



## Students protest as Cardiff University revealed to still invest £2 million in fossil fuels

- People and Planet members stage lie-down 'oil spill' protest outside SU
- Cardiff University has over £2 million of investments in fossil fuel companies
- Despite decrease of around £450,000 since last year, complete divestment unlikely

**EXCLUSIVE**  
Anna Lewis & Joseph Atkinson

A Freedom of Information (FOI) request has revealed that Cardiff University continues to hold over £2 million in investments in the fossil fuel industry despite continued student protests.

Last year, the environmental society People and Planet showed that the University was investing £2,504,881 in nine corporations in the oil and gas industries.

The FOI released by the University shows that now this figure has fallen by £459,030 to £2,045,851, a drop of almost one fifth, emphasising the University's apparent commitment to divesting from fossil fuels.

However, a Cardiff University spokesperson has stated that although the University is "committed

to sustainability at the highest level", it is unlikely that it will completely divest from fossil fuels.

They said: "We recognise that this is a complex issue but do not consider that University disinvestment from the fossil fuel industry is the solution."

The news comes despite a Student Senate motion that was passed last November lobbying the University to divest. The motion also specified that the Students' Union should request quarterly updates of the University's investment folio and lobby for student representation on University investment committees.

In light of the figures released, a protest staged by People and Planet last Thursday has shown that students are still committed to lobbying the University to stop the investments. Named the 'oil spill', the event saw members of the society lie on the

ground outside the Students' Union and get covered in oil to encourage students to sign their petition.

The petition calls for the University to "screen for and exclude the fossil fuel industry from their investment portfolio" and "immediately freeze any new investments." Instead, it was suggested that funds be transferred to lower risk, ethical investments" within five years.

During the protest, the petition gained approximately 150 signatures.

In addition to the 'oil spill', People and Planet will continue to lobby the University to stop its investments. This will include coinciding events with the upcoming COP21 talks, which will be held in Paris in December. According to Sean Langdon-Dark, the President of Cardiff's People and Planet society, the University should also make effort

**Pictured:** People and Planet protest outside the Students' Union (Photographer: Joseph Atkinson)



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# the free word



## Conflict at university

With a number of contentious issues featuring in the paper this week, it just goes to show that students do still value free speech

Joseph Atkinson

This week we've re-explored some issues that we looked at last year, namely the University's investments in the fossil fuel industries. While the University has opted to divest around £450,000 in the last year they still hold over £2 million in investments in oil and gas, including the likes of oil giants Shell and BP.

With People and Planet continuing to lobby against the University to divest fully, students are once again demonstrating the power of protest, and the fact that they have managed to reduce the University's investments in fossil fuels by about one fifth is pretty encouraging.

In their statement to us the University insists that they remain committed to sustainability but believe that complete divestment is not necessarily the answer to the issues.

These revelations come from an FOI regarding the University's general fund and the investments that it holds. It's interesting to look through and see exactly where parts of our student loans are invested. For exam-

ple, it currently holds shares worth £139,073 in the supermarket chain Sainsburys, £379,327 in mobile communications giant Vodafone, and £407,141 in the recently scandal-hit bank HSBC.

Personally, I don't think that the University should be invested in an industry that is contributing to global climate change. As a research institute dedicated to solving some of the problems faced by humankind, to invest more than £2 million of their general fund into the fossil fuel industry is dramatically contradictory. However, it is encouraging that (a) they have recognised students' concerns to an extent and (b) students continue to protest against perceived injustices.

Another recent student demonstration has of course revolved around feminist icon Germaine Greer's visit to Cardiff University to give a guest lecture. At the time of writing, Greer is still set to deliver the lecture and the University is refusing to back down despite an online petition led by the Students' Union's Women's Officer Rachael Melhuish garnering nearly 3,000 signatures.

It must be noted that a counter-petition arguing that Greer should not be prevented from lecturing at the University is very nearly neck-and-neck with the original petition.

The Greer debate is certainly polarising and I personally am unsure of what I think. Greer is set to deliver her lecture on women and power in the 20th Century, and her problematic views of post-operative transgender women seem unlikely to come up in such a lecture. Surely she should be allowed to speak on an issue on which she is a leading figure in the field of literature?

However, on the other hand, Greer's now well-publicised views pull no punches and clearly cause huge offence to many people; is it right that someone who causes offence so readily should be allowed to transmit her views to a group of impressionable students.

The Comment section this week have presented a very well-balanced page arguing the fors and againsts of Germaine Greer visiting Cardiff University. The debate has certainly educated myself as to the multitude of views held by students in Cardiff and demonstrates that stu-

dents DO actually hold opinions and are not afraid/oppressive toward free speech as some people, including the well-known evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins. Even Edward Snowden has had his say on the Greer issue, saying that "An individual trying to limit speech at universities is interested in neither university nor justice."

Another article in Comment this week argues that Welsh is not pointless from the point of view of a Welsh language campaigner. The article is a very clear riposte to views put forward in The Tab. A lot of articles of late have attempted to counter the views put forward on the online newspaper, and it just goes to show once again the multitude of views that exist in the student sphere.

So, three contentious issues that students are arguing over feature in this week's paper, and hopefully you'll have your own views on them too. If so, please do get in touch with our Comment section to have your say - if you can present your case for an article effectively and with good reason, then you can get your work published and have your own word on some huge topics.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY: GAIR RHYDD 729

28/10/2002



This week we go back to a more brazen Gair Rhydd in 2002, who apparently "enjoyed the view" of the crowning of Miss Wales, a student from our rival University of Glamorgan. Siemens Mobile were also a little more risqué 13 years ago, running the Urban Challenge to find the most 'up for it' student, with competitions including 'get your bra off' and 'blind man's buff'. Apparently the winning campus would have the 'best looking people and the best set up campus'.

The Student's Union's very own Xpress radio station could boast about receiving ten nominations for the Radio One National Student Radio awards, going on to later win seven. This was more gongs than any other station received in the country, and the team received their awards from the likes of Tim Westwood at a ceremony in London. I am somewhat jealous.

Students were also up arms and demonstrating against the West taking action in Iraq. A week of protest events finished with a rally in the University's Law building, with MP Jeremy Corbyn speaking, who, in a surprising turn of events, is now the Labour party leader.

According to a survey for Whitaker's Almanac, Welsh people reportedly were more clued up on the antics on Albert Square than

on current politics. 20 per cent of Welsh interviewees couldn't name a single world leader, but in contrast 56 per cent could name five characters in Eastenders, "making Peggy Mitchell more notorious with Saddam Hussein". As a soap-lover myself, this is something I sympathise with - rumours of the return of Grant have me far more hooked than Cameron blundering over PMQs.

Little world news made the cut in this issue, other than a German man being eaten by an Australian crocodile, and a bull escaping a livestock market in Flintshire and causing quite the scene.

Gair Rhydd also decided to make a scene with a garish two page spread advertising for contributors, including pictures of Alan Partridge with an apparent 'quote': "Writing for gair rhydd? I'm all for it! It's got to beat living out your life as a criminal. I'm Alan Partridge." I've asked our editor to consider similar action, but he politely declined.

Finally, it appears Welsh football was at a high in October across many years, with the Sport section celebrating a 2-1 win against former World Champions Italy. Let's hope the trend continues.

- Shanna Hamilton

# Campus in Brief



Jack Boyce

A team of researchers from Cardiff University's School of Engineering are set to perform the first major trial of automatically repairing concrete. The project, called 'Materials For Life', is piloting three different concrete-healing properties in real world situations for the first time, in hopes that they can be incorporated into a single system to automatically repair concrete in the built environment. It's estimated that around £40 billion is spent a year on repairing and maintaining structures, with the majority of these being made of concrete. The hope for the project is to develop a system that is embedded at the initial setting of concrete, which will then automatically repair any damage it detects autonomously without the need for human intervention.

“A government-back report from Lord Mervyn Davies has set a target for FTSE 100 companies to have at least a third of boardroom position held by women by 2020”

Olympic boxer Fred Evans, of Cardiff, has been given a suspended jail term after hospitalising a friend, despite a judge saying that he deserved to go to prison. Evans struck Michael Wilson, a good friend of his, at a pub in Gloucestershire. The incident hospitalised Wilson for four days with a broken jaw. Evans is the current Olympic silver medal holder at welterweight, and is preparing to train for next year's Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. Evans has been given a two-year sentence, suspended for two years, after Judge Jamie Tabor heard that the sentence would be “devastating” for the boxer's career.

Professor Colin Riordan, President and Vice Chancellor of Cardiff University, has said that the University is in prime position to be named in the top 100 universities in the world in the QS World University rankings. Despite climbing the rankings in recent years, Cardiff University are still only 122nd in the world. Prof Riordan stated, “When I arrived here – and I picked up this sentiment from quite a few people – there was a sense that Wales ought to have a top 100 university.”

## National

A government-back report from Lord Mervyn Davies has set a target for FTSE 100 (Finance Times Stock Exchange) companies to have at least a third of boardroom position held by women by 2020. While this target has been set, Nora Senior, the president of the British Chambers of Commerce, has stated that there is no need for “over-bearing government regulation” to force that these targets are met. The initial target of 25 per cent, which was set back in 2011, has been succeeded – doubling the amount of women on FTSE 100 company boards in four years. Lord Davies celebrated the victory as a “near revolution, which has taken place in the boardroom and profound culture change at the heart of British business”.

BBC Radio 4 Extra has surpassed 6 Music to become the largest digital-only radio station, according to latest listening figures from Rajar. The Radio 4 spin-off, which focuses on comedy and drama programmes, has reported a rise of 12.6 per cent in listeners to hit 2.2 million. Despite this, 6 Music also reported a record quarter, hitting a 6.5 per cent rise up to 2.18 million listeners. A total of 41.9 per cent of radio listening comes via the digital platforms, with Ford Ennals, digital executive of Digital Radio UK, saying that these figures marked a “tipping point” for the consumption of radio.

TV programme Antiques Roadshow has found the most valuable item in the shows 38-year history – which is worth more than £1 million. The item has been described as a “world famous piece owned by a sporting institution”, which was discovered during filming at the Royal Hall in Harrogate, Yorkshire. The item and its exact value will not be revealed until the episode airs in April 2016.

## International

China has finally ended its controversial one-child policy, which has been in effect since 1979. The Xinhua News Agency said that couples will now be allowed to have two children to “improve the balanced development of protection”, after concerns of an ageing population. Currently, 30 per cent of China's population is over the age of 50. The one-child policy has undergone a formal relaxation over the past two years, with certain couples allowed to have two children if one of the parents was an only child. Couples who violated the policy were subject to a variety of punishments, including fines, loss of employments and even forced abortion.

Following a no-confidence vote, Moldova's government has been dismissed by members of parliament amid a bank scandal. Many Moldovan citizens are angry after the disappearance of more than £600 million from Moldovan banks. This missing money is equivalent to an eighth of the country's entire GDP, and the value of the national currency, the leu, has rapidly fallen. Calls for an early election have intensified following months of large anti-corruption protests. Prime Minister Valeriu Strelet has been forced out of office after only three months in charge, while former Prime Minister Vlad Filat was detained earlier this month in connection with the bank fraud.

Paul Ryan, a Republican from Wisconsin, has been named as the new Speaker of the US House of Representatives. Although hesitant to run at first, Ryan's help in determining budget and tax policies in Congress garnered majority support from the Republicans to take over from previous Speaker John Boehner of Ohio. Ryan thanked Boehner for his work in the role, calling him a “man of character”, before declaring that Democrats and Republicans need to work together. “We're not settling scores, we're wiping the slate clean”, Ryan said.

Pictured:  
The  
Chinese flag  
(Photographer:  
Jeffrey Meyer)

“China has finally ended its controversial one-child policy, which has been in effect since 1979”



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## Cont'd: Students protest at fossil fuel investment



Continued from front page

to support COP21 to "do its part in helping lower global carbon emissions."

A spokesperson for People and Planet emphasised the need to protest by stating that: "Cardiff University invests £2 million in the fossil fuel industry while claiming to be a sustainable university."

People and Planet treasurer Jack Pickering said: "Fossil Fuel corporations have a long history of funding climate change denial and fighting sustainable energy as well as committing human rights abuses. We think that in the run up to COP21, it's time to take them on directly and challenge their legitimacy"

Langdon-Dark also stated that the event was created to "raise awareness of the investments" and the on-going campaign.

He said: "We're running this campaign for the divestment of £2 million, so that the University can send a political, and in many ways ethical, message to the corporations in the fossil fuel industry which it currently has financial ties to."

"We hope that Cardiff University will recognise the legitimacy of our campaign, and join the international divestment movement."

Talking to Gair Rhydd, VP Welfare Kate Delaney stated that the Students' Union will be working with both the

Ethical and Environmental Officer and People and Planet to make sure that their aims are achieved. However, although Delaney acknowledged that the amount of money invested in fossil fuels has decreased, "no discussions have taken place so far on why there's been a chance with the University".

It was also confirmed that the Students' Union President and Vice President Education both sit on the Policy & Resources Committee of the University that deals with investments.

The nine companies involved in the fossil fuels industries that Cardiff University has an investment in are: Tullow Oil (£9,344), BG

Group (£301,530), British Petroleum (£355,905), Royal Dutch Shell (£331,225), Wood Group (£72,971), BHP Billiton (£250,099), Rio Tinto (£228,509), Chevron (£266,489) and Total S.A. (£229,779).

Defending these investments, a University spokesperson said: "Cardiff University has robust systems in place to ensure that any investments are appropriate and advance our purpose to be a world-leading university."

"Like most world-leading universities, Cardiff University collaborates with a number of public and private sector companies on a wide leading researching projects, including in the fossil fuel industry."

"We're running this campaign so the University can send a political and ethical message"

## NUS campaign to ban letting fees

Anna Lewis

The Students' Union has backed a campaign to scrap letting agency fees, amidst concerns about the spiralling costs of accommodation.

Last week the Union posted a message on its website announcing that NUS Wales President Beth Button is working to legally scrap letting agency fees. This involves amending upcoming housing legislation in the hope that it will be accepted in the Welsh Assembly Government.

To support Button, the Students' Union is conducting research into accommodation issues faced by its students. This involves asking students about agencies fees they have been forced to pay in the past and whether they have had resorted to borrowing

money in order to cover such costs.

Welsh Assembly members are also getting involved in the movement, and have agreed to visit student houses to assess concerns about poor standards and problems with mould and vermin infestations.

The AM members will visit Cathays and Roath on November 2nd. The Students' Union are now asking for students experiencing housing issues to volunteer their accommodation for inspection.

If interested, email either Students' Union VP Welfare at WPWelfare@cardiff.ac.uk or Beth Button at Beth.button@nus-wales.org.uk.

The announcement follows after both Cardiff students and members of the community marched in solidarity

the week previously to fight against agency fees. During the protest, speakers also drew attention to the rising cost of rent after it was revealed that rent in Cardiff has increased by 25 per cent in the last four years.

Cardiff University students have also spoken out against the high agency fees demanded by companies, before initial deposits are even agreed.

Third year ENCAP student Sarah Hazelwood said: "I think that considering you already have to put a deposit down on one month's rent and letting agencies fees, it is a large amount of money for someone on a limited income for almost no customer service in return."

A third-year Journalism student also explained to Gair Rhydd that

her and eight fellow flatmates were made to pay £80 each in order to take their accommodation off the market, equating to a sum of £720 from one house alone.

However, she also stated that agency fees in other areas of the UK are substantially higher, as her cousin was made to pay £310 in agency fees in Bournemouth.

Other inquiries have found that agency fees generally range between £80 and £100, and are paid only a short time before a month's rent is then needed for deposit.

According to the Guardian, 'administration' costs for students can average up to £400 including fees for photocopying contracts and creating inventories.

"It's a large amount of money for someone on a limited income for almost no customer service Sarah Hazelwood"

## University Hospital unit reopens after mother forced to give birth elsewhere

Joanna Beck

"The Neonatal Unit was closed in August due to the break out of an infection which affected 12 babies"

Due to a clause of the Neonatal unit in the University Hospital of Wales (UHW) Reann Jenkins was forced to travel from Bridgend to Bristol to give birth to her baby boy, Jaxon, who was born with Spina Bifida on the 3rd of October. It was not possible for her Caesarian section to be performed at the UHW due to the continued closure of its Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and so Reann was taken to St Michaels Hospital in Bristol, where she has had to stay for three weeks.

The Neonatal Unit was closed in August due to the outbreak of an infection which affected 12 babies, meaning it was not possible for the hospital to take any new admissions at the time of baby Jaxon's birth. The Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Community Health Council blamed the spread of the bac-

terial infection on "poor infection control measures" and there were reports that staff would change clothes in the toilets and that equipment was not being stored correctly.

The closure has led to Jaxon's father, Ryan James, having to travel 60 miles to visit his partner and new born son, whilst also having to care for his seven other children. It has been reported that he has had to spend over £200 in toll fees and the couple had to celebrate their daughter's birthday in the hospital.

Mr James' had already experienced the healthcare that The University Hospital of Wales could provide, and so was confident when it was discovered that his son would be born with Spina Bifida that he would get the care he needed.

He told The Mirror; "we had experienced amazing care from midwives and nurses in Cardiff for our other children, so we knew we were in good hands."

So when we were told by a consultant that there was an infection outbreak in the neonatal unit in Cardiff and that it was currently closed, it did worry Reann quite a bit."

Although the University Hospital has now opened a temporary Neonatal Unit to deal with cases such as this, it is not clear when the Neonatal centre will resume full working capacity. A statement from the Hospital said that "admissions will be prioritised in partnership with patients and clinical colleagues in the Neonatal Network across Wales" but it is not clear how many patients they will be able to admit.

Jaxon weighed only three pounds and seven ounces when he was born and has already undergone two operations on his spine and brain. He will now be transferred to Singleton Hospital in Swansea so he can be closer to his parents.

Pictured: University Hospital of Wales (Photographer: Anna Lewis)



## Germaine Greer visit confirmed despite protests



Anna Lewis

**G**ermaine Greer will continue to give a guest lecture in Cardiff despite student protests, the University have confirmed.

In a statement made to Gair Rhyd, a University spokesperson confirmed that her lecture, titled 'Women and Power: the lessons of the 20th Century' will carry on as planned.

The announcement comes after a petition campaigning against the academic's visit gained nearly 3,000 views in less than a week. The petition was launched to draw attention to Greer's "transphobic" attitude towards trans-gender women and to lobby the University to "prioritize the voices of the most vulnerable on their campuses, not invite speakers who seek to further marginalize them".

Despite these claims, the University said that they "respect" the student-led petition but concluded that they must follow their "duties in freedom of speech and equality and diversity legislation and allow event to take place in line with the safeguards of our Freedom of Speech Code."

Originally, Greer stated on BBC's Newsnight that she would not visit the University due to the "abuse" received by Cardiff students.

During the interview, Greer explained: "I'm 76, I don't want to go down there and be screamed at and have things thrown at me. Bigger it"

However, the University have talked to the academic after her television appearance to ensure that the event will continue as planned.

In reaction to the news, Women's Officer Rachael Melhuish stated that: "I'm disappointed that the University is still planning to hold the event, particularly in the light of Greer's recent comments on trans people."

Despite this, she acknowledged that the campaign has started valuable debate and spread awareness of issues such as transphobia.

Melhuish, who created the petition against Greer has since received widespread criticism from both individuals and the media.

In an opinion piece written for the Daily Mail, Melhuish's campaign was described as a "gobbledygook-laden plea", whilst the Women's Officer

herself was accused of doing "silly things".

The article continued: "We all did silly things at her age and hopefully she'll grow out of it but if anyone ever needed a good robust dose of Germaine Greer it is Ms Melhuish, whose elders have been filling her head with rubbish."

Greer's controversial appearance has received national media attention since the launch of the petition and has been discussed within BBC radio and newspaper publications including The Guardian, The Independent and The Telegraph.

A counter-petition was also established in reaction against the original campaign stating the importance of Greer's visit. The petition, which

has received nearly the same amount of signatures as the originally campaign itself, states that "enough is enough. Stop no platforming women who only want to talk about women's rights and women's lives."

In the petition, which was started by Diana Boston from Canada, also continues: "This reactionary tactic of calling a woman a 'transphobe' is no different than calling someone a 'commie' in 1960's America during the cold war. It's a slur that contains no analysis, just an emotional response"

Other responses against the original movement to prevent Greer have cited the importance of maintaining free speech within universities in the interest of promoting debate.

**Pictured:** Germaine Greer will give her lecture next month despite the popularity of student petition (Photographer: walnut whippet via Flickr)

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Melhuish, who created the petition against Greer has since received widespread criticism from both individuals and the media  
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## Cardiff unmasked: capital's strengths and weaknesses revealed



**Pictured:** Cardiff Bay (Photographer: Pete Birkinshaw via Flickr)

Toby Holloway

**A** comprehensive study has been released detailing Cardiff's best and worst features.

The report, published by Cardiff Council, aimed to assess Cardiff's potential to become "Europe's most liveable capital city". It highlighted a range of socio-economic indicators including average wage, obesity levels and happiness.

Cardiff performed well across many categories, especially concerning safety, resident happiness and its large number of highly qualified people. However, the study also laid bare several of the city's less favourable attributes, such as the lingering inequalities that exist between Cardiff's rich and poor.

Cardiff's population is booming, with the report stating that the city's population expected to grow at a rate of 26 per cent between 2014 and 2034 - the highest in the UK. It was also stated that: "each day 80,000 people commute in to Cardiff from the surrounding local authorities", with com-

muters making up a third of the Welsh capital's 200,000 strong workforce.

Cardiff unsurprisingly boasts a higher 'Gross Value Added' (in layman's terms; the amount each person adds to the economy) than the rest of Wales, though trails other UK cities in terms of average income. This is something that the study said "must be addressed" if it were to "deliver the opportunities expected in a leading liveable city".

Inequalities not only exist between Cardiff and other UK cities, but also within Cardiff itself. There are 60,000 citizens in the Welsh capital among the most deprived 10 per cent in Wales, the vast majority of which reside in areas such as Splott, Ely and Adamstown. This disparity in development is underlined by the fact that 48 per cent of children in Ely live in low-income families, compared to only 3 per cent in wealthy Lisvane.

According to the report, Cardiff has experienced a substantial drop in crime rates over the last decade -

a decrease of 45.5 per cent - meaning that "people in Cardiff are almost half as likely to be a victim of crime as they were 10 years ago". This is seen as an important factor in determining Cardiff's potential as a 'liveable' city, with low crime rates contributing to people's general feeling of safety, and, therefore, the population's overall happiness.

The study also highlighted the tourism industry as being of great importance to Wales' capital, reportedly contributing more than £1 billion to Cardiff's economy in 2013. In the same year, Cardiff received over 18 million visitors, with this number surely swelling due to the vast amount of rugby fans that attended World Cup games at the Millennium Stadium.

The report showed that Cardiff is a relatively healthy city, with obesity levels well below Wales' average, though still slightly concerning. The number of smokers in Cardiff is falling, however the number of binge

drinkers is still relatively high. This is largely attributed to the city's large student population, and is higher than the Welsh average.

Finally, Cardiff performed exceedingly well in arguably the most important indicator observed by the study: happiness. The Welsh capital ranked sixth in terms of satisfaction with quality of life out of Europe's happiest cities, and was beaten only by Scandinavian cities and Amsterdam. It was stated that 95 per cent of Cardiff's population were satisfied with their quality of life, 8 per cent higher than London.

The report concluded that: "Cardiff performed extremely well", especially where quality of life was concerned. The study also declared that: "it is important that this success is built upon", and with the number of promising projects planned for the city, it would not be over-optimistic to assume that Cardiff could claim the crown of "Europe's most liveable city" in years to come.

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There are 60,000 citizens in the Welsh capital among the most deprived 10 per cent in Wales, the vast majority of which reside in areas such as Splott and Ely Adamstown  
”

# Student found guilty of rape

## Man charged for sexual attack on first year during Freshers' 2014

Joanna Beck

Akeem Hassain, a 20-year-old student from Merthyr Tydfil, has been found guilty of raping a fellow student. Cardiff Crown Court heard how a young woman, also 20, woke to find a man she did not know having sex with her on her first night of university last year.

The trial, which began two weeks ago, heard that upon arrest Hassain said to police "this can't be right - I'm doing Police Sciences". Hassain's defence council claimed that the sex had been consensual and that the woman was trying to "save her reputation" by saying she had been raped, even relating her attack to the comedy television show 'The Young Ones'. Her flatmate told a very different story.

"She looked like she had been crying and said a boy had come into her room and forced himself on her and when she told him to stop, he wouldn't. She didn't know who it was. She had been really drunk."

The court heard how the woman had only been at the University for a matter of hours, and had been getting to know some other students. She had been drinking a lot when the attack took place and told the court that she had needed help to get back to her room. She described how she had told Hassain to stop, that he was hurting her and that she was bleeding.

The recent series of sex attacks, which took place in Cardiff at the beginning of this academic year, show that one year on, women are still at serious risk of sexual attacks. A recent summit regarding the attacks concluded that 'Lad Culture' was to blame for the three separate incidents in Cardiff, one of which also allegedly involved a male student.

Sexual consent workshops are one of the ways that universities are trying to put a stop to 'Lad Culture' and make people aware of the boundaries. Many universities are introducing sexual consent lessons and sexual consent workshops were made compulsory at both Oxford and Cambridge last year. This followed a report from the National Union of Students, which claimed that more than a third of female students had been inappropriately touched or groped. Cardiff University Students' Union have a "zero tolerance to sexual harassment" but have not yet implemented consent lessons.

Michael Jones, of the prosecution, explained to the court that Akeem Hassain "took advantage of a girl in a vulnerable position."

"The fact that a woman is intoxicated gives no one the right to take advantage". Sentencing will take place in two weeks and Hassain's request for bail until sentence was denied.



**Pictured:** Cardiff Crown Court (Photographer: Along Tine Ago/Flickr)

“The recent series of sex attacks, which took place in Cardiff at the beginning of this academic year, show that one-year-on women are still at serious risk of rape”

“Upon arrest Hassain said to police “this can't be right - I'm doing Police Sciences”

## Senate announce agenda for first meeting of year

- Action sought over Welsh language 'slander'
- Support requested as students set for 'National Day of Walk Out'

Toby Holloway

The Student Senate have announced the agenda for their upcoming meeting, which will take place on Tuesday 3rd of November.

They intend to raise a number of issues, including concerns about support for student sex workers and international students.

The first item on Senate's agenda concerned the apparent lack of water fountains available across the Cathays campus with the exception of Bute, the

ASSL Library and the Students' Union building.

The motion called for the Students' Union to "lobby the university to increase the provision of free water across the Cathays and Heath campuses", noting that "students should not have to choose between staying hydrated to concentrate on their work and affording another necessity".

The Senate's second item will raise the issue of the rights of Welsh lan-

guage speakers and the provision of support for Welsh speakers. This has been a controversial point of discussion recently, after online news medium 'the Tab' published articles dismissing the Welsh language as "pointless" and Welsh language speakers as an "insignificant minority".

Welsh Language Officer Steffan Bryn has also been in the headlines for his attempt to make his position full-time and with salary.

Bryn requested that a letter be written to Welsh First Minister Carywyn Jones and Welsh Language Commissioner Meri Hughes to ask what provisions are made to protect Welsh speakers against potentially offensive articles, such as those published by the Tab.

He also asked that a statement be made on the Students' Union website stating its support for Welsh language speakers and that an application be launched for a meeting with the University's Vice-Chancellor Colin Riordan.

The third item on the Senate's agenda demanded the full support of the Students' Union concerning a 'National Day of Walk Out' by Cardiff's international students.

This action would take place on 'International Students' Day' and would contest the difficulties faced by many

international students studying in the UK. These include the suggestion that it is increasingly difficult for international students to study in the UK following the recent introduction of new immigration laws.

The fourth issue to be raised in November's meeting will concern the decriminalisation of sex work, which, according to the Senate, a number of students are likely to carry out alongside their studies.

This is apparently due to a number of factors, including rise in living costs and tuition fees. The motion declares their support for the "full decriminalisation of sex work" across the UK, as states that this would "ensure that sex workers feel able to report unsafe clients or violence at work without the worry of criminal repercussions".

Finally, the agenda reiterated the desire for an increased number of growing spaces around campus, as they believe these "provide substantial physical and mental health benefits to students".

A previous motion was passed by the Students' Union, however the agenda stated that a "lack of coordination has not brought this project to fruition".

The meeting will take place on the 3rd of November in the IV Lounge in the Heath campus.

**Pictured:** Last Year's Student Senate



“Sex work is apparently due to a number of figures, including the rise of living costs and tuition fees”



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## Reflections on my time at uni: Why it was an invaluable experience

**Kirsty Fardell**

**M**y time at uni flew by so quickly, yet it still feels like yesterday. Those weeks with only nine hours of lectures to attend seem so familiar yet such a world away from my routine now.

Everyone is guilty of wasting a lot of valuable time at university and I was no different. It seemed that the less I had to do the less I did altogether. Then third year crept up on me and I panicked about my prospects for the future – I suddenly realised that this comfortable, lazy bubble would burst soon and the elements of the real world would hit me like a tonne of bricks. I turned my spare time into something productive by becoming the first editor of the Advice Section for Gair Rhydd and threw myself into creating the weekly content. I took up netball and played every week, and as if over night my valuable time became valued. I had more to do so I got more done.

Looking back now I am so grateful that I stepped up in my final year, I got the most out of it that I could and now I am in a position where it has clearly all paid off. University is such a great time to try new things and develop yourself so that you are ready for this crazy real world, and only now I can appreciate the true value

of the whole experience. Without the extra activities I wouldn't be sat in the position I am currently in.

As soon as 2015 hit I was desperately searching for a graduate job for when I finished. Some of my friends doing other degrees had found something and were due to start as soon as they graduated. This definitely made me panic. I accepted the first offer I had, which was nothing that I ever imagined doing, but I soon found it difficult to imagine myself in that role within a couple of months. I kept persevering with the job search, looking at all of my options and spending hours on job websites trailing through looking for the perfect role.

I had ideas of what I wanted to do, but my key motivation to find a job was to stay in Cardiff. I am originally from Essex but the thought of moving back is not one I welcome. I had grown to love the place that I came to on a flipped-coin decision. It became home and I knew I didn't want to leave. The pressure was on to find something stable that would pay me well enough to afford living under my own roof.

Quite a few job applications came back with interviews – every one very different from the next, but with each my confidence grew. I started to look

forward to them. They made me realise what I was actually looking for from a job and taught me not to settle for less. A couple of offers came for low paid roles without any room for growth. In one interview, the job was completely different to what they had talked about on the phone. It was a lot less money, not permanent and extremely boring. I pulled them up on all of those points and turned down the role there and then as I knew I had been lied to which was never going to be a good start to a job.

My boyfriend, a primary school teacher, suggested that I would be good at doing what his consultant at Teaching Personnel does. They are an education agency that have kept him in full time work for a couple of years, so he had a good idea of what they do. I enquired about vacancies, and the manager called me for a chat about what sort of thing I was looking for. This happened just before my final exam at uni, so I was starting to lose hope with the job search and began looking for anything part time just to keep me going.

I was invited in for an interview, but I didn't go in thinking too much of it. I felt relaxed but confident and just wanted to find out more about the role in case it was another disap-

pointing interview. When I walked out of the room I was instantly set on the job - all my experience had lent itself to a role like this despite never having considered it. I knew this was the perfect job for me and I wanted it.

A couple more interviews followed which all went really well. The room for growth with Teaching Personnel was excellent, so I knew I had the prospect of a full career with them. When the job offer came I was ecstatic, I had landed myself this great job that I was really keen for and would mean I could stay living in Cardiff.

My days now are completely different. I start work at 7.30am every day and finish at 5. I spend my time finding the perfect jobs in schools for so many people, setting them up from start to finish and making sure they are still enjoying their job at the end of the week.

Looking back, I realise that the reason I have this job, which I love, is because of all the experience I have from university. In my interview my manager wanted to know everything about my role as editor, my degree content, and even what I did for fun.

Everything you do at uni counts towards something in your future, so it is definitely worth making the most of it.

**Pictured:** Main building, Cardiff University (Photographer: Jeremy Segrott)

“ Looking back now I am so grateful that I stepped up in my final year, I got the most out of it that I could and now I am in a position where it has clearly all paid off ”

“ Looking back, I realise that the reason I have this job, which I love, is because of all the experience I have from university ”



# Long distance relationships: Making the journey worth it



**Pictured:**  
If you love each other, you can make it work (Source: stokpic.com)

**Charley Griffiths**

When starting university, many couples worry about how they will maintain a long distance relationship. Maybe it's because you didn't get into the same university, or you needed/wanted to go to different places for your specific degree. Perhaps the other has already graduated, or simply chosen to stay at home. Whatever the circumstances, there are plenty of ways you can make it work for the both of you.

The most important thing to do when in this situation is to talk regularly. We live in an age where technology allows us to communicate easily with each other. Skype, Facetime, Snapchat, and social media in general give us that 'face to face' experience. Having said that, don't forget the obvious text or phone call. It doesn't take long to drop a message in to check on how the other has been doing, and see how their day has been. It's a simple way to show that you care and despite the distance, they are never far from your mind.

A simple phone call to hear each other's voices can really make a bad day better. For the old romantics out there who want to get back to basics, letter writing can be a really personal and sweet way to keep in contact

with each other. Plus, it is always exciting to get something in the post that isn't a dodgy takeaway menu.

When it's time to make the trip to visit your other half at their respective home, driving isn't always an option for everyone. I would definitely recommend investing in a railcard to cut the cost of train journeys. Book as far in advance as possible to save money. The same applies to coach journeys. Alternatively, if you have friends who live in the same place as your partner, see if you can lift share with them if they are visiting home for a weekend.

The important thing to remember is that you should try and take it in turns wherever possible when it comes to visiting. Not only is this fair money and time wise, but if one person is always the one doing the travelling, it could potentially cause stress, un-enthusiasm or resentment, and therefore a disagreement and unnecessary strain on your relationship. Another thing to consider, is always knowing when the next visit will be. It can certainly help the wait go faster if you have a date to look forward to.

It is also important to remember that there are benefits to long distance! It helps you become more independent as you are not in each

other's hair all of the time. You can go out with your friends and not feel guilty for leaving them at home; you can throw yourself into your work with no distractions, or even little things like watching what you want to watch on TV. This then makes the time you do spend together even more special. Plus, you have more to catch up on when you do see each other. There may even be advantages you hadn't even considered yet. If you are in different cities or universities, you get to experience what each location has to offer. You can meet new friends in the form of their housemates or course friends, or if you are finding that uni life is a bit too much, you have someone or somewhere to escape to for a little while.

You may be bombarded with a familiar yet ridiculous argument: how can you trust them? What if they cheat? You would never know! There are lots of new boys or girls at uni, oh god their flatmates are attractive... First things first: stop thinking this, don't do this to yourself. It is unproductive, and will cause you unnecessary stress and anxiety. Trust is important to establish in any relationship. As blunt as this may be, if you cannot trust each other, long distance will never work. If you trust

each other, there is never any need to worry.

Essentially, you know what is best for you. Each relationship is different, you just need to get into a routine. It may seem hard at the beginning, but it does get easier over time, and after a while you will wonder why you were so worried in the first place. If you are reading this, and worried about a new relationship that will be long distance, all I can say is: give it a go. You don't know until you try.

As a nervous first year, I was extremely worried about how my relationship and, living three hours and two train journeys apart, how it would impact us. People told me that long distance wouldn't work and there are 'plenty of new people at uni, why stick with him?' (Or even that we should break up now to save us the pain later. How rude.)

Yet three years later, we are still going strong, and love each other more because of the investment and effort we have jointly put in. The majority of our relationship has been long distance. Of course there have been a few problems, but no relationship, long distance or not, is perfect. In any relationship, if you love each other, you make it work. It really is as simple as that.

It is also important to remember that there are benefits to long distance! It helps you become more independent as you are not in each other's hair all of the time

It does get easier over time, and after a while you will wonder why you were so worried in the first place

## 5 ways

### to make the most of reading week

Reading week is a luxury only certain degree programmes get. Make the most of it folks.

#### 1. Read

That sounds really obvious but it's tempting to sit around and do nothing

over reading week. However you could easily get a couple of weeks worth of reading done over a couple of days. This means that you're not under so much pressure when you go back. Equally, you can catch up on any reading that you weren't able to do on time.

#### 2. Formative essays

If you have the opportunity to do a formative assignment, take advantage of it. You don't often get your work marked by a lecturer. This is a great way to discover your strengths and weaknesses early on so that you can improve and get a better grade in your marked summative assignments.

#### 3. Dissertation

If you feel that other modules have taken a front seat over the last five weeks, take a few days to concentrate solely on finishing off your reading and planning where you are going with your dissertation. You probably have a second supervision meeting in the couple of weeks after reading week, so take this opportunity to prepare well for it.

#### 4. Exams and essays

Start thinking about summative work. What weeks / topics in the

module did you enjoy? What do you think you will end up writing about? Can you make revision notes from the last five weeks ready for January? The more you get done now, the less preparation you have to do during the Christmas holidays.

#### 5. Be kind to yourself

Go out and have fun. Have a lie in. Go for a meal. Head home for a couple of days for a bit of pampering. You have a chance to recharge your batteries and relax a bit. A break from the stresses of uni is important too. It's going to be a busy Christmas break with January exams, so enjoy!

# What I did when I graduated...



**Gwen Williams**

“When my boss decided to sell his company and move to Spain, I was forced to think about where I wanted my career to go”

“Running my own business gave me a chance to be a stay at home mother and work at the same time”

**C**alvin Williams and Janet Morgan are the company directors of a small water cooler company in South Wales. They explain how business is a great opportunity regardless of your educational background.

**What are your roles in the company?**

**Calvin:** As company directors, we are in charge of making decisions and organising the daily running of the business, which includes setting out the rounds for the delivery drivers, managing orders of products from suppliers and customer orders and ensuring that there is cover in the event of staff illness. We are also heavily involved in promoting and expanding the business through sales and also deal with a lot of the finance.

**In terms of your career path, how did you come to a decision to start your own business?**

**Janet:** After obtaining a business degree, I worked as a manager for various local companies. When it came to a time that I wanted to start a family with my husband, it made sense to get involved in starting my own company so that I would be able to work from home. Therefore I went into business with my friend who had initially suggested the idea. Fifteen years later, despite some set backs due to the recession, I am proud that the business is still going strong.

**Calvin:** I left school at sixteen after obtaining some O-Levels and I worked for several different companies as a driver. Later on I began working as a driver for a water cooler company and worked my way up to the position of manager.

When my boss decided to sell his company and move to Spain, I was forced to think about where I wanted

my career to go. I then realised that there wasn't much competition in the water cooler industry but there was an increasing demand for the product. I decided to take a risk and start my own company along with my current business partner. Initially it was incredibly hard work but fifteen years on, our business continues to do well.

**Why did you choose this career path?**

**Calvin:** Although I had no qualifications, business had always interested me. Coming from an agricultural background, I was heavily involved with the commercial side of things from a young age. When I worked as a driver, my boss recognised that I was a natural salesman and had a business head on my shoulders. As a result, he offered me an opportunity to show him that I could contribute to the running of the business. With his guidance, I realised that I enjoyed the management side of business far more.

**Janet:** There are lots of jobs in business out there and if you have the initiative, you can create yourself a job by starting up a small company. It was an ideal career move for me due to having small children. Running my own business gave me a chance to be a stay at home mother and work at the same time.

**What do you like about your job?**

**Calvin:** Working for yourself can be very rewarding. Each day is different in the business world. I get to meet a lot of different types of people particularly when I am out promoting the business and selling products. Also, we are the bosses so are in control of where the business is going and the progression of our careers.

**Janet:** I agree with Calvin. Because

we are the bosses we can decide when we work and make our hours flexible.

**Is there anything about your job that you dislike?**

**Calvin:** Dealing with staff can be quite challenging sometimes, especially if you have known them for a long time.

**Janet:** I am not a fan of the accountancy side of the business. I much prefer dealing with customers on the phone. We make sure that the service we provide is the best possible and it's lovely to hear that our customers are satisfied with our work.

**Describe a typical work day for you?**

**Calvin:** I start work at around eight o'clock and prepare the driver's rounds for the following day. I then arrange any special deliveries and cooler sanitation services. While I am in the office, I answer the telephone, assist with office work and do a stock check in case any orders need placing.

Usually in the afternoon, I am out of the office either attending to special deliveries that have come in during the morning or promoting the business to other companies. I am also the transport manager and am responsible for ensuring that our company vehicles are in good working order by arranging that they are regularly serviced.

**Janet:** I start work around the same time. My role revolves around the office. I prepare delivery notes and invoices and am in charge of the accountancy. I also assist in answering the telephone and arranging meetings with customers and suppliers.

**Do you have any tips for a students that's aspiring to go into the same**

**career?**

**Janet:** Make sure you do lots of market research before you start your own business. You need to know everything there is to know about the product you're offering, including how you will initially finance the business venture and whether there is a gap in the market for it. Starting a business is incredibly hard work. You need to be dedicated as success does not come overnight. It could take a few years before you really see results. If you hit a rough patch, don't give up. You will get back what you put into it eventually and more!

**Did you consider any other career paths?**

**Calvin:** Helping my father to run his farm when I was young helped me develop skills that you don't learn in the classroom. I was very good at manual labour and used to work for a building company as a weekend and summer job during my time at school. I picked up many additional skills from that such as brick laying, plastering and carpentry therefore I did consider a job in the trades.

**Janet:** No I always thought that business was a wise option that would open many doors for me.

**What advice would you give your twenty year old self with hindsight?**

**Calvin:** Don't be afraid to have a go because with hard work and determination, you can do anything you want. The business world isn't easy and is often harsh but it can allow you to build something from nothing no matter what your educational background.

**Janet:** Grab every opportunity that comes your way as you will only regret the things that you didn't do when you were young.

**Pictured:** All suited up (Photographer: Flazingo Photos)

“The business world isn't easy and is often harsh but it can allow you to build something from nothing no matter your educational background”

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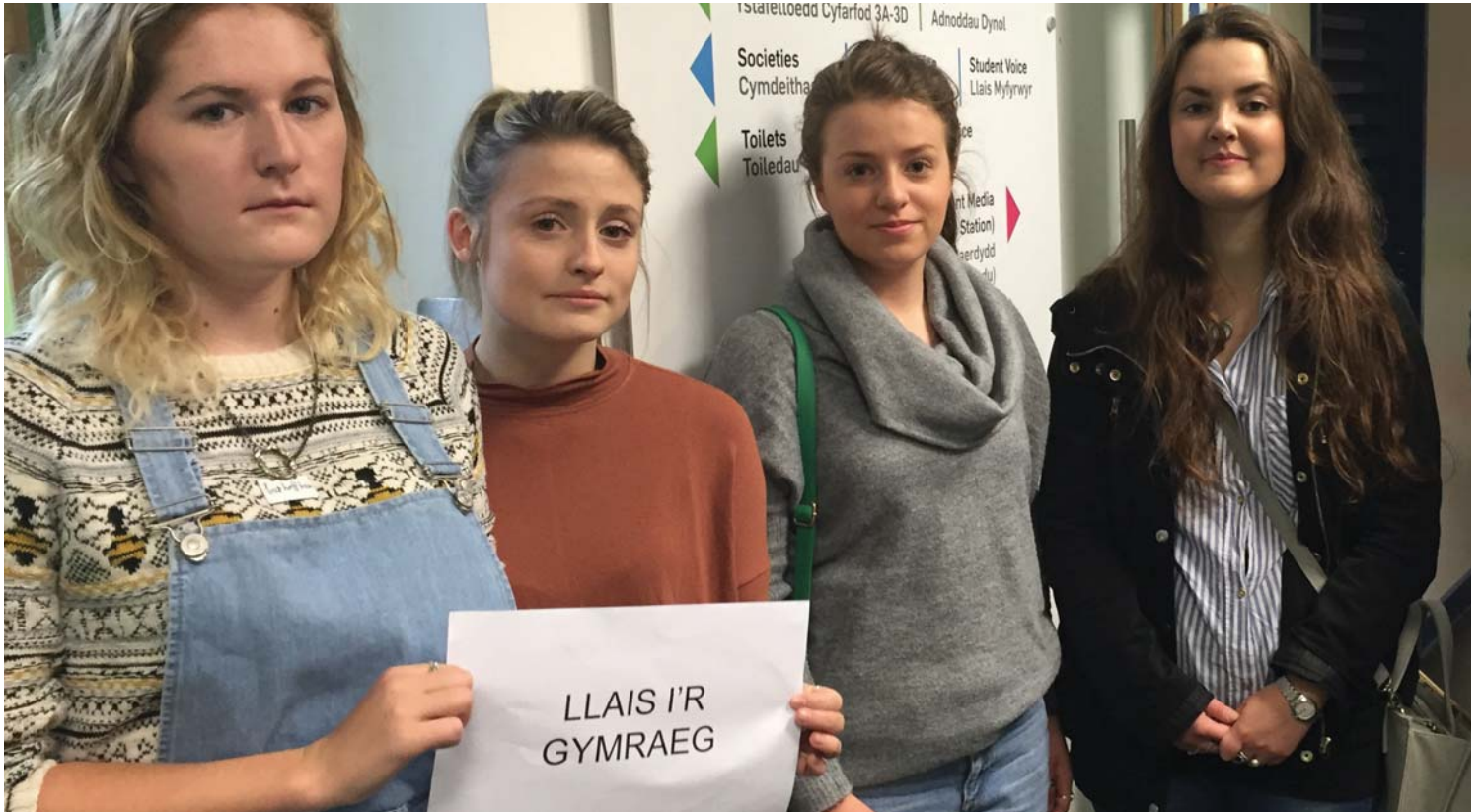
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## The Welsh language is not “pointless”

After one of the assistant editors of The Tab asked, “What is the fucking point?” of spending money to preserve the Welsh language, students voice their opposition

Dewi Alter  
Morgan  
Owen

“  
Over 21 per cent of the population are able to speak Welsh - a large proportion of any population  
”

It is with great regret that this comment piece must be written as a reaction to the abhorrent behaviour, which many of you may have seen, by Oli Dugmore (assistant editor of the Tab) regarding an article on the Welsh language.

The article in question, published by the Tab, was simply explaining the allocation of £1.8 million funding to Cardiff University to preserve the Welsh language. This had some students of Cardiff University standing mockingly beneath bilingual signs and questioning what the Welsh meant. We would like to alert these students that the Welsh says the same as the English, but in Welsh. Meaning the below is as the above but translated into the native language of Wales, the oldest surviving language of this country. The Welsh language was spoken before the Victorian era, before the Shakespearean era and long before William the Conqueror arrived on these shores. They have similar signs all across the country,

and also mainland Europe, such as Switzerland, where one can see signs in German, French, Romansch and Italian, possibly even English.

But what really caused hurt was Dugmore’s caption for the article on Facebook: ‘What is even the fucking point.’ The author of the comment seems to forget in which country he resides: Wales. A country which has only one official language recognised by law (The Welsh Language Act). That language is Welsh. Therefore, one of ‘the points’ is to respect the law, and respect the language of this country, of which this city is the capital. This city which has a vast number of Welsh speakers and many more people that understand it, and that number is ever growing thanks to the success of Welsh medium education.

Having offended so many, a member of the Welsh language community attempted to alert the Tab, via Facebook, of their error. In reply, we received further insulting comments.

We feel that if they had been said in relation to Middle Eastern languages they would be have been dubbed insulting, if not racist, and would have received instant condemnation by the institution and would have made headlines at BBC News, not just a comment piece in a student newspaper.

The replies, by Oli Dugmore quote: ‘... the language is pointless. A bare minority of people speak it, all of whom also speak English.’ Firstly over 21 per cent of the population are able to speak Welsh comfortably. This accounts to over a fifth; a large proportion of any population.

Dugmore then goes further and states that ‘Having two language [sic] instead of one is pointless.’ Mr Dugmore, more than half of the world’s population speak at least two languages. In no way is speaking multiple languages ‘pointless’: it boosts brain power. Multilingualism stalls the progress of neuro-degenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s and de-

mentia, expands career potential and opens up cultural opportunities unavailable to non-speakers. We would encourage anyone to learn as many languages as possible. Oli Dugmore’s remarks are simply ignorant and obnoxious.

Finally, as Welsh speakers, we feel aggrieved by such comments. But our grievance is also enhanced by the complete absence of support from the Student’s Union, which condemns any form of ethnic hatred (which could quite possibly in this instance be classed as racism), and also Cardiff University. This recent episode further reveals the urgent need for a full-time Welsh language officer to protect speakers and ensure that our voices are heard on campus and to ensure that such unacceptable behaviour is condemned. We have been exposed to this hatred as a result of the lack of support for the Welsh language and its speakers by the establishment. The need has never been greater to have a full time Welsh language officer.

**Pictured:** ‘Voice for the Welsh’ Welsh Language Protest at the Students’ Union on October 22nd (Photographer: Carwyn Williams)

“  
This reveals the urgent need for a full time Welsh Language officer  
”

# Should Germaine Greer come to Cardiff?

## YES: Censorship does not inform public debate

Eleanor Prescott

When Dapper Laughs was banned from performing at the SU last year, I was one of the majority of students who voted to ban. I found his whole shtick lazily sexist and like many others, was unimpressed the SU was offering space for him to parade it in. It was only on reflection, whilst we were all still patting ourselves on the back, that I wondered what we'd actually achieved.

The answer is I think, a whole lot of not much. Did we fight lad culture? Well... we stopped one prat from having an audience on one evening of his tour. Anyone who was going to see him probably saw him somewhere else anyway. Cardiff 1 – Sexists nil. At the very least though, Dapper's whole act was based on lad culture, and that did rather conflict with the SU's no-tolerance policy on it.

But sadly, Cardiff SU's gained a bit of an 'anti-free speech' reputation in recent years. If that sounds ridiculous, look again at Women's Officer Rachael Melhuish petitioning to cancel a Germaine Greer lecture here because of her views, a story that blew up this week.

Greer's offence according to Melhuish is "misogynistic views towards trans women, including continually misgendering trans women and denying the existence of transphobia altogether".

Then she went one step further, claiming that granting Greer the opportunity to speak means Cardiff University is actually endorsing those views. Horseshit. This isn't 1984 and 'thought crimes' aren't real.

Now Greer's views on transgender people are, in this writer's opinion, ignorant as well as utterly lacking in empathy and humanity. Awfully, views like Greer's play a role in implementing policies denying transgender rights, when the speaker holds a position of high influence. But it's total rubbish that allowing someone a platform to speak equates to endorsing their views. A university has to offer an impartial, equal platform because we include people of all faiths and backgrounds. That's just how a university works.

Walt Disney is believed to have been an anti-semitic, but if he was does this make fans of Disney then "by extension" endorsers of antisemitism? No, of course it doesn't. But we can still fight antisemitism more meaningfully than if we were to ban Disney films being shown in the SU, just to point out we object to it. Suggesting someone's stance on an issue taints every little thing associated with them in some way is illogical – but these are the same people implying I'm transphobic for questioning the point of a ban.



**Pictured:** Germaine Greer has caused a stir after saying transgender women are 'not women' (Source: BBC Newsnight)

Along with others who disagree with the ban for the same reasons, I've been lumped in by Melhuish of striving to "debate the validity of trans lives" (uhm, no) belonging to the "freeze peach brigade" and by Payton Quinn of not caring about trans people - ad hominem at its baffling worst. A transgender man I was debating with flew into a rage, told me I was ignorant and should never call myself an ally, basically for suggesting that if Greer's expressed views were legally defined as hate speech under UK law, she might have been arrested by now for broadcasting them on national television.

Overreactions aside; if we banned every speaker that some of the student body disagreed with on some issue, who'd be left to talk here? Most of us have come to university to expand our worldview, and banning speakers – however problematic - is counterproductive to that.

Even if Greer was going to bring those views up, the Q&A would have stopped the exchange being one-sided. No one had to hear Greer speak, but there will be people who were interested in what she was actually supposed to talk about. Instead of exercising a right to protest, you're calling for nobody to have a choice. Taking a stance against hate speech where it occurs is impor-

tant, but that just isn't what happened. So I raise Melhuish this: why not channel your opposition into promoting education around transgender rights? This would be useful to those who don't have as sophisticated a grasp on the subject. We're all ignorant of something, and without being transgender it's impossible to have an inherent understanding of those unique, varied experiences.

But sometimes potentially offensive questions need to be asked so that other people can learn, mainly in order to be less offensive. If people cut off conversation completely for fear of causing offence to a group - as is happening across university campuses in this country - no one benefits. In trying to be as inclusive as possible you make the pool of people allowed to speak yet smaller and smaller.

What this petition has done is bring transgender issues to the surface of discussion here at Cardiff. Melhuish trying to no-platform Greer hasn't really worked – it doesn't matter if she speaks here or anywhere else. Her transphobia has been broadcast nationally in the process of trying to ban one unrelated lecture. So don't waste the opportunity this exposure has given Cardiff University to raise transgender voices – we can counter that sort of ignorance, and we should.

## NO: The University shouldn't be giving a platform to promote transphobic speakers

Emma Tranter

Germaine Greer, writer and so-called feminist, has hit the headlines recently in a spectacular fashion. Not only does she have a substantial record of transphobia and trans-misogyny, she's also gone on this week to belittle one of the biggest trans cases of recent times, Caitlyn Jenner. In order to show support and solidarity with trans people, I personally believe the University should cancel the event.

Women's officer Rachael Melhuish, who created the online petition to cancel the event which now has over 2,600 signatures, told me: "The University should not be giving a platform to someone who is so frequently and explicitly transphobic. Greer is seen as a feminist icon but feminism that excludes trans women is not feminism. The harmful attitudes that Greer perpetuates directly contribute to a culture where trans women face high levels of violence and discrimination."

The oppression and violence that trans people face, particularly trans women, is by no means an exaggeration, as Greer suggested in her interview with Newsnight when asked about the petition. But how does she know? As a white, middle-class academic, I can imagine she has never received the discrimination that trans people do on a daily basis. Employment discrimination, a major issue is trans life, leads

to high rates of homelessness and often leaves trans women with few options besides sex work.

Suicide rates in the trans community are shockingly high – one study found that 84 per cent of respondents had considered suicide and 35 per cent had attempted it. Trans women, particularly trans women of colour, also face a horrific amount of physical violence, and often even murder – so much so that trans day of remembrance was created as an annual event to remember all the trans people murdered in the past year. As if Greer's presence in the university isn't insulting enough to trans students, her talk is scheduled just two days before this year's day of remembrance, which is the cherry on top of inappropriate cake.

The presence of such a vocal transphobe has a great impact on the trans students at Cardiff. Nonbinary trans student James says "I was really saddened to hear that my university is hosting Germaine Greer. Greer's offensive views and policing of gender, and of womanhood in particular, are completely at odds with the university's zero tolerance policy for acts of discrimination against minorities, including LGBT+ people. Misgendering trans people like myself is, to quote Laverne Cox, an act of violence."

Many people are concerned that no-

platforming in this way would censor and silence Greer, and is an affront to free speech. This, frankly, is ridiculous – Greer is a well-known public figure and respected academic, and whether or not this talk goes ahead, she has the reputation, audience and career history to access platforms that will reach an even wider audience. She has had books and many articles published over the span of her career, and cancelling this would not even prevent her from asserting her views elsewhere with a much wider reach than this talk will have. This is something often misunderstood about no-platforming – it is not about free speech, it is about the message inviting an individual with harmful and oppressive views to this institution sends to the most marginalised students within the university.

On many other occasions universities have not platformed harmful speakers. Feminist writer Julie Bindel has been given refusal several times due to her trans-misogyny and just last year here in Cardiff Dapper Laughs had a gig cancelled at the student union. Even the National Union of Students has a no-platform policy against a number of organisations including the EDL and BNP.

These incidents of no-platforming and protest are not about censoring these individuals, but about the impact

on marginalised students as a result of providing oppressive and harmful individuals with a platform. This is not the first time student activists have protested against Germaine Greer out of concern for trans students – earlier this year a protest event was held in Cambridge while she gave a talk at the Cambridge Union society.

Trans student activist Em Travis, who helped organise this protest, said "I wonder if those who dismiss TER-Fism [trans exclusionary radical feminism] and other transmisogyny as a mere difference of opinion, rather than recognising it as violence, have ever considered what it's like to be part of a community where a standard day involves news of another murder or suicide. I'm consistently astounded by the incapability of free speech warriors to recognise that verbal bigotry and physical violence, even when not perpetuated by the same person, are two handles of the same knife." Greer's views are not just an opinion, but a part of a larger societal problem that causes a vast amount of violence against trans people.

If our University really are committed to their policies of support for trans students, they would consider the message they send when paying a trans-misogynistic public figure to speak here, and cancel the talk.

“ Sadly, Cardiff's SU has gained a bit of an anti-free speech reputation in recent years... it's total rubbish to say that allowing someone to speak equates to endorsing their views ”

“ In order to show support and solidarity with transgender people, I personally believe the University should cancel the event ”

“ While Greer's views on transgender people are, in my opinion, ignorant, if we banned every speaker that some of the student body disagreed with, who'd be left to talk here? ”

“ Cancelling this event would not prevent her from asserting her views elsewhere...this is not about censoring, but about the impact on students as a result of providing Greer with a platform ”

# Traffic-free day gets green light

George Caulton

**D**o you live in Cathays, Heath or near the city centre? Are you aware that you are inhaling carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and other hazardous air pollutants every day? Do you drive your car small distances on a daily basis? If so, then you are potentially contributing to the intoxication and pollution of Cardiff's landscape and fellow beings.

With this in mind, Cardiff City Council have recently announced a 'traffic free day' throughout Cardiff city centre one day a year in order to reduce the devastating impacts of air pollution in the city. Knowing that tens of thousands of people die annually due to the impacts of air pollution, Cardiff's councillors possess the hope that more cities will catch on to

Cardiff's attitude towards lowering levels of air and noise pollution.

Whilst air pollution rates are being assessed as 'moderate', recent years have proven that the rates of noise and light pollution within Cardiff City Centre have increased to a 75 per cent risk, which indeed advocates a cause for necessary action.

Councillor Richard Cook recently stated in an interview with ITV Wales that "vehicles would be prevented from coming into the centre of Cardiff, say perhaps from the Taff past the Castle, up to the Civic Centre. And those streets would be given over to the citizens of Cardiff to enjoy."

On an international basis many cities such as London, Paris and Brussels have all contributed to the suc-

cess and aim of decreasing the rates of air pollution, maintaining and promoting an eco-friendly society.

On September 20th 2015, Brussels Capitol region was entirely free of cars, between the hours of 9:30am-7pm. Whilst cars were denied access, public transport, such as buses, were still running in order to promote the use of these public facilities and to minimize the rates of pollution infusing the air.

Despite many citizens of Cardiff and London finding the latest announcement 'tedious' and 'frustrating', Cardiff Council hope that 'Traffic-Free days' will encourage the use of walking and cycling within the city centre to create an ever growing eco-friendly community. In addition to this, the Council have adopted

an aim to create 'food-for-thought' about the harmful effects of pollution rather than making the assumption that the rate of pollution in Cardiff will never affect them. Many people are quite ignorant to the impact of emissions in their busy day-to-day lives.

Considering that many of the participating European cities are only pursuing this day for 24 hours a year, there can be no real reason why the 'traffic free' day in Cardiff city centre should have negative associations. Instead, the fact that communities are attempting to structure days in order to attempt to decrease the levels of pollution in city centres, should, in itself, be welcomed, in an attempt as it endeavours to become a more eco-friendly society.

“  
Whilst cars are denied access, public transport is still running in order to promote the use of these public facilities  
”



## On the right track?

Train services in Cardiff were criticised over the Rugby World Cup period, why is this still a major problem?

Brett Jones

“  
Violent crimes on trains had risen by eight per cent and sexual offences on trains had risen by 25 per cent  
”

**N**o matter what team you may have been supporting in this year's Rugby World Cup you were virtually guaranteed to have been facing a bumpy ride. Even if your team was not in the 'Group of Death' you may still have had to go up against the giants of New Zealand, France or Ireland. Whoever was your team you knew that your journey was not going to be a straightforward one.

And if you were a fan travelling by rail to the Millennium Stadium then that might have been doubly true.

Trips to and from Cardiff, for rugby fans, have been plagued by problems. Social media has become a very welcoming home for the complaints of those with a grievance, and the Rugby World Cup is no exception. There have even been photographs posted online of passengers sleeping in the luggage compartments of trains.

First Great Western (FGW) has

admitted that there was "severe overcrowding" during the Rugby World Cup matches that were held in Cardiff. In a statement they said, "Although we warned customers services were likely to be very busy and to travel early, the number of people wishing to travel is slightly higher than predicted, and passenger numbers have been less evenly spread throughout the day than we would normally expect." But frankly that is dodging the issue.

'Severe overcrowding' is another way for FGW to say that they underestimated the number of people who would be demanding their services. It is just another way for a business to lay the blame of their own failings at the feet of their customers.

This is not simply a comfort issue either; there is also a very clear safety aspect to all of this. Earlier this year British Transport Police released fig-

ures which showed that violent crimes on trains had risen by 8 per cent and sexual offences on trains had risen by 25 per cent. These kind of crimes often occur on overcrowded trains because of the increased chance for confusion and more of a chance for perpetrators to blend in with the crowd.

To be fair, in a perverse kind of way the sexual offence figures can be seen as good news. It was thought that up to 90 per cent of such crimes on trains went unreported, if victims are feeling more confident in coming forward that is obviously to be welcomed.

The problem is that the companies who got the figures for the Rugby World Cup so wrong are going to be in the position to make similar decisions again, and we have no reason to think that they won't get those decisions just as pathetically wrong again. And FGW doesn't have a great track record (pun unintended) in this area.

In 2010 six of the ten most overcrowded train services in Britain were thought to be run by FGW, the second most overcrowded of all was the Swansea to London run. Since then things have been going in the right direction, in 2013 only three of the most overcrowded journeys were run by FGW and last year that figure was down to two. But after the mismanagement of this year's Rugby World Cup I can only see that figure going up.

World Cup transport decisions get a lot of attention and companies tend to react quickly if they are getting a lot of negative attention, but once that attention goes away the impetus for a company to respond to that pressure also goes away. Unfortunately it seems that the impetus is still on the customer to keep up the pressure on train companies if we want to see them trying to do a good job.

**Pictured:**  
Left: A Cardiff Bus (Photographer: welshpete2007 via flickr)  
Right: A First Great Western train service (Photographer: Ian Britton)

# Veganism and vegetarianism: no laughing matter



Daniel Heard

“If these figures are true, especially in the society we live in today, then why is there still a stigma attached to veganism and vegetarianism?”

Want to hear some anti-vegan jokes? Of course you do! “What do you call a vegetarian who goes back to eating meat?” “Someone who lost their veg-inity!” Haha! Hoho! Oh, brilliant, right? Hey, here’s another one - “How many vegans does it take to change a lightbulb?” “Two, one to change it and one to check for animal ingredients!” I mean, you couldn’t make these up! (Actually, someone with a terrible sense of humour did, but still.) Okay, one more! “Do you know that vegetarians have a 20 per cent higher life expectancy?” No? Seriously, they do. And that’s no joke. In fact, both vegetarians and, perhaps more frequently, vegans, are the subject of ridicule on a daily basis, simply because they don’t eat meat. Well, I wonder who the joke is on now...

It has been revealed recently that processed meats - such as bacon, sausages and ham - cause cancer, according to the World Health Organization. In its report released in the last week, it said that consuming 50g of processed

meat a day - which isn’t even two slices of bacon - increased the chance of developing colorectal cancer by 18 per cent. In the UK, around six out of every 100 people get bowel cancer at some point in their lives. Meaning, theoretically, if everyone had an extra 50g of bacon a day for the rest of their lives, then the risk would increase by nearly 20 per cent to around seven in 100 people getting bowel cancer. And that’s almost as awful as some of the anti-vegan jokes I found online.

If these figures are true, especially in the society we live in today, then how is there still so much stigma around vegetarianism and veganism? Vegetarian diets have been linked to lower risks of several chronic diseases, including high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, diabetes and heart disease. An estimated three million Britons, around five per cent, are vegetarian and never eat meat or fish, and to gain more of an insight, I spoke to Faith Clarke, a second year Journalism student and vegetarian, about her experiences, and how, in effect, it has

changed her life.

“I’ve been a vegetarian for a couple of years now and have recently made a gradual transition to veganism. Personally, my decision to not eat meat and animal products rests predominantly on ethical reasoning, though I like to think my dietary choices are both healthier and more environmentally-friendly also. I frequently get asked why I don’t eat meat, and it is a question I struggle to answer. It is not because I lack the passion to elaborate, but rather because I dislike the way in which I am made out to be the ‘odd’ one, when in my mind I find it hard to believe that people can eat meat and dairy products without some kind of guilty conscience.”

“There are so many myths that surround vegan and vegetarianism, with ‘you can’t meet nutritional requirements’ being the most popular. If people took the time to research the elements of a stable vegan diet they would discover that you can quite easily encompass everything you need to be healthy - if anything, with a lot

more ease than a meat-based diet. I also think that the stigma surrounding veganism is largely to do with a lack of education; people fear breaking away from the diet they have been raised on because they simply do not know what else they can eat. I hope that the recent revelations concerning the negative impacts of meat consumption make people think twice about what they are consuming; if not for ethical reasons, for their own health and well-being.”

Ditching meat and fish in favour of a vegetarian diet can even have a dramatic effect on the health of your heart. A recent study of 44,500 people in England and Scotland showed vegetarians were 32 per cent less likely to die or need hospital treatment as a result of heart disease. Incredible really, that there remains so much of a stigma around, what is, undoubtedly, a better way of living your life. Though I’m not vegan or vegetarian, I fully understand the reasoning behind this monumental decision. And that is no joke.

**Pictured:** Why is this healthy way of life the topic of such jokes? (Photographer: Koloreak Salgai)

“Ditching meat and fish in favour of a vegetarian diet can even have a dramatic effect on the health of your heart”

## Why are reading weeks exclusive to certain subjects?

Joe Fletcher

“Many thus believe that a degree programme in a humanity involves less work”

Calling all students! No - calling all students of the humanities? Or should I say, calling all students of very particular humanities? Reading week is back. For many, these last five weeks have been nothing short of torture, and a chance to recuperate and catch-up will be swell. Reading week is a much-maligned and often-mocked university tradition, whereby those students reading the most reading-intensive subjects, have two ‘reading’ weeks off a year to, well, read.

Until the beginning of this academic year, my own opinion on reading week was one of unflinching opposition and scorn. Humanities students have very few contact hours, which leaves them lots of ‘free’ time in which to work independently anyway, so an

additional two weeks off per year are surely unnecessary?

I should add that I am a history student. Indeed, we history students do not have hordes of lectures to attend. Many of our hours are spent working independently, and we won’t be hounded down if we don’t do the necessary reading. After all, it’s impossible to take attendance at private study-sessions. But come essay-time, who has done the work, and who hasn’t, will tell.

However, without the sacred ‘contact hours’, many thus believe that a degree programme in a humanity involves less work than, say, a degree in a science. In some ways this is true. The amount of work a student must do to get by is less. But university study is very different from your A-

levels: a student must do more than ‘get by’ to be successful. Scribbling down your friend’s answers at the last minute to avoid the reproach of a teacher is no longer sufficient. My father used to remind me that, to an extent, I was at school to pass, not necessarily to learn. Though grading is naturally still important at university, work at this higher level is more about learning and bettering yourself.

The theory that because we have fewer contact hours we have less work to do is completely invalid. I’d bet with confidence that a history student who is fully-engaged with his/her course works as hard as anyone (medics and dentists aside, perhaps).

Once we view various degree-programmes on an equal-footing, the other question that arises is whether

or not certain subjects are more entitled - or even more conducive - to a reading week than others.

Let’s take history as an example once again. It is something which cannot possibly be learned in a classroom for hours on end. A student is taught as much by the historians behind library-books and journals, as they are by those they come face-to-face with during the week. Lectures and seminars provide a skeleton for independent research. Practical application of the subject comes in writing essays. Such a degree can therefore probably afford two weeks ‘off’ during the academic year. Degrees such as chemistry, wherein learning relies on experiments (i.e. lab-work) and more structured teaching, cannot be so accommodating.

“The theory that we have fewer contact hours so have less work to do is completely invalid”

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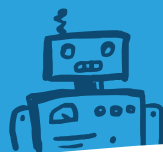
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# politics



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## Tax credit changes to come But House of Lords questioned

Conor  
Holohan

Labour is falling apart as the Blairites struggle to countenance a leadership committed to senile, Michael Foot-era politics. Yet public discussions have been dominated by the Tories' contentious tax credit reforms. For the Labour Party, the past few weeks have been an optimum time to bury bad news, as the tax credit row continues to overshadow their internal quarrel and commotion.

The Conservatives are not without their own internal strife: multiple Tory backbenchers and cabinet ministers have found themselves dissenting over Chancellor George Osborne's cuts to the tax credit system, which was invented by Conservative Lord Howe, and introduced by Gordon Brown during the last Labour government. Since then, tax credits have become a subsidy to employers of the poor, allowing them to continue paying workers low rates, whilst mugging the taxpayer to the tune of £34 billion in the process.

Osborne's cuts would help to find £4.4 billion of the £14 billion he has pledged to cut from the annual welfare budget, but fiscal assessment of the cuts has shown that 3.2 million low-paid families would lose £1,300 a year on average. The tax credit reforms have been of significant concern to Members of Parliament across the parties, and now it would appear that the Chancellor will indeed be making changes to his proposed Bill. This is in light of it being

defeated twice in the House of Lords on Monday evening.

The defeat of Osborne's propositions - by a majority of 17 - has raised some serious constitutional issues about the relationship between elected and unelected entities of our governing system. The upper chamber is composed of 249 Conservative peers, 212 Labour, 111 Lib Dem, 177 crossbenchers and 60 bishops and other 'experts'. All members of the house are not held accountable by elections, but are peers until they die. The composition of the Lords means that the Conservatives do not hold a majority there as they do in the Commons. That the unelected upper chamber is to the left of the incumbent government and House of Commons, who voted in favour of the Chancellor's changes. The Lord's decision to overturn Osborne's tax credit reforms is of significance as it breaches the constitutional convention that the upper chamber cannot block changes to the law to do with tax or public spending.

The principle is considered by most to have been established in 1911, following peers' decision to block the Liberal Party's 'People's Budget'. The prominent and influential eurosceptic Tory MP Jacob Rees-Mogg insists that the convention of 'no taxation without representation' dates back to the 15th century. Regardless of when the convention was conceived, it is at least 100 years old, and is based on the core idea that de-

terminations on tax and spending should always fall upon elected officials who can be held accountable at elections.

David Cameron's reaction to this, it is being speculated, could be to flood the House of Lords with Conservative peers by appointment, as Downing Street have signalled a review of the unelected House over 'constitutional issues'. The Prime Minister's spokesman has refused to rule out a drastic change in the political composition of the Lords.

Speaking about the constitutional crisis beside the Thames, Mayor of London Boris Johnson said it was 'wrong of the House of Lords to get in the way of the sovereign expression of the will of Parliament' and said that the House was 'in the wrong, as well as 'in grave danger of pushing its luck'. Finally, on the tax credit reforms, Johnson expressed that he felt 'corporations should be paying people more'. Though the London Mayor does make a good point, the independent Institute for Fiscal Studies have found that the rise in the minimum wage - which is part of the 'package' containing the tax credit reforms - will not offset poor households' immediate losses, and smaller businesses will struggle to employ due to the cost of doing so.

Following the tax credit reforms' defeats in the Lords, along with Conservative MPs scrutiny and Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell's letter to Osborne saying he would not

gloat if the Chancellor made a U-turn on the changes, Osborne is in 'listening mode'. He has, since the vote in the Lords, made clear that he will work to lessen the negative impact of the reforms with 'transitional help' for those affected. Speaking during questions to the Treasury, the Chancellor said 'we will continue to reform tax credits and save the money needed so that Britain lives within its means, while at the same time lessening the impact on families during the transition'.

He will set out these changes to the tax credit reforms in his Autumn Statement at the end of November. Still, he pledges that 'we are as determined as ever to have the low tax, low welfare, high wage economy that Britain needs'. Bending on the issue puts to bed some recent claims that the Conservative leadership is too presidential. An unnamed senior Tory MP told the BBC that 'since they won a majority, the leadership think they're God's gift to politics'.

A reform of the House of Lords is long overdue - the proportion of Liberal Democrat peers in comparison to their mere eight seats in the Commons is a blatant sign of this. Some in Parliament would like the second chamber to be subject to elections, whilst others would like a complete abolition of the Lords. In voting against the will of our elected representatives, the House of Lords may have become the proverbial turkeys voting for Christmas.

“ He will set out these changes to the tax credit reforms in his Autumn Statement at the end of November ”

“ The defeat of Osborne's propositions - by a majority of 17 - has raised some serious constitutional issues ”



**Pictured:** George Osborne is under pressure to change his plans (Photographer: mrgarethm via flickr) The House of Lords could face some tough reforms (Source: UK Parliament via flickr)

# Plaid Cymru feeling confident and aiming for government at Conference



Brett Jones

The Plaid Cymru Conference this year has been a hopeful affair, but more than that, it has had the sense of a group of people who have found a direction. If there was one message to take away from this year's conference it was this: May 2016.

May 2016 is a date to put in your diary if you're going to be in Wales, or near it. On the 5th of May 2016 Wales will go to the polls again, and Plaid feel confident they'll see an end to 17 years of Labour dominance.

The Welsh Assembly Elections next year will arrive at an intriguing time for all the main parties. For Labour, who have held the balance of power at the Welsh Assembly since it was formed in 1999, it will inevitably be read as an approval rating on Carwyn Jones and Jeremy Corbyn as the party tries to rebuild after this year's defeat. The Conservatives, it will be seen as an indicator of how their Westminster majority is being received further afield. It could be a

long prayed resurrection for the Liberal Democrats, or the last nail in a coffin.

But for Plaid Cymru, May 2016 seems to hold up more hope than for any of the other parties. Coming from a historically low position of holding only 11 Assembly seats, they're coming back before a much brighter back-drop this time. The closer than expected Scottish Independence vote and the SNP virtual-annihilation of the other parties at the General Election, indicates that there is a promising future for nationalism.

And Plaid certainly doesn't want to hold the SNP at arm's length. Plaid's leader, Leanne Wood, appeared alongside Nicola Sturgeon at the SNP conference in Aberdeen and Nicola Sturgeon returned the favour in Aberystwyth this October.

They both discussed the "good ideas" that the parties are putting forward, a complacent Labour party and a country that's ready for change, that could

be ready for Plaid Cymru and a Leanne Wood First Minister.

Liam Bowen, Chair of Cardiff University's Plaid Cymru Society, described the speeches as "powerful, charismatic and tactful".

But the society were also quick to urge a note of caution. Scotland has often rushed where Wales has feared to tread, and nobody wants to be seen to be taking a good result in May for granted. "One thing I think we, as young members of Plaid Cymru, were guilty of during the last General Election was to be too optimistic," said Liam Bowen about the SNP's electoral successes.

"The feeling within our society is that we need to be proud and supportive of the SNP's accomplishments (and we can't wait to get out to Scotland to help during the next referendum!). But to remember that we are our own Party. Wales is a totally different animal to Scotland. The Scottish people have



seen the light and turned their back on Labour for good, while we are still waiting for the people of Wales to see how Labour has failed us, and will continue to do so under the lackluster leadership of Carwyn Jones."

But he was also keen to stress Plaid's original ideas saying, "I was particularly proud of Plaid Youth's motions on a Youth Parliament for Wales and to end the stigma attached with mental health - both of which were accepted by all."

Looking ahead to next year, it's clear from Leanne Wood's speech that Labour's 'failed' 17 years in government, and particularly the NHS in Wales, will be their fighting point. She urged voters to look again at Plaid, a party that offers the change that Wales needs.

What could be Plaid's great chance is also its great challenge; it seeks to profit from the victories of the SNP whilst forging an identity distinct from the SNP, its campaign for May will be informative to say the least.

**Pictured:** Leanne Wood with the rest of the Shadow Cabinet at their conference (Photographer: Keith Morris via Plaid Cymru flickr) (left) and local Plaid Cymru candidate Glyn Wise (right)

## Draft Wales Bill could address constitutional matters, but has limited scope and removes powers

Adam Muspratt

The first draft of the controversial Wales Bill was met with criticism after it was unveiled by the government last Tuesday. Dubbed by the Welsh office as a "radical package", the Bill proposes a number of powers to be handed to Wales, chiefly; energy, transport, and the running of the assembly. It also features a much expected reserved powers model, which means that the Assembly will be able to legislate on anything that is a devolved matter, rather than asking the Supreme Court all the time.

Of course some areas will be reserved for Westminster, such as defence and foreign affairs. The main issue with the current Assembly is that it can only make laws in a few areas which are specifically conferred to it. The Bill seeks to address this by casting a wider net of what powers are devolved. But, as policing and the legal system will not be devolved it seems this will make life difficult.

First minister Carwyn Jones was incensed by the Bill, stating that it would

cause a surge in Welsh nationalism, and even went on to state that it treats the Welsh like "second class citizens". His main concern with the Bill was its inclusion of measures that allow English ministers to veto on Welsh legislation, he also stated: "I can't see how it could possibly pass".

It was also made clear that only three bills would have been able to pass under this Assembly had these laws been enforced in 2011, and certainly not the changes on organ donation coming into force in December. Similar sentiments were echoed by the leader of the Plaid Cymru, Leanne Wood, she said: "It only implements a fraction of the issues already agreed by all parties years ago. Effectively, the bill as it stands, enshrines Wales' status as a second-class nation in the UK."

In defence of the Bill on offer to Wales, Welsh Secretary Stephen Crabb has stated that its defeat would be a "massive own goal" for Cardiff Bay politicians. A spokesman for the Welsh Secretary also said, "The accusation that

the draft Wales Bill provides 'English veto' over Welsh laws is nonsense. The first minister is playing a dangerous game by peddling this nationalistic rhetoric."

Andrew Davies, the Welsh Conservative leader, also welcomed the draft and was critical of the stance taken by the first minister. He said: "For the sake of Wales, it's absolutely crucial that Labour's first minister backs this draft Bill and acknowledges the hugely positive benefits it will bring."

The Bill has inevitably caused an eruption of partisanship from both sides. While Stephen Crabb is dismissively labelling anyone critical of the bill as an over zealous nationalist, the critics of the bill can be accused of unhelpful sabre rattling, particularly in relation to the language used by the first minister in which he reduces the bill as an attack by the English. Carwyn Jones' talk of "constitutional crisis" is over emotional and disingenuous of what the Bill proposes. The Bill would in actuality address many constitutional matters and has the po-

tential to drastically alter the Welsh political process.

As outlined by Roger Scully, a professor at Cardiff University, the Bill would allow the halting of fracking, control over the age of persons to vote, the number of constituencies, the number of members running each constituency, and the system by which the Assembly is returned. This could mean that the voting age could be lowered to 16 by the 2021 Assembly election.

Perhaps the Bill can be seen as somewhat limited in scope and there is the argument to be made that any powers devolved to Scotland and Northern Ireland should also be devolved to Wales.

At the end of the day, given the amount of vitriol the Bill has received from the Welsh political class, it is highly doubtful that it will become legislation, certainly in its current incarnation. Regardless, the outcome depends on the decisions made by the Welsh affairs committee who will scrutinise the Bill in November before it is introduced to parliament in the New Year.

“ He will set out these changes to the tax credit reforms in his Autumn Statement at the end of November ”

# The new “Special Relationship”

Sam  
Patterson

“  
Saudi Arabia is the single largest customer of the UK arms industry”

Saudi Arabia is one of the richest countries in the middle east, it is the world's largest oil exporter, and it is the largest consumer of UK manufactured arms and military equipment. It was revealed back in June that the desert Kingdom was secretly aided by the UK in its 2013 election to the United Nations Human Rights Council. Despite having ascended to the UNHRC, Saudi Arabia's human rights record is deplorable, and in response to heavy criticism of this special relationship from both the opposition and from within the party, the UK has scrapped a £5.9 million contract intended to provide training programs for prisons within the authoritarian kingdom.

The story of Ali Mohammad Baqir al-Nimr has received worldwide publicity. Arrested for taking part in protests in 2012, then 17, Ali faces beheading and then crucifixion (in that order). Whilst Ali's situation warrants serious discussion indeed, it must be remembered that he is one of many in a country that executes one person every other day for acts which are not even considered criminal in Western Europe, such as blasphemy and sorcery.

Even when discussing the death penalty, we run the risk of trivialising the contemptible breadth of Saudi Arabia's seemingly unending human rights abuses. Women are unable to drive, they require the permission of a male relative when trying to obtain a passport, marrying, travelling or applying for work/education. Migrant workers, 9 million of whom constitute more than half of the countries workforce, are routinely exploited and abused. Wages are retained and working/living conditions are inexcusable given the exorbitant wealth of many of the companies they labour for. Physical abuse and forced confinement are regular occurrences, and the workers are often the victims of racist abuse, being largely of African, and South-Asian

origin. There is no formal written penal code in Saudi Arabia, and judges are able to try people under incredibly vague charges such as “trying to distort the reputation of the kingdom”, or “breaking allegiance with the ruler”. Miscarriages of justice are absolutely routine; defendants are often held for months without charge, and children can be tried as adults if they show visible signs of puberty.

So why is it, in light of all this, that the UK aided Saudi Arabia in joining the United Nations Human Rights Council? This is exactly what Jon Snow asked Cameron six times before he received an answer in an incredibly awkward C4 interview: “It's because we receive from them important intelligence and security information that keeps us safe.” - Cameron. This is to some extent true; the UK does receive intelligence gathered by Saudi sources.

But this is not the only reason for our special relationship with this authoritarian regime, nor is it the most important reason for this relationship. Saudi Arabia is the single largest customer of the UK arms industry, and the payment for billions of pounds worth of equipment and vehicles is made in the form of crude oil, up to hundreds of thousands of barrels of which are delivered to Britain every single day.

British made Tornado GR4 and Typhoon aircraft have played a major role in the Saudi led bombing campaign in Yemen, an on-going conflict with Iranian funded Houthi rebels. The Saudi bombing campaign has caused at least 2,300 civilian casualties in the last six months; Amnesty International has urged the British government to investigate whether or not weapons and vehicles supplied to the Saudis have been used to kill civilians. Saudi Arabia used its position on the UNHRC to block a UN investigation into possible war crimes, delegating the responsibility



**Pictured:** Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond with Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir in London, 26 August 2015. (Photo: Foreign Office via Flickr)

instead, to the Saudi-allied Yemeni government. This effectively means, that Saudi Arabia will be investigating Saudi Arabia's human rights abuses.

The government has just scrapped a £5.9 million prison consultancy contract with the Saudi regime. Jeremy Corbyn wrote to the Prime Minister urging him to cancel the deal because of the sentencing of Ali Mohammad Baqir al-Nimr. The government provided no explanation for the scrapping of the deal, but it would be naive to assume that Corbyn's protest was the only factor. Criticism of Cameron's relationship with the Saudis has been mounting recently within the conservative party as well as outside, attempts to cancel the contract by justice secretary Michael Gove had previously been resisted by Cameron and Phillip Hammond, the foreign secretary.

Despite the fact that criticism of the government's relationship with the Saudis is not exclusively the pre-occupation of the opposition, the Saudi ambassador to the UK, Mohammed bin Nawaf bin Abdulaziz, lashed out against Corbyn in a Daily Telegraph column. He

said: “an alarming change in the way Saudi Arabia is discussed in Britain” has taken place in the last few weeks. “One recent example of this mutual respect being breached was when Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Opposition, claimed that he had convinced Prime Minister David Cameron to cancel a prison consultancy contract with Saudi Arabia worth £5.9m.” He flatly denied the import of criticisms of his regime's human rights abuses, saying: “If the extensive trade links between the two countries are going to be subordinate to certain political ideologies, then this vital commercial exchange is going to be at risk.” “We want this relationship to continue but we will not be lectured to by anyone. Hasty decisions prompted by short-term gains often do more harm than good in the longer term.”

Criticism of our government's relationship with the Saudis, and of their human rights abuses, are clearly beginning to bother the Saudi Arabian government. In the C4 interview with Jon Snow, Cameron said that he would “look for an opportunity” to raise the issue of Ali Mohammad Baqir al-Nimr. As of yet, no such attempt on his part has been made.

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This effectively means, that Saudi Arabia will be investigating Saudi Arabia's human rights abuse”

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The desert Kingdom was secretly aided by the UK in its 2013 election to the United Nations Human Rights Council”

## MPs vote against removal of ‘tampon tax’

Luke Brett

Jaffa Cafes and pitta bread are exempt from Value Added Tax (VAT) all together, as the tax

code deems them basic necessities. VAT is 20 per cent on luxury items such as a watch or a car, and five per cent on items recognised as between necessary and luxury, applying tampons and sanitary products.

Due to this, there has been outrage and a campaign to abolish the tampon tax all together, eventually being debated and voted on in the Commons earlier this week after 250,000 people signed a petition calling on the government to axe the tax.

The petition on change.org had the message: “We need to know why the Government still taxes sanitary products on luxurious grounds, but not helicopters, the maintenance of our private jets, or crocodile steaks.”

Campaigners argued women could save up to £922, based on an average of women spending £18, 450 on sanitary products over the course of their lifetime.

However, MPs voted against the removal of VAT on Tampons and other sanitary products, by 305 to 287 votes. HMRC defended the tax, arguing it was the lowest in the EU under EU law.

The Prime Minister's official spokeswoman said: “The Government sympathises with the issue here and understands the concerns that are being expressed.”

When in government, Labour slashed the rate from 17.5 per cent, imposed in the 1970s, to five per cent. Although, they were prevented from lowering the VAT on the product any further by EU rules.

Conservative Treasury minister, David Gauke, has stated that the government will attempt to negotiate changes on this policy when Britain renegotiates its membership with the EU ahead of a 2017 referendum.

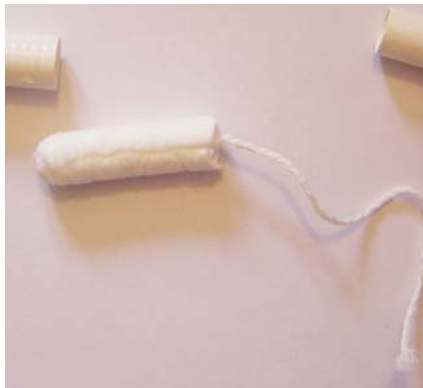
Labour MP Stella Creasy went semi-viral when confronting veteran Tory MP Bill Cash over the issue in parliament, after he did not use the term ‘sanitary towels and tampons’ rather saying “these products”.

11 Tory Ministers showed they were prepared to vote with Labour to end tax, therefore putting pressure on David Cameron and his slim Commons majority to back the removal of the levy.

The tax has been lauded and mocked with a large social media campaign calling for sanitary products to be freed from VAT. Clearly the item is not a luxury, therefore EU law should be reformed to progress from its definition of ‘luxury’. There is evident inequality with men's razors being tax exempt, whilst sanitary products are still taxed – as soon as the sanitary tax is put in the dust bin of history the better.

**Pictured:** Should tampons be exclusive of VAT?

“  
Campaigners argued women could save up to £922”



## Tensions increase between Israel and Palestine

Rhys Thomas

The seemingly permanent conflict between Israel and Palestine took a turn for the worse last month when Israel, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank saw fatal clashes and increased tensions in what is arguably the worst outbreak of violence between Israelis and Palestinians since the Gaza War last year. The discontent started when a rumour spread in Palestinian circles that hard-right Jewish religious extremists were pushing for a rule change in who could access the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (important for being the third most holy site in Islam and the holiest in Judaism) - the rule was that anyone could visit, but only Muslims were allowed to pray there as Jewish law (supported by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel) had prohibited access for Jews. The Israeli Government denied that any changes were occurring, but this was not enough to satisfy many angry Palestinians who have a deep distrust of the Israeli State.

When the Israeli Defence ministry banned the Mourabitat (an Islamist protest group which Israel says is violent) from Temple Mount, the Palestinians saw this as confirmation of their fears. In the lead up to Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year), Israeli police led a raid on the site and discovered a stash of assorted bombs

and rocks which they feared would be used against Israeli worshippers who would be visiting the site for New Year. The first violent clash came on the day after, with police and Palestinian protestors clashing. These battles continued and Israel responded with preventative measures such as an increased police presence on the Mount and increasing the penalty for stone-throwing, which is the favoured mode of attack for many protestors. Several on each side were wounded.

What followed this was an even more serious spike in violence. A series of Arab on Israeli 'lone wolf' stabbings (together with shootings and running over with vehicles) over the past several weeks have taken place across Israel in several major conurbations such as Tel Aviv and Petah Tikva with men, women and children all being targets. This hasn't come without Israeli reprisals - Israeli forces have shot dead several suspected attackers, with some debate centring on if those shot were actually attackers or not. In addition, rockets have been fired at Israel from Gaza with the Israeli Defence Force then bombing Hamas sites in Gaza as retaliation. There is no doubting that tensions are rising.

Many have called this outburst of violence the 'Third Intifada' - Inti-



fada meaning 'uprising' in English - specifically a Palestinian uprising against Israel. The First Intifada started in 1987 and lasted until 1993, the Second from 2000 to 2005. These uprisings can take many forms, but violence is a constant throughout them all, with thousands of lives being lost in both Intifadas. Whether or not this turns into a full-blown intifada remains to be seen, but it will require some tact from the Israeli Government to try and stop further escalation.

There have been international attempts to stop the violence, including a proposal by the French to station international forces on Temple

Mount to keep the peace, although this was rejected outright by the Israelis. US Secretary of State John Kerry has stepped in to try and find a solution meeting with both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Germany and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in Jordan. Kerry's seemingly sensible idea of installing cameras at the compound to monitor behaviour drew scorn from both sides, especially the Palestinian side. Nothing is simple in the Middle East, especially when both leaders have poked the beehive with their rhetoric and neither truly seem to want or expect a two-state solution anytime soon.

**Pictured:** There have been hopes of peace in the region for years, this boy was in a 'Freedom for Palestine' demonstration in Cardiff (Photographer: Walt Jabsco via Flickr)

“ Many have called this outburst of violence the 'Third Intifada' - Intifada meaning 'uprising' in English. ”

## Genocide in Myanmar?

Rory Wade

An assessment by Yale University Law School as part of an investigation by Al Jazeera has uncovered "strong evidence" of a genocide coordinated by the Myanmar government against the Rohingya people.

The Rohingyas are a Muslim minority originally from Bangladesh who have resided in Myanmar for generations - yet the government has rendered them stateless since 1982 and considers them to be "illegal immigrants". This means they will be denied the right to vote in the General Election on November the 8th. According to Amnesty International, the Rohingyas are often described as "one of the world's most persecuted minorities".

According to Tun Khin, the Burmese Rohingya Organisation President - "Because of that law [the 1982 citizenship law], today more than 1.3 million Rohingyas are not citizens of Burma and are denied the right to have food, denied the right to have medical treatment, denied the right to have movement, denied the right to have children, denied the right to have education and it leads to state-sponsored violence against them, and burning down their houses and pushing them to the camps."

The government of Myanmar - who are being accused of committing and encouraging acts of violence against them - denies their very existence, prohibiting the use of their name and pressuring foreign officials to not even utter the word Rohingya. According to the Burmese President Thein Sein, "There are no Rohingyas in Burma".

It's statements like this that are - according to University of London professor Penny Green, the director of the International State Crime Initiative - "part of a genocidal process". "President Thein Sein is prepared to use hate speech for the government's own ends, and that is to marginalize, segregate, and diminish the Muslim population inside Burma" she added.

Green's International State Crime Initiative believe the government to have been behind the 2012 Rakhine State Riots - in which violence erupted between the Muslim and Buddhist residents after a reported rape on a Buddhist woman by Rohingyas led to the killing of ten Muslims by Buddhists, resulting in 88 deaths on both sides and more than 90,000 being displaced.

"It wasn't communal violence," said Green. "It was planned violence. Ex-



press buses were organised to take Rakhine Buddhists from outlying areas to take part in the aggression. Meals were provided - it had to be paid by somebody."

The Al Jazeera investigation also uncovered a military document that uses hate speech to spread fear among recruits that the Myanmarese are "in danger of being devoured by Muslims". The investigation also alleges that the government pays Buddhist monks to stir hatred to provoke further ethnic tension and to work for pro-government organisations.

One monk who is prominent in the anti-Rohingya movement is Ashin Wirathu - dubbed "The Face of Buddhist Terror" by TIME Magazine in 2013. He leads the 969 Movement, an anti-Muslim nationalist movement opposed to what they see as Islam's

expansion in the Buddhist majority Myanmar. Both Wirathu and the 969 Movement encourage boycotting of Muslim-run shops and the support of legislation proposed by President Thein Sein that would send Rohingyas to another country.

As Myanmar's first properly contested election takes place on the 8th of November, it is hoped that the status of the Rohingyas would be a topic discussed by opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. However her NLD Party has no Muslim candidates and her silence over their plight is alleged to be due to her needing the support of the majority Bamar ethnic group. Seeing no place for them selves in the newly democratic country, many Rohingyas are now fleeing to other South-East Asian countries on boats - risking their lives for the hope of a better life.

**Pictured:** Rohingya Muslims fleeing violence and persecution in Myanmar. (Photographer: Mathias Eick)

“ Seeing no place for them selves in the newly democratic country, many Rohingyas are now fleeing to other South-East Asian countries ”



## Birth order found not to affect personality

Malcolm in the Middle can no longer blame his siblings

Bradley Walker

Like to blame your problems on being the middle child in your family? Too bad. Recent studies have concluded that birth order has little to do with personality traits and behaviour.

The study carried out by the National Academy of Sciences used sample groups from the UK, Germany and the USA in order to see whether the birth order of siblings affected their emotional stability, confidence and overall personality. While previous studies saw a correlation between birth order and confidence, new findings suggest that older children are less likely to be more responsible as studies suggest, and younger children are less likely to be more confident and sociable.

Adler's study concluded that first-borns were more privileged. However, this was counterbalanced with an increased burden. This was why he concluded that birth order changes the development and growth of our personality, as the first born would be more likely to be neurotic and paranoid, as opposed to the youngest sibling's more laid out and re-

laxed outlook on life, a result of an easy and non pressured upbringing.

The study links back to the lives of early humans, suggesting that older siblings who are physically dominant over their younger siblings would develop to be more dominant, and therefore less cooperative.

The 2015 study however used a much larger sample group to test whether birth order affected personality size and the conclusion was that it did not, the results and findings of the study were different on a family to family basis. The study concluded that: "birth order does not seem to be an important consideration for understanding either the development of personality traits or the development of intelligence in the between-family context."

The study did however show a decline in IQ from first child to last child. In most cases there was an average decrease of 1.5 IQ points for each increase of birth order position. The correlation however is only mild, as only 6 out of 10 older siblings had a higher IQ than their closest sibling. The 'replicated finding' of this part



**Pictured:** These siblings have nothing to worry about - birth order does not affect personality (Photographer: Patrick via Flickr)

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Adler's study concluded that first-borns were more privileged. However, this was counterbalanced with an increased burden

”

of the study showed that it was appropriate to compare with former studies in the field by psychologists

such as Adler and Sulloway, both of which argued that personality traits were affected by birth order.

## NASA announce their plans for Mars

We could soon see humans being sent to the Red Planet

Sophie Young

The recent discovery of water on Mars and the release of the film, 'The Martian', are not the only examples of Mars-related

excitement unravelling before our eyes. NASA has just announced that its Space Launch System (SLS) has completed all the necessary steps to



pass a critical design review, making it the most powerful rocket capable of launching humans ever built.

To explain how this relates to Mars, NASA has a three-stage plan that they hope will ultimately transport humans to Mars and have them stay there for several years. The first stage of this plan (Earth Reliant) is mostly research and building necessary resources. This includes building rockets and ensuring the human body can sustain long periods of time in space.

The second stage (Proving Ground) is rather exciting in its own right. NASA plans to find a small asteroid, or take a part of a larger asteroid, and drag it into cis-lunar space (the area of space around the moon). The purpose of this is to utilise resources from the asteroid, including finding out about its internal structure. Some asteroids may contain resources astronauts can use to obtain breathable air, fuel, and possibly even 3D printing. Finding these resources may also provide ways to stop us relying on Earth, thus making space missions more autonomous.

It would also provide a platform to develop technology (sensor systems in particular) that will allow space-

craft to dock and form rendez-vous points. These will be crucial in future Mars missions; points between Earth and Mars will allow rockets to refuel and to handle cargo. By dragging the asteroid through space, scientists will be better able to deem ways to move extensive loads of cargo between Earth and Mars through the data they will gather from this initial relocation. This mission is called the Asteroid Redirect Mission and it is planned to start in the 2020s.

The third stage (Earth Independent) is most familiar thanks to science fiction: getting people to Mars. NASA plans to send people to live on Mars for years at a time in the 2030s. Once there, these people will work to harvest Martian resources to create fuel, water, oxygen and building materials. They will also conduct research to find out about the planet, studying the climate and history of the planet amongst other things.

The SLS is the first vehicle that has ever been designed to meet the challenges of travelling the full distance to Mars while transporting people. It is set for its first journey to the skies in the testing stage in 2018 - definitely something to keep an eye on.

**Pictured:** The iconic logo of the space-exploring organisation (Photographer: Bill Dickinson)

“  
Once there, these people will work to harvest Martian resources to create fuel, water, oxygen and building materials

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# Processed meat classed as top carcinogen



**Pictured:**  
Left: Hotdogs (Photographer: Chris H)  
Right: Cigarette (Photographer: Raul Lieberwirth)

**Karla Pequenino**

**F**easting on bacon butties and ham sandwiches is officially unhealthy. A new report by the World Health Organisation's (WHO) International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) identifies processed meats as top carcinogens, ranking them with arsenic and tobacco. In other words, these meat products are considered likely to produce tumours because of their connection with the rise of bowel cancer.

Examples of processed meat include bacon, ham, sausages, canned meats and hot dogs. In essence, all meat transformed to boost flavour and preservation time through smoking, salting or curing.

The investigation looked at different diets and populations. "It is one of the most complex assessments of the medical and scientific literature ever undertaken concerning a particular cancer risk," says Professor Bern-

nard Stewart who oversaw the committee responsible for the report.

IARC's conclusion is the result of the work of two dozen specialists, from ten different countries that went through more than 800 scientific articles about the connection between meat and various types of cancer.

Eating too much red meat in general was also proven dangerous. Having a lot of beef or pork was determined as being probably carcinogenic to humans, increasing the risk the pancreatic and prostate cancer.

For every 50 grams of processed meat ingested daily, the risk of developing bowel cancer rises 18 per cent, according to the press release. That's around three slices of bacon or ham. Furthermore, the Global Burden of Disease organisation states that every year 34,000 cancer-related deaths are attributed to excessive

processed meat consumption. This puts processed meats in the same riskgroup as tobacco smoke, arsenic and alcohol. However, the risk is not the same. Tobacco causes 1 million of deaths per year, alcohol consumption 600,000 and air pollution 200,000.

"It's also important to put the cancer risks associated with red and processed meat into context in terms of other preventable cancer causes," warns Kathy Chapman, a member of Australia's Cancer Council. The nutrition expert believes that instead of avoiding meat completely, "An overall healthy lifestyle, including diet, is important to reduce your cancer risk."

Not everyone agrees that processed meat is bad. According to the North American Meat Institute, avoiding these products defies common sense. Betsy Booren, the institute's vice-president of scientific

affairs accuses the IARC of manipulating the results: "They tortured the data to ensure a specific outcome. Yet, Professor Bernard Stewart himself says that eliminating all red meat is not in question: "No-one's proposing that we ban bacon, put warnings on hot dogs or take beef off the BBQ." In fact, the recent WHO review is not saying anything new, but gives strong evidence that consuming red or processed meat in the long-term increases the risk of cancer.

Back in 2009 the charity World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) was already making headlines for asking parents to stop feeding their children salami and ham because of researched that connected processed meat to bowel cancer. Thus, according to Professor Stewart: "The findings provide a new degree of certainty for health authorities who produce evidence-based dietary guidelines."

**“**  
For every 50 grams of processed meat ingested daily, the risk of developing cancer rises 18 per cent  
**”**

## +CANCER CAUSING FOODS

--- FARMED SALMON ---

Wild salmon is healthy, farmed salmon? Not so much. A new study at University of Albany found that this version is often full of cancer causing contaminants like pesticides and flame retardants.

--- ALL SODAS ---

A "popular" soda uses caramel colouring, a known carcinogen. Plus, all sodas - diet included! - acidify the body, which in turn causes cancer cells to multiply.

--- MICROWAVE POPCORN ---

There is more than just corn kernels in microwave popcorn. They contain PFDA (perfluorooctanoic acid) which is a likely carcinogen. To avoid risk, air pop your popcorn and add your own flavoring.

--- FRENCH FRIES ---

Foods heated above a certain temperature, such as french fries, have high levels of acrylamide, which is a chemical that studies have shown increases the risk of cancer.

# --- THE USUAL SUSPECTS ? ---

SOURCE: AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY & CANCER RESEARCH UK

**Pictured:**  
It isn't just processed meats (Designed by Karla Pequenino)

**“**  
It is one of the most complex assessments of the medical and scientific literature undertaken concerning a particular cancer risk  
Bernard Stewart  
**”**

# The aftermath of the Ebola epidemic

With Pauline Cafferkey relapsing and reports of 'post-Ebola syndrome', is the threat of the virus truly eradicated?



Shanna Hamilton

Last year Ebola was big news, and for good reason. The epidemic in west Africa saw 11,312 people killed. Poor infection control, healthcare facilities and certain cultural practices in developing countries meant the virus raged across the continent, with the media quick to scare-monger.

I wrote about this last year – that while serious and often fatal, we were all highly unlikely to catch it here in Cardiff, and no, that student who left Flux in an ambulance did not vacate the building “because she had Ebola.”

I don't like to say I told you so, but only one case of Ebola was reported in the UK, with the West relatively unscathed. However, what is the aftermath of this deadly disease for the 17,145 other infected people who survived the illness? Is the epidemic really over?

I quoted Cardiff lecturer and Guardian writer Dean Burnett last year, on his poignant remark: “If you go by the media coverage, the worst thing about it is that it might end up affecting the UK, US or similarly developed wealthy nations. And we can't have that now can we?” It is truly a shame that in recent months, global media no longer seemed concerned with the devastation Ebola has caused in African countries – it's not hot news, we're all safe

here right?

That is, until reports of Pauline Cafferkey, the Scottish nurse who contracted Ebola while selflessly helping sufferers in west Africa splashed across the headlines this month. She had been readmitted to an isolation unit at the Royal Free Hospital in London after suffering an apparent relapse. According to her doctor, Michael Jacobs: “Pauline has become unwell by meningitis caused by the Ebola virus.”

However, don't panic. “But to very clear about this,” Jacobs added, “she hasn't been re-infected with the Ebola virus. This is the original Ebola virus that she had many months ago, which has been lying inside the brain, replicating at a very low level probably, and has now reemerged to cause this clinical illness of meningitis. And this is obviously a serious thing.”

It was easy to forget about the devastation Ebola caused once the dust began to settle, but is the case of Pauline Cafferkey and her relapse an isolated incident? How are Ebola survivors faring across the rest of the world?

Many thousands of those who battled through infection have tried to resume normal lives, but remain traumatised, shunned by their societies through fear and sometimes, missing the majority of their family members, lost to the disease. It is becoming far

more apparent, thanks to patient-monitoring in survivor clinics, however, that the after-effects are far more than just psychological.

“Post-Ebola syndrome” is a new phenomenon being reported by clinics to describe the myriad of symptoms seen in those who managed to fend off the infection. These ailments include chronic headaches, crippling joint pain, even blindness. According to Dr Moses, clinical director of the Ebola Treatment Centre in Monrovia, Liberia, “Once cured, patients began to develop symptoms, such as joint pain, dizziness, blurred vision, lack of ability to concentrate; sometimes so bad patients have difficulty returning to work.”

Since such a long list of health issues have been reported, some are unconvinced that the Ebola virus is to blame. “Many of the symptoms being reported by survivors are non-specific and could be due to consequences of Ebola virus disease or other diseases,” according to Michael Sneller, a researcher of infectious disease at the US National Institute of Health (NIH). He points out that some symptoms, such as anorexia and insomnia, could be down to post-traumatic stress disorder and others could be down to more common west African diseases - malaria, for example.

To tackle the question of whether Ebola's damaging effects linger long after initial infection, a study by the NIH in collaboration with Liberia's Ministry of Health is asking 1,500 patients at survivor clinics about their symptoms and collect vital physical samples – blood, stool etc. Launched in the summer, the PREVAIL study will also track survivors to see if they are immune to any possible future Ebola outbreaks, and also if they transmit the virus at any point to close contacts.

What we do know about Ebola, however, is that the virus can remain in the sperm of males and be sexually transmitted for up to nine months after initial infection. In one study of 93 male survivors in Sierra Leone, one of the worst-hit countries in the epidemic, around half still had Ebola RNA (similar to DNA, but single stranded) in their semen. After nine months, the virus still appeared to remain in a quarter of these men.

This was not particularly surpris-

ing as we already knew that Ebola can persist in other tissues such as the eye, the placenta and the central nervous system. Although the risk of transmission is much lower from these sites, this persistence of the virus may play a role in the reported 'post-Ebola syndrome', as well as Cafferkey's diagnosis of meningitis – an inflammation of the membranes that cover the spinal cord.

What is surprising, and particularly worrying for countries who are finally 'disease-free', is that experts believe that at least 20 cases of Ebola have been the result of sexual transmission, with one of these cases officially confirmed.

“This new research shows that Ebola virus can persist in the semen and be transmitted sexually many months after the original infection has disappeared,” said Dr Jeremy Farrar, Director of the UK research council, the Wellcome Trust. “The fact that there has so far been only one isolated [official] report of this type of infection suggests that this kind of transmission may be rare, but it highlights just how much we still don't understand about the Ebola virus, infection and recovery.”

He also warned, “It also reminds us that the Ebola epidemic could be far from over. With more than 17,000 Ebola survivors, it's possible that further cases of delayed transmission and late complications will occur.”

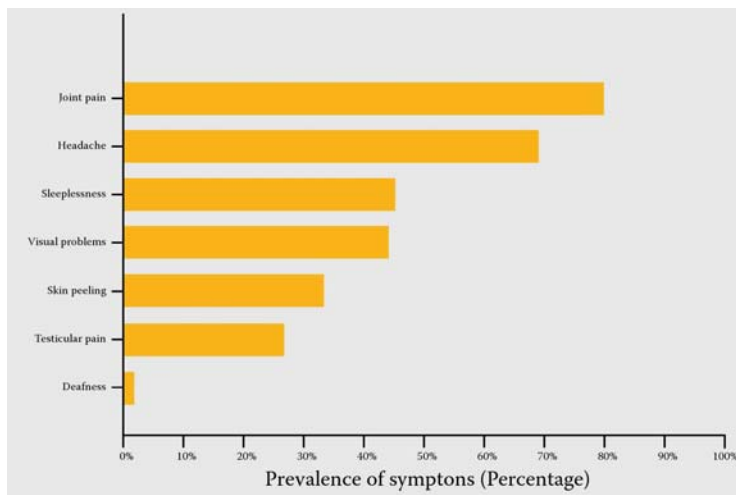
It is also worth pointing out that at the latest WHO meeting convened to review the disease spread, the committee advised that the “Ebola virus disease outbreak continues to constitute a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.” Moving into the unknown territory after infection, with reports of 'post-Ebola syndrome' and concerns of sexual transmission, the epidemic, and the danger for those in West Africa, is far from over.

Jeremy Farrar added, “We must remain vigilant and continue to monitor the long-term health of survivors so that any new infections can be identified quickly and measures put in place to prevent further cases.” Ebola is still big news for the brutally damaged west Africa and its 17,000 survivors, even if it isn't on our front pages. Pauline Cafferkey's unfortunate turn for the worse reminds us that there is yet more to come.

**Pictured:** An Ebola treatment in Guinea (Photographer: UNMEER via Flickr)

“  
But to be very clear about this, she hasn't been re-infected with the Ebola virus”

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“  
With more than 17,000 Ebola survivors, it's possible that further cases of delayed transmission and late complications will occur”

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# The addictive properties of cheese

## Why your cheddar cravings may not be mild

Lisa Carr

In light of recent news that has emerged claiming that processed foods cause cancer, a University of Michigan study has found that processed foods are highly addictive. A complete lose-lose situation, really.

The 'Yale Food Addiction' scale was used to create a list of the most addictive foods in the world, with five hundred students submitted entries of what they felt they were addicted to. Topping the list was pizza, while some may attribute its addictiveness to its outright deliciousness, researchers claim they have found a science-based reason behind why we become addicted to some foods over others, and that cheese is the true addictive substance.

Processing is the key behind the addiction: highly processed food such as chips, crisps and cheese are highly addictive whereas unprocessed foods such as salmon and brown rice are certainly not what we turn to when we need to satisfy cravings. Moreover, all these foods contain fat. Erica Schulte, one of the study's authors, told website Mic.com: "Fat seemed to be equally predictive of problematic eating for

everyone, regardless of whether they experience symptoms of 'food addiction.'"

As well as being both fatty and processed, cheese contains a chemical called casein, a protein that is found in all milk products. Cheese contains casein in much higher quantities than normal milk products. To produce one kilogram of cheese, around ten litres of milk is used, and the whey product that is used to produce the hard cheese is also casein. So you really get a big casein kick from a lump of cheese. When cheese is digested in our bodies, casein is broken down into a bunch of opiates called casomorphins. Multiple studies in the past have shown that casomorphins interact with opioid receptors in the brain, triggering reward responses that lead to addiction, much in the same way as drugs.

In the UK, 98 per cent of households regularly buy cheese, and we collectively consume 700,000 tonnes of cheese yearly in restaurants, home and food processing. This equates to around 10kg per person per year, though I'm sure most of us agree our personal figure far surpasses that.



**Pictured:** Sweet dreams are made of cheese (Photographer: Skånska Matupplevelser)

“ Cheese interacts with opioid receptors in the brain, triggering reward responses that lead to addiction ”

“ In the UK we collectively consume 700,000 tonnes of cheese yearly in restaurants ”

# Research uncovers the specific smell of human death

Maria Mellor

Death has a specific smell: a cocktail of chemicals that the ingredients which have been uncovered by a new study. Researchers have been able to isolate the cause of the particular scent of human death, which may lead to exciting possibilities in the future.

The findings could be incredibly useful in the field of forensics, as a synthetic smell could be used to train dogs to be able to more accurately find human bodies, or even to develop electronic devices to seek out the scent for use in police work.

This is the first time that research-

ers have been able to scientifically distinguish between the smell of dead human bodies and dead animal bodies. This discovery could be especially useful in natural disasters to help recover the dead quickly and help families grieve.

Six dead human bodies and 26 animal bodies were studied over six months as they decayed, and researchers studied the exact chemicals emitted from each one. They were able to distinguish specific chemical markers from the human bodies that were not found from the decaying bodies of mice, moles, rabbits, turtles or even pigs, which are often used in decomposition experiments for their similarity to humans. Never before have pig bodies been studied alongside human bodies in the same conditions and even though they have the same microbes in their guts, the same percentage of body fat, and similar hair as people, there were still several distinct differences.

However, there was one problem with the study - they examined individual isolated body parts rather than whole bodies, meaning that the chemical make-up of a whole body decaying could be different.

The team noted in their paper that "further research in the field with full bodies has to corroborate these results and search for one or more human specific markers."

You may think that the smell of death is a slightly weird topic to focus your research on, but there has been a lot of new findings surrounding the topic in recent news. For example, a paper co-authored by researchers from the University of Kent and Arkansas Tech University found evidence that both humans and animals perceive the scent given off by dead bodies as threatening, triggering a fight-or-flight response.

"It is hard to think of a scent as frightening" said co-authors Dr. Arnaud Wisman and Dr. Ilan Shrira. They found that the smell given off by decaying tissue acts as a "chemosensory warning signal" that "mobilises protective responses to deal with relevant threats."

A series of four experiments were conducted where participants were exposed, either knowingly or unknowingly to the smell, and their reactions were compared to when they were smelling other scents such as ammonia and water.

Research regarding dead bodies, both human and animal, is ongoing as forensic science aims to improve and get more accurate. There are projects such as the Body Farm in Tennessee, where donated bodies are left in different conditions and studied to see how they decompose, allowing us to gain an ever-more useful understanding of how tissue breaks down.



“ A synthetic smell could be used to train dogs to be able to more accurately find human bodies ”

**Pictured:** The chemical smell of death buried six feet underground (Photographer: Dixie Lawrence)

# societies



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## Hannah's note: NUS Zones Conference

Hannah Sterritt  
VP Societies

Hi everyone, I hope you've had a great week. As ever, the past week in Societies has been pretty hectic! Last week I spent two days at the NUS Zones conference for Union Development. In case you aren't aware, NUS stands for the National Union of Students and are known for the NUS extra discount cards and national campaigns on behalf of students, among other things. I decided to attend the Union Development Zone conference

because this is where the value of student opportunities in University Education, or rather, why being in clubs and societies will transform your University experience is discussed and celebrated, something I feel strongly about.

Whilst at the conference I spent a lot of time discussing the big issues that currently face Cardiff students and sharing best practise between unions. It's very promising to see that we are very forward thinking as a Students'

Union in Cardiff as we have already implemented a lot of the ideas discussed.

In other news the current total of society members (as of Thursday evening) stands at a massive 7,346! This is fantastic and I hope the numbers will keep increasing over the term ahead.

As ever, if you have anything that you need my help with or any ideas for change please come and speak to me or drop me an email at VPSocieties@cardiff.ac.uk.



## Red Cross Society nominated for humanitarian prize

Zoe Hall



The Cardiff University Red Cross Group (CURCG) has achieved some great things since it began last year. We won Best Newcomer Society 2014, and earlier this year we received some amazing news – we've been shortlisted for a National Humanitarian Citizenship Award.

The Humanitarian Citizenship Awards night is an event held annually by the British Red Cross celebrating the extraordinary things ordinary young people do. It's easy to forget that whilst most of the volunteers in the UK are adults, there are still 7,000 young volunteers who make a difference in other people's lives every day. This award celebrates these young people aged 25 and under and what

they've achieved.

There are four award categories: first aid, fundraising, community action and volunteering. Whilst we at CURCG aim to help students in all of these areas, we have been shortlisted in particular for the first aid category. Last year we ran our unique tailor-made Freshers' Aid Give it a Go session in September which was hugely successful, where we taught some of the most common basic skills university students are likely to face like cooking burns, taking care of a drunk friend and just for good measure, some CPR too. You never know when it will come in handy!

We also designed lessons for the Baking and Film societies and taught them skills that they wanted to learn



– we hope to do the same this year, so if you want your society to learn some free basic first aid, get in touch with us! As well as teaching them the physical skills of first aid we also tried

to tell them about the humanitarian side of things like what you can do to help (even if you think you can't), what it means to give first aid and a little something called the bystander effect which basically means people don't want to get involved in something when other people are nearby. We want the students of Cardiff University to be prepared for the worst, and IF the worst happens to be confident enough to help, even if it just means calling 999; it really can save lives.

The award ceremony takes place at the Palace of Westminster on November 24th and we feel incredibly lucky and grateful for this opportunity to represent our Group at this event. Our President, Habbas Al-Ashaab, and myself, Zoe Hall (secretary), will be attending along with other young volunteers from around the country – including friends from Stirling University Red Cross Group who have been nominated for the volunteering category.

When opportunities like these arise, it makes me appreciate how good being part of a society at university is and how important it is get out there in the world.

**Pictured:** Cardiff University Red Cross Group with their Best Newcomer Society award (left) and at Freshers' fair 2015 (above)

“ We want the students of Cardiff University to be prepared for the worst, and IF the worst happens to be confident enough to help. ”



# Cardiff University Howard League

Esme Trice



As the oldest UK prison reform charity, founded in 1866, the Howard League for Penal Reform has taken some incredible steps towards improving our prison system. It takes its name from John Howard, one of the earliest prison reformers, and works independently of government support – without charitable donations and memberships, its vital endeavours would be impossible. It does, however, run alongside parliament, the media, members of the criminal justice system and students to help enforce change for more effective sentencing and – ultimately – safer communities.

One of its most recent success stories was enabling prisoners to receive books from their families once again. Previously classed as a 'luxury item', they were banned from care packages and prisoners had to rely upon prison libraries. These are not always well-stocked or accessible, and prisoners enrolled on educational courses during their sentence may require certain reading materials, so that the Howard League was

able to grant wider access to literature for prisoners is fantastic news.

The Howard League also works to raise the profile of the issues it addresses. Prison reforms and the overall success of our prison system can often fall into a group of social policies that are underestimated in importance or neglected. In contemporary society, with more young people than ever attending higher education, most of us will have a political view on at least one topic. With everyone at university over the voting age, it is necessary to fully understand the implications of voting for a particular party, which intrinsically involves understanding and holding an opinion on the policies they seek to implement.

For students at Cardiff University who are enrolled in Social Sciences or Humanities degree programmes, engaging with the Howard League Society can impart valuable debating skills, provide the opportunity to socialise with like-minded people, and grant experience useful for professions in social work, policing, the criminal justice system and political

positions. For others it is an opportunity to engage with a topic of interest and indulge that guilty pleasure we all have; everyone is fascinated by crime.

The Howard League Society has run for three years previously but unfortunately could not be run this year due to too few people willing to take committee positions. It will be up and running for the academic year 2016-17 provided there is enough interest. Alongside the perks listed above, we will also be running events. We hope to attract guest speakers from the Welsh Assembly to discuss their attitudes towards prisons and policy, screen films, run trips to Howard League conferences in London, organise visits to The Clink - the restaurant in Cardiff Prison - hold talks from other prolific speakers and set up student discussion groups to explore ideas around penal reform. We will also be embracing the other key element to a university society which is of course socials. Students from all subject disciplines will be welcome to these and we will try to accommodate peo-

ple of all walks of life in the types of socials we hold.

I have taken over the society for this year whilst it is inactive, and will be the President next year, but we still need to find people to fill the positions of Finance Officer, Secretary and Vice President. Students who are interested, who would like to be members but not necessarily with a committee position, or for anyone who is simply keen to learn more can visit our Facebook page – Cardiff University Howard League. Towards the end of semester two I will be speaking to students enrolled on the degree programmes mentioned earlier to remind them that the society will be returning, and we will be at the Societies' Fair in September for the Howard League's 150th anniversary.

We are welcoming suggestions and new members, even though we are not a formal society for the time being, because we are still looking to run events like the trip to The Clink independently. Please do get in touch if you have any questions or are interested.

“ We are welcoming suggestions and new members, even though we are not a formal society ”

## Take part in the international community with AIESEC Society

Maria Urquiaga



AIESEC is the world's largest youth-run, non-political, not-for-profit organisation. 'AIESEC' is a French acronym for 'Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales' which means 'International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences' – we no longer use the acronym and are currently known as AIESEC.

The organisation was founded after the Second World War in order to prevent future generations from suffering a similar tragedy. In 1948, a group of young people decided that encouraging and spreading cross-cultural understanding is the best way to create a better world for all of us. Today, AIESEC is even more developed than it was expected to be when it was founded and it is still growing. It

is present in over 126 countries and territories with more than 70,000 young, inspired and passionate members. AIESEC aims to achieve peace and fulfilment of humankind's potential through international volunteering exchanges and professional internships, developing responsible and compassionate global leaders.

Our society is formally known as AIESEC in Cardiff and represents the organisation in Wales, since it is currently the only local chapter in the country. However, AIESEC UK has 22 local chapters across major cities in the UK, including Manchester, Bristol, Leeds and Edinburgh.

It is a brilliant opportunity for our members and for interested students to gain invaluable personal and professional experience. The students have chances to take management

positions in HR, finance, marketing and sales routes and participate in different programmes and projects within the society while studying at university. Students are also given a chance to attend AIESEC conferences nationally and internationally where they can meet members across the AIESEC network and improve their leadership, interpersonal and communication skills. All of the opportunities in AIESEC not only enhance your CV, but also give you great memories shared with good friends.

We believe that being a part of the global community, developing professional skills, increasing cross-cultural awareness, providing opportunities to volunteer and explore the world, encouraging compassion and promoting peace will create a

positive impact on our members and on society. In fact, our new members this year will be attending their first national conference in Leeds at the end of the month to gain more knowledge on AIESEC, world issues and leadership.

If you believe you can change the world, want to meet like-minded individuals or simply want to gain relevant work experience, come to one of our local committee meetings! You can find out more at [aiesec.co.uk](http://aiesec.co.uk) about the opportunities we offer. Additionally, please email us at [cardiff@aiesec.co.uk](mailto:cardiff@aiesec.co.uk) to get involved in our society or to ask any questions regarding AIESEC and our programmes. You may even be able to attend our next national conference in February. We look forward to hearing from you!

“ It is a brilliant opportunity for our members and for interested students to gain invaluable personal and professional experience ”



Pictured: A group of AIESEC members at an event

## Cardiff Volunteering goes Blind Bowling

Rachel Jones



Last Thursday Cardiff Volunteering teamed up with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) to host a Blind Bowling Give It A Go event. The evening started at RNIB's offices where students met up with some lovely people with a range of visual impairments (and their guide dogs) who explained their respective conditions and how they cope with them.

We were shown some intriguing devices that made life easier and safer – including a gadget that sits on a cup and makes a noise when the level of

liquid reaches an optimum level, and a device that vibrates a certain number of times to let you know whether you are holding a £5, £10, £20 or £50 note!

RNIB staff then gave us a lesson in 'sighted guiding' which enabled students to assist those with visual impairments as we all walked over to Superbowl for a game of bowling. On route to the bowling one of our students discovered firsthand the joys of owning a guide dog, when James (the dog, NOT the student) decided he needed to relieve himself of a rather heavy load! Ten minutes and three poop scoop bags

later we were on our way again.

Upon arrival, we mixed the teams up and made all the students wear a variety of specially adapted glasses that simulated various sight-loss conditions while attempting to play a game of bowling. It really didn't matter what the ultimate scores were, or who won on each lane, because everyone had a brilliant time! It was so successful that we intend to do it all again in the not-too-distant future so be sure to book your space on the next one!

All the students were brilliant, and helped give the RNIB clients a night

to remember, but a special commendation goes to Simranjit Cheema for her fantastic interpersonal skills with the clients. Our first ever 'Volunteer of the Week' award goes to Andreas Charalambous who showed exceptional kindness and empathy to Sarah and gave her assistance throughout the evening – she was very grateful and we were very impressed – well done Andreas, you did yourself, Cardiff Volunteering and the University proud! Stay tuned for more information about an exciting new project we are developing with the RNIB.

“ Our first ever 'Volunteer of the Week' award goes to Andreas Charalambous ”



Pictured: Andreas the 'Volunteer of the Week' (left) and RNIB clients and Cardiff Volunteers (right)

## Profiled: The Ahlul Bayt Society

Akeel Bhamani



Cardiff Ahlul Bayt Society is a family of students aiming to spread the message of kindness and humanity. We take our inspiration from the teachings of the 'Ahlul Bayt', which is an arabic word, referring to the Prophet and his holy family.

We believe justice to be a key part of Islam, and the main way we look to better society is through charity work. In the words of Ali – the grandson of the Prophet, "Man is either your brother in faith or your equal in humanity".

If you noticed our big yellow bins around the university last year, it was of course, our 'Hungry for Justice' cam-

paign. We set up a collection point in the SU as well as going around Talybont with the collection bin, and with all your help, we managed to collect 40.4kg of food for Cardiff food-bank in under a week! With this huge success and great appreciation from the food-bank, we will be bringing the campaign back to life this November during interfaith week, so be sure to come along and donate any food items to people that need it more!

Who doesn't love free hot chocolate on a cold winters morning? Then Absoc, like last year, will be setting up a free hot chocolate stand within the

next few weeks near the SU! We try to spread kindness and generosity through this, which we learned from Hussain – a member of the Ahlul Bayt – a man who still inspires us everyday through his sacrifice over 1,400 years ago, so we try to promote his message and spread awareness in this way.

Through our weekly gatherings every Thursday, where we have book circles to learn about new Islamic teachings followed by prayers read together to enhance spirituality, the society not only acts as a platform for people to better ourselves religiously, but also creates a group of friends that many in the Ahlul

Bayt Society have grown to cherish.

We also have great socials, like mini golf, bowling, annual dinners... And our next planned social is a trip to see the beautiful waterfalls at Brecon Beacons on Saturday November 21st! Our society is growing every year, and we would love for anyone to come along to our events and get involved and make a difference. Whether it's charity work you're interested in, if you want to find out more about the Ahlul Bayt, or even just want to meet new people and take part in our socials, be sure to like our Facebook page: Cardiff Absoc, to keep up to date!

“ Who doesn't love free hot chocolate on a cold winters morning? ”



Pictured: Members of Ahlul Bayt Society.



**November/Tachwedd**

**The Staves**  
03/11/15, £15 ADV

**Everything Everything**  
07/11/15, £17.50 ADV

**Foals**  
08/11/15 - **SOLD OUT**

**Slaves**  
15/11/15 - **SOLD OUT**

**Treatment Presents:  
Annie Mac**  
20/11/15, from £18.50 ADV

**Public Service Broadcasting**  
26/11/15, £20 ADV

**Andy C All Night**  
27/11/15, £13 ADV

**Marina And The Diamonds**  
28/11/15 - **SOLD OUT**

**Happy Mondays**  
29/11/15, £28.50 ADV

**December/Rhagfyr**

**The Story So Far**  
01/12/15, £14 ADV

**Kodaline**  
03/12/15 - **SOLD OUT**

**Scouting For Girls**  
12/12/15, £22.50 ADV

**Ash**  
14/12/15, £17 ADV

**January/Ionawr**

**The Temperance Movement**  
26/01/16, £14 ADV

**Coheed & Cambria & Glassjaw**  
31/01/16, £27.50 ADV

**February/Chwefror**

**Neck Deep**  
05/02/16, £13.50 ADV

**KERRANG! Tour 2016  
ft. Sum 41 & more**  
11/02/16, £18.50 ADV

**Gabrielle Aplin**  
12/02/16, £16.50 ADV

**Bowling For Soup**  
14/02/16, £20 ADV

**Fun Lovin' Criminals**  
18/02/16, £23.50 ADV

**City and Colour**  
19/02/16 - **SOLD OUT**

**Stiff Little Fingers**  
28/02/16, £18.50 ADV

**Richard Hawley**  
28/02/16, £25 ADV

**March/Mawrth**

**Theory Of A Deadman**  
03/03/16, £15 ADV

**Machine Head**  
10/03/16, £26 ADV

**The Stranglers**  
18/03/16, £26 ADV

**Boyce Avenue**  
19/03/16, £25 ADV

**Wolf Alice**  
24/03/16, £17 ADV

**April/Ebrill**

**Funeral For A Friend**  
05/04/16 - **SOLD OUT**

**Funeral For A Friend**  
06/04/16 - **SOLD OUT**

**PVRIS**  
08/04/16, £12 ADV



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# Annual General Meeting

## Cyfarfod Cyffredinol Blynyddol

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*Thursday 12th November*

**OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS  
DOORS 17:30, THE GREAT HALL**

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**SUBMIT MOTIONS TO [AGM@CARDIFF.AC.UK](mailto:AGM@CARDIFF.AC.UK)  
BY 12PM WEDNESDAY 4TH NOVEMBER**

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*For more information visit:* [CARDIFFSTUDENTS.COM](http://CARDIFFSTUDENTS.COM)

**THIS IS A STUDENT MEMBERS' AGM. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO SHOW VALID STUDENT ID ON THE DOOR.**

Business to be transacted: ratification of minutes of the previous meeting; receiving the report of the Trustees on the Union's activities since the previous meeting; receiving the accounts of the Union for the previous financial year; approving the list of affiliations of the Union; open questions to the Trustees by the Student Members; and any motions submitted by members.



Editor: Vacant

@HeathParkCSU

VPHeathpark@cardiff.ac.uk

gairrhydd.com/park-life

## Katey's note Representing you at the NUS

**Katey Beggan**  
VP Heath Park

Hello! I hope you are well and you enjoyed the Halloween celebrations over the weekend! As Hannah Sterritt said earlier in the paper we attended the NUS Zones conference for Union Development last week. Whilst there we shared ideas and attended workshops on greater liberation in sport, the impact of competition and how to create wider democracy engagement.

I know that many of you may think that these issues aren't really relevant to healthcare students but in actual fact they are. Healthcare-based students often need greater support from their Students' Union to help them get involved with democracy and student-led activities. You need support so that you can be informed about decisions that have huge potential to effect how you study or where you go on

placement. Furthermore, I started the conversation on how to provide more opportunities for students to engage with activities outside of their courses. These are just two of the many reasons why it is so crucial that healthcare based students get involved with their Students' Unions.

Whilst at the NUS Zones conference I decided to run for a National Zone Executive position in order to highlight the struggles healthcare based students face when it comes to Union engagement. Unfortunately, I was unsuccessful in this election, however it raised some important questions and got people at a national level talking about the issues that effect healthcare student participation. From this I plan to work with NUS over the rest of the year in order to try and address some of these issues.

Elsewhere, exciting times are ahead! The Medics' Varsity tickets will be on sale very soon along with the supporters' packs. If you haven't already been added to the Facebook group make sure you do add yourself!

Finally, the new members of the Heath Park exec have now been confirmed. Congratulations to everyone



**Pictured:** Far left: NUS National President Megan Dunn at the NUS Zones Conference (Photographer: NUS)

“  
The new members of the Heath Park exec have now been confirmed. Congratulations to everyone who has won a position!  
”

who has won a position, I look forward to working with you over the next year. The exec are here to help me run events and activities for all Heath students. If there is anything you would like us to discuss and get involved with then please do not hesitate to contact us.

I'm in the office all week this week and as always please come and see me if you have any issues that you would like my help with.



## Inspiring the future of healthcare Get involved with the 'Who's in Health' volunteer campaign

**Katey Beggan**

I knew I wanted to be a doctor from a relatively young age. With the exception of a brief detour to do an English degree instead- and even earlier than that when I fancied myself a budding vet - medicine and the other healthcare sciences were known pathways to me. However, for many children in Wales, this level of certainty is impossible to attain. After all, it's hard to dream of being an occupational therapist if you've never heard of them, let alone met one in person.

Which is where the 'Who's In Health' national campaign draws its inspiration. A few weeks ago I was privileged enough to get involved

with the campaign, which sees various volunteers from throughout the healthcare sector go into primary schools and talk about their jobs. From medical lecturers, to humble medical students, physiotherapists and the Dean of the Medical School himself, we all went with the aim of sharing some of our passion for the things that we do.

Attempting to wrangle a group of incredibly excited eight and nine year-olds is no mean feat, but it was a wonderful experience all around. Equipped with anatomy flashcards, a stethoscope and pen torch, as well as some colouring sheets, I rotated around the class and spoke to each of



the individual groups of children. For the uninitiated I will make clear that the average nine year-old is incredibly inquisitive, occasionally bold and always hilarious. These ones were no exception.

As well as sharing our enthusiasm, the campaign also aimed to show the connection between the subjects that the pupils were learning at school and their application in the real world. Teaching them to take their own pulses and multiplying by twos and fours was an easy connection to make, as well as emphasising the importance of good literacy when communicating with patients and colleagues. That said, I feel as though some of my mes-

sage may have been lost as I paled in comparison to the wow factor of my stethoscope, a feeling I definitely empathised with. Although I now appreciate its practicality, there is a part of me that will probably never stop being excited by the fact that I get to "play" with stethoscopes on a near-daily basis.

The children's enthusiasm boosted my own and made me feel that little bit more inspired as I made my way back to placement. I'd like to imagine that given a few more years, I may one day meet one of these endlessly-enthusiastic children again- and they might have their own stethoscope by then.

**Pictured:** The Schools of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the Heath (Photographer: Anna Lewis)

# What's on at the Heath?

With the new Students' Union Hub opened at the Heath Park campus, we look at what's going on over the next few weeks



**Neil Alexander Heath Park co-ordinator**

The newly-refurbished Students' Union in the IV Lounge is open in all of its big-desk glory from 9am to 5pm weekdays. The reason we have such a huge desk is for visiting services that come from Park Place SU. Everyday a service is at the Heath to better understand and engage with students.

The other reason the desk is so big is for you to come in, sit and chat with us. Tell us and the visiting staff what it's like to be a student at the Heath. Tell the services what you want here

and how you want to engage with us. Ask what we can do for you.

The SU staff that have so far visited are already implementing new procedures that will make students' lives a bit easier at the Heath. Volunteering are looking to get better healthcare volunteering placements for Heath students. Finance are here with their own stall twice a month selling NUS cards so you don't have to travel to Park Place. Give it a Go found out about the March nurse intake and will greet next year's fresher's with a

bus tour of the city. Student Advice now have two drop-in days here on Monday and Wednesday from 10am to 2pm so students can call in here instead of having to travel into town. The Skills Development Service has been here every week trying to publicise their Heath-based courses to everyone in the IV Lounge. Every service here has either taken surveys or talked directly with students and made plans to act on feedback from the data received. The visiting services also bring up freebies so come and get some and

when you are here help make your Students' Union into something that is relevant and useful to you.

At the Heath SU we already offer the full range of services we do at Park Place (including Jobshop, Lettings and Student Advice) but with staff visiting from the services and together with your help, we can tailor the Heath SU to be of maximum effectiveness and assistance to you.

Below is a rota on when the Park Place staff and Elected Officers will be visiting. Come pop in for a chat.

**Pictured:** The University Hospital of Wales at the Heath campus (Photographer: Anna Lewis)

Week one: Commencing Monday 2nd November	
Monday	Advice (Drop in) / Cardiff Volunteering
Tuesday	Activities (AU)
Wednesday	Advice (Drop in)
Thursday	Elected Officer / Finance
Friday	Lettings

Week two: Commencing Monday 9th November	
Monday	Advice (Drop in) / Cardiff Volunteering
Tuesday	Jobshop
Wednesday	Advice (Drop in)
Thursday	Elected Officer / Finance
Friday	Skills Development Service

Week three: Commencing Monday 16th November	
Monday	Advice (Drop in) / Cardiff Volunteering
Tuesday	Activities (Societies)
Wednesday	Advice (Drop in)
Thursday	Elected Officer / Finance / Student Voice
Friday	IT Shop / Commercial

Week four: Commencing Monday 23rd November	
Monday	Advice (Drop in) / Cardiff Volunteering
Tuesday	Activities (Give it a Go)
Wednesday	Advice (Drop in)
Thursday	Elected Officer
Friday	Jobshop

“ Every service here has either taken surveys or talked directly with students and made plans to act on feedback from the data received. ”





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# Annual General Meeting

## Cyfarfod Cyffredinol Blynyddol

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*Dydd Iau 12fed Tachwedd*

**YN AGORED I BOB MYFYRIWR  
DRYSAU'N AGOR 17:30, NEUADD FAWR**

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**CYFLWYNWYCH EICH CYNIGION I [AGM@CARDIFF.AC.UK](mailto:AGM@CARDIFF.AC.UK)  
ERBYN 12PM DYDD MERCHER 4YDD TACHWEDD**

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*I gael rhagor o wybodaeth ewch i: [CARDIFFSTUDENTS.COM](http://CARDIFFSTUDENTS.COM)*

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MYFYRWYR DILYS AR Y DRWS.**

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# BUCS Results: Wednesday 28th October

Presented by:



H/A	Sport	Cardiff Team	Opposition	Result	W/L/D
A	Badminton	Mens 1st	Imperial College London 1st	5-3	L
A	Badminton	Womens 1st	Bristol 1st	5-3	L
A	Football	Mens 1st	St Mark & St John 1st	1-3	W
H	Football	Womens 1st	Cardiff 2nds	8-0	W
H	Football	Mens 2nd	Bournemouth 3rd	4-2	W
H	Football	Mens 3rd (Medics)	Swansea 4th	1-0	W
H	Football	Mens 4th	Bournemouth 2nd	2-3	L
H	Football	Mens 5th	Southampton Solent 2nd	2-3	L
A	Rugby Union	Mens 1st	USW 1st	13-7	L
A	Rugby Union	Mens 2nd (Medics)	Queen Mary 1st	44-31	L
H	Rugby Union	Mens 3rd	USW 2nd	12-15	L
H	Rugby Union	Mens 4th (Medics)	USW 3rd	24-24	D
H	Rugby Union	Womens 1st	Bath 1st	30-7	W
H	Lacrosse	Womens 1st	Exeter 1st	9-15	L
A	Lacrosse	Womens 2nd	Bath 2nd	26-1	L
A	Lacrosse	Mens 1st	Exeter 1st	16-1	L
H	Lacrosse	Mens 2nd	Aberystwyth 1st	0-20	L
H	Table Tennis	Womens 1st	Exeter 1st	3-2	W
A	Table Tennis	Womens 2nd	Bournemouth 1st	5-0	L
A	Table Tennis	Mens 2nd	Southampton Solent 1st	11-6	W
A	Tennis	Mens 1st	Brighton 2nd	2-10	W
A	Tennis	Womens 1st	Royal Holloway 1st	8-4	L
H	Tennis	Womens 2nd	Cardiff Met 2nd	6-6	D
H	Netball	Womens 1st	Cardiff Met 1st	46-43	W
A	Netball	Womens 2nd	Exeter 2nd	37-29	L
A	Netball	Womens 3rd (Medics)	Winchester 2nd	25-53	W
A	Netball	Womens 5th	Winchester 3rd	12-48	W
A	Hockey	Mens 1st	Kings College 1st	6-0	W
A	Hockey	Womens 1st	Oxford Brookes 1st	0-4	W
A	Hockey	Womens 2nd (Medics)	Brunel 1st	0-7	W
H	Hockey	Mens 5th	UWE 4th	12-0	W
H	Basketball	Mens 1st	Bournemouth 1st	57-67	L
H	Basketball	Womens 1st	UWE 1st	60-52	W

Wins	Draws	Losses
16	2	16

## Cont'd: City attendances down despite solid start



Continued from back page

It is likely to be a while before we see the Cardiff City Stadium as full as it has been for Wales' home Euro 2016 qualifiers

controversial decision of changing Cardiff's home colours to red as part of a commercial rebranding of the club, you sense that a level of animosity between Tan and supporters has not ceased to exist. He has certainly not been forgiven for meddling with tradition.

To a certain extent, this may have resulted in supporters boycotting the stadium. Whether such a boycott will cause Tan to lose much sleep is debatable; the multi-millionaire has plenty of cash but it is hard to imagine him wanting to bail the Bluebirds out if the attendance predicament leads to serious financial implications.

Ticket prices, on the other hand, could be a factor. The least expensive adult ticket is £16 whilst the most costly one is priced at £32. Putting that into context, the BBC's Price of Football investigation found that the average cost of the most expensive ticket on the day is £36.79. So the price of watching the Bluebirds is rather reasonable when compared to the division's other sides.

Therefore, the question of why there are more vacant seats than filled ones prevails. Following the Middlesbrough fixture, which was watched by 13,371 - the lowest crowd at a league game since the Bluebirds moved to the Cardiff City Stadium in 2009,

Slade insisted that the only way to boost the gate was by continuing to win games. Undoubtedly, more supporters will return if Cardiff can conjure up a credible case for promotion. Rightly or wrongly, that is what happens in modern day football.

At the moment, though, the jury of supporters refraining from attending are not convinced by the evidence presented to them. When you consider that Cardiff City's season meandered out into another campaign of mediocrity after a similarly strong start by Slade last season, you can understand the scepticism amongst certain sections of the fanbase.

It is worth noting that the Middlesbrough match took place on a Tuesday night - meaning a lengthy trip from Teesside when many fans were likely to have work the next day. Meanwhile, the Wolverhampton Wanderers fixture was also broadcast live on Sky Sports - potentially leading to many opting to watch the game at home or in the local pub.

Nevertheless, even if that was the case, it seems unrealistic to think that those spectators watching on TV would have made a substantial difference to the numbers at the stadium. And the attendance figures are somewhat obscure as they always include all season-ticket holders - a number



**Pictured:** The attendance for Cardiff's win over Huddersfield in September. (Photographer: Jon Candy)

of whom may not have even turned up to some of the matches this campaign.

Admittedly, the club has acknowledged that the problem is exacerbating by introducing an interesting new initiative for their two home games against Reading and Burnley this month. Those with season tickets are allowed to bring under-16s to these two games for free in an attempt to enhance the oscillating attendances.

With sponsorship and media com-

prising the majority of the club's revenue anyway, it seems the real concern is having enough backing to spur the players on to a successful season as opposed to compensating for the £48 million spent on the construction of the stadium.

Even with this enterprising offer for the November games, however, it is likely to be a while before we see the Cardiff City Stadium anywhere near as full as it has been for Wales' home Euro 2016 qualifiers.

The average attendance at the ground is, less than 14,500 - below half the capacity of the stadium

## Basketball: Men's first team falter at home against Bournemouth

Cardiff University.....57  
Bournemouth University.....67

Jason Roberts

Cardiff fell to their second consecutive defeat last Wednesday, losing to Bournemouth 57-67 in a frustrating matchup in which the hosts struggled for consistency all afternoon.

The game began with the Cardiff big men attempting to trap their opponents with double teams, but they fell into foul trouble early, and allowed the visitors to get to the line early and often. With Cardiff forced into early changes, the Bournemouth forwards began to gain a rebounding advantage and continued to draw fouls, widening the gap on the scoreboard. The Cardiff offense began to show signs of life towards the end of the quarter, connecting on a gorgeous alley-oop, but at the close of the first period the score stood at 9-25, leaving them much to do before half-time.

The second quarter began more brightly, with several steals leading to easy fast-break points and a 15-4 run which brought Cardiff right back into the game. Fewer fouls kept Bournemouth away from the line and dried up the source of their scoring. Looking to create offense while their big men were resting, intense Cardiff pressure forced the Bournemouth

guards into taking poor shots and when the horn sounded for halftime, Cardiff left the court with a 34-32 lead.

But the lead wasn't to last long, as Bournemouth came back out with their forwards well rested and once again drawing Cardiff into fouls. With Bournemouth able to reset defensively after their free throws, the Cardiff offense struggled to thrive without the fast-break opportunities that had been so abundant in the first half. At the end of the quarter, all their good work in the previous period had been undone, and they were left with a 38-50 deficit to overcome.

Unfortunately, the fourth quarter continued in the same manner, with Bournemouth getting the ball inside almost at will and continuing to draw fouls, growing their lead to 16 points. With time running out, Cardiff moved into a full court press to try and force more turnovers that had kick-started their offense in the second half. They also began to shoot more threes, but although a couple found the net, it wasn't enough as Bournemouth closed out the game out comfortably, the ten point deficit a fair reflection on the balance of play.

The loss puts Cardiff at 1-2 for the season, and with an away trip to division leaders Plymouth up next, it

may be tough to avoid three defeats in three weeks. Nevertheless, there were positives to take from the game, and if Cardiff can avoid early fouls

and maintain the defensive intensity they showed in the second quarter, they should stand a chance to return to winning ways.

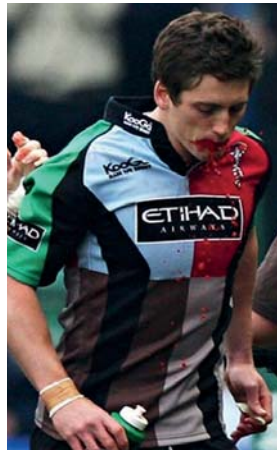


**Pictured:** The basketball team in action during April's Varsity fixture with Swansea (Photographer: Taliesin Coombes)

If Cardiff can avoid early fouls and maintain the defensive intensity they showed in the second quarter, they should stand a chance to return to winning ways.

# Cheating in sport: Is there light at the end of the tunnel?

In the wake of Valentino Rossi's controversial kick on Marc Marquez, Dan Heard assesses the different types of cheating in sport and if it will ever end



Dan Heard

The events of the 2015 Malaysian Grand Prix between Valentino Rossi and Marc Marquez have left a bitter taste in the mouths of MotoGP fans. The crash on lap thirteen between Rossi and Marquez is the culmination of a weekend of tension between the pair. This followed the Italian's scathing remarks about what he perceived as underhand tactics by Marquez in the previous race in Australia to help his Spanish compatriot Jorge Lorenzo to win the title.

No one was quite sure as to what his endgame really was here, nor are we really any the wiser. Rossi, who on numerous occasions has accused Marquez of trying to help Lorenzo claim the 2015 World Championship, appeared to kick Marquez as the pair battled for third place. Marquez crashed as a result and was forced to retire, with Rossi subsequently penalised after the incident was reviewed by race officials. After the race, Rossi's post-match comments didn't exactly cover him in glory either: 'Unfortunately, I lose a lot of time with Marc and in turn I tried to go wide to get a better line to make him slow because he just rides to cause me some problems.'

Sport, at every level, is supposed to be a training ground for virtue, to mould the character of athletes, coaches and supporters so that they may learn lessons that can help them to achieve off-the-field as much as on it. In few other venues are people able to learn as effectively the good habits of perseverance through difficulties, teamwork, striving to overcome ob-

stacles, the importance of preparation and practice, and the courtesy and class we call good sportsmanship. But the field, court, track, circuit, pool or roadway can also cultivate vice, when results become more important than virtue, when winning becomes more important than winning fairly.

Remember when Harlequins wing Tom Williams chewed on a fake blood capsule to feign injury? Remember when Formula 1 driver Nelson Piquet Jr. was told to crash into a wall by his own team principal? High-profile cases of cheating and gamesmanship have dominated the back pages, not only recently with the likes of Rossi and Marquez, but in years gone by. Exactly why do competitors feel compelled to seek an unfair advantage? Sports history is littered with cheating scandals and there are probably hundreds more that went undetected. It's almost inevitable that sooner or later people will cheat, because when you put money, fame, and glory on the line there will always be the temptation to 'bend the rules' and gain an upper hand against our opponents.

When it was announced that Lance Armstrong had been stripped of his seven Tour de France titles, the immediate public response was mixed at best. How was it at the start of his career that a relatively unknown rider was beating the whole of the EPO (recombinant erythropoietin, the most infamous of the performance-enhancing drugs, now known to have been used by Armstrong) generation? Was it that Armstrong trained

harder than the others? Had he developed physiological and psychological advantages that placed him head and shoulders above the rest? No, it was down to drugs and deception.

His years on the bike are now, and always will be, characterised by fraud and lies, but in the end, the only unremarkable thing about Armstrong's otherwise remarkable career was that he took drugs. Perhaps most telling is the fact that when Armstrong was stripped of his titles, the race organisers chose not to award the winners titles to any of his rivals. How far would they have needed to go down the race standings to find a rider who was clean, given that so many of the top riders were using performance enhancing substances?

Away from cheating to win trophies and plaudits, there is the phenomenon of stars "playing away", as it were, notably and most infamously within recent memory, Tiger Woods and Ryan Giggs. When Woods finally fell from his pedestal, with the car crash, the angry wife, the link to a controversial sports doctor, and, of course, the tales of countless extramarital affairs, it was one of the greatest recorded drops in popularity of any non-political figure. Given Woods's impenetrable mask of perfection, and the hints of trouble from one strange glimpse behind it, the revelations were inevitable and very, very costly.

He had always been the "bionic man" in terms of personality, controlling to a fault and controlled to a fault, particularly in the world of pro golf, where even fellow professionals

and other insiders didn't really know him, because he didn't want anybody to know him. Giggs, meanwhile, the most decorated player in English Footballing history, conducted an eight year affair with the wife of his own brother. His family-man image was further in tatters when he later lost a £150,000 legal battle to hush up an affair with a glamour model, with such sordid claims making the former BBC Sports Personality of the Year a laughing-stock. Yet he later capped an unlikely comeback by taking caretaker-charge of Manchester United. He retains his hero status amongst the fans he played in front of during his entire career to this day.

Whether we like it or not, cheating has become an irreversible condition of modern sports, both on and off the field of play. Moreover, the very future of sport will most likely now be determined by definitions, standards, policies and enforcement - or the lack thereof. At present, imbalanced incentives seem to favour the continued erosion of fairness in sport. On the field, the financial and other benefits of gaining competitive advantage via enhancement techniques are significant - while the benefits of catching cheaters are not. Off the field remains an entirely different story. Catching cheaters also carries the threat of economic and reputational harm if the perpetrators happen to be big stars, such as those I've referred to, and no doubt countless more. This ultimately begs a disheartening question: has fairness become impossible in modern-day sport?

**Pictured:** Left to right: Valentino Rossi, Tom Williams, Lance Armstrong and Tiger Woods (Photographers left to right: Fiat Yamaha Team, Charlie, cas\_ks and Keith Allinson, all via Flickr)

“Sports history is littered with cheating scandals and there are probably hundreds more that went undetected”

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“Whether we like it or not, cheating has become an irreversible condition of modern sports”

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# Coach's Corner: Stuart Read

Mark Wyatt

**T**his week in Coach's Corner, Mark Wyatt spoke to Stuart Read: Team Principal for the Cardiff University Sailing Club. He gave us an insight into the upcoming season, this week's BUSA competition, Varsity 2016 and what it's like being in the team.

## First up, what are your goals for the year ahead?

We want to have another successful year in the club – success doesn't always mean winning though. We have a great committee and want the club to run very smoothly and very safely at the end of the day. We are hosting the BUCS Fleet Event for the first time this year - this is the first time that it's outside of Portsmouth and will be based at Cardiff Bay at our brand new centre. We're very excited for this and our goal is to settle down into our new home at Cardiff Bay Yacht Club, grow and develop our club as a result of this.

## So how did you perform last year and how will you build on that?

Last year we did relatively well and the team ended up going to France to compete in the World Tournament which is fantastic, representing Wales. Moving to the new club is going to be a huge positive as it is a purpose built club so our students have more of an opportunity to grow and develop their skills and abilities. We have great on-site support and facilities and also our coaches and members can get some invaluable experience from people around them.

## Swansea won the sailing Varsity last year, how confident are you that the title can come back to the right hands this year?

Well as an Athletic Union we are always disappointed when our teams lose, but we're here to support them and make sure that they win next time. We did bring home the cup and the shield so I'm very happy with that. The sailing had a good attempt at ticking their box though. It was a new facility and the equipment was slightly challenging, the weather was difficult to manage also, so it was a great new experience for our members to experience. This year there will be a lot more of us who took part before and so that will assist us greatly! Furthermore, because we're hosting the BUCS Fleet this year it will act as a great test - we can get a feel for how Swansea are competing and identify their weaknesses early on. Then we can exploit them and cause some trou-

ble next Varsity!

## Great idea! What for you is the best thing about being Team Principal and leading others?

It's a massive privilege being Principal. It's an addition to my role at the Union as Activities Safety Coordinator and the job was something that the club needed but didn't have at that time and so I took on that role. I've learned an awful lot from that role as well. What has been fantastic about it though is that it is a student run club and from a healthy and safety perspective it's great to see young people being so aware during their sessions of the important safety measures. Giving students the confidence and experience to deliver the sessions to their members is great to oversee also.

## How well have you been able to add the Freshers into the team, is it easy or difficult?

From my point of view, all sports should be encouraging new members of all abilities into clubs, from grass roots all the way to top level competition. A sport such as sailing, you do get a lot of new people come who already have a great sailing background, which is great for the club as they can come into the team in first year, which means by third year we are smashing Swansea, we're winning BUCS and that's a real great benefit! Those who haven't sailed before, the club are really good at getting individuals up to a high standard because racing is an element of sailing that appeals to many and it's a team sport so it's inclusive, lots of people want to give it a go!

## As you mentioned Cardiff are hosting the Fleet Racing Championships this year, can you tell us some more about the competition and how do you think Cardiff will fare at the event?

It's a huge event, we're bringing in quite a few universities from across the UK, including Edinburgh and all the teams from along the South Coast where sailing is very dominant. With the new facility it's going to really help us, bringing in a lot of equipment – we have 12 new rescue boats for example. With all this, you need a lot of staff to support it and these people are all coming from the club. They're all volunteers too so they won't get paid and they all put a lot of time and effort into this as it is their passion. This is all hugely positive for Welsh sailing and will be a big milestone for the club, as well as also



being a great piece for the University to reflect on in terms of accomplishments. In terms of our performance, we have some high calibre universities like Portsmouth and Southampton who always perform well. Yet it is home territory so we know where all of the obstacles are and we will definitely use that to our advantage.

## The Sailing Club is known for being a real social hub for members. Are socials integral in a sport such as sailing so that the team is working well on and off the water?

Absolutely, I don't personally partake in the socials – as a student many years ago I got involved in many and I totally believe that student interaction and being part of them is good – it builds a bond with your peers. When you join a club, you are a member and that's basically it. However when you're out on a boat, you have to rely on other people to ensure you're not going to get hurt and to rely on your team to know that there is safety and rescue there for you at all times. So I think socials are so important for team bonding, the only thing I'd say is as long as it's all in line with the Student Union behaviour policy then we're happy with whatever they do.

## What has been your personal highlight being with the Cardiff Sailing Team?

Two years ago we were shortlisted and

were runners up for the Welsh Yachting Association's Club of the Year and that was fantastic. It showed the dedication as well as the growth and development of the club recently. This was down to Emily Wiltshire and her committee in securing £23,000 worth of funding that goes into training, development and purchasing equipment, which all develops the club to where it is now.

## Okay, what's your favourite place to sail?

Well this is probably the funniest part of the story, I don't sail. I'm Principal of the Club but the only Principal in Wales that can't actually sail a boat... Still, I enjoy being on the boats and I'll go with Cardiff Bay!

## What's your favourite boat class?

Powerboat! Anything fast and adrenaline filled then I'll love it!

## Biggest sailing influence?

Has to be Blackbeard the Pirate!

## What is your favourite sport (not sailing!)?

Outdoor sports are what I live for, climbing, kayaking or mountain biking are my favourite!

## Finally, what is your best memory of sailing?

Kayaking down waterfalls in the south of France.

**Pictured:** Boats wait at the start line at BUSA (Photographer: BUSA)

“ For those who haven't sailed before, the club are really good at getting individuals to a high standard. ”

“ We have great on-site support and facilities so our coaches and members can get some invaluable experiences ”

“ We can exploit them and cause some trouble next Varsity! ”

Harry Elliott  
Cardiff Blues  
Columnist



It is not a bold statement to say that all Cardiff Blues fans, or any fans of sporting teams for that matter, want their side to win every single game they play. This is never possible though. When your team does not win, you need to be as objective as humanly possible and have a sense of perspective.

That is the order of the day/week for Blues supporters. The Blues have just endured a run of four successive away games against each Irish province. Danny Wilson and his men have surfaced on the other side of

this section of the fixture list with three straight losses, but crucially with improving performances on each occasion.

Eight, five, eight, and seven – the number of points the Blues lost by on their travels to the 'Emerald Isle', thus securing the Blues some valuable bonus points, the next best remedy to losing. Before last weekend, The Blues had the joint most bonus points in the Pro 12 – accounting for half of their points tally.

After Saturday's trip to Italian outfit Zebre, the Blues return to The

Cardiff Arms Park this weekend, for the first time since 6th September. The reigning league Champions, Glasgow Warriors, await Danny Wilson's side, and should prove tricky opposition as the Blues look to get their campaign back on track. Glasgow boasts much of the Scotland side from this year's World Cup in their ranks - all of whom should be back in Pro12 action, however, Blues have quality of their own returning. Wales captain Sam Warburton, Gareth Anscombe and others should be back from World Cup duty and

will undoubtedly be looking to put on a show for the Arms Park return.

One win out of five going into the tie against Zebre may not have been the best of starts to the campaign, but it must be seen in context. Away trips to the Irish provinces are hard enough, but when they come successively that compounds the task further. The Blues are still giving away too many points, but signs of improvement are there for all to see. Wilson is laying the foundations at The Arms Park, let's give him time to finish the project.

# Sport Spotlight: Cheerleading

This week in *Sport Spotlight*, *Gair Rhydd Sport* sent James Lloyd to find out more about the Cardiff Snakecharmers

James Lloyd

Pom-poms, cheesy pop songs and skimpy outfits. That's how I imagined cheerleading. How wrong could I be?!

When it was announced that we would be doing cheerleading as this week's sport spotlight I immediately jumped at the chance. Being on the American Football team I thought that it would be nice to see what the Snakecharmers get up to and check out what is widely perceived as an 'airey-fairy' dance sport.

The day soon arrived. I was going to train with the Snakecharmers - what a dream. I was put into the "Venom" group, a level three team who were last year crowned national champions. This group are the creme de la creme of Cardiff cheerleading. I was super nervous as I stuttered into the gymnasium. Rather kindly, I was introduced and was made to feel very welcome. We began to warm up with a brief jog followed by intense stretching. I was utterly gobsmacked at how flexible some of them were. I attempted to make friends and sought out George, aka Diffey who made me feel very welcome along with the other only boy, Seb.

We split into groups of five and began to do stunts. That's right stunts. Unbelievable, I can barely do a roley-pole, let alone stunts. Luckily I was doing the basic stuff like backing and

catching in a cradle - I think that is the right terminology. My group quickly debriefed me and soon enough I was partaking in my first stunt. I had to lift a flyer called Eleri by the bum. So, rather politely, I placed my hands at the top of her legs. I did not want to cause offence. Swiftly, I was told to "not be shy" by Coach Carly. I took a big gulp and confidently lifted Eleri by the bum and hoisted her in the air. Boy, I felt like a right legend.

Actually, I was a little embarrassed as we continued to do these stunts. I was having a lot of fun with the endless ass grabs but felt a lot of pressure as I continually cradled Eleri after her stunt. Ok, so we weren't doing any of the complex stuff like some of the others, but it was terrifying to know that if something went wrong, the consequences would be huge. Each time Eleri made it safely to the ground, I breathed a huge sigh of relief.

This is where my admiration for cheerleading took a massive boost. After seeing the odd fall in other groups I winced and winced. In all seriousness, if one of the flyers falls, it's going to hurt - I can see why it is ranked as one of the most dangerous sports. These guys are seriously ballsy. I asked if people do get hurt, in which, among some of the responses were "a couple of bloody noses" and "blows to the face". Scary - and that's only in training.

After a short drinks break we moved on to more individual routines such as cart wheels, roley-poleys and kicks. Having learned the cart wheel on the beach in Salcombe over the summer I was keen to show off my skills. It turns out I wasn't very good, so we continued to refine my technique. Next we tried some roley-poleys, which I probably haven't done since I was five years old and in primary school - they are certainly a lot harder than I remember! Being a kicker on the American Football team, I was keen to do some of these leg drills. Seb, who may I add is unbelievable at cheering, demonstrated his flexibility. He leaped in the air and did the splits, landing perfectly. I was told to give it a go but decided I wasn't flexible enough. So, we did this warm up drill for legs, where you stick your arms out as a 'T' and lifted your leg (eight times on each side). Apparently I



**Pictured:** Above: The Snakecharmers in action at Varsity 2015. (Photographer: Taliesin Coombes) Left: Georgina Cassar in Venom training.

enjoyed this one a little too much, but it looks pretty cool when everyone is in a line and doing it in sync.

I quickly swapped groups to have another go at lifting/stunting - remembering the first rule of cheering, which is "DON'T BE SHY". I was still a little tentative about bum grappling, but 'when in Rome', as they say. I was a new man; I gracefully (well maybe not so) grabbed my flyers bum and threw her up. I was loving life, really having a great time - my grin beaming from ear to ear.

Now, get a grip Lloyd, enough of bums. The session eased out at a nice serene pace, as we moved onto perfecting tumbles and splats. I did not enjoy splats so much. They looked really painful, as you jump, you somersault forward and land in an awkward position. The girls, who were naturals, completed it with a sense of elegance. I however was like a boozed up baby giraffe. Legs going all over the place, I was probably lucky not to do any damage. Next up we tried this backward flip (which I think is called a flick) with a roller as an aid. Now, you had to gain enough momentum to rock the roller back and then gracefully land with your arms and control your feet. A couple of girls demonstrated and I was pretty impressed. So I gave it a quick go and nearly snapped my back in half - certainly enough cheer for one day.

Coach Carly had asked me if I wanted to see any demonstrations, I proceeded by saying 'yes'. I stood back and watched Venom do their thing. In awe, I was pretty taken aback. Some of the flips, tricks and somersaults were outstanding and to them it was pretty standard stuff. To the non cheerleader like me, I was amazed at how elegant and precise some of the tricks were and the little margin for error. This didn't faze the cheerleaders who continued to shock me with their incredible routine.

Ultimately, cheerleading is friendly, welcoming and a lot of fun. The girls, Seb and Diffey made it an awesome experience for me, despite my nerves. I was made to feel at home and felt that I'd learned so much in such little time. Cheerleading is not pom-poms and dance routines, but dangerous jumps, heart-racing tricks and endless ass grabs - it is certainly not for the faint hearted. I would encourage anyone to watch cheerleading first hand, especially the Snakecharmers and see the thrills of what it has to offer. The cheerleaders are incredible; mentally and physically. To have the nerve to be tossed in the air and do a trick is pretty mental - these guys are serious athletes. It is something that I would love to do again, so for that, I am very thankful to the Charmerers for their kindness and words of advice, I hope I did you proud!

“ I however was like a boozed up baby giraffe. Legs going all over the place, I was probably lucky not to do any damage. ”



Shaun Davey  
Cardiff City  
Columnist



The Bluebirds currently sit just a handful of points shy of the play-off places, but a dismal bore draw in the Severn-side derby against Bristol City last week raised further questions about Russell Slade's ambitions and tactical awareness.

Slade went with the same team that narrowly beat Middlesbrough on 20th October, but after his side huffed and puffed to find a goal, the failings in front of goal seem to highlight that tactically, something needs to be changed. The squad look like they lack the fundamental ability to play in a

rigid 4-4-2; something that Slade quite obviously prefers and something that is proving to not bring enough goals to the side.

Something pointed out in last week's column was the Bluebird's defensive solidarity and this again was evident; but there is cause for some concern. David Marshall kept his side in the game as he put in yet another man of the match display with some world-class saves. However what Cardiff really lack, is pace up front - a striker that plays off the shoulder of the last defender. Numerous times, balls were

being whipped in from the wing from Craig Noone, to no prevail. Before last weekend, it was 6 hours since a Cardiff player put the ball in the back of the net, so what options does Slade have at his disposal to change that?

Cardiff certainly need creativity up front and more creativity in midfield. Sammy Ameobi missed a sitter against Bristol City from two yards out, and question marks still arise over what the on-loan forward's best position actually is. There is a call from the fans to adopt a 4-3-3 formation to allow Mason to operate more centrally, using

his strength to provide inter-play with Ameobi, thus freeing him up in his more natural wide position. The Cardiff back room staff might also want to think about investment in January as it's clear reinforcements are needed, especially if Slade and co are to raise the supporter's hope that a top-six finish is a realistic goal. If he fails, then Cardiff's lack of attacking threat will eventually make a promotion push extremely difficult. This weekend, Cardiff welcome Reading to the CCS: a side who beat Cardiff during an FA cup 4th Round tie in January earlier this year.



## Cardiff City attendance falls over 50 per cent below capacity

As attendances at the Cardiff City Stadium continue to fluctuate, we explore why some Bluebirds supporters are reluctant to fill the empty seats

Jamie Smith

Within touching distance of the play-offs, in a higher league position than this time last season and enjoying a vastly improved home record, just why the Cardiff City Stadium remains so sparsely populated is a perplexing concept for some.

The average attendance at the ground is, disappointingly, less than 14,500 - below half the capacity of the stadium.

So why are Russell Slade's men not attracting more supporters? Well, numerous factors could potentially be contributing to the array of empty seats; starting with Slade himself.

The former Leyton Orient manager has still not convinced a large contingency of supporters critical of his supposedly negative and defence-

minded style. Based on the display against Bristol City, they might have a point. Whilst Cardiff were defensively well-organised, they lacked creativity when going forward and were guilty of giving possession away carelessly.

Far from a positive advertisement for Championship football, Sky may have regretted broadcasting what was ultimately a match that failed to live up to its billing as the Severn-side derby with a real deficiency in intensity and a lack of fierceness for a local derby.

Perhaps the most frustrating aspect of the lacklustre performance was that it was such a contrast to the showing against Middlesbrough. Slade's men had looked energetic and well-disciplined against last year's play-off finalists. But, coming up against a newly-promoted Bristol City side, hovering above the

relegation zone, Cardiff might have counted themselves lucky to escape with a point as The Robins struck the woodwork twice in the second half and forced David Marshall into several vital stops.

However, this is primarily a results business and Cardiff have lost just two out of their first 13 fixtures. Furthermore, in seven league fixtures at home, only Hull City have left with three points so Slade seems to have addressed one particular area of weakness from last season at least.

Of course, they will need to have done more than simply stay in touch come May but, for now, Cardiff find themselves in a promising position - even if that has not always been matched by aesthetic performances.

Alternatively, Vincent Tan could be the main culprit behind the vacuousness of the ground. Although the Malaysian owner reversed his

**Pictured:** The Cardiff City Stadium, which opened in 2009. (Photographer: Jon Candy)

### November sport in Cardiff

#### Thursday 5th November

WWE LIVE  
Cardiff Motorpoint Arena, 19:45  
WWE returns to Cardiff with huge names like The Big Show, Kane and Ric Flair all in action!

#### Friday 6th-Sunday 8th November

2015 BUCS/BUSA Fleet Championships  
Cardiff Bay  
The annual student sailing championships comes to Cardiff Bay for a weekend of intense competition on the high seas.

#### Saturday 7th November

Football: Cardiff City vs Reading  
Cardiff City Stadium, 15:00

#### Saturday 7th November

Rugby: Cardiff Blues vs Glasgow Warriors  
BT Sport Cardiff Arms Park, 15:00  
Pro12 rugby returns to Cardiff as the Blues take on last year's champions Glasgow.

#### Friday 13th November

Football: Wales vs The Netherlands  
Cardiff City Stadium, 19:45  
Wales welcome the Dutch to Cardiff in this warm up to Euro 2016. This will be a stern test for Chris Coleman's side ahead of next year's competition.

#### Saturday 28th November

Football: Cardiff City vs Burnley  
Cardiff City Stadium, 15:00

### Also in this week's Gair Rhydd Sport



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**Coach's Corner:** Stuart Read of the sailing club P38 >>



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