The SPDaily

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Lucky 26? Drag bingo kicks off SPANC

Students win big at bingo

Amy Rushton

#SPANC26 got off to a musical start as delegates took to Dorothy's for a Friday night social featuring copious amounts of fluorescent green cocktails, dancing mascots and a rendition of Angels by the SPA's very own Callum Martin.

Earlier in the night, Nia Death Xperience and Leyton Stoner performed drag bingo, featuring notable badger and pigeon cameos and an unprecedented win by Daisy, Daisy and Daisy.

Prizes flew across the room, as Hannah Foley collected a HopRocket beer hamper, and Niall Mirza later grabbed a book and Thatcher's Cider for having celebrated his birthday earlier in the week.

Later in the evening, Bree Alegretti and the SPA team kicked off karaoke with a performance of Toxic, then followed by Heather and Rosie singing The Winner Takes It All in a dramatic recreation of last year's coin flip.

Exposé's Zandie Howells ended the night with Half the World Away, which saw those still standing join arms in a hopeful but unharmonious choir.





On the road again...

Sophie Layton

From Pokémon battles to a tipsy trip across London, 200 journalists from the UK and Republic of Ireland have braved tough terrain, pouring rain, and a litany of engineering works to reach Norwich.

There was also a menagerie of wildlife on display, from *The Pigeon* spreading its wings to *The Beaver* enjoying a spot of sudoku!

Most distressingly, however, are reports that an unknown badger was seen stealing snacks on the railway. Witnesses say he was wearing a lime green jumper, and should be considered armed and dangerous.

But others found themselves exploring! *Rewind* were spotted making a pit stop at the cathedral, and a raucous celebration on the motorway as *The Student* crossed from Scotland to England, despite the extensive drive still to follow!

From cringe to comedy gold: The wild evolution of SPANC



Bree Allegretti and Jem Collins

From the outside, SPANC looks perfectly put together. But over the past 14 years, there have been someless polished moments.

The awards evening is particularly chaotic; there was the *Lemon Press* (York) delegate who ripped his shirt off in excitement, and an impassioned speech from an *I, Science* (Imperial) winner who moved people to tears by dedicating her award "to science". There's plenty of action off stage, too.

In Cardiff, at #SPANC18, a cross-publication riot broke out over a lack of gravy at the sit-down meal. And a year earlier at Leeds, one group managed to do so much raucous cheering that their table collapsed.

The Gryphon, who hosted #SPANC17, got off to a difficult start with the SPA team, after they drank half the cans of beer delivered ahead of time for the goody bags. We try not to think about what could have happened at #SPANC22 (in Glasgow) when the awards venue told us with two weeks' notice that there were structural issues with the building and they were only fairly confident the floor wouldn't cave in (a replacement was luckily found.)

One injury we were definitely not responsible for was in Bristol (#SPANC24): One winner from *Women's Wrongs* (UCL) left the awards ceremony only to break their leg, then Instagrammed us to thank us for putting on the event - from the A&E department. Even during Covid, the awards (hosted at Bree's flat in London in 2021) were boisterous. *Palatinate* (Durham) tuned in to watch the virtual ceremony - and got told off by their next door neighbours for cheering too loudly at winning Best Publication.

At least they weren't as rowdy as the hen party that crashed the Friday night social last year with an inflatable penis.

The conference itself is obviously meant to be a little more calm and educational. But maybe not as sedate as one sponsor found it; they dozed off in more than one talk and even let out a few audible snores.

Another speaker - who will remain unnamed - did go down as one of the biggest divas in SPANC history after they demanded the awards ceremony be delayed for an hour because they were running late.

Our speakers do, often, go the extra mile for us. When all trains back from the conference in Cardiff were suddenly cancelled, one was forced to crash on the floor of the Trustees' Airbnb.

Another speaker overshared a bit too much, and a video of their 2016 later had to be taken down over some accidental libel.

For all the chaos, SPANC always brings out the best in people.In 2014, at Nottingham Trent, outgoing Trustee Bree Allegretti proved his commitment by running for four Exec positions and losing each one - before succeeding on the fifth and final go.

And who knows. You could find the love of your life, like two Trustees (Geri and Ollie) did at #SPANC19 in York.

Try not to do anything tonight that will get you in next year's issue of *The SPDaily!*