

Jessica Davies (pictured) is in Year 11 at The Ecclesbourne School in Duffield. Jessica (15) has been selected to replace Sam Gregory of Kilburn as our new, young columnist for the next 12 months. Here is the article that Jessica sent in to All Things Local and which was judged the winner as it was both informative and amusing ...

## The Eurovision Song Contest

The Eurovision song contest is a live television show that has taken place on European prime time television for the past 53 years. Many varied views spring up when I mention this infamous competition. Everyone knows what it is, although probably for its questionable music and bizarre performances. But is it a good thing?

As you may well know, the contest involves entries from each of the European countries. Twenty five go through to the final live show. It all began in 1955 involving only Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Luxembourg. It has grown a lot since then.

English commentator Terry Wogan to our delight often ridicules some of the acts. And you know, this show just wouldn't be the same without old Terry advising us to fetch ourselves a stiff drink during the less sparkly moments.

This year the fated winner was Russia. Dima Bilan (heartthrob – blatantly the best) stormed his way to the top with song "Believe" involving an ice dancer and questionable bare feet. Russia earned a massive 227 points.

It goes without saying that a large part of Eurovision is its political voting. It'd be wonderful to say Russia won for its choice of song, but somehow I find that hard to 'believe'. Perhaps the steadily rising fuel costs around greedy Europe means oil rich Russia gets more than its fair share of points.

Maybe Russia's geographical advantage means it borders with many voting European friends.

Or perhaps I am being too cynical. After all, if the points really were dished out on such mere details then surely the same country would win year in year out. And they certainly do not!

It may surprise you to learn that England has won the contest all of seven times, a while ago admittedly. We last won with Katrina and the Waves – Love Shine a Light in 1997 but also with Sandie Shaw, Lulu and Bucks Fizz! And we've come second 15 times.

This year Andy Abraham of the X factor fame (former bin man) flew the flag for England, singing a "Dad-dancing concoction of disco and soul". He won 14 points – by no means dire – from semi-finalists San Marino (tiny country buried in the back of Italy's boot) and Ireland. You know, Andy deserved at least that much. Although, don't you think if we sang our song in, for example, Spanish, we'd need to give at least a few points to Spain? How many people sang in English?

Despite the voting, other memorable performances from this year included Latvia's pirate song "Pirates of the Sea", Spain's comedy "Baila el chiki chiki" with robotical dance demonstrations, and more traditional Eurovision pieces with coloured lights, fast beats and costumes from Israel and Romania.

Viewing figures, from the start to present day, have always been high: an estimated 100 million for 2008. Love it or hate it, it has produced stars such as ABBA and, er, Bucks Fizz, over the years and brings a little annual colour to our screens. Long may everyone's favourite European song contest continue!

Jessica

Note from Editor: Congratulations Jessica, I look forward to reading your articles over the coming year.

