



[Image: Christopher Thomond]

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[Image: Michael Upson]

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The LGBTQ* Issue



LURUFC Players Banned After 'Inappropriate' Social Media Activity

● **One Player Suspended Following Offensive Tweets**

● **Two Players Banned for Further 'Inappropriate' Activity**

Benjamin Cook
Elli Pugh

Three members of Leeds University Union's Rugby Union Club have been handed a one week ban from matches and social events for 'inappropriate' behaviour on social media, with one of these members found to be responsible for publishing tweets of an offensive nature on the club's official Twitter account.

Tweets including slurs towards women, the disabled, and the LGBT community, sent from LURUFC's Twitter account were brought to the attention of Leeds University Union staff on 27 January, with staff meeting a member of the society's committee over a week later on 4 February. As an outcome of this meeting LURUFC were told to launch an internal investigation into the matter.

Speaking to *The Gryphon* at the time a spokesperson for LURUFC said, "An issue with our Twitter account was brought to our attention; immediately we looked into the issue and deleted all the tweets that we realised were inappropriate. We are conducting an internal investigation to find out who was responsible for sending the tweets. We are committed to making our twitter as professional as possible and are working to ensure that no issues arise in the future."

Hours after making this statement, the same spokesperson posted a message to LURUFC's closed member's Facebook group informing members that despite informing *The Gryphon* that an internal investigation would take place and an official punishment handed out by the society's internal disciplinary board,

they would consider not putting this into practice.

Having obtained this information through an email sent to *The Gryphon* from an anonymous member of the Facebook group, the newspaper passed it on to Union staff, while also making LURUFC aware of the situation. A committee member for LURUFC then informed *The Gryphon* that as well as punishing those responsible for the Facebook post, the member responsible for the initial offensive tweets had also come forward.

All three have been handed a one week ban both from playing matches and attending social events, and are also expected to write a letter of apology to the LURUFC committee.

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Society ~ Avigail Kohn

Features ~ Stephanie Uwalaka, Molly Walker-Sharp

Views ~ Rachel King, Freya Parr

Science ~ Sam McMaster, Dougie Phillips

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Photography ~ Jack Roberts Roberts

LGBT History Month: A Month to Celebrate and Reflect

This month we mark LGBT History Month, a month celebrating the huge achievements of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people around the world, as well as promoting education about the issues which still affect the LGBT+ community today.

The LGBT+ movement has experienced a number of blows to its progress in recent years. In 2013 Russia passed a controversial federal law banning 'gay propaganda' amongst minors. Furthermore Michigan State has recently passed a bill that includes an unconstitutional ban on anal and oral sex. This would make any partaker in the above activity liable to 15 years imprisonment. Whilst the bill is aimed at banning animal abusers from adopting pets, many have called for an amendment to the bill given the direct comparisons to gay sex, further affirming the importance of promoting education.

LGBT History Month falls during a month where, in 2005, a large celebration took place over the eradication of Section 28 in England and Wales. Section 28, brought in by Tory Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher in 1988, actively prevented

schools from discussing LGBT+ issues, offering any support or advice to the community or portraying homosexual relations as 'acceptable' family relationships. Moreover, openly gay military personnel were only allowed to serve in the British Armed Forces from 2000. US "don't ask, don't tell" laws, which similarly prevented openly gay American military personnel from serving, were only dropped in 2013.

LGBT History Month is crucial in celebrating the successes and the losses within the global community, such as David Kato, a Ugandan teacher and LGBT+ rights activist. Kato was described as Uganda's first openly gay man and was tragically murdered in 2011 for his work. Losses stretch throughout the world as far as New Zealand where in 1999, 14-year-old Jeff Whittington was murdered by two men in an anti-gay hate crime.

LGBT History Month is a festival of equality but it is important to remember the plight of other members of the community who are not able to stand in solidarity this February and who have fought for the rights that we and other LGBT+ people around the world have the privilege of enjoying today.

Homophobia and hostility present themselves as tangible obstructions to LGBT+ rights with laws preventing access to welfare and support acting as direct barriers to LGBT+ rights' further progression. Education is paramount in eradicating prejudices against all minorities and this is why LGBT History Month is so important in raising the profile of issues facing the community today.

This February at LUU, our Equality & Diversity Officer Gemma and her fantastic Liberation Coordinators have put together a cracking programme of events celebrating the achievements and commemorating the setbacks the LGBT+ movement has faced so make sure to look out for everything on offer in the Union!

Jonny Foster

LUU Community Officer

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First

Junior Doctor Contract Imposed Despite Strikes



[Images: Jason Lau]

Jonny Chard & George Jackson

The controversial new junior doctor's contract is set to be imposed by the government, despite a nationwide strike that took place on Wednesday.

Nearly 3,000 operations were cancelled and appointments faced disruption as junior doctors took part in their second 24-hour strike over the government's new employment contract.

Formal talks between Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt and the British Medical Association (BMA) broke down in January, and after chief negotiator Sir David Dalton advised the government to do "whatever it deems necessary" to end the conflict, the contract is set to be imposed regardless of opposition.

The Health Secretary claims the new contract is part of the government's plan to introduce a seven-day NHS.

However, a fundamental sticking point in discussions has surrounded the proposed changes to junior doctor salaries, which will involve an 11% increase in basic pay but a decrease in the amount of money doctors receive for working evenings and weekends.

The government's latest offer means that doctor's working at least one in four Saturdays will receive extra pay for these shifts, an improvement on previous offers.

Many in the profession feel that making doctors work more hours for less pay will lead already stretched weekday services to become unsafe and that around 70% of junior doctors will leave the NHS, leading to what some doctors have described as a 'brain drain'.

Strikes took place all over the country, including outside Leeds General Infirmary (LGI), where there was overwhelming public support.

The protest was followed by a demonstration in Leeds City Centre, which saw Junior Doctors provide lessons on basic life support and explain the contractual dispute to members of the general public.

Dr Polly Dickerson, a Junior Doctor and University of Leeds lecturer, stated that although she did not want to strike, she 'had no choice'.

She hoped Jeremy Hunt would 'start listening to the real concerns' of those striking and offer a contract that would, primarily, make patients safer.

However, she feels that demanding 'more work from the same number of already over-worked people, for the same overall budget' will be to the detriment of 'high quality care in the future' and will put off bright students from studying Medicine at university.

Dr Lucie Cocker, a junior doctor and BMA representative at Mid Yorkshire Hospitals, stated on the picket line outside LGI that an all-week service would be possible, so long as funding is increased 'across the board ... for all the hospital support staff'.

Dr Cocker also expressed concern for current medical students, who 'don't know what NHS they're going into in August' once they've qualified.

These reforms are not only 'unfair' on junior doctors currently working in the NHS, but also for future generations of those wanting to enter the medical profession.

Players Banned After 'Inappropriate' Social Media Activity

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The committee member told *The Gryphon*, "An issue with our Twitter account was recently brought to our attention; immediately we looked into the issue and deleted all the tweets that we realised were inappropriate".

"We conducted an internal investigation in line with our Disciplinary Procedures 2015/2016 to find out who was responsible for sending the tweets and how the account came to be mismanaged. During the investigation a further social media incident arose, which subsequently was included in our investigation".

"The Club has found that three individuals were involved and have now all been given various punishments for their misconduct. The Union is aware of such events and continue to give guidance and help to the Club. All three members understand how their behaviour was unacceptable and not in keeping with the positive and inclusive culture we wish the Club to be known for".

"The Club is committed to ensure its twitter and other media outlets are as professional as possible. On top of certain actions already taken by the Club we will be working further alongside the Union to gain the appropriate training and guidance so that these mistakes do not happen in the future."

The Gryphon asked Leeds University Union, who last year signed up to the National Union of Students' Lad Culture Pilot Scheme, what action had been taken on the matter, and whether the original tweets infringed upon their Equality & Diversity Policy. An LUU Spokesperson responded, "As a result of allegations of homophobic comments via the club's Twitter feed, a member of the club's committee was spoken to by Union Management and asked to remove any offensive tweets from their feed. The Union has not yet received any official complaints about the club's feed but will continue to work closely with the committee to ensure that their communications remain appropriate. Any internal disciplinary procedures that are undertaken by the club is at their discretion.

If any student is concerned about the behaviour of any club or society, we urge them to speak to the Union's Activities Team."

Record Nominations in LUU Leadership Race

Greg Whitaker
Associate Editor

With nominations closing today in the Leeds University Union Leadership Race, LUU have confirmed that this year has seen a bumper number of nominations and applications for all positions.

Positions include Union Affairs Officer, Welfare Officer, Equality & Diversity Officer, Education Officer, Community Officer and Activities Officer, as well as the position of Editor-in-chief of *The Gryphon*.

Over 50 students have put them-

selves forward, while peer nominations have exceeded the 230 mark - a significant increase from nominations in last year's Leadership Race. A spokesperson for LUU said, "We are delighted to see so many students wanting to take part in Lead LUU. We are looking forward to working with them to reach as many students as possible, and supporting them over the next couple of weeks, and we wish them all the best of luck." Polls open at 12:00 on Friday 4 March, while all results will be announced on Friday 11 March.



“The problem isn’t the voters, the problem is the politics, the politicians, the political parties and the political system.”

The Gryphon speaks to Green Party leader Natalie Bennett about the ‘Green surge’, climate change, feminism, and the difficulties facing BME candidates in British politics.

Greg Whitaker

In your recent New Year’s message you stressed that ‘It’s time to turn the Green surge into Green seats’. How is the Green Party planning to do this in 2016? Do you see the Green party asserting itself as anything other than an alternative party in the near future?

Well, of course we have the local elections coming up in May, and when you look in London and Wales, and at our sister party in Scotland, they are all very different elections to last year’s Westminster election. They are fair proportional elections in which people can be utterly confident they can vote for what they want and get it. So for us, starting with those elections, there is a huge opportunity to turn the ‘Green Surge’, that last year saw our membership more than treble, and saw our party receive 1.1 million votes in the general election, which is more than every previous election added together, turned into Green seats in the future. But also, of course, this year there are council elections up and down the country and we have now got much stronger, and many more, local Green Party branches in local areas than we have ever had before. I think many people in all parts of the country really feel like they want more Greens, or perhaps their first Greens on their local council to really be there, challenging, scrutinizing and really making a difference to what are very often very entrenched, very closed environments where people haven’t been often questioned or challenged.

Do you face a challenge to keep the Green Party relevant with the Labour Party’s swing to the left? The Green Party has often been supported by young voters, a voting base which has recently swelled the Labour membership.

I think the change in direction of the Labour Party really is a huge positive for us because it means that politics has opened up, and broadened outwards. We are really seeing the start of the end of neo-liberalism and neo-Thatcherism. Before we were very much out on our own, saying things like ‘bring the railways back into public hands’, even though even a majority of Tory voters also believe in that. But of course we do also have very much a unique Green message – the understanding that we have to live within our environmental limits of our one planet. That ultimately isn’t politics, it’s physics, and we can’t keep chasing after the failed policy of growth. We have to build a much fairer, more equal society, within our planetary limits.

In many towns and cities up and down the country we are very much the opposition to the Labour Party, especially now with people questioning them. Whether it’s Liverpool City Council selling off the green spaces for luxury home developments, which is of course a hugely dominant Labour city council, or if you look at Manchester, who seem to be very focused on the airport as some kind of engine for growth, utterly unrealistic as that is, we are the alternative in these places for these coming elections, and as I said, in London, in Wales and



[Image: Christopher Thomond]

Fact File

Green Party Membership: 65,964
Votes at 2015 General Election: 1,157,613
Vote Share in 2015: 3.8%
Number of MPs: 1 (Caroline Lucas)
Green Seat: Brighton Pavilion



[Image: Stuart Rust]

in Scotland, there are proportional elections, meaning people can really vote for what they believe in.

In the Party’s 2015 General Election manifesto you pledged to ‘End austerity and restore the public sector, creating over one million jobs that pay at least the living wage’. What is the Green Party’s economic plan? And how will you portray yourself as a party not only to be listened to on environmental issues?

Well I think the election in 2015 was certainly the election we as a party clearly broke clear of that. People understand that Green political philosophy is a complete political philosophy. I think that on many issues, whether it was championing the cause of refugees, and saying that Britain should take its fair share of refugees, or whether it was really championing the cause of disabled people who really suffered under the previous coalition government, we really proved this. In terms of our economic plan, the way in which Britain is operating at the moment simply isn’t sustainable. We can’t keep having big multi-national companies, from Google to Amazon and Starbucks, not paying their fair share in taxes, being effectively parasites while the rest of us pay for the roads, for the hospitals, for the schools etc. We need big multi-national companies and rich individuals to pay their way, which they are not doing at the moment. We cannot continue on this path. Even organizations like

the IMF and the World Bank are saying that economic inequality is actually a threat to economic stability.

The government has recently scrapped student maintenance grants without a parliamentary debate. Your party has proposed scrapping university tuition fees. What is your alternative?

We believe in no university tuition fees on a matter of principle. Education is a public good, it should be paid for by general progressive taxation. Far more progressive than it is now. If you look at the current situation it is clearly unsustainable. Even before the changes to grants, 73% of students are not going to pay their loan back, about 50p in the pound of those loans will never be paid back. This is a profoundly unsustainable, unworkable model and this means that young people are now facing thirty years of their life, usually from their mid-twenties to their mid-fifties, with that weight of debt weighing down on their shoulders. Any year at all you make any sort of money, 9% of that goes off to pay back part of your loan, which you will never actually pay off, and of course those are the years you are perhaps thinking about settling down, buying a house (if you are outside London), and having a family, all while you have that weight of debt, dragging you down the whole time.

The Green Party is opposed to fracking, and obviously promotes a greater onus on the use of renewable energy. How realistic is it to see the UK switch to primarily relying on renewable energy sources in the near future?

I think it is extremely realistic, indeed it is unrealistic to continue on the government's, what you could call, 'fracking fantasy'. There has been talk of fracking for years, and there has been huge and growing resistance wherever they have tried to crack. Communities have

Absolutely the Green Party is a feminist party. I am very proud of its track record, and I am also proud that I am the first female political leader to take over from another female political leader in British political history.

said that this is simply unsuitable for Britain, and as communities find out about the local impact of fracking they are increasingly aware that we simply cannot crack and stick within our limits in terms of carbon emissions. Also we are losing huge opportunities in terms of other forms of energy industry. Solar installers, insulation installers etc - jobs and opportunities have been lost. If you take for example the proposal for a tidal lagoon in Swansea Bay, the first in a proposal of five which could provide 9% of our electricity needs, the government, after a flush of enthusiasm, have put the brakes on that, and that's a whole industry that we could be developing in Britain and exporting to the rest of the world. The current government's energy policies are deeply economically destructive, as well as environmentally destructive.

How do you feel about the agreement on climate change made at the Paris Conference of last year? Does it do enough? Are you optimistic that the world is starting to make positive steps towards tackling climate change?

The Paris climate talks were a huge and actually quite surprising success. The fact that we came out with the 1.5 degree limit to global warming was a huge achievement, and really quite a surprise. We are now living in a 1 degree globally warmed world. We have seen the realities of that over Christmas and the New Year in terms of the British climate with the floods and extreme weather across the north of the country. I was just listening to BBC radio saying that the rhubarb industry in Yorkshire is having real troubles because it hasn't had frost this year. Of course, there were a lot of things not in the Paris talks that should have been. For example the promises made by governments there came to actually about 3.4 degrees of warming, but what the key is now is to really push people around the world - campaigners and individuals who get that we really need this change, to really push governments, and particularly our government, to act. I was just talking about renewable energy, and energy conservation is a complete no-brainer. The best possible energy to have is the energy you don't need to use - the cleanest, greenest, best all round. But this government has utterly failed to act on energy conservation, which would ensure everyone would have a warm, comfortable and affordable heated home.

In the past you have expressed your dissatisfaction with the UK's current 'First past the post' voting system, due to its disproportional nature. What voting and electoral reform would you ideally make, and would you ever want to see the introduction of an Australian-style 'compulsory' voting system to improve voter turnout?

On the compulsory voting system first of all, I am not in favor of this, because this suggests that the problem is the voters and I do not think that this is the case. As we saw in Scotland with the referendum, where the turnout was nearly 95%, when the politics works and seems to be promoting relevant messages, people feel like they can make a difference and will turn out to vote. The problem isn't the voters, the problem is the politics, the politicians, the political parties and the political system. There are so many people who live in 'safe seats', they know full well that their vote is highly unlikely to make an immediate difference to who represents them. Of course, every vote does make a difference, one of the things for the Green Party is that we are now getting more 'short money', the money given to parties to act as an opposition party in parliament, because of the 1.1 million votes we received at the last election. So every vote does count, but how much more it would count if we had a fair electoral system, a system like they have already in London and Wales, for the geeks among us either the additional member system or an AV system. Either way you still keep a local representative, a local MP, covering a larger area than they do now, but then you also have a top-up list to ensure the result is proportional. We have just witnessed the least proportional electoral result in UK history - The Green Party, if we had a proportional system, means that Caroline Lucas, our one MP, would also have had 24 compatriots in the House of Commons. This really cannot continue. The last real reform in Westminster was women getting the vote in 1918, and I think we should make a vow not to get past the 100th anniversary of that without having updated our system, and introduced a fair proportional system.

Last year's elections debates managed to give a platform to yourself, Leanne Wood, and Nicola Sturgeon, in demonstrating the work of women as political leaders. Feminist issues seem to be getting more traction in both parliament and the media. Are there signs that things are changing for the better for women in politics? Is the Green Party a feminist party?

Absolutely the Green Party is a feminist party. I am very proud of its track record, and I am also proud that I am the first female political leader to take over from another female political leader in British political history. The fact that we had to wait until 2012 to get to that point really is quite astonishing. In most elections that we stand in, the Green Party has the highest percentage of female candidates. We still haven't hit 50% in most elections, so like every other party we still have a way to go, however, we are making big strides in that direction. I also think it's worth stating the reason for this is that I am not really an essentialist, I do not believe that women are essentially any different to men. However, women do have different life experiences and are positioned differently in the world, and it is important that those experiences and positions are represented in parliament. The fact that this country still only has 29% female MPs is an absolute disgrace.

The Green Party positions itself as progressive on social issues, often campaigning for the rights of oppressed groups such as women and the LGBT* community. Why is this so crucial to the Green Party's policies?

I think these issues are clearly just very important in their own right. We have had centuries of discrimination, and often centuries of persecution and we want to counteract all of that by promoting policy which gives everyone a fair chance to live their life in the fulfilled productive way that they want to live it. I think also that being a champion of LGBTIQ issues also shows that we are very much focused on being more than just a party of the environment. If you go back historically, it was Greens on the London Assembly that pushed Ken Liv-

ington to establish the Register of Civil Partnerships in London, which was the first precursor to gay marriage. In Brighton and Hove, the Green council was seen very much as a leader in trans issues. We have a really good track record on delivering on this, however, there are many issues that we need to work on regarding this. I hear so many horrible cases of LGBTIQ asylum seekers who are treated unfairly by our system, sometimes even sent back to even face persecution or even death, and this is something we need to continue to speak out against loudly and clearly, and make sure the government is not being discriminatory in terms of our asylum system.

At the last election the Green Party actually fielded fewer BME candidates than UKIP. Of 357 candidates contesting seats for the Green Party, only 15 came from BME backgrounds. That's a problem surely? Is the Green Party struggling to shed a reputation as a white, middle class party?

I would absolutely accept that that is a problem. As an explanation, not an excuse, if you look back at the history, it was the September before the general election where I stood up at the Green Party Conference and issued a challenge to members, and said let's stand in at least 75% of seats, which was seen to be very ambitious, and we ended up standing in 93% of seats. So we saw a very rapid growth and a very rapid development. However, one of the things we certainly failed to do during those months was to do anything like we should have done in terms of promoting BME candidates. I was referring earlier to the way in which we worked to ensure we were at the forefront of increasing the percentage of female candidates, and we are starting to use the same support mechanisms to make sure in the future we also support BME candidates. I am very proud to say that in our London Assembly selection, there is going to be more than 40% BME candidates, and that is something we want to replicate and continue up and down the country. I think that one of the things we are finding as we promote more BME candidates is that there are lots of barriers to people standing in council elections in terms of financing, and we really need to think about how we can change this and help support candidates,

We can't keep having big multi-national companies, from Google to Amazon and Starbucks not paying their fair share in taxes, being effectively parasites...

and I think this is something every party should be thinking about.

Finally, What's been your proudest moment as leader of the Green Party?

I think that one of the things that I will remember and think about for a long time was during the leader debates, when I was able to challenge David Cameron face-to-face about his failure to join the UN program to take some of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees from the camps in neighbouring countries. To be able to stand there and look the Prime Minister in the eye and ask him 'why are you not doing this humane, decent thing to support people who are refugees?', is something I am really proud of, and I am proud of the fact that David Cameron looked rather uncomfortable answering.

Campus Watch



1 Birmingham University

Students Demand Action After Spate of Muggings

Over 4,000 students at Birmingham University have signed a petition campaigning for greater police presence after a group of muggers attacked students four times in one week, with some claiming they were held at knife point. The attacks took place in Selly Oak, a predominantly student area. The Student Union have said that they are working with the university and police to lobby for more patrols.

Katie Lowes

2 Oxford University

Famous actors made Oxford Fellows

Benedict Cumberbatch and Emma Watson are among eleven non-academics to be appointed visiting fellows at Oxford University. Alan Rusbridger, Principal of Lady Margaret Hall said that "We can imagine fascinating interactions or collaborations between them [...] it could be a conversation or debate, a performance, a lecture or seminar, a form of outreach"

Appointees also include former children's laureate Malorie Blackman and high court judge Rabinder Singh.

Antonella Stonehouse

3 University College Dublin

University Crack Down on Lad Culture

University College Dublin's student newspaper has discovered a Facebook 'ring' of 'lad culture', and the union is now offering consent classes to deal with the problem. Male students had been sharing indecent images of female students online. The name of a group sharing such images was called 'Girls I'd shift if I was tipsy', in which students' union president, Marcus O'Halloran, was a member. The University has launched an investigation.

Josie Hough

4 Cambridge University

Missing Cambridge Student Found Dead in Cairo

The body of a Cambridge student, Giulio Regeni was found in a ditch in Cairo, nine days after his disappearance on the 25th January. Investigator Ahmed Negi has said that the body had multiple stab wounds and signs of torture. A spokesperson for Cambridge University said that the university is "deeply saddened" and that their "thoughts are with his family and friends."

Euan Hammond

The Digest



Taiwan Earthquake Death Toll Rises

An earthquake hit Taiwan at 4am local time on Saturday, the Lunar New Year holiday. 38 people have been officially confirmed dead, with 100 still missing. William Lai, the mayor of Tainan, suggested the death toll would far exceed this number. Most of the casualties were found in the rubble of the Wei-guan Golden Dragon apartment block in Tainan. Many have claimed that the 17-storey building, constructed in 1994, was defective. The government announced it will investigate the earthquake resistance of other old buildings.

Nao Takahashi



Continuity IRA Claim Responsibility For Two Dublin Shootings

The Continuity IRA, a hard-line republican group aiming to carry on the original IRA mission, have claimed responsibility for the shooting of another man in Dublin on Monday night, in what police believe is a follow up to the killing of David Byrne last Friday. Byrne was killed in an armed attack on a Dublin hotel in retaliation to his role in the shooting of Alan Ryan, a leading member of another dissident republican group, four years ago. In light of the attack, Irish Justice Minister Frances Fitzgerald announced that 'the Irish police will take all necessary steps to try to prevent further bloodshed'.

Mike Johansson



Trump & Sanders March on at New Hampshire Primaries

Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders have shaken up US presidential elections this week with landslide victories in the New Hampshire primaries. Sanders who won the vote against rival Hillary Clinton said "the people of New Hampshire have sent a profound message to the political establishment, to the economic establishment, and by the way, to the media establishment". Sanders won 60.4% of the vote, whereas Clinton received 38.0%. Trump received 35.3% of the vote, beating his fellow Republican candidates such as Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz and Jeb Bush. He ended his victory speech by stating "we are going now to South Carolina. We're going to win in South Carolina."

Zoe Bancroft



UN rule Julian Assange "unlawfully detained".

At least ten people have been killed and scores more injured in a head-on collision between two trains near the Bavarian town of Bad Aibling, about 60km south-east of Munich. The German transport minister has stated that both trains were travelling at around 100km/h (62mph) on a single track route before crashing on a bend, largely without braking. The stretch of line in question has an automatic braking system in place, designed to halt any train that passes a stopped signal, and it is not yet known why this failed. Two of the three data recorders have been recovered and investigations continue into the cause of the crash.

Jonny Chard



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What does 'Love' mean to Leeds?

The Gryphon focuses on the notion of love and speaks to students from varying sexual orientations on campus in the week running up to Valentine's Day to find out their perspectives on love.



[Image: Michael Winokur]

Stephanie Uwalaka

As we near Valentine's Day, instead of focusing on the chocolates, cards, and flowers, instead we might benefit from examining our notion of what we think love is, on a personal level and in the wider context of society, in order to challenge the overly romantic kind of love we are often presented with in films and on television and to come to the realisation that love has a greater effect on our actions than we realise.

The Oxford dictionary defines love as 'a strong feeling of affection' but with 4,070,000,000 Google search results of articles or otherwise telling us 'how to find the one' and the media in general perpetuating the idea that being single suggests loneliness and therefore implying a 'need' to find someone; we are never fully able to question our own perceptions on we think love is and at times we may even miss appreciating experiences of love in our lives due to these misleading conceptions. To find out what the students of Leeds really pertain 'love' to be, *The Gryphon* spoke to several students on campus, in relationships and single, and of various sexual orientations, to tell us their thoughts on the subject.

What would you say 'love' is?

'I would say that love is not just a feeling but that it's a choice, because you have the choice to make your relationship work. It's about seeing that there are flaws but also about accepting them. I mean, if you think about it, marriage is a bit like betting the other person half of your stuff that you'll stay together!'

Emma, final year, Physics and Maths

'That's quite a broad question! But, I think love is an inherent need in life, something we cannot imagine not having, as it would make life a whole lot worse...'

Joe, final year, Music

'I think love is between two people who support and respect each other but mostly I would say that it is hard to define. I mean, I won't be celebrating Valentine's day

this year as I don't think you need just one day out of the year to celebrate love!'

Martina, second year, Media and Communications

What are your views on Valentine's Day?

'If you love each other, I think the day should be about the love you have for your partner and your relationship. However, I think today particularly young people aren't really looking for love, and are perhaps settling for less in terms of romantic relationships.'

Camellia, final year, Criminology

'I don't really like the idea that it feels quite forced and that you feel like you have to make it romantic, but I like that you can use it as a day to celebrate your relationship.'

Emma, final year, Physics and Maths

'I'm personally not a fan because of its commercialism,

“...it appears that most people know that the celebration of love cannot be assigned to one day...”

which I think causes people to stress a lot about the day. I really think that romance should be a fluid part in a relationship and, while it is an important part of any relationship, it's not the be-all and end-all. I think that everyone should do what they like on the day and celebrate it with their partner.'

Joe, final year, Music

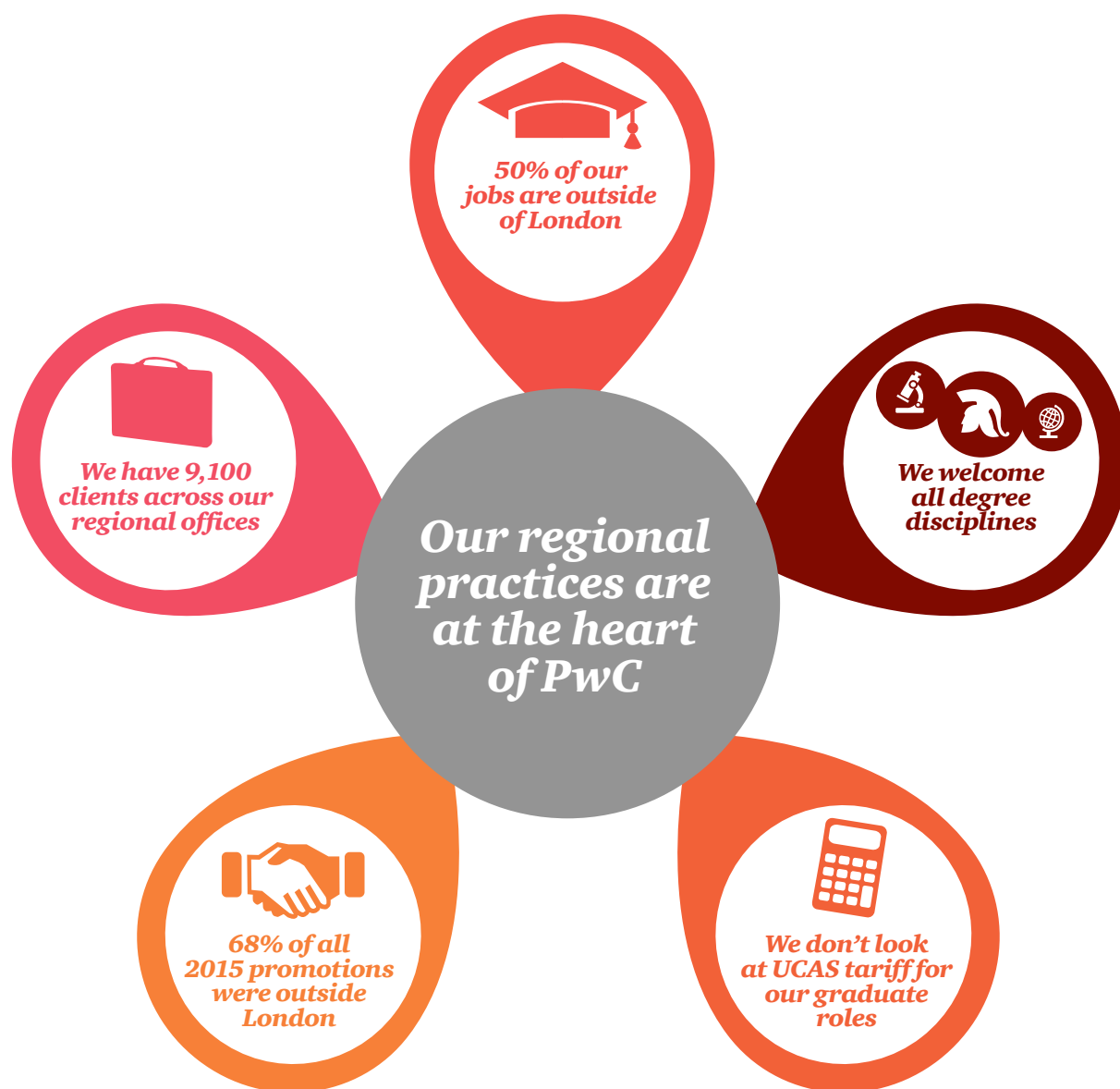
'I really think that Valentine's Day is mainly commercial and maybe even a corporate event between Christmas and Easter! But the idea that love can be compact-

ed into a day is not right. Also, Valentine's can make singletons feel bad, like the feeling that they should be with someone or that they are alone.'

Alistair, second year, French

Having spoken to several students about what they think love really is, it seems that, whilst love is quite difficult to define, the students concur with the fact that love requires work, choice, acceptance, joy, and celebration. In regards to Valentine's Day, it appears that most people know that the celebration of love cannot be assigned to one day; it is an inadequate way to show love as it suggests romantic gesture, which is not always required to show someone you care. Some students' views also touched on the consumerist nature of Valentine's Day, suggesting that it is perhaps just another event in the financial calendar. This reiterates the fact that money is not linked to notions of love and may even highlight the contradictory nature of such a materialistic holiday, designed to celebrate love. Not only that, but it was actually quite difficult to ask people to talk to about 'love' and for them to give their honest thoughts on it.

Perhaps love is in the everyday things we do for others and even for ourselves, the actions that we choose to take with care and consideration of others, as well as putting our pride aside and allowing ourselves to open up our hearts. It is in the films we watch, it is in most of the songs we hear; we appear to be constantly exposed to 'love' but real love is something that we, as human beings, all long for and require in one form or another, whether that be taking care of yourself or the love of a friend, a neighbour, or family. In a world where everything is increasingly virtual and online, this sentiment has lasted through the ages as an essential and very real part of our being. Whilst one day in the middle of February is a cause for the celebration of love, this should be extended beyond romantic love, to love of any kind, and in fact should let us know that a display of love or affection, however small, is just as valuable on any day of the year.



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Transforming the Media...

The Gryphon explores transgender representation in the media and the work that still needs to be done.



Sophie Roberts

Before the sixties, few, if any, films had been made about transgender people. However, with the recent release of Hollywood blockbuster, *The Danish Girl*, various fictional and documentary television shows, and the reality television star Caitlin Jenner's very public gender transition, it is apparent transgender is becoming more and more popular as a subject the media wishes to explore.

However, the LGBT website, GLAAD, recently reviewed the last ten years of transgender images on television. They found that trans characters, when they were portrayed in the media, were more often cast as villains, murderers, or sex workers and generally had negative representation. Furthermore, GLAAD alludes to the fact that anti-transgender language and dialogue are very prevalent in television and generally go unchallenged by other characters. This is shown in both *Family Guy* and *Two and a Half Men*, where transgender characters were introduced but were used as the punchline. It seems obvious that there is a problem of both a lack transgender representation and it being shown in a defamatory manner in the media, issues that clearly need addressing. But it is also arguable that a few directors, creators, and writers have begun to bridge this gap.

Drop Dead Diva and *Orphan Black* both featured episodes that focused on the largely unseen topic of transgender men. Meanwhile, Candis Cayne starred as a trans housekeeper in *Elementary* and unusually her character's storyline did not hinge on her gender identity; instead the focus of this multi-dimensional character was on other issues. Popular series, such as *Glee* and *The Fosters*, have both included transgender people as regularly scripted characters. However, while they do have strong and often positive storylines, transgender characters often remain sidelined at the outskirts of the narrative.

As the title subtly suggests, the award winning Ama-

zon series *Transparent* tackles the relatively untouched topic of transgender also. Yet it differs from the other examples because the entire focus of the series is on transgender people, rather than limited to one character. It tells the story of Maura Pfefferman, who had been presenting as a man throughout her adult life despite always identifying herself as a woman.

What was particularly interesting was the discussions between Maura and her trans friend, Davina, of sex reassignment surgery. Davina herself had undergone the surgery as well as facial reconstruction to make her features more feminine. However Maura tells the doctor in her consultation that she is yet to decide whether

anti-transgender language and dialogue are very prevalent in television and generally go unchallenged by other characters

to keep the sexual organs she was born with. Although, when asked by the doctor if she plans to get breasts she replies, 'two please'. This highlights the diversity that exists within the trans community and the viewers only gain this insight because *Transparent* has dedicated full episodes to exploring these issues. *Transparent* has been praised for its broadening of the viewer's perspective of the lives of trans men and women. Jeffery Tambor, who plays protagonist Maura, has said that "people are identifying with the trans movement" following the release of the show and, to its credit, *Transparent* does provide viewers with an in-depth insight into the lives, troubles, and celebrations of those in the trans community through its many trans characters.

Transparent has interesting links to the recent Oscar nominated film, *The Danish Girl*. Based on a real story,

Lili, played by Eddie Redmayne, undergoes sex reassignment surgery an operation that had never been attempted before, in spite of its many risks. With the film set in the mid-1920s, *The Danish Girl* highlights the fact that these issues have been around for decades. But, with almost one hundred years separating Maura and Lili's lives, the reactions from friends, family, and the public within the stories do not greatly differ. This prompts the idea that the media is questioning whether society has really changed at all in its attitudes towards transgender men and women.

There is also much public debate over which actors should play these characters. *The Danish Girl* was heavily criticised when Redmayne was cast as Lili as critics argued that there are many transgender actors who could potentially portray the role more candidly, having undergone similar journeys themselves. Unlike the film, this is the route the creators of *Transparent* seem to have followed: Alexandra Billings, who plays Davina, is a trans woman herself and we are also introduced to the character of Dale, a trans man like the actor Ian Harvie who portrays him. Similarly, the very popular television series *Orange Is the New Black* features a large focus on one particular trans character for which the actress Laverne Cox was nominated for an Emmy. This clearly highlights the increasing appreciation for trans representation on television and also marks a definitive change, as she became the first ever openly transgender person to be nominated in the acting category for the award.

Transparent, alongside the other television series, is an example of the changing trend in the portrayal of transgender people in the media. They are popularising the subject of transgender and are teaching viewers more and more about the issues surrounding the topic. However there is, arguably, still a long way to go: the representation of transgender people is still riddled with problems and these examples are only forming the first steps towards real change.

Bisexuals In Love

The Gryphon talks to students, Emma and Joe, about bisexual acceptance at university, gender roles, and gender-blindness.

Emma Hooker & Joe Reeves

When I came out as a bisexual woman at the age of thirteen, I did not realise how much it would shape me. Even though the LGBTQ* community is generally more accepted in today's society, particularly in the university environment, there is often a stigma against bisexuals which stems from a lack of understanding about this sexual orientation. Bisexual celebrities are misrepresented in the media, underrepresented in television shows and movies, and repeatedly stereotyped. These stereotypes can often afflict relationships, with partners having difficulties with trust, sexual satisfaction, and the lingering notion that perhaps one day their lover will either realise their bisexuality was a phase or merely a gateway to homosexuality.

Joe came out as a bisexual man at the age of fifteen. He and I are in an exclusive heterosexual relationship. Having been with members of both sexes, in purely sexual and fully committed relationships alike, Joe originally felt that he would not be able to connect to a woman on the same level as he could with a man. However, we share a deep understanding, perhaps through both coming to terms with being outside the heteronormative, 'coming out of the closet', and experiencing this attraction to both sexes. Our connection is strengthened by finding someone who fully embraces both their own and their partner's sexuality within the relationship and

it has taught me that nobody should dismiss or suppress a part of themselves, whether that be their sexual orientation or otherwise. Waiting for the person who understands, relates, and embraces this part of your personality should be a priority for anyone looking for love.

For us, we have embraced our mutual sexuality through disregarding traditional gender roles. Since we have both been in same-sex relationships, where there was no member of the opposite sex to take on the stereotypically 'masculine' or 'feminine' attributes, there is no expectation for either one of us to be 'the man' or 'the woman'. This can be as simple as Joe elegantly crossing his legs whilst I sit, legs apart, resting my elbows on my knees to as complex as the extent to which men and women are expected to express their deeper emotions. 'I never feel awkward doing something that stereotypically the girl would do in a heterosexual relationship,' Joe says, 'I see myself as having masculine and feminine qualities and Emma balances that pretty perfectly'. In previous relationships, I have been called cold, distant, and lacking in emotional vulnerability. Joe's femininity counterbalances my masculinity so naturally that I never struggle to discuss my feelings. There is always this balance between us and it allows Joe especially to express himself in ways that perhaps would make some partners uncomfortable, such as cross-dressing or experimenting with makeup. Even though we both identify with the sex we were assigned at birth, we acknowledge our genders

to be somewhat fluid, and each other's bisexuality lends itself to a safe environment to explore this gender spectrum. I am essentially gender-blind: I do not care if you are cis or trans, androgynous, gender fluid, or agender, and, because I am bisexual, sex is never an issue. Joe and I once remarked how it would not matter if one of us came out as transgender; we love the person on the inside.

Some bisexuals say that they could not be in an exclusive relationship, homo, or hetero. Joe and I used to feel this way. He acknowledges that 'sex is a huge part of our relationship' and I would agree, but what surprised us is that we are both sexually satisfied. We have been asked if we felt that in the future we would require a threesome in order to feel sexually complete and Joe argues that 'having a threesome with Emma is definitely not a necessity'. Likewise, I have no desire or need to actively seek a second sexual partner. Instead, we embrace each other's sexuality within our sex lives without awkwardness or restraint, with honest communication. If you are a bisexual, I would urge you to believe that as long as you are able to freely discuss your sexual preferences, then there is no reason why your sexual satisfaction, and your relationship as a whole, would be compromised in a monogamous relationship. In a similar vein, if you are dating a bisexual, do not fear that you will be forever unable to have a complete relationship: love can transcend all sexual boundaries.

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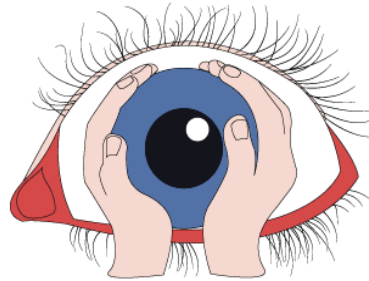
In The Spotlight: TEDx University of Leeds

Flora Tiley

On Friday 29th, 2016, Leeds University played host to one of the most iconic, inspirational and innovative lecture series known to our generation – TED (Technology Entertainment Design). Many of you will be familiar with TED lectures, where global experts, researchers and ‘do-ers’ with a wide range of expertise give the talk of their lives during an 18-minute window.

These videos are played on an almost weekly basis in one of my lectures and they are truly unbelievable. The TEDx scheme enables smaller, independently organised, local events to take place, showcasing the talent available right on our doorstep. Indeed, the seven speakers present on Friday evening were true assets to our university. All from different backgrounds and professions, they were united under the themes of subjectivity and perception. The evening not only displayed the real-life, groundbreaking issues being tackled within the walls of this very university, but also a spectacular array of knowledge and deep-rooted passions.

The lovely Grace Baylis bounced on stage to introduce each speaker and keep everything light-hearted as we delved into our thoughts after every talk. Interspersed amidst the live speakers, we were treated with videos from TED talks from years gone by, all



three of which were perfectly suited to themes of the evening. From cognitive psychology, to Wikipedia, to self-driving cars, and Parkinson's disease, amazing ideas and messages were shared in the intimate Stage@Leeds.

The stand out performance came from Chris Cook, a Broadcast Journalism graduate who is now magician. Not only did he beguile us with his tricks, he shared some valuable messages in the slickest speech of the night. The childish wonderment may be gone from our lives, but Cook's talent helped us stop taking life so seriously, if only for a moment.

The key thing about the TED lecture series is that

they give us options for the future, rather than dwelling on the doom, gloom and damage of the past. It is too late to be a pessimist in this world and the wonderful team that curated the event on Friday selected some amazing speakers to reiterate this. University is a fundamental platform for getting voices heard and sparking debates, so combining this with the quality and reputation of the TED series ensured the audience was blown away. The team behind this event is now looking for new recruits as part of the society, a prime opportunity to see how we can help develop the world from within this city.

Galentines Day? It's Only The Best Day Of The Year



Avigail Kohn

Forget Valentines Day, 2016 at LUU is all about Galentines Day. Taking inspiration from *Parks and Recreation's* Leslie Knope, LUU's Women's Liberation Co-ordinators have organised an empowering weekend alternative to the standard saccharine holiday.

Running on Saturday the 13th from 11am-5pm, Galentines Day promises to be an event to remember. The organisers have collaborated with societies ranging from ISOC to Rethinkers to Thai Boxing, and have even managed to get LUU's Exec involved and talking about relevant issues.

Ones to watch out for:

Mine, 12.00pm: Belly Dancing

Room 2, 12.30pm: Fierce Babe Network -

Ending Girl Hate

Room 6, 14.00pm: Islam and Women: A discussion with ISOC

Room 6, 16.00pm: Debate – Feminism isn't about man hating

Whether you want to get active, get political or get a chance to listen, Galentines day offers a wide choice. With events such as Sex Positivity Workshops, Consent 101, and Pole Dancing open to attend.

Despite its girl-centric name, Galentines day is open to everyone of any gender, as long as they are open-minded and respectful of the nature of the event. Entrance is pay as you feel, so no one has to make any financial commitments (probably a relief to those of you already in your overdrafts), but all the money donated will go towards Leeds based charities SARSVL

(Support Against Rape and Sexual Violence) and Angel of Youths.

Speaking to *The Gryphon*, Emma Healey, an organiser of the event, said: "I genuinely believe that there is something for everyone to enjoy, and it's a great cause. I think we all need to take a little bit of time to celebrate each other and I personally guarantee you will leave the event feeling just a bit better about the world. We are going to discuss some tough topics, but all of it is done in such an empowering way."

So grab your gals (and your guys) and make your way over to the union this Saturday. Galentines day promises to be an informative, inclusive and exciting affair that will challenge you in many ways – and who could say Knope to that?

In The Middle

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

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In columns this week we have a number of LGBTQ* stories, including Anja telling us about being non-binary and Warren describing the catching up he's had to do since he's come out.



[Image: Ashley Hockey]

I Want to Break Free

Juliette Rowsell discusses how artists over the past 50 years have influenced and impacted on the LGBTQ* community

February is LGBT History Month and the importance of music in bringing issues of greater social equality to the fore cannot be understated. When we can find little hope in our own lives, we look to music for liberation. David Bowie, Freddie Mercury and Elton John all redefined what it meant to be 'normal' and, in the process, helped to liberate anyone who didn't fit society's rigid expectations. In a world where there was no flexibility, no icons for the LGBTQ* community, they became not just stars in a musical sense, but of hope and inspiration too.

While LGBTQ* individuals have historically been shunned from society, members of the community have often blazed trails on the musical scene. From Elton John and Freddie Mercury to Angel Haze and Frank Ocean in more recent times, they have not only dominated the charts but also produced some of the most forward-thinking records of recent times. Their ability to put a human face to the terms 'homosexual', 'bisexual', 'pansexual', helped challenge the discriminatory connotations for so long forced upon being 'gay'. When some of the most beloved people on the planet are also the outcasts, then what did it mean to be part of the 'mainstream'? The freaks were no longer freaks, but cool.

"I'm gay" David Bowie told *Melody Maker* in 1972, only five years after homosexuality was decriminalised in the UK, before later retracting this statement in 1976 when he claimed he was bisexual, he would then state he was a "closet heterosexual" in 1983. Bowie demonstrated to us that sexuality is fluid, and he opened the door for fellow LGBTQ* musicians, offering inspiration at a time when Freddie Mercury and Elton John were still in the closet, and Boy George still at school. Bowie's ability to show us that there's something incredibly human about feeling alien showed us it's ok not to fit in. There's a hero, an alien-starman that lies within all of us and we shouldn't let society tell us otherwise.

Of course, that's not to suggest that the musical establishment has always been progressive on LGBTQ* issues. The Kinks' 1970 hit 'Lola' was banned for its description of a sexual encounter with a transgender woman and, in a time where LGBTQ* individuals were stigmatised as sexually perverse, lyrics like 'girls will be boys and boys will be girls / it's a mixed up muddled up shook up world', challenged traditional expectations. People were beginning to see past the social constructs of 'male' and 'female', and the BBC wasn't happy about it. Yet, while this may appear as a just an-

other example of the silencing of a minority group, it helped build momentum for the LGBTQ* cause: it was clear that they were being inflicted to unfair discrimination.

Being gay in a world which tells you to be straight is hard, but musicians' ability to hold two fingers up at the establishment provided much needed hope for LGBTQ* individuals. Musicians not only produce music, but they become heroes; we relate to them in a way that politicians can only dream of. Would David Bowie be the hero

he is today if it wasn't for his boldness to transcend all social boundaries? Would Freddie Mercury be as loved if it wasn't for his flamboyant stage presence? While both produced some of the most iconic records of the last century, it was their ability to make the shocking acceptable that allowed them to surpass the limits of 'musicians' and become 'stars'.

When Freddie Mercury donned a tight mini leather skirt, heels and a wig in Queen's music video for 'I Want to Break Free', he was singing about more than just breaking free from the pain of a failed relationship. Mercury sings about the constraints of 80's Britain and its rigid social values. He dreams of a world where gender and sexuality are not limitations, where people are 'free' to be who they want to be.

Whether you want to be a bisexual-alien-rock-star like Ziggy Stardust or an androgynous chameleon like Boy George, it has been musicians who have continually given us the confidence to be who we want to be and feel comfortable in our own skin. In showing us the superficiality in traditional expectations of men and women, they give us an insight into a future where gender and sexuality are no limitations.

Unfortunately, the world is not perfect, and in 2015, over 5,000 homophobic hate crimes were reported to the police in the UK. However, the actual figure of such crimes is suspected to be around four times higher than this as many still feel too afraid to report such crimes to the police. There is still a long way to go before equality is achieved. But the confidence and bravery of musicians over the past fifty years to be themselves in a world which tells them to do otherwise, reminds us how a rainbow can only appear after a storm. One day the LGBTQ* community will be able to break free, and they will have a lot to thank LGBTQ* musicians for this achievement.

[Juliette Rowsell]

Is The Is Are by DIIV

Recorded and produced by vocalist and guitarist Zachary Cole Smith, *Is The Is Are*, DIIV's 17-track sophomore album, is a hazy myriad of dreamy guitar reverb enveloped by pervasive raw tones, dark lyricism and harrowing, strong vocals. Fortunately, *Is The Is Are* arrives just in time to move DIIV away from the controversy they have been marred by since the release of 2012 debut *Oshin*. Most noticeably, a 4chan scandal involving bassist Perez, the departure of drummer Colby Hewitt, and a 2013 drug arrest and a subsequent rehab-stint for Smith.

The melodic dream-pop and gorgeous fluidity of *Oshin* is still present in the tracks 'Under the Sun' and 'Healthy Moon', but also entwined with the energetic tracks such as 'Dopamine', are darker, more troubling elements emerging in 'Incarnate Devil'. 'Bent (Roi's Song)' veils its hard hitting lyrics (Fought my mind to keep my life/ But my body's putting up a tougher fight) in the guitar haze that constantly floats over the album, culminating in the shoegaze final number 'Waste of Breath'.

Is The Is Are spans a plethora of emotion from the sombre and lyrically dark title track ("Last time I walked down this street, I wanted to die") encapsulating the bleak inner turmoil of drug addiction and hopelessness, to the lighter 'Valentine'. Alongside the stand-alone singles as a highlight comes a collaboration with Sky Ferreira on Sonic Youth spoken word-esque 'Blue Boredom' to provide a desolate poetic two and a half minute interval.

While no doubt a braver and artistically deeper album than their summery debut, the 63 minute long *Is The Is Are* still isn't the definitive masterpiece Zachary Cole Smith so desperately yearns to produce, but it's certainly no disappointment.

[Jessica Heath]



All I Need by Foxes

Hailing from Southampton, Foxes has already been on many people's radar for a while. With radio-friendly hits such as 'Youth' and 'Let Go for Tonight' under her belt, *All I Need* is Foxes' second album following 2014's *Glorious*.

'Better Love' demonstrates what Foxes does best: explosive, over-the-top choruses, paired with choral backing vocals, creating an anthem feel to the whole song. 'Body Talk' follows, delivering more of an understated, poppy vibe and proves to be very catchy. 'Cruel' changes up the tempo and the mood of the album once more, with its' minimalist, electronic beats. It feels quite experimental for Foxes, but she definitely pulls off its more innovative style. 'Devil Side' slows the album down, feeling a lot like a ballad with soft piano and violin complementing Foxes' vocals. Drum-heavy 'Money' is a tad repetitive lyrically which unfortunately means it is not nearly as engaging as some of the other tracks on the album.

Stand-alone, all these songs work, and they work very well at that. However, their sheer epic diversity does mean that this album lacks cohesion. This is not to say, of course, that albums should exclusively contain songs which all sound the same; but there is a degree of natural and flowing progression you expect track-to-track on an album which is not found here. There is very little sense of rhythm or connection between the tracks, which creates at moments within the album, a disjointed and fractured feeling. There is a sense that Foxes is attempting to explore too many different avenues on this album. Nonetheless, she is clearly extremely talented and this is a great selection of tracks to demonstrate that.

[Emily Clarkson]



Mndsgn and Ivan Ave @ Headrow House 1/2

Mndsgn (Ringgo Ancheta) is a hip-hop producer - originally from the Philippines, he moved to a commune in rural New Jersey when his parents fled the country after a group they were involved in turned to terrorist actions. He now lives in LA, working with Stones Throw. Performing alongside him was Ivan Ave, a Norwegian MC. Their set predominantly revolved around promoting a new album that the pair have worked on together called *Helping Hands*, which is out on the 12th February.

Judging by the general mood of the audience, four support acts was a bit excessive. Nevertheless there was a good array of music, even if littered with weird moments like Dulahli's electronic version of Paul Simon's 50 Ways to Leave Your Lover.

Unfortunately, when Mndsgn and Ivan Ave finally came on the stage, the audience seemed to be a bit fed up having waited for three hours, something exacerbated by the fact that for the first five songs of their set, Mndsgn sat down at the side drinking a beer while Ivan Ave rapped.

However, Ivan Ave was able to lighten the mood almost immediately and was very entertaining, accidentally calling the audience Glasgow and then blaming his inability to give compliments for his lack of a girlfriend. His lyrics were quite amusing too, including copious food references such as 'my minds running like butter' and 'fresh like a coriander seed' (although the truth in that statement is debatable).

Almost as if to ensure his presence was not forgotten, Mndsgn finally arose, stepping up to the decks to play heavenly melodies that perfectly complimented Ivan Ave's relaxed manner. When it was Mndsgn's turn to take to the stage solo, he treated the audience to a glorious mix of new music. One song started off with a ballad segment almost akin to that in Bohemian Rhapsody before suddenly switching into the dreamy lazy beats that Mndsgn is renowned for.

[Polly Hatcher]





The Life of a Legend

Celebrating what would have been Bob Marley's 71st Birthday. Jemima Skala looks back over the career of the reggae icon.

Bob Marley has been so influential, throughout his life and even throughout the decades after his death. His is the name that immediately springs to mind whenever you mention 'reggae' or 'rasta'. He is the touchstone for everyone looking to get into reggae and has spawned a whole cult of followers, copycats, and total admirers. His legacy has survived him, and shows no sign of fading.

His music is a point of connection for everyone, whatever your musical leanings. My dad is a huge reggae buff, and would play the most obscure reggae and dub tracks around the house whilst I was growing up, but I knew Marley's name long before I knew Peter Tosh, Lee Scratch Perry or Bunny Wailer. I listened to Bob Marley in every guise; my favourite song for years was The Fugee's cover of 'No Woman, No Cry'. We even used to sing 'One Love' in music assemblies at primary school in lieu of the more traditional songs. A friend of mine professes to detest reggae in all its forms, because "it all sounds the same". Aside from the fact that he is simply wrong, he concedes that the two reggae artists he will actually listen to are Desmond Dekker and Bob Marley. It speaks volumes of Marley's ability to reach even the most dedicated rock and roller. Perhaps this was because Marley was able to express universal emotions very simply, succinctly, and in a way that would speak to the most amount of people.

Although, in the grand scheme of the reggae scene of the Caribbean in the 1970s, Bob Marley is only a thread in a rich tapestry, his position as the figurehead of the movement was never in doubt. Marley was as politically involved as he was musically active. In 1976, Michael Manley, head of the Communist-leaning People's National Party (PNP), asked Marley to play at the free Smile Jamaica concert he had organised to relieve the tensions between the warring supporters of the PNP and the Jamaican Labour Party (JLP). In spite of declaring his support for Manley in 1972, Marley made a point of setting up an entirely neutral standpoint for his performance; he dissuaded Manley from staging the concert on the lawns of the Prime Minister's official residence. He was infuriated when he found out that the government had coincided the concert with the elections, saying, "dem want to use me to draw crowd fe dem politricks."

In spite of suffering an attack from armed gunmen two days before the concert, Marley still performed, justifying this with, "the people who are trying to make this world worse aren't taking a day off. How can I?" This whole episode has become somewhat ingrained in the folklore of the Kingston ghettos, and is the subject of Marlon James' Booker Prize-winning novel *A Brief History of Seven Killings*.

After this incident, Marley spent two years in England to get away from the political hotbed that Jamaica had become. 1977-1978 was spent recording *Exodus* and *Kaya*. The former remained on the British album charts for over a year consecutively. Again, we are reminded of Marley's universal ability to speak equally to people

"We are reminded of Marley's universal ability to speak equally to people living in the Jamaican slums and the townhouses of Kensington."

living in the Jamaican slums and the townhouses of Kensington.

While it's not always desirable to remember the more negative aspects of our idols, it's important to remember them for the person they were, as well as for the influence they had. In this light, it's difficult to remember Bob Marley without remembering his rather unattractive habit of chronic adultery. After marrying Rita Anderson in 1966, he had relationships with several other women throughout his lifetime. Rita claimed that Marley was abusive towards her at points in their relationship, both physically and emotionally. Marley's estate recognises that Bob Marley had eleven children: three with Rita, two from Rita's past relationships, and several others from other women. However, it is likely that there were more.

Marley converted early on in his career from Catholicism to Rastafarianism, a sect of Christianity that rejects all material and earthly pleasures, which they term Babylon, and proclaim Zion, a reference to Ethiopia, as the Promised Land. In 1970s Jamaica, Rastafarians were on the receiving end of a lot of persecution as a result of their dreadlocks, which were perceived as dirty, and their religious and ritualistic use of cannabis. Marley, however, was responsible for showcasing Rastafari music and culture on a global stage, taking it from the ghettos of Jamaica and bringing it to the world. Whilst this may have had the cringe-worthy side effects of causing numerous young white stoners to grow dreads, Marley was responsible for the popularisation of Rasta culture.

Marley made seemingly simplistic statements speak absolute volumes. The lyric in 'No Woman, No Cry' of "then I'll cook wholemeal porridge/Of which I'll share with you" spans the mundanity of simply cooking porridge; it's the following line that gives it meaning. Suddenly, the lyric becomes less about domestic tasks

"Marley was responsible for showcasing Rastafari music and culture on a global stage, taking it from the ghettos of Jamaica and bringing it to the world."

and more about the spirit of humanity. Conversely, the nonsense verses of 'Them Belly Full (But We Hungry)' have puzzled listeners for decades (what is 'a yatta yuck'??) but the words almost don't matter in the context of the most incredible bassline you have ever heard. It was Marley's ability to make music speak beyond lyrics that has contributed to his dedicated following. It makes sense, therefore, that he was asked to play in Boston at the Amandla Festival in 1979 to demonstrate his opposition to the apartheid

in South Africa: he could make his music speak for every person suffering under the weight of oppression.

There's no real way to stop talking about Bob Marley. His presence was so great that it spans across a multitude of subjects, of which there are simply not enough words to cover them in the detail they deserve. In spite of his failings as a man, he was a brilliant musician: dedicated, perseverant, hardcore. He spoke for all those who could not speak for themselves, inspiring generation after generation to get up, stand up, and dance.

[Jemima Skala]



[Image: Jamie Sinclair]

Youth Club Sounds

Coming hot off of the back of their dry run free party at the intimate Distrikt bar, Youth Club are looking to carry that raw energy straight into their launch party later this month. Expect cutting edge sounds and a completely new club experience. John Liddell met with Robbie Russell and Xyrenn Maddox to chat about their upcoming series of nights and their enticing mission statement: “We are a movement formed out of love for the creators, the innovators and the beat-makers of tomorrow.”

The Leeds music scene has seen itself stagnate into the once underground subcultures of house, techno, and drum & bass, now butting heads with one another for the biggest venues of the city. In an age where acts can demand fees based entirely on their YouTube plays and Soundcloud follower count, Youth Club are doing the hours of searching through the vast wealth of undiscovered music the internet has to offer, unearthing the rich seams of incredible production coming out under the guise of the future beat sound. Xyrenn and Robbie are the crate diggers of the online generation. Using the foundation of their award winning weekly radio show the guys have been honing their sound and bringing us exclusive talks with artists, often locking down acts first UK interviews before they then go on to do the likes of DJ Semtex and Tim Westwood. Now, for the first time, they are bringing their own acts to Hifi.

I asked Robbie if he could classify the type of music and acts youth club are bringing to Leeds, and he explained exactly why he'd rather he didn't. “When producers sit down and lock themselves to a category and a sound, whack their BPM to this, put the usual drums on here and then find some shiny noises to put their own spin on it, the sound stagnates. Youth Club is so called because it's bringing in these young musicians creating music without trying to fit into a category.” “Making it simply for the love of it, for the avant garde creation of a sound rather than just sitting down to make a house track or a techno track.” added Xyrenn.

The word ‘future’ is knocked around a lot when defining this sound – when you sit down and take samples but strive to create new beats, breaks and sounds then there's no looking back, only forwards. Emerging music cultures of recent years have been more of a flash in the pan than the forward thinking new sounds they set out to be. Dubstep, and more recently grime, has exploded, rising to the mainstream faster than they can establish themselves and projecting acts to stardom overnight. The Skrillexs’ and the Skeptas become the ambassadors and the sound becomes entrenched and there it festers. The future sound by its very definition will always be the most progressive sound, retaining excitement for artists and audiences alike who are able to catch the movement as it grows.

However, the sound isn't unrecognisable. Like all the best electronic music, it takes samples and sounds from all corners of music before breathing a new life into them with the fresh beats and vibes that will leave you wanting more. This isn't a genre for people who don't like current music and want something new, it's for the lovers of music that

can appreciate the next step in the evolution of the sounds coming out today and more importantly tomorrow.

The boys have chosen Hifi, Leeds intimate gem synonymous with great sounds, even better crowds and always wall to wall dancing. All who are looking for a good time and groove are welcome on the 18th February.

Tickets can be purchased through Resident Advisor.

Follow the links to find Youth Clubs expansive Soundcloud account
https://soundcloud.com/youth_club/ycsp-004-levels-w-jay-prince-jarreau-vandal

plus the exclusive single Youth club put out for R.O.M
https://soundcloud.com/youth_club/rom-falling-for-youyouth-club-01-exclusive

[John Liddell]



[Image: Jay Kotecha]

Weekly Chart

This time last year we were praising the music scene for harking back to its 'queer' roots because of a revamp of disco and all things funky. Nowadays, LGBTQ* musicians are ruling the charts as we gradually begin to accept the sexual diversity of our species. Music has long been an important voice by the people for the people, creating awareness and gradually, acceptance. So, here are a select few of the finest tunes from artists old and new who identify as LGBTQ*, many of them using their art to address problems of identity or social acceptance.



Hercules & Love Affair with Antony Hegarty – Blind

Andy Butler of Hercules and Love Affair has long been heralded as a leader in musical expression and finding solace in art. Growing up in an abusive household, Butler found a fascination with Greek mythology and club music. Hercules and Love Affair was started as a project with a rotating cast, and in 2008, Butler collaborated with Antony Hegarty (now known as Anohni) and created this 7-minute masterpiece. The lyrics deal with growing up as a homosexual in a community that totally rejected him, but embracing freedom and solace when he left.



Hurray for the Riff Raff – The Body Electric

This band released their first album back in 2011, and do not identify as any specific genre, and nor do the members. Unlike many of the more modern LGBTQ* bands, disco is not the favoured genre: a transgender violin player and a queer banjo player make up this bluesy folk troupe.



Sylvester – You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)

An iconic disco tune from Sylvester James who was known for his flamboyant appearance and genderless vocals. He was one of the forerunners in LGBTQ* in the 70s, and grew a strong following around the world. Not only did his music become iconic, but as with many similar artists, Sylvester was a campaigner against the spread of HIV/AIDS, before dying from the disease aged just 41.



Lowell - LGBT

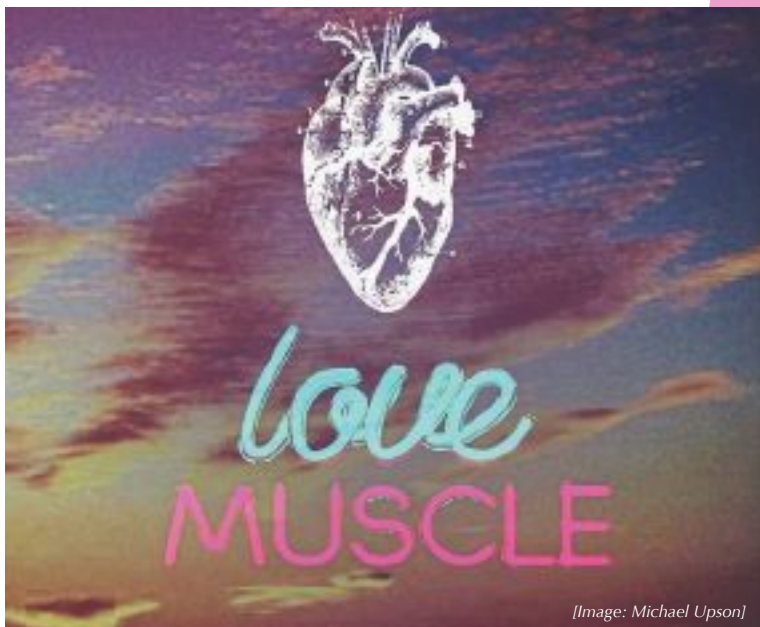
Elizabeth Lowell Boland (AKA Lowell) dropped out of college to become a stripper and is now a musician telling the stories of her experiences and her bisexual inclinations. Released just in 2014, this is a great indie pop tune is a subtle plea for us to equate 'L-G-B-T' with 'L-O-V-E'.



Fatima Yamaha – What's a Girl to Do?

Some of you may have caught Bas Bron (AKA Seymour Bits or Fatima Yamaha) last weekend at our very own Hifi club. This particular track was released back in 2004, and Bron was supposedly confused as to where it would fit into the music scene back then – it cannot be allocated to any specific genre or style. Nonetheless, this track has survived the ebb and flow of 11 years of music, without being prodded and poked or exhausted. Appearing under this female guise reiterates Bron's aim to disassociate genre from good music.

[Flora Tiley]



A Pumping Gay Dance Party

For the more discerning club goer, the Leeds gay scene is a bit of an insult. The selection ranges from Queens Court to Mission, and not much further. People like DJ Michael Upson, Back to Basics associate and former organiser of Leeds' A Rave Called Sharon, are fed up. He's out to change the gay clubbing landscape in Leeds by starting his own night: Love Muscle. After three parties of growing success, the public are starting to cotton on to his more refined style of LGBTQ* fun. Max Waters spoke to Michael Upson about it.

What does Love Muscle sound like?

I like to think it's the Chicagoan definition of house music – which was simply just “music you heard at the warehouse”. So really it's anything from techno to disco to soul & funk old and new. I'm a sucker for a hi-nrg disco record and one that I think perfectly encapsulates that tempo and rhythm is The Break by Kat Mandu. Nothing beats a sweaty room full of people bouncing along to it.

I really seem to get hooked on songs that mimic my own life and feelings, as I think most people do. Being able to relate to a song really makes it come alive so I rarely play a vocal that I can't find some personal feeling in. This record is really one of those and it's Danny T's mid-90's sound at its best. It's also just had a re-release on the new Glitterbox compilation. It's a subtle twist on a bill withers song and given a female vocal takes on a whole new homo-erotic twist. It's class. (Me'Shell NdegéOcello - Who Is He And What Is He To You (Danny T NYDC Mix).

Hearing Rødhad play this in Berghain was one of my finest dancefloor moments and in homage to the church we try to bang it out a bit towards the end of the night. This record just sounds like the inside of Berghain to me – the chimes seem to bounce around of that high ceiling whilst the thundering bass punches out from the imaginary function 1 in my head. (Head High – Rave (Dirt Mix).

What direction do you hope to take Love Muscle? What sets Love Muscle apart from, say, the nights that already exist in gay clubs?

I want to create a safe physical space for LGBTQ* people to meet each other, but with the backdrop of a quality soundtrack. If nightclubs are a place to meet people, it's hard to do that with a straight crowd. I see it all the time, LGBTQ* kids out with their straight friends because there's not a place for them to meet like-minded people. In Leeds if you're gay and you like good music there's very few nights you can go to, which can be very isolating. The main issue is drawing people in. There are two main ways to do this, the most obvious being booking someone big. It's a pretty safe bet to draw a big crowd but it costs a lot and it's not sustainable, also it doesn't allow a community to grow. All you'll get is people coming along once to see that DJ, rather than come down every time because Love Muscle is on.

“I want to create a safe physical space for LGBTQ* people to meet each other, but with the backdrop of a quality soundtrack.”

A lot of gay clubs nowadays have strayed from being a safe place for gay youth, they've become more of a popular destination for hen parties which has led to a lack of cohesion within the gay community. Club owners have capitalised on this and only play music that appeals to the lowest common denominator because they know it's not just a gay crowd coming through the door. Ironically, the scene has been diluted by liberalism.

There's no longer a space in Leeds where LGBTQ* youth can come together to listen to music that they enjoy, and simply be themselves. And outside of London, and Manchester there really isn't anywhere in the UK for them people to do this. Love Muscle is not about turning a profit, it's about creating a space for people to come together and feel like they belong.

Famously clubs in Berlin such as Berghain and Tom's Bar have strict door policies that we're also starting to see creep into the UK. Do you think these help or hinder the cohesion of the community?

I think these places get a bit of a bad reputation. The door policy of Berghain is designed to create a safe LGBTQ* space, and has almost become a victim of its own success. Now it's become an immensely popular club with both straight and LGBTQ* communities, it's just increasingly difficult to maintain that safety and atmosphere that it once enjoyed. I think the restrictive door policy just reflects their commitment to their community, even though there are obviously huge downsides – you don't want to book a holiday to Berlin, hoping to go to Berghain, only to find yourself turned away at the door. Not only does it add a sour taste to your holiday; it also can eat away at someone's confidence. Whilst it would be incredible if Love Muscle became even half as popular as Berghain, I wouldn't want it to get to that state.

The problem of confidence can be a big issue in the LGBTQ* community, are you hoping to try to help this?

Love Muscle is all about creating self-worth in the LGBTQ* community, something that I think is missing now. For me, 'Back to Basics' saved my life, in fact it was the reason I decided to move to Leeds. I hated school, and in my first year I just didn't click with most of the people I met in halls. I met my best friends at 'Basics', and I hope Love Muscle can do the same for others. With this sort of thing, it takes someone to stick his or her head above the parapet. Nightlife scenes have always revolved around individuals, they don't “just happen” If you don't do something yourself, it's not going to. Dave Beer is testament to that. Leeds wouldn't have the incredibly vibrant music culture it has today without him.

How do you think we can get LGBTQ* culture into the mainstream?

There just needs to be more positive gay role models, and outside of the entertainment industry. The world needs more Tom Daley's and Casey Stoney's. LGBTQ* people of great-note outside of the TV/Film shy away from being visible because of institutionally homophobic and racist organisations like the FA. For example, football is the moral compass for so many around the world because it's such a huge part of their life. These sporting associations could do so much more to support their players but they don't; for example, Thomas Hitzlberger only came out as gay after he retired (FACT: his beard wife taught me German.) It's not just in the UK though, in the US Michael Sam was tipped to be the next big thing in the NFL, but his sexuality put a lot of teams off signing him. We are seeing a lot of positive laws come about, but there are still severe problems in culture. LGBTQ* youth who don't fit that stereotype presented in the media of the butch lesbian or fem gay man still don't feel like they fit into society and end up being the most susceptible to mental health issues.

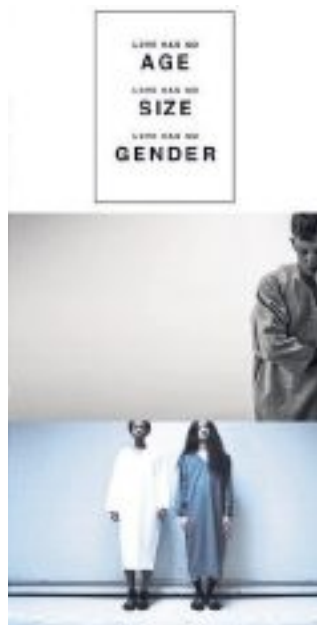
There's a real fear right now that the UK's nightlife is under threat, and lots of different things are being blamed. What's your take on it?

Primarily it's high rent prices that are responsible for big clubs closing down. The activities put on in nightclubs don't provide enough money to pay the rent for the often-large physical space that they take up. It's far easier for landlords to make the money they need by chopping it up into flats than worrying about whether club promoters have done a good job to pull a crowd on a Saturday night. Plus the councils need the money because their budgets have been cut and 40 flats pay far more council tax than one commercial space so they're more than happy to dish out noise abatement orders. I believe that good nightlife still exists in abundance, though just in lots of different microcosms. It's a lot easier for small groups of people to come together with the invention of social media and create mini scenes of their own without the budgets of massive night clubs. Everyone is still going out, they're just in different spaces. Love Muscle is similar, I know there are lots of people who want this sort of thing in Leeds, they just need to be told it physically exists. Otherwise people revert to virtual spaces, like Grindr. People clearly want to come together, that's why these apps exist but I really do think they encourage risky sexual behaviour in some people. I just hope that Love Muscle can be this physical space that promotes a far more positive and rewarding way of meeting people.

[Max Waters and Oli Walkden]

Love Muscle's next night will be at Whatf Chambers on 19th March with special guest, Gideon from NYC Downlow.

The Amsterdam Unisex Brand



Amsterdam is known for innovation and creativity, with its fashion scene home to many established designers and up-and-coming talent. Many of the designs are at the forefront of fashion trends, acknowledging and exploring new social constructs. As gender binaries continue to blur, the trend for gender-neutral clothing is constantly gaining momentum. Themes of androgyny and unisex clothing have been apparent since 2011, but this year we can really see the emerging trend come to light across all market levels. Whilst gender blurring runway styles are grabbing most of the headlines, mid market and high street brands begin to tap into this trend across the world.

Nobody has to Know is a unisex brand found in Amsterdam. It is a concept store that uses locally manufactured garments to blur the lines of age, sex and gender, with the philosophy that it is more important to feel comfortable in the clothes you wear rather than focus on their intended gender. Their collections are intended to free people from stereotypes and place focus on the garment itself and how it fits with each individual identity.

"NO SIZE, NO GENDER, NO AGE. Wear what you love and the rest NOBODY HAS TO KNOW"

All garments are without size labels furthering their casual, minimal feel. The store space incorporates other brands and vintage pieces to create a sense of community. Taking a step back from the fast pace of the fashion industry, NHTK is beginning to incorporate slow fashion values into the everyday world. Combined with the recognition of a cultural undercurrent and social issue the brand also highlights the backlash towards the labeling found within society and the shift towards a more caring industry.

[Olivia Deith]



Japanese Menswear

Japan might be nearly six-thousand miles away, but that hasn't stopped the very best of Japanese menswear hitting British shores. High street retailers as well as luxury designers, the country's unique brand of simplicity, paired with stacks of personality, it's unsurprising that its home-grown labels have resonated with style experts on an international scale. So whether you're new to the Japanese fashion world or are looking to add to your line-up of eastern pieces, this week we look at the biggest players on the field.

Uniqlo

Uniqlo has been a high street favourite for style-conscious guys for a while now, with the Japanese retailer producing high-quality basics and simple, laid-back designs since the mid-eighties. Today, the brand is a one-stop shop for all your wardrobe staples, with new linen, polo shirt and sports wear being released in recent months.

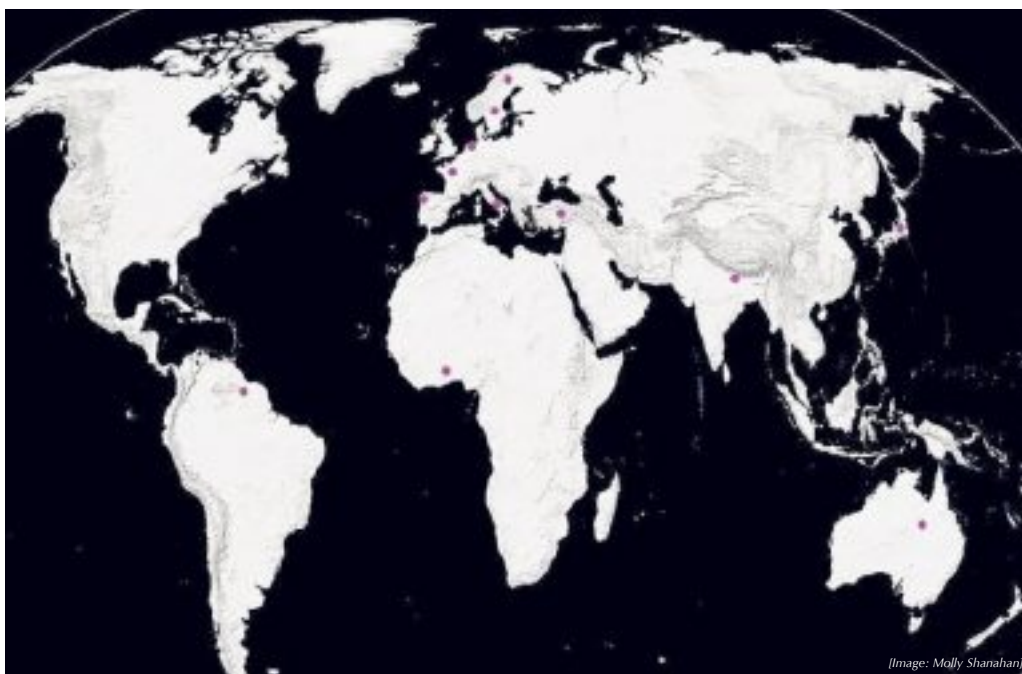
Comme des Garçons

Don't let the name fool you: Comme des Garçons (which translates as "Like Boys") actually hails from Tokyo and not France. Founded by husband and wife partnership Adrian Joffe and Rei Kawakubo, this label is deeply embedded in the European fashion scene, with shows as Paris fashion week every season.

Bape

No other brand exudes Japan's unique brand of street style like Bape, aka A Bathing Ape. The brainchild of DJ and producer Nigo back in 2003, the label has become recognised across the globe for its ape emblem, camo prints and cartoon graphics, adding a touch of child-like fun to the most cutting edge of urban prints.

[Grant Wilkinson]



[Image: Molly Shanahan]

Australian focus

Australian fashion certainly isn't all flip-flops and board shorts; to the contrary, the land of eternal sunshine has produced some of the most popular fashion bloggers around; Harper and Harley, Chronicles of Her and Gary Pepper are a few to check out if sleek styling and beautiful street photography are your thing. It's not just the bloggers making waves globally, from high end to high street Aussie designers are landing on our shores left, right and centre.

The Fifth Label is bringing cool tailoring and bold shapes, perfect for creating a unique street style. From culottes to candy pink knits, look to Zolando.com for the best bits of from The Fifth, suited to our slightly cooler temperatures. But, if there's one style the Aussies have really nailed, it's boho. Perfect for the summer festivals, think crochet crop tops and floral playsuits mixed with grungy vintage pieces. Get this look from Verge Girl, a Brisbane based boutique that ships worldwide. For something more high end, Ellery is one of the best of Australia's designers and their Spring 2016 collection would look stunning in any hemisphere.

[Bella Brooks]

Scandi Street Style

Since living in Oslo, I've noticed a few things about Scandinavian style: sneakers beat heels, layers beat the weather and black beats everything. The focal contrast, between street style in the UK and the Nordic countries is rooted in the weather they experience. Scandinavian style is chic but above all, practical- crop tees and bare knees for the most part just ain't gonna fly.

Practicality, along with a natural ability to ski, and a desire to drink copious amounts of coffee, seems embedded in Norwegians and it's reflected in their style. Monochrome layers and flat shoes are a must, whereas a quick flick through 'London street style' on Pinterest reveals brave, block colours, faux fur, pastel hair and sequin skirts. This is not to say Scandinavian style is dull by any means, it's achingly cool, modest and pleasingly androgynous.

As we enter Spring and the sun is finally shining, I decided to take to the streets and shops of Oslo to catch some stylish Scandinavians. Sophie teams a pair of rolled up Mom jeans with an oversized dark green scarf and bright red lipstick for a pop of colour. Robin has matched a khaki jacket with ripped jeans and a grey beanie, because it's still a bit chilly. Swedish sisters Maddy and Alex are effortlessly cool, round sunnies, pastel socks, metallic overcoat, oversized scarf- yep, yep, yep. I can even get down with the reebok bum bag. I fell for Caroline and Ingild duster coats - which are actually different - in Monki. Both were teamed simply with some sneakers, giving a casual look, perfect for wandering around Oslo's shops.

[Charly Bowen]



South Asian Design



Tarun Tahiliani

Tahiliani's stunning designs see rich grandeur in modern silhouettes. Appealing to the contemporary international individual whilst keeping to his Indian roots and artistry, expect deep tones; saffron, rust and burgundy, in variety of drapery, flattering cuts and handiwork from gorgeous chikankari embroidery, mirror work to velvet appliqués. Labelled the 'Karl Lagerfeld of India' he's renowned for allowing Indian couture to move with the times and the developing technology.

Fahad Hussayn

Offering collections for both menswear and bridal wear, Hussayn is one of the younger designers leaving a lasting impression on the fashion world, giving us contemporary Pakistani styles with a regal touch. Mentioned for his exaggerated styling, each of his detailed creations are relatively distinctive. Delicate embellishments and bead work on silks, cottons and lawn, Hussayn's exceptional work is truly a masterpiece.

Prabal Gurung

Nepalese designer Gurung has undeniably made a name for himself with his designs seen on the likes of Jennifer Lawrence, Michelle Obama, and Kate Middleton. In a proud stance his collections frequently reference his homeland with the use of bold, vibrant colours and his AW15 collection an ode to Nepal after the devastating earthquake. A clean take on glamour, sophisticated outlines and an astute, artistic eye for detail has led Gurung to becoming a distinguished designer.

Zolaykha Sherzad @ Zarif Giovanni Battista Giorgini

Zolaykha Sherzad has created a brand encompassing culture and tradition with stylish and fashion forward pieces. Ethically produced in her native Kabul, all materials are sourced in Afghanistan and tailoring and embroidery is undertaken by locals with a modern aesthetic and high quality feel in mind. Hand made coats and jackets embossed using traditional weaving and embroidery techniques are the remarkable outcome.

[Rukaiyah Dadhiwala]



Italy: A Year Abroad Perspective

The Italy-enthusiast Dianne Hales wrote once that "as a country Italy makes no sense". Indeed, united into a nation only a century and a half ago, Italy is a patchwork of regions, cultures and landscapes.

In 1951, Giovanni Battista Giorgini held a fashion show in Florence, establishing a nascent international scene for Italian couture, and since then Italy's history of fashion has become notorious. Milan, we know, is one of the fashion capitals of the industry. Accessories, we are told, is to an Italian like tea is to the English. To be Italian, we have been assured, is to be effortlessly glamorous.

Milan and Rome are the famous homes of fashion, but the rest of Italy carves out an identity for itself too. In Bologna there can be found a bohemian abundance of dreadlocks and harem pants, the by-product of the infamously left-wing, student-orientated city. Where I live, in Salerno, the boys often accessorize ripped jeans with colourful Nike 'Just Do It' mini backpacks and Adidas Superstars or Stan Smiths while girls dress in black from head to toe, preferring sleek leather and black heeled boots. Milan may have a founded a culture of couture, still today splashed across our monthly Vogues, but Italy is an incredibly multifaceted country, its style established by a culture of variety.

[Mamie Hampshire]



Pushing The Boundaries

The clothes we wear can help to construct (or perhaps more crucially deconstruct) the gender binaries that we as consumers of fashion have come to so rigidly prescribe to. But how far is gender fluid fashion the future of clothing for mass markets? And more importantly how central is its role for the LGBT community? Of course the desire to dress in a non-gendered way is, in many ways, no more related to sexuality than it is age or race. However, ungendered clothing is an example of the ways in which this generation is increasingly embracing choice. Fashion is beginning to truly reflect who we are as people, which doesn't fit neatly into a box.

Nicola Formichetti is one of the biggest names in this scene, as artistic director at Diesel, he's the mastermind behind the recent denim ads across Porn Hub. His next fashion foray? Genderless clothing with brand Nicopanda. Through projects such as these, designers and fashion moguls like Formichetti are proving something that seems to have been ignored for too long: fashion, sexuality and gender are related. In fact, more than related they're practically mutually exclusive, through both their presence or lack thereof.

A recent example of the attempt to question gender binaries is Jaden Smith's role in the Louis Vuitton spring/summer 16 womenswear campaign. The fashion houses' designer Ghesquiere commented on the decision to include the young star, suggesting that Jaden represents a generation 'that is free of manifestos and questions about gender'. The seventeen year old has been praised for such a bold gender fluid statement, however he has also faced criticism about the questions this kind of gender blurring creates.

One particular critic is journalist Katie Glover, voicing a trans perspective in defense of gender binaries and citing the importance of clearer distinctions between 'men' and 'women'. Commenting on Jaden Smith's LV campaign she speaks not only of her concerns that a move into genderless clothing will prevent trans people being able to fully identify as either men or women, but also that the inclusion of someone like Jaden - who has not identified as trans - in a campaign such as this is actually taking something away from the trans community - merely a boy dressing in women's clothes.

“While gender is undoubtedly always a question in my work, I don't see it as a boundary.” Martín Gutierrez

Her criticism is in some ways understandable, but gender neutral clothing is perhaps sometimes more about non-conforming than it is anything else. The blurring of gender binaries and trans issues are potentially linked, but are by no means the same. The sooner we consider gender neutral clothing as distinctly separate from being trans; at times finding crossovers and at times finding none at all - the less this kind of criticism may be grounded in anything.

Genderless clothing is opening the doors for true self expression - we need to look no further than Martín Gutierrez for proof. Discovered by Saint Laurent, who used his single Hands Up for an editorial back in 2012, his music has since been featured by several houses such as Dior and Acne. As the industry continues to shake off the restrictive shackles of expectation and tradition and head towards a future of collaboration, it is artists such as Gutierrez that are coming to define what fashion means in 2016. These hybrid talents; model / artist / activist... (the list goes on) are the individuals taking the industry by storm. These young talents are refusing to be restricted by anything, least of all gender.

As more and more labels work towards gender neutral lines there are clear distinctions to be made. This is more than simply 'androgyny', a word that increasingly seems to over simplify the concept of gender fluidity. Genderless dressing isn't about a woman preferring the shape of more masculine tailoring, or simply the inclusion of a man in a womenswear campaign. Instead, this focuses on pushing or breaking gender stereotypes that we have been programmed to see as normal for too long. Clothes can be an expression of so much of your identity; your mood, your surroundings, your beliefs and the way you view your own body. Why should our gender be the overarching thing that defines how we are able to express ourselves? As the popularity of gender neutral brands such as Amsterdam based 'Nobody Has To Know' are proving, there's not simply a space for this type of clothing today, but an unequivocal need.

[Molly Shanahan]



Good afternoon.

You know when you open the fridge and a load of food comes out that people have foolishly piled on to a high shelf, and you're knocked to the ground by an avalanche of broccoli and extra mature cheddar? It's been a bit like that for loyal scribblers these last couple of weeks. We've had a tremendously well-attended event at LS6 café, a gorgeous new issue that we have put together at superhuman speed, and now this: the first Gryphon page of the year, the final piece of this scribblesome trinity. The thing you've all been waiting for. Below you can find a delicious platter of art, designed to get you ready for the issue, on sale this week from Wednesday to Friday in the University Union.

Yours proudly,

The Scribe

Blisters

The valley aches
Where it used to dream,
The trees are dead
But once were green.
The buzzards curse,
They used to sing and
The pylon is metal
When it once was string.
My clothes feel soaking,
There're blisters on my feet.
I used to run up this valley
But there're blisters on my feet.
Each floorboard did creak
Yet now it will sigh,
Under the weight
Of memory's great cry.
There are blisters all over my feet.

The brass knob is stained
Where once it was clear,
The view was so distant
But now is too near.
The food tasted fresh
So of course it tastes old,
And the sun left here once
So now it's gone cold.
And my shoes do not fit
So there're blisters on my feet,
And if I try to squeeze them on it
Hurts the blisters on my feet.
Your home is now dead
Because you are dead too.
Your home is now dead
Because you are dead too.
There are blisters all over my feet.

James Carroll

I Will Wait

Though the stars forfeit this life,
Though the Darkness conjures the Light,
Though the Lamb makes love to the knife
And is consumed by everlasting night,
And Harmony troubled by natural strife,
The End cannot take me tonight.

Though the crescendo is upon my ears
And the music not yet begun,
Though the birds have taken to the years
Born in the death of our sun,
And it is only the madman who hears,
The End has not yet won

Though the mist is now gathering fast,
Each brumous breath touching my heel,
Though the air takes memories past
And Lethwards casts them, though I kneel
And invoke false names I knew not of last,
The End is to me not anymore real.

Though it is not long in mortal state,
For the Nightingale wills me through,
That I can bodily resist the fate
Of slumberous Death the Poet named true,
It is yet in me to ask the bell to wait
And toll not for me without you.

For you exist in starlight captured
Between death's deep melody,
And walk in beauty enraptured
Through a midnight eternity,
And though we must oft be parted
The End, with you, will come slower for me.

Jonathan James Green



Carla Menas



[Image: A42 Films]

Room Is Hard Not To Fall In Love

Director Lenny Abrahamson's *Room* is an astonishing feat of cinema. What could be a deeply unsettling story instead manages to rise up above its sombre start to become a life affirming, joyous film. Based on the best selling book, it has been beautifully adapted with a delicately written screenplay by the original author Emma Donoghue. The film opens in a tiny 10-foot by 10-foot soundproof garden shed, where Joy, or Ma, and her son Jack are held captive by the man who kidnapped Joy seven years ago. The film could easily fall into this claustrophobic narrative; detailing the feeling of entrapment and the climax of the escape, but *Room* has carefully not marketed itself as a thriller – because it isn't.

In the five-year-old eyes of Jack (Jacob Tremblay), the tiny room in which he lives is literally his world. Up until just after his birthday Ma (Brie Larson) has allowed him to think that only what he can see is real. Anything outside the four walls is nothing but a dream, or something that only exists inside the two-dimensional TV; and so Jack is allowed to exist in a state of blissful ignorance. Jack's tiny universe is brought to life by the talented cinematography of Danny Cohen, whose close-up shots of the everyday items Jack greets every morning like old friends (Sink, Lamp, Toilet) make the tiny space, with its egg-shell snake and floating toy boat in the cistern, seem almost like domestic bliss. Until, that is, the camera cuts out again and you're reminded with a jolt that whilst it's Jack's universe, it's still very much Ma's prison.

Jack's innocence is fleeting however, as Ma starts to tell him of his grandmother's

house, places outside the room, and Jack's universe is cracked open. Yes, they do escape (no spoilers – it's in the trailer) but for mother and son, life outside is perhaps more difficult than imagined and freedom seems to come at a cost. What keeps the mood afloat is the strength of their relationship and the fierce love between them, and most of all, discovering the real world and all that comes with it through Jack's eyes.

Brie Larson is Oscar nominated for her role as Ma/Joy, and rightly so. Sometimes her performance is heart-wrenching to watch. The need to protect Jack drives Joy to desperation and frustration, and the on-going wretched pressure to keep up normality for the sake of her son is perfectly captured in Larson's weary face. There is equal happiness and pride in her cracked smiles as well though. An Oscar nod would not even have been amiss for the nine-year-old Jacob Tremblay, who carries the film with his unfaltering energy and innocence, making Jack's journey of discovery utterly believable.

From stark beginnings, this film battles its way through to its happy ending, and is not without its dips along the way. Ultimately this genuine tale of a mother-son bond and childhood innocence is a gem of a movie, reminding us to be grateful for the simple things we have. 'You're gonna love it,' Ma tells Jack, 'the world.' Simply put, it would be hard not to love this film too.

[Heather Nash]

Chemsex: Hard-hitting, Honest and Raw

One of the most brutal and hard-hitting documentaries of this year, William Fairman and Matt Gogarty present an emotionally-compelling film about the lives of those affected by Chemsex. Chemsex is a term used to refer to the use of drugs in a sexual context, often indulging in methadone, GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate) and crystal meth. This emerging scene is known to be developing within London. The city has become a hub for drug use. *Chemsex* leaves nothing to the imagination and provides an honest look at a worsening epidemic in the gay community.

Chemsex targets the use of drugs in the gay community, attempting to answer why they engage in these activities, despite being fully aware of the danger. Is it just extreme hedonistic wants or does the issue go deeper? For many, Chemsex provides a sense of euphoric escape for a community which is still afflicted by HIV and homophobia. The film focuses on the extreme subculture that's soared in popularity in the last few years. This growing phenomenon can be attributed to the popularity of mobile apps such as *Grindr* that make anonymous sex much more possible, at the click of a button.

Interviews from men who have all been affected by this epidemic hit hard, as you learn that many want to escape this way of life, however have found themselves too deeply entwined to free themselves. David Stuart, one of the interviewees, is an advisor at London's Soho Sexual Health Clinic on Dean Street who attempts to find the much deeper causes for this substance abuse. Dr Stuart feels that chemsex is causing a medical health emergency in the gay community as the spread of HIV and Hepatitis C

begins to increase due to the lack of protection in chemsex weekends.

The film's message is not one of education, but one that looks at the anguish and isolation these individuals endure. Forced to come to terms with the consequences of experimenting with such dangerous drugs. Whilst the film provides a powerful story through (at times unnecessary) graphic images and intimate interviews, it fails to inform the audience on how to protect yourself if you do engage in Chemsex. Neither does it delve into the reasons why these men engage in transgressive activities nor the benefits these men gain from chemsex, which is only glossed over. These issues can lead to the stigmatisation over a community, encouraging scaremongering from the media by putting out such a cautionary message, yet the filmmakers' concern is with those who are already involved, rather than preventing this altogether.

Nonetheless, *Chemsex* provides an honest account of these men's lives who struggle to break away from this scene. It is a sad film as you witness the struggles these men face as they try to free themselves of this consuming addiction. An engaging film that really humanises these people and who want to enjoy sex sober, and live normal lives. At times it can be tough to watch, yet what you get from the film is a complex understanding of these men and what the mountains they face every day.

[Ellecia Sands]



[Image: Focus Features]

Should Eddie Redmayne Have Played The Danish Girl?

FOR Unless you've been living under a rock for the past few months you would have heard about Oscar winner Eddie Redmayne's casting as Lili Elbe in *The Danish Girl*. Born Einar Wegener, Lili was the first recorded person to have male to female sex reassignment surgery so she could live her life as Lili Elbe.

In recent years the portrayals of trans characters have shifted into the mainstream and films like *The Danish Girl* and TV shows like *Transparent* have brought more attention to the cause. We now see trans actresses like Laverne Cox gracing red carpets and our TV screens without so much as a bat of an eyelash. So why would a cis gendered Eddie Redmayne be the person chosen to portray the inspirational Lili Elbe?

According to the director, Tom Hooper, "There's something in Eddie that is drawn to the feminine; he's played women before, most notably Viola in *Twelfth Night*. In our film, Lili is presented as a man for two-thirds of the movie, and her transition happens quite late on, so that played a part in coming to a decision." In this case then, there could be something quite unsettling about "remasculinizing" a person who has already transitioned to play a man for more than two-thirds of the film. In some ways it feels like it is undermining the journey they have experienced.

Alternatively, to take a philosophical view on our concepts of gender you can easily argue that by casting a cis actor in the role of Lili demonstrates the meaninglessness of physical gender. As Hooper points out about Redmayne, there is something feminine in his presence and he has a natural gender fluidity that lends itself to the role. If we can accept gender is a construct of society then we can accept that physical gender is meaningless and far more open to interpretation than we would like to think. Therefore the role should be cast purely on talent, of which Eddie Redmayne has in droves. He brings sincerity and understanding of the pain Lili went through, in preparation for the role he got involved with trans groups to get to know the community and understand the process so he didn't take the role lightly.

This film has shone a light on the lack of parts for trans actors in the film industry and Hooper has said himself that this is an issue that needs to be addressed. Many of the supporting roles of *The Danish Girl* were filled by trans actors which does show a move towards the acceptance of the community in the film industry. What we really need to see is trans people in roles of all types and not limiting them purely to playing post transition roles. The film industry is wildly discriminatory and a movement towards casting people of all backgrounds irrespective of gender in all roles would be a fantastic move forward.

[Nicole Stewart Rushworth]

AGAINST *The Danish Girl* (2015), directed by Tom Hooper, is a film inspired by the life of Lili Elbe, born Einar Wegener, one of the first people to undergo gender reassignment surgery. This beautifully filmed and performed costume drama has been celebrated by many reviewers, including some from the BBC and The New York Times, for capturing the zeitgeist of our time. In recent years, notable figures, such as athlete Caitlyn Jenner and actress Laverne Cox from the TV series *Orange Is The New Black*, have been raising awareness about trans people. *The Danish Girl* could hardly have been released at a more opportune time. However, Hooper's too delicate treatment of the content ultimately results in a missed opportunity for the transgender movement. The world is ready for a bolder representation of transsexuality than the one *The Danish Girl* offers.

Given recent backlashes against the casting of cisgender actors in transgender roles, such as Jared Leto as Rayon in *Dallas Buyers Club*, it is hardly surprising that Hooper has received open criticism for casting Eddie Redmayne as Lili Elbe. That is not to detract from the quality of Redmayne's performance; his moving interpretation of Lili Elbe has rightly stirred Oscar buzz for the actor. Prominent trans activist Paris Lees even spoke out that if any cisgender person is "going to do [transgender representation] justice then I'm happy it's Eddie." However, for all his talent and the "gender fluidity" which Hooper identifies in Redmayne, the actor remains cisgender. An interpretation of Lili Elbe by a transgender actor would have been immeasurably more moving, authentic and deep.

There was also hope that the casting of a transgender actor as Lili Elbe would open doors for the trans community. There is a pool of talented transgender performers, yet so far it has been largely neglected in Hollywood. Furthermore, in 31 US states, a person can be fired on the basis of transsexuality. Perhaps to compensate his lead role casting decision, Hooper cast 20-30 trans actors in supporting cisgender roles. This is a remarkable action, but still not enough.

Just as Hooper played it safe casting Redmayne as Lili, he was too cautious in his direction. The film downplays the hardships of being transgender. Too much emphasis is placed on Gerda and Lili's marriage and friendship, while too little attention is paid to the turmoil Lili surely experienced in her social life during and after her transition. In the film, a few doctors perceive transsexuality as a mental illness and only in one scene does Lili suffer physical and verbal abuse. The support she receives from friends and acquaintances almost makes her transition seem uncontroversial. Overall, the storyline fails to pack a proper punch in order to contribute to a deeper understanding of what it means to be transgender: if only Hooper had been bolder in his casting and direction.

[Mariana Avelino]



[Image: TruTV]

The Art of Drag: What Ru Can Do For You!

Start your engines! That's right, *RuPaul's Drag Race* is back for season 8 of this cult phenomenon reality series. Wait, what? You haven't heard? Where have you been! *RuPaul's Drag Race* is a reality TV show which each year sets to find out America's next top drag superstar, awarded by superstar model of the universe, RuPaul. Imagine *America's Next Top Model* but with drag queens and ten times more shade. At the end of each week, two drag queens must fight it out on stage in the most epic lip sync of their lives. The series achieved cult status in recent years and since its addition to Netflix, it has been amassing more fans ever since. In fact, it was RUvealed last year that Jonathan Ross has purchased the rights for a UK version of the series, and many fans await in anticipation to see how it will turn out. The question on everyone's lips however is just why a reality show such as RuPaul is so important for LGBTQ* issues and its community? How can we find inspiration from drag as an art form? Well, let's delve in and enter the RUiverse.

RuPaul originally created the series to elevate drag as an art form, and it's clear that its influence has been far greater than originally anticipated. I discovered the series a few years ago when starting university. At first, I thought it was a novelty but when I realised the amount of work the contestants put in, I was amazed. I delved into the scene here at Leeds, visiting clubs such as Viaduct which host a range of drag cabaret. It made me realise that these were people's careers and the contestants were competing for more than just a title. They were competing for their dream goal.

What does drag mean? Many of us who have been subjected to gender studies will argue the idea that drag mocks identity, and is a satire on societal expectations of gender. Others, less informed, may think it's just a novelty and bares no importance to the LGBTQ* community. Wrong. So wrong. I would agree that drag mocks identity, but it goes further beyond LGBTQ* issues and in fact, inspired many more communities. As a G myself, I enjoyed the empowerment and courage that it takes to perform as drag. My theatre background allows me to understand characterisation and the portrayal of a role on stage, but I see more than just a brand in many of the queens. The show has been so powerful for the scene that

“Many of us can take real inspiration from drag without having to drag up, and I would urge those who aren't necessarily involved with LGBTQ+ directly to see how drag can inspire you too”

many queens are still basking in their glory, touring the world. We've had a fair few queens tour Leeds too. From season six winner, Bianca Del Rio, to show favourites, Wilam, Latrice Royale, Courtney Act and Alaska Thunderf*** 5000, it is clear that there is a cult following for the queens. If you are interested in seeing some drag, Viaduct showbar always have cabaret acts throughout the week, and I'm sure that many more *RuPaul Drag Race* stars will visit our city in months to come.

While it is exciting to see the queens, it can come with a price. Paying up to £40 to say 'hi' and have a photo is all fun and part of the drag club culture, but I think that in order to get the most out of drag, you have to see its importance beyond the stage antics and performances. Let's have a look at RuPaul herself. Rupaul has had an amazing career, a key highlights of this was being the covergirl for MAC makeup in the 90s was a strong standing point for challenging gender ideals. Ru's career took off again with this new season but we see a clear divide between Rupaul Charles in the workroom and Rupaul the drag queen. This shows the difference between character and self, and it's important to realise that if it takes a character for someone to identify themselves then fine, so be it.

Many of us can take real inspiration from drag without having to drag up, and I would urge those who aren't necessarily involved with LGBTQ* directly to see how drag can inspire you too. For example, I see myself as a drag ambassador rather than an aspiring drag queen (I don't really suit dresses, unfortunately). However, I did gain heaps of confidence by watching the show and so can you. Drag isn't just for the LGBTQ* community, it's for equality. I was impressed to see so many straight fans when I saw the AAA girls in Mission. Studying here at Leeds has never been a problem for my sexuality, I've never felt part of a minority or segregated community and I owe a lot of that to the arts I enjoy here in the city. From drag queens to theatre and galleries or even nights out, I take inspiration from forms such as drag and embody their confidence. Because, after all, as RuPaul so joyfully says: 'if you can't love yourself then how the hell you gonna love anyone else?' Amen!

[Mark McDougall]



What's on: LGBTQ* Special

February is LGBT History Month and Leeds is no stranger to supporting LGBT rights. With an extensive range of activities happening throughout the month, here are a few hand chosen by the arts editors for you to check out.

Leeds Queer Stories: Leeds City Museum

Running until May 2016.

It hosts its own drag cabaret show every Friday and Saturday nights from 21:30. This exhibition engages with new audiences and has emerged from the recently successful Leeds Art Gallery queer cultural project 'PoMoGaze'.

The Viaduct Showbar

It hosts its own drag cabaret show every Friday and Saturday nights from 21:30. Other show times are as follows: Monday 11pm, Thursday 11pm & Saturday 6-8pm

Dancing Bear at West Yorkshire Playhouse

Wednesday 10th February.

This performance will explore sexuality and gender through dance, live music, drag performance and text.

Check out our review for this show in next week's issue.

Transitions: Launch and Exhibition

Launch: 17:30-19:30, Friday 13th February.

To celebrate LGBT History Month, Inkwell has invited artists from LGBT communities around the UK to submit work addressing the theme of "Transitions", by selecting an early work and a recent piece from their practice, to show progression and development.

The exhibition is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00-17:00 until Tuesday 17 March.

Leeds Beckett University. Claiming our Histories: Lesbian, Working Class and Poor – Reflections on the Lives of Three Lesbians.

15:00-17:00, Wednesday 17th February.

This talk portrays the lives and stories of three working class lesbians. The talk will be aimed at the effects of multiple oppressions which these three women have been subjected to.

Leeds Labour Students LGBT History Month Movie Night: Pride

Monday 22nd February.

Another chance to watch the critically acclaimed film which depicts a group of LGBT right activists affected during the miner's strike of 1984. Stars Bill Nighy and Imelda Staunton.

An LGBT History of Leeds

Thursday 25th February.

Third Floor Meeting Room, Central Library. 18:30-19:30

To mark LGBT Month 2016 this talk will discuss some local examples of media reporting, lesbian and gay social spaces and political activism since the 1950s, and provide time for discussion.

[Mark McDougall]

Treasures of the Brotherton

If you've ever spent a prolonged period in the Brotherton library you will have noticed Special Collections, a double doorway on level 4 leading to the University's collection of over 200,000 rare books and objects. Arts subjects often like to take their wide-eyed first years up there during induction week to show off the copy of William Shakespeare's 1623 first folio in an air conditioned room whose temperatures would have you booking in for the next available appointment at Leeds Student Medical Centre with a blocked nose.

Now the pencils-only, gloved, padded and nerve-gnawing experience of handling really old books has been done away. Thanks to a £1.4 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and a 'generous donation from the Brotherton-Ratcliffe family', you can now look (but not touch) at these objects which are attractively displayed and ordered behind glass cases inside the sparkly Treasures of the Brotherton gallery inside Parkinson Building. Treasures of the Brotherton displays around 100 items from the University Library's collections and delightfully arranges them into key themes that reflect the wider collection. The themes, 'from hand to print', 'imagination and creativity', and 'understanding our world', are designed so that the sensitive objects on display in the permanent exhibition can be regularly replaced and changed to aid with conservation and to present the range and wealth of fascinating objects hidden in the collection stores.

The dimmed lighting and stylish text panels conjure the feeling of walking into a futuristic version of how you'd imagine Baron Brotherton's parlour. An ethereal Shakespeare's first folio, with the appearance of floating atop a thin stand, greets you as you enter and meets the expectation of the type of priceless (almost – a similarly aged first folio sold ten years ago for £2.8 million), treasures you will encounter. Each theme is paired with an interactive screen to browse more information about individual objects which, on first glance, is extremely helpful, but through more thorough investigation the text on the screen, especially in the temporary exhibition, is copied and pasted to fit more than one object, making the effort of trawling through looking for new information a little arduous.

The temporary exhibition is the thought-provoking and immensely fascinating *On Conscientious Grounds: Objection and Resistance in the First World War*. The exhibition offers a look at conscientious objectors who rejected conscription for political, social or religious reasons. The Liddle collection provides the gallery with the letters, photographs and court documents which make up the intriguing narrative of the men who refused to fight and the women who supported their cause. Individual stories link to the wider narrative and create a personal level of understanding the socialists, pacifists, religious conscientious objectors to the war who were so demonised in their time. This temporary exhibition is exactly the provocative and deeply interesting display that was needed to open this new gallery and to introduce us to what promises to be an exciting programme of constant change and movement at the Treasures of the Brotherton.

[Hayley Reid]



[Image: Fullbright]

LGBTQ* in Gaming: Love, Greenbriar, Borderlands and Talos

Applying terms like tolerant or open-minded seems outmoded in the 21st century, as accepting someone's sexual preference is pretty much a case of simply being a decent human being. Oh for a time when we can count ourselves like the Asari from *Mass Effect*, who in addition to rocking sapphire-blue skin, didn't give a damn about the genitals of the person they fell in love with, their mono-gender species rendering them 'conservative yet convivial' towards other races and genders. The Asari's attitude towards gender could be the reason why they 'favour compromise and cooperation over conflict'.

There's a long way to go, but LGBTQ* characters in gaming are gradually seeing their fair share of representation. Doctor Samuels, from *Borderlands 2*, is a female scientist in the Pandora Wildlife Exploitation Reserve (yes, you read that right) and has a wife, which is casually mentioned by the grade-A douchebag Handsome Jack when he threatens various acts of violence against her wife if she doesn't follow his orders. Even Handsome Jack, the homicidal arrogant narcissist, doesn't make a derogatory comment about a lesbian relationship. So here's something I never thought I'd be saying: be like Handsome Jack.

Providing players with the choice to play LGBTQ* characters has been used in *Fallout*, where you can choose perks which allow you to chat up your own sex for either combat boosts or additional dialogue choices. But it's in *Skyrim* where same-sex marriage comes to the fore, as you can marry any race (even the scaly Argonians), and any gender. But what makes *Skyrim*'s inclusion of same-sex marriage commendable is the Bethesda Marketing strategist Pete Hines' refusal to make a big deal out of it or exploit the inclusion of same-sex marriage for a pat on the back, which is exactly the kind of attitude one should have towards equal representation in gaming. On Twitter Hines quashed any rumours of same-sex marriage being hushed up, saying that it wasn't 'hush hush, just not making a huge deal out of it. You can marry anyone [...] doesn't matter what you're playing'.

Gone Home is also worth a mention here, for paying testament to the courage it takes to come out. As you wander through your old home you pick up scraps from Samantha Greenbriar's journal, your little sister. She documents, almost

without realising it, gradually falling in love with Lonnie DeSoto, a girl in her class who abandons joining the army so they can be together (no points for guessing why being a private in the army in 1995 might be some impediment to their relationship). Beautifully written and acted, in particular where Sam recounts the heart-breaking conversation with her parents telling her it's just a phase, that she 'just hasn't met the right boy yet', *Gone Home* really makes you feel Sam's vulnerability but also her confidence as she remains true to herself.

“Bethesda's Marketing strategist Pete Hines' refusal to make a big deal out of or exploit the inclusion of same-sex marriage for a pat on the back is exactly the kind of attitude one should have towards equal representation in gaming.”

Dragon Age: Inquisition's transsexual character, Cremisius 'Krem' Aclassi, was designed using input from the trans community. However, there are instances of communities reacting incredibly negatively to video games approaches to sexuality. The Tumblr community took umbrage with *Fire Emblem Fates* as Soleil, a bisexual girl, is given a magic powder which makes her see all women as men and all men as women to get her to practise talking to women confidently, as her adoration of women is such that she often faints when speaking to attractive girls. This results in Soleil falling in love with the male protagonist who she views as a woman, saying it doesn't matter whether she fell in love with him as a man or as a woman, what matters is the person. Some Tumblr users took this to infer that she was trying to be 'cured' of homosexuality, when really it was portrayed as a way for her to gain confidence when talking to women; to stop her from fainting when she talked to 'cute girls' and really, enabling her to court some lucky girl without feeling weak at the knees.

LGBTQ* representation in gaming has come a long way, but there's still improvements to be made. Nintendo's recent decision to allow same-sex marriage in *Fire Emblem Fates* paves the way for equal representation for everyone in the gaming community, hopefully other gaming titans will follow suit. Perhaps as gamers we should begin with ceasing the assumption that a character is straight just because nothing has been said to the contrary.

[Zoe Delahunty-Light]

In The Middle with Laura Barnett, Author of *The Versions Of Us*

Following the success of her debut novel *The Versions of Us*, the film rights of which have just been bought by the minds behind *My Week With Marilyn*, *In The Middle* talks to Laura about destiny, love, and her advice for aspiring writers.

***Versions Of Us* is a book that makes use of alternate universes, drawing a lot of parallels with *Sliding Doors*. Is that a good point of reference?**

My favourite alternate universe book or film - well, I guess it would be *Sliding Doors*. I remember seeing it when I was about fifteen for the first time and finding something just so fascinating about the idea that these two doors close and she either gets on the train or she doesn't, and that definitely set my imagination racing. I've also been influenced by a lot of Latin American fiction which tends to play with the idea of different realities and different universes, kind of postmodern fiction. I studied Spanish at university so that definitely got under my skin, and also Italo Calvino and his *If On A Winter's Night A Traveller*, which again plays with the idea that there are many different ways of telling the same story.

Does the idea that there are multiple versions of you living different lives from your own scare or excite you?

(Laughs) Probably a bit of both. I mean it's one of those sort of just brilliant traits that kind of inspires people, the idea that we're on this tiny little rock of a planet somewhere at the edge of a galaxy and there could be another planet somewhere that looks a little bit like ours, and the person that we are is just a little bit different. I wasn't really thinking about that sci-fi parallel universe thing, it was more I guess almost a literary exercise: how three stories would complement each other and how the characters' lives would interplay.

Other 'what might have been' stories usually have two paths, was there a significance of choosing three versions of events?

To me that felt like it wasn't going to be diverse enough I suppose; there's something quite elemental about the idea of three isn't there, with the trinity, and you know it's kind of an image that runs through so much of culture and it just felt right. It felt like one was just one story and obviously it wouldn't work, two wouldn't be interesting or experimental enough, and three hopefully was just right.

How did you keep track of the three narratives, did you write them at the same time?

I did yeah, I wrote it pretty much exactly as it appears. So switching between the three stories as I went, I didn't write the whole of version one, then version two, then version three -- I wrote it consecutively.

You've written a series of short stories, is this what you prefer to write and why you wrote three variations?

That's a really interesting question. No, I mean I have written short stories, but it's always been about novels for me. I've loved reading novels for as long as I can remember, from loving *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* when I was about six to the sort of the novels I love now. So no, I've always had the novel in my head as an ambition, but I think for being a writer and trying to learn your craft, I think short stories are a really great exercise. It's quite a different thing: it's the difference between a marathon and a sprint I guess.

The book tackles the idea of destiny, is this something you believe in?

The jury's out on that one. I would say instinctively no, I certainly don't believe in pre-determination. There does seem to be a pattern to things doesn't there, and I guess we need to explore that in the idea that the three variations are still quite similar, they're not completely different people. I think there are a lot of things that seem to be set in motion from the beginning, you can only control so much, I would say.

What have been the moments that have changed your career path?

One of the key moments was choosing to study modern languages instead of English. I'd always thought I would study English because I loved literature and I wanted to be a writer; I knew that from a young age. But I got really into Spanish at school and enjoyed travelling and learning about different cultures so I ended up doing Spanish and Italian. And I guess that took me down a different path in the sense that I ended up spending two years in Rome and I think that made me grow up quite a lot when I was nineteen when I had a number of Italian boyfriends and drank too many cocktails! As a writer, I think it's really important I think that you spend time in other places, other worlds and learn how other people live and just develop empathy in that way, so that was a big career choice. And then I trained as a journalist after going to Cambridge before going to City University in London, then I worked at *The Telegraph* and I'm really glad I did that.

Do you think having a background in journalism has improved your ability to write fiction?

Yes I do, I think -- well, yes and no. I'd say yes in that I feel particularly the kind of journalism that I've done -- features and criticism -- is all about detail, it's about, you know, paying very close attention to what people say and how they say it. In terms of interviews and things like even what they're wearing or where they live, and all those kind of details come out. And you understand that you can't just write generalised statements, you have to really convey the sense of the person in as few words as you can. That's the other thing I think writing to a deadline makes you aware of concision and I think that's really important. But I think it can be a bit of a hinderance as well because you get used to not being able to make things up. I think sometimes I make it a bit hard for myself by, you know, literally plotting out the exact route my characters take from place to place on Google Maps, I actually feel quite guilty when I make things up. So a lot of what I write is very much rooted in fact and I do really try to thoroughly research everything and not just sort of take liberties. So sometimes I kind of feel like journalism plugs your imagination a little bit.

Do you have any advice for students who want to go into writing?

It sounds a bit obvious but my main advice would really be to do it - write as much as you can, find a slot that works for you to do it every day just so you can keep getting better and improving. And also it sounds a bit obvious but lots of people forget about this; read, read a lot, read really critically with an open mind, read things that you don't necessarily immediately think that you'll enjoy because you'll always learn something from it. Really try and analyse what those authors have done; how they've done it, what makes that bit work, what makes the plot tick, what makes the characters work, like really think and read analytically and then that's your kind of apprenticeship from the author.

Can you give any insight into your next novel, *Greatest Hits*?

Absolutely yeah! So I'm nearly at the end of the first draft of that one, so it's about a musician, a female singer songwriter in her sixties, who has been very successful and then for various reasons has to retire from music and from the world really. The novel is set over one day when she's in her studio at home listening, for the first time in many years, to her back catalogue and choosing a number of songs to go on a greatest hits album. Each song that she chooses becomes a means through which we learn about her life; who she is and who she's been, and through which she comes to terms with her past, really, and with her future.

***The Versions of Us* was released in paperback in January.**

[Emma Bowden, Hannah Holmes and Zoe Delahunty-Light]



[Image: Fox Broadcasting Company]

The X-Files: I Want To Believe

"My life's become a punchline" remarks Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) as he resignedly watches a YouTube clip of Barack Obama facetiously discussing the subject of UFOs with Jimmy Kimmel. We're only seven minutes into this underwhelming revival exported by Channel 5 and it's already become self-aware. It seems to be doing its damndest to desecrate everything that engrossed viewers of The X-Files' original run in the Nineties, with superfluous padding of the already convoluted mythos that led the show astray in its later seasons and brought the generally first-rate "Monster of the Week" episodes crashing down with it.

Showrunner Chris Carter, once considered a pioneer of intricate, speculative fiction and unbridled terror, has now seen his name become a byword for 'making shit up as one goes along'. 23 years on in 2016 the truth is still out there, and we're left with a Sisyphean landfill site of a narrative as question after question is thrown into the mythos with no forward planning, meaning that answers to these questions are as illusory as bacon-flavoured Coke.

Fourteen years following the closure of the titular The X-Files with the series' cancellation, Fox Mulder and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) have resigned from the FBI and into the peripheries of society, Mulder becoming a recluse and Scully making a living as a medical doctor, before the actions of a right-wing webcaster force them back into the fray. The pre-title sequence sees Mulder recap the series' events up to that point, ostensibly with the purpose of re-orientating fans who haven't watched an episode in aeons, and is a cavalcade of continuity, with iconic monsters of classic episodes such as the Flukeman and Eugene Victor Tooms making fleeting appearances, before segwaying into more filibustering about the existence of extraterrestrial life and a government conspiracy to colonise Earth, accompanied by description of real life incidents suggestive of such.

"23 years on the truth is still out there, and we're left with question after question being thrown into the mythos with no forward planning"

And that's where the funeral pyre of coherency is lit. The opening titles roll - they're almost entirely unaltered from those you remember (or don't) at the series' genesis back in '93. No overhauls to reflect the aging of the lead actors, or advancements in visual effects in the two decades since seemed to be necessary. That expository diarrhoea will come to typify much of what follows in the next 40 minutes, as the writers become dependent on rambling monologues accompanied by illustrative stock footage to carry the narrative.

Duchovny and Anderson both jadedly grumble and sleepwalk through dialogue as if the realisation has hit like a freight train that they're 'getting too old for this shit', as we're expected to believe the testimony of one person, Sveta (Annet Mahendru), who claims that extraterrestrials are an elaborate hoax, perpetuated in a false flag operation by the government -- enough to fracture Mulder's lifelong conviction to the contrary (despite him having been abducted and seeing them with his own two eyes). The reintroduction of a familiar villainous figure, whose last onscreen appearance showed him graphically incinerated, at the episode's close does nothing to wash out the aftertaste of discontent.

On paper, the idea of an The X-Files revival was worth investing in, attempting to inch towards closure that the series was aggravatingly denied; but it is consequently impenetrable for new viewers, and estranges itself from longterm X-Files by smuggling in extraneous layers of mystery, rather than attempting to work with the nine seasons' worth of mythology already available. Sheer nostalgic value isn't enough to offset this. With five more episodes of this miniseries still to follow, one can still cling to hope for course-correction. Or, at least - I want to believe.

[Adam Berkeley]

The Well-Fed Student: Savvy Spending Edition

Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Abu Bakr and Asda Online seem to be where we all shop the most. To hunt down the best bargains in Leeds, I've found in places like Millie's and Taste of the Orient (on Vicar Lane), Kirkgate Market and Aldi to add to this list and compare the bargains.

Bargain Bits and Bobs

Soy sauce – 99p for a massive bottle in Taste of the Orient oriental supermarket, they also sell massive bottles of sweet chili sauce for £1.80 and sriracha for £1.60.

Creamed coconut blocks – one makes 2 tins worth of coconut milk. 75p from Morrisons.

Spices (in packets) – 50p (special offer) in Sainsbury's, 64p in Morrisons.

Dairy-free milk – I usually get whatever is on offer in the big supermarkets, if not in the chilled section, check the long life milk section – that's usually where I find almond milk for £1.

Honey – 99p for 450g in Abu Bar, £1 for 340g in Morrisons,

Nut butter (palm oil free) – The Wild Peanut brand is sold in Abu Bakr for £1.69 - it's completely natural and comes in all different cool flavours. You could alternatively get a big 1kg tub of Meridian peanut butter for about a fiver from Out of this World.

Carbs

Oats - 75p for 1kg in Morrison's, Asda or Aldi.

Brown rice - £3.50 for 2kg in Morrisons (world food section).

White rice - £4.99 for 5kg in Abu Bakr.

Pasta - £2.87 for 3kg in Morrisons.

Noodles - Taste of the Orient sell every noodle under the sun, including rice noodles for those who are wheat free, all for around £1.50 for 400g, or 2kg for £2.50.

Gluten free pasta – never cheap, but most supermarkets do their own cheap range now (£1.20 from Asda). It is, however, worth investing in pasta made from brown rice as it is much more filling and nutritious – you can get this from Millie's or Out of this World for around £2 a pack.

Fruit and Veg

Frozen mixed berries - £1.50 for 400g in Sainsbury's.

Frozen broccoli – 90p for 1kg in Morrisons.

Frozen peas – 69p for 900g in Morrisons.

Frozen peppers - £1 for 500g in Morrisons.

Frozen spinach - £1.32 for 1kg in Morrisons.

Prices of fresh fruit and veg vary depending on what's in season, but are usually cheapest at Kirkgate market or Abu Bakr.

Bananas – 3 bunches for £1 from Abu or Kirkgate (share with friends or freeze them and use them in smoothies, porridge, or banana bread)

Nuts and Dried Fruit

Buying in bulk from Abu is cheapest. Millie's is also brilliant for nuts and seeds, as they buy them in bulk and package them into all different sized bags.

Almonds - £5.99 for 700g in Abu Bakr.

Cashews - £4.90 for 500g in Millie's.

Mixed seeds - 75p for 125g in Millie's.

Sultanas – supermarket own brand is always cheapest. 84p for 500g in Morrisons.

Fish

Smoked mackerel - £1.49 a packet in Aldi! £2 a packet in Morrisons and Sainsbury's.

Smoked salmon – 'trimmings' are £1.49 in Morrisons.

Tuna in brine – 53p from Asda.

Frozen white fish - £1.70 for 520g in Sainsbury's.

Most supermarkets have own brand frozen 'white fish fillets', which sounds terrifying but is actually just Pollock. Try to check they are sustainably sourced though.

Free Range

It's worth spending more on free range meat and eggs. Caged animals are kept in horrible conditions, and a sad, unhealthy animal gives you sad, unhealthy meat and eggs. Chicken joints are much cheaper than breast. You can also get a whole free range chicken for about a fiver and use the leftovers in meals throughout the week.

TOP TIP: Little Waitrose in town is great for reduced, good quality meat, probably because no one goes there.

Free range chicken thighs - £2.50 for 500g in Morrisons.

'Mixed weight' free range eggs – 85p for 6 at all good supermarkets.

Vegetarian Protein

Chickpeas – 3 for £1 in Morrisons.

Red lentils - £3.69 for 2kg in Abu Bakr.

Tofu – 99p for 350g silken tofu in Taste of the Orient - currently buy 2 get 1 free.

Valentine's Day on a Budget

Flowers – Kirkgate market sells bunches of daffodils for 50p, lilies and tulips for £1. For a more controversial valentine's gift you can buy a cactus for £3.99!

Romantic meal – Marks & Spencer's 'Dine in for 2 for £10' deal is running over Valentine's weekend. You get a main, side, starter or dessert and a bottle of wine for £10, so you get a treat meal without spending loads, and also you don't have to go and be competitively romantic with the other hordes of couples who are eating out in restaurants.

[Patsy O'Neill]

Black Swan Pub's Excitingly English New Menu

Black Swan Pub on Call Lane have released a brand new food menu, and hosted a tasting session to introduce it. Specializing in traditional British food with a contemporary twist, the new menu was set out to compliment the existing theme by adding a number of innovative options.

Upon entering the venue, I was greeted by a friendly maître d', inviting me to proceed to the bar for a beer tasting, and was told to select three of the locally sourced ales on offer, which were served in small 1/3 pint glasses and presented on a wooden plank. As someone who rarely enjoys beer, I was pleasantly surprised to find that some of the options had an interesting fruity and smooth flavour, and the Ilkley Tribus was a personal favourite.

For the purpose of the food tasting, the starters were served in the form of canapés, allowing me to taste a number of different dishes including a pearl barley and leek risotto, a confit duck cube, a delicious salmon crusted scotch duck egg and a delicate venison carpaccio. The confit duck practically melted in your mouth, allowing it to seamlessly blend with the celeriac sauce and apple salad, creating an exciting explosion of flavour.

The starters were a delicious tease, leaving us even more intrigued for the main course. We were given a selection of meat, vegetarian and fish dishes, which were all equally

sophisticated and elaborately presented. The fish tasted fresh and tender, while the pork belly was light and without a greasy or heavy feel to it. The vegetarian option was a spinach and ricotta gnocchi, served with artichoke chips and puree, which pleasantly surprised me. The menu uses the same ingredients in a number of forms – for example, the fish features butternut squash served three ways: pickled, boiled and in a sauce. The use of the same ingredients allows for a unanimous flavour combination without making the food taste bland.

By the end of the evening, I was more than ready for dessert. There were a platter of options – a beautifully golden rhubarb crème brûlée, a creamy chocolate tart with honeycomb and vanilla ice cream, and a poached pineapple garnished with the combination of chilli and raspberry ice-cream for the more adventurous eaters. Whilst all of the desserts were incredibly tasty, the rhubarb crème brûlée stole my heart.

To end a wonderful evening of good food and relaxed atmosphere, served by friendly staff, we were offered a shot of their homemade espresso martini. This cleansed the palate nicely as we congratulated the chef for his impressive work. I will definitely be coming back to the Black Swan again – especially to try their 'Two-for-Tuesdays' gourmet pizza deal that sounds too good to miss!

[Sofia Dedyukhina]

Columns

Catching Up After Coming Out



Our favourite B-list holiday is just around the corner: Valentine's Day, an occasion for those in relationships to be reminded of their love and for the rest of us to be reminded of our singledom. More importantly, it is also LGBT History Month, which means it is the perfect occasion to talk about being gay.

This feeling of being alone, or rather of being fed up of being alone, is precisely what drove me to my grand

coming-out. It was long over-due and I had been continuously putting off the big reveal, waiting in the wings for some form of cue that would allow me to finally burst out onto the scenes of open homosexuality.

I repeatedly missed the cue, and before I knew it I found myself embarking on my highly anticipated third year abroad, a new country with new people and places, yet still not out.

But in the end, moving abroad gave me the shake-up I needed. I was lucky enough to have a coming-out celebration that was full of love, support and, thanks to some wonderful friends, an assortment of penis-related food items, Babybel[en]ds and cheese balls included.

Although, as many of you will know, coming out isn't a one-off performance, after which you receive your gaycard and retire to your new life as a fully-fledged, out gay man. Coming out wasn't a final curtain call; it was actually just the start of the show, and I found myself thoroughly unprepared and feeling pretty clueless.

Rather than blossoming from the cocoon into a fully transformed butterfly ready to fly off and flirt with boys, I think a more appropriate analogy would be that of a newborn foal, birthed and left to find its bearings as it tries to stand up and stagger off.

I felt as though a lot of catching up was in order. I was essentially a twelve-year-old schoolboy with all the usual milestones of adolescence ahead of him. Everything from acknowledging you fancy someone and acting on it to hook-ups and heartbreaks; all these awkward first-experiences were new and exciting landmarks on the road to becoming an emotionally developed and well experienced post-adolescent member of society.

While I don't think that leaving the country to do a crash course in reinventing yourself is strictly necessary, the year abroad was useful in that it offered a time frame, by the end of which I was ready to return to the UK as the aforementioned fully transformed butterfly that flirts with boys.

Ultimately, however, your own 'character development' is an ongoing process rather than a racecourse with a finish line in sight. There are always going to be new experiences to be had and new things to be learnt, about yourself or about others, and perhaps this LGBT History Month, or even this Valentine's Day, will be the perfect opportunity to make the first few steps on the road to being the best possible version of yourself.

[Warren O'Donnell]

So Here It Is: My Coming Out



Coming out never really gets any easier – and you will probably never have to stop doing it. That feeling of terror rises up inside of you, that makes you feel like you might vomit, never really goes away. Even if it's only for a fleeting second before you blurt out the words, there is always that 'what if?'

As you learn to become okay with it though and realise that if somebody can't accept this part of you then they probably don't deserve you – the reactions matter less. It helps that you've generally got a lot of the big "comings-out" out the way. Your family knows, your friendship group knows, the key figures in your life are aware; everyone else is just the periphery.

But what if you haven't? And what if they're not?

This is the position I find myself in, and I guess that makes this my coming out letter.

I lead an odd existence where my university friends only really know me as someone who dates women, so it confuses them that my family don't know that about me.

It's not that I've kept it a huge secret, it's just that I haven't been asked – or, at least not since I've been comfortable with my sexuality. That sick feeling I was talking about earlier, it's really off-putting.

If I had come out every time I had talked up to it in my head, I would have probably done it 100 times, but I haven't even done it once. It's not that I don't think they'd support me or that they'd disagree, my parents are wonderful and I think they probably know already. This is unlikely to surprise them.

It's just never felt like it's been the right time – there's always been too much else on, there's always been an excuse. I always said I would tell them when I got a girlfriend, but I made my excuses and never did.

I used to say it was because I wasn't sure – I didn't want to get it wrong. I didn't want to come out and then realise that actually I wanted to date men. What I've

realised is being wrong doesn't matter, if it's who I feel I am at that moment, then it's right. Even if it does change, so what? We, as people, are fluid; we change. Changing doesn't make who I was false or, who I am, a mask. Regardless of my sexuality, I am me. I am a bundle of contradictions and that's okay.

As it stands, I have known I'm not straight since I was 14, I've been comfortable with that since I was 18 or 19, and now I'm nearly 22. I've had a girlfriend, I've publicly identified as gay countless times, I've been in love – and I haven't been able to talk to two of the most important people to me about that.

I've waited so long and the longer I have waited, the higher the mountain to climb has become, and I'm not waiting any longer.

I don't want to live a double life. I don't want to be involved in LGBT activism and still in the closet. I don't want to hide.

So I guess, here it is, my coming out:

I am Emma Healey, as it stands I am interested in women. It might stay this way – it might not. All the matters is who I am now – and that person is happy.

[Emma Healey]

Mx Anja's Story



My gender fluctuates between agender and a woman. Most of the time I feel agender, but as I'm being treated as a woman and perceived as one by most people, I sometimes find it empowering to identify as a woman politically (of course I insist that I am non-binary overall, especially if people assume I'm a woman because of the sex I've been assigned at birth or my gender presentation). Not to mention that often it's quite handy to enjoy the cis-passing privilege and avoid 'casual' transphobia, by embracing my invisibility and keeping fingers crossed my gender dysphoria doesn't act out too

much.

I came out as non-binary in the summer. Really, it's been a while since I've thought about it, but it wasn't until my friend came out and I asked them how they knew they were non-binary that I first said out loud I might be non-binary too. We've had a long chat about how we both feel we're not trans enough, but concluded that non-binary is the label that is most accurate. It also explained well why, while completely comfortable with people knowing about my partners, I was so uncomfortable with being called a lesbian. Yes, I am usually not interested in men, but I am not a woman either.

Coming out was so truly wonderful and liberating. I finally have words to describe how I feel about my gender that at least some people have heard of. It's a word describing an experience I have in common with many people, I can read stories about them feeling the same way I do. It makes me super happy whenever anyone refers to me as 'they,' when I get a letter addressed to Mx Anja. I have found words to describe why I feel such discomfort with having a uterus some time, I know of people who experience similar body dysmorphia.

Sadly, it comes with a downside as well. I've come out to most people I know. Most have been happy for me, but not all. I've repeatedly been told that I'm obviously a woman, that singular "they" is not grammatically cor-

rect, and even asked when I'm planning on cutting off my boobs. My lack of interest in men implies that I am a lesbian, and wearing a dress implies I am conforming to gender norms. When I question the exclusion of non-binary people from women's spaces I am told it's due to men not being welcome, but invited along as long as I'm ok with being misgendered as a woman. And some trans people have confirmed my worries, assuring me that I'm not really trans.

Overall, I wish that people who don't know me just respected me and didn't bother telling me about my gender, assuming they know better. And I wish people I know bothered to get to know me and understood what gender means to me. It is possible, and actually many lovely people find it really easy. I'm glad they are around and keen on smashing the white supremacist capitalist patriarchy with me instead of clinging to the tradition.

[Anja Komatar]

A Tragic Truth In These Tinder Times



In an age where our smart phones play cupid, it is hard to predict just how many Valentines Day tables will be booked for Tinder veterans this February.

Personally, I keep my Tinder distance setting low and my standards even lower. The gender set to 'Only Men', and the age range slightly above that which my own moral fibre would care to admit. And the result? I will be spending Valentines Day with two rather delicious men who can successfully pleasure me simultaneously - Ben and Jerry.

Joking aside, it is worth remembering the dangers of online dating spaces. The truth is that we have no idea who we are swiping left or right to. Behind the security of our protective screen we often convince ourselves that 'dangerous' people cannot reach us.

More than 4000 offences reported last year were linked in some way to today's most popular online dating apps. Alleged crimes included child sex grooming, rape and attempted murder. One report presents a seven-fold increase in overall crime related to dating apps in just over two years.

Grindr, founded in 2009, is an online dating app that connects users to other men seeking same sex relations in their locality. Reports have claimed that users have been prone to blackmail in order to keep their sexual encounters secret. In an almost archaic replica of 1960s America, victims are subject to entrapment and blackmail for something as natural as their sexual desire. Some have argued that apps such as Grindr have the agency to further this criminal activity.

Tinder, released in 2012, is also a location-based dating app. Call me old fashioned, but I think cupid looks for more a little more than just proximity to determine the compatibility of two matches.

Recently a report has claimed that victims of sexual

assaults linked to online dating apps have multiplied six fold over the last six years. With 85% of these known victims being female, and 42% in their twenties, it is clear that apps such as Tinder ought to be used with caution by our student population.

For those who aren't too self-conscious to conceal the truth, it is not wholly uncommon nowadays to hear that very successful matches first met on a through a dating app. Several of my close friends have found that swiping through a series of Polaroid photographs on a Sunday afternoon actually lead to them meeting their other half.

It is reassuring to know that technology can play cupid (and get it right) from time to time. It is, however, disconcerting to belong to a generation where these dating apps are used with such abandon. In researching this article I know that I am guilty of placing too much trust in the applications on my phone.

When searching for more than my two scrumptious dates (Ben and Jerry) this Valentine's Day, I will be conscious of the possible risks behind my on-screen chats.

With such an increasing crime culture harvesting in these location-based applications, I for one, have swiped away my misconception that all users are safe.

[Joel Jackson]

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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Views

From Country Clerks to Florists, Bakers to B&B Owners *The Gryphon* asks: Should people have to serve LGBTQ* couples if they feel it goes against their religious beliefs?

Yes

In the 21st century, religion is no excuse for discrimination. Whether it's homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, or anything else besides we should be doing all we can to end such unfounded prejudices. In a society which prides itself on liberalism and tolerance we should be coming together to shun such outdated views to where they belong - in the past.

Even if it was an excuse, in a secular society personal views and work should be kept separate. Just because someone is different to you does not give you the right to marginalise them. To refuse to serve someone simply because they are 'different' is to take a step into the past, back to the days of segregation. It would be unthinkable not to serve someone based on skin colour or sex, so why is it not the same for sexuality?

Such discrimination is a reminder

for LGBTQ* individuals of the heavy inequality they still face. Despite the popular belief that we live in a liberal and accepting society, the number of reported homophobic hate crimes in the UK rose by 22% last year to 5,597. However, the actual number of hate crimes committed is estimated to be around four times higher than this as many are still too afraid to speak out. Whether it be children using homophobic slurs on the playground or grown adults refusing to treat LGBTQ* individuals like human beings, prejudice is something that affects the lives of every non-hetero, non-cis individual.

Simply refusing to interact with those we don't agree with might seem childish but it has serious repercussions for society as a whole. It rationalises hate, normalises discrimination and teaches young people that it's ok to treat people

differently just because they are different to ourselves.

Ultimately, however, we must remember it is only a minority of people who would be willing to use 'religion' as an excuse for their prejudiced actions. But in a world where many LGBTQ* individuals are made to feel marginalised as a result of religion, religion needs to be able to accept criticism and adapt. For too long religion has been put on a pedestal which has been allowed to get away with open acts of sexism and homophobia. In no other part of society would you be able to get away with such discriminatory behaviour, so religious institutions should be as vulnerable to criticism as any other. LGBTQ* activists work tirelessly to promote equality, but it's about time that the straight people of the world took it upon themselves to end such homophobia; there is only so much

success a minority can achieve while the rest of society remains passive.

While most people would be advocates of equality, the fact that these questions even still need to be asked shows how LGBTQ* rights have yet to be fully established. Ireland's gay marriage referendum last year highlighted how gay rights are still very much in the early stages; they are not set in stone.

When the day comes where we stop having to question the establishment of equal rights, we will have equality. But, until then, LGBTQ* individuals will continue to live in a perpetual state of not knowing who will question their right to a 'normal' life next.



[Image: Elyse Lewin]

Juliette Rowsell

No

I wish I could say that no person would ever face discrimination because of their gender or sexuality. I wish I could say that no person's religion would ever cause them to be prejudiced. To be honest, I wish I could say this debate wasn't needed. But I can't, so it is.

Wedding planners, florists, priests, bakers B&B owners. Just a handful of the professions where people have cited their religion as a reason when refusing to serve homosexual couples. I have little time for these people. I think they're narrow-minded to assume that their way of life is the only way. And for the most part, I think they are wildly stretching

their interpretation of religious texts to justify their own ignorance. But the fact is these are real people with real feelings, exactly the same as the customers they serve. Rightly or wrongly the stress caused to them from being forced to do something which they see as a sin, is no less real than the stress on the people they discriminate against. In a way it's a question of practicality and compromise, why would a gay couple want to support a homophobic business anyway? And can you justify putting a religious person through emotional distress to support a capitalist business ideal? It's not that I think these are opinions we can let

slide indefinitely, but whilst they are still around you cannot change them by forcing people to go against their beliefs.

The issue of separating religion from work is also impractical. Secularism where all religions are equally silenced might be perversely fair, but you only have to look at France's issues to see it simply doesn't work. To allow equal rights to all religions you cannot ask someone to leave their beliefs at home. For most changing their religion is as unthinkable as changing their sexuality. A Christian does not stop being a Christian based on geographical location. And, much as I loathe to admit it, to some people

serving a gay couple is going against their religion.

I wish I could say that every person was free to live as themselves and to love who they chose. I hope that one day, and I hope it's soon, people will realise that who others love does not detract from their faith. But until then it is a wrong to force a person to repress their religion as it is to force a person to repress their sexuality, it just won't work.

Rich Kengal

Observations on Being Bisexual

Michael Everrit
BA Philosophy

In this day and age only a steadily diminishing minority would even think to suggest that being gay or lesbian is a choice. For bisexuals the notion of choice sadly persists in the public consciousness. When a young person

“A sitcom cliché has a straight-laced woman revealing that she had a lesbian fling with her college roommate [...] Consider the fact that the joke works just as well if the woman is revealed to have

comes out as bisexual, they can expect to have their sexual identity dismissed as an experimental phase. A sitcom cliché has a straight-laced woman revealing

that she had a lesbian fling with her college roommate. The joke is supposed to be that this reveals her to have had a wild and crazy youth. Consider the fact that the joke works just as well if the woman is revealed to have been a punk rocker.

Perhaps the most surprising difficulty bisexuals face is that they are at times made to feel unwelcome in the LGBTQ* community. Even with marriage equality becoming a reality, same-sex couples face greater challenges than straight couples. The less than subtle suggestion from some in the LGBTQ* community is that bisexuals who, knowing this, chose a same-sex relationship, only have themselves to blame when they are persecuted. Anyone who thinks that you truly have a choice in the matter has surely never fallen in love themselves.

The image of a bisexual most people seem to have is that of a wanton libertine: the kind of person who wants

to have their cake and eat it. If you have chosen to live openly as a bisexual then, people assume, you are trying to defy social convention. Having icons like David Bowie as figure heads has been a double edged sword for bisexuals. At its very worst, the libertine stereotype has created an association between bisexuality and polygamy. The belief of many is that bisexuals will be compelled to sate their desire for both sexes and will therefore be incapable of being in a committed relationship. There is no more logic in this than in suggesting the same about a person who likes both blondes and redheads.

Another frustration many have to deal with is explaining to people that dating someone of the opposite sex does not stop you being bisexual. Being in a relationship does not change the nature of your desires, whatever they may be. Biology does not care what your relationship status is and anyone in a relationship, regardless of their

sexual identity, will retain their previous desires. That is something all couples have to deal with.

This article has been largely focused on the negatives but there are, it has to be said, times when it is good to be

“The image of a bisexual most people seem to have is that of a wanton libertine: the kind of person who wants to have their cake and eat it.”

bisexual. When you are single, you have access to the largest possible dating pool. When you pay to see a movie full of sexy Hollywood celebrities, you get double your money's worth. When your opposite sex partner confesses to checking out the hot waiter, you get to lighten the mood by reassuring them that you are guilty of the same thing.

At the end of the day, like any sexual identity, bisexuality is what it is.

Life In Plastic, It's Fantastic

Helen Brealey
BA English and French

After two years of revamping the classic Barbie to meet more realistic body expectations, Mattel have revolutionised an iconic doll which has not drastically changed since its first release in 1959 by releasing 'curvy', 'petite' and 'tall' versions, as well as dolls with different skin tones and hairstyles. Many believe that the decision is a publicity stunt, with a plummet in sales in recent years appearing to play a part in the decision, but it can't be overlooked that this is a positive step forwards.

It's easy to dismiss how early children's perceptions form, but I'm always amazed when I spend time with my young cousins by how much they already know about body shape, and how one should seemingly look, as well as the importance of 'looking good'. If one was to scale up the measurements and proportions of the classic Barbie and apply them to a living female, she would have to walk on all fours, and would be unable to lift her head, demonstrating just how unrealistic the figure that we've all known for years is. In addition, the clothing options have moved away from what some argue to be objectifying clothing.

All in all, it appears a celebration of the diversity of body shapes and sizes, however I can't help but notice one thing – what about Ken? Despite the dramatic make over, or rather make under, of female Barbie dolls, poor old

“It appears a celebration of the diversity of body shapes and sizes, however I can't help but notice one thing – what about Ken?”

Ken remains the same right down to his chiselled abs. This is potentially due to the fact that, whilst Ken's proportions are unrealistic, they are at the very least theoretically possible. But whilst Barbie is still primarily marketed almost exclusively to girls, it seems odd that Mattel have not been more enthusiastic to adapt the male version of the doll at a time when they claim to have been taking steps to combat the idea of 'gendered toys'.

In our heavily documented, social media obsessed age, with 400 million of us signed up to Instagram at the end of last year, men are experiencing body image concerns just as much, if not more, than women. Last year, according to the recent Channel 4 documentary *Obsessed with My Body*, which explored

the huge growth in teenage male vanity, males took more 'selfies' than women. With such easy access to 'role models' on the internet, we are bombarded with unrealistic body expectations at all hours of the day, with many going to extreme lengths to achieve a certain look. Men are feeling the pressure just as much, and more needs to be done at a younger age to combat the negative connotations with certain body sizes and shapes. Body perception is not something that we are born with, but rather something that environment teaches us, so a full effort needs to be made to tackle this.

Personally, the achievement here is not that there is a 'curvy' (actual human sized) Barbie, although it is a positive step to be marketing more realistic body shapes, sizes and designs. For now, it is important that the discussion has been opened and the need for change recognised. But the true achievement will be when the discussion is no longer about our bodies.



[Image: Mattel]

Julian Assange: Still Wanted. Still Here.

George Jackson
BA Philosophy

Over the past week, Julian Assange, co-founder and editor-in-chief of WikiLeaks, has been hoping for a solution to his long-term asylum status at the Ecuadorean embassy in London, where he has been living indoors since June 2012. Last Friday a solution was said to be found when a UN panel ruled that

Ultimately Assange has agreed to go through with proceedings, on the condition that he will be protected from extradition to the USA. Sweden has guaranteed no such protection

Assange is being 'arbitrarily detained' and should, instead, be freed. For a man whose career has been defined by exposing state malpractice around the world, particularly by the US government (note the infamous Collateral Murder video of 2010), it's no surprise that the likes of the US authorities are keeping

an eye on him. Speculation suggests that if the Interpol Red Notice issued for the extradition of Assange to Sweden were to be followed, this could pave the way for further extradition of Assange to the USA.

Regardless of Assange's position as either a cybercriminal or poster-boy for democracy in the digital age, what also needs to be considered is the seriousness of the accusation of rape made against him by the Swedish authorities. Some people have dismissed this allegation, along with two previous allegations of sexual assault (which have since been withdrawn), as a mere 'set-up' to ensure he can be forced, by extradition request, into the hands of the US government; only this is not easy to prove, as no such request has yet been made by the Americans. On the other hand, there is strong evidence that Assange was at least

sexually involved with the two women who made the allegations, therefore it is difficult to argue that Sweden's request for Assange to face trial in Sweden is merely 'arbitrary'. Furthermore, his life's



[Image: EPA]

work is built on the principle that states, particularly state officials, and other powerful individuals are not above the laws they uphold, so he would do well not to act as an exception to this, if he wishes to be consistent.

Ultimately Assange has agreed to go through with proceedings, on the

condition that he will be protected from extradition to the USA. Sweden has guaranteed no such protection, along with the British authorities, who have clearly said Assange would be arrested on the point of leaving the Ecuadorean embassy. This makes his situation stickier, without a doubt. Assange has repeatedly asserted that the sexual assault and rape claims against him are 'without basis'. Nonetheless, this doesn't exempt him from facing trial, nor does it stop him being responsible for leaking multitudes of classified information, for better or worse. The one question that remains is whether or not this man should be allowed to get away with leaking such information. Is he upholding freedom or putting lives in danger? In some cases, some of the information leaked could be 'harmful', but from what I've seen so far the only people harmed are the corrupt trying to cover their backs.

'LGBT': Terms and Conditions May Apply

Liam Kerrigan
BA Philosophy

LGBTTTQQIAA. You would be forgiven if you were unable to explain what each of those letters stands for. As someone who is part of this ever-expanding acronym, I even find myself unable to name each of the featured terms. In order, it stands for: Lesbian; Gay; Bisexual; Transgender; Transsexual; Two-spirited; Queer; Questioning; Intersex; Asexual; Ally. Until last year, I didn't even realise that 'Queer' was no longer considered a slur. To confuse matters further, the above is not an exhaustive list of terms used within the LGBTQ* community; there is also Pansexual, Agender, Gender Queer, Bigender, Gender Variant and Pangender, to name just a few.

It seems somewhat strange, though, that we seem to have an ever-expanding list of terms and categorisations in a time when many young people who identify as LGBTQ* are rejecting being given any particular label.

When Union J singer George Shelley released a video last week saying that he had dated both men and women in

the past and would date either in the future, he claimed that he would not resort to labelling himself as straight or bisexual as he felt that such labels were "old-fashioned". This is not an uncommon attitude amongst members of the LGBTQ* community. In an age where sexuality and gender is becoming increasingly fluid, and traditional ideas of what gender and sexuality are being broken down, it is not exactly surprising either.

More and more, people are identifying themselves - in terms of their gender and sexuality- in more personal ways. This begs the question: is there even a point trying to label or categorise people on account of their gender and sexuality? As a subject that can be better thought of as a sliding scale than

It seems somewhat strange, though, that we seem to have an ever-expanding list of terms and categorisations in a time when many young people who identify as LGBTQ* are rejecting being given any particular label.

as a series of fixed divisions, and when the differences between some of the proposed categories appear so nuanced as to render one or the other pointless, it can seem almost counterintuitive to seek to label an individual with a fixed term on such matters.

There is, of course, something that can be said for the virtue of categorisation when it comes to organisation of the various individuals within the LGBTQ* community. As a group regularly subjected to oppression and discrimination, being able to unite under one banner provides us with a greater chance to make a difference for all individuals within the LGBTQ* community. But whilst this might say something for the umbrella term of 'LGBT', it doesn't necessarily make any difference in terms of the usefulness of the individual distinctions within this

category.

By no means are the various group terms a bad thing; many people are happy to identify with a particular label and

As the traditional divisions between various genders and sexualities appear ever more antiquated, so might the abundance of modern divisions

wear it with pride. But as the traditional divisions between various genders and sexualities appear ever more antiquated, so might the abundance of modern divisions prompted by the revolution of identity in which we seem to find ourselves soon seem equally so.



[Image: Krieg Barrie]

The Psychology of Sexuality

Hannah Holmes

Sexual orientation is described as our patterns of emotional and sexual attraction, with the American Psychological Association further highlighting an emanating sense of personal and social identity, based on those attractions. Alas, the understanding and acceptance of sexuality has, historically, not always been favourably embraced; until 1973, the very same American Psychological Association perceived homosexuality as a mental disorder. Although we've moved on in non-homophobic leaps and bounds – where sexual orientation is now no longer considered a 'choice' – the psychology of sexual orientation is still heavily debated.

The nature versus nurture debate is inescapable in many areas of Psychology, however there are very few issues which are as hotly contested as the determination of a person's sexual orientation. Debate on the origins of sexual orientation is made all the more convoluted by the fact that sexuality is not a concrete concept; it exists on a continuum, rather than a strict dichotomy of homosexual or heterosexual.

The 'nurture' face of the coin lands on a side which argued that developmental elements, occurred during childhood, are one of the significant contributing factors to homosexuality. As such, the roles of domineering

mothers and ineffectual fathers dominated the thinking of psychologists who subscribed to this area of debate. This theory was however based on very little scientific evidence and – rather like the once popular notion that 'refrigerator mothers' cause their children to be autistic – has largely been discredited. In fact, the role of mothers in determining sexual orientation is more likely to be related to factors such as sex hormones levels. For example, lower amounts of prenatal testosterone have been linked to homosexuality.

One area of research which provides the perfect arena for separating the influences of genetic and environmental factors on sexuality, are twin studies. The general finding from these studies is that the concordance rate for homosexuality in identical twins is roughly 50%, compared to approximately 20% in fraternal twins. Given that twins are usually treated similarly, this difference is likely a result of identical twins sharing all of their genes, whilst fraternal twins share only half of them. However, as the concordance rate in identical twins is not 100%, it would be hasty – and indeed false – to claim that environmental factors don't exert some influence. Additionally, genetic linkage studies have shown that, in the case of homosexual males, there are more homosexual men on the mother's side. This has led to homosexuality being identified as an X-Chromosome linked trait – with the specific related gene, Xq28, being dubbed the 'gay gene'.

Evidence of a biological basis for homosexuality also comes from brain differences. Sexual orientation cannot simply relate to differences in the brain's activity patterns; your sexuality is unlikely to have altered after waking from a night's sleep or even a coma. Differences in sexual orientation must therefore, somehow, relate to differences in the actual anatomical structure of the brain. For example, structures in the hypothalamus – the section of the brain that relates to sexual drive and function – differ in size for homosexual and heterosexual males. However, not all of these structures, which develop prenatally during the process of sexual differentiation, are involved in the brain's regulation of sexual behaviour. This suggests that potentially key components of our brain's development, with regards to sexual orientation, occur prior to birth and that in terms of sexuality, size really doesn't matter.

The science suggests that far from being an actively made choice, homosexuality is actually the result of things we don't choose, things out of our control – our genes, upbringing, and hormones. Clearly, finding evidence in support of homosexuality's 'biological basis' should only make us more vigorous in promoting LGBT rights.



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Breaking The Code Of Science's Last Taboo



Dogie Phillips

We will have all at some point during our lives heard someone reminisce about the good old days – a simpler time, where things were so much easier. A perfectly acceptable concept when considering the innocence of youth or a time when the BBC made decent programmes, however for those who identify themselves as anything other than heterosexual, the ‘good old days’ are something of a misnomer.

Indeed, throughout history homophobia has been rife in all walks of society – from sporting venues to the workplace – but its existence within the scientific community is often understated. A person's scientific reputation is based upon their published research, yet during the 1980s the working environment was a hostile place for ‘out-and-proud’ LGBT scientists. This was partly a result of Section 28; an amendment to the Local Government Act which made the discrimination of LGBT people in the work place completely legal. So although homosexuality had been legalised, ‘coming out’ could very likely be detrimental to your career.

It was this homophobia within the scientific workplace which acted as the catalyst in establishing nationwide groups, such as the National

Organisation of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals (NOGLSTP), to advocate, educate and support LGBT students and professionals in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Organisations like the NOGLSTP have helped increase the communication between LGBT scientists through an array of networking and mentoring schemes, certainly resulting in more gay-friendly work spaces today. Nevertheless, the visibility of LGBT scientists to the wider public is still a hurdle to be cleared.

The Independent's Rainbow List – formerly the Pink List – is an annual celebration of the 101 most influential lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Britain. Although a fantastic way to recognise and celebrate the pioneers of LGBT equality, the last two years has seen a distinct lack of scientists represented on the list. Why are scientists not influencing the LGBT community?

A lot has changed since the likes of Alan Turing – the pioneering British computer scientist and Nazi code cracker – was prosecuted for homosexual acts. However, the scientific world is still littered, perhaps inadvertently, with archaic notions and levels of both positive and negative discrimination. Engineering,

for example, has had constant struggles in casting aside the preconceptions that it is a male dominated subject. Charities such as the Women's Engineering Society have worked hard to remove the barriers which halt females entering the profession, yet nearly 100 years have passed since women were allowed to vote and we still struggle to achieve gender equality. And this is before we even throw sexuality into the mix – it's certainly understandable why an LGBT scientist or engineer would choose to keep their sexual preferences to themselves.

The question therefore arises; Does this all matter? Should sexuality – whatever the preference – play a role in science? Do LGBT scientists need to shout out ‘loudly and proudly’ about who they really are? Well, there should be no need for a scientist to divulge their sexuality; it in no way impacts upon their ability within their chosen fields of research. But if by doing so it increases the exposure of their positive contributions to society, of which I'm sure there are many, then it should be openly advocated. We need positive role models – the next generation of athletes, politicians, and yes, the forgotten scientists, should never let fears over sexuality stop them from bettering the world.

Science In Focus



Studies Show There is Still a Way to Go: Mental Health and the LGBT* Community

Sam McMaster

Bullying and harassment of the LGBT community is, unfortunately, nothing new but in these more progressive times I think we can admit that opinions are changing and people are becoming more accepting.

The ‘It Gets Better’ campaign has drawn over 613,000 supporters since 2010, all of them committed to combatting the bullying of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender teens. Despite receiving criticism for perhaps sending the wrong message, it has done some good and has inspired a lot of other people to help with the issues surrounding LGBT discrimination.

A Northwestern Medicine study has found that about a third of LGBT youths still struggle with discrimination and harassment. As Brian Mustanski, director of the Northwestern Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and associate professor in medical social sciences at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medi-

cine, says “We tend to think that society is evolving but we can't just accept this narrative that ‘it gets better’ and think it gets better for everyone.”

The innovative study has not only looked at the number of victimizations teens experienced but also the severity of the assaults (both mental and physical) and how they evolved over time. Those who experienced moderate to high levels of harassment that built up over time or steadily increased were more at risk of developing mental health problems.

Overall the study showed that most of the targeted youths are doing better over time as they are victimised less or for the unfortunate few, simply become resilient to the harassment. However, this has drawn into light that for those in the most severe conditions, something drastic must be done and saying it gets better just doesn't cut it.

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The Inspirational Life of Nigel Owens

James Candler
Rugby Union

Nigel Owens is a fantastic referee. As every ardent rugby fan will surely agree, one cannot help but release an audible sigh of relief when finding that their highly-anticipated 'big game' is in fact going to be refereed by the Welsh wonder and not some less pleasing aficionado (*cough* Wayne Barnes *cough* Jérôme Garcès). Owens has often been lauded as a referee who understands both the bewildering free-for-all that is the modern professional scrum, as well as the players around him. He has a keen sensibility for handling the adrenaline-addled behemoths that populate the rugby field (as is clearly evident after a quick google of either 'Nigel Owens Christopher' or 'Nigel Owens Stuart Hogg') and it is this understanding that allows for some of the most entertaining games of rugby in recent memory. Players know where they stand with Owens and so the whole game is not wasted on endless infringements and silly penalties, but rather enjoyed by players who are competitively toeing the metaphorical line set by a firm yet empathetic referee. It is no wonder then that he was picked as the referee for the final of the 2015 Rugby World Cup. Nigel Owens is indeed a fantastic referee. And so much more.

In 2007 Owens came out as a homosexual, having battled with self-acceptance for numerous troubled years. The Welshman has admitted in past interviews to having considered chemical castration whilst struggling with his sexual identity and states that he simply "didn't want to be gay". After a failed suicide attempt when he was 26-years-old, Nigel was finally forced to



[image: Themba Had]

come to terms with who he was and begin the challenging process of ending years of denial – something that he claims was "the biggest challenge of [his] life". Now at the age of 44, Nigel Owens is a crucial ambassador for both homosexuality in sport and for Rugby Union as a whole. He is a frequent collaborator on the Welsh language rugby-themed programme Jonathon, a notable patron of the 'Bullies Out' charity, and also hosts his own chat show, *Munud i Fynd* – all of which ensures he remains a prominent public figure.

The significance of Nigel Owens' prominence both on and off the field cannot be understated. For such a typically masculine sport as Rugby Union to have an

openly gay man as such a crucial and adored figure of the modern game (with 95% in a recent online poll for The Telegraph agreeing that he is the best referee in the world) is a huge step in the right direction. Let us not forget, that it is only as recent as 2009 that Gareth Thomas became the first openly gay professional rugby player in history. Hopefully, with figures such as Nigel Owens continuing to make such a positive impact, it will not be long before rugby is recognised as a diverse, inclusive sport for people from any walk of life.

LGBT History Month: Role Models Matter

Michael Andrews
Horse Racing

Sport has a special way of bringing people together. The Christmas Truce of 1914 is a powerful and moving image – uniting two entirely different (and seemingly irreconcilable) groups together in the most serious and high-pressured situation the human race ever faces. It's that feeling of unity and community that sends droves of football fans to their club's stadium to mix with so many vastly diverse people and it initiates the Cheltenham roar in March, enabling the employment of millions of people across the globe. However, this community has traditionally failed when it comes to outwardly and explicitly accepting its LGBT members. Is that true of horse racing too?

Horse Racing is a closed-off sport to many: horses are particularly costly, racing form is distinctly difficult to decipher and the sport isn't something you can merely 'pick up' in a day. This sad, yet just criticism is the sport's protection and its weakness. There are many people in racing who are LGBT, but only people within the tight-knit community know it. The knowledge doesn't fill the pages of the Racing Post for everyone to read, it doesn't in fact really drift away from the pubs and stable yards of Newmarket and Lambourn. It's not done out loud for fringe racing fans to hear. In recent times, only Clare Balding springs to mind as an 'out' LGBT flag-bearer for

the sport.

It was a surprise therefore that in 2013, apprentice jockey Jack Duern came out as gay via the Racing Post. Although his boss and many of his horses' owners already knew, it was the first time an active jockey had revealed his sexuality to the press. The reaction it received exemplified the racing community's feeling already – it was met neither with public outrage nor with an outpouring of support. Instead the racing community shrugged, and turned the page. It revealed simply that it isn't an issue in horse racing. But why did Jack's coming out matter so much?

Growing up, we all look to role models – outstanding people who we one day wish to imitate. For sporty kids, sport supplies those idols. In this current environment, fans don't know there are gay stars out there – they're growing up with the message that none of these role models identify quite the same as them. Imagine that; the people you admire the most and yearn to become are not fully representative of who you really are. And if they are, they don't think anyone should know.

Not for a second am I suggesting racing stars need to come out extravagantly, adding #likesboys to every tweet, refusing to wear their silks unless they're rainbow



[image: Racingfotos]

coloured or pushing the infamous 'homosexual agenda' every time they're interviewed. However, they do need to be visible. Be it a jockey, who happens to be gay or a trainer who is actually trans. Represent your sport but be true to yourself – it's not just you you're representing. In racing, it seems that being LGBT isn't a problem. But for many kids growing up, they need someone to stand up and remind them that that is the case.

Is Mervyn King of the Castle?



[Image: Clive Brunskill]

Luke Etheridge
Football

While other Premier League clubs were snapping up new players (or a new manager in Manchester City's case), Aston Villa had a very quiet transfer window with no new faces appearing at Villa Park. However, a few days after the window shut, they announced that lifelong fan and former Governor of the Bank of England would be joining the board at the club, who are currently bottom of the table, eight points from safety with thirteen games remaining. He is the second figure from the field of economics to become involved with a Premier League club this season, following the appointment of former Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls at Norwich City.

These two appointments say a lot for how football is seen by many at the top of English clubs as a business, which just happens to become a sport most Saturdays.

But this shouldn't come as a surprise with the amount of money that is now available in the game. The newest TV deal is bringing in over £5 billion over 3 years for the Premier League, meaning footballing results are bound to have large implications for the finances of the club. The well-documented problems of Portsmouth and Bolton, with the latter currently in £170 million of debt, are testament to this.

Does this make appointments like this necessary? Does the amount of money involved in football warrant having someone with experience in the financial world on the board? Although King is a fan of the club, the Chairman Steve Hollis does admit that he's been hired because of his experience of dealing with problems during the recession, saying the appointment will help the club back towards 'successful times'. A similar sentiment was shared by Norwich when Ed Balls was appointed Chairman, hoping that his 'economic know-how' would help the club over the long-term.

There is no doubt that many fans will have reservations about these figures outside of the world of football having a big say about the running of the club. It is a very different world from the one King and Balls have been used to over the last few years, with supporters being more bothered about what happens on the pitch, than the profits that are made off it. Obviously, clubs don't want to be in a mountain of debt just to keep in the Premier League, but there's no point making a lot of profit but being stuck in League One.

King and Balls may have some work to do to prove to the fans they're in it for the love of the club, not just to build up their retirement funds. But, with money in the game growing and growing every year, expect to see more establishment figures moving from finance to football, to try and help clubs keep control of their new-found wealth.

Doping: Should Records Be Reset?

John Gibby
Athletics

Ever since athletics was first rocked by its ongoing and highly volatile doping scandal at the end of 2015, a massive amount of soul searching has taken place by the key figures throughout the sport. Key questions have had to be answered. How could cheating on this scale have been covered up? Should Russia be allowed to compete in upcoming competitions after allegations of 'systematic doping' by the country's athletes? And, more recently, should world records be reset given many of them could have been set by some of those cheating? UK Athletics has claimed that such a move could herald a 'new era' in the sport, where no doubt its leaders will be anxious to put this sorry affair behind them and concentrate on what really matters – the sport. It's just one of a number of measures suggested by the British governing body to try and restore confidence in the integrity of athletics going into this summer's Olympic Games in Rio.

The idea has proved a divisive one, however, with former 110m hurdles World Champion Colin Jackson speaking out against the proposed ban, suggesting that 'world records are world records', and that elite athletes such as British triple jumper Jonathon Edwards could see their records un-

fairly taken away from them. As an alternative he has suggested the IAAF and other bodies work hard to find out exactly which record breakers were the dopers, and to wipe their records instead, but with some of these still lasting from the mid-1980s this is a mammoth, and frankly, impossible task. Despite this, high-profile names such as marathon world record holder Paula Radcliffe and six-times Olympic champion Usain Bolt are amongst those to agree with Jackson, with Bolt branding UK Athletics' proposal 'really pointless', and

calling on all in the sport to 'build on the future' rather than concerning themselves with the past. Bolt is not alone in his calls for the reforms and investigations to focus on the future, and with the whole of the Russian team facing the possibility of missing Rio due to the allegations levelled against them, some will claim that there are more important matters to prioritise, rather than worrying about illegitimate practices in a bygone era.

In the midst of what is clearly a controversial debate on some of the sport's most important honours, IAAF President Sebastian Coe has suggested a compromise whereby 'suspicious' records would be erased. This wouldn't necessarily require hard evidence on the specific occasion the record was set, but would affect former athletes and record holders such as shot-putter Randy Barnes, who was later handed a life ban for use of steroids. The reality is that if the records are not all wiped clean, some that were fraudulently obtained will inevitably remain in the history books. This is the unfortunate price of allowing some of the greatest athletes of all-time the glory and recognition they deserve.



[Image: Mike Atkin]

Celtics Lose Tale of Two Halves

Conor Robson
American Football
University of Leeds 12-28 Bradford

After a short coach trip west to Bradford, the Celtics arrived to find a team who had beaten them earlier in the year and a semi-waterlogged field to play on. What ensued can only be described as a tale of two halves, with Bradford coming out on top.

The first half went to the Celtics. Buoyed on by an inspirational speech from the Head Coach in remembrance of Old Boy Rob Worboys who sadly passed away last weekend, the defence wasted no time as on the first defensive play of the game, veteran Felix Titherley forced a fumble and the Celtics recovered. Full of confidence, the Celtics offence trudged onto the field and immediately repaid the defence for their turnover as rookie Ian Granger threw a 30-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Conor Robson. With the extra point almost impossible to

kick in the conditions, the score remained 6-0 to the Celtics.

On the offensive side of the ball, the Celtics had mixed success for the rest of the half, as the combined efforts of tight end Rory Ellis, running back Josh Beynon and fullbacks Oscar Taherbeigi and Felix Titherley produced solid drives, but lacked the necessary splash play. This changed when Taherbeigi produced a long run to the left side of the field, only to have it called back for offensive holding. Consolation came a few plays later when Beynon matched his efforts with a similar 25-yard run. Credit for the Celtics offensive performance in the first half should also be given to the offensive line who faced heavy blitz pressure all game, being feet deep in mud the entire game. The Celtics were finally able to punch the ball in the end-zone again when quarterback Jordan Au scrambled on a bootleg for a five-yard rushing touchdown.

The defence had an equally strong

performance in the first half, swallowing up the Bradford running game in a rigorous manner. They were not lacking for big plays either, as with the absence of any passing game from Bradford, key turnovers came in the form of forced fumbles and recoveries. All of this amounted to a 12-0 score line at halftime to the Leeds Celtics.

The second half was a different story. The offence could never get going in the poor field conditions, as it was getting difficult to even jog through the middle of the field without sinking. In contrast however, Bradford finally managed to kick their offence into gear and behind their running back put four touchdowns past the Celtics defence, all of which appeared to be on the exact same play.

In the end it was not a day to remember for the Celtics, with the Bears putting up 28 points in the second half, converting two of their two-point conversions, ending in a final score of 28-12.



Badminton 1sts (W) 0-8 Loughborough 1sts
Badminton 3rds (M) 7-1 Huddersfield 1sts

Basketball 1sts (M) 91-38 Sunderland 1sts
Basketball 1sts (W) 27-89 Durham 2nds
Basketball 3rds (M) 27-70 York 2nds

Fencing 1sts (M) 127-121 Manchester 1sts
Fencing 1sts (W) 126-122 Manchester 1sts

Football 1sts (M) 4-2 Newcastle 1sts
Football 1sts (W) 8-2 Sheffield 1sts
Football 3rds (M) 0-0 Sheffield 3rds

Hockey 2nds (M) 5-2 Durham 3rds
Hockey 2nds (W) 0-3 Leeds Beckett 2nds
Hockey 3rds (M) 4-0 Newcastle 3rds
Hockey 3rds (W) 2-1 York St. John 1sts
Hockey 4ths (M) 1-6 Sheffield 3rds
Hockey 5ths (M) 2-5 Newcastle 4ths
Hockey 5ths (W) 1-3 Hull 1sts
Hockey 6ths (W) 1-4 Bradford 1sts
Hockey 7ths (W) 7-0 Hull 2nds

Lacrosse 1sts (W) 11-9 Durham 2nds
Lacrosse 2nds (W) 3-25 Northumbria 1sts

Netball 2nds 49-28 Beckett 3rds
Netball 4ths 25-32 Sheffield 2nds

Rugby Union 1sts (W) 5-24 Edge Hill 1sts

Squash 2nds (M) 3-0 Sheffield 3rds
Squash 3rds (M) 3-0 York 2nds

Tennis 1sts (M) 10-2 Sheffield 1sts
Tennis 1sts (W) 0-12 Sheffield 1sts
Tennis 2nds (M) 4-8 York 1sts
Tennis 4ths (M) 12-0 York 3rds

Volleyball 1sts (M) 0-3 Northumbria 1sts
Volleyball 1sts (W) 3-0 York 1sts

Water Polo 1sts (M) 6-7 Northumbria 1sts
Water Polo 1sts (W) 11-4 York 1sts

Broncos Win Super Bowl 50

Tom King
NFL Super Bowl

In what is often referred to as the greatest show on Earth, Super Bowl 50 saw the Denver Broncos emerge victorious against the Carolina Panthers 24-10. The Panthers came into the game as favourites, having finished with only one loss during the regular season, and beat the Arizona Cardinals 49-15 in the NFC championship game two weeks ago. The Broncos however, were not deterred by the Panthers' reputation. The league MVP Cam Newton, Panthers' quarterback, was sacked after a Super Bowl record-tying seven times, as he saw his ego left in tatters.

On a clear, warm day in Santa Clara, all eyes were on quarterbacks Newton and of course Peyton Manning. Both are at opposite ends of their career, and both have differing personalities. Newton lived up to his reputation of being 'the main man' pre-game, sporting a warm-up t-shirt with a gold superman logo. Manning looked as calm as ever during the warm-ups, in what could possibly be the last game of his career.

After Lady Gaga had sung the United States national anthem, Manning hit tight end Owen Daniels for 18 yards on the opening play of the game. The drive ended in a 34-yard field goal from Brandon McManus, giving Den-

ver a 3-0 lead. From then on however, the Broncos defence took the spotlight away from Manning, as linebacker Von Miller stripped the ball off Cam Newton, and Malik Jackson took the ball into the end zone for the first touchdown of the game. Faced with a 10-0 first quarter deficit, and the vivid Broncos fans in loud voice, the Panthers were behind and under pressure. The challenge was to see how they could respond.

The second quarter initially saw a spirited response from the Panthers, with running back Jonathan Stewart spectacularly diving over the Broncos defensive line, to make the score 10-7. Carolina's defence was also growing in the game, with linebacker Luke Kuechly delivering some bone-crunching hits. However, later in the quarter Josh Norwood produced the longest punt return in Super Bowl history with 61 yards for the Broncos. They soon came away with another field goal to extend their lead to 13-7.

Back to the football following the half-time show, and the third quarter saw Newton finally connect with open wide receiver Ted Ginn Jr, however the resulting field goal hit the upright. Manning, who was also not dominating the game, had the ball stripped and it was recovered by Carolina. The Broncos defence held

tight, but this time the field goal went over from Graham Gano, making the scores 16-10, and setting up a tense final quarter.

The final quarter saw the final blow delivered by the Broncos defence. The inspirational Miller hit Newton, again causing the ball to go loose. Running back C.J. Anderson powered his way into the end zone, through the tackle of Kuechly. Anderson had provided an exceptional foundation for an ageing Manning to play from all season, and that was the case in Santa Clara. Fittingly it was Manning who put the game beyond all doubt, completing the two point conversion to Bennie Fowler to make the final score 24-10.

After Broncos the wild celebrations had finished (for the time being) the trophy was presented, and the spotlight again returned upon the future of Peyton Manning. In an entertaining response to the retirement question, he stated he had other priorities at the moment, one of which was drinking a lot of Budweiser.

However, this is not just a victory for Peyton Manning, but a victory for the Denver Broncos as a whole. It is a victory that they will savour for a long time.

Leeds Look Strong in Athletics Steel Cup

Zoë Thresher
Athletics

The Leeds University Athletics team was one of many Northern universities to compete in the Steel Cup Competition on Wednesday. Other competitors such as Leeds Beckett, Sheffield Hallam and Loughborough promised a day of tough rivalry for the Gryphons, however team spirits were high and everyone was excited to kick off the indoor season. Held at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield, it was one of the first indoor competitions of the year for many athletes and Leeds got off to a strong start in the women's 60m heats, as Sophie Money took second place with a joint-personal best time of 8.10 seconds. Gussie Beech, who ran an indoor personal best of 8.73 seconds and gained third place, gave an impressive performance in what was only her second indoor competition. Zoë Thresher also took third place in the last of the 60m heats, running 8.63 seconds and banking her first time for an indoor 60m race.

The men were shortly faced with the 200m heats in which both Jake Sanderson and Ben Webster participated in their first competitive indoor race yet. Sanderson's powerful run gained him an impressive time of 29.19 seconds. Money continued the victory streak with her new indoor personal best of 26.40 in the 200m which she described to be 'a good confidence

booster in the run-up to BUCS'. Thresher also marked a first indoor time of 28.42 seconds but believes there is a lot of room for improvement. Despite the nerves, Gemma Brown ran an impressive 29.47 seconds and showed good form throughout the race earning her a well-deserved third place. The women continued to place in the top three as Beech stole second place with a time of 29 seconds. The pleasing performances from



[image: Zoe Thresher]

the women 200m runners left the team hopeful for a slick 4x200m relay at the end of the day.

Will Snook flew past athletes from Northumbria and

Sheffield Hallam University and gained first place in the 400m heats with a time of 49.40 seconds whilst Dan Bala also bagged a time of 55.87 seconds. Despite Leeds' successes and standout performances from the likes of Snook and Money, the competition was still strong with only the relays left to go.

The men initially got off to a positive start in the 4x200m. However, an unfortunate misjudgment during the baton handover between legs three and four left the men's team disqualified from the race. Brown set off the first leg of the women's 4x200m comfortably and handed over to Money, who pulled Leeds up into a strong second position. Despite this, Leeds Beckett were too strong to be reckoned with as Leeds dropped back slightly into third place. However, Beech on third leg and Thresher on fourth leg were able to maintain this position through to the finish line and were pleased to get the baton around the track without any crashes.

President Ed Hall rounded off the day saying that 'we had some encouraging performances from the team which we are looking to build on for BUCS Nationals in a couple of weeks. We are really proud of the athletes and excited at the prospects of what LUUAC could achieve this year'.

Gryphons Devastated on Derby Day

James Candler
Women's Hockey
University of Leeds 0 - 3 Leeds Beckett

In a tantalising match-up between the University of Leeds women's 2nd team and their Beckett counterparts, the red brick side was disappointed to be on the receiving end of a 3-0 defeat that left them scratching their heads and licking their wounds.

The girls in green began well, displaying a ferocious intent that bullied Beckett into a brief state of submission. The initial centre pass was aggressively pressurised by the Gryphons, and fairly soon they had turned over possession, which allowed for their first scoring opportunity of the match. Caitlin Tiemessen managed to effectively dribble her way up-field, before linking up with Jess Brisley, who fired a powerful shot towards the opposing goalkeeper. The subsequent penalty corner further increased the pressure, but Beckett coped well and were soon able to make their way into the Uni half, winning a penalty corner of their own. It was clear from the off that both sides knew how to create and apply pressure, but it seemed as though Beckett were just that little more threatening when they had possession. This was partially down to some unfortunate instances of miscommunication amongst the Gryphons (who would occasionally pass the ball to a player who was simply not in the right part of the field) but also the result of



[image: James Candler]

their infrequent but damaging lapses in defence. The first goal of the match came from a Beckett penalty corner that arose from a sustained period of pressure. The corner was whipped in with lightning speed before being slammed into the back of the net. The University of Leeds did hit back impressively and at one point a goal was nearly scored by midfielder Georgia Burley,

who executed a beautiful challenge down the left wing, before hurtling the ball towards the Beckett goal. Alas, despite the pressure that was built and the many penalty corners won, the half ended with the visiting rivals 1-0 up.

The second half saw Beckett increase their stranglehold on the match. The half began with an initial surge in energy from both sides, with a number of balls turned over and fouls penalised, demonstrating the sig-

nificance of these opening minutes of the second half. The introduction of Anna Sibley (who delivered a tremendous performance) did inject some much-needed pace and creative spark to proceedings, but still the same problems seemed to persist for the Gryphons. The home side expended much energy creating pressure and chances that unfortunately went awry, whereas Beckett seemed to bide their time before pouncing on any opportunities that came their way. The next goal came from a Beckett counter, as Leeds were unable to turn quickly enough and impede Beckett from making their way upfield. Although goalkeeper Fran Smith parried the first shot, the subsequent penalty corner ensured the goal. A mere two minutes later and the visiting side made yet another breakaway counter, scoring a third goal and thereby sealing the fate of the match.

The Gryphon was fortunate enough to catch up with head coach Gawaine Mackenzie-Hogg, who gave his two cents on the match. The coach highlighted as the key areas in which his team must improve, their success at converting chances into points, as well as their one on one defending. The coach admitted that having 16 shots on goal and coming away with no points is simply not good enough and that this is what they will primarily focus on the preparation for future matches. The girls in green will certainly hope to prove resilient in the face of defeat.

Poor Weather Dampens Sunny Season



Sam Hawthorn
Rugby Union

It has been a positive season for men's Rugby Union, with something on offer for each of the four teams at this late stage in the season. The wet weather of late has led to cancellations and a busy schedule in February and March, which contains some season-defining games for all four teams.

Since a spirited Varsity performance, the 1st XV have succeeded in surpassing their achievements of last season. Whilst a Varsity win has eluded them for the last three years, they have secured their place in the Northern Premiership for yet another year. With three league matches to play, there are fewer nerves than the relegation play-off against Bishop Burton at the end of last year. Notable results came in the form of an away draw at Northumbria and a home win against Nottingham.

However, by far the most significant result came last week. Led by Luke Harris, who scored two tries on the day, the 1st XV overcame Nottingham for the second time this year to condemn them to a potential relegation play-off come the end of the season.

The 2nd XV have been the most consistent team in the club as far as results are concerned. With only one loss to their name, they are well-placed to win the league and achieve promotion for next season. After

the top-of-the-table-clash against Newcastle, which is due to take place in the coming weeks, we'll know more about the fate of the 2nds for next season.

The 3rd XV compete in the same league as the 2nds and have not been as successful in the league. A disappointing result at fellow strugglers Northumbria means two big performances are required against Sheffield

Hallam and Durham if the 3rds are to stave off relegation. The team have excelled in the cup, winning twice on the road at Liverpool Uni and Northumbria to earn them a home tie against UCLan in the quarter-finals on the 17th February. Two more cup wins would mean a trip to Sheffield for finals day and the newly-dubbed 'BUCS Big Wednesday'.

The 4th XV started strongly with a thumping victory against Teesside. However, a draw in the away fixture and a few narrow losses has left the 4ths mid-table (too much socialising perhaps). A 36-10 win at the end of January against Liverpool John Moores took the team through to the quarter-finals of their respective cup competition. Perhaps silverware is on the cards.

Sheffield Prove Too Tough For Gryphons

John Gibby
Men's Table Tennis
University of Leeds 0 - 17 Sheffield

Watching a BUCS Table Tennis fixture is like watching no other sport you have ever attended. At Leeds, in the late-afternoon light of the Cromer Terrace Fitness Suite three games take place simultaneously over the span of about an hour, at such rapid speed it's hard to keep up with it. And so it was the brave athletes of the University of Leeds men's table tennis team took on league leaders Sheffield over the usual best-of-17 format. The four players on each team take each other on in a round-robin format, before a doubles match, designed to break a deadlock at 8-all should it transpire. Confidence wasn't high, with one player beforehand speaking of the 21-point gap between the two in the league table, not to mention the massive 150-point 'goal difference'.

Still, the Gryphons put on a brave show, often forcing errors in their opponents' play, or benefiting when Sheffield tried an ambitious shot which resulted in a fault. There was no doubting the severity of the challenge that the Leeds players were up against. However, with the opposing side hitting serves having thrown the ball six or seven feet in the air with huge amounts of strength, and at times working their way back from the edge of the table until they were half way across the

hall to deliver powerful returns, it was always going to be an uphill task. It was that level of complexity which really gave them the upper-hand over the home side, clearly the result of sheer dedication to their sport, and machine-like effectiveness in bringing their training from the practice room into the match.

More than once the Leeds players mentioned Kim Daybell, their world class player from last year, currently taking some time out from university to attempt to qualify for the Rio Paralympics this summer. They were without Daybell (himself born in Sheffield) on this occasion however, and though one player claimed the team was "essentially last year's reserves" they really did give it their all, and the frustration on their faces was tangible each time the Sheffield players secured another point.



After an exhausting final quarter of an hour the match may have ended 0-17, but it was far from a walkover for the visitors. They were made to work for their white-wash, and it required all of their elite talent down to the last electrifying rally.



[Image: Mathew Norman]

In honour of Super Bowl 50, *The Gryphon* checks out the Leeds Celtics p.21



[Image: Themba Hlad]

For LGBT history month, *The Gryphon* honours Nigel Owens p.19



[Image: Zoe Thresher]

Resident athlete Zoe Thresher examines the Steel Cup Competition p.22



[Image: Nigel Brunskill]

The Gryphon questions establishment figures in football p.20



[Image: Jack Roberts]

Qualification Secured for LUU Korfball

- Gryphons make finals for first time
- Fantastic performances from Luke Hawthorne and Jacob Cooke

Matthew Norman
Korfball

After finishing fourth at the Yorkshire preliminaries and only just qualifying for regionals, the Leeds University Korfball first team played out of their skins to book a shock place at first-team Nationals next month. Leeds were looking to improve on last year's performance when they missed out on first-tier Nationals, but the team knew it was going to be an extremely difficult day, having been pooled with historically successful teams from Sheffield University and Nottingham.

Leeds's first match of the day, however, was up against Birmingham's second team. Leeds asserted their dominance on the match early on and sped to a 4-1 lead with Jacob Cooke, Rachel Muir and Luke Hawthorne all finding the net. A hint of complacency slipped in to Leeds's game which Birmingham capitalised on to close the gap to 5-3 at the half-time whistle. After composing themselves during the break, Leeds ensured that the lead wasn't cut anymore throughout the whole second half and finally ran out 8-6 winners to get their qualification quest off to the perfect start.

With eight teams all vying for the top four spots, the day was always going to be non-stop and action-packed.

This meant Leeds were straight back in the thick of it in a massive match against Sheffield. With the final group match against a very strong Nottingham side, Leeds knew this would be their best chance at collecting the second win they needed to finish in the top two. Nonetheless, it would take a special performance with Sheffield having won the Yorkshire preliminaries, beating Leeds in the process, and playing in the league above usually.

Leeds got off to the perfect start as a slick attacking move won them a penalty which was comfortably put away by Hawthorne. Despite being early in the match, the intense start from Leeds sent a clear message to the Sheffield team and their home fans that they were not going to roll over easily. In what was turning out to be an extremely hard-fought and patient game, the scores were locked at 1-1 close to half-time before a quick Cooke double put Leeds in the ascendancy. The goals started to flow more readily in the second half but a

magnificent Leeds defence ensured there was already no way back for Sheffield. Leeds pushed 6-3 ahead before the move of the day saw Matt Norman and Hawthorne combine again to settle the match.

The brilliant win ensured Leeds's qualification to first-tier Nationals next month and knocked Sheffield out. The final league match saw a tiring Leeds lose out to eventually winners Nottingham 9-1 to finish second in the group. A resilient performance against Birmingham 1sts in the semi-final then was in vain as Leeds lost out 11-6, after Birmingham snuffed out a late Leeds comeback at 8-6. Unfortunately for Leeds, the day didn't end on a high as they lost to Sheffield Hallam to finish fourth on the day, but had already achieved what they set out to do.

Leeds will need to perform to a similar standard if they want to achieve their goal of finishing in the top eight at first-tier Nationals, a feat not achieved in recent Leeds Korfball history. But the way in which they qualified will fill the team with confidence, especially as all ten squad players scored on the day.