

In The Middle

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**Black
History
Month**

Music • Clubs • Fashion • Arts • Lifestyle and Culture • Society

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The MOBO Awards

[photo: James Gould]

Grime and Hip Hop: a separation

It's taken almost two decades and a return to London, but as of 2014 the Music Of Black Origin Awards finally have a dedicated grime category. It may be a landmark long overdue, but it's another occasion where the proverb rings true: it's better late than never.

In fact, for a long time the word grime didn't even feature as part of the awards, failing to get the recognition that its thriving scene deserved until 2010, when Tinie Tempah took home the newly renamed "Best Hip Hop/Grime Artist" award. This isn't to say that the MOBOs had previously ignored the genre completely, they've long celebrated it, but never as a genre in its own right. Grime pioneers Lethal Bizzle and Dizzee Rascal have both won awards and Chipmunk claimed the best Hip Hop award in 2009, an undeniably impressive feat given that he'd beaten the likes of Eminem, Dizzee Rascal, Drake and Kanye West to the lucrative title. Likewise, there have been previous attempts to integrate parts of the UK underground with a UK Garage category in 2004, which So Solid Crew won, but these didn't make it past that year.

This new step is without a doubt a positive one. For a group with as high a profile as the MOBOs to have conflated grime and hip hop is incredibly problematic. Despite grime's initial hip hop influence, the two distinct musical traditions have grown independently of each other, and to take them and group them together almost arbitrarily effectively reduces this part of the narrative of black history. Grime is resolutely British whilst Hip Hop is historically American, so to say that they are somehow the same is to say that these two distinct roots are also somehow homogenous. The manner of such a grouping is reminiscent to that of the omnipresent grouping of jazz and blues, and it is no negative thing that the grime/Hip Hop amalgamation might not achieve such longevity. That the UK has its own distinct Hip Hop scene is evidence enough that this grouping is meaningless.

With this reduction of cultural history comes a reduction of the genres themselves.

By putting them both under the same banner you judge them by some wider metric that will inherently leave out the things that make each genre distinct. Sure, there are commonalities, but these are pretty much limited to the presence of MCs. Everything else, from the instrumentals to the style of MCing, are massively distinct.

Perhaps more than anything this development suggests an even wider change to the scene. 2014 has been a fantastic year for grime, with tracks from the likes of Meridian Dan and Skepta (both nominees) making a serious impact on the UK charts, and perhaps it is simply the case that this is the first year that the genre has been too vocal in mainstream music to be ignored.

The MOBOs have been criticised in the past for being too commercial with their nominations so with this new category it's almost as if the MOBOs, probably unintentionally, have vindicated the commercial viability of a genre that has for most of its life time

been decidedly underground. Whether or not this is a good thing is another matter, but the simple truth is that the MOBOs are influential. Airing on ITV at prime time to a large audience means that a small change like this can have a wide impact on the genre itself, and you could reasonably expect an upsurge in interest as grime takes the limelight as a movement for the first time.

All in all, the awards celebrate music of black origin, and it is vital that it is recognised that from these roots grew a wonderful and diverse range of music. Celebrating a variety of genres with categories for soul, reggae and many more, the MOBOs provide a vital medium for presenting past and present as a whole, not only celebrating the history of these prominent sections of the musical spectrum but also creating a platform for future success. To some extent then, it is strange that grime and hip hop ever shared a category, but they did and now their separation is to be applauded. Let's hope the first ever winner of the award appreciates its importance. And let's hope the category lasts longer than UK garage's did. *[Editorial]*

Gig Guide

Sunday 26th October

Pale Seas, Wharf Chambers

This fresh Southampton band bring their oceanic, melancholy soundscape to Leeds, about as far from open water as is possible. This is dark pop for what will probably be a dark October evening.

Monday 27th October

Katy B, O2 Academy

See the MOBO nominated house queen and her electrifying live show. She is still on a mission, promoting her latest album 'Little Red' (whose title might be a reference to her hair colour).

Tuesday 28th October

Greys, Brudenell Social Club

Loud rock band from Toronto whose debut album title 'Easy Listening' is way off the mark as a description of their sound.

Wednesday 29th October

Johnny Marr, O2 Academy

Undoubtedly a 'Godlike Genius' according to the NME, but has he still got it? Find out as he tours in support of his latest album 'Playland'.

Thursday 30th October

Zola Jesus, Belgrave Music Hall

One of the most prolific and experimental singer-songwriters of recent times, teasing classical, gothic and Lynchian sounds. You'll be enchanted by this American's live show.

Friday 31st October

Showaddywaddy, City Varieties Music Hall

Celebrate Halloween in the most petrifying way possible.

Editor's Picks: MOBO Nominations

**By the time you'll be reading this the awards will be over and done.
Here are the artists we hope have won.**

Big Narstie

Best Grime Act

Big Narstie has been part of the grime scene since its inception in the early 2000s. He is a larger than life character who has dominated the internet recently with his 'Uncle Pain' videos, offering Agony Aunt-style advice to unfortunate fans. "My Big Brother Had Sex With My Girlfriend." "I Fell In Love With A Prostitute." These are the sorts of problems that Big Narstie can deal with, usually by swearing a lot and telling you to "get mad."

Even if this advice is excessively candid and very digressive, the videos are hilarious, and have helped him to earn the esteemed accolade of Noisey's Man of the Year 2013. Everything he does is beautifully tongue-in-cheek: for his latest tour he formed the 'Base Defence League (BDL)' with JME and others (surely a form of social commentary) and his latest mix tape, 'What's the Story? Brixton Glory II', was an album of grime covers of Brit Pop anthems by the likes of Oasis, and a follow up to Part I in 2008. If you want some music that doesn't take itself too seriously, get into Big Narstie. *[Oliver Walkden]*

FKA Twigs

Best Newcomer, Best Female Act

It's a shamefully beige choice from me, given that our girl FKA Twigs is one of the least surprising among the nominations after a plaudit-heavy year, but though I'd love to pick out one of the unknowns and boldly declare their show-stopping prowess, for me the standout figure stands out already.

Nominated for a BBC Sound of 2014 Prize earlier in the year, and among the front-runners for a Mercury at the end of the month, Twigs' first full length LPI has been warmly received by all sections of music media, and with good reason. Ambient electro-pop needed a champion and FKA stepped up in style, with James Blake-esque poise and an album that sees a subtlety that had long been missing return to pop. Understated and dramatic all at once, the London-based singer songwriter deserves her place at the MOBO top table. *[Andrew Kemp]*

Nicki Minaj

Best International Act

So good she's been nominated twice (sorry Iggy), and the perfect salve to fellow International Act nominee Chris Brown, Minaj has been having a mighty year. Regardless of what you think of her, the amount of noise she's been making is second to none. Following a controversial artwork reveal with an even more controversial video launch was just the tip of the Nicki Minaj doesn't care what you think iceberg.

Her biggest obstacle is combination unstoppable force/immovable object Beyonce, still riding high after a career best album, however this time at least, if we're judging it purely on entertainment value, Minaj wins by a mile. Not only has she moved the cultural conversation to where she wants it, the tracks she's been putting out have been consistently excellent and with new album, The Pinkprint just around the corner, this is very much Minaj's year. *[Daoud Al-Janabi]*

Everything Will Be Alright In The End by Weezer



Weezer's last attempts at cementing themselves on the alternative rock ladder were met with mixed reviews, and rightly so. Their collaboration with Lil' Wayne on 2009's *Raditude* clearly wasn't helping the cause. Fortunately, producer Ric Ocasek has leapt to their aid again to return Weezer to their former glory with *Everything Will Be Alright in the End*.

Frontman Rivers Cuomo certainly has the intention of re-living their golden days, with the album's sing-along single 'Back to the Shack' yearning for 1994. As always, Cuomo's lyrics are rather uninspiring and even corny at times, most evidently in the opening track's somewhat cringeworthy declaration: "Ain't got nobody, Ain't got no one to kiss and hug me...". It's no news that

Cuomo is better with power chords than he is with words, so when you find yourself humming along with a number of tracks on the album, you know he's done something right.

Even the guitar solos have come a long way since the note-for-note melody-mirrored shreds of the *Green Album* and we find a prime example with 'I. The Waste Land', where Rivers rests his vocals for the sake of an instrumental. The help of Best Coast's Bethany Cosentino makes surf-rock duet 'Go Away' another highlight, with the pair's voices complementing each other like a cheesy chat up line.

It's not Weezer's chef-d'oeuvre, but definitely not their worst. Some will be satisfied with a handful of catchy trademark hooks, but veterans will wish they could jump in a time machine to 1994 and reproduce some classics like 'Say it Ain't So' and 'The Sweater Song'. Weezer are still cool in an uncool kind of way – we should just ignore the clichéd lyrics and take them for the nerd-rockers that they are. Maybe then, *Everything Will Be Alright in the End*... [Alex Paddock]

Otherness by Kindness



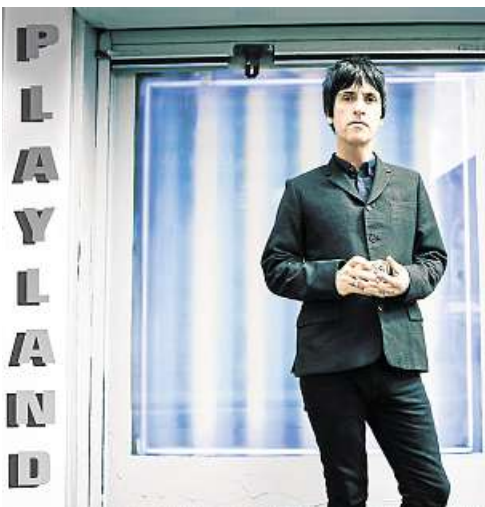
Otherness is pure angsty funk. If the sentimental track titles are anything to go by, he has clearly had a lot on his mind; 'Why Don't You Love Me', 'Who Do You Love?' and 'This Is Not About Us' would all seem more at home on the back of a boy band's first album. However, search 'This Is Not About Us' on YouTube and you can see Kindness, A.K.A Adam Bainbridge, happily grooving away next to a backing dancer.

Despite having glum undertones, Kindness' new album does have a slow, steady groove to it – a glum groove – which is a move away from the slightly more plodding, indie synth sound of his last album, (which features an excellent cover of the Replacements'

'Swingin' Party'). *Otherness* also seems to have a lot of soul and R&B influences, which makes a nice change for the indie-electro producer, moving him firmly into the pop genre.

Several tracks on *Otherness* feature guest vocalists, the aforementioned 'Why Don't You Love Me?' features Dev Hynes (of Blood Orange and Lightspeed Champion fame), whilst 'Who Do You Love?' sees Robyn give a performance of dubious standard. Kelela and Ade also feature on the album on the single 'World Restart'. This is the best track on the album, the crooning vocals making it soulful and easy listening, with the male vocalist sounding like a member of Fat Freddy's Drop. The thing is, these vocalists sort of take the shine off of Kindness's own restrained, simple vocals – meaning the tracks featuring him alone seem a bit bland in comparison. The combination of this restraint, the morose lyrics, and the ambling pace, make an album that is low impact and not hugely memorable, despite being easy on the ear. [Patsy O'Neill]

Playland by Johnny Marr



Johnny Marr is, without doubt, a legend. As guitarist and co-songwriter of the Smiths, Marr helped take over and mould the world of 80's indie-rock. Although much less headline-driven than Smiths band-mate Morrissey, Marr's timidity has still left him popular but in a subjacent, less controversial manner. Having worked with various successful artists over the years and been announced winner of last year's NME's Godlike Genius Award, the Manchester man has achieved a lot since his post-Smiths days.

It is tragically the case, however, that in this day and age if a 50-year-old artist has had big success in his earlier years, more often than not the terms 'outdated' or 'dismally ordinary' spring to mind. And as

much as I'd love to love everything the Ex-Smiths man has done, *Playland*, regrettably, has left me feeling rather uninspired. It's by no means a poor album, there's just not that spark.

Disappointment aside, Marr's second solo album is definitely a step forward from 2013's *The Messenger*. Lead single 'Easy Money' is the epitome of catchy, upbeat indie-rock and sees some of Marr's lyrical intelligence come to life as he talks about the evils money can lead to. Marr also briefly steps into 2014 as 'Little King' and title track 'Playland' bring a small touch of psychedelic-rock to the record. *Playland* undoubtedly has the potential to be regarded as a top of the range indie-rock album, it's just difficult not to expect more.

If the past 32 years were to be forgotten and only the last couple remembered, Marr could still be deemed a creditable success in the rock'n'roll scene, but *Playland* was never going to be an epic Morrissey-Marr masterpiece, nor was it ever going to amaze the 2014 sea of Alt-J worshippers. But an album of simple, easy-listening indie-rock is – let's face it – pretty damn refreshing. [Joey Colley]



Världens Band Clothworker's Centenary Concert Hall 17/10/2014

For anyone who loves world music, Världens Band are something you've got to see. I have just been transported to seven different worlds in the space of an hour's lunch break. These people take the noise out of your heart, turn it into human music and make you want to dance on through the rest of your day.

Världens Band say they are here for three reasons: to bring peace, to make us dance and, now jokingly, to become world famous in the UK. Let's help them along – they have brought warm love to a once cold-hearted Clothworkers Centenary Concert Hall and the public clearly want to see a repeat of their tour. This is the kind of group who reach the end of their set and leave you so impacted that you immediately book tickets for tomorrow.

As an audience we are totally part of their jam. With 15 musicians from 7 different countries, every minute we are filled with exciting new sounds that fill up your senses and shake away the worries of work and university life.

Charu Hariharan (India – vocals and mridangam) sends shivers down my spine with her voice of humble magnificence during Indian folk improvisations. Feisty Navah Elbaz (Tunisia – dancer and vocalist) takes us to the Mediterranean for enticing flamenco accompanied by Dave Foley (Scotland – flute), via some Klezmer tunes and insights into Jewish culture. Later the group even adds a touch of head banging Arabic punk. Swedish fiddle players Anna Möller and Thea Åslund help us sit back and breathe with their at-first-minimalistic, sensual duet, before they are surrounded by a mix of odd ball accompanists. In the words of Arvid Rask (Sweden – mandola), they got us all “dancing like crazy birds in the end”.

“Screw the system!” he calls, and people climb down over the balcony wall to go dance with the band.

Världens Band proposes a movement for world peace through musical unity and reminds us that, through travel, we can now learn from each other. Each exceptionally talented musician plays with individual expressionism, whilst fusing together as one colourful, global tribe; their message of equality is heard. *[Caitlin Mayall]*

Crocodiles Brudenell Social Club 08/10/2014

The sight of a half-empty Brudenell is enough to make the most swaggering of indie rockers quake in their Chelsea boots. Crocodiles, however, seem seasoned enough to take this in their stride but fail to transform a drizzly Wednesday night in Leeds into anything resembling a rowdy San Diego punk gig.

They bring together a well-honed blend of lush melodies and scuzzy guitar sounds but sadly, it all feels a little cold. The California twosome barely acknowledge their audience and look less than chuffed to be on stage, making for a performance that doesn't pack much of a punch. The band seem to have lost sight of the energy and attitude that give their sleazy brand of rock'n'roll its appeal. The crowd too appear to miss their grimy edge, keeping their distance from the stage and hardly breaking out of anything more than a civilised wave of head nodding.

In spite of their unexpectedly passionless delivery, the band do supply some undeniably great songs. During the unashamed arrogance of 'Neon Jesus' and the dizzy dreaminess of 'Mirrors', the audience are reminded of why they braved the rain. These older tracks are interspersed with the more poppy sounds of their most recent album *Crimes of Passion*. This balance, however, is not enough to distract from their tepid delivery.

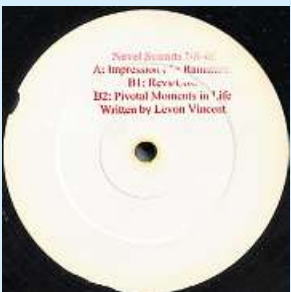
As I start to contemplate necking my pint and heading for the exit, the band pull it back somewhat with their last song. In a finale that makes liberal use of the dry ice budget, both guitarists turn their backs to the crowd and do what we all came to see them do – make a hell of a noise. Tonight may not have been their finest hour, but their exit proves that Crocodiles may not have lost their bite just yet. *[Charlotte Gray]*

Weekly Chart



Velvet Hammer
Happy
[Soozi Records]

Ace up-tempo northern soul (and nowt to do with Pharrell), this rare gem has just had a welcome reissue.



Levon Vincent
Revs/Cost
[Novel Sound]

Anthemic techno from one of the genre's finest; played at the right time, this track does magic to the dancefloor.



STL
Silent State
[Smallville Records]

Repress of a timeless classic from the one and only Levon Vincent, modern tribal house masterpiece.



Steve Summers
Anhedonia
[Russian Torrent Versions]

Russian Torrent Versions further refines its lo-fi jam aesthetic with Steve Summers' tense walls of noise and swinging subs.



Ekranoplan
Star Frog
[All Caps]

Possibly the standout from Kowton & Julio Bashmore's latest collaborative EP – perfect end-of-the-night material.

[Laurence Huntingdon]

SUBDUB West Indian Centre 18/10/14

Saturday 18th October saw the return of SubDub to Leeds' West Indian Centre. As one of Leeds longest-running events providing the best of Reggae, Dub and Roots, SubDub and Exodus are uncontested in their field and have rapidly earned nationwide respect as a collective. Also responsible for Outlook and Dimensions festivals, Simon Scott and Mark Salford have gained international acclaim since their SubDub venture began in 1998.

Favoured amongst Leeds' partygoers and DJs, Hessle Audio's Ben UFO described the West Indian Centre as 'instrumental for dubstep, dub and dub-reggae in Leeds'. It is certainly unlike any other venue in the city. Escaping from Hyde Park and the city centre, the West Indian Centre is hidden in the West Indian community of Chapel Town and offers the perfect space to host such a friendly night which is adored by so many. Everything is refreshingly low-key and even the bouncers are remarkably easy-going.

Iration Steppas hosted Room 1, alongside King Alpha collective. The sound was, as usual, second to none; the massive rigs in every corner provide a trembling bass with which few dancehall sound systems can compete. The tempo was truly upped in Room 2 with sets from Asher Senator and Peter King. Tippa Irie definitely earned his headlining spot in this smaller, more intimate setting as he made the crowd go wild for his entire set. Overall Subdub achieved what it has been aiming to do since its creation so many years ago: host a night in which music prevails and people keep on coming back for more.

If you can't wait until the next Subdub, head to Momentum at Wire on the 1st for the Om Unit Inversion launch party. Tickets available from Ticket Arena. [Harriet Shepherd]



Halloween in Leeds

[Photo: Canal Mills]

Flux Halloween Special

The Flux Halloween Special promises indeed to be something special as they welcome *White Material*'s Galcher Lustwerk. The Brooklyn-based producer and DJ is famed for his distinct deep vocals which make his soothing house tracks instant classics. If his mixes for Blowing Up The Workshop and densinghour are anything to go by, this is a set not to be missed. Also joining him on the line-up are Flux's Aartekt and DJ Kon of Kon and Amir. Tickets are £12 and Flux are vowing to take advantage of RA's new ticket re-sale scheme to avoid touting, so keep an eye out online or get hunting for those last few paper tickets.

Acetate

If you're looking for something a bit less festive, head down to Wire for Acetate. Set up by the *Hessle Audio* boys, this home-grown Leeds' night returns to Wire with head honcho Pearson Sound gracing the decks all night long. 1 DJ, 100% vinyl, this night is a back to basics, no-frills event boasting great music, an intimate venue and undoubtedly a great crowd. Tickets are a bargain at £7 or £10 on the door.

Nightmares at the Mill

Tickets for Canal Mills presents Nightmare at the Mill sold out long before Halloween had even crossed our minds, but with a line-up this big, there's no wonder. Showcasing UK talents Scuba and Jackmaster in the main room, the more intimate second room will play host to German techno giant, Levon Vincent alongside Northern Irish house duo, Bicep. This night is guaranteed to be big and tickets will no doubt be available nearer the time through Facebook, so keep an eye out on the event page.

System.

Opting for a Halloween house party instead? Head to Mint Club on Saturday instead to catch system. present Chilean luminary Ricardo Villalobos. A pioneer of minimal techno and microhouse genres, Villalobos has played a crucial role in the transformation of the German underground scene. Alongside this legend comes long-time Fabric favourite, Craig Richards, who has earned worldwide recognition through his consistent, yet variable sets at London's biggest club. The stellar line-up is a rarity in Leeds, so don't sleep on this one.



This Week We Love... Malaika Firth

Some people are particularly fortunate recipients of a good batch of genes. One of the lucky few is Malaika Firth. However, that's not to say that's all that defines her. Firth's style is a genuine credit to her own chic sensibilities. Her sartorial choices indicate a trace of tomboy cool with a staple diet of beaten up denim, cropped t-shirts, and sweetly finished with a utility jacket. Firth has also drawn up the blue prints for effortless off-duty styling; balancing London cool with sharp tailoring.

She doesn't have to be alone in her stylistic tendencies either. You can get back to basics with understated khaki green and toasted caramel hues and ease your way into the always transitional period of autumn. Get booted up with a trusty pair of ankle boots and get ready to see through the treacherous expeditions that winter beholds. Take Zara's solution to understated elegance and invest in a pair for a reasonable £49.99. They'll ensure you're marching your way into spring in no time and can easily be combined with the classic trench coat. As a British staple straight from Burberry, prices can vary but head to Asos where for £60 you'll be ready to fend off the slightest batch of drizzle the Leeds' skies will undoubtedly have to offer.

With a fashion campaign for Prada under her belt, Firth rewrote statistics in the process by being the first black model to front the brand in twenty years. Not a bad start for someone who is only twenty herself. With an infectious smile and her girl-next-door charm, you can't help but style crush on her. Why follow the crowd, when the crowd can follow you? *[Francesca Macari]*

Icon - Omoyemi Akerle

Omoyemi Akerle is the epitome of a powerhouse. She is one of the driving forces behind Nigeria's burgeoning and swiftly developing fashion industry. Her quest to promote, preserve and protect the West African country's sustainable fashion industry lead to the creation of Style House Files. It is an agency and catalyst in image consultancy and creative direction that bridges the gap between fashion insiders, industry professionals and the global sphere.

Akerle's ambitions to place Nigeria's fashion industry on a pedestal also lead her to launch Lagos Fashion and Design Week. Partnered with the British Fashion Council, the four-day spectacle features more than 40 designers and has gained international acclaim through respected journalists such as Suzy Menkes, as well as interest from a number of buyers like Selfridges.

Her extensive reach doesn't end there as not only is she listed on Business of fashion's Global 500 but she has also created a platform for a selection of Nigerian designers. This has allowed the designers to present at British Fashion Council's International Fashion Showcase 2012 -2013, Pitti Immagine W in Florence 2012-2014, Vogue Talent Milan Fashion Week and Ndani Space at Selfridges, London.

Akerle's work doesn't stop there either. "In five years, I see an industry with fundamental basics, such as proper investment in formal education for the industry, proper mechanisms in place for access to skills acquisition and development, garment manufacturing plants, accessibility to textiles, retail expansion, access to funding, retail outlets that cater to every demographic". Her forward thinking and desire to promote fashion as a contributor to Nigeria's economy make her an icon, and long may her work continue. *[Sarah Shaikh]*



Icon - Alek Wek

Born in Wau, South Sudan, Alek Wek has gone from seeing her beloved country ravaged by civil war, to escaping and beginning a new life as a refugee in London, and finally finding international success as a supermodel. As a Dinka woman, Wek has spoken out about the prejudices she has faced, particularly in the world of fashion. She has continually fought for the same recognition and opportunities as those around her, a right which has not been easy to achieve.

As a result of these battles, milestones for Wek include appearing in the much coveted position as the 'bride' in Karl Lagerfeld's Chanel catwalk, and working with other top designers such as Vivienne Westwood and John Galliano. It was however, gracing the cover of Elle magazine in November 1997 that Wek truly acknowledges as a pivotal moment. This moment was significant for Wek not just as a model, but as a woman now able to publicly embrace, celebrate and educate about her Sudanese roots in an industry so often criticised for its innate racism.

"Whether I like it or not, my skin defines me", writes Wek in her autobiography. However, whether you know her as the face of high street brands, or the face of numerous charities, it is clear that Wek is using this to her advantage. She continues to challenge not only her own expectations after a childhood characterised by terror, but also those of the world around her. *[Molly Shanahan]*



Sartorial Sounds of AfroPunk

August of this year saw the fashion blog scene go into overdrive, as Afropunk festival hit Commodore Barry Park, Brooklyn. Hair and lips were colourful, statement jewellery was huge, and the clothes themselves had everything screaming with originality. With performances from country singer Valerie June to punk band Fishbone, Afropunk also provided a diverse music selection.

The festival's ethos is based around DIY and the fashion reflected this with a mix of thrifty vintage pieces, bold handmade accessories and outfits reminiscent of 80s prints and tailoring. Some of the most striking looks seen at the festival were inspired by traditional attire such as printed African head wraps and tunics dyed in flamboyant colours. This tribute and transformation of cultural heritage through fashion really underpins the character of the festival.

Despite the festival's name, the hairstyles were far more limited to afros from beaded dreadlocks to patterned buzz cuts. Make-up was equally vivid, with elaborate eye designs and lips painted every colour from neon green to white. The festival clearly not only celebrates creativity and music but also colour and the history connected with it.

Afropunk received a huge amount of media attention this year and it is due to this that the festival is set to be even better next year. With more and more people coming together to celebrate music, tradition and DIY fashion at its very best, Afropunk is certainly on the rise. *[Lydia Norris]*

Gentlemen's Hour

The Most Influential Black Men in Fashion

Despite being an industry that often shocks and surprises, many in the Fashion world have struggled to accept the emergence of fierce new designers and models from non-white backgrounds. However, despite these plainly ludicrous difficulties, many have paved the way into the fashion world as successful editors, writers, designers, stylists and executives. This week we look at the most influential black men in fashion, from models, to designers through to A-list celebrities.

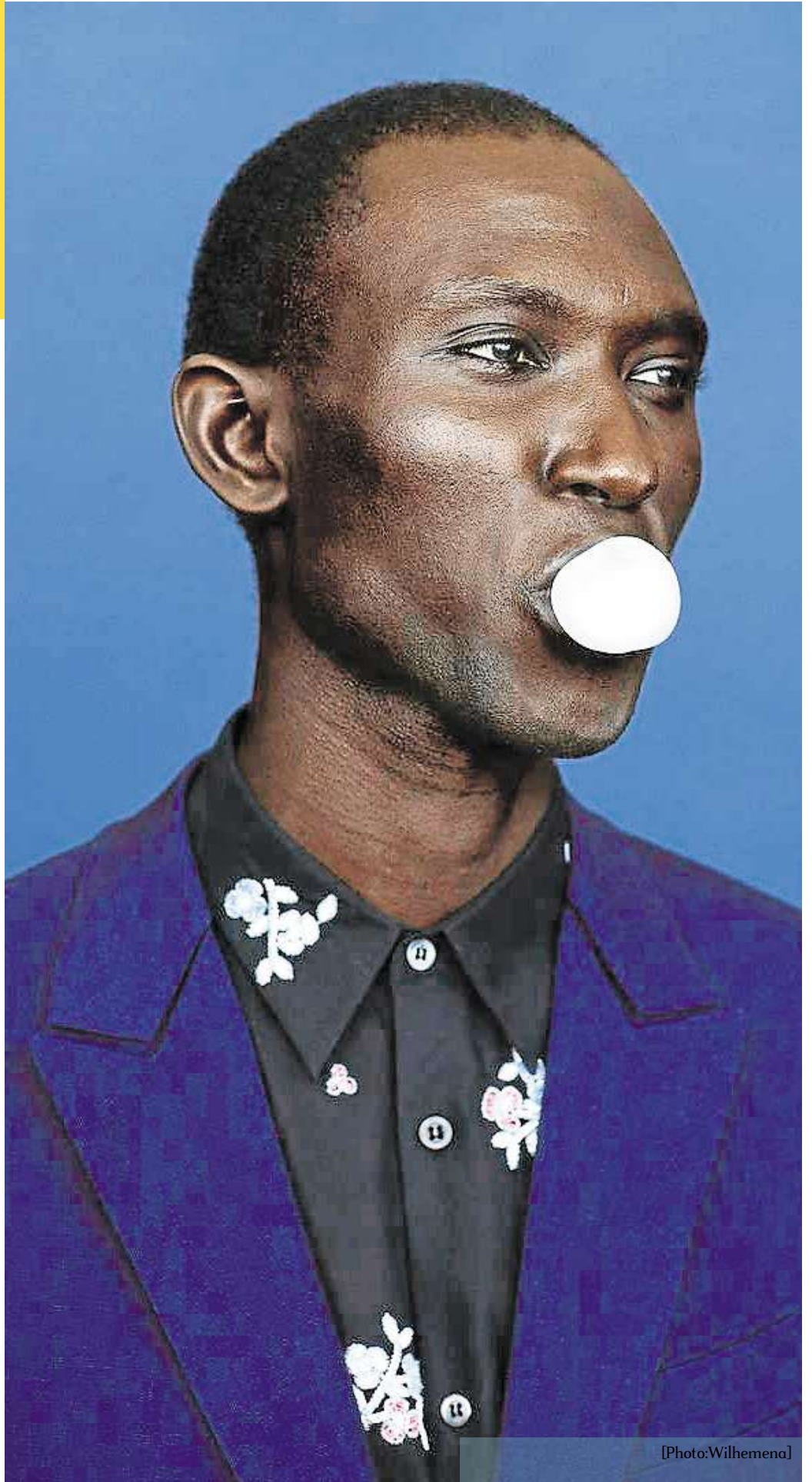
Many of you may not have heard of Portuguese model **Armando Cabral** but you may recognise him from his various campaigns for J-Crew and H&M. In 2009, calling on his experience from working with top-end designers, he launched his own line of quality footwear. Made in Italy, the shoes combine luxury materials, rich leathers and tough canvas, to make everything from hi-top trainers to hardy looking boots. Up and coming, yet with a wealth of design experience, Cabral's work can be found on designer stockist website mr.Porter.com.

Someone you may have heard of is the legendary **Jeffrey Banks**. After working in the high ranks of Ralph Lauren and Calvin Klein, Banks created his own brand in 1978 at the tender age of 25, and set about bringing the masculine element of 20's and 30's Hollywood glamour to his contemporary designs. From suits, to neckwear, to accessories, Banks has it covered. However, what qualified him as such a great fashion designer were his furs that he designed for men. Another major designer, André Leon-Talley, once said that his furs were "so smart and tailored that some women want to wear them". If that isn't success then we don't know what is.

Another name on the street that has bloggers feverishly typing away is that of upcoming model **BB Kaye**. Starting off a dancer, BB, which stands for Black Beauty, crossed over into the world of fashion after appearing on E4's reality show "Dirty Sexy Things" which followed eight hopeful models in their day-to-day lives. After signing to Storm modelling agency, BB has done campaigns for Roberto Cavalli and GQ as well as dancing for pop-stars such as Kylie, Mariah and Beyoncé.

Finally, it's common nowadays for our favourite celebrities to delve into the exciting world of fashion creating their own ranges for popular names as well as their own brands. **Pharrell Williams** and **Kanye West**, two of the biggest names in music and holding influence over many, have already in fashion with much success. Pharrell's "Billionaire Boys Club" and "Ice Cream" lines are already stocked by Urban Outfitters and Kanye's line of trainers "Nike Air Yeezy II Red Octobers" were selling for £4,700 after selling out in shops in just 11 minutes. They are both trend-setters that many choose to admire and follow and the extension of their influence is seemingly immeasurable.

With the established designers and the up-and-coming talent in the fashion industry today along with influence from celebrities, it seems that black men in fashion are finally moving out of their minority status, and are in fact a reason to be reckoned with. *[Grant Wilkinson]*



[Photo:Wilhemena]



Black History Month

Marvina Babs-Apata

Marvina Babs-Apata is a Nigerian-born project manager and mother of two. She founded Angel of Youths, a non-profit organisation that builds social projects about young peoples' passions. In celebration of Black History Month, *In The Middle* profiles one of the most inspirational figures in the Leeds arts scene.

Marvina's mother didn't tell her they were migrating to the UK for good. Aged just thirteen when they left Nigeria, she couldn't see the reason for the move; for her, Africa was so "rich and cool". Unpleasant experiences at secondary school and college in the UK didn't help either. She was a victim of bullying which she believes was due to her being African.

She didn't have a "cool" accent or know the local slang. It made her stand out. She was always made to feel like she was lesser for being African. It was this experience that led her to create Angel of Youths, a non-profit organisation that builds social projects about young black and ethnic minority peoples' passions.

The fact that there weren't any positive images of being black in the media and society drove Marvina to strive to change herself and her identity so as to fit in with society's standards of "normal". The stereotyping she received in school was not just from fellow peers but also from staff; despite taking math, chemistry, biology and further maths, Marvina's teachers told her she could not pursue a science degree and that she should try a less challenging career path.

While she was in Africa, Marvina had never thought of herself as black. She was just another human being who lived in Nigeria. It was only when she came to the UK that she started to become self-aware of her black identity; all of a sudden there were stereotypes

that determined what she could and couldn't do and how she was supposed to act. One such stereotype came into play when, to everyone's astonishment, Marvina chose sailing for PE at school instead of long distance running or sprinting. She didn't understand the reason behind the astonishment until recently. Through her work with black and ethnic minority Leeds communities as one of the main founders of Angels of Youth (AOY) she is exposed to the issues that young black people face in society.

AOY was formed in 2011 after the death of a close friend Marvina knew since her teens. In Marvina's words, "AOY was set up because I felt so sad and heartbroken that my friend had felt so isolated and alone that his only solution was suicide. I wanted a way to give young people a place they could go to and be made to feel special". Through AOY organised community projects, young people are given the opportunity and guidance to showcase their talent in whatever area that might be. This has included, but is not limited to, politics, hair, healthcare, music and fashion design.

One of the projects that Angel of Youths has been commissioned by the Leeds City Museum to create is the 'My Leeds My

Culture' exhibition for Black History Month. The project aims to celebrate positive African descendant contribution to Leeds culture and heritage via a community curation led by Young adults (aged ten plus) covering, sport, fashion, visual arts, music, history, heritage and faith.

Marvina is a microbiologist by profession, but her desire to make history and impact future generations acts as her biggest motivation. However, having two jobs can be quite challenging and as a result she is taking a year out to focus mainly on AOY work. Just like her role models, she believes that it's better to be poor and leave a legacy behind than to be comfortable but forgettable. Her words of advice? "Do not do things because they sound or look good. It shouldn't be about money or pride because making an impact on people is much more fulfilling than that."

My Leeds My Culture will be showcased at Leeds City Museum from October 2014-2015. [Johnny Philomen]



[Photo: Lionsgate]

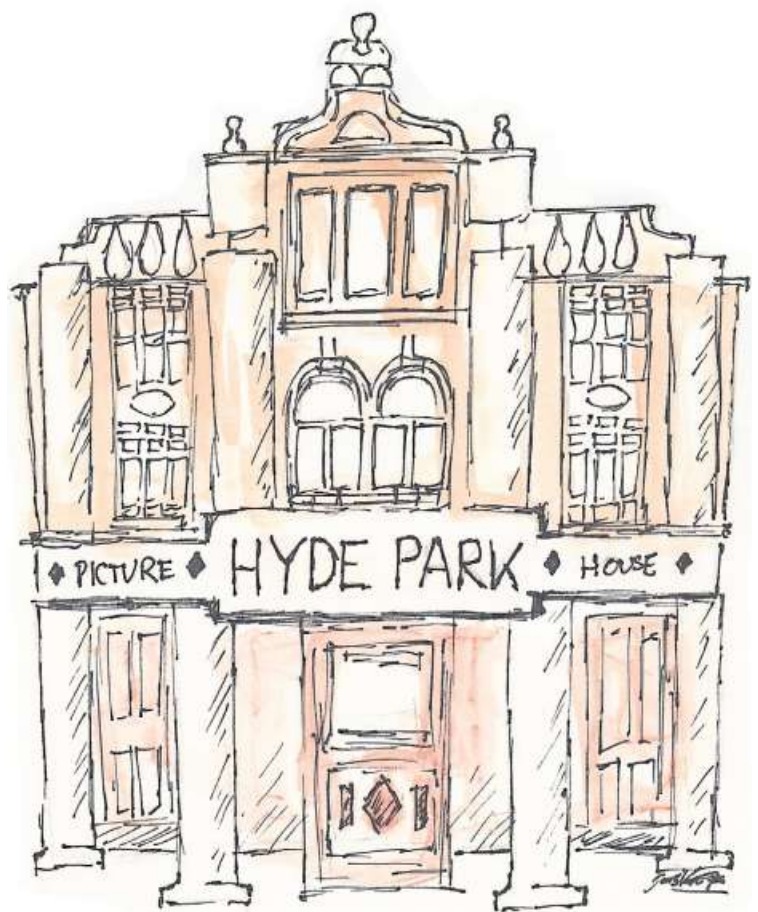
The Rewrite

Is Hugh Grant back on form?

It's romcom 101. Hugh Grant plays a washed-up, Oscar-winning scriptwriter who finds himself teaching university students in the unknown town of Binghampton after various failed attempts to restart his career. In his fourth collaboration with director Marc Lawrence (who also directed *Music and Lyrics*) Grant plays Keith Michaels, a troubled intellectual who finds himself lost in the turmoil of mortal life and a strange conflict between his broken self-esteem, his chauvinistic endeavors (he has an unhealthy taste for younger women) and the Jane Austen scholar, Mary Weldon, who wants him well and truly ousted from the university.

Helped along by a perplexingly forgiving mum/grad student and perhaps the only woman who doesn't want to slap him, the film takes us through a journey with Michaels as he gets to grips with reality. Once again Grant falls into another perfect sleazebag role, reminding us of his once-beloved turn as the caddish Daniel Cleaver of *Bridget Jones' Diary*. His attempt here however reeked of a contrived effort to unearth 'golden-age Grant'. Watching his flustered englishman-abroad shtick played out for the tired routine its become borders on subversive in its wit. His self-awareness is at times laughable.

Admittedly, he can still deliver a line with a certain aplomb and generate the odd giggle which is remarkable considering the script which is at best describable as benign. However, even that considered and despite Grant's best efforts, the film still seemed totally aimless at times and its objective threadbare. *The Rewrite* is a step-up from Lawrence and Grant's 2012 effort *Did You Hear About the Morgans?* but once again leaves viewers somewhat alienated by Grant's seemingly inherent caddishness and wincing at a plot that quite simply fails to deliver. [Stephanie Scarbek]



Leeds' Icons Hyde Park Picture House

As the twenty-eighth Leeds International Film Fest draws closer, it's time to focus the spotlight on this little cinematic gem located at the heart of Hyde Park. Opened on 7th November 1914, the Hyde Park Picture is celebrating its centenary in less than a fortnight. The building boasts nine fully operational gas lights making it the only gas lit cinema in use in the UK, and a decorated Edwardian balcony that mark it as a grade II listed beauty. With its façade featuring simple pillars and the bold name emblazoned above the entrance, it exudes a grandeur that mimics the Grand Theatre, and rightly so. Because of its quaint beauty and rich history, this is a building that captures the early days of cinematic entertainment, and creates awe in any visitor. [Jasmin Vincent]



Foxcatcher

Delving into the heart of darkness

[Photo: Sony Picture Classics]

Foxcatcher starts and ends with a fight. It's Channing Tatum – of G.I Joe and *Magic Mike* fame – that opens and closes the latest film from *Moneyball* director Bennett Miller. It's not Steve Carell, in impressive prosthetics exuding an intangible darkness, nor the reassuring Mark Ruffalo with his easy charm and affability that enamours audiences to him almost immediately. Channing Tatum, sullen and moody and a whole different creature to the lovable clown from his last release, comedy sequel *22 Jump Street*.

Those that have heard of *Foxcatcher* will undoubtedly have seen the photographs of Steve Carell, unrecognisable with a beak nose and unflatteringly grey haircut, but the film is as much about the former wrestling Olympic champion brothers Mark and Dave Schultz as it is the schizophrenic millionaire John DuPont who murdered one of them, and it is this triadic focus that makes the film quite unlike any other true crime drama released in recent years.

From the get-go we are inducted into a world where men don't talk about their feelings. A world where men are professional fighters; where every conversation is as much about what's not being said as what is. Tatum's character, the naïve Mark Schultz, is summoned to the impressive Foxcatcher Farms estate by the peculiar John DuPont who refers to himself as 'The Eagle' and encourages others to do the same. His offer seems harmless enough; he wants to coach an Olympic wrestling team for the 1988 Olympics, with champions Mark and his brother Dave (Mark Ruffalo on fine form) at the helm. Of course things are never that simple, and what follows is a meandering study in the human psyche, a slow-burn of tensions that only reaches its catastrophic conclusion in its dying breaths.

Speaking at the UK press conference, Carell gave insight into his transformation into DuPont; "Once all the make-up went on, people reacted differently on set. [...] I stayed in character because I didn't have a choice – no one wanted to talk to me." Sure enough John DuPont is a man who sets others on edge, the kind of guy who makes the hair on the back of your neck stand up for no reason in particular. The choice to cast Carell, an actor mostly known for his work in family-friendly comedies such as *Evan Almighty* or *The U.S. Office*, came down to his ability to instil in audiences "Some kind of belief that the situation is benign" – that DuPont – strange, eccentric DuPont – was, at his core, harmless. "Everything I learned about DuPont suggested that people underestimated what was inside of him" added Carell – and certainly the film relies on the tensions

between the assumptions we make about people versus the reality.

Foxcatcher does not offer easy answers. It is a film that refuses to fit its characters into neat boxes as heroes or villains, instead hinting at the shades of grey that are present in every code of morality. It is an uncomfortable watch, one that sees audiences drawn into a world that seems staged yet at the same all too real, and leaves them with plenty to think on by the time the credits role. Some critics have complained that the film does not do enough to explain DuPont's mental state or that the film's conclusion seems to come out of nowhere, but it is the chaotic final act that shows the true extent to which DuPont's psychosis has grown, hinted at in glimpses, such as his obsession with controlling his self-image.

Praise is undeniably due to Carell for his startling turn which solidifies him as a highly underrated dramatic talent. His performance is as nuanced as that of the late Philip Seymour Hoffman gave in Miller's debut film *Capote*. Yet Channing Tatum is also proving to be one to watch, having escaped the Nicolas Sparks material of his past and perhaps taken some tips from the Matthew McConaughey school of career progression. His portrayal of a vulnerable young man unravelling at the hands of an equally unstable mentor is truly compelling. Mark Ruffalo provides the voice of reason as the grounded Dave Schultz who is at the centre of the tragedy; a likeable, affable fellow, looking out for his family and arguably where the film's moral centre lies.

Carell is already being tipped for an Academy Award nomination, though the man himself remained philosophical on the subject. "You can't give stuff like that too much credence," he said of the impending Oscar buzz. Considering his standout performance in indie comedy *Little Miss Sunshine* went largely unnoticed, fans of Carell might be right in thinking this is finally the actor's time to shine.

The film is every bit as visually rich as its predecessors *Capote* and *Moneyball*. It firmly cements Miller as one of the most promising young directors working today, but *Foxcatcher* also presents audiences with something new. It offers an intense, unflinching glimpse into the heart of darkness; one unexplainable violent act that can be reasoned for a lifetime, but in the end, may always remain a mystery, and perhaps it's that truth that leaves audiences so stunned. [Hannah Woodhead]

Foxcatcher is due in cinemas later this year.



The North & Wind of Change

White Cloth Gallery brings some of John Bulmer's iconic photography to Leeds, but is it the right space for this kind of exhibition?

John Bulmer, notable for his use of colour in early photojournalism, once noted that the last thing he wanted was for his photographs to be on the walls of galleries. It seems ironic, then, that his 'The North' collection finds itself at The Whitecloth Gallery, somewhat sidelined.

His photographs are, in themselves, visually stunning. The collection, comprised of photos dating from 1976, beautifully depicts the isolated, adversarial, geo-political climate of the time. The grain of the film lends a number of the photographs an almost painting-like quality, imbuing each subject with an air of poignancy and dignity – not least in one particularly striking picture of a solitary figure crossing a dilapidated footbridge.

The 'Wind of Change' collection – to be published this month by The Bluecoat Press – sees Bulmer turn his lens to wider, global subject matter. Again, Bulmer's ability to capture the humanity and dignity of his subjects shines through. The placing of a candid shot of a young, smiling Queen Elizabeth II next to a portrait of two elderly Eastern European women felt neither expositional nor confrontational, merely highlighting the indiscriminate, yet reverent, eye that Bulmer casts over his subjects.

However, the exhibition seemed marred by the space it was contained in. Of course, running a gallery is ultimately a business venture, and thus certain artistic concessions may have to be made in view of ensuring shows like this may continue to run. Bulmer's photos felt, in many ways, marginalized and almost an afterthought in a gallery that felt more like a meeting place. It's hard, for instance, to fully appreciate the gravity of Bulmer's stunning depictions of the Ethiopian landscape when half of the gallery space is taken up by coffee tables. It resulted in a situation where the oft-gritty realism of Bulmer's shots was almost mocked by the stark, unyielding environ in which they were placed.

That said, Bulmer's photographs are viscerally beautiful. They perfectly capture the human essence of each subject depicted. It thus seems a shame for such powerful pictures to be relegated from the primary focus they deserve. *[Joshua Rickayzen]*



The Knick

Blood in the time of cholera

Photo: Cinemax/Sky Atlantic

Think *Call The Midwife* with cocaine, suicide, racism, blood – lots of blood – and just a touch of moral ambiguity.

Okay, so *Call The Midwife* might not be the most apt comparison to *The Knick*, which follows the operations of New York hospital 'The Knickerbocker' in 1900. In its first five minutes Clive Owen's grim-faced, Dr. John Thackery, wakes up in a brothel, injects cocaine between his toes, and botches a caesarean under observation. The show instantly grips you in its vice, saying this ride's going to be aggressive, but goddamn if it isn't going to be exciting.

Unfortunately, the show does slack at times in order to introduce us to the technicalities of the hospital. We get to know its staff, its workings and it wheels out its dramatic meat – there's a newly appointed black deputy chief of surgery, a switch to electric lighting, and a woman in the administrator's office. It might sound mundane to us, but *The Knick* strives to make us aware that this is important stuff for them. Given a few more episodes, these early narratives should ramp up the drama to be in line with the action, although nothing quite lives up to the excitement of those opening scenes.

The first such scene – the aforementioned caesarean – starts with a woman helplessly pleading "please save my baby" and ends with both mother and baby lying motionless on the operating table. Stopwatches fill the intense silence, passing the hundred seconds the doctors allowed for the surgery. It's a painful and unapologetic few minutes. While you might be disgusted by the brutality of it all, you can't help but admire the beauty of its execution. It's authentic, it's unrelenting and it's powerful.

Social and technological change may steer the show, but it is clear that the operating theatre is where it feels most at home. Quickly and carefully darting from cut, to pump, to snip with mounting tension, gradually building to a crescendo of despair. These moments are rhythmic and exciting – Steven Soderbergh owns them, really defining the show in just a rough few short segments. Operation scenes are to *The Knick* what action scenes are to Tarantino – aggressive, tense, and stylish as hell. The result is as slick as it is gory, but the buckets of blood never feel gratuitous.

Sky Atlantic has landed another belter with *The Knick*. It has potential by the bloody bucketload, and it'll be interesting to see if it can handle its many plot threads as expertly as its surgery. Keep your eye on this one, even if it's kept it hidden behind your hands.
[Jack Bromley]

The Establishment

Owen Jones

In his new book *The Establishment: And how they get away with it*, Owen Jones attempts to introduce a debate that is 'long overdue – a debate not just about who rules us, but about the threat they pose to democracy itself'. Jones was also the author of the international bestseller *Chavs*, which was long listed for the Guardian First Book Award and received Young Writer of the Year prize at the Political Books Award. He gives a definition of the establishment as a term that is 'loosely' used to mean 'those with power who I object to'. He argues that the establishment is instead about 'power and mentality'.

To legitimise his argument Jones investigates the central power of the establishment and some of its leading figures in off-the-record chats, lunches, and meetings in top business headquarters with beautiful scenic views of the capital. Various key contributors to political matters are quoted, including Henry Fairlie, the journalist who first brought the term 'The Establishment' into common use. Others include Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, right-wing blogger and columnist Paul Staines or "Guido Fawkes", Masden Pirie, Friedrich Hayek, Mark Littlewood, Steve Varley, David Blanchflower and many more.

Jones covers a range of examples to accompany his analysis of the ruling elite's usage of power for their own interests. Starting with think-tanks such as the Adam Smith Institute and free-market organisations such as the Tax Payers Alliance, he goes on to look at the Thatcher settlement, right-wing bias in the media, the police force and tax avoidance. Though many of his arguments are valid and passionately articulated, it can sometimes lead to repetitive reading. For example the constant reference to the establishment as being like L'Oréal's 'Because you're worth it' campaign quickly grows tiresome.

Aside from the flaws, Owen Jones has written an insightful book into the world of elite business and politics, and the effects it has on everyone under the rule of the establishment. He concludes that a 'democratic revolution – to reclaim by peaceful means the democratic rights and power annexed by the Establishment – is long overdue'. Caroline Lucas, Brighton's Green MP, is quoted recalling the reaction to cuts to council tax benefits, saying, 'what really struck her was that people weren't angry, they were just so ground down by it all. It was just like they'd lost the will to fight'. Jones' book enlightens readers to the injustices taking place in modern society, provoking anger in the reader throughout and instilling a desire to help change. [Elisa Narborough]

Another Crossing

Khadijah Ibrahim

Leeds-based poet, playwright and activist, Khadijah Ibrahim, has recently released her debut poetry collection, *Another Crossing*, in which she explores, through her own personal experiences, the ever-changing identities of the many ethnically diverse communities in our city.

Born in Leeds of Jamaican heritage, Khadijah went on to study Arabic and Middle Eastern studies at our very own Leeds University. As part of her degree, she spent a year in Yemen, and this experience inspired her to study the history of North Africa more deeply, an influence which can still be seen clearly in her poetry today. She was exposed to new ways of writing, and allowed her work to be influenced by, among other things, classic poets and Sufi philosophy. In recent years she has founded Leeds Young Authors organisation, to develop the confidence of young people through creative expression, and spoke at TedXBradfordWomen last year.

Another Crossing traces and recaptures 1970s Leeds, when young people were excluded from school for growing locs, and residents experienced riots, police harassment and racism. However, these were also culturally expressive times for black communities in Leeds, as they established their own music and dance culture, influenced by the Caribbean, Black American music, and British punk. Rastafarianism was important to Khadijah as a young woman, but she loved punk bands such as The Clash, The Jam and the Sex Pistols just as much. People regularly listened to punk records at the Jubilee Club on York Road, and 'Rock Against Racism' was also prominent in the area. Part of her performances based on her collection will look at this aspect of life in Chapeltown.

The book evokes her Jamaican grandparents' home in Chapeltown, (where she lived under a mixture of British Victorian values and Caribbean traditions), and her mother's home in Harehills, where there were strict rules, good meals, and shebeens (blues parties) in the cellar. She divided her time between the two addresses while growing up.

This book recalls the history of Black British life in diverse areas of Leeds, which Khadijah feels is important for both Leeds residents and university students to connect with. The book is littered with the sights and sounds of the historical areas which shaped Leeds, and still provide us with so much to learn from today. [Naomi Anderson Whittaker]

And the Nobel Prize for exclusion goes to...

You only have to look at any English Literature syllabus to see a canon dominated by white authorship. While no one is denying Dickens' acerbic wit or the ethereal charm of the Romantics, our literary canon is in desperate need of more inclusivity.

Recently, Kenyan novelist and playwright, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, the bookies' favourite to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, narrowly missed out to French writer Patrick Modiano. Ngugi has previously been nominated for the prize, pointing to the undeniable excellence of his writing; yet despite this, his work is still relatively unknown on a larger scale. In fact, Wole Soyinka, Nigerian writer and Leeds alumnus, is the only black African to have won the award.

So what is the reason for the absence of African voices in the canon? It can't be an issue of language. Due to colonialism, English is spoken nationally in twenty-four African countries. Allowing African writers to share their rich and vibrant tales in a more accessible tongue.

It's important for Africans to be given a literary voice. For too long their lives have been misrepresented in canonical literature. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* erases the African voice and perpetuates the damaging stereotype of Africa as barbaric and antithetical to Western civilisation. Why should texts that reduce Africans to mere caricatures be seen as more literary than stories about Africa written by Africans themselves?

Perhaps the real problem lies in the difficulties Western academics have in engaging with and fully understanding African forms of literature. Jane Plastow, Professor of African Theatre at Leeds, remarked that African writers feel 'limited' by 'Western literary forms' – 'the novel is classically focused on the psychology of the individual, whereas African societies are much more collective.' Western readers seem

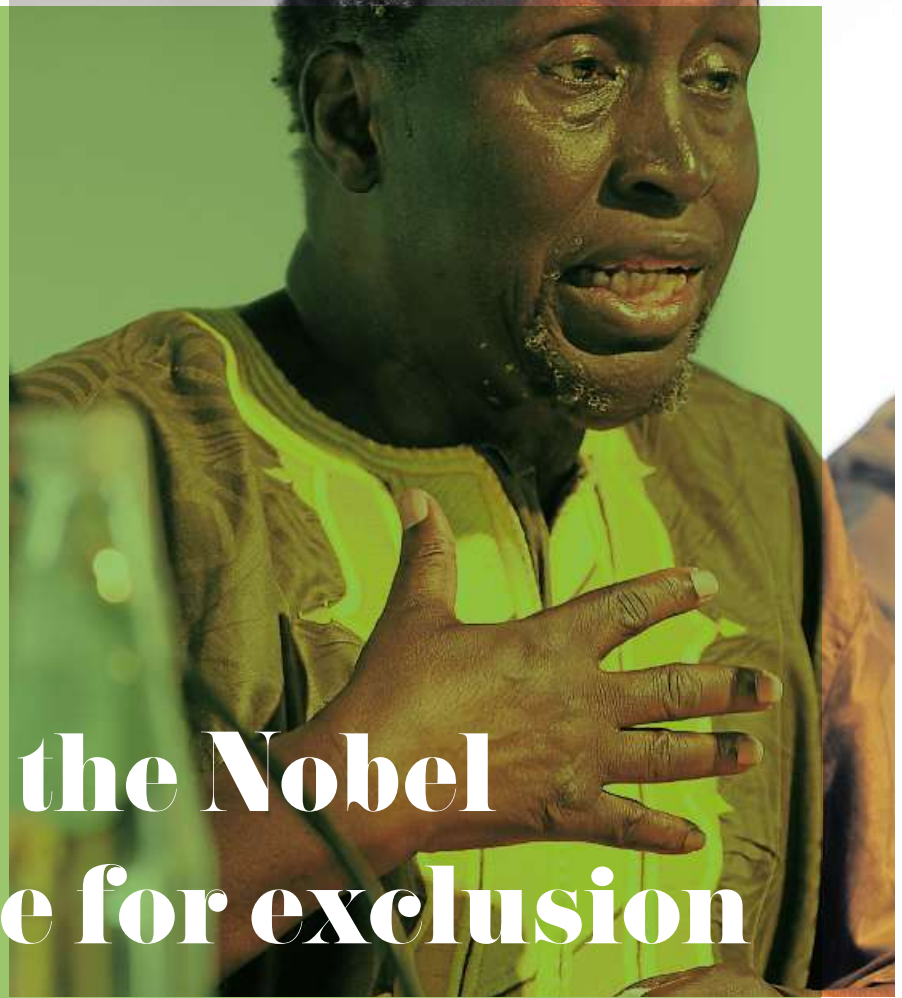
to have difficulty engaging with texts that focus on the communal nature of African life.

Professor Plastow went on to comment on the Western aversion to the 'overly polemic' nature of African literature. Ngugi himself has been imprisoned for illuminating the injustices of Kenya's dictatorial government, and perhaps some readers can only see his texts for their fearless activism, rather than their aesthetic value. It is absurd that a writer as accomplished and erudite as Ngugi, who wrote his debut novel *Weep Not, Child* here at Leeds, should be constantly overlooked by critics because his writing doesn't adhere to Western formal tradition.

Despite this history of neglect, African authors are slowly obtaining mainstream interest. A notable example is Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, whose debut, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, was recently adapted for film. A major draw to Adichie's writing is the depth of her characterisation and the voice she gives to African women, a group constantly marginalised in a white patriarchal world. Recently lines from her 'We Should All Be Feminists' TED talk even featured in Beyoncé's 'Flawless'.

She even recently featured on Beyoncé's hit 'Flawless', which featured lines from her 'We Should All Be Feminists' speech. Adichie's ability to make feminism a more intersectional doctrine, shows that African writing has social importance and deserves canonical recognition.

Can the Nobel Prize for Literature claim to award those who produce 'outstanding work' when they underestimate the writings of a large and dynamic group of people? The lack of African winners points to a need to accept more culturally diverse forms of literature, and redefine what we classify as 'canonical'. [Melissa Gitari]



Separate but Equal?

We have a habit in this country of liking to believe that we don't have a racism problem. We don't like to talk about it. It comes from that deep part of our cultural subconscious that still reveres the stiff upper lip and 'Keep Calm and Carry On' mugs. If you talk about it you're only adding fuel to the fire. That's how we convince ourselves that groups like UKIP and the BNP are just a lunatic fringe that will just bugger off after a while. So let's start a conversation. Let's talk about the lack of non-white faces on our television screens.

There are of course a number of high-profile faces in British television these days. We've been lucky enough to be blessed with the talents of Idris Elba, Richard Ayoade and Paterson Joseph in recent years. But I can count the number of black and minority ethnic actors regularly appearing on our screens on one hand. Casts of major TV shows still tend to be dominated white actors. While dramas such as *Top Boy* have introduced a wider audience to the Black British experience, comedy still falls far behind when it comes to diversification.

In the USA the problem is far more obvious, especially given the context of continued racial tension currently pervading American culture. Although recent American sitcoms have tended to include at least one non-white cast member – Mindy Kaling of course now holds the lead in her own show – historically American television comedy has been a whitewashed industry. Take for example, *Friends*, perhaps the biggest and most recognisable American sitcom of recent times. In a city in which the white community makes up under half the population, only one non-white character appears with any regularity. Charlie, a professor of palaeontology, appears in a grand total of 9 of 236 episodes.

Across the pond the alarming trend of white-dominated casts has been countered by the equivalent of baseball's colour line. When *The Cosby Show* first aired thirty years ago, it not only revived the sitcom genre in the States and introduced the world to Bill Cosby's on-point jumper game, but with its predominantly Black cast opened up a space for self-expression for the African-American community. Following in its footsteps came *In Living Color*, *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* and, this year, *Black-ish*.

This separation of comedy can of course be controversial, yet has proved hugely successful. These are shows that not only give voice to the problems facing a disenfranchised and marginalised group, but have remained accessible to audiences regardless of skin colour. Perhaps, the key to this is the way such shows blur our perceptions of what it means to be black in America. More often than not, at the

core of these sitcoms have been successful, middle-class families, because these shows are as much about class as they are race. For too long to be black has been to simply be side-lined as 'urban'.

Or perhaps it's just down to the universality of comedy. There's a false belief that culture is defined by race. It's a horrible, pseudo-science hangover we're still nursing from the Victorian era – the same is true for the very concept of race. Race does not define culture, or what we find funny or moving. Culture is rather defined by shared experience. There is no naturally occurring, scientific reason to explain my dislike of Marlon Wayans. The same is true of my admiration for the work of Dave Chapelle.

Could such a method work over here though? It already has. *Goodness Gracious Me* and *The Kumars at No. 42* not only kick-started the careers of Sanjeev Bhaskar, Nina Wadia and Meera Syal, but showed that there was a place for South Asian voices in mainstream television. Voices that had as much to say about white British life as the British Asian experience.

Of course, one swallow does not a summer make, and it would be naive to suggest that the workings of the American industry could be applied to our own industry as a miracle salve. The problem facing our own comedy industry is potentially far more worrying. There simply aren't enough comedians of an ethnic minority background being given the spotlight. With the exception of the aforementioned British Asian comedians, ethnic representation on British television seems to be confined to a revolving door of appearances of Stephen K. Amos, Doc Brown and Andi Osho on *Mock The Week*.

If we are to encourage the emergence of further non-white talent to enrich our screens, is it not crucial for us to establish a space for the expression of the black British or British Asian comedians? How many countless American comedians could point to the inspiration of the success of Bill Cosby and Richard Pryor. The comedy industry is failing these communities by failing to offer them the role models they deserve.

The importance of establishing a space for the expression of the black or Asian experience is not to isolate and exclude, but rather to open a dialogue. It forces us to confront the problems facing ethnic communities we live alongside day to day with and helps us see the faults in our own. It's thirty years since Theo Huxtable came back to his family with a report card full of D's, and its impact is still talked about to this day. Will we say the same about *Not Going Out*? [Benjamin Cook]



Photo: Frazer Sparham

Belgrave Street Feast

Still the edgiest way to cause a coronary

Belgrave Music Hall is certainly one of the best things to come to Leeds in the last year. With its eclectic live music selection, slightly overpriced yet insufferably trendy craft beers and a beer garden – for all those warm, dry Leeds days – it’s truly great. It’s the perfect place to impress visitors and cement the idea that yes, Leeds is cooler than anywhere else you could possibly drink IPA and eat pizza.

Something the Belgrave Music Hall have started introducing is the Street Feast. Every second saturday of the month, the venue opens its doors to local street food vendors of all varieties, and encourages an atmosphere of gluttony and meat sweats. It offers free entry, reasonably priced food and somewhat limited sitting room. The stalls are constantly changing, but this occasion saw food from Fu Schnickens – recent winner of the British Street Food awards – Fish&, Laynes Espresso, Holy Pierogi, Dim Sum Su, Noisette Bakery and a few more. There were lobster rolls, nectarine cake, rosemary battered bacon bits and steamed buns – a diverse and delicious selection of Leeds’ finest street food.

The day feast, whilst offering all the meat one could desire, really lacked a suitable option for vegetarians. Now, don’t get me wrong, some stalls did have vegetarian options such as falafel, but these almost entirely ran out by early afternoon. Also, falafel is basically always the vegetarian option, and while delicious, is pretty conventional for a food festival that should offer a wider selection. As an evil animal consumer, my options felt wide yet for my vegetarian friend, not being able to try the Fu Schnickens because they had removed their vegetarian option was pretty frustrating.

High recommendation go to, irrespective, Fu Schnickens. Each steamed bun is hand crafted in front of you and has an imaginative and perfectly complimentary selection of items – glazed pork with pickled carrot, palm sugar and peanuts, for example. Sweet, complex flavours, and small enough to eat about five in one go. Noisette Bakery nailed the baked goods market, so successfully that they actually managed to make vegan cashew cake taste pretty good. They had an incredible nectarine angel food cake, which if GBBO has taught me anything, is exceptionally hard to bake. All I can say is that it was soft vanilla-y deliciousness and I would like to put it in and around my face more often.

Belgrave have assured me that they will widen their selection of vegetarian options for the next feast, which is both essential and also economically tactical in a place as hipster as Leeds. Providing they do this, and add a few chairs, the street feast is a great place to eat away your woes. Unless your woes are obesity related. *[Ruby Lott-Lavigna]*

How to make Akara

Bean cakes, or ‘Akara’, are a Nigerian snack or breakfast food, and the perfect complement to your morning coffee.

Ingredients

- 125g bean flour
- 250ml water
- 1 stock cube
- ¼ red onion
- 2 tbsps of salt
- 1 pepper
- Vegetable oil

Method

Dice the onion and pepper and set aside.

In a medium-sized bowl, mix together the bean flour, water, stock cube, onions and pepper to make a batter. Stir well and set aside.

Heat oil in a pan until hot, and drop ½ tsp of batter in the oil to test it. If the oil is hot enough, the batter will rise almost immediately.

Scoop batter into hot oil and let it fry till it turns golden brown.

Scoop the bean cake out of the oil and pop onto a piece of kitchen roll to absorb the excess oil.

Allow to cool and enjoy!

[Efe Onedo]

Black History Month has always been a very big one for our society and celebrating it is always important, as there is so much to be learnt from the experiences of the past.

We have also collaborated with the History Society, Islamic Society and English Society to organise talks linked with Black History.

Leeds African Caribbean Society focuses on raising cultural awareness and delivering cultural enrichment through a wide variety of exciting events. If you are not from an Afro-Caribbean background, it can be difficult to be exposed to the culture and its rich history.

The History Society have helped us facilitate talks with lecturers from the History Department. A talk introducing The Black Politics of the USA is on Wednesday 29th October, from 17:30-18:30 in Baines 1.13. The lecturer, Say Burgin, will discuss movements from civil rights all the way to the Ferguson tensions of today.

Our collaboration with Islamic Society is also a very exciting one. Our President, Natasha Mutch-Vidal, and Isoc's Inter-faith Officer Kyle Gray will be leading a discussion on 'African Empires and Mansa Musa, the richest man that ever lived'. This will take place on Tuesday 28th October in Baines 2.37 at 18:00. *[Natasha Mutch Vidal]*

Carina Derhalli

Membership: If you find you can't stop shimmying and shaking after the show's done, why not join the society? No training is required and anyone can join, so long as you're willing to give it your all and aren't afraid of having a laugh. With only a £5 membership fee for the whole year, Stage Musical Society will 'rock your boat' and make your time at university just that much more showstopping.

Avigail Kohn

It was a treat of powerful voices, captivating choreography and incredible mastery at dancing with heels. The enthusiasm and commitment of the performers really shones through. Alex Barry, 2nd year and a new member of the Stage Musical Society describes his experience as “active, uplifting and full of joy – attributes evident in the performance, during which you’d be hard pressed to keep a smile off your face.

[For the full preview visit www.thegryphon.co.uk]

Calendar Events

[Carina Derhalli and Maddy Keating]

24th October	25th October	26th October	27th October	28th October	29th October	30th October
7-9pm	8:30-10:30pm	1.40-7pm	7:30-9:30pm	5-7pm	5:30-7pm	12-7pm
FemSoc's 'Make a Zine', LUU Room 2, Free. Help put together a booklet about gender equality and make your voice heard.	Cultural Showcase, Riley Smith Hall. Enjoy some amazing performances, all in aid of Black History Month.	Discover South East Asia, Common Room Enjoy a fun-filled night of music, dancing, quizzes and games and best of all free food and drink.	DanceSport GIAG, Ballroom and Latin Dance, Riley Smith Hall. £2. Fan of Strictly? Have a go and see if you can better the celebs.	Learn to Knit, Hidden Cafe. £4. Release your inner-OA and learn the skills that will keep you warm this winter.	Comedy Sketch workshop, LUU Room 2, free. Have a go at writing and play some games	Rifle GIAG, Meet Parky Steps, £12. Beginner or expert, give Rifle Soc a shot. You get 40 .22 rounds and unlimited ammo for the air rifle competitions.
10pm-4am	11:30pm-3am	2:15-3:45pm	5:30-7:30pm	6-9:30pm	5:30-7pm	5-6pm
BHM Blowout, Oracle. Celebrate Black History Month dancing to RnB and HipHop with the Winner 2014 UK Afro-beat DJ competition.	Halloween party with EEsoc. Maluko, free. Grab your best fancy dress and have fun on the dancefloor.	Squash GIAG, Gryphon Sports Centre. £1. Grab a racket and try your hand at this traditional sport.	Global Cafe and Diwali celebrations, The Lounge and Treehouse, free. Try some traditional Indian sweets and drink.	Mansa Musa and African Empires, Baines Wing 2.37, free. Insightful talk to learn more about African culture in aid of Black History Month	Traditional Greek Dancing, Raven Theatre LUU, free. Dance together as one big group.	'The Effect of Tourism and Colonialism on the Carribean' in Baines 1.13. Don't miss the last BHM chat.

Society Snaps

Korfball Students came out in force to finally learn what this game is all about
© Lucie England-Duce



Cabaret Run-through Students strut their stuff and show that it is definitely worth watching
© Sam Lewis



Medieval Games night Students enjoy playing some historically-inspired puzzles
© Alice Greenfield

Columns



Ellie Parkes

Legs gathered up under my laptop, unruly curls hauled back into a bandana, I was furrowing my brow over the infinite complexities of men, shoes and cosmopolitans as I started to type up this week's column. Gazing up longingly at my poster of the New York City skyline and feeling existentially insecure, the glorious hot-pink tome of my Sex and

The Great Pretender

the City box set glittered reassuringly at me from my bookcase. Still, I couldn't help but wonder – was I unconsciously trying to be someone else?

One of my friends had a drinks cabinet in his room in halls, complete with the most expensive gin and vermouth money could buy. He used to comb back his hair with grease, wear skinny ties and insist on smoking even though the doctor specifically told him he was allergic to nicotine and his extremities would fall off if he didn't desist. In his dimly lit room, you'd be greeted by his dark silhouette draped languidly over the back of a chair, his collar unbuttoned and a pocket square in his dressing gown.

Judging from the female traffic that passed through his room that year, the look, unapologetically plagiarised from *Mad Men*'s Don Draper, seemed to be working for him. Worth sacrificing a few fingers and toes for, I should think.

Sometimes life just can't help but imitate art. In Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*, the female protagonist, Amy Dunne, has a rant about the pervading stereotype of the 'cool girl', a "hot, brilliant, funny woman who adores football, poker, dirty jokes, and burping, who plays video games, drinks cheap beer, loves threesomes and anal sex, and jams hot dogs and hamburgers into her mouth like she's hosting the world's biggest culinary gang bang while somehow maintaining a size 2".

Amy is convinced the 'cool girl' is a fabrication, a cliché that a woman adheres to in an effort to please men – "so many women are willing to pretend to be this girl... the girl who likes every fucking thing [a bloke] likes and doesn't ever

complain... a woman who has watched too many movies written by socially awkward men who'd like to believe that this kind of woman exists".

Amy's venomous reaction to everything the 'cool girl' represents is an amazingly bitter diatribe against people who form their identity by mimicking fetishised cultural stereotypes – a rant against conformity, against men and, more specifically, against women who are senseless enough to want to model themselves on a misogynistic counterfeit.

In the spirit of STC, I'd like to propose an innocuous summarising question: is Flynn's character right and are we all really in danger of simplifying ourselves into film and literary tropes? When I'm resorting to going on endless Tinder dates for column inspiration and pretending I know anything about human relationships (give me a couple of weeks), it may already be too late, and I may have actually convinced myself of my own transformation into Miss Bradshaw. But there is solace in the knowledge that I'd have to drop three dress sizes and set fire to my current wardrobe, before I am in any real danger of getting too carried away.



Jen Pritchard

University changes people. Some discover a passion they never thought they had, like jazz, swing dancing or quidditch. Others have their minds transformed by the majesty of knowledge, walking the earth with eyes wide open to the beauty of life. Other people become massive bell-ends because they've managed to have a lot of sex and think other people are impressed by that.

Why don't you just grow up?

But one thing university is supposed to do is force you to grow up. I'm not sure, because we all know that one person who tried to wash a toaster in a sink in third year, and still posts their laundry home to their parents every weekend.

So what is being a grown up? Is it being careful with money, in control of your work, responsible with your health? Unlikely. I can count, on one hand, the number of people I know who actually achieve these things. And they're really boring.

I definitely don't feel grown up. I still ring my mum a few times a week to get her to comfort me when I'm stressed, or so I can brag about my achievements and receive a "well done!", like a figurative gold star on the name chart of my mind. (On this imaginary name chart, by the way, I am beating everyone and get all the gold stars because I'm the best.)

I think farts are hilarious, I sleep with a teddy bear, I can't walk past a climbing frame without being heartbroken that I can't play on it anymore. I still feel like I'm going to get told off when I eat chicken nuggets for breakfast or chocolate spread straight out of the jar. When parents on the street say to their children 'Mind out of the lady's way', I can't handle it. I'm not "the lady"! "The lady" is a middle-aged cashier in Tesco's, or someone my Nan knows. I still feel closer in age to those toddlers, but their parents are only a few years older than me.

But then at other times I feel like I've got this whole thing down. I can buy myself the appropriate over-the-counter medicine for whatever illness I'm experiencing. I generally know the time of my train in advance, and at least attempt to get to the station in plenty of time. It's not having to bother reading

the microwave instructions for something, and just whacking it in until that basic human instinct tells me it's probably ready. All that is stuff that children can't do. They can't even reach the microwave. The idiots.

I don't know if those feelings ever go away. I imagine some of it fades when you have your own children and you realise how stupid they are, and how clever and great you are in comparison. I guess it's also when you start to feel important and meaningful, when people start to take you seriously. I'm excited for that. I'm excited about making a difference and having an opinion people care about. Maybe that is being a grown up, I hope so. Then again, I don't suppose that's going to stop me being afraid of the dark. I don't know. I think I'll just ask my mum.



“Nothing has been that difficult that I haven’t been able to overcome it yet. I think its my positivity thats got me this far in University... and stubbornness. But its a good stubborn because I know what I want and when I want it.” - Adam

Humans of Leeds