

Quench

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IN THIS ISSUE



In this issue, Music have an exclusive interviews with bands The 1975 and Man Overboard. Travel debate whether or not it's safe to travel alone as a woman, and shine a little light on St Ives. We've also got a bumper Culture section, with a preview of Wicked's premier in Cardiff leading the magazine, and interviews with author Nick Mamatas and photographer, Andrew Morris.

Features are back and ask whether or not Britain's obsession with body image and athleticism is actually doing us any good, and delve into the strange world of Tinder. LGBT+ talk about the importance of Facebook's new gender options, and Fashion bring us a summary of the recent London Fashion Week.

After successfully predicting a wide range of results in this year's OSCARS, we've also got a comparison of Marvel and DC's efforts in superhero media in Film and TV, and an overview of the smaller film exhibition spaces in Cardiff. As ever, video games, Film and Music have reviews of the latest shows and releases, with an extended review of city-simulator Banished.

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THE QUESTION

It's that time of year again, so I'll say what the vast majority of you are probably thinking: Students' Union elections are a real headache for everybody involved. They're a horrible time for students, who're typically off schedule, and don't need swathes of people in costumes accosting them as they try and navigate the crossroads at Park Place. It's a terrible week for the agoraphobic.

ELECTION SEASON AMOUNTS TO THE WORST FANCY DRESS PARTY EVER

But they're also a horrible time for candidates, who're tasked with convincing people that their ridiculous visage is a package for a list of serious policies, while wearing the same costume for a week. Spare a thought for the poor bastards, who, for a variety of reasons, are competing in what amounts to the worst fancy dress party ever.

That's not to deride the Union, or to undermine the value of student democracy, of course; this building pays our bills, and I'd rather have someone in fancy dress helping to make budget decisions than a hard-nosed corporate type who'd like nothing more than to sell this building to Tesco. It's just a bloody shame the whole thing has to be so ridiculous to everybody involved, because there are some very real issues at stake.

There's a good chance that you'll read this once the elections are over, and you'll already have made your mind up about the whole thing. But if there's still time, take the time to read the manifestos and understand some of the ideas that people have. I've spent the whole year grandstanding about how much I dislike student politics, but some experiences I've heard from people on my course and others about how their issues have been sidelined have underlined how important the work of elected officers really is.

I know joint honours students who were told they'd be able to write a dissertation for either of their subjects in their prospectus, only to get to second year and find out that wasn't true. And don't get me started on the University hiking up fees for international students who're already enrolled and can't do anything about it. It's a shame that the one time of year that student politics are actually visible to the entire student body - and not just individuals and those engaged with the Union - has become this mess of drab soundbites and painted-on smiles as opposed to raising awareness of issues that are actually effecting people.

But can we blame candidates for resorting to gimmicks when they're contending with so much apathy? If this election was won on manifestos, people wouldn't feel the need to dress up, and it's our fault for letting things fall this far. If what gets peoples' attention is a strange mask or a pair of bunny ears, then maybe the problem doesn't lie with the elections themselves, but with the voters - that is, you and me.

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Want to broaden your portfolio? We meet every Monday at 5:30 in CF10, and the gair rhydd team meet just before at 5. Occasionally we're in a different place, so check Facebook and Twitter for any last minute rescheduling. Alternatively, email pitches and ideas to any of the above or editor@quenchmag.co.uk and we'll get back to you ASAP.



THE UNHEALTHY IDEAL

With the pressure to physically conform now greater than ever, **Andy Love** takes a look at body image, marketing and our unhealthy obsession with health.

A quarter of adults in Britain are currently obese. The papers are still trying to find a culprit. Is it sugar? Is it fat? Is it an epidemic? Am I sick? Are you? Supermarkets have started filling their shelves with healthier alternatives, such as Tesco's 'Healthy Living' range. It seems like a win/lose situation as it might seem great to see healthier food being advertised in stores, but the real people winning from our building anxieties are the marketing teams creating expensive 'health' products that could be seen as luxurious to those on a lower income. This battle to be healthier seems to leave us all confused especially when, according to Helen Bond, a dietician and spokeswoman for the British Dietetic Association, some so called 'healthy bars' can have more sugar than a two finger KitKat, or be more calorific than a bag of Maltesers.

The American adult population is currently the heaviest on the planet; the average body mass globally is 62kg, whereas in the US it is 80.7kg. Despite making up only 5 percent of the world's population, the US accounts for almost a third of its total weight. In contrast, Asia has 61 percent of the population, but only 13 per cent of the excess weight. Weight loss struggles can be troubling and most people will be battling with them throughout their lives (as not all of us are blessed with a fast metabolism). Can you say that you have never said yes to a muffin with your latte? Many people try to go on diets on a daily basis but it becomes so easy to not do it, and the often found ignorance of nutrition can hamper most attempts. Friends can be truly beneficial in that step of the journey by offering solutions that have worked with people they know. A slimming program can be very helpful in order to know if you are overweight and to realistically give you a weight loss frame, along with providing nutritional information. Slimming down does not necessarily have to be about eating less; it is about knowing what, when and how much to eat. The mathematics of it is really simple – if food is body fuel, you need to burn more than you consume in order to lose weight.

Can it all be blamed on food, though? No, and according to Prof Ian Roberts, researcher from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, people do not necessarily eat more today than we did 50 years ago but we move less due to our use of machines. The body is a vehicle designed for your personal transportation and is fuelled by food. So if you have a big body you consume more food than a small body. If every country becomes as fat as the US then in mass terms it is like having an extra billion people in the earth feeding another half a billion. The media's focus on

obesity and a healthier lifestyle may seem like an exclusive attack on fat, but it is making everyone anxious about their weight.

As Britney Spears once sang: 'I'm Mrs. She's too big now She's too thin'. Why do most people feel so comfortable saying that someone is too skinny but shy away when someone is overweight? I do not see it as flattering, I see it as rude. Binge eating disorders can be as devastating as anorexia. After losing four stone recently I got bombarded with people saying I had gone too far, that I had to stop or that I am now 'too skinny'. This can potentially be damaging as a psychological trigger (a potential trauma making someone act differently) as you could be making someone more insecure without knowing it. American Supermodel and TV presenter Tyra Banks spoke to HuffPost Live about similar experiences. Tyra grew three inches and lost almost two stone in three months when she was eleven, going from a "cute and chubby little girl" to shooting up, weighing seven stone and "looking sick and frail". Tyra was not sick but people thought there was something wrong with her;

'I was the brunt of every joke, every bad thing. I hated my reflection in the mirror, I would try to stuff food down my throat to gain weight. Nothing would work. I lived at the hospital with needles in my arms trying to figure out what was wrong with me. Even though later I gained weight and became a supermodel, that girl always lived inside of me and I know what that felt like. Then to become a supermodel with all of this hair and make-up and glamour. Then I start projecting images that I know make my 11-year-old self insecure, I felt like I had and still have a responsibility to tell the truth and to talk about my pains, my issues. So my passion is girls and self-esteem.'

A research carried out by the American Psychological Association revealed that teens who think of themselves as underweight are more likely to face depression and turn to steroids. The main researcher, Dr. Aaron Blashill, believes that this study displays the often unnoticed issue of distorted body image among adolescent boys:

'Teenage girls tend to internalize and strive for a thin appearance, whereas teenage boys tend to emphasize a more muscular body type. We found that some of these boys who feel they are unable to achieve that often unattainable image are suffering and may be taking drastic measures.'

Dr. Menna Jones, clinical lead of the Service for High Risk Eating Disorders (SHED) in Cardiff, advises that the majority of people who have eating disorders tend to develop them early on in their lives. These tend to be

Some so called 'healthy bars' can have more sugar than a two finger KitKat, or be more calorific than a bag of Maltesers



adolescents and the possibility of developing a disorder is likely to decrease year by year. In fifteen year olds, 1 in 100 develop anorexia or other eating disorders. Binge Eating Disorder (BED) is even more common than anorexia and also more likely to go undetected. It also tends to

muscles, but it is not as simple as that, as personal trainer Gareth Tamplin explains:

'Our genetics will dictate, to a large degree, where we store our fat on our bodies. For women it's usually more around the hips and thighs whereas for men it'll often be the back and

The available literature about healthy eating can also be quite misleading - displaying 'good' and 'bad' food groups tends to make people feel guilty about what they are eating leading to even more issues

be developed later in life, affecting mostly young adults between the ages of 20-25. Young people of university age seem more likely to develop BED than anorexia, due to the changes in lifestyle. As opposed to anorexia which tends to develop earlier on in life, people are more likely to develop binge eating disorder and bulimia as they grow up.

Men can develop eating disorders as well, but they are usually less reported. 1 in 10 people who seek help regarding an eating disorder are male. For men, the usual culprit is a combination of trying to build more muscle without accumulating body fat - men can then become anorexic at a higher weight due to muscle development mass with a very low body fat. Dr Jones advises:

'A minimum BMI of 18.5 applies to both men and women, but we find that male bodies become compromised at a higher weight than women. As we understand more about eating disorders with men, we become more worried about men at heavier weights. The gym and celebrity culture could be blamed as a factor, but there is also a combination of sexual experiences and life events

stomach. Taking abs as an example, you can have a body builder and a marathon runner who are both at 10% body fat but look completely different - the body builder's abdominal muscles will show through because the actual abdominal muscles are more developed.'

The available literature about healthy eating can also be quite misleading - displaying 'good' and 'bad' food groups tends to make people feel guilty about what they are eating leading to even more issues. This constant pressure also hits Hollywood, and actress Jennifer Lawrence has expressed her belief that it should be illegal to call someone fat on television. 'Why is humiliating people funny?' she asks. Lawrence revealed that by Hollywood standards she is a fat actress and believes that the media should be held accountable for the effect it has on a younger generation. Is it truly surprising that so many young people flock at the gym daily? Are we trying to be healthier or are we being fooled by companies trying to say we could become bigger, better, faster, stronger? And when does it end? Perhaps more curious and dangerous than the 'Fat Britain' is the anxiety all of this is creating

A minimum BMI of 18.5 applies to both men and women, but we find that male bodies become compromised at a higher weight than women

that can affect their personality and how people deal with stress. It is also a little early to say for certain if healthier products can be associated with eating disorders, but products displaying calorie and nutritional content tend to increase anxiety and preoccupations with controlling food and weight. Overall, statistics do show that the rates of eating disorder at several levels are increasing, but people are developing eating disorders at a younger age and suffer severe problems.'

Fat storage between men and women and from person to person works differently. Most people also tend to have unrealistic expectations from models and trainers who work out as part of their career. This may result in individuals opting for quicker alternatives like steroids and nutritional supplements as a fix. It also explains why some people may struggle with their expectations as a change in body definition can take time. Due to the 'fight on body fat', some gym goers will try to decrease their body fat further to try and show

for everyone. When young boys get bombarded by burly superheroes and girls grow up watching America's Next Top Model, it may be a while until we learn that bodies come in different shapes, forms and colours. A lot of respect to people trying to be a better you, but here's a tip from Dita Von Teese: 'You can be the ripest, juiciest peach and there's still going to be someone who doesn't like peaches. So you can either submit to someone's criticism of you, or you can get on with the business of being your own amazing self.'

Reducing how much people are eating and not eating with other people could be warning signs.

Help in Cardiff is available from SHED on 029 20336447, support groups run by Beat (www.b-eat.co.uk) and Cardiff Student Minds through Facebook and twitter (@StudentMindsCDF)

THE 'S' WORD

With suicide rates higher than ever before **Amy Endacott** presents an overview of Professor Green's recent radio show 'Suicide Survivors'.

Probably, like myself, a lot of you reading this will listen to Radio One whilst driving your Corsa/Clio/KA around Cathays, and with one ear will listen to the mix of bad pop and equally bad chat. But the station really caught my attention when I started to hear a familiar voice mention, in my opinion, a still all-too-hushed topic.

'Suicide Survivors' was aired on a Monday evening on BBC Radio One and was hosted by Stephen Manderson, A.K.A. Professor Green. The hour-long show opened with the startling statistic that suicide is the biggest killer of young people, claiming the lives of four under-35s everyday.

Manderson explained that his own father committed suicide six years ago, and despite his best efforts he has never fully come to terms with it. Joining Manderson is 'Emma', a nineteen year old who attempted suicide three years ago, and psychotherapist Dr. Aaron Balick.

Manderson recalls the day, six years ago, when at just twenty four he was woken by his grandmother saying, "Stephen, your Dad's dead, he's hung himself." He explains that he's always wondered what made him do it and whether it could have been prevented. 'Emma's' story is slightly different. She was raped at twelve and at sixteen attempted to take her own life by jumping off a bridge. As Dr. Balick reminds us, everyone has their own story and even though "there are things we can discuss that will apply to a lot of people, there are always individual particularities we must honour."

Year-on-year we find studies that show us young peoples' lives are becoming more and more complex, yet we live in the shadow of this constant cloud that tells us we have to be happy all the time. We have to remember we live in a world of human experience and, as Balick says, "everyday things can be emotionally stirring and enough to knock somebody off their feet."

Manderson tells us he had a "fractured relationship with [his] father to say the least", but he confesses that he is still left wondering what was going through his father's head at

this time. Dr Balick reminds us that parents have problems too. We always feel like they should be the one fixing things, but a parent with these issues will struggle as much as any younger person. As 'Emma' looks back on the decision she made she explains how she "blocked [her] family out completely or [she] wouldn't have been able to do it". Suicide may seem selfish to some, but to understand a suicidal person's thoughts you would have to be, as Manderson says, "in a place you never want to be".

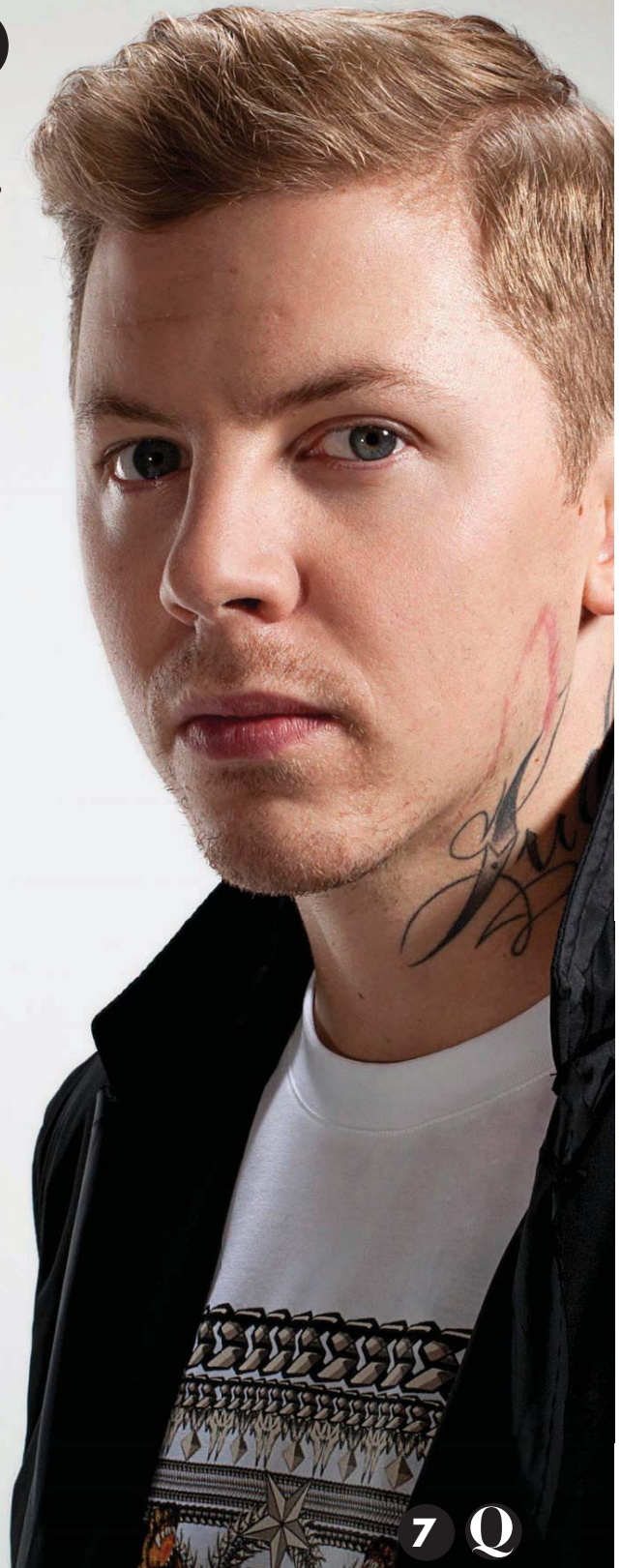
'Emma' recalls her recovery process in Riverside Adolescent Unit in Bristol, where she was treated after her attempt. Revisiting it for the show she says that "the place brings up all sorts of memories." The unit offers help from educational work to family therapy, but Emma insists that although it was hard it changed her life. "If you get help", she says, "you can get back to the life you deserve to have."

Touching on his own coping methods, Manderson reminds us there are outlets for the difficult times in our lives. "I never really had a voice until I found music, it changed my life," he says. "People would contact me saying they liked my music but to me that was so much more, those were my feelings."

The show brings to light the questions and sometimes upsetting narratives of suicide and how it affects lives everyday. As Dr. Balick says, "If suicide or self-harm is said, people shut down. But you need to remember they're still your friend, they're just somebody that's struggling, and if you think that person may feel like killing themselves, then you ask that question, because that's the reality of it and it needs to be talked about."

So why is suicide still such a taboo subject? Why are we still afraid of something that is so prevalent in our society? Life is about facing and confronting challenges, and whether that is asking a friend if they are really okay, or admitting to someone that you are not, that's the nature of living and it cannot be swept under the carpet anymore. As 'Emma' says, 'people just need to be okay about talking about it, and perhaps if they were I could have had a very different story.'

Manderson recalls the day he was woken by his grandmother saying, 'Stephen your Dad's dead, he's hung himself'





James Ayles talks us through his experiences interning in the world of television and lets slip on what it's really like to work with the infamous The Valleys cast.

As we near the end of the semester, for many third year students thoughts are beginning to turn towards the almost unthinkable life after University. The first thoughts begin with little more than amused curiosity at the idea of having to pay taxes, and wake up before midday. Yet as the time ticks by the first hints of panic begin to emerge; I mean, what am I really qualified to do? For those lucky enough to study Medicine, Engineering or another vocational course, these worries are less pronounced. For those who picked their subject in the belief you'd have a whole host of careers to choose from, and all the time in the world to decide? Well, that time has almost run out.

Whilst at University, I began to rather urgently seek any form of work experience I could, having belatedly discovered that stating 'I like writing' on a four-line CV is in no way going to persuade anyone that you are actually capable of doing it well. In this quest for 'real-world experience,' I spent a day working on the set of Snog Marry Avoid. This day was spent mostly waving around a boom pole for the cameraman, who early on accepted that I didn't have a clue what I was doing. We spent hours looking for crazy people, filming them, filling in forms and cleaning the floor of the mobile studio. When the episode aired, I quickly realised that all that effort comprised no more than two minutes screen time. I was hooked.

In my search for more experience, I e-mailed one lady once a week for a month, not hearing a single thing back. Finally, having missed three previous opportunities, at about 10pm one night, I received a call from her, inviting me to start the next day at 7am. And I took it, despite being a week away from my first-year exams. The show was called The Valleys, and the day I started was the first day of the first series. I ended up staying well beyond the initial fortnight, working almost every day, before and after exams. In my first week alone, I was a plumber, a chef, an electrician, a chaperone and a personal shopper. One Sunday, at about 5pm, when shops were closing and normal people were settling down to a roast dinner, I was told to print, frame and deliver a giant poster within two hours, on an impossibly small budget. And, with a little assistance, I did it. You'll find, as work experience, there is absolutely no expectation that you'll be anything more than terrible. Attitude is everything. Despite regularly getting food orders wrong and, on one occasion, walking straight into the middle of filming, I made a good impression.

My next adventure was on a studio show called Baggage for Channel 4 at Media City. This was a brilliant experience, despite the show, a short-lived concept somewhere between Blind Date and Take Me Out, being cancelled after 3 episodes. I was exposed to the brutal nature of TV work: we would be in the office from 7am, and wouldn't leave before 1am. My role would again cover everything from distributing the schedule to stocking the dressing rooms,

collecting the contestants from their hotels and chaperoning them throughout the day, before moving on to the studio floor when filming began, ensuring everyone was fed, watered and happy. Once filming finished, I'd be charged with returning contestants to their hotels in the early hours. Another eye-opener for me was working with Gok Wan. From the first day of rehearsals, when I acted as a stand-in contestant, he was nothing short of brilliant. Each day he would announce himself with a cheery 'Good Morning!' before proceeding to kiss and hug each and every person in the office, commenting several times when approaching me how he 'loved an awkward hug from a straight man.' On the last day of filming I mentioned to him that my sister was soon to be leaving home. Without hesitation he told me to speak to him after that nights show, whereupon he produced a copy of his book, with his signature and personal note to her inscribed inside.

Similarly, the Valleys cast were, on most occasions, a hugely entertaining bunch. When you spend 13 hours a day in someone's company, you usually find ways of liking them. Beyond their on-screen personalities, they are so much fun. Each cast member took the time to write my other sister a note in a card for her birthday, and I've also been the recipient of dating advice from both Lateysha and Nicole, although I never dared to follow through with their suggestions.

On any show, you will always gain attention from members of the public. On The Valleys, we filmed the cast going camping in mid-Wales on a bone jarringly cold January morning. Having

somehow manoeuvred three cameras, tripods, cases and other equipment across two rivers and several fences to the filming location, I returned to our car as filming started. A middle-aged woman in her car pulled up beside and asked what was going on. On being told what we were filming, her look of sheer horror was unforgettable. She promptly told us how disgraceful and demeaning the show was, to which we could only offer a meek "they're nice people, really," in response. She was far from the only person to take offence and many nights out filming became rather fraught experiences due to the open hostility. On another occasion, a crewmember had an innocuous Twitter conversation with one of the cast, and in the following days then received a string of rather vicious tweets from various strangers simply through association.

There is no denying that my work experiences have been tough, but also that they have been essential for boosting my post-university opportunities. For all the inhumane hours, the ridiculous situations and the occasional feeling that no one knows what is happening, working on something as unpredictable and exhilarating as TV is always exciting, and I'm lucky to have at least a vague direction to my post-University life.

I was exposed to the brutal nature of TV work: we would be in the office from 7am, and wouldn't leave before 1am



As app dating becomes the new frontrunner in the online dating world,
Hattie Miskin signs up to Tinder to investigate.

A couple of months ago I was sat at home with a friend when she announced wearily that she was going to have to go to bed because her thumb was tired from the excessive use of Tinder. I laughed at her, not just because the idea of going to bed from thumb fatigue was ridiculous, but because to me the world of online dating was still a place for the middle aged and lonely, not somewhere for an attractive twenty one year old to waste her time on a Saturday night. Granted, I've always been very behind the times. My family had dial-up Internet way after it was still acceptable, and my trusty brick Nokia was reluctantly exchanged for an iPhone at the beginning of this year. Now, Tinder is everywhere. And, for the purpose of this article, I decided to sign myself up to the craze and conduct my own sort of social experiment, seeing what all the hype was about.

For those who don't know anything about it, Tinder is one of a group of dating apps including Grindr (aimed exclusively at gay or bi-sexual men, and often referred to by my gay friends as 'slutty gay Tinder'), and it works much like Paddy McGuinness's 'No likey, no lighty' philosophy. It syncs with your Facebook account and you can display a few pictures, an 'about me', and it also shows potential matches any mutual friends you have in common. It shows you someone's picture and you can swipe left for no, and right for yes, and if you both swipe 'yes' you get matched. Shallow? Yes. That is the point. GQ magazine pointed out that unlike online dating sites like Match.com, Tinder doesn't pretend to have any fake formulas to match you to

One guy boldly claimed, 'I may not go down in history, but I will go down on your sister', which seemed to be the closest anyone could come to an instant woman repellent

your soul mate. You look, you like, you swipe.

The first thing I noticed about the app was that I shouldn't have laughed at my friend's thumb problems: it is absurdly addictive. If someone wrote an article called 'How to Waste Your Life and Fail Your Degree', number one on the list of to do's would certainly be: 'Get Tinder'. Secondly, it turns you into a total bitch. I found myself very quickly saying things like, 'Jesus, slim pickings on Tinder', and chanting 'No, no, no, ew, no' under my breath as I swiped face after face mercilessly to the left. It is also very amusing. At times we would all be gathered around my housemate's phone watching her swipe away, and I'd feel like we should be munching on a big bag of popcorn. For many of my friends, Tinder is pure entertainment. They will never meet up with anyone they match with, nor really have a conversation with them that moves further than throwing back and forth dirty puns.

In an article in the Telegraph, one female journalist decided to conduct a Tinder experiment herself and ended up concluding (after a colossal failure of a Tinder date) that it isn't a dating app, but 'the Yellow pages for ego boosting and one night stands.' I can see her point. One friend had already recommended Tinder to me on the basis that it was a massive ego boost, and I had heard a lot of stories of people hooking up after meeting on the app for a 'one night and one night only' style romance. Reading guys' 'about me' sections revealed a lot about people's reasons for signing up. Some were honest and said that they just wanted to meet hot girls and weren't into dating, while some were self deprecating and depressing:



'I'm desperate'. One guy boldly claimed, 'I may not go down in history, but I will go down on your sister', which seemed to be the closest anyone could come to an instant woman repellent.

Conversation starters also revealed a fair amount. They all, mimicking real life where the man is always expected to make the first move, were started by the guy. And they varied. A lot. Many began with the simple, 'Hi, how are you?', while others went straight in for the bluntly honest approach, including, 'To be honest I only go on Tinder for vanity reasons and for the aspirations of sex'. Some decided on tongue-in-cheek chat up lines – 'They call me the fireman...I'm always turning on the hos' – and others went for the weird and sometimes completely random: 'woof kapow'. Using my Tinder account, my housemate and I decided to see how far someone could be pushed on Tinder before getting freaked out and stopping the conversation. It turns out, pretty far. After about five messages back and forth, one guy agreed to kinky Lord of the Rings role-play without even blinking. Clearly this kind of thing is not at all unheard of on Tinder. There is certainly enough evidence to believe that Tinder's reputation of an easy place to find a one-night stand is not unfounded.

But what of the people who actually date people that they have met on the app? The Huffington Post posted a page of memes that made up a list of 'The Unwritten Rules of Tinder', which started with '1. Be good looking', but included 'Don't use Tinder to fall in love. It is strictly for hook-ups'. After using the app I think this is quite accurate, though I do know a few people who are dating people they have met on it, and they are perfectly happily. Tinder seems slightly more geared towards dating than other 'dating' apps. It is less shallow than Hot or Not, which gets

potential matches to rate each other on appearance and then – terrifyingly – tells you how 'hot' you have been rated on average by your viewers, and less driven by casual sex than Grindr, whose name even screams seedy clubs and encounters in dark alleyways. It is also open for everyone to use, whether you are male or female, gay, straight, bi, anything. Especially in university cities like Cardiff, if you set the age range right, you are pretty much always matched with fellow students, so are instantly matched with people you have at least one thing in common with.

Most of the girls I speak to say that they wouldn't meet up with a guy from Tinder for either sex or dating because it is 'creepy'. There is definitely anxiety hovering around blind dates and internet dating in our post 'Catfish' society, and the question has to be raised as to whether it is safe to meet up with the attractive twenty two year old rugby playing medic who could turn out to be a fifty year old ex-con living in his mother's basement. In this respect, I have to say Tinder seems to do it better than other dating sites. By linking with your Facebook it makes it a little harder to create a fake account, and the 'friends in common' element is reassuring as you can see that the person you are looking at is probably who they say they are.

The problem for a lot of people with actually dating someone from Tinder was summed up by one guy's 'about me' where he had written: 'We didn't meet on Tinder...' Though meeting people online clearly works for some people, and good for them, I have confirmed this week that to me Tinder will never be more than a laugh. I'm not a hopeless romantic, but I feel that at this age I'm not ready to answer the inevitable question people ask you when you are in a relationship, 'Sooo, how did you two meet?' with a shamefaced 'Online...'

GQ magazine pointed out that unlike online dating sites like Match.com, Tinder doesn't pretend to have any fake formulas to match you to your soul mate.



LIFESTYLE
LGBT+

GRINDING YOU DOWN

Andy Love on gay dating in the 21st century

"Hey, how are you doing?" "I'm good, how are you?" "I'm good. What are you up to?" "Chilling. What are you up to?" "Bored..." This might seem like a regular start up conversation for people with dating/hook up apps. But are they good, are they bad, where do we stand?

Do you remember a time when people would say "You shouldn't really date online. It's kinda dangerous". In the brave year of 2014, they are quite the norm. Who's never heard of Grindr and its variables? There are so many! Scruff, Growlr and the ones becoming popular more recently like Tinder and Hot or Not?. The thrill of knowing someone is five feet away from you, the excitement of opening the app and seeing that new message and who knows – the next hook up, or even prince (not so charming)?

It's easy to understand the importance of these apps. It made gay people visible to each other. It is good to open an app and see that "you are not alone". It opened a dialogue and a proximity between a minority and that is quite good, but with that it has also opened options. Too many options can be a bad thing – anyone who has wandered into Boots to buy a toothpaste could tell you that. You just want to clean your teeth but brand A will make it whiter, brand B will help your gums... One word: confusing.

When you have a choice of five different people to date, and another five sending you messages, it can all be a bit exciting. It seems that some gay guys have started to see dating as "shoe fitting". Pun not intended, but this one is too big, this one is too small, this one is for parties, this one is for work...it all becomes a "Goldilock's Battle of the Best" and it makes it difficult to set your eye on one thing when there are so many possibilities. In the age of technology and the "now" we don't stop to take a step back and have the patience to think things through. Personally, I believe that when you are seeing too many people at once you are not really getting to know anyone at all. One of the most ironic things I find are apps like Tinder - being matched with someone you can either "message" or "keep playing" - so wait, is this all just a game? How are you meant to meet someone if no one is taking it seriously?

As I read on a tweet recently: "A gay marriage, where both grooms delete Grindr and say I DO!". Just last night, talking to a friend, I heard a line I have heard many times "I used to date a guy at a time... but no one else does it, so I'm losing opportunities

by doing that!". I agree, but shouldn't we be the change we'd like to see in other people? Lead by example and all that. It may be naïve, but it is not unreasonable to think that if I take time to get to know someone, hopefully there is someone out there who does the same. Whilst Tinder and Scruff are relatively new, there is also the issue with Grindr's reputation. The automatic assumption is "everyone is in it for sex" - since that's what the main aim of the app used to be. Dating has become a playing field where most people's hearts don't seem to be truly in it.

Dating has become a job interview

Another common thing I hear is "the spark". We have all felt it – that moment when you meet someone and you just know you want him/her. That tiny little moment that makes life seem like a Hollywood film or that Disney has been secretly directing this fairytale romance. And isn't that a lovely feeling? But when dating – it doesn't really come into play. Mostly because realistically two people will hardly ever feel the spark or at least not in the same intensity. So what dating truly becomes is a job interview – you try your best to impress each other (and in most cases this will be a power struggle of interest). This means you're likely playing the perfect you most of the time, rather than being the "real" you. When seeing all this as a playing field, it makes it easier to understand that although we are more connected, we are also more isolated. I have never been the dating type – I have always found the whole thing tedious and long-winded. I'm a simple guy, I prefer to get to know someone before deciding where things might lead, or as someone once said, "to get to my bedroom, you have to go through the living room".

So can we blame it all on the apps and their reputation? Perhaps, but maybe the immediacy of the internet and how little time we take to get to know one another also have a lot to answer for. Putting it bluntly – mobile phone companies will charge you a fortune for mobile data and will give you plenty of minutes for free. As humans, we seem to have lost that sense of clear vocal communication, we prefer

to interact through cold letters and texts rather than the old frank tone of voice. We also try to avoid any situation that might bring us discomfort – sincerity and honesty is too often mistaken for "Drama". Most of the time however, drama is a shot at getting the truth and trying to know what is happening, usually by someone who often feels neglected. In the dating battlefield where people tend to fail to communicate effectively consider yourself lucky if you never had someone disappear on you, the lack of sincerity makes that an even harsher reality. These apps have its social importance, but they may also turn us cold, reducing people to just "another face in the grid". Try to turn a bad situation around: if things don't work out make a friend out of that experience. Even if you're not compatible romantically, dating is about getting to know each other. That guy is a person with feelings looking for the same thing you are – maybe he knows someone that could be compatible with you and vice versa, so why not network?

The other harsh truth is that, while we are all trying to communicate - and yet feeling somehow isolated – we are all on the apps. As a good friend said recently, "everyone is on the apps. At the pub, at the club, even when you're talking to them – they are searching". That is the main issue with the app world - besides the vanity of something like Hot or Not, judging your look based on how many people rated you hot, it's the thought process that maybe that eternal next swipe will bring THE ONE (And let us be clear on the image issue here – I would like to think that The One wouldn't be a bare-chested exhibitionist). Break that illusion a bit, chip away at it – let the perfect person reveal themselves through their actions before you decide where things might go. As exposed brilliantly by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, one must endure the presence of a few caterpillars if one wishes to become acquainted with the butterflies. Or as in Love and Other Disasters – stop trying to cast your true love instead of just meeting him. Maybe true love is a decision. You know, a decision to take a chance with somebody, to give to somebody without worrying whether they'll give anything back, or if they're gonna hurt you, or if they really are the one. Maybe love isn't something that happens to you. Maybe it's something you have to choose. Get to know someone before you force them into the glass slipper, and remember that only happens at the END of the story. Leave the fantasy of a "love spark" (it's not a lightning bolt) where they belong – the great works of fiction.

FIFTY SHADES OF GENDER

Emrhys Pickup discusses Facebook's recent addition of over 50 gender identities and a new pronoun option to user's basic info.

February
13th: Shit
went down.
*Mimes eating
popcorn.*

Facebook requires five things from you when you sign up - your name, email address, a password, your birthday and your gender; with gender being presented to you as a tick box option between male and female. Most non-binary trans* folk do not feel comfortable being represented by either male or female all of the time, as non-binary identities consist of those who are genderfluid (flowing between genders), agender (a lack of gender) and many others, but up to recently they have had to choose.

As trans* rep for Cardiff Uni one of the tedious but important tasks I complete is making a note of any forms I see with a simple male-female tick box for gender. I myself take to scribbling them out and writing 'agender' in big letters by the side - however this is not possible online. It's like completing one of those stupid character quizzes where you hate all the answers but have to choose one knowing full well that one answer will change the whole outcome and not accurately tell you which Disney princess you are. I recently made my programming lecturer aware of non-binary identities and my dislike for his use of gender as a binary example - to which he replied saying he would change the notes for next year; result!

So when Facebook finally accepts, acknowledges and provides for such identities - what more can we moan about? With the choice of 57 genders to choose from and the option to select as many as we wish to describe ourselves as well as an extra gender neutral pronoun option, everyone's happy! Surely? As a side note - the extensive list of the genders does in fact also include cisgender identities, so it is not just for trans* people - specifically non-binaries - I am just aware that this is the cross-section most in need for the addition.

I feel as a non-binary trans* person I have a lot more patience than many other NBs I have interacted with - especially those on forums. I understand and feel the discomfort that comes from being mispronounced or placed into boxes which I don't fit, so one just needs to be patient with such matters. And patient we have been; and how it has paid off! Facebook now fully recognises us! Though surprisingly the non-binary community, despite taking advantage of the safe space to complain about the struggles we face, seemed rather non-plussed by the amazing addition of all these options and gender neutral pronouns. Whether this is because they believe Facebook should have had it all along or just that we're a hard bunch to please I don't know!

I mean, try and find a student that doesn't use Facebook? It's a pretty big deal! With such a massive company continuing to support LGBT+ rights (following on from the addition of 'in a civil union' and the option to express interest in both men and women) we can't go far wrong! Trying to persuade people that such identities exist is something many NB people face on a day-to-day basis, but this simple addition will be buried somewhere in the subconscious of all those using Facebook - waiting for the moment someone next presents as non-binary to them.

One of the most accepting things someone has said about my gender is telling me that he knows he is pansexual (rather than bisexual) because of me! Now, how would he accurately express his sexuality on Facebook? He could tick both the 'Men' and 'Women' boxes under the 'Interested In' section - but then does this mean no-one can possibly fall for people who are NB? I sure do hope this isn't the case else my relationship is screwed! So maybe now that Facebook has acknowledged other genders exist it will also recognise people can also like us - as crazy as that may sound to some!

But the question that remains is - why should we have to reveal our gender to all those on our Facebook? The truth is, we don't - we can put anything and just hide it from our friends, safe in the knowledge that only we will ever know whatever option we chose. But the option is there for those people who do want people to know and are proud of their gender - as everybody should be, no matter how they identify.

C O L U M N R O A D

with Helen Griffiths



Internet Defender

If you've ever met me, or read any of my previous columns, you'll have probably noticed that I have a slight obsession with (read: worrying addiction to) the internet. Especially social media. To the point where, if someone criticises the internet or a social media platform, my immediate response is to jump to its defense. Sounds silly, right? Don't worry, I know. And I'm not completely delusional and blind to the fact that there are certain issues surrounding the internet. But just indulge me, for this one column, and let me defend the internet. Someone has to. Then I'll shut up about it, I promise.

You might be thinking "but everyone loves the internet, don't they?" (I did). The sad truth is, no. No they don't. Thinking about it, people have been complaining about the world wide web for a long time. When it first came into popular use, there was a lot of concern that it would lower the intelligence of school kids - that they'd start writing in "text/msn/internet speak" all the time and forget how to use "proper grammar" (don't get me started on all the things wrong with that phrase). But that, in the immortal words of Hagrid, is "codswallop, if you ask me". Just as people speak differently when they're addressing different people (you wouldn't speak to a police officer the same way you do to your friends), they can also change the way they write/type to suit the occasion.

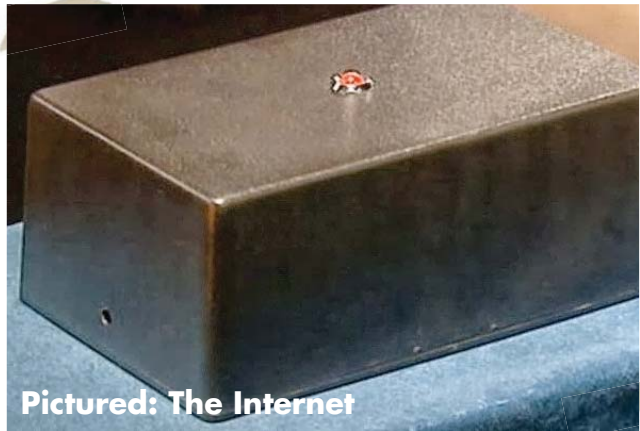
If someone criticises the internet or social media platform, my immediate response is to jump to its defense

Then there are those who point to things such as cyber bullying and say that the internet is just another place for people to do wrong. Of course, it's terrible and disgusting that things like this happen, but it's not the internet's fault if people sometimes use it for bad things - they're just bad people. Give the world a platform for mass communication, and of course a few people will miss-use it. That doesn't mean the platform itself is at fault. There are constant efforts being made across the internet (just as in real life) to make sure things like this do come to an end - most sites do all they can to combat things like bullying and abuse.

A number of my friends have said they don't like the "big brother" aspect of social media - the fact that people can know exactly what you're doing all the time. But that's just not true. You don't have to share anything that you don't want to; it's not like your Twitter account automatically detects and posts

everywhere you've been and everything you do - if this were the case, believe me, I'd be the first to complain.

The reality is, sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are there for you to share the positive things that you do and thoughts that you have. And I think that's a pretty great idea. Remember the days when the only way you'd keep up with what certain people were doing/let them know what you've been up to was through the annual, obligatory "Christmas update letter"? Even then, that was confined mostly to relatives and family friends. What about everyone else who you might want to keep up with but don't necessarily have the time to contact individually? Admit it, we all love seeing what our old school friends are up to these days, even if we haven't spoken to them in ages.



Pictured: The Internet

On another note (and at the risk of sounding like a complete prat), Twitter in particular is increasingly becoming a great way to get a job in certain careers, especially those that are media-based. This might not necessarily mean directly contacting an employer; even tweeting about certain things, about what you're doing and the kind of experience you might be gaining, can mean you get onto the radar of potential employers or peers. Before I go any further, let me just clarify - even as I'm typing this, I'm thinking how disgustingly corporate and suck-up-y (definitely a word) it sounds. But the fact is, it's true. And it's also, again, a really good thing. Social media has completely changed the way that people get hired. Employers can, for instance, look at your Twitter profile and see all of the fantastic things you've been doing that might be relevant to your dream job. If you've been tweeting about them, that is. And THAT's when posting about all the positive things you've been doing really pays off.

Finally, there's never been an easier way to share funny thoughts, videos, pictures, songs you like, or anything else really, with your friends or followers. I might have mentioned before (only about a million times) that I'm a big photo fan. I love capturing all the fun things I've done or the great places that I've been fortunate enough to visit. We all do. And how else would we share them with the people important to us than through social media? I honestly don't know how we coped before Facebook. It genuinely terrifies me a little bit when people say we might not be using Facebook in 10 years or so (although, I don't believe that for a minute, it's become far too important).

To sort of sum up, I think my main argument is that the benefits of the internet far outweigh any negatives that people come up with. It is, overwhelmingly, a force for good.

Fast Fashion



Trend Watch: Fur

Fur secured its place firmly in the street style scene last season – it's everywhere! The most popular high street stores, such as Topshop, had fur everything – hats, headbands, coats, gilets, scarves, gloves, etc. Although it may seem to be an obvious trend to watch out for, many designers have showcased it in their collections for A/W 2014 – but this time, with more extravagance and creative flair. As I'm writing this, media sites are blowing up about Chloe's fur coats at Paris Fashion Week. Fendi opened with Cara Delevingne strutting down the runway wearing a larger-than-life fur hood in Milan. At London Fashion Week, fur got bigger, better and brighter; Marques Almeida showcased bright fur pieces adorning models' shoulders. Matthew Williamson designed fantastic garments with blue

and red fur. Don't even get me started on New York Fashion Week! It looks like fur's here to stay for another year.

Plus what a great trend it is because it's an incredibly versatile way of expressing yourself. You can dress it up to be super glamorous, vintage, or keep it casual and low key. To play it up, wear red lipstick and wear a mid-length formal coat with a big fur collar. If you want a vintage look, wear a fur jacket – preferably leopard print. If you want to keep it casual, don a fur snood to keep you warm with a leather jacket. Or to keep it simpler – go for a fur headband or cossack. For fashionistas who are feeling a little daring, try bright fur pieces. You'll be ahead of upcoming trends.

Vivian Yeung



THE OSCARS. BEST DRESSED

The awards season is not only an important event in the film calendar but also in the fashion on. Outfits are meticulously planned with the 'best dressed' lists in mind. As the red carpet becomes a catwalk in its own right, glamorous floor length gowns and sharp tailored suits were the outfits of choice at the Oscars. The best dressed included Jennifer Lawrence in structured burnt orange Dior Couture and Emma Watson in a metallic Vera Wang gown accessorised with an Anya Hindmarch clutch. In terms of the men's fashion Leonardo DiCaprio

looked dapper in Armani, along with Benedict Cumberbatch who stayed true to his British roots wearing a suit by his favourite Savile Row designer, Spencer Hart. However, the award for best dressed male came from an unlikely source, as Kevin Spacey turned heads in an on-trend navy suit by the iconic British designer, Burberry. We have made the collective decision not to talk about Liza Minnelli's satin, blue ensemble...

Jess Rayner

Bow

Down B*tches

Beyoncé has become one of the most iconic figures in popular culture not just musically, but she also never fails to turn heads in the fashion world. After causing a stir at the Brits in a mermaid-esque, blue floor-sweeping gown, showing everyone just how sequins are done. In true Queen Bey style her stage outfits for her 2014 Mrs. Carter tour left no doubt that despite now being a mum she is still a sex symbol, holding nothing back with her wardrobe choices. Her style choices echoed her mantra that 'the most alluring thing a woman can have is confidence' braving bejewelled bodysuits, leather and mesh dresses. All her outfits were designed by the global name Versace, who struck a perfect balance between glamour and sexy, epitomising Beyoncé's sassy attitude and characteristically energetic performances. It is safe to say that Beyoncé is at the top of her game, after a fashion evolution involving numerous catwalk appearances for designers such as Tom Ford confirming her position as the ultimate style diva. So in true Beyoncé style embrace your inner diva and bow down to world's sassiest fashion icon. All hail Queen Bey!

Jess Rayner



"The most alluring thing a woman can have is confidence."
- Beyoncé



STYLE GUIDE: WORKWEAR

With summer internships, interviews and fingers crossed even a graduate job on the cards over the next couple of months, it's time to start thinking about how to make the right impression. This starts with your wardrobe. The stylists at Monsoon Accessorize give their top tips on flirty and functional



Image Consultant - Sarah Morgan

What's your go-to piece for your working wardrobe?

My go-to piece for a working wardrobe has got to be statement jewellery. No matter what line of work you are in, you can beef up a boring old business suit, or instantly update that same old shift dress by throwing on a statement piece. With oodles of delicious necklaces, bracelets and rings to choose from these days, it's a low-cost way to stay on trend each season.

What's your top beauty tip for a working day?

My top beauty tip for a working day is to keep hydrated. Whether I'm hurtling around the stores on a personal shop with a client, or powering through a bunch of press days checking out the new designer collections, I've always got a bottle of water on the go. Failing that a quick slick of Bare Minerals 'Stroke of Light' makes me look at least half awake during the madness of fashion weeks.

How do you incorporate your personal style in your work wardrobe?

I have an obsession with layering shirts. No matter what the trend, I seem to always manage to incorporate a buttoned up shirt underneath whatever I'm wearing for work. I think it harks back to watching Audrey Hepburn movies as a teen - that perfectly starched white shirt seemed to go with everything.

Do you have any fashion don'ts for the workplace?

One of my fashion don'ts for the workplace would be not to bare too much flesh. Getting ahead in any business is all about utilising your nous not flashing your flesh. Think demure rather than daring - keep office and industry appropriate at all times. By all means try this season's sheer trend, but remember to keep it tasteful and don't forget your underpinnings.



LIFESTYLE FASHION & BEAUTY

Make a Splash

Don't forget about make up! The right shade of lipstick can help you put across impressional professional.



Stylist - Mary Homes

What's your go-to piece for your working wardrobe?

For me work wear is all about having a few staple classic dresses that fit really well and are easy to wear for work in the day and can be easily dressed up for after work dinner and drinks. My go to piece would be a statement necklace to dress up a classic dress.

What's your top beauty tip for a working day?

Always carry a red lipstick for last minute glamour it can make all the difference.

How do you incorporate your personal style in your work wardrobe?

Accessories are so important, a chunky necklace, silk scarf and a statement pair of shoes can really show your personal style and add a

touch of quirkiness to a classic black dress.

Do you have any fashion don'ts for the workplace?

Don't try to hard to look like someone you're not, it's so important to be yourself, dress to feel good and wear pieces to suit your body shape and you will naturally ooze confidence at work.

What's the most valuable piece of advice you could offer someone looking to get into fashion?

Fashion can be a tough industry to break into as there is so much competition, but being yourself and working well with people really shines through. Interning and assisting stylists is a good starting point and perseverance and a strong attitude will pay off to get you your dream job.

LDN FASHION

WEEK

ALICE TEMPERLEY

Designs by Alice Temperley always encapsulate both versatility and a sense of the unique for maximum wearability. This year's repertoire of catwalk shows was no different, as Temperley showcased a plethora of gorgeous garments in her A/W14 collection.

Worn by the likes of Kate and Pippa Middleton, Temperley's classic, feminine cuts and colours serve to celebrate and accentuate the female figure. This year's collection was all about emphasising the waist through floaty textured skater dresses and double breasted coats and jackets. But alongside the typically girly feel often derived from Temperley's designs emerges the layering

trend. Think thick cashmere coats over satin jackets or shawls and scarves in Grecian and Oriental prints.

We also never fail to notice the make-up which accompanies each and every one of Temperley's outfits, and this year saw the rise of the ethereal. Make-up artists were asked to team a rosy lip with a natural foundation base while hairstylists produced textured waves and tousled ponytails, a sure fire trend that you can carry straight through to spring.

Jacqueline Kilikita

Another year and another array of fantastic catwalk shows down, London Fashion Week has officially come to a close. But whilst we closely anticipate the fashion pack's return to the UK, take a look at our picks of the best designer collections, to inject some style and inspiration into your wardrobes at home.



BELSTAFF

It would seem that chief creative director, Martin Cooper, had the recent UK storms in mind when he designed this latest collection for Belstaff. With this being Cooper's final collection for the fashion house, he truly embraced a long careers worth of jacket knowledge into this collection.

The catwalk, which resembled a WWII bunker, was awash of Peacoats, blazers, bombers, trenches, parkas, and Belstaff's classic Roadmaster jacket in this total immersion of military style.

The line has taken inspiration from youth culture of the 70's and 80's with a breath of rebellious spirit, using playful concepts of plaid and floral patterns and the

utility shades so typical of Belstaff's moto heritage.

Shearling, as always, played a key feature in the collection, appearing on the collars of long military jackets adorned with leather and quilting, and styled with gauntlets for oversized insulation.

The ready-to-wear line refers to a sense of effortlessness that comes with wearing good clothes – and when it comes to jackets, Belstaff are the best!

Sophie Falcon

JASPER CONRAN

Jasper Conran's showcase of 'timeless contemporary British style' was the epitome of femininity. The silhouettes were elegant, in muted nudes, monochrome and flashes of the A/W seasons' biggest shade: orange.

The collection was one of the most wearable, embodying classically British sharp tailoring, with pieces such as A-line pencil skirts and trench coats for the everyday working woman. Conran is a British designer who has built a strong foundation in the local fashion industry, with simplicity running at the heart of his designs creating effortlessly stylish and timeless pieces. His A/W collection featured beautifully structured classics, such as the

pencil skirt in luxe fabrics paired with detail, intricate blouses.

The collection's stand out pieces included cashmere coats in dusty pink, sexy little black dresses with sheer inserts and beautiful evening dresses embellished with sequins. The collection was a showcase of Conran's refined yet wearable style at its best producing demure and unmistakably chic pieces.

Jess Rayner



"London Fashion Week produced autumn/winter 2014 collections that were eminently wearable, comfortable and sensible. Enjoy it while it lasts"



SIMONE ROCHA

Considering this is still a young brand Simone Rocha hit the nail on the head with her collection at LFW. In terms of forward thinking trends and consideration of wearability it was certainly one of the most impressive collections.

There were a lot of A/W fashion favourites such as velvet and faux fur with some new contenders of python stamped leather and metallic chiffon. But the strong theme of mixing these textures and fabrics contributed to the looking fresh and exciting.

A lot of black was featured in fantastically elegant Elizabethan shapes, and a tartan trouser suit thrown in for good measure, not to mention the beautiful knee length gauze dresses in her signature pale pink.

Jordan Brewer

BeautySpot



Cushnie Et Ochs S/S14

Nail Trends For Spring 2014

It seems that our obsession with nail art is ever increasing, taking into account Phillip Lim's amazing new nail varnish collaboration with Nars and Instagram being clogged with countless celebrity 'nelfies' (nail selfies). So here at Quench, we've trawled through some of the best nail trends that this year's travelling Fashion Week circus had to offer. From London to Milan, Paris to New York, treat your talons to some of the most coveted colours and daring designs around at the moment.

As seen at **Peter Som**, acid brights are the main colours you should be rocking on your nails for next season. Choose high gloss polishes in neon oranges and yellows to create that happy summer vibe we're all so looking forward to. If you're searching for a more toned down trend, you're in luck. The classic nude nail builds on last season's nail trend and screams both elegance and

sophistication. What's more, the look is so easy to recreate at home with some trusty French polish.

Nails also underwent a tribal transformation at this year's New York Fashion week with multi-coloured stripes dominating the nails of models at **Manish Arora** and **Emerson**. Try your hand at a similar style using polishes in Lego inspired colours such as solid reds, blues and greens. But don't worry if the stripes aren't neat and tidy, the look isn't meant to be perfect or precise.

Last but not least is the moon mani - painting the moon shape above your cuticle in a different colour to the rest of the nail. This has been seen at high end designer shows from **Cavalli** to new, up and coming make-up artists and designers such as **Jenni Kayne**. The trick is to use contrasting vivid colours or to keep the nail completely natural.

Jacqueline Kilikita



Peter Som S/S14



Lea Rose S/S14

FASHION & BEAUTY

How To Wear The Full Eyebrow Trend This Season



The 90's saw the rise of the bushy brow which gave way to the painfully thin, overplucked brow in the early noughties, and today all kinds of eyebrow related jargon is continuing to flood the beauty industry. From the scouse brow to the HD brow, threading to sculpting - just what is the go to shape for eyebrows in 2014?

The **intense arch** has been spotted on the likes of Kim Kardashian and Katy Perry, which achieves that perfectly sculpted look displayed on the catwalks at this year's repertoire of Fashion Week shows. Using a pair of sharp tweezers, pluck your eyebrows into a V-shaped arch, whilst taking special care to keep the shape of the actual brow quite thick. Lightly pencil over your brow with an eyebrow pencil in a similar colour to your hairs, continually following the V-shape to give accurate precision and to emulate that high definition look.

expertly rocked by models at Cavalli and Valentino and its biggest ambassador is beauty queen Cara Delevingne. It would be easiest to invest in a trusty eyebrow pallet by Benefit or e.l.f which both include a duo of eyebrow shades and a small brush to help you recreate the look. It's pretty simple, really - just comb the brow into a neat shape whilst carefully colouring in the brow using the shadow. Follow your natural shape and blend in the shadow from the corner of your eyebrow to the outer end, being careful not to smudge the shape as you go along.

The **dramatic wing** is a favoured style of both Rita Ora and Miley Cyrus, which sees the brow curl slightly at the end, framing the face beautifully. To achieve the look, just add an eyebrow pencil to your cosmetics bag. Make sure the pencil is sharp and simply extend the length of your brow at a slight right angle and by a few millimetres, making sure the eyebrow becomes slightly thinner at the end.

The **power brow** has been **Jacqueline Kilikita**

Benefit Does Brow Arch March!

There's no doubt that eyebrows are a big deal lately with the increasing popularity of HD brow tattooing and special brow bars invading cosmetics stores and high street shops. So, in support of the Look Good Feel Better cancer campaign, **Benefit** have decided to offer brow waxing, threading and shaping all for a small suggested donation of just £5, which will go directly to helping those who are suffering from the visual effects of cancer. Receiving a fabulous new look whilst giving to charity, you say? What's not to love? Don't forget to pop down to Debenhams from March 1st and make a beeline for the Benefit counter! We'll see you there.



FEMALE SOLO TRAVEL



Travelling to a foreign country can be daunting for anyone but taking the step to travel solo as a female is an issue which raises a lot of questions. Is it safe for women to travel alone? What is there to gain from solo expeditions. Travel contributors Anne Porter and Krishna Hemaraji discuss the pro's and con's of exploring the world with just your backpack for company.



Last summer I travelled solo around Europe.

Daunting? Yes. But I am so glad that I did it. Why did I go alone, you ask? I knew people who had travelled in groups, but call me crazy, I knew that I wanted to go it alone. My experiences in Europe mean that I am all for female solo travel. Travelling solo as a female simply requires common sense and I'm sure most people are in possession of enough of it to travel alone. Being respectful to your surroundings is simply good manners. Travelling to countries where women are treated very differently to our society is certainly daunting, but it is simply the case of being aware of the differences before you go. Don't be the woman who travels to a Muslim country or region, for instance, and doesn't cover up her arms, legs and chest.

Travelling solo as a female just requires common sense

It's one way to make yourself stick out like a sore thumb, and attract local attention for all the wrong reasons. Knowing how

to handle unwanted attention is no bad thing – it might even come in handy back at home! For instance, taking a few minutes to learn the word 'No' in the local language is worthwhile. Pickpockets will target your handbag at any given opportunity, so don't make it easier for them! Keep your belongings in your sight at all times. Don't be afraid to walk away from any situation that makes you uncomfortable.

Don't be afraid to walk away from any situation that makes you uncomfortable

Anyone should make a solo trip a safe one. Travelling increases both freedom and self-confidence. People I met while travelling seemed impressed (and surprised) that I was travelling alone. Being alone meant that I could go where I wanted and visit all the sights I wanted to. There was no-one around to judge me for eating my weight in ice cream (blame the Italians for that). I was forced to talk to people – I had to ask locals where the station was and chat to the seller to buy fruit from a market stall. People

even mistook me for a local. I became totally immersed in cultures that I had never experienced before – and wouldn't have if I hadn't been alone or had somebody else to do it for me.

Of course I took steps to make sure that travelling alone wasn't too difficult. I think I would feel very differently about female solo travel if I hadn't done this. I made sure that I started in a country that I was familiar with and had a grasp of the language so it was less isolating. Planning to see a friend from University in her home city of Warsaw, Poland, gave me something to look forward when I had a bad day.

I became totally immersed in cultures that I had never experienced before

Would I travel alone again? Of course. All it takes is common sense and being both aware and respectful of your surroundings. Embrace independence. You want to go alone? Do it.

Anne Porter

SAFE OR SENSELESS?



Women travelling alone are often considered the most vulnerable of travellers as they lack the security that travelling in a group offers and furthermore unlike men, women are often subject to gender-biased treatment. Add to the mix the stories we often hear about girls that go abroad to study with the hopes of gaining an insight into different cultures but instead return home traumatised by incessant sexual harassment. Do we take into account all the warnings, cut our losses and cower away from exploring this world, or do we take excessive steps to protect ourselves by going to extremes such as hiring protection.

Do we take into account all the warnings, cut our losses and cower away from exploring this world

People will always experiences different cultures and countries in individual and unique contexts. It does not necessarily depend on the country, nor does it depend on

the fact that females are able to travel alone. Consider for example Turkey. The murder of Sarai Sierra, a New York based woman travelling alone in Turkey who vanished in January 2013 and was later found dead, an incident which shocked travellers around the world. But does this mean that turkey is unsafe for women to explore on their own? A range of statistics and reviews produced by former travellers state otherwise. Most women considered Turkey to be safer than home with the exception of minor cases of groping, pinching and romantic advances. Some even went so far as to say that Turkish men were more polite and courtly towards foreign women. Turkey is generally a safe place to visit and is considered to have a comparatively low crime rate compared to cities of similar size in Europe. These figures and statistics illustrate that maybe some of the negative notions regarding female solo travel that circulate in society are more rumour than truth.

Another destination which is often associated with female violence is India, where innumerable accounts of sexual attacks faced by locals

and foreigners alike are often presented in the media. Many women would prefer to travel in South East Asia where there are fewer reported cases of sexual harassment than India.

However there is no destination in the world which can be presented as a danger-free country for any traveller, however most women around the world are aware of the dangers they may face whilst travelling.

You cannot travel assuming that your native social proceedings will be accepted everywhere

So instead of exiling the thought of solo travel, consider the cultural norms of the places that you are planning to visit. In some cultures, women are expected to cover their hair while in other places females are expected to cover their legs and shoulders. Interactions between men and women differ in different countries and you cannot travel assuming that your native social proceedings will be accepted everywhere. Along with this comes sobriety and the need to be constantly

aware of your surroundings. Stay awake while travelling in buses, make yourself familiar with the surroundings of your accommodation and make sure you know the way back to your hostel at the end of a alcohol fueled evening.

The best we can do is lessen the chances of putting ourselves in a risky situation with self-made policies and agreements so we can enjoy what the world has to offer. I hate to say it but, you only live once, and although you should always be aware of your safety, there is a wide world to explore so don't regret never experiencing it!

Krishna Hemaraj



I ST IVES

This month our travel journal presents the gem of the Cornish coast with **Sophie Moore** telling us why St Ives is the perfect English 'staycation' destination.

There is much to be said about the enduring appeal of St Ives. One of the most popular destinations on the Cornish coastline, it is famed internationally for its mild climate, golden stretches of sand and glittering expanse of blue sea. Here, the quality of the light is so exquisite that since the early nineteenth century it has attracted a wave of influential sculptors and artists who come to capture the uniqueness of the landscape. From its balmy beaches and great surf, to its deliciously fresh seafood, St Ives offers a year-long wealth of remarkable attractions. Easily reached by road or boat, but best travelled to by train, the local branch-line from St Erth is just a stone's throw away from the water's edge and will take you on one of Britain's most spectacularly scenic railway journeys.

The town itself is cradled around the harbour, the hub of this historic fishing community, where a daily influx of boats brings in the freshest catch of fish, to be enjoyed the very same day in one of the glorious local restaurants. Though its identity is bound intrinsically to the sea, today the town is a hybrid of boutique chic and the classic seaside resort; from the picturesque harbour-front, the winding cobbled

The town is a hybrid of boutique chic and the classic seaside resort

streets merge with quirky fishermen's cottages and lead up to a tight maze of independent shops, cafes and art galleries. You'll find a plethora of little pubs, here, some shabby, some not; The Sloop Inn, on the water's edge is a particular favourite with locals. Wherever you turn the streets are full of people indulging in a slow stroll, rather than a mad dash and this is indicative of the attitude of the St Ives



locals.

Boasting some of the county's finest places to eat, culinary connoisseurs will be pleasantly satisfied with the high standard of produce offered up by the local restaurants and cafes. For all your seafood requirements, there's nowhere fresher than The Black Rock. A local hotspot and situated within walking distance of the harbour front, your evening's supper of plaice or mussels will most likely

The streets are full of people indulging in a slow stroll, rather than a mad dash and this is indicative of the attitude

have been caught by one of the boats in the bay that very morning. If you desire a stunning location to accompany your supper, head to the Porthmeor café where you can enjoy your food to the crashing of the waves and the feeling of sand between your toes. Of course, when in Cornwall pasties are a must, but if you're going to eat like a native, be sure to buy local; Pengenna pasties has been running for over 25 years and the quality (and monstrous size) of their pasties is second to none.



If that's not enough to tempt you, St Ives is blessed with an abundance of superb beaches. For seclusion and relaxation, why not allow yourself to be soothed by the sounds of the sea in the hidden cove of Porthgidden, an ideal place to dip your toes and bask in the warmth of the morning sunlight. Or, if surfing's more your thing, just a short stretch away over the other side of the town centre lays Porthmeor beach, a Blue Flag stretch of sand, renowned for the quality of its Atlantic waves and spectacular sunsets. If you're an art-lover, from here you can go straight to the Tate Gallery, located directly behind the beach; the flagship for Cornish art, it's strikingly curved windows have won numerous awards for architecture and allow for a panoramic view of the vast ocean front. From here, head back to the harbour front where you can take a coastal walk along to Godrevy lighthouse, made famous, of course, by Virginia Woolf's novel.

So what is it then that makes St Ives such a magical place? It's got everything that a seaside town needs, that's for sure. But aside from the glorious beaches, gastronomic delights and cultural treasures, the real charm of St Ives is undeniably the vibe of the people. There's a real buzz about St Ives that's simply infectious, a palpable sense of community

The real charm of St Ives is undeniably the vibe of the people

spirit that is evident anytime you walk down the street. People are proud of their town and their lust for a slower pace of life is plain for anyone to see. This is what gives this town its heart and that, is why I love St Ives.





Franciska Bodnar explores the argument against chain hotels and in doing so, highlights a quirky gem right on our doorstep. Here she tells us why the Bunkhouse is the perfect and affordable hostel for any visiting friends or family and why you should consider a more original form of accommodation when planning your next trip.

Visiting a new city or just simply exploring the one you live in is arguably a vital part of people's lives and it is sometimes easy to overlook places of interest in your own city. Of course, during your travels and journeys, it is important to have a safe place to call it a day and re-fuel. This is where hotels come in and the struggles/joys of trying to find a hotel that best suits you, your needs and your bank balance.

Review upon review upon recommendations, some may find themselves going back to the trusty old ways of picking quality over quantity, often meaning that nowadays, independent, smaller businesses such as bed & breakfasts and hostels get prioritised over big hotel chains which consist of endless amounts of the same, sometimes expensive, characterless rooms. Whilst there are pros and cons for each of these types of accommodation, I have decided to take the example of a 'quality' hotel and review it after my visit in order to be able to share and reveal my experiences and overall feelings towards it.

Amongst Cardiff's many quirky, archaic and individual locations is a place named Bunkhouse, situated on St Mary Street. With no big signs or banners by its entrance, it's almost easy to dismiss the place but once noticed, it is hard not to be intrigued by the cool tag line "beds, bar, boogie". What appears to be a bar, maybe a small night club from the outside is in fact a hostel, as implied by the name.

Walking in, you're welcomed by a warm and fuzzy atmosphere with Mediterranean style decorations including lanterns, fairy lights, comfy sofas and

actual beds to sit on. Their afternoon tea and biscuits are served in the most adorable vintage tea set and they also have a selection of fruit beers and other refreshments. Their signature 'super hot chocolate' made with Nutella and toasted marshmallows is not to be missed and adds to the quirky vibe of the hostel.

It only gets better in the night where they have frequently have live music and lively bar staff who help transform the place into the perfect pre-drinking avenue before a night out. A selection of drinks from shots to cocktails can be ordered from the bar to get the night started in style.

Away from the bar area are the rooms upstairs, which feature bunkbeds and claim to be soundproof with all the modern facilities such as TV and wifi. Most importantly, they only cost £15 for a night's stay so unlike many other hotels, a stay at the Bunkhouse shouldn't be a budget breaker.

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the amount of accommodation on offer and therefore easy to submit to the call of the large chain hotels but more quirky and unique hotels can not only prove cheaper, but can enhance your overall travel experience.

Overall, Bunkhouse is the ideal location to stay as it's cheap, cheerful and is the only hostel in the heart

of Cardiff, where the rest of the city is just at your doorstep. The Bunkhouse proves a great example of a independent hotel and also an alternative to the bland and predictable rooms of chain hotels.





& STEAMING STARVING



Go large or go home as self-proclaimed drunkfoodaholic **Josie Copson** brings you her favourite spots to stumble into after a night out in Cardiff

There are three times in life when calories do not count. These are: number one, your birthday; number two, the entire Christmas season; and finally number three (the one that occurs the most regular for many of us for the majority of us...) when we're drunk. When you've had a bottle of rose, a few swift pints, or a whatever your tipple of choice is on a night out, calories become a myth. Fact. You are free to feast on whatever it is that you may desire. Carbs? What are those? Grease? The more, the better. Large? Of course.

I don't know if I'm the only one who's a drunkfoodaholic, but after exiting a club I rarely go straight home - my local fast food joint needs a quick visit before I can even think about returning. Visiting the take away shop is a continuation of my night out and an important part of the experience. It's no surprise that Channel 4 produced a show documenting drunk people in a chip shop, called (unsurprisingly) Fried Chicken Shop. If you haven't watched it yet, get on 4od now! I found it very entertaining to watch and it's even more exciting to be there in the midst of it. So, I'm going to run through my favourite places to go and purchase the best, most fattening food after a night out in the 'diff:

1. Family Fish Bar

Family Fish Bar has to be Cathays' favourite chip shop - it would be hard to find a student who's never paid it a visit. My housemate has become such a regular that he is now on first name terms with the staff, and if I go along with him the chances are I'm going to get a free scallop or "potato fritter", the name being

dependant on which part of the country you come from. For me though, a battered sausage and chips is the ideal post-night out meal. The great thing about Family Fish Bar is that their perception of a small portion seems to be a little distorted, seeing as one is actually enough to feed my entire ten bedroom house.

It's often the case that I suddenly feel really generous in these establishments and purchase food for every man and his dog, although these gestures don't always go to plan. One time I decided an entire chicken was the right way to go, so after stumbling home with my Family Fish Bar present, I placed it on the table only for a friend to throw up at the sight of a chicken on a bone (a phobia we did not realise she had).

My connection with Family Fish Bar has become so strong that when they were closed one night, I decided the best thing to do was find their number on Google and leave them an answerphone message asking why they were closed and politely enquiring as to whether it would be possible to open up and make me a battered sausage and chips? Unfortunately this attempt failed; nevertheless I'll remain a loyal customer.

2. Chippy Alley

"If truth be told all I wanna do is go out, get shitfaced and have a curry and a fight down Caroline Street". Gavin and Stacey's Nessa has captured the famous Caroline Street's personality perfectly. Otherwise known as Chippy Alley or Chippy Lane by both students and locals alike, its situated in the centre of the town, right in the middle of the clubbing district,

an ideal location. It was awarded its name due to the large amount of fast food places that call the street their home. Gregg's is the only chain shop on this street; all the rest are independent, non-commercialised food joints.

I remember my first experience of Chippy Alley. I was taken aback by the amount of choice on offer, so after much deliberation between our group we decided on Dorothy's, the longest standing food shop on the street having opened in 1953. After looking through the menu I was torn. Between the cheeseburgers, fish and other battered delights, I finally decided to ask the man behind the counter for a "Birmingham style kebab" (as I was feeling a little homesick), to which he replied that he would get me an "extra large". He most definitely knew his stuff. As I delved into this delicious meal which combined bread, kebab meat and salad (that makes it healthy, right?), my two friends demanded to see his manager - they were so delighted with the service provided by that young man that they believed he was worthy of a promotion and a pay rise. We then exited the chip shop and my housemate offered her chips to a homeless man outside, which he refused claiming he was already full, demonstrating the amount of food anyone can pick up in this amazing street.

Chippy Alley is not just a great place for food, but it's also the best spot to pick up people for after parties. An inevitable experience for anyone who goes out in Cardiff.

3. Fast food chains

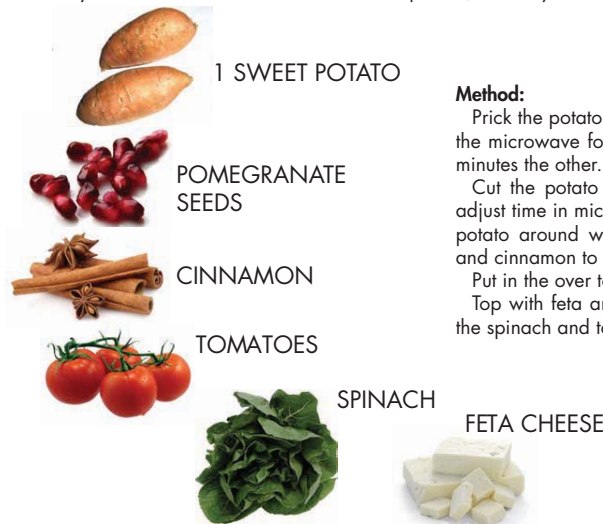
I think it would be hard to find someone who has never had a deep McDonald's craving after a night out. One night, back when I was a fresher living in Talybont, me and my flatmates realised that we just couldn't go to bed without a large Big Mac. So, we made the small trek to McDonald's. We were refused service however, as it was drive thru only after 11pm, but as disheartened as we were, it didn't matter. We had a plan. We jumped into our invisible car and attempting to make our impression of a vehicle as realistic as possible, we "drove" round to the first window, the woman behind it being the one who had refused us five minutes earlier. With complete confidence we began our order, waiting with baited breath for a response. Sadly, she saw through our ruse and we were left to go home empty handed.

On another night out I politely asked a Burger King employee for 20 free chicken nuggets after I deemed my milkshake unsatisfactory. Unsurprisingly that was also a failed attempt. It seems that no rules can deter me in my late night conquests for food.

I'm going to go out there and say it - drunk food is a vital part of any night out. Food just tastes that much better after a few drinks, doesn't it? So heed my advice, forget the carbs, forget the grease, and go large! It's one decision you won't regret the morning after.

SEASONAL RECIPE: STUFFED SWEET POTATOES

To continue with our "seasonal veg" theme, this month's recipe will show you how to put a summery Mediterranean twist on the humble potato, courtesy of **Emma Forbes**



Method:

Prick the potato with a fork and then cook in the microwave for 5 minutes one side, and 5 minutes the other.

Cut the potato in half to check it is done, adjust time in microwave if necessary. Mix the potato around with a fork, add some butter and cinnamon to taste.

Put in the oven to crisp up for 15 min.

Top with feta and pomegranate seeds. Add the spinach and tomato as a side salad.

MUNCHESTERS

Dylan Jenkins gets all wrapped up in Cardiff Central's newest lunch offering



It's match day and I'm sitting downstairs at the large window of Munchesters, one of Cardiff city centre's newest ventures, wrap in one hand and a coke in the other, watching the streets overflow with Welsh and French supporters. This new lunch venue stands out on Trinity Street, its green banners boasting wraps, salads, pastries, coffee and soups, tempting the passers-by.

Wraps are the establishment's main feature and there's a variation on offer, from 24 hour cooked lamb to 8 hour beef - each as distinctive as the last. Today my co-editor Emilia and I tried the chicken and chickpea wraps, each on offer as part of their meal-deal - £3.50 for a chef's deli wrap and a can of soft drink.

The wraps themselves were delicious, each boasting unique and distinct flavours, served in chapati style wraps, which are made fresh each morning and were softer, warmer and fresher than most wraps I've had before.

The creamy chickpea filling was my favourite of them both. Its honey yoghurt and coriander relish blended beautifully, resulting in an exciting balance - sweet, with a burst of freshness. The chicken wrap was nearly as good - its warming ginger complimented brilliantly by the kick of paprika. Munchesters is the work of award winning Purple Poppadom's chef Anand George and it shows.

We also sampled some sweets: their sticky passion fruit macaroons were melt-in-your-mouth tasty; their mocha truffles offered the bitter bite of coffee over good, soft chocolate. I loved their carrot tea-cake, its nutty, carrot texture went deliciously with its rich, soft icing. I was surprised as to how much I enjoyed their white chocolate, infused with mint and pistachios, resulting in an exciting and memorable flavour.

However, the meal deal wasn't massively filling and choice of drink was minimal (there's an array of other drinks that aren't included in the meal-deal). But here, you pay for flavour so if that's what you're looking for, it's worth the money. Their modern interior is fresh and inviting, and there's a lot of small touches that add up, making it a noteworthy destination for a coffee, snack or speedy but really tasty lunch.

Taste sensation but lacking in substance. Nevertheless, it gave me the munchies.

FOR

Emma Forbes

Let's discuss the widespread phenomenon of instagramming food. We have all heard of it and many of us take part in it, posting pictures ourselves (I know I do). Unfortunately, the instagramming of meals has received a fairly unanimous negative response, with blogger Katherine Markovich vocalising the widespread belief that people, 'really, truly, absolutely, do not care about you or your food'. However, I would suggest that Markovich and others would do well to unfollow those that post images of food, if they are so fiercely opposed to it.

As someone who's interested in food, I enjoy scrolling through food posts and taking inspiration from other people's ideas to spice up my own meals. Sharing recipes creates a culture of giving to others without expecting anything in return. This goes against the normal attitudes of our society and builds a sense of community between users. Compared to many of the other trends of our generation, I think that the instagramming of food is admirable. I would rather see less selfies on my news feed and more people sharing their creativity in the kitchen, proving that they care about what they eat more than about reflecting their own narcissism.

There are many problems in our consumerist society, including rising obesity rates and people living increasingly unhealthy lifestyles. In my opinion, it's about time that healthy became the new 'trendy'. Many may turn and laugh, describing this food trend as 'hipster' or 'alternative'. Well, let them laugh. If being alternative means to eat healthily and care about the food that we put into our bodies, then great!

There's the argument that food tastes worse if you instagram it first. By building up expectations, when you actually take a forkful of your artsy dish, you are left dissatisfied. However, personally I have never experienced this sense of disappointment and feel that taking pictures of food actually enhances the eating experience. This is backed up by research which has been published in the *Psychological Science* journal. It claims that 'rituals enhance the enjoyment of consumption because of the greater involvement in the experience that they prompt'. A person's sensory perceptions are heightened by arranging food in artistic compositions and sharing the images with others. There's nothing wrong with embracing the instagramming food trend, as it is sociable, helpful and creative, while promoting a healthier lifestyle to boot.



HASHTAG FOODPORN

The #food hashtag on Instagram has over 90 million entries: there's no doubt that documenting your meals is here to stay. However, is it a trend worth embracing, or should we shun those who dare whip out their phones at the dinner table? **Emma Forbes** and **Britta Zeltmann** investigate both sides of the issue.

AGAINST

Britta Zeltmann

Whatever happened to 'no phones at the dinner table'? Today, it seems as crucial to place your phone by your plate as it is your knife and fork - we no longer keep them near in fear of missing a beat, but because we simply **MUST** show the world what we eat. Instagram has created a world whereby making people jealous is the aim and tugging on the hunger strings of your open-mouthed followers proves to erupt that envy in every form possible. There's just a few simple rules to follow.

Rule no. 1: **ANYONE** can do it; Instagram quite literally has no boundaries. Unfortunately this gives many a licence to cross the line between creating tasteful food erotica with downright smutty porn - I'm referring to the 'fast food filterers' among us, who deem it not only appropriate, but necessary to show their artistic take on all the Big Macs they can find.

Rule no. 2: It doesn't need to taste or smell nice to stand out on our news feeds. A handful of lettuce leaves on a rustic chopping board, accompanied by the hashtag #motivated, is enough to make us yearn for their #willpower and #healthylifestyle (note the convenient absence of #hobnobs presumably consumed directly after the lettuce). If the photograph is of homemade produce, all the better! If we're going to boast about our food, why not boast about the lifestyle it follows - nothing quite beats something we 'rustled up' ourselves before 'grabbing a quick Starbucks' en route to pilates - surely?

Rule no. 3: Finally, you must ruin the eating experience for yourself and your fellow diners by taking out your phone at any opportunity. You don't need to worry about enjoying the ambience of a restaurant, the company you're with, or even appreciating good food like the olden days. All you need to do is select a filter that best compliments your food, making it appear more expensive than it probably was.

Alexandre Gauthier, chef at the French La Grenouillere, listed as one of the 100 best restaurants in the world, sadly does not agree with the above. He is a strong believer that "there's a time and a place for everything," and has banned photography in his restaurant. So if we're going to photograph our food, maybe we should do so less publicly. We should portray a more realistic representation of what we eat; find a middle ground between Maccy Ds and Michelin Star, and most importantly, refrain from gratuity. Tweet what you really eat, not a pretentious representation: no-one's fooling anyone by pretending to dine at a gourmet restaurant every night.

HANG FIRE

BBQ - these three letters should speak to the heart of any meat enthusiast. The Food & Drink editors ventured to the Lansdowne pub in Canton to sample some delights from the American South.

Dylan Jenkins

Photography: **Emilia Ignaciuk**



It's hard to express the delicious experience we had at Cardiff's best pop-up restaurant, but smokin' is a word that springs to mind. Every Thursday and Friday between 5 and 9pm, the Lansdowne Pub is taken over by Samantha Evans and Shauna Guinn's Hang Fire Smokehouse, awakening the soul of southern-style BBQ through the "holy trinity of good times": good food, good music and good beer. Once through the doors, we were transported by the sweet and smoky aromas, southern music and welcoming atmosphere that consumes this charming, local establishment on a weekly basis. The Lansdowne is Cardiff's Camra Pub of 2014 in fact, and its marriage with this exciting venture is a match made in heaven.

Inspired by Sam and Shauna's six and a half month American road-trip, from California to the Carolinas and "everywhere in between", everything feels authentic. There they learnt the art of southern-style BBQ, a passionate and soulful way of life that invalidates Britain's BBQ culture and hypnotizes each who get to experience it. Sam and Shauna's zeal is intoxicating and we guarantee you'll be amazed by what they have to offer.

It's best to arrive before 8pm to be guaranteed a meal: "Once it's gone, it's gone. The food takes days to prepare and seconds to eat and everything is made from scratch - there are no shortcuts". The result of their hard labour is a mouth-watering menu, inspired by Texan BBQ, where slow smoked meat is brought to your table for you to sauce with their trio of homemade sauces: sweet and classic 'Kansas City BBQ', uniquely delicious piccalilli and mustard hybrid 'South-Carolina Mustard' and my favourite, the 'Texas Espresso BBQ' and its bittersweet aftertaste.

But the sauces aren't the main attraction. The menu is filled with meaty delights and "the only

thing used to cook all of the meat is smoke - no grilling, no frying, no microwaving. All smoked". 18-hour pulled pork, 14-hour brisket and 9-hour ribs, as well as half chickens and wings are all on offer but 'The Hang Fire' offers a variation and comes with two sides. It oozed sweet, smouldering vibes: tender, juicy pulled pork, sticky wings and smoky brisket, which is at its smokiest when its red 'smoke ring' is thick round its outside. Everything was bit into with ease and pleasure and went deliciously with every sauce. I loved the communal, casual feel to the whole experience: hands across the table, a bit of this with a bit of that, variations and combinations. It's not only delicious, it's fun.

The sides were beautiful: perfectly seasoned crisp yet fluffy fries were wonderful when dipped in the meaty BBQ beans, with its subtly spicy kick through its thick, sweet body. The house 'slaw, which changes weekly, was a refreshing vinegary break from the sweet, smoky, meatiness of the meal and the moque chouz creole corn's soft-crunchy texture and warming, comforting depth stood out amongst the rest.

It's vital to turn up early. We were too late to sample their Memphis dry-shake ribs and burnt ends, also known as meat candy, which is twice smoked brisket that inspired the saying "need no teef with our beef" due to its melt-in-your-mouth texture which I'd imagine is as delicious as it sounds. We also missed out on their American-style desserts, which are made by a lady called Ira, from key lime or pecan pie to chocolate brownies.

The pub is a perfect setting for the venture, and the manager Binki Rees has put together a delicious choice of drinks to go with your BBQ experience, from smoked lager to sweet bourbon. I was truly amazed by the

picklebacks, the two shots, one a sweet bourbon and the other a pickle juice. The idea is to down the bourbon first followed by the pickle juice, resulting in an unexpected sweet and sour sensation, each complementing each other perfectly, and a perfect amuse-bouche before your meal.

"In America BBQ really is a culture, a complete way of life. Not really is it a community based food, it's a real family affair. People eat BBQ for breakfast!" This heartfelt communal atmosphere is this pop-up's underlying drive, whilst great food, music and drink take the spotlight. Sam and Shauna are clearly driven and passionate about food, and their experience is a reflection of this. "It's food from the heart. BBQ is like the American soul food, the history goes back to black slaves in America buying cuts of meat, digging a hole in the ground, smoking them low and for a long time". They should be proud that they've taken this feat to Wales and delivered an experience that is like no other in Cardiff.

American food culture boasts opportunities for innovation that don't exist in Wales. Nevertheless, I'm happy to say that they've succeeded in bringing a piece of this culture with them. When asked what they had planned for the future I was pleased to hear that their future lies with the Lansdowne, as well as continuing their catering and hopefully bringing back their authentic 'Wiener Wednesday' which I'm extremely eager to attend.

I don't believe in over-indulgence when food is this good, and although I was weighed down afterwards, the soul, atmosphere and passion of Hang Fire is truly uplifting. American BBQ is on the rise in Britain and it's great to see a particular branch of that trend burn brightly in the heart of South Wales. There really is no smoke without Hang Fire.



WICKED THROUGH AND THROUGH

One of the most successful musicals of the 21st century, *Wicked* makes its way to Cardiff this month. But how well does it reflect the Gregory Maguire novel it's adapted from? **Freddie Rochez** goes through the life cycle and finer nuances of Elphaba's story

Art: **Emilia Ignaciuk**



It's all a matter of perspective. 'It's all in which label/ is able to persist,' as the Wizard of Oz sings in the second act of *Wicked*. And when you're trying to turn a childrens' classic into something new, that's what you need to focus on. Based on the novel by Gregory Maguire of the same name, *Wicked* tells the story of the formative years of Elphaba, a green-skinned girl who grows up to become the infamous Wicked Witch of the West.

Wicked, arriving soon at Cardiff's Wales Millennium Centre, has an amazing pedigree for a musical. It has a list of accolades longer than your arm, a universally-beloved score, and a history of famous names in its leading roles, including Idina Menzel, the first actress to play Elphaba and the current star of Disney's *Frozen* (incidentally, another story which takes a traditionally villainous character, The Snow Queen, and casts her as a misunderstood hero). But what *Wicked* doesn't have, which has become almost a necessity for successful musicals in the last few decades, is a happy ending.

A look at any given cinema's timetable will show you one undeniable truth: happy endings sell. The good guys win, they fall in love, and ride into the sunset. The villains, meanwhile, are either converted or killed off, depending on the age range of the target audience. It's a simple idea that recurs again and again in books, films, television, and theatre. But this straightforward pattern becomes difficult when rewriting your story from the point of view of the villain, as Maguire did when he wrote his 1995 novel, *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*.

Happy endings sell. Down-beat ones don't, unless you've got the pathos for it. This is exactly the problem faced by Stephen Schwartz when he came

to adapt *Wicked* to the stage in 2003. His vision for the musical is undeniably upbeat, with gloriously technicolour costumes, catchy lyrics, and fantastic choreography. But how to fit this in with a story that must end, inevitably, with the protagonist's death by melting? It simply doesn't work.

It was less of a problem for Maguire, whose novel is based on both L. Frank Baum's original *Oz* series and the 1939 adaptation of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Maguire's own interpretation of *Oz* is a world away from the fairyland of Baum's books, and in a gritty, dystopian land ruled by a power-hungry Wizard, Elphaba's death takes on a tragic resonance. Of course, *Wicked* the novel is only the first of a four-book series, and what actually happens between Elphaba and Dorothy is never really explained. But that doesn't work in a big budget, all-singing, all-dancing musical which only lasts two and a half hours. The novel's plot is simply too dense to be explored properly in that time frame and the relationships that Elphaba builds with everyone from Glinda to the Wizard are too complex to be staged properly.

Schwartz's solution is to shift the focus. *Wicked* is no longer *The Life and Times Of Elphaba*, but *The Untold Story of the Witches of Oz*, exploring the love-hate relationship between Elphaba and Glinda. Yes, Elphaba is still the freedom fighter from Maguire's text, but she's been mellowed somewhat. Gone are the political assassinations, the Frankenstein-esque experimentations, and the convent years. The musical allows us to see yet another side of the character; the vulnerable, insecure and simply odd girl, as well as Maguire's justice-seeking rebel and Baum's monstrous tyrant.

The friendship between Elphaba and Glinda (or 'Galinda', if you prefer) is what gives *Wicked* its heart. Largely told through the eyes of a grown-up Glinda, the story starts with Elphaba's birth, but quickly skips ahead to the pair's meeting on the first day of university. The pair go through every possible combination of relationship without actually becoming lovers, although I believe that there is a certain audience for this idea, and enough fanfiction on the subject to sink a ship. Starting as university roommates, the characters progress from vowed enemies, through a stage best described as frenemies, eventually becoming both best friends and rivals for the affections of Fieryo, a prince and fellow student. And all of this before the interval.

The second act brings the narrative closer to

The second act brings the narrative closer to Maguire's text, although it's still vastly different from both the novel and Baum's work

Maguire's text, although it's still vastly different from both the novel and Baum's work. Of course, some things have to be cut in any adaptation. The political murders carried out by the Wizard's regime go unmentioned. Elphaba's years as a freedom fighter, terrorizing the population of *Oz*, is largely glossed over. Dorothy hardly makes an appearance, other than as a vague silhouette in the final act. And anyone wondering what in God's name is going on with the clockwork dragon hanging over the stage should probably just go and read Maguire's books. All of them. Twice.

I'm not going to tell you how they get round the problem of Elphaba's death. Either you've seen *Wicked* already, and you know what happens at the end, or you don't, and I'm not going to spoil it for you. I can't say that the musical is the same as the novels; too much has been left out, in order to make the story work for the stage. The novel and the musical are as different from each other as they are from Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*. *Wicked* is a dark, gritty piece of magical realism which shows a classic villain in an entirely new light, and adds depth to a fantasy world which had previously been little more than a series of exotic faces and locations. *Wicked*, meanwhile is a lively, vibrant piece of theatre which deserves all of the acclaim it has received and more, and the news of a further adaptation into a big-budget film will have fans nervous and elated in equal measure. But despite the differences in narrative and tone, both versions explore the same questions; how far are good intentions cancelled out when they lead to bad results? And what is it to be considered to be *Wicked* - by ourselves and others?

Wicked comes to the Wales Millennium Centre from March 12th - April 26th, starring Nikki Davis-Jones as Elphaba and Emily Tierney as Glinda.

Wicked is no longer 'The Life and Times Of Elphaba,' but 'The Untold Story of the Witches of Oz', exploring the love-hate relationship between Elphaba and Glinda

Nick Mamatas

is a Greek-American writer

and editor. His latest novel *Love is the Law* melds the Marxist theories of Trotsky and the occult teachings of Aleister Crowley in a noir setting; it's the story of teenager Dawn Seliger attempting to track down the murderer of her mentor in magic and love. He's also the author of *Move Under Ground*, which combined the mythos of H. P. Lovecraft with the Beat Generation (a group of American writers in the 1950s), as well as *Under My Roof*, *Sensation* and *Bullettime*. **Adam Brelsford** talks to him about *Love is the Law*, his influences, and his work as a writer.

Love is the Law got some really strong praise from people like Warren Ellis and Duane Swierczynski. Are you happy with how it's being received?

The reception has been interesting. Women who were involved with punk or radicalism in the 1980s, 1990s, or even today have really enjoyed it so far. I think this is the first book of mine that captured a woman audience to any significant extent. Then there are the Thelemites. *Love is the Law* mixes Crowley and Trotsky, which some of the more doctrinaire Thelemites don't like very much. Current wisdom seems to be that Crowley was a champion of right-libertarianism, though I have trouble imagining him fuming about "sound money" and other grumpy reactionary concerns. Of course, the book isn't a demonstration of the perfect melding of Crowley and Trotsky, so as you might be able to guess, many of the complaints have come from people who never made it past the cover copy.

Speaking of, there have been some few people complaining about the term "black magic" on the back cover as well. I just want to take these people to my bosom, stroke their hair and say, "It'll be all right. It's okay, you powerful mage, you commander of the spirits. I didn't do anything too awful to you," and kiss their tears away.

I haven't heard all that much from organized Trotskyism. I guess book review pages are at a premium in workers' papers too, just as they are in the bourgeois press these days.

Overall, the book had some problems at first, including a last minute price change that still hasn't been reflected in all the online retailers, but it's doing well. We've only had one major review so far, on NPR.org (the website, not over the actual US radio waves) but it's doing well. It might end up being a word-of-mouth cult classic, which at this late date in my career, I'll take.

I can't imagine much research, if any, was needed for the Trotskyism, as you've been on the radical left for a while, but how about for Crowley?

Time spent on the fringe is really time spent on the fringes. If you're on the left, you often find yourself rubbing shoulders with the right; a materialist often

encounters the mystic. So Crowley was someone I did a bit of research for, but I've known a number of his followers (formal and informal) over the years. And as someone who writes supernatural fiction, I of course have done research generally on various magical topics—and a number of readers are true believers in this or that bit of supernaturalism. For this novel in particular, I was inspired somewhat by the blog of a dissident member of the OTO in the United States. He would write on his complaints about the OTO nearly every day and one day I asked him why he bothered. He said something about waking up each morning and deciding then what was the most important: very often it was internal politics of the OTO. So I was reminded of my own time on the left, and how that game of politics is played. He also had some interesting things to say about Leviathan (on another topic, not about his motivation to blog), which I integrated into the book.

I'm a writer's writer,
which is not a
complimentary term

Does Leviathan in Love is the Law represent anything in particular to you?

When I was young, and stupid, and underpublished I had an idea. It's the same idea that many young, stupid, and underpublished writers have; write a little manifesto. Mine was to be about "chthonic fiction"—you know, to differentiate my stuff from the main stream of dark fiction, which was heavily influenced by Stephen King. Luckily, I was talked out of it by wiser friends than me. But I have a great interest in the notion of the chthonic; my short story "Dead Man in My Bed" is an example of bringing the chthonic into a modern setting. Anyway, I am interested in that which is primal, which is underground, and the idea of the underground as something other than a reaction to the mainstream. These days, many countercultures are just that; pop culture arises and counterculture arises in opposition. But some countercultures come out of something deeper, from pieces of society

grinding against one another. I suppose that's what Leviathan means to me. Something always out there in the deep, ready to rise up if only to keep us all from growing complacent.

What interests you about noir? And do you have something in particular you'd like to tackle, or are currently working on, to stake out more of a position in that field?

Noir is a capacious genre; it can be anything. In that, it's sort of like horror, but horror is overburdened by the phenomenal success of Stephen King. A noir can stop in the middle to give a several-page lecture on art, as in *The Burnt-Orange Heresy*. The words can nearly fall off the page, as in anything by Ken Bruen. As an annex to the mystery genre, it can be shelved in actual bookstores (good luck finding much horror in a bookstore these days) while being something unique. I am working on a novel now, about Greek fascists in a Greek-American enclave in New York City. We'll see how it goes; by working on I mean I have a sixteen-day-old baby at home right now, so I'm hardly working on anything except trying to sell copies of *Love is the Law* and earn some diaper money.

Usually, when asked, you cite John Fante as probably the biggest influence on your work. Is he something of a perennial influence, or has it waned over the years?

John Fante is an influence, definitely. I suppose he has waned a bit, which is a good thing, though I've been loving what his son Dan is doing with crime fiction, and the mix of confessional/crime fiction I've been seeing out of magazines like *The Savage Kick* (of which Dan Fante is a major part). So he's still in there, if largely via extension and deflection these days. John Fante is still a major model for me in how to be a writer, if less so on the actual sentence by sentence level.

How about any newer influences on your work that you're aware of?

I've been reading a fair amount of alt.lit recently—reading about it more than reading it, truth be told.

I'm more interested in authors like Tao Lin and Noah Cicero as social phenomena than writers, but there are some excellent writers in that scene as well. The best is probably Jarrett Kobek, whose recent novels ATTA and BTW I've really enjoyed. I might start tinkering with some stuff in that direction. In this case, it's less an influence than a specific integration, so we'll see what happens.

I was curious as to your thoughts on Thomas Ligotti. I noticed you gave him a nod in your short story Thy Shiny Car in the Night. I also thought I detected a bit of a Ligotti vibe in the performance artist in Bulletime and Abyssal Eyeballs in Love is the Law. Does this sound plausible? And what do you think of Ligotti's work, generally?

I love Ligotti. Love love love him. My favorite story of his is "The Shadow, The Darkness" as the horrifying evil could be an extradimensional reality in which this one is embedded, or it could just be a stomach ache. I'm actually less interested in his stories where he explores the "puppet theater"—the Abyssal Eyeballs basement show is basically just like a lot of basement shows and odd performances I'd seen in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Looking back on your published work so far, is there anything you're not pleased with?

My first novella, Northern Gothic was yet another publishing issue—the firm was going through

immense changes so production fell through the cracks. Under My Roof, from the same publisher six years later, came out the week after a bankruptcy, and was rushed to press with a cover that makes the book look like a memoir of my bout with ovarian cancer. I'd love to see them republished some day, with a proper copy edit and decent covers.

How about anything you're particularly proud of so far?

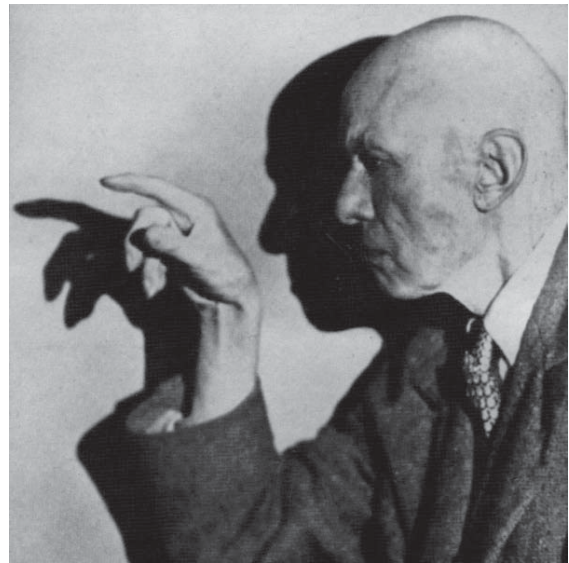
Love Is The Law, which is my first novel my wife Olivia actually likes. She skipped through the middle section of Move Under Ground and then claimed to have read it, gave up on The Damned Highway, found Under My Roof too cynical, and thought Sensation was "too clever." So Lit!

Nice! Has she ever read any of your short stories/novellas?

A number of them, most of which she didn't like. She did help with one, "Avant-n00b", about a young fashion blogger who finds an impossible garment. It was published in the anthology BLOODY FABULOUS, which given that it was a book of stories about fashion for an audience of people who wear ratty unicorn t-shirts over their distended bellies until they rot off from years of sweat and funk, went nowhere fast. Anyway, she liked that one! So do I!

Do you have much interaction with the people who read your books? I was curious if you knew what kind of people make up your "audience", for lack of a better word.

I guess I have a few audiences—there's a subset of fans of "literary" horror (most of whom are writers) and adjacent to them Lovecraftian completists. Some people who are interested in what used to be called independent literature, before the term was so thoroughly abused by people uploading their serial killer and magical elf novels to Kindle, also read my stuff. So basically literary weirdos. I'm a



writer's writer, which is not a complimentary term: it just means someone who is read primarily by other writers and by people who wish to be writers. That second group is even more sizeable!

If you could give some advice to yourself back when you were a wish-to-be-writer, or just starting out, what would it be?

Back in the mid-1990s my friend and I put together a translation of a book, and being young and stupid we thought we could send it out and we'd get a check in the mail. Now, we did get some positive responses—notes and even phone calls from editors, and even people telling us that we'd hear back in a month or so. It actually took three years to get the book—KWANGJU DIARY, about the uprising in the South Korean city of Kwangju—published. I was also writing some sample test questions for Korean study guides for English comprehension. I would have told myself back then to go get a temp job and work two days a week, because hints of money and even promises of money are not enough. No matter how cheaply one lives, and I was living very cheaply in a place with a tub in the kitchen, one has to have some sort of income eventually. Prosaic advice, but there it is. Part-time work is a good thing to have.

I just want to take these people to my bosom and stroke their hair and say, "It'll be all right. It's okay, you powerful image, you commander of the spirits. I didn't do anything too awful to you"

ANDREW MORRIS



Andrew Morris is a graduate of Swansea University who recently won the Wales International Young Artist Award, for his poignant series “What’s Left Behind?”, which focuses on the homes of those who passed away recently. Culture editor **Sum Sze Tam** talks to him about his photos, his beginnings, and the current tumultuous arts environment

You recently won the Wales International Young Artist Award for your fascinating photography series “What’s Left Behind?”. What compelled you to capture these images, and how did you carry it out?

What drew me to this particular subject area was that each time I went into a property I would be completely unaware of what was behind each door or what I would discover inside. Sometimes you would be able to tell that the family had already been at the house and taken some of the personal belonging that may have had intrinsic value. On other occasions it seemed that the house was still being lived in. It was a rather odd feeling for me to undertake my work within a property where everything remained there. I found myself starting to spot similar themes within these spaces that were once considered to be family homes. For example, one of the rooms that I worked in was empty except for a single chair; however, there were other small details which I would start to notice, such as the marks on the carpet or indentations where something obviously once stood. It is amazing how much detail can be picked up from a space that can be considered as empty or simplistic. It is a really good feeling for me as an artist to recognise that other people can look at some of my work and are able to see the absence and presence as I do.

How did you get started with photography? When did you decide you wanted to do this for a living?

I’ve always had a strong interest in photography. As a child I always found myself to have a camera in my hand pointing and shooting and capturing moments. After moving on to college I first decided that I wanted to start studying

photography. After these two important years I found myself faced with a decision; that is; what do I want to pursue in terms of a career? I was in two minds; for example, one side of me was looking at studying business and the other looking at photography. I decided to study something which I really love and wanted to do.

You’re a graduate of Swansea Metropolitan University’s ‘Photography in the Arts’ BA. What was studying for a Photography degree like, considering that career prospects are less straightforward for those in the Arts?

I had four great years at Swansea University where I worked on a number of projects, which included researching a number of different areas. I did not consider my career options at this point, the only thing I knew was that I wanted to finish university and go on to work full-time within this particular field. That is, within the gallery and exhibitions side of things or working as a freelance photographer, which I currently feel I am doing well, and I feel that I have made the right choice to pursue my passion to work as a photographer on a full-time basis.

The arts industry, being so entrenched in the artist’s personal life, can be a very difficult environment to navigate right now, especially with the rise of the Internet. What’s the biggest challenge you’ve had to face as a photographer so far, and where do you want to be in a few years time?

I would say that the internet has helped me with the number of people who have been able to see my work. The biggest challenge I would say I’ve had

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to deal with is being able to push myself to make work at the highest standard and continue at that level where I won the award for Wales International Artist, which I feel is a great accomplishment, and I'm still overwhelmed by the fact I was chosen out of the five finalists.

What piece of advice would you give to any budding photographers trying to make their big break?

By reflecting on my achievements as a photographer to date, I have realised that it is worth stepping outside of your comfort zone and facing challenges, which for me has really paid off. However I feel that it is important to mention that my achievements to date has also been down to the hard work and commitment which have enabled me to reach the point that I am at now. The advice that I would offer is to pursue your passion, don't ever give up, and persevere at all times! It is also good to be humble to any advice or criticism that is offered, as this will only help you to reflect on your work which will lead to lifelong learning and improvement of your craft.

Andrew Morris' What's Left Behind? series comes to Chapter Arts Centre from March 14 - May 18. It's there for a good long while, so make sure you don't miss this chance and get yourself down there!

RACISM IN THE COMIC BOOK INDUSTRY

A DRAMATIC UPROAR OCCURRED IN THE COMIC BOOK WORLD RECENTLY. THE FIRST EVER MUSLIM CHARACTER TO HEADLINE HER OWN COMIC BOOK HAS APPEARED, REPLACING THE PREVIOUS, CAUCASIAN, OLDER, BUXOM, LEGGY, AND JUST ALL-ROUND SEXIER CAROL DANVERS AS MS MARVEL. **CHARLIE ANDREWS** EXPLORES FANS' REACTIONS, AND WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT THE INDUSTRY AT LARGE.

Racism is a widely known concern. It appears in everyday life, and is prevalent in the mainstream media; there have been many films that explore the issue (Crash [2004], Schindler's List [1993] and the current 12 Years A Slave, to name but a few), as well as TV shows (South Park presents racism in an over-the-top manner to highlight how ridiculous racism truly is). The former example typically uses the issue to drive the narrative, such as in Schindler's List and 12 Years A Slave, or utilises it in such a way that the notion of racism appears to be ridiculous and unsubstantiated. These cultural forms demonstrate a movement towards eradicating racism or at least challenging the notion of racism. However, one media industry in which racism is still a prevalent concern is the comic book industry.

When I say racism exists within the comic book industry there are two key areas to which I refer; the casting of actors in film adaptations of comic books, and the comic book material itself. When an actor is cast for a film role the production team usually looks at the skill set of the actor in question, their personal qualities, previous roles and what they feel said actor can bring to the role in question. So when Fox recently announced that they had cast Chronicle star Michael B Jordan as the Human Torch in a 2015 reboot of Fantastic Four, the announcement was not well received

and racist views were rife amongst fans. On internet forums fans declared their outrage with some saying Jordan "definitely does not fit the role of Johnny Storm simply because he is black" and another going as far to say "he was white, then he became the Human Torch and got burnt...". Clearly a lot of people are focusing solely on the issue of ethnicity, unable to accept a black actor portraying a white character, yet the only issue that should matter is whether the actor has the right qualities to bring to the character (his talents and skills, not his ethnicity). Although the overwhelming majority of fans have taken the racist stance, there are some who have defended the casting with one comment stating: "...it's 2014 not the 60's. That's why we can cast more diversely. Race has nothing to do with character". My own opinion of the casting was initially one of 'erm...ok', because I wasn't expecting it despite the rumours. However, I have decided to wait until a trailer has been aired, so that I can see Jordan in the role, before making an informed judgement.

Aside from a black Human Torch, the biggest and most controversial move from Marvel has been the reboot of Ms. Marvel in their Marvel NOW!



MICHAEL B JORDAN.



PHOTO: TODD WILLIAMSON/INVISION/AF



ART: JAMIE MCKELVIE



CAROL DANVERS,
THE OLD MS
MARVEL.

continuity. In October, 2012 Marvel Comics launched the Marvel NOW! line, acting as a fresh continuity with all new #1s. Many popular characters and titles were included in the first wave of Marvel NOW! as part of the company's initiative to attract new readers. The Ms. Marvel title was part of the third wave of the initiative and debuted in February of this year. Instead of focusing on the traditional Ms. Marvel, Carol Danvers, this title instead centres on Kamala Khan, a 16-year old Muslim girl living in modern America, thus becoming Marvel Comics' first Muslim character to headline her own comic book. The change was met with widespread criticism amongst fans. However, the main focus of criticism was the issue of race, as fans declared their love for Danvers, a white, blonde, blue-eyed woman, whilst shunning the Muslim Khan. Fans took to the forums to declare the move a "cash grab" by Marvel, changing the ethnicity of a core character to "grab headlines" instead of remaining true to an Aryan-centric view.

I actually picked up this book and was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the writing and how seamlessly G. Willow Wilson integrates Kamala's culture into the narrative. Within the first few panels it becomes immediately apparent that Kamala is stuck between a rock and a hard place; her parents hold strong Muslim beliefs and force their daughter to abide by their traditional ways of living. However, Kamala is also being pressured to 'fit in' by her peers at high school. Kamala is very much stuck between two sometimes contrasting cultures: Islam and the American way. This contrast plays well into the book and is very much one of its strengths, in fact this book is near on brilliant. The only real problem I had with the issue was the way Kamala got her powers; no spoilers, but I mean come on! There were hundreds of people caught up in the same situation who came out superpower-free.

I was not the only reader who came away impressed

by the change to Ms. Marvel; at the end of the issue there was a double page spread dedicated to presenting the praise that the creative team had received for the new character. Here are just a couple of examples of the feedback they received:

"Thank you so much for creating and advertising a Muslim female superhero. She looks amazing and it's a HUGE step in diversity and solidarity. I think honestly it's the best decision that Marvel has made in a while, and it's amazing."

"Thank you, Marvel, for pushing us towards a future I'd like to be a part of: where heroes are here, and everywhere, and in anyone. Even someone like me. You've made comics that much more appealing to me by opening up your character base, to include everyone, and I'd like to just thank you for it." you for it."

Racism is still an issue within the comic book industry although there are some signs of progression. There is always going to be that one person who is set in their ways and won't embrace change and I don't think any commercial decision will change that. However, there are examples of comic books that have changed the opinions of the masses. Ms. Marvel is a genuinely good title, one which I have added to my pull-list and highly recommend to any reader, and I hope Michael B. Jordan silences those racist critics and gives a stellar performance, for it is characters such as these two that publicly help combat negative views and push towards progressive attitudes.



RIOT AT THE

Little did anyone imagine that a night at the ballet would turn into one of the biggest art-induced



29TH MAY 1913

A century ago in the romantic city of Paris, Stravinsky's infamous *The Rite Of Spring* had its premier showing. The bourgeois and the bohemians of the time filled Théâtre des Champs-Élysées; a beautiful, newly opened and highly regarded theatre. However, a mere few minutes into the performance, the audience became restless. The gowned ladies twitched, their gentlemen gasped, and the traditionalists booed over the bassoon solo. Before long, the crowd were in uproar, screaming, standing, hurling abuse and storming around the auditorium. Complete and utter chaos ensued; despite attempts to calm patrons during the interval and police intervention, by the final bar of music the theatre had turned into a zoo. How could anything on stage have caused the riots? It may have something to do with the following controversial aspects...

THE PLOT WAS TWISTED

The story is set in pagan Russia during community celebrations of Springtime. A weird old woman takes centre stage and gives a prophecy, after which violent rituals begin. A group of young girls start dancing passionately, throwing their bodies around to the gentle-sounding 'Dance of the Abduction' and 'Ritual of the Rival Tribes'. To bring the Earth-worshipping to its height, a sage enters, blesses nature then everybody starts dancing again. So far, it's nothing horrific.

Things turn more sinister in the second half; the maidens become mischievous and start playing ritualistic circle games. One girl is forced to be the Chosen One, the carer of creepy male ancestors that have been conjured from the past. It's not a glamorous role, the audience learns; she is the tribes' sacrifice to the god of Spring. The virgin must dance until she dies.



THE ORCHESTRA SOUNDED DERANGED

Stravinsky wanted his audience to react to his avant garde score. Unlike grandiose orchestral repertoires and controlled impressionistic harmonies of the time, Stravinsky's score, played by unusual instruments, was jagged and atonal. Most daring of all, it lacked rhythm, the key part of early twentieth century orchestral music. There was little logical order to where the instruments came in and left, how long they played for or how they interacted. Instead, they clashed, interrupted and fought for domination.

The score is incredibly complicated because of its irregular beat and multi-layered structure, so the likelihood of it sounding perfect on opening night is low anyway. Even if it was played exactly as planned, the tribal dissonance wouldn't have made pleasurable listening. It pulsed randomly, taking inspiration from repetitive folk songs then shaking them up so that the orchestral movements hiccupped unpredictably rather than glided.

BALLET

ENTERTAINMENT
CULTURE

riots ever. Culture Editor **Amy Pay** digs into the history of Stravinsky's notorious 'The Rite of Spring'.



EVERYTHING LOOKED FREAKY

One of Stravinsky's close associates, Nicholas Roerich, was behind the look of the original production. He took great influence from folklore, nature and ancestry to transform the art deco theatre into a stark Russian landscape. The costumes were largely constructed around antique tribal wear, incorporating traditional natural crafts such as lace, woodwork and mark-making. Embellished smocks, wild headwear and Slavic patterns transformed the maidens from covered innocents into violent, sexual beings. Roerich's scenes were contrastingly sparse: arid, dusty plains and burial grounds devoid of natural decoration.

Vaslav Nijinsky brought a whole other dimension of controversy to the theatre. As one of the early twentieth century's most boundary-pushing choreographers, his reputation preceded him. His direction of the dancers in 'The Rite Of Spring' echoed Stravinsky's polyrhythmic, violent score. He overturned traditional dance aesthetics by instructing ballerinas to subvert the rules; knees were turned inwards, toes were unpointed, arms were flopping and heads were loosened up from their typical stiff upright position, falling onto the shoulders. The movements were jerky, combining ungraceful leaps and forceful gestures with provocative coaxing, mimicking epileptic fits and slumping into the ground. It was anti-ballet at its most disturbing.

100 YEARS LATER: THE RITE OF SPRING IS RESURRECTED AT SHERMAN CYMRU

The Olivier Award-nominated company Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre is daring to perform Stravinsky's creation at Sherman Theatre on 8th and 9th April 2014. Director Michael Keegan-Dolan refreshes *The Rite of Spring* and another of Stravinsky's ballets, *Petrushka*, using a muddle of physical theatre, dance, song and spoken word to communicate the chaos to modern audiences.

If you don't like nudity, violence and sexual imagery, this may not be for you. If, however, you fancy checking out a rare no-holds-barred interpretation of Stravinsky's unsettling Ballet Russes shows, head to www.shermancymru.co.uk to buy tickets.

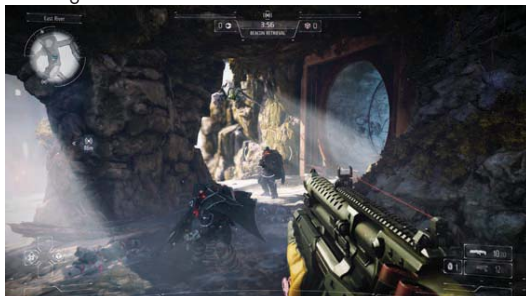




Adam Bown looks at one of the main launch titles for the PlayStation 4. Is the latest game in the Killzone series enough to make you want to buy a new console?

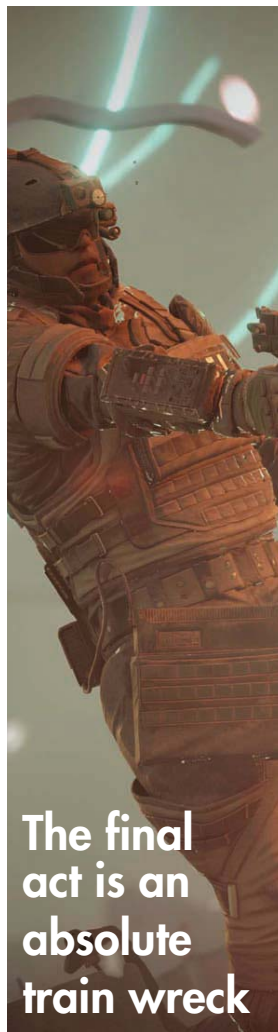
The Killzone franchise is seemingly to Sony what the Halo franchise is to Microsoft. Both are first-person shooters set in the future, with the first three main entries centred on an intergalactic/interplanetary war. Now they can add 'fourth entry being a sequel-reboot' to the list of similarities.

Case in point, Killzone Shadow Fall, the fourth instalment in the Killzone franchise and PlayStation 4 exclusive launch title, is set 30 years after the events of Killzone 3 and finds Vekta having been divided Cybertron-style between the Vektans and the Helghan refugees using the space-age equivalent of the Great Wall of China. However, with tensions once again rising between the two factions, it is up to central protagonist Lucas Kellan and sidekick Echo to try and stop all-out war from breaking loose.



To its credit, Shadow Fall seems to aspire to do more than your average war-time shooter, with a central message promoting peace and portraying both parties involved as being as equally opinionated and xenophobic as each other. Which is a welcome relief with the 'Cash Grab of Duty' series routinely churning out the same pro-America spiel for the armchair generals to faun over. However, where it falls short is in the execution.

First and foremost, characterisation is at a premium in that neither Kellan nor Echo are properly fleshed out, perhaps having enough character for a goldfish between them, and with Echo being part-Vektan and part-Helghan, it is seemingly a missed opportunity. She is a child of two worlds trying to stop them from tearing each other apart; with a strong character arch behind her she might well have been a complex and engaging protagonist, yet all she is given is one token plot twist and zero motivation to aid Kellan at all (perhaps she was



The final act is an absolute train wreck

just bored and there was nothing good on television).

Furthermore, while it has a commendable central message for a futuristic war game, beating the player over the head with it incessantly is like blaring an air horn at point blank range in their ear, and is just aggravating. Perhaps Guerilla were assuming that because of the Call of Duty franchise, with its ever shifting locales and clockwork explosions, the audience would not be able to grasp the concept for any longer than a nanosecond, but assuming that just makes a mockery of the player.

More importantly, the final act of the game is lacklustre to say the least; there is no closure to the character arcs and continuity seems to have been thrown out of the window, it's an absolute train wreck.



Nevertheless, despite what it lacks in the narrative department, Shadow Fall ostensibly makes up for it in the gameplay, for the most part at least. A challenge is always welcome and thankfully the enemy AI prove to be quite a handful, especially in later chapters where you have to tackle heavy duty Spider Drones, forcing the player in plenty of instances to scamper behind a piece of debris to regenerate health and have a little cry. On top of that, the controls are largely easy to use, apart from the implementation of the Dualshock 4's touchpad to change the OWL's setting. (The OWL being a companion droid with several different functions which aids the player during the campaign.) Trying to juggle these functions while enemies are firing at you from all angles is like trying to cross the Arc de Triomphe roundabout whilst wearing a blindfold.

Overall, Killzone Shadow Fall is an entry into the series that feels like it is running on empty, and is not a must-own, but it will kill the time in between now and the next current-gen releases.



The classic Thief series returns from a 10-year absence in the form of a reboot. **Iuan Thomas-Hillman** gives his first impressions of the PC version.

When a franchise that is beloved by its fandom is rebooted, it is always going to be a divisive game. So in this instance an attempt has to be made to separate the game from its predecessors and judge it on its own merits. Last month after several years of development, anticipation and internet arguments, Eidos Montreal released the simply-titled Thief.

First off, the game looks absolutely beautiful. As you would expect, the game has a heavy reliance on shadow play and lighting effects and it definitely delivers on expectations; the fire effects are incredible, the textures incredibly detailed, and even at the lowest graphical level the sky box looks fantastic. Sadly this does come at the cost of performance, and older machines will definitely suffer.



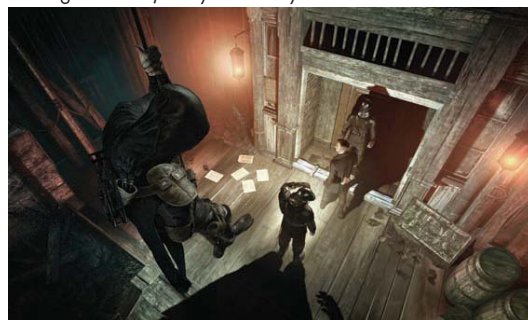
The original games were so defining of the stealth genre, and despite being a reboot, expectations were high leading into the gameplay. Fortunately, the stealth and thievery mechanics feel amazing and the immersion into the world they provide are fantastic. The inclusion of 'focus' (the in-game term for 'magic eyesight') means the game itself plays like Dishonored. There are some RPG elements, however, which create a stronger sense of progression and are a much-welcomed component to the overall gameplay.

Sadly, the story, while not inherently bad, is quite frankly boring. The premise is similar to Dishonored in that the story is set in a plague-ridden city with a generic evil upper-class member in charge making life difficult for the impoverished masses. There is also a generic evil henchman as well, who's reveal was a tad jarring - you do not really need to witness a murder in cold blood in order to know someone is bad, especially when someone you are supposed to like does the same thing in the tutorial.

At the end of the tutorial your female companion dies, but



given that you have only known the girl for around 5 minutes, it is hard to feel any involvement in this. The only thing she does is murder a guard, and it is not until you find out that she is the girl from the very last cutscene of Deadly Shadows (the final game in the original series) that you actually care about her death.



The voice acting is also painfully average. At times it is obvious that a single sentence was recorded in different takes, which is both jarring and ruins all sensation of immersion. The sad thing is that the game has been in development essentially for seven years, you would think they will have had this stuff sorted.

Adding to the disappointment, the levels themselves are fairly linear. Whilst there are multiple paths, each one is a predetermined line from Point A to Point B, and you simply chose which of the three to use. The sprawling nature of the old games that demanded exploration is only present in the hub world, with missions themselves being fairly linear.

This linearity in the levels is also very clear in how rope arrows function. In the old games they could grab on any wooden surface, but now they have to be fired at very obvious wooden beams that only exist for the rope arrows. Nevertheless, the game still provides a challenge, and the lack of any form of blade weapon means sticking to the shadows and remaining unseen is the way to go.

It becomes a struggle to fall in love with this game - many were hoping for perfect, 5 out of 5 scores, but the multitude of criticisms that can be made about it are too obvious to ignore and therefore knock the score down. Previous fans of the series should still try it out though, and some may find it provides a welcome experience for newcomers.



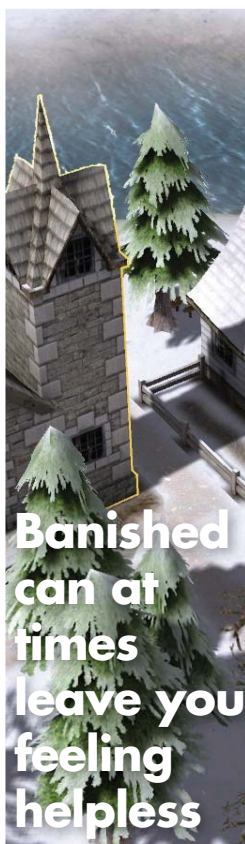
Rhian Carruthers has a lot of fun failing miserably at town planning with Shining Rock Software's *Banished*

In 2011, Luke Hodorowicz began working on *Banished*, a middle ages city-building game that forces the player to strategically use and manage resources so the townsfolk can survive and eventually flourish. The game is measured in years and seasons, and the information tab will tell you how long you've been slogging through winters. It was released in February, and I quickly founded Ford, a little village in a valley. I prepared myself to fill the familiar roll of a mostly benevolent god.

If you've never played a city building simulations before, *Banished* is a great example to start with. It begins with a group of settlers, exiled from their home and forced to start again in the middle of nowhere. The tutorials adequately explain the main features of the game, namely which buildings are essential, how to manage resources and how to trade. The problem is I forgot it all the moment I started my game.

Unlike most games, there's nothing to unlock with *Banished*. From the word go you can build any building you like. I had a school house before I had any houses and therefore any children. I had a population of ten people, a marketplace, church and town hall. You can build pastures but if you don't have any animals there won't be anything in them. There will however be a nice yellow question mark hovering above reminding you the guy who was supposed to work the field has starved to death. Actually the only thing I didn't make until I was at a comfortable population level was a tavern, and that was only because I was trading beans for ale. I don't know why, ale didn't seem to benefit anyone. One of my many mistakes perhaps.

The death toll in my first three or so days of playing was pretty high and I can only blame my complete inability as a strategist. I spent my earlier hours following citizens as they carried out the tasks I'd assigned to them, and to some I had become quite attached. In particular, a glitch left me with a house that only had one inhabitant. Beryll moved in to her own house at the ripe old age of newborn, and she stayed there until she died. She became a gatherer after graduation, and no matter how many males grew in to adults or how little space was left, no one



moved in with her, and no children were born. This made me a lot sadder than it should have.

I should say that *Banished* has twenty professions. Aside from builders and labourers, that's eighteen buildings that need to be built and at least eighteen people needed to work there. Difficult then when I'd built them all and my population was only twelve.

At first *Banished* reminded me of *Black and White 2*. True, there's no huge wolf running around and picking up children, there's no comically voiced devil or angel on your shoulder as you play, and no question of your morality really, but the idea of building and managing the town is the same, right? The main difference I'd have to say is that *Banished* can at times leave you feeling helpless. You aren't a deity, as I'd first thought, and actually the control you have is very limited. In *Black and White 2* you can pluck your townsfolk from the ground and put them somewhere else. If the wheat is taking too long to grow you can water it yourself and replenish the food stores. I spend every second of *Black and White 2* micromanaging every aspect of my town. I can even move the sun down if my people want a lie-in.

Banished is less forgiving. Should a fire start there's no way to put it out. Villagers will take water from the nearest well (providing you've built one) while you watch and bite your nails, hoping it doesn't spread to the next storehouse because that one has all the food ready for winter. Occasionally a tornado will touch down somewhere on the map. The first time it missed everything but the herbalist's shack I'd stuck in the middle of the forest. The second time it reduced the living populace to twelve.

Once you've built your town up enough and providing you have a town hall you will start to receive Nomads who ask for citizenship. These will raise your population, although they aren't educated so their production rate is slower. They can also bring diseases with them. I began the game with a cheery open door policy, but five or six epidemics later I bolted them shut. Even though I'd built a hospital as soon as I'd had the villagers pick up enough stone I had forgotten to put anyone in there as a physician, thinking a tailor was more important. After that people

ENTERTAINMENT VIDEO GAMES

were dying faster than they could actually make it to the hospital. It's difficult, watching someone with something as innocent as influenza wander around the town, perhaps going about their job or going home to get warm, and not being able to just drop them there yourself.

The people seem to have a mind of their own. I can't actually work out why some workers will ignore the job they've been given, whether it's a bug or hauntingly realistic A.I. It could be that I've not been keeping them happy enough, but honestly I've found it difficult to just keep them alive. The woodcutter is by and large one of the most important tradesmen of the town, second only to the farmers. If the houses are cold your people are unhappy, their health deteriorates and they die. With a woodcutter they can turn wood in to logs which they can use for fuel. It's simple. Getting your woodcutter to start cutting logs... not so much.

This might be a bug and in Hodorowicz's on going devlog he promises to keep the game updated. There's a chance my qualm about the errant A.I. will be soothed by the next patch. As it is, it's not a big enough problem for me to stop playing, and actually it gives the idea of town management a little extra bite, as you have to deal with ordering people around who just won't follow orders. On the other hand, this again might stem from the fact that I was jiggling individuals into several jobs once they'd reached the production limit, given I'd made the game so difficult for myself with my initial building spree.

When you consider that this
was all developed by one
person it becomes all the
more charming

I have a horrible habit when I'm playing Age of Empires II of just killing villagers who do that to me. You can't do that in Banished. I've had to be patient, I've had to watch as people walk past their place of work and into the wilderness only to turn back like confused children trying to remember why they've walked in to the kitchen. Funny when you're riding high in Summer with a storehouse full of beans and chicken, infuriating when it's winter and they're the only thing stopping your people freezing to death.

I do have a problem with getting ahead of myself, that much I'll admit. I had three woodcutters and one forester which meant a lot of my tree felling was done by highlighting trees in the town and waiting until a labourer (people with an unassigned profession) could get there. This also works for iron and stone, thank god because the mining process takes bloody ages. It's a quick fix that's viable at the beginning of the game, but you can't really survive if you rely on it completely. The resources on the ground are finite, and you really need to have the back ups in place before you start to rely on them. Once I'd ran out of resources I found myself using up my stores of raw materials in one season. It was not the proudest moment of my life.

Banished is unforgiving. You
aren't a deity, and the control
you have is actually very
limited

There's little chance to get comfortable too. Once you have a few successful farming years the crops will start to yield less and less, though this is most noticeable with Orchards. Foresters replant trees but again, cutting down younger trees means less wood, so it's a good idea to rotate between three forester camps. Quarries and Mines will slowly use themselves up and once they're gone they can't be removed, so be careful not to place them right by your town.

Banished is simple, sort of. It has some very basic game mechanics and an equally simple goal. When you consider that this was all developed by one person it becomes all the more charming, a sometimes uplifting, sometimes soul-crushing, always frustrating game that doesn't seem to have an end. Hodorowicz promises more features in the future, so who knows, perhaps they will help push this reasonably ambitious undertaking from entertaining time-waster to a truly great game.



MARVEL vs. DC

With the rise of the comic book movie, **Charlie Andrews** discusses the different approaches taken by the two biggest publishers



Marvel. DC. The two biggest publishers in the comic book industry; their rivalry stretches back for years, but recently that rivalry has evolved and transgressed over to two other mediums: film and TV. With the dramatic rise of popularity in the comic book movie, a new, multi-billion dollar platform has opened up for the big two to compete in; yet film is not the only platform to make money in, in fact more and more companies are discovering just how much money is to be made in TV programmes. So with the release of Captain America: The Winter Soldier on March 28th I thought now would be an apt time to look at the standings of the big two across both platforms, discussing past success and drawing on future planning.

The competition in the film industry is fairly one sided. DC's past releases include Green Lantern, Batman, Superman, Batman, Superman, The Dark Knight Trilogy, Man of Steel, oh and Batman. Marvel, on the other hand, have been a lot more diverse in using their character gallery; X-Men, Spider-Man, Fantastic Four, Hulk, more X-Men and that's before you get to Marvel Studio's catalogue – Iron Man, The Incredible Hulk, Thor, Captain America, The Avengers and more. There is a reason behind this diversity; DC has Warner Bros. as its sole distributor whilst Marvel has Sony, Fox and Disney's Marvel Studios. I want to focus mainly on the approaches employed by WB and Marvel Studios, as it is these approaches that evidence the varying degrees of success.

Building a Universe

Since 2008's Iron Man, Marvel Studios has been

actively building a cinematic universe. In this universe all events that take place effect the in-film world thus creating a far more intricate cinematic experience. Iron Man was the beginning of what Marvel Studios called Phase One; a series of films (Iron Man, The Incredible Hulk, Iron Man 2, Thor and Captain America) that led up to the release of Avengers Assemble (or The Avengers as it is known world-wide). Each film's narrative would contribute

Marvel Studios has plans all the way up to 2021

to that of The Avengers whilst also introducing the audience to each key member of the character roster.

The universe building really paid off with Phase One bringing in over \$3.8 billion, The Avengers alone raked in a huge \$1.5 billion. Phase Two is already well underway with Iron Man 3 and Thor: The Dark World already hitting cinemas with Captain America: The Winter Soldier coming out at the end of March, leaving just Guardians of the Galaxy and next year's Avengers: Age of Ultron to complete Phase Two (which has already grossed over \$1.8 billion – Iron Man 3 brought in \$1.2 billion on its own). Marvel Studios has already announced that it has plans all the way up to 2021 with Phase Three to start next year with Ant-Man, to likely be followed by Thor 3, Captain America 3 and the recently confirmed Doctor Strange.

Relying on Two

DC has witnessed just how much money it is possible



to make with comic book adaptations in the modern film industry courtesy of their rival publisher Marvel. However, whilst Marvel Studios took their time, laying the foundations and building up to a monumental success, DC appear to be jealous and are thus being overzealous by rushing their team-based movie.

A lot of people are aware that the Justice League are DC's equivalent to The Avengers, but there are also a lot of people who do not know who a lot of the core characters of this team are. This is mainly down to the fact that DC has relied far too heavily on their two biggest characters: Superman and Batman. To date Superman has had **six** live-action films whilst Batman has had an even more impressive **seven** films. But what about the other core members of the long-rumoured Justice League adaptation? Well only Green Lantern has had a live-action film and it didn't do all too well, making just under \$2.2 million – only \$0.2 million more than the film's budget.

However, with last year's release of Man of Steel, DC marked the start of their new cinematic universe. This can only be a good thing right? You wouldn't be scolded for hoping. Unfortunately Warner Bros. are not being as formulaic and patient as Marvel Studios, instead they want to rush towards their Justice League adaptation. Whilst Marvel Studios created individual films focusing on each of the core characters, Warner Bros. is just throwing every character into the supposed Man of Steel 2 sequel, Batman vs. Superman, where we will be seeing another version of Batman, the introduction of Wonder Woman, and possible cameos for Cyborg, Nightwing, Flash, and more. The main problem behind this is that the non-comic reading audience will not be aware who these new characters are and thus are unlikely to be as invested in the Justice League as they are the Avengers.

ENTERTAINMENT FILM & TV



by Keanu Reeves in the very loosely-based film adaptation *Constantine*).

The Hell's Kitchen Quartet

The TV side of things is a much more even competition. Both publishers currently have one sole adaptation airing and have future plans for many more. DC, however, recently had *Smallville*, a series focusing on the early years of Clark Kent before he became Superman – it ran for 10 full seasons and was the CW's (a leading U.S. television network) second longest running show.

Faster Than a Speeding Arrow

The CW is currently airing the second season of *Arrow*, the on-screen adaptation of the character Green Arrow. Whilst this isn't the first adaptation of the character on the small screen (he appeared on *Smallville*) this adaptation of the character is much better. This show is one of my favourites to grace my TV screen, it has a Nolan-esque feel to the character – Oliver Queen is a lot darker, edgier and the atmosphere is a lot more brooding. The cast is superb and the writing is absolutely phenomenal. The show has already been picked up for a third season despite the fact the show is still early into the second. The reason for the show's ever-growing success is largely down to the big step up that season two has made. Although the first season ended spectacularly you would be forgiven if you forgotten just how clunky the first half/three-quarters of the season was though. Season two got off to a much better start, largely thanks to the writer's increased use of the source material – we have already been introduced to Black Canary, Solomon Grundy, Slade Wilson's Deathstroke

and everybody's favourite speedster Barry Allen.

Arrow's two part mid-season finale that aired at the end of last year introduced us to Barry Allen – played by Grant Gustin. This introduction came after the CW announced they would be developing

DC's plans for TV adaptations do not stop at *Arrow* and *Flash*, the CW are also talking about developing an *Hourman* series whilst NBC have green-lit a Pilot for a *Constantine* series

a Pilot for a *Flash* TV series. Therefore, *Arrow*'s task was to introduce the audience to the human side of the character in the form of Allen. I was originally critical of the casting but after seeing Gustin on screen in the role of Barry I was sold on the project. The *Flash* has a rich history and is arguably more well-known than *Green Arrow* and, after seeing Grant Gustin in the iconic *Flash* mask, I am hugely optimistic that the show will be picked up for a full season.

DC's plans for TV adaptations do not stop at *Green Arrow* and *Flash*, the CW are also talking about developing an *Hourman* series whilst NBC have green-lit a Pilot for a *Constantine* series (a character who was played

Marvel do not have as much previous success on the small-screen compared to DC, however last year saw the beginning of their first show *Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* One of the most interesting aspects of this show is that it is directly connected to *Marvel Studios'* cinematic universe – an aspect that, at first, did not seem to go in the company's favour. When the show first started it was met with widespread criticism – a lot of people were disappointed with a lack of 'supers' in the show. Yes, the series ties into the cinematic universe, however, as the title of the series suggests, the show focuses on a group of Agents belonging to S.H.I.E.L.D., so effectively the series is more spy-orientated as opposed to superhero focused. The show has since developed and is now a lot better, the mid-season finale was super (pardon the pun), and it is now expected to be picked up for a second season.

On the back of *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* *Marvel* is now pushing its programming to develop more series based on their characters. Back in issue 140 of *Quench* I reported on *Marvel's* announcement that they had struck a deal with *Netflix* to produce five new series; these will be 13-episode commitments focusing on *Daredevil*, *Iron Fist*, *Luke Cage* and *Jessica Jones* – with the fifth being a team-up series called *The Defenders* (which would bring all four characters together in a team-up mini-series). The first of these series to be released on *Netflix* will be *Daredevil*, which is expected at some point in early 2015. For more information on the announcement and the featured characters head over to quenchmag.co.uk to read my previous feature.

FUEL FOR THE FILM FANATIC



Jade Attwood gives you a dose of local film goodness

Bored of Cineworld, Netflix and that embarrassingly limited DVD collection which you hauled to Uni but have watched an innumerable amount of times? Well, little may you know Cardiff hosts a variety of film events throughout the year and is home to a delectable selection of alternative film venues for you to delight on. So here's a guide to the best in all things film on our very own doorstep.

THE POT

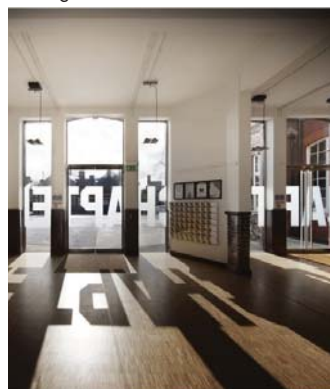
Thinking of the perfect date night without blowing your budget? Cosy café, The Pot (on Cwyr's Road) provides the perfect solution. After last year's success, The Pot has resumed their Film and Dinner evenings, pairing their delicious offerings with a fairy lit, hazy atmosphere and film classics. For a bargain £7.50 which includes choice of meal from a specially created menu, the evenings promise a night to remember. The evenings have proved hugely popular with the surrounding student film lovers, so require booking in advance to avoid disappointment.



CHAPTER'S DARKENED ROOM

Never one to disappoint, Chapter provides one of the quaintest settings in which to view some alternative cinema I am yet to encounter. With a charming café and bar the place is a must visit for any seasoned filmy or anyone looking for something different to do other than frequenting one of Cardiff's many nightclubs. Additionally this year, Chapter has planned to take to different venues across the city and beyond in their line of "Darkened Room" nights.

Hosted at outdoor venues such as the picturesque Caerphilly Castle and atmospheric rooms such as The Angel Hotels Victorian Hall, they promise a film night to remember.



THE BIG CARDIFF MINI FILM FESTIVAL

Hosting events throughout the year, The Big Mini Film Festival hits some of the best and unique venues. Believing in the talent of local producers on a shoestring budget, pop along to one of their events to see some of the best independents budget film making from around the City.

With standard annual mini festivals such as music, video, horror and comedy, the company promises to cater for any genre throughout the year. Look out for events via their Facebook page and website which lists opportunities to enter any of the competitions as well as screening information.

RISE OF THE CHILD STAR

Jenny Morgan examines the highs and lows of being a child star.

Child stars are in general some of the most enviable people on the planet. They start their careers young, cashing in on their cute chubby cheeks and ability to cry on command. They are able to retire by about eighteen, set for life. However, it rarely turns out that way. The most notable cases tend to go a little crazy with all the attention and are remembered for their exploits outside the studio. Yet, when you think about it, there are few, if any British child stars and the ones that do exist don't seem to go off the rails. So is it the extreme Hollywood culture that young stars can't deal with? Or is it just inevitable given their early projection to celebrity status?

She was the first ever recipient of a special juvenile Oscar

If you were measuring child stars against each other, it would be fair to say that being a British child star seems harder but is less risky. The most successful British child stars have come from the Harry Potter franchise, having made \$7.7 billion globally at the box office! This not only makes it the highest grossing film franchise of all time but it propelled the three main actors into the starlight as well. Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint and Emma Watson started acting aged around ten and eleven and have since gone on to break out their own films as young adults. Daniel Radcliffe, for example, has truly broken away from "safe" roles, taking parts in *Kill Your Darlings*, *The Woman in*

Black and the new *Frankenstein* adaptation.

If you compare Daniel Radcliffe to an American child star from a huge movie franchise, such as Macaulay Culkin from *Home Alone*, you can see the difference in the industry on either side of the Atlantic. Although his time in the limelight has now faded, from the ages of eight to fourteen, he was a hugely successful child star. By making his name in films such as *Home Alone*, *Home Alone 2: Lost in New York*, *Richie Rich* and *Uncle Buck*, he managed to make an estimated net worth of \$15 million. However, since retiring from acting he has been arrested (in 2004) for drug possession and was briefly jailed. He is now in a band called *Pizza Underground* after dating Mila Kunis for about 8 years!

Of course none of these stars' careers would have been possible if it hadn't been for the original child star - Shirley Temple who recently died aged 85. Her adorable charm and blonde curls meant she was one of the most popular stars of the 1930s, in hit movies like *Bright Eyes* and *Stand Up and Cheer*. Her rendition of the song "On the Good Ship Lollipop" in the film *Bright Eyes*, was among her most famous performances. As a result, aged six, she was the first ever recipient of a special juvenile Oscar. She still holds the record as the youngest ever Oscar winner. She was even credited with helping save 20th Century Fox from bankruptcy. She starred in a total of 43 feature films - but found it difficult to sustain her career in adulthood and left acting behind in 1950.

Shirley Temple paved the way for cherubic children to carry on her legacy and girls

especially have followed in her footsteps. More recently Lindsay Lohan, Chloe Grace Moretz, Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, Dakota and Elle Fanning, Abigail Breslin and Quvenzhané Wallis are all female child stars who gained great success very early on in their lives. The last two have both received Academy Award nominations for Best Actress in *Little Miss Sunshine* and *Beasts of the Southern Wild* respectively making them some the youngest to do so.

The most notable stars tend to go a little crazy...

There are many productions that base their success on someone who hasn't even reached puberty yet and some may say it is too much for them. At that stage in their lives, the pressure they are put under can take away their childhood and gives them problems that shouldn't concern them until years later. A star's fall from grace is always going to be highly publicised but the real test for a child star is dealing with their fame and staying grounded. There are multiple household name actors who started their careers young and made the leap to stardom without incident; Kate Winslet, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Jake Gyllenhaal and Leonardo DiCaprio to name just a few. As much as people envy their success it is very easy to forget the strain they are put under and how so much attention at a young age can be problematic. Might making it through their late teens untarnished just simply be luck of the draw?

CINEMA REVIEWS

MORE ONLINE:



DIRECTOR:
Jean-Marc Vallée

SCREENPLAY:
Craig Borten
Melisa Wallack

STARRING:
Matthew McConaughey
Jennifer Garner
Jared Leto

BUDGET:
\$5.5m

REVIEWER:
Kathryn Lewis

DALLAS BUYERS CLUB _____ 4.5/5

For most cinema goes a string of Oscar and Golden Globe nominations indicate one of two possibilities; either a genuinely novel and imaginative production or an extensively glorified, predictable film with an overpaid, over used Hollywood actor. Fortunately Dallas Buyers Club, the new masterpiece from little known, French- Canadian director Jean-Marc Vallée, fits perfectly into the first category.

The film conveys the harsh realities of Ron Woodroof (Matthew McConaughey), a heterosexual 'cowboy' suffering from HIV in 1980s deep south USA, where the disease is highly stigmatised and unquestionable associated with the homosexual community. When Ron is informed of his imminent death, he travels to Mexico in search of medication to elongate his life and discovers a combination of drugs which are successful in extending the days he has left. In experiencing the positive effects of the unapproved medication, Woodroof decides to set up the 'Dallas Buyers Club' with his unexpected, transsexual companion Rayon (Jared Leto), in a bid to help the HIV positive community in Dallas.

Throughout the two hour production, the film tackles the difficult subjects of homosexuality, drug use and casual sex, paired with the haunting power the pharmaceutical industry possess in America. Vallée doesn't hold back and every nitty-gritty element of the filthy sex and drug abuse

gets its moment on screen. In parts the camera embraces these scenes for what at first appears to be an uncomfortable length of time; however, it consequently adds to the powerful realism produced throughout the film. Furthermore, the fact that much of the storyline is based on true life events makes the narrative even more compelling and heart-warming.

Although the cinematography throughout the film is outstanding, by far the best parts of the film are McConaughey's and Leto's performances. The first thing you'll notice whilst watching is the extent to which the actors pushed their bodies for the roles, never have I seen an actor look as convincingly ill as McConaughey's execution as Woodroof. Furthermore Leto's performance as a transsexual, drug addict is striking; the actor is completely unrecognisable in drag and produces such a connection between the character and the audience that if you don't feel emotional by the end you must have a heart of stone.

Overall this film has a narrative which will keep almost any viewer hooked from start to finish; I couldn't recommend the film anymore to anyone who is a lover of cinema. Dallas Buyers Club is truly a great storyline, justified by first class acting and rough but authentic imagery. What's more, if Jared Leto doesn't win best supporting actor the world has gone mad!

THE BOOK THIEF _____ 4/5

The Book Thief is based on a book which is set during WWII in Nazi Germany. It is narrated by "Death", voiced by Roger Allam, and tells the tragic story of twelve year old Liesel Meminger, played by Sophie Nélisse. She and her sickly younger brother are given away by their communist mother to the Hubermans, who immediately set about raising Liesel as their own.

Her character is so well written that it is impossible not to empathise with her as she buries her brother and steals her first book so she can have something to remember him by. Once she has arrived into the Hubermann household, it is the touching relationship between Liesel and her foster father, Hans, which will warm the hearts of any audience member. Liesel starts the film unable to read and is

therefore teased because of it. Yet, she still has a fascination with books and with the help of Hans, she teaches herself to read.

However it seems that no matter how good this film is it was never going to get the glory it deserves. The Book Thief has received surprisingly little publicity; no billboards, few TV spots, meaning that given the huge amount of choice already out at the cinema, it is unlikely to be everyone's first choice. The release date has been completely miss timed as it is after every award ceremony had released their nominations so it was never going to be in contention.

This touching film is a young adult movie and shows a child's perspective of war. It is therefore unsurprising that the major atrocities of war are somewhat glossed over.

Jenny Morgan

"Her is a highly intelligent social commentary that provokes questions on human social detachment in modern day society"



HER 4/5

Her is a highly intelligent social commentary that provokes questions on human social detachment in modern day society and our relationship with technology.

Theodore Twombly (Joaquin Phoenix) is a socially isolated 'love sick puppy', searching for a soul mate after being embroiled in an acrimonious divorce with childhood sweetheart and successful writer Catherine (Rooney Mara). It is another impressive performance from Phoenix, augmenting his already strong resumé, in this role he particularly proves his adeptness at acting by himself. For the majority of the dialogue, he is talking to himself yet he still remains sensitive and humorous.

Twombly writes saccharine sweet letters for beautifulhandwrittenletters.com, a tailor made letter writing service for doting lovers who have no time to write them themselves. Think punk poetry cum-hallmark "I will stomp on this couple's teeth to remind me of the sweet little cute crooked tooth that I love" (wretch).

Plagued by caprice, "I can't even prioritise between video games and internet porn", he seeks solace in an artificial operating system 'OS1'; named Samantha, who is voiced by a seductive Scarlet Johansson. As the advert for the OS1 proclaims, it's 'not just an operating system, it's a consciousness'. Their relationship grows symbiotically, coaxing each out of their respective shells: for Twombly, he needs healing from the after burn of a failed marriage to his wife, for Samantha, the discovery of what human conscience entails.

As the two become more romantically involved, there is a particularly difficult 'cyber-sex scene' (Think Blade Runner, where Harrison Ford tries to make love with the replicant Rachael for cringe factor) in which Samantha learns to 'feel'.

Jonze makes a comment about contemporary social detachment and our mediated interpersonal relations. As we become more restricted by work and modern life, the less personal our relationships become. It is highly salient that Samantha, the computer, learns almost all she needs to know about him from his e-mails and the contents of his hard drive. Samantha also reveals a greater truth about the nature of love in humans,

suggesting that it's defined as "a socially acceptable form of insanity".

The film becomes a deep meditation on the doomed love affair between A.I. and humans. This becomes most evident as Samantha attempts to organise a sex surrogate (Olivia Wilde) but Theodore can't go through with it, showing just how far removed he has become from human touch and how introverted into an artificial, online world he has become.

The only human character that Theodore seems completely at ease with is Amy (Amy Adams), whom he later discovers is also in a friendship with an OS1 after her own divorce. It is particularly apt that they develop a 'real' human relationship throughout the movie.

Jonze's effort is particularly well timed, considering the immense investment multinationals, like Apple, Google and Amazon, are putting into technology that communicates with the user through speech. Samantha is in fact the name of a text to speech setting on Macintosh computers, very similar to the voice of pre-IO7 Siri, Apple's virtual assistant on the Iphone.

The score incorporates and takes influence from Arcade Fire's latest album, Reflektor. The closing track on their latest album was originally written for Her, and is featured on the credits. Jonze remarked: "The band were working on [Reflektor] as they were working on this. The record sort of informed the soundtrack and the soundtrack informed the record a little bit". Karen O's 'The Moon Song' must also be underscored as a valuable addition to the eclectic soundtrack, receiving an Oscar Nomination.

Filmed in Shanghai, it play-acts as a near future Los Angeles. Stylistically sun drenched with a vivid pastel hued colour palette, the film takes on a retro styling from cinematographer Hoyte Van Hoytema (Tinker Taylor Soldier Spy & The Fighter) which perfectly compliment an excellent effort from Jonze that could well be his finest work.

Tom Bamford

THE LEGO MOVIE 5/5

Remember the time when building fantasy worlds out of little blocks could keep you entertained for hours. Well the legendary LEGO Movie has teased to catapult our childhood fixations back into the lives of film watchers worldwide.

The narrative focuses on Emmet (Chris Pratt), a regular construction worker who goes about his daily business. But his world is completely turned upside down when he meets Wyldstyle (Elizabeth Banks) whose explorations end in Emmet transporting himself to the "Piece of Resistance". He awakens in the custody of the ruler of his very own city, "Lord Business" (Will Ferrell), where in captivity he discovers Business's evil plans to set his beloved City with Kraggle glue. Swiftly rescued by Wyldstyle, Emmet is then transported to the mighty Vitruvius, and his team of Master Builders. Far from the creative mind of his surrounding colleagues such as Batman (Will Arnett), Unikitty (Alison Brie) and Octan Robot (David Burrows) Emmet is surprised to find himself as the involuntary leader in the Masterbuilders' quest to stop the evil Lord Business.

The film is full of adult aimed puns, creative fantastical worlds and above all deeper encoded comments on society, which are simply not intended for kids. Emmet's

character for example seems to remark on the unconscious nature of consumer society providing a metaphorical representation of the Western individual. What's more the clever intertextual references peppered throughout the film provide equal amounts of entertainment and nostalgic enactment, which could seldom be achieved by any other film.

All in all the movie can hardly be faulted. With eye-boggling animation and a witty script, voice acted by some of the biggest talents in Hollywood, in terms of production all that can be seen and heard is seamless. With a fully feel good ending, making you want to stick it to the man and even a real life cameo from comedy favorite Will Ferrell what's not to like? This film has most certainly built LEGO a strong standing in our culture once again...in the words of its own soundtrack "Everything (about this film) is AWESOME".

Jade Attwood

HOW DO YOU TAKE

VINYL

I still remember the first CD I ever purchased. I was almost ten, I think, and I was terrified they'd call me up on the parental advisory sticker at the edge of the case. To my relief, the transaction went off without a hitch and I was soon the proud owner of Sum 41's 'All Killer No Filler.' I listened to the album endlessly and read the sleeve notes to the point of recital... What I'm trying to say is, I was pretty psyched. I still find it strange when I'm listening to In 'Too Deep', be it in Live Lounge or anywhere else, and it isn't immediately followed by summer.

There began my love affair with physical music. A few years later my brother moved out, leaving me with three big boxes of records and a broken record player. Listening to music suddenly wasn't something that just happened; it was a commitment. I set aside time in my day to sift through and, dare I say it, appreciate what I was listening to. I started getting snobby about it, but quickly learnt there were people out there who knew more than me so I've more or less grown out of that now. I'll be the first to admit that part of the reason I prefer the lure of vinyl is nostalgia. It's not my only motivation, but it's a pretty big one.

Physically, vinyl takes up a lot of space. Moving between home and university is annoying at best but it's impractical to cart my entire record collection here and back every term. I'm really lucky that I moved in with someone in second year who already had a record player, a smaller one than me, too, and we pooled our collection (moving out at the end of the year was messy). In first year, though, I was record-less, and like most of the people I knew I found myself turning to Spotify. I resisted paying for it as long as possible – I mean, most of the tracks were on Youtube – but I finally bit the bullet when they brought in a 5 play limit and again more recently because the adverts are consistently getting more and more aggressive (let me know if they've let up) and there was a free trial.

I loathe paying for the service, but much like Xbox Live I just keep forgetting to cancel. It's no secret that there's a huge disparity in hits and how much is paid to the artists, and this irks

me more than it should. Now, you could argue that that's no worse than me wandering into a used record store and coming out with bags full. At least with Spotify they're getting something, right? It's infinitely better than piracy, right? Well, the artists don't seem to think so.

Thom Yorke's displeasure at the whole arrangement should come as no surprise. In an interview with NME last year, Yorke talked about the release of Radiohead's In Rainbows, which might be seen by some as an inspired adaptation to an increasingly digital world. 'What was most exciting was the idea that you could have a direct connection between you as

I'll be the first to admit that the reason I prefer the lure of vinyl is nostalgia.

a musician and your audience,' he explained. For those of us who want to see a shift from the commercial drive of the music industry, this was a godsend: there was hope and it didn't come at the cost of physical sales. In Yorke's words, 'And then all these fuckers get in the way, like Spotify is suddenly trying to become the gatekeepers to the whole process. We don't need you to do it. No artists need you to do it. We can build the shit ourselves, so fuck off.'

Foals front man Yannis Philippakis has publicly stated he would rather people 'stole the record on vinyl than bought it or streamed it on Spotify.' To some, this may sound like a child throwing their toys out of the pram, but for others it's just the latest vocalisation of the stress between the business and creative aspects of the music industry. It's an old song and I doubt we'll hear the end of it any time soon.

Rhian Carruthers

In the great debate surrounding the best format for music, CDs are often overlooked. Without the nostalgic romance of vinyl and the convenient technological prowess of MP3, they don't seem to bring much to the table. Largely due to the memory of a crappy, broken piece of plastic that we're stuck with from childhood, the image of the CD is one of failed middle ground. This is far from the truth, however. Yes, the battered old Now 52 CD that's been rattling around the foot-well of your car for the last decade may not exactly be a work of art, but if done properly a CD can be so much more.

It may sound 'sooo much better' and yes, you will look really cool when you whip out your 12-inch, but at the end of the day there's a reason we've advanced. Admittedly we've advanced past the need for CDs, too, but if you want to own more than invisible data when you buy an album then CDs are a feasible option. They're reasonably priced, they sound great, they're pretty and they have the potential to offer so much more than just music. You never quite know what you'll get with a CD; they're more diverse than you might think. From sleek, beautifully designed cardboard sleeves to chunky, satisfying box sets with everything from posters to personal notes and gorgeous artwork inside, CDs can be something special. Of course all these things are doable on vinyl, but aesthetically vinyl is often unjustly held in a higher regard due to more consistent design across the format. In actual fact, visually vinyl sleeves and CD cases are becoming increasingly similar in everything but size.

For an example of CDs at their finest you need look no further than the work of music packaging designers ACDSleeve. They mainly focus on producing innovative and beautiful sleeves, ranging from outrageous and complex pop-up designs to elegant cardboard cut-outs. Often working in tandem with independent labels such as Big Scary Monsters and Alcopop! Records, ACDSleeve have helped to create some stunning packaging for some equally stunning sounds.

YOUR MUSIC?

CD

The best feature of any physical copy, be it vinyl or CD, is the way that they can be used as an extension of the narrative created by the record itself. A good example of this is Frank Ocean's 'Channel Orange' which themes itself around nostalgia for retro technology, such as old games consoles and televisions in a modern world. The theme is reflected by the CD sleeve, the CD itself and the booklet inside. Similarly Bonobo's 'Black Sands' adds to the mysterious feel of the record and artist by including nothing but a map of an unknown location and the image of an eerie landscape. These are records which fully utilise the physical copy to add to the overall experience of an album in a way a download simply can't.

As for the sound, contrary to popular belief the quality is often the same if not better than that of vinyl and MP3. The standard encoding for CDs is, without going into too much tech detail, of a much higher resolution than that of MP3 downloads from leading outlets such as iTunes, Amazon and Spotify; it's the same as digitally-produced vinyl, which is becoming increasingly common. In terms of analogue vinyl you do lose a miniscule, almost negligible amount of the original sound when converting it to a CD, but the end product is a much cleaner, crisper sound with greater noise reduction. It is this noise reduction that really makes the difference between CD and vinyl. With the latter you get that authentic sound of a needle on a record that you can't recreate with CDs and, from a technical point of view, wouldn't want. In purely technical terms, CDs usually surpass all other formats, unless you want to burden yourself with the pain in the arse that is FLAC downloads which are hard to find and make for complicated listening through normal media.

It's worth noting that the CD isn't the unloved middle child between vinyl and mp3. Don't write off the humble disc too easily; if you take a few minutes to look into the positives, you might just find that it's the one for you.

Henry Boon

ENTERTAINMENT MUSIC

SPOTIFY

Spotify is simple. It's a streaming service, a cross between iTunes and radio. If adverts don't bother you, it's free to use. Advert-free costs £10 a month. Fancy a cheeky listen to Chaka Khan, a boogie to the Bee Gees? You barely have to lift a finger. Listen as long as you like, make playlists, find and share new music. It's also a great alternative to piracy - when you use Spotify, the artists are paid for the music you listen to.

Unfortunately, as with every positive change that comes with new technology, there are a few dinosaurs having a moan. Radiohead's Thom Yorke, annoyed with the middlemen role Spotify play in music distribution, described it as "the last desperate fart of a dying corpse". Talking about their self-released album 'In Rainbows', he said "you could have a direct connection between you as a musician and your audience, [and then you get] Spotify suddenly trying to become the gatekeepers to the whole process". Radiohead allowed fans to download the album directly, on a pay-what-you-want model. It sold over 3 million copies in its first year. By this point, Radiohead were already an established and successful group; their previous album went platinum in the UK. A new band is unlikely to have such success with similar methods.

Through Spotify, artists can easily promote their music in different countries. Ron Pope releases his records on his own label. Earlier this year, he said "My music was added to Spotify in September of 2010 [...] I'm getting over a million streams in Sweden alone most months. As a result of this, I was offered a very respectable guarantee to play at the Brävalla festival there last summer." No big label, no big promotional push. He also praised the way Spotify present their artists. "With Spotify, it's not about a single; the fans can pour over my entire catalogue and follow my journey from my first album all the way through to today." Daniel Glass, of Mumford and Sons' label, said "When you have quality and you're in the sophomore stage of this band's career, I think the fear of holding it back is worse than letting it go. Opening up the faucet and

letting people hear it, stream it and all that stuff is definitely very healthy."

The problems with Spotify seem to increase with the popularity of the artist. In 2011, Patrick Carney of The Black Keys said "for unknown bands and smaller bands, it's a really good thing to get yourself out there. But for a band that makes a living selling music, [streaming royalties are] not at a point yet to be feasible for us." Carney is one of many artists that complain about the amount Spotify pay. However, I think it is the record labels that should come under scrutiny.

Spotify do not pay artists directly, despite the incessant whining of Foals' frontman Yannis Philippakis, who described the payouts as "an insulting pittance". Spotify pay 70% of their revenue to rights holders. This is divided between them, based on their percentage of Spotify's total stream rate. The more streams a label gets, the more they get paid. It's

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the record deal that dictates how much streaming income the artist is paid, not Spotify. In some cases, this could be small, however popular independent artists will invariably be paid more. For example, Ron Pope said "I've had over 57 million plays and they've paid me out \$334,636". Hardly an insulting pittance.

Obviously, artists will make more money if we buy their music directly. Should we boycott Spotify? Of course not. Artists need to adapt; there should be more focus on streaming royalties in their recording contracts. If a restaurant you liked became slow and outdated, you'd go somewhere else. There is a reason people stopped buying tapes, stopped using typewriters. We crave speed and convenience. Spotify have simply capitalised on that. Moby said, "I just don't see the point in fighting a future that's already here", and I agree with him. Illegal downloading - which artists make nothing from - could be a thing of the past. We shouldn't stop the moving train; we should keep it on the tracks.



With electronic music and clubbing culture on a high **George Atkins** explores the underground and independent dance scene in Cardiff's bars and clubs.

It is truly remarkable that in a matter of years, Cardiff's electronic music community has grown from one or two niche club nights, to a plethora of burgeoning events, each with their own sounds and styles, comfortably putting it as one of the most interesting in the country. The scope of size and breadth of the venues facilitating this kind of music is also remarkable. You have the large-capacity venues and spaces; the love or hate student appeal of Solus, Revolution, Glam and Soda Bar nights, but there are also smaller venues focusing on more experimental and forward-facing acts: places such as Clwb Ifor Bach, the criminally-underrated Undertone and Ten Feet Tall, the dark and enigmatic Vaults and of course the ever-present Buffalo Bar.

Each of these venues are recognisable and known via their own promotional nights; Catapult Presents and The Vaults, Signature and Pirate Radio for Buffalo, FAO for Clwb and so on. This premise is far from unique. In fact, you would be hard pressed to find a club in a major UK city without it's respective club night; it very much goes with the territory. What is unique is that in such a small region such a spread of musical talents are being showcased, with each venue supporting each other in the pursuit of breathing new life into not just Cardiff's music scene, but into Wales' as a whole.

One Cardiff-savvy act that knows only too well the state of the city's music scene is the house/ electronic duo Bodhi. "The Cardiff scene has grown in strength over the years," explain the pair. "We are seeing more nights popping up, hosting some pretty big names in the electronic music scene. Certainly, when we meet other DJs, they regard Cardiff as an enjoyable place to come play!" However, the want for a club night where the inclusion of many genres of music in one place is available is an interesting one; "I think one of the things [we] would like to see more of is mixed line ups on nights out. It would be good to get some more diverse line ups where you can get your dose of disco,

house, and techno in one sitting". It seems certain, then, that even though the city's adventurousness concerning its club nights is growing, there is still room for improvement; perhaps a move towards what London, Manchester, Bristol and Nottingham are already showcasing, with nights where a multitude of different sounds and styles is not just welcomed, but encouraged.

An excellent example of the up-and-coming promotional talent being launched in the city is the electronic music collective Boulevard, who have already shown great promise by putting on events featuring Crown Duels, Taches, Felon and xxxy, and rising to the challenge faced by one of Cardiff's smaller venues (The Full Moon) to use every inch of its club night potential. On the growth in Cardiff, Boulevard's Dom Eden seems hopeful. "The popularity and success of acts over the last years has really made a big impact on all house/electronic nights. Scenes change, but Cardiff's a diverse city with some top promoters involved, there's rarely a week when there's not at least one night that has got people excited, whatever you are into". What's also mentioned is the supportive community, how anyone can feel welcome putting on event; "It seems many of us compete for the same acts, dates and venues, but there's a good friendship between most of the promoters in Cardiff... It's a really friendly place to be promoting at the moment, we've met so many people since we started the night who support and attend our events, [and] we are more than happy to return the favour."

It seems then that there is a healthy respect for each other amongst all the promoters and club owners in Cardiff's burgeoning music scene. Growth is seen as an all-encompassing thing, that everyone and every night should advance and evolve as one, displaying a greater array of talent and creativity every time. It is this element that makes Cardiff one of the most exciting new development areas for eclectic electronic music in the UK; watch this space!



MAN OVERBOARD

Charlie Mock chatted to the New Jersey quintet about the heroes of the genre, their 'Defend Pop Punk' mantra and the importance of finding a niche.

You can ignore pop punk all you like, but New Jersey's Man Overboard - along with their 'Defend Pop Punk' mantra - are making sure that it's one genre that won't be disappearing any time soon.

"Throughout the years it's always been there" vocalist Nik Bruzzese says, "no matter the different types of music that came up, pop punk was there the whole time". And he's right. Whether it's The All American Rejects that take your fancy, or We Are The In Crowd with their synth-fuelled spin on the sound, pop punk has been successfully churning out bands for nearly two decades. That doesn't mean to say it hasn't evolved, though. "Blink [182] kind of set the way for live bands. You watch their shows and you can tell how many bands rip them off in their own, weird way; you've just got to find your own niche." And Man Overboard have done just that. Honing their catchy hooks and pop melodies, they've mastered the chorus and created a live show that holds its own without wanting for "funny dick jokes".

But, like their contemporaries, Blink 182 must have been a huge influence. "Of course! Them and a big list of all the other pop punk bands out there. We never thought that we'd

get to where we are so we thought, yeah, let's call ourselves Man Overboard." What better way to pay homage to the pop punk pioneers

**"NO MATTER THE
DIFFERENT TYPES
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THE WHOLE TIME"**

themselves? "I should probably try and learn that song though," Bruzzese admits sheepishly about the track that gave them their name.

You don't need to look very far to see that Man Overboard have come a long way in just a few years. Having made it to the Top

10 in the Billboard Independent Albums chart with their 2013 release 'Heart Attack,' they're only dreaming bigger. The pop-punkers have worked with Steve Klein (of New Found Glory fame) on several previous releases and they aren't planning on stopping there. "We always talk about different people that we would love to have produce songs. The other day we were talking about Rivers Cuomo. If Rivers was like, "Yeah, I like your band!" we'd be freaking out."

Working with big names and selling out shows hasn't gone to their heads, though. "Fast forward and we're like, oh my God!" Nik says about the band's recent success. They've not long finished touring with veterans on the scene Mayday Parade and are back out on the road for a US tour with All Time Low and Handguns later this month. For Man Overboard, staying in one place for long just isn't an option.

So, what's coming up next for the band? "We'll be in the studio when we get home. After this tour we've got six weeks off so we'll sit in my studio, hanging out, figuring life out!" If the self-proclaimed pop punk defenders are planning to carry on at the rate they're going now, figuring life out might just get that little bit harder.

THE 1975

LOUIS BROWNE & JACK GLASSCOCK SPOKE TO MATT HEALY OF THE RISING INDIE POP SENSATIONS BEFORE THEIR SELLOUT CARDIFF SHOW

You've been to some mad places recently. It must be surreal going to places you may never have been before and getting crazy receptions. Where have you received the most surprising reaction?

Hong Kong I'd say for that, probably. It was like all the surreal elements of last year, by the end, kind of became our reality. So we went from genuinely being in awe, to kind of being like: "oh yeah of course that's happening, of course we're doing this fucking ridiculous thing", it became a bit of a joke. So we turned up in Hong Kong, it was this mad-dash trip to get there from the other side of the world. It was crazy, and we were all just kind of focused on the logistics of the situation. Then when we got there we were on after Nile Rodgers and Chic on the main stage, second to top. When I got there I was thinking "fucking hell, that can't be right". But we played to a full crowd who knew every word; it was amazing.

What was it like going on after them? There must have been some huge pressure to follow their set!

Well yeah, when he's playing like every hit from the 70s! You've got to remember he's written like every single song, so he was playing everything from 'Celebrate' to 'Get Down On It'. We're thinking like, we're following this - the best wedding band ever, but yeah it went down fine, it was cool.

I've heard you talk about how the band is a 'personal endeavour' for you guys. Is that why you have kept yourselves detached from social media and limit what you give away about yourselves? Do you think that would almost juxtapose the intimacy of your music?

To a certain extent, yeah. I think the idea of that juxtaposition runs through everything we do: from the music being particularly colourful, and the visuals obviously all being in black and white, I think it's kind of very, very honest. It's uncompromising in its narrative, but then slightly detached from reality in the way it's presented and the way that it's consumed. Yeah, it's all about a duality of ideas, but that's not been a contrived marketing scheme or mind-set, it's just an extension of the way I am. I did a big piece in the culture magazine for the Sunday Times the other week, and spoke for hours and it was actually like a kind of therapy session. We kind of figured out that's the way I've always lived my life, you know, like I don't sit on the fence very well and I'm not very good in the middle; I like an extreme polarity to everything.

Talking about that extreme, your album is clearly a soundtrack to your formative years. Did you find solace in writing about these extremes: sex, girls, drugs etc?

Oh yeah of course. Well this is the thing, it's funny now because as a band and as me, we've been defined as being really honest and kind of wearing our hearts on our sleeve to an extent, but that would be true if I'd written that album when people knew who we



"I DON'T SIT ON THE FENCE VERY WELL AND I'M NOT VERY GOOD IN THE MIDDLE; I LIKE AN EXTREME POLARITY TO EVERYTHING"

were. But they didn't, so I wasn't questioned with anything like that. I wasn't questioned with 'am I being too honest?' - it could be a genuine form of expression, without the fear of kind of a reaction. Slightly different now, but yeah, for this first album, that's the way it was. And then people embraced the band and embraced the album, and then thought 'oh he's so honest', but actually all of that honesty came from a place of real insecurity and neurosis. It's interesting, but yeah of course it is, it's the only thing I do. Music drives me insane, the incessant presence of music in my life. It informs how I see the world; it drives me crazy.

Is it something you worry about, going into the second album, having more time constraints, more pressure, and more expectation? Do you think the change would be a bad thing?

Well yeah, of course. Your identity becomes totally conflicted when this kind of thing happens to you. Especially such a stratospheric rise like we've had; like a dramatic, quick rise. So yeah, you think about all of those kinds of things. You think: 'fuck, am I still going to be able to write a song?'

But, what I realised the other day, we were in Australia writing a song and I was like 'our job is a job now' - never treat it like or call it a 'job', but technically it is - but that means our job is writing a soundtrack to how cool our life is, you know. I think if you look at it like that, everything else doesn't really matter anymore. I don't really care. I cared so much about reviews and critical acclaim and all this sort of thing and now I've realised that it doesn't matter.

It's true that a lot of people will just assume you've shot to fame from nowhere, when in reality you've been together for 10 years. Is there anything about the speed in which you've had success that you regret? Do you almost wish certain elements of it had gone slower?

No I don't resent anything, you know. What people have got to remember when bands are on the rise, and when artistic movements happen - I'm not saying we're creating a movement - but maybe we're at a time that'll be remembered in ten years' time. Nobody knows what we are yet; I don't know what this is; I don't know how it should've happened or anything. Like, all the reviews, they don't know what it is. We've got to give it ten years to see what it actually was. So I don't resent anything about it, I'm just enjoying making music.

So definition isn't something you particularly worry about? A lot of people refer to you as a 'pop' band, whereas other people refer to you as anything but a 'pop' band. What do you think about genre? Do you feel you don't want to be pigeon-holed, or do you feel it's something that comes with time?

I don't care. I really don't. Not that I don't care about the question, it's just simply not in my innate person to think like that. It's difficult with things like that because - I've said this a million times before - but we create in the same way that we consume. We're part of a generation that grew up with, I suppose you could say the internet, but what I mean is various different sources to consume all types of media, not consuming anything in a linear format; that kind of indifference and that lack of caring. Now teenagers, kids of our generation, they're not interested in tribalist attitudes towards anything. Having a stoic adherence to one musical genre isn't really part of the way kids do things nowadays. We're a band that are very, very representative of that and it's kind of ironic because we

came out and there was a certain amount of unexpectancy because there's a massive polarity in our sound. Each song sounds slightly different. But now that unexpectancy has become expected. So it's odd; now everyone expects each song to sound different from the last.

I heard the song that you ended the Zane Lowe 'versus' show the other day with. I think it was a remix that George produced and you sang on, and there was some rap elements to it as well. You talk about the polarity and multiplicity of your music, so is there any part of you that would want to surprise your fans and drop something completely different like that towards the end of the album?

Maybe... I mean it doesn't really matter. I think what people are coming to learn as well is, people are scared of pop music. They're scared of pop music and everything that comes along with it: the personalities; the agenda; the reason; the money. They're getting freaked out by the idea of 'pop'. The things that we've been criticised for, like being 'too shiny', and having all these 'production techniques' - people assume they come from being like, commercially-minded, but the reason our band is so slick is because we made it like that. We produce all of our records. We know exactly what we're fucking doing. All reviews, all these kinds of things, they think they've got it all down. Maybe they have with a lot of bands, but with us, no one knows our band and our band's potential and... I suppose, our band's potential for downfall.

So to answer your question, yeah we were a band for years, and then by the end of that time we sort of became producers. That's what we did - like making house music. And then we did 'The 1975'. We went back to a band and produced it. And now, we're going back to being more production-ey. Like, we did a remix for James Vincent McMorrow recently, and all those EPs we did in my bedroom, like 'Sex' and stuff.

Obviously, a lot of your music so far has been shaped by your formative years and your lyrics seem to thrive off your experience. So, if you went back to your 16 or 17-year-old self, and there was this band called 'The 1975' about, would you listen to them? Do you think you could connect with them?

I'd be... Ahh it's such a difficult question. I'd die! It'd be my favourite band ever. Of course I would. We are my favourite band. I mean, you have to be. Like, you can't not be and if anyone says they're not - like isn't everyone bored of people who don't want to be in their bands and they just slag their bands off and stuff? It's hilarious when Noel Gallagher does it. I love that he hates so much about Oasis.

I'm not there yet, you know. The music is about a pursuit of joy, not a pursuit of ego. You can only be truly joyful if you're putting yourself into it 100%, and putting myself into making a record is me at my most, I suppose, safe, because I'll look for it everywhere else.

Read the full interview over at:

quenchmag.co.uk

PEOPLE ARE SCARED OF POP MUSIC



LIVE REVIEWS

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GEORGE EZRA • CLWB IFOR BACH • FEB 16

Armed with the modest means of just two guitars and a collection of skillfully crafted songs, George Ezra embarks on his first headline UK tour. Ezra satirically humours Clwb Ifor Bach's crowd by suggesting that his two guitars granted him 'professional' status, yet it is clear that Ezra can captivate an audience despite such an economical production. Support comes from Geordie powerhouse Eva Stone, whose impressive vocal acrobatics and honest tales of love and heartache immediately command attention. The purity of Stone's tone exudes confidence, and her blues injected acoustic tracks prove to be a complementary prelude to Ezra's set.

The raspy bellow of George Ezra's voice is astounding from the audience's perspective, as the rich sonority and maturity of his tone is remarkably delivered from a twenty year old's body. Nevertheless, Ezra's tracks are not lacking in youthful exuberance, which is clear from the offset through the dynamism of opening number 'Blame It on Me'. Ezra fully exploits his vocal

power by indulging in the flowing melodies of 'Benjamin Twine', accompanied by intricate guitar picking. Ezra juxtaposes the strength of his voice with glimpses of fragility, evident in his crowd-pleasing single 'Budapest' which showcases moments of delicate falsetto.

'Did You Hear the Rain?', the lead track from Ezra's debut EP, brings his set to a climactic end with a haunting acappella opening verse. The song conjours a dark intensity, driven by the dynamic bass line and Ezra's gritty vocals, roaring the final refrain "Oh, Lucifer's inside!". There is an organic authenticity to Ezra's work which sets him apart, as his understated production in fact heightens the intensity and honesty of his performance. The simplistic delivery of Ezra's refined songwriting flourishes in the intimate setting of Clwb Ifor Bach, and his voice alone can leave a lasting impression on the audience. Ezra has been hailed as one to watch for 2014, and his live performance undoubtedly justifies his growing popularity. **Eleanor Wilson**



ROYAL BLOOD • THE GLOBE • FEB 14

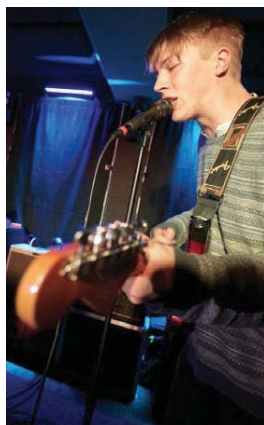
The misery of a wet and windy Friday night in Cardiff is lost as you walk into The Globe, a small venue that you hope no one else has turned up to when you arrive - so you can grab a seat on the balcony and lord over those standing below. This night is a showcase of some very solid new bands out of Brighton, with openers Tigercub taking to the stage to remind everyone just how loud the speakers can be. Their new songs and fan-favourite singles such as Little Rope are well received by the growing crowd.

In between sets all sorts of sexy hits croon out of the speakers; 'Bump N' Grind' and the like - it is Valentine's Day after all. The lights drop and the band we've come to see, the hotly-tipped Royal Blood, stroll onto the stage. A basic production with lights projecting the duo's shadows onto a canvas allows the music to take centre stage, and what music it is...

The hard-hitting drums of Ben Thatcher and well-crafted riffs

of guitarist Mike Kerr rock the venue; he could be the coolest bassist around as he dominates from the front with bad-ass basslines and strong vocals. Stomping, amp-breaking single 'Little Monster' is enjoyed by all following its 'hottest record' plug on Radio One, the lustful lyrics echoing back to the stage. With only three songs released it is good to hear fans singing along to those only available in grainy YouTube recordings, such as the bluesy 'Hole'. Closer 'Out Of The Black' is lapped up, with Kerr ripping out his earplugs and showing real enjoyment as the duo smash out the rollicking breakdown finale.

A diverse crowd witnesses a fairly short 45 minute set, but the huge response will please the rising two-piece rockers. As I said, it's Valentine's Day, and they walk off stage throwing roses into the audience; they show their love for Cardiff and Cardiff gives their love back. Royal Blood are a top live band clearly ready for their breakout into the big time. **Marc Mayo**



DRENGE • THE FLEECE, BRISTOL • FEB 27

Having received the 'Best New Band' award at the NME Awards 24 hours earlier, rounding off a year that had included the release of their critically acclaimed debut album, expectant fans queued around the corner as Drenge headed to Bristol.

Opener Kagoule's set is hazy yet melodic, with the vocal harmonies of guitarist Cai Burns and bassist Lucy Hatter giving the Nottingham three-piece an interesting angle. The awkward manner of TRAAMS' frontman Stu Hopkins is offset by his robust vocals, but it is when Hopkins is away from the microphone that TRAAMS transmit their most captivating sound. The dreamy bass led instrumental of 'Head Roll' proves an atmospheric highlight.

Drenge kick off in a familiar fashion, launching in to opener 'People In Love Make Me Feel Yuck' followed by the rousing 'Bloodsports'. Drenge's show is one of relentless visceral energy with their rawness carrying a quasi-metal edge to it in a live environment. The pair hardly draw breath between tracks and

when they do it's to throw a drumstick or bottle at the other. The way that they feed off one another so naturally on stage is not the only thing that points to their siblinghood.

The Derbyshire brothers aren't resting on their laurels here. Tracks such as 'Necromance is Dead' and 'Backwaters' sound as fresh and convincing now as they did twelve months ago and if anything the vocals of Eoin Loveless are more assured than ever, maintaining that snarly drone that has become so distinctive.

Shunning a pre-meditated encore, Drenge end on album closer 'Fuckabout', which sees fans start a stage diving conveyor belt. It loses its adolescent charm after the fifth or sixth rigid attempt, but the knowing smiles of Drenge appear as nostalgic acknowledgements. This is confirmed when Rory jumps in leaving Eoin to sign off with "I don't give a fuck about people in love, they don't piss me off they just make me give up" before putting down his guitar and following suit. **Liam McNeilly**

RECORD REVIEWS

WILD BEASTS • PRESENT TENSE 4/5



Mercury Prize nominees Wild Beasts' fourth album 'Present Tense' sees the light of day following a full year of studio work. The album title is in many ways a reflection of the style; their aim for this body of work is reflecting their identity in the present, the band taking further steps into the electronic territory hinted at on 'Smother' in 2011.

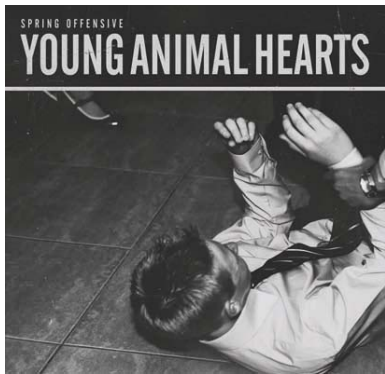
This album is a much less single-friendly affair than previous releases, but Wild Beasts could have done much worse for a first single to grab listeners' attention than the 6/4 drum loop of opening track 'Wanderlust'. The vocal synths featured on the track manage to sound full yet simplistic, giving greater emphasis to Hayden Thorpe's lyrics.

"Nature Boy's" lower vocal range, vocal harmonies and African-sounding drum beats continue into 'Mecca's

entirely synthesised introduction. 'Sweet Spot' is one of the more guitar-based offerings, before 'Daughters' shows drummer Chris Talbot's less conventional patterns over some heavily delayed synthesisers. 'A Simple Beautiful Truth' is perhaps the closest Wild Beasts get to a return to upbeat guitar-based music, but this is followed by one of the most forward-looking tracks, 'A Dog's Life'. With its rippling snare drum effects, Talbot's drumming shows to be one of the most interesting parts of the album. The lyrics "It's tense for me" reference the album name on 'Past Perfect', and the minimalism takes full effect on highlight 'New Life'.

The use of the synthesisers throughout the album shows how far Wild Beasts have come. 'Present Tense' is a dynamic and atmospheric album that should take multiple listens to fully appreciate. **Alec Evans**

SPRING OFFENSIVE • YOUNG ANIMAL HEARTS 5/5



Remember when Foals were just 'some band from Oxford' who nobody had ever heard of? Well there must be something in the water over there, because they've done it again. Spring Offensive's 'Young Animal Hearts' is one of the most promising debut albums since 'Antidotes' (although if comparison is to be drawn it plays more like follow-up 'Total Life Forever').

Off the back of a successful pledge campaign, the quintet has finally released the debut their small but dedicated following have been longing for. This lengthy process results in a meticulously tweaked masterpiece of intelligent and emotive songwriting. To find a debut without a weak track is truly a rarity, but with their driving rhythms, pitch-perfect harmonies and wide scope of musical talent Spring Offensive deliver each song with the confidence and quality of a much

more experienced band.

Spring Offensive's ability to paint a vivid, impassioned picture through their music is showcased perfectly by opener 'Not Drowning But Waving' which, based on the work of 50s poet Stevie Smith, tells the moving story of a couple's struggle with a death on their conscience. In more relatable topics, standout tracks 'No Assets' and 'The River' reflect day-to-day struggles with money, society and the bitter swells of heartbreak. Covering everything from the mundane to the fantastical, from devastating to uplifting; Spring Offensive present a complete understanding and beautiful portrayal of any subject matter which takes their fancy.

A sensational debut from a band who couldn't deserve it more - if there's one new band you listen to today, let it be this one. **Henry Boon**

ANGEL OLSEN • BURN YOUR FIRE... 3/5

With first album 'Half Way Home', Angel Olsen went from resonance-in-the-rough to crisp vocals over guitar picking; from songs entitled 'If It's Alive, It Will' and 'Creator, Destroyer' to 'Safe in the Womb' and 'The Sky Opened Up'. In short; 2012 was dire.

Thankfully, this year's 'Burn Your Fire for No Witness' opens with 'Unfucktheworld'. It's minimalistic and not a million miles away from her folksy debut, but the touch of synth and self-assertive message - "I am the only one now" - are the perfect way to bridge the gap from Safe First Album to Better Second One.

'Stars' is one of the album's highlights. Angel's voice disintegrates by the end of the track to become entirely indiscernible, which is entirely appropriate to the accusation, "I think you like to see me lose my mind".

The odd twang sneaks in (you can take a nap through seven-minute drawl 'White Fire'), but overall 'Burn Your Fire...' just about does justice to its title. The record succeeds in maintaining an accessible rock vibe while pushing the boundaries far enough to make Olsen's second offering a worthy contribution.

Hannah Embleton-Smith

NAI HARVEST • HOLD OPEN MY HEAD 4/5

In a scene saturated with jangly guitar riffs, and where everyone and their brother are the next big breakthrough act, it can be hard to take "indie rock" seriously sometimes. Thankfully, Nai Harvest don't seem to let this bother them. Boasting four solid examples of why the band shouldn't be ignored in 2014, 'Hold Open My Head' takes you on a 15-minute journey of 90s-inspired rock that does everything to avoid being pigeonholed.

Providing the catchy riff and sing-along bridge essential for any successful record opener, 'Rush' boasts a host of nostalgic tones that wouldn't

sound out of place on Weezer's self-titled debut. The thoughtful ramblings of the title track achieve both universality and personality with such ease that it's hard to believe the brains behind Nai Harvest are barely pushing 21. 'I Don't Even Know' closes the EP with a final abruptness that reflects the encapsulating awareness that runs throughout.

No matter which of the contrived labels you condemn 'Hold Open My Head' to, it's apparent that Nai Harvest are creating noise much bigger than their two-man crew would suggest. **Charlie Mock**



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