

## Arfon Candidates

Opinion articles from two candidates

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December Issue 2019  
Issue No. 281

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Bangor University Students' Union English Language Newspaper

## Ready for the General Election?



### The Arfon seat was won in 2017 by a margin of 92 votes for Plaid Cymru

By ALEC TUDOR

The 3rd General Election in five years will take place on the 12th December. It comes after years of tumultuous Brexit negotiations and conflicts between Parliament and Government.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, leader of the Conservatives, is seeking re-election, competing against leading party leaders like Labour's Jeremy Corbyn and the Liberal Democrats' Jo Swinson.

Undeb Bangor encourages students to

vote:

"This general election is arguably the most important in our generation. It will determine our place in the European Union and will shape the future of our country. In this election, more students than ever have registered to vote and we should make our voices heard. Here at Undeb Bangor we've organised a number of events including taking 50 students down to London for a People's Vote March. We have also employed students to encourage others to register to vote as well as organizing a General

Election Debate with 3 of the local candidates. We implore all students to vote on 12th December wherever they are."

Bangor University has also released its statement regarding the General Election:

"For most of our you, this will be the first opportunity you've had to vote in a General Election. The outcome of this election will shape your future, so we are encouraging everyone to vote to make sure that your voice is heard. Some have described this as one of the most important elections in a genera-

tion, so please don't miss this opportunity, and vote on Thursday, 12 December."

The Arfon seat is contested between four candidates: Hywel Williams of Plaid Cymru, Steffie Williams Roberts of Welsh Labour, Gonul Daniels of the Conservatives and Gary Gribben of the Brexit Party. In 2017, the seat was won by Hywel Williams with a margin of 92 votes over the previous Welsh Labour candidate, Mary Griffiths-Clarke. Arfon registered a 64% vote for Remain in the 2016 Brexit Referendum.

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**SPONGEBOB ACADEMI NIGHT - PAGE 39**

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Fresh off our November issue, December is full of news.

Naturally, the General Election is the main topic of this month. All key issues, from Brexit to climate change, are affected by who comes into power, both locally and nationally.

With the surge in voter registration, it is important that if you're new to politics and elections, make sure to get informed about your candidates. Our Politics section as well as our Debate Article focus on helping you make an informed choice. We also have opinion articles from the candidates in the Arfon constituency; make sure to read these too.

As Westminster election season is coming to an end, it is also worth pointing out that the Sabbatical Officer Nominations are now open until the 7th February. Student Politics will help warm up the cold winter months and make for an exciting competition.

For the politically uninterested, don't worry. There's plenty to read: from the newest film reviews to music and history, we've got you covered for the Christmas season.

Plenty of news from ourselves too: last month, we received the "Best Student Development" award from the Student Publication Association Wales Regional Awards. It is the first time in recent memory that we've run, and getting an award for all our improvement these past two years has felt good.

Alongside it, we are announcing our brand new Academi night, due to take place on the 12th March. Keep watch on our social media channels, as promotional videos and such are coming soon.

With good news also comes the bad: Darby, Manuel and Courtney, our colleagues, are leaving us. Whilst we say goodbye to our team members, we must go on, and so, we need you. Whether you've never done this before or are experienced, email the above address about taking over the roles.

We'll welcome you gladly.

And so we go: our last issue of this semester, delivered in print and now in your hands. Enjoy.

*The views presented hereinafter do not represent the views of Seren Bangor, Bangor Students' Union or Bangor University.*

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# NEWS

## Bangor University skate team cleans graffiti-stained skate memorial by hand

By MAYA AUER

On Friday, the 8th of October, Bangor University students volunteered to clean up vandalism to a skate bowl built in the memory of a young victim of an accident.

The skate bowl near Beach Road had been stained with graffiti of swastikas and genitalia at the end of September this year. It was built as a memorial for Darren Frost, a teenager who died in a cycling accident in 2011 in Bangor. The culprits are suspected to be kids from the area, as some of the scribbles on the bowl were inside jokes about local skaters.

For more than 2.5 hours, a total of 18 people scrubbed the bowl clean using anti-graffiti spray paint and washing up liquid.

Founder of Bangor University Skate,

Max Ansell said: "This has happened many times before. There are no CCTV's around the bowl, which could be one of the reasons why kids do this and will most likely keep doing it."

After finding out about the graffiti, the team decided to clean the bowl under the motto of 'Bangor Skate Against Hate'. In previous cases of graffiti, the bowl had always been cleaned by skateboarders, and old friends of Frost from the area around Bangor. The team wanted to take over the workload for a change to show their support to the Bangor skate community and pay their respect to Frost.

Former friend of Rhys, and experienced skater, Jasper Dawson Clough, said: "We do not really mind looking after the bowl, because we're the only

ones who know how to properly do it. Many of the vandals do not even know the bowl is a memorial, they do not act out of maleficence, it's rather carelessness. But it would be nice if there was more self-policing among people. A bigger sign indicating that the bowl is a memorial might help in making that clearer to everyone."

Initially, Bangor Skate struggled to get hold of the ones in charge of maintaining the bowl. Both the Council of Bangor, as well as the Council of Gwynedd, could not give a definitive and immediate response as to who is responsible for looking after the memorial.

Ansell said: "The council put us in touch with Mark Williams, Area Manager North of Arfon, Bangor, and

Ogwen, but apart from him, no one we spoke to and asked for advice, or allowance to clean the bowl, seemed to really know, or care about the issue."

When questioned about who was in charge of maintenance, Williams said: "Any maintenance that is required must be reported to the swimming pool and we will then report the matter to the Council, as we still use the majority of their services."

Finally, this resulted in the Bangor City Council advising Bangor Skate to paint over the graffiti.

However, experienced skateboarders and friends of Frost, informed Bangor Skate about the fact that paint was going to damage the bowl's quite delicate surface even more. Therefore, the team agreed on scrubbing the bowl clean

instead.

Ansell said: "We hope that with our cleaning initiative, we can draw attention to the fact that skateboarders are the only ones maintaining the bowl, which, at the same time, is a memorial that needs to be respected and looked after."

Skateboarding, in fact, does not always have the most popular image, which might be a reason for the lack of public interest in skate facilities. It is initiatives like 'Skate Against Hate' from Bangor University Skate that show the true spirit of skateboarding through mutual respect and companionship.



## Supporting students who are carers

Bangor University chose national Carers' Rights Day (21 November) to launch the only Student Carer Policy at any Welsh University and highlight their support for students who are also carers.

Young carers and others will be speaking about their experiences and the support which is available to them at a Carers' Rights event at the University, in partnership with Action for Children, Carers' Outreach Service and Gwynedd County Council.

Recognising the challenges for young carers, the majority of whom are not in full time education or employment, the University has several strategies in place to support and raise aspirations of this group.

Delyth Murphy, Head of the University's Widening Access Centre said:

"As a University, we have been extending the support available to students who are carers over the last four years. Having a Policy highlights to students

what is available and also signposts our staff to best practice.

"Young carers are four times more likely to withdraw from their higher education course than other students. We realise that juggling the competing demands of studying and caring can be challenging, that's why the Policy aims to smooth administration and support, to make things as flexible as possible for these students."

The University offers £1,000 bursaries to students who also have a caring role beyond that of bringing up any children, recognising that they may have extra expenses. It is also the only institution hosting an annual residential course for carers aged between 16-25 with the aim of raising aspirations and providing a taste of University life.

Prof Iwan Davies, the University's Vice Chancellor commented:

"The University places great emphasis on student care, and we also want to encourage under-represented groups to consider studying for a higher

education qualification. I'm delighted to see that we are working to support carers in this way."

Kaydee Owen comes originally from Gloucestershire and is in the 3rd year of her PhD, having studied earlier Psychology degrees at Bangor. She said:

"Going to university can be a daunting experience for anybody, but as a carer who moved away from home to study, I definitely faced some additional challenges. I think the work that Widening Access is doing to help build a network of carers is a hugely positive step. The centre is very good at disseminating information about local services that can support carers within our age bracket. Receiving this contact and support at the beginning of the semester helps students to integrate a level of support into their university life. Widening Access also offers plenty of opportunities for carers to meet up with one another at the university. Sometimes it is just really reassuring to know that other people are feeling the

same anxieties that you are and that those feelings are completely 'normal' and ok."

Third year Psychology student Jan Lloyd-Nicholson from Criccieth also commented:

"It is extremely hard juggling university life and studies with and caring duties and roles. The bursary has helped my family and myself immensely while I study at Bangor University. It's an extra bonus which is much appreciated."

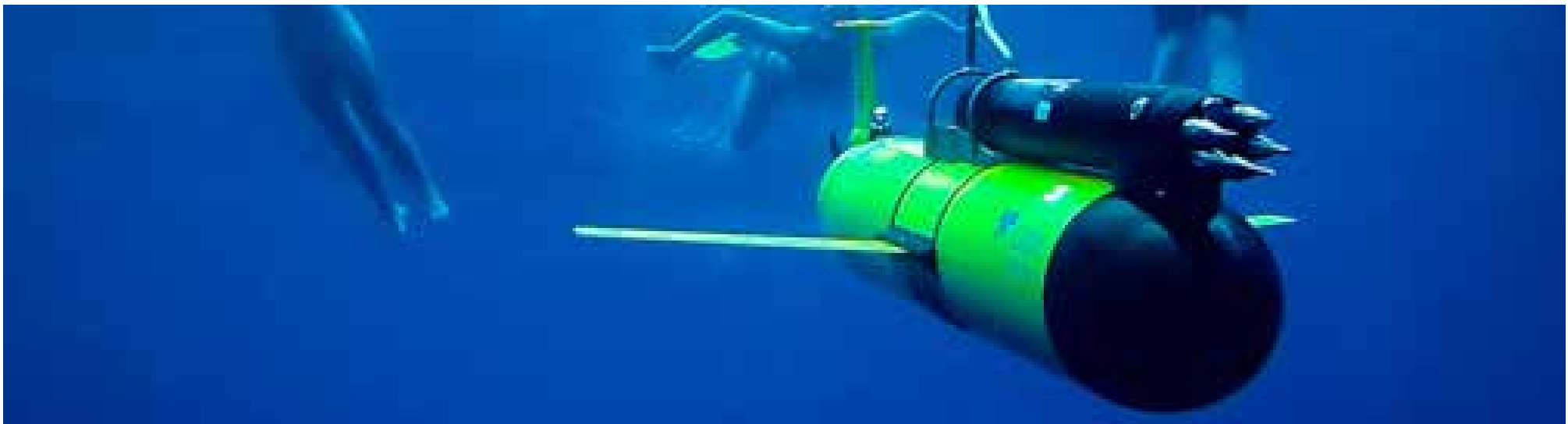
Kate Cubbage, of the Carer's Trust said:

"Bangor University is providing the most extensive support to students who are carers in any University that I've come across and are to be congratulated."

The Carers' Rights event was on Thursday, 21 November, 9.30-12.00 in Neuadd Reichel, Ffriddoedd Road Bangor, in partnership with Action for Children, Carers' Outreach and Gwynedd County Council.







# Underwater Gliders help improve weather forecasts

New measurements of how waters mix just below the surface of the Atlantic Ocean are to be used to improve weather forecasts. The water turbulence was measured by an underwater ‘glider’ and the results of the research, led by Bangor University researcher Natasha Lucas, are published in a new Journal paper. Our weather is largely driven by heat supplied to the atmosphere by the ocean. In order to be able to make reliable seasonal predictions of the weather it is vital that the transfer of heat from

the ocean to atmosphere is correctly predicted. A key process in determining this transfer of heat is ‘Langmuir circulation’, or wind rows, which we often see in lakes and the ocean in windy conditions. Commenting on the work, lead author Natasha Lucas, of Bangor University’s School of Ocean Sciences says: “We have known for a while that it is likely that Langmuir processes are important in determining the exchange of heat between the ocean and the

atmosphere. However, to accurately represent these processes we needed to be able to make measurements of turbulence close to the ocean surface. “The recent development of underwater gliders from which we can measure turbulence over recent years have enabled us to be able to make the measurements near the surface. “In this new paper we report a series of measurements made in the mid-Atlantic Ocean during an autumn storm. We have then used these measurements to develop a representation of the key

processes which will now be put into Met Office weather prediction models to improve seasonal weather forecasts.” Professor Stephen Belcher, Chief Scientist at the Met Office and a co-author on the paper said: “Getting the interaction between the atmosphere and oceans right is important to all that the met office does, from weather forecasts to climate projections. This work is already being implemented into Met Office forecasts systems, and we should be seeing the benefit soon.”

The paper is a collaboration between physical oceanographers at Bangor University and the National Oceanography Centre, and meteorologists at Reading University and the Met Office, and was published in the November edition of the American Meteorological Society journal; the Journal of Physical Oceanography.

## SHIPSS COURSE REPS

by LISA SPARKS



### CYNRYCHIOLWYR CWRS COURSE REPRESENTATIVES

#### UNDEB BANGOR

We thought we would introduce the course representatives for SHIPSS this year and tell you a bit about what we achieved last year and hope to achieve this coming year. We have a number of course reps this year within SHIPSS that have been allocated to specific year and degree schemes, and also Masters and PhD levels. During the academic year 2018/19, we achieved so much for the students of SHIPSS. Our first large hurdle was the amalgamation of the History, Philosophy and Social Sciences. We worked closely with our students and our lecturers to develop strong working relationships, to ensure that this change

was a smooth transition. It also gave us the opportunity to meet new students and lecturers from other schools to gain insight into different disciplines. Course representatives also played an integral role in securing a SHIPSS student lounge, and fought to improve IT facilities, and the seating area. We cannot promote the use of this room enough and would really like you to come along and use the facilities. The student lounge is located in MALT, mezzanine floor. Following the NSS results last year, we worked with the lecturers within SHIPSS to develop welcome week 2019. We worked hard to improve the welcome week activities for the new students, offering exciting events, such as escape rooms, a day out to Caernarfon and the quiz and pizza night. We have also recently had confirmation that the Postgraduate Room for our school has been set up, which can be located on the ground floor in MALT, opposite Terras café. Again, please make use of these facilities, there is a fully functional kitchen, technology and WIFI to help us with our studies, and also remove some of the pressures of home life.

The next academic year, 2019/20, we would like to continue to work towards the feeling of community within SHIPSS, to develop professional working relationships between our lecturers and students, to remove that gap and build bridges of clear and prompt feedback. Your course reps are also working closely with the staff within SHIPSS to arrange non academic events, which will kick off with our Christmas event. We have also been working closely with the SHIPSS society to arrange non-academic events which include the school’s Winter Ball on the 13th December 2019, tickets for which are on sale through the SU, our PJ, pizza and movie night on the 4th December 2019, and the Valentines bake off in February 2020. We also have academic events: presentation skills support on the 11th of December 2019, and also an employability event on the 20th of February 2020. Both these events will be informal. If you have any concerns, issues or ideas on how to improve SHIPSS, please let us know and we will take it forward to someone who can possibly help.



## Sale and use of residential leaseholds in Wales

In order to support Welsh government policies on leasehold in Wales, researchers are seeking people who have a residential long lease as part of their home ownership or mortgage, to complete an online questionnaire about their experiences and understanding of leasehold. Dr Gwilym Owen of Bangor University’s Law School is part of the research team with the Law Schools of Kent and York. They have been commissioned by the Welsh Government to undertake research into the experiences of owners concerning the sale and use of leasehold properties in Wales. As part of this research, the team has designed an online survey of

leaseholders in Wales which should take no longer than twenty minutes to complete. This survey aims to find out more information about: the type of property, the freeholder and manager; how much leaseholders knew about leasehold when they bought their home; the terms of their leases; and any legal action or disputes they have taken because of the lease. If you are a leaseholder with a long lease of either a flat or house in Wales, the team would like to hear from you. If you are able to help, please check out the survey on [www.york.ac.uk/law](http://www.york.ac.uk/law) The survey is open until 20 December 2019.



# Arfon General Election Debate in Pontio



by ALEC TUDOR

A debate with three of the candidates running for the Arfon seat in this year's General Election saw discussions around key policies.

The debate took place in Pontio's PL5, and lasted until 21:00pm. The candidates who participated were Hywel Williams of Plaid Cymru, Steffie Williams Roberts of the Labour Party and Gonul Daniels of the Conservatives. The questions presented to the candidates were sent in prior to the debate, via an online poll on Undeb Bangor's social media.

Dr. Brian Jones moderated the event. He considered this election the most divisive election he's seen. The questions chosen were based on four topics – Brexit, the environment, the NHS, and education. All candidates had an equal opportunity to reply.

The Brexit Party candidate did receive an invitation, but did not reply.

The first few minutes of the debate featured introductory speeches by candidates, stating their first three priorities.

Steffie Williams Roberts started by condemning the damages done to the local area and community by the Tory-Lib Dem Austerity. She is determined to see change and bring a new perspective. She believes Labour can and will deliver real change. She said this General Election is about so much more than Brexit, citing other concerns such as the environment and climate crisis, the NHS and Housing.

Gonul Daniels came next, talking about her background of being a hard-working engineer and mother. She stated that she is a 'One Nation' Conservative, believing in policies for the common good and in going far in life through hard work. She acknowledges that Arfon predominantly voted

remain, but wants to respect the result of the referendum and focus on the domestic agenda.

Hywel Williams was the last, taking a stand against inequality and oppression. He is not one for political games. Plaid Cymru believes in taking responsibility for Wales and joining the world as a free country. His background is in social work. He wants a fair system for students in Wales. He wants to ensure a People's Vote, combat climate change, and ensure equality.

The first questions focused on Brexit as well as its impact on Higher Education.

Gonul Daniels stated that this General Election is about Brexit. She says that it has been three years of a stalemate, with money being invested in Brexit rather than on the domestic agenda. She voted Remain in the Brexit Referendum, but believes in upholding the result of the first referendum. By delivering Brexit, the divide is stopped.

Hywel Williams agrees that the Brexit issue has polarised opinion, and points to the Loser's Consent tactic used in the devolution referendum. He prefers staying in to any of the three Brexit deals. He also gives the example of other countries who convened people's assemblies in order to inform citizens. He states that the stalemate is the government's failure, not the opposition's. He also quotes undeliverable results and promises, as well as lack of leadership from both main parties. He would like to see a further referendum, with a different question. He also agrees with Gonul on getting back to work in Westminster.

Steffie stated that Labour's been very clear on its Brexit strategy, to the laughter of the audience. She thinks Corbyn's neutral position is the best thing in a deeply divided country. She believes in bringing the question back to the people,

for new generations of voters.

Gonul argued that the 'Remain Alliance' in Arfon makes this election about Brexit. She claims the only way to get over it is to get Brexit done and move on.

Hywel cites the EU-Canada Agreement which took 7 years to negotiate. He says that a deal with the EU after Brexit will take double the length. He concludes: "If we want to get Brexit done, dump Brexit" to the applause of the audience.

Steffie said Labour will renegotiate the deal and put it to the people to decide. Nobody voted to be worse off, and that it is the Parliament's duty to make sure that doesn't happen.

On the impact of Brexit on higher education, Hywel references the EU financing that goes into Bangor University. Steffie also cites Bangor, but also describes how universities have become businesses. She wants to remain in the EU as she cannot imagine not being in a university city without that funding.

Gonul says that once out of the EU, the government will be funding "where the EU has funded before". She also says the Erasmus programme is within the Withdrawal Agreement.

On the topic of the environment, Steffie says a Labour government will bring a Green Industrial Revolution. She says Welsh Labour are the first in the world to declare an emergency and ban fracking. She also notes that so much more has to be done.

On the Labour Manifesto, net zero emissions will be reached by 2030. Asked about the 2050 net zero emissions target of the Conservative Manifesto, Gonul said 2030 is too soon, referring to the necessary changes to be made. Hywel said his party has a strong record on the environment. On the question of protecting coastal areas, he says it is not addressed enough across

the UK. He focuses on three key areas: transport, housing, and energy. On the NHS, Gonul said the Conservative manifesto announced funding 50 000 nurses. Moderator Brian Jones addresses that by saying 18 500 nurses who are already present are included in the 50 000 figure, to Gonul's agreement.

Hywel stresses the importance of training people locally. He believes in collaboration between higher education and nursing. He says: "if we make EU citizens unwelcome, they will vote with their feet." He also references dwindling EU nurse applications.

Steffie says Welsh Labour has protected nurse bursaries, and are currently working on a project to attract professionals from all across the UK. She says there are 100 000 vacancies in the health service.

The debate became heated, with Gonul expressing disappointment that nurses haven't applied for the EU Settlement Scheme. Steffie intervened, citing the heavy workload required during the application process.

On the topic of education, Steffie said access to quality education should be a right, and it is a Labour Party policy. She noted that the marketisation of Higher Education is a problem, and she wants to focus on bringing it to an end.

Gonul said that it should be for the public good. She says there needs to be a balance when considering tuition fees. She will campaign on tuition fees being reduced should she be elected.

Hywel believes in a need to apply imagination to how things are delivered. He is much in favour of academic freedom, but is concerned about the accountability of universities.

Both Steffie and Labour said that tuition fees need to be scrapped, with Gonul saying there needs to be a balance. Asked about the Hostile Environment, Gonul says that the Conserva-

tives don't want to deter international students from coming to the UK. She says that some of the issues surrounding the topic are that, following years of studying, they may not wish to leave. She says she doesn't want to project the hostile environment, saying that this is about Brexit. She says it needs to be done and immigration can be looked at.

When asked as to why she refers to international students as immigrants, Gonul said it was "off the top of my head", and that it is a term to use for someone moving to another country.

Hywel doesn't think that students from abroad should be classified as immigrants. He thinks the hostile environment policy is 'absolutely shameful'. Steffie says the system needs to be rights based and humane; she says the main problem is the hate language that has been normalised, citing mainly the right wing.

On the question of ensuring no hardship will be caused to vulnerable members of communities, Gonul stated that in the austerity period, hard choices had to be made. She said she would look for the issues that are in the area.

Hywel said most people are poor, and also in work. He says Universal Credit has to be scrapped, and that we need to change the way the government sees poverty. Steffie wants to increase the minimum wage and scrap the two child limit on the child benefit. In the closing statements, Gonul says this election is between Johnson and Corbyn: "I don't think other parties have the influence." Hywel said Arfon needs an 'experienced and committed MP'. Steffie said it is a choice between two countries.

*DISCLAIMER: This transcript only covers general aspects of the debate and cannot give a specific overview of every question asked.*





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# POLITICS

## THE FUTURE IS VOTING Make yours count!

by BETH THURLOW

With the general election now only days away, it's time to really think about where your vote will go! Young people aged 18-24 have the power to change the way the government is run; don't let a lack of knowledge affect your vote. Putting your tick in a box does make a difference, so don't let your voice go unheard. This is the third general election since 2015 so let's make this one count! So, with that in mind here is a rundown of the parties' top priorities for this election.

**CONSERVATIVES**

Leader Boris Johnson  
Top priorities  
Bring back the Withdrawal Agreement Bill to Parliament before Christmas to achieve Brexit by the end of January  
£20.5bn additional funding for the NHS in England by 2023-24, 50 million more GP appointments and 50,000 more nurses  
20,000 more police officers over the next three years in England and Wales  
No rises in income tax, National Insurance contributions or VAT  
Introduce an Australian-style, points-based immigration system, which treats everyone equally regardless of where they come from.

**LABOUR**

Leader Jeremy Corbyn  
Top priorities  
£400bn national transformation fund, including £250bn for energy, transport and the environment, and £150bn for schools, hospitals and housing  
£75bn for 100,000 new council homes a year by 2024 and 50,000 affordable homes a year through Housing Associations  
Free full fibre broadband for every home and business in the UK by 2030  
£10-an-hour minimum wage for all workers  
Hold another referendum on Brexit

**PLAID CYMRU**

Leader Adam Price  
Top priorities  
Second referendum on Brexit  
Devote an extra 1% of GDP to green investment over 10 years, giving Wales a share worth £15bn  
£20bn for a Welsh "green jobs revolution", investing in renewable energy, transport infrastructure and digital services  
Lift children out of poverty via new payments for children in low-income families, and a "once in a generation" £300m boost for education

**LIBERAL DEMOCRATS**

Leader Jo Swinson  
Top priorities  
Stop Brexit, which the party argues will release money to be spent on public services over the next five years  
£20bn a year for five years to tackle climate change  
1p rise in income tax to invest in health and social care, allowing the NHS budget to be increased by £26bn a year by 2023-24  
Recruit 20,000 more teachers and increase school funding by £10.6bn a year by 2024/25  
£130bn investment in infrastructure

**GREEN**

Leaders Jonathan Bartley, Sian Berry  
Top priorities  
£100bn a year for a decade to tackle climate change - mainly paid for by borrowing  
Net-zero carbon emissions in the UK by 2030  
Pursue a "green new deal" including a "structural transformation" of the way the economy works  
Create more than a million new jobs through green investment  
Introduce a People's Vote Bill to implement another referendum on Brexit - will campaign to Remain

**BREXIT PARTY**

Leader Nigel Farage  
Top priorities  
Leave all institutions of the EU and restore the primacy of UK law  
Negotiate a free trade agreement with the EU, similar to the deals the bloc has with Canada and Japan, with a new deadline of 1 July 2020  
Leave the EU and move to World Trade Organisation trading rules if a free trade agreement cannot be struck  
£200bn spending programme on infrastructure, wi-fi and services for young people

**UKIP**

Leader Patricia Mountain  
Top priorities  
Leave the EU immediately with no deal  
Cut immigration to low, sustainable levels  
£5.4bn a year for 30,000 more doctors and 40,000 more nurses  
Education in schools to focus on making the UK self-sufficient



### Election jargon buster

**Canvassing** – when a party asks voters who they will be voting for and try to drum up support for their own candidates.

**Devolution** - A process where powers are given to other parliaments within the UK, which are the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and Northern Ireland Assembly. These bodies debate and make laws for these countries.

**Dissolution of parliament** – 25 days before a general election parliament suspends temporarily; only the PM and ministers remain working.

**Election night** - The time after the polls close, at 10pm, and vote counting begins. The exit poll is broadcast at exactly 10pm and forecasts what the result of the election is. First results usually come in just before 11pm.

**Marginal** – a constituency that won by a small number of votes in the previous election.

**Safe seat** – a constituency where the MP won by a majority vote in a previous election.

2019



NOMINATIONS OPEN  
December 2nd - February 7th

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Conul  
Daniels

EDUCATION

I am a school governor and know how important education is. The Conservatives are increasing school funding by £14 billion of which £1.24 billion will go to Wales to improve:

- Wales' Education
- GCSE Results
- Reading, currently Wales' worst performing subject
- School funding so it is in pace with inflation
- Per pupil funding
- Performance information access



Steffie Williams  
Roberts

Education should be free and easy to access from cradle to grave. Every human being deserves the chance to learn, to grow and to discover through a high-quality education that is accessible to all. Chronic underfunding has left our classrooms too full and our teachers overworked and this has to change



Hywel  
Williams

I am a former postgraduate student and a former member of teaching staff at Bangor University, specializing in developing Welsh-medium education and training in work and social care.

As a Member of Parliament I have sought to protect the interests of the University, particularly with regards to Brexit, research funding and the rights of staff and students.

I support wide access to higher education, with fair and equitable funding.

NHS

The Conservatives are providing an extra £1.2 billion in funding for the Welsh NHS, with an extra £110 million this year to go towards the repair of NHS facilities. This funding will go to Wales to:

- Improve service so that patients spend less than four hours in A&E
- Improve cancer waiting times
- Improve ambulance wait times
- Make GPs more accessible

I'm so proud of our NHS but chronic underfunding has left it clinging on for dear life. The priority of any MP should be to ensure our NHS is properly funded so that it can be properly staffed and equipped to deal with the needs of its patients. Universal, free healthcare should be a human right not a political tool.

I support the basic principles of the health service. It underpins Plaid Cymru's health policy including our commitment to increase recruitment and eliminate the divide between health and social care.

I campaigned to expand medical education in Bangor, the first step towards establishing a local Medical School. I have been campaigning to keep key services such as maternity and vascular at Ysbyty Gwynedd Bangor in the face of Welsh Labour government cuts.

In London I chaired the Committee which transferred responsibility for mental health to the Welsh Government.

ENVIRONMENT

The UK is the first advanced economy in the world to pass a net zero target. The Conservatives are committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and have reduced them by 25% since 2010. The Conservatives will:

- Reduce single use plastic
- Eliminate avoidable plastic waste
- Introduce a deposit return scheme
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Improve Wales' air quality and reduce all forms of pollution

We are in a climate emergency. Yet, no one seems to be behaving like it's an emergency. We need that sense of urgency an ambulance has when there's a code red right now, because our planet is in code red. We need a green industrial revolution, we needed it yesterday.

Sustainability is one of my main personal values and it is a Plaid Cymru core policy.

I supported the first strike action of young people from local schools in March, welcomed them to my office and spoke at a number of climate protests in Bangor.

At Westminster, I work closely with the Green Party and I was delighted to receive the personal endorsement of Caroline Lucas, the Green MP for my candidacy this year.

BREXIT

The Conservatives are the party of aspiration and will deliver for the people of Wales. We will act on the result of the referendum and leave the EU by the 31st January. The Conservatives will:

- Unleash Britain's potential for a brighter future
- Focus on delivering a funding boost to public services

No deal will ever be as good for Wales as remaining in the EU. However, I respect the decision in 2016 to leave the EU. Things have changed in the last three years and the deals brought to Parliament have been poor, these are exactly why a second referendum on any deal is the only democratic solution to Brexit.

I am in favour of staying in the European Union. I have relentlessly campaigned to try to achieve that.

I have scrutinized the government's proposals in detail. I noted their shortcomings and voted to protect us from the effects of the obvious faults - particularly the dangers to the University.

I was a member of the Brexit Select Committee and gained useful expertise in the field.



## OPINION: ACTIONS NOT WORDS

**Vote for an engineer, a doer, someone who delivers results.**

### Gonul Daniels

Gonul Daniels is the Conservative Party Candidate for Arfon.

**"I grew up in London and I am not a career politician. I am a working mum and have had a career in technology engineering. I also have expertise in education and women's issues.**

**I first decided to get involved in campaigning when I saw social injustice in school provision and believed we needed people with real world experience in politics to bring about change.**

**I realised how politics can affect the everyday lives of people through policies created and wanted to be part of the policy making process with my real-world knowledge."**



**"The Conservative Party is the only party who can deliver Brexit! Let's stop the dithering at Westminster and get Brexit done so we can focus on other priorities such as the NHS, policing, education and housing. Lend me your vote to deliver Brexit!"**

by GONUL DANIELS

**I**n this election you have a clear choice – a Conservative MP who can work with a Conservative government to deliver real change, or another MP who will be powerless in Westminster.

Plaid have made this election about Brexit not me. They have made a pact with the Lib Dems purely to try and keep their own seats.

Let me remind you about the Lib Dems and their pacts:

- In 2010 they promised not to put up tuition fees, until they realised it would get them into power

- The Lib Dems prop up the Welsh Labour government which has for 20 years overseen the increasing North/South divide in Wales

- The Welsh education minister is a Lib Dem and responsible for children

in Wales not getting the same Educational funding as children in England, even though the Welsh government are given 20% more per child

I make no pretence! I have pledged to back the Prime Minister's deal to Brexit by 31st January 2020 because I believe in democracy. We had a vote and I lost; I was a remainer. You cannot hold another referendum without delivering on the first. My son plays football and sometimes he doesn't like the result, but no-one replays a match because they didn't get the result they wanted.

If you vote for me you will get an engineer, a doer who delivers results with a record of volunteering for the good of the community.

I delivered a school from my front room, that school brought £7.5mn in-

vestment and jobs to the local area, 240 children go to that Ofsted outstanding school because I delivered change.

Elect me and after delivering Brexit I will work with the Conservative Government for full fibre broadband, increased money for Wales NHS and schools, increased policing, and investment and jobs in Arfon – let's make use of Bryn Cegin Business Park!

This election is a choice between Boris Johnson or Jeremy Corbyn, anything other than a Conservative vote risks Jeremy Corbyn in power. Labour haven't served North Wales very well for the last 20 years, why would it be different for the UK.

Only a Conservative MP with a Conservative Government can deliver real change in Arfon. Elect me if you want **ACTIONS NOT WORDS.**





# OPINION: THE OFFICIAL REMAIN CHOICE FOR ARFON

Arfon needs an experienced and committed MP who gets the job done.



**Hywel Williams**

Hywel Williams is a Welsh politician and Plaid Cymru Candidate for Arfon. He previously represented Caernarfon.

He studied Psychology at the University of Wales, Cardiff before qualifying as a social worker at the University of Wales, Bangor in 1977/78.

**I stand for Plaid Cymru. We believe that we in Wales should be taking responsibility for ourselves, not relying on others to decide for us. We want to join the world as a free country, playing a full and constructive part – not put barriers up against our neighbours.**

by **HYWEL WILLIAMS**

I have always stood against, inequality, injustice and oppression. And for a fair deal for everyone, for peace and the protection of our environment. That's why I became an MP in the first place in 2001. And that's what drives much of my casework, working locally, working for the people of Arfon.

I am not one for political games or personal ambition. I don't want to be the next Prime Minister but three – that's not what it should be about.

I stand for Plaid Cymru. We believe that we in Wales should be taking responsibility for ourselves, not relying

on others to decide for us. We want to join the world as a free country, playing a full and constructive part – not put barriers up against our neighbours.

As to myself, I come from Gwynedd. I was born in Pwllheli, one of six children living in a council house. All of us have benefited from free further and higher education – without a burden of debt at the end. I oppose student fees and want a fair system for Wales as they have in Scotland.

I was educated at Cardiff and Bangor Universities. I was a mental health social worker before joining the So-

cial Work Practice Centre at Bangor University, specialising in developing Welsh medium training and education.

I left the Centre to pursue a freelance career in the same field, working for a wide range of public, private and third sector bodies including universities in the UK and abroad. In 1998 I was appointed as a part time specialist advisor to the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee.

I was elected to Parliament in 2001 and then again in 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2017. At Westminster I have specialised in social policy. For the last two years I

have been a member of the Brexit Select Committee.

On the main issue of the election, I believe that we will never get a better EU deal than the one we have now. I'll oppose both Tory and Labour exit plans, so as to secure your right to live study and work in the other 27 countries of the EU. To ensure that the University can recruit the best staff from those countries without artificial barriers to academic freedom. And to safeguard our EU funded research and collaboration with other universities across our continent.

At Westminster MPs must get back to our proper work, so neglected during this Brexit mess. Working for Welsh economic success, ending poverty and homelessness, and improving health and other public services.

I have been so fortunate as an MP to be able to work for the people of Arfon and Wales towards ending unfairness, oppression and inequality. This shambles over Brexit just proves again that for most of us Westminster is not working. So in these troubled times Arfon needs an experienced and committed MP who gets the job done. I think I fit that bill.



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Comment Editor - Abi Robinson  
comment@seren.bangor.ac.uk

# COMMENT



## A Winter Wipeout: Declutter December

by **ABI ROSE ROBINSON**

It's that time of year, the summer clothes can be packed away, and the jumpers and jackets are dusted off for the foreseeable future. The days are shorter and we can't step outside without muttering "it's a bit cold" under our chunky scarves. And as the seasons change, what better time for a good sort out?

Here are some tips on how to organise your winter wardrobe and declutter your life...

### 1) Categorise Your Clothes

Yep! Sort a few different piles: Jeans, tops, jumpers, dresses, going out clothes; identify what you have so you can add what you don't have! And for those clothes that have been sitting in the back of your wardrobe since who knows when, you can earn some money through a sale on Depop or you can make an act of kindness and drop them off at your local charity shop.

### 2) Shoes

Box away those sandals and flip flops because, unless you're fortunate enough to fly to a hotter climate this winter, they won't be needed! Bring your comfy boots to the forefront and add some woolly socks to keep your feet even more toasty!

Or, if you're feeling extra fancy, treat yourself to a whole new shoe wardrobe and bin that pair of Chelsea boots that are collecting all of the dust.

### 3) Pick A Shelf

If you're like me and you have shelves full of unwanted items that have collected a few layers of dust, start at the top and work your way towards the bottom. A cleaner shelf, whether it be in your kitchen or your bedroom, helps you to pick the item you need quicker. And unwanted items can be sold on to a better home!

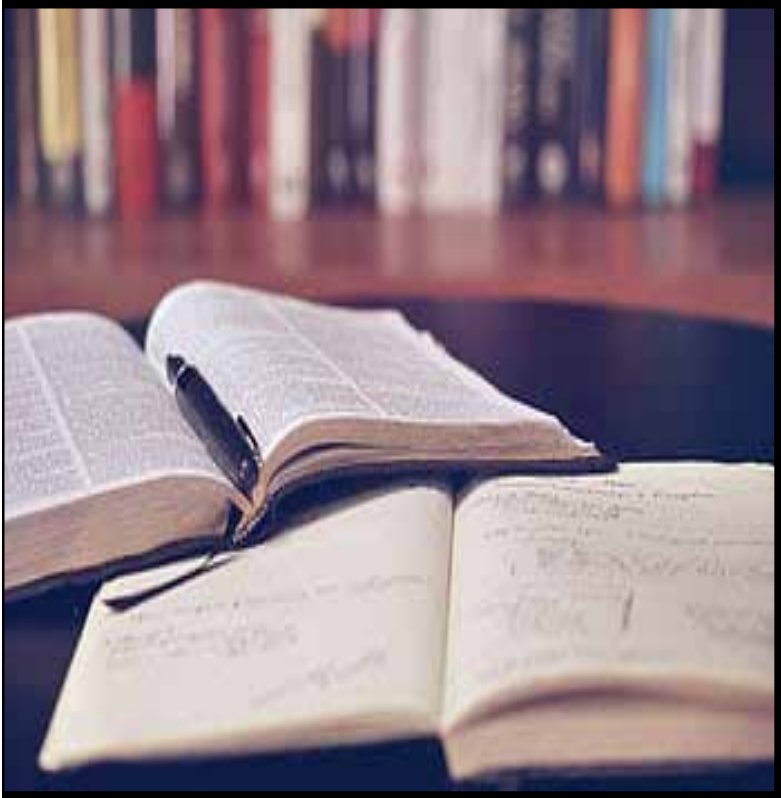
Again, if you are in denial that the bottle is empty, it's time to face up to that and throw it in the bin!

### 4) A Maybe Box

You don't have to be too harsh on your declutter, if there are items you think you may need but you're not sure when for, place them in a maybe box. They may be needed for the summer months; you can pop the box under your bed or in the loft (if you have one)!

This is also a good idea if you have old birthday cards that are a meaningful yet have no place in your room anymore!

## Some Effective Techniques To Improve Your Focus



by **ABI ROSE ROBINSON**

Staying focused can be difficult. Even more difficult when you know you need to stay focused but there are so many distractions pulling your attention in different directions. So, in this article, I'll be giving you some tips on how to keep your head in the game.

### Remove the Distractions

My first tip sounds a little obvious, but it isn't a plan we often stick to. Hide your phone. Hide your Xbox. Hide yourself (away from your friends) if you have to! Just you and your work at your desk with the intention to get things done! Give yourself one hour with your phone in a cupboard to complete as much work as you can, and then after the hour is up, allow yourself a well-deserved break!

### Stay Present

It's hard to complete a piece of work when your brain is always thinking about the future or the past! Keep your focus on the here and now. Even if you have to turn your focus inward and towards your breath, this will ground you to the present moment and will eliminate the distracting thoughts that pass through your head.

### Reward Yourself

Even if it is with a small chocolate bar- I tend to buy another item of clothing I most definitely do not need! But tell yourself that if you complete the task, you will reward yourself for it. If you don't complete it- the reward isn't deserved. Chocolate tastes so much better when you've been thinking about it all day long and you've finally finished your work, so you deserve it!

### Write

Keep typing and don't stop. The likelihood is that any idea on the page is better than no idea at all. If you think the idea is terrible, you can go back to it in the future, maybe when your head is a little clearer and you've been able to formulate a clearer path and intention.

### Relax

I once heard the relevant quote: "stress is the enemy of concentration" and I believe it is true. In order to focus, you need to feel calm and collected. You cannot write an essay whilst your heart is racing with the sheer thought of everything you have to accomplish. Keep your mind in a pleasant place. Take things step by step and remember that your work will be completed!

Email Me Your Articles: [comment@seren.bangor.ac.uk](mailto:comment@seren.bangor.ac.uk)





# Should We Boycott Father Christmas?

by **ABI ROSE ROBINSON**

After asking some of my nearest and dearest this question, I received many horrified faces and shocked responses such as: “Of course not!” and “Why would anybody ever want to do that?” To begin with, I had the same response. Father Christmas was a magical part of my childhood and I was heartbroken when I found out the old man with the magnificent white beard didn’t shoot down my chimney on Christmas Eve. So, why boycott a treasured figure whose mission is to only bring joy and happiness to children?

I am grateful for the childhood I had. Every year, I had a loving Christmas with a filled stocking and a substantial amount of presents to open in the morning. I’d barge into my parents’ room bright and early waiting for the words “let’s see what Father Christmas has brought you” in the hope that I was at the top of his ‘good’ list. Yet, for some children, this isn’t the case. For many families, Christmas is just as stressful as it is joyful. There is a lot of pressure for parents to overspend and buy everything that is on their child’s list written for Father Christmas. There are even children who don’t receive

anything on Christmas day. With the expectation that it is Father Christmas who is the giver of their presents and not their parents, some children reach the conclusion that they aren’t deserving of the gift they asked for. This often puts parents in an awful position; one that they do not deserve to be in. After considering the turmoil that families face each year, especially those who bankrupt themselves in order to buy the most expensive gift on the list, it is no wonder that people are quickly turning to the solution of boycotting Father Christmas. I personally believe there are other, less drastic, solutions.

It is important that children are taught to be appreciative of what they receive, whether their gift be what they asked for or not. My younger cousins are told that Father Christmas has a budget, one that cannot be exceeded, because then he wouldn’t have enough for the other children in the world. All children should be made to feel special at Christmas time. That doesn’t mean that the more expensive the gift is; the more special they are. Father Christmas does not need to be boycotted in order to spread the important message that Christmas is not about the gifts you receive, but the small

acts of kindness you make. Charities need our help more than ever around this time of year and even a warm pair of socks can go a long way. Surely, the true spirit of Christmas is to embrace what you have rather than what you don’t have. And to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves. So, with that in mind, maybe it isn’t Father Christmas that we need to boycott but the high expectations placed on parents to buy extravagant gifts.

# Is Social Media Shaming Ever Ok?

by **ABI ROSE ROBINSON**

Whilst I was scrolling through the endless pictures and videos on my Instagram news feed this week, I came across an account in the explore section called ‘PassengerShaming’. This account has one million followers and is a collection of photos of plane passengers snapped whilst they are acting in some pretty obnoxious ways. There are also a few wholesome pictures of dogs napping on their owners or waiting for their inflight food, but the main purpose of the account is to capture infuriating passengers in action. Whilst this account did have me chuckling at some rather awkward situations, it did force me to ask myself, are some forms of social media shaming more ok than others?

It is widely accepted that newspapers and magazines can shame men and women (especially celebrities) in some rather despicable ways. Critiques on their weight, fashion and lifestyle have become a large part of popular culture. Luckily, as a society we are progressing in a direction that will not tolerate the unjustified jibes against people on social media. So, what makes this account so different to the accounts that are blocked and disgraced for shaming people in similar ways? Well, there is one rather obvious answer. The people who place their bare feet on another person’s seat kind of deserve to be shamed. But does that mean that we have to take the dispute to a social media account? Public announcements of disapproval are often

granted through the medium of Twitter or Instagram. But where is the line between jest and jibe? We are all guilty of laughing at another’s expense at least once in our lives, whether that be through a funny tweet or a funny picture. It is important that the line between harmless banter and offensive behaviour isn’t crossed. I think this account handles that pretty well, but there are other accounts that don’t. Luckily, Instagram and Twitter are quick to remove offensive accounts so that we can enjoy the harmless banter friendlier accounts provide. There is also a report button that a person can use if they think the post crosses ‘the line’. The creator of the account ‘PassengerShaming’ is a forty-year-old ex-stewardess and she captured her

photos whilst on the job! This social media project eventually got her fired, yet the account still stands. I believe her contract termination was due to unprofessionalism rather than nasty behaviour. The account keeps a light-hearted vibe and even posts a few inspirational quotes... something we can all get on board with!





# SEREN HIGHLIGHTS







## The Question: What is your favourite memory in Seren so far?

### Darby Higgins - News

My favourite memory of Seren is from when I first joined. There was a Halloween social and I remember being super nervous to go because I've never been good at making friends and I find social situations quite difficult. I don't remember much of what happened on the night, but I felt so comfortable and like I could be myself, which was a first. Meeting everyone in Seren, and being a part of that community helped my confidence so much and it's honestly an experience that I will cherish forever.

(Also if you get the chance to go on a Seren social do it because they're wild)

### Holly Peckitt - Travel

My favourite memory of Seren would probably be the first time I came into the Seren office to do my pages. From the first time I visited Bangor University for an open day when I was 17, I knew I wanted to write for Seren, inhaling the pages, but I never thought it would happen. Now I'm about to turn 21 and once a month I come into the office and feel like every bookish character I've ever aspired to be: Hermione Granger, Rory Gilmore, the list goes on. With this lovely bunch of people and an incredible opportunity to share my thoughts with the student body, I couldn't be luckier to be a part of this newspaper!

### James Tanner - TV

My favourite memory of being a part of Seren was giving my speech for TV editor at the editorial elections. It was a slightly nerve-wracking experience, but I definitely felt like I was in my element and I haven't looked back since. I really wanted to gain some writing experience from this role- and I certainly have thanks to putting my name forward and giving it a go. Now I can have my own work put out there in print and that's an amazing personal achievement.

### Stephen Owen - Music

My favourite memory of Seren is

probably either attending the last night of the Ara Deg Festival in Bethesda in order to write a review for Seren or the first social I attended at the start of the year. Ara Deg was a quite bizarre experience but just something I wouldn't have attended otherwise, and I was hugely grateful for the opportunity; whereas the social was a hugely reassuring moment. Coming as a fairly quiet member of the team, it was fantastic to find a really friendly group of people who seemed to care deeply about the quality of content in Seren. I am sure this may be topped as the year goes on however.

### Samantha Newman - Environment

I think my favourite memory of Seren has to be when I first helped deliver the paper to the flats in the student villages. Just being able to hold a hard copy of the paper that we put so much effort into and give other students a chance to read it was a pretty memorable experience. Delivering the paper with a group of fellow Seren editors made it that much more fun.

### Amelia Smith - Lifestyle

The first time I completed the design of my pages has got to be my favourite memory with Seren. It was not easy! I got frustrated, kept stopping and starting, and asked a tonne of questions – it can be a super fiddly task. But eventually, with the help of my fellow editors, I finished! It was such a relief. A week later, I picked up my copy of the paper, and saw my work in print. It was a proud moment.

### Manuel Trottmann - History

Working for Seren has been a great pleasure. Although I am only here for one semester, I was elected to this position which I really appreciate. Yes, I have written quite an amount of history papers during my studies so far, but I did not have any previous experience of writing for a newspaper. Luckily, I received several articles from other writers (thank you Alec, Staci and Lewis) so

I did not have to do it all by my own. With that help, we never ran short of content and could easily fill the section. Editing with InDesign was actually the more challenging part of the job. It took me almost a whole afternoon to edit my very first issue and if it had not been for the help of Alec and Sinclair I would probably still be on it. Cheers to you two and to the whole Seren team! I loved being part of it!

### Menna Jones - International

My favourite memory of this semester being a seren editor was actually when I went to the seren taster session before becoming an editor and telling Sinclair he looked like Arthur from Shrek the Third which remains iconic to this day.

### Tom Ewing - Games

My favourite memory of Seren was during editorials where we had every computer occupied and everyone was doing their sections, it was just a great atmosphere. We had music playing thanks to Alec and everyone was helping each other out and talking to one another, it just felt like everyone was working as a team and it felt really good. It was nice to get to know all the new editors as well as help them get to grips with InDesign. There's also the content meetings which I enjoy as I get to hear all these great ideas that everyone's been working on, and just getting the ideas out in the open is really great.

### Niamh O'Connell - Books

I first started writing for Seren last year, and it is was one my favourite things to do at University. One of my favourite moments of seren this year, is putting together my first pages and seeing them published in the paper. It's really nice feeling seeing your work published in print, and it is something I love seeing every month.

### Holly Williams - Sport

Only starting writing for Seren in November, I was immediately welcomed.

One of my favourite moments of Seren so far has been writing the article on why people should start a sport, as it is one of my first proper articles and seeing this printed at the end of this month (December) will be a great feeling!

### Tessa Ast - Fashion

I almost didn't apply for the position, as public speaking is quite nerve-racking for me, but I am so glad I did and now get to experience everything that Seren has to offer. I loved opening the Seren issues and seeing things that I've written and pictures that I've taken – it's such a great feeling.

### Nina Bennett - Social Secretary

Being social secretary for Seren has given me so many valuable skills that I wouldn't have been able to gain anywhere else. Not only that, I have met and become friends with such amazing people since being a part of Seren. Definitely an opportunity I'm glad I didn't miss.

### Em Woodhouse - Web Coordinator

As website coordinator I didn't expect to get too involved in the actual team, but Seren is full of such good people that everyone pitches in, gets involved, and has a laugh- like when we're spending 3 hours hand-drawing pictures of SpongeBob (page 39!) because we don't know how to use anything more technical than publisher.

### Catherine Maskrey - Food & Drink

Being the new editor at SEREN for food and drink these past couple of months has been amazing, but picking out my favourite SEREN memory is easy: the first social we had. The socials we've had so far have been brilliant but beating a meme/vine social is going to be very hard to do.

### Beth Thurlow - Politics

My favourite seren memory would have to be the day I saw my name and work in newsprint for the first time,

made my dreams feel more like a reality, closely followed by an icebreaker social where I got the chance to connect with so many new people

### Michael Shiels - Film

I started at Seren this year after a friend who worked on the paper last year recommended it to me as I have always been a keen writer. I am also a massive film lover, so being able to be the film editor this year has been fantastic. But my favourite memory has not been to do with film; it was actually the research and investigative work I had to do for my Fishman article which turned out really well.

### Caroline Cartmill - Social

I joined Seren this year so I could be a real life gossip girl and be one step closer to fulfilling my dream of writing for Cosmopolitan. I love being part of the amazing team and also getting tequila drunk at the socials!

### Abi Robinson - Comment

This is my second year as a Seren Editor and my favourite memory is reporting at the Varsity games in Aberystwyth. At the end of the day my ears were ringing and my voice was non-existent but I had a fabulous time with a great team. I'd repeat the day in a heartbeat if I could. It was topped off when we won the last event (football) and the entire Varsity games. Big up Seren, big up Bangor!

### Alec Tudor - Editor-in-Chief

Seeing a whole new team of Sereners in the office. It brings me back to when I was a sub-editor a year ago. I wasn't expecting to have that much fun and belong to a great environment; I hope everybody new here feels the same.

### Sinclair Davis - Deputy Editor

My favourite memory just might be reading this list.

Open Positions- contact [editor@seren.bangor.ac.uk](mailto:editor@seren.bangor.ac.uk)

News Editor

Business Editor

Social Media Officer

History Editor

Creative Corner Editor



# COULD YOU BE PART OF OUR RESIDENTIAL LIFE TEAM?

could this be you?



We're looking for dedicated go-getters who want to make a positive contribution to the halls' community.



**If you think you have what it takes...**

**APPLY NOW!**

[www.bangor.ac.uk/accommodation/  
residential-life-team.php.en](http://www.bangor.ac.uk/accommodation/residential-life-team.php.en)



Campus Life: December News

Hi everyone! We hope you are getting into the festive spirit and are looking forward to your Christmas Holidays. The Campus Life Crew have had a great few weeks preparing for the festive season and we are all looking forward to a well-deserved break.

We hope you have enjoyed our events over the last few weeks as much as we have. We have had an excellent November from Learn to Cook sessions to ice skating, we covered it all. We had a great night playing Bingo in Bar Uno and Barlows and we love handing prizes to the lucky winners. Bingo is a great opportunity to get your friends and flatmates together to have a laugh, even better if you win!

Ice-skating in Deeside was our last Wet and Wild trip of 2019. It was absolutely freezing but we all got our skates on and after some time to practice, we were like professionals. Dancing on Ice watch this space! If you missed out on our free Wet and Wild trips this semester, make sure to keep an eye out for our new Semester 2 Calendar, as we have some cool trips planned for you all.

After a busy week studying, is there anything better than not having to cook on a cold, winter's evening? That's why we love our free food events, especially our chippy teas served up in Bar Uno and Barlows Kitchen. We all grabbed our chip butty and waited for the karaoke to start. Needless to say, Bangor's got talent!

Applications to Join the Residential Life team will close on 31st January. You will be able to find the application form and job description on <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/accommodation>. The Campus Life Crew are always available to answer any of the questions you have about joining our wonderful team.

If you're thinking about living in Halls next year remember the frozen prices and £1 pre-payment deal only runs to the end of January 2020. So, make the most of this offer while you can. The returner only Halls are great

for groups and with everything included – why live anywhere else?

The Campus Life Team would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We look forward to seeing you in January ready for Semester 2. You will find your new Campus Life Calendar in your kitchen when you return. Make sure to download our app which is available for Apple and Android to keep up to date on the go.



Featured Campus Life Coordinator

Ocean

Hey! I'm Ocean. I'm studying MSc Psychology and this is my fourth year here in Bangor! I loved going to Campus Life events when I lived in halls, so I was very excited to become a Campus Life Coordinator. I'm originally from Manchester but loving my life here in Bangor. Say hey when you see me around campus!

Here are my three highlights from November: Open Mic Night

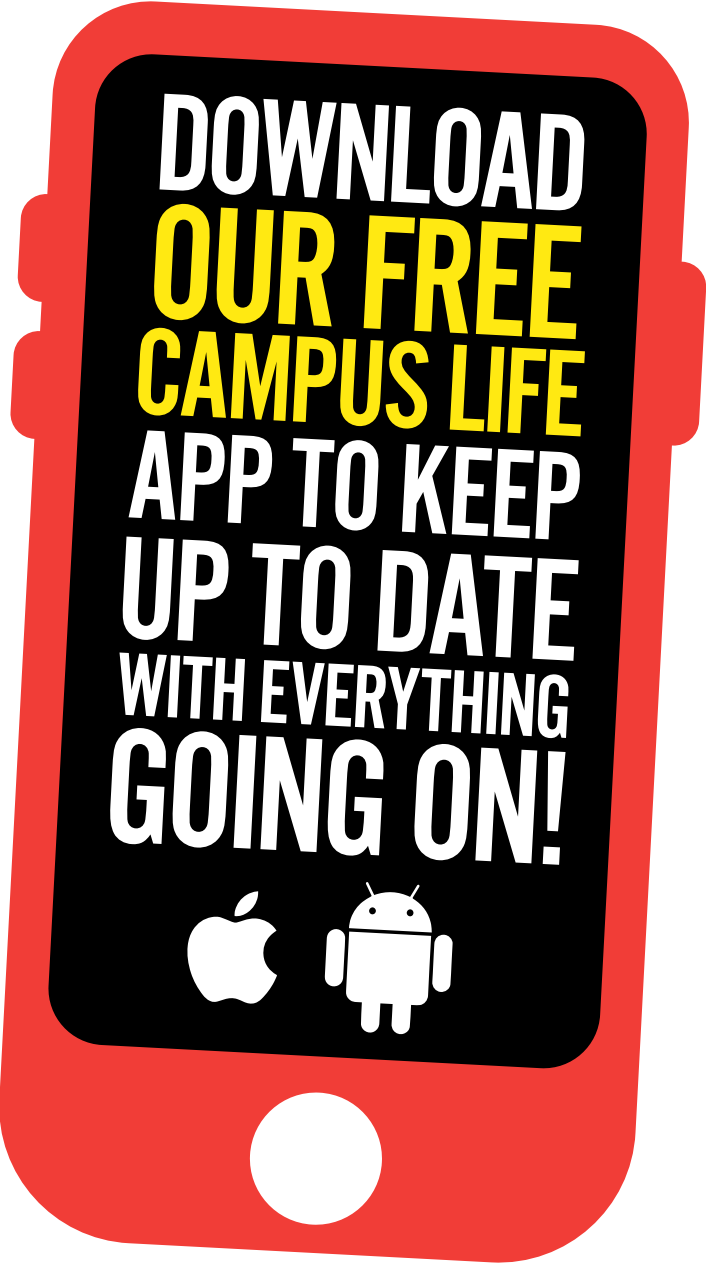
My first highlight for the month was the Open Mic Night in Barlows. It was amazing, we had so much talent in one room from drummers to poets. There was a great atmosphere and it was an entertaining night!

Big Win Bingo

Big Win Bingo was fun. We played the first round for a full house and it was very intense waiting for the one winner to shout Bingo!

Walk and Talk

Walk and Talk was a lovely afternoon. We walked down to the pier and then on to the stone circle where we played a game. It was lovely to talk to students I wouldn't usually meet.



Dates for your diary

Learn to Cook Gingerbread

Tuesday 10th  
Barlows Kitchens: 7pm

Learn how to bake a batch of delicious festive treats! We'll provide the ingredients so you can just focus on the taste test!

Film Night

Friday 13th  
Acapela: 7.30pm

We LOVE films and we LOVE free popcorn! Join us in Acapela at St Mary's for a chilled evening with epic surround sound and a huge screen! Check out the poll on our Facebook page and vote for what you want to watch.



2019



## International Newsletter

December 9th



**NOMINATIONS OPEN**  
December 2nd - February 7th

UNDEBBANGOR.COM/ELECTIONS



The Sabb Elections are the students' chance to decide the future leadership of Undeb Bangor - Your Students' Union.

Nominations open on the 9th of December. This is your chance to put your name forward to run in our most exciting election of the year.

There are 5 positions to run for:

- President,
- VP for Education,
- VP for Sports,
- VP for Societies and Volunteering
- UMCB President.

Each role has something different to offer, but they all offer an exciting time, a once in a lifetime opportunity and the chance to you to make change happen in this full time paid role!

All the information about the elections can be found on [www.undebbangor.com/elections](http://www.undebbangor.com/elections). If you are unsure about anything and need to speak to anyone. Feel free to come in and see us on the 4th floor in Pontio or drop us an e-mail, [undeb@undebbangor.com](mailto:undeb@undebbangor.com)



# Awards Season

2nd December 2019 - 30th November 2020

Student Voice Awards  
Landlord Awards  
WhatUni Awards  
Societies Awards  
Volunteering Awards



[www.UndebBangor.com/nominations](http://www.UndebBangor.com/nominations)



# YOUR SABBATICAL OFFICER UPDATE



**Mark Barrow**

President of Undeb Bangor  
mark.barrow@undebbangor.com

Hello everyone. I hope you have had an enjoyable semester, and that you are looking forward to a well-earned break over the Christmas holidays.

As I'm sure you've noticed, the last few weeks have been incredibly busy for Undeb Bangor, and there is still a lot more to come before the end of semester one! I'll highlight some main points here, but do feel free to get in touch with me if you'd like more clarity or information.

I'm sure that you're aware of the strike action taking place in Bangor by some members of UCU. The striking began on 25th November, lasting until 4th December. Undeb Bangor supports the rights of staff at the University to take action on issues that affect them and their members. However, our priority is our students and we are working with the University to mitigate against any adverse effects that strike action might have on students.

'Green Gown' Awards and Think Before you Drink

Over the past year, we have been working collaboratively with the University's Catering team and the Sustainability Lab in producing the Think Before you Drink campaign. This campaign focuses on what Bangor University has done to make its catering products and outlets more sustainable, such as by reducing waste. One example of the work done in this area was to make available Bangor University-branded reusable hot drink mugs, and by introducing a 10p discount when customers use reusable mugs.

The campaign was a finalist at the annual Green Gown awards, which took place in Glasgow on 26th November. The awards recognise innovative ways that UK Higher Education institutions have attempted to be more sustainable. Despite now winning the award, being recognised at this level was a huge credit to the work that has gone into the campaign.

University meetings/committees

On 28th November, I attended a University Strategic Development Day, which focused on the University's strategic direction. I also attend many high-level meetings where the running of the University is discussed, in conjunction with Bangor's main strategic priorities. These include the Academic Strategy Group, and the Employability Strategy Group.

As ever, do feel free to get in touch with me, and I look forward to seeing you soon.



**Henry Williams**

VP Sport / AU  
henry.williams@undebbangor.com

This month I had a big announcement that will undoubtedly benefit students and their ability to play Wednesday afternoon sport. Wednesday lectures and their conflict with sport has consistently been a stumbling point for students, with three factors that are a perennial issue for students wanting to take part in BUCS sport:

1. Persistent timetabling of events on Wednesday afternoon despite our policy.
2. The need for students to travel early on a Wednesday to matches due to our geographical location.
3. The fact that even home fixtures need to be scheduled from 1pm (or earlier) in order to fit them in and comply with BUCS regulations on travel time for visiting teams.

I have worked alongside the university Executive find solutions to address these issues. I am delighted with the following:

- a. The Timetable Unit will endeavour to avoid the using the 12-1 slot on a Wednesday in the coming semester. The timetable cut-off point on a Wednesday will then be moved back to 12 noon from September 2020.
- b. Staff are particularly encouraged to Panopto Wednesday morning lectures or make alternative material available.

- c. Formal 'Sport Special Circumstances' will be introduced so that students can legitimate any sport-related absences on a Wednesday. Absences will need to be verified by the Athletic Union and students will have to undertake to make up any work they have missed. This will operate via the 'Request Centre' and full details will follow in due course.

I would like to thank the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience, Professor Carol Tully as well as all the relevant stakeholders in the University for collaborating with the Athletic Union and implementing these changes for the benefits of all!

Also - the AU has raised over £9000 for MOVEMBER!!!!!!



**Muhammad Firdaus**

VP Societies & Volunteering  
muhammad.firdaus@undebbangor.com

While you're awaiting (or enjoying!) your holidays, take a quiet moment to reflect upon the year 2019. How did you start the year? What challenges did you have to overcome? What challenges do you still face? How have you grown, as a person, since the beginning of the year? Most of our time is spent chasing external goals and we frequently forget our internal selves, and how far we have come from where we once were.

But the end of the year is the perfect time to remember, and to take a rest and prepare for the year ahead. It's been a long year. In fact, it's been a long semester! I launched the Wholesome Bangor campaign last November. It is, as I described it, quite possibly the laziest social media campaign ever - the aim is to highlight all the good, positive, and frankly wholesome things that happen in Bangor. We live in a world of stress and negativity, and I felt like highlighting all the good that happens that we may not be aware of.

So next time anything good comes along, or you do anything that helps make the world a better place, I would like to ask you to post it on social media under the hashtag #wholesomebangor

There is no end to this campaign. It goes on for as long as you allow it to go on. My dream, in fact, is for it to continue long after my time is over. You could see it as a metaphor for anything good in life - at the end of the day, it is up to us to remind each other that we care, and that for all the doom and gloom we see around us, there is just as much good, just hidden away. All we need to do is our little bit.

Stay safe, take care of yourselves, and I'll see you all in January. Nadolig llawen pawb a Merry Christmas to all, and happy holidays!  
#wholesomebangor

## What is a Sabb?

Sabbs are your Sabbatical Officers; students who have chosen to take a year out and have been elected in a cross-campus ballot to run your Students' Union and represent you.

## What does a Sabb do?

Sabbs make sure that the Students' Union is run by students for students so that everything the Union does is geared towards your wants and needs during your time at Bangor University. Sabbs ensure that students are properly represented in the University, the local community and beyond. Here in Bangor we have five Sabbs, responsible for the SU as a whole, each with their own remit and area of responsibility. If you'd like to get in contact with one of the Sabbs, their contact details are above, as well as a brief outline of what their role entails.



**Harry Riley**

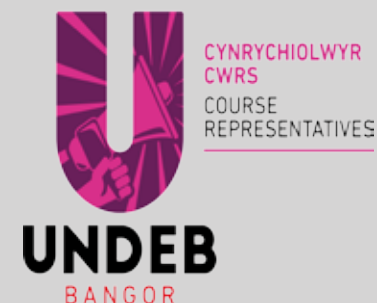
VP for Education  
harry.riley@undebbangor.com

It's almost 2020, what a daunting prospect... Since the last one of these I've been mad busy with preparing for the General Election! I've also attended a Higher Education Funding Council for Wales conference on student mental health and wellbeing which was super insightful. At that event we also gave Kirsty Williams, Wales' education minister, our brand new student led mental health strategy which she said she'd read on the train! I hope she was impressed because it was led by you guys and the only way to better the student experience is to listen.

I've also seen a lot of posters up about water fountain frustrations! I know this has taken absolutely forever but we are seeing progress and the university are starting to take it seriously but we shouldn't take this as a win just yet and must stay vocal!

Many students have also been affected by the strikes and I feel solidarity for all of the lectures and what they're striking for. The university has committed to making sure your studies aren't affected by this and know that you can come to the SU with any queries about this!

As always, feel free to contact me about any ideas!



Any questions?

Come and see us!





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# SCIENCE

## Feline Fish



By FERGUS ELLIOTT

It turns out that it's not only cats who love laser pointers: some fish do too. Researchers at the University of Plymouth hope that they can exploit this behaviour to learn more about the behaviour of marine species.

The behaviour was noticed whilst marine biologists were surveying the ocean floor near the southwest coast of England. The survey equipment used lasers aimed at the ocean floor, and they noted that some species of wrasse gave chase to the dots of light. Although it is unclear exactly why the fish do this, they seem to be trying to ward off the beams instead of "catching" them.

Intrigued by this behaviour, researchers carried out a study into and found that some species were notably more aggressive than others. Males also seemed more aggressive in chasing the invasive beams away. The team concluded that study of how the fish react to lasers could be used to determine their size, sex and species in a much more cost-effective way than additional methods.

## Tropical Retreat



By FERGUS ELLIOTT

Elephant seals are a common sight around the icy continent of Antarctica, but one individual seems to have taken a holiday in Sri Lanka. After spotting the animal, the Sri Lankan navy alerted conservationists who kept an eye on the seal during its tropical retreat.

Elephant seals are named after both their impressive size and the male's trunk-like noses. They can also dive to a crushing depth of 2,100 meters where the pressure is around 3000 pounds-per-square-inch. They are early capable swimmers and could physically make the 6,200 km trip from the nearest colony to Sri Lanka, but the question 'why' remains a mystery.

Sri Lanka is not in the native range of these animals, with much warmer waters than they are used to. The animal appeared to be exhausted and injured, and perhaps got separated from the rest of the colony whilst being hunted by one of the many predators lurking in the open ocean. It has since been rescued by the Sri Lankan navy, bringing its tropical retreat to an end.

## Dangerous By Design: A world built for men



By FERGUS ELLIOTT

Seatbelts, body armour, crash test dummies and even spacesuits; recently it has been realised just how dangerous these things can be to many people. Why? They're designed around traditionally male bodies, leaving women's health at risk.

For example, a recent paper focusing on body armour for female troops in the US army found that the ill-fitting protection encumbers movement, is uncomfortable to wear, and even leaves gaps which enemies can grab onto in hand-to-hand combat. The issue in designing new armour lies in the curves in the plates needed to better fit female troops. Lt. Col. Fran Lozano explained to the Christian Science Monitor that

the more curves there are in the plates, the heavier they must be, as well as decreasing their protective qualities. Work is apparently being carried out to investigate new compounds which would offer the right mix of properties.

NASA has similarly announced new spacesuit designs that overcome the problem they were having with size. In the past, spacewalks from the ISS had to be cancelled due to there not being enough small size spacesuits for the female astronauts. The new suits are intended to be universal, with just some modification of padding needed to adapt them to astronauts of all sizes. This will be invaluable as NASA begins its push for more manned missions,

first to the Moon and then to Mars. As well as offering a better fit, the suits come with other improvements such as improved mobility, allowing astronauts to lift objects (quite useful), and easier embarking/disembarking.

These issues extend into everyday lives. With many safety products relying on data gathered from years ago, a gender data-gap has opened up. Even things like standards for office temperatures have been based on the average temperature of males, leaving young women (with a lower metabolic rate) in offices up to 5°C too cold. Crash test dummies based on the female body have only been used in the US since 2011. In the EU, there is one test where

a female dummy is required to be used, but the dummy is only tested in the passenger seat. This leads to design choices which not only don't do enough to protect women in case of an accident but can actively cause harm; women are 17% more likely to be killed in a car crash.

It is clear what is needed: more data. Regulatory bodies should ensure that both men and women are accounted for during tests, giving designers and engineers a better understanding of how their designs will affect all of the people using them, not just half.

## Time's Up For Daylight Saving?



By FERGUS ELLIOTT

Twice a year, the UK jumps an hour forward or back due to the concept of Daylight Saving Time. The idea was originally coined by Benjamin Franklin to reduce the usage of candles but did not become widespread until the first World War, where countries either side of the line adopted it in a bid to reduce coal consumption. So is daylight saving an outdated idea, or still just as relevant today?

Many countries ditched daylight sav-

ing after 1918, as the reduction in coal usage was no longer a priority. However, the 1970s energy crisis meant that the energy reduction from people using fewer lights in the summer evenings looked more attractive, and today, most countries have stuck to some sort of time-shift between the seasons. Recent studies have cast doubt on this claim, however, showing that DST leads to a 1% increase in energy usage, particularly during the autumn.

The health effects are also a mixed bag. During the summer, the longer evenings mean that people could get more vitamin D from sunlight and are more easily encouraged to go outdoors to exercise. Critics meanwhile point to the disruption of the circadian rhythm (the body's sleep cycle) and the negative effect this has on health, with studies having found a higher risk of heart attacks in the 3 weekdays after moving the clocks forward in the spring.

And, of course, in 2019 there's a Brexit angle to all this. The European parliament voted to scrap DST by 2021, meaning that no countries within the European Union would change the clocks semi-annually. With a recent survey finding that 44% of people were in favour of keeping DST, this could be yet another thing to throw into the Brexit debate.



# PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

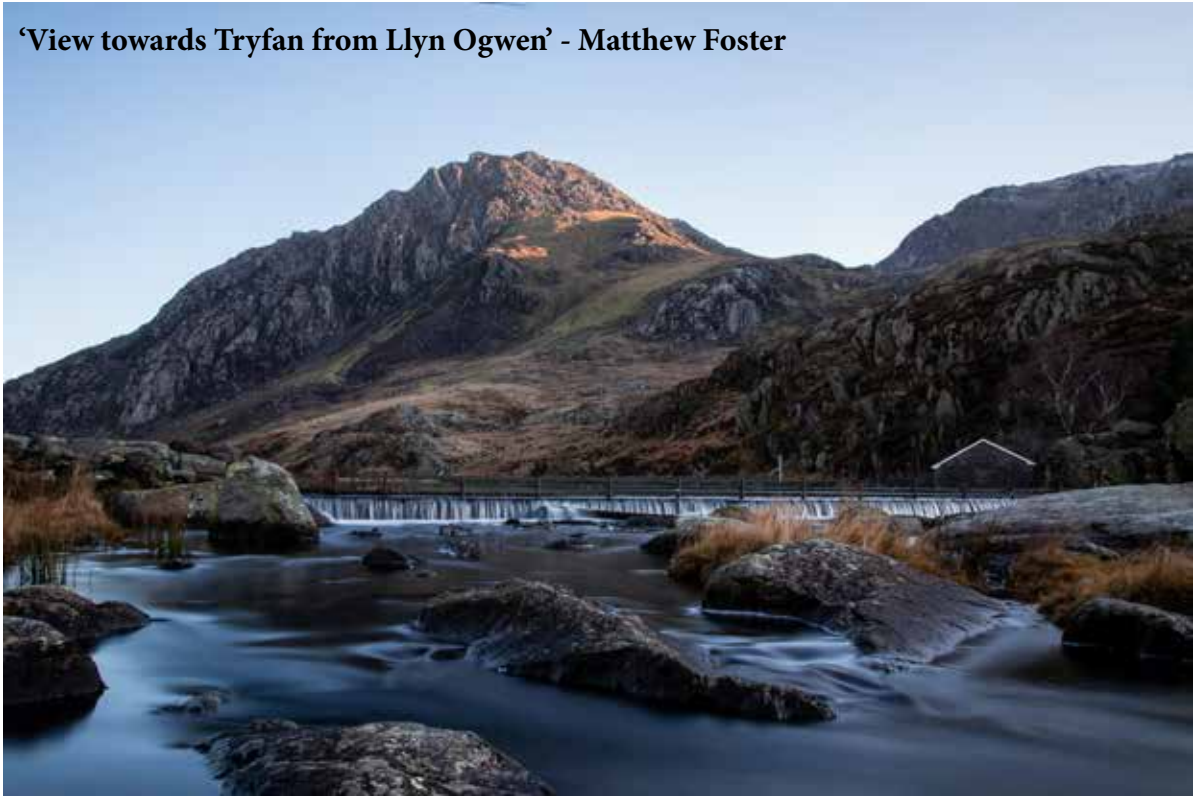
‘Cnicht Lakes’ - Dylan Bridgen



‘AUOB Independence March, Merthyr Tydfil’ - Llinos Stone



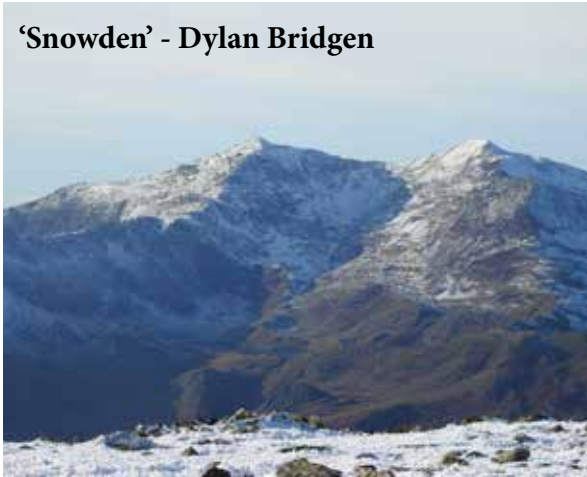
‘View towards Tryfan from Llyn Ogwen’ - Matthew Foster



‘Sunset on Bangor Pier’ - Megan Stone



‘Snowden’ - Dylan Bridgen



‘Neath Waterfalls’ - Garin Beams



‘View from Ffriddoedd Accommodation’ - Megan Stone





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# ENVIRONMENT

## Have Yourself a Zero Waste Christmas

By PATRYCJA BIALECKA

Christmas is considered one of the most wasteful times of the year; in the UK, we produce 30% more waste than usual during the festive season. Here are some tips and tricks on making Christmas more pleasant for you and the environment.

### Food

Food is the staple of Christmas. It wouldn't feel right without the turkey, roast potatoes and cranberry sauce. You don't need to cut down on this to be eco-friendly, just be more conscious of what you put in your basket. Try to buy package free food by visiting your local butchers or shopping in stores like Morrisons which tend to have more plastic free veg than other stores. You can organise with your family, or whoever you're spending Christmas with, on who brings what to dinner so there will be less waste or leftovers. 4.2 million Christmas dinners in the UK are wasted each year. If you do end up with extra food, giving to a homeless shelter is an amazing way to give to others and share the Christmas spirit (make sure to check up on which shelters accept leftover food in advance). If not, then it would be a great time to share with your neighbours or there are loads of recipes online which use up leftover Christmas food like pies, turkey noodles and tray bakes. The possibilities are endless so there really is no excuse, but in the worst case scenario, COMPOST!

### Presents

Aside from birthdays, Christmas is the only other time you can get excited about gifts and giving to others. But did you know it is one of the most wasteful activities of the year? Wrapping paper's sole purpose is to just get ripped up and binned, 227,000 miles of it is thrown out each year! There are many great alternatives you can use instead. Newspapers and brown paper are really cheap, some even cheaper than Poundland wrapping paper, and they give your presents a vintage feel. You can use materials like scarfs which serve as a present too or you can buy/make simple bags which can be reused each year and passed along friend groups. If you're super picky then you can always buy recycled wrapping paper from certain brands, just make sure it is recycled afterwards as well. The presents that you wrap usually come in their own plastic packaging. It is much more special to make something or give someone an experience as a present. I received a coasteering experience from my friend once and it was honestly, my favourite present to date. Memories are much better gifts than an earring you'll never wear. If you live near charity shops, you can even find brand new items that are sold for a fraction of the original price and the main idea is that you're not buying from a plastic-producing company so you're not creating a demand for them.

Did you know, 1 billion Christmas cards which are thrown out aren't recycled? Cards are so much cuter handmade and should only be sent to people you really care about. Otherwise, did you know you can send digital cards? They create that same one minute of joy you get when opening a card without the waste that usually follows.

### Decorations

Some people decorate to impress others. We've all seen pictures of those crazy homes in America which are covered in performing lights. It's not only a waste of money but it's a huge drain on energy. Decorations should be something personal to you and something that gets you in the Christmas spirit. You can buy many decorations in charity shops or online for amazing prices or even make them yourself. You can even give these as presents to friends and family. If you have decorations already, reuse them or give them to a loving home! Things like plastic decorations are important to reuse until they have lived their life. It's so much worse to throw them out and replace them when they can live in another home and not pollute an animal's habitat.



## ACTIVIST OF THE MONTH: Isra Hirsi

By OLGA BIALASIK

If you're at all interested in American politics, you may have heard of Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, but what about her daughter? Isra Hirsi is already helping to save the planet at just 16 years old, having started her climate activism by joining her high school's environmental club. This interest is a new one – even though Isra has been involved with social justice issues from a young age, throughout middle school she was mostly focused on the Black Lives Matter movement.

It wasn't until she realised how disproportionately people of colour are affected by climate change that she began to speak up about the crisis. As a young, black, Muslim woman and the child of immigrants, she knew the importance of amplifying marginalised voices, and she began to work towards raising this awareness in environmentalist groups, noting that the movement is still predominantly white: "When

we talk about the climate crisis and we don't talk about these communities that are being affected, we create this circle of it becoming a white issue, or an issue that doesn't care about black and brown bodies."

In January 2019, she co-founded the US Youth Climate Strike and remains the organisation's executive director, dealing with policy, advocacy and action. Her determination to shed light on climate change, especially for young people, was well rewarded in March, when approximately 1.6 million students across 120 countries gathered to demand action from adults in power, a strike that became one of the largest ever. Isra also took part in the global climate strike on 20 September, where she spoke at the march in Minneapolis, Minnesota, her home city.

In an interview for Grist, Isra was asked whether her inspiration regarding activism came from her parents.

She denied this, claiming that it was her own learning process that motivated her. In fact, she had been frustrated with her mother's presence in her work for months, saying, "I didn't want to be known as Ilhan Omar's daughter, I wanted to be known as myself."

She need not have worried; Barack Obama tweeted about her this year, naming her among five young activists he hopes will inspire people to follow their example. And just recently, in late October, Isra received the Voice of the Future Award at WrapWomen's Power Women Summit, proving that she is making a name for herself in the climate movement, outside of her mother's shadow.



# Global Movement Spotlight: Protecting the Night Sky

Blinded By Our Own Christmas Decorations



By SAMANTHA NEWMAN

Christmas movies and cartoons alike tend to paint an idyllic scene of Christmas Eve, with a town lit up by Christmas lights and Santa's sleigh passing through a sky full of stars. Unfortunately, the reality is not as picturesque. Light pollution, the brightening of the night sky due to obtrusive, excessive, or misdirected anthropogenic sources of light, may not be our top priority when considered next to climate change or chemical trash dumping, but it is still keeping us from enjoying a view of the stars. The problem of light pollution increases exponentially during the holidays, when lights and decorations are on full display, and has impacts on wildlife and human health.

Appreciating a pristine dark night sky is not the most common occurrence, but it has been known to happen when hiking at night in a national park or when you get back to your small town

after a trip to a big city. Colloquialisms, like 'the city that never sleeps', portray our general acceptance of the near constant presence of artificial light in cities, regardless of time of day. But this situation is not solely limited to the big city anymore; rather, man-made sources of light are increasingly brightening the night sky in rural areas in the UK. It has been estimated that light pollution has increased roughly 24% in the last ten years in the UK, and now only 22% of the UK has pristine dark skies.

This may just seem like the next logical step in modernization. Maybe it's a sign that we are moving closer and closer to completely urbanizing our way of life, with every road in the UK lit up with adequate light, towns with no dark alleys to be found, and cities that can be seen from space. But have we stopped to consider what this loss of natural dark skies is doing to the environment? It should be acknowl-

edged that advocates are only seeking to reduce artificial light that is excessive or unnecessary, such as outdoor lights that are on where not needed, or lights that are directed upwards for decoration and not practicality. Not only does the artificial light contributing to light pollution lead to an enormous waste of energy, it also affects ecosystems and masks our view of the stars. Light pollution can disrupt ecosystems, especially threatening nocturnal wildlife, such as by confusing migratory patterns and changing interactions between animals. Your neighbours' extravagant light display may be festive, but it could also impact your sleep quality and suppress your body's production of melatonin, potentially contributing to increased anxiety and headaches. The presence of light during sleep has even been linked to sleep disorders and disease.

This is not to say that you shouldn't put up holiday lights or decorations,

rather that you can make a few small adjustments to prevent further contributing to light pollution. Consider lighting only what you need, using warm white LEDs (light-emitting diodes) which are better for wildlife than the cool white and blue LED options and have the added benefit of being more energy efficient than fluorescent lights. Replace outdoor lights with low-glare fixtures or baffle lights, or go a step further and putting motion sensors on outdoor lamps. A significant and relatively affordable step that renters and homeowners alike can use to positively decrease their contribution to light pollution is to put holiday lights and decorations on timers so that they turn off during the hours when no one will see them anyway.



## Renewable Energy Protecting Welsh History



By SAMANTHA NEWMAN

Hydropower is being harnessed to protect a significant piece of Welsh history from the effects of climate change.

A collection of more than 200 rare bibles, housed in Tŷ Mawr Wybrnant in Snowdonia, has been increasingly at risk due to prevalent and increasing rainfall, excess moisture in the air, and flooding. This collection contains one of only 24 known copies of the first bible translated into Welsh, which was printed in 1588.

Researchers from Bangor University helped create this energy scheme in conjunction with the National Trust and Trinity College, whereby hydropower generated from a local stream nearby will power generators in the grade II listed building. It only requires 4.5kW hydro, it is considered a 'pico' or small hydro scheme, which helps reduce the humidity levels and protects the bibles. Roughly two years of work on this project has culminated in the installation of a small hydropower scheme that has been estimated to save over 5.2 tons of greenhouse gas emissions per annum.

This is only one of many recently installed renewable energy technologies throughout Snowdonia, adding to a collection of biomass boilers and heat pumps, all contributing to the National Trusts' goal to reduce their fossil fuel consumption by 50% by 2020. When the exhibit reopens in the spring, the National Trust will also give visitors the opportunity to learn about how the use of renewable energy is being harnessed to protect an important Welsh manuscript.

Perhaps apropos, the very element that caused the risk to Welsh history is being harnessed to solve it.

Got A Story?

Submit it!

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# HISTORY

## Graduating into the New Roaring Twenties

Are the prospects of the future a great depression?

by ALEC TUDOR

With all that's going on in the world today, the issue of living out one's life well has become as difficult as deciding how to start one's career well.

As I approach my day of graduation, I realise it will not be in the same decade. Growing up used to a barrage of impending disasters and political avalanches that never seem to end, it is hard to see that final year students will be graduating into their own roaring twenties.

What does this entail for us? Will we see solutions to our present concerns, or should we be prepared to face more? Where do we go from the post-truth era? What new technologies and changes await us? All these questions are reasonable. But the most urgent one concerns us most: are we looking at the near future with a clear perspective?

Try to imagine the new decade: what will you be talking about once Brexit is over and Trump is no longer in office? What will be most urgent topics? Will you be dressed the same, speak the same, think the same? Will you be a socialist or become a conservative? Will you still be on Facebook? Will you be better off or worse? The last question is what intrigues, and is what confuses most of us.

We currently live in a very stress-

ful and chaotic period. The constant barrage of information and misinformation has clouded our judgements, whilst the ongoing events and disasters have made us lose hope and obscured our vision for a better future.

Perhaps Donald Trump has coined the perfect term for what we currently feel: "Make America Great Again." Make the World Great Again. Or Make Humanity Great Again. Make Nature Great Again. We feel a sense of nostalgia for the past and a sense of dread for the future. But perhaps our feelings are not the whole side of the story.

Perhaps this aspect of nostalgia needs to be analysed; how exactly do we make something great again? What is that 'greatness' that we're looking for?

It'd probably be easier to go to the 80s, or to the 60s and 70s. They're closer to us and easier to imagine. But even those decades find their echoes somewhere else; hence, it is best to look at a decade and at a generation strangely similar to ours: a decade we think of in moving images, the 1920s.

**100s years ago, in a world far, far away...**

*"It was an age of miracles, it was an age of art, it was an age of excess and it was an age of satire."*

This is how F. Scott Fitzgerald described the 1920s; a decade which came after a disastrous World War and saw radical changes, both good and bad, all across the world.

It's been nicknamed the roaring twenties, the Jazz Age, the Boom, and many other terms; it saw the decline of old social standards and the rise of others, the advance of technologies like radio and cinema, and the surge of dictatorships and new theories.

Freudian psychoanalysis was in vogue, alongside the rise of Jazz bars and clubs; art was changed with new movements and theories, and science was in a midst of exploration.

It was the decade of the 'Lost' generation; the men and women who came of age during WW1 and saw the destruction of empires, of traditions and of human life en masse.

They came in an age where everything around them was shaken; in hindsight, this gave them greater freedom to express and establish themselves.

It would be very hard to categorise the generation in any other way: they were communists, they were socialists; they were conservatives, they were capitalists, fascists, imperialists, feminists and so many others. They engaged in political discourse, subverted Prohibition and sought to revive the old Germany; they became artists and thinkers, activists and conspirators; that the era will end in a financial disaster and subsequently lead to a future global conflict is unfortunate but true; our romanticisation of the 20s eludes the consequences it had on the rest of the century.

Much like the "Lost" generation, this generation has grown up in a stressful, albeit less bloody, period: a chaotic political climate laden with questions relating to everything from national identity to societal and moral values, a constant barrage of bad news about everything from climate change to the neighbour next door, and a general atmosphere of apathy coupled with a nostalgia for the past.

Much like 100 years ago, we have a greater freedom to express our values and craft our society. The internet, the device you're on right now, the resurgence of theories and new movements, the vast polarisation on any topic; it will be interesting to see how each of these will play out into the new decade.

Will we see a different outlook? It is very hard to think that we will somewhat be better off soon, but how easy was it in 1919 to think that there will



be anything good anymore? The war to end all wars happened, after all. Age-old heroics and bravery died against machine guns. Countless empires and monarchies have fallen. Centuries of work were laid to waste in 4 years.

That isn't to say the 1920s were always happy; in many ways, they were an era of escapism as well as aspiration. But the fact that there was such a resurgence of hope and belief in redemption speaks volumes for how it might happen again. Perhaps after seeing that everything's not going well, all you've got left is to hope.

This shift in perspectives was aided though by the coming of new opportunities. And in the case of our times, there's plenty.

### The New 'Age of Miracles'

With all that's being said, one can still point out that the negatives still outweigh the positives. The advance of technology cannot prevent the increasing problem of mental health. Neither will the end of Brexit and Trump stop the negative attitudes of the risk society. All the same, if threats like climate change aren't dealt with immediately,

then we might not see our 'jazz clubs'.

However, another thing to be observed is that desire for change is something that we can all agree on. From "Make America Great Again" to "Let's Take Back Control", to Green New Deals and People's Votes, opponents on both sides of the political spectrum can agree that we cannot go on in the present way. Further evidence is youth activism; the problems of society are becoming visible even to the youngest. Whilst much blame is put on corporate interests, it is important to note that these interests may not be profitable anymore in the long run. Ethical capitalism may only scrap the surface now, but in a few years we may see major investments in sustainable enterprises.

For many students, some of these topics may not come across their time at university, although their lives may be impacted by them. Whilst all this may seem wild speculation within a year or so, it is important to trust that solutions to many of our problems may come with new people, and that the prospects of our future may not be as bleak as they seem.





# Cold War on Ice

by MANUEL TROTTMANN

The geopolitical tensions between the Western and the Eastern bloc – known as the Cold War – shaped the world history of the second half of the 20th century. Despite the name, the period of the Cold War was everything but cold. Although the two blocs never directly fought each other, proxy wars served as an indirect trial of strength.

But the capitalist West and the communist East also fought each other by other means. The Space Race was a competition for power and superiority over the respective political system. Another such showdown was in sports.

The Olympic Games became highly political, serving as a stage for political protest such as boycotts. In 1956 several nations boycotted the Olympic Summer Games in Melbourne due to the

Soviet suppression of the Hungarian Revolution. In 1980, the United States and several other countries refused to attend the Summer Olympics in Moscow after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. In return, the Soviet Union stayed away from the next games in Los Angeles.

Sport became an arena where the antagonists could prove their strength. After the Second World War, the Soviet Union had put a lot of money in the formation of a sporting elite that won an insane number of medals. In the popular team sports, however, the Soviet Union was less successful. In those sports, large organisations have emerged in the capitalist West employing professionals.

The only exception was in ice hockey, where the Soviet Union managed to

create a team that dominated international competition for several decades. Soviet ice hockey first appeared on the international stage in 1954 at the World Championship in Stockholm. The Russians did not have a long tradition in this sport. The state had forged a national team throughout the preceding years. The win of the gold medal in their very first World Cup was a huge surprise and granted them international attention.

From then on, the Soviet team would dominate international competition, winning twenty-two out of thirty-two World Championships and seven out of nine Olympic Games. Crucial to the Soviet success was their coach Anatoli Tarasov. He created a unique style of play including elements and tactics from football and ballet. In contrast to the North American style of play, the Soviets relied less on physical strength, as on the class of the individual player.

The Russian players were very talented skaters and emphasised passing and puck possession. Players would only shoot from a very promising position. Otherwise the puck would be passed and kept in possession until such a position was reached. The very unique style was often referred to as 'collective ice hockey', reflecting the communist ideology of collectivism. Indeed, Soviet ice hockey training included political indoctrination.

The new style of play was difficult, and often frustrated the opponents. The core of the team played together throughout the year at the Central Army Sports Club in Moscow and seemed to get on blindly.



However, Soviet success was controversial. In both the World Championships and the Olympic Games, only amateurs were allowed to play. Officially, professional sportsmen did not exist in the Soviet Union as they were all employed by a factory, the army or any other organ of security. Practically, however, they were full-time ice hockey players. Such bypassing of amateurism was especially criticised by the motherland of ice hockey, Canada. The best players from North America were all professionals playing in the National Hockey League and thus excluded from international competition. Despite those restrictions, Canada still managed to dominate international competition with selections of college players – until the rise of Soviet ice hockey. As their protests were unheard, Canada stayed absent from World Cups between 1970 and 1976.

The ultimate battle on ice was the 1972 summit series where the Soviet team faced a Canadian national selection of

NHL players. Four matches were held in Canada and four in Moscow. Before the series, everyone in North America expected Team Canada to sweep away the Russians as they could not compete with them in a professional game. The Soviets won the first game 7-3. Although Canada managed to win the series in an extremely tight last game, the series proved that the Russians could keep up with North America's best players.

The Red Machine continued dominating the international ice hockey stage until the decay of the Eastern Bloc – with one prominent exception. In 1980, the US national team consisting of college players managed to beat the highly favoured Red Giant during the Winter Olympics in Lake Placid. In the time of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, this "Miracle on Ice" caused national euphoria in the United States. The victory was seen as a proof that their way of life was the right one.



## Shaping modern Wales: A brief Biography of David Lloyd George

by LEWIS KIRBY

One of the most radical social reformers in British history, David Lloyd George revolutionised Wales, and indeed the whole of Britain, throughout his political career.

His unshaking liberal stance on British politics was very much a product of his upbringing and the influence of his uncle Richard Lloyd. Both a shoemaker and a pastor of the non-conformist faith, Richard Lloyd performed a fatherly role in David Lloyd George's early life, acting as the main male figure after David's father passed away from pneumonia in 1863.

While living in comparative comfort to the rest of the village of Llanystumdwy, the family suffered poverty during these years, which David would blame on the Tory upper-class and would serve to fuel his passionate war against the status quo of British society. This became so apparent in his campaigning that Historian G. E. Raine has commented; "there is a quality in his oratory which his own past life has bestowed on him".

It is indeed clear from some of his most famous legislature, such as the 1909 people's budget, that Lloyd George remembered his humble roots all throughout his career, and indeed, he would invest himself in improving the lives of Britain's lower classes. The majority of his taxes being focused at the wealthy or super rich, it is clear that Lloyd George detested the system

of Gladstonian Liberalism which called upon the good nature of the ruling classes to look after the poor but was sadly often neglected.

Early in his career, David Lloyd George successfully defended a deceased Welsh quarryman's rights to be buried upon sacred ground at the parish churchyard in the non-conformist tradition. This became known as the Llanfrothen burial case and 'brought him recognition throughout Wales'.

In the same year, Lloyd George established the newspaper "Udgorr Rhyddid" (meaning the 'trumpet of freedom') in the town of Pwllheli with a number of other young liberals. While originally a liberal newspaper, Lloyd George distanced himself towards the end of the 1930's as the Welsh language paper became increasingly nationalistic.

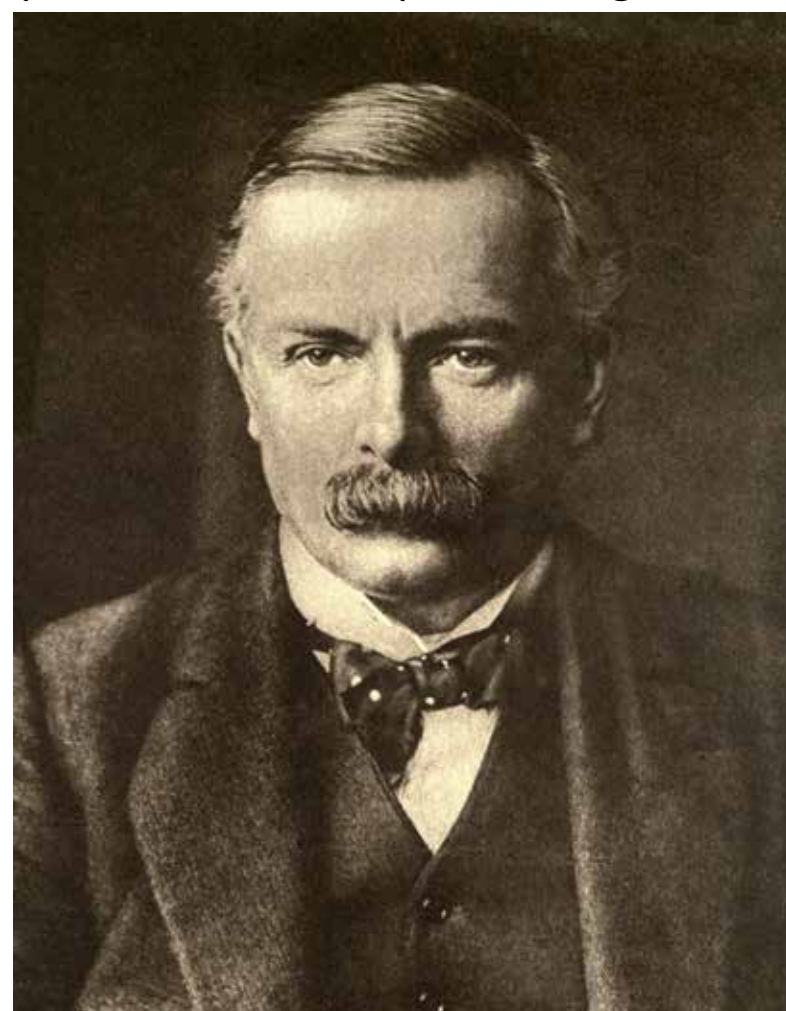
Lloyd George would once again prove himself the champion of the Welsh underdog in 1902, as he led a campaign against the tory 'Balfour's Education Act', which would see greater funding for Anglican schools but would neglect non-conformists and was therefore deeply unpopular in Wales. Once again, Lloyd George led a masterful defence for Welsh interests which would conclude in 1905 with the establishment of the Welsh department in the board of education.

In 1892, Lloyd George became the leader of the Cymru Fydd (young Wales)

movement. The movement which was established in 1886, was a strong voice of Welsh nationalism, inspired by the Irish home rule movement. With this, Lloyd George demonstrated his support for Welsh independence during the late 1800s.

Historian and writer John Grigg provided the somewhat sceptical view that, "though at first it was tactically expedient for him to concentrate very largely upon Welsh issues, or upon general issues in which Wales was especially interested, his own view of politics was always far wider and his ambition unlimited". It is undeniable that Lloyd George was more dedicated to the idea of Welsh nationalism early in his career, causing some radicals to label him as a traitor to the Welsh, yet he continued to demonstrate sympathy for Welsh issues.

Ultimately, David Lloyd George was one of the most important and pivotal figures in Welsh politics throughout history, and the effect of his works are still felt to this very day. Not only through his legislature, aimed at assisting the poor, but also through his promotion of Welsh Culture. He would receive the peerage as Earl Lloyd George of Dwyfor and as the Viscount of Gwynedd in recognition for his service to Wales in 1945 but would sadly pass away before he could take his seat in the House of Lords.



Credits: A. & R. Annan & Sons, 1915



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# TRAVEL



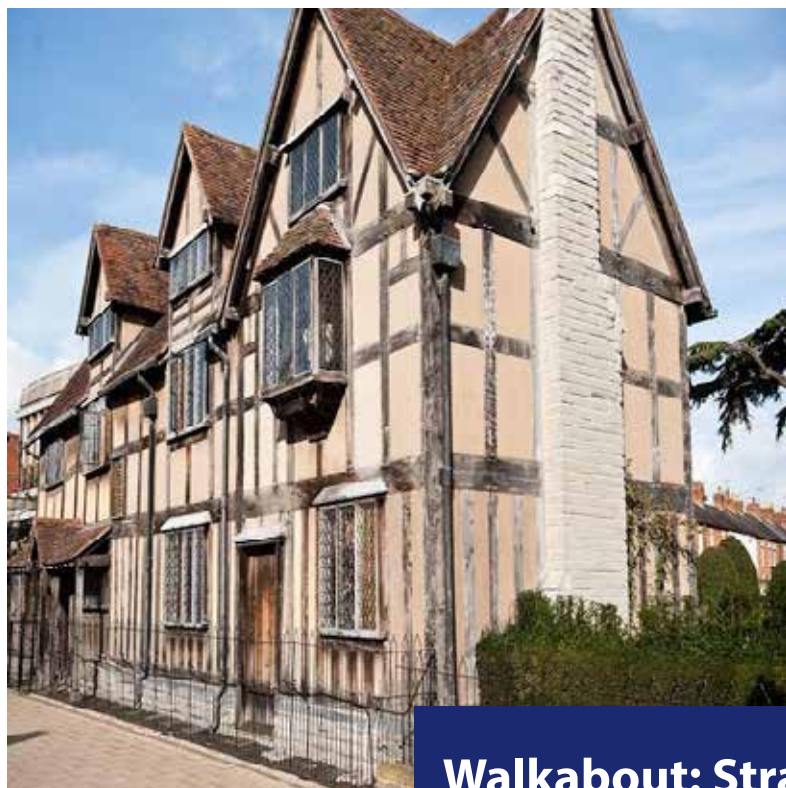
## Editorial

Happy December, and welcome to the final days of the decade! As well as that, congratulations, you've almost made it through the semester! This is always a long one, but we're nearly there, people. As the year draws to a close and it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, we can't help but reflect on the year, and the decade that has just slipped through our hands. Time is a weird thing, fleeting, yet often in the very moment a complete drag. Here we are though, at the end, and we cannot help but think about where we've been, where we've come from and where we're going next. As L.P. Hartley said in *The Go-Between*, "The past is a different place; they do things differently there."

As we enter a new decade, look back on where you've come from, how far you've come and where you're going next, whether that be in relationships, personally, or in your exploration of this world. A year, a decade, makes a difference, and regardless of how you've felt about the past, enter a new decade with ambition, wanderlust, and enthusiasm for what is yet to come. This month I've included what I'd probably consider my favourite travel discovery of the past decade, Stratford-upon-Avon. No, it's not across the world and I didn't travel by plane there, but we don't have to spend thousands to feel rejuvenated and enriched in our wanderlust.

Reflection aside, it's Christmas! It's time to pull on a Christmas jumper, drink the festive drinks in coffee shops while they're still here, and soak up all the Christmas lights. However far you're travelling to visit loved ones, make sure you take a look at our travelling home for Christmas guide, in order to make a chaotic journey as smooth as possible, ready for all the celebrations ahead. With that in mind, keep warm, be happy, and have a very Merry Christmas!

"It was snowing. It was always snowing at Christmas. December, in my memory, is white as Lapland, though there were no reindeers. But there were cats." - Dylan Thomas, *A Child's Christmas in Wales*



## Walkabout: Stratford-upon-Avon

by HOLLY PECKITT

"To me, fair friend, you never can be old,  
For as you were when first your eye I eyed,  
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold  
Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,  
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd  
In process of the seasons have I seen,  
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,  
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green."

- William Shakespeare, Sonnet 104

I have seen Stratford-upon-Avon in three of four seasons, and I never fail to fall in love with the Warwickshire town all over again with each and every visit. To some, perhaps this holds very little interest, but to others like me with a love of history, literature, and Shakespearean writings, Stratford-upon-Avon is everything one could ask for in a little English town. For those who long to immerse themselves in a world of the past and fiction, welcome to Stratford...

### Getting There:

Now here's the tricky part. To get a train from Bangor to Stratford-upon-Avon would roughly take 4 hours, so make this a stay-over trip if you can, to minimise exhaustion and maximise the time you have to explore. These are also incredibly expensive, averaging £80 for an open return ticket.

Via coach from Bangor, a journey to Warwickshire takes roughly four hours, so if you're visiting for the day, you'll need to set off before sunrise. Be sure to pack water and plenty of entertainment! Based on this, unless you are travelling in a large group, grab a friend who can drive and take a road

trip down to South West England!

### Things to do:

It's obvious, but Warwickshire's nickname of "Shakespeare Country" comes with good reason. William Shakespeare, the national poet of England, was born here in 1564 and aside from fleeting trips to London, he lived out his days in the far-from-sleepy town. Tucked away from the bustle of the capital, the town rumbles with excitement for every tourist and passing stranger, making it - despite its literary fame - a significantly understated site away from the cities of Britain.

For any lover of Shakespeare, one of the best parts of Stratford-upon-Avon are the Shakespeare properties. Step back in time into the Elizabethan era through the buildings the playwright once owned, beginning with his birthplace in central Stratford-upon-Avon. The majority of the house remains in the condition Shakespeare would have grown up in, and will leave anyone in awe of the Elizabethan era. Partway through your tour, step out into the Tudor garden and ask one of the actors to perform a soliloquy - they're paid to recite Shakespeare in the gardens, so pick any play you like!

The journey continues with the New Place and Shakespeare's School, where many an Elizabethan child were educated, kindling Shakespeare's love of the spoken and written word, to form the man he later became, re-writing our language within his own two hands. Further down the road lies the New Place, which Shakespeare bought for his daughter Susanna Hall and her husband upon their marriage. These are all contained to the town centre but if you're wanting to learn more, consider hopping on a sightseeing bus to visit the houses of Mary Arden (Shakespeare's mother) or Anne Hathaway (his wife, not the

actress) to see Tudor life from a rural perspective. Both properties are unfortunately closed from November to March for the winter season, so if you're wanting to pack this into your schedule be sure to travel outside of this time!

From birth to death, your Shakespearean journey draws to a close with Trinity Church, the burial site of Shakespeare himself alongside his wife, daughters, and sons-in-law. Though you do have to pay 50p to get up close, the shrine to the Bard is everything a bookworm could ask for, rendering any fan speechless and left with a lifelong memory.

For those who fancy a trip to the theatre, the town is host to the Royal Shakespeare Company and its theatres the Swann and The Other Place. Situated on the banks of the River Avon, student discounts are available to see a plethora of plays, both Shakespearean and contemporary throughout the year. In recent years plays have included *Measure for Measure*, *King John*, Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and the new adaptation of David Walliams' *The Boy in the Dress*. Outside of the Globe, there really is nowhere quite as magical to see such incredible theatre in action.

A breath of fresh air might also be needed, but not to worry since the Avon river affords you endless options of sailing down the river and throughout the town's leafy crevices via a canal boat. Perhaps not so charming in winter, I agree, but under the soaking sun of summer surrounded by nature and the arts, this has the potential to be a glorious afternoon.

For those who aren't intrigued by what the town has to offer, then consider exploring the surrounding forests, countryside, and villages.

Just a drive away from Stratford-upon-Avon is the scenic landscape of

the Cotswolds. An area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, this is considered to be amongst the most picturesque corners of Britain, filling with tumbling hills and Edwardian villages that feel straight out of a book such as *Stow-on-the-Wold* and *Burton-on-the-Water*. Not your cup of tea? Within a flash you can easily be in the cities of Coventry, Oxford, or Birmingham, although I'd choose Stratford-upon-Avon over these any day.

### Where to Eat:

Befitting of a literary town, The Pen and Parchment is a cosy pub in the heart of this location. Just meters away from the RSC, The Pen and Parchment boasts a vast menu of affordable meals, snacks, and drinks, all within a lovely setting.

However, if you don't fancy a pub or are heading to the theatre, the RSC has its very own cafe and bar just past the theatre shop - so kill two birds with one stone and bask in the artistic airs of Shakespearean theatre.

### TIPS:

Make the most of the actors and workers at the Shakespeare properties. They're paid experts in the history of the places and know wealths of information about anything and everything Shakespeare! They can give so much information about the buildings in a single sentence that you'd never find on Wikipedia, so make the most of it!

Shakespeare's birthday (23rd April) is Stratford-upon-Avon's busiest day of the year, and is filled with celebrations! So whether you love or hate the Bard, be sure to adjust your plans accordingly to avoid/see this!





## How to Prepare for Your Journey Home for Christmas!

by HOLLY PECKITT

It is a fine art that is mastered by many few: packing to go home for the Christmas holidays. The textbooks to be lugged across the country, the clothing supply list to make sure you've got enough socks when you return, and those pesky forgettable objects that you'll kick yourself for if they're forgotten. The thought of arriving home and being reunited with our families is always thrilling, especially at this time of year when everything grows festive, but the preparation to even set off itself can be daunting. Travel, packing, work, deadlines, making sure your flat or house is all locked up, being an adult. It's a lot, but it can be a breeze when simplified.

### Travelling:

By the time this issue comes out, it'll be a week until classes finish for Christmas. If you're travelling home by public transport, please book your ticket now if you don't want to sacrifice your soul to Network Rail any time soon. Tickets in the festive season

rocket in price, so the sooner you can book your seat on a journey home the better.

The recipe for surviving the sardine-packed Christmas travel dash will need:

1 x Patient Human

1 x Phone

1 x Earphones, to block out the commuters and disappear into Christmas music, heavy metal etc

1 x Charger, or Portable Charger (TIP: Book a seat next to a plug socket, if not, a portable charger will be your new best friend)

1 x Reading Material that isn't your phone! Make the most of what could be many hours travelling and read the book you've been dying to read! A newspaper; a magazine; the crossword section! Reading soothes the mind and clears room for escapism - maximise its magic.

Food - depending on what time of day you're travelling, you'll need different things, but the general gist here is that without fail you're going to get hungry. Whilst sugar might be

tempting, pack something that is going to provide a slow release of energy, so you don't feel awful after the sugar high e.g., fruit, porridge, etc. TIP: pack your lunch rather than buying it. The prices of train trolley food are incomprehensible and will leave you reeling like the Grinch at Christmas, so just say no when a trolley cart passes in an attempt to lure in the weak. The same can be said for train station cafes. They know you're going to want something, anything, to eat, so the prices are bumped up that little bit more, making something that would be £1 anywhere else cost £2.50 - not a lot in perspective but it adds up fast. Instead, don't throw away your leftovers - save them for your trip! A tupperware and cutlery are all you need to make this a healthy, cost-effective, travel meal.

Drinks - Water is an absolute must when travelling long distances. The heat of public transport, along with the raucous sound of those around you are enough to give anyone a headache, so along with this, be sure

to have some paracetamol too!

Your RAILCARD! If you forget everything else, just remember this! If you've booked your travel tickets with a railcard discount, without the railcard to prove your eligibility your tickets are redundant, meaning you'll be charged a full fare on the spot. Perhaps not the nicest start to a Christmas holiday.

### Presents:

If you celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah, be sure to pack any presents you've bought for your friends and family back home! We all want to gift the most meaningful gifts to those we love, but they can't always be the largest when you're travelling home. If this is the case and you've bought things already, pack them tightly in your luggage, using bubble wrap if needed. If anything needs to be bought online, have it delivered to your home address to save you lugging it back on a cramped coach or train. The same applies for breakables. Don't buy them in Bangor,

### Housekeeping:

Ensure everything, including that extension lead that you can't be bothered ever unplugging, is off at the mains. You don't want to be returning to find your belongings barbecued. Ensure you've got your keys ready and lock all windows, having ventilated all the rooms well beforehand.

If you're living in private accommodation, inform your landlord of your pending absence. Even if they haven't prompted you, for the security of the property they'll expect you to be in touch with any information about how long you'll be away for. Any good landlord will take bins out for you whilst you're away, but just in case, have every cleaning product known to man at the ready in January, because let's just say that student bins can grow... pungent...

With these tips in mind and bags all packed and ready to go, sit back, relax, and have a very Merry Christmas!



## Like "The Crown"? You'll Love Caernarfon!

by HOLLY PECKITT

In November 2018, Left Bank Pictures sent filming notification letters to the business owners of Caernarfon, noting the impending arrival of a film crew, actors, and of course, the heavy burden of monarchy. Finally, the wait is over, and Netflix's *The Crown* has once again been released onto the royal balcony with all the grandeur and elegance of *Seasons One and Two*. For the beady-eyed amongst us, some stunning shots of Caernarfon will not have gone unseen, recreating the investiture of Charles, the Prince of Wales, in 1969.

A coastal town dating back to the 1000s, Caernarfon has a regal and bloody history. Since the first investiture of a Prince of Wales in 1301,

with King Edward II, Caernarfon Castle has been the grounds across centuries for this long-standing tradition, celebrating in part the actions of Edward II's father, King Edward I.

Under his medieval reign, England and Wales became unified under the same monarch; this in turn caused great threat to the Welsh population, bringing us in united history to where we are today. This was considered to be a monumental moment in the Queen's bestowing of such a title upon her first son and the heir apparent, as the BBC's Welsh History site describes "The title isn't automatic, however. It has to be created each time by the reigning monarch - and as such is not a hereditary title."

As a result, Caernarfon Castle and the surrounding town are considered by many as a staple landmark location upon which the grounds of the 21st century royal family have been built.

So, you liked, maybe even loved *The Crown*? Then this is the place to go!

Getting There: Unlike many of the places covered here on Walkabout, to get to Caernarfon is a piece of cake. Simply look for an Arriva 5C bus, and hop on board across Bangor! However, if you're not sure where to get on, the bus station in central Bangor is the best place to go, as you'll be provided with the best place to get on and the next time of arrival.

Where to Eat: It might not be to everyone's tastes, but who can resist an artisan cupcake? Y Gegin Fach on Pool Hill is the perfect place to relax with a coffee and a slice of cake in the winter months. It's simplistic interior is quaint and not to everyone's tastes, but has an air of cosiness wafting throughout, and is perfect for all ages. The cake is a delicious feast that will imprint itself on the brain for years to come, and all come at affordable prices. The cafe is unfortunately closed Sunday and Monday, but when open for business, Y Gegin Fach is a cosy corner away from all the bustle of Christmas shopping in Caernarfon.

The obvious attraction lies in the

Castle! Roughly £7 to get in with a student ID, you'll easily spend hours upon hours within the walls of this stunning relic, absorbing the detailed history it offers. Owned by Cadw, this is perhaps one of the most intact castles from Edward I's reign, and charts the bitter war between the English and Welsh monarchies. Mimicking Roman architecture in design, any fan of *The Crown*, *Merlin* or a plethora of regal period dramas will be in awe of what surrounds them, making this part of a fantastic day out, or a great place to show your family when they come to visit!

A breathtaking harbour lies just beyond, giving incredible views over the Menai Straits and the southern parts of Anglesey. As well as this, why not take a look at the Ffestiniog Railway? It's an arduous journey, taking several hours by steam train on the Welsh Highland Railway, but a vintage journey to the very heights of Mount Snowdon isn't something many people can say they've done in their lifetime. From the top, though a little chilly, the views across Snowdonia are outstanding. It's a rare experience, so why not let it be you? It doesn't come cheap, but this is absolutely worth saving for for the memories at least.

If nothing appeals to the eye in Caernarfon, then remember that this is an interchange to places throughout North West Wales. From Abersoch to Portmerion, go and explore...



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# INTERNATIONAL



Photo by Moyan Brenn (Flickr) (CC BY 2.0)

## Country Spotlight: Czech Republic

By MENNA JONES

The country that I want to introduce to you this month is the Czech Republic, or Czechia as it is also known. The Czech Republic is located roughly in the centre of Europe and is bordered by Germany to the west, Austria to the south, Slovakia to the east and Poland to the northeast. It has a population of 10.7 million inhabitants with the largest city and capital being Prague which is home to a population of 1.3 million inhabitants. Interestingly the country is one of the few countries in Europe, like the UK, which doesn't use the euro (even though it is part of the EU). Instead, it uses the Czech Koruna. The main reason I wanted to talk about

this country this month was because of the 30th anniversary this month of the Velvet Revolution, a period of nonviolent protest in the country from around the 17th November to the 29th December 1989 against the one-party Communist government of Czechoslovakia. This resulted in the end of 41 years of one-party rule in the country and the transformation of the country into a parliamentary republic. However, this is not all, many Czechs are using this anniversary to continue protesting against their current prime minister Andrej Babiš who has been in the spotlight of criticism especially since April when he was nearly charged with fraud in relation

to an alleged misuse of an EU subsidy which caused the Justice Minister to resign the next day (according to the Financial Times). These and other related events caused about 250,000 people to march to protest these actions, first gathering in downtown Prague on the 23rd June this year and then again, a couple of weeks ago on the 26th November with around roughly the same amount of people participating. The marches were organised by a group called A Million Moments for Democracy. Want to contribute to my section? Email me at the address above!



Photo by Martin2035 (CC BY 4.0)

## Filipino society Adobo making

By MENNA JONES

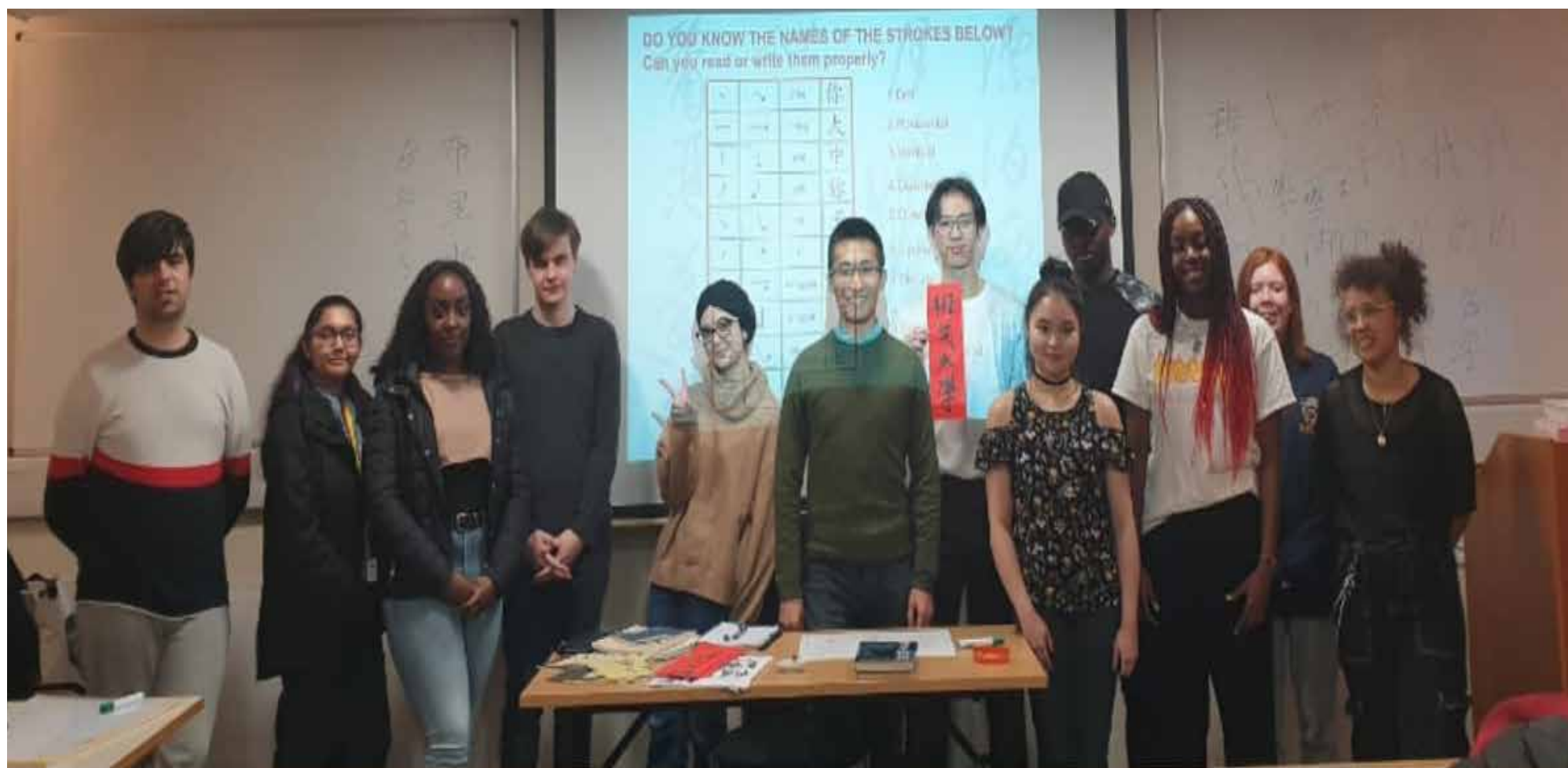
On Wednesday 27th November, I headed to Barlow's Kitchens to participate in an Adobo cooking session put on by the Filipino society. Adobo is a traditional Filipino dish, sometimes made with chicken, pork or aubergine. We made it with chicken drumsticks (but you can use more or less any cut of chicken with breast meat being a good alternative) and a vegetarian version with aubergine. This was then marinated in a sauce containing soy sauce, bay

leaves, cane vinegar (but you can use white vinegar), garlic, onion, water and sugar. You can buy large bottles of soy sauce and vinegar at the Asian supermarkets (rather than the tiny bottles in other supermarkets). We were told an interesting fact that in the Philippines, each region makes this dish slightly differently. So, we all grabbed a chopping board and started to prepare the vegetables while the others prepared the chicken and the marinade. After adding all

the ingredients and waiting for about an hour and a half or so, it was finally ready. We had the dish along with plenty of portions of rice and overall it was worth the wait because the food tasted and smelled amazing and it was a thoroughly good way to spend a Thursday night. If you want to find out more about the dish and how to make it, there are recipes online!







# London Society Chinese Calligraphy session

By MENNA JONES

On Friday 29th November I went to the management centre to attend a Chinese calligraphy session organised by the London Society. First, we learned that the Chinese letters are made from a combination of different strokes and the combination of these strokes were called characters. We then looked at the development of these characters over time and how they went from very pictorial to then slightly more refined and more complex but also how there was a difference in these depending on whether they were written in Traditional Chinese or Simplified Chinese.

After this, we explored the different styles of Chinese calligraphic script; for example, regular, semi-cursive and cursive. After this introduction and background knowledge, we were ready to try and start writing some simple words and phrases of our own. We started with numbers, although these characters looked relatively simple when typed or written out, they were quite hard to replicate in practice because each character has a specific stroke order which is quite important to follow. Thus, it took me a while to copy each character out and even longer for phrases such as 'My

Name is...' or 'I'm from Bangor'. After we had tried with a regular pen, we were able to try with one of the traditional brushes which was fun but also quite difficult as you had to hold the brush a certain way and apply a certain amount of pressure to get the right result. Overall it was a great way to spend a Friday evening. If you want to come to another one of the London Society's events, then check their Instagram ([bangorlondonsoc](https://www.instagram.com/bangorlondonsoc)) for more updates!



# Eurovision Bulletin: Junior Eurovision special

By MENNA JONES

As Junior Eurovision was on Sunday 24th November, this bulletin is dedicated to the contest. In recent years I have not been that engaged with the Junior contest due to there being less emphasis on it and the declining number of countries that decide to compete in it. However, as Wales were competing for the second year in a row and it was being broadcast on S4C, I decided I should probably pay more attention. Wales can compete as a country in JESC because it is handled by S4C and the BBC is not involved in the contest. This year's contest was held in Poland in Gliwice after their victory last year and the motto was 'Share the Joy' and I can tell you that every contestant

certainly lived up to this. There were 19 entries this year with Wales being represented by Erin Mai who was singing 'Calon Yn Curo' (Heart Beating). It was quite refreshing to hear the song being sung in Welsh, along with the other entries, the majority of which were sung in their native language. There was only one song that was sung completely in English which was Australia's entry, 'We Will Rise'; this starkly contrasts the contest held in May. I listened to a bit of each song before the contest and my personal favourites were North Macedonia, Ireland, France, Poland and Wales. However, nearly every song stood out and was of a very high standard this year with the main fan favourite, Spain

(who returned to the contest after 12 years), delivering some professional vocals with amazing high notes. France also delivered a very catchy, well-delivered song 'Bim Bam Toi', which I must admit was stuck in my head for a few days after the contest. In the end, Poland managed to win again with Viki Gabor and her song 'Superhero' with Kazakhstan coming 2nd and Wales, unfortunately, coming second to last. Poland's double victory begs the question of why they are so good in Junior Eurovision but not in the main contest? Plus, after Kazakhstan's second placing, why is the EBU so hesitant to invite them to the main contest?



Photo of Viki Gabor by Serecki (CC BY-SA 4.0)



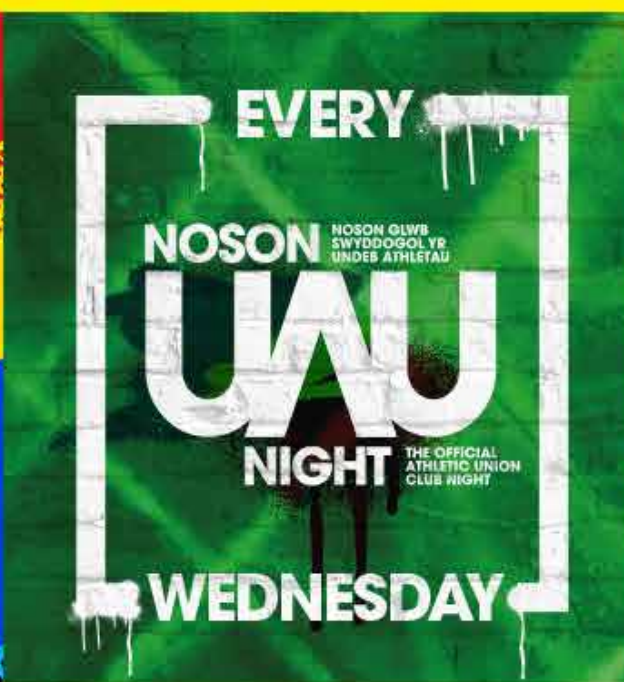
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# FOOD & DRINK

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## Festive feasts for One? - reviews

By EMILY READ

Meal deals, we all love them. These are a go-to for students in Bangor, with many supermarkets and high street eateries alike offering the chance for you to get your hands on the perfect lunchtime feast. With Christmas fast approaching, it's time for us to find out which of these stores really has the best festive range, as well as meal deal selection for the other 11 months of the year.



**Morrisons:** Morrisons have a fantastic choice of sandwiches and wraps to select from, along with a good range of sides and drinks to make up a meal deal for £3.50. However, if you fancy something warm to eat, the new hot meal deal selection at the back of the store is simply divine, with 6 chicken strips and chunky chips coming to just £3! Pigs in blankets are also available at the hot counter which are a festive bonus, along with other veggie options such as mozzarella sticks (which are tasty but Bar Uno's are better) and chilli cheese bites. I think the cold meal deals are quite expensive for what they are but the hot meal deals are a steal. Overall rating: 4 stars.

**Siop/Shop:** Siop/Shop, as expected, did not have any festive treats available, although I did manage to find a small sandwich range in the fridge section. The range of sandwiches is limited but due to its location, Siop/Shop is a perfect choice if you are running late for lectures and need to quickly grab a sandwich on the way, but is an expensive option to say the least, especially considering there is no meal deal available. Overall rating 2 stars.



**McDonalds:** Although McDonalds is a bit more out of the way for students without a car, who can resist the Big Mac and Fries for £1.99 deal? Some new items have been added to the menu just in time for Christmas, including the Millionaire's Latte and their new limited edition doughnut, which has a caramel icing and a sweet sauce filling. Old favourites are also returning such as the Big Tasty and Matchmakers Cool Mint McFlurry. McDonalds is definitely not the healthiest choice around, but swapping a Fries for a Shaker Side Salad can make your meal a lot lighter! There is definitely a large choice of meals for the other 11 months of the year, with special items being added regularly, though the food isn't always of as high quality as some of the other eateries sampled (I often receive my order lukewarm and sometimes items are missing!). Overall rating: 3 stars.



**Asda:** Like Morrisons, Asda have a good selection of sandwiches and wraps on offer to grab and go, and is ideally located next to Deiniol Library, so is a good choice for anyone looking for a quick bite to eat mid-way through completing an assignment. There is a hot counter at Asda, although their range isn't as varied as Morrison's. There doesn't seem to be any festive meal deals available, however you can get your hands on a Christmas Eve box for only £2.50 in selected stores. Overall rating: 3 stars.



## Healthy food and drink swaps for those on the road

By WMB LOGISTICS

When it comes to being on the road for a long period of time, you are going to find yourself feeling peckish. Feeling peckish comes with sugar cravings, and sugar cravings plus low mobility bring excess energy, which ultimately leads to excess fat. Whether you drive for work or just find yourself travelling long distances often, the team at [www.WMBLogistics.co.uk](http://www.WMBLogistics.co.uk) have compiled a list of healthy food and drink swaps to help you stay refreshed, awake and not groggy, without piling on the pounds.

Swap energy drinks for black coffee or water. It's hard to not reach for the drink that is packed with sugar – especially if you're on the road during the early morning – but try to opt for something a little different. Black coffee is not only extremely low in calories, it also reduces inflammation and reduces the chance of cardiovascular disease. Compared to your sugary energy drinks, high sugar fruit juices and more, black coffee boosts your memory and will help keep you awake on those longer journeys. Water, however, is always your best option; by keeping hydrated, you can therefore concentrate better, as well as feel more awake whilst on the road.

**Eat slow releasing carbohydrates**  
When you consume slow releasing carbohydrates, it makes your body feel fuller for longer. Yes, it might seem the easier option just to pull into a burger van and get a quick and easy dinner, but that will sit on your stomach. Instead, opt for a sandwich. Less fat and less grease equals feeling less uncomfortable and groggy when it comes to driving again.

Always have fruit on hand to snack on

Fruit is a natural sugar and won't give you the sugar come-down that you often associate with chocolate and sweets. When that sugar rush drops, you will crave more sugar, and you'll instinctively reach for more snacks – even if you might not be hungry. Apples and grapes are great to snack on while on the road, but if you do get a break, then oranges and bananas are great too, just don't peel them when driving as you need to be focused on the road.

Choose low fat cheese and yogurt  
The fat within dairy is mostly saturated fat (that's the fat that takes ages to get rid of). If you are eating a lot of dairy, opt for eggs, low fat cottage cheese and low fat yogurt.

**Eat leaner meats**  
Chicken and turkey are your best options here. With more protein than fat content, chicken and turkey are white meats that naturally contain less fat. If you need to add a sauce, try to make sure it's fat free or reduced salt. Use chicken or turkey to help bulk out meals, such as wraps, baguettes, soups and sandwiches. It's far better for you than eating a surplus of red meats.

**Have vegetable pots**  
Whether you're purchasing vegetable pots from supermarkets or making them at home before you head out on the road, vegetable pots are a far healthier option than chocolate bars or processed foods. Peppers, cucumbers and tomatoes can be used as a 'pick me up' snack, as well as giving you a good dose of vitamin C. Hummus is a delicious, healthy dip alternative and goes great with vegetables and salad items.

**Tinned foods are your friends**  
Tinned mackerel, tinned tuna or any type of tinned fish is going to be healthy and also give you that source of omega 3 and proteins. Fish is naturally higher in protein than fat, so stock up on these when you're pitched; whether you make a tuna sandwich, have tuna and sweetcorn in a salad or jacket potato, or otherwise.

### A FESTIVE RECIPE

By CATHERINE MASKREY

**P**igs in Blankets - serves 8 people, can be done with vegetarian substitutes

At this time of year, everyone is looking for a way to make the holiday period special. My recipe does exactly that without breaking the bank.

25 minutes total - 5 minutes prep and serving, 20 minutes cooking  
12 Cumberland sized sausages,  
12 rashers of bacon  
A teaspoon of oil  
Garlic salt  
Smoky Paprika  
Ginger

Add the oil and seasonings, to taste, into a pan heated on the hob to temperature 6. Fry the sausage 4 at a time on each side for 4 minutes. Top up the oil after frying two lots.

Carefully wrap the sausages in the bacon.

Fry them at the same heat for 5 minutes, 4 at a time. Top up the oil after frying two lots.

Allow the pigs in blankets to cool while you begin to clean up. Don't forget to turn off the hob!

Once cooled, cut up into halves/thirds and you're ready to serve.

## Best Festive meal deals

By EMILY READ

To keep with the holiday spirit, this month I decided to go with giving advice on which places appear to have the best festive meal deals. Best get down before they sell out!



**Greggs** is onto an absolute winner this Christmas! With a large festive range, including the iconic festive bake and the all new pigs in blankets tub, this menu is a one you don't want to miss out on. As well as these festive editions, the normal sandwich and hot bites ranges are still available, including the delicious vegan sausage roll and the balanced choice menu for those wanting a lunchtime snack under 400 calories. They have a good selection of sandwiches on offer, which coupled with a drink comes to £3. There really is something for everyone and with a price tag of only 95p per sausage roll, can you really go wrong?

Overall rating: 4.5 stars.



**Costa** have unveiled their highly anticipated Christmas menu and it looks promising. There appears to be a huge range of festive hot drinks available and also many new sweet and savoury treats to try, including a Terry's Chocolate Orange Muffin and a British Turkey and the Trimmings Toastie. There also a few yummy veggie and vegan options including the Festive Veggies under Vests Sandwich and the Vegan Rocky Road, although this range seems to be limited in comparison to some of the other retailers. They have a good selection of tasty toasties and scrummy sandwiches all year round but is not the best option if you're trying to save a few pennies.

Overall rating 3.5 stars.





## LIFESTYLE

Saving Money  
This Christmas

By SCOTT TAYLOR

Christmas is just around the corner, and as much as we all love giving gifts and spreading Christmas joy, our bank accounts loath it. Especially when you get to university, find yourself with quite a few friends, and you feel like you should be buying lovely gifts for all of your new pals. Well, this article will hopefully offer some great tips for getting amazing deals on Christmas presents and shopping on a tight budget.

The first step is to download browser plugins that apply vouchers and codes to all the sites you may be using this year to buy your presents online. There are many services out there, but Honey and Pouch are by far the most popular. When you are doing your online shopping, they will help you instantly apply any vouchers currently on the web that can be applied to your shopping basket. They may not always have vouchers but they are completely free and they will help provide you with some amazing savings.

Another great way to save money on presents is to take advantage of the fact that Black Friday takes place just before Christmas and so you can get some amazing gifts for incredibly low prices. Many shops will do a week long sale for Black Friday online in order to help reduce traffic on Black Friday itself, but still make sure to check stores both online and on the high street on the day itself for some incredible deals and get some great presents for an often huge discount. You should also remember that if you have Amazon Prime then they also have their own set days where they offer huge discounts on items specifically for Prime users and you can get some incredible products for ridiculous prices. They are often only sold in limited quantities at that price so you will have to be quick and check frequently if you use one of the Prime days.

Alternatively, to save money next Christmas, simply buy your presents throughout the year. It may seem excessive to be buying Christmas presents early on in the year but there are sales and offers all year long that you can be taking advantage of. Buy presents and put them to the side. Make sure that you remember you bought them when Christmas comes around!

By using these few tips, you can save a great deal of money on Christmas presents for your friends and family, and still get some incredible gifts for those you love. Have a great holiday, and enjoy saving those hard earned pounds!



## Spending Christmas Without Family

Photo by Scott Ellis: www.vsellis.com (CC BY-SA 2.0)

By AMELIA SMITH

Christmas is a time of year that comes with huge expectations about joy, family and togetherness. It's supposed to be 'the most wonderful time of the year'. We're told that being alone on Christmas is sad and not 'the done thing'. This is a lie. The reality is, lots of people spend Christmas alone or apart from family every year. This can be for all sorts of reasons. If you are spending Christmas alone this year, and you're worried about how it's going to make you feel, there are a bunch of ways you can make it work for you.

First things first: have a plan. You need to know if you're going in to work and you need to make sure you've got all you need as the shops will be closed. Don't wait until Christmas Eve to think about it. You could stay home, or you could try to get out

of the house and do something that'll make you happy or distract you.

Why not get organised? This is a great time to catch up on the admin of life. There will be no distractions or people calling you boring! You'll feel better about yourself when you've done some work, and you'll either be ahead of everyone else, or back in sync when boxing day comes.

Bake or cook yourself some good food. Even if you aren't eating a traditional Christmas meal, eating something special can be uplifting. If you're not up to cooking, you should absolutely go ahead and treat yourself to your favourite takeaway!

Clean up your room and living space! Cleaning is, for some, a therapeutic activity, and again, being productive on a day when everyone else is sat on their butts can give you a much-needed mood boost.

Get some fresh air. It will make you feel better. And/or, if you have one, take a bath. Indulge in some skincare. Light some candles. Wear pyjamas all day. But not the same ones you slept in. Get clean, comfy and cosy!

If you don't want to stay at home, why not go to work (if your work needs people at Christmas). This gives you an outlined activity for the day, and you'll be making money! You'll probably be doing your colleagues a favour too.

Gain a better appreciation for the good things in your life and get involved in volunteering. During the holidays, volunteering is great for connecting with others, boosting your self-esteem, and bringing joy to people. Why not offer to help out at a soup kitchen or visit residents at a nursing home near you?

If you're anxious about telling other

people your plans and don't want to be judged or have to defend your choice, you don't have to tell everyone you're going to be alone. However, you should tell someone. Telling a trusted friend about your whereabouts is just good drills. Choose the most decent person in your life and let them know what's going on, and how they can support you. If you want them to give you some space, just tell them that!

You should never feel like you are lacking support. There are people who would love to hear from you and volunteers trained to counsel you. If you're alone at Christmas and are feeling overwhelmed there are a number of services that you can reach out to. In the UK, the Samaritans can be contacted on **116 123**.

Above all, just be kind and gentle to yourself. Merry Christmas!

## Why You Should Turn Your Devices off at Night



By AMELIA SMITH

A large number of people use their devices all day long, and then electronic media to help relax at night. If you're a nighttime technology-user, this article is here to help you realize the extent to which electrical devices can make it harder to settle down for sleep. Using your phone or laptop, for example, before bedtime can be stimulating, both physiologically and psychologically, in ways that can negatively affect your sleep.

Practice ignoring notifications for 15 minutes. Then 30 minutes, and so on. Don't check your phone every time it goes off. You should tell your family, friends, and colleagues that you might not respond straight away, but you will within a specified amount of time, like 30 minutes.

Try to keep your bedroom free from distractions. Your room should be somewhere that you connect with sleep. If you want to relax in the room you sleep in and have no distractions, it is a good idea to watch TV, check social media and eat in a different room. If you do keep a phone nearby in case of emergency, make sure it only rings

when certain people are calling, and still place it across the room, away from your bedside.

We've all heard of 'blue light' by now. This short-wavelength, artificial light suppresses the production of melatonin - the hormone that regulates the sleep cycle. This, then, can disrupt your sleep. Have a go at putting your devices aside about an hour before you go to sleep - this should reduce their impact on your sleep. Devices include computers, phones, laptops, tablets, etc. The earlier you stop looking at your device in the evening, the better, but do what feels realistic for you.

Using your electronic devices before bed delays your body's internal clock and makes it harder to fall asleep. The more electronic devices you use in the evening, the harder it is to fall asleep or stay asleep. They increase your alertness at a time when you should be getting sleepy, which in turn delays your bedtime, and compromises alertness the next morning. Over time, these effects can add up to a significant, sustained deficiency in sleep.

It's not just blue light that can affect your sleep. Receiving a message that

you're going to be thinking about all night right before bed is clearly distracting, and getting notifications throughout the night could disturb your sleep. It's so important that you switch off to these kinds of alerts before bed. Not much can be done to resolve any conflict when you're tired, and worrying about them is only going to make sleep harder. However, if you do happen to receive a text that could be disruptive, just try and write down your thoughts and feelings, and you can return to it in the morning with a fresh mind.

A good alternative to scrolling through your phone is reading. Read a printed book, magazine or whatever takes your fancy under lamplight (instead of bright overhead lighting). If you would rather use an e-ink e-reader (like the Kindle Paperwhite, NOT the Kindle Fire), that's fine because it doesn't produce the same blue light as a smartphone or tablet.

Try colouring in or do some brain-training games like Sudoku (on paper) to tire your brain before sleep. These activities will also help your general well-being and focus. Why not do some exercise or simply go for a walk

before bed - get some fresh air, do some physical activity to wear your body out a bit so that you appreciate your rest more.

The Mayo Clinic says that if you do choose to use technology during the hour before bedtime, keep it 14 inches from your face and dim the brightness, in order to reduce the blue light and increase the natural melatonin release. Researchers at Harvard Medical School found that people who read from an e-book as opposed to a paper book needed an extra 10 minutes to fall asleep. Melatonin delivery was delayed by 90 minutes, and only half the amount of melatonin was released.

If you wake up in the middle of the night, try singing a single song lyric in your mind over and over. This will help block the anxiety and allow you to fall back to sleep.

Today's devices are amazing. They connect us to people and endless information. However, we need to learn to control them, instead of letting them control us, raise our anxiety and harm our all-important sleep.



## How to Control Your Cravings

By AMELIA SMITH

I'm sure everyone has experienced some sort of craving, especially the uncontrollable desire for food we know we shouldn't have. Sometimes, we just can't stop ourselves! The most common type of food people crave is often processed junk foods that are full of sugar. Cravings can prevent people from maintaining a healthy weight and keeping a clear, happy mind.

Your brain is responsible for your cravings, even though they may seem to originate in your stomach. Early humans consumed the foods we crave now as a means of survival. Things like sweet plants, fatty meat and salty foods were not readily available, and so when they managed to get some, their brain acknowledged the information as a good thing, making them want more. Today, our brains are wired in much the same way. Although we have easy access to foods with lots of sugar and calories, this ancient drive is still present, making us want more of what's not actually that great for our bodies. This article will provide you with some handy tips to try and curb those cravings and keep you feeling good about yourself!

### 1. Drink Water

It is not uncommon that thirst is confused with cravings, and sometimes hunger. When you feel a desire for a specific food, try drinking a glass of water and then wait a few minutes. This allows you to see if the craving goes away, and if so, your body was simply in need of hydration. Drinking lots of water can have many other benefits to your health too. In certain people, drinking water before a meal can even reduce appetite!

### 2. Eat More Protein

Eating protein may help to prevent you from overeating, lessen cravings and help you feel satisfied for a longer period of time. It has also been shown to reduce the urge to snack at night

by 50%!

We know that protein is important for curbing cravings. The Cleveland Clinic says that eating healthy fats is, too. Including healthy fats in every meal can help if you're hoping to break a particular sugar craving. Things like nuts, seeds, fish and avocado are ideal; they are all full of omega-3s.

### 3. Distract Yourself

Distancing yourself from the feeling of a craving is a common technique to avoid giving in. You could take a brisk walk or even a shower to focus your mind on something else. Changes in thought or environment can help to stop your cravings. Alternatively, you can acknowledge the craving, be aware that it's just another thought and then make it disappear by distancing yourself from the thought. It takes time to master this, but it can help. Try looking at mindfulness videos on YouTube.

Chewing gum is a great distraction when you start thinking about a sugar craving. A study in 2011 found chewing gum for at least 45 minutes can significantly suppress cravings. If you decide to try this, pick sugarless gum!

### 4. Exercise Regularly

Make exercise part of your daily routine. A 2016 study found people who exercised often had more self-control than those who didn't. This means they would be better at suppressing their cravings. Plus, the more they exercised, the more their self-control increased!

### 5. Plan Your Meals

By planning your food for the week, you remove the possibility of spontaneity and uncertainty. You'll be less likely to experience cravings when you don't need to think about what to eat at the next meal. Make sure you eat breakfast! Arguably the most important meal of the day, one study showed that making breakfast a pri-

ority decreased cravings throughout the day.

### 6. Avoid Getting Extremely Hungry

Hunger is one of the main reasons we experience cravings. To avoid getting hungry, it's a good idea to eat regularly and have healthy snacks close at hand. This may prevent the craving from appearing at all. Why not try splitting your breakfast and lunch into two portions, so you have something to munch on in between meals.

Whatever you do, don't go to Supermarkets when hungry. They give you access to any food you could think of. Annoyingly, they usually place the unhealthiest foods at eye level. Prevent cravings while you shop by only going when you've recently eaten. Limit the trigger foods you buy. Your body can develop a tolerance to certain foods, much like it does with alcohol or drugs, making you want more. The more you have, the more you'll want. Try buying your unhealthy foods in small amounts, or just once a month.

### 7. Fight Stress

Women under stress have been shown to eat significantly more calories and experience more cravings than non-stressed women. Stress raises the blood levels of the hormone cortisol, which can make you gain weight.

Try to reduce stress in your environment by planning ahead, meditating and slowing down a bit. Stress and junk food are unfortunately a great match. Get those sugary foods off your mind by calming your nerves with mindfulness.

### 8. Get Enough Sleep

The hormones in your body can majorly affect your appetite. Lack of sleep disrupts your hormone fluctuations, and may lead to strong cravings and poor appetite regulation. When you're sleep deprived, the levels of leptin (a blood protein that helps

suppress appetite) decrease, and the levels of ghrelin (a hormone that stimulates hunger) increase, leaving you famished. Sleep-deprived people are up to 55% more likely to become obese, compared to people who get enough sleep. This is shocking! It's so important that you sleep well, for all aspects of your physical and mental health.

Getting a good night's sleep is easier said than done - but it's worth investing some time and skipping the Netflix binge to get your sleep schedule right. Catching a good amount of zzzs will help you have more self-control to avoid giving in to a snack attack.

### 9. Eat Proper Meals, Slowly

Certain cravings can be caused by both hunger and a lack of key nutrients. By eating proper meals at regular mealtimes, your body will get the nutrients it needs and you will be satisfied for longer. If you do find yourself in need of a snack between meals, make sure it's something healthy, such as fruit, nuts or seeds.

It can take up to 20 minutes for your stomach to send the message to your brain that it's full. If you slow down and enjoy your meal, reaching for a snack after dinner may seem less appealing. When you eat, be present. Avoid sitting on your phone or watching TV as these take you away from the moment, and stop you realising how much you've eaten.

There's nothing wrong with the occasional treat - you have to #TreatYoSelf every so often, after all! But you can't let these treats become a common occurrence; they stop becoming a treat and instead they can be a dangerous gateway leading to weight gain, food addiction and binge eating. Be aware of your cravings and your triggers; it will make it much easier to control them. Try to follow some of these tips and take control next time you feel a craving coming on!

## 9 Tips for Work Experience

By AMELIA SMITH

Don't overlook the opportunities that lie within your clubs and societies! Volunteering or having a part-time job are both very likely to help you get a job, but other extra-curricular activities can make you seem more attractive to employers. Check out these tips to get the most out of your work experience!

### 1. Make a good first impression

This is a piece of advice we hear all the time, and there's a reason why! If you show you are friendly, reliable and competent from the start, it's more likely that opportunities will be offered to you.

### 2. Be organised

Always listen to any instructions properly and keep track of important information like dates and deadlines. Make a timetable and stick to it.

### 3. Socialise

Introduce yourself to the people you'll be working with. Approach everyone with a smile and don't be afraid to ask people about their roles. Finding out how they got to where they are could really help you in the future.

### 4. Ask questions

Be resourceful - before you ask a question, see if you can figure out an answer for yourself, do some research, or simply ask Google. But remember, there's nothing wrong with asking a question if you're not sure. Having the confidence to ask will be respected by your colleagues, too.

### 5. Get involved

An obvious one. The more you get stuck in, the more experience you'll gain! You will be noticed as someone who goes the extra mile, which is always great for references and future positions. It's greatly appreciated when you offer to help, and it's a good way to make connections.

### 6. Make suggestions

Ideas and input are always appreciated. Whether it is taken up or not, your contribution will be noticed by employers and demonstrate that you care about the wider impact of your role, and show off your ability to think outside the box. If you think you have a positive, useful comment to add, speak up.

### 7. Make notes

Keep a journal of any tasks you've worked on and the skills you've picked up. It's also helpful to write down any problems you encountered and how you overcame them. Having a record of your experience is great for reflecting & future job applications!

### 8. Ask for feedback

This will give you the chance to improve in your role as you go. See if you can get some informal feedback from colleagues and your manager throughout your experience.

### 9. Reflect

This is an important part people forget about when gaining work experience. It enables you to complete your learning and consolidate your development.

Whatever your work experience is, make the most out of it and have fun! You are sure to make some valuable connections, strong friendships and great memories. Good luck!

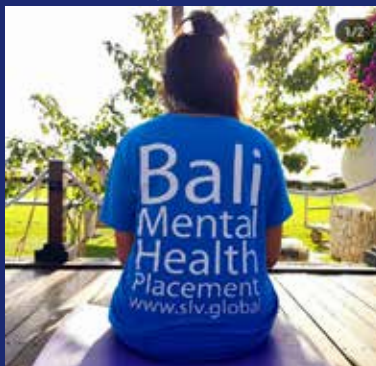
## SLV Global

By RADHA MONGIA

SLV Global is a company that runs placements abroad that help individuals studying in any area around mental health, in addition to those who are interested in volunteering on mental health placements. The aim is to help people in less developed areas where the mental health services are less available and where community projects as simple as teaching English or art and music therapy sessions will help individuals.

There are three main areas at the moment that SLV Global recruits volunteers for. These include Bali, Sri Lanka and India. Anyone interested in volunteering can sign up and get more information. The placements and their locations are more than just volunteering, it's the experience you gain as an individual. On an SLV Global placement you have the opportu-

nity to discover new cultures and explore the area you're volunteering in.



I went on one of these placements to Bali, where I volunteered for a month, helping a range of people from children in orphanages to other specialized areas. The experience helped me gain a better understanding of mental health in another country, as well as

enriching my understanding of a different culture. During my placement I was also able to explore Bali, a place I never thought I'd travel to until I signed up to this placement. I explored temples and beaches, and made the most amazing friends. Not only with the other people volunteering with me, but with the fantastic coordinators and people I met along the way.

SLV Global's placement helped me become a conscious person and helped me to understand how I can better help others. It also raised my confidence as an individual, providing me with a fantastic experience. Being able to put my placement on my CV furthered my career and since then I have had fantastic opportunities come my way.

SLV Global has given me amazing memories, lifelong friends, a massive

confidence boost and taught me so much about helping and being a better psychologist.



If you're interested in any of their placements, please contact me by email seu831@bangor.ac.uk. I am the ambassador here at Bangor University and it's a cause I am passionate about.



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# FASHION



## December Fashion Events worth attending

By JUSTYNA UCHE-EZE

The world of fashion never sleeps – or hibernates. Here are the most exciting Fashion Events taking place in the UK in December:

### Manchester Vintage Fashion and Textiles Fair

On December 1st, the Manchester Vintage Fashion and Textiles Fair marked an exciting start to a great month for all fashion lovers. The event took place at George Carnell Leisure Centre and showcased Vintage and Designer clothing from as long ago as the 1860's to the 1980's along with antique and traditional textiles, buttons, jewellery and accessories. Items in these categories and more were available in a large variety, providing an opportunity and access to buy that perfect stand out, one of a kind piece of clothing. This event has been present over the past 26 years and attracts trade buyers and collectors from all over the UK as well as Europe. Each year, lots of fashion designers, stylists, film costumers, period enthusiasts, students, the fashion press and well-dressed men and women of all

ages attend, making it evident how perfect the Manchester Vintage and Textiles Fair is in gaining inspiration and spicing up everyday outfits with that vintage aesthetic.

### Winter Fashion and Beauty Festival

This event also took place on the 1st of December in Liverpool, and over 25 of Liverpool's most successful brands attended this Festival's first outing. Liverpool decided to bring together its independent designers and top brands to create an amazing event to show off its

unique styles. Brands such as Lovelivethelable, TYED, Secret Garden, Giarosa, Angel Designs, Practical Magic and many more came together to mark the first ever Liverpool Fashion Festival. Items such as handmade party dresses, puff parka coats, bobble hats, hair accessories, jewellery, crystal-infused candles, skin care products and more wowed industry insiders and normal attendees alike. Along all the fashion and beauty, street foods and drinks were also available. To add a little bit extra, entry was free, along with music by a DJ, making the first Liverpool Fashion and Beauty Festival as perfect as possible.

### Fashion Awards 2019

One of the most important fashion events that the UK has to offer each year are the Fashion Awards 2019. The Event was hosted by the British Fashion Council at the Grand Royal Albert Hall on December 2nd. It is a day to celebrate and recognise creativity and innovation in fashion, as well as all the

individuals, brands, and businesses whose imagination have opened new branches in fashion globally over the nearly finished year. A voting process is used to decide the final shortlist of five nominees; over 2000 members from across the global fashion community collectively agree and vote through a two-stage system. Each year, guests include key fashion influencers, industry & business leaders, creatives, designers, media, retailers and celebrities. Categories such as; Urban Luxe, Fashion Icon, as well as Brand, Designer, and Model of The Year, and many more were presented during the event.

### Cheshire Fashion Week

An upcoming event that is definitely worth checking out is the Cheshire Fashion Week (CFW19), though it is technically more of a weekend, taking part from 14th to 15th December. Cheshire Fashion Week is a clothing trade show, held semi-annually in Cheshire areas, which was established in 2018 by a team of Chester fashion promoters, curators, and event producers, led by Hair Heals CEO Claire Namukolo, and powered by Cheshire Fashion Council. The weekend is expected to be a vibrant event of runways, live talks, lifestyle pop-up exhibition stalls and celebrations. On the 14th, Hannah Shaw, one of Cheshire's top stylists will be opening the CFW19 at a Gala Night at Doubletree by Hilton Hotel. The second day is expected to be the most thrilling, the designer line-up consists of four main categories; Children's Wear, Uni-

sex Non-Binary, Sustainable Luxury and Women's Wear. Popup exhibition stalls and brands will also be present on the 15th, including brands such as Arbonne UK, Ohsolea Boutique, Insu Beauty, Lola Star, Santinni and more. This event is a great way to see current trends, especially from the North West of the UK and it offers an array of designer fashion showcases, exhibitors displaying and selling their products and services plus an opportunity to get inspired and to buy new, trendy and high fashion items.

### G&G Luxury Christmas Fashion Event

As it is December, at least one Christmas event has to be included on this list. Gita and Guechi are hosting an exclusive and luxurious shopping experience, allowing you to shop till late with live music, professional photography, and drinks. The event is taking place on the 14th of December in a ballroom (& a bar-room) at the Bentley Hotel. The G&G Luxury Christmas Fashion Event & Networking Party is a perfect opportunity to socialise while being able to meet various fashion and beauty designers and explore a range of fashion, jewellery and beauty brands, as well as meet influencers and bloggers. The best thing about this event is the fact that even though it sounds very extravagant and top class, tickets to attend are free! This makes it a perfect opportunity to explore fashion while taking part in the luxurious life of Kensington London, even if just for one evening.



## A Look to the Past: Santa's Outfit

By TESSA AST

Santa Claus is quite the striking figure if you think about it, with his signature red coat, white fur trimming and wide, black buckle belt. Surely this is what we all picture when we think about Santa, but his look has actually gone through some changes throughout the years.

Since Santa Claus is based on St. Nicholas, it's worth taking a look at his garments first. Since St. Nicholas was a bishop, paintings from the 19th Century depict him wearing clerical garb with religious imagery, with either the classic bishop's headdress or a halo on his head. While this is certainly also a striking look, the contemporary meaning of Christmas has undoubtedly distanced itself somewhat from being strictly Christian by adopting traditions and imagery from various cultures. Therefore, it only makes sense that Father Christmas himself has become less clerical in his look over the years.

Early drawings of Santa Claus do often look quite similar to his modern look, with one exception; the colour was not settled on yet. There are drawings of him with his coat, fur trimmings and buckle belt but the depicted him wearing a tan coat, or a blue one. Contrary to popular belief though, it was not the Coca-Cola Company who first designed Santa's red outfit, but Thomas Nast. In his early drawings of Santa, he is wearing the modern red look, but he is depicted as being quite slender in order to fit through chimneys; Nast did, however, later also draw Santa in his full size. Haddon Sundblom's version of Santa for the Coca-Cola Company and all its subsequent advertisement have however cemented this red, full-figured Santa and is surely the reason Santa Claus is now standardized the way we know him.



# DIY: How to make your own festive headbands



By **TESSA AST**

The year is drawing to a close and we all know what that means: Christmas parties! Lots and lots of Christmas parties and dinners. With everyone dressing up to look their best, it's not an easy feat to stand out and wow and woo your way through the evening. Be the belle of the ball at every Ugly Sweater Party and fancy Winter Dance with these extravagant headwear-pieces!

### The Basics

For this DIY, you will need a hot glue gun, headbands, some yarn, tape, ribbons, wrapping paper and, depending on the style you pick, lots of Christmas themed decoration (easily found in Charity Shops, Craft Stores or

Discount Stores). Start each piece by either wrapping the headband in ribbon (fixed every couple centimetres with a drop of hot glue), decorating it with wintery washi tape or painting it.

### All I want for Christmas...

Starting with the easiest one, this headband only takes a couple minutes to put together but still adds a cute and whimsical touch to any festive outfit. Simply take a huge pre-made bow and press it onto the side of the headband. Next, fix the bow in place with a bit of ribbon of the same colour by pulling it through the bow.



It's me.

For added stability, add a drop of hot glue to the underside where the bow, the ribbon and the headband meet.

### Foraging for Fashionistas

This one is where it becomes very obvious why a hot glue gun is such a wise investment. For this headband, you need some decoration that looks like branches and leaves, preferably

with some red plastic berries on them. Wrap the branches around the headband and use ribbons to keep them in place before fixing them with lots of hot glue. Then, gradually add more decoration, especially red baubles to match the berries, and ribbon.



Joe

For this one, it is important that you try on the headband after each added accessory to make sure you are still happy with the composition and size of your new forest crown. This will look gorgeous with natural hair colours and styling, especially brown and red hair, and paired with a green jumper or dress.

### What's better than one bow on your head?

That's right, it's TWO bows on your head of course. Use a very wide ribbon band for this and cut two pieces that are each about two hands in length. Then use tape or a glue gun to glue each of the ribbons into a little

loop. Next, take some normal ribbon or tape and tie a knot into the middle of each loop, creating neat bows. Use some more thin ribbon to tie tiny baubles into the middle of those as well. Lastly, simply use the thin ribbon and some hot glue to fix the bauble-bows onto each side of the headband.



Emma

### Jingle Bells

This one admittedly should not be worn for an entire evening, for everyone's benefit as this headband can get pretty loud and annoying (but hey, maybe that's exactly what your party needs). Simply attach big jingle bells onto the headband with some ribbons and make sure they are in a nice, straight row. Then fix the underside of the ribbon and the bells onto the headband with the hot glue and you're ready to disrupt the holidays in fashion!



El

You're the present! For this super cute headband, wrap an empty square or rectangle carton in wrapping paper, tie a nice ribbon around it and tie it to one side of the headband. Fix with hot glue, and done! Christmas Gifts sorted!



Hyemin



## Three Tips for Holiday Makeup



By **TESSA AST**

The holidays are getting closer each day and, surely, many of us are looking forward to dressing up nicely for Christmas dinners and parties with our family and friends. Here are some essential tips for making sure that our Makeup and hair stays looking great throughout the evening.

### Ready! Set! Glow!

To make sure that your outside glows with as much Christmas cheer as your insides do, try using the same shimmer pigment for both your eyeshadow and your highlighting, for a simple, coherent look.

### Glam for the Fam

Turn any everyday look full-glam in minutes by adding a ready-to-use glitter crème eyeshadow. While only taking a short amount of time, this looks gives the illusion of real make-up mastery.

### Lips that last

If you're wearing lipstick (and who can resist a red lip during the holidays?) make sure not to go for a high-moisture one. Stick to either a durable liquid lipstick or a crème lipstick with a more waxy, long-lasting finish (think MACs signature lipsticks). This will make sure that your lipstick survives as much of the dinner as possible!



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Social Editor - Caroline Cartmill  
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# SOCIAL

## A note from me...



**H**o ho ho,  
Welcome to this month's social section - which I am currently writing 35,000 feet in the air! I am flying home from Abu Dhabi, back in time for December and the festive period. I'm super excited to wear all my favourite coats and pom-pom hats and get in the festive spirit once I'm home, as Christmas to me really is the most wonderful time of the year.

I love Christmas because it's the one day of the year where it's socially acceptable to drink and eat all day. My standard Christmas day routine is to have Prosecco and smoked salmon for breakfast, get dressed at lunch time in full glam (lashes, hair, the lot!), stuff my face with celebrations, Christmas dinner, and then proceed to party in the living room for the rest of the night.

If (like me!) you are going to be single this Christmas - do not panic! Spend your time wisely by going out with the girls and looking glam, because who knows - maybe you will find your match whilst you're out enjoying yourself? In my experience, December is the perfect month to meet someone new. Love really is in the air just before Christmas and it's quite easy to secure a few dates. I am particularly excited for this Christmas, as a psychic medium told me I will meet a new man over the festive period, with dark hair and dark eyes, who will sweep me off my feet, so who knows, maybe I will be meeting Mr Right in the next few weeks?

I'll be making an effort this December to give back to others, as Christmas is about giving after all. I'll be dropping off some supplies at my local food bank, and I'll be doing a couple of extra volunteering shifts at Childline, as the queues of young people trying to call is always longer during the winter months.

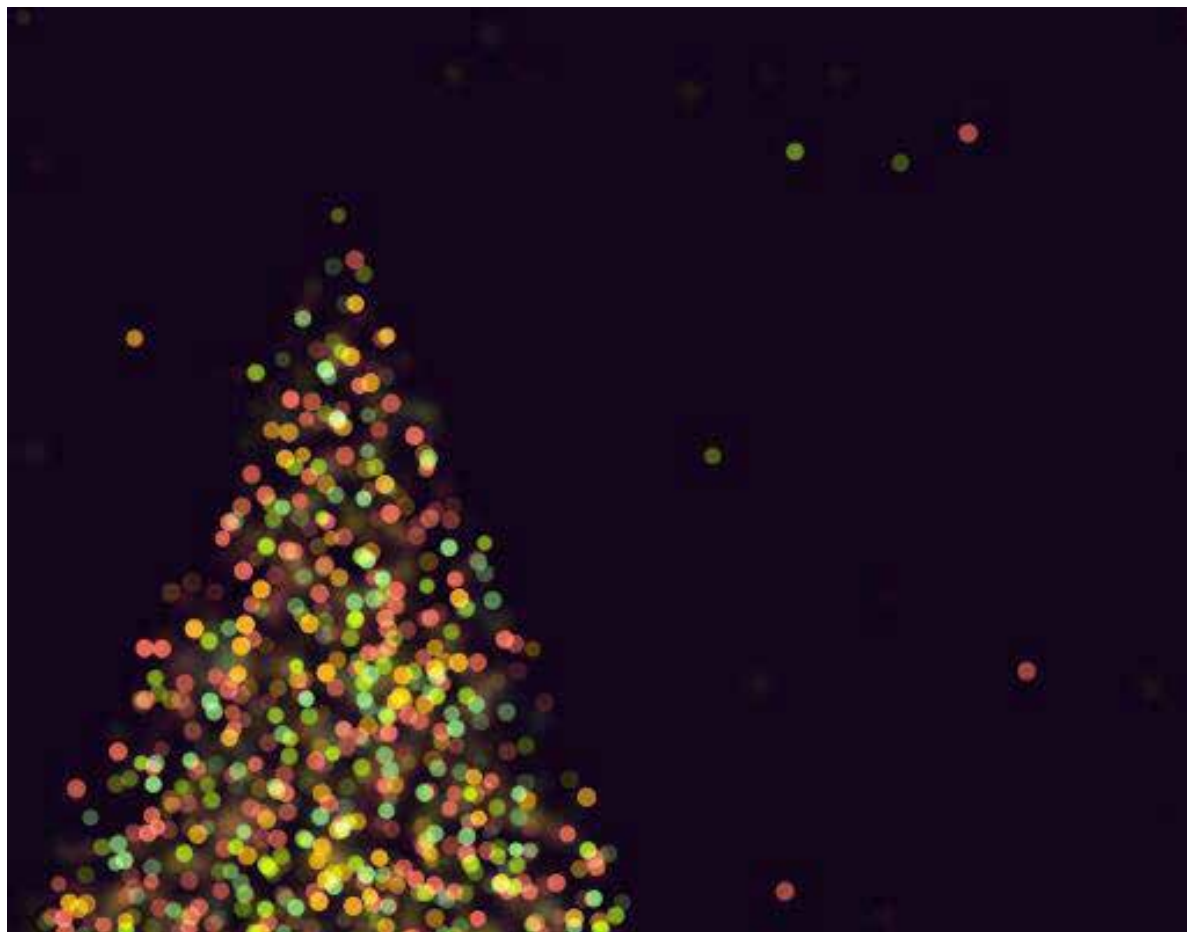
Despite my love of Christmas, I am mindful that the Christmas period can be very difficult for those who struggle with their mental health. For those of you that may be feeling worried about your own or somebody else's mental health at this time of year, then I want you to know that you are not alone in feeling this way, and talking about it can be really helpful. Whatever you're going through, you can call the Samaritans for free at any time on 116123.

Merry Christmas Everybody! Nadolig Llawen Pawb!

Love from,

*Caroline xoxo*

## Staying Safe



## On Your Christmas Nights Out

By **CAROLINE CARTMILL AND CARYS L'ESTRANGE**

**O**ver the festive period, you are likely to find yourself on several nights out. With more alcohol consumed at this time of year, as well as added factors like the cold weather and snow, nights out can have more risks to our safety. We have written these tips for all your festive nights out so you can keep yourself and others safe. Enjoy!

Wear a coat out and put it in the cloakroom - The cost of using the cloakroom is as cheap as a drink and will stop you freezing on your way home.

Go out with enough battery on your phone to last the night - you'll need it for selfies and keeping in contact with your friends in case you get separated.

Save all your friends' phone numbers - if you're used to only chatting on snapchat or facebook messenger then you might not always have people's actual numbers saved, but if one of you runs out of data on the night you won't be able to contact them.

Drink in moderation, and stick to the same kind of drink during the night if you can. Starting on wine and changing to spirits and shots later can make you feel and be very sick.

Stay hydrated and drink plenty of water during the day before going out, and also in between alcoholic

drinks on the night out.

If someone's offered to buy you a drink, make sure you can see the bartender pouring it - and don't accept the drink if you don't trust the person buying it.

BYOB (Bring Your Own Bag) - so many girls go out sharing clutch bags so they don't all have to carry one, but it's a very easy way to lose track of where all your stuff is and end up out without your money, keys and phone. If you bring your own clutch bag then you've got your essentials on you at all times.

Put some fold up flats or flip flops in your bag if you're out in heels. They're a lifesaver when you need to march up Bitch Hill at the end of the night for your kebab.

Keep a hair bobble in your bag too - any drunk girl vomiting in the toilets will greatly appreciate it.

DRUNK FOOD - don't skip the takeaway at the end of the night, it will make your hangover feel so much worse if you don't eat. Make sure to eat before going out too to line your stomach.

Put an emergency fiver in your phone case - if you've still got it at the end of the night then you can spend it on food!

Pick a meeting point in the club in case you get separated from your friends, and actually wait there if you're lost! We usually have the ball pit as our meeting point, but don't ac-

tually go in it if you want your friends to see you!

Make plans of how you'll be getting home before you even go out. Fortunately, Bangor is quite a small place and the clubs are walkable from all accommodation, but if it's bad weather or you're alone, then a taxi might be a better option.

If you've ordered a taxi, check you're actually getting in the taxi you ordered and not a random one.

Don't accept a lift home from anyone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

If you're walking home, avoid alleyways and shortcuts on dim streets. Especially if you end up being alone, stick to main roads that are well lit.

If you've got an 'overnight guest' coming back with you, check you're both on the same page about what you want to happen before leaving together. Make sure neither of you are too drunk to consent, use protection, and also check there is no fire drill due in your building to avoid the awkwardness in the middle of the night!

Prep your room - there's nothing worse than coming back steaming drunk to a room with clothes all over the floor and random shoes that are like trip hazards in front of the door. Before going out, try to tidy up a bit, make your bed cozy and have a pint of water ready to drink before you go to sleep.

## 'Tis the Season to Have Protected Sex

by **CAROLINE CARTMILL**

**I**t's a well known fact that people have more sex at Christmas time compared to the rest of the year. There are various theories as to why this is, such as people feeling more turned on by the colour red, coworkers sleeping together after the office party, and people feeling more happy, relaxed and broody due to Christmas.

An STI is probably the most unwanted Christmas present there is, so here are a few things to remember if you're planning to have sex over Christmas ...

Your local STI clinic will have different opening hours over Christmas, and emergency contraception might be less available as many pharmacies will shut on certain days.

If you are having sex after a night of drinking alcohol or taking drugs, make sure you have sexual consent from your partner, and that they have sexual consent from you. Being too drunk or too high on drugs affects your ability to consent to sexual activities. Keep checking during sex that your partner is still consenting and enjoying it, and if you are unsure of whether they are, stop and wait for them to sober up.

If you have only decided you fancy your coworker after several drinks at the work's night out, then it's probably your beer goggles talking! A UK study found that nearly 20% of Brits have had a sexual encounter with a colleague at the work's due, so if you choose to sleep with your coworker, consider the impact it could have on your professional relationship beforehand.

Use a condom to avoid unwanted pregnancy and STIs. Girls may also want to consider other methods of contraception to avoid pregnancy, like the pill or the implant - the 11th December is nicknamed 'Conception Day' as it's the most popular day of the year to get pregnant.

If you're having sex when drunk, you're more likely to forget to use a condom or put it on wrong. If you aren't sure if your partner is putting the condom on properly, then do it for them. Girls may also want to consider using a female condom, which can be inserted a couple of hours before you have sex.

The novelty Christmas condoms you see online or in shops may look cool with their festive patterns, but be wary of 'useless' condoms. Kelly Harris, a spokesperson from Brook Cymru explained that sometimes novelty condoms are cheap because they have not been tested properly, and therefore are not guaranteed to protect you from STIs and pregnancy. You need to check the condom for information like the sell-by date and the European kite mark to check it is tested.



# Christmas on Campus

by CAROLINE CARTMILL

Christmas is typically a time of year that we spend with family and friends, relaxing, unwinding and eating lots of food. And for most of us, it will be spent at home with our families. However, for some students, it isn't possible to travel home for Christmas, and if you're one of these students - try not to panic! I spoke to Rosnah Shik, 3rd year English Literature and Creative Writing student from Malaysia about her experiences in Bangor last Christmas.

**What made you decide to stay in Bangor for Christmas last year?** I stayed mainly due to financial reasons as it would be very expensive to fly home for every university holiday, and usually my family fly over to visit me.

**How does life in halls at Christmas compare to halls during term time?** Halls were very quiet, and with me being the only person left in my flat, at times it could be a bit lonely. I tried to walk into town often and get out and about as much as I could.

**What types of things did you get up to over the break?** I used the free time to work on my assignments and revise for my exams. I also spent a lot of time with friends who didn't go home either, especially the other Malaysian students who I celebrated Christmas Day with.

**What did you do to overcome loneliness?** My family came to visit me for a bit, so when they were around things didn't feel so lonely. When they left, I kept myself busy working on my assignments, but also taking regular breaks to talk to my friends that were in Bangor, and also calling my friends and family who were in Malaysia. I also have a friend who lives locally in Bangor so I would visit her and her family quite often.

**What advice do you have for students who will be in Bangor over the Christmas holidays?** Keep yourself busy - maybe try to get together with some other friends and take a mini trip somewhere? Also, enquire about what's going on at the International Centre because they often have activities and events for international students who aren't going home. Campus Life has events on until mid-December too. Also, I would say take the opportunity to revise and finish

work early, and just enjoy the peace and quiet and time to relax!

Here are some ideas of things you can do over the Christmas holidays that will help you feel productive, healthy and happy:

**Set yourself goals** - write down a list of things you want to achieve over the holiday like completing certain pieces of work, or going to the gym so many times each week. Make your goals achievable but also slightly challenging - this will help you stay motivated and give you a purpose for each day.

**Stick to a routine** - try to sleep, eat and study at similar times each day so you don't lose track of your sleeping schedule and end up slothing for a few weeks. Sleep is important for both your physical and mental health, so try to get a good amount of it each night!

**Meet up with friends** - before the holiday begins, establish who will be here and make some plans to see them. You could also try arrange to visit your friends in their hometowns, giving you the opportunity to see other parts of the UK, as well as not feeling stuck in Bangor for the whole holiday. If you don't know many people here, then this might be the perfect time to meet some new people. Through mutual friends you could find out about other people who will be here, get in touch with them and maybe meet for a coffee in town?

**Stay in contact** - call, text or FaceTime your friends and family from home often. They will be missing you too and will also want to make sure you are happy and safe.

**Stay warm** - keep your heating on and stay wrapped up. You don't want to end up spending the whole holiday ill in bed! I also suggest you get a flu vaccination too!

**Keep your cupboards full** - you never know when the weather could turn, and you don't want to be venturing out in heavy snow and having to carry heavy shopping bags back as you've got nothing to eat! Treat yourself to your favourite foods on Christmas day, or get together with some friends and cook a roast dinner.

**Smash your uni work** - get ahead of your assignments and do some revision. Revising little and often over

the weeks off is much more effective than cramming everything in the last few days. This time off is the perfect chance to get ahead with work, so make the most of it.

**Be active** - maybe aim to walk at least 10,000 steps a day, or make the most of your gym membership and attend some exercise classes. As well as improve your body and health, exercise increases your levels of happiness. Taking part in exercise classes is also a good way to meet new people and make friends.

**Do some local site seeing** - the time off is the perfect opportunity to explore the local area, even if you're doing it alone. North Wales is beautiful (especially in the snow!) and you can discover different buses and train routes to see places.

**Get a job** - lots of local shops and restaurants will be looking for Christmas staff, especially as many of their student's workers will be at home. Enquire with local businesses whether there is any work available. Some of my best Christmases and New Years have been spent working behind a bar or waitressing, as people are really friendly and happy at Christmas, and the tips are fab.

**Volunteer your time** - See if there are any local volunteering projects, like befriending the elderly or serving Christmas lunch to the homeless. Helping others will make you feel more fulfilled.



Feeling festive AF

# 12 Things to Do That Will Make You Feel Festive AF ...

by CAROLINE CARTMILL

- 1) Get a mini Christmas tree for your bedroom. I got mine from B&Q for only £6 - and it's pink!
- 2) Send Christmas cards - even people you aren't especially close with like colleagues and course mates will all appreciate the gesture of a handwritten Christmas card. You can also buy cards in most supermarkets who donate the profits made to charity.
- 3) Drink a Costa Irish Velvet latte - it's the perfect Christmas drink! Treat yourself to a Terry's Chocolate orange muffin too. When the Costa festive menu comes out, I always feel in a more Christmassy mood!
- 4) Light your Christmas candles (unless you're living in halls!) - my personal favourites are Pine and Eucalyptus by Jo Malone (£48), and Orange and Cinnamon by Oliver Bonas (£17.50).
- 5) Turn up to your Christmas socials in a sparkly Christmas jumper or a festive costume. I will be attending the Powerlifting Christmas dinner in my sexy santa dress with lots of glitter!
- 6) Dance around your room to your favourite Christmas tunes - aka All I Want for Christmas Is You - Mariah Carey



Manchester Christmas Market

- 7) Buy yourself an advent calendar - they're only a couple of pounds and a total childhood throwback.
- 8) Make mince pies - and give them out to your course mates to spread the love for Christmas!
- 9) Get the flat together for a Christmas dinner - if everyone does a bit each it's easy to do and a great way to bring everyone together.



- 10) Watch a Festive Favourite on Netflix - you're bound to find a film you love on there! Vanessa Hudgens is back again this year with another cheesy Christmas film, The Knight Before Christmas, and it's almost as good as The Princess Switch! Netflix also has the films you've undoubtedly seen a million times but will never fail to please like The Grinch, The Polar Express and Elf.
- 11) Visit a Christmas market - if you have a full day available to venture out to the Manchester or Liverpool Christmas markets, then I would totally recommend it. However, if you're on a bit more of a budget this year then there are some really good local ones nearby - such as the Portmeirion Food and Craft Festival on the 6th-8th December, or Bangor University's very own Christmas market at PJ Hall on the 4th December.
- 12) Make a Christmas wreath for your door - or if you're lazy like me, buy one and just put it up! Penrhyn Castle has wreath making workshops on various days in December, only costing the usual entrance charges + £6 for a wreath you can take home - bargain!

# Salon Review: Beau Bridges

By VICKY WILKES

Where: Beau Bridges, Menai Bridge

Treatment: Cut and blow dry  
And just like that, winter's here. Drab, dull and depressing - but your hair doesn't have to be! There's something special about getting your hair done, you always feel a little more put together and that's the perfect antidote to the winter months.

Moving and settling into uni can be a stressful time. You need to settle into a new routine and find your feet in a new area and this involves everything from finding a new local to where to get your haircut! If, like me, you're used to getting your hair cut at

the same place you have done for the past however many years at home, it can be hard to find a new place to go! I found myself putting off a haircut until I went home for Christmas or Easter. I'd tried a couple of salons in Bangor, but after reading a few online reviews of hair salons in the area, I stumbled across Beau Bridges in Menai Bridge. The staff were really helpful when I made an appointment over the phone, and when I had my hair cut for the first time there, I knew I'd found a salon and a stylist I could trust with my hair!

My stylist (Danielle) always takes the time to know what I want in order to avoid the dreaded "I love it!" in the chair and then crying in front of the mirror at home. I have shoulder length hair and I use heat on it

at least once a day - so being able to chat with my stylist about how to care for my hair (even receiving recommendations for which shampoo and conditioner would be best for my hair type) is great!

Undoubtedly, being a student means that money is tight. But if you are looking to treat yourself, try and book an appointment between Tuesday and Thursday 9am-4pm and receive 20% off! So, whether it's getting ready for a Christmas party, meal, or even getting all dressed up to sit in your living room all day to eat Quality Streets and watch the new Gavin and Stacey special, make sure you feel that extra bit more glam with a fresh new trim.





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CYMDEITHASAU  
SOCIETIES  
GUILD

**UNDEB**  
BANGOR



UNDEB  
MYFYRWYR  
STUDENTS'  
UNION

**UNDEB**  
BANGOR

# STORM FM 87.7

**10** MLYNEDD . YEARS

**LLUN | MON**  
19.00-20.00  
**Recovery Hour**  
*Kira Carmichael*

**LLUN | MON**  
20.00-21.00  
**This Week in History**  
*Finlay Tyson*

**LLUN | MON**  
21.00-22.00  
**Jumbled Audio**  
*Quentin Lucas*

**MAW | TUE**  
21.00 - 22.00  
**Pretentious Music**  
*Tom Bennet*

**MAW | TUE**  
22.00 - 23.00  
**Breeze FM**  
*Jake Waller*

**MER | WED**  
13.00 - 15.00  
**Bangor Arts Show**  
*Chris Johnson*

**MER | WED**  
16.00 - 17.00  
**The Black Hole**  
*Laura Bafaletse*

**MER | WED**  
17.00 - 18.00  
**Confusing Life Show**  
*Dylan Hundleby*

**MER | WED**  
18.00 - 20.00  
**Little Talks**  
*Liam Quentin & Charlie Mannion*

**MER | WED**  
20.00 - 22.00  
**Rhys & Stephen**  
*Rhys & Stephen*

**MER | WED**  
22.00 - 00.00  
**Past your Bedtime**  
*Scott Taylor*

**IAU | THUR**  
17.00 - 21.00  
**Radio UMCB**  
*UMCB*

**IAU | THUR**  
21.00 - 22.00  
**Sonnee Night**  
*Charlie Mannion*

**GWE | FRI**  
00.00 - 01.00  
**The Owl's Nest**  
*Jake Kilov*

**GWE | FRI**  
16.00 - 17.00  
**Undeb Bangor Hour**  
*Muhammad Firdaus*

**GWE | FRI**  
19.00 - 20.00  
**The Ambient Music**  
**BF Wish Line**

**GWE | FRI**  
20.00 - 21.00  
**Seren on Storm**  
*Seren*

**GWE | FRI**  
21.00 - 22.00  
**Our Hands Don't Work**

**GWE | FRI**  
22.00 - 23.00  
**DJ Society**

**SAD | SAT**  
11.00 - 13.00  
**Jake & Barnaby**  
*Jake Kilov & Barnaby Omar*

**SAD | SAT**  
21.00 - 22.00  
**Pretentious Music**  
*Tom Bennet*

**SAD | SAT**  
22.00 - 23.00  
**Emily Harris**  
*Emily Harris*

**SUL | SUN**  
13.00 - 14.00  
**The Church Show**  
*Joe Barnes*

**SUL | SUN**  
14.00 - 15.00  
**The Z files**  
*Zach Wait*

**SUL | SUN**  
16.00 - 17.00  
**Eurowave**  
*Menna Jones*

**SUL | SUN**  
20.00 - 22.00  
**Tunes and Chats**  
*Alysha Khan*

**SUL | SUN**  
22.00 - 23.00  
**Kira Carmichael's**  
**Fancy Dress Party**  
*Kira Carmichael*



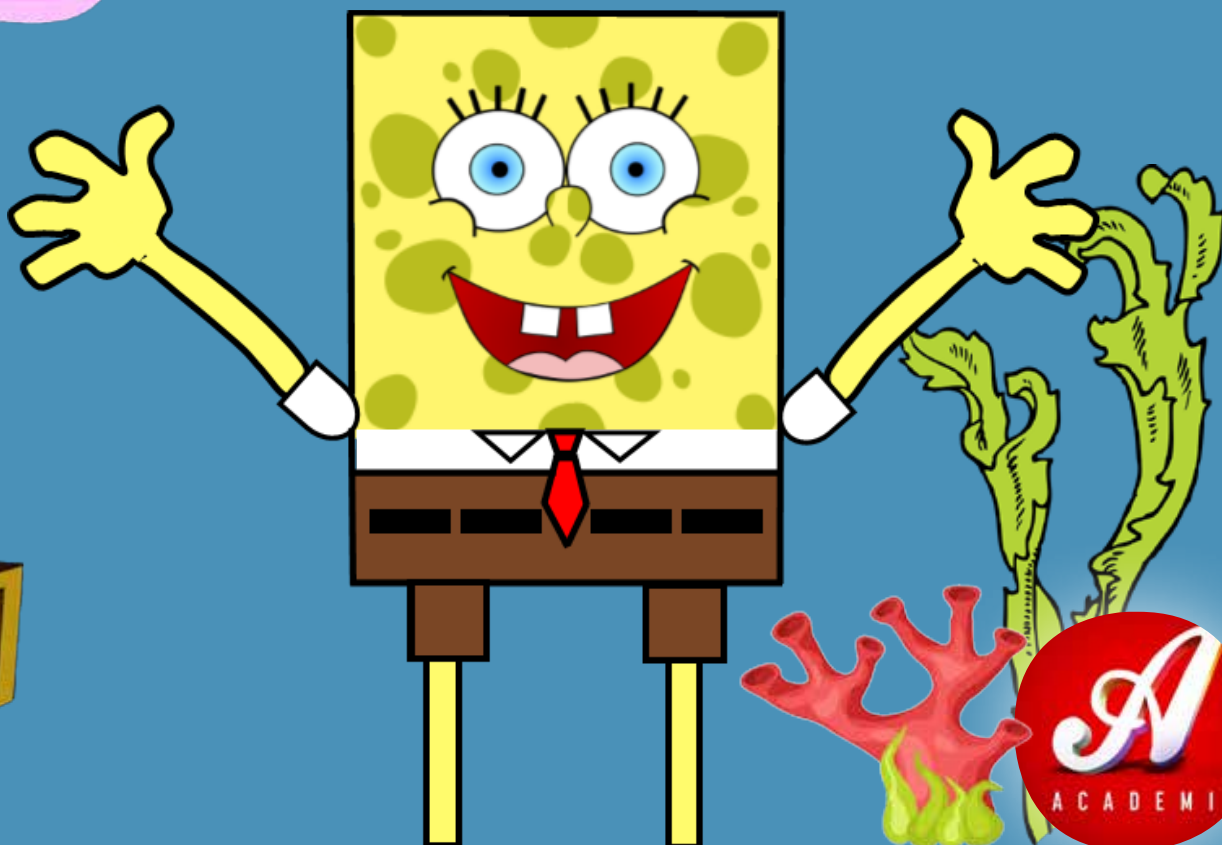
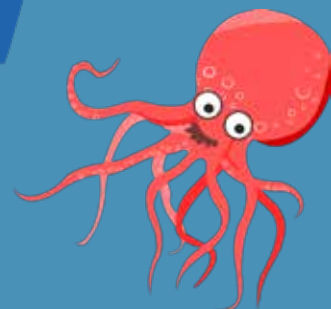
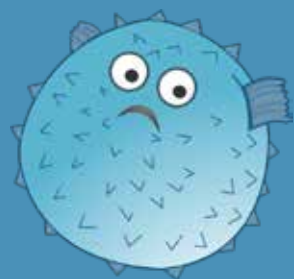
SEREN  
PRESENTS

# SPONGEBOB

## SQUAREPANTS

MARCH 12TH 2020

*Academi*





# Beth welwch chi nesaf? What will you see next?

WWW.PONTIO.CO.UK

## COMEDY CLUB COMEDIC

THURSDAY 12 DECEMBER NOS IAU 12 RHAGFYR

**MARK SIMMONS**

"Master of one liners"

"Absolutely hilarious"

"A talented comic with an artless & grasp of joke-writing"

"Kings of the highest order"

**ROB KEMP**

"Twisted genius"

"Very funny"

"He is a delight to witness on stage"

**RACHEL FAIRBURN**

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# ARTS & CULTURE

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## How Has 9/11 Changed the Way We Show Invasions?



by SIÂN BILLINGTON

The first recorded "invasion narrative" - a story or piece of work depicting an invasion or post-invasion world - followed the mass media sensation caused by the Franco-Prussian War in the 1870's, where after an invasion of France, the various German states unified to create the massive European superpower of the German Empire. 'The Battle of Dorking', was a short novel depicting a successful invasion of Britain by a German-speaking enemy, as told by an elderly grandfather to his grandchildren, who are now the heavily-taxed lower-class citizens of a colony.

This story was a national sensation and a national controversy, with many people seeing it as a betrayal and condemnation of the British Empire, and that the idea that the world's greatest imperial power at the time could ever cease to exist was an impossibility. But despite this, "Battle of Dorking" would inspire many other stories of cultures getting invaded and taken over by a superior one. This speculative 'what-if?' genre exploded between 1871 and 1914, with many pieces of fiction for adult readers describing the hypothetical destruction of British society. It was during this period that acclaimed science fiction writer H.G. Wells decided to combine the invasion narrative with the interest in life on Mars, creating the narrative of 'the

alien invasion' with "The War of the Worlds" in 1898.

With this context, we can see that the idea of the alien invasion narrative comes from a place of fear and concern, and while it is disingenuous to say that aliens in fiction always have a direct allegorical parallel to our world, it is also wrong to say that aliens are just aliens. For Wells, the Martians represented a fear of a more technologically advanced and brutal Germany, but sometimes textual metaphors are deeper than that, sometimes not being obvious to the author or audience until years after the fact. But primarily, invasion narratives depict what a culture fears most, and personify it through the alien 'other'.

Which takes us to our comparison of the depiction of invasion narratives in two widely different cultures: Hollywood movie *Independence Day* in 1996, and Hollywood movie *War of the Worlds* in 2005.

*Independence Day* depicts the life of a soldier, a scientist and the President successfully blowing up an invading alien mothership after the destruction of many iconic American landmarks; *War of the Worlds* is the story of an absentee father trying to protect his children during the near mass-extinction of humanity in an invasion only stopped by a virus totally out of any of humanity's control. Just

considering the difference in the tone in these two premises, it's pretty clear that something major happened in just nine years that these two movies take the same basic idea of the alien invasion and present it in two wildly different ways.

And that something major was 9/11.

Compare anything that was made by the West in these two decades: Clooney *Batman* vs Bale *Batman*, *Scream* vs *Hostel*, and your alien invasion. The America of 1996 had very little to worry about - the economy was booming, the Cold War was over, and the biggest scandal they could turn up was that the president was getting off in the White House with someone who wasn't his wife. In this period, Hollywood was spending a lot of time in the disaster genre, destroying the country again and again with tornadoes, volcanoes, sharks and asteroids. In the 90's, a movie could blow up Congress and it was a joke - Americans were disconnected from any real social or existential anxiety, and that was released through 'what-if?' thought experiments like disaster movies.

But then you got to 2005, there are close-ups of a woman's screaming face as she is turned into dust by an unimaginable weapon of horror that she is running away from in absolute fear. In the 90's, there was no fear or horror in seeing symbols of America

destroyed - when the aliens blow up the White House, it's actually kind of epic and amazing to see. During the destruction in *Independence Day*, thousands, if not tens of thousands must have died, and yet the movie just does not care. Compare that to *War of the Worlds*, where people are vaporized in front of Tom Cruise's face, horrified and terrified and screaming. A very on-the-nose moment in the film harkening to 9/11 imagery is after Tom Cruise runs through the streets with people turning into dust all around him, leaving him covered in grey ash, an image, in a post 9/11 world, is loaded with meaning, as Cruise covered in ash very much resembles the images of the 9/11 first responders, who were also covered in similar-looking grey ash while searching through the remains of the World Trade Centre.

Even while ignoring the mass destruction of human life, the disaster movie was another pop culture casualty of 9/11 - people no longer had an appetite to see images of mass destruction when they knew they could be a very real thing that happened where they lived. And when mass destruction did return, years after 9/11, the goofy glee in destruction seen in the 90's was gone, replaced by a hyper-realistic tragedy that is acknowledged to destroy the lives of millions.

There was no way a post-9/11 movie could show the spire of the Empire State Building fall onto crowds below a la *Independence Day* - as we now know, that's not how skyscrapers fall down.

The crucial difference in between these two movies is what is being destroyed; in the 90's, the invincible, immortal 90's where everything was good and would never die, it's stuff - buildings, landmarks and cities. In *War of the Worlds*, it's people, human lives. And that is the real crux of how 9/11 changed the invasion - people were people again, not characters. To 90's audiences, the biggest fear they had was that their stability would be destroyed. But 9/11 actually did destroy Western stability, so more focus was placed on the fear of losing human life. Whole crowds of people are exterminated by the lasers, and we hear them screaming as Tom Cruise holds a crying Dakota Fanning.

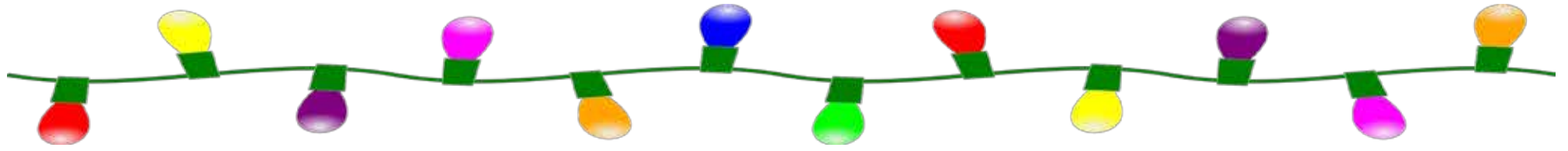
9/11, for a time, killed the bombast and joy of destruction, which forced us to show the fragile threads of our civilisation in our movies. And this trend lasted for a long time - you can see with the amount of hyper-realistic grimdark movies that came out in the early 2000's - but as the world gets further away from 9/11, we can see the joy of destroying stuff creep back in - and hopefully for a while.



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# BOOKS



## Feeling Festive: Holiday Recommendations

By NIAMH O'CONNELL

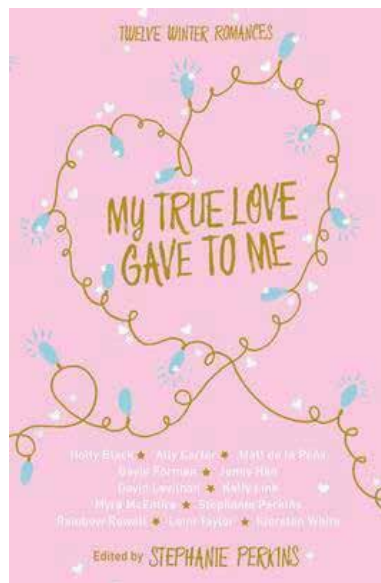
The Christmas period might be the time of the year where you love to pick up a new book and enjoy the atmosphere of Christmas or

maybe you have a friend you loves to read around the festive period who would love to add a new book to their shelves that they can read this

year, either ways Christmas is a great time to settle down and find yourself some new books to read, with plenty of genres, which all have a little bit

of Christmas magic. Curl up under a blanket, make yourself a hot chocolate covered with whipped cream and mini marshmallows, and settle down

with these festive reads - the perfect companions for a cosy Christmas night in.



**My True Love Gave to Me:**  
Twelve holiday Romances  
edited by Stephanie Perkins

If you are a fan of the classic Love Actually or the new Netflix film Let it Snow, this book is a great Christmas read for you. Edited by Stephanie Perkins, this book is an anthology of different holiday romances for whatever you celebrate: Christmas, Hanukkah, or the Winter Solstice. Written by twelve of the bestselling young adult authors, such as Rainbow Rowell, Laini Taylor and David Levithan, My True Love Gave to Me is a treat for everyone, especially fans of the festive season.

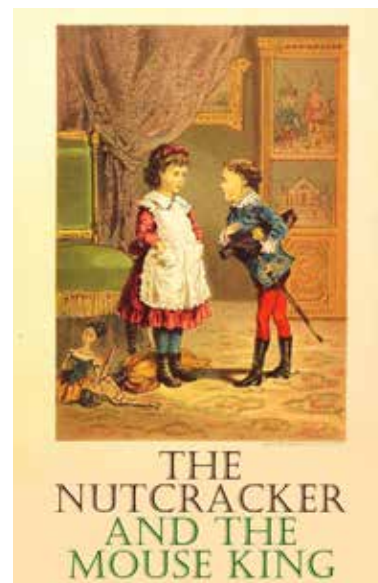
Average Goodreads score: 3.70/5



**Twas The Nightshift Before Christmas** by Adam Kay

As a follow-up to his bestseller This is Going to Hurt, Adam Kay returns with a festive read for the season. This is the hilarious, poignant and entertaining story of the life of a junior doctor at the most challenging time of the year. With twenty-five stories of intriguing, shocking, and incredible Christmas incidents, the British public should finally appreciate the sacrifices made and challenges faced by the unsung heroes of the NHS on a day to day basis. This short collection is fully illustrated (as tastefully as possible) and will delight anyone who loves Adam Kay.

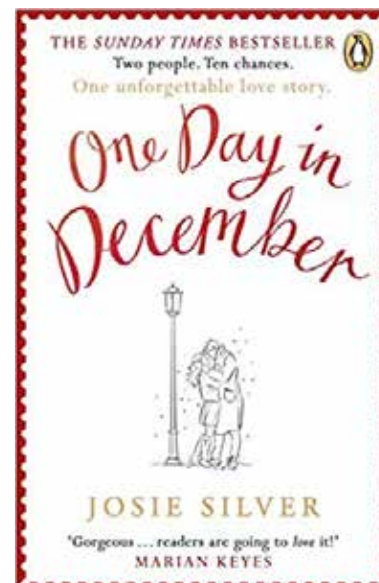
Average Goodreads score: 4.27/5



**The Nutcracker and the Mouse King** by E. T. A. Hoffmann

First written in 1816, one of the oldest stories on this list, The Nutcracker and the Mouse King is a classic Christmas story that has been adapted many times, usually for the Christmas period. The story follows young Marie Stahlbaum and her favourite Christmas toy, the nutcracker, who comes alive and defeats the evil mouse king in battle, after which she is whisked away to a magical kingdom that is populated by dolls. In 1892, the Russian composer Tchaikovsky was inspired by the short story, and with the help of choreographers Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov turned story into a famous ballet, The Nutcracker, which is now one of Tchaikovsky's most famous compositions. The original story is a perfect quick read to get you ready for the festive season.

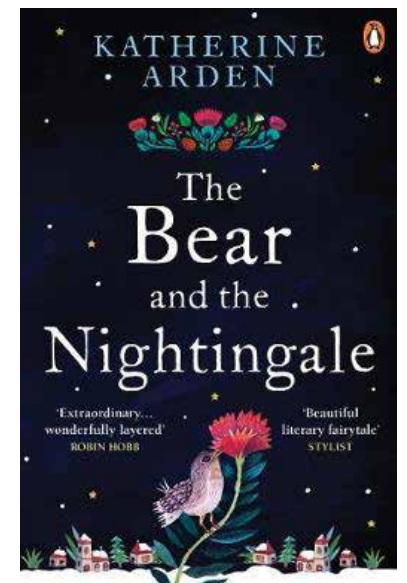
Average Goodreads score: 3.38/5



**One Day in December** by Josie Silver

If you're a fan of those cheesy romance movies which play 24/7 on TV during the season, One Day in December is a great winter romance for you to enjoy. It is a love story about what happens after you meet, or rather, don't meet the one. Laurie is pretty sure that love at first sight only exists in the movies, but then, through a misted-up bus window one snowy December day, she sees the man who she knows instantly is the one for her. Their eyes meet in a moment of pure magic... and then the bus drives away. Certain that it was fate and that she will find him again, Laurie spends a year scanning every bus stop and café in London hoping to find him. But she doesn't - not when it matters, anyway. Instead they 'reunite' at a Christmas party, when her best friend Sarah introduces her new boyfriend, Jack - the man from the bus, as luck would have it. What follows for Laurie, Sarah, and Jack is ten years of friendship, heartbreak and missed opportunities. This story is joyous and heart-warming, making it a great read for those cold December days.

Average Goodreads score: 4.00/5



**The Bear and the Nightingale** by Katherine Arden

If Christmas is a time of snow, magic and fairy tales for you, a good read is the first book of the Winternight Trilogy. In the deep Russian wilderness, winter lasts most of the year, but Vasilisa doesn't mind - she spends the winter nights huddled around the fire with her siblings, listening to her nurse's fairy tales. Above all, her favourite is the chilling story of Frost, the blue-eyed winter demon, who appears in the frigid night to claim unwary souls. Wise Russians fear him, her nurse says, and honour the spirits of the house and yard and forest that protect their homes from evil. But after her mother dies, her father goes to Moscow and brings home a new wife, and her new step-mother forbids her family from honouring the household spirits. Vasilisa fears this may have severe consequences, and indeed, she is right. As danger circles, Vasilisa must defy even the people she loves and call on dangerous gifts she has long concealed, in order to protect her family from a threat that seems to have stepped out of her nurse's most frightening tales.

Average Goodreads score: 4.12/5

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Get in touch!

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# National Book Award Winners 2019

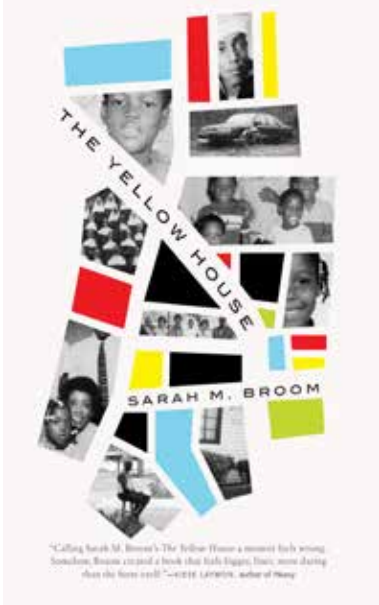
By NIAMH O'CONNELL

On the 20th November, the National Book Award winners were announced for 2019. This year none of the finalists had ever previously won at the awards, along with a majority of the finalists being first time nominees. Evidently, this year was a celebration of new storytellers. The National Book Awards have five categories for published books: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, translated literature, and young people's literature.



**Fiction- Trust Exercise by Susan Choi**

Set in the early 1980s in an American suburb, the book follows students that attend a highly competitive performing arts school, struggling and thriving in a rarefied bubble, ambitiously pursuing their dreams. When two freshmen, Sarah and David, fall hopelessly in love, their passion does not go unnoticed - or unmeddled with - by anyone, including the charismatic acting teacher Mr Kingsley. When in school, the students feel unaffected by the problems of the outside world, until it comes to their doorstep, leading to a spiral of events that turns the students' world upside down, and could leave them scarred forever.



**Nonfiction - The Yellow House by Sarah M. Broom**

In this book full of great ambition, Sarah M. Broom tells the story of a hundred years of her family and the relationship with a home that is in a neglected area of one of America's most mythologised cities. This story is about a mother's struggle against a house entropy, and that of a prodigal daughter who left home only to deal with the pull it has on her, even after the house was destroyed in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The Yellow House tells the story of everything and everyone who lived in the city of New Orleans. It is a brilliant memoir of place, class, race, and inequality, and a deeply moving story from an unparalleled voice of startling clarity, authority, and power.



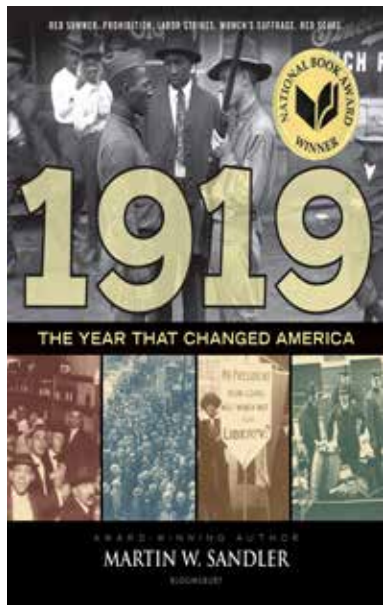
**Poetry - Sight Lines by Arthur Sze**

In his new work, Arthur Sze employs a wide range of voices and his mythic imagination continuously evokes how humans are endangering the planet; yet, balancing accuracy with passion, he seizes the significant and luminous, transforming these special and telling moments into riveting poetry. Events such as the current phenomenon of drawing calligraphy with water in public parks in China, to Thomas Jefferson laying out dinosaur bones on the White House floor, Sight Lines travels through space and time and brings the stunning and meaningful into focus through poetry.



**Translated Literature - Baron Wenckheim's Homecoming by Laszlo Krasznahorkai, translation by Otilie Mulzet**

Set in modern times, this translated work tells the story of Baron Bela Wenckheim, who decides to return to the provincial Hungarian town of his birth when he is coming closer to the end of his life. Having escaped the many debts he owes the casinos of Buenos Aires, which is where he was living in exile, he wishes to finally be reunited with his high school sweetheart Marika. What follows in an endless storm of gossip, con men, and local politicians, vividly evoking the small town's usual drab and absurd existence.



**Young People's Literature - 1919 The Year That Changed America by Martin W. Sandler**

When America was recovering from the aftermath of World War One, black soldiers returned to racism so violent that the summer would be known as the Red Summer. The suffrage movement had a long-fought win when women gained the right to vote. Labourers took to the streets to fight against their harsh working conditions, and nationalistic fervour led to a communism scare. Each of these movements reached their tipping point in the year of 1919. Now, 100 years later, these social issues are still as relevant as they were then. Sandler traces the momentum and setbacks of these movements through the last century, showing that progress isn't always a straight line and offers a unique lens through which we can understand history and inspire change that many still seek.

## Bookish Gifts for Christmas

By NIAMH O'CONNELL

If you are struggling to decide what to get for your friend or family members for Christmas, and if you know that one of the people close to you loves to read, here is a small collection of ideas that are a great gift for one of your bookish friends and family.

**Bookmarks**

As someone with an ever-growing collection of my own, bookmarks are a great gift for someone who loves to read - you can never have enough of them. Bookmarks can also be found anywhere in many different styles, such as: the magnetic ones that fold over the page; the metal ones that

stick out from the top of the book; or the simple and classic nicely designed piece of paper or fabric that sits within the pages and never lets you lose your place. And instead of using the receipt of their newest book (or even their most recent grocery shop), they can now use the new gift from you to mark the book that they are currently reading. And if you are really last minute, printable and DIY bookmarks are a perfect choice for this gift. There is a huge selection of printable designs that you can find online, and can always be tailored to the likes of your friends, whether they are a Harry Potter or Jane Austen fan - or it can be

personalised with their own name or star sign, which makes it more personal if you make them yourself. Bookmarks are the perfect small gift for your bookish friend.

**Book subscription boxes**

If you really want to treat someone who loves books, over the past few years subscription boxes have become a lot more popular, and you can even find ones that are specifically catered to book lovers. These subscription boxes are usually monthly, however certain boxes can be bought individually in advance or be purchased as a previous box that released for an earlier month. Each month's box usually

has a different theme, such as unlikely romances or urban fantasy, and is full of things that fit the theme, including gifts like art prints, tea or mugs. And if they enjoy the wide selection of gifts they get in the box, it may just encourage them to treat themselves to a continuing subscription where they can get even more bookish goodies. Popular subscription boxes are Fairyloot, TheBookishBox, and LitJoy Crate.

**Gift Cards**

An obvious choice, but if you know the gift receiver relatively well, finding a new book that they would love to start reading will always be a welcome addition to their shelves. How-

ever, choosing a new book for someone can be tricky, especially if you are in a pinch for time. Sometimes you may pick up a book they have already read or that just isn't their type of read. That's why gift cards are a great choice for them. Just by knowing that they are a reader, you are sure to know that one of their favourite places to shop is the local bookstore, and getting a gift card for them will make sure they can get a book they love. You can also get gift cards for online sites, which then opens up an even larger world of books for them to choose from, and adds to the growing list of books they want to read.



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# MUSIC

## 2019 in Review

### AKA Trio Live Review

By **STEPHEN OWEN**

In another display of the sheer diversity of music on offer in North Wales, a collaboration between three artists from three continents occurred at Galeri in Caernarfon on the 23rd of November. AKA Trio consists of Italian jazz-guitarist Antonio Forcione, Senegalese kora player Seckou Keita and Brazilian percussionist Adriano Adewale, bringing their diverse talents together into a band that fuses jazz, folk and anything from flamenco to traditional Senegalese music. Promoting their debut album Joy, the band showed remarkable versatility, having each member of the trio take the lead in songwriting whilst the remaining two still added their own unique talents. Forcione's technical yet always melodic acoustic guitar playing also didn't clash with the harp-esque drones of Keita's kora, whilst the huge variation in Adewale's percussion added a huge range of different textures to each song. Songs like the ethereal title track, or the more

rhythmic Uncle Solo were performed with a remarkable fluidity, with Keita's longing vocals sung in his traditional Manding language, adding so much to songs such as the latter. Key also to the gig's intimate atmosphere was the conversation in between songs, talking about the past of each artist whilst interspersing humour, interesting conversation about their instruments and what brings them together. Much in accordance with the name of the album, there was a refreshing sense of joy on display, with moments such as the impromptu theatrics seen in their final song, The Beautiful Game, and the dancing of the audience during the encore being perfect examples of this. AKA Trio highlighted both the stunning possibilities of artists from disparate cultures coming together to make music, and Wales as an intriguing melting pot for much of the globe's most intriguing music, all whilst being a liberating and consistently wonderful experience.

## Editorial



**STEPHEN OWEN**  
Music Editor | 2019/20  
Got an idea?  
Email  
music@seren.bangor.ac.uk

As this is the final issue of Seren for the calendar year, I would like to first thank everyone who reads this section and the newspaper as a whole, along with anyone who has contributed this year. I would personally always welcome more contributions to the section as it only makes this section more diverse and representative of different tastes. This can be pretty much anything; reviews

of albums past or present, reviews of gigs or interviews, to name just a few options. For this issue, I will be reviewing albums released throughout the year that I have missed or haven't reviewed, along with a longer discussion article about music from the last year I have enjoyed. As ever, I hope you enjoy and have a good Christmas break.

By **STEPHEN OWEN**

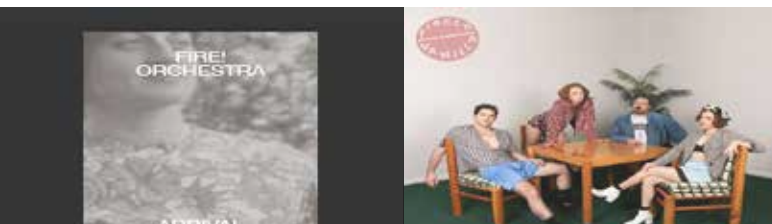
When discussing this year's music, it is far harder than before to discuss music in broad strokes. In an era in which so much music is accessible to so many people, it is much easier to find yourself lost in a huge range of different styles, genres and moods on an even daily basis. In an age of streaming, music is separated from its geography to a far greater degree, making this only a tiny snapshot of a huge web of genres and music scenes. One of the most obvious trends of this year can be found in the retro-tinged yet strangely modern take on pop that has begun to emerge out of the synth-heavy sound that has dominated much of the 2010's. The huge success of Lana Del Ray and Angel Olsen's albums are some of the most obvious incarnations of this, but the ethereal beauty of **Weyes Blood's 'Titanic Rising'** and Welsh artist **Cate Le Bon's 'Reward'** are among my highlights in this regard. The former's blending of baroque pop ballads with dreamy keyboard, and Reward's contrast between Le Bon's moody vocals and the quirky saxophone heavy instrumentation suggest that pop is moving in an odd yet extremely exciting direction. A similar idea was also explored by **Tim Bowness**, albeit with a style more influenced by progressive rock on his latest album, **'Flowers At The Scene'**. Looking at the more aggressive side of modern music, the UK has seen something of a punk and post-punk revival in recent years, with **IDLES** and **Fontaines D.C.** spearhead-

ing this re-emergence. Alongside this, however, have come artists inspired by the zanier elements of that late 70's to early 80's scene. While artists such as **Black Country, New Road** and **Mush** promise much, the first band to truly break the mainstream is **Black Midi** with their Mercury Prize-nominated debut **'Schlagenheim'**. Combining scratchy guitar lines with dense and powerful percussion, plus vocalist **Geordie Greep's** strange, abstract lyrics, Black Midi have quickly created a bizarre and gripping universe of their own through their music. Another common theme for this year was old artists breaking new ground. 90's alt-rock band **Ride** returned with **'This Is Not A Safe Place'**, a thrilling release that still invoked the wall-of-sound style music that characterised their early years whilst pushing into new ground, but the most intriguing re-releases were two electronic releases from rock musicians. **'Anima'** by **Thom Yorke** is a flowing, bizarre piece of glitchy electronica that came with a short film whilst **Sonic Youth** bassist **Kim Gordon's** debut solo record **'No Home Record'** features everything from abrasive, industrial noise to almost hip-hop-esque beats. Electronic music has personally been something I have found much more gripping this year, with the epic melodrama of **Alexander Tucker's 'Guild of the Asbestos Weaver'** and the complex, genre-bending sound of **Battles' 'Juice B Crypts'**. It has become more common this year for artists to release their album in two parts, or create two

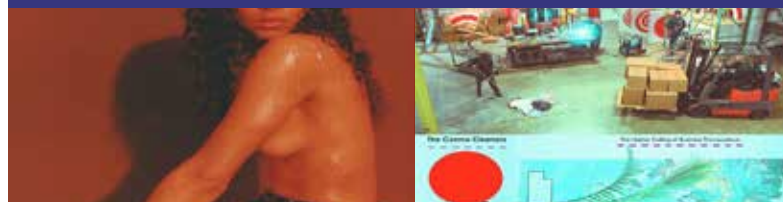
thematically different albums with the music they have recorded. A stalwart of modern indie rock over the last 10 years, **Foals' 'Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost'** sees the band go from rhythmic and densely layered rock to soul-searching ballads in an album that showcases one of the most dynamic and varied artists in popular music. New York indie-folk band **Big Thief** also continued this trend, with **'UFOF'** and in particular **'Two Hands'** being superb albums. Otherwise, one of the finest albums of the year was a strange take on folk in **Richard Dawson's '2020'**, which I reviewed last month. Touching upon a huge array of contemporary themes and featuring a wiry yet gritty, distorted guitar sound, it is a distinctive symbol of the modern day. There are a number of artists who have already been mentioned in previous issues who should once again be mentioned, from **Carwyn Ellis' vibrant, psychedelic-pop collaboration with Rio 18 on 'Joia!'**, the ethereal jazz-meets-electronic stylings of **The Comet Is Coming's 'Trust in the Lifeforce of the Deep Mystery'** and the fluent blending of Welsh folk, South African music and electronica heard on **Super Furry Animals frontman Gruff Rhys' 'Pang!'** All in all, 2019 has been an interesting year musically and hopefully this has been reflected well in the pages of Seren.

### Upcoming / New

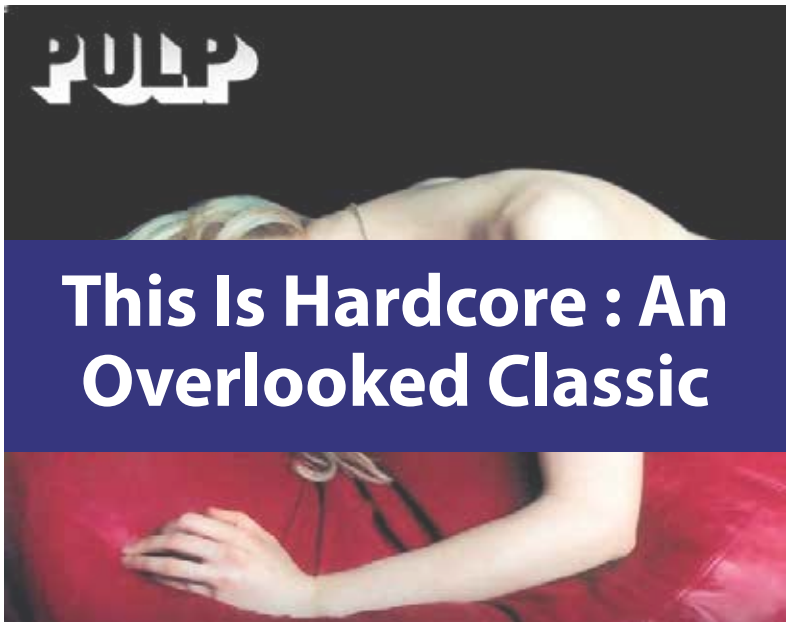
- The Who - Who (6th December)
- Gary Numan - When The Sky Came Down (13th December)
- Kanye West - Jesus Is Born (25th December)
- Field Music - Making A New World (10th January)
- Algiers - There Is No Year (17th January)
- Pet Shop Boys - Hotspot (24th January)
- Wire - Hive Mind (24th January)
- Squarepusher - Be Up A Hello (31st January)
- Destroyer - Have We Met (31st January)



### Featured Albums







# This Is Hardcore : An Overlooked Classic

By SCOTT TAYLOR

Pulp are a band who are most well-known for their album Different Class, which came out with singles like Disco 2000 and Common People. Whilst it is obvious that this album is a classic, and one of the greatest albums in the 90's, it overshadows Pulp's other releases that dropped in the years before and after it. The album This is Hardcore is by far the most damaged victim of this, for very few people seem to remember this album even came out, yet it is an incredible album with, in my opinion, the bands greatest work. The album is far darker than any other piece of work the band released in their prime, but this helps show the maturity of the band and their songwriting skills. The album opens with one of the darkest songs on the record, The Fear. It helps set the scene for this album that this isn't going to be anything like the last two albums this band released. There won't be any upbeat celebrations of British working-class life here, just an insight into Jarvis Cocker's dark descent into the world of deviant hardcore desires. Drugs, sex and mental health are the themes of this album, and this is an incredibly dark change of pace. The album never holds back. It goes into the song Dishes which is far more laid back and relaxed yet still

rather sad and dismal. Whilst there are one or two slower songs on this album, the band don't forget that just because something is sad it can't be loud. We get to the highlights of the album when we look at tracks like I'm a Man and Sylvia. They are both loud and bombastic, and keep the album from becoming too dark and sad. They are songs that you will just want to sing along to as loud as you can, and unfortunately seem to have just been forgotten in time. We can't talk of highlights, however, without going into the titular track, This is Hardcore. The song is cinematic and orchestral yet sleazy and grimy, perfectly explaining the mood and feel that this album is going for in such an exact manner. That all being said, there are still many other tracks like 'Glory days' or 'Help the Aged' and many more that help contribute to this album and its greatness. Whilst Different Class is a spectacular album that perfectly looks into British working-class life, This is Hardcore is a sincere and dark insight into the mind of a man who threw himself into the seedy underbelly of the celebrity lifestyle, and how he came to terms with it. This is Hardcore is a modern classic, and hopefully people will look back on this album in years to come, and remember it for the great piece of art that it is.

# Kelsey Lu : Blood

By STEPHEN OWEN

In my review of 2019, I mentioned the new influx of pop that has really blossomed over the last year. Featuring more traditional instrumentation than the synth-heavy sound of much of the pop of the last decade, albums like Weyes Blood's Titanic Rising and Angel Olsen's All Mirrors are in many an evolution of the minimalism of modern artists like Adele or the early work of Kate Bush, Scott Walker and others. Kelsey Lu's debut, Blood, is an album that is also at least partially in this mould whilst holding onto some of the 2010's orthodoxies. This is reflected most obviously in the production credits on this album, with everyone from Skrillex to Michael Uzowuru (producer of Frank Ocean's Blonde) having a hand in the album's direction. The album begins with the mournful, string heavy Rebel and the folky Pushin Against the Wind, two tracks that in their own way exemplify the darkness of parts of this album. This clashes not entirely satisfactorily with the conven-

tional R&B sound of Due West, with the smooth, quite cliché production from Skrillex and typical idealisations of California and love not really making the album's lead single quite as arresting as the opening two tracks. This is the often-frustrating result of the album's attempt to balance between the more mournful and the glitzy, commercial sides of pop. Another example of this contrast is the fairly weak Foreign Car and Poor Fake, one of the album's highlights. Melding a disco sound along with an utterly serene chorus reminiscent of Weyes Blood, it is a unique moment in the album that is the best example of Lu's talents. Otherwise, other notable songs are the somewhat misplaced cover of 10CC I'm Not In Love, a floaty ambient ballad that overstays its welcome, and the title track with its floaty ambient soundscape. All in all, Blood is certainly an exciting start for an impressive songwriter, there are still inconsistencies that stop this from being the impressive debut I feel it could have been.

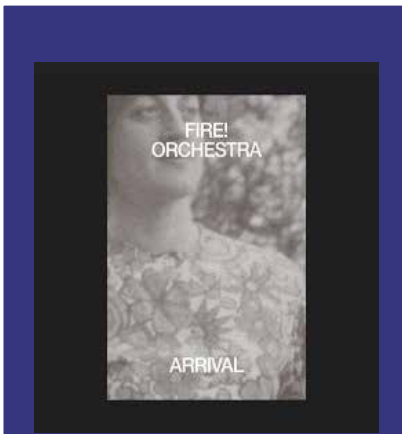
# French Vanilla : How Am I Not Myself?

By STEPHEN OWEN

Another band that recall post-punk, French Vanilla do so in a less frenzied and more arty fashion than Uranium Club on their second album How Am I Not Myself? As expected with releases of this kind, the tight, groovy rhythm section and wiry guitar lines are present on this release, but with significant alterations. With far less guitar than most post-punk bands, the sleazy saxophone lines of Daniel Trautfield often take the lead on tracks like Real or Not alongside the utterly gripping vocals of Sally Spitz. Able to sound joyous and passionate in a similar way to the B-52s' Kate

Pierson and Cindy Wilson or icy and reserved, Spitz's voice makes up for the sometimes-weak lyrics she sings. Lead single All The Time is a perfect example of these elements working in unison, with a driving bassline and an excellent lead saxophone line in the chorus coming alongside Spitz's forlorn vocals. Suddenly is another excellent track in this regard, being slightly less densely textured with more abstract lyrics that are slightly less clumsy than All The Time. The songs in which Ali Day plays guitar are generally not quite as strong as those with saxophone, but Protective's scratchy, funky guitar melodies alongside the feminist lyrics make it

another of the album's stronger moments. Whilst the album discusses, with mixed results, relationships and fame, its discussions of gender generally make for more compelling listening. Whilst the lyrics found within Protective, Bromosapien and closer Sensitive (Not Sensitive) aren't exactly subtle, there is a passion and authenticity to those songs that seems far more powerful when compared with more general songs. All in all, How Am I Not Myself is a significant improvement from French Vanilla's self-titled debut, showcasing a consistent and thrilling collection of songs that don't overstay their welcome.



# Fire! Orchestra : Arrival

By STEPHEN OWEN

An album that passed me by on its release in May, the fourth album of Swedish jazz collective Fire! Orchestra, combines experimental, expansive jazz with the atmospheric yet eerily volatile rock of bands like Godspeed! You Black Emperor or Swans into a dynamic and frenzied take on a well-established, if odd, style. For an album that is just over an hour long, it is vital that Fire! Orchestra are able to create distinctions between each of their lengthier compositions. Thankfully, this is accomplished with relish by the group. Almost every song sees one of the instruments take center stage alongside the frenzied and utterly deranged vocals of Mariam Wallentin and Sofia Jernberg. Whether the writhing, dissonant violin melody and flourishes of organ in Dressed in Smoke, Blown Away, or the similarly violent horn parts found through much of the nearly 16-minute Silver Trees, there is always something slightly different to be found in each part of this album. There is even

a cinematic, slightly Scott Walker-esque song in the short but chilling (Beneath) The Edge of Life and an odd but effective cover of Chic's At Last I Am Free as the album's closer. Having mentioned the vocals, it should be stressed how brilliantly Wallentin and Jernberg accentuate the chaos of the instrumentation. Able to sound sorrowful one moment, and completely insane the next, they allow repetitive grooves and melodies to not become boring, and instead as a way of building tension and atmosphere in a gripping fashion. Arrival is a very intriguing album, showcasing some incredibly talented musicians having the discipline not to overextend and compromise the atmospheric and at times utterly beautiful soundscapes they create. It is another example of jazz modernising, being able to keep its traditional instrumentation whilst melding with newer genres to brilliant effect.

# Uranium Club : The Cosmo Cleaners

By STEPHEN OWEN

US post-punk artists Uranium Club's third album, The Cosmo Cleaners, is another fine example of music that borrows from the quirky yet dense music of the late 70's and early 80's, sounding simultaneously frenzied and contemplative. From the opening track, Flashback Arrestor, the off-kilter and uncomfortable rhythms of early Talking Heads and XTC are immediately invoked, with the vocals having the same irreverent yet tense delivery of much of the most bizarre post-punk vocalists from David Byrne of Talking Heads to Mark Mothersbaugh of DEVO. Speaking of the vocalist, the lyrics discuss anything from the titular concept to relationships and career aspiration in the same awkward and stilted way much of the most prominent artists from post-punk and new wave's 70's and 80's peak did. Much of the rest

of the album follows in a similar vein to the opener but with slight differences. The repetitive, teasing groove of Definitely Infrared contrasts to the somewhat jarring, DEVO-esque tempo shifts of Grease Monkey, or to the forlorn clean intro to Man Is The Loneliest Animal. The guitar throughout is among the album's biggest strengths, sounding thin but not piercing as the two guitars exchange bouncy and extremely catchy guitar melodies. The pieces that will most likely make or break your experience with the album, however, are the two extended pieces that consist of almost half of The Cosmo Cleaners' length; Michael's Soliloquy and Interview. With The Cosmo Cleaners. The latter blends an irreverent and somewhat absurd spoken word narration over a repeating guitar melody whilst the latter has staccato piano chords and more minimal guitar over record-

ings of what sounds like doors slamming and frenzied conversation, before cutting suddenly into its frantic punky ending. The solemnity of the narration in Interview is a strangely tense and abstract moment in an otherwise irreverent album, the minimalism of the arrangement jarring with the frenzied approach of much of The Cosmo Cleaners as well. Whether you enjoy the longer tracks or not, much of the most recent release from Uranium Club has a straightforward fun to it that offers a fine contrast to the more abstract pieces, however. In a decade in which post-punk and new-wave has seen a significant revival of its zanier aspects, Uranium Club is one of the strongest examples of this in action, melding a strange atmosphere with the absurd, straightforward fun that made many of the bands in the original wave of this music so iconic.



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# TV



## Editorial

Hi there, and welcome to the December issue of Seren! As we drift closer into the festive period, with Mariah Carey and Michael Buble tingling on repeat in our ears and streets and houses lit brightly with decorations, it's easy to get carried away with the festivities which can leave us feeling exhausted just at the mention of the word Christmas! So before you have that much-needed nap to sleep off the whirlwind of food, presents and dancing, make sure to read this space. Here you'll find the perfect cure to your food coma when you finally hit the couch and turn the remote on. One of the things I always look forward to at Christmas is all the great TV to devour - it's still a time for indulgence, right? Go on, pour yourself some mulled wine and maybe grab another mince pie - but remember to leave some for Santa of course! Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year- your TV editor James.



## News From the Small Screen

by James Tanner



Black Friday may have already passed, but there's still many great online deals on offer - and one of the biggest right now is the new streaming service Britbox. Already proving to be a huge success in the US with over half a million subscribers, the site launched in the UK on 7th November, offering access to the largest ensemble of TV shows to date - and the best thing is that they're exclusively British. Currently, you can sign up on the website or via the ITV Hub, or by downloading on your smartphone device, laptop/ipad or Apple TV. As a joint venture be-

tween the BBC and ITV, it's still in the early days of finding its feet - but there are already talks about it replacing the two respective catch up platforms BBC iPlayer and ITV Hub. Once shows are aired, there is typically a limited time available for viewers to watch content, ranging from 30 days to 12 months. Those programmes then find a new home in Britbox - amongst a host of other TV shows from past and present, as well as classic films and brand-new commissions. Looking at the variety of TV shows we now have at our disposal, with content being streamed on platforms

worldwide, it seems logical that they should be kept in one place. From my own experience, Britbox is easy to navigate as it follows a similar layout to streaming giants Netflix and Amazon Prime Video - categorised by genres ranging from comedy and crime to drama and documentaries, as well as more precise searches such as 'actors' and 'decades'. So if there's a recent series you didn't quite get to watch in time, or you fancy venturing into the archives of British TV, you'll be guaranteed hours of quality entertainment. Channel 5 programmes are now also available, with All 4 and Film

4 planned to join the family in 2020. Could this merging of British networks be a sign of the need to compete with streaming culture? Whether or not this device proves an immediate success any time soon, there is still plenty to offer for those who prefer the flexibility of a streaming subscription compared to TV license fees. The TV world's your oyster, and the best of it is you can get a 30-day free trial, before paying a £5.99 subscription. Go on, discover new favourites and revisit your old ones over the Christmas period - but rest assured, these shows aren't going anywhere!



## Christmas TV Picks

by James Tanner

Without a doubt Christmas is the busiest time of year, and when many students return home to reunite with friends and family, the social calendar begins to look a lot fuller. I'm sure we all look forward to those moments where we can crash on the sofa in the company of some good TV- so rest assured you'll have a wide choice of TV treats to choose from...

### Gavin and Stacey Christmas Special - BBC One

We've been looking forward to this reunion almost as much as mum's pigs in blankets. After ten years off screen, the return of the classic comedy classic looks to be one of the most watched shows over Christmas, as we eagerly wait to find out what happens next to Smithy, Nessa and the gang. You'll have to wait until Christmas day to find out what happens!

For more festive treats try... *Mrs Brown's Boys* on BBC One.

### A Christmas Carol- BBC One

A story we're all familiar with and synonymous with the image of Christmas- but you may be proved wrong when you think you've seen it all before. This three- parter looks likely to offer a new take on the often-adapted Dickens ghost story, and with a cast including Guy Pearce, Stephen Graham and Andy Serkis it should deliver some spine-tingling magic to those who like a grittier watch for their Christmas nights.

For more festive treats try... *Call the Midwife* Christmas special on BBC One or *Dickensian* on Netflix.

### Dracula- BBC One

If you fancy an even scarier Christmas, *Sherlock* creators Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffatt have turned their attention to the most famous vampire of all- with a possible twist. Although only a short teaser trailer has been released, the BBC haven't set an exact date for the gothic tale, so it will be interesting to compare how it differs to the original text, and if it could dare to be more terrifying.

For more festive treats try... *Doctor Who* on BBC One

### The Great Festive Bake Off- Channel 4

If you've been having withdrawal symptoms from Bake Off recently finishing and can't wait until next year, you'll be overjoyed to know it will be making a one-off festive special just in time for Christmas. Four merry bakers will be making a return to the tent for two episodes, cooking up some festive treats- and unlike the usual drill they'll be in for another chance of winning the competition!

For more festive treats try... *A Berry Royal Christmas* on BBC One.





## REVIEW: *Flirty Dancing* by Holly Peckitt

**T**ake Me Out, Naked Attraction, First Dates, the list goes on. No matter how much enjoyment we get from watching people desperately seek for love in the most humiliating, tacky ways, dating programmes are never the most savoury of watches. Many of us wince and avert our eyes, or frantically change channels to avoid locking eyes with... with something we really don't want to see. The culture of dating programmes is increasingly toxic, leaving viewers with a foul taste in the mouth and newspapers firing criticism from left, right and centre. Do any of us actually enjoy watching such TV? I'm not sure,

but I know that I never found myself as moved by it as in the case of Channel 4's *Flirty Dancing*.

Now in its second season within a year, *Flirty Dancing* has become a roaring success, and yet, ironically, it appears hardly anyone has heard about it. Unlike *Love Island*, this appears to be everyone's cup of tea, and a beautiful watch that can't help but bring a few tears to the eye. Brought to the screen by Ashley Banjo (former winner of *Britain's Got Talent* in the dance troupe Diversity and choreographer), the show's premise is simple: a blind date with no communication, other than dancing.

As a former dancer, I was thrilled by the idea of this. As much as it sounds strange to comprehend, it isn't just two people attempting dad-dancing like in *Academi*, but rather the same dance choreographed and rehearsed separately, with the couple's first meeting being the moment they find themselves dancing in what hopes to be harmony. Again, something that sounds rather impossible at first glance, but it works wonderfully.

The best part is, you don't have to be good at dancing! The show is embracing of all abilities, personalities and shapes and sizes, and doesn't exclude people based on their bodies,

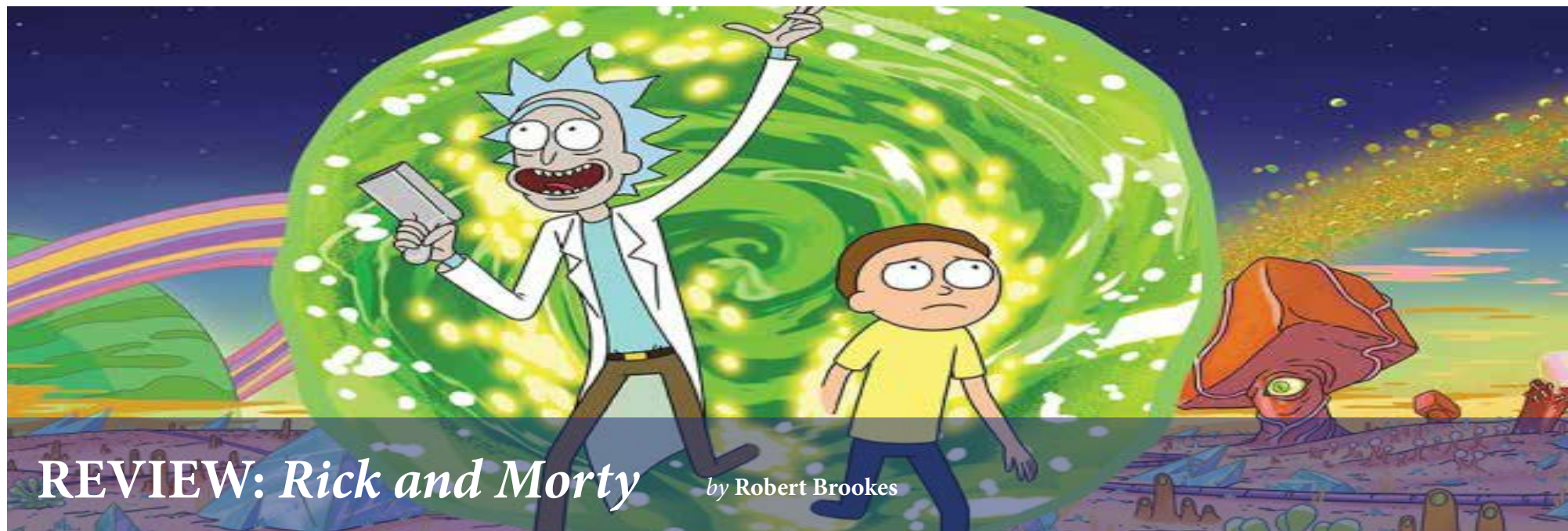
making it a glorious acceptance for all of us who desperately want that representation in contrast to the likes of *Love Island*. Diverse, joyous, and utterly charming, what more could you want?

This programme is for the faint-hearted, for the romantics, and for those who are understandably losing faith in humanity. It's a cosy Friday night watch that will leave you beaming as you follow two strangers meeting for the first time and not be allowed to say anything but that which is spoken through their movements. Their happiness, nerves, and relief when it pulls off are delightful, but it

doesn't always go that way. The question after that is whether they decide to separately show up to the same place and go on a second date (and technically finally meet one another).

It's soppy, it's mushy, and will leave you with butterflies in your stomach on behalf of the contestants, but isn't that exactly what we need in this chaotic world?

*Flirty Dancing* is on Channel 4 and All4 on Fridays, 8-9pm.



## REVIEW: *Rick and Morty* by Robert Brookes

**J**ustin Roiland and Dan Harmon's animated sci-fi dark comedy series is back for its fourth season after two years' absence, and it kicks off brilliantly. For those unfamiliar with the series, the general premise is a mad scientist called Rick goes on wacky adventures with his grandson Morty, often into alternate universes with the help of Rick's portal gun. It sounds simple enough but each episode packs in action, pop culture references and plenty of character development. This last element helps *Rick and Morty* stand out from the crowd of other animated TV series (eg. *The Simpsons* or *Family Guy*), as family

dynamics shift and darker moments impact characters. Another one of the show's strengths is its humour, which is most comparable to *South Park*, as there is profanity and innuendos abound. However, there's also plenty of satire and clever call-backs to famous and more obscure pop culture thrown in too.

This season's premiere entitled 'Edge of Tomorty: Rick Die Rickpeat' (this being a reference to the Tom Cruise film *Edge of Tomorrow*), whilst not as deep as some other seasons' episodes, is a pretty good encapsulation of *Rick and Morty*. The plot starts with Rick taking Morty to a distant planet, but

only after getting permission from Morty's parents (a little display of how Rick's authority has been challenged). There they gather crystals that show the holder all their possible future deaths. After taking one for himself, Morty sees a future in which he dies of old age in the arms of his high school crush Jessica. This leads to him becoming obsessed with dying with her, which accidentally results in him killing his grandfather Rick - but this is soon waved away as a hologram of Rick tells Morty how to bring him back. However, since that won't result in the future Morty wants, he refuses. This leads to the subplot where Rick's

consciousness is routed into clones of alternate universe Ricks, and he has to try to get back to Morty and his own universe.

The episode balances these two plots perfectly all in the span of twenty-two minutes without ever feeling too convoluted. From Rick having to navigate alternate universes (which isn't as easy as he thinks, as many of them end up being fascist dystopias), to Morty doing whatever it takes (however stupid or violent) to end up with his crush, there are plenty of twists that take you off guard, but still have you laughing throughout the episode. There's even a post credit

scene that contains a perfect WTF moment.

All in all, 'Edge of Tomorty: Rick Die Rickpeat' is a great addition to *Rick and Morty*. Whether you're already a fan of the series or a total beginner, you can still be thoroughly entertained by this episode. Even if you're not a fan of sci-fi or animated shows, it's still worth checking out.

Seasons 1, 2 and 3, with the first three episodes of season 4 are available on Channel 4, and All 4 catchup, with the next episodes coming soon.



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# FILM

## Seren Star Wars Special

By MICHAEL SHIELS

With the release of the latest instalment in the Star Wars saga almost upon us, I believe that now is the perfect opportunity to look back upon the Skywalker story, from the genesis in 1977 through to its supposed conclusion over forty years later. We will look at the highs and the lows over the decades, and have a look at how the imagination of George Lucas created one of (if not) the biggest properties in global popular culture. Although the Star Wars brand has transcended mediums from books, video games, television shows, and everything else you could think of, in this article we will be focusing on the heart of it all, the feature films. Moreover, we will only be discussing the Episodic films and ignoring the spin offs in Rogue One and Solo due to the fact that they will be continuing into the future, whereas according to Lucasfilm the Skywalker story will end with Episode IX. The format of this discussion will follow the chronological order in which the films are set within the story as I feel that is how the majority of our readers will have experienced them, although if you haven't, I would personally recommend watching them in order of release dates to increase the viewing experience. Before we jump into the films, I want to give a quick warning that the rest of this article may contain some spoilers, but let's face it, if you don't know that Darth Vader is Luke's dad by now you probably aren't that interested.

Picture the scene: Its May 1999, the lights have dimmed, the fanfare has blared, and John Williams' iconic theme kicks in. Star Wars is back. I imagine that about 2 hours later the wildly excited fans who'd camped out for days probably thought that they were having a bad dream. I am of course talking about Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace. I know you will be expected to rant and rave about this film as so many others have and don't worry I will, I must first give the film some grudging compliments. Firstly, you cannot deny that George Lucas is a visionary. Some of the world building and look of the galaxy far far away in this film is fantastic; moreover, the CGI was revolutionary and so far ahead of its time that it still looks good today for the most part. However, just because you have a cool new toy doesn't mean you should use it at the expense of everything else, and I believe that the extensive use of green screen hindered the film more than it helped it. As with most Star Wars films, the sound design and editing is phenomenal, especially during the intense pod racing sequence and, of course, John Williams' score is pretty much perfect giving us the

iconic Duel of Fates. Unfortunately, what talent Lucas has as a visionary and a worldbuilder is outweighed by the fact that, unfortunately, he's not a particularly great director, and a poor screenwriter. Some of the dialogue in this film is turgid, especially the attempted goofy comedy throughout (step forward Jar Jar Binks). Moreover, he manages to get wooden performances out of some of the most talented actors of their generation through a combination of the script and, I believe, the fact that they had to act against green screens with little direction on how the scenes would play out. In terms of the story itself, I think he made some fundamental errors such as showing us Anakin as an annoying child, and the dull political aspect which felt much more like filler than thriller. There is no real lead character, and none of the characters you do meet are given any real development. On top of this, there are some really contrived revelations about the backstory of popular characters such as C-3PO, and the attempted fan service just comes across as messy. If you couldn't tell, I really do dislike this film. I think it's a mess from top to bottom and, despite a few scenes, it really does have few redeeming qualities. The final score for Episode I is: 3/10.

On the surface it looked like Lucas's second effort in the prequel trilogy had been used to rectify some of the missteps of the Phantom Menace and return the Star Wars franchise to the level of quality that fans had been expecting. Unfortunately, Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones is considered by many to be even worse than its predecessor, and many believe that it is the worst of the franchise. Here there was an opportunity to iron out the problems with the plot, to develop the characters into more rounded individuals, and give the audience an exciting space adventure. Alas, it seemed that the opposite happened, Lucas doubled down on the silly aspects of the first film. From the beginning, the film begins with a daft car chase and it just goes downhill from there with awfully pointless CGI action set pieces throughout. A particular low point is the conveyor belt scene which feels hollow and inconsequential to the plot. They even managed to make Yoda fighting for the first time seem ridiculous rather than breath-taking! Now let's talk about the acting and the dialogue which somehow managed to get even worse for this film: Hayden Christensen's performance, and the entire character of Anakin in this story, was handled exceptionally poorly. Instead of him being a tragic character who fell from being a hero to the dark side, he is portrayed as a

bratty teenager who you never want to root for because he is so unlikeable. Adding to this, the vomit inducing romance scenes between him and Natalie Portman's Padme are dripping with the sexual chemistry of a dried up river bed and are painful to watch. Again, I have to blame the direction for this because Portman has proved both before and after this trilogy that she is one of the greatest actors of her time, and the fact that she has this blot on her record is a massive shame. Wooden performances, wooden dialogue, a mind numbingly boring plot, and stale action scenes are not exactly a recipe for success. As a result, my score for Episode II is a dismal 2/10.

Now, most people feel that Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith is a marked improvement on the previous two films, and they'd be correct. But let's face it, saying that something is better than the previous two instalments is not much of an achievement; sitting and watching paint dry on a wall for 5 hours would probably give you more fulfilment. I don't want to seem like I'm out here to attack the prequels, if they are your favourite films, then fair play to you. Having said that, I cannot lie about my opinions on these movies, and once again I feel that Revenge of the Sith is a bad piece of cinema. Don't get me wrong, it has a lot more going for it than its two predecessors, the action is noticeably better and the effects during the opening space battle is truly fantastic. Moreover, the acting seems to have improved and the story is overall much tighter, however some of the slumber inducing dialogue is unfortunately still present. The best thing about this film though (and I think one of my favourite aspects of the prequels overall) is Ian McDiarmid playing Senator Palpatine. You can tell that he really relishes this villainous role of the evil puppet master pulling the strings that will enable him to become the feared emperor of the original trilogy. His performance is electrifying and intriguing, and really stands out amongst some of his co-stars. If I had to describe this film in a word it would be that it's 'underwhelming'. Almost every aspect of it feels watered down, like there was potential for greatness somewhere in this story but the execution wasn't there. For instance, the fall of Anakin and the rise of Vader could've been epic, but the emotionless, over choreographed dance routine that concluded this chapter of Anakin and Obi Wan's journey felt very underwhelming. Likewise, Palpatine's victory and the destruction of the Jedi didn't have the impact it could've because of the lack of character development throughout the three films. I highly

recommend watching Revenge of the Sith immediately after Attack of the Clones because it makes it seem better, but unfortunately, I didn't, so my score for Star Wars Episode 3 is a below average 4.5/10.

The big problem with the prequel trilogy is that it failed to deliver spectacularly on what it promised. The backstory to one of the greatest villains in cinematic history turned out to be that he was an annoying kid, then an annoying teenager, who then suddenly becomes evil. It took the mysticism of the force and explained it in a way which managed to ruin one of the most integral parts of the world. It had fantastic characters to work with in the form of Yoda and Obi Wan and managed to butcher them, tarnishing the legacy of the original trilogy. Lucas's ego, and his need to personally control every aspect of the story really made these three films suffer, and perhaps with a bit more collaboration between other screenwriters and directors, the prequels could've been a success. Thankfully we will now be leaving the darkness of the prequels and emerging into the light of the late 1970's, a time where nobody had heard the name 'Star Wars'.

There isn't much you can say about Star Wars (1977), or Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope that you can say that hasn't been said before a hundred times over. Everybody knows the story of the visionary genius, George Lucas' dream of re-creating the action series of his youth in an epic, galaxy trotting space adventure. When nobody thought it would succeed, it did, and it did more than anyone could have ever imagined, going on to become a box office behemoth and spawning the most popular and lucrative franchise in film history. More than the film itself, this production revolutionised the whole industry, with groundbreaking special effects from ILM that still hold up to this day. What Lucas did magnificently was create a magical world of wonder and endless possibilities through a combination of incredible sets and model work, as well as jaw dropping sound work. There are more sound effects and ship designs etc synonymous with this film than any other in history. But unlike the prequels in Star Wars, you had a great simple story with likeable interesting characters that populated the fantastic world that was built for them to inhabit, and other than some classic clunky dialogue in places, the script flows really well. Luke Skywalker, Princes Leia, Darth Vader, Han Solo and so many more are all household names across the world because of this film and that achievement alone is a reflection on this film's brilliance. The performances are fantastic, most

noticeably from Harrison Ford who just oozes charisma and roguish charm in his portrayal of Han. Another stand out is Alec Guinness, adding that touch of class as the wise old sage who teaches us about the world, and the voice of James Earl Jones as Darth Vader created one of the most recognisable sounding characters in the history of Hollywood. John Williams' score and the accompanying Star Wars crawl that opened the film is one of the best ideas amongst many that this film had to offer. It became instantly recognisable and unique to the franchise, and without it I am sure that Star Wars wouldn't have taken off in the way it did. Above anything, this film has a feel-good factor, it truly is a crowd pleasing superbly satisfying summer blockbuster, and set the foundation for all that would come after. Star Wars is truly a landmark in film history, but it isn't perfect in every aspect so as a result I'll give it a score of 9/10.

From a near perfect film to one that is even nearer, Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes back is in my humble opinion one of the greatest films ever made, and certainly one of the best sequels. Star Wars had built the beginnings of a great legacy, but it was truly the Empire Strikes back that cemented that legacy in place. Following on from the elation felt at the end of the last film, this throws the audience back in at the deep end as we are shown our beloved characters backed into a corner and beaten down by the baddies. Let's just talk about the story for a moment. There is a love story in this film, and it works and feels natural, and George Lucas didn't write the script which probably explains it. Moreover, Carrie Fisher and Harrison Ford have amazing chemistry, and their relationship is really the heart of the film and key to it being a success. Whilst this is going on, we also learn more about the mysterious force through the teachings of Yoda, and this aspect helps to fantastically build the world and expand the mythology of the Jedi (all without mention of midichlorians)!





# STAR WARS

What truly elevates the Empire Strikes back though is the enlarged scale and scope compared to the first film; the action is bigger, better and more explosive. Take the opening battle of Hoth as an example, this sequence is one of the most famous battle scenes ever put to film, and the design of the mighty Imperial Walkers help give it an epic feel of impending doom. John Williams once again comes up trumps with the iconic Imperial March theme that represents everything about the evil Empire perfectly. The purposeful powerful orchestral backing that now followed Vader and his troops gave them an added level of intimidation. Talking of Vader, the biggest bombshell dropped at the end of this film as he reveals his true identity to Luke is iconic, and you really feel the tension and emotion in the scene. The ending of this film is truly shocking and powerful, and leaves you with a cliff-hanger of seismic proportions. In many ways this is the perfect second film in a trilogy as it builds on its predecessor, is a wonderful stand-alone tale in its own right, and also ends in a way which pushes the anticipation levels through the roof for its sequel. Star Wars Episode V is faultless and as a result it gets a perfect score of 10/10.

Return of the Jedi is admittedly my favourite Star Wars film, however, I know it's objectively not as good as its predecessors and begins to show signs of the direction that Lucas would begin to take the franchise going into the prequels. I am talking of course about the Ewoks who many believe are the first sign of Star Wars becoming goofier and child friendly in order to sell merchandise, and the cynic in me can see the partial truth in this claim. However, for me personally, I like the Ewoks. Yes, it probably is purely due to nostalgia of watching this film when I was young, but I don't really care because I think they're delightful. What Return of the Jedi did was stick the landing of this trilogy of films in a fitting and satisfying way. The epic conclusion to this epic story as Luke battles Vader in front of the cackling evil Emperor is one of the greatest personal, emotionally charged final confrontations we've ever witnessed on screen. So much careful storytelling and character development had gone into this culmination, and it is pulled off perfectly. Meanwhile, the last stand of the Rebellion as they launch a desperate offensive against the new Death Star gives us a grand space battle which I

believe has yet to be topped in Star Wars, and in science fiction films in general. Everything about this ending screams excitement and fist clenching anxiety for the fate of your beloved characters. Almost every element is so satisfying that you can't help but sit back and admire the story that has unfolded before you over these three phenomenal films. What's more is that all of them work as stand alone stories much more than other interconnected film series such as the MCU. For this particular stand alone film, Star Wars Episode VI, I grant it a rating of 9/10.

Overall, I think that the Star Wars original trilogy is one of the greatest ever, just being piped by the Lord of the Rings for quality, but its impact on the industry is by far the greatest of anything that has come before or since, not only for its help in developing the technology and storytelling techniques that would change filmmaking forever, but also its simple underdog story of good vs evil within a world with infinite possibilities resonating positively with the public in an almost unanimous fashion. Moving on, we will be talking about the most highly debated period of the Star Wars story, and that is the current crop of films that are completing the Skywalker Saga.

It was 2012 when the monumental news dropped that Lucasfilm had been purchased by Disney in a \$4 billion deal that would see them developing new Star Wars films, and what's more, that they would be continuing the main saga with Episodes 7, 8, and 9. Although it was later revealed that George Lucas had treatments and ideas for these sequels that he offered to the new filmmakers, Disney decided to not use them and follow its own formula in writing these next chapters. It was announced that JJ Abrams would be brought on to direct the as then untitled Episode VII and Lawrence Kasdan (writer of the Empire Strikes Back) would be brought on to help craft the screenplay. These were all good signs, along with the constant interviews where we were being told that JJ and his team were going back to the old school feel of Star Wars, with a heavy reliance on practical effects, rather than the cold artificial nature of the CGI heavy prequels.

Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens was always going to have a hard job to be successful. For one, it had to be a good film, and reassure the fans that the franchise was in good hands going forward. Moreover, it had to bring Star Wars back into the

public's consciousness in a positive fashion after the sour taste the prequels had left in people's mouths. As a result, the film was very safe, perhaps too safe in some parts, but to me it was a necessary step in order to create a positive reaction which then could be built off of. Despite the fact that The Force Awakens follows a narrative structure very similar to that of the original Star Wars, it is much more than just a carbon copy. This is down to the new characters and how they were introduced to us. The likes of Rey, Finn, and Kylo instantly captured the attention of the audience and they all had the beginning of satisfying arcs that looked like they could develop throughout the trilogy. Unfortunately, the Last Jedi rather butchered most of these, but more on that later. Moreover, the old cast were here to hand over the torch and they do this magnificently, the legendary characters feel like a natural part of the story, rather than a contrived presence in the narrative as they did in the prequels. Harrison Ford returned as Han Solo in one of the best performances of the latter part of his career, and alongside the energy of the incredibly talented up and coming young cast helped bring these well written characters to life. Another thing that Episode VII did fantastically well was in building the world at this point in the timeline of the galaxy. It clearly established the players, and hinted at some interesting mysteries to be developed upon, such as the identity of Snoke, and the origin of Rey. Overall, I think JJ and the rest of the cast and crew did a fantastic job bringing Star Wars back and made a film that was interesting, nostalgic in a positive sense, and above all a fun romp back in the style of the original trilogy. As a consequence, Star Wars Episode 7 gets a score of 8/10.

Now we get to perhaps what is the most divisive entry into the series, Episode VIII: The Last Jedi. Following the success of Episode 7, Star Wars fans were on the whole excited for the possibilities of the Last Jedi. Luke Skywalker was back and we had a whole cast of new characters who had compelling stories to continue into the new film. Moreover, Looper director Rian Johnson was at the helm and his talent as a writer/director is undeniable; I've just seen his most recent film Knives Out and it is one of the best of 2019. Johnson's genius is seen at times during the Last Jedi with some beautiful jaw dropping action, especially the fight with Snoke's guards and

the silent sacrifice in the space battle. However, where he made some very interesting stylistic choices he also massively disrespected the legacy of the franchise he was working in, and I believe that his selfishness and desire to leave his own unique mark on the Star Wars franchise jeopardized the entire story going forward. It seemed he was obsessed with subverting fans' expectations, but this was not done in a good way, and it seemed almost petty. For instance, making epic looking scenes in the last film into punchlines for below par jokes, and deciding to not build on the mystery developed, but rather just quickly answer it with an unsatisfying conclusion, such as the storyline surrounding Snoke. Perhaps most heinously, he managed to mess up the return of some of the legacy characters, most notably the original series' protagonist Luke Skywalker. It was reported that Mark Hamill clashed with Johnson over the direction his character was being taken and you can see why. I really feel that Kathleen Kennedy and the other higher ups at Lucasfilm have to shoulder a lot of responsibility for this mess as they didn't step in to rein in Johnson's changing of the carefully crafted outline to the story. Overall, Star Wars Episode VIII was a real disappointment and gets a score of 4/10.

Looking forward to Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker which will hit cinemas on the 20th December there is a sense of trepidation given the mistakes that have come before, but as ever there is also optimism. Optimism that the creative forces at Lucasfilm can stick the landing and give a fitting end to the most famous story ever put to film, to satisfy their vast fanbase, and do justice to the wonderful world and characters that evolved from the brainchild of George Lucas into the public consciousness. With JJ Abrams returning, and the backlash to the Last Jedi hopefully acknowledged I believe that there is enough potential to create a fantastic movie that will book end the three trilogies satisfyingly and superbly. Star Wars has been, and will continue to be one of the most beloved and studied film franchises of all time, and no matter how the Rise of Skywalker is received, The Galaxy Far Far Away will live on in the imagination of all of us who've been captured by the wonder that ambitious and striking filmmaking stirs up within ourselves.





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# GAMES



## REVIEW - Pokémon: Sword & Shield

By TOMOS EWING

I've been quite a big fan of the Pokémon franchise since I was little, however as a child I didn't play any of the games and instead was an anime-only fan of Pokémon. My first game in the franchise was Pokémon Let's Go! Pikachu, a remaster of Pokémon Yellow, so I went into Pokémon Sword & Shield with very little knowledge or experience.

The first thing that surprised me about this game was the world design: the new Galar region is heavily inspired by Great Britain and the different influences of British culture and lifestyle is seen throughout the world. The dialogue is heavily centered around British slang and we see 'mate' slung around quite a bit, with your rival even saying he's "absolutely cream crackered" which I'll admit made me laugh. What made

the game really enjoyable for me was that it reminded me a lot of my childhood through the design of the villages, towns and cities as well as the countryside.

There is no national Pokedex in this game, meaning that not every Pokémon from every game appear in Galar. However, being a relatively new player to the franchise, the absence of a lot of Pokémon didn't really faze me all that much. There are still over 400 Pokémon throughout both Sword and Shield, and it was exciting that I could learn about all the ones that were new to me: my favourite Pokémon ended up being Lucario, a fighting type from generation 4. Even though they were already introduced in previous games, I got to experience all of these Pokémon for the first time which was refreshing (unless they were from the Kanto Region, otherwise I already knew about them).

The gym battles were also interesting, and the inclusion of gym challenges made the gyms stand out much more than the ones I faced during Pokémon Let's Go! Pikachu. Instead of just beating trainers up until you fight the gym leader, this time there were gym challenges which served as puzzles, requiring more skill to go through than simply battling multiple gym trainers before a final standoff with the gym leader. I had a fun time herding Wooloo (the sheep of the Galar region) into goals, as well as traversing through an ice rink using sensors to detect cracks and holes in the ice, and many of the other gym challenges were also engaging. I do wish that these gym challenges were a bit more difficult, but as the game is aimed at a mix of older fans and new, young fans I could see why making the game a bit easier was necessary.

The plot intrigued me as well, and

made sense within the established story of the Galar region. The main cast were fleshed out and overall were solid characters: your character's rival, Hop, was irritating at the beginning as he kept bringing up things I already knew, but later on in the game his character develops into a somewhat decent one. My only big complaint in this regard were the main 'bad guy' team, known as Team Yell; all this group does is cheer on a rival trainer named Marnie and try to battle you to let her win the Pokémon League. I felt like Team Rocket were a much better example of how a main antagonistic team should be presented.

My favourite feature was hands down the camping activity. Essentially, at any point in the game that you're free-roaming Galar, you can set up a campsite. In your little camp, the six Pokémon on your team run around and interact and

play with each other, and you can even play with them using toys which allow you to grow your relationship with your Pokémon. This feature reminded me a lot of my old Nintendogs games on the Nintendo DS, and gave me a bit of a nostalgia trip in that regard. There is also the cooking feature which allows you to cook various curries and feed your Pokémon, with over 150 curries to cook to fill out your Currydex. You are rewarded for filling out your Currydex with various toys that you can use in your camp. Camping is a lot of fun and I found myself using the feature a lot more than I think it was intended to be used, but I enjoyed playing with my Pokémon and building friendships with them.

Overall, Pokémon Sword & Shield are incredible fun and have sparked a newfound love for the Pokémon games in me.







# Xbox Game Pass Review

By TOMOS EWING

When we think of popular subscription services our minds drift towards Netflix, Amazon Prime, Now TV, etc. However, subscription services for games consoles aren't talked about as much in comparison with these movie/television streaming services. After some research into the different ones available, I settled on the Xbox Game Pass since Xbox is the system I prefer to play on. So what made the Xbox Game Pass stand out to me from other subscription services?

Microsoft's Xbox Game Pass was something I only picked up recently but have found myself using very often. In summary, the Xbox Game Pass offers around 246 games (as of writing this) for around £7.99 a month. Many of Xbox's exclusive titles have all been

released on Game Pass, such as Forza Horizon 4, Gears of War 5, Blair Witch, etc. There are also many other popular game franchises available on Game Pass as well like Borderlands, Fallout, Metro and many others. The library also changes often, with the least-played games being removed every few weeks as an influx of new titles all come in. One of the Xbox Game Pass' greatest strengths lies in this vast library of games, and the sheer amount of titles that are available to subscribers leaves you with more than enough on your plate. It also allows indie developers to have their games debut on the service and it ends up reaching a larger audience, meaning independent developers also benefit from the system.

Xbox Game Pass is also a much better investment in comparison to other subscription services in the games industry, such as EA Access or PS Now.

EA Access is cheaper, sitting at £3.99 per month, and gives you access to over 50 games. EA Access subscribers gain access to The Vault which gives you access to full EA games that are playable so long as you keep the subscription going. There are a few standout titles here as well, such as Dead Space and Dragon Age, however I felt that the library didn't offer much outside of games published by EA. The one factor that made me lean more towards the Xbox Game Pass is that on Game Pass, you get access to brand new exclusive games on launch day for free; on EA Access, however, you get up to 10 hours of trial for brand new games such as Anthem or Battlefield V and you then have to purchase the full game, albeit at a discounted price.

Also, there's the matter of PS Now, PlayStation's subscription service. In Essence, PlayStation Now is Sony's

answer to Xbox's Backwards Compatibility feature; the difference being that on Xbox you simply need to pop in your old Xbox or Xbox 360 disc and you can play your old games, whereas on PS Now, you have to pay £8.99 a month to play your PS3 games, and even then you can't use your own discs to do so. PS Now offers over 400 PS3 games to stream and play as well as over 50 of PS4's 'best hits' which include games like The Last of Us, Uncharted, God of War, and others. The disadvantage of this being a streaming service is that you have to have a stable internet connection in order to play the games on offer with PS Now, whereas with Xbox Game Pass you can play the games offline once they are downloaded.

One of the best features of Game Pass is that instead of paying £7.99 for Xbox Live Gold, which lets you play online with other players, and paying

for the Xbox Game Pass on top of that, Microsoft introduced Xbox Game Pass Ultimate which combines both subscriptions and gives you access to Game Pass on PC as well. There are some titles that are exclusive to Game Pass on console, and some exclusive to Game Pass on PC. Even if you don't take advantage of the Game Pass on your PC, it's still worth it as you only pay £10.99 a month for both Gold and Game Pass as opposed to £7.99 each per month.

If you're a student like me and own an Xbox, Game Pass is a subscription service worth checking out. Its large variety of titles on offer let you explore many games that different kinds of people will enjoy, and is also a much cheaper alternative to forking out £50 for brand new games.



# Console Wars

By TOMOS EWING

For as long as I can remember, any and all discussion involving video game consoles have been split into three groups: Xbox, Playstation and Nintendo. There are some who enjoy all of these, but for the most part, there is a heated debate as to which is the best of these platforms, so I thought I'd delve into my own opinions about each console in this generation, as next year we'll be seeing a new generation of consoles introduced.

Firstly, I'd like to talk about Xbox. Xbox has been an incredibly successful company when bringing out consoles, games and many other things; this console generation, being the Xbox One, started out rough and it took Microsoft a while to recuperate. In the last few years though, the Xbox One has been a standout console with many great updates and games

to show for it. We got the Xbox One X, which is currently the world's most powerful console with true native 4K resolution complete with High Dynamic Range and 60fps support on many games, as well as a hefty 12 gigabytes of GDDR5 RAM which gives out roughly 6 teraflops of computing power (essentially, the Xbox One X is powerful). Xbox also introduced the Xbox Game Pass, a subscription service giving you access to over 260 games. Most first-party exclusive games have also been incredibly solid since the launch of the Xbox One, such as the Forza, Halo and Gears of War franchises. With all the information about Xbox's next generation console, Project Scarlett, coming to light, it seems that Xbox will be aiming for another powerful console release, and hopefully with a great suite of launch titles to go with it.

Playstation has also been a choice console for me for the last few years; the Playstation 4 houses some of the

best games I've ever played, such as The Last of Us, God of War, etc. I played on my PSP way back when. It was my portable console of choice and I loved playing games like RocoLoco and LittleBigPlanet while travelling about. PS4 was a console I only picked up a few years back, and even then, I only picked it up for the games. However, the first-party exclusives on PS4 are much better than the Xbox exclusive titles: Persona 5 has quickly become one of my favourite games of all time, with games like The Last Of Us, Spider-Man, Infamous: Second Son and Until Dawn blowing me away in terms of how much I enjoyed the story. I also really like the Dualshock-4 in terms of how it feels to use, and it really does improve over the Dualshock-3. I enjoyed the incorporation of the motion controls and touchpad in some of the exclusives I played, which was very unique, specifically in Until Dawn and how you had to stay still in certain sections. Overall, if you're looking for sol-

id single-player experiences then the PlayStation 4 is easily the best choice.

The Nintendo Switch is one of the consoles I've had the most fun with, and playing it on the go makes it even more so. Playing Mario Kart, using the joycons on a small screen with friends, really does have its own novelty. I like the way you can buy multiple sets of joycons and then mix and match them to create your own colour combinations, bringing a layer of customisation to the console. The games are fun too, which is expected of Nintendo games at this point. The Switch introduced me to so many new game franchises that I never knew I'd have this much fun playing, like Pokemon, The Legend of Zelda, or Super Smash Brothers. Having a console I can take around with me is incredibly handy, and I love how I can link to others' Nintendo Switches and play Mario Kart and other games via local play. I also do like playing the console in Docked mode, where

it connects to the TV, allowing you to play games either in handheld or docked modes. The versatility of this console is truly a benefit, and if you enjoy Nintendo in general, or if you're looking for a console you can take with you in your bag, I couldn't recommend this console enough.

Each console has its own strengths and weaknesses, and with only a year before the new generation of consoles releases it's exciting to think what each big company can deliver in terms of hardware, as well as their game lineups. I feel that Microsoft will have the best console in terms of sheer power, Sony will have a much better lineup of exclusives to unveil, and I'm interested to see if Nintendo will even bother with a new console considering the Switch hasn't been out that long, as well as how popular it is. With the specifications that have been released by Microsoft and Sony, it seems the console wars will be in full force over the next year.



# SOCIETIES & VOLUNTEERING

## Societies



**Bangor University Sci-Fi & Fantasy Society welcome you to join us!**

Free film nights held in Academi 7:30pm every Monday  
Regular social events & collaborations with like-minded groups

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/scifisocbangor/>  
<https://www.undebbangor.com/opportunities/society/scifisocbangor/>

**Social Sciences Society Presents:**  
**1920's Winter Ball**  
Party like you're Gatsby!

**13th December**  
Reichel DJ til' late  
7:30—Midnight  
Bar + Buffet  
Early Bird tickets - £17  
General sale - £20

Charity Raffle for the Snowdonia Animal Sanctuary  
Live Music with the Magee Brothers

By **LISA SPARKES**

The SHIPSS (School of History, Philosophy, and Social Sciences) society have been busy organising events for students, and this is the big event for this semester: our 'Party like its Gatsby 1920's' Winter Ball. tickets are on sale through the SU Shop. Our society tries to organise unique and exciting events that students

can get away from assignments and exams and relax for a few hours. This evening will have live music, DJ, poker tables, raffle and a buffet and bar for you to enjoy whilst raising money for a fantastic charity, the Snowdonia Animal Sanctuary. Please join us for a fantastic evening to get in to the Christmas spirit.

## Volunteering



### Walk&Talk with Connect@Bangor collaboration with Meet and Mingle

We had our first collaboration with meet and mingle on the 22nd November in the Students union. There, we aimed to create a platform for people to network, mingle, make friends and just to have fun on that night away from studying- in the form of icebreakers such as 'mafia' and 'speed network-

ing activity' and fun games, which turned out to be a huge success. If you enjoyed this activity and would like to know more about Walk&Talk with Connect@Bangor, find us on Facebook and like our Facebook page at Walk&Talk with Connect@Bangor and come join us on our walks that happen every Wednesday and Friday

at 3.30pm either outside of Pontio or in Main Arts Reception (location will be confirmed before the walk on our Facebook page). We will go to places around Bangor like Bangor Pier, the Stone Circle and so on. Thank you so much for coming and we hope to see you soon!



## Sbectrwm

Sbectrwm has been back in business this year! For those that don't know, we are a student-led playgroup for children with autism and their siblings. With fresh faced volunteers and a brand-new building, we were ready to start the year off with a great session! Caitlin Williams (Project Leader) stated "It was great to be back and to see the kids after such a long break! All the volunteers were amazing, and we had a really successful session; all the kids settled in straight away and thoroughly enjoyed the ses-

sion, none of them wanted to leave by the end of it!"

The sessions have been filled with toys, board games, and many drawing competitions! The parents made a point of saying its great to have Sbectrwm back, with one parent emphasising how she hasn't been able to be away from her child's side for 6 months until the first session. Another parent gifted us some photos of a session from the previous academic year, stating "It's the best project she's ever come across" and thanked us for

providing an invaluable service. Lou Watson (Project Leader) stated "It's great to be part of a project that gives so much back to the community". This semester has been a great for Sbectrwm; we are currently looking to expand our service and provide a Monday session- consequently we are recruiting children aged 5-11 with Autism and their siblings. If you know of anyone who is legible please contact [gareth.williams@undebbangor.com](mailto:gareth.williams@undebbangor.com).





# Bangor University Healing Garden

By **FATIMA AMMAR**

Bangor's student-led community garden at the Fron Heulog site (next to St James's Church on Friddoedd Road), formerly nicknamed 'HogSoc garden,' has been undergoing a new project in collaboration with Headway Gwynedd, the brain injury association, since the summer of 2019. On top of the pre-existing raised vegetable beds, cold frames, live willow dome, Welsh heritage fruit trees, and our charismatic shed, we have created a sensory garden for brain trauma patients and students alike to enjoy, benefit from, and relax in.

Throughout the past decade, the garden has been renovated from a disused patch of land. In the past year, this changed dramatically as we started to renovate other parts of the garden for the Healing Garden. Volunteers from both Student Volunteer Bangor Healing Garden and Headway Gwynedd, as well as local contrac-

tors, have been busy at the garden conducting various tasks such as creating the accessibility ramp which runs from the entrance gate down the vegetable bed area and around into the sensory spiral. An arduous few months were spent clearing the garden of weeds, brambles, ivy and turf to make room for pathways and planting. It was a mammoth task that would not have been achievable without our dedicated volunteers and donations. We had also applied for Kew Garden's Grow Wild grant which we have successfully been awarded. This will go towards ensuring that the Healing Garden is the green haven we strive to achieve.

The Healing Garden features a sinewy path fondly called the Sensory Spiral which leads to a wonderful seating area and bog garden at the heart of it. The path is inter-planted with colourful plants to allow for sensory exploration. The spiral shape helps enlarge the space and create multiple layers of planting. Future plans include an area for feathery

grasses and in spring we hope our sowed wildlife meadow will come to life in a burst of colour, attracting nationally important pollinators such as butterflies and bees.

We have also made a pizza oven for the garden to add a culinary edge to our socials. It was a key feature in our Pizza Party social in October in collaboration with RAG, who are supporting our friend charity, Headway Gwynedd, this year. In addition to the pizza oven, we also have campfire areas to gather around when the Welsh chill kicks in, snug in our recycled cotton blankets- or to toast and roast some tasty snacks. Our chair, Emily, had fun toasting some pumpkin seeds at our Pumpkin Party last month while members warmed their hands over the fire.

As a garden volunteer group, we are committed to ensuring we are as sustainable as possible in our daily activities. We have created a compost heap area for all organic plant material to be reused. We hope to use the compost to fertilise our crops in fu-

ture, encouraging greener methods of plant growing. We have also scavenged most of the wooden planks and decorations used around the garden second-hand and through donations. We have recently installed an arbour, a pergola, and a mirror to help reflect colours and lights from around the garden.

Sensory gardens are used to help those suffering from various sensory problems, learning difficulties, brain injuries, or mental disorders to feel safe and comfortable exploring their senses and learning to focus on them separately without risk of sensory over-stimulation. All five senses are explored; perfumed flowers and various herbs play on the sense of smell; barks and grasses might provide interesting textures to touch; herbs, edible flowers, and fruits can play on the taste buds; kaleidoscopic wildflower patches provide a show for the eyes and even the shapes of various leaves on the plants can help to encourage shape and spatial awareness. Colours can also transfer across the seasons

making the garden fully functional year around; in autumn, for example, there is an array of burnt yellow and burnished oranges as well as the crunching sounds of the decaying leaves covering the ground.

We meet almost every Sunday for volunteer workdays, and throughout the week we hold socials. So this year, our socials have included a Christmas Wreath-Making Workshop, Terrarium Workshop, Halloween Pumpkin Party, Pizza Party, and the usual start of academic year BBQ.

The garden is of particular interest to students of the School of Natural Sciences as there is a range of biodiversity that can help develop species identification skills (we hold occasional identification workshops in collaboration with other natural sciences societies). We are hoping to document species in the garden, both visiting species and residents. It is also great for psychology students to observe the effects of nature and therapy gardens on various ailments and conditions.





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# SPORT

## What's On?

7th December - Winter  
Showcase - Pole Fitness

7th December - Winter  
Showcase - K-Pop

8th December - AU  
Super Teams

9th December - In-  
house competition -  
Brazilian Jiu jitsu

26th January - York-  
shire Open - Bangor  
Karate Union

AU Circuits every Sun-  
day - see AU page for  
times

Want to feature your  
sessions, fundraisers,  
matches in this section  
then contact me on

sport@seren.bangor.  
ac.uk

By HOLLY WILLIAMS

## Double gold medals for Bangor Karate Union's top competitors.



By TANYA RILEY

The Bangor Karate Union (BKU) began their new competing year with a new squad and an incredible set of results on the 17th November. The club competed on home soil for a second year at the Welsh Open held in Llandudno Junction. The lack of travel meant that upon arrival at 9am everyone was well rested and excited to start the competing year with a bang. The competition began and progressed quickly. Before long the club's competitors were on the mat competing in kata.

Our first competitor, Sion, progressed through to the finals of the male novice section where after an intense final came away with the silver medal, a fantastic personal result for him, after receiving bronze the year previous. Next came our intermediate females who were both relatively new to this category after progressing up from novice. Bethany unfortunately got knocked out at 5th place, her highest placing to date in the category. However, Arcadia progressed through the rounds to reach the final where she smashed the competition and achieved the club's first gold medal of the day.

Our advanced competitors achieved prominent results in immensely tough categories, with Theo recovering from a leg injury managing to place in the Top 8 for his category. For the ladies, our veteran Holly achieved her highest placing of 5th place after being

knocked out by the eventual winner of the category. Whilst our newest squad member, Robyn, who is also new to competing, achieving 4th place again being knocked out by the winner of the category.

Our final individual category and the club's most successful, was the female novices. We had 4 competitors in this category, all of whom placed in the Top 5. Our captain Libby was knocked out at 5th place by our own competitor who also went on to knock Ebony out of her first competition in 4th place. Suddenly, the club was in a repeat position to the first competition the year before, with an all BKU final. It also happened to be the same two individuals, Rachel and Hannah. These two individuals began karate together over 2 years ago with no prior knowledge and have pushed each other to beyond the best of their abilities. In 2018 it was a close final with only one flag in it, with Rachel reigning supreme. Would the result be the same this year or would the tables have turned? Both individuals performed their final katas beautifully and almost identically. It was difficult to perceive which the referees would choose. As the flags went up a mix of both red and blue filled the air, yet again there was only one flag difference between them both... but this year it was Hannah who won the gold. It was a result which would lead the pair into an incredible final category for the club.

Hannah and Rachel had barely 10 minutes to soak in the high of their

incredible final before they were back up on the mats. This time they were competing in pairs kata. This category requires two individuals to perform the same kata synchronously and with no cues from each other. They need to be in perfect harmony. The competition was tough, with all other competitors being experienced and seasoned black belts, performing increasingly advanced katas, the odds didn't look good for the pair. However, with each round that passed the pair became increasingly in sync and the competition less so. The final was in sight and we dared to believe it might be possible. They reached the final against a strong male black belt pair however, when the flags went up, they had smashed the entire competition to achieve the club's first gold medal in the pair kata category, with the third lowest kata in karate because of their incredible ability to perform in sync.

Both Hannah and Rachel challenge each other to be the best they can both be, and because of this they are able to achieve unparalleled heights of ability in their category and beyond. Their connection branches beyond that of karate and into friendship outside the club which makes them an incredible force on the competition circuit. I can not wait to see what this pair are able to achieve in their final year at this club, but I know it will be incredible.

The BKU would like to praise all its competitors on an unbelievable result at our first competition back. With par-

ticular acknowledgement and congratulations to the kata pair on an incredible 1st place result and to Hannah on her well-deserved double gold medal!





# Why YOU Should Start a Sport in the New Year

By HOLLY WILLIAMS

Sports is often a pastime that many University students undertake throughout their three years of study. Although many people do sports for the passion of it, there are multiple health benefits.

Aside from the physical health benefits of becoming fitter and physically healthier, there are also multiple mental health benefits which could be a reason for you to join a team in January. It has been scientifically proven that regular exercise can have a profoundly positive impact on depression, anxiety, ADHD and more. Not only this, it can relieve stress, improve memory, help you sleep better and boost your overall mood, which are perfect to help university students.

Studies have shown that exercise can be just as effective as antidepressant medication for mild to moderate depression, without the side effects. A study undertaken at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health discovered that a fifteen-minute run a day, or an hour walk, can reduce the risk of major depression by 26%. Along with this research, it has shown that maintaining an exercise schedule can prevent someone from relapsing. Exercise is this effective for several reasons: it promotes changes in the brain such as neural growth, and reduced inflammation; it also releases endorphins, which are chemicals in your brain that make your overall mood improve.

As stress affects your body in multiple ways such as tensing muscles and causing insomnia and stomach aches, it can lead to worry and discomfort, therefore creating more stress and a cycle between your mind and body. Exercising can break this cycle. As well as releasing endorphins in the brain, physical



activity can relax the muscles and relieve tension in the body. As the body and mind are closely linked, when your body feels better, so will your mind.

Exercise can also improve memory and thinking; the same endorphins

that boost your moral also help people concentrate and feel mentally sharp for tasks. It also stimulates the growth of new brain cells and helps prevent age-related decline.

Having these multiple health benefits

are just the reason why you should join a sports team in the New Year, anything from Brazilian jiu jitsu to netball it is always worth a try.

Check the AU page for more information on joining a sports club.



## 12 Hours of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu



By HOLLY WILLIAMS

Multiple members of the Brazilian jiu jitsu club came down to undergo twelve hours of rolling, practicing techniques and just to have fun in order to raise money for Movember. American football, boxing, karate, judo, wakeboarding and Japanese jiu jitsu came down to have a go and help raise money with us. Thanks

to everyone's help, we managed to raise over £100.

If anyone is interested in taking up Brazilian jiu jitsu, training is on Mondays 17:00-19:00 at Academi and Thursdays 17:00-18:30 at the Poun Bangor.





## Fly Without Fear



By MEGAN FOSTER-WHITE

Bangor Uni Pole Fit is unlike any other sport. Take gymnastics, dance and a bit of powerlifting and you have someone that does pole fit. It takes immense strength, but more importantly it takes a lot of self confidence. Pole fit has never been

about competing against one another, rather learning from each other and encouraging one another. If someone told me a few years ago that I would be performing at university wearing little clothing and spinning around on a pole I would call them a liar. Everyone has

their own journey with pole fit and a reason why they take part. It's a beautiful sport which inspires me everyday to try my best and to push myself even further. Being part of this wonderful community has made me more confident and has done wonders for my

mental and physical health. I'd encourage everyone to try pole fitness once in their life (I promise you it's harder than it looks). Join something that lifts you up, helps you engage and pushes your body in ways you didn't feel possible. If you'd like to know more about our

team, what we do and how you can take part, please message our Facebook page "Bangor Uni Pole" - we'd love to hear from you!

We'd also like to invite you to our winter showcase on the 7th December, PL5!

## Netball Bangor 2nds vs Keele 2nds



The girls started with a strong 1st quarter, keeping tight on their players; gaining a 10 point lead. This lead continued to increase during the second quarter with glorious shots from Martha Taylor and some great interceptions from Poppy Mchale in defence!

The girls kept to their own pace with some brilliant play from Jenna Tate and Libby McKenna-Fraser bringing the ball up court.

The match ended with a fabulous win for Bangor 61-25!  
Player of the match: Grace Anderson

Captains player: Martha Taylor

DOD: Libby McKenna-Fraser

