



[Image: Leeds Celtics Cheerleaders]

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[Image: Gabriel Green/PR]

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[Image: RAF]

Government Cuts Leaves DSA Funding in University's Hands

Rachel King

The government has announced its plans to reduce funding for disabled students in higher education, with universities now expected to foot the bill. Minister for Education and Science, Jo Johnson, has announced that from September, cuts to the Disabled Students Allowance will mean funding will no longer be provided for non-medical support staff, while funding for specialised computers and accommodation will also be reduced.

The government had initially planned for the cuts to come into effect last year, but opposition from the NUS on the basis that smaller institutions with a higher proportion of disabled students would be heavily affected.

It is expected that the cuts to DSA will save the government £30 million, with Mr Johnson declaring in a written statement, "The increasing numbers of disabled students entering HE is to be celebrated,

as is the increasing numbers of those declaring their disability. However, it is possible that the continued provision of DSAs may have removed the urgency of some higher education providers to expand provision for all disabled students."

Speaking to The Gryphon, Gemma Turner, Leeds University Union's Diversity and Equality Officer, said: "The recent cuts to Disabled Students Allowance will mean limited funding from the government, with universities now being responsible for funding technology, non-medical support, extra accommodations costs as well as other aspects. Disabled students should not have to pay more for the same university experience as the rest of the student body would receive. This is why I have been working with the University to make sure the recent cuts to the DSA don't affect disabled students' time at University."

She added, "Being a disabled student myself I was constantly reminded in life of

how much money I'm costing, and I don't think that should be an issue for students to their education. It shouldn't be a barrier for new students coming to university. I hope the data [of new students coming] doesn't decrease, but if funding isn't available then it could do."

The reduction in funding to the Disabled Student's Allowance is the latest in a series of cuts to higher education, with George Osborne announcing in his Autumn Statement last week that student nurses will see their bursaries cut in favour of a tuition loan system despite an £8 billion increase in funding for the NHS.

Speaking to The Gryphon third year student nurse at Leeds University, Joe Murphy said, "Some people argue that taking away the bursary will discourage less committed students from applying, but I worry more that many mature, poorer and postgraduate applicants will now be prevented from a vocation they would have excel in."



04 12 15

Weather

| | HI | LO |
|----------|----------|----|
| Friday | cloudy 8 | 7 |
| Saturday | rainy 11 | 6 |
| Sunday | rainy 11 | 7 |

Quote of the Week

Any more ideas on a post card, please to:

Donald Trump,
Leading Republican
Presidential Candidate,
The Dick Cheney Home for
the Demented,
USA

Former Python John Cleese
Tweets his two pennies worth
on the ongoing Presidential
nomination race

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Head of Photography ~ Jack Roberts

Editor's Letter: Air Strikes Are Not The Answer

Other than making George Gallo-way and the Respect Party relevant again, I see little reasoning behind the decision to extend airstrikes to Syria at this time.

For the second time in my lifetime we as a nation have allowed bluster and sophistry to see us plunged into an armed conflict in the Middle East with no clear plan. We all know that history repeats itself, but to see history repeat itself quite so quickly can only leave one in disbelief.

Hilary Benn is a principled man, that much is clear. He clearly believes in the need to defend human rights at anytime. But if a blind adherence to principle is what we are told has seen Labour become "unelectable" (come back to me in five years on this), it is a blind adherence to principle that has led us once more into war. Benn's speech for all its high-minded rhetoric and pleas to our sense of justice rang hollow, it lacked substance. Nobody in the

House of Commons last night was opposed to the defeat of Daesh, even the 223 'terrorist sympathisers' in the chamber. An opposition to extending bombing to Syria without a substantial plan was not synonymous with allowing Daesh to carry on their business. To suggest anything otherwise is disingenuous. It doesn't even necessarily suggest an opposition to intervention at all. Though we can point to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya, as spectacular disasters of Western intervention; interventions in Kosovo and the Balkans can always be raised as instances of success. But we go into Syria blind. With figures of 70,000 moderate fighters to retake ground abandoned by Daesh. Figures with no evidence. With no idea which groups we will support. No plan to support rebels against Assad. In short, no plan to see an end to the civil war raging in Syria.

Any intervention on our part as a nation will be token. With two of the

world's superpowers already struggling to have a significant impact in the conflict, what impact do we have but as a mere symbol? A symbol that costs our nation half a million pounds with each airstrike, in a time when the poorest and most vulnerable in society are being pushed to their limits by austerity. It is a desire to play with the big kids, to desperately attempt to make ourselves relevant in a fight against an enemy we have still yet to get to grips with.

Much of the rhetoric emanating from the Commons last night called on us to act in support of France. "We must react". God forbid we might stop to think. Otherwise we may seem weak, irrelevant and helpless. People might even think we don't have a plan.

Benjamin Cook,
Editor-in-Chief

Photo of The Week:

University of Leeds student Nao Takahashi captured this festive scene in the city centre earlier this week.



Image: Nao Takahashi

University Announce £57m Surplus

Benjamin Cook
Editor-in-Chief

The University's Annual Report and Accounts has been revealed in the University of Leeds has made a surplus of £57 million in the 2014-2015 financial year, an increase of £18 million compared to 2013-2014. The University's accounts were boosted by a £15 million one off-benefit from an exceptional tax credit for research and development expenditure supplementing the £42 million operating budget. A record amount of income has also been generated through tuition fees.

In the last five years, has seen income from Funding Council grants drop from £161 million to £97 million, a decrease that has been offset by increasing income from tuition fees. At £268 million, tuition fee income now accounts for 42% of total income for the university.

Making record profits does, however, appear to be coinciding with improvements in the University's reputation, particularly in the National Student Survey's rankings where The University of Leeds has moved from joint 11th position to joint 3rd position within Russell Group universities, scoring 92% against an overall national average of 69%. The University has also jumped to 14th place in The Times' Good University Guide, up from 30th three years ago.

A spokesperson for the University told *The Gryphon*: "Students will directly benefit from the significant investments the University is making to help deliver the ambitious targets in its strategic plan. With an underlying operating surplus of £42m, our healthy financial position provides a secure base from which to do this. This investment includes £500m to provide new and refurbished buildings, facilities and equipment that will transform campus."

The University's healthy financial state also appears to be coinciding with improvements in the University's reputation. In the National Student Survey's rankings Leeds has moved from 11th to 3rd of the Russell Group universities, scoring 92% against a national average of 69%, and 94% for libraries compared to a national average of 88%. The University has also jumped to 14th place in the Times Good University Guide, up from 30th three years ago.



Have Your Say:

"There should be more investment in student resources, especially in the humanities." Georgie Stuart, English

"More money should be granted to the Union to provide grants for student societies and enhance student experiences." Sarah Binns, Maths

"The University doesn't owe us anymore, during my year abroad I felt well provided for by the University and I was pleased by the lower tuition fees for year abroad students, which is not the case in some other countries." Benji Landman, Spanish and Portuguese

Riley, Mine, Pulse and Raven to close

Elli Pugh
News Editor

Mine, Pulse, Raven and the Riley Smith Hall will be closing over the Christmas holidays as the first part of the Union Upgrade.

One of the aims of the £20 million refurbishment project is to provide more space for societies. A complete overhaul of the Riley Smith has been planned and the space will benefit from new lighting and retractable seating. In the meantime, the closure of Mine and Pulse will see the capacity of Fruity reduce in semester two.

Piers Cotte-Jones, the Union Activities Officer, told *The Gryphon* that society activities which are usually held in the Riley Smith, Mine, Pulse and Raven have successfully been relocated to the wider University area: "The University have been really helpful in accommodating our societies during the upgrade process. We are also creating a Refectory theatre as an alternative space while the Riley is closed. This is actually an even bigger space than the Riley, and will provide a 300-seater performance space for our students."



Seven out of Ten Students Against Brexit

Shamima Noor
News Editor

A survey carried out by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) has found that seven out of ten students would vote to stay in the EU if a referendum were held tomorrow.

The findings, which are based on a survey of 1,005 students, show that a majority of students would vote to stay in the EU. However, the report analysis states that "students are not a lost cause for those campaigning for the UK to leave the EU". The report revealed that "around one-third of students say they have given the topic only 'little thought' (21 per cent) or 'no thought at all' (13 per cent)...a similar proportion say they hold their views 'not very strongly' (27 per cent) or 'not strongly at all' (6 per cent)".

Universities UK, the vice-chancellors' representative organisation, are currently campaigning for an "in" vote to argue that it would be in the interests of British univer-

sities to stay in the EU. However, their decision to adopt a stance on the EU referendum has been criticised by those who think that the organisation should not have taken sides in a political debate.

Nick Hillman, HEPI's director and a former government special adviser on higher education, said: "It is clear the UK's membership of the EU is more popular among students than among the population as a whole. There are diehard antis on university campuses but they make up only a small minority of students".

Hillman also added that "because students are spread all over the country, their voting power was diluted at the general election. That will not be the case in a binary stay/leave national referendum...Indeed, if the 'stay' and 'leave' sides are as close as recent polls suggest, then the two million UK students could clearly affect the result one way or the other."

HEPI said that its survey shows that, despite the fact Universities UK does not represent students, its position "of favouring the UK's continued membership of the

EU...does still reflect the views of students."

This week, leading academics at British universities have warned that an exit from the EU would be detrimental to the economic health of UK institutions. Mike Galsworthy, a visiting researcher at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, has said: "Nothing good can come of it."

Explaining his point, Mike said: "the EU is one huge community of talent...You can put together multinational, innovative, bespoke teams to tackle the really big global challenges. It's not just the money; that could, maybe, be compensated."

It's that we're on top of this massive engine, driving us all forward together... Hoping British science would do as well if we weren't is like imagining Lionel Messi would be the player he was without the Barcelona first team playing all round him."

Campus Watch



1 Chicago University

Gun attack threat at University of Chicago

The Hyde Park campus of The University of Chicago was closed following a threat made by Jabari Dean via social media that he would launch a gun attack within the campus quad. Classes were cancelled and all members within the University were advised to stay off campus. Dean has been arrested and will appear in court. Classes are to resume as normal next week.

Zoe Bancroft

2 Queensland University

Racist group call for all-white union

The University of Queensland has condemned a "racist" Facebook page attempting to garner support for a "white student union" on campus. The page was created last week, aiming to create a "safe place" for "students of European descent". The university has released a statement distancing itself from the page, following a post ranting about the number of international students enrolled at the institution.

James Hicks

3 Strathmore University

Woman dies during terror drill

A woman at Strathmore University in Kenya has died after jumping from a third-storey window during a terrorism drill. The drill, which included people pretending to be terrorists, was believed to be a real attack by a number of students. The university is now facing criticism from across Kenya for failing to inform students that the drill would be occurring.

Jack Rhodes-Worden

4 Brunel University

Students walk out of Katie Hopkins talk

A group of students at Brunel university staged a mass walk out when controversial personality Katie Hopkins took part in a debate on "Does the welfare state have a place in modern society?" She insisted the protest was staged by university professor Peter Beresford, who tweeted his appreciation of the students' actions.

Nao Takahashi

The Digest



[Image: Reuters]

Russian jet shot down over Turkey

For the first time since Moscow launched air strikes against the opponents of President Bashar al-Assad in September, a Russian aircraft has been downed in Syria. The Russian Su-24 was shot down by Turkish F-16s in the Turkey-Syria border on the 24th November. The plane crashed in the Syrian province of Latakia. There is a dispute between Russian and Turkish authorities regarding whether the aircraft, which was unidentified at the time of being shot, was over Turkish or Syrian airspace. This is the first time any NATO state has shot down a Russian or Soviet Plane since the 1950s. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that "the actions were fully in line with Turkey's rules of engagement".

James Hicks

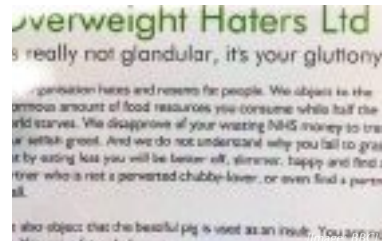


[Image: Mike Walker/Reuters]

Yorkshire Ripper declared no longer mentally ill

The Yorkshire Ripper, Peter Sutcliffe, is set to be returned to prison after being declared no longer mentally ill by psychiatrists. Doctors have recommended the 69-year-old, who was given twenty life sentences for the murder of thirteen women and attempted murder of three more in 1981, be taken out of Broadmoor Hospital, a high security psychiatric unit, and moved to a specialist prison. Richard McCann, son of Wilma McCann, Sutcliffe's first victim, has said, 'None of this will bring my mum back and where he is locked up does not really change anything.' The final decision is to be made by the justice secretary, Michal Gove.

Alice Handy



Police investigate 'fat shaming' cards

The Police have launched an investigation into the distribution of cards on the London Underground by a group of people who "hate and resent fat people" and who name themselves 'Overweight Haters Ltd'. The group have been specifically targeting individuals on the tubes and handing them cards which explain their reasons for 'hating' them, arguing that due to their weight, they are "fat, ugly humans". When asked to comment, Stephen Burton, director of enforcement and on-street operations said: "this sad and unpleasant form of antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated". Transport for London have said that they are appealing to people who have seen the cards being distributed to contact station staff and police.

Becky Ward



[Image: Reuters]

Oscar Pistorius charged with Murder

Oscar Pistorius, the Olympic athlete who shot and killed his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp in February 2014, has been charged with murder, after an Appeals court overturned the earlier manslaughter verdict. Pistorius was under house arrest after serving one year of his five year sentence in custody, but must now return to court for re-sentencing. He faces a minimum of 15 years in prison. Pistorius fired four shots through a locked toilet door, fatally wounding Steenkamp, although he has always maintained he believed it was an intruder. The judge has now stated the identity of the person is 'irrelevant to his guilt' and 'the possibility of the death of the person behind the door was clearly an obvious result.'

Jessica Murray

The Big Picture: Syria Vote

Sam Robinson

What happened?

The UK has extended airstrikes to Syria after the House of Commons passed a government motion authorising action against Islamic State in Syria by 397 to 223. It was a comfortable win for Cameron, with 66 Labour MPs supporting the motion and helping the government to a majority of 174. As a result of the vote, the RAF have already completed six successful air strikes on an IS-controlled oil field at the time of writing, according to the Ministry of Defence. The government has said there is a clear need to confront the danger of IS by extending action to Syria, however, opponents have strongly criticised the move, arguing it is a repeat of the mistakes made in previous military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya.

The Arguments

Cameron opened the debate to make the case in favour of airstrikes. In particular he stressed that precision airstrikes would limit civilian casualties, and that there have been no civilian casualties from British bombing in Iraq. The PM also repeated his suggestion that there are up to 70,000 moderate ground troops with whom Britain could work to defeat IS. Cameron further pushed the point that IS were already a threat to national security, arguing we cannot “sit back and wait for them to attack us” while the organisation was plotting terror attacks against Britain.

The opponents of the motion, led by Corbyn, were sceptical of Cameron's plans. Criticism focused especially on Cameron's 70,000 “moderate” fighters; speakers doubted the figure Cameron had arrived at, pointing out that much of the Free Syrian Army and other groups Cameron had cited were fractious and divided, and that many were engaged on their own fronts away from IS and could not be of use.

Furthermore, Corbyn and several others stressed that airstrikes would inevitably lead to civilian casualties. Not only this, but airstrikes would be ineffective against IS as planes were already struggling to find targets in IS territory. Corbyn summed up his stance against the government as “hard-headed common sense”, not pacifism, arguing that the government had failed to make the case for airstrikes. Many other opposition speeches ran in this vein.

While much of the debate focused on dry strategy, there were a few more emotive appeals. “Father of the House” Sir Gerald Kaufman announced he was opposed to airstrikes, stating “I am not going to be party to the killing of innocent civilians for what will simply be a gesture”, while a number of other speakers warned the spectre of Iraq in 2003 hung heavy over the government's proposals.

From the other side, by far the greatest surprise of the night was Hilary Benn. In an impassioned speech Benn appealed to a moral duty to show solidarity with the French and stand up to human rights abuses. Drawing on Labour's tradition of “internationalism”, Benn pointed to the role Labour took in fighting Franco, Mussolini and Hitler. In his closing remarks Benn said “[Labour] has always stood up against the denial of human rights and for justice and my view, Mr Speaker, is that we must now confront this evil. It is now time for us to do our bit in Syria”. Commentators have widely praised Benn's speech as the best of the night and one of the best in the recent history of the chamber.

What next?

Both main party leaders come away from the debate with something to worry about. Cameron was repeatedly asked by members of the House to apologise over remarks he made in a meeting of the 1922 Committee in which he labelled Corbyn and those intending to vote against the motion “a bunch of terrorist sympathisers”. Although Cameron suggested during the debate that there was “honour” in voting either way, he stopped short of a direct apology. Cameron's failure to address his remarks has widely been seen as a blunder.

Meanwhile, Corbyn was forced into giving his MPs a free vote on the issue after failing to reach a consensus with his shadow cabinet before the debate. Although a majority of Labour MPs sided with Corbyn in voting against the motion, a sizeable contingent – 66 MPs in all, including almost half the shadow cabinet – supported the government. It was expected that a significant number of Labour MPs would rebel, however the vote could raise new questions over Corbyn's ability to control the party.

The outcome of the vote has already been criticised by a large portion of the public. A thousands-strong anti-war demonstration took place outside Parliament during the debate, and the result of the vote was widely condemned on social media with an e-petition opposing airstrikes reaching over 182,000 signatures. Public support for the airstrikes had been falling before the vote; a YouGov poll on 17th November showed 59% in favour of airstrikes with 20% against. By 1st December these figures were 48% and 31% respectively. With less than half of the public approving airstrikes, the government's mandate for the bombings looks shaky. Corbyn has suggested that Cameron was eager to rush the debate through Parliament, as he knew public opinion was turning against him.

It has yet to be seen how much effect RAF bombings will have in Syria, but this vote could well tarnish the government's reputation.



[Image: Peter MacDiarmid]

70,000

The number of “moderate” fighters operating in Syria according to the government's claims.

“To oppose another reckless and half-baked intervention isn't pacifism. It's hard-headed common sense.” Jeremy Corbyn MP

“We believe we have a responsibility one to another. We never have and we never should walk by on the other side of the road.” Hilary Benn MP

£508,000

The cost of one airstrike in Syria
[Source: Sky News]

400,000

Estimated civilian population of Al-Raqqah
[Source: The Guardian]

“Go for it. Don’t be worried. You could be on to something, you never know unless you speak to someone about it.”

In the week that The University of Leeds is named as the Times’ Entrepreneurial University of the Year, The Gryphon speaks to Tim Brazier, founder of My Student Venture.

Jessica Murray
News Editor

Could you start off by telling me what My Student Venture is all about?

My Student Venture is an online platform and we help students get work and experience in start ups and smaller businesses. If you go to a career’s fair you’re going to see all the big companies over and over again, so we spend all our time finding all the other companies that aren’t there.

It actually started from another business plan I had, which was light-up skis. But I wasn’t too good at the technical drawings, so I wanted to find a product design student and I was running around asking different people on campus and they couldn’t help me, so I ended up back to square one. Then I thought, if I’m inside the student bubble, and I can’t find a student with the skills that I need, how hard must it be for other businesses that are starting up?

How successful has it been to date?

It’s kind of like that chicken and the egg thing: you’ve got to get businesses on board but you’ve also got to get students on board. I’ve had loads of support from the university, and I’ve got some quite good publicity as I’ve gone on; quite recently I was featured in the Sunday Times as part of Global Entrepreneurship Week. I’ve also been accepted on to Entrepreneurial Spark, which is Europe’s largest and most active accelerator, a programme where they take a load of start ups and put them in one building where you all receive mentoring and coaching and events. It basically takes your business, whether it’s at the idea stage or whether you’ve been running for years, and helps it move forward and grow.

What kinds of businesses do you work with?

We have such a range; some are still at the idea stage and they just want someone to join them so they can help get it off the ground. Lots of people are wanting websites designed, so that’s a great way for computing students to boost their portfolio. Then we’ve got businesses who are a bit more set up and are looking for marketing, like social media, content writing and blogging, so that’s really good for any students from humanities or journalism courses. Then we have bigger organisations that have been running for a few years, who are maybe looking an intern. We’ve got over 90 business signed up, and over 300 students.

What were the main challenges you faced when setting up a business?

Trying to get the word out there is the hardest thing because there’s only me, and a few others, and we only be in so many places at once. At Leeds university especially, there’s so many opportunities, and we’re trying to get heard amongst that. Growing the network has been a challenge, but it’s starting to



[Image: Jack Roberts]

pick up now and as you get more success stories it makes it easier for people to understand what we do.

How do you hope to develop My Student Venture in the future?

It’s now open for students from across the UK, not just Leeds, although due to where I am, a lot of the opportunities are in Leeds. We just want to keep growing. As work is changing, more and more graduates are doing project work and freelance work, rather than having a career in a big business, and this helps give them their first experiences in doing some project or freelance work.

What support did you receive from the university when starting the business?

I went to Spark, the university’s start up services, based at the careers centre. If you have any idea, no matter how wacky it is, you can turn up and they’ll sit down and have a meeting with you, talk it over and they advise you on what to do next. They have different competitions and options, including an Enterprise Scholarship which I was lucky enough to win. They also have an incubator space, a shared office space used by 30 student start ups in the Leeds Innovation Centre, which sounds really good as a trading address and gives you credibility. Spark also have access to specialists, so you can call them up

and they’ll put you in contact with a specialist accountant, or a lawyer, for an one hour consultation. They’ve also helped promote the business, and provided opportunities for press events and networking.

What would you say to those who are thinking of setting up a business, but are afraid of taking the first steps?

Go for it. Don’t be worried. You could be on to something, you never know unless you speak to someone about it. In terms of starting a business at university, it’s the best time to start. The three challenges you face when you start a business are time, skills and money. As a student you probably don’t have a huge amount of contact hours, and actually have so much more time that people in fulltime jobs don’t have. Students have loads of skills, and you’re surrounded by so many people and resources who can help you learn new skills in a different department. You have so much less risk and commitment as a student; here, if you run it for a year and it fails, the only thing you lose is one year’s salary, but in the process you’ll have made yourself incredibly employable. Starting a business you learn so much by doing so many different things; you’re the financial planner, you’re the marketing director, you’re the bin man. You might decide you enjoy the marketing side and you can use that experience to get a job in that area. What have you got to lose?

Leeds named as *The Times*' Entrepreneurial University of the Year

Lydia McMath

The University of Leeds has won the Entrepreneurial University of the Year Award in this year's *The Times* Higher Education Awards. The achievement was announced this week and comes as a result of the university's decision to adopt 'enterprise' as one of the four pillars of its strategy, and as one of its five students' union values.

The results of this commitment to enterprise are widespread and emerge from a number of university strategies undertaken in the 2013-14 academic year. In this year, the university gained £5.3 million from intellectual property and registered 374 patents. Its spin-out companies attracted £43.2 million in investments and created 426 full-time equivalent jobs. It also helped develop 275 regional businesses through the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Growth Programme.

In the same academic year, more than 900 students, half of them coming from outside of the School of Business, un-

dertook enterprise electives. In the same year, The university started a popular MSc course in Enterprise, set up fully funded "year in enterprise" placements and enrolled 13,000 people from 105 countries on its "Starting a Business" online course. Such achievements have also enabled Leeds to make significant progress towards assembling an investment of more than £40 million for a 10,500 sq m University Innovation and Enterprise Centre.

The judges of *The Times* Higher Education Award praised the University, saying: "enterprise is at the heart of the institutional vision of the University of Leeds, with senior staff, experienced educators and leading researchers driving this agenda across the whole university."

The judges also said that enterprise was reflected in increasing "curriculum opportunities for enterprise education", owing to "unprecedented levels of alumni and business community support", as well as "a strong local and regional impact" in both public and private sectors.






COMING SOON

JANUARY 2016

The Refectory is undergoing an exciting new revamp ready for January 2016 with an innovative new look and evolved food offer! Come and visit us in January to see our new look and taste some fantastic new dishes.

Find out more about the refurbishment on the Great Food at Leeds website and on social media [#RefectoryRevamp](#)
www.leeds.ac.uk/gfal

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GREAT
FOOD
at
LEEDS



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

What Does it Mean to be 'Green'?

Following the Climate Change march this weekend in Leeds town centre and this week's COP21 talks in Paris of leaders from around the world about global warming, *The Gryphon* explores the issue of climate change, what it means to be 'green', and the action that needs to be taken to combat it.



Stephanie Uwalaka

Have you noticed how our winters are more spring-like? And our summers are happening mid-autumn? Often a topic of conversation in Britain, the weather has become more adverse in recent years as more storms, stronger winds and drastic seasonal changes occur. But why does such discussion never seem to extend to why this bad weather is happening more often? Climate change is arguably the biggest global challenge to face our generation, yet whilst some are actively making changes to help combat it, others are not aware of the detrimental changes it will have upon us and our planet.

According to the Met Office, this October was averaged the warmest since 2001; they also affirm that 2015 is set to be the first year that global temperatures are one degree over pre-Industrial temperature records. This is alarming as governments and world leaders have aimed to limit global temperatures rising above two degrees over pre-industrial period records: it is measured from this point due to the Industrial Revolution when temperatures massively increased alongside industrial production. After this two degree rise in global temperature we will start to experience severe effects of climate change across the globe.

According to gov.uk, the possible extreme impacts of climate change upon the UK, should we continue at our current rate of resource consumption, would include: temperature rises of over four degrees in England, food supplies affected due to higher chances

failed crops and difficult weather conditions, more serious floods, heat waves, and higher sea levels around our coasts. In 2014, the government have also stated that 'there is clear evidence to show that climate change is happening [...] The UK is already affected by rising temperatures'.

It is easy to feel helpless in the face of such a great and threatening issue, but this should be a wake-up call: we are consuming more than we can sustain.

It is easy to feel helpless in the face of such a great and threatening issue, but this should be a wake-up call: we are consuming more than we can sustain. The question is: what will we do about it for our generation and for future generations? These terrible possibilities are avoidable; it is clear that a preventative method is sorely needed to tackle climate change. Therefore, how, as an individual, can you help to prevent global warming?

There are several ways you can be 'green' and help to protect the environment and as a consumer you have the power to choose what you buy with con-

sideration for the benefit of the planet. You can buy products that are organic, ethical, and fairer to our planet. As a consumer you could also try buying products that have recyclable packaging, do not use chemicals that are harmful to the environment, and come from traceable and sustainable sources.

You can also look at changing what you eat as eating less meat can cut your carbon emissions and switching to vegetarian or vegan options for meals you enjoy can make a difference to environment and even to your health. Buying locally grown produce also supports local businesses and cuts the amount of carbon dioxide produced from transporting or importing the food to your plate. Changing how you travel is another way to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions; using public transport, cycling and walking for shorter distances, can help greatly reduce one of the greatest causes of carbon emissions.

To find out more about helping the environment at a local level, *The Gryphon* spoke to Christa, from Green Action, about how they are 'green', their views on climate change, and what they do as a society to help combat it:

'Green is such a broad term, but from being part of green action I have come to think of 'being green' as the way we think to consider our impact on the environment both for the land physically and for those living in our world. Another way to put it is to make a conscious effort to impact the environment, the welfare of people and animals with the least amount of negative impact. In our current society it is very difficult to know who produced our food, if they were treated fairly in terms of pay and work hours, if that company is helping or hindering the environment for the future. As part of Green Action we have a food cooperative





[Image: Reuters]

(cooperative being we are all volunteers, there is no hierarchy system like normal societies, we all have a say in any decision made), where we look at where we source our products, who sources our products, how the people and the environment is impacted so we do this research before deciding to stock any product. Being green is also a political issue, to support campaign and educate our society into being aware of what we can do support and protect the people who provide our food or clothes, both locally and across the world. Education is also key for becoming a greener world and to protect what resources we have for the future.'

In regards to the government's action upon climate change, from the gov.uk website, they say they are reducing UK emissions, adapting the UK to climate change, and working to secure global emissions. However, this week there has been a major discontented reaction to David Cameron's plans for his speech at the Paris talk this week. After the Prime Minister has made numerous cuts to plans for green energy, Greenpeace have highlighted that he has been sent an open letter from various large companies in the UK, including Tesco, Unilever, M&S, and Ikea, asking him to back green energy measures for the UK, with the letter stating: 'We would like to see your government commit and put forward policies to support the growth of the UK renew-

ables sector through the 2020s'. As recent government figures show, renewable energy already counts for a quarter of the UK's electricity.

As recent government figures show, renewable energy already counts for a quarter of the UK's electricity.

Taking a look at LUU, The Gryphon spoke to Union Affairs Officer, Toke Dahler, about what the Union is doing to tackle global warming issues:

'We run several funded student-led sustainability projects and we have also just sent three students to Student Climate talks in Paris. We are have the highest NUS sustainability rating in the UK, but are always looking to do something better. There are also bee-hives on top of the Laidlaw library and a recent forum

passed that there will now be bee-hives on the roof of the Union. And we've actually been looking into introduce 'reverse' vending machines to the Union which give some change in return for items people recycle.'

In addition to this, there are three sustainable gardens on campus, aiming to encourage students to grow their own produce as open to all where you can help garden and are free to eat produce from the gardens.

Perhaps it is a question redefining being 'green', because we are all a part of the human race, and we all need to recognise that this is our planet as a whole. It may be necessary to change the mentality surrounding the apparent 'chore' of saving the planet for every one of us and for our future generations. By simply being proactive out of respect for each other, and for our natural environment, we may realise that being 'green' should not just be a duty, but a measure consciously and collectively taken as a society to help combat climate change. In rethinking what being 'green' entails, we may be able to see that in caring for our planet and for each other, we are actually taking care of ourselves.

The Open letter to the Prime Minister on this issue is available on the Greenpeace website- <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/sites/files/gpuk/cameron-business-letter.pdf>

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Cheerleading and Feminism - Bring it on!

Cheerleading started out in the 1800s as an activity exclusively for men. *The Gryphon* explores cheerleading becoming a female activity and discusses what this means for the modern-day cheerleader.



Hannah Macaulay

For those of us that associate cheerleading with the nineties 'Bring it On' films, it can be hard to imagine a world where the female cheerleader is not the norm. Nevertheless, this was the reality that cheerleading was created in. It first appeared at an American football game between Princeton University and Rutgers University in 1869 through cheers and fight songs that created a high-energy stadium spirit. The match led to the creation of an all-male "Pep Club" at Princeton, which is now seen as the official birth of cheerleading.

The sport went from being exclusively male to ninety percent female-dominated for primarily one reason: World War II. The men went to fight in the war, the American women stayed at home and began dominating universities and their activities such as cheerleading. Since then, cheerleading has taken America and the rest of the world by storm and the American NBA cheerleaders are especially well known because of the huge popularity that American basketball has gained during the years. From an outsider perspective, it is clear that cheerleading is both an athletically advanced discipline and a positive contribution to stadium spirit. However, the lack of men in cheerleading and the lack of cheerleaders encouraging the crowds at women's sports events raise questions. Furthermore, the short skirts and cropped tops that the female cheerleaders perform in, when compared to what male basketball players are wearing, could also suggest that cheerleading is a complicated topic in regards to female empowerment. It is of course also clear that cheerleaders and stadium spirit go hand in hand, but this still does not explain why popular women's sports with big crowds do not have cheerleaders. Why, for instance, does the women's NBA league in America not have cheerleaders?

The Gryphon spoke to both Leeds Celtics Cheerleaders and the Leeds Women's basketball team about the debate. Charlotte Bean, a Celtics cheerleader, strongly agreed that this is an issue that needs addressing. She said,

'Why shouldn't women's teams also have cheerleaders? I think it would be nice as it is more about raising morale and support for the team playing not just putting on a show as it is viewed by some.'

All over the world women's professional sports are gaining more and more attention and crowd size. Perhaps it is finally time for us to view their disciplines as just as important as men's and integrate cheerleading into their games. *The Gryphon* also asked Charlotte about her viewpoint on cheerleading and about any concerns in regards to it being disempowering to women. She expressed that there were some stereotypes linked to being a cheerleader that she found problematic. 'Often, people do not view cheerleading as a 'proper' sport, and instead see it as a side-line activity to more 'real' sporting events. Even though cheerleaders have their own competitions and leagues, they are often not recognized for being a sport in the same way as many other male dominated activities. Officially,

Even though cheerleading may seem like an activity where a male audience objectifies women, it can also be seen from another point of view: as women empowering themselves by actively doing what they enjoy.

and at Leeds University, cheerleading is classed as a sport but culturally we have a long way to go in order for the general public to perceive it on the same level as disciplines such as football, rugby, or basketball.'

When asked about cheerleading and feminism, Sophie Jordan, Leeds Women's basketball player, stated that feminist arguments are valid when it comes to cheerleading on the side-lines for matches, 'since there is the issue of them being objectified and only there for male attention'. However, she added that, 'at the end

of the day I believe women should be free to do what they want to do without being scrutinised or attacked'.

These remarks touch on the duality of cheerleading. They raise the question as to whether a cheerleader's actions are determined by her own interests or by the validation of men. Even though cheerleading may seem like an activity where a male audience objectifies women, it can also be seen from another point of view: as women empowering themselves by actively doing what they enjoy.

The debate about whether a woman is still a 'true feminist' when she dresses up, or down, and wears makeup, is one which is rooted in something much deeper than just cheerleading. Recently, the issue has been discussed in the media regarding celebrities like Beyoncé or Miley Cyrus. Both women are publicly declared feminists and have both appeared on stage in underwear and on magazine covers almost fully naked. For many people this creates confusion, since they cannot see the link between fighting for the rights of women whilst still establishing yourself as a sex symbol. It is an age-old controversy, with some arguing that the use of femininity and sexuality can be seen as female empowerment, while others label it as degrading.

Are cheerleaders, by doing what they want and wearing what they please, actually furthering a feminist agenda? Is the society that objectifies them actually the real problem in this debate, rather than the individuals themselves? Or should a sport based primarily upon the practice of cheering on men be completely out-dated in year 2015? Feminism is defined as 'the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of equality of the sexes'. In some ways, maybe cheerleaders are not cheering for the men but for their freedom to do whatever they want. Maybe we should not question the cheerleaders' outfits and roles, but rather why they are not present at WNBA games and other female sports events.

Cheerleaders have been around since the 1800s and they are not leaving the world stage anytime soon. Therefore, it is up to all of us to change the stage they are currently performing on for the better.

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In The Spotlight: LUU's Women's Liberation Co-ordinators

This Week, *The Gryphon* interviews Emma Healey, Women's Liberation Co-ordinator and NUS Women's Conference Candidate at LUU, to find out more about her feminist beliefs and how she works with LUU societies to help bring about change at Leeds University.



Siân Halas

In your own words, why is feminism so important and how does it impact upon your role?

Part of the reason feminism is so important now is because we are being told we don't need it. We are being told that we have achieved equality whilst we are seeing our friends being raped; we are told we are equal whilst being paid so much less, whilst trans women (particularly those of colour) are being killed at a horrifying rate. Feminism is so important because it says that this shouldn't be happening: feminism stands up to discrimination and oppression.

Thanks to you and the other Women's Liberation Co-ordinators, Anja Komatar and Eleanor Price, consent classes are being introduced to Leeds University. What was your motive in introducing these classes?

For me and the other women's liberation co-ordinators, consent seemed like an obvious place to start. Ideally we would be taught about it in school, but school PSHE is pretty shocking and doesn't look like it will improve anytime soon. When 1 in 3 university age women experience sexual assault, it's pretty obvious that the current system just isn't working. Consent workshops have got a really bad rap lately with many seeing them as demonising men, or just about teaching not to rape.

That's not what they are at all - they are designed to be interactive, more like a conversation than a lecture. And it's not just about saying don't rape - it's about learning what is and what isn't consent, when someone can and can't consent and how to say no. The experience of so many survivors of sexual assault include doubt and uncertainty, not knowing if what happened to them was sexual assault or their fault. Consent workshops mean people are more aware of what has happened to them. Hopefully through education we can stop the shame and self-blame that come up in so many survivors' stories.

What do you think about the recent row over International Men's Day?

I think the case of men and mental health is important: something that isn't given enough attention. Men are more likely to experience loneliness and have no one to turn to, and we need to change the gender binaries so men can be more open about their emotions. Depictions of mental health problems tend to focus on women, completely excluding men. Feminism fights for men too: it tries to eliminate the gender binary that keeps us in little boxes. My only issue is when rape of men or men's mental health is brought up to try and diminish women's experiences. Why can't we agree it's all bad? Why does one have to be worse than the other?

In your role as a woman's liberation co-ordinator you help students manage mental health issues and stand up for women's rights. Do you think there is a connection between feminism and mental health?

Feminism and proper mental healthcare are both about fighting for a better place: a place where women can feel like they are worth fighting for. Feminism and mental health advocacy are both empowering for groups who are often told that their anxiety is irrational and that their feelings and thoughts are invalid. Feminism and mental health advocacy are about creating a space where all people are understood and cared for. It tells us that we, with all our flaws and contradictions, are valid. This isn't to say there aren't huge problems with discrimination within feminism and I don't mean to erase that at all - it is a huge problem and something we can only really fix by incorporating intersectionality into our politics, and our activism.

Are you going to be organising any other events throughout the year?

Yes! Watch out for "Galentine's Day" on the 13th February. It'll be a day-long event aimed at celebrating and empowering women and non-binary people. With support from lecturers, societies and sports teams I'm sure this will be a fantastic event - get in touch with me if you want to get involved!

Dance Exposé: Exposed

Avigail Kohn

What happens when you put contemporary, commercial, ballet and break-dancers together in one society? Although the initial response might be "chaos", Dance Exposé, an eclectic dance society that combines all forms of dance, has changed my verdict to "awesome".

I was given the chance to see the society's 'Exposed' showcase, a taster of their big event in February. Although the show wasn't very long, it demonstrated the scope of the society's performers. Performances ranged from Tap Dancing to the Can-Can to Bollywood, and there was even a special feature from LUU's own Aca-pella group. Seriously, I felt like I was in Pitch Perfect.

'Exposed' followed the theme of the seven deadly sins, including dances that focused on lust, pride and envy. There was no defined explanation for any of the dances, which I think increased the creativity of the night. As it was up to interpretation, I could make the performance be anything I wanted it to be, although I think my theory about one of the dances being about cavemen vs. modernity might have been a bit far-fetched.

It is no wonder the event was so well put together when you look back at what Dance Exposé have accomplished. From winning the 2013 Riley Smith Award

for 'Best Show' to winning five trophies on their 2015 tour in Salou, Dance Exposé has no shortage of awards to lean back on.

So who are the people that have led to this success? Dance Exposé is made up of dancers who have a variety of different styles, skills and techniques. The society prides itself on the fact that it has no limits. It allows a mix of various dance forms, creating an environment where anyone is welcome to dance or choreograph in whatever way they feel most comfortable, and where there are many opportunities to learn new things.

The society does require auditions, but that shouldn't put potential members off. Students of all ages, dance backgrounds and levels of experience are welcome, as long as they are committed and love to dance. Dance Exposé is the only dance society that doesn't charge class fees, and is relatively cheap, charging £35 for a year-long membership.

However, for those of us who can't tell our left foot



[Image: Zoe Thresher]

from our right, Dance Exposé offers a fantastic, energetic and exciting dance show that will make you feel as though you've stepped into a scene from Step Up. With the show coming up on the 17th - 20th of February, I'd quickstep my way to the ticket booth once tickets go on sale because it's going to be a sell-out and it's going to be good.

In The Middle

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

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In The Middle with... alt-J



[Image: Gabriel Green/PR]

The Gryphon chats to alt-J's Gus Unger-Hamilton about going from St Mark's Residences and Ash Grove to headlining this year's Latitude Festival.

alt-J aren't a band that you can easily visualise chowing down on a greasy all-day breakfast from Poppina's, but that was once their everyday lives. Made up of four Leeds graduates, Gus Unger-Hamilton, the band's keyboardist, studied English Literature while his bandmates all studied Fine Art. You might think that the band would have forgotten about their alma mater after winning the Mercury award and headlining festivals all over the world, but Unger-Hamilton still has a soft spot for his old halls of residence.

"I went back to St. Mark's in August, they've pulled it down and rebuilt it which was actually quite sad. Not only have things changed since we lived in Leeds but they've literally demolished the place we lived." It was at St. Mark's that Unger-Hamilton met Joe Newman and started the band with Newman's course mates Thom Green and Gwil Sainsbury. Their sound, he says, "came out of who we were as people. It helped that Leeds is quite a forward thinking, diverse university. We started the band properly in second year and practised at Joe and Gwil's house and we had to be quiet then because Gwil's neighbour...liked to not be disturbed, let's say."

"[We] practised at Joe and Gwil's house and we had to be quiet then because Gwil's neighbour liked to not be disturbed, let's say."

So if it wasn't for an arsey neighbour, alt-J might be a very different band without their signature hushed harmonies and intricate instrumentation. As it was, since their formation in an Ash Grove bedroom, "[Their song-writing] hasn't really changed hugely except Thom on the second album used Ableton rather than relying solely on traditional drums".

alt-J are a band intent on creating art and when asked whether this comes from their study of the arts, Unger-Hamilton sees its influence in the "high standards [we have] when it comes to what we create". With high-standards are at the forefront of their creative process, experimenting constantly with different sounds, from bhangra to medieval folk music, becomes essential.

"It keeps you interested. We need to be interested in this project, you can't just be doing it for the success or for any other reason except that you find this an interesting way to spend your time. By trying out new and interesting things we're making things that fascinate us and excite us. It comes partly when we're writing but also comes in the studio because we have the time and the resources to muck about with." Inexhaustible experimentation and merciless high-standards paid off for Unger-Hamilton and the band struck gold with their 2012 Mercury Award win for debut album *An Awesome Wave*, shooting the band to an unprecedented level of popularity.

"It certainly felt pretty fucking cool to win the Mercury prize - that was a dream come true. Really the only dream we ever had as a band was to win the Mercury. We weren't like 'One day we want to play the Hollywood Bowl or one day I really want to be on Jonathan Ross;' winning the Mercury prize was the most important

thing to us." The Mercury win coming only a year after graduating from Leeds did shock him slightly though. "It was quite weird to win so early on but at the same time it felt like a culmination of a few years of hard work. There's a lot of people who've heard of us from the Mercury but for us it was like 'wow, this is amazing, we've been doing the band for about four years so this is... really nice.'" He laughs modestly.

Winning the Mercury might have been their aim but they're not far off being headliners of the world's biggest festivals. After headlining Latitude this summer, Melvin Benn, the man behind both Latitude and Reading and Leeds, has tipped them to be future Glastonbury headliners. This runs off Unger-Hamilton like water off a duck's back, his focus entirely on making music. "It was never about being festival headliners at all, but that would be an exciting prospect for us of course, we're really about making great music and recording."

On being asked whether the arena tour they're currently embarking on, playing Leeds First Direct Arena on the 6th December, is preparing them for potential festival headline slots in the future, Unger-Hamilton gives a nuanced and mature response. "From a business point of view yes. Festival bookers look at us selling out gigs like the O2 in London in January and give us festival billings accordingly. However, the reason we're doing the gigs is we need to go and play for our fans. The business side is just a by-product."

With such great expectations looming over the band after their debut album and festival slots, you would forgive the band for feeling the pressure when coming to record their second album *This is All Yours*.

"The reason we're doing the gigs is we need to go and play for our fans. The business side is just a by-product."

"We didn't feel pressure as we're just so excited. I think we knew as well that we were going to make a good album. Put it this way; if we were going to release a second album it was going to have to be good otherwise we wouldn't release it. We knew that we had a good group of fans who like our music, and our music is fundamentally quite weird, so we knew our fans would like it even if it was bizarre in places."

And weird it is. If you're looking for overt, populist songs you'll probably be left confounded in places by *This is All Yours*. Where some artists would insert a saccharine tale of heartbreak, alt-J explore Nara - a Japanese city with a huge population of deer that are sacred to the people living there. "It was a nice idea to write a song about. Living a life that's not run by other people, not trying to appease other people."

If anything sums up alt-J it's an inability to be "run by other people", they will experiment, they will listen to only their own judgements, and they will take over the world on solely their terms.

[Alex Fowler]

Product by SOPHIE

Fads can be cool. Remember sneering at your mates for not being hip enough to know who White Ring were back in 2011 when you thought Witch-House was going to take over the world? Fond memories eh? But inevitably, all fads die out. Despite this, they'll always be albums like Salem's *King Night* which outgrow their sub-genres and morph into something more tangible which you'll still be listening to five years down the line and thinking "damn, this is great." *Product* is one of those albums.

Categorised within the 'PC Music' umbrella (although not technically on the niche label) known for its baby-girl vocals and candyfloss beats, Sophie stands out amongst the crowd. His material is darker, more challenging, championing a production style that is downright unsettling. The sheer lack of anything organic makes it feel cold and metallic; the only thing vaguely relatable to a human are the vocals which are so heavily distorted they sound like they're squeezed from an android. Weirdly enough, it's this lack of anything warm sounding which makes *Product* so engaging.

'L.O.V.E.' is the most challenging track on the album, essentially five minutes of ear-splitting buzzing and robotic vocal samples, which despite being difficult to listen to showcases Sophie's capacity to be confrontational as well as fun. The album's best, however, is 'Just Like We never Said Goodbye' which takes a simple four chord structure and bubbly synth sound to make what's probably the best pop song I've heard all year.

When PC Music inevitably dies a gruesome death at the hands of a megastar trying to dip their wick in the genre, I'll still be able to listen to this album and appreciate it for what it is: a brilliant, avant-guard piece of electronic music.

P.S - for those who fancy buying this album it's available as a free download when you purchase one of his specially branded puffa-jackets, pair of high heels or, brilliantly, silicone butt-plugs.

[Max Roe]



Few Days to Go by Fufanu

Dubbed by *Rolling Stone* as "Disclosure attending Bela Lugosi's funeral", the Icelandic band are about as weird as their name. They started off as techno duo Captain Fufani, until the theft of their master computer lost the entirety of their unreleased music. They followed this by adding live instruments and shedding the "Captain" part of the name (which apparently got left behind "at a rave in Cologne"). Their venture in this different style of music has already seen success, including the praise of Damon Albarn and The Vaccines, who they recently supported on tour.

Few More Days To Go opens with 'Now', a confused track as the downcast vocals and the heavy blend of live and electronic instruments contrast with the seemingly romantic lyrics. The album seems to be full of contradictions, 'Circus Life' conjures an image of a horror show with seven minutes of gloriously moody

rock and equally sultry vocals. Singer Kaktus hauntingly chants "the show must go on", a line that becomes increasingly tormented as he repeats "and on and on and on", the mundane and repetitive aspects of everyday life leaking into the music. The synth in 'Plastic People' feels reminiscent to the soundtrack of Pacman. It perfectly encapsulates the stress of gaming and as the song goes, the paranoid lyrics could definitely draw links to the feeling of being chased in a videogame gone wrong.

Overall, *Few More Days to Go* is an electro-rock album full of gloomy psychedelia and sinister atmosphere. It definitely wasn't intended to relax the listener. However, it is full of great songs and even if the mood is very morose, it promises great things for their future.

[Polly Hatcher]



Christmas in Reno by Cassie Ramone

Cassie Ramone has presented us with her second solo offering since leaving Vivian Girls, *Christmas in Reno*. In it she mixes the same wispy, hopeless and mildly depressive tone of her first solo album, *The Time Has Come*, with an odd seasonal twist.

The album is made up entirely of covers of well-known Christmas classics, such as, 'Wonderful Christmastime', 'Rockin Around the Xmas Tree', 'The Christmas Song' and 'I'll Be Home For Christmas'. The opening track, 'Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)', gives off a general Christmas-at-Jack-the-Ripper's-House vibe, with Ramone's voice echoing against some sad, belated jingling. Whilst the lyrics "They're singing 'Deck The Halls/But it's not like Christmas at all", make me wonder how this was ever became the jolly Christmas banger of Darlene Love and Mariah Carey. 'Sleigh Ride' is perhaps the most cheery song on the album, with Ramone's monotonous yet ethereal voice being put against a marginally more upbeat backing rhythm.

If the album can be afforded any deeper meaning, then you could see how Ramone is attempting to create a sense of disillusionment with the joys of Christmas. The mellow tone and slow plodding rhythm conveys more of a heart-breaking loneliness than images of roasting chestnuts and Yule-tide carols in 'The Winter Song'. Depending on how much of a hard-core Christmas fanatic you are, Ramone's twist on these classics can be quite refreshing and more representative of a Christmas where all you want to do is delete your family members and drown yourself in turkey.

Once you get past the initial mental image of a serial killing Santa dancing around his victims, the album is actually quite calming; perfect for nursing those Boxing Day hangovers whilst still clinging to the all-pardoning excuse 'yeah but, it's Christmas...'

[Olivia Raine]



Agent Fresco at Belgrave Music Hall 22/11/15



"What happens on tour stays on tour" - opener Cleft warms the crowd at Belgrave Music Hall on this cold-as-hell Sunday evening with some banterful small talk as charming as the Mancunian duo's music. Their self-proclaimed 'turbo-prog' is funky and energetic, but the real entertainment is in Cleft's inner relationship: gurning at each other throughout the set and toying with the audience by often playing as quiet as they possibly can - you'd think they were two schoolkids having the time of their life rehearsing. This deceptively heavy duo has more energy and talent than your two-bit four-piece, but the band that followed are anything but.

Icelandic band Agent Fresco are humbled to be at Belgrave Music Hall for their debut UK performance, but it's hard for anyone to follow Cleft's enthusiasm. Fresco's tour supporting their latest and highly commended album 'Destier' brings a forceful alternative rock to Europe, as well as elements of progressive and pop music - bouncy riffs and a modest technicality make their music so catchy yet unique. The terrifying 'He Is Listening' and 'Angst'

with fierce growls played alongside the poppy 'Howls' and 'Pyre' with soaring high vocal lines shows the influx of emotion this band is capable of, but carries with it an endearing fragility.

As the night progresses, vocalist Arnór Dan Arnarson reveals his intimate world to us - the fire within Fresco's music. Between each song, their emotional blueprints are laid before us and it is simply humbling to be involved in matters so personal. The requiem for Arnarson's father 'Implosions' and 'Wait For Me's yearning to return to family ties the audience together - I would not be surprised if many a tear fell during these songs. Yet Fresco rocked as hard as they moved us; with the closers 'Eyes of a Cloud Catcher' and 'The Autumn Red' sending the audience wild, ending the night in celebration rather than in sorrow. Agent Fresco's first night in the UK was no less than electrifying, and I am hopeful for their swift return to Leeds.

[Jekabs Jursins]

JAWS at Belgrave 23/11/15



Birmingham Indie surf pop four-piece, JAWS, bought hazy guitar echoes of nostalgia-inducing lazy summers to Belgrave Music Hall on a cold Monday night in November. JAWS have made the transition in three years from lesser-known support act for the likes of Spector and Peace, to a UK tour headliner through a collection of festival stints and numerous headline slots at hometown venue, The Birmingham Institute. Through these various performances and the release of debut album, *Be Slowly*, in 2014, they've managed to engender a great amount of support which one couldn't fail to observe on Monday night.

They remain a band undeniably linked to the reputation of the waves of B-town (Birmingham) bands that emerged onto the musical scene in late 2012, alongside the likes of Peace and Swim Deep. As such, their performances are also intrinsically linked with the characteristic B-town collection of young fan-girls adorning the edges of the stage from the first opening of the doors in adoration of their indie pop dreamboats.

The younger members of the audience heralded the entrance of the headliners by throwing themselves into each other continuously in an explosion of ecstasy; they drooled over the vocals of Connor Schofield and his shimmering, summery melody.

'Toucan Surf' and 'Friend Like You' from 2013's EP *Milkshake*, was performed to a crowded room of eagerly awaiting fans, some of whom were longing to recapture the excitement of late nights in 2013 with a set incorporating both old hits and newer tracks such as the 2015 upbeat opener 'What We Haven't Got Yet'. 'Be Slowly', a slowed down rendition of 'Stay In, Stay Out', 'Surround You' and final track 'Gold' are all received enthusiastically by the crowd, cementing their status as fan favourites and the ensuing continuance of JAWS' success.

[Jessica Heath]

UML Gig Picks of the Week



Alt-J, The Horrors and Ghostpoet - Sunday 6th December - First Direct Arena - 6.30pm - £31.90

The Mercury prize-winning band, Alt-J will be making a return to Leeds, the city where they formed back in 2007. With two beautifully crafted albums up their sleeve, the band have managed to create a wonderful hybrid of indie rock and folktronica. They will be joined by two other British acts; the garage punk/rock band, The Horrors and the vocalist and musician, Ghostpoet.

NAO - Thursday 10th December - Headrow House - 8pm - £7

East-London R&B artist, NAO will be playing Headrow House in light of her three album releases this year: *Reggae Martini*, *February 15* and *Bad Blood*. Studying and working within music all her life has allowed NAO to create unique funk-pop electronic music that can be played authentically and live, without sequencers.

Jeffrey Lewis & Los Bolts, Down Dime and The Wharf Street Galaxy Band - Thursday 10th December - Wharf Chambers - 7.30pm - £10

The New York indie-rock musician and comic book artist Jeffrey Lewis has released his seventh studio album, *Manhattan*, with his band Los Bolts. With songs themed on human observation and specific details of moments experienced whilst rambling through the city's streets, *Manhattan* is a highly emotive and personable album. He will also be joined by the frantic indie band, Down Dime and Leeds' The Wharf Street Galaxy Band.

Leeds UML is a society, community, and volunteer-run music library that can be found in a tucked away room on the top floor of the Union. Members have access to a music collection that has been built up over 60+ years, containing thousands of CDs, vinyl records, and a couple cassette tapes too. Joining costs £6 for the year. For more info, and to have a look at the collection and past events, visit leedsuml.com



[Image: Getty]

Music and Image

After the recent airing of the AMAs, Robert Cairns discusses the deification of image in music

Coldplay baffled the audience by performing with a troop of dancing primates. Meghan Trainor devoured Charlie Puth's face in an extremely awkward showcase of cannibalistic affection. Justin Bieber received a soaking baptism in the tears of his preadolescent super fans. The American Music Awards (AMAs) once again showcased the overbearing narcissism of the world's most popular artists under the guise of rewarding talent. An artist's image, in numerous genres, is undoubtedly as important as their music, but as young fans are becoming increasingly invested in their idols' Instagram inventory instead of the mounting piles of monotonous discographies, is image now the key defining factor in a mainstream artist's sustained success?

The AMA's kicked off with the timeless Jennifer Lopez performing a rendition of her 1999 hit 'Waiting for Tonight'. But, proclaiming "tonight is not about me, tonight is about the music", she then burst into a dance routine along to the soundtrack of some of this years' best selling songs. Whilst J-Lo's abundant and seemingly endless energy was admirable, focus has and will be placed on how she still looks half her age, the vibrancy of her dress choices and the sultry nature of her dance moves, but not on the quality of her vocal performance. Of course, J-Lo is rightfully a fashion icon, but our generation are more concerned with the superficial elements of her performance than its musical quality.

The same story occurred throughout the show's star studded guest list. After Bieber closed the show with a mad medley, the inexplicable catchiness of 'What Do You Mean?' was overshadowed by the fact Bieber had the dare to rock up to the gala wearing a vintage Nirvana t-shirt, at which the internet promptly lost its shit. Why should we care about what an artist chooses to wear at an event that is meant to reward music? Whether a deliberate middle finger to his critics or a genuine ode to a band that disbanded around the time he was born, Bieber's wardrobe selection has shown that his critics are as easily duped by the illusion of image as his pious Beliebers. Even his recent album *Purpose* has been used as a blatant and genius rebranding of his bad boy image into a misguided pop star with a heart of gold. Induced by his 'new' innocent persona, it seems the world has forgotten about his all too recent drunk driving charges and Brazilian brothel visits - oh Justin you scallywag, when will you learn?

For years artists have used image to promote their music: The Rat Pack wooed audiences with their suave suit and ties, whilst Elvis' iconic umpsuits and hypnotic

pelvic thrusting blew them away. Bands like The Rolling Stones, The Sex Pistols and Nirvana all used their rebellious style to fuel their anti-establishment war path and turn countless heads in the process. When Radiohead recorded *OK Computer* they changed their sound not their image, propelling them to new heights of fame. But all these had the music to accompany and legitimise their characters. In the current era of mainstream mediocrity, competition is so forced and fierce that only the feeble skeletons of regurgitated pop songs can find success, so much so that it is the mere facade of image that separates each industrially constructed artist from the next. No wonder artists are now using music to promote their public representation.

The other performers took their moment in their spotlight to reassert their importance, but it was Meghan Trainor and Charlie Puth's actions that stole the show. After crucifying this year's most hated song, 'Marvin Gaye', the two love birds proceeded to bite each other's faces off in what can only be described as a touching tribute to *The Walking Dead*. The audience didn't know what was more uncomfortable, having to sit through the kiss or having to listen to their thankfully abridged duet with grimacing smiles of forced enjoyment. With cameras continuously prowling, the audience had to maintain their countenance as the producers would gleefully ignore broadcasting the various on stage performances for snippets of celebrities looking expressly bored. With all this increased consciousness of image, artists can take a leaf out of Coldplay's book. Coldplay care little about their aesthetic features - people hate them because of their music, not because of their image.

By the time the mostly subdued event came to a close, the shows' producers were probably grateful they didn't invite Miley Cyrus to the party, as days earlier she opened her latest tour wearing nothing but prosthetic breasts and an impressively sized strap-on dildo. It's difficult to censure an artist's image in the modern age, so its up to the music stars themselves and labels to make sure they provide a decent model for their young fans to aspire towards. But too many modern artists are evading these responsibilities and manipulating their image to spearhead their musical careers. And the annoying thing is we fall for it again and again; we can't criticise the deification of image without talking about image, and unintentionally confirming its importance.

[Robert Cairns]

**“Is image
now the key
defining factor
in a mainstream
artist's sustained
success?”**

Festive Chart



Aphex Twin - XMas_Evet1 N

A very different take on a Christmas tune, the admirable Aphex Twin released this track on his flawless album Syro last year. Layer upon layer of sounds and rhythms compile with a groaning bassline, echoing that of overfed Christmas revellers. This particular mix is slightly lighter with a continuous drum riff and unmistakable bell chiming to add to that festive feel.



The XX - Last Christmas (Lennard Charles Edit)

The iconic voices from the XX take on a cover of the seasonal classic. What starts out as something cringeworthy morphs into a cracking, gentle electronic track, and veers away from the well-known Wham! Lyrics.



Nathan Fake - XMas Rush

True to Fake's infamous style that heralds him as one of the finest names on the electronica scene, this 2010 release dabbles with pounding acidic techno beats and gentle female vocal sample. This track rattles along nicely, dabbling with different rhythms and beats to then gently peter out with a rumbling crash – an ideal representation of the Christmas chaos.



Milieu - Treetopping Beants

Its not unheard of to have some hiphop amidst the holly – take the legendary RUN-DMC Christmas In Hollis – but this instrumental oozes cool. Clearly taking a strong influence from the synthesizers in Paul McCartney's 'Wonderful Christmastime', this will leave you less Scrooge and more smooth.



Chevron - Rudi The Techno Pioneer

Even in normal terms this song is outrageous: a relentless basscore track with dirty bassline, combined with jingle bells and roars about a 'Merry Christmas'. Don't play this to your Grandma.

[Flora Tiley]



[Image: Canal Mills]

Review

Daniel Avery + Volte Face @ Headrow House

Daniel Avery's second appearance in Leeds this year was a sell-out, owing to his ever-dynamic sound (as proven by recent releases 'Sensation' and 'Clear'), the additional presence of Volte Face (50% of 'Rote') and the novelty of the new venue, Headrow House, and how it would deliver a night of techno. The sets spanned from 10pm to 5am, during which the restless studio experimentation of both Avery and Volte Face was reproduced.

2015 marks Volte Face's first forays into production, featuring on a Daniel Avery remix 12" alongside Rodhad, and releasing a debut EP on the newly minted BleeD imprint in April. He showcased his sound and mixing ability to an increasingly packed out room, which upon entering clearly proved to be a versatile setting.

When the words 'Taste it, kiss me again' rang out in isolation at 1am, it was clear Avery's set was underway. Repetition of lyrics from 'All I Need' on Avery's 2013 album Drone Logic inspired both tension and anticipation, intercepted by snippets from the recent release 'Sensation'. From this starting point of steady thumping and modulation, the set delved further into shifting atmospherics and determined beats. Despite the absence of a single track from Drone Logic being played in its entirety, the audience was not left disappointed. Instead, the opening of his set acted as a blueprint, Avery continuing to tease listeners with samples and remixes from the album.

Avery's second newbie of 2015, 'Clear' fitted into the mix seamlessly. It encapsulated the sense of par-

anoia and euphoria of the music and was received with enthusiasm. Perhaps more exciting though, was Avery's back to back mixing with Volte Face from 3am: the sounds became darker but importantly ensured a dynamic finish.

Techno did not present a challenge to Headrow House; in fact, space and sound were in perfect unison. All night long eyes remained fixed on the alcove in which the decks stood, where the lighting was concentrated and projected outwards. Essentially, the venue aided the progression of Avery's set by creating a cinematic experience that induced the trance effect that so defines techno, complete with 5am curfew signified by the fire alarm. Unmissable.

[Natalie Layng]

Move-D @ Canal Mills

The main room at Canal Mills is the mothership of nocturnal reckless abandon in Leeds. You've probably had a few heady moments in there of late, watching producing goliaths such as Detroit cool cat Moodymann or maybe even gaudy deep house merchant Gorgon City. But one can't help think that the recklessness that suffuses the dancefloor has undergone a transference into the booking policy at Canal Mills.

It is a sign of the times that Dusky, Adam Beyer, Barnt, Move D and Jeremy Underground can share a bill. One must come to accept that it is Canal Mills' duty to book big names and stick them in a big room, and no doubt hundreds of punters were creaming over the expansive house and techno sounds of Dusky and Beyer. It just seems a bit much

when a gorgeous spin of an edit of Fleetwood Mac's Dreams gets poked and pinched by the noise from next door.

That's exactly what happened on Saturday. After Barnt (of Chappell fame) brilliantly chugged Room 2 into life, it was Move D rolling out the smooth house records. Like a hippie uncle who had taken control of the music at your family Christmas do (with glasses, silvering beard and a wooly jumper to complete the look), he dished up wholesome tracks from several points on the dance music spectrum. A flurry of acid tracks, including his own Acid Grind featuring Jus-Ed, twisted things up a bit. But, in the main, the vibe was very laidback and akin to the dreaminess of that Fleetwood Mac track. At one point, a record jumped. The German didn't panic,

nonchalantly blowing on the needle and plonking it back on wax. You sense more of a fuss would have been kicked up in the main room.

Jeremy Underground closed proceedings with what can only be described as a set of pure bangers, deliciously melding Chicagoan and Manhattan house sounds, all underscored with the most fierce kick drum imaginable. Liem's If Only got a great response, and left the 5am dancers with a positive, albeit melancholy, message that hoped to 'make this world a better place'. One thing is for sure: in the topography of Canal Mills, Room 2 is this song's imagined better place.

[Oliver Walkden]

Throw Away The Rulebook

It's that time of year again; out of the depths of December come the celebratory drinks invites, work parties and Christmas balls. With festive cheer aplenty and sub-zero, you must fight the urge to stay in under that oh-so-appealing blanket and instead head out the door and embrace winter dressing. Leave the rules behind and experiment with achieving the right balance for you. Not everyone is comfortable in head-to-toe sequins (some things are a blessing rather than a curse). Many say winter is the best season for showing personal style, through layering and texture-play, a look can go from drab to trend-focussed with a few strategic additions.

Multi-purpose pieces are great for mixing and matching looks to suit different events; we've paired a slip dress over leather pants to dress it down, provide extra warmth and play up the two textures, but worn alone for a statement event would have an equally captivating effect. Equally the addition of a good accessory can lift a whole outfit, and the metallic thread of the turtleneck provides the jumpsuit with an evening edge and the faux fur stole makes the outfit playful yet stylish.

Instagram is awash with decadent gatherings and opulent gowns, but there are ways of achieving this polished winter chic look without forgoing present giving this Christmas. Whether it be monochrome with a hint of sparkle, accents of velvet and leather or classic stripes

you'll be sure to impress this month.

An understated smooth base is the perfect starting slate when looking to experiment with eye looks and lipstick shades. Whether it be

**"You cannot
fake chic but
you can be chic
and fake fur."**

**Karl
Lagerfeld**

shimmery lids or a matte wash of colour, the Naked 3 palette creates a wearable yet flattering glitzy party-ready look in an instant. Experiment with matte berry hues, Claudia wears Rimmel lipstick in shade 30, or opt for a fail-safe classic red - Jen wears Russian Red by Mac.

For Men's fashion we focussed on statement trousers, from checked to textured plaid, and offset them with a more subtle shirt combination. Turtlenecks are a great way of making the trousers wearable, whilst still retaining their smart status. We teamed the looks with a simple loafer, allowing this outfit to easily transition from day to night.

Make your own show stopping look with a bit of creativity this year and preserve those pennies.

[Emma McCormack]

Stylists: Emma McCormack & Faye Buckland

Models: Claudia Cardinali, Lynton Williams and Jennifer McDermott

Make-up artist: Harley Wild

Shoot Location: Bar Soba, 9a Merrion St, Leeds



Burgundy Slip Dress: Motel £35.00
Leather Trousers: Topshop £22.00
Lace-up boots: ASOS £45.00
Glitter Moon Bag: The White Pepper £38.00
Lipstick: Russian Red by Mac £15.50



Shirt Dress: The White Pepper £62.00
Lipstick: Rimmel 30 Boots £5.50





Mint Green Farah Hudson Shirt:
Urban Outfitters £50
Trousers: Primark £10.00
Belt: Primark £3.00



Turtleneck: £19.00 ASOS (set of two)

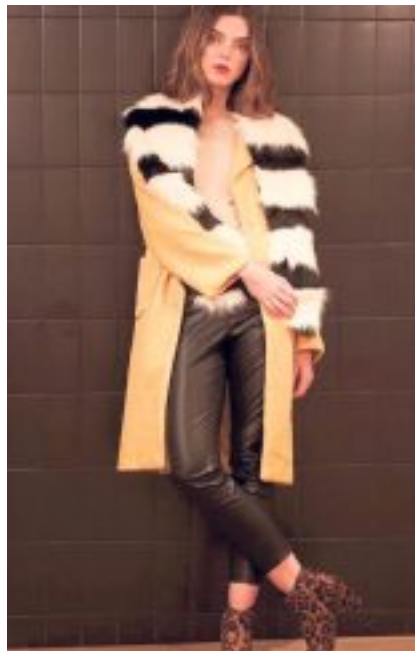


Striped Dresses: The White Pepper £68.00
Chunky Sandals: New Look £25.00
Glittery Socks: Topshop £2.50



Knitted Jumpsuit with Shoulder Details:
The White Pepper £68.00
Metallic Heeled Sandals: New Look
(SOLD OUT)

Nude Body: Missguided £12.00
Mustard Boyfriend Coat:
The White Pepper £80.00
Faux Fur Stole: New Look £19.99
Leopard Print Boots: ZARA (model's own)



[Huge thank you to the lovely people at Motel Rocks & The White Pepper for sending us over some beautiful festive pieces]

LRFS Meet The Directors

In the run up to the Leeds RAG fashion show on the 11th February, we catch up with the show's directors Esther Eldridge and Rachel Archer on how they're hoping to make this year the best yet.



[Image: Ryan Blackwell]

What are you both studying and how much has this helped you?

We both study Political subjects – Politics and Philosophy and International Development. It's important to know the issues that surround the global economy and governmental relations as fashion does operate in a political environment. It also helped us decide the charities we wanted to support and why we believe they should be the heart of the show. Socio-economic issues have been raised by our studies and fuelled our passion for helping in the charity sector.

How will the 2016 RAG show differ from previous years?

Every year tries to be bigger and better, and this year we are no different. We're very focused on our chosen charities and keep them at the centre of everything we do. We want everyone to feel included and that they can be a part of a fantastic event. Our theme is also about breaking boundaries and moving away from previous fantasy based themes.

What made you pick the charities will you be raising money for this year?

Most of us are in very privileged positions as students that an unfortunate amount of people will never have the same access to. Both of the charities we have chosen address inequalities in society and provide new opportunities for people. Leeds MENCAP is a fantastic local charity that works with children and young adults with learning disabilities, many who come from deprived backgrounds, to provide them with support and access to resources. The world is currently facing a devastating global refugee crisis, the Refugee Council works directly with these refugees helping them to rebuild their lives.

What is the most important thing you aim to achieve from this whole process?

The most important thing for us is raising as much money and awareness as possible for the chosen charities. The whole reason we are doing it and all our profits go to the charities, and we want everyone to have a fantastic time while raising money for such worthwhile causes.

What has been your biggest challenge so far?

Our biggest challenge so far has been managing a work/life balance. We are both very passionate third year students with part-time jobs and we find it hard to switch off. We want the show to be the best yet for everyone involved, including our fantastic committee.

How much of a part are local designers and shops playing this year?

There is a great range of local designers, featuring everything from vintage to scandi fashion. We have tried to source local designers and get as many Leeds shops as possible involved on varying scales. We also have fantastic local hairdressers Renegade providing us with styling for the show.

How have you avoided previous issues such as controversy over model casting?

We have kept model castings open and we invited everyone to come along. Our models were chosen for their fantastic personalities and enthusiasm for the show.

How did you pick the themes, and when will you announce them?

We picked the theme based on something that was completely different to what has been before. We wanted to steer away from the mystical and to have something real and relatable for everyone. Keep your eyes peeled, our theme is announced on the 14th of January.

What does your day to day role involve at the moment?

We are busy every day, meeting with different teams on our committee, managing our social media platforms and juggling lots of tasks. The best part of our job is that in one day we can experience everything from styling to finance, although this can sometimes be a test.

How do you find managing such a huge team of people?

Our committee is absolutely fantastic and we are lucky to have such talented amount of people on board. Obviously at times it can be stressful trying to make thirty different voices heard but we are overwhelmed by the levels of enthusiasm on the committee and support we have had from the RAG team.

What events will be taking place between now and the show?

We have our 'Winter Warmer' on the 8th of December featuring mulled wine and stalls featuring everything from henna to homemade crafts. We also have a Fitness fun day planned for January the 26th.

What would you say to anyone wanting to get involved next year?

Go go go! It will be one of the most rewarding experiences you can be a part of and you will meet some incredible people. The skills you learn are invaluable to help you develop both in your personal and private life. Also, fingers crossed, when we raise the fantastic amount we hope to raise for charity it will be the best feeling in the world!

What are you most excited about between now and the show?

Esther: To watch our dreams change into reality.
Rachel: Yeah and to strut our stuff on the catwalk at the end of the show.

[Molly Shanahan]



Good afternoon.

Like a spoon of spaghetti hoops masquerading as an aeroplane and destined for the mouth of a toddler happy to suspend their disbelief, Volume III Issue II of The Scribe is approaching. Early next week, you will be able to chomp on its tomatoey, arty goodness for yourselves when we sell copies in the Univeristy Union. Until then, however, we have chosen to present you with a little peak of the kind of things that you will find in the issue. These selections are not specifically on display in the issue; they are instead a highly exclusive Gryphon teaser. Since this will be our last Gryphon offering of the year, we would like to extend our Christmas well wishes to you all. I suggest you put on "Step Into Christmas" by Elton John, a song that is regularly the 17th or 18th track on any Christmas compilation: uplifting and too often overlooked.

Yours festively,

The Scribe



Hanna Hetherington

Mercy for Mercedes

The ash falls from her sixth cigarette and twenty years perish.
Ribbons of smoke slither through the empty space around the bars of daylight which cut through this chamber
Where silence reigns and tears drip from a vacant eyeball.

Three beings –half alive- pulsate on skeletal furnishings. These are the only things that occupy the distance between green and blue walls.

Who knew hell would be this cold, this quiet?

By Cameron Tallant

Lines Written at Bolton Abbey

Royal cracked walls of sacred stone
Abreast the gentle Strid,
Since resting Henry declared the end
And of the treasures and frame he hid.

Lying now, centuries on, a church-side ruin
Of the former Abbey,
As much a grave to the lost Order
As the dead in yard here by me.

My mind frames the stolen houses,
Pillars, shelters and doors.
Though I pity a tyrant's curse
I believe here ruined there is something more;

Lacking in structure and a skeleton of a whole
Yet far more beauteous despite,
Whether nostalgia or idealism in tragedy
It is open to a godly night.

Intermixed with the elements of divine creation
It is no longer enclosed in shade,
But pure and naked, heart free of pain,
The dissolved Priory with nature laid.

Internally facing, without blush of shame,
His stars reigning above,
Their light becomes the setting of the stone
And their preservation His love.

Natural growth flowers through,
Making peace with arch and petal,
Alike they naturally exist as one
Life, one picture, and thus settle

As a standing point of caring faith
Striving the years thro'.
Grown among the setting village,
To some decaying, to I new.

No longer a construct of our worship
But, moulded into the ground,
Becomes of the earth upon which it sprung
And less so human bound.

Our ownership is done, it is writ,
Left to the influence of forces great,
By now we can merely watch it pass
And pass with us and wait.

By Jonathan James Green

Comedy



[Image: Manuel Vason]

How To Describe Figs In Wigs...

London-based performance group Figs in Wigs are not easy to describe. Their website offers some help, suggesting you imagine 'Kraftwerk meets Chicks on Speed at a fruit stall...and you're nowhere close'. However, their latest offering – the seemingly disparate, yet cleverly devised 'Show Off' – is perhaps your best bet at figuring out what this passionate, all-female company is all about. Dance, music, and comedy all collide in this corrupted cabaret, and, as the cast triumphantly declare, there's no better place to finish the tour than in Leeds. No matter how peculiar the performance was, the audience assembled at the Live Art Bistro duly laughed along (even if they were occasionally ordered to).

In essence, the performance entailed a series of sketches, all performed by the Figs themselves, and through the medium of a succession of separate artistic genres, incorporating everything from contemporary dance to the very odd post-grunge band that concluded the show. However, this description does not really do justice to the chaotic energy that disrupted any structure that the audience might have been searching for. As costume changes happened on stage and the cast took a two-minute break to take selfies with the audience, it was quite clear that Figs in Wigs were not pursuing any conventional artistry. Instead, it seemed they were after the direct opposite, deconstructing all that we might expect from a youthful, Feminist performance company.

Thank goodness then for the short introductory monologues to each sketch. Each member had their attempt at describing what was about to be played out

on stage, invariably getting trapped in their own plays-on-words, prompting both laughter and ironic cringing from the audience. However, it was amongst this uneasiness that the more touching moments arose. "This show is about social media and narcissism" declares one Fig, halting, if only briefly, any silliness and prompting a reassessment from the audience. Leaving it until halfway to declare this description was somewhat effective. Suddenly, the opening dance number that had seen the women marching devotedly to incessant music, gazing unwaveringly at their iPhones had much more poignancy. The outlandishness depicted in the sketches and the variety of garish costumes both contributed to the ironic attack on narcissism that was at the centre of 'Show Off'.

There were moments when Figs in Wigs hit their stride, humorously attacking the sexual side of narcissism, with one quipping "we don't have penises, just penis envy". Occasionally though, the humour that runs through the show comes off as confused and plain awkward. Of course, the awkwardness is supposed to be part of the comedy, but sketches that see pretty standard toilet humour vaguely masked as contemporary circus ultimately fall flat. The performance group evidently have a lot to offer but this never totally transfers in 'Show Off'. When one of the microphones faults and fails to project yet another pun, one of the Figs inadvertently shouts out one of the show's best ironies: "This is all planned, by the way!"

[Will Reece-Arnold]

Leeds Tealights: Laughter Fills The Library

Returning from an award-winning run at the Edinburgh Fringe, the Leeds Tealights were back again on home soil. Expectations were high for the comedy sketch group which has seen the returning Stephen Rainbird teaming up with a fresh new cast: Nancy Salt, Will Sidi, Emre Kose, and Madeleine Gray. Hidden away in the upstairs room of the Library Pub, the setting was appropriately cosy for a rapport to be generated between comedian and audience. Not only was the location suitable for the acts to follow but also allowed people to ease the wait with a refreshing beverage from the bar.

Arriving 40 minutes before the show started, we felt suitably keen, walking into the empty room and being told to go and wait with a drink downstairs. Ahir Shah opened the show with an hour of genuinely hilarious stand up comedy; racing through topics such as smoking, vegetarianism, religion, capitalism and love. Shah managed to keep the audience captivated throughout his whole performance by combining impressive streams of memorized anecdotes with spontaneous comments made at audience members' expense. Keeping everyone in fits of laughter at the outrageous jokes, Shah ended his set on a different note, - a declaration of love for his girlfriend. Instead of making it a schmaltzy speech, he infused it with humour using intellect and a cleverly placed Proclaimers reference. The audience left having all had their heartstrings tugged, and put in good stead for the Tealights to follow.

The group opened with a choreographed sequence of dance moves alluding to cultural appropriation and the boundaries of comedy. The sketches that followed were easily accessible to a student audience, covering fresher initiations and stereotypical gap yearers. The former sketch provided a very funny interpretation of what happens during university socials, with 'Garden Soc' taking inspiration from the Rugby club. Other sketches involved an angry driving instructor, a zombie apocalypse and a man who thinks he is a dog. There were moments where the dialogue could have been swifter to make the comic timing more precise, and the punch lines were relatively obvious at times. The majority of the content, however, was original and created a room full of laughter. The show closed on an innovative sketch of the first date between a couple which suddenly plummets downhill after both revealed their favourite pastimes with humiliating results. Through an 'Inbetweeners'-esque rendition of a love song, the situation was galvanized, and the scene ended with the couple realizing their unconventional similarities. The whole evening was an endless stream of creative genius infused with unique comedy. Make sure to go out of your way to watch one of Shah's shows and catch the Tealights at their next performance. They will surely not disappoint.

[Mary Pattison]



[Image: New Line Cinema]

Why Are All Christmas Films Rubbish?

Is it just me, or are all Christmas films complete rubbish? Okay, so it probably is just me, but nevertheless I'll bah humbug my way through this. Let me ask you a question: what do you say when someone asks your favourite Christmas film? *Love Actually* perhaps? *Home Alone* maybe? *The Nightmare Before Christmas*? Well, in that case, I don't mind. You're free to go. However, if you are one of the other kind of people, stay right here, I'm not done with you yet.

The films mentioned above are all fine because they aren't Christmas films. They're films with plots and ideas that could operate just fine if it wasn't Christmas at all. When I say I hate all Christmas films I'm talking about real Christmas films. You know the ones. All colourful-wolourful and oldy-woldy, with cheeky merriment and whimsical japes. Oh, how I hate them. And if you are one of those people who simply cannot resist guffawing like a twit, having just seen a full-grown leotard-clad actor stumble into a Christmas tree, then yes, I hate you too. Okay fine I don't hate you, but I do harbour a small amount of tinsel-wrapped resentment towards you and your movies.

You might have the impression by now that I'm talking, in part, about *Elf*, and you wouldn't be wrong. I can say that I've watched the film once, many years ago, and if I was any kind of half-decent writer I'd have watched it again for research. But I'm not, and I'm certainly not willing to risk watching that pile of pointy-shoe-wearing dog waste again for the sake of a well-evidenced opinion. I was not surprised to find that many people shared my opinion of the film, but I was horrified to discover that as many people adore it in the most sickening of ways. In short, *Elf* is the Marmite of Christmas films.

Joking aside, why do these kind of films persist on plopping into our existence? *Elf* is by far at the top of the dung pile as far as these travesties are concerned, yet year by year the movie makers churn out dozens of the same low-content, high-drivel rubbish and make actual money out of it - people clearly still go and watch them. So maybe they aren't so bad after all?

I've heard it said that those jokes you get inside Christmas crackers are made deliberately terrible, the idea being that we can all laugh aloud and bond over how bad they are together. Perhaps the same can be said of the Christmas film. I seriously doubt that anyone involved in the production of such a film could be oblivious to just how bad they are, so surely they must be made intentionally bad. And people seem to like things like that.

As you're sitting down with the family, all jumpers and mince pies, through your tinsel-tinted eyes do you really think you could disapprove of a cheesy old Christmas movie? We know that they're terrible. That's why they're an essential part of Christmas. They give us something to bond over, and if anything that's the point of this time of year.

Maybe I've just been a Scrooge until now, but okay. Fine. You've convinced me. All Christmas films are rubbish - but that doesn't mean they can't be great.

[William Hoole]

LIFF: The French Connections

This year's Leeds International Film Festival screened a series of seven short films by French directors entitled *French Connections*. Encapsulating the quirky French cinematic style, the short films are at once witty and soulful, commenting on the heroic aspects of humanity.

L'étourdissement (Stunned), opens in an abattoir with a group of bemused workers surrounding a cow that will not die. One of the workers, Monsieur Coppi, drops down dead without reason, and the difficult task of informing Coppi's wife lies with the two other workers, Eddy and George. Director Gérard Pautonnier embeds his short with black humour, leaving a constant wry smile on the audience's faces despite the decidedly uncomfortable scenario. Unable to tell the charming Madame Coppi straight away, they accept an aperitif and have polite conversation before leaving the apartment without having been able to tell her. The short culminates in a build-up of unspoken emotion as Eddy leaves Monsieur Coppi's wallet and keys in the apartment. The instant Madame Coppi sees them, she has a horrifying moment of realisation that something has happened to her husband. She opens the door, and finds Eddy standing behind it. They lock eyes in a shared, tragic understanding. *Stunned* explores how it is often understated actions that speak louder than words, and how the sensitive and thoughtful side to human beings should be deemed most heroic.

Another beautifully tender short entitled *Le Grand Jeu (Game of Life)*, playfully toys with the spectator who is left in the dark up until the denouement. In what appears to be a homosexual encounter, two men meet up in a remote countryside setting, discussing what lies they have had to tell their loved ones in order to meet in secret. They walk along a country track, suitcases in hand, in the early hours of the morning, ending up at a graveyard, where they stop at one of the graves and begin to get

undressed. The next thing we see is the two men performing Peter Pan in full costume. Seemingly absurd and comic on the surface, the director then gives a flashback of a home video where, as young boys, they are performing a show for their mother. An immediate pang of touching understanding hits the audience, as we suddenly realise, these two brothers are paying tribute to their mother on her birthday. The director explores how the children within us should never die; what seems absurd to society holds the most meaning within the self. Being heroic for others sometimes means disregarding social conventions, and once again, our actions define who we are.

The final short film, *Coach*, directed by Ben Adler, was the winner of the International Jury Special Prize for Best Short film at the Berlin International Film festival 2015, and is the only English language short of the series. The tone of *Coach* is far more dire and shocking than the rest, painting a repulsive picture of English hooliganism. A young boy and his father are on their way to a football game in Paris when their car breaks down and a coach load of England fans invite them on board. It is truly heart breaking to watch the young boy's rejection of his father, as he is seduced by the sexist, anti-social actions of the England fans. All is said in his smirk, as he watches them shout abuse at French fans and burn the French flag at a pit stop. *Coach* leaves the series of shorts on a sour note, bearing the ugly truth of a teenager rejecting his father. Yet Adler provides redemption, as the young boy wipes off his grin when his father gets caught up in a fight, eventually reuniting with him through his expression of disgust for the fans. *Coach* evokes all the teenage guilt of being embarrassed of a parent who simply has his or her own set of morals which stand apart from the rest. Adler explores how heroism is often manifested in refusing to follow the crowd.

[Olivia Neilson]



[Image: Warner Bros]

Black Mass - A Johnny Depp Comeback?

Black Mass tells the tale of notorious Boston gangster, James "Whitey" Bulger. It follows the true story of how he and FBI Special Agent John Connolly forged an unsavoury alliance. Told through the testimony of Bulger's old gang mates', the film sports a stellar cast, Joel Edgerton takes on the role of Connolly, Benedict Cumberbatch of Bulger's brother Jimmy. Peter Sarsgaard, Kevin Bacon, Dakota Johnson, and Corey Stoll all appear too. There are some fantastic performances all round by this cast, but it's Johnny Depp's deeply chilling portrayal of Bulger that is ahead of the pack.

Written by Jez Butterworth and Mark Mallouk, the story walks you through the increasingly seedy Bostonian Gangster scene with a gripping focus on Bulger's story. Although it follows the growth of his 'organisation,' we slowly witness his character's descent into paranoia and emotional impulsiveness, and the subsequent warping of Connolly alongside him, in defending his actions and promoting his value to the FBI. Scott Cooper does a great job directing, with excellent chemistry between the characters in a highly believable manner in a world where gangsters and politicians are so messily entwined. The overall plot holds together well, yet there are some loose ends that are never completely cleared up and leave you feeling just a little bit more underwhelmed than you should at the end of this movie, although

"It's Johnny Depp's deeply chilling portrayal of Bulger that is ahead of the pack"

the eventual outcome of the people portrayed in this movie are outlined in a Band of Brothers-style round up.

The setting of South Boston, colloquially known as "Southey", provides a grounded backdrop for the fairly unrelatable story (for the majority of us), with its many thick - though sometimes wavering - Bostonian accents. The aesthetic provides a strong smack around the face, letting us know we are definitely in the late '70s and '80s with a vibrant wardrobe, from Bulger's tight, flared jeans, to Connolly's countless pieces of gold jewellery. This is supplemented by a functional yet forgettable score that helps the film along, but does not go on to do much more than that.

All in all, *Black Mass* is a fine piece of filmmaking with Johnny Depp's so-called "comeback performance," which delves into the gruesome and horrifying world of one of the USA's most notorious gangsters and allows us to witness the devastating partnership that led to the events outlined in the film. It is a very gritty depiction and not one for the faint-hearted, yet those who enter with that in mind and a thirst for witnessing the life of a man with such a hunger for power, you will not leave disappointed.

[Matt Bolland]

Carol - Passionate and Groundbreaking

The Leeds International Film Festival's closing screening, *Carol*, starring the spell-binding duo Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara, received over eight hundred spectators in the majestic Town Hall. Stephen Woolley, the producer of *Carol*, came to introduce the film and speak about its genesis; how it took eleven years to develop due to various complications such as buying the rights to Patricia Highsmith's novel, *The Price of Salt*, on which the film is based. Shockingly, Woolley also discussed the difficulties of funding *Carol* with two female protagonists. Major production companies repeatedly questioned, 'but who's the male lead?' It is a sad truth the Hollywood side of the film industry is sceptical that two prestigious female actresses are going to provide enough box office attention. However, Film4 came to *Carol's* rescue, along with two other independent film production companies to give it the funding it so deserved.

Set in the winter of 1952 in New York, *Carol* is a story of love between two women, a wealthy mother and wife, Carol (Cate Blanchett) and a younger shop assistant, Therese (Rooney Mara). Director Todd Haynes, whom Woolley proclaims the 'maestro' of *Carol*, beautifully illustrates a tentative love that unfolds between the two women. Their instant attraction is palpable, as both actresses are experts in expressing emotion through their eyes alone. Both Carol and Therese follow this passion blindly without fully comprehending what it is they are experiencing. Carol, placed in a more dominant role, pursues Therese with pure fascination whilst enduring a difficult divorce and rebelling against social judgment and condemnation.

instincts, and invites Therese on a road trip with her. Rooney, who won Best Actress for the film at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival, conveys a woman unsure of herself, timid and inward, who worries she says 'yes to everything' without fully knowing what she wants. However, her desire for Carol culminates on the trip, and the drama rascalates from there.

There is an uncanny resemblance between Carol's young daughter and Rooney Mara's innocent, child-like face, which brings forward the concept of a caring, maternal love Carol feels for Therese. The moment she sees a picture of Therese as a young girl is beautiful; she is moved to tears, as she realises she is being torn away from her daughter.

Following on from her mesmerising performance in *Blue Jasmine*, Blanchett once again magnificently portrays a woman on the edge, always with a cigarette and a strong drink in trembling hands. The striking cinematography of Blanchett and Rooney's pensive faces, often through reflections, leaves the audience with a sense of empowerment, as the two women take control of their lives. Therese flourishes into a young woman more certain of her future after her time apart from Carol, as she no longer floats along in the decisions of others. Her final decision, the director so subtly conveys, marks a shift from youth to maturity, we can all strive to achieve. *Carol* expresses a genderless love, a state of attraction between two human beings that can evolve in the most unlikely of places.

[Olivia Neilson]

Blanchett powerfully depicts an autonomous woman who follows her passionate

Stage



[Image: Matt Crockett]

World Premiere: The Girls

Gary Barlow and Tim Firth's new musical, *The Girls*, based on the British film *Calendar Girls*, premiered to an electric atmosphere and a standing ovation at Leeds Grand Theatre at its world premiere last Tuesday. Both Barlow and Firth took the stage during its curtain call, along with the original women who created an alternative calendar of nude members of the Women's Institute, leaving the crowd in awe of this brilliant new musical. Although moments of the show were fairly predictable for both newcomers and fans of the original film, it doesn't override the overall heart-warming tale based on a true story.

It is no easy task in the current industry to create a successful new musical, but they appear to have managed it; the show's soundtrack was pleasant throughout, with a nod to Barlow's contemporary talent. Although at times it felt that a reprise of Take That's 'Shine' was about to break into the auditorium, the upbeat rhythm of the music boded well for the juxtaposition of the more dramatic and frequently emotional moments of the show. This afforded prevalence to an excellent aspect of the show; a reference to how the themes of death and mortality were presented. Instead of relying on a dramatic impact to emphasise such moving themes, it was modestly portrayed which left the heart ever warmer during moments of reflection that occurred throughout the show.

However, it would appear that whilst Barlow and Firth have created a new show which promises to be an enthralling night for audiences of all kinds, it cannot be overlooked that there were elements where *The Girls* came across as slightly basic

for the more informed musical theatre enthusiast. For example, the narrative structure of the show was mostly explored throughout act one, leaving act two to conclude all of the characters' journeys through uninspiring solos, as opposed to drawing its main plot together in a more unique and innovative way. This was portrayed better through the use of a couple of the musicals main melodies during certain moments within the show.

While a show such as *The Girls* appeals to a particular demographic, it is an inspiring reference to suggest the possible direction of musicals in the near future. The cast of *The Girls* are to be commended for their work in this show - each performer gave memorable performances, handling the theme of nudity well and in a typically British manner. The younger actors performed with high levels of energy and the upbeat feel of the ensemble was ever prominent.

Although *The Girls* was predictable in places, and some elements of the set (such as the numerous household items being painted green to represent the hills of Yorkshire) felt redundant, the show itself left spectators touched and on this particular night, rather excited. Whether this was due to the presence of Mr Barlow is yet to be seen, but do go see this musical before it no doubt moves on to its inevitable run as a hit UK touring production.

[Mark McDougall]

The Art Aficionado's Weekly Planner

| Art | Film | Theatre |
|---|---|---|
| Stillness and The Body – The Tetley LS10 1JQ | The Lady in the Van, Vue the Light LS1 8TL | Alladin, Carriageworks Theatre LS2 3AD, 4th December |
| Being There - Staircase Gallery LS1 3AD | The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2, Everyman Cinema LS1 5AY | The Girls, Grand Theatre LS1 6NZ |
| Life Drawing - The Fenton, LS2 3ED | Carol, Hyde Park Picture House LS6 1JD | Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, West Yorkshire Playhouse LS2 7UP |
| Hey Clay, 5th & 6th December - East Street Arts Barkston House LS11 9RT | Muppets Christmas Carol, 12th December, Hyde Park Picture House | [Cameron Tallant] |

Video Games

Esports: The Sport of the Future?

We all know football. Whether you like it or loathe it, there's more money in it than almost any other sport and it's benefitted greatly from a history spanning centuries. Watching football matches on TV or at the local stadium is nothing unusual, and kids are still inspired by their sports heroes to grab their ball and go for a kick around in the street.

Now compare this to the relatively new phenomenon of Esports, which in the past few years has seen a massive rise in both popularity and mainstream coverage across the globe. A number of competitive video games, some of the biggest being *Dota 2* and *League of Legends*, have exploded into huge international tournaments with staggering amounts of prize money – in 2015, the International Dota 2 Championships were giving away sums from a total prize pool of over \$18 million, and the Twitch-streamed finals were watched by over 4.5 million people.

With the number of my friends who watch and play Esports games, it's been somewhat inevitable that I dabble in them myself. Some time ago I tried my hand at *Dota 2*, which was a jarring experience to say the least: like all brave new players, I had to start in what my friends jokingly call 'potato-tier Dota', the lowest ranking of player skill. The premise is simple: your team has to fight their way past the other team's defences, and destroy a structure called their 'Ancient' while protecting your own. The simplicity of the objective belies the staggering amount of strategies and terminology: abbreviations for character names and items, and terms like 'ganking', 'laning', 'farming' and 'stack and pull', can make the uninitiated feel like they're listening to a different language. With patience

and perseverance, the steep learning curve can be overcome, but be ready to deal with verbal abuse, uncooperative team members, and profoundly unsportsmanlike behaviour. Imagine that kick-around in the street I mentioned earlier, only the members of your team sit down on the tarmac and do nothing but swear at you for forty minutes.

Obviously, I'm aware that my experience isn't indicative of what it's like to break beyond 'potato-tier'. But it was enough for me to appreciate just a little of the appeal of Esports: the depth lends itself to varied and highly complex play, meaning that the smallest success or failure can make a huge difference. Esports players are very literally in a league of their own, too: strategies wildly different to those of casual play have to be formulated because the pros know every other play or counter. Thus, the game at the professional level is incredibly different to that of the casual player base.

Of course, this barely scratches the surface. If anything is apparent, it's that the sheer complexity of these games means that writing anything significant on just one of them could take years, let alone on the practice as a whole. But one thing's for sure; if the popularity boom of Esports in recent years is anything to go by, they're here to stay, and they're only going to get bigger as technology gets better. And who knows? Maybe the nay-sayers who claim these games aren't a sport will find traditional sports overshadowed in years to come.

[John Craigie]

[Image: ESPN]

TV Christmas TV: Adverts of the Advent

It's officially that time of year when our screens are inundated with an abundance of Christmas adverts. Aware of our nation's criteria for the ultimate Christmas commercial (reflective soundtrack, idyllic family living room scene, shots of indulgent festive delicacies – you know the score), here's my humble opinion on this year's collection.

John Lewis

This year's offering features little Lily who spends her time gazing longingly through a telescope, trying to access a lonely 'Man on the Moon'. With the arrival of Christmas, she sends up a bunch of balloons to space, attaching a gift for her faraway friend. Unwrapping the telescope that she enclosed, the radiance of the old soul's smile is successfully heart-warming for this time of year. However, whilst it's all very lovely that he can now watch the Christmas celebrations on earth, there seems to be one slight flaw: the lonely 'Man on the Moon' is still alone... Maybe I'm just missing the tagline's message: to "Show someone they're loved this Christmas" – which I guess is rather nice actually.

Sainsbury's

With the vibe being more 'children's programme' than Christmas, this one took me back to the kids TV of my childhood. We see animated Mog the Cat triggering an unfortunate chain of events that threatens to ruin the Thomas family's Christmas, destroying their beautifully decorated home in the process. However in true festive spirit the neighbourhood pull together to bring Christmas to the Thomas' - along with tangerines, turkey and a tree (all purchased from Sainsbury's I should hope).

Whilst it didn't scream Christmas, I'll grant Sainsbury's a little grace as the story has been published as an illustrated book to raise money for Save the Children - charity brownie points right there.

Marks and Spencer's

Seemingly filmed in a random warehouse filled with fake-looking presents, children jumping on beds, a ridiculously giant sofa and too many flashing lights, I'm struggling for praise here. The climactic ending showing a lone drummer walking out of the shot says it all really. Oh and the soundtrack is 'Uptown Funk' because.... why not?

Coca Cola

Winner of my gold star for the 'The Best Christmas Advert of 2015'

These guys know that you don't need a cheesy storyline to get people in the Christmas spirit. 30 seconds of snowy landscapes, plenty of fairy lights, adorable little faces in eager anticipation of Christmas, an appearance of the famous big red truck, a festive jingly soundtrack - what's not to love? Indeed, #theholidaysarecoming and you've earned my vote Coca Cola.

[Grace Ellerby]



[Image: Netflix]

Narcos: Money, Murder & Muchachos

Netflix have only gone and done it again. Following the success of *Orange Is the New Black* and *House of Cards*, they've managed to conjure up yet another addictive series. *Narcos* follows the Colombian cocaine trafficker, Pablo Escobar, on his journey to conquer the country and his rise to power from a petty smuggler to head of the Medellin Cartel. Still in its first series, *Narcos* is sure to capture your attention and leave you wanting more.

Money, murder and muchachos are the key ingredients to the narco empire. Add a helping of drugs, women and exotic locations and you have a decent summary of *Narcos*. If you can see past the subtitles and the on-going influx of new characters to replace those that are killed, then *Narcos* is a series that will challenge you politically; US-Latin American relations are questioned constantly and Colombian politics brought to the forefront. It's not the kind of programme that can be put on in the background while you make a cup of tea: *Narcos* is an intellectually challenging series that excites, enthralls and demands the focus of its audience.

As well as the dangerously likeable Pablo, *Narcos* follows two American DEA agents, played by Boyd Holbrook and Pedro Pascal, who are sent to Colombia to bring Escobar to justice and, incredibly, eliminate the drug trafficking industry. We join Escobar on his rise to power to the chief of arguably the most powerful drug cartel in Latin America during the 1980s. It starts off as fun and games, with lavish

parties, secret affairs and tricky investigations but we are quickly transported to the darker side of life in Colombia during this time. Using real footage, we witness the damage and real-life casualties of Escobar's war against the government and the havoc he left behind him as he tried to eradicate anyone who opposed his ideology.

The series begins with a significant shoot-out in a Colombian club that we are brought back to later on, once we've found our feet in the Medellin-DEA spat. From this moment we are taken back to the past so we can understand the string of events leading up to the massacre and the initially unapparent significance of the incident. Although much of the episodes are in Spanish with a largely Hispanic cast, it's not hard to see that the series is directed from an American point of view. Whether intended by the writers or not, the US is depicted as the heroic neighbour, albeit one that barges in to crush the conflicts of the impoverished Colombia.

Narcos is dramatic, complex and riveting; it's made for those who are looking for a series that's not just about the superficial. Although masked by the women, drugs and luxurious lifestyles of the cartels, *Narcos* perfectly illustrates the hard-hitting reality of Colombian politics and drug trafficking during the 80s and 90s.

[Nabihah Parker]

Master of None: Refreshing & Realistic Comedy

I watched the entire first season of Aziz Ansari's *Master of None* in one sitting. Was this because it amounted to an overall five hours? Was this because I am a terrible person with no self-control? The answer to both of these questions is yes, the latter more so. The main reason why *Master of None* is such an enjoyable, easy show to binge-watch, however, is its realism; the characters, conversations and situations are all relatable, believable and, above all, entertaining.

Created by Ansari and Alan Yang, *Master of None* focuses on actor Dev Shah (Aziz Ansari) navigating his way through life in New York. The season hits the ground running with humour in its first scene when Dev is torn between using Uber X or Uber Black to travel to buy morning-after pills after a split condom incident, then offering to buy said pills for his date - and they say romance is dead. Well, he must have done something right as this one-night-stand evolves into the main romantic plotline of the series between Dev and his eventual girlfriend Rachel (Noël Wells). The relationship is nothing special, it's a simple, real-life relationship. There are no grand romantic gestures or huge bust-ups that are resolved at the airport, just two people enjoying each other's company, eating pasta and making bets with wagers of oral sex, as you do.

The relationship does not monopolise the season however. Ansari uses other aspects of the show to incorporate real issues and send a clear message. He expresses his feeling towards the issue of representation of race in the entertainment industry through the medium of Dev's career. At one point in the show, Dev is asked, and refuses, to put on an Indian accent in an audition for a cab driver, an issue which

Ansari himself actually faced when auditioning for the role of a call-centre worker in Michael Bay's *'Transformers'*. The episode in which this happens begins with a montage of the representation of Indian characters that Ansari grew up watching; it depicts Peter Sellers and Fisher Stevens, two white men in brownface putting on Indian accents, in *'The Party'* and *'Short Circuit'* respectively. The episode makes the viewer uncomfortable about the issue, and rightfully so, since Ansari portrays this real issue in such a way that it cannot be ignored.

“Dev is torn between using Uber X or Uber Black to travel to buy morning-after pills after a split condom incident”

The best episode of the season has to be episode seven *'Ladies and Gentlemen'*, which offers an accessible but unflinching look into the issue of gender inequality. It begins with the juxtaposition of a woman being followed home after being harassed at a bar to an ominous soundtrack, and Dev and pal Eric (Arnold Baumheiser) having a pleasant walk home to the tune of *'Don't Worry, Be Happy'*. The episode brings to light the ever-present problem of your typical 'but I'm a nice guy' type of man; the man who believes that he's a paragon of virtue and that all women owe him something, but as soon as a woman won't sleep with him, she's suddenly a 'massive bitch', showing that he is, in fact, a complete tool. He probably follows *'Meninist'* on Twitter as well.

Overall, *Master of None* is a refreshing take on the comedy genre; it's entertaining and informative, and it easily maintains a realistic atmosphere.

[Charlie Green]



[Image: Justin Gardner]

Canal Mills Street Food Market: A Taste of Things to Come

Because street food served on the street would just be too predictable, how does a warehouse sound instead? The Canal Mills street food market is held on the last Friday of every month, and is a great way to get the weekend started with street food, music, and cocktails all on offer.

After having a quick browse around, and I do mean quick as there were only four stalls to check out, it was quite disappointing that half of the promised street food stalls were nowhere to be seen, despite a grand variety being promised on Facebook. The choices were between gourmet pizza, juicy burgers, tasty dim sum, or vegan Indian food. Having tried both the pizza and the vegan Indian, I was quite pleased with the student-appropriate prices and the quality and quantity of food that I got, even if I was limited to the slim range of food available.

The initial exciting appearance of the “Cocktail Shack” failed when it came to the drinks on offer, again restricted by a slight lack of choice. With a selection of only three drinks - a festive mulled cider, mojito or a sweet Bailey's-like concoction - I retreated to the normal bar for a drink. This wasn't too much of a let-down, as Canal Mills regularly serves an excellent selection of Independent Pale Ales and drinks that are hard to find elsewhere. A beam of hope shone through onto the stage, which

would have been set up perfectly for some live music, but instead in its place was a DJ, playing similar music to an ordinary club night.

A regular fixture of the night market is a large street art canvas, completed by one of the artists, but this was unfortunately placed in a the corner where it was barely noticeable unless you searched for it. Another three canvases were set up by the entrance with artists creating pieces live, yet due to the lack of influx of people I couldn't help but feel sorry for the artists that were busy painting away in a neglected corner of the warehouse. Whether it was due to people feeling a pinch money-wise at the inevitable Christmas shopping creeping closer, or because of the blustering gale-force winds outside, it was a shame there was a lack of bodies at what had all the makings of a fantastic event.

Despite lacking atmosphere on the night, the Canal Mills Night Food Street Market was still a great location for a street food event. It is in no way a superior version to Belgrave Feast, held every month at Belgrave Music Hall and Canteen in town, but with a few improvements it could be a worthy alternative.

[Nabihah Parkar]

Books

Baby it's Cold Outside: Yuletide Reads

Given that most of us spend the holidays swamped in revision and essay-writing, it's hardly surprising that we tend to turn to festive blockbusters throughout the Christmas season rather than books. But this year, instead of settling in for a marathon viewing of Bridget Jones or the Polar Express, why not rediscover the magic of Christmas with one of these seasonal classics?

Dr Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* is, in its own special way, one of the most heart-warming Christmas books out there. The Grinch is a lonely, bitter creature who despises Christmas. One year, he decides he must prevent Christmas from happening - not understanding that removing all physical traces of Christmas is futile, as the Christmas spirit is not something which can be taken away from people. While we can't help but laugh as Seuss works his magic with rhyme, this short story also instils a distinct message about the true meaning of Christmas, made all the more poignant as a result of society's increasingly consumerist-driven perceptions of the festive season.

Skipping Christmas, by John Grisham, is the book behind the 2004 festive hit Christmas with the Kranks. With their daughter having flown the nest, Luther and Nora Krank prepare for their first Christmas without her - at which point Luther decides they would be better off skipping Christmas altogether. They resist decorating the house, acknowledging carollers and buying Christmas cards, much to the disappointment of their neighbours. Everything is thrown into disarray when they receive an unexpected call from their daughter, who is on her way home expecting

their usual party to take place that evening. Chaos ensues as the Kranks attempt to pull together a party for the sake of their daughter - and along the way they learn about the true values of community, friendship, and putting others first.

If you prefer the traditional classics, how about Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*? Initially written to draw attention to the plight of those living in poverty and to express his concerns about social inequality, *A Christmas Carol* is a timeless tale which still resonates with readers today. Miserly Scrooge is visited by the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come, each seeking to encourage Scrooge to see the error of his ways. Scrooge's change in character ultimately enables him to appreciate the need for goodwill and compassion towards others.

Within each of these books the themes which embody the Christmas spirit are exposed and our views regarding the meaning of Christmas are challenged. Whilst many of these stories have a moral element to them, it is often only discreetly hinted at, allowing us to curl up nostalgically with them in a post-Christmas dinner coma. Many Christmas stories transport us back to our childhood, revitalising our imaginations and reinstating what Christmas means to us. Whether you opt for a children's classic, such as Raymond Briggs' *The Snowman*, or a contemporary bestseller, there is something magical about a festive story that cannot be felt through film.

[Rosemary Maher]



[Image: Patsy O'Neil]

Festive Recipes

Gluten-free Mince Pies

These tasty festive treats are made using simple and affordable ingredients. They are gluten free (to help avoid that Christmas bloat), and the only sweetener used is honey, which is much more nutrient-dense than refined sugar.

You will need:

A muffin/bun tray with 12 holes
Cling film

Pastry Ingredients (for 12 pies)

100g rice flour (available from Morrisons or Abu Bakar for about 80p)
75g ground almonds
50g butter (fridge-cold and cut into cubes)
1 egg
1 tablespoon runny honey

Filling

1 orange (zest and juice)
1 lemon (just zest)

100g raisins/sultanas
50g cranberries
1.5 teaspoons cinnamon
1.5 teaspoons ground ginger
1 tablespoon runny honey
4 tablespoons water

Method

[1] Preheat your oven to 150 degrees.
[2] Put the rice flour, ground almonds and cubed butter into a bowl and rub the mixture together with your fingers, until the butter is fully incorporated and the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.
[3] Stir in the egg and honey.
[4] Gather the mixture into your hands and form into a ball. Wrap it in cling film and put it in the fridge so it's easier to roll out later.
[5] Grate the zest of the orange and lemon into a pan (just the orange/yellow surface layers, not the white bits) and then squeeze in the juice of the orange.
[6] Add the other filling ingredients and cook on a low

heat, stirring regularly for about 10 minutes, until the liquid is absorbed and the fruit is plump and sticking together. Put it into a bowl to cool off.

[7] Line the baking tray by greasing the holes with butter and sprinkle with flour.

[8] Roll out the pastry to about 3mm thick between two sheets of cling film; it's easiest to divide the pastry in half, keeping one in the fridge whilst you roll out the other. Use the rim of a mug to cut out circles and place them into the holes of the baking tray.

[9] Fill each pie with the cooled filling.

[10] Roll out the leftover pastry to cut out smaller circles for the pie lids. Place on top of the pies and make 2 little slits in the lids with a knife to let the steam out.

[11] Cook for about 25-30 minutes until lightly browned, and serve with a festive mug of mulled wine.

[Patsy O'Neil]

Christmas Cupcakes with Snow Meringue Icing

Lighter than a proper Christmas cake, but just as fruity and alcohol-sodden. Don't be put off by the amount of ingredients, you can always swap the nuts or dried fruit for others you prefer - cherries, dates, and almonds all work well in this recipe.

Ingredients (for 12-15 cakes)

80g sultanas or raisins
120g candied peel
4 tbsp brandy (or other Christmassy booze - I used half ordinary brandy and half Kirsch)
4 medium eggs
100g dark brown sugar - preferably Muscovado
200g carrots - finely grated
2 unwaxed lemons - zest of

100g self raising flour
50g ground almonds
1tsp baking powder
2tsp ground ginger
1tsp ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
60g pecans, roughly chopped

For the meringue icing

170g icing sugar
2tbsp water (or 2tbsp of brandy)
1/4 tsp cream of tartar
White of 1 egg

Method

[1] Soak the sultanas and candied peel in the brandy, and set to one side.
[2] Preheat the oven to 180°C and line a muffin tray with paper cases.

[3] Whisk the eggs and sugar in a large mixing bowl for 3 minutes until light cappuccino coloured and fluffy. Add the finely grated carrot and lemon zest and whisk until combined.

[4] With a large metal spoon, fold in the flour, ground almonds, baking powder, ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg until you can no longer see any white specks of flour. Finally, add the soaked sultanas, candied peel and any brandy left in the bowl and mix.

[5] Spoon the mixture in to the cases, filling them four fifths of the way up. Place in the middle of the oven for 30 minutes.

[6] Once the cakes have cooled, it's time to make the Snow Meringue Icing.

Icing

[1] Place all of the ingredients in a metal bowl over a pan over boiling water, ensuring the bowl doesn't touch the bottom of the pan. Stir with a metal spoon for 2 minutes to dissolve the icing sugar.

[2] Remove from the heat and whisk (with an electric whisker) for 9 minutes. The mixture is ready to use when it's standing up like snow-covered mountain peaks.

[3] Pipe, or spoon the icing on to the cakes in your preferred style and adorn with silver balls, snowflakes or glitter.

[Natalie Sawyers]

Columns

Women and Social Media Trolls



Without debate, the world would probably be an easier but perhaps, a less exciting place. It's completely within someone's rights to disagree with your opinion, but what happens when the debate turns ugly? While social media can be a great thing, whether it's being used to catch up with old friends or keep up to date with the news, its increased use has given way to a darker side, whereby anonymous trolls are constantly on the lookout to attack anyone who dares voice an opinion.

These so-called trolls will attack anyone if it means that they can get a reaction, but the most high profile cases of online harassment in recent years have been against feminist campaigners, activists, and politicians. In 2013, whilst campaigning to have a woman featured on a banknote, activist and journalist Caroline Criado-Perez received an overwhelming number of threats, including one that told her to "fuck off and die". Another one read, "I will find you and rape your nice ass". For Caroline, the constant abuse understandably took over her life, yet Twitter refused to accept any responsibility for the malicious tweets. Later that year, two suspects appeared in court and were charged, but the effects of their words are unlikely to be forgotten in a hurry.

During the Labour leadership campaign earlier this year, trolls also attacked candidate Liz Kendall, with some suggesting that just because she isn't married with

children, she somehow wasn't fit to lead the Labour Party. Other trolls went as far as to call her the anti-Christ. Whilst Kendall shook off the abuse, refusing to drop out of the race, she still recognised that the abuse she received was nothing less than vitriolic and appalling. Some may argue that people in the public eye should expect some degree of scrutiny, but when scrutiny includes rape and death threats, why should we be so passive towards it?

As I said, trolls don't just attack people in the public eye; it's all about engaging with as many people as possible and seeing if they can incite a reaction. For example, in light of the terrorist attacks in Paris earlier this month, and after reading tweet upon tweet of hate directed against Muslims (because apparently it's now fair to punish everyone for the actions of a few?) I tweeted: "these terrorist attacks are not a platform for you to promote your racism, Islamophobia, and anti-refugee stance". What I thought was a fairly uncontroversial statement was quickly met not just with racism and Islamophobia (ironic), but also with a great deal of sexism directed towards me.

How dare I, a woman, have an opinion on current affairs and social issues? Surely I should be spending my time in the kitchen, or gossiping about boys with my friends as we sit and watch the latest rom-com? Joking aside, the messages I got were nothing short of terrifying and frankly demeaning. One tweet read: "I'd like to see you make that same speech standing in a refugee camp wearing a miniskirt. They like miniskirts". Another told me to "stop talking absolute nonsense little girl and open your eyes and ears". Whilst it was great that people stepped in and defended me, I couldn't help feeling that it was exactly what the trolls wanted; a bigger audience for their tweets, and potential future targets.

In the days following the attacks, I received around 50 tweets from people telling me that I was wrong, all containing at least a hint of sexism and a dash of racism for good measure. Perhaps the thing that annoyed me the most was my reaction to it all. Here I was, reading rape threats and other disgusting comments, yet it had no effect on me at all. If someone had walked up to me in the street, screaming in my face that I was a "silly little dopey student girlie" (one of the less eloquent tweets I received), perhaps I would be genuinely offended. Yet

when I was faced with the exact same thing on my laptop screen, all I could do was laugh. Maybe it was that I felt a little bit sorry for the people who choose to spend their days anonymously attacking strangers on the internet, but I also feel as though the normalisation of harassment against women played a role in the way I reacted.

One reason for my complete lack of emotion may have been that many of the trolls who replied to my tweets remained anonymous. It might sound stupid, but if I knew that they were real people, using real names, I might have been more inclined to challenge them on their views, hoping that there was a small chance that they might change their mind. But when there's no way of identifying them, and no way of knowing if they actually hold these opinions or whether they're just trying to get a reaction out of me, it seems kind of pointless to fight back.

Each time I asked the trolls why they were anonymous, I was met with responses like "Twitter affords anonymity". But when anonymity is being used to harass people, surely social media giants should be doing more to protect the people it affects?

Social media is by no means a true representation of our actual society, but it does go a long way to demonstrate the ways in which women are silenced on an everyday basis, and how it's become so normalised that we often fail to challenge it. Whether we're being catcalled in the street or shot down when we speak out on feminism (or any issue for that matter), sometimes the fear of what will happen if we fight back stops us from doing just that. One thing is for sure; no matter how often it happens, being harassed online is never normal. Fighting back, both in defence of ourselves and in defence of others, might not stop the harassment altogether, but at least it sends a clear message that the trolls are in the wrong, not us.

[Lauren Davies]

Mental Health A-Z: G is for Grief



I peek through the bedroom curtains to find a beautifully foggy morning. After suffering the longest awkward silence in a full lift, I shuffle outside and into the fog. With Chris Martin's heart-breaking voice running through my earphones and this morning's breakfast keeping me all warm and fuzzy, I begin my walk towards campus.

Autumn is my favourite time of year, and yet there is something deeply sad about it. Maybe it's the sight of the leaves withered and decayed on the pavements, lying about until they darken and rot. Or perhaps it's the sudden darkening of the sky, as if the late afternoon submits itself to the inevitable grasp of winter.

It may be a time for new beginnings, the building up towards celebrations and cosy evenings with blankets and hot chocolates, but it always reminds me of the people who are no longer here to see it.

This morning the falling leaves remind me of the cherry

blossom outside of my grandparents' house. It's funny how you can't get out the habit of calling it his house too, even though he's not around anymore.

I remember peering outside of the living room window, watching as the dusty, pink fragments drifted down like confetti. Sometimes, I'd wander down the road to the corner shop with Granddad, giggling as I skipped alongside him, in the pure bliss of spring sunshine and a blur of frizzy curls.

It feels strange, walking in a big city alone, twelve years later.

I walk past a shop window already displaying Christmas items and my mind drifts back to the hazy memory of my Auntie's party when I was ten, perhaps eleven. We're all sitting in a disorderly circle between the kitchen and the conservatory door, the smaller of us cross-legged on the carpet. In the spirit of family tradition, she hands us each a secret-Santa present; we all pretend we don't know it is from her and say our thanks to Father Christmas. Uncle Nen gets out a joke book, which he begins reading terrible lines from straight away. They make us all groan but we laugh anyway.

Christmas Eve was never quite the same after he'd gone.

I snap out of it to cross the road. Thoughts are often like this when I walk: fragmented and with a lingering sense of emotion. As though my mind hasn't quite finished ordering all the elements into their place.

The song changes and I am taken back to that one Easter when everything felt as if it was crashing down. I am back by that coast, walking for miles to try and get rid of the deadlines and thoughts and emotions screaming at me.

But strangely, I almost feel the urge to smile.

It's as though remembering all these things keeps me moving. Thinking of the times when I was at my worst empowers me; I have come so far and will keep getting better.

Recently losing Grandad, who was such a positive influence upon not only my life, but also my little sister's, has left a raw scar. Being here, walking towards campus, drifts my mind back to the funeral. Every single unknown relative who approached me knew more about my life than I seemed to; he had told everyone he knew how proud he was of all things I've done. Some days, I almost see him, and wish I could go back and thank him for all the kind things he has said to me. But now it's all becoming a blur, fading into the mass of unorganised things left floating around my head.

Approaching Cavendish Road my trail of thought gradually comes to an end.

And, as I am sure you have already done whilst reading this emotional ramble, it is at this point when I stand back and realise how twisted my brain actually is.

Perhaps I should stop reading so much depressing literature. If I'm not careful I will turn into a Sylvia Plath poem - a lovely but rather depressing form to remain in for too long.

Come to think of it, Coldplay's Ghost Stories wasn't the cheeriest move either. Not that I learn; it'll be the same album accompanying my thoughts on the misty walk home.

[Charlie Collett]

Gezellig: The Joy of Untranslatable



Gezellig (pronounced heh-ZELL-ig) is that feeling you get when you are cuddled up watching films with your favourite friends in bed, eating ice cream and feeling cosy. It's being at pre-drinks where the alcohol is flowing, you like everyone there, and you just feel comfortable. It's that feeling you get when you are so comfortable in your surroundings and company that you can feel the safety and warmth glowing inside of you. It's feeling like home.

It's a Dutch word that I learnt on my year abroad - and is probably the most common answer to "what is your

favourite Dutch word?" I think it probably is the favourite word, because it is more than a word, it's a feeling and it's a state of being that is so uniquely Dutch. It fits the culture so well - cycling home in the rain and arriving back at your house with huge windows looking into your living room, having blankets on outside chairs in every bar all-through winter, and that once you've made your place in their heart you'll stay there forever.

I didn't learn much Dutch at all - not for lack of trying - but gezellig is one of those that has stuck with me. It has also made me realise the true triumphs of multilingualism and multiculturalism.

By learning other languages and experiencing other cultures, not only do we enrich our communities and experience so much more, but we also see so much more beauty in our own lives.

Whether you agree with the Whorfian hypothesis, that language can dictate thought and cognitive function, or not - there is something to be said for finally being able to acknowledge and recognise that feeling. Previously I would have just felt content, or cosy, or comfortable - using words that just didn't quite fit and that didn't quite encapsulate everything. Being able to put your finger on it and label that sensation or that moment allows you to appreciate it and really convey what you are feeling.

The power of language is so amazing and so beautiful - and all the untranslatable words to me are the most beautiful. I guess partially it's in the mystery, but also its about seeing what is valued in a community or country, and the fact that each culture differs, even just slightly.

To fully experience all that the world and existence has to offer we need a mix of cultures, and languages and to learn from each other. We need to be taught these words and feelings so we can see the beauty in our own lives: so we can label and experience the full beauty of buying a book and leaving it unread and stacked up with other books (Japanese: Tsundoku aka my hobby). Experience the whole frustration of waiting for someone to turn up (Inuit: Iktsuarpok). So you can bathe in the pleasure from other people's misfortune (German: Schadenfreude).

But most of all, so you can look around a room of people and think "this is so... gezellig!"

Dictionaries might try and translate it to cosiness, but the Dutch know it is so much more.

[Emma Healey]

Views

With the UK extending air strikes to Syria, debate still rages. *The Gryphon* asks: Should the UK be launching airstrikes in Syria?

Yes



Sam Robinson

The rise of Islamic State's brutal caliphate has sent shockwaves across the world in the last couple of years. The international community is rightly united in condemning IS and its destructive sadism, but a huge question remains over whether we should be intervening militarily in Syria with airstrikes.

It's clear that some sort of intervention is needed; the sheer brutality of the IS regime, their explicit goal of trying to eliminate the moderate "grey area" to split the world into two warring camps and the fact that to them violence seems to be not just a means but something to celebrate in itself all make it clear that IS cannot be negotiated with. To expect a political, non-military settlement from such zealous fanatics as IS is naive.

The unyielding viciousness of IS also makes Syria in 2015 different from Iraq in

2003. The justification for Iraq was clearly based on lies and misdirection, but now there is at least room for discussion. IS is barbaric and pose a threat to us which they make no effort to hide. There is a clear target and compelling reasons for engaging this target; allusions to Iraq, although understandable, don't do justice to the key differences between then and now.

While airstrikes cannot defeat IS on their own, they have proven effective in aiding ground forces such as Kurdish troops in bids to recapture strategically important cities. Indeed, Kurdish troops themselves have repeatedly said that airstrikes have significantly aided their campaigns, allowing them to carry out operations with smaller losses and quicker results. And though IS may have grown wise as to the best ways

of avoiding airstrikes, that doesn't change the fact that a sustained airstrike campaign limits their mobility, keeps them pinned down and grinds away at their morale – important assets that shouldn't be overlooked.

Speaking of morale, part of the appeal of IS lies in its success. Fighters are drawn in by the image of a glorified, righteous war against non-believers, one in which IS makes sweeping gains against numerically or technologically superior armies. Bursting this bubble by keeping up the military pressure will tarnish the all-conquering image IS would very much like to promulgate. There's no better example of this than the siege of Kobani in summer 2014, where airstrikes repeatedly blunted IS' attacks against the Kurdish defenders and played a crucial role in denying IS a key symbolic victory.

Defeat at Kobani showed the world IS could be beaten, and this stalled their momentum for some time.

The government's plans need much work, especially with regard to the faith they (mis)place in 70,000 "moderates" in Syria. As such, perhaps boots on the ground, while regrettable, will be necessary. But for the time being, while the international coalition decides on its next steps, military pressure against IS needs to be sustained. This problem will not simply go away with a diplomatic or political solution – we are talking about an organisation that has made abundantly clear that it believes there is no room for negotiation. Airstrikes are a terrible thing to resort to, and it would of course be much better if we didn't have to use them. But sadly we don't live in that kind of world yet.

No

Lawrence Cwerner

Using airstrikes in Syria will "make us safer" according to David Cameron. We've heard it all before. The now infamous 'WMD' claim in 2003 was the same, a pathetic attempt to justify an illegal war. The idea that dropping bombs on civilian areas will bring peace and stability to the region and the world as a whole is as laughable as it dangerous. A war is exactly what ISIS want, and it is of the upmost importance that we don't give it to them.

Too often people assume that dropping bombs in Syria will only kill members of the caliphate. We forget the thousands of civilians living in the areas controlled by the terrorists, half a million in Raqqa alone, civilians who would be killed by airstrikes. According to the Syrian

Observatory for Human Rights, Russian airstrikes have killed 485 civilians in the past two months, including 117 children. This loss of innocent life is the reality of airstrikes, and if the UK were to partake in bombing Syria then we would be contributing to the death toll.

It is true that terrorists are also killed in these strikes, but if we use this as an excuse to take innocent lives can we claim to be any better than these terrorists? Furthermore, western airstrikes play into the hands of ISIS, as they are a powerful tool in their radicalisation process. 21st century western intervention in the Middle East has not brought peace to the region, but only made it more unstable. Invading Iraq has dramatically increased resentment towards the UK, and was a

major factor in the 7/7 bombings, the last major terrorist attack on British soil. UK airstrikes would only exacerbate the situation, and almost definitely increase the likelihood of further terror attacks.

ISIS want a war. They want a reaction from governments. They aim to create fear, and a retaliation of airstrikes would only show that they are succeeding in their aim. Violence ought to be a last resort, and that the UK has taken such drastic action shows we are frightened and unsure. Bombing Syria would further isolate them from the international stage, and therefore make it easier for ISIS to expand into more areas of the country.

The way to defeat ISIS is to bankrupt them financially, not to stoop to their lows and kill innocent civilians. If the UK

were serious about stopping ISIS, then we would stop trading with the countries that supply them with arms and money, such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey. We should cut ties with and place sanctions on these countries. If the UK were to take this leading role, other countries may follow suit and force nations like Saudi Arabia and Turkey to rethink their actions.

UK airstrikes on Syria will prove a terrible decision, both on an ethical and a practical level. The main beneficiaries of such a strategy are ISIS themselves and the weapons companies who manufacture the planes and bombs, and not the people of the UK or Syria.

NI's Abortion Ruling: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back for Reproductive Rights



Emma Healey
BA Politics

Whilst in most of the UK, people have been able to access free abortion under the NHS since 1967, those who reside in Northern Ireland are still, even in 2015, not afforded this basic right. The way the law currently stands even those who fall pregnant due to rape or incest are unable to have an abortion. It is unacceptable that someone should be expected to carry their rapist's child against their own wishes. It is unacceptable that someone should be forced to carry a foetus to full-term that cannot survive outside the womb. It is unacceptable that Northern Irish women reside in the UK but are not afforded the same rights as all other citizens of this country.

It is a relief, therefore, that the High Court in Belfast has recognised that this excessively restrictive abortion legislation breaches the European Convention on Human Rights. However, this still does not mean that Northern Irish people will have the same rights to abortion as English, Welsh, and Scottish residents. It is only suggested to extend this to rape, incest, and fatal foetal abnormalities. This is not nearly enough. Furthermore, this ruling by the High Court does not even mean that the government actually have to enact a change to the law. There is a deep divide in the Stormont Executive over abortion and this ruling is

“Northern Irish women are not even entitled to free abortions on the NHS. Not only can they not access abortions in their home towns or even home country, they have to fund their own travel to places where they can legally terminate a pregnancy”

likely to be appealed.

There also seems to be no movement on the fact that Northern Irish women are not even entitled to free abortions on the NHS. Not only can they not access abortions in their home towns or even home

country, they have to fund their own travel to places where they can legally terminate a pregnancy and even pay for their own abortions. Every year nearly 5000 women travel from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to the UK to get an abortion. In addition to the cost of flights, they have to pay between £400 and £2000 at private clinics depending on how many weeks pregnant they are. The costs of private abortions are rising which is deterring many women. This excludes many vulnerable people, such as those who live in poverty or with limited disposable income. The difficulty in accessing abortions can lead to people taking risks on their lives. Whilst the association of abortion with death is one that is foreign to many of us, before the 1967 Abortion Act it was a very real risk for those facing an unwanted pregnancy and remains a risk for so many women around the world. One frightening recent example is Savita Halappanavar who died in Ireland in 2012 after being refused an abortion despite evidence of having septicaemia.

It is understandable that in a highly religious country such as Northern Ireland that there may be a large proportion of people who oppose abortion. However, it is not fair that one person's religion has the right to limit other people's lives. Religion ought to have no place in Politics – particularly when it acts to restrict individual freedom. If someone's religion opposes abortion, they can make the decision not to have one. They should not be given the ability to stop others from having that choice. It is an infringement on their human rights, and their rights as UK citizens, but it is also part of a worrying wider trend towards further restrictions on reproductive rights.

The UK's current Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt favours reducing the final date at which a termination can be obtained from 24 weeks to 12, and whilst this doesn't signify any imminent change in policy – it is concerning that many of the party of government do favour further restrictions on a person's right to choose. David Cameron, himself, has suggested lowering the cut-off point by a month. Whilst 4 weeks may not seem like much, this could make a huge difference to so many people's lives. However, the most insidious

development regarding abortion in the UK is the increase in protestors outside abortion clinics. One London clinic has already been forced to close due to protests and pressure from anti-abortion campaigners, and another is under serious threat. The right to protest is of course hugely important, but what is more vital and essential is the right to live free from fear. These protesters actions should be recognised for what they are – bullying and intimidation. Having an abortion is a decision that is not taken lightly and it is not an easy way out – it can be emotionally, and physically, traumatic. What somebody who is likely scared and upset needs is someone to support them, not to have to walk past people shouting insults about how they are murderers. In the US, this anti-abortion sentiment has gone one step further. We have recently seen a politically and religiously motivated shooting at an abortion clinic in Colorado Springs. This isn't a one-off – abortion clinics experience regular attacks, albeit often arson and other kinds of attack rather than gun crime. Additionally, between the 2011 and 2014, the US passed more legislation restricting abortion than in the entire decade prior. It seems like for every step forward, there are two steps being taken backwards.

“If someone's religion opposes abortion, they can make the decision not to have one. They should not be given the ability to stop others from having that choice.”

It's a common joke that if cisgender men needed abortions they would be available on every corner. But for as long as men, and especially white, cisgender, and middle-class men, take up the majority of seats in our legislatures it seems unlikely that we will ever see a world where women's services are seen to be equal to their male counterparts. We exist in a society where tampons are expected to pay for rape crisis centres, what next abortions paid for by mooncups?

2024: The Olympics Nobody Wants to Host

Oscar Ponton

The recent decision by the residents of Hamburg to vote 'No' in a referendum to host the Olympic Games is one which follows a growing trend, that of cities rejecting the games in favour of a more useful and honest approach to the spending of public funds. With just over half of the population (51.6%) voting against hosting the games, it could be argued that many did in fact want the games for the benefits that hosting entails, such as improved infrastructure, increased tourism and a national sporting legacy. Yet the proposed €11.6 billion to be spent was seen by many as wasteful in a time when Germany has been hit hard economically by the current refugee crisis, and equally vulnerable following the high profile attacks in Paris last month. Add to this is a growing suspicion of worldwide sporting organisations (FIFA for one) and numerous examples of the actually harmful economics of hosting the games and it becomes little wonder that so few nations remain willing to continue

to throw their hat in with the farce that is the Olympic merry go round.

The main fear in hosting the games revolves around the misuse of public

“As an outsider[...] it would appear odd to only see this generation calling for the truth. Yet, considering that neither the dictatorship nor the civil war is taught in school, it is hardly a surprise

funds, a fear that is often justified, as the proposed spending of Olympic committees regularly exceed their predictions due to the costliness of hosting such an event. An example of this can be found rather worryingly close to home, as the 'Olympic Legacy' and foot bill of London 2012 continues to drag on into taxpayers pockets. Look no further than the recent scandals surrounding the transfer of the Olympic stadium into West Ham's ownership, a transfer which

has seen the majority of the costs being provided for by the government rather than that of the club. These ongoing costs are exactly what Hamburg sought to avoid, and quite rightly considering that the London Olympics was originally slated to cost just £2.9 billion and has ended up costing over £8.92 billion in public funds. And what of the renovated infrastructure of the East End? Yes it's been given a flashy makeover, but it has also paved the way for the ongoing gentrification of London's cheapest borough which is becoming a growing problem in pricing out local residents.

So why bring the Olympic Games to your city? It didn't exactly do wonders for Greece in 2004, practically creating an economic meltdown due to misspending of funds, whilst many believe other 2024 candidate cities like Rome would sink Italy into an even deeper recession if they were to actually host. In fact, the economic disadvantages of hosting have become so profound that democratic nations have become increasingly wary, allowing oppressive regimes like Russia, China

and Azerbaijan to host various games in attempts to improve their global image. The scandals surrounding Sochi 2012 and Beijing 2008 have been well documented, whilst the decision to grant the 2015 European games to a despotic nation of human rights abuses like Azerbaijan has been vehemently criticised. And then there's the shambles that is the Qatar World Cup, where 1,200 workers have already died in its construction (that's 62 per game) and the problem becomes not just about economics, but a moral question of ethics. If a city's populace like Hamburg's decides not to host the games then, it may miss out on a certain sporting grandeur, but what is that when compared to the questionable economic value of such an event and the dubious moral fibre of sporting organizations worldwide.

Some Faith With Your Force? No, Thank You.

Liam Kerrigan
BA Philosophy

When you go to the cinema, you can expect a number of things: overpriced popcorn bearing only a vague hint of flavour; floors that you struggle to peel yourself away from after each step; adverts that seem to last forever and end up making you want to boycott whatever they advertised; a group of people who have somehow fallen under the misapprehension that the rest of the audience wish to hear their running commentary; but most of all, you expect to spend two hours without thinking, just watching.

However, the Church of England think that in this time we ought to reflect upon

our faith and the action of prayer, so they paid for a dreary advert to precede the new Star Wars film in which the Lord's Prayer is read line-by-line by a number of

“Now I am a staunch defender of free speech [...] But for the C of E to claim this is an issue of 'free speech' is disingenuous at best.

different groups and individuals.

Unfortunately for the C of E, the UK's three leading cinema chains have refused to show the adverts on the grounds that it might risk 'upsetting, or offending, audiences'. Since this announcement, the Church of England have said that this 'bewildering' decision is an affront to free speech and have emphasised the fact that faith and prayer plays a part in the lives of millions of people in the UK.

Now, I am a staunch defender of free speech - I've defended it previously in this paper. I think our Union's "no platform policy" is noxious, I think government strategies like Prevent suppress

free speech and will ultimately lead to an increase in extremist activity, and I think the idea that this advert should be banned because it could be "offensive" is ridiculous. But for the C of E to claim this is an issue of 'free speech' is disingenuous at best. As a post on Digital Cinema Media Limited's website makes clear, this is about keeping a 'neutral stance' in religious and political matters. The only way to do this is to allow for absolutely no political and religious advertising, or to allow for all religious and political advertising. Were the Church of England to have their way, following their advert a group of us atheists could screen an advert that states: "Wasn't all that prayer stuff a load of rubbish? There's no god." This could then be followed by an advert from a group of Muslims, then an advert for the Liberal Democrats, then the BNP, then Labour, etc.

It seems quite obvious to me what the more sensible of these two choices is, and it is this that the C of E are ultimately objecting to. One can't help but think that were it, for example, a Muslim organisation that had paid for an advert, the Church of England might not have



[Image: Marcin Mazur]

been quite so supportive, nor would the condemnation have been quite so loud had it been banned.

The Church of England has orchestrated a campaign of manipulation and misrepresentation, but it is easily seen through even from far, far away.



[Image: The Guardian]

Gene Therapy - A New Step in Cancer Treatment



[Image: Gernot Krautberger]

Amy Cleaver

Layla Richards, an 18 month old girl from London, was diagnosed with a highly aggressive form of leukaemia at just 14 weeks old. Now, thanks to the doctors at Great Ormond Street Hospital, after only a matter of months she is well on her way to recovery following pioneering treatment. Could her 'near miracle' recovery pave the way for a wave of revolutionary cancer treatments?

Layla's Story

Layla was born, seemingly, a healthy 7lbs 10oz baby girl; however, at 14 weeks Layla's parents began to notice something was wrong. Her heart rate began to dramatically increase, she started to cry inconsolably, and would no longer feed. After initially believing it be a stomach bug, Layla was eventually diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia – a common childhood cancer.

Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia affects 1 in every 2000 children, with symptoms typically appearing in those aged between two and five years old. Normally, a healthy person's bone marrow produces stem cells, which develop into red blood cells and platelets before being released into the blood. However, Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia causes the bone marrow to release immature white blood cells known as blast cells, resulting in a reduced number of red blood cells prompting symptoms of anaemia. The outlook for children who develop Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia is usually good;

nearly all of those diagnosed go into remission and around 85% can be completely cured. But Layla was found to have an extremely aggressive form of the leukaemia and, after several rounds of chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant, the cancer returned.

On her first birthday doctors told Layla's parents they had run out of options, suggesting palliative end of life care. Professor Paul Veys, director of the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit at Great Ormond Street Hospital, said, "In Layla there was a lot of leukaemia still bubbling in her system. Really at that point the situation was hopeless. Normally we say the family should pursue a palliative care option because, normally, what you try fails and you lose time in hospital." Despite this, Layla's parents refused to give up on their daughter. "We didn't want to accept palliative care and give up on our daughter, so we asked the doctors to try anything – even if it hadn't been tried before" explained Miss Foley, Layla's mother.

The Last Hope - Gene Therapy

The medical staff at Great Ormond Street hospital, along with the biotech company Cellectics, gained ethical permission to try a highly experimental therapy which had only been trialled in mice. The proposed treatment used advanced gene editing to develop designer immune cells. Genes are first added to donor immune cells, effectively causing them to seek out, and kill, leukaemia cells. Next – using a cutting edge technique called TALENs – the specialists switch off two genes; one to ensure that the donor cells are not rejected by Layla's body and another to ensure the new

immune cells are not wiped out by the powerful drugs, essential to Layla's recovery. Layla was injected with a 1ml infusion of the genetically engineered cells, in a procedure that took only 10 minutes.

Initially it was unclear if the treatment had worked, but within weeks she developed a rash; a clear sign that the desired response was occurring and she was beginning to fight off the Leukaemia. After three months the doctors conducted a bone marrow transplant which helped restore her immune system. Today, Layla is happily at home with her parents and sister, alive and cancer free.

A New Step in Cancer Treatment?

Layla's reaction to the revolutionary treatment ranks as one of the most remarkable things Dr Paul Veys has witnessed during his career – "We're in a wonderful place compared to where we were five months ago, but that doesn't mean cure. The only way we will find out if this is a cure is by waiting that one or two years, but even having got this far from where we were is a major, major step." This is the first time that TALENs has been used for cell editing and only the second time in the world that gene editing cells have been used. The progression of gene editing technology has been phenomenal, although much more research is needed to prove that this treatment is safe and effective. Hopefully this success story will aid in the development of further treatments for a range of cancers and inherited disorders, becoming a lifesaving cure for more children like Layla.

Do You Want To Build a Snowflake?



[Image: Susan Lucc]i

Sandy Kelly

It's usually cold and rainy in Leeds, but imagine, just for a second, that you're somewhere snowy; the cold bites at your cheeks and the snow is floating down. You hold out your hands and a snowflake lands on the end of your finger. Looking closely at this snowflake, you see a myriad of complexity and clarity.

Gradually, the snowflake melts into water. But no fear, as the next one that lands on your finger will be as unique as the last and all those that follow.

Such beauty is a mainstay on our Christmas trees, lights and in our minds when we think about Christmas. An innumerable amount of snowflakes fall every year, and you'd be very hard pressed to ever find a clone. How does nature create such small and intricate objects?

The key is in the chemical forces, determining the angles of each molecular bond and the environment in which the snowflake is formed. Snowflake growth is very sensitive to temperature and humidity and influences how one forms and grows.

Snowflakes are self-assembled when water vapour in the air condenses directly into solid ice, around ten kilometres above us. As more vapour condenses on this snow crystal, the nucleus grows by deposition on the surface. Between -2.8°C and 0°C , the crystals form six-sided plates (six-sided due to the way hydrogen atoms bond to an oxygen atom to create water). Below this range, needles form. Even cooler temperatures yield hollow columns, and even cooler temperatures than that produce plates and columns again. Already, we can see the reasons for this intricate object. As a snowflake falls, it experiences various micro-environments and even the smallest change in temperature and humidity can affect its growth, with each "arm" growing independently. Drier air usually encourages the growth of flat surfaces and a higher humidity encourages growth at the tips, edges and corners, with a higher amount of water vapour leading to a faster-growing and more intricate crystal.

It was once assumed that no two snowflakes are identical, but the main question pre-

vails: who would know? There are claims of discovery but given the relatively minuscule amount of snowflakes studied, it would take rather a long time and rather a lot of snowflakes to disprove the assumption. The number of ways you can possibly create a snowflake is vast and the various parameter ranges are just as vast but never say never.

In this day and age, there are still question marks regarding precisely how these factors affect snowflake growth, but this hasn't stopped snowflakes being a symbol of a White Christmas for most of Europe and North America. As well as this, we use the snowflake to represent cold and wintery conditions, snow tyres are labelled with a snowflake and the symbol for the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City was a snowflake.

So there you have it. Next time you find yourself in the middle of snowfall take a second to take out your finger, catch a snowflake, and gaze at its complexity; the product of a complex process, a symbol of Christmas and a triumph of nature.

Stocking Fillers



In no particular order, *The Gryphon* celebrates some of the coolest tech releases this year. These items may be expensive but put them on your Christmas lists anyway and if you're on your best behaviour Santa may just get them for you.

2015 Macbook:

Though the new Macbook has some questionable design choices; I'm looking at you 480p webcam, it's hard to deny that the ultra-thin notebook is a marvel of technology. Sporting Intel's newest Broadwell based Core M processor; the laptop is completely passively cooled, quite an achievement considering the performance it packs under the hood despite the processor's low power design. In their quest to create one of the thinnest notebooks, Apple decided that traditional batteries weren't good enough for them. They instead broke the battery down into smaller cells to allow it to fit into the tiny chassis. The traditional switches on the keyboard had to go too, though I was sceptical at first the new scissor switch design is a joy to type on. The last of the new additions is the USB type-C charging and data transfer port, though Apple should have included more than one port, it's a strong statement on the future.

Remote Control Drones:

Remote control planes and helicopters have been replaced by drones. They are easy to fly, with either a specialised remote or with Bluetooth linked to a smart device. There's just something cool about flying a drone around. Just don't spy in people's windows. Many people have been, strapping GoPros to them to take some fantastic high altitude landscapes. If you get the chance to fly one, don't pass it up.

Moto 360 2:

Smartwatches have been around for a while now and though the Moto 360 2 isn't the biggest release of this year, I feel it's certainly the most complete feeling and pleasant to use. Android Wear is intuitive and welcoming and links easily to your smartphone, whether it's Android or Apple. The Apple Watch could have been here if it didn't feel like a tech demo and didn't cost upwards of £300. Motorola have managed what Apple could not; the 360 has an 'always on' watch face, good battery and snappy performance. Perhaps the next iteration of the Apple will succeed but their design philosophy will have to change.

Hoverboards:

Segways are so last year, apparently. Gyroscopically controlled personal transport devices had a down-sizing this year in a fantastic Back to the Future style. There are a few variants, one wheeled or two but their purpose remains the same; letting you get around with a smug look on your face. That's what that one guy that wheeled past me at the Library has led me to believe. Full recommendation from me, give them a go if you get the chance.

We're in the business of **IDEAS**. We are a collective of students, artists, writers, designers, illustrators, photographers, all fueled by our desire to collaborate. We **ARE** creatives dreaming BIG. We are creatives dreaming together. Ideas are our currency. Imagination is critical. So is coffee. The best work is always ahead of us. We are persistent. We are relentless. We are all painters and performers working on screens big and small. Our **BEST** projects are born from what we learn as we fall, as we grow, as we create, collectively. We are **SHARED** learning. We work hard and party often. Creative comrades, come together.

We are the Leeds Creative Common.



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Across The Pond With Mac White

Mac White
North American Sports

Yet another month of sports have passed for University of Leeds students. Are you feeling the need to impress your extended family with some knowledge at the dinner table this holiday season? The Gryphon has you covered; here's the North American sports round up!

But first, a brief recap of some of the topics mentioned in last month's article.

In the MLB, the Kansas City Royals won their first World Series title in 29 years, defeating the New York Mets in five games. The two teams will renew hostilities next April when they become the first ever World Series opponents to meet on Opening Day.

In the NHL, 18-year-old phenomenon Connor McDavid has been sidelined since 3 November with a broken left clavicle. Playing against players who are twice his age McDavid is looked at as ice hockey's next star. He's expected to be out for up four months.

Finally, while there were six undefeated teams in the NFL a month ago, but only one remains without a loss. Led by their brazen and superbly talented quarterback Cam Newton, the 11-0 Carolina Panthers have shocked the rest of the league and don't appear to be slowing down.

However, the Panthers' undefeated streak is minuscule compared to the run that the Golden State Warriors have been on. The Warriors, last year's National Basketball League (NBA) champions, are currently 19-0, which is the longest winning streak to begin a season.

Led by guard and last year's league MVP Steph Curry's 31 points-per-game, the Warriors have utterly dominated opponents. Their excellent passing and clutch shooting has often made a mockery of their competition.

They do have a long way to go before setting the all-time NBA win streak record of 33, which at the current rate would be broken on 4 January. If any team is to challenge the 71-72 Los Angeles Lakers, a team with four Hall of Famers, it looks to be this year's Warriors. They are that good.

On the other end of the basketball spectrum is the Philadelphia 76ers. The rebuilding 76ers began their season 0-18. Going back to last season, Philadelphia had lost 28 straight games, an NBA record.

However, on 1 December, Philadelphia finally won their first game of the 15-16 season. The victory came against a Lakers squad also struggling mightily in the early goings.

Aging Lakers' star Kobe Bryant had announced before the game that he'd be retiring at the end of the year. The thirty-seven-year-old is a five-time NBA champion and 17-time All-Star who is a slam-dunk pick to be in the Hall of Fame.

Peyton Manning is another aging star that hasn't seen his typical success this season. On 15 November, against the Kansas City Chiefs, the quarterback Manning became the NFL's career passing-yards leader, surpassing Brett Favre's 71,838.

Despite his record-setting day, Manning completed

only five of 20 passes and had four throws intercepted by the defence. He was pulled from the game in the second half and hasn't seen any game action since.

The 39-year-old is a five-time NFL MVP and 14-time Pro Bowl selection who also has the record for most touchdown passes thrown at 539. He is owed \$19 million in salary next year.

Finally, the MLB off-season has concluded, leaving teams scrambling to fill up their rosters with what they believe to be the missing pieces. The baseball free agent market is renowned for its massive contracts.

Recently, former Washington Nationals pitcher Jordan Zimmermann signed a five-year \$110 million dollar contract with the Detroit Tigers. However, this is not even the biggest contract signed this past week.

On 1 December, the Boston Red Sox inked pitcher David Price to a seven-year \$217 million dollar deal. To put the deal into perspective, Price will make \$84,931.50 a day, every day for the next seven years, an amount that is more than twice the yearly American minimum wage salary.

According to ESPN.com's Jerry Crasnick, another free agent pitcher, Zack Greinke, is said to be looking for a five to six-year deal where the average yearly salary would be above Price's. This would equate to around \$32 million a year.

So there you have it, a cheat-sheet on the wide spectrum of the overseas sporting world guaranteed to astonish anyone this holiday. Who says school never teaches you anything? See you in 2016!

Should Jack Grealish Have Been Dropped?

Yes

Fiona Tomas

No

Nancy Gillen

There aren't many worse ways to celebrate a 4-0 defeat than by going on a boozy night out with friends who inhale 'hippy crack' – more commonly known as laughing gas – only for it to be filmed and strewn across social media the next morning. That's all before being dropped from the first-team squad by your manager. This is the latest chapter in the ever-deteriorating storyline of Jack Grealish's footballing career, which underlines his reputation off the pitch rather than on it.

After playing a key role in helping his side survive the relegation drop last season, Grealish was snapped on holiday in Marbella with a £1,000 bottle of Ciroc Vodka. This was only days after he was photographed unconscious – allegedly intoxicated by alcohol – on a street in Tenerife with packets of cigarettes next to him.

When sports professionals are shown up in sticky situations such as this, fans can be quick to show their support. Footballers, they say, like everyone else, have the right to socialise freely when not on the pitch, to drink, enjoy themselves. They, like us, are human and the pressures to consistently perform and train to a high standard can evidently

take their toll.

It's clear that the 20-year old youngster badly needs a lesson in self-discipline. Here is a young lad who is degrading his prospects of becoming one of England's finest domestic players. He made a name for himself at Villa as the most talented player to emerge from Villa's academy in recent years. He also played a pivotal role in his side's successful battle against relegation last season, which thrust him into the middle of a tug-of-war affair between England and the Republic of Ireland. Maybe he refused Martin O'Neill's offer to play for the RoI because he's scared of his right-hand man Roy Keane, who I imagine would think of a much harsher punishment for Grealish's behaviour. It's obvious that Rémi Garde has had enough and his decision in demoting the youngster was the right thing to do.

For now, Grealish belongs where he is – playing alongside what are most probably more mature and capable twenty-year-olds at Villa. He has a lot more learning to do before earning the trust of his manager and fellow players, and most importantly, the chance to play on the big stage.

There can be no denying that Jack Grealish's behaviour after Aston Villa's 4-0 loss against Everton was disgraceful. After a poor performance on the pitch, Grealish did not travel back to Birmingham with the team, but went to Manchester to go out partying.

After similar incidents over summer, manager Rémi Garde has seen it fit to drop Grealish to the U-21s side, with no foreseeable return. Although a punishment needs to be undertaken, I see dropping Grealish as detrimental both to his development as a player and to Aston Villa's chances of avoiding relegation.

Grealish burst onto the scene in the 2014-15 season, starting his first Premier League game in April in which he played excellently. His stand out performance then came in the FA Cup semi-final against Liverpool, with Grealish having a hand in both Villa goals, showing that he could perform at the highest level. Therefore, despite his off-field behaviour, I feel that Grealish needs to continue playing at a level where he can improve and develop as a player. His talent is already notable

for someone so young, and games against the top teams of English football will help him hone his skills to become a great footballer. Dropping him down to the U-21 side, a level which he has already grown out of, may stunt his progress.

In addition, Aston Villa are currently in a position where they cannot afford to lose good players. They currently lie at the bottom of the table with only one win, five points off 19th place Newcastle. Things are not looking good. I will admit that Grealish's performances have not been up to scratch this season, but he could still be the instrumental player to turn this all around. The team need players of his quality to get out of the relegation zone. Instead Grealish is lingering in the U-21 side.

Grealish has to learn his lesson somehow, but I don't think his demotion is doing anyone any favours. Villa need to focus on turning their season around first before worrying about their player's off-field behaviour.

First 'Day-night' Test is a Roaring Success

Matthew Norman
Cricket

Australia have made cricketing history once again in the past week by winning the first ever day-night test match against local rivals New Zealand in Adelaide. In what turned out to be a low-scoring affair, the pivotal talking point wasn't regarding the light, the change of conditions or even the new pink ball, but a controversial decision regarding another relatively new advance in the sport, the Decision Review System (DRS).

After winning the toss and deciding to bat, Brendon McCullum's New Zealand struggled to make any significant scores as opener Tom Latham was the only player to make a 50. Australia took control as they bowled their guests out for a poor 202. However, New Zealand looked to be fighting back valiantly as they reduced Australia to 116-8, despite a 50 from Captain Steve Smith. At this moment, spinner Nathan Lyon joined Peter Nevill at the crease, knowing their side was in serious trouble already. The crucial moment occurred as a Mitchell Santner delivery appeared to find Lyon's edge and found its way to Ross Taylor at slip. The decision was given not out but instantly reviewed by McCullum using DRS, which indicated a faint mark on Hot Spot on Lyon's bat as the ball passed. Lyon, seemingly accepting his fate, started to walk off the field before the 3rd umpire, Nigel Llong, decided the evidence was inconclusive and gave him not out. Lyon and Nevill went on to share a partnership of 74 as Australia forced their way back in to the match, eventually bowled out for 224.

New Zealand once again struggled in their second innings as Josh Hazlewood got the ball to swing and seam to take career-best figures of 6-70 as they were dismissed for 208, setting the hosts 187 to win. Despite



[Image: Ryan Rycroft]

the low target, Trent Boult gave the Black Caps hope as he responded with a 5- himself. However, it proved to be in vain as Australia reached the target with three

wickets to spare and take the series 2-0.

It is extremely noteworthy that the major talking point of this momentous match in the history of cricket is regarding a system that has been used since 2009. The proposal of day-night tests had been divisive amongst many past cricketing greats before the match, with the likes of Kevin Pietersen, Sachin Tendulkar and Michael Holding all openly opposing the idea but Martin Crowe, Geoffrey Boycott and others backing it. It has to be said, albeit initially, that the pink ball and day-night experiment was a success. Concerns surrounding the durability of the pink ball and its retention of colour disappeared early on day one whilst the crowd attendance averaged over 40,000 for each day, an incredible attendance for test cricket even in cricket-adoring Adelaide. The match also saw vast increases in TV audiences and all the players involved seemed more than happy with how the match progressed with McCullum stating that day-night cricket is "a great concept" and "[it's] here to stay".

For every new advancement or innovation in a sport surrounded by tradition and heritage, there will always be cynics and sceptics. But for a sport that has been playing day-night one day internationals since 1971, and after the early successes of this match, there are definitely, and rightly so, calls for more day-night test matches to be played in the near future.

Shot in The Arm for British Sport

Fiona Tomas
British Sport



[Image: Stu Forster]

The Chancellor's Autumn Statement may have revealed future hardship for students and recent graduates, but for sport throughout Britain, it's a different story. UK Sport, the UK's largest sports charity which distributes public money to elite sport, has been granted a 29% increase in funding.

This is good news – and somewhat unexpected – for the sports organisation, who feared budget cuts would be imminent.

It also means that, when combined with funding from the National Lottery, UK Sport will be set to receive

around £148 million over the next five years in the run-up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and confirms David Cameron's commitment in continuing to build on the legacy left by the 2012 London Games, and confidence in UK Sport's strategy to deliver results at an elite level.

In particular, Chancellor George Osborne also added that extra support would be underway in surprise bids to host two major sporting events – the Road World Cycling Championships and the 2021 Rugby League World Cup in Manchester.

Better still, the likes of Lord Coe – in his first year as head of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) – will welcome the extra £400,000 that will be added to the UK Anti-Doping budget in the increasingly difficult fight against drug cheating in sport.

At a time when austerity is under such scrutiny, these budget announcements are a positive sign for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. For UK Sport, Sport England and the UK Anti-Doping, it is also a huge relief. The Chancellor's reserved funding for these areas is a sign that sport is still valued by the government and recognised as a fundamental and ever-important part of British culture which must be financially supported in order to produce generational role models, economic gain and an increased national pride. When George Osborne declared last week "we're going for gold in Rio and Tokyo", perhaps he really meant it.

His words echo UK Sport's ambition in bettering the medal tally that was achieved at London 2012 – which would mean winning 66 Olympic medals and 121 at the Paralympics, although the organisation has yet to

officially publicise their realistic medal objectives for the Games.

However, with the pros inevitably come the cons. The 24% cut to local government grant funding will leave community sport, which depends on local authorities, in a more precarious position. In the long-term, this is likely to lead to a drop in participation rates and rising obesity levels within more economically disadvantaged areas, with reduced spending on local leisure facilities.

Round-up

- 29 per cent increase for UK Sport funding
- 5 per cent cut for Department of Culture, Media and Sport
- 20 per cent cut for the same department's administrative spending
- Government backed bids for Cycling World Road Championships and 2021 Rugby League World Cup
- Income-tax exemption for non-UK athletes ends in 2016 (except during World Athletics Championships)
- No change in UK Anti-Doping funding
- No change in grassroots sport funding

Muay Thai to Shine

Nancy Gillen
Muay Thai
Art of War 2015

Leeds Muay Thai society have an exciting weekend coming up. On Saturday 5 December, a number of fighters from the University of Leeds are fighting in the Art of War 2015, hosted by the University of Nottingham. Some members have been fighting for years and have plenty of bouting experience, while others have only just started this year. Joining Leeds and Nottingham in the ring are Nottingham Trent University, the University of Warwick and Muay Thai 8, a local club. The event will see the universities and clubs take each other on in over 20 fights, taking place in a ring in a bar. Though an annual event, this is Leeds' debut

appearance.

But what is Muay Thai? Otherwise known as Thai Boxing, its origins can be traced to Thailand in the 16th century and it is different from other martial arts as it includes the ability to strike someone with the elbow, knee and shin as well as kicking and punching. It is known as the 'art of eight limbs', as a fighter can strike eight different points of contact on an opponent's body. The popularity of the sport is rapidly increasing in this country.

Abuga Aroni, the Leeds Muay Thai kit and sponsorship secretary spoke about the society's preparation for the event. 'We've been training three times a week for months now and it's honestly been a lot of great fun. It's been an experience in helping

each other improve and also finding weaknesses within ourselves. We are going to go there and have fun, that's the most important thing for us. We all purely love this sport and it's given us so much.'

Hopefully this weekend they will do just that and also do the University of Leeds proud. If Muay Thai sounds like the sport for you, Leeds University Muay Thai Society is open to all abilities, whether you are there for fun, fitness or competition. They train on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and encourage anyone to come along. More details can be found on the LUU website.



Badminton 2nds (M) 8 - 0 Sheffield Hallam 2nds

Basketball 1sts (W) 33-50 Bangor University 1sts

Basketball 2nds (M) 70-59 Leeds Beckett 3rds

Basketball 3rds (M) 48-63 Sunderland 3rds

Fencing 1sts (M) 135 - 76 Lancaster 1sts

Fencing 1sts (W) 135 - 110 Sheffield 1sts

Football 2nds (M) 3-0 Leeds Beckett 4ths

Football 4ths (M) 4-3 York St John 3rds

Golf 1sts 2 - 4 Lancashire 2nds

Hockey 1sts (M) 1-3 Leeds Beckett 1sts

Hockey 1sts (W) 1-4 Nottingham 1sts

Hockey 2nds (M) 2-4 Sheffield 2nds

Hockey 2nds (W) 1 - 3 Durham 4ths

Hockey 3rds (M) 1-2 Durham 4ths

Hockey 4ths (M) 2-1 York 2nds

Hockey 4ths (W) 0 - 1 York 2nds

Hockey 5ths (W) 0 - 3 Newcastle 4ths

Hockey 5ths (M) 1-8 Durham 5ths

Hockey 7ths (W) 1 - 7 Huddersfield 1sts

Hockey 8ths (W) 0-5 York 3rds

Lacrosse 1sts (M) 13 - 5 Manchester Met 1sts

Lacrosse 1sts (W) 24 - 2 Liverpool 1sts

Netball 2nds (W) 35-33 Leeds Beckett 2nds

Netball 3rds (W) 24-38 Northumbria 3rds

Netball 4ths (W) 44-52 Newcastle 3rds

Netball 5ths (W) 22 - 37 Northumbria 4ths

Netball 6ths (W) 33 - 37 Northumbria 5ths

Rugby League 1sts (M) 6-66 Hull 1sts

Rugby Union 1sts (M) 7 - 24 Newcastle 1sts

Rugby Union 4ths (M) 17-17 Teesside 1sts

Squash 1sts (M) 2 - 3 Newcastle 1sts

Squash 2nds (M) 3-0 Northumbria University 2nds

Squash 3rds (M) 2 - 1 Newcastle 3rds

Table Tennis 1sts (M) 4-13 Newcastle 1sts

Tennis 1sts (M) 12-0 UCLAN 1sts

Tennis 1sts (W) 4-8 Manchester 1sts

Tennis 2nds (W) 0-12 Leeds Beckett 2nds

Ultimate Frisbee 1sts (M) 10 - 5 Sheffield 1sts

Volleyball 1sts (W) 3 - 2 Beckett 1sts

The Year of Women's Sport

Nancy Gillen
Women's Sport

When looking back at the development of women's sport in Britain, 2015 will be a stand-out year. From media campaigns to success on the sporting arena, many female sporting athletes have become role models to young girls across the country. The launch of *This Girl Can* in January, a campaign portraying women exercising in a realistic light, encouraged many to participate in sporting activities across the country and set up 2015 perfectly for an excellent year in women's sport.

A personal highlight was England women's football team winning bronze in the World Cup this summer. Many people in the UK were not aware of the tournament when it started, but as England progressed further and further into the tournament, the players started to capture hearts and support soared. After a heart-breaking exit to Japan after Laura Bassett's last minute own goal, the Three Lions went on to defeat adversaries Germany to return to England with a bronze medal round their necks. The support didn't stop there though, with FAWSL attendance figures soaring and women's football in general receiving wider coverage in the following months.

2015 was also a great year for England's hockey team with a victory in the EuroHockey Championships, in what was a thrilling final against the Netherlands. 2-0 down with 8 minutes to go, England managed to



[Image: Dan Mullan]

pull it back to 2-2 to earn a shoot-out. They then won this 3-1, producing triumphant celebrations. This again has created publicity for a women's sport hardly covered or televised.

Aside from team achievements, many female sporting individuals have shone this year. It seems like heptathlete Jessica Ennis-Hill is always in the headlines for her many achievements, but 2015 saw her return to the world stage after 18 months out due to her having a baby in July 2014. However there was no sign of her extended absence as she comfortably won gold in the heptathlon at the 2015 World Championships in Beijing. She has been recognised for her inspiring success through a nomination for Sports Personality of the Year 2015.

Also on the list is Leeds cyclist Lizzie Armitstead. 2015 saw her become the World Road Race Champion, beating her Dutch opponent by just

a wheel. She also won the British Road Race Championships for the third time, despite being involved in a crash 11 days before.

Regular British summer sporting event Wimbledon also showed off an exceptional display of women's sporting ability. In particular, Heather Watson's match against Serena Williams was spellbinding, with the young Brit winning the second set and then leading the third set 3-0, having reduced Williams to a frustrated figure. However Williams showed her championship credentials, fighting back and winning the match. The match really was a testimony to how exciting and enthralling women's sport can be.

500 words can't do justice to what a fantastic year this was for women's sport. There is an endless list of achievements, with these examples only being a few. Let's hope that 2016 can see further development and wider coverage for women's sport.

Murray Master Class Steers Great Britain to Davis Cup Glory

Matt Norman
Tennis

Andy Murray has once again written his name into the history books of British tennis as he led his nation to their first Davis Cup title since 1936, a time when King Edward VIII was still sitting comfortably on the throne. In doing so, Murray became only the fourth player to win an incredible 11 matches in one Davis Cup campaign, 8 singles and 3 doubles alongside his brother Jamie, en route to lifting the famous 115 year-old trophy.

Having beaten strong teams from the USA (3-2), France (3-1) and Australia (3-2) in their own backyard, Great Britain knew they would have to play exceptionally well against a cohesive Belgium side in Ghent. Kyle Edmund, playing in his first match in the campaign, got off to a fairytale start as he took the first two sets against Belgium's number 1, David Goffin. Unfortunately for Edmund, Goffin refused to keel over and fought back valiantly to win the match 3-6, 1-6, 6-2, 6-1, 6-0 and give Belgium the lead and momentum. Murray overcame Ruben Bemelmans in the second match of the tie to even up proceedings in a trouble-free 6-3, 6-2, 7-5 win to set up the tie perfectly for the doubles at 1-1 the next day.

Andy then combined with his older brother Jamie then for a third time in the campaign to push Great Britain in front as they maintained their 100% record together in this year's tournament, brushing Goffin and partner Steve Darcis aside 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2. The fourth match between Andy Murray and Goffin was always going to be the pivotal moment of the tie as teams traditionally place their strongest singles players fourth to either ensure they can secure or level the tie with one match still to play. Despite playing incredibly well himself, Goffin struggled to make any severe in-roads against the Murray serve, only breaking him once throughout the match. In what was a fitting end, Murray produced an incredible backhand lob against the run of the point that dropped inches inside the baseline to secure the game, set, match, and Great Britain's historic victory. The Scot defeated the tireless Goffin 6-3, 7-5, 6-3 which gave GB an unassailable 3-1 lead in the best-of-five tie to spark mass celebrations on the Ghent clay.

Great Britain's win marks the inconceivable turnaround achieved by team captain Leon Smith who was appointed in April 2010. At the time, GB were one loss away against Turkey to being relegated to the fourth tier of the Davis Cup, epitomising the outstanding work Smith has done with the team to turn their fortunes around. Smith, who was 11 year-old Murray's first ever



[Image: Jordan Mansfield]

tennis coach, managed to lure his old protégé back in to the Davis Cup team having not played many ties in the recent past. Smith has managed to rediscover the pride and passion in his players to represent their nation in the Davis Cup which has been an essential part of the revival with Murray describing the win as "probably the most emotional I've been after a win" and "I didn't know that would ever be possible [to win this competition]".

It is now widely hoped and believed that the triumph, putting Great Britain at the pinnacle of male tennis for the first time in 79 years, will inspire the next generation to sustain tennis as a major sporting powerhouse for the indefinite future.

Gryphons Grind to a Stalemate

James Candler
Men's Football
University of Leeds 0 - 0 Liverpool JMU

Leeds' men's football 1st team held out for a 0 - 0 draw against Liverpool John Moores on Wednesday, in a match that was achingly stagnant and gruelingly physical. It was a match that ground to a deathly stalemate, but was by no means void of impressive football.

The Gryphons started strongly, and their kick-off showcased a determinative enthusiasm and desire, as an immediate ball over the top of the visitors' defence allowed striker Kit Ellam to pressurise the Liverpoolian goalkeeper. The shot went wide, but was enough to give John Moores plenty to think about. Following this, central midfielder Dylan Kay managed on two occasions to exploit space down the right wing, thus enabling winger Liron Mannie to display his electric pace and almost come away with the goods. Leeds enjoyed an impressive period of dominance after this, winning seemingly every contest and pinning John Moores in their own half. The defensive structure held strong, making the midfield too congested and dangerous an area for Liverpool to break through, and the attack was bolstered by some penetrative through-balls from Kay and Lu Noovi.

Unfortunately, Liverpool appeared to be settling into the match after 15 minutes, and Leeds' supremacy was beginning to be challenged. The visitors won

their first corner of the day and, despite the fact that the corner was poorly-struck and going out, sought to boost their performance. If Leeds were to put a stop to a somewhat lacklustre period, they would have to react unequivocally and threaten the Liverpool goalkeeper, as the opposing players had been doing to Leeds' goalkeeper Alex Gunn. However, the Gryphons' next attack (a beautifully curled-in free kick from Kay) found no attacking heads. After this any attempts in the first half to attack John Moores' goal were met with a tight defensive structure that made shots on target near impossible. In contrast, before the half was over Liverpool enjoyed two more threatening shots on goal. One of these was the product of a rare lapse in communication between centre back Josh O'Hanlon and right back Eetu Hylinen, which allowed the Liverpool striker to get right behind the defence, and into the box.

After a shaky end to the first half, Leeds undoubtedly sought to make amends, and reassert the dominance they had displayed in the first half. Liverpool had other ideas however, as they kicked-off with some intelligent passing interplay up the middle of the field, which allowed for a powerful strike right into Gunn's gut. Leeds responded with an impressive counter-attack, with striker Jack Seccombe receiving the ball in space, after an excellent clearance from Omar Bukleb. Seccombe was able to dance through some Liverpool defenders, before effectively holding the ball up until



[Image: Jack Roberts]

support could arrive. Sadly, the ball once again went awry after it was crossed in-field, with Jack Bullock losing the ball in contact. If this report seems to be settling into some sort of routine, that is because the game did just that. Though it was played with frenetic pace and end-to-end energy, one couldn't help feel as if a team would work their way into the other's half, only to squander their chance at goal. There was simply not enough invention or risk-taking close to the net, and as a result the game ended with a disappointing 0 - 0 score line.

After the match, the referee remarked that he thought the match was a physical, but well-contested affair, with the visiting side garnering more legitimate attempts at goal in his opinion.

Last-minute Pain for Leeds Netball

Matthew Norman
Women's Netball

University of Leeds 1sts 35 - 36 Liverpool 1sts

Leeds netball 1sts agonisingly missed the opportunity to close the gap between them and first-place Liverpool 1sts as a tense end saw the latter edge the match 36-35. After falling six behind at the end of the first quarter, Leeds fought back superbly before a gut-wrenching final minute saw Liverpool reclaim the lead and ultimately the match.

Leeds struggled to upset the Liverpool rhythm early on as they asserted their authority on the court. Liverpool, now undefeated after seven matches in the league this season, dominated the first quarter as both their goal shooter and goal attack capitalised on most of the opportunities that came their way. Despite Leeds' centre Lucy Hemsley getting the better of her opposite number, chances were few and far between for Emma Crofts and Beth Horridge in attack as Liverpool took a 13-7 lead into the first break.

Some quality reading of the game from Leeds' Bea Skingsley exemplified her team's increased intensity from the start of the second quarter as an amazing run saw Horridge and Crofts score nine goals between them to Liverpool's two, to see Leeds take the lead for the first time in the match at 16-15. The elevated performance from the Leeds girls was now clearly getting

to their opponents, as their fast-paced passing game fell apart, allowing Leeds to dominate the space as they found their own passing game. Liverpool refused to let the game get away from them as they fought back valiantly themselves to reclaim the lead before a brilliant interception from Meg Clark sparked a quick counter which Crofts expertly put away. The match



[Image: Jack Roberts]

was hanging in the balance as the half-time whistle blew 20-20.

The third quarter got off to the perfect start as the fresh-legged Katie Cresswell skilfully evaded her defender to allow her fellow substitute Sarah Haynes to

grab her first goal of the match and put Leeds ahead. Both teams struggled for goals as they aimed to take control of the game with sluggish passing and frantic play seeing a lull in scoring. Leeds did eventually take the ascendancy as they scored four unanswered goals to go up 25-21 halfway through the quarter. However, Liverpool illustrated their undefeated credentials once again by refusing to let the scoreline get the better of them to crawl their way back to within one goal. Leeds did get the better of the low-scoring quarter to go into the final period 27-26 in front.

Liverpool evened the match straight from the restart as persistent fouls on their attacking pair allowed them numerous chances to score, which they ultimately seized. Leeds replied instantly, refusing to let Liverpool out of their own half or maintain any attacks, as Haynes scored three on the trot to put Leeds 30-27 up. Liverpool was able to equalise for the umpteenth time in the match despite some quality work by the tireless Claire Wilsher in defence. With only a minute left on the clock the sides were still locked at 34 apiece.

Unfortunately, Lady Luck must be Scouse as Liverpool went ahead for the first time since the second quarter before doubling their lead seconds later. Leeds did manage to get one back before the final whistle but it was regrettably in vain, as Liverpool finished 36-35 on top.

Beckett Attack Too Much for Gryphons

Alex Bowmer
Men's Hockey

University of Leeds 1sts 1 - 3 Beckett 1sts

Uni's hockey men's 1sts lost 3-1 away to local rivals Beckett despite an attacking second-half display, in a match watched by two-time Ashes-winning cricket and Leeds Beckett graduate Jonny Bairstow.

The game got off to an even start, with both teams zipping the ball about nicely on an overcast day. However, it was Uni that enjoyed the lion's share of possession, with a few timely interceptions preventing the visitors from going through on goal.

Will Kenney-Herbert and Ed de Blaby were marshalling the back line well, helping instigate many of the visitors' most promising attacks. However, Beckett were top of the league for a reason, and came into this encounter with four wins and one draw to their name. They bagged nine goals against St. Andrews in their last league outing, and looked intent on filling their boots this time around. Pol Soms was proving particularly elusive, and he was definitely the hosts' main attacking influence, with his tight ball control and ability to dart past opponents proving particularly useful.

The breakthrough came midway through the first period, as Beckett's Will Root broke away before playing a neat one-two with Matt Gibson. The onrushing Soms was steaming around the outside, receiving the ball on the edge of the circle. It looked as if the chance had gone as he had seemingly taken the ball too wide; however, he maintained his composure to slam a diagonal shot into keeper Savvas Hadjigeorgiou's

left-hand corner.

To their credit, the boys in green regained a foothold in the match, making inroads into Beckett's half, with Matt Proctor in the thick of the action. However, the hosts were still posing a very real attacking threat, and they doubled their lead soon after. George Wilkinson went on a mazy dribble, and was deemed to have been halted illegally. However, the resulting pass from the 23-yard line was intercepted by the table-toppers, and another menacing run forward saw space open up for Root, who made no mistake.

A superb raking crossfield pass almost allowed Uni to mount a quick response, but the team could not keep the ball in-play, with the half-time whistle blowing shortly afterwards.

The second-half continued in a similar vein to how the first ended, as Beckett won a penalty corner and although Gibson's attempted was well-saved by Hadjigeorgiou, the ball was then shovelled on to Adam Geldard-Williams, who flicked into the unguarded net. In the blink of an eye it was almost 4-0, as a ferocious drive by Harry Lankfer was parried superbly by Hadjigeorgiou.

Things went further downhill for Uni, as Wilkinson was given a yellow card and was forced to sit out for a few minutes. However, the Gryphons began to enjoy a period of sustained possession for the first time in a while, with the team enforcing a series of penalty-corners, with Will Flett's powerful shot being thwarted superbly by Will Rutter with the second of these attempts. Uni were continuing to knock on the door, but Beckett's defending was stoic. Another flying stop from Rutter prevented Flett from a deserved goal,

and it was to their immense credit that the Gryphons never stopped running. However, Soms still provided a threat on the break, and his stinging shot cannoned off the legs of Hadjigeorgiou.

Then, the moment Uni were waiting for. Max Evans was deemed to have been fouled as he went through on goal, with Tom Precious emphatically sending the keeper the wrong way. A retake was ordered, but this did not disrupt Precious' focus, as his penalty stroke was placed coolly in the bottom right-hand corner.

Leeds enjoyed a flurry of opportunities in the closing stages, including another penalty stroke, but they were unable to break the steely Beckett resistance.

Overall, the outcome was disappointing, but the team can be heartened by a bustling second-half display against a team that are firm favourites for promo-



[Image: Jack Roberts]



Women's Netball: The Gryphons fought hard, but were defeated p.23



Matt Norman runs the rule over the first 'day-night' test p.20



Men's Football: Uni earn a 0-0 draw against Liverpool John Moores p.22



Should Grealish have been dropped after his partying antics? p.19



Perfect Send-Off for Hsien-Hsu

● Easy win leaves Leeds top of the table

● Veteran Jen Hsien-Hsu plays outstanding final game as Gryphon

Fiona Tomas
Men's Volleyball
University of Leeds 3-0 Lancaster

Leeds gave the perfect send-off to Jen Hsien-Hsu with a comfortable 3-0 win over Lancaster seeing them remain top of the league.

Hsien-Hsu, who has offered six years of dedicated service to the club, couldn't have wished for a better way to end his Gryphon career. The hitter, who has been in fine form this season, played an instrumental role once again to help secure his side's victory.

The men in green went into their match buoyed by watching a dramatic finale to the women's side game against Leeds Beckett. The team battled from two sets down to clinch a dramatic 3-2 victory over Beckett, setting the bar high for the men to follow.

Captain Nigel Sibanda, despite nursing a shoulder injury, played the dual role of player-manager in the absence of the team's coach and slammed down the first point of the match. Leeds dominated the opening exchanges and sped into a 10-5 lead, executing well-rehearsed shots and dummied jumps and forcing Lancaster to commit error after error.

A fantastic one-handed dive from Mo Bashar after

fifteen minutes kept a rally alive for Christian Grimes to push over the net and secure a well-deserved point.

It was an emotional game for veteran Hsien-Hsu, who took a knock halfway through the first set when he accidentally collided with Basha, but remained unhurt. A series of slams from Sibanda, Wataru Iwai, and Savvas Anthis saw the Gryphons storm into an unassailable lead to clinch the first set comfortably 25-11.

Lancaster improved in the second set and proved much more of a match for Leeds. Hsu scored an ace near the start of the second set and the Gryphons continued to put pressure on Lancaster, although the visitors began to play with a lot more caution. A powerful slam from an opposition hitter levelled the set at 8-8, before Anthis grounded another strong cross-court slam, a feat that he performed countless times throughout the game. At 13-11, the set remained close, although the occasional wide serve and progressive net blocks meant that Lancaster kept the Gryphons on their toes.

Sibanda then acrobatically tipped the ball over the net beautifully to gain a three-point lead at 21-18, before two unforced errors from Lancaster meant that Leeds edged further away from their opponents before Hsu slammed down the winning point to claim the second

set 25-21.

Lancaster had tired by the third set, with a series of misjudged serves allowing Leeds to capitalise and jump ahead yet again. A misjudged serve from Lancaster allowed them to gain a point, before a thumping slam from Basha put Leeds 6-5 in front. Anuar and Grimes combined well to produce a brilliant block and the recovery shot saw the Gryphons earn a point from almost nothing, before Hsu tapped a shot teasingly over the net when Lancaster were caught out of position.

The in-form Hsu, thoroughly enjoying his last game, scored a fantastic ace down the court at the start of the second phase after daringly tossing the ball up high, to the cheers of his fellow team-mates, before Anthis slammed down again to make it 19-11. Lancaster then served into the net, before a stinger from Anthis was thumped down the centre of the court. A fantastic block from Grimes ensued, before Lancaster grappled a point back. Leeds were playing for fun, trying to set the last final shots for Hsu, who, as a setter, is not usually supposed to score.

In the end, Leeds ran out winners 25-15 to stay top of the table and continue their fine form.