



Image: Crash Records

Students Left in Dark Over Absent Leeds Beckett President

Beckett Students' Union President Joe Murray absent from post for over two weeks amidst suspension rumours

**Polly Hatcher
Jessica Murray**

A number of students have signed an open letter to Nicky Goldthorpe, Chief Executive of Leeds Beckett Student's Union, calling on the Union to provide information as to why President, Joe Murray, is absent from his post.

Murray has been absent from work since 17th November, and with the Union remaining silent on the reason behind this, students are starting to get concerned.

The open letter states "Part of the role of the Students' Union is protecting the welfare of Leeds Beckett students.

Given the increasingly worrying and disturbing rumours surrounding his absence – including rumours he has been suspended – we the undersigned (who all attend Leeds Beckett University)

feel very strongly that students deserve to know if their safety has been and is at risk.

We are particularly concerned that the Students' Union has prioritised its own reputation over the safety and wellbeing of students."

The letter has now been signed by over 100 students, calling for the Students' Union to give more information about why he is currently not in his post.

The Gryphon has also been informed that a group of students are looking to organise a vote of no confidence, but are unsure whether they are able to do this with the President not in attendance.

Murray is currently taking a year out from his degree in Sport and Exercise Science to carry out his role as the President of the Students' Union, which he was elected to earlier this year. He has previously acted as a Course Rep,

Student & International Ambassador and a Faculty Representative.

On the 3rd November he was also elected to sit on the NUS Union Development Zone Committee for 2016/17, the first time in four years that a student from Leeds Beckett has held an elected position in the National Union of Students.

In response to the open letter, Leeds Beckett Students' Union have stated: "Joe Murray is currently absent from both the Students' Union and the University. As is our standard practice, we are unable to comment on individuals and we ask the membership to respect this confidentiality at this time.

"Please rest assured that the safety and wellbeing of our members remains our first priority."

A Global Food Waste Revolution
We chat to Real Junk Food Project Founder Adam Smith

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A 'smoke-free' campus?
The issue comes to light as student proposes designated smoking areas

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Busted are Back

The band from our childhoods is back, but where are the guitars?

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Your Christmas Style Guide

From ball gowns to puffa jackets, Fashion have got you covered

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Quote of the Week

“And so 2 bed early. Me back is no better. Oh me! Oh my! Oiche mhaith s codladh samh xoxo”

Gerry Adams,
Twitter

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Editor's Letter:



Dear Students of Leeds,

There's a Santa hat on the front page. Students in Hyde Park are gathering together to put up their cheap Wilko trees, filling in the gaps left by minimal branches with excessive amounts of tinsel – a sad state of affairs that even an Instagram filter can't fix. The German Christmas market is already bursting at the seams, with hundreds of students flocking to take part in the annual Christmas tradition of eating bratwurst, drinking steins and browsing traditional decorations that we never buy. Christmas sandwiches are stocked in every shop, so I can finally stuff my face with turkey, stuffing and cranberry sauce every day of the week, while eagerly looking forward to the pigs in blankets served with my Terrace Christmas meal. There's so much to love, and so much to hate, but whether we like it or not, Gryphmas is truly upon us once again.

For all my cynicism towards many aspects of Christmas – the extravagant commercialism of it all, the cheesy commodifications of things like the German market, and excessively long adverts about dogs bouncing on trampolines, Christmas is one of our most sacred traditions and one which we must hold dearly. If it weren't for Christmas, when we would make time to see our families? To sit down around a table with our most loved ones and actually spend time with each other (as much as we might do so begrudgingly). For me personally, a year filled with uni work, exams and a dissertation, work placements and travelling over summer and now a full time job, I feel like I've only been able to make handful of fleeting visits home this past year. Now is the time to set aside all work and commitments and make time to see my family, and most importantly of all, my dog. Besides, when else could I legitimately eat my body weight in pigs in blankets?

However, although it's easy to get wrapped up in present buying and sparkly ball dresses, it's also important to remember those who live around us at this time of year. We as students come to Leeds

and take all it has to offer us, it's educational institutions, shops, nightlife, housing and public transport, but then vanish during the Christmas weeks, forgetting about those Leeds residents we live amongst who might not have the privilege to return home to warm welcomes and roaring fires.

For one, Leeds has a serious problem with homelessness that needs addressing. You've probably walked past homeless people countless times on your way to and from uni, but it's time we started paying them more attention. The cold winter months are drawing in, and these are the people who have no homes to turn to.

Food poverty is also rife in the Leeds area. Nearby Armley is home to the Real Junk Food Project, a now global campaign of pay-as-you-fee cafes helping to feed the world using leftover food. This week I interviewed organisation founder Adam Smith about how the project has skyrocketed in recent months. He and his team work hands on with some of the most underprivileged citizens of Leeds and provide them with food they so desperately need. As he says, “[we are] deeply ingrained in some of the most complex social issues you could ever imagine, from street drinking to prostitution, all the way to child hunger, malnutrition, obesity and just poverty in general.”

So before you leave this Christmas, think about ways in which you can give something back to the community. LUU have launched a great campaign encouraging students to leave a Christmas Presence this winter. You can donate leftover food, unwanted clothes and even empty glass bottles (and after the flurry of Christmas nights out, there's guaranteed to be plenty of those) at collection points outside Hyde Park Picture House and Hyde Park Book Club.

Whatever you do or wherever you're going this December, have a wonderful Christmas, but don't forget to take the time to help those left privileged, and be thankful for all you have.

Jessica Murray
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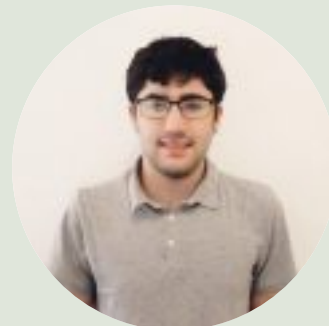


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Editor of the Week



James Felton
Sports Editor

James has shown excellent dedication to covering BUCS fixtures throughout the semester, as well as writing match reports and engaging Sports features.

University working towards a 'smoke-free' campus

The issue is discussed among students following a proposal to introduce designated outdoor smoking areas

Polly Hatcher

At the most recent Better University Forum a motion was proposed to implement specific outdoor smoking areas on campus. Nine voted in favour and six voted against, but any further decision has been postponed until February, when it may go to a student wide referendum.

Notes from the discussion highlighted the issues that there were concerns over stigmatising smokers and not enabling them to smoke between lectures. However, the benefits were also discussed including a reduction in littering and second hand smoke.

The proposal fits in well with the university's decision to work towards a 'smoke-free campus'. Speaking to The Gryphon, a university spokesperson said: "After extensive discussion by the Health and Safety Committee, which includes staff and student representatives, the University has agreed in principle to work towards a smoke-free campus.

"Clearly there are many practical issues to be discussed, and these will be explored by a University working group that will include LUU, the Facilities Directorate, trade unions, health professionals and others. We will keep staff and students informed of progress."

'Smoke free campuses' have been implemented in many universities across the United States of America and some in the UK.

From January 2007 Newcastle university implemented a smoke free campus. On their website,



Image: Minds

they list the reasons for this, stating that they want to "protect the right of the non-smoker not to be exposed to secondhand smoke", to "provide encouragement and support to smokers who wish to give up smoking" and to "minimise the accumulation of unsightly smoking litter and reduce the risk of fire by providing suitable and adequate facilities."

Freya Emerson is a second year architecture student at Newcastle University, and she said that "Newcastle is smoke free but it doesn't stop people from smoking on campus and there are lots of designated smoking

areas."

A second year University of Leeds student said "I don't see what the issue is with smoking outdoors. Obviously second hand smoke is harmful but when you're in an open outside area the effects on non-smokers are minimal. People wanting to ban smoking on campus feels oppressive and unnecessary."

The motion to introduce designated smoking areas has been postponed until February, when it is likely to go to a student wide referendum.

Staff call for bonus following University of the Year award

Staff at Leeds ask for £500 bonus following University of the Year award

Euan Hammond

Over 500 members of staff at the University of Leeds have signed a petition requesting a £500 bonus as a 'thank you' for their hard work. This year Leeds received The Times and The Sunday Times 'University of the Year Award', prompting three staff unions – UCU, Unison and Unite – to ask for recognition in the form of a monetary reward for staff.

The petition on the Leeds UCU website states that Vice-Chancellor, Alan Langlands, 'subsequently emailed staff about giving an extra day's annual leave as a thank you.'

However, the offer angered many staff who already struggle to take their full quota of annual leave.

Nick Allen, Branch Chair for Unison; Jo Westerman, Branch Chair for Unite and Tim Goodall, Branch President for UCU gave a joint statement to The Gryphon.

"Following the announcement of the award of University of the Year 2017 to the University of Leeds, which all parties agree pays tribute to years

of hard work and professionalism from all the staff of the university, as well as staff in LUU and Bright Beginnings, the three unions jointly approached the Vice-Chancellor to ask for cash recognition of the achievement, in line with what was offered by other regional universities who were previously awarded the same accolade.

"We received a reply saying that the University would offer one day extra of annual leave. All three unions immediately began receiving messages from members asking how they could take an extra day's annual leave when they were unable to take all of their current leave because of their workload.

"Prompted by this response we carried out a survey to ask members what their preferred method of recognition would be and inviting further comment. Our survey received an unprecedented response. Over 80%, averaged across the unions, preferred a cash reward or to be given a choice between cash and leave. Less than 15% preferred annual leave as the only option.

"40% of respondents explained difficulties faced in

taking their current leave allocation in any one year and the reasons for this.

"Over 500 members of staff signed a petition asking for a cash reward. We have this week contacted the University's senior management asking that they reconsider."

A University spokesperson explained their stance on the matter: "The University wanted to thank colleagues for their integral role in us being named University of the Year. An extra day's leave, which can be taken at any point throughout the year, was seen as a meaningful and flexible way of rewarding staff for their commitment and dedication.

"We are very proud of the award and it really is down to so much energy and inspiration, ensuring that students experience an outstanding education here at Leeds."

The University are expected to give a definitive response to the petition this week as staff wait to see if they will be getting an early Christmas present.

Campus Watch

1 University of Tokyo Another blow for artificial intelligence?

A Japanese robot with artificial intelligence has recently failed the entrance exam to the prestigious University of Tokyo for the fourth year in a row.

The robot, Torobo-Kun, scored almost the same as it did last year which, according to Noriko Arai, professor at the National Institute of Informatics, has ensured that the scientists 'were able to gauge the possibilities and limits of artificial intelligence.' The robot still has a long way to go as its standard deviation score in the mock exam was only 57.1; a score of 80% or higher is required by Tokyo's liberal arts courses. Nevertheless, Torobo-kun is showing promise since its score would mean that it would have an 80% chance of being accepted into 1,373 departments in 535 universities throughout Japan.

Anna Matthews

2 Cambridge University University accused of covering up anti-Semitic attacks

At the end of October in the graduate student union at Cambridge University, three Jewish students wearing kippahs were verbally and physically abused as they were leaving the private party for the sporting societies of Christ's College.

As they were leaving, they were met with a mob that allegedly tried to beat and choke them, shouting obscenities such as "F***ing Jews, you don't belong here" and "F*** off, Darkie". An unnamed student told *The Telegraph* that they experienced "vicious anti-Semitic slurs" and stated that they even tried to choke one of his friends with his own scarf.

Following investigations into the incident, master of Christ's College Jane Stapleton stated that the two students involved in the incident have been disciplined, although she would not identify the individuals or reveal the punishment.

It was also found that the students did not act out of anti-Semitism. Shlomo Roiter-Jesner, one of the victims of the attacks, stated that the college "has not confronted the issue at all. They have brushed it under the carpet".

Jangira Lewis

3 University of Bristol University develops new technology to harness nuclear waste

A team of physicists and chemists at the University of Bristol have developed new technology that harnesses nuclear waste to generate electricity.

They have created a man-made diamond which, when placed in a radioactive field, generates a small electrical current.

The developers hope that the new technology could be used to solve the problem of nuclear waste, clean electricity generation and battery life.

In a statement, the university said that the man-made diamond can produce a charge simply by being placed in proximity to carbon-14 radiation, compared to the majority of electricity-generating technologies, which use energy to move a magnet through a coil of wire.

Despite their low power, relative to current batteries, the life time of the batteries could revolutionise powering devices over long time periods, with a carbon-14 battery reaching 50 per cent power after 5730 years.

The innovation was presented at the Cabot Institute, the university's flagship cross-disciplinary research institute, in its annual lecture, 'Ideas to Change the World', on November 25.

Jonathan Chard

4 University of Cardiff Research has revealed the university adds just under £3bn to the UK economy

It comes after London Economics, a policy and economics consultancy, produced and published a report that suggested the university generates £6.36 for every £1 it spends.

With this evidence, the firm went on to calculate that the university made £2,918m in 2014/15, which is an increase of £248m from the previous year.

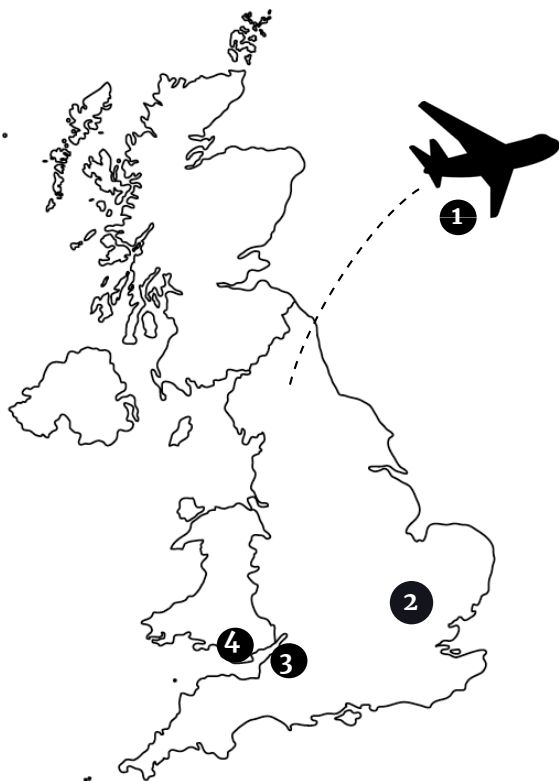
In addition, the findings also revealed that the money added to the UK economy enables 11,000 people to be employed.

The publication of the report, which analyses the university's economic and social impact, no doubt offers a helping hand in terms of publicity to the university, who recently unveiled plans for a new £300m Innovation Campus.

Vice-chancellor Professor Colin Riordan stated: "Cardiff University continues to be a key economic and social driver".

"This year's update shows a marked increase in our overall economic impact and confirms the role of universities in driving economic growth through high-level skills and ground-breaking research."

William Marriott



Hyde Park murder investigation continues as police search for guitars

Police search for guitars believed to be linked to Hyde Park murder earlier this month

Charlotte Mason

Police are looking to trace two electric guitars missing from the home of a man murdered in Hyde Park.

Christopher Laskaris, who was 24, was found dead in his flat on St John's Close on Thursday 17th November. Philip Craig, a 37-year-old man from Hyde Park, and Dempsey Pattison, 22, have been charged with his murder.

Officers are now appealing for information about two electric guitars, an amplifier and a laptop missing

from Christopher's flat.

They are a red Fender Jaguar electric guitar, a blue Flying V electric guitar, an Orange Crush 35RT amplifier and a Lenovo laptop.

Detective Chief Inspector Mark Swift from West Yorkshire Police said, 'We are keen to speak to anyone who knows the whereabouts of these items or has been offered similar items for sale at any point since November 4.'

'We are continuing to carry out enquiries to trace these items and would urge anyone who has information that could assist the investigation to

contact us immediately.'

A student who lives on St John's Close and wanted to remain anonymous told The Gryphon that police and forensic investigators were at the property 24 hours a day in the week following the murder but have now left.

Police are asking anyone with information about the missing items to contact the Homicide and Major Enquiry Team on 101 with reference to 'Operation Pulleygate', or to call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

North South divide influences two thirds of University Applicants

Jonathan Chard

Nearly two thirds of prospective students are influenced by the north-south divide when it comes to applying to universities.

Research conducted by The Student Room, an online forum for students, showed that almost 62% of students would prefer to study in the South, compared to just 38% who would rather study in the North.

Reasons for the disparity included a belief that universities in the south had lower crime rates, fairer weather and a better academic reputation.

The cities of Bradford, Hull and Birmingham ranked the lowest with students, with high crime levels rated highly on the list of factors, followed by a reputation for "being boring".

Hannah Morrish, university community manager at The Student Room, said:

"Old-fashioned ideas about the 'grim north' and the 'posh south' might seem tongue in cheek but it's clear from our research that geography still plays a part in shaping social mobility and young people's confidence about the future."

According to the study of 2700 prospective students, the reputation of a city greatly influences university choice, with two thirds stating that a bad reputation would put them off attending a university.

The two largest factors given for choosing the study up north were the cost of living and the eagerness to flee the nest.

Nearly 54% of students listed cheaper living costs as the most important reason for their decisions, and 33% listed getting away from home as a decisive factor.

Only 12% of those choosing to study in the south felt fleeing the nest was an influence in their decision, with nearly two thirds wanting

to stay close to home.

Students who chose to study up north did so also because of the perceived idea that "northerners were more friendly".

Natasha Farrington, a third-year History student from Manchester, wasn't surprised to see evidence of a divide.

"I do think there is a divide, due to the ingrained perceptions of the north and south," she said.

"Although steeped in generalisation, there is an opinion that the south is better, posher. If you've lived a middle class life in the south, the 'grimey' perception of the north may not appeal when wanting to increase your prospects for the future."

On the other hand, Charlotte Carey, a third-year PPE student from London, found the survey to be shocking.

"The results of this survey are surprising to me as other than the odd quip, I didn't realise such stereotypes played such a role in which universities students applied to," she said.

"For me, academic reputation and the specifics of the course were the most important factors. I was also quite keen to move away from home, and the prospect of £2.50 doubles was definitely appealing!"

The research comes with just over a month until the UCAS university application deadline on January 15, as nearly 600,000 students apply for higher education.



Image: Thinkstock / Alex Finnis / BuzzFeed

Leeds University scores highly for green impact

The University has been awarded a 'first class award', scoring 100% for environmental policy but 0% for ethical investment

Rabeeah Moeen

The University of Leeds has been named one of the key universities producing environmental research.

It was amongst a number of higher education institutions dominating this research field following the Paris Agreement. The University of Oxford was also present from the UK, with Utrecht University of the Netherlands leading the way in terms of publications with the most impact.

The University of Leeds published 1,507 publications between 2011 and 2015 on the issue of a greener world, with 1,083 authors involved. Furthermore, it was found that several of the most cited articles have authors from a number of other universities, highlighting the impact of collaboration in environmental research.

On the other hand, this research is not translating into actual change.

People and Planet has revealed over 75% of universities in the UK are missing their carbon targets, meaning just one quarter are on track to meet goals to reduce carbon emissions for 2020. This is the fourth time the group has recorded universities are set to miss their targets, which are legally binding. Universities are obliged to reduce their carbon emissions by 43% by 2020.

This has been blamed on a lack of government support for public sector sustainability, specifically on energy-saving schemes still not formalised within Parliament. People and Planet have said "the landscape looks bereft of any significant support or incentive for sustainable development in universities in England." This is following the loss of a number

of schemes in 2010 which included things such as the student green fund.

Leeds University was awarded a 'first class award' in People and Planet's Higher Education league tables, the criteria for which included factors such as employment of dedicated sustainability staff and divesting from investment in fossil fuel companies, particularly relevant to Leeds due to the university's decision to reject calls to divest from fossil fuels earlier this year.

However, it was not in the top 10, and came 23rd in the table, with Nottingham Trent University winning the top spot. This may have been for things such as their new carbon negative building opened earlier this year. Their environmental manager, Grant Anderson, also said "we made it a formal requirement that all of our courses incorporate at least one of the 17 UN sustainable development goals." Following on their heels was Brighton University, who had made sustainability one of its core values, reduced its carbon footprint and recently installed 893 solar panels.

There are now fears that a lack of progress towards



Image: leeds.ac.uk

sustainability will be worsened, particularly with new government policies. For example, environmental sustainability has been removed from the annual grant for higher education funding.

The University of Leeds' commitment to sustainability has been broken down into factors upon which it was assessed. It was given a 100% score on environmental policy, yet 0% in ethical investment, suggesting there is still work to be done. All information was taken from publically-available sources, and more information is available

Leave Your Presence Behind this Christmas

Ian White

When students go home for Christmas, an enormous amount of leftover food from people's kitchens is thrown away. LUU has teamed up with a number of local charities and Leeds City Council so that unwanted food goes to those who need it, not to landfill.

Collections will be held on Wednesday 7th December at Hyde Park Picture House and Hyde Park Book Club from 11am to 4pm.

All the donated leftover food will be distributed to homeless charities and food banks around Leeds, including The St. Vincent de Paul Society and the North West Foodbank, giving those in need a much appreciated Christmas present. The Union will also be working with The Real Junk Food Project, an Armley-based organisation which has received unprecedented success and media attention in the past year for its pay-as-you-feel cafes.

There will also be an opportunity to donate any unwanted clothes and for empty glass bottles to be handed to Leeds City Council for recycling.

Jamie Ali, LUU's Community Officer, said: "When you're going home for the holidays, remember that LUU is around to help you get rid of your food waste in a sustainable way, which will give the worse off some extra food at this time of year."

This collection day is part of the wider Leave Leeds

Tidy Project, which aims to reduce landfill during the student changeover period. Last changeover the project helped to divert an enormous 25 tonnes of unwanted items away from landfill and back to be reused by the Leeds community.

The eight recycling centres operated by Leeds City Council will remain open throughout December to handle the extra waste generated by Christmas packaging and gift-wrapping, and they will even compost real Christmas trees.

Councillor Mark Dobson, executive member for the environment, said: "With the sparkle and fun of the festive holiday period, many of us don't give waste and recycling a second thought.

"But at a time of year when we can create more waste than normal, it's even more important that we make the most of the available recycling services."

The council recommends visiting www.lovefoodhatewaste.com to make the most of your family's festive feast without days of cold meat sandwiches.

So make sure that any food you haven't got round to eating doesn't go to waste. Instead, this Wednesday, join LUU to make sure it goes towards feeding people facing difficult times this Christmas.



Image: handyanton.co.uk

University's Field trip simulator wins award

University of Leeds and Leeds College of Art win Times Higher Education award for Outstanding Digital Innovation

Amy Crawford

The Virtual Landscapes team at the University of Leeds and Leeds College of Art have won the award for Outstanding Digital Innovation in Teaching or Research after developing a first person video game which simulates field trips.

The tool enables students to explore a virtual landscape as they would a real one. They are able to interact with the digital landscape to collect real-time data, determine location and map regional geology.

Those on courses with a geology field trip element will be able to use it to help prepare for field work, allowing the time spent on the field trip itself to be used more profitably.

In one exercise, 70% of the students who used the software reported increased confidence in the tasks they faced.

Furthermore, as the technology enables the teaching of the same skills and processes as the field trip itself, it can also be used by students who cannot undertake fieldwork due to illness or injury – something that was not previously possible.

Virtual landscapes is based on the multi platform Unity 3D game engine. It allows open ended environments with real world mapping, and can be accessed anywhere with an internet connection as a browser plug in or stand alone app.

Leeds' new, distinctly academic application of the

software has been so successful it is being evaluated by other UK Universities, including Keele, Durham, and Liverpool. Globally, universities in the USA, South Africa and Guyana are looking to implement the model.

Dr Jacqui Houghton, from the School of Earth and Environment at the University of Leeds, is director of the Virtual Landscapes project.

She said: "This is a fantastic example of team working, using experts from different disciplines and institutions to find a solution to a problem we had been grappling with for some time.

"Virtual Landscapes was developed from a pencil and paper exercise into a tool that has revolutionised the way that students learn about geology."



Image: leeds.ac.uk

Death of Bristol students sparks national conversation on mental health

Christopher Tobin

A coroner is investigating three sudden deaths of students from the University of Bristol. The causes of the deaths have yet to be officially established, although tribute messages left on memorial pages established following the deaths suggest the students may have taken their own lives.

Two of the students have been named as philosophy student Miranda Williams, 19, and law student Kim Long, 18. The University of Bristol is not treating the deaths as suspicious, and has not connected the separate incidences.

Student Living Officer at the Bristol students' union, Stephen LeFanu, told *The Guardian* that "starting university can be extremely difficult. Some new students are without their support networks from home for the first time, and will be experiencing new academic and social pressures. Rising fees mean that students are also increasingly under a great deal of financial pressure, with many taking on part-time work alongside their studies. Many people will also experience complex mental health difficulties, regardless of their environment."

The shocking story has sparked a national conversation about the state of mental health services for university students.

A survey by the NUS published last year showed that over eight out of 10 students have suffered mental

health issues, with nearly a third of students saying they had experienced suicidal thoughts. In 2014 the Office for National Statistics reported that 130 full time students in England and Wales had taken their own lives. Data shows this is increasing each year.

Mind, the mental health charity, have argued that data shows a rise in tuition fees has severely damaged overall mental health amongst students. Mind's Stephen Buckley said: "Today's students face an unprecedented financial burden with student loan and tuition fee debt higher than ever before. On the other side of this is the financial stress and uncertainty around employment on graduation. Both of these are major contributors to mental health problems like anxiety and depression."

Shelly Asquith, the NUS vice-president for welfare, said in a statement in February that "The evidence is clear. The marketisation of education is having a huge impact on students' mental health. The value of education has moved away from societal value to 'value for money' and the emphasis on students competing against each other is causing isolation, stress and anxiety. It has also forced institutions to compete aggressively against each other and put more money into advertising initiatives than student support services. The NUS is urging the sector to take these statistics seriously, and consider an urgent review of the level of funding given to mental health services, particularly counselling."

Bristol University has released a statement saying "Sadly we can confirm there have been three unrelated student deaths this term. These events are always extremely upsetting and our thoughts are with the students' families and friends. Our student welfare services are offering support to anyone affected. It would be inappropriate for us to comment on the cause of these deaths until the coroner has undertaken independent inquests, although we understand that there are no suspicious circumstances surrounding them. The University of Bristol has around 22,000 students. We will, of course, be investigating if there is anything we need to do to learn from these sad events but we have no reason to believe they represent a wider issue."

While figures show that Bristol spent £32.15 on mental health services per student per year, Leeds was found to be spending only £16.50 – just over half of Bristol's spending. Despite increasing mental health awareness and efforts on the part of the University, it seems that mental health remains underfunded.

If you are struggling with your own mental health, please contact Samaritans on 116 123 or visit the Samaritans website online. In addition, the University offers a counselling service alongside Nightline, a confidential service run by Leeds students offering help and support.

Views

Should Britain abolish the monarchy?



Yes

Edmund Goldrick

The British Monarchy, currently, is a wonderful institution. They have carried out their duties admirably, helping raise astronomical sums of money for worthy causes, forging exceptional careers, and becoming effective diplomats for times when conventional diplomacy was not expedient. But the monarchy needs to be abolished, because otherwise, we ask the Royal Family to do something no one should ever be asked to do: risk their children's safety.

Today more than ever, people's private affairs are the subject of public gossip. Public figures are stalked, their phones tapped, their accounts hacked, their photos leaked. Bloody anything, from a photo sent to a partner in confidence to a video of a celebrity using a bong in private are shared and consumed by a mass of people who drain your faith in humanity, and are distributed by even less savoury beings.

This is not an environment anyone should have to place their child in. Think about everything you've ever done – ever – that could be the subject of gossip

and sharing if you were famous enough. Your first partner, the first time you were drunk, any stupid thing you've ever said and regretted, any hookup, any night out, anything.

Prince Harry got an unfortunate taste of this – but he was lucky. Cameras on phones were only just becoming 'a thing' (an extremely low resolution thing at that) when he was exiting his adolescence. The poor prince had his blurry picture splashed over all the tabloids in Britain for things that it should otherwise be reasonable to expect to be able to do in private, or for enough alcohol and egging-on to seem like a good idea. Think how far recording technology has come. For the next generation of royals, for the children of the British crown, every hard learning experience, every tender moment, every anarchic and a-little-bit-stupidly-fun decision, will be just one picture away from being consumed by the whole world, by anyone heartless enough to get a kick out of intruding on someone else's life.

Prince Charles too suffered from such a despicable invasion of privacy. As his relationship broke down, he did what anyone would have done: he reached out to someone he loved. A 1989 phone call with Camilla was tapped, and published, being spread by every broadcaster, print journal, and joked about by every two-bit current affairs show. An adult with lots of support and life experience would struggle to cope with something like that. Think about what it would do to a teenager. Think about what it would do to a child.

The Royal Family can and will continue to do so much good, they will continue to put the good of others above their own, because that is their duty. It is time to relieve them of this duty. I couldn't ask someone to put their children through that. Could you?

No

Sophie Wheeler

Many people have been in uproar recently over the idea that the treasury should cough up £369 million for repairs to Buckingham Palace, the official residence of Queen Elizabeth II. Over 140,000 people have banded together to sign an online petition created by Mark Johnson, suggesting that "The Crown and its estates should be made to fund its own renovations." Some people have even gone as far as calling for the abolishment of the monarchy. It appears that in a time of cutbacks and austerity, the royal family is a luxury that we can no longer afford.

However, the idea that the royal family is a net cost which is somehow preventing the treasury from 'balancing the books' is misleading at best. The treasury benefits from taxes paid on the owned Crown Estates owned by the monarchy, which came to approximately £285 million for 2015 alone. The annual cost to the taxpayer from the royal family for that same year came to roughly £40.1 million. Now

I'm no mathematical genius, but that seems like a large net profit for the taxpayer to me. This excludes the voluntary payments made to HMRC by the Queen and Prince of Wales, despite the fact that legally the monarch is exempt from paying tax on their personal income. Not to mention the extra revenue generated by our vibrant tourism industry as a result of having the royal family which is currently estimated at £500m annually.

This is before we take into account more recent changes which make the royal family even more affordable. The 2011 Sovereign Grant bill allows the treasury to pay an index percentage of annual income generated by the Crown Estate to the monarch as a grant. This index percentage currently stands at 15%. A large proportion of the remaining income goes straight to the taxpayer. The online petitions are misleading; effectively, the Crown Estate is paying for its own renovations, simply through an increased

sovereign grant as a percentage of its own income. Additionally to this, the new system will make sure that royal funding will be properly audited. This means the system of financing the Royal Family will be more accountable and transparent, hopefully in turn leading to savings.

However, there exists also the benefits of having a royal family which are not so easily quantifiable. The royal family plays a pertinent role in maintaining diplomatic relations abroad, is essentially engrained in our nationhood and furthermore most people in the U.K hold a favourable view of the monarchy. As polls suggest, those in favour of the monarchy remain in a comfortable majority. It would be absurd to abolish the royal family against the wishes of the majority of British people, due to the demands of a select minority.

Back To The Future Of Fascism

Daniel Dolado-Hollyman
BA Geography

‘The deeply disillusioned, those intellectually apathetic to neo-liberal conservatism amongst us.’ Maybe not what one would expect when uncovering the core values of those promoting America’s revamped, yet still racist, alternative right. People’s fears, frustrations and anger are certainly at the forefront of far right-wing populist movements across the Western world, including America’s ‘alt-right’ and Britain’s UKIP. These symptoms of a failing neo-liberal system that works only for some are born out of genuine discontent and should rightly be expressed within and outside of the political arena. That’s democracy. Nonetheless, I fear our response has us walking in the wrong direction, if progressive social reform is what you’re after. The political turmoil we are witnessing in America and Europe is the culmination of these symptoms after years of economic and social inequality, now outpouring before our eyes. In short, those who voted for radical alternatives to the status-quo such as Brexit and Donald Trump are crying out for change, regardless of what that change may be.

Those seeking change by such political means should not be so hasty, and instead realise that straightforward solutions to complex problems are

contrary to reason and belong in the ‘post-truth’ world. Of course one could argue that the left has failed to provide us with a real alternative to neo-liberal capitalism, and I would certainly agree with that. However, all too often in modern history have Western electorates failed to see past the man

Unfortunately, these prerequisites for horror are rife once again across the Western world

advocating nationalism, proposing easy solutions and promising the return of greatness during times of hardship. Undoubtedly, the far-right has always had a way of tapping into the fears and frustrations of the masses. Indeed, only recently was Donald Trump’s successful presidential campaign founded on stirring emotions of hatred and fear. As Oscar Wilde once said, “The emotions of man are stirred more quickly than man’s intelligence.”

Perhaps then, now more than ever, we need a nudging reminder of where that path leads. The rise of fascism across Europe only eighty years ago saw prejudice against different religions, xenophobia,

nationalism and anti-gay sentiments that concluded in some of the worst atrocities ever committed by any human civilisation. Unfortunately, these prerequisites for horror are rife once again across the Western world, along with a background of economic crises and instability. Restraining from making parallels between the conditions that led to the rise of fascism in the past and those that have now led to the likes of Donald Trump would be damning as well as blind — as would referring to modern fascists as the ‘alt-right’. Let’s not allow mainstream media to frame neo-Nazis in such a manner. Let’s call them out for what they really are and stand up against their corrupted values.

As a more digressive and less apocalyptic thought, I remember quite clearly that my History teacher back in early high school once told me that history runs in cycles. If something seems incredulous and radical right now, take a step back in time and see what similarities you find, then perhaps things start to make more sense. At the time, I politely disregarded this comment and swiftly returned to folding my paper aeroplane. Now I realise that there is hope. The left has beaten fascism before and we will beat this poisonous ideology again, whatever mask it tries to hide behind.

Run To The Hil!

Kane Emerson
BA Politics and Economics

On news of the death of Fidel Castro, Jeremy Corbyn called the dead dictator a “champion of social justice” who had a huge impact on socialism. What is going on in the Labour Party? Is Corbyn some naff student politician who lacks any grasp on reality in praising a brutal oppressor? An oppressor whose “reign was characterised by a ruthless suppression of freedom of expression”, according to human rights champions Amnesty International, who have not been allowed into Cuba since 1990. The Labour Party indeed seems to look to Latin America for inspiration today. Whilst many have moved on from the black and

Benn’s barnstorming speech on Syria demonstrated the political and charismatic leadership Labour is greatly lacking under Corbyn.

white views of the Cold War, many Labour members see themselves as comrades at the foot of their great leader Jeremy Corbyn. “Great” being highly questionable even in jest with the Conservatives currently leading by 16 points in the polls.

I despair at yet another event that has reaffirmed my lack of confidence in the Labour Party at opposing the highly unaccountable manner in which Downing Street is conducting the biggest constitutional change of our lifetimes, never mind the pathetic way in which

Corbyn whispered “Remain” during the EU campaign for fear of losing respect of his Marxist comrades. Whilst his supporters portray him as a man of the people, the people most enthused by his leadership are the middle-class with romantic views of socialism, paternalistic views of poverty and protectionist views on public-sector cuts. The working-class don’t share much of this romantic view of socialism that one attains at university, nor do they appreciate the way in which the leader conducts himself or dresses (only a privileged person can get away with dressing shabbily – what are “wavey garms” in Leeds make you a “chav” in a council estate).

In the midst of the loss of the Labour Party to an outspoken fringe is the potential threat of losing one of Labour’s great assets – Hilary Benn. Benn’s barnstorming speech on Syria demonstrated the political and charismatic leadership Labour is greatly lacking under Corbyn. The reason for my decision to write on Labour has been inspired by the recent threat of deselection that Benn faces. Despite this, and the (supposed) insults of “Blairite” and the repulsive, wide of the mark speculation on how Benn’s father would view his son’s political stances, Hilary Benn shows his political bravery. Rather than deselecting Hilary

Benn, Labour members should be making him their leader in Parliament. I couldn’t imagine a better person to deliver a real opposition to the government and bring Labour back to an electable position.

The current Labour party spells disaster for British democracy and for the working-classes. We have no real opposition in the House of Commons with the lacklustre leadership of Corbyn that indulges in fanciful middle-class socialism. The overall result of this is a growth in power of the government with their plans of an unaccountable Brexit, greater surveillance and most worrying of all, the planned gerrymandering of constituencies. Meanwhile, Labour members distract themselves with the deselection of one of Labour’s biggest assets.



Image: Getty

The Media And The White Terrorist

Hugo Jones

BA International History and Politics

Months after the tragic murder of Jo Cox, her killer, Thomas Mair, is now being labelled as a 'terrorist' by some papers and media outlets. Those that aren't using that word are being repudiated by their critics. But the arrival at reports of a 'white terrorist' have been delayed, as after the attack restraint was applied over the use of the 'T-word', from almost all news outlets. It could be asked why the media was so cautious in this case, yet has been much more willing to imply acts of terror when perpetrated by Islamic extremists.

The comparison of the tragic murder of Lee Rigby on a South London street in May 2013 exemplifies the willingness of the media to use the phrase 'terrorism' when it conforms to preconceptions of Islamic fundamentalism. The killers are reported to have shouted 'Allahu Akbar' as they brutally murdered Rigby, and it's not overly tenuous to compare this to Mair allegedly shouting 'Britain First' as he attacked Jo Cox. Both Rigby's killers and Mair had histories of mental health problems, which were publicly disclosed soon after both attacks. However, Rigby's murderers, Michael Adebolajo and

Michael Adebowale, were instantly titled 'terrorists', or 'suspected terrorists' in the most prudent reports. Of course, this attack was witnessed and filmed by many, whereas details were slightly unclear after Jo Cox's murder. But Mair described himself as a 'political activist' as he was arrested, making it very

sensationalist reports of terrorism encourage further violence

clear his reprehensible killing qualified as a terror attack. Yet the immediate mention of the word 'terrorist' was scarce among British media.

While 'terrorism' may seem like a clear-cut definition of events such as the 9/11 attacks, in reality it is a notoriously vague notion, and should not be carelessly attributed to incidents, as the consequences can be immense. After Mair's attack, reluctance to report the killing as a terror attack is understandable, as with the EU referendum looming, such rhetoric could be considered a part of the

rampant hyperbole surrounding the In/Out debate, and disrespectful towards Jo Cox's memory. But this level of restraint isn't seen in attacks committed by foreigners, or Islamic extremists, as after decades of attacks with such a basis, the word 'terrorism' now comfortably fits this prejudice. The ease with which the media can report a Muslim attacker as a terrorist has enormous repercussions. A study by Michael Jetter in 2014 proved that sensationalist reports of terrorism encourage further violence. Frantically printing the word 'terrorist' is promoting terror, and consequently somewhat fulfils the aims of the attackers.

As it has become clear that Mair was a right-wing fanatic, with a collection of Nazi literature at his home, who meticulously planned a politically aggravated attack, some news outlets have found it safe to label him a terrorist. But the attack has shown how when a white, British man commits an atrocious attack, the immediate sensationalism in the media can be avoided. This exception should be extended, as the race and religion of attackers are not determining factors of whether a politically motivated murder is a terror attack.

The Legacy Of Castro: Icon And Image

Michael Everritt

BA Philosophy

Fidel Castro is dead and already the world feels a little duller because of it. Whether Castro was a good man is now a moot point. Let the historians argue about that, if they so desire. Whether he was a great man is a question that is far more worth asking. Even his many enemies will find it hard to deny that he was. To be great is to make a mark upon the world that you will be remembered long after you have left it behind. Truth be told, there have been few more iconic political figures to emerge from the turmoil of the twentieth century.

A messiah to the far-left and a bogeyman to the far-right, Castro played both roles with aplomb. It is rare for a world leader to be so apparently self-aware of their own image. So carefully crafted was that image that it is doubtful to think he was ignorant of its value. There was the beard, the cigars and olive green uniform with the little cap. The latter item remains readily available for purchase from numerous stalls on Camden Market. Alongside his spiritual brother Che Guevara, Castro became symbolic of the revolutionary spirit which swept the post-war world. So distinctly symbolic have those two men indeed become, it should not be surprising if one day people assume them both to have been mythical.

A degree of comical surrealism was always a crucial part of Castro's image. Case in point, it is strangely appropriate that the US attempted to assassinate him with an exploding cigar. There is an old idea that the fool is the only person daft enough to dare stand up to the king. Castro, when he refused to bow down to the US, came to be celebrated as a hero by a great many disenfranchised people. That he was able to sustain the paradox of being both a dictator and a

counterculture rebel is a testament to his strength of will.

His conviction was, likewise, easy to admire. Even when Communism faltered and failed in the East, he seemingly never lost faith in its ideal. It is an academic question whether he demanded that Cuba pay too high a price to keep the dream alive. We all know what it is that paves the road to hell. There is an undeniably stark contrast between the mourning in Havana and the celebrations in Little Havana, the Miami neighbourhood populated by Cuban political

exiles. In death, as in life, Castro refuses to be easily categorised as a hero or a villain.

For better or worse, there is unlikely to ever be another world leader quite like Fidel Castro. Regardless of the sins that the man may have committed, there remains something in the idea of him which seems worth celebrating. In a world where men like Putin and Trump hold power, we need more fools to oppose them. To my mind, then, that lesson is Castro's true legacy.

Rest easy comrade.



Image: AP

Just To Let You Know, Men Also Cry

Natasha Zack
BA Philosophy

It's a very acceptable thing to cry. Crying is a reaction we all have when we're overwhelmed, be it from sadness, happiness, or laughter. Why is it that when we see men crying on the popular television show 'I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here', so many of us feel the need to tell them to 'man up'? It's so detrimental to our society to keep pushing these gender roles, telling men to be masculine and women to be feminine.

Telling men that they're not allowed to cry and that they're not allowed to express emotion can be very damaging to their mental health. The NHS tell us that "The highest suicide rate was among men aged 40 to 44", clearly stating how important it is that we direct focus towards men's mental health. It really angers me to know that still, in the 21st century when feminism is really trying it's hardest to promote equality, that men are still being targeted for showing their feelings.

The reasons for getting emotional on 'I'm a Celeb' were celebrating a son's birthday, family and homesickness, things that a woman may get emotional over too. Although, if it were the female contestants getting emotional, there wouldn't be a fuss over it because of our society's gender expectations.

I asked two friends some questions:
(Male friend) 'Do you feel that in various situations

you shouldn't cry purely because you're a guy?' "No I wouldn't say so, I feel like there are situations where people shouldn't cry, however, not specific to gender" 'So what would you say about men who do get more emotional, such as examples from I'm a Celebrity?' "I would say that he shouldn't cry, not because he is a man, but because you've got to pull yourself together, although if people want to cry I wouldn't judge them in the slightest" (Female friend) 'Do you feel that in various situations guys shouldn't cry purely because they're a guy?'

"They should be able to cry, if girls can cry, why shouldn't guys? They shouldn't have to put up a strong persona all the time". 'So what would you say about men who do get more emotional, such as examples from I'm a Celebrity?' "Good for them, getting emotional".

I found these responses very interesting, one friend said how he wouldn't judge anyone if they wanted to cry but he feels that people should just "deal with

it", whereas another friend was a lot more open to men, and people in general, being more emotional. Of course, I only asked two people, but I do feel that even these responses show how men and women view emotion in completely different ways. Despite how the male I questioned made a point that nothing was gender specific, his outlook on emotions is very stereotypical for a man; he feels that he needs to be strong and "pull [himself] together" whereas my other friend clearly expresses how she feels men don't need to be the strong one the entire time.



Let's Not Blacklist Blair

Josh Kirby
BA Politics, Philosophy and Economics

It is easy to criticise Tony Blair. His depiction as a war-monger in both the left and right-wing media was only amplified following the Chilcot report's damning conclusions. An academic study in 2013 estimated the number of war-related deaths in Iraq to be nearly half a million. The idea of men in suits sending troops and bomber planes to the other side of the world because of plain 'politics' still infuriates many, and the left has never forgiven Blair for his siding with George W Bush.

The former Labour Prime Minister did, of course, have his reasons, but it is difficult still for anybody to be absolutely sure of his motives. Dodgy dossiers and improper planning uncovered by Chilcot do not help his cause. One thing that can be concluded, regardless of the views expressed by all sides on the justification of the Iraq war, is that mistakes were definitely made.

I have always thought it unfair that due to these mistakes, the left completely ignores Blair's plethora of achievements. Tom Watson, in his speech to the Labour Conference in Liverpool earlier this year, spoke about the need for unification, the need to be 'the

party of Britain'. He continued, much to the current Labour leader's obvious dismay, to proudly speak of the changes that Labour can make when it is in power, rattling them off one after another as the conference's applause grew louder and louder: the lifting of millions out of poverty, a national minimum wage, new hospitals and lower crime rates, to name a few.

Tony Blair was very good at winning; his record of winning three consecutive general elections in the UK has been matched only by Margaret Thatcher. His New Labour movement not only attracted members of the left who saw his raw potential to gain power, but also drew in disillusioned Conservatives. Blair managed to unify voters from all over the political spectrum, winning a massive 418 seats for Labour, a record high for the party. Labour today have a comparatively measly 231 seats. This number is predicted by all projections to tumble even more in 2020. Blair was clearly able to speak to people in a way that few politicians ever could.

In the aftermath of a catastrophic mistake made by David Cameron in the name of party politics, the unnecessary referendum that has led to the disastrous decision to take Britain out of the European Union, the country needs a politician that can fight post-truth politics. It needs someone that can competently attempt to tackle the government's agenda to push forward with a decision that has blown a £100bn hole in the budget, a decision that has led to an increase in racial attacks, a movement towards isolationism. This competent attempt is not going to come from the Labour Party in its current state. It is wrong to shun the man that can and might help us because of a mistake, terrible though it may have been.



The Real Junk Food Project: “We rattle cages, we piss people off, but we do it because we believe it’s the right thing to do”



As part of last week’s Leeds Creatives event, *The Gryphon* editor Jessica Murray sat down with headline speaker Adam Smith, founder of The Real Junk Food Project, to discuss how far the organisation has come in the last twelve months.

The Real Junk Food Project have had an extremely busy twelve months. The food waste initiative, founded by Adam Smith just a few miles away in Armley, has grown exponentially and there are now over 100 cafes spread across seven different countries. What started as one man’s idea became a global initiative that has enacted real change across the globe, bringing the problems of food waste and global poverty to the attention of many through the media storm they have created.

When I chatted to Adam just before his talk at the Leeds Creatives event last week, he was very ambivalent about the impact of all this media attention: “It’s been very tough. They want my time all the time. And what they don’t understand is that the reason I got to the stage where they want my time is because we are so committed and hands on with the work we do.”

On top of this, he finds the fact that the initiative is praised so often by the media unsettling and at odds with what the organisation sets out to do.

“To be able to achieve what we’ve achieved doesn’t sit very comfortably with me and I hate what we do, but I think it’s amazing what people do to contribute back into the bigger picture. They all care about the next generation and the environmental issues surrounding food waste.

“It’s a tough one for me because obviously emotionally I am so connected to it because I am the founder but I despise what we do and we’re designed to put ourselves out of business as quickly as possible, so we hope that we’re not around in the next 10–15 years time. If we are we’ll see ourselves as a failure, not a success. We should be looking at closing cafes, not opening more and more around the world.”

This anti-business model shows just how committed

Adam and his team are, in addition to their clear rejection of any money-making commercialisation in the project. From day one they turned down the opportunity to film programmes with the BBC and Channel 4, or to invite star chefs such as Jamie Oliver into the original cafe.

He’s often attracted media attention for his scathingly honest opinions of such celebrity chefs, but makes it clear that he doesn’t regret his words.

“I know the guy [Jamie Oliver] personally, I know what he does, I know he makes £10–15 million every time he does a new show.

“And Jamie’s not the only one, Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall’s ‘War On Waste’ is a load of nonsense, but it brings it to light very quickly, and has a huge reach in a very short space of time.”

To him these celebrities are only in it for the ‘fashionable’ nature of the topic and the commercial success it brings them, while TRJFP is “deeply ingrained in some of the most complex social issues you could ever imagine, from street drinking to prostitution, all the way to child hunger, malnutrition, obesity and just poverty in general.” Unlike Jamie Oliver, they can’t go back to their luxurious homes at the end of the day. He does, however, acknowledge that these high profile projects bring the issue to light and increase the amount of volunteers heading to the pay-as-you-feel cafes around the country.

It’s clear as Adam talks, rapidly and determinedly, that this is all about that one clear goal, that one clear vision he has in his mind to “feed the world”. He claims that the idea came to him on a farm in Australia on 22nd February 2013, and since then he has never looked back. His passion for the project is enormous, and for all the bold egotism he displays towards the

media and celebrity chefs, he is incredibly humble and down to earth.

“I was voted one of the 40 most influential men in the world in 2014, and it wasn’t because of me as such, it was because of how I approached what we did, we rattle cages, we piss people off, but we do it because we believe it’s the right thing to do”.

His approach to life is so startlingly direct it can catch you off guard – like it did just minutes after our interview when he took to the stage and began his speech with a story about a near fatal car crash he was in a few years ago, where the only thing that kept him going was the cocaine in his system. But it’s this down-to-earth association with the people he helps that has made him so successful.

He’s determined to open his projects and cafes to anyone and everyone, regardless of wealth, to remove the stigma of charity and to further his vision that food should be a human right freely available to everyone. He has provided thousands of school children with free breakfast, and ‘accidentally’ set up the first pay-as-you-feel supermarket – they had received a huge stockpile of food that needed distributing, so they invited people down to their warehouse to help themselves.

Despite all the media hurrah, the fluctuating public interest in the project and the problems they face, Adam’s end goal is perfectly clear, “I hope, eventually, global leaders will come together and realise that this isn’t just an issue in the West or the UK or in Leeds, this is a global issue and it’s affecting every single one of us and it will destroy our planet single-handedly if we don’t get a grip on our agriculture system and our food waste issues.”

In The Middle

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Don't EU Want Me Baby?



Image: The Guardian

Since the referendum in June, there have been many unforeseen effects of the decision to leave the European Union, from Erasmus funding to visa provision. Ben Roberts explores the potential effects of Brexit on the British music industry and start-out bands.

Brexit is the gift that keeps on giving. Giving us endless disappointment that is. The British public's shock decision to remove ourselves from the European Union will no doubt have countless negative impacts. One aspect not often mentioned when grumbling about Brexit starts is the effects that it will have on the music industry. Will Brexit be the final nail in the coffin for the music industry or will there continue to be a small stream of talented musicians breaking the money grabbing mould?

Immigration was a keystone in the debates leading up to the vote. At risk of offending the 51% responsible I won't go into my opinion on the matter. However, the fact is that there will no longer be free movement between the UK and other EU countries. This could result in the demise of small bands trying to make it in Europe. The dream of throwing equipment in the back of a van, getting a ferry over to mainland Europe and touring non-stop in some of the world's most artsy cities will no longer be reachable for a lot of small groups. Lots of musicians don't earn a penny from their music in their early years, so having to pay for visas to enter every country they tour will not be feasible. Without gaining the exposure they need through relentless gigging, small bands won't get their music heard to new fans, which is so vital when trying to gain a reputation as an established act. Thus, talented musicians may be hindered by the mere fact that the prospect of travelling around Europe will no longer be viable due to the sheer cost it will amount to.

There's also the issue of equipment prices. The pound has lost considerable value against the dollar since the vote, and music shops are feeling the effects. American products from brands such as Fender and Gibson have gone up in value, with one music shop owner saying he's had to raise prices by as much as 40%. American companies make a lot of the professional instruments that bands simply need to get a competitive sound quality. You wouldn't expect a builder to construct a brick wall without the right equipment, so how can you expect a band to make a great sound without decent gear? For large bands this probably won't be an issue. But for the working class musicians that have to save money for years to be able to buy

the right equipment, this could be devastating. The British public has often had an attachment to working class heroes, like Oasis and the Libertines, which we may have to let go of. If equipment prices are not within their price range, a band's talents may be lost by their inability to fully showcase their talents with the right equipment and lights that have the potential to shine so bright will simply die out.

Now, imagine that you're part of a young band who are fortunate enough to have parents that can make the price effects of Brexit redundant. You would still need to gig to gain an audience right? But what if there was nowhere to gig. You'd never be able to break your way into the music industry. Brexit could make this nightmare a reality for many young musicians. The EU gives more than £1 billion to

"Lots of musicians don't earn a penny from their music, so having to pay for visas to enter every country they tour will not be feasible"

the creative industries, of which a considerable amount goes to supporting struggling music venues. Many music venues rely on this funding to stay afloat so without it we could see many of them shut down. It's hard enough for small bands to get a gig these days, imagine what it'll be like when the gigging scene they're trying to break into fully dries out.

So there you have it. Thanks to the shock outcome of the EU Referendum, we can wave goodbye to the success of

small bands that give us hope for the future of music. There will be an even greater gulf between the acts on independent labels who will not be able to afford such changes and the acts on mainstream labels who have money pumped into their success. The working class heroes that Britain is famous for will be priced out of the industry and, even if they could afford it, the British music scene will probably be on its deathbed anyway without EU funding.

One important point to remember is that although we can predict the effects of Brexit, there's no way to tell exactly what will happen. I simply hope that the music industry isn't hit too hard so that me, and the rest of 'the 49%', can continue to enjoy brilliant music from new British artists.

Ben Roberts

Fresh Beats

Starboy by The Weeknd

Alt-R&B underdog turned international superstar Abel Tesfaye returns riding the wave of success from his last LP – *Beauty Behind the Madness* – and a series of smash-hit singles in 2015. The Weeknd's rise in popularity since his first mixtapes in 2011 has been mirrored by a gradual change in style, as Abel adapts to a more mainstream audience. Personally, I have been conflicted over this change, especially since 2015's *Beauty Behind the Madness* felt unsatisfying in the context of Abel's wider discography. However, while Abel is still dabbling in mainstream styles on *Starboy*, he seems to be experimenting.

Many varieties of pop music are explored here; 70s soul on 'Sidewalks', UK Garage on 'Rockin'', 80s style synthpop on 'Secrets' and 'Love To Lay', and nu-disco on 'A Lonely Night'. The list goes on. There are also tracks like 'Reminder' and 'Party Monster', which use contemporary, mainstream R&B styles like trap.

Lyricaly, this album demonstrates the themes we have come to expect from The Weeknd; promiscuity, drugs and drink all feature, though there are some stand-out lyrical moments too. *Reminder* makes reference to his "old shit" and how others imitate his earlier style, followed by some bragging about his new found level of fame. While these lyrics are a little trashy, it's refreshing to hear Abel discuss the real world rather than bland pop lyrics that are overused in his most recent material.

Overall, this record is an improvement on his previous effort, but it is also over an hour long and eighteen tracks. This length in context of the record's style does make it difficult to enjoy this as a full LP, since consumers will be prone to picking and choosing their favourites.

Fred Savage

Rating:



Skin Companion EP by Flume

Skin Companion has kicked off Flume's staggered releases of more material that was written around the same time as the production of his second album, *Skin*; the sophomore album was released in May this year and is the recent winner of the ARIA Music Award for Best Dance Release. The EP comes as part of the US's Black Friday Record Store Day.

The EP unmistakably follows the track that *Skin* laid down only a few months previously. It holds a similar timbre and synthesiser that makes it fit perfectly as a companion, especially with first track 'TRUST', featuring Isabella Manfredi. It takes a slightly different approach with a more relaxing sound than some of the more forceful songs on *Skin* such as 'Lose It' and 'Smoke & Retribution', moving away slightly from the hip hop and R&B elements that are featured on the album. It also takes a step away from the more pop-oriented sounds which came along with Tove Lo's feature on 'Say It' as well as popular single 'Never Be Like You'.

However, Flume's signature sound remains intact with textured beats and experimental vocal samples. 'Heater' and 'Quirk' sound like they could have come directly from his 2012 debut self-titled album.

The problem is that this EP isn't bringing anything new to the table. It begs the question of why these new releases are even necessary. They were clearly the songs that were rejected from *Skin*, and listening to the companion EP simply sounds like everything Flume has done before. It functions as its own body of work, but just isn't groundbreaking, taking a very similar approach to *Skin*.

It's listenable, but far from stimulating if you're already familiar with Flume's back catalogue.

Isobel Moloney

Rating:



Night Driver by Busted

Call Peter and get him to smash up the Flux Capacitor; you don't want to see the future. If this is what's multi-platinum, the Year 3000 is a bland dystopia ruled by cryogenically preserved X Factor fans.

Okay, maybe that's a little harsh. Here in 2016, it's been thirteen years since Busted released *A Present for Everyone*. Several questionable solo careers and one McBusted tour later, the band's back together. This time around, the boys have jacked in guitars and goofy grins for synths and sample pads. This is part of a glossy, new production, courtesy of John Fields. And the result is... okay. But that's about it.

Opening track 'Coming Home' sets the precedent. The boys exchange soul-searching lyrics about where life is headed (and, for some reason, the beauty of the Taj Mahal) over sparse beats from a drum pad. This is interspersed with big choruses of "I'm coming home", complete with cheesy synth hook. Evoking the synth-pop vibe revived by bands like M83, the message is pretty clear. Busted have moved on. They're cool now.

There are some funky highlights. Lively 'I Will Break Your Heart' offers a cheeky sax solo, whilst the guitar-driven groove of 'On What You're On' brings a fun, Daft Punk inspired dance-fest. But often, as with 'Thinking of You', the record feels blandly produced and overly reliant on simplistic choruses.

Listening to *Night Driver*, it's hard to believe these are the pop-punk boys who once sang an ode to their teacher's ass. It's enjoyable in places, a successful reinvention no doubt, but you can't help feeling Busted have lost their sense of fun in the process.

But who knows? Maybe in the Year 3000, when everyone's living underwater, this washed-up record will fare a little better.

Sam Corcoran

Rating:





Image: NME

Do they know it's Christmas time?

November is officially over, but the Christmas trees and tinsel were popping up before the pumpkins, and the shops have been blasting Mariah Carey since September. But now that Christmas is officially upon us, Sarah Ashford-Brown wades through baubles and mince pies to unwrap the mystery of Christmas music.

31st of October – everyone is in an autumnal mood, focussing on their Halloween makeup and costume. 24 hours later, November 1st, Christmas trees are up, warm jumpers out, and Christmas songs played on repeat. Indeed, it's finally the time to get excited, go home to our parents full of joy that the semester is over and prepare to break our diets.

This is the perfect time for forgotten artists to resuscitate their one-month Christmas fame, for the likes of Mariah Carey to emerge from their igloos, shine like stars, and make the greatest amount of money as possible. As Western countries control the biggest musical industries, Christmas is the time of the year to capitalise on the festivities and make the most sales, bringing their favoured 'Christmas Artists' out of their special stockings where they have been hibernating for the past 12 months.

I would, however, argue that it is difficult to find Christmassy songs that aren't covers anymore. Famous artists, such as Justin Bieber with his Christmas-themed album *Under The Mistletoe*, use Christmas as an extra career boost. By covering these famous and well known tunes, Bieber can appropriate these beloved songs, and younger generations will start to believe that 'All I Want For Christmas Is You' is a Bieber original. These Christmas songs also open up new audiences to the star; people may not generally follow the popstar will listen to the album, just to hear the latest covers of recognisable songs.

This is like Ariana Grande, who has added her own style to the songs with her angelic face appearing in the accompanying music video; soon all the little girls will forget the original versions and just focus on the pretty Ariana. This year I look forward to seeing just how far stars will go

to capitalise on the Christmas season. Maybe Miley will cover herself in Brussels sprouts or get out of a Christmas pudding half naked. But do these Christmas covers undermine the original songs?

Firstly, these covers can help smaller artists too, such as Cimorelli or Megan Nicole, enabling them to reach a wider audience. At Christmas time, people are keen to listen to festive music regardless of who is singing it. Sinatra of course will always be an old favourite, exciting a sense of nostalgia in the older generations, but perhaps is seen as a bit old-fashioned in the current age and does get forgotten. Do we even remember who originally sang 'Santa Claus Is Coming To Town'? No, it's not The Jackson 5, and it's not Pentatonix either.

We can all agree that *Frozen* isn't the best of all the Disney movies. But anyone can see that the company released the song on 27th November 2013, the perfect date to capitalise on a film full of Christmassy songs, just before the cold Winter months when the

warm cinema starts to look ever more appealing. With lots of merchandise, a box office turnout of \$1.276 billion, many awards, and the songs are stuck in our heads forever, *Frozen* was the perfect Christmas coup. And if you haven't already, I can guarantee you will have watched the movie once before the Christmas break is over.

So, it's Christmas. Let's just embrace the festive spirit, get our Christmas cheer out in full force and put Michael Bublé on max

Sarah Ashford-Brown

"Maybe Miley will cover herself in Brussels sprouts, or get out of a Christmas pudding half naked"

Gig Roundup

Palace @ Belgrave, 24/11/16



HMLTD @ Brudenell, 22/11/16



JAWS @ Headrow House, 25/11/16



Since I last saw them in September 2015, Palace have released their first full album, grown their fan-base, and still managed to remain quietly below the mainstream radar. As the bluesy London four-piece took to stage, the headwear of frontman Leo Wyndham struck me immediately. His hat of choice had morphed from the ever-present cap to a black beanie type. Was this a mark of a darker, more mature Palace? Was this the end of the youthful exuberance that had attracted so much buzz in the wake of their *Lost in the Light* EP? Or was the Belgrave just rather chilly?

Surprisingly, none of these were proven to be true, with Palace having the crowd transfixed from the moment they opened with 'Head Above the Water'. Furthermore, the Belgrave was in fact rather warm, yet a furiously perspiring Leo admirably refused to remove his beanie.

Although their set featured many of the older, crowd-pleasing songs, each member of the band seemed notably more assured than I had previously seen. 'So Long Forever' featured a bold, drawn-out breakdown that a psychedelic guitar solo emerged

out of, complementing Wyndham's trademark haunting vocals. Stage presence was another aspect that had notably developed since their set at Headrow House over a year ago; bassist Will Dorey appeared to feed off the swaying energy of the ever more active crowd, whilst frontman Leo maintained a Dr Feelgood-esque thousand-yard stare at the audience.

Overall, the gig was an almost flawless performance from a band that seemed to be riding a wave of several sell-out shows. Closing with 'Bitter', the crowd suddenly burst into life, the sweaty Belgrave trance broken by Leo's words of gratitude for their attendance.

Palace appear to be a band poised for future mainstream acclaim, and it was a delight to experience their melancholic music in an intimate setting of under two hundred people, before they surely gain a deservedly broader following.

Dominic Johnson

Rating:



Trump would hate HMLTD. The creative madness and complete ambiguity of the London pack's sound delivered a sensual battering. Formally known as Happy Meal LTD, they are hard to describe. Frontman Henry Spychalsk resembles Adam Ant turned glam-rock-masochist as he lurches about the stage as if possessed. The guitars sounded awful, even when they were in tune, but somehow it worked. You couldn't explain what was going on, but no one questioned it.

Right in front of the stage, about seven avid fans thrust about, clearly off their faces on something other than the buzz of HMLTD. As the band swaggered into the sultry, lacy bass intro of their first online single 'Is This What You Wanted?', the reaction from these die-hards was a resounding "Yes". Meanwhile, the rest of the crowd stood timidly admiring from afar, some bobbing with their Red Stripe and some genuinely confused by the visceral and outlandish savagery of Spychalsk. The ambient and seductively chill Cigarettes After Sex were playing next door and, with HMLTD's gig being free, those who had popped in between sets looked as if they'd been sprayed with icy water.

The whole atmosphere of the set felt like a weird collective LSD trip. The lights shimmered off the band's silk shirts and leather trousers, the stompy guitars shook the room, and the Nick Cave-like depth of Spychalsk's vocals consumed the senses as his lipstick-clad mouth contorted into an impending Joker-esque smile.

The experience reached its climax with 'Where's Joanna?', as gloriously deranged Spychalsk lurched into the crowd. The whole thing was a blur of breakneck punk and fucked up glam rock, but for a cold Tuesday night it delivered a hot injection of much-needed adrenaline.

With HMLTD, expect the unexpected.

Meg Firth

Rating:



Four years ago, I was stood in a tiny Birmingham venue waiting for B-Town giants Peace to grace the stage with their we-don't-give-a-shit feel-good indie vibes. Before them, an unknown band nervously performed before us. "They'll never make it", I said. Little did I know that, within a matter of years, JAWS would emerge from the shadows of the B-Town scene, and capture a sense of youthful angst unexplored by their fellow Midlands rivals.

Beginning with 'Just a Boy', JAWS establishes the mood for a set that is filled with energy and a whimsical nostalgia. 'Think Too Much, Feel Too Little' provides a suitable contrast, with the song showcasing the band's more mellow side.

"I'm not very good at talking", Schofield informed us. But this didn't matter. New album *Simplicity* is surprising as much for its maturity as it is for its honesty. It is an album that deals with issues of anxiety and self-isolation in a world that increasingly pressures us to have an exteriority of strength. JAWS' set is filled with songs that have a bold exterior and roaring Cure-esque guitar chords,

yet are based in a broken anxiety. Schofield has a shy sensitivity but a sense of unquestionable boldness through music, however awkward he might tell us that he feels.

The band's encore of 'Gold' closes the night, and the atmosphere is one of pure elation. With a set that was filled with energy and an overbearing sense of rawness, it was a gig that the dooey eyed denim-jacket clad indie kids, the driving force behind the crowd's energy, will remember with fondness for years to come.

I might not be the fifteen-year-old at the centre of the mosh anymore, but it was with a heart-warming nostalgia that I watched a band who have only soared in talent over the years deliver such an accomplished set.

Juliette Rowsell

Rating:





Youth Club go NORF

Youth Club Sounds are an events team hoping to be characterised by their signature curation of SoundCloud beats and up-and-coming DJs who challenge the mainstream. We spoke to organiser Robbie Russell for an inside look at how this exciting new musical movement has progressed.

Robbie explains their musical influences in more detail: “We mostly fall under the category of ‘the Soundcloud beat scene’, but that doesn’t really mean anything other than that the producers we support are all young, talented musicians who are doing whatever they like with the tracks they produce. It’s where Kaytranada started, same with Cashmere Cat and predated by Hudson Mohawke who came up through MySpace”.

Much of the music Youth Club Sounds features is influenced by hip hop, trap and RnB, but they want to make clear that they won’t stick to the confines of genre – what’s important is showcasing brand new music and not taking anything too seriously. There’s only one rule: “it’s a completely techno-free zone”.

A few developments have been in the works recently: Youth Club Sounds are set to be the resident club night curators at Headrow House as well as keeping up their monthly slot at Hifi. They’ve also got a clothing line set to be released in the coming months along with their first label compilation, which will feature “more instrumental, more melodic music that might not be as conducive to a bloody good party as the stuff we play down in Hifi – but all will come from the same idea”.

An event showcasing music that’s breaking through on the internet right at this moment is rare outside London, highlighting Leeds as a fast-growing hotspot in the UK for innovative music. November saw the launch of their Headrow House residency, a night titled ‘NORF’ which promised to bring ‘the new underground to Leeds.’ Youth Club Sounds are a group aiming to go places, and this first step looks well assured. Approaching Youth Club Sound’s ‘NORF’ Launch generated a curious array of emotions. The events team are undeniably capable, and coupled

with the proven ability of headliner Big Zuu, the night suggested the possibility of real quality. However, the location of Headrow House, which traditionally plays host to live bands, could’ve been set to stifle this.

After receiving clearance from *In The Middle*’s music editors that this was indeed a club night, I joined the fold. Having been genuinely giddy at the prospect of grime trio YGG headlining, their pulling out of the event was disappointing. To be able to bring in Big Zuu at the drop of a hat is a testament to the ability of the promoter’s and their knowledge of the scene.

NORF, despite my apprehension, was a resounding success. The stripped back setting of Headrow House proved to suit a club’s vibe, while the enclosed parameters contributed to the imposing nature of the music. NORF’s trap set kicked off proceedings, reiterating their promise to avoid genre confinement and showing this was not an exclusively grime zone.

Big Zuu was, as expected, a highlight. His swagger and aggression, which has marked him out as a future star of the scene, was on show in all its glory, his stage presence and flow hyping the crowd to fever-pitch. Reloads were frequent, gun fingers primed. Big Zuu then put down the mic and picked up the headphones, spinning tracks for Mez under his ‘Great Zuu’ alias. Mez illustrated why he generates such a buzz for himself around the scene, shelling it down with a ferocity rarely matched throughout grime.

If this was the fifth NORF night that Youth Club Sounds had hosted I would’ve been impressed. For this to be their first is little less than incredible. In the vacuum that Jamz has left since their departure from our city, I think we’ve finally found a suitable replacement.

Reece Parker & Isobel Moloney



Jungle Jam

Jungle Jam returned to its spiritual home of Mint Warehouse for another edition on November 25th. The crowd may have been dominated by students, easily identifiable from their fresh faced glee, but woven amongst them were older junglists keeping their fire burning under the camouflage netting. The common denominator between these two groups, that far too often fail to converge in Leeds' nightlife, was an appreciation of jungle and a determination to enjoy the rave.

DJ Shock's set sufficiently warmed up the gathering crowd but Randall and Dillinja's collaborative set propelled the night towards another level. Their set dipped into D'n'B, mixing between Wiretap's Serum and M.I.S.T VIP remix of 'Midnight' artfully. They succeeded, with the aid of MC Fearless, in keeping the crowd's energy teetering on the edge of frenetic without freefalling. DJ Zinc continued in a similar vein. Opening tracks, such as 'Firefox' and 4-Tree's 'Warning', may have been older than many of the attendees but their ability to get the dancefloor hyped demonstrate why they remain popular.

Room One was where the majority of the crowd assembled, enticed by the heady combination of projected visuals from *The Jungle Book* and thumping beats. However, Room Two and Three had plenty to offer up as well for those who risked a wander. Future Formation hosted Room Two and provided unrelenting energy that stayed just the right side of overpowering. It's a real testament to them that the room was nearly full for much of the night, considering the madness going on in Room One. Meanwhile Mikey B's garage infused set in Room 3 proved popular with those grabbing some air outside that wasn't saturated with both moisture and chopped beats.

Jungle Jam nailed it with both the bookings and the branding. The night was named 'We Love Jungle' and judging from the response to the night this is a sentiment shared by many attendees who were reticent to leave and return to basements in Hyde Park and beyond. Jungle may not be the first genre you associate with Leeds' nightlife but it appears to be here to stay.

Victoria Beyai



Nightmares On Wax

'One Night With' returned after their soulful evening with Sadar Bahar last week, to treat us to a night with Leeds' very own Nightmares on Wax. George Evelyn, an experienced DJ and producer with releases on London-based Warp Records, returned to his hometown on Friday for a Wire takeover.

I'm not sure what my expectations for the four hour Nightmares on Wax set were, but they were definitely exceeded. The whole thing was eclectic from start to finish, leaving everyone captivated.

The crowd was taken on a journey from Hip-Hop to House, with a few twists along the way. I walked into Wire to just catch the start of his set where A Tribe Called Quest's 'Black Spasmodic' — a laid-back hip-hop tune — was playing over the Funktion

One sound system. With this, Evelyn brilliantly set the tone for his fiery set, which included 'Reclaim the Balcony', a heavy new Nightmares on Wax song that was released the same day.

He then quickly changed things up, dropping some slower house songs and mixing in his own 'Da Feelin'. The mixes were faultless and each song was a perfect extension of the last. Nothing makes me enjoy a set more than seeing the DJ enjoy it too, and Evelyn's cheery interactions with the crowd fuelled the disco fire on Friday night.

Todd Terje's 'Strandbar (Disko)' was a stand-out track which transformed the atmosphere and got everyone grooving, until Evelyn delivered the perfect final song to end our four hour journey together — the Shipperson edit of his very own 'You Wish'. In one of those special moments that tend to define a set, the dancefloor was lit up and there wasn't a pair of feet still on the ground.

Frankie Elsey



Faux Fur Coat, New Look
£54.99



Major cross strap glitter
sandals, Topshop, £24



Star Print Ruffle Plisse Blouse- £35



ASOS Velvet and Pearl Chain
Bag
£25.00



Topshop Metallic Strappy
Jumpsuit- £60.00



H&M pleated silver skirt - £29.99

Your Christmas fashion fix...

You've made it. The longest semester is nearly over. Essays are being handed in and reminders of the Christmas socials you'd forgotten you'd paid for are popping up all over the shop. Then, a question. Can I drag out 'the party dress' for a third year in a row?

If you're in need of some serious outfit inspo then look no further, as we've prepared the ultimate guide to partywear this season with glittery classics as well as more alternative approaches.

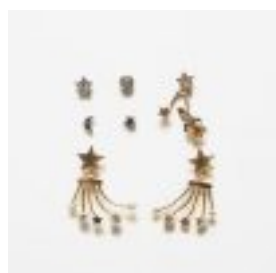
Victoria Copeland



Gold Crystal Gem
Chandelier Earrings, New
Look, £7.99



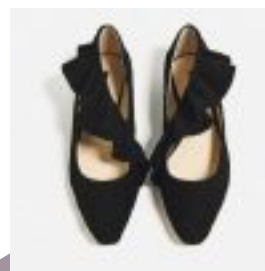
MOTEL ROCKS DELUXE Gabby
Sequin Dress in Iridescent
Green- £48.
20% Student discount.



ZARA Pack of star earrings, -
£9.99



OASIS velvet wrap dress - £45



ZARA, Frill detail Ballerinas
- £29.99



ASOS, Embellished Shard Sequin
Cami Midi Dress- £95.00

Alternative Advent Calendars: “The Pre-Christmas Present”

In the last few years, the alternative advent calendar trend has taken hold of the Christmas retail market. With influencer's like Zoella opening multiple calendars everyday on her infamous 'vlogmas', and being seemingly surprised by her host of daily goodies, the pre-christmas present has been much desired by those seeking to elongate Christmas and deflect the winter blues. Zoella herself appears to annually have advent calendars ranging from Playmobil, (Really?! At 26?!), to Yankee candle to Charlotte Tilbury, (coming in at a whopping £150) – but is all this really necessary? It would appear to anybody caught in the throes of the Black Friday sales in the Trinity Centre that the commercial value of Christmas has somewhat exceeded the excitement of family time, food and traditional festivities. With beauty advent calendars usually beginning from around £25 (Sanctuary at Boots), they aren't cheap.

The commodification of Christmas is something which has been much contested over the recent years. With the adoption of American tradition 'Black Friday', the countdown to Christmas has become more of a money spinner each year.

Untraditional advent calendars could be considered a gift in themselves,. Just the other week my mum asked if I'd rather forgo a Christmas morning stocking and have an advent calendar full of testers, most which I wouldn't use, instead. In M&S we were offered an advent calendar for the 'Bargain' price of 'just' £35, (as opposed to £60) if we spent £200 or more in store that day. A bargain? I'd rather spend £3 on a regular calendar.

It's time these crazy commercial ploys stopped. After all, as students, graduates and parents alike, can anybody really afford on the build up to Christmas to be quite so lavish? Ban the beauty, watch *Home Alone* and enjoy some time with your loved ones. After all, what does a miniature tea tree moisturiser have to do with Christmas anyway?

Meg Painter



Image: MoltonBrown.com

The 4 Best Puffer Jackets:

December is Cold. December in Leeds is especially cold. Despite years of battling our parents throughout high school, adamant that we didn't need a coat, I think it's time that we finally accept that a good winter coat is a necessity. Students of Leeds are in luck, for the somewhat historically mocked Puffer coat, likened to the Michelin man amongst other characters, is back in fashion. Warm, practical and cosy, here are our top four best buys, from budget binding to bank breaking:



Missguided – £17.50

Satin and chic, this puffer won't put you too far in your overdraft, but will provide the winter warmth you need.



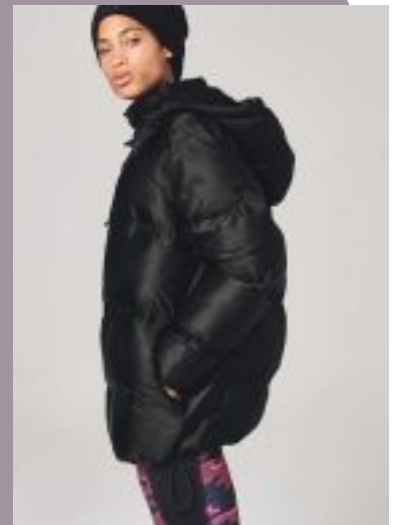
Zara – £29.99

In Festive red, this jacket is a winter essential for brightening up your wardrobe.



Urban Outfitters – £75

This infamous green jacket is a Leeds staple. With its own instagram @thatpuffa, this jacket has taken campus by storm.



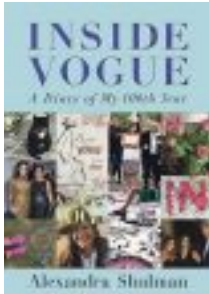
Ivy Park at Topshop – £110

if you've got more money to spend, head over to the Ivy Park range at Topshop for this winter warmer.

Meg Painter

A bookish stocking filler ...

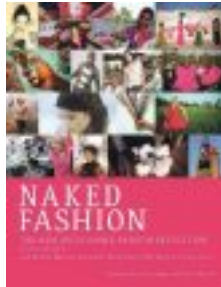
Take some time to put down the uni reading this Christmas and curl up in front of the fire with some of these stylish reads ...



Inside Vogue: A diary of my 100th year

Alexandra Shulman
(£11.89, Amazon)

To top off *Vogue's* centenary year, Editor-in-Chief Alexandra Shulman has published her diary, documenting the magazine's historic anniversary. A good companion to the BBC documentary aired in September, this book goes right behind the scenes as *Vogue* house prepares the *Vogue*100 show at the National Portrait Gallery between the usual glamorous business of fashion weeks and cover shoots.



Naked Fashion

Safia Minney
(£14.99, Amazon)

Founder of The People Tree, Safia Minney, explores how we can be more ethical in our fashion choices as she interviews the people at the forefront of the campaign. A mix of thought and photography this read is guaranteed to make you more conscious about your fashion decisions.



Tales from the Back Row: An Outsider's View from Inside the Fashion Industry

Amy Odell
(£13.48 Amazon)

Cosmopolitan's online editor Amy Odell provides an amusing account of the difficulty of working in the fashion scene when you're not Anna Wintour. She focuses on a New York fashion week so you can be sure to enjoy interviews with all the big industry influencers, from the designers and models to the stylists and photographers.

Victoria Copeland

The Depop Christmas Edition

Christmas is coming and it's been a while since the last student loan. If you need ideas for your friends' Christmas presents without spending too much, then this week's top picks will help you.

Unique cards

@loljms is the one for you! Pokemon or pug lover, Jedi or hipster, there are cards to suit all. @fabricate also sells hilarious meme cards - a must have for this Christmas.

A Cosy Christmas read

@abinagendram is a really unique and interesting idea. 'Stuck in a reading rut? Go on a blind date with a book, plus find a gem you wouldn't have found otherwise.' Visit her page and you'll understand. Super original and at the moment she is doing special Christmas orders - you won't even need to wrap them.

Decorative Glitter

@spangledgalz is the sparkliest Depop gal you'll find; she sells glitter for affordable prices, perfect for all festive occasions. She tests all the products herself, and they're guaranteed to bring a sparkle to your Christmas.

Stocking Socks

@takeawest has a lot on offer. But my personal favourite are her socks - the most original socks you'll find and they're really cheap! I'm telling you, if someone got some for me, I'd never put shoes on again.

Sarah Ashford-Brown

Victoria's Secret 2016

The Pre-Show Lowdown. What we know so far:



What:

This year is the 20th anniversary of the annual lingerie catwalk show, with a celebrity FROW, star studded line up and underwear worth up to \$3.5 million.

When:

The Show this year is held on December 5th.

Where:

Paris is hosting the 2016 show. As a first time host, the show is sure to be filled with surprises.

Who:

Musical guests this year include Lady Gaga and Bruno Mars, whilst The Weeknd has also been invited back for a second year. The fantasy bra is to be worn by Jaz Tookes this year, with fellow angels Elsa, Stella, Lily, Adriana and Alessandra returning also. After initial controversy, but ultimate success, best friend turned model duo Kendall Jenner and Gigi Hadid are also in this year's line up. Younger Hadid, Bella, has also been invited to join the cast.

How:

The show incorporates a carefully selected line up of models from a set of New York castings, both open and invitational. Successful models were flown by private jet to Paris last Sunday.

Meg Painter





The Scribe is an arts society, a host of events, a place for creativity to thrive, but above all, a university publication in the form of a zine. We aim to produce at least four issues a year – five if we're lucky – with pages are packed full of submissions from the university's students, from poetry to painting, creative writing to photography. If you, like us, have a feel for all things imaginative, handmade and creative then The Scribe is the place for you. If you sign up to our mailing list, like our Facebook page and most importantly, buy membership you will have access to information about deadlines, launch nights and other events and as a member will pay reduced admission for all things Scribe, and will be able to submit your art and writing to the Scribe. Like us on Facebook at facebook.com/thescribeleeds, email us at thescribeleeds@gmail.com, to buy our membership, search 'The Scribe' on the LUU website.

Great little cigarette / Moments

We plucked at strings,
now pluck at burs
clasped to our coats,
whilst the melody you hum
keeps with our paces
a bar at a time,
legato as we slide down drifts,
your mustard coat stark against the bland ground,
mine burnt umber.
Burnt like the smoke
exhaled, inhaled
steady rhythm,
interrupted
by my occasional cough
on the sweet poison you're so accustomed to.
Looking wrongly beautiful with that cigarette
hung haphazardly from your lips,
charred cherry glowing saffron,
crackling like early vinyl.
Together we light mine,
a feeble quiver of light
in encroaching dark.
Inhaling, exhaling
steady rhythm,
ethereal long limbed tendrils,
simmering all responsibilities.
Tobacco blown. Breaths shared.
A mezzo forte rift of smoky laughter left to resonate.
Lucy Cunningham

Ezra

Pound me.
Scratch me out.
Take the first impressions of my thoughts and draw a line
Of dark graphite.
Eradicate my calculations, confessions and the voice that reaches out —
Stripped back,
Lay down the rest,
And sign it with an E.

I have had a revelation.
I have never made a choice,
But have passed through life waiting to be chosen
And at most,
Accepted or avoided another's selection

The female curse, frozen.

And yet undone, or never born, in the figure of a man of Greatness.
Unseen passivity, only humility
And a hand outstretched, opening the door...

What strength or weakness he must have had
To pour himself out, or someone else,
And in his murky pool reveal the world's flickering form
Only to pass it to another,
Ready to pounce.
After how many moments of indecision and revision did the shy,
Assertive hand
Pass on the leaves of his reflection into the tiger's mouth?
What strength or weakness
To take it back in pieces and yet more whole,
And, unblushing, write his name beneath it.

Anna Broadbent

Issue II Launch Night

The Scribe cordially (alcohol pun intended) invites you to the launch of Issue II, a night of open-mic and the inaugural Scribe Theatre Awards (otheriwise known as the Scribeys). Celebrate Leeds's incredible arts scene with us by performing your music and creative writing or simply buying a zine and enjoying the show.

Find us at Hyde Park Book Club, from 7pm onwards on Monday 5th December. Admission is just £1 for members and £2 for non-members. Further details can be found at facebook.com/thescribeleeds



Debate: Were the cast of *Hamilton* right to call out Mike Pence?

Yes

‘Conversation is not harassment, sir’, said Brandon Dixon on Twitter in response to Donald Trump’s demands for an apology to Mike Pence, following Dixon’s bold statement directed towards the vice-president elect. Indeed, Dixon was polite and thoughtful, and definitely did not show aggression in his address to Pence after their performance. Merely stating an opinion that has been shared by many following Trump’s election, Dixon expressed how diverse Americans currently feel ‘alarmed and anxious’ that the new administration will not protect them under Trump’s leadership. He simply called for a celebration of diversity in American society, as had been showcased by the cast of *Hamilton* in their politically-charged play. It was not a violent message by any means, showing Trump’s accusations of ‘harassment’ to be far-fetched.

So, is it appropriate for the cast to even use their play as a means of voicing their opinions? Of course, and no they shouldn’t apologise for their actions. It was done in a respectful manner, welcoming Pence and even reprimanding the audience for booing. As the under-represented ethnic minorities will have an even smaller role in Trump’s government, a reputable play accessible to a wide audience seems like the only platform where they can be heard. When looking at the mass riots which have spread across the states like wildfire during and after the election, surely we should be recognising the courageous efforts made by the cast of *Hamilton*. In a democratic age, it is shameful that Trump cannot see beyond this; rather than recognising the extent of the situation which called for such action, he only sees a potential threat to his own authority.

In an era where Twitter is the world’s political platform, it is refreshing to see how the cast of *Hamilton* were unafraid to voice their opinions publicly and respectfully. Besides, Mike Pence openly declared he ‘was not offended’. Surely then, this is just another case of Donald bulldozing his way through Twitter, just to make his presence heard yet again. Same old tricks Donald. It’s time for a new strategy now.

Rebekah Chapman

No

In an interview toward the end of the US election campaigns, Robert De Niro, legendary actor, described his desire to punch Donald Trump, future despotic tyrant, right in his orange face. If Robert ever gets round to it, I and every other liberal-thinking mind across the globe will leap for joy. The memes will be hilarious. But De Niro will also be rightly charged and convicted for assault. Despite the viral potential of such a move and our own political points of view, it would still be a reprehensible act.

On November 18th the cast of *Hamilton* broke an ethical code by calling out Mike Pence after that night’s show, making him the unwitting star of Saturday morning’s viral video. It was unfair to blindside him and thus force Pence into a no-win situation in the middle of a clearly anti-Trump audience. *Hamilton*’s hip-hop music and liberal politics would have hardly attracted the working-class demographic whose votes put Trump in office; indeed the seat from which the video was shot reportedly cost \$449. This breach of the fourth wall has been condemned by performers such as E Street Band member Steve van Zandt, who felt it necessary to qualify his position through his anti-Trump beliefs. However I don’t see why van Zandt need be a Clinton supporter to have his opinion heard – as a performer, he is most qualified to decide whether the *Hamilton* cast’s opportunism went too far.

It is tempting to throw out measured perspective when dealing with people as unpleasant as Mike Pence, and even seems appropriate when those people are tearing up the rules of what is acceptable to say in the public sphere. However, it is in fractious times such as these that we can least afford to detach ourselves from an objective sense of ethical rights and wrongs.

Joe Scott



Image: Pete Malkin

Breaking Out of London: Why regional theatre matters.

As government cuts to the arts continue to plague communities up and down the country. *In The Middle* discusses the importance of regional theatre...

Regional theatre is often underestimated and misjudged as being an impractical drain on resources and funding, especially when nothing can apparently compare to London's main stage. However, how can the bright but harsh lights of the capital's platform be likened to the original and local pieces of performative history that relate to the residents?

The beauty of regional theatre is that the local performances are often raw and visceral in their authenticity; they might not be the polished perfection found in national theatre but it is this simplicity that draws in the audience. It provides a substantial economic boost to regional towns and cities, and is often where some of the most prominent names in the acting industry are born: Sir Ian McKellen, Hugh Bonneville and Sheila Hancock to name a few. It has been noted that publicly funded theatre results in more opportunities to present a more challenging performance, as well as time to deviate from the norm and experiment. Performing local history creates a living chronicle for those residents that have either lived through it, or whose grandparents did, generating a sense of community that cannot be unearthed through national theatre.

Watching Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or *Romeo and Juliet* in London, while impressive, is almost mundane in that it is commonplace through its popularity. Under-represented regional theatre productions are unique, innovative and inimitable. Alice Nutter's *My Generation*, performed at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in 2013, was reviewed as 'restless, messy, infuriating, informative, often funny and finally moving'. Spanning local history and its effects, this sense of embedded provincial lair impacts an audience in a way that national theatre perhaps fails to do. Despite

this, regional theatre has become synonymous with inadequacy and inefficiency.

In actuality, regional theatre offers a rich and cultural panoply in the face of slashed funding and this misguided, almost stereotypical perception: "Regional theatre is mostly lots of elderly people watching Alan Ayckbourn plays or musicals and drinking wine, that it almost entirely lacks diversity, and that Rupert Goold may indeed have had a point when he suggested that there is a growing gap between what is being presented in London and the regions, that will leave the latter moribund."

"The beauty of regional theatre is that the local performances are often raw and visceral in their authenticity..

Arts funding is dichotomous in its availability. In 2013 the Rebalancing Our Capital Cultural Report remarked that arts funding heavily leaned towards London's theatres in a stark comparison with regional theatres. London's total sum was £69 per head in contrast to £4.58 per head in regional. This lack of funding may result in more

basic, perhaps even unsophisticated, performances but this does not diminish the dedication and passion delivered by the performers. If anything, this only fuels their motivation to secure large audiences and ensure more funding.

Justifiably, regional theatre is not for everyone. Many prefer the larger productions of renowned classics and the sense of 'high culture' that this instills. However, the uniqueness and ingenuity of regional theatre is arguably unparalleled, and should bear just as much significance as national theatre.

Stephanie Bennett

LUU Dance Competition: An evening of triumph



Image: LUU Vertical Fitness

It must be acknowledged that LUU possesses a fantastic range of talented dancers. The creativity, skill and range that was presented on Friday night is something to be proud of. The Dance Competition was professionally run and well put together by Backstage Society and was also well presented by the always entertaining Dance Rep, Lauren Huxley.

It was commendable to see how many strong and creative women were presenting work. In the wider context of the creative industries where men often dominate creative roles, it was refreshing to see a range of talent here at the union. It was first brought to my attention with an Irish Dance troupe performing to Beyonce's 'Who Run the World?' which was brought to life by the rhythmic tapping of hard shoes.

As proven by their triumphant win, LUU Street Dance presented the most complete performance of the evening. Everything was painstakingly considered; the choreography, costumes, tricks, characterisation, timing and precision all came together. Similarly, Vibes Bollywood Dance illustrated great skill at creating a whole performance, an experience for the audience that was consistent, exciting and completely entertaining.

The standard was set high from the beginning and the efforts from societies such as LUU Belly Dance and Vertical Fitness showed great passion, which forgave some of the more stagnant parts of their performances.

The Ballet Society's performance, while enjoyable to watch, was missing the dynamic range to foreground the slower, peaceful sections. Perhaps more variety in the shapes and levels used would have given the piece more life. Vertical Fitness were another group who have undeniable levels of technical skills, strength and stamina and show great potential in future performances.

Chinyere Wokocha gave a standout performance and while some dancers performed with more confidence than others, it is hope that any future performances will allow them to expand and fully adopt the role of a confident dancer. Lucy Stoddart also gave a phenomenal performance during her solo which rounded off a wonderful evening for all involved.

Alice Boulton-Breeze

Periphery at Lady Beck Studios

Lady Beck Studios is off to a flying start in the Leeds art scene with a new exhibition from Clare Holdstock. We sent Fiona Holland to investigate...

Tucked away in the heart of Mabgate, is the recently founded Lady Beck Studios and Project Space, formerly known as Enjoy Art Space. The site is made up of three floors and includes a gallery as well as several studio rooms and workspaces. Lady Beck is run by the Assembly House studios in Armley, and strives to continue Enjoy's legacy of being a space that is run by and for artists in Leeds.

From 24-27 November, Lady Beck places host to Periphery, a collection of new sculptural work and assemblages by the artist Clare Holdstock, who currently lives and develops her artistic practice in Hull.

In her show, one interesting notion Holdstock attempted to address was the recent history of Modernist high design. Several tower-like structures stand in the space, which bear resemblance to the Modern designer Charles Eames' Toy, a construction kit for children.

Holdstock also managed to put together a personal account on the make up of contemporary urban

spaces, bringing together forms and shapes of various sizes and materials such as discarded metal, plastic sheets, and concrete. These obstacles were scattered around the room filling the entire space, meaning viewers had to step over and around the objects to move through the exhibition. The abstract forms Holdstock created alluded to scrap-like structures of temporary signage or abandoned man-made objects that might be found on a roadside or underpass, making reference to the fragility and short-lived aspects of twenty first century urban landscapes.

It is refreshing to find a rise in independent exhibition spaces emerging in Leeds that differ to the staple art institutions that already exist in the city. Artist-run spaces like Lady Beck allow us to glimpse into the developing creative talent of art graduates from around the country, and to engage in an artistic community.

Fiona Holland





Image: Tristram Kenton

He's Behind You! Where have all the pantomimes gone?

"Pantomimes offer thrilling spontaneity, unpredictability and a unique experience with each performance"

December creeps up on us again and Christmas sets up camp for the rest of the semester, but this time round there seems to be something missing – pantomimes. They seem to be lacking in Leeds. They are loved by children and are traditionally festive events that bring generations together. But with Leeds resorting to a 'Rock 'n' Roll panto' and relying on casting reality stars such as *Geordie Shore*'s Scotty T to attract the masses, one might begin to question whether pantos are taking a step towards the Christmas tradition graveyard this year.

Although some may not view the arguable decline of the pantomime as a loss, these colourful performances will have been many children's very first experience of theatre. Without such an opportunity, there is little other obvious occasion for children to be introduced to onstage entertainment. Although the West Yorkshire Playhouse seems to attempt to address the importance of theatre for infants with their production of *Rudolf* this Christmastime, the joy of pantomime is its ability to entertain on a number of different levels. The adult jokes that become shockingly obvious with age allow generations to come together for equal enjoyment as they watch the shows year on year.

Not only do pantomimes get children to the theatre, they also give adults this chance. With many people leading increasingly fast-paced lives, when can we take time out to visit the theatre if not at Christmas? A lack of pantomime may lead to a fall in theatregoers, at Christmastime and throughout the year, as the annual reminder of the joy of theatre

disappears. Whether you're a fan of the pantomime or not, getting bums on seats in theatres can only be a good thing for the arts and, although not the most highbrow of theatrical entertainment, pantomimes are special for other reasons.

For one, they encourage communication between performers and audience. The crowd experience how its reaction shapes the performance they are watching, just as it can in all forms of theatre. The audience makes a difference, showing how theatre is not a passive event, but a two-way conversation. Through such demonstrations, theatre proves its relevance in the arts world as it offers thrilling spontaneity, unpredictability and a unique experience with each performance.

Pantomimes also remind us of the power of storytelling. Long gone are the times when stories were only transmitted by word of mouth, but pantomimes present a strong case that there are few better ways to tell a story than orally and visually. When we sat down to watch the Christmas pantos of our childhood, whether or not we knew the story of *Cinderella* or *Aladdin* proved to be irrelevant, as it was how the stories were performed that was entertaining, not the hopeful anticipation of a plot twist.

Above all, pantos are needed now more than ever. As this comically catastrophic year draws to a close, we turn to Christmas for some light relief... sometimes it's necessary to dream of a world where good will always trump evil.

Jessica Newgas

Starting a Food Revolution... In The Middle with Billy Collins

Last week, Leeds University Union played host to an innovative event: Leeds Creatives. The events saw creative people from in and around Leeds come to give speeches about the great work they're doing to improve the city. One of those people was Billy Collins, proprietor of Honest Edibles, a vegan food business that provides people with healthy, sustainable and ethical food.

After his speech, Billy sat down for an interview with *The Gryphon*. Before talking to Billy, you already get such a friendly feel from him; you know that this is a man who's doing the right thing. After talking to Billy, you want to drop everything and go out and make a change, to go and join the 'food revolution' as he puts it. Billy has had a close relationship with food for years, having been a head chef at a couple of establishments. He decided to go to University to learn more about the environment. During this time, he established a company called Good for Belly, which then evolved into Honest Edibles around a year ago. Billy's reason for establishing his business here was to fill a niche and provide people with sustainable, ethical nourishment.

This isn't merely a business venture, however. Billy wants to supply products that ultimately change the way we look at food as a whole. He told us 'I'm all about trying to start a bit of a food revolution; a deeper connection to ourselves, a deeper connection to the environment, and definitely a deeper connection to each other'. This isn't such an outlandish aim; there has been a 1500% increase in veganism over the last 12 months, as Billy told us. It's clear to see that people are beginning to feel this deeper connection with the environment and with each other. As Billy rightfully put it, 'The world's fucked!' It's our job to un-fuck it and the best way to do so is through our diet and the way in which we treat the environment. People are becoming aware

of the detrimental effect that an unhealthy diet can have on not only themselves, but the environment too, and a counterculture is establishing itself with the aim of fighting the harm that is being done to the environment. The food revolution has begun.

Eating can be a very political and revolutionary act, says Billy. He believes that buying into the wrong foods is buying into the wrong ideologies and philosophies which are in turn harmful to us, the environment, and those around us. He believes that we have the power and the resources to put towards the correct ideologies. He states 'The obligation is very much on us, to realise that we're in power'. This realisation has already begun to happen, with the numbers of veganism rising exponentially like Billy says, but there's still a long way to go. Getting people to think about what they're putting into their bodies is imperative to Billy. 'Food can be either the slowest form of poison or the best form of medicine' he says.

There is an issue with genetically modified foods, foods that include pesticides, that's why he has made a point to create a products that are completely ethical from start to finish, with nothing harmful or unsustainable. Even the packaging is biodegradable and compostable. Billy's isn't done yet. When asked about his plans for the future, he told us that he's got big ambitions to create real change in our relationship with food; he's not where he wants to be, but he's getting there. He appeared at the Great Yorkshire Vegan Festival on the 28th, and he's appearing at various street markets around the city, putting his fingers in a lot of vegan pies as he put it. He plans to start off by getting a café. He talks of writing his own book. He also has his eyes set on education, stating that it is as paramount to making food as being in the kitchen.

For Billy, business is a philosophy first and foremost. He believes that when people realise that your philosophy's pure, they will buy into it; and he's living proof of that.

You can catch Billy outside of the Union at the farmers' market every Monday. Make sure to visit the Honest Edibles Facebook page to keep up with the company.

Charlie Green



The Great Yorkshire Vegan Festival

The event served for both the converted and the curious, as the crowd ranged from young to old, from families to students.

It seems the Vegan stereotype has been outgrown. I was initially surprised by the length of the entry queue to the Great Yorkshire Vegan Festival, although it quickly became clear why the hordes were gathering. The £3 entry fee, which went towards Animal Welfare Charities, was just the start of an event which was all about positivity, ethical values and moral responsibility. The Main Hall in particular was crammed, making access to the vast number of stalls sometimes frustratingly slow. However, there were also more relaxed spaces with the live talks and seating areas making the atmosphere one of courtesy, leisure and friendliness.

The content of the festival demonstrated how Veganism is far from limiting. From enticing chocolate truffles and cakes, to oils, spices and teas, it was easy to forget that it wasn't a typical Food Festival. The sights and smells were similar, yet the familiar BBQ, standard of any festival, was this time providing Vegan hotdogs. The companies and stall owners were all passionate in explaining their unique products, which offered ethical and often healthier, Vegan alternatives. For example, the Vegan cheese made with Soya milk had both strong flavour and texture, and offered a realistic alternative for cheese lovers reluctant to give up dairy. The stands showed just how creative people can be in creating innovative products in order to change their diets and lifestyles. My personal favourite were the Tacos which used mince made from Jackfruit. Overall the stalls displayed diversity and experimentation, rather than the

usual connotations of blandness and restriction that Veganism can incite. The Festival also offered a whole alternative lifestyle, with vegan clothes, make up and health products. I felt a sense of guilt in realising how much of what we consume and use daily (outside of food) still has such strong issues of animal welfare and environmental impact tied up in them. Products that had never occurred to me to be damaging appeared to be so, such as commonplace Paraffin candles which can easily be replaced with Eco soy wax candles which are more ethical and don't have health risks. If anything, the Festival demonstrated how many sins we unknowingly commit in the consumerist world.

The only problem was money, or lack of, in the case of students. Sadly, to feel you are making a difference and partaking of the full ethical Vegan lifestyle you need to be willing to spend a bit of extra money with each item. In this sense, Veganism still seems to be marginalised as something expensive and out of reach. However the impressive scale and turn out of the Yorkshire Vegan Festival seems to indicate that hand-made, cruelty free and all importantly Vegan products don't have to be a novelty and could potentially be made widely available for all.

Sophie Brownlow

Sleeping Giants

by Sylvain Neuvel

In his debut novel, *Sleeping Giants*, Sylvain Neuvel brings a fresh and global perspective to the well-worn science fiction trope of giant alien robots.

When Rose Franklin is eleven, she falls into a hole while biking in the woods. She is discovered in the hole, laying in the palm of a giant metallic hand that has been resting there for thousands of years. Two decades later, Rose, now a high-ranking physicist, is charged with leading a research team to reassemble the unearthly giant and glean any knowledge they can from its advanced technology. The team races to find all of the giant's body parts buried around the planet before the rest of the world finds out about the alien technology. Their attempts do not go unnoticed and geopolitical tensions rise quickly, bringing the world to the brink of war. As tensions rise, the people associated with the project start to question the real purpose behind the reassembling of this giant, doubting that it is just in the name of science.



Image: Biblosanctum

Following in the footsteps of *World War Z* and *The Martian*, the story is told through transcripts of recorded conversations held between a powerful and enigmatic high-ranking government agent in charge of the operation and the scientists, government officials, and military personnel linked to the project. Also included in the narrative are the personal journal entries and mission logs of the crew. This style works out well for the story, which has one foot in the science fiction genre and one in that of the political thriller.

Neuvel blends the excitement of scientific discovery with the anxiety of geopolitical tensions seamlessly. While mostly science

fiction, the apocalyptic undertones due to the threat of global, and possibly even extraterrestrial, conflict tell a story that seems more relevant than ever. The author does an excellent job at explaining the science behind the research being done in the story, which actually makes the tale even more gripping. The story relies heavily on its characters to relate the story to the audience, who watch it unfold through the interviews with the unknown government agent. While some of the more personal aspects divulged by the characters seem a little far-fetched to be discussing in these interviews, on the whole, the characters are well-fleshed out, intelligent, and wholly engaging. As the plot unravels, new characters are cycled through, all of them as colourful and interesting as the last.

Overall the book is a fascinating and fast-paced read that keeps you on the edge of your seat throughout. I would highly recommend for anyone looking for a smart, page-turning thriller containing a healthy dose of science fiction.

Jade Verbick

Rating:



Mira Publishing:



"I believe the good reader will find the good book at the end of the day..."

William Hoole interviews Mira Fadwa Fadel; computer scientist, innovator, educator, journalist, translator, and founder of Mira Intelligent Read. Based on Otley Road, Mira Publishing is a non-for-profit independent publisher of fiction and non-fiction. Meeting Mira in her office, we received the insider's perspective on life as an independent publisher in Leeds.

To start with, I asked Mira what inspired her to embark on the no doubt difficult task of establishing her own independent publishing company. "It is indeed difficult!", she admits, "Before I established the company I spent about a year or so just researching it and I found lots of mysteries in this industry, some things I really couldn't understand - to this moment I still don't really understand - mainly about the distribution, about this journey from the author to the reader. In between there are lots of things I don't understand (things which many people, to be honest, don't understand as well) because while I'm researching I read a lot of articles and reports in different newspapers also wondering how this industry is making money, because the contribution to our GDP is two billion pounds per year, so that's quite a lot of money, where is it? How does it generate it? We don't know. So I decided to take a different route. My company is a not-for-profit company, and I wanted it to be fair to every author and reader." I then asked Fadel if there's a tendency nowadays for mainstream publishers to avoid investing in new authors in favour of just reprinting an ancient backlist with new covers. "Yes, just the covers change!", she agreed, "They change how it looks and that's it, and then they put chocolate or a mug with it just to encourage people to read. This is not my way of doing things."

"In 2014, I think, about 987 bookshops closed and only three opened - it's all Waterstones wherever you go!"

It's often said that the only way to succeed as an independent publisher is to move to London, so I asked Fadel what it was that drew her to Leeds. "I've always been in Leeds!", she keenly interjects, "Since I came to this country I've been in Leeds and I love it, I love Yorkshire." She continues, "The first couple of authors we published lived in Leeds as well as an author actually at the university who was looking for a translator, and the translator I used was also a student at the university which was brilliant because part of what I want to do is to help people in Leeds. I also met Olga McPhail from the university, she wrote the novel 'Born in Chechnya' - it's amazing! And we work with the university to organise book signings etc. It's better, I prefer to start locally and then you grow."

Before interviewing Fadel, I'd heard that big publishers don't really search for local authors nowadays, and it's independent publishers who are doing all the hard work. I asked her if she would agree. "Yes", she admits, but she's proud of a couple of things. "One of the books we've published so far (Janis Hetherington's 'Love Lies Bleeding') is being commissioned for ITV to be a three-part documentary. And just recently I got a letter from a highly respected figure suggesting that one of our authors be considered for a nomination for the Nobel Prize for Literature. We're not just the publishers but the agents of our authors as well; we market and do everything on their behalf."

To finish, I asked Mira to expand on the Mira Intelligent Read mission statement, the demystification of the gap between reader and author, what mysteries she encountered, and whether she managed to remove any of them.

"First I wondered how those publishers made profit, because as a publisher we pay for the publishing, the marketing, everything. Then the distributor will take 60%. What is left for us? It doesn't cover the translation, it covers nothing at all. So I wondered how those big publishers made money. Many bookshops are now closed, they've disappeared. In 2014, I think, about 987 bookshops closed and only three opened - it's all Waterstones wherever you go!"

William Hoole



Flavoursome Fare at Comptoir Libanais

The new Lebanese canteen in Trinity is the perfect escape from the overload of Christmas

In amongst the Christmassy chaos of the Trinity Centre, new Lebanese restaurant Comptoir Libanais offers a welcome glimpse of heavenly summer with its colourful souk-like interiors and delicious exotic food. The new Lebanese canteen is (based next to the Everyman Cinema on the top floor of Trinity) offers tasty Middle Eastern dishes along with a host of beautiful hand-crafted items such as embroidered bags, ornate silver tea pots and exotic delicacies. Stepping inside instantly whisks you away from drizzly old Leeds to a much to a much warmer climate.

Although it's close proximity to the cinema may cause some confusion (this could have easily ended up being a film review instead) we were greeted warmly by the Comptoir staff who took us over to our table and talked us through the menu. It had been a long Monday so cocktails were the first order of the day; the Comptoir G&T was strong, fresh and citrusy, the perfect concoction of Hayman's gin, tonic, pink grapefruit and a dash of rose water.

Lebanese food is not something I've really tried before so I was keen to test out my tastebuds with a Mezze Sharing Platter; a large starter platter containing a host of small dishes. There was the staple pita bread and hommos (hummus), falafel and some to-die-for cheese sambousek (just like halloumi). But there was also a whole host of dishes I had never tried before, such as tabbouleh, a very fine salad made up of parsley, mint and tomatoes, as well as Baba ghanuj, a delicious smoky aubergine dip with pomegranate seeds. It was the perfect introduction to the flavours of Lebanese cuisine and an ideal way of trying out some different foods if you're wary of risking the unknown with your main.

This though, is something I would highly recommend. While my dining buddy played it safe, I ordered the Lahme Man'ousha and it turned out to be the most delicious thing we tried all night. It's basically the Lebanese version of a pizza; minced lamb, diced onions, peppers and chilli on a oven-baked flat bread. Topped with pomegranate seeds and molasses, it had an addictively sweet tinge, and the lighter quality of the flat bread (as opposed to more dense pizza dough) made it incredibly easy to munch our way through a whole plateful.

The other main we tried was a succulent grilled half-chicken, flavoursome but not too spicy, with Batata Harra, spiced cube potatoes which were way more satisfying than fries. The diversity of the menu allows you to stick to your Nandos-style safety blanket if you want, or try out something different. The desserts were also a pleasant surprise; for those of you who like to watch the calories, there was delicious organic natural yoghurt, topped with either honey and mixed nuts, Lebanese fig jam or pomegranate seeds. Or for the more indulgent diners (like me) I would recommend the chocolate and tahini brownies, served with chocolate sauce and vanilla ice cream – it may be a rich, chocolatey overdose but the lightness of the sponge made it addictively edible.

Yes, it may be that time of year where it's all about those turkey sandwiches and Christmas dinners, but if you fancy indulging in some exotic, flavoursome fare, then Comptoir Libanais is the perfect alternative.

Jessica Murray

Gilmore Girls: Changing Seasons

The first time I heard about the Gilmore Girls revival all I could think was...jump back. Like every Gilmore Girls fan who had bitten the forbidden fruit of loving a discontinued TV-show, I wasn't remotely satisfied when the show ended the first time round. I was that kid who scoured the internet for any Hep Alien t-shirts that I figured somebody cooler than me would've started making in their bedroom. To me, this revival was more exciting than Christmas and I have to say: writing this without including any spoilers was a real nightmare, and with the new four-part series being shrouded in as much secrecy as J.K. Rowling's *The Cursed Child*, there was no possible way I could ever mention the last four words. But they're ace.

Obviously, A Year in the Life was never going to be exactly the same as the original: in the nine year gap between the show's original final episode and its new Netflix debut, the characters have aged quite considerably. Understandably, it was at first disconcerting that Rory was no longer a character without so many flaws, and watching Lorelai struggling with the once much-loved Dragonfly Inn was sad to see – but it was because of these things that the show still felt natural. The people were older, but Stars Hollow stayed the same, Lorelai's house stayed the same, and the characters, essentially, stayed the same. Sure, Lorelai had ditched her infamous tight-dress-and-cardigan combo for a more mature, brightly coloured wardrobe, and her relationship with Luke wasn't as harmonious as it had been nine years ago, but it was this that made the show feel as if it had actually gone somewhere.

With A Year in the Life, Amy Sherman-Palladino managed to create the sense that Gilmore Girls had never been discontinued: that it had been consistently creating new episodes in the nine year hiatus it actually took. The concepts within these four 90-minute slots were out-there and quirky, almost dreamlike – most importantly, they were different from before. The way certain scenes were staged almost made the show feel like a fairytale. Especially at the end of the last episode, it was as if Rory and Lorelai had just stepped in to a scene from *Alice in Wonderland*. The balance of new and old was impeccable: at some points I caught myself subconsciously thinking that I must be watching an old episode, and at other times I would admire just how much the style of the show was changing. In all honesty, it just felt so real. The tributes to Edward Herrmann (Rory's grandfather), were so heartfelt that you knew Lauren Graham's tears were genuine. The constant parallelisms of the characters missing each other, and the many references to the time that had passed were so obviously authentic that it made the whole thing so much more magical. And, obviously, Paris was so Paris-like that we could never doubt this revival's success.

To conclude, even though I certainly wasn't satisfied when the four-part series ended this time round, when the closing credits rolled around for the last time, and 'Where You Lead' played for one final bar, I thought to myself: this was enough.

Emily Moscrop



Image: Amy Elizabeth

Kirkstall Abbey Market Showcases Best Local Business

Last Saturday marked the final appearance of the Kirkstall Abbey Deli Market of 2016, which takes place within the ruins of the 864-year-old abbey toward the end of each month.

Kirkstall Abbey is a go-to for niche entertainment – from music festivals to last year's outdoor *Lord of the Rings*-themed movie marathon it's one of West Yorkshire's best alternative event venues, guaranteed to give you a good time, and the deli market was no different. The blanket of fog that had seeped through the grounds that morning stayed for most of the day, adding an eerie beauty to the semi-concealed ruins and clusters of trees, the perfect photo opportunity for budding photographers. Despite the strange weather, crowds flooded in and out of the grounds over the three hours that the markets were open, gradually dying down as the afternoon wore on. Nowhere near as busy as the Christkindelmarkt currently set up in Millennium Square, but definitely a popular go-to for those wanting a sample or two from local businesses.

The foods on offer are strange and wonderful. What appears to be a regular pie stall on first glance becomes the quirky creation, with the lovely little lady behind the table singing 'green Thai curry pie' to passers by. Not the kind of flavours you would expect from a pie, but still tempting. Another stall giving away free samples of popcorn advertises a ground chilli powder mixture that the vendor insists will sit comfortably between your salt and pepper, with fair warning that its heat isn't for the fainthearted. Local cheesemongers Cryer and Stott take up more room than any other stall on-site, with a range that puts Morrison's cheese counter to shame, with gift cheeses fashioned into different shapes and objects just in time for Christmas. For the lazy baker, Bottled Baking Co provide all of the necessary ingredients, minus dairy, for making apple strudel muffins, brownies, and coconut bread in handy milk bottles with the recipe and their website written on the packaging label.

Set apart from the gift-selling stalls are the vans and tables selling hot food and drink for the then-and-now. Hot spiced wines and cold local draught beer is sold in a large van just outside of the ruins where the main market is set, generously priced for how drunk they get you in such a short space of time. More impressive are the the amazing stonebaked pizzas made to order on site. Tricky to eat while walking round without a knife and fork, but still delicious. The most popular food vendor by far was local business Smak!, specialists in Polish food, which saw most of their stash of Kielbasa disappear after only an hour, a potential rival to the bratwurst sold in Millennium Square. For people who love food and maybe want to try something new while supporting local businesses, Kirkstall Abbey's Deli Market is a firm must.

Georgia Ryan

Melting Hearts in Leeds this Winter

Ah Christmas, the most romantic time of the year! Nights may be getting colder but that doesn't mean romance has to.

I want to share with you what I think are some wonderful date ideas during this cold winter season. They won't guarantee fireworks and butterflies – that, I'm afraid, is out of my hands – but I do promise they'll provide an entertaining and enchanting experience for you and a lucky someone.

If you fancy kicking off your date before dark falls then pop along to the Leeds City Museum, located right by Millennium Square, where they are holding an indoor Etsy market every day from 11-4pm, beginning on December 6th. This market pops up all over the UK and celebrates local crafters and designers, encouraging people to shop local this Christmas. You can browse their selection of stalls that will be selling a range of handmade, vintage items, so if you're looking for Christmas presents for your family this year, this is a great place to start. Helping each other choose gifts will certainly make the whole debacle of picking out presents a lot more pleasurable.

When night begins to fall and you're done mooching around the indoor market, it's time to brace the chilly outdoors once again, but fear not, there are plenty of ways to keep yourself warm. Perhaps a nice hot mug of Christmas cheer or a steaming plate of delicious food? Well, the Christkindelmarkt offers just this. Located in the centre of Millennium Square, the German Christmas Market proves to be one of the most popular events, with its adorable authentic log cabins and abundance of colourful fairy lights. Grab yourself a traditional German delicacy such as Currywurst or Bratwurst sausage, all washed down with a warming glass of Gluhwein, and finished off with a sweet stollen! You can also browse the range of seasonal gifts, including handcrafted toys, jewellery and Christmas decorations. If you're lucky, you might even be able to listen to some traditional German folk music which, to me, screams Christmas like nothing else. If this weren't enough, there is also an outdoor ice skating rink right by the market where you can enjoy skating under the stars. If, like me, you aren't very good at it, then it's the perfect excuse to hold each other a little closer for balance.

So, you've purchased all your handmade gifts, stuffed yourself full of German culinary delights and skated your feet sore, it's now time to wind the night in, but where? All Bar One is a classic, cosily furnished bar that offers a slightly more mature experience. The cocktails, although slightly on the expensive side, are sure not to disappoint and the Cocktail of the Month: Truffle Shuffle, a silky smooth blend of Baileys, Honey Tequila and cream is highly recommended. If you're feeling extra indulgent, you can even book a Cocktail master class, where you can learn the ins and outs of how to make your favourite alcoholic refreshments – you'll be sure to impress your date with your bartender moves.

During the Christmas period there are also a couple of seasonal events to get you in the mood. The Hedonist Project is a unique seasonal concept bar that has been transformed into a winter mountain ski themed lodge. It's the perfect place to escape the chill and get 'piste' this winter. Leeds is also welcoming an exclusive *Game of Thrones* themed pop-up inn running from Friday 25th November to December 9th. It will be taking residency in the old Cafe Rouge unit downstairs in The Light every evening between 5pm and 10pm. The medieval décor and themed cocktails, such as The Three Eyed Raven, and the offer of an enormous meat feast, along with the chance to meet a John Snowe lookalike makes for a magical evening that you and your date will undoubtedly enjoy. Even if you're not a true *Game of Thrones* fan, this is sure to be guaranteed fun.

If none of this takes your fancy, then you can always keep it simple with a film at either the more contemporary Everyman cinema, or, for a more traditional experience, you can visit the Hyde Park Picture House. This cinema doesn't merely showcase the latest releases but some more classic, independent films, which is perfect if you want something a little different. The experience comes at a reasonable price as well, with tickets starting at around £5.50. During the Christmas period, you can't go wrong with snuggling up close with someone and watching an old classic!

Alice Vivyan-Jones

My Weight Does Not Undermine My Eating Disorder

This week, Charlie frankly discusses her own experiences with eating disorders, and encourages us to challenge the way we think about these illnesses.



I had an eating disorder for over three years, but my mind-set was disordered for much longer. It didn't happen like the flick of a switch. It took years of subtle negativity, self-doubt and body comparisons, slowly creeping into my mental state like the darkening of the summer sky. What began as a harmless desire to lose some belly fat gradually shattered my self-esteem, weakened my closest friendships, and changed my perspective of food forever.

Whenever somebody mentions the term 'eating disorder', most vision a scarily thin girl standing in front of a mirror. We are bombarded with skeletal images, showing the terrible effects of eating

disorders in a very visual, physical sense. But this automatic association of disordered eating with a tiny figure is extremely damaging, implying that serious cases of eating disorders require drastic weight loss, when in reality this is far from the case

As my eating decreased I lost a little weight- but not much. All the girls I saw on my Instagram feed had tiny waists and thigh gaps, and there I was with my chubby cheeks and wobbly stomach. I was mortified by my failure to become skinny, and punished myself over and over with a cycle of bingeing and restricting, binge drinking, and exercising; ultimately spiralling my weight fluctuation out of control.

I hid my eating problems for years, not understanding why I behaved in such erratic and frantic ways, wearing loose clothes to hide my body. In my eyes, to be bulimic was to be fat and bloated, instead of the small anorexic. It's only now that I understand how this association was a societal one, and not just within my own head.

Your weight and body type alone never determine what mental or physical illness you may have. The size of your waist should never determine whether or not you each lunch today, if you should punish yourself with endless exercise, or if you must avoid that chocolate cake you really want. It's wrong that if you naturally

have a small waist, people think it gives them the right to ask whether you have an eating disorder, assuming that they can pry into your business and assume you have a mental illness. It's wrong that a girl in size 12 clothes struggles with Orthorexia in secret, ashamed to tell anybody because she's 'not sick enough'.

I'm taking a risk writing this article. Mental illness is something I'm very open about, but pouring your most intimate stories onto a page, or into a newspaper, still makes me nervous. But I'm doing this to challenge myself- to never return to those horrible years of disordered eating- and to reassure anyone else out there that it is ok to share. If writing this helped just one person to seek help, I'd be over the moon.

Eating disorders are complex processes, and every person has different traumas and life experiences that trigger them to develop disordered behaviours. Eating disorders can develop regardless of your weight, grades at university and financial situation: mental illnesses can occur even if you feel you have no reason to be struggling. If you feel pressured by any aspect of University life, or you have a pre-existing mental illness, don't be afraid to ask for help and never ever give up on recovery: regardless of your size.

Charlie Collett

In Defence of Trashy Romance Novels

Should we be giving more credit to romance novels? Mariana debunks the idea that the genre is nothing more than simplistic, escapist drivel.



Something incredible happened last week. I picked up the latest *Shopaholic* novel by Sophie Kinsella and yes, it was every bit as good as I had hoped. All week I have been jabbering to my friends about how "I love the book, even if it is girly", until it occurred to me the nonsense I was talking.

I started to ask myself: Why am I associating 'girly' with 'trashy'? Why am I dismissing this book that gives me pleasure? Why do I feel the need to justify my reading of it? I realised that I had naturalised a very sexist perspective on the romance genre. One that saw the genre as unintellectual and "weak", when in fact most romance novels are feminist and intellectual.

Romance is one of the few literary genres dominated by women - chiefly written for women by women, and depicting women as active and engaged protagonists. The criticism that romance novels are based on the damsel in distress formula - a woman needing to be rescued by a man - is simplistic at best. Should you have read as much romance as I have, you will know that most novels portray smart, strong, independent women, such as the protagonists of *Gone with the Wind*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and even *Fifty Shades of Grey*. Novels in which the woman is not so empowered from the start tend to show her undergoing a transformation into a strong, sophisticated beauty.

Although, admittedly, more often than not the trigger of this transformation is the man, the qualities the woman comes to reveal were intrinsic to her from the beginning. The criticism remains that the woman needs the man to feel complete. However, the same is true for the man, who is hopelessly in love with her.

The other major criticism of romance novels is that they are forms of escapism. I mostly disagree. In my opinion, what is easily interpreted as escapism is actually a female reader taking her happiness and pleasure into her own hands. If she feels frustrated or unfulfilled by her love life and is in a situation where her circumstances cannot be immediately

changed, it is an act of protest and empowerment to find self-fulfilment, even if it is only temporary.

Romance novels depict women as deserving of love and respect and allow readers to step into the shoes of the heroine. Furthermore, in what pertains to arousal, it is empowering for women to enjoy and explore their sexuality.

The notion that romance novels are shallow is yet another fallacy. A convention of the genre might be for the resolution to be uplifting; however, a happy ending need not be frivolous. Sometimes a happy ending is muted: two people finding contentment rather than joy together. Additionally, a happy ending does not diminish the meaningful struggles the protagonist has faced or the novel's treatment of serious themes, such as mental health and social class in *The Notebook*.

Not all romance novels are good, as is true for any genre. However, whether a piece of romantic literature lacks in form or substance is the fault of the author, not the genre. It is narrow-minded to perceive romance as anything less than a valuable form of literary expression.

Mariana Avelino



Welfare at Leeds: Disabled is not a Bad Word

As part of Disability History Month, Equality and Diversity Officer Emma Healey discusses her own experiences, as well as the programme of events that LUU are running.



When I started organising Disability History Month, I didn't identify as disabled. Sure, I had some on-going, chronic health conditions, and a variety of mental illnesses – but I wasn't disabled. That was reserved for more "serious" conditions. I didn't look "disabled". I didn't have problems accessing buildings. In my mind that meant I wasn't disabled, I was just chronically ill.

However, all of these assumptions were based on the idea that being disabled is a negative thing – and that is really problematic. Through organising disability history month, and connecting with loads of incredible disability activists, I'm now not ashamed to say I am disabled and it is encouraging to know that there is a whole community who support my rights and understand the limitations I face.

It's not yet something I am entirely comfortable with: I worry that, as someone with invisible illnesses, I am seen as taking up space or not "authentically" disabled. However, I don't worry about this from the disabled community; it is more the judgement from non-disabled people and those who assume that because I don't look sick, it must mean that I am healthy.

I'm not going to pretend that I'm not privileged because my impairments are invisible. I don't struggle with physical access or people continuously offering to help me. I don't get told I am an inspiration for just existing or that if someone had the same impairment as me, then they would kill themselves. However, these are all realities for a huge number of disabled people – as is poverty, increased risk of domestic violence, isolation, manipulation, and having to fight for basic medical care.

The question of privilege regarding invisible disabilities came up during a Disability History Month workshop run by the disabled women's organisation Sisters of Frida. Sarah, from the organisation, highlighted that whilst visibly impaired people tend to have too low expectations put upon them, those with invisible disabilities have people assume that we can do everything a non-disabled person could. There are some days when I literally won't be able to make it out of the house and others when I am unable to eat without vomiting – and it is hard. I equally have to take a minimum of four prescription

medications a month just to function – which at £8.40 for one prescription, the costs start to mount up. I feel guilty and ashamed when I have to take time off work due to my illness.

My disability has stopped me travelling, something I used to love. These effects are not a result of a fault of myself; it is the fact that society is not set up to support those of us with disabilities. An example of this is the fact that in the entirety of the UK there are only about 900 fully accessible toilets.

This Disability History Month I would encourage you to question what you think of as 'disabled' – whether you have a mental illness, a chronic health condition, or a physical or mental impairment know that you are valid and that this a movement for you.

We need to recognise the power of identifying as disabled and acknowledge that society does not work for us. We are expected to adapt and make it work, but through disability activism and rights, we can make society adapt to our needs.

Please come along to our great programme of events: <https://www.luu.org.uk/campaigns/dhm/>

If you want to seek further support on the issues discussed above then contact your personal tutor, the Student Advice Centre, the Disability Coordinator Team or Leeds Assessment Centre.

Emma Healey

Why Hygge is no longer 'hygge'

It's the concept everyone seems to have jumped on this year, whether it's publishers, journalists, or just the general public. Lauren explains why the commercialisation of hygge is ultimately taking the meaning out of it.



All the way back in issue three of *In The Middle*, I wrote about the Danish concept of 'hygge'; the lovely concept of sitting around the fire, drinking hot chocolate, maybe with a storm raging outside. Having been in Denmark this summer, and having listened to actual Danish people talk to me gleefully about it, I came back to the UK thinking how great I would be if we adopted the concept over here... Oh, how wrong and naïve I was back then. The thing is, we've gone mad for hygge over here. Whether it's the innumerable *Guardian* articles by Brits trying to break down the true meaning of the

word, or the fact that Waterstones has entire tables dedicated to all the books written on the concept, it's everywhere I turn. The nice little hygge bubble I experienced whilst studying in the country has been well and truly popped – so thanks for that.

It's all grimly predictable; Christmas unsurprisingly comes around every year, and companies will always need something new to latch on to and market just in time for the festive season. Maybe every other year I've been just as oblivious as everyone else, but with this year's craze being something close to me, I've selfishly managed to actually take notice this year.

When I got back from Denmark, one of the first things I bought was a book on hygge, in some sort of desperate attempt to artificially recreate the happiness of the summer. Now, when you search for hygge on Amazon, you'll be greeted by a whole array of books on the matter, all of which were released within the last two months. All of these books promise to help you find your special cosy place, rediscover the joy of simple things, or embrace the art of hygge, but the concept of hygge really isn't so difficult to understand that you need a step-by-step guide to achieve it.

After hearing about hygge on TV, my mum told me that she'd been living the hygge life for ages, and she's not wrong. That's the thing with hygge; it's really not that hardest thing to achieve. As I said in my previous piece, what's hygge for you isn't necessarily hygge for someone else, and that's the beauty of it. It's all about finding your own little bit of happiness

It's not exactly a completely unknown concept to the UK. I doubt there would be many people who would be upset at the idea of snuggling up under a blanket on the sofa, Christmas film on the TV, accompanied by a few candles. It's called being cosy, and it's called being nice. It's just that now, publishers, journalists, chefs and everyone else has latched on to the fact that it can be given a simpler name, even though seemingly no one can pronounce it correctly.

Ultimately, commercialising hygge is perhaps the most unhygge thing you can do. How about we just leave it to the Danes, who seem to have the concept pretty much nailed, given that it is theirs after all.

Lauren Davies

Off to a good start?

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Whether you've been in Leeds
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Student Mornings: Tired to Wired

It's no secret that students are notorious for not getting enough sleep. Emma Purvis looks at student sleep and reveals some tricks you may not have thought of to ensure you catch those precious zzzzzs.



Emma Purvis

It is no secret that in most lectures there is usually one person slumped over the desk, head nestled in their arm, with a pen hanging limply in the other hand. At first, it is impossible to tell whether they are actually asleep or only 'resting their eyes', until they inevitably jolt themselves awake wearing an expression of utter confusion and disorientation. Unlike the other life lessons which you learn at university, the ability to balance sleeping, studying and socialising often remains an enigma right up until graduation. Out of the three, it comes as no surprise that generally sleep is not considered to be the top priority – especially during the onslaught of December deadlines. I asked thirty students how many hours sleep they got per night and the average of their responses came to just under six and a half hours; which is two hours less than what the National Sleep Foundation recommends. This culture of viewing sleep as a luxury and not a necessity will not change overnight, so in the meantime, quality not quantity is the best approach to take when it comes to sleeping.

One habit that most people are guilty of (myself included) is going to bed and scrolling through social media for hours on end, before finally looking at the time and questioning your life choices. It is not only the amount of sleep that this affects, but also the quality. Studies have shown that the artificial light emitted from screens is processed by our bodies as daylight. Since our brains think the sun is still up they delay total relaxation keeping you awake longer and decreasing deep sleep. Turning off all electronic

devices half an hour before going to bed, which is easier said than done, will promote relaxation and should prevent that zombie-chic look in the morning.

As an alternative, reading a book is a great calming activity as it allows the consciousness to wind-down, as long as it is an actual book and not an electronic one – sorry to all you Kindle fans out there. Not only does reading induce sleep faster but it can also reduce stress levels by up to 68% according to a study by the University of Sussex. As someone who has depended on copious amounts of coffee, and has constantly

*If you do get the munchies
a couple of hours before
bed opt for cherry juice or
bananas*

panicked over essays for the last two weeks, this is one life hack I am definitely going to try. So whether *Harry Potter* is your book of choice, or perhaps *Fifty Shades of Grey*, try to put down the phone and flick through some paper pages instead.

In most cases, food choices have a greater impact on our lifestyle than we realise and sleep is no exception. Specific food choices can be the reason for tossing and turning all night and there are some very unlikely culprits. Staying away from stimulants such as coffee/energy drinks are obvious if you are planning on getting an early night, but some seemingly innocent

foods contain more caffeine than they let on. Green tea is among the herbal drinks that people reach for before bed, but in reality one cup contains 50% of the caffeine found in coffee. The high sugar content in chocolate and the caffeine from cocoa beans turn that Dairy Milk bar from an indulgent midnight-snack into a fast-releasing energy bar.

Chinese cuisine could also factor towards a restless sleep because of the flavour enhancer MSG which is commonly put in the food. This additive is a potent stimulant which has been known to keep people awake for a substantial amount of time after consumption. If you do get the munchies a couple of hours before bed, opt for cherries (cherry juice is even better), or bananas, as these foods promote peaceful sleep.

The majority of students are no strangers to having naps as part of their daily routine – especially when lectures are scheduled before midday. However, napping disrupts your sleeping pattern and will most likely leave you feeling more sluggish than you did in the first place. Keeping naps to a maximum of twenty minutes is just enough to refresh the body without it going into sleep-mode, and should not interfere with actually going to bed later on in the night. Even simple things like making sure your room is completely dark and silent can be a massive help in getting to sleep; so if you live in an area where house parties are a regular occurrence, earplugs could be a great investment. If watching the clock at 3am to count how many hours sleep is left following hours of wriggling to find a comfy position sounds familiar, hopefully making a few of these changes can make those precious hours of sleep more effective.

A conversation with Zygmunt Bauman

Hannah Macaulay discusses liquid modernity, Brexit and hope with sociologist Zygmunt Bauman



Hannah Macaulay
Features Editor

On one of the coldest, rainiest, windiest days in recent British history I find myself on the number 1 bus on my way to Headingley. I check the time on my phone. It's 4.20P.M. and I am meeting Zygmunt Bauman, Emeritus professor at Leeds and one of the most influential sociologists in modern history, for a conversation at 4.30. As a Sociology student who is passionate about her subject, this is a big deal. Ask any person with a slight relation to the field, and they will tell you that Zygmunt Bauman can be described as nothing less than the Polish Mick Jagger of contemporary Sociology.

We're stuck in a queue on Otley Road. I am approximately 15 minutes away from Zygmunt Bauman's address, and I start to worry. What if I'm stuck on the bus for the next hour? I decide that if worst comes to worst I'll just have to get off the bus and run. I wait patiently for another 10 minutes and suddenly, the bus starts speeding up. It's driving fast now, really fast. It's 4.35 when I see my end-destination near the Leeds ring road. I hit the "stop" button with fierce determination, say thank you to the bus driver and start powerwalking towards the Bauman residency.

When I reach the big Headingley villa, the gate is open as a welcoming invitation onto the property. As I walk down a narrow path, I see that the door to the house is open too. A woman, who I discover to be the sociologist Aleksandra Kania, comes running towards me. "Hello, hello!" I say as she shakes my hand and invites me inside the house. She points at my shoes, and asks me if I would like to take them off. "They're quite wet, but..." I don't even finish my sentence before she hands me a pair of slippers that I can wear. I look at my surroundings. The hallway is filled with old photographs; there are a couple of paintings, some with stamps from Poland on them. There is a little piece of furniture with various sorts of clay jugs on it. It feels like I'm visiting a relative, the house is warm and I feel very comfortable. I normally only wear slippers in my own home or my grandparents'. I don't know if it is the contrast to the horrid weather outside or the slippers, but I feel relaxed in the settings of the Bauman house. "Come with me," Aleksandra says, and we emerge into the

living room where Zygmunt Bauman is sitting and waiting in a big chair.

As I sit down next to him, I notice the arrangements in front of me: there's a glass of apple juice, a piece of cheesecake, some almonds and a small bowl of yoghurt with raspberries. I've never been treated this well at an interview before. "Eat, eat!" Zygmunt says, as he points at the food in front of me.

I get my notepad with questions out, and a pen to write down answers. "Hannah Macaulay... Are you by any chance related to the famous historian Thomas Macaulay?" Zygmunt asks me, and the questions catches me so off guard, I don't know what to answer. "No, I don't think so. But my grandfather is a well-known linguist," I reply. He nods, looks puzzled. "It's just because Macaulay is such an unusual name..." he says. "It's Scottish," I reply and he asks me if it's ok that he smokes. I tell him that I don't mind, that most of my friends smoke. "But you don't?" Zygmunt asks, and I say that I do not. Aleksandra points at the package of tobacco. "They constantly warn about how bad this stuff is for you!" she says, and smiles at me. I agree and add that we really do live in a risk society.

I look down on my piece of paper filled with countless questions for Zygmunt Bauman, and have no clue where to start. I suddenly feel overwhelmed by everything I want to ask him and all the knowledge I want to get from him in such a short amount of time. I start by asking the sociologist about his term 'liquid modernity'. I ask him if he can summarize it short and precise, as I want to make it understandable to a student audience. I suddenly remember that this is something you should never expect from an intellectual, and certainly not a sociologist. "Liquid modernity is a metaphor. It describes a society that constantly changes its shape, a society that is constantly unpredictable." He picks up my glass of apple juice, and demonstrates what he means by tilting it back and forth. "Like the juice in this glass constantly changes its shape and form when you move it, so does contemporary society. In our search for solidity we have ended up in a liquid world where the only predictable thing is unpredictable." He looks at me with a serious face, and inhales smoke from his pipe. "Let's take an example like Brexit" he says. He is silent for a short moment, his eyes fixated on something behind me. It is clear that he is concentrating on what next to say, how to formulate the many thoughts and theories that are inevitably

rushing through his brain. "Is Brexit a gain or loss? That is something we simply don't know yet. The whole situation is in a state of uncertainty."

I ask how this liquidity links to current issues that are seen as the roots of Brexit, for example the refugee crisis. To this Bauman replies: "my late friend Umberto Eco has some interesting points about this." Bauman explains to me, how Eco conceptualizes the mistake we've made regarding immigration in modern society. "In the past, we relied on the labor force of immigrants to build up our countries. The people that came to our country were therefore controllable through a lawful process, and our governments wanted them. Now, however, we have a different situation. Many people have been forced to flee their countries (primarily due to wars or poverty), and mass-migration currently has the essence of a natural catastrophe. The problem is that we still attempt to control immigration in the same way as we did in the past. We try to use old solutions to solve new problems: we need to reinvent the way in which we treat migration."

Bauman takes one more drag of his pipe, and then continues his thoughts on the refugee crisis. "Refugees bring a state of panic to a country. Panic that provokes the fear of instability. Suddenly we, in our comfortable, 'safe world', realize that nothing is certain. In 2016 refugees are no longer the poor: they are well-educated, middle-class people that never predicted themselves to be in the situation they're in. People see that refugees have nothing, but realize that they once had everything. They bring the awfulness of life's instability to our consciousness. They make us realize that we, as well, cannot be certain of our safety. And that is why we act so hostile towards them as a society."

After the many bleak analyses of our current world, I ask Bauman for solutions. What can we do about the feeling of fear that many people seem to have ingrained in them? "There is a Chinese proverb by Confucius that can offer resolution. It goes like this: If you think in terms of a year, plant a seed; if in terms of ten years, plant a tree; if in terms of 100 years, educate people. Educating people is the most important factor in order to create change. Simultaneously, you can't just expect quick fixes." I ask Bauman if he thinks that these expectations of quick fixes dictate our current society. To that he answers that "people expect quick solutions all the

time. We want change, but we want it NOW. We can't wait. This desperation for change can be seen in the way America voted in the presidential election. Donald Trump offered a quick solution, quick change and thereby won against Hillary Clinton. To think that change can happen fast is a big mistake. Changing the world takes at least 100 years." I find myself questioning if this 'fast-pace mentality' is somehow reinforced by social media.

I then, rather naively, ask what Bauman's prediction is for the future. He pauses, looks at Aleksandra, then looks at me and smiles. "Hannah, you are still very young. You must understand, that we can't and shouldn't ever try to predict the future. The world is a place of uncertainty, the future of humanity unpredictable. In sociology you will never learn any research method or theory that will allow you to prophesize. Because we, as the only species, have language, we can of course speak and think in the future tense. But you must always remember: we can predict many things, but never the actions of human beings." At first I am disheartened by his response. I had hoped to hear some reassuring words about how our current world will inevitably change for the better. But I know that Bauman is right: the future cannot be controlled, and nothing can be predicted. For a "child of globalization" like me, who is additionally a control freak, it is a scary and daunting realization. But looking into the future is impossible, even for the most qualified people.

When I ask Bauman about how current issues have occurred, he comes with the example of David Cameron, who was ironically a man who thought he could prophesize. Cameron wanted to stay in power by promising a referendum: an outcome he thought was a calculated risk, an outcome he thought he could

predict. What he didn't realize was that people were given a different choice through a referendum than at a usual parliamentary vote. Normally, people have limited choice between few parties that are a part of the establishment. Having the opportunity for an in/out vote against the EU, however, meant a unique voting opportunity that people could use to fight the establishment. You see similar traits in the path to Trump's victory. People no longer trust the political system. We are, in the words of Bauman, once again liquefying the institutions in the hope of solidifying them.

Towards the end of our conversation, I ask Zygmunt about my generation, the so-called 'millennials'.

Changing the world takes at least 100 years

Here Aleksandra steps in to assist in answering the question. "Your generation is the first generation post World War II that doesn't know what you'll be doing in the future. You may have dreams and goals, but these are all based on how the world looks in this present moment. In reality the world is so ever-changing that you can't predict anything. Young people today can't expect to do better than their parents, in contrast to the generation before them. You can just hope to hold onto the position that you currently have in society. You are pressured by the idea of the unknown future: that raises the winds of fear, and that leads to a bleak

sense of hopefulness." When Aleksandra brings up hope I ask her and Zygmunt, fairly optimistically, if there is any reason to feel hopeful for the future. "I guess there is still hope," Aleksandra says. "Zygmunt and I both lived through World War II and we still regained hope after that."

"How long is this article supposed to be? Isn't it a 1000 word limit?" Zygmunt takes a puff of his pipe, and I realize that my time is up. I thank him greatly for his good company and shake his hand as a final goodbye. "Good luck in the future with Sociology. I have been studying it for 70 years now, and I have never been bored once, not even for a second." As I get up to leave the Bauman residence, I am showed a quick glance of Aleksandra's office. It is filled with endless stacks of books, a desk with piles of scribbled notepads and pictures of Zygmunt. I tell her that my father once told me to never trust people that don't have books in their home. Aleksandra responds by stating that most of the books are in Zygmunt's office upstairs.

I leave the villa and enter the outside world: it looks almost apocalyptic with its flooded pavements and heavy rain. I step in a puddle by mistake, and recognize that liquid life has caught up with me in more ways than one. In no time at all my shoes are, once again, completely soaked. Despite everything, I, for the first time in a while, feel surprisingly cheerful. In a time filled with Trumps, Le Pens and Farages, I am reminded that there are also Baumans and Kaniass. This can easily be forgotten, but it's crucial to remember. 'Maybe it's not so bad after all' I think to myself, as I let go of my longing for prediction and replace it with something much simpler: hope.

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Leeds Southbank is Getting a Revamp

Alice Green

Chances are, you've rarely ventured to the industrial South of Leeds, perhaps only on a night out to Beaver Works or if you were blessed with the opportunity to live in Liberty Dock during first year. But this could all be set to change. City planners have proposed a new £350 million development in the Holbeck area, in the South of Leeds, which aims to double the size of the city centre by regenerating the equivalent of 250 football pitches of land. This would be comprised of a mix of office space, apartments, bars and restaurants; hopefully providing 35,000 jobs and 4000 new homes for the city.

A key goal for the South Bank development is to enhance the liveability of Leeds. Put simply, that means making the city a more comfortable place to live, work and move around. In order to achieve this, planners are proposing a new 3.5-hectare park to act as a central area for recreation and relaxation. In addition, as all Leeds residents know far too well, the roads here can often be unbearable. Luckily, there are plans afoot to transform the road network and provide a clear cycling and pedestrian network, encouraging local people to stay away from their cars and brave the fresh air. These all seem like promising proposals to improving life in Leeds.

proposed new HS2 station in Leeds, South Bank Central, would sit at the heart of the development and bring in a constant stream of train passengers from the South of the country. Whilst HS2 may certainly not be liked by everyone, it seems that for southern Leeds, it would bring clear benefits.

Previous developments to Leeds city centre have had varying levels of success. Whilst the bustling Trinity Centre and recent Victoria Gate development attract huge crowds of visitors every day, Clarence Dock has become somewhat of a ghost town. Clarence Dock is the result of a £250 million regeneration project, opening in 2007. Yet there was a lack of interest and low visitor numbers, which resulted in numerous empty units, leaving it feeling like a forgotten part of the city.

The lack of success with Clarence Dock leads many to fear that South Bank will have the same fate. Will it simply be a repeat of previous mistakes? Planners insist that investing in the Holbeck area will have major benefits across the South of the city. It seems that the overall success of the development will be dependent on how well South Bank is integrated into the wider city, in order to avoid the isolation suffered by Clarence Dock. Interesting times certainly lie ahead for Leeds.

The highly controversial HS2 plans would play an integral role in the success of the South Bank redevelopment. On 15th November, the government announced the route for the second phase of HS2, which forms a Y shape, with one branch heading to Manchester and the North West, whilst the second targets Leeds and the North East. The



Image: Southbankleeds

All Is Not What It Queens

Shona Augustinus

Can you believe it? The Monarchy will be getting a complete refurbishment of Buckingham Palace, costing around £369 million and we are going to be paying for it! Well no, not exactly. This is the controversial and typical media spin that most newspapers have led the general public to believe this past week. However, when one looks closely at the business and economics behind it, it's quite clear that this is not the case; so give big Liz a break.

Firstly, the Queen is the most taxed person in the whole world, paying 85% tax on all 'profits' she makes. The average person will only pay between 20% and 40%, so it's certainly not comparable. Last year she contributed a record £304.1 million to HM Treasury, which then went to help fund all of our

services. Secondly, the Queen is of course a wealthy woman but her personal wealth is not extraordinary and she does still have to pay for her own tea and crumpets. All royal property and artefacts belong to the Monarch, not to Mrs. E Windsor personally. When any profit is made from the selling or the use of royal property this doesn't then go into the Queen's pocket, it goes to the crown estate. This is then taxed by 85% and any remaining profit goes to the daily maintenance of palace, which will then include the Queen's personal salary as well as any state events or functions. At the end of the day, you never see the Queen on Forbes billionaire lists.

The media is claiming that it will be ordinary tax payers' money that will be going towards the refurbishment of the palace. What is actually happening is that they are reducing the amount that the monarch gets taxed by 10%, so she still will be paying a hefty 75% tax. The spin that papers such as *The Sun* have taken is that the sovereign grant has been increased by 66% - but they have completely disregarded where this money has actually come from. This has unsurprisingly allowed for a whole lot of hate to be directed towards the royal family and fuelled anti-royalist campaigns to dissolve the monarchy entirely. I understand that the royal family may not be everyone's cup of tea, but it cannot be disputed that they contribute a lot towards the country's GDP.

21st century royals don't just live lavish lifestyles, charity work is almost a full time job for them. It has been estimated that the Queen helps bring in about £1.4 billion a year for charities. On top of

that there are so many charities that the royals have actually set up themselves: from Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for Disabled People to The Royal British Legion that provides support for military veterans.

The British public definitely benefits from the royals, whether it be with the charity work they do, or the massive revenues they bring in. They bring character to the country, and even if you don't particularly like them, I'm sure you don't mind the national holidays when someone gets married or the Queen celebrates getting really old. The papers have also conveniently forgotten to mention that the Houses of Parliament will be getting £2 billion for repair, which will also be coming from tax payers' money. The palace is 313-years-old after all, so shouldn't we let the Queen redecorate, considering she will technically be paying for it herself?



Image: forbes.com



Image:time.com

Trialling Extortion Freely: The New TEF Regime

Students took to the streets of London in their thousands to protest against the TEF: but what is it? And how will it affect us?

Tim Knickmann

In November 2015, the government published a paper titled “Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice”. This was followed up by a Green Paper (“The Teaching Excellence Framework: Assessing quality in Higher Education”) in February 2016 a final White Paper, and in May (“Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice”). Behind these bureaucratic titles lies the largest change to Higher Education since the tripling of fees back in 2012. In effect, what the government has decided is, amongst other changes, to link funding and fees to teaching quality as assessed through the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). As most of you have probably heard, the University of Leeds will raise fees to £9,250 for 2017/18 for new students. And under the new framework it probably won’t stop there.

The three reports mentioned above span roughly 250 pages in mind-numbing language and detail, however there are certain key points that quickly become crystallised when looking at the information. Firstly, the TEF is technically only part of these changes which concern the development of a government backed league table, similar to *The Guardian* League Tables. Its goal will be to provide students with “clear information” regarding the quality of teaching. This will also be linked with access to funding, both by the government and the ability to charge higher fees.

The TEF will establish the Office of Students as the new regulating body for all higher education providers and the establishment of the UK Research and Innovation being responsible for almost all research funding. This body will encompass the current seven separate research councils. The TEF will also change the process of securing university titles and degree-awarding powers, making both substantially easier than before. Both changes are meant to encourage competition and choice, by allowing start-up higher education providers to establish themselves quicker as viable alternatives.

Going a little deeper into the TEF itself, every provider for higher education whom signs up for it will receive either a Bronze, Silver or Gold award (before public consultation the rankings were “meets expectations”, “outstanding” and “excellence”, however this was scrapped due to ambiguity). The awards will be handed in the following proportions; 20–30% will receive Gold, 50–60% will receive Silver and 20% will receive Bronze. Therefore, there will be a fixed percentage of Gold universities, Silver universities etc. The award will be based on several key metrics: the National Student Survey, retention, proportion in employment or further study; and a high skilled employment metric. Providers will also be able to supplement these applications with information that they provide. Benchmarking will aim to ensure that universities are comparable by adjusting the sector average indicators to students with certain characteristics. The data will be averaged over three years, with each university up for renewal after three years. A Gold ranking will mean that universities can raise their fees by inflation (Retail Price Index, normally around 2–3%), Silver ranking will mean half of inflation and Bronze ranking will mean no raise in fees at all.

To go into the reasons why so many Universities



Image: The independent

consider the TEF a flawed model, *The Gryphon* interviewed George Bradley, a Project Support Coordinator for the Union and the Coordinator for the protest down in London. The turnout was fantastic, with over 15,000 students protesting, including 95 students from the University of Leeds, making it the largest demonstration since 2010. According to George, the main criticism for the TEF is its flawed metrics. He points out that institutions with a focus on international students, such as LSE, with roughly 70% of its student body being international, will score considerably lower. According to the mock TEF table which Times Higher Education published, Bath will be the only Russell Group University in the Top 10, LSE will be at 81, and Leeds at 25 (most likely being a top silver), Oxford at 28, Oxford Brookes at 20, and Leeds Beckett at 113. All of these are within 120 ranked institutions.

“Every provider for higher education whom signs up for it will receive either a Bronze, Silver or Gold award”

The rise in fees aside, if these rankings are then matched to the ability to hand out Tier 4 visas, then universities reliant heavily on international students will have to rethink their business model. He also added that this will mean a decrease in bursaries over time, negatively impacting individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds. On the other side, George pointed out that this increase in fees will also mean a shift away from government funding, transferring the national debt to individual debt.

Regarding of funding, he mentioned that the tuition fees disproportionately benefit STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) students. The University is going to spend £96 million on the Centre for Engineering and Physical Sciences. This is the largest, single-project investment ever on the University Campus. This stands in comparison to £7.6 million on the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies. Although it is understandable that

there are certain areas requiring more funding than others. With an increase in fees, this difference in funding may continue and increase. He also points out that with the fee difference, price might become more and more important, as universities will be able to adopt different fee levels. Following the option to treble tuition fees in 2012, almost all universities did, with 76% charging the maximum fees some courses and a third for all courses. On average, the annual tuition fee is £8,700. Therefore, it is only reasonable to assume that the universities will charge higher and higher fees if allowed to. George also wanted to point out that the Union line is one of free education and opposition to the TEF as it stands. However, he acknowledges that this is in contrast to them helping in the process of filling out the application.

Adding to the Union’s criticism, there are other flaws. One is that the metrics are not a good surrogate for measuring teaching excellence. An example would be the focus on contact hours. Although students want contact time, educators point out that this is not the philosophy of higher education, which is often founded on the principle that students should learn to be independent. Furthermore, metrics such as retention rates punish institutions that attract individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Several studies have found that such individuals are more likely to drop out. Lastly, student responses on the National Student Survey might not reflect teaching quality either, with students’ votes potentially being skewed by ulterior motives. London Universities, for example, have reported that location is critical in student satisfaction surveys, with the high cost of living and transportation costs overshadowing the teaching itself. Lastly, the TEF has the chance to be a bureaucratic monster both for universities and for the government, sucking up time and resources.

Whether the TEF is refined and made into a usable tool by prospective students, whether the metrics are overhauled, and whether universities start gaming the system are all unclear. Nevertheless, the TEF is on the horizon and universities will most likely adopt it, despite calls for boycotts by several universities. Fees will most likely rise across the board. What the impact on teaching quality will be, one of the reasons this originally started, is yet to be seen.

The Science Behind 2016's Science Fiction Movies



Image: Marvel

Steve Gibney

Science fiction films offer us a chance to escape into a future which we can only dream of – one where anything and everything is possible. Throughout the last few decades Sci-Fi has made incredible strides, in no part thanks to the advancements in special effects technology. The best Sci-Fi films postulate about the technological, medical and societal advances that man will make decades before such inventions have even been conceived. While some studios prefer to blow their budget on over-the-top spectacles of an explosive nature (I'm looking at you Michael Bay), some Hollywood producers still aim to release movies with scientific credibility. While this year has had its fair share of cinematic ups and downs, it has been an astronomical year for Sci-Fi films. The question is: how realistic can science fiction movies ever really be?

Arrival

Following the story of two scientists attempting to communicate with a new alien species, *Arrival* has caught the attention of movie critics, fans and linguists alike for its gripping story and incredible attention to linguistic detail. David Adger, a linguist at Queen Mary University of London, specializes in syntax and says that the way the film approaches "different hypotheses about the language, coming up with generalizations, and testing them out was spot on." If, in the future, we are contacted by aliens, it is obvious we need a reliable means to communicate with them. One of the difficulties with another species would be the fact that perception shapes how we communicate and everyone's perception is different – it would be even more so for another species. In *Arrival*, they suggest that we would use verbal communication, however it has been theorized that a more reliable method would be to use maths, due to its universality. For instance, in the 1997 movie "Contact," aliens used sequences of prime numbers in their communications, and this held the key to

decrypting their messages. Likewise, in 1977's "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," the alien visitors used five musical tones in a major scale to communicate. This is made possible as, presumably, vibrating strings have consistent harmonics across the galaxy. In general; that concepts used in *Arrival* attempt to simplify linguistics and the film does so beautifully and could very well provide the most accurate portrayal of alien contact we have seen.

Doctor Strange

During production of Marvel's latest hit, *Doctor Strange*, producers consulted Adam Frank, an astrophysicist at the University of Rochester in New York. They did so to ensure that the rather abstract ideas of the film fit with the more grounded world which has been introduced in previous films, especially in explaining the concept of the multiverse. Thankfully, the scientific idea behind a multiverse exists and is not entirely unrealistic. One idea for a multiverse relies on the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics, which suggests that every time a quantum event happens the universe splits off into a parallel version of itself, and each one goes on splitting and splitting, ad infinitum. The concept of "other dimensions" is heavily relied on in *Doctor Strange*, this is unsurprising for those of whom have read the original comic, with the comic book version of *Doctor Strange* relying on these other dimensions to gain most of his power. In the case of the film they stretch this idea even further and manage to successfully explain this concept, as well as showing a visual representation of abstract dimensional space.

Passengers

In the upcoming space adventure *Passengers*, we see Chris Pratt and Jennifer Lawrence awoken from suspended animation during deep space exploration. This form of travel is made possible through the use of fictional hibernation pods. The need for hibernation pods is fairly obvious, as almost any space destination is ludicrously far away. Because of this, Science fiction needs a way to explain away the

problems that come with decades-long space voyages. The concept of hibernation pods has been around almost as long as space exploration; having featured in "Alien" in the 80s, they provide a relatively simple solution to space travel. However, while the idea does exist, they are a long way from solving all of our problems. The company, SpaceWorks, has suggested a solution which isn't quite as extreme as hibernation pods. The process involves putting astronauts into a deep sleep, specifically a state called torpor. Torpor is an inactive, low-metabolic state induced by a decrease in body temperature. While this isn't as good as hibernation, torpor is a proven concept one which displays promise. Theoretically, inducing torpor would allow NASA to drastically reduce the materials needed for a long trip, such as the 180-day trip needed to travel to Mars, thus reducing the weight which would need to be launched. While Torpor seems promising, it won't keep someone asleep or in stasis for any great length of time and it also requires considerable resources of its own. Despite this, it seems Torpor will likely be the first steps necessary for long-term space travel. One aspect of space travel *Passengers* accurately portrays is the idea that a lot can go wrong when attempting to travel in deep space; if temperatures fluctuate, if nutrition is miscalculated, if the slightest thing goes awry, you're going to run into major problems. While *Passengers* may be emphasising the "fiction" in Science fiction, it deserves a significant amount of credit for looking critically at the demands and challenges that will inevitably come with deep space travel.

It appears that the technology shown in Sci-Fi films is gradually becoming less about escapism and more about accuracy. We no longer view the ideas shown in movies as unrealistic because we have already developed incredible technological advances in reality. Overall, it is evident that as audiences begin to assess entertainment more critically, those planning to venture into the Sci-Fi genre need to be ready to produce films of a higher calibre to earn our praise.

Britain's Biggest Killer: The Quest to Combat Dementia



Image: Sea Hero Quest

Hilary Robinson

Historically, heart disease has been the biggest killer of individuals in the UK. However, dementia – a disorder which is characterised by memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving, navigation and/or language – has, for the first time ever, overtaken heart disease as the leading cause of death in individuals in England and Wales. There are currently more than 850,000 people in the UK living with dementia, with the increase in dementia related deaths thought to be a result of the exponential increase in the disease's prevalence, linked to the ageing population by the Office for National Statistics. In a hope to stop this trend, researchers are focusing both on more effective treatments, and early diagnosis.

The most common cause of dementia is the neurodegenerative disorder Alzheimer's, which usually occurs in the elderly. It results in a progressive brain disease, leading to a loss of connections between neurones, a decrease in vital neurotransmitters, neurone death and a loss of brain tissue. The exact cause of Alzheimer's is unknown, but there are many predictions on why the brain begins to break down.

One of the most common theories of Alzheimer's, and therefore dementia development, suggests that neurodegeneration is caused by a biological process known as the amyloid cascade. Amyloids are proteins which can aggregate and be deposited around the body. According to the amyloid cascade theory, a protein called amyloid precursor protein – which normally promotes cell growth, survival and motility and is found predominately at neurone synapses – is broken down into β -amyloid proteins. Soluble β -amyloid proteins are then deposited around neurone synapses, aggregating into plaques which are thought

to be toxic, killing the cells, and leading to dementia.

Another theory focuses on the levels of neurotransmitters in the brain. Acetylcholine (ACh) is a key neurotransmitter which plays an important role in learning and memory. It has been suggested that a loss of ACh results in defective learning and memory areas of the brain, again causing visible dementia symptoms.

Whilst the definitive cause is not known, it is assumed that the disease results from various issues, including the theories outlined above. Unfortunately, the current treatments available for dementia and Alzheimer's are not that effective. Scientists have tried to increase the level of ACh in the brain using donepezil; a drug which prevents the breakdown of ACh, thus increasing its concentration in the central nervous system. Whilst this drug has variable effects in patients, it hasn't been found to significantly improve the quality of life. There is therefore a lot of room for improvement of dementia treatments.

Whilst we don't yet have an adequate treatment for Alzheimer's, researchers are also looking into diagnosing dementia at its earliest stage. Amazingly, this year, researchers at University College London announced that Sea Hero Quest – a video game they have helped develop – is able to accurately record a subject's sense of direction and navigational abilities. As these skills are seen to decline during the progression of dementia, it is hoped that a potential diagnostic test could be built from the game, aiming to evaluate navigational skills to diagnose dementia at its earliest stage. This could ensure that patients received the best care possible, as soon as possible, reducing the number of dementia related deaths every year.

Top Scientific Breakthroughs of 2016

December is here! It's the season of good will and a perfect time to reflect on the year so far. Well, all things considered, 2016 has been an undeniable big ol' pile of shi- faecal matter. However, do not fear, *The Gryphon's* Science section are here to cheer you up with some positives from this year in the world of science.

Here's our definitive countdown of 2016's top five scientific breakthroughs!

5 – SpaceX nailed that landing

As this is a countdown, where better to start than a rocket-based breakthrough? Private space company SpaceX have managed to launch and, more importantly, land its Falcon 9 rocket on numerous occasions during 2016. Not only is this the perfect example of engineering excellence, it represents a giant leap for mankind in achieving affordable space travel.

4 – That computer's got game

I, for one, welcome our new computer overlords... Ok, that may be jumping the gun a little, however 2016 marks the year that a computer first beat an elite professional at the ancient strategic board game, Go. That's right, the artificial intelligence of AlphaGo out-thought and convincingly beat Fan Hui – the reigning three-time European champion and confirmed human.

3 – An Ape-titude for mindreading

This may sound like a classic case of 'monkeying around', however researchers have managed to display the existence of 'theory of mind' in chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans. With the help of a man in an ape suits (seriously), research published this year shows that humans are not the only species to have the key cognitive skill of attributing "false belief".

2 – Scientists crack fertility treatments

As scientific breakthroughs go this is a whopper, matched only by the size of its subsequent ethical quandary. Scientists from Tokyo University of Agriculture have managed to birth mice from eggs created in a dish, without using a live mammal. You read that correctly, using just skin cells and in-vitro fertilization techniques a total of 26 healthy mice were successfully born. Ethical debates are set to begin on the potential for producing human eggs and, more importantly, what to do with all these bloody mice...

1 – Einstein's mind: an ocean of gravitational waves

That Albert was a clever fella. So clever that this year, more than 60 years after his death, he's managed to steal the scientific breakthrough limelight. Physicists at the Advanced Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory managed to confirm the existence of gravitational waves, caused by black holes colliding with one another. Following Einstein's initial prediction, it only took one hundred years to make the historic observation. I thought German's were supposed to be punctual?

And that's it for 2016: blast off. Whatever faecal matter is brought with 2017, take comfort that there will also surely be a whole host of scientific 'good-news' stories to cheer you up.

Cosmic Slop & MAP: how one club night is helping the Leeds community

At the Leeds Creatives event last week, we chatted to Tom Smith, founder of popular club night Cosmic Slop, which helps raise funds for Music and Arts Production (MAP), a charity that provides underprivileged young people with free vocational arts courses.

Oisín Teevan

Tom Smith arguably knows more than anyone about the ins and outs of inner city Leeds life. A Leeds local himself, he traverses between the world that we as students know (the Cosmic Slop nights that he runs), and the reality that many of the city's disadvantaged have to face – something he is currently combatting with his Music and Arts Production charity (MAP). MAP offers an alternative for young people who for various reasons aren't able to attend mainstream education. We spoke to him at the Leeds Creatives function, an event that in many ways he inspired.

Earlier you were talking about regeneration issues you were facing in regards to Hope House [MAP HQ]. Do you think Leeds is headed for the same gentrification that London is undergoing?

It's very pressing and depressing. I think in Leeds, in the north, we actually have quite an affluent city centre but then all around the city centre we've got a ring of poverty. So what are we going to do? Are we going to have shiny shops come right up to the suburbs? Or are we going to integrate the city centre with the communities around it? Are we going to offer opportunity to people from those communities so that they can actually fit in? Or are we going to pretend they don't exist?

So do you think MAP and Cosmic Slop are ways of combating this gentrification?

If you see the artists come, and the creatives, then that is surely the first step of gentrification right there. So maybe I'm the vanguard of gentrification. But I think there's a point where it's healthy and there's a point where it's not. There's a point where there's a mixture of people and there's genuine interaction. Then there's a point where we've lost that, and all that's left is the commercial aspect – it's all about the money. So it's not a straightforward question. I'm part of the problem, as we all are.

Looking at MAP as a charity, do you think that now you're having to employ more people and do more paper work, it's starting to seem more business like? Do you think there's a risk of leaving those roots?

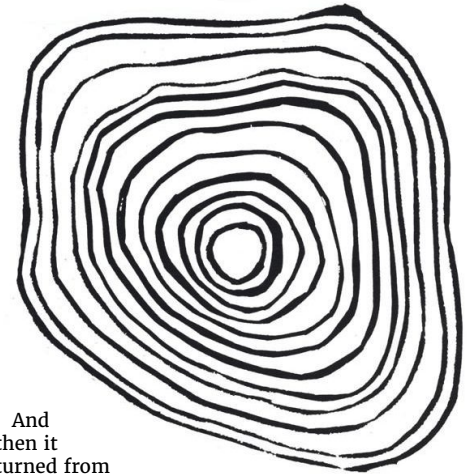
There's a huge risk. One thing I've always loved about MAP is it's so real and useful on a grass roots level, it has so much to give. As any organisation grows, there are certain processes that take place – bureaucracy is one.

I'm determined that we work with MAP and endeavour to make sure that the charity can keep on doing what it's doing, that we listen to the people who are there on the ground everyday, doing the good work. The difficulty is that when you start talking about spending a large amount of money, the people you bring aren't those people, they're office people, they're the bureaucrats. I'm a bit of a bureaucrat so I'm not criticising that, I do what I have to do. But there is a danger that you get a different type of people; in basic terms, you're going to get people who are more middle-class, office based, educated academically speaking, and less frontline people who are going to work one-to-one and know how to engage with people from disadvantaged communities.

From a personal perspective, what turned your head towards charity work? Was there any kind of pivotal moment, or was it a gradual process?

So I did a lot of youth work. I'll be honest with you, when I first interacted with young people that these types of projects are aimed at helping, they scared me. I wasn't confident with them, the differences were massive and there was a communication difficulty. But as I worked more, those differences melted away and I learned roughly how to do it, and that we're all the same.

But then I also wanted to build a sound system and open a music venue. Whilst I was trying to open this music venue, I was trying to do this youth work at the same time, and then I thought "Ah, it could be a music venue and then during the week we'll do community projects".



And then it turned from the emphasis on the music venue, to the emphasis on the community with the music facilitating that.

Following on from Cosmic Slop, do you think there are more similar events popping up?

Yeah. I've had several people call me over the years, and said "Look you've inspired me to do a similar thing with tangible social benefits from these music events." And I think that this is something that's going to increase. Otherwise we're doing music events for what, to promote someone else? To promote a product? To just line our pockets for no reason?

Can't wait to go home this Christmas?

"A good day for me would be to have a couple of hundred bucks aha. Every day, I come here, and I read. I also sometimes do a bit of shopping. I like going to museums, they are free, the one next to the Library is nice. It's probably my favourite one."

– Anonymous

Sarah Ashford-Brown

These people won't.

Every day, on my way to uni, I notice a lot of homeless people who are being ignored. At first, it broke my heart to think that I was unable to do anything, but I then realised that there is always something you can do.

I have been trying to find recent statistics to illustrate the problems of homelessness in Leeds, but it is difficult to find any concrete representation of the issue. Indeed, homelessness is hidden, and not talked about enough. What I do know is that many cities in the UK, including Leeds, have witnessed a drastic increase in the number of homeless people in recent years.

I have taken this definition from Shelter, the housing and homelessness charity, which says the

following: 'You should be considered homeless if you have no home in the UK or anywhere else in the world available for you to occupy. You don't have to be sleeping on the streets to be considered homeless.'

This is why the problem stays out of conversations so often. Most people do not understand – or refuse to acknowledge – that young people 'sofa surfing', without a permanent place to stay are homeless.

Leeds, however, has lots of hard working organisations and groups supporting people in need. One of them is part of the University of Leeds.

I recently decided to embark on a project to record the voices of these homeless individuals, asking them to tell me a little bit about them, allowing them to be heard.

This is my small way of helping, raising awareness of their situation, by showing students that these people are humans too and that everyone has the

opportunity to help. As I really wanted to do a little more, I decided to do my interviews with HOMED, which organises a weekly sandwich run, providing the homeless with food, gloves, and hot drinks. As well as having a good time, meeting new people and having a rewarding experience, I am helping others, and that's what matters.

"Seven and a half years later, and I'm here. In prison, they promised me everything. I would get out, have a flat, a job, everything I'd need. I've been to every job interview, every opportunity I had, never missed any. But everything that was promised to me never happened. I was very good, I quit drinking and drugs and as soon as I got out, they put me right back in this shit. I was kicked out of the home I was put in, and you know, I don't mind sleeping outside as long as I have a good sleeping bag, but what I mind, is that they lied to me, all these promises never came to anything."

– Anon.

Following in his father's footsteps

Luke Etheridge
Formula One

The final Grand Prix of 2016 was a very atypical race, despite the typical result. For the fourth race in succession, Lewis Hamilton led home his Mercedes teammate Nico Rosberg to secure the team's eighth one-two finish of the season, with the German securing his first world championship, thirty-four years after his dad Keke achieved the feat.

Rosberg came into the weekend knowing that a podium would win him the championship regardless of where Hamilton finished, and everything looked to be going to plan as he got a clean getaway, slotting in just behind his teammate. Red Bull's Max Verstappen would also have been hoping for a good start as he battled for fourth in the championship, but a spin on the first corner put him in last place. However, clever strategy from the team, and the usual decisive overtaking from the Dutchman put him in second place after the front runners pitted for the first time.

One of the main criticisms of Rosberg over the past few years has been his weakness in wheel-to-wheel action, especially when compared to Hamilton. However, he pulled off a brave overtake on lap 19 to overtake Verstappen, with the two cars coming close to touching on more than one occasion, before proceeding to catch up to Hamilton. After everyone

had made their final stops, the Mercedes duo looked to be heading for a comfortable win, and Rosberg would have been dreaming of his first title.

Realising that the title was slipping out of his grasp, Hamilton began to control the pace more carefully, slowing down in the final sector on each lap, where overtaking is nigh-on impossible, to allow Verstappen and the fast charging Ferrari of Sebastian Vettel to catch up, with Vettel gaining over two seconds a lap. The team, sensing that the win was at threat, asked Hamilton to speed up, with the Brit replying that they should 'let us race'. As the laps counted down, the gap shrunk and shrunk, before the top 4 cars were all within 5 seconds of each other. Vettel managed to get passed Verstappen, and set his sights on the leading two cars, as he searched for his first win of the season. With Verstappen's tyres beginning to lose all grip, Lewis slowed down even more, but Rosberg defended resolutely from Vettel's onslaught, holding on to second place, doing donuts on the pit straight to celebrate a hard fought triumph.

Hamilton's anguish at losing the championship was clear to see at the end of the race. He ended the season with more wins and pole positions than his teammate. It was reliability issues, such as his engine failure while in the lead in Malaysia that arguably cost him the title. However, bad starts from the Brit in three of the races this season, as well as a horrendous

qualifying in Baku, may have proved just as costly to his title hopes.

Many teams and fans will be hoping that the new regulations next season help to halt the dominance of the Mercedes team, who have won 51 of the 59 races since the hybrid era began in. Wider tyres are just one of the changes being made, with the drivers hoping that the new rubber will help them push harder for longer. If that is the case, don't be surprised if the next season features many more races where the result is up for grabs right until the final corner.



Image: Reuters

Football rocked by sex abuse scandal

James Felton
Football

Termed 'football's dirty secret', allegations of child sex abuse have emanated from numerous former professional footballers since Andy Woodward went public with his story over a week ago. David White, Steve Walters and Paul Stewart are amongst twenty players from various clubs, who have all come forward with their harrowing stories. Much, though certainly by no means all, of the abuse centres around former Crewe Alexandra coach Barry Bennell who has already served three jail sentences for child sex offences, and, at the time of writing, has been charged with eight offences of sexual assault against the same boy: A boy of 14 years of age. Crewe, although not instantly, stated that they will run their own internal investigation. The English FA have also been keen to get involved to find out the extent of

the abuse, of where, how and why it has permeated in the English game for so long and why it was kept quiet. None of these are easy questions to answer.

The FA chairman Greg Clarke has claimed that 'the 1990s society was sleep walking and we were part of the problem'. Charities such as the NSPCC as well as the police and any other institution which needs to be at the forefront of the investigations will be involved in uncovering these long-hidden events. Government enquiries – amidst the current general enquiry into child sex abuses – will also be carried out in some shape or form. Over the last few days it has been unearthed that Chelsea paid one of the alleged victims to keep quiet. Clubs such as Blackpool, Cambridge, Peterborough and Leeds United have also been implicated, demonstrating that the scandal is clearly very widespread.

The fact that a club coach used his position in order to sexually abuse and exploit young children does not want thinking about; it is simply disgusting. Not only did these players go through physical pain just to follow their dream of being a professional footballer, but the emotional and mental effects of what happened will have scarred them for life. Despite this, five-time darts world champion Eric Bristow tweeted several controversial ideas regarding this harrowing subject. He stated that these footballers should have come forward at the time, showing his lack of

empathy for the situations they found themselves in. He also tweeted that this would never happen to darts players, as if the mere fact that these were aspiring footballers was linked to why they, in his view, 'let it happen', also claiming that, and I quote, 'bet the rugby boys are okay ha'; and, finally, using homophobic slurs and disgusting language, he also described the victims as 'wimps', even though the bravery they showed, and by coming out this week are still showing, is more than most people could ever dream of showing. After being put down by Piers Morgan and Susannah Reid on Good Morning Britain on Wednesday morning, he finally apologised. However it was too little, too late. The former darts player has been sacked from his punditry role with Sky Sports after causing unnecessary offence and sadness to victims, their families, their friends, and anyone with a connection to the case, after his ill-educated comments, which will have only added to the suffering.

This child sex abuse scandal will certainly not go away. The extent of the crimes done will now need to be thoroughly researched, the football clubs in question will need to answer some important and uncomfortable questions surrounding their involvement and any possible collusion. As Bristow's tweets show, more must be done to educate the population about this disgusting crime; this is not to say the majority, or even many, people have the same repulsive views, but nonetheless it is a topic which, even in 2016, still has various myths attached to it. Justice needs to be done, victims need closure, paedophiles need locking up and all complicity needs accounting for. At the moment this remains football's dirty secret, let's hope that truth and justice will prevail and, whatever happened does not remain a secret for much longer.



Image: Crewe Alexandra

British Tennis is on the up

John Gibby
Tennis

As sport fans in Britain we are used to disappointment. It's an expectation so engrained in to us from a young age that there's a certain sense of inevitability whenever we lose a penalty shoot-out, or participate in any Rugby World Cup that isn't 2003. For the last few decades no sport has this been truer in than tennis. Despite a stereotypical depiction of us Brits as an all-conquering force in the game we popularised worldwide, unfortunately this would be just as fatal a misconception as the idea that that makes us any better at football (but that's another story). This mediocrity can be epitomised by the fact that for many years tennis fans in this country idolised Tim Henman, even naming a hill at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club (the home of Wimbledon) after the big man. He never even reached a Grand Slam final. In fact, since the days of Fred Perry only two British men reached a Grand Slam final. The women fared undeniably (but still not much) better, but in recent years they too have fizzled out with Virginia Wade at the 1977 Wimbledon Championships the most recent Slam champion.

However, things would appear to be changing. Of course, there's the obvious factor of the emergence of Andy Murray, a late bloomer by all accounts but a bloomer nonetheless. In a year much maligned in and outside of sport, 2016 has without a doubt been Murray's golden year, winning not only Wimbledon for the second time, but also the ATP Tour Finals, and, for the first time, dethroning Novak Djokovic

to become world number one, and retaining that title at the prestigious end of year stage. It would be a mistake, however, to assume Murray is the only brilliant bit of news for British tennis at the moment. In addition to the seasoned veteran (albeit a seasoned veteran who finds himself in the best form of his life), a series of young, fresh faces are very much on the up. Yorkshire's Kyle Edmund has broken into the top fifty for the first time this year, getting to the fourth round of a Slam for the first time at Flushing Meadows in September, to cap a Davis Cup victory alongside Murray last year. When the Brits took home the spoils for the first time for 79 years, winning BBC Sports Personality Team of the Year in the process. Edmund looks the ideal candidate to succeed Murray when the time comes, and is already spoken of as a future top ten star.

But as ever, it's not all about the men. Far from it, as a plethora of talented female British tennis players make the steady ascent up the world rankings themselves. The trio of Johanna Konta, Laura Robson and Heather Watson lead the way among this group, having shared the British number one spot amongst themselves for the last few years. Konta in particular has enjoyed a stellar year in 2016. Like Edmund, she reached Round 4 in New York, but without a doubt her biggest career achievement to date was reaching the semi-finals in the Australian Open, bowing out to the eventual champion Angelique Kerber. Ending the year as world number ten, she is a definite one to watch as the dominance of veterans such as the Williams sisters comes to an end in the next few years. It would be incredibly surprising not to see her go all the way

in a Grand Slam at some point in the next three or four years. Because that's where we find ourselves as a tennis nation now. No longer must we stick our colours to one mast; things are changing, and the British are coming.



Image: BetAdvisor

A defeat in the Volleyball

John Gibby
Womens Volleyball

It was a slow start to the Northern 3B fixture between Leeds Women's 2s and Sheffield Hallam at The Edge on Wednesday afternoon, and not in terms of the quality of the volleyball. After almost an hour of technical difficulties with the net, during which time it was tweaked and altered, and taken down all together at least twice, the teams seemed understandably raring to go. It was the visitors who got off to by far the better start, firing themselves into a 2-10 advantage off the back of some slightly untidy play from Leeds, who seemed to just need a bit of time to get into gear during this match. That theory proved correct when the girls in green found themselves enjoying a purple patch later in the first set. Some long rallies matched up with nimble net play and a certain complacency from Hallam after their early success in the match meant they ended up levelling things at 21 points apiece with it seemingly all to play for. However, with Leeds' serving having achieved parity, the ball was slammed right into the net at the worst possible moment. Even as it happened there was a tangible feeling that this could be a turning point in the match, and so it proved, with Hallam picking their momentum back up following the foul and going on to win the set narrowly, but decisively, with 23-25 the score.

Things were always going to be more level in the second set, especially near the beginning, and Leeds didn't cut their guests quite so much slack in the opening exchanges this time around. Hallam were also to blame for their initial failure to kick on (this was literally the case at one point when they kicked the ball to win it), with a number of entirely avoidable fouls and out balls, which meant it really was nip and tuck stuff as the score went from 13-13 to 14-14 to 15-15. After this point however, the South Yorkshire side really found their stride and went on to asset in the second set. Despite one of the luckiest (or perhaps most skilful) returns probably ever seen in university volleyball to keep Leeds clinging on, they lost the second set by the larger margin of 20-25. Any time a team finds themselves down by that margin in a match it's difficult for them to recover, and though Leeds fought valiantly in the final set it never really seemed to be happening for them. The relatively long game for a three-set match started to take its toll on the home side and Hallam triumphed once again, taking the set, and with it a straight-sets victory in the match. It hasn't been the easiest start to the season for this Leeds side, but they can take heart in their performance today. It may go down as a 3-0 defeat on paper, but for much of the match it certainly didn't look like one from the side-lines.



Image: Gryphon

Golden day in Goole for judo squad

Gianluca Guerriero
Judo

The last two weeks have seen a glut of medals for the University of Leeds Judo Club. With competitions in Sheffield and Goole, Leeds have proved to be a dominant force on the Yorkshire Judo circuit; with eight of the team managing to bring home 3 bronzes, 6 silvers, and 6 golds between them.

Highlights included Spencer Brittain, who only started Judo a year ago, showing up the competition and bagging gold in Sheffield. Perhaps the most inspirational performance came from Martin Woodhams who won silver in the weight category above his own despite spending the early hours of the same day at Fruity. James Storrow also competed in both his own weight category and the one above, securing gold in both – beating Scunthorpe's

former strongest man along the way. Gareth York demonstrated admirable stamina, taking his last fight of the day right to the wire, exhausting the audience and taking home silver for his efforts. Similarly, Raphael Philippdes had to endure some frustrating refereeing decisions and gamesmanship in order to grind out his silver medal finish.

Matthew Lenny, who's gone five years without competing in a judo event, won 100% of his fights in his pursuit of gold in front of a fairly hostile crowd at the Christmas Championships in Goole. The Club's president, foolishly competing with a fractured elbow, managed to endure an additional tie-break round to wrestle silver from his opponent.

Finally, Anna Hulme, who earned enough points for her 1st Dan assessment the day before competing, fought valiantly against a 2nd Dan – ranked 8th in the country – doing enough to bag herself a silver medal.



BUCS Round-Up

James Felton
BUCS

As the semester is nearly over, there was another successful week of fixtures for those teams representing Leeds University this week. The Mens Football first team are top of their division with only one game left before the Christmas break after a magnificent 5-0 win over Northumbria 2nds. Next up is the short trip to Leeds Trinity for a match against their first team.

In the #OneToWatch series, the Rugby Union Mens 1st team did not disappoint as they beat Birmingham 1sts 57-46, scoring nine tries in the process. It was also a successful day for the Womens 1st Rugby Union side, who beat Northumbria 2nd 33-0, whilst the Squash Womens 1sts won 3-1 against Liverpool 1sts. The Womens Waterpolo 1st team demolished their Manchester counterparts 15-1, meanwhile in the netball, the Womens 3rd team went away to

Sunderland, coming back victorious with a score of 62-28.

The Lacrosse Womens 1st team showed their dominance against Durham, winning 16-4. In the Fencing, Leeds went away to North Wales beating Bangor 121-109. The Tennis 1st team were, like several Leeds teams, completely dominant in their victory over Manchester, winning 12-0.

This upcoming week, Wednesday 7th December, sees the last BUCS matches of the semester and of 2016. These fixtures include a tasty derby for the Volleyball Womens 1sts against Leeds Beckett, a match between the 3rds and 2nds of Leeds University in the Womens Tennis and a Men's Hockey match at Headingley Campus against Leeds Beckett. As with every week, most matches are against our Yorkshire and Lancashire rivals, with next week being no different. The matches, by and large, will return on Wednesday 1st February after the exam period finishes. Let's hope that the Gryphons can continue on with their success.



BUCS fixtures 8th December

Full fixtures and results at bucs.org.uk

- Badminton Mens 2nd vs Newcastle 1st: 2pm, The Edge
- Basketball Mens 1st vs Sheffield Hallam 2nd: 5:30pm, The Edge
- Football Mens 3rd vs Sheffield 3rd: 2pm, Weetwood
- Football Womens 1st vs Central Lancashire 1st: 4pm, Weetwood
- Hockey Mens 1st vs Leeds Beckett 1st: 5:30pm, Headingley Campus
- Hockey Womens 1st vs Newcastle 1st: 5pm, Weetwood
- Netball Womens 2nd vs Newcastle 2nd: 5pm, Gryphon Sports Centre
- Rugby League Mens 2nd vs Durham 1st: 3pm, Buslingthorpe Vale Rugby Ground
- Rugby Union Mens 2nd vs Northumbria 2nd: 2pm, Weetwood
- Squash Mens 2nd vs Leeds Beckett: 1pm, Weetwood
- Squash Womens 1st vs Newcastle 1st: 4pm, Gryphon Sports Centre
- Table Tennis Mens 1st vs Manchester: 2pm, Cromer Terrace
- Tennis Mens 1st vs Leeds Beckett 3rd: 12pm, David Lloyd
- Tennis Womens 3rd vs 2nd (Both Leeds): 12pm, John Charles Centre for Sports
- Volleyball Womens 1st vs Leeds Beckett 1st: 6:30pm, Gryphon Sports Centre
- Waterpolo Womens 1st vs Northumbria 1st: 2:15pm, The Edge

Leeds 68-53 Hallam



Leeds humble Hallam at Netball

Luke Etheridge
Netball 2nds

A fantastic second half performance from Leeds' netball 2nd team at the Gryphon Sports Centre on Wednesday evening propelled them to a 68-53 victory against Sheffield Hallam 1s. It had been a good start to the season for the home team, with three wins out of a possible four in the league, and they went into the match in third place, with only their opponents and Leeds Beckett ahead of them.

Leeds started the brightest of the two teams, with goal shooter Chloe Vialou-Clark having plenty of opportunities in the first few minutes, using her height advantage over the Hallam goal keeper to help put the side 4-0 up. There was a break in play after an injury left Leeds goal keeper Kate Bowman unable to continue, with Sarah Danaher coming on as her replacement. This seemed to rob Leeds of their momentum, with Sheffield beginning to find their way into the match as the quarter neared its conclusion, getting within two

points to make the scores 15-13 at the quarter's end.

Once again, Leeds started the quarter on the attack, consolidating their lead with three quick points courtesy of Vialou-Clark and Claudia Gray. The lead swapped between four and five points for the whole quarter, with points coming thick and fast from both sides, as Danaher and her Sheffield Hallam counterpart were left powerless to stop the clinical attacks which have made these two teams the best in the league. One of the star players for Leeds during this period was wing attack Ellie Bird, who provided some excellent passes for the two goal scorers, with the half ended 33-29 to the home side.

Changes at half time saw Bird move to wing defence, with Helen Grennan replacing Zoe Phillips, and Ellen Whitehead coming on for Jess King at centre. The third quarter proved to be the decisive one in the match, as Leeds were just too good in attack and defence for the Sheffield side, with Bird and Vialou-Clark showing amazing accuracy at one end of the court, with the makeshift partnership of Danaher and Mia Richardson growing in strength

at the other, as they countless Hallam chances. A clever pass close to the ground from Grennan helped put the lead for the home side into double figures for the first time, and they had consolidated this into a 55-41 advantage by the end of the quarter.

Sensing a chance to make a real statement, Leeds went for the jugular, with Gray's shooting from the edge of the area proving crucial, as she helped Leeds hit the sixty-point mark. Hallam gained a few consolation goals towards the end of the match, but in the end they were well beaten by a confident and tactically astute home side, who will have been glad to bounce back from a cruel defeat at Leeds Beckett in their last league match a fortnight ago.

As with most of the BUCS teams, there is only one match left for the netball 2nds in 2016, as they face Newcastle 1s at the Gryphon Sports Centre next week. On this evidence, there is no reason why the side can't improve on their fourth place finish from last season. And with a cup quarter final in February, silverware is looking like a real possibility.