



THE GRYPHON

The official newspaper of Leeds University

NO TO FEE RISES, NO TO THE TEF

**BOYCOTT/
THE NSS/?**

Student Exec refuse to back NSS Boycott

LUU Student Exec decide not to endorse nationwide National Student Survey boycott

Benedict Coltman

The LUU student exec have chosen not to endorse the NUS' National Student Survey (NSS) boycott, a campaign which is attempting to thwart the government's plans to link tuition fees to teaching quality and thus raise fees around the country.

Around 25 student unions have joined the NUS spearheaded boycott, including Manchester student union which joined after the Student Senate passed the motion with a majority of 90%.

Other students unions have also opted out however, such as York student union, which opened the issue up to a campus-wide referendum. 568 voted to opt out of the boycott, and 379 voted to join.

No such vote was held at LUU, with the Student Exec deciding unanimously that the boycott was the wrong course of action.

Melz Owusu, Education Officer at

LUU, said, "We as an Exec have taken the position that we do not believe a boycott will have the desired impact on the Government changes to Higher Education; rather that what it will do is very much fracture the strong relationship and standing that we have with the University, which allows us to represent students effectively."

The NSS is a survey final year undergraduates are invited to complete. The data collected provides prospective students and interested parties with independent information on higher education institutions. The National Union of Students (NUS) is leading the resistance and the boycott is also supported by the Universities and Colleges Union, a large union that represents university staff.

Under the government's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), university fees and funding will be tied to quality of teaching. If a university meets a

'baseline quality threshold', it will be allowed to increase its tuition fees in step with inflation. Government projections predict that the inflation-inclusive fees for the 2017/2018 academic year will be £9,250. Other projections show that fees could be over £12,000 per year by 2020.

The government will rely on three measures to judge quality of teaching: NSS results, student drop-out rates, and graduate employment. In boycotting the NSS, the NUS hopes to prevent the tuition fee rise and ultimately defeat the TEF, which it opposes completely.

Calls for the NSS to be boycotted are causing tensions in some universities. NSS data is compiled by Ipsos MORI, an organisation independent from universities. It therefore has respectful standing and is used on university open days to attract students. Universities have an interest in making sure that

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Gryphon Air:

**Mondays,
12pm, LSR**

Catch The Gryphon radio show, Gryphon Air, every Monday at 12pm on Leeds Student Radio

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Editor's Letter:



Dear Students of Leeds,

As members of Generation Y, it's expected that the internet and social media are built into our consciousness, almost like a second language. Unlike our parents we didn't need to learn how to use Facebook and Twitter, we were part of its growth. Taking a picture of our food in a restaurant is an integral part of the process as ordering it in the first place, and a night out isn't a night out without a drunken blur of Snapchat stories. Social media has so irrevocably wormed its way into our daily lives it's almost impossible to separate.

But a backlash is starting to brew, and I for one am keen to join the masses turning away from Twitter. 2017 started with *Guardian* journalist Lindy West declaring 'I've left Twitter. It is unusable for anyone but trolls, robots and dictators'. The story caused quite a storm on social media because I think West's comments rang true for a lot of people disgruntled with the current state of social media.

Admittedly, Twitter is great for a number of reasons. It's an open democratic platform that allows people to have their say on a number of issues, connect with people from all corners of the globe, share and react to stories at lightning speed and exercise freedom of speech.

But while there is so much good on Twitter, there is also so much hate. So much hate. Whether it's from trolls deliberately seeking a reaction, or virtue signallers keen to point out the faults of others to emphasise their own values, it's difficult to escape unscathed. The *New Statesman's* Deputy Editor, Helen Lewis, recently wrote

about how journalists are too scared to tweet against alt-right journalist Milo Yiannopoulos for fear of evoking the wrath of his Twitter mob. Even discarding these extreme examples, the Twittersphere can get offended at the slightest word out of place, the slightest nuance of meaning interpreted a certain way. They mob is almost impossible to please.

Emma Watson is a prime example of someone who has been on the receiving end of this mob. She had dedicated a lot of time these past few years to promoting women's rights and launching the He For She campaign, but received an extensive backlash on social media for her 'white privileged' feminism, and was often branded a 'feminazi'. In all the abuse, there were some valid points - her campaign was to an extent whitewashed, exclusive and in some ways reinforced existing power structures - but her intentions were in the right place, and launching vitriolic attacks is not the way to go about improving the dialogue surrounding feminism. It's getting to the point where even posting your own views (however well intentioned they are) on a Twitter account requires a thick skin. In a weird, inverted way, Twitter is stifling democracy.

If you're prepared to wade through the vitriolic rubbish posted by hateful trolls, or the do-gooders ready to pounce on every slip up, then Twitter is great. It can be a force for good and help promote some worthwhile causes, but as long as this culture of hate spreading and self-righteousness persists, I will struggle to maintain my love for the platform I once held dear. Debate is healthy and a symptom of a flourishing democracy, but a platform which anonymises and normalises hate to such an extent is not the best way to achieve change.

Jessica Murray
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students respond to the survey (if too few students respond, the results are unusable).

According to the government's White Paper on higher education reforms, universities that, under TEF, receive a rating of Meets Expectations or higher will be allowed to increase their tuition fees. As Meets Expectations is the lowest rating (the others are Excellent and Outstanding), the number of universities that will be permitted to increase fees in autumn 2017 may be very large.

Maurice Sadler, a third year medical student, expressed concern at the proposed TEF changes. "Pricing universities on the quality of their teaching will lead to less-affluent students deciding to go to the lower scoring, cheaper universities, while richer students will be able to afford the better and more expensive establishments.

"TEF seems like a slippery slope to dividing higher education along wealth lines entirely, with an end point of the complete commodification of education. I think anyone who believes in social mobility would be wrong not to treat the government's proposals with extreme scepticism."



Image: Lisa Murgatroyd

Editor of the Week



Sarah Berry
News Editor

Sarah worked tirelessly to ensure that the News section of this week's issue was completed, even though it almost meant staying until the small hours of Friday morning!

Brownlees get Bodington Base

£5 million Brownlee Centre will be the UK's first purpose built triathlon training facility

Polly Hatcher

This year a new £5 million triathlon training base named after Leeds' very own Brownlee brothers will open.

The University of Leeds' Bodington playing fields will host the new one mile cycle circuit, which is one of the longest of its kind in the United Kingdom. This will be built at the Weetwood Pavilion, which is just over three miles from the University.

Cyclists of all ages and abilities, including students and staff at the University, and others in the community, will be able to use this six metre-wide cycle circuit for either recreation, coaching, or competition.

This will also be the UK's first purpose-built triathlon training base and will become the first permanent home for the Leeds Triathlon Centre. It will provide strength and conditioning, physiotherapy and support services to GB athletes based in Leeds.

£1 million of funding comes from Sport England, UK Sport, British Cycling and British Triathlon, with the rest provided by the University.

Alistair Brownlee, who graduated from the University of Leeds in 2010 with a degree in Sports Science and

Physiology, said "This is a real honour. Having the UK's first purpose-built triathlon centre in Leeds will ensure that the city continues to be a hub for triathlon. It brings together the facilities top athletes need in one place to create a world class training environment."

At the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio, Leeds alumni or current students made up the men's triathlon team, as current student Gordon Benson who studies Nutrition joined the Brownlee brothers.

The Vice-Chancellor Sir Alan Langlands hopes that opening The Brownlee Centre will continue this trend. He said: "The University is extremely proud of Alistair and Jonny's achievements and it is fitting that this unique world-class facility, which will inspire thousands of people to be more active, is to be



Image: leeds.ac.uk

named after two of our most successful sportsmen.

"Our graduates have dominated top level triathlon and cycling at various events, an achievement which everyone in Leeds can be proud of. Opening the Brownlee Centre and new cycle circuit reinforces our vision of becoming the number one provider of higher education sport and physical activity experience in the UK."

Brexit could save Yorkshire steel

University of Leeds report suggests Brexit could be a game changer for the faltering industry

Jangira Lewis

A report conducted by the Leeds University's Business School suggests Britain's departure from the EU could save Yorkshire's struggling steel industry provided the government adopts a number of new policies. The findings provide hope for graduates wishing to enter an industry which, despite its difficulties, still features on University industrial placement schemes via the likes of Tata Steel.

The cross-party Steel 2020 report advises on the key policy and regulatory areas that the government should reassess to save the industry, while also warning of the potentially-devastating risks of not securing a good trade deal with the remaining 27 members.

Dr Ian Greenwood, Associate Professor in Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management at Leeds University Business School, researched and co-authored the 12-month inquiry.

"This is not special pleading for charity," says the report. "Rather, it is the game changer that will free up capital to invest in improving energy efficiency and creating a level playing field with respect to global

competitors; something that may be easier to achieve outside the EU. Leaving the EU should now be seized upon as an opportunity to go further and faster than continental partners in shaping an energy policy that supports UK industry."

Similar deals to the one offered to car firm Nissan should also be provided to steel companies. Yorkshire still plays a key role in what remains of the industry, with Sheffield Forgemasters continuing to supply products for the British military and one in three aeroplanes in the world containing steel made in Stocksbridge.

Despite the opportunities to set the industry's future on a new path, the report also stresses the importance of securing a good trade deal with the remaining EU nations.

"It depends what Brexit looks like," Dr Ian Greenwood told *The Gryphon*. "A trading environment framed by WTO tariffs and bilateral deals with much stronger economies does not bode well for UK steel. Like the vast majority of steel industry insiders and MPs, in respect of the steel industry I did not support Brexit. The risks for the industry, it's people and communities are substantial."

Leadership Race turnout decreases

This year's elections saw fewer students voting than last year

A total of 6561 voted in this year's Leadership Race, a decrease from last year's turnout of 7744. Students have been voting since Monday to elect their new Student Exec and *Gryphon* editor, with LUU bringing in incentivisation on the final day to try and boost votes. Students who voted were given a voucher to claim a free pint in Old Bar or Terrace, a free hot drink from Balcony or Pyramid, a free Perkier or Naked bar from Salad Box or a free Chupa Chups lolly from Essentials.

This year's race has been remarkably free from drama, apart from a candidate running for Union Affairs officer who was accused by Leeds Labour society of reversing his views on Brexit since last year's referendum. With voter numbers decreasing, LUU will be looking to find further ways of engaging with students across campus in upcoming elections.

Out of the 32 candidates running for the seven positions, only nine candidates were BME and only 13 were women. This led to many calls for increasing diversity and engagement with minority groups.

Results of the Leadership Race will be announced tonight, from 6pm in the Riley Smith Theatre.

Head to www.thegryphon.co.uk for our results night coverage

Campus Watch

1 University of Glasgow The philosophical force behind Star Wars

On May 4th this year, the inner workings of the force will be able to be explored at the University of Glasgow in a new day-long course entitled 'Destiny, Justice and Metaphysics of the Force'.

The short course for those interested in the concept behind the famous film franchise will enable students to channel their inner philosophical force and investigate morality and, according to the course organizer Dr John Donaldson, how the actions of the Jedi are 'not entirely free'.

According to Dr Donaldson, students will be able to study the metaphysics behind the force, how it controls those who follow it and how it can impact moral responsibility.

The event is open to members of the public as well as students of the university, and is anticipated to bring in many interested, curious and philosophical Star Wars fans.

Anna Lasok

2 University of Cambridge Cambridge student burns cash in front of homeless man

A member of the prestigious Cambridge University Conservation Association has been expelled from the organisation after he was filmed burning a £20 note in front of a homeless person.

The Pembroke College student was dressed smartly in bowtie and tails, using a cigarette lighter to burn the money.

The footage was shared on Snapchat. The video captured a homeless man standing outside a clothing shop in Cambridge city centre. After burning the money, the student says "some homeless shelter."

The Cambridge University Conservative Association (CUCA) said the student had been expelled, and "his membership was revoked immediately after the news came to the committee's attention. This was on the basis that there is absolutely no place for people who behave like this in our association. That said, he was not acting in the capacity of a CUCA member, nor was he attending, or had attended, a CUCA event.

The mother of the student in the video, expressed how her son's behaviour "[was] completely out of character" and that "he [had done] two years of volunteering at Stockbridge homeless shop in Edinburgh when he was still at school."

Amy Crawford

3 University of Gary Neville Class of '92 plan sports focused University

Gary Neville, the ex-Manchester United footballer turned TV commentator, is in talks to open a new university with brother Phil as well as Ryan Giggs and Paul Scholes, also ex United players. *The Manchester Evening News* revealed that Neville has linked up with Lancaster University to look into opening a site in Greater Manchester.

The planned university would specialise in sports studies offering courses in physiology, sports management and media. The University could offer places for up to 5,000 students and offer a halls of residence. No exact plans have been set but extensive talks have been had. No sites have been chosen as of yet.

A spokesman for Lancaster University said to the *Manchester Evening News* that they "can confirm that we are discussing this project with Gary Neville, but we are still evaluating its feasibility and no decision has yet been made to proceed or otherwise."

Neville has previously shown interest in aiding Manchester's development with the plans for the University following his bid to add skyscrapers to Manchester's city centre skyline.

Christopher Tobin

4 City University, London Ridiculed tabloid ban overturned in near unanimous student vote

City University's controversial tabloid newspaper ban looks set to be overturned less than three months after it was implemented.

As reported by *The Gryphon*, the University voted to ban selling *The Sun*, *Daily Mail* and *Express* in campus outlets, accusing them of "stirring up racial hatred" and "attacking the weakest and poorest members of society". The move aimed to "oppose fascism and social divisiveness in the UK," but was instead attacked for opposing free speech.

The motion to overturn the ban stated: "A university is a forum for open discussion and is undermined by the censorship of dissenting narratives and opinions. Banning dissenting voices from the discourse is an inherently undemocratic act."

Students protesting the ban littered the University's journalism department with copies of the tabloids, petitioned the University, and eventually achieved a 70 to 3 vote victory in the motion to lift the ban.

Despite the return, the controversy has been seen as highly damaging to the University's reputation. One student, Vincent Wood, branded the ban "classist," while others decried the move as tragically ironic and foolish. The newspapers in question are some of the biggest employers on City's campus.

The union has asserted its vow to "protect the freedom of the press", while challenging "prejudice and miseducation within the media".

It is now up to the Union's board of trustees to decide whether or not to approve the vote.

Sarah Berry



Raising the (collapsed) roof in Factory

Somya Mehta

Clubbers in Manchester were seen ‘raising the roof’ – quite literally – when the ceiling of a nightclub collapsed early on Sunday morning. Witnesses revealed that LED lights came smashing down as the wooden panel of Factory’s roof dropped at around 1:28am.

The unforeseen situation left all the students aghast and created quite a ruckus. As the ceiling dropped, dancers were heard screaming and shouting, and soon, found themselves in unison, all holding the plasterboard together.

Footage of the scenario has emerged on social media, showing chaos and panic amongst the students in the nightclub. However, no one was hurt in this incident as the club was evacuated safely. Students, who witnessed the incident first-hand, later took to social media to convey the news.

Tom Foster, aged 20, a student from Salford University, revealed that the whole situation was unfortunate and scary, and that help took quite a long time to arrive. He stated, “We were all dancing and we just suddenly had this wooden ceiling panel fall on our heads.

“As soon as the ceiling went all the lights smashed and fell on everyone, there was crying and screaming, we were just standing there holding it up, with half the room in darkness.

“It took about two minutes for the DJ to stop



then bouncers rushed in, but there was no plan. I was surprised there was no announcement. I would have thought there would be someone in a situation like this to help people calm, when half the room is holding up the ceiling of a very old building.

“I got glass and dust in my eyes. Luckily we hadn’t had too much to drink.”

Another student from the same university told that they “felt rubble fall on my head, not heavy at all,

and it went in my eyes.”

Later, a spokesman for Factory added, “A section of plasterboard came loose from the first floor. The same section came loose on this exact weekend two years ago. At this stage we are uncertain how or why.

“No-one was hurt and the club was evacuated purely as a precaution. There is no structural issue so we now need to investigate with contractors how this re-occurred.”

Avocado artwork finds royal buyer

William Marriott

A Leeds University student was left stunned when her painting was purchased by none other than the Duchess of Cornwall.

The surprise purchase came after both the Duchess and the Prince of Wales visited the Ferens Art Gallery in Hull amid the City of Culture 2017 celebrations. Helen Brayshaw’s painting, titled ‘Halved Avocado’ was purchased for an impressive £300.

Helen, who is studying for a master’s degree in Fine Art, tweeted “I’ve never been so thrilled” after the wife of the second in line to the throne singled her work out from the 330 items on display.

“I didn’t think anyone would buy it,” she said of the diminutive eight-by-eight-inch still life. “If you blink you’ll miss it. I was just stunned really.”

Camilla had initially set her sights on a drawing of a greyhound, but, fortuitously for Helen, it transpired that the picture was not for sale.

When asked about the impressive achievement, Brayshaw told *The Gryphon* that she was still in shock, but is extremely happy that she made the decision to return to University.

“It was a tough decision for me to give up full-time work in order to paint. But being picked to exhibit at the Ferens Open Exhibition and then have my work purchased by the Duchess of Cornwall has proved to me it’s never too late to follow your dreams”.

It isn’t clear where the painting will go, as the Royal couple own various properties, including Clarence House and Highgrove House. However, it is highly likely other members of the royal family will see it.



Leeds pioneers faith-based therapy

Leeds University researchers pioneer treatment which incorporates religion as central to its practice

Sarah Berry

Research by the University of Leeds has produced a new form of therapy which actively embraces Muslim patients' religious belief as part of their treatment, contrary to traditional practice and despite resistance from some practitioners.

The new treatment is a form of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, which is widely used by the NHS, called 'behavioural activation'. Although the religion-based treatment has met resistance from practitioners, it is "showing some individual signs of success".

The programme encourages patients to reconnect with Islam by challenging the idea that mental illness results from, or creates a break with, faith. It uses passages from the Quran to show patients that mental health problems can affect anyone, regardless of how strong their faith is.

Richard Garland, who runs the Touchstone Mental Health Charity responsible for implementing the new therapy, commented: "What has been produced here is a type of therapy that takes full account of this particular faith and links it to people's value framework. It's a very practical application of someone's belief system."

Although the NHS has an obligation to provide culturally appropriate care, religion is often not considered to be a part of a person's culture, despite its potential to be a valuable tool and the fact that faith sensitive therapies have proven effective when tested elsewhere around the world.

Lead researcher Dr Ghazala Mir, of the University of Leeds Institute of Health Sciences, highlighted the particular importance of her research and the NHS project it has led to for Muslims struggling with their mental health: "not only is there under-referral [amongst the Muslim population] but the outcomes

for people who do actually get referred are not as good as the general population."

NHS data suggests that Muslim patients are prone to more severe forms of depression and have longer recovery times.

The new form of treatment may also go some way to combatting the stigma surrounding mental health, which some see as an additional barrier for Muslims seeking help. According to Dr Mir: "This stigma does involve the idea that maybe if you need treatment,

there might be something wrong with your faith identity in the first place," she says.

Samira exemplifies the merits of the new approach, and now sees religion as vital to her recovery from depression. She said: "I'm happy that I can live my life with my religion and that I've got the support of teachings from the Quran."

It is hoped that behavioural activation will become increasingly available across the UK in the future.



Image: bbc.co.uk

In Music we Trust

LUU society fundraiser collaborates with charities to bring music to the disadvantaged

Rabeeah Moeen

The University of Leeds' Music Impact in the Community society is running a charity fundraiser event in collaboration with a local Leeds charity 'Leeds Music Trust,' which aims to bring music to underprivileged communities.

Leeds Music Trust is a volunteering society that runs events all year round. Projects span locations including care homes for the elderly, hospices for dementia patients, primary and secondary schools and refugee centres. The driving power of the charity is that music is a powerful, connecting force which can help those from underprivileged backgrounds.

LMT originated in a small studio close to Leeds city centre used by businessmen and local children alike. The studio owners would give small bands and hopeful musicians a chance to have a space to practice their music.

The idea bloomed into a charity with the help of a successful local band, Kaiser Chiefs, who returned to their home studio to help them expand. The

investment in their facilities allowed them to become bigger and eventually apply for a license as a formal charity.

With their funding, LMT have already begun to collaborate with another charity, 'Holbeck Elderly Aid', in order to truly bring music to everyone. With more funding, they would like to be able to further improve their facilities.

The charity has big ideas, and Mark, from LMT, said it aims to "promote the art of music, especially for disadvantaged groups, whether that be socially, financially, or any other way." The inclusivity means the charity is open for all. Anyone with an interest in music is welcome to visit the studio and get an introduction into life as a musician.

Naturally, their work goes hand in hand with education. Mark said they often have "inquisitive" children coming in who suddenly have a space to learn about music, especially as it is often a neglected subject in schools.

The Music Impact in the Community society has found a natural partner in the Leeds Music Trust.

Maria Cortes-Monroy, who is running the event, said: "We believe that music education plays a large role in developing a child's personality and intellect and that it should be accessible to anyone regardless of background. Leeds Music Trust aims to encourage this which is why LUUMIC chose them as our charity for this fundraiser."

The event will involve five performers, including Tree, a band involving a Leeds College of Music student; Pneuma, an 8 piece soul-fusion band; Sonic Bliss Machine, an alt-rock band from Manchester; Whoeva?, a DJ, producer and pianist who will be performing jazz; and DJ Ken, a member of Leeds collective Soul Control.

The gig will be held on 14th March at the Lending Room in the Library pub from 7pm, with an entry fee of £3.

Something More?

LUU Christian Society hosts week of evangelical talks outside the Union

Sarah Berry

This week, the Leeds University Christian Union hosted an event to encourage students to contemplate Christianity with daily talks, entertainment and free lunches. Their marquee, which stood opposite the Student Union, attracted hungry and curious students for the daily gatherings and pay as you feel cafe.

The students were invited to have lunch and sit down to listen to one of a number of guest speakers. Presentations were delivered on a variety of topics, including “something more than Netflix and chill: what is real love?” and “something more than a house and a spouse: can happiness begin today?”

While the week was intended to provoke students into contemplation and further discussion, the ideas presented were often contentious, such as a talk on Christianity’s claim to “have the only way”.

Speaking to *The Gryphon*, Claire, an English Literature student on exchange from Beijing, said that she “found [the events] enlightening” and that although she was not religious she wanted to attend the event in order to gain more insight into Christianity.

The week was well organised and highly interactive, including Q&A sessions which used questions attendees texted in during the speeches. However, the strong presence of members from the Leeds University Union Christian Union made it difficult to ascertain how successful Something More’s outreach was.

Michael Ots, an evangelist and author who



Image: Something More

takes his message across the UK and Eastern Europe, spoke to *The Gryphon* after kicking off the week with his talk titled “Rubbish: isn’t the bible a fabricated fairy tale?” Commenting on student engagement with the Christian message, he said “it’s a great time to investigate. People are questioning and wanting to examine stuff seriously. It’s really important to look at the big questions. As a student, there’s a unique opportunity to ask them”.

He believes that the lack of a religious upbringing in the current student generation allows them to approach ideas afresh “without

preconceived ideas”, resulting in a greater interest and freedom to investigate religion.

When asked about events based around other faiths, such as the upcoming Discover Islam week (which takes place from the 20th to the 24th February), Ots responded by saying: “Christianity is not worth believing because you’re ignorant of the alternatives. Look at all the claims, go to all the weeks and think it through.”

The event was part of a series of Something More gatherings which are taking place at student unions across the UK.

Students seek Sex Ed overhaul

Students meet in the University Union to discuss plans for overhaul of outdated, LGBT+ excluding curriculum

Edmund Goldrick

An enthusiastic group met at the Union on Thursday night to discuss materials from the Sexual Wellbeing Foundation, a student charity aimed at reforming the curriculum.

Currently, the approved curriculum focuses on STDs, pregnancy prevention and marriage. Home taught, free school, academy, and primary school students do not have to receive sex education. The curriculum’s core is providing “effective advice on contraception and on delaying sexual activity, [which will] reduce the incidence of unwanted pregnancies”.

There was a unanimous feeling among the audience that they had been let down by this system, and that their education had left them ill-prepared to navigate relationships and sexuality, particularly with a view to enjoying them.

SWF founder Olive Barton also sees sex education reform as a means to preventing domestic violence. The materials discussed at the meeting focused on providing early warning signs for domestic violence, and on recognising controlling, and coercive actions. SWF also have plans for materials covering LGBT+.

At present, though required to espouse marriage as

the ideal relationship, state schools are not required to promote marriage as defined by the Government since “no school, or individual teacher is under a duty to support, promote or endorse marriage of same sex couples”. Schools are only required to talk about sexual orientation if asked “appropriate questions...there should be no direct promotion of sexual orientation”.

Even if asked, schools are not required to give information on Transgender or Intersex. For Intersex, the American Journal of Biology estimates that 2% of births had some deviation from solely male or female sex characteristics, they also estimate that around 1 in 1000 have elements of both male and female sex organs.

For Trans youth, the situation is particularly dire. Research from the Universities of Brunel,

Worcester and London South Bank indicates almost half of under-26 transgender individuals had attempted suicide. Providing education on LGBT+ and access to support services remain at the discretion of individual schools and teachers.

While support is growing for more pragmatic relationships education, currently no party has committed to including LGBT+ education in the curriculum.



Views

Should Commons Speaker John Bercow have objected to Trump speaking in Parliament?



Yes

At the beginning of last week, John Bercow did something courageous and, frankly, necessary, in stating his opposition to Trump and his upcoming state visit. Some may argue that this act was more of an attack on British democracy than on Trump; it is true that Bercow's speech was an undeniable divergence from the impartiality that his role requires, and in spite of that may also reap few tangible or immediate results for the anti-Trump movement.

However, Bercow's apparent audacity in speaking out against Trump seems to have distracted from the threat to free speech, democracy and equality Trump poses. Firstly, to let him speak in the House of Commons would be an insult to Parliamentary equality initiatives, and to the female, ethnic minority, and disabled MPs who would have to endure him. In other words, it would silence and undermine those who oppose him on the grounds of respecting their humanity.

Furthermore, the people, the foundation of democracy, have, indeed, spoken: thousands upon thousands of British individuals have marched in protests against Trump, and one protest being planned for later this month is already expected to be

one of the biggest in British history. This shows the sheer strength of opposition that exists in the United Kingdom, while still only representing the most mobile of Trump opponents.

We did not vote for Trump, we had no say in this world-altering election, and, for many of us, we did not even have a say in our own current leader. The formal and systemised pathways of British democracy would have rendered many of us voiceless in the face of the current political situation, if it were not for the embracing of the alternative pathway of protest. I do not believe that this should be disregarded, even in the name of Parliamentary protocol.

I am not naïve. I am under no illusion that this one act will prevent Trump from making his smug presidential debut in the United Kingdom, with or without Parliamentary support. But to allow this to make us complacent would be a mistake. Letting Trump speak is one thing, but to let him do so without any high-power opposition is something far different, and far more serious. This is a fact that Bercow recognised, and was willing to undermine and potentially sacrifice his position for; sometimes, to protect the wider picture, someone has to step

outside of their role and put themselves in the firing line.

We should not wait until we have the benefit of hindsight to decide whether or not Bercow is the defiant voice we need in this time of worldwide turmoil. Look around you, at the current state of the world, and consider your opinions on Trump, his policies, his potential, and his purpose. Consider the havoc figures so alike to this hot-headed bigot have wreaked across history; and then realise that the way that Bercow used his position was the most conducive to resistance, and to setting the precedent for British integrity that Theresa May refused to.

Maybe Bercow was simply being petty and self-important, or overstepping his mark. Maybe though, he was a standing up against a fascist buffoon, and a courageous act of rebellion against the Prime Minister's weak pandering to her last post-Brexit hope. Maybe it is an admirable adherence to the principles of equality in the face of adversity. Maybe it is a moment that people will one day read about in history books, breathing a sigh of relief for our Parliament's refusal to cooperate with the powerful force of oppression that is Trump.

Aiden Alexander Wynn

No

John Bercow took his ticket and stood in line, eager for his turn to strike out against the new commander-in-chief. So, when his number was called, strike out he did, disavowing the racism and sexism of the leader of the now not-so-free world. What he has said is admirable and undoubtedly true, having but one flaw: it is not his place to say it.

As Speaker of the House, impartiality is not something that Bercow may pick and choose, dipping in and out of neutrality in the same way that Donald Trump dips in and out of sanity. In offering his opinion in such a way he disrespects every civil servant, every local government official who has had to hold their tongue for so many years, unable to express their view for the sake of impartiality and out of respect for their position. It seems that Bercow has forgotten that he is not the only one who slaves under the burden of neutrality - but is that not often the case, that the shepherd forgets his flock, whilst attempting to slay the dragon?

One might suggest that this is not an issue of Trump's politics, but of his lack of humanity, a possible justification for Bercow's comments and his intention to block a speech to Parliament by the

American president. Nonetheless, even this argument falls to the accusation of hypocrisy, with both Chinese president Xi Jinping and the Emir of Kuwait having been invited to speak in the Commons. If Donald Trump is to be barred then the question must be put not only to Bercow but to the British government as to whether they find fault with Jinping's suppression of Tibet and and the Emir's ban on Israeli travellers.

However, surely, the Americans are different. "We should be prepared to make a stand" says Yvette Cooper in defence of Bercow. Unfortunately we are in no place to make such a stand; having been coerced into bed with Trump, courtesy of our own Prime Minister, we are in a very weak position to dictate who goes on top. Out on our own on Brexit Island, our hopes of resistance lay in tatters from the moment Theresa May accepted Trump's helping hand down the stairs at the White House.

The Speaker should look to Lord Fowler, Speaker of the House of Lords who, following an apology from Bercow, declined to comment on the issue but pointed to his own work campaigning against discrimination towards those in the LGBT community, above all those with HIV/AIDS. It does not take a great leap

to ascertain Lord Fowler's opinion on Trump, but he makes it clear through his work outside of the House. Impartiality is not a synonym for passivity, rather the ability to know when to leave your opinion at the door.

But this must not spell the end for Bercow. Conservative James Duddridge has tabled a motion of no confidence, however I do not wish it to succeed. It is better that the Speaker keeps his job, understanding his error and, in future, respecting the neutrality that his position demands. Equally, I find no fault in his recent declaration with regard to how he voted in the EU referendum, given that it was done from outside his post as Speaker. To dismiss Bercow for his opinion would be to blow his mistake out of proportion, making a mountain out of a molehill.

Trump must be opposed, both for his political insanity and for his basic inhumanity. That opposition has not come from a government that have warmed their hands on the bonfire that he has created. It is certainly relieving to hear criticism of the president from inside the House of Commons but it has come from the one place that it cannot, the man in the middle.

Jasper Clow

Banning the Daily Mail is a risk

Elise Middleton
BA English Literature

In an unprecedented move for the online encyclopaedia, English Wikipedia have voted to ban *The Daily Mail* as a source for citation, claiming it to be 'generally unreliable'. The paper is now prohibited from being used in contributions to the English section of Wikipedia, save for 'exceptional circumstances'. This decision comes in the midst of a wide-ranging debate regarding the media crisis of 'fake news', dragged into the spotlight during the recent presidential election amidst the wealth of untrue stories circulating the internet.

Among many circles, professional or closer to home, there are a number of newspapers that are considered less trustworthy than others. *The Daily Mail* and *The Sun* are the first to come to mind, and while Wikipedia's argument that the former has a 'reputation for poor fact checking, sensationalism and flat-out fabrication' is not something outside the realm of accuracy, there is a wider issue at play.

It is important to note that the editors voting to enforce this ban are volunteer editors, and that Wikipedia itself has not always enjoyed a trustworthy reputation of their own. With the nature of the site relying on public contributions and opening it up to issues of truthfulness, it seems as if this ban may be an instance of throwing rocks in glasshouses. The decision was confirmed by editors designated as

'closers', who hold the authority to do so, but was suggested by dozens of volunteers who can simply create an account and add whatever they please to pre-existing articles. Even the WikiProject Fact and Reference Check asks for contributions from members of the public, which raises the question of

“Wikipedia itself has not always enjoyed a trustworthy reputation”

whether this makes the website a democratic one or one contributing to the issues of fake news.

While *The Daily Mail* has been banned from Wikipedia, there are a number of other questionable sources that remain allowed to serve as sources of so-called reliable information. Kremlin-backed Russian organisation *Russia Today* and the American *Fox News* are two prime examples of news institutions oft questioned for their authenticity which remain eligible for citation. It may be unreasonable to expect Wikipedia to instantaneously ban all forms of media that are questionable, but there seems to be an element of hypocrisy for the site to claim other media outlets are too unreliable, considering that the entire process of Wikipedia involves battling untrue contributions.

Regardless of the complexities of whether Wikipedia is right in making the move of prohibiting *The Daily Mail*, this ban is significant in light of the wider debate of fake news. It is a prime example of the tension between a need for a free press within society, versus a growing desire for checks to be made against explicitly false articles.

As part of an entirely complicated and raging debate about fake news, while Wikipedia may have been an unlikely source for a first categorical step towards removing the toxicity of fake news, it marks an important declaration of priorities - one that evidently is required by other institutions.

With important political figures - Kellyanne Conway and Sean Spicer being two prime and relevant examples - doing their utmost to blur the line between truth and lies, there needs to be a willingness to identify those that make matters worse, but perhaps not shut them out. Even if such a confident move is made in an effort to cleanse the current state of many modes of media and the news, it opens a dangerous route to press censorship if those in power decide they want to try and shut down publications they consider to be telling a lie.

Free press is integral to our democratic society, and while it can be necessary to take certain articles with a pinch of salt - or even disregard them entirely - it is undeniably risky to take a stand and block a news outlet, considering the precedent it can set for more 'trustworthy' publications internationally.

Sweet home Alabama?

Megan Shefford
BSc Maths with Finance

Jefferson Sessions is the newest member of President Trump's elitist, nightmare cabinet. Having been a junior senator in Alabama for over 20 years, he is the new Attorney General - a position which is regarded as one of the four most important spots in the US cabinet, along with Secretary of State, Treasury and Defence. Why is this the newest in a long line of recent tragedies for American politics? It's not simply because it's one more old, rich, white man in power, it's more that Sessions was blocked from becoming a federal judge by the judiciary board in the 1980s due to his "racist behaviour". Furthermore, he is a climate change denier and he failed to disclose his holdings in oil before his Attorney General confirmation - a legal ethics requirement. To put it simply, he's your perfect ultra-conservative horror story.

Being the senator of the state of Alabama for 20 years should maybe have raised some red flags in itself, with the state branded by several studies as one of the most racist in America - housing five chapters of the KKK, five white supremacist groups and its own Neo-Nazi party. After an investigation into Sessions during his nomination for federal judge in 1986, he was unanimously rejected by the senate judiciary board having been considered ultimately too racist. So it's no surprise Sessions is loved by Alabama, never winning a re-election with less than 59% of the vote. Allegations of racism were based on former colleagues testifying about his use of the 'n word', derogatory comments about the NAACP (National

Association for the Advancement of Coloured People) and ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union), stating that they were "un-American" and "communist inspired". The final nail in the coffin was joking that the KKK were "okay until he learned they smoked pot". These are terrifying words to hear from the new Attorney General, "The People's Lawyer", meant to represent everyone. Of course, over 25 years have passed since his federal judge nomination, so who's to say he hasn't changed? Or has his bank of immorality and ignorance simply had time to grow?

Session's opinions on topics such as climate change highlight his density towards scientific fact, instead choosing to present the 'alternative fact' that excessive CO2 "isn't really a pollutant" and it "doesn't harm anybody". We'll be sure to remind you

of this fact when Alabama is underwater, Jeff. Yet still, it gets worse. Upon nomination to a cabinet position, you have a legal ethics requirement to disclose any holdings in companies or industries that could cause a conflict of interest. Sessions failed to disclose his holdings in oil - it turns out he owns oil rights across 600 acres of land, some lying below a federal wildlife refuge. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, member of the Senate

Judiciary Committee, found this "particularly troubling", and wouldn't one say grounds for impeachment?

The cabinet for the Trump administration has fallen nothing short of a tragedy, from the disastrous choices of private-educated billionaire Betsy DeVos as Education Secretary and the CEO of ExxonMobil, Rex Tillerson (friend of Putin), as Secretary of State, to the fact that the cabinet's combined net worth is greater than the least wealthy one-third of American households. With Jeff Sessions as "The People's Lawyer", average citizens are all in danger of not being fully represented by their government. Having a racist liar at the top of the legal system doesn't seem forward thinking to me. So much for US values and the land of the free, America.



Image: AP

Tara Palmer Tomkinson deserves better

Bethany Donkin
BA International Development

Since you cannot purchase *The Sun* from Essentials, you probably follow their Facebook page to keep up with their five-star journalism. Last week Tara Palmer-Tomkinson passed away. The Sun's sensitive and considerate headline read: "Tara Palmer-Tomkinson's troubled life... Drug overdoses, a failed music career and the search for love that always eluded her". Unless it's an obituary of an infamous criminal or cruel dictator, I wouldn't expect anyone in the public eye to go down with such a scathing headline.

Of course, you go on to read the article and it's a classic piece of online Sun journalism; a shocking, eye catching headline followed by disappointment. The article simply lists highlights and facts about Tara's life, the known circumstances of her death accompanied with lots of pictures to break up the text. The article fails to make a real connection between the sensationalist headline and the content; all talk no bite.

Similarly, *The Metro* headline read; "Tragic Tara dead at 45". The Metro's use of 'tragic' and the Sun's use of 'troubled' set alarm bells off in my head. I'm sure some would put this down to my 'over sensitive' inner feminist monologue, but I have a suspicion that Tomkinson has been framed in this 'tragic' and 'troubled' light because she was single. That, coupled with her drug addiction, ultimately made her

a broken woman, unredeemable; troubled and tragic.

In her 20s and 30s Tara partied and lived a celebrity life style. However, contrary to the popular practise of some of the other "It girls" of the nineties such as Normandie Keith and Isabella Hervey, Tara didn't settle down. She didn't get married, have kids or

It's clear that in our society marriage and children are held up as the most important thing a woman can achieve

write a life style book on how to make perfect vegan brownies. No, she passed away single and alone in her bed.

Let's break down *The Sun* headline in its criticisms of Tara a little further. Yes she did have drug overdoses, but she was very self-aware of her failures and her problems. In a radio interview with Matt Baker, Tara stated that after all the crazy parties "... you end up in rehab because you feel no self-worth and you realise you've done absolutely nothing. You've been completely greedy because of your bank account and your rather naughty party habits...When I was using I was in the darkest, loneliest most horrible little hole."

In the way of a "failed music career", *The Sun* is pulling at straws. She released one very bad song in 2012 called "5 seconds". The video could be confused for some sort of Peter Kay parody type video. But despite this one unsuccessful pop song, she was still a very talented pianist. *The Sun* chose to pick on this one obscure fact rather than acknowledge all of her other achievements; the columns she wrote for numerous magazines and papers, the TV shows she hosted and the fact she was a patron for the Scottish charity 'Speur Ghlan' which helped young people with Autism.

Finally, *The Sun* states that Tara was on a "search for love that always eluded her". If a male celebrity of similar status passed away, would we not hold him up as a rock and roll style bachelor who never let a woman tie him down? The last line of Tomkinson's Wikipedia page reads "She never married or had children". Yes, once again this is true, but she dated Robbie Williams and Duncan from Blue, the biggest British heart throbs of the new millennium. It's clear that in our society marriage and children are held up as the most important thing a woman can achieve.

Ultimately, Tara created her own brand from her "It girl" status, she was a household name in the late nineties and noughties. Tara had low points in her life and to die at such a young age is heart-breaking. However, "tragic" and "troubled" are not the words I'd prescribe to the life of Tara Palmer-Tomkinson.

Blaming immigrants? What a total Hunt!

Chris Hague
BA International Relations

Last week's announcement from the government, that the NHS will now charge foreign patients upfront for non-emergency treatment, is the latest display of scapegoating immigrants for the problems the NHS faces by the Tories.

NHS England finds itself with a £22bn 'black hole' in its budget for the next five years and currently holds a budget deficit of £2.45bn – a number that continues to climb dramatically every year due to funding cuts. All of this has led to the Red Cross declaring the NHS' A&E departments to be in a state comparable to a 'humanitarian crisis,' with the charity having to step in to assist A&E departments across England in order to transport patients home. The government's target for A&E departments to see patients within four hours has become an impossible task for some hospitals this winter, with the percentage of patients seen within four hours reaching a record low at 86% and the number of people waiting twelve hours for a hospital bed has doubled over the last year to more than 2,500. It's a bleak picture, but blaming immigrants for 'health tourism' is not the answer.

If professional spin doctor Jeremy Hunt wants to find someone to blame for the current crisis NHS England faces, he only needs to look in the mirror. Health tourism is barely an issue when you compare it to the scale of pressure government cuts are placing upon NHS England. Nigel Farage has claimed that health tourism costs the NHS £2bn a year – that's a lie. It wasn't convenient for the meerkat-lookalike

to mention that we recoup most of that £2bn figure from foreign governments and, in fact, estimates have placed the cost of intentional health tourism at around £110 million-£280 million. Can the alt-right stop using alternative facts to fit their ridiculous narratives please? Just for once? Please?

Yet again, the focus placed upon health tourism is more scapegoating of immigrants for the problems caused by politicians in Westminster. The official Leave campaign, during the EU referendum, were especially guilty for this by airing adverts depicting a crowded NHS hospital if the UK remains in the EU, contrasted with a perfect, pristine and flawless service provided in a hospital if we leave the EU. The honest truth is this: there would be no NHS budget crisis or stupidly long waiting times in A&E departments, or a shortage of NHS nurses, if the Tories funded the damn thing sufficiently and stopped forcing budget cuts upon NHS England so that they can give corporations a tax cut. The Tories claim you can only have a strong NHS with a strong economy, yet they aren't delivering a strong NHS – or a strong economy for that matter.

For years, the Tories have been slashing budgets left, right and centre in almost every governmental department but they need to realise at some point that you can't keep cutting and still expect to

maintain the same quality of service. Then they claim budget cuts aren't being made and they are investing millions into the NHS this year, but that's not exactly true in real terms. Think tank, The King's Fund, estimates that funding will only increase by 1.3% between 2010-2020, which is well below the average of the past several decades, where NHS funding increased on average at 3.6%. The Tories are cutting NHS funding each year so it is unable to keep up with the pressures of an ageing and growing population.

It's time for the Tories to stop making excuses for a problem they've created and it's also time we stop blaming immigrants for every problem the UK faces. Don't be fooled by the focus placed on health tourism, it's a distraction to shift blame to another party because the Tories know full well that their cuts are creating the crisis in the NHS. Don't trust the things you read on buses either. £350 million a week to the NHS anyone?



Image: Getty

A local reaction with global effects

Kane Emerson
BA Politics and Economics

Community. It's something that I've been thinking a lot about recently. Its importance has been drilled into me by my grandparents, my old school and by the biographies of the great and the good. It's something that matters to the rest of us too. We feel lost without it. And many have lost it. With the upsets of Brexit and Trump having been dissected to death, many in the media have echoed "globalisation" as the root cause of these phenomenons. People broadly like the economic progress achieved with globalisation, however they don't like that we've forgotten about the local. We've lost the idea of community and, therefore, the self.

We often measure the self in terms of our position in the community. Traditionally the measurements weren't quantitative but qualitative. Our grandparents measured the self in terms of church attendance, positions of leadership and contribution. You knew who you were by your membership of clubs, church and political party. Today this has been eradicated by consumer culture. We've been indoctrinated in the cult of consumption that measures one's self in cars, gadgets and clothes. Of course such greed has always existed, but never at this price.

Globalisation is fuelled by unsatiated consumption of disposables that are replaced within a year. Local shops have been replaced by huge chains that have successfully taken advantage of this economic shift.

Shops are uniform with the same goods being sold and the same corporate jargon being spoken by workers. Schools, the stalwart of any community, are placing employability as their highest priority. Church attendance is also falling year on year.

Immigration has been a boon to economic growth. However, in some cases, this has been to the detriment of community. In areas which have not been fortunate enough to experience successful integration, the sense of community has undoubtedly suffered. The votes for Brexit and Trump were not because some uncultured working class people were racist, but because many believed that their core traditions and values were being dismantled in the name of economic gains.

Although I am a devout remainer and Clinton supporter, there was logic in the votes and a sign of sad desperation. It is important to consider the difficulties of achieving integration with the language and cultural barriers that many immigrants face. For me, and I suspect a lot of my remainer peers, community matters less

because of our existence as a transient section of society, one that is able to travel and see the benefits of thriving multiculturalism.

This is not an article that despairs about the state of the world, but simply seeks to remind ourselves what is important in the world as 2017 is still in its infancy. As we students moan at the sad and outrageous current state of affairs, we need to remind ourselves that the world is built up of nations, which are built up of communities. To reverse the ugliness we need to remember the importance of community. Our next election may depend on it.



Image: Getty

Betsy Devos: A red flag for rural America

Max Bayer
BA Media and Communications

In what has been an incredibly contentious start to Donald Trump's new administration, the nomination, and now confirmation, of education secretary Betsy DeVos has drawn significant debate. For many Democrats, the fear of DeVos is two-fold. First, many argue that her support of charter schools and state voucher programs would cripple public education nationwide. Second, DeVos had some rather head-scratching answers to straightforward questions pertaining to the country's public education system during her nomination hearings. Her responses generated significant criticism, especially from Senate Democrats who protested her confirmation with a 24-hour plea to their Republican colleagues. In the end, the Senate had split the vote 50-50. In a historic decision, Vice President Mike Pence was left to break the tie, and in siding with the majority of his fellow Republicans, confirmed Secretary DeVos. However, for one of President Trump's most loyal bases, the confirmation of DeVos should raise eyebrows.

According to the Pew Research Center, "Trump's margin among whites without a college degree is the largest among any candidate in exit polls since 1980. Two-thirds (67%) of non-college whites backed Trump, compared with just 28% who supported Clinton, resulting in a 39-point advantage for Trump among this group." For that demographic specifically, Betsy DeVos' distance from the public school system should be worrisome. According to data from the National

Center for Education Statistics, 50.4 million students attended public elementary and secondary schools during Fall 2016, compared to 5.2 million students who attended private equivalents. In 2016-17, 3.5 million students are expected to graduate from high school, 3.2 million of which come from public schools. Finally, 73.5% of people between 25-34 with a bachelor's degree had year-round, full-time jobs, compared to 61.6% for those with some college education. The statistics display a clear conclusion.

DeVos' distance from the public school system should be worrisome...

Public education in America is still the most popular form of education for American families and that number will not change overnight. If you want to make America great again, one of the first ways of returning to that glorified greatness would be to improve the public education system. However, that logic flies squarely in the face of the beliefs of Secretary DeVos. Charter schools are institutions that receive government funding but do not operate on the same confines as other public schools or districts. According to Uncommon Schools, a charter school management organisation, the schools are "granted greater flexibility in its operations, in return for greater accountability for its performance." The system works best in

environments where public schools are drastically underfunded at a local level, failing the families and communities that rely on them. Alternative teaching methods, more engaged faculty, and creative learning environments are some of the ways these institutions can create better achievement in these communities. But in rural areas where there is only one, maybe two, public schools available, drawing federal resources in order to support the charter program makes no sense. If your local school begins to lose funding, the value of the education will deteriorate which can cause a trickle down effect in student achievement. As noted earlier, the likelihood of future job attainment correlates highly with your level of education. When rural Americans point to fleeing jobs and immigration as causes of local job loss, they should also be aware of public education funding. Why this is valuable is because Secretary DeVos' background in public education, or rather lack thereof, paints a bleak picture for the future of the institution. Instead of reviving the public school system with the necessary resources in the necessary areas in order to improve student growth and achievement, DeVos is likely to dedicate her time to the promotion of the charter school system in areas that simply don't need it.

To put it bluntly, DeVos is merely an experienced philanthropist with an opportunity to push an agenda that has been maintained for years. Unfortunately, for most families who rely on public schools, specifically those in rural pockets, that agenda would regress the quality of local education. Where public education is not failing, an alternative would be detrimental.

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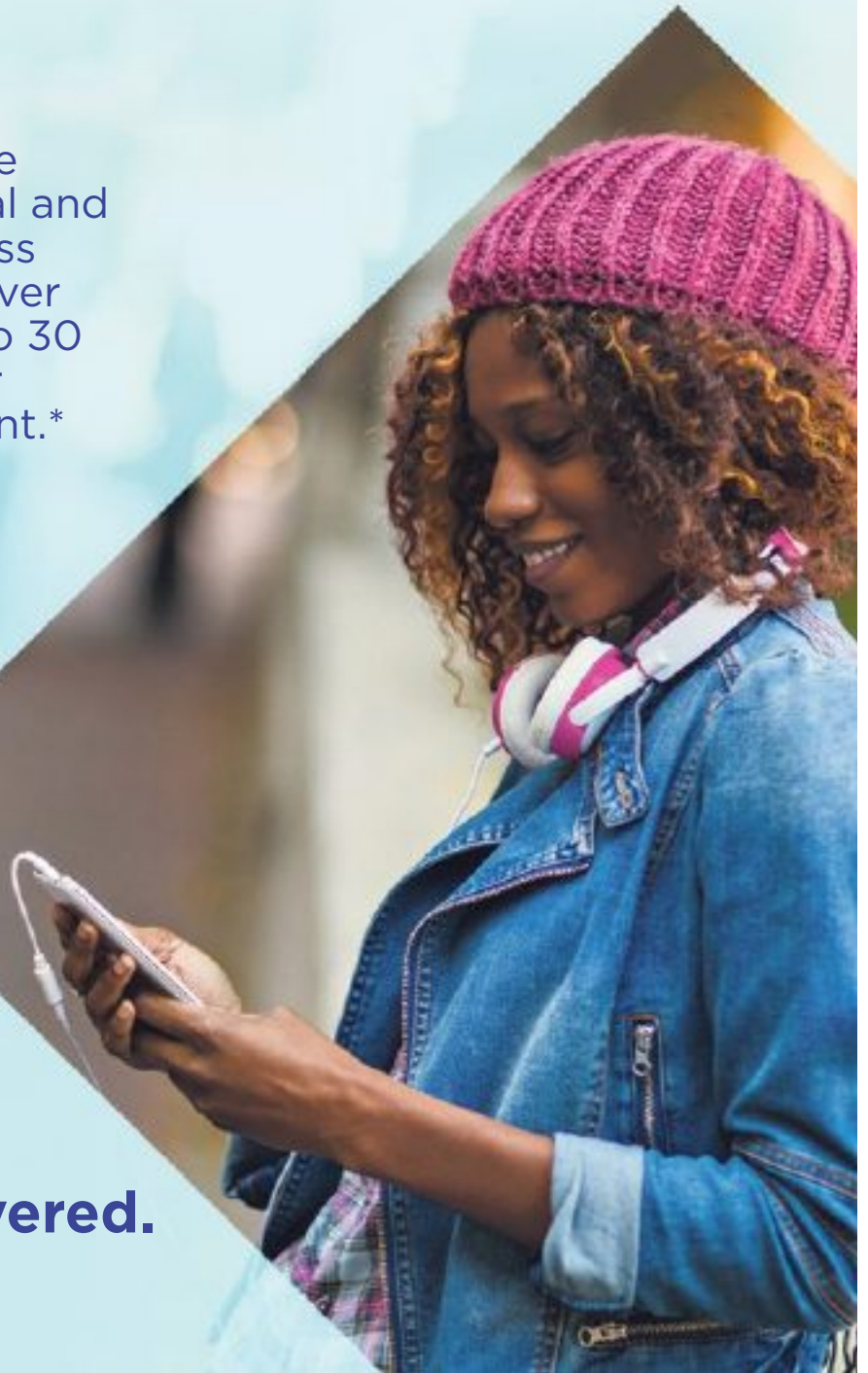


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In The Middle

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The Future of Music

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From The Making of St.Vincent's
Ernie Ball Music Man Signature
Guitar

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Image: Esquire

The Guitar: This Is A Man's World

Next month, St Vincent's boob-friendly guitar will hit the shops. Who would've thought misogyny in the music industry ran that deep? Kitty Pandya explores the issue further.

Imagine Ed Sheeran on stage, guitar and loop-pedal in toe, looking pretty sweaty-headed during a performance of 'Sing'. Now, imagine Joan Jett on stage, hooking the audience into synchronised head-banging before the first play of 'I Love Rock 'n' Roll's' recognised riff. Spot the difference?

Ignoring the obvious aesthetic dissimilarities and opposition in genre, a fundamental difference between Sheeran and Jett is symbolised less through themselves, but the instrument that they both play, and the relevance of this for their respective genders. In other words, it is much, much easier for a man to comfortably play the guitar.

When I started learning to play the guitar at the age of eight years old – being so small that my first guitar was actually bigger than I was – I was blissfully unaware of any such issue at all. But now, at my grand age of twenty-two (and having probably grown a mighty five inches in height), how comfortable it was for me to play my instrument was less to do with its general size, but it's shape. And the shape of me.

Writers concentrating on a guitar's shape often refer to the instrument as having an anatomy, and it's clear to see why. Guitars inherit a number of the human physique's parts – the neck, the back, the waist and the ribs – in composition of it's overall body. A body which bears incredible resemblance to that of a woman, in mirroring a smaller top pair of curves compared to the larger lower pair. To put it bluntly, a guitar's curves essentially depict a pair of boobs above a perfectly proportional pair of hips. So if the guitar's configuration is emulating the female, is there not a certain gender-inferiority-irony that women often have to adjust their style of play?

Take the example of Jett. Don't get me wrong, there's undoubtedly an unwritten rock 'n' roll law that it looks cooler to lower the strap and play the guitar as close to the ground as possible. I don't dispute that (despite having experience of technical difficulties). But let's say that Jett woke up one morning and wanted to hang up those rock boots in exchange for a bar stool and an acoustic guitar. The previously mentioned pair of guitar boobs would ultimately clash with – or rather, squash – one of Jett's real boobs, whilst the waist-like indent provides the most perfectly flawed dip for her second boob to hang into. Sound snug to you? My boobs and I can tell you that it isn't.

Now I'm not making the point that women cannot play guitar as well as men. In fact, I am advocating the opposite. It is the design defects of the guitar which I believe can hinder many women from fulfilling their rock, reggae or rap potential. Consider it less of a glass ceiling, and more of a wooden instrument. And I can imagine what you're thinking – if this problem is as big, bold and bloody annoying as I am making it out to be, then why has nobody done anything about it?

Enter St Vincent.

March 3rd will see St Vincent's new female-friendly model of guitar make its debut on the retail scene, having first been shown off by its founder (real name

Annie Clark) herself at a Taylor Swift concert two years ago.

With Clark being at the forefront of contemporary female guitarists, and due to release her fifth album this year, it seems both the perfect time and perfect person to (as her guitar's website states) have "crafted [a guitar] to perfectly fit her form, playing technique and personal style".

And no, before the obnoxious voice sounds itself, the creation of this guitar has not now triggered a role reversal in the instrument's gender inferiority. Clark has not created a guitar that only women can play – she has invented an instrument that everyone can play. Her attitude to women, her aspirations for women, and her accomplishments as a woman go against a common grain within the music industry that, consciously or not, often squashes not just a lady's boobs, but their importance too.

This should only be the beginning. The novelty of Clark's guitar needs to wear off, to promote female inclusion and inspirations, and dispel of fundamental flaws within the music business. Hopefully, in the not too distant future, current eight-year-old girls who want to play guitar will do so without growing up to find a gross gender gap.

So guitar, in a rehash of Sheeran, I'm not in love with the shape of you.

Kitty Pandya

"Clark has not created a guitar that only women can play - she has invented an instrument that everyone can play"

Fresh Beats

For a Moment I Was by Amber Run

Amber Run have returned with a beautifully depressing second album. Scrapping their guitar roots (very similar to the likes of Kodakone), the Nottingham four-piece have opted for a new, complex sound laced with emotion. Utilising smooth pianos, harmonies and simple guitar riffs sporadically rearing their head, each song is enriched with a touching vulnerability.

Presenting a constant battle between a person and depression in painfully honest terms, the minimalist tone of songs like 'Haze' and 'Fickle Game' forces full attention on lead singer, Joe's, lyrics. Recently, the band has openly talked about their struggles with mental health; such problems are all too evident in the album. Amber Run have managed to harness their darkest thoughts, plunging the listener into the very personal internal struggles of the band's consciousness.

The telling title comes from a period of confusion in the band's life. About a year ago, Amber Run's manager informed them that they were being dropped

from their label (Sony). On top of this, Felix Archer, the band's drummer, decided it was time to move on and leave the band. Instead of simply giving up, the four remaining guys decided to push on and create another album without knowing what the future held for the band.

Although repetitive in parts, the monotonous lyrics help illuminate the obsessive nature of mental health. The constant recycling of "I'm a failure, I'm a disaster and I don't want to be anything else" in 'White Lie' acts as a mantra, trying to convince the listener that the band is okay. For anyone who has been touched by mental illness each word seems to ring a bit too true.

For a moment Amber Run may have been lost, but now they have most definitely found their feet.

Jenny Pudney

Rating:



Brooders by Brooders

As someone who's known local Leeds outfit Brooders on a personal level since I played a show with them back when they were called Hunny, I was eager to check out their self-titled EP. What I discovered on initial listen was a clear progression from their previous *Hunny EP*, with their previously indie-tinged riffs getting heavier and more grunge-infused, their softer side more emotive and melodious.

The EP starts out with the blistering 'Thrill Killer'. One of the band's heaviest tracks so far, it combines an infectious, grungy riff with vocals that wouldn't seem out of place on a Frank Carter record, to create a memorable experience. This is then contrasted with 'Cling', as well as 'Say Your Prayers', which expand on their grunge-influences in a ballad that shows the band's mastery of their craft, retaining their heavy, punk-infused elements particularly in the second half of the song.

The following track 'Haze' - one of the initial singles from the EP - displays the band's performance and musicianship at its best, combining the heavy ear worms that the group have perfected with a catchy

chorus that marks itself as one of the most memorable moments of the EP. In contrast to the rest of the EP, Brooders ends on a slower note, with the dulcet vocals on 'Blue Eyed Prince' cementing the track as one of the more well-crafted on the EP.

The final track, 'Melancholy', was personally the only track that I felt fell short of the rest of Brooders' output. Although a track that channels the band's grunge influence nicely, it didn't stand out in the same way the rest of the tracks did. Despite this, Brooders' self-titled EP was a release that genuinely surprised me; although young, Brooders are definitely a band that show veteran musicianship well beyond their age.

Hopefully the next year or so will see them gain more national recognition, and from there who knows where they could go.

Zygy Somogyi

Rating:



DROGAS Light by Lupe Fiasco

Trilogies are notoriously difficult to master. A journey that sets out with a strong identity can often stagnate under the weight of a disappointing, irrelevant sequel, or a finale that inevitably fails to live up to its hype. But if *DROGAS Light*, the first of Lupe Fiasco's three-part passion project, is expecting to avoid the trilogy trap, then it has got off to a terrible start.

In a somewhat anti-semitic dispute with Atlantic Records over the management of his music career, Wasalu Muhammad Jaco has ventured into independent label territory. The resulting album hints at a fragmented, tortured soul, lost in the wilderness of remaining relevant in a constantly changing genre.

At best, it's unadventurous and uninspiring; at worst, it's boring, lethargic, regressive, and disjointed. 'Jump' is a highlight, using an intriguing vocal sample and booming bass line- similar to Kendrick Lamar's 'Rigamortus' - to create a drive and pace that the rest of the album sadly cannot match.

And then it all suddenly changes. The excessive

two minute outro of the otherwise contained 'Kill' introduces bluegrass and gospel vibes in an evolution that is anything but natural. What was previously a poorly hatched example of bearable trap, becomes a baffling exploration of over-commercialised hip-hop. The cheesy chorus of 'Pick Up The Phone' is utterly dry, and the groovy Daft Punk-esque overtones of 'It's Not Design' are compelling, but so out of place that they leave you wondering whether you're still listening to the same album. Painfully tagged on, the finale of *DROGAS Light's* only redeeming factor is that it makes you forget the disappointment of the songs that preceded it.

Jaco's vocal ability and dexterous technique is evident, but overshadowed by strange surroundings. **Let's hope the rest of the trilogy picks up before it gets any worse.**

Robert Cairns

Rating:



In The Middle with Stornoway

Image: Six07 Press

As they prepare to wave farewell, Heather Nash sat down with Stornoway to chat album tours, Mother Nature, and didgeridoos...

"I think the feeling at present is one of triumph and embrace, one last explosion of fun," Oli Steadman, bassist for Stornoway, tells me when I ask about the atmosphere for their upcoming Farewell Tour. After 10 years, Stornoway's particular brand of bird song-infused indie-folk is coming to an end, and the news has come as a devastation to many. "It's been truly humbling to have this demonstration of how far and deep our music has travelled," Oli says. Their inbox has been spilling over with messages from 'Stornofans' – an instantly endearing phrase – from California, Australia, Paraguay, all flying in to see a show. Pretty good for a small folk band from Oxford.

I ask what we can expect from these shows since Stornoway aren't out to promote an album – an experience Oli sometimes finds awkward. "There's that issue of knowing that it will be the first time your audience is hearing a song. Our songs tend to be growers." Stornoway's songs reward multiple listens, especially in terms of their poetic lyrics. "It will probably be the most fun we've had on a tour; most people will know all the songs and words already. We did a little bit of a poll online and we're using that to create some of the set-list." We can also expect some returning fan favourite stage props, and new covers of some of the band's favourite folk songs added to the mix. "It's our last opportunity to try something new, we're pulling out all the stops." Oli says. It sounds like the gigs are shaping up to be a real last-hurrah, a thank-you to the band's most dedicated fans.

Of course with a last tour comes the end of an era, and for Stornoway, the end of 10 long years on the road. They cite shows around the laneways of Australia's biggest cities in 2011 as particularly wild – as wild as indie-folk gets, that is. Tours in the USA are highlights thanks to the opportunities to explore between shows, and even Oli's description is poetic: "hiking the Redwood forests or picking up ticks in the woods of Wisconsin." But he admits, "By the time we reached Washington for the Sasquatch festival we were suffering somewhat." It's no surprise that the band grabbed the opportunity to get outdoors, even if it exhausted them. Anyone who has ever listened to Stornoway will know of the huge influence Mother Nature has on the band. 2010's 'We Are the Battery Human' was an anti-technology

anthem, pressing people to get outside and disconnect, well before the media preached the same message. But even when it was written, Oli explains: "Social networks had just come in as a means to share your music and we actually fully embraced this. Whereas our demo CDs were physically handed to pub owners." So, even Stornoway are supportive of the digital age nowadays.

As the band goes their separate ways, the great outdoors persists, with lyricist and singer Brian following his heart into the woods to become a full time nature-reserve warden in Wales. Drummer Rob has escaped across the Atlantic to study in New York, and Jon's around Oxford where Oli proudly tells me he's making waves with his theatre music and film scores. As for himself? "I have my annual festival tours and afrobeat DJ adventures as Count Drachma", inspired by the music of his home country South Africa.

"I think the rest of the band truly freaked out when I bought a didgeridoo"

Oli's other work as the head of a London start-up for gig-lovers is exposing him to a slew of new music, and for those of us pretty sad to hear of Stornoway's departure, he's quick to point out some new folky talent. "Martha Bailey is a highly talented new writer

with some truly captivating songs; Catgod are the band I'm most excited about for 2017 from our hometown of Oxford; and singer-songwriter FENNE LILY from Bristol' is already playing popular shows." So, that's our next playlist sorted then. Thanks Oli.

In a last ditch attempt to stop them going, I ask if there's any hope for a Stornoway re-union in the future? Maybe they want to explore a new sound? Oli's answer is firmly tongue-in-cheek. "We couldn't agree whether to go with psychedelic dancehall on the fourth album, or electro-maskand. I think the rest of the band truly freaked out when I bought a didgeridoo and began to insist on its inclusion in every new song." Well it certainly might have been more interesting than Mumford & Son's third album, that's all I can say.

Heather Nash

Stornoway play The Brudenell Social club on Sunday 5th March.

Gig Roundup

Drake @ First Direct Arena, 08/02/17



Image: Meg Firth

Loyle Carner @ Belgrave, 08/02/17



Image: Save Tonight

Boxed In @ Belgrave Music Hall, 06/02/17



Image: The KEXP Blog

"When you go to Leeds, you gotta do something special"- Drake teases us in his Toronto drawl. Seconds later, he invites British grime artist Giggs to share the stage with him, and the crowd's response suggests that they appreciate the appearance. Giggs may not be of the same calibre as the likes of Rihanna or The Weeknd, but you get the feeling that Drake has reached and maintained such a level of fame now that he doesn't always need to bring out other big names; he's just as happy promoting the artists putting out music he enjoys and offering them the opportunity to experience his world for a night.

As for the rest of his 'Boy Meets World' show, the unrelenting stream of hits Drake has to offer is truly staggering. At this stage of his career he's built up an impressive repertoire. He manoeuvres between the songs of his diverse set with the infallible confidence we've come to expect from Drake, from the straight-up bangers 'Started From The Bottom', 'Jumpman', 'Worst Behaviour' to the more subdued numbers 'Take Care', 'Marvin's Room', 'Hold On We're Going Home'.

The only thing slowing down the pace of his breathless show are the various monologues he punctuates the set-list with. These speeches could come across as cringe-worthy were they spoken by other artists, but Drake is best when not taken too seriously, and so his talk of "togetherness" and "love" are enjoyable enough and befitting of someone with his reputation for smooth talking.

He ends his show on a slightly political note, with a rallying call in which he suggests that music and love can offer the antidote to a world seemingly content on "dividing" and "alienating". As the lights dim and Drake descends from the stage, the crowd are left feeling slightly overwhelmed but, most importantly, satisfied.

Drake delivers everything you'd hope a Drake show would deliver.

Mike McArdle

Rating:



"The best show so far". Loyle Carner's return to our city, the first place to sell out on his current tour, was a triumphant one and Leeds certainly earned the title. If there was a place sublimely suited to stage Loyle Carner, Belgrave was it. The room absorbed the self-reflexive lyrics, allowing the audience an intimate entry into the candid world of Loyle Carner.

Emotionally charged from the moment he stepped on stage, Loyle opened with the atmospheric 'Isle of Arran'. The gospel sample filled the room and grasped the audience, captivating them until Loyle begrudgingly ended his set. After the first track ended, he flashed his innocent grin, pausing to take in the sheer amount of appreciation the venue has to offer; he seemed so humbly unassuming of the sheer magnitude of the effect of his talent on the wanting Leeds audience. The Belgrave audience showed up. They hit the lyrics, hushed for Carner's moments of spoken word, and maintained an electric energy.

"There's a conspiracy" Carner mused. People think he's depressed when meditating on his dark, pensive

It was a dark and drizzly night. In the warmth of Belgrave, a crowd stood under the tantalising red and blue lights anticipating the arrival of Boxed In. Minutes later, moving its way along the walls, fiercely agitating the scanty flame of life in the hearts of the audience, the electropop oozed.

Students seized the front of the hall, while a rabble of forty year old men with seemingly identical beards tapped their right feet in unison to 'Jist', a track with undeniable funk and groove.

I was pleasantly surprised by Oli Bayston's spirit; the main man behind Boxed In was far more mirthful than the smouldering images of him online had previously suggested. This was particularly obvious during 'Underbelly' when every member of the four piece was giving it their all. Despite the fact Bayston was only playing pulsing piano chords, he was bashing those keys as if it was all his body was made to do, and it was satisfying to see such passion.

Bayston's vocals sometimes took on a Morrissey quality that was unique to the live performance.

verses. But he reassured us he's "fucking fine", proving the point with his up-beat collab with Tom Misch, 'Damsel'fly'. We were treated to moments exclusive to Loyle Carner's unique approach to his genre and music. The audience hushed to listen attentively to poetry. For an emerging rap artist this seems brave, but with the depth and honesty of his lyrics we were mesmerised.

The final track, 'Son of Jean' was a fitting end to the dynamic show. The backdrop, a projection of Carner's family that also forms his album artwork, was deserted by the other members, leaving his mum to address the audience. Her poem, as telling as Loyle's own lyrics, finished the show...

"He was and is a complete joy. The world is his, that scribble of a boy."

Isla Tweed

Rating:



However on a couple of tracks, particularly 'London Lights', Bayston's vocals weren't quite in tune, but this was compensated by 'Mystery', where his confident falsetto shimmered over the electronics.

What was particularly noticeable about the whole evening was how perfectly balanced the sound was. Although few know the intricacies of this exact science- myself included -the band created a bubble of sonic perfection. By the encore, the audience threw inhibitions to the wind, and ditched the foot tapping for complete dancing, as encouraged by the strobe lights.

There were yelps of glee when Bayston announced that the final song would be 'Melt', which was frankly a full on banger.

Emma Dutton

Rating:



We Love Jungle Awards

The Winners

Best Club Night
Rumble in the Jungle

Best Festival
Boomtown

Best Jungle Single
Who Knows- Shy FX Remix

Best Breakthrough Jungle Producer
Papa Gee

Best Jungle Producer
Serum

Best Jungle Label
Philly Blunt

Best Breakthrough Jungle MC
Gardna

Best Female MC/Vocalist
Jenna G

Best Jungle MC
Tenor Fly

Best Breakthrough Jungle DJ
Kelvin 373

Best Female DJ
DJ Storm

Best Jungle DJ
Aries

Inspiration/Pioneer
Dillinja

Best Jungle Radio Show
Brockie & Det- Super Sunday (Kool FM)

Lifetime Achievement-
Tenor Fly



February saw Jungle Jam roll through Leeds for the first time since their New Year's party with SubDub, and this time they had an ace up their sleeve. The were showcasing the We Love Jungle Awards, so we sent jungle aficionado Caris Dollard to check it out...

Forget the Brit Awards and the MOBO's, Leeds was blessed with hosting the We Love Jungle Awards at our very own Mint Warehouse. From the hallowed presence of General Levy to the constant voracious appreciation of perhaps Leeds' favourite genre of music, it was a brilliantly organised affair. Even ignoring the awards night's high profile status, Jungle Jam put on a cracking party with a nice twist from their classic nights.

The Caribbean BBQ was in full array, with everything from jerk chicken to curry goat. Although I'm not normally one to have a snack mid night out, those sweet potato fries really hit the spot whilst sitting under the camouflaged seats, listening to the sweet jungle music playing in my ear.

After my light mid-night snack and DJ Shock's grooving skills, the awards started and the quality of production throughout the ceremony was very impressive. You might assume that no one would want to stand around for two hours listening to winners being announced, but the eagerly excited fans maintained a high level of energy throughout as the names flashed up on the big screen. And if you rocked up before 10pm you got the chance to be on the BBC documentary- the only reason I managed to drag my housemates to a

night out so early!

There was a nice moment of remembrance during the awards for the MC Tenor Fly who sadly passed away last year, with tributes from many artists on the stage, referring to him as 'one of the greatest MCs in the country'. He was a very talented MC within the Jungle industry, working alongside the likes of Congo Natty and Top Cat. The crowd showed their appreciation with enormous cheers and chants of 'Tenor' 'Fly' slowly working their way into a song from the legend himself 'Born Again', itself a stalwart of jungle sets.

After the awards were all accepted, the night continued in true Jungle Jam style with Topcat driving the crowd with a fast paced sound combined with the reggae vocals of 'A Friend in Need'. It was the perfect end to a night in the jungle, and despite the sweat dripping from the ceiling, they managed to put on a magical production, with true jungle fans all coming out to appreciate the sound.

If you now feel disappointed you missed the whole affair, General Levy livestreamed the whole thing on Facebook, with wonderful commentary from the users of Facebook too.

Caris Dollard



Flux 6th Birthday

Clubs editor Julia Connor headed to the legendary Flux to celebrate the 6th anniversary of the electronic music night opening its doors...



Image: Elliot Young

Leeds is recognised all over the country for its eclectic nightlife, with nights like *mono_cult* bringing world renowned DJs along for the party. This year, *mono_cult* are celebrating their tenth anniversary, and are returning to Leeds to throw a special one-off party at Canal Mills.

Founder and resident Matt Long told us how the event first came about as a daytime party back in 2007, “with a group (5 of us originally) of mates which I’d met from uni”. It started off as a hobby and a passion project “that wasn’t taken too seriously” to begin with.

Canal Mills hasn’t always been home to *mono_cult*. “The venue we used [originally] was called The Lounge, it had an amazing covered terrace with a proper alfresco vibe to it. We ran around a year of successful parties there til we eventually got shut down from the police due to sound complaints. From then we moved the parties to The Faversham, Mint Club, Wire, pop up warehouse spaces and eventually Canal Mills”.

Ten years on, we asked Matt how he thinks Leeds’ position as a northern nightlife capital has changed over the years. “Dance and electronic music has become a lot more popular over the decade. Weekends are just as crazy and there are as many events running as there were 10 years ago, it’s just different as there’s been lots of changes but we’ve managed to adapt and develop the parties to enable us to keep going though this”.

With Italian techno Duo Tale Of Us, American house duo Mood II Swing, Panorama Bar resident Soundstream and Belfast duo Bicep who are close friends with the organisers; *mono_cult*’s tenth anniversary boasts an extremely diverse mix of acts. They’re not just from all over the world, but from all over the electronic music spectrum.

Frankie Elsey

What started out as a one-off charity event down at Wire, Flux has grown into a full blown underground electronic music brand, and February marked its 6th birthday.

Carefully curated underground line-ups have been the focus from day one, and it’s something the guys take very seriously. As Beaver Works has expanded, so has the event, bringing us up to six rooms of house, techno and disco mixed by masters at their craft.

We’ve seen international headliners who are well respected in the scene (Erol Alkan, Scuba, Levon Vincent) and up-and-comers equally worth taking note of if you take this stuff seriously (Denis Sulta, Francis Inferno Orchestra, Moomin). The residents are an accomplished bunch as well, tastefully warming up and closing every time. Then the smaller rooms have supported other local promoters (Deep Fever, Nord, Pretty Pretty Good) giving a platform to showcase their residents too, as after all, the essence of underground culture is the community vibe.

Everyone on the line-up is very deliberately placed in the right room, at the right point in the evening. The end result? A seamlessly progressive musical odyssey between the hours of 11 and 5. If you can maintain a mood as the selectors behind the decks switch places, then that’s production done well and done right.

What’s more, it’s never been about in-your-face décor, (you know what they say about all of the style, none of the substance) because when the music’s on point in Leeds’ best dingy venue, extra embellishment just isn’t needed.

The Flux brand also stretches far beyond the walls of Beaver Works. Outside of our uni term time, the illuminated X pops up on stages around the UK and internationally. Think terrace parties hosted in London and stage takeovers at Dimensions, Snowbombing, Virgo and Love International Festivals. The list keeps growing.

Add into the mix a thriving music blog where a team of passionate contributors spread the electronic love, plus most recently the launch of a vinyl-only record label, and one thing’s clear; Flux are in this for the long haul. Happy Birthday guys, here’s to the next six.

Julia Connor

mono_cult: Preview

Frankie Elsey chats to event founder Matt Long ahead of the tenth anniversary of the renowned night....



mono_cult

SAURDAY 4TH MARCH
CANAL MILLS



Sustainable Sportswear that is Changing the World

In need of some brighter sportswear to inspire a trip to The Edge? Want this sportswear to be sustainably made here in Yorkshire and to also fund women's business education in India? We thought so.

Bella Kinesis is a sustainable sportswear brand that through the Mann Deshi Foundation, helps to fund business training programs from women in rural India. We caught up with founders Roshni Assomull and Shaleena Chanrai to talk about the great work they're doing and the great clothes they're selling.

Why did you decide to start creating sportswear? Did you see a gap in the market?

We started Bella Kinesis because we felt that a lot of the existing sportswear on the market was designed by fit people, for fit people. At school we hated sport and only took up exercise again in our twenties, after suffering from differing weight issues. We felt intimidated by the activewear available. We decided we wanted to create a friendlier, more approachable fitness brand with which women could identify more easily.

Being new entrepreneurs yourselves, how important was it that you were funding business education for women in India?

Having started a business ourselves, we understand how difficult it can be to take that initial step. We couldn't have done it without the support of a startup loan and the mentors we've had along the way. We're so fortunate to be living in a country where this kind of help and information is readily available for the public. What we liked most about the work that Mann Deshi does, was the impact it had on whole communities. We believe that that giving women a business education will not only provide them with financial independence but also self-confidence and will earn them the respect of men around them. We hope that projects like this have a domino effect; these courageous women can inspire other women resulting in a real change in attitudes towards the role of women in Indian society on a grander scale.

Why is sustainability in fashion an important issue for you both?

Since entering the garment industry, we've started to better understand the manufacturing process and the many issues that can often accompany it. It takes us months to design, test, source materials and create our garments. Quality is the most important factor. Each piece should last at least two years of wear and

tear. We're not a high street brand and we don't want to compete with their turnaround times and constant need for newness. Fast fashion creates both ethical and environmental concerns—it's often the result of cheap labour, whilst also increasing pollution and waste. We're now trying to do our best to change our own consumer choices and become advocates for change within the garment industry. We want to be as transparent as possible with our manufacturing processes so people can really see how and where their clothes are made.

How was working with artist Zaina Al Hizami on your recent collaboration?

We met Zaina a few years ago at a party and immediately fell in love with her colourful, geometric artwork. After a few drinks, Shaleena and I came up with the idea to print her artwork onto Lycra and create a limited edition Bella Kinesis collection. She loved the idea too and we quickly became friends. Many of our meetings just turned into catchups and gossip sessions so it was more fun than work. We found that working with other creatives really helped us expand our ideas and gave us the opportunity to become bolder with our design choices. It was amazing to collaborate with such a talented female artist. Her work has inspired us to be more courageous and put more of our personality into our garments.

Have you each got a favourite piece from your current range?

We love our new Zaina x Bella tank. We remodelled our classic workout tank to feature printed sides with Zaina's artwork and added a mesh panel at the back. It looks really awesome if you wear the matching Zaina x Bella bra underneath as you can see the gold lurex elastic through the mesh. It's been one of our bestsellers!

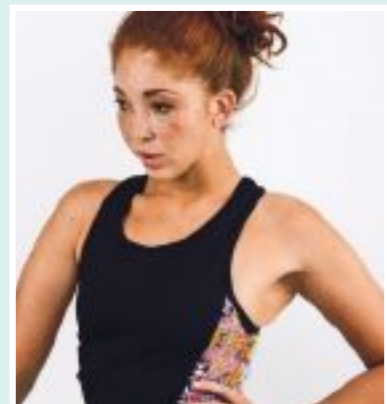
Victoria Copeland



Jump Around - £45



Pyramid Bra - £38



Zaina x Bella tank - £36

Leeds RAG Fashion Show

This years Fashion Show is being held in the Refectory on Thursday 23rd February. Entitled *Samsara*, the show places an emphasis on sustainability and the circle of life, with the chosen charities this year being **Cruelty Free International and Labour Behind The Label. Tickets are available on the LUU website.**

What are the three words that capture the essence of the RAG fashion show?

Current, sustainable, ethical.

What role does the show play within the union/what does it hope to achieve in terms of making a statement?

As one of the biggest events in the union calendar that is led solely by students, the show exhibits the huge levels of creativity we have as a committee with an end goal of producing a memorable show with a strong message. We want people to come away from it with a clearer understanding of how fashion links to the cycle of the earth, and how the definition of *Samsara* is really important in making the audience reconsider their own fashion-led behaviour while at the same time coming away with new ideas on how they wear their own personal fashion.

What makes this years show special?

Our charities this year link closely with the theme, both being related to sustainability and ethical practice within fashion. We have made a conscious and active effort to really make sure that the show is both ethical and sustainable. Another aspect is in production – this year we are making it more like a traditional fashion show that you would see at fashion week, and the production side means that the show will be incredibly immersive and entertaining without losing the professional elements of a fashion show.

Why do you think the chosen charities are important?

We live in a world where fast fashion means that the rights of those who provide to the industry are constantly overlooked, and instead the focus is on how much money the industry makes. This obviously is a huge issue in terms of human rights, so Labour



Behind the Label is making a change to people's lives in terms of changing the way that the industry treats garment makers, as well as giving the workers a platform in which to improve their own lives. Cruelty Free International Trust is linked with Cruelty Free International, focusing on researching alternatives to animal testing and providing the legal grounds in order to contest the mistreatment of animals in the name of beauty, which is something that we have avoided by choosing the ethical makeup brand Illamasqua to do the model's makeup for the show.

What specifically should we be excited for in the show?

We have excellent music provided by FLUX djs, which, alongside with our incredibly creative stylist and production teams, will truly transform the refectory from a regular eating area to a truly immersive fashion experience that we hope our audience will be discussing for months to come.

What has been the best part of putting the show together?

Meeting and working alongside the really talented committee has formed new friendships and developed creative skills that many of the members would otherwise not have been able to do. I personally study politics so being able to have a creative output within the university environment is really important to me, and being part of the show provides just that."

Meg Painter

A look at this year's charities...

Every year the RAG Fashion Show selects some great charities to support through ticket sales and donation, and this year is no exception with Labour Behind The Label and Cruelty Free International Trust being the charities of choice for the 2017 show.

Labour Behind The Label

Labour Behind The Label works to improve the conditions of textile workers the world over with a particular focus on women who make up 80% of the garment workforce. The charity has many campaigns from the 'change your shoes' campaign which aims for transparency in who is making our shoes and in what conditions, to the 'living wage' campaign which focusses on giving workers beyond the minimum wage to truly cover the ever increasing cost of living. There's much more information on their website as well as information on how to donate if you're unable to buy a ticket for the RAG show.

Cruelty Free International Trust

The second charity supported by this year's show is Cruelty Free International Trust; a charity all about finding alternatives to animal experiments. They have specific aims and objectives in making sure that laws around animal experiments are complied with as well as spreading more information about the subject in order to educate as many people as possible.

Victoria Copeland

How to Style Sustainably...

We talked to RAG Head Stylist Tiffany Grous and Deputy Stylist Maya Sherpa about the challenges they've faced with this year's RAG fashion show theme...

Sustainability is a tricky theme in terms of styling; where did you draw inspiration from?

We've taken a different approach to sustainability in that we haven't created themes from the traditional associations of sustainability, but drawn inspiration from why sustainability is important and the core reasons behind it. There are some surprises and themes that you wouldn't automatically associate with sustainability but are the underlying reasons behind the importance of it – we are excited to reveal these on show night.

Where have you been sourcing clothes from? Any local sources in Leeds?

The stylist team have been sourcing clothing from graduate designers at the likes of Central Saint Martins, LCF, Berlin and London. We have tried to put a focus on local designers also, using graduates from both the University of Leeds as well as Leeds College of Art; which we are very excited about. We have a range of designers, from independent local designers and brands, to high-end designers, eco-designers and vintage brands.

Why do you think sustainable fashion is important?

Sustainable fashion is important as it's essentially the future of the retailing and fashion industry. Now that brands are having to consider the impact and footprint that they will have on the environment both ethically and from an eco-perspective, more awareness is being raised and more brands and designers are understanding their impact which is great.

What can others do to help to improve sustainability?

There can be a stigma associated with sustainable fashion, but it can be small adjustments to make in your fashion choices that can make the most impact as they are easy to maintain. Whether that's re-working some of your denim, going to a clothes swap, walking whenever you go shopping or opting to buy local brands and retailers to minimise your clothes carbon footprint.

Stella McCartney in her Kering talk in November said that as consumers we have the power to challenge the people making our fashion. How much do you agree that we should be holding designers to account but sourcing ethical and sustainable pieces?

The power of social media and the accessibility of information online means that now consumers can make more conscious purchasing decisions in their life. It's great as it means that if you aren't happy with a certain brand's decisions, sourcing or manufacturing methods then you can say something. Social media makes it easy to find others with the same opinion and make a true impact through shared activism. Being aware of your purchasing decisions is more important than ever before, and is easier to do than previous years so consumers should take full advantage of the platforms that they have to research brands and voice issues they may have.

Fashion week statements (so far)...

After a turbulent few months in American politics, New York Fashion week had its say...



Image: indigital.tv

Public School creative directors Dao-Yi Chow and Maxwell Osborne send Trump parody hats down the catwalk.



Image: Lillie Eiger

Mexican born designer Raul Solis makes his political view clear at LRS.



Image: indigital.tv

The future is female at Prabal Gurung.



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National Theatre Live: The Debate



Image: Fox Searchlight

Image: National Theatre

Lauded by some for increasing accessibility, but lambasted by others for ruining the true live experience. National Theatre Live is a major talking point in British theatre. Our writers Aiden Wynn and Stephanie Bennett go head to head to see if the lives up to the hype...

Performances by highly regarded theatre companies have never been the most inclusive events. Thankfully, NT Live has provided a way of bridging the gap; by screening many of the National Theatre's productions in cinemas across the globe, this initiative creates a greater level of accessibility in the world of theatre.

For example, a local cinema is almost always going to be more convenient than going to the theatre, in terms of things like travel costs and parking. And, while tickets for NT Live screenings aren't exactly cheap, they are a lot cheaper than purchasing tickets for just about any decent seat in the actual venues.

Don't get me wrong, I adore going to the theatre, and the immersive experience it entails. But that experience also involves a sense of elitism, as well as a level of etiquette that, while completely valid and necessary, is uninviting for the fidgets, the foodies, and those who want to enjoy a performance in a relaxed environment. It may not be quite the same, but the cinema is, undeniably, a more welcoming environment than a theatre.

I'm not suggesting that the level of accessibility provided by NT Live is perfect; the screenings are few and far between, and there are only two – at

“The theatre involves a sense of elitism that is uninviting..

most – for any production. Plus, let's be honest, there is a lot that you can lose by not seeing a performance at a theatre, like the power of the effects, and the electric atmosphere that you can't get anywhere else.

So it is not perfection I am arguing, or even anything close to that. What I am arguing though is that initiatives like NT Live are a step in the right direction, because they allow a greater number of theatre-lovers to be theatre-goers – even if it is only through the big screen.

Aiden Wynn

Often acclaimed, National Theatre Live could be argued to be a dynamic method of capturing theatre to accommodate those that can't always attend performances due to location or monetary costs. However, that's perhaps the only solace that theatre-lovers can possibly hope for when, in actuality, NT Live is arbitrary and artificial.

“The refined and intricate delicacy of a live performance is practically bludgeoned..

The nuance of theatre that is so carefully wrought for the stage is ultimately lost in the midst of a broadcast. A predominant element of the magic so many ardently clamour for when attending a performance is through watching from the theatre itself, not through the displacement and hollow translation of a television or cinema

screen. The very depth and heartfelt core of a performance is lost through the atmosphere of the theatre; how can actors truly perform when half of their audience is not even visible?

Small-scale touring companies that perform in the hearts of communities are constantly battling National Theatre Live screenings, slashing the budding performances of innovative writers across the country. The subtle discrepancies and shades of tone, pitch, expression and movement found in such live productions are irrevocably forsaken, cast aside in favour of more viewers. The refined and intricate delicacy of a live performance is practically bludgeoned into a filthy, fetid and foul mockery.

It would be more beneficial for National Theatre Live to tour their work alongside the caricature of their current screenings. If their primary issue is ensuring that the public can watch if they so wish, then surely it can be solved through tours through the country. This guarantees that the essence of theatre is not discarded in favour of a weak parody of its brilliance and genius.

Stephanie Bennett



T2 Trainspotting: A Film For Its Addicts

Few sequels manage to recreate the magic of their originals. T2 Trainspotting seems to be the exception. Rose Creese gives her thoughts on how the cult classic has managed to endure



On a simplistic level, the box office success of *T2 Trainspotting* can be easily attributed to the expansion of *Trainspotting's* fan-base over the last two decades. The wide critical acclaim and new generation of viewers has accumulated to create a numerically greater audience, leading to the economic success of *T2* in its opening weekend (£5.15m), trumping the £4.7m made almost 21 years prior. However, it is derogatory to attribute the success of *T2* to a swollen fan-base, when in fact its favourable reception by this very cult following is the key to understanding its triumph.

T2 is not a film primarily motivated by ticket sales but rather a film meticulously designed and tailor-made for its cult audience and their romanticised fixation with the characters, action and sub-culture of the original. There is a natural human thirst for pleasure of a visual, sexual, material and emotional nature which *Trainspotting* quenched for the viewer despite the decay and poverty of its world. Through the cinematography, humanity of the characters and morbid submersion into the husk of society, it offered an audience who had '[chosen] life' a romanticised escape. *T2* plays upon this notion of beautified dismay in nostalgically reuniting its audience with the relationships and comedy they so loved whilst translating it into realistic terms of the present day that blight the sublimity of *Trainspotting*.

The film itself is a subdued version of its analogue in style: *T2* has an absence of babies crawling on ceilings and overdoses that absorb the viewer into the carpet, but retains motifs of *Trainspotting* in the fleeting recollection of the 'worst toilet in Scotland' and gentlpiano accompaniment of Lou Reed's 'Perfect Day'. The film does not present access to euphoric despair and indulgence – its effect is grounding and

“In fulfilling its audience’s fixations, T2 has created its own rare success as a cult sequel.”

distinctly separates the past and present, allowing its cult audience to reminisce in harmony whilst achieving the ending that they need. The wheel comes full circle and a relationship is forged between the two films as their outcomes are mirrored and poetic justice is served. The simple satisfaction that every character gets what he deserves by the end of *T2* is an element that was created for its audience; the continuity presented thrives off the relationship

between the original and its audience, ensuring that they leave the cinema with a sense of euphoria that is different but nonetheless present.

In fulfilling its audience’s fixations, *T2* has created its own rare success as a cult sequel. It is the love of an audience that makes something definably 'cult' and there is distinct difference between sequels such as *Mean Girls 2*, which betrayed the original’s moral study of unapologetic individuality in return for judgement out-of-touch with its audience, and this film which was crafted to suit the needs of its followers. *T2* does not copy its original in a way that aims to recreate the delight of the original but instead utilises nostalgia, justice and loveable characters to provide closure for that same audience twenty years later.

Rose Creese

Pygmalion

Image: West Yorkshire Playhouse

Picking up much publicity and acclaim for its innovative staging and stellar performances, *Pygmalion* gets put under the spotlight, as *In The Middle* delivers its verdict...

'Ambitious flower girls who see this play must not imagine they can pass themselves off as fine ladies', flashes repeatedly across the stage before the play has even begun. Sam Pritchard's reworking of Bernard Shaw's 1905 classic *Pygmalion* brings the play into a post-modern world with the use of on-stage technology, giving the play an eerie relevance to debates of current prejudice.

When the naïve yet independent Eliza Doolittle first visits phonetics-expert Henry Higgins's Instagram-ready, minimalist-style apartment, Higgins places her in what is essentially a moveable human-size cardboard box in which he can record and analyse her thick Bradford 'working class' accent. Consequently, we see how Eliza is trapped by the

limitations of her voice, while Higgins is trapped by his own prejudice. It is humorous yet sinister; Alex Beckett and Natalie Gavin's onstage chemistry keeps the play sharp and energetic. Eliza gives as much as she gets, and Gavin's brilliant performance means we are constantly fearing for her fate.

The play's visual finesse is one that is relevant and millennial. The stage is curved into a semi-circle, and characters use an on stage camera in which the image is projected onto the backdrop. The effect is a Big Brother style all-seeing eye, and we see how Eliza's life is being controlled by Higgins. The play begins on a postmodern note as characters mouth their speech to pre-recorded voices. However, if there's one criticism to be made of *Pygmalion*, it is that the

play sets us up for a postmodern exploration of the self and our corruption through technology, only to forget about some of these themes after the first act.

In our post-Trump world, the need to reconsider the workings of prejudice is more poignant than ever. The play doesn't only explore how we perceive class and the damaging effects of this prejudice, but makes us question what values we are upholding in doing so. The production brings the play into the 21st century with a visually stunning effect, and we are consequently presented with a world that is being corrupted by the prejudice of a bitter ignorant man. Sound familiar at all?

Juliette Rowsell

Image: The Tetley



These books were alive; they spoke to me

The latest exhibiton to grace The Tetley features the work of Dora García. *In The Middle* takes a look at this daring literary work ..

Running from 3rd February to 23rd April, Barcelona-based artist Dora García presents her first institutional solo show in the UK. The exhibition explores her career-long production of printed matter and performance works at the charming art deco Tetley gallery. An interactive and engaging exhibition, each of the small rooms of the Tetley comes to life with a unique visual of text or performance.

The 'Eco Scuro' cover strikingly adorns the walls and tables of much of the gallery and also fronts the script of 'Performance', a script which examines what performance is and how it can be experimented with. This idea is interlaced throughout each of the rooms

as performances of iconic texts such as James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* take place, inviting the audience to hear and see the narratives as well as read them. García attentively explains her thought processes behind the exhibition through a video interview in the main room. Performance texts take us back to the original way of reading as a shared experience out loud, she says.

Not only do the live performances create a fun environment for visitors, but García also expresses her personal preference for them as an artist. The live art provides her with immediate feedback, preferable to not knowing who sees her work. This connection

between artist and audience was certainly reciprocal, as each room included a little eye-catching quirk to keep us engaged.

Steal this book sits patiently on the windowsill of Gallery 5 waiting for an audience member to follow its instructions. A large table is scattered brightly with annotated copies of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, welcoming visitors to participate in collective reading sessions. These were just a few of the fabulous insights into the interactive vision of text and performance portrayed by García.

Eve Newstead

Loving: A heartfelt portrayal of interracial marriage



Image: Focus Features

The story of a marriage which changed a nation. *Loving* has picked up a few Oscar nods. Isabel Rushmer sits down and falls in love with this latest release...

Loving, based on the real life Loving vs Virginia Supreme Court Case of 1967, tells the story of an interracial couple who unlawfully married in the late 1950s. As a result of their nuptial, they are arrested and exiled from their home state for 25 years. Their marriage gained wide attention and eventually helped to overturn anti-miscegenation laws in America. Richard Loving (Joel Edgerton) is a bricklayer and a man of few words. His wife, Mildred (Ruth Negga) embodies grace and wisdom through her resilience and tenacity. Both actors give stellar performances, yet Negga steals the show with a modest yet powerful portrayal of her character, with rightly-deserved Oscar nominations as a result.

Both the soundtrack and camera work are beautiful. Each scene led effortlessly into the next, tied together with gorgeous soft strings throughout. The stunning cinematography complements the setting, costumes and cars of the era. Yet it seems the director took care to avoid the civil rights movement happening on

their doorstep in Washington, mirroring their desire to stay out of the limelight. This does not limit the sense of paranoia or concern hanging over the couple; they are constantly living in fear when they sneak back into Virginia. This film addresses the struggle of its protagonists with a level of restraint which is admirable. No one so much raises their voice in the face of adversity and hatred until they achieve victory. Though the content throughout is discrete, the sentiment is deafening.

The film is subtle, understated and brilliant. Far from the mushy love stories that are filling up our Netflix feeds; the director has crafted *Loving* to reflect a raw, real and transparent love of two people who just happened to have different skin colours. I'm excited to see with what he can come up with next.

Isabel Rushmer

Review: Toni Erdmann

Surreal German comedy exploring the complexities of a father-daughter relationship

This award-winning German comedy has conquered this year's film season; having swept the European Film Awards for Best Film, Director, Screenwriter and the Best Actor awards for both of its two leads. Notably, director Maren Ade is the first woman in the Award's history to win Best Director. And for good reason.

This dark comedy is a layered exploration of the relationship between a wise cracking father and his high strung daughter. We are introduced to Winfried, a retired music-teacher and the father, as he is playing a prank on a delivery man, joking that a package contains mail bombs and 'erotic products'. The joke falls flat on his victim and this comedy of awkwardness continues. Shortly after, we are introduced to his grown daughter Ines, just returning from Shanghai as a consultant for an oil company.

The film follows the strained, complex and ultimately moving relationship between these

two. In a bid to understand his daughter, Winfried births Toni Erdmann. Toni is Winfried's alter ego who allows him to enter his daughter's life and the corporate world she is a part of. The sheer ridiculousness/magnificence of Toni exposes the cracks in his daughter's 'fashionable' life, as the film provides an interesting commentary of the hypocrisy and sexism of corporate success. I especially enjoyed Winfried use of a set of fake teeth. They appear frequently and for no reason. Their constant presence on screen means that, by the end of the 162 minutes, they are completely acceptable and admirable. At the start of the film, Winfried's dog dies. Arguably, the whole film could be seen as how one man deals with the pain of canine death, adopting an alter ego as a coping mechanism for his unending grief.

Ultimately, the film is a brilliant one, and if you can get past the subtitles I would definitely give it a watch.

Olivia Raine



Image: Vox



Let's Drink Some More Gin, Shall We?

There comes a time, as editors when we must compel ourselves to 'take one for the team'. With this moral responsibility in mind. Lifestyle and Culture editors Charlie Green and Will Hoole were invited down to the Botanist, where they were obliged to sample the second best gin in the world. Here's what happened....



Gin Gin Gin. If you don't love it, you're doing it wrong. Or, at least, you aren't drinking the same kind as us. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Something hung in the air as we walked the evening high-street, something would happen tonight that would change us forever, for good. Leeds' side-streets usher us into the Botanist; the charmingly edgy eatery tucked behind Trinity. Warmth, the plaintive strumming of a guitar; the whole heady scene welcomed us inside. And there it is: Caorunn.

The gin sits seductively alone as we sidled over. But before we can make the move, the others join us, the masterclass begins. First there's a short history of Caorunn (pronounced ka-roon). The artisanal Scottish Gin proposes to mix "the rugged charm of Speyside" with "the urban sophistication of modern Scotland". We began to feel out of our professional depth (Charlie's a Red Stripe man). Nevertheless, our guide presses on, carefully elucidating the drink's infusion of five foraged 'botanicals': Rowan Berry, Heather, Bog Myrtle, Dandelion, and Coul Blush Apple. Now, I'd love to say the first taste to hit my expert taste buds was the unmistakable resinous pang of 'Bog Myrtle', but, alas, it was not. The first thing we tasted was gin, and bloody good gin at that.

History lesson over, we were herded over to the bar like excitedly tipsy sheep.

Our shepherd showed us many life-changing things that evening, but most importantly he showed us how to make a cocktail. Half-pissed on straight

Caorunn, we didn't think the night could get any better, until we learned just what we were in for.

The cocktail is a speciality of Caorunn, crafted especially by the Botanist. Firstly, we watched, doe-eyed, as our mentor mixed an example. His expertise made it look easy - it's only a cocktail after all, how hard could it be?

Well, we were about to find out. Stepping up to the bar, Charlie and I posed like practiced bartenders. Unfortunately, the gin-infused confidence was not to last. As Charlie maniacally decimated an apple beside me, he proceeded to slice his thumb open - bloody drops dripping into his gory concoction.

To his credit, Mr Red Stripe persevered, dumping the blood-sodden apple chunks into the mixer. Despite this minor hiccup, we both completed our cocktails. The cocktails were ready, and, although Charlie's appeared a little redder than mine, they both tasted bloody orgasmic. After all, how could they not - there's Bog Myrtle in that Caorunn, you know.

Once again, the Botanist proved the most endearingly homely neck of the Leeds woods. We were left comfortably free to embark on our alcoholic adventures, and, though we may have lost some thumb-blood along the way, we returned vastly improved. Caorunn proved the passion of so many gin-lovers, and though there are some that would cling to their Red Stripe (not naming names), we couldn't help but leave gin-lovers ourselves.

William Hoole

"We were herded over to the bar like excitedly tipsy sheep"





Method:

1. Add the butter into a saucepan and allow it to melt.
 2. Then add in the orzo a fry them off for about 2 minutes- stir this constantly so that the pasta doesn't stick to the pan.
 3. Add in the tomato paste, Cayenne Pepper and Chilli Powder and stir so that everything is combined with each other.
 4. Add in the vegetable stock and water, then add in the lemon juice.
 5. Add in the basil leaves
 6. Allow orzo to boil through.
- Serve up with some crusty bread.

Hulya Erzurumlu

Orzo Soup

This recipe is one that is perfect for those cold winter days when you're feeling bunged up with a cold. With high levels of chilli and zest, this is a recipe that is guaranteed to get that cold out of your system and get you back on your feet. It's also great to sweat out all those toxins after a heavy weekend of drinking.

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups of Orzo Pasta.
- 1 vegetable stock diluted in 3 cups of water.
- 1 tablespoon of butter.
- 1 tablespoon of tomato paste.
- Juice of half a lemon.
- Basil (a few leaves).
- 1 teaspoon of Cayenne Pepper.
- ½ teaspoon of Chilli Powder.



Image: A Cedar Spoon

24: Legacy: Enough is Enough. Or is it?

Superbowl Sunday saw the premiere of 24: Legacy, a new spin-off of the widely successful 24 that aired from 2001 to 2010. But does the latest revival do justice to its predecessor?

24: Legacy marks the third instalment of the *24* franchise, the first revival coming in 2014. *24: Live Another Day* tried to revamp the format by relocating the action to London but was ultimately disappointing. The original show starred Kiefer Sutherland as Jack Bauer, an agent for the Los Angeles Counter Terrorism Unit (known as CTU). *24: Legacy's* protagonist is CTU agent Eric Carter (Corey Hawkins), who has a special ops background similar to Bauer's and seems similarly drawn to danger. *Legacy* adopts the unique format of its predecessor; events occur in real time with each episode taking place over the course of one hour. The iconic digital clock and split screen returns, allowing the show to remain as fast paced as ever.

As usual the action is primarily divided between CTU and the Washington political sphere. *24: Legacy* manages to replicate *24's* juxtaposition of explosive action with sly bureaucratic backstabbing, in which a phone call can be as tense as a shootout. The characters are painfully familiar to fans of *24*, from the genius data analyst who can track anyone and hack into anywhere, to the angst-ridden teenager out to cause trouble. Pretty much everything is the same, right down to the font in the opening credits. The message is clear: we know what works. The theme of PTSD is also present in both iterations of the show, as is the inevitable threat to the protagonist's family from whatever bad guys are around. *24* was criticised for its portrayals of Islam and representing torture as an effective means of interrogation, with the show even entering the discourse surrounding U.S. military policy during Bill Clinton's administration.

Unfortunately the reboot seems unable to overcome these issues so far, but hopefully they will be addressed at some point in the series. On the other hand, *Legacy* has made a few interesting changes. For example the introduction of an African-American lead sees the issue of profiling and police brutality raised by the second episode. The cast is, as a whole, more diverse than in Kiefer Sutherland's time, reflecting the overall shift towards diversity television has made in the last decade. *Legacy* has also been adapted to reflect technological changes by incorporating drones and image rendering software. Yet such changes are not so obvious, since the format already relied upon society's increasing use of mobile phones.

Despite these differences *24: Legacy* has none of the innovation that excited critics about *24*. Clearly the creators have opted to stick to a recognisable, yet heavily exhausted formula. *24: Legacy* is pointless for viewers who haven't seen the highly superior original series. But the show does indeed satisfy the craving for action shared by both Hawkins and Bauer, and by *24's* ever loyal viewer.

Molly Hewitt



Poetry: Outdated or in Disguise?

Do you hate it, love it or just don't care about it? The stereotype of a poet is a middle aged man with a coffee stained shirt, sat in an empty office, reading a prehistoric book written in text so small it's a task just to decipher it. So, in three words, poetry is outdated, tedious and pointless. Or is it?



Image: The Daily Dot

In our generation, poetry has taken on new forms to adapt to our fast-paced lifestyle. It's thrown into our Monday morning scrolls on Instagram as everyone posts their 'motivational quote of the week.' Little do many realise, most of these cheesy quotes originated from Wilde, Fitzgerald and Bukowski. So before you've even left the house for that 10am, you've already read poetry without realising it.

We mock poetry all the time, pairing it with lines like 'what's the point' and 'I don't get it.' In all fairness, I don't think anybody understands Shakespeare or Milton at first glance but did those numbing English lessons in High School really ruin poetry for us forever? What about the spoken word poets, the rappers, the singer-songwriters and the political debaters? Poetry comes in many shapes and sizes.

Spoken word creates a social quality to a form of writing that many consider an isolating and often depressing read. Some of my favourites are Shane Koyzan, Anis Morgan and Sarah Kay. They focus on modern life and the pros, cons and everything else that comes along with it. Poetry is a way to express our opinions on modern issues, ranging from politics to fashion to that lecturer who may as well be talking

in a different language. Spoken word is interactive, it gives us the opportunity to clap, laugh or swear at their writing. It brings liveliness to a genre of writing that many consider to be dead. Poetry doesn't always have to be soppy and cheesy.

Due to the chaotic nature of twenty-first century life, most people read poetry digitally on their commute to work or in their 3pm coffee break. The ideal setting includes fairy lights and a hot drink with a paperback version, creating some ambiance. However, this isn't practical for our daily lives and when it comes down to whether poetry is relevant or not in our society, I think incorporating it into our modern lifestyle is incredibly important. We like to socialise and go out, we don't have time to read poetry at home so we read it on the train or make it a social event.

I am an English Literature student, who enjoys Frost and Dickinson alongside Rupi Kaur and RM Drake. I read poetry on Instagram, Pinterest and in paperback form. And I can also rap the majority of Kanye on a Friday night. Poetry has taken on many new forms. So if we're still reading, listening and writing it then yes, poetry is relevant even in this day and age.

Take This One to Bed

Antony Dunn's anthology *Take This One to Bed* at first presents itself as a sultry invitation, and you open the pages expecting to see hymns written to the female body — or at least some thinly veiled allusions to sex. Instead Dunn gives you the intimacy evoked by the suggestive title instead, in some painfully recognisable, but yet obviously personal verses.

Many of the poems seem to chronicle a relationship in its various stages. Dunn's poems make you feel like you're prying through a bedroom window into his marriage, and you don't always find what you expect to. In the title poem 'Take This One to Bed' Dunn's sparse writing painfully conjures a couple at the stale end of an argument. Elsewhere, the narrator's son and his pet goldfish make a surprising, but oddly poignant recurring appearance, as he and his wife struggle with the day-to-day workings of a marriage - how to tell their son the news, and then how to tell him of their separation. In 'Leaving iv. Departures' the poet writes 'I cannot pinch this distance closed with tender thumbs' and the bed in the title suddenly feels empty and very lonely.

Elsewhere, the poems are painfully self-conscious. Dunn paints pictures of his old school friends now out-of-touch in 'Eighteen' - everyone can recognise the wistful finality of the last line 'we will not be this way again.' Dunn is a local poet and two matching poems 'Leeds to London' and 'London to Leeds' capture exactly the odd transient atmosphere of the journey many of us know so well. But perhaps my favourite poem of the collection is 'Animal Rescue'. The narrator lists the small defenceless creatures he has helped over the years, the insects he has carried out of his home and set free. I won't spoil

it for you, but I think this poem achieves what all good poetry does - perfectly nailing a feeling, in this case vulnerability, in a way that has never been done before.

Dunn is a poet firmly situated in the present day, with references to the radio and even Facebook in many of his poems, each only adding a layer of reality to the stories he's telling, rather than perhaps spoiling the art as you might have first assumed. 'Portrait of poet with a dimmer-switch' takes the eternal image of the artist at his desk and updates it, but the sorting through of feelings - that's the same as ever.

At points this constant self-examination can feel slightly indulgent but in other places Dunn's tendency towards introspection results in his most successful verses, like in 'Spider Hours' - a new take on the old wives' tale of swallowing spiders in your sleep. Dunn's entrusting us with his poems, asking us to take them to bed with the same confidentiality his poems create.

Heather Nash

"Dunn's poems make you feel like you're prying through a bedroom window into his marriage, and you don't always find what you expect"



Confidence: Relatable campus drama

“God may be dead. but getting through finals will take a miracle”

The debut of writing team Rowland Manthorpe and Kirsten Smith, *Confidence* tracks two occasionally coinciding protagonists as they navigate the trials and tribulations of their final year at university. Ellie has hit a brick wall with her dissertation, and battles lukewarm feelings towards her unfailingly devoted boyfriend as her social life flounders in the frenzy of revision period. Meanwhile, Charlie finds himself unmoored by his breakup with smart but maternal Sara, his dreams of sexual freedom and entrepreneurial success dissipating under the reality of his own lack of preparation and hideous banter with the ‘ladz’.

Interspersed with these narratives are sections about Nietzsche and his philosophy of confidence, which form something part essay, part biography, breezily introducing the reader to his life and central tenets of his philosophy. These sections inform the characters’ lives as they spiral comically out of control, reaching for a practical connection between philosophy and the struggles of student existence.

“Interspersed with sections about Nietzsche and his philosophy of confidence”

A fresh and unsentimental depiction of modern university life is *Confidence’s* undoubted strength. Eschewing the nostalgic tone of predecessors such as *Starter for Ten*, Manthorpe and Smith drop the English campus novel squarely into the twenty-first century, a landscape dominated by debt, sexist lad culture and an often ill-fated desperation to lead the debauched ideal of student life.

The obvious humour in this world finds voice easily, but there are also some depressingly accurate reflections of the corporatisation of universities, and little shying away from the grim reality of campus sexism.

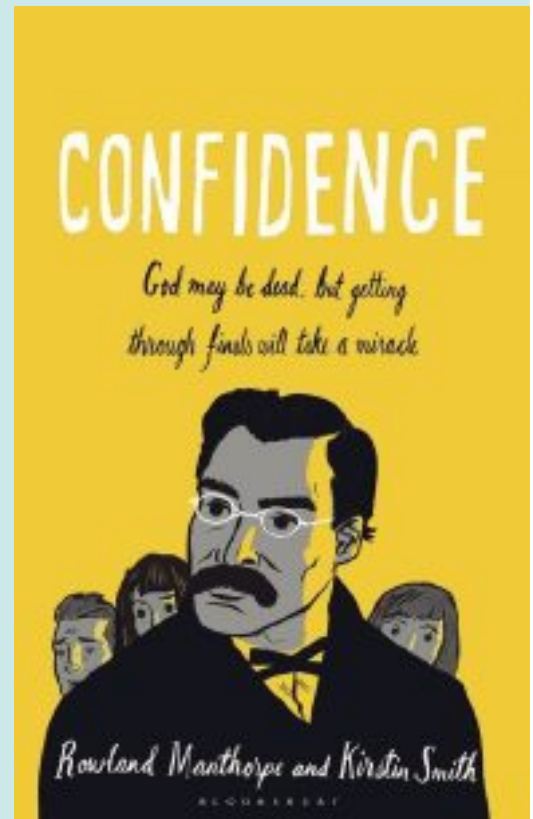
For a novel that is occasionally so clear-eyed, it is disappointing that it drifts, rather like its protagonists’ lives, into slightly unfocused excess. While Ellie and Charlie make engaging anchors, their respective trajectories reach such absurd levels of disaster that it sometimes seems they belong to a less sharply-observed episode of *Fresh Meat*, rather than any aim for practical philosophical understanding. The supporting cast, meanwhile, are painted in broad brushstrokes (homogeneous Ladz, devoted boyfriend, boat-dwelling eccentric) that make them more quirky background dressing than fleshed out characters. Although littered with pithy observations, the prose is occasionally clunky and rarely soars, with jokes often falling flat in what feels like a strain to be relatable.

“The attempt to situate the characters’ experiences in a philosophical context is admirable”

There is also little attempt to integrate the sections about Nietzsche into the text as a whole. Though well-written, they read like a particularly interesting lecture rather than part of a novel. The attempt to situate the characters’ experiences in a philosophical context is admirable, and produces some genuinely relevant insights into the powerful and frustratingly elusive nature of confidence. It is unfortunate, then, that its clumsy realisation creates more a tiring feeling of constantly hopping between two entirely different modes than a true synthesis between life and ideas.

For all this, there is much to enjoy in *Confidence*: it is a fresh, ambitious and highly readable debut. And for those of us that have felt just as lost as Ellie and Charlie, it is not without some painful rings of truth.

Ella Gilani



Rating:



Even More Stranger Things

Super Bowl treated us with an in depth look at the second season of *Stranger Things*. arriving on Netflix this Halloween. As a super fan of the show I could speculate all day. but I’m here to remind you about the first season. and see how the second will stack up.



Image: Daily Express

The first season of *Stranger Things* followed the adventures of friends, going to school and playing D&D, only to get wrapped up in government experiments, parallel worlds and a girl, eleven. A lot of people think the show is just a nostalgia fest,

as its set in the 80s. However, I cannot relate to this, like so many others, and still thoroughly enjoyed it despite its similarities to films like *E.T.* It builds its own incredibly interesting world, and the shot of the giant monster-thingy from Season Two left us all on a cliffhanger. It feels like something much worse is coming our way in Season Two, and the kids can’t deal with that alone, so it’ll be interesting to see how the government gets involved again.

Another thing of note is how good Season One’s performances were, especially from the younger actors, Millie Bobby Brown in particular. So I really hope the same can be said for Season Two, with rumours she is returning Luke Skywalker style.

It was interesting how such a short season of only

eight episodes presented and answered so many questions. We can guess the upside-down will be central again, but even then, how? The show never reveals too much, but doesn’t keep you in the dark for too long either.

The setting for *Stranger Things* is what drew most people in, but when you watch it you realize its complete originality. The characters, the world and the mysterious plot are accompanied by an amazing visual style that seems to have 80s inspiration but its own flair too. And it seems like Season Two will carry on this trend.

As I’ve alluded to before, *Stranger Things* has multiple levels; the kids, their families, the police and the government. All these sub plots culminate with the upside-down, and after Season One’s ending, it’ll be interesting to see how these elements interact again. It will be difficult to top last season but I think it can be done. It needs to be fresh and new but still within the rules the universe has established.

Will Nelson

Welfare at Leeds: How to be Resilient When Things Don't Go Your Way

There's always a lot of pressure to succeed at university, but it's not always possible. Martha gives some advice on how to build up your resilience when things don't go right.



Lydia Bleasdale-Hill (Associate Professor in Law and Leeds Institute for Teaching Excellence Fellow, 2016-17) discussed with us the importance of building resilience against disappointment and failure:

“Failing at something which is important to you, or feeling like you haven't achieved the standard that you wanted to, is a fact of life for all of us. Disappointment and failure are often hidden from public view though, particularly in an age when competition for jobs, for example, is rife; and at a time when the trend on social media is towards presenting an idealised version of our lives. The need to deal with setbacks doesn't disappear with age, so learning coping mechanisms early on is vital: many students will already have those in place, but it can still be useful to think about engaging with formal sources of support like those mentioned in this blog, or friends and family. I think it's particularly important to share both our success and 'failures' with our peers: not only can we gain support from each other that way, we can learn how they managed those more difficult situations.”

With many of you have now receiving your results from the January exams this is a stressful time of time. You might be disappointed with them and if you are that is OK. The grade you see on the VLE, or get on a feedback sheet does not have to be final and you have a lot of options available. It is easier said than done

but it is important to not let yourself get downhearted by results you are potentially unhappy with. University is about learning and building up skills, academic and otherwise, over a long period of time.

There are also numerous factors which you feel may have affected your academic performance, including illness or issues in personal relationships. Resits and applying for mitigating circumstances are both possible options for you.

Have a chat with your Student Support Officer or Personal tutor or if you are worried about approaching your School, or don't feel happy about doing so, then LUU Student Advice can offer confidential help and advice. We can help you decide what to do and help you with any communication you might have with your School if you would like us to.

You can contact the Student Advice to learn more about the services available to you on campus, and further afield in Leeds.

Easing the Pressure: Building Resilience course runs every Wednesday, contact M.A.Clowes@leeds.ac.uk for more information.

Martha Clowes

How resilient do you feel?

Psychological resilience is defined as an individual's ability to successfully adapt to life tasks in the face of disadvantage or adverse conditions. This adversity and stress can be caused by a multitude of factors including family or relationship problems, health problems, workplace/academic and financial worries to name a few. The student population on average has lower resilience levels to the average adult outside of Higher Education.

The Joys of Dogspotting

In a world so full of hate, is Dogspotting the only pure thing left? Lauren discusses the Facebook group that's going to become your latest obsession...

Firstly, hear me out. We all know that everything seemed to go wrong in 2016 and the current worldwide political climate is enough to make you want to stay huddled in your duvet for the rest of your life. But there's perhaps one thing that might restore your will to live, even just a little bit, and that thing is Dogspotting.

What is Dogspotting, I hear you cry? Well, it's pretty self-explanatory. If you're out and about, and you happen to come across a surprise dog (no known dogs are allowed in Dogspotting), then it's a valid spot. Head over to the Dogspotting Facebook page, post your picture, and voila! The Facebook group, which currently contains over 400,000 members, defines Dogspotting first and foremost as a 'sport and a lifestyle'. I'm in no position to disagree with this. As someone who has vehemently opposed most sports for much of my life, it's almost a relief to find one that doesn't require me to run for long periods of time or throw a ball. That is of course unless I'm running after a dog or throwing it a ball.

But the Dogspotting page is so much more than a place for people to collectively squeal of pictures of cute dogs; it's an escape from the evils of the world, a little piece of paradise where nothing bad ever happens. Perhaps I'm being overdramatic, but

as I lay in bed the other night, scrolling through Dogspotting, I realised (after an hour of doing so) that it's impossible to be sad when you're looking at dogs. Worried about the end of days under Donald Trump? No problem, just look at pictures of greyhounds in coats. Wishing that winter could be over already? A picture of some golden retriever puppies will warm your heart on these cold days.



Like most good things in this world, however, not everyone in the group plays by the rules. I've mentioned rules a few times now, and if you want to be a part of

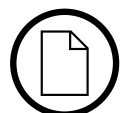
such an excellent group then it's probably worth noting now that there are a lot of rules. As I've previously mentioned, you can't post pictures of your own dog or a dog you know, but isn't that just common sense? Additionally, human faces aren't allowed in the photo, because who wants to see a human when we could be focusing on a dog? Another important one; no so-called 'low-hanging fruit'. This means that pictures taken in places where dogs can be expected, such as at the vets or a dog park, are invalid spots. If you post any of these, beware of the wrath of fellow spotters, eager to point out your mistake, or the omnipresent admins who will turn off comments on your post without any consideration for your mental wellbeing.

In all seriousness though, just take a short read through the rules and you'll be good to go. If ever there was a blinding light to brighten up even the darkest of days, then Dogspotting is it. We're all so preoccupied with the big issues of the world. We're all angry and resentful (with good reason I might add). But sometimes, just sometimes we need to take time away from those things and just think, 'Hey, isn't that a cute dog?'

Lauren Davies

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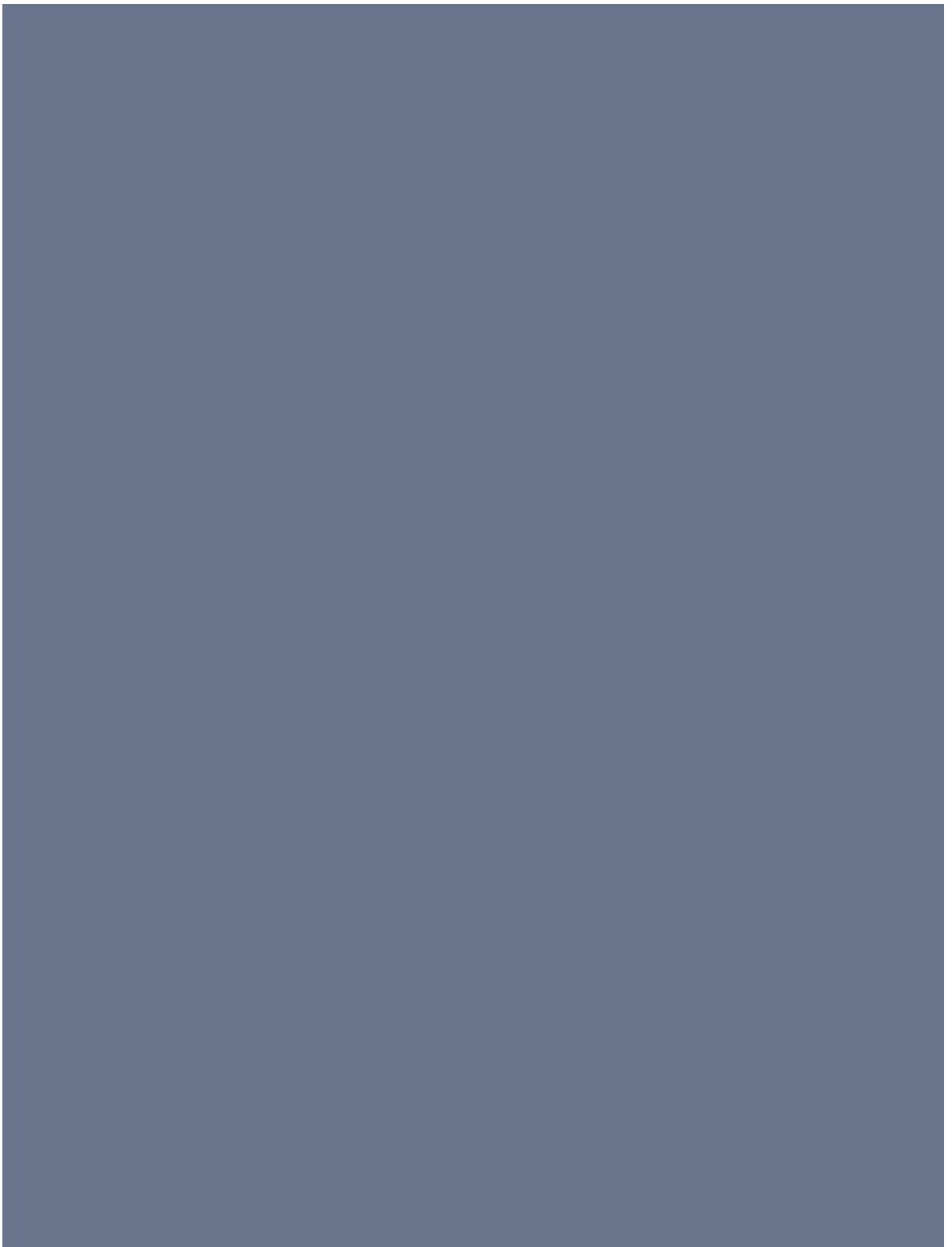
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Heavy Metal LGBT+

Heavy metal has always had an affiliation with the dark - here Edmund Gorick investigates how this darkness strays beyond the occult and spooky into the sociopolitical.



Image Credit: Huffington Post

Edmund Gorick

This was supposed to be an uplifting piece about LGBT+ in Heavy Metal and the progress that's been made. This is not that piece. There are some positives, but it's largely a dive into the darker side of the scene. Personally, this was a difficult piece to write. I've had overwhelmingly positive experiences in Metal, the people I've met through the scene have brought unparalleled joy and beauty into my life, and the music is bloody awesome. To see that as the whole scene, however, would be wilful ignorance.

Rob Halford was, naturally, the starting point. Judas Priest's lead vocalist, he was the first openly gay person in the genre; he helped create Metal, and pioneered the leather and studs look that has stuck with the genre ever since (more about that later). This was where I ran out of openly LGBT+ people I could use as positive examples of the community. I had intended to talk about Kristian 'Ghaal' Espedal, but it turns out he advocates church burning and was convicted of aggravated assault, so not a good role model there. Also one to consider was Otep, but she gets so much flak it raises startling questions about sexism in the genre.

The reason for this scarcity is, in my view, due to two reasons. More positively, Metal fans are generally uninterested in artists' private lives. There are very few 'personalities' in Metal, and there's no cottage industry turning out celebrity gossip. Metal media tends to revolve solely around touring and music, private life usually only comes up if a band stops touring or recording because of it. The second is that, from my

experience, Metal attracts a disproportionate fan base from the far left, and the far right. This isn't surprising, like Punk it is an aggressive music that attracts those who feel disenfranchised. Unlike Punk, however, bands and fans are not easily identifiable by social beliefs.

Common Metal themes include: the occult, science fiction, fantasy, history, anger, and depression. It is rare for a Metal band to regularly discuss social or political issues. It's much easier to keep fans with social divisions together when you're singing about dragons or life's fleeting

“At my second Wacken Open Air, there were Nazis in my camp”

misery. When bands do take political stands, this risks alienating fans. I had a chance to see this when German Death Metal band Varg (not to be confused with Varg Vikernes), performed at Metaldays. In 2016 Varg released *Das Ende aller Lügen*, that declared, rather violently, that people who didn't want to welcome refugees should shut it. Despite the fact that Metaldays has a strong hippie streak, opinion on Varg's new direction was divided, and many fans seemed disgruntled. This division probably helps explain why there are so few openly LGBT+ people, and why so few bands touch on social issues.

In good news, rainbow flags are becoming a more common sight at Metal festivals, and the gender ratio continues to improve. However,

there is a grim contrast. Last year, at my second Wacken Open Air, there were, and I speak no hyperbole, Nazis in my camp. A wretched group of simpleton, SS apologising, Saxon Nazis. Another shock came in the research for this article. In 2014, Wacken announced the triumphant reunion of Emperor, a Norwegian Black Metal Band. I was there that year too. I passed the stage, gave it a quick listen, and kept walking; it wasn't really my style. What I didn't realise is that the reunion featured drummer Bard 'Faust' Eithun. Eithun murdered a man in 1992 simply because that man was gay. No one, from the festival organisers, to his band mates, the legions of fans gathered around or the many who have interviewed him since, have asked 'Are you repentant?' Terrifyingly, no one seems to care.

Despite this, LGBT+ has contributed much to Metal culture. The leather, studs and spikes that have been gleefully adopted, especially by the more extreme sub genres, including Black Metal, were brought to the scene by Rob Halford. He bought the initial outfits from the gay BDSM shops in London. How's that for irony? To make matters more convoluted, the culture between Metal sub-genres differs wildly. Power, Symphonic and Folk Metal are generally far more relaxed and liberal, while more extreme subgenres, drawing on much darker themes, tend to be less so. There is, however, a lot of crossover in the fan bases, so it would be folly to try and contain cultural problems to a single sub-genre.

I am ashamed to say progress will come slowly, and painfully, if it comes at all.

The Unsung Heroes in LGBT+ History

As part of our celebrate of LGBT+ history month, Bethany Donkin lists four key LGBTQ+ figures and activists we should all have been taught about in school

Bethany Donkin

Sylvia Rivera

Sylvia was a Venezuelan–Puerto Rican transgender woman born in New York in 1951. Leaving home aged 11 due to abuse, Sylvia fled to the gay areas of New York, surviving on the streets and working in the sex trade.

Rivera fought tirelessly for LGBT rights throughout her life and was a major figure in the gay rights movement in New York in the early 70s. She was an activist until her death in 2002.

Whilst living on the Streets, Rivera and her friend Marsha P. Johnson set up the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) which provided safety and housing for homeless and vulnerable LGBTQ people.

As the gay rights movement began to become more mainstream and predominantly white and male dominated, Rivera became a central spokesperson and advocate for women, transgender and people of colour who were often marginalized in the gay community. She was hyper-aware of the multifaceted face of discrimination, recognising the importance of intersectionality in LGBT discrimination.

Since her death, The Sylvia Rivera project has been set up in her honour, a charity which offers legal help to people who have experienced harassment, discrimination, or violence because of their gender identity. Like Sylvia the organization believes that gender self-determination is inextricably intertwined with racial, social and economic justice.

Documentary to watch: *Beautone* by Alex Weheliye.



Image: Retro Report



Image:PopSugar

Marsha P. Johnson

A friend of Sylvia Rivera, Marsha P. Johnson was born in 1945 in New Jersey. Described by RuPaul as “The true drag mother”, Johnson is regarded as one of New York’s most well-known drag queens, even modelling for paintings for Andy Warhol. Along with Sylvia Rivera she cofounded the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) and was a prominent gay rights activist in the 60s and 70s. She was passionate about advocating for transgender folk to be incorporated into the gay rights movement.

When asked by a judge what the “P” stood for in her name, Marsha responded “Pay it no mind”. This was a line she often used as a sarcastic response to the frequent questions she got in regards to her gender.

“The true
drag mother”

She was a prominent AIDS activist in the 80s, an illness which she struggled with herself. She was an active founder and member of ACT-UP, an organisation created primarily to protest the lack of medical research in the area and the extortionate price of HIV and AIDS medication. The organisation lives on as an international advocacy group trying to bring about better legislation around HIV/AIDS medication and to positively impact the lives of those living with the virus and disease

Documentary to watch: *‘Pay it No Mind’: The Life and Times of Marsha P. Johnson*. Directed by Michael Kasino and Richard Morrison.

Del Martin & Phyllis Lyon

A couple who fought for gay rights for over half a century, Del and Phyllis moved in together on Valentine's Day 1953 in San Francisco after becoming lovers and knowing each other three years.

In 1955 they set up the Daughters of Bilitis, the first lesbian civil and political rights organisation in the United States. This organisation was a support network for women who were afraid to come out, educating them about their rights and gay history.

The organisation was initially a social club where women could feel safe to socialise and dance with those of the same sex; something that was illegal in America at the time. To advertise their organisation the couple published 'The Ladder', the first lesbian publication in the US. The organisation ran for fourteen years and its impact in inspiring women to create similar groups across the country was unfathomable.

During the 60s the couple created the Council on Religion and the Homosexual (CRH), which aimed to create religious support and solidarity for gay rights.

Two months before Del Martin passed away in 2008, the pair became the first gay couple to be legally married in the United States.

Place to visit: The GLBT History museum in San Francisco.



Image: Igbthistorymonth.com

Thoughts on Being Agender

A short comment by Pooja Balaji on how it feels, and what it means, to be misgendered.



Image: Gluekit

Pooja Balaji

Being misgendered feels exactly like looking at a picture of Benedict Cumberbatch; it seems okay but there's just something a bit off about it. Having identified as a woman until very recently, it has always been really difficult to reconcile myself to my gender identity. When I came out as agender, and began to use gender neutral pronouns, it felt like finally coming home. There is still a lot of ignorance surrounding genders that are outside the binary. Non-binary people are constantly misgendered in day-to-day situations, having to use the genders we were assigned at birth just to be able to fit in.

Similarly, being forced to take on the gender roles

of our assigned genders is also immensely taxing. A lot of us are pigeonholed into traditionally feminine or masculine boxes due to familial and societal expectations, something which makes us very uncomfortable. Agender is a gender identity that is seen as a subset of non-binary identities, where the person does not identify with any gender.

I identify as agender because I see myself as genderless. It took me a long time to adjust to my identity, more so because I come from a background where I felt forced into gender roles from a very early age. Personally, I experienced a lot of gender dysphoria because of my appearance during my teens; I used to dress very traditionally masculine in order to compensate for the excessive femininity that my

waist length hair used to force upon me. I have since gone through a major transformation when I chose to get a pixie cut; it made me feel a lot more gender neutral and comfortable in my own skin.

This is why the LGBT society in Leeds is such a great resource, because it provides a safe space and a support system for anyone who may need it. For anyone who may feel like they cannot come out to their families for fear of the repercussions, LGBT soc provides an atmosphere of unconditional love and acceptance. Being non-binary is clearly something that not enough people talk about or accept. Only if we start openly discussing gender neutrality, and recognizing people who are part of this minority, will we get the acceptance that we need.

The Farms of the Future

With the population booming, the agriculture industry is increasingly struggling feed so many hungry mouths. Is technology the way forward? Kieran Savage interviews Agriculture students to find out...

Kieran Savage

The UN predicts that the world population will be 9.7 billion by 2050. The answer to feeding this dramatic number of mouths may be robotic farming — set to improve production efficiency, while reducing resources required. But are we ready for such a gamble into the unknown? Entrusting machines with our survival?

I interviewed Samuel Bennett, an Agriculture student from Nottingham University, who provided an insight into the industry, stating that “in general there seems to be a positive attitude towards it all but there is a long way to go with some of the technologies.”

My main concern was understandably the potential for massive job losses. Sam stated that, “Technology brings in an element of uncertainty. There will always be a need for workers to move robots from field to field, farm to farm and so I do not see robots taking over anytime soon. Also, robotic milking systems are brilliant, saving so much time for the farmer as the systems can automatically milk the cows on a schedule. There will be job losses for milkers but jobs created to analyse the data.” So surely if there won’t be a significant loss in jobs, but gains in efficiency, surely adopting the technology is a no brainer.

Patches O’Hullahan, a farmer from Lincolnshire,

suggests that job losses are not an issue, as even now average working farms of 1000 acres can be maintained by only two people. Drones can be used to help with fertilising but this is only a small part of the entire process. He also alludes to the fact that despite how advanced technology gets, there will always be a need for people to inspect for disease, injury and machine failure.

However, Sam then goes on to say “your standard dairy farmer would struggle to afford converting to the robotic milking system as the equipment is expensive”. So could this lead to more dairy farmers being squeezed out of the market?

Gareth Wyn Jones’s documentary on BBC iPlayer shows the real crisis facing dairy milk farmers with the number of farmers in the last 15 years being halved. Technology advancements have allowed farmers to scale up massively – take Müller, who pump out one million cartons per day. So, the intensely competitive industry is under threat and efficiency seeking is extremely important.

So the prospect of using drones for farming could potentially bring a completely new dimension to farming. Sam claims that “it’s certainly interesting, but I don’t think everyone is convinced, as if you can’t analyse the data from the drone it’s not really worth it or if it takes too long to download the images.”

Oscar Miller who is studying Agri-Business

Management at Newcastle University reaffirms this, “the high initial capital investment, combined with the high maintenance costs for drones is not yet justifiable; due to the lack of coordination between the drones to allow for optimal efficiency in a large scale commercial farming setting.”

It is fair to say that the idea of drones in farming is pretty cool but it seems there is more to be done before this technology becomes a viable option. Another area of concern that Pablo Gonzalez de Santos acknowledges is safety “robots have to be capable of detecting what is going on in their surroundings and act accordingly to protect humans, wildlife, and themselves from crashes and accidents”.



Image: The Conversation

Care to Share? How the sharing economy is taking over society

Chloe Pryce explores the sharing economy with a look into some of the different companies driving this revolution and also discusses some of the dangers...

Chloe Pryce

Uber, Deliveroo and Airbnb are all names we hear of, see, and perhaps even use, daily. On average, each day 40,000 people rent accommodation using Airbnb and 5.5 million people catch an Uber. But imagining an economy where just about everything is temporarily ‘rented’ rather than owned, from cars to beds to tools to pets, is not as far away from our current reality as you might think...

Defined as an economic system in which people rent assets or services from each other, coordinated via technology, the sharing economy has grown significantly over the past few years and is now valued at 26 billion pounds. Thanks to data from GPS

and social networks, technology platforms such as Snobswap, SupperShare, StashBee and MyCuteDesk allow consumers to share almost anything from designer clothes and meals to storage space and desk space.

This prevailing collaborative consumption allows for a more sustainable economy as it reduces overconsumption and allows us to make better use of scarce resources. Renting a car only when you need one, rather than owning one. This means fewer resources are devoted to making cars and fewer cars are left sitting on driveways when they could be better used elsewhere. Technology platforms in the sharing economy can also reallocate underused assets in times of crisis. For example, Airbnb provides free accommodation for people in crisis. Most recently, they have provided those affected by travel bans in the United States a place to stay.

As innocent and genius as this phenomenon may appear, the sharing is not all caring. A symptom of the sharing economy is what has come to be known as ‘the gig economy’- characterized by the dominance of short-term, independent contracts as opposed to permanent, contracted jobs. The ‘gig economy’ which has expanded as a direct result of the sharing economy, has come under much criticism for its exploitation of

labour. Companies operating in the sharing economy are not firms in the sense that they sell goods or services, but are technology platforms connecting consumers. Taking the example of Uber, it is not a taxi company, but a technology platform which connects consumers, allowing those offering a ride to connect with those demanding a ride. It treats drivers as independent contractors. This means there is no holiday pay, sick pay or minimum wage despite the fact that Uber sets the prices and has significant control over the drivers. This leaves worker’s wages much below the minimum wage after all expenses are accounted for which has led to court cases against Uber, the most obvious one being the 2016 case involving drivers Aslam and Farrar. Not only are questions regarding worker’s rights arising but equally questions regarding regulation, insurance and legal liability. Taking the example of Airbnb in San Francisco and Amsterdam, there is question regarding whether those leasing rooms should have to pay the taxes and obtain the permits which established, traditional hotels are subject to pay.

Despite the legal grey area threatening the existence of the sharing economy, it is predicted to be a \$335 billion industry by 2025, continually expanding, contributing to a more sustainable economy and allowing those with, to lend to those without.



Image: The conversation

Loans for Sale: Government sells student debt to private investors

With the announcement of student loans being sold to private investors, Jess Jones looks into the process and implications for students carrying the debt...

Jess Jones

On Monday the Government announced plans to sell student loans to private investors. The deal will involve around 4 billion pounds' worth of loans from almost half a million students whose repayments began between 2002 - 2006. In an effort to cut national debt, the government will sell the loans through securitisation - 'the process of taking an illiquid asset, or group of assets, and through financial engineering, transforming them into a security', where debt will be sold as bonds to investors.

According to *The Financial Times* the proposed sale of the loans will not affect the terms or the administration of the income-contingent loans that currently stand, with the government insisting that former students who fall into this bracket will be not be affected as strict controls will be in place. David Gauke, Chief Secretary to the Treasury believes the sale "will play an important contribution in our work to repair the public finances".

However, this type of loan is riskier than other forms of private sector debt; the current loan repayment system for students in this threshold means they begin

paying back their debt once earning over £17,495, and subsequently stop if income falls below this; the repayment of debt is currently 9% of any earning above this level and moves with the Retail Price Index.

Although the sale will not affect the current terms of the administration of these income-contingent loans, it has raised questions about potential future changes on the loans. The sale involves set regulations, meaning that to change the terms would be a violation of a contract, leaving future governments unable to modify these terms.

Many are opposed to the selling, including Sorana Vieru, NUS Vice-President for Higher Education, who believes that ministers are "pulling an ugly move on students". Adding that selling to private investors will lead to temptation "for governments to subject future students to extortionate interest, commercial terms and conditions and the raising of the repayment threshold".

These recent changes to the ownership of student loan has led many to question how much students really know about their own debt?

In a survey conducted this week current University students were asked general questions about student

loans, including questions about the recent privatisation plans. This found that 76.92% of students were not aware that the Government is selling the loans of those who started repayment between 2002-2006 to private investors. When asked "How aware are you of the current payback system for student loans?", only 15% said they were completely aware, with a further 69% saying they only understood certain aspects of it. Many also had no idea about interest rates regarding student debt or the changing Retail Price Index.

It is clear that many students are actually quite unsure about the reality of the debt they carry on graduation. Whether it's because many choose to ignore the debt that is quietly piling onto our shoulders or perhaps students have actually not been made aware of interest rates, inflation and payment plans.

These recent changes could lead to further implications to the repayment of debt in the future, and whilst some may prefer to remain blissfully unaware until graduation, for those concerned, head to the gryphon website for a simple breakdown.

Women in Leadership: The Latest Business Society

Women in Leadership is a brand new society aimed at helping and supporting women in the industry. Tim Knickmann went along to the society's launch to find out more...

Tim Knickmann

On Monday, a new society opened in the Business school. Women In Leadership aims to encourage and support women in the business industry, tackling some of the barriers women face when competing for high-level jobs. The concept behind the society appears to have been in development for a long time, and the hard work paid off. The event was successful, well marketed and targeted its audience well. Even as a male, and thus not the intended audience for the event, I found it interesting and enjoyable.

One of the main reasons the meeting was so engaging was because the society isn't trying to push an agenda. They want to help raise the confidence of young women in positions which are normally male-dominated. Now, before all males turn away, Sarah Nield from PWC summed the dilemma up nicely when she said "Men wait until they are 80% confident and then just do it, while women wait until they are 120% confident and then slowly ease into something". Nield talked about her life, her role, her education; she talked of her achievements and her story as a woman in the industry, but didn't dwell too much on the gender issues.

She did naturally address some of these issues

though, and fielded some questions relevant to women. Questions included how to deal with part-time arrangements, what struggle she faced, and the openness of PWC to professionals with children, but most questions focused on success, opportunity, and how to land a job - the same questions that would be asked of any 'male' leadership figure. Although upcoming events seem to more 'female' orientated, I think this is a great thing. LUBS and LUUTIS can be seen as quite male dominated. Women in Leadership is actively trying to stand for being a female Investment Banking, Business, and Accountancy society.

The committee has a plan full of ambition, and is determined to focus on its members instead of focusing on its

committee. The committee members didn't make a show of introducing themselves and their positions; the society is purely focused on helping students. It's free to join, so there is no reason not to sign up.



Britain in a Flap: Bird Flu's back



Image: Farming UK

James Deed

We all remember the pandemic known as bird flu which took place in Britain about 10 years ago, but what has happened to it since? Has it simply vanished off the face of the earth, or it is still lurking around?

Bird Flu, or avian influenza, has been around for years (with cases dating back as far as 1878 in Italy) and has continuously caused massive outbreaks within the poultry industry. It occurs sporadically throughout the world, killing millions of birds before dying down and returning to a dormant phase until a new strain reemerges. Although the number of people who contract the virus is very small, a high proportion of those infected die from it (roughly 60%).

Nearly ten years on since the last time we saw bird flu cases in headlines, cases are starting to appear in wild birds across the UK and Europe. The latest strain (H5N8) has been found in 40 wild birds across Britain after migrating across Europe in the preceding months. One single case has been identified at Martin Mere, a popular tourist attraction in Lancashire for bird watchers - this area experiences up to 60,000 wildfowl per day at peak times during winter. Only one bird, a greylag goose, has died as a result of the virus. This area risks the potential for a large-scale outbreak across the country. However, appropriate measures to prevent human contraction have been made, with disinfectant mats and vehicle restrictions preventing the movement of bird droppings (the main vector in transmitting bird flu). Now that cases are

being found within wild bird species, what will this mean for our poultry industry?

Several farms, particularly in our neighbouring county Lancashire, have experienced recent outbreaks of the strain. One pheasant farm in Preston has reported to have identified several cases of the H5N8 strain within a flock of 10,000 birds. Since then the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has set up a two-mile protection zone and a six-mile surveillance zone around the farm, before humanely culling the flock of birds to prevent any further spread of the strain. Similar measures have been utilised in Scotland and Wales to decrease the risk of the virus, along with a Britain-wide ban on poultry shows and gatherings until at least the 28th of February.

But is this strain dangerous to humans? Should we be worried that there might be a repeat of the events which happened ten years ago? The current strain of avian flu which is circulating Britain belongs within the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) group but by building upon previous experiences, DEFRA are working incredibly hard to restrict the spread of the virus from wild birds into the poultry industry and subsequently into humans. Currently, the NHS website states that there are no cases of avian flu in humans within the UK. Furthermore, Public Health England has made a statement that there is a "very low" risk to humans, whilst the Food Standards Agency have said that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers.

Bird Flu Facts:

- Humans can be infected with avian viruses, such as avian influenza which has three subtypes A(H5N1), A(H7N9), and A(H9N2).

- Human infections are primarily acquired through direct contact with infected animals or contaminated environments, but do not result in efficient transmission of these viruses between people.

- Avian influenza infections in humans may cause disease ranging from mild conjunctivitis to severe pneumonia and even death.

- The majority of human cases of A(H5N1) and A(H7N9) infection have been associated with direct or indirect contact with infected live or dead poultry.

- Controlling the disease in the animal source is critical to decrease risk to humans.

Source: World Health Organisation



Image: The Insatiable Traveller

The Very Hungry Caterpillar – The Rise of the Fall Army Worm



Image: Harmony Brands

Camille Hanotte

A growing global population will undoubtedly increase the stress on finite resources, none more so than with food availability. This looks set to be exacerbated with the rapid colonisation of Southern Africa by a new species of pest, destroying thousands of crops along with the livelihoods of farmers across the region.

The perpetrator is the Fall Army worm (*Spodoptera Frugiperela*), a non-native crop-demolishing caterpillar, which is thought to have been introduced through imported goods from North and South America. This very hungry caterpillar has begun spreading across southern Africa as fast as a swarm of locusts. Targeting mainly maize plant species, the Army worm munches its way through the crops, quickly destroying the young shoots. Not only are the caterpillars masters of destruction, they also cunningly bury themselves into the crops to make it virtually impossible to establish their existence from the outside. In addition, they can lay a total of 50 eggs in a single location, making them the perfect invader.

Although first reported in Príncipe and São Tomé in January 2016, the wind has aided adult moths to disperse their vast amounts of larvae far and wide, including regions such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia and Mozambique. Scientists from the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI) believe that if this pest is not controlled it could spread to as far as Asia and the Mediterranean. So, how does this affect me and you? Well, according to the United Nation's Food and

Agricultural Organisation (FAO), the situation may become a threat to "world-wide agricultural trade" if it is not dealt with soon.

Alarmingly, the FAO estimate that 70% of crops in the region have already been destroyed by the caterpillar. With maize and grain species remaining the main component of many southern African diets, their production represents a core component of the livelihoods for thousands of farmers in the region. The situation is especially fragile; this latest trouble comes at a time when the region is still recovering from two consecutive droughts, which drastically reduced the availability of food in the region. As a result of the invasive pest, the rates of starvation and debt suffered within the region could increase if the Army worm is not stopped.

As metaphorical alarm bells begin to ring, the FAO is set to hold emergency talks this February in Harare, Zimbabwe, discussing how best to tackle the imminent threat. Highlighting the seriousness of the situation, the Zambian government has already spent an estimated US \$3 million to try and control these hungry caterpillars, opting to fight the pest with its own army. In an attempt to manage the outbreak, thousands of affected hectares of land have been sprayed with pesticides using Zambian military planes.

As the region yet again faces more challenges, it is crucial that this latest threat is dealt with in the most efficient and effective way possible. If managed incorrectly, the food security and livelihoods of southern African citizens will be at stake.

The Alternative Science Digest

Normally this space is reserved for the weekly digest, updating you on what's new in science. However, this week we thought we'd bring you a slightly different round up of scientific stories... This week we're looking at the weird, and not so wonderful, things that we put into our body. Why? Because science apparently says we should.

Urotherapy

I'm honestly not taking the pis-, err, Michael here. Drinking urine is actually considered an all singing, dancing – and apparently curing – alternative therapy. At more than 95%, your wee is predominantly water, with its remaining constituents made up from urea, chloride, sodium and other inorganic and organic compounds. It's been proposed that issues such as arthritis, psoriasis and even cancer can be combatted by drinking a daily glass of your own morning urine (this is apparently important, afternoon or evening wee is a no no).

Placental Encapsulation

The consumption of the placenta (yes, you have indeed just read that) is a practice which stems from traditional, albeit controversial, Chinese medicine. The placenta – which is the organ that allows for an exchange of blood, waste and nutrients between mother and child during pregnancy – is processed into pills, which are then consumed orally by the mother following childbirth. The proposed benefits include a reduction in stress and postnatal depression, although there is very little scientific evidence to back this up. In addition, devouring placenta is suggested to help restore iron levels within blood, however a clinical study undertaken by the University of Nevada – the first of its kind – found no benefit was incurred to a mothers iron status.

Faecal Microbiota Transplantation

This may sound like a crock of crap, literally and figuratively, however Faecal Microbiota Transplantation (FMT) is very much a real procedure. FMT requires the 'relocation' of bacteria and yeast, taken from a healthy person's gut, into the colon of a patient that is deficient in this department. As the functionality of your digestive system is dependent on a diverse and dense population of bacteria existing in your gut, FMT could prove to be a highly successful treatment in lessening the symptoms of illnesses such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome and Inflammatory Bowel Diseases. The implant of the good gut microbiota, which have been processed to remove any existing poop from the sample, is delivered via rectal catheter.



Image: Dr SHem

Marxist Society: Questions Answered

164 years after Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels explored the inequalities that separate social classes, many of us, including myself, still have difficulty in defining the term 'Marxism'. *The Gryphon* sat down with Harvey from the Leeds University Marxist Society in order to find out more



Image: Marxist Society

Mary O'Gorman

What is the Marxist society and what do you do?

The society was established in order to educate people about Marxist ideas; to offer a Marxist perspective on topics ranging from current affairs to significant events of the past and to create a forum for political ideas. The society helps to organise a Marxist current in the student movement, which argues for a socialist solution to the typical problems faced in the daily life as a student. The society is relevant to all students at Leeds who face the problems of low maintenance grants, hefty rent prices and increased living costs.

What do you discuss during your meetings?

We discuss a wide variety of topics, ranging from Corbyn and the Labour Party, Marxism and feminism,

the life and ideas of Che Guevara, and fundamentalist terror and imperialism. One of the most common accusations Marxism faces is that it is only concerned with economics, yet our meeting topics range from cultural history to current affairs.

How would you personally define Marxism?

It is the body of ideas originated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the nineteenth century, which seeks to provide a scientific understanding of society in order to more effectively transform it. We envision the transformation of society on socialist lines, and understand that this transformation can only be effected by the conscious, revolutionary action of the working class.

Do you think Marxism has a place in today's society?

Yes, more now than ever! Capitalism is in its most profound crisis since the 1920s, perhaps ever. The rising cost of living, the housing crisis, oppressive working practices, racist state violence and any number of other grievances being raised by ordinary people only evidence the depth of barbarism into which capitalism is driving us. Only a revolutionary socialist perspective can really offer a way out of this massive impasse to the benefit of working class and oppressed people.

Do you think an individual's social class affects their educational / job prospects today?

Without doubt. A huge number of employers will only recruit graduates from 20 different universities (this isn't even the entire Russell Group), and a significant

portion of these employers will only recruit from four universities. 10% of students at the Oxbridge Universities are from lower classes, while the highest percentage in the Russell Group is Queen Mary at 37%. These statistics would suggest social mobility is still elusive for many.

Why do some people hold power over others? How do people and institutions of power (e.g. the government) manipulate those less privileged than themselves?

We believe that all things can and should be understood historically, as occurring under particular conditions, and in a given time and place. We consider social hierarchy on all lines to have originated with the manufacturing of a surplus in human societies, at which point it became possible for some members of society to accrue property, prestige, and power over others. As such, all relations of domination originate in questions of property.

The methods by which the ruling class manipulate and dominate workers as well as poor and oppressed people are various and seemingly endless; from the domination of culture through to the use of lethal force against whole populations. These are actions carried out in a system which we have the power to end. The task is to build a revolutionary party which has the size, authority, and understanding to lead the overthrow of this rotten and violent system. The Marxist Society is trying to play a part – however modest – in that attempt.

Find out more at facebook.com/LeedsMarxists

LGBTQ+ Representations in Pop Culture

This month, LUU is holding several events to raise awareness of the issues that the LGBTQ+ community have to face, along with the steps that can be taken for a more inclusionary society. Last week, a discussion was held by feminist and queer youtuber, Rowan Ellis, on LGBTQ+ representations in pop culture

Verity Sowden

In her presentation, Rowan highlighted that individuals from the LGBTQ+ community are severely under-represented. When they do appear, they are tragic characters that continually suffer and do not get a happy ending, often being killed off for alleged "shock factor". As Rowan pointed out, this is the most predictable thing that can happen to an LGBTQ+ character, known as the "bury your gays" trope.

The narratives of LGBTQ+ characters are predominantly centred around their sexuality and the ways in which it causes them to suffer, making it their defining characteristic rather than one aspect of a multifaceted identity. Bisexuality is particularly demonised and never outrightly stated, feeding into the perception that bisexuality does not exist or that it is not a legitimate sexuality. Transgender individuals, meanwhile, are grossly underrepresented, with a mere 2.6% of onscreen LGBT characters identifying as transgender, which perhaps signifies a lack of understanding or, more likely, an unwillingness to accept gender as flexible.

Prior to this event, I had not stopped to consider at length the negative and derogatory ways that many media outlets treat LGBTQ+ characters. Despite such negative portrayals, we are seeing glimmers of hope for more positive representations, such as Annalise Keating from 'How to Get Away with Murder' and Nomi Marks from 'Sense8', who serve as fully realised characters in their respective narratives. We will hopefully see more LGBTQ+ character on our screens in the future, and it should be something to campaign for as it would reflect the real world and real life experiences. When LGBTQ+ characters become permanent or recurring figures, just like any cisgender or straight character, I believe we will have made significant progress, as they will be treated like real people rather than plot points or shock tactics. Be sure to visit Rowan's YouTube channel for more feminist and queer critiques of the media and pop culture.

A major point of this talk, for me, highlighted the extent to which the media, an outlet which significantly influences us, tends to neglect or damagingly portray LGBTQ+ individuals and why this

must be brought to the attention of wider society, through LGBTQ+ month and year-round awareness promotion. As students at one of the top universities in the UK, we like to think that we are beyond needing to be taught about matters concerning sexuality, but the truth is that awareness and understanding of LGBTQ+ communities is sadly lacking. Through campaigns like LGBTQ+ History Month we can change this. Difference is what makes us interesting and it should be celebrated. The Union's campaign this month is definitely something we can all get behind: "Let's celebrate and be proud of who we are."



Image: Ineqt

Should the Six Nations have relegation?

Yes
Luke Etheridge

The Super Bowl shows the interest and spectacle that can be generated by play-off matches, and the Six Nations would be fools to miss out on this. In their first ever Six Nations, Italy had a points difference of -122. Last year, their points difference was -145, and they conceded 29 tries, a tournament record. Not exactly fantastic progress over the seventeen tournaments. On the other hand, Georgia have won sixteen straight matches in the Rugby Europe Championship, and have only failed to win the title five times since the turn of the century. At the moment, they are ranked higher than Italy, so why shouldn't they have a chance to play in the Six Nations?

Rugby union in the northern hemisphere is generally a lot poorer than that played in the south, with England being the only team from north of the equator to win the World Cup. At the last edition, in 2015, the four teams of the Rugby Championship (Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Argentina) made it to the semi-finals. Since Los Pumas were inducted into this tournament in 2012, they have shown gradual improvement, winning a match in each of the last three editions. Supporting the growth of rugby in

Italy was given by chief executive John Feehan for no relegation in the Six Nations, but what about Georgia, Romania, and Russia? Does promoting growth in these countries not matter? Even if they don't achieve promotion, the opportunity of regular fixtures against the top Northern hemisphere sides would surely inspire these, and other European nations to improve. Legacy is one of the big buzzwords around sport lately, and there can't be many better legacies than opening up the sport to millions of fans across the continent, from Moscow to Madrid.

No
Ryan Wan

Adding relegation to the Six Nations would hinder the development of the lower ranked teams, because it would most likely be Italy and Georgia trading places year on year. This would mean that the opposition that these team face would be of drastically differing quality each year.

This doesn't mean that I am opposed to Georgia joining the Six Nations, I just think that their inclusion shouldn't be at Italy's expense. They have certainly earned the right to be considered by

consistently qualifying for the World Cup since 2003 and winning the European Nations Cup consecutively for the past six years. The latter achievement certainly implies that they need more challenging competition to play against.

However, Georgia would fare no better than Italy in the tournament and most likely do worse, at least in the short term. Since Italy joined the Six Nations in 2000, they have ended up with the Wooden Spoon 11 out of 17 times. Despite given 17 years, Italy have not managed to bridge the gap and with relegation this would probably take even longer with Georgia.

If Georgia truly want to improve their team, then they need to strengthen their domestic league in a way similar to Italy. Exposing their players to better opposition on a weekly basis will improve the skill level of their players and also give them a larger pool of talent to choose from, alongside those that already play abroad.

Italy need to stay in the Six Nations in order to become true European contenders. They have a new coaching staff, one that has experience with big European teams and I believe that O'Shea can make significant progress with the team by the time the 2019 World Cup comes around.



Image: Planet Rugby

Hawkins precise in Preston for win

James Felton
Snooker

The 2017 World Grand Prix concluded on Sunday, with Barry Hawkins beating Ryan Day, in another, though not as thrilling, battle between England and Wales on the weekend. The tournament, staged at the Guild Hall in Preston, saw many stars of the game, including Ronnie O'Sullivan, Neil Robertson and Mark Selby, attempt to win this ranking tournament in front of a passionate crowd in north-west England. This tournament was another example to show that, although Snooker has - positively - become a worldwide sport, with tournaments now played in nearly every corner of the globe, England still attracts the great players to do battle. And with prize money of £100,000 up for grabs for the winner, this was an extremely lucrative tournament.

The First Round, however, saw some big name players lose their opening, and thus only, match of the tournament. Indeed, Mark Selby, John Higgins and Stuart Bingham lost to Martin Gould, Michael White and Ryan Day respectively. With a best of 7 frame format for the opening three rounds, mistakes can be capitalised on in a way that is a lot harder to sustain in the longer matches that snooker fans are used to in major tournaments. These competitive and surprising results of the opening rounds was to be a

prevalent theme of the opening few rounds. Indeed, in the Second Round, Ronnie O'Sullivan and Judd Trump were thrashed 4-1 by Neil Robertson and Barry Hawkins. Michael White, the man who beat John Higgins, lost to fellow Welshman Ryan Day, whilst Shaun Murphy narrowly beat Ding Junhui 4-3. Joe Perry, who has had a recent resurgence of form, having got to the final of the UK Masters in January, was knocked out 4-3 against Liang Wenbo. Neil Robertson lost 4-2 against Barry Hawkins whilst Marco Fu beat Mark King by the same score line, as did Ryan Day against Shaun Murphy. The best of 11 frames semi-finals could not have produced more contrasting matches. Barry Hawkins produced a stunning victory over Liang Wenbo, winning 6-1, and thus assuring himself a huge confidence boost ahead of the final on Sunday. Ryan Day, conversely, had to fight extremely hard to win his match, beating Marco Fu 6-4.

After losing the initial frame in the final, Hawkins played some astonishing snooker, scoring five centuries on the way to taking a 9-3 lead against his rival. Day, however, won the next four frames, demonstrating that there could still have been life left in the match, but in the end Hawkins sailed over the line, winning 10-7. With the World Snooker Championships just two months away, tournaments such as the World Grand Prix can be used to gauge

players' form, although every Snooker competition is different, and with the increasing competitiveness of the sport, it is unsurprising that so many top players lost in the opening rounds. Whether Barry Hawkins can translate this tournament win into a strong performance at the World Championships, nobody knows. But since this was his third Ranking title victory of his career, it is a key milestone for him. He has been a finalist, twice semi-finalist and quarter-finalist, in the last four World Championships. Could this be the year he goes onto win it? If so, he will receive a grand prize of around £375,000. He's certainly got strong form going into the tournament and will be one of several players who can realistically expect to do extremely well at the Crucible in Sheffield.



Image: Action Images

Tense win keeps England on track

Tom Davies
Rugby Union

England vs Wales. The rose vs the daffodil. Episode 130 of a rugby boxset offering all the tension, twists and trauma of a Netflix creation. Coming into the game, the two sides were arguably further apart than they have been for a decade. England, with their new coach and new approach, unbeaten in fifteen matches; Wales, drawing criticism for their one-dimensionality, undoubtedly falling behind in the race for hemispheric hegemony.

From the off, the game was fast and open; the Six Nations this year appears to be returning to its former glory, after a series of attritional tournaments. England gained the initial momentum, dominating possession and territory in the first fifteen minutes,

but they were met with was a Welsh wall – the lesser-known cousin of Trump’s mythical construction, built not by Mexicans but by Moriarty, Tipuric and Owens. Ultimately though, it was not impenetrable, with Youngs squirming over for the first try of the game as the phase count hit the quarter of a century mark.

At this point, the Welsh fans around the Principality Stadium feared a repeat of the 2016 game, when England effectively won the game with a strong first-half display. A Liam Williams break two minutes later quickly alleviated these fears, marking the start of a crucial 20 minutes during which momentum rested firmly on the side of the Welsh. Whilst more drama was to come, the post-match analysis may well highlight this as the period when the game was won and lost. Although Wales eventually came away with a try shortly before half-time, the result of a perfectly

executed set piece move which put Liam Williams under the posts, critics will argue that seven points was a meagre return after dominating the second quarter of the game. For England, their ‘whatever you can do we can do better’ attitude to defence, embodied by the imperious Launchbury, kept them in the game and showed the collective spirit which left them unbeaten in 2016.

The second-half started at breakneck speed, with both defences ferociously physical. England, after escaping another Welsh attack for the loss of just three points, began to assert their authority on the game. They were fuelled by powerful carries from George and Haskell, both of whom laid down strong claims for a starting place through their impact off the bench. On 64 minutes, with England pressing the Welsh line, a Youngs pass destined for Brown and fell into the hands of Biggar, whose quick-thinking interception was the pinnacle of a performance certain to silence his critics. England, though, continued to build momentum and a 70th minute penalty moved them to within two points. Ben Teo’o, another effective substitute, then made a break which forced Wales into more desperate defence, spurred on by a hysterical Cardiff crowd. In the end, the relentless attacks of England’s ball-carriers proved too much for tired Welsh minds and bodies: a panicked clearance kick and non-existent chase gave Elliot Daly, whose exploits marked his maturity and promise, space to dive over in the corner.

The image at the final-whistle of Maro Itoje thumping his chest with raw passion, as Alun-Wyn Jones stood dejected behind him, told the story: a sixteenth consecutive victory for England, an agonising defeat for Wales. Maybe it also symbolised the diverging paths of the neighbouring rugby nations. But, overall, England’s 21-16 win on Saturday should be remembered mostly as an incredible sporting spectacle; a game of remarkable skill, spirit, and physical sacrifice which will have Six Nations fans thirsty for more.



Image: Rugby World

More success for British Tennis

John Gibby
Tennis

Britain’s Fed Cup tennis team qualified for the World Group II play-off stage of the competition for the first time in four years last weekend, as Anne Keothavong’s women saw off the Croatian team 2-1 in a close-run deciding set. With British number two Heather Watson seeing off Donna Vekic in straight sets before Johanna Konta faltered against Ana Konjuh, a doubles match was needed to decide the tie. However, they overcome a series of issues in that game including going two breaks down and losing the first set, followed by ankle trouble for British number one Konta. With that seen to, the team took it to a set apiece and in a nip and tuck final set where the first four games went against serve, Britain eventually emerged victorious 4-6 6-4 6-3. Keothavong said after the match that she was “absolutely ecstatic” and “so proud” of the team.

Due to the relatively complicated format of the Fed Cup, which is slightly different to the Davis Cup, the equivalent in the men’s game, Britain now go into a play-off draw where they can face both teams from around the world, and countries which have been playing in the elite World Group so far in the competition. If progressing, they themselves will play in World Group II in 2018, in what would be their first return to that level of international competition in 24 years. For Britain, it is the challenge of Romania

that awaits in the play-offs, a team who boast players including world number four Simona Halep and suffered a surprise defeat to Belgium in their most recent match in the competition. In addition to Halep, Konta and Watson as well as teammates Laura Robson and Jocelyn Rae could find themselves up against the likes of Irina-Camelia Begu, who was good enough to reach the fourth round of Roland Garros last year, and world number 19 doubles player Monica Niculescu. To add to the scale of the task in front of them, it’ll be an away match for the Brits, due to take place on April 22nd and 23rd.

The format of the competition has long brought about much debate, including from former British team captain Judy Murray, who has argued that the competition ‘is in desperate need of a revamp’, and cited concerns with the competition’s efforts to promote women’s tennis when resigning her post as skipper in March last year. At least for now though, we’re stuck with the Fed Cup we know, and the national team will no doubt be getting ready to give it their all in Romania in a couple of months’ time. Success could bring the latest in a long line of resurgences in the British game.



Image: Getty Images

Futsal breeds success

**Surnai Rei
Futsal**

When Futsal was first established in 2014, it was just a social sport. There would be weekly social sessions every Friday night where everyone could participate and play for fun. Liam Turner ran Futsal at the time and he managed to pick players that stood out from the social sessions to compete against other universities in BUCS tournament for the first time. I was one of the players that attended the social sessions and competed in the tournament. I really wanted to drive forward the development of Futsal, as it was a growing sport not just in Leeds, but also across the country. Seeing as Liam was graduating and leaving Leeds, I spoke to him about taking over as the President and what I wanted to do. He was more than happy to pass on the leadership role to me and helped me get in touch with Andrew Lockwood, who focused on the social side of the sport. My main aim was to establish Futsal as a competitive team as well as promote the sport through social session.

Starting the season last year (2015/2016), we encountered a few problems. We did not have a coach, we could only train on Friday night 9:30-10:30pm and we needed to form a strong squad who were committed to train on Friday week in, week out.

During freshers' week, Futsal had over 100 people who were willing to try out for the team, and I managed to filter out players to form a squad. Just in time, I managed to speak to Aidan Lewis, my flat mate from first year, who is very passionate about

coaching. He agreed to take over Futsal as a coach and train players alongside Oron Sheldon, who has been playing Futsal for a long time.

We got off to a bad start in the league, losing our first two games. This was due to the fact that many players from the squad did not have enough experience of the sport. Yet, as time went on and we trained more, we started winning every game, finishing 3rd in the league and reaching the semi-finals of the Conference Cup.

This season, our coach Aidan has been away, having secured a coaching position in Qatar. Oron took over as the head coach and trained players week in week out, also getting help from James Briars who ran the York University Futsal Club last year. Together, we formed a very strong squad this season, drawing from last season's experience and harnessing the growing international popularity of Futsal.

Sadly, we got knocked out of the quarter-finals of the Conference Cup, but we dominated the league - winning all ten games.

This goes to prove that my main goal of establishing Futsal as a competitive sport in Leeds was successful. Running the team on my own would have been hard work, but I had support from Oron, Aidan, James Briars and Liam Hine, who is part of the football committee. Liam helped out a lot in terms of running the social media and transportation.

Hopefully, for next season we can form two teams and continue to develop the sport and get a decent training slot at the Edge, because training on Friday nights is very tough for all our players.



BUCS fixtures 22nd February unless stated otherwise

Full fixtures and results at bucs.org.uk

American Football Mixed 1st vs Keele 1st:
4.30pm (Sunday 18th February)

Football Mens 1st vs Leeds Beckett 1st: 2pm,
Weetwood

Football Mens 2nd vs Leeds Beckett 4th:
1:45pm, Weetwood

Golf Mixed 1sts vs Newcastle Mixed 2nd: 11am,
Leeds Golf Centre

Hockey Mens 2nd vs Durham 4th: 4pm,
Weetwood

Hockey Womens 5th vs Newcastle 4th: 4pm,
Weetwood

Hockey Womens 6th vs Hull 2nd: 2:30pm,
Weetwood

Netball 1st vs Manchester Metropolitan
University (TBC)

Netball 2nd vs Leeds Beckett 2nd: 1:30pm,
Gryphon Sports Centre

Rugby Union Mens 1st vs Newcastle 1st (TBC),
Weetwood

Rugby Union Mens 2nd vs Liverpool 1st: (TBC),
Weetwood

Tennis Mens 1st vs Leeds Beckett 3rd: 1pm,
John Charles Centre for Sport

Tennis Mens 2nd vs Durham 4th: 12pm, David
Lloyd

Tennis: Mens 3rd vs Sheffield Hallam 1st: 12pm,
Weetwood

Tennis Womens 1st vs York 1st: 12pm, David
Lloyd

Waterpolo Womens 1st vs Dundee 1st: (TBC)



Leeds 34-3 Strathclyde



Dominant performance in the pool for Leeds

Luke Etheridge
Waterpolo Mens 1sts

This was a day to forget for the Strathclyde University men's water polo team on Wednesday. After a 220-mile trip to the Edge, the team couldn't get their bus parked, leading to the start of the game being delayed slightly. By the end of the match, the Scottish side will have wished they'd have stayed at home, as they were thrashed 34-3 by Leeds, who moved through to the last 16 of the Water Polo Trophy. From the start, Leeds were on top, with twenty-four unanswered goals in the second and third quarter propelling them to victory.

Strathclyde were the first side to score, winning a penalty after a Leeds foul. The away side were then lucky to stay ahead, with Leeds hitting the crossbar, before two quick goals put the home side 2-1 up. One of the major advantages that Leeds had during the match was their ability to make changes, with Strathclyde unable to field any substitutes. After the away side levelled the scores, Leeds made their first changes, but it was their goalkeeper who put

them ahead, catching Strathclyde's stopper unaware with a fantastic long range shot off of the crossbar. Constant pressure from the home side helped them score five more goals, taking an 8-2 lead right on the buzzer to signal the end of the quarter.

The second quarter started scrappily, but Leeds' counter attack was working to devastating effect. Their attacks seemed much more purposeful than their opponents, and this showed as they quickly took a 12-2 lead. Strathclyde's occasional attacks were stopped by the Leeds defence, which inevitably led to another goal on the counter for the home side. This pattern continued for the rest of the quarter, adding five more goals to take a 17-2 lead into half time. Strathclyde looked crestfallen at what was happening, as they were unable to make any changes to save their tiring bodies.

There was no sign of the home side relenting in the second half, as they scored two goals in quick succession, one courtesy of another fantastic counter-attack, and one down to a poor pass from the away side's keeper. The extra energy of the Leeds side was obvious, as at times they seemed to have

extra men in the pool, such was the effectiveness of their play. Despite this, Strathclyde were slightly improved from the first half, but still couldn't prevent the home side taking a 27-2 lead, before finally scoring, much to the annoyance of the home keeper.

Leeds seemed to take it easier in the final quarter, seeming content to keep the ball, and only attacking when an obvious opportunity presented itself. They took a 30-3 lead, forcing Strathclyde to shoot from long range, leading to quick turnover's, giving Leeds a chance to attack again. The home side added another four goals before the end of the match. Strathclyde tried to salvage some pride before the end, as they hit the crossbar three times in the final few minutes, but Leeds ended the match as 34-3 victors.

The home side will be hoping they can take this momentum into their final league match against Newcastle, as they need to avoid defeat to ensure that they stay in the Northern 1A division next season. If they can repeat the team spirit and determination they showed today, there's no reason why this should be a problem.