod i baru siroedd er mwyn rhannu'r gwaith ariannu i fwy o ardaloedd:

“Mae'r targed o £450,000 i gael ei godi ar gyfer pob ‘Steddfod yn llawer o arian, ac mae gofyn i un sir geisio’i godi yn dipyn o gamp, yn enwedig mewn ardaloedd cefn gwlad. Dwi mor falch bod Ei-

steddfod 2027 yn dod â Maldwyn a Meirionnydd at ei gilydd. Mae'n bwysig bod dim ffin yn gwahanu pobl mor debyg”.

Mae'r Eisteddfod Genedlaethol yn cynhyrchu tua £16 Miliwn o bunnoedd i'r economi, pob tro caiff ei gynnal. Yn Eisteddfod 2024, “i bob punt cafodd eu buddsoddi, daeth £60 yn ôl i'r Economi leol”, yn ôl Business Live. Soniodd Fflur James bod “pawb yn diolch i'r Eisteddfod” wrth gydnabod y buddion Economaidd, ac “roedd y gwestai, tafarndai a siopau'n llawn, a llawer o stondinau yn teithio i Steddfod 2027 oherwydd dylanwad y Garreg Las”.

Tra'n edrych ymlaen at Brifwyl y Brifddinas yn 2028, dywedodd Fflur James, “da ni mor llwus yn ardal Caerdydd, mae gymaint o amrywiaeth o bobl yma, ac mae'n rhaid i ni ddefnyddio hynny i fantais, a dim ceisio gwneud hi'n Steddfod tebyg i'r blynydd cynt.”

“Gobeithio bod Eisteddfod y Garreg Las wedi dangos i beidio trio chwarae'n saff, wrth gael ‘acts’ annisgwyl, a cheisio dod â siaradwyr newydd, o bob ochr y byd, at ei gilydd mewn ffyrdd hollol newydd”.

Hir-oes i'r Eisteddfod!

‘Top Tips’ i Las-fyfyrwyr

Rhodri Jenkins
Cyfrannwr

Mae Wythnos y Glas wedi dod i ben erbyn hyn ac mae rhaid gweud - dyna beth oedd wythnos! O nos- weithu GymGym i ddigwyddiadau Undeb y Myfyrwyr, roedd hi'n wythnos llawn dop! Ond nawr bod yr holl helynt drosodd, mae'n bryd i chi lasfyfyrwyr setlo mewn i fywyd arferol yn y brifysgol. Felly dyma gwpwl o ‘top tips’ i lasfyfyrwyr.

Gwedwch ie i bopeth:

Boed yn ymuno â chymdeithas neu drio rhywbeth newydd, mae Caerdydd yn orlawn gyda cyfleoedd i fyfyrwyr. Gallwch drio bywyd mewn amryw o leoliadau ar draws y ddinas neu rhoi ymgais ar chwaraeon newydd. Gallwch fynd ar dripiad addysgiadol neu gymdeithasol drwy nifer o gymdeithasau'r brifysgol. Hyn i gyd tra'n creu ffrindiau newydd a gweld pob cornel o Gaerdydd, a chofiwch, dyw hi byth rhy hwyr i ymuno. Felly gwedwch ie i bopeth- mae nifer o gyfleoedd i gael i bawb o bob wedd o fywyd.

Llenwch eich amser rhydd:

Yn amlwg, mae'r holl gyfleoedd yn mynd lan ac amser, a rhwng y cyfleoedd yma, darlithoedd, seminarau a gweithdai, bydd genych chi amser rhydd yn dal i fod! Byddwch yn ddoeth yn yr amser rhydd yma drwy wneud

ychydig o waith - yn darllen am eich cwrs neu 'n paratoi ar gyfer seminarau. Mae'n bwysig i chi aros ar ben eich holl waith felly, manteisiwch ar eich amser rhydd i wneud hyn. Er bod sgrolio ar y cyfryngau cymdeithasol yn gallu swnio'n wael, mae'n grêt er mwyn ffeindio ry-sait newydd neu tips i lasfyfyrwyr. Manteisiwch ar hyn, mae nifer fawr iawn o fyfyrwyr yn defnyddio Tiktok neu Instagram ar gyfer cynllunio prydau, peidiwch gwneud eich deiet i gyd yn orlawn o ‘pot noodles’ a ‘sweet treat’ o Tesco!

Arian:

Mae'n gallu ymddangos yn frawychus i gael eich benthyciad gan Student Finance Wales a gorfod cyllido, arbed a peidio gwario'r holl arian ar siopa dillad! Rhowch gyllid wythnosol i'ch hunan, a gweithiwch o gwmpas hynny. Prynu bwyd unwaith yr wythnos i bara'r wythnos gyfan, cadw ychydig o arian ar gyfer taliadau pwysig fel rhent neu blaendal i fynd ar drip, ac wrth gwrs ychydig o arian ar gyfer y gweithgareddau cymdeithadol (does dim rhaid i hyn gynnwys alcohol!). Mae'n ddoeth i gael dau gyfrif banc - un ar gyfer arbed, ac un ar gyfer gwario eich cyllid wythnosol. Felly dyna'r tri ‘top tip’ mwyaf i lasfyfyrwyr. Cofiwch ‘weud ie i bopeth, llenwi eich amser rhydd gyda bach o waith, a bod yn ddoeth gyda'ch arian. Yn olaf, cofiwch joio'r profiad. Mae symud o adref yn brofiad newydd i bawb ac er ei fod yn gallu bod yn frawychus, mae'n gyfle i fod yn fwy annibynnol ac yn eich paratoi ymhellach at fywyd fel oedolyn.

O Gymru i Batagonia:

Pedair Wythnos ar Ben Arall y Byd

Efa Jones
Golygydd Taf-Od

Yr haf hwn, treuliais i a phum myfyriwr arall o Brifysgol Caerdydd fis ym Mhatagonia, gan aros yn y Gaiman a Threvelin, dau le sy'n gartref i gymuned o siaradwyr Cymraeg. Diolch i ysgoloriaeth y brifysgol, cefais gyfle unigryw i brofi bywyd y Wladfa, dod i nabod y bobl leol a dysgu mwy am y gymuned Gymraeg sydd wedi datblygu ar ochr arall y byd.

O'r eiliad y cyrhaeddodd ni yn y Gaiman, cawsom groeso cynnes iawn gan y gymuned Gymreig leol. Er ein bod wedi teithio miloedd o filltiroedd, doedd hi ddim yn cymryd hir i deimlo'n gartrefol. Roedd cynhesrwydd y bobl a'u balchder tuag at yr iaith Gymraeg yn amlwg o'r cychwyn gyntaf. Wrth glywed y Gymraeg o'm cwmpas, teimlais yn llawer agosach at Gymru, gan roi cyfle i mi weld dros fy hun sut mae'r iaith a'r diwylliant wedi parhau i ffynnu dros y blynyddoedd.

Yn ystod ein hamser yno, cawsmom gyfle i helpu gyda gwersi Cymraeg yn y bedair ysgol Gymraeg: Ysgol yr Hendre, Ysgol y Gaiman, Ysgol y Cwm a Choleg Camwy. Roedd clywed y Gymraeg yn cael ei siarad gan blant ifanc gydag acenion Sbaeneg ar ochr arall y byd yn agoriad llygaid ac yn dyst i ymdrech a brwdfrydedd y gymuned i gadw'r iaith yn fyw.

Un o brofiadau mwyaf diddorol y daith oedd mynychu dosbarthiadau Cymraeg i oedolion. Clywsom straeon am gysylltiadau teuluol â Chymru, am neiniau a theidiau oedd yn siarad Cymraeg, ac am gyfnod pan nad oedd llawer o gyfleoedd i ddysgu'r iaith yn ffurfiol.

Roedd gan bawb eu rhesymau personol dros ddysgu, ac roedd clywed eu hanesion yn gwneud i mi werthfawrogi'r iaith mewn ffordd hollol newydd.



Buom yn lwcus iawn i allu profi Eisteddfod y Bobl Ifanc tra oeddwn yn y Gaiman. Cawsmon ein cynnwys ym mharatodaau yr Eisteddfod gan gymryd rhan mewn ymarferion dawnsio gwerin a chôr. Cynhaliwyd yr Eisteddfod yn ein hail benwythnos, roedd yn ddathliad bywiog yn y Gymraeg a'r Sbaeneg, gyda'r cystadlu'n parhau tan oriau mân y bore! Teithiodd pobl o bob rhan o'r Ariannin i fod yn rhan ohoni.

Wrth gwrs, roedd digon o gyfleoedd i weld tirwedd Patagonia hefyd. O ymweld â Phorth Madryn i weld y morfilod ac Amgueddfa'r Glaniad, i dreulio amser ym Mharc Cenedlaethol



Los Alerces ger Trevelin. Roedd pob profiad yn cynnig rhywbeth gwahanol.

Cyn teithio i'r Wladfa, doeddwn i ddim yn siŵr beth i'w ddisgwyl o ran sefyllfa'r Gymraeg ym Mhatagonia. Ond, cefais fy synnu gan frwdfrydedd y bobl a'u hymroddiad tuag at yr iaith. Mae cymaint o bobl wedi ymroi eu bywydau at sicrhau bod y Gymraeg yn dal i gael ei defnyddio, ei siarad, a'i gwerthfawrogi yno.

Mae'n amhosib crynhoi pedair wythnos mor arbennig mewn ychydig gannoedd o eiriau. Ond un peth sy'n sicr, rwyf wedi dychwelyd i Gymru gyda gwerthfawrogiad newydd o'r iaith, ac o'r bobl sy'n gweithio i sicrhau ei dyfodol. Nid hanes y gorffennol yn unig yw'r Gymraeg yn y Wladfa, ond iaith sy'n parhau i gael ei dysgu, ei thrysori a'i dathlu.

Llwyddiant Myfyrwyr yn Hanner Marathon Caerdydd

Dewi Williams
Cyfrannwr

Ymgasglodd dros 25,000 o redwyr yng nghanol dinas Caerdydd ar ddydd Sul y 4ydd o Hydref wrth i'r hanner marathon ddominydu'r brifddinas am y 23ain tro. Dechreuodd y ras sy'n ymestyn 13.1 milltir tu fas i Gastell Caerdydd, gyda'r ffordd yn mynd a rhedwyr lawr i'r bae ac yna lan i Barc y Rhath cyn gorffen tu fas i Neuadd y Ddinas.

Yn ogystal â'r rhedwyr, ymgasglodd miloedd o gefnogwyr ar hyd strydoedd y ddinas wrth i deuluoedd, ffrindiau a thrigolion lleol gefnogi rhedwyr ar hyd y ffordd. Mae disgwyl i'r ras godi swm o dros £4 miliwn tuag at elusennau ac achosion da. Cafodd record cwrs y menywod ei thorri gan Joyciline Jepkosgei o Kenya wrth iddi hi ennill gydag amser o 1:05:40, a Gideon Kiprotich o Kenya enillodd ras y dynion gydag amser o 59:34.

Cwblhaodd nifer o eiconau Cymreig y ras, gydag enwau mawr o'r byd chwaraeon fel y cyn-chwaraewr pêl-droed Aaron Ramsey a'r cyn-chwaraewyr rygbi Shane Williams ac Adam Jones yn cymryd rhan. Fe wnaeth rhai o gyflwynwyr cyfarwydd S4C hefyd gymryd rhan, gydag Angharad Mair yn llwyddo i dorri record Brydeinig menywod dros 65 oed, a Heledd Cynwal yn rhedeg ochr yn ochr gyda'i thad a oedd yn rasio am y tro olaf yn 80 mlwydd oed.

Bu nifer o fyfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd yn rhedeg yr hanner marathon hefyd, gan gynnwys Swyn Dafydd a Steff Davies. Dywedodd Swyn, sy'n astudio'r Gyfraith a'r Gymraeg: "Odd e'n brofiad amesing - hwn yw'r ail flwyddyn i fi gymryd rhan yn yr hanner marathon, a ma'r awyrgylch di bod yn wych ac mor gefnogol y ddau dro!"

Dywedodd ei bod hi wedi "Codi arian tuag at Am biwlans Awyr Cymru" eleni, a hefyd wedi rhedeg er mwyn "mwynhau'r profiad".

Ychwanegodd, "Gan bo' fi'n troi'n 21 mis yma, o ni'n meddwl bod e'n gyfle da i redeg 21km i droi'n 21!"

Rhedeg yn gystadleuol oedd Steff beth bynnag, wrth



iddo geisio gosod PB newydd yn ystod y ras. Dywedodd Steff, sy'n astudio gwleidyddiaeth:

"Odd e'n brofiad arbennig iawn, llawer o ryddhad wrth groesi'r llinell. Fy nod oedd ceisio rhedeg mor gyflym â phosib gan redeg dros fy nghlwb rhedeg - Harriers Caerfyrddin."

Fel nifer o deuluoedd eraill mae'n siŵr, dywedodd Steff bod aelodau o'i deulu wedi rhedeg gyda fe hefyd, gyda'i dad a'i chwaer yn cwblhau'r hanner marathon.

Er y bwrllwm a'r dathlu, newyddion trist oedd yn hawlio'r penawdau wythnos yma wrth i Run 4 Wales gadarnhau bod person wedi marw yn ystod y digwyddiad.

Gyda'r digwyddiad yn parhau i dyfu, gan ddenu miloedd o gefnogwyr a rhai o redwyr gorau'r byd, mae'n amser cyffrous i fyfyrwyr yn y ddinas sy'n awyddus i gymryd rhan. Mae'r balot ar gyfer hanner marathon blwyddyn nesaf bellach ar agor, felly os ydych chi'n ystyried rhedeg yn gystadleuol neu ar gyfer achos da, ewch amdani!



Hir yw bob ymaros i Elfyn Evans

Ifan Meredith
Dirprwy Brif-Olygydd

Ar ôl dod yn ail bump gwaith, mae Elfyn Evans (o'r diwedd) yn Ben-campwr Byd Ralio, y Cymro cyntaf i wneud hynny a'r Prydeinwr cyntaf i wneud hynny mewn 25 mlynedd. Bydd ei enw yn y llyfrau hanes fel y trydydd gyrrwr o Brydain i gyflawni'r gamp gan ymuno â Colin McRae a Richard Burns.

Daeth diweddglôg ar flwyddyn o ralio rhyngwladol ddydd Sul, Hydref 4, wrth i Rali Sardinia gael ei chynnal ar yr ynys yn yr Eidal. Roedd cyffro a bwrllwm yn mynd mewn i'r rali cyda'r Cymro, Elfyn Evans ar frig y ben-campwriaeth.

Ond, roedd y cyffro ond ar ddechrau wrth i'r Cymro ddechrau ar y rasio ddydd Iau. Roedd 17 cymal yn rhan o'r rali hwn ond erbyn y diwedd, un cymal oedd o bwys, yr un olaf, y Cymal Cyffro ac am gyffro. Daeth amheuan i Elfyn Evans wrth iddo ddioddef tylliad (puncture) yn y rali ddydd Sul, cymal ond un o'r un olaf. Cafodd hyn effaith ar ei obeithion i gipio pwyntiau o ddydd Sul y rali. Toc wedi 13.00 wnaeth y gyrrwyr rasio am y tro olaf yn 2026 ar Gymal Cyf-

fro Rali Sardinia ac am gymall! Roedd y cyfan yn dod lawr i hyn - un cymal ac yn y pen draw, un cornel.

Thierry Neuville o Wlad Belg osododd yr amser gyflymaf drwy'r cymal gan ei gwblhau mewn 04:54.2 a 5.6 eiliad tu ôl i'r gŵr o Wlad Belg, roedd Elfyn Evans gydag amser o 04:59.8. Ond roedd un gyrrwr i ddod, arweinydd y Rali, Oliver Solberg. Roedd y gŵr o Sweden yn barod i gipio coron y byd tan y gornel olaf. Ar ôl curo'r Cymro ar bob un o'r amseroedd rhannol (split times), roedd y diwedd o fewn golwg i Solberg a gobeithion y Cymry wedi diflannu. Ond wedyn daeth sioc i bawb wnaeth wyllo'r cyffro wrth i Solberg ddod oddi ar y ffordd.

Aeth car Solberg yn syth mewn i berth ac yntau yn ceisio canfod ei ffordd nôl i'r ffordd a nôl i'r Rali. Ar ôl iddo ganfod ei ffordd nôl i'r ffordd a chwblhau'r cymal, roedd Solberg 14.5 eiliad yn arafach na Neuville ac yn camu nôl i'r 8fed safle ar y cymal gan adael pwyntiau pwysig i Elfyn. Ar ôl bod yn ail bump gwaith, mae'n bryd i'r Cymro gipio teitl mwyaf y byd ralio. Chi'n neud lwc eich hun o bosib...

Tîm rygbi merched Prifysgol Caerdydd yn creu hanes.

Gwenllian Mason
Golygydd Taf-Od

Daeth diwrnod hanesyddol tu hwnt i dimoedd rygbi Prifysgol Caerdydd yn Ornest Caerdydd cyntaf y flwyddyn academaidd ddydd Mercher diwethaf. Sicrhaodd y ddau dîm fuddugoliaethau, gan gipio'r dwbl oddi wrth Met Caerdydd am y tro cyntaf yn hanes y gystadleuaeth.

Er fod y ddwy gêm wedi bod yn llawn cyffro ac emosiwn, roedd buddugoliaeth y merched yn un i'w gofio, gan mai dyma'r tro cyntaf erioed iddynt guro tîm Met Caerdydd ym Mharc yr Arfau.

24-20 oedd y canlyniad terfynol, gyda dwy gais i'r asgell-wraig Katie Terrell, un i Georgina Bullen, ac un i'r capten, Cleo Pallister-Turley.

Yn ôl y prif hyfforddwr, Kerry Jenkins, roedd hi'n "hynod o falch o sut berfformiodd y merched".

Ychwanegodd fod y tîm wedi chwarae gyda "chalon a phenderfynolrwydd", a bod pawb yn gallu gweld pa mor awyddus oedd y chwaraewyr i sicrhau'r fuddugoliaeth.

Dyma ganlyniad a synnodd nifer o bobl, yn enwedig yn dilyn sylwadau honedig prif hyfforddwr y tîm gwrthwynebol ychydig ddyddiau ynghynt. Dywedodd Lisa Newton y byddai "gwa-

haniaeth corfforol" y ddau dîm o fantais i Met Caerdydd a'i bod yn edrych ymlaen yn fawr i chwarae. Ond, yn anffodus iddi hi a'i thîm, ni aeth y gêm eu ffordd nhw ddydd Mercher.

Ymatebodd capten Prifysgol Caerdydd, Cleo Pallister-Turley, i'r sylwadau hyn drwy bwysleisio na ddylai Met Caerdydd danamcangyfrif ei thîm. Dywedodd fod yr holl waith caled gafodd ei roi mewn yn ystod y cyfnod cyn-dymor am roi sioc i Met Caerdydd ac yn bendant talodd hyn ei ffordd yn y gêm.

O fewn yr 15 munud cyntaf, daeth cryfder, cyflymder a sgiliau Katie Terrell i'r amlwg wrth iddi redeg heibio'r amddiffynwyr i sgorio cais cyntaf y gêm – ac am gais oedd hwn.

Dywedodd Katie, "Roedd ennill yn un or teimladau gorau erioed. Dwi'n credu ein bod ni wir wedi haeddu'r fuddugoliaeth. Aethom ni allan yno fel un, nid fel unigolion, a dangos i bawb beth oeddem yn gallu cyflawni."

Erbyn diwedd yr hanner cyntaf, roedd tîm merched Pri-

fysgol Caerdydd wedi gosod 24 pwynt ar y sgorfwrdd, gan roi eu hunain mewn sefyllfa addawol iawn cyn dechrau'r ail hanner.

Fodd bynnag, daeth Met Caerdydd yn ôl yn gryfach yn y 40 munud olaf, gan leihau'r bwlch yn y sgôr a rhwystro Prifysgol Caerdydd rhag ychwanegu o gwbl at eu cyfanswm. Er gwaethaf ymdrechion Met Caerdydd, nid oedd eu perfformiad yn ddigon y tro hwn i sicrhau buddugoliaeth.

Daeth y gem i ben gyda'r sgôr yn 24-20 i dim merched Prifysgol Caerdydd, gan seilio buddugoliaeth hanesyddol fydd yn y co' am amser hir.



Y canllaw perffaith i wleidyddiaeth Gymreig a Phrydeinig yn ystod yr Haf

Betsan Griffiths
Golygydd Taf-Od

Ydych chi wedi bod ychydig yn nerfus am y sgysiau gwleidyddol dros beint yn y dafarn ar ôl Haf hir o beidio edrych ar y newyddion?

Peidwch â phoeni, dyma'r canllaw perffaith i chi ddod i wybod beth yn union sydd wedi digwydd yng ngwleidyddiaeth Cymru a Phrydain yn ystod y gwyliau.

Senedd Newydd Cymru

Ym mis Mai, cafodd gwleidyddiaeth yng Nghymru ei drawsnewid yn llwyr. Daeth plaid newydd i rym yn y Senedd. Am y tro cyntaf, mae Plaid Cymru, dan arweinyddiaeth Rhun ap Iorwerth, yn rhedeg Llywodraeth Cymru. Ond fethodd y blaid groesi'r trothwy i arwain Llywodraeth fwyafrifol mae tipyn o negydu gan y Prif Weinidog i wneud felly er mwyn pasio deddfau.

Ar yr un pryd, cafodd Llafur Cymru eu taro'n drwm gyda chanlyniadau siomedig gan ennill 9 sedd yn unig ar ôl ennill pob etholiad yng Nghymru ers dros 100 mlynedd - daeargryn gwleidyddol heb os.

Trawsnewidiad y Blaid Llafur yn San Steffan

Ym mis Mehefin, ymddiswyddodd Syr Keir Starmer fel Prif Weinidog Prydain, er gwaethaf ei lwyddiant yn yr etholiad cyffredinol yn 2024. Cafodd Starmer ei wthio allan o'i blaid gan ei gyd-aelodau oherwydd ei ddiffyg arweinyddiaeth, disgyblaeth a'r gwrthdaro ynglŷn â pholisïau a materion rhyngwladol o fewn y blaid. Erbyn hyn, mae Syr Keir wedi camu o'r neilltu fel Aelod Seneddol gyda'r ymgeisydd Llafur arall, Sagal Abdi-Wali yn ei olynu.

Cafodd Andy Burnham ei benodi fel Prif Weinidog Prydain ym mis Gorffennaf, er ei fod wedi trio am ei le yn Rhif 10 ddwywaith o'r blaen. Caiff ei adnabod fel 'King of the North', gan ddefnyddio dylanwadau o'i swydd fel Maer Manceinion ar ei bolisïau yn Rhif 10 fel prisiau

costau byw, digartrefedd a newid sectorau preifat i fod yn rhai cyhoeddus.

Helynt i Reform yn y Senedd

Yn dilyn etholiad da i Reform UK ym mis Mai, ymddiswyddoedd oedd hanes arweinydd Reform UK yng Nghymru, Dan Thomas ym mis Medi, ar ôl iddo gael ei arestio ar amheuaeth o ymosod ac o reoli drwy orfodaeth. Yn ôl Thomas, mae am ail-geisio am ei sedd yn y Senedd waeth pwy bynnag yw arweinydd y blaid.

Bellach, Helen Jenner sef cyn-ddirprwy arweinydd y blaid yw arweinydd Reform UK yng Nghymru. Yn ôl Jenner, mae hi'n "anrhydedd llwyr" i arwain y blaid a'i gobaith yw arwain y blaid tuag at lywodraethu yn 2030.

Yn ychwanegol, symudodd yr Aelod Seneddol Sarah Cooper-Lessard o blaid Reform i Blaid Cymru. Dywedodd Lesard nad yw Reform o ddirif ynglŷn â llywodraethu Cymru. Roedd gan Reform gynlluniau i'w diarddel o'u plaid beth bynnag ar ôl iddynt ddarganfod ei bod yn cefnogi annibyniaeth i Gymru.

Cyflwr y Deyrnas Unedig

Ym mis Medi, cynhaliwyd cyfarfod rhwng Prif Weinidogion Cymru, Yr Alban a Gogledd Iwerddon i drafod cynnal refferenda annibyniaeth yn y dair wlad. Yn dilyn y cyfarfod yng Nghaerdydd, dywedodd y dair wlad "fod amser San Steffan yn dod i ben". Hwn yw'r tro cyntaf erioed i'r dair wlad alw am fwy o bwerau datganoledig ac annibyniaeth oddi wrth San Steffan ar yr un pryd.

Er bod Burnham yn credu fod yr Undeb ar ei orau gan wneud penderfyniadau gyda'i gilydd; mae'n dal yn agored i drafodaethau ynglŷn â datganoli pwerau ychwanegol megis plismona a chyfiawnder i Gymru.

Dyma chi felly, pigion o'r hyn sydd wedi digwydd ym Mae Caerdydd a San Steffan dros yr Haf. Rydym yng nghanol tymor yr Hydref bellach a does dim amheuaeth fod cyfnod gwleidyddol cyffrous a chythryblus ar y gorwel!

Cyfres newydd ar S4C yn mynd tu ôl i'r llen yn yr ystafell ddosbarth

Mea Verallo
Cyfrannwr

Athrawon. Y bobl sy'n gosod seiliau ein dyfodol. Ond, beth os allen ni fod yn 'bry ar y wal' wrth iddyn nhw ddysgu sut i'n dysgu ni?

Dyma gyfres sy'n archwilio wyth athro newydd sbon yn ei blwyddyn cyntaf o ddysgu. Mae'r gyfres wedi ei gosod dros Gymru gyfan yn estyn o Bort Talbot i Blas-mawr. Wedi'i chynhyrchu gan Carlam a'i gyhoeddi gan S4C ym mis Medi 2026, dyma gyfres o bum pennod awr o hyd sy'n rhoi cipolwg i'w bywyd newydd tu ôl i'r ddesg.

Ymhlith yr wyth athro mae yna ddysgwyr Cymraeg o Lydaw sy'n dysgu Ffrangeg yn ysgol Bro Dur, Port Talbot. O gemeg i ddrama mae'r gyfres yn arddangos yr uchafbwyntiau a'r isafbwyntiau o ddysgu mewn ysgolion prif ffrwd yng Nghymru. Mae hon yn gyfres ddrama gomedi sy'n cynnig rhagolwg difyr a realistig ar fywyd athrawon. Drwy gyfuno hiwmor â straeon emosiynol, mae'r gyfres yn llwyddo i ddangos ochr ddynol y proffesiwn addysgu, gan fynd y tu hwnt i'r stereoteip o athro fel rhywun sydd yno i addysgu yn unig.

Yr hyn wnes i fwynhau fwyaf am Athrawon oedd y cymeriadau. Mae nhw'n teimlo fel pobl go iawn, gyda'u personoliaethau, eu problemau a'u gwendidau eu hunain. Dydi'r gyfres ddim yn ceisio portreadu athrawon fel pobl perffaith sydd bob amser yn gwybod beth i'w wneud. Yn hytrach, rydyn ni'n gweld yr ochr fwy personol iddyn nhw, a sut mae gwaith yn gallu effeithio ar eu bywydau tu allan i'r ysgol.

Mae'r gyfres hefyd wedi dangos twf personol unigolion o fewn y gyfres. Ar ddechrau'r tymor, mi oedd Siôn-Rhys Ev-

ans yn cael trafferth sicrhau disgyblaeth yn ei ystafell ddosbarth gydag ambell ddisgybl; ond wrth ddyfalarhau mae'n llwyddo i greu perthnasoedd pwrpasol gyda disgyblion i sicrhau bod parch yn cael ei ddangos yn ei wersi.

Agwedd arall sydd wedi bod yn hynod o adfywiol i wyllo oedd cyflwyno Alex Williams sydd yn athro gwyddoniaeth yn ysgol Bro Dur ym Mhort Talbot. Mae Alex Williams yn berson an-neuaidd sydd yn defnyddio'r rhagenw Mx yn lle Miss/Mr yn yr ysgol. Mae'r cysyniad bod rhagenwau wedi datblygu yn ein bywyd pob dydd a'u bod hefyd wedi datblygu yn y gweithle hefyd, yn hynod o amazing! Dywedodd Dirprwy Ben-naeth yr ysgol, Miss Sioned Jones:

"Dwi'n meddwl bod hi'n bwysig iawn bod bob un disgybl yn gweld bod 'na gynrychiolaeth iddyn nhw ar gorff y staff. Mae Alex wedi mynegi eu balchder am agwedd barchus y disgyblion tuag at eu rhagenwau. Am blant ac ysgol ysbrydoledig (Dim 'bo fi'n biased o gwbl)!"

Wrth nesáu at ddiwedd y gyfres gallaf edrych nôl a dweud heb os mae'r gyfres wedi bod yn llwyddiant mawr. Mae'r gyfres wedi bod yn bleser i'w gwyllo ac rwy'n mawr obeithio ei bod hi yn cael ei adnewyddu am fwy-fwy o gyfresi i ddod.



Dilynwch ni
ar Instagram!

Blue Shirts, Bullying

Oliver Hanlon
Features Editor

Illustrated and Designed by: Olivia Nilsen

Initiations and hazing are, as with many other UK universities, a persistent issue here at Cardiff University.

Last academic year, the issue of initiations forced its way into the open when the Cardiff University Men's Cricket Club was suspended by the Students' Union amid allegations of degrading rituals.

"Witness accounts described recruits being subjected to verbal abuse and holding wet socks in their mouths; a witness referred to the incident as a 'form of human torture.'"

In the same year, Gair Rhydd reported separate allegations of an unnamed society coercing prospective members into, among other things, eating dog food. While most of the big instances of initiations and rituals we have heard rumours about come from the Athletics Union, these instances show that the problem reaches into societies, too.

Tackling dangerous initiations has again become a 'priority' for university officials across the country, as the challenges facing Cardiff are not unique but part of a national problem.

As for a recent harrowing example, the University of Bath launched an investigation into allegations that members of a

sport club had engaged in an initiation event involving the spiking of drinks, specifically targeting girls' drinks. While Gair Rhydd is unaware of any comparable behaviours taking place at Cardiff University, Bath's example should demonstrate, plainly and clearly, the importance of tackling the cultures and behaviours behind initiations before they escalate to

worrying, dangerous, and criminal levels.

To prevent anyone from thinking Cardiff has very little of this problem, let us remind readers that, across many years, there have been several high-profile incidents regarding the conduct of sport teams at Cardiff. In March 2020, for example, all five men's football teams were suspended for initiations that the Union stated were

"degrading" and "humiliating."

In October 2023, for another, members of the rugby committee resigned, and blue shirts and chinos were banned in YOLO for months after a 10-to-15-person scrum took place in the queue outside the Students' Union.

"In January 2026, the men's cricket club were suspended for initiation rituals that constituted 'bullying and excessive drinking', which included allegations of heads being flushed down toilets, people being forced to eat raw onions, and verbal abuse."

Many of the students involved in each of these incidents have now graduated, but the recurring pattern of repeated initiations persists. Despite clear guidelines, this poses serious questions about the culture within some sport societies on campus, and the Students' Union's effectiveness in tackling the problem.

Confronting this question of culture will be an important challenge facing the Cardiff Students' Union heading into this academic year. Formal initiations continue to be explicitly banned by the Union, and the issue was prominent during the Union's elections.

Part of the new VP Sports manifesto focused on improving 'Report and Support' and "breaking the taboo of students feeling scared to report abuse in sports clubs".

Margherita Puccinelli, VP Sports and Athletic Union President, expressed to Gair Rhydd that a major challenge has been initiations going under different names. On the issue, she said that: "You can call it a welcome night, a relaxed mixer or anything you like. What matters isn't the name on the event, it's the behaviour taking

place. If those behaviours constitute an initiation, that's how we'll address them".

In their aim to tackle the problem, the Union has outlined clear red lines: non-voluntary activity and pushing students to the point of vomiting with dangerous drinking initiations are immediate violations, for example. Puccinelli also made clear that coercive practices will not be tolerated, saying that: "To an extent, just because the option was given doesn't always mean that behaviour is okay either", Puccinelli explained.

"There's a clear line when drinking stops being social and becomes about pressure, humiliation or pushing someone beyond what they're comfortable with. If someone is being encouraged or expected to drink to excess, particularly as part of proving themselves or fitting



December 2009- Gherkin' Off
Engineering Rugby supposedly caught food poisoning after they ate gherkins that were inserted into their asses.

"There should be no humiliation, no coercion, no pressure. If any behaviour is over the line in terms of someone might say, 'Oh yeah, I'll do that', because they want to fit in, that's still a no."

On the subject of initiations where freshers are forced to drink until they vomit, Puccinelli added:

The Union has started this year by giving pre-term 'Safer Societies' workshops and active bystander training. It has also introduced a traffic-light system to show committees which minor issues they can handle internally and which serious misconduct, such as initiations and sexual violence, must be referred to the university's Report and Support or Student Advice services. On committee

& Booze Cardiff's Initiations



October 2008:
Initiation Devestation

The *Gair Rhydd* archive shows a long history of initiations by Cardiff University sports teams.

October 2008:
“I had to drink a pint through a pig’s head”
A *Gair Rhydd* investigation found that students were coerced into eating pet food and made to drink a pint through a pig’s head.

responsibilities, the VP Sports added: “Committee members don’t need to be experts, but they do have a responsibility to help set the tone in their groups. That means modelling the right behaviour, challenging things that aren’t appropriate, and speaking up when others aren’t responding. They’re not expected to deal with everything themselves, but they are expected to lead”.

The VP Sports argues that the focus is on trying to fight behaviours: “We don’t want to ban sports; we’re trying to ban the behaviours, if that makes sense.” Puccinelli also emphasised that it was important to preserve the positive impact of sport clubs:

“I came to university as an estranged student, didn’t have a community outside of university, and sort of struggled when I arrived. For me, I wouldn’t have got through my degree without having a sports club, so I really want students to understand just how positive our sports clubs are.”

However, this preventative policy does come with its challenges. The biggest reason why these initiations persist is because of their visibility — rarely things you know the details of unless you were involved (the organiser or the victim, that is). In that way, it’s no surprise that the Union emphasise preventative measures as their focus, because punitive measures are simply not easily executed for a problem largely invisible to the Union. The Union can deploy security, welfare workers, and paramedics to monitor the YOLO queue on Wednesday nights, but it can’t stop activities that take place outside their view from happening.

If the Union wants to do something about the problem, which it says it does, it must go beyond just training. Initiations have been explicitly banned here and across the UK for many years, and committees are aware of that, but initiations still happen. Reaffirming that initiations are still banned is right and part of the correct course of action but not enough to make an impact in curbing the problem. The Union can’t ensure committees listen to its training, but they can bring the hammer down when the rules are broken.

Another challenge is that reports to the Union require verifiable evidence. Puccinelli said:

“It’s very difficult because some students might not feel comfortable reporting with their name, but we do encourage students as much as possible not to report anonymously, because then we can’t solve the issue.”

As a result, trapped in a limbo land, it is hard to see how the Union can make any progress outside of their push on prevention and understanding.

Despite these hurdles, Puccinelli remains optimistic about the question of the cultures within sport teams, saying: “I think cultures are hopefully hugely improving compared to what might have been happening at the university ten years ago, and these behaviours really are changing.

“That doesn’t mean they are perfect; there is still a long way to go.”

This is partly reflected in a new push for improvement to the Union’s society-tethering



system, which Puccinelli explained is “really about creating a positive society that goes above and beyond: raising money, hosting positive community events, sober socials, and collaborating with other clubs”, but the enactment of these new tiers is yet to be seen.

With Freshers’ behind us, the Union’s new training and guidelines will be put to the test. It has been nearly a year since the incidents that led to the cricket team being suspended took place, and previous years show us that many of the behaviours the Union seeks to prevent or disincentivise are likely to have gone on as sport clubs and societies sought new members.

It is yet to be seen whether the new preventative policies will affect the conduct of these groups and, if they occur, whether students will feel confident in reporting initiations. In the past, there has been a culture of silence and social ostracisation around this issue; the impact of this is invisible and needs to be overcome if the Union wants to have a realistic chance of making a dent in the initiation problem.

Song of the Edition

The Floras 'Chew'

The Floras are an indie-rock band formed by five students while at Cardiff University. Released in first semester of the 2025 academic year, 'Chew' is a lively, upbeat track to listen to on campus.

Check it out here!



From the Bedroom to the Big Stage: An Interview with Swn Headliner Alice Costelloe

Ruby Collins
Deputy Editor-in-Chief

In a week, Swn Festival will take over some of Cardiff's biggest venues to highlight Welsh and international musicians for three days. On Swn's Saturday night, Alice Costelloe will perform her latest album, *Move On With The Year*: a debut collection of eclectic indie-pop tracks. Ahead of her performance, *Gair Rhydd* managed to chat to Alice about songwriting, performance and anything Cardiffians should know before coming to her show.

Compared to Alice's EP and singles, *Move On With The Year* marks her largest and most long-term project to date. In this album, Costelloe's style is freer than ever. These songs flit between a diverse mixture of instruments, from the traditional sounds of the flute and recorder, to the harsh, monotonous ringing of an ex's telephone.

While her instrumentation reflects the lack of limits Costelloe has found in her solo career, they never stray far from the emotional hub of her songs. Instead, they reflect her raw lyricism, giving listeners intimate insight into her feelings of rejection, thoughts on marriage and womanhood; 'I don't see myself, all dressed in white'.

When we spoke with Alice, she under-

stood how these songs open her up to listeners, and told us how reciprocal this exposure has been as fans deeply resonate with the album; "they say it sounds like the album is about their life, or parents, or about this. That kind of response means a lot".

As Alice left the band *Big Deal* in 2016, she commented on how different the writing process felt alone. While she "enjoyed being able to make the creative decisions" on these songs, she felt "just stuck in [her] bedroom, basically, for six months" which, inevitably, "does make you feel a bit crazy". Therefore, the meaningful response Alice has received not only at shows but internationally online, redeems her "six months of feeling like a strange hermit on a deadline".

However, it's clear that there are difficulties to consistent live performance. When asked if Alice repeats the same lines, stories or jokes between songs, she remarked this is something she has not mastered, instead she "never knows what to say and will just say something, whatever comes into [her] head".

Hilariously, Alice shared that she once spent a ten-minute power breakdown during a French gig reciting her French GCSE aural presentation (which she failed!). For students with tickets for Swn, "that's the kind of chat that is getting said between the songs".

Making music has always been a central passion for Alice. As her music-themed French monologue proves, Costelloe spent her childhood flitting between various musical instruments, seeing what sounds she could mix into songs — viewing them as "vehicle[s] for writing".

This album, then, has truly been lifted from her bedroom to the big stage, as Alice reflects on feeling brought back to her youthful creative processes writing alone; "Rather than just failing at doing some complex things that I'd need to practise loads to do them. I was just playing how I would play at home and just, kind of, experimenting with things".

This enthusiasm explains how Alice keeps herself committed to music during tough times. When asked what advice Alice would give to budding Cardiff musicians, she told us, in a personally rather moving moment, about the bizarreness of when Alice realised that "not everyone has something that they are passionate about".

"So, even if it feels insanely hard, and doesn't make any sense financially, feel glad that you have this interest in something that means so much to so many people".

Alice Costelloe plays in Cardiff at Swn Festival on the 17th October 2026 and is certainly one to check out.

STAR: Cardiff's Shining Light for Refugee Action

Jasmine Comanescu
Culture Editor

Earlier this week, *Gair Rhydd* had the opportunity to talk to Astrid Victoria, an elected president of *STAR*. Here's what we learned about Cardiff's student-led group and their aims — and what you need to know if you want to join them.

STAR stands for 'Student Action for Refugees', and it is a much larger organisation across the UK. Branches exist in 30 locations, within which there are currently 38 active groups. Since its opening, the one in Cardiff has seen significant growth and student engagement. *STAR* participates in helping refugees through two main activities: fundraising and conversation classes. The latter is the most frequent of its activities.

Conversation classes entail *STAR*'s fantastic volunteers coming together to provide refugees with a safe and easygoing space for building community and practicing their spoken English skills. Bakes, soft drinks, teas and coffees are all readily available, and all individuals attending are encouraged to partake in enjoyable conversations with one another. These classes take place weekly, and are a welcoming environment for everyone.

STAR works alongside another organisation by the name of Space4U, which focuses on helping refugees with written English skills. Space4U also helps *STAR* with providing routine clothing drives, supporting refugees with toiletries and weather appropriate clothing.

Fundraising, on the other hand, takes place through an array of events. During our conversation, Astrid described the glowing success of *STAR*'s live music fundraiser, 'Refugee Rhythms', which invites Cardiff's *One World Choir* to perform. The choir is made up of refugees and asylum seekers based in Cardiff, and they play a variety of music, both in English and in their native languages. The live music night is a fantastic opportunity to build on the connections formed during the year, and the money raised goes towards humanitarian causes. For instance, two years ago the profits went towards Palestine, and last year's money was raised for Yemen.

STAR also worked with the *Sudanese Society* last winter during their Winter Quiz, raising money for Sudan through the Emergency World Food Programme.

Astrid explained how *STAR* aims "to advocate for all refugees", and criticised the way in which society tends to ignore the atrocities happening in places such as Sudan and Yemen. They also want to bring light to a lot of misinformation about what it means to be an asylum seeker. An individual only becomes a recognised refugee once their case has been evaluated. Until that point, they can be stuck in the asylum system for years, during which they are not allowed to work or claim benefits, and are forced to live off of under £10 per week.

If you are interested in joining *STAR* as a volunteer, you will undergo some basic training to ensure the safety of both you and the refugees. For starters, *STAR* requires its volunteers to be mindful and sensitive in the subject matters they approach during their classes. Probing questions about family and war can force individuals to relive moments they might not feel ready to face. While some people may bring up their families, as a volunteer it is important to let refugees lead that conversation themselves if they so wish to.

To close off our conversation, Astrid's message to potential new volunteers was to be open and always challenge people on their rhetoric. She also iterates that people fleeing bombs do not destroy the United Kingdom. Quoting Somali-British poet Warsan Shire, she finished with the thought that "no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land".



The Cornell Case: It Happens Here Too

Rowan Stanger
Time to Act
Head of Communications

Like many of us, I was outraged when I read about the horrific rape case at Cornell. I was also able to find some hope in the fact that so many around me echoed the same feelings and were speaking out and turning their anger into productivity. My social media feed was full of people posting messages of solidarity for Jane Doe and news of recent protests in the US and those being planned across UK cities.

However, I was still overwhelmed with anger at how normalised this has become and the fact that while I was devastated at the news from Cornell, I wasn't shocked. Every student knows multiple people who have experienced sexual violence but their stories rarely make global headlines. The numbers are staggering. An analysis by The Metro shows 27,000 women starting university this year could be a victim of rape or attempted rape before their graduation.

When it happens thousands of miles away it is much easier to ignore it as something tragic but not relevant to our lives. Especially when it is on the backdrop of such an American scene as a frat party it is easy to dismiss as yet another horror story to come out of the US. But how different is a frat party from a sports society social? To discuss the Cornell case in a productive way, we must look at Cardiff as well where rape culture is just as real and survivors are consistently let down by systems built to support them.

This is something every University must address but Cardiff University is in need of a significant amount of work. In a recent *Gair Rhydd* investigation 56% of students reported having experienced it themselves, a number 3x higher than the national average.

It is all of our responsibilities to call out harmful behaviour, whether that be explicit sexual violence or the 'jokes' and discriminatory language that creates a culture where violence goes unchecked. At Cornell

there were a total of 57 on the group chat, fully aware of what was going on. Being a passive bystander is not enough, it failed Jane Doe and it fails people at Cardiff every year. Rape is not an inevitable part of university life, it is a product of a culture we all must take a role in dismantling.

Students in Cardiff are also faced with unclear support systems, long waiting times and often a lack of real consequences for sexual violence. Many are furious with Cornell University for expecting only apology letters from three of the Cornell 7 and allowing two of them to remain on campus. While sharing this anger, students in Cardiff are faced with the harsh reality that if apology letters are considered an acceptable punishment at Cornell they probably would be here too.

Gair Rhydd also investigated into the University's Report and Support system, a service for anonymously reporting incidents and accessing support. However, even without being a formal complaint service, there is very little trust in it with 85% of students saying they wouldn't use Report and Support service.

The university addressed what happened at Cornell in a message to students last week, acknowledging the re-traumatising effect it can have on survivors and declaring that sexual violence is not tolerated at Cardiff. While the sentiment is appreciated, we need more than words when students are being failed by the very systems built to support them. The existence of student-led campaigns such as *Time To Act* show that the necessary support is not there. It should not be the responsibility of students to advocate for their own safety yet this is the position we find ourselves in at Cardiff.

While horrific, what happened at Cornell is nothing new. Universities are facing an international crisis of sexual violence, consistently dismissed as an unfortunate but necessary part of student life. This case has highlighted that the crisis can only be addressed if we hold each other and our institutions to account.

Chasing the Perfect Autumn

Ryan Greenhall
Culture Editor

As the days grow shorter and the air turns crisper in Cardiff, there is something quietly stimulating about this time of the academic year. When the city changes, the leaves paint the pavements in leaves that are shades of orange and golden-brown. And when students return, social media starts to fill us with images of neatly highlighted reading lists and packed libraries, scented candles and homemade coffees. Everyone becomes a more curated and aesthetic version of themselves: a productive version.

The beginning of the academic year has always carried a sense of renewal and change but recently, it has been transformed into something much bigger. On TikTok, trends such as ‘resetting’, ‘dark academia’ and endless university preparation videos encourage us and give us an opportunity for self-improvement. Modern culture has convinced us that you need new clothes and routines in order to have a successful year.

There is something appealing about this. After a summer of disrupted schedules and uncertainty, creating fresh routines can help us feel motivated. Making study playlists and organising a calendar can offer a really good sense of control, and I would be lying if I said I wasn’t guilty of also doing this. These little rituals help mark a transition, but when does it get too far?

Students, already navigating rising living costs and academic pressures, are feeling more vulnerable than ever. The rise of micro-trends has created a fantasy that starts making it more important to convince yourself you’re doing the work, than actually just doing it yourself. And maybe we can become the ‘dark academia’ students that read classics in Bute Park, but that shouldn’t be a priority in order for you to feel content and comfortable. What makes this particularly difficult is that the ambition and targets keep moving. Once one trend fades, another quickly replaces it, so we are never quite satisfied or complete with how we present our work and lifestyle. The idea that waking up at 6 AM, reading all day and never missing a deadline, while also working part-time jobs, all while heading to a cafe for a nice pumpkin spice latte, is impossible. And it shouldn’t be encouraged as a personal failure. It is important to be organised and motivated, however, it shouldn’t feel exhausting.

At the same time, these ideas are not entirely negative. For some students, they provide inspiration and community which is just as important. University can sometimes be isolating to certain individuals, especially for first years arriving in a new city. Watching videos about academic success and habits can be reassuring. Seeing others work hard can motivate us to do the same thing. But the problem is that you should find people you can bounce off of, and find friends to work together, allowing you to be inspired by each other’s standards, not just by consuming products.

Perhaps the healthiest approach is to remember that there is no correct way to be a student and working towards your degree. Some people work best in colour-coded planners, while others rely on last-minute lists and ideas in notebooks, and that’s perfectly fine. Success at university shouldn’t be measured by the things you see online, it is measured by routines and ideas that genuinely work for you.



The Move From Halls to Housing: A Guide to Cathays

Isabella Schraibman
Contributor

When arriving in Cardiff as a fresher, you’ll soon hear people talk about Cathays as if it’s a mythical legend. Often described as the land of rats, cheap pints, Mama’s kebabs and ‘Misfits Monday’, Cathays is Cardiff’s unofficial heart of student living and the ideal place to call home in second year. But, before rushing to sign on the first house you view, there are a few important things to consider such as, location, housemates, rent and what you want to prioritise.

Lively or Peaceful Home?

Location is one of the most important considerations when choosing a house, and it mostly comes down to what type of person you are. If you love a night out, a funny side character on your doorstep, or a hearty takeaway at 2 AM, Salisbury Road or Miskin street could be perfect for you. With Misfits and Yolo nearby, and The Woodville as your local pub, a night out is as accessible as it gets. Plus, you’re only a five-minute walk from uni to make your hungover Thursday lectures slightly less traumatic. If you’re looking for something close to the action but with a little more peace Harriet and Richard Street offer a happy medium. Still within a ten-minute walk of campus, close to all the clubs and takeaways, and with the Mackintosh as your local pub, this area allows you to enjoy student life without hearing it all from your bedroom window. For those who prefer their beauty sleep, housing around Cathays Cemetery and Cathays Terrace offer a more peaceful atmosphere whilst still being close to campus with access to Roath Park.

Best Friends or Future Enemies?

Deciding who you want to spend your next year with is another big decision. You’ve probably

already heard the horror stories about the second-year housemate curse, but these tensions can be avoided with some thought. Firstly, consider what kind of household you actually want to live in; is a house of twelve people going to overwhelm you or do you thrive in a busy environment? Next, perhaps conduct some subtle investigation of your potential housemates’ habits. Do they leave their dishes to produce mould? Have you got an aspiring DJ on your hands? Or are they a future Rugby social sec? Ultimately, what you want to weigh up is your tolerances and decide where you draw the line. The best person to go on a night out with perhaps is not who you want to share your bathroom with, or maybe they are?

The Boring Stuff...

The admin of signing a house can seem both daunting and tedious. Suddenly, you’re expected to understand contracts, deposits and tenancy agreements. So here are some quick tricks to save you some stress — and hopefully save your mum an earache down the phone. Most students go through letting agencies such as Cardiff Student Letting or CPS Homes who show you a variety of properties and deal with landlord hassle. When viewing houses, you may have to look past the current tenants’ mounds of dishes and lingering LYNX Africa. However, try to not let these temporary distractions deter you away from more permanent problems. Keep an eye out for mould, single glazed windows and shower pressure that resembles a sprinkler. Take lots of photos and don’t be afraid to ask questions.

Moving from university halls into a house is such an exciting step with a lot to look forward to. Choosing your perfect house is largely about deciding what you are willing to compromise on so choose your battles wisely and you will have an amazing second year.

Westside Cowboy at Swn: It Goes On

Thomas Jackson
Contributor

It is sometime in the beginning of May and I am queuing outside of the ‘Chalk’ Nightclub in the Brighton lanes. I have vacated Cardiff just for the weekend to attend the annual Great Escape Festival of new music in my home city.

I am with my Dad, my aunt and my uncle; we are all slightly tipsy and slightly out of breath, having run here straight from another venue. The bouncer checks our tickets and we are funnelled into the venue as soon as the lights are lowered. Despite this, the club is visibly packed with people, mostly in their 50s, the sort that treat BBC Radio 6 as a religion.

All I know about the next band is that they had won Glastonbury’s ‘Emerging Talent’ competition and supported ‘Geese’ on a European stint of the ‘Getting Killed Tour’. This is some feat for a band without a studio album.

Onto the stage walk the quartet, all in their early to mid-twenties, Jimmy Bradbury (vocals, guitar), Reuben Haycocks (vocals, guitar), Aoife Anson O’Connell (vocals, bass) and Paddy Murphy (vocals, drums). They are young enough to be the son or daughter of most of the audience.

They spend some seconds tuning their instruments and before the audience can even quieten, the drummer screams “WESTSIDE COWBOY”, slaps their sticks together and they erupt into a performance of their first song of the slot.

Cowboy by name and cowboy by nature, they subscribe to a 90s Americana sound yet sing with a definitive English accent. Their self-coined genre, ‘Britainicana’, is a nostalgic feel ruptured with the energy and angst expected of a post-punk band.

We leave completely impressed, in

agreement they may be the best performance of the festival. I type the band’s name into Instagram and apparently I am very much late to the party, I have 12 mutual followers. So, I get on the train home and begin to listen to the singles. They met in Manchester, as all good bands do, the remanence of another. Murphy and Bradbury as part of *Katz*, a “three-piece surf-punk band that played so fast it ceased to exist”, and Haycocks and Murphy playing in a noise pop group, *DieKaiDie*.

At that point the band’s discography was made up of six singles and an EP, their debut album set to release sometime in early Autumn.

They spent the summer performing at intimate venues, punctured with a set at Leeds Festival and the TRNSMT in Glasgow. Then finally, *It Goes On* was released on the 21st of August and as I write this in late September, I have not since stopped listening to it.

The eleven song track list is loud but controlled with fantastic drumming from Murphy, and Anson O’Connell’s vocals add a nice counterpoint to the otherwise all male vocalists. Soundwise it remains similar to the thumping they made in that night club in May. The guitar truly anchors every song, it edges mid-west emo in its open string drone. This achieves a much bigger feel to every song, helping to add some depth to a relatively simple arrangement.

If you have to judge them off one song, I truly recommend any performance of, ‘Kick Stones (The Boys)’. You can find it on Youtube filmed from their appearance on ‘Later... with Jools Holland’.

And, if you require any final convincing, both my aunt and I simultaneously bought the new album for my dad and he is quite pleased with owning two.

Westside Cowboy play Tramshed, Saturday 15th October, as a part of Swn Festival.

The Freshers’ Cheat Sheet

Gabriela Camattau
Contributor

Being a fresher is daunting. Suddenly you’re responsible for everything from dish soap to sorting out a second year house. Everyone older is telling you to make the most of university and how it’ll be the best years of your life and whilst this may be true, it can place a lot of pressure on you to get everything out of it straight away. It’s completely normal for settling in, finding your people and getting the marks you want to take time. That being said, here’s your guide on how to go about making the most of first year!

Best Ways to Meet People:

Join societies!

Trying out different societies is a great way to meet people and learn about yourself. You can go as often or as little as you want, so it’s completely okay to try something out and decide it’s not for you. For sports societies, it’s very common to join without even doing the sport and just come to the socials where people dress up and go out together. You can find information about societies on Cardiff’s Students’ Union website!

Seminars

Lectures can be huge making it difficult to get talking to people. But in seminars you’ll be with the same group of people for months, so it’s a great opportunity to get to know them. It’s a good idea to exchange socials so you can ask each other uni related questions and maybe make a new friend.

Going Out With Your Flatmates:

If you get along with your flatmates, they’re a great way to network, you can meet their friends and they can meet yours. I completely leached off of my flatmates’ social abilities last year and it worked out great!

Best Places for a Night Out:

Central or Prince of Wales Wetherspoons; The Taf, a university owned pub located in the Students’ Union; Clwb Ifor Bach (my personal favourite) is perfect if you like indie, alternative, rock, emo and pop music; Live Lounge is a bar and club which plays live covers, pop, rock and indie music; YOLO, Cardiff University’s student club night in the Students’ Union on Wednesday’s that people usually go to with their societies; Circuit, for rap and pop music; The Depot holds ticketed events; and Tramshed hosts club nights, comedians, film screenings.

Study Tips:

Look At The Assessment Criteria

Criteria sheets are like a shortcut to higher marks by explaining exactly what examiners are told to reward.

Set Your Own Mini-Deadlines

Often essays and exams will fall very close to each other because they’re trying to be nice and give you the latest deadlines possible. To avoid a time crunch, it is best to find out when things are due early on and set your own mini-deadlines.

Read Your Feedback Closely

It’s normal to want to forget what you’ve submitted once it’s handed in, but paying attention to feedback is the quickest way to boost your marks because it constructively tells you what your strengths and weaknesses are.

Study With Friends

If you can’t focus on your own, studying with others can be very motivating as you hold each other accountable and can take breaks together.

Give Yourself Breaks

Go to the Lidl bakery or for a walk! Movement and a pain au chocolat is a great way to keep your brain switched on.

Cite As You Go!

To avoid going insane later, try logging your citations as you go along. You don’t want to end up retracing your sources at 2 AM, like I did.

Studying Hotspots:

ASSL Library (or any other library on campus), John Percival Cafeteria, Hoffi Coffi, Secret Garden, The Bagel Place, Rhostio and Taly social centre.

Bad Apples: Saoirse Ronan Becomes a 'Bad Apple'

Maisy Beales
Contributor

Described as “unhinged” (Screen Rant) and “bonkers” (Metro), Jonatan Etzler’s *Bad Apples* horrifies audiences while putting them into fits of laughter.

Saoirse Ronan shines in this hilarious and shocking dark-comedy thriller as the thinly-stretched, primary school teacher, Ms Spencer. She struggles to teach her class while our first ‘bad apple’, Danny (Eddie Waller) runs riot.

Ms Spencer (Saoirse Ronan) is a well-intentioned primary school teacher trying to prove herself to her superiors. However, she is on thin ice as she repeatedly fails to contain Danny. He is not a cheeky happy trying to make his peers laugh; Danny is violent, temperamental, and impenetrable. The staff try to contain him, the pupils try to avoid him.

Chris Roe’s fantastic score for the film makes the tension that follows Danny visceral; I flinched whenever he was on screen. Ms Spencer’s attempts to get through to Danny results in him breaking a fellow pupil’s arm. Ms Spencer is forced to find an unorthodox, albeit effective, way to stop Danny’s destructive wrath.

This is a brilliant yet subtle social commentary on the desperation teachers feel when they are unsupported by educational institutions. Ms Spencer is only forced to take matters into her own hands because no one else wanted to deal with Danny.

Ronan’s character even begs for a 1-1 for Danny in the film, claiming she would then be able to focus on the rest of the class. The main ethical issue of the film of how Ms Spencer deals with Danny, could have been entirely avoided if she had more support from educational institutions.

Scary things happen in this film, but the scariest thing about it is the plausibility of these events. I’m sure there were teachers in the audience who had fantasised about doing what Ms Spencer did. There are Ms Spencers up and down the UK, young, well-intentioned teachers who are just trying their best without being given the tools to do so. While Ms Spencer acts questionably at times, this just reflects her desperation to be a good teacher, no matter the cost.

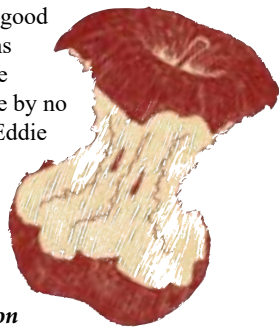
After Danny runs away, a utopia unfolds in the school. Ms Spencer’s pupils are thriving, her superiors finally recognise her hard work, and her co-worker and ex-boyfriend starts to fall for her again. We almost forget that Danny is missing, and a moral question arises: can one person’s suffering be justified if it ensures everyone else’s happiness?

This film will feel particularly nostalgic for the state-school educated among us. We all had a Danny — though maybe not quite as dangerous as this one — who would throw a chair across the classroom for no reason.

What is even more relatable is the feel and look of the school; the slap-dash decor, the scuffed paint, the visible exhaustion of the teachers that was impossible to ignore, having one proper “goodie-two-shoes” in the class, the gossip about the teachers dating, the higher-ups that never did anything but somehow had the nicest suits and cars.

The title cleverly alludes to some of the characters being ‘bad apples’ without specifying who. As the plot thickens and more characters show their flaws, it becomes hard to identify who is good and who is rotten. After Danny runs away, we focus our attention on the other pupils, revealing that they are by no means perfect. Alongside Ronan, Eddie Waller [Danny] and Nia Brown [Pauline] provide outstanding and immersive breakout-roles that disorient audiences with the moral dilemma they present to us.

Illustrations: Charlotte Henderson



Not Just Bants: How Cardiff Uni Can Keep Students Safe from Sexual Violence?

Liv Whitehead
Culture Editor

Honestly, I’d have loved to have started the year with something really appropriate for the beginning of the academic year, such as how to not get lost in the John Percival building, or how many times you can rewatch *Gilmore Girls* in one semester without skipping lectures. However, we are living in a world where you can be learning at a university level and still unable to comprehend the concept of consent.

Consequently, it seems more important to remind students, both freshers and final years, of the support that is out there. I have spoken with *Time to Act*, a student-led campaign fighting against sexual misconduct within our university and beyond, to ensure as many avenues for support as possible are available.

Within the university, there is the Student Support Intervention Team, who provide non-judgemental 1:1 sessions to discuss support, such as access to external services, or information on the reporting process. This service is available during office hours from Monday to Friday, via Report and Support.

Externally, New Pathways is a charitable organisation who offer specialist therapeutic support to victims of sexual trauma through in-person, online, or telephone services. Other local help involves the Ynys Saff Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) which provides

both access to counselling and forensic medical testing. Further, BAWSO provides support for minority ethnic victims of domestic or sexual abuse. Cardiff Women’s Aid is devoted to assisting women, through advice and counselling, as well as offering refuge for women fleeing from domestic abuse. This organisation has a helpline which is open all day, every day. Reaching out for support can be a challenging decision, but luckily Cardiff is brimming with teams so that when you’re ready, you won’t be grasping at darkness.

Time to Act was quick to provide me with a list of things that can still be done within our university to prevent acts of sexual violence occurring. Firstly, consent and bystander training must be imperative for students. There is a module of Learning Central outlining the laws of consent for those who are unsure; it is essential not to neglect this resource or play fast and loose with these laws. Other recommendations included a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence (which should be obvious) and challenging the norms that allow rape culture to continue, by dismantling the behaviour that lets it fester in silence.

What struck me most, though, was the call for survivor-centered reporting systems. In 2023, a Cardiff University student who was a victim of sexual assault called for more visible support stating “you need to be spoon fed. When you’ve just been sexually assaulted, your brain is like a puddle of mush”. *Time to Act* bolstered this plea by not only agreeing that the university

should make support more apparent on campus, but also urging that survivors receive more guidance during the reporting process, since being left to navigate difficult systems poses the risk of retraumatizing them.

Upon first approaching an article on ‘how we can keep safe from sexual assault’, I worried I would be writing a fruitless step-by-step guide on rules, such as not walking home alone at night. *Time to Act* pointed out that everyone already knows how to keep safe and constantly reminding people of these measures only creates an avenue for the victim to be blamed when something happens.

The central focus should be on what predators do: “It’s not [the victim’s] fault; it’s the perpetrator’s fault. It’s always the perpetrator’s”.



The Best Pub Crawl for Freshers

Imogen Tickle
Contributor

Pub crawls are an integral part of freshers week; this guide to the best pub crawl will help you familiarise yourself with the new area you’ve moved to, and find the best deals on food and drink to guarantee a fun night out.

CATHAYS

Stop 1: *The Woodville*

To begin your night out, start at ‘The Woody’ on Woodville Road. With a rotating selection of beers and ciders weekly, it’s the perfect spot to grab your first pint and fill your stomachs before this night out.

Stop 2: *The ‘Mack’*

Next, head on over to the Mackintosh Hotel which has a wide range of indoor entertainment, such as pool and darts. With the MiXR app, students can get up to 30% off drinks and food, with beers on tap starting from £3.65.

Stop 3: *The Flora*

Make a stop at The Flora on Cathays Terrace which opens until 11 PM. This pub offers a 25% student discount on selected drinks as well as a 2 for £11 cocktail mix-and-match deal.

Stop 4: *Cathays Beer House*

As implied in the name, this pub is a staple in the Cathays area. This post-office-turned-pub offers a cosy feel alongside a rotating line of local ale and cider, with the average pint around £4.

Stop 5: *The Crwys*

Next, head to The Crwys, an authentic Welsh pub which offers live entertainment and outdoor seating in their beer garden. And let’s not forget their deal of 3 beer bottles for £11!

Final Stop: *The Royal George*

The Royal George is our final stop with discounted drink prices with proof of student identity. This pub also offers cocktail deals, including 2 for £10 cocktails, a perfect ending for the night.

TALY

Stop 1: *Y Meindy*

To start strong, grab your first drink at Y Meindy which opens until 11pm. They offer a 20% student discount on food and drink throughout the week.

Stop 2: *Blackweir Tavern*

Next, head along to Blackweir Tavern on North Road. This pub has regular food and drink deals tailored for students, including 2 for £11 cocktail deals. Be sure to utilise their 25% discount on all food and drinks!

Stop 3: *The Woodville*

As mentioned, ‘The Woody’ crafts their drink menus with students offers

on drinks Sunday - Friday, alongside their rotating selection of beer and cider.

Stop 4: *The ‘Mack’*

Make a stop at The Mackintosh Hotel which offers £3.65 student deals on spirits and mixers weekly, alongside indoor entertainment to ensure a good time for the whole group.

Stop 5: *Foundry*

The Foundry on Salisbury Road offers live music alongside £2.50 student pints (via the Nyx app). Remaining open after 12am, be sure to grab a drink here before heading to its sister, Misfits.

Final Stop: *Misfits*

As the final stop, Misfits is well known to close a night well as it tailors its drinks menu to students. With £1 drink deals on Saturdays, ensure that your drinks are well balanced with a trip to Mama’s Kebab Shop down the road.

ROATH

Stop 1: *Four Elms*

To start your night, head over to The Four Elms on Elm Street with their average pint costing £4. From 5pm, they offer a free drink with a selected meal on certain days so grab a bite to eat before your night out.

Stop 2: *The Ernest Willows*

The next stop is The Ernest Willows (Wetherspoon) who use the Wetherspoon app to easily order drinks directly to your table. This pub serves cheap drinks until late with deals on cocktail pitchers and food.

Stop 3: *Paradise Garden*

Be sure to head on over to Paradise Garden, a cocktail bar with live music and DJs every week. Paradise Garden offers a 10% discount on drinks with a Student ID and 2-for-1 cocktails every Wednesday.

Stop 4: *The Royal George*

The Royal George is our next stop with discounted drink prices when presenting your student ID. For football lovers, this pub offers a 10% discount on selected drinks on match days.

Stop 5: *Pear Tree*

Before the night ends, be sure to have a drink at The Pear Tree on Albany Road. With fixed weekly offers, you can get 3-for-2 large glasses of wine (250ml) and discounted food on early weekdays.

Final Stop: *Greene King, The Claude*

To finish the night, make your final stop at The Claude which opens until 12am most days. Be sure to close your night off with a bite to eat here, with cheap food deals of £8.



The Sound of the City:

Cardiff's Best Independent Music Venues

Lily Hill
Culture Editor

Forget the overpriced tickets, sold-out arenas and the same nights out, because some of Cardiff's best nights out happen in the city's smallest rooms. From mosh pits and underground post-punk, to late night, laid back DJ sets, Cardiff's independent music scene offers far more than just your average gig. Tucked down the city centre's side streets, hidden amongst the houses of Roath, or set up in repurposed industrial buildings, these venues welcome a mix of some of the industry's biggest names alongside Cardiff's local talent, and up-and-coming musicians. Whether you're a student searching for your next gig, or a music lover hoping to discover the next big thing, here are five independent venues that deserve a spot on your radar.



Clwb Ifor Bach

Located down Womanby Street, Clwb Ifor Bach is far more than just an iconic grassroots music venue, it's a cornerstone of Welsh culture. Since opening its doors in 1983, it has hosted some of the industry's biggest names, from *Coldplay* to *The Strokes*, building a reputation for breaking international artists before they hit the big-time, so it's the perfect place to catch the next big thing! It's multi-floor layout also makes for a great night out, with differing genres spread across

floors. With its deep roots in Cardiff's heritage and music scene, Clwb is an essential stop for any student to check out.

Fuel Rock Club

Just across the street, Fuel offers a very different, but equally exciting experience. This is Cardiff's only dedicated full-time rock and metal venue that doubles as a bar and hub for alternative music lovers. Its intimate 160-200 capacity makes it the perfect launchpad for Cardiff-based rock and metal talent, as well as regularly showcasing upcoming local student bands looking to test out new material. For students into the alternative music scene, Fuel is a must visit to find your new favourite local band.

The Globe

Housed in a former cinema down Albany Road, The Globe's intimate gigs, club nights and tribute acts are a must for students seeking an electric atmosphere. Having recently caught the rock/post-punk band, Gurriers, play an incredible set to celebrate the release of their new album here, complete with mosh pits and crowd surfers, I can vouch for its appeal. Even a packed gig at The Globe feels personal, and with an upper mezzanine offering views from above, there really is no bad spot in the house.

Tramshed

Back closer to the city's centre, Tramshed proves that bigger venues can still feel intimate. Located just a ten minute walk from Cardiff Central Station, it's ideal for commuter students looking to catch a gig without having to worry about missing the last train home. Having also seen the Irish folk band, *Madra Salach*, here recently, I can confirm that even from the back, you don't feel far from the stage. Despite being one of the larger venues on this list, Tramshed still retains that local, independent feel whilst hosting an impressive range of touring artists.

Paradise Garden

Finally, away from Cardiff's busier gig venues lies a hidden gem: Paradise Garden. Down City Road, this hi-fi music venue, cafe and bar opens out into a lush garden complete with an outdoor yurt for a distinctive calm and sociable atmosphere. With a focus on sound and Cardiff's only audiophile sound system, its monthly programme features everything from open mics and live music, to DJ sets each week. Praised for its intimate, relaxed and creative setting, it offers a refreshing alternative to some of the city's louder venues, and whilst it may fly under the radar for many students, Paradise Garden is well worth discovering.



17th Century Satire Gets 21st Century Bite:

Sandra Oh in *The Misanthrope*

Helen Turnbull
Head of Culture

Martin Crimp's masterful reimagining of Moliere's 1666 play, *The Misanthrope*, directed by Indhu Rubasingham, took hold of Lyttelton Theatre this summer and is soon to be screened in cinemas by National Theatre.

Crimp's revival four centuries on drags the debate of flattery and French aristocracy into an era of 'cancel culture', mis- and disinformation and hypocrisy intertwined with flashes of radical feminism.

Rubasingham's result is sharp, messy and consistently thought-provoking. The recharacterisation of Moliere's French aristocrat Alceste into Alice, a biting and fiery novelist played by Killing Eve's Sandra



Oh, unfolds on a set that blends baroque flourishes with a classic London townhouse dressed in contemporary, Oliver Bonas-esque furnishings. Where Alceste raged against courtly flattery, Alice rages against John's flattery to appease a woman whom he had forgotten the name of, despite John's defence that it was offered out of moral duty in the opening scene.

Oh is flanked by a sharp supporting cast, with Paul Chahidi as John; Tom Mison as Stefan; Abigail Cruttenden as Claire; Imogen Elliott as Esmee; Rina Fatania as Indira; Freddie MacBruce as Allen; and Jemima Rooper as Elaine.

Oh plays Alice with coiled, stinging anger that toes the line of caricature.

Even as the production hangs on rhyming, lyrical dialogue that nods to its 17th century roots, Oh keeps Alice's fury grounded in something painfully current.

A Berlin literary prize being withdrawn over a controversial remark; a recorded conversation between fan Esmee and Alice; cunning Allen's recording of quotable material for a hit piece on Stefan; and Elaine's twisting of a voice recording are all precise portraits of how the reception of words can outrun their intent, and how quickly reputation can be reduced and distorted.

The poignancy of the play comes through the coarse friction between female characters.

Despite Alice's scathing remark, "male monstrous liars", that breaks the boundary between audience and stage, her feminism seems radical as she snipes at Claire, Elaine and Esmee, dismissing them in turn as the controlling manager, the grasping ex-wife and the spoilt, talentless nepo baby. These moments interrogate Alice's contradictions as she claims a more radical feminism than the women around her. Yet, the production is quietly sceptical, with Elaine's rebuke about

Alice's freedom as a childless woman landing forcefully.

Stefan's plot swallows a fair amount of stage time, becoming a wandering road that resolves in a bleak Moliere-echoing ending. Rubasingham saves the production's strongest image for last in a spectacular culmination of light, movement and colour. It's a moment far better experienced than described here. A masterful and ingenious production.

The Misanthrope comes to cinemas from 22 September with National Theatre Live. Find your tickets at ntlive.com.



Got an opinion? Get in Touch here.

“Frustrating” Timetable Delays, Institutional Silence and the “Feral” Results

Alex Portman Ross
Politics Editor

I’ve got my timetable!’ Was the shout heard in some student accommodation across Cardiff on the 25th of September. This shout came three weeks after the university’s own deadline. Worse still, *Gair Rhydd*’s polling indicates 29% of students were greeted by blank timetables on what was supposed to be the last day of this fiasco. So, what went wrong and how were students, staff and local businesses affected?

Delays were initially soft launched on the Cardiff Students app before Hybs contacted students. This transpired when the £9 million system failed students for the second consecutive year. The system was then condemned by students, staff and the Students’ Union.

Condemnation of a system which scheduled lectures in toilets last year is unsurprising. Some students were surprised to receive their timetables on the same day they did last year, which was 3 days after the deadline. However, for many students, especially those studying joint honours, the fiasco persisted.

Gair Rhydd spoke to a joint honours student from the College of Arts, Humanities. “I did everything I was expected to do — I submitted my choices on time and planned my modules carefully around the restrictions I was given.” They were understandably “frustrated” especially because their modules were initially approved. The student’s frustration was compounded by how this failure came to light as they told *Gair Rhydd*, “I was not contacted about this clash, I found it myself...”

This comes after the University assured *Gair Rhydd* they were using the last days “... to identify and resolve as many timetable clashes as possible... To provide [students] a timetable that is as complete and reliable as possible when it is released.”

Despite this, many students had to settle for incomplete timetables. In multiple departments small group teaching has been released five weeks after the Universities deadline. Breadcrumbing timetables has offered limited clarity to students and created complications for the wider Cardiff community. A member of the management team in a Cathays business revealed they felt the fiasco had “a massive effect on non-students and is unfair to businesses.” This struggle recurring raises concerns for businesses, like this one, that primarily employ students.

Our source highlighted this worry: “at least we have an accommodating manager, I really feel for the people who don’t and their employment might be at risk.”

With 60% of students relying on part-time employment to fund their studies, many cannot afford for their employability to be hampered by the university’s incompetence.

The lack of apologies or assurances to businesses mirrors

the neglect of students who weren’t offered clarity on this situation. Besides vague emails from their departments creating a new deadline, the wider university’s apology only came in comment to *Gair Rhydd*.

The university’s centralisation, which a student termed “scandalous”, has placed staff in a hard position. An academic from The College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences noted that “whatever chaos we are managing behind the scenes I hope we’re good enough you don’t see it.” This centralisation, which staff blame for this “feral” situation, has placed staff between a rock and a hard place.

Another staff member’s response to their predicament came with venom. “Staff feel so guilty when they go on strike, ... but it gets to the point where it’s the only option. Hopefully the university will listen and it doesn’t have to get to that”. With all-time high tuition fees, investment in £9 million systems and staff hired to rectify this issue, what is Cardiff University missing? Will new schemes like Campus Futures be this disastrous.

In times of change, students place their faith in their Stu-

dents’ Unions. Notably, the new administration’s comments to *Gair Rhydd* were their first mention of delays, despite them being privy to the issue for months. With students piecing their timetables together using Snapchat group chats, they’d welcome firm support from our Students’ Union. Instead they were emailed ‘The Student View on Timetabling’, a document created by our last Union president, Maria Pollard, which noted “students need to be kept more informed”.

The Students’ Union and the Sabbatical Officers, with timetabling in their purview, have made 121 instagram posts since the university’s deadline passed. None mentioned timetabling delays.

This silence led a prominent student activist to conclude the Students’ Union “...may have lost focus of things happening in the now”. With mention of strikes as our “only option”, will these institutions make amends and listen to students, staff and our wider community to tackle the problems we currently face?



How Your Students’ Union Works

Jordi Blake
Politics Editor

As another academic year begins, Cardiff University will welcome a new cohort of students, alongside those who are returning to continue their courses. But one thing applies to all, whether they are a fresh-faced first year or an experienced veteran, they will all interact with Cardiff’s Student Union.

The Student Union’s role at the university is multifaceted. The Guild of Societies and Athletic Union are both run by it, supporting over 200 societies (including student media like *Gair Rhydd*) and 60 sports clubs.

It is also the primary outlet for student democracy, an umbrella which includes the likes of the Student Senate, any elected officers (including sabbatical officers), and the University’s student Annual General Meeting. A student automatically becomes a member of the Student Union when they enrol at the university and gain full vot-

ing rights in all elections. These are held twice a year, with the first set in November which elects 25 Student Senators and the executive committees of each sabbatical officer, as well as settles any outstanding by-elections. The second set of elections are held in March and elect the seven sabbatical officers, who all serve one-year terms. These are full-time paid roles that each represent a specific section of students.

The seven current sabbatical roles are: Student Union president (responsible for leading the SU and the elected officer team), Vice President Undergraduate Students (which replaced VP Heath Park after its abolition in 2025), Vice President Sports and Athletic Union President, Vice President Postgraduate Students, Vice President Societies and Communities, Vice President Cymraeg (representing the university’s Welsh speaking community and championing the use of the Welsh language), and Vice President International Students (representing all international students at the university).

Ten campaign officers are also elected

during the March elections: Anti-Racism Officer, Mental Health Officer, Estranged Students’ Officer, two LGBTQ+ Officers, Accessibility Officer, Ethical & Environmental Officer, Women’s Officer, and two Heath Park Students’ Officers. Unlike the sabbatical officers, these are part-time unpaid roles that students take on alongside their studies.

The Students’ Union is far more than just elections and campaigns, though. Through its own nightclub, Y Plas, the Student’s Union puts on events such as YOLO, which has remained a firm student favourite night out for years. The venue also regularly plays host to gigs from a variety of popular music acts and is located just a stone’s throw away from the SU pub, Y Taf, a favoured

haunt of Cardiff students.

Whether it be through democracy, student nightlife, or other means, the Student Union is at the heart of Cardiff University, and its particular beat shows no signs of stopping soon.



True Change or More of the Same? *Plaid's First 150 Days*

Jac Allen
Contributor

Plaid Cymru has now survived 150 days in government. The party of Wales won 43 seats this year in the Welsh parliamentary election, just 6 seats shy of a majority government. This election result saw Plaid Cymru's Rhun ap Iorwerth take over from Eluned Morgan, ending over 100 years of Labour dominance in Wales. So what has Plaid done over the last 150 days, and what does it mean for students? According to Rhun ap Iorwerth, "with Plaid Cymru at the helm, the old order is replaced with new leadership, new energy and new ideas".

The Welsh nationalist party made many promises of improving the country. In the run up to the election, the party pledged that NHS wait lists would be "eliminated". Since then, the Welsh government has announced a £145 million boost to the NHS in June 2026, £25 million of which will be invested into new surgical and diagnostic hubs. NHS waiting lists are a massive issue in Wales at the moment, with hospital staff incredibly overworked. Prioritizing this issue is what Wales has desperately needed.

Another issue being prioritised by Plaid Cymru is

childcare. In their supplementary budget, Plaid stated that they will be investing a further £55 million into childcare to deliver 12.5 hours per week of funded childcare to all 2 year olds. This funding includes support for Welsh medium childcare, pushing towards the Welsh Government's goal of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. This extra funding is supposed to expand on the 30 hours of free childcare already provided. The focus on Welsh medium education is essential for the language to survive, which is good for the furthering of Welsh culture and Welsh society as a whole.

Gair Rhydd spoke exclusively with Lindsay Whittle, MS for Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent, who won the Caerphilly by-election in 2025 against Senedd colleague Llyr Powell on a message of positivity and change. Whittle stated that "Labour took Wales for granted for far too long... Plaid Cymru has started to make changes aimed at improving people's lives".

In late September, the BBC reported that the Welsh secretary Stephen Kinnock accused Plaid Cymru of stalling on investments into Wales. Helen Jenner, head of the Reform party in Wales, questioned the spending of the "so-called party of Wales" in a Senedd meeting late last month; "the so-called party of Wales would rather spend the people of Wales's taxes in Uganda than here at home on our nursing graduates who have been left without jobs

and on Welsh pupils with additional learning needs. When will you put aside your personal pet projects and put the people of Wales first?"

Despite the dismissive comments of reform about Plaid's commitment to the Welsh people, the First Minister of Wales demanded a new deal for Wales before he was elected to the top job. But, he now has the power to address the Prime Minister directly. Rhun ap Iorwerth has called upon Andy Burnham to offer a new deal for what he believes to be a more fair treatment of Wales. He pleads that Wales needs to be regarded as a nation of its own, not just a constituency of England. With Plaid Cymru being a pro-independence party, some believe that this is the first step towards an independent Wales: for better or for worse. Others believe that this is a necessary step in improving quality of life for Welsh society as a whole.

It has been an eventful first 150 days, but this Plaid government is still in its infancy. The party has had its fair share of criticism, but overall it has been a positive change from the previous government. Will Plaid continue on this path of improvement or fall into complacency like the labor government before? Only time will tell.

Self-Determination or Separation:

Barney Sturt-Bennett
Politics Editor

Despite nearly 500 years of English rule in Wales, independence seems an unpopular idea. A YouGov poll in September found just 20% of respondents in favour of an independent Wales. To put that into perspective, in September 49% of Scots in a Norstat poll believed in an independent Scotland; and in May just over 35% in Northern Ireland favoured a United Ireland.

While Plaid Cymru, Wales' nationalist party, controls the Welsh Government, they have ruled out an independence referendum within a first term. So, if it isn't an independence movement, what on earth is Welsh Nationalism, and what does it mean for Welsh Politics today?

264 years before Ireland was placed under the control of English parliament; 171 years before Scotland; and 490 years ago for us, in 1536 the nation of Wales was brought under English law. In fact, until 1967 Wales was legally English, the legal region that included Wales was named for England. How was this slight resolved? In 1967, the region was renamed to England and Wales, and the laws remained unchanged.

The cause of Welsh Nationalism has been defined by disasters. Tragedies and injuries are imposed from Westminster, through a lack of care, forethought, and accountability.

The suppression of the Welsh language, for example, as an indirect result of Westminster education rules.

The flooding of Capel Celyn, a Welsh-speaking community, in order to supply water for Liverpool. Permission for the plan was passed through Parliament without a single vote from Wales' 36 MPs.

The Aberfan disaster, the tragic deaths of 144 people, 116 of whom were children, after the collapse of a coal mining waste tip onto a school. After an enquiry the blame was found to fall upon the National Coal Board, headquartered in London, nobody was charged.

Welsh Nationalism calls for the power to make the sort of decisions that lead these tragedies to rest, not in the hands of English MPs in Westminster, but with Welsh representatives here in Wales. It is the movement to put the voice of the Welsh people in the ear of those who govern Wales. In many ways, it has been successful.

With the election of Plaid Cymru, Welsh Nationalism has surely triumphed, right? Well, the truth is that Plaid's election success was not solely a result of the party's nationalism, but rather a response to the nation's rejection of the English nationalist Reform party.

The nature of Plaid's victory was complex, suffice to say that support coalesced around Plaid because they were neither

What is Welsh Nationalism?

the anti-immigrant Reform party, nor the stagnating Welsh Labour Party; rather than because Welsh Nationalist issues had suddenly leapt to the forefront of voter's concerns.

Wales' lack of passion for independence (comparative to say, Scotland) is a result of the nature of Welsh nationalism. A movement defined by English negligence, rather than aggression. The last major war over Scottish freedom in the 1700s was fought by wigged men with rifles. The last Welsh revolt was led by Owain Glyndŵr, whom the English accused of wizardry, in the 1400s.

The primary concern is not separation, but self-determination.

Dreams of independence are for now, dreams, even fervent nationalists will admit that the economic reality of an independent Welsh nation would be poor. The focus becomes laying the groundwork for improving outcomes here in Wales, reducing poverty, improving education, and Welsh language expansion.

Welsh Nationalism is, today, the movement to make decisions for Wales in Wales. In the first term of the Plaid government, this movement faces its most serious challenge. Only time will tell if the Welsh people will vote nationalist a second time.

Illustration: Charlotte Henderson



Power Buys Immunity: *The Justice Tree*

Az Kim
Politics Editor

It often becomes apparent in our day-to-day life that the same rules don't apply to us as they do to the powerful elite — whether it's Donald Trump and his involvement with the Epstein case or the British royal family being granted immunity from prosecution. It's hard to deny that the rich and powerful seem to be above the law, and the case of Đỗ Ngọc Phương Thủy's death is no exception.

In May 2025, a former Deputy Chairman of the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee, and husband of a current minister, veered onto the wrong side of the road. He unintentionally collided with a motorbike carrying Đỗ Việt Hùng and his teenage daughter, Đỗ Ngọc Phương Thủy, before crashing into a tree, killing Phương Thủy. Việt Nam's national television channel VTV first covered the case 15 months after the crash, reporting that the police had exempted the driver, Nguyễn Sỹ Cương, from criminal

liability. Young Vietnamese social media users demanded further investigation, organising protests online. They renamed the tree at the crash site the 'justice tree', encouraging the public to visit the site and place flowers beneath the tree. Public uproar reached global audiences, and the efforts of students around the world led to the location of the crash being officially marked on Google Maps as 'The Truth of Justice'.

Even though these displays of grief and dissent have been non-violent, the government has enacted widespread restrictive directives to censor students. Uninformed police cleared flowers from the base of the tree, and Hà Nội universities have begun actively suppressing student participation in these unofficial memorials.

A post from the Hà Nội University of Industry urges students to remain alert and "remain vigilant against attempts to exploit young people's kindness and enthusiasm for malicious purposes and to divide the vital national unity bloc," parroting the Ministry of Public Security, which blamed "hostile and reactionary forces" for

manipulating young dissidents. In response, national media outlets quietly removed and reposted versions of the report with now-blurred official documents, concealing the identification and blood alcohol test results as well as addresses associated with Cương. The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Public Security have also censored social media posts related to Nguyễn Sỹ Cương: illustrating systematic censorship nationwide.

The official report is straightforward: Cương tested negative for alcohol and admitted responsibility. This account itself is neither complicated nor contested but is the recall of official documents following government censorship of youth mobilisation. The obfuscation of documents without explanation, alongside factual inconsistencies and drastic efforts to shut down public attention to the case, raises legitimate questions about transparency and accountability.

When a state answers questions about an elite figure with delay, and with accusations against those asking, it invites the suspicion it hopes to avoid. The public's scrutiny isn't rooted

in whether a legal exemption was the right decision, but whether anyone outside the elite world would get the same treatment — and if the process was transparent enough to find out.

In a one-party state where courts and media are not independent of the ruling party, that question cannot be answered from outside the elite inner circle. In the case of Đỗ Ngọc Phương Thủy's death, the government was able to protect Nguyễn Sỹ Cương from the top down by controlling all outputs from the media and higher education institutes, begging the question of how far the powerful and rich will go to protect one of their own.

However, none of this is uniquely Vietnamese. Everywhere, power buys proximity to discretion: the sympathetic reading of rules, settlements, and decisions reached before the public learns the facts. What distinguishes systems is whether independent courts, a free press, and open records can expose that discretion and correct it.

‘Students are citizens in this city’ Will Kinnocks Investment Deliver For Wales?

Stephen Doughty on *Llais Rhydd*

Reuben Badman
Politics Editor

When asked what the biggest issues facing students was, Stephen Doughty did not reach for fees or the cost of living. He talked about safety.

‘Students are citizens in this city, just like anybody else’, the Minister of State and MP for Cardiff South and Penarth told *Gair Rhydd*. ‘They want to be safe, they want to be secure, they want to have their bins taken away, they want to be able to walk safely at night, they want to be able to enjoy what is an amazing city, like anybody else, no matter where they come from’.

Then he moved to sexual violence, an area we had not asked yet.

He was explicit: tackling sexual violence is a top priority for the UK Government, and it must start with the people affected.

‘Always listening to survivors and victims’ he said, because ‘without understanding their perspective (...) we are not going to be able to make a better future’.

I believe he means it. He is happy to meet *Time To Act* to discuss his role, and the government’s, in stopping sexual misconduct. Policy written without survivors in the room will almost always fail the victims.

For students, the need is clear. A 2024 Office for Students pilot survey in England found that 20% of students had experienced unwanted sexual behaviour. Women were more than twice as likely as men to experience sexual harassment (27% to 12%) and over three times as likely to experience sexual assault or violence. Yet only 12% of students who experienced harassment made a formal report to their university and 43% of those who did call the experience poor. 90% of those who experienced sexual assault or violence did not report it to the police.

The prosecution figures partly back Doughty up. The Crown Prosecution Service says rape suspects charged have hit a 20-year-high and the conviction rate has risen 2.5%. Locally, 13% of victim based investigations in South Wales end in a charge, 4 points above the national average. But rising charges hide a system failing at the

other end. In wSouth Wales, cases open for more than a year jumped from 243 at the end of 2024 to 336, a rise of 38%, and across the UK the CPS receives 2.6 adult rape cases for every it finishes. Cases are going in faster than they come out, leaving victims waiting for a charge that may never become a conviction.

A rise in charges measures how busy the system is, not how well it works. Doughty is right to put listening to survivors first, because if students do not trust the system enough to report sexual misconduct, no number of charges will fix it. But, listening is only the start. What is needed now is the next step: specific targets, a deadline and survivors given a seat at the table.

Doughty also pointed to policing as a test of whether promises will translate into change. He argued that Labour’s reversal of police cuts and putting more officers on the streets has had a direct impact on communities and said he is pushing for greater funding for Cardiff.

The figures appear to support his claim. Forces received up to £17.6 billion and in February 2026, neighbourhood policing roles had grown by 3123, beating the target of 2972. Showing promise, it may reach the 2029 goal of 13,000. The figures also lend to a greater investment locally: South Wales received 91 new neighbourhood police officers, higher than areas like Merseyside receiving 79 and Warwickshire receiving 18.

Doughty arrived with a clear message: ‘students are citizens’ and deserve to be treated like it. The figures are slowly moving in the right direction, now the next step is making sure students feel the difference.

Alfie Chapman
Contributor

Making his debut speech as Welsh Secretary during September’s Labour Conference, Stephen Kinnock announced a game-changing investment for Wales. Throughout his speech, he highlights how Wales has been overlooked by past governments, something he has experienced first-hand as “a child of Tredegar”. In response to this, he hopes an investment of £14 billion will open opportunities for Wales, including twelve thousand jobs and seven new train stations.

Whilst this is an exciting prospect, what is Kinnock’s investment actually going to deliver for Wales? Is it enough? And what does it mean for us, the students of Wales?

Along with the obs and train stations that will help create opportunities across the country, he has also highlighted more promising uses for the investment. For example, Kinnock will invest £64 million into port infrastructure to support 5,000 jobs in the Celtic Sea. This is a vital investment as it supports some of Wales’s most skilled workers. Workers who oversee an important aspect of Wales’s economy, as the Celtic Sea is a significant area for offshore wind development. Whilst this has mostly been put in place to support already existing jobs, it will also create opportunities for young people that have studied and trained in these areas of expertise.

Unemployment in Wales is a growing issue, and especially anxiety-inducing for young people. 17% of 16-24 year olds are not in education, employment or training. Whilst this is an issue across the entire UK, economic inactivity is higher in Wales than the wider UK. Therefore, the promise of 12 thousand jobs is only a small development in employability. An additional 62,500 jobs will be needed to reach the rest of the United Kingdom’s employment level.

His investment into transport will also benefit employment through easier connections to the rest of the United Kingdom. The endless opportunities created by seven new stations is an exciting prospect. He has already secured £455 million from the spending review to use for transport

connectivity across Wales. With an improvement in cross-border connectivity, job opportunities will be much less limited for people in Wales.

Kinnock consistently highlights the importance of Wales’s connection to the rest of the United Kingdom. This connection can be strengthened by this investment into transport. He claims that Plaid Cymru and Reform want to limit this connection, which could create countless opportunities for Wales’s people. Due to Plaid holding up the investment, Kinnock accused them of “sitting on their hands” and stating that “jobs and security were being delayed” because of them.

The parties in England have already put the deals underway, but not Plaid. In response to Kinnock’s comparisons between Plaid and Reform, Plaid politician Liz Saville Roberts stated that Kinnock is “insulting thousands of former labour voters who chose Plaid Cymru in May”. This includes many of the young people Kinnock seems to be lobbying for with his investment, such as the students of Cardiff who played a large part in voting in three Plaid MS’s in each Cardiff constituency.

It is undeniable that a £14 billion investment will change the lives of countless people living in Wales. But is it enough? A focus on employability is promising, as it is an issue that has or will affect everyone. It is especially promising for students and young people in Wales as unemployment is quickly growing. Post-graduate employment will be supported by this investment, which will create more optimism for students heading into the job market.

Despite this, a promise of twelve thousand jobs is not sufficient for Wales. In a country where over 60,000 more jobs are needed to reach the rest of the UK’s employability rate, 12,000 is merely a drop in the ocean. We need more.

Image: Wikimedia commons



big ideas...

Burnham, Devolution or a Celtic Coalition: Where is the UK Heading?

Ruby Davis
Contributor

Late last month, Andy Burnham addressed the Labour Party conference with a speech that surprised even right-wing commentators with its vigour. “Hope” was the buzz word focused on in Burnham’s speech. However, it was the second, more inconspicuous, use of “we” which bolstered audience support. But, is Burnham’s want for unity enough to keep the UK together?

The surge in the Labour Party’s popularity has been coined the ‘Burnham Bounce.’ PollCheck research shows that the party has risen from a low of 19.7% in July to a more respectable 27.6% in the latest polls. These impressive stats might have come as a surprise to Labour’s opposition. After all, years of political uncertainty in the UK has created a culture of pessimistic, cynical voters who possess little to no faith that a PM could truly change anything. Yet, despite the disillusionment, Burnham flipped voters by giving them the feeling he described in his speech: hope.

In many ways, this PM seems to give voters a lot of the things they didn’t get with Keir Starmer. He appears authentic, strong-willed, and is delivering on changes, like capped bus fares, which the public can feel in their day-to-day lives. Voters can be impatient, and so small wins like these helped to generate support. Today’s bolder Labour has proven to be successful thus far, though the ‘Burnham bounce’ can’t last forever.

Despite opinion polls resulting in Labour’s favour, there remains lurking issues facing Burnham’s government coming from within the UK.

Leaders of Plaid Cymru, the SNP, and Sinn Féin gathered on the 14th of September to sign ‘The Cardiff Agreement’: a document detailing each nation’s right to self-determination. This means that Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales all have first ministers who want to leave the United Kingdom. For the first time, this outcome is more than just a possibility, it’s achievable.

As revolutionary as this may sound, it shouldn’t come as a surprise to Westminster. It’s no secret that the home nations have been inching closer to demanding independence for some time, now they’re just putting the wheels in motion.

Plaid Cymru have been clear in their plea for the country’s independence, though this is not representative of the entirety of the nation’s parties. Both Reform and Welsh Labour oppose the move to leave the United Kingdom and cite concerns as to whether the move would further divide Wales and weaken relations between the home nations.

So, why do the Celtic nations want independence? Possible explanations for this are extensive, but a general feeling of being underrepresented prevails.

Politics in the UK has felt increasingly London-centred, with major decisions focusing around Westminster. This undoubtedly affects the nature of policies being created, and so becoming independent could give more power to the leaders of each country.

All this leads us to the big question; where is the UK heading?

In a perfect world, a mutually beneficial relationship between Westminster and the Celtic nations would be reached, giving them more power to influence decisions. However, this outcome is

unlikely. Burnham recently stated that a referendum for Scotland is currently “off limits” whilst the government focuses on issues with the economy. Focusing on issues with the cost-of-living crisis will always be welcomed, however the dismissal of the nation’s long-standing wants to be heard will likely increase divisions between the UK.

It ultimately remains in the hands of Westminster as to whether a Celtic Coalition can be instated, though, if they refuse it would be naïve to assume that the nations would forget about this ambition. The pact holds the power to change the UK. It should be considered that if citizens felt like more power had been awarded to their country, they would have more of a reason to use their vote and become democratically involved.

A Celtic Coalition is becoming more possible day by day. The signing of the Cardiff Agreement proves that the topic of independence is not going away, no matter how much Parliament might wish it would. If Burnham is committed as he says he is to devolution, he will consider the pact more than just offering a cursory acknowledgement of the concerns.

Where the ‘Burnham bounce’ is helping the PM thrive in England, the government must realize the UK is composed of individual countries who need their own power to thrive. What works for England does not necessarily serve all of the home nations.

So would a Celtic Coalition be too much devolution for a Burnham government? Where is he going to draw the line? There seems much to be discussed when Burnham meets the Celtic leaders later this month.

“Gen Z of All Nations, Unite!” French Students Protest Underfunding

Oskar Hyams
Head of Politics

What do tear gas, stun grenades and batons all have in common? The answer: they have all been used against students in France, following protests in response to underfunding and overcrowding in schools. The police’s response has been so brutal that the Mayor of Saint Denis was tear gassed after trying to separate students from the Gendarmerie. With the violence escalating and one 15 year old losing his hand to a police stun grenade, this begs the question: what are the students angry about, what are their demands and how have politicians reacted?

The protests began in a lowkey suburb of Paris in late September, as students joined their teachers to voice their anger at understaffing and a lack of resources at the Saint-Exupéry High School. However, after their demands were met and more teachers were employed, the fervor to see reform in all schools spread like wildfire. It started with students in Paris blockading entrances to their schools and then students in Lille and Marseille followed suit.

One particular area of grievance for the protesters is the French online platform that decides higher education places. With 80% of students passing their baccalauréat (which entitles them to a university place), the system has created intense competition and anxiety around students getting their preferred courses and universities. The students also take issue with class sizes and lack of teachers. Many complain of classes as big as 35 pupils, while their teachers go missing “for several weeks without being replaced”. One student told Channel 4 how they were “desperate” and that the current situation in schools is “catastrophic”. Despite France spending more per student aged 15-18 than the EU average for upper-secondary schools, it is clear Prime Minister Lecornu’s austerity approach (in response to high borrowing costs in France) is leaving young people and educators anxious about their futures.

With more than 6,000 arrests and 100 injured (including police officers), what remedy are the students actually asking for and

is it so extreme that the French Government can’t deliver?

Well, the National Union of Students in France released a list of 10 ‘emergency measures’ which they demand should be “implemented immediately”. The first demand made by the Union was a call for a major renovation scheme for schools and universities. This includes fitting air conditioning into all schools “to cope with heat waves” and ensuring that all establishments have “clean and functional sanitary facilities”. Students also call for a major recruitment drive to ensure there is 1 nurse, psychologist and guidance counsellor per 500 students and an end to the online higher education platform, to free up “250,000 additional places in higher education”.

In reaction to these demands, the Government and Prime Minister Lecornu have already begun making promises, in the hopes of ending violence and disorder. As a start, the Education Minister announced that 3,000 substitute teachers would be deployed to 100 schools which have been identified as having a serious staff shortage problem. The Minister has also promised to authorise the recruitment

of “several hundred” teachers while working alongside the Prime Minister to amend the 2027 budget to redirect more funds toward teacher recruitment. Additionally, the Government has also committed to making the higher education application platform more transparent, so students are clear on how applicants are ranked, why they may be rejected or accepted and how their grades are weighted.

However, with regard to school maintenance, leadership has pointed to regional governments as the ones responsible for this infrastructure. With two thirds of the country’s schools being built before 1970, however, there are real questions over at what point the government should step in to provide financial assistance for these renovations.

As the disorder continues into the weekend, with 55% of French citizens saying they want the protests to stop, it remains to be seen which side of the argument will compromise first. Will the students have their demands answered or will the Government’s ‘belt tightening’ approach stall negotiations? Only time will tell.



Image: Wikimedia Commons

Llais Rhydd Interviews Brexit Referendum ‘Possible’: Burnham’s Options on the EU

Cefin Campbell MS

Carlos Zayas
Politics Editor

Last week, *Gair Rhydd* was given the chance to interview Cefin Campbell, the Plaid Cymru Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education.

Campbell was drawn to Plaid at the young age of 14. Despite being born in one of the most Labour-voting parts of the United Kingdom, it was a visit by Gwynfor Evans to his local chapel while campaigning for parliament that drew him to the movement. The belief in a right of self-determination for Wales, instilled in him during Evans’ speech, would be the defining feature of the rest of his political career.

On universities and student media, the minister started out by sharply criticising the previous Labour government for allowing universities to ‘wither on the vine’. However, when pressed about immediate government commitments to avoid further redundancies and address issues caused by the university sector facing a financial breaking point, he repeatedly pointed towards Plaid’s review into higher education sustainability, which is due to be published in late 2027, more than a year away. ‘Promising to look into it’ can leave students feeling a lack of urgency from the government, and makes the largest party in the Senedd vulnerable to other groups offering more radical, immediate alternatives to young people. This is particularly risky for Plaid, given that at the last election many student voters chose them over the Greens as the party of progressive action and change...

To read the full article go to gairrrhydd.com. To listen to the interview head to Spotify to listen to our podcast *Llais Rhydd* via the QR



Jamie White
Contributor

Brexit has done more harm than good,” said Andy Burnham at the Labour Party Conference, last month. This statement should ring true for millions of students nationwide. From a sharp decline in study abroad opportunities, to the loss of freedom of movement for graduates, Brexit has failed students.

What options does the Prime Minister have regarding the future of the EU-UK relationship? The first would be to maintain the status quo with the current trade deal between the EU and the UK. The second would be to pursue entry into the Single Market (a free trade zone for EU members). Finally, should Burnham go ‘all the way’ and add a second referendum into Labour’s 2029 manifesto?

Staying as we are means very little for students. For Burnham it would certainly be the path of least resistance, and would avoid opening old wounds that surrounded the divisive Brexit debate. For a country in desperate need for unity, perhaps maintaining the status quo with Europe is what the country needs. However, this would be a disappointing outcome for many students.

The European job market remains largely closed off for British graduates, now requiring complicated visa applications or an EU citizenship to access. The upcoming ETIAS system (a pre-travel screening system) would introduce new fees for students looking to travel abroad. While the return of the Erasmus+ programme is welcomed, students over the past five years have missed out on opportunities to study abroad. While this remains Burnham’s simplest option, for stu-

dents it would just maintain the post-Brexit barriers.

Another option for Burnham, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats, would be to re-enter the Single Market. This would give the UK access to the EU’s €17-18 trillion internal market, honouring the four freedoms of goods, services, capital, and people. These are the core values underpinning the Single Market which members must maintain.

For Burnham it would be a divisive option, with Richard Tice already accusing him of trying to enter ‘Brussels via the backdoor’. For students, it would improve mobility and employment opportunities within the EU. It would also allow for greater cooperation over research between British and European academic institutions.

While certainly beneficial for students, reentering the Single Market could be a waste of precious political capital for Burnham, especially if he pursues such a policy without the mandate of a referendum.

Rejoining the EU would be the most controversial and challenging option for Burnham. Claiming that an in-out referendum was ‘possible’ in a future Labour manifesto, European leaders welcomed the possibility of the UK’s return. A poll published by YouGov on the 30th September saw 59% of Brits support rejoining, with 32% opposing.

Despite this, Burnham would be required to win the 2029 General Election, win a referendum, and then negotiate a new deal with the EU to re-enter.

For students, it would allow full participation in the EU’s democratic and policy making process, as a new generation obtains EU citizenships. However, it could lead to greater competition for competitive gradu-

ate and entry level job opportunities. Rejoining the EU would extend the right to live and work freely in the UK to EU citizens. While rejoining the EU remains possible, the practical challenges surrounding it would likely lead to it being shelved in favour of greater cooperation with the EU from the outside.

Overall, Burnham’s options on the EU puts him at a crossroads. Maintaining the status quo might be the easiest option, but would be disappointing for British students. Rejoining the Single Market would be a great opportunity for students as many of the benefits of EU membership would return. However, without the mandate of a referendum, Burnham will face accusations of re-joining the EU by the ‘backdoor’.

Rejoining fully remains a challenge, with lengthy negotiations potentially taking years while dividing the country. While this might be true, is Burnham politically adept enough to undo the harms of Brexit?

Image: Wikimedia Commons



Records Smashed in 2026 Cardiff Half Marathon

James Leigh
Head of Sport

On the beautiful first Sunday of October, the masses lined the streets to watch 30,000 runners pounding the tarmac in the 2026 Cardiff Half Marathon.

The race, in its 23rd instalment, was a huge success, with a record number of participants from all across the world taking part in the race around the Welsh capital.

Spectators were treated to a phenomenal run from Joyceline Jepkosgei, the Kenyan athlete finishing with a time of 1:05:40 — a women's course record.

Another Kenyan, Gideon Kiprotich, won the men's race in a superb 59:43, whilst Poland's Sam Kolek and Briton Mel Nicholls took first place in the men's and women's wheelchair events.

The race also played host to some famous faces: notably Welsh football legend Aaron Ramsey and ex-Welsh rugby star Adam Jones. With several road closures in place, huge crowds gathered to cheer on thousands of tightly packed runners as they set off.

Speaking to *Gair Rhydd* before the race, Dan, a Cardiff University student, was "buzzing" to start.

When asked about his training, he replied, "hopefully I can pull something out the bag".

The race started at 10:00 AM, the starting pistol releasing the runners down Castle Street towards the Principality and then Cardiff City Stadium before heading towards Penarth.

From there, runners made their way to Cardiff Bay, passing the Senedd and Millennium Centre before looping north towards Roath Park. A final dash through Cathays brought them to the finish line at Cardiff's Civic Centre.

In the women's race, Jepkosgei, a former half marathon world record holder, finished ahead of Ethiopia's Wede Kefale and Tigist Tesema in second and third.

The men's race saw Kiprotich take first place, beating out second place Yismaw Dillu, and Jonah Rutio.

Sam Kolek would be the first finisher of the day, taking first in the men's wheelchair category: his third Cardiff half victory.

Speaking to *Gair Rhydd*, the Polish athlete said he was feeling "absolutely great" after taking the 2026 title, describing it as his "first performance this year where nothing went wrong".

"I was ready for the course, I was very focused and very aware of all the difficulties I can bump into, so it was really good," Kolek said. "I'm coming here next year, because this is one of my favourite venues."

With extremely high demand for a place to complete, the ballot for next year's race is open already. Those eager to race will have to wait with great anticipation for the announcement of the ballot results on 22nd October.

Evans Brings Rally Back to Wales

Oliver Hedley-Lewis
Sport Editor

Welsh driver Elfyn Evans alongside co-driver Scott Martin clinched the WRC title after an extraordinary Rally Italia Sardegna event.

Having made his debut in the top flight of the WRC at the 2007 Rally Wales GB, Elfyn Evans is now a champion. The 35-year-old from Dolgellau in North-West Wales has been competing consistently in the WRC since 2014, when he first signed for M-Sport WRT. However, his time at the top of the WRC did not kick off until he moved to Toyota Gazoo Racing in 2020.

Since joining TGR, Evans became a regular title contender but never quite managed it, finishing as a runner up for five of the last six years. Much like the years before, Evans' 2026 campaign was strong but beset with unfortunate mistakes and issues.

Evans laid out his intentions for 2026 with a strong start to the season, collecting a second place in Monaco and an overall win in Sweden. Unfortunately, due to the nature of rallying, Evans' blistering start unravelled at the following events in Kenya and Croatia. Despite a commanding start to the Kenyan Safari Rally, Evans suffered a catastrophic suspension failure to his Yaris' right-rear assembly in phenomenally muddy conditions.

Somewhat fortunately for Evans, the sheer amount of mud present also claimed the cars of his main championship rivals in Oliver Solberg and Sebastien Ogier after both their engines had been swamped, offering Evans a lifeline to stay in the championship fight. At the following round in Croatia, Evans and Solberg looked for a return to form after their luck in Kenya. Within the first stage of the event, just a couple of miles in, Solberg clipped a

bank and sent himself into the thick Croatian foliage. Later in the day, Evans also became stranded having overshot a tricky corner in a rare mistake from the Welshman.

For the next three rounds of the 2026 championship, Evans bagged precious points with two podium finishes and his final overall win of the season in Japan. With strong finishes in the remaining rounds, including two more podiums, Evans was in a strong position for the final event of the year held in Sardinia. However, despite his efforts, Solberg had an extraordinary run in the last few events to put himself within touching distance of Evans' championship lead. With just one stage to go in Sardinia, Solberg just needed to finish ahead of Evans to secure the championship win after Evans and Martin suffered a puncture earlier in the rally.

Solberg sat a few seconds up on Evans and just needed to cross the line, but in an extraordinary turn of events Solberg oversteered slightly on the infamously slippery Sardinian sand and hooked a 'gravel bank' or a 'bush' which pulled his Toyota Yaris off the road and into a sandy bank. Despite getting his stricken Toyota moving again and finishing the rally, Solberg finished behind Evans thus crowning the Welshman as Britain's newest WRC champion. "I don't think it's quite sunk in yet", Evans stated following the unprecedented turn of events.

"I feel sorry for Oliver as well — he had an incredible weekend, and I'm sorry for him to lose it so close to the finish there."

Elfyn Evans and Scott Martin secure their place amongst rallying royalty as he becomes the third British man to secure a WRC title following a 25-year gap, joining the likes of Colin McRae and Richard Burns.



A Student's Guide to BUCS and IMG Sport

Mael Le Paih
Sport Editor

Starting at Cardiff and thinking about joining a sport team? With so many clubs and leagues on offer, it's easy to feel a bit lost. This guide breaks down the two main ways to get involved: BUCS and IMG, so you can find the right fit.

BUCS stands for British Universities & Colleges Sport, the competition that pits universities across England, Scotland, and Wales against each other every week. The elite national leagues sit at the top, with regional leagues filling out the pyramid below.

Cardiff competes right at the summit. Our rugby first team plays in BUCS Super Rugby, the highest level of university rugby in the country,

and recently got the better of Cardiff Met in the Cardiff Clash.

There are 72 sports clubs on offer, with every sport you can imagine. 37 of them are BUCS-affiliated and most field several teams, so there is a chance for everyone. Last season Cardiff finished 10th in the national BUCS standings with 3,018 points, putting us firmly among the best sporting universities in Britain.

Fixtures are mostly on Wednesdays, with sports such as Futsal, Gaelic Football, and Indoor Cricket playing at weekends. If you want weekly, high-level competition against other universities, BUCS is it.

Intramural Games (IMG) is billed as recreational, but it gets competitive. Open to students and staff, IMG runs Netball, 7-a-side Football, and 11-a-side Football. Teams come

from independent and school-affiliated societies, so you're spoiled for choice.

Every Wednesday the Talybont Training Village courts (indoor and outdoor) host IMG Netball. The season splits into two phases: one a semester, across six fiercely contested leagues. Last year, the Law Society A team took the Super League crown.

Also played in two phases, 7-a-side rewards success. Hosted at the Talybont 3g astro pitch, win and you move up to a tougher bracket. Phase 2 features three leagues of nine teams — all society and school sides. 2025/26 champions ISOC (Islamic Society) FC will be out to defend their title.

The 11-a-side game is just as competitive, with five leagues of five teams. This is played on the Pontcanna Fields, run by the lo-

cal Cardiff council. The best sides from phase 1 earn a spot in the top bracket, and phase 2 mirrors the English football pyramid: Premier League, Championship, League One, League Two, and National League. Reigning champions of the Premier League, CPD Gym Gym, are the team to beat.

Want to represent Cardiff against the best in Britain? Try out in BUCS. Fancy playing alongside your coursemates or society friends while still chasing silverware? IMG is calling.

Cardiff University Announces New Partnership with BUCS Rugby Teams

Kieran Miller
Sport Editor

Josh Twigg (Cardiff University student and prop forward), Stuart Vanstone (Head of Sport at Cardiff University), Jamie Muir (Cardiff Rugby Managing Director), Professor Wendy Lerner (Cardiff University Pro Vice-Chancellor), Margherita Puccinelli (Cardiff University student, VP Sport and AU president) and Finn Charles (Cardiff University student and scrum half).

A new major partnership between the University and Cardiff Rugby has been revealed and aims to create a sustainable pathway for young and late-developing talent within the city. Both organisations signed a memorandum of understanding at the home of Cardiff Rugby: Cardiff Arms Park on Thursday 17 September (just 20 days before Cardiff University's historic victories against Cardiff Metropolitan).

Announcing the partnership, Cardiff University described it as combining “elite sporting development with higher education study in the heart of the Welsh capital”. Both sides have agreed to improve recruitment processes through connections with schools, colleges, and rugby networks. Cardiff Rugby interim Rugby General Manager, Darren Allinson said:

“We want to support the recruitment and retention of young Welsh players, particularly those who have come through the pathway, by giving them the chance to combine high-performance rugby with a strong education and genuine dual-career options.”

This partnership seeks to improve participation in the fast-growing women's game, aiming to open up the programme to improve the development that female players receive in their rugby pathway going forward. This comes following the Welsh Rugby Union's proposal of having two professional sides, which Cardiff

Rugby claim to be following closely.

With Cardiff Rugby Managing Director, Jamie Muir

portraying his excitement for an improvement on the women's game:

“Women's rugby is an important and exciting part of that shared vision. We want to build on our relationship with Cardiff University as we pursue our ambition to establish a Cardiff Rugby Women's team and create stronger pathways and opportunities for female players.”

Both organisations aim to

explore potential commercial opportunities, community engagement and potential events following the announcement. A commitment included in this partnership is to promote and support certain BUCS Super Rugby matches, such as the recent Cardiff Clash, in an attempt to increase the sport's exposure across the capital and further.

On the academic side, this will help to support students and players with the transition into sport, employment, and post-graduate study whilst balancing rugby. Protocols have been put into place to support student athletes throughout their journey with comprehensive support. With the University's announcement declaring that student-athlete wellbeing and academic success should be “central” in the collaboration.

The University's Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor Wendy Lerner has referred to the success of Cardiff Rugby Alumni: such as former Welsh internationals Jamie Roberts, Hallan Amos, and Ellis Jenkins, for encouraging student athletes to look to life beyond professional sport. The statement closes with the desire to safeguard the sport, especially at a time when the Welsh Rugby Union remains under scrutiny and uncertainty.

“Rugby is part of the fabric of Welsh life and so it follows that two organisations here in the nation's capital should seek out every opportunity to safeguard this amazing sport for future generations.”



“Pay to Win”: The Financial Landscape of Modern Football

Jacob Hamlin
Sport Editor

In light of Manchester City FC's recent 114 alleged cases of severe financial misconduct, it is important to reflect on the financial landscape of football and how this level of misbehaviour must be punished and exposed. It has increasingly become the case that whoever has the most money to spend will succeed and those who do not will fail dramatically.

A great case of this change in action is Wrexham. Since Ryan Reynolds's and Rob McElhenney's £1.5 million purchase of the club in 2021, the club has grown to be worth between £300 and £350 million pounds. During this five-year period they have achieved a historic three successive promotions. However, despite increasing their revenue 23 times over, the club has suffered a £25 million loss across the five years of American ownership. This highlights how, even while losing tens of millions of pounds, in the current landscape of finance in football, owners must continue to spend if they wish to be successful.

By comparison, fellow Welsh team Swansea City reported a club record £21.6 million loss in 2025 alone, just £3.4 million shy of Wrexham's across five years. The financial demand of football clubs in this modern era is clearly becoming too much, leading to increased ticket prices distancing fans from their club. One that is still suffering despite spending the most money in their history.

In 2026, the highest sale of a player in the second tier of English football was £84 million pounds for Mateus Fernandes of relegated West Ham. Comparatively, five years ago in 2021, the record sale was Aaron Ramsdale with £24 million pounds. This is a 250% increase in money paid for a second division player. This drastic increase in money is crucial to the success of clubs

everywhere globally. Money has always been a large part of the game but it is now becoming the only factor.

It is important to note that this change to the game has been gradual, not sudden. Since the formation of the Premier League in 1992, football has become incredibly commercialised, with 64 clubs going into administration between then and the present.

This is why the alleged financial misconduct by Manchester City must not remain unpunished. In allowing clubs to spend increasingly shocking amounts of money on players, the gap between teams becomes strikingly large and unjust. Not only as they have succeeded due to an alleged inequitable amount of spending, but also the financial fallout it has created for other clubs. Many teams which have lost out on title wins, cup runs and European qualifications have suffered losses in the tens of millions at the hands of City's strategy.

Punishment has been rumoured to be anything from points deductions and fines to expulsion from the league and relegation down the pyramid. Shockingly, only 49% of fans would want to see the club relegated, with a majority preferring other, less damning punishments. It is an interesting result considering that these fans and their club have suffered due to City's alleged rulebreaking.

This level of spending within football has been protested for years now, as the sport has become primarily obsessed with money and success only as an afterthought. The slogan “created by the poor, stolen by the rich” is now ever-present. It is important that we continue to see fans push back against this commercialisation within football as we saw in 2021 in response to the proposed “European Super League”.

In a world where the cost of living grows by the day, the sport that was once working class is drifting further and further from its origin and to a new, pay-to-win direction.

A Wales Recap: Bellamy Under Pressure?

Cole Davies
Contributor

Following a disappointing summer for the Reds where they missed their ticket to the Americas, Bellamy and his boys have been waiting for their opportunity to show what they can do in this year's Nation's League.

However, with Bellamy's move to Burnley falling through and a difficult few games away from home, questions are being raised to the future of this national team under the ex-city and Welsh captain's side.

“Big heart” were the words used by Craig Bellamy after a 1–0 loss to a star-studded Portugal. With players such as Cristiano Ronaldo, João Félix, and Premier League player of the Year Bruno Fernandes, they were seemingly too much for Wales at the José Alvalade Stadium.

Although, looking at the injury list heading to Portugal, Wales were missing their very own star Harry Wilson, along with Manchester United keeper Karl Darlow and defender Joe Rodon. Even with key players missing, Wales managed to hold on throughout the match but fell to a frustrating, deflected strike by João Félix in the first half, finishing the game at 1–0.

Injuries, deflections and a “£1.4 billion squad” was the story of Wales's opener in Portugal. Nonetheless, Bellamy claims he is “calm” and remains hopeful to show what this youthful squad can do in the following fixtures.

Travelling to Denmark days later, Wales were eager to take all 3 points from the Danes and put up a performance worthy of the red shirt. Having said that, the night didn't go to plan with a second successive defeat in Copenhagen which saw Ben Davies score an own goal and a finish from Gustav Isaken finishing the game at 2–0.

After the game, Craig Bellamy claimed “I'm really hurting”, giving an honest reaction to the fans. He also had this to say: “The team will get better; these players will keep improving ... but also how can I improve?”. Whilst seen as empty words after a poor run, the game was

decided by an unlucky deflection and an unfortunate own goal with the young Welsh only gaining more experience against these well-organised teams.

With two losses in two games and a continuous search for their first win in 2026, Wales were desperate to relieve the pressure that had been building on Craig Bellamy and put up a performance the home fans could be proud of.

At the Cardiff City Stadium, the Wales national team were waiting to face an elite national side consisting of Manchester City's Erling Haaland and Arsenal's captain Martin Ødegaard, a team that reached the quarter finals of the recent edition of the World Cup.

While these elite European sides have found a way to break Wales down game after game, the boost of playing in front of their home crowd and playing the counterattack against an aggressive Norway side, might be the way they turn their luck around.

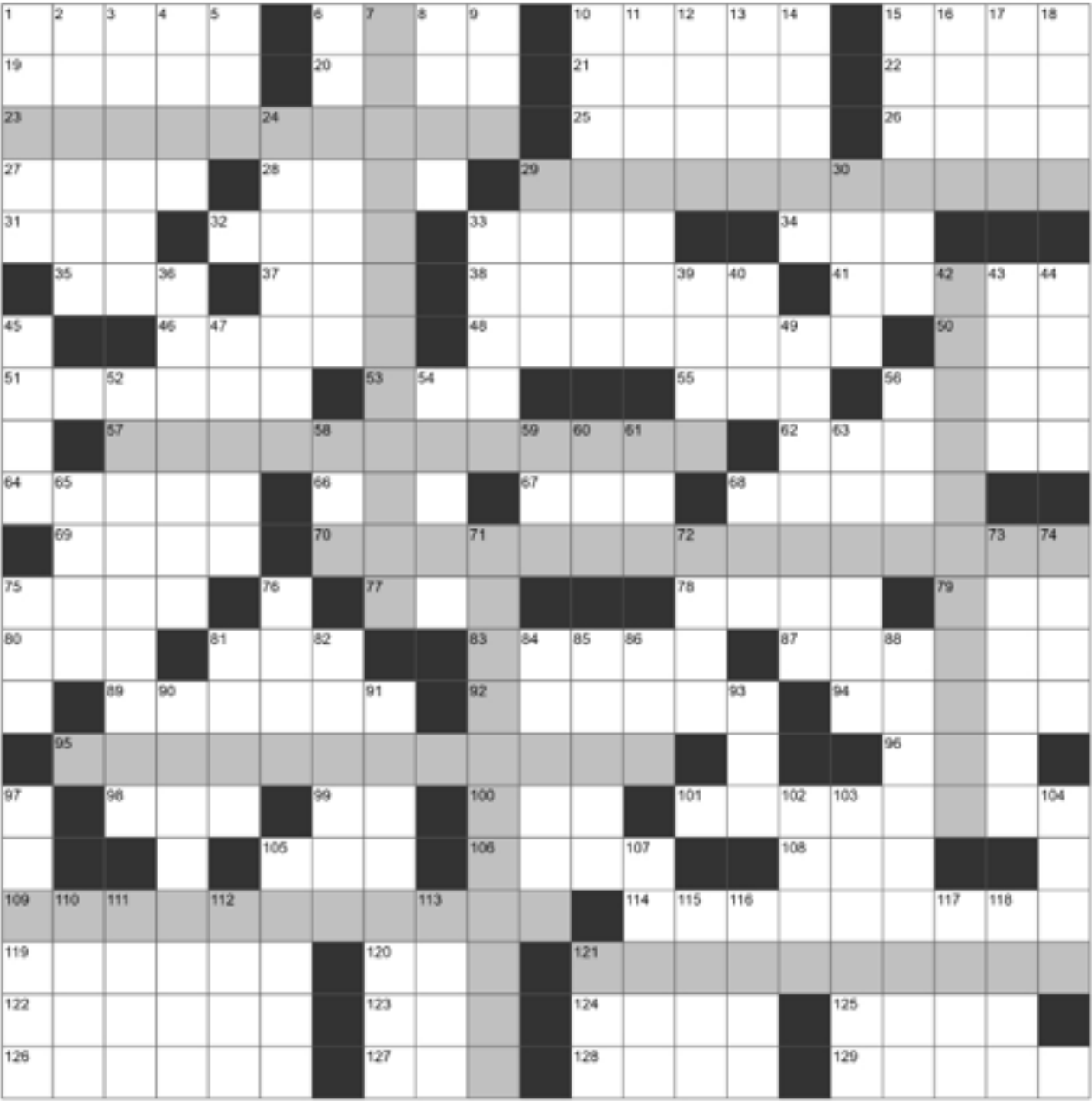
An opener by Oscar Bobb set the Reds back as the crowd prepared for another night of disappointment, only for Daniel James to score a much-needed equaliser after a cross by Sorba Thomas. Shortly into the second half, Daniel James played to his strengths and caught the Norwegian backline by surprise, forcing Torbjørn Heggem to commit a foul and be handed a red card.

With a difficult run of games, Neco Williams converted a brilliant free kick into the top-right corner and gave Wales their first win of 2026 against a favoured Norway side.

Riding on the high of their recent win against Norway, Wales were hoping to capitalise on the momentum and take revenge on Denmark in their return fixture at home. However, after a tough game, Rasmus Højlund converted a penalty and finished the game 1–0.

With one win and three defeats in four games, Craig Bellamy and the players will be feeling the pressure to turn it around in the next international break this November.

‘Gourd’
luck!



Across

Down

1. Had the nerve, ventured
6. Matured
10. Playing between a birdie and bogey
15. Wight or Man
19. “Throw the dog ____”
20. Obnoxious or pathetic person (shmuck’s kin)
21. Precedes brûlée and fraîche
22. Linger
23. **Becomes listless, vacant, or unresponsive**
25. Yuletide tune
26. Newcastle river
27. “Gears of War: ____” (2026)
28. Rumble, as hair
29. **’88 horror film (Headless Horseman’s hat?)**
31. Lair
32. Slight fight
33. Kvetch, cavil, complain (or a pond fish!)
34. Dot follower
35. Toolbox user’s initials
37. “Human-caused worldwide heating”, briefly
38. Oust from office
41. ____ mortis
46. Proprietor rather than a mere franchisee
48. 20th-century essayist Max, whose name sounds like an alcoholic German tree?
50. Palette selection
51. Nighttime get-together
53. Roth ____ (US tax-free banking option)
55. Be indebted to
56. Maize
57. **Bare-bones personnel for basic operations**
62. Point the finger at
64. Did a number two
66. Sleep stage and “Everybody Hurts” band
67. Drone’s aviation designation, briefly
68. “I can’t stop now, I’m on ____!”
69. Energy use over time by ones at rest, briefly

70. **Periods of work scheduled late at night**
75. Bovine bellows
77. Teacher helping those with extra requirements (in Ire.)
78. “Aha! Got it!”
79. Posh twat’s exclamation
80. Always, contracted poetically
81. Bar barrel
83. 1604, to a 54 Down
87. Metaphor’s mate
89. Pair in a toolbox, for gripping
92. Becomes unconscious or leaves (with “out”)
94. Offends the nose
95. **False feeling in amputated arms and legs**
96. Total income of a country’s residents, briefly
98. Venereal illness, briefly
99. “Let’s ____ [100 Across]...”
100. “...[99 Across] ____ a bank!”
101. Bare to the sun’s rays
105. Freudian focal point
106. One-named “Orinoco Flow” singer
108. Org. for energy cooperation and dialogue
109. **Cowards**
114. Carnivore
119. Sea separating Greece and Türkiye
120. Eager e-greeting
121. **Scapegoat searches**
122. Lingua ____
123. “A Nightmare on ____ Street”
124. Put ____ appearance
125. -nym prefix
126. Brownish pigments
127. NNW U-turn
128. Double agent
129. Didn’t exist

1. Stupefied, seeing stars
2. Presaged, foretold, portended (archaically)
3. Traditionally nomadic Indo-Aryan ethnic group
4. Non-binary person, informally
5. Agnus ____ (“Lamb of God”); culture-war inits.
6. Pacify or soothe
7. **Uncredited authors**
8. Ostrich cousins
9. Speck
10. To damn or execrate
11. One who walks with heavy steps
12. Cop’s catch
13. Frenziedly
14. Artefact of a bygone time
15. Narrow continent connectors
16. Eyelid woe
17. Singer Del Rey
18. Ogled
24. Put on a jury for a trial
29. Window section
30. Standard or benchmark
33. Havana hailer
36. Stereotypically loud-mouthed New ____
39. “Take ____” (Madonna hit)
40. Haul
42. **One’s horror-loving female lover?**
43. Couple’s pronoun
44. Descartes or Magritte
45. PDQ or pronto
47. Gardener’s opps
49. Corpse-carrying carriages
52. Organisms similar to each other in form thanks to convergent evolution despite different ancestry
54. Caesar’s subject
56. 251, to a 54 Down
58. 0.0000001 joule
59. Actor’s prompt or pole for pool

60. Bit of sunshine
61. Actress Mendes
63. Beneficiary’s brother, perhaps
65. Clarinet cousin
68. Spots, plugs, pitches
71. **Schedule where a person sleeps during the day and is awake at night**
72. Split asunder
73. Silent-film supplanter
74. “____ Not There” (song by The Zombies)
75. Pre-____; ____ sch.
76. Yard parts
81. Benevolent
82. Still half-asleep
84. Underworld denizens
85. Taxi driver
86. Robot suffix
88. Era’s large animals considered as a group
90. Overdue accommodation expense
91. Kisses
93. Precedes Diego and Jose
97. Precarious, treacherous
102. Jedi foe
103. Donkey declaration
104. TV-recording devices, for short
105. St Vincent Millay, Ferber, and Mode
107. Essential acid
110. “Scott Pilgrim” and “Juno” Michael
111. Petri-dish gel
112. Apiece
113. Afflicts
115. Citation abbr.
116. Salicylic acid target
117. Minecraft explosives
118. Posho English college
121. Film director Wenders