



THE GRYPHON

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Pints against policy?

Union offers free pint in return for votes, contradicting assertion it “will never serve an alcoholic drink for less than £1.50”

Jessica Murray
Dominic Johnson

Leeds University Union's stance on alcohol has been called into question after they introduced free pints as part of a set of incentives to encourage people to vote in its Leadership Race, in contradiction to their policy on not selling a unit of alcohol for under one pound.

Earlier this year *The Gryphon* published a story on drinks prices in LUU compared to prices at other student unions, with a Union spokesperson asserting that “We [The Union] will never serve an alcoholic drink for less than £1.50 and never sell a unit of alcohol for less than £1.”

This appears to contradict the union's decision to hand out free pints in return for votes in the Leadership Race.

Furthermore, following a story in *The Gryphon* about bottles of VK being blurred out of official photos taken at Fruity by a photographer, the Union responded: “We have policy in place to promote responsible drinking and therefore we prefer not to use images that show alcohol consumption and brands. Removing part of the bottles was an odd editing choice made by our photographer and we agree it doesn't look great!”

The Leadership Race received its lowest turnout in recent years with 6561 votes cast, compared to last year's

7744 and 8488 in 2015. In an attempt to increase voter turnout in the final days of voting, the Union introduced incentives to encourage more students to vote. These included a voucher that entitled voters to a free pint in Old Bar or Terrace, a free hot drink in Balcony or Pyramid, a free Perkier or Naked bar from Salad Box, or a free Chupa Chups lolly from Essentials. This seems to have been quite a successful technique in encouraging more students to vote, with many taking advantage of the incentives and the number of votes surging in the final days.

However, some have voiced their complaints about such policy. While the

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Why is my rebellion white?

We look at the whitewashing of punk and it's existence in Africa and Asia

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Cirque du Soleil back in town

The world famous circus troupe present *Varekai*, *Tales of the Forest*

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Sharks are friends, not food

Science explore the future of sharks and their integral role in the ocean

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Darling Marling

Laura Marling holds a seminar ahead of the release of latest album *Super Feminia*

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Gryphon Air:

**Mondays,
12pm, LSR**

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

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Editor's Letter:



Dear Students of Leeds,

Binge drinking at university has long been a problem to be tackled. With students moving away from home for the first time, no parents to reign in their consumption, and fellow students likely to pressure them to drink more, it isn't difficult to take it too far. The consequences of this can range from minor injuries, poor grades, broken friendships, mental health problems, or even serious injuries and death. Just a couple of months ago a student at Newcastle University died after drinking excessive amounts of alcohol at a society initiation. These incidents are thankfully rare, but they go to show that more work needs to be done to in order to tackle the endemic of binge drinking.

Leeds University and LUU have introduced a number of measures to try and tackle this, from avoiding cheap drinks prices in their bars, banning society initiations and drinking games on campus, introducing a whole host of non-alcohol related events, and refusing to publish photos of students drinking alcohol at Fruity. While these are often great and well-intentioned policies, they seem to fall short of tackling the overarching problem. Cheap drinking, initiations and drinking games all still take place, but just away from the safety and support of LUU. If students can't get drinks cheap enough at the Union bar, they'll buy a cheap bottle of vodka from the local shop and drink it at home or in halls. If students can't do initiations on campus, they'll do them late at night on Woodhouse Moor instead. The Union provides students a safe space to drink in, with staff members and security on hand to deal with any issues or accidents. The Union have played their part in tackling irresponsible drinking in LUU, but this needs to be extended further beyond the walls of the Union.

There is a general culture around drinking, around socials and

sports teams, that needs to be tackled and there's no easy solution. The fact of the matter is that students will drink. And drink a lot. Alcohol is so ingrained in to British culture, the problem isn't going away any time soon.

The most important thing that needs tackling is ignorance around alcohol and tolerance levels, and the potential consequences that can arise from drinking too much. Never in my life have I been given any alcohol education; at school I was taught not to smoke or take drugs, but no one ever told me how many units were in a pint of beer or how to gauge your tolerance levels. Four years after coming to university, I feel like I've only just learnt my limits.

More education and awareness should be instilled in students at school, and then again when they come to university. Society committees are all given training and guidance about how to organise responsible socials, and how to prevent alcohol-induced accidents. But there should be more conversation on how we can extend this to all students, and make it a more compulsory aspect of university life.

Excessive drinking can and does have devastating effects on students' lives. It needs continuously addressing.

For more information on responsible drinking, visit:
www.drinkaware.co.uk.

Jessica Murray
Editor-in-Chief
editor@thegryphon.co.uk

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incentives may have increased the voter turnout, it may not have increased voter engagement in the Leadership Race and the policies of the respective candidates, instead encouraging students to cast careless votes in exchange for complimentary Union benefits. Although other techniques were employed in an attempt to increase engagement, and Union 'Racemakers' worked hard throughout the week to encourage students to vote, some felt the use of incentives was the wrong course of action.

LUU have responded: "We've always had a way to say thanks to students who vote. Whether its products, parties or printer credits, we have run competitions and given away prizes and freebies for years. We see this as generating a buzz of activity and conversation around the race.

Drinks vouchers were limited to one per voter and were also redeemed against a huge range of hot and soft drinks.

We made sure that thanking voters with a complimentary drink didn't contradict our responsible drinking policy as the choice of drink from the range of options was down to the individual, there was never an alcohol only choice and the terms included a quantity restriction of one per person."

Reece Parker, the newly elected Gryphon editor, argued: "The use of incentives undoubtedly led to skewed ballots, many people simply clicking on random applications to receive their rewards. I won by a mere 300 votes; who's to say this was not due to having an amusing haircut or a bright jacket in my candidate photo?"

There are also reports of students making use of the numerous voting stations around the Union and claiming their free vouchers multiple times, allowing them to possibly claim up to five free pints of beer. Although this was of course not the intention of LUU, it is part of an overall uncertainty on Union policy with regard to alcohol pricing and advertisement.

To discover more about *The Gryphon's* coverage of the Union's alcohol policy and the blurring out of VKs in Fruity's Facebook photographs, visit: www.thegryphon.co.uk/category/news

Editor of the Week



Jemima Skala
Music Editor

Jemima has worked tirelessly for the Music section this year, organising countless reviews and interviews. This week she came on our new radio show, Gryphon Air, for a chat about the Brit awards nominations.

Burglars target final year students

Seven final-year students had their laptops broken, losing dissertation and course work

Polly Hatcher

On Friday 17th February, a burglary took place at the house of seven final year students on Headingley Mount. The offenders used a crowbar to force entry to the house, which they then used to break into the bedrooms, all of which were locked.

They stole all of the students' laptops and two rucksacks.

Hannah Brown, a final year Fashion Marketing student who lives in the house, said "They were only after laptops as my friend had a really expensive camera next to her laptop which wasn't taken so it was clear that this was a made to order job.

"I'd actually hidden my laptop under my bed in a towel in a bag but they still found it. In hindsight I hadn't hidden my charger so they could see I had a MacBook somewhere so I would say to others that you should definitely remember to hide your charger too."

Two houses in the same area were also robbed that night, and, after speaking to people in the other houses, Hannah said that they all used XL taxis to get to their nights out.

Hannah said: "The taxi driver was asking us if we were all out and we aren't an obvious house to rob as we're right next to a shop with CCTV, the stadium with CCTV and a blocked off road so we feel they were certain we were out and probably told that we were.

"Lots of us have lost some form of work and my friend's memory stick was in her rucksack which they took too.

"I would say to make sure you back things up somewhere else such as Dropbox. You just can't be

too cautious – especially in final year! If they want to take your laptop then they will, so just make sure everything's backed up and insured then you won't really have too much to lose."

The West Yorkshire Police's Crime Map shows the concentration of burglaries around student areas. The map below displays the number of burglaries reported during December 2016 (the latest available statistics).

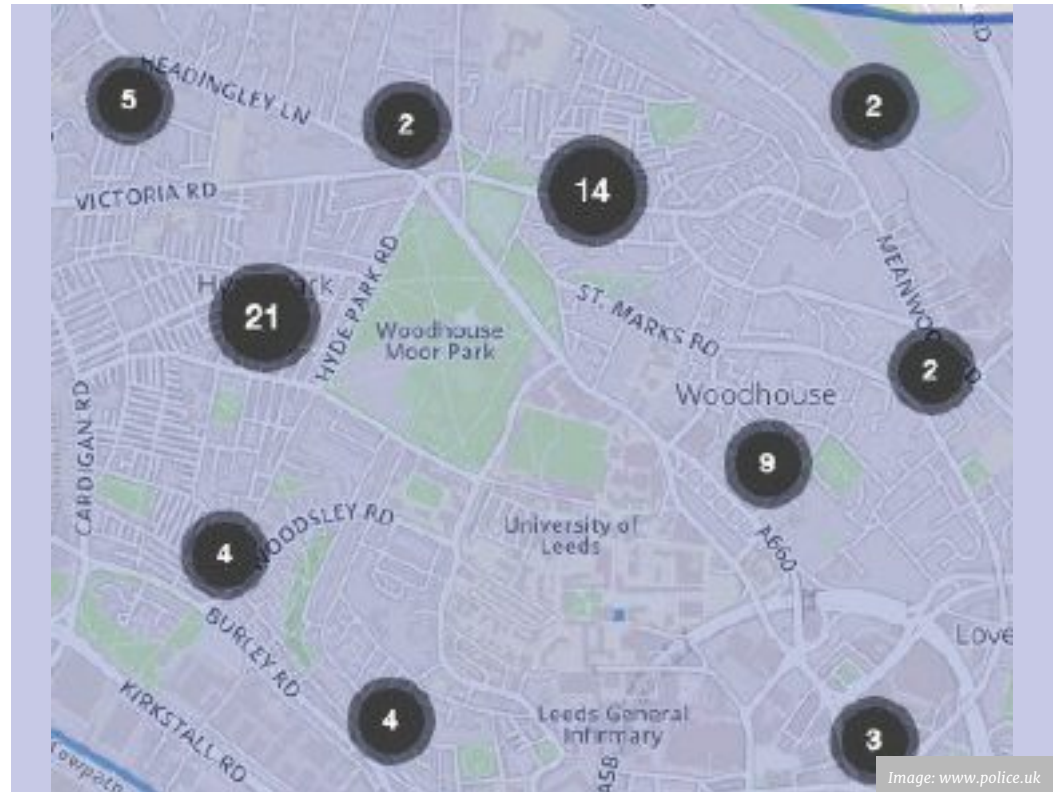


Image: www.police.uk

Leeds: Capital of Culture 2023?

Undaunted by Brexit, an independent group has launched Leeds' momentous bid for the European title

Christopher Tobin
Sarah Berry

The Independent Steering Group has launched Leeds' bid to become a European Capital of Culture by calling upon organisations and individuals to come together to submit their ideas to showcase the best of Leeds.

"In 2023, we want the eyes of the world on us. This is your opportunity to shape the future of your city" states the campaign website, www.leeds2023.co.uk.

The bid and website will give every resident of the city the chance to share their cultural and creative projects. They will be presented to a panel of European judges and, it is hoped, secure Leeds' victory.

Sharon Watson, chair of the Leeds 2023 Independent Steering Group said: "Today marks one of the most exciting milestones so far in our journey towards 2023 as we officially throw the bid open to the people of Leeds and ask them to tell us what they would like to see in a 365 day cultural programme.

"It has always been our ambition that people living and working in Leeds feel the bid is truly collaborative, that it belongs to them and they've been given a chance to shape and influence it each step of the way. That's because we feel passionately that it's those people at the heart of our communities who are best equipped to

articulate the creativity and energy that makes Leeds a place where culture in all its many different forms can grow and flourish."

A group of Leeds creatives, named Collective, 23 are coming together to propose a programme of events for 2023. Using their skills and connections they'll create an artistic programme to put Leeds at the center of the race to win the bid.

In response to confusion over the bid's feasibility following Brexit, the organisers have said: "We were worried about that too, but the Department for Culture Media & Sport (DCMS) announced that the UK would fulfil its obligation to host the competition as it will still be a member of the European Union until at least 2019 and will therefore participate as a full member.

"The competition is not exclusively for EU member states. Norway,

Iceland and Switzerland have all hosted the title in the past but are not members of the EU."

The European Capital of Culture was last hosted by the UK in 2008 when Liverpool won the bid, and prior to this Glasgow was the last UK city to win back in 1990. The decision will be made in 2018, with planning having started three years ago in 2014. The bid is being led by the Independent Steering Group with cross party support across Leeds City Council.



Campus Watch

2 University of Cambridge Students warned not to wear college gowns over fears they may be face attack

Dr Paul Hartle, an English fellow at St Catherine's college, expressed his concerns following an assault of a Cambridge student cycling across the city centre wearing college attire.

Students were urged to refrain from wearing academic gowns and dinner party dress when out and about in the city centre.

"The student was wearing his gown which may have occasioned the incident, given recent unhelpful local publicity about the stupidly arrogant behaviour of a particular student (from another college)," he told *Varsity*, the Cambridge student newspaper.

"Whilst I suspect this was a random act, it might be prudent for a while at least not to wear your gown about town," he added.

The assault on the student was seen as a reprisal for the high profile incident where a Pembroke college student was filmed taunting a homeless man by burning a £20 note in front of him.

As reported by *The Gryphon*, Ronald Coyne was dressed smartly in bow tie and tails and was filmed burning the money with a cigarette lighter.

Jangira Lewis



1 Sussex University University comes under fire after staff workshops held on 'dealing with right-wing attitudes in the classroom'

Officials at the university state that the event was aimed at helping staff act appropriately when faced with extreme views, such as racism or homophobia.

The workshop was held for academic staff by one of the leading professors at the university and was well advertised around campus via posters, welcoming all Faculty and PhD staff to join for an "informal discussion and collaboration around issues of conflict, security and peacebuilding".

This has led to accusations that the university is restricting free speech.

In a statement released by the university, they said "The event was aimed at talking about what role teaching staff should have in challenging extreme attitudes, such as racist or homophobic comments on campus.

"Racism and homophobia exist across the political spectrum and there should be no elision between right wing politics and extremism.

"An openness to and tolerance of diverging political views is an essential part of learning and sits at the core of the teaching ethos at the University."

Polly Hatcher

3 University of Bristol Students take landlords to court - and win

A group of students at the University of Bristol successfully sued their landlord for unreasonably taking money from their rental deposit. The six students received a letter from their letting agency informing them that nearly £800 would be deducted from their deposit due to a repaint of the house and over £500 of cleaning costs.

As a result, one of the students involved provided evidence that the flat was left in a cleaner state than what it was when they moved in and found that no painting was actually done to the property despite hundreds of pounds charged to them.

The third year biology student said that "After emailing them countless times it became evident they weren't going to budge on the money at all, and were simply waiting for me to give up." After taking the landlord and letting agency to court the group was given a cheque for full costs within the week.

Christopher Tobin

4 University of Oxford Kim Jong Un's nephew refuses place, fearing assassination by his own uncle

The nephew of North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un has refused a place at an Oxford college fearing assassination by his uncle's hitmen, it has been claimed.

It seems that the allure of the prestigious institution and the prospect of a reunion with his girlfriend (reportedly already studying in Oxford) cannot outweigh Kim Han Sol's fear of danger.

Although there have been concerns for his safety for some time, they were heightened by the alleged assassination of Han Sol's father - and Kim Jong Un's half brother - in a Malaysian airport last week.

Chinese security officials had already warned the 21-year-old that his uncle may make an attempt upon his life in order to eliminate his family's bloodline and thus its threat to Kim's leadership. In the event of a power shift, Han Sol had been viewed as a potential replacement ruler.

Although the North Korean regime has denied foul play in Kim Jong Nam's untimely demise, it wouldn't seem out of the question for the leader who notoriously executed his own uncle on a charge of treason back in 2013.

According to the *Mail on Sunday*, Han Sol is now living under armed protection with his mother and sister in the Chinese province of Macau.

Sarah Berry

Meet Your Student Exec-Elect

The votes are in and the results have been counted... Here are your new student exec for 2017/18



George Bissett
Community Officer

The biggest thing I want to change is the culture surrounding house hunting. I want to discourage students from signing too early (despite letting agents' deceptive attempts to convince them that they have to SIGN NOW OR LIVE IN A CARDBOARD BOX!) and encourage more students to do their own bills so they can avoid overpriced 'all-inclusive' packages. And of course, the Fruity Bus.

The biggest challenge is going to be getting landlords and letting agents to play ball; getting a burglar alarm in every student house in Leeds, abolishing signing fees and introducing a maximum deposit is going to be tough if landlords and letting agents value making money over students' well-being. But that's why I'm



Natasha Mutch-Vidal
Equality and Diversity Officer

Engagement is really important to me; I want to get people up and making the most out of Leeds University Union, ensuring it is an inclusive space for everyone. I want to work closely with the Liberation Coordinators to ensure that every student has the best possible time at Leeds University irrespective of our differences. I will foster a culture of understanding and more importantly respect and continue to push for equal platforms for all including, mature, disabled, parenting, international, BME, LGBTQ+ and religious. One of my policies is to completely eliminate the negative stigma attached to the word 'immigration.'

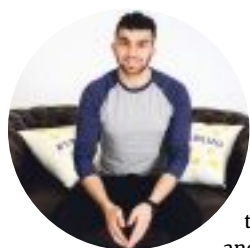
Making sure the union upgrade causes minimal disruption is going to be tricky but it is only fair that all students' needs are considered.



Jack Palmer
Union Affairs Officer

I'm looking forward to working on making our democratic structures more inclusive and visible for all student voices and having an input on how the building upgrade is developed to make the building more multi-purpose and accessible, but the biggest achievement I'm aiming for is to get the University to increase their block grant funding of LUU. With the building project having a negative effect on our income and our services for mental health support and academic representation under increasing demand, it is vital that the University recognises the role of LUU has in the student experience and as one of the best Unions in the country, and match their funding with that recognition and ambition. The block grant is up for negotiation in 2018, and having lobbied this year on this subject, I hope the future financial sustainability of LUU will be secured with this better funding.

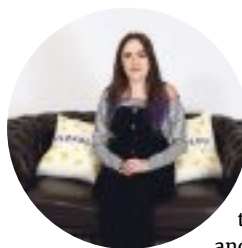
It's great that I'm going to be around for another year and I'm really looking forward to working with the next Exec, but I need to make sure I keep the momentum of projects I've started going over summer so that they hit the ground running in September and keep my focus on what I've set out to do. If I've learned anything so far this year it's that time flies, so there isn't any to lose!



Zaki Kaf Al-Ghazal
Education Officer

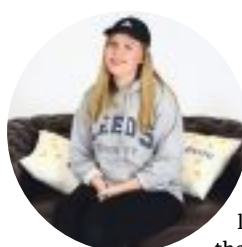
I want to change the culture around studying in the university; in today's job market the coveted 2:1 is seen as the be all and end all dominating students' lives from day one of first year (with freshers' being told that their first year grades are needed for future internships and so on). Grades are important but too often they impact the mental health of students and take the educational aspect away from learning. It becomes a means to achieve good grades as opposed to learning for the sake of educating oneself and becoming a more well rounded person.

I think pushing for the introduction of one 24 hour library will be a challenge. Past education officers have pushed and have not succeeded. But the pressure is on the university; it cannot keep refusing this demand from students and fees are unfortunately increasing once again due to TEF. This gives the university even more money, and I will do my very best to ensure this is used to fund Laidlaw library's 24 hour opening.



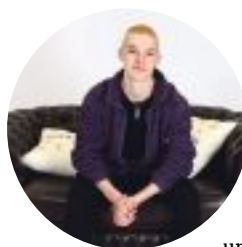
Chloe Sparks
Education Officer

The biggest change I want to make as Welfare Officer is to improve support for sexual assault and domestic abuse survivors. There is little awareness of how domestic abuse impacts many students and this needs to change. I want to keep on improving the inclusiveness and accessibility of all welfare support at LUU, but I think this specific issue is so important as it can be extremely difficult for students to reach out for help about this. I will ensure that the support for this is accessible to all student survivors, whether you identify as LGBTQ, disabled or even male, you shouldn't be made to feel even more isolated by the support offered by your union.



Jessica Bassett
Activities Officer

I have to admit I spend the majority of my student loan in LUU. If I'm not eating an essentials meal deal I'm having drinks in Terrace. I want to give something back to all students that use LUU. I want to create Union loyalty cards that can be used across all venues within the union. A point system could be implemented and each purchase recorded and turned into points. In addition to this I believe engaging with LUU is also important therefore if you go and get your CV checked in JobLink you could also pick up some points that lead to PRIZES!



Reece Parker
Gryphon Editor

The biggest thing I want to change is the percentage of the student body who regularly read *The Gryphon*. Every lecture shoutout I performed during campaigning I began by asking 'how many people here read *The Gryphon*?' and I never got more than five hands. This is unacceptable.

My biggest challenge will be delivering *The Gryphon* into student halls. In the coming weeks I will be bringing a plan to the union and seeking their guidance and assistance.

1 in 3 students can't afford food

Study claims students are struggling to afford necessities and are having their health put at risk by high debt

Rabeeah Moeen

New research has revealed that debt is adversely affecting students in ever greater numbers. The scrapping of the maintenance grant and a further rise in tuition fees has spiralled the cost of a university education, and high costs mean high debt.

Financial technology company Intelligent Environments commissioned a survey which found that three-quarters of students who apply for maintenance loans feel stressed about the amount of debt they are accumulating. A large number of these students said they have to seek sources of income elsewhere, with a third turning to family members.

The Vice President of NUS, Shelly Asquith, said "the NUS is concerned about the impact this has on the likelihood of working-class students to apply to university," as they would likely be forced to seek out other forms of income.

The research also found that the top three items students spend their loans on are rent, food and utilities, seemingly disproving the stereotype that students are unable to manage their money.

Director of Intelligent Environments, David Webber, said the duty was on banks to "assist students in managing their finances responsibly."

Worryingly, a third of the survey's respondents said they were unable to afford their weekly food shop. The inability to buy food is, along with a higher rate of mental health problems, a consequence of

high university debts.

Estelle Clarke, a member of the advisory board for the Intergenerational Foundation – a think-tank that researches fairness between generations – said "there is an undisputed negative relationship between debt

and mental health."

Industry experts have warned these figures depict the inevitable outcomes of an increasingly unaffordable higher education system.



Image: bbc.co.uk

Oxford abroad?

The University is considering opening campuses abroad to continue receiving EU benefits

Jangira Lewis

Oxford University is considering opening its first foreign campus in response to the UK leaving the European Union. This would break the university's 700 year tradition as it has never opened a foreign branch.

The former director of the French ministry for education, Jean-Michel Blanquer, confirmed French authorities were working to bring the UK's top universities to France.

Oxford University has been informed that such a campus would have French legal status and therefore continue to receive EU funding after Brexit.

If its plans come into fruition, the construction of a new Oxford University campus in Paris could begin as early as 2018.

The possibility that Brexit could lead to European research funding being withdrawn from UK universities has been described as a "disaster", by academics. In addition, there are persistent concerns that a lack of access to Europe will make UK universities less attractive to potential students and staff members.

A decision has yet to be reached, but a spokesman for Oxford said: "Oxford has been an international university throughout its history and it is determined to remain open to the world whatever the future political landscape looks like."

The former director-general of the French ministry for education and the Dean of Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Economiques et Commerciales, Jean-Michel Blanquer, has confirmed that the Université Paris Seine already has plans for a new international campus.

He has also met with officials from the University of Warwick to discuss the proposals.



Students lose 40% of friends every six months, according to research

Benedict Coltman

A study from Oxford University has found that many friendship groups deteriorate when students leave home and go to university.

The researchers, who analysed both male and female original friendship groups, said the core reason was because many students could not get home every weekend to see their friends.

Following a group of students moving to university throughout their first year, Evolutionary psychologist Professor Robin Dunbar said: "We looked at what happened to the original set of friendships - they deteriorate really rapidly over a matter of months. The churn was phenomenal".

Dunbar, speaking at the AAAS annual meeting in Boston, revealed that the research showed how the students lost forty percent of their friends every six months.

Speaking to students at The University of Leeds, many agreed with the research.

Many students at Leeds University agree with the research. Hannah Gravett, an undergraduate medical student, said "There are some friends I still speak to but others I hardly see anymore. It's difficult to catch up with each other when you're both so busy".

However, speaking about the figures, Gravett added "I might not talk to one or two friends anymore but forty percent of my friendship group hasn't disappeared!"

The study also proposed a "very striking sex

difference" suggesting that the research shows girls needed to ring each other to keep friendships strong, while boys needed to meet up in person.

"Women clearly have much more intense close friendships," he said. "They're very intense, very like romantic relationships - in the sense if they break they break catastrophically."

Comparing friendships, Dunbar added talking didn't strengthen or weaken boys' relationships.

"What held up their friendships was doing stuff together. Going to a football match, going to the pub for a drink, playing five a side. They had to make the effort."

Professor Dunbar also stated that having a large group of friends could make women stressed, which might affect their fertility. He said, "Women's infertility is heavily driven by social stresses. The stresses you incur destabilise the menstrual system endocrinology and very

quickly lead to infertility".

However, having a tight knit group of friends of around five is said to potentially cancel out the effects of this stress.

Dunbar added, "If you do not have these friends, you are more likely to have your menstrual cycle and endocrinology disrupted"



Council in turmoil

Three Labour councillors have resigned in just eight days, citing a "toxic atmosphere"

Christopher Tobin

Crossgates councillor Janette Walker joined Garforth members Mark Dobson and Sarah Field in forming a new local independent party. This is the third councillor to quit Leeds City Council's Labour government in eight days, suggesting the administration is in deep trouble.

Walker said she had no confidence in the Leeds party leadership to manage the nearly £500 million budget arguing that there is a "toxic atmosphere of mistrust, bullying, cronyism, whispers and unfairness endemic within the controlling elite of the Leeds Labour Group."

The council leadership has said that the claims of the three resigned councillors are "completely fanciful". They've stated that Walker in particular is disgruntled due to disciplinary investigation she is facing over "inappropriate social media postings" and low attendance. Walker said she was being investigated for publicly criticising fellow councillors who had failed to pay their council tax which she criticised "not in keeping with the Labour values".

Her resignation follows plans announced on Wednesday to increase taxes by 5% for families. Leader of the council Judith Blake criticised the government's funding cuts on the city but stressed

Leeds and the Labour administration was "strong and resilient in the face of huge pressure".

The Tory leader in the council, Andrew Carter, joked that "we seem to be getting emails like confetti about defections from the Labour group". Another Tory councillor John Procter added: "Labour in Leeds are divided. They haven't got a clue what to do with

a serious budget situation. They're split, they are in turmoil and we all know it."

Leeds University Labour society were asked about the accusations of bullying and the state of the council but Josh Molly, chairman, said they had "no comment to make".



Image: Labour Party

An insider's view on the leadership race

Reece Parker, Gryphon Editor-in-chief-elect, gives his take on the leadership race, its questionable voting incentives, and what can be done to improve future elections

Reece Parker
Clubs Editor & Editor-in-chief-elect

Like most of the third-year students at Leeds University, I'm currently treading water in the pool of degree classification. Failing an incredible resurgence, a first is out of my grasp, and a 2.2 is a fate I've almost certainly avoided. Unlike the vast majority of the Leeds student body however, I've embraced a new form of purgatory, that of being a winning candidate in the LUU elections. Purgatory truly is the correct description of this, being trapped between the elation of success and the creeping realisation of the task at hand. Think of it as the worst sequel to *The Hangover* thus far, and the lead role is now a man who mumbled through his own acceptance speech and jumped off stage before its conclusion. I've struggled in the last few weeks to explain quite the effect this race has upon candidates, but I hope I can express it in this article, otherwise I'm in for a long year.

This year's leadership elections received 6561 votes, reflecting a mere fifth of the student body.

I feel it is required to first address the elephant in the room. This year's leadership elections received 6561 votes, reflecting a mere fifth of the student

body. The fact that the Tab Leeds' 'fittest fresher' competition drew more votes is especially troubling. I'm sure in the coming weeks our union will pick apart the reasons as to why this has happened. Nevertheless, my own personal notion is that there is a gap between the student body and the exec that undoubtedly needs bridging. Our students are not aware of their achievements, are not aware if promises are being fulfilled, are not aware if they are being represented. I will address this in my tenure as Editor-in-chief, and seek a solution.

Secondly, and attached to this, is how our union sought to correct the low voter turnout. With two days of the election week remaining, the crisis from the lack of votes meant that those who completed a ballot were told they could receive a series of rewards, from a pint in Old Bar to printer credits. This undoubtedly led to skewed ballots, many people simply clicking on random applications to receive their rewards. I won by a mere 300 votes, who's to say this was not due to having an amusing haircut or a bright jacket in my candidate photo?

When pushing candidates to vote, the main tactic employed by the union was to suggest a completion of the 'dream team'. Every candidate I had the pleasure of speaking to rightly condemned this questionnaire. There is no way that you can select the best candidate by answering 5 arbitrary questions, explicitly designed to be divisive. Questions such as 'should the exec be involved politically?' draws nuanced answers, nothing which can be encapsulated by 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. If I had to concisely show the issue with this questionnaire, I have to say that I did not even receive myself when I

completed the test.

Whilst it has been necessary to criticise the tactics to increase voter turnout, I believe congratulations are in order for the team which handled candidate mentoring, budgeting, and other admin tasks. They worked tirelessly and their professional aid was

I won by a mere 300 votes, who's to say this was not due to having an amusing haircut or a bright jacket in my candidate photo?

comforting. Everyone who took part in this race did so in good spirits, and I would've been happy for anyone involved to have picked up the coveted positions on results night. Whilst this is undoubtedly cliché, everyone who was involved is a winner: to leave your comfort zone in front of an entire university, to speak on stage in front of many, to argue for the positions you care about, these are achievements many of your peers will sadly leave University without. If there is a way to turn around the lack of student interest in the exec, it is to continue to grow the extensive support networks and sounding boards we have developed throughout this race, and for those who were elected to incorporate the promises and passions of their peers into their tenure. If we manage this, we can mean so much more to our students than a catchy video or a tacky slogan.



Last dates for the old ways: going Dutch

Aiden Alexander Wynn
BA English Literature

Many of you may have seen this year's Valentines' episode of First Dates. It was full of bursting with perfectly matched couples, and enough first date butterflies to make me and my housemates all shed a tear – for the most part. However, this largely successful episode was undercut by a scene of the utmost awkwardness, when Steve suggested that he and his date, Elaine, “go Dutch”.

This idea of going Dutch is one that upends accepted notions of dating etiquette, by having the man and the woman split the bill equally between them. I was aware that this was something that still had rather a large stigma attached to it in our society's dating world. But still, the fact that Steve's refusal to pay for the whole date made headlines in national newspapers is simply baffling to me.

What I don't understand is the fact that this expected dating arrangement accepts a highly misogynistic idea that the man is going to have more money than the woman, and so should pay for her. Firstly, this is such a frustratingly outdated example of heteronormative, patriarchal, and hyper-masculine standards latching onto us, while we refuse to shake them off. But, even beyond that, it acts as an inconsiderate, preconceived assumption of each individuals' socioeconomic

background, and ignores the fact that money is not an easy-going topic for a lot of people.

It is not that I believe that the arrangement itself is an issue; just the normalisation of it. As an example, if whoever initiated the date decided on an extortionately priced restaurant without

I know that some want to hold onto these sorts of chivalrous behaviours, but honestly, in my opinion, chivalry is dead for a reason.

consulting their dating partner, then it would be fair that the burden of paying more should fall onto their shoulders. But still, I'm a proponent of discussing this arrangement before the card machine is whipped out, even if one partner was overzealous enough to book something pricey, without consideration for what the other would want.

However, in the case of Steve and Elaine on First Dates, the situation was a blind date that both agreed to go on, to a restaurant that neither had any control over. If nowhere else, then certainly in

this case it doesn't seem to be the fairest solution that one party should have to pay for the whole meal, unless they genuinely wanted and offered to.

I have seen some criticisms of Steve's handling of the situation which suggest that he should have discussed the idea of going Dutch with Elaine prior to the bill arriving, which does make sense. But what I still don't like is the idea that payment should only be discussed if it is going to deviate from this expectation. It is my belief that accepted dating etiquette should lie in the discussion of how the couple are going to pay for the date, in whatever arrangement they choose. Not in an assumption that one person can and will pay for the whole thing.

I know that some want to hold onto these sorts of chivalrous behaviours, but honestly, in my opinion, chivalry is dead for a reason. These outdated modes by which a man is supposed to woo a woman seem disingenuous, incentivised, and to exist based upon an accepted idea that the man holds all the power in the situation, from things like their financial status, to where a date takes place.

Usually, I'm all for someone who is undermined by the patriarchy squeezing whatever benefit they can from it. But, in this case, the dynamic resembles far too closely some archaic courting ritual, in which a couple's relationship is established as fundamentally unequal from the outset.

Nuttall's Hillsborough Lie

Will Maylunn
BA Philosophy

15th April 1989, Hillsborough Stadium. 96 people lost their lives due to a collection of horrendous decisions. Tragic for those who lost their lives, tragic for their families, and tragic for the football community. After the Sun's disgusting treatment of the situation and the resulting backlash (including Liverpool FC's recent decision to ban the Sun's “journalists” from their stadium), one would think anyone would treat the matter very seriously. But perhaps that doesn't apply to UKIP's leader, Paul Nuttall.

In 2012, Nuttall claimed he “lost close personal friends” in Hillsborough and that he understands “as well as anyone how deep the scars of that tragedy go.” When pressed about those claims this week, he admitted this wasn't true. This has rightly been met with outrage across the UK, particularly from the families of those who passed away — it was beyond insensitive and insulting. He's currently the UKIP leader and their candidate for the Stoke by-election, but many of Stoke's residents have turned against him, calling for him to resign. Nuttall has now said that a member of his staff wrote it, not him. The post was removed from his website, and now his entire website has been shut down. Apparently this is due to “scheduled maintenance”. Funny, that.

Normally I'd attempt to give him the benefit of doubt. Is there a tiny chance his staff wrote something so personal without even passing it by him? Even his colleagues don't believe him; it was announced on Monday that the chairman of UKIP's Liverpool branch

and the chairman of UKIP's Merseyside branch have both resigned in protest. In case you aren't quite convinced, let's have a look at his track record, shall we?

In the Stoke by-election, Nuttall was accused of election fraud. After declaring he lived in Stoke on the electoral registration form, the property was later discovered to be empty, and Nuttall was forced to admit that he had never even entered the house when filling out the form. Clearly, he did not live there. Clearly, he lied. On his LinkedIn profile, he claimed to have a PhD from Liverpool Hope University. LHU were very interested to know where this imaginary degree came from, stating that “the education section is for qualifications you have been awarded, not ones you'd like to have one day.” Nuttall later said it was someone else who wrote this. In 2009 he wrote that he was a board member of a charity (North West Training Council), but NWTC responded very clearly that this was false and, in fact, he had never met any of the board members. He also claimed to have played professional football for Tranmere Rovers. Unsurprisingly, this was false. He claimed to have not written this either. Sensing a pattern? Me

too.

The fact that he really didn't need to lie about these things speaks volumes. He didn't need to pretend to lose close friends in Hillsborough to show compassion and understanding. He didn't need to lie about where he was living, since there's no rule about having to live in the constituency. He didn't need to lie about being a professional footballer, or having a PhD, or anything else. He simply didn't need to. The fact that he has repeatedly and unnecessarily lied reveals the level of contempt he holds for the public, and how little the word “credibility” means to him.

There is an almost infinite list of reasons why Paul Nuttall's politics is the last thing Stoke needs (or anywhere else for that matter). His incessant lying is but the icing on the (xenophobic) cake.



Image: PA Wire

Appealing to hearts, not minds: emotional politics

Max Bayer
BA Media and Communications

First things first, the concept of “fake news” has run completely off the tracks. President Donald Trump’s efforts to delegitimise the work produced by seasoned journalists is abhorrent and despicable. Is “the media” (whatever that even means in the 21st century with the Internet, Facebook, television, Snapchat, Twitter, Fox News, The New York Times, Breitbart, etc.) flawless? Of course not. Do dozens of high-quality news outlets continue to devote each and every day to producing valuable work that holds those with power accountable? You’re damn right. It’s going to continue to be that way today, tomorrow, and in 2020.

I felt that quick debunking was relevant before addressing the more important question. In what many are calling a “post-truth era”, has there been a shift by the public to valuing their gut rather than facts? Have emotions overrun civil political discourse? The answer is multifaceted.

I think the underbelly of all of this has been increasing political polarisation. The slow death of the political moderate has allowed the loudest voices in the room to be those standing farthest away from each other. The best example of this can be seen in the most recent U.S. Presidential election where Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Bernie Sanders forced the topic of conversation to sway farther and farther from the centre. Whilst one

was proposing building a wall to keep out illegal immigrants, the other was pushing for free tuition at public universities.

As a result, the discourse between constituents has deteriorated. When party figureheads preach policy that alienates the middle, supporters find less and

The slow death of the political moderate has allowed the loudest voices in the room to be those standing farthest away from each other.

less common ground. And here’s the kicker: when party leaders propose utopian policies that adhere to dreamlike-visions of the world, people buy in. Fast. If you’re a young 20-something with thousands of dollars of student debt, what sounds better than policy aimed at refinancing those loans? Well, free college tuition of course! If you’re a recently laid off, middle-aged white man from rural Kansas, what sounds better than sensible immigration policy? A concrete wall stretching across the whole border.

This cycle of adhering to unrealistic visions has created one hell of a conundrum. Political expectations

have been expanded on both sides of the political aisle that focus more on emotions than on reality. President Trump caused so many disenfranchised voters to gravitate towards him because of the bleak picture he painted at so many rallies — one consisting of terrorism, illegal immigration, and abundant job loss. Unfortunately for Trump, the facts paint a much different picture of America over the last few years. Terrorist attacks are rare, illegal immigration has stabilised, and unemployment has fallen.

So where does America go from here? Is there a fix to this problem? I think there just might be. America can tackle it’s political polarisation through...“the media.” Yes, that’s right, through the very institution under the utmost scrutiny at this very moment.

The world and America in particular, has been blessed (or cursed) with a wealth of information unlike any generation prior. That has added an extra layer of responsibility that I think the public has glossed over in past years. It’s imperative that people dedicate the necessary time to educate themselves on what’s going on, the sides of each argument, and the valuable takeaways. The more educated we are as a public, the more sensible a policy we’ll see enacted to satisfy our needs. To best educate ourselves, it requires trust in the media to produce a commodity worth consuming. It requires that we expect the best from trusted outlets. And it requires that we pay attention to the stories addressing people from all walks of life. News is a resource; we must take the utmost advantage of it.

Should we pursue A.I? A Binary Question

Chris Vickers
MPhys Physics

So, are you terrified of AI development and the horror it could bring? If not, then maybe you should be. While it’s long been the stuff of science-fiction, the idea of a real artificial intelligence being a part of the world we live in still seems like stuff of the distant future. However this distant future could be closer than we think, with current researchers in the field predicting complete AI sometime in the next 25 to 50 years. Scared yet? Maybe not, the idea of having intelligent computers and robots actually seems pretty exciting and provided we don’t make too many or give them weapons, how bad could it be?

As it happens, pretty bad. You see us humans, and all other life we’ve ever seen, are organic. While we have very complex brains the actual speed of our processing is pretty slow, the machines we use on the other hand, while less complicated, think about a million times faster than we do. And as time goes on the machines keeping getting more complex, and we aren’t getting any faster. The result of this is at the point where we do create an artificial intelligence of human complexity it will have surpassed us. To illustrate this, take a calculator and input the longest most complicated equation you can fit, grab some paper, press equals and see who finishes first. Then, imagine this speed discrepancy applied to every single aspect of thought and cognition. And then remember that this is one of the simplest computers on the planet. In theory an AI with the processing speed of a regular computer left alone for a week would perform

over 20,000 years of human intellectual work.

What is so scary about this is the realisation that with this much of an advantage we would be entirely at its mercy. With so much of our lives dependent on digital assistance, and even more so in 25 or so years’ time, it doesn’t take much of an imagination to see how easy it would be for a rogue machine of godlike capabilities to do away with us for good if it so desired. Perhaps as a solution to this we could take a page from Philip K. Dick’s book and bring in some laws of robotics? ‘Don’t kill humans,’ etc.

Alas, even this is unlikely to save us. Another neat advantage of being created is that, like us humans, the entirety of an AI’s mind is capable of change. And while as humans we do this over the course of millions of years of evolution, with an artificial mind change could be as simple as a Windows 10 installation. The AI’s self-designed updates could easily amend these restrictions and once again we’re stuck in a situation where we are all at the mercy of a god. Further laws to stop the AI from self-improving would rely on the designers somehow being more adept at preventing loopholes than a super genius AI would be at finding them.

So is that it? Should we just throw in the towel now if the risks are so great? Not necessarily, while an artificial intelligence could well spell our doom it might also be our only salvation. Because for all the potential terrible things an AI could do, it might still be better than the things we will do to ourselves. So far as a species we’re stock piled enough nuclear weapons to destroy the entire planet and only continue to build more. And in the face of the impending disasters of global warming, we have simply buried our heads in the sand. Let’s be honest, how much longer do we really expect we’ll last? Personally I really believe it’s rather preferable to throw ourselves at the mercy of a robotic creation when the alternative is the mercy of ourselves.



Image: FOX



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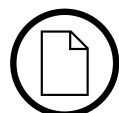
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Presents

In The Middle

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Samsara: Cycle of the Earth

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

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Image: Sonic PR

To promote her new album, *Semper Femina*, the notoriously shy Laura Marling held a student press conference to explain her music and method. We sent Associate Editor Flora Tiley down London to get the scoop on *Semper Femina*...

An admirable feminist. A woman of inexplicable guitar skills. A slender, pale goddess with the voice of an angel. Laura Marling is the six-string strumming 27-year-old whose poetic folk has no doubt influenced your life at some point. Starting out at the youthful age of 17, by 21 she had scooped a Brit Award. Now, free from her five-album contract with Virgin Records, she has spawned her own label More Alarming Records for her upcoming release *Semper Femina*. The phrase *semper femina* comes from a Virgil poem, the full quotation being “*Varium et mutabile semper femina*”; “woman is ever a fickle and changeable thing”. Shortening it to simply “*semper femina*” translates as “always woman” – an intentionally feminist gesture, having written the album in what was said to be a particularly “masculine” exploration of her life. With singles and self-directed music videos, the extensive promo in the run up to next month’s album release has been unprecedented. Amidst all this, she hosted a real one-off event, a student-only press conference at Goldsmith’s University.

As *The Gryphon*’s representative, I headed to the capital, not quite able to fathom that I was going to be in the same room as the inspirational, mesmeric and adored musician who had been a pinnacle of hope to me through those unsettled, uncomfortable teenage years. Because, let’s face it, being a teenager is the hardest and cruellest thing any individual has to go through. A good friend and I have all too often been at her gigs, necks craned, hands clasped in one another’s, tears rolling down our cheeks, never faltering on any of those masterful lyrics. This was a big deal. Seated in a small venue in the Goldsmith’s student union, about 40 other eager students from all over the country sat poised on their seats, facing the empty stage, save two tall stools, two microphones and two guitars.

And then she appeared: a vision clad in white, her nymph-like frame and features lilting in. She captivated the whole room, a mixture of her iconic and beguiling singing and spoken lyrics complemented expertly by cunning chords. She was hypnotic as she played: lazily strumming complicated rhythms and notes and effortlessly ranging her vocal scale. But there was something dead behind the eyes, despite the life and the otherworldliness of the music.

Often heralded as being wise beyond her years, a young Marling’s lyrics would be inspired by Gothic and Romantic literature until life experiences gave her additional stimuli for her writing. Yet it seems that her youthful career has rendered her immune to the fascination and critique of audiences with her music, her answers becoming much more animated when asked about working with producer Blake

Mills, a notorious stickler for perfection. She credits Mills, an “extraordinary musician” and his “unorthodox” methods for her vast improvement on the guitar: “I would go home every night from the studio and practice guitar because I wanted to be as good as him”.

When asked about the ‘meaning’ behind her tracks, she would drift about a proper answer, unwilling to delve further. And I agree: her music is her expression and her song production is likely to have been a cathartic, personal process, so why should she have to explain herself?

Marling speaks with great love and excitement about ‘Reversal of the Muse’, which was a series of podcasts where she interviewed various women in the music industry, including HAIM, Dolly Parton and Shura, highlighting the general lack and inequality thereof. In discussing this further, she makes another hint at moving on from music, wishing to extend the podcast conversations into visual art and film.

“I think the imbalance there needs to be rectified in whatever way it can be... So we can have a more balanced understanding of the world, because these are the mediums by which we understand the world”.

She has unashamedly discussed her views on femininity and feminism. She set out writing *Semper Femina* to undermine male perception of women – “We’re accustomed to seeing women through men’s eyes” – to then discover that the powerful way to do so would be to “look at women through a woman’s eyes”. Fundamentally, she has been inspired to ask more questions and continue the learning process about femininity. And again, she tackles it with such admirable maturity; she is not a bra burning, man-hating feminist.

So, not only was the conference a chance for me to fan-girl, but I observed what may be the beginning of a hiatus from music for our darling Marling. Having been at it solidly for ten years, perhaps she may just need to take time to add more strings to her bow? Whatever her future holds, she will continue to influence and inspire guitarists, feminists and artists around the world.

Flora Tiley

Laura Marling will play Leeds O2 Academy on 8th March.

“We’re accustomed to seeing women through men’s eyes”

Fresh Beats

***Prisoner* by Ryan Adams**

Prisoner is the 16th studio album by the exceedingly talented Ryan Adams, offering an emotional and raw depiction of love and heartache. However, it would be too easy to conflate this record into a mere breakup album following Adams' divorce to Mandy Moore, let alone being entirely disrespectful to his musical talent.

The record opens with 'Do You Still Love Me', a song synonymous with 80s rock and roll through its blunt guitar, heavy drums and that distinctly American sound in Adams vocals, recognised in the likes of Springsteen and Bryan Adams. However, the mouth organ on the following title track replaces the all American anthem into something more sentimental, setting the tone for the rest of the album.

Evocative lyrics such as "I miss you so much I shiver and shake" and "Feel like I'm headed for a breakdown" scatter the record in their cutting honesty on the nature of heart break. This album is either one to avoid following a breakup, or crucial.

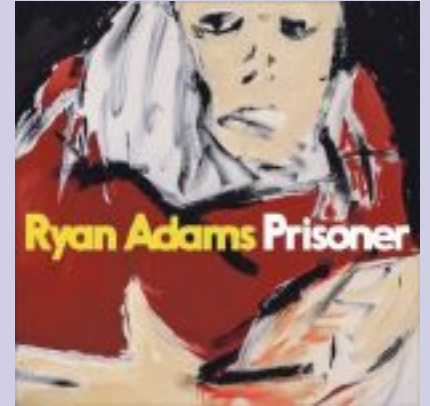
Prisoner is the type of album you can picture working well at a festival, despite the undeniable emotion, the record certainly has a summer feel and will work perfectly at festivals such as Greenman, where Adam's is headlining in August.

At the risk of sounding old fashioned, I haven't heard an album like this in a long time. I can't help feeling that the record would be a perfect soundtrack to some 80s coming of age blockbuster, probably helped by the notable influence of Springsteen, ELO and AC/DC. *Prisoner* is one of those records that is rare in its honest and profound sincerity.

Adams has managed to take the despair of heartbreak and turn it into a beautifully constructed record.

Phoebe Berman

Rating: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



***Now That The Light Is Fading* by Maggie Rogers**

Maggie Rogers' painfully short EP of five songs is an unforgettable debut, showcasing songs which would be at home both on a relaxed Sunday morning and out at a club. Infusing pop with elements of R&B, dance and sporadic sounds of nature, Roger's has created a completely unique collection of songs.

Growing up in Maryland Rogers was consumed by folk music and the banjo, recording albums in a studio of her own making. It was not until later in life that her horizons were opened to dance music whilst on a year abroad in France. This revelation changed Rogers' sound, fusing her new found love of dance with folk past in her first single 'Alaska', which is featured on her EP. This hypnotising song was written in just fifteen minutes for a NYU master class with Pharrell Williams, the video of which shows Williams stunned with absolutely no notes.

It is almost impossible to compare Rogers' music with anything else around today. Her use of natural

soundscapes with the backbone of dance music is a creative triumph. This is particularly visible in 'Color Song' where Rogers harmonises with herself to the accompaniment of grasshoppers. Even in the upbeat, electronic peak of 'One + Off' there are still random sounds of grass rustling in the breeze.

The EP flows to a calm end through 'Better', an understated song which revolves around simple lyrics and beats, with the odd bird song chucked in for good measure. Maggie Rogers is one to watch, having already sold out her first two London shows in February.

This small EP only hints at the genius still to come.

Jenny Pudney

Rating: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



***Bringer of Pain* by Battle Beast**

I'm going to make a bold claim. *Bringer of Pain* might just be the best Hard Rock album of the decade. Battle Beast kick so much arse I'm going to have trouble sitting for weeks. It could be described as a masterful throwback to the 80's, but that would not do it justice.

Shortly after 2015's hit and miss *Unholy Savior*, lead song writer Anton Kabanen and the band split over creative and personal differences. This left fans anxious over the future of the band. That angst is gone.

The lyrics and composition are refreshingly sophisticated and varied. You still get your dose of cheese in 'Bastard Son of Odin' and 'Rock Trash', but the likes of 'King For a Day' and 'Familiar Hell' are deep, complex and catchy. Tomi Jousten of Amorphis makes a notable appearance in 'Lost in Wars' and they even drop a New Wave track in 'Dancing With the Beast'.

Above all, the whole band are having so much fun. Normally when I rave about an album it is because

it has been crafted by perfectionists of the utmost professionalism (the likes of Wintersun, and Blind Guardian). Battle Beast however, have created a master piece out of sheer gay energy. I cannot recall another album where everyone involved has revelled in every minute, because there's no where they'd rather be than rocking out with their mates.

In particular, keyboardist and producer Janne Björkroth is having a blast. *Bringer of Pain* is overflowing with delightful licks, and they're not content to confine the keyboard to melodies or the bass to root notes. It's fun, catchy, well written, and well produced. They're playing in Manchester on February 23rd at Ruby Lounge.

Go buy the album, go see them play, and enjoy.

Edmund Goldrick

Rating: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



superfood

DIRTY HIT TOUR
MARCH / APRIL
2017

In The Middle with Superfood

Image: Facebook

After a notable absence, indie wunderkinds Superfood are back and better than ever before. We caught up with them to chat social media, Glastonbury and radical lasagne.

Dom sounds a bit worse for wear as we chat over the phone. He'd been at the NME awards the night before with friend and flatmate, Harry Koisser. "Everyone who was playing came back to our house, and I was in bed by like, 2am, but they were in the kitchen being so noisy. I thought fuck it, I'm just going to get up, joined them until like, 5am. So unnecessary..."

It seems like the party always seems to find Superfood, whose notoriety for rambunctious antics on and off the stage has stayed with them, despite becoming pretty quiet in the near-three years since their debut album *Don't Say That*. With no new music since 2014, fans were delighted when their new single 'Double Dutch' dropped earlier this month in the middle of the Super Bowl, in a fittingly sensational fashion.

"It's been so long, but it's just a real relief, because people seem to have taken to it quite well," Dom says. In explaining the lengthy absence, it seems that the band were left floundering after their debut album, parting ways with their label almost immediately. "We were trying to make an album with no label, and we didn't have managers for a while either... We were living on absolutely no money."

It's clear that in their time off, Superfood have definitely made some changes. They're now just a duo comprised of Dom Ganderton and Ryan Malcom, and their new single has moved quite significantly into a new direction. "When we first started the band, they were a lot more kind of Beck-inspired, processed beats, and we put guitar on top of that. We ended up getting the band, and before we knew it, when we were going in to record our album we were an 'indie band' and we sort of lost sight of what we first set out to do," Dom explains, in response to the band's categorisation of being Britpop-inspired and 90's-revivalist. "I guess we're trying to shake off the cobwebs of those stereotypes."

The synth-heavy sampled track 'Double Dutch' exhibits this perfectly, with the frolicsome lyrics and harmonies contrasting with a brooding bassline unheard of previously in Superfood's repertoire. "I was just scrolling around the internet and I found these old videos, instructional videos for double dutch, and I found this group called Stan's Pepper Steppers," Dom remembers. "I thought it would be cool to write about these girls - they're still going now."

Although confident in their new material, there seems to have been some growing

pains for the group. "We were thinking of doing that whole thing when you like, change your name. We deleted all our online presence. We were just like, fuck it, social media, it's just a tool. The old music is still there on Spotify and stuff but... It's more of a rebirth."

Having said that, Superfood are known for not taking themselves too seriously, and their friendship with bands such as Peace and Wolf Alice have always led to general carnage. Dom fondly remembers last summer, when members of Superfood and Peace joined forces to form a one-night-only super group called Radical Lasagne. "Us and Peace used to have the same manager, a guy called Russ Tannen, and it was his birthday, and he basically just asked us to pay a little covers set, and then for some reason, ever since I've been like, 15, I've just wanted to be in a band called Radical Lasagne... So I said I'd do it, as long as we could be called Radical Lasagne. And then Harry (Koisser) took it really seriously and started putting it all over fucking Twitter and shit."

Indeed, Superfood's childish larks were displayed in a particularly hilarious fashion at Glastonbury Festival 2015, when they interrupted Peace's set: "We were so messed up, we were trying to sing 'My Generation' by The Who, and then I can just remember seeing their manager's face, trying to escort me and Ryan off the stage, just like 'get off! What are you fucking lunatics doing?' That was funny."

Clearly still retaining their boyish charm, the upcoming Dirty Hit Tour, where Superfood will hit the road with label-mates Pale Waves and King Nun, is set to be a boisterous one. "It's just a bit nerve-wracking because we've got new members, we haven't toured before, and I'm really scared that the other bands are going to blow us out of the water" Dom admits, "but I am looking forward to it. Just need to get the first show done and it'll be smooth sailing from there." Although it's set to be a capricious and uncertain few months for the band, with the album set to come out at the end of the summer, their new material is already resonating with a fan base that has grown alongside them.

Steph Green

Catch Superfood on the Dirty Hit tour at the Brudenell on 21/3/17 with King Nun and Pale Waves

"We deleted all our online presence. We were just like, fuck it, social media, it's just a tool"

Gig Roundup

HEXA @ Howard Assembly Room, 17/02/17



Image: Opera North

This concert was not for the faint hearted. HEXA have created a musical response to David Lynch's 'Factory Photographs', a collection of images Lynch took of disused factories and the ruins of industry in the USA, Poland, Germany and the UK.

As a massive David Lynch fan I was eager to check it out, and watching the show was like entering a Lynchian nightmare. The black and white photos depicted desolate factories, machinery and barbed wire. The music was equally void of humanity as they used synthesisers and computers to make harsh, metallic and utterly terrifying sounds. I should have guessed how intense the show would be as before it started the ushers were actually handing out earplugs.

The tensest moment was right before they started playing. Then all of a sudden noises of sirens, gunfire and scratchy violins exploded in to the room. It built to the point where it felt like torture. The intensity kept increasing and reached the peak when they started playing wailing screams.

This created a hellish atmosphere that was so overwhelming several couples walked out after a few minutes.

It was hard not to feel trapped as the photos worked with the music to produce something extreme. I felt uncomfortable throughout and several times I caught my face wincing. The images were shocking and the music succeeded in matching this sense of dread. Even though I hated the experience, I couldn't get it out of my head and I guess that was the whole point.

It showed how music and art can combine to create something powerful and thought-provoking.

Lucy Ingram

Rating:



Deaf Havana @ Manchester Ritz, 17/02/17



Opening act Holiday Oscar is, as he admits, an odd fit for a rock show. He plays laid-back folk music, and writes fun lyrics about the absurdity of detox diets and our addiction to our phones. It shouldn't work in this setting, but because he's so charming and talented, it does.

The main support act, Dead! are a major contrast. This is rock, but it doesn't go down well with the crowd. The 'singer' mostly shouts and it feels like noise – there's a place for this chaotic kind of music, but it's not here.

When Deaf Havana walk onstage, they are met with applause, whoops, and whistles enough to cause an earthquake. We've been holding it all in for almost two years, it's no wonder.

The band are evidently taken aback by this warm welcome, and both Veck-Gilodi brothers find themselves speechless in between songs. Yet, it's exactly what they deserve, because new album *All These Countless Nights* is impressive, hefty and heartfelt, and it is a testament to their survival as

a band. They showcase new songs aplenty tonight, including a spine-tingling, stripped-back 'St Pauls', and crowd-pleasing 'Sing'.

Fan favourites 'The Past Six Years' and 'Hunstanton Pier' are the night's highlights, and the 1500 people present could fill an arena with the sound of their sing-a-long. There is a special energy in the room, as if all the uncertainty and anxiety of the past few years has finally been released and everyone who cares so deeply about this band suddenly feels more alive. From the awe-struck grins on every member of Deaf Havana's faces, they feel it too. This, above all, makes the night special. To see that these lads have finally found a smile. To know that they are loving it every bit as much as we are.

It is a truly triumphant return.

Sophia Simon-Bashall

Rating:



Tom Grennan @ Brudenell Games Room, 16/02/17



Image: The Independent

It's rare that an artist manages to completely captivate a crowd in the way that Tom Grennan held the attention of the entire Brudenell Games Room during his performance of 'Something in the Water.' He may not have an extensive back catalogue but his short set definitely justified the buzz surrounding the twenty-one year old singer-songwriter.

Acoustic opener 'Old Songs' demonstrated the unique way that Grennan's songs combine frank storytelling with the rich tones of his gravelly, soulful voice. He claimed that he was feeling a bit worse for wear but his bluesy vocals filled the small room and his energy never faltered. Confident and self-assured on stage, you would never guess that this was Grennan's first headline tour.

His voice took on a haunting edge on tracks such as 'Lucky Ones' and his emotive performance demanded the audience's undivided attention especially during the raw 'Sweet Hallelujah.' Highlights came from the flawless delivery of the deeply textured tracks from his *Something In The Water* EP. His natural charisma complimented his engaging stage presence

as he chatted casually with the audience between songs. His excitement about the impending release of soulful new single 'Praying' was contagious as he delivered the upbeat new material, accompanied by the chanting crowd.

Closing the set with a stripped back, acoustic version of the Chase & Status collaboration that kick-started his career, the soft musical accompaniment really brought his raw vocals to the forefront. With no unnecessary theatrics, the show was clearly about Grennan debuting his talented voice and captivating live presence to the large crowd that had somehow squeezed into the small venue.

2017 is shaping up to be an important year for breakthrough male vocalists and Tom Grennan looks set to lead the way.

Lucy Milburn

Rating:





Monki In The Middle

Despite only being in her mid-twenties, Monki has firmly established herself as an influential selector and tastemaker, and her Monki & Friends Tour arrives at The Chapel, Church on 24th March. We sent Clubs Editor Julia Connor to meet her.

The London-based Radio 1 DJ is all about bringing fresh music to the masses, and has long been a champion of the accessible, youthful sounds that have become club dance floor staples over recent years. This ethos comes to the fore in her weekly show, which maintains the momentum of the weekend into the early hours of Monday morning, airing from 1am through to 4.

But her first experience of broadcasting was on pirate radio. Monki landed an internship and then a show at East London's Rinse FM as a fresh faced 18-year-old, before the station got its community license. At Rinse the expectations were different: "There wasn't much talking for a start. It was all about the music and all about how well you could mix and concentrating on how you could get that right. Obviously it wasn't legal or legit but the set-up was really good".

Moving to Radio 1 was a whole new ball game, with the nature of such an exposed platform requiring Monki's personality to be the driving force of the show. "It was never a thing for me on Rinse. Obviously they get a vibe off you and then it takes some time putting that into practice. For ages I was like 'people don't care about what I've got to say they just want to listen to tunes,' but in fact people do want to hear about your weekend, where you've been playing and what mischief you've been up to". Detecting this humility paired with the charisma she exudes on air, and it's easy to see why the station wanted her on board.

High energy tunes are the main theme for the three-hour show, so naturally a lot of planning and a vast amount of music consumption goes into the production. "I think my mates think I just rock up every week and just talk on the radio for three hours, but it's going and sifting through music, downloading promos on email, checking out SoundCloud, checking out blogs, Mixmag online, and producers are emailing you constantly trying to get you to play their tunes. It's basically just being on your laptop for two days of the week just listening to music". Luckily with several years in this business she can tell "within 20 or 30 seconds" if she's feeling something she's hearing. How does she describe the day-to-day in such an iconic station? "It's a bit like being in a Sixth Form common room or something. Everyone's just mucking about or doing serious work".

Extending her musical know-how outside of radio, she's been releasing her free 'Monki & Friends' EPs plus singles on her label Zoo Music for several years on SoundCloud. This is a woman in touch with the digital era and a generational need for accessibility. At the lighter end of the spectrum there's crowd-pleasing tropical house and garage-infused numbers, but delve a little deeper and there's bass and dubstep to discover as well. "My friends would send me edits and stuff for my sets just to play out on the radio or in the club, and then they would give it out on their SoundCloud, but if they were still sort of up-and-coming or didn't have a big listenership then it wouldn't get as much shine as I thought it should. So I was just like why don't we just start something? If ever you've got anything we can just put it up on my SoundCloud and we'll put all the info in the bio". Those friends include Shadow Child, Friend Within, My Nu Leng and Bodhi. All recognisable names, and evidence of Monki's impact in aiding the progression of those around her.

Being easily accessible to a digital audience entails some critique at times. Does anyone give her a hard time online? "Luckily not really for my radio show, but I have had a few from my live streams, you get quite a lot of keyboard warriors on those sorts of things. The first time I got it I was like 'Fucking hell that's a bit harsh!' and then the second and third time it just gets funny. The more you do and the better you get, the more crap you're gonna get basically. I remember my mate got one the other day, he's a producer, and someone went to the trouble of emailing him to say 'Do you play vinyl?' and then the next line was just 'No you don't because you're crap'. I think he just replied like 'lol'".

Haters aside and onto the subject of touring. The first Monki & Friends started in

Room 3 of London institution Fabric, and Monki's full of optimism when it comes to the future of the capital's nightlife. "I've seen the new licensing agreements and I just think Fabric know what they're doing. They're such a long-running establishment. I'm just happy the place is open to be honest. And then this new place has opened in East London called Printworks. So off the back of Fabric closing and everyone being up in arms, it's reopened along with this 5,000 capacity venue too. It's all good news, hopefully it'll just carry on".

Although she's played in Leeds a few times before, including as a resident on Annie Mac's AMP tours, this will be Monki's first time playing at Church. Explaining to her how it's changed drastically from being the centre of all things cheese (Halo) - "my old mates who went to uni there were like 'Really?' So I had to be like, 'I think it's changed' - to an eery underground venue where you're very aware of being in a former place of worship, a pretty undisputable statement rounds off our conversation: "That's the last place God would want you to rave!"

But raves in churches are how we roll in Leeds, and the remaining tickets for Monki & Friends are over on Skiddle.

Julia Connor



LGBTQ Clubbing Leeds

In celebration of LGBTQ+ History Month, Janine Roberts summarises Leeds' selection of LGBTQ+ focused clubbing...

"I want to take you to a gay bar," Electric Six famously announced in their 2003 hit, and, if you're part of the LGBTQ+ community – or have been somewhat on the curious side at least – you have most likely dreamed of getting up on a podium at a gay bar and celebrating your sexuality. Fortunately, if this sounds familiar, then have no fear, because Leeds has a gleaming gay scene right in the middle of the city centre.

The Leeds gay scene is varied and important. The New Penny has been awarded a heritage award for its contributions to the LGBTQ+ community. Said to be the longest running gay bar in the country, the prolific venue goes to show that Leeds knows how to do it right. On the other end of the gay bar spectrum, Fibre has been described on Trip Adviser as the most 'pretentious gay bar in the UK'. As someone who embodies the definition of 'pretentious English Lit student', you can find me on the dance floor of Fibre letting my full pretentiousness out of the closet.

Viaduct is perhaps one of the most loved gay bars in the city and has welcomed several of the UK's biggest drag artists over the years. It is bold, bright and it is very, very queer. Exiting through the Viaduct smoking area you will find yourself at Mission 2, which opens its doors to the LGBTQ+ community on Monday and Saturday nights with events such as 'Werk' and 'Cloud 9'. Mission's transformation into a gay club includes various podiums for you to get your freak on and is a not necessarily common knowledge amongst students. However, these gay club nights provide LGBTQ+ individuals with a club environment, rather than the more bar-to-club atmosphere at many of Leeds' other gay bars.

"Gay bars have the tendency to cater most efficiently for gay men. This is what made the Union's decision to introduce the new female LGBTQ+ club night 'Scissors' so important."

However, no community is without its downfalls. Gay bars have the tendency to cater most efficiently for gay men. This is what made the Union's decision to introduce the new female LGBTQ+ club night 'Scissors' so important. The Union has provided a space for gay and bisexual women to express their identity.

Throughout the rise of the LGBTQ+ movement, it has always been gay bars that have been at the forefront of gay and trans liberation. It was at the Stonewall gay bar in America in which the infamous Stonewall Riots – the 'Rosa Parks moment' of LGBTQ+ liberation – took place, and thus beginning the visibility of the LGBTQ+ movement. When the Pulse nightclub was attacked last June, part of its significance lay in the fact that the target was a gay nightclub. In a minority history that has been so dependent on nightlife, the attacking of such a place symbolised an attack on not only the current LGBTQ+ community, but an attack on its history

and the sheer significance of these safe spaces. The attack reminded us that even these so commonly thought of 'safe spaces' can still be subjected to the external gaze of homophobia. Just because LGBTQ rights have professed profusely since the 1960s, it doesn't mean the battle for equality is over.

Whether you've spent your whole life in the closet and want to let loose or just want to express your sexuality, then Leeds' gay scene is a welcoming environment. Going to a gay bar for the first time can be a truly exciting experience. However, the opportunity to be in a place in which you know that your identity is being celebrated, is one that every LGBTQ+ person should experience.

Janine Roberts

Bongo's Bingo

The Gryphon team headed down to Bongos Bingo for a night of dance offs, false calls and glowsticks...

If I could give you one word of advice for a night at Bongo's Bingo, don't make a false call. You may be two bottles of wine down, the numbers on the book in front of you may be swimming on the page, and you may be fixated on winning that pink fluffy unicorn... But if you shout bingo too soon the entire room will shout 'dickhead' at you. Take it from someone who learnt the hard way.

In normal circumstances, having over 200 people calling you a dickhead simultaneously might be classed as quite a traumatising incident, but in the raucous atmosphere of the bingo hall, it's all part of the experience.

The venue was packed to the brim with bingo-goers eager to get their hands on the coveted pink unicorn or 23-inch dildo. Arrive early to make sure to grab a table – last entry is at 7.30pm so prepare for an early dinner and an even earlier pre-drinks as Canal Mills is pretty pricey and try to get as near to the front as possible. From our table near the back we could barely hear Jonny Bongo, resident DJ and bingo caller, explaining the rules.

As Mr Bongo himself said in our recent interview with him, the atmosphere is almost impossible to describe. One minute you'll be up on the benches dancing to the Vengaboys or 'Year 3000', the next minute you'll be furiously trying to concentrate on the numbers being called.

Although there are a fair few opportunities to bag prizes, there's also a pretty high chance you'll leave the night with nothing, but you'll have so much fun in the process you won't care. Unless of course, you lose in an on stage dance off to win £500 (the preferred method to decide who takes home the cash when there are two callers). You can do the worm, you can do a slut drop, you can even whip your shirt off and swing it in the air, but if the cheers aren't loud enough you'll walk away with nothing. One certain member of *The Gryphon* team certainly wasn't happy...

Bongo's Bingo is a fantastic and unique night. There is really nothing quite like dancing with glow sticks on benches to some 90s rave music before cracking on with some good old fashioned bingo. But it is undoubtedly an event catered towards large groups and large characters. I for one could not have been tempted in to a dance off on stage no matter how drunk I was. Leave your inhibitions (and your dignity) behind, and Bongos Bingo will be a night you're unlikely to forget.

Bongos Bingo takes place every Wednesday at Canal Mills. Head to www.bongosbingo.co.uk for more info.

Jessica Murray





Rebellious Fashion: A History

Over the year's, fashion has played a major part in shaping and reflecting the social climate. From the flapper dresses of the 20s to the power suits of the 80s, clothes are a powerful weapon for challenging the norm. Style Editors Beatrice Rae and Ashleigh Stern take a look at rebellious fashion through the decades...

Wartime Style

Women's fashion took on a new purpose in the war years, and flourished despite air raids and austerity. With their husbands, fathers and brothers at war, women ran factories, drove ambulances, built vehicles and ammunition, and raised families single-handedly.

It was the era of powerful women with rolled hair, red lips and drawn-on seams down the backs of their legs. It was the era of resourcefulness. Old items were reworked in to new ones as clothing could only be bought with coupons, which were limited. Women also turned to practicality, with trousers becoming increasingly popular as well as 'siren suits', originally designed for use on the way to and in air-raid shelters.

Women adapted to war time with style and creativity, and many found it hard to return to traditional housewife roles when the war had finished.



The Roaring Twenties

The true birth of fashion and liberation, the 20s is known as roaring for a reason. A booming economy led to many coming in to large sums of money, and a period of extravagance and decadence ensued. Elaborate parties frequented by 'flapper girls' defined the decade.

20s fashion was beautifully elegant, featuring midi length loose fitting dresses, dropped hems, tassels, jewels and pearls. Evening looks would often incorporate headaddresses and extravagant feathers, allowing women to be more daring with their style. The 20s was the first era of real progression in exposing the body in a positive fashion and a step towards equality, liberalism and freedom in fashion.

These two dresses are inspired by not only the 20s classic silhouette but the decadent fabric. The first blue dress takes the dropped-hem loose fitting inspiration from the era which is a really elegant shape, its modernized by using it in a mini dress form. The second incorporates a classic tasseled fabric, a notorious 20s fashion statement.



Missguided: £27.50



Asos: £25

Swinging Sixties

The swinging 60s was the time of the mini skirt and bee-hive hair. Bringing us style icons such as Audrey Hepburn, Brigitte Bardot and Twiggy, 1960s style still resonates in today's society. Possibly Audrey Hepburn's most famous style moment was the 1961 LBD she wore in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Off-screen, she became an off-duty inspiration with her chic capri trousers and ballet pumps.

Brigitte Bardot was the French actress, style icon and sex-symbol all women wanted to be. Her messy blonde hair piled high in her famous beehive, Bardot made off-the-shoulder tops fashionable.

Twiggy, described on her website as 'the world's first supermodel', was a massive style icon in the 60s and, indeed, today. The 'skinny kid with the face of an angel' was the pinup with long legs and the mini-skirts to match.



The Liberating Seventies

Known as the decade of chilled happiness and good vibes, the 70s was an era of music and fun, and the fashion of the time definitely reflected this.

Fashion drastically moved away from the 60s miniskirts and geometric prints, to larger than life flares and bell sleeves, and floaty floral and paisley prints. This decade also marked the birth of the lava lamp, and patterns in fashion often copied these bold clashing colours and oozy shapes, soon followed by the break through of tie dye.

70s fashion was all about shape and detail, large platform shoes and flowing fabrics. The 'happiness' vibes of 70s youth were portrayed in fashion through quirky symbols and slogans, many of which are still popular today.

The looks I've chosen use the bell sleeves and classic 70s flares, with bold colours and detailed patterns. The flared trousers are a flattering shape, as flares elongate your legs, and the patchwork patterns perfectly channel that 70s vibe. The bell sleeved floating top incorporates loose fitting 70s glam with the classic modern elasticated crop top and Bardot shape neck line.



Topshop: £32



Motel Rocks: £10

Power-Dressing Eighties

The 1980s marked an era where a woman could choose from a variety of styles and dress how she wanted. One such style was that of female power dressing. Defined as 'the practice of dressing in a style intended to show that one holds an important position in business, politics, etc', power dressing was all about women in the work place.

However, it then transcended into everyday wear. The 80s had a tailored look, with a lot of women wearing jackets, if not fully tailored suits, feminizing them with soft pussy-bow blouses. Shoulder pads were central to power dressing, increasing the shoulder width of a woman in order to help her feel powerful in a world dominated by men.

Television shows such as *Dallas* and *Dynasty* helped to shape women's fashion by introducing lavish costume jewelry into night and day wear. Huge earrings and stones (real or not) were central to 80s style. Lastly, of course, the 80s brought us the body suit - an all-in-one that has made a comeback in the last couple of years. 80s fashion will continue to influence our style today.



The Naughty Nineties

The 90s was all about pop culture, oversized everything, denim and anything gimmicky. Many often associate the 90s with Will Smith's flashy colourful bomber jackets in *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* and the Spice Girls' little crop tops and baggy combat trousers with an excessive amount of chains and zips.

The 90s also brought back the kitten heel, ridiculously small clutches, cute fluffy clothes and chokers. The quintessential girly look became something a bit sporty and edgier, and it was the first time where casual clothes and lounge wear became the in style. Print and pop culture sky rocketed in popularity, and teens became inspired by their favourite popstar's looks. Who wouldn't want to copy Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake's denim fantasy?

I have chosen two denim numbers (and not just because of Britney and JT) because denim was all the rage in the 90s. The classic denim dungaree with cute patchwork detailing is the perfect combination of fun and sporty, and is a great way to recreate a fabulous 90s look. To go even further you could add a twisted wired choker and some gimmicky badges. The jacket with graffiti style spray looks like it was taken straight from the wardrobe of *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* and there's no better way to sum up 90's fashion!



New Look: £29.99



Topshop: £65





Rebellious Fashion: Today...

Fashion is all about expressing yourself and your style. It's an art form of individualism and by exploring fashion's diverse and rebellious history and returning to the present day around campus, you can see how far liberation has come and how people everywhere express themselves through their own individual style.

So we decided to see how students in the 21st century use their style to express themselves...

Campus Style:



Name: Morgan Crawford

Reading: French and Philosophy

Academic year: Fourth Year

Style Inspiration: 'UNICORNS!'



Name: Callum Neilson

Reading: English Literature and History

Academic year: 2nd Year

Style Inspiration: 90s grunge and old skater clothes



Images: Louise Arron (Completely Candid)

Name: Charlotte Evans

Reading: Printed Textiles

Academic year: Third Year

Style Inspiration: My mum's old clothes! I love to incorporate her old style and wearing a mix of contemporary and vintage

Style Editors Profiles:

Name: Beatrice Rae

Reading: English Literature and Language

Academic Year: Second Year

Style Inspiration: 'My style is greatly influenced by classic icons. I love Audrey Hepburn, Brigitte Bardot and ofcourse Marilyn Monroe.'

Favourite Designer: 'That has to be Chanel because of their gorgeous and timeless collections'

Favourite Trend: 'The Bodycon - Big up the curves ladies!'

Why did you want to be a Style editor? 'I wanted to write and also have a chance to be creative and explore fashion in a way I hadn't before.'



Name: Ashleigh Stern

Reading: English Literature

Academic Year: Second Year

Style Inspiration: 'My main inspiration is quite frankly my mood; the happier I am the more colour you'll see. I get inspired by my surroundings and architecture and by my favourite designers.'

Favourite Designer: 'Definitely Stephane Rolland! His Couture designs never fail to move me.'

Favourite Trend: 'Either flares/ bell sleeves, embroidery or the pinafore. I love mixing trends together-so I love a preppy outfit with a grungy boot'

Why did you want to be a Style editor? 'I am an aspiring fashion Journalist and love exploring new trends. I was desperate to showcase the style Leeds has to offer and portray the expressive art form that fashion and style is.'



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Cirque du Soleil presents Varekai

World-renowned circus troupe Cirque du Soleil came to Leeds this week, as part of their nation-wide tour of Varekai. Jessica Murray gives her take on the much hyped show...

Despite having heard of the world famous Cirque du Soleil (the circus troupe, not the club night at Canal Mills) multiple times before, I really didn't know what to expect when I headed to First Direct Arena to see their first ever nation-wide tour of *Varekai*, their latest performance.

A couple of comedic ushers (Sean Kempton and Emily Carragher), bumbling around the crowd 'polishing' bald heads, and dragging an unsuspecting couple who couldn't find their seats up on stage was not the introduction I expected, but it was the start of a fine balance between serious jaw-dropping acrobatics and silly slapstick comedy that defined the show.

TV shows such as *Britain's Got Talent*, where acts are forced to show off their most impressive and daring tricks in a three-minute audition, have made us slightly desensitised to impressive stunts. We're desperate for the adrenaline of life-risking performances, so it was refreshing to see Cirque restrain from this in-your-face extravagance. This is an art they have perfected, and they have nothing to prove.

There isn't really a story arc or plot to the show; it's made up of a series of set pieces with an overall aesthetic theme. *Varekai* (meaning 'wherever' in the Romani language) takes place in a forest at the base of a volcano. A series of bamboo-like poles guard the rear of the stage, allowing the ensemble to leap up and down at will, and the whole cast were dressed in an array of brightly-coloured luscious costumes, like tropical insects in the jungle.

One of the first scenes features an Icarus-like figure, performed by Fernando Miro, falling from the sky and landing on the forest floor, to be surrounded by creatures who torment him and steal his wings. He's soon sent flying back up with the help of a net, which he utilises

in a number of different ways, swinging around the stage before plummeting to within inches of the ground. There's not much reason to these little short stories, and if you try too hard to figure out 'what's going on', you'll miss the enjoyment of the show. It's all about being swept up in the breathtaking skill of the performers.

"Varekai is an impressive feat, avoiding cheap stunts in favour of a refined and polished work of art"

The show is, of course, a global phenomenon, performed in countless countries and employing more than 1,300 artists from around the world, and therefore language isn't really a medium they can employ to engage with their audience. Most of the characters/creatures communicate in gibberish, the songs are sung in a foreign tongue, and the comedy relies on extravagant slapstick humour to connect with its audience. With Euro power ballads, weird and wonderful costumes and extravagant dance routines, it's hard not to liken aspects of the show to Eurovision Song Contest – except here the dancers are supposed to steal the limelight.

But the show really comes in to its own towards the end, when a team of acrobats use a set of Russian swings to launch themselves in to the air, and complete daring somersaults and backflips before landing elegantly on a safety net. This scene provided both mind blowing stunts and a fun and upbeat atmosphere, two things that the rest of the show arguably struggles to reconcile.

Varekai is an impressive feat, avoiding cheap stunts in favour of a refined and polished work of art. The stunts are impressive, and the performances faultless, so despite the pace and energy dipping occasionally, this is well worth a look.

Jessica Murray



Prevenge: A New Kind of Comedy

Western Edge Pictures/ Gennmaker

Genre-defying and boundary-pushing horror comedy *Prevenge* has been picking up as much praise as it has controversy. In *The Middle* went to a special screening at Hyde Park Picture House for a Q&A with first-time director Alice Lowe...

The conceit of writer/director Alice Lowe's debut feature *Prevenge* is a darkly comic slasher-flick with a twist, not only in the film's perspective being that of the slasher, but that this slasher is a heavily pregnant thirty-something year old woman.

The lead character Ruth – played by Lowe, whilst actually seven months pregnant, no less – has experienced the double whammy of the loss of her partner, and the news she will have to ready herself to bring a new life into the world. These two conflicting anxieties are consolidated in the sardonic voice of Ruth's unborn baby, urging her to commit grisly murders in a series of viscera and comedy filled set-pieces.

The serial nature of the film is used intelligently by Lowe, as we are treated to a well-focused procession of idiosyncratic and fantastically original characters. For the majority of the film, Ruth and the object of her malicious intentions are the only two characters in any particular scene. One would expect, this being a super low-budget affair, that this was done out of necessity. However, this actually allows us undistracted access to nuanced, carefully constructed comic characters. Dan Renton Skinner as a horny vendor of exotic pets, and most of all Tom Davis as the vile, lurching, 70s 'DJ Dan', are particular standouts.

Bravely, for an independently made feature, the film's score is afforded centre stage, rather than quietly and anonymously dwelling in the background. A 70s inspired electronica and synth heavy effort from Toydrum imbues the film with the appropriate

atmosphere of malignant threat. In conjunction with the casting of Kate Dickie, and considered cinematography by Ryan Eddleston, the score lends real credence to the film's right to a full feature length, as opposed to something that may have been comfortably relegated to a TV spot.

The topics of grief and expectancy are not particularly inviting to trite or insensitive observations made merely for shock value or cheap laughs. It is therefore a relief that Lowe has approached the subjects with the proper respect, and has crafted a sensitive and accomplished directorial debut, in equal measures funny and sorrowful, with a gasp-inducing violent streak.

At the following Q&A Lowe spoke of bucking the trend in a male dominated profession, as not only a woman writer/director, but a working, heavily pregnant one at that. In discussion of her almost total creative control over the project, she suggested it resulted in what is by far her best work. The lack of creative control is certainly a contributing factor as to why the British film industry is guilty of creating so many dire comedies. With producers being so risk averse, many good projects are hamstrung by the need to follow established sensibilities, as Lowe quipped: 'Richard Curtis is fine, but only Richard Curtis needs to make Richard Curtis films'. We should be thankful therefore, that Lowe has had the desire to break free of such curtailing pressures, and continues deliver such cult-hits as her previous script, *Sightseers*.

“It is a relief that Lowe has approached the subjects with the proper respect, and has crafted a sensitive and accomplished directorial debut..

Jonathon Atkinson



Image: Annapurna Pictures

Review: 20th Century Women

Yet another film to generate much Oscar-buzz this year. *20th Century Women* is finally released in UK cinemas, so we decided to take a look...

20th Century Women is an absolute joy. It is a film with a genuine affection for its characters, it's laugh-out-loud funny and heart-breaking. It's pertinent to the time in which we live, and I laughed and cried throughout.

The film has a genuine, infectious warmth. The drama follows Dorothea, played superbly by Annette Benning, who cop-opts the women in her son's life, Abbie and Julie, played by Greta Gerwig and Elle Fanning respectively, in helping to raise her son, Jamie. The other major player in proceedings is lodger William played by Billy Crudup. It's interesting that one of the principle characters is played by Elle Fanning, who was so great

in *The Neon Demon*, a movie about artifice, about characters who were dead in the eyes. In contrast, the best thing about *20th Century Women* is that each character feels real and full.

The conceit of the plot is that each character is asked to share their life with Jamie so we learn all them all in turn, all their quirks, interests, and passions; it's beautiful. It was Roger Ebert who said that films are meant to be empathy machines, and that's exactly what this film is.

It really is a film for everyone; I know there were moments and lines that I found painfully relatable

from all of the characters and I feel like it would be the same for everyone who goes to see it. It also has this brilliant progressive feminist message which is just that, "every man should know what it is to be a woman". It's also brilliantly made with gorgeous cinematography, production design, and great original music from Roger Neill. In case it wasn't already obvious, I absolutely loved it.

James Selway

Rating:



On The Edge of Nothing

Bursting on to the scene with vibrant and original productions. Screw Loose performed it's latest play *On The Edge of Nothing*, at Stage@Leeds. Jessica Newgas give her opinion...

Spine tingling, engaging and bold, *On the Edge of Nothing* had us on the edge of our seats. The intimate space of the Alex Clegg theatre in stage@leeds confronted the intrigued audience with a bunker containing six soldiers who had been tucked away in hiding with only each other for company for no less than five years. With supplies low and tensions high, and a bit of delusion and drunkenness thrown in, writer and director David Ley set the scene for what would be a tantalizing display of just how good student theatre can be.

Following these six characters, worn and bruised from war and seclusion, the play was an exploration of the vast spectrum of human emotion, moving from moments of hysterical comedy to acts of robotic violence with astounding ease. The set was like a forgotten attic: broken chairs, empty bottles and a radio whose silence proclaimed the reality of their isolation. This scene, however, was all underlined ominously with the sign hanging quietly in the background like a bad omen: 'All Good Men Fall'. The play was tinged with tension and a sense of waiting, echoing

the waiting of these forgotten soldiers as they squabbled over whether they should stay in hiding or venture out to see if the world had anything left to offer them.

It was the dreariness of the characters' situation, however, that created the perfect opportunity for some dry British comedy. From naming a soldier with a leg injury 'Speedy' to punctuating the play with the witty chaos of Wires, Ley was able to showcase his talent for writing comedy as well as the darker elements of the play; the audience didn't know whether to laugh or squirm.

On the Edge of Nothing was the first production by the newly founded theatre company Screw Loose and if this impressive display of dynamic new writing and mature performance is anything to go by, they're one to watch.

Jessica Newgas

BAFTAs 2017



Image: Stuart C. Wilson

As awards season continues to dazzle and delight, *In The Middle* reviews the latest BAFTAs, looking at the highs, the lows, and the likely differences with the upcoming Oscars...

The BAFTAs opened with a bang at the Royal Albert Hall with a heart-in-mouth performance from *Cirque du Soleil*. They, and likewise returning host Stephen Fry, did not disappoint. Unsurprisingly, many British filmmakers fared well, with Ken Loach winning Outstanding British Film for *I, Daniel Blake* which was notably snubbed in the Oscar nominations and Dev Patel beating Oscar-favourite Mahershala Ali (*Moonlight*) for Best Supporting Actor, Patel's first accolade this awards season. The BAFTAs are known for their preference for British film, however, so they shouldn't be taken as an accurate prediction for the Oscars.

Predictably, Best Actor and Actress BAFTAs went to Oscar-favourites Casey Affleck and Emma Stone. Yet, neither performer was competing against their closest Oscar competition, as Denzel Washington (*Fences*) and Isabelle Huppert (*Elle*) were not nominated. Outstanding Screenplay was awarded to Kenneth Lonergan for his sublime script for *Manchester by the Sea* beating *La La Land* which won the Golden Globe. It is unsurprising that the British chose a cerebral introspective film such as this over *La La Land* with its jokes about sunshine in LA and spontaneous outbursts of song, even if those songs are very beautiful.

La La Land remained, nonetheless, the big winner of the night, winning Best Director (Damien Chazelle) and the biggest gong of the night, Best Film. It currently ties the record with *Titanic*, earning fourteen Oscar nominations, and remains the firm favourite for this year's Oscar for Best Picture.

Most deserving winner was Best Supporting Actress Viola Davis (who also won the SAG and the Golden Globe) for her incredible role in *Fences*. She has become notorious for her powerful speeches and her BAFTAs acceptance did not disappoint. Presidential candidate for 2020? Yes please. But, as Fry concluded, 'Well, we've reached the legal limit of sycophantic fawning, so let's crack on with awards...and see who the Russians have decided has won'.

The Oscars will air on Sunday 26th February 2017 at 5:30pm PST with host Jimmy Kimmel. For viewers in the UK, NowTV will be live-streaming it from midnight, GMT.

Emily McDermott

Fifty Shades Brighter?

Fifty Shades Darker is a viciously misogynistic and sadistic film that degrades women. Well... that's what I thought I was going to say before I watched the film. Being proven wrong is sometimes a very pleasant surprise. The second instalment of the BDSM phenomenon has once again thrown the world into a kinky frenzy. *Fifty Shades Darker* does something that the first instalment of the trilogy did not. I felt empowered.

Fifty Shades Darker manages to address the kinky world of Christian Grey rather well. Anastasia openly states her sexual desires, and Christian adheres. In the first film Christian dictated what he wanted and there was little negotiation in it. It's rather refreshing to see a male director do something that even director Sam Taylor-Johnson couldn't do in the first film: balance the genders. Christian and Anastasia stand on a pretty level playing field.

I've read some pretty harsh reviews of this film, and I think many are uncalled for. Anastasia, as much of a wet blanket as she is, fights her own battles and is more strong-willed than she was in the first film. There's no denying that she's objectified on camera, but so is Christian. Both of their bodies are the centre of attention in several scenes. In the heated sex scenes, director James Foley focuses on both Christian and Anastasia, and doesn't put

her in the forefront of it all. We are given a few scenes in which Christian's ripped body is on show, but Ana is fully clothed or covered.

Other scenes which present Ana as more of an empowered than victimised figure include when Ana fights off her boss who attempts to assault her. I was waiting for Christian to run in like Prince Charming to her rescue, but she owned it. Ana utilises her own resources and doesn't rely on Christian, she doesn't want his money or his help and gave me a little hope that maybe things in Hollywood might change. He's a billionaire businessman with more vacation homes than sense, but she progresses in her career, turns down his money and regularly puts him in his place.

When I left the cinema, I started to think about what this progressive mainstream Hollywood film might do for the representation of women in film. James Foley puts Christian's behaviour at fault and presents a strong female lead who doesn't play by a man's rules. Yes, I have to admit that it isn't a ground-breaking feminist film thanks to Christian's controlling nature, the females who are blamed for his sadistic nature and the way Ana sometimes falls to Christian's knees... but it's a good starting point.

Catherine Woodward

Catherine Woodward defends the latest installment of the *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy...



Underrated Television Romance

If you're put off the idea of TV romance by an episode of *How I Met Your Mother* or *Vampire Diaries*, don't worry, there's plenty more on screen romance that's a lot more genuine and easier to stomach. So grab your significant other (whether that be a human or a tub of Ben and Jerry's) and get stuck in...

Crashing

This hilarious Channel 4 show written by the incredible Pheobe Waller-Bridge follows the chaos and confusion that six twenty-somethings grapple with while living in a disused hospital. This could be a modern day version of *Friends*, only with far more foul-mouthed, frank, and less delusional characters. Waller-Bridge perfectly captures each character's insecurities that may not make them very likeable, but certainly make them a lot more humane. The situations these characters get into are so uncomfortably hilarious, yet so real, you will definitely find yourself wanting more and finishing this one in a single sitting.



You're the Worst

FXX's *You're the Worst* is the perfect example of a modern day love story minus the over the top emotions or bucket-loads of sappy dialogue. Two awkward and self-destructive people find themselves falling in love with each other, and have no idea how to deal or display these new set feelings they never knew existed in them. It is an absolute delight to see Jimmy, a self-obsessed novelist and Gretchen, a clinically depressed PR executive coming to terms with these feelings and navigating their way through them.

Love

This Netflix Original by Judd Apatow who made films like *Knocked Up*, *Trainwreck* and *The 40-Year-Old-Virgin*, certainly did not get the attention it deserved. The series is a heartfelt attempt at exploring romantic relationships and unconventional subjects, such as addiction. This is not your classic love story between two beautiful people falling for each other, but one where both protagonists are fighting their own demons while attempting to stay relevant in the dating scene. A light hearted comedy this one is surely going to give you some hope if you are still on the lookout.



Fleabag

Another great series by Phoebe Waller-Bridge and probably the best new dramedy of the year, *Fleabag* should be at the top of everyone's list of shows to watch. The humour is clever and sharp, but the plot is the star here. Waller-Bridge plays a broken woman dealing with the death of her best friend and trying to make it in London. The narrative is so skillfully layered that you will find yourself laughing out loud at the most ridiculous scenarios in the tragic, yet troubled lives of the characters instead of sympathising with them. Watch this for Waller-Bridge's witty soliloquies and Olivia Coleman's perfect act as a godmother turned horrific stepmother.

Please Like Me

This Australian dramedy is a fresh take on relationship dynamics. After being dumped by his girlfriend who suspects him of being gay, Josh gradually starts to embrace his sexuality. It beautifully documents Josh's struggles with his troubled family, love and social life. It has a little bit of everything from a suicidal mother, depression to homophobia. However all this is incorporated so effortlessly into Josh's life that nothing feels over the top. A four-season-long saga is enough to give you lessons that will stay with you for a lifetime.



Catastrophe

Catastrophe is your typical 'boy meets girl and love follows', except there is an added dimension of an accidental pregnancy. Josh and Sharon, after a weekend of casual fun, return to their normal lives only to find out that Sharon is pregnant. The disastrous turn of events that follows is nothing short of a roller coaster ride. What works for the show is the brilliant chemistry between the leads. Following the couple as the cope with a baby on the way while trying to develop feelings for one another, *Catastrophe* hits all the right notes for a good love story with just the right amount of quirk and uniqueness.

Nishta Mital

Twenty-First Century Romance

Long gone are the days of flower bouquets and dinner dates: it seems dating in the 21st century is all about Pokédates and phone apps. Georgia Ryan explores romance in the modern age...

Released in the summer of 2016, Pokémon GO was praised for encouraging gamers to stretch their legs as they built up their Pokédex in the outside world, meeting likeminded fans of the franchise along the way. Their Valentine's event, running officially between the 8th and the 15th February, took the aim of the game to the next level, and encouraged fans of the app to get physical in a different way. Pokémon GO promoted users pairing up on their hunt for rare pink-coloured Pokémon that had been made more common for this limited time, or talking to strangers en-route and setting up their own 'Pokédates'. A sweet sentiment, but a tad patronising and one that feeds the negative stereotype that gamers are inept at finding and building their own romantic relationships. Users of the app, however, seemed to brush off the good intentions of Niantic, the game's developers, and focused on the Valentine's event being a failed opportunity for the game to offer something more in terms of design and function. One Pokémon fan highlighted that the logistics of the Valentine's event replicated those of the Halloween event held last year, and asked whether Niantic were going to step up and do something different for their next event. The question that should be asked is this: does users' overlooking of the wider aim of the Valentine's event, and the general concept of a Pokédate, underline a running dating trend in today's society – mostly that dating and serious relationships don't seem to interest us?

As part of a student population, it's difficult to reason why anyone needs to be in a serious relationship when there are degrees to earn, places to travel and many,



many more nights out to be had. But every single day on campus someone is dwelling over 'what are we', sometimes too afraid to ask the person, oftentimes not getting a clear enough answer. This grey area is problematic for those who do want something more, and don't know why things aren't progressing, because it leaves them in a position where they devalue themselves and put the wants of the other person before their own. All too often people are matched with 'partners' who aren't on the same page, or even in the same book. That's where technology steps in.

Tinder and Grindr have become two of the most popular dating apps in history, with 100 million and 10 million user downloads respectively, and hold firm reputations as 'one night stand' apps. Without the algorithms of traditional online dating strategies, matches are made solely by the users who are asked the question 'Do you want to have sex with this person?' in the form of pictures and written profiles for each potential match. From there, it's a simple yes or no answer. The geolocation feature on both apps allows users to scout out potential partners in cities or countries they are briefly visiting, and leave with no strings attached, making hook ups easier now more than ever, and placing those looking for serious relationships at risk of being lured in and blocked by strangers who lie about their intentions.

The lengths some have to go to find a serious relationship can oftentimes be shocking. Channel 4's series *First Dates* has not only expanded to Ireland, Australia and very soon America, but also produced a spin-off that aired in January of this year called *First Dates: Hotel*, which took the original format of the show where two people are matched through an algorithm monitored by 'experts' and meet for the first time in London's Paternoster Chop House, only this time participants are willing to fly out to France for their blind date, a huge investment in a relationship that may not take off. Skipping the get-to-know each other stage of dating by relying on a computer to decide whether you are compatible with someone is a huge gamble, and playing Pokémon GO is not enough to base the foundations of a relationship on if you don't hold the same values or want the same things. People call it a 'match' because what they want matches up with what you want: find a match, whether that means a partner who wants to sail around the world with you, or a one night stand you'll never see again.

Georgia Ryan

Here's Looking at You Kid

Helen Burke is a seasoned poet and has amassed an impressive array of competition successes over the years. Valley Press have released an anthology of her most requested poems...

Here's Looking at You Kid is Helen Burke's collection of her most requested poems. They centre, touchingly, around her parents, covering everything from her father's distinctive Irish twang, to her mother's exploits in her old age. Just like the anthology's title, most of the poems are endearingly funny.

Burke has the talent of finding the humour and the humanity in bleak stories. In 'Hospital Lingo' she deftly takes on medical jargon and mixes it with her own wry experiences and observations of life on a hospital ward. The poem contains my favourite lines of the anthology – 'Chrissie at the end is having everything removed, / piece by piece – her sanity, her sense of humour, her husband. / She's quite glad about the last.' 'My Wild Mother' paints a humorous portrait, and so the ending feels even more sobering to the reader. 'A wheelchair goes into a bar' goes as far as directly playing on the format of a joke whilst skilfully opening our eyes to life in a wheelchair, a personal experience Burke says in the notes at the back of the anthology, that she doesn't much like writing about. But it makes Burke's anthology stand out – not many poets can write about such a sensitive topic with such humour and insight.

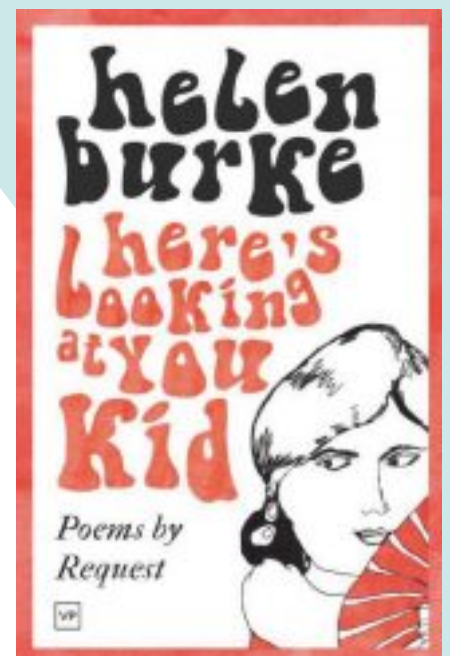
'Keats in Piazza Navona' delightfully imagines one of Burke's poetic inspirations alive and well in the bustle of modern day Italy, in one of the most whimsical poems in

the collection. In contrast, 'Baxter's Crime' chronicles the daily occurrence of a dog being walked, or rather dragged, outside Burke's house. Burke finds a kinship with poor Baxter – 'I feel a bit like him. / Pulled this way and that. / Someone behind me with a lead I can't see. / Baxter has no idea what his crime is. / (Nor have I.)' and it's hard not to feel the same empathy towards Baxter's plight too.

Burke's verses tend towards the long side, made up of complex run on lines, but this only gives the impression that her words are genuine, spilling from her mind onto the page barely controlled. In 'What they found in the poet's stomach' Burke's writing style is at its best, the punctuated lines building up, detailing everything every poet has ever tried to capture in their writing, their length matching the long line of Burke's poet predecessors.

But, Burke tells us, her most requested poem is 'The Green Piano' and I can instantly see why. It's a simple poem, but life-affirming in its message. Many people have asked Burke for a printed version, and I can easily imagine the inspiration a tacked up copy of this above your desk might deliver. It's gently forceful in tone, capturing that carpe diem attitude, one which is echoed elsewhere in the anthology too. In total, Burke's collection of poems is enough to make anyone smile.

Heather Nash





With No Power Comes No Originality

DC's attempt at breathing some comedy into its universe falls somewhat flat, with hollow humour, hollow characters, and a hollow story

It is dull, cheesy, overused jokes like this that make this 'comedy' what I like to call 'American-funny', but not actually funny. Kind of like comparing *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* to *The Inbetweeners*. Each episode appears to be a near-replica of the last in terms of narrative structure, with the R&D division narrowly avoiding being shut down and replaced by LexCorp at the end of each half hour instalment.

There is no substance behind the humour, or the characters for that matter, who fall into the typical stereotypes of Eager Girl Who Wants to Do Well, Dull Woman In Tech Who Doesn't Like Other Women (so feminist of you, DC), Really Eager Guy Trying/Failing to be Useful, and Egocentric Bossy Boss Man. They are not the heroes Gotham needs, and definitely not the ones it deserves right now. It's an awful reminder of what can happen when DC tries to be funny and light-hearted, when the company's forte is with complex webs of story that tackle serious issues, and put Marvel Comics to shame.

After release in the US and online at the start of this month, fans of the DC universe are likely disappointed by the two-dimensionality of a series that had so much potential to blossom in the same corrupt darkness that made *The Dark Knight* trilogy, Greg Berlanti's Arrowverse and the ongoing Rebirth story arc so popular amongst their target audiences. In trying times when accountability of those in power is such a crucial issue, why didn't DC take a stand, do what Batman does best and get serious?

I'm still, maybe naively, holding out hope for this year's Wonder Woman.

Georgia Ryan

The premise of DC's latest TV series *Powerless* sounds interesting enough: it promised superheroes being held accountable for their actions, painted a picture of city streets rampant with villains, and alluded to investment in technology that would protect citizens and prevent property damage. It's eerily similar to Marvel's *Civil War* arc, which hit the big screen last year, but with an interesting twist of non-supers rallying together. Or so you would think.

The series takes place in the fictional Charm City, where a branch of Wayne Enterprises, headed by Bruce Wayne's moronic cousin Van Wayne (Alan Tudyk), is tackling the mountain of insurance claims put forward by the general public who have been affected by the acts of superheroes and villains. In order to decrease the number of insurance claims that can become legal battles, the company's new Director of Research Emily Locke (Vanessa Hudgens) proposes that Wayne Security invent products that prevent property damage and harm to the public, such as kryptonite glass that cannot be broken by Superman. Locke immediately finds flaws with the product and argues that if someone needed rescuing by Superman on the other side of the glass, they couldn't be saved, at which point the glass is broken by the character who manufactured it, highlighting that the glass would only be effective against the powers of two supers maximum. Not the smartest idea.

Is *Legion* as 'Marvel'ous as expected?

Gritty and realistic. *Legion* shows the dark side of super powers. But does the new series live up to the hype?

Marvel's new television show is a far cry from its Netflix counterparts. *Legion*, which is connected to the X-Men comics, takes a mind-bending and darkly humorous approach to the superhero TV genre, which is not surprising considering the showrunner, Noah Hawley, is best known for his work on the TVshow *Fargo*.

Taking place in the 1960s, the show follows David Haller, played by Dan Stevens, a patient at a psychiatric hospital who is diagnosed with schizophrenia after he claims to hear voices and be able to control objects with his mind. At the hospital, we are introduced to the incredibly funny and show-stealing Lenny, played by Aubrey Plaza, and the beautiful, closed off Sydney "Syd" Barrett, played by Rachel Keller, who Haller falls in love with at first sight. It's Syd that makes him start to realise that his symptoms might not be just a mental illness, that instead he might have powers.

The show suddenly shifts from the hospital to Haller being questioned by government agents on the whereabouts of Syd. It is then that we are recounted how Haller ended up in the hospital in the first place, and the events that led up to Syd's disappearance. Full of surreal moments and darkly disturbing scenes, we start to get a glimpse of Haller's view of the world.

Unlike other superhero movies and TV shows out there, *Legion* shows how



having powers is not always a gift. Instead it can be psychologically damaging and feel more like a curse than anything else. At its heart, *Legion* tackles the psychological effects powers have on their hosts, and does not shy away from portraying mental illness. What is portrayed is a deeply disturbed man suffering with mental illness due to the nature of his powers. This aspect of the show sets up Haller to be an unreliable narrator whose memories and perceptions of events are skewed by hallucinations and a weak grasp on reality.

For viewers who are not aware of the comic book background of *Legion*, the show can seem quite confusing at first. In general the quick cuts and strange camera angles can be disorienting for any viewer. That being said, more information is bound to be revealed in following episodes, and while the first episode will likely leave you unsettled, its action packed ending will only make you want to find out what happens next.

This show promises to be a surreal and action-packed adventure that is bound to be incredibly entertaining.

Georgia Ryan



The Moorside

Fiona Holland reviews the controversial retelling of the kidnapping of Shannon Matthews

As it marks nearly a decade since the appeal and search for nine-year-old Shannon Matthews in 2008, BBC One's two-part series, *The Moorside*, revisits the unusual event that grasped the attention of the local community, as well as news nationwide. Shannon's disappearance in Dewsbury was said to be the biggest missing person investigation for the West Yorkshire Police since the case of the Yorkshire Ripper in 1981. After more than three weeks, Shannon was found in the base of a bed in the house of Michael Donovan, the uncle of Karen Matthew's partner Craig Meehan. The family that had called for their daughter to be found had in fact been involved in her disappearance. The investigation did not end in relief for the community but in further disturbance.

The BBC's decision to make the docudrama did not escape controversy. *The Moorside* gathered a lot of attention before it was aired, receiving calls from Karen Matthews' relatives urging producers not to broadcast the show. In an interview on ITV's *Good Morning Britain*, Karen's cousin Susan Howgate spoke out against the programme believing it would 'bring everything back.' Another possible concern that arose before the show was broadcast was how it might affect the now 18 year-old Shannon who lives under a new identity. While nearly nine years have passed since the disappearance, it is likely that the story is one that many have been trying to forget.

The Moorside, however, does not place its focus on Shannon Matthews, but on the residents of the estate, their reactions to the kidnapping, and to the lies that

"While nearly 9 years have passed since the disappearance, it is likely that the story is one that many have been trying to forget."

surrounded it. Sheridan Smith's performance as Julie Bushby, a friend of Karen Matthews, was a particularly convincing portrayal of an energetic community leader with an unwavering loyalty to find Karen's daughter. Gemma Whelan's representation of Karen should also be credited with equal praise. She depicts Karen as multidimensional in character, as someone who is acting as an adult and never completely certain of the differences between right and wrong.

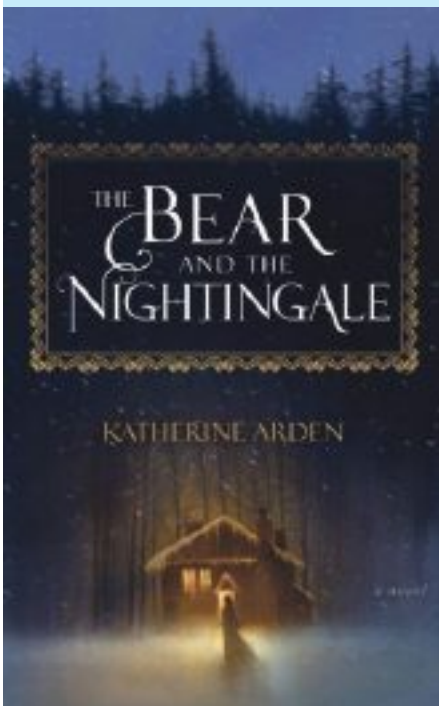
Since the final episode last Tuesday, the show has been highly praised. Nonetheless, an issue that has emerged is whether it was an accurate representation of what actually took place. In *The Guardian*, Mark Lawson has noted that several scenes such as Julie's speech in the courtroom at Karen's trial are 'solidly factual.' Mumtaz Hussain, a local councilor in Dewsbury however, thinks differently. Hussain told *The Huffington Post*, that there were, 'more people from that south-east Asian background involved in that search than what was portrayed last Tuesday.'

It is inevitable that dramatic adaptations of such complex real life events will struggle to act as accurate accounts of what actually took place. It cannot be denied however that Neil McKay and Jeff Pope's *The Moorside* has constructed a powerful image of a local community that was brought together but also broken apart by such an incident, telling a side of the story of the Shannon Matthews case that might have otherwise been left untold.

Fiona Holland

The Bear and the Nightingale

A magically chilling tale of powerful spirits and family bonds set in Russia...



The story starts off with a tale of a beautiful girl who bravely faces the winter demon Morozko and is rewarded riches beyond imagination. This old folktale slowly unravels in the novel to be the story of Vasilisa, the youngest daughter of the Russian boyar Pyotr Vladimirovich and his wife Marina Ivanovna, who dies while giving birth to the girl. Vasya, as she is nicknamed, is set apart from her siblings with her ethereal beauty, her wildness, and her close ties to magic. She has the ability to see the old spirits that populate the hearth, stables and woods of the village, keeping the villagers warm, well-fed, and safe. Her new stepmother can also see these spirits, but fears them intensely believing them to be demons.

Her suspicion and hatred of Vasya, is echoed by the villagers at the encouragement of a young and charismatic priest. The priest insists that everyone turn their backs on the old spirits, as they are demonic and unchristian. The weakening of the old spirits leads to the reawakening of a nasty and powerful evil, intent on destroying everyone and everything, starting with Vasya's village. Vasya must face the realities of becoming a woman in medieval Russia, while also facing both human and supernatural threats to her and her family.

The Russian setting helps create a rich and fantastical backdrop that adds depth to the story. Arden works hard to describe the cold and deadly Russian winters that last

a long time and leaves many hungry and near-dead. As the years go by in the story, the winters become harsher, yet more beautiful, the cold described so vividly I actually shivered.

At its core, this story is about family bonds and the lengths that people will go to protect their loved ones. The relationships between Vasya and her siblings is heartwarming and feels very real. Her father's attempts to give her a good life, though misguided, come from a place of love.

The story also shows the struggles of growing up as a woman in a time where she was expected to act docile and when she grew to age, she would be expected to marry and submit to a husband, though this goes against Vasya's very nature. Her struggle against social expectations is one that many of us can empathise with.

Where the story breaks down is in its third act. Certain stories are never fully elaborated with characters leaving without tying up their stories. With so much lead up and preparation, the final battle is almost disappointing, and it is too close to the end for there to be any real closure for the readers. Overall, though the book tells a vivid and beautiful tale that is worth a read.

Jade Verbick

Welfare at Leeds: Simple Self-Care

When you're constantly working to deadlines, taking time for yourself is often far down on your list of priorities. LUU Welfare Officer Martha's here to give you some ideas for when you just need to relax.



and it is also bad preparation for working life. Self-care is key to positive health and wellbeing.

Self-care can include setting aside time each day for extra-curricular activities, whether this be revisiting an activity you have done before or trying something completely new. This doesn't have to be a physical activity either. It could be reading your book, trying crafts such as crochet or practicing the instrument you've been trying to master since year 7. It could be making the time to see a friend you haven't for a while, or trying out that edgy coffee shop you haven't been in before.

It also doesn't have to cost you any money, as Leeds has plenty to offer which won't break the bank. There is free entry to Leeds Art Gallery, the Henry Moore Institute and Leeds City Museum. Closer to home the Parkinson Building houses the Stanley and Audrey Burton Art Gallery which also has free admission.

There is also free self-care to be found in the abundance of nature Leeds has to offer. Some of the most picturesque places to visit (which are all geographically opportune for students) include Roundhay Park, The Hollies in Headingley, the Meanwood Valley Trail and Meanwood Urban Farm. These all offer a green, leaf-filled, river-running experience which will make you feel you are a million miles away from the

concrete jungle of Hyde Park, Woodhouse and Burley.

Whilst living at University it is also easy to let your eating habits get disrupted by a new hectic lifestyle, which often has a lack of routine. It can also be hard to learn how to budget for food if you've never done so before. Kirkgate Market offers affordable food deals which are perfect for shopping on a budget. A healthy diet is important for effective self-care, but this doesn't mean living off celery and hummus. It means eating a balanced diet of food which you enjoy. For interesting recipes which won't leave you penniless check out Jack Monroe's website 'Cooking on a Bootstrap'.

Take time this term to explore what simple self-care measures you can put in place to rejuvenate yourself and keep your health and wellbeing in check.

Events to check out:

Lake District with GIAG and GOGA 11th March, 07:30-19:30

Mindfulness Café, Mondays, 2:30-4pm, LUU Room 2
GIAG Trip to Whitby, 4th March, 9am-7pm

Lishi Tai Chi, 3rd March, 2:30-4pm, LUU Room 6
Board Games Night, 22nd March, 7-9pm, LUU Room 2
Easing the Pressure: Building Resilience, Wednesdays, 3:30-4:30pm, LUU Room 1

Martha Clowes

There is often a perception that at University it's a waste of time and resources to take a break to self-care. This is not the case. Your time studying can be more effective if you give yourself the space to rejuvenate and reenergise. Motivation can also be increased when you're excited about attending an interesting event, cooking a meal you love, or partaking in an activity you enjoy. It's important to involve yourself in activities and hobbies which fill you with positivity. Over-working is negative for your physical and mental health and wellbeing,

Strange Museums of the World

You might think museums are boring attractions full of the same old dusty artefacts, but here Edmund gives you a run-down of the strangest and most wonderful museums across the world...



instant chicken ramen. In 1971 he also created 'Cup Noodles'. The museum features a Cup Noodle vending machine, which is a highlight of gimmicky Japanese vending machines in that it actually makes sense. Simply buy your cup, and add hot water with the built-in tap. You now have noodles.

Questacon, Canberra, Australia.

Also known as the National Science and Technology Centre, Questacon is a certain stop for the countless school children who get ferried from around Australia to Canberra to 'see the nation's capital'. Questacon is a gem, however, containing earthquake simulations, Tesla coils, a freefall slide, and a rotation of science exhibitions. Move over London Science Museum.

Museum of Broken Relationships, Zagreb, Croatia.

This is a museum that is as entertaining as it is validating and depressing. The premise is simple: people submit artefacts that symbolise their broken relationship, romantic or otherwise, and leave an anonymous blurb divulging as much as they care to tell. Admissions include an axe that belonged to a woman who, having being left abruptly for another woman, spent the two weeks her ex took to reclaim his belongings, to axe a piece of furniture daily, until there was nothing left. Also featured: 'the Toaster of Vindication'. When a four year relationship ended,

they stole their ex's toaster. If you have a relationship that hasn't quite had the closure you feel necessary, they take submissions.

Ravelnik Museum, Bovec, Slovenia.

Near the remote Slovene town of Bovec, in the Slovene Alps, there's a museum by the river Soča, dedicated to the Isonzo front of WWI. For two and a half years the Italian and multi ethnic Austro-Hungarian armies murdered each other by the hundreds of thousands, trading nothing but a few mountains. War museums often miss the mark, distorting history to fit a national narrative. All marble and grandeur, heroic statues, waving kids, flags flying as history is twisted because we can't stand the idea that everyone's loss was for nothing. "No" says a little museum at the Soča; not here. There's no staff, no gift shop, no entry fee, no audio tour. There's just the remnants of a bloody and pointless battlefield, and a few signs to say 'here are the walls where men were blown apart. Here are the caves they cowered in, here are the dugouts they cried in, the beds they sweated in, and the holes they died in. Here is where boys died for nothing'.

Edmund Goldrick

Please forgive the jarring tone of this piece, some museums are great because they are amusing, while others are great because of their solemnity. The following are some of the world's finest, but perhaps not the most well known museums.

Cup Noodle Museum, Osaka, Japan.

Dedicated to Momofuku Ando, this museum lauds his inventions and achievements. In 1959, he created the world's first instant noodles when he manufactured

An Open Letter to Anti-Feminists

It's 2017 and yet some people still have the wrong impression of feminism. This week, Bradley busts the most common myths that still surround it.



"Brad, I've got this friend coming up over the weekend who you might be in to. She's really into politics like you, she's studying at Cambridge and she's hella hot... ah but she is a feminist."

This conversation is not the first I've had of its kind. Many of my friends treat feminism, and particularly feminist women, as a dirty phrase. These same individuals are some of the most respectful and caring people I know. They hold the same values as I do, but they, like many others, misconceive what 'feminism' means. Concerned mainly with the procedural elements of equality, they argue that feminism is either too extreme, too exclusive or is no longer needed. So it is my duty, as a feminist, to unpack these arguments in the hope that you will consider mine.

"Feminism is too extreme": This statement conceptualises feminism as a single, static entity, and defines this entity in terms of the scattered minority of women who might actually wish to establish a matriarchy. The problem is that all social movements contain extremists. To define a social movement by its fringes would be to discount almost all movements. Trump is apparently a Republican, Stalin claimed to be a socialist, and a man wearing a "Kill All Whites" shirt claimed to identify with Black Lives Matter. I am a feminist, but that does not suppose that I agree with everyone else who is a feminist.

"Feminism is no longer needed": If concerned with procedural equality under law, this argument has some merit. Both genders can vote, can own property, receive divorce settlements, run for office, the list goes on. But legal equality (which I would qualify hasn't actually quite been realised) does not equate to substantive equality. This is why we need feminism. We need feminism because the sexualisation of young girls persists. Don't believe me? Have you ever asked yourself why adult women, dressed in school uniforms, are advertised as "Teens" on Pornhub?

We need feminism because women currently comprise one-third of parliament. Don't think gender impacts democracy? Ask yourself, would a two-thirds female parliament have taken until 2015 to stop taxing tampons as a luxury product?

We need feminism because I know of too many women who have been raped. Because my relatives and friends are too regularly heckled, because female enrolment in STEM subjects is

disproportionally low, because the *Daily Mail* produces a weekly list shaming women's appearances, because menstruation is treated with contempt, because women are stigmatised for breastfeeding in public, because gendered children's toys are ridiculous.

"Women are taking feminism too far": The biggest misconception of all is to frame feminism as merely a means of raising women up to or above the standard of life that men enjoy. This implies that feminism is an attempt to alter women's prospects on some competitive balance sheet of advantages and disadvantages. It isn't. Feminism is not simply a women's issue, it is not even simply about equality; it is a means to challenge an entire system of role patterns that restrict both sex's freedom and happiness. Do you really think it's just a coincidence that the number one killer of men under 50 - the gender that's taught to repress their emotions - is suicide? Do you think it's fair that when men look after their children alone for an evening it's labelled "babysitting"? Is it acceptable that domestically abused males rarely feel they can seek assistance, or that the international aid community has little data at all on the vulnerability of men?

Perhaps in the course of reading this you have found one, two or three of the examples I provided that you disagree with and wish to counter - and I'm willing to debate them; but wouldn't the existence of just one gendered restriction justify the existence of feminism?

Bradley Young

Challenging the Public Perception of Life Drawing

The preconception of life drawing as overly sexualised and a little bit weird couldn't be further from the truth. Maya recounts her experience of trying life drawing for the first time...



Up until recently, if you had asked me what my opinion on life drawing was, it wouldn't have been particularly encouraging. I, like most of my friends, thought of it as quite an uncomfortable and funny situation to find myself in. However, being a fresher at university and wanting to take all the opportunities that I see around me, I approached the ArtSoc stall at the refresher's fair and was persuaded to at least give it a go. I thought to myself, if I'm ever going to go to

something like this I may as well try it out now.

The following Thursday I was feeling bold and had found a few friends who were bold enough to try it out too. We were definitely nervous. We had no idea what to expect.

The first thing that I was surprised about was walking into to seeing a young woman in a robe. For some crazy reason, once we started thinking about how old the model would be, we completely forgot that there was a high chance that the model could be female. This was our first preconception that was challenged.

Next was the experience itself. We all took pieces of paper, the materials we wanted and tried to find a good spot. In the midst of trying to take off my coat whilst trying to prevent the charcoal in my hand from getting on any of my belongings, I managed to miss the robe of the male model drop. I looked up and BOOM there it was, dangling in the silence. Surprisingly though I didn't laugh. No-one did. I looked around the room and noticed how everyone else was viewing the man as art; focusing on how the light created shadows, the muscular definition and so on.

However, I have to be honest. There was one thing that did make me giggle and that was the poses the model chose to stand in. Every now and then the model would switch poses, but not into the 'classic' poses you'd expect. The funniest thing was when he tried to hold a pose which can only be described as 'creative'. He whipped out a stick and tried balancing himself on one leg whilst holding the stick for support. In that moment I suddenly realised how peculiar the whole situation was. What if someone walked in right now? It would look pretty hilarious.

Anyway, the message I wanted to share with you all is not to believe everything people tell you. Life drawing is actually one of the most relaxing things I've ever experienced. For a solid hour and a half your mind is blank, empty of thoughts, focused and most importantly calm. If you're interested to try out life drawing, check out the Art Society's page on the LUU website.

Maya Sterrie



Keep Calm and Carry on

Edmund Goldrick outlines the danger with the 'tough it out' attitude towards illness in the work place and university. Who's at risk? And what should we be trying to change?



Image: KC Green

Edmund Goldrick

Catch any bus, go to any university lecture, office, supermarket, and you will likely find clearly sick people toughing it out and carrying through with their day. It is reflective of confusing workplace protections around sick leave, the social pressure to work and study, and a lack of awareness of the risks.

Currently, workers are required to be sick for four consecutive days before applying for paid sick leave. This is unhelpful, as it asks workers to project how long they expect to be sick for. Even if they do get paid sick leave, what you will receive is a pittance of what you'd be paid if you were at work. Average weekly pay in Britain is around £500 a week, while the average paid sick leave is only £112 a week (the minimum weekly sick pay being £88.45). Unsurprisingly,

One student boasted he managed to continue to attend all his classes despite having 'rhino flu'

research cited by *The Independent* indicated that Brits took, on average, 1.85 days of paid sick leave in 2015. Though up from an alarming 0.93 in 2014, it is nowhere near the pre-GFC average of five days. That the average falls well below the required four consecutive days suggests most people are never able to get paid sick leave.

This echoed the concerns of one part-time Leeds

University worker, who, despite being very ill, lamented, "If I stay home, that's £50 I've lost, so it's just not worth it". The situation is more convoluted for people on zero hour contracts. Citizens Advice says people on zero hour contracts 'may' be able to get sick leave, but gives no indication of what circumstances allow you to get it. They instruct workers to ask for a reason from their employers if they are denied it, and to contact them if they are unhappy with the response (again, no indication of what constitutes a valid reason for being denied paid sick leave). ACAS (Advisory, Conciliatory and Arbitration Service) however, alleges that most zero hour contracts give people 'worker' rather than 'employee' status and so do not give the person a right to paid leave.

A recent report by the Public Library of Science and the New York Department of Health stressed the importance of paid sick leave in encouraging contagious people to stay home. However, the influence of such studies is countered by pharmaceutical studies, and news reports on sick leave that focus on 'how much money was lost' by people taking sick leave. They make no effort to assess the economic gain of sick people not working; namely, it reduces the risk of contagion to colleagues. This is despite that avoiding further contagion is, understandably, the medical priority.

Aside from economics, there's also an issue of vulnerability. While many may be able to work through an illness, others may not be so lucky. This includes people recovering from surgery, with autoimmune diseases, struggling financially or with their studies. In the latter case, research at the University of Minnesota found that an extraordinary proportion of students who had symptoms well beyond a cold

were still attending all their classes. Around 40% of students displaying Influenza like illness (ILI) maintained constant attendance.

This 'tough it out' attitude persists at Leeds, with one student boasting he managed to continue to attend all his classes despite having 'rhino flu'. While some classes have good mechanisms for recording either the lectures themselves or noting the vital content, for others attendance is much more crucial to success, and absence through illness is going to present enormous difficulties.

40% of students displaying Influenza like illness maintained constant attendance

There is even little encouragement for basic measures to prevent spreading illnesses if you are sick, such as coughing into one's arm rather than a hand, or wearing a mask as in done in much of Asia. The latter would be a particularly sensible measure if sick, and one's classes demand attendance.

Unfortunately there is little will to change any of these areas. Be it more sensible paid leave arrangements, public health campaigns, or more support to allow students to be able to miss classes through sickness, but still keep up with their course. It seems the persistent 'grin and bear it' attitude still prevails, at the risk of not only the sufferer but other students and colleagues.

Why is My Rebellion White?

Features editor Jessie Florence-Jones looks at the whitewashing of punk and its still thriving existence in Asia and Africa.

Jessie Florence Jones

When someone says punk, the first thing to come to mind for most people is a safety pin through a body part, a load of studs and a mohawk. Growing up as a scouse kid in a (very) white suburban Crosby village, the movement offered a way of listening to music akin to screaming into a pillow. As I became more politicised, the movement in my eyes swiftly moved into the area of anti-totalitarianism. From Stiff Little Fingers, Anti-Flag and Dead Kennedy's 'Nazi Punks Fuck Off', the rich intertwining of anarchism and anti-government sentiments strengthened my own discontent. Many would say 'punk is dead', rolling their eyes, and point to '77 as the hay day and subsequent decline of the genre. This is far from the case however. Punk has, for a long time in mainstream media, been relatively white washed. The movement hardly fitted on *Top of the Pops* anyway, but the small nugget allowed into the public eye didn't stray very far from a young Johnny Rotten condemning the Queen. Throughout history however, and still now, all over the world, punk is alive and kicking. Following on from Polystyrene, the black, braced, fierce-ass lead singer of X-Ray Spex, the contemporary in Asia and South Africa shows that punk never died; just stayed where it was needed most.



Image:music in Africa



Image: Karabo Mooki



Image: Karabo Mooki



Image: Africa's Country



Image: OkayAfrica

Soweto - Africa

There are examples of punk in Africa stemming back to the '70s but the movement was dominated back then by white Africans musicians. Now however, with bands such as TCIYF, Death at the Party and Brainwreck, the subculture is being taken back and spearheaded as a politically charged voice of the disenfranchised.

The movement started with members of TCIYF starting a skate group (Skate Society Soweto) in 2011, subsequently releasing videos on YouTube and getting coverage by photographers. This DIY effort from the groups in Soweto is at the heart of what the movement is about, releasing music for themselves and spreading publicity through any art avenue they can find. The Facebook page, which has hosted gigs that Death at the Party amongst others have played, says simply in their bio: 'It's all about spread the word, getting the music out there and building up something new. No politics, no hatred and no bullshit. Just good loud music and some awesome skating'.

This brand of the a-political opens an avenue in South Africa to challenge the dominant white voice without addressing it directly. This mode of rebellion comes through sheer joy it seems and, with little information on the internet, the movement is still relatively self-contained in Soweto - this is punk by black Africa for black Africa.

Myanmar (formerly Burma)

My Buddha is Punk is the go-to information point on this particular subcultural shift. Originally released in 2015 it follows Kyaw Kyaw, a punk musician looking to combine the positives of buddhism with the political force of punk. The creator of the film, Andreas Hartmann, attributes his original interest to his view of Burma following 2011. Though changes were being made, he states that 'the civil war was going on and ethnic minorities were still persecuted' (*i-D magazine*).

Enter Kyaw Kyaw: the face of this political shift. Following the 'Saffron Revolution' in 2007 (a protest movement lead by monks originally sparked by change in fuel prices) the musician formed his band Rebel Riot. Being a closed country for almost fifty years, punk arrived late to Myanmar. That explains then why the same unrest, expressed with the same raw power, cropped up here twenty years later than the West.

Much like punk in Germany and other Eastern European countries, the movement's underlying philosophy is inextricably linked to the undoing of fascism. In Eastern Europe punk prevails as an anti-neo-nazi movement. In Myanmar, Kyaw Kyaw's scene is protesting the aftermath of a half-decade dictatorship that perpetually violated human rights. The uniqueness of this movement is combining the angry fervor of the scene with the peaceful zen of Buddhism.

In *My Buddha is Punk* we see Kyaw Kyaw and his friends questioning monks about their religion and how its harnessed. This reinvention in Myanmar is one of the most important political punk movements to date. Much like Soweto the movement started underground. With this film however, the voice of the oppressed is slowly becoming louder.



Image: Fanzui Xianfa - facebook



Image: Rebel Riot - i-D



Image: KyawKyaw

China

This movement is huge. Following the 1989 Tiananmen democracy revolts, Cui Jian started the ripple which would soon become a wave of change in China's cultural history. Starting in Beijing, the punk movement eventually spread in the '90s to the Middle Kingdom, taking with it rising rebellion and discontent. The prominence of consumerism in China has left a massive portion of its youth turning to punk for an alternative set of values and model of escapism. The movement in the People's Republic today is so colossal that *Vice* now has a branch in Beijing dedicated solely to covering its developments.

Fanzui Xianfa, whose name means 'criminal thought', have used their music to critique multiple governmental flaws, from environmental problems in China to corruption in Japan. Zuoxiao Zuzhou, friends with the artist Ai Weiwei, introduced the avant-garde to punk, singing about everything from a hopeless population to a critique of the 2008 milk scandal. Other bands include Demerit (dedicated to an undoing of false promises and consumerist culture), Gum Bleed, Flyx, Omnipotent Youth Society and a hell of a lot more.

These are the movements to turn to when people say punk is dead. It's not dead. It never died. Starting off as a movement that naturally belonged to the oppressed, down-trodden and seemingly voiceless, it never was white in the first place. So when despairing that the verve of anti-government screams of the 70s and 80s have been silenced, turn away from the West: it just got taken back from white boys in tartan.

Nokia 3310: Return of the Brick

With Nokia set to bring back the beloved brick phone, Chloe Price gives us the low down on why we are going back to the mobile dark ages

Chloe Pryce

It appears that your Grandma's ugly brick mobile phone you've been begging her to get rid of for years may soon be more in than your fresh iPhone 7. Having read about Donald Trump's plans to implement anti-globalisation policies, watched the reboot of Full House and seen middle-aged parents playing Pokemon Go, 2016 had me feeling like we'd been booted back to the 20th century. And it's looking like 2017 is going to be having us throwing back again, with the return of the memorable, oh so loved, Nokia brick. The Nokia 3310, first launched in 2000, may be the ugly brick phone we begged our parents to get rid of when 2008

and the iPhone rolled around. However, as thousands await the return of the brick, it goes without saying that that iconic status of the Nokia is as indestructible as the Nokia 3310 itself.

Following the leak that Nokia was going to re-release the Nokia 3310, many have questioned exactly how it will fit into the 21st century apart from being the talk of Twitter. Can Nokia truly hope to make money off it? Competing with the smartphones that our society has become addicted to, it is difficult to see where the most loved phone of the 90s will fit in.

As well as its indestructibility and brilliant battery life compared with our smashed screens and battery-dead iPhones, what might attract 2017 phone users to the Nokia 3310 is its affordability. Predicted to go for around £50, the 3310 could attract a whole range of consumers from those wanting a cheap, no frills handset to those wishing, for memories sake, to see whether their talent at Snake still stands. Perhaps the perfect phone for festivals?

Secondly, it's rumoured that it will be hitting the stage at the Mobile World Congress 2017 in Barcelona alongside 3 other Android-powered Nokia handsets: the Nokia 3, 5 and 6. Although Nokia isn't building the new handsets, as the brand license is now owned by the Finnish company, HMD Global, Nokia

will still be involved. It will set performance and brand requirements, allow use of its R&D facilities and receive royalties. Whilst we're unsure what the rebooted Nokia 3310 will entail, the other 3 handsets are speculated to be of premium quality, costing around £635 for the 12GB version with a design which is still very 'Nokia'.

All we can do now is sit back and wait for the countdown to MWC 2017 to see exactly what Nokia has in store for us.

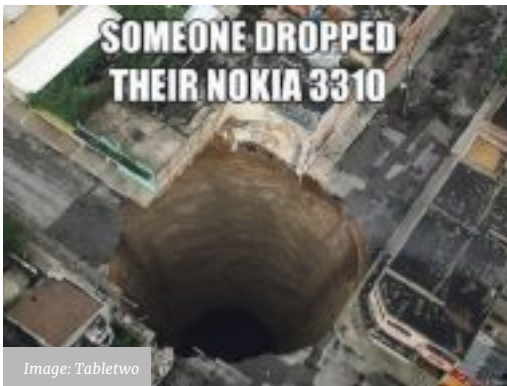


Image: Tabletwo



Image: Metro

Peugeot Gearing up for Acquisition

Tim Knickmann

On Tuesday February 14th it was revealed that Peugeot (formally PSA Group) is in advanced talks to buy GM's European Unit. For most of us, this is Opel/Vauxhall. To give some context to the deal, Peugeot has been in varying alliances since 1992. They have liaised with BMW, Toyota, Dongfeng (a Chinese company) and Mitsubishi. In regards to GM, a joint venture began in 2012; collaboration was meant to happen on chassis, vehicle design and engines with cost savings of up to \$2bn by 2018. However, Peugeot continued to struggle, requiring a cash injection which meant that GM sold its 7% stake in Peugeot in 2012. This made room for Dongfeng to invest in the company, and allowed for greater synergies between the two companies. As Peugeot had failed to jump on the emerging market bandwagon, the Dongfeng cash injection and collaboration tried to get it to catch up.

However, the relationship between Peugeot and GM continued to develop. As mentioned, they are in advanced talks now to spin off the GM European Unit. Peugeot has posted a loss from 2012-2014, while GM Europe just posted a loss of \$257mil in 2016 and has posted a loss since 1999. Peugeot has been restructuring since 2014, with CEO Carlos Tavares cutting costs continuously and trying to lower the break-even point. Naturally, with all Opel and Vauxhall works based in Europe, the synergies should be significantly larger than under GM's roof. It seems to be that Tavares radical cost-cutting approach will help to bring Opel to profitability. However, both the German and the UK government have expressed that they are insisting that no jobs will be cut. Given that GM wanted to write down the value of the European Unit by \$400mil, following the decline of the pound from Brexit, it would be a major political loss to lose workplaces and subsequent employed workers. Similarly, there are German elections in several months, making this acquisition a lot more political than it should be.

The cost cutting approach will most likely start in the UK. The Vauxhall work in Ellesmere Port was due to be closed in 2013 before the talks began, and so will most likely be a natural place to start the cuts. Given that assurances have been made to the Business Secretary, but not the Union Leader even though they attended the same meeting, there is cause for concern about the politicised nature

of the deal. If the stock market is anything to go by, this has been taken as great news. On the day, Peugeot shares jumped 6.5% from its highest to lowest and GM jumped 3.5% but finished the day up 5.28%. After the news had been digested properly, most of the Peugeot gains were wiped out after investors realised that the cost savings would have to be significantly bigger than projected to make the acquisition worthwhile. Most likely, jobs will have to be cut somewhere, and it will be a long fight for politicians to ensure that it does not happen in their country.



Image: topspeed.com



Image: MK2 Peugeot

What skills do employers value most in their graduates?

With competition for graduate jobs ever increasing, what skills are employers really looking for in their graduates? Julia Constable talked to business representatives at the LUBS Night of Exchange and reviews the night as a whole...

Julia Constable

Last Thursday night, Revolution Electric Press was buzzing with conversation from students and employers alike. 'A Night of Exchange' was organised by the Leeds University Business Society, with the aim of giving students from all years the opportunity to meet with employer representatives outside the boardroom. This informal environment broke the barrier between employer and employee and provided a relaxed atmosphere for students to ask open and honest questions about the job opportunities available to them. As a free event, open to all LUBS Society members, with complimentary food and an open bar, this event successfully combined the social side of working life with the gravitas of a networking event.

At this event, there was one question I wanted to find the answer to: what skills do employers value most in their graduates? Whether you're looking for part-time work experience, potential Summer Internships or Year Abroad Placements, it is important to know the options that are out there, and the growth and

development opportunities that employers can offer you. More importantly, what skills can you offer to potential future employers?

I spoke to Matt Elliott, a Project Manager in the field of Technology at RBS, who explained that graduates should be creative and open minded in order to be able to adapt to new environments within the business. He suggested that RBS is reluctant to "pigeon-hole" new recruits and instead aims to give them the opportunity of working in several different roles through job rotation, in order to find the position that they are most passionate about and would want to commit to long-term. Naturally, computer literacy is important as technological skills are necessary for everyday operations, particularly at RBS, as Facebook Workplace is becoming increasingly integrated. Perhaps the most useful advice he could give to future recruits was to align your values with the culture of the business to make sure that the business is a "good fit" for you and that your values compliment those of the organisation that you work for.

Karandeep Soheli, Head of Energy at Charlton Morris,

suggested that passionate and "highly motivated" candidates are particularly attractive to employers; recruits who show a willingness to learn and want to be proactive participants within the business are highly valued. Furthermore, creative and innovative candidates who are friendly and outgoing are extremely attractive, particularly for Charlton Morris, in order to break the stigma surrounding the recruitment field, which is sometimes seen as "old-fashioned" and at times aggressive.

Overall, the general consensus from employers that I gained during the evening was that less tangible soft skills are just as important as technical hard skills. Although both are equally important, employers are willing and able to teach new recruits technical hard skills specific to different job positions. However, soft skills such as good communication, self-motivation and flexibility demonstrate your potential to employers and show that the raw materials are there to be transformed. If your values align to the culture of the business, the business will have the right tools to help you reach your full potential.

Incremental Innovation at its Best

With yet another iPhone release on the way, Jess Jones looks at Apple's model of incremental innovation, and how consumers suffer from it...

Jess Jones

Every year millions of Apple users around the world go into a frenzy when the next iPhone, Mac, iPad and Apple Watch get released into the ever changing technology market. But is Apple's strategy of incremental innovation worth the dent to our bank accounts or is it just a money making con to millions of their global customers?

When Apple announced the launch of the first iPhone in January 2007, the world was astounded: a computer that made phone calls and could be carried in a pocket? Following this, in June 2010 Apple released details of the iPhone 4; this new model would feature a new shape, new retina screen and improved camera ability with front facing features. In the early days these transformations were major technological

advancements; the jump from the 4 to the 4s gave consumers iMessage, iCloud, Notification Centre and Siri which are now fundamental features of the product that make Apple so unique and desirable. However, as the years have progressed and as the tech industry is innovating quicker than we can process, are the changes worth the added cost and are these features ones that the average customer even notices?

Apple's latest iPhones, the 7 and 7 Plus, feature only a few changes from the 6S. The pixel resolution of the 7 Plus matches that of the 6S Plus, along with its height, width and depth. Although a major addition is the splash, water and dust resistance feature, this does however come with the catch of having to buy wireless earphones unless you choose to use the headphone adapter. Arguably, one of the key features of the 7 Plus is its impressive camera ability that far surpasses that of its predecessors. It has wide-angle: f/1.8 aperture and a telephoto: f/2.8 aperture, along with 2x optical zoom and up to 10x digital zoom. To those not overly interested in photography this won't mean much apart from knowing it's better than the last. But an iPhone with newer, even slightly better features than what we already hold leaves us desperate to know what Apple will create next.

As an avid Apple user myself, I felt great disappointment recently when

losing my 6 and having to downgrade three steps in the iPhone sphere and resort to using to my mother's old 5c. In reality, it's still a phone, it makes calls, it sends texts and would help me navigate home using maps if needed. But in a world where consumerism prevails, I feel I want more. Apple have cleverly turned us into technology hungry animals and are probably sat laughing at their desks in San Francisco as their incremental innovations make them billions for every new product launch...yet here we wait in angst for the next product. Will it be an iPhone 8 or the iPhone 8S?

Who cares what Apple has lined up for us... we'll all buy it anyway.



Image: Inc.com



Image: Eurdoia

Sharks are friends, not food



Image: Disney Pixar

James Deed

Nowadays, sharks tend to get pretty bad press in the media; they are portrayed as man-eaters and a threat to humans. But there are over 500 species of shark in the world, 97% of which pose no danger to humans at all. These predators survive in the oceans at the top of the food chain, with no real competition aside from the odd killer whale or giant squid, however their main threat survives on land: man. Sharks are reported to kill between 5 and 12 humans each year, whereas humans kill 100 million sharks each year (that's 11,417 per hour), which is usually used to fuel the barbaric shark fin industry. This demand for shark-fin soup is said to be of a "cultural importance", yet there are no known health or medicinal benefits from human consumption. What scientists are starting to observe is that due to this over-fishing, 20% of the shark species are now on the brink of extinction. Just to put this into perspective - sharks have been on this planet for at least 400 million years, outlasting the dinosaurs and having survived 5 planetary mass-extinctions. Now it seems that their existence balances in the palms of our hands.

So what? Why should we care?

We should care because many of the shark species are known as "keystone species" - what this basically means is that sharks have a disproportionate effect on the ocean's food web, which has taken millions of years to establish. The importance of sharks is due to their dominance as predators, although they may seem like greedy carnivores, they actually prevent other marine species from having a detrimental effect

on the ocean ecosystem. They also feed on the weak and older fish individuals which 'trims' down the population, preventing the spread of disease in shoals and ensuring that a healthy population is maintained.

Without these sharks what can be expected?

One of the initial changes to the ecosystem will be the emergence of other dominant species, such as tuna and octopi. These new apex predators are so highly-adapted that without any natural predators their populations will explode. This will increase the demand for other marine life that resides lower in the food chain. A possible chain of events that we could see is as follows:

1. Sharks become extinct
2. No natural predators for tuna species
3. Tuna populations rapidly increase
4. Tuna's prey (which consume coral reef algae) are consumed in huge numbers to feed the growing population
5. No fish to eat the algae
6. Algae bloom on the coral reefs
7. Corals die
8. Loss of habitat for the remaining coral ecosystem

That might seem far-fetched, but this sequence of events has happened with other species. Furthermore, sharks exhibit an intimidation factor upon the food chain. By being present, their prey (such as sea turtles for tiger sharks) will feed in a broader area and will therefore be prevented from overgrazing on sea grass beds.

What's the take-home message?

When sharks are removed from an area, the ecosystem loses its balance. Various researchers have demonstrated how, without sharks, there may be a detrimental effect on our commercial fisheries, due to the loss of various important fish and shellfish populations. If the rate that people are fishing for sharks continues to rise, there may not be any left in our oceans within the next few decades. The film *Jaws* is scary, but a future without any sharks in our oceans is even scarier.



Image: Terry Goss

The Orca-stration of Beached Whales



Image: Robert Pitman

Leo Kindred

The news in the natural world last week was of 2 large “super-pods” of whales becoming beached in New Zealand. While over 200 pilot whales returned to the sea under their own steam, joining the 100 or so that had already been re-floated by conservation volunteers, the remaining beached whales sadly died.

People have often associated the beaching of whales as some sort of apocalypse barometer for modern times, however it has happened throughout history. The largest recorded stranding of pilot whales occurred as far back as 1918, where 1000 whales became stuck on the shore of the Chatham Islands. This was not an isolated episode either; another cited incident from 1946 saw 835 whales washed ashore in Argentina.

Beached whales exist somewhere between pandas and Pixar films in terms of affecting human emotion, only somewhat more profoundly and with less catchy music. It's these profound reasons which prompted Melville to choose a whale to be the symbolic nemesis in his tale of Moby Dick; so impossibly and overwhelmingly large, these enigmatic creatures exist in the human conscious as a monolithic leviathan of the deep, immense in solemn meaning. We now understand that whales are not monsters – in a lot of the world's cultures our human interactions with them have shifted away from fear and the inherent desire to hunt them. Indeed, after the second pod of whales became stranded on New Zealand shores, volunteers formed a human chain in an attempt to stop any more of them from beaching.

The reasons behind these distressing incidents are numerous, with many still to be fully understood. Sometimes it can be due to sickness, with toxic

algae and viruses being blamed for causing whales and dolphins to come ashore through delirious impairment. Human activity is also thought to be partially responsible. Factors such as the use of high-intensity sonar, pollution and even climate change are thought to impel whales into grounding themselves. Shallow water can also interfere with the animals' echolocation, the means by which some whales build a picture of the world around them.

Another theory being floated (ahem) are shark attacks. Continuing a theme we've previously touched upon – where the Gryphon took a nostalgic look at the 1999 shark horror-action film Deep Blue Sea – rangers from New Zealand's department of conservation have found the carcass of a whale containing bite marks made by a large carnivore. Sharks may have been involved; the massive stranding could have been prompted by an attack, driving the pod towards the land and shallow waters.

It certainly has happened before. In 2015 a juvenile humpback whale washed up on rocks in New South Wales, Australia, drawing a crowd of beachgoers who, inevitably, took selfies. A rescue operation was launched, resulting in the eventual return of the Humpback back into the sea. The celebrations were however short lived; the whale was attacked and killed by a large 3.5 metre shark, seemingly waiting for it. Shark attacks are an engaging theory, particularly as it appears peculiar that a species should be so vulnerable through a fault in its echolocation, or any other innate means of navigation, that have been derived through millions of years of natural selection.

Nevertheless, be it sharks, natural disasters, deafening sonar, pollution or illness, the cause of these mass whale beaching remains very much unclear.

Knowledge Bytes: Running out of time

If you're a computer science student, or find computer systems interesting, you're probably familiar with the concept of Unix time – this being the time keeping method used by multiple operating systems to describe the seconds that have passed since Thursday 1st January 1970. This doesn't count leap seconds (added due to Earth's orbital wobble) but there's only been 27 of them since 1972, so it's not that big of a deal. You might be thinking, “That's nice and all, but how on earth is this interesting?”

It starts to get intriguing when you think about how programmers have had to deal with this variable. Originally, time values were stored as a 32-bit integer (232 or 32 ones and zeroes). Traditional Unix clocks will run out in the year 2038, making embedded systems in financial institutions – and other awkward to upgrade places – especially vulnerable. This has been called the Unix Millennium Bug. Many systems have been upgraded to allow for 64-bit integer time, but fixing all systems is a slow process.

The Millennium Bug itself was caused by many system only using 2 digits to store years, making the year 2000 indistinguishable from 1900. Other problems were caused by programmers misunderstanding that the year 2000 would, in fact, be a leap year. Thankfully, most computer systems were upgraded.

Many other such time keeping problems have been seen before and others are predicted to occur in the future – despite them seeming silly, they can have disastrous results. For example the Deep Impact spacecraft was reportedly lost in 2013 due to its clock reaching 232 tenths of seconds from 1st January 2000.

64-bit time will run out in the year 292,277,026,596. So, if we haven't been cooked by the Sun's expansion by then, the programmers of the future will know what needs to be fixed!



Image: Septimiu

What it's like to be a committee member

As we approach the middle of second term, many societies have begun discussing electing next year's committee. If you've been thinking about running, you may be curious as to what it's really like to help run a society. *The Gryphon* is here to give you all the reasons why you should run to become a committee member

Gabriella Davis

It is no secret that being a member of a university society is a great experience and a lot of fun. This is because there are a number of people, both at the forefront and behind the scenes, who allow for the society you adore to run like clockwork. Often, society members do not realise how much hard work is put in and how many tireless hours are spent by committee members running the society. I know I was guilty of it when I was a fresher. Unfortunately, we cannot foresee the future and no matter how much planning and organizing takes place, no one can tell if everyone

will deliver on his or her roles within committee.

As a member of the executive committee for a sports club at university, I know the trials and tribulations that occur when running a society. What I did not know is that being on a committee entails endless stressful group chats that we all share to make sure everything is plain sailing, not to mention all the hectic running around to sort things out that might have been forgotten. Although, the reality is that these hiccups experienced are what make the team more cohesive, with all committee members working together to resolve any problems. The other committee members become your best friends and worst enemies – challenging, motivating and supporting each other along the way.

On the whole, being a committee member is a great opportunity, both to grow as a person, but of course, an extra achievement to add to your CV. I know that when I complain to my housemates about things that need to be done, their reply is always the same, "At least it is something you can put on your CV," to which I usually respond with some sarcastic comment about not needing it on my CV. The truth is, being on the committee is not just about personal gain and popularity, it is a chance for us to make things better within the society and to improve things so that all the elements of the society are at their best, making the society more enjoyable for you. Furthermore, the



Image: Emplotic



Image: Barbi Honeycutt

authority you get allows you to voice concerns and introduce new features to the society, such as larger charity events and more social elements.

If you think a society that you are part of could be changed for the better, then why not try out for committee? It may seem like an intimidating prospect, but the support you'll receive from the previous committee and the memories you'll make with your fellow committee members will make the experience all the worthwhile. At the end of the day, if you are passionate about your society then you will enjoy being a committee member – no matter what.

Society Spotlight: Mature Soc

Contrary to its name, the casual meet-ups that the Mature Society hold are open to any student, regardless of age. Society editor Bea Warleta interviews committee member Sue to discuss what goes on at Mat Soc, why they're open to all ages, and its plans for the future

Bea Warleta

Sue is a little older than the average University student. Sitting across from me in the crowded Refectory, she giggles: "I am not going to tell you how old I am, but I am old enough to be your grandma". She's Secretary for Mat Soc, the mature students' society. Mat Soc meet once a fortnight for coffee and tea, and occasionally for a Friday dinner at Old Bar. More than a society, they think of themselves as a community, providing support and advice for all kinds of students. "We're not equipped to be giving official advice", Sue tells me, "but most of us are Leeds residents so we know what's here in terms of help, so we sign-post people".

Sue points out that they do have an administrative problem. Most mature part-time students have demanding personal lives to balance against their studies, whether it's their own families, work or health issues – or all three. With so much to deal with, many of the members don't have the time or capacity to put in the work that Mat Soc needs in order to grow, reach more people, and become a more active society. And while they have had people requesting more activities and events from Mat Soc, Sue emphasises that the casual, informal feel to the society is what makes Mat Soc such a great society for its members. "I do think we've made some really nice

friends by just being that kind of low-key, informal, peer-support, if you want to call it that", she says, "because it's then when people open up about their personal issues".

And while they are called 'Mature Students', they are all-inclusive, and don't discriminate against age. "The last chair, who was 24, and myself – we were looking at the label, the title that we have, because, actually, we don't discriminate on age. If someone that's 19 wants to come, why wouldn't that be good?" She recognises, smiling, that this is unlikely, but that might also have to do with the society's name. "I don't like that word", she laughs. And she has a point – just because two students are the same age does not necessarily mean they'll have similar interests or that they'll get along. But Mat Soc provides the space for people who don't find many things in common with the 18 year-olds they share lectures with to find support, talk to other people going through similar struggles, and potentially find people with similar interests.

There are other services, like the Lifelong Learning Centre, which offer similar support for older students, with regular activities and meet-ups. However, this, Sue points out, is a school provision, run and organised by the University. Mat Soc, as a society, wants to remain student-led, as that is essential for maintaining the community feel of the society that

makes it so great. For that community feeling to stay alive, however, they also need an active committee, to keep offering activities and support for students and representing every age group over 21. An active social secretary and marketing committee would make a huge difference, and it's something that they lack at the moment. Sue reflects, "I do think the potential is very good. Mat Soc is here, it's like a constant presence, and I just hope it can carry on". I hope so, too.



Image: Mature Soc

Pie eating stunt definitely not pukka

Reece Parker
Football

Each year, amongst a growing tide of 'modern football' sweeping the English game, there is often a story which embodies the grass-roots game, a story of triumph against all odds. This year, Sutton United were passed the baton, with the magic of the FA Cup sprinkled on their run more liberally than the rubber crumb on their 3G pitch.

Having defeated fellow non-league sides Forest Green Rovers and Dartford F.C, Sutton made light work of the higher echelons of the football league pyramid. Cheltenham and AFC Wimbledon were humbled at the hands of the U's, before Leeds United were drawn as their opponents in the fourth round. In their most inspiring performance yet, Sutton sent their challengers back to Yorkshire with their tails firmly between their legs. Arsenal were drawn for the next round, and this year's fairy tale tie was founded on unfamiliar astro-turf.

As Sutton's victories grew in magnitude, so did the mini narratives which surround smaller clubs. First was the novelty of the astro-turf itself, purchased by the manager Paul Doswell, who himself patrols the side-lines vape in mouth. Perhaps the most heart-warming story was that of Wayne Shaw, the 23 stone

reserve keeper. A club icon, not only for his portly size, but also his dedication to the club, being caretaker of the pitch, community-liason officer, and sleeping in the clubhouse three days a week. This cup run must have meant the world to him, more than anyone else at the club.

All eyes were on the match this Monday, with Sutton fighting valiantly against a club over 100 places above them in the football league pyramid. Whilst Goliath swept aside David this time, each member of Sutton's team and backroom staff provided a terrific advert for non-league football, except perhaps Shaw. Following a novelty bet set up by The Sun, Shaw ate a pie on the side-lines, fulfilling the terms for the 8-1 bet. Shaw has since resigned from his position and is under investigation from the Gambling Commission. The Sun, continuing their great relationship with the British football community, subsequently hung Shaw out to dry. The legal repercussions of this event and Shaw's culpability are an interesting debate which I'm under qualified to deliver, what I feel must be addressed is how the general public are treating his actions as part of the 'magic of the cup'.

This is not a story of FA Cup magic. FA Cup magic is about fulfilling dreams, about teams outdoing opponents which outclass them through sheer grit and determination. David and Goliath tales. Characters

like Sutton striker Roarie Deacon, himself an Arsenal academy graduate, coming out with a point to prove and being the best player on the pitch. Names like Ronnie Radford and Guliano Grazioli being inscribed in their club's respective histories. What Shaw demonstrated was an off-pitch novelty act which undermined the performances of his teammates on the pitch. These players fit training around full-time jobs, such is their passion for the game, and Shaw's actions show nothing but contempt for their professionalism.



Image: BBC Sport

Progress for British bobsleigh team

Luke Etheridge
Bobsleigh

For a nation without any tracks, Great Britain has always done surprisingly well in bobsleigh and skeleton events. Amy Williams won gold at the 2010 Olympics in skeleton, with Lizzy Yarnold emulating her achievements in Sochi four years later. The Russian city was meant to host this year's World Championships, but the doping scandal that has enveloped Russian sports over the last year led to some countries potentially boycotting the events. Because of this, the decision was taken to move the championships to Koenigssee in Germany.

The women's bobsleigh was the first event to be contested, with the British duo of Mica McNeill and Mica Moore hoping to build on their World Junior victory in January. They looked to be in a good position after the first run, setting a time of 51.84 seconds to put them in seventh place. Unfortunately, they failed to take advantage of more favourable conditions during later runs, and dropped down to sixteenth place, with the American pairing of Elana Meyers Taylor and Kehri Jones winning their first gold medal since becoming a team.

In the two-man bob event, Francesco Friedrich and Thorsten Margis had been the team to beat over the last few years, winning the 2015 and 2016 World Championships for Germany. Therefore, it was no surprise when they were fastest in all four of their runs, winning the title by 1.2 seconds from Canada, with Germany's second team completing the podium. Britain's Bruce Tasker managed to finish fourth in 2016 alongside Joel Fearon, but they couldn't replicate the performance this time around, finishing the event

in ninth, with the other British pairing coming home in twenty-eighth position.

Lizzy Yarnold will be hoping she can regain her world crown this weekend, after she took a break throughout the 2016 season. She finished tenth overall in the World Cup, held in January, and will be hoping to rediscover the form that earned her two top-five finishes earlier in the season. Another British hope for gold in this event is Laura Deas, with the 28 year old finishing seventh in the world cup standings. The German fans will be hoping for another victory on home ice in this event, with Jacqueline Loelling leading the world rankings, and reigning champion Tina Hermann also looking in good form. In the men's event, Britain's Dominic Parsons will be hoping to better his ninth place finish from last year.

Unfortunately for fans of Cool Runnings, there's no Jamaican team this time around, but there is another unlikely contender in the four-man event. The Brazilian team spent some of the off season training in North Yorkshire, with former Olympic decathlete Edson Bindilatti leading

the team. The team finished 24th in last year's event, beating competitors from more established nations such as Poland, Serbia and the Czech Republic. They're coached by former British world champion Nicola Minichiello, and will be hoping to gain extra experience ahead of the Olympics next year in Pyeongchang. After a year where Leicester won the Premier League, and Lincoln reached the FA Cup quarter finals, a Brazilian bobsleigh victory would surely be one sporting shock too far.



Image: Peter Kneffel/AP

Lloyd signing shows strength of WSL

James Felton
Football

Manchester City's capture of superstar Carli Lloyd from Houston Dash is an excellent example of how the Women's Super League has progressed since its revamp in 2014. The American, one of the best players in the world, has signed a short term deal for last season's league winners. After playing an astonishing 232 times for her country, scoring nearly

a century of international goals and having two gold medals and a World Cup winner's medal to her name, she brings a wealth of experience to the English top-flight as well as her clear quality.

Alongside Lucy Bronze, Steph Houghton and Toni Duggan, Lloyd will feature in a side which is not only hoping to defend their league title, but also will be aiming to progress in the Champions League. They are currently in the quarter-finals of the European competition, facing German side Fortuna, with the

first leg to be played on 23rd March. Lloyd will be hoping to help City go far in Europe's premier tournament, not least because Arsenal are the only English side to have won this competition since it was founded in 2001.

However, Carli Lloyd's addition does not just bode well for Manchester City's chances, both in Europe and domestically, it also demonstrates the clear progression being made by women's football in this country. Indeed, since the rebranding of the top flight, the league has become more competitive

and gathered more exposure, both in attendances and TV audiences. Arsenal were the victors of seven championships in a row in the early 2000s, but have struggled in recent years. Despite finishing third in three out of the last four championships, showing that they are still a quality side, they have not won a league title since 2012. Manchester City, Chelsea and Liverpool are the last three winners of the WSL.

Nationally, also, the English team has also gone from strength to strength. After famously finishing third in the 2015 World Cup, thanks to the stewardship of Mark Sampson, and brilliant performances from the likes of Duggan, Fara Williams and Lucy Bronze, the English side are genuinely able to compete on the global stage. The 2017 SheBelieves Cup will be a good tournament to gauge the progress made by the national side. This tournament takes place over the first week in March, with England, France, Germany and the USA each playing each other once.

Ahead of the new domestic season, which begins in April, Manchester City have plenty of time to prepare, and, at this stage, all eyes are currently fixed on Europe's premier competition. With three different winners in the last three championships, and Arsenal's hegemony over the country no longer there, it is certainly an exciting time for the Women's Super League. Kelly Smith's retirement does mean that this is the end of an era, but it is also the start of a new one, with more televised coverage, press reports and general exposure, the women's game is in an exciting place. Let's hope it stays like this.



Image: Sky Sports

Depleted field won't affect spectacle

John Gibby
Horse Racing

The issue of 'absent friends' can often overshadow a sporting event. Regularly an injury or suspension will overshadow a major fixture to the extent that more people are bothered about who isn't in attendance than who is. With so many superstars both equine and human for racing fans to fawn over, that seems unlikely to be a problem at next month's Cheltenham Festival, but certainly became a concern this week when Thistlecrack, favourite for the Gold Cup, the week's biggest race, was ruled out with injury. Last year's World Hurdle winner, who took Kempton by storm over Christmas when cruising to victory in the King George, was seeking to become only the second novice since 1974 to win racing's blue riband event, but will now not line up at Prestbury Park on March 17th. He suffered a slight tendon tear, not a serious injury in the grand scheme of things, but enough to keep him out of the picture at least for the rest of the season, though trainer Colin Tizzard hopes to have his star back for a defence of his King George crown this winter.

But Thistlecrack isn't the only big name set to miss out on the tension and the potential glory of a race at the Festival. Among those already confirmed to be missing the big meeting are Annie Power and Faugheen, the last two names of the Champion Hurdle trophy, who are both trained by Willie Mullins

at Clossutton. Mullins relies on a much reduced Cheltenham squad compared to his normal heavy raid, with ace novice chaser Min recovering from a slight setback, and one time Gold Cup favourite and Ryanair Chase victor Vautour no longer with us after a tragic paddock accident early in the season. In fact, the absence of Thistlecrack, Vautour and Annie Power means that none of the five horses who won the Festival's lauded 'championship races' will be back this year, with reigning Champion Chaser Sprinter Sacre and the Gold Cup hero of 2016 Don Cossack both having been retired since last March. Valseur Lido, last year's Ryanair runner-up, and Coneegree, the Gold Cup champion of 2015, are among the others who miss out due to injury.

Overall then, we are looking at the risk of much depleted fields in some of jump racing's biggest events. The Champion Hurdle looks like it could pass as a Grade 2 event, while the three market leaders

for the Gold Cup have had six horses beat them collectively so far this season – hardly the mark of a group of potential champions. However, it will take more than a few injuries to detract from the spectacle that is the Cheltenham Festival. Those of us who love racing know that it's bigger than the individual horses or people that make it up. It is indeed an institution, and once again, you can hear 'the Cheltenham roar' coming.



Image: Getty Images

Out on his Arsène: is time up for Wenger?

No league title in thirteen years, and looking likely to exit the Champions League at the last 16 for the seventh year running, Joey Wright and Tom Davies look at whether a managerial change is necessary at one of England's most successful clubs

Yes
Joey Wright

Many Arsenal fans would love to rewind to the 2003/04 season of success and stay there forever, yet Arsenal never recovered from the 'Invincibles' fame which occurred nearly fifteen years ago.

Fast-forward to the 2015/16 season, which epitomised the recent failings of Arsenal as they lost the title once more and revealed how, with Arsène Wenger, nothing will change. It was the season that Arsenal did not sign an outfield player and, unfortunately for the longest serving manager in the Premier League (more than all the other managers combined), it was the season that confirmed he was not doing enough.

Twenty years is a long time in football and many teams have seen managers come and go. While Manchester United changing managers show it is not an easy fix to hope for improvement with new blood in charge, Arsenal have to look at the long-term. The long-term has to see improvement which cannot be from a slowly decaying football team. In addition, you only have to look as far as Antonio Conte to

see how a managerial change can reinvigorate club.

To change the cycle of coming close but not winning major silverware, Wenger would have to fundamentally change and even Arsenal legend Thierry Henry revealed recently that "I do not know if he's willing to do that." His idea of selling expensive and buying cheap is not working – Granit Xhaka and Stefan Mustafi are just clear examples of high spending which, when compared to how successful the cheaper N'Golo Kanté and David Luiz have been at Chelsea this season, reveal Wenger's limitations. Not only has he stopped his policy of cheaper spending, but he has not been able to follow through with his younger talents such as Theo Walcott and Jack Wilshere. It is clear that Wenger is going to be stubborn with his tactics, but his changing transfer policy is not improving Arsenal's situation.

With the likes of Diego Simone, Massimo Allegri and even Eddie Howe being linked with the job, some kind of revolution would occur in Arsenal with Wenger gone, and in the long run, this will be seen as long-overdue, necessary change.



Image: The Loose Cannon

No
Tom Davies

The cacophony of voices calling for the removal of Arsène Wenger, after 20 seasons at the helm of Arsenal, is louder than ever before. The manner of the Champions League defeat to Bayern last week was embarrassing, but the European complaints of Claude & co. on ArsenalFanTV are unfounded – what else can they expect against the likes of Barcelona and Bayern Munich? Fourth in the league and the last-16 of the Champions League have become synonymous with the complaints of the 'Wenger Out' campaign, but Arsenal fans might have to learn to expect nothing more.

In modern football, success is ultimately dictated by money. It is a frustrating argument – Arsenal fans pay the most in the League for their season tickets. Many will retort: 'but if Leicester can win the League?'

Unfortunately, though, the Leicester fairy tale was an anomaly – Arsenal are grounded in a harsh Premier League reality. For the Arsenal board, what Wenger brings is consistency in return for their investment – Arsenal have not finished outside the top four in his time as manager, a feat no other club has achieved. Arsenal fans are entitled to want more. But sacking Wenger by no means guarantees this. Look at Manchester United. The post-Ferguson era has been remarkably unsuccessful for them. Three seasons, three managers and £350 million later and they lie 6th in the League. Wenger certainly has questions to answer – the post-Christmas capitulation is becoming far too regular an occurrence. Sacking him, though, would be the Brexit of the footballing world – a move from stability to uncertainty, a leap of faith with only the dreaded Europa League as a safety net.



BUCS fixtures
1st March unless stated
otherwise

Full fixtures and results at
bucs.org.uk

Badminton Mens 2nd vs Durham 2nd: 2pm, The Edge

Badminton Womens 1st vs Leeds Beckett 2nd: 1pm, Headingley Campus

Basketball Womens 1st vs Northumbria 2nd: 5:30pm, The Edge

Football Mens 1st vs York 1st: 2:15pm, Weetwood

Hockey Womens 4th vs Teeside 1st: 3pm, Weetwood

Netball 2nd vs Lancaster 1st: 1:30pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

Rugby Union Mens 2nd vs Leeds Beckett: 2pm, Weetwood

Rugby Union Mens 4th vs Doncaster College 1st: 2:15pm, Weetwood

Rugby Union Womens 1st vs York 1st: Weetwood (TBC)

Squash Womens 2nd vs Bradford 1st: 1:30pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

Tennis Womens 1st vs Leeds Beckett 2nd: 12pm, David Lloyd Centre

Tennis Womens 2nd vs UCLAN 1st: 12pm, David Lloyd Centre

Volleyball Womens 1st vs Manchester Met 1st: 6pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

Waterpolo Womens 1st vs Liverpool 1st (TBC)

Mens Ultimate Outdoor 1st vs Durham 2nd: 1:30pm, Weetwood

Leeds 2-3 Strathclyde



First set fightback helps Strathclyde to victory

John Gibby
Volleyball Men's 1sts

It's probably fair to say that Leeds Uni Men's Volleyball went into their cup tie against Strathclyde at the Gryphon Sports Centre on Wednesday night as fair underdogs, as a team in the relegation zone of the Northern 1A league going against the all-conquering side that is currently top of the Scottish league. This didn't really show early on in the game, however, as an evenly matched opening set really did go down to the wire. After speeding off into an 8-3 lead, Leeds looked largely in command of the opening exchanges of the match, before one mistake at the back led to a purple patch of Strathclyde's own; they managed eight points on the trot to take charge 11-8. Though the home side went on to reclaim the advantage twice in the set, the visitors ended up taking it by 28 points to 26.

Throughout that first set, Strathclyde were far

from helped by a series of incidents where they launched the volleyball into the wall of the sports hall, and therefore forfeiting a series of points. That element of their game was eliminated going into the second set, but Leeds made just as good a go at it, with a nip-and-tuck set ending up at 17-17 before the Scottish side went on to assert by 25 points to 19. They would perhaps have won the set slightly less convincing but for a series of foolish mistakes from Leeds when attempting to return serves. A talented side, they seemed to lack tactics, or, more basically, a plan, for much of this set. This was a departure from their precision earlier on in the match, and perhaps this marked the point where things started to unravel for the boys in green.

By this time, the writing really did seem to be on the wall for the Gryphons. They had given a good account of themselves against a very strong student volleyball side, in a game which seemed to be decided in the final few points of the first set. However, they

were far from done. For much of the second half of the game, those of use in the sports hall wondered if we were about to witness an upset – a turnaround of magnificent proportions. After Leeds clawed back what looked set to be a consolation set, they used their agility, quick thinking and much improved tactical game to level things up at two sets apiece. They were a tired team by that decider, however, and it was the Scots – the team with the momentum, who went on to win the day. Ultimately Strathclyde were rewarded with a semi-final tie against Liverpool.

Well cut-off within the relegation zone in the league, it will soon be time for Leeds to start focussing on next season, when hopefully they can harvest some of that promise they showed on Wednesday night into the reward they deserve.