gair rhydd

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US AND THEM

Staff speak out about redunancies, wellbeing and incompetent leadership

Ruby Collins
Deputy Editor-in-Chief

Over the summer, UCU negotiations with Cardiff University management have neared collapsed. As a result, industrial action in the 2027 spring semester is likely.

In May 2026, a staff survey, which has been leaked to *Gair Rhydd*, revealed almost 70% of participants voted negatively to the statement that "change is managed well at Cardiff University". Now November, *Gair Rhydd* have been contacted by staff from across the University to report their unaddressed frustrations and feeling that a "lack of emotional intelligence" among management is causing "irreparable damage" for years to come.

With such a disheartened staff body, and students also feeling the consequences of senior managerial decisions, what do students need to know about why Cardiff University staff have been pushed to this point?...

Read Our Feature On Pages 16-17



Cofio Aberfan 60 Mlynedd ers y Drychineb

Tor-calon, tristwch, trasiedi

Ela Rhys ac Ifan Meredith
Pennaeth Taf-Od / Dirprwy Brif-Olygydd

60 mlynedd yn ôl trawsnewidiwyd bywydau trigolion Aberfan pan fu i domen lo lithro a boddi Ysgol Pantglas a thai cyfagos. Bu farw 144 o hoelion y gymuned gyda 116 o'r dioddefwyr diniwed hynny'n blant.

Roedd hi'n ddiwrnod anodd; briwiau'n cael eu hagor, a'r dagrau'n cronni wrth i'r gymuned ymgasglu ar y 21ain o Hwydref i alaru, i gofio ac i dalu teyrnged. Cynhaliwyd munud o dawelwch am 9:15, oddeutu amser y drasiedi. Llwyd oedd yr awyr, y glaw yn disgyn a'r tywydd yn cydymdeimlo gyda'r teimlad wrth i'r gymuned glosio mewn distawrwydd llethol...

Darllenwch yn llawn ar dudalen 14

Overheard on Campus

Cardiff's Unfiltered Snippets and Soundbites

Isabella Schraibman
Contributor

When walking around campus, everybody loves a cheeky gossip with friends, a post-night-out debrief or a funny 'hot take'. However, be aware of your surroundings as you never know who could be tuning in. Over the past week, I've been keeping my ears open around campus listening out for the unfiltered realities of university life beyond the lectures and reading...

Read in full on page 11

Llais Rhydd Sport: the New Home for Cardiff Unversity Sport

James Leigh
Head of Sport

Alongside the launch of *Llais Rhydd*, *Gair Rhydd's* brand new podcast, the Sport section is delighted to announce our very own show: *Llais Rhydd* Sport!

With a new edition out every month, *Llais Rhydd* Sport is your new home for student-focused sporting news, and it promises to report, debate and celebrate every important issue facing Cardiff University's teams and participants...

Read in full on page 31



It Wasn't A Monster
It Was My Boyfriend

Read in full on page 21

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A Note From the Editor



When I last wrote to you, *Gair Rhydd* was restablishing itself on campus as the place for the issues you care about.

Since then, it has been great to get emails and messages from so many students who are passionate about being part of Cardiff's Free Word, and I want to especially welcome the new members of the editorial team and our new Staff Writers.

On the front page of this edition, you may have been grabbed by the feature piece which unveils how the University has been failing its staff in almost every imaginable way over the last few years. Equally, you may have been caught by the anonymous article written in the Opinion section on sexual violence. Whatever the reason you are reading this *Gair Rhydd*, I thought it would be worth explaining the choices of focus.

Thanks to the work of the Politics team in our last edition, many staff members across the University have since gotten in touch with *Gair Rhydd* to talk about the frustrations and injustices they have been subjected to. Being the space for accountability that *Gair Rhydd* is means connecting students and staff on the issues that matter, and that is why we think, no matter what you study, you ought to read Ruby's feature piece.

With both a regional and global focus on sexual violence as a result of current news items, we had a few writers across various sections speaking honestly about sexual violence and related topics in the last edition. As a consequence, an anonymous student reached out to *Gair Rhydd* wanting to give their deeply personal account of the topic. While some may find it a hard read, and those who have been a victim should be aware that it may be upsetting to read, it is important that students do read it.

At the start of this year, *Gair Rhydd* pledged to make sexual violence on campus a priority focus in our coverage, and this is us staying true to that. If you, like this anonymous *Gair Rhydder*, want to speak out about something but feel nervous to do so with your own name, get in touch, we will always ensure complete anonymity with sensitive topics.

We have also had our first podcast episode from the Sports team - their monthly University sport round-up - which you can listen to on *Llais Rhydd*, and read about in the Sports section of this edition. The Politics team also sat down for an in-depth, hour long conversation with your Students' Union President, Joshua Tandy which gets into all the topical issues on campus. To listen in, go to *Llais Rhydd* on Spotify, and to read Oskar and Alex's reflections on the interview, head to the Politics section.

The last thing I want to say is, once again, get involved! It's been great to see so many passionate students contributing, but there is always room for more. Particularly, if you want to be part of *Gair Rhydd's* News team, are an illustrator who wants to see their work in the paper, or someone with videographer experience, email editor@gairrhydd.com, or message us on Instagram: we want you!



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!

Leaked Survey says Just 30 Percent of Staff have Positive View of University Leadership

Ruby Collins
Deputy Editor-in-Chief

An internal staff survey conducted by Cardiff University, leaked to Gair Rhydd, reveals shockingly low levels of trust in senior leadership.

Shared by a disgruntled member of staff, this survey has not been seen by students until now. Thew survey had 3,263 respondents, almost 70% of who voted negatively to the statement that "change is managed well at Cardiff University".

This year, Cardiff University is running at a deficit of £33.4m, following a deficit of £31.2m in the previous year. In response to the financial crisis, senior management have introduced staff and student facing 'Hyb' systems, new departments across all subjects, and have even phased out courses including Ancient History and some Modern Foreign Languages.

In the survey, participants were able to tick one of three boxes in response to a statement: negative, neutral or positive.

"Across all statements pertaining to "Leadership", over 40% of staff voted negatively, revealing widespread dissatisfaction with senior management".

Additionally, over 25% of staff responded by ticking the "neutral" column, meaning only 30% of staff feel positively towards Leadership at all.

Participants expressed that they felt unable to address or report mismanagement from superiors. When voting on a statement that "I feel I am able to speak up and challenge the way that things are done", almost 40% of staff responded that they feel negatively.

Alongside this, around 50% of the survey's 3,263 participants voted that they feel either "medium" or "negative" about a statement regarding whether or not they feel that they are able to report "bullying" or "harassment" without feeling it would "have a negative impact on me".

Furthermore, for all questions pertaining to "Wellbeing and Balance", almost 30% of participants consistently voted negatively. Specifically, over 25% of respondents voted against statements questioning whether they are able to "cope with the stresses" of their jobs and whether they receive appropriate support for their physical and mental wellbeing.

This year, senior management have provided staff with an 'Academic Delivery Model'. Disgruntled lecturers, who would prefer to remain anonymous, have shared with *Gair Rhydd* that this model takes tasks which lecturers have been performing their entire careers and has minimised the time allocated to complete them. Consequently, lecturers are working outside of their contracted hours and are reporting extreme stress. In this survey, almost 40% of participants voted negatively to the statement "I am able to manage my workload without regularly working unreasonable hours".

When asked if they felt that "action would be taken as a result of this survey", over 50% voted negatively. Even if staff have taken the time to complete this questionnaire, the majority have such little faith in executive management that they don't see its results going anywhere.

While this 2026 survey suggests staff feel supported by their line managers, colleagues and immediate superiors, it signals a resounding frustration with and distrust of higher management.



Left to right, Vice-Chancellor Wendy Larner, Chief Transformation Officer David Langley (nicknamed "cuts guru"), Deputy Vice-Chancellor Damian Walford Davies, Pro Vice-Chancellor Stephen Riley.

We are always looking for stories, if you have a tip please email news@gairrhydd.com.

Cardiff Uni Banter: Has the Story Come to a Close?

Meghan O'Neil
Features Editor

Cardiff Uni Banter' the now national story that was reported on the BBC News, Wales Today Programme on the 9th October has seemed to fade in student memory, since the new (old) owner apologised, but is it really the end?

On the 15th October a mystery Masters' student who claimed to be the original Cardiff uni banter owner came out with an apology. The account published a statement of apology on Instagram consisting of ten slides containing apologies and an explanation for the publishing of rape confessions and sexually offensive confessions which has caused controversy in recent weeks.

The account first published an apology to "anyone who has been hurt, upset or negatively affected" by the content that was "shared" on this account.

The supposed "original owner" of the instagram account explains how they started the account and have since graduated from undergraduate studies and are now "pursuing a masters degree". They said that since the page started gaining traction they brought in "several people to help manage the account" which resulted in them "losing access to the account when the new individuals took over its administration".

Since the recent controversy, the original account owner was made aware by friends what had been posted and managed to "regain access" to the account and "change the login details, update the email and remove the previous administration". The original account owner claims that it is now "back under my control".

The statement takes accountability for the situation, saying "regardless of the intention behind a post, its impact on the people who encounter it matters."

The statement also shares the account's plans for the future, which include bringing in a "small group of trusted individuals to help manage the page." With their priority to "establish a more responsible approach to moderation […] as well as reconsidering how this platform approaches awareness."

The account says that in the future instead of sharing experiences of sexual assault they want to focus on "sharing useful information, highlight specialist organisations and help people access appropriate support services.

The account finalises the post reiterating their apology to "everyone who has been hurt, or negatively affected by this account, I apologise."

While this statement was posted on the original Cardiff uni banter instagram page, Gair Rhydd has been unable to verify the identity of account holder, or verify the claims made in the post.

But is this the end of the story? Whilst anger over the situation seems to have calmed on campus with the release of the statement of apology is all forgiven? Plain answer not entirely, the accounts comment section was filled with comments such as "Nice way to crawl out of it isn't it" and "Took your time".

The online chatter seems to have stilled but student groups like Time To Act are still arguing that accountability hasn't been taken as the 'Cardiff Uni Banter' account has still blocked people who have challenged them.

So the main chapter of the 'Cardiff Uni Banter' Controversy may have closed, however one question remains will we ever find out the identity?

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 0808 500 2222, or use Cardiff University's Report and Support system to report sexual violence on campus.



IMG Teams Under Fire for 'Inappropriate' Social Media Presence

Elisabeth Ounsworth
Head of News

Cardiff University's IMG League has contacted teams after repeated concerns over alleged inappropriate social media presence.

The university's Sports Development Officer, Ryan McHugh, sent multiple emails to IMG team representatives warning them that they had found evidence of inappropriate social media content. This included 'content that may promote or depict excessive alcohol consumption, initiation-style activities, harmful or dangerous behaviour, harassment, humiliation or any other content that could be considered inappropriate, offensive or damaging to the reputation of your club or the wider IMG or Cardiff University brand.'

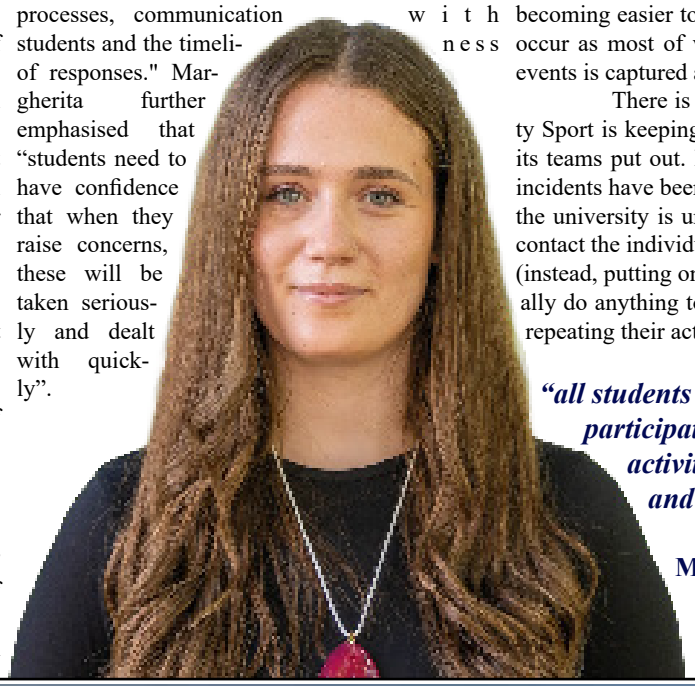
The second email, sent two weeks later, urged all committees to 'take immediate action to review their social media channels and remove or amend any content that could reasonably be considered inappropriate or inconsistent with the expectations outlined in [the] previous email', stating that 'the fact that further concerning content has appeared since then makes it particularly important that this guidance is taken seriously'.

A Cardiff University spokesperson declined to comment on which specific clubs or teams were the main perpetrators, stating that 'we have asked all teams who have a social media presence to be committed to promoting responsible behaviour, respect between teams and individuals, and a positive sporting environment for everyone involved'. They further reported that any future concerns 'will be addressed in line with the relevant University procedure'.

When asked how they will support students who may have been negatively affected by the activities depicted in the social media content, they stated that they 'recognise the importance of supporting all students', and that 'students who have any concerns are encouraged to report them through the appropriate university channels so that they can be considered and suitable support offered'. However the university support system has been known to incur lengthy waiting times for students trying to access support.

Margherita Puccinelli, Cardiff University's VP Sports and Athletics Union President, called the allegations "concerning". In a statement for Gair Rhydd she stated that "all student group leaders [...] should understand their responsibilities and the standards of behaviour expected of them", and that "all students should be able to participate in sporting and social activities in a safe, inclusive and respectful environment".

When asked about the suitability of Cardiff University's centralized 'Report and Support' system for this issue, she stated she is "aware of frustrations students have expressed about the time it can take for reports submitted [through that system] to be addressed". Margherita told us that she has already "reached out to Cardiff University Sport to better understand the current reporting mechanisms for IMG, including how concerns about student behaviour are raised". She also expressed "hope to work with the University to identify where improvements can be made, particularly around the accessibility of reporting processes, communication with students and the timeliness of responses." Margherita further emphasised that "students need to have confidence that when they raise concerns, these will be taken seriously and dealt with quickly".



"all students should be able to participate in sporting and social activities in a safe, inclusive and respectful environment"

Margherita Puccinelli
VP Sports

The university has made consistent attempts over the last academic year to crack down on initiation-style activities within sports societies to ensure student safety. Last academic year, Cardiff University's Cricket team were suspended for the year after being found to have initiated Freshers in a manner which did not align with Cardiff University's expectations. In this age of social media, it is becoming easier to spot when activities like these occur as most of what happens at student social events is captured and posted online.

There is no doubt that Cardiff University Sport is keeping a watchful eye on the content its teams put out. But the manner in which these incidents have been handled raises the question: if the university is unwilling to call out, or directly contact the individual clubs and teams responsible (instead, putting onus on all teams), will this actually do anything to dispel those responsible from repeating their actions?

Cardiff Researchers Seek to Unravel the Teenage Mind

James Roberts
News Editor

Universally acknowledged as a difficult period between childhood and adulthood, adolescence is a period of mental development and confusion.

However, work by researchers at Cathays campus's CUBRIC building (next to everyone's favourite supermarket), may shine a light on the psychological changes which impact everyone at that age.

The Brain Exploration in Adolescent Minds (BEAM) project, seeks to analyse the teenage mind from a cellular rather than a hormonal perspective, aiming to better understand the neurological factors which contribute to the turbulence of puberty.

Speaking to BBC Breakfast, Dr Jessica Hall, lead researcher at BEAM, said they hope the results of the project will create "better interventions and support for young people". She added that "this study aims to build a really big resource that will be used by lots of scientists going forward".

Using the cutting edge Connectom scanner, the study will examine the neural development of 350 children between the ages of 8 to14.

In addition, 100 children with 22q11.2 deletion syndrome will take part in the study. Otherwise known as DiGeorge syndrome, the condition is associated with "lifelong problems, including heart defects and learning difficulties", according to the NHS.

According to Dr Hall, BEAM intends to meet participants "several times every two years". Children will be asked to go into the Connectom to have scans taken of their brains. Researchers will take further scans as they engage in activities such as playing iPad games and answering questions.

Cardiff University Brain Research Imaging Centre (CUBRIC) is a world leading neuroimaging cnetre located here on campus. The £44 million centre houses bleeding-edge research technology, including the Siemens 3-Tesla Connectom MRI system which was the first of its kind in Europe when installed.

CUBRIC, and this piece of research, demonstrate Cardiff University's long term strategy of becoming a research led Univrsity, the building itself the cornerstone investment for Cardiff's 'Maindy Park Innovation Campus'.

The project, funded by The Welcome Trust, is a collaboration between experts from the University of Cambridge, the Donders Institute in the Netherlands and Centre for Neuropsychiatric Genetics and Genomics, as well as Cardiff University.



Image, right, Mtjonesuk via Wikimedia Commons

Security Breach in University Web Systems

Elisabeth Ounsworth
Head of News

Students across Cardiff University will have noticed an emergency alert at the top of their Cardiff University apps informing them that some university systems have been affected by what the alert calls 'a global cyber-security issue'. It directs students to the IT status page for periodic updates. This follows the discovery of a severe cyber-security flaw affecting PHP websites which was identified by AI, described by researchers as a 9.2 out of 10 according to the BBC. As the world's IT experts grapple with this unexpected discovery, how have Cardiff University students been affected, and how long will this last?

The flaw that was found involves a type of widely-used programming language used for web development called PHP. According to the BBC, in 2024 experts found a 'potential theoretical flaw' in PHP which could pose potential cyber security risks including cyber attacks, but did not know how any human would have the capacity to use it to their advantage. But with advancements in AI happening all the time, the discovery was made in the summer of 2026 that this vulnerability could indeed be exploited with malicious intent.

PHP teamed with researchers to attempt to formulate a security patch that could be applied to any company and website, ensuring widespread safety—but internal information leaks led to cyber-criminals using an AI of their own in an attempt to utilize the flaw and find a way into websites. For the average consumer, this poses risks to personal data around the globe.

The status page's most recent update, posted October 21st, claims that IT staff were made aware of 'a significant vulnerability requiring urgent patching maintenance', calling the issue 'critical' and stating that the decision has been made to 'block internet access to the affected systems'. They claim that the 'vast majority' of systems aren't affected, but that it is 'difficult' to determine all affected systems. The post notes that has access to the blocked sites is still available on campus or via the VPN, but for students who commute to university from home, how will this affect them?



Cardiff's Russell Group Status Comes into Question as Research Hours Halved

Elisabeth Ounsworth
Head of News

Cardiff University made the decision to slice staff's yearly allocated research hours in half at the start of this academic year, from around 600 to just 315 annually. Since Russell Group universities' prestigious standing is based on its output of influential research, with Russell Group Universities receiving X% of the UK's yearly private research funding for tertiary education, the question being asked by staff and students alike is, how will this impact that? Could Cardiff lose its Russell Group classification?

A statement released claims:

"Cardiff University's academic delivery model ensures a baseline of 315 university-funded hours for research (from a total of 1500 hours across all activities), with scope for additional allocations according to strategic priorities and available capacity. Externally funded research time is added on top of the 315 hours. 315 is the absolute minimum research hours.
This recognises the importance of research within academic roles, giving staff dedicated time to pursue their research and enabling further flexibility where strategic needs and capacity allow."

Despite claiming that 315 hours is the 'absolute minimum', according to academic staff members, the only way to surpass this number of hours is to apply for a sabbatical. This means forfeiting either a teaching term or a year to focus on research, work on projects in their own unpaid time, or to find external grants to extend research funding and thus be able to complete more hours. Some academic staff members called this decision "upsetting", and said they felt short-changed by the university.

This decision not only raises questions about Cardiff University's commitment to supporting their staff in producing innovative research, but also whether they value Cardiff's status as a Russell Group institution. The Russell Group is a self-selecting association of public research universities established in 1994. Universities can only join by applying or being asked to join by universities already in the group. Cardiff became a Russell Group institution in 1998, after being invited by the [?].

There is no clear set of criteria that a uuniversity must have to be a russell group university. But their main focus, according to a blog post titled 'What is a Russell Group university?' available on Cardiff University's International Study Centre website, is leading academic research and innovation. The page cites some of the benefits of studying at a Russell Group institution, stating that:

"Russell Group universities offer world-class research led by academics who involve students in their own work so you can learn by practice. [...] The benefits of studying alongside academics with Russell Group-level expertise [...] is that the Group collaborates to win research funding, which not only develops the universities' reputation, but also increases the chances of further funding in the future. The more high-profile research your university publishes, the greater the reputation for both the university and you. By learning from academics who work on high-profile research, you will benefit from their experience as well as insight into research methods and existing theories".

The blog also states that 'by choosing a Russell Group university [students] will be taught by academics who work on high-profile research, benefitting from their experience. Russell Group universities are considered to be some of the top in the world and focus their values on research and working to create stronger communities and ideas for the future'. With this being a major selling point for both the university and its home and international students, along with being a clearly identified core value, people within Cardiff University's community cannot help but wonder what drove the decision to reduce academic staff's ability to meet these expectations.

Image, right, Seth Whales via Wikimedia Commons

JOMEC Student Support Moved to John Perceival Hyb

Kyle Bright
News Editor

Students have been left to depend on a student support team based a mile away from their building as the university continues to centralise its facilities as part of their new Hyb scheme, in a bid to cut costs.

The School of Journalism, Media and Culture (JOMEC) previously had a dedicated student support team inside the Central Square Hyb, but after the reforms, it has been reduced to a front desk with minimal staffing.

Instead, the old support team have been merged with the John Percival Hyb, which is based in a building in Cathays over a half hour walk away from the School of Journalism, Media and Culture in the City Centre.

For JOMEC students to access support online, they must now email the team in the John Percival Hyb, who must now juggle supporting both JOMEC students, and those within the School of Global Humanities.

Students were not consulted about the changes, with the only noticeable change being the change of email address to contact the Central Square Hyb on the student intranet and in uploaded lecture slides at the start of the academic year.

Speaking to an anonymous staff source about the changes, they described the situation as the university's "centralisation f*** up".

Another source explained that staff were being rotated between the Central Square Hyb and John Percival Hyb with only one person available at most times for support in JOMEC, compared to a previous team with multiple people on hand.

Feedback gathered by Cardiff Students' Union last academic year found that many students "remain unclear about what a Hyb is", with little understanding of how they differ from the previous support systems.

The Hyb model was brought in as a move by the university to centralise administration and support services, marketed as locations which provide "redeveloped study space" and "in-person support" for students.

A freedom of information request revealed that the university had spent over £419,000 on "targeted support" from consultants to design the Hyb system.

Gair Rhydd approached Cardiff University for comment but, at the time of publishing, none was provided. Should a comment be provided, the web version of this article shall be updated.



University to Implement AI Search Feature in LibrarySearch

Jac Allen
Contributor

The LibrarySearch Research assistant is a tool that allows students to generate answers about academic or scientific topics with five sources to back it up. It was implemented by Cardiff University to aid students with research, costing [--]. The maintenance for the upkeep of this AI tool costs the University [--] per year. The tool is powered by generative AI, more specifically GPT -4.2 mini, an LLM (large language model).

The use of an LLM is controversial, as it has been widely reported that their energy consumption and carbon emissions have had a significantly negative impact on the environment. According to UNESCO "It is estimated that training a single large model could emit over 626,000 pounds of carbon dioxide" which is on average more than if you drove 1,400 miles in a compact petrol car, not dissimilar to the type most students drive. The positive of using an LLM is that other languages will be supported even if most of the index is in English. This is essential for a University that prides itself on being bilingual.

The Research assistant is located on the top left of the LibrarySearch home page. To use the tool is simple: all you have to do is ask a clear and detailed question about an academic or scientific topic and the Research assistant will generate an answer. It achieves this by converting the question into a query by the LLM so it is understood by the search engine. The search engine then takes the most relevant documents in its index and ranks them according to how well they can answer the question. The LLM uses the top 5 sourcecraft an answer.

The tool displays the 5 sources and a button to "view related results". It's important to note however, that the tool does not use the preferred Harvard referencing style. Another negative is how you cannot ask follow up questions, making the natural language style of research slightly redundant.

To test this tool, Gair Rhydd searched one of the example questions 'Did Picasso's time in Paris influence his artistic style?' It generated a 361 word answer that, to summarize, made a clear and concise argument that Paris affected his artistic style significantly, giving evidence to back these claims.

At the bottom of the answer there is a button that allows you to copy the answer and include sources. This might confuse some students as lecturers have warned against directly copying AI and have said that it could be defined as academic misconduct. So is Cardiff University, part of the Russell Group of universities, encouraging their students to commit academic misconduct? Gair Rhydd asked Cardiff University how it aligns with the University's stance on AI in academia and its reasoning behind the inclusion of a copy button. Cardiff University responded with [--].

Research assistant is an effective tool that, if used correctly, can help university students research certain topics that may otherwise have taken a lot of time. However, it isn't without its faults, with environmental and academic integrity concerns leading the tool to be a controversial yet not entirely negative addition to LibrarySearch.



Cardiff UCU Threaten Strike Action in 2027

Oliver Hanlon
Features Editor

The Cardiff University branch of the University and College Union has voted to restart a campaign of industrial action after talks with the university broke down. The union has demanded that the university commit to no compulsory redundancies in 2027 and reduce staff workloads.

The university has so far committed to no compulsory redundancies in 2025 and 2026; however, the UCU are demanding that this commitment is reaffirmed alongside more manageable working conditions. The UCU say that staff cuts through voluntary means, as well as staff leaving the university and not being replaced, have worsened the workloads for those that remain.

Peter Hill, a UCU Wales official, said: "We continue to maintain a red line against compulsory redundancies. Similarly, we recognise the effects of job losses are felt by those who remain within the university. Impossible workloads and reductions in research time erode quality education".

According to union leaders, staff cuts combined with changes to the time staff are allocated to do different aspects of their jobs, such as research and teaching, mean that "an already existing workload crisis is getting even worse.

The union is demanding the protection of research time and a reversal of cuts made to the amount of time academics within the university are given to commit to research. The UCU is demanding that this is restored to 40 per cent.

The UCU has stated that the next steps in action will be a non-binding consultative ballot to members in early November with a view to a ballot on strike action and action short of a strike in early 2027. If the dispute is not resolved, it is possible that students may see disruptions to teaching at the start of 2027. Potential UCU action could include anything from marking boycotts to full strikes.

A Cardiff UCU spokesperson said: "The threat of industrial action from our members has so far limited the damage done by management's catastrophic cuts and reckless, chaotic restructuring exercises… Disruptive industrial action is the last thing any of us want, but the threat of it seems to be the only thing which Cardiff Uni bosses understand".

Image, below, Cardiff UCU



The School of Welsh put in with Global Humanities

Fflur James
Taf-Od Editor

You probably won't need to be told how different the University looks and feels following the changes made by the senior Cardiff University team. Schools have been slashed and departments merged under plans to save money.

One of those schools is the School of Welsh, which has now become the Department of Welsh within the larger School of Global Humanities. Other schools have also been merged within this larger School of Global Humanities such as English, History and Music.

Practically and structurally, the changes can be seen clearly. Similarly to many schools, the office for the School of Welsh has now turned into a teaching room within the John Percival Building. For many, it is sad to see that there is no single place with the 'School' although the Hyb for the Global Humanities which is situated in the John Percival entrance.

One of the students who have seen the changes is Megan Bill who studies Welsh.

"More than ever, I appreciate the work staff from the Welsh department are doing to maintain the feeling of community within the department, despite the changes."

"This has been a key factor of my experience in the university until now. Losing that would be a pity".

Another student who has graduated, one of the last to do so under the 'School of Welsh' is Myfanwy Lewis who now studies a postgraduate course in the Department of Welsh. For Myfanwy, there is no clarity for MA students whether there is a room or specific location for the postgraduate students.

"The School of Welsh had one specific room for MA students; there is no longer a room".

"There is no certainty nor communication regarding a specific study space within this new school. People are now more spread apart."

However, she acknowledged that there are some elements to applaud following the changes to the department.

According to Myfanwy, there are more chances to collaborate across the bigger school between different departments within the new school. This brings different opportunities for the students of the future.

She mentioned that Welsh as a subject remains a department on its own and added "that is not the same with English as a subject".

As English share a department with other subjects. However, the Welsh language continues to be recognized across the University.

According to Myfanwy, there remains a close community within the corridors of the Department of Welsh despite the abolition of the School of Welsh. She thanks, despite the changes, the staff within the Department of Welsh remain dedicated to the students.

Song of the Edition

Why Horses? 'Cat's Cradle'

Why Horses? are a post-rock, post-punk band formed while at Cardiff University, established in 2022. One of their most recent singles, 'Cat's Cradle' is a building, experimental track: 'am I thinking too much?'

Check it out here!



"It's called fashion, ook it up.": the It's Called Ffasiwn exhibition at the National Museum

William Jackson
Staff Writer

Fashion often connotes social entitlement, a cultural authority. Various images of catwalks and flicking the pages of unaffordable magazines such as Vogue, GQ, and Grazia that display a savvy assortment of characters with premium accessories. Indeed, the feelings of alienation and hostility to these unnecessarily extravagant objects that display status are warranted. But fashion belongs to everyone. It's a social signifier for identity and a celebration of self expression. This is precisely what *It's Called Ffasiwn*, an artistic exhibition hosted by the National Museum, is designed to represent: a Welsh cultural celebration.

Immediately, the observer is confronted with a dazzling carousel of photos showcasing outlandish characters in the quiet towns of the Welsh Valleys. Kids sprawling in post-industrial settings with chic style and photographed with intense creativity. A portrait of six is posing in light green with an averted gaze, unusually placed in a dull gray setting. Another photo presents a group of five dressed in bright red and black in a barren landscape. One photo, rather amusingly, is a group of three posing in a pub elegantly next to a contentful local resident. They are out of place, indeed, but that is what makes it fascinating.

It's Called Ffaswin began as a twelve-week artistic project in Blaenau Gwen back in 2015. French photographer Clementine Schneidermann was the first photographer-in-residence for a cultural and environmental regeneration programme called 'Arts+Minds' funded by the Arts Council Wales, offering workshops and classes in Welsh communities.

Schneiderman then met Charlotte James, a creative director and filmmaker from Merthyr Tydfil. Their similar interests and engaging practices led them to run fashion and photography workshops with youth clubs, collaborating with kids from working-class backgrounds. This came to define the project and their photographic studio, *Bleak Fabulous*. Since then, *Bleak Fabulous* has continued to pursue Ffaswin, with major collaborations, like Alexander McQueen in 2020, significantly increasing the creative output and fostering the next generation of talent.

Ffaswin shifts from reality and performance. It is framed as taking inventory from traditional documentary practices whilst simultaneously providing a visually provocative expression. The style of these photos attempt to mediate the experience of understanding the value of imagery as a form of documentary, but crystallising the value of photographing identity and self-expression. It's incredibly rewarding to see because it is tirelessly rebellious, and artistically astute, embracing different beauties that Wales has to offer

As we are guided through the exhibition, the photos are set on the backdrop of an post-industrial architecture of south Wales, contrasting with the bright clothing of its participants. The power of photography offers a cultural reinvigoration of the region, which has been traditionally associated with its industrial and social heritage, fostering another way of seeing a space.

It is not surprising to see how the media has rendered the Valleys as bitter caricatures of social deprivation and unsympathetic reports of deindustrialisation, rarely exploring the families that live there. A poem presented on the recording reads: "People describe it as rough because they think there are loads of druggies." However, *Ffaswin* wants to dismantle that fact. The coverage that *Ffaswin* juxtaposes a preconceived idea of the Valleys with an ambitious assortment of humour, fiction, and whimsy. The poem ends with the line: "I love my town, I know its mine well, it is now at this moment in time."

It's Called Ffaswin is an effective testimony to the ineffable promise, hope, and creativity of today's celebrated youth, a collaborative project with young participants and the communities they live in. "We are from Merthyr and we are iconic!" is perhaps the best summary of the project, rightfully so.



Images via Katie Gall





Sŵn:

Cardiff Transformed Through Music

Lily Hill
Culture Editor

At Sŵn Festival, the city itself becomes part of the line-up. One minute, you're squeezing into a tiny room to catch an up and coming folk artist, and the next you're sprinting across Cardiff in hopes you'll see the packed out headline set at Tramshed. With over 100 bands, one ticket, and probably 20,000 steps, it's far from a relaxing day out, but that's all part of the appeal.

Perhaps the most discernible trait about Sŵn is the chance to discover Cardiff just as much as the music. Spanning all the way from Womanby Street in the city's centre to venues closer to Principality Stadium, the festival takes audiences to places beyond their usual range.

For example, I stumbled across The Canopi, a grassroots community space with a coffee bar at the front; and intimate space for gigs tucked in the back, down Tudor Street. Standing at the back of the room watching an artist I hadn't heard of perform in a place I'd never been to before, really encapsulated the essence of Sŵn to me: finding something special in a place you wouldn't expect it.

That sense of discovery extends to the line up too. By bringing artists of all sizes into independent venues across the city, Sŵn gives emerging musicians the chance to reach new audiences and listeners the opportunity to stumble upon a new act through taking a chance on an unfamiliar set.

Dove Ellis' set was a particular highlight for me, his hauntingly visceral songwriting paired with a voice reminiscent of Jeff Buckley. There was definitely something exciting about walking into a gig with no expectations and leaving having discovered an artist I couldn't wait to check out on Spotify.

Looking at the student side of it, Sŵn also offers impressive value for money. My £45 student ticket enabled me to see seven bands in one day, coming out at roughly £6 per act, including the headlining favourites Westside Cowboy. Sŵn has this distinct advantage in comparison to attending an individual gig, you get a shorter set, but for a fraction of the price. With opportunities to volunteer in exchange for festival access, it also offers ways to get involved beyond the standing in the audience.

But, of course, the experience isn't flawless. Clashing set times and walks of up to twenty minutes between venues can become frustrating and tiring as the day progresses. Similarly, you risk the chance of turning up to a performance that's already full. At Fuel, securing a view for Die Twice from the back was almost impossible due to the mix of a packed-out crowd, low ceilings, and a sea of people over six feet tall.

Still, these drawbacks are part of the compromises made for a festival that spans citywide. It hosts valuable opportunities not just for audiences and artists, but for venues too. With the recent closure of District, the sustainability of Cardiff's independent music scene has been questioned, as yet another live music space disappears from the city's streets.

Alongside soaring business rates, rising operating costs, and the wider pressures facing the late night hospitality industry; independent venues are becoming increasingly vulnerable. It emphasises the importance of multi-venue festivals like Sŵn and its ability to introduce audiences to new spaces, helping sustain the venues that give the city its musical identity.

The Survival of the Fittest: YOLO or The Hunger Games?

Imogen Tickle
Proofreader

YOLO is the most sought out club in student culture, with cheap drinks, good music, and the go-to club choice of many societies. Although, the new ticketed entry system has forced YOLO's hand to become a night of social survival, with people fighting to get tickets to join those weekly socials. Those who are lucky are tasked with enduring the chaotic ordeal inside and surviving the arena of the week.

But getting into YOLO is only the first battle of the night. Having successfully paraded as tributes of YOLO through Cathays, in our themed outfits, we found ourselves stuck at the back of the queue, with little alcohol to suppress the cold. At that moment, we got a chance to see all the coordinated outfits of different societies, setting a high standard for the highly anticipated YOLOWEEN.

As we made our way up the stairs, the queue behind us seemed to get longer and longer, with more people eagerly waiting to be let in. Although, before we can enter, we're tasked with Student ID checks. Those without their ID immediately get eliminated from the arena, forcing them to retrace their steps and join the never-ending line of people. Security stand at the doors to Y Plas, onlookers to the frantic assembly of students, taking the position of Peacekeepers (just without the violence).

At first glance, YOLO seems like any other night out in Cardiff. The familiarity of groups dancing near the DJ, loud music blaring in your ears, and people drinking together. However, we come to realise that the true fight begins at the bar.

There's a frenzied look in people's eyes as they discreetly claw to make their way to the front of the disorderly queue, scrambling towards YOLO's Cornucopia. Pushing an arm in to stake a claim near the card reader and stare at the bartender until you meet their eye to order. The queueing system is unlike the order enforced by security outside, here it's a free for all!

Nevertheless, the system works. After grabbing our drinks, we headed straight towards the dance floor, entranced by the music blasting from the DJ booth. The night carries on, drinks start flowing, and more people join the dance floor. Everyone around gets whisked away into the thrill of the night, trying to forget the 9am lecture we have tomorrow morning and snapping pictures of each other.

But, as more people get let in, the crowd of people get busier. People are bumping into one another and dancing with strangers we'll likely never see again. Although, that's the true test of social survival, embracing the people around you and letting loose with the people you arrived with.

As the night came to an end, we pushed our way through the sea of people and, although failing multiple times, we found the exit of the building. The cold air of the night is refreshing to say the least after braving the crowded, sweaty arena. It's met with the aroma of the burger stand perfectly placed at the bottom of the stairs, the true saviour of the night.

The real victors of YOLO are those that survive the night out and embrace the chaos inside. Taking the victory tour of Cathays leaves us already mentally preparing for next Monday afternoon, ready to start the fight all over again.

May the odds be ever in your favour.

Rate My Study Spot!

Jaydn Taylor
Contributor

It's getting colder and studying at university can be a big step-up in workload. Therefore, it is great to have a study spot where you feel comfortable (and most importantly cosy), away from your accommodation and free from distraction. Whether that is in a silent library or in a coffee shop, which is perfect for an autumnal drink and study session. So, please indulge in this list of study spots perfect for you:

Libraries

A library wins the award for an ultimate lock-in spot, with little distraction and a great atmosphere; libraries can be fabulous spots for cracking on with some work with good access to WiFi.

The Science Library:
One of my favourite libraries on campus includes the Science Library, especially the reading room. Picture what you think when you hear 'library' and the reading room is it. The reading room (on the top floor) is incredibly aesthetic with its grand architecture and walls of bookshelves; so much that you feel as if you have entered Hogwarts! As long as you sit in a spot with plugs and silence is how you find it best to study, I would definitely recommend it. Plus, if you're feeling cheeky, the Taf is opposite for a post-study pint or snack (or pre if you need motivation).

Art & Social Sciences Library (ASSL):
The ASSL is one of the most popular and open 24/7, so at some point you'll certainly end up here past your bedtime. This library is great not only for its opening times but also its size. Whether you're feeling more social or more like you need to lock-in, this library has a floor for you (and the plugs to accommodate you). And, if you fancy a sweet treat as a reward, Lidl's bakery is just next door, nothing more you could ask for.

Student Union / Centre for Student Life

Not a fan of libraries or want a change in atmosphere? Try the SU or the CSL. These two are much more relaxed environments and much more sociable. The SU is especially helpful for working as a group with its varied group seating which you can (sometimes) grab with ease. I have found there can be issues with finding plugs so if you do visit, make sure your devices are fully charged. While this can be a great place to study, these two locations can be a little more noisy at times, so just be aware of this beforehand. Nonetheless, there are lots of food and drink places nearby such as Costa, Greggs, and the Taf, so you definitely won't go without.

Coffee Shops

Want a venture off campus? Fancying a bit of eavesdropping whilst you study? Then coffee shops are definitely for you, so here are some I would recommend:

Black Sheep Coffee:
A favourite among JOMEC students like myself. Black Sheep offers lots of plugs, free WiFi (although it can be dodgy at times), and a 20% student discount! They also do great pastries and drinks, and is perfect for if you want to live your 'performative' uni lifestyle with a matcha. It is overall a great place to go if you're in the city and desperately need a study session.

Hoffi Coffi & Rhostio:
These are two great options that offer closer alternatives to coffee shops in the city, especially if you're living in the Talybont direction or for those in Cathays. They have lots of choice and have been strongly recommended by second years (who are much more experienced than me). As long as you're able to focus with noise and win the fight for the plug sockets, these locations are certainly for you.



Day in the Life: *Academics Optional, Hockey Mandatory*

Helen Turnbull
Head of Culture

It's a Wednesday, maybe the best day of the week, and the alarm rings at 9am. Immediate thoughts consist of whether it's worth skipping another lecture (it's third year, should I be locking in at this point…?), followed by what I'm having for breakfast and then BAM. It's a Wednesday, and hockey is calling my name. Some people may say that hockey is my whole life, and whilst I could try and deny the allegations, it's true. I live and breathe it, so thank god I'm the president of the men's hockey club. Hop in the shower, revise the game plan, pause thoughts on hockey (unfortunately) as I attend my Macroeconomics Analysis tutorial. Some new faces here, or is it that I haven't attended many? Either way, skip on home via Lidl for a cheeky food shop, remembering food is fuel, especially if the goal is an Angel's step in YOLO.

Sat at the desk in my room, attempting to do some studying, contemplating that I will wrack up nine grand a year in debt (or thereabouts) to study here at Cardiff, and a wave of bliss rolls over me. How could I forget? How could I let it slip my mind? How are thoughts ever of Macroeconomics more important than those of hockey? Some may say it's an obsession, I just say it's a way of life.

Back to Lidl where perhaps my love for Lidl rivals my love for hockey? What a silly thought. Back to Lidl to meet with my teammates at quarter to two for the drive up to Llanrumney. A quick warm up before a prompt pushback for the Men's Third Team at three o'clock against the University of Bath Men's Fourth Team.
Whilst many things may go in my favour, like coming to Cardiff for university, my amazing housemates, or getting YOLOWEEN tickets, this game did not.
To cut out some expletives, we lost nine to one. I've been known to blame the weather (and it was rather windy) or blame the ref: "Ref, it's a penalty!" But we took our loss with dignity. We can't all win in life, and as a president, I have to set a good precedent, if you pardon the pun.
But did I mention I got the assist on the goal?

Sucking up my pride, and for the greater good of the club, I fulfilled my president duties and umpired the next game. Despite being partial rivals, I would even be happy to say if the Medics Men's 1s Team won against the University of the West of England Men's 2s. But they lost one-nil to UWE. It's safe to say it was not a winning Wednesday.

However, the day is not over and the night is young. A run home to freshen up and before I know it, I'm in social attire heading through the streets of Cathays to a teammate's house. Eight-thirty on the dot, the hockey club rolls into Foundry Social (RIP Gassy's for those who remember) for one of the club's renowned traditions, the table games. And before anyone's mind jumps to a preconceived idea of what a men's hockey social may look like, it's the game you would play as a child, naming all items belonging to a specific category. Like different car brands, or how many different types of drinks I consumed as a hockey freshman.

After a few rounds of games, we bounced across the road into Misfits (big shout out for our sponsorship, we love you Misfits!). I threw some questionable shapes in Misfits before heading over to YOLO at midnight. A big boo to the SU for staggering the queue and making my life hell as a president trying to organise timings for socials and ensuring newcomers are included.

And this is where my memory goes hazy. I hit the dance floor with VKs in hand, boogieing my troubles (a nine to one loss) away. Then 3 a.m. rolls around and Robbie Williams' voice blesses my ears for yet another week, before devouring a chicken and chips meal from T&A Kebabs and hitting the hay. Another day in heaven, and I'll do it all again next week.

A satirical story based on (some) facts.

Fontaines D.C Turn Inward On *Dopamine Chamber*

Ryan Greenhall
Culture Editor

Not a lot of bands have handled growth and the ever-growing rise of fame as confidently as Fontaines D.C in the last few years. Across five albums, they have moved away from the post-punk label that first defined them at the beginning of their career. This year, they have decided to release something more introspective and sullen. The melancholic lyrics and instrumentals convey this feeling throughout the tracks. The album cover is psychedelic and colorful, yet the face has no expression. The colors, music and textures do the talking and feeling.

The album is built around atmosphere. There is a constant sense of tension between movement and stagnation throughout the album. Their lyrics circle ideas of emotional deplency, overstimulation, and the search for relief in a world that sometimes feels designed to distract with dopamine, rather than fully satisfy. Critics from NME have described the record as dark and cinematic, and that feels accurate. Although, what is most impressive is the album's instrumentals. There are shimmering synths, distant guitars, and arrangements on songs such as 'Mimesis', and the lead single 'Marianne' that often feel more like cinematic film scores than traditional post-punk and rock music. The production rewards attention and the details reveal themselves gradually. And for all its darkness, *Dopamine Chamber* is not a hopeless album. There are moments of beauty and happiness throughout it, moments where a lot of humanity shines through. That balance keeps the record engaging from start to finish, and doesn't feel exhausting in its themes or ideas.

My favourite song on the album is 'Where is Gone?', the album's collaboration with international artist Rosalía. It is the first time Fontaines D.C have featured a guest vocalist, and the result is one of the most striking songs they have recorded. Her voice brings warmth and grace to Grian Chatten's low vocals. Rosalia's presence also highlights why she has become one of the most ambitious modern artists. Her career has been defined by an avant-garde approach, her willingness to take risks, and blending traditional and experimental music while operating on a global scale. Frontman Grian Chatten in an interview has described her as a combination of "David Bowie and Björk". I, myself, had the chance to see her perform in London earlier this year and left convinced she is aiming for something most artists today would never dare to attempt. It was pure art. She is bold and challenging. A true musical genius.

Band members Conor Deegan, Conor Curley, Carlos O'Connell, and Tom Coll deserve some attention too. There is a quiet vulnerability in every musical delivery that suits the album's reflection on isolation that runs throughout the album. Even when surrounded by layers of instrumentation, they allow Grian Chatten's vocals remain the focus point, guiding the listener through those moments. The track 'Tongue' on the album deserves particular praise for the way it builds tension. It's one of the more atmospheric moments on the record with its slightly jarring vocals. Together, these songs highlight Fontaines D.C's growing confidence as composers, even when embracing louder and more abrasive sounds.

The album also feels designed for large spaces where people can feel every part of the music. Listening to it, it is easy to imagine these songs translating more powerfully on stage. Fans in Wales will get that opportunity when Fontaines D.C arrive at Blackweir Fields in Cardiff next June in 2027 as part of their major UK tour.

Dopamine Chamber may not be as immediately striking as their previous album *Romance*, but it is a richer and more immersive listen. More than anything, there is a little more emotional core. That in itself, in my opinion, makes this more of a compelling and impressive record.



Balloon Girl: *How High Is Too High?*

Jasmine Comanescu
Culture Editor

You can't change what happened, but you can change what happens next. These words lie at the centre of Hannah McPake's Balloon Girl, a recent play at Sherman Theatre.

Over the past week, I have found myself describing this play to people as "Doctor Who meets A Christmas Carol meets redeemable Elon Musk." The family-friendly Sci-Fi follows Carol Gaudron, a multi-billionaire, tech-savvy, and deeply ambitious woman looking to launch the first civilian up to Mars. The night before launching, she is visited by Louisa, a time-traveling teenage ghost from Victorian times, who is "tasked" with convincing Carol to cancel the launch and see the error of her ways before it's too late.

While this plot may sound hefty, it is persistently scarily rooted inreality. The play immediately grounds itself in real-world capitalism. We see Carol's success through comparisons to the likes of Musk, Bezos, and Zuckerberg, complete with a slideshow of their faces plastered on the stage. Further, Carol's aim at sending a working-class girl up to Mars on her own poses the age old question of: just because we can, does it mean we should? Does one small death for man justify one giant leap for the elites of the world? The grapple between technological advancement and humanity is a theme throughout the play, shown through Carol's private AI assistant and ever-shrinking morals.

Humanity rushes to the forefront of the play with the entrance of Louisa in all senses of the word. The previously empty and bleak stage becomes filled with stunning set design, taking the audience through an exciting whirlwind of Wales throughout history. Carol, who had been orphaned at a young age, is Welsh, yet pushes back and rejects her cultural identity. Her struggles with facing the death of her parents is one of the main emotional drives of the play. As she allows herself to remember her parents, she allows herself to remember her heritage and embrace her history.

Perhaps the most poignant and heartbreaking aspect of the play is the backstory of Louisa's character. Louisa Maud Evans was a real girl from Bristol in the late 1800's. In the summer of 1896, Cardiff's Fine Art, industrial, and Maritime Exhibition was set to include a performer called Mademoiselle Albertina, who would take a hot air balloon up to a considerate height before descending back down to the outskirts of Cardiff by parachute. The event was advertised as a safe yet daring show coming from an experienced performer. In reality, Louisa was a young girl with very little experience and the balloon she was sent in was built with spectacle in mind rather than safety. On 21 July 1896, Louisa went up in the hot air balloon, but was caught by wind. At only 14 years old, she tragically passed away after drifting out to the Bristol channel. The people of Cardiff, outraged at the exploitation of such a young girl, raised money for her funeral and headstone, which remains in Cathays Cemetery today. Louisa's story is a tragic one, yet one that should never be forgotten.

The technical aspects of the play are also worthy of high praise. The crew did a magnificent job of moving between time periods seamlessly and artistically. The actors did a phenomenal job at switching between personas quickly and efficiently. Light moments of comedy got large reactions from the audience, including some one-liners I was later told were improvised. The show also included a signed performance throughout.

The ending of the play is a hopeful one, and once the curtains close, we are left in the same position as Carol. We can change what happens next.

Not So Fresh:
Things That Were Fun During Freshers But Quickly Go Stale

Liv Whitehead
Culture Editor

Despite all the tearful goodbyes to parents and general awkwardness of freshers week, we must all admit that we are nostalgic for that time. There was a certain independence in it all: feeling rebellious for going to Tesco at 10pm, having a shower late at night, or literally any other normal day activity made more exciting because we were finally allowed to do it at night. Nevertheless, the novelty of some of these things wears off quickly after freshers week. Here is a list of things we're all afraid to say that we dread throughout every day of student life:

"My name is … and I study…". I don't care and neither do you. Am I allowed to admit that yet? There have been times over my three years at university where I've thought about keeping business cards on me, so I don't have to go through these facts. I am guilty of asking these questions at the pub and then feeling like a job interviewer or social worker, I must confess. But now we're both going to have to awkwardly wave at each other until we graduate because we've already forgotten each other's names.

The perishability of food. I don't think this was ever a fun part of student life, but it was something that made me feel like Greta Thunberg when I would refuse to throw something out immediately after its best before date. Lorax-level care for the environment. I don't understand why things go sour so quickly though. I could open a jar of pesto one day, and the next day it'll have eyes and fingernails! Speaking of pesto, I feel the need to say that pesto pasta gets boring pretty quickly after freshers. I won't say it though, because it remains one of the only things I can actually cook.

Moving swiftly on, flat behaviour charts. We've all done it, and if you haven't then your flatmates obviously enter the kitchen on a one-in-one-out system. There's something about arts and crafts that seems to bring us together as first years. Those charts are never used more than three weeks however; maybe you'll use it a couple of times in lieu of a passive-aggressive message on the group-chat about food in the sink.

Sticking posters back up that constantly fall. Need I say more? You could have the worst seminar of your life, only to come home and find an array of 90s bands strewn across the floor. It's like Sisyphus versus his boulder except it's me versus white tac.

Freshers flu.

You're probably thinking of flat fire alarms. You're wrong. It will always be interesting to see whose shower got interrupted, who was asleep, and who's looking guilty. It's one big game of Cluedo for those with the eyes to see.

This might ruffle some feathers: Minion-themed socials. I don't even own any yellow clothes. I will be washing yellow paint out of my 'baboi' for weeks. You do get street-cred if you rock up dressed as Gru, but that does mean you have to go to YOLO with a bald-cap on. The choice is yours.

The craziest thing is that no matter how monotonous things get, or no matter how many times our friends must drag us out kicking and screaming to a 9am, we're going to miss all of this desperately in a couple of years. So why not find the humour in all of it? What will never get boring though? A trip to Spoons…

Committee Tips: 10 Sober Socials That Aren't Just Another Night Out

Laura Ellis
Culture Editor

As the first semester gets underway and deadlines begin creeping into the calendar, the appeal of yet another night out can start to wear thin. While clubbing and drinking are a big part of the social calendar for many societies, they don't have to be the default every week.

Whether you're a Social Sec looking to switch things up, make socials more inclusive, or simply give everyone's bank accounts and livers a break, Cardiff has plenty of alternatives. From Sunday roasts to trips outside the city, here are seven sober social ideas to add to your calendar.

1. Sunday Roast at The Taf

Sometimes all you need is a Sunday roast and a chance to recover from the week. The Taf serves its Sunday roast from 12-4pm for £9.99, with a selection of meats and sides to choose from. As deadlines start piling up, it's an easy and low-effort social that gives everyone a chance to catch up without committing to another late night.

2. Brodies Coffee and a Bute Park Walk

Wrap up warm, grab a coffee, and make the most of Cardiff in autumn. With locations on Castle Street and Gorsedd Gardens Road, Brodies Coffee pairs nicely with a walk through Bute Park, plus students can get 10% off! It's a particularly good option for societies wanting something relaxed where members can talk to each other or have a catch-up.

3. Bowling at Lane7

If you want an evening social without falling back on the usual pub or club night, bowling is an easy alternative. Lane7 in the city centre takes group bookings of up to twenty people, with bowling starting from £11 per person. It also takes some of the pressure off making conversation for an entire evening, which is especially useful when you've got newer members who might not know each other particularly well yet.

4. Sunrise or Sunset Walk at Penarth

For something that costs virtually nothing, swap the city centre for the coast and head down to Penarth. Pick a clear day, get everyone on the train, and walk along the seafront or out towards the pier for sunrise or sunset. Admittedly, convincing an entire society to wake up for sunrise might test your powers as a Social Sec, so sunset is probably the safer option. Either way, it's an easy change of scenery from Cathays and a good excuse to get outside.

5. Boardgame Night

Bring out everyone's competitive side with a board game night. Bring along your favourite games and split into smaller groups. Add in some snacks and you have the perfect social evening. There's always the option to turn it into a competition with a small prize for the winner. It's cheap and easy to organise and allows everyone to get to know each other away from the club.

6. Cake Competition

Put your society's baking skills to the test with a cake competition. Set a theme, get members to bring along their best attempt, and have your committee judge the results. You could add categories for the best-looking, best-tasting, and most disastrous creations to make everyone feel included. At the end of it, you've got plenty of cake to share too!

7. Yoga Class

For a social that is slightly more relaxing than your average Wednesday night out, organise a group yoga class. Whether your members are regulars or have never stepped onto a yoga mat before, a beginner-friendly session can be a fun way to try something different together. It could also provide a much needed break from lectures, library sessions, and deadlines. Finish it off with a coffee afterwards and you've got an easy and relaxed afternoon as a society.

"Try anything once"
A Beginner's Adventure into CU Dancesport

Grace Whitcomb
Contributor

Whilst I was trawling through the vast array of societies available here at Cardiff, a certain one caught my eye. Keen to try something completely new, I was set on finding a 'wild card' society, so, when I noticed CU Dancesport, I was certainly intrigued. After all, there could be nothing more unfamiliar to me than dance. Perhaps I was feeling adventurous, but after years of watching Strictly and criticising its celebrities from the comfort of my own home, it was finally my time to take the plunge into the glittering and glamorous world of Ballroom and Latin dance.

CU Dancesport offers dance lessons for all abilities in Ballroom, Latin, and Salsa, with 'Dancesport' being the competitive division of Ballroom and other partnered dances.w

At the society, there is the opportunity for everyone to compete on the university circuit and perform at showcases.

First stop: Ballroom. Our first Ballroom dance was going to be The Waltz. Luckily, I was among many other complete beginners, but unluckily, I ended up in the front row, exposed where the teacher could see me, and between two obviously more experienced dancers. This was certainly outside of my comfort zone. The teacher assured us that The Waltz was similar to walking, we needed flexed knees and the first step in the sequence was heel to toe. Sounds easy enough. But after confusing my left and right feet repeatedly for 15 minutes, I was definitely humbled.

Nevertheless, I greatly enjoyed imagining myself gliding across the floor as the music played, a feeling that was exaggerated when we danced in hold (with a partner). I took the role as follower whilst my partner was the leader, and together we eventually managed to remember the sequence we had been taught five minutes ago without stepping on each other's feet, a success!

Next we ventured into the world of Latin with the basics of the Cha Cha. Again, we learnt a basic sequence of steps, but this time the rhythm was more difficult, with it often beginning on the second beat and creating a more syncopated feel.

We also had some added extras, including a spin and the 'New Yorker' move, which made me feel very glamorous. This time, I took the reins as leader (most attendees were female, so we took turns at learning the leader and follower parts) and desperately tried to remember the sequence and not get distracted by the music. Each time we ran through it, the music was getting faster and faster, the more it sped up, the more mistakes we made, but the more fun it became. Just as we were getting into the flow, the music ended and class was over all too soon.

Everyone I spoke to had enjoyed the class as thoroughly as I had, and now the hall was full of discussions of the class, the dances, the latest series of Strictly, not to mention the two performances from committee members that had interspersed the lesson: they had made The Waltz and the Cha Cha seem utterly effortless. I was even more impressed by their costumes (the beautiful dresses and shoes may or may not have been a part of my decision to join).

Whilst it was daunting to go to a society alone, the overwhelmingly positive and welcoming atmosphere at CU Dancesport put me at ease instantly and resulted in me having one of the best experiences I've had at university so far. I was so convinced that I went to the Salsa class the very next day. There is only one word for CU Dancesport: fab-u-lous!

Overheard on Campus: Cardiff's Unfiltered Snippets and Soundbites

Isabella Schraibman
Contributor

When walking around campus, everybody loves a cheeky gossip with friends, a post-night-out debrief or a funny 'hot take'. However, be aware of your surroundings as you never know who could be tuning in. Over the past week, I've been keeping my ears open around campus listening out for the unfiltered realities of university life beyond the lectures and reading.

Queuing Fiasco

It was 10am on Thursday morning, post-Octoberfest socials, and the YOLO queue had struck again. The aftermath was already unfolding for one unfortunate student as he explained his night.

"So, I'm standing in the queue with my society, chatting to this girl, when suddenly I feel this spray splashing up my leg. I look down and realise she's peeing, standing up, and didn't even bother to crouch. Naturally, I ask her what she's doing, and she calls the bouncer on me! He immediately let her into YOLO and after an hour queuing, I got sent home. I walked home genuinely tearing up."

"Aw mate, how do you feel now?"

"Well it's a bit peak, because my mate got into YOLO with her and apparently, they hit it off!"

Moral of the story? Never underestimate the quarrels of the YOLO queue, and perhaps reconsider your romance strategies if you go for someone who's christened your friend's leg!

Pear Shaped

I was sitting in Bute, when I overheard how one student's afternoon appeared to have taken an unexpected turn after an innocent trip to Lidl.

"My mates went to Lidl before the lecture and bought these crazy-looking pears, so we thought it would be cool to try these. Now I don't really ever eat pears, nevertheless, I have one, go to my lecture, and chill in the CSL. Then I start developing a sweat, my throat's sore and I'm feeling sick. I was thinking right, I've got to go. I have to frantically climb over five unimpressed people, run out the back of the lecture theatre and out to the toilets where the pear came right back up."

"Well on the bright side at least you made it to the loos."

"I mean hardly, I had to do a clean-up job, take myself home and sit in a dark room."

Take aways from this? Leave the crazy produce until after class and no one's judging you for leaving a lecture, except maybe the five people you climbed over…

Hips Don't Lie

Whilst waiting in the queue for Gregg's, I overheard two girls discussing how their housemate's unfortunate dance floor disaster sabotaged a blossoming new friendship before it even began.

"So [blank] and I were in YOLO last night, and we'd tried mingling with new people at our social and befriended this super sweet girl. The three of us were dancing together when The Macarena came on. [Blank] gets so into the boogie and hip-bounces me with such force that I fall to the ground."

"Now it was a harmless mistake, so I thought it would be funny to make him feel a bit guilty. Our new friend however, thought it was a pre-meditated attack and completely shunned him for his scandalous behaviour, leaving him embarrassed and defeated!"

Lessons from this? Beware of the power of The Macarena. What begins as a harmless dance could end friendships!

From a pear-induced catastrophe to YOLO dramas, there's a glimpse into campus' untold stories. As you can see, between deadlines and dissertations, there's plenty of room for a laugh with your friends. However, next time you're dropping a crazy story, perhaps look around first, or you might become someone's BNOC.

A Dummy's Guide to Pretending You've Done the Reading

Phoebe Brown
Contributor

We've all been there right? Only three weeks in and I'm sure all of us, including the freshers, have sat in those seminars acting like it's your GCSE drama exam to not let anyone know you've got absolutely no clue what's going on. And if it hasn't happened to you yet, if you've been miraculously more organised than your peers and ticked the reading off before walking into that seminar room, I've got some bad news for you…It will happen.

At some point, you will be the one sitting there wordlessly nodding along to what sounds like gibberish. There's simply no escaping it. So I'd advise that everyone should read this guide on how to seamlessly get away with your own disorganisation.

1. The Strategic Nod

A tried and true method of pretending you've done the reading is some strategic nodding. Of course, you cannot contribute to the seminar, you're stuck there with no idea what's going on and no knowledge of the text, but some small and subtle contribution will ward people off the scent of your cluelessness.

I advise you to listen carefully, attempt to understand the points your peers or tutor are making, and pick the right time to nod in agreement. The possibility of this may depend on your subject but it is always best to pick one viewpoint or opinion and pretend like you also hold it. Therefore, whenever this viewpoint is expressed, nod at the person expressing it, this will deceive them into believing that not only have you done the reading but you have thought over it enough to form a strong opinion.

However, you must remember not to overdo it, you don't want to sit there like a bobblehead for the entire hour, you'll appear both clueless and crazy. You should instead come across as a quiet but active member of the seminar.

2. The Strategic Shake

Following on from my last tip, this is where the trickier but, if done right, incredibly effective strategic shake comes in.

If someone expresses a viewpoint that opposes the one you are pretending to hold, you should give a small and slow shake of the head. It is important that you do not shake too much or too forcefully, it will come across not only as rude but as overacting and then people may become suspicious.

Each shake must be strategic and well thought out. With practice, and I'm sure you'll have lots, this method can be mastered quickly.

3. The Thoughtful Look

For the few people in that seminar who have done the reading, the discussion will be one of interest and may trigger academic thought. Therefore, to effectively pretend to have done the reading you must come across as intrigued, perhaps even inspired by the content.

I strongly advise practicing this in the mirror before the seminar. You haven't done the reading, so really, it's the least you can do. The look must be subtle. I recommend pointing your gaze toward the floor or the laptop in front of you, perhaps placing a hand on the chin or propping a foot upon your knee.

This will give you a look of thoughtfulness and to your peers and seminar tutor, you should come across as engrossed in the discussion. To really hammer the point home, after sitting in your 'thoughtful pose' for a while, you could write some dummy notes. You'll seem too engrossed to contribute, creating a mask of intelligence.

I hope this short guide comes in handy the next time you sacrifice the possibility of getting a first for the possibility of getting a YOLO ticket!

Best Food Places For Students

Emily Albutt
Contributor

Moving to Cardiff, you can quickly become overwhelmed with the number of different places to eat. From quick lunches between lectures to weekend brunches and meals out with friends, the options seem endless! But with a student budget to consider, it can be hard to know which places are actually worth the visit. Here are some of the best places that I believe are worth it.

Cathays: Affordable Places Close To Campus

Whether it's a quick bite between lectures or somewhere to sit and enjoy a meal, Cathays is full of so many delicious spots at very student-friendly prices. Senghennydd Road is the perfect place for a quick but tasty lunch near uni. Cafes like McSims and The Falafel House offer a vast range of food and are perfect for those busy uni days.

However, my personal favourite is The Bagel Place. This small but popular spot is ideal for a filling and flavoursome lunch. The menu features a range of delicious bagels at very reasonable prices. Their meal deal which includes a bagel, drink and a snack is just £6.99! I can personally recommend the Halloumi and Chilli Jam Bagel. However, be warned, it can get very very busy around 1pm, so timing your visit is essential if you don't want to queue.

Another great option is Hoffi Coffi at the top of Colum Road. With affordable, tasty meal deals and plenty of spaces to sit, this café is ideal for a lunch and study break.

For something a little different, Metchys on Cathays Terrace is another student favourite. Sitting just outside Lidl, this café is in the perfect location for an after lecture treat or a weekend breakfast. From full English to a brunch to burgers or pizza, Metchys is perfect for any occasion.

A Cardiff student food guide would not be complete without The Taf, the university's own pub located inside the Students' Union. With daily food deals, including Sunday carveries and Friday dirty fries, it's a great place to grab a meal without leaving campus. Thursday pub quizzes also make it the perfect spot to combine dinner with a fun competition.

City Centre

It would be impossible to write about the best food spots without mentioning Cardiff's indoor market, where it seems you can find almost anything. From traditional Welsh cakes, to gnocchi, to tacos, to bao buns, the market has everything. It's a great place to try something new. With plenty of upstairs seating it's ideal for a group that all fancy trying something different. The Market also hosts night events where it stays open until 10pm rather than the usual 5pm, so even more time to enjoy all the foods it has to offer.

Restaurants Deal To Know About

Many restaurant chains in the centre offer student discounts which can make eating out much more affordable. Pizza Express offers 25% off through Unidays, while Franco Manca has a 20% discount with a minimum spend of £12. Honest Burger also offers a 20% student discount through the StudentBeans app. Pho is offering 25% for students until 31st October. Bills has a 20% discount with the Unidays app.

Remember that offers can change, so check the latest deals before heading out. And if in doubt, it's always worth asking about student discounts as you never know what you might be able to save!

Illustration: Charlotte Henderson



Galaru am Ysgol y Gymraeg?

Fflur James
Golygydd Taf-Od

Does dim angen dweud wrth ddarllenwyr y Gair Rhydd pa mor wahanol y mae'r Brifysgol yn edrych ac yn teimlo wedi'r newidiadau diweddar i strwythur y Brifysgol a'i hysgolion. Mae'r newidiadau wedi dod i rym yn dilyn cyfres o ddatrysiadau i mewn ymgais i wneud toriadau ariannol i goffrau'r Brifysgol.

Un ysgol sydd wedi cael ei diddymu, a'i hisraddio fel Adran o fewn Ysgol ehangach yw Ysgol y Gymraeg, sydd bellach yn cael ei galw'n Adran y Gymraeg. Mae'r Adran hon yn gyfadran yn ysgol newydd y Dyniaethau Byd-Eang. Mae sawl ysgol wedi dod ynghyd i ffurfio'r ysgol hon ar ei newydd wedd.

Mae'r newidiadau ymarferol i'w gweld yn ogystal â'r rhai strwythurol. Fel sawl ysgol arall, bellach, mae Swyddfa Ysgol y Gymraeg wedi'i droi'n ystafell addysgu yn Adeilad John Percival. I lawer, chwith yw gweld nad oes canolbwynt gan yr 'Ysgol' mwyach, er gwaethaf Hyb y Dyniaethau Byd-Eang ym mynedfa John Percival.
Un fyfyrwraig sydd wedi bod yn llygad-dyst i'r newidiadau gweledol a strwythurol yma yw Megan Bill.

"Yn fwy nag erioed, rwy'n gwerthfawrogi ymdrechion staff y Gymraeg i gynnal ymdeimlad o gymuned o fewn yr adran, serch y newidiadau. Mae hyn wedi bod yn ffactor allweddol o'm mhrofiad yn y brifysgol hyd yma. Byddai colli hynny wedi bod yn drueni mawr" meddai.

Un arall sydd eisoes wedi graddio, a hynny dan faner Ysgol y Gymraeg, ond sydd yn astudio cwrs meistr yn Adran y Gymraeg bellach yw Myfanwy Lewis. I Myfanwy, does dim eglurder i fyfyrwyr MA ac astudiaethau ôl-raddedig ar ystafell neu leoliad penodol ar eu cyfer, meddai.

"Roedd gan Ysgol y Gymraeg un ystafell penodedig ar eu cyfer, does dim un bellach".

Dywed, nad oes "sicrwydd na chyfathrebu am fan astudio clir, o ran yr ysgol newydd hon". Mae'n bendant yn teimlo bod yr ymdeimlad o agosatrwydd wedi pylu yno.

"Mae pawb ar led llawr yn fwy", meddai.

Ond wedi dweud hynny, mae hi hefyd yn cydnabod bod elfennau i'w cymeradwyo, er gwaethaf y glec i'r Adran.

Cred Myfanwy bod mwy o gyfleoedd i gyd-weithio ar draws yr ysgol fawr gyfan, a hynny rhwng adrannau eraill oddi fewn i'r ysgol newydd. Daw hyn â chyfleoedd amgen i'r myfyrwyr yn y dyfodol.

Mae Myfanwy yn diolch, fod y Gymraeg fel pwnc wedi perchnogi Adran gyfan i'w hun.

"Dydy hynny ddim yn wir am y Saesneg fel pwnc" meddai, sydd yn gorfod rhannu adran hyd yn oed gyda phynciau eraill. Cyfri ei bendithion mae Myfanwy o ran hynny; fod gan Adran y Gymraeg, ei enw ei hun, serch ei bod hi nawr yn rhan o Ysgol y Dyniaethau Byd-Eang.

Mae'r Gymraeg felly'n dal i gael cydnabyddiaeth ar draws y Brifysgol.

Fyddai'r sefyllfa'n waeth petai'n rhaid i'r Gymraeg rannu adran, fel y mae'r Saesneg, a ninnau yn fyfyrwyr ym mhrifysgol mwyaf Cymru, meddai. Noda, fod cymuned glos yn dal i fod yng nghoridor Adran y Gymraeg, er gwaetha' diddymu'r 'Ysgol'. Bydd hynny ddim yn newid, diolch i staff ac athrawon ymroddgar y Gymraeg, ychwanega.



Oes gwerth mewn gradd?

Efa Jones
Golygydd Taf-Od

Addysg, cymdeithasu neu brofiad? Beth yw'r atyniad i fynd i'r brifysgol, ac a yw'n werth chweil?

Yn ystod y misoedd diwethaf, mae llawer o drafod wedi bod am gostau addysg brifysgol ac a yw mynd i'r brifysgol yn wastraff arian neu'n fuddsoddiad yn y dyfodol.

Gyda ffioedd dysgu yn cyrraedd hyd at £9,790 y flwyddyn yng Nghymru, heb sôn am rent, bwyd a chostau byw eraill, mae rhai myfyrwyr yn cwestiynu a yw cael gradd yn werth yr arian.

Ond, er gwaethaf y gost, mae miloedd o bobl ifanc yn dewis mynd i'r brifysgol bob blwyddyn. I rai, mae'n gyfle i ennill cymhwyster ac yn agor drysau i fyd gwaith, tra bod eraill yn ei weld fel profiad cymdeithasol sy'n rhoi'r cyfle i bobl ehangu eu gorwelion a bod yn annibynnol.

Felly, a'i penderfyniad personol yw mynd i'r brifysgol, neu a oes pwysau ar bobl ifanc i ddilyn y llwybr drud hwn?

Mae Gethin Roberts, myfyriwr ail flwyddyn sy'n astudio peirianneg, yn teimlo bod pwysau ar ddisgyblion i ddilyn y llwybr traddodiadol hwn, yn enwedig y rhai sy'n gwneud yn dda yn yr ysgol.

"Dwi'n teimlo fatha bod y syniad o brifysgol wedi'n araf bach cal ei bwsio arna fi, i'r pwynt lle neshi fyth ystyried yr un opsiwn arall."

Mae'n credu bod rhieni ac ysgolion weithiau'n rhoi gormod o bwyslais ar addysg brifysgol, gan orliwio'r manteision, yn enwedig i ddisgyblion sy'n gwneud yn dda yn academaidd. Cafodd ei annog i beidio â dilyn prentisiaeth hyfforddi rygbi pan oedd yn 16 oed, ac er ei fod yn hapus yn y brifysgol, mae'n credu na `ddylid diystyru llwybrau eraill.

Roedd Swyn Dafydd, myfyrwraig trydedd flwyddyn sy'n astudio Cymraeg a'r Gyfraith, hefyd yn ansicr am ei dyfodol wrth adael yr ysgol. Dewisodd fynd i'r brifysgol er mwyn parhau â'i haddysg ac agor drysau i fyd gwaith

"Yn yr ysgol, ro' ni'n eitha ansicr o beth roeddwn i eisiau gwneud yn y dyfodol, ac efallai yn gweld mynd i'r Brifysgol yn "safe option.``

Ond mae'r gost yn peri pryder iddi, yn enwedig wrth gymharu ei sefyllfa â ffrindiau sydd wedi dilyn prentisiaeth ac sydd, yn ei barn hi, mewn sefyllfa ariannol gwell.

Gyda rhai myfyrwyr ond yn mynychu darlithoedd am ychydig ddyddiau'r wythnos, codai cwestiynau ynglŷn â gwerth yr addysg a ddarperir. Ond ai nifer yr oriau darlithio yn unig ddylai fesur gwerth gradd?

Er y gost ofnadwy o uchel, pa bris ar addysg bywyd. Mae Gethin yn gweld gwerth arall yn y brifysgol, sef y cyfle i wneud ffrindiau oes a datblygu fel person. "Dydi fy mywyd cymdeithasol erioed di bo'n well na'r 4 mlynedd dwetha, a allai ddim dychmygu cyfnod o fywyd lle dwi wedi bod yn hapusach," meddai.

Ond beth sy'n digwydd ar ôl graddio?

Yn ôl arolwg Graduate Outcomes 2023/24, roedd 6% o raddedigion sefydliadau addysg uwch Cymru a ymatebodd yn ddi-waith tua 15 mis ar ôl gorffen eu hastudiaethau. Roedd 84% yn teimlo bod eu gweithgaredd presennol yn ystyrlon, ond dim od 68% oedd yn cytuno eu bod yn defnyddio'r sgiliau a ddysgwyd wrth astudio yn y brifysgol.

Mae Swyn yn hyderus y bydd ei gradd yn ei helpu i gymhwyso fel cyfreithwraig ond yn poeni am brinder swyddi yn ei hardal enedigol. Dywedodd, "gan fy mod i eisiau dychwelyd adref i Orllewin Cymru, dw i'n eithaf ansicr faint o swyddi bydd ar gael."

Felly, a oes cyfiawnhad dros y miloedd o bunnoedd sy'n cael ei wario ar addysg brifysgol, neu a yw'r profiadau a'r cyfleoedd sy'n dod yn ei sgil yn amhrisiadwy?

Sefydlu Undeb Cristnogol Cymraeg Caerdydd

Ela Rhys
Pennaeth Taf-Od

Ar ddechrau'r flwyddyn academaidd eleni bu i fyfyrwyr a chyn-fyfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd fynd ati i sefydlu Undeb o'r newydd; Undeb Cristnogol Cymraeg Caerdydd.

Yn wir, mae dros 200 o gymdeithasau ac undebau ar gael i fyfyrwyr y Brifysgol i sicrhau fod ein hamser yma yn y brifddinas yn un bythgofiadwy.

Mae ystod o undebau eisoes wedi'u sefydlu i sicrhau fod rhywbeth at ddant pob un ohonom. Fodd bynnag, nid oes gan Undeb Myfyrwyr Caerdydd gymdeithas nac Undeb ar gyfer Cristnogion Cymraeg.

Hyfryd felly yw gweld myfyrwyr ein Prifysgol yn dod ynghyd i sefydlu'r Undeb a llenwi'r bwlch yn y ddarpariaeth.

Mae Taf-Od wedi bod yn ddigon ffodus i gael cyfweliad gyda Steff Davies, un o sefydlwyr yr Undeb. Dyma oedd ganddo i'w ddweud:
Beth yw cefndir yr Undeb?

"Rydyn ni'n grŵp o oddeutu 15 i 20 o Gristnogion sydd yn siarad Cymraeg yma yng Nghaerdydd, naill ai dal i fod yn astudio yn y Brifysgol neu newydd adael."

"Penderfynom sefydlu'r Undeb yn gynharach yn y flwyddyn. Aethom ati i greu 'group chat' ar WhatsApp er mwyn cysylltu siaradwyr Cymraeg sydd yn Gristnogion o ystod o eglwysi ledled Caerdydd."

"Cynhaliwyd ein cyfarfod cyntaf ar yr 8fed o Fehefin ac rydym eisoes wedi cael sawl cyfarfod ar ddechrau'r flwyddyn academaidd newydd er mwyn trafod ein syniadau ar sut y gallwn foli Iesu yn y brifddinas."

Beth yw bwriad yr Undeb?

"Ein bwriad fel Cristnogion bob tro yw rhannu'r newyddion da am Iesu. Yn benodol yn yr Undeb, rydyn ni'n awyddus i gysylltu gyda myfyrwyr a chyn-fyfyrwyr yng Nghaerdydd sy'n chwilfrydig am Gristnogaeth gan rannu'r gobaith sy'n gwreiddio o'r groes a sut y dylem ymateb i'r hyn mae'r Beibl yn ei ddweud wrthym."

"Rydym yn bwriadu gwneud hyn trwy gynnal digwyddiadau amrywiol ar draws y flwyddyn. Gobeithiwn ffurfio cymdeithas o fewn yr Undeb i weddïo a darllen Gair Duw gyda'n gilydd."

Pa fath o weithgareddau ydych chi'n eu cynnal?

"Rydyn ni'n dal i fod yn nyddiau cynnar o ran cynllunio. Ond, y syniadau sydd wedi dod i'r amlwg yn ein cyfarfodydd diweddar yw digwyddiadau gwahanol sy'n canolbwyntio ar wahanol bynciau mewn cyd-destun Cristnogol."

"Un syniad yr hoffwn ei wireddu yw gwahodd siaradwyr gwadd o'r byd chwaraeon, y Gymraeg, hanes a gwleidyddiaeth i ddod i siarad ac esbonio sut maen nhw wedi profi gras Duw yn eu bywydau."

"Yn ogystal, dwi'n siŵr y bydd digwyddiadau megis 'Cawl a chân' ac ati, a chyfleoedd i ni drafod y cwestiynau mawr megis er enghraifft, 'Pwy yw Iesu?' a 'Beth yw bod yn Gristion?'"

"Fel Undeb byddwn hefyd yn hala amser yn cymdeithasu ac yn cwrdd bob yn ail wythnos i ddarllen y Beibl gyda'n gilydd, moli Duw a thrafod syniadau."

Pwy all ymuno â'r Undeb?

"Mae'r UCCC yn agored i unrhyw un. Os oes diddordeb gyda chi, plîs cysylltwch â ni trwy ein cyfrif Instagram neu cysylltwch â rhywun rydych chi eisoes yn ei adnabod sy'n rhan o'r Undeb ... bydd croeso cynnes i chi."

Roeddwn i ymhlith y myfyrwyr oedd yn ddigon ffodus i fynychu un o ddigwyddiadau cyntaf yr Undeb ddechrau mis Hydref. Draw yn Eglwys y Crwys cafwyd noson o ganu emynau megis Dyma Gariad fel y Moroedd, Mi Glywaf Dyner Lais, Arglwydd, Arwain Trwy'r Anialwch a Chalon Lân.

Drwy ganu, sgwrsio a chymdeithasu dros baned, cawsom gyfle i ddod i adnabod Cristnogaeth yn well.

Roedd Gruff Jones hefyd ymhlith myfyrwyr y Brifysgol a fynychodd y digwyddiad. Dywedodd Gruff wrth Taf-Od:

"Cefais noson wych yn canu emynau. Roedd cyd-ganu emynau cyfarwydd Cymreig yn Gymraeg gyda grŵp o fyfyrwyr yn deimlad hynod o braf."

Mae'r Undeb yn cyfarfod bob pythefnos ar nosweithiau Llun mewn gwahanol leoliadau ledled y brifddinas gyda digwyddiadau ehangach yn cael eu cynnal bob mis.

Mae'r digwyddiad nesaf eisoes wedi'i drefnu. Bydd yr Undeb yn cynnal 'Cwis Chwaraeon Cymreig' yn Nhafarn y Crwys ar yr 16eg o Dachwedd. Cadwch y dyddiad!

Awydd ymuno?

Cysylltwch â'r Undeb drwy eu cyfrif Instagram; ucccaerdydd.

Ewch amdani a chofiwch fel y bu i Steff bwysleisio, fod croeso i unrhyw un.



Myfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd yn rhagori ar draws Ewrop

Gwenllian Mason
Golygydd Taf-Od

Dros y penwythnos diwethaf, bu rhai o fyfyrwyr o Prifysgol Caerdydd yn cystadlu mewn amryw o gystadlaethau rhedeg.

Megan Williams yn cyflawni ei Marathon cyntaf:

Am y tro cyntaf erioed, gwnaeth Megan Williams, myfyriwr yn ei thrydedd blwyddyn brofi moment "bythgofiadwy" ym Marathon Caer. Llwyddodd hi i redeg pellter o 26.2 milltir mewn amser arbennig o 4 awr a 10 munud.

Dywedodd Megan fod "rhedeg yn ffordd i mi ddiffodd" a'i bod eisiau profi i'w hun ei bod yn gallu "cyflawni heriau".

Ychwanegodd bod y rhyddhad o orffen y ras yn "deimlad anhygoel", yn enwedig ar ôl i'r holl ymarfer dalu ei ffordd.

Nid ar chwarae bach mae modd cyflawni llwyddiant o'r fath, yn ôl 'Runner's World', ar gyfartaledd mae paratoi eich corff i allu rhedeg pellter o'r fath yn cymryd hyd at 16-20 wythnos – amser eithriadol o hir sydd angen llawer o "gymhelliant, cysondeb a ffitrwydd."

Yn ôl Megan roedd "cydbwyso gwaith, digwyddiadau'r haf a rhedeg y pellteroedd angenrheidiol oedd yn rhan o'r cynllun ymarfer yn heriol", ond ychwanegodd ei bod hi wir wedi mwynhau'r holl brofiad.



Dwy fyfyrwraig yn teithio draw i Portiwgal ar gyfer SheUltra:

Cyflawnodd Efa Llew a Beca Hughes gamp a hanner draw ar arfordir Algarve ym Mhortiwgal yr un penwythnos yng nghystadleuaeth flynyddol SheUltra.

Pwrpas y digwyddiad ydy codi ymwybyddiaeth ac arian at elusennau cancr menywod, felly digwyddiad i ferched yn unig ydy hwn. Dis-



gwylir i'r cystadleuwyr gwblhau pellter o 29.83 milltir, ond heb unrhyw derfyniadau amser, na pwysau i'w redeg.

Yn debyg i Megan, dywedodd Beca ei bod hi "awydd sialens" ac eisiau gweld beth oedd hi'n medru cyflawni. Ychwanegodd bod y cyfle i'w wneud mewn gwlad tramor gyda thywydd braf a golygfeydd anhygoel yn ei wneud yn brofiad mwy pleserus – ac yn esgus i gael gwyliau!

Doedd Beca erioed wedi rhedeg pellter mor hir o'r blaen, a cwblhaodd hi'r digwyddiad gyda'i Mham, ei chwaer a ffrindiau teulu. Dywedodd bod croesi'r llinell yn "ryddhad enfawr ac yn deimlad anhygoel, yn enwedig ar ôl y milltiroedd anodd olaf."

Roedd ei pharatoadau hi yn "gymysgedd o gerdded a rhedeg pellteroedd hir", a dywedodd nad oedd hi wedi dechrau ymarfer tan tua mis cyn y ras – tipyn o gamp felly oedd croesi'r llinell i orffen!

Llongyfarchiadau enfawr i'r dair – gan obeithio eich bod chi wedi gallu cael cyfle haeddiannol i ymlacio yn ystod yr wythnos ddiwethaf!

Lluniau gan gyfrannwyr

Tocynnau Rhad Rygbi Cymru: Cyfle i fyfyrwyr neu arwydd o argyfwng?

Dewi Williams
Cyfrannwr

Ym mis Chwefror eleni, gwelodd Stadiwm y Principality y nifer leiaf o bobl erioed yn y dorf ar gyfer gêm Chwe Gwlad, gydag ond 57,744 o bobl yn troi lan i wylio Cymru yn colli yn erbyn Ffrainc. Misoedd yn ddiweddarach, mae'n ymddangos nad oes unrhyw beth wedi newid, gyda degau o filoedd o docynnau ar gyfer gemau Pencampwriaeth y Cenhedloedd dal ar werth.

Bydd tîm Steve Tandy yn croesawu Siapan, Seland Newydd ac Awstralia i'r brif ddinas trwy gydol mis Tachwedd, gyda'r gêm olaf allan o'r tri yn erbyn Awstralia yn dechrau am 8:10yh ar Ddydd Sadwrn y 21ain. Dyma'r gic gyntaf hwyraf erioed ar Ddydd Sadwrn yn hanes rygbi Cymru.

Dros y blynyddoedd mae nifer o gefnogwyr wedi cwyno am ddechreuadau hwyr i gemau, gyda chefnogwyr meddw ar ôl yfed trwy'r dydd, diffyg trafnidiaeth nôl gartref ac awyrgylch fflat yn y stadiwm ymhlith y cwynion. O ystyried hynny, nid yw'n syndod bod mwy o docynnau ar ôl ar gyfer y gêm hon nag ar gyfer y ddau arall.

Mewn ymdrech i geisio gwerthu'r tocynnau, rhoddodd Undeb Rygbi Cymru docynnau ar werth i fyfyrwyr am ddim ond £10 ar ddechrau mis Hydref. Gyda'r Stickmen Project yn perfformio eu cerddoriaeth electronig yn ystod hanner amser a sioe oleuadau yn cymryd lle, dywedodd yr Undeb mewn datganiad y bydd "awyrgylch parti a ddylai apelio'n uniongyrchol at fyfyrwyr, yn ogystal ag unrhyw un sy'n chwilio am noson wych allan yng Nghaerdydd."

Tra bod y cyfle i fynd i weld y tîm cenedlaethol yn chwarae am bris mor fforddiadwy yn beth cadarnhaol i rai myfyrwyr efallai, mae'r darlun ehangach yn adlewyrchu'r argyfwng mae rygbi yng Nghymru yn ei wynebu. Yn ogystal â'r gêm yn erbyn Awstralia, mae yna filoedd o docynnau dal ar werth ar gyfer gemau Seland Newydd a Siapan, gyda tocynnau ar gael i fyfyrwyr am ddim ond £10 ar gyfer gêm Siapan hefyd erbyn hyn.

Mae'n ddigon hawdd deall y sefyllfa wrth edrych ar dirwedd ehangach rygbi Cymru ar hyn o bryd. Mae perfformiad y tîm ar y cae ers cwpan y byd 2023 wedi bod yn drychinebus, gyda'r crysau cochion yn mynd ar rediad o 18 colled yn olynol rhwng 2023 a 2025. Ers apwyntiad Steve Tandy, mae canlyniadau ar y cae wedi gwella'n weddol, ond mae'r dirywiad mewn perfformiad yn sicr wedi cael effaith ar faint y dorf.

Mae materion oddi ar y cae hefyd wedi mynd o ddrwg i waeth. Gyda'r undeb yn cyhoeddi colled o £18m dros y flwyddyn ddiwethaf, mae'n edrych yn anochel fe fydden nhw'n parhau gyda'u cynlluniau i dorri pedwar rhanbarth lawr i dri. Mae penderfynoldeb yr undeb i gael gwared ar naill ai'r Scarlets neu'r Gweilch yn ystod y broses yma wedi troi cymunedau cyfan yn eu herbyn, a hyn oll ar ôl datgan yn 2024 taw cadw'r pedwar rhanbarth oedd y bwriad.

Ac yna mae'r awyrgylch yn y stadiwm ei hun. Mae'r traddodiadau hynny sydd wedi gweu rygbi mewn i'n hunaniaeth a'n diwylliant wedi diflanu bron yn gyfangwbwl erbyn hyn. Prin yw clywed emynau'r corau meibion, caneuon Max Boyce a dehongliadau pwerus o Galon Lân yn atseinio trwy'r stadiwm. Bon Jovi, Guns N' Roses a remix electronig o Sosban Fach gan y Stickmen sydd i'w glywed heddiw.

Wrth ysgrifennu i DragonSports, disgrifiodd Stephen Jones ei sioc wrth weld 50 tocyn ar werth drws nesaf i'w gilydd ar gyfer y gêm yn erbyn Seland Newydd: "A ticket for a home Welsh game was gold dust… There was a time when you'd have to sell 50 grandmothers for that."

Yn ffodus i rheini o Brifysgolion Caerdydd sy'n awyddus am noson mas mewn crys coch, mae'r dyddiau yna bell yn y gorffennol. Ond, i ni sy'n gweld rygbi fel rhan ganolog o'n hunaniaeth, diwylliant a Chymreictod, dim ond atgof arall ydyw o ba mor ddifrifol yw sefyllfa ein gêm genedlaethol.

Buddugoliaeth i dîm medrus merched Cymru

Rhodri Jenkins
Cyfrannwr

Mae tîm pêl droed merched Cymru un cam yn agosach at gymhwyso i Gwpan y Byd 2027.

Bu cyffro mawr yn Llanelli yn ddiweddar ar y 13eg o Hydref wrth i dîm pêl droed merched Cymru guro Albania gyda sgôr aruthrol o 3-0 gan eu rhoi nhw un cam yn agosach at gymhwyso i Gwpan y Byd yn 2027.

Roedd hi'n gêm ragbrofol hynod o gyffrous gyda Mayzee Davies, Elsie Hughes a Hannah Cain yn sgorio gôl yr un er mwyn sicrhau llwyddiant i Gymru. Roedd y Wal Goch yn gryfach nac erioed, gyda dros 4,837 o gefnogwyr ym mhresennol ym Mharc y Sgarlets; record newydd i gêm ragbrofol menywod Cymru. Yn sicr, bydd y noson hon wedi'i hoelio yn y côf yn hanes pêl droed menywod Cymru.

Ymysg y Wal Goch bu cefnogwyr o Geredigion yno i gefnogi'r chwaraewraig ifanc a thalentog, Casi Gregson o Lambed. Cafodd Casi noson dyngedfennol draw yn Llanelli wrth lwyddo i feddiannu ei chap cyntaf i Gymru wrth gael ei galw ar y cae yn y 85' muned.

Daw Casi yn wreiddiol o Lambed ac wedi tyfu lan yn chwarae pêl droed "gyda'r bois" gan nad oedd tîm merched yn yr ardal ar y pryd. Ers hynny, mae hi wedi bod yn chwarae i amryw o dimau megis Newcastle United cyn cyrraedd y tîm cenedlaethol.

"Gwireddu fy mreuddwyd fel merch fach"

Mewn cyfweliad gyda *Gair Rhydd*, dywedodd Casi bod y gêm wedi "gwireddu fy mreuddwyd fel merch fach" hynny ydi, cael chwarae pêl droed yn broffesiynol dros ei gwlad.

Bu iddi sôn am y daith hir i gyrraedd y tîm gan gyfeirio yn benodol tuag at y cyfnod TGAU a mynegi ei bod hi wedi "gweld e'n anodd i gadw cydbwysedd rhwng fy mywyd fel disgybl a'm bywyd fel chwaraewraig pêl droed proffesiynol."

"Teimlad gorfoleddus"

Bu i mi holi Casi sut deimlad oedd chwarae dros Gymru am y tro cyntaf. Dywedodd Casi ei fod yn deimlad "hollol orfoleddus" gan ei bod wedi "gwireddu fy mreuddwyd o'r diwedd."

Ategodd tuag at hyn gan ddweud ei fod "fel cherry on top of the cake". Does dim dwywaith felly fod y gêm wedi bod yn un holl bwysig iddi ac mae dyfodol disglair iawn o'i blaen.

Un gêm ragbrofol 'two-legged' sydd ar ôl i dîm menywod Cymru, hynny yn erbyn Norwy ar y 1af a'r 5ed o Ragfyr. Bydd y merched yn chwarae rhan gyntaf y gêm benderfynol yn Stadiwm Clwb Pêl Droed Dinas Caerdydd, a'r ail-ran draw yn Norwy.

Dymunwn pob lwc i'r tîm a hwythau ar derfyn y gemau rhagbrofol cyffrous hyn.

Ymlaen.



Tarddiad: majesticmediauk

Cofio Aberfan 60 mlynedd ers y drychineb

Tor-calon, tristwch, trasiedi

Ela Rhys ac Ifan Meredith
Pennaeth Taf-Od / Dirprwy Brif-Olygydd
yn Aberfan

60 mlynedd yn ôl trawsnewidiwyd bywydau trigolion Aberfan pan fu i domen lo lithro a boddi Ysgol Pantglas a thai cyfagos. Bu farw 144 o hoelion y gymuned gyda 116 o'r dioddefwyr diniwed hynny'n blant.

Roedd hi'n ddiwrnod anodd; briwiau'n cael eu hagor, a'r dagrau'n cronni wrth i'r gymuned ymgasglu ar y 21ain o Hydref i alaru, i gofio ac i dalu teyrnged. Cynhaliwyd munud o dawelwch am 9:15, oddeutu amser y drasiedi. Llwyd oedd yr awyr, y glaw yn disgyn a'r tywydd yn cydymdeimlo gyda'r teimlad wrth i'r gymuned glosio mewn dist-awrwydd llethol.

Tu allan i'r ardd goffa ar hen safle Ysgol Pantglas yng nghalon Aberfan roedd cannoedd yn y dorf; yn oroeswyr, ymhlith y sawl a fu'n helpu, yn deuluoedd, yn blant.

Gwnaeth Prif Weinidog y DU, Andy Burnham ymweld ag Aberfan ddydd Llun cyn y diwrnod o gofio. Ef yw Prif Weinidog cyntaf y DU i ymweld ag Aberfan ers Harold Wilson oedd yn Brif Weinidog pan ddigwyddodd y drychineb. Ddydd Mercher, ymddiheurodd y Prif Weinidog yn Nhŷ'r Cyffredin am rôl yr awdurdodau ar y pryd.

Ar ddiwrnod y coffáu hefyd, gostyngwyd baneri ar dir y Senedd ym Mae Caerdydd er mwyn nodi'r drychineb 60 mlynedd yn ôl.

"Mae'n holl-bwysig ein bod ni yn cofio"

Ffigwr gwleidyddol amlwg fynychodd Aberfan ar y dydd Mercher tyngedfennol oedd y Prif Weinidog, Rhun ap Iorwerth aeth ati i gydymdeimlo drwy osod torch yn yr Ardd Goffa Aberfan a chyfarch y dorf. Gydag o oedd y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog, Sioned Williams ac Ysgrifennydd Cymru, Stephen Kinnock. Mewn cyfweliad gyda *Taf-Od* mynegodd Sioned Williams:

"Mae'n hollbwysig ein bod ni yn cofio. Wrth gwrs, uniaethu ac anrhydeddu'r galar ofnadwy a brofwyd yma."

"Mae e bron yn anodd amgyffred … 116 o blant, cenhedlaeth gyfan wedi ei cholli – rhaid meddwl amdanyn nhw a meddwl am y bobl sy'n dal i brofi'r effaith."

"Yn amlwg, roedd brad yn fan hyn. Cafodd y gymuned ei bradychu. Roedd rhybuddion eisoes wedi bod am beryglon y pyllau glo ac fe anwybyddwyd y rheini."

"Fel gwleidydd, mae rhaid i ni gofio bod wastad gwersi i'w dysgu a'n bod ni wastad angen sicrhau fod lleisiau pobl fel y gymuned yma yn Aberfan yn cael eu clywed."

"Pob bendith i bobl Aberfan"

Mynychodd y Brenin, y Frenhines Camilla a Thywysog Cymru Aberfan brynhawn Mercher yn ogystal. Talodd y teulu Brenhinol eu teyrnged yn Ardd Goffa Aberfan wrth i'r Brenin a Thywysog William osod torch ac fe osodwyd tusw o flodau gan y Frenhines Camilla.

Cafodd y gymuned oedd wedi ymgasglu gyfle i sgwrsio â hwy hefyd wrth iddynt droedio Moy Road, lle safwyd Ysgol Pantglas, tuag at Ganolfan Gymunedol Aberfan a Merthyr Vale.

Yno, wnaethant gyfarfod á rhai o weithwyr gwasanaeth brys 1966, ymgolli yn yr arddangosfa oedd yn coffáu'r drychineb a bu i'r Brenin gloi ei araith yn Aberfan yn Gymraeg gyda'r geiriau; "Pob bendith i bobl Aberfan."

Nid oes geiriau i fynegi'r teimlad oedd yn Aberfan y diwrnod hwnnw. Roedd y tristwch yn gwbl amlwg, y brad yn dal i roi dolur a'r galar yn dal i glwyfo'r briwiau.

Mae posibilrwydd mai dyma oedd y digwyddiad mawr olaf fydd yn cynnwys nifer helaeth o'r sawl oroesodd y drychineb. Mae hyn o ystyried bod disgyblion ieuengaf Ysgol Pantglas ar y pryd yn agosáu tuag at eu 70au. Pwy a ŵyr felly faint o'r unigolion hyn fydd yn bresennol yn yr achlysur fydd yn dynodi 70 mlwyddiant.

Felly, fel Cymry, rhaid parhau i gofio a thalu ein teyrnged i'r gymuned sy'n dal i frifo a choffáu'r drychineb a adawodd 144 o feirwon - 116 o'r rheiny yn blant.

Yng ngeiriau pwerus T.Llew.Jones:

Distawodd chwerthin llawen
Y plant wrth chwarae 'nghyd,
Pob tegan bach yn segur,
A sŵn pob troed yn fud.

Lluniau gan Gair Rhydd









Rhaniad y Blaid Werdd yn taro Cymru

Betsan Griffiths
Golygydd Taf-Od

Mae dirprwy arweinydd y Blaid Werdd yng Nghymru, Phil Davies, wedi ymddiswyddo. Gwrthwynebodd y symudiad 'hiliol' a 'gwrth-Semitaidd' ynglyn â Seioniaeth (Zionism) sef y symudiad Iddewig sydd yn cefnogi cread, datblygiad a gwarchodaeth Israel fel gwlad yr addewid i Iddewon. Wnaeth y blaid ddatgan fod Seioniaeth yn ffurf o hiliaeth yn eu cynhadledd ddechrau mis Hydref.

Mae Phil Davies, sy'n 28 mlwydd oed, wedi bod yn ddirprwy arweinydd i'r Blaid Werdd yng Nghymru ers 2024, ac wedi ymwneud â'r Blaid ers 7 mlynedd. Cyhoeddodd ei ymddiswyddiad ar y cyfryngau cymdeithasol, o ganlyniad i'w rwystredigaeth tuag at y Blaid.

Mewn cynhadledd ar ddydd Sul ar gychwyn mis Hydref, cafodd y symudiad i gydnabod Seioniaeth fel ffurf o huliaeth gan y Blaid Werdd ei basio o 1,022 i 813. Mae hyn wedi cael ei feirniadu'n fawr gan wleidyddion a chefnogwyr y Blaid gan achosi rhaniad mewnol. Datganodd y Blaid fod angen cael un ddemocratiaeth unedig o dan wladwriaeth Palestina, gan gynnwys yr Israel bresennol. Ar y cyfryngau cymdeithasol, torrodd Davies y newyddion ei fod yn ymddiswyddo o'i rôl fel dirprwy arweinydd y Blaid Werdd yng Nghymru. Disgrifiodd y Blaid fel plaid imperialaidd a gwrion.

Penderfyniad Davies

Dywedodd Davies ei bod hi'n afrealistig ac annheg fod rhywun o'r Deyrnas Unedig wedi dweud wrth bobl yn y Dwyrain Canol sut y dylent fyw eu bywydau, gan gymharu'r sefyllfa â rheolaeth Lloegr dros Gymru.

Mae Davies yn dal i gefnogi Palestina ac yn cydnabod fod Israel yn cyflawni hil-laddiad.

Yn barod, mae yna densiynau mawr yn y Blaid Werdd ynglŷn â'r rhyfel rhwng Palestina ac Israel gyda'r syniad o Seioniaeth yn dabŵ mawr yn y blaid.

Dywedodd Davies wrth BBC Radio Wales Breakfast nad oedd yn gwybod pam y cafodd y sylwadau eu gwneud a pham yr roedd yn cael ei drafod, ac nad oedd y mater yn gwneud unrhyw beth i wella ansawdd bywyd pobl ym Mhalestina.

Ers y gynhadledd, mae Arweinydd y Blaid Werdd yng Nghymru a Lloegr, Zack Polanski, wedi rhannu datganiad gan ddweud na fyddai'n caniatau i unrhyw aelod o'i blaid gael ei eithrio dros resymau crefyddol neu gymunedol y maent yn rhan ohono.

Ymateb y Blaid Werdd

Fel Iddew ei hun, wnaeth Polanski beidio ymddangos yn y gynhadledd i bleidleisio ar y mater gan ddweud ei fod yn ymgyrchu yn etholaeth Holborn a St Pancras - etholiad wnaeth golli yn y pen draw. Ond ar ôl hynny, dywedodd wrth y BBC y byddai wedi pleidleisio yn erbyn y cynnig.

Yn rhan o'r datganiad, pwysleisiodd y Blaid ei bod hi'n ddi-hiliol ac yn gwrthwynebu'r feddiannaeth anghyfreithlon ym Mhalestina ac yn Israel.

Mae'r Blaid Werdd yn dweud eu bod yn parhau i fod yn ymrwymedig i gydraddoldeb, cyfiawnder a hawliau dynol i bawb ac yn gwrthwynebu pob math o hiliaeth.

Mae Anthony Slaughter, arweinydd y Blaid Werdd yng Nghymru, yn anghytuno â'r symudiad, gan ddweud ei fod yn ceisio sicrhau fod y Blaid Werdd yng Nghymru yn cefnogi diogelwch a rhyddid i bawb.

Ymateb y gymuned Iddewig a gwleidyddion

Dywedodd Pennaeth Cyngor Iddewig ei fod yn beirniadu symudiad y Blaid Werdd, a'i fod yn siomedig. Yn barod, mae Iddewon Prydeinig wedi profi gwrth-Semitiaeth yn ystod y flwyddyn. Yn ôl yntau, cafodd Iddewon eu llofruddio yn y synagog a'u trywanu ar y strydoedd, a gwelwyd cymunedau Iddewig yn cael eu bomio.

Mae Rhun ap Iorwerth yn credu fod sylwadau'r Blaid Werdd ynglŷn â Seioniaeth yn hiliol ac yn ffiaidd, ac yn cytuno bod lle i ddwy wladwriaeth ym Mhalestina ac Israel. Mae Helen Jenner yn beirniadu'r symudiad, ac yn datgan fod gan bleidiau'r chwith broblem ddifrifol â gwrth-Semitiaeth.

Mae Davies eisiau i'r Blaid Werdd yng Nghymru fod yn annibynnol o'r Blaid yn Lloegr oherwydd diffyg cefnogaeth, ac y byddai'n ystyried ail-ymuno â'r blaid os bydd hynny'n digwydd.

Sgamiau AI yn cynyddu bron i 50%

Ydy AI bellach yn fwgan ac yn rhy ddominyddol?

Leus Tudor
Cyfrannwr

AI, Chat GPT, Gemini. Termau sydd bellach yn rhannau annatod o'n geirfa ni. Maent yn cynnig help llaw pan fo angen ac yn declyn academaidd defnyddiol. Mae'n llenwi ein sgriniau a'n sgrolio, posteri diddychymyg a rhybuddion brawychus am yr amgylchedd. Mae hi'n anodd gwybod ble'n union i sefyll, ai bwgan brawychus yw hwn, ynte teclyn defnyddiol ac arloesol sydd am arwain ein dyfodol?

Un o'r pryderon, er hynny, yw ei allu i gynnal sgamiau mor gredadwy. Yn anffodus, mae sgamiau AI wedi cynyddu bron i 50% yn ddiweddar. Daw hyn wrth i'r dechnoleg allu dynwared lleisiau teulu a ffrindiau mewn trallod. Dywedai 47% o oedolion y Deyrnas Unedig eu bod yn ei gweld hi'n anodd adnabod y gwahaniaeth rhwng cynnwys AI a chynnwys gwir - o le ma'r ystadegyn yma wedi dod Gall hyn beri gofid mawr, yn enwedig i bobl hŷn a bregus. Bellach, mae'n ysgrifennu mor gywir a medrus, mae hydynoed systemau spam cyfrifiadurol yn ei gweld hi'n anodd ffiltro AI.

Sail AI er hynny yw defnyddio'r system o ddeallusrwydd ymennydd bodau dynol gan drosi hwnnw yn gyfrifiadurol i greu system o ddeallusrwydd di-ddiwedd. O gysidro hyn, ai dychrynllyd neu gywrain ydyw?

Oes yna le felly i gysidro nad bwgan yn unig ydyw? Mae'n gallu bod yn dechnoleg arloesol iawn, sy'n cael ei defnyddio er mawr lles llawer o bethau.

O ran yr iaith Gymraeg mae deallusrwydd AI yn cael ei ddefnyddio fel ffynhonnell gan Lywodraeth Cymru i'w cynorthwyo i gyrraedd y nod o filiwn o siaradwyr Cymraeg erbyn y flwyddyn 2050. Caiff ei defnyddio ar gyfer creu adnoddau i ddysgwyr ac mae ymrwymo'r iaith gyda thechnoleg newydd yn bwysig iawn fel hwb ar gyfer ei dyfodol.

Daw llawer iawn o fanteision eraill hefyd, megis, ei ddefnydd mewn gofal iechyd. Caiff ei ddefnyddio er mwyn dod o hyd i welliannau i gyflyrau eang megis cancr, ac mae'n gallu gweithio yn gynt nac unrhyw fod dynol. Mae AI hefyd yn cyfrannu i'r economi a gall helpu ym maes newid hinsawdd, meysydd amaeth, gwyddoniaeth, trafnidiaeth a seiberddiogelwch gyda'i allu i drin data yn gynt a mwy nac erioed o'r blaen.

O gysidro hyn, mae'n bosib gweld fod dwy ochr. Ydi, mae'n cael ei ddefnyddio yn anfoesegol i dwyllo, yn cael ei wastraffu, ac yn gallu cael ei weld fel bwgan mawr, ond, mae buddiannau anferthol hefyd. Mae posib ei ddefnyddio yn foesegol ac yn wyliadwrus. Ond, y ffaith amlwg yw - mae AI yma i aros. Bydd yn ran anferthol o'n dyfodol.



Gig Tew Tew Tenau:

"Gogledd Cymru sy'n dominyddu'r sîn Gymraeg"

Sami Sullivan
Golygydd Taf-Od

Sain gwefreiddiol oedd gan y gîtar drydanol nos Sadwrn diwethaf yng Nghlwb Ifor Bach, wrth i TewTewTenau gynnig blas o Lansannan i ganol y Brif-ddinas. Ar y 10fed o Hydref, heidiodd cannoedd o fyfyrwyr i gefnogi'r band roc o Ogledd Cymru a oedd yn uchafbwynt i rai wrth weld band lleol yn perfformio.

Ers ffurfio yn Haf 2022, mae TewTewTenau wedi cyrraedd rownd derfynol Brwydr y Bandiau Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2023, yn ogystal â pherfformio yn Tafwyl ac ar Lwyfan y Maes.

I Aled Brennan, sydd yn wreiddiol o Lansannan, roedd y gig wedi profi'n fwy na noson allan iddo:

"Mae'n bwysig i allu cael mynediad at gerddoriaeth cyfarwydd, ac mae hyd yn oed yn well yn fyw" meddai. " Mae'n wych fod band lleol o fy nhref i yn gallu cael llwyfan yn unig clwb Cymraeg Caerdydd a gwerthu allan o docynnau."

Mae'r profiad hwn yn arwyddocáol i fyfyrwyr sydd wedi gadael eu hardaloedd lleol i astudio yn y brifddinas. Gall symud i ardal ddieithr gynnig cyfleoedd cyffrous, er weithiau bod rhaid aberthu'r cysylltiad dyddiol gyda chymunedau cyfarwydd.

I Aled, mae cerddoriaeth yn gyfrwng i gadw'r cysylltiad hwnnw'n fyw:

"Mae cael y cyfle i glywed band lleol o adra, a gweld ffrindiau yn teithio lawr i fama yn gwneud i'r lle deimlo'n fwy cartrefol. Dwi'n mwynhau bob dydd Sadwrn yn Clwb, ond roedd y noson honno yn un gwerth chweil".

Mae'r ymdeimlad hwn o berthyn yn tynnu sylw at rôl cerddoriaeth Gymraeg y tu hwnt i'r llwyfan ac effaith hyn a'r bobl o amgylch y wlad. I gynulleidfaoedd ifanc, mae gigs yn ffordd i gwrdd â phobl newydd, dathlu'r iaith Gymraeg a llunio cymuned newydd mewn dinas bell o adref.

Er hyn, mae sicrhau bod gan fandiau ar draws Cymru fynediad at lwyfan a chynulleidfa yn parhau'n gwestiwn pwysig i'r sîn gerddoriaeth Gymraeg.

Mae Tomos Jones o Bwllheli yn dadlau mai "Gogledd Cymru sy'n dominyddu'r sîn Gymraeg", gan amlygu cyfraniad sylweddol y rhanbarth at gerddoriaeth gyfoes Gymraeg. Roedd yn cydnbaod yr "heriau i gychwyn band yng Nghaerdydd ac ardaloedd y de oherwydd canran llai o siaradwyr a bod yn ansicr am niferoedd y gynulleidfa"



Mae lleoliadau fel Clwb Ifor Bach felly'n chwarae rhan flaenllaw wrth hybu cerddoriaeth o wahanol ardaloedd yng Nghymru i gynulleidfa yng Nghaerdydd. Yn ôl y clwb:

"Rydyn ni wedi bod ar flaen y gad o ran diwylliant Cymru ers dros ddeugain mlynedd, ac rydyn ni'n falch o fod yn lleoliad llawr gwlad a hyrwyddwr cerddoriaeth mwyaf blaenllaw Cymru. Mae Clwb Ifor yn cyflwyno'r gorau o blith cerddoriaeth Cymru a thu hwnt i'w gynulleidfaoedd, gan roi cyfleoedd i filoedd o artistiaid newydd ddatblygu eu crefft."

Er mwyn i'r sîn gerddoriaeth Gymraeg ffynnu ar adegau ar wahân i'r Eisteddfod, mae angen i fandiau allu cyrraedd cynulleidfaoedd newydd. I Aled a'r myfyrwyr a ddaeth i weld TewTewTenau, mae'r gig yn dangos sut y gall un llwyfan ddod â phawb at ei gilydd.

Bydd yn ran anferthol o'n dyfodol.



Tips Ffasiwn yr Hydref

Mea Verallo
Cyfrannwr

Wrth i'r dail droi'n oren a'r awel droi'n oer – mae hi'n atgof i ni fod misoedd yr Hydref wedi dychwelyd eto. Er bod rhai yn hiraethu am yr Haf sydd bellach wedi ein gadael, mae hi hefyd yn esgus i adnewyddu ein siwmperi a'n cotiau glaw. Weithiau mae hi'n teimlo'n anodd i gadw i fyny gyda'r 'trends' tymhorol ond dyma restr fer o'ch 'staples' ar gyfer Hydref 2026.

O brintiau trawiadol i liwiau cyfoethog, ffabrigau moethus ac ategolion sy'n denu sylw; nid oes angen gwario ffortiwn i edrych yn dda'r tymor yma. Mae 'trends' Hydref 2026 yn ffocysu ar ddarnau ymarferol a mynegiant personol. Dyma'r crynodeb wedi'i deilwra i fyfyrwyr ffasiynol Caerdydd.

Lliwiau trawiadol

Os ydych chi am ychwanegu ychydig o 'wmff' at eich gwisgoedd pob dydd, beth am wisgo lliw sy'n dal sylw fel coch neu marŵn? Mae hyn yn troi gwisg all deimlo'n ddiflas yn fwy diddorol gan wneud i chi sefyll mas mewn torf. Gall hyn fod mor syml a gwisgo esgidiau coch gyda jîns a chrys-t gwyn. Mae dull o'r enw 'the sandwich method' sydd yn dechneg ffasiynol syml, ble rydych chi'n matsio lliw ar frig eich gwisg gyda'r dilledyn ar y gwaelod. Esiampl o hyn fyddai gwisgo siwmper goch gydag esgidiau coch i fatsio.

Printiau pwerus yn parhau

Mae llewpard yn batrwm sydd wedi bod yn hynod o boblogaidd yn 2026 ac mae'n ffordd hawdd o ddod a cymeriad i wisg sy'n ymddangos ychydig yn blaen. Y nôd yw dyrchafu gwisgoedd syml ar gyllideb fach. Felly, gallwch ddefnyddio'r patrwm fel eitem sy'n gwneud datgan ('statement piece'). Byddai bag print llewpard heb os yn ychwanegu elfen o ddrama at wisg syml pob dydd.

Patrwm arall sydd wedi bod yn dominyddu'r byd ffasiwn yw smotiau. Gallwch gerdded mewn i Zara a phrynu gwisg gyfan wedi'i gorchuddio mewn smotiau. Ond, os nad ydych chi eisiau edrych fel ci dalmatian, beth am wisgo un eitem smotiog yn unig? Gall hyn fod yn siaced syml neu gallwch fynd un cam ymhellach a gwisgo jîns.

Siacedi

Rywbeth a ddylai hoelio'i le yn eich cwpwrdd dillad yw siaced o safon dda. Nid oes angen gwario mwy na £100 i gael siaced sydd yn edrych yn ffasiynol ac yn smart. Un o'r deunyddiau mwyaf poblogaidd y tymor hwn yw lledr swêd. Budd prynu siaced fel hyn yw ei bod yn siŵr o bara am byth gan ei fod yn eitem diamser ('timeless').

Gallwch brynu siacedi swêd mewn amryw o liwiau megis du, hufen neu wyrdd olewydd. Mae'r siacedi hyn yn ychwanegu elfen o 'chicness' at eich gwisgoedd pob dydd. Dyma ffordd syml o edrych yn ffasiynol heb ymdrechu'n ormodol.

Dyma ychydig o awgrymiadau a allai wneud i chi edrych yn ffasiynol yr Hydref hwn. Ond,y peth pwysicaf i'w gofio yw; gwnewch yn siŵr eich bod yn gyfforddus. Nid oes angen gwisgo i fyny pob tro, mae siwmper a throwsus llac yn hynod o dderbyniol, yn enwedig ar gyfer darlith ben bore dydd Iau!

Dilynwch ni ar Instagram!

"US AND THEM"

Ruby Collins
Deputy Editor In Chief

Over the summer, UCU negotiations with Cardiff University management have neared collapsed. As a result, industrial action in the 2027 spring semester is likely (read more about this in News, page 6.

In May 2026, a staff survey, which has been leaked to Gair Rhydd, revealed

"almost 70% of participants voted negatively to the statement that "change is managed well at Cardiff University".

Now November, Gair Rhydd have been contacted by staff from across the University to report their unaddressed frustrations and feeling that a "lack of emotional intelligence" among management is causing "irreparable damage" for years to come.

With such a disheartened staff body, and students also feeling the consequences of senior managerial decisions, what do students need to know about why Cardiff University staff have been pushed to this point?

Voluntary Redundancies

When cuts were announced in January 2025, voluntary redundancies were offered across schools as late as July. While this form of redundancy was optional, an anonymous lecturer from the College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences expressed to Gair Rhydd that "it was forcing people to make decisions that they might not have necessarily made in a different framework", another describing it as a waiting game for "who might blink first".

What's worse, the pressure put on academic staff to take redundancies has also affected groups differently.

"About 80% of ENCAP voluntary redundancies were taken by senior female lecturers,"

and a separate anonymous staff member shared that, in their department, voluntary redundancies were

"more likely to be taken by academic staff from ethnic minority groups"

Consequently, this has "an impact on the diversity of what you can teach", and with no budget to hire, there is no financing for the "prospect of replacement". For example, History no longer teaches Indian history, and has no academic to supervise American history dissertations.

In a 2026 internal staff survey conducted by Cardiff University, leaked to Gair Rhydd, 20% of participants voted negatively to the statement that "Cardiff University is making progress on creating a more diverse and inclusive place to work". As pressure to take redundancy in Spring 2025 mounted, it is clear that these redundancies had no thought for how consequences may vary by class, gender or ethnicity.

While some might have hoped employment stresses subdued as redundancies were taken off the table, academics and professionals at Cardiff University have been faced with complete restructuring of their roles.

Academic Delivery Model

In 2026, lecturers were provided with an 'Academic Delivery Model' where senior management asserted new guidelines for the time lecturers should commit to various tasks. An anonymous lecturer in the School of Global Humanities told Gair Rhydd that jobs they have always done are "all of a sudden allocated less hours, so that they can give us more to do".

"Additionally, this model has imposed a tremendous cut in research hours, from 40% of contracted hours to 20%"

(read more about this in News, page 3). While 40% is the current average benchmark of research hours for universities across the country, lecturers are now expected to deliver cutting edge, research-led content to students with less time.

In an interview with Dr Ann Heilmann, professor of English Literature at Cardiff University, she claimed that staff across various departments are "very, very stretched", as

"senior management have "stripped out the time to think", they've "stripped the time to teach"

and to "be as responsive in pastoral care as we should be in personal tutoring". Additionally, she noted that for a long time, "universities [have] only work[ed] because people are fulfilled by their jobs and prepared to do way more than their contract stipulates".

If industrial action does take place, academic staff may only work their contracted 35 hours: inevitably leaving many tasks incomplete, emails unresponded to and directly affecting the quality of students' education on every level. Unfortunately, it may take a total strike for management to fully realise their perseverance. Dr Andy Williams suggested that "this place runs on goodwill", and, as staff continue to face such adversity, "there is no goodwill left".



Wellbeing Support and a Looming Mental Health Crisis

As a consequence of lecturers' overloaded timetables and unreasonable working hours, staff across academic and professional services report feeling incredibly stressed and overwhelmed.

In the 2026 survey,

over 25% of respondents voted negatively to a statement that they are able "to cope with the stresses" of their jobs

and that they receive appropriate support for their mental wellbeing. Almost 40% voted negatively to the statement "I am able to manage my workload without regularly working unreasonable hours".

When the survey was sent out in May 2026 to staff, an accompanying article commented that the University Executive Board is "committed to responding to these results in a concrete way", promising to address concerns regarding "Workload and Wellbeing".

Yet, as late as November,

"Gair Rhydd is told of "unsustainable levels of staff going off sick with mental health issues due to stress at work".

While management does provide counselling services for struggling staff, multiple lecturers have come forward alleging that queues for these provisions have had waitlists of multiple months since the cuts were first announced in 2025.

It has been nearly 6 months since this survey results were released, and senior management's "commitment" to improving staff wellbeing seems to have made little tangible change for our lecturers. In June 2025,

"Wendy Larner, Vice-Chancellor, spoke at the Senedd, where she stated that "the majority" of poor staff wellbeing and mental health "refers to personal, not workplace stress"."

Yet, students can speak to any member of staff and transparently see that mental health struggles among Cardiff University staff are not isolated or simply anecdotal. Instead, they are a widespread issue that has been driven by the systematic failure of Cardiff University to competently support the staff that make the institution what it is.



Dr Ann Heilmann, professor of English Literature at Cardiff University,

STAFF SPEAK OUT TO GAIR RHYDD

John Percival, aka the "mess"

Another hidden issue facing academic and professional staff in the new 'Global Humanities' department is the poor provision of equipment or suitable working environments. Students might have noticed that Humanities lecturers now share offices in the John Percival building, yet this simple merging of rooms has had invariably frustrating impacts on our staff.

For lecturers, sharing offices raises administrative obstacles. When meeting with personal tutees, dissertation students or conducting office hours, their office-colleague must make themselves sparse. Effectively, staff are left without a workspace, access to their technology and even develop more strained working relationships with their colleagues.

It has been raised that academic staff, in week four of lecturing,

"still haven't been provided with reliable access to their new offices"

(keys or working electronic cards), shelving, and even computers. One anonymous lecturer stated that after waiting several weeks for technological equipment, they were then given "non-functional equipment that had to be replaced". In the 2026 staff survey, a statement regarding whether staff were provided with "effective equipment" by Cardiff University saw almost 30% of staff respond negatively.

Additionally, multiple lecturers have commented on the wastefulness of these physical changes. Prof Ann Heilmann informed Gair Rhydd that "they threw out hundreds of armchairs [...] and bookcases". Various other lecturers have been in touch with photographs of desks and other furniture left strewn on the street for weeks. One anonymous staff member commented that

"the car park was full of [functional] furniture that was probably destined for the very big skips", until 2026 Welcome Week,"

telling us that he and his colleagues "grabbed extra bookshelves before they sent them into the car park".

Despite this, some lecturers commented that senior management allegedly marketed part of their motivation of moving all of Humanities into John Percival because "it's good for the environment" and aligns with University attempts to lower their carbon footprint by reducing the amount of buildings they span.

Perhaps this visual clutter did not phase senior management, though, as they have not felt bothered to trek down to the Humanities buildings. One disgruntled School of Global Humanities lecturer revealed that, in a meeting between academic staff and senior management,

"Vice-Chancellor Wendy Larner allegedly "admitted that she hadn't been to John Percival"

Despite Gair Rhydd finding last year that over £1m was spent in the refurbishment of the John Percival building,

"upper management did not deem it necessary to check in on the new restructuring"

and renovation. If they had, they might have also felt offended by the piles of furniture and books littering the car park.

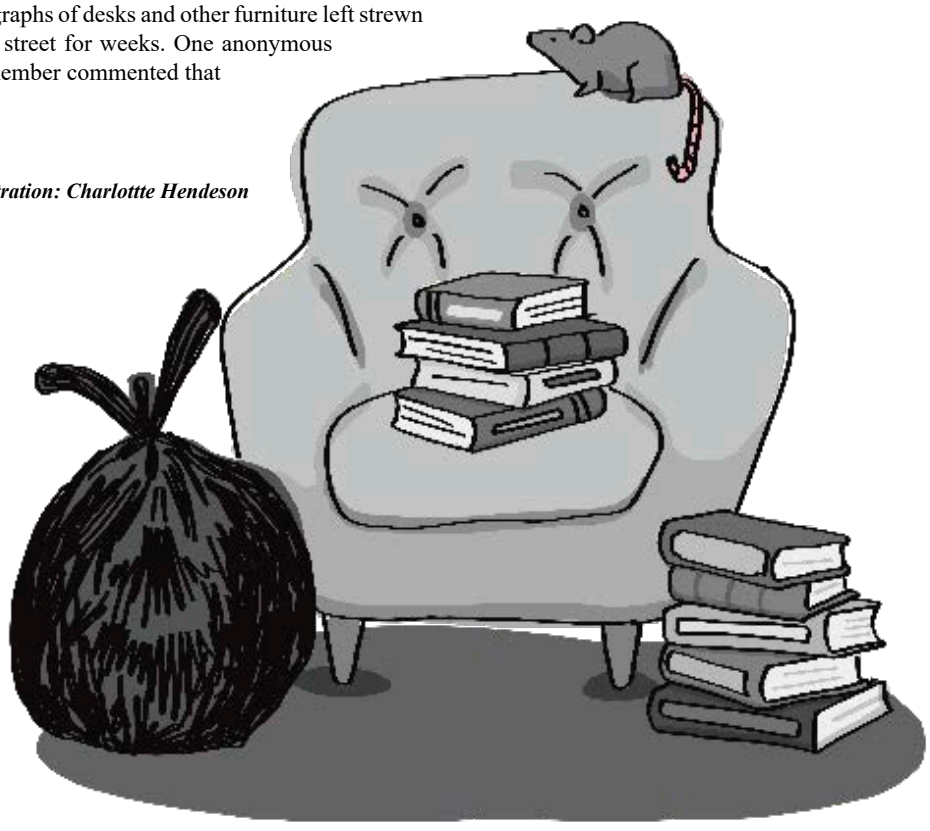


Illustration: Charlottte Hendeson



Dr Andy Williams, Spokesperson for the Cardiff UCU branch.

The 'Us and Them' Mentality

These adversities combined have caused mounting frustrations and disenchantment with upper management. Despite this, academic and professional staff retain very strong trust in local management, immediate superiors and colleagues. One academic expressed that "one of the positive repercussions" of the cuts was that they have

"never felt as connected with my colleagues than in this situation".

While lecturers at other universities facing cuts, such as Nottingham and Exeter Universities, were split into groups of 'at risk' and 'safe', Cardiff University chose to put all staff at risk. As a result, a strong sense of togetherness was fostered among various hierarchies of staff who all felt equally unsafe, personally and financially.

An anonymous lecturer has suggested that moving the School of Global Humanities into, mostly, one base has been an "own goal" for management.

One academic reported that staff "now have such a strong identity of us and them" which "is such a shame because we should be one university". Yet,

"when "senior management gives the idea that they are one thing and we are another, that is so toxic".

A dissatisfied Humanities academic certainly reflected this perspective, claiming that "they'll try and suggest that they care, but you cannot believe a word that comes out of their mouths". Speaking frankly, they feel

"as soon as doors have been closed, they do not give a sh*t about us".

Ultimately, they feel that there is a shared belief among staff that "nobody trusts" Wendy Larner, reflecting that "personally, [they] think she needs to go," and "somebody else [needs to] come and clear" Cardiff University up.

There seems to be a consensus, across the University, that if senior management continue to treat academic and professional staff in the manner they are now, a catastrophe could be on the horizon. As Dr Andy Williams put it, "The wheels are coming off, and nothing is being done".

Therefore, potential industrial action could include strikes of 'working to rule', where professional and academic staff only work to their contracted hours. That could also include

"strikes from all professional work and assessment boycotts, which will substantially impact students' learning, assessments, and graduations."

Despite universal dread at the tremendous impact strikes and further industrial action would present to students, there is a resounding sentiment that upper management have faced staff with no other solution, making Industrial Action in 2027 highly possible and further trouble probable…



How Hinge Is Reshaping *How We Date?*

Gabriella Camatta
Contributor

Imagine telling someone in the 60s that one day there'd be a world where you could spend your evenings swiping yes or no to a filtered stream of seemingly infinite faces. Would they think it was a dating utopia or a sterile marketplace, where prompts start to read like the back of a cereal box?

With approximately 53% of people aged 18-29 having used dating apps such as Hinge or Tinder, online dating is a modern normality and, although it's hard to deny these apps work for many people, it poses a lot of questions about what it means to date in the digital age.

One of the clearest ways apps like Hinge have reshaped dating is the control it gives us over how we are perceived. It is true that, to an extent, we curate ourselves in real life too, through our clothing and the way we choose to speak to people. However, from our favourite angles to witty prompts and personal stats, online dating allows us to meticulously craft our first impressions in a way that's unique to the online world.

Even in the talking stage, texting gives a person hours to think of replies that they may not be able to on the spot. So when we then meet a person, the idea of them we carry is formed not only by the snapshots they've chosen to share, but the version of themselves that texting allows them to be: a much more controlled first impression than previously possible.

Online dating cuts to the chase as you glimpse a person's dating intentions before you even interact. From the straightforward short-term and long-term to the more ambiguous 'figuring out my dating goals', you can usually gauge what someone is looking for. It also cuts out a lot of that slow-burn uncertainty between people, since it's usually safe to assume people are there with romantic, or at least non-platonic, intent.

And although this may save time, is that slow-burn uncertainty not the part that some of our favourite stories centre around? Then again, if stories are built on conflict, perhaps we wish to avoid it in real life.

Never before have dating options felt so infinite. Like with any other social media app, dating apps are designed to keep you hooked, gamified with features such as 'superlikes' and 'roses' and making you wonder if a better match is just one swipe away. The immediate swiping feature places emphasis on appearance, encouraging snap judgments before a person's character has a chance to show.

As hundreds of profiles flicker before us, people can begin to feel less like individuals and more like hazy possibilities consumed like content. Similar to social media likes, matches can slip into a form of validation, with focus placed on the number of matches a person can receive rather than on their compatibility.

Online dating has reshaped how we date as the logic of social media has entered romantic life. Much like with Instagram, through apps like Hinge we can learn about people or at least the version of themselves they've chosen to display before we even interact. They are hyper efficient: perhaps at the cost of something slow-burn. Like with TikTok or Instagram, online dating presents us with the illusion of infinity where there is always another profile, another possibility and another swipe.

A Patchy Situationship *with the BBC*

Felix Randall
Contributor

Excluding the obligatory roll of the eyes, the one gesture I think of when the exhaustingly relevant name Trump is mentioned is the grating, repetitive whining of "Fake News!". But this simple-minded deflection is seeping into UK discourse, and causing great agitation.

More and more frequently, the far-right rallies their self-righteous, Trump-esque crusade against the institution, and naturally all of her institutional disciples. Currently, target number one is the BBC. But we trust the BBC, right?

For all Brits, 'The Beeb' existed as an omniscient benchmark for culture and current affairs: News, Radio, Attenborough, Horrible Histories. We've all engaged with it for as long as we've known. Yet, it remains impossible to drown out the war cries from either end of the political spectrum.

The issue lies in the saturation of the news market. Anyone with a phone can be a journalist; credibility, in the age of misinformation, is like gold dust. 'The Beeb' excluded, news outlets are private businesses. This makes us consumers, not readers, of news.

It doesn't matter if you actually buy a paper anymore (and we all know you don't), because as soon as you click that headline, your impression is being reported and packaged for sale before you can say 'Capcha!'. It follows that any story must be packaged to sell first, and inform second. Narratives are dictated by your Murdochs, Mullens, and Lebedevs. There is no doubt that where journalistic integrity ends, private interest begins.

And who wears private interest better than our very own homegrown populist fanatic, Nigel Farage, sworn enemy of the omnipotent institution. Nigel's doting admirers at GB News won Reform UK countless supporters by slating the integrity of the BBC, churning out headlines like "BBC accused of breaching impartiality guidelines" or "forced into embarrassing climbdown" on the weekly. It is agreed amongst the far-right that the BBC serves the invisible leftist overlords, intentionally leading the British public away from the noble pursuit of patriotism.

But this assault accounts for more than one frontline; left-leaning media are no strangers to spats over neutrality. Take, for example, the BBC's coverage of the genocide in Gaza. I use this term deliberately; the UN itself agrees there is not a shadow of a doubt that these atrocities amount to anything smaller.

So, why won't the BBC? When asked in 2023, the organisation held the same, banally frustrating line as the Labour government: they will not use the term until the 2024 ICJ case reaches a verdict on whether or not a Genocide is being committed (despite the UN itself being staunchly clear on the matter).

This was a critical mistake. By repeating the same lobbyist-approved script as the incumbent government, the BBC unknowingly walked straight into a political minefield, exposing them to a barrage of accusations; to which they replied with a masterful stroke of public accountability, vowing to 'do better next time'. But can two things be true at once here? Can the BBC be left-leaning on one issue, and right-leaning on the other?

We must accept that no news outlet is neutral. This may well be because they have revenue targets and competition. But, more fundamentally it's because they're all simply collections of individuals, each with their own incentives, goals, and, in some cases, a great political relationship with Russia. And yes, the BBC relentlessly courts controversy, but it is ours to hold accountable.

The pundits take issue: state-run media is, historically speaking, not great at impartiality. And this sentiment is incredibly important because state-run is exactly where we are tripping ourselves up.

The BBC is publicly owned (or at least the four people still paying their TV license owned) and distinct from the government, with their own bureaucracy, programming, and occasional prolific sex pest. But it stands that it cannot be bought or sold: and no, the BBC is not impartial, regardless of their commitment. But, at least nobody has a clue, and it isn't as blatant as everywhere else.

Garvaghy Road: *A Battle For Culture Or A Return To Conflict?*

Aimee McGeary
Contributor

After 28 years free from the public eye, the Drumcree parade dispute reappeared in headlines after the recent ruling from the Parades commission. This allowed the loyalist Orange Order to march the infamous Garvaghy road in Portadown, County Armagh in the North of Ireland.

The fallout after the disallowance of the 1998 march resulted in a tragedy, in which Richard Quinn (11), Patrick Quinn (9), and Jason Quinn (8) lost their lives in an arson attack on their home in Ballymoney, County Antrim.

In the wake of the 1998 parade, William Bingham of the Orange Order spoke on the tragedy stating "No road is worth a life, let alone the lives of three little boys".

Despite the pouring rain on the 27th of September 2026, protesters arrived in bus loads to show support for the residents of the Garvaghy road and, in a way, nationalist's culture as a whole.

Although being labelled as a peaceful protest, exchanging guns and petrol bombs for flags and posters, it may still have similar consequences of the catastrophic damage suffered by many generations in the, appropriately named, 'Troubles' in the later decades of the 1900s.

Due to the troubled history regarding the Drumcree parade route, the protest of hundreds gathered to barricade the road and stop the march from happening. In the end, the protest was successful and ultimately shed light on the underlying truth that we have been at a standstill in Northern Irish politics. But, we now may be on the precipice for real, necessary change.

As the protest continued later into the day, an impromptu, traditional Irish musical session took place, as the Mary Wallopers performed for an emerging crowd in celebration of the battle won.

Traditional Irish music has been widely popularised in recent years. It's hard to separate what happened on the Garvaghy road from the wider trend of Fontaines D.C., Guinness, and Claddagh-themed merchandise saturating the market.

"When Irish culture becomes fashionable, who is it really for?"

As someone who is proud to be Irish, the surge in popularity of Irish culture can invoke a strange thought. Many believe that by wearing a Claddagh ring or by simply ordering a Guinness at their local pub, they have cracked the code as to what it is to be Irish. However,

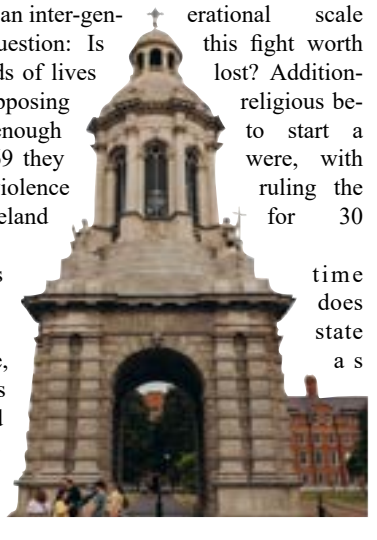
"they are unknowingly cashing in on the fetishisation of Ireland"

with simplified ideals of our traditions, language, and culture.

Despite this oversimplification of what Irish culture entails, Trinity College Dublin recently published a study, finding that 73% of adults under 35 expressed a strong desire to strengthen their Irish language skills. This could be due to the largely influential artists, like Kneecap, CMAT and Fontaines D.C.. Through the inclusion of their native Irish tongue in their songs, these artists are aiding in the fight to bring a dead language back to life and reclaiming the most important thing: culture.

In the end, the protest did remain peaceful. Although, the fear of a re-emergence of paramilitary groups and violent outbreak is felt throughout households. Despite the tragedies of the Troubles being before mine and many of my peers' lifetimes, its lasting effects are more embedded in our culture than ever before. Growing up, hearing stories from friends and family of bomb threats on the streets, civilian shootings, and police violence feels much further in the past than merely three decades.

Sharing these stories and truly understanding the impact paramilitary violence can have on an intergenerational scale begs the question: Is this fight worth the thousands of lives lost? Additionally, are opposing religious beliefs truly enough to start a war? In 1969 they were, with sectarian violence ruling the North of Ireland for 30 years.



As time passes, so does hope for a state of true peace, as memories are shared and scars are reopened in

The Hidden Cost Of The M&S Cookie Craze

Keeley Powell
Opinion Editor

We all love a cheeky dessert here and there. Even the healthiest of people have to admit the wide range of M&S cookies fulfill our intense sugar cravings. But, with recent discussions online about the statement that roughly 38,000 steps would have to be taken to walk off a pack of those addicting delectables, awareness of the health risks that come with this discourse should be made apparent.

Content from the M&S TikTok page, presented by Director of Product Development Kathryn Turner, is entertaining and even exciting to see the new festive drops, but does have to be consumed with caution. Yes, it is just a video displaying new foods, but this leads to feeding into obsessions with unhealthy confectionery that people may not realise they have.

It could also be suggested that this way of advertising food bypasses the UK law legislated in January this year, banning the advertisements of 'junk food' before 9pm on TV.

Although this point isn't life threatening to the British public, it does lead into more serious conversations on the regulation of unhealthy foods. For years we've been told to have a balanced diet and to get enough exercise. But, in this economy and with the struggles of time management, people don't always have the resources to make nutrient packed meals, especially given we all just want a sugary treat sometimes. Thus, there's no surprise as to why health conditions like diabetes had been recorded to impact roughly 4.3 million people in the UK.

If we look at the M&S cookies for example, a standard milk chocolate cookie has roughly 28g of sugar. Now that might not be a bother to some people but, if we're being honest, we don't just eat one and move on, we're gonna try and eat at least half of the pack. This can be alright as a regulated treat, but with the constant algorithm push of these adverts, and in some cases where we might turn to food as a comfort, it starts to become a vicious cycle.

This cycle becomes especially risky for not only those who may be at risk of diabetes, but also women who might have PMOS/PCOS. This condition impacts a vast amount of women, yet many won't realise they may suffer from its conditions due to underdiagnosis in the UK, showing a lack of care for women's health yet again. It can cause issues that involve hair growth, fertility, moods, and periods. So, why is this important? And how on earth does this link to M&S cookies?

Well, the links between insulin resistance and PCOS are very close, leading to hormone imbalances in the ovaries and, in general, an insulin resistance that can lead to more dangerous conditions, like Type 2 diabetes. It doesn't take a genius to comprehend that because women are being underdiagnosed, while being influenced by all of these adverts revolving around addicting sugary foods, there has become a large spike in women developing diabetes.

By no means am I a certified health professional, but we can all understand that the seriousness of diabetes isn't exactly something we want to experience, especially if there's a way to lessen such worries.

In relation to those M&S cookies and the obsession people have formed for Kathryn Turner, with comment sections treating her like the modern day Diana, it goes to show that there is a real danger to this normalisation of unhealthy foods being constantly shown without realising its influence online. This shouldn't come off as a hate piece on sugary foods, I'm an avid M&S dessert lover myself, but it is clear that we should take more care with what we consume and how marketing tactics can become risky for our health.

With all that said, does anyone fancy a cuppa and a cookie...?

Is Satire A Distraction or *Driver for Change?*

Isaak Hewitt
Opinion Editor

Have you noticed the recent trend of eat-the-rich satires releasing lately? Our appetite for the genre has never been so insatiable, what with frustration towards the 1% being particularly galvanised in response to recent events. Companies have noticed, rolling out TV shows like *Beef*, *Veep*, and *The White Lotus*, as well as countless films including *Saltburn*, *The Menu*, and the *Knives Out* trilogy, to rapturous reception. They capitalise on our embitterment with the elites, exposing them as ridiculous caricatures: their greed an object of mockery.



However, in engaging with these farcical portrayals being paraded in front of us, are we being pacified? So often, we watch these works with smiles on our faces, laughing along at the silly old rich people and leaving satisfied when they get taken down by our righteous heroes. Better still, they sometimes realise the error of their ways!

Their inspirations, on the other hand, are far more insidious; the terrifying reality that looms over us — the top dogs controlling the narrative and the future to our daily detriment — is ground up and reduced to comedy. Can we still laugh at these nightmares when we live through them every day? Moreover, should we?

It's a dilemma deliberated in *Digger*, the divisive new Tom Cruise-starring satire of global warming and the upper echelons of society. On the surface, actors in absurd costumes set in motion that our world is barrelling rapidly towards the irreparable wreckage beyond the climate point of no return. This story is far from unfamiliar, being very reminiscent of Netflix's smash-hit film *Don't Look Up*.

That's only one side to its dual-narrative structure, though. The other half of two-time Oscar-winning director Alejandro G. Iñárritu's latest feature is a fascinating reckoning with questions of how helpful that approach to storytelling really is. By turning evil into a joke, are we minimising it? Or is it valid to want to distract ourselves from the stresses of day-to-day life through comedy? And can it actually help to motivate us to action by drawing attention to it?



If *Digger*'s disastrous financial failings are anything to go by, people don't want to think about it at all. Despite audiences' apparent adoration of similar eat-the-rich comedies, this more self-reflexive exploration is sadly set to be a historic Hollywood bomb, set to lose around $245 million. That's not exclusively down to ideological rejection, poor marketing and mixed reviews are surely the main causes of the film's downfall, but it's certainly a factor. The reality is that audiences don't want an examination of how they escape and whether that's productive; they just want to escape.



Maybe, though, what's turning people off so much is the definitiveness of *Digger*'s assertion that wanting to avoid our troubles is so wrong. It's true that demoralising daily stories of the rich and the powerful messing with and manipulating us for their own gain can take a toll. These films and shows, then, can serve as much-needed relief for our collective mental health. Indeed, for many, finding humour in the horror is hopeful in and of itself; making light of what bothers us most can make the weight of it all a little less heavy.

Ultimately, the purpose of satire can go both ways, and that doesn't have to be a bad thing. Sometimes, such sarcastic humour can make a genuine difference by raising awareness of societal issues and making us more critically consider the status quo. Other times, it's just a therapeutic distraction, where the problems that plague us become the comedy we laugh at. Not all satire has to have such grand aspirations; giving us a space to stop worrying for a few short hours is noble enough.

When Did We Become So Afraid *of Being Uncomfortable?*

Arielle Melamed
Opinion Editor

I am the president of Cardiff University's Kayaking club. And I can't kayak.

Of course I'm being hyperbolic, I can kayak – in the sense that most able-bodied people are able to paddle if they've never done it before. It is a simple action. You put one blade of the paddle into the water and pull it towards you before doing the same on the opposite side, causing the boat to move along the river. That's it really.

There is a difference between being able to do something and knowing how to do it. Between keeping yourself afloat and being able to roll, between getting from A to B and actually being able to read the river. The only way to bridge that gap is to practice. To be bad at something before you can be good at it. And ultimately to accept that you will, at some point, look silly doing it. And yet, we seem increasingly reluctant to do just that.

"We have become remarkably fluent in the language of self-preservation"

We talk about protecting our peace, establishing boundaries, conserving our energy, and refusing to entertain anything that doesn't serve us. Much of this is necessary. Learning to recognise our own limits and remove ourselves from situations which make us unhappy is a key part of growing up and knowing yourself. But somewhere along the way, I wonder whether we have become so preoccupied with protecting ourselves from discomfort that we have forgotten what discomfort can do for us.

There is always a reason not to go. To not attend that society GIAG where you don't know anyone and are unfamiliar with the activity, not to strike up a conversation with a stranger in your seminar, not to apply for a position you might not get. We tell ourselves that we aren't particularly interested, that we would rather stay at home, that we know what we like. Sometimes, this is true. But sometimes what we call 'knowing ourselves' is simply a refusal to find out who else we might be.

The problem is not that we have too many boundaries, but that we have become reluctant to question the ones we have imposed on ourselves.

At University, we are constantly surrounded by opportunities to try things that are new, meet people we would never ordinarily encounter, and discover interests that may have otherwise remained entirely foreign to us. There are societies for almost everything, modules on subjects we know absolutely nothing about, and people whose experiences of the world may challenge everything we take for granted.

After all, there is a particular vulnerability in being bad at something. To be a beginner is to surrender the illusion of competence and admit that there is something we don't know. It risks embarrassment, rejection, and failure. It means you must accept that you cannot control how a situation will turn out, only whether you are willing to have it.

We cannot become more capable without first being incapable. We cannot broaden our understanding of the world without encountering ideas that challenge it. And we cannot meaningfully discover ourselves if we shut off any opportunities to find out that we were wrong about ourselves in the first place.

None of this is to suggest that we should abandon our boundaries or deliberately make ourselves miserable. The discomfort of trying something new should be thoroughly distinguished from the distress of remaining in a situation that is harmful. The former can be productive, and the latter is not something that should be romanticised. Not every invitation has to be accepted, nor every opportunity seized. Sometimes saying no is what we need.

But, it is always worth asking ourselves, occasionally, whether we are refusing because we genuinely don't want to do something or because we are afraid of what might happen if we do.

Harm Reduction Or Censorship:
The Case For The New Porn Ban

Katie Fender
Contributor

If you've ever watched porn, which I'm sure a large portion of you reading have, you would have likely come across the categories of strangulation and incest/step-incest. From the 6th of November, possession of pornographic material depicting these tropes will be illegal.

Strangulation, often incorrectly called choking, is not something most young people go looking for out of genuine kink. Over 58% of 16-21 year olds say they have come across strangulation in porn, while only 6% actively sought it out. When paired with the fact that over a third have experienced strangulation during consensual sex, it begs the question: how are algorithms and multimillion dollar porn companies shaping the way that young people have sex?

But equally, should the government really be interfering and legislating what people use for their own private sexual gratification? Especially when all the pornstars involved are consenting adults? Depicting murder, rape and all sorts of violent crimes is a liberty rightfully afforded to film directors and other creative professions.

"After all, depicting harm isn't doing harm."

Is this ban quietly moving the line from doing to showing? The case against the new law rests on whether the state should intervene to prevent direct harm to another individual. The whole argument turns to one single question: does watching depictions of violent or rough sex actually cause harm?

Look at what the viewer is doing, and the hands-off view starts to wobble. Think of the last horror film you watched; imagine there was a murder committed by strangulation. As the viewer, you were not intentionally invited to enjoy the murder from the killer's perspective by identifying with them. This is exactly the difference. Think 'POV' angles and the cropped out faceless male.

"The function of violent porn is the viewer's arousal,"

Obviously identification doesn't make every viewer violent; arousal isn't automatic endorsement. But, harm doesn't need to take the form of direct violence. When the act of being eroticised is already a crime, a genre that's dependent on the viewers identification with it doesn't need to create offenders to cause harm. It just has to shift what people regard as normal sex. A generation that comes to see strangulation as a part of sex is suffering real bodily harm. Preventing harm to others is precisely where even the most hands-off liberal principle draws the line.

So, is porn actually shifting what young people see as normal?

Non-fatal strangulation is already a criminal offence under the domestic abuse act of 202; and yet it is increasingly becoming a sexual norm, especially in young people. Over a third of 16-34 year olds, and 43% of sexually active 16-17 year olds report being strangled during consensual sex. Porn might not inherently make viewers more violent, but there is still evidence to suggest that content within porn has shifted what young people view as normal sexual relations. This is a subtler harm, one that should make you question if your sexual preferences are a genuine pleasure or a result of your algorithm.

This law is certainly justified, as it attempts to slow down the normalisation and eroticisation of already illegal acts. It is unknown whether or not the ban will reduce violent acts happening in young people's sex lives, but the correlation between depictions in porn and real-life occurrences make it a reasonable target for legislation.

The new law is not an infringement on free speech as eroticisation of sexual violence has real world harms and consequences, therefore justifying state intervention. This law is harm reduction, not censorship.

However, though this is a step in the right direction, porn and its algorithms will continue to corrupt young people's attitudes and relationship towards sex. This law is the least we can do until that is the case.

"Watching strangulation and incest shouldn't be easier than understanding consent."

What Welfare Labels Aren't Telling You

Velina Whiting
Contributor

In Britain, we enjoy being reassured that our consumer choices are ethical, especially regarding food. Consider the frankly bewildering number of different labels shown on food packaging. Egg cartons labelled 'free range' indicate that the hens laying them are allowed time to roam outside; meat products from RSPCA Assured farms claim to follow "world-leading welfare standard".

The issue is, what do these labels even mean? Beyond feel-good welfare buzzwords, we aren't told much about what these standards permit and prohibit.

Take RSPCA Assured, associated with an organisation recognisable as one of the oldest and most respected animal welfare charities in the world. This prestige buys a lot of trust from the British consumer. After all, why would the RSPCA risk its good name by associating itself with factory farms and cruel farming practices? Except, on several occasions, workers on RSPCA Assured farms have been caught kicking, punching and otherwise abusing their animals.

In 2024, an open letter signed by over 170 individuals and organisations called for the scrapping of RSPCA Assured. The For Charlie animal rights campaign cited almost 100 documented investigations over 16 years of abuse on RSPCA Assured farms and slaughterhouses. The campaign accused the scheme of 'welfare-washing' and failing to effectively regulate animal welfare. These investigations continue, with another having been published this month. For All Animals recorded over 700 incidents of verbal and physical abuse towards calves over three days on one farm. It's far from the standards of care we'd expect from the RSPCA.

In fairness to RSPCA Assured, as heinous and upsetting as the abuse recorded is, these investigations don't establish that abuse is widespread across the scheme. In response to the open letter, the RSPCA commissioned the independent Crowe Review. It reviewed 200 RSPCA Assured farms and concluded that the scheme was "operating effectively" in enforcing its welfare standards. The scheme also agreed to implement 20 recommendations made by the report, such as significantly increasing welfare visits to member farms.

It would also be wrong to ignore the scheme's efforts to improve animal welfare. For example, RSPCA Assured requires outdoor grazing for dairy cows and increased care for cows during and after pregnancy, including extra space and food. Believe it or not, this is above legal minimum standards for animal welfare.

However, while reading RSPCA Assured's animal welfare standards, I started to feel increasingly uneasy: these "world-leading welfare standards" seem to permit practices I find troubling, even cruel. Both castration and disbudding (removal of horn buds with hot irons) of dairy calves are permitted, while the RSPCA describes them as "potentially injurious husbandry procedures".

Consider dairy calves: disbudding is common practice and allowed during the first five weeks of a calf's life. The procedure is painful, and the resulting wounds take up to nine weeks to heal, according to the Royal Veterinary College. The RSPCA regulations require disbudding to be performed with localised anaesthetic, where no similar requirement exists while performing non-surgical castration upon a calf (albeit with long-acting pain relief). Animal lovers can console themselves by noting that the RSPCA admits this is "an area [they] are looking to progress"'.

Animal farming is an inherently cruel industry. RSPCA Assured provides higher welfare standards to improve it — that is admirable. It's also failed to prevent mistreatment on its member farms, and its own standards allow for practices that cause pain. The RSPCA's prestige encourages us not to ask questions about what being RSPCA Assured actually means.

Labels like it give customers a reason to believe that the animal they're eating was spared from the worst of the industry. Not the whole of it.

Too Old for Trick-or-Treat,
Too Young to Budget

Milly Arthur
Opinion Editor

"Halloween is the one night a year when a girl can dress like a total sl*t and no other girls can say anything about it."

Regina George had the right idea about Halloween. Social rules seem to loosen, and Halloween becomes a sacred time when students can forget about their midterms and instead transport themselves to the Midwest as cowboys. However, one thing George did not foresee is that in Cathays, it is not just one night a year, but one whole week.

Before university, Halloween did not require hours of dedication to carefully curated Pinterest boards. The family's muddle box, containing a witch hat with a wig attached, two sparkly dresses, and a couple of superhero capes was more than enough to secure a happy Halloween. Nobody needed a group chat to co-ordinate costumes or a calendar to figure out which day to wear them.

When we moved to Cardiff, we traded the disappointing slimy liquorice of trick-or-treating for the equally questionable and strong sambuca of the student Halloween. The excitement, however, remains the same. Looking back, there were parties to remember, costumes to laugh about and the shared chaos of a night when everyone could be a little ridiculous. Yet, with Halloween now behind us, I cannot help wondering whether we took things a little too far.

On one hand, there is something quite sweet about students keeping Halloween alive and multiplying the celebrations across the week. In Cathays, we seem to have three chances a year to get Halloween right, and nobody wants to miss out.

But there is money to be made from all this excitement. A quick look at the Cardiff Joke Shop's website reveals the range of costumes available. What's striking, though, is the difference between the men's and women's sections. Men are presented with costumes like prisoners, *Scream* characters and skeletons, while women are offered a 'naughty schoolgirl', a 'bloodthirsty vampire' or a 'naughty nun'. Even the names feel excessive. It makes you wonder: who is Halloween really for? Are we dressing up for fun, or have we been sold the idea that even our costumes should make us look attractive?



Then there are the club tickets, some selling out weeks before the 31st of October. Halloween becomes less spontaneous when a night out needs to be booked in advance and a costume requires its own budget. What started as an excuse to dress up can begin to feel like a logistical operation. We are too old to trick-or-treat, but too young to budget for a week of Halloween celebrations.

There is something brilliant about seeing Cathays filled with ridiculous costumes, spotting a niche reference that makes you laugh, or discovering that someone else has dressed as the exact character you loved as a child. Halloween gives us an excuse to be silly together.

Now that Halloween is over, we can put our feet up, recover from the sambuca, and assess the damage to our bank accounts. Whether you loved every second, or were delighted to put the costumes away for another year, the best part is that we get to do it all again next October.

Unless, of course, you are in a sports society. In which case, put the witch's hat back on. It's time for YOLO.

It Wasn't A Monster. *It Was My Boyfriend*

Anonymous
Contributor

I will not try to shroud this in euphemisms or flowery language, but throughout my first relationship, I was the victim of sexual assault on multiple occasions. The perpetrator was not some stranger or random man who I met online, but instead was the boy who lay in my bed every night.

I held this secret inside my soul for the entirety of the relationship, pushing it down to the bottom of my toes. Maybe I had made it up and my memory was ballooning from the actual event? Wasn't it my fault? When I had laid there naked, part of me believed my body was his for the taking. But part of me kept it quiet because I repeated to myself over and over like a mantra that it had not happened. That I was being dramatic.

Years later, I still battle with myself for keeping quiet, and it is something I am still grappling with to this day. I isolated myself from my family and the little friends I had. I told them nothing of what I was dealing with just by being with him.

An all-consuming fear and panic was living inside of me every day, and I covered up this anxiety with anger and isolation. It was only an entire year after the events, and after finally breaking up, that I even mentioned it to someone. The words felt like glue as they clawed their way out of my mouth.

What I am trying to say here, is that I cannot describe this boy as a monster. Because, in doing so, I allude to an image that you already have in your mind: a stereotype of a predatory, old man, or maybe a group of lads drunk at a party. What I want to tell you is that most of the boys who commit these crimes are the ones we think we love. The ones we invite into our bed over and over again, and the ones we stay with long overdue.

This relationship was something I went through at quite a young age, and because of this I believed it to be an isolated anomaly — albeit a horrible one. But over the years that followed, my close friends, cousins, and sister, all told me similar stories. Stories of boys they had trusted, and believed they loved, who had made them feel like an alien in their own body.

Most of these kinds of stories never make it to court, or to the police; most don't even make it out our mouths. Sexual assault within relationships doesn't fit the wider narrative of what we understand violence to be. I have spent quite a lot of time trying to process those events that happened all those years ago and, yet, my hands still shake as I write this. Whilst I have spent countless hours trying to work out why he did it, trying to pick apart his brain, I still struggle to put the events into a specific box.

Stories like mine are never black and white. They live within a blur of boundaries that don't reveal themselves to you until a random Thursday afternoon, when you're hit with a wave of nausea, and you feel every drop of blood sink to the bottom of your feet.

Monsters are not those confined to the shadows. They sit next to you in lectures and invite you for a pint on the weekend. They are the boys you have known since you were six. Over half of the cases of rape, or attempted rape, are committed by partners or ex-partners. Crimes like these aren't confined to the outskirts, the social outcasts, the incels. They happen far too often and far too close to home, so why don't we admit it?



The Inconsistencies *Across Our Institution*

Bethan Jones
Head of Opinion

There is something I have struggled to comprehend during my time at Cardiff University. I walk into my 9 AM lecture and sit idly in my seat, as

"the only expert in their field reels off a series of monotonous phrases"

that barely push their way into my brain. I scramble to jot down a couple sentences that have actually made sense, before my professor hurries on, rattling through random bullet points on a slideshow that is at least fifteen years old.

An aspect of university that goes over our heads is that lecturers are not necessarily teachers, but experts who happen to relay their knowledge to a room full of eager youngsters, willingly choosing to be there. Unlike school, university runs on the consensus of believed-to-be mutual interest; the student wants to learn and earn a degree, whilst the lecturer gets the chance to share their theories and groundwork.

But most researchers have spent years of their life digging down into a rabbit hole of information that they struggle to get out of, forgetting that most people are on the outside. Freshers stumble along to their first lecture in semester one and are suddenly thrown into the deep end,

"being led by someone who has totally forgotten what it's like to be an amateur".

Being brilliant at a subject and being good at explaining that subject are two very distinct skills, yet university seems to treat them the same.

This is not always a dig to the lecturers themselves, but more the system that university thrives upon. As a research-focused university, lecturers at Cardiff are told to prioritise this. I've had numerous lecturers disappear for months, or even an entire year, to go on research leave, and in doing so, leave behind open-mouthed students, gawping at a subject they've only just started to sink their teeth into.

This means that teaching, and inevitably the part that matters most to the student, is completely sidelined. Lecturers are swapped in and replaced, contact hours are scarce, and the accessibility of information is lengthy and complicated; with the advice we're given only putting more responsibility on the students, rather than the lecturer themselves. And this isn't even mentioning late feedback on assignments, as well as the second year-running of chaos following timetable delays.

Even when I can actually grapple with the content, getting access to it can be difficult. If, for some reason, a lecture is missed, it can be weeks before the recording actually gets uploaded to Learning Central, by which time the assignment is due and I've had to piece the information together from jumbled up readings and my friend's badly written notes.

For students with disabilities or neurodivergence, this is far more of an inconvenience. Recordings are an essential form of access and yet, whether you get them depends on your course or module. One student noted that whilst lectures being recorded shouldn't discourage in-person attendance, they were a "useful tool" when you "struggle to take things in at a speed everyone else does", particularly if you need "extra time to process information" such as those with ADHD or Autism.

We pay the same fees and work towards the same degree classification, yet the support we receive varies hugely from module to module, relying heavily on the individual delivering the content. One lecturer might update slides, upload sessions, and answer emails, whilst another does none of these; yet we're all being marked on the same scale.

"Fixing these issues doesn't mean lecturers should be acting as one homogenous group".

After all, varying lecturing styles, dynamics, and personality are a part of what makes a good lecture. But the inconsistency across this institution to provide basic levels of access and support is leaving some people behind in the dirt. And many feel as though their voice and presence as a student isn't enough to change that.

Organisations Shaping Our Campus Need *You*!

Alex Portman Ross
Politics Editor

Do you want to change Cardiff University? Whether you're a fresher or returner, activist groups affect you. While University life is busy, your spare time could help organise protests, lobby institutions, or bake cakes for fundraisers; and shape our campus.

If you're interested in tackling sexual violence at Cardiff University and in wider society, *Time To Act* are the perfect fit for you. They burst onto the scene in 2023 with the founders, Becca Rumsey and Emily Carr, believing 'sexual misconduct can be eliminated'.

The organisation has really changed campus culture. They lobbied for mandatory consent and bystander training for sports teams and societies; many of whom took the 'Don't Be A Shitty Committee' pledge and completed *TTA's* training. This comes alongside institutional advancements including the creation of working groups on sexual violence in the University and Union.

They've also recently raised over £4,000 for charity, become an NHS recognised sexual health hub, and have their '4th AGM motion already written'. This work would be impossible without the committed volunteers who run the most effective campaign group at Cardiff University.

The newly formed Cardiff Students Against Austerity believe...

"students and staff shouldn't have to worry about fundamental needs while management salaries increase".

While as yet unproven, CSAA were quick to tell *Gair Rhydd*: "although we are in our infancy, this doesn't mean we're placid." To support their growth, reach out to CSAA who assure us they're "non--partisan, so everyone is welcome."

Caerdydd Students For Palestine aim to hold Cardiff University "accountable for their complicity in the ongoing genocide in Palestine". By occupying buildings and running encampments CS4P made the University open more asylum seeker scholarships and publish their investment portfolio. While successful, these methods were controversial as they culminated in an injunction on protests by the university.

Adjacent to their controversial methods, *CS4P* hosts fundraising events supporting Palestinians living in Gaza. With consistent activism since 2024, *CS4P* are ideal for aspiring activists who should visit their instagram or attend their events to get involved.

As their mop mascot may give away, *Re-Open-Nominations* isn't your traditional protest group. Established two years ago, *R.O.N's* instagram page "is about getting students engaged in student democracy while holding candidates to account in an engaging manner" Within this dialogue, *R.O.N* has supported candidates and ensured all campaigns are bilingual. With turnout on the rise, we have no doubt you'll contact their instagram to engage with student democracy. This work ensures candidates are "the best they can be", whilst fulfilling Student Union election rules requiring *R.O.N.* to be a valid candidate.

How effective are these groups? The answer to that question depends on you. These students have changed campus culture and institutional norms but they need your help.

"You have to be the change you want to see. It's time to get involved. Use your spare time to organize protests, lobby institutions or bake cakes".





Illustration: Charlotte Henderson

What should Cardiff students expect from Plaid's first budget?

Alfie Chapman
Contributor

Plaid's first budget is a whopping £27.5 billion. Where will this money go? With an additional £1.2 billion more than last year, Plaid must show development to prove they can govern competently.

Following months of struggle to pass a budget after a defeat at the Senned this summer, Plaid had to negotiate with Labour on how the party would support people with additional learning needs before they could see it finally pass.

The budget promises to be strategic with how it is distributed. Plaid has assessed the most impacted issues for Wales and will initially invest into these. Areas such as, climate change, Welsh language, and unemployment are amongst those that will take the most advantage of the budget.

In addition, £150 million of the budget is being invested to support the NHS along with £50 million for childcare. Investments into housing and transport will also be beneficial to the people of Wales by developing more affordable homes and wider connectivity for more rural areas.

Education is a fundamental sector of interest for Plaid, so as Cardiff University students we may be able to expect investment from the budget. Whilst a focus on primary and secondary education is clear, with a new curriculum being developed and free school meals becoming available for all Primary school children, a lack of investment for tertiary education institutions is apparent.
Despite this, the party has outlined a short number of investments that will hopefully benefit university students.

For starters, additional learning needs will be supported by an additional £2.5 million in further education institutions, meaning people with additional needs can be provided with the support they need and deserve. Importantly, the budget aims to enable the higher education sector to become sustainable and resilient. However, there are no clear plans as to how Plaid will do this.
In addition, transport investments such as completing the Core Valley Lines upgrade will benefit student connectivity to the rest of South Wales. Connectivity will also be improved by the proposal of Trams in Cardiff. Students will benefit from this as travel in the city will be quicker and easier. Another improvement is the extension of the £1 bus fare scheme for 5-21 year olds which already benefits countless university students.

"But how is Plaid's budget going to benefit university students?"

Whilst there are mentions of how Plaid is using the budget to support us, there is no clear objective. At a time of crisis for Welsh Universities, as they struggle with financial and enrollment issues, you would think that there would be more mention of how students will be supported. It is clear Plaid is sweeping it under the carpet. An action that would be convenient following the controversy that followed past comments by the party about reducing Welsh natives' grants when they go to university in England. While Plaid have since backtracked this statement, it is convenient that they have mostly ignored University investment despite an insistence that 'there's a £100m black hole facing our universities'.

Plaid would prefer Welsh people to study in local universities and provide for the Welsh economy once they graduate. However, it is unjustly harsh to penalise Welsh people who want to study away from their home. This controversy has led to Plaid being accused of 'removing the freedom of choice' and having a 'divisive national ideology' by the Welsh Conservative Party. It also reflects that the budget does not have students at the forefront of its mind.

Despite the Plaid budget providing for some of the most financially deprived areas, such as the NHS and childcare, tertiary education feels mostly forgotten, especially at a difficult time for many universities in Wales. One would think Plaid would have a higher focus on investment into Welsh universities.

Plaid needs to do more to support University students. With the difficulties higher education institutions in Wales are facing, a clearer plan from the party to help support universities is required. How do you think we should be supported? Whether you're a student, lecturer, or any other member of the university; we deserve more investment.

Image credit: Senedd Cymru via Wikimedia Commons.



Why You need to Care About the Senedd

Oskar Hyams
Head of Politics

In May this year, the student community helped deliver a historic result for Welsh Politics. Both Cardiff constituencies delivered 3 Plaid MSs to the Senedd. Students rejected right wing populism by electing 10 out of a possible 12 progressive candidates. Yet, despite many students who turned out to give Plaid a mandate to govern, many did not understand what they were voting for and, crucially, why they should care.

Now, with student votes helping clear the path for a first ever non-Labour Welsh Government, what powers does this newly elected Administration have? The most important distinction to make is the difference in control between the UK Government and the Welsh Government. The UK Government (based in London) has 'reserved' powers over issues like foreign policy, military spending, constitutional issues (like whether or not Wales will be allowed more powers), and justice. The Welsh Government, on the other hand, has power over the NHS in Wales, transport, housing, and (most importantly for students) education.

It is also a

"common misconception that the Welsh Government is the same thing as the Senedd."

The Welsh Government is made up of MSs from the largest party of the Senedd (or any supporting parties where necessary).

They are the ones who set the policy agenda, present a budget, and manage the day to day goings on of government. The Senedd, however, is made up of a number of parties (including Plaid, Labour, Reform, the Greens, and one Liberal Democrat) and its main role is ensuring the Government is scrutinised on its policy decisions and held to account. It also passes legislation (or laws) to set out long term policy goals onto the statute books.

However, this doesn't answer the question, why should I care? What difference does it make to my life?

"For Cardiff students, the Senedd does so much more than you realise."

For example, Plaid MS Keira Marshal is leading the charge on tackling sexual violence within universities. She has been a major proponent in the promotion of Cardiff's own Time To Act's petition—to make it law that universities must protect students from sexual violence.

The Welsh Government will also be vital in deciding the financial future of Welsh universities. Minister for Tertiary Education, Cefin Campbell, revealed early last month that the government was launching a report into the future of welsh universities, and he revealed exclusively to Gair Rhydd that they were considering options for if and when they would "step in" to save or support universities.

Equally important to students, however, will also be access to the NHS. Plaid have committed to hiring "up to 100 additional GPs" to help tackle waiting lists. This will help students get quicker access to support in the NHS. The Welsh Government also provides all people in Wales with free prescriptions, a vital policy in a time of such high cost of living.

The Senedd and Welsh Government are vital to your day-to-day life. They decide how long you have to wait to see a doctor. They decide how sexual violence is prevented. Most importantly, they represent you when Westminster won't.

US Midterm Madness!

Tristan Wijker
Contributor

The most important elections happening this year take place on November 3rd. Why? They could see a major blow to Trump's power. This is because Trump's Republicans are fearing a colossal shift of power in the US Congress. Similar to the UK parliament, Congress has 2 chambers, the House and Senate, who both work together as relatively equal partners in law making.

All of the US House and a third of the Senate are up for election, both of which are currently controlled by the GOP, meaning the Democrats are throwing everything they have into taking back Congress. These elections will decide how much of a restraint Trump has in governing. While Trump is a big fan of using executive orders or law by decree, he still needs Congress to pass his tax cuts and more major legislation.

The first of the two is the House of Representatives, made up of 435 members, these reflect small constituencies that generally match the population and will therefore trend closely with national popularity. As Trump is currently extremely unpopular, thanks to the war and high grocery prices, the House is likely to flip to the Democrats. Trump, knowing this, attempted to get certain republican led states to gerrymander their borders, called 'redistricting'.

This is where constituency boundaries are re-drawn to give better chances of a win to a certain party, especially in swing seats. Some Democrat run states have tried to counter gerrymander, but to much less success. Despite this, estimates predict the Democrats will take back the House and Trump's efforts are likely to be too little to stop the momentum the Democrats have.

The Senate is a harder battle, while Trump remains unpopular, only a third of the senate seats are up for election. Meaning Democrats will have to succeed in red heartland states that Trump carried in 2024 by double digits, all while still defending vulnerable seats. Luckily for the Democrats, they have recruited largely good public speakers and popular figures.

Take for example ruby red Texas, the state of gunslinging, ranch going Cowboys has become a tossup because the Democrats managed to put James Talarico on the ballot. He is a Democrat who is a big fan of using the bible to push for more state influence in keeping drug prices low, funding education all while still being strong on the border.

Unsurprisingly, using the bible in Texas is very popular, letting him take a small poll lead. It is now the most expensive senate race in history; funded largely by Elon Musk pouring 190 million dollars into covering the wounds of the Republicans nominating scandal ridden Ken Paxton.

Similar stories are unfolding all over the nation in states such as: Alaska, Ohio, and Kansas. Ideally the Democrats want over 50 seats. Having 50 seats would mean that Vice president JD Vance will tiebreak votes meaning they need 4 more but this road is hard.

The Senate flipping would be a major Democratic success since they would be able to deny Trump's appointments to various positions in the cabinet and the Supreme Court. The latter is massively important to the future of American politics for decades. So if you support or oppose President Trump pay attention on Tuesday and see him claim victory or maybe crash out a little.



Image via Wikimedia Commons

How much does protection justify limiting a freedom?

Az Kim
Politics Editor

The shooting at Silver Rail Elementary school earlier this month marks the 449th mass shooting in the USA since the start of the year. It brings to light, once again, the decades old question of why mass shootings still happen, and the extent to which it is a consequence of government failure.

Having spent some time in the American school system, it's bizarre to learn that schooling in the UK doesn't include some sort of exposure to gun violence. UK schools have statutory safeguarding frameworks and the guidance on keeping children safe is legally binding. Why is it that the US has compulsory attendance laws with no legal duty of protection? The stark contrast begs an answer to what school shootings ask of the US, and highlights what the UK has already answered.

One could argue that the American government is failing tremendously to protect their most vulnerable. Gun violence remains the number one leading cause of death in children in the US — a direct consequence of the government's choice time and time again to protect an outdated amendment over its next generation. The core of the Second Amendment debate revolves around self-determination and the rights of individuals. District of Columbia v. Heller is the landmark case used to support the argument that individuals have the right to bear arms. The case underscores the view that any attempt to limit the right to bear arms undermines not only individual freedom, but also national historical tradition.

However, rights have limits. The argument for less restrictions on gun ownership frames protection as a clash of rights, but it's objectively more nuanced than that. It's also, at its core, not an issue isolated to the US, not because gun violence could become a threat in the UK, but because the issue at stake scrutinises what a country does, or does not, do to protect its children. In every scenario, access to a weapon means increased opportunity for casualties, whether that is a gun in the US or a knife in the UK. The question isn't whether legislative protections for these weapons are absolute, but how much protection of children justifies limiting them, and who gets to decide. The UK is a step ahead of the US; UK legislature makes the chain of responsibility clear, whereas US courts have held that police have no constitutional duty to protect individuals.

In the name of individual freedoms, adults can choose whether or not they utilise their Second Amendment rights, but children can't. They live with the choices of the adults around them whether or not that choice was made with their best interests in mind. The United States has the duty to uphold responsible sovereignty and guarantee welfare for its own citizens.

A responsibly sovereign nation does not simply govern, they govern in a way that recognises individuals as participants, which the US is abhorrently failing to do. If the human cost of maintaining the spirit and letter of the law isn't enough for government action, what is?

Broken Loans & Sinking Universities:
How to Fix Higher Education Finances?

Mariam Ahammouch
Contributor

Affordability. One word captures a major concern students face when considering university and pursuing a career that interests them. Getting the education they need can mean taking on substantial debt before their careers have even begun. Although UK government student loan repayments depend on income, graduates can face repayment obligations lasting decades. The cost of university also goes beyond the loan itself.

Students invest their time and give up potential earnings to pursue a qualification without a guarantee of securing the career they hoped for.

This raises an important question: how can we make higher education accessible without placing so much pressure on those seeking it?

Reducing that pressure could give students more freedom to focus on their studies and make the most of university life. But, tuition fees are only part of the challenge. Students also need to cover rent, food, and transport, which can mean balancing their degrees with part-time work. When paying the bills becomes the priority, students may feel compelled to take whichever job is available, rather than one that supports their career goals.

Internships can present another barrier when they are unpaid or do not cover the costs of taking part. Students should be able to choose opportunities based on what they can learn, not simply on what they can afford. Germany, for example, offers a useful starting point for rethinking how higher education is funded in the UK. Most public universities in Germany do not charge tuition fees for undergraduate degrees, although semester contributions and some exceptions do apply. Eligible students can receive BAföG, which generally combines a non-repayable grant with an interest free loan. This would also reduce the amount students ultimately have to repay.

However, living costs remain and not every student qualifies for support. The UK could draw on these principles without necessarily copying the entire system. The lesson is not that studying can be made cost-free, but that students do not have to bear such a large share of the cost themselves. A first approach would be to increase public funding for universities, allowing tuition fees to be reduced gradually while protecting teaching quality. Any reduction in fee income would need to be replaced with reliable funding rather than leaving universities to absorb the loss.

However, this alone wouldn't solve the problem of students' financial difficulties. Living costs such as rent, food, transport, and study materials remain. Programs such as means tested maintenance grants could support students from lower-income households. Therefore, grants rather than loans could be offered, which would take the pressure off of students. Germany's combination of grants and interest-free loans could provide inspiration.

Pursuing reforms for this would need consideration into the different student support systems in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. As for greater public funding, this would require decisions about taxation and spending priorities. On the other hand, greater public funding would place additional demands on government budgets. Higher education competes with other priorities, such as healthcare, schools, and housing. Critics also might question whether taxpayers who did not attend university should contribute more. To this, one may argue that universities can benefit wider society through research, skills, and the education of professionals. Fundings could be introduced gradually, with additional support initially directed towards students with the greatest financial need.

Imagine a student having to choose between an extra shift at work and preparing for a seminar. Here, more financial support could give these students more time to focus on their studies. It could also make it easier to participate in university activities and gain relevant work experience. Paid Internships could make career opportunities more accessible to students without financial support from their families. Other than being affordable, university should include students being able to participate fully in their education. In the end, the ideal goal would be for students to choose education pathways and careers based on their interests and abilities, rather than financial circumstances.



'Naughty Boys' Illness

Reuben Badman
Politics Editor

Growing up, at even the slightest mutter of their child having ADHD, parents across the country would often respond in shock. 'No, they are just naughty' is the common response. This was the attitude of ten years ago and it is safe to say attitudes have shifted.

On October the 9th an independent review into mental health conditions, ADHD and autism was released. The review concluded that neurodiversity-related conditions have been recognised and accepted widely, but as a result people are waiting on diagnostic assessment, leaving many struggling to access support.

"The review is stark, reducing wait times and getting support to people quicker, regardless of diagnosis, is a priority".

Questions arose whether this review has been a step in the right direction. There is a growing view that ADHD, Autism, and other mental health conditions have been over-diagnosed. That view is far from unanimous. Many believe diagnosis is helpful and, for some, life-changing. *Gair Rhydd* spoke to chemistry student Molly Turner, who was diagnosed with ADHD two years ago, and she echoed this exact point. Diagnosis allowed her "to let go of some of the guilt I felt over not being able to do things as easily as other people". Think ADHD, a UK-based referral service, reinforces this perspective, arguing "individuals with ADHD often experience low self-esteem" because of societal challenges.

Despite neurodevelopmental disorders like ADHD and autism becoming more accepted over the past 10 years, those who carry them still face a lifetime of setbacks, criticism and misunderstanding. Reflecting on their own experience, Molly echoed something similar: "I feel that ADHD has become more widely talked about and slightly destigmatised. However, it does feel stigmatised in academia (especially in STEM subjects)". She expands this, underlining the scrutiny she feels her condition is placed under when needing adjustment.

Not everyone sees the rise as progress. Some argue too many people are being diagnosed, straining stretched services further. Others worry a label becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Downing Street's rhetoric fuels that narrative. It keeps citing the one million young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), a third of whom it says have ADHD or autism.

The figure proves less than it implies. It counts how many NEET young people have the conditions. It cannot say whether diagnosis held them back, or whether years of waiting for support or living in a society that has treated neurodevelopmental conditions as a defect did. The second explanation is the catch-up period. For years, ADHD and autism went unseen, so a rise in assessments is what correcting that looks like. Dr Rachel Moseley of Bournemouth University says unrecorded diagnoses "largely reflect a catch-up effect". This is not over-diagnosis. It is a system finding the people it missed. The risk is that there is a culture that stops 'catching up'. Dr Moseley backs support for those who need it most, but warns against taking people with less visible differences less seriously.

Tied closely to the story of diagnosis is the story of women and girls, who have been left on the margins of recognition. Boys are diagnosed far more often than girls, but this does not mean girls have it less. It means they are less likely to be noticed. Dr Joanna Martin, a senior researcher at Cardiff University says:

"Women are less likely to receive such timely diagnoses, and this is linked to poor mental health outcomes".

Welsh and Politics student Grace Browne knew this first hand: ''Looking back through all my education, my difficulties were often brushed off as being disorganised, emotional, forgetful, or simply not trying hard enough". Unless women and girls inconvenience the room, too often, their struggles and experiences are forgotten.

The review is right. Diagnoses have risen and support must reach those who need it most. But it lands in a culture quick to doubt the value of a label. If need is judged by who is most severely affected, are we returning to the 'troubled, naughty boy' era, where only the most visible are acknowledged? If so, girls who cope quietly may be missed again. Getting help to people faster is only progress if it reaches everyone who needs it.

A Reform Wales Refresh

Katherine Wright
Contributor

After Dan Thomas' resignation as the Wales Reform leader, Nigel Farage has replaced him with someone he "trusts", Helen Jenner. All eyes are on the Reform party after the 'bump in the road' that has damaged their reputation as the opposition party in the Senned government.

At the start of 2026 Reform set out to support schools, the NHS, cut taxes and put money into pockets, as well arguing they would put Welsh people first through the removal of the status as a 'Nation of Sanctuary'. Reform states they want to find a new direction rooted in common sense and respect for the people who keep this country running. Reform's focus is on scrapping international aid to try and build the backbone of the country through the reinvestment of this money. This comes after the Labour government arguably removed any kind of optimism from the country by failing to meet the priorities of Wales and the Senedd. As a result, Reform are promising to remove migrant hotels in an attempt to regain trust and to "protect Welsh communities".

This comes with the new leader of the Reform party, Helen Jenner, who sets out to make Wales "understand what we stand for and don't turn away from us thinking we're a party that stands for radical things". While in her teen years, Jenner was recognised as a rebel with her pink hair, can she really be reliable to create change as the new leader with her rebellious reputation? Her previous occupations include being the deputy to Reform UK in April and becoming a member of the Senedd for Bangor Conwy Mon at Welsh Parliament elections in May. Her ambitions weren't always directed toward politics, her father majorly influenced her career path by explaining the importance of the European Union, which gave her the "sudden thought" to "actually care about politics now".

Nigel Farage, co-founder of Reform UK, has stated that Jenner is a "determined campaigner" and will do a "very good job", in order to bring stability to Wales and the political party. Farage's optimism seems to be a sense of hope for Reform supporters after the turbulent start to the year with Dan Thomas' arrest on suspicion of assault. Despite being released without charge, Thomas has stepped down from his position as leader of the Reform Party in the Senedd, allowing for a fresh start for the party.

Reform UK, however, have faced serious backlash from the Welsh public as people doubt them and their stability. Their recent clash with Plaid over the burka ban has caused a lot of opposition from the Muslim community and the Welsh public for what some may call racist behavior. This links to Reform's manifesto for a harder line on immigration, including deporting all illegal migrants from the UK. Their 'Five Year Emergency plan' will establish a UK Deportation Command to identify and deport those they consider 'illegal'.

"They argue this ensures the Welsh people are 'put first'".

The backlashes, after only a month of Jenner being in charge, raise doubts on the hero she will really be for Reform in Wales.

How India's Exam Scandal Proved Modi isn't Invincible

Carlos Zayas
Politics Editor

India has one of the hardest exam systems in the world. Last year, 20,000,000 students sat the NEET-UG medical exams, fighting over 60,000 undergraduate public university places. Failing to get a good score on your NEET exam can leave you unable to study medicine in India, a potentially life ruining situation.

Earlier this year, after the exams had been taken, it was revealed that some of the questions had been leaked before the exam day, the exams were recalled and students were told they would have to resit. The fallout of that decision would lead to a number of students tragically taking their lives, unable to face the thought of going through the exam process again. Systemic corruption in the Indian education system was to blame, and the ensuing protests would induce an unprecedented government U-turn, a repressive state crackdown, and the need for the judiciary to step in to protect student voices.

The controversy surrounding the exams started in May of 2026. It was revealed by a number of investigations that some WhatsApp and Telegram channels linked to private tutoring groups had included real exam questions in their preparation material weeks ahead of the exam release date. This resulted in an unusual increase in students with perfect or near perfect marks. Students who had access to these private tutoring groups gained an unfair advantage over their peers, which resulted in them having better access to potentially life changing opportunities. However, the National Testing Agency's decision to recall exams and make students resit led to a tragic spike in student suicides.

What followed was a wave of student protests, the results of which are completely without precedent in modern Indian politics. The social media savvy Cockroach Janta Party was able to effectively threaten the Executive enough to force the education minister to resign and take responsibility for the moral and organisational failings in the examination process. This is the first time a senior member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cabinet has resigned due to public pressure.

However, the government would try and make sure that was the last concession it was forced to make to the protesters.

As student groups attempted to organise the 'Chalo Sansad' march towards Parliament, they were met with swift and harsh government repression. Heavy-duty riot barricades were installed, tear gas was fired and lathi charges — a colonial-era tactic used to break protests using large bamboo staffs — were used extensively against the protesters. Additionally, police filed hundreds of criminal cases against peaceful student protesters, potentially leaving their lives permanently marked with criminal records that would severely impact their future opportunities. This was a deliberate government scheme to scare students into silence.

Eventually, India's Supreme court stepped in to protect students' right to protest, and rejected the police's heavy-handed suppression tactics both physically and legally. The court ruled that peaceful protests, such as what the students were engaging in, did not merit such violent police reactions. The court went on to demand that police dismiss charges against young, non-violent student protesters, protecting their potential medical careers from being permanently ruined by a criminal record.

These student protests show us that despite concerns about the health of the world's largest democracy, civil society is still able to make the government act when enough pressure is exerted. The protests managed to force the government into doing a wholesale overhaul of their examination security measures, had the education minister stand down and apologise, and proved the judicial system is still strong enough to decisively stand up to the Executive.

Could Reform's Scandals Drive Voters to The Tories?

Barney Sturt-Bennett
Politics Editor

To those who say unite the right, we are not uniting with that." These were Kemi Badenoch's words to Tory party members at their conference just a couple of weeks ago. She was commenting on the suggestion, made by some within her party, that the Conservatives should ally themselves with Nigel Farage's Reform.

Since then, we've seen reporting from ITV news that has revealed the widespread extent of virulent racism, sexism, and chauvinism within the right-of-right wing party. Undercover reporters successfully captured Reform councillors, candidates, and members making disgusting comments on hidden cameras. This being revealed just the month after Channel 4 reporters recorded Nigel Farage celebrating illicit foreign donations in a pub garden.

Reform's reported culture of bigotry, alleged financial misconduct, and recent flirtations with the American-style evangelical right are topics of constant discussion. Firstly, because they don't seem to have much impact on the beliefs of Reform's core supporters. Secondly, because they force a re-evaluation of Reform's right-wing rivals: The Conservative Party.

"Scandal after scandal prove that Badenoch was right to steer clear of Reform, the Conservative's greatest selling point is their legacy".

The Conservative party is one of the most successful election-winning machines in the history of Western democracy. A flirtation with the allegation mired Reform could go a long way to undermine that record with traditional, moderate, Tory voters. 14 years of perceived disaster and incompetence have also undermined that record, but Badenoch can't fix that now.

Farage's Reform party is a frightening concept for many. The two historically major parties see this.

At Prime Minister's Questions Andy Burnham congratulated Badenoch for her conference speech, adding his voice to hers as they criticise the political culture that Reform has given rise to. In response to the ITV undercover investigation Burnham commented that we have "allowed a poison into our politics" and implored the Reform party to take action against the members caught in the report.

Unity in the political mainstream is good, the argument for consensus goes, certain shared values are essential for 'good-faith' debate.

"The unique danger of Reform to these parties has been to disrupt political norms;"

a pursuit of shared values could allow the mainstream to build back to that normal.

Reform's rhetoric and behaviour risks forcing public perception of the Conservative Party towards one of professionalism and moderacy by comparison. After austerity, Brexit, Covid, and Truss many on the left find it easy to point at the Tories and say, 'finally, they're gone.'

Now, the conduct of Reform forces voices on the left to root for the Conservatives to win back the right-wing vote. The situation for right-wing moderates is more severe.

Young people, many being students, spend their entire lives aware of politics under successive Tory governments.

"Their ideas of the Tory party are built on that memory:"

Brexit stripped this generation of opportunities, Covid of experiences, Tories held parties in Downing Street while hospital wards filled. The Conservative government's legacy is one of disaster for these young people.

Now, Conservatives pose the only meaningful alternative, to right-wing voters, to a party mired in controversy surrounding a culture of bigotry and accusations of misconduct.

Joshua Tandy on *Llais Rhydd*

Oskar Hyams & Alex Portman Ross
Head of Politics & Politics Editor

Joshua Tandy, our Students' Union President, recently sat down with *Llais Rhydd* to discuss all things YOLO, timetabling and tackling sexual violence.

Outlining his flagship policy goal, Tandy put emphasis on his "three pronged approach" to address the sexual violence epidemic. This consists of lobbying both the Senedd and Westminster Parliament, increasing awareness around Report and Support and promoting the Lets Talk Consent campaign.

Tandy contacting Welsh Politicians about *Time to Act's* petition (which calls for a duty from Universties to protect students from sexual violence) is a strong start. However, with the petition running out of time to secure a debate, it's imperative that the leader of our student community is working towards solid policy guarantees from the government alongside this work.

Alongside this, staff and students are similarly anxious about the lack of assurances from the University on the Campus Futures scheme. *Gair Rhydd* highlighted the University's historic failures surrounding campus 'improvements'. This included a case of post graduates being forced out of their offices with little to no notice and the proposed restructuring of the ASSL.

Looking forward, Tandy wants a genuine "two-way conversation". To provide the student side of this he wants "students reaching out about the issues they are feeling." *Gair Rhydd* worries the onus is being placed on students who already have so many commitments.

However, many may have been left questioning the Union's commitment to a "two-way conversation" following the YOLO queue saga. The President was quick to clarify their communications strategy "needs to be reviewed" after the official Y Plas account was accused of debating and unfollowing students for disagreeing with them in their comment section.

He also made clear that neither the Sabbatical Officers nor the student community had been directly consulted on the introduction of entry fees for YOLO. He stated "operational… things don't necessarily always cross over to the Sabbs side" which is incredibly worrying considering the importance he placed upon the union "living by student feedback".

Finally, *Gair Rhydd* turned to the biggest crisis since Tandy took office, timetable delays.

"Tandy confessed the SU knew the University wasn't "going to meet the deadline" in the summer and with students left in the dark Tandy admitted the team "needed to do better"

but also said "sometimes [it's] just hard to find the time to write the post". *Gair Rhydd* questioned this considering 121 other instagram posts from the SU team were uploaded before any mention of timetabling.

As part of his retort, Tandy suggested the Union "shouldn't have to be the ones to be able to say, hey, your timetables are gonna be late." If this isn't in the purview of our union president what is?

It is undeniable that Tandy is an effective communicator and this is evidenced by his concrete base of support within the student community. Both Tandy and VP Undergraduate are also working tirelessly to tackle sexual violence on campus. However, his image is dented by his lack of influence on the University over timetabling and lack of influence over the Union on issues like YOLO pricing.

"With split opinion among students, the nuance is key, to hear the full story listen on Llais Rhydd."



From Gasfields to Graduates: *Britain's Energy Crossroads*

Hugo Keenan
News Editor

Green was the light given to the Jackdaw gasfield in Westminster this October. Green, too, was the cause around which environmental opposition rallied. To critics, the approval marks a retreat from Labour's pledges to draw a line under new North Sea licences upon their election in 2024. To ministers it reflects a less comfortable reality: geopolitical uncertainty is now more than ever defining the domestic policy agenda, placing energy security at the top in a development that could create deep divisions.

For students and graduates leaving university to an uncertain economy, the debate is no longer simply about climate targets. It's about living costs, employment, and the kind of energy system Britain must build to balance two increasingly competing priorities: sustainability and security.

Just six years ago, the Climate Change Act was amended, raising ambitions from an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 to 'net zero' by the same year. The journey toward renewables and reduction of carbon emissions in the UK seemed more emphatic than ever.

This feeling continued into 2024 when Labour entered government with promises of a clean energy revolution, drawing a clear distinction between itself and successive Conservative administrations on new North Sea licences. However, the most recent Jackdaw development suggests the government's position on net zero has softened, echoing U-turn criticisms reminiscent of the preceding government.

What's worth noting is the fact that Labour is not governing in the same international environment in which it campaigned. It's true that the government changed in 2024, but so too did the global landscape. Few developments have altered the picture more than the conflict in Iran and the resulting loss of certainty across global energy markets. For governments like ours heavily reliant on steady supplies of oil and gas, energy security has rapidly emerged as a strategic concern, propelling it towards the top of the political agenda in the UK.

The International Monetary Fund has warned that the ongoing conflict between Iran and the US threatens global inflation, as energy prices are set to continue rising. With global markets increasingly exposed to geopolitical shocks, ministers in the UK appear unwilling to assume the political risk associated with greater reliance on foreign supply while domestic alternatives remain available to the North. After all, the government of the day is judged not only on emissions targets but also on household bills, economic stability and energy resilience. Perhaps the political cost of approving Jackdaw was simply calculated to be lower than the economic and societal cost of rejecting it, which would leave greater exposure to international market volatility.

"For students and recent graduates, the Jackdaw decision translates into a unique emerging policy dilemma that hasn't before been encountered

Many are instinctively supportive of ambitious climate action having witnessed the environmental consequences of decades of political inaction. This is reflected in the extensive polling which points to strong support for climate action among younger voters. Yet young people are simultaneously confronting high living costs, housing pressures and an increasingly competitive graduate job market. The challenge facing policymakers reflects this tension: how to maintain the hard fought momentum towards net zero while ensuring the economic conditions required for growth, investment and financial security are not undermined in the process.

What remains is that the controversy surrounding Jackdaw is ultimately about more than gas. It is a test of whether Britain's climate ambitions can withstand the pressures of an increasingly unstable world in which we've bought into. Labour entered government promising environmental transformation; two years later, it finds itself balancing that ambition against concerns over energy security, economic resilience and living standards for its young people.

As today's students prepare to enter the workforce, that balancing act may prove one of the defining political challenges of their generation.

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Wales on the Verge of World Cup Qualification *after Victory over Albania*

Rosa Simkin
Staff Writer

Wales moved a step closer to a first ever Women's Football World Cup after achieving a convincing 4-0 aggregate victory over Albania in the semi-finals of the European play-offs.

Rhian Wilkinson's side entered the two-legged tie ranked 31st in the world, thirty-seven places above Albania, but with a heavily depleted squad. Nine players were unavailable through injury, with six uncapped players being included as Wales looked to continue the momentum built since reaching their first major tournament, the UEFA Women's Euro 2025.

"Wales Edge Difficult First Leg"

The first leg, held at Stadiumi Loro Boriçi, proved far less comfortable than the rankings suggested, with Wales returning from Albania with a narrow 1-0 advantage.

The only goal arrived after 21 minutes, when Ezmiralda Franja turned Lily Woodham's corner into her own net.

Wales had over 55% of possession and nine attempts, but managed only three on target: a sum equalled by their hosts. Albania also struck the post, while Megi Doci had a goal ruled out as offside.

Wilkinson's options were limited with Ella Powell, Ffion Morgan and Liverpool midfielder Ceri Holland amongst those unavailable, and leading goalscorer Hannah Cain starting on the bench.

Nevertheless, Wales found a way to win, extending their soon-to-be record-unbeaten run, equalling the previous national best of nine matches without defeat, set between November 2013 and August 2014.

"Wales Turn on Style"

Any concerns from the opening encounter disappeared in the second leg as Wales produced a dominant performance in front of a record 4,837 crowd at Parc y Scarlets.

Centre-back Mayzee Davies opened the scoring after 34 minutes, heading home her first senior professional goal. Elise Hughes doubled the advantage five minutes after half-time before Hannah Cain completed the 3-0 victory with a close-range finish in the 62nd minute.

Wales controlled 62.2% of possession and registered seventeen shots, seven on target, while limiting Albania to just two attempts on goal.

"What you saw today was a completely different Wales, and we need to see more of that team", Wilkinson told BBC Sport Wales.

"We're finding ways on hard days to win, Albania was a hard day. On days like this when it comes together you're seeing a level of football that's fun to watch and fun to see."

Wilkinson also praised those who had stepped up amid Wales' injury problems.

"We need depth in Wales, we had nine injuries. This is what we want to see, when there's an opportunity through injury, the youngsters coming in and giving me a headache."

For Mayzee Davies, her landmark goal made the occasion even more memorable. "It's amazing, it's my first professional goal", Davies told BBC Sport Wales; "to get it for my country is honestly amazing".

Qualifying began with 53 European nations competing in a Nations-League style format, with League A group winners Denmark, France, Germany and Spain achieving qualification.

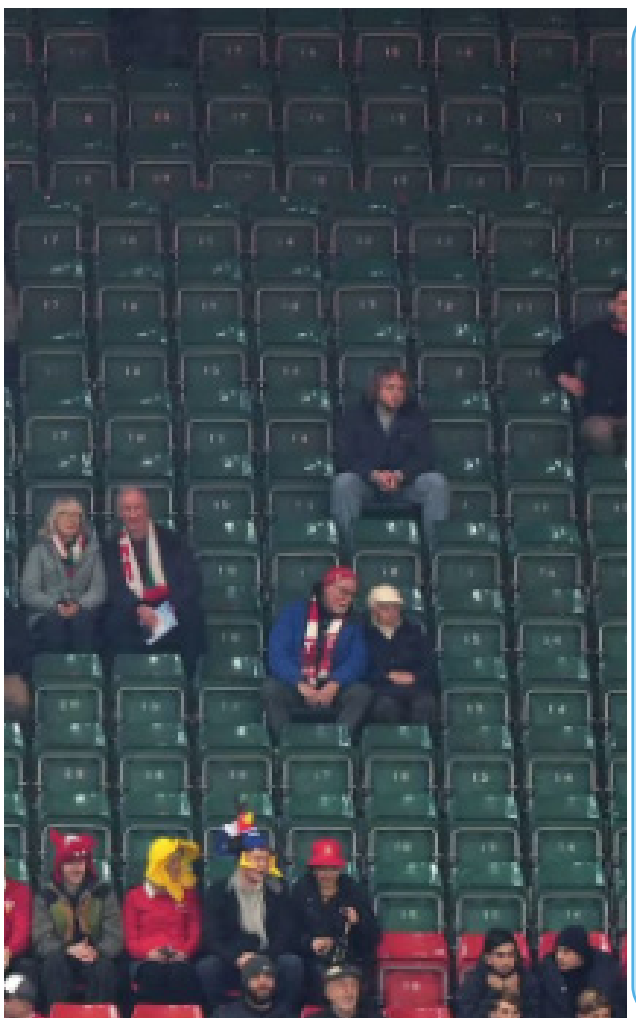
"How does World Cup Qualification work?"

With those four places secured, the remaining field was whittled down to 32 teams for the European play-offs. The play-offs consist of two knockout rounds, with each tie contested over two legs.

Following their victory over Albania, next up is a reunion with former Wales manager Gemma Grainger, who departed in 2024 to take charge of Norway. The first leg is at Cardiff City Stadium on Tuesday 1st December.

Victory over the two legs would be historic, although not necessarily enough to guarantee a World Cup place: seven of the eight play-off final winners qualify directly for next summer's tournament in Brazil, with the lowest-ranked winner from the qualifying group stage entering the inter-confederation play-offs.





Growing Calls for WRU Bosses *Resignation*

Kieran Miller
Sports Editor

Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) bosses face growing calls to resign after the Union confirms losses of £18 million this financial year—more than double last year's £7.2 million.

The recent tale of Welsh rugby has been one of empty seats, mismanagement, and players drifting over to England. With the Autumn Internationals right around the corner, the WRU have confirmed that they have suffered a loss of £18m this financial year — an increase of 150% compared with last year's losses of £7.2m. The Union has also confirmed that they expect next year's losses to be around the same figure.

Supporters have already called for the board to resign, citing poor on-field performances, mismanagement, and plans to cut one of Wales' four regional sides. The Union says the losses strengthen the case for reducing the number of regions, arguing that the current model is unsustainable. However, Swansea Council leader, Rob Stuart, challenged that view in an interview with Radio Wales Breakfast, with Swansea's Ospreys currently one of the sides facing the cut:

"I'm really clear on what needs to be done, the chief executive [Abi Tierney] and the board need to go. They've completely mismanaged the game in Wales."

"What we need though is certainty. We've got enough quality players in Wales to sustain four sides. We've got enough income going into the WRU to sustain four sides. They just need to manage it better."

The scale of the WRU's financial strain is clear from its £83m in operating costs, including £20m spent on performance rugby and £4m allocated to the community game. A further £28m went to Wales' four professional clubs. Cardiff Rugby, owned by the governing body, recorded a £1.2m loss that year, adding to the pressure on Welsh rugby's finances.

Ironically, these figures come just five months after chief financial and operating officer, Gavin Marshall, described the union's finances as being in a "pretty good position". Marshall proceeded to explain, following the announcement of next year's predicted figures, how "[it] can't go on like this". However for fans, these words will mean very little, with actions speaking louder than words.

This year's losses, along with similar losses predicted for next year, have led many to question whether those in charge are qualified and whether the Union's decisions and governance are sound.

One factor behind Wales' recent on-field decline has been the weakness of its player-development pipeline. Many of the country's top players have retired, and there has been no one ready to fill the gaps in the squad. Welsh rugby now faces serious risks: financial strain, challenges in schools, grassroots clubs folding and schools selling pitches. With fewer students playing and the sport's popularity declining in Wales, the WRU has a great deal of work to do.

Heading into the Autumn Internationals, Wales face difficult opposition to kick off the series against Japan, with Wales coach Steve Tandy already in the headlines over big calls he's expected to make in regards to his squad selection with the World Cup right around the corner.

There is no doubt that these losses and disappointing announcements will weigh on Welsh fans during the next campaign. Tandy is expected to face questions about the issue and his views on the WRU leadership. The Union will hope that negative press and pressure from fans can be eclipsed by a strong run of results.

Nations Championship 2026:

is Wales Ready for Redemption?

Oliver Hedley-Lewis
Sport Editor

Despite a disappointing last few years, is it nearly time for Wales to return to the top flight of international rugby? There certainly have been glimmers of hope.

Just two years ago, Welsh rugby was in its darkest hour following a 24-21 loss to Italy at a home game in March, signing off the 2024 Six Nations campaign with a total whitewash. Matters were not helped after a loss of 24-19 in the Autumn Internationals against Fiji.

Hopes were lifted in the 2025 Autumn Internationals when Wales managed to claim their first home victory in two years in the fixture against Japan. Sadly, the win against Japan was overshadowed, somewhat, by tough defeats against New Zealand (52-26), and South Africa (73-0), with the latter marking the first time Wales were pointless at home since 1967.

A glimmer of hope shone through at the most recent Six Nations championship, when Wales was able to put in some strong performances, particularly against Scotland and Italy.

Despite losing against Scotland 23-26, Welsh dominance in the first half boosted confidence amongst fans and players alike.

The fixture against Italy was a different story, with Wales avoiding a second Six Nations whitewash after securing a 31-17 win against the Azzurri.

Wales looked to capitalise on this momentum heading into the first stint of the inaugural Nations Championship, where they took a 39-24 win against Fiji and a close 33-31 win against a touring Barbarians side before the Nations Championship began.

Unfortunately, this was as far as their momentum would carry them.

Wales' subsequent games in the Nations Championship featured a 31-21 loss against Argentina and another scoreless 43-0 loss against the South Africa Springboks.

Appointed in September 2025, it would seem as though Steve Tandy has had a tough start to his stint as Head Coach. However, faced with a relatively young squad and uncertainty surrounding the WRU's structure and funding, it is likely no surprise that Wales are finding their feet again ahead of the 2027 Rugby World Cup (RWC).

Tandy's experimentation is clear in his recently announced 39-man squad for the second phase of the Nations Championship, with every Welsh game being played at home.

Dewi Lake retains his captaincy for the upcoming campaign following strong performances in international tests and Gloucester, for which he also captains.

One of the most recognisable names in rugby, Louis Rees-Zammit remains a player to watch after a brief 18 month stint at the NFL, becoming a notable attacking threat alongside strong performances for Bristol Bears, scoring four tries in three appearances.

After an injury spell, Dafydd Jenkins is also back. He returns to the forwards alongside Kane James, a promising young talent and fellow Exeter Chief who earned his first cap against Argentina in July.

Alongside a number of recalls, Tandy has announced three uncapped players in his squad.

Che Hope has been described by Tandy as a "really exciting talent" after his recent performances for the Dragons. With scrumhalf Kieran Hardy out with a knee-injury, it's possible that Hope will fill in the void.

Aneurin Owen is the second Dragons player who is looking to earn their first cap after being called up by Warren Gatland in 2021. Owen looks to be a notable addition to the team as Tandy looks to find Wales' best options for a centre partnership for the 2027 RWC.

The final uncapped player in the squad is 24 year old Rhys Barratt from Cardiff Rugby. Named as Cardiff Rugby's breakthrough player of the season in May 2025, Barratt has earned his first call-up for the international team.

Tandy's squad selection also features some losses, most notable of which being Macs Page and Olly Cracknell.

While Tandy's recent squad announcement is perhaps a departure from what was expected, it also acts as an exciting indicator that the Wales coach is willing to experiment and evolve to build strength and depth in the lead up to the 2027 RWC. There is certainly potential in the young Welsh side and it will be particularly interesting to see what Tandy and the team can do in the next few fixtures.

Wales Endure Heavy Defeats in First Women's

Rugby League World Cup Appearance

Kathryn Rees
Contributor

In a milestone for Welsh sport, the women's rugby league side have made their first appearance at a World Cup. However, drawn into a group with England, Samoa and Australia, it would certainly not be an easy task.

Wales started against England at HBF Park in Perth, Australia, on Saturday 17th October. However, they were beaten 70-6 by an England side determined to make a strong start to the tournament. England's attacking quality proved difficult to go up against, with Connie Boyd scoring a hat-trick and Anna Davies also managing three tries. Amelia Brown produced one of the standout moments of the match, running 109 metres to score a try. Although the score was disappointing for Wales, the team showed determination against an internationally experienced opposition. England's strength and ability to run through gaps in defence ultimately proved too much, leaving Wales with a difficult task ahead in their next group fixture.

Their second match, against Samoa on Friday 23rd October, brought further disappointment. Wales suffered a 76-0 defeat at CommBank Stadium in Sydney, as Samoa delivered a powerful attacking performance. Wales started well and created several early and smart opportunities, but they were unable to break through Samoa's strong defence. Samoa started scoring quickly in the ninth minute through Laikha Clarke and continued to dominate as the match progressed. Seven first half tries gave Samoa a 40-0 lead at the break, before they added another seven tries in the second half. The result was particularly significant for Samoa, as their 76 points set a record for the women's international rugby league team.

"The two defeats highlight the challenges Wales have faced"

as they compete against some of the strongest teams in the sport. While stating this, some have thought it unfair that Wales have been put into their first matches with these teams, but nothing has been done about it. However, Wales' opponents have demonstrated impressive attacking ability, while the Welsh team have struggled to turn their opportunities into points and maintain defensive consistency throughout the matches. Despite this, the experience of competing at a World Cup has been said to be valuable for the Welsh players. Facing top-level international opposition offers an opportunity to identify the teams' areas for improvement, develop greater confidence and gain experience that may benefit them in their future competitions. For a squad making its first appearance at this level, the tournament represents a very valid and important step in the development of women's rugby league in Wales.

"These defeats do not mean that Wales' capmaign is over yet,"

with Australia next on the schedule on Sunday 1st November. This match will hopefully provide another test against one of the leading nations in the women's game. Wales will need to remain organised in defence, improve their handling and make the most of any scoring opportunities if they are to put up more of a fight for a chance of winning. For Welsh supporters, these results have been difficult to accept, but the team's participation in the tournament remains a significant achievement. Their remaining fixture offers another chance to demonstrate resilience and gain experience on the international stage. Their challenge will be to learn from their defeats, improve for the future and continue raising the profile of women's rugby league across Wales.

From the First Whistle to the Last Dance:

A Winning Day with CULC

Bella Urdaneta
Contributor

8AM. Alarm off. Nerves on. Checklist ready. It was the first match of the season for Cardiff University Women's Lacrosse 2s, and as captain, I was determined to have everything under control. Sticks? Check. Water? Check. Team? Check. Shoes? Sitting by the front door, apparently enjoying a day off.

With my mind occupied on getting everyone to Llanrumney and gathering all the essential necessities for the game, I was feeling rather pleased with myself that everything was going so smoothly. That was until I arrived at the pitch and realised I had forgotten my own shoes. Cue flatmate hero mode: spending £15 on emergency insurance for thirty minutes came in handy as she could collect those lazy shoes while I attempted to warm up the team. Nothing quite prepares you for the reality of Crocs on wet AstroTurf…absolutely would not recommend.

Thankfully, the rest of the team had their act together. Warm up done, red ribbons in place and sticks in hand, we stepped onto the pitch ready to conquer the match.

We needed a strong result to place us at the top of the league, even with the fact that we were facing our own clubmates, the wonderful 3s. Before kick-off, I reminded the girls to trust one another, and above all, to not be scared and just try to fight for every ball. We improve by trying, and I was already proud of every single one of them, win or lose.

The first quarter brought confidence, goals were flying in, and we were having fun. It's worth mentioning that a beloved teammate, determined to score, somehow tripped over herself and landed flat on the ground — also would not recommend. Safe to say that that particular attempt did not end in a goal.

The second quarter brought some beautiful lacrosse, including a ladder of passes from midfield into attack. Our defense and goalkeeper kept Cardiff 3s from scoring, even though they were persistent and amazing for their first ever match as a brand new team.

By the second half, nerves had disappeared. I encouraged the girls to experiment, and one produced an outrageous goal with her back to the goal. After a few goals from myself and my great teammates, we finished with a 28-0 victory, putting us top of the league for the opening round.

With spirits running high, the score wasn't what made me the proudest. It was watching the girls grow in confidence, encourage one another and trust their teammates. Captaincy feels easy this way.

Back in the changing room, we enjoyed complimentary Poppi drinks from one of our VCs and shared how amazing that first match was. Naturally, the captain's footwear disaster received attention, gaining my DOTD. Cardiff 1s and the men's team had also won, giving the entire club plenty to celebrate.

CULC certainly knows how to have a good time. The women's 1s, 2s, and 3s joined the men's team for an enormous social. Seniors became princesses, freshers became peas, and mixed teams travelled up and down Cathays completing challenges, including a human pyramid that was every bit as hilarious and structurally questionable as it sounds.



By the time we reached Misfits, the weather was miserable, but the rain wasn't stopping us. We danced the night away, celebrating three winning teams and a society where friendships extend far beyond the pitch. The hangover was absolutely worth it.

YOLO may have missed us this time, but there's always next Wednesday. From the first whistle to the last dance, this is exactly why I love being a part of CULC.

INSIDE IMG: A JOMEC FC *Matchday*

Tom Watkins
Contributor

It was an early 11 AM kick-off for the two JOMEC teams as they prepared to battle for their first three points of stage one of the 7-a-side IMG season. In stage one, teams are placed at random into groups to determine their ability, which determines their league for stage two: the Championship or the Premiership.

With the teams gathering at 10:45 AM at Talybont North for pre-match training, each side was summing up their opposition, intent on securing the win.

The JOMEC teams, representing the School of Journalism, Media and Culture, were split into 1s and 2s. The 1s were taking on BarcaLawna, representing Law, whilst the 2s prepared for MENA United, Cardiff's Middle Eastern and North African Society.

JOMEC 1s immediately faced some trouble after both balls were discovered to have punctures, hence causing some last minute drills with the 2s before kick-off. Despite this setback, the boys were still raring to go.

From kickoff, BarcaLawna seemed to be on the back foot, with JOMEC 1s dominating possession in the middle of the park, and any faint hint of a counterattack easily soaked up by the 1s' powerful defence.

Soon, the JOMEC squad were rewarded for their dominance and constant attacking threat when midfielder, Jude Dray, thundered the ball into the back of the BarcaLawna net midway through the first half.

The 1s were relentless, spectators would assume it was only a matter of minutes before they doubled their advantage. However, the BarcaLawna defence held strong, and at half time, JOMEC's lead remained 1-0.

The second half saw a revived BarcaLawna side, with the momentum shifting in their favour. Long balls over the JOMEC midfield caused trouble, and after constant pressure, the trailing side finally equalised with a thunderous shot into the top left corner.

With both teams frustrating each other throughout the second half, JOMEC 1s managed to survive the late BarcaLawna rejuvenation to gain a well-deserved point.

On the other pitch, the JOMEC 2s were taking on MENA United in what would be another close game.

With the first half deadlocked, it seemed a scoreless affair was a strong possibility. However, a late strike from Jack Wigglesworth would steal the three points for JOMEC, sending supporters into joyous delirium.

Speaking to Wigglesworth after the game, he talked Gair Rhydd through his goal: "after many failed attempts, I finally managed to get my team a goal. It was a great ball from the right wing, which I let roll across my body to hit with my weak foot into the far right corner".

Wigglesworth described the match as "tense", but he was "relieved to secure three points for the team" and to "bag [his] first goal of the season".

It was a great first match for both the JOMEC squads, and they surely will have gained some confidence ready for the season ahead. For neutrals, this chilly Wednesday morning offered two entertaining, end-to-end games, signalling a promising start to the IMG season at Cardiff University.

Next week, JOMEC 1s take on Music FC, who sit at the bottom of Group A, whilst the 2s will battle ISOC FC in Group C; if the first two games were anything to go by, then it's clear that both neutrals and players alike will be in for a treat.



A Cardiff Crisis?

Cole Davies
Contributor

The last few years for the Cardiff City FC, Bluebirds, have been tough for the fans, with lackluster performances and suffering relegation in the 2024/25 season. However, Cardiff was given a bright new start under Brian Barry-Murphy; they not only survived the infamously dreaded league one, but placed second, securing their promotion back to the championship immediately, and leaving fans optimistic for new beginnings under a promising young manager.

Whilst the season hasn't begun the way the club would've hoped, sitting at 19th after eleven games, does the table truly reflect the ability of this squad?

The season began with the heavily anticipated Welsh Derby between Cardiff City and the box office Wrexham, who had a fantastic season the year prior finishing just outside the playoff positions; Cardiff surely knew this would be no easy task. After suffering early into the match, conceding a goal from ex-Cardiff striker Kieffer Moore, the Bluebirds managed to hang on and find form, playing the attractive football they were known for back in league one. It was anybody's boxing match. However, with Wrexham seemingly about to claim bragging rights, in the dying moments of the game, Rubin Colwill stepped up and equalised with a superb free kick into the top left corner, sending fans into a frenzy. The game ended 1-1.

"After proving a point against 'Disney FC',"

fans believed they would carry on with this momentum — unfortunately, this was not the case.

Their following fixture proved that their style of play could result in goals, taking the lead twice against Derby with goals from Cian Ashford and Yousef Salech. However they were clearly lacking defensively, conceding every time they scored, finishing at 2-2. A similar story could be seen in their game against Sheffield: scoring two, yet conceding yet again. This raised concerns over their back line and performance under pressure. After the game, a deflated Barry-Murphy claimed his newly promoted side "should have won", that they were the better team, and that it was Cardiff who threw the game away.

Unfortunately, Cardiff City had a run of poor results following this statement, with two losses and two draws throughout September. Thankfully, the Bluebirds took all three points against Charlton Athletic in a dominant 3-1 win, proving that the squad still had the ability to play the expansive, possession-based football the coach had envisioned.



Heading into the international break, Cardiff City would be sure to reflect on recent games and look to silence their constant critics.

Returning to championship football, Cardiff suffered another tough defeat in a close match against Blackburn Rovers, with Callum pulling one back in the second half, yet amounting to nothing.

With pressure mounting, Cardiff took on Watford, another team struggling in the lower ends of the table, a game the Bluebirds could not afford to lose. While Cardiff was expected to gain all three points, no fan would've predicted the thrashing that took place on 13th October at Cardiff City Stadium. A brace by Moylan, a precise finish into the corner by Tanner, and a lucky own goal by Watford's Pollock allowed the Bluebirds to head into the second half with a comfortable 4-0 lead. The game finished at 5-1; by far the best performance we've seen from Barry-Murphy's side, proving that the talent and ability is there, the team simply needs to find consistency.

Whilst their most recent result was another draw, 2-2 to Middlesbrough, it proved that they could get a result against any team in the division whilst playing the football they want to play. Do not write them off just yet!

Is Cardiff up to the Task of Hosting the *Biggest Fight in British Boxing History?*

Gracie Bradley
Contributor

The long-awaited heavyweight clash between Tyson Fury and Anthony Joshua takes place in December at Cardiff's Principality Stadium; the two titans of British boxing are ready for the night, but is Cardiff?

Broadcasting giant, Netflix, originally eyed up New York to stage the fight, however, due to Anthony Joshua's contract agreements of only fighting in the UK, the fight was transferred to the other side of the pond, finally taking place in Cardiff. New York to Cardiff is a vast change; both fans and those who work within the boxing industry struggle to believe that the small city is able to host such an important, exciting event. When asked about the choice of location at the press conference, event organiser Turki Alalshihk said:

"I wanted this fight to be in Wembley… In the end, Wales delivered and the fight is still in the UK. It's the country of Ryan Giggs, let's do it!"



Cardiff's Principality Stadium hosts up to 80,000 fans, the stadium has been home to all sorts of events, including: sports matches, Hyrox events and concerts. The greatly successful and talented artist, Taylor Swift, hosted a one-night show at the stadium in 2024, which sold out from thousands of Swifties; so if this could happen without a flaw, what is stopping people from believing Cardiff can host?

We know the stadium is a go, but what else? Cardiff's transportation system holds a vast amount of opportunities of great value to its residents and visitors, including multiple train stations, taxi services and bus routes that stem across the whole city. When under pressure due to big events, delays and traffic seem to increase and become an issue, but this is not uncommon and happens to every city. Many would also argue that Cardiff is very much walkable — with the right shoes and weather!

Locals of Cardiff have spoken out about the event, and there appears to be a mixed reaction, with many saying that the fans and supporters of boxing are unwelcome in Cardiff due to stereotypical actions and behaviour. They believe that the fight will bring antisocial attitudes and create an unsafe environment for the many students and young people that usually inhabit the city on late nights. Others welcome the event, believing that it will bring a boost of tourism and economic activity to the city, supporting local businesses and shining a spotlight on what Cardiff has to offer.

The Principality Stadium has hosted many events, artists and celebrations for years. London seems to always be a favourite for important moments, but the humble other option of Cardiff brings forward such opportunity, and the welcome thought of accessibility for Welsh people that is often never given. After all, the main focus is safety, enjoyment and hospitality, and for these checklist qualities, Cardiff should not be overlooked.

Llais Rhydd Sport:

a new home for Cardiff University Sport



James Leigh
Head of Sport

Alongside the launch of Llais Rhydd, Gair Rhydd's brand new podcast, the Sport section is delighted to announce our very own show: Llais Rhydd Sport!

With a new edition out every month, Llais Rhydd Sport is your new home for student-focused sporting news, and it promises to report, debate and celebrate every important issue facing Cardiff University's teams and participants.

We'll be bringing you interviews with players and coaches from sports across the university, tackling the biggest talking points in Welsh sport, and touching on the stories shaping the wider sporting world.

Whether you're an IMG fanatic, a BUCS star, or just a casual sports fan, there's something here for you.

The show is hosted by me, Head of Sport James Leigh, alongside University Sport editors Mael Le Paih and Kieran Miller, Wales editor Ollie Hedley-Lewis and UK editor Jacob Hamblin.

"Edition One"

Our first edition begins with BUCS rugby, where we take a look at Cardiff men's narrow loss to Brunel before exploring what the University's new partnership with Cardiff Rugby may mean for the side on and off the pitch.

We then move onto football, where we dive into the men's victory over Gloucestershire and examine the women's frustrating draw against Exeter
In hockey, we take a look at the latest results of the women's sides, before Ollie tells us all about the Men's 2s recent 9-1 victory, a result, which for some reason, he was rather reluctant to tell us about. Listen to find out why…

To finish up the University sport conversation, we speak to our very own Jacob Hamblin about one of Cardiff's newest BUCS teams, Gaelic football. A side which is very important to him, and one he is proud to be a part of.

Beyond university, we preview the inaugural Nations Championship and what to expect from Steve Tandy's Wales against Japan, New Zealand and Australia. We also check in on Welsh football before expressing our own opinions on Harry Kane's Ballon D'or win.

Listen in to find out more.

Llais Rhydd Sport is just getting started, and we can't wait for you to join us.

Spirited Cardiff Fight Back for Draw Against Exeter

James Leigh
Head of Sports

On 21st October, Cardiff University Women's Football faced Exeter University in matchday two of the BUCS Western Tier 1 campaign.

A cold and windy Wednesday afternoon, Cardiff arrived at Llanrumney with a point to prove. Following a disappointing 2-1 loss away to Gloucestershire in their season opener, the hosts looked to bounce back and take their first three-point haul of the season. However, this would be no easy feat, with Cardiff facing an Exeter side who had run riot in their season opener, thrashing University of South Wales 13-0.

From the first whistle, Cardiff dominated the early phases. Led by captain Jemima Lister, the hosts moved the ball with confidence, spraying passes across the pitch and sending runners darting into wide areas to keep Exeter on the back foot.

Yet for all Cardiff's control, clear chances were hard to come by. Exeter's defence stood firm, showing no sign of cracking under the pressure, and a handful of speculative Cardiff efforts from distance did little to trouble their goalkeeper.

As the half carried on, perhaps frustrated by Exeter's staunch defence, Cardiff heads began to drop, and mistakes began to creep in. This would be exemplified when, with less than five minutes of the half to go, a long ball over the top of the Cardiff defence was not dealt with properly, and the chasing Exeter striker was brought down.
Penalty, Exeter.

The spot-kick was converted and seemingly out of nowhere, Cardiff found themselves 1-0 down – a scoreline far from reflective of the match.

The halftime whistle blew shortly after, and the Cardiff players looked on with disbelief. After such a dominant half, how could they find themselves behind? What more could they do to find an equaliser?

The second half began, and it was immediately clear that whatever had been said at the break had worked. Cardiff looked back to their best, playing silky, fluid football from the off.

This sharp start seemed certain to pay dividends when the hosts broke clear and found themselves one-on-one with the Exeter goalkeeper, but the chance went begging. Just ten minutes later, however, Cardiff found themselves bearing down on the goal again, yet still they could not find the target.

It was beginning to look like this would not be Cardiff's day, compounded further shortly after, when a looping shot rattled the crossbar.

Nevertheless, despite these near misses, Cardiff heads did not drop and very shortly, their persistence would pay off. After some neat play on the edge of the Exeter box, Cardiff's Jess Thomas slotted home an equaliser.

Very little time remained on the clock. Could Cardiff find a late winner?

From the restart, Cardiff pressed relentlessly, barely allowing Exeter time to breathe. The hosts forced a near-immediate turnover and were soon bearing down on goal again, only for the shot to be dragged just wide of the post.

Cardiff's final chance had slipped away.

The full-time whistle left both sides scratching their heads: Cardiff wondering how victory had slipped through their fingers, Exeter marvelling that they had held on.

Speaking to *Gair Rhydd* after the game, Cardiff Head Coach, Liam Bell Gutierrez, praised his team's performance, yet, was left in "disbelief" after such a dominant performance.

"It feels like two dropped (points) even though we scored in the last minute," he said.

Looking ahead, he stayed upbeat. "We need to remain positive, and we'll just take it into next week."

Cardiff take on University of South Wales in their next match on 4th November; a match they will hope to win and take their first three points of the season.

Student Guide to Horse Racing:

From Race Days and Rivalries to the Future of the Sport

Arabella Cox
Contributor

As the national hunt season gathers momentum, a new generation is finding their way to the racecourse. For many students, a day at the races can begin by the promise of affordable tickets, drinks, dressing up and music, with initiatives such as INVADES making race days more accessible to a younger and increasingly diverse audience. However, the appeal can become more than a day out: your enthusiasm could help shape the sport's future, encouraging a new generation to look beyond the grandstand…

INVADES figures display that over three thousand students from seven universities – including Cardiff University – attended the Welsh Race Day Party 2026 at Chepstow on 11th October. With discounted tickets, the event demonstrates how racing is becoming increasingly appealing to younger audiences, as well as bringing people into Wales for what is widely regarded as the jump season's unofficial opener.

at Cardiff, a former student had never experienced a race day until joining the university. The easy access to courses, such as Chepstow and Cheltenham, "illuminated the opportunity to get involved in racing", as she felt "seeing such strikingly powerful horses handled with so much compassion, made [her] realise that the equestrian community work with the animals as one team, so commonly misunderstood by television spectators". This creates an interesting opportunity for racing: the first attraction may be the party, but the hope is that the experience introduces young people to the sport and welfare behind it.

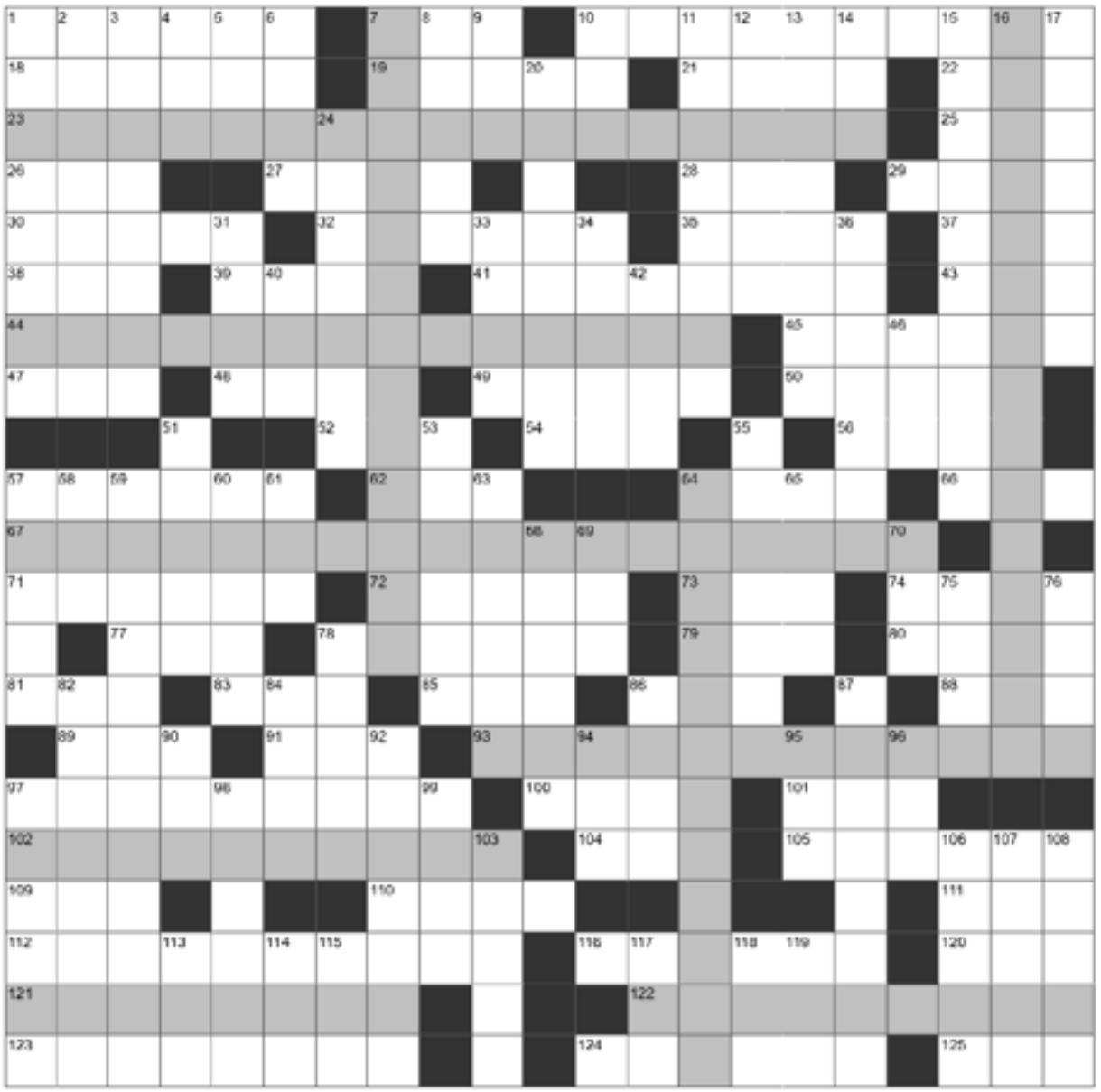
But what should first-time race goers actually watch for?
At Chepstow, the National hunt isn't only picking a horse and hoping it wins. Watch how the horses approach and jump hurdles, how the combination navigate the undulating and challenging going of the course and if you can spot any tactical decisions made by a jockey. You could pick a horse from the parade ring and follow it, not just the leading combination. Where is it positioned? Did it have a strong start? A good jump? You might even find yourself cheering on some winners – even if you did only pick it for its cool name or funky colours. Perhaps you will find a horse you want to follow for the whole season!



As 2026 draws to a close, the intensely competitive Coral Welsh Grand National is held at our most local racecourse, the £170,000 feature race introduces an electric buzz for a social student outing, paired with your increasing knowledge and favourite horses could make for the perfect day out — especially when there is a Welsh win, such as the star jockey Sean Bowen and local trainer Rebbecca Curtis in 2025. This race was first held in Cardiff 1895-1948, meaning this race carries a piece of Cardiff's own sporting history within it.

Beyond the betting slips and race day atmosphere, there lies an industry built around extraordinary work and care. Cardiff students interested in meeting the horses that tear up the turf, can attend National Racehorse open days at local yards, such as Pat Wilkins Stables, run by trainer Tim Vaughan; they can see training facilities and learn about equine healthcare and welfare. Christian Williams Racing also highlights variety within the industry: incorporating biomechanics and varied-terrain training into its approach. From jockeys and trainers, equine nutritionists, physiotherapists and business managers, there is a job for everyone to be involved in and support one of Britain's most exhilarating sports.

Are you the sharpest in the shed?



Answers on the Gair Rhydd website!

Across

1. Fishy femmes fatales
7. US Dems' chief leadership board, briefly
10. Digitally duplicating the properties of
18. "Allow me to rephrase..."
19. Unwelcome kitchen critter
21. Iridescent blue mineral
22. Scots variant of "no"
23. Thing that disrupts smooth operation or function
25. A cacophany
26. ___ Kippur
27. Person from Poznań, probably
28. Former athelete and MP Sebastian ___
29. Start to byte
30. Common prefix in dinosaurdom
32. Political extremists or fanatical football fans
35. Possess
37. Flange
38. Cock counterpart
39. Retches
41. Obscure or abstruse
43. Hydrocarbon suffix
44. Up for auction
45. Puts in office
47. Paul, Nicholas, Fagans, etc.
48. At any time
49. Sahara sights
50. Value
52. Gamers' favourite colour combo
54. Male delivery
56. Purchaser's pleasure
57. Chased away
62. Currency code of 21 of 27 countries
64. Wisecrack
66. ___ a fi ("yuck" in Welsh)
67. Situations without advantages for people or sides
71. Certain daisies
72. Birthmark, mole, lesion, etc., in dermatology
73. Wildebeest
74. Radio options
77. Dubious claim that something will come soon, init.
78. Watch on Netflix
79. Secretive British military force, briefly
80. Centralised-intermediary–free form of finance, init.
81. Lord's prayer opener
83. Icon on home screen
85. Railway respite, for short
86. 2010s sweetheart synonym
88. Zilch
89. Paleo- opposite
91. Future fish
93. Sleeps with multiple partners
97. Underground pits where sewage is held
100. Burdensome boob size
101. Lukewarm, dialectically
102. Grudge or grievance, with implication of future confrontation
104. Controversial Simpsons clerk
105. Sweet Andalusian wine
109. "I've said ____ thousand times!"
110. Boardroom VIPs
111. ___-de-France, where one finds Paris
112. Extremely cruel acts committed during war
116. Tang- and Ming- dynasty Chinese ceramics
120. ___-wop music
121. Repeatedly criticised someone harshly
122. Take measures to stop something (with "on")
123. Spiny Australian anteaters
124. Serengeti scavengers known for their laughs
125. Snake sound

Down

1. Pusher in Greek myth
2. Struggling to get it up
3. Changes again, as a law
4. Suffix for Caesar
5. Annual 30-day abstinence challenge, for short
6. Part of a process
7. Instructor of fresh US army recruits
8. Triple trio
9. Felidae member broadly, or the domestic variant
10. ___-wolf
11. Leeches or aimless wanderers
12. Much ado about something
13. Loch-overlooking
14. Gore and Capone
15. Circuitously
16. Event that increases the chance of future failure
17. Organisms' complete sequenced genetic information
20. In rhetoric, inverted relationship between phrases
24. Less smooth
31. Fairy-tale swamp-dweller
33. Looked at letters literately
34. Sleep-related prefix
36. Emerged as a larva from an egg
40. Off-rd. ride
42. Adolescent
46. Historic period
51. Kid kangaroos
53. Sellers' suckers
55. They're watched after "whips" in an infamous song
57. Speed-reducing replay option, for short
58. Bewitch
59. Spend too long reading the literature, run out of time to write the report
60. Tennis player Rybakina
61. Cinematographers, for short
63. Engrosses, commands the attention of
64. Assembling tabletop pastime
65. Furthermore
68. Subtle aspect
69. '90s 2G mobile network protocol standard, briefly
70. Woebegone
75. Carte, for ordering
76. Not so spicy
78. Animal's track
82. Commonplace, not foreign
84. ____ rock music
86. To ____ in arms about
87. Romantic ruptures
90. East, in Essen
92. Brings forth
94. Elvis' record label
95. A singular gift of charity to the poor?
96. Nocturnal hooter
97. Open-faced sandwich hors d'oeuvre
98. Acted as a pimp
99. Snick and ___
103. Medicinal measures
106. Greek goddess of modesty
107. Luminesces
108. Very long times
113. ___-doke
114. Web domain name displaying in apps with non-Latin characters, for short
115. Common colloquial "thaanks"
117. Frosty
118. Star Wars Solo
119. Grandma, in Germany