



*Freshers*, by Joanna Davies  
Honno Press  
Available from March 18th  
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## Q&A with Joanna Davies

First there was *Ffreshars*, the Welsh language novel by Joanna Davies that raised a few establishment eyebrows on its publication in September 2008, due to its no-holds barred account of Welsh University life.... Now, there's *Freshers* the English language novel by the same author, due to be launched on March 18th 2010. The story was so good, she did it twice!

*Set between September 1991 - August 1992, Freshers follows the misadventures of a group of young people beginning their first year as students in Aberystwyth University. We follow their sexual and social dilemmas from their first week in University until the end of the Summer term.*

### **So why publish the same book in English?**

**Joanna:** It's not the same book as I've added 20,000 words to the original story so it's a 'Director's Cut' if you like with even more action and sauce than the Welsh version! A lot of my friends who aren't Welsh speakers were really taken by the extracts that I translated for them. So that inspired me to create an extended English version and with Honno's support it's been a brilliant experience. I was lucky enough to work with a fantastic editor at Honno! And I hope I can publish many more novels in both languages.

### **It's quite rare for authors to be equally confident in working in both languages. How difficult has it been for you to 'translate' the Welsh language culture which is a foundation for *Ffreshars*?**

**Joanna:** The story's core is a universal theme. It's a rites of passage novel... what it's like to leave home and find a whole new world waiting – and one that is frequently unkind to the unwary and inexperienced. So I don't think language is really an issue. I hope the characters and the story are strong enough to attract any reader regardless if they're familiar with the 'Welsh language' issue or not.

### **Joanna herself spent eight years studying at Aberystwyth University and her experiences have given her plenty of material for the book. So how true to life is *Freshers*?**

**Joanna:** Obviously my student experiences have provided a basis for the book but the story is purely fictional! said Joanna with a smile.

**Are you worried that parents about to send their brood to University will read the book and quake at the content?**

**Joanna:** The characters do have a pretty wild time in the book", said Joanna. "But obviously, the story is slightly more action-packed and extreme than real life. I think University is a great learning curve for a young person, you leave home for the first time, make new friends, savour your new-found freedom and as a consequence things can get a bit messy! All the characters in the book go on a life-changing journey and even though they misbehave, they do have to face the consequences at the end of the story!

Honno will be launching the novel in the newly opened Cardiff Arts Institute on Thursday, 18 March at 8pm with a short reading from the book by the author and young actors Aled Wyn Thomas and Catrin Mai as well as a performance by local blues band, 'The Royston Boys'. Entry is free and all are welcome.

***Reviews for Ffreshars***

Not for the fainthearted, a novel of passion, wild parties, drugs and complications  
**Lowri Mair Jones [www.Gwales.com](http://www.Gwales.com)**

*Ffreshars* begins as a diary of three friends going to college but which takes us to a much darker and unexpected place. Bad boys and worse girls...isn't college a nightmare! **Llwyd Owen (novelist)**

"And though it's a white-knuckle ride for the reader, ...the dark consequences for the characters make this a compelling modern Welsh fable. " **Big Issue**

A riot of a novel full of the ardour of college days - but not for the fainthearted!  
**Caryl Lewis (author of Martha, Jac & Sianco)**

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