

SEREN

FREE!

Valentine's Issue 2008

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW



You may not realise it, but Students' Unions up and down the country are all charities and this year their practice is that Bangor Students' Union is changing the way in which they run things. This follows closely after NUS have updated their own constitution and policies. Over the summer, current President of the Union, Sam Burnett, put together a group of students to discuss the way in which changes could be incorporated into the Union here in Bangor. Since the legal status of the Union was changing, it made sense to update other processes of the Union at the same time.

Now this process has moved on several stages. Every student at Bangor University was emailed and given the opportunity to give their opinion on the proposed changes and slowly these mutated into the first stage of a new constitution. The implication of which was voted on at an Emergency General Meeting on 28th January and this new constitution will come into effect on 1st August, as the new financial year commences.

So what are the changes? There will still be five sabbatical officers of the Union, but their names and remits have been re-evaluated. There will still be a President, an AU President and a UMCB President, but the Communication and Societies Officer's role along with that of Education and Welfare Officer have been reassigned under the job titles of Deputy President and Societies and

Events Officer. The Deputy President's job will encompass welfare and communications and the Societies and Events Officer will be in charge of societies and Union events such as Serendipity.

There is going to be more opportunity for students to get involved in Union politics. There will no longer be a Council, but a Senate instead and twenty two senators will be elected to it by cross campus ballot in a separate election later on in the year. There will be committees set up to oversee groups of societies, all of which are compartmentalised within their aims. One such committee will be a Communications Committee which will encompass societies such as SEREN and Storm FM, as well as new areas such as Environment and Community. Another exciting addition is that of an Events Committee who will be able to give opinions on everything from Serendipity; and Give It A Go; to which acts appear in Amser/Time.

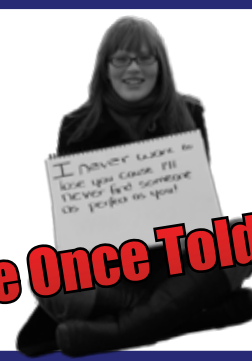
It is only the first section of this new constitution which has been written and voted on, but the next sections will be written over the next six months and by the beginning of the next academic year, Bangor Students' Union will be run in a different and hopefully more efficient way, but you will already notice some of the changes as the elections for next year's sabbatical officers take place in the coming weeks.

Emma Dodd

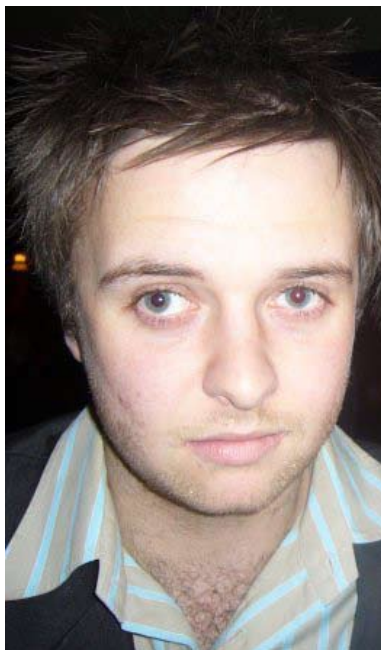
THE NEW CONSTITUTION MEANS:

- More opportunity for students to get involved in Union politics
- Sabbatical officers names and remits re-evaluated
- No more Council, but a Senate instead

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Issue



Someone Once Told Me

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Daniel Turner****Thank you to all who
made it happen****EDITORIAL**

Hello to all and welcome to the first issue of Seren in 2008. Since the last edition the team has had a good chat about where we feel we want to go. The paper has progressed rapidly in the last couple of years, and we are now at a stage where we have to make some decisions on how to further this progress. Primarily, we have decided to use the supplement (STAR) less frequently, and instead use it only for special edition issues. The planned compilation CD that we hope to release in the next issue will be produced in relation to the STAR magazine for example. The deduction of the supplement consequently frees up a lot more space within the newspaper. This room we will fill with extra news, and a politics

section. Additionally, we have the space for extra sub branch pages if needed. The politics page takes a very similar format to that of the Halloween edition. We have two articles on the political world, one from the right side of the political spectrum and one from the left. As well as this, we have The Bludgeoner, who keeps us up to date with the inner gossip from around the Student Union. We have also included a section in which you can have your say on where you want the student paper to go. As a paper written by the students, for the students, it is essential that we have a good grasp on what the general population want to see.

Someone Once Told Me

The Valentines Day issue is always a tricky one to get right. How do we avoid straying into 'cheesy' romantic territory covered in overused clichés without completely losing the theme? This year we have been rescued by one man and his passion. Mario Cacciottolo came up with an idea of photographing people with a board which contains a message that someone once told them. His work has since flourished from its foundation in London to photographs of people from around the world. Features editor Siobhan Holt was able to contact Mario and arrange for him to come to Bangor. This he recently did, and in the centre of the newspaper, we have published several of his photos that contain, surprise- surprise, a valentines message that someone once told them. His work is really quite fascinating, and we all wish Mario the best of luck in pursuing his career.

St Patrick's Day

On page nine, there is a special on St Patricks day. The occasion often springs ideas of Guinness until your sick and waving all things Green orange and white. In keeping with this, we have included recipes for traditional St Patricks day drinks, including Guinness punch and Irish cocktails. As well as this however, there is an article on the patron saints of Britain and Ireland, that questions why we celebrate St Patricks day so much, often over our own patron saints.

University Bands

As I have mentioned in most issues up until now, we plan to release a University Bands compilation CD. We have been overwhelmed by the amount of bands that have displayed their interest so far. Out of all of those who have responded, we plan to use as many as we can on the CD, and the initial selection and invention process of it will start very soon.

7-A- Side World Cup

In the sports section there is an article on the ever popular 7- A-Side league. Seren hopes to capitalise on the growing interest in the competition by setting up an all- day 7- A- Side world cup to raise money for the paper. Entrants will initially be designated countries that they will represent, and from that knockout stages will be played through until one country is awarded the world cup. If anyone has any ideas or expresses any interest in being involved in this, please feel free to contact me.

Apart from that, happy reading to you all and a happy Valentines Day, St Patricks day and any other 'excuse for a celebration' day.

Jack Peat**editor@seren.bangor.ac.uk**

Vote in the Students' Union elections

Tuesday 4 March to Thursday 6 March.

2008 Etholiadau Undeb y Myfyrwyr: Mawrth 4-5-6 2008
Students' Union Elections: 4-5-6 March 2008
www.undeb.bangor.ac.uk/e08



"BE CORRUPT IF YOU MAY, BUT NEVER FORGET, TAXES YOU MUST PAY"



UCLAN STUDENT EXPOSED SELLING ESSAYS FOR UP TO £1,000

As a college graduate, in the summer of '07, it was my belief that those who apply and attend university courses are those who truly understand the meaning and importance of education. Banned are the class clowns and jokers of the college classrooms, non-existent is the rebellious and ridiculously controversial louts looking for attention. Large lectures are full of diligent, dedicated scholars set on learning and improving their skills and knowledge.

Since becoming a university student that mirage has long disintegrated into miniscule, segments of dirt blowing in Bangor's bitter winds. University is the time of your life. It's about making friends, meeting new people, mixing business with pleasure and having a good time. Here in Bangor, students have a good idea of what is important and despite hectic social lives they manage to find time for essays and reports.

It seems this is not the case for all universities. An unsettling scandal has recently hit the papers surrounding the University of Central Lancashire. One masters student, Kai 'Jimmy' Li has spent the last two years of his degree selling plagiarised essays to lazy students. These students were so desperate for someone else to do their work they were paying up to £1000 per piece. Kai had up to

35 writers working for him to deal with the enormous demand from cheating scholars.

Since this operation has been discovered Kai was threatened with deportation and hilariously, criminal action from the Inland Revenue for neglecting to pay taxes on his huge illegal income. A spokesperson for Inland Revenue said: 'If he wasn't doing it for large amounts of money then that is not as bad' It appears not knowing whether past graduates earned their degrees or not, is irrelevant and petty compared with the realisation that this student did not pay his taxes.

Another intriguing aspect of this story is the fact that, due to there being little hope of finding those inactive students, they will have the opportunity to continue their degree and survive on their own. Their punishment being the severe drop in the deep end of a university degree. The 35 writers who knowingly wrote work for people with very little interest in their degree cannot be traced and their only inconvenience is lack of pocket money. The genius mastermind of the operation: a promising business student with genuine talent, a scholar containing the essential greedy streak needed to become successful in the business industry that is now suspended from college and has fled in fear of the government to his home country

China. When Mr Kai Li was first caught, he pleaded to keep this scandal from his parents and said: 'I will work very hard and become a great businessman. You give me a lesson I won't forget for the rest of my life'.

It is obvious Kai Li committed a terrible crime; however his business venture was possibly due to the incredible demand and willingness of others to cheat and deceive. This article should not highlight to you the evil nature of one man; instead it should cause you to reflect on the changing attitude of students in modern education. High grades have become imperative thanks to high competition for post degree jobs and students are willing to go to extreme lengths to get them. University students are becoming corrupt and deceitful to obtain a well-paid job and it will take more than the exposure of one plagiarism operation to put an end to this trend.

After all, it's not just the students who are money obsessed but also the government who were most upset by not getting their cut of the profits. A sad sordid tale that casts a shadow on the education and government system of the future. Let us, the students of Bangor University, avoid such scandals.

RoBee

SEREN: also available online
www.seren.bangor.ac.uk

**LATEST ISSUES
COMPETITIONS
SURVEYS
LINKS
CONTACTS**

NUS EXTRA (SPENDING)

LOSSES OF £1.1 MILLION UNCOVERED BY STUDENT NEWSPAPER

The referendum of March 2007 was a contentious issue in Bangor, indeed, a large proportion of 2007 was consumed formulating arguments for and against NUS, organising Ballots and finally voting on whether to disaffiliate or not. The financial aspects of being part of the NUS seemed to be outweighing the actual benefits of being affiliated to it. The University spends £37,000 a year on being part of the NUS, money that many people believe could be better spent. On top of this, the general function and purpose of the NUS was widely questioned. It seemed recent failures had created a general disillusionment on what the NUS actually provides us with. Limited discounts and campaigns on issues that only effect a small majority of students were two hot-topics on the debate. As well as this, the NUS ironically spent £80,000 on trying to stop universities disaffiliating, when it was the overspending of funds that Universities were contemplating disaffiliating over. On the 13th, 14th, and 15th of March 2007 students voted in a campus wide election on whether the university should disaffiliate itself from the National Union of Students and the result was that the students decided to stay affiliated. Reasons for this range, but a significant reason was the imminent introduction of NUS Extra cards that promised more benefits than ever before at a cost effective rate. The NUS Extra cards were also designed to drag the organisation out of the financial turmoil.

Recently a student newspaper investigation has uncovered losses of over £1.1 mil-

lion between 2006 and 2007, with NUS extra cards contributing at a loss of £18,000. The survey points to severe financial mismanagement in the NUS, and reports how:

Their predictions on the income of NUS Extra were 'significantly overstated'.

- They spent £300k of student money holding their annual conference in one of the UK's premier locations.

- The NUS splashed out £108k on a business development manager during their loss-making year.

Whilst official figures remain unavailable, financial estimates given at the NUS's Annual Conference in March show that the NUS lost £1,120,503 of students' cash last year with a potential £600,000 loss also possible this year. The losses have been attributed to many financial hiccups and errors. £100,000 was spent on hiring a business development manager to help the union. The NUS Extra cards seem to be at the very forefront of the fiasco, not only failing to overcome the financial difficulties, but adding their own strain as well. Official documents obtained by York Vision show how the NUS admit that the predicted income from their 'extra' cards was 'significantly overstated' - despite spending £245k on their finance department. The cards cost the NUS £740k last year and that is due to rise by over £100k this year. Their annual conference costs alone added up to over £300,00, most of which was spent

on the lavish building and hospitality costs. Further expenses and bureaucratic costs were incurred over the year that totalled to around £120,000 alone.

While the financial downfalls of the NUS seem to be flawed, they have also highlighted deeper structural deficiencies. The governance review of the organisation delivered

ignored". It continues that many members feel that their policy-making procedures are 'flawed'. However in its most damning statement, the review reveals how the, "Cumber-some structures, procedures and policies of the NUS appear to be a barrier to, rather than a tool for change and increased student movement"

duced our deficit to £300,000. We are also committed to breaking even within three years". The promises of a more fruitful future is what will keep the student unions holding on for now. But the troubled introduction of the NUS extra cards, means there still may be doubts over whether NUS can deliver on their promises.

NUS National Treasurer Dave Lewis added that, while the NUS are in trouble, individual unions have benefited from their investment. He said: "Last year NUS Extra brought in over £1million of new income for students' unions - York alone received £20,000 of new income. And already this year we have seen NUS Extra put £750,000 into students' unions".

However these individual unions contribute £3.6m to the NUS - meaning unions are still losing nearly £3m in affiliation fees based on last year's estimates. The NUS predict that this year the organisation could lose a further £675k but has set itself a savings target to reduce that deficit to £300k. At the time of writing, no up to date financial information was directly linked to on the NUS' main website.

NUS president Gemma Tumelty insists that the union remains stable as it is 'asset rich'.

The report seems to come at an ironically vulnerable time for the NUS. After students in Bangor voted to stay affiliated only a year ago, it seems that the preliminary warning may have been completely overlooked by the NUS.

Jack Peat

STUDENT SPENDING HITS ALL TIME HIGH

The days of the stereotypical student struggling to survive on baked beans on toast and charity shop clothes appear to be over as a new breed of student takes over. A new study on a modern student's spending habits show that we spend on average £221 a month on non-essential 'luxury' items such as fashion, finer foods and expensive nights out. Even international travel is becoming more popular during student holidays, with 17% of those questioned stating globe-trotting as a favourite pastime. Today's students can see more parallels between themselves and the glamorous teens in

the world of the 'The O.C.' than the lazy students of the 80's sit-com 'The Young Ones'.

So where is all this money coming from? With larger student loans, more bursaries and scholarships, interest-free overdrafts and increased parental financial help, as well as earnings from part-time jobs, young people have access to more money than ever. But is this going to have a negative effect on our attitude to money in later life? The credit crunch is hitting the older generations hard, and it seems that we are looking to head in the same direction.

Katy Sandford

FINALLY SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO HEAR US MOAN...

The time has come, Bangor University has been chosen and soon, very soon, students will be able to freely and reverently complain about their lack of money like they have never complained before. For once these complaints will be gratefully listened to and sympathised with. As you read this I can imagine jaws dropping with disbelief and eyes widen with astonishment, but I assure you this is true.

The student income and expenditure survey has randomly chosen Bangor from a list of Universities around the country to investigate all aspects of student finance for people studying higher education courses. Their aim is to get an up to date picture of the general student finance situation and make improvements to funding and support for all. It seems the National centre for social research and institute of employment services, are not only satisfying our constant urge to complain, they are also doing their best to fund us with more substantial D&D (Drink and Dance) money.

In my opinion, it's about time. Students will be selected at random and asked to fill out a questionnaire and provide contact details so they can be reached to organise an interview. Participants will then be asked general questions about financial support,

tuition fees, expenditure, experience with debts and their own personal opinion on studying. As well as this students will be asked to bring their student loan letters and keep a 7-day diary of all spending. If you are given the chance to participate in this study, I highly recommend that you do. It is not often we find someone so eager to hear about our trivial financial worries and more importantly someone who can do something about it. As well as that, students who take part will be given £12 love to shop vouchers, in a short-term attempt to ease our poverty suffering -or perhaps just to show their gratitude.

The entire process is completely confidential and information will be treated in accordance with the data protection act. If you take part, you may be asked for consent to link answers to a study by the student's loan, which would be used for research purposes. So if you are a student and you are struggling to survive on government funding or just like to complain, this study will highlight any inadequacies in your lifestyle and pave the way for improvement. To find out more, you can email info@siesinfo@sies or free phone 0800 6524574.

RoBee

TWO IN THREE GET TOP STUDENTS DEGREES

Concerns over university standards are set to continue as the latest figures display that two thirds of students countrywide are obtaining degrees of the highest attainment possible (either first or higher second-class). The total figure obtained was 175,390 students achieving these top degrees, improving on the previous year's total by 3,300. This increase has become more profound in recent years, as a look at corresponding figures in 1996 show that only 48% of students overall graduated with the same achievements.



These figures come just a few months after a study published in September highlighted that students were obtaining degrees with an average of just 26 study hours per week in England across all subjects, below the European average. In addition, controversy closer to home arose late in 2006, when a leaked e-mail suggested that Bangor University was considering a proposal to increase the number of first-class degrees on the basis that the University of Wales, Aberystwyth had similar measures in place.

NEVER LOSE MONEY TO YOUR LANDLORD AGAIN

Losing your deposit can be stressful. You don't want to have to fight to get it back. A new Government scheme now protects anyone signing up to an 'Assured Shorthold Tenancy' agreement, which is the standard contract for rented accommodation. The scheme started on the 6th April 2007, meaning all students getting ready to move in with friends this term need to take note.

After paying your deposit like any good tenant, your landlord or agent must give you written details of how your deposit is protected within fourteen days. They must tell you their full contact details and the contact details for the scheme that protects your deposit. They also need to include an explanation of the purpose of the deposit and how to release your deposit should you need it.

More importantly you'll also know how to deal with a dispute. If you don't get this information, just ask 'How is my deposit protected?'

tos of the condition of your property.

If you find that your landlord hasn't protected your deposit it does not mean that you are out of pocket. As a tenant you can apply to the county court who can compel them to do so. When it comes to the time when you are moving out make sure that all rent and any extra expenses are paid. Then with the landlord or agent you should discuss how much of the deposit you should get back and within ten days you should get the agreed amount. Should you find that you can't agree there is a free service provided by the scheme that you can use.

If you want further information just hit the computer lab and go to www.direct.gov.uk/tenancydeposit.

Kirstie Wallace and Gabrielle Biles

Do you use protection?

From 6th April 2007, landlords must protect your deposit.

Go to www.direct.gov.uk/tenancydeposit to find out how to get protected.



The best way to make sure you get your money back at the end of your tenancy is by making a list of all contents and taking pho-

HISTORIC CLOSURES OF BANGOR BUILDINGS

Theatr Gwynedd is set to close its doors of 30 years as its building on Deiniol Road faces closure. It is the only large theatre in the city, and presents Welsh, English and International theatre, concerts, opera, contemporary and traditional dance as well as pantomime and children's entertainment.

Plans to develop a multimillion-pound performing arts centre in a joint venture with Bangor University have been in the pipeline since May last year. However the development, which would include theatre space, performance workshops and other areas for the use of professionals, local community and the University, and would be supported by local councils, could take up to 5 years to complete.

With no permanent base, performances will be held at various venues around Gwynedd and Anglesey. This means that the local population of both students and residents would have to travel outside of the city to find entertainment. Since the closure of the cinema in Bangor two years ago, the theatre was the only place to see a film without travelling to Llandudno Junction, a good twenty miles by car or train. For those, including a majority of students at the university, that don't own a car a trip to Anglesey to see a



performance can be expensive and time wasting. The movement of the theatre also leads to uncertainty for the 20 highly skilled staff members that work there and their long term future.

There are calls for the closure of the building to be postponed until a definite plan and time scale for the project has been released. The 'tender' for the feasibility study has only just closed, and there has yet to be a company named to undertake the work. The Unite Union, which represents many of the theatre staff, are pushing for an extension on the closing date to ensure the theatre will remain open whilst talks to secure jobs are ongoing.

"The closure of this theatre will be a huge blow for the local community as it forms a crucial part of Bangor's cultural life and serves many local community groups including many schools, dance and drama groups," said Unite regional officer John Hamilton.

Bangor as a "City of Learning" would also be "immeasurably impoverished culturally", Mr Hamilton added.

With much uncertainty surrounding the project, we can only hope that Theatr Gwynedd can live through the dark times ahead.

Visit Theatr Gwynedd's website at www.theatrgwynedd.co.uk

Katy Sandford

Can our present local authorities be trusted with anything? This museum is one of the oldest in Wales and was founded in 1884 by the University of Bangor as one of its first cultural acts with the intention of collecting objects relating to the heritage of North Wales. It has outstanding collections from a wide area across north Wales due to the interest and far sighted curators who have been in charge of its collections, including the renowned Professor Dodd, whose detailed knowledge of the collections was outstanding and led to some important additions to them.

Have we no awareness of their significance nor care or respect for these collections and the knowledge which they represent of our North Wales predecessors?

Less developed nations expect us to return items, which they often previously ignored, but we are not prepared to spend a mere £60,000 per annum on preserving and ensuring they are known to our own communities.

We should be spending more on ensuring these collections are more widely known and educate our children in their past so that visitors to the area may know more about them. The capital city of Wales, Cardiff, has been



without a museum for many years but within the last few years the Council has woken up to the fact that its history is little appreciated by its citizens and visitors and has started to make collections illustrating Cardiff's past. We are about to throw ours overboard!

We have recently seen £40 million go to preserve items in South Wales in the tiny Cynon Valley, the Maritime Museum in Swansea and Big Pit in Blaenavon and even more go to preserve our British maritime history recently. Are we so blind as not to realise that we have on our doorstep a collection, which represents a wide spectrum of the heritage of North Wales? No other museums existed in the area until the eighties. Do we think so little of those people who have been here before us as to let their unrecognized, unprotected, efforts remain and disrespected?

Shame on you for even contemplating such an act. It is time that Local Authorities had a bounden duty to look after our heritage.

Andrew Laing
Past Director of the
Council of Museums in
Wales

BEYOND BOUNDARIES

Last month saw the second Beyond Boundaries conference take place, a postgraduate showcase for an array of potential research topics, held at the in the School of Biological Sciences in the Brambell Building on Deiniol Road, such as the potential for whale-watching tourism in Iceland and continued study on the topic of dementia, to name but two. In all, about forty post-grad students contributed to the two-day event, continued from last year because of the inaugural event's success in 2007.

Paul Butler, the chair of Beyond Boundaries' organising committee highlighted the cross-disciplinary nature of the event, stressing that students would need to display "clear communication of often complex ideas" and that the successful relaying of these academic topics was an imperative to the University, "whose continued existence is increasingly dependent upon the funding of academic research".

Although such a comment raises concerns over whether research in Bangor is straying too far in the direction of funding from corporate sources, Beyond Boundaries attempts to address these issues by allowing students free rein to present their topics on whatever interests them, Butler again stressing the advantages of the conference as a "relatively unthreatening environment" that allows the presentation of ideas in a public forum. The conference took place on the 23rd and the 24th of January.

Stephen Davies

BANGOR UNIVERSITY CHEMIST REINVENTS THE WHEEL

Dr Vera Thoss, an environmental chemist from Bangor University's School of Chemistry, has been partnering with Welsh Company UTD Research Ltd to produce novel products from used tyres.

Due to its high calorific value, the refined tyre-derived oil was mixed one to one with diesel and used successfully to fuel a car.

"The results are very encouraging..." Said Dr Vera Thoss, "...we tested the fuel at the Anglesey Circuit recently and found that the

said "We are so pleased that Bangor University has had the foresight to recognise our potential and what we intend to achieve. Bangor is setting the standard for academic institutions by embracing the entrepreneurial spirit of Welsh companies."



While carbon black, oil and gas have been produced from used tyres in different laboratories worldwide, UTD Research were the first to successfully scale up the process using their patented technology and thereby producing litres of oil. Using state-of-the-art technology at Bangor University allowed characterizing the oil and advice on its refining.

fuel significantly enhanced the performance of the trial car."

The carbon black produced could be used for printer inks, pigment, fillers and active charcoal. The gas produced is estimated to be able to provide the energy for the entire process; this therefore really is "true recycling".

Mike Walker from UTD Research Ltd

Bangor University and UTD Research Ltd from Wales will be providing the technology worldwide to be able to process used car tyres into useful products. Bangor University has made a substantial contribution to the ability of UTD Research to market the technology worldwide.

STUDY SONGWRITING

The song, it could be argued, is the single aspect of culture in which everybody participates- we all sing at some point, and enjoy our favourite songs. It's perhaps the combination of simple tune and words that makes a song so memorable. Singing and songwriting is an accessible art form and people have used song to reflect their lives and ideas since time immemorial. Bringing us up to date, musician, writer and journalist, Paul Morley, recently described the pop song as a 'specific 20th century art form'.

With this in mind, Bangor University is announcing a new and unique degree in English with Songwriting to be taught from 2008. This is the only degree in the UK that

teaches songwriting in all its aspects: the composition of words and music, the theory, the history, recording technology and business skills. The degree offers both rigorous academic education and practical work. A third of the course will be spent writing and analysing songs, and two-thirds of the time following a traditional literary course covering texts from 1066 to 2008.

"Academics, literary critics, and people in general have for centuries gained pleasure from enjoying and analysing all forms of culture from high art, classical symphonies, from novels and plays to sonnets and haiku to popular culture: story-telling, folk songs and ballads, to contemporary forms such as the soap opera and pop song," said Ian Greg-

son, poet, literary critic and lecturer at the School of English.

"Songs have formed the inner soundtrack to so many people's lives. We can all relate to songs because they richly represent the changing face of our own culture, and other people's. The song form has undergone radical transformation since the Tin-Pan Alley tunes and 12-bar blues of the 1920s and 30s. The proliferation of forms and styles in the late twentieth century has meant that there has been no better time to study songs and their backgrounds, to contextualize their meanings, and become inspired to write some ourselves," said composer and lecturer, Pwyll ap Sion of the School of Music.

NIGHTLINE- HERE TO HELP

Hello, Nightline? How can I help you?
Hello, Nightline? Take your time, I'm here to listen.

...Hello?
Hi there, how can I help you? Can I ask your name?

Hi, it's John. This might sound like a silly question... could you possibly tell me what Nightline is?

Of course I can, John. Nightline is an information and listening service. It is run by students, for students. Anything you say is completely confidential. Is there anything else I can help you with?

I really don't know anything about it. What can you help me with?

Well... We can provide you with anything from university related information, such as exam timetables, to taxi or take away numbers. Any information a student in Bangor will require, Nightline can provide.

Okay... what if I don't need information? Is there anyone there just to talk to?

Certainly. We are a listening service. We can't provide advice, but we're here to listen to absolutely anything you would like to talk about. Is there anything in particular you would like to talk about?

I'd like to know more about Nightline. What kind of people work there?

Good question. Every type of person volunteers here; anyone who is willing to help other students you will find at Nightline. We're all fully trained and ready to listen.

Okay... but how can I get involved? I don't know where to go.

Don't worry, if you would like to volun-

teer it's very easy to get started. Do you have a pen?

Yes.
Okay, well you can email janet.smith@undeb.bangor.ac.uk and simply ask if you can become involved. Did you manage to get that?

It's that simple?
Yes. After this you would have an informal interview, and as long as you would be free from the 22nd - 24th February for our training weekend,

you should be all set to start!

Training weekend? That sounds a bit too intense...

What do you feel sounds intense about it?

A whole weekend? It just sounds a bit stressful to me. Is it stressful?

Oh no, it's not intense in the slightest. We have lots of getting-to-know-you games, and there are plenty of friendly faces there to help you out. Also, there's no obligation for you to join. Does that sound any less intimidating?

That actually sounds quite fun. So I just email janet.smith@undeb.bangor.ac.uk?

That's the right email address, yes. So do you feel like you know more about Nightline now?

Yeah, definitely, and I hope to find out more. It sounds great for my C.V. too.

I'm glad to hear that, John. And would you like any more information?

Yeah... could I get the number for Pizza House please?

Nightline:
01248 362121



Politics

THE BLUDGEONER



The Bludgeoner gets fidgety around this time of year; the cold wintry days refuse to budge, any sign of life nowhere to be seen. Bangor in the winter is like an Alaskan ghost town without the snow. All but the hardest souls eschew going outside in favour of sitting indoors and fretting about exams, or the fact that the end of their degree is but minutes away. The locals prefer to stay indoors in favour of throwing another log on the fire, or penning more angry letters to the local rag complaining about rubbish or some other execrable act the marauding hordes of students that evidently roam the streets have perpetrated.

There is one thing around this time of year, however, that snaps the Bludgeoner

out of his freeze-induced torpor and that is the thought of elections. The Bludge has always believed in the power of democracy to cure life's ills, and surely popping a slip of paper in some nice teller's box is the most powerful way of muddling oneself in the murky goings-on of democratic life. He always chuckles when he hears that old line in America that they're only a democracy once every 4 years – that may be true (although perhaps not at the moment given that they're taking so long to decide between the Martin Luther King and Emily Pankhurst tribute acts), what fun students' union life is – a democracy once every year, with general meetings in-between if you can be bothered to show up.

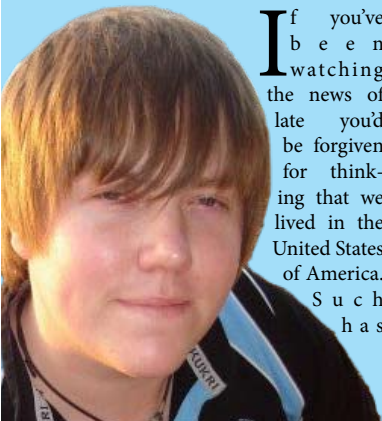
The Bludgeoner finds it terribly easy to lapse into a lazy cynicism about these things: politicians, the lazy bastards, don't care about anyone but themselves. Hand-in-hand with gout-ridden corporate penny-pinchers, the conniving beasts are trying to take over the world. The Bludgeoner soon

forgets about all that each time he passes the crumbling union building – one would have to be a pretty awful dictator to come over all Machiavellian about a piddling student organisation when there are oil republics and rogue states to be had left, right and centre. No really – the closest the students' union can come to an armed militia is the archery club. Who are quite good, admittedly, but not brownshirt material.

The Bludgeoner was going to stand for president in the elections this year but his think tank documents didn't come through soon enough, so he's sadly going to have to sit this one out. It's a terrible shame as he'd already spent \$6 million on Superbowl adverts and 129 boxes of 'Bludgeoner 2008' pin badges are sat in a lock-up in the Wirral. There's always next time, though.

The Bludgeoner lives in a council house in Caernarfon with his 6 sisters and is currently working on a biography of Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich.

RANT FROM THE RIGHT: SPENCER GEORGE



been made of the current elections in America that it often outweighs stories about our own political goings-on. Not that I blame the broadcasters for favouring the latest events in South Carolina, Florida or New Hampshire wherever it is that the latest Primary is being held. I too have found myself embroiled in recent US politics, staying up until the early hours, eyes glued to BBC News 24 to find out who has gained the latest advantage in the race for the White House.

If you've been watching the news of late you'd be forgiven for thinking that we lived in the United States of America. Such a

I can't say I know a great deal about American politics. Their political system is in great contrast to that of our own and if it weren't for watching every episode of the West Wing, I wouldn't know my 'Gerrymandering' from my 'Swing States'.

Like it or not, America sets the global political agenda and the results of the American elections over the next 11 months will have a profound effect on us all. Economic turmoil, 50 million Americans without health insurance, deteriorating relations with foreign powers and the continuing war in Iraq are all burning issues at the forefront of American minds. The choice the American people have to make, both now in the nomination period and then further on down the road during the presidential election is a difficult one.

And what a choice they have to make. It is thought that every ten years there is a shift in political ideology amongst the electorate of a democratic country. The US is a prime example of this. There were twelve years of Republican rule, then eight years of Democratic government followed by another 8 years of Republican administration. These patterns would suggest that America is just

about ready to embrace the values and ideologies of the Democratic Party. This in turn would lead us to think that the next choice for President of the United States is between a woman and a black man.

Hillary Clinton, wife of former president Bill Clinton, is the first serious female contender for the White House. Famous for her backing of social healthcare, Hillary has engaged with many women voters and has even struck a chord with many moderate conservatives. Clinton has focused her campaign on fixing the problems caused by the Republican administration, reminding Americans of her "35 years of political experience" and marketing herself as the reliable candidate who can restore pride in America.

However, Hillary is plagued by the fact that she voted in favour of the Iraq War, a war that most Democrat supporters were opposed to. Also, many commentators still offer the opinion that she is riding on her husband's coat tails and that she will in fact be the mouth piece for Bill Clinton, a man who himself has fallen out of favour after his over zealous, negative campaigning.

Opposing Hillary is Barack Obama, a

HAVE YOUR SAY

Seren is currently enjoying its 25th year as the official English language newspaper. During these historic years the paper has distorted, diversified, modernised and transformed into the format that you see today. We are now at a stage where we can begin to advance far further than ever before. To date, we run six 20 page additions of the paper throughout the year in full colour at a run rate of 2,000. Within the paper there are the following sections that we feel cover the broad spectrum of student interest: News, Politics, Features, Lifestyle, Travel, Music, Film, Books and Sport. An additional supplement (Star) has been introduced to the first three issues as an experimental run.

Such developments are certainly positive in the run of things. We now have a strong team, with sub editors for each section and substantial content for each issue. However the progress has in parts lead to some tough

CHANCE TO COMMENT ON SEREN

decision making. The paper is still limited to 20 pages and the amount of content we can actually include is limited. Although this may sound like a favourable situation to be in, it does require decision making at many points, and as the student newspaper, it should be in the students' hands to decide

what they would like to be included.

Please take the time to answer the questions below, and also feel free to email us with suggestions.

- 1) Would you like to see more content in a particular section? (i.e- Music, Film, Sport etc....)
- 2) Do you think we should cover any other sections?
- 3) Did the supplement work? If not, how would you change it?
- 4) Would you change the layout?
- 5) How would you like the paper to expand?

editor@seren.bangor.ac.uk

NOT QUITE THE WEST WING

black male from the state of Illinois. He is the first mainstream black candidate for the White House. Obama has created a 'buzz' amongst many apathetic voters in America. He has appeared on the political scene from nowhere, hitting the ground running and gathering mass support amongst black and student voters. Barack Obama is a fresh face that has provided a huge energy boost to American politics.

His campaign focuses on change and the power that the electorate has to make a difference. The economy, the environment and civil rights have been at the heart of the Obama message. But whilst Obama can rely on the core demographic of black voters, he is finding it difficult to convince white voters that he is the man for the job. In South Carolina for example, whilst four in five black people voted in favour of Barack Obama only one in five white people voted for him. Obama faces the dilemma of shifting public opinion of him being a black candidate for President, to that of him being a Presidential candidate who just happens to be black. That in itself could prove to be his biggest challenge.

For Hillary to win the Democratic nomi-

nation and become President, America needs to be ready to embrace change. For Obama to win the Democratic nomination and become President then America needs to be ready to embrace radical change.

So who will go on to win the American Presidency this November? Clinton or Obama? Well how about a 71 year old Republican by the name of McCain. A former war hero, John McCain is the current front runner in the Republican nominations. Whilst America might be ready for a shift in political ideology, it is not yet ready to take the bold step needed to elect its first female or black president. It's sad but it's true. America has the chance to make a statement to the world and yet it will take the safe option of voting for a man who has served his country and bares the scars to prove it. A man who although a Republican, believes in economic stability over tax cuts. A man who despite voting in favour of the war has openly spoken out about its mishandling.

What ever the outcome, one thing is for sure. When all Westminster has to offer is a story about an MP wrongly using expenses to pay his own family, it's not wonder the country is so excited by US politics.

LEFT LEANINGS: NATHAN LEE

It used to be so simple. Allegiance to either the left or the right of the political spectrum took form within two parties, along with a centrally aligned 'protest party'. The slightly liberal tiers of allegiance certainly don't suffice in catering for the needs of the majority, and often fall short in dealing with the needs of the nation as a whole. But this form of political adherence was suited to the social spectrum of Britain at the time. Post war politics was dominated by violent swings from left to right to consolidate the balance of British society and the British economy. In this way, the domineering characteristics of the left and the right were suitable in providing the answers to a society that was constantly distorted anyway. But post Thatcher, this all began to become an inadequate model for British party politics, and the face of it began to change.

Today, fewer people than ever are members of political parties, but growing numbers are only too happy to sign up to single issue campaigns. This is a result of many modern factors that have come to interfere with how the political world should be run. The internet is certainly high up on this list. The immediate access to the World Wide Web means that it is now far easier for peo-

ple to communicate ideas and build upon common interests and views. Along with this, the press and other means of communication have given birth to a new form of political party, the Single Issue Party.

In essence, there are two main strings of Single Issue parties. The first is the right-wing radicals that have really grown since the birth of the New Labour Party. They have taken political activism with vengeance through groups such as the Anti-Euro No campaign and the Countryside Alliance. The string of right wing radicals has altered significantly in recent years, moving from the 'university campus sit-ins' and 'placard waving students' to a broad spectrum of political activism. On the other side of the Single Issue party groups is the Co-option fears. Many of these parties have increasingly found themselves being absorbed into the New Labour, rather than strongly divulging away from it. Former Pensions secretary Peter Hain had his roots in the protest movements when leading campaigns against the apartheid regime in the 1970's, helping in founding the Anti-Nazi League.

So do the Single Issue Parties work? In many cases, the answer is no. The first weakness is that such an approach is not based

on traditionally successful methods. Effective parties are usually coalitions of factions or interest groups. There is a very unrealistic element about bringing together political forces based on a single intellectual or cultural common denominator. Party politics is dominated by many issues, and although the party may be united on the one issue, there may be fractions amongst others. As well as this, voters may diverge over other issues, and campaigning for support can often be quite shallow when the party is mobilizing under one banner. In this way, there is no chance of the party being able to represent the electorate at large.

Labour MP Paul Flynn recently launched an outspoken attack on single issue groups on his widely-read blog, accusing some of "bloated empire-building" and criticised Shelter ignoring good news in favour of carefully-orchestrated "sob-ins". Attempts by government to open dialogue with groups who vehemently oppose their policies have also had mixed results.

But many seem to be easily confused in defining a Single Issue Party's nature and aims. After all, Single Issue Parties rarely set out for complete political dominance, and are very realistic about the fact that they

will not make significant gains in the overall electorate. Their purpose is often merely to emphasise the popular support for one issue so that the bigger parties can be aware of public opinion.

Some politicians look at campaigners and envy us - our ability to speak the moral and pragmatic truth no matter how uncomfortable that is

Adam Sampson, Shelter Chief Executive

As Mr Simpson expresses, the single issue parties are also a vital means of expressing exactly what the country needs, without treading on thin ice. In many ways, Single Issue Parties are essential for a modern democracy to work. The requisite of the country's opinion as a whole has become an ever increasing factor in the quest for a truly democratic nation, and in this way the voices of the majority must be heard. At the same time, some could argue that this system makes the electorate less democratic. Most successful Single Issue Groups gain only a small majority of the overall electorate. In this way, even though the issue at hand may be popular amongst a significant proportion of people, it certainly doesn't express the countries sentiment as a whole.

A success story of the Single Issue Groups

frontier is Shelter. It was founded in 1967, on a wave of public outrage following the transmission of Cathy Come Home (a documentary drama about homelessness) and has pioneered many of the techniques used by today's single issue campaigns. It now receives about 25% of its funding, about £12m, from the government, mainly in the form of contracts to deliver services such as housing advice lines. Mr Sampson insists it keeps lobbying and service provision separate, adding that Shelter has been a thorn in the side of ministers on several issues, such as anti-social behaviour orders.

"The aim it seems to me is to bite them often enough to understand the consequences of not being friendly to you."

Greenpeace and others walked out of the government consultation exercise on nuclear power, amid concerns they were merely being used to add legitimacy to a decision that had already been made. But with MPs on all sides casting increasingly envious glances at the public support and credibility enjoyed by single issue campaigns, their influence can only grow stronger.

Lifestyle

LOW FAT/ CALORIE MEALS

LEEK AND POTATO SOUP

Ingredients
1 tsp Olive Oil
1 Small Onion, Chopped
450g Leeks, Sliced
450g Potatoes, Diced
500ml Semi Skimmed Milk
500ml Water
1 tsp Herb Cubes

Method
Heat the oil and gently fry the onion leeks and potatoes for 3 minutes

Pour in the milk and 500ml water, add the herbs and season with salt and pepper.

Bring to the boil, cover and simmer gently for 20 minutes.

Strain the vegetables, reserving the liquid in a jug.

Blend or liquidise the vegetables, then blend in the liquid.

Reheat gently, adjust seasoning and serve.

163 calories, 4.1g fat

CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

Ingredients
2 Chicken Stock Cubes
2 Pints Boiling Water
4 Small Skinless Chicken Breasts, Diced
1 Medium Onion, Sliced
10g Parsley
1 tsp Black Pepper, Freshly Ground
1 tsp Salt
85g Frozen Peas
150g Noodles, Egg, Thread

Method
Make up the stock by crumbling the stock cubes into the boiling water and stirring well. Put into a large pan and add the chicken, onion and seasonings.

Bring to the boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 30-35 minutes (or until chicken pieces are tender).

Add the peas to the pan and simmer for a further 10 minutes.

At the same time, cook the noodles as per the instructions on the packet.

Stir the noodles into the soup and serve.

130 calories, 1.7g fat

GREEK STYLE BEEF SANDWICH

Ingredients:
4 thin slices cucumber
1/4 tsp snipped fresh mint or dash dried mint, crushed
1 dash garlic powder
3 fresh spinach leaves
1 thin slice onion, separated into rings
2 oz thinly sliced deli roast
1 thinly sliced tomato
1 whole wheat bun, split
1 tbsp plain fat-free yogurt

Instructions:
Toss together cucumber slices, mint, garlic powder, and dash pepper.

To assemble, layer spinach, onion, roast beef, cucumber mixture, and tomato on the bottom half of the bun. Top with yogurt. Add the top of the bun.
Makes 1 serving.

262 calories, 7 g total fat

BLACK BEAN AND RICE SALAD

Ingredients:
2 cup cooked rice, cooled
1 cup cooked black beans
1 cup chopped tomatoes
1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded, op
1 tbsp fresh parsley, snipped
1/4 cup low calorie italian salad dr
1 tbsp fresh lime juice
1 lettuce leaves

Instructions:
Leftover black beans and rice combine to make a great lowfat, low cholesterol salad. Combine rice, beans, tomato, cheese (if desired), and parsley in large bowl. Pour dressing and lime juice over rice mixture; toss. Serve on lettuce leaves. Nutrition (per serving): 217 calories, Total Fat 2 g (9% of calories) Source: USA Rice Council :

217 calories, 2g total fat

The Great Orme

How to keep warm and stay loved this February



Welcome to the Valentine's issue. So we've had the Christmas season, New Year and the awful sales - as well as the dreaded exams. But fashion at the moment is in a bit of a lull - that is what I feel. Not warm but not freezing - just blowing gales and pouring rain so it is hardly a time to think what will look good. Basically it's about what will survive the weather without being destroyed or shrinking.

Though a fashion trend that is maxed-up in this season is hats. They are a must-have this season and I can't seem to get away from mine. They hide a multitude of bad hair days and if you have got to be somewhere fast with hair like a haystack just put the hat on and hey presto! Ready to go. There are plenty of styles and varieties for you to play around with from the cute beret to the cosy bobble hat so get experimenting.

Navy blue is very in at the moment and extremely flattering, especially if you're a blonde. Navy jackets, the blazer, the granddad cardigan (although I think you need to be tall to pull this last style off, but if it works for you, then get one.) The cropped jacket is another favourite of mine as it nips in that waist while making you look taller, magic! Team it with a vest, skinnies and some heels and you have a classic, stylish look. Although until the weather improves in this neck of the woods, then most of us will just have to stick with hoodies, long coats and scarves. But this doesn't need to be boring! As there is an amazing variety of long coats out there they are no longer a dull necessity with so

many styles, colours and patterns to choose from. They can live up an outfit meaning staying warm can also mean staying stylish!

For your feet the winter necessity has to be boots. They come in so many styles as we all know ranging from knee-highs to ankle boots and heels to flats. These are another must for this weather as on a night out why freeze and squeeze your toes into tiny stilettos when you can wear comfy boots? I have a couple of pairs of boots that I always wear - one pair in brown and the other in black meaning they fit with most outfits. That is my suggestions anyway as I always choose comfort and the ability to have a dance than stand in the corner hopping miserably on one foot to another.

So I suppose I must mention the dreaded V-day. If you're in a couple be grateful, enjoy the day that most singles cannot bear with, and don't moan if you don't receive many presents or are given the un-classic, un-perfumed, cellophane-

wrapped red rose. Nothing more to be said on that topic; except if you're lucky enough to be with someone great, and you're going out for the classic meal for two then make an effort: wear something nice, do your hair and have him looking at you thinking 'Wow, check out my girlfriend!' not 'She can't even be bothered to make an effort when I'm paying for this meal.' As for all you singles, well, if you're feeling a bit down then a bit of retail therapy never goes amiss...

So there you go ladies, enjoy the next term and don't be fashion slaves, it's boring.

Sophie De L'Orme



DR RASHESH ON COMMON AILMENTS



1) **Constant coughing:** If you recently had flu, a cough will linger for a few days or even a few weeks. But if you have a cough which has stuck for too long it's time to get to the doctor because it could be one of the several things: chest infection, tuberculosis and lung cancer to name a few.

2) **Blinding headaches:** Everyone gets headaches from time to time, but if you start missing work regularly and live on painkillers, the time for action has come. It could be as simple as getting different glasses, changing your diet, lifestyle, or it could be more serious. It's best to get to the truth soon.

3) **Vision problems:** Everyone's vision deteriorates somewhat with age, but if your vision is blurry overnight or changes in any other noticeable way, see an optician and a neurologist. It could be nothing but it may

also be serious.

4) **Fever:** If your temperature fluctuates from high to normal for no discernable reason, or you run a fever for more than three days visit your doctor.

5) **Rectal bleeding:** if your stools are dark in colour and you become aware that you regularly bleed from the anus, make that appointment. It could be any of a number of things, from benign piles to serious colon cancer.

6) **Ongoing diarrhoea:** Whether the result of food poisoning or a virus, diarrhoea is dangerous. The longer it continues the worst it gets and dehydrates you severely. If you regularly get diarrhoea, see a doctor.

7) **Chest pains:** This could be as innocent as heartburn, but it could also be a signal that your heart is in trouble. If chest discomfort is accompanied by pains in your left arm, don't bother with the GP get straight to the emergency room. It could be a serious problem.

8) **Night sweats:** sweating at night is not normal- it is often a

symptom of tuberculosis, Aids or Hodgkin's disease which is lymphatic cancer.

9) **Genital sores:** These are usually a symptom of sexually transmitted disease. They should not be ignored, as it can not only pass to others but can cause infertility or erectile dysfunction.

10) **New moles:** Most people



have moles somewhere on their body. If a mole changes colour, shape or size, it could be turning nasty. Watch out for new moles. It will not go away by itself but if left untreated, can become life threatening.

11) **Sudden muscle weakness:** If you suddenly find you have difficulty standing, walking, balancing or that muscles were fine the day before have become weak, get it checked. It could be among other things like Parkinson's disease or even a mild stroke. And yes, you people

can have strokes too.

12) **Breathing difficulties:** Sudden onset could signify many things from asthma to an allergic reaction. Breathing problems can quickly become life threatening. Don't ignore it.

13) **Constant urination:** Everyone urinates a few times a day, but when you start getting up three to four times during the night to go to the toilet, something is wrong. It could be prostate problems or the onset of type 2 diabetes or bladder infection.

14) **Bumps and lumps:** Whether we are talking about swollen glands or lumps under the skin, this should never be ignored. It could be something benign like mild infection or a pimple or boil, but then again it may not.

15) **Chronic exhaustion:** Everyone one works and has family commitments and getting tired is normal. But if you find yourself having trouble getting out of bed in the morning, something could be wrong. The exhaustion could be a symptom to other ailments. Get yourself sorted.

16) **Loss of interest in life:** If you find yourself depressed don't just sit there and do nothing. Talk to someone close or family members who will be able to help you out. Get into something you like to do or enjoy and try to take your mind out of that. In short 'it's all in the mind' you can change the situation.

2008

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Bangor University

Monday 25th February
Lecture Room 4, Main Arts Building
Summer Camp Presentation @ 6:00pm
Worldwide Adventures @ 7:00pm
Or come along to the Careers Lounge on the
3rd floor of the Student Union between 2pm and
5pm

Ym Mhrifysgol Bangor.

Dydd Llun, Chwefror 25.
Yn yr prif adeilad celf, Ystafell 4!
6:00pm - Cyflwyniad ar y rhaglen 'Camp
Counselors'
7:00pm - 'World Wide Adventures'
Neu dewch i fewn i'r adran gyrfau yn y undeb
myfyriwr, 3ydd llawr rhwng 2:00pm a 5:00 pm.



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Travel

Network Rail

NATIONAL RAIL IS NATIONAL JOKE

The nation-wide rail provider hit the news last year over their latest price increase, and now they've hit the headlines again due to journey delays, engineering work and yet again, inflated fares. Over the past two years, the company Network Rail has been fined millions due to the delays in their engineering work. Recently, the problems seemed to peak over Christmas last year when they failed to meet the deadline of 30th December for completion of engineering work in the Midlands, around the area of Rugby, causing crippling delays to commuters and students returning from the south of England. It's not just passengers that have been incensed by these delays either- train operators Virgin Trains were anxious to get the tracks back under their control.

For most students the post-Christmas journey back to Bangor is stressful, time consuming and painful. You are forced to wait at stations for hours on end with bags that weigh the same as you do. When the train does come it is a struggle to find a seat let alone a place for

that over-sized bag. Students and many other travellers often find themselves crammed into carriages like livestock, clutching their possessions with every available hand and just trying to find the space to breathe.

On one memorable journey when the onboard shop was the only standing room available, the retail manager took pity on the crowds and handed out free bottles of water to the most needy and admitted to having seen it more crowded still, with people actually sitting on the shop counter.

It's not just over the Christmas period that train delays have been a problem. I have been taking the train regularly over the past

three years and there have always been delays on one line or another. Network Rail have said they're sorry for any inconvenience their engineering work has caused though...

If you couple the livestock treatment of their passengers with the frequent and frustrating delays that British Rail are famed for, the ultimate question remains, why are we paying increased fares (which are reportedly being pushed up to ten times the rate of inflation) for an abysmal service? Frequent commuters in the city of Oxford are proposing a boycott in an attempt to lower the prices, an idea with good intentions, but for many of us the reality is that without trains we would

be stranded in our coastal city.

Do you have any further comments on this topic? Would you like to share your views and experiences of British trains? Please email me at travel@seren.bangor.ac.uk if you would like to comment on this topic and air your views on Seren's website or in future issues.

Rachel Eales



"It was my Grandma's funeral and the journey home from Bangor to Taunton, which should have taken five hours took nine due to 'track faults' and delays. We even had to back track to Birmingham after an hour's travelling. It's an appalling service."

Fay Caddy,
Psychology 2008

"The train came to a standstill for twenty minutes and the carriage was plunged into darkness. I was barely able to catch my connecting train."

Rachel Estlin,
Psychology 2010

"A six hour journey from Llandudno Junction to Newcastle ended up taking twelve due to delays and break-downs. In the end she was left in Darlington and had to get a taxi costing forty pounds to Newcastle."

Liz Stevens,
Law 2010

Visit York this Valentine's Day

If you're looking for a great day out or a short weekend break this Valentine's Day then the city of York offers the perfect destination. There is simply something there for everyone, especially if you're interested in history, as York boasts a number of historical attractions. Getting to York couldn't be easier. The main train station is within easy walking distance of the city centre, which in itself is small enough to walk around on foot, and there are car parks and park and ride facilities surrounding the city.

The first landmark you'll notice, even before you get to York, is the spectacular York Minster. It is the largest gothic cathedral in Northern Europe. It has been a place of worship for over one thousand years and features several magnificent stained glass windows. Inside there are daily services along with the opportunity to climb the York Minster Tower- all two-hundred and seventy five steps! The top of the tower opens to a square rooftop which gives you amazing views of the city as well as the Minster's medieval pinnacles and gargoyles. Below ground level is the York Minster undercroft, treasury and crypt, in which the highly acclaimed audio tour allows you to explore Roman, Norman and Viking remains, the jewels of the Treasury and the atmospheric Crypt.



The city walls offer a two mile walk around York with information panels and maps along the way and they are open from 8am till dusk every day. Keeping on the subject of history, a visit to York would not be complete without a walk down the Shambles. The Shambles is often called Europe's best preserved medieval street and is itself mentioned in the Domesday Book, so it has been in continuous existence for over nine

hundred years. At one point the street is so narrow that you can touch either side with your arms outstretched. Furthermore the original doorways are still used so you'll find yourself crouching down just to enter the many small, unusual shops! Along with these attractions, by day there is the Jorvik Viking Centre to visit, the York Castle Museum (featuring Dick Turpin's actual prison cell), the York Dungeons and many more

places of interest. Not too far away is the town of Harrogate, Castle Howard (one of Britain's finest historic houses and gardens) and Eden Camp which is a brilliant World War 2 museum with a difference- it's set in an original Prisoner of War camp built in 1942. There are thirty three huts which each contain reconstructed scenes from the war, lifelike exhibits and more artefacts than you could think of.

There are historical attractions to enthrall the masses and an old-time charm to add the romance this February

Finally to finish off your trip to York why not choose to join one of the city's many renowned ghost walks? There are different walks that begin at different parts of the city and all offer spooky encounters! The most popular walk begins at York Minster at 7:30pm and lasts about one and quarter hours. It is very reasonably priced at three pounds each for students and you are taken around several haunted establishments by experienced guides- mostly with grizzly tales! If you're looking for the ideal place to visit with something to do all day, then York is definitely the place to go. There are historical attractions to enthrall the masses and an old-time charm to add the romance this February.

Will Varley



A break from Bangor

Well, let's start this off with a disclaimer - my column this month isn't about Spain. The University of Valencia don't start semester two until 18th of February, so I'm STILL at home in Nottingham.

There's only three weeks until I leave though, so preparations have started. The paperwork has been done, flights have been booked and my mum has already bought me a lot of factor fifty sun cream. Considering I'm whiter than a pint of milk and only have to step outside in the summer to get hideously sunburnt, I'm not sure why I thought choosing the sunniest Spanish university partnered with Bangor was a good idea! On the positive side, people are suddenly a lot keener to visit me than they were when I was in France - my aunt and uncle booked their flights to Valencia before I'd even booked my own.

So what have I been doing this month? Not a lot to be perfectly honest. I'm going mad with boredom, and I even found myself wishing I was back in Bangor with my friends, sitting exams and stressing myself out with revision! OK, slight exaggeration; I don't think anyone is ever that bored! I've mostly been walking the dog, watching endless DVDs and teaching my dad to use Facebook - but that's another story.

I'm not as nervous this time. Three weeks before I left for France, I was a tearful, worrying wreck. But this time, I'm practically carefree. I know what to expect, I've been through it once and I know I can do it again. I don't have anywhere to live yet, but I will have a friend from Bangor out there with me, so it'll be fine.

Considering I said in my first column that university in France was a culture shock, I'm starting to wonder what university in Spain is going to be like, and whether there's a stronger phrase than 'culture shock'. Spaniards, especially Valencians, are known for being nocturnal, and apparently it's quite normal for the evening meal to be eaten around 9pm and for a night out to start around midnight, and I haven't even considered siestas yet. I'm hoping that perhaps Spanish uni time-tables will be in the laid-back, late mould, but somehow I doubt it. I'll be happy provided there are no 8am or 8pm classes!

I did really enjoy France, and there's a large part of me that wishes I was going back there, because it's familiar and because I have a much better grasp of the language than I do with Spanish. I've been learning French since I was nine years old, and I only began learning Spanish when I started at Bangor, so there's a massive difference in my ability. Oh well, they do say that total immersion is the best way to learn, I'll just have to test that theory. By the time I'm writing my next column- sat on the beach, with a lovely tan (did I mention that Valencia is on the Med?) I'll have changed my tune.

I hope everyone's exams went well, I'll think of you all shivering in Bangor whilst I'm sunning myself. Until next time, adios!

Loran Perkins

ST PATRICKS DAY 2008

IRISH COFFEES AND COCKTAILS



Irish Filter Coffee
2/3 part freshly brewed coffee
1/3 part Irish whiskey
2 tsp brown sugar
lightly whipped cream
Into a stemmed glass, put two teaspoonfuls brown sugar; add one-third Irish Whiskey and two-thirds really hot, really strong black coffee. Stir well, then float whipped cream on top.

St. Patrick's Day Cocktail (Irish Eyes)
1 oz. Irish whiskey
1/4 oz. green creme de menthe
2 oz. heavy cream
Shake well with crushed ice. Strain into chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with maraschino cherry.

St. Patrick's Day Green Cocktail (Midori Sour)
1 oz Midori melon liqueur
1 oz whiskey sour mix
2 oz Sprite soda
Fill a highball glass with ice. Add the midori, sour mix, sprite, and stir.



St Patrick seems to be the most favoured of all the saints. Whether Irish, Scottish, English or Welsh, the day of St Patrick is the most celebrated of all. To many the day is associated with endless hours of drinking, dancing and having a lot of fun. But why St Patrick? Why do we collectively celebrate a day that really only signifies the history and heritage of one nation? And above this, to what extent do we celebrate the saints of other nations, and in what forms do they take?

The history of St Patrick himself seems to shed little light on this puzzle. Saint Patrick is believed to have been born in the late fourth century, and is often confused with Palladius, a bishop who was sent by Pope Celestine in 431 to be the first bishop to the Irish believers in Christ. Interestingly, St Patrick was not born in Ireland, and is believed to have been either in Rome, Brittany, England or Wales. Saint Patrick was the patron saint and national apostle of Ireland who is credited with bringing christianity to Ireland. Most of what is known about him comes from his two works, the Confessio, a spiritual autobiography, and his Epistola, a denunciation of British mistreatment of Irish christians. Saint Patrick described himself as a "most humble-minded man, pouring forth a continuous paean of thanks to his Maker for having chosen him as the instrument whereby multitudes who had worshipped idols and unclean things had become the people of God." Saint Patrick's Day has come to be associated with everything Irish: anything green and gold, shamrocks and luck. Most importantly, to those who celebrate its intended meaning, St. Patrick's Day is a traditional day for spiritual renewal and offering prayers for missionaries worldwide. So, why is it celebrated on March 17th? One theory is that that is the day that St. Patrick died. Since the holiday began in Ireland, it is

believed that as the Irish spread out around the world, they took with them their history and celebrations. The biggest observance of all is, of course, in Ireland. With the exception of restaurants and pubs, almost all businesses close on March 17th. Being a religious holiday as well, many Irish attend mass, where March 17th is the traditional day for offering prayers for missionaries worldwide before the serious celebrating begins. In American cities with a large Irish population, St. Patrick's Day is a very big deal. Big cities and small towns alike celebrate with parades, "wearing of the green," music and songs, Irish food and drink, and activities

drunk, and hold historic associations only with the pint they hold in their hand. The Irish are obviously prone to a pint or two on the day as well, but the prevalent celebration of it in Britain may largely be to do with the British interpretation of the day. As it is often observed by many foreign viewers, the British are certainly prone to making a celebration out of pretty much anything.

The celebrations of St David, St George and St Andrew are varied in tradition and popularity. There is little doubt that each of them individually bring spark to the nation they represent, and they all (similarly to St Patrick) address the history and culture

St George to discover a new identity could be crucial to its survival.

In Wales, the history of St David bears much similarity to that of St Patrick. The fight for Welsh freedom against the Normans is ever similar to the fight of the Irish against the British. In this way both days similarly show immense pride in the sustained independence of each country. The day is now recognised and celebrated world wide, in the USA the day is now officially recognised as the day of the Welsh, and the Empire state building is lit with the red, green and white colours of Wales. Domestically, the day is often celebrated with traditional meals and

The outstanding characteristics of each saint seem to shine light over the varying degrees of celebration on each of their days. The saints of Wales and Ireland (and to some extent Scotland) are often related to the countries' struggle for independence. In this way the days of their patron saints are of increased importance to them. Historically, patriotism will have been vital to the country as a means for their success, and therefore a designated day that highlights their history and heritage will have been of paramount importance to them.

So we finally come to addressing the question... Why St Patricks day? Well there seem to be many reasons. The first is that the history of St Patrick and its connotations seem to embody everything that is Irish. From the Leprechauns to the clovers to the pints of Guinness,

the 17th March has always been a day to be green. The traditional association of the Irish to drink could be a reason why it is so widely celebrated in Britain. After all, the day is only really associated with pubs and drinks. As well as this, it could be the necessary attachment Britain still has to Ireland. After their independence, Ireland could easily become a distant part of the British Isles, and days such as this could reinforce its historic connection with Britain.

Whatever the reason St Patrick's day has always been a special event, and will continue to be so. The rise of the other patron saints does seem to be an imminent agenda. St Andrew's Day has become a public holiday, and St David's Day has popular support to become one. The celebration of St George is being widely re-invented to fit in to today's society. Overall, each saint still carries its own story and still represents its own heritage, although it is the contemporary world that allows for some to prevail over others.

Jack Peat

WHY ST PADDY?

for kids such as crafts, coloring and games. Some communities even go so far as to dye rivers or streams green. (History from www.St-Patricks-Day.com) The legacy that is St Patrick is now mainly associated with pride, as the man who converted the Irish to Catholicism. Recently, especially surrounding the political ties Ireland has with Britain, the saint has been used as a historical figure head behind the independence of Ireland from Britain.

The history of drinking on St Patrick's Day has a long history, and Guinness, Murphy's and (collectively) stout and ale has a large part to play in this. It also is largely to do with how different countries view the day. St Patrick's holiday does diverge in traditional celebrations from Ireland and Britain. The Irish use the occasion as a day to be proud, and in this way celebrate it with traditional sporting events (ie- Gaelic football and hurling), religious ceremonies and parades. The British on the other hand hold little connection with the traditions of the day, and therefore typically associate it with merely being

that each country is founded upon. Like St Patrick's Day, only Scotland celebrates their patron saint as a national holiday. St George's day in England had certainly waned away in the twentieth century, becoming a day of little significance and expressing little national pride. However in recent years the day does seemed to have gained some steam. BBC Radio 3 had a full programme of events in 2006, and Andrew Rosindell has been putting his argument forward in the House of Commons to make St George's day a national holiday. The day is fraught with problems however, all of which need to be addressed if the day is to become more important. This may include changing its identity to coincide with the demographics and culture of contemporary England. The increasing multi-culturalism aspect of England means that the day would have to be modified to include all aspects of our societal life. Independent writer Yasmin Alibhai-Brown condemned the day for being too Anglo-Saxon and demanded that the day should celebrate the multi-cultural aspects of British society. The quest for

marches. The Eisteddfodau concert is also heavily related to Saint David. A poll conducted for Saint David's Day in 2006 found that 87% of the Welsh wanted 1st March to be a bank holiday, with 65% prepared to sacrifice a different bank holiday to ensure this. A petition in 2007 to make St David's Day a bank holiday was rejected by Prime Minister Tony Blair.

In 2006 the Scottish parliament past legislation to make St Andrews day a bank holiday. Although Burn's Night seems to be more widely celebrated, the day is still celebrated as an important event in Scottish history. In Edinburgh there is a weekend of events from 30 November called 'Jig in the Gardens'. On 2nd December in West Princes St Gardens, they kick off with a night of musical entertainment and ceilidh-dancing. In Glasgow an even called 'Shindig in the Square' is placed at George Square with a ceilidh and traditional live musicians. In addition, Embassies around the world are planning to celebrate St Andrew's Day with a variety of Scottish themed events.

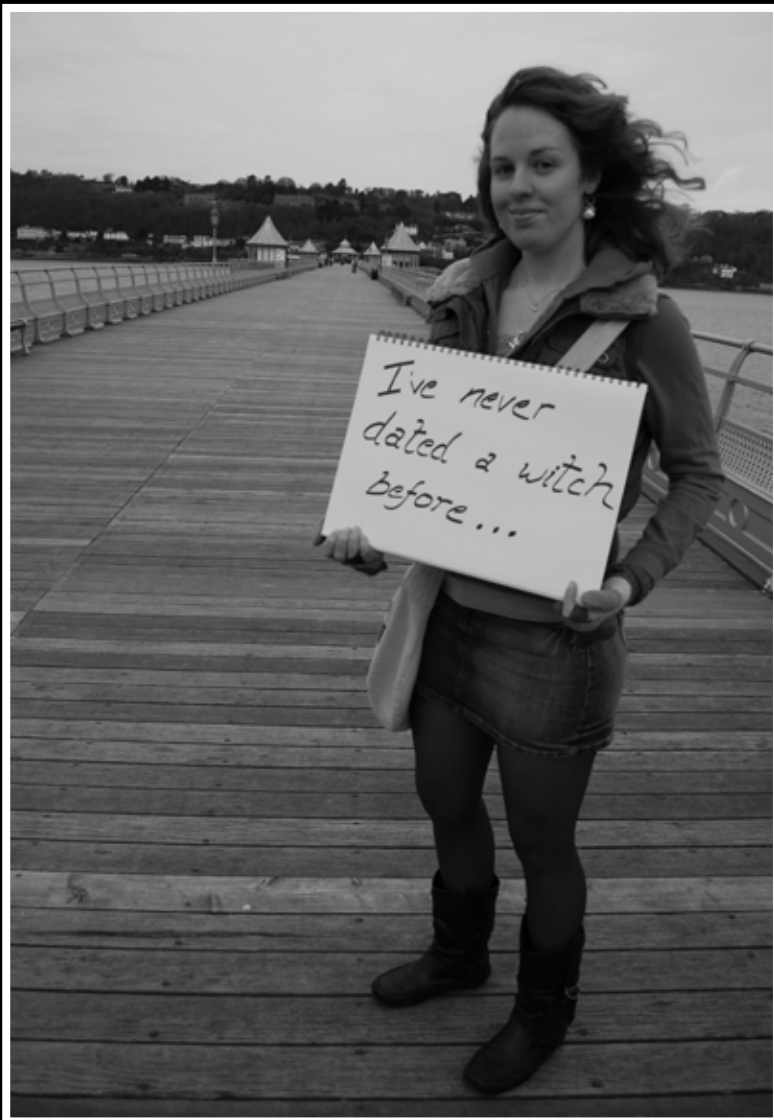
GUINNESS PUNCH

Ingredients
1 tall can of Guinness stout
7 oz (1/2 can) sweetened condensed milk
Cinnamon to taste
Nutmeg to taste
1 raw egg
Method
Blend all ingredients in a blender or mix in bowl with a whisk then drink.

ingredients:
2 (12 oz) cans frozen limeade concentrate
2 (12 oz) cans frozen lemonade concentrate
2 (2 litre) bottles lemon-lime flavored carbonated soda
1 (750 milliliter) bottle rum
2 quarts lime sherbet
In a large pot, combine limeade, lemonade and lemon-lime soda. Stir in rum. Mix in the lime sherbet.

Ingredients:
4 liters lemon-lime carbonated soda
2 pints lime sherbet
6 cups crushed ice
In large punch bowl, pour in soda. Add sherbet. Add crushed ice.

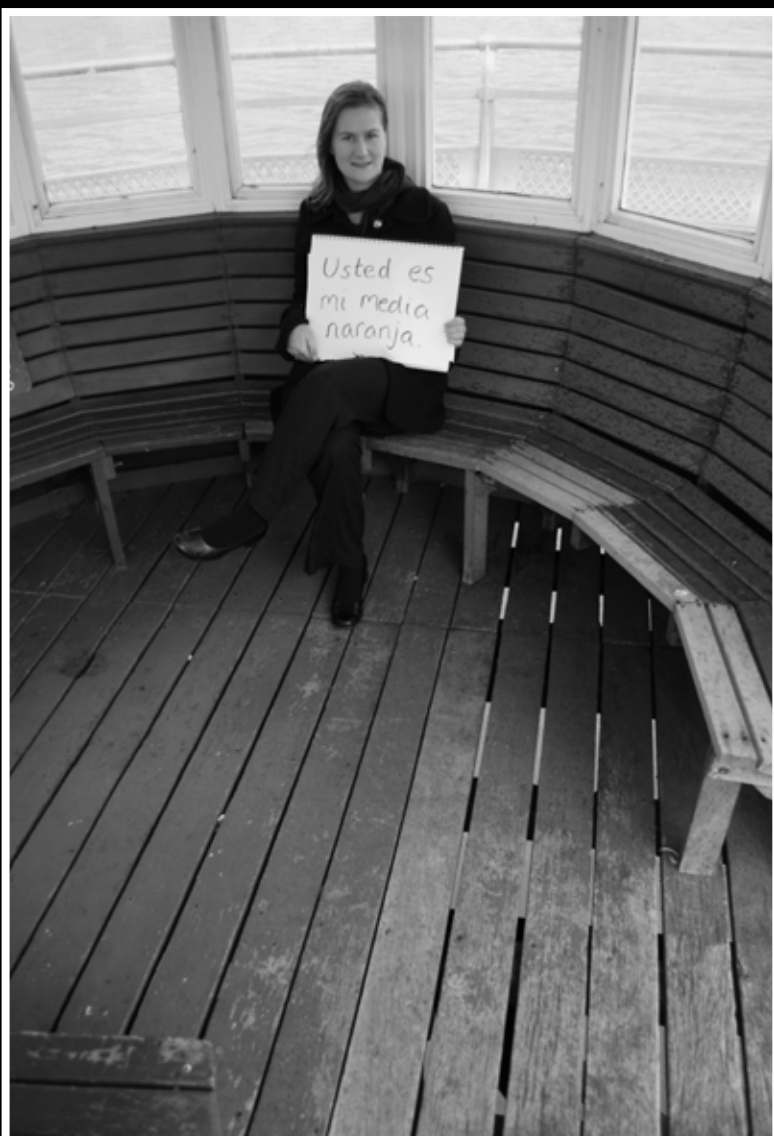




▼ **Emma Dodd**

'Usted es mi media naranja' means 'you are my half orange'. In Spanish there is a tradition that you call the person you love your 'half orange.' This is because it's rare to find two halves that fit together perfectly. So that's why my Costa Rican ex-boyfriend used to call me his 'half orange'.

▲ **Rebecca Hussey**



▼ **Sally Brothwell**

Sally Brothwell could have been offended by the comment her better half made, but now sees it as a joke between the pair of them.

▲ **Elin Stewart & Spencer George**



Someone Told I ❤️

Once Me ... BANGOR



▲ **Emma McColl**

'My boyfriend at the time told me this when we were eating food' adds Emma McColl, 'I was being really picky and I wouldn't have anything that he wanted to eat in the meal.' However, it ended up being a meal she wouldn't forget in a hurry!

▼ **Matt Ison**



▲ **Emma Dixon**

'My boyfriend currently lives in Surrey' explains Emma Dixon, 'so I don't get to see him much but he always manages to cheer me up by sending cards and letters. This particular line featured in the card he gave me for our first anniversary and I think it sums up how much of a softie he is!'

▼ **Hannah Philpott**



Puzzles, Posers & Problems



compiled by Jack Peat

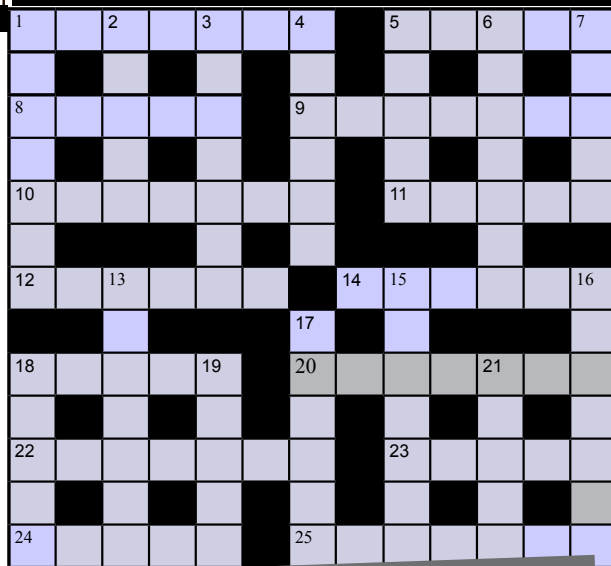
inQUIZitive
Just for Fun

1. Which is the largest joint in the body?
2. What is the fundamental oath usually associated with doctors?
3. Into which ocean does the Zambezi river flow?
4. What was Ringo Starr's original name?
5. They may be complex, vulgar or mixed. What are they?
6. In which film did Elvis Presley play the role of a boxer?
7. In the Bible, whose parents were Zacharias and Elizabeth?
8. Tariffs and quotas are some of the weapons used in which kind of war?
9. In which sport has Stephen Roche achieved

success?

10. Which country is the home of feta cheese?
11. Who said the famous phrase 'An army marches on its stomach'?
12. Fats Waller was famous as a player of which instrument?
13. The first Bond movie was released in 1964. What was the title?
14. What name is given to the person authorized to vote on behalf of someone else?
15. Who was the captain of the spaceship that went where 'no man has gone before'?

10 minuteXword



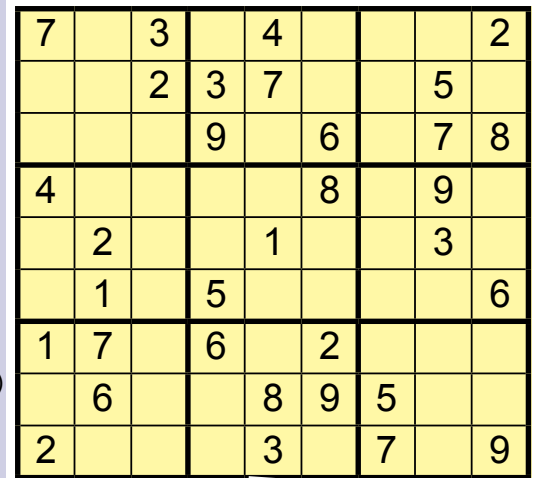
FACTIVE

Valentines days is worth approximately £2.4 billion to the retail sector
 Around £151 million is spent on flowers
 Around £26 million is spent on cards, with around 13 million cards sent
 Around £384 million is spent on chocolate
 Around £18 million is spent on lingerie

Compiled by Jack Peat

Name:.....Bangor Uni E-mail:.....

SERENoku



WIN
yourself
a SEREN
pint glass
(or 2)!!!

WHAT TO DO...

Complete
 (1) X-Word
 or (2)

SERENoku

- or you can

enter both!

Next, fill in

your name and

Bangor Uni

e-mail address

(at the top) and hand

this page in to main reception at the

Students' Union. Alternatively, you can

e-mail your answers to:

editor@seren.bangor.ac.uk

Winners will be selected at random

from correct entries and will be

awarded by 05/03/08.



Seren's Radio Times

Storm Forecast

Monday

07:00 - 09.00
Storm In A Tea Cup
 morning mix

11:00 - 13.00
Storm Bites - Geek Chic
 Jack Green and Isa Wilson

13:00 - 14.00
The SU Show
 with Carolan Goggin, Communications and Societies Officer (CSO)

16:00 - 18.00
Homeward Bound

18:00 - 20.00
The Time Tunnel

Spencer, Lex & Tom with the best of the 60s, 70s & 80s, including the 30 Second Challenge

20:00 - 21.00

The Forum
 John Jackson hosts the debating panel show, with the news team and special guests

21:00 - 22.00

Kate's Kloset
 Hip Hop and R&B with Kate Barratt

Tuesday

07:00 - 09.00
Storm In A Tea Cup



11:00 - 13.00
Storm Bites

13:00 - 14.00
The SU Show

16:00 - 18.00
Homeward Bound - Out Loud and Proud
 Music and chat from Pride with Aimee 'Cherry' Hamilton (LGBT Officer)



18:00 - 20.00
The Text Session
 DJPJ with your requests - text STORM and ur msg to 60300

20:00 - 21.00
Warm Up To Trash
 Prepare for Trash a night early with Zara

22:00 - 00.00
Bangor's New Music
 Storm's music team review their pick of the latest CDs

Wednesday

07:00 - 09.00
Storm In A Tea Cup

11:00 - 13.00
Storm Bites

13:00 - 14.00
The SU Show
 with Xanthe Larcombe, Education & Welfare Officer

14:00 - 16.00
The Big Mix Up
 Clare Moore-Smith with mainstream music and chat

16:00 - 18.00
Homeward Bound

18:00 - 19.00
The Society Slot
 A different society is showcased each week

19:00 - 20.00
The Speculative Analysis Show
 Highlights from SpecAnal's weekly experiments and tours, with music and chat of a spooky variety

20:00 - 22.00
Rock Stock
 Tom Giddings with a Trash warm-up

22:00 - 02.00
Trash LIVE!
 coming in January

Thursday

07:00 - 09.00
Storm In A Tea Cup
 morning mainstream mix



11:00 - 13.00
Storm Bites

13:00 - 14.00
The SU Show
 with Bethan Williams, UMCB President with a Welsh language show

16:00 - 18.00
Homeward Bound

18:00 - 20.00
Something Borrowed, Something Blue
 DJPJ with an eclectic mix of old and brand-spanking new

19:00 - 21.00
Ultrasound
 Lee Howson & Sean Lashec with their Trash cool-off of new, classic and obscure indie

21:00 - 22.00
The Jazz Hour
 with Jack Baker

22:00 - 00.00
The Underground
 Alex 'Colonel' Kirkham hosting underground dance at its best

Friday

07:00 - 09.00
Storm In A Tea Cup

11:00 - 13.00
Storm Bites - The Dave and Ryan Show
 Mainstream music and chat

13:00 - 14.00
The SU Show

14:00 - 16.00
Plektrum

16:00 - 18.00
Homeward Bound

18:00 - 20.00
Sound of the AU
 The best of the Athletic Union, hosted by Adam James

21:00 - 23.00
No Added Sugar
 Winner of the Best Mainstream Show award 2006-07 - hosted by Jack Green and Dave Pallant, with lots of challenges



23:00 - 00.00
The WelshBoy Show
 Station Manager Mike Walsh - mainstream, with a little edge towards Welsh bands

00:00 - 02.00
The Saturday Sessions



Saturday

18:00 - 20.00
Bach A Tew
 (Little and Phat)
 Kerry Walton's Welsh language show

Storm FM are currently looking for a team to host their Saturday afternoon

Sports show.
 If you're interested in rounding up the weekend's sporting action, both nationally and locally, then get in touch with Storm's Programme Controller, Peter Banks - peter.banks@undeb.bangor.ac.uk

Sunday

13:00 - 15.00
The Chart Show
 Weekly countdown

15:00 - 16.00
Around the World in 60 Minutes
 Em & Jen with a whistle-stop tour around the music world

16:00 - 18.00
The Classical Show
 Classical tunes you know, mixed with those you may not

18:00 - 18.30
7 into 30
 The news team present the week's happenings in 30 minutes, with Kate Barratt

19:00 - 21.00
The Motel
 Sarah & Alex with funk and big tunes, including the Helpdesk

21:00 - 22.00
Sin Roc Gymraeg
 Welsh rock music

22:00 - 00.00
Dead Air
 Mainstream chat, music and madness!

Features



Seren have been very privileged this month: a photographer from London travelled to Bangor to take some stunning and romantic pictures especially for this year's Valentine's Day issue.

Mario Cacciottolo, who has his own website: someonecancetoldme.com came and took photographs of some of the students here at Bangor (mine is above!) Have a browse at a selection of these beautiful black and white photographs on pages 10-11, because they are will melt your heart this Valentine's Day.

What to do if you are single this Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day, just the mention of this "holiday" and my blood runs cold. For us singletons everywhere Valentine's Day simply serves as a reminder that we are not in a relationship and it can actually be a very depressing day.

However, it doesn't have to be like that, it can be the complete opposite! Valentine's Day is not just a day for couples; it's a day to show your friends and family how much you care. You can basically have a brilliant Valentine's Day without having to splash out on the expensive stuff that couples buy (I am however open to any Secret Admirers, that part is always fun!)

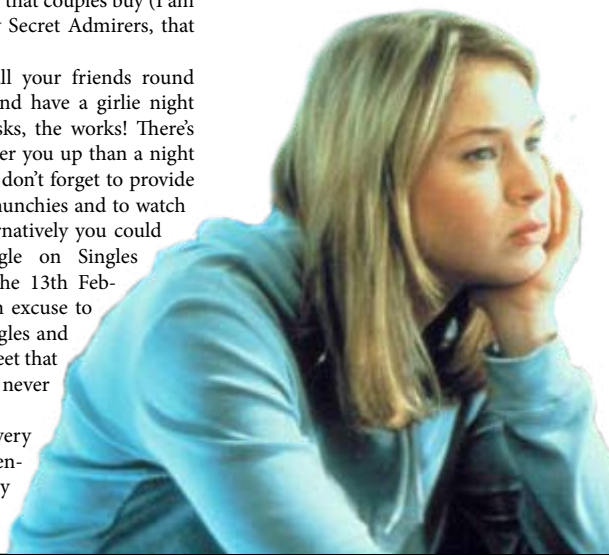
Why not invite all your friends round on Valentine's Day and have a girlie night in - DVDs, face masks, the works! There's nothing better to cheer you up than a night in with the girls, just don't forget to provide a good selection of munchies and to watch *Dirty Dancing*. Alternatively you could celebrate being single on Singles Awareness Day on the 13th February. Use this as an excuse to throw a party for singles and you could possibly meet that special someone, you never know!

I however am very cynical about Valentine's Day; I have only ever spent one Valentine's Day as part

of a couple. So to be perfectly honest I have more fun being single on Valentine's Day, not to mention my bank balance is a lot happier too.

So if you are single and dreading Valentine's Day, just think of it as another typical Thursday; go and enjoy pound night in Varsity, cheese night in Octagon and just use it as an excuse for a night out with other singletons!

Bianca Murray



The True Saint Valentine

Everyone knows that February 14th is a day to celebrate romance, giving cards and gifts to the one that you love, but do you know where this tradition comes from? Who was the real Saint Valentine?

The true origins of Valentine's Day have long been shrouded in mystery. No one can even be sure which saint the day was originally made for. The Catholic Church recognises three Saint Valentines who were all supposedly martyred on February 14th.

The most widely recognised legend begins in third century Rome. Valentine was a priest during the reign of Emperor Claudius II. Claudius felt that single men made better soldiers than married men with families and so he outlawed marriage for all young men. Valentine felt this was unjust and so he secretly continued marrying young lovers. When he was discovered they sentenced him to death.

Whilst in prison he is reported to have fallen in love with the jailor's daughter who had been visiting him. On the day of his death

he left a letter signed "from your Valentine" which is where this sentiment began.

Before becoming Valentine's Day the middle of February was also the Pagan festival Lupercalia. Part of the festival's ritual involved putting the names of the single girls into an urn and then the bachelors would choose one each. They would be paired for a year and the union often ended in marriage.

This practice was outlawed by the Church when the festival was "Christianised" by Pope Gelasius. He declared February 14th as Valentine's day at the end of the fifth century although it didn't become widely celebrated in Britain until the 1600s.

Now it is the second largest card sending holiday of the year, with one billion cards sent each year.

Sarah Whittingham

It's a Wilde, Wonderful Play!

Once Valentine's Day is over and done with, what can you do as a pair? If you are going to be in Bangor and want to spend an evening together, why not go and watch *An Ideal Husband*? No, this is not a new reality television show, it is the latest play to be performed by BEDS: Bangor's English Drama Society. The cast and crew of around fourteen members have been rehearsing Oscar Wilde's social comedy since autumn of last year and it looks set to draw in the crowds once again.

The play is about a politician, Chiltern, who is in danger of losing his reputation after he is blackmailed by the villain of the piece, Mrs Cheveley. However, 'the play is also quite romantic', explains Bryony Chave-Cox who is starring in the production, 'there are two love stories involved'.

Jon Gavaghan, who is playing the character of Chiltern adds that people should go and see *An Ideal Husband* because it 'is a play people might not normally see elsewhere'. Lance Cane adds that 'it is a very funny play but it does have a lot of depth to it'. The piece has seen a lot of dedication and hard work



Left Anja Wittich (Miss Mabel Chiltern), Right Simon E Price (Lord Goring) taken by Gareth Roberts

BEDS: Bangor English Drama Society

Gifts for Him and Her

It occurred to me recently that you have to buy presents for that special person in your life four times a year-twice as many as any siblings, friends or parents. There's birthdays, Christmas, anniversary and of course, Valentine's day.

It can leave the bewildered partner thinking 'how can I make this one special or different?' Or for the typical student-'how can I afford a good present?' My advice would be to remember that Valentine's day is a day for both of you and so present-buying need not be traumatic.

As a guide to the financially challenged among us- and to quote my boyfriend here "It doesn't have to be massively expensive...it just needs to show that you know them."

Buying for her is something that a lot of boyfriends struggle with. There are several inexpensive options for those who are finding it difficult. A very clichéd gift, that's not to say a bad one (there's a reason it's popular), is to buy her flowers or chocolates. However if you want more than the generic- 'aw they're beautiful!' I suggest you consider another option.

A photo album with a couple of choice photos of the two of you is sweet and is a collection she can add to over time. Music

is also another appreciated gift. You have to be very aware of her tastes for this to work- whether it's Andrew Lloyd Webber or Slipknot, it shows thought and knowledge about what she likes.

A film is also a nice idea, but don't just buy anything- look out for a film that catches her eye, either a DVD or even a trip to the cinema would work. (If you think you can sit through *P.S. I love you* this would be perfect, otherwise *Sweeney Todd*- it may lack the romance but it has blood for you and Johnny Depp for her- the perfect compromise). Avoid the romantic comedy flicks unless they happen to be her favourite, otherwise it will come across as thoughtless.

The old-fashioned favourite is jewellery. A beautiful necklace is always nice, and it can cost as much or as little as you like. If you have a bit more money to spend, why not take her away. Wanting to spend time together will always be a welcome idea.

When I asked my boyfriend for ideal presents for men, I got a surprising list of

very varied items and an interesting take on the male sentiment. If money is an issue, novelties are always a winner, something small and funny. Alternatively a novelty book, be it about romance and relationships or funny animals. Edward Monkton books are fun to read- in his words, it's "simplicity and daft".

To share a pleasure with the fairer sex, films are always welcomed, *Transformers* is a guy's favourite, or anything with Jessica Alba (apparently *Into the blue* is good- she spends a lot of time swimming). There are also some good TV series available for the more affluent- *Heroes* series one being a good choice.

Whether it's football, tennis or rugby, most men have a sport they like (or play) in which case some new sports equipment is both thoughtful and practical. Alternatively buy yourself some new lingerie. I think this one needs no explaining!

Valentine's Day does not need to be difficult, it's a day to celebrate love. A general guideline for both sexes here is another quote from the male perspective- "Get something you can enjoy together...however if one is a fan of *Maid in Manhattan* and the other *I Spit on Your Grave* this may not work so well."

Rachel Eales and Luke

Is Chivalry Dead?

As Valentine's Day approaches and couples everywhere think about the gifts they will exchange and the time they will spend together, SEREN poses the question, 'Is chivalry dead?' After all, in an age of equality and the rush of modern life, chivalry may well have been squeezed out. With everyone so busy, old fashioned manners are no longer adhered to and maybe that doesn't matter, perhaps chivalry is dead because we no longer see a need for it.

As a woman who spent half an hour waiting for her boyfriend to turn up for a date, I pondered this question and decided that it would be nice if aforementioned boyfriend did the chivalrous thing and made a point of making sure he arrived before me and most certainly not late.

Maybe chivalry is dead in Britain where we try not to offend anyone and in doing so; lose some of the niceties of life. In Latin America the men live by the rules of 'machismo', which is not about being 'macho' in the sense that many of us may feel well ac-

quainted with, i.e. showing off in front of the boys, but seems on a practical level to mean that they treat women with a chivalrous attitude. And the women do not feel slighted by this. Men are expected to hold the door open for a woman and they consult the girl's father before declaring her his girlfriend. Is this archaic? Perhaps, but it's quite nice.

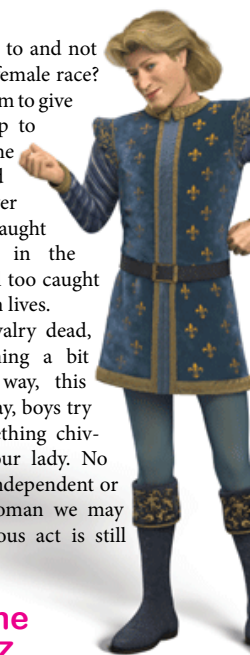
Romance tends to suggest big gestures and mushy sentiments, whereas chivalry is more about a state of mind.

I am all for equality, expecting to pay my way on a date and if offered otherwise, am nicely surprised, but what could be fostered is an attitude of chivalry. This is different to romance, though the two are linked. Romance tends to suggest big gestures and mushy sentiments, whereas chivalry is more about a state of mind. Why should chivalry extend only to the woman you are romanti-

cally attached to and not to the entire female race? Men don't seem to give their coats up to women in the cold or hold umbrellas over them when caught unsuspecting in the rain. We're all too caught up in our own lives.

So, is chivalry dead, or just running a bit late? Either way, this Valentine's Day, boys try and do something chivalrous for your lady. No matter how independent or modern a woman we may be, a chivalrous act is still appreciated.

Caroline Alvarez



Music

Hot Chip - Made In The Dark

If you've ever been to Trash then you're sure to be very familiar with Hot Chip's single 'Over and Over', which is still a dancefloor favourite despite its release back in March 2006. They're a band who have won the hearts of both indie and dance fans alike, with their genre-spanning album 'The Warning' earning the band a much deserved

Mercury nomination. So with such impressive credentials to follow up from, how does 'Made In The Dark' shape up?

Unlike its predecessors, 'Made In The Dark' definitely needs a couple of listens to get into it. The first three tracks 'Out At The Pictures', 'Shake A Fist' and 'Ready For The Floor' are such obvious floor-fillers that the rest of the album seems a little dreary in comparison. 'Out At The Pictures' gradually draws the listener in with its quirky introduction that plays around with tempo until climaxing with Alexis Taylor's reassuringly familiar vocals, whereas 'Ready For The Floor' is exactly what its title suggests as it is impossible to listen to without wanting to drag your mates to the nearest dancefloor. I find the album version of 'Shake A Fist' a little disappointing however, after listening to the live version non-stop last summer there seems to be a bit too much going on, although electro fans are sure to love the 'sounds of the studio' section.



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If you can manage to make it past these tracks then the rest of

'Made In The Dark' feel much more like a collection of unrelated songs, rather than a coherent album.

This does, however, show just how versatile Hot Chip are. Their sound is all over the place but each track rightly deserves its spot on the album. Particular highlights include the more poppy 'One Pure Thought' and 'Touch Too Much' which sound like Backstreet Boys singing over Daft Punk. Staying on the boyband vein, 'Made In The Dark' sees Hot Chip's first venture into piano ballads as the album closes with 'Whistle For Will' and 'In The Privacy Of Our Love'. Despite Taylor's gorgeous vocals and heartfelt lyrics these songs are frankly boring and it is all too tempting to skip these last two tracks altogether.

It has its failings but 'Made In The Dark' is yet another brilliant offering from Hot Chip, I just hope that next time they can stick to one or two sounds instead of trying to do everything at once.

Emma Dixon

Band of Horses - Cease to Begin

Band of Horses, previously known simply as "Horses" are an indie/rock four piece formed in 2004 in Seattle. The band consists of 4 members Ben Bridwell, Creighton Barrett, Tyler Ramsey and Rob Hampton. Cease to Begin is the band's second studio album and was released in October of last year. Songs from Band of Horses' previous album have been featured in popular US television dramas such as The O.C. and One Tree Hill. The album has been massively plugged on Radio 1 by both Edith Bowman and Jo Whiley and when they commented that this band was one to watch for 2008 they weren't wrong.

The album's opening track 'Is There a Ghost' has only three lines, but its guitar rift and haunting vocals will have you hooked and listening to the song over and over. The building crescendo of drums makes this one of the most epic songs on the album and looks set to ride high in the charts in 2008 so look out for it. Lead singer Ben Bridwell's vocals have been compared to that of Jane's

Addiction singer Perry Farrell so that gives a pretty good indication of his vocal talent. The album has much a similar sound to Snow Patrol's 'Eyes Open' album with collaboration of low and mid tempo tracks with strong guitar rifts and drums, perhaps a little more polished sound. 'Lamb on the Lam' track does not feature any vocals but merely displays the musical talents of this up and coming band who are destined to make it big in the UK this year.

Other songs such as 'Ode to LRC' and 'No One's Gonna Love You' that feature on the album deliver an eclectic mix of powerful vocals and solid indie rock that seems to be missing from the music scene of late. So if you are looking to invest in a good album, I would strongly suggest Band of Horses' 'Cease to Begin', for anyone who appreciates good musical and vocal talent this album is a definite choice.

Bianca Murray

These New Puritans – Beat Pyramid

These New Puritans are certainly eclectic. Despite intimidating displays of intellect, they have also been lauded by the material world - working closely with Heidi Slimane and producing music ('Navigate, Navigate') for the Dior Homme Show 2007. Their 'geek chic' approach have rightly awarded them a place in the upper echelons of indie intelligence with the likes of Foals and Lightspeed Champion - acts which are destined for huge things this year. However, due to their repetitive and forgettable demos that were floating around last year, I never really expected big things from These New Puritans. This album has completely reversed my usually stubborn and unmovable opinion. A gorgeous blend of tribal-like drum beats, swirling synthesisers and mumbling, hypnotic vocals, Beat Pyramid is darkly futuristic yet approachable - a feat that has only previously been achieved by Joy Division.

Beat Pyramid focuses on what are clearly obsessions of These New Puritans: numerology, mirroring, cycles and colours (especially silver and gold). This is portrayed both lyrically and melodically as Jack's lyrics incessantly talks about these themes over thumping bass and shimmering synthesisers. The very format of the album itself further reveals this penchant for cycles as it runs in a continuous loop - with the last song 'I Will Say This Twice...' running into the first song, '...ce I Will Say This Twice'. Despite all of this mysticism Beat Pyramid definitely makes you want to dance as irresistibly catchy choruses and beats make it a shoe-in for indie dancefloor appearances. Most of the songs on the album run along this vein, although that doesn't mean there is a lack of variation as different instruments make every song unique: such as the hiss of a snare in 'Numerology (AKA Numbers)' and stomping brass in 'Swords Of Truth'. This is all broken up by shorter 'instrumental' tracks, such as 'Doppelganger', '4' and 'H'. 'Doppelganger', the longest of the three, is a calming interim between the more rowdy 'Swords of Truth' and 'C16' as it consists of a steady drum beat, drifting synthesisers and the occasional twang of a guitar and crash of



a cymbal. Whereas '4' and 'H' are all recordings picked up by Jack - the former in a park on his phone and the latter recorded on his laptop in his back garden. Despite being ridiculously pretentious, these pieces provide a break from the relentless drum beats and give the album a more organic feel.

'Mkk3' and 'Costume' are the 'ballads' of the album, although this is something These New Puritans are clearly quite scornful of as 'Costume' contains the lyrics *We're not trying to relate to you* whereas 'Mkk3' was apparently compiled of stolen bits of internet love poems, including the line *Michael Barrymore masturbating*. Nice.

With Beat Pyramid, These New Puritans have set themselves far apart from the dross and have revitalised the new rave genre that

is known for its style over its substance. Jack delivers his vocals in that fashionable 'talkie' style, earning him comparisons to The Rakes but steering clear of that hideous 'mockney' as favoured by many singer-songwriters too numerous to mention. Beat Pyramid has taken the direction that the Klaxons were trying to reach with the dire 'Isle Of Her' and made it beautiful. They deserve all the recognition that they will get, and I predict Nationwide Mercury Prize nominations to follow.

Emma Dixon

Kylie - X

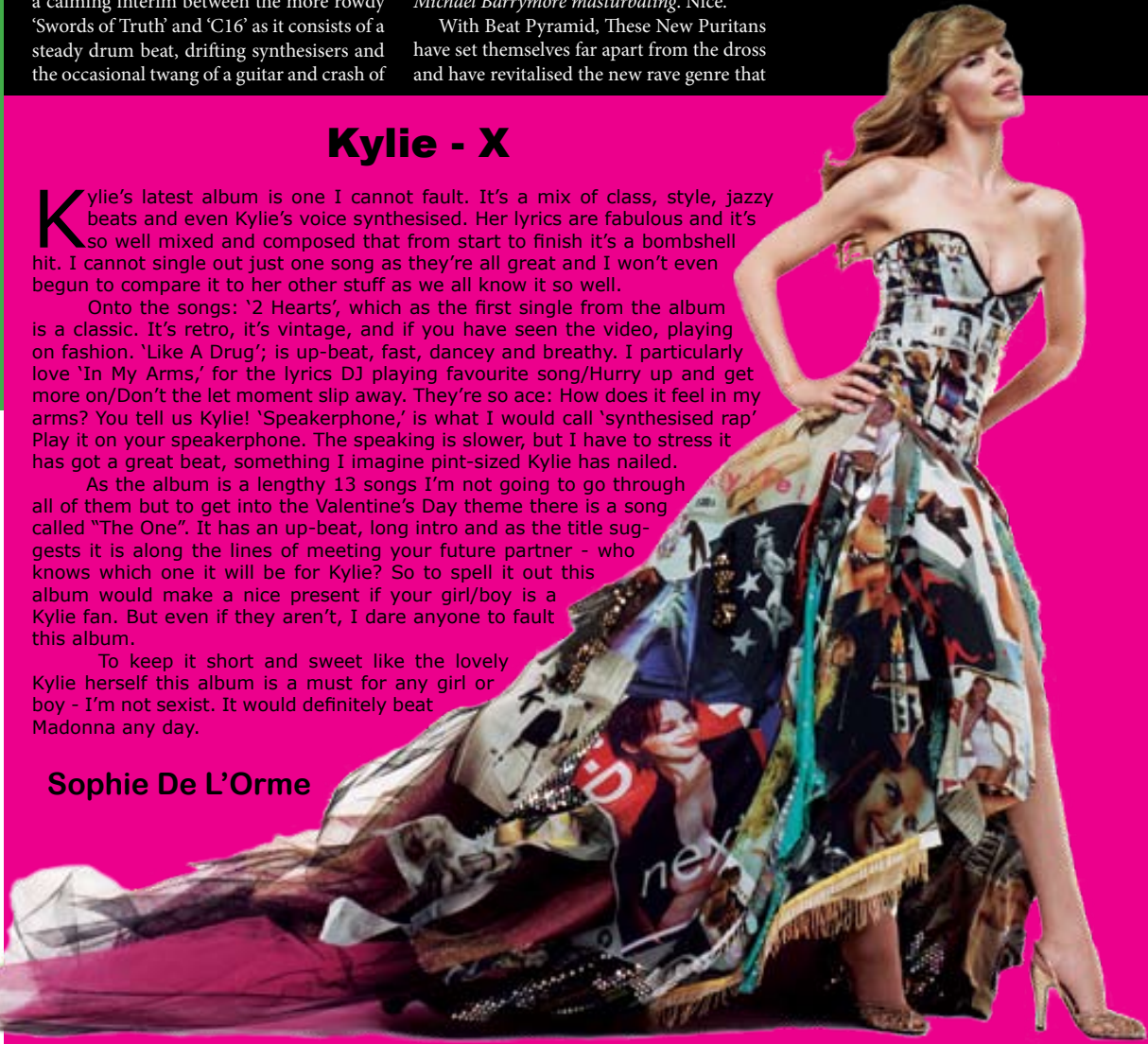
Kylie's latest album is one I cannot fault. It's a mix of class, style, jazzy beats and even Kylie's voice synthesised. Her lyrics are fabulous and it's so well mixed and composed that from start to finish it's a bombshell hit. I cannot single out just one song as they're all great and I won't even begun to compare it to her other stuff as we all know it so well.

Onto the songs: '2 Hearts', which as the first single from the album is a classic. It's retro, it's vintage, and if you have seen the video, playing on fashion. 'Like A Drug'; is up-beat, fast, dancey and breathy. I particularly love 'In My Arms,' for the lyrics DJ playing favourite song/Hurry up and get more on/Don't the let moment slip away. They're so ace: How does it feel in my arms? You tell us Kylie! 'Speakerphone,' is what I would call 'synthesised rap' Play it on your speakerphone. The speaking is slower, but I have to stress it has got a great beat, something I imagine pint-sized Kylie has nailed.

As the album is a lengthy 13 songs I'm not going to go through all of them but to get into the Valentine's Day theme there is a song called "The One". It has an up-beat, long intro and as the title suggests it is along the lines of meeting your future partner - who knows which one it will be for Kylie? So to spell it out this album would make a nice present if your girl/boy is a Kylie fan. But even if they aren't, I dare anyone to fault this album.

To keep it short and sweet like the lovely Kylie herself this album is a must for any girl or boy - I'm not sexist. It would definitely beat Madonna any day.

Sophie De L'Orme



Black Kids Are “Hot As Balls”!

Despite a mildly controversial stage name and the harsh realities of the British weather, Jacksonville's Black Kids have taken the UK by storm this winter. Armed with a hugely impressive debut EP, 'The Wizard Of Ahhhs' (released late last year and available for free download via the band's official website), the band have just embarked on a free UK tour (supported by Friendly Fires and Ipso Facto) for which tickets are allotted at random to lucky fans. Tonight, the queue that stretches from London's trendy 93 Feet East venue down Brick Lane is so long that the staffs of the numerous Curry houses which line the famous old road are having trouble wading through the masses to attract potential punters to their restaurants. When we catch up with frontman Reggie Youngblood and drummer Kevin Snow before the gig we are welcomed with bottled beer from the band's backstage stash. "I've only ever had this beer warm" declares Youngblood, whose soft spoken tone is poles apart from his unmistakable on-stage wail. "Is that the English way?" asks Snow. Clearly, Black Kids are not letting their new found fame go to their heads.

Seren: So, this is the third leg of your first proper UK tour. How's it going so far?

Reggie: It's pretty intense...

Kevin: Really good fun. The first show was definitely a blast. A guitar amp went out, but that's the norm for us. We're not really into playing shows with no technical issues.

Seren: The most boring shows are the ones that go smoothly.

Kevin: Who wants to see that? You can just stay home and listen to the album...

Seren: So first a free EP and now a free tour. How are you guys making money?

Kevin: Well, we sold two t-shirts yesterday...

Reggie: We are getting paid, I don't ask about the logistics or where the money's coming from. It might be dirty money... I just take the money and run!

Seren: I see you guys have your scarves on, it's not exactly Jacksonville weather at the moment. What's the coldest venue you've played in the UK so far?

Reggie: Glasgow. It was snowing for a little bit. We were just leaving through the countryside and it started to snow. It was beautiful.

Seren: You've got some pretty high-profile gigs in the pipeline including shows with The Pigeon Detectives and Kate Nash, are they friends of yours?

Kevin: We haven't actually met either one yet!

Seren: I was hoping for some gossip...

Kevin: But we're looking forward to it. Kate Nash ran into our manager a few weeks back and she's a big fan. We're looking forward to meeting her.

Seren: Let's talk about your first single - 'I'm Not Gonna Teach Your Boyfriend How To



Dance With You' - when's it coming out?

Reggie: Not until March I think. It was produced by Bernard Butler, it sounds pretty good...

Seren: It certainly does! What's the inspiration for the lyrics?

Reggie: Well, I had a wild period in my life where all I wanted to do for about five years was go out, get pissed and dance, and make the rounds... So I found myself in that scenario many times. I'd meet a really nice young lady, and we'd have the best chemistry on the dance floor, and then she'd just go off with this busted-ass looking troglodyte guy. If I had a nickel for every time that happened to me...

Seren: While we're on the subject of lyrics, I noticed you've posted all of your lyrics on your Myspace page which is quite a bold move, because you know they're going to get scrutinized... And I've got to bring you up on one of those lines now. Can you explain to me the phrase "It's hot as balls"...?

Reggie: (Laughs) You guys don't have that?

Seren: Not at the moment, no.

Kevin: I have to say you're the first to ask that question!

Reggie: I don't know... we're from the South... It's like a localism.

Seren: Does it mean 'very hot'?

Reggie: Yeah.

Seren: I'm glad we've got that sorted!

Kevin: Basically we're trying to start a new trend in the UK.

Seren: Well certainly in Bangor, that's going to catch on now. I suppose I'd better ask you about your own influences as a band.

Reggie: Bands like Sparks - they're a great influence - and The Magnetic Fields... then of course there's The Smiths and The Jack-son Five.

Seren: I also have to ask you about musical talent from Jacksonville because you share your hometown with Fred Durst, Lynyrd Skynyrd and Ma\$e, the rapper.

Kevin: The best artists are from Jacksonville...

Reggie: Really Jacksonville has a legacy that we are trying to perpetuate and live up to. It's a lot of pressure...

Kevin: It's hard to meet Fred Durst's standards really.

Seren: Well you must be doing something right because Wikipedia lists Black Kids as one of Jacksonville's famous inhabitants.

Kevin: Wow, I don't know if we're famous yet...

Seren: If Wikipedia says it, it must be true!

Alex Farley

LOCAL SINGER-SONGWRITER ENTERS LIVE STAGES OF NATIONAL MUSIC COMPETITION



Sarah Louise, a Caernarfon-based singer-songwriter, has won the opportunity to perform in the live stages of Live and Unsigned, the biggest individual musical talent search held in the UK (barring the omnipresent X-Factor) from a field of over 10,000 bands and solo artists. Like the X-factor, plans are being made in addition to televising coverage of the competition's stages.

Emphasising both talent and originality from its roster of assembled musicians, the competition will have winners in the categories of best individual male and female artists (solo acts) with the best band also being crowned with a third distinction. The overall

winners will receive a management contract as well as £20,000 with which they will cut a new single under the label of the competition organisers, Future Music.

Plans are also in the running for the Live and Unsigned winners to go on tour across the UK, which will see them perform at festivals the length and breadth of the country, with up to 100 individual gigs planned. In order to achieve this, however, Sarah Louise will have to obtain success against fifteen other hopefuls on the 24th of February in order to book a place in the Regional Final.

Away from the competition, it's been

a busy few months for university graduate Sarah Louise, whose debut English-language full-length 'Skin Deep' is out now (her first album, the Welsh-language Tira Na Nog, was released in 2005). For more information on her fortunes in the competition, and her upcoming tour schedule, which will see her play Academi and Patrick's Bar in the next two months, visit www.sarahlouisonline.com or www.myspace.com/sarahlouisonline.

Stephen Davies

In The Next Issue:



In next month's issue of Seren we are giving away a free CD! This will feature the cream of the student bands that can be found in Bangor. Each track will be recorded live, as part of a Storm live lounge making all the songs exclusive to us. You can't get hold of it anywhere else so make sure you get your copy free with the next issue of Seren!

Also, a few lucky bands will get the chance to perform live at Academi as part of our Seren SIN Night.

This is a great opportunity to reach a wide audience of potential student fans. If you're a student and you think your band has got what it takes to feature on a shiny new CD then contact us.

Email either Jack on:
editor@seren.bangor.ac.uk
Or Emma on:
music@seren.bangor.ac.uk

Film

CLOVERFIELD *****

This high-concept, first person-view disaster movie from the perma-tease mind of Lost creator J.J. Abrams follows a group of twentysomething New Yorkers whose leaving party for one of their friends is interrupted by an unknown entity's full-scale attack on the city. Rob is leaving for Japan, so once his love-life with Beth is thrown into turmoil by Travis (a gloriously thankless role which could have, and may have, been played by someone on work experience, but is pivotal in the context) at his going-away do, it is perhaps only appropriate that a Godzilla-type abomination chooses to rear its ugly head. The awakening of that ugly head and subsequent appearance may be due to the nefarious deep-sea drilling practices of the company Rob is going to work for, according to the abundance of viral marketing websites.

An array of superbly choreographed set-pieces punctuate the film at just the right time. Director Matt Reeves never overplays his hand and is wise to limit the screentime of the thing causing headache problems for the Statue of Liberty — even its dawn-lit reveal only just feels like the tip of the iceberg.

Indeed, a sequel is already in development. Whether it will follow the genre conventions so neatly subverted here remains to be seen. As a matter of fact, no scientist pops up to spoon-feed the creature's back-story nor are there any President sorts sermonising about the importance of independence and personal liberty before proceeding to blow the titular beast to smithereens. Cloverfield is what you want to make of it and the ambiguity of it all will prove to be its enduring appeal.

Cloverfield haunts mainly due to a lingering shot of the creature post-helicopter crash which immediately enters the pantheon of classic monster moments. An example of when film really comes into its own: thematically tragic yet visually comic with a literal stare into the maw of fate, cineastes will no doubt have long debates about what it really means.

However, most of the dialogue undermines the drama, and the widespread motion sickness across the pond will affect box office over here. As our 'eyes' for the largest



part of the running time, Hud is not unlike the sort of person you'd like to see eaten alive - part of me wished one of Rob's friends at the party was a professional cameraman, if anything, to cease Hud's incessant rambling. But maybe that was the point. After all, there is a cinematic conceit that just because the audience has laid down money, then in turn, they should automatically care about the characters they're watching. If treated as a sensory rollercoaster which it very easily

can be then Cloverfield breeds a delightful level of indifference, and this reviewer is sure many older viewers will take pleasure in a second helping of young urban professionals both recklessly and unceremoniously being bumped off.

Perhaps the message, if any, is that it is only in the most life-threatening of events that "love" is at its strongest, maybe the only time it will ever be clearly, truly defined (as made explicit before the credits roll). Can it be a coincidence that the word is found in the title, especially one as enigmatic as "Cloverfield"? Maybe the second instalment will play more on our fear of romantic comedies rather than the current world climate...

Kevin Smith

Sweeney Todd - The Demon Barber of Fleet Street ****

Johnny Depp's foray into the world of musicals was not as misguided as I first imagined it would be. The tale of Sweeney Todd is a well-known tragic story of revenge. A young barber is banished to a distant colony so that the local judge can make advances on his beautiful wife. Years later, the barber returns under the name of 'Sweeney Todd' and with the help of Mrs. Lovett, seeks revenge on the population of London.

The story is a wonderful contrast to the 'happily ever after' tone that musicals are famed for. Depp's portrayal of the demon barber, Todd, leaves you empathizing with this apparent villain. He is so twisted with hatred that he ignores everyone around him, his only thoughts being to find Judge Turpin (a badly cast Alan Rickman) who ruined his life so many years ago. However, coming back as a British character Depp's unmistakable voice of Captain Jack Sparrow does come out in several scenes - once Jack Sparrow, always Jack Sparrow. Whereas Bonham-Carter's take on the scheming Mrs. Lovett is

clever, whilst she is clearly in love with her new friend, the extent of her madness is only revealed towards the film's tragic ending.

Both the lead actors have subtle voices that lend themselves to this genre of musical very well - both of them being coarse and imperfect but ultimately nice to listen to. Alan Rickman as Judge Turpin is creepy and devious, but his deep voice is unmelodic and boring to listen to. With great performances from Sacha Baron-Cohen and Ed Sanders as Mrs Lovett's young employee, the cast work beautifully in director Tim Burton's gothic portrayal of central London.

Burton's take on Sweeney Todd is a feast of blood and gore. From up-close arterial bleeding to the discovery of the meat cellar for Mrs Lovett's pies, you need a strong stomach to sit through this film. With blood, catchy songs and the ever charismatic Johnny Depp, Sweeney Todd is a must see this month.

Rachel Eales

IN THE VALLEY OF ELAH *****

In the Valley of Elah' is yet another addition to the ever growing list of Hollywood movies tackling issues relating to the War on Terror. This time the issues that are being dealt with are far closer to home and something that many may appreciate on a personal level - what happens to our soldiers (or in this case American soldiers) after they return home from combat zones, in particular Iraq. This is an issue of particular relevance at the moment and one that affects many soldiers in real life, so it is good to see a film dealing with the matter, especially one involving such high calibre talent as this effort.



Inspired by actual events, 'In the Valley of Elah' begins when career officer Hank Deerfield (Tommy Lee Jones) is informed that his son's unit has arrived back on American soil but that his son has gone AWOL. Heading to his son's base to try and find out what has happened he discovers that no one seems to know anything and senses that something isn't quite right about the whole issue. Things take a turn for the worse when a body is found and is identified as his son, but as the body is apparently on military property there is a dispute over who has jurisdiction over the investigation. That is, until undervalued detective Emily Sanders (Charlize Theron) takes matters into her own hands, discovering a technicality that means the death is actually in her jurisdiction. Working together to try and find out what happened; she and Deerfield discover inconsistencies in the version of events given to them by the Army. As they get closer to the truth and Deerfield discovers things he never knew about his son and the harsh effects of the war on his son soon become ap-

parent, and it isn't long before the investigation also takes its toll on Deerfield himself. As the truth is revealed an important question is raised - Is the tragedy that Deerfield's son was murdered, or that the Army, which he once loved and respected could turn its back on him so easily?

'In the Valley of Elah' is definitely more a drama than it is a thriller, and as such it is the strength of the performances that make or break it. Fortunately, whilst none of the actors deliver career defining performances but they are all strong and convincing enough to carry the film. Tommy Lee Jones is probably the only person who could really play Deerfield, managing to pull off both the tough military man and the father saddened by the death of his son. He puts a suitable amount of emotion into his role to convince as both. Charlize Theron is also believable as a female detective who isn't respected by her colleagues and sets out on her own to do what she believes to be right. Susan Sarandon, plays Deerfield's wife, and despite her brief screen time, delivers a very good perform-

ance as the grieving mother. The leads are also backed by a strong supporting cast. Paul Haggis, in his first time as both writer and director since his award winning 'Crash' has crafted a very interesting film that has a lot to say about the way soldiers are treated once they return home and also the true meaning of patriotism. Whilst he probably won't win any awards this time, he has produced a film that is thoroughly convincing and has something very important to say. This is quite a slow moving film but constantly maintains enough interest so as not to feel long winded, but the film is somewhat lacking in tension which prevents it from working as a thriller. Overall, though 'In the Valley of Elah' is a drama and a very well made one at that. It certainly isn't a very entertaining film but it is really is a film that you should see, as the events do reflect real life and the issues are something we should all be aware of.

Robert Mann

A DIATRIBE ON THE EVILS OF IDIOTIC AND POINTLESS FILMS: ALIEN VS PREDATOR: REQUIEM

O STARS

First, some background. When I was seven, my mother told me about a terrifying film she had seen at the cinema, and had since rewatched on TV many times. She spoke of a chilling scene where an alien bursts out of a man's chest, creating one of the iconic scenes of cinema, and one highlight of one of her favourite films. That film of course was Alien. I had already developed a taste for all things film, and I KNEW I had to watch this film. My mother was strict about a lot of things I watched, but she was perfectly happy to let me watch the Alien trilogy at such a young age. What I'm trying to say is that this magnificent trilogy (I disregard Resurrection entirely) has been with me throughout the past 15 years through thick and thin. I adore everything about HR Giger's creation, and the Quadrilogy release of a few years ago just furthered it. The Predator films? Yes, they were alright, but could not hold a candle to the Alien in the slightest. So, when I walked out of AVP1 over 3 years ago, I was furious. Nothing about it made sense, nothing about it worked, the whole thing was a pointless exercise in a stupid brand crossover directed by a useless hack and poorly acted by everyone within (for the record, I did enjoy the games during the 90s).

That about brings us up to speed. I groaned when they announced a sequel, but the early footage did not look THAT bad. It looked entertaining. It actually had Aliens

fighting Predators, and the design of the Predalien hybrid was... ok. I was not expecting much, but thought that it could not be as bad as the first film. Naivety strikes again.

To call AVP:R (already a horrible title, shared with the bad sequel to Battle Royale) a heinous abortion of cinema is giving it too much praise. The Brothers Strause have concocted a mish-mash of poorly lit, hideously directed, barely acted and outright plagiarist moments into one awful, awful film. The loose



plot if you are interested is that the Predator ship from the end of the first film crash lands into a small Colorado town (ugh) and Aliens breed, whilst a Predator is dispatched from the home planet to go and clean up the mess. Meanwhile, a bunch of annoying teenagers, an ex-con, law enforcement types, a soldier and other people fight for their lives. I'll just mention the Predator briefly, he's a detective in this film, who just happens to occasion-

ally skin someone and take out some Aliens, nothing more. And my comment on plagiarism is entirely just, throughout the excruciating 90 minutes of this film, I was mentally picking out every single reference from every film of either series. It got to the point where a radio call from the National Guard became the radio conversation between the Marines from Aliens, almost word for word, effect for effect. There is not a moment of originality in the film, everything that made either the Alien or the Predator great is tarnished or outright desecrated.

Maybe it was a mistake seeing the film, and maybe I'm being overly picky with my comments. After all, I just wanted a brainless bit of fun, but I did not even get that. I suggest that you do not even consider paying any kind of money for this. I hope to God that they never put the Alien up on the screen again if there is going to be a similar outcome. This is without a doubt the worst film of this year, last year or any other year that springs to mind, and made me so angry I tried to open someone else's car instead of my own. That's what bad films do to you I guess. Pathetic.

(For the record, our own Robert Mann gave this 5*. It could be a marmite reaction, but he had not seen the original films. I'll leave that with you)

Ian Davies

WINTERS' STRIKE

Britain loves to go on strike; postal workers, teachers, train drivers, they're all at it. And now strike fever has spread Stateside to the Writer's Guild of America, a labour union representing film, television and radio writers across the pond. Since November 5th 2007 over 12,000 writers from the WGAE and WGAW (Writer's Guild of America East and West respectively) have protested against the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, a trade organisation representing the interests of 397 film and television producers, including big names such as MGM, Sony, and Disney.

The WGA has requested that the AMPTP double the residuals writers receive from DVD sales to 0.6% (up from 0.3%) per DVD sold. WGA members argue that, considering home video sales outweigh box office sales by over 150%, a writer's residuals, or profits made from subsequent airings or purchases of a program, are a necessary part of a writer's income that is typically relied upon during periods of unemployment common in the writing industry.

They have also insisted that the current DVD residual rate (0.3%) be applied to residuals in other digital media such as Internet downloads, streaming media, and video on demand television channels. However, the television and film companies are claiming that this 'new media' is an untested market and are unwilling to bow to such demands. "If they gave us everything we had on the table right now" says WGAW President Patric Varrone, "if they gave us everything we wanted... they would be giving all of us less than each of their CEOs makes in a year. And in some cases, a lot less."

However, AMPTP spokesperson Jesse Heistand does not believe the WGA have any justification for the strike, "The WGA organizers are grasping for straws and have never had a coherent strategy for engaging in serious negotiations".

Now into its fourth month, the strike has had devastating consequences on the television and film industry. The last writers' strike occurred in 1988 and lasted almost 22 weeks, costing the industry an estimated \$500 million. However, the cost of the current strike is now reported to have exceeded \$1 billion

and has proved detrimental to programming schedules.

Studios were hoping that an agreement could be reached before the backlog of scripts expired. However, ongoing negotiations and a refusal by studios to comply have meant that scripts for several programmes such as *Desperate Housewives*, *24* and *Heroes* have since run out, and production of these programmes has ceased until a compromise can be reached.

The strike has also had an affect on scripted talk shows and major Hollywood blockbusters such as *Saw 5*, *The Incredible Hulk*, and the new *Rambo* film. Television channels have seen an influx of unscripted programming such as reality television and game shows, resulting in a dramatic loss in viewing figures; NBC saw its prime time 18-to-49-year-old viewership drop by 11%, CBS dropped the same demographic by 10%, and ABC lost 5%.

On January 7th it was announced that this year's Golden Globe awards, the precursor for the Oscars, would not be held in its usual format. Without scripts for the presenters, and a threat from actors saying they would not cross the proposed picket line, it was decided that the winners would simply be read out without any audience or any of the usual glitz and glamour. It was also then thought that a similar approach would need to be taken for the Oscars, but the WGA have since granted a waiver permitting guild members to write material for the awards, and have decided against picketing the event.

Many actors have expressed their support for the writers' strike, with some marching with the writers and even refusing to cross the WGA's picket line. Those that have shown their backing for the strike include Ben Stiller, Tom Hanks and Angelina Jolie. George Clooney has even offered to act as mediator between the two sides, saying "When the strike happens, it's not just writers (affected)... Our hope is that all the players will lock themselves in a room and not come out until they finish. We want this to be done. That's the most important thing."

Chris Thomson

Eagle vs Shark (15) **** (Review copy courtesy of Optimum)

Are you familiar with *Flight of the Conchords*? No? Then shame on you. It is by far the funniest sitcom of recent years, about a folk duo trying to make it big in America. And get girlfriends. Just watch *Business Time* on YouTube. Anyway, I bring that up as Jemaine (half of the Conchords) is one of the stars of this brilliant New Zealand comedy, that brings to mind comparisons with *Napoleon Dynamite* and other such quirky comedies. Lily works in a burger bar, where she is not liked by any of the staff, but lives for mid-day, when Jarrod from the video game store comes in. She eventually pilfers an invite to Jarrod's Fight Man tournament (think *Mortal Kombat*) and manages to win him over. What follows is a quest to defeat a high school bully from Jarrod's past, dysfunctional families, weird loners and impressions.

The *Napoleon Dynamite* comparison is apt on one hand for this film, as there is certainly that vibe running throughout it. Jarrod's hometown has the feel of being stuck about ten years behind everyone else, which only enhances the humour of the situation. But it was not until after seeing the film that

the comparison even came to mind, because I was too busy laughing at the brilliance of Jarrod's incredibly geeky training sessions, and the dysfunctional characters we see throughout the film. It is an incredibly sweet film, not perhaps romantic comedy levels of nausea, but just that sweet sense of "Awww", that to me is a sign of a good film that is just a joy to behold.



The DVD itself is pretty good, with a decent presentation in terms of picture quality and sound, but is not one that you will want to show off your new HD Upscaling player or surround sound kit by any means. Extras-wise, we have an

excellent introduction by the director of the film Taika Waititi, and a few interviews with the director and the cast. In addition, there is a decent commentary with quite a few laughs and is certainly worth a listen. Finally, there is around 20 minutes worth of deleted scenes dealing with Lily and Jarrod's hometown. All in all, it is a solid package, and fans of the film should definitely pick it up. For the rest of you, make sure you at least watch it, and those who have not seen *Flight of the Conchords*: You know what to do.

Ian Davies

JUNO ****



Another review, another reference to a sitcom. I have to be frank here, because it completely skews my impartiality that is supposed to be inherent within me as an extremely amateur and frankly rubbish critic. Fans of *Arrested Development* (sigh, just buy it already) will be fully aware of the comedic brilliance of Jason Bateman and Michael Cera's father/son relationship within the show. As a result of that pairing, I've made sure to watch everything either actor has done since, and usually just love it. Understand? Great, lets review *Juno*.

Juno is a 16 year old teenager stuck in your typical Minnesota town where there isn't that much to do. Except get pregnant it seems. When she has a one night stand with best friend and bandmate Bleeker, it leads to a crisis for the young lady, struggling with the notions of abortion faced by so many unwilling teenage mothers. Salvation comes in the form of Mark and Vanessa, seeking to adopt a child of their own, whilst this unexpected jump into maturity forces Juno to confront her own feelings about the future, life and love.

Critically lauded, a box office smash in the US and a potential Oscar winner later this month, forgive me for having the concerns that we were facing another *Little Miss Sunshine* scenario here: A little feel-good, quirky comedy coming from no-

where to win the hearts and minds of cinema-goers everywhere. Fortunately, *Juno* is far better than that overrated, manipulative piece of tosh, and succeeds in actually being

funny, heart-warming, sensible and downright great. Ellen Page had already shown promise in *Hard Candy*, and cements her position in *Juno* as a formidable young talent for the future. Fortunately, she's surrounded by a fantastic ensemble cast, playing their roles to perfection (especially JK Simmons as Juno's father, why isn't he in more films?) Arguably, the standout is Michael Cera, who really has the shy, nervy and endlessly geeky teenager down to a tee now. It bodes well for the oft-rumoured *Arrested Development* movie, and hopefully he will be able to develop his craft further without being stuck as a one trick pony. Diablo Cody's script is magnificent, and succeeded in making me feel a bit old (I'm 22) with the barrage of slang at the start of the film. Stick through it, it's a bit jarring at first, but you'll find yourself saying "honest to blog" or "wizard" in no time. Special mention goes to the superb soundtrack, which closes (like the film) with Page and Cera's brilliant cover of "Anyone Else But You" by the Moldy Peaches. I've had it on repeat for two days now, and that song still chokes me. Brilliant.

Ian Davies

Sicko (PG-13) ***

We are all aware of the many failings in the NHS, but what Michael Moore seems to say in his latest documentary film to come out on DVD, *Sicko*, is that if we think we've got it bad; just take at the American healthcare system. The NHS in fact is one of the systems that he holds up as a perfect example of a "socialist" healthcare system working to ensure the wellbeing of the country. Michael Moore certainly portrays the American system badly, with people being turned away due to lack of health insurance or loopholes meaning that they cannot claim for their treatment. He then travels to various countries, showing how great their health services are, with smiling patients telling the camera that they have just received their treatment for free.

The contrasts are huge, but living in a country with one of these heralded systems, it is easy to see that Moore is not telling the full story. His arguments are strong, but he does not even touch on any of the failings in either Britain, France or Cuba which he visits. There are some really sad stories about people who have really suffered due to the American system and a touching scene where he takes volunteer fire fighters from 9/11 to Cuba to receive the treatment they cannot obtain in the United States. An amaz-

ing sense of humanity is portrayed between citizens of two countries that are supposedly sworn enemies. Cuba is an interesting example in the fact that it represents the complete opposite to the United States, yet healthcare is available to all citizens in a way which it is not in America. Moore points out that detainees at Guantanamo Bay who are suspected of masterminding the 9/11 attacks have better access to medical care than the citizens of America and the heroes who rescued people from Ground Zero in its aftermath.

All in all, *Sicko* makes for an interesting watch, and from a British perspective made me think that although the NHS isn't perfect, its heart is in the right place and the foundation of the Welfare State was a wonderful ideal. *Sicko* is part of a now popular genre, which includes other of Michael Moore's works from *Stupid White Men* to *Fahrenheit 9/11* to the work of Morgan Spurlock (of *Supersize Me* fame) who did a series looking at social issues in America and included one on the health service. This genre shows a taste for the political in our leisure time and even though it is quite easy to spot flaws in some of Moore's arguments, they certainly provide food for thought.

Emma Dodd

AMNESTY FILM NIGHTS

Film nights are every Sunday at 7pm in the Main Arts Lecture Theatre. Hosted by Bangor Amnesty Student Society. Free entry. Students only.

Rabbit-Proof Fence - 10/02/08

Maria Full Of Grace - 17/02/08

City of God - 24/02/08

The Lives of Others - 02/03/08

Lilja 4-Ever - 09/03/08

Tsotsi (15) * * * * *

Tsotsi, winner of best foreign language film of 2006 stars Presley Chweneyagae as Tsotsi, leader of a violent gang living in the slums of Johannesburg who kill to get money. Shot on location, the film is an unflinching depiction of the danger and violence that occurs in the slums of Johannesburg. Tsotsi is adapted from a novel by award winning South African writer Athol Fugard. The story follows Tsotsi searching for redemption in his life after accidentally kidnapping a baby following a carjacking. He chooses to look after the baby much to the despair of the baby's mother and father who don't know the whereabouts of their newborn.

This powerful and moving drama features an exceptional and charismatic performance from Chweneyagae. The cin-

ematography is stunning, showing the class divide of Johannesburg with some stunning imagery. The pumping soundtrack courtesy



of African Kwaito music artist Zola also gives the film raw energy. Although a gritty and occasionally violent film, it is certainly worth

watching for the central performance from Chweneyagae as he movingly and convincingly turns away from his violent past as he continues to care for the baby. The story is told with passion from director Gavin Hood as he makes you care for the characters right up to the tense conclusion. At only 85mins, the pace never lets up. A compelling and rewarding watch.

The DVD features plenty of extras including alternative endings (they made the right choice) and deleted scenes with optional commentary. There's also a generous inclusion of a very good short film from Gavin Hood, 'The Storekeeper'. A solid making of shows plenty of behind the scenes footage with cast and crew interviews.

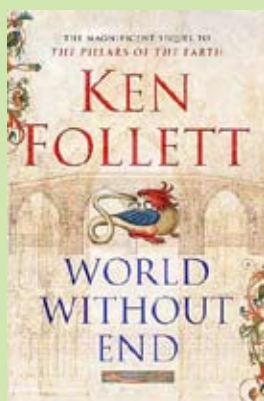
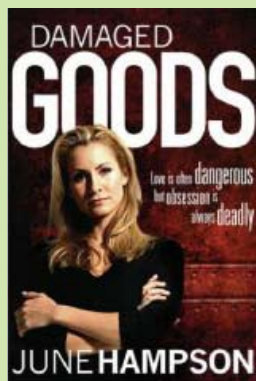
Mark Varley

Books

Damaged Goods By June Hampson

After the murder of Daisy Lane's husband and lover, life finally seems to be on track. With her son and her lover, the notorious London gangster, Roy Kemp, life seems perfect. But is it too good to be true...? This hard hitting compulsive crime thriller always leaves the reader wanting more. With the infamous Kray Brothers involved, Hampson has secured a gripping crime thriller in Damaged Goods.

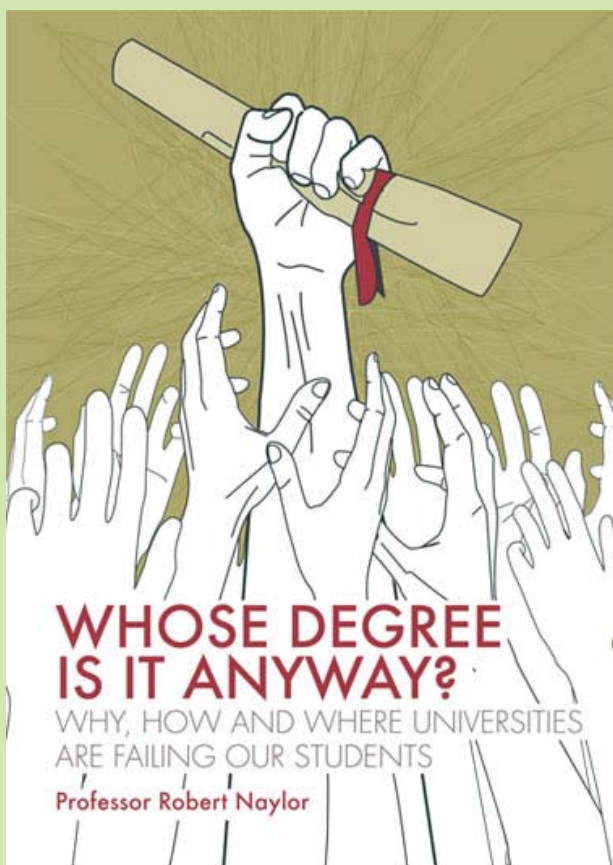
Available from Orion Books on 21/2/08 RRP £9.99



World Without End By Ken Follett

In 1327 four children witness a murder that will impact the rest of their lives, more than any of them realise. Within the group is a bully, a thief, a boy genius and a girl who wants to be a doctor. As adults their lives are tangled together by love, ambition, greed and revenge. This masterful epic takes place in England where men, woman and children are grappling with war, love, death and the devastating sweep of historical change. This is a perfect read for all those who love adventure novels.

Available now from Macmillan books RRP £20.00

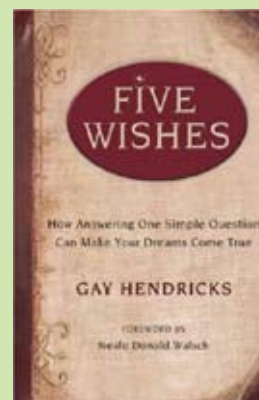


Whose Degree Is It Anyway? By Professor Robert Naylor

This is the ultimate guide of explanations for all the university fees, the millions of people who want to go to university and how far your degree will get you with your employers. After summarising the important parts of the important challenges that students, and universities, face, Professor Naylor helps the reader to understand the push behind university and helps you to grip the reality of the degree that you're getting. 'Whose Degree Is It Anyway?' is a fascinating and insightful look at the university system and how you can make your degree work for you and your future.

Available from Pencil-Sharp now RRP £14.99

By Emma McColl



Five Wishes: How Answering One Simple Question Can Make Your Dreams Come True by Gay Hendricks

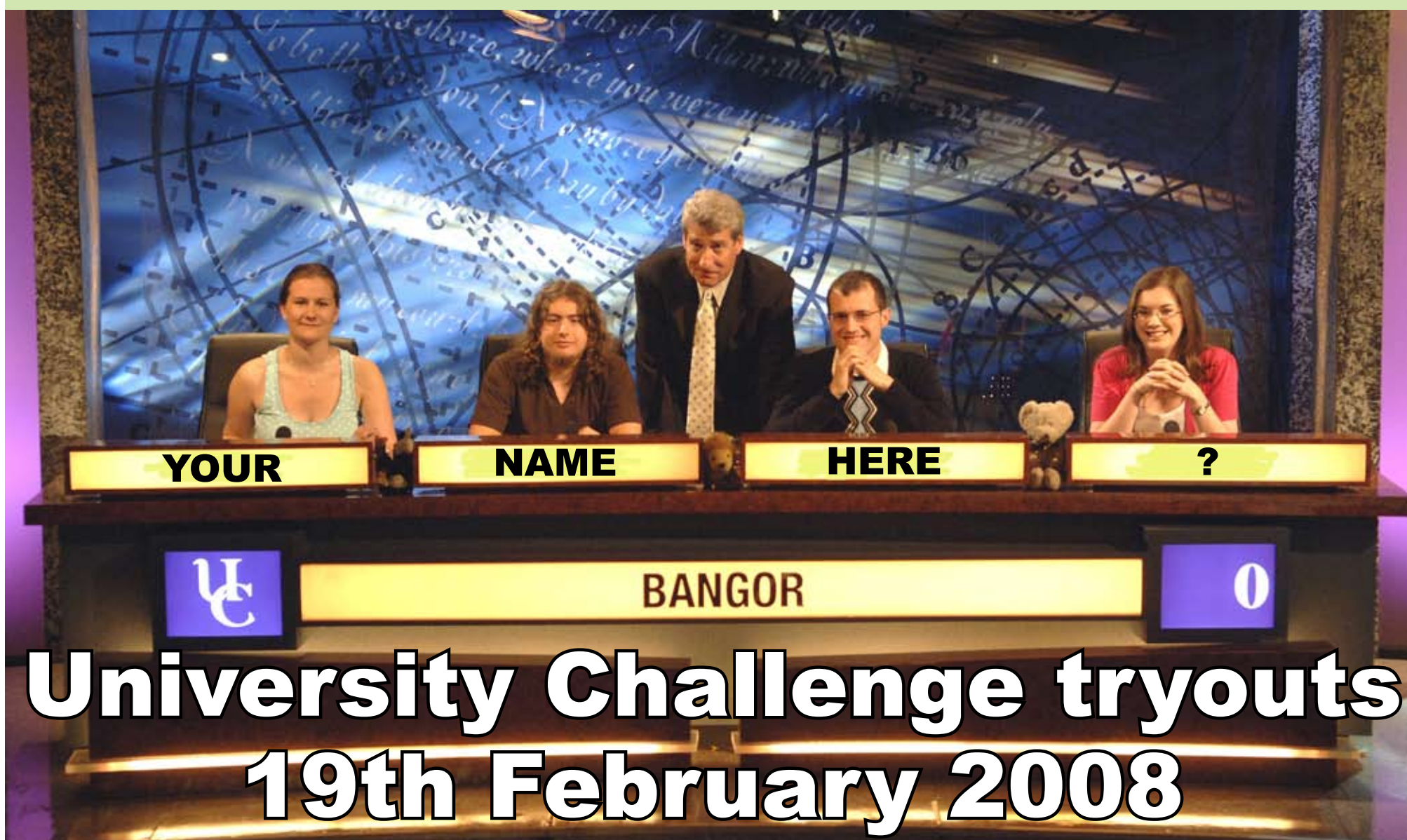
This fascinating self help book is a must read for all. This completing read that lets you forget about the new years resolutions that you have all ready broken and focus on the important wishes and goals you should be able to accomplish. This half novel and half self help book is ideal for those who want their own attainable five wishes for a lasting successful and happy life.

Available from Michael Joseph LTD on 7/2/08 RRP £12.99

Remember Me? By Sophie Kinsella

This fun fast paced novel begins with Lexi, a smart, successful and sexy 28 year old who wakes up from a coma and believes it is three years ago, when she was single, unsuccessful and had crooked teeth. This trip of self discovery is a perfect read for when you might need a feel-good novel.

Available from Banton Press on 11/2/08 RRP £17.99



UNIVERSITY AWARD BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

BURSARIES ASSIST IRISH NATIONAL ORIENTEER

Irish National Team Orienteer Fiach O'Rourke is among the promising sporting students awarded Bursaries by the University this year. As well as orienteering, Fiach, from Kildare, Ireland, a former student of Salesian College, Celmbridge, Co Kildare, is also a keen badminton player, playing at college and University level.

Fiach has been involved with sports for four years. Orienteering is a family activity for him and the sport itself requires map work and long distance and mountain running. He also dedicates 18 hours a week of training to his badminton as well, including shuttle sprints and games. "It was an honour to be awarded the prize," said Fiach. "Use of the facilities will greatly be of benefit to me and my training programme." Fiach is studying a Sport, Health and Exercise Science degree and he came to Bangor as the University was keen to accept an active sports student onto the degree- enabling him to continue to compete and study for his examinations whilst at college last year.

Bursary Helps Young Rower.

Daniel Harris is among the promising sporting students awarded Bursaries by Bangor University this year. The Maes Glas Bursary will provide Daniel with free use of the sport's facilities and access to coaching advice at the sports centre.

Daniel, from Durham, is a keen rower and is placed fourth in the elite 8's in the UK National Rowing Championships. He has been four times national champion and has rowed for England for the last two years, having achieved first and second place results. He is studying



Sports Science at Bangor University, opting to specialise in outdoor activities and has been rowing for seven years, training at Elite Level for the past four, which involves training ten times a week.

"I came to Bangor as the Sports degree is one of the best in the country and the area around Bangor allows me to fulfil all my sporting interests, including rowing. This Bursary will enable me free use of gym facilities and assist me with my training," Daniel said.

Will Varley

TWO OF 'TEAM GB' AWARDED SCHOLARSHIP

Olympic hopeful and Great Britain athletics team member, Nick Swinburne, and international canoeist and Kayaker Richard Longley have both received Sports Scholarships of £500 at Bangor University.

Nick, from Rothbury, Northumberland, is a middle and long-distance runner and is studying Sports Science (Outdoor Activities) at Bangor University. He has been competing seriously for only two and a half years and has reached an international level. He is currently ranked 3rd in UK cross-country and has attained a number of outstanding achievements in the last year: he won First place running for the England team in Eurocross in Luxembourg, he came second in the under 20 Northern cross-country, First in the North-Eastern Half Marathon and came 24th for the GB Team in the European Mountain Running Championships in

10-12 hours a week and is driven by an aspiration to win at an international level.

"We place great emphasis on providing excellent teaching and on attracting and enabling the strongest students to study at Bangor, and are pleased to be able to award prizes to these promising students," said University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Merfyn Jones, presenting the Scholarship prizes.

"We value the importance of student support at Bangor. Our broad range of Scholarships reward the highest calibre of students who want to study here," he explained.

Over £100,000 in Scholarships were awarded to first-year students studying at Bangor University this year, with many receiving payments throughout their three years at University. The University awards a range of individual and Open Scholarships and Merit Scholarships.

"We are delighted to be able to distribute



OLYMPIC TEAM MEMBER SUPPORTED BY UNIVERSITY

Local 2012 Olympic team member Dominic Breen-Taylor, who sails a Laser dinghy in the GB Olympic Team and Wales national squads, has been awarded a British Olympic Passport allowing him free training and coaching at the University's Maes Glas Sports Centre for a year.

Eighteen year old Dominic needs to be at peak fitness as sailing is a demanding, physical sport and of course he's a top athlete which means he sails each weekend and trains six days a week. Dominic travels less in the winter, but spends much of the rest of the year travelling to Weymouth on the south coast for Olympic sailing team training; otherwise he's in the gym maintaining fitness or at school. Dominic is a 6th form pupil at Ysgol David Hughes, Menai Bridge.

Local Athletes Bursaries, giving access to the same benefits of free coaching and admission to the University's Maes Glas Sports Centre have also been awarded to local young sports competitors by the University. In receipt of the

Local Athletes Bursaries are: Adam Williams for athletics, Mark Douthwaite, Jack Willis and Rebecca Owen for swimming and Sian Jones for squash.

Jack Willis, who is seventeen and a pupil

at Ysgol Friars, is a member of the Wales swimming squad and competes in the UK and abroad. He began training at 11 years old and currently swims for 16 hours a week and trains in the gym for a further two hours. Adam Williams, also a seventeen year old Ysgol Friars pupil, is an international triple jumper and is currently sixth overall in Wales. His training involves two hours of sprint training for speed and fitness, weight training for strength and power and bounding training for elasticity and power. He needs a high level of overall fitness and trains six days a week.

"We're delighted to be able to support and assist our local top athletes," said Mike Goodwin, Director of Estates & Facilities at the University. "The Maes Glas Sports Centre is an excellent resource for sporting and leisure activities for the University and the surrounding community alike," he added.



Will Varley

France.

He is an improving sports person, recording increasingly faster training and racing times. A committed athlete, Nick trains twice daily, aiming towards his long-term goal of the 2012 Olympics.

Nineteen year old Nick, a former pupil of King Edward VI School, Morpeth, was encouraged to run by his school and parents and by joining the Morpeth Harriers.

Richard James Longley, is a member of the GB Freestyle Canoe and Kayak Team since 2004. A former pupil of Monmouth School, the nineteen year old student from Coleford, Gloucestershire is now studying Religious Studied at Bangor University.

Richard is currently ranked 2nd in his category (decked canoe), 4th in Europe Junior Men's Kayak and 13th in the world in decked canoe category. He trains between

such a large sum of money among so many students this year," said the University's Head of Student Recruitment, Carys Roberts. "This means that each student will receive a sum that will really make a difference to his or her finances while at University."

Nick is seen being congratulated by Mike Goodwin, Director of Estates and Richard by University Vice-Chancellor Professor Merfyn Jones. The Sport Scholars were unable to attend the same ceremonies due to other commitments.

The awards certainly reflect the University's dedication to sport. In recent years, questions have been cast over its commitment, with issues such as sporting facilities being high on the agenda. New financial commitments in the form of scholarships and bursaries certainly show the university's commitment to rectify this.

THE SAINTS OF THE 7-A-SIDE



The seven-a-side league has been a big hit in Bangor in recent years, and this year has certainly been no exception. With a combined total of sixteen teams, 160 players and 15 weeks of intense matches, it has become an important feature in the lives of many students around Bangor.

Since its creation nearly three years ago, Mike's Bites have taken on the 'Manchester United' role of the league. They have held high positions each year, winning the league once whilst being in contention for it every time. Last year saw the league go to the very wire, with fierce competition at the top between the teams 33% Longer and The Hurri-

canes. The league was decided on the last day of the season, seeing The Hurricanes come out as eventual winners by a single goal after a controversial last day. Since then, 33% Longer (now 33% Wiser) have continued to play a successful role within the league.

This year has seen the emergence of a new side that have dominated this season since day one. The All Saints are a combination of 'The Chutney Ferrets' and 'G's and Hustlers' from the previous season. Captained by Matt Allen and including two players from the Welsh Leagues, they have stamped their mark on the league with domineering triumph. Their immaculate record thus far of seven wins from seven games whilst conceding no goals is certainly commendable and has sent out a stark warning to the league. Up until Sunday 27th January, the league had been a dead heat between Mike's Bites and All Saints, both of whom had managed to win their opening six games. But Mike's Bites took a three point lead at the top of the table when the teams came head to head in the first game of the New Year. The eagerly anticipated game ended with All Saints impressively beating their rivals 4-0 in a hard fought game.

The league is played on the Ffriddoedd Astro-turf pitch on Sundays from 2:30- 4:30. Each game is half an hour in length and there are two games played at a time. If you want to keep updated with the league, add '7-A-Side' football to your Intranet page.

Nathan Lee

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
All Saints	7	7	0	0	19	0	21
Mikes Bites	7	6	0	1	26	7	18
Clytn Blackmore	7	6	0	1	25	7	18
33% Wiser	7	4	2	1	12	6	14
Get your rat out	7	4	1	2	11	7	13
Monkey love	7	4	1	2	13	9	13
B>F>R	7	3	3	1	11	5	12
Fear the possum	7	3	3	1	5	4	12
WPM City	7	3	2	2	5	7	11
FC Outrageous	7	1	4	2	6	9	7
Inter Yamum	7	1	2	4	4	14	5
UN Athletic	7	1	1	5	6	14	4
Beetle Vale	7	1	1	5	6	10	4
Dem shamrocks	7	1	1	5	8	11	4
M B D M	7	1	0	6	8	26	3
The Law	7	0	1	6	4	26	1

For anyone involved/ not involved in the league this year, look out for SEREN'S 7-A-SIDE WORLD CUP. This should be taking place very soon, and will involve all teams selecting a nationality and competing in an all day event.

RUNNER ROB WINS TOP SPORTING ACCOLADE AT BANGOR



Universities in this year's Home Nations Cross Country Championships after representing Bangor at the British Universities Indoor Student Athletics Championships.

Rob was awarded Sportsman of the Year and a Blues, an honour afforded to competitors who have excelled in their field and represented Bangor at County or International level. Both were awarded by the University's Athletic Union. He has also contributed within Bangor University, captaining

and growing the Athletics Club and organising a Crazy Sports Day, which raised £145 for the North West Wales Cancer Research Fund Institute at the University. A £750 prize was awarded to Rob in memory of the late Dr. Llewelyn Rees, Director of Physical Education at the University between 1961 and 1972.

"We're delighted to award students such as Rob. He has achieved excellent results at an international level, brought great results back to Bangor by representing the University and Wales, and has made a valued contribution to sport within the University to the benefit of other students," said Mike Goodwin, the University's Estates and Facilities Director, who presented the award.

Will Varley

Rob Samuel, a final year sports science student from Gobowen, near Oswestry, is the winner of the Llewelyn Rees Memorial Award at Bangor University. The prize is the most important sporting prize awarded annually and is presented to the most promising sportsperson at the University.

Rob is an excellent distance runner, competing in both cross country and distance running events. At 22 he has enjoyed a successful and busy competition schedule, which has included a fifth place in the Snowdonia Marathon, one of the toughest marathons in Europe. Rob is ranked the third overall male in the North Wales Cross Country League, first male in the Pentathlon Series and is ranked well within top ten positions in the North Wales Regional Athletics Board Rankings for 5K, 5 mile and 10K races. He was selected to run for Welsh

NEW GROUND WITH NEW AMBITIONS

For all those who have travelled along Holyhead Road recently, you may have been intrigued (and slightly annoyed) by the new roundabout that is under



construction around half way up. The roundabout is being built to accommodate a new Bangor City Football Club stadium, and is one of many signs that the prestigious Welsh premier league club is going places.

Playing in the Welsh Premier Football League, Bangor City is one of the most successful teams in the history of Welsh football, having won our national league twice and the Welsh Cup no less than five times.

Bangor has also represented Wales in Europe in nine campaigns, playing matches in Italy, Norway, Spain, Poland, Iceland, Sweden, Yugoslavia, Romania and, most recently, Latvia. The international reputation our club has gained is recognised by the number of fans from all over the world who regularly contact us for information and memorabilia.

This season, under the managership of Neville Powell, Bangor City is once again focussed on adding silverware to the reputa-

tion our attacking, attractive football always gains. Eye-catching players include classy defenders Paul O'Neill and Lee Webber, tigerish midfielders Kieran Killackey and Mel McGinness and all-action forwards Ashley Stott and Les Davies.

The Welsh premier league has certainly gained much stead in recent years. Emerging teams such as New Saints (previously TNS) and Llanelli AFC have now got a full team of professional footballers, and are leading the way for all other Welsh sides to perk up their own ideas. Traditionally, Bangor City FC has been the best supported team in the Welsh Premier league, and continues to be so today. The new stadium is a welcome development for a team that is going places, and after a dismal few years, that is exactly the boost Bangor need.

City of Bangor Council, owner of The Farrar Road ground, has been approached by developers who wish to build a retail centre on the site. Bangor City Football Club has a license from the Council to use the stadium, but if the Council wishes to use the land for purposes other than football, it is perfectly within its rights to do so providing they give equal alternative accommodation. Proposals of a multi storey complex, with cinemas, cafes, bars, restaurants and a bowling alley have been drawn up and construction could possibly start as soon as Bangor City move out.

The commencement of construction on Holyhead road has been welcomed by a successful run in the league and in cup

competitions. They have won 15 games out of the last 20, drawing four and losing only one. The run has seen them rise to fourth in the league, tightly chasing Rhyl.

Bangor have also enjoyed equal success in the Welsh Cup. After beating out low league sides, they recently scraped through against Aberystwyth in a closely fought game. It has been the forwards that have made most of the headlines this season, but today it was keeper Paul Smith and defenders Lee Webber and Peter Hoy who grabbed the headlines as they overcame a doughty Aberystwyth to book their place in the quarter final of the Welsh Cup. It was even stevens after 120 minutes, but in a nail-biting penalty shootout, Paul Smith saved three out of five Aber efforts, whilst Hoy and Webber (along with Marc Limbert) slotted home the vital spot kicks to take us into the last eight where we will meet Cymru Alliance outfit Guilsfield.

Bangor's next home games are Rhyl in the League cup (Tuesday 12th February) and Llanelli in the Welsh Premier League (Saturday 16th February).

Jack Peat



STUDENT GEAR UP FOR BUSA CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Over 1150 university students will head west to Swansea this weekend for the BUSA Cross Country Championships with a few students looking to impress before the World Cross Country Championships in Edinburgh on 30 March.

In the men's competition 720 athletes line up with Frank Ticker's (ex-Birmingham) 2007 title on the line. With the top 3 men from last season having left university, the gold, silver and bronze will find new university homes this season. Kevin Deighton (Loughborough) finished one place outside the medals last year and will look to go one better and head back to Loughborough with a medal. Deighton has been hampered by injuries this season and missed out on leading the European U23 Cross Country team; look for him to make a big impact this weekend. Jon Pepper (Birmingham) and Ben Moreau

(Oxford) finished 5th and 6th respectively last year and are both in the fray this year. With over 65 universities competing in the men's event expect the local support for the 18 Swansea university students to be strong with the university hosting the event for the 1st time.

Felicity Milton (Durham) took the gold from Elle Baker (Brunel) by one second in 2007 and both are in the race this season to revisit the battleground. Both, however, will be looking over their shoulder as the two time European Junior Cross Country Champion Steph Twell (St Mary's) enters the event for the first time after starting university in September. European 5000 metres Junior Champion 2005 Emily Pigeon (Loughborough) also comes into the event as a fresher. Pidgeon, from Shurdington in Gloucestershire, could well be one of our Olympic

hopefuls at London 2012 if she continues to mature as a middle distance runner and will be one to look out for at the BUSA Championships.

If competing for the BUSA title wasn't enough the Championships are also a key selection event for the World University Cross Country Championships being held at Mauquenchy, France from 5-6 April 2008. The top two finishers in both the men's and women's 'A' races are automatically selected for the World University Cross Country Championships (subject to fulfilling the FISU criteria).

The Championships is being hosted by Swansea University with the support of Swansea City Council and Gwent Athletics, for more information about the event please visit www.busa.org.uk/athletics.

Hannah Marshall

SPIRITED PERFORMANCE BY BADMINTON TEAM

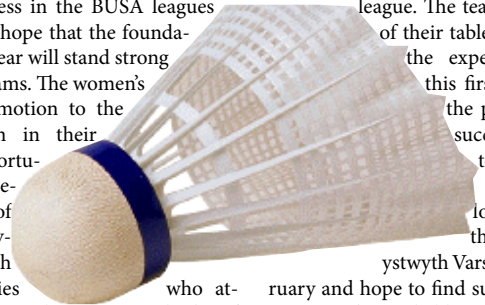
This year has been a year of transition for the badminton club, and though our success in the BUSA leagues was limited, we hope that the foundations built this year will stand strong for the future teams. The women's team, after promotion to the highest division in their conference, unfortunately will be relegated at the end of the season. Playing against much bigger universities who attract an international standard of players was a challenge; perhaps it's a case of little fish in a big pond. In addition, after a promising start, the men's first team will also be relegated after a close-fought relegation match decider held today. Many talented

first year players meant that the club could enter a second men's team into the BUSA league. The team finished middle of their table and we hope that the experience gained in this first season will help the players reach more success in the seasons to come.

The teams are looking forward to the upcoming Aberystwyth Varsity matches in February and hope to find success at the Welsh University's Cup held in Cardiff in April.

The club itself has expanded this year, having already held a club tournament and soon a club ladder.

Laura Reilly



TOUGH TIME AHEAD FOR ROWING CLUB

The start of the second semester for the Rowing Club is going to be a grueling one as the culmination and success of the whole of the winter's rowing program is to be based on just one 20minute effort in London.

The event is the Head of the River (HoRR), which takes place on the 15th March on the Tideway, a section of the Thames made famous by the Oxford-Cambridge Boat race. The race is a demanding 6.8km challenge for rowers and coxes alike, both mentally and physically.

The rowers need to face the intense pressure of racing alongside over 3000 rowers; 420 crews of 8 oarsman. The standard is incredibly high; Bangor University will be racing against the best international athletes from the national squads, past and future Olympic Gold and World Championship medal winners. Furthermore, both Blue boats from Oxford and Cambridge Universi-

ties will be racing. In what other sport can our University sportsman compete directly with Olympic Champions?

Then there are the physical demands of rowing nearly 6.8km flat out. Setting off in small intervals under time trail format, the aim is to cover the water as fast as possible.



There are boats in front, behind and to the side of you, but it's time that counts. After 1km into the race of powerful rowing, your initial aerobic capacity is shot; the rest is pain management for the remaining 20minutes.

The crew needs to apply power, balance, and control of the blade all the way through to the finish, there can be no weak links in the crew, or it becomes very, very apparent.

The demands are also shared with the Cox, the difference between a good Cox and poor one is massive. The Cox needs to not

ing over or being took over by other crews. The difference of steering a poor and good line can add over 5minutes to the race.

The women have there own event: the Women's Head of the River over the same course with 300 entries, traditionally taking place two weeks before the Men's event. The

up to 15km each session, two circuit sessions a week, two rowing machine sessions and aerobic cross training. With this preparation behind them, the club is aiming to achieve a top 200 placing on the 15th March.

In the build up to the HoRR and WHoRR the club will attend the Trent Head, Hammersmith Head and BUSA Head, rowing over 24km of competitive rowing in just over a month. Then the attention will turn to the sprint, side-by-side format of the Regatta season.

The club would like to thank everyone that took part and supported our 13 hour sponsored row in Patrick's Bar in December. We raised £268.79 on the day for the club and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The club, in preparation for the Head of the River, is aiming to complete a 24hour row in March.

Paul Johnson

girls are aiming to come in the top 150 crews against superb opposition.

The club has prepared for these events since September. The crews have had three to four sessions a week on the water, rowing